

A vibrant, comic book-style illustration of a futuristic city street. In the foreground, a large, bearded alien with a red and black suit and a small horn stands prominently. To his right, a character in a white and grey suit with a green helmet and goggles holds a large pistol. In the background, other characters, including one with a large backpack, are visible. The scene is filled with colorful, stylized buildings and signs, creating a bustling, sci-fi atmosphere.

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PORTS OF CALL

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This book refers to several other Starfinder products, 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 for free at paizo.com/sfrd.

AA(#) *Alien Archive Volume*

AP(#) *Starfinder Adventure Path*

AR *Armory*

COM *Character Operations Manual*

GM *Galactic Magic*

NS *Near Space*

PW *Pact Worlds*

SOM *Starship Operations Manual*

Chapter 2: Ports

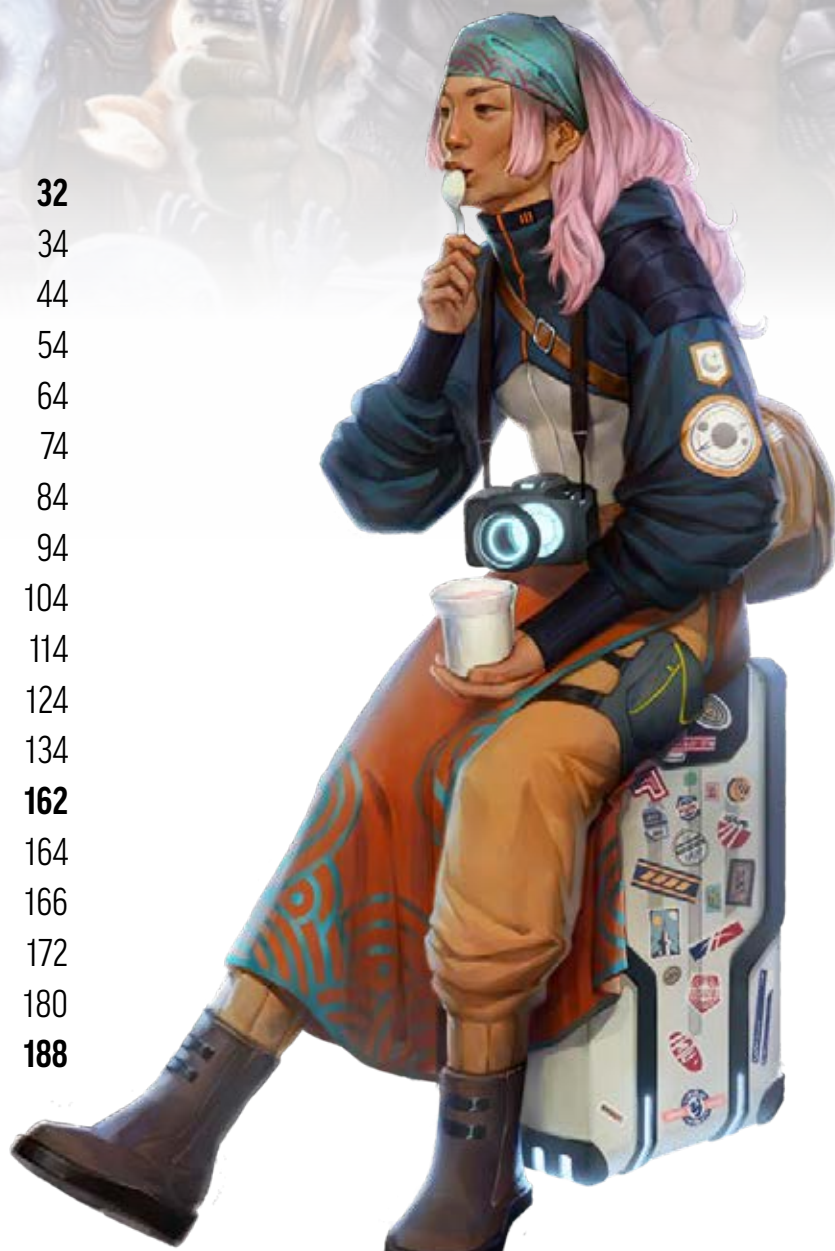
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OVERVIEW

UNDERSTANDING PORTS

When we think of Starfinder adventures, it's so natural to imagine daring starship battles, delving the zero-g ruins of a lost civilization's asteroid fortress, or wrestling with oversized carnivores in an alien jungle. These scenes play upon that thrill of the unknown as player characters depart "civilization" to trespass in the galaxy's unknown frontier. Books like *Starfinder Galaxy Exploration Manual* capture that limitless possibility.

Of course, there's far more to science-fantasy adventure than that! Whether it's a space station, wilderness outpost, or glittering megacity, Starfinder leans just as heavily on settlements. In this "deadly frontier" paradigm, settlements become havens where PCs can rest, repair, and recruit, and it's all too easy for these settlements to become downtime hangouts that feel predictably safe and forgettable—all while exoticizing alien destinations by comparison. No longer.



MOSCARU

A PORT'S ROLE

Ports of Call explores 10 major settlements in detail, exploring the opportunities, dangers, sites, and contacts therein. In this way, each settlement becomes a lively location equally suited as an adventure's starting point as it is an adventure's self-contained setting. In addition to the settlement design guidelines on pages 405–407 of the *Core Rulebook*, this book explores four different roles a settlement might take for your campaign.

A Gateway

Even though the Drift allows starships to arrive from any angle, there are plenty of reasons why traffic might funnel through a specific place. Tightly controlled regions might expect visitors to secure visas, undergo cargo checks, or endure some other bureaucracy. Certain settlements might experience so much traffic that they become informal entry ports to a region, attracting countless guides, embassies, and other resources that make it an ideal hub. Or, sometimes, a settlement has special access to some other form of transit, like a magic portal, that makes it both a gateway and gatekeeper to some secondary destination.

An Iconic Gateway: Whereas Absalom Station might ease travel to the Pact Worlds, it's just one route to that system. By comparison, Shulgi Station (pages 114–123) is a classic gateway, controlling access to a massive portal into the Astral Plane, a closely linked demiplane, and several Outer Planes beyond. For those traveling where the Drift doesn't reach, Shulgi Station might be an essential waypoint.

A Destination

Rather than facilitating the journey, a port might be the destination itself, boasting one or more extraordinary attractions. It's important that whatever this attraction is, it also serves as a springboard for more interaction and adventure. A massive market isn't just a place to sell gear, but a place to find vendors eager for fetch-quest adventurers, criminal elements exploiting the commerce, and rumors pointing to every corner of the galaxy.

An Iconic Destination: Built to capitalize on cheap real estate and a new Drift lane, Golarion World (pages 64–73) is a place people go to have fun! Kindly overlook the operational dangers, untested rides, numerous historical inaccuracies, and improperly contained zoological displays that almost definitely won't require adventurer intervention.

A Resource

Whether its tools, technology, raw materials, or expertise, some places are packed with one or more key resources, attracting visitors from across the galaxy. A resource port specializes in at least one valuable good or service. In some cases, that means extraordinary variety and quantity, such as a continent-spanning marketplace. In other cases, it means an industry that's so economical or exceptional that it outshines its competition.

That said, any exceptional resource attracts exceptional business interests. Resource ports often include organizations, corporations, or governments that lay claim to these goods, guarding them from other claimants. Where there's less oversight or exclusivity use, resource ports can become hotbeds of intrigue, sabotage, and competition.

An Iconic Resource: Thanks to its powerful, fluctuating gravity, Silselrik compresses an astonishing wealth of diamonds and other gems. For now, crawling cities like Midios (pages 144-145) have overseen sustainable harvests, yet outside interests increasingly try to muscle in on the action.

A Base

The galaxy is a big place, and starfaring PCs need a place where they can convene, recuperate, resupply, and even put down roots. An exciting base plays a careful balancing act between being safe enough to trust yet volatile enough that there's conflict and the possibility for adventure close to home. A base must also be accessible—both to and from offworld adventuring sites—so that it makes sense why the PCs keep returning to this place as opposed to setting up a base elsewhere. A base is also often defined by its people, featuring not just capable NPCs like mechanics, information brokers, scholars, aspiring crew members, ambassadors, or guides, but also engaging NPCs like neighbors, bartenders, musicians, and others who provide a sense of local culture, emotional investment, and security that keeps the PCs interested.

An Iconic Base: Easily accessible from across the galaxy, Absalom Station is a classic adventure hub, and the Drifter's End neighborhood (pages 54-63) serves as a premier hangout for starfarers of all kinds. Whatever services PCs might need before setting out for their next adventure, they can find here.

A GUIDED TOUR

With so many places to go, you would be forgiven for not knowing where to start or what to do once you arrived at a new destination. Thankfully, two of the galaxy's greatest travel writers have pitched in to present *Ports of Call*, providing insider commentary and local secrets that would never appear in some off-the-shelf guide published by AbadarCorp. Pulled from the duo's author bios in their latest publication, *Near Misses in Near Space: 17 New Death-Defying Destinations*, please meet **Moscaru** (host shirren) and **Sprax** (female skittermander).

Moscaru

Although previously known as the author of the bestselling "Held in All Four Arms" romance novels, Moscaru met their own true love: travel. Now inseparable from their coauthor Sprax, Moscaru brings a cultured, historical, and analytical perspective to understanding every destination. Their tireless work in highlighting local traditions and voices has helped them win three Drifty awards as well as receive an honorary doctorate from the Qabarat University of Xenanthropology and Xenoarchaeology. When between

A DRIFT CRISIS CONSEQUENCE

Playing adventures featured in *Starfinder Drift Crisis* isn't required to use and enjoy *Ports of Call*. However, this book does factor in one outcome of the Drift Crisis: the introduction of Drift lanes (page 25), which operate like extremely efficient highways through the Drift between specific worlds. A few of these worlds feature in *Ports of Call* in part because of their strategic role as Drift lane hubs. Even if your campaign occurs before the Drift Crisis or doesn't use Drift lanes yet, you can adjust and enjoy those ports for their many other virtues.

trips, Moscaru enjoys quiet afternoons spent with a good book and their klikharps, Sonata and Cacophos III.

Sprax

A precocious epicurean and fearless social butterfly, Sprax set out to travel the galaxy at a young age. Her charm and sense of reckless wonder have won her friends across a hundred worlds—as well as earning two Drifty awards for excellent travel journalism and placing seven times on the Iron Inevitable, an annual list of explorers who somehow survived self-inflicted disasters. No matter the danger, her observations helpfully capture the insights, entertainment, shortcuts, and possibilities of the galaxy's most daring destinations. She knows how to scream "I'm sorry, I was trying to help" in over 60 languages.



SPRAX

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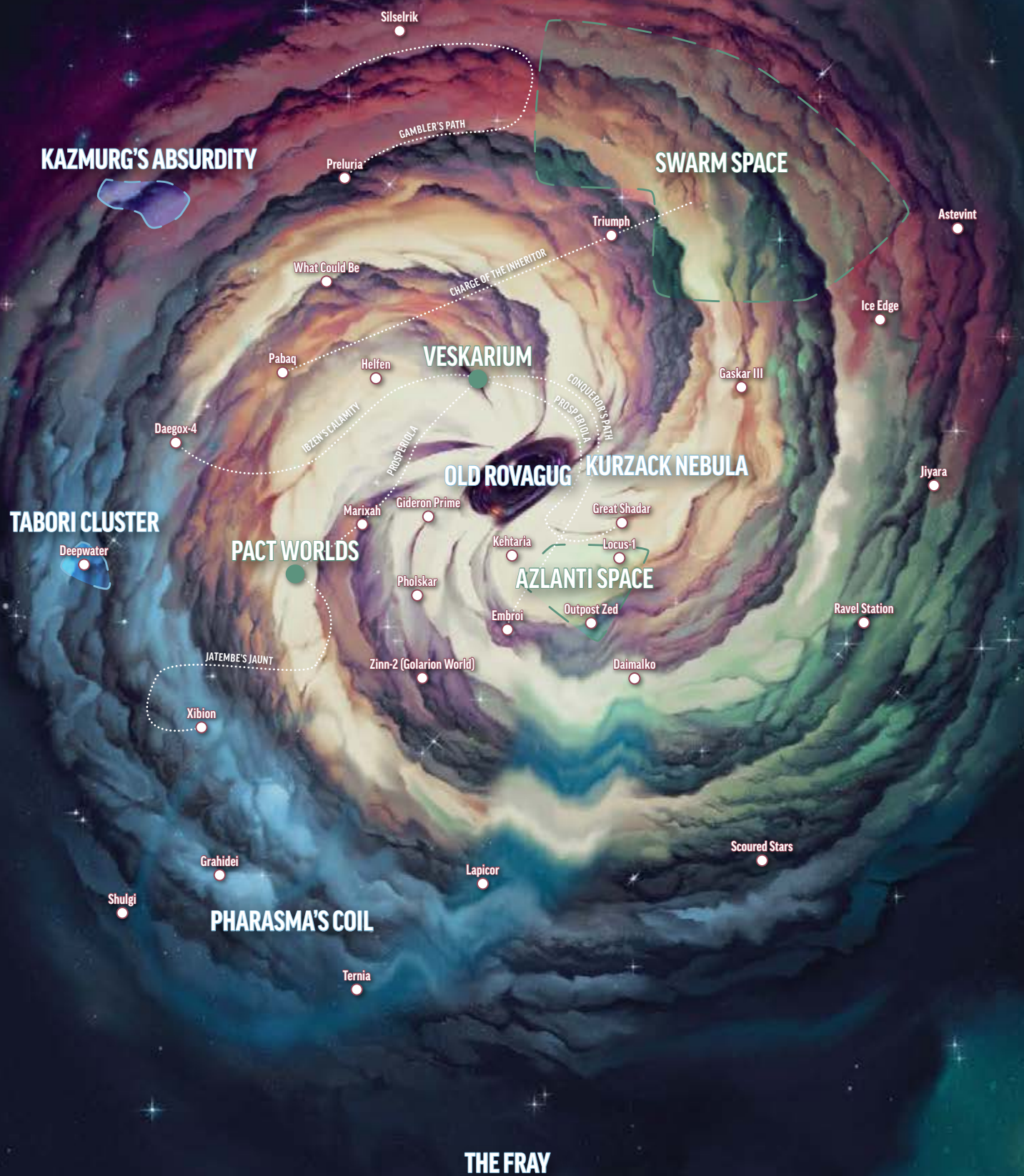
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DESNA'S PATH

THE FRAY



KAZMURG'S ABSURDITY

SWARM SPACE

VESKARIUM

KURZACK NEBULA

OLD ROVAGUG

PACT WORLDS

AZLANTI SPACE

TABORI CLUSTER

PHARASMA'S COIL

THE FRAY

THE GALAXY

Even before the Gap, inhabitants of the future Pact Worlds gazed into the sky with wonder and dissected its secrets with science. What Golarion's astronomers couldn't discover with mathematics, divinations, and rudimentary telescopes, extraterrestrial visitors (such as contemplatives, verthani, and witchwyrd) shared when they arrived via pre-Gap skyships and interplanetary teleportation.

Most of these societies communed with the gods, empirically proved the existence of an afterlife, and developed extradimensional travel—more than enough to dispel notions that anyone was truly alone in the universe, much less the figurative center of all creation. As a result, the system's early scholars developed fairly accurate models for the galaxy, its constellations, and its major features. However, actually reaching any of those distant worlds was another matter. Some civilizations managed to develop spacefaring technologies before the modern era, but these exceptional voyages charted and colonized a minuscule fraction of countless worlds.

For most of recorded history, campfire legends and astrology held a society's best understanding of the nature and denizens of the cosmos. And every time a society devised a constellation, each of those stars acquired a new name; instead of such an impossibly exhaustive list of names, this article provides those constellations most common among Pact Worlds inhabitants, with some of those names derived from how they appear from the Pact Worlds' position in the galaxy.

After centuries of faster-than-light travel and other advanced technologies, the scientific community has discovered that the Pact Worlds system lies in a spiral galaxy commonly known as Desna's Path, named not solely because Desna is the goddess of stars, but also for the four primary arms that give the galaxy a rough butterfly shape, evoking Desna's sacred animal. Desna's Path measures about 90,000 light-years across and contains an estimated 250 billion stars and star-like objects, making it fairly average in size by scientific reckoning. As is common for spiral galaxies, its arms spin around a powerful black hole (see Old Rovagug below), star density increases near the core (especially for older objects), and the arms contain much of the remaining galactic mass. Based on advanced scientific modeling, the galaxy formed approximately 10 billion years ago; since then, it has avoided direct collision (but experienced near misses) with several other galaxies in the Ilys Supercluster to which it belongs.

With untold billions of planets, there's no limit to the possibilities of what might exist within Desna's Path. Yet, even this galaxy is one of millions believed to exist across the functionally infinite Material Plane, to say nothing of the unfathomably vast multiverse beyond.

Even so, it's home—and what a home! Let's explore!

Old Rovagug

At the center of any great galaxy hides an even greater black hole, whose gravity anchors the billions of orbiting stars. Nicknamed Old Rovagug by the pre-Gap Pact Worlds in homage to their all-consuming destroyer deity, the black hole is more widely called the Devourer's Teeth. A vast accretion disk spins

around Old Rovagug, gradually drawing in the billions of aging stars that crowd the galactic core. Dense dust clouds periodically clump into planetoids, and the immense heat created by the friction energizes star formation in a few nearby nebulae.

The combination of time dilation with the risk of being drawn past the event horizon has impeded nearly all development of life near the galaxy's center—but what deters natural life encourages the supernatural. Like most black holes, Old Rovagug tears open millions of momentary rifts to the Negative Energy Plane every second, allowing creatures like spectral undead, gargoyle-like sceaduinars (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #42 55), and titanic darvakkas to escape into the surrounding space. These interlopers rampage across any worlds they can reach before the oppressiveness of reality inevitably disintegrates them. Other creatures have evolved to thrive on the outskirts, such as draeliks (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 4 36), who hide within the nearby Kurzack Nebula.

Unlike most black holes, Old Rovagug radiates light-year-wide entropic tendrils. Seeming to ignore material physics, these tendrils extend and roil outward like solar flares for thousands of years before fading and being replaced by new projections. Like black holes, they aren't directly visible, instead being observed only by the empty spaces they leave behind—most often along the accretion disk, earning them the name Whiskers of the Sun-Eater for how they radiate from the lightless center of the galaxy.

Pharasma's Coil

Just as telescopes designed to sense other forms of light have uncovered previously invisible stars, so too are some phenomena perceptible only with magic. When early arcane stargazers looked up, they witnessed a broad, pale blue spiral several handspans wide. Noting its resemblance to the Lady of Graves's sacred symbol, they named it Pharasma's Coil, considering it a reminder of her awesome power. Yet, this wasn't some enduring omen. Spells like *see invisibility* lay bare more than hidden creatures; they peer into the Ethereal Plane, a realm of emotion, dreams, spirits, and psychic magic that overlaps the Material Plane. These astronomers beheld a second galaxy, and it has been crashing through Desna's Path for millions of years!

Two physical galaxies would twist and absorb each other, but like a ghost, the passage of Pharasma's Coil through Desna's Path is almost imperceptible. However, the Coil's sheer emotional mass partially transcends planar boundaries, warping Desna's Path where they cross. Known as the Spirit Scar, this immense intersection generates psychic interference, nightmares, hauntings, and (most ironically, given the galaxy's namesake) spontaneous undead reanimation. Radio dishes pointed here intercept ghostly whispers as often as they receive blips from distant pulsars. Just enough travelers entering the Spirit Scar emerge emotionally frazzled, forever subdued, or even possessed that the region has acquired widespread infamy. Others discover temporary wormgates (*Starfinder Galactic Magic* 155) into the Ethereal Plane. When these portals aren't closing unpredictably behind travelers or unleashing night hags

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into the area, they leak streams of disruptive ectoplasm that damage fast-moving starships.

Drift travel might bypass the Scar, but what of the countless worlds caught in the path? Unsurprisingly, these systems exhibit high rates of occult activity and psychic abilities. Development of Daimalko's psychic Confederation of Volkaria might stem from the Scar, which likely also contributed to the Awakening that ravaged the world. Perhaps it's no coincidence that dual-souled shakaltas, the symbiotic kallestrine crystals embedded in hadrogaans, psychokinetic stellifera, the sentient planet Arquand, and more all evolved within the Scar. Despite the region's apparent dangers, the ethereal intersection has also contributed positively to many societies. Those hoping to meet not yet contacted psychic cultures risk extended visits, and astroarcansists theorize what impact Pharasma's Coil might have on the likes of the Azlanti Star Empire and its neighbors.

The Fray

Long dubbed the Dark Tapestry, the vast gulfs between galaxies aren't so empty as once thought; myriad creatures of unfathomable and uncaring philosophies traverse these spaces. Of these, a terrifying number belong to the Dominion of the Black (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 496), whose legions contemplate which worlds they might conquer next. Most of the galaxy suffers only occasional scouting parties consisting of brain collectors (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 4 16), nehhaeshi-shaas (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 70), and their cultists. Along the galaxy's rim, where stars grow distant and dim, these creatures gather without fear. Playing on the tapestry analogy, this perilous periphery is known as the Fray.

Precious few facts exist about the Fray. With billions of worlds deep in the galaxy, few have reason to travel so far along its edges. Travelers have long known that Drift travel can't reliably reach beyond the galaxy, and the Fray acts as a nebulous boundary where exiting the Drift might fail catastrophically. Only a few hotshot explorers have tried traveling beyond; most simply vanish, their starships' signatures going completely dark in an instant. A few vessels return hours, days, or even years later, their crew missing and their computers scrambled except for haunting distress calls and corrupted surveillance footage.

These faulty records, along with those rare survivors who can communicate, provide a fragmented, contradictory picture of the Dark Tapestry. One witness suddenly entered a void where their sensors witnessed nothing—not even the star systems they'd recently left behind. Another reported encountering physical resistance, as if the starship had entered an immense spiderweb that etched and pitted the hull before the crew overloaded the engines to break free.

CLOUDS AND NEBULAE

Galaxies are awash with gas and dust, whether scattered by a supernova or just left over from the Age of Creation. Where they grow massive enough, they collapse inward, forming new stars in a cosmic nursery light-years across. Whether magical or wholly natural, thousands of clouds and nebulae drift though Desna's Path; the following are but a sample.

Candabris: Star and black hole formations frequently tear open rifts to the Positive and Negative Energy Planes, respectively, but sometimes it's the extraplanar influence that creates the astronomy, not the other way around. Called Candabris by its fey inhabitants, this eldritch cloud has slowly spilled into space from the First World. The dust retains its primal potency, and when particles collide, they burst and grow unpredictably into flowers, zero-g rain showers, and even hapless animals that swiftly perish in the near-vacuum. The larger the colliding fragments, the larger the resulting creation, with the largest being the Cyan Tangle. This array of woody, mile-thick roots stretches over a light-year in diameter, with some enterprising fey hollowing out and colonizing some sections of its breadth. Candabris's most recent creation, Magentotitan, blossomed explosively only a few years ago, and energy waves from the sun-sized flower's appearance still emanate across the cloud, surfed by delighted asterays (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 18) and other fey.

Eleven Acts: Although named for its brightest stars in honor of Iomedae's miracles prior to her apotheosis ages ago, the Eleven Acts is a young nebula with thousands of stars that swirl around a good-aligned singularity (*Galactic Magic* 152). The few societies that have recently colonized the outermost planets enjoy blissful abundance, and the region provides a Material Plane beachhead for celestials mobilizing against evil forces. However, the singularity disintegrates anything that crosses its event horizon, and when it tears apart a wayward star, it expels twin beams of holiness across the galaxy that sear fiends and undead in their path.

Kurzach Nebula: A nearby Whisker of the Sun-Eater slowly drinks the dust of this doomed nebula. Ironically, this agitates the matter in a way that speeds star formation, illuminating parts of this dingy cloud for a few million years before being absorbed. Due to its special composition and circumstances, the nebula deflects most scans and confounds navigation tools, making it an ideal destination for fugitives. The nebula is also home to the Shadari Confederacy of draeliks, who revere their home's destructive forces as well as the Negative Energy Plane creatures that frequent the area.

Metamorphosis Nebula: Appearing like a butterfly unfurling its wings for the first time, this nebula seems inexhaustible after billions of years of continuous star creation. At its heart floats Cynosure, a blue star that blazes with harmless heat and contains the demiplane that serves as Desna's divine realm (for anyone bold enough to fly in). Although Desna rarely visits, her influence wards this nebula against bad luck and nightmares, with periodic azata patrols offering aid to the weary and fierce resistance to evil interlopers. According to myriad legends, this nebula catches mortals' strongest dreams and spins them into new stars; supposedly, a traveler could seek out their star to view the dream anew and uncover any messages it conveyed.

Old Naga: Having drawn too close to Desna's Path, material from the dwarf galaxy Ophidian-2 is cascading into its larger neighbor, creating a visible particle stream known as Old Naga. In theory, Old Naga presents a bridge between galaxies that bypasses the Fray. However, with few faster-than-light technologies suited for the trip, no records exist of anyone in the

modern era making an attempt. Nonetheless, the fast-moving stream could've propelled early starships pulled by solar sails, suggesting that some inhabitants of Desna's Path might have originally evolved on the galaxy's cannibalized neighbor.

Spelleater Cloud: Even the galaxy's eldest societies are young on a cosmic timescale, and Desna's Path has seen civilizations come and go. A few ended dramatically, including at least two forgotten cultures who obliterated countless planets and stars in their internecine feud. The debris, known as the Spelleater Cloud, seems to hunger for magic, and since most modern technology includes at least a few enchanted components, the cloud saps and ultimately disables starships that linger here too long. While scientists can account for some of the lost magic, which is coalescing to transform the cloud into a metastar nebula (*Galactic Magic* 154), most of it seems to vanish deeper in the cloud. Countless hypotheses explain the phenomena, but after grainy images of a humanoid body recently emerged from one of these magic-eating points, historians question whether the ancient civilizations were fighting each other or killing a god. What, they posit, might happen when this corpse absorbs enough magic?

Other Nebulae: Astronomers seem to identify another few nebulae or clouds every year, each with its own evocative name. Some like the Three Tigers Nebula, Bullseye Cloud, and Jade Lantern capture the visual magnificence. Others like the Last Word of Groetus Nebula invoke other qualities or fates, such as the aforementioned nebula's predicted absorption into a black hole in the next millennium. Without a doubt, religious references prove popular, and given the spectacular appearance of these formations, it should come as no surprise that at least 49 of them (including Shelyn's Delight, Crown of Shelyn, and the Fan of Seven Lovely Colors) are named after an ancient goddess of love and art.

NEARBY GALAXIES

Although Desna's Path comprises the Ihys Supercluster along with several hundred other galaxies, several formations make up its immediate neighborhood.

Gest and Aganhei: These dwarf galaxies, named for explorers of Old Golarion, orbit Desna's Path at some distance. Gest lives up to its ne'er-do-well namesake, having a penchant for snagging rogue planets and sling-shotting them toward Desna's Path. Aganhei earns special attention for the encrypted transmissions coming from it, which must have been sent at least 100,000 years ago. What's more, attempts to develop better navigational tools created an arcane compass that should've detected portals but instead always points toward Aganhei.

Ophidian-2: Ancient records indicate that there used to be two Ophidian dwarf galaxies orbiting closely enough for Desna's Path to begin absorbing them, but after the Gap, no trace of Ophidian-1 remains. Material from Ophidian-2 forms the

Old Naga stream (page 10), with some speculating that various forms of life originated there and rafted to the larger galaxy.

Rider Proxima: Named for its position within the Rider constellation, Rider Proxima is the largest galaxy of comparable size. Astronomical analysis suggests intense levels of extraplanar activity across the galaxy, as if some of the stars aren't hydrogen and helium so much as titanic portals to the Plane of Fire or blazing rifts of Nirvanan radiance.

Siccatite Ring Galaxy: Resembling a loop of red and blue stars, this nearby galaxy seems to have lost its black hole suddenly—either vanishing or exploding dramatically. Without a unifying core, the galactic mass has spun outward into a ring over millions of years, and in millions more years, it could break apart entirely.



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DRIFT LANES

The recent Drift Crisis tore at that plane's very being, and while Triune's realm has since recovered, it emerged from the ordeal with scars. Known as Drift lanes, these scars represent speedy, especially reliable paths through the Drift, enabling faster travel between specific points and creating a strategically valuable travel network.

Following the Drift Crisis, Drift travel has regained its traditional functionality: traveling to Absalom Station once again takes 1d6 days, reaching a Near Space location takes 3d6 days, and accessing the Vast takes 5d6 days, all influenced by the relative number of Drift beacons in the area. However, whether by accident or design, the Crisis left figurative wrinkles across the Drift, and explorers discovered that these wrinkles predictably and speedily connected various points in the galaxy, regardless of the number of Drift beacons nearby. While the galaxy remains accessible primarily through conventional Drift travel, these so-called Drift lanes have created powerful highways, opening new opportunities for travel, trade, and conquest.

UNDERSTANDING DRIFT LANES

Any given point in the galaxy corresponds to a point in the Drift, just not in the same configuration; two spots in the Drift a mile apart could correspond to two points 1,000 light-years apart on the Material Plane. Were the Drift a static plane, reaching the desired point might require light-years of travel—little better than just using conventional thrusters in the galaxy. Fortunately, the Drift isn't static. It constantly folds in on itself.

As an analogy, imagine that the Drift is a towel in a clothes dryer, each loop of thread corresponds to a Material Plane destination, and a starship traveling through the Drift is a speck of lint. As the towel tumbles and churns, different loops briefly brush against each other, and the lint might get passed from one loop to the other. By random chance, the lint eventually lands on the desired loop. Fortunately, a starship isn't so helpless. In addition to transferring a starship into and out of the Drift, a Drift engine lets a pilot predict when figurative loops will align, allowing them to plot a course and reach their destination by making a few strategic hops. The more Drift beacons a destination has, the more its corresponding loop tends to brush past others, making it easier to track and access. Of course, planar gyrations are virtually undetectable to mortal senses, and even as a starship leaps halfway across the Drift, it usually looks like it's just coasting through the plane's placid clouds.

When the Drift Crisis struck, it tore the figurative towel in a million places. Jumping from one loop to the next might accidentally send the starship through the towel, only to land on an unrelated loop or even get hurled into the cosmic machine's lint trap. For a time, the towel seemed to be unraveling, but—through miraculous developments scientists haven't fully identified yet—something stitched the tears closed. The Drift Crisis ended, and the Drift was repaired—mostly. Most notably, the towel now has a lot of loose threads, and after a few revolutions in the dryer, the

threads snagged on various loops. Now, while a Drift pilot can still chart a course the traditional way to one of these snagged locations, they have a new option: just follow that loose thread from A to B, with no chance of getting lost.

Those loose threads represent the Drift lanes. Some connect just two points and attach to nothing else. Others chain together, leapfrogging across the Drift, whereas others still snagged multiple threads, turning those points into invaluable junctions. Using a Drift lane is almost always faster and safer than charting one's own path to a Near Space location, and even zigzagging along a few Drift lanes can outpace a conventional trip to the Vast. However, since a Drift lane isn't a highway, a starship can't take an exit ramp and reach a point somewhere between the two ends. Exiting a Drift lane prematurely means entering a random point in the Drift.

Physical Description: A Drift lane functions like a massive, flexible tunnel; its internal diameter measures several miles across, with certain sections widening or narrowing depending on surrounding conditions within the Drift. The walls are typically semi-translucent and thick, resembling a shimmering heat mirage or gelatinous sheath. This boundary softly repels attempts to move through it, keeping most starships from accidentally veering off-course but not preventing a determined vessel from pushing through the side and exiting into the rest of the Drift (after which the breach seals shut).

From the outside, a Drift lane is functionally indistinguishable from the rest of the Drift. Given a lane shifts and flexes along with the rest of the plane, its exact position changes frequently. Due to these qualities, identifying and interacting with a Drift lane from outside is impractical, if not impossible. No matter how much its exterior form appears to shift, anyone inside a Drift lane experiences limited movement, with the path curving gently and only rarely turning or twisting dangerously.

Opportunities and Perils: Particularly for worlds in the Vast, Drift lanes provide unprecedented accessibility, and unrelated planets that now share a lane often develop exciting partnerships. Transporting cargo, passengers, and ideas between key locations is faster than ever, fueling economic and intellectual booms.

However, conventional Drift travel has one big advantage: it's almost untraceable. Pirates once had to lurk near planets or raid settlements because catching a starship mid-Drift was almost impossible. However, Drift lanes enable blockades and ambushes along valuable routes, allowing brigands to patrol narrow routes carrying valuable cargo and heralding a new golden age of piracy.

New Lanes: The concept of Drift lanes is new to science. Within a few months, explorers identified many of the major Drift lanes known today, yet new lanes emerge periodically, and indeed, the

exact workings of these lanes have yet to be fully understood. Did newly discovered lanes appear more recently than others? If so, what makes new Drift lanes? Is their number finite, or are there countless Drift lanes yet to be found, hiding across the galaxy's expanse? Are Drift lanes permanent, or might they fade or migrate with time? A few conduits, colloquially called Drift threads, don't seem to connect to planets, instead linking two unremarkable voids. Are these areas where future worlds might one day exist? Are the threads floating through the Drift until they snag and permanently connect two existing worlds? Or, are they just leftovers from the Crisis, like abandoned genes hiding amid useful DNA? Are they even Drift lanes or some related phenomenon?

Testing these hypotheses could take the efforts of a generation. Fortunately, whether it's universities or organizations like the Starfinder Society promoting science, governments and militaries shoring up defenses, or companies uncovering efficient new ways to extract wealth and deliver goods, there's no shortage of potential patrons eager to hire explorers and adventurers to locate and chart unknown Drift lanes.

USING DRIFT LANES

To access a Drift lane, a starship must be outside the atmosphere but within the gravity well of a world at one end of the lane. The starship's pilot must chart a course to the Drift lane, and lanes are exceptionally easy to navigate to (DC 10 Piloting). As usual, it takes 1 minute for the ship's Drift engine to activate,

during which time the ship's thrusters can't be used. If all these conditions are met, the ship enters the Drift on the Drift lane.

No matter their length across the galaxy, a Drift lane takes 7 days to traverse, divided by the ship's engine rating (and, as usual for Drift travel, not rounding the result). For example, a Blackwind Sepulcher (*Core Rulebook* 307) with an engine rating of 2 would travel from one end of a Drift lane to the other in 3.5 days. The manage course downtime activity (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 154) can be used to further reduce travel time on a lane, using a value of 1 as the normal minimum. For example, a character who spent 1 day managing a ship's course couldn't reduce the final travel time below 2 days.

Ships traveling the same Drift lane can see and interact with each other in the Drift. A ship that gets on a lane but then loses or turns off its Drift engine remains parked on the lane, floating in the Drift and becoming a navigational hazard to other ships on the lane. Ships can wander off or intentionally leave a Drift lane, but when they eventually emerge from the Drift, it will be at a random location. This also adds some reliability to travel along these lanes; ships that use them are less likely to become lost forever in the Drift should something go awry.

Starship Combat: The exact width of a Drift lane (measured in hexes) varies by the route, per the GM's discretion. A typical lane's interior is about 10 hexes wide, with sides about 2 hexes thick. The sides behave much like difficult terrain, causing anything moving through them (including attacks) to treat each hex as though it

were two hexes for the purpose of distances and movement speed. This provides limited room for maneuvering, plus it provides a clear way for ships to escape the Drift lane or even push an enemy out!

Adjust these dimensions as needed to create the desired encounter. However, note that a starship with average, poor, or clumsy maneuverability needs a space at least 5, 7, or 9 hexes wide, respectively, to turn around without using pilot stunts.

FAMOUS DRIFT LANES

Several discovered Drift lanes have garnered more attention due to their strategic or scientific importance. These lanes (or, in some cases, a pair or more of connected Drift lanes) have been named by those regularly using or studying them, though the average galactic citizen might still be unaware of their existence. Recalling knowledge about a known and named Drift lane requires a character to succeed at a DC 15 Culture or Piloting check (but even some established Drift lanes still retain their mysteries).

Charge of the Inheritor

Drift scholars were thrilled to find the terminus of a Drift lane in the atmosphere of Pabaq, the osharu (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 92) home world in Near Space, after the conclusion of the Drift Crisis. That excitement turned to fear when the first exploratory ships entering the lane emerged near a lifeless planetoid in a blue dwarf system near the edge of Swarm-controlled space. Soon after, large sects of the Knights of Golarion and the Church of Hylax sent regiments of troops and engineers to establish bases in that system, holding the far end of the Drift lane against the Swarm. Bulwark (page 134) has quickly become a pilgrimage site for followers of Iomedae who want to “fight the good fight” against the ravenous, insectile menace.

Conqueror's Path

Even as the galaxy reeled from the Drift Crisis, the neglected Azlanti colony world of Kehtaria (see Atuity on page 44) became inexplicably easier to access—and the Drift Crash ejected a Veskarium battleship into the planet's orbit. Since the Crisis concluded, Kehtaria has retained its accessibility as one end of two different Drift lanes. One route links to Vesk-4 in the Veskarium, while the other links to the planet Oyojii in the Azlanti Star Empire's Oyoya system. Oyoya's ruler, Arcidux **Tethin Placaria** (NE male Azlanti envoy) delights in the courtly prestige this Drift lane affords him, whereas Vesk-4's High Despot **Kamilzanva** (LN female vesk solarian) takes a more humble approach. Given both empires' recent tensions and histories of conquest, the route has become known as the Conqueror's Path. Vesk quite enjoy the title, considering it an homage to Damoritosh and their military prowess, but any war would devastate everyone involved.

While overshadowed by these titans' posturing, the Conqueror's Path also extends from Oyoya to Embroi. So far, only a few embri trade delegations have used the lane, but Embroi keeps its loyalties and aspirations secret, and in the event of an Azlanti-Veskarium war, it could be Embroi that does the conquering!

Gambler Road

One of the more dangerous known Drift lanes, initially thought a dead end, opens in high orbit above the poisonous green gas giant

Preluria in Near Space. Shortly after the end of the Drift Crisis, several scout vessels entered this Drift lane at Preluria, but only one returned. The others were all consumed by the black hole at the other end of the lane, and so it was deemed off-limits to travelers. However, a human engineer on the sole returning crew named **Salli Numo** (NG female human) began telling tales of seeing an impossible planet just inside the black hole's event horizon before her ship reentered the Drift lane. This story sparked the interest of fortune seekers throughout the galaxy, and though most of these treasure hunters failed to return from their trip into this Drift lane—now called Gambler Road—a handful have come back bearing wild accounts of the impossible planet as well as strange relics that have made them rich.

Ibzen's Calamity

The Near Space corporate prison planet Daegox 4 is connected to the Veskarium's Conqueror's Forge via a slightly unstable Drift lane. Those who mapped the lane reported that its “walls” appeared to be thinner than normal in several places, making the journey through it quite dangerous when it wends through areas of the Drift that see large amounts of planar activity. Accounts of fiendish starships, elemental storms, and pockets of planar debris penetrating the lane's walls without warning have dissuaded most casual spacefarers from using this passage. Nevertheless, the wardens of Daegox 4 are concerned about the increased access the lane provides to their world, especially as it connects to a space station bristling with military technology.

The lane is named after Ibzen Houdle, a prisoner who somehow stole a Drift-capable shuttle from Daegox's surface and escaped into the Drift lane. As security ships threatened to overtake him, Ibzen executed a daring maneuver where he skimmed the edge of the lane's wall and attempted to reverse course while exiting the Drift, but his shuttle suddenly disappeared in a multihued explosion. Some believe Ibzen survived, jettisoning in a makeshift escape pod to some unknown destination.

Jatembe's Jaunt

The vibrant world of Xibia is inhabited by the descendants of an expedition from the magic school of Magaambya on Lost Golarion. They regained contact with the Pact Worlds system after the discovery of Drift travel but have remained independent as a civilization of peace and scholarship. After the Drift Crisis, travelers discovered a Drift lane that connects Xibia to the Pact Worlds' Triaxus, which is set to usher forth a new spirit of collaboration and trade between the two. The lane is named Jatembe's Jaunt after the ancient wizard Old-Mage Jatembe, the founder of the Magaambya.

Prosperiola

The series of Drift lanes known as Prosperiola connects Verces in the Pact Worlds, Vesk-3 in the Veskarium, Marixah in Near Space, and Great Shadar in the Vast, in that order; consequently, these lanes have increased the trade of technological goods and raw resources between these worlds. Prosperiola is a merchant's dream come true, but with the increased ship traffic comes an increase in space piracy. Ambushes commonly occur along these Drift lanes, and cargo vessels making the route are always on the lookout for security specialists to protect them.

GALACTIC ADVENTURING

The universe holds an endless variety of possibilities for those who set out to explore its depths. The 10 categories that follow briefly describe a small fraction of things that a starfaring group might encounter, some of the opportunities and threats those things present, and a few sample hooks to help create characters related to such phenomena.

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ANOMALIES

Anomalies are strange, often unexpected phenomena that have yet to be fully documented or understood. Though they're endlessly variable, some anomaly examples include localized gravitational lensing, time dilation, life-forms with inexplicable—even seemingly impossible—biochemistry, or unidentified artifacts that exhibit properties incompatible with commonly understood physics or magic.

Opportunities: Once discovered, careful investigation of an anomaly might lead to the development of new scientific or magical principles or provide insight into existing ones. Some anomalies might give hints about the history of the galaxy—its development over eons, the existence or activities of precursors (see Precursors on page 18), or even events that might have occurred during the Gap. Although seeking out, documenting, and unlocking the secrets of anomalies is a decidedly speculative endeavor, the potential benefits are so great that many wealthy individuals and organizations are willing to fund such efforts.

Threats: Anomalies hold the inherent dangers of the unknown. Experimenting with phenomena that depart from the common understanding of reality carries a significant risk of dangerous—even fatal—consequences. Even during more ordinary discoveries, it might turn out that an alien relic is booby-trapped to keep it from falling into the wrong hands, or that a strange sensor reading is actually bait from a crew of pirates hoping to lure in and capture a well-equipped scientific vessel.

Character Hooks: A PC fascinated or repelled by the unusual might have a connection to anomalies.

- Studying anomalies is your life's work. After receiving a thorough education, you were hired by an exploratory research organization. It's steady work, but your sponsors demand results.
- You're an undercover agent tasked with stealing the secrets of anomalies controlled by rivals. Your ongoing mission is to find any such anomalies and learn as much as you can.
- As a scientific feature journalist, you regularly research, visit, and interact with known anomalies while preparing explanatory articles or vids for public consumption.

CARGO HAULING

Nearly everyone in the galaxy needs external supplies to survive or thrive. In many cases, these necessities must be transported across great distances, especially as population centers outgrow the resources of their local environs. Merchants constantly

traverse the stars, ensuring that they meet the needs of countless societies.

Opportunities: Goods are ever flowing between inhabited areas, so freelance hauling can be a perfect fit for people who want to travel to or between specific places. Experienced haulers often develop a strong understanding of the markets they service, and many eventually begin purchasing their own cargo and become merchants themselves. With access to enough shipping manifests, large organizations can even begin piecing together detailed analyses of the flow of goods through inhabited space. Though such findings might seem mundane, they provide keen insights into impending and ongoing warfare, migratory and economic activity, and social movements. PCs might even pick up cargo jobs of their own; see page 166 for more information.

Threats: Though hauling jobs are almost always available in many corners of the galaxy, the work is anything but reliable. Piracy is a real concern, especially far from major population centers, but more mundane delays resulting from docking, customs, or warehouse loading and unloading are even more common and can be just as impactful. Multiple shipping delays with the same company, regardless of fault, can result in being assigned less profitable runs or even none at all. Black- and gray market dealings are commonplace, and partaking in said activities or even being in the wrong place at the wrong time can land a hapless hauler in legal trouble—or worse.

Character Hooks: A PC might be directly involved in or reliant on intergalactic trade or simply knowledgeable about it.

- Your family has been running a backwater trade route for decades. However, recent Drift changes have put you in direct competition with several large corporations who are severely undercutting you.
- As a current or former customs enforcement officer, you're certain a regional shipping provider is running a smuggling operation out of your port, but you have no concrete evidence—yet.
- You believe restrictions on the free transportation of goods are harmful to everyone, and especially to your bottom line. You've found it much more lucrative to smuggle anything to anyone who needs it.

DIPLOMACY

Calm discussion can often be a preferable alternative to brute force as a means to any number of ends. Diplomacy can occur between and among all sorts of entities, including

individuals, labor organizations, corporations, factions, and all levels of government.

Opportunities: Successful diplomacy is usually mutually beneficial for those involved, and most larger organizations devote at least some of their operating budget toward attempting to resolve disputes amicably. Specific benefits will vary drastically depending on the terms negotiated but might include cash, investments, property ownership, licenses, privileges, and even a more informal “shared understanding.” Individuals involved in the negotiating effort are often paid well for their work, as a successful deal can lead to years of significant benefits for both sides. In some cases, third-party negotiators aren’t paid for their labor but are instead permitted to include provisions that benefit themselves as part of the negotiated terms.

Threats: For all those who would benefit from a diplomatic solution, there can be just as many at the fringes of such a situation hoping that it falls through. While most attempts to undermine negotiations are carried out through legal (if questionably ethical) means, underhanded tactics such as espionage, sabotage, and assassination aren’t uncommon, with diplomatic staff frequently caught in the crossfire and needing protection or justice. A breakdown of international relations might lead to war, sometimes with an immediacy that threatens the very people trying to prevent it.

Character Hooks: A PC might be professionally trained in diplomacy or simply steeped in its customs.

- As a professional mediator, you’re often called in to assist conflicted parties in reaching a mutually beneficial compromise. It’s your job to remain neutral, but neither side makes that easy.
- You take great pride in being one of a faction’s best diplomats. Occasionally, you’re instructed to access and duplicate secret internal documents of rival factions, which is bound to get you in trouble someday.
- Diplomacy often brings together high-ranking officials, making them prime targets for assassination. You’re hired for jobs of this sort—or to defend against those who are.

DISASTER

Natural dangers abound in the galaxy, whether on crowded Absalom Station or among the stars in the remote Vast. These threats range from terrestrial, such as plague, famine, flooding, or seismic activity, to cosmic-scale, such as supernovas, gamma ray bursts, or galactic collisions. Whatever form they take, disasters are a disruptive force that create ample opportunity for change.

Opportunities: Destruction and displacement create myriad immediate needs, along with plenty of opportunities for those willing and able to fill those needs. Merchants are likely to find that they can command prices far above the normal market rate, so long as they’re willing to ignore the plight of the destitute. Some unscrupulous individuals don’t even possess what they’re allegedly selling, instead relying on their victims’ desperation to enact their schemes. A disaster frequently inspires cooperation between rival individuals or groups, which might allow soured relationships to mellow. If nothing

else, people looking to help others will have no shortage of opportunity following a disaster.

Threats: A newcomer caught in the middle of a disaster might be every bit as victimized as a local, but even those who arrive after the fact find a far more dangerous set of circumstances than normal. Supply chains and housing are frequently disrupted, and the resulting shortages might cause widespread hunger, exposure, or disease. Looting and raiding, driven by desperation, are possible. Law enforcement might be stretched beyond capacity, possibly resulting in both draconian martial law and pockets of anarchy.

Character Hooks: Most PCs have encountered disasters in their lives; some might have even been the cause of one or two.

- You volunteered to seek out resources to help your community recover from a natural disaster and have been traveling ever since. When charity fails, you perform odd jobs to purchase the supplies they need.
- Whenever tragedy strikes, you’re always among the first on the scene to offer goods or services to those in need—above market rate. When confronted, you claim it’s better than not providing them at all.
- As a member of a government or independent relief agency, you’re frequently dispatched to help alleviate the immediate needs of disaster-affected communities. It’s rewarding work, though sometimes the bureaucracy can be stifling.

EXPLORATION

There’s a fundamental urge in nearly every culture to observe the nearby world and record those observations. It’s fitting that the same drive would carry forward into the endless stellar frontier. Explorers seek to better understand the cosmography in which they live and to share that knowledge with others.

Opportunities: The recent Drift Crisis and subsequent stabilization of the Drift lanes reset large chunks of galactic knowledge, immediately setting off a scramble to update old star maps. These efforts are ongoing and pay well, enticing many to sell their services as contracted explorers. Other entrepreneurs prefer to freelance—exploring on their own terms until they find something interesting, then attempting to sell the knowledge to the highest bidder. In addition to accurate maps of the Drift lanes, there’s great value in newly discovered star systems, mineral deposits, life-forms, precursor artifacts, and salvage of all kinds.

Threats: Exploration inherently carries an element of chance. Will that new Drift lane open out onto an unoccupied solar system of habitable planets and plentiful resources, or an ancient star mere moments away from going supernova? Environmental dangers like corrosive nebulae rival sapient ones, such as claim jumpers or hostile life-forms. The best explorers possess the gumption to always push forward into the unknown, tempered by an intuition for when they’re about to get in over their head.

Character Hooks: Most PCs are no stranger to exploration, but for some of them, learning more about the galaxy is their ultimate goal.

- The Drift Crisis represents one thing to you—opportunity. You’re always seeking out rumors of new and unexplored Drift



lanes nearby, knowing that one lucky break could completely change your prospects.

- Since you were a child, you dreamed of exploring the vast emptiness out among the stars. Now, either independently wealthy or bankrolled by a government or large corporation, you're able to do just that.

- Before it was lost in war or cataclysm, your ancestral home world was uniquely suited to your species. Your people survive as a diaspora but have never stopped searching for a new place to call home.

FIRST CONTACT

The initial meeting of two sapient species is an inflection point in both cultures' developments—a complete re-contextualization of the universe and their place in it for each. How both sides react in those crucial first days and weeks can indelibly alter the trajectory of their relationship.

Opportunities: The arrival of a new species to an existing social and political landscape can provide everyone a chance to reevaluate the possibilities of cooperation. The sudden arrival of the Swarm, for example, quickly put an end to over 250 years of warfare between the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds. New species are likely to have vastly different experiences in science, technology, philosophy, and other kinds of knowledge, allowing for a rewarding exchange of ideas. Species of especially unique biochemistry, such as the

silicon-based quorlu, often represent a unique opportunity for cross-species collaboration.

Threats: Species without any sort of shared history often find their perspectives to be vastly different from each other. If one or both conclude that the other is fundamentally incompatible, a peaceful first contact can rapidly devolve into a frantic war for survival. Sometimes, this decision isn't even intentional—with significant enough technological disparities, communication failures, or other dissimilarities, misunderstanding can pile upon misunderstanding in a destructive spiral.

Character Hooks: Some PCs are first contact specialists, while others hope to be.

- As an expert in linguistics, you're often among the first specialists brought in following an encounter with an unmet civilization. Your efforts are instrumental in ensuring that a peaceful and productive first contact is achieved.

- Your detailed profiles and exclusive interviews of newly discovered starfaring species have made you a media sensation throughout the Pact Worlds. You're constantly chasing new arrivals but hope to be the first to meet a new culture someday.

- Whether by design or circumstance, you were the first of your species to make contact with another species, perhaps from Near Space or the Vast. Despite—or because of—your many differences, the time you've spent among them has been fruitful.

HEAVY INDUSTRY

The identification and extraction of bulk materials—as well as their subsequent use in constructing components for interstellar-scale civil engineering, agriculture, energy generation, starship construction, and weapons manufacturing—are foundational for any starfaring society. Vast amounts of capital and labor are expended in pursuit of ever more reliable and exploitable resources.

Opportunities: With their deep pockets and desire for huge returns, industrial firms are usually eager to fund expeditions seeking out new sources of raw materials or research grants for developing new compounds or improved manufacturing techniques. Independent freelancers frequently keep contact information for a few such firms in different industries readily available to easily sell their discoveries, inventions, or scientific breakthroughs. People with extensive ties in an industry can sometimes gain opportunities unavailable to the general public, such as wholesale pricing on certain kinds of goods, weapons, or vehicles, or access to prototypes of new technologies.

Threats: Efficiency is one of the cornerstones of profitable industry, and especially profit-driven entities often cut corners with regards to occupational safety. Supply chains might lack redundancy and therefore become susceptible to mishap, and security forces might prove to be inadequate for especially dangerous environs. Often, workers aren't provided with purpose-built equipment and are expected to make do with the generic gear that they have to jury-rig as best they can. New industrial installations frequently encroach on previously undisturbed habitats, and local life-forms often retaliate. Rival sabotage also poses a serious concern, especially for facilities deep in space and far from any kind of law enforcement.

Character Hooks: Most PCs needn't look too far for a connection to interstellar industry, though some are closer than others.

- After years of grueling labor for one of the larger starship manufacturers, you finally commandeered one of their smaller vessels fresh off the line. Now you're unemployed, but opportunities abound when you own a starship.
- As a freelance bio-engineer, you spend much of your time seeking out and cataloging new life-forms with potential agricultural and pharmaceutical applications.
- You've become radicalized against callous disregard for sapient life after being aggressively displaced to make room for a new industrial facility. You now seek to sabotage any resource-extraction or manufacturing facilities you come across.

PIRACY

Many pirates claim sections of well-traveled but poorly patrolled space lanes, whether those traveled in normal space or in the newly formed Drift lanes (page 12), jealously defending their territory from rivals and shaking down passing starships until the route dries up or a stronger force drives them away. Pirate crews' flexibility and the element of surprise are their greatest assets as they travel the stars looking for plunder.

Opportunities: Piracy affords many a lifestyle beyond what they're likely to attain in civilized society, albeit at the cost of a greatly shortened life expectancy. Though they operate outside the law, many pirates abide by a personally significant code of conduct and will intentionally target or spare potential victims in accordance with that code. While pirate crews often choose to work independently, it isn't uncommon for pirates to garner the support of a backing faction. Some seek quasi-legal status as privateers acting on behalf of local or regional governments, while others join the Free Captains or smaller regional pirate alliances.

Threats: A victim of piracy that loses their starship's cargo can suffer consequences that might range from a mere inconvenience to existentially devastating, usually depending on the victim's means and access to recovering or retributive measures. The ships themselves are also quite valuable, and pirates might insist on commandeering the vessel in addition to plundering its contents. Some pirate crews might agree to transport the ship's former occupants to a nearby safe port; others might press-gang them into piracy themselves. The cruelest pirates simply force the prior occupants out the nearest airlock.

Character Hooks: PCs might be former (or even current) pirates, or they might do everything in their power to counteract such villains.

- Years ago, pirates captured your ship and ejected you in an escape pod for a laugh. You drifted for days before being rescued. Since then, you've vowed retribution against all pirates.
- You have wealthy contacts who occasionally commission you to rob from their rivals while they maintain plausible deniability. You've been trying to escape that life, but the money is too good.
- Whether out of desperation, greed, or the mere thrill, piracy is the life for you. You're wanted in several systems, but the law hasn't caught up to you—yet.

PRECURSORS

The progress of a civilization is neither linear nor unbroken, and the histories, cultures, scientific knowledge, and spiritual wisdom of those who came before are frequently lost to time. Whether by design or circumstance, artifacts from ancient civilizations such as the Sivv Dominion or the kishalee are occasionally preserved, and they can offer a wealth of knowledge. These artifacts might consist of architecture, everyday objects, writings, art, or even tech relics (*Starfinder Tech Revolution* 64).

Opportunities: Most artifacts can be plumbed for knowledge—directly in the case of writings or recordings, or indirectly via study and research. In extremely rare cases, an ancient relic is a complete and fully functional tool of some kind, ranging in potential application from doomsday device to electric kettle. Even if no immediate practical application can be found, a precursor artifact generally has archaeological value—providing context for other discoveries or hints as to where further artifacts of the same civilization might be found. Ancient artifacts' general rarity usually allows them to command a high price on collector's markets.

Threats: Precursor relics might be laden with traps, inherently unstable, or otherwise dangerous in and of themselves. Additionally, tampering with the remnants of a dead society can potentially reawaken whatever apocalyptic threat laid waste to it in the first place, causing history to repeat itself. The nature of the work itself also attracts danger, as unscrupulous treasure hunters find it easier to jump a claim than to find one of their own.

Character Hooks: Many a starfaring PC inevitably encounters the remnants of precursors in their adventures, though some specifically seek out these antiquities.

- Artifacts from long-dead civilizations are rare and valuable, whether for scientific research, historical documentation, or mere collecting. You've become adept at both acquiring such relics and lining up buyers for them.

- For reasons unknown, you seem to be compulsively drawn to ancient alien relics. Perhaps you have a psychic sensitivity to some form of energy they emit, or maybe they were left behind specifically for you.

- Your settlement built into a precursor ruin was pleasant, until a wave of treasure hunters arrived looking for a big score. Now you carry a grudge against those who seek to plunder without regard.

WARFARE

Across the galaxy, economic and territorial expansion are common motivations for warfare—along with religious, xenophobic, and nationalistic causes. Others take up arms because of a deep-seated compulsion, or even because they find it enjoyable. Stranger still, some species have no readily comprehensible motivations, committing acts of aggression according to unknowable patterns or seemingly at random, with no identifiable purpose.

Opportunities: Personal advantages for a member of the military can vary dramatically based both on their role and status as well as the general nature of military service within the culture in which they serve. Militaries always need supplies and services, consistently providing contractors and fleet followers alike with ample patronage. While most spoils of war go directly to the victorious government, there are often residual benefits of a more personally exploitable nature. For example, citizens of a victorious empire might gain access to new settlement opportunities, natural resources, or cultural theft.

Threats: While the clearest peril associated with war is being on the wrong end of a weapon, there are many other dangers that can affect even those not on the front lines. Occupying forces are often abusive to locals, but trying to evacuate a contested area is also fraught. The social breakdown as settlements are abandoned often spurs an increase in crime. Displaced refugees might strain the resources of the communities hosting them, leading to tension. Resources and political attention directed to the war effort can result in shortages and mismanagement at home, which in turn can spiral into civil unrest.

Character Hooks: Exposure to war, whether direct or indirect, is common among starfaring PCs.

- You've been in the military for most of your life, but after a recent tour of duty, you were placed in inactive reserves. While you struggle to integrate into civilian society, you have plenty of downtime to explore.

- Caught up in recent conflict, you lost your family, friends, and most of your possessions while evacuating. Now, you're focused on surviving day-to-day while searching for a new home or familiar face.

- In matters of warfare, someone is always willing to pay to gain the upper hand. You know that's where the money is, which is why you offer your services to the highest bidder, possibly even at the expense of your conscience.



GIANT

Ancient beyond measure, giants have evolved into numerous subspecies that thrive in harsh environments. However, they're best known for their prodigious strength, stature, and pride.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Giants are tall and muscular, ranging from 9–15 feet in height depending on subspecies (though a few giants are much taller).

SOCIETY

According to legend, their gods forged the giants at the dawn of time to endure for all ages. Thanks to their strength, adaptability, and self-congratulatory mythology, giants are often incredibly proud. Giants care deeply for tradition and kin, commemorating their deeds and building bonds through media, tattoos, and stories.



SPECIES TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Str, +2 Con, -2 Dex

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Giants are Large humanoid with the giant subtype. They have a space and reach of 10 feet.

Low-light Vision: Giants gain low-light vision.

Expert Thrower: As a ranged attack using two hands, a giant can hurl an object or piece of debris with a minimum bulk of 3 and a maximum bulk equal to your Strength modifier +2. The debris is a basic melee weapon with the thrown property, the knockdown critical hit effect, and a range increment of 5 feet × their Strength modifier. It deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage. Picking up debris is a move action, but if a giant can draw a weapon without spending an action (such as via the Quick Draw feat), they can pick up debris as part of the action used to throw it once per round. They can't use this ability while encumbered or overburdened. A giant increases the range increment of other thrown weapons they wield by 10 feet. At 5th level and every two levels thereafter, the damage dealt increases by 1d6, though the number of damage dice can't exceed the bulk of the debris.

Skilled: Giants gain a +2 species bonus to Engineering and Intimidate checks.

Subspecies: A giant gains additional abilities based on its subspecies.

Fire: Fire giants have fire resistance 5, which stacks with one other source of fire resistance. When wearing armor, their armor check penalty is 1 less severe than normal, and any speed adjustment from the armor is reduced by 5 feet (minimum -0 feet).

Hill: Hill giants gain a +2 species bonus to bull rush and grapple combat maneuvers, and they gain a +2 species bonus to AC against bull rush and grapple combat maneuvers.

Slag: Slag giants have fire resistance 5, which stacks with one other source of fire resistance. They gain a +2 species bonus to sunder combat maneuvers and ignore 5 points of an object's hardness when dealing damage.

Stone: Stone giants gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet, and they increase the die size of damage dealt by debris they hurl from d6s to d8s.

ADVENTURERS

A giant's pride often drives them to test their strength against unfamiliar environments, attain trophies of great deeds, and return home with tall tales of their exploits. However, many chafe at other settlements' tiny amenities, encouraging giant adventurers to explore wildernesses where their size provides a clear advantage.

NAMES

Names: Most giants have a single multisyllabic personal name and can trace their lineage back as far as the Gap. Some sample names include Akor, Elthel, Flega, Gehela, Igvale, Rigrath, Roros, Sortar, and Vekora.

SELAMID

Selamids are sentient oozes originating from the gravitationally dynamic planet of Silselrik, where they build cities called megadplexes on the backs of immense, wandering oozes.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A selamid's body consists of flexible protoplasm contained within a semi-rigid membrane, allowing the ooze to take a variety of shapes as needed. These contortions only minimally impact a selamid's bodily functions, largely thanks to a selamid's host of redundant organelles distributed throughout their mass, with few beyond the nucleus large enough to see. At the end of their 40-year lifespan, a selamid splits into two selamid descendants known as pairlings. Each retains a unique blend of their parent's memories and personality, creating an imperfect record of past lives' experiences.

SOCIETY AND ALIGNMENT

Most selamids live in smaller communities of roughly a dozen inhabitants. These families teach recently split offspring, who learn to establish their own identity distinct from their forbears. Pairling dynamics are usually emotionally charged, with the two becoming extremely close friends or hated enemies, and the search for an identity often stems as much from sincere curiosity as it does from the desire to be different from one's sibling.

Historically, selamid culture has no concept of gender, though some selamids have begun exploring the idea as they meet travelers from other worlds. Romantic attachments are rare, and when they occur, they're often long-lasting and commemorated in a life fusion ceremony to celebrate multiple beings symbolically becoming one.

While selamids rarely wear clothing, they do don armor as needed, easily molding themselves into armor of sundry shapes. Selamids enjoy accessories like jewelry, which they suspend within their protoplasm in a protective vacuole. Their habit of carrying items in full view of everyone is consistent with the openness and honesty that define selamid culture.

ADVENTURERS

Cravings for novelty and self-discovery motivate many young selamids, some of whom pursue the adventuring lifestyle for excitement and experience. Mirroring their physiological flexibility, selamids thrive when filling a range of team niches. Even in the face of failure, they literally and emotionally bounce back, providing positive encouragement to their companions.

NAMES

Because their spoken language incorporates various scrapes, pops, and sighs as their membrane undulates and rasps against itself, selamid names often include breathy vowels, as well as K and S sounds. A selamid typically creates their own name a few weeks after splitting. Sample names include Cuoptsee, Deksiari, Hekshee, Pehtias, Shuhulunsal, and Umkuolsis.

SPECIES TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Dex, +2 Con, -2 Cha

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Selamids are Medium oozes with the selamid subtype, but they don't gain the normal ooze immunities.

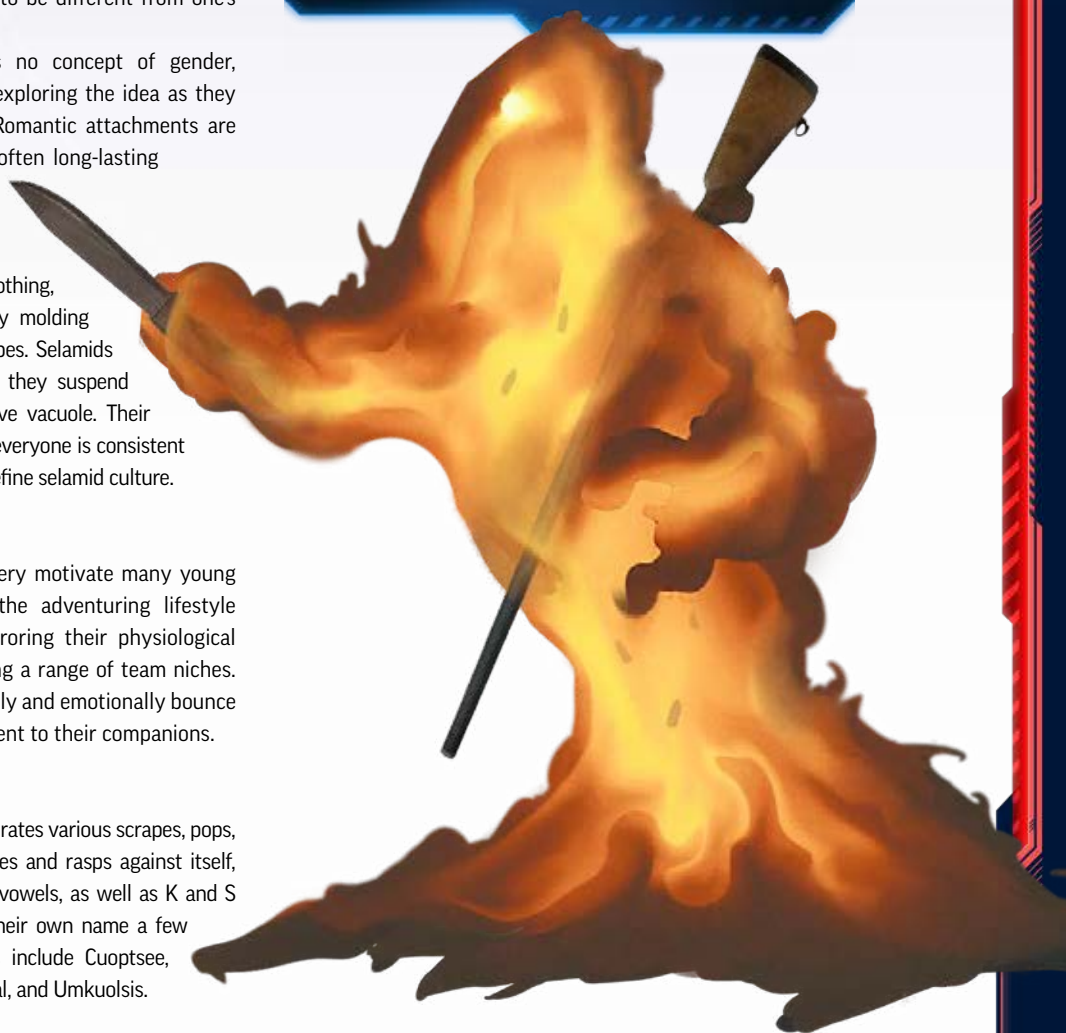
Advanced Ooze Biology: Selamids aren't immune to critical hits, aren't mindless, and can gain and use skills normally. For effects targeting creatures by type, selamids count as both humanoids and oozes (whichever type allows an ability to affect them for abilities that affect only one type, and whichever is worse for abilities that affect both creature types).

Blindsight: Selamids have blindsight (vibration) with a range of 60 feet.

Gravity Adaptation: Selamids can take 10 on Athletics checks in zero gravity.

Malleable: A selamid can manipulate and wear equipment as a creature with two arms, and equipment and armor of the appropriate size never needs to be adjusted to allow a selamid to use it. They gain a +8 species bonus to Acrobatics checks to escape.

Sightless: A selamid can't see and is never subject to any effect that requires them to see a target or effect.



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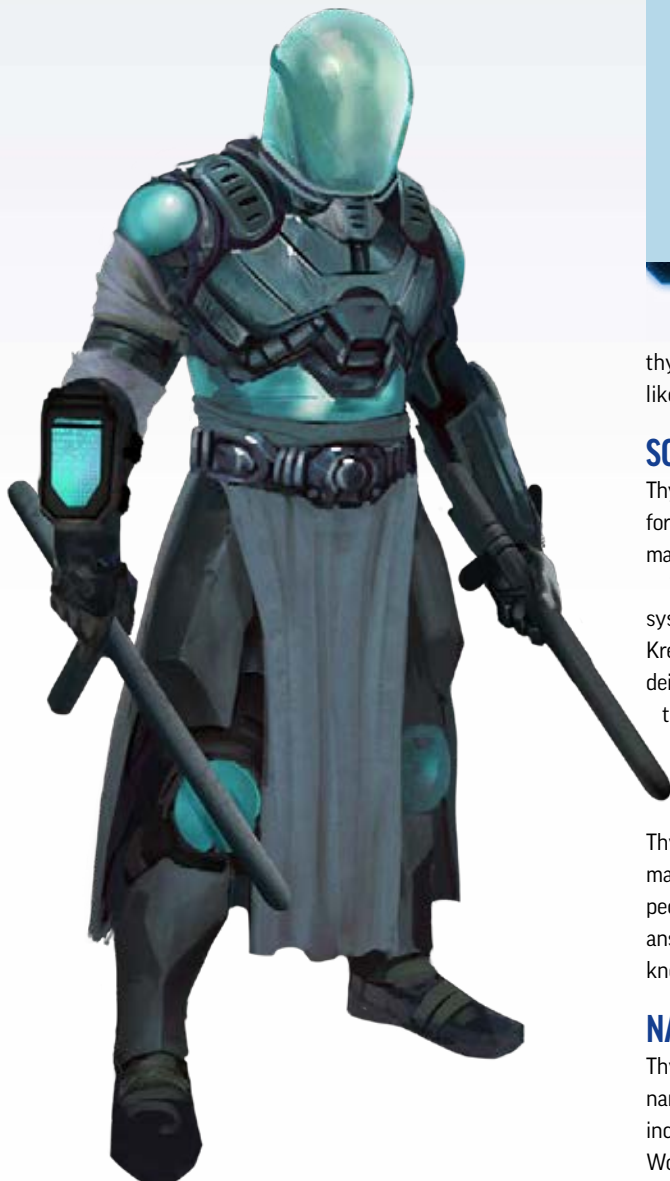
THYR

Thyrs are intelligent oozes composed of buoyant gas who wear containment suits to protect themselves and interact with the world around them.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A thyr is a swirling cloud of buoyant gas whose outer molecules form a thin, malleable membrane. Their bodies lack any set form and can adopt vague shapes, though never with enough precision to convincingly replicate other creatures. As this physiology is impractically fragile and lightweight for many day-to-day tasks, thyrs typically inhabit containment suits, armor, and other full-body attire that stabilize their form.

Without organs or even brains, thyrs form memories and skills by recombining their gases into complex neurological chains that float microscopically throughout their bodies. Able to live for centuries, a thyr's natural life ends in one of two ways: they incorporate outside gases and split into two new



SPECIES TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Int, +2 Wis, -2 Str

Hit Points: 2

Size and Type: Thyrs are Medium oozes.

Amorphous: A thyr's body is malleable and shapeless. They have the amorphous universal creature rule. They don't take double damage from critical hits but are affected by critical hit effects normally.

Gaseous: Thyrs have a base speed of 10 feet and an extraordinary fly speed of 30 feet with average maneuverability.

Limited Telepathy: Thyrs have limited telepathy with a range of 30 feet.

Psychic Linguist: Thyrs gain a +2 species bonus to Culture checks. Once per day, a thyr can cast *comprehend languages* as a spell-like ability. At 10th level, a thyr can cast *tongues* as a spell-like ability. Their caster level equals their character level.

Thermal Consumption: Thyrs consume thermal energy. They have fire resistance 5, which stacks with one other source of fire resistance. Once per day as a reaction when a thyr takes fire damage, they can increase their fire resistance by 5 until the beginning of their next turn. Until the end of their next turn, all of the thyr's speeds increase by 30 feet, to a maximum of twice their normal speed using that form of movement. This increase counts as an enhancement bonus.

thyrs with childlike intellects, or they destabilize spectacularly, like a star undergoing supernova.

SOCIETY AND ALIGNMENT

Thyrs are intelligent telepaths with keen memories and a knack for untangling codes and linguistic cues. Most enjoy logic games, mathematics, poetry, puzzles, riddles, and learning new languages.

Thyrs evolved on Bastiar-7, a gas giant in the Scoured Stars system. Alongside numerous other species who formed the Kreiholm Freehold, they fled the system to escape an overbearing deity; only recently have a few thyrs returned to the system. In their long diaspora, thyrs developed a reputation for sagacity, long memories, and boundless curiosity.

ADVENTURERS

Thyrs have only begun traveling widely in the past few years, making wandering thyrs ambassadors for the Freehold and its people. Those who travel are often hunting for information—the answer to a question, data for a research project, or simply knowing what lies beyond the horizon.

NAMES

Thyrs adopt a sentence or phrase as their name and adopt a new name or alter their existing name at will. Some sample names include Buoyant Joy, Past Sleeps Within, Speaks Forgotten Words, Summer's Last Breeze, Treads the Clouds.

XULGATH

Xulgaths are reptilian humanoids who originated on lost Golarion.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Xulgaths average around 5 feet tall and 150 pounds. Females tend to be slightly larger and heavier. Xulgaths give birth to live young in clutches of one or two. They have glands on either side of their neck that produce pheromones that, though often offensive to the senses of other species, are a vital part of the xulgath language and communication.

Due to evolving in lightless conditions, most xulgaths are shades of white or gray. Communities that migrated to live aboveground are known to develop more vibrant colorations over generations.

Xulgaths are strong and hardy, but because their language involves complex pheromones as well as spoken words, non-xulgaths can find them reticent and off-putting and are often unable to discern the full meaning of what a xulgath says. Contrary to some prejudiced beliefs, xulgaths don't always have an offensive odor but actually have acute control over this aspect of their physiology and will frequently adjust the way they communicate with one another so as to not offend their neighbors.

SOCIETY AND ALIGNMENT

Xulgaths are natives of lost Golarion that spread through the galaxy mostly as drow labor, though they've since established their own communities. Xulgaths have one of the longest recorded histories for an intelligent species, but after millennia of intentional cultural erasure, much of this history has been lost. What remains is passed down through oral-olfactory storytelling and doesn't exist in a written form. Due to frequent resource scarcity throughout their history, xulgath society is quick to disregard those deemed weak, which can come across as callous to other species. Xulgaths tend to value individual strength and are quick to propose contests of prowess (not necessarily physical) as a means to solve conflicts. Xulgath collectives tend toward neutrality, though individual xulgaths run the gamut of alignments.

ADVENTURERS

Many xulgaths take to adventuring easily. A xulgath might adventure as a way to prove or hone their strength and for the opportunity to take on ever-increasing challenges. Some xulgaths are reluctant to take on support roles when in an adventuring team, so they're more likely to be seen on the front lines rather than behind their allies.

NAMES

Xulgaths often pass down the names of remarkable ancestors. Many names have been passed down from the ancient civilizations of Lost Golarion, even if the original namesakes themselves have long been forgotten. Sample xulgath names include Resh, Amat, Xikar, Mitun, Utuath, and Ninsuth.

SPECIES TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Str, +2 Con, -2 Cha

Hit Points: 4

Size and Type: Xulgaths are Medium humanoids

Ancestral Knowledge: Xulgaths can choose one Intelligence-based skill. That skill becomes a class skill. If it's already a class skill, they instead gain a +2 species bonus to the skill.

Pheromone Cloud: Once per day as a standard action, a xulgath can create a stench cloud around themselves with a radius of 5 feet for 1d4 rounds. Creatures who enter the cloud must attempt a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + the xulgath's level + their Con modifier) or become sickened for 1 round. This is a poison effect.

Xulgath Senses Xulgaths have blindsense (scent) and darkvision with a range of 60 feet.



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EXPANDED DOWNTIME

An adventurer's journey through the galaxy is often punctuated by thrilling yet short-lived encounters, where split-second decisions can mean the difference between life and death. Time between such adventures doesn't have to be dull, however, and whether traveling through the Drift or lying low in a city between missions, there are plenty of opportunities to spend your downtime productively. The activities in this section use the downtime system presented on pages 150-155 of the *Starfinder Character Operations Manual*.

CATALOG CREATURE

You make a close study of a particular creature in the wild.

Activity: You spend the day recording detailed notes about the behavior, diet, physiology, and other details of a creature or group of creatures that you observe for at least 8 hours. Typically, the creature you observed should have an Intelligence modifier of -3 or lower, though you might be able to catalog a more intelligent creature type at the GM's discretion. You must have a journal (digital or otherwise) in which to record your observations.

Results: You gain an insight bonus that you can apply in one of three ways when interacting with the studied species: a +2 bonus to your initiative check when fighting the species, a +2 bonus to a saving throw against a special ability of that species, or a +3 bonus to a Charisma-based skill check to influence that species. You must choose to apply the bonus before attempting the roll.

Multiday: If you spend one week cataloging the species, you can use the journal in which you gathered this information as

a qualifying data set for the purposes of recalling knowledge about the cataloged creature, identifying related creatures, or performing the research downtime activity about the creature or a closely related topic (at the GM's discretion).

CHANNEL DIVINITY

You spend time in religious contemplation and reflection, or in direct service of your chosen deity. This activity references anathema, edicts, and blessings associated with a deity; this information appears on pages 100-119 of *Galactic Magic* for the 20 deities featured in the *Core Rulebook*. At the GM's discretion, you can use this downtime activity to commune with a different deity whose anathema, edicts, and blessings use these as guidelines.

Activity: You spend the day communing with your deity through thought or action. Select one of the following activities and attempt a Mysticism check (DC = 15 + 1-1/2 × your level).

Atone: You engage in rituals to appeal to your deity, asking for forgiveness for having taken an action that's anathema to them.

Espouse: You perform an activity in line with your deity's edicts. You can't select this activity if you have taken actions that are anathema to that deity unless you first atone for them.

Results: If you choose the atone activity and succeed at the Mysticism check, you successfully atone for minor activities that are anathema to your deity (at the GM's discretion) and regain their tacit approval. This doesn't atone for major infractions outright (which often require significant personal sacrifice or quests), but this activity might be part of atoning for such transgressions.

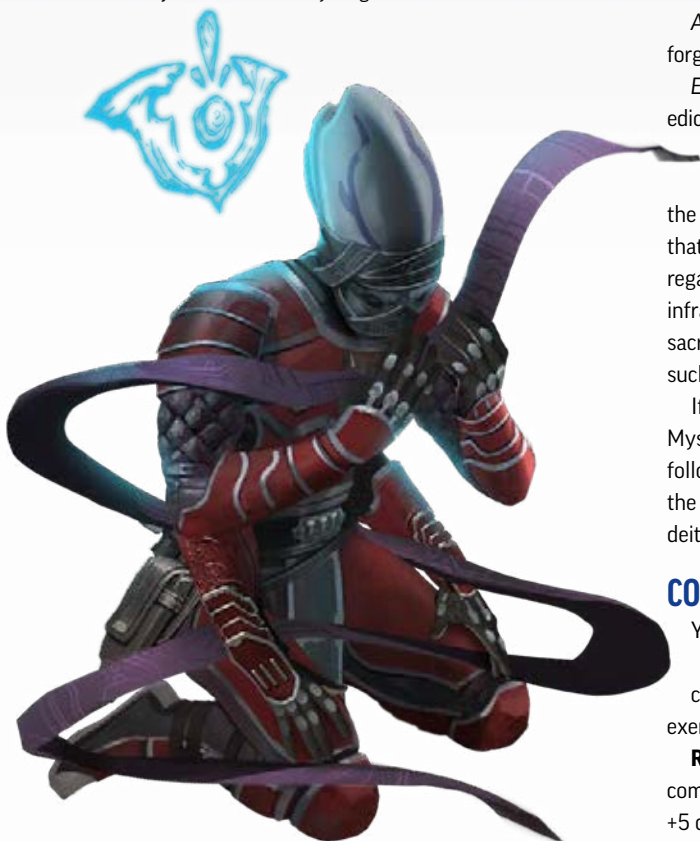
If you choose the spouse activity and succeed at the Mysticism check, you gain one of that deity's blessings on the following day. The exact effect of the blessing is determined by the GM, but it typically manifests in a way that conveys your deity's minor intervention.

COMPANION CARE

You spend quality time with your creature companion.

Activity: You spend the day bonding with a creature companion (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 149), whether through exercise, grooming, training, or other focused activities.

Results: If you haven't yet bonded with your creature companion, you can attempt the Survival check to do so with a +5 circumstance bonus at the end of the day.



If you're already bonded with your creature companion, you gain three benefits that last until the end of the day. First, the distance at which you can control your creature companion increases by 10 feet. Second, the saving throw DCs of your creature companion's abilities increase by 1. Finally, your creature companion can score a critical hit on a natural 19 (in addition to a natural 20), though the first time it scores a critical hit on a 19, this third benefit ends until you use this downtime activity again.

COOK FEAST

You turn your culinary talents to your allies' benefit.

Activity: You spend the day preparing an extravagant meal for up to 15 people (including yourself). You must have access to a kitchen or starship galley and to premium ingredients. Purchasing these ingredients typically costs 5 credits per person fed; alternatively, you can forage for ingredients with the live off the land task for Survival or another character can acquire ingredients you use during the same period using the gather resources downtime task. Attempt a Culture, Profession (cook), or Survival check with a DC equal to 15 + 1 for each creature fed. If you use Profession (cook) for this check, reduce the DC by 5. Allies can aid your skill check as a downtime activity.

Results: Allies who partake of your feast can do so in addition to any other downtime activity they're performing. If you failed the check by 10 or more, you created an inedible meal. If you failed by 9 or less, the meal is nutritious but provides no special benefit.

If you succeeded at the check, anyone partaking regains an additional Hit Point for every two character levels they have (minimum 1) after their next full night's rest, and each gains a +1 morale bonus to their next saving throw made against disease or poison within 24 hours. If your check result exceeded the DC by 10 or more, you also increase the morale bonuses anyone partaking in the feast receives from downtime activities by 1 for 24 hours.

DEBRIEF

You study your opponents and review your combats.

Activity: You spend the day reviewing and learning from the previous day's conflicts.

Results: Based on what you accomplished the previous day, you gain a useful insight that you can expend in one of two ways on the following day.

Learn from Failure: If you rolled a 1 on an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw the previous day, you can expend the insight to reroll a natural 1 on a d20 roll and use the second result.

Learn from Success: If you scored a critical hit, you can expend the insight to roll 1d3 and add the result as a circumstance bonus to one attack roll you just made (after seeing the roll but before learning the result) against a creature of the same creature type that you critically hit to earn the bonus.

DISTILL SERUMS

You tinker with the potent magic of certain serums.

Activity: You spend the day carefully distilling and monitoring two *serums of healing* of the same item level. At the end of the day, attempt a Mysticism check (DC = 10 + the level of the serum).

Results: You combine the two serums into a single *serum of healing* that functions normally for a serum of its level, except it

restores additional Hit Points. If you succeed at the Mysticism check, the new serum heals 2 additional Hit Points per die rolled (such as 3d8+6 Hit Points for a mk 2 *serum of healing*). If you exceed the DC by 5 or more, treat any die result of 2 or less as though it were a 3 to calculate the number of Hit Points the serum restores. If you fail the Mysticism check by 5 or more, the serum is rendered inert and doesn't restore any Hit Points.

INVEST

You make an investment of credits you believe (or hope) to be wise.

Activity: You spend the day researching available financial vehicles in which you can invest, such as stocks, property, or commodities. You must have access to the infosphere of a world or system whose economy supports such activity (at the GM's discretion). You choose to invest a specific amount between 1,000 and 100,000 credits; you lose access to these credits. After one month, roll a d%, and at the GM's discretion, add your ranks in one relevant Profession skill (such as accountant, corporate professional, or financier) to the result.

Results: Consult the following table, using the result of your d% roll to see the results of your investment. If you have any investment remaining, you can either withdraw the credits or leave them invested and attempt this roll again in one month, repeating the latter until you have no investment remaining.

D%	RESULT
01-15	You lose the entirety of your investment.
16-50	You lose 50% of your investment.
51-75	Your investment increases by 10%.
76-95	Your investment increases by 50%.
96+	Your investment increases by 100%.

Special: This downtime activity could provide exceptional profits during adventures that last many months. The GM might limit the amount you can earn from this activity each level to the wealth of 2 encounters of your level (*Care Rulebook* 391).

MARATHON ENTERTAINMENT

You fully immerse yourself in a single intellectual property.

Activity: You spend the day watching vids or playing games focused on a single specific intellectual property (such as a single holovid series or multiple instances of entertainment that include the same characters).

Results: For the next week, you gain a +2 insight bonus to Diplomacy checks to improve the attitude of fans of that specific intellectual property. You also gain a benefit for the following day depending on the genre of the entertainment, as listed below.

Action/Adventure: The first time you roll an initiative check, you gain a +2 morale bonus to the check and gain temporary Hit Points equal to your key ability score modifier for 2 rounds.

Comedy: You gain a +1 morale bonus to Medicine checks.

Drama: You gain a +1 morale bonus to saves against emotion effects.

Horror: You gain a +1 morale bonus to saves against fear effects.

Mystery: Choose one Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skill. You gain a +1 morale bonus to checks made using that skill.

Romance: You gain a +1 morale bonus to saving throws against charm effects.

MECH SYSTEM DIAGNOSTICS

You fine-tune one of your mech's systems, reinforcing it against future damage.

Activity: You spend the day building in redundancies to one of your mech's components. Choose one of the following: upper limbs, lower limbs, frame, auxiliary systems, power core, or cockpit.

Results: Once per hour on the next day, when your mech experiences system failure and you roll to see which system malfunctions, if you roll the system you chose, you can reroll and use the second result to determine which system is damaged.

SCHMOOZE

You get to know the local populace.

Activity: You spend the day in a small settlement (or a neighborhood of a larger settlement) talking to influential and connected locals. At the end of the day, roll a Charisma check, adding 1 to the result for every 3 ranks you have in Diplomacy. In notably friendly or unfriendly areas, the GM might apply a +2 or -2 penalty to this check, respectively, or as much as a +5 or -5 penalty for extraordinarily welcoming or xenophobic places. This activity can be performed only once per week per settlement.

Results: Consult the following table, using the result of your Charisma check to see the results of your activity.

CHARISMA CHECK	RESULT
2 or less	You not only fail to make any connections, but you mistakenly offend an influential local. You take a -2 penalty to Diplomacy checks in this settlement for one week.
3-5	You're unable to gain a meaningful foothold in the community, but you gather some information that comes in handy, giving you a +2 insight bonus to the first Diplomacy check you attempt in this settlement in the next week.
6-15	You get to know the local movers and shakers personally. The first time in the next week you would fail a Diplomacy check in this settlement, you can reroll that check.
16-24	As 6-15, plus an influential community member likes your style and talks you up around town. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks in this settlement for one week, and your attempts to gather information take 1 hour rather than 1d4 hours.
25+	You become something of a minor local celebrity. You gain the benefits of 6-15 and 16-24 results above, and you also gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Profession checks in that settlement for one week.

SOCIAL MEDIA CURATION

You immerse yourself in social media.

Activity: You spend the day crafting or curating a social media profile and interacting with others on it. At the end of the day, roll a Charisma check, adding 1 to the result for every 3 ranks you have in Diplomacy or a relevant Profession skill. At the GM's discretion, if you have an ability that directly enhances your fame or fan engagement (such as the icon theme's celebrity ability), you gain an additional +1 circumstance bonus to this check. You can perform this activity only once per week per social media account.

Results: Consult the following table, using the result of your Constitution check to see the results of your activity.

WILL CHECK	RESULT
1 or less	You're overwhelmed by the apparent successes of others and fall into a funk. Any morale bonuses you would gain for the next day are reduced by 2.
2-5	You maintain your account in good standing.
6-15	You connect with a new subset of users and learn something new. You gain a +2 insight bonus to your next skill check to recall knowledge attempted in the next day.
16-24	Another user, impressed by your skill, hires you for consultation. This pays 50 credits per level and doesn't require any additional time spent.
25+	A fan or friend is inspired to send you a personal item (from <i>Starfinder Core Rulebook</i> or <i>Starfinder Armory</i>) worth 1000 credits or less.

SPELLCRAFT

You devise a magical trick to temporarily enhance a spell.

Activity: You spend the day focusing your energies on a single spell. Choose a spell you know and attempt a Mysticism check (DC = 10 + the spell's level + your level).

Result: If you succeed at the Mysticism check, once before the end of the following day, you can apply one of the following benefits to the chosen spell. You must choose the benefit as you cast the spell, and some benefits can only be applied to spells from a specific school. If you exceed the Mysticism check's DC by 10 or more, you can apply a benefit each time you cast the spell before the end of the following day.

Calculated: If you roll one or more dice to determine how much damage the spell deals or how many Hit Points or Stamina Points it restores, the first time you roll these dice, you can reroll any die result of 1 and must use the second result.

Convincing (illusion only): Creatures attempting to disbelieve an illusion you cast as a move action take a -2 penalty to their Will saves. A creature takes no penalty if it interacts with the illusion as a standard action.

Expert: Treat your caster level as 1 higher when casting the spell.

Overpowering: Increase the spell's saving throw DCs by 1.

Precise: You gain a +1 bonus to any attack rolls you make with the spell before the beginning of your next turn, and those attacks reduce any AC bonus the targets receive due to cover by 1.

Protective (abjuration spells only): One creature affected by the spell gains a +1 bonus to AC for 1d4 rounds.

STARSHIP SYSTEM DIAGNOSTICS

You examine and bolster your starship's systems.

Activity: You spend the day building in redundancies to one of your starship's systems. Choose one of the following: life support, sensors, weapons array, engines, or power core.

Results: Once per starship combat on the following day, when your starship takes critical damage and you roll to see which system is damaged, if the system you chose would be affected, you can choose to reroll and use the second result to determine which system takes critical damage.



TALK THERAPY

You offer an ally a friendly ear and a bit of wisdom.

Activity: You spend the day talking with and listening to an ally, and this ally can't perform any downtime activity for the day except this one, with you as their ally. At the end of the day, attempt a DC 10 Wisdom or Charisma check, adding 1 to the result for every 3 ranks you have in Diplomacy or a relevant Profession skill (such as counselor, manager, or psychologist).

Results: If you succeed, your ally gains a +1 morale bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting effects for the following day. If you exceed the check's DC by 5 or more, the bonus increases to +3. If you fail the check, decrease the activity's DC by 5 the next time you and that ally attempt this downtime activity with one another.

TIDY UP

You get around to cleaning and organizing your living or traveling environment.

Activity: You spend the day tidying your starship, living quarters, campsite, or other place you spend significant time. At the end of the day, roll a Constitution check or Wisdom check. This activity can be performed only once per week in the same location.

Results: Consult the following table, using the result of your check to determine the results of your tidying. You also

gain a +2 morale bonus to initiative checks in that location for one week.

CHECK	RESULT
1 or less	You accidentally dispose of a random consumable item (or 250 of your credits if you don't have a consumable item).
2-5	You gain the satisfaction of a job (mostly) well done.
6-15	You find 1d20 physical credits.
16-24	You find a personal item of negligible bulk worth 100 credits or less.
25+	You find a personal item or weapon accessory (<i>Starfinder Armory</i> 58) worth 1,000 credits or less.

TUTOR

You share your skills with an ally.

Activity: Choose a skill in which you have at least 3 ranks. You spend the day teaching a willing ally whose number of ranks in that skill is at least 3 lower than yours; the ally must use their downtime studying with you. At the end of the day, your ally attempts a DC 10 ability check, using the ability associated with the chosen skill.

Result: If your ally succeeds at the check, they count as being trained in that skill until the end of the following day. In addition, before attempting a check with that skill, the ally can add a +3 insight bonus to their check; they can apply this bonus three times during that day.

STARSHIP OPTIONS

The post-Drift Crisis market has demanded spacefaring that less relies on technology and more embraces enchanted or magically enhanced systems and propulsion. The far reaches of space are filled with countless ports and sites to see; sometimes, the journey is more important than the destination. Indeed, other times the destination is the ship itself. From huge luxury starliners to plucky tug ships, the galactic hubs of society are ready to cater to any itinerary at any price.

STARSHIP SYSTEMS

Destinations throughout the galaxy are home to entrepreneurs and inventors who constantly create new systems they hope will dominate the starship and tourist markets.

Expansion Bays

The following options are available for ships with open expansion bays.

Agricultural Suite

Popular on colony ships and some luxury cruisers, this layered combination of hydroponics and livestock, animal care facilities, biowaste conversion, and food processing takes up four expansion bays. It provides food indefinitely for up to 200 Medium-sized creatures so long as the PCU requirements are met.

Arena

This massive sports grid and concert venue requires three expansion bays and can be installed only on Huge or larger starships. Extensive seating, speakers, and vidscreens allow someone using the entertain downtime activity (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 152) to affect up to 200 willing creatures. The DC of their entertain check is equal to $10 + 1$ per 20 creatures they're entertaining + $1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the average character level or CR of those they're entertaining.

Atmospheric Bubble

Whether through careful enhancements to existing shield emitters or magic, the area within 15 feet of the starship contains a breathable atmosphere and protection from cosmic radiation. This expansion can also provide artificial standard gravity on the ship's hull, if desired.

Display Room

Whether it's used as a public museum or a private collection, this often-understated room highlights the special few objects placed in it and has comfortable seating for reflection and contemplation. At a GM's discretion, a display room can be used for the lounge or research downtime activities (*Character Operations Manual* 153–155).

Garage

A garage must be mounted on a ship that's Small or larger. It can store 1 Large or smaller terrestrial vehicle. While a vehicle is

housed in a garage, repairs on it take half the time. A vehicle can be deployed from the garage directly to the surface if the ship has landed, or it can be loaded into an available drop pod (*Starfinder Starship Operations Manual* 25) or sky crane (page 29).

Garage, Massive

Massive garages function as garages, can be mounted on Huge or larger ships, and take up two expansion bays. They can house 1 Colossal, 2 Gargantuan, 4 Huge, or 16 Large terrestrial vehicles.

Lido

This ship area features lawns, pools, and other traditional outdoor recreational facilities and sometimes has exterior views through a transparent forcefield or dome. A lido is designed to maximize relaxation with calming music, simulated sunlight, and other factors to recharge guests and crew. Luxury liners often include a lido, but they can be found on smaller ships as well. You can use a lido for 4 hours before using the carouse downtime activity (*Character Operations Manual* 151); this reduces the cumulative penalty to the saving throw for carousing repeatedly by 2.

Mech Bay

A mech bay takes up two expansion bays and can be installed only in a Large or larger ship. It can store 4 Huge mechs, 2 Gargantuan mechs, or 1 Colossal mech. While a mech is housed in a mech bay, repairs on it take half the time and shield regeneration is twice as fast. Mechs can be deployed from the bay directly to a planet's surface if the ship is landed, or they can be loaded into an available drop pod (*Starship Operations Manual* 25) or sky crane (page 29).

Menagerie

Whether looking to transport and research zoological specimens or display living trophies, a menagerie provides a place to house, care for, and observe alien creatures in environmentally controlled cages. Four Medium creatures, two Large creatures, or one Huge creature can be maintained comfortably. These numbers can be doubled if the comfort of the captured aliens isn't a concern, though the risk of sickness and violence increases. Held creatures can be used for the research downtime activity (*Character Operations Manual* 155), and the facility can be used for the lounge downtime activity (*Character Operations Manual* 153).

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Sky Crane

A sky crane uses massive parachutes and thrusters to transport terrestrial vehicles and mechs from a starship in orbit or the atmosphere to the ground and back again. The sky crane requires two expansion bays on its own as well as appropriate storage, such as a mech bay (page 28), and can deploy or recover one mech or vehicle per hour.

Temple

A temple is a space dedicated to worship and meditation. Most temples are dedicated to specific deities, though it isn't unheard of to find temples dedicated to general connections, multi- or non-denominational worship, or simple meditation.

During downtime, a mystic or other faithful can use a temple for the entertain downtime activity (*Character Operations Manual* 152) for other willing participants and substitute a Mysticism skill check for the normal Profession skill check. A temple also grants a +1 circumstance bonus to Mysticism checks made as part of the channel divinity downtime activity (page 24).

Zero-G Hold

This cargo hold uses graviton dampers and opposing gravity generators to maintain zero gravity within the hold, whether in space or on a planet. A zero-g hold can be installed in the same expansion bay as a sealed environment chamber (*Core Rulebook* 299).

STARSHIP SYSTEMS

SYSTEM	PCU	COST (IN BP)
Agricultural suite	5	15
Arena	20	15
Atmospheric bubble	2	5
Display room	1	1
Garage	5	6
Garage, massive	10	10
Lido	2	10
Mech bay	15	15
Menagerie	1	5
Sky crane	10	5
Temple	0	1
Zero-g hold	2	2
SECURITY		
Smoke screen	2	2
Weapon hatch	4	1/3 × weapon cost
OTHER SYSTEMS		
C-1 baffle	1	5
Luxury ship framework	0	1/4 × base frame cost
Magic power core, arcane dawn	300	35
Magic power core, arcane zenith	400	45
Magic power core, arcane dusk	600	65
Magic sensors	0	Sensors cost
Magic thrusters	0	1/5 × base frame cost

Mass simulator, mk 1	10	20
Mass simulator, mk 2	20	40
Mass simulator, mk 3	30	60
Mass simulator, mk 4	40	80
Modular service robots	50	15
Teleportation interstellar drive	75	15 × size category*

*For the purposes of this calculation, Tiny = 1, Small = 2, Medium = 3, etc.

Security

The following new security options are available.

Smoke Screen

Mounted on the underside of a ship, this device, when activated, emits a thick cloud of smoke and mist that billows forth constantly for one minute. During this time, all creatures directly underneath the ship have total concealment; those within 20 feet of the ship have varying degrees of concealment determined by the GM.

Weapon Hatch

A weapon hatch conceals a single weapon mounted on the ship (until it's fired). A science officer's scan action reveals this weapon only on the 5th level of information discovery (instead of the 3rd).

Other Systems

C-I Baffle

The counter-inertial baffle system allows a starship to suddenly and dramatically change its facing with no other indication that it was going to do so. Once per starship combat, the starship's pilot can attempt the flip and burn stunt with a +2 bonus.

Luxury Ship Framework

Luxury ships are designed to enable especially comfortable travel to all manner of destinations—and often to extract as much money from guests as possible. These ships ply the galaxy's better-known space lanes with regularity and fanfare. Some are

space yachts for the rich and famous, while others are massive mobile resorts and casinos.

A luxury ship framework must be purchased at the same time as a Medium or larger starship base frame. Applying the luxury ship framework to a base frame costs an amount of BP equal to one-quarter the base frame's BP cost (minimum 1). A starship with the luxury ship framework has the following abilities.

Crew Requirements: Keeping guests happy and well-attended is critical to a luxury vessel's success. In addition to its minimum crew requirements, a luxury ship must have one crew member for every guest.

Staterooms: A luxury ship is designed to house guests and keep them comfortable. A luxury ship has extra expansion bays equal to its normal number of expansion bays. These additional expansion bays can be used only for luxurious guest quarters, recreation suites, or other expansion bays intended primarily for guests, as determined by the GM.

Vulnerable: Luxury ships can't add additional weapon mounts.

Magic Power Core

A life-giving tree of light with roots penetrating every corner of the vessel feeds magic energy directly into various subsystems. A crystalline cable network lines bulkheads and converts the unrealized dreams of the crews into a memetic turbine. A creature captured from the outer planes churns the energy dynamos of a null-space reactor. However it accomplishes the task, a magical power core converts magical energy into usable power for a starship. These hybrid devices don't have backup battery systems, but in emergencies, a spellcaster can feed spells into a magic power core to power life support, gravity, and comms (but no other systems). Each spell slot sacrificed to the power core provides 2 hours of emergency power per level of the spell slot. An arcane dawn magic power core can be used on Tiny, Small, and Medium ships. An arcane zenith core can be used on Medium, Large, and Huge ships. An arcane dusk core can be used on Huge, Gigantic, and Colossal ships.

Magic Sensors

Magic sensors, whether enchanted crystals or rune-encrusted lenses, can be purchased alongside normal sensors at an additional cost equal to the normal sensors' cost. Outside starship combat, a crew member can use magic sensors to *detect magic* (as the spell) to a range of 1 mile from the ship.

Magic Thrusters

Magic thrusters use arcane energy to move a starship and can provide improved handling. Magic thrusters are purchased and installed along with typical thrusters, at an additional cost equal to 1/5 of the starship frame's BP cost (minimum 1). Magic thrusters grant an additional +1 Piloting modifier and reduce the distance between turns by 1 (minimum 0).

Mass Simulator

A specialized mass driver enables smaller vessels to tug larger vessels or objects in busy docks or mining operations.



STARSHIP WEAPONS

LIGHT DIRECT-FIRE WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Hawser, hook	Short	–	1d4	5	14	Tractor beam
Arcane rail, mk 1	Short	–	1d4	10	5	Mystical ^{SOM} , unerring
LIGHT TRACKING WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Antimagic missile	Medium	10	2d6	5	8	Antimagic, mystical ^{SOM}
HEAVY DIRECT-FIRE WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Hawser, harpoon	Medium	–	4d6	30	20	Tractor beam
Arcane rail, mk 2	Short	–	1d6	10	20	Mystical ^{SOM} , unerring
HEAVY TRACKING WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Antimagic missile	Medium	10	4d6	10	15	Antimagic, mystical ^{SOM}
CAPITAL DIRECT-FIRE WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Hawser, grappler	Long	–	2d4 × 10	30	45	Tractor beam
Arcane rail, mk 3	Short	–	1d6 × 10	15	30	Mystical ^{SOM} , unerring

When using a weapon with the tractor beam special property, the mass simulator allows the firing vessel to affect ships a number of size categories larger than that's equal to its mk level. For example, a Small ship with a mk 4 mass simulator can target and move a Gargantuan vessel with a gravity gun.

Modular Service Robots

To help minimize crew cost and space requirements, enterprising starliners have developed robotic servants that can readily swap functions by way of interchanging modular parts. These robots operate under the guidance of the ship's computer and travel about the ship on specially designed lanes, out of the way of guests and crew. While they fulfill simple, daily tasks on a ship in a usually unremarkable way, they can exhibit eccentricities if their software isn't well maintained.

A ship with a modular service robot system halves the time it takes to make repairs.

When installed in a luxury ship (page 30), a modular service robot system also replaces the crew required to accommodate guests with simple, modularly constructed robotic servants. These robots care for the ship, its crew, passengers, and each other, and they can operate most expansion bays. These robots can't take combat actions, but they also don't require crew quarters, freeing up installed quarters for passengers and crew.

Teleportation Interstellar Drive

Mystical scholars, driven by distrust in Drift travel thanks in part to the Drift Crisis, have worked tirelessly to create alternative ways to traverse the stars at faster-than-light speeds. One result is the T.I.D., which takes multiple forms but carries great risk; use of these devices leaves a ship in a critical state upon arrival.

A teleportation interstellar drive is available only for starships with a magic power core (page 30). The ship must have previously visited the target star system while both the magic power core and magic interstellar drive were installed. The ship must remain stationary and build arcane energy for a number of days equal to the distance of the destination: 1d6 for destinations in the same star system and 5d6 days for travel elsewhere in the galaxy. Starship combat interrupts this buildup; it must be restarted from zero. At the end of this buildup, the ship is instantly teleported to the target system. On arrival, all systems have the glitching

condition, and the ship can power only life support, gravity, and comms until the systems are repaired.

Base Frame

Busy ports, mining facilities, and even wranglers of starship-scale creatures often need smaller, maneuverable ships to move larger ships, objects, or creatures around tight spaces. These tugs can mount large tractor beams and often employ mass simulators (page 30) to achieve these functions. However, some take advantage of these utilitarian frames to mount unexpectedly large weapons on comparably small ships.

TUG

Size Small

Maneuverability good (+1 Piloting, turn 1)

HP 35 (increment 10); **DT** –; **CT** 7

Mounts forward arc (1 light), turret (1 heavy)

Expansion Bays 1

Minimum Crew 1; **Maximum Crew** 2

Cost 10

STARSHIP WEAPONS

The starship weapons listed on the table on this page are available to mount on starships throughout the galaxy.

Special Properties

Some of these weapons have the following new special properties.

Antimagic

A weapon with this property bursts with a field of antimagical energy, causing disruptions to local magical fields. Dealing hull damage to a starship with an antimagic weapon imparts a –2 penalty to the next Mysticism check a creature on the damaged starship attempts as part of starship combat.

Unerring

This weapon fires a projectile that unerringly finds its target, so long as it's a viable target and not beyond the weapon's first range increment. A ship's gunner must still take an action to fire, but no gunnery roll is needed. An unerring weapon can't be fired more than once per round.

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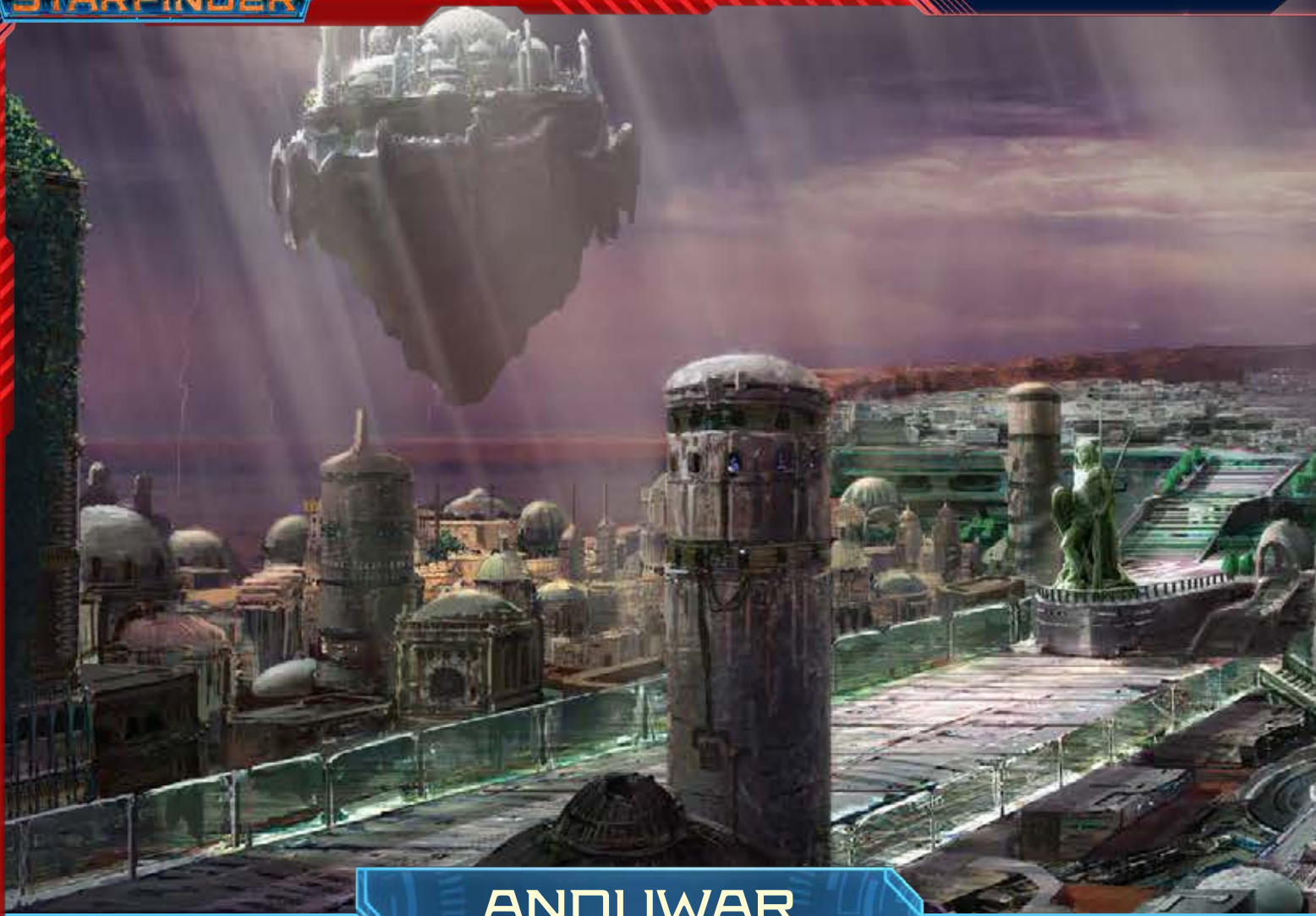


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ANDUWAR

Giants' metropolis split between surface and aerial districts.

ANDUWAR

N cosmopolitan city

Gravity standard

Atmosphere normal (with pockets of caustic, corrosive, and toxic)

Day 4 days; **Year** 6 years

Population 1,281,000 (85% giant, 5% human, 4% vesk, 3% dwarf, 3% other)

Government oligarchy (Cloud Imperium)

Languages Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran

Qualities bureaucratic, financial center, technologically average

ECONOMY

Exports armaments, starships, technology, war machines

Imports livestock, pharmaceuticals, produce

Maximum Item Level 16th

Specialty Item Level armor (20th), vehicles (18th), weapons (20th)

NPCS

Agraesis (LN female fire giant^{SF17} soldier) Chief Dictum of the Anduwar Authority

Dormond (LN genderfluid stone giant^{AA2} mystic) High ecclesiastic votary of Minderhal

Elthel (NG female cloud giant^{AA2}) Cloud Imperium archminister and bureaucrat

Gaharl (LN female stone giant^{AA2} soldier) Leader of PITT Division

Sereveg (NE male cloud giant^{AA2}) Cloud Imperium chancellor and bureaucrat

Taviss (CN agender cloud giant^{AA2}) Cloud Imperium high marshal and bureaucrat

Moscaru: Welcome to Anduwar, a city of giants split between earth and sky! Between local and offworlder! When traveling in Anduwar, always be careful. It's a—

Sprax: Giant playground!

Moscaru: ...A what?

Sprax: A giant playground!

Moscaru: It most certainly is not!

Sprax: Sure, it is! Everything's huge! I had to shimmy up a table leg eight feet high just to reach the seat of my chair this morning! And the table was even taller! I love climbing over everything! It's great fun.

Moscaru: I see. I recommend extensive use of a jetpack or magical flight to manage the city's grand scale.

Sprax: And I recommend sliding down the banners hanging from the Tourism Office.

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Moscaru: Please don't.

Sprax: And the food! The helpings are so big! I took a bath in my soup this morning.

Moscaru: Ahem. Well, folks. Don't do that. Giant chefs are easily offended, and soup is liable to scald. Repeat after me: soup is not a hot tub.

Anduwar is a city divided with three surface districts and a fourth, Emproa, hovering overhead. Members of the ruling Cloud Imperium's convoluted bureaucracy, its support staff, and foreign delegates live in Emproa's heights, while the city's other inhabitants reside below, weathering the region's plentiful seismic activity and periodic caustic fog.

In ages past, a coalition of storm and cloud giants comprised the Cloud Imperium, ruling over Pholskar's diverse communities together. This peace shattered shortly after the Gap as cloud and storm giants waged a 30-year civil war in a bid to seize exclusive power. The cloud giants eventually scattered, though fierce battles sent the old capital sky city of Talgradur plummeting to Pholskar's surface. The storm giants largely retreated to the sky city of Agrishall, and though the Cloud Imperium is controlled by cloud giants, the ancient wars left its power diminished.

Drift travel only complicated matters. Even as the Cloud Imperium lorded over Anduwar, the Drift brought a growing

stream of offworld visitors that presented new risks and opportunities alike. Anduwar received ever-increasing numbers of visitors to the planet. Intent on profiting from the traffic and maintaining control, the Cloud Imperium designated Anduwar the official offworld port, hoping that would prevent travelers from causing trouble elsewhere on the planet and introducing rebellious notions. Yet, Anduwar has grown faster than the Cloud Imperium can manage, leading to increasingly lax oversight.

Today, while the elitist Cloud Imperium looms over Anduwar from Emproa, the surface city is a cosmopolitan nexus for trade, innovation, and offworld interaction. In theory, the Cloud Imperium's border patrol (properly known as the Pholskar Interplanetary Trade and Tourism Division, or PITT) tightly restricts foreign access to the rest of Pholskar, but its limited control over the lower city means anyone determined to leave can—so long as they're willing to risk angering cloud giants.

GEOGRAPHY

Anduwar is located on Pholskar, a planet in Near Space that experiences frequent volcanic eruptions, pyroclastic flows, earthquakes, and landslides. These events often release caustic gas from deep within the planet's crust, causing the atmosphere to vary from mildly caustic to dangerously corrosive. These dense gases sink quickly, so the more tectonically stable and



ANDUWAR

higher altitude an area, the less it experiences this weather. It's no surprise, then, that most of Pholskar's settlements perch on mountainsides far from fault lines, rest atop mesas, or outright fly on magically levitated islands of stone and solidified cloud.

Anduwar sits atop Fandarra's Palm, a vaguely oval-shaped plateau that towers roughly 400 feet over the surrounding steppe, connected only by the broad, winding Rodhir Pass. The city covers nearly the whole plateau, which is divided into three districts: Tronir, Vokesis, and Sicanthro. These first two districts are older, scaled to monumental proportions that serve the Large- and often Huge-sized inhabitants. Sicanthro has more recent origins, catering instead to offworld travelers with Medium-sized proportions.

The Palm experiences significant earthquakes about six times a year as well as lesser tremors throughout the year. The most powerful occur during "earthquake season," a three-week period that known as the Quarrel occurs roughly three times a Pholskar year; during such periods, the planet's three moons' elliptical orbits simultaneously bring them closer to the planet. Ancient myths commemorate it as a time when the moons' namesakes—the giant deities Fandarra, Minderhal, and Thremyr—fight for dominance over all of giantkind.

By necessity, most construction incorporates heavily reinforced stone and concrete, often engineered to flex, rather than break, when jostled. By comparison, Emproa's architecture boasts a fusion of ancient and modern themes, with sleek glass skyscrapers, white stone pillars, glittering domes, extravagant

gardens, and plentiful statuary. Virtually nothing caters to shorter creatures, and the soaring edifices seem designed to awe even 20-foot-tall viewers.

RESIDENTS

Anduwar's residents are primarily giants. Cloud giants comprise a clear majority in Emproa, but in the Palm, fire giants, slag giants, stone giants, and hill giants are most common. Other giant species like sun giants, moon giants, and shadow giants are rare, and most of Pholskar's moon giants live on the planet's three moons.

Offworlders comprise a growing minority. Humans, vesk, dwarves, and nuars are fairly common, as are Large-sized species like dragonkin, sarcesians, trox, and uplifted bears. Throughout most of the city, these citizens are dwarfed by their surroundings—often comically so. Flight, both magical and technological, is commonplace here, where a chair's seat might be 10 feet off the ground and the table even higher. Likewise, inhabitants require great strength or assistance when handling a 2-foot-tall drinking glass and other massive utensils. Smaller residents regularly employ powered armor or pilot smaller mechs in the city just to have enough strength and height to open doors.

Conversely, larger giants can't enter Sicanthro without risking collateral damage as they maneuver through the much smaller spaces. Many hire offworld messengers or employ drones to conduct business in the district, and most law enforcement and government agents within Sicanthro are offworlders contracted by

the Cloud Imperium. The loyalty of these agents is inconsistent, and they periodically take bribes or let petty offenders escape.

Outside the city, fire and slag giants drive massive rigs loaded with minerals from the nearby Shattermaw Mountains or Hell's Howl, a ring of active volcanoes to the south. East of the city, stone giant communities live seminomadic, pastoral lifestyles across the plains of Rodhir, traveling to Anduwar periodically to sell the flesh, cheese, and wool from upondo (giant shaggy livestock) they herd. These giants also build and manage towering hives for foot-long keeshar bees, whose honey the city's brewers transform into countless mead varieties.

Wild burrowing reptiles known as augrisaurs often threaten anyone outside the city, and stone giants living in the lowlands sometimes hire mercenaries to help cull nearby packs.

The Palm's steep cliffs host vast flocks of birds, including both seasonal and permanent residents. Ridge shrikes—predatory avians with a 5-foot wingspan—receive special attention not only because of their plentiful eggs (which smaller giants harvest as a delicacy), but also for their role in local falconry. The annual Shrikefest pits trained ridge shrikes against flying battle drones.

Moscaru: Anduwar's atmosphere can play havoc on one's throat and vocal organs. Of course, one could utilize environmental protections for the duration of one's stay, but that dulls the tantalizing smells of street food. Instead, check the city's causticity readings daily and plan your outings accordingly. Regularly wash your nasal passages (or similar cavities) with water to neutralize residual acids. Warm tea and herbal tonics can preserve your voice and—

Sprax: And here's my advice! One: breathe deep! The air likes to tickle your nose and face, so you should let it! Two: be sure to visit Devil's Breath! The gas shooting out of this crevasse is the best in the city. It's purple! And it gives you lovely dreams.

Moscaru: Oh, dear! Please ignore my colleague. The gases at Devil's Breath are highly toxic and cause hallucinations. Please consult your doctor before visiting and always utilize environmental protections.

SOCIETY

The Cloud Imperium looms over every part of Anduwar, literally and figuratively. Steeped in tradition and self-importance, the convoluted bureaucracy has grown bloated with redundant positions and departments that motivate the officers to seek and express power elsewhere—often by punching down. Most cloud giants are members of the Cloud Imperium, making the governing body synonymous with the cloud giants as a people.

Yet, the Imperium isn't a monolith. Some members lobby for radical change, such as the aged and determined Archminister **Elthel** (NG female cloud giant^{AA2}), a progressive giant old enough to recall the Gap's aftermath and ensuing warfare between cloud and storm giants. Elthel has long lobbied for drastic restructuring and diverse representation of giants among the Cloud Imperium—an unpopular stance that has drawn the ire of many colleagues. Some of her political opponents, including her curmudgeonly contemporary Chancellor **Sereveg** (NE male cloud giant^{AA2}) and

charismatic egomaniac High Marshall **Taviss** (CN agender cloud giant^{AA2}), aim to disgrace Elthel, forcing her into early retirement. Taviss's claims that storm giant insurrectionists are gathering for a second war have the Cloud Imperium on edge.

While it claims rulership of the planet, the Cloud Imperium lacks the resources to administrate most of Pholskar, and even its control in Anduwar is piecemeal. There, only Emproa receives consistent vigilance. Cloud giants rarely set foot on Pholskar's surface and have long delegated the management and maintenance of the Palm to hired agents. However, even these forces are stretched thin thanks to the city's expansion to cover the entire Palm. While some accept their limitations, others turn to mercenary groups, military contractors, and corporations for assistance, particularly in Sicantro, where the need for smaller agents is high.

As the Palm creeps closer toward semi-independence, a few rebel groups have taken root. One group, inspired by **Forgotten** (CG nonbinary stone giant^{AA2} mystic), a seer claiming to know damning secrets buried by the Cloud Imperium centuries ago, spreads rhetoric through whispers and intimate underground meetings. While Forgotten's identity is secret, their closest ally is Captain **Dafore** (NG male slag giant^{SF17} vanguard), a high-ranking dictum in Anduwar's law enforcement agency, the Anduwar Authority, who works behind the scenes to ensure Forgotten and their meetings remain undiscovered. If Dafore's boss, Chief Dictum **Agraeis** (LN female fire giant^{SF17} soldier), were to discover this betrayal, Agraeis would remove Dafore's head for insubordination.

In Sicantro, **Ravina Irhart** (NE female dwarf operative) spouts heartfelt speeches in public places, stoking resentment of the Cloud Imperium's injustices. While Ravina seems to have the city's best interests at heart, she aims to overthrow the Cloud Imperium in a bloody coup and seize control of the city. Ravina is secretly bankrolled by **Kaxical Li** (NE male human), CEO of Minerex, a mining corporation angling to build a mine and refinery on Pholskar.

Anduwar is more than tyranny and insurrection. Its markets bustle with trade, and locals who order durable goods via the infosphere often receive their purchases at high velocity, hurled by expert couriers who can lob parcels just as easily as they throw boulders. Streets occasionally clear to make way for impromptu wrestling contests, either as innocent sport or as traditional nonlethal duels. League games for the team-based contact sport jawkuli energize the city, and fans perform ballads dedicated to their team's latest exploits. Few can forget the Mile Mead, a spontaneous pub crawl tradition where gathering crowds decide to drink enough mead to fill enough giant-sized mugs that, if stacked, would stretch a mile high.

RELATIONS

Rumors of war with Agrishall circulate periodically, so much so that most citizens don't take the threat too seriously. Delegates on both sides strive to maintain peace—storm giants knowing that they aren't yet strong enough to prevail, and cloud giants knowing they have more dangerous rivals thanks to Drift travel. The Cloud Imperium in Emproa conducts ongoing trade negotiations with the Veskarium, supplying the empire with impressive armaments and starship weapons. The Veskarium considers Pholskar a minor player in galactic politics, yet vesk visitors nonetheless marvel

at Anduwar's scale and nearby natural dangers. The planet has become a popular destination for vesk to test their mettle.

Numerous planets and organizations seek permission to build facilities beyond Anduwar's borders, aiming to capitalize on Pholskar's valuable minerals and other exploitable riches. Major parties include the Gideron Authority, drow houses from Apostae, various factions in Preluria, and the Aspis Consortium. The Imperium's representatives rarely approve these motions, locking proposals in a long bureaucratic process, so some plan more forceful or covert methods of expansion: convoluted schemes like destabilizing the government, causing food shortages, or utilizing local giants as puppet CEOs and investors.

RELIGION

In Anduwar, religion is ever-present yet routinely ignored. The three moons—Fandarra's Eye, Minderhal's Eye, and Thremyr's Eye—loom over the city, each named for a prominent giant divinity. The city rests upon Fandarra's Palm, and many consider her the city's protector. Yet, religion has long taken a backseat



to other matters, like industry and war. Today, the giant deities feature mostly in museum exhibits and popular culture or by invocation in colorful idioms.

Minderhal (He Who Makes; LN god of engineering and cities) hears the prayers of architects, engineers, mechanics, construction workers, programmers, and artisans, acting as a stern muse. The Day of Making, Minderhal's main holy event in Anduwar, features a 2-week festival after each Quarrel where citizens show off their latest creations, with the best in various categories winning a large cash prize and work contracts. The Day of Making is an auspicious occasion for opening buildings and starting new projects—often breaking ground where the Quarrel leveled a building a day earlier. While most government buildings are considered sacred spaces to Minderhal and contain a shrine or art installation in his honor, the Grand Architect's Hall serves as the official church: a combination temple, museum, patent office, and blueprint archive.

While Minderhal features most prominently in Anduwar, **Fandarra** (The Blood Mother; N goddess of earth and the cycles of life) receives the most heartfelt prayers. The city rests upon Fandarra's Palm, her Eye watches over it, and when the Quarrel rocks the landscape, its citizens descend into bunkers to stay safe—sheltering in her earthen embrace.

Fandarra's purview also includes the cycle of life, including fertility, birth, crop production, and death. Hopeful parents pray to Fandarra for fertility or guidance through the adoption process, new parents pray for Fandarra's patience and wisdom, and aging giants pray to Fandarra for a painless passing. When Fandarra's Eye is full in the sky, old superstition attests that Fandarra is birthing something new into the world, during which her followers pray the new life is beneficial. Many giants believe that upon death, their souls leave Fandarra's care and travel to the Boneyard where they're sorted by Pharasma.

While inhabitants know of **Thremyr** (First Jarl; CE god of ice, tribute, and violence), he rarely receives prayers. His moon bears a jagged chasm created sometime during the Gap, with common superstition insisting it mirrors a real wound Thremyr suffered in that forgotten time. Whatever befell Thremyr, Pholskar's residents commonly believe the deity is a husk of his former power—and thanks to his traditionalist views in an increasingly cosmopolitan city and his might-makes-right dogma, few consider him worthy of worship. He has no noteworthy worship sites in Anduwar, and even smaller shrines are a rarity. Even so, Thremyr has some faithful among raiders, criminals, and isolated giant communities surrounding Anduwar, believing their patron will recover and seek vengeance against whatever wounded him.

Bergelmir (Mother of Memories; CG goddess of history and genealogy) remains important to giant culture, as does **Zursvaater** (Prince of Steel; LE god of armaments and war), patron god of fire giants, arms dealers, and soldiers. Increasingly, Damoritosh's faith attracts Anduwar's fire giants, and many consider him Zursvaater's student or rival. Giants who leave Pholskar often worship Weydan or Triune.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

To the Cloud Imperium, peace seems like a fragile thing. Rumors indicate Agrishall prepares for war, crafting starships

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cloaked in storm clouds and mechs that drain power from surrounding technology to hurl lightning bolts. Moon giants' periodic voyages to Agrishall suggest they might ally with storm giants in a coming conflict. While some Imperium bureaucrats, including Archminister Elthel, strive to preserve peace, others insist Anduwar should launch a preemptive strike and neutralize the perceived threat. As High Marshall Taviss delivers impassioned speeches to sway the masses, he privately hires agents to sabotage Elthel, along with those who ally with her or stand against him. Taviss's agents ensured the last two storm giant emissaries leaving Anduwar never arrived in Agrishall and that the third never even made it to Emproa in the first place. While this last disappearance has swayed many to Taviss's cause, it has made Elthel suspect foul play. Unsure of whom she can trust, Elthel increasingly relies on offworld agents to gather information.

For most citizens, the greatest threat isn't external; it's the Cloud Imperium. They believe the Imperium's overbearing, outdated, and isolationist policies have prevented Pholskar from expanding onto the galactic stage, and that its obsession with Agrishall and past grievance keep it from focusing on the future. These views drive some to join burgeoning rebel groups or cults of Thremyr, while others flock to the Palm's major gangs: the Crunch Knuckles, Byside Cutters, and Palm's Chosen. Some offworld corporations with branches in Anduwar also seek change, hoping to exploit the ensuing chaos to expand their influence.

Outside city limits, raiders attack visitors and corporate convoys transporting goods to market in Anduwar. While the Anduwar Authority wants these criminals punished, the crimes happen well beyond their jurisdiction and means. They're actively seeking agents to stop these raids on their behalf. This prospect attracts visiting adventurers especially, for the job provides the travel permits necessary for offworlders to legally leave the city—an otherwise rare and expensive privilege. The Pholskar Interplanetary Travel and Trade Division's agents—termed PITTs or PITT agents by locals—vehemently oppose the Anduwar Authority's methods, and the group's leader, **Agent Gaharl** (LN female stone giant^{AA2} soldier), lobbies the Cloud Imperium to stop hiring bounty hunters. Like many stone giants, Gaharl has refused to set foot in a flying city since the fall of Talgradur, meaning much of her negotiation relies on intermediaries.

Sprax: Know what I love about Anduwar? Everyone's so friendly!

Moscaru: Friendly? That's... a generous way of phrasing it, Sprax.

Sprax: Well, of course! First there were those frowny-faced greeters—

Moscaru: When we arrived? You mean the TIPP agents who thought we were spies? They were—

Sprax: Then there's those guides following us around, too. Awful nice of them to make sure we don't get lost.

Moscaru: Not guides—that's the Anduwar Authority. They've followed us ever since you climbed Savior's Memorial and appointed yourself royalty.

Sprax: They're just jealous I made it to the top! Anyway, I like it here!

Moscaru: I admit, you have a way with making new friends. Challenging that fire giant to a wrestling contest was a bold move, yet she admired your spirit and invited us to that party later.

Sprax: It's going to be so fun! What kinds of drinks are they gonna serve?

Moscaru: Whatever glass it comes in will be bigger than you, my strange companion. Take it slow.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

These are a handful of Anduwar's exciting destinations.

Ambassador Row

This street in Emproa boasts luxurious hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues suited for ambassadors, CEOs, and visiting VIPs of all sizes. Securing a reservation requires considerable paperwork and credits, yet most consider the cost worthwhile. After all, the sheer density of power brokers and moguls here means that a resourceful visitor can make invaluable contacts and deals in a matter of days. This reputation for high-stakes deals makes Ambassador Row equally attractive to spies, and myriad organizations sponsor agents to "vacation" here to steal data, steal clients, or outright sabotage rivals. The Imperium seems unperturbed by these antics so long as they remain subtle and localized, and anyone departing Ambassador Row is supposed to have documentation and an Anduwar Authority escort.

Anduwar Authority

Anduwar's law enforcement agency operates from its headquarters in Emproa, staffed mostly by cloud giants. However, the agency employs a host of outside agents for patrolling other districts. Typical officers are called dictums, overseen by captains, whose districts are managed by chief dictums. While paid well and mostly loyal, dictums in the Palm are often lenient about petty crime, especially because the city is growing far faster than the Authority can police. To combat growing crime, stations occasionally post bounties so that freelancers handle neglected or dangerous cases.

Byside Hotel

This inexpensive and lively hotel on Byside Road boasts accommodations for visitors of varied sizes, two restaurants, a bar, slot machines, and live entertainment every weekend. During the Quarrel, Byside rents out bunkers and board. The hotel's owner, **Vigrian Krum** (CN nonbinary vesk), has long been on the Byside Cutters' payroll, and the gang uses spare bunkers for meetings and storing stolen goods. While Vigrian publicly decries the Byside Cutters and begs the Anduwar Authority to intervene "for the good of the neighborhood," the greedy vesk has begun robbing his customers and blaming it on the gang—a ruse that's sure to fail sooner rather than later.

The Chute

This system of magical portals connects Pholskar's flying cities to various surface locations. Each sky city has a prominent doorway that automatically links to the nearest surface portal, forming a magical pathway known as a Chute. As a result, a migrating city might link to and detach from various doorways as it flies, whereas Emproa's portal connects to one of the three doorways in Tronir, Vokesis, and on the outskirts of Fandarra's Palm as it meanders over Anduwar. Operating an active doorway is as simple as opening the door, stepping into the dark extradimensional room beyond, closing the door, and opening the door on the other side. Understandably, these portals receive close supervision by TIPP agents, who demand extensive documentation for their use.

Devil's Breath

On the outskirts of Sicantro, this cleft in the earth exudes a caustic, purple gas that triggers brief yet vivid hallucinations. The chain link fence surrounding the site does little to discourage determined visitors from taking a quick whiff. While most assume the gas is natural, scientists with the offworld corporation DemDon Laboratories recently identified it as a synthetic compound. Suspiciously, DemDon hasn't disclosed this discovery to the public, and its more ethical scientists secretly seek independent investigators to study the phenomenon further in case it poses a greater threat.

Grand Architect's Hall

Housed in a skyscraper with a steely facade, Minderhal's primary holy site functions as a church, a museum, a patent office, and an archive of the city's architectural blueprints. While the worship hall is built to host 1,000 giants at once, it's rarely more than a quarter filled during sermons; most visitors travel here on business. High Ecclesiastic **Dormond** (LN genderfluid stone giant^{AA2} mystic) strives to draw more devotees to worship, an objective that clashes with the opinions of Archivist **Indrogia** (N female sun giant^{SF17}), who manages the blueprint archives and considers regimented worship a waste of time, focusing instead on practical public works in their god's name. The two subtly compete with one another, planning increasingly elaborate events to further their own causes.

Immaculate Forum

This extravagant palace of white stone and glass spires serves as the Cloud Imperium's seat of power. Bureaucrats gather here to discuss commerce, budgets, political policy, and interplanetary relations, and canny lobbyists might get their attention with cunning words or heavy purses. The most important meetings convene in Primacy, an inner courtyard accessible only to the highest-ranking Imperium officials (and rarely, their guests). Pristinely maintained gardens surround the site and display statues of esteemed post-Gap cloud giants, most of whom are still alive thanks to giants' longevity. Being honored with a statue carries extraordinary prestige, and traditionally the recipient can name and receive a boon at the commemoration ceremony.

Lacuna

It's an open secret that this cantina and VR den is a favorite hangout of Crunch Knuckles, a gang of ruffians and bullies rumored to be led by Fade, an immortal shadow giant^{SF12}. Lacuna's owner, **Pina Threm** (NE female ysoki operative), is in a tight spot; while she'd rather not host volatile criminals in her bar, they pay their tabs on time, remain her best customers, and provide unreliable security. The Anduwar Authority regularly raids Lacuna to arrest wanted Crunch Knuckles, but they never catch Fade. It seems the group always knows the Authority's plans, and the chief dictums wonder if offworld bounty hunters might launch an unpredictable ambush.

In truth, Pina fabricated Fade as an enigmatic persona for running the Crunch Knuckles and deflecting suspicion. To her, the gang merely represents a lucrative side gig. She focuses more on running an assassins guild, many of whom work part

DOWNTIME IN ANDUWAR

The following special downtime options apply in Anduwar.

Carouse: Giants have impressive constitutions, and local cuisine reflects their innate resilience—they prefer their foods extra spicy, their coffee extra strong, and their alcohol extra proof. When you use the carouse downtime activity in Anduwar, you need to spend a number of credits equal to only 50 × your character level.

Work Out: Much of Anduwar is built to giant scale, and for Large and smaller creatures, simply spending a day in the city is a challenging workout. When you take the work out activity while in Anduwar's Emproa, Tronir, or Vokesis districts and you're Large or smaller, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the multiday Fortitude saving throw (+4 when combined with an exercise-focused recreation suite).

time at the Lacuna as a cover. One of the Crunch Knuckles' captains, **Zevyre** (LE male fire giant^{SF17} solarian), now suspects something isn't right. Unsure whom he can trust, he's looking to hire (or dupe) some do-gooders into investigating Fade.

Pholskar Interplanetary Trade and Tourism Division

PITT Division headquarters operates out of a squat concrete building in Vokesis that overlooks Rodhir Pass. PITT agents ensure the rest of Pholskar remains "free of offworld influence" by preventing any offworlders without special documentation from traveling outside the city. Even so, countless visitors sneak out every year—many using forged documents supplied by the Palm's Chosen gang. Agent Gaharl, leader of PITT Division, has searched for the criminals' headquarters for a decade without success. She's getting desperate, and her increasingly risky schemes might soon endanger innocent residents.

Pholskar Spacedocks

This large spaceport serves as the only officially sanctioned landing area for offworld starships, though outlaws and rebels periodically sneak past Imperium patrols to alight elsewhere on Pholskar. Docking fees and planetary taxes stay low, facilitating the much-needed food shipments to sustain Anduwar's citizens. Merchants commonly import pharmaceuticals, too, for giants' cultural fondness for crafting rarely extends to biotech and other microscopic sciences.

Savior's Memorial

This memorial depicts Primacy **Yvaine** (NG female cloud giant^{AA2}) at three times her true size, commemorating the military commander who led the Cloud Imperium to victory during the civil war. Of late, vandals spray the statue with outlandish conspiracy theories about Yvaine—that she orchestrated the war for profit, that a parasite controls her (and much of the Imperium), that she's a pawn of Great Old Ones, and more. The Anduwar Authority aggressively seeks out the vandals and interrogates witnesses, with the crackdown making some residents wonder if some of the graffiti is true. Extensive surveillance and investigation have

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yet to identify the vandals, but the statue's caretaker **Boline** (CG agender slag giant) swears the real artist is a ghost.

Sicantro Tourism Office

While its sign claims to "share the wonders of Pholskar" with visitors, the Sicantro Tourism Office primarily provides visitors with the applications needed to visit Emproa, leave Anduwar, or visit one of the planet's ruins or cultural heritage sites. The Cloud Imperium rarely approves any of these onerously long requests. Most residents consider these official channels a waste of time, yet the office's personnel possess a wealth of local knowledge about interacting with giants, maneuvering in the scaled-up districts of Tronir and Vokesis, local holidays and traditions, and tourist-friendly destinations in Sicantro. Spies for the Palm's Chosen monitor the office, identifying desperate visitors who might pay the gang's high fees for forged travel documents or smuggled passage out of the city.

Thremyr's Stone

Outside Anduwar, at the edge of Fandarra's Palm, stands an ancient, blackened stone nearly cloven in two from top to bottom. Thremyr's embittered cultists gather here periodically, fueling rumors of abduction and sacrifice whenever someone disappears mysteriously. The best-known case involves **Maldrena** (N pangender hill giant envoy), one of the most popular singers in Anduwar, who insists such cultists abducted their mother at Thremyr's Stone a few years ago, but the Anduwar Authority has never found evidence to support their claims. Maldrena offers a longstanding reward for any information on the whereabouts of their mother but has yet to receive a worthwhile lead.

Vertiginous Garth

This trio of skyscrapers is filled, floor after floor, with massive vertical gardens. Technological automation maintains most of the facility, save for the ecologists who oversee the tower's artificial ecosystems and the programmers and roboticists who tend the gardening drones. **Urgona** (LG male hill giant technomancer) owns and operates the towers as CEO of UrgoCo, a technology company focusing on hybrid robotics and automation. Despite the Vertiginous Garth's productivity, its produce accounts for a fraction of the city's food needs. Urgona recently acquired land on Tronir's border to build additional garths, but a series of accidents have injured every surveyor Urgona has sent to the site. Suspecting foul play, the CEO is looking for resourceful agents to investigate.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks provide sundry ways to kick off adventures in and around Anduwar.

Call to Arms: A mysterious broadcast suddenly blares from every speaker in the Palm, afflicting the district's giants with violent rage. As the broadcasts' frequency increases, chaos spreads. Curiously, other inhabitants aren't affected, leaving it to offworlders to track down the source of the broadcast and end these rage-casts.

Exploding Tensions: An explosion in Emproa's Immaculate Forum kills dozens of high-ranking bureaucrats. The Cloud

Imperium assumes that Agrishall launched the attack and prepares to retaliate, yet investigators lack the evidence to confirm the attacker's identity and motives. Who's really to blame, what do they have to gain, and what can the PCs do to track down the responsible party and avert a war?

Foodborne Fear: Hackers usurp gardener drones in the Verdiginous Garth to sow the crops with necrotic poison, ruining tons of food and sickening inhabitants. Urgona is determined to find the culprit behind this attack, but is it an enemy from his past or the city's food importers trying to erase local competition?

Giant Hoard: A notorious slag giant thief exploited the post-Gap confusion to execute countless heists, eventually disappearing into the wilderness and leaving behind tales of her fabulous wealth and legendary axe. Credible witnesses claim to have spotted her tomb in the Shattermaw Mountains. The most dangerous part of this treasure hunt isn't the wild beasts or tomb's defenses, but rather the other cutthroat explorers chasing after the same prize!

Party Foul: An eccentric Cloud Imperium bureaucrat hires offworlders to be their personal guard during an upcoming gala. There, the bureaucrat causes a scandal and is assassinated, and their innocent bodyguards receive the blame. Finding the true culprit is a high-stakes race against time in a district where the PCs are far from welcome.

Quarrel's Cause: Based on new evidence, a team of seismologists hypothesize the Quarrel isn't a natural phenomenon but instead caused by some unknown source deep belowground. Anduwar needs offworld spelunkers small enough to descend under Fandarra's Palm and learn more. However, the more the PCs uncover, the more the plateau shakes, as if dreading someone might uncover its secret.

Road Raiders: Raiders have captured the main road outside Anduwar, defeating and embarrassing the Cloud Imperium's initial counterattacks. Unwilling to admit weakness, the Imperium hires adventurers to infiltrate and sabotage the raiders' operation so that the next Imperium assault will be a fabulous victory.

Sewer Beasts: A pack of augrissaur burrows under Anduwar's walls, emerging in the sewers and basements. Worried the beasts will destabilize the entire plateau, Imperium authorities offer a reward for every augrissaur head brought in.

Shrieking Shrikes: Outraged at the cruel blood sport planned for this year's Shrikefest, a stone giant Xenowarden devises signals inaudible to giants that will turn the ridge shrikes on their handlers. The signal works better than expected; with an army of aggressive birds now at their beck and call, this ecological vigilante is ready to unleash nature's fury on the city.

The Vanishing: Cloud Imperium agents are vanishing, only to have their frozen, half-cloven heads appear in prominent places several nights later. Believing the Imperium responsible for Thremyr's wound and weakened state, his cult hopes to provoke terror and chaos before assassinating the city's leaders. The Imperium responds by punishing a wide range of dissenting subcultures, not just Thremyr's faithful, escalating the conflict as various factions clamor for revolution. Can the PCs uncover the Thremyr instigators? Will they diffuse tensions, or lead the revolution to victory? Can they even escape the city alive?

FEATS

Pholskar's inhabitants are massive and mighty, and they've developed the following feats to leverage that strength.

Bullying Brute (Combat)

You're a terrifying sight when you toss your opponents around.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Intimidate 5 ranks.

Benefit: Once per round when your attack roll to perform a bull rush, reposition, or trip combat maneuver exceeds the necessary result to succeed by 5 or more, you can also attempt an Intimidate check to demoralize the target. If you succeed at the combat maneuver but don't exceed the needed result by 5 or more, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to demoralize your target as if you'd exceeded the KAC by 5 or more.

Certain Strength (Combat)

You rely on your strength to get through under pressure.

Prerequisites: Str 13, character level 3rd.

Benefit: Once per day after you roll an Athletics or Strength check, you can choose to reroll the check and use the second result. One additional time per day, you can reroll one Athletics check made to perform a chief mate crew action (*Character Operations Manual* 146). For each check, you must choose to apply this reroll after seeing the die result but before learning the result of the check.

Counter Grapple (Combat)

You're a skilled wrestler who can quickly turn the tables.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (grapple).

Benefit: As a reaction after a creature successfully uses the grapple combat maneuver against you (but doesn't pin you), you can attempt a grapple combat maneuver against them with a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

Distance Hurler (Combat)

You can hurl weapons great distances.

Prerequisites: Str 15.

Benefit: You increase the range increment of weapons with the thrown special property by 10 feet. If your Strength is 19 or higher, you instead increase the range increment by 20 feet. If your Strength is 23 or higher, you instead increase the range increment by 30 feet.

Impressive Flex (Combat)

You terrify your foes with impressive posturing.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Intimidate 5 ranks.

Benefit: As a full action, you show off your physical prowess in a dazzling or terrifying display. Attempt an Intimidate check to demoralize all foes within 30 feet of you, applying the check's result separately to each creature and its DC to demoralize. If your display is dazzling, each creature you successfully demoralize is fascinated by your strength for 1d4 rounds rather than shaken. If your display is terrifying, each creature you successfully demoralize is shaken for 1 round (even if your check result would normally increase the duration of the shaken effect). Once you've successfully affected a creature with either display, they're immune to this feat for 1 hour. This is a sense-dependent ability.

Knock Heads (Combat)

You push foes into each other with disorienting, painful force.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (bull rush).

Benefit: When you succeed at a bull rush combat maneuver and push the target into another creature's space, the target stops in the previous square as normal. However, both the target and the other creature take damage equal to half your character level plus your Strength modifier and gain the off-target condition until the beginning of your next turn. The second creature can reduce the damage by half and negate the off-target condition with a successful Reflex save (DC = 10 + 1/2 your level + your Strength modifier).

Muscular Retort (Combat)

You use your raw strength and instinct to defend yourself in the heat of battle.

Prerequisites: Str 15.

Benefit: Select bull rush, grapple, or trip. You gain a +2 bonus to KAC against combat maneuvers of that type. If a creature attempts that maneuver against you and fails, they provoke an attack of opportunity from you.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times. Each time you select this feat, select a different combat maneuver.

Plow Through (Combat)

You use your size to push your way past your foes.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Athletics 3 ranks.

Benefit: You can attempt to move directly through another creature's space as if using Acrobatics to tumble; however, you use the Athletics skill in place of Acrobatics, the DC equals 15 + 1-1/2 the creature's CR, and succeeding avoids provoking attacks of opportunity from the creature you move past (not from others). If you instead use a standard action to use this feat, you move at your full speed, and if you succeed at the Athletics check, you treat the creature's space as difficult terrain and deal damage to the creature equal to your base attack bonus plus your Strength modifier.

Shoulder Burden (Combat)

Even the heaviest loads barely slow you.

Prerequisites: Str 15, character level 5th.

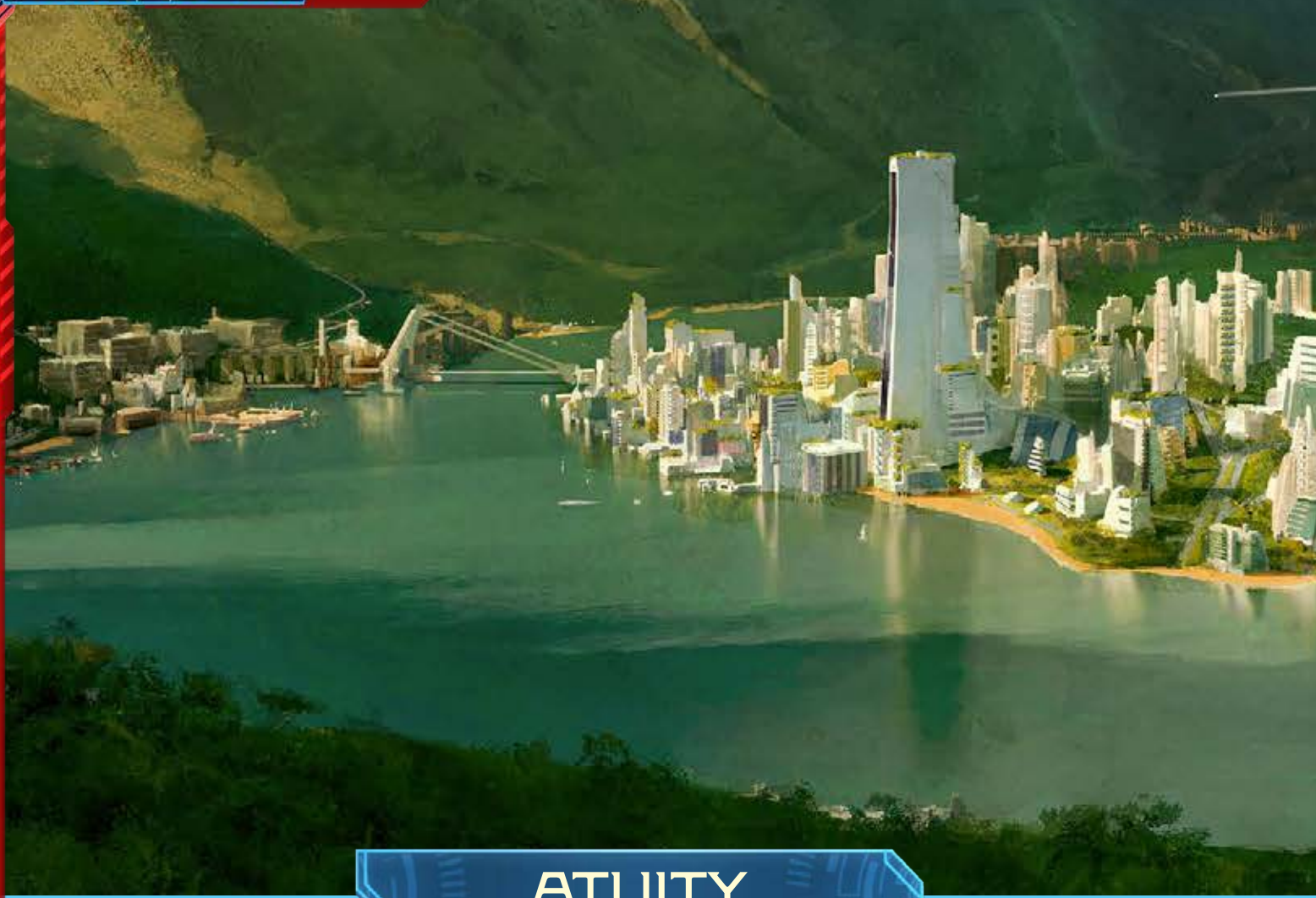
Benefit: At the beginning of your turn, you can choose to ignore the encumbered condition and treat the overburdened condition as though you were instead encumbered for a number of rounds equal to your Strength modifier. Once you use this ability, you can't do so again until you rest for 10 minutes to regain Stamina Points. In addition, the encumbered condition reduces your speeds by 5 feet (rather than by 10 feet), and the overburdened condition reduces your speeds to 10 feet (rather than to 5 feet).

Spectacular Smash (Combat)

You shatter objects with ease.

Prerequisites: Str 15.

Benefit: When you damage an object, you ignore an amount of its hardness equal to half your level (minimum 2). You gain an insight bonus to Strength checks to break an object equal to half your level (minimum 1).



ATUITY

Colonial outpost turned bellwether on a primal jungle planet.

ATUITY

LN city

Gravity Normal

Atmosphere Normal

Day 28 hours; **Year** 243 days

Population 16,056 (52% Azlanti, 10% vesk, 38% other)

Government colonial legislature, oligarchy (see below)

Languages Azlanti, Common, Vesk

Qualities technologically average

ECONOMY

Exports chemical extracts, medicinal compounds, produce

Imports luxury goods, technology

Maximum Item Level 13th

NPCS

Vasoya (LN female vesk soldier), Captain of the *Red Clarion* and leader of the Veskarium forces on Kehtaria

Eiran (LN male Azlanti soldier), Leader of the Azlanti military presence on Kehtaria

Ekentas (NG male neskinti^{SFAP8} mystic), Member of the Atuity Triad

Sarca (N female gosclaw^{SFAP8} mechanic), Member of the Atuity Triad

Xiomon (LN nonbinary Azlanti envoy), Member of the Atuity Triad

Vodo Zant (LN male ijtkiri^{AA3} soldier), Lieutenant commander and acting captain of the *Red Clarion*

Ysabal Sebelius (NG female osharu^{AA2} mystic), Rector of the Verdant Spiral

Sprax: Ah, Atuity! It's like four destinations in one. You've got your fancy Azlanti capital in the center, your cosmopolitan melting pot wrapped around that, your crime-ridden hellscape out there in the Tangles, and then a never-ending jungle full of things that either want to eat you, set you on fire, or paralyze you and jam seeds down your throat. That last one's not as bad as it sounds, actually.

Moscaru: Beautiful place to visit, though. And I must say, I've traveled all over Near Space and the Star Empire, and you won't find friendlier occupying forces anywhere.

Sprax: Right?! I've had my life saved by both an Aeon Guard and a Veskarium sergeant since I've been here. Back home, I bet you they'd have just let me walk right in front of that hoverbus.

Moscaru: It's true; with the vesk and the Azlanti both trying to win the locals to their side, they have

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a vested interest in being seen helping people wherever they can. But I'm sure you'd have been fine. You always are. Somehow.

Kehtaria, the only planet in the Adalawe system, has the distinction of being one of the earliest worlds the Azlanti Star Empire attempted to annex in the years immediately following the Gap. Claiming the planet for the empire was a simple enough task, but conquering it proved to be another matter entirely. The settlement of Atuity was established by the Star Empire's fourth colonization effort; the entire first expedition vanished without a trace, while the two that followed yielded only a handful of survivors between them. Ultimately concluding that the effort required to properly tame the planet far outweighed its strategic value to the empire, the Star Emperor designated its vast wilderness an imperial preserve, where further development was forbidden without explicit permission from the Aeon Throne, and left the inhabitants of Atuity to their own devices.

Over the next two centuries, Atuity slowly expanded from a beleaguered backwater to a bustling boomtown populated both by Azlanti and by non-human settlers who found life on the Star Empire's fringe to their liking, far removed from the oppressive dictates of the Aeon Throne. By 300 AG, Azlanti humans made up slightly more than half of the city's population, including a

small, Empire-sanctioned military presence keeping the peace and a handful of petty nobles hoping to impress the twin Star Emperors Iorian and Yridela Ixomander by helping to bring the untamed planet to heel. The remainder encompassed a wide range of different species, most of them hailing from one of the other planets claimed by the Star Empire. To the settlers who called it home, Atuity promises a simple life in an agrarian community that nonetheless boasted most of the comforts of a major city and the stability afforded by the Star Empire's presence, without the draconian administration that typically comes with it.

The Drift Crash changed everything. No fewer than seven new Drift beacons materialized in the Adalawe system in the space of a few hours, swiftly followed by a host of starships hurled off course by the Crash and drawn to the new beacons. The largest and most significant of these vessels was the *Red Clarion*, a Vindicas Tyrant under the command of Captain **Vasoya** (LN female vesk soldier). Unable to make contact with or return home to the Veskarium, the crew of the *Red Clarion* sent a landing party to the surface of the planet, seeking to establish their own base of operations in Atuity. Wary of the vesk intruders but not wanting to goad them into acting out of desperation, ranking Azlanti military officer Commander **Eiran** (LN male Azlanti soldier) quickly negotiated a peace, permitting the vesk to take up residence in the city in exchange for assistance in maintaining order as the population



ATUITY

ballooned from the arrival of more and more refugees from the Crash. With neither side engaging in open hostilities for fear of provoking the other's empire, this uneasy peace persisted for some time, only to be nearly shattered when the Sovereign Vindicator *Ascendant Paragon* abruptly arrived to reassert the Star Empire's sovereignty over the planet, sparking civil unrest across the city. Only decisive action by a team of skilled Atuity Triad negotiators prevented the standoff from exploding into direct conflict.

At the conclusion of the Drift Crisis, explorers discovered that Kehtaria is connected to two Drift lanes leading to Vesk-4 in the Veskarium and the planet Oyojii in the Azlanti Star Empire's Oyoya system. Together, the two routes are known as the Conqueror's Path. As these lanes enable both militaries to quickly bring in reinforcements, the city continues to enjoy a tenuous peace in the shadow of the two massive dreadnoughts, with both vesk and Azlanti acutely aware of the planet's newfound strategic importance in a post-Crash galaxy and pragmatic enough to recognize that it's only a matter of time before one of the two empires makes a play for control. Meanwhile, the stalemate has given rise to a small but rapidly growing movement for true Kehtarian independence.

GEOGRAPHY

The vast majority of Kehtaria's surface is buried beneath layers upon layers of thick vegetation, roiling forests of massive treelike fungi, and continent-sized carpets of moss and lichen. Kehtaria's native flora have extremely rapid life cycles, with even the largest

plants growing to maturity within a few years, dying, and rapidly decaying into nutrient-rich mulch to nourish the next generation. Wildfires occur regularly, routinely transforming vast swaths of vegetation into ash. Even the borders of seas and continents shift on a near-constant basis as new growth indiscriminately displaces water and earth alike. For this reason, attempts to thoroughly map the planet's surface have proven largely futile, and most inhabitants consider it to have only two distinct geographical areas: the city of Atuity and everywhere else.

Atuity was established at the summit of a low plateau near the southern coast of one of Kehtaria's two major continents, where a solid foundation could keep it relatively stable even as the forest constantly expanded and receded around it. The heart of the city, known by locals as the Spire District, has remained relatively unchanged over time, with a majority of its buildings constructed from durable steel and concrete according to the Star Empire's architectural traditions. Administrative buildings occupy much of the area and surround the Azlant Spire, the seat of local governance; a residential district bordering the Spire District features the luxurious villas and townhouses of Azlanti nobility and other well-heeled residents. The surrounding areas, where most non-humans and Azlanti illustri make their homes, are somewhat humbler but still generally well-kept, containing the city's commercial district as well as the former factory complex that has become the de facto Veskarium embassy and planetside base of operations for the erstwhile crew of the *Red Clarion*.

Since the Drift Crash, Atuity has experienced explosive population growth as explorers and refugees have flocked to the city in droves. As a result, the city's outskirts, colloquially referred to as the Tangles, have rapidly expanded into a ramshackle sprawl of residences, workshops, hangars, and airstrips hastily constructed from local organic materials or repurposed starship chassis. Outside the stabilizing influence of the city's peacekeepers, the Tangles have become rife with criminal activity, with roving gangs of thieves stripping unattended craft for parts and opportunistic swindlers charging docking fees and taxes for the use of lots to which they have no legal claim. All the while, the region's borders remain in a state of constant flux as encroaching plant life rapidly swallows abandoned and insufficiently maintained buildings, only to be cleared anew to make room for construction.

RESIDENTS

Atuity remains a predominantly Azlanti settlement, with much of its political and economic power consolidated in the hands of its original founders' descendants. Nonetheless, many of the Azlanti dwelling in the city arrived more recently as members of a visiting dignitary's retinue, deployed there as part of their military service or simply drawn there by the promise of a simpler existence on the imperial frontier. It's an unspoken but universally recognized truth that Atuity also holds a certain appeal to criminals and others who wish to disappear, including former citizens of the Star Empire who have a vested interest in making new lives for themselves far from the watchful eyes of the Aeon Guard.

The planet's unique ecology has made it a particularly popular destination for sapient offworld plant species who find the climate and environment to their liking. The largest of these contingents is a thriving hortus (*Alien Archive 3 50*) population, descended from a small group that arrived alongside the founding Azlanti colonists and who now form one of the largest communities of the fungoid species beyond their home planet of Croban V. Most of them have happily settled into a social niche as horticulturists and phytologists employed by the Azlanti to research and harness the untapped potential of Kehtaria's lush ecosystem, working alongside growing populations of ghorans (*Alien Archive 2 57*), khizars (*Pact Worlds 212*), and raxilites (*Alien Archive 3 83*). In addition, an order of osharu (*Alien Archive 2 92*) botanist-monks calling themselves the Verdant Spiral have recently arrived on the planet to devote their lives to the monumental task of documenting and cataloging each and every one of the planet's vast array of unique plant species.

Most of Atuity's other non-human residents are members of species native to worlds conquered by the Azlanti, having either arrived with initial settlers or come to Kehtaria seeking civil rights not afforded to their kind elsewhere in the Empire. The most populous of these residents are gosclaws (*Adventure Path #8: Escape from the Prison Moon 49*), izthephtars (*Adventure Path #8 57*), neskindis (*Adventure Path #8 50*), and slivaras (*Adventure Path #8 47*), but representatives of nearly every species considered citizens of the Star Empire are represented to some degree.

Finally, although they make up only a tiny minority of the city's overall population and are among its newest arrivals, vesk wield a degree of influence that far exceeds their numbers. Although rarely encountered in the Spire District, patrols of heavily armed vesk are a common sight throughout the rest of the city, where

they ostensibly work alongside Commander Eiran's Azlanti peacekeeping forces to maintain order and keep the Tangles clear of environmental hazards and dangerous predators. The majority of Atuity's vesk presence is concentrated in and around the Hall of Promise, Captain Vasoya's base of operations, with only a skeleton crew remaining aboard the *Red Clarion* as it hangs ominously over the city opposite the equally massive *Ascendant Paragon*.

Although there has been no documented contact with any Kehtarian indigenous cultures, there's reason to believe that the Azlanti weren't the first to inhabit the planet. Unknown symbols and pictographs have been found carved into the walls of underground caves and the sides of the few rocky outcroppings tall enough to breach the jungle's surface, and some of the more intelligent native creatures have been observed to make and respond to vocalizations that linguists surmise to be fragments of an ancient spoken language.

Sprax: You know what I like best about this place? All the plant people. Remember that mushroom guy in Eastrow, the one who sold us those noodles? I loved his scarf.

Moscaru: Yes, one of my favorite things about Atuity is all the diversity and culture. This empire rules citizens of so many different species, but it's uncommon to see them all living in one place like this. And it's so refreshing to see Azlanti citizens mostly treating other non-humans like... well, like people.

Sprax: Yep! And even vesk and Azlanti military are friends here!

Moscaru: Well, they do each still have a massive warship hovering over the city carrying more than enough firepower to wipe Atuity off the map. But they haven't actually done that yet, so I guess we'll call it progress.

Sprax: Do you want to know one of my favorite Vesk words? It's *batvaratzku*. It means 'a friendship forged from mutual fear'. If there's one thing I know about vesk, it's this: just because they're pointing a weapon at you doesn't mean you're not their friend.

Moscaru: Do they know that?

SOCIETY

Prior to the Drift Crash and the subsequent arrival of the *Red Clarion*, the relatively small number of troops under Commander Eiran were more than capable of maintaining order. Despite being a loyal citizen of the Azlanti Star Empire, Eiran's leadership style was never particularly authoritarian, and Atuity's resulting reputation as a place where non-human citizens of the Empire could enjoy atypically generous freedoms had long provided the city with a steady flow of new settlers from a slew of different worlds. Eiran's comparatively laissez-faire approach to governance proved an asset when the vesk soldiers arrived, as a more traditional Azlanti response would almost certainly have resulted in open warfare.

Despite Eiran's official status as imperial steward of the planet, most of the real power in Atuity is held by the Atuity Triad, a council comprised of the city's three preeminent landowners. Over the course of the last decade, this informal oligarchy has gradually

taken on nearly all responsibility for coordinating construction and industry, resolving disputes between citizens, and general administration of the city's daily affairs. Backed by considerable wealth and resources, the Triad enjoys near-universal community trust and support thanks to a long record of popular and successful civic projects. Currently, however, the Triad's members disagree on the best path forward for Kehtaria. Industrialist **Sarca** (LN female gosclaw^{SFAPB} mechanic) is sympathetic to the Veskarium, spiritual leader **Ekentas** (NG male nesikinti^{SFAPB} mystic) supports true independence, and **Xiomon** (LN nonbinary Azlanti envoy) fears that any deviation from absolute loyalty to the Star Empire will cost the city all that they've accomplished. However, all three remain dedicated to ensuring peace and stability for the people of Atuity while also taking full advantage of the opportunities presented by the planet's sudden strategic importance.

Traditionally, the varied peoples of Atuity have been mostly welcoming toward visitors and new settlers. Azlanti citizens tend to be far more tolerant of non-humans than most familiar with the Star Empire might expect, although a certain amount

of insularity and prejudice does persist, particularly among members of the nobility and troops recently deployed from offworld. The dozens of non-human species who call the city home, particularly those hailing from other worlds in the empire, greatly appreciate the freedoms they enjoy on Kehtaria and are often excited over the prospect of sharing them with newcomers. The vesk soldiers, aware of the tension created by their presence on the planet, tend to make every effort to be accommodating and affable wherever possible, fully aware that the Veskarium's designs on the planet depend on their ability to maintain popular support among the people. Even the Tangles, despite their reputation for lawlessness, overflow with friendly locals, although visitors are nonetheless advised to stay alert.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

With multiple platoons of soldiers regularly patrolling their borders and two immense, heavily armed dreadnoughts perpetually looming over their home like malignant moons, the inhabitants of Atuity are in a curious position. They know that they have little to fear from most external threats but, simultaneously, remain cognizant of the utter devastation that could break out at a moment's notice should the Azlanti and Veskarium factions ever decide to resume their hostilities. Most of the city's residents have long since accepted the existential threat as just a part of life in Atuity, grimly reasoning that if the threat of mutually assured destruction isn't enough to keep them safe, they might as well stop worrying and go on with their lives.

Outside of the constant threat of annihilation by orbital bombardment, most of the greatest dangers to the inhabitants of Atuity are internal ones. Despite the best efforts of Vasoya and Eiran's combined forces, crime is on the rise in Atuity. The city's peacekeeping forces are stretched too thin to keep up with the city's meteorically rising population. The Tangles in particular have grown increasingly hazardous; roving street gangs claim large swaths of territory while various criminal syndicates jockey for control over the lucrative potential presented by smuggling and other illicit businesses. At present, the various factions are too busy fighting one another to expand beyond the Tangles, but should one organization ever consolidate control over the criminal underworld, it might present a legitimate threat to the security of the entire city. Even in Atuity's more orderly districts, occasional violent clashes between unsanctioned groups supporting one (or neither) of the factions' claims to Kehtaria have grown increasingly commonplace.

Beyond the city limits, the vast jungles enveloping the planet are filled with all manner of deadly flora, fauna, and fungi. Ferocious carnivores of all shapes and sizes prowl the perimeter of the Tangles, an ever-present threat to those who make their living by venturing outside the city. Many of Kehtaria's native plants are no less voracious than its animals, and even those that don't actively hunt prey present a plethora of other dangers in the form of dagger-sized thorns, deadly secretions, and predator-attracting pheromones. Even the very nature of Kehtaria's environment can be hazardous to the unprepared, as the boundless layers of moss and lichen that blanket



VASOYA

the planet's surface are pocked with countless concealed sinkholes and subterranean tunnels just waiting to give way beneath the feet of an unsuspecting explorer. Massive forest fires, most of them ignited by combustive fungi inadvertently spread by the apex predators known as immolsivixes (*Drift Crisis* 155), routinely sweep across the planet as part of its regular growth cycle.

THE OLD GROWTH

Kehtaria is a large planet, and despite the best efforts of the Verdant Spiral and many other botanical expeditions before it, only a tiny fraction of the world's life-forms have been discovered, let alone thoroughly documented. It's perhaps unsurprising that the existence of one of the planet's most prevalent and insidious local species remains entirely unknown.

A symbiont capable of bonding via microscopic spores to nearly any form of plant life, the entity now calling itself the Old Growth is essentially a single massively distributed fungal creature that currently infests a significant portion of the vegetation covering Kehtaria's surface. Plants infested in this manner are not only mentally controlled by the fungus but become a part of an enormous telepathic mesh, with those that possess consciousness or sensory input sharing their senses and memories with every other organism in the mesh for as long as they remain connected. Over time, the Old Growth has discovered that it's also able to exert a limited form of control over non-plant-based organic creatures by using a local species of fruit as a vector. Any plant or animal creature that entirely consumes one of these fruits from an Old Growth-infested plant is subject to the same effects as a plant infested by its spores.

Despite its near-omnipresence across Kehtaria, the Old Growth has only recently begun to attain true self-awareness. Without the thoughts of sapient creatures in its collective consciousness, the organism's motivations had remained limited for eons, never developing beyond the primal urge to sustain and propagate its own existence. With each intelligent mind added to the mesh, however, its cognition and capacity for abstract thought have increased dramatically. In recent years, it has begun employing settlers unfortunate enough to fall under its control to conduct preliminary reconnaissance into Atuity, hoping to determine whether or not the settlement poses a threat to its existence.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Atuity features several prominent locales.

Ascendant Paragon

The Nys system, second only to the Adalawe system in terms of its remoteness from the rest of the Star Empire, is the domain of Arcidux **Xibia Ulklasstin** (LN female Azlanti). Considering appointment to such a remote system to be beneath her, the arcidux has traditionally spent most of her time on her ancestral estate in New Thespera, leaving the governance of the Nys system to a seneschal. As luck would have it, however, she was attending a ceremonial function on the planet Koshoria when the Drift Crash struck, stranding her in the backwater she so despised. Although initially enraged at her misfortune, Xibia saw opportunity when she caught word of the situation in Atuity. Hoping to curry favor with the Aeon Throne that might result

DOWNTIME IN ATUITY

PCs can take advantage of the following special downtime options in Atuity.

Gather Supplies: The Kehtarian wilds offer a bounty of nutritious fruits, vegetables, and fungi, there for the taking by anyone brave enough to risk its many dangers. Moreover, the rapid growth of the native plant life all but ensures that such delicacies are always in season and never in short supply. When you gather supplies anywhere in the wilderness outside Atuity, double the number of additional characters you can support with a day's foraging. The resources available within a given area never become depleted.

Inoculate: The botanical laboratories of the Verdant Spiral are second to none in the Star Empire, and those who find themselves in the good graces of the order are welcome to make use of their resources free of charge. When you use inoculate to research preventative treatment for a disease or poison native to Kehtaria, you gain a +3 bonus to your Medicine check to inoculate a creature against the specified affliction. If you're assisted by one or more Verdant Spiral personnel, reduce the research time required from 1 day to 6 hours.

in a more prestigious charge, she assembled a fleet headed by the Sovereign Vindicator *Ascendant Paragon* and converged on Kehtaria to reaffirm the Star Empire's claim to the planet.

Although the resulting standoff between the *Ascendant Paragon* and *Red Clarion* eventually transitioned into an uneasy peace, Xibia has no intention of ceding any ground to the vesk nor to any burgeoning movement for Kehtarian independence. Complicating her designs is the presence of Commander Eiran, who, despite his vastly inferior social rank, nonetheless holds the position of superior officer in all matters pertaining to Kehtaria. Although she maintains a veneer of civility in all communications with the Azlant Spire, the arcidux has been deliberately stingy about deploying her crew to assist in the ground effort, privately hoping that Eiran's slackening grasp over Atuity might eventually prompt the Aeon Throne to remove the commander from his position and grant her authority over the military presence there.

The Hall of Promise

Before the Drift Crash, the hulking building that now serves as the Veskarium's base of operations on Kehtaria was a factory producing heavy construction equipment, robotic harvesters, and various types of deforestation machinery. It was formally gifted by Commander Eiran to Captain Vasoya shortly after the arrival of the *Red Clarion* as a gesture of goodwill and has since been converted into an imposing garrison within Atuity's city limits.

The entire ground floor of the Hall of Promise serves as a command post for the vesk military presence in Atuity. From her office and living quarters at the heart of the building, Captain Vasoya routinely dispatches troops to help keep peace within the city, undertake various civic engagement projects in the hopes of winning local hearts and minds for the Veskarium, and surreptitiously perform reconnaissance missions to keep tabs on the Azlanti. In recent months, with the turmoil triggered by

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the arrival of the *Ascendant Paragon* having largely stabilized, Vasoya has also sent an increasing number of expeditions into the wilds outside Atuity, seeking confirmation for her suspicions that the “preserve” encompassing most of Kehtaria’s surface area hides a secret of some strategic value to the Star Empire.

Every member of Vasoya’s crew has been requisitioned spartan-but-functional living quarters on one of the upper floors of the Hall of Promise, even if they keep a primary residence elsewhere in the city. It’s also public knowledge that any citizen of Atuity can petition Vasoya for sanctuary within the building for any reason, though none have yet taken her up on the offer.

Market Rows

Atuity’s commercial district boasts three different open-air markets, referred to as Northrow, Eastrow, and Southrow, respectively (or sometimes just “the Row,” typically referring to whichever is closest). Each row is comprised of several city blocks of open space set aside for merchants and traders to erect temporary booths and colorful tents to hawk all manner of esoteric wares, including extravagant offworld luxuries brought by visiting trade vessels, unique and delightful handiworks crafted by local artisans, and an unparalleled variety of fresh produce and game gathered from the wilds outside the city.

Due to a lack of resources, the Rows are largely unregulated by any central authority, meaning that nearly anything of value can potentially be found for sale there, even goods normally illegal in the Star Empire. All would-be vendors must pay yearly dues to the local Merchants Guild in exchange for the right to sell goods in one of the Rows, and the Guild’s leadership is canny enough to deny membership to anyone whose product might be detrimental to Atuity or its economy as a whole. Those denied the ability to sell in the Rows typically find the illegal markets of the Tangles more than welcoming to their enterprises, however.

The Moonflower Lounge

The Tangles are filled with seedy bars, skimmer dens, and other such places offering endless opportunities for unsuspecting visitors to get themselves swindled, murdered, or, if they’re lucky, merely drunk. Most of these establishments are fortunate to last even a few years before disintegrating from neglect and being swallowed up by the jungle. The Moonflower Lounge, a notorious nightclub on the west side of the city, is one of the more prominent exceptions, priding itself in its high-class decor and an unparalleled selection of imported food and drink. The club’s namesake is a 20-foot sculpture of a moonflower, crafted from djezeteel and mounted above the building’s arched entrance. A series of randomly generated light patterns softly pulse in millions of different colors across the nanites embedded in the sculpture’s surface.

Blatant criminality is strictly forbidden on the grounds of the Moonflower, but it’s an open secret that opportunities for illegal high-stakes gambling and other questionable activities abound in the club’s back rooms, which are normally accessible only by special invitation. Thanks to the club’s reputation for both security and discretion, these rooms have also become a popular meeting place for political functionaries and businesspeople wishing to discuss sensitive topics on neutral ground.

The Lounge is owned and operated by **Mottled-Gray** (N male stellifera^{SFAPB}), an atypically worldly member of his species who supplements his psychokinetic water body with a stylish, technological exosuit incorporating a built-in digital vocalizer. Very little is known of Mottled-Gray’s history, nor of what brought him to Kehtaria, although unconfirmed rumors persist of some dark event in his past that led him to flee his home planet of Parin by enlisting in the Alien Cohort. What’s known is that Mottled-Gray has spent his years in Atuity carefully cultivating relationships not only with both the local Azlanti and vesk factions, but with countless other personages and organizations of a less savory nature, and that he can sometimes be persuaded to leverage those connections for the right person... and the right price.

Red Clarion

Ever since its arrival during the Drift Crash, the Vindicas Tyrant *Red Clarion* has hung forebodingly in geosynchronous orbit over Atuity like a celestial body bristling with powerful weaponry. While most of its crew have long since relocated to the Hall of Promise below, a few dozen technicians and security personnel remain behind to ensure that the ship, its systems, and its onboard hangars filled with BMC Maulers remain in top condition. They’re managed by Lieutenant Commander **Vodo Zant** (LN male ijtikri^{AA3} soldier), Vasoya’s austere second-in-command.

Zant has been tasked with keeping the ship’s systems and weapons ready to deploy at a moment’s notice, should the armistice with Azlanti forces come to a sudden end. He takes his job very seriously and has assembled a complex web of contingency protocols slated to go into effect should one of many possible scenarios come to pass, including a failure by Vasoya to deliver daily status reports or other check-ins from the Hall of Promise. Should something go terribly wrong on the ground and Vasoya’s troops be captured or otherwise lost, Zant has every intention of mounting a first strike on the *Ascendant Paragon*, hoping either to disable the opposing battleship before it can react or to die an honorable death in service of the Veskarium.

The Spire District

The Azlant Spire is one of the oldest buildings in Atuity, having been constructed by the city’s original settlers to commemorate surviving their first full cycle on the planet. A scaled-down replica of the tallest building from the skyline of Eronesse on the Azlanti home world of New Thespera, the Azlant Spire appears as a gleaming spike of polished marble, gleaming steel, and blue-tinted glass that’s easily visible from anywhere in the city; it also serves as a convenient landmark for newcomers learning to find their way around.

The building is used primarily for administrative purposes by Commander Eiran and his lieutenants. Each member of the Atuity Triad also keeps an office here, as does each of the local Azlanti dominuses and a small number of delegates representing the Veskarium. Together, they make up an informal parliament that strives to work towards Atuity’s best interests while adequately representing each of the city’s major political factions and interest groups.

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The core of the city surrounding the Spire is home to most of Atuity's oldest and most influential Azlanti families and businesses as well as a handful of new-money oligarchs who have managed to buy their way into the city's inner circle. Most of the dominuses reside in extravagant villas lining the crescent-shaped freshwater Lake Allaramandis—also the source of the city's drinking water—that sits along the southernmost edge of the Spire District. Also located within these neighborhoods are Atuity's most ostentatious and impressive feats of architectural artistry, including the 60-foot marble statues of Star Imperators Iorian and Yridela Ixomander that loom over the plaza outside the Spire and the soaring Temple of Lissala that lies just to the southwest. Surrounded by such imperial splendor, it's almost possible to imagine that one resides at the heart of the Azlanti Star Empire and not within a tiny speck of civilization on its farthest outskirts.

Tangles Spaceport

In just a few short years, the spaceport at the north end of Atuity's eastern Tangles has rapidly grown from a single landing platform and a handful of nondescript hangars into a lively hub of activity that frequently boasts well over a dozen arriving or departing vessels in a given day. Though the primary building complex remains under Azlanti jurisdiction, a sprawl of hastily constructed landing bays and dockyards have sprung up around it to meet the needs of the city's growing population. Most of

these are considered to be a part of the spaceport proper despite being privately owned and operated, but they tend to vary wildly in the quality of construction and services offered.

With Commander Eiran's forces already spread far too thin to effectively oversee the area as it continues to expand, the collection of docking fees and enforcement of ordinances has been delegated to the Atuity Stevedores Guild, headed by dockmaster **Kas Plasken** (LN nonbinary brakim^{SFAPB} mechanic). While the Guild has largely succeeded at keeping the spaceport and associated shipyards running smoothly, it's widely understood that corruption and graft run rampant. Guild officials regularly accept bribes from smugglers in exchange for the freedom to operate unimpeded, and unscrupulous mechanics look to charge outrageous fees for essential services.

In recent months, rumors have proliferated about mysterious, unmarked shuttles arriving unannounced in the dead of night and idling silently on a landing pad for anywhere between a few minutes and a few hours, only to depart before sunrise without any apparent cargo having been loaded or unloaded. Both spaceport administration and Guild officials have been curiously tight-lipped on the matter.

The Verdant Spiral

One of the most striking sights in Atuity, the Verdant Spiral is a breathtaking compound of glass-domed greenhouses and buildings coaxed from living wood by xenodruidic magic,

arranged in a radial pattern circling the crest of a low hill on the southeastern border of the Spire district. Inside, the botanist-monks of the order that gives the structure its name dutifully go about their work, studying and tending to the thousands upon thousands of Kehtarian plant specimens they've gathered over decades. It's believed that despite having been active on the planet for less than a century, the Verdant Spiral has already amassed a library of botanical knowledge unsurpassed nearly anywhere else within the borders of the Azlanti Star Empire while still having barely begun to scratch the surface of Kehtaria's vast ecosystem.

The majority of the Verdant Spiral order, including its current rector **Ysabal Sebeliu** (NG female osharu^{AA2} mystic), are osharu drawn to Atuity by accounts of the planet's abundant and unique flora. The order's reputation for bringing its members tranquility and clarity of purpose have attracted individuals of other species as well, with sapient plants such as hortuses and ghorans in particular finding it appealing. One of the most reliable sources of employment for mercenaries in Atuity is guarding one of the Verdant Spiral's frequent forays into the wilderness undertaken by groups of seeking to witness unique floral phenomena, gather new plants, or merely spend a few weeks in communion with the vastness of the jungle.



MOTTLED-GRAY

It's rumored that at least a few members of the Verdant Spiral are secretly Xenowarden sleeper agents tasked with ensuring that Atuity's expansion remains limited and the jungles of Kehtaria unspoiled. This speculation—whether true or not—has caused a degree of tension between the Spiral and those representing the city's industrial concerns. "Sabotage by Spiral monks" has become a popular and convenient scapegoat for project supervisors facing missed timetables or defective equipment.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Characters looking for adventure in and around Atuity might encounter any of the following plot hooks.

Civil Disobedience: Ekentas hires a group to discreetly investigate the disappearance of a group of young activists that he recently dissuaded from performing a violent act of terrorism in the name of Kehtarian independence. Did the activists do something foolish and get themselves captured by the Veskarium or Azlanti militaries? Are they planning a large-scale attack that runs the risk of starting a war? Is it too late for anyone to bring them back alive?

Fire in the Skies: A team of laborers sent to clear one of the firebreaks outside of the city has run afoul of a hungry immolsivix. In addition to presenting a significant danger in its own right, the beast harbors dangerous fungi that threaten to ignite a massive wildfire in the area. Sarca is looking for hired muscle to get rid of the immolsivix or otherwise neutralize the threat it poses before it starts a conflagration that could wipe Atuity off the face of the planet.

Flower Power: A team of botanists from the Verdant Spiral are mounting an expedition to enter the Kehtarian wilderness and witness the blooming of an exceedingly rare plant that flowers only once every 160 years. Of course, they'll need experienced guides to protect their expedition from dangerous wildlife.

Returning from the Shadows: An Azlanti scouting party, thought lost almost a decade prior, suddenly emerges from the wilderness to announce that they've discovered the remains of an ancient Kehtarian civilization and are requesting reinforcements to accompany them back to the site. Curiously, none of the returning scouts seem aware that more than a few weeks have passed since they entered the jungle, and they're strangely cagey about the specifics of what they've actually found.

Season of Hate: Someone is deliberately inflaming tensions between the Veskarium and Azlanti forces by vandalizing buildings with anti-vesk graffiti and sabotaging equipment. Commander Eiran has publicly disavowed the act but is unable to spare the personnel to perform a meaningful inquest. Captain Vasoya, wary about the optics of mounting her own investigation, is enlisting unaffiliated parties to surreptitiously look into the matter. Who's really behind these acts of vandalism, and what's their motive?

Urban Development: Commander Eiran has dispatched Azlanti troops to clear several blocks in the Tangles to make way for the construction of a spaceport expansion, but its inhabitants refuse to vacate. Mercenaries are being brought in to "deal with" the

problem, but will they work with the Azlanti to forcibly relocate the residents? Or, will they defend these inhabitants and risk the ire of the commander's forces?

What a Tangled Web: A diplomat visiting the Azlant Spire is rumored to be carrying top-level clearance documents that grant their bearer unrestricted travel throughout the Star Empire. A former Aeon Guard officer, hiding in the Tangles under an assumed identity, is offering a small fortune to someone who can steal them. Can the PCs recover the documents without triggering a diplomatic incident? And who else in Atuity might want to acquire them once the word gets out?

Written in the Earth: Strange symbols have begun appearing in the jungle outside of Atuity, hundreds of feet across and seemingly purposefully crushed or cut into the foliage. When viewed from the air, they bear a striking similarity to some of the mysterious pictographs discovered elsewhere in Kehtaria. Who's creating the symbols, and what do they mean?

BIOHACKER THEOREMS

The diversity and promise of Kehtaria's many botanical wonders have opened up a wealth of new opportunities for enterprising chemists and biohackers as well as something of a gold rush for unscrupulous pharmaceutical companies eager to cash in on its bounty.

The following theorems provide additional options for the biohacker class (*Character Operations Manual* 40). You must be 8th level or higher to choose these theorems. A theorem marked with an asterisk (*) applies to your biohacks class feature and doesn't stack with other similar theorems that alter biohacks. Only one such theorem can be applied to an individual biohack.

Accelerated Metabolism (Ex)

Once per day, you can target a living creature with a special biohack as a move action. This doesn't deal any damage and doesn't count against your total uses of biohacks, but it otherwise functions as a biohack. If you hit the target, it must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or suffer a dramatic increase in the speed at which its system metabolizes drugs and poisons. For the next 10 minutes, the onset time and maximum duration of any contact, ingested, inhaled, or injury drugs and poisons affecting the target are halved, and the victim must attempt two saves each round against the effects, progressing to the next stage on the appropriate track with each failed save.

Adaptive Metabolism (Ex)

As a move action, you can expend one of your biohacks to inject yourself or an ally attuned to your custom microlab with a specially designed compound derived from a native Kehtarian lichen with unsurpassed adaptive properties, momentarily fooling the target's system into metabolizing chemical compounds differently. Choose any serum with an item level no greater than half your biohacker level. The next poison, drug, or serum that affects the target before the start of your next turn has the effect of the serum you chose instead of its usual one. The substituted effect lasts a maximum of 1d4 rounds or the length of the original effect, whichever is shorter. If the original effect is still ongoing when the duration expires, it resumes at the same stage it was at before the change.

Botanical Booster* (Ex)

Any booster you successfully use on yourself or an ally alters the target's biochemistry to become more like that of a plant or plant creature. The target gains a +2 enhancement bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, and stunning effects, unless the effect specifies that it's effective against plants. This extra benefit to the booster doesn't affect targets with the plantlike subtype or the plantlike universal creature rule.

Decomposing Inhibitor* (Ex)

Any biohack inhibitor you successfully use against a creature causes its cellular structure to rapidly break down. For each of the next 1d4+1 rounds, the target takes 2d6 acid damage at the end of its turn.

SERUMS

The following serums (*Core Rulebook* 225) were developed by osharus of the Verdant Spiral in Atuity but have found their way into specialty shops in the more populated areas of the galaxy.

CHLOROPHYLL INFUSION SERUM

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

A living creature who imbibes this serum develops a noticeable greenish tint to their skin, sometimes accompanied by temporary, leaflike protrusions. For the next week, the creature no longer requires food and gains the photosynthesis ability of a ghoran (*Alien Archive* 2 57). For the duration of this effect, the creature is affected by spells and abilities as though they possess the plant type graft (*Alien Archive* 133).

GERMINATION SERUM

LEVEL 12

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 5,700 **BULK** L

A living creature who imbibes this serum immediately falls into a deep sleep lasting for 8 hours. During this time, harmless tendrils of vegetation sprout from and wrap around the creature's body, eventually encasing it in a thick podlike shell. When the creature wakes, it emerges from the pod cured of all ailments as if affected by a *restoration* spell (*Core Rulebook* 374), except any permanent negative levels are restored in addition to temporary ones.

Some conspiracy-minded individuals claim that *germination serum* is actually a bioweapon developed by some nefarious plant species and that the creatures who emerge from the pods are actually sinister duplicates of the creatures that went in, the originals having been fully digested during the interval. These rumors are almost certainly untrue.

POISONBREATH SERUM

LEVEL 6

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 650 **BULK** L

For 1 hour after you drink a *poisonbreath serum*, you can exhale a dangerous poisonous mist. This grants you a +2 enhancement bonus to Intimidate checks against adjacent living creatures that can smell your breath. During the serum's duration, you can take a standard action to breath a cloud of poisonous mist in a 15-foot cone. Each living creature in the area is affected by insanity mist (*Core Rulebook* 419). Once you've breathed out the poison, the serum's other effect immediately ends.

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DRIFTER'S END

Melting pot of alien ambassadors and spacefaring vagabonds.

DRIFTER'S END

CG space station neighborhood

Gravity standard (artificial)

Atmosphere normal (artificial)

Day 24 hours; **Year** 365 days

Population 200,000 (30% human, 25% shirren, 20% lashunta, 25% other)

Government council (Syndicsguild led by the Prime Executive)

Languages any

Qualities financial center, technologically average

ECONOMY

Exports information

Imports luxury goods

Maximum Item Level 20th

NPCS

Auter the Immortal (NE male human moroi^{SF42}), Daylite Arcade owner

Brujo Dyre (N male human), Syndicsguild member

Captain Novaspawn (CG nonbinary kalo mystic), high priest of Besmara and museum curator

Samni Houthner (CG agender human), Syndicsguild member

Tigixitav (NG female shirren), Syndicsguild member

Moscaru: To many, Drifter's End is the doorway to Absalom Station and, subsequently, the rest of the Pact Worlds. As such, it has become a melting pot of a myriad of cultures both local and from outside the system.

Sprax: It's certainly the only place on the station I could find with a food cart that served authentic Oeddertchonk cuisine! And I looked everywhere! Even in the back of some restaurants' kitchens in case they forgot they had some jojokolea peppers.

Moscaru: As a shirren, I appreciate the variety of choices in both food and entertainment that can be found with the neighborhood.

Sprax: You didn't find it overwhelming? Even a little?

Moscaru: No. I am a seasoned traveler, accustomed to sampling a bevy of options during my trips.

Sprax: Oh, it shows!

Drifter's End is a neighborhood on Absalom Station that quickly evolved into a cultural hub after the introduction of Drift travel 300 years ago. Since the space station's reactor

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acts as a powerful Drift beacon, vessels traveling to the Pact Worlds usually stop at Absalom Station first before heading to their final destination. Drifter's End, located within the station's Ring close to its docking arms, serves as a haven for everything from diplomats and adventurers to long-haul cargo crews and vagabonds.

Drifter's End is a neighborhood that never seems empty of people, even at the latest of hours. With ships constantly arriving, the neighborhood's businesses and amenities generally stay open 24 hours a day to cater to customers. A crew returning from a lengthy trip out to the Vast likely doesn't want to wait for "normal" business hours to celebrate a successful mission or drown their sorrows after a major setback, so the always-open Drifter's End bars, restaurants, and other entertainment venues successfully cater to this clientele.

At Drifter's End, new opportunities and cosmopolitan ideas are in constant supply. Even by Absalom Station standards, the neighborhood has a very diverse population, always accepting cultures from across the galaxy. It would be hard to find a neighbor more helpful to tourists and outsiders than a Drifter's End local. Anyone who needs advice in the area on where to find dining, work, directions, or any nearby events can always find a local resident willing to offer directions and

suggestions. As the Drifter's End saying goes, "All Drift travel ends at our doorstep. Anything you come looking for, you'll find it here."

GEOGRAPHY

Drifter's End might look like any busy space station neighborhood to most outsiders at first glance, featuring storefronts, warehouses, and domiciles, but the area hides much more nuance. The sector consists of approximately one-quarter of Absalom Station's Ring, with major docking arms at either end of the arc and some minor docking areas interspersed between. The normally drab urban construction is accented by neon signs, and a wide array of different architectural styles have been added to Drifter's End over the past three centuries, leading to a variety of building shapes. Some might consider these styles clashing, but Drifter's End residents consider it a point of neighborhood pride.

The northern end of Drifter's End's semicircle abuts the area around the Plenara, the seat of government for the Pact Worlds on Absalom Station. As such, this part of the neighborhood is dedicated to hotels and other amenities—including translation services—that cater to foreign envoys and diplomats. It's the most luxurious part of Drifter's End due to the influx of wealth from these ambassadors, who



DRIFTER'S END

aren't afraid to throw it around. Adjacent to the rows of hotels is an area known as the Circle, a large tourist destination that hosts major public events, including hologram-enhanced plays, concerts, and festivals.

The other side of Drifter's End is more residential. Alongside apartment complexes, permanent residences sit above storefronts, the same individual or family usually owning both. Not many tourists make it to this end of the neighborhood, though its dive bars and corner shops are often frequented by rough-and-tumble starship crews who refer to Drifter's End as "the real Absalom Station." This area is also home to the Lorespire Complex—the headquarters of the Starfinder Society—though some residents consider the sprawling campus to be a district of its own.

The center of the semicircular neighborhood is the least easily categorized since it contains a mixture of businesses and warehouses for storing goods that come into Absalom Station. Most notably, the area houses the Multi-System Trade Coalition, or MSTC, which serves as the primary financial and bureaucratic institution of Drifter's End. The MSTC owns several blocks of this part of Drifter's End, and it runs the local shipping and dockworkers' credit union. As a direct result, the restaurants and shops of this area tend to cater more strongly to the working class. Recently, the government of Absalom Station set aside a block near MSTC's holdings to host a large number of refugees from Suskillon,

a friendly system in the Vast attacked by the Swarm; consequently, that area quickly received the nickname "District Suskillon."

RESIDENTS

Drifter's End has a diverse populace among both its permanent residents and visitors. Native Pact Worlds species tend to comprise the majority of the local inhabitants, but even that margin isn't by much since the presence of both the Starfinder Society headquarters and a great number of non-Pact Worlds envoys mean that people from all over Near Space and the Vast end up settling in Drifter's End. Mixed in with the permanent residents are transient adventurers, tourists, transport crews, and foreign diplomats that add to the neighborhood's everyday population. In fact, while Drifter's End has a relatively small population on its own, it's nevertheless constantly among the most crowded areas of Absalom Station at any given time.

As a stopping point for much of the cargo coming into Absalom Station, Drifter's End employs a great deal of customs and dock workers, mostly from the neighborhood's permanent residents. These individuals outnumber even Starfinder agents in the neighborhood, though that might be due to most Starfinders opting to live in other parts of the station and taking public transport when they need to report in at Lorespire Complex.

Sprax: I know we can always secure ourselves nice accommodations, but how about we do the Starfinder Stay this time? I hear the Starfinders always have such interesting things in their houses. Must be like sleeping in a museum!

Moscaru: That program's terms require that living spaces with anything overtly dangerous have those items either moved elsewhere or locked up before being rented out. Isn't that why so many Starfinders have storage spaces?

Sprax: Oh, is that how it works? Well, that explains why I couldn't find anything interesting even when I dug through all their drawers and checked all their closets for goodies. Not a single weapon or unholy artifact! All they had were several dozen cheap souvenir-store trinkets.

Moscaru: Well, I'm glad these Starfinders are keeping tourists safe. You, on the other hand, need to stop digging through other people's private things. Please, for once, let's visit Absalom Station without you getting on another venture-captain's bad side.

SOCIETY

Drifter's End has a strong culture of its own, sometimes even considered vastly different from the typical culture of Absalom Station. Drifter's End is locally known for being one of the only parts of the station with businesses that stay open throughout the entire night cycle. Locals will say it's because travelers and tourists arrive at so many hours of the day or that some people just never quite get used to not having proper days and nights, but in truth, Drifter's End citizens enjoy fostering a culture of nightlife. Late-night bars, restaurants, holo-vid theaters, and arcades litter the area. While the neighborhood can be more dangerous by night, just like anywhere else, the effect is lessened due to the sheer number of businesses that continue to operate even until the day cycle begins. The crowded streets also ease up by night, but even in the latest hours, they're never truly empty.

Due to the volume of trade and visitors coming in from all parts of the galaxy, most residents of Drifter's End have complicated sets of fashion and decorative tastes. Those from other parts of the station note how trends in Drifter's End seem to change faster than anywhere else and always edge toward a mix of clothes and accessories from different cultures. Residents also have an insatiable hunger for furniture and housing decor that comes from anywhere outside the

Pact Worlds. This demand often leads to oddities like rugs woven entirely of grass from far-off planets and magnetic jewelry crafted from fire-blackened corals. While some find the eclectic tastes of Drifter's End residents more than a little amusing, it keeps the warehouses full of shipments from all parts known and unknown. These "complaints" are usually made in jest.

And while the neighborhood is known for being friendly to tourists, there's always a bit of a cultural divide between permanent residents and visitors. There are plenty of smaller and lesser-known businesses tucked away on side streets that cater less to sightseers and are considered "local secrets." Few members of the community point out these establishments to total strangers but will often share their locations with good friends. The most out-of-the-way places forbid patrons from using comm units to broadcast pictures or vids to social media infosphere sites for fear of the location's existence being leaked to the general public. These bars and eateries also serve as hubs for information about local jobs, opportunities, and private events. In a place as sprawling and bustling as Drifter's End, prospects are just as coveted as credits.

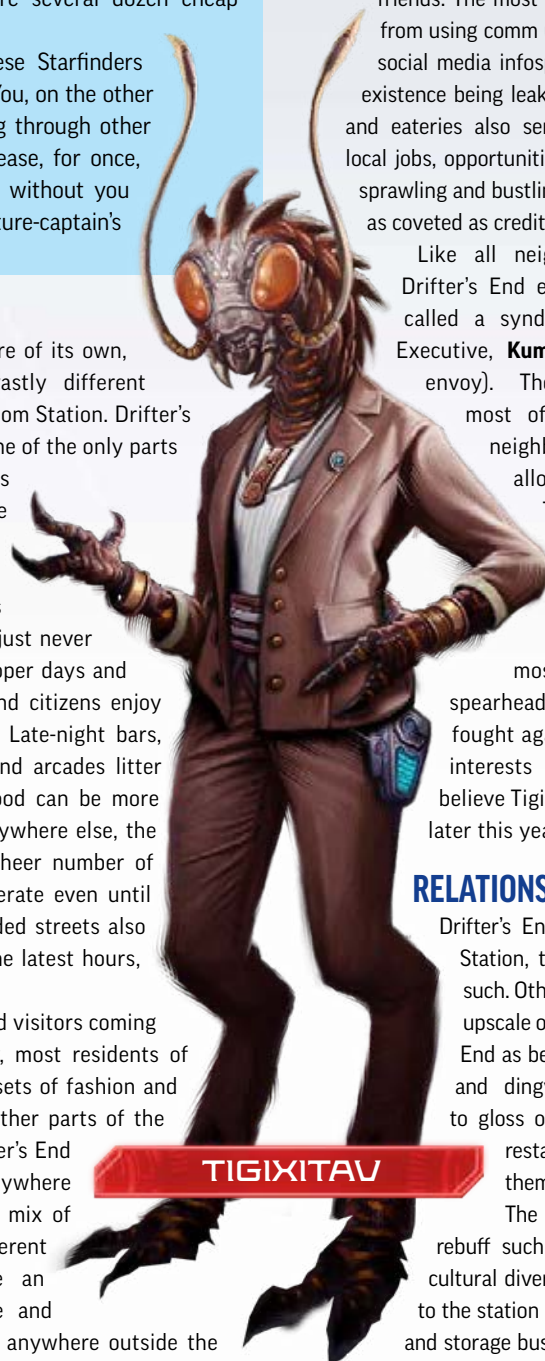
Like all neighborhoods of Absalom Station, Drifter's End elects a council of representatives called a syndic to advise the station's Prime Executive, **Kumara Melacruz** (LG female human envoy). The syndics are involved with most of the day-to-day affairs of each neighborhood, from setting tax rates to allocating funding for social programs.

The Drifter's End syndic currently consists of **Tigixitav** (NG female shirren), **Samni Houthner** (CG agender human), and **Brujo Dyre** (N male human). Tigixitav is the most popular of the three, as she has spearheaded several initiatives that have fought against encroachment by AbadarCorp interests in the neighborhood. Most locals believe Tigixitav to be a shoo-in to be reelected later this year.

RELATIONS

Drifter's End is an important part of Absalom Station, though it isn't always recognized as such. Other neighborhoods, including the more upscale ones in the Eye, look down on Drifter's End as being lower class, citing its seedy bars and dingy warehouses. These critics tend to gloss over the ritzy hotels and glamorous restaurants near the Plenara, considering them not to be truly part of Drifter's End.

The neighborhood's residents quickly rebuff such statements, stressing their home's cultural diversity, which brings in tourism money to the station in addition to Drifter's End's shipping and storage businesses. Those who live in the Arms,



TIGIXITAV

the Spike, and the other parts of the Ring are less snobbish about Drifter's End, with many considering the neighborhood to be a "great place to part."

Probably the most notable tension in the neighborhood is between the Multi-System Trade Coalition, which handles the majority of the finances for Drifter's End workers, and AbadarCorp. Sadly, this rivalry seems mostly one-sided. AbadarCorp doesn't fear competition (since most of the company's executives understand that competition is healthy for the economy) and has noticed the potential business opportunities within Drifter's End. It has attempted to establish its temple-banks and sponsored big-box retail stores for decades, only to be rebuffed by the residents who are fiercely loyal to the MSTC. Coalition leaders tend to paint AbadarCorp employees as "uncaring drones who think of nothing but profit" and that the company wants to "suck the soul out of the neighborhood"; dockhands and port officials often repeat such lines, leading to them occasionally mishandling, losing, or just delaying AbadarCorp shipments that come in through Drifter's End. Meanwhile, AbadarCorp continues to negotiate with the Drifter's End syndics to try to get a proverbial foot in the door while ignoring these slights.

Due to the number of travelers who pass through Drifter's End thanks to the ease of reaching Absalom Station via the Drift, the neighborhood has always been welcoming of those who have nowhere else to go. In previous years, the Vast system of Suskillon was attacked by the ravenous insectile Swarm, and though that system isn't an official protectorate of the Pact Worlds, the two share a good relationship. Many refugees fleeing the planet from the original attack have found a place to stay in Drifter's End while their government retakes and rebuilds their home world, and some have elected to stay permanently. More refugees from the recent Drift Crisis have increased this itinerant population, causing some tensions among residents worrying over resources. Luckily, the Absalom Station primex has recently been working on plans to open up more parts of the station for habitation.

RELIGION

The faiths of Drifter's End are as diverse as its populace. From Damoritosh to Hylax and from Eloritu to Triune, just about every deity's devotees are represented somewhere via personal shrines or small acts of worship. There aren't any large centers of worship in the neighborhood, as most residents travel to Congregation on the other side of the Ring for important religious services. Veneration of Talavet is the largest faith in Drifter's End due to the goddess's focus on community and self-reliance, which residents both highly value. Even among those for whom religion is a major aspect of their lives, locals still welcome those of other faiths, including lesser-known beliefs from outside of the Pact Worlds. Harmful cults are, of course, frowned upon.

Unusually, though the church of Abadar is a major force on the rest of Absalom Station, the Master of the First Vault's faith is nearly nonexistent in Drifter's End. Most residents conflate the worship of Abadar with the business practices of AbadarCorp, which aren't well-liked within the neighborhood.

Those who live in Drifter's End and follow the god of commerce do so almost apologetically. They tend to not advertise their faith and, if it's ever brought up, try to change the subject for fear that it will lead to a loss of opportunity or friendship. Some might call this religious persecution, but Abadar devotees see it as a small obstacle to overcome as the price of doing business in a "hostile environment."

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The most common danger at Drifter's End is theft, whether by a mugger on a shadowy street or by a smuggler taking goods that aren't theirs from a warehouse. A robbed individual can report such crimes to Absalom Station security, either over their comm unit or by visiting one of four small security postings in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, these cases tend to be difficult to solve unless the victim has solid evidence of the perpetrator (such as a vid on their comm unit), and even then, some thieves make themselves particularly hard to trace. On the other end of the spectrum, the Multi-System Trade Consortium staffs a department dedicated entirely to theft claims filed by those who store goods at Drifter's End. While many of these robberies occur within the neighborhood, some would-be pirates try to steal a ship's cargo by stowing away on the vessel and accosting the crew before they enter the Drift. The MSTC handles these cases if the crew in question are members in good standing, occasionally hiring mercenaries to track down the pirates and retrieve the stolen merchandise.

The number of high-profile individuals that come through Drifter's End means that attempted kidnapping can also be quite common. Most diplomats and envoys have their own guard details, so most abductions are thwarted quickly. Sometimes, these individuals will hire locals for security, especially when they have particularly important business or are wholly unfamiliar with Pact Worlds customs and need bodyguards who can navigate the regional culture.

Since both thefts and kidnappings are such known issues, Absalom Station security keeps their postings staffed around the clock and sends patrols through the more populated areas of the neighborhood to keep violence at bay.

STARFINDER STAY ACCOMMODATIONS

Visitors to Drifter's End usually stay at the several hotels in the neighborhood, though reservations are always recommended due to the constant comings and goings of envoys from the protectorates and other places. Many of these travelers require long-term accommodations, sometimes at a moment's notice, so the more prestigious hotels are often booked solid. However, there's an option for lower-budget lodgings through a program called "Starfinder Stay," which was started by a pair of retired Starfinder agents who still live in the area near the Lorespire Complex. This application, which is free to download onto any comm unit, allows users to take advantage of the time many Starfinders spend traveling across the galaxy by short-term leasing Starfinders' housing while they're away.

The program matches participating Starfinders to tourists looking to rent accommodations for a few days or longer,

providing users access to a shared calendar that displays blocks of time agents note they believe they'll be off the station. These dates aren't always exact due to the random nature of Drift travel, but most Starfinders enter time estimates on the low side. When on the rare occasion a Starfinder returns early, the Starfinder Stay program is always able to find spare vacancies and has a few permanent rooms reserved at a local boarding house to ensure a tourist isn't left with nowhere to go. If necessary, a renter can split their stay across multiple lodgings over several days if they can't find an exact match for their length of stay. While most of the process is handled entirely through the application, the founders maintain an office in Drifter's End for handling any in-person issues (which have been few and far between).

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The neighborhood of Drifter's End has several prominent areas.

Chronicler's Desk Park: Between the Circle and Diplomat Row is a small park that gets its name from a statue that sits at its center. The metal statue portrays a small desk with a closed singular journal in the center of it and a stack of books leaning off the edge, as if mid-fall. While the origins of the statue are unknown, the phrases "The Old Chronicler's Desk" and "Therabild the Architect" are listed on a sturdy plaque attached to the statue's base. While no records of the name can be found (possibly lost to the Gap), it's widely accepted that Therabild the Architect is the piece's sculptor. Many art scholars have studied the statue over the centuries, and they have proposed numerous theories about its meaning. A plethora of academic essays have been written on how the statue reflects an awareness of the futility of preserving records, some even calling it a representation of the Gap. Others instead consider the desk to be a beautiful yet painfully ironic relic that praises the chronicling of history, despite its own history and context being lost.

The Circle: The Circle is a wide, open-air amphitheater that hosts a variety of holovid screenings, concerts, and other entertainment throughout the year. For Drifter's End residents, a season pass is surprisingly inexpensive, as the Circle makes most of its money from tickets sold to tourists, gift shop merchandise, and charitable donations from patrons of the arts. The Circle can seat about 2,400 people in the round, and though there are larger venues in the Pact Worlds, the Circle provides a way for lesser-known performers to play to considerable audiences. Due to Drifter's End's constant activity, the Circle holds at least two shows a day; for instance, they might show a classical play in the afternoon and host a high-energy band that same evening. In addition, the Circle holds a free late-night rave once a month, where hundreds of dancers can mingle and party until morning!

Daylite Arcade: Rarely is there a business open from dusk until dawn as successful as Daylite Arcade, a "night only" entertainment center. It's a perfect place to spend a night without a care for what tomorrow might bring. Even in the middle of the week, Daylite Arcade is packed with tourists, mercenaries, and even late-shift dock workers looking to blow off some steam. The arcade is bathed in garish neon lights

DOWNTIME IN DRIFTER'S END

The following special downtime options apply only in the neighborhood of Drifter's End.

Hunt Bargains: Due to a steady influx of goods and the protections of the MSTC, you can almost always find a bargain in this neighborhood. When you use the hunt bargains downtime activity in Drifter's End, you can choose an item with a level that's at least 4 lower than your character level (or up to 2 levels lower than your character level if you use the multiday version of the activity). In addition, if you succeed at the activity's skill check, you receive a discount of 15% (instead of the usual 10%). The GM still determines if the item is available in Drifter's End.

Drill and Lounge: By spending a night at one of the neighborhood's arcades (such as Daylite Arcade), you can combine the drill and lounge activities into one downtime activity. You must still succeed at the skill check or crew action check, and if you succeed, you gain the benefits of both downtime activities (the ability to take 10 on the next chosen crew action or skill check you drilled, and the gain of temporary Hit Points on the following day). You can take this combined downtime activity only once per week.

that showcase multiple vidgame cabinets, some of which date back over a century. Private HACs can also be rented for more immersive experiences. While the arcade doesn't offer meals or refreshments on its own, nearby bars and quick-service restaurants happily deliver food and drink to arcade patrons, provided they tip well.

The establishment was founded (and is still run) by **Auter the Immortal** (NE male human moroi^{SF42}), a vampire with mysterious origins. The only thing most Drifter's End residents know about Auter is that he has lived in the neighborhood for as long as they can remember, and the vampire knows just about everything there is to know about it. For the right price, Auter will even share information about the area's more secretive and unscrupulous happenings, though his compensation for doing so might extend beyond mere credits.

Diplomat Row: Diplomat Row is the name of the street of ritzy hotels and permanent housing for envoys at the northern part of Drifter's End. Close to the Plenara, the Pact Worlds seat of governance, the street hosts an ever-changing array of delegates and diplomats. Consulates for protectorates such as the moon of Marata and the Burning Archipelago can also be found here, though the embassies of full Pact Worlds members are in the station's Eye, close to Jatembe Park. Diplomat Row also features private notaries and other bureaucratic resources for its political guests and residents.

While many of the hotels reserve rooms for visiting diplomats, they also accommodate everyday guests... or at least, those who can afford it. These lavish hotels offer every conceivable amenity, from indoor pools, gyms, and other forms of recreation to gourmet restaurants that can whip up even the most alien of cuisines at a moment's notice. The Stationary Satellite Hotel is the closest to the Circle, which means its vacancies are often filled the quickest.

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The Graffiti Walls: In 317 AG, a mysterious yet gorgeous spray-painted mural appeared on a wall near the Lorespire Complex overnight. It portrayed a disintegrating humanoid silhouette in space, edged in bright neon colors. While such vandalism would typically be cleaned upon discovery, this piece quickly touched the hearts of many Starfinder agents who saw it that morning, with a few saying it reminded them of colleagues lost on their Scoured Stars expedition. The piece was signed only with a stylized letter "A" circled in front of a sunrise. Since that event, more pieces from the artist have popped up on nearby streets, sparking a fervor to establish the artist's identity. One night, in the blink of an eye, another wall was plastered with flyers reading only "Albitta of Absalom" above the outline of a hooded woman wielding a pistol spraying a rainbow of colors.

Since then, Albitta's graffiti murals have garnered popularity as well as imitators. Several new walls have been added to the buildings where her paintings first appeared, and street artists are encouraged to practice their craft there instead of elsewhere in the neighborhood. The newer pieces change regularly as artists rotate and try new techniques, but Albitta's murals remain untouched despite the occasional attempt to alter them. No one is sure how they revert to their original compositions hours after someone tries to paint over them, nor what mysterious forces impel the vandal to give up artistry forever afterward.

Gravity Wells Hoverskate Park: Over a century ago, an Arcanamirium annex called the Wyllis Dome in eastern Drifter's End suffered an unfortunate magical explosion; the incident destroyed the building and peppered the surrounding block with gravitational anomalies. In the following decades, various groups attempted to eliminate these anomalies to no success, so the site was essentially abandoned—that is, except for local youths sneaking past warning signs to use the gravity wells for hoverskating thrills. The more these young athletes broadcasted their dangerous tricks onto infosphere sites, the more popular the site grew. Some skaters eventually constructed ramps around the wreckage to gain greater speeds and momentum as well as half-pipes and rails to turn the former annex into a full-fledged hoverskate park.

Making the best out of a bad situation, the Arcanamirium donated the land to the Drifter's End Syndicsguild, who declared it a public space. The Gravity Wells Hoverskate Park sees use almost around the clock, even attracting tourists interested in watching the extreme athletes compete. For the more adventurous, hoverskate and safety gear rentals are available for anyone who wants to try out some anti-gravity flips and tricks for the first time, with the proceeds helping to keep the park clean and maintained. In addition, **Milldeh Fogglide** (CG agender halfling) hosts full-day hoverskate tours every weekend that begin at the park and go across the entirety of Absalom Station.

Moscaru: Ack! What th—Sprax?!

Sprax: Haha, yeah! Just took an advanced hoverskating class at Gravity Wells!

Moscaru: Ah, yes, that's the park in Drifter's End offering beginner classes twice a week? I was unaware that there were advanced classes or that you were such a dedicated athlete. I'd have rather learned either without your crashing into me.

Sprax: Dedicated athlete? Me? Not really, but I found a coach who does advanced sessions on request and figured some anti-grav tricks might be a great way to clear out my sinuses! I've had these terrible allergies sticking with me ever since that Ikal Expanse safari on Castrovel!

Moscaru: You took an advanced hoverskating class you weren't qualified for to rid yourself of allergies?

Sprax: I nearly broke four of my arms after the first gravity well threw me onto a rooftop. But hey, it was a hospital rooftop, so they patched me up before any permanent damage set in! I was just so sad that my special lesson ended so early.

Moscaru: Did it at least clear out your sinuses?

Sprax: Oh, I had forgotten all about that, but now that you mention it, it absolutely did!

Moscaru: Nothing like a near-death experience to overshadow allergies. I hope our fans choose a less dangerous approach.

Lorespire Complex: The Starfinder Society's headquarters consist of a campus of buildings surrounding the towering Lorespire, which houses the Hall of Discovery, a meeting place for the society's elected Forum members and First Seeker. The future of the society is often decided there, usually with the help of Guidance, a massive computer containing the collective consciousnesses of previous Starfinder leaders. In addition, Starfinder scholars study an impressive collection of texts and artifacts from across the galaxy in the Archives.

While Drifter's End residents consider the Society to be a somewhat close-knit organization, its members do contribute heavily to the community. Starfinder venture-captains work and sometimes live within the Lorespire Complex, so they have reason to help keep the neighborhood safe and clean. Junior Starfinder agents are sometimes asked to perform public services as part of their duties, and many have made fast friends among the local shopkeepers and business owners. In fact, over a decade ago, Starfinder agents became somewhat of a tourist attraction in their own right, with those who openly displayed badges routinely getting asked by sightseers to take holopics with them. These Starfinders were usually genial to these requests, but the First Seeker at the time was unsure if the publicity was a good thing and asked agents to keep their allegiance subtle while in public.

While the Lorespire Complex is generally closed to most visitors, the society often makes exceptions for traveling scholars who wish to peruse their digital libraries or discuss theories with Starfinder sages. The campus also hosts the public Museum of Pre-Gap History, which display several ancient relics found on Starfinder missions. The museum's docents are available on request to host educational tours for schools and tourists alike.

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MSTC Offices: The Multi-System Trade Coalition is an economic trade institution that operates out of Drifter's End, specializing in trade with non-Pact Worlds settlements, especially those considering protectorate status. The coalition started out as a financial partnership between several local shipping companies operating out of Drifter's End and quickly developed into the neighborhood's economic backbone. The MSTC maintains its financial stability by also managing the Drifter's End Credit Union, which is used regularly by most local residents, keeping them safe from the predations of larger financial establishments.

The MSTC owns several offices in the center of Drifter's End, each dedicated to a different aspect of its reach. While these buildings couldn't be considered tourist attractions, visitors to Drifter's End often find themselves on this block regardless. They might trade UPBs for credits (or vice versa) at the credit union or fill out paperwork to report a lost shipment at the Bureau of Trade Management. Those of a more mercenary bent might report to the MSTC Security Agency to look for work as guards on long-haul cargo routes. MSTC also runs a meeting hall where members can hold mixers or discussions about their prospects and Absalom Station politics.

Museum of Space Creatures: Drifter's End brings all types into its fold, including those who might be considered enemies under other circumstances. Permanently docked at a slip adjacent to one of the station's arms is a large starship from

Kalo-Mahoi run by Besmaran devotees as a space-focused museum that teaches visitors about the various creatures native to the vastness of the universe. While there are rumors that the Museum of Space Creatures originally started out as an elaborate money-laundering scheme by retired space pirates, High Priest **Captain Novaspawn** (CG nonbinary kalo mystic) assures that they've been dedicated in sharing their love for xenobiology even before the Pirate Queen herself embraced them. Despite concerns expressed by some residents, these Besmarans operate under entirely legal means and continue to serve the community, claiming that all of Drifter's End is an extension of their own crew.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure ideas can kick off any campaign starting in Drifter's End.

The Amnesia Syndrome: For a week, visitors and residents of Drifter's End are seen wandering confused and disoriented, complaining of brief gaps in their memories. Deliveries end up forgotten on corners, and street food vendors stare off into nothingness as their food burns. With some investigation, it becomes clear that each of the victims passed by the statue in Chronicler's Desk Park before suffering their major lapses in memory. Is this some kind of dormant effect on the sculpture that's only now activating, or has someone enchanted it?

A Whale of a Time: High Priest Captain Novaspawn receives word from their Free Captain contacts that a pod of oma were spotted on the fringes of the Diaspora and are heading toward Absalom Station. The kalo mystic also picks up chatter that a band of space-whale poachers are in pursuit of the oma. The captain gathers allies and detaches their erstwhile museum starship to intercept the hunters and save the innocent space creatures.

Complex Systems: When a group of Starfinder agents brings back an unusual artifact from a mission, it accidentally activates, and an ancient technomagical program installs itself in the Lorespire Complex's security systems. The entire campus goes on lockdown with no one able to get in or out. As the alien virus infects computer after computer, the First Seeker sends out a call for help. Can the program be stopped before it reaches Guidance, possibly erasing centuries of Starfinder knowledge?

Corporate Takeover: When the high-ranking leaders of the MSTC begin acting strangely and start making decisions that run counter to the coalition's mission, the rank-and-file workers loudly express concerns that AbadarCorp has somehow threatened or bribed them. Violence against open worshippers

of Abadar in Drifter's End increases, and AbadarCorp shipments going through the neighborhood are found mysteriously destroyed. What has caused the executives' change in behavior, and can the Drifter's End residents be convinced to trust each other again?

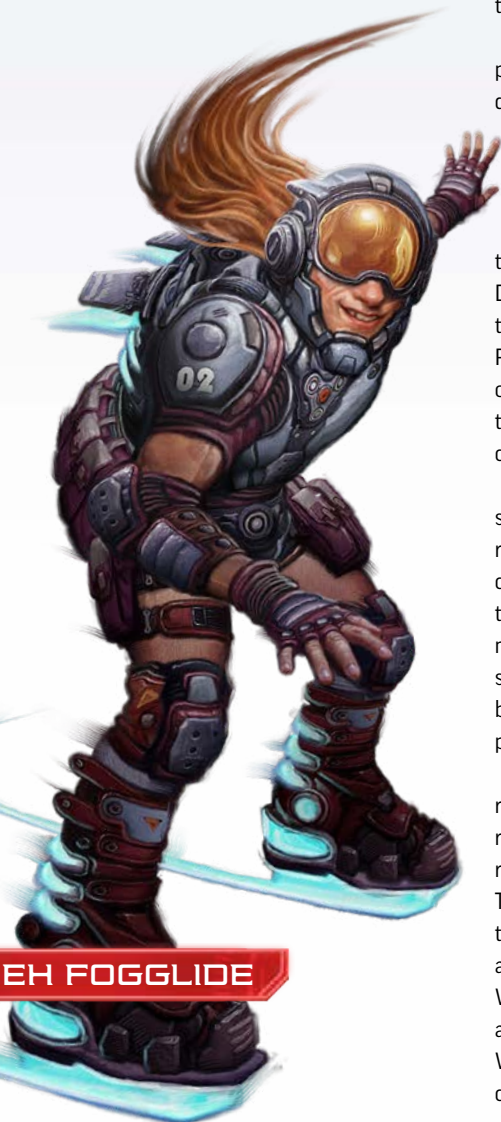
Deep Cuts: Absalom Station security learns that a gang from the Spike called the Ten Razors is storing illegally smuggled goods in a warehouse in Drifter's End. After raiding the building and capturing a handful of gang members, the security officers discover that the Ten Razors' leader, a mysterious figure known only as "Cutter," is planning a brazen attack on the Stationary Satellite Hotel. Unsure of the gang's exact location, Absalom Station security begins looking for an elite team to infiltrate the gang and learn Cutter's identity.

Dinosaur Crisis: A large shipment is being moved from a docking slip on Absalom Station's Arms through Drifter's End when one of the containers starts shaking violently. It suddenly breaks open, releasing several smuggled dromaesaurids into the neighborhood. The ensuing panic puts tourists and residents in grave danger unless the beasts can be stopped, but the shipment's owner is offering a substantial reward for the dinosaurs to be brought in alive.

Lost in Translation: A newly contacted planet is making a petition for protectorate status and has sent over a diplomatic delegate to meet with the Pact Council. The delegate, a member of a previously unknown species, has brought along a translator who spent months learning the major languages of the Pact Worlds. However, when they arrive, the two are separated in the bustle of Drifter's End, and while the delegate manages to make their way to their rooms on Diplomat Row, they're worried greatly for their friend lost in this new, foreign place. Luckily, through magical translation, a Pact Council intern gets the translator's description and puts out a covert request for aid. Can someone save the delegate's translator before something dire happens to them or they cause an interstellar incident?

The Lullaby Thieves: A new band appearing at the Circle somehow puts the entire audience to sleep with music and robs them of everything as they doze. After the large-scale crime is finally reported, the band issues an ultimatum through their infosphere page: they want a lifetime contract with a major music producer, or they'll begin targeting other crowded spaces with their soporific tunes. Can these maniacal musicians be stopped before they put all of Absalom Station to sleep... perhaps permanently?

People Over Policy: Tigixitav and a Pact Council representative with familial ties to Suskillon, the system recently invaded by the Swarm, are seen meeting with the refugees of District Suskillon. Rumors begin to spread that Tigixitav is gathering information to help introduce a policy to the Council that will provide these unfortunates with more aid, possibly even a place to settle elsewhere in the Pact Worlds. The shirren politician's longtime rivals spread and amplify this propaganda in an effort to ruin her reputation. What's the truth of the matter, and will it affect Tigixitav's chance for reelection?



MILLDEH FOGGLIDE

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEMS

Drifter's End marketplaces sell all manner of equipment, many of them targeted at tourists looking to take a remembrance of the neighborhood home.

ALBITTA'S PAINT SPRAYER

LEVEL 4

HANDS 1 CAPACITY 10 USAGE 1/USE

While industrial paint sprayers are available via commercial construction stores and infosphere sites, the ones found in Drifter's End are inspired by the "paint pistol" supposedly used by famous street artist Albitta. It's shaped a bit like a small arm with a large canister in place of the clip to hold the paint. As a standard action, you can use a paint sprayer to spray paint in a 15-foot cone, covering all creatures and objects in the area. Invisible creatures and objects in the area are rendered partially visible unless they succeed at a DC 15 Reflex saving throw. A partially visible creature is no longer unseen but still benefits from concealment (20% miss chance). The paint can be removed by spending 10 minutes scrubbing it off with a cleaning solution, through magical means such as *token spell* (cleaning 1 cubic foot per round), or with a paint remover (see below). A paint sprayer's canister can be refilled with a paint color of your choosing for 20 credits.

CAVATINA SQUEEZEBOX

LEVEL 5

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 2,800 BULK 1

HANDS 2 CAPACITY 20 USAGE 1/ROUND

Crafted by the members of the Besmaran priesthood at the Museum of Space Creatures, this electronic concertina emits sounds similar to an oma's calming cry when played as a move action. If you succeed at a DC 17 Profession (musician) check when you play the squeezebox, you and all allies within 60 feet who can hear the music gain a +1 morale bonus to saving throws against fear effects until the beginning of your next turn. You can continue to play the squeezebox and grant this bonus as a move action each subsequent round without needing to attempt the skill check again. However, if you stop playing for even 1 round, you must succeed at the skill check again to grant the bonus again. This is a sense-dependent effect.

CAVATINA SQUEEZEBOX, MASTER

LEVEL 10

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 17,500 BULK 1

HANDS 2 CAPACITY 40 USAGE 1/ROUND

A master cavatina squeezebox functions like a regular cavatina squeezebox, except that you must succeed at a DC 25 Profession (musician) check and the morale bonus granted is +2 instead of +1.

EXTREME HOVERSKATES

LEVEL 13

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 46,000 BULK 1

HANDS – CAPACITY 40 USAGE 4/10 MINUTES

Extreme hoverskates are for advanced enthusiasts of the sport, allowing for more intense maneuvers. They function identically to hoverskates (*Starfinder Armory* 104), suspending you approximately 1 inch off the ground when worn and activated. However, when you overcharge your extreme hoverskates, the bonus increase to your speed is 30 feet (instead of 20 feet), and you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Acrobatics checks to

balance and Athletics checks to jump during that move action; this stacks with the bonus granted to your Athletics check for your increase in speed.

PAINT REMOVER

LEVEL 4

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 2,000 BULK 1

HANDS 1 CAPACITY 10 USAGE 1/USE

Much more practical-looking than an Albitta's paint sprayer, a paint remover isn't much more than a plastic canister with a spray nozzle. A paint remover is filled with a special chemical compound that can dissolve most paint almost instantaneously. As a standard action, you can use a paint remover to spray this solution in a 15-foot cone, covering all creatures and objects in the area. A sighted creature in this area gains the dazzled condition until the beginning of your next turn unless it succeeds at a DC 15 Reflex saving throw; the creature can also take a move action on its turn to wipe the chemical from its eyes, removing the condition. In addition, any paint on affected creatures and objects (such as that from a paint sprayer) slowly dissolves and is completely gone by the beginning of your next turn. This renders a partially visible creature covered in paint invisible again and might have other effects at the GM's discretion. A paint remover's canister can be refilled with the specialized chemical for 20 credits.

SHOCK-ABSORBING HELMET

LEVEL 8

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 8,800 BULK 1

HANDS – CAPACITY 20 USAGE 1/USE

While even professional hoverskaters are encouraged to wear simple safety gear when performing tricks, these advanced technological helmets are sold to those who attempt the most extreme stunts. When you fall while wearing a shock-absorbing helmet, you can convert the first 1d6 bludgeoning damage to nonlethal bludgeoning damage; this conversion is cumulative with damage reduced through deliberate jumps, successful Acrobatics checks, and other means (see shock-absorbing pads, below). This requires no charges. In addition, as a reaction when you're struck by a wound critical hit effect that targets your brain, you can activate the shock-absorbing foam within the helmet, consuming 1 charge and allowing you to roll the Fortitude saving throw twice and take the better result.

SHOCK-ABSORBING PADS

LEVEL 6

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 4,000 BULK 1

HANDS – CAPACITY 20 USAGE 1/USE

Like a shock-absorbing helmet, these advanced technological knee and arm safety pads are generally sold to extreme athletes. When you fall while wearing shock-absorbing pads, you can convert the first 1d6 bludgeoning damage to nonlethal bludgeoning damage; this conversion is cumulative with damage reduced through deliberate jumps, successful Acrobatics checks, and other means (see shock-absorbing helmet, above). This requires no charges. In addition, as a reaction when you're struck by a wound critical hit effect that targets your arm or leg, you can activate the high-tech shock-absorbing cushioning within the pads, consuming 1 charge and granting you a +2 circumstance bonus to the Fortitude saving throw.

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GOLARION WORLD

Planet-sized theme park with alien power sources.

GOLARION WORLD

CN theme park

Gravity standard

Atmosphere normal

Day 26 hours; **Year** 350 days

Population 370,000 (66% human, 12% android, 6% halfling, 5% dwarf, 5% gnome, 3% elf, 3% half-orc)

Government corporate oligarchy

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Halfling, Orcish

Qualities Drift Lane Adjacent, Tourist Trap

QUALITIES

Drift Lane Adjacent This settlement is on a Drift lane (page 12) connected to Castrovel.

Tourist Trap This settlement is a major tourist attraction. During peak travel seasons, its population might be double or greater.

ECONOMY

Exports souvenirs

Imports construction equipment, electronics, foodstuffs

Maximum Item Level 15th

NPCS

Tael Anyari (CN male human), Vice President of Theme Parks
Guhna Bronzeridge (N female dwarf vanguard^{COM}), Head of Park Security

Exim (CG agender android mechanic), Senior Manager of R&D

Sprax: Golarion World! The cheeriest place in the universe, full of fun, thrills, and good eats all enjoyed through the lens of history! I've never seen lost Golarion with my own eyes, of course, but if living in the Inner Sea region was half as exciting as riding the Eye of Abendego water coaster or watching the lich Tar-Baphon's hourly assault in the Siege of Absalom stunt spectacular, then I wish I had a time machine! Ask anyone who's been: a trip to Golarion World is just as good as a journey into the past!

Moscaru: I enjoy delightful diversions such as Golarion World as much as the next shirren, but I have some doubts about its historical authenticity. The New Horizons Luxury Retreats executive who planned the park is supposedly a history student, but they clearly made some accommodations to entertain guests. But this isn't a disparagement! Far from it.

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Golarion World's expansive theme parks are chock full of rides and shops that are sure to bring a smile to your face. In fact, there's so much to see and do, you'll need to spend at least a week there. Just don't expect to come home with accurate knowledge about lost Golarion's past.

With the newly formed Drift lanes, unexplored and uninhabited systems suddenly became accessible. The *Whirlwind*, a scout ship from the Pact Worlds, stumbled upon one such system while reconnoitering a Drift lane. Though the system has only three planets, the crew's report of the second world from the yellow sun—one with a breathable atmosphere and almost pleasant climate—sparked the interest of an executive at New Horizons Luxury Retreats, an interstellar company with massive resources and a focus on crafting high-end recreational experiences.

Tael Anyari, recently promoted to Vice President of Theme Parks at New Horizons, studied history as a hobby during his time at college and became fascinated with tales of lost Golarion. When he received word of a "new" planet in Near Space that could easily support settlements with a few adjustments, he knew he'd found a venue for his bold plan to recreate that ancient world... in theme park form!

After convincing the New Horizons board of directors to purchase the rights to the planet, Tael and a large crew of explorers and terraformers headed out into Near Space to begin construction on what would become the largest and most ambitious amusement park project in the known galaxy. Unfortunately, the project seemed doomed when an unexpected earthquake swallowed part of Tael's base camp. Those involved in the accident survived, thanks to the quick thinking and cool head of Guhna Bronzeridge, a veteran terraformer. She helped everyone reach the surface once again, and along the way, the group discovered a cube made of glass and stone in an underground cavern. The surveyors were fascinated to learn that the planet had previous inhabitants, though no trace of them could be found on the surface, and that other cubes were buried all over the planet. After further study, researchers learned these cubes could generate unlimited power.

Tael realized he could save millions of credits by powering his theme park with these cubes, and only a few months after the planet's discovery, Golarion World was open for business!

GEOGRAPHY

Golarion World is a series of large theme parks spread across an entire continent on the planet Zinn-2, named after the founder of New Horizons Luxury Retreats. Each park, or "land,"



represents a different area known to have existed in lost Golarion's Inner Sea region, which extended throughout nearly an entire hemisphere. The continent was heavily terraformed to create specific ecosystems for these lands that normally wouldn't be in such close proximity, with highly sophisticated technology and machinery maintaining constant individual climates. Monorails for guests and underground high-speed trams for employees offer quick connections between the theme parks, while roads that wind through the non-park landscapes offer a more rustic way to travel. However, parts of these wildernesses are home to dangerous creatures, some native to the planet and some imported by New Horizons to heighten verisimilitude.

The rest of Zinn-2 has been left untouched for now, though New Horizons is looking to eventually expand Golarion World with more lands that emulate lost Golarion's other continents, such as Tian Xia and Arcadia. Historical researchers gather information about these areas while the research and development division imagines new rides and experiences. Engineers, working with xenoarchaeologists, are searching for more subterranean cubes to power these new attractions.

Golarion World's many theme parks include Chelax Land, Irrisen Land, Osirion Land, and more, all described in greater detail starting on page 70. In addition to rides, shows, and shops, each land features a high-rise hotel on its outskirts for guests, carefully decorated in theme or hidden from view

with foliage or hills. It's estimated that Golarion World can accommodate up to 2.5 million guests, though park security does its best to ensure that they're as evenly spread out across the lands as possible, sometimes by temporarily shutting down rides or slowing monorail transit between the parks.

Most of the permanent residents of Golarion World are the employees who operate the rides, staff the shops, and perform in the shows; these individuals live in specially designed homes within each land that have thematically appropriate exteriors but contain modern amenities within. Other employees—security officers, mechanics, and so forth—keep long-term residences in two cities outside of the parks: Sandpoint and Whistledown. These cities are off-limits to guests and can be reached only via subterranean tunnels. These passages also provide access to the planet's energy-providing cube artifacts. After employees began to refer to this network of tunnels as the All-Ways, park management adopted that as its official name.

RESIDENTS

Even though Golarion World has been open for only a short time, New Horizons Luxury Retreats was able to quickly hire enough front-facing employees, also known as cast members, eager to staff the various theme parks. Each potential cast member is given an extensive interview process and psychological evaluation to determine which land most interested them and whether they'd be able to maintain the level of commitment to

character necessary to maintain guests' sense of immersion. The majority of cast members are aspiring holovid stars, enthusiastic history buffs, and veteran live-action role-players. Now that the parks have been open for a time, New Horizons fields an ever-growing number of applications from those looking for a new home on Golarion World.

After being assigned a land (and quarters there), a cast member is fitted with an appropriate wardrobe, which they must wear at all times when on the clock. They're also given a crash course in the mannerisms expected of them while interacting with guests; for instance, cast members of Shackles Land act like boisterous (but friendly) pirates, while those working in Ustalav Land are generally more morose. While most cast members are shop clerks or ride operators, the most talented performers receive specific named roles to play, modeled after famous historical figures of that land, and roam a park's trails and streets. One of Golarion World's most popular characters is the imperious Abrogail Thrune of Chelias Land; she's portrayed by several different cast members, but each of them portrays the queen as playfully vain and domineering in a way the guests can't get enough of.

Typically, a cast member works about a 4-hour shift in the park, with three to four shifts covering the amount of operation time for most of a park's shops and rides. A character cast member's workload differs a bit, as many of them wear elaborate, iconic costumes or heavy makeup; such an employee is "on" for an hour before getting an hour-long break and repeating the cycle twice more during a working day. Cast members usually work for 3 days and then are off for 2 days. When they aren't working, many cast members dress in "civilian" clothes and enjoy the parks—though usually not the one where they spend the most time! They might also travel to Sandpoint or Whistledown to partake in more modern pastimes.

The rest of Golarion World's employees work behind the scenes, using the All-Ways to get where they need to be in the parks. Mechanics repair malfunctioning rides, janitors clean up messes, and security personnel handle any troublemakers. They wear simple, dark brown polo shirts and slacks when in view of the public, and most guests pay them little attention. Finally, there are the research & development engineers who work in Golarion World's office headquarters in the center of Sandpoint. They're constantly working on new rides and improvements for existing rides under the watchful eye of senior manager Exim, with occasional visits from Tael Anyari.

Sprax: Her Infernal Majestrix Abrogail Thrune is hilarious! On my last visit to Chelias Land, I followed her around for a full hour, asking about her dealings with devils, and she kept finding new and sidesplitting ways to insult me! She didn't repeat even one!

Moscaru: I've noticed that Queen Eutropia Stavian always has a gaggle of adoring children in her wake, saying they want to grow up to be just like her. It's not easy being a role model like that. I must applaud the cast members' commitment, acting skills, and boundless patience.

Sprax: And their diabolism!

Moscaru: Excuse me?

Sprax: Abrogail Thrune! She told me that if I made an infernal pact, I could skip the line to ride the Screaming Jungle hovercoaster.

Moscaru: Ha, well, I'm certain she was just staying in character.

Sprax: And then another actor in a realistic devil outfit appeared suddenly—sent Abrogail screaming—and said I could ride the hovercoaster nine times if I just signed his fancy release form, so I—

Moscaru: Ohhhh... I shouldn't be surprised that I leave you alone in a theme park for half a day and you manage to sell your soul.

SOCIETY

Golarion World doesn't have a government. As such, since the planet is wholly owned by New Horizons Luxury Retreats, and all its inhabitants are employees, the company can impose laws or regulations as it sees fit. However, as the company is technically beholden to Pact Worlds labor standards, the non-work life of an employee isn't much different from someone living on Castrovel or Triaxus. As Vice President of Theme Parks and creator of the project, Tael Anyari has the most power and could be considered



Golarion World's de facto leader. Still, so long as employees maintain the standards set within the New Horizons employee handbook (bringing any grievances or complaints to their manager or the Human Resources department as necessary), Tael doesn't feel the need to act as an authority.

However, this doesn't mean that Golarion World is lawless. Security guards stationed throughout the lands attempt to keep unruly guests in line as well as police Sandpoint and Whistledown. Most of the time, they deal with small infractions, such as disturbing the peace or vandalism. Guests who are charged with a single infraction are asked to return to their accommodations for the rest of the day and are placed under light observation by the staff. Repeat offenders are escorted to Absalom Island and then to a shuttle off the planet; any other guests that came to the park with them (usually family members) can choose not to accompany them as long as they have means to leave at a different time. Employees who break the law are summarily fired and also escorted off the planet. In rare cases, when a very serious crime occurs, Golarion World has agreed to operate officially under Steward jurisdiction.

Life in the company cities of Sandpoint and Whistledown isn't much different from life in any standard Pact Worlds city. Chain restaurants and tri-vid theaters operate as normal, providing standard food and entertainment, though any business wishing to operate in one of Zinn-2's cities must first get the approval of New Horizons Luxury Retreats. Like most city governments, New Horizons provides business permits based on merit and employees' needs and requests. This has led to a small percentage of the Zinn-2's population not being employees of Golarion World but who are also aware (and often need to use) the All-Ways. At the behest of New Horizon lawyers, these individuals must sign nondisclosure agreements pertaining to the operation of the parks.

When not working, employees are free to come and go as they please. Some take mini-vacations on Golarion World itself, taking the chance to go on the rides they don't get to experience during their jobs. Most, though, leave Zinn-2 via Little Kortos, the orbiting space station that acts as a transit hub for guests exiting and entering the parks. A few have their own starships permanently docked there and can come and go as they please, while others must book passage on other vessels. Luckily, New Horizons offers their employees free transit on their cruise liners that drop off guests to Golarion World, provided their vacation time lines up with the ships' schedules.

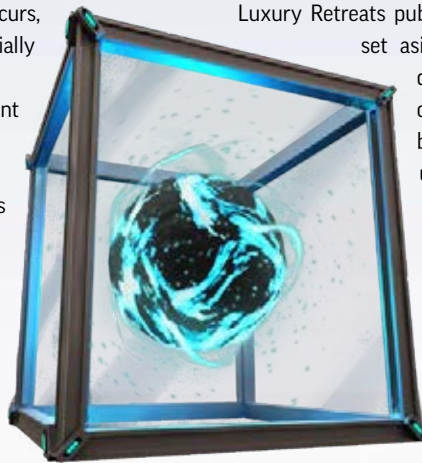
RELATIONS

Golarion World is at the end of one of the newly formed Drift lanes (page 12), connecting it to Castrovel and placing it within a short travel time from the Pact Worlds. As a result, most visitors to the park hail from the Pact Worlds, as many of them have direct ancestral ties to lost Golarion. However, a sizable number of guests have at least a passing curiosity about the

ancient planet, and many use Absalom Station as an efficient intermediary destination. The rest come simply to have a good time, so many see Golarion World in a largely positive light.

Historical scholars—especially those who have made careers out of studying everything about lost Golarion—and certain members of the Knights of Golarion have a more negative opinion about the massive theme park. They often call the historical inaccuracies throughout Golarion World “harmful in promoting a romanticized and fictional view” of the planet. Some deride how the park trivializes serious known problems, such as Chelaxian royalty consorting with devils and the threat of demonic invasion from the Worldwound. These opinions aren't popular among the general populace, and someone publicly espousing them is often told, in so many words, to lighten up. Of course, this response hasn't stopped the most vocal critics of Golarion World's historical precision from continuing to talk about it on dedicated infosphere sites to any who'll listen.

Thanks to efforts by Tael Anyari and the New Horizons Luxury Retreats public relations team, a plan is underway to set aside large, untouched areas of Zinn-2 to donate to the Xenowardens as natural conservation sites after the latter group began protesting the climate manipulation used to maintain immersion in each of the parks. The Xenowardens are looking forward to having some dedicated areas to transplant flora preserved from the time of lost Golarion, in the hopes that such species can flourish once again.



POWER CUBES

Glass and metal cubes exactly 14 feet on each side have been found in underground caverns across Zinn-2. Each cube contains a pulsating, roughly spherical mass of a plasma-like substance, visible through the cube's glass sides. Over 20 have been discovered so far, and the planet's explorers believe there might be more than double that number left to find. No one is certain who constructed and placed these cubes, as no other signs of technology have yet been found on the planet. Some believe the builders used the cubes to power a device that transformed them (and their cities) into pure energy, while others posit the cubes were teleported into the planet to prepare it for an alien force that never arrived (but still could). In either case, scientists and engineers agree that the cubes surpass most power sources found in known space and likely were made by an advanced technomagical society.

The first readings taken of one of these cubes showed that the plasma within emanate an incredible amount of energy. However, the substance has yet to be fully identified, as the researchers have been unable to access it directly. There are no doors or hatches in the cubes' sides, and the glass resists all forms of damage. As Golarion World was being constructed on the surface, Tael Anyari occasionally met with those studying the cubes to ensure the artifacts wouldn't endanger his product. On one visit, he casually commented that if they could find some way to harness the energy within, then he would



save a lot of money and not have to mar the landscape with unsightly power plants. Suddenly, an aperture opened at one of the cube's vertices. To everyone's surprise, the hole was the perfect connection for a standard power conduit. A few weeks later, installation began on hundreds of miles of subterranean cables that now route power to all the parks.

A single alien cube remains unattached to Golarion World's power grid and under constant study by a rotating collection of physicists, metallurgists, and electrical engineers. Recently, they noticed that the plasma inside the cube increases in luminance moments after the parks' many rides are shut down for the day. This has led to speculation that the technomagical relics are somehow connected wirelessly to one another and that Golarion World's many attractions might be putting a small strain on this network. Reports from the more cautious researchers note that if Golarion World continues to expand its power consumption, there's a chance that an errant surge of energy could "blow out" one of the cubes like a fuse, possibly leading to a planetwide blackout. Unfortunately, Tael Anyari seems unwilling to heed this warning as he plans additional parks and other power-hungry ways to increase attendance.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

At first glance, Golarion World seems like a planet free of major conflicts—at least, that's what the New Horizons Luxury Retreats public relations team would have everyone believe.

The parks have the same rate of minor accidents and occasional disagreements between guests that any major tourist attraction of their size would, and the cities of Sandpoint and Whistledown endure infrequent crimes, but even putting those aside, the planet isn't exactly "the cheeriest place in the universe" written about in advertisements.

First, the wilds outside of the various lands have been seeded with lost Golarion-appropriate wildlife that has interacted and interbred with the planet's original-but-sparse fauna to produce a handful of unique and dangerous predators. Common boars have grown more aggressive as their hooves have become more keratinous, allowing them to trample over sharp rocks and thorns unharmed. Jigsaw sharks released into the waters around Absalom Island have consumed enough native jellyfish to incorporate the creatures' toxins into their own biology. Certain species of ravens have graduated from common scavengers to ambushers as they've learned to drop heavy rocks from the sky to crack the armored shells of Zinn-2's terrapins. These adaptations have made Golarion World's wilderness expeditions more dangerous than promoted, and New Horizons has shortened the distance guests can travel from places of safety without having to hire more experienced adventuring guides.

What started as a good-natured rivalry between Sandpoint and Whistledown—stemming from questions like "Which city has the better coffee?" and "Who has the more talented amateur starlance players?"—has evolved into full-fledged prank war that

threatens to disrupt park operations. At first, the antics were confined to the two cities. A group of Whistledown residents would plant a veritable forest of saplings that magically sprouted overnight in the lawn in front of Sandpoint's town hall, leaving the Sandpoint citizens to retaliate by releasing a swarm of robotic squirrels in several of Whistledown's supermarkets simultaneously. Recently, the main pranksters on both sides have begun tricking each other at their places of work, leading to cast members suffering time-release itching powder in their costumes and restaurant employees finding important kitchen utensils replaced with foam replicas. New Horizons managers have sent out several messages insisting the pranks stop, but no one in charge has yet identified the ringleaders.

Corporate spies from one of New Horizons Luxury Retreats' largest competitors, Paradise Resorts, have been snooping around the theme parks, closely examining the rides and attractions and subtly questioning the guests and employees. Paradise Resorts is looking to replicate Golarion World's success with a similarly large park that would essentially replicate the experience of traveling to the planes of the Inner and Outer Spheres. Unfortunately, the company's research has shown that these other planes don't hold the same appeal as lost Golarion since it's actually possible to visit the former! Frustrated, Paradise Resorts is considering turning to actual sabotage to level the playing field.

Sprax: Why won't Golarion World employees let us take a look at one of those power cubes? Because it's too "dangerous"? Look, I'm no engineer or xenoarchaeologist or someone with even a basic understanding of physics, but like a lot people, I am very curious! Maybe bringing in a fresh pair of eyes... or two or three or a dozen... could result in a breakthrough. And I bet they could even charge extra for a behind-the-scenes tour!

Moscaru: Though New Horizons has tried keep the existence of their "power cubes" a secret, former employees have anonymously leaked it on various infospheres. Hundreds of suppositions about the cubes sprung up almost as quick as you could blink, ranging from them being artifacts of an ancient civilization, objects from the future of all things, or the result of some deific intervention. The cubes haven't caused any problems for Golarion World so far, so despite some dire warnings from infosphere theorists, the park's attendance remains steady.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The theme parks of Golarion World include the following.

Absalom Island

This expansive island in the middle of a terraformed body of water resembling the historic Inner Sea serves as Golarion World's entrance and exit point for guests. Visitors must first dock at Little Kortos, a space station in geosynchronous orbit, where they meet with a customer service representative to set the length of their stay, plan any special excursions, and, of course, pay. Regularly scheduled shuttles ferry groups of

guests down to Absalom Island, only a few miles outside of Absalom City, a massive metropolis constructed to resemble the stone and wooden buildings of lost Golarion's history. Most of the buildings are artificial fronts hiding the interior of such attractions as The Siege of Absalom stunt show, the Precipice Disaster fully immersive holothriller, and Cafe Aroden, a large eating hall where courageous (and hungry) guests can attempt the Test of the Starstone Burger. Those who can finish the massive sandwich within 30 minutes win a cash prize and have their holopicture added to the Wall of Food Gods. Absalom City is also a hub for monorail service leading to the other theme parks.

Cheliox Land

The majority of the buildings in this theme park feature barbed towers of red-veined black marble rising to sharply pointed, conical roofs. Amid this imposing architecture, cast members dressed as cartoonish devils caper and cavort, some even tempting guests with money or power if they sign away their souls on long parchment scrolls filled with fake legalese. Cheliox Land is ruled over by the character of Queen Abrogail Thrune and her honor guard of black-armored knights, though most everyone knows she—and all the land's "residents"—are in league with the fiends of Hell. Rides and attractions around Cheliox Land include the Devil's Bargain, a hovercoaster that plunges into a 300-foot pit lined with holographic fire as its climactic drop; the Thrune Cross, a circular, spinning thrill ride that holds guests in place on the walls with centripetal force before dropping the floor out from under them; and the Court of the Infernal Majestrix, a thrice-daily show where Queen Abrogail sentences traitors against the state to increasingly horrible (but expertly staged) deaths at the bidding of her devil advisor.

Geb Land

Geb Land features Mechitar, a city of squat, mud-brick buildings faced with glazed exteriors and the occasional obsidian stepped pyramid. Within, cast members dressed as undead beings such as zombies and ghouls run the shops, restaurants, and attractions, often while commenting on how tasty guests' flesh looks. They never attack the visitors, of course, citing the numerous "Dead Laws" that protect the living in Geb Land. Several other more powerful "undead," referred to simply as Blood Lords, roam the streets of Mechitar, pretending to keep the rest in line. The largest pyramid in the center of the city is the home of the ghost king Geb, and every midnight, a holographic projection of this historical figure appears at the building's apex to announce the Funerarium, a parade of the city's undead residents. Guests are encouraged to join in the march, and they often first imbibe many alcoholic beverages. The famed hovercoaster, the Ossuary, is situated within Geb's pyramid; its tracks and cars are modeled to look like bone, though the ride takes place almost entirely in the dark.

Irrisen Land

Snow and ice cover the hills of Irrisen Land, a frosty theme park specializing in cold weather activities. Guests can ice skate across Glacier Lake, bobsled down the slopes of the Crown of the World, or enjoy a stroll through the snow-dusted streets of Whitethrone.

The cast members wear fur-lined coats, hats, and dresses and delight in warning guests about invoking the wrath of the “winter witches,” a group of powerful spellcasters who keep the land frozen. These witches are said to be descended from the mother of all witches, Baba Yaga, who can be found on the porch of her mobile hut as it traverses the land. Perched atop chicken legs and fitted with internal gyros to keep the interior level as it moves, Baba Yaga’s Hut is Irrisen Land’s most sought-after restaurant.

Lastwall Land

Shining white castles dot the landscape of this theme park area, and the majority of the cast members are dressed as crusaders in heavy armor made out of a lightweight material that resembles steel. The character of Watcher-Lord Ulthun II rides on horseback between these fortifications with a retinue of knights, occasionally engaging in mock battles with exaggerated “demons” (other employees in costume) that emerge from underground tunnels at preset locations. These skirmishes only occur if there are enough guests around to appreciate them, and afterward, Ulthun (who always wins, of course) attempts to recruit the guests into “the Crusade” that’s the last line of defense against demonic hordes. Rides and attractions within Lastwall Land include Castle Everstand Armory, where visitors can purchase replica weapons and armor; the Crusader War College, an interactive holographic experience where guests, acting as students, must help fend off a demonic horde; and the Fangwood Dragon, an exciting hovercoaster that features simulated attacks from a robotic green dragon.

Mwanga Land

Mwanga Land is replete with jungle canopies and winding rivers, amid which sits the vibrant city of Nantambu. The city is arranged in a series of concentric circles divided by canals. Glass wind chimes decorate most buildings, filling the city with a constant, pleasant tinkling sound. The very center of Nantambu holds the Magaambya Academy campus, where guests can purchase small magical trinkets and even participate in “classes” that teach them the basics of magic (fabricated with technomagic and holographic effects built in each classroom’s walls). The campus is overseen by characters given the title of Magic Warriors, guiding each day’s students through the exercises and offering gentle words of encouragement. Outside Nantambu, visitors can enjoy the Vanji River Cruise, which leads through areas of simulated danger and eventually over a waterfall; the Screaming Jungle, an incredibly fast hovercoaster that zips around and through massive trees; and the Ruins of Kho Fun Center, which is constructed to look like the crash site of an ancient flying city and features indoor skydiving, wall climbing, and miniature golf.

Osirion Land

Sand-blasted stone pyramids stretching across a vast desert are Osirion Land’s claim to fame. Though the sun beats down mercilessly on the park, plenty of shaded areas and stalls selling cold drinks can be found, and employees are trained to recognize the early signs of heat stroke in a variety of species. Should a worker spot someone struggling, they’re instructed

DOWNTIME ON GOLARION WORLD

Golarion World is primarily a vacation destination, and player characters who perform the following downtime activities at the park gain the listed additional benefits.

Carouse: With many fine restaurants and bars all across the planet—especially in the pirate-themed Shackles Water Park—the stress-relieving experiences of Golarion World stick with you a bit longer. A successful carouse downtime activity performed here lasts for twice as long, meaning your extra Resolve Point (or points) aren’t lost until the end of the second day following the Fortitude saving throw.

Lounge: Whether by going on some relaxing rides or simply traveling the countryside to absorb the history of Golarion, you’re more invigorated by the time you pass here. First, you don’t need to remain in one space to perform this downtime activity (as long as you remain on the planet and don’t do anything stressful). Second, the number of temporary Hit Points you gain the following day is increased by your key ability score modifier.

Work Out: In addition to family attractions, Golarion World offers immersive but taxing “experience packages” for guests who want to sample what it was like to live on lost Golarion. These long-term trips into the wilderness outside of main park areas can be grueling. A successful work out downtime activity here confers a +2 circumstance bonus to the rerolls granted by the activity.

to get them into one of the air-conditioned buildings nearby under the auspices of “an urgent audience with the Ruby Prince.” Then, that character arrives a few minutes later to formally welcome the guest to Osirion Land and sometimes even put on an impromptu magic performance. As such, for a cast member to undertake the role of the Ruby Prince, they must have considerable talent in spellcasting or sleight of hand. The Sphinx Head is a haunted house-style ride where guests are accosted by mummies and giant scarab beetles, while the Pyramid of Doom is an “escape room” experience popular with guests who enjoy solving complex puzzles; reservations for this attraction must be made at least 1 day in advance.

Shackles Land

Shackles Land is a massive pirate-themed water park that’s situated on and around dozens of small islands. The guest monorail arrives at Port Peril, which holds the majority of the park’s restaurants, accommodations, and changing areas. Small “pirate ships”—sailed water taxis with hidden motors—ferry guests from attraction to attraction, with the small crews pretending to press-gang their passengers into service. The boisterous character of the Hurricane King can show up just about anywhere across Shackles Land to enforce the pirate’s code, which generally means prodding a guest who doesn’t look like they’re having fun to walk the plank into the temperature-controlled ocean. Other roaming characters include Tessa Fairwind, a friendly red-haired captain, and the Master of the Gales, a curmudgeonly druid. Shackles Land is the favorite of many younger visitors, who enjoy attractions such as the Eye of Abendego, a coaster that

simulates riding through a hurricane; Raptor Island, a petting zoo that's home to small, genetically engineered dinosaurs; and The Smoker, a barbecue eatery situated within a fake volcano.

Taldor Land

The architecture of Taldor Land consists mainly of quaint villas with gently sloping roofs and the occasional manor house. The cast members dress in high collars, puffy breeches, and shoes with buckles on them, and they're trained to speak in an exaggeratedly formal manner. Occasionally, the quiet and dignified air is broken by the appearance of the character of Queen Eutropia Stavian and her hound Taldogis gleefully parading down the streets, greeting one and all with friendly waves and smiles (though Taldogis is more prone to lick a guest). Queen Eutropia is a very popular character, especially with preteen guests, as she's always keen to ask them about themselves and their plans for the future. A twice weekly "Tea with the Queen" event is often booked up months in advance. In addition, this park also contains a large ranch for breeding and raising pot-bellied bulettes (page 73) out on the plains. Taldor Land's rides include the Seven Towers, a series of drop towers that function concurrently; the Secret of Kith Academy, a comedic, interactive ride that has guests "recruited" into the notorious spy organization the Lion Blades at a bardic college; and Sellen River Rapids, a log flume that ends at a chaotic sawmill.

Ustalav Land

The misty moors and decrepit, cobweb-filled buildings of Ustalav Land tell a story of a land haunted by ghosts, specters, and other things that go bump in the night. Artificial clouds keep this park in a state of perpetual gloom, and the pale cast members wear dour expressions along with their black hats and waistcoats. Most of the taller structures are festooned with gargoyles or tall spires. The rides and attractions tend toward the spooky, including Gallowspire Grave, a dark ride where guests can witness the escape of the lich Tar-Baphon (also known as the Whispering Tyrant) firsthand, and Carrion Hills, a twisting hovercoaster that races through several cemeteries. To fight the seemingly pervasive melancholy, the dual character of Ailson Kindler wanders the park. First, she appears as an old, gray-haired woman looking to tell stories of her past fighting monsters. Then, a second character shows up as the young Ailson, usually at the same time as the aforementioned creatures, for a staged battle.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Though it's meant to be a place of relaxation, leisure, and carefully controlled "danger," Golarion World holds plenty of opportunities for true adventures.

Danger on Raptor Island: The Raptor Island petting zoo features dinosaurs genetically engineered to be much smaller than their kin. An accident in the underground hatching facility beneath the island creates a highly aggressive species of compsognathus with chameleon-like skin. The camouflaged dinosaurs escape their confines and begin terrorizing the island above.

Hell Comes to Cheliax Land: A contingent of Hellknights takes a break from enforcing their ideas of the law to visit

Golarion Land, staying in Cheliax Land. They find the depiction of the land very amusing, but their vacation is cut short when a faction of the Cult of the Devourer crashes their starship into Cheliax Land as retribution for past altercations. Devourer survivors attack randomly, looking for the Hellknights, who are currently without their iconic armor.

History Mystery: A prominent historian of lost Golarion goes missing while visiting Golarion World. New Horizons quietly hires a group of adventurers to scour the park and find the scholar before word reaches the galactic press. The investigation eventually leads into the All-Ways and a closed, underground area of the park called Darklands Grotto that's still under construction. Creepy things lurk in the dark below, especially near a cave whose walls are covered with ancient symbols that link Zinn-2 to lost Golarion!

Long Live the Queen: A group of oft-returning visitors calling themselves the New Ulfen Guard have a fixation with Queen Eutropia of Taldor Land, regardless of which cast member portrays her. They come to the park dressed in furs and begin "guarding" the character, to the point of interfering with other guests attempting to interact with her. When park security arrives to speak with the New Ulfen Guard, they produce actual weapons from a *null-space chamber* and fight back. They take the queen hostage and retreat into a nearby coffee shop.

Power Cube Peril: Suddenly, Golarion World's power cubes produce energy spikes, leaving guests stuck on out-of-control rides or trapped within attractions whose automatic doors won't open. To make matters worse, energy is being siphoned into a previously unknown device at the center of the planet. What will happen when it's fully powered up? Are the original builders of the power cubes returning?

School of Hard Knocks: Zo! brings a new show to Golarion World with teams competing to best a series of specially designed challenges within the Magaambya Academy attraction. With the winning "class" set to receive 1,000,000 credits, competition gets fierce, and production nearly stops when a malfunctioning effect injures one of the crew. Though the event appears to be sabotage, the undead producer opts to continue the production.

Tar-Baphon Awakens: Tael Anyari purchases a strange relic offworld to add some historical verisimilitude to the Tar-Baphon mascot costume, not realizing the item is cursed. The next cast member to don the costume is granted magic power that rivals that of the ancient lich, warping their personality into one obsessed with conquering Golarion World.

Weather Woes: The climate-control satellites that keep Irrisen Land in perpetual winter and Shackles Land sunny and warm are infected with a computer virus. A collection of militant Eoxians takes responsibility and threatens to unleash blizzards, tornadoes, and worse if their demands aren't met. They want Geb Land shut down due to its depiction of undead beings.

Whistledown Worries: A serial killer stalks the streets of Whistledown, targeting employees who work in Ustalav Land. The murders are staged to look like vampire attacks, with blood drained from each victim through a pair of puncture wounds in the neck. Despite a curfew, the killer continues to find prey.

GOLARION WORLD SERUMS

The many restaurants and snack stands across Golarion World's parks offer a variety of food and drink, including the fizzy, syrupy Golarion World serums, each of which comes in a different flavor and confers some beneficial effect upon drinking. Guests can purchase these serums by the bottle or have them mixed with tonic water or alcoholic spirit for a refreshing cocktail. Due to their popularity, New Horizons Luxury Retreats has begun selling its line of Golarion World serums across the galaxy, though the prices of the flavors presented here might be higher outside the theme parks.

These serums function similarly to *serums of enhancement* (Starfinder Core Rulebook 225), except where noted. They're effective when imbibed by a living creature and last for 1 hour.



CHELIAX CHERRY

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

This tangy, red beverage bears a label with a frustrated cartoon devil—complete with smoke coming out of its ears—paired with the phrase, “Quench a devil of a thirst!” The serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of evil outsiders.

GEB GRAPE

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

The label of this deep purple beverage features a bumbling cartoon zombie chasing after its own head as it rolls away. A slogan at the bottom of the label reads, “Chase the ghoulish flavor!” The serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of undead creatures.

LASTWALL LEMON

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

The label of this tart, yellow beverage features a cartoon armored knight holding a tower shield with a lemon emblazoned across it. Its slogan reads, “Your knight in citrus armor.” The serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of chaotic outsiders.

MWANGI MINT

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

Above text reading, “A garden of refreshment,” an image of a cartoonish giant carnivorous plant with mint-like leaves graces the label of this light green beverage. The serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of plant creatures.

OSIRION ORANGE

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

The label of this citrusy beverage features a shambling cartoon mummy wrapped in orange-tinged bandages, and a bit of cloth

trailing from it appears caught on a tiny pyramid. Beneath that is written, “Lift the curse of thirst!” The serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of creatures with the earth subtype.

SHACKLES SOUR

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

This electric blue beverage comes in a bottle featuring a cartoon pirate with an exaggerated puckered mouth. A speech bubble coming from the pirate reads, “Sour me timbers!” The serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of creatures with the water subtype.

TALDOR TOFFEE

LEVEL 3

MAGIC ITEM **PRICE** 250 **BULK** L

Adorning this light brown beverage's label is a cartoon noble astride a horse and whose lance spears into a golden-furred lion above a slogan reading, “Classic flavor.” The sweet serum grants you a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of magical beasts.

POT-BELLIED BULETTE COMPANIONS

New Horizons Luxury Retreats' genetic engineers have reached back into the mists of lost Golarion's past to recreate one of that planet's most feared predators... in miniature form! By shrinking the original creature's size and dampening its voracious appetite, these scientists have essentially domesticated the bulette. The tiny, pot-bellied versions of these landsharks retain their iconic dorsal fin and ability to burrow through the earth.

POT-BELLIED BULETTE

LEVELS 2-8

Tiny magical beast

Senses blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Good Save Fort; **Poor Saves** Ref, Will

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee Attack jaws (P)

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

Ability Modifiers Str, Con

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Leaping Charge (Ex) As a full action, a pot-bellied bulette can jump, and if it enters an opponent's space at the end of a horizontal jump or the apex of a vertical jump, it can make a melee attack.

If the pot-bellied bulette jumps at least 20 feet horizontally or 5 feet vertically, it can make two melee attacks instead of one (with the standard -4 penalty to each attack). The pot-bellied bulette gains a +4 bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity for entering or leaving an opponent's space during this action.

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IZADAMAR

Recently resettled hyper industrialized ancient megacity.

IZADAMAR

LN megacity

Gravity standard

Atmosphere Normal

Day 20 hours; **Year** 2 years

Population 48,183 (15% nelentu, 15% tekian, 14% izalguun, 12% thyr, 7% human, 5% match, 5% sygnathrix, 4% SRO, 23% other)

Government Council

Languages Common, Izalguun, Jinsul, Ysoki

Qualities academic, surrounded by the past, technologically advanced

QUALITIES

Surrounded By the Past The citizens of this settlement live among the vestiges of their distant ancestors, though they can't usually take full advantage of such relics.

ECONOMY

Exports alloys, tech relics, technological items

Imports food, fuel, textiles

Maximum Item Level 12th

Specialty Item Level technological items (18th)

NPCS

Captain Alis Sandel (LN female human soldier), Aspis Consortium councilor

Dezarin (CG female sarcesian^{AA} vanguard), Starfinder Society venture-captain

Dr. Evos Kinsari (LG genderfluid ryphorian^{AA}), ecologist, city founder, and Frozen Trove councilor

Famaani (N nonbinary izalguun^{AA3}), Izald-Mar councilor

Grand Conservator Numuur (LG male izalguun^{AA3}), high priest of Kadrical

Jadnura (LN male kasatha solarian), retired First Seeker of the Starfinder Society

Professor Reiloh Tivaa (LG female damaya lashunta), Qabarat University councilor

Whispers Words of Truth (NG agender thyr), Fastness of the Past councilor

Moscaru: Izadamar is a cultural wonder! A city, built upon a military camp, built upon an ancient... megacity? Truly magnificent! The care this city's architects give to restoring—rather than just rebuilding—its ancient buildings and sites shows the great care and attention that—

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**Sprax:** Fear!**Moscaru:** What?**Sprax:** I'm just correcting you! It's a sign of fear, isn't it? Of that god of theirs. Kiddie-Cal or something? The child. The one that throws tantrums if you take his stuff.**Moscaru:** Nonsense, Sprax! Buildings of such beauty aren't built on fear! They're built on love. And Kadrical isn't an infant; he's a preserver, a protector, a lover of history, and... just to be safe, never say that again.

Ages ago, a people known as the izalguuns^{AA3} constructed hyper-industrialized megacities that spanned nations, with 20 of them covering most of the planet Agillae-4 (one of many planets in the Scoured Stars system). However, as they became disillusioned by their overly protective god, Kadrical, the inhabitants fled. Their semi-automated metropolises gradually fell to ruin, though various buildings and technological defenders survived the millennia. Recently, the izalguuns' old neighbors, the nefarious jinsuls, returned to the Scoured Stars and converted part of Agillae-4 into a military station to assist in their conquest of the system and Kadrical himself. However, a coalition of other one-time Scoured Stars species and the

Starfinder Society repelled the jinsuls, and for the first time in memory, izalguuns have returned to Agillae-4.

A team of scientists from Triaxus have established Data Relay 13, a long-term camp nestled amid the downtown of one of the abandoned megacities known as Izadamar (an imperfect transliteration of its ancient name, Izald-Mar). Alongside them settled the descendants of Izadamar's original builders, izalguuns, who endeavor to understand their ancient ancestors' culture, technologies, and history. Since then, archaeologists, ecologists, explorers, historians, corporations, prospectors, past residents of the Scoured Stars system, and members of the god Kadrical's growing church have all trickled in, settling amid the megacity's original architecture (designed for the Large izalguuns), jinsul infrastructure (made for this Medium species), and the never-ending renovations by new arrivals. And surrounding Izadamar are millions of square miles of unexplored urban landscape.

GEOGRAPHY

The Scoured Stars consists of three stars—Agillae, Bastiar, and Callion—that revolve around a common barycenter. The orange dwarf star Agillae contains five terrestrial planets within its habitable zone. Agillae-4 is the most developed of these worlds, a temperate planet mostly covered by ruined,

IZADAMAR

interconnecting massive megacities, much like the Ring of Nations that encircles Verces. While migrants resettle and rebuild Izadamar, beyond that city's core stretches an urban jungle reclaimed by wildlife, defended by ancient technological defenses, and likely hiding unique treasures left behind by izardguuns of a bygone age.

At Izadamar's center lies its vast spaceport, constructed by izardguuns long ago to build the colony starships they used to escape their world. During their brief occupation, jinsuls converted the area into an airfield for sleek fighter craft and renovated part of the building to fit their grim aesthetic: sharp lines, prominent spikes, and dark colors. After the spaceport was abandoned by both occupants and partially renovated yet again to create some comfortable boarding gates, check-in kiosks, and restaurants, only a fraction of the motley spaceport remains fully operational. However, that's plenty to accommodate the city's slowly growing traffic. Decommissioned and destroyed jinsul surface-to-air artillery pepper the perimeter, and every month, salvagers uncover another stash of abandoned jinsul munitions.

Jinsuls knocked down hundreds of buildings to create a large perimeter road around the spaceport with radiating streets, but most of them end abruptly after less than a mile—a massive, incomplete construction project the jinsuls abandoned when they evacuated the system. Where these spokes trail off unofficially marks modern Izadamar's city limits. Within, most

of the landscape has been at least casually surveyed and mapped, though secrets still remain.

Beyond, ancient izardguun architecture encompasses countless thousands of square miles. Partially collapsed buildings and unchecked vegetation challenge even the toughest land vehicles. Thousands of animal and plant species have reclaimed the skyscrapers, creating metallic towers brimming with grasses, trees, vines hundreds of feet long, and beasts of all descriptions that scurry and fly between these artificial microbiomes. Six-limbed robotic sentries built in the izardguuns' image occasionally reactivate in the rubble, resuming long-expired instructions. If rumors can be trusted, a divergent lineage of izardguuns still lives deep in the urban wastes, fiercely defending their ancestral home world. It's equally likely that these are ghosts of the ancient inhabitants haunting the ruins—not that such proves any more comforting to explorers. Scans have failed to reveal the truth of these divergent izardguuns, though many of their modern kin have returned to search for them.

It's little wonder that inhabitants refer to this expanse that covers most of the planet simply as "The Ruin." Each year, blocks and blocks of the Ruin are repaired, repurposed, and reinhabited as the city continues its exponential growth. The resettled downtown consists of four informal neighborhoods: the Core at the city's center, the Hub alongside the jinsul roads, the reinhabited Sprawl, and the dangerous and unexplored Ruin.

RESIDENTS

Izadamar is a figurative gateway to the Scoured Stars system that accommodates not only countless colonists and the various organizations interested in Izadamar, but also the explorers, prospectors, traders, and surveyors intent on studying and exploiting the largely unknown (yet historically rich) Scoured Stars system. Virtually none of the residents have lived here for more than the few years since the jinsuls' departure, and those exceptions are the survivors from the Starfinder Society's tragic first expedition to this region a few years earlier. The new residents display diversity in form and purpose, though most are driven by optimism and curiosity. They seek answers, connections, excitement, fame, home, history, wealth, and more—and they come here by choice, bound together by hope for their future.

Izalguuns built ancient Izald-Mar, and jinsuls founded Data Relay 13, yet Izadamar's leading force is Frozen Trove Labs, a Triaxian megacorporation with a cutthroat corporate culture. Once overseen by a powerful white dragon, the company has been dealing with the recent death of its scaly CEO. Two dark horse contenders have seized the company's reins—even eliminating some of the dragon's ambitious heirs. Now **Beshikasiss** (NE female dragonkin^{AA}) and **Xall** (LE male rhyphorian^{AA}) continue Frozen Trove's genetics and biotech development for commercial and industrial use. However, the more that explorers uncover in the Ruin, the more the duo reconsider their priorities here. They visit periodically to manage new endeavors directly, including salvage operations and the reverse engineering of forgotten izalguun sciences. As a result, dragonkin^{AA}, rhyphorians^{AA}, kobolds^{IS}, and even young dragons frequent the city, often in service of Frozen Trove.

A large portion of Izadamar's populace consists of adventurers, educated professionals, their staff, and their families. Archaeologists, historians, and ecologists (many with ties to universities, museums, libraries, and research centers) come to learn, record, and discover. Meanwhile, explorers, surveyors, prospectors, and corporate researchers arrive to salvage and plunder. Among the prominent groups present are lashuntas from Castrovel's universities, thyrs from the Fastness of the Past (a museum of Scoured Stars history), dwarf miners from Ulrikka Clanholdings, the budget tech start-up ProsperoCo, the Aspis Consortium, and of course, the Starfinder Society, who connected the Scoured Stars to the galactic community and helped defeat the jinsul army several years ago. As with any frontier operation, Izadamar attracts its share of opportunists, merchants, arms dealers (especially those dealing in old jinsul weapons), entertainers, and more—anyone aiming to make life amid the ruins a little brighter and more chaotic.

Yet, most residents just seek a new life on a new world. The Returned comprise a large fraction, referring to those species that originated among the Scoured Stars, fled the god Kadrical, and returned only recently. They include nelentus, tekians, thyrs, and more (described further on page 79). After countless generations, the grievances their ancestors held against Kadrical have waned; many hope primarily to rediscover and rehabilitate their home worlds. Most of these settlers hail from the Kreiholm Freehold, a distant group of

DOWNTIME IN IZADAMAR

Analyze Sample: Izadamar has many scientists and researchers on hand to help identify mysterious technology. When you use analyze sample to identify a technological item, treat the DC to identify that item as 2 lower. If you're a member of one of Izadamar's major corporations, such as Frozen Trove Labs, ProsperoCo, the Salvager's Union, Ulrikka Clanholdings, or the Starfinder Society, you instead treat the DC to identify that item as 4 lower.

Plan Route: Izadamar is the gateway to the Scoured Stars system, and the tour guides at the Interplanetary Exploration Hub are always willing to lend galactic explorers a helping hand. While in Izadamar, you can plan a route to any star system, planet, or settlement that has been discovered in the Scoured Stars. It doesn't need to be well-known.

planets whose inhabitants include many species from that ancient diaspora.

Izalguuns living here fit into two broad identities: those whose ancestors fled to far-off Izalraan and those who remained behind on Agillae-4. The ancient emigrants abandoned their high-tech lifestyle and developed an agrarian society, and those izalguuns returning here consider the technological remnants dangerous and best left undisturbed. Instead, they've begun cataloging and breeding the rampant vegetation, developing local crops to feed the growing city. The ones who remained behind continued with seminomadic lives, hunting feral beasts, scavenging materials from their crumbling megacities, and devising unique technologies and augmentations over the millennia. Some of these izalguuns have settled permanently in Izadamar (which they call Izald-Mar), while some others frequent nearby regions. For a steep fee, they'll sometimes guide expeditions through the Ruin, using their expertise to identify dangers and spot opportunities that are well worth their wages.

The most controversial residents of Izadamar are followers of Kadrical, the jealous god who resides within the Scoured Stars system and considers it his domain. Historically, Kadrical was a callous and envious deity who imprisoned the system's inhabitants to protect and preserve them. The god has shown tremendous philosophical growth since reawakening, however. While he remains vulnerable to jealous outbursts, he has given his blessing for the system to join the galactic community and for its inhabitants to come and go as they please. Though fanatical, Kadrical's followers also provide a needed voice of reason in the city. They limit what archaeological artifacts and resources are removed from the Scoured Stars in the spirit of cultural preservation—and to keep Kadrical from growing angry over the looting.

Sprax: Wow, there's way more green in this city than I expected! Gardens everywhere! Even on the roofs!

Moscaru: Fascinating, isn't it? Supposedly, ancient Izald-Mar produced much of its food in towering gardens and massive laboratories. When they fled the system, those plants and animals broke free.

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Sprax: Wait, so those vines hanging a hundred feet from the skyscraper are—

Moscaru: —the equivalent of feral zucchini, yes. Those vines evolved to capture prey to obtain much-needed nitrogen, so don't go playing around them. Biotechnicians are trying to breed a less dangerous variant.

Sprax: I love it! It makes all the buildings look like they're wearing happy little hats!

Moscaru: Hats? No no, this is about Izadamar's food security and... hm. Oh dear, now I can't unsee it.

Sprax: You're welcome!

SOCIETY

As Frozen Trove's research station grew, it required peripheral services like stores, custodians, and guards, which swiftly attracted an eclectic mix of migrants. The company knew its employees couldn't control a burgeoning city, so it formed a council that would include a single representative from each major organization represented by the city's population. As the

city's founder (in a manner of speaking), Frozen Trove Labs holds the most prominent council seat as first among equals. Since this system allowed even newly arrived factions a say in the city's governance—so long as they brought adequate numbers and support with them—this council achieved legitimacy quickly. So far, preexisting organizations like the Aspis Consortium, ProsperoCo, Qabarat University, Ulrikka Clanholdings, and the Starfinder Society have earned seats, as have several newly founded groups. Of the latter, several focus on preserving and reclaiming the Scoured Stars for its original occupants, such as the Fastness of the Past and two distinct izalguun groups termed the Izald-Mar and the Izalraan. Others emphasize the planet's possibilities for new arrivals, such as the Salvager's Union, Settlers' Alliance, and the Returned.

Because Izadamar is only a few years old and includes an eclectic mix of inhabitants, its culture experiences constant flux as its society receives and tests new ideas. Those who travel here are often bold and outspoken; this trend sparked friction between the earliest factions, whose members openly antagonized and undercut each other. Quashing a nascent dueling culture was among the council's first objectives; while citizens rarely resolve their disputes with laser pistols now, that early violence instigated grudges and unresolved blood feuds that periodically reawaken even today. Despite such sentiments, the city's widespread sense of cooperation holds firm. With

untold dangers lurking in the Ruin, the average citizen knows that internal strife would be the death of Izadamar. Under such threat, even unlikely partnerships have flourished.

Whether on purpose or through accidental appropriation, locals have adopted an array of "izalguun-isms." Much as an izalguun might rear onto their hind legs to bring their four front limbs to solve a problem, bipedal neighbors deliberately stand up straighter and roll their shoulders back to signal that they're taking a problem seriously.

RELATIONS

As the eminent settlement in the Scoured Stars system, Izadamar acts as the unofficial gateway to the Scoured Stars. It's a way station, a supply depot, a trading center, and a place to seek medical aid or starship repairs. Thanks to the habitability and opportunity density of numerous Scoured Stars planets, new corporations, organizations, and unaffiliated fortune-seekers arrive in Izadamar monthly.

Belkaine Industries, Temetera, and OiGoCorp are recent corporate arrivals that are evaluating their options by performing exploratory missions throughout the Agillae, Bastiar, and Callion systems, respectively, before deciding where to put down roots. Apostae, Verces, and the *Idari* have likewise sent delegations to the city. While Apostae seeks unique weapons they can reengineer and mass produce in Apostae's arms factories, vercite agents investigate whether the rumored "technological wonders" coming out of Izadamar are worth further investment. Although kasathan ambassadors initially investigated whether any of the planets might serve as permanent homes for *Idari* citizens, their teachings



of Talavet have spurred fascination and religious collaboration with Kadrical's church to better revive local traditions.

Surprisingly, AbadarCorp is virtually absent. While the locals would welcome the funds, political clout, and infrastructure expertise AbadarCorp could bring to the table, the company's priests seem to fear and distrust Kadrical. Whereas Talavet's faithful celebrate and build upon the Scoured Stars' past, Abadar's reputation for acquisition might inadvertently incite Kadrical's wrath.

Perhaps the city's greatest allies are the Starfinder Society, who played an important role in establishing the system's independence and safety. With a lodge far larger than they can effectively use (page 81), the Society leads many expeditions into the Ruin.

FACES OF THE SCOURED STARS

With a history of isolation, most of the Scoured Stars species are largely unknown to the Pact Worlds. The following introduces many of the species that evolved here, including those nelentus, matoh, tekians, and thyrs who emigrated ages ago to form the Kreiholm Freehold.

Izalguun^{AA3}: Izalguuns are horse-sized, six-limbed creatures with vertically oriented mouths. Their lower arms are bulkier and elongated, allowing them to use these arms as a second set of legs. In the distant past, they built technologically advanced megacities, including Izald-Mar and the other cities on Agillae-4. Most fled the Scoured Stars for Izalraan, also known as Icefront, and adopted a peaceful agrarian lifestyle with limited technology. Those who remained became scavengers.

Jinsul^{AA3}: Jinsuls are chitinous, six-legged creatures with powerful forelimbs, three rows of hooked pincers, and dozens of eyes. Although fanatical followers of Kadrical, jinsuls contorted the faith to justify their bloodthirsty conquests before being driven from the Scoured Stars. Unconfirmed jinsul sightings are a weekly occurrence, more urban myth than reality, but there's a very real possibility that hidden jinsul bunkers survived, still inhabited by soldiers unaware that they lost the war.

Matoh^{SFS1-39}: Matohs are pale, eyeless, tubular creatures that evolved from parasitic brain worms. Matohs prefer living in wetlands, and as no such spaces yet exist in Izadamar, many take to bathing in a mix of dirt and a sticky oil secreted by some of the city's broken tech and buildings. While this sludge-like runoff hasn't had a discernible effect on matohs so far, they've become obsessively protective of their "bathing pools."

Nelentu^{AA4}: Nelentus are winged, bat-like humanoids who coexist in symbiosis with a telepathic fungus called entus. Nelentus who stay too close to the spaceport at the Core report hearing strange psychic murmurs with no discernible source. While this led some to fear that hidden chambers remain within the spaceport, others worry the murmur is their entu's psychic death cries.

Syngnathrix^{SS}: Syngnathrixes are magically adept amphibious monstrous humanoids with two or three-finned prehensile tails. They walk like other bipeds with augmentations or via the use of magic.

Tekian^{SFS1-39}: Tekians are silicon-based living machines with a nervous system resembling sophisticated circuitry. They have

elongated heads, a triangle of round eyes, and skin like liquid mercury. They require both ammonia and electricity to live, both of which are thankfully easy to acquire in Izadamar and to scavenge from the Ruin. A growing minority of tekians believe the ancient megacity isn't a city, but rather a complex machine whose streets serve as circuits and buildings as data nodes. Calling themselves Students of Mar, these tekians increasingly obsess over "turning on" the city, which many theorize would be a terror to behold.

Thyr: Thyrs are intelligent gases that live in containment suits and communicate through telepathy. Thyrs have a long memory, and many can recite tales, legends, and songs from long before the Gap, when their people lived within the Scoured Stars. Several thyrs have begun overlaying these ancient stories' references to Izadamar's surroundings, hiring trustworthy explorers to investigate what might be intact troves of lost lore.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The most obvious and persistent threat to Izadamar is also its greatest draw: the Ruin. When the ancient izalguuns fled ages ago, they inadvertently left behind countless creatures that have grown over time. Massive vines cover much of the urban jungle, providing a home for factory-farmed livestock that escaped in ages past that have since evolved into tenacious beasts like brachiating bovine loukans and tazighasts, four-winged fowl that now grow to dangerous sizes. The jinsuls' arrival disrupted the planet's hardscrabble ecosystems, and many of these larger predators have developed a taste for humanoid flesh.

The izalguuns' ancient robots still amble about, performing mockeries of their last assigned tasks or reawakening suddenly when they detect nearby life. These technomagical constructs often ignore other creatures, following obsolete orders to defend key areas—but some develop new priorities over time as they struggle to find purpose, however violent, in their decaying world. Others latch onto the first izalguun they perceive, loudly demanding instructions or validation that attracts threats.

For all its dangers, the Ruin attracts many fortune-seekers. While they often band together in groups for their own safety, some form roving gangs that rob citizens of supplies and discoveries. Both the Salvager's Union and the Settler's Alliance have petitioned the council for help in suppressing these raids, and while the council agrees the task is of paramount importance, members can't agree whose responsibility it should be. In the interim, the council condones vigilante peacekeeping—a practice that Ulrikka Clanholdings believes could do more harm than good. Were that not enough, an untold number of jinsul marauders still inhabit the Ruin, having either failed to evacuate the system years ago or willingly stayed behind to prepare for future violence.

On a political front, shell corporations owned by Frozen Trove Labs, ProsperoCo, and the Aspis Consortium have settled in Izadamar and requested council seats—a move intended to gain their parent companies greater control over the planet. Curiously, the most ardent opponent of these underhanded tactics is ecologist Dr. **Evos Kinsari** (LG genderfluid ryphorian^{AA}), representing the city's 24 original founders from Frozen Trove, who stubbornly resist any attempts to usurp their power.

Sprax: I get to choose the next trip: Ganifrae's Rings!

Moscaru: Oh, I haven't heard of that place. Is it a restaurant? A jewelry store? I could use a new bracelet, and the izalguun revivalist styles capture local history so well.

Sprax: Even better: they're giant floating rings in the Ruin, and when they spin, you can hear her voice!

Moscaru: Her? Her who?

Sprax: Dunno! Some dead vesk lady, maybe?

Moscaru: Sprax, need I remind you that vesk don't exactly have a pristine track record for their treatment of skittermanders, and—

Sprax: C'mon, Moscaru! We could make nufriends. I bet she's lonely and dying for a friend!

Moscaru: She's dying? Or you are? No, no, no! No corpse, ghosts, or hungry ghouls today. What's your second choice of destination?

Sprax: ...Fine. Second choice, huh? Okay, there's this old jinsul bunker nearby full of fascinating deathtraps that—

Moscaru: It's going to be one of those survive-by-the-skin-of-our-mandibles days again, isn't it?

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations are in Izadamar.

The Assemblage

Within the grand halls of this remodeled skyscraper, the Council meets to decide the fate of the city. In addition to the council hall, a court, and numerous offices, each councilor has an entire floor for their own use—often as a place to recruit specialized agents to advance their personal goals rather than government business. Archaeologists looking for support or work might visit Professor **Reiloh Tivaa** (LG female damaya lashunta), councilor for Qabarat University, or **Whispers Words of Truth** (NG agender thyr), councilor for Fastness of the Past, a museum based in the Kreiholm Freehold. Captain **Alis Sandel** (LN female human soldier) of the Aspis Consortium seems to have a limitless need for mercenaries, and though the Starfinder Society's retired First Seeker **Jadnura** (LN male kasatha solarian) likewise hires capable warriors, he's far more discerning about their moral disposition than combat skills.

Beneath the Assemblage, locked behind countless layers of security, resides the Dawn Facet, a 9-foot-tall golden stone carved with triangular sides. The stone recently appeared without warning or any indication of its origin. It now hovers, spins, and occasionally emits a keening song. The council tries to keep the stone's existence a secret, having appointed a coalition of unaffiliated scientists to determine its purpose and origin. Even then, however, agents have infiltrated this research team, and many of the academics owe secret allegiance to the various ruling factions.

The Brewin' Ruin

This crowded tavern in the Sprawl is a favorite stomping ground for many of the city's independent explorers, looters, and hunters

who spend most of their time within the Ruin. The food here is simple but nourishing, the drinks are cheap, and the patrons are relatively welcoming. **M-VOX** (NG genderfluid SRO^{pw}), or M for short, diligently manages the establishment, wagging their comically large false eyebrows and telling well-intentioned (but rarely funny) jokes to make everyone feel welcome. Assisting them are a host of "bits," tiny robots that scurry, roll, and fly around the bar to deliver food, take orders, and tidy up.

The citizens who frequent the Brewin' Ruin are a tight-knit community, and most patrons are happy to trade tales, tips, and advice with one another. **Yoriak** (LG male tekian), a longtime explorer and father of four adopted orphans, is attempting to organize these eager citizens to gain them a voice at the council table. Called the R-Corps (short for the Ruin-Corps), the group is more akin to a club and support group than an organized lobby. The R-Corps are only a few dozen shy of reaching enough members to succeed and secure a council seat. Regardless, the name is catching on, and many citizens now refer to any independent Ruin worker as an Arc.

Ganifrae's Rings

These five giant rings consist of various alloys and partly protrude from the Ruin's ground at various heights and angles, with one hovering about 12 feet off the ground at its lowest point. On stormy days, the rings rotate in place, churning the surrounding earth and stone. **Ganifrae** (NE female dragonkin^{AA}), an explorer from Frozen Trove Labs, discovered this feature, gaining notoriety with the impressive find. However, on her third trip to the site, Ganifrae vanished. Since then, the rings' few visitors complain about "hearing her voice," whose barely intelligible words warn and encourage listeners about the site with equal frequency. The only survivor of Ganifrae's last expedition is her lover **Egelmyr** (N female dragonkin^{AA}), who resides alone in the Hub. She has been nonverbal since Ganifrae's disappearance and responds to most questions with a shake of her head. Frozen Trove representatives have posted a large reward for anyone who can determine the purpose of Ganifrae's Rings. Few are tempted.

Izadamar Housing Authority

Despite countless square miles of ready-made real estate, Izadamar's population remains low. To coax visitors to reside here permanently, the city's leadership established the IHA, which functions as a glorified information kiosk. Its virtual intelligence tour guides provide an overview of the trinary star system and local opportunities. For anyone who elects to stay, the system also randomly assigns the new resident an unoccupied home of appropriate size. Though Izadamar is committed to distributing homes and workspaces for free until it reaches a population of 100,000, these spaces are notorious for being fixer-uppers that rely on the resident's work to be made habitable. Plenty are even cursed or haunted, and a small industry has arisen for hiring exterminators and exorcists to clear out newly owned buildings. There's credits to be made for most adventurers coming to Izadamar, as the housing authority regularly puts out calls for assistance in clearing out notable infestations.

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Izadamar Lodge

After expelling the jinsul invaders a few years ago, the Starfinder Society claimed one of the larger jinsul bunkers to renovate and use as its local lodge. Overseeing operations is Venture-Captain **Dezarin** (CG female sarcesian^{AA} vanguard), a respected survivor of the Scoured Stars Incident who chose to remain here despite the injuries and emotional trauma she suffered. She strives to study the ancient cultures of the Scoured Stars, search for any Starfinders who might still be stranded throughout the system, and keep a watch on Kadrical and his followers.

However, the greatest discoveries might be beneath the lodge itself. After clearing what they could and identifying some sealed doors best left undisturbed, Starfinders barricaded several of the bunker's spare wings to focus on outfitting the space they needed. Once she has the agents and bandwidth, Dezarin hopes to send a team deeper into the bunker to see what other jinsul and izalguun secrets might lie below.

Museum of the Honored Past

This large museum in the Core is a joint venture between Qabarat University, Fastness of the Past, and the Sanctuary of the Protector. Managed by Curator **Etengi** (N dualgender nelentu^{AAA}), a well-respected historian of the Scoured Stars and its associated cultures, this building specializes in restoring, preserving, and displaying historical objects recovered from Izald-Mar. That said, the museum attracts few tourists, so its

patrons periodically apply pressure for staff to send relics to the Kreiholm Freehold and the Pact Worlds for display. Considering this artifact export a form of looting, Kadrical's faith regularly protests any removal. In most cases, the museum appeases the protesters by donating any religious relics to the Sanctuary of the Protector. Still, it doesn't help that Curator Etengi pays a nominal fee for any relics delivered to the museum, no questions asked. It's not enough to encourage looting, but it does mean some finds reach the museum rather than a scrapper's yard.

Sanctuary of the Protector

Originally constructed by ancient izalguuns long before the city's abandonment, the Sanctuary of the Protector functions as the center of worship of Kadrical, patron god of the Scoured Stars. In honor of Kadrical's role as a preserver, the building has been lovingly restored by his faithful and countless local engineers. Most of the jinsul's severe modifications have been removed, but a few (including a pulpit of polished amber and various ceremonial knives, sabers, and altars) were placed on display within Preservation Hall, an on-site museum containing a variety of holy relics and religious iconography.

Under the watchful gaze of Grand Conservator **Numuur** (LG male izalguun), Kadrical's clergy do their part to protect the city's inhabitants and preserve the history of the izalguuns who once lived here. The site hosts daily services, some of which focus on wholly spiritual sermons and reflection,

whereas others are hands-on workshops where faithful bring in ancient treasures to restore to their old glory under master conservators' supervision. Either way, Izadamar's citizens know of Kadrical's past irritability and jealousy, and many attend services to appease him.

Station 4

This vast, ovoid tower is dotted with satellite dishes and labeled "Station 4" in flashy holographic letters. Once a massive communications and data-processing station used by jinsuls to coordinate their invasion, the site is now a power station that houses the planet's infosphere. Despite this being a standard copy used to start up remote infospheres, mysterious sites and data periodically appear on the network, much of it written in various ancient izalguun languages. These are usually fragments that seem to be from old text conversations, to-do lists, or user manuals, but occasionally they provide hints of tantalizing structures deep in the Ruin. Even as some urge caution about these phantom articles and their origins, digital archaeologists excitedly comb the infosphere for new discoveries they can sell like treasure maps to aspiring adventurers.

Station 4 also houses Izadamar's only news network. Its serious and overly proud news anchor **Upero** (LN nonbinary nelentu) is often upstaged by **Kimzi Crookclaw** (CN female kobold¹⁵), the most popular reporter. Kimzi's misadventures reporting anything from store openings to Ruin expeditions are universally comical and good-natured. Word on Izadamar's streets indicates **Kazkaruz** (LE male syngnathrix), manager of

Station 4, seeks "freelance combat specialists," though no one seems to know what for. While some claim he's in debt to the Aspis Consortium or looking for a specific relic from the Ruin, others claim the strange noises coming from Station 4 at night and the pallid green glow that occasionally rings its satellites indicate something more sinister at work.

Teki's Haul

Also known as the Dump, Teki's Haul is a massive dumping ground for any junk and debris cleared away during the city's expansion. **Teki Pipwhiskers** (CN female ysoki) and her crew of scrappers sift through this debris, salvaging reusable construction materials, breaking rubble into gravel, repairing scavenged tech, and recycling the remainder. While teams occasionally find valuable relics and other objects of interest, which Teki happily sells to the highest bidder, most of the scrapyards income comes from selling recycled construction materials. Claiming that "nothing goes to waste at Teki's," Teki and her crew accept most anything at their scrapyards and are always hiring laborers, engineers, scrappers, and guards. This operation comprises a huge fraction of the Salvager's Union, and though many believe the idea of unionizing originated with Teki, she has shown no interest in taking the Councilor's chair.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks provide compelling ways to begin adventures in and around Izadamar.

Forbidden Find: Archaeologists from Qabarat University discover a 50-foot-diameter sphere in the Ruin, mounted between buildings with cables and overgrown with moss and ivy. Beneath the plants, constantly shifting mathematical equations glow a faint purple on the sphere's surface. Despite the scholars' excitement, **Famaani** (N nonbinary izalguun), leader and councilor for the Izald-Mar, uses her authority to bar the university's further investigation. This doesn't technically stop unaffiliated explorers; unable to contain their curiosity, several academics seek freelance adventurers to document the find, run tests, and retrieve samples. Is Famaani protecting her ancestors' treasures, or does the sphere contain some dangerous secret best left undisturbed?

Left for Dead: Explorers uncover a recently abandoned camp that seems to have been used by a particular Starfinder agent—or their killer. When the Society confirms the agent has been missing since the Scoured Stars Incident, the Society mobilizes to find and rescue its missing comrade. However, the Starfinder is elusive, switching camps and evading search parties at every turn. Why doesn't the Starfinder want to be found? Is it a Starfinder at all? Or, is the Society chasing a ghost?

Night of Blades: A contingent of jinsul militants operating out of the Ruin wage war against Izadamar, attacking the Sprawl by night and retreating to their hidden base by day. While at



first the attacks seem like random street violence, each killing leaves more clues to the perpetrators' identity. Are these jinsuls attacking for mere sport, or is there a deeper purpose to their killing spree?

Subterranean Secrets: When a building collapses in the Ruin, cleanup crews discover the structure stood atop a complex tunnel network excavated by some great beast. The ancient passages now house dangerous creatures, many of which seem adapted to the lightless depths. What horrors lurk in the tunnels beneath Izadamar? The truth is connected to the beings who have continued to survive in the Scoured Stars since the time before its civilizations fled. A whole flock of Kadrical's unremembered children wait in the dark.

SPELLS

Izadamar's inhabitants have developed and popularized the following technomancer spells.

CONJURE GRENADE TECHNOMANCER 0

School conjuration (creation)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** no

You rapidly conjure and assemble the components to make a grenade, which you throw as part of the action used to cast this spell, requiring an attack roll to hit the intersection as normal. The grenade has a 20-foot range increment, deals 1d4 piercing damage, and has the explode (5 feet) property. Creatures in the affected area can attempt a Reflex save to halve the damage.

JUNK GRENADE TECHNOMANCER 1-5

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch

Targets 1 bulk of inert electronic equipment

Duration 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You transform a pile of technological junk into three grenades. You must target inert, nonworking electronic equipment of at least 1 bulk. Valid targets include a broken computer system, nonworking or unconnected computer or robot parts, a destroyed robot or another such trashed mechanical system, or any combination of related electronic components from the above, as long as the junk is found in sufficient quantity.

You're automatically proficient with these grenades, and these grenades function only for you. Each grenade's damage and explode radius varies by the spell's level. If the spell lets you choose between multiple damage types, you can choose for grenades to deal different damage types (for a grenade that deals energy damage, choose acid, cold, electricity, or fire). As a full action, you can change the damage and damage type of a *junk grenade* you're holding into a different type allowed by the spell. Creatures affected by a *junk grenade* can attempt a Reflex saving throw using your spell's saving throw DC to take half damage.

When you cast this spell as a 2nd-level or higher spell, rather than creating 3 grenades, you can choose to create 5 grenades

using the next lowest spell level (such as 5 grenades that deal 2d6 piercing damage when casting this as a 3rd-level spell).

1st: Each junk grenade deals 1d6 piercing damage and has an explode radius of 10 feet.

2nd: Each junk grenade deals 2d6 piercing damage and has an explode radius of 10 feet.

3rd: Each junk grenade deals either 4d6 piercing damage or 4d4 energy damage and has an explode radius of 10 feet.

4th: Each junk grenade deals either 6d6 piercing damage or 6d4 energy damage and has an explode radius of 15 feet.

5th: Each junk grenade deals either 8d6 piercing damage or 8d4 energy damage and has an explode radius of 10 feet.

6th: Each junk grenade deals either 11d6 piercing damage or 11d4 energy damage and has an explode radius of 15 feet.

MINIBOT MESSENGER TECHNOMANCER 1-2

School conjuration (summoning)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Duration 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

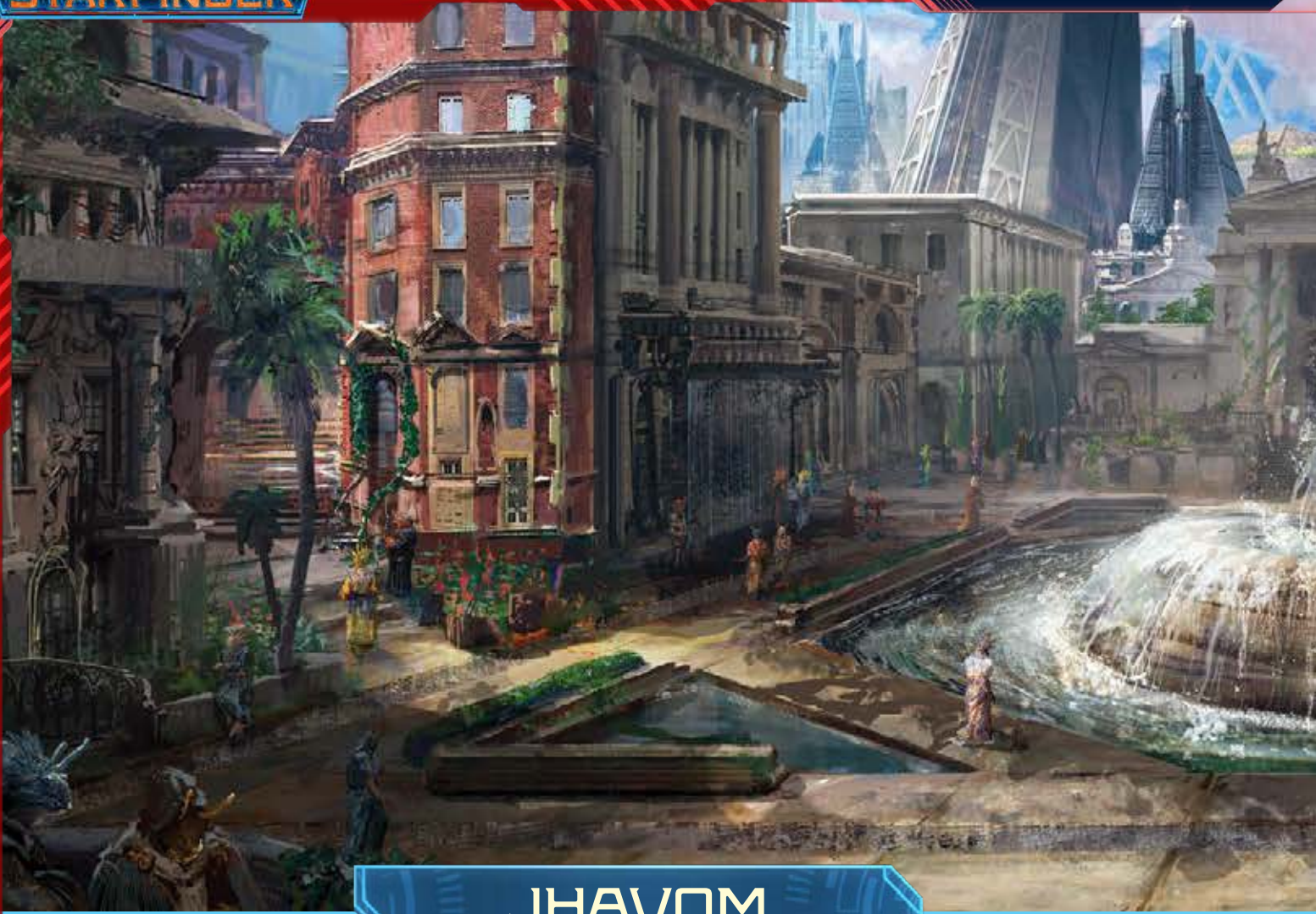
You conjure a miniature messenger robot that appears in your space. The robot is a Tiny construct with the technological subtype. Its KAC and EAC are each equal to 10 + your caster level, it uses your saving throw modifiers, it has the evasion ability of a 2nd-level operative, and it has a number of Hit Points equal to your caster level. It has a 30-foot land speed, a 30-foot fly speed with average maneuverability, and a Perception bonus equal to your caster level.

Until given instructions, the robot remains in your space, either following you or perching on you. As a move action, you can command the robot to deliver a message or deliver an object to a place or creature of your choice. Once commanded, and each round thereafter, the robot performs two move actions to travel toward the intended target. The robot seeks the recipient based on your simple instructions and its own senses, and if it can't find the recipient, it tries to return before the end of the spell's duration to report its failure.

Upon arriving, it plays back the message audibly (though you can choose for the robot to communicate via displayed text or sign language) or presents the object (which the recipient can take from the robot with a free hand without spending an action). The robot then lingers for 1 round, either recording a response of 10 words or less or accepting an item from the recipient, after which the robot travels back toward you and delivers that message or item. A message must be 10 words or less, though for every additional move action you spend instructing the robot, you can increase the message length by 3 words or by a number of words equal to your Intelligence modifier, whichever is greater. The robot can carry only an item of light bulk or negligible bulk.

1st: The robot travels a maximum distance from you equal to 100 feet plus 10 feet per caster level. Once it returns to you, the spell ends.

2nd: The robot travels a maximum distance from you equal to 1,000 feet plus 100 feet per caster level. The spell doesn't automatically end when the robot returns to you; you can command the robot to make a number of deliveries equal to 1 + 1 for every 4 caster levels you have before the spell ends.



JHAVOM

Center of divinely inspired scientific and academic pursuits.

JHAVOM

LG university city

Gravity standard

Atmosphere normal

Day 30 hours; **Year** 675 Days

Population 739,860 (62% osharu, 19% lashunta, 4% human, 1% kasatha, 14% other)

Government council (The Grand Council)

Languages Common, Osharu, Lashunta

Qualities academic, bureaucratic, cultured

ECONOMY

Exports academic materials, artificial chemicals, pharmaceuticals, prototyping technology

Imports raw materials, research subjects, scientific equipment

Maximum Item Level 15th

NPCS

Naspatu (LG nonbinary osharu mystic), chair of the Informational Safety Board

Regumo (LN male osharu nanocyte), head of Global Security Council

Taisunala (NG female damaya lashunta envoy), rising political dissident

Sprax: Oh boy, Jhavom! I love Jhavom!

Moscaru: ...really?

Sprax: What's not to love? It's warm, it's safe, it's got some of the best holoivid game rigs I've ever seen, and some of the canals are so steep, they're better than a ride at Golarion World!

Moscaru: And here I was thinking you were going to be excited about the universities, libraries, and museums contributing to an urbane culture of advanced learning.

Sprax: Ew, absolutely not. There's so much happening in Jhavom, I don't want to spend any of my time learning about what already happened—I want to see what's happening now!

Moscaru: That at least makes perfect sense. Let's take a look, shall we?

The city of Jhavom is a shining jewel of wisdom and intelligence set in the rain forests of the planet Pabaq. Jhavom serves as the planet's capital, as well as the oldest and largest city of the slug-like osharus, Pabaq's sole sapient species. Located in the center of the landlocked continent Jenikar, Jhavom's towering spaceport is often the first place seen by offworlders coming to the planet to take advantage of the impressive academia and

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accumulated knowledge of the osharus, or to explore the forests of 300-foot-tall trees that surround the bubble-city. Driven by a devout Yaraesan population, Jhavom's temples, universities, and laboratories are renowned in nearly every field imaginable, and locals are happy to welcome visitors who share the desire to study and expand the knowledge and influence of local academic circles. The cosmopolitan, tolerant nature of the city makes it a popular spot for both scholars and tourists, and the constant influx of new ideas has created a vibrant arts scene dominated by forward-thinking philosophers.

Jhavom is a place of dualities held in a careful balance; millennia-old history and modern technology complement one another. Here, the religious and scientific communities are nearly indistinguishable from one another and support each other in advancing the wisdom and understanding gathered from every corner of the galaxy. Visitors from numerous planets bring exciting new ideas even as they learn from ancient traditions and intricate theories. However, Jhavom's reputation for cutting-edge thought and daring experimentation can draw the attention of unscrupulous individuals and organizations who seek to apply or direct the flow of knowledge to their own advantage, and even the most careful researcher can make dangerous decisions when the pursuit of knowledge outstrips judicious caution.

GEOGRAPHY

The massive rain forests that surround Jhavom both support and constrain the city. An immense protective bubble surrounds the metropolis, serving as a defensive barrier against the numerous flora and fauna of the adjacent jungle—most notably the ganatra, stealthy and vicious mammalian apex predators that dominate the local ecosystem. While the bubble is a relatively recent technological development, the still-extant buildings of ancient Jhavom are clear signs that osharus have lived here for millennia. The effects of the Gap on osharu records, however, means that the mystery of how the city survived the dangers of the landscape in ancient times remains unanswered to this day.

A sprawling elevated spaceport in the northern section of the city dominates the skyline of the Visitor's District, a deceptively named neighborhood that hosts as many lifelong residents as it does tourists. The heavily automated spaceport towers 500 feet in the air so docking spaceships don't disturb the surrounding rain forest. Much of the real estate under the busy docks is dedicated to a cramped warren of efficiency housing and small businesses. Only a few blocks away from the spaceport, the canals and streets begin to open up, and travelers can find enclaves, such as the lashunta-centric Little Castrovel, and some of Jhavom's famed schools, such as the Pabaq Center for Xenobiological Studies, whose up-and-coming xenobiologists

JHAVOM

frequent many of the spacer bars and hotels hoping to meet and exchange knowledge with other species.

Numerous waterways emanating from the monumental Wisdom's Fount serve as the main thoroughfares of Jhavom its central neighborhoods of Old Jhavom, with residents and visitors swimming along the shallow canals or taking one of the many water taxis, both magical and mundane, that offer service throughout the city. Large public pools serve as plazas and are often partially occupied by pop-up floating markets that migrate around the city on a regular schedule. Historic aqueducts are kept pristine and sparkling by a series of automated cleaning systems paid for by a toll system, and they provide stunning views of the city's vistas for those with the credits to travel the elevated waterways. Those who eschew the aqueducts must instead navigate the oft-confusing maze of street-level canals.

The least desirable areas of Jhavom are those near the protective bubble that surrounds the city. These "edge districts" are plagued by the constant hum of the forcefield and the occasional jungle animal finding its way into the city, and rumors persist of criminal elements who maintain clandestine ways in and out of Jhavom. While quality of life in these areas remains high, due in no small part to ongoing philanthropic efforts by the Center for the Improvement of Society, the edge districts remain the domain of those who prioritize solitude over more luxurious accommodations, taking advantage of the less populated locale to hide their business from the scrutiny of others.

RESIDENTS

Osharus are the sole sapient species native to Pabaq, and Jhavom is the largest of their protected university cities. Here, the osharu ideals of faith, learning, and safety are on full display. Work among osharus is often centered around academic learning and its applications, and many are employed as laboratory technicians, field scientists, or bureaucrats dedicated to maintaining the meticulous records generated by the osharu scientific-industrial complex. For many osharus, pursuit of knowledge is its own reward, and Jhavom's accumulated knowledge is a point of fierce pride for residents from every corner of Pabaq. As such, the Gap's devastating interference with historical records in general and the Hall of Records in particular has caused most osharus to treat the mysterious event as an immense crisis. Today, Jhavom's Cosmological Disasters Department is the preeminent source of continued studies into the Gap, and, more recently, the Drift Crisis (explored in depth in *Starfinder Drift Crisis*).

The Little Castrovel neighborhood in the Visitor's District has grown steadily since Pabaq and the Pact Worlds made contact, driven heavily by lashunta immigration. Their shared love of learning and applied knowledge generally makes osharus and lashuntas easy allies. While lashuntas have prominent roles in the academic departments, research companies, and publishing firms of Jhavom, the Drift Crisis has recently emboldened the Unity Coalition, a nascent political movement demanding non-osharu representation on the Grand Council. Led by the firebrand orator

and philosopher **Taisunala** (NG female damaya lashunta envoy), the Unity Coalition argues that restricting the Council's perspective to a single species limits the ability for true cooperative understanding of the myriad mysteries of the universe, while defenders of the status quo attribute Jhavom's prosperity and safety directly to the osharu values of caution and rigorous academic discourse. Jhavom's media cycle regularly features debates on the topic between outspoken public figures on each side of the issue.

Jhavom's well-earned reputation as an academic utopia makes it one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Near Space. Visiting scholars and pilgrims bring wide-eyed wonder to the tourism sectors, while entrepreneurs seek to exploit and expand upon the scientific breakthroughs discovered in the universities and private labs. The automated defense drones that constantly patrol the city keep the peace in public areas, so even those with outside scores to settle generally remain cordial within Jhavom's limits. While Pact World species are the most plentiful due to Absalom Station's importance as a Drift hub, scientists and thinkers from as far as the Marixah Republic (*Starfinder Near Space* 88) and Szandite Collective (*Near Space* 104) are regular sights in Jhavom's lecture halls.

Sprax: I love the view from the spaceport here! You can see for miles over the jungle!

Moscaru: I like looking out over the city skyline. Jhavom has such a charming blend of ancient and modern architecture, and the builders take such care to balance the two against one another.

Sprax: I always wind up watching the swarms of drones fly around. There's so many here!

Moscaru: While I imagine some are the standard delivery drones, many are state-of-the-art automated law enforcement drones controlled by AI-rie—think of them as the city watch, just updated to modern times.

Sprax: Oh, I know—why do you think I keep such a careful watch on them? They don't need to know what I'm doing!

Moscaru: What are you doing that needs to be kept so private? We're on a sightseeing tour!

Sprax: Well, I found one *really* steep aqueduct that you can go really fast down—and then I found out you can go even *faster* if you punt your way down the slope... but I didn't notice this merchant was about to cross the sluice with his shopboat...

SOCIETY

On paper, Jhavom is an idyllic academic utopia. The intelligent and diligent scholars of the city work in prosperous peace while their nonlethal security drones maintain order on the streets. Even animal control in Jhavom is humane; interloping jungle creatures are caught and rereleased into the wild in a careful attempt to maintain biodiversity. The average Jhavom resident spends most of their time improving themselves in their chosen field, maneuvering for a professorship at one of Jhavom's dozens of galaxy-renowned universities or taking their expertise into the private sector to accrue a personal

DOWNTIME IN JHAVOM

As a center of academic excellence, Jhavom provides the following variant benefits when engaging in the listed downtime activities.

Analyze Sample: The quantity and quality of great minds in Jhavom can provide increased insight. When performing the analyze sample activity in Jhavom for multiple days, increase the cumulative circumstance bonus to +2 per day and the maximum circumstance bonus to +10.

Inoculate: Quality materials, cutting-edge facilities, and a strong sense of medical ethics makes medical care in Jhavom among the best in the galaxy. When performing the inoculate activity in Jhavom, there is no penalty for failing an associated Medicine check.

Research: The culture of learning in Jhavom promotes multi-disciplinary approaches to education. You can gain the Research benefit for up to two topics at once when doing research in Jhavom; each time you study a new topic beyond the second, you lose the benefit for the older topic.

fortune. Free time in Jhavom can be spent enjoying the digital delights of the Playplex (page 91), exploring the rich history contained in Jhavom's museums and libraries, or engaging in friendly debate in one of the many stimulant cafes or student bars that dot the city.

An esteemed few make up the Grand Council, an interconnected group of technocrats who serve as Pabaq's most powerful leaders and are considered the most revered osharus on Pabaq. The surest way to succeed in politics in Jhavom is to be recognized as a luminary among osharus, so political debates often resemble symposiums or roundtable discussions more than persuasive speeches. Osharus able to lecture on many disciplines eloquently and intelligently are typically front-runners, though occasionally an outstanding expert in a single given field may win elections if their area of expertise becomes particularly relevant to the political moment.

Jhavom is viewed by some offworld investors as a fertile hunting ground for innovation, and it's not uncommon for some Pabaq scientists to realize that a cleverly worded contract has essentially stolen their research out from under them. The natural caution of osharus gives them a certain edge in these negotiations however; many osharus won't sign anything if they suspect underhanded dealing, and a strong Yaraesan community ethos of discovery for discovery's sake means that many Jhavom residents pursue open-source research or non-profit work rather than sell their discoveries to corporations. Nevertheless, business interests in Jhavom are always on the lookout for a mark with more greed than caution.

Yaraesa's faith has deeply imprinted on Jhavom society. Many of the public pool plazas that dot the city host meditative exercise sessions during the day, and the times before and after group classes are valuable opportunities for friends to informally discuss their latest theories, difficulties, and breakthroughs. While Yaraesa's church lacks the formal structures of power held by other faiths, many teacher-student or mentor-mentee meetings begin with a quick prayer to the goddess to keep the discussion on

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track and fruitful. The osharu goddess Jalvari (*Starfinder Galactic Magic* 125) is often worshipped in tandem, honoring the place of accidental discoveries and unintended results in the scientific process. A popular saying in Jhavom is "Yaraesa understands what Jalvari uncovers."

RELATIONS

As a center of academia, Pabaq is widely regarded as a major contributor to positive intergalactic relations. Scholars and researchers from universities and research centers across the Pact Worlds and Near Space regularly come and go from the city, contributing their own insights and disseminating the latest theories across the stars, and far-flung churches of Yaraesa regularly organize large group pilgrimages in pursuit of expanding their knowledge of the universe. Veskarium and Gideron Authority scientists routinely schedule visits to the city to scout for new applied-science breakthroughs that might be translated into a tactical military advantage. A robust Xenowarden community works to preserve and understand the wealth of biodiversity in the surrounding jungles. They form the cornerstone of a thriving ecotourism industry that strives to educate visitors about the wonders of the natural world and combat corporate interests that view the dense rain forest as a source of raw materials and undeveloped real estate.

While most official governmental stances regarding Pabaq are neutrally cooperative, a surprising number of security and counter-intelligence agencies have offices on Pabaq, the better to surveil and manage the flow of information. While Jhavom's universities attempt to keep the free exchange of knowledge uninterrupted, scientist priests from the Informational Safety Board keep tabs on certain topics of research to prevent potentially dangerous knowledge or technology from falling into irresponsible hands. The ISB regularly fields requests from groups like the Stewards, Directive 9, or Hellknight factions to censor specific dangerous ideas or individuals, but all decisions are ultimately made in committee by the members of the board, led by **Naspatu** (LG nonbinary osharu mystic), priest of Yaraesa and the board's current chair. Independent groups with interests in study and discovery, such as the Starfinder Society and Aspis Consortium, may butt heads with the ISB's authority, occasionally attempting to spirit away dangerous discoveries for study, safekeeping, or profit by licit or illicit means. These cold conflicts sometimes even erupt into open hostilities, such as when Azlanti saboteurs were caught planting explosives in an attempt to eradicate experimental research into non-Drift faster-than-light travel.

Corporate machinations are also a particular nuisance in Jhavom. With so much raw information generated, the value of a discovery isn't always immediately apparent to the initial finder, and businesses ruthlessly battle to acquire data or the scientific minds responsible, the better to capitalize on new concepts and products before their competitors can. AbadarCorp maintains a large patent office in the city to stake their claims as quickly as possible, and many smaller organizations have followed suit to remain competitive. Less scrupulous entrepreneurs sometimes engage in heavy-handed negotiation, and the most desperate or greediest would-be buyers sometimes employ ne'er-do-wells

for shakedown, intimidation tactics, or even outright theft of million-credit research and prototypes.

THE JALVARI DEEPS

Underneath the city lies the Jalvari Deeps, a catch-all phrase for the maze-like sprawl of ancient sewers, tunnels, and connecting passageways named for the osharu goddess of unexpected discoveries and disproved hypotheses. The reasoning behind the deific naming convention is twofold and somewhat tongue-in-cheek: first, the disorienting, shifting labyrinth continues to defy archaeological attempts to accurately map the area, turning many discoveries into unintended surprises; second, years' worth of graffiti featuring the goddess decorates the walls and serves as a living, evolving guide to the undercity's hazards and wonders. In the Deeps, consistent direct navigation is nigh impossible: tunnels flood seasonally, sluices open and close based on complex counterweight systems, and magical passageways appear during certain celestial events. Some of the sewers drain directly into the natural caves that wend for hundreds of miles out into the rainforest, and amphibious predators stalk the tunnels for prey trapped in the deeps by flash floods. More than one secret stairwell or flooded cistern in the city's oldest buildings have led to ancient tombs, workshops, and shrines from various esoteric episodes in Jhavom's lengthy lost history. Despite the Deep's well-earned reputation for danger, its passageways are still regularly used for student dares, forbidden experiments, and clandestine rendezvous.

A few years ago, a maintenance drone was swept into a drainage vent and dropped into an unmapped part of the expansive cave system, miles beneath the known portions of the Deeps. Before finally going offline for good, it managed to transmit a low-quality video feed of an arrow-straight tunnel lit by terrariums populated with unidentified luminescent arthropods; a cavernous chamber full of clay statues portraying hundreds of osharu scribes at stone lecterns; and a massive prayer wheel, reminiscent of the central feature of Wisdom's Fount, occluding a massive chasm, powered by falling water from the sewers. The drone's video feed mysteriously cut off shortly after descending past the prayer wheel and broadcasting footage of constructed passageways honeycombing the lower parts of the crevasse. Archaeologists and digital specialists have attempted to decipher the prayer wheel from the original footage, and debate rages around whether the abjuration magic covering the device is intended to keep interlopers out of the chasm, or whether the wards are designed to keep something trapped in the Deeps. So far, the exact location of the fissure remains undiscovered; numerous expeditions that have attempted spelunking their way to the chasm have vanished, and those who do return speak of unexpected technological failures, mysterious cave-ins, and deadly ambushes by aggressive, silent dark-robed figures who have thus far evaded all attempts at capture or diplomatic contact. Many Jhavom archaeologists dream of being a part of the team that solves the mysteries of the Jalvari Deeps, and there's fierce competition in the community to recruit offworld adventurers who haven't yet been scared off by tall tales of the labyrinth's dangers and challenges.

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CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Though Jhavom has a well-deserved reputation for being an academic's paradise, life in the city is not without its tensions and dangers. For all their knowledge, Jhavom scientists are not infallible, and every few months a new story breaks about a bioengineered monster or metaphysical miscalculation wreaking havoc on one campus or another. Jhavom's advanced robotics circles follow the strictest safety recommendations but are still susceptible to bad code or erroneously configured hardware generating hazardous malfunctions in their automated systems. Universities engaged in particularly dangerous fields of study often hire offworld adventurers to conduct surprise audits, seeing them as the perfect blend of impartial observer and prepared exterminator. Even more insidious are those great minds who fall prey to the corrupting influence of power that comes with accumulated knowledge; a Jhavom scientist who has made the deliberate choice to pursue an unethical course of study likely has the intelligence and resources to hide their depredations for months or years, long enough to bring their plans to fruition.

The disruptive potential of many of Jhavom's breakthrough discoveries makes it a center for intergalactic intrigue, and a bustling shadow economy of double-dealing, sabotage, and theft plagues its academic institutions and private industries. Illicit transactions in Jhavom can involve planetary governments, corporations and organizations protecting or advancing their vested interests, or the occasional ultra-wealthy private individual

with inscrutable designs. Even if a scholar or scientist successfully defends their discoveries from private predations, Jhavom's powerful Informational Safety Board may see fit to label a discovery as "Excessively Hazardous" and seize all related research to store in their secure vaults within the Glory in Knowledge Museum. More than one researcher has chosen to flee the planet just ahead of a visit from ISB agents and pacification drones rather than submit to the organization's protective censorship.

Even as such internal threats loom, the jungles of Pabaq remain filled with deadly predators like the camouflaged ganatra or the mind-ensnaring spores of hypnotic wrackvines. As many of Jhavom's pharmaceutical and chemical industries rely on the uninterrupted flow of natural resources into the city, well-armed expeditions regularly travel to outposts and farms to gather raw materials. Further into the dense jungles of Jenikar, archaeologists seek to uncover and explore lost ruins of Pabaq's long-forgotten history, and anthropologists hope to learn more about the reclusive and evasive osharu societies that have never adopted the luxuries of metropolitan life, taking care to do so without upending their way of life or inadvertently exposing them to unethical exploitation. The need for continued travel in the jungle means that a well-armed mercenary can always find work in Jhavom.

Sprax: I could spend all day at the Food Bowl.

Moscaru: It is an epicurean's Elysium! Do you have a favorite restaurant?

Sprax: I can never pick just one—and it seems like every time we come back, there's new ones for me to fall in love with!

Moscaru: I personally can't wait to see the latest virtual reality breakthroughs at the Playplex.

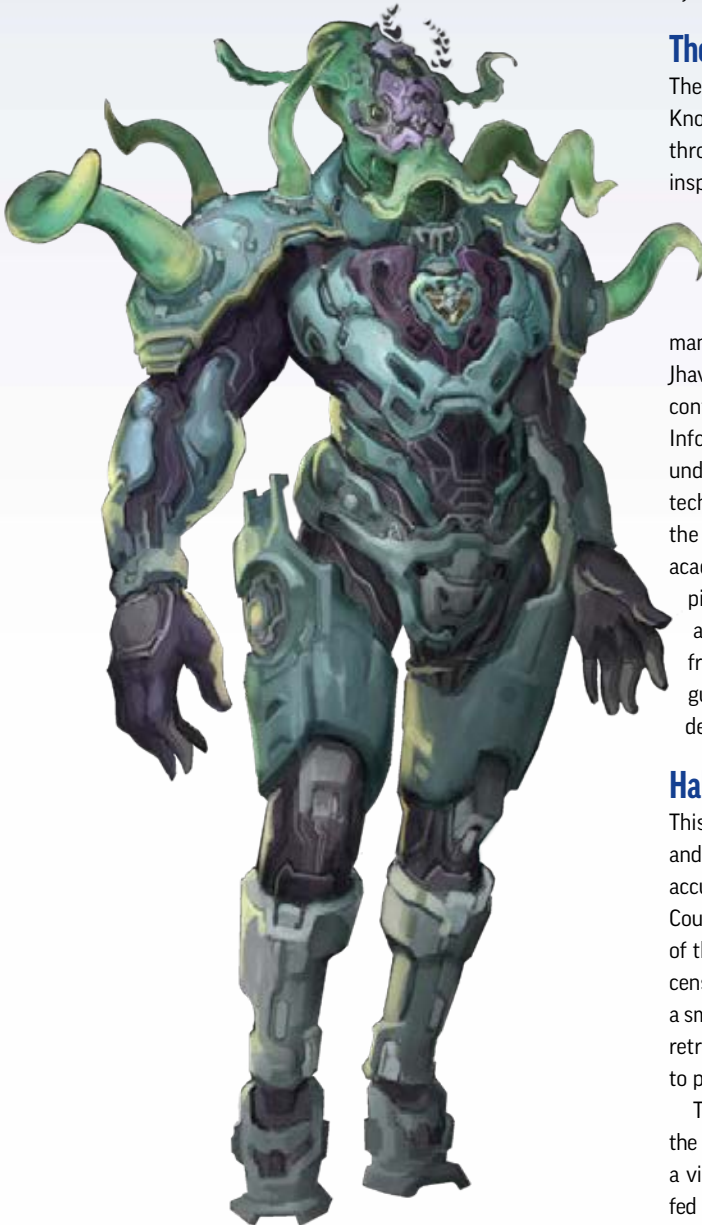
Sprax: I never took you for a vidgamer!

Moscaru: No, I prefer something more cerebral than the action-packed laserfests you enjoy. There are so many applications beyond entertainment, though! The implications for medical training, diplomatic meetings—even practicing culinary skills!

Sprax: I can never get into cooking simulations. They only make me hungry.

Moscaru: That's hardly a unique situation for you. Would you rather go sight-see some history at Wisdom's Fount or the Proving Ground?

Sprax: Not when there's a whole campus of holoivid games to explore. You just won't catch me in a cooking sim!



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

There are several interesting areas to visit in Jhavom.

Al-rie

As the center of Jhavom's city defenses, the graceful spires of the Al-rie contain the control centers for the security drones that patrol the city's skies and waterways. The Al-rie is a cutting-edge innovation hub for surveillance and nonlethal suppression technology, and many now-ubiquitous security devices across the galaxy were first designed and employed in the process of keeping Jhavom safe and secure. The entire facility is overseen by **Regumo** (LN male osharu nanocyte), who serves as both the Director of Security for Jhavom and the duly elected head of Pabaq's Global Security Council. While some engineers and scientists continue to raise concern about the vulnerability of the heavily automated facility, citing recent drone malfunctions and algorithmic errors in apprehending malcontents, the majority of Jhavom residents are comforted by the constant presence of the city's drones.

The Glory in Knowledge Museum

The largest temple to Yaraesa on all of Pabaq, the Glory in Knowledge Museum showcases records and artifacts from throughout osharu history in a modern aesthetic designed to inspire reflection, inquiry, and reverence. The natural history wing is acclaimed for its groundbreaking virtual reality experiences, where visitors can explore the jungles of Pabaq from the perspective of different native species.

The holographic archives also contain recreations of many of the most important political events in the history of Jhavom and the planet. The basements of the museum also contain the offices and private archives of the church-run Informational Safety Board, where the members of the board undertake the solemn duty of deciding which knowledge and technology is too volatile to make available to the public. While the contents of the ISB archives are well guarded, visiting academics may request supervised study time with specific pieces. Such applicants must pass a battery of interviews and background checks before they receive signed approval from board chair Naspatu and descend into the heavily guarded study chambers, where the item of interest is delivered to them.

Hall of Records

This 180-story skyscraper sits at the center of Jhavom and serves as both the collected digital repository for all accumulated osharu knowledge and the seat of the Grand Council, the highest position of power on Pabaq. The archives of the Hall of Records hold every kind of data imaginable, from censuses and municipal records to educational transcripts, and a small army of bureaucrats and librarians are on call to assist in retrieving any information—unless that data has been removed to protective archives by the Informational Safety Board.

The Grand Council resides near the top of this structure, where the six elected osharus are hardwired into what is functionally a virtual-reality coma under which a ceaseless torrent of data is fed directly into their minds. Elections for the Grand Council are

typically held only when a council member dies, and the elections are a planet-wide holiday where all industry ceases and every osharu citizen is expected to vote for their chosen candidate—a fact that is a growing point of contention among non-osharu residents on the planet. The Grand Council blurs the lines between civic and religious authority: past edicts from the collective have included clarifications of civil laws, interpretations of Yaraesan doctrine, and declarations of states of emergency. Some even believe the Grand Council to be blessed by Yaraesa herself, the better to process the overwhelming rivers of data they're fed. To be called in front of the Grand Council is a solemn matter, and to face their hardlight holographic projections is to face the greatest minds of the scholarly planet.

IXE Food Bowl

This large natural sinkhole on the edge of the Institute of Xenoculinary Excellence's campus has been carefully engineered to transform the scenic location into Jhavom's most acclaimed restaurant space, with the falling waters providing a stunning backdrop to some of the most creative cooking in Near Space. The institute caps leases in the space to a maximum of five years at an affordable rent, the better to continually elevate new chefs and styles. With the steady turnover and the cosmopolitan palette of Jhavom gourmards, Food Bowl restaurateurs seek a competitive advantage through unique ingredients, innovative methodologies, or surprising fusions of different traditions. The most recognizable restaurant to come out of the Food Bowl is the popular kasathan franchise Kitchen Table Tales, where chefs tell fantastical stories as they cook, using dramatic ingredients, knife tricks, and theatrical performance elements to spice up their recounting. IXE restaurateurs sometimes hire adventurers to obtain one-of-a-kind ingredients from far-flung locales or to serve as outside actors to protect against (or engage in) acts of culinary sabotage.

Jenikar Outfitters, Incorporated

After catastrophic budget cuts were made to the Pabaq Environmental Academy, the entire school was bought by Murboona (NG agender ghoran mystic), an eccentric reality holoivid star and preacher of Oras who restructured the organization into a multi-faceted ecotourism and edutainment conglomerate. Jenikar Outfitters provides hiking and river tours in the jungles of Pabaq, with guides using advanced technology and magic to provide opportunities for tourists to get up close and personal with many of the more photogenic species of the planet. Fan-favorite packages include the Vistas of Jhavom treetop glider tour; the Jenikar Ruins loop, where patrons ride plodding herbivorous hrungis to ancient historical sites; and the thrilling Whitewater Caverns tour, where heavily-enchanted boats ride underground rivers through scenic subterranean spaces. The company faces accusations of causing disruptions to the natural ecology of the area, as well as dangerous working conditions for their guides, but their iron-clad contracts have so far shielded them from liability. Even their fiercest detractors give begrudging credit to the company for their lucrative support of local conservation organizations, species repopulation, and scientific study. The company is always seeking mercenaries to

guard visitors against the dangers of the jungle and regularly hires contractors to survey the jungle for new locations and trails to expand their tour offerings.

Playplex

The Playplex is the pride and joy of Jhavom's entertainment economy and the largest gaming center on Pabaq. The neon-drenched underground complex has a huge arena for competitive events, an eight-story barcade for social and casual gaming, the Virtually Paradise simulated experience lounge, and a collaborative makerspace where designers can network with one another, enlist beta testers, or meet with prospective clients about their latest projects. Competition at the Playplex is fierce, whether among rival companies fighting for eyes on their latest offerings, professional gamers engaging in feuds for social media clout, or computer engineers trying to make the leap to game design. The location is also a popular hangout for those involved in Jhavom's enterprising drug industry, with pushers using a variety of ingenious methods to smuggle designer substances to those who want to chemically supplement their electronic escapism.

The open secret of the Playplex is that the entire place is a joint venture by a collective of behavioral psychologists and computer engineers who monitor every aspect of each visitor's experience from the moment they walk into the complex through the choices they make in individual games. The metadata aggregated is used in all manner of applications, from developing user-interface best practices to conducting xenopsychological research. The technology involved and the psychological profiles created by the Playplex are highly sought-after, and they are constantly testing and upgrading digital and physical security to keep the highly exploitable information out of the hands of unscrupulous actors.

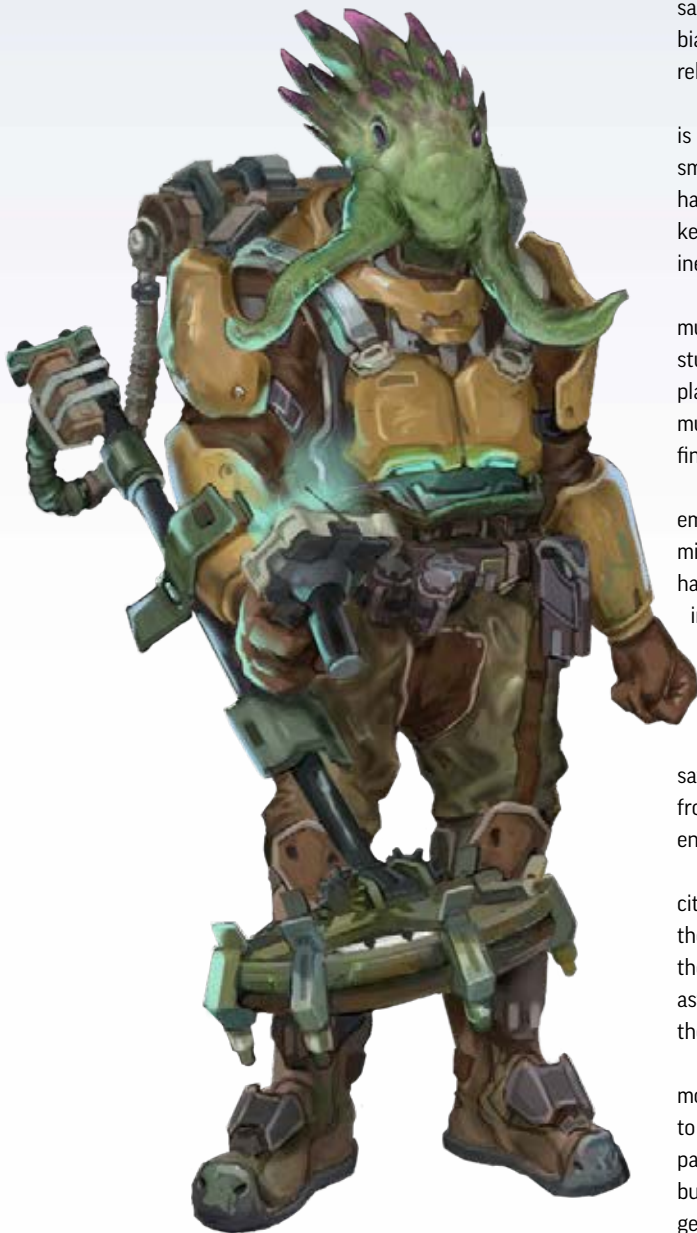
Proving Ground

One of the oldest historic sites on Pabaq, this sizable amphitheater sits directly in front of the entrance to the Hall of Records and is traditionally revered as the site where Jhavom was originally founded. According to legend, the amphitheater was built on the spot where a Yaraesan mystic once gathered several disjointed osharu communities and persuaded them to band together and pool their knowledge and resources, overcoming their objections with succinct arguments and observations of each community's strengths and challenges. Today, the amphitheater continues to serve as a place for ideas to be aired and debated, and it's often reserved for political speeches and declarations, though it keeps open hours every morning for those who have a thesis or argument they feel warrants public announcement. All debates and presentations here are recorded and disseminated via infosphere, with copies being stored in the Hall of Records for posterity, and a regular contingent of AI-rie drones and guards stand watch here for arguments that might devolve into physical altercations.

Wisdom's Fount

This ancient and towering monument in the center of Jhavom is an awe-inspiring blend of meditative shrine and hydropower facility. The original fountain portrays an osharu aspect of

Yaraesa meditating and bearing a massive prayer wheel in the center of magically-spiraling ribbons of water and is some of the oldest stonework found in Jhavom. From the fountain, the water flows outward to feed the aqueducts and canals of the Old Jhavom district. The immense prayer wheel's runic inscriptions generate both the water and the physics-defying hydrokinesis spells that keep it moving, and the monument's magic is periodically revitalized by the near-daily downpours during Jhavom's rainy season. The fountain singlehandedly provides for all of the water needs of the Old Jhavom district and much of the more modern areas toward the city's outskirts. Recent addition of glass stairwells, ramps, and observation platforms were made to protect the stonework from being damaged by the many pilgrims and tourists who come to marvel at and meditate on the serene beauty of the figure. It's traditionally considered to grant good luck in your academic pursuits to contribute water to the fountain, as a symbolic gesture of the shared pursuit of galactic understanding.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following are several seeds for adventure that might take place in Jhavom.

Deep Door: A vault door in the Jalvari Deeps opens only during a specific lunar eclipse that is happening for the first time in two decades. Rival archaeologists seek to discover the vault's hidden secrets, as well as avoid whatever fate befell the expedition who vanished into the vault the last time it was opened twenty years ago.

Expedition to the Vast: Astronomers with the Cosmological Disasters Department have discovered a sharp increase in background planar energies coming from a sector deep in the Vast. They are seeking knowledgeable and skilled adventurers to assist in their scientific expedition and are offering top credits for those willing to sign on.

Free Food: A small biotech research start-up was burgled, and their board has agreed to pay a hefty reward for the recovery of their missing food crop prototype. The researchers suspect sabotage from a rival group of scientists with strong political biases who are attempting to make the same breakthrough to release as an open-source public project.

Magical Convention: An upcoming thaumaturgic symposium is short-staffed and hiring offworlders to help things run smoothly. Hires will be tasked with managing security, handling exorbitant requests from entitled guests of honor, and keeping the peace between sparring factions—plus coping with inevitable magical mishaps.

Missing Mentee: When a well-respected professor is found murdered, the university assumes the blame lies with a promising student the professor recently suspended over suspicion of plagiarism. The student, however, hasn't been seen since the murder, and the student's family hires private investigators to find their whereabouts and prove their innocence.

Peaceful Inquiry: Talks have broken down between warring empires, and osharu-run research outposts are caught in the middle of violent annexation efforts. A Jhavom-based university has brought diplomats together to attempt to broker a deal in which the scientists can continue working—or negotiate a ceasefire long enough for them to be evacuated.

Robotic Rescue: A junior researcher at a robotics incubator made a series of jubilant social media posts about achieving a huge breakthrough just moments before safeguards were triggered, and the entire facility was cut off from the outside world. The company seeks troubleshooters to enter and assess the situation.

Stellar Stigmata: A series of strange attacks have driven the city's academic circles into a panic. The attacks occurred over the course of weeks at diverse locations all over the city, but they follow the same basic pattern: each victim is a prominent astrophysicist, claims no memory of the attack itself, and shows the same unique pattern of burn marks around their temples.

Testing Grounds: Engineers at the AI-rie have developed more effective means of suppressing violent offenders and want to test their developments against battle-hardened targets. The pay is lucrative, and the damage is supposed to be nonlethal—but the engineers didn't account for their virtual intelligence getting its own ideas for test parameters.

EXPEDITION CHRONICLER (ARCHETYPE)

When preparing for a scientific or academic excursion, an ounce of preparation is worth a pound of unexpected complications. Expedition chroniclers work to ensure that their exploratory ventures are successful and fruitful, putting in the legwork to ensure that discoveries are properly documented, necessary equipment is procured and carefully packed ahead of time, and all the appropriate bureaucrats have received properly filed paperwork well in advance. When an expedition chronicler is a part of a crew, everyone else's jobs become that much easier. Some chroniclers try to include expository text and turn their reports into thrilling tales of their adventures, while others take a fact-driven approach that reads like a textbook. Some chroniclers are driven by a desire for fame, fortune, and glory, and use their writings as a way to build their own reputation—and possibly somewhat inflate their tales in the recounting.

A good expedition chronicler employs critical thinking skills, creative problem solving, and careful foresight to assist their colleagues to the best of their abilities. A chronicler knows that the overall success of the mission requires close collaboration and a little luck, and they're just as happy to help their companions succeed with a well-timed assist or specific item as they are to succeed themselves. A chronicler should also be unafraid—or at least willing—to be in the thick of things, the better to be an eyewitness to unfolding events. To a well-prepared expedition chronicler, death can be avoided with a few additional contingencies, but to miss critical details or a valuable piece of information by hiding in the back is a true tragedy.

While members of any species can learn to become an expedition chronicler, the osharu culture of cooperative exploration and discovery means that many of the best practices held by chroniclers were pioneered by osharu adventurers, and their innate sense of caution and tendency for meticulous documentation make them natural logistical organizers. A disproportionate number of lashuntas also train as chroniclers due to their love of learning and the number of expeditionary opportunities that Castrovellian universities provide. A number of kasathas take on the role of chronicler, as these duties and responsibilities overlap considerably with the storytelling dedications of the goddess Talavet. Exploratory groups such as the Starfinder Society and the Aspis Consortium pay top credits for their members to receive operational training on Pabaq, and even military organizations such as the Veskarium or the Hellknights sometimes send quartermasters to get certification in expeditionary readiness from one of Jhavom's universities.

Alternate Class Features

The expedition chronicler archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 9th, and 12th levels.

Constantly Connected 2nd Level

Your rigorous note-taking and research skills provide you with knowledge and resources that you can call upon to answer difficult questions. You gain a tier 1 datapad (*Starfinder Armory* 100); you can pay credits to upgrade this datapad as normal.

As long as you have access to this datapad, you automatically succeed at any checks to remember events that you were witness to, and you can attempt any check to recall knowledge untrained. Additionally, you can employ your contacts and researching skills to recall knowledge. If you can connect to an infosphere, reference a relevant downloaded data set, or use a comm unit to message an acquaintance, you can spend one hour to attempt a previously failed recall knowledge check a second time.

A Way with Words (Ex) 4th Level

Your ability with the written word is undeniable, and you can paint compelling pictures and sway opinions. You gain an insight bonus equal to a third of your character level to Profession (writer) checks. In addition, you can use Profession (writer) in place of Diplomacy when you attempt to change a creature's attitude toward you, as long as you know a language that creature understands and spend one hour writing a persuasive message or making notes to consult while speaking to that creature.

Perpetually Prepared (Ex) 6th Level

You know that sometimes the success or failure of a venture can hinge on deceptively simple matters of foresight and preparation. As a full action, you can dig through your pockets to retrieve an item, chosen at the time you take this action. This item can cost no more than 100 credits per character level you have above 5th (100 credits at 6th level, 200 credits at 7th level, and so on), and it can have no more than light bulk. After using this ability, you can't use it again until you resupply at a location with a wide variety of equipment available (at the GM's discretion) by spending credits equal to the value of the item you retrieved with this ability.

Brief Reminder (Ex) 9th Level

You can't personally prepare for every eventuality, but by working with your teammates, you can set your team up for success. Once per day, you can spend 10 minutes reviewing your expedition notes and briefing any number of allies. You can also do this as part of spending 10 minutes and a Resolve Point to recover Stamina Points. Until the end of the day, as a reaction, you can shout a timely reminder or warning to add a +2 circumstance bonus to one d20 roll made by an ally who partook in the briefing session; this must be done before the roll. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you give another briefing. At 15th level, you can hold briefings twice per day.

Ever Ready (Ex) 12th Level

Because you constantly think about potential difficulties, you're rarely surprised by actual dangers. You can always act in a surprise round, though if you choose to do so when you would otherwise be surprised, you use your initiative result or 1 less than the initiative result of the first creature to act that would've surprised you, whichever is lower. If no creature would've successfully surprised you, you can choose one ally to benefit from this ability.



OUTPOST ZED

Anarchic trading post on the edge of Azlanti space.

OUTPOST ZED

CN space station

Gravity standard (artificial)

Atmosphere normal (artificial)

Day 46 hours (artificial); **Year** 96 years

Population 429,000 (varies; 24% brakim^{SF8}, 20% hortus^{AA3}, 10% draelik, 10% screedreep^{SF8}, 8% dessamar^{AA3}, 5% human, 23% other)

Government anarchy

Languages Azlanti, Draelik, many others

Qualities insular, notorious

ECONOMY

Exports black market goods, scrap, Azlanti salvage

Imports food, mechanical parts

Maximum Item Level 14th

NPCS

Ela (NG female bantrid^{PW} mystic), priest of the Church of Weydan

Queen Astridielle (LN female ysoki), monarch of the Lower Realm

Rineahl (NE male draelik operative), Path of Decay fixer

Yasari Demir (CG male brakim^{AP8} envoy), rebel hero of the OZAZ

Moscaru: The last bastion of freedom on the outskirts of Azlanti space exists completely outside of the yoke of the empire, nurturing the rebel factions that make their home in Outpost Zed. In addition to all manner of specialty goods and equipment, merchants trade in information as well as more unusual goods that are difficult and even dangerous to procure elsewhere.

Sprax: Are you talking about the underground market?

Moscaru: In a settlement composed of a great many diverse cultures with no formally recognized laws, in which the word "sardat" is more of an expletive than a title of respect, it only makes sense that trade would be less inhibited than what we're used to.

Sprax: This whole place is uninhibited. Smugglers run through Outpost Zed like food through a skitterwhelp!

Moscaru: That's not the most pleasant analogy you've ever thought up.

Sprax: Sorry, I'm just excited thinking about everything you can buy on Outpost Zed! It's like a buffet for guns, ammo, military surplus, cute souvenirs... oh, but don't steal anything. 'Posters hate that.

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Moscaru: Yes, stealing is one of the few acts designated as a crime on Outpost Zed, and it is, in fact, punishable by death.

Sprax: Just don't get caught! I didn't get kicked out of an airlock while I was there.

Moscaru: Sprax, is this a confession?

Sprax: Funny you should say that. Remember that key chain I gave you last year for First Choices?

Moscaru: You can't be serious.

Outpost Zed, inhabiting the rusty shell of what was once an asteroid-mining platform owned and operated by the Azlanti Star Empire, is full of dangerous corridors, illicit deals, and unfriendly crowds. The derelict space station is shaped like a six-pointed star glittering with multicolored lights, with a tower stretching from its top and a massive drill down below. What was once a bustling center of industry has become a symbol of freedom erected in uncaring space and abandoned by the empire that created it. It's now a popular destination for outlaws, rebels, and long-haul cargo crews skirting Azlanti space.

Corridors cramped with shops, stalls, and food carts twist throughout Outpost Zed. In addition, a vast network of narrow crawlspaces and industrial pipes form an isolated undercity that operates almost entirely independently from the lawless

trade hub just on the other side of the walls. Here, traders, pirates, smugglers, rebels, and corrupt Azlanti officials shuffle through the dim hallways. Most folks stay helmeted, wear masks, or pull their hoods down—anonymity is prized on the station. In any other location, a fight might break out between Star Empire forces and revolutionaries, but here, political disputes are frequently put aside, and even the most zealous tend to behave. Otherwise, they aren't allowed inside the market corridors through which the outpost's lifeblood flows. Trade is the only sardat, or governor, of Outpost Zed.

The outpost's markets are known for their fantastic variety of goods; ysoki spacefarers like to say that if Outpost Zed doesn't have what you're looking for, Grandmother Rat already stole it for herself. The hundreds of tiny storefronts and stalls that make up Outpost Zed's market are a treasure trove of rare imports and antique ship parts. Anyone with the right connections—or the nerve to ask the right questions—can access Outpost Zed's illicit goods: experimental drugs, stolen weapons, and shady services offered by the dregs of the Star Empire.

The off-station credits attracted by trade keep the outpost running, with much of it spent by individuals to maintain their sections of the aging platform in good repair. Residents of Outpost Zed form vibrant communities virtually no different from those on any other world; neighborhoods form when people



OUTPOST ZED

decide to live by a common code and look out for one another. These tight-knit groupings of shelters and merchant alleys band together to form their own districts with no permanent borders. Though neighbors don't always agree with each other, even the least scrupulous inhabitants would fight to the death to protect their home.

Where outsiders see only anarchy, the permanent residents have, in fact, forged a set of codes to protect one another. The criminals who frequent the settlement know stealing is forbidden, as is harming a vendor or a person claiming political sanctuary. Most bounty hunters know better than to stalk their quarries to Outpost Zed, realizing that here, an injury to one is an injury to all. Members of the Aeon Guard might appear in or out of their armor when they visit the outpost, but they always look the other way when Empire laws are broken. Outpost Zed is held together by a sacred agreement between its inhabitants, and there's nowhere better to hide. As long as they follow the rules and customs of their neighborhood, anyone can stay safe in the cramped halls of Outpost Zed.

GEOGRAPHY

Outpost Zed is located at the edge of the Nys system, one of the dozen or so star systems controlled by the Azlanti Star Empire. Nys is one of the furthest systems from the heart of the Star Empire in the Aristia system, placing the outpost on the periphery of the periphery. Nys is also the location of Koshoria,

the home world of the insectile dessamars, who tend to ignore the Azlanti as the empire disregards them in turn.

The multilevel platform at the center of Outpost Zed contains dozens of industrial-sized chambers tapering down to a colossal drill. The rooms ringing the drill were once warehouses, storage bays, and sorting assembly lines. Now, their steel husks contain ramshackle huts and market stalls. Six arms radiate from the platform, providing docking and loading bays for cargo. Most trade activity occurs inside the station, with long-term vendors sleeping in cramped efficiency rooms above or below their storefronts. Some vendors rent out closed stalls, little more than storage lockers with an oxygen supply, to those looking for a safe place to sleep on a budget. There's no true day and night cycle on Outpost Zed, and individual shops operate according to their owners' schedules. These neighborhoods aren't officially zoned or maintained, but residents do their best to keep their blocks clean and tidy of debris.

Everywhere on the station, crawlspaces, shafts, and pipes snake through the ceilings and walls. Another community coexists within these shafts, comprised entirely of small-sized creatures able to comfortably fit within. They refer to their collection of cramped real estate as the Down and tend to refer to themselves as Downers.

Learning the geography of Outpost Zed is difficult since many inhabitants are transients liable to relocate their stalls and homesteads on a day's notice. Outpost Zed's neighborhoods shift over time, the station constantly changing with the needs

of its population. Even the defunct mining platform's blueprints are little help; weaker walls have collapsed, and chambers have filled with debris as the outpost has deteriorated. Residents perform makeshift repairs or work in groups to add sections of steel and plastic tunnels as a means of temporary expansion.

RESIDENTS

The strong survive and the smart thrive in this notorious smuggler's den, but there's always more than one way to get by. You can run into anyone on Outpost Zed. Though it's on the edge of Azlanti space (home of a fiercely human-centric imperial ethno-state), the station boasts one of the most diverse populations in the galaxy. It isn't uncommon to encounter people from distant and far-flung cultures around every corner of Outpost Zed. Individualists of all types are drawn to the place, typically pursuing credit-making ventures or fleeing authorities in the wake of said ventures. Though long-term residents must frequently cooperate with one another as neighbors, business partners, or spotters, privacy and anonymity are highly prized all over the station. For most living on Outpost Zed, friendship isn't sought—it happens as an unavoidable consequence of owing someone enough favors. It's common for individuals to fully conceal their identifying features out of habit while moving about their daily business, though a variety of insignias, signs, and other codes signify an individual's rank and affiliation. Learning the ins and outs of this nonverbal language is paramount for survival on Outpost Zed.

Azlanti officials sometimes openly sport their military gear, while others prefer anonymity; Azlanti in obeisance to the Star Empire are easy to spot. Most who dare to step foot on Outpost Zed remove their official insignia as a show of respect, admitting that while they claim no authority on the station, they expect safe passage. All but the most courageous spies and vendors give imperial agents a wide berth. Various street gangs and operations display preferred colors and symbols to denote their membership and claimed territories of protection, settling any disputes in remote tunnels and disposing of evidence to avoid provoking acts of retaliation. Since the Drift Crisis, more people have been spotted wearing a stylized white, upturned crescent that denotes a refugee or other person claiming political sanctuary. This symbol is usually holo-projected above the head or worn as scented jewelry or a temporary tattoo to reflect that person's status.

Outpost Zed isn't equipped to produce typical export goods, and residents subsist via the use of hydroponic mushroom farms, water collected and treated with ancient filtration equipment, and imported foodstuffs. Locals tend to be scavengers who know how to build a shelter out of junk and create weapons and gear out of found items. Most vendors specialize in weapons or scrap, and many of the displayed goods for sale are refurbished rubbish or stolen from elsewhere. A robust gig economy is the other primary moneymaking venture for residents of Outpost Zed. Everyone is constantly looking for their next job, whether it's getting in on the ground floor of a money-grabbing scheme, cashing in on a new trend, or running a high-risk errand. Those who aren't into chasing credits scrape by with anything they can beg or scavenge without overtly stealing from another resident. This harsh way of life isn't for everyone, and most people leave the outpost once they've concluded their business.

DOWNTIME ON OUTPOST ZED

The following special downtime options apply on Outpost Zed.

Find Buyer (page 169): There's always someone on Outpost Zed willing to buy anything. When you use the find buyer downtime activity, you only reduce the sell price of your cargo by 1 BP per lot if you fail the associated skill check by 5 or more.

Hunt Bargains: Those with the right connections or enough canny common sense to adapt can find just about anything they're looking for in the outpost's infamous Market Halls. You can use the Bluff or Culture skill (instead of Computers or Diplomacy) to hunt bargains while on Outpost Zed.

Research: The residents of Outpost Zed know a fair amount about the Azlanti Star Empire, and heroes with perseverance can find all manner of tidbits about the Azlanti among their detritus. This counts as a source of knowledge for researching topics involving the Azlanti Star Empire, and once during the week following your research, you can reroll a failed Culture check to recall knowledge about the Azlanti Star Empire.

Those who stay do it because they have nowhere else to go, because their shady business is too lucrative to abandon, or because they're too dedicated to fighting for freedom from the Azlanti Star Empire.

Following the cardinal laws of not stealing—or rather, not getting caught—and minding one's own business is usually enough to gain grudging acceptance from many Outpost Zed residents. Truly integrating with the community is more difficult, however, especially since so many residents are transient and the population changes constantly as the cycles spin on.

SOCIETY

Outpost Zed has no official government, laws, or police force. It's up to each individual to protect themselves. Grouping up for safety is common, leading to hundreds of unique enclaves and neighborhoods. Anarchy reigns in the streets, but complex codes govern everyday lives. Each neighborhood has its own code, as does each faction. It's impossible to know them all, but there's a set of universal rules most sectors of the outpost agree to uphold. Punishment for breaking any of these laws in common areas (such as the markets) or in someone else's neighborhood is death, either at the business end of a pistol or by ejection out of a nearby waste vent.

Among the widely agreed-upon codes of Outpost Zed is community inheritance. When someone dies, a person who can prove affiliation with them has first right to take their belongings; otherwise, their possessions become community property on a first-come, first-served basis. Sometimes, a next of kin comes forward to claim the property before this happens, but unclaimed belongings are free game for anybody on Outpost Zed.

With justice just a trigger squeeze or airlock whoosh away, locals are hyperaware of their surroundings. Some folks are extremely polite, while others avoid strangers. Occasional public squabbles break out suddenly and end swiftly, and bystanders swarm crime scenes to remove all evidence and salvage like busy worker ants.

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Tasteless residents gleefully talk about “inheritance parties” caused by neighborhood skirmishes and political power grabs. These scoundrels see bloodshed as a chance for another paycheck. Such is life among scavengers and smugglers.

With no government, Outpost Zed residents do what they can to get by. They work together in insular communities or turn to public volunteer works, such as those provided by the Assembly of Peace (page 100), to keep them safe and sound. Outpost Zed has not one, but two local infospheres, each operating out of servers on opposite sides of the structure, though outages are common. The pervasive rule of “finders keepers” means the outpost’s accessible areas are generally kept tidy and clear of debris, but without regular maintenance, some corridors have collapsed entirely. Strangers are everywhere, many with unsavory intentions. Though the station has no laws, everyone seems to live by a secret code learned from birth that they don’t share with outsiders. Arriving on Outpost Zed unprepared is a jarring, potentially deadly experience.

Luckily, even in this place, there are people who want to help newcomers. **Ullie Kure** (CN female brakim^{SF8}) runs her famous “finishing school” out of a defunct rock-crushing station. Her operation has a reputation for helping prepare visitors to survive on Outpost Zed as well as integrating them into the community. Ullie’s service got its nickname thanks to its origins. When she came to Outpost Zed as part of a community of brakim refugees, Ullie was horrified by the number of young orphans struggling to survive on the station. As more of her people succumbed to desperation, poverty, and illness, she refused to stand by and watch youngsters suffer such a hard life. She began taking lost young residents and refugees under her wing, teaching them important skills and introducing them to upstanding members of the community. Since then, Ullie has helped visitors of all ages learn about the dangerous world of Outpost Zed and how to contribute to its strange society.

RELATIONS

Outpost Zed takes its autonomy from the Azlanti Star Empire very seriously. Though the platform is on the outskirts of a system within the Star Empire’s holdings, the Azlanti government ignores Outpost Zed so long as it doesn’t pose a threat. Most Azlanti citizens, if they know of it at all, think of Outpost Zed as simply a hunk of space junk crawling with drifters and opportunists—a spent shell that has served its purpose. Some Azlanti officials, particularly those in charge of less populated worlds or engaged in tasks that frequently take them outside of their home systems, frequent the station despite its ambivalence toward their empire. Most Outpost Zed traders hate the Star Empire but tolerate some officials for the business and legitimacy they bring to the station. Official Azlanti patronage is seen as desirable by some, a sign of symbiosis between the Star Empire and the scavengers surviving on the crumbs it leaves behind. Azlanti officials are protected like any other visitor while on Outpost Zed, except for one location. Most Azlanti sympathizers avoid the OZAZ (page 101), where the outpost’s usual code of peace is sometimes broken by rebels’ tendency to shoot a uniformed Azlanti officer on sight.

One of the closest of the Azlanti Star Empire’s neighbors (though not so close as to be under threat of imperial expansion)

is the Shadari Confederacy, spread across several planets situated in a nebula of dust and ionized gas in the Vast. More often than not, those fleeing the Star Empire’s grasp pass through Outpost Zed on their way to the Confederacy, so it’s seen as an ally to station residents at best and as a convenient place to hide from Aeon Guard forces at worst. This cordial relationship has led to cross-cultural exchanges between Outpost Zed and the Confederacy. Draeliks from the Shadari system have made permanent homes on the station, many of whom follow the nihilistic philosophy of Ataxxea (see below).

More distant systems, such as the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium, are aware of Outpost Zed, though it’s rare for them to want to visit Azlanti space. Both civilizations have clashed with Star Empire forces in the past, and their governments are unwilling to do so again. However, individual crews and other adventurous spirits might find their way to Outpost Zed to search for unusual equipment or information about the Star Empire’s latest deeds.

RELIGION

A myriad of faiths can be found on Outpost Zed, representative of its diverse populace. Most residents aren’t particularly devout given their lines of work, but just as many pay obeisance to the gods at small shrines within their particular neighborhoods. Some of the more familiar gods worshipped on Outpost Zed include Besmara, Ibra, Lao Shu Po, and Pharasma.

The few permanent Azlanti inhabitants of the station (as well as those who are friendlier to the Star Empire) might venerate **Lissala** (Scion of Seven; LE goddess of duty, fate, obedience, and reward of service), the patron deity of the Azlanti Star Empire. Her faith, with its rigid and precise services, hasn’t found too much of a foothold among the freewheeling outpost residents. Lissalan devotees keep to themselves and refrain from proselytizing their goddess, knowing it’s likely to be a futile effort. They still practice their beliefs regularly in small groups as part of their duties, but they tend to stay away from the OZAZ, where the Lissalan faith is frowned upon as being a tool of the Star Empire.

There are more followers of the philosophy of **Ataxxea** than worshippers of Lissala on the station, due mainly to the larger populace of draeliks. Ataxxea has no gods, just the belief that entropy is the most sublime force in the universe. Its followers don’t actively set out to destroy things—they merely aim to allow the slow decay of everything to happen naturally. This poses a slight problem on Outpost Zed, where most of the corridors and machinery required to keep the station livable require constant maintenance. Ironically, some Ataxxean draeliks find gainful employment on Outpost Zed by running scrapyards in the lower portions of the station where other residents can safely dispose of their garbage. Occasionally, a cult of evil draeliks will surface on Outpost Zed and try to drive off outsiders or attempt to shut down the station so that entropy can better take its slow course.

In the months leading up to the Drift Crisis, the church of Weydan established a presence on Outpost Zed. At first, the Weydanites offered surreptitious aid to the rebels of the OZAZ under the guise of providing important resources to the station. They gave out food and water to any who asked, treated illnesses and ailments of all kinds, and volunteered to clean up hazardous waste from the older parts of the outpost.

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While these good works benefited everyone, the anti-Azlanti revolutionaries clearly received the lion's share of the church's largess. This changed during the Drift Crisis, as the Weydanites focused their attention on the refugees who became stranded in the Vast due to the calamity, many of whom might not have survived among the bizarre customs and shifting social landscapes of Outpost Zed. The church has supported the use of the crescent-shaped mark of refuge by ensuring there are multiple ways for different species to detect them. The current de facto leader of the church on Outpost Zed, **Ela** (NG female bantrid^{PW} mystic), has publicly stated that any who disrespect the mark of refuge will "suffer the wrath of the Endless Horizon," though many believe that to be mere bluster.

Sprax: Just giving into decay and entropy doesn't sound very Drift, if you ask me.

Moscaru: Nevertheless, we must respect the beliefs of those who think differently than ourselves. Though, Sprax, I would say that, as a skittermander, you've likely introduced more than enough chaos into any number of systems!

Sprax: Oh, is that what entropy means?

Moscaru: Not exactly, just a little joke on my part. I do find it interesting that there are some Ataxxeans on Outpost Zed who have agreed to essentially organize the station's scrap into junkyards, creating

what could be called "temples to entropy." It's almost a contradiction.

Sprax: I visited one of those scrapyards! It was full of neat old Azlanti junk! And I got to pet one of the entropy slugs!

Moscaru: Entropy slug?

Sprax: Yeah, it was a big slug creature twice my size! I think they like energy or something, 'cause it tried to eat the battery on my force field. Cute, though! Well, in a so-ugly-it's-cute kinda way. Like you, Moscaru!

Moscaru: Excuse me?

Sprax: Not really, just a little joke on my part.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Though Outpost Zed residents will always put aside their differences in a heartbeat to defend their home, they hardly see eye-to-eye. Dozens of neighborhoods, each with their own internal social codes and expectations, coexisting together with no formal laws is a recipe for conflict. Outpost Zed's factions constantly vie for control, usually preferring subtle methods that aren't easily proven or traced but sometimes engaging in direct conflict. Neighborhood warfare is uncommon, but when it occurs, it can be devastating.

Generally, the station's merchants care mostly about protecting their wares from theft. The rebels living in the OZAZ constantly

stage demonstrations to radicalize visitors and residents alike, hoping to convert the entire outpost into an anti-Azlanti revolution cell. One zealous sect of rebels wants to purge the criminal element from the station; others, realizing those “criminals” are just as disenfranchised, want to recruit them to the cause. Azlanti spies work to undermine Outpost Zed’s independence, of course, but their actions aren’t overt. Star Empire loyalists take care to avoid the OZAZ and other rebel-affiliated areas.

AN ALIEN ENVIRONMENT

With so many species inhabiting Outpost Zed, newcomers to the station might find themselves at loose ends. For many Pact Worlds denizens, the temperature and humidity on most decks is a little uncomfortable despite the atmosphere being breathable for most. In addition, the food offered from vending machines and stalls might not seem palatable (or even edible). Brakim residents, for instance, prefer a salty nutrient paste for most meals, while local hortuses subsist on strange, smelly vegetables that have started to rot. A multitude of cultures and customs could make even simple transactions a hassle for the unfamiliar. An incautious visitor who doesn’t pay attention to

their surroundings and treats Outpost Zed as any other friendly port could end up sick—or worse.

Luckily, with the recent addition of a congregation of Weydanites to the station, outsiders can find guides to help them navigate Outpost Zed’s environs. These disciples offer such services at no cost, though with the recent influx of refugees from the Drift Crisis, they’ve been quite busy. Unless a visitor is in dire need, they might have to wait several hours before a Weydanite is available to show them around the station. A fair number of new arrivals are in too much of a hurry to stand for this inconvenience and go off on their own, to mixed success.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

There are several interesting areas to visit on Outpost Zed.

Assembly of Peace: This mid-sized “church” of Weydan operates in a long stretch of corridor between two of the station’s protruding arms. Those who enter Outpost Zed on that side are met by welcoming Weydanites standing under colorful fabric hangings and holographic projections. These devout followers of the Endless Horizon are friendly to all, believing any visitor might be an avatar of their god. The church also sponsors relief efforts, such as neighborhood clean-ups, and handles much of the station’s volunteer infrastructure maintenance. Ela, the Weydanite priest nominally in charge of the outpost’s church, is rumored to be an avatar of Weydan, though she coyly denies it.

Drillbit: Named for the gigantic metal drill affixed to the outpost’s underbelly, Drillbit is a collection of corridors and storage bays repurposed into marketplaces and neighborhoods along the “bottom” of Outpost Zed. Ships dock along the great grooves of the drill, now orange with rust, where rickety mechanical lifts creak as they pull loads of traders and travelers up into the outpost proper. With the station’s crumbling infrastructure upheld by volunteers, different sections of Drillbit vary in appearance and safety. There’s no official signage, and visitors rely on landmarks and local guides to shepherd them through the twisting maze of homes and makeshift stalls.

Fourth Corner: Rumors abound in this hazy bar at the far end of Sector 4. First Customs Officer **Efathrad Olganot** (LE male Azlanti human) of the Azlanti Star Empire eagerly holds court at the bar or in his private booth. Efathrad loves bribes, free drinks, and finery. Anyone willing to pay for his bar tab can rent his ear for a few hours, and the bar is full of his drunken supplicants on any given evening.

The Goods: Though now bereft of precious minerals, a small collection of asteroids is still tethered to the station, a remnant of its mining days. These rocks are colloquially referred to as “the Goods,” and recently, an independent and unscrupulous trade consortium discovered a buyer for the trace amounts of radioactive material still present in the asteroids. Today, derelict camps full of poor miners and their families, many suffering from radiation sickness, spend their days carving into the rock with rusty equipment. Out on the Goods, gravity varies, shoddy equipment results in frequent accidents, and hostile alien life occasionally threatens miners. Luxuries are nonexistent, and supplies are scarce. Life is hard on the Goods, but inhabitants still have hope for the one big payload that can help them leave.



ELA

The Lower Realm: Amid the pipes and ducts beneath the platform's crowded Market Halls is the Lower Realm; this small "city-state" patterns its customs and behavior on ancient stories of grand kingdoms and chivalric knights and considers itself a separate part of the station from the Down. Currently, Queen **Astridienne** (LN female ysoki) reigns as monarch of the Lower Realm. Originally founded by the descendants of indentured non-Azlanti miners who were left to die on the platform when the Azlanti Star Empire abandoned it, the Lower Realm is populated entirely by creatures small enough to fit into the cramped openings required to access the area. Larger tradespeople and envoys from other neighborhoods are sometimes invited into the Lower Realm; they're generally transported into the more spacious junctions using magic and technology closely guarded by the realm's military. The people of this city-state expect all visitors to abide by exacting customs, especially during state affairs attended by the queen.

Market Halls: The largest portion of Outpost Zed's central level, and most visitors' first experience on the station, are the Market Halls. These wide-open, repurposed mining facilities and corridors lined with hovercart tracks are all crammed with stalls and storefronts. Shops operate out of every available space, from defunct smelting machines to overturned ore-storage bins. Side chambers offer some respite from the bustling market, but are also home to shadier deals or high-stakes gambling tables. The vendors of the Market Halls and their families live in apartments tucked above it all or on cots folded beneath their stalls during business hours.

OZAZ: A collective of anti-Azlanti revolutionaries have turned an empty storage bay into a community that appears downright cheerful when compared to the rest of the station. Bright street art adorns the concrete and steel surfaces, and children play in the open. Everywhere, armed guards patrol on foot or in dilapidated hovercarts once used to carry ore. This place is the Outpost Zed Autonomous Zone, or OZAZ, a small commune the size of only a few corridor blocks. Twelve years ago, the OZAZ declared full independence from the Azlanti Star Empire. Residents of the OZAZ are affiliated with several major revolutionary cells within Azlanti space, though they're making overtures to similar groups in other civilizations as well.

Like anywhere else on Outpost Zed, the OZAZ has its own set of rules. No flags or national iconography can be displayed in the OZAZ; offending material is confiscated if guests are rude about it. The embargo on political conflict is off here, and it's the one place on the outpost an Azlanti official might fear to tread. Opportunities abound here for rebels and idealists to help out, and though there's no government or elected leaders, some revolutionary heroes loom large in the community. **Yasari Demir** (CG male brakim^{APB} envoy) is famous for his fancy flying. He was pressed into the Star Empire's service as part of the Alien Cohort years ago but defected after his secret rebel activities drew too much notice. He then made a name for himself when he and a squad of fighters took down a Star Empire transport on its way to exterminate a rebel base. Yasari's modified cargo shuttle, cheekily named *Pay Dirt*, ferries refugees and asylum seekers out of Azlanti space on an irregular schedule determined only by Yasari's whims. He brings escapees to the OZAZ, where

they can get back on their feet and start a new life. There are always more people than Yasari can help on his own, though, so he's always hiring reliable crews to help liberate downtrodden Azlanti citizens.

Path of Decay: The draeliks and others of Outpost Zed who most fervently believe in the philosophy of Ataxxea tend to keep to themselves and lurk on the edges of the other communities. However, in a decrepit corridor on the outskirts of Drillbit known as the Path of Decay, these devout worshippers of entropy gather freely and regularly to discuss their ultimate goal of undoing the constant repairs made to Outpost Zed. Many of them consider the crumbling platform a sacred place and believe the preservation work being done by the Weydanites and other community-minded individuals to be a form of blasphemy.

Sabotaging reconstruction efforts while remaining in the shadows requires credits, and the Ataxxeans of the Path of Decay finance their endeavors through a team of assassins-for-hire led by **Rineahl** (NE male draelik operative). Rineahl doesn't often dirty his hands with killing, but instead acts as a fixer and supplier for his agents. Somehow, these dirty deeds are never tied back to him, probably because he doesn't offer his affiliates any support beyond providing them with a name, weapon, and opportunity. Upon doing so, the fixer always says, "If you get caught, it's your problem." That doesn't stop him from taking his ample cut of the earnings, however.

The existence and purpose of the Path of Decay is known to most inhabitants of Outpost Zed, but since the station lacks official law enforcement, they've struggled to do anything about it. Occasionally, someone will form a group of vigilantes to storm the Path of Decay. Such attempts usually end in the death of the attackers, for the Ataxxeans have riddled the corridor with deadly traps and are dangerous practitioners of mystical arts themselves. Appeals to the Azlanti Star Empire to clear out the Path of Decay go unheeded, as the local arcidux in control of the Nys system couldn't care less if Outpost Zed were destroyed from within.

Sector 12: Outside the station's central platform, Outpost Zed's arms are divided into sectors that function as independent neighborhoods. Some are stretches of wasteland, barren of people or resources due to toxic contaminants, collapsed corridors, and defunct elevators that can't be repaired. In other sectors, vast "forests" of pipes and the ruins of ancient equipment form a technological wilderness. Sector 12 is one such place with superheated vents effusing toxic chemicals into its atmosphere. The sector has been walled off from the rest of the station, written off as unlivable. However, some draelik residents have noted the similarity between this poisonous air and the composition of the nebula in which their home world in the Shadari Confederacy resides; these individuals have been introducing various reagents into the sector, attempting to transform the area into a place where they can exist comfortably.

Southdock: Sector 22, also called Southdock, occupies the southernmost arm of Outpost Zed. Thanks to a leak in an ancient ore processing facility, many of Southdock's chambers are partially underwater. Strangely, Southdock is known for its fishing. Everything from outdated tech, antique treasures, valuable ore, and even alien fish are dredged up daily from the

flooded chamber floors. Stalls selling the catch of the day dot Southdock's border. Lucky visitors might encounter **Maureena Ba** (N female hortus^{AA3}), who proudly displays trophies she claims to have all caught in Southdock, including taxidermy filter feeders of impressive size, mechanical fish, and strange salvage. Maureena's sportfishing tournament attracts folk from near and far to compete for fabulous prizes and a chance to hang a catch in Maureena's hall of fame.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks provide ways for heroes to get involved in adventures on Outpost Zed.

An Alliance of Rebels: Yasari Demir takes an uncharacteristic stroll outside of the OZAZ when he's attacked by Azlanti spies looking to assassinate a major rebel figure. Yasari offers his thanks to any who help him fend off the ambush and discovers that one of the Azlanti agents' comm units contains

information on a group of covert rebels operating within the Alien Cohort. Yasari is convinced the rebels are in dire trouble and gathers a force to come to their aid, although many others in the OZAZ believe the data to be a trap to lure Yasari away from Outpost Zed.

Asteroid Rush: Rumors start to fly through Outpost Zed that one of the asteroids of the Goods holds an ancient relic of incalculable worth buried at its center. No two people can agree on the artifact's form; some say it's a titanic *aeon stone*, while others believe it to be some form of ancient technology from a pre-Gap civilization. Treasure seekers from all over begin crowding the asteroids, clashing with the miners who live there. The Goods devolve into chaos after the trade consortium who sells the asteroids' radioactive material to unknown buyers pulls up stakes and leaves the system.

Dragon Slayers: Recently, an incursion by a dangerous radiation drake (*Starfinder Adventure Path #8: Escape from the Prison Moon* 56) damaged the "palace" of the Lower Realm (several shipping containers welded together) before retreating to a nearby unused docking bay, prompting Queen Astridienne to call for courageous knights to slay the dragon. After undergoing a series of public trials to convince the royal leader that they're fit for the task, would-be heroes must brave an abandoned sector of the station to face the radioactive beast.

The Entourage: Influencer and infosphere celebrity **Envar Tamm** (CN male korasha lashunta) sets his sights on filming a vid in Outpost Zed's infamous Market Halls! He wants to show his viewers the real scoop on the goods, food, and people of Outpost Zed while showcasing his own handsome face as much as possible. However, the station still holds numerous dangers, especially for outsiders, and Envar's publicist insists that he hire a security entourage. The influencer can be difficult to keep up with though, as he insists on visiting the old mining platform's most notorious places, including the Path of Decay.

Explosive Revelations: Arcidux **Xibia Ulklasstin** (LN female Azlanti human), appointed leader of the Nys system, makes a rare visit to Outpost Zed. Not bothering to hide her identity or disdain for the station, she imperiously marches through the marketplaces with a large contingent of Aeon Guards. Suddenly, an explosion rocks the station, and though the arcidux survives the blast, several innocent shopkeepers are killed. The Church of Weydan demands that Xibia remain on Outpost Zed until the perpetrator of the bombing can be found, whether it be Ataxxean extremists, OZAZ rebels, or another Azlanti arcidux making a power play.

Smuggler's Blues: A damaged starship enters the system and requests emergency docking at Outpost Zed. Though the vessel appears to be of Tetrad make, the only person on board is a kasatha who claims to be the captain and immediately takes the mark of refuge. When a contingent of other Tetrad ships, all captained by witchwyrds, arrives, they demand the kasatha be turned over for stealing the vessel and its precious cargo. The Tetrad merchants threaten violence, and it's clear they have the firepower to back it up, but the mark of refuge is one of the few Outpost Zed traditions that all inhabitants can stand behind.



YASARI DEMIR

NANOCYTE KNACKS

Inhabitants of Outpost Zed, especially the anti-Azlanti rebels of the OZAZ, know to take every advantage they can get, whenever they can get them. These nanocyte knocks were developed on the repurposed asteroid-mining platform for use in all manner of situations.

2nd Level

You must be at least 2nd level to choose these nanocyte knocks.

Cushioning Sheath (Ex)

You're instinctively able to gather your nanite array beneath you to help break your fall when said fall would otherwise break you. When your sheath array is active, the surface on which you fall always counts as yielding (*Core Rulebook* 400), converting the damage from the first 10 feet of a fall to nonlethal bludgeoning damage. In addition, when your sheath array is active, for every 5 by which your Acrobatics check exceeds the DC to avoid taking damage from the first 10 feet of a fall, you can ignore the damage from an additional 10 feet of falling.

Split Cloud (Ex)

You've learned to keep your nanites functioning even when they're separated by currents or environmental factors. Your cloud array can have a gap of one 5-foot square between the spaces it fills. At 10th level, this increases to two 5-foot squares, and at 18th level, this increases to three 5-foot squares. Even if split into multiple smaller clouds by these gaps, the cloud functions as one unit. When reconfiguring the spaces your cloud occupies, at least one square of each smaller cloud must remain unchanged.

6th Level

You must be at least 6th level to choose these nanocyte knocks.

Aquatic Propulsion (Ex)

Your nanites propel your weapons with great force, pushing through water and dense gases without difficulty. Each time you form a weapon using your gear array, you can apply the underwater weapon special property to that weapon (when used underwater, it ignores the -2 penalty to attack rolls and deals full damage). If you do, combat maneuvers you attempt using that weapon gain a +1 bonus.

Hampering Nanites (Ex)

Your nanites seize and hobble your foes, restricting their movement. After a creature takes damage in your nanite cloud or you damage a creature within 30 feet with a weapon formed with your gear array, you can take a reaction to cause the creature to become entangled (Reflex negates) for a number of rounds equal to your Constitution modifier, or until it escapes with an Acrobatics check or a Strength check. An entangled creature can attempt such a check as a move action. After using this ability, you can't use it again until you spend 1 Resolve Point to regain Stamina Points after a 10-minute rest.

Vehicular Array (Ex)

You've learned to transform your nanites into basic vehicles to help you maneuver various terrain. When you use your gear array to take a major form, you can use a nanite surge to instead form your nanites into a basic energycle that only you can ride. This otherwise follows the standard rules for your gear array. At 10th level, you can form your nanites into a torpedo minisub, and at 14th level, you can form your nanites into an ultralight turboglider (*Armory* 139). Regardless of the form, these vehicles offer no cover, can't carry passengers, have no hardness, deal no collision damage, and have 1 HP.

10th Level

You must be at least 10th level to choose these nanocyte knocks.

Adaptable Augmentations (Ex)

You can temporarily alter the systems of your body to accept almost any augmentation. When you use your gear array to create a cybernetic augmentation, you can install it into any empty body slot, regardless of where it would normally be installed. If this augmentation takes up multiple slots, you must have the requisite number of empty body slots or the augmentation fails to manifest.

Exploratory Form (Ex)

You're driven to explore diverse environments and worlds. While your sheath array is active, you can use a nanite surge to gain either a climb speed of 30 feet or a swim speed of 30 feet. If you already have the selected speed, you instead increase that speed by 15 feet. This lasts for a number of hours equal to your Constitution modifier. You lose this speed when your sheath array ends.

14th Level

You must be at least 14th level to choose this nanocyte knock.

Gluttonous Nanites (Ex)

Your nanites make the most of every opportunity to regenerate. Once per day after a combat in which you defeat a significant enemy who's no longer alive, you can direct your nanites to devour that enemy's body; if you do so, you regain Stamina points equal to 3 times your nanocyte level. You must have the hungry nanites and feasting nanites knocks to select this knock.

18th Level

You must be at least 18th level to choose this nanocyte knock.

Flurrying Fog (Ex)

Your ability to strike from multiple angles out of your nanite cloud improves even further. While you're adjacent to or within your nanite cloud, your reach with melee attacks made with weapons formed with your gear array gain additional reach of 10 feet. You can also make attacks of opportunity against any targets that would provoke them within your nanite cloud. You must have the menacing pall nanites knock to select this knock.



PRECIPICE

Thriving enclave resisting the drow noble houses' efforts to seize control.

PRECIPICE

NE chasm city

Gravity standard (artificial)

Atmosphere normal (artificial)

Day 7 days; **Year** 243 years

Population 63,045 (80% xulgath, 10% orc, 5% half-orc, 4% drow, 1% other)

Government autocracy (city manager)

Languages Draconic, Drow, Orc

Qualities insular, profiteering

QUALITIES

Profiteering The businesses of this settlement engage in unethical practices in order to make profits.

ECONOMY

Exports minerals, technology

Imports food, oxygen, water

Maximum Item Level 12th

Specialty Item Level technological weapons (16th)

NPCS

Ireshk (NE female xulgath operative), city manager

Maro (LN male xulgath soldier), head of the Delver's Union
Celiasora Misraria (NE female drow^{AA} technomancer), head of research at NocTech Labs

Moscaru: Precipice is aptly named, for it sits upon a literal cliff's edge while also facing down an uncertain future as a bastion of culture standing against forces that would quash it. I find the city's charm in its determination to stay alive—nay, to thrive—even in the face of such adversity.

Sprax: The only thing it really needs is a little sunlight to brighten everything up.

Moscaru: Which isn't necessary when ninety-nine percent of the population requires little to no light to navigate.

Sprax: Oh! And there's the smells, too! Can you say you've really lived without experiencing xulgath scent-graffiti firsthand?

Moscaru: I think many people would say they've lived quite well without experiencing the overpowering... cultural significance of smell to xulgath society. It's a shame that weaker noses simply miss out on an entire aspect of their culture.

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On the barren, hollow planet Apostae, life is difficult even for those who submit to the hegemony of the ancient drow noble houses. However, much to the chagrin of the planet's current oligarchs, the formerly drow-controlled city of Precipice now stands strong as a symbol of defiance.

House Misraria, a drow noble house whose legacy can be traced back to Lost Golarion, has been in decline since the Gap, to the point that, until recently, it maintained only a single major holding outside of Nightarch: Precipice. Precipice originated shortly after the Gap ended as a simple exploratory outpost established next to a chasm in Apostae's surface hundreds of feet wide. When an agent of House Misraria discovered the existence of caverns and tunnels winding off from the chasm that led to countless unexplored subterranean chambers and deposits of valuable minerals, she made the outpost a permanent settlement and oversaw the transfer of many of House Misraria's serfs, largely xulgaths (page 23), to the settlement to expand exploration as well as to study and export valuable discoveries.

Over the centuries, Precipice functioned smoothly, its primary threat being the occasional hostile creature that found its way close to the city through the tunnels. Rival drow houses kept an eye on Precipice, but the settlement never made any revolutionary discoveries or suffered any catastrophic disasters,

so for the most part, there was neither reason nor opportunity for another house to take an active interest.

However, with the sudden catastrophe of the Drift Crisis (explored further in *Drift Crisis*), an event that disrupted most interstellar travel, much of House Misraria's attention and resources focused on securing their offworld interests. An organized group of xulgath rebels led by a former close aide to House Misraria, **Ireshk** (NE female xulgath operative), took the opportunity to strike. The rebel forces drove House Misraria and many of the other drow from Precipice and officially declared themselves an independent entity.

GEOGRAPHY

Precipice is built over and partially into the Black Gulch, one of many deep crevices that run across the surface of Apostae. The Black Gulch stretches for miles and varies from 600 feet to several miles wide across its length and is several miles deep. Tunnels and caverns riddle its walls, and a river of a murky, corrosive slurry flows along the bottom.

The gulch is about half a mile wide where Precipice sits. The city's first buildings were constructed on the surface along its north side. Most of the surface construction is made up of atmospherically sealed buildings connected by cylindrical thoroughfares. Among Precipice's most remarkable sights is the



PRECIPICE

massive arched bridge that connects the north and south sides of the gulch.

The north side of the city houses industry providing necessary services, such as water and air recycling, as well as a military command center and barracks. What originally functioned as House Misraria's family compound and the upper-class residential districts sit on the south side, which is where most of Precipice's drow residents lived, though after the uprising, many drow residents fled. The new leadership either gifted or sold the dwellings to important figures in the new government. The primary upper-class shopping district sprung up on the bridge itself, which now functions as both a shopping mall and thoroughfare, with stores clustered on either side. Smaller bridges and support struts also crisscross the gulch beneath the main bridge, supporting many eateries and clubs that opened on the city's lower levels to serve poorer residents.

As exploratory expeditions delved into the Black Gulch, the city naturally built downward to accommodate the workers. Rather than being allotted into formal housing districts, most of this construction is squeezed in wherever it would fit, with comfort or convenience as an afterthought. Consequently, the streets built into the gulch walls are often confusing and unintuitive. The population in these districts is mostly xulgaths, along with minority populations of orcs and half-orcs. Since the uprising, Ireshk and the new leadership have been focusing on raising the quality of life in these districts, but there's still

much work to be done. Haphazard slums now bleed into nearby tunnels and caverns as well. Such areas are difficult for the government to monitor, and so the tunnels are often left to their own devices in terms of law and public safety. The military patrols these tunnels for dangerous creatures that sometimes crawl up from deeper caverns but usually shows no concern for the affairs of citizens.

RESIDENTS

Xulgaths make up the majority of Precipice's population. When the city was primarily a mining and exploration outpost, House Misraria transported a large number of xulgaht serfs, along with a small number of orcs and half-orcs, to explore the dangerous caverns and to do the hard labor required for mining rare minerals underground. The descendants of these first arrivals still perform the same labor for the most part, though after the social changes that took place after the uprising, many have taken the opportunity to pursue other paths.

In the past, the minority drow population made up the ruling upper class, and the rest of the population was forced into servitor roles. After the uprising, however, social class in Precipice became much more fluid. When most of the drow population fled the city, they left behind a vacuum in society that others quickly moved to fill. Some drow chose to stay to either retain their business interests or to look for opportunities to assist House Misraria or another drow party interested

in reclaiming the city, while others simply didn't have the resources to flee.

Post-uprising, Precipice supports a small but growing population of immigrants—both temporary and permanent—from other planets. Adventurers and thrill seekers from the Pact Worlds and Near Space are known to visit Precipice to seek permission to explore the caverns, as are researchers and opportunists with less clear agendas. Over time, Precipice has collected an eclectic group of researchers and explorers determined to uncover the mysteries of Apostae. Precipice's government is happy to entertain such visitors so long as they regularly submit their findings to the city.

With the amount of strange and mysterious technology brought into Precipice from below, there are plenty of oddities that even the best researchers in Precipice can discern no use for. What doesn't have an immediately apparent function is typically discarded at the scrapyard (page 110), so Precipice has become a popular stop for Pact Worlds-based salvage ships seeking new materials on their way to other hauls.

Precipice and the surrounding area have no native fauna to speak of, aside from the creatures that lurk deep in its caverns. Most of these creatures are constructs, but some explorers who made it deeper within the planet report strange organic creatures. Relatively new projects aimed at developing sustainable livestock farming in the settlement have yet to produce promising results.

Sprax: You really can't live in this city and be afraid of heights. While I was in the Web looking for some breakfast, I watched a courier jump right off one bridge down to the one under it and just keep walking!

Moscaru: Just like the city in which they live, the people of Precipice fiercely cling to what's theirs while dancing on the edge of a literal and metaphorical cliff. Being mostly species with a history of marginalization, they are protective of the freedom the city offers them and quick to band together in the face of adversity.

Sprax: And they're really generous to tourists! A very nice lady took me on a tour of the city's best party spots for only five thousand credits.

Moscaru: I really think I should hold onto your wallet from now on. Prospective tourists should be wary of the same scams one might encounter in any city.

SOCIETY

Since the uprising, Precipice's once-strict social stratification has fallen apart once the drow minority lost their hold on the city. While friendlier to non-drow than the previous administration, Precipice's current government isn't a utopia. Drow who remained in the city exist in an unstable position in society. No laws oppress them, and they receive the same protections as any other citizen. However, they now lack the protections their privilege used to afford them, so some fear they might become targets of revenge for the centuries of oppression the drow leadership inflicted on others.

The government under Ireshk is a self-proclaimed competitive meritocracy with few social programs to assist

DOWNTIME IN PRECIPICE

The following downtime activities function differently in Precipice, as noted below.

Analyze Sample: Due to the data on Apostae's cave systems that Precipice has been accumulating for decades, PCs are at an advantage when studying specimens that relate to that subject. When performing the analyze sample downtime activity to analyze a sample that originates from Apostae, you can attempt the relevant skill checks untrained, so long as you have access to a science lab or similar facilities.

Coordinate: The delvers of Precipice understand the importance of teamwork; someone having your back in a tunnel is often the difference between life and death. In Precipice, you can attend workshops at the Delver's Union as part of the coordinate downtime activity. If you do so, you gain the following effect in addition to the normal effects: one time at any point during the following day, you can use the aid another action to aid two allies instead of one.

Hunt Bargains: Precipice's economy has few regulations, so PCs can sometimes find massive bargains. When you succeed at the hunt bargains downtime activity, you can purchase the item for 15% less than normal rather than 10% less than normal. However, because of the lack of regulations, on a failed check, you can only find the item being sold for 15% more than normal.

the poor or those unable to work. Ireshk firmly believes that only the most adaptable survive and that the best way to encourage her people to thrive is to give them no other option. The few social programs available are geared toward employment, though these programs provide opportunities generally limited to dangerous occupations, such as soldiers or cavern delvers.

This city has no governmental police force. The local military protects government buildings and public places from any outside threats, while owners of private property and businesses typically employ private security. More often than not, fights and petty theft are left to the involved parties to handle. Substances that are illegal or controlled in other settlements generally have few to no laws surrounding them in Precipice.

This lack of formal structure, along with the general scarcity of goods that comes from residing on a world with limited natural resources, creates a social environment where citizens are generally suspicious of one another. Many who reside here join gangs, unions, consortiums, or other tight-knit groups for mutual protection where the law is lacking. Precipice's government ignores most of these groups so long as they don't go too far but does take a much more proactive stance in protecting offworld visitors. Seeking to forge strong relationships with offworld powers, the city takes any direct threats to its guests very seriously. However, it does nothing to prevent visitors from getting fleeced by local merchants or charged bogus "administrative fees." Citizens themselves tend to be insular and suspicious of outsiders who show interest in anything other than the caverns and quickly close ranks should they sense an outside threat.

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Religion doesn't play a major role in life in Precipice. Like many drow on Apostae, the religious members of Precipice's xulgath population lean toward following demon lord patrons. Some worship Talavet (*Galactic Magic* 114) as a perhaps unlikely patron of the xulgath species, especially in Precipice where the focus is on the development of a xulgath-dominant culture. Other faiths brought by visitors to Precipice maintain a small following, such as Yaraesa and Eloritu, but religion remains a mostly private and personal affair for most citizens.

RELATIONS

One of Precipice's greatest priorities is strengthening its relations with other Pact Worlds powers to secure legitimacy on an interplanetary scale. Precipice's leaders are aware that the drow oligarchs who control almost all of Apostae would like nothing more than for Precipice to be wiped off the surface of the planetoid and forgotten. The drow noble houses see the very existence of Precipice as a slight. While it gives them a reason to mock House Misraria, the houses are also aware Precipice could easily become a beacon of resistance for Apostae's oppressed populations. However, the noble houses are too caught up in scheming against one another to attack Precipice directly, and so they remain locked in a tense stalemate until an opportunity to return the city to drow hands presents itself. In the meantime, every drow-controlled settlement on Apostae has placed embargoes on Precipice. Rumors persist that Crater Town, a settlement on Apostae run by retired mercenaries and not directly overseen by a drow house, is involved in secret dealings with Precipice under the noses of the drow houses. Some suggest that the two settlements are plotting to vie for greater independence on Apostae.

To strengthen Precipice's position in the Pact Worlds, Ireshk has been courting powers that might be interested in securing access to Apostae's caverns without negotiating with the drow houses. Some of Precipice's strongest interplanetary ties are with Castrovel. As an institute with a focus on xenoarchaeology and xenoanthropology, Qabarat University wasted no time negotiating with Precipice for the opportunity to research Apostae's mysteries, and the university has since made sizable donations to the city in exchange for exploration rights. Sovyrian, homeland of elves, also has a vested interest in Precipice. It's rumored that powerful individuals in elven society have donated large sums of credits to help Precipice thrive as part of a plan to undermine drow power on Apostae.

Other parties are interested in Precipice for reasons more mercantile than academic. Drow-owned corporations have long used their access to the technology within Apostae to maintain an edge over other arms manufacturers, but some rival corporations see Precipice as an opportunity to discover something that would allow them to undercut drow suppliers. One such company is AbadarCorp, whose leaders are currently ascertaining the risks and rewards of angering the drow noble houses by dealing with Precipice. No formal agreements have been signed, and the noble houses have a vested interest in keeping it that way. Several smaller corporations are interested as well, seeing Precipice as an opportunity for them to make a discovery that will catapult them to the level of the most prestigious weapons manufacturers.

UNDER PRECIPICE

Precipice's most precious "natural" resources by far are the caverns and tunnels that wind for miles beneath Apostae's surface. They provide the means for both Precipice's livelihood and its safety. Much of the city's infrastructure is geared toward excavation and exploration as well as those who provide support for such ventures, including engineers and logistics specialists, material suppliers, medical doctors, and the delvers themselves.

The job of delver sits in a complicated place in Precipice society. When House Misraria still controlled the city, xulgath, orc, and half-orc delvers equipped with minimal protective gear were regularly sent to ensure the cavern's safety for drow explorers. The casualty rates were high, the compensation was low, and it wasn't uncommon for entire expeditions to mysteriously disappear after a particularly valuable find. Working conditions for delvers improved drastically after the uprising, but it's still a very dangerous job. The Precipice Delver's Union represents most delvers native to Precipice, and it advocates for wages commensurate with the risk as well as the safest possible working conditions for its members. Precipice's government has agreements with the union to use only union delvers for government expeditions, but private interests often hire non-union teams to lower their costs. To ensure credits flow into the city, the government mandates that non-union expeditions purchase permits to explore the caverns to cover regular maintenance and patrols that make the caverns safer for all explorers.

Being a union delver is considered a prestigious job in the eyes of Precipice's citizens. It's dangerous but also seen as vital for the city's existence, and it's common for commercial businesses to offer "delver discounts" on their products. Delvers who survive multiple expeditions or make valuable discoveries are treated as minor celebrities in Precipice. Explorers not affiliated with the union can be treated with a similar level of regard, so long as they've proven themselves.

Over Precipice's lifetime, delvers have uncovered several remarkable finds. One of the first major discoveries was a room full of pure adamantine machinery that had long since stopped running. Stripping the metal and selling it provided the credits to truly get Precipice on its feet. More recently, a delver named **Hamun** (CN nonbinary xulgath) discovered a smooth horacalcum sphere that ticks softly. NocTech labs now has possession of the sphere, but even they've yet to glean insight into its purpose. It's also rumored that Ireshk herself discovered something in the caverns that she has threatened to use against the drow houses in the event of an invasion, a claim that has seemingly kept them from attempting to retake the city so far.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Precipice and its citizens face constant threats to their survival. Situated so closely to the dangers lurking beneath Apostae's surface, most of Precipice's residents travel armed and are experienced with their weapons of choice. Guards constantly patrol the tunnels for constructs and occasionally organic creatures that get too close to the city. Working these patrols is dangerous, so the city is willing to pay out bounties to individuals who show proof of slaying any threats to Precipice's safety.

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Precipice faces more insidious dangers as well. It's a well-known secret that every major drow house has agents somewhere in the city. **Cerenn Rycast** (CE female drow^{AA} envoy) is one such agent. She has been quietly working for months to build up enough paranoia to cause city-wide riots so House Rycast can move in while the unrest keeps Precipice's government distracted. Fear of spies is common among the public and can lead to attacks on innocents if such sentiments flare out of control. Cerenn frequently uses recent offworld arrivals as scapegoats for her schemes, as it can only benefit House Rycast to convince the people of Precipice that they can't trust strangers.

While most of the drow houses have a vested interest in seeing Precipice's current leadership fall, only one has a personal vendetta against the city. **Teverin Misraria** (NE female drow^{AA} operative), the most recent manager of Precipice for House Misraria, has only one more chance to make up for her failure in losing control of the city. Teverin quietly plots the assassination of Ireshk from Nightarch through a number of agents stationed in the city, hoping that the rest of the populace will fall in line without a leader. Though if they don't, truth be told, Teverin would like nothing more than to burn out every "ungrateful traitor" in Precipice and start over.

While Ireshk treats fostering diplomatic relations with offworld powers as a priority, she also keenly knows the dangers such negotiations can pose to the city's autonomy. Powerful corporations or nations could use economic pressure

to force Precipice to make concessions to the point of essentially becoming a subsidiary. Such threats lie on the horizon, as AbadarCorp representatives have made several requests to purchase controlling interest in several of Precipice's facilities. With the need to import much of Precipice's food, water, and air supply, such deals might be impossible to avoid forever.

Lastly, conflicts still brew within the city itself. While Ireshk seized power and is content to stay in her current position, other voices in the city call for greater changes in the city's governance, such as free elections and a representative governing body. These conflicts have yet to lead to violence, but there's no saying when tensions might boil over.

Sprax: You can't go on a vacation to Precipice without touring the caverns! I had the nicest tour guides, but they won't tell you about the secret tour you can take if you go past the signs labeled "DANGER: RESTRICTED ACCESS." Then you get to see some of the... what did you call them, Moscaru? Indigenous species in their natural habitat! I met the cutest little—well, big—fuzzy spider creature, though it ran off because my tour guides were a bit loud as they came down after me.

Moscaru: While Precipice doesn't actually offer cavern tours, the authorities do perform regular patrols to make sure no one gets themselves killed walking

into unexplored sections of tunnel or makes off with important artifacts.

Sprax: That reminds me! I found lots of super cool souvenirs to bring home to my friends and family, but after my tour guides were nice enough to carry them for me, they forgot to tell me where they left them. I'm going to have to go to that big fancy building to ask about them.

Moscaru: Good luck with that.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are several notable locations in Precipice.



Delver's Dive

Delver's Dive is a popular bar established in one of the cleared-out caverns in the side of the chasm. It primarily caters to delvers and explorers but has seen a rise in tourism of late, leading the ownership to lean into a "delver" theme that's considered tacky by locals. Trinkets with no discernible use found in the caverns are often donated or sold to the bar and put on the wall along with a picture of the delver who discovered them.

Nicaros Zeizerer (CE male drow operative) currently owns the bar. He was sent to Precipice to spy on House Misraria and uses the bar as a convenient location to keep an ear out for valuable discoveries. His current orders are to report in if there's a convenient opportunity for House Zeizerer to swoop in and take control of the city. To Nicaros's surprise, more than anyone else's, he discovered he enjoys his work and the people of Precipice, and lately, he has been wondering where his loyalties truly lie.

The Delver's Union

Partially embedded into the side of the chasm, the Delver's Union building is where **Maro** (LN male xulgath soldier), the head delver, plans sanctioned expeditions into the caverns close to Precipice. All requests for exploration permits—along with the associated fees—go through the Delver's Union. Since granting access to the caverns is one of Precipice's primary sources of funding, Maro and the rest of the delvers command significant power in the city, though that power brings with it no small risk given their profession. Interested parties can hire union delvers as escorts into the caverns for a hefty fee.

Izava's Scrapyard

Not all discoveries from the caverns are deemed useful. Things with no discernible purpose often end up in a scrapyard just outside of Precipice's city limits run by **Izava** (CN female xulgath mechanic), along with all the other trash the city produces that can't be easily recycled. Izava is considered a bit of an eccentric and is generally left to her own devices in the small off-the-grid domicile she maintains. She spends her days sifting through the scrap others leave and seems to believe there's something important to find, though no one else is quite sure what she's looking for.

NocTech Labs

House Misraria operated this research laboratory to study discoveries from the caverns and determine their value as weapons. After the uprising, **Celiasora Misraria** (NE female drow^{AA} technomancer), a minor member of the house, pledged her services to Ireshk rather than give up on her research. Ireshk doesn't trust her but allows the technomancer to keep her position as Head of Research because her knowledge of Apostaeon artifacts is unparalleled in the city. However, Ireshk assigned a collection of "research assistants" to spy on her. There are rumors that Celiasora is working on a top-secret weapon

reverse-engineered from an artifact Ireshk unearthed from the caverns, and none but the two women know exactly what this weapon is capable of.

Precipice Base 1

Ireshk knows that Precipice faces threats from both above and below. To that end, she entrusted her brother-in-arms and fellow leader in the uprising **General Uthirat** (LE male xulgath soldier) with overseeing the city's military concerns. While she trusts him to protect the city from outside threats, Ireshk is concerned that Uthirat would waste no time challenging her for her position should an opportunity present itself, so she keeps a close eye on his activities; it's rumored that several of his subordinates are her spies. She's concerned her agents might have been compromised, and she's always interested in getting outside help from competent individuals.

Precipice Spaceport

Prior to the uprising, Precipice lacked the infrastructure to accommodate offworld visitation. After Ireshk took over, she immediately set about expanding the existing planetary shuttle terminal into a fully functioning spaceport, with room enough for large vessels to dock and unload goods. While still small as spaceports go, the new terminal sees enough movement of people and goods that the settlement's economy is steadily increasing. However, Precipice's government knows that the spaceport would be a prime target for terrorism or sabotage by the settlement's enemies, so the spaceport manager **Elsor Hakan** (NE male orc) keeps a watchful eye out for any sign of trouble—though he's less watchful when it comes to allowing his customs employees to take bribes or otherwise fleece visitors deemed unimportant.

Qabarat University Research Annex

Of all the outside interests in Precipice, the city probably maintains the closest relationship with Castrovel's Qabarat University. Given the university's expansive xenoarchaeology program, the possibility of access to Apostae's caverns enticed the university to send one research team that ultimately expanded into an entire permanently staffed research institute headed by Doctor **Xalisha Meven** (N female damaya lashunta), who was one of the first researchers from Qabarat to personally explore the caverns. The annex is just above the Delver's Union, and Xalisha frequently works with Maro to plan expeditions and study discoveries. Precipice currently grants exploratory and research privileges to Qabarat University in exchange for free access to their research.

Seven Spires

House Misraria ruled Precipice from their family compound, named for the seven curved black spires that rise from the roof of the main building. Ireshk claimed it as the city manager's residence after the uprising, expelling most of House Misraria's members and employees and bringing in those loyal to her. Only those personally vetted by Ireshk are allowed to be in the compound unescorted, and Ireshk rarely leaves. It's clear the new city manager is concerned about some kind of threat to her

well-being, but whether it's from the drow houses, her fellow rebels from the uprising, some other power, or a combination of the three, she won't say. The compound is a well-defended and trap-filled fortress, and even Ireshk isn't sure all its secrets have been discovered.

Spireshade District

Surrounding the Seven Spires compound is a residential district originally reserved for visiting drow not associated with House Misraria. Now, offworld visitors can typically rent by the day, week, or month, choosing either a separate home or a suite in the Black Cliff Hotel—sometimes derisively called the Beggar's Block since it's where drow who can't afford their own separate lodgings stay. **Arxul** (N male xulgath) took over running Black Cliff after the drow owners fled during the uprising, and he now seeks to turn it into an attractive vacation spot by adding a spa and other resort-style amenities for tourists. Not all the vacated residences have been reoccupied after the discovery that one of them had been rigged with a series of lethal traps by the previous occupant before they fled. While clearing the rest of the residences isn't her main priority, Ireshk is offering whatever valuables were left behind in these dwellings to anyone willing to render them safe for habitation.

Topside Aeroponics

This indoor farm sits on the top of the chasm under a vast bubble dome interwoven with the specialized equipment vital for keeping plants alive in an artificial environment. As the farm's owner, **Kessa** (NG nonbinary xulgath), is fond of pointing out, the farm is the only bit of green in Precipice. The farm provides Precipice's only supply of local fruits and vegetables, and it's exceedingly difficult to maintain. Kessa constantly experiments with different plants to see which offer the most yield for the fewest resources. Given the farm's expenses, Kessa must constantly request loans or donations from other sources. So far, their petitions to the government that Precipice must have a local, sustainable food supply have been met with slightly less than the requested amount of funding, but Kessa is concerned that Ireshk will eventually decide the farm is only a drain on resources. To that end, they're determined to find—or create—the perfect crop before that happens.

Underground Innovations

House Misraria never succeeded in establishing a successful weapons brand, but after the uprising, a former technician named **Areduth** (NE female xulgath mechanic) took over the abandoned Misraria TechWorks workshop and established her own line of weaponry. Areduth works with NocTech Labs to develop and mass-produce weapons and armor, most reverse engineered from discoveries found beneath the surface. The company's first weapon line—longarms that shoot burrowing, spined projectiles—has been reasonably successful, and they're always looking for new contractors to test out their designs in the field. Rumor has it they're currently developing a line of armor that will weaponize a xulgath wearer's naturally occurring pheromones, perhaps even to the point of enabling non-xulgaths to mimic them.

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The Warrens

Over the years, the city of Precipice gradually expanded into the already-explored tunnels and caverns beneath the surface. Several of the discovered caves have been sealed off to allow for an artificial atmosphere, and a portion of the city's poor now make their homes there. **Tyerah Chol** (NE female half-orc) funded the development and now uses most of the people who live there as labor to continue expanding and developing the space. A portion of the warrens was recently damaged when construction caused caustic liquid to start leaking out of pipes buried in the walls.

The Web

Over the years, stalls and shops sprung up on the bridges and struts that crisscross the chasm. Stairs and ramps were added as well until the city's support structure became its own community colloquially referred to as the Web. Recently, the

vendors of the Web have come together under **Golguth** (NE male xulgath) to form a united consortium, though some aren't pleased by Golguth's sudden monopoly.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following are adventures that might take place in and around Precipice.

Absconded Artifact: Ireshk summons the PCs with an important offer. An agent of House Arabani has successfully made off with a powerful artifact that was being studied in NocTech Labs. Ireshk offers the PCs a generous reward if they go to Nightarch and retrieve the artifact before House Arabani has time to thoroughly analyze it.

Caught in the Middle: A corporation or government entity the PCs have ties to asks them to travel to Precipice to ascertain the potential benefits of a trade alliance. Saboteurs employed by House Rycast intend to destroy this burgeoning relationship before any formal agreements can be made, placing the PCs in the middle of a dangerous conflict.

Clockwork Stalker: The Delver's Union has put a bounty on a dangerous construct that has been stalking the tunnels close to the city for weeks. Not much is known about the creature because it has killed anyone who has come into contact with it so far, leaving only small traces of footage behind. There's evidence that the creature is intelligent and enjoys setting traps and ambushes for prey.

Fugitive Flora: An unidentified plant sold to Topside Aeroponics mutated into a carnivorous hunter after undergoing experiments intended to increase its growth rate. It has now escaped and left seedlings all over the city. Kessa, afraid of losing their funding over a well-intentioned mistake, begs the PCs to retrieve the parent plant and its seedlings without involving the government.

Infiltration: A drow agent of a minor house offers the PCs a substantial number of credits to infiltrate several government buildings in the city and download a computer program onto the main servers in each one. The PCs are free to plan their heists as they see fit, but their actions must remain undetected if they want to get paid at the end.

Prophecy Cube: A frazzled-looking xulgath offers the PCs a strange metal puzzle cube he found in the tunnels. If they take it, the xulgath mumbles something about it "not being his problem anymore" and quickly leaves. The cube periodically whispers in a strange mixture of languages melded together in a mechanical voice. The words sound eerily like prophecies.

Rallying Cry: The PCs find themselves in the middle of a rally calling for a freely elected ruling council. Tensions are high, and violence threatens to break out when someone throws a rock. Is this an act of sabotage by the drow noble houses or a sign that Precipice's government needs to change?

Silent Spires: The Seven Spires compound has been radio silent for several days. Its traps are primed to go off at the presence of any intruder. General Uthirat hires the PCs to infiltrate the compound to discover what happened to the current city manager and the rest of the people inside.



Ticket to Treasure: One of the PCs' contacts obtained exploratory permits and wants to hire them as escorts to chart a newly discovered vault. It's unknown what dangers and treasures this vault might contain, but to find out, the PCs must protect their noncombatant employer.

Troubling Toxicity: A large number of people in Precipice begin to fall ill, and someone discovers toxic green buildup in the water recycler. Studying it reveals evidence of an algae native to the Veskarium. Soon, more vital systems begin to malfunction or simply fail. Can the PCs figure out who's behind the sabotage before innocent civilians lose their lives?

DEEP DELVER (ARCHETYPE)

While cave systems aren't unique to Apostae, the city of Precipice maintains some of the best training facilities, including the Delver's Union, for those who want to explore such environments. Whether they trained at a specialized institution or picked up their skills elsewhere, deep delvers are experts at surviving in dangerous conditions with dwindling resources. Some species who are adapted to living underground, such as xulgaths or bolidas (*Alien Archive 2 20*), might develop the skills of a delver just from their daily lives. Of course, such skills aren't limited in usefulness to natural cave systems. Delvers can just as easily use their skills in cramped starship corridors, decrepit buildings with treacherous floors, alien ruins, and so on.

Delvers tend to have martially focused skill sets, such as that of soldiers, vanguards, or operatives. However, anyone who expects to spend extended periods of time underground can benefit from a deep delver's abilities. Those who tend to be more perceptive than average, such as mystics, might also benefit from the additional awareness of one's environment that being a delver confers.

Alternate Class Features

The deep delver archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 9th, 12th, and 18th levels.

Close-Quarters Specialist (Ex) 2nd Level

You're experienced at navigating tight spaces in dangerous conditions, allowing you to remain mobile and ready to respond to threats even with very little space to react. You no longer gain the entangled condition while squeezing. This ability doesn't allow you to move through spaces narrower than half your space. Due to your familiarity with fighting in close quarters, you also gain a +1 bonus when making attacks against a foe that's squeezing.

In addition, when you're squeezing, you can use a reaction to gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your AC against a single attack by using the environment to your advantage. You can't use this ability again until you spend 1 Resolve Point to regain Stamina Points after a 10-minute rest.

Honed Senses (Ex) 4th Level

You've grown accustomed to navigating without light. You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 30 feet. Additionally, whether

it be an impending cave-in or a deliberate trap, you have a practically preternatural ability to notice such threats in your vicinity. 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 is rolled in secret by the GM.

Treasure Hunter (Sp) 6th Level

Cave systems aren't just home to traps and hazards, but often also valuable finds. You've become adept at discerning the functions of such treasures. You can use your bonus in Perception in place of Engineering for the identify technology task of Engineering or in place of Mysticism for the identify magic item task of Mysticism. In addition, you can cast *identify* as a spell-like ability three times per day. Your caster level for this effect is equal to your character level. Once per day when you attempt a Perception check to search an area, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to treat the result as if you rolled a natural 20.

Equipment Exploiter (Ex) 9th Level

You're used to long expeditions underground, and you can rest and maintain your equipment even when in remote places. Environmental protections in armor you wear lasts for an additional number of days equal to your key ability score bonus before needing to be recharged. Additionally, you can squeeze charges from powered equipment even when it seems impossible. When you run out of charges while using a weapon that uses batteries, you can immediately spend 1 Resolve Point to cause the weapon's battery to immediately regain 1d10 charges. You can use this ability on a particular battery only once per day.

Scrappy Survivor (Ex) 12th Level

After extensive physical conditioning and practice in the field, you can force your body to keep going even when you have nothing left. When you're suffering from thirst, you need to attempt checks to avoid nonlethal damage only every 4 hours instead of every hour. When you're suffering from starvation, you need to attempt checks to avoid nonlethal damage only every other day instead of every day. You can also hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to three times your Constitution score instead of two times your Constitution score.

In addition, you gain a climb speed equal to half your land speed. If you already have a climb speed, it instead increases by 10 feet.

Terrain Savant (Sp) 18th Level

You've grown so familiar with traversing underground terrain that you've developed the ability to glean information about the environment that others would find impossible to discern. Once per day, you can cast *commune with nature* as a spell-like ability, with the following exceptions. The spell functions only underground or in an otherwise enclosed environment, and it has a radius of 1 mile per level instead of 100 feet per level. Your caster level for this effect is equal to your character level. You can use this ability additional times per day after the first but must spend 1 Resolve Point for each use after the first.



SHULGI STATION

Extraplanar junction shaped by stars and thought.

SHULGI STATION

N space station

Gravity low

Atmosphere normal

Day 22 hours; **Year** 4 years

Population 200,000 (29% planar scion^{AA2}, 21% shulsaga, 8% ghoran^{AA2}, 5% contemplative, 37% other)

Government meritocracy

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common

Qualities academic, cultured, devout

ECONOMY

Exports Outer Planes goods, starship parts, viral media

Imports clothing, food, fuel

Maximum Item Level 15th

Specialty Item Level hybrid items and magitech augmentations (17th)

NPCS

Balzi Dicork (NG female nuar), head librarian and mayor

Paralictor Ladil (LN agender embri^{AA2}), local Hellknight commander

Avtei of Junval (N male shulsaga), transit authority and priest of Ibra

Sprax: Shulgi has a small-town feel, but with all the amenities of a large city! It's a sprawling and diverse planar transit hub.

Moscaru: Most visitors can only perceive a fraction of it. One frustrating aspect of this city is when you hear about an exciting attraction but cannot even find its neighborhood unless a local points you in the right way.

Sprax: You never know what you might discover when walking around this town. I turned around, and the neighborhood completely changed on me!

Moscaru: More accurately, the neighborhood did not change. You did, and so you were able to perceive a different neighborhood that was already there. Most visitors who come here are so stuck in their mindsets that they might only notice a few blocks of this town. They will see Shulgi Station, the blocks where they eat, sleep, and shop, and never realize how much more there is.

Sprax: But getting lost here is an adventure! It's like a dream come true.

Moscaru: Or a nightmare. This is one town where it is easy to become literally lost in one's thoughts.

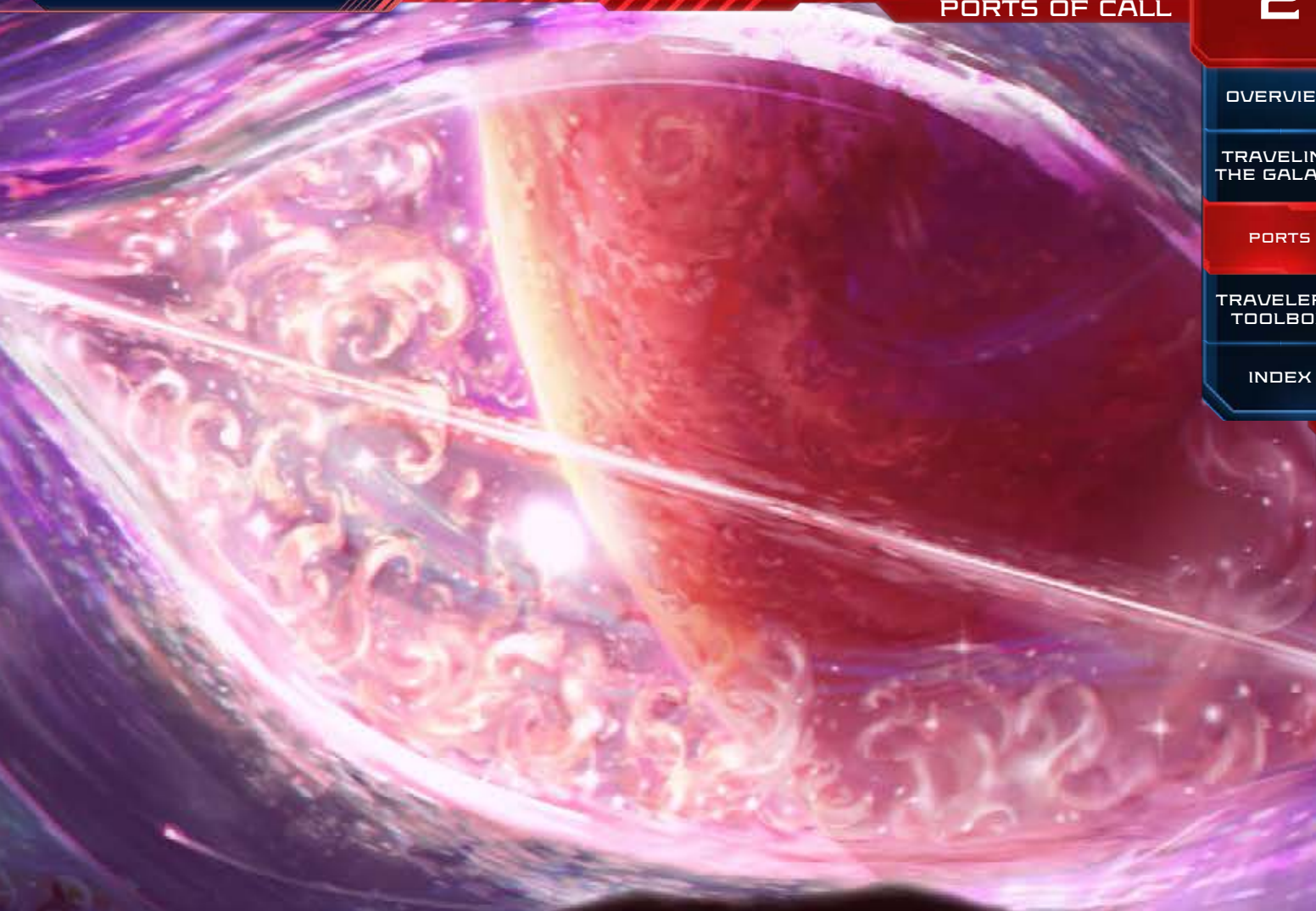
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Whereas the Pact Worlds lost Golarion, the tiny planetoid Shulgi gained a satellite sometime during the Gap. No mere moon, this satellite is a stable portal to the Astral Plane, a transitive plane of shimmering thought and possibility. Looming beyond the portal floats Junval, a demiplane that outwardly resembles an azure gas giant planet yet whose interior acts as a subtle battleground between the Abyss, Axis, and Nirvana. The two worlds seem to orbit each other, as if tethered by gravitational and metaphysical attractions through the portal between them. Meanwhile, a steady stream of breathable atmosphere flows across Shulgi from the portal, periodically bringing storms of stray thoughts from the Astral Plane.

Before the Drift's introduction, most faster-than-light travel relied on shortcuts through dangerous planes using the likes of chaos sails and shadow drives. Ibra's faith offered an alternative: constellation orreries that allowed starships to zip along the imaginary lines connecting the stars that formed major constellations. Although these interstellar drives have never matched the Drift engines' versatility, their reliability led to a resurgence during the Drift Crisis. In the galaxy's constellation network, Shulgi's star lies at the junction of four major constellations. What's more, Shulgi Station's libraries and astral influence provide a unique advantage

in reconfiguring a constellation orrery to acknowledge other cultures' legends and constellations, opening an ever-expanding set of destinations for this technology.

In addition to being a popular planar transit hub, Shulgi unfolds like a puzzle box for travelers who are willing to explore it deeply. Centuries of proximity to the Astral Plane have created a city where the streets shift, thoughts can solidify, and unique neighborhoods become accessible to travelers with the right mindset.

GEOGRAPHY

Shulgi is not one city, but many, each simultaneously occupying the same space as the others while still existing in completely different realities. Over time, the Astral Plane's mental detritus has blown past Shulgi, and when it encounters a potent thought, it occasionally coalesces into physical matter. This process has created at least six different variants of Shulgi Station that each exist conditionally, the paths into each opening only to someone with the right mindset or who's thinking the right thought. What's more, while some variants are accessible with an escort (who can shepherd a small group), others can only be reached by qualifying individuals. There seems to be no way to know how many neighborhoods exist or when a new one might develop. Only a few locations,

such as the Shulgi Orrery Plaza, exist in all neighborhoods and provide common ground. Other locations, like various library branches, purposefully maintain similar buildings across many neighborhoods.

Well known neighborhoods include New Yulgamot, with a shulsaga majority and delicate towers that arch impractically in the low gravity. Another neighborhood, Medley, thrives on blended ideas and cultures from the Material Plane, with subdistricts known as Mataras and Vesktown. Some neighborhoods show distinct planar influences, from the cozy musical streets of Sanctuary to the orderly circular walls of Rings, and the squat and dark tenements of Zeltz.

Lacking the mass to have formed a sphere, Shulgi is instead a kidney-shaped planetoid easily overshadowed by the four planets in its star system. Wide space docks occupy Shulgi's concavity. Every other inch of real estate appears occupied by a mishmash of different neighborhoods and architectural styles—an optical illusion caused by the eyes (or other visual organ) trying to parse the coexisting realities. Shulgi's negligible gravity also means it can't retain an atmosphere of its own. However, it receives a constant stream of air, light, and thoughts from the astral gateway, which both enables respiration and results in a bizarre array of plant growth.

RESIDENTS

Shulgi doesn't seem to be the creation of any one people, having grown and developed to accommodate myriad immigrants, many of them extraplanar. Shulsagas likely arrived first, exploring the astral breach and setting up an early outpost. Standing about seven feet tall, appearing to be chiseled from purple stone, and often riding flying disks, shulsagas are ennosites, creatures formed from thought itself deep in the Astral Plane. There, shulsagan culture centers around the protection of nascent demiplanes. A young demiplane gradually develops its properties and identity by drawing upon its surroundings, usually coalescing into a unique creation if left alone. However, fiends, celestials, and other powerful minds can shape new demiplanes to their own standards, and shulsagas consider this interference anathema. Once a demiplane has matured and stabilized, shulsagas generally lose interest in it.

Shulsagas maintain a strong presence on Shulgi for three main reasons: high demiplane-forming activity in this part of the Astral Plane, the unique properties of the demiplane Junval (page 118), and a destination for recuperation and growth. The rift shapes currents in the Astral Plane that draw quintessence, crystallized thought, and other matter into the area, driving the collision and accretion that feeds demiplane growth. Thus, Shulgi serves as an ideal station for spotting new demiplanes and dispatching patrols. Junval incorporates an unprecedented blend of planar elements, which intrigues (and sometimes worries) shulsagas, and the competing elements churn nearby astral space, further accelerating the currents. Finally, time flows naturally around Shulgi compared to the timelessness of the Astral Plane. Shulsagas periodically travel here so that their wounds can heal, their bodies can grow, and their minds can more easily master new skills.

Outside their sacred city of Yulgamot on the Astral Plane, Shulgi Station is likely the second most popular destination for these vacations.

Thanks to nearby Junval's access to other Outer Planes, Shulgi Station has a large population of planar scions—some immigrating from those planes and others traveling here to better understand their supernatural origins. Most are aasimars^{AA2} and tieflings^{AA2}, though law-infused planar scions known as aphorites gather here, seemingly intent on understanding the city's shifting logic. Contemplatives find the ability to shift reality through deep and concentrated thought irresistible. Ghorans^{AA2} come to Shulgi for the gentle and nourishing light that bathes Shulgi from the Astral Plane and made a verdant home here, creating the fabulous Galaxy Park, a showcase for plants from everywhere. Meanwhile, Shulgi's mazelike nature drew nuars like a magnet, many staying on to become city guides and librarians of the labyrinth.

Moscaru: Shulgi and its moon, Jun, were explored pre-Gap, but the barren planetoid attracted little attention from travelers. Ancient records from surveys of pre-Gap Shulgi describe it primarily as an “airless rock with little to recommend it.”

Sprax: Now the atmosphere coming off the Astral Plane is so pure that it makes you feel giddy as you leap around. It's a great place for low-gravity sports, and for growing plants of all kinds.

Moscaru: It's also excellent for those who enjoy crackpot academic theories about why the demiplane Junval had replaced Shulgi's moon. I've heard scholars suggest with all seriousness that Shulgi's missing moon is the gateway to Torag's mead hall.

Sprax: Academics is easy here with so many librarians to answer your questions! Speaking of libraries, everyone should try navigating the library labyrinth! There's puzzles, mysteries, games, and monsters to hug! I made so many nufriends there, I can't remember all their names!

Moscaru: The labyrinth also contains death traps, but don't let that stop you.

Sprax: I didn't! And it's through the labyrinth that we can really learn to navigate the city, find new neighborhoods, and make new friends.

Moscaru: Or die.

SOCIETY

Shulgi's government, like its physical layout, confuses newcomers. Despite having few laws and a constantly changing population, Shulgi Station remains peaceful due to its strong, small, and friendly communities whose members band together whenever environmental threats pour from the rift, creating a cycle of populations whose thoughts continue to reinforce a vision of what Shulgi Station should be. Eventually, enough astral material responds to the collective vision, calving off another variant neighborhood ideally suited to that group's needs. The longer Shulgi Station exists, the

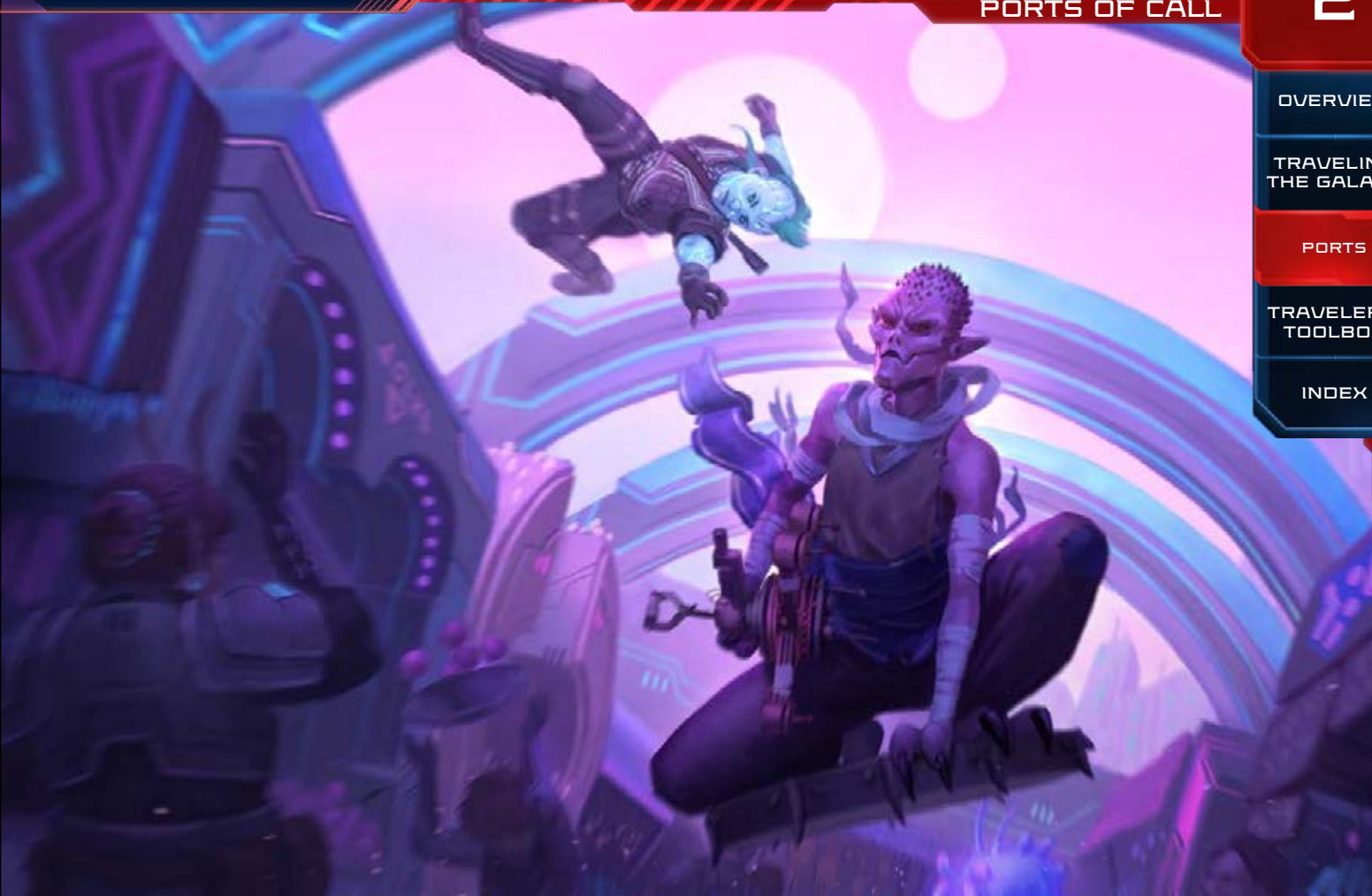
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more fractured its groups risk becoming. Even so, three main organizations with overlapping spheres of influence help to unite and protect the planetoid.

The Church of Ibra operates the Constellation Orrery Network, which connects Shulgi to much of the galaxy and provides the Ibrans considerable influence. In addition to creating and repairing constellation orreries (*Starship Operations Manual* 10), disciples collect fees from any starship docking at Shulgi or using the portal. Much of these funds enter a vast account the church distributes through grants to support research across the galaxy. The rest helps to maintain the station and acquire supplies, though Ibrans take almost no hand in day-to-day operations that would distract from their studies of the multiverse. Nonetheless, when they do deem something near Shulgi to be worth their attention, Ibrans act decisively and suffer little pushback.

With thought storms blasting through its rift, Shulgi represents a source of unfettered, untested ideas that infect the galaxy—at least that's how the Hellknight Order of the Eclipse sees it. Dedicated to controlling the flow of ideas that would destabilize civilization, the order arrived in force to stabilize Shulgi's streets and stem the ideological torrent. With specialized technology and psychic adepts, Hellknights monitor the rift and deflect incoming storms, much like a planet's magnetic field blocks solar radiation. Where rogue quintessence manifests into thought simulacra, Hellknights

intervene so that these magical constructs don't cause damage. When the rift causes less trouble, the Order of Eclipse patrols the streets, providing police, firefighting, and medical services where they can. Even the Church of Ibra, while initially skeptical of having such a rigid organization on their doorstep, now agrees that these Hellknights provide a necessary service. Especially over the last decade, **Paralictor Ladil** (LN agender embri) has carefully managed the Hellknights' mission parameters, stressing vigilance over any overzealous schemes to seal the rift. No doubt this approach stems from their limited personnel, not limited ambition. The paralictor regularly hires freelancers to assist the order's operations, especially to study and patrol the more chaotic neighborhoods that Hellknights can't access.

Neither Ibrans nor Hellknights wish to deal with the headaches of administrating a city government, and shulsagas seem to care little for such operations outside New Yulgamot. Over time, Shulgi's expansive library network has filled this vacuum. Originally created to train starship navigators using constellation orrery drives, the library maintains branches in every known neighborhood. Keeping the infosphere running, supplying job boards, and managing the archives provided so much crucial infrastructure that its head librarian, **Balzi Dicork** (NG female nuar witchwarper^{COM}), has been acting mayor for the past 10 years. To appease the insular neighborhoods, each appoints a representative to

serve on the library's advisory board. Although this bickering group seldom agrees on a course of action, it helps alert the library to problems that might arise.

RELATIONS

Shulgi's system is one of the closest neighbors to the Pact Worlds, located only a few light years away. Pre-Gap generation ships coming from both Arkanen and Castrovel explored and settled parts of the system. Shulgi's system includes four other planets: Balson, Tolgus, Stofoni and Doti. Balson is primarily an ocean world, but Stofoni and Tolgus are verdant planets with biomes ranging from temperate rain forests to plains and savannas.

Doti, a gas giant, is known for massive electrical storms that chase across its windy surface. These storms attracted dirindis, sazarons, and contemplatives, who settled on the planet and built floating cities in Doti's clouds. Powered by those storms, these cities include research stations, universities, and most of the system's manufacturing sites—but residents are growing concerned as some of these storms have started to dissipate. Already one city, Resajo, has fallen into the depths of the atmosphere, all its residents lost. No one knows the reason for this weather change on Doti,

but local scientists are trying to find other ways to power their towns. Some worry that soon the only species living in the storm will be the clouds of electrovores that feed and multiply in Doti's atmosphere.

JUNVAL

While numerous branches of the constellation orrery system intersect with Shulgi, its demiplane partner on the other side of the rift acts as a nexus to yet more wondrous realms. Junval (sometimes called Junval Junction) is a spherical demiplane formed in part from the Outer Planes of Nirvana, the Abyss, and Axis. Whereas in most demiplanes these components might have diffused and been diluted like several paints blended to make a new color, these three elements instead retained their distinct identities, more like beads of three colors poured into one bucket. Their opposition to each other—neutral good, lawful neutral, and chaotic evil—churns these fragments, creating eddies in the Astral Plane that fuels the stream of thoughts toward Shulgi. Periodically, one material accumulates toward one side, temporarily attuning Junval to that plane. In addition to influencing the demiplane's interior—such as furniture rearranging itself into the most efficient orientations or vending machines briefly developing a destructive, hateful hunger—it allows starships orbiting Junval to slingshot themselves through the Astral Plane, arriving at the attuned Outer Plane in a matter of days. Return trips are also possible when Junval attunes properly, making Shulgi a gateway to three other vastly different planes.

Most of Junval's interior is open air. At its center, like an atomic nucleus, floats an immense orrery that projects an ever-changing light show of different constellations across the demiplane's inner shell, cycling through the patterns visible across a million different worlds and multiple planes. A permanent Ibran observatory records previously unknown constellations, which might form the foundation for new orrery drive destinations when properly explored.

The orrery's four largest arms each support a host of platforms and buildings that jut out like branches, many bearing homes, shops, and other structures. Three of the arms each correspond to one of Junval's planar influences, with the fourth being unattuned, and the arms periodically rotate in unpredictable ways.

Whenever the unattuned arm approaches one of the others, tiny rifts into the associated plane appear, allowing an acrobatic traveler to leap through and enter Nirvana, the Abyss, or Axis. These junctions usually last a few days, after which the portals (and any hope of an easy return trip) seal shut. The portals often attract extraplanar merchants, causing vast markets to spring up all along the arms.

Due to the massive amounts of astral quintessence that spins past Junval, the demiplane periodically must vent excess thoughts to avoid destabilizing. In practice, this venting causes inhabitants' thoughts to manifest physically, transforming into a less psychically volatile form. Tired travelers often discover their favorite chair or bed just around the corner. Hungry inhabitants



encounter a food stall selling beloved delicacies. However, these manifestations can as easily be dangerous; ingesting too much thought food without the occasional real meal can make travelers light-headed. Unconscious anxieties or memories can coalesce as thought simulacra, free-willed constructs whose morality usually reflects whichever planar influence is dominant at the time.

The Ibrans who loosely oversee Junval have tried to curb the most violent thought simulacra in various ways, as any major manifestation might disrupt their work. At times, they've released devices that safely crystallize thoughts for later disposal, though these devices sometimes destabilize and explode into riots of memory. Hostels throughout the demiplane provide lodgings that are guaranteed thought-neutral, stymieing the demiplane's effects. Yet, the most infamous strategy involved posting signs encouraging visitors to think of cute, harmless things like kittens. The resultant Feline Fiasco flooded Junval with cats. Worse, the various aliens less familiar with cats imperfectly imagined the furry simulacra that appeared. These "ennocats" vary, some with rainbow-hued fur, some with wings, others with antennae or other fanciful additions. Despite attempts to shoo them away, they've spread throughout the demiplane and occasionally stow away to Shulgi, where they act as mischievous guides and guardians. Ennocats subsist partly on thoughts, and unless bonded to a dedicated companion who can sustain them, they rarely survive for long if removed from the Shulgi area.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

For most residents, the immediate threats to their well-being stem from Shulgi's environment. Astral weather events strike several times a month. Sometimes it's as innocent as glowing hail or singing fog, but when a massive wave of thought blasts past, confused (and often violent) thought simulacra manifest, their forms incorporating the fears and resentments of a dozen unrelated neighbors before beginning to rampage.

Beneath their public professionalism, tensions grow between the Hellknights and the laissez-faire library government under Mayor Balzi. The more that Shulgi Station's neighborhoods fragment into areas that the Hellknights can't easily access and patrol, the harder it becomes for them to protect this world. They regularly pressure library officials to help unlock these areas as well as establish local ordinances to guide orderly growth. Much as the library appreciates the Hellknights' peacekeeping in times of crisis, Mayor Balzi balks at their excessive policing and pushy demands during periods of peace. Both groups are frustrated by the Church of Ibra's obsessive interest in distant astral phenomena while ignoring the problems of the chaotic and ever-shifting neighborhoods that surround them. This discord has created an opening for third-party negotiators to settle the disputes that keep Shulgi's factions from working together.

Artwork created in Shulgi Station often absorbs some of the area's stray thoughts. While this inspires deep literature and academic genius, the art sometimes develops an infectious quality that has made Shulgi's marketing firms some of the galaxy's most successful and insidious. Seeing their success,

DOWNTIME IN SHULGI

Player characters can take advantage of the following special downtime options on Shulgi Station.

Research (Planar): With the assistance of helpful librarians in the hub of a planar nexus, travelers can prepare for their extraplanar journeys. You spend a day in Shulgi's library system, conducting research into planar physics and extraplanar cultures or meeting with cultural experts. For the next week, you can attempt all Mysticism and Physical Science checks concerning other planes untrained, and the DC of such checks is reduced by 5.

Plan Route: The library's labyrinths hold the secrets of many constellations for interstellar travelers preparing for a voyage. When you spend a day in the labyrinths learning about the constellations and mythologies of far-off star systems, you gain a +6 circumstance bonus to your next Piloting check to navigate to your next destination. If other crew members join you, they get a free action to aid that Piloting check with the ship skill of their choice.

Refit Starship (Constellation Orreries): Balrok's Forge has made constellation orreries affordable and available to a wider range of shipping concerns. You spend 1d4 days assisting Balrok's friendly installation crews to upgrade your ship's drive to include a constellation orrerySM. As thanks for your help, Balrok cuts you a deal. You only need to spend $8 \times$ size category in build points to refit your ship with the drive.

many tyrants and demagogues have outsourced their personal brand management to Shulgi, making propaganda one of its most lucrative exports. Firms sometimes accept their clients' rivals, churning out revolutionary material in equal volumes. Residents often look askance at this manipulative industry, and Shulgi's "meme machine" periodically attracts vengeful victims of the propaganda campaigns. Usually, their actions just involve property damage and small-scale violence, but it's only a matter of time before some evil empire's armada shows up at Shulgi's doorstep.

Moscaru: No trip to Shulgi is complete without visiting the fascinating and dangerous demiplane of Junval.

Sprax: Because they have kittens! Multi-colored ones with wings and antennae and awesome colors.

Moscaru: I was referring to the risk of having your deepest desires and subconscious fears materialize. But sure, let's talk about the ennocats, felines sprung from the collective imagination of generations of nervous travelers. Do you know the story of how they were first created?

Sprax: Yep! A skittermander employee put up signs urging travelers to "Stay calm; imagine fuzzy kittens." The travelers did, and now the ennocats are everywhere. They're the official mascots of Junval.

Moscaru: Why is it always skittermanders? Whatever the reason, this was a helpful change. Despite being constantly underfoot, the ennocats remain effective protections against malicious thought simulacra.

Sprax: They make great pets too! As for having your imagination come alive, I got to imagine an entire amusement park and made so many nufriends there.

Moscaru: Junval is one of the few places where you can meet your favorite fictional characters, dreams, and memories. The one person you can't hide from there is yourself.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations are of special interest to travelers exploring Shulgi.

Aid Society for the Thought-Displaced

One downside of Shulgi is that it's far too easy for visitors to literally become lost in their thoughts. Even those who come to Shulgi with grounded personalities, clear goals, and a strong sense of self can be hit by a thought storm coming out of the Astral Plane that displaces them far from their home neighborhood to somewhere else on Shulgi. The thought-displaced can find themselves trapped in a strange neighborhood where no one speaks their language, there are no familiar landmarks, and no matter what they do, they can't find their way home. As a result, **Instrumentality of Interstitial Thought** (NG nonbinary contemplative mystic) founded the Aid Society in the diverse neighborhood of Medley. They frequently hire adventurers to provide aid to lost travelers and to help track down missing persons.

Balrok's Forge

Balrok's Forge is a gigantic ship repair and overhaul business that operates near the docks of Shulgi. **Balrok** (CN female tiefling^{AA2} mechanic) reverse-engineered a salvaged ship with a constellation orrery drive and then created a small factory to manufacture the parts so that she could make more. Initially, the Church of Ibra complained about this theft of intellectual property, but Balrok met with them and persuaded the Ibrans that outsourcing the manufacturing would free them up for other intellectual pursuits. Since then, she has turned Zeltz into a ship manufacturing and repair hub—though not without garnering some resentment from a few of the more conservative Ibrans who dislike that so many constellation orreries are now made by outsiders, or that Balrok has made innovations of her own to the basic designs. Constantly looking to improve her designs, Balrok offers high rewards to anyone who can bring her salvage from alien ships or vessels from other planes, and she isn't too fussy about how those ships became salvage.

Fort Ruel

Chaos rides in the wake of natural disasters. If order isn't restored, looting, riots and societal breakdown follow. The Order of the Eclipse, symbolized by a corona of fire around a dark moon, devotes itself to being the light of the law that outshines dark times. Their mission to quash reckless communications that would feed chaos and rebellion has earned the order infamy abroad, but on Shulgi, these Hellknights are considered local heroes who help shield the

planetoid from the worst thought storms. Hellknights' law enforcement earns them occasional scorn, yet the overall goodwill inspires many to train as armigers. A broad dome shields Fort Ruel from above, casting its grounds in perpetual twilight (along with part of the Medley neighborhood). The fort includes training grounds, a barracks, a call center, garages with emergency vehicles, and holding cells for arrested miscreants. A pervasive rumor insists Fort Ruel also contains extensive laboratories for holding, studying, and even dissecting captured thought simulacra. If true, a future thought storm might harness the captives' distress, creating truly terrible simulacra.

Galaxy Park

The soothing light from the Astral Plane provides a nurturing environment for plants of all kinds to thrive. The many ghorans^{AA2} who settled on Shulgi Station developed a sprawling arboretum unlike anything else in the Material Plane. Here in Galaxy Park, thousands of wondrous plants that normally hail from different biomes and even from different planes thrive side-by-side. All of this verdant wealth has attracted unscrupulous botanists, many of whom trespass into the park without a ghoran tour guide in order to dig up samples of especially valuable specimens. While undeniably beautiful, these chaotic plantings aren't without their own protections. The ghorans, desirous of guarding their botanical treasures, have seeded Galaxy Park with dangerous and carnivorous flora. In this park grow plants that can fascinate, intoxicate, poison, or consume unwary visitors.

Library Network

Every neighborhood has its own nestled library. The libraries provide an important function on Shulgi Station: educating pilots. Using a constellation orrery requires understanding and remembering the constellations of dozens of interconnected cultures and solar systems. Although databases might list the hundreds of different constellations that any given star is a part of, those are no substitutes for the in-depth understanding of the mythologies that help a navigator skim across the stellar lines that sometimes cross into the Astral Plane. In addition to normal library media, there are librarian storytellers, many of them nuars, at each of these libraries who'll share the mythologies of the constellations with those who wish to learn.

For most users, merely hearing a foreign culture's stories isn't enough to truly absorb them. Beneath the libraries run extensive labyrinths that students can enter to reenact the stories of a culture's mythology and make them their own, often overcoming monsters, puzzles, and conundrums in the process. These labyrinths wind deep under Shulgi's surface and connect the libraries to each other, seemingly overriding the thought-based navigation required on the surface and allowing librarians to move freely. However, dehydrated humanoid corpses increasingly turn up in the labyrinth—some from those who went missing below and some utterly unfamiliar—causing rumors to fly that a new monster prowls the maze.

Medley

Migrants from the Pact Worlds and various Near Space locations often find their way to the Medley neighborhood. This crowded version of Shulgi Station hosts a dynamic population where cultures and architectural styles seem to change from street to street. The neighborhood's variety and welcoming attitude makes it a natural accidental destination for thought-displaced wanderers. Easy as Medley is to access, its individual features are often difficult to locate unless specifically pointed out by locals. It might be that after centuries of diversification, Shulgi is about to split Medley into distinct realities. Residents resent this prospect, and they've taken to blending traditions, holidays, and more in an attempt to overwhelm whatever logic guides Shulgi's evolution; if it can't tell where to divide the neighborhood, they reason, Medley will remain whole. So far, it has worked.

New Yulgamot

New Yulgamot is likely the oldest neighborhood, home to the spindly shulsagas who emigrated here from the Astral Plane. This neighborhood's buildings are tall and delicate towers, resplendent with balconies, hanging gardens, and roof-level observatories. The entrances to these elegant buildings are 60 feet in the air, and shulsagas fly throughout this neighborhood upon flying disks. New Yulgamot serves as a spa and hospital zone for the city, as the light from the Astral plane helps people heal.

Reliquary Way

Immediately outside Shulgi Orrery Station lives a street studded with hundreds of small shrines, many with priests and other merchants selling blessings, talismans and other items associated with their faiths. It's a famous stopping place for the faithful who wish to have their ships and journeys blessed before departing for far-off destinations. One of the largest shrines here is to Isvith, Mistress of the Maze, who has a huge following in this mazelike shrine. Her temple serves as a gathering place for guides, attracting people of all faiths who need help navigating Shulgi's baffling streets.

Rings

Rings is a small and orderly neighborhood made up of concentric walls, each containing dwellings, shops, and other organizations. The neighborhood has a strong Axis connection, and its center is a community recreational park that's often used for team sports and competitions designed with Shulgi's light gravity in mind. Building community around such events helps the neighborhood maintain its lawful nature. In addition to traveling axiomites, many vesk have found themselves attracted by this orderly and sport-loving neighborhood, a bastion of stability in the chaos that Shulgi offers.

RIPPLES

When **Prism of Manifold Possibilities** (N male contemplative witchwarper^{COM}) founded the Research Institute of Psychic Planar Logistical Experiments and Sciences in the Medley neighborhood, his initial pitch for his project was to study

and redirect thought storms into more harmless variants of themselves. However, RIPPLES has increasingly attracted members obsessed with the possibilities of harnessing thought storms. These newer members have shifted the institute's focus from strict damage control to experiments aimed at fueling ideas and creating lasting societal change. They want to study not just the immediate effects of a thought storm, but also any lasting changes or afterthoughts that ripple outward from a storm's epicenter. Internal partisan bickering prevents the group from being effective at shifting societal norms. Rather than one unified body, this schism has divided the institute into a dozen different ideological departments, each with their own goals and interests, and many have stooped to sabotaging and undermining other groups. Each department fields teams to influence and empower incoming thought storms, which has resulted in the institute being an epicenter where many thought storms land and wreak havoc.

Sanctuary Steps

Named for the shallow stairs that run the length of this sprawling, pastoral neighborhood, Sanctuary Steps attracts celestial residents like aasimars^{AA2}, traveling tritidair azatas^{AA2}, and anthropomorphic beasts native to Nirvana known as agathions. It's a favorite stopping place for travelers from Nirvana, who often spend a few days here before traveling on to other missions in the Material Plane. This neighborhood delights visitors with its dancing lights, theaters, museums, and gentle music. Despite its charitable inhabitants, Sanctuary Steps displays an unspoken and judgmental moral compass, often hiding its entrances from anyone who doesn't meet its holy standards. Residents worry about their reputation for exclusivity, especially because they would rather offer asylum and help to repentant criminals trying to restart their lives. Their efforts have softened the neighborhood's consciousness somewhat, yet it has caused some of the lights, music, and fountains to glitch noticeably. Some worry that the neighborhood is struggling to deprogram its prejudices and might lash out with upcoming thought storms.

Shulgi Orrery Station

Hundreds of ships cluster around the docks of the station, many waiting to be refitted with a constellation orrery drive or hooked up to one of the massive Constellation Orrery ships that the Church of Ibra sends out to distant locations here and on other planes. When the Drift Crisis began, Shulgi's constellation orrery system became nearly overwhelmed by interstellar merchants seeking alternate paths to their markets. Although this demand has dropped somewhat with the resolution of the crisis, business still booms here with merchants who have decided that depending on one form of travel can be disastrous. The station includes observatories, a reference desk staffed by the library that matches ships with convoys willing to take them to their destinations, and a branch of the Guides' Guild filled with guides who, for a fee, will help travelers navigate the confusing city.

Zeltz

Dark tenement buildings constructed in wildly contrasting architectural styles tower over the streets of Zeltz. This industrial neighborhood features shadowy pubs, a night market where anything can be traded, and extensive repair facilities. This area serves as home to smugglers, back-alley deals, meme workshops, and exiled criminals. Numerous factories operate here, where they produce magitech that ranges from necrografts to the components for constellation orrery drives. The neighborhood itself is not so much evil as it is depressing. Rent is cheap, but the work is hard and pays poorly. People who find their way here often have trouble finding their way out again since despair seeps into the mindset of most residents. Demons mostly behave themselves while traveling in Zeltz, or at least work subtly so as not to attract the attention of the local Hellknights.



In addition to the factories and smuggling operations, abyssal recruiters in this neighborhood seek out travelers for their insidious marketing research. The demons who travel through here pay travelers to tell them about the best part of their home worlds, playing off cultural pride. Then, over time, the teams coax the travelers for ideas on how to corrupt and transform the world's greatest strengths into matters of shame, leaving chaos and confusion in their wake. Armed with this information, the demons and their teams leave for their target worlds, ready to seed their destination with messaging that sparks hatred and divisiveness.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Shulgi Station and Junval could launch countless adventures, including the following.

Ambush Amid the Stars: A group of confidence artists presenting themselves as constellation orrery pilots are luring ships into ambushes, killing the crews, and disassembling their victims' ships for parts. Shulgi officials hope to hire adventurers to pose as hapless travelers to hire these criminals as guides to track down and destroy their operation.

Brain Drain: Excited by rumors of a new demiplane forming near Junval, thousands of shulsagas fly off to witness the phenomenon. The disappearance of so many minds seems to confuse Shulgi Station, whose overlapping neighborhoods begin crashing into each other as the planetoid reflexively recalibrates. Can the PCs help stabilize the area?

Clash of Storms: Thought storms of unprecedented strength strike Shulgi, overwhelming the Hellknights' defenses. After helping to fight off the weather's effects, the PCs travel to Junval to investigate the demiplane's role in this disaster, only to be caught in a deadly crossfire between agents of Nirvana and the Abyss who are each trying to purge Junval of their enemies' extraplanar influence.

A Fatal Forgiveness: A witchwyrd merchant seeks bodyguards for his trip to Junval. There he hopes to meet the embodied memories of his deceased crew who died on a disastrous expedition he organized. Can he make amends without literally being slain by his own guilt?

Lost and Found: A very confused quadrupedal alien shows up in Medley, speaking a language that no one locally understands. The Aid Society for Thought-Displaced People seeks travelers willing to discover who this creature is and help them return home.

Lost in Thought: A contemplative entrepreneur offers an exciting new graft to help travelers transition between Shulgi's neighborhoods. This graft is eagerly adopted by folks ranging from merchants to local Hellknights. Eventually, some of the most enthusiastic early adopters become thought-displaced, and others notice that each transition is becoming harder to control.

Murderer's Maze: The PCs chase a murderer through the library labyrinths, where the maze has absorbed some of the criminal's notorious misdeeds and manifested them as monsters. Some of these threats indicate that there's more to the story: that the fugitive is repentant, was magically coerced,

or some other twist. Can the PCs use these experiences to outsmart and capture the criminal? And how do the visions shape their quarry's guilt?

Safety Inspectors: It's almost the Maze Festival, a holiday sacred to Isvith. The city's librarians and the nuar population are preparing for a huge event and require a team of adventurers to test the featured labyrinths and make certain that all is working as it should.

Stop the Presses: Cruel propaganda has struck the PCs' home, and the messaging originates from Zeltz. Hellknights are willing to provide the PCs resources to help them infiltrate that neighborhood, which the Order of the Eclipse can't reliably access and which has long vexed them. However, as the PCs navigate Zeltz, the abyssal agents they're hunting are also watching them, developing ways to turn the PCs against the Hellknights or each other.

SHULGI SPELLS

Residents of Shulgi Station and Junval have developed unique spells to leverage their home's astral and psychic resources. Through the unique properties of their home, some have developed these spells innately, while others have trained under veterans. These spells play off the psychic energies within the settlement, though they're sometimes found developed independently by other cultures across the cosmos.

CAPRICIOUS CATS MYSTIC 3 WITCHWARPER 3

School conjuration (shadow)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range 30 ft.

Area spherical emanation

Duration 1 minute or until expended (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** yes

You conjure a pack of Tiny whimsical cats that scamper and perch within 30 feet of you wherever you move. These adorable felines are only semi-real and are immune to damage. The cats appear with their own inclinations and don't meaningfully heed your other instructions: roll 1d6 five times on the table below to determine these inclinations. This can result in multiple inclinations of the same type. As a move action, you can expend one of these inclinations and issue a command to the cats as a move action (for mischief or spite inclinations) or a reaction (for affection), causing the cats to perform the associated action once. Once you've expended all of the inclinations, the cats disappear.

D6 INCLINATION

1-2	Affection: Cats purr, nuzzle, and perch atop one creature in the emanation. The creature can reroll a saving throw they just failed against a fear, mind-affecting, or pain effect and use the second result.
3-4	Mischief: Cats crowd, distract, and cling to one creature in the emanation, successfully providing your choice of covering fire or harrying fire.
5-6	Spite: Cats claw and bite one creature in the emanation. Make a melee attack against KAC, for which you can use your caster level in place of your base attack bonus and your spellcasting ability modifier in place of your Strength modifier. The attack deals 4d6 slashing damage.

STARLIT SPAN MYSTIC 3 WITCHWARPER 3

School conjuration

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch and close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Duration 2 hours/level (D)

You conjure a sparkling bridge made of quintessence from the Astral Plane. The bridge is 10 feet wide and connects one point you touch to another point within close range. Both sides must be anchored to a solid object like a ledge or wall, and the bridge can slope at no greater than a 45-degree angle. The bridge is watertight and supports creatures and vehicles, though it's somewhat fragile, with hardness equal to your caster level and Hit Points equal to 3 × your caster level. The spell ends if you move more than 100 feet from the bridge.

IDENTITY STORM

 PRECOG 4  TECHNOMANCER 4  WITCHWARPER 4

School illusion (mind-affecting)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area 15-ft.-radius burst

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell causes all creatures in the area to perceive all other creatures as copies of someone they have a strong impression of, whether a friend, enemy, or even themselves. At the start of each of each affected creature's turn, that creature chooses to treat all other creatures it can perceive as allies or enemies. The creature must attempt attacks of opportunity whenever any enemy provokes them and can't target allies (or squares containing allies) with harmful effects. Any affected creature that's attacked immediately treats all other creatures as enemies. Any affected creature targeted with a beneficial effect immediately treats all other creatures as friends. An affected creature can spend a move action to attempt a Will Save to end the effect.

THOUGHT RIPPLE MYSTIC 2-6 WITCHWARPER 2-6

School divination (mind-affecting)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets 1 primary target and 1 secondary target/spell level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. from the primary target

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Will half; **Spell Resistance** yes

You overload a target's mind with so much psychic stimuli that it ripples to another target, triggering the initial spell as well as overloading the new target with residual psychic overload. This spell deals 2d8 damage to the target, plus 2d8 damage for each prior target that already took damage from this casting of the spell. You choose the order in which targets are affected. Each secondary target of this spell takes a -1 penalty to their Will Save for each opposing alignment of the primary target (so if the primary target was lawful evil, a secondary chaotic evil target takes a -1 penalty, and a secondary chaotic good target takes a -2 penalty). If this spell damages four targets, it incites a thought storm that causes each target to become confused (as per the *confusion* spell) for 1 round on a failed save.

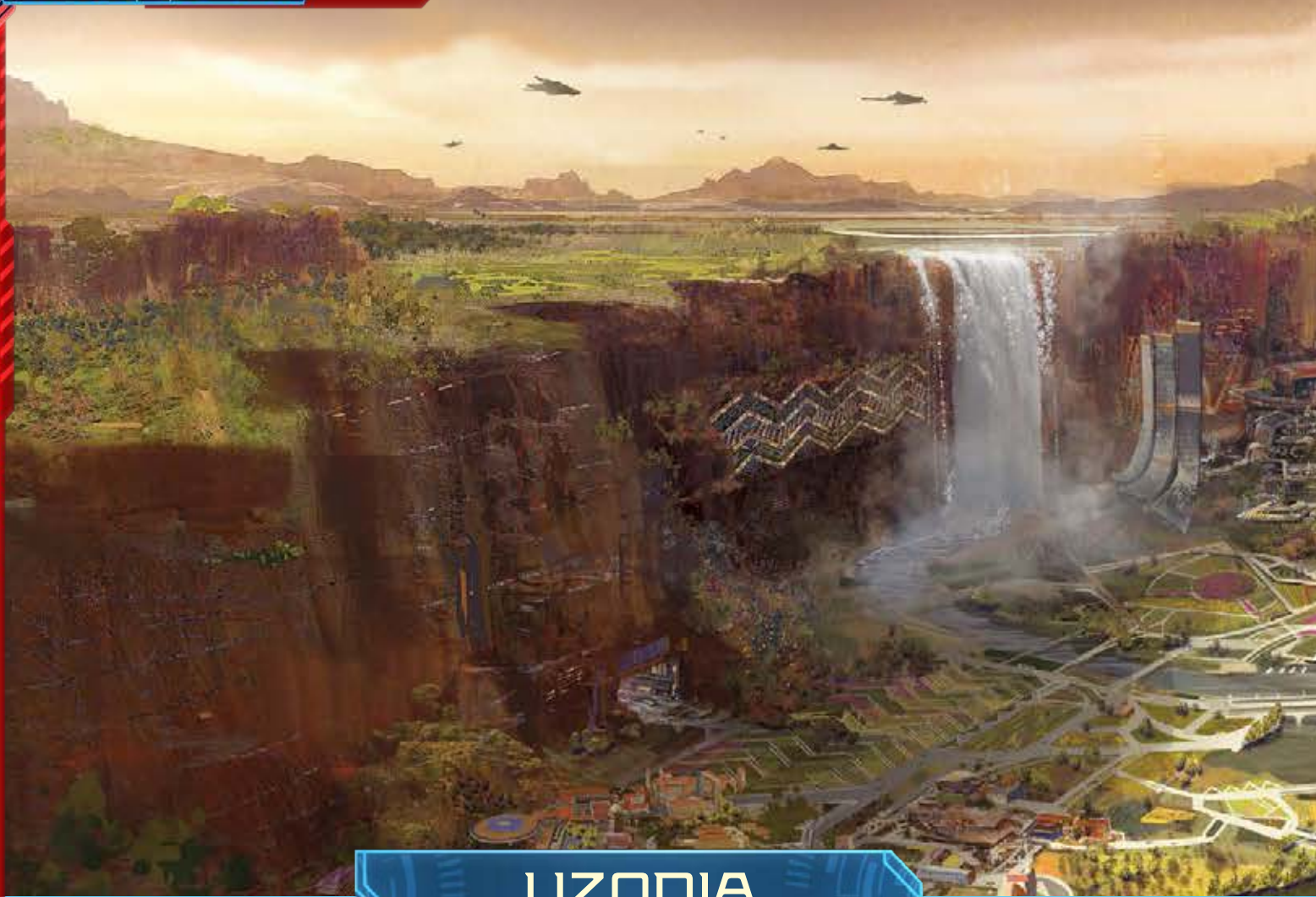
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UZODIA

University city rediscovering its magical roots.

UZODIA

NG city

Gravity standard

Atmosphere normal

Day 20 hours; **Year** 2 years

Population 350,000 (70% human, 10% elf, 8% dwarf, 5% half-elf, 2% gnoll^{ACD}, 5% other)

Government gerontocracy

Languages Common, Xibian

Qualities academic, insular, technologically advanced

ECONOMY

Exports magic items, medicinal plants, starship parts

Imports Drift Engine technology, weapons, artifacts

Maximum Item Level 15th

Specialty Item Level magic items (20th)

NPCS

Yvetta Heron (LG female human mystic), dean of Uzodia Academy

Jacquil Leopard (NG male human vanguard^{COM}), protector-general of Uzodia Academy

Iron Elephant (NG nonbinary dwarf), director of The Memory

Sprax: Uzodia, a beautiful city filled with a vast array of magical scholars and some of the best food in the galaxy. I truly enjoy that this world seems filled with academics of all types. Many had never met a skittermander before! I think I answered more questions than I asked for a change!

Moscaru: When we first touched down in Uzodia, I was taken by the absolute beauty of the spaceport. An impressive display of art and culture in the middle of a place of engine grease and exhaust fumes! The ships even had themes based on either local animals or perhaps fauna from Golarion? A wonder and a marvel.

Sprax: And did you smell the food in the air? Meat cooked straight on the bone over open flames, spiced hot vegetables, and the freshly baked bread! Oh, that bread!

Moscaru: Yes, I'm hungry just recalling it.

On ancient Golarion, the visionary Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors developed a spellcasting tradition, created the Magaambya school, and founded a magical society that shaped arcana for millennia. Their successors developed

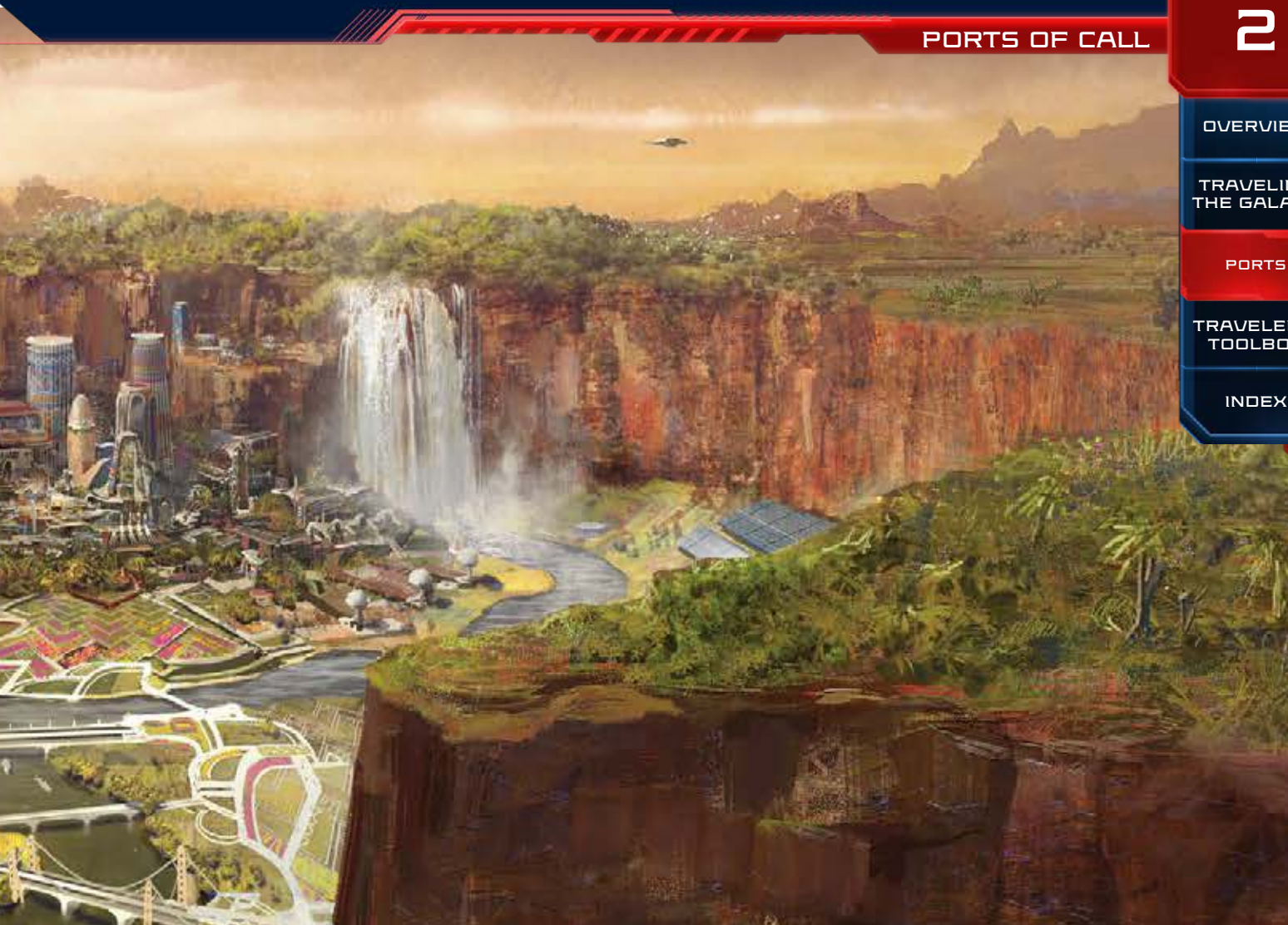
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increasingly wondrous rituals, gazed into other planes, and dreamed of magically traveling beyond the stars. Apparently they succeeded, arriving on a distant world sometime during the Gap. What likely began as a research outpost of humans, elves, dwarves, and gnomes grew into an academy and later an independent society. When the Gap ended, they remembered their magic, culture, and alien neighbors, just not what inspired those traditions or where they'd come from.

It mattered little; the ingenious people developed their own meaning for the unfamiliar symbols and monuments surrounding them. Statues of forgotten founders acquired new mythologies. The 10 governing houses reinvented themselves based on the unfamiliar animal imagery. Their planet became Xibion and they Xibians. Within a few years, they developed friendly relations with other intelligent species on nearby planets, forging a system-wide alliance known as the Nebula Union. Then, a decade ago, Xibian explorers identified a route to Absalom Station, unknowingly rediscovering their ancestral home—or what was left of it. Since then, Xibians and Pact Worlds residents have eagerly learned from each other.

True to its ancient directive, Uzodia is a nexus of learning and magic, providing exemplary education for a modest fee. Not only does the city attract scholars from across the galaxy,

but its graduates and visitors have dispersed widely, helping Uzodia and its allies create a powerful network of friends.

GEOGRAPHY

The tips of Uzodia's tallest buildings barely peek above the lip of Enkuro's Gorge, which cuts partway across a vast savanna known as the Kaal. While a summer wet season invigorates the grasslands, it's the autumn clouds' collision with the Kamaris Mountains to the north and west that blanket the high peaks with snow. The meltwaters sustain the Tokos and Zbeka rivers, bringing life to the region year-round. Where the rivers converged, their combined power carved Enkuro's Gorge, whose local flora and fauna evolved over ages into a unique jungle biome thanks to its water and sheltering cliffs. Uzodia was built near the northern end, where the rivers cascade over the 300-foot cliffs before combining and flowing south toward Unmata Lake about 10 miles away.

Come winter, the Tokos dwindles as rainfall slows and the mountains freeze. However, the eastern peaks remain volcanically active. Steady geothermal energy melts some of the snow throughout winter, and hot spots across the savanna heat the Zbeka, channeling warmer water into the gorge. Come spring, the Zbeka's snowmelt dwindles, and the Tokos takes over once more, channeling cool water toward Uzodia.



UZODIA

The rivers' fluctuating flows moderate the city's temperature year-round and channel rich, volcanic nutrients into the gorge, sustaining a vibrant, subtropical ecosystem.

Uzodia's founders clearly recognized the region's unique diversity and built their city to best preserve the wildlife. Both waterfalls are favorite sites to cool off or warm up depending on the season, yet large portions of their pools remain off-limits to protect endemic diving bird nests and shrimp. Large swaths of the sheltered jungle to the south remain undeveloped. Spellcasting wardens carefully monitor and remove invasive species from the wild areas as well as the Karasha District, a broad greenbelt of parkland, native plants, and pathways that winds through the city. Named for the bioluminescent karasha trees, the district becomes a riot of pink and yellow blossoms in late spring before the petals litter the ground. By tradition, street sweepers keep most of the flowers, whose faint magic is integral to various pricey perfumes, dyes, and enchanted items.

If there's one feature that captures visitors' attention, it's the bridges crossing the Toko-Zbeka. Each bridge built earned acclaim, so funding bridges quickly became a popular way for patrons and houses to earn prestige. What's more, the sides of these bridges serve as ideal mediums for artwork, and most sport elaborate iconography or wide murals commemorating some historical (often embellished or even legendary) event. However, the centuries have seen far more benefactors than ideal bridge locations, and some areas include bridges crisscrossing each

other as they compete for grandiosity. Fortunately, a recent zoning crackdown slowed this construction, and many bridges instead support public transit rather than foot traffic.

Uzodia's districts blur into one another, measured more by subcultures and building styles than by official demarcations. Toward the north, the Tahil is the downtown full of shops, offices, plazas, and entertainment venues, with skyscrapers peeking above the clifftops and strewn with mist-loving vines along the waterfall-facing sides. The western cliffs slope more gently than to the east, and the Shoulder consists not only of the homes along the rocky hills, but also those dwellings built into the cliffside. Wxolo and Kala Tail neighborhoods are bastions of the 10 houses, where each owns a large compound split between workspaces and homes for higher-ranking members. Finally, residential neighborhoods like Boughhollow, Pezan, and Vizjit occupy pockets of the jungles to the south, providing ample space for recreation and personal gardens.

Given the pleasant microclimate below, the savanna above has relatively few inhabitants. Farmland to the north supports many of Uzodia's staple crops in the rich soil; farmers take great care to control agricultural runoff. To the east extends the Anka District, an industrial center whose noise barely reaches the gorge's bottom. The district also hosts Starheart Station, a sprawling spaceport and shopping complex. A network of gondolas zigzag from the port and down to Uzodia's core, swiftly moving visitors to and fro.

RESIDENTS

With Xibion lacking intelligent native life, the planet's inhabitants (and by extension, Uzodia's) originate almost entirely from the Pact Worlds countless centuries ago. Mwangi humans, Ekujae elves, and Taralu dwarves comprised the bulk of the expedition, with a handful of gnolls also in attendance. When they arrived on this world, dwarven engineers and architects took the lead in constructing cities, including Uzodia, as well as pioneering further advances in starfaring technologies. Elven and human scholars established what would soon become Uzodia Academy and, when the Xibians met life on other planets in the system, spearheaded diplomatic efforts. Some of the gnoll explorers stayed within the settlements, but most ventured out into the wilds.

Today, descendants of the Magaambyan expedition are Uzodia's most common inhabitants, each with dark skin tones of light brown to nearly obsidian black and hair color ranging from deep red to black. Many choose to dye their hair using products made from local bioluminescent plants that provide lustrous locks of pink, platinum, purple, and green. They wear equally bright and colorful clothing, often using yellows, oranges, and greens as base hues with flourishes based on personal preference or affiliation.

The general population doesn't see themselves as distinctly dwarves, elves, and human, but a single group of Xibians, working and living together as one. Though the various families of the original expedition intermarried or found love with offworlders, hints of their ancestral cultures can be found within an Uzodian neighborhood if one knows where to look. However, they aren't limited to a single species, and the idea of separating these traditions by species is laughable to most Xibians, who believe that the best people for a task should be the ones performing that task or at least training others to be good at it.

The aftermath of the Gap has only entrenched these feelings further. Many parents lost their lives in the unfortunate catastrophes caused by the confusion of emerging from the Gap. However, the remaining Xibians stepped up to find homes for the resulting orphaned children, seeing it as a planetwide emergency that required immediate action. As such, Xibian families today include a wide array of species, with a young Uzodian perhaps having both dwarven cousins and half-elves aunts and uncles.

With the founding of the intra-system Nebula Union and the recent reintroduction to the Pact Worlds, Uzodia is growing. People from across the galaxy who wish to study magic enroll in the city's prestigious academy, while others come to experience the much-lauded Xibian food and music firsthand. Many of these visitors stay in accommodations near Starheart Station, venturing out of the city on day-long sightseeing trips or simply browsing the nearby, vibrant marketplaces.

Moscaru: The architecture of Uzodia is a far cry from the dour blues and grays of space station corridors. It seems amazing how they shaped this land so utterly.

Sprax: The various houses are also an absolute treat. As I visited the main audience hall for the elder council, I was greeted by a wonderful man whose last name was "Leopard." I was unsure of what that meant, but he guided me to a comfortable seat, and I

was able to watch the elder council in progress. I had several questions, naturally, about how they govern things here, but Mr. Leopard merely walked over to me and answered them.

Moscaru: How often did you interrupt?

Sprax: Only three or four or five times. Mr. Leopard smiled and only bit his tongue once or twice!

Moscaru: Well, at least they didn't try to arrest you...

Sprax: I know! That would've been dreadful! But I do kind of wish to know what their judicial system is like.

SOCIETY

Xibian society was at first structured around the Magaambyan faculty and students who took part in the expedition, and while that was an obvious, albeit rough, hierarchy, the group soon realized they would need a fully functional government to survive on this new world. A collection of faculty and senior students formed a committee to solve this issue and emerged with a way to emulate the ideals of the Ten Magic Warriors who traveled with the mythical Old-Mage Jatembe, founder of the Magaambya. Citizens would be divided into 10 houses, with each focusing on specific trades and traditions. The elder of each house would be part of a council that would govern the world.

The original travelers were allowed to petition to join specific houses at the time, based on their interests. As time wore on, this societal structure calcified a bit, and movement between houses is now difficult and time-consuming. As it stands, what family a person is born into delineates their house, as evidenced by their surname. However, several families and other groups of people consider themselves "houseless." Though being houseless tends to make their lives more of a struggle—as many view them with suspicion and wrongly assume they aren't trustworthy—they have myriad, and often quite justified, reasons for not participating in the system. Many of the houseless have even emigrated to the Pact Worlds.

The 10 houses of Xibian society, all of which are present within Uzodia, are as follows. The roles and responsibilities noted here are archetypal, showcasing the focus of each house in broad strokes. No house is a monolith, and it isn't uncommon to see, for example, a House Bull doctor or a House Ibex musician.

House Bull: Guided to create, people of House Bull gravitate toward careers in construction, architecture, industry, and engineering. They're protectors, and their innovative designs in starship armaments provide Uzodia and its allies unique weaponry rarely seen elsewhere in the galaxy. They also delight in peaceful crafts, having famously designed local homes and landscapes with a high standard of beauty.

House Elephant: Chroniclers of the past, those of House Elephant oversee historical, archaeological, and genealogical records. **Iron Elephant** (NG nonbinary dwarf) is the current director of a massive record of births, deaths, marriages, and many other social aspects known as The Memory. These archives are kept within several dozen computer banks located in Uzodia, and clerks constantly reorganize and add to the data on a daily basis. Scholars of House Elephant have also struggled to fill in the blanks left by the Gap, and many believe they're fighting a losing battle.

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House Frog: With a reputation for boisterousness, House Frog members value the performing arts. In addition to sponsoring Uzodia's major theaters, most of the accomplished musicians, acrobats, actors, and orators either belong to or train with House Frog. Equally famous are their Chime Ringers, an elite peacekeeping force whose patrols typically carry a sweetly jangling chime. Less well known is that House Frog oversees a swiftly growing spy network across the galaxy, spread by its touring entertainers.

House Heron: Unity drives House Heron, whose diplomats, politicians, and judges not only guide Uzodia's harmonious existence, but also maintain the Nebula Union and oversee most galactic embassies abroad. By reputation, House Heron members are unflappably poised, such that their rare outbursts convey righteous indignity and power when unleashed.

House Ibex: Though based on the original Magic Warrior named Ibex, this house takes its imagery from the acksume, the planet's native, antelope-like creature. This house values healing and medical research, and they operate the largest hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies across Xibion. House Ibex also sponsors expeditions into the wilds of Xibion and to other worlds to find medicinal herbs, long-lost medical processes, or simply the next great leap forward in assistive technologies.

House Jaws: House Jaws represents some of the most highly trained warriors on Xibion, and they sell that expertise to whoever wants to buy it. The mercenary members of this house are willing to do whatever it takes to complete the jobs they're hired for. Sometimes, these soldiers of fortune find themselves up against other members of their house, an unfortunate problem they see as the cost of doing their business.

House Kite: The house of seers is one that everyone respects, but few truly know. Home to mystics, precogs, and other spellcasters of all types, House Kite is known for its mystical knowledge. Some of the best magical teachers of Uzodia Academy come from House Kite, and they're often welcomed like celebrities when they come to lecture or teach.

House Leopard: Steadfast and loyal, the members of House Leopard often act as protectors and law enforcement. However, they approach their duties with compassion instead of severity, partnering with House Spider to solve problems of crime at their roots and not just punish any wrongdoers. This reputation has earned them the respect of many of the other houses.

House Snake: As councilors and teachers, members of House Snake focus primarily on providing guidance for young Xibians. The progenitors of House Snake are credited with drawing up the original framework for the house system and touting the wisdom of its usage. House Snake also controls the bureaucracy around changing houses, and they see it as their goal to ensure that everyone is placed where they can do their best. Occasionally seen as controlling, House Snake is often at odds with the houseless, seeing them as rebellious and chaotic factors in a world that needs stability now more than ever.

House Spider: As speakers for the lost, House Spider represents those who fall through the cracks of society. Their members' main focuses are humanitarian aid, natural disaster preparedness, and providing relief to populations under threat. Within Xibion's ruling council, a House Spider elder can be counted on to ask for systemic ways to protect those in marginalized populations, including the houseless.

RELATIONS

Xibion is one of the founding members of the Nebula Union, a system-wide alliance that includes the aquatic uulians of the watery world Treolisk, the three-armed baraggahs of the desert-covered Ptomeray, and the advanced clockwork automatons of the worldship *Astrolabe I*. These disparate sentient species were brought together in peace by Xibian diplomats when they first took to the stars after establishing their home world. The process took over a decade of negotiation, as baraggahs and uulians have been locked in a centuries-long war over an issue that most had forgotten about long ago. The endeavor's success is attributed to a masterful elven envoy named Quentya Heron, who perished over 200 years ago in a terrible accident.

The members of the Nebula Union now enjoy profitable trade and cultural exchange, though the individual civilizations have chosen to remain on their home worlds. Occasionally, a clockwork automaton or burly baraggah will be spotted living and working in Uzodia, but mostly, they only visit



IRON ELEPHANT

Xibion on business. Ambassadors to the Nebula Union meet regularly on *Astrolabe I*, which has the facilities to host the various species without much trouble. There, they discuss the basics of interplanetary commerce and law; while the individual members of the alliance maintain their autonomy, certain edicts are in place to protect the space lanes between the planets. In addition, should the unthinkable happen and interplanetary war break out once again, Nebula Union representatives are poised to mediate the conflict before it gets out of hand.

At the close of the Drift Crisis, a Drift lane (now named Jatembe's Jaunt) was discovered connecting Xibion to Triaxus in the Pact Worlds, strengthening a relationship between the two systems that began during the heyday of Drift exploration. Many Xibians are interested in learning more about where they originally came from. On the other side of the coin, a large contingent of Pact Worlds humans, elves, and dwarves who trace their ancestry to the Mwangi Expanse of Lost Golarion feel a deep connection with their long-lost cousins and make trips to Uzodia to experience what they consider to be a "living testament" to the resilience of their progenitors.

CONRASU GROVES

The original Magaambyan expedition from Lost Golarion brought with them a wide variety of supplies and equipment, not truly knowing if they would be able to return to their home world. These preparations held them in good stead, allowing them to create the now-thriving civilization on Xibion. In addition to magical building materials and seeds for planting, the travelers took along a few special saplings from the trees that were used to create the wooden exoskeletons for the living shards of cosmic force known as conrasus. These saplings were planted across Xibion, including in Uzodia, in sacred areas called conrasu groves.

The conrasu trees are grown by skilled botanists and mystics, as they bear the unique property of reacting strongly to music. Certain melodies will cause a conrasu tree to flourish, while more discordant noises stunt its growth. The conrasu grove tenders are tasked with ensuring the trees are subjected to and shaped by the correct songs since their wood is one of the sturdiest and most unique materials in the galaxy. Conrasu wood is used to craft luxury furniture for the wealthiest of houses as well as living weapons and armor.

However, that use represents only a fraction of conrasu grove output. Through a lengthy process involving complex symphonic music, chants, and rituals, many conrasu trees are grown into living starship frames. For good reasons, these vessels go for exorbitant sums, with the profits often funneled back into the care of the grove. Conrasu wood starship frames are usually sleek and beautiful and can be outfitted with all the usual standard systems, though many Uzodian engineers make it a point of pride to fashion technology that blends seamlessly with the elegant frame.

Those who travel on a conrasu starship tend to feel at ease, as if the wood of the frame exudes calming waves of comfort and empathy. Many passengers and crew claim to sleep more soundly and always experience pleasant dreams. During long journeys through the Drift, the music that shaped the conrasu tree can sometimes be heard echoing through the vessel's corridors and chambers.

DOWNTIME IN UZODIA

Player characters can take advantage of the following special downtime options while in Uzodia.

Refit Starship: Thanks to the city's advanced engineering techniques supplemented by magic, you can refit or upgrade a single starship system in Uzodia's starport in 1d2 days, instead of the normal 1d4 days.

Research: The sheer number of scholars and libraries in Uzodia allow for deeper dives into topics of a magical nature. When you research a specific topic that relates to magic, you gain all the benefits of standard research downtime activity, except that you can also use Mysticism to recall knowledge about that topic (even untrained) with the DC reduced by 2. In addition, once during the next week, when you're attempting to recall knowledge about that topic, you can roll Mysticism twice and take the better result.

Conrasu groves are an important part of Xibian life and, as such, are highly protected. Only the tenders are allowed within the groves, and many of them have trained in combat to defend their grove when necessary. Trespassing onto a grove is an offense punishable by long terms of community service or, rarely, exile. Offworlders can view a grove at a distance from specially built platforms, and on those rare occasions a small group of outsiders receive the honor of entering a grove, it's treated as a solemn affair. Those who aren't respectful of the situation are asked to leave immediately.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

While Uzodia seems like an academic paradise at first glance, the city faces numerous threats, even if they're subtle and slowly bubbling under the surface.

Within Uzodia is something of a small underclass of the various houseless citizens who feel oppressed and constrained by the houses and their governance. While many feel, legitimately or not, that the house system doesn't serve them, they recognize that ultimately it's the government they have. "Without a house is without purpose," many among the houses say while not recognizing the instability that would arise should the houseless ever organize in significant numbers.

House Jaws has specifically fanned these flames, attempting not to overthrow the house system itself, but to prove that House Leopard, for all their vaunted might, is powerless to protect the very heart of Xibion. House Leopard is currently working with their allied houses to root out this threat and create an understanding with the houseless, but despite their efforts, things are slowly coming to a boil—and if handled poorly, Uzodia could find itself on the brink of the first Xibian civil war, which the houses wish to avoid at all costs. House Leopard wants to quietly put an end to this threat without coming off as heavy-handed, and they occasionally recruit adventurers from the Pact Worlds to investigate leads and bring the most dangerous rabble-rousers on both sides to justice.

Local fauna known as eracha ants bear a resemblance to the insects they're named after but grow to be between 4 and 10

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feet in length. Eracha ants build colonies deep underground, often emerging at dusk to menace passing citizens and other creatures. House Heron and House Jaws have managed to cull eracha ant numbers over the centuries, driving them away from major settlements. However, they've recently seen evidence of the involvement of a greater force controlling the eracha ants, and the two houses are quietly asking adventurers to find the source of this threat and end it. Some recruits have already discovered small technological devices that might be stirring up the eracha ants and driving them to assault Uzodia specifically, but these objects self-destruct shortly after discovery, leaving no trace behind. This frustrating turn of events has led many on the city council to advocate for increased patrols around the city's borders and in the nearby jungles, creating a shortage of soldiers to protect the city internally.



YVETTA HERON

Apart from the eracha ants, the jungles outside Uzodia teem with creatures perhaps never before seen elsewhere. Unfortunately, there are those from the Pact Worlds who, upon seeing this virtually undisturbed forest, think of nothing but hunting the beasts there. While some Xibians have opened lucrative hunting businesses, xenodruids and local conservationists have spoken out against this practice, claiming that it's thinning out the wildlife populace to an unacceptable degree. These protests seemed to push the hunters further out into the wilds to evade notice while claiming to hunt elsewhere on the planet. Lately, though, several small expeditions haven't returned from their outings, leading many to believe that the jungle is somehow fighting back.

The Drift lane that connects Xibion to Triaxus brings increased trade and visitors, but it also represents a source of conflict. Many worry that this influx of newcomers will threaten the Xibian way of life. Mostly written off as xenophobes or bigots, these traditionalists stew in their frustration, some merely waiting for the Pact Worlds visitors to show their true faces as conquerors here to crush Xibion and plunder its natural beauty and resources. This hasn't happened yet as many of the people of Xibion welcomed these guests, but there are those who watch and wait, hoping to turn tragedy and misunderstanding into fortunes for themselves.

While the Azlanti Star Empire is in the distant Vast, they aren't unaware of Xibion and its system. Since the discovery of the Drift lane, the Azlanti sent spies masquerading as typical human Pact Worlds citizens to the planet. These agents returned to the Star Empire with news of Uzodia's magical academy and starship weapon manufacturing excellence, which has only increased the Empire's desire to take the system for their own. The Aeon Guard has yet to send any military forces to Xibion, and the Xibians remain blissfully unaware of the threat lurking among the stars that's eyeing them hungrily.

Moscaru: An interesting aspect of Uzodia is how mixed the cultures are. I spent some time connecting with one of our local guides, a dwarven man whose large family consisted of elves, humans, and half-elves. When I commented politely on this, he seemed bemused, as if it were the most normal thing in the world. He advised me that Xibians are one people, even if there are some small cultural differences based on physiology.

Sprax: Oh! One guide I talked to was part a group of hunters chasing down creatures called eracha ants. I asked for a spot in the expedition, but a couple of them laughed, saying that the ants would eat me! I said I wasn't scared of tiny insects, and my guide showed me a holoivid of their last hunt. I don't know why they call those things "ants" when they are so big! I politely retracted my request.

Moscaru: Did you have a chance to take a look at Uzodia Academy? It's a beautiful campus that reminds me of

the heart of Absalom Station itself. Beautifully laid out, although probably far less busy.

Sprax: Yes! I walked the perfect circle around the main academic plaza, but after a few minutes, I got real tired and needed a nap.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Uzodia features several prominent locales.

Kevek Monastery

Kevek Monastery is home to a religious order of monks that supports the worship of some of the gods of the Mwangi Expanse on Lost Golarion. The Kevek monks believe that the spiritual and cultural life of all Xibion requires that these gods continue to be venerated, and what information they can provide is cherished and protected. However, those who practice this faith are few in number in Uzodia.

The ancient building contains elaborate shrines to Chohar, the Golden Lion; Grandmother Spider, the Weaver; Luhar, the Setting Sun; and Tlehar, the Rising Sun. Smaller shrines venerate additional deities. The monks welcome all who visit and are happy to explain each shrine's significance as well as recite legends and myths that have been handed down from generation to generation. The devoted preach lessons of justice, loyalty, love, and destiny in the hopes of preserving their gods' ancient traditions.

The serene monastery is located at the foot of the Kamaris Mountains, away from the bustle of the city. It sees occasional foot traffic from Uzodia residents and tourists most days. Many more arrive during certain holy days, when the monks emerge from their building to perform sacred songs and dances in the square out front. These displays also act as fundraisers and recruitment drives for the monastery, though anyone is allowed to donate credits or take on the monks' way of life at any time.

Though most don't realize it, the Kevek monks are all trained in combat in a secret inner chamber that only the faithful can access. The fighting styles they learn are derived from their ancient religious orders, training with unusual weapons like bolas, staknives, and spiked chains. Some of the older monks like to retell stories passed down from their predecessors about the earliest days of Xibion, in which people were saved from danger by a burning gold lion or protected from a rampaging beast by a woman made of night and stars. The younger generation believes these stories to be mere allegory but know the myths nonetheless empower many to find strength and be of stout heart in the face of adversity.

Mama Rae's Cantina

Near the southern edge of the Uzodia Academy campus (see below) is the recently opened Mama Rae's Cantina, a huge restaurant taking up most of a city block that caters mostly to students. Mama Rae's is a haven from the formal, often stuffy, atmosphere of the academy, often brimming with music, lights, and dancing. The cantina boasts a variety of drinks and food cooked to perfection, served by a legion of cooks and bartenders. The carefree mood acts as a balm for many students who are overloaded and overwhelmed by the press of academia.

The first floor of this behemoth of an eatery is dedicated to the bar area, the main dance floor, and a well-attended outdoor patio for dining guests who want to enjoy the music but wish to eat outside and enjoy the weather. The second floor is a dining hall that one might find in a typical college campus, with rows of tables and bench seating. Patrons serve themselves from a large buffet and are charged by the pound. The cantina offers discounts to students (with proper ID) who often just need a warm meal before falling back into the rigors of study. The third floor hosts Mama Rae's offices, a smaller bar, and VIP seating, where some of the more esteemed university faculty can enjoy their own meals.

What most folks don't know about Mama Rae's is that it's a front for a small but growing organized crime ring run by none other than the owner, Rae Jaws. Others of her house are thrilled that she's continuing the family business, as the discovery of a Drift lane near the planet has allowed them to engage in interstellar smuggling. Mama Rae has kept her illicit deals discreet, for now. Those with underworld connections know that when they need prohibited goods, such as cursed magical items or banned research material, Mama Rae might just be able to procure them. For a substantial fee, of course.

Starheart Station

Starheart Station is Uzodia's starport and main location for shipbuilding and maintenance. All day and nearly all night, the sounds of plasma torches, industrial lifts, and riveting machines ring throughout Starheart Station and beyond as engineers and shipwrights come together to create what could only be called masterpieces of ship design. The smaller vessels built here look quite similar, but the flagships of each house are crafted in vivid and unique detail, with crests, house symbols, and even hulls shaped to look like the house's animal.

The honor of working on the living vessels made of conrasu wood (page 129) goes to members of each house who have the aptitude, attitude, and intellect to create what many believe are flying works of art. These engineers understand how the ships are originally shaped, and many of them are accomplished musicians in their own rights. Separate soundproof hangars are situated at the starport's southern edge, and inside, music is either piped in or played live to help transition the living starships into the next steps of their journey: launching into space.

Uzodia Academy

The western half of the city is home to Uzodia Academy, an academic institution patterned off the Magaambya. Sprawling across 5 miles, this lush and manicured campus is noted for its unique architectural style. Several lecture halls form concentric rings around a main courtyard, with well-kept pathways lined with trimmed hedges leading between them. The buildings date back to the earliest days of Xibion's settlement but have been maintained and updated throughout the centuries. Cavernous libraries that were once filled with physical books have been converted to holographic chambers where students can interact with the data they're searching for. The lecture halls now boast state-of-the-art audio and visual equipment to enhance just about any lecture. The dorms also feature accommodations that can be tailored to nearly any species in the galaxy.

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Uzodia Academy teaches a wide array of subjects, ranging from the sciences of engineering and magic to more creative arts like poetry and painting. Students focus on a particular subject but are encouraged to broaden their horizons by taking classes on anything that interests them. Lately, if a student wants to learn about something that none of the academy staff are studied in, current Dean **Yvetta Heron** (LG female human mystic) will make it her mission to find a tutor for that student, whether local or virtual.

Students and faculty are constantly on the move through the campus, lending an almost electric hum to the air from all the activity. This feeling has seemingly taken on a life of its own in recent months. The academy's head of security (with the given title Protector-General), **Jacquil Leopard** (NG male human vanguard^{COM}), has received reports of students and faculty complaining of strange events. Each incident involves a victim feeling dizziness, fatigue, and nausea after finding themselves compelled to walk the grounds' pristine paths for hours on end. They've noted that something is "pulling" them closer to the center of the academy, after which they awake in their beds with several minutes of missing memory. Uzodia Academy's medical staff attribute these episodes to exhaustion or overwork and generally prescribe plenty of bed rest. However, a couple of the Protector-General's security guards have recently gone missing while investigating this phenomenon, leading Jacquil to seek outside aid.

X'oshan Theater

Standing near the very heart of Uzodia is one of the oldest theaters on the planet. A relic of the original expedition, the X'oshan Theater was a place where workers and researchers could listen to live music and watch plays originally from their home world, performed by the best acting and singing talent the expedition had to offer.

As time marched on and the direct connection to Golarion was lost, the X'oshan Theater became a balm to soothe the ache of missing home. The Gap rendered some of the plays and songs into artifacts to be stored rather than works to be performed, but each work that could be saved has been sealed and lines the long hallways that lead to the main theater area of the X'oshan, signifying bits of Golarion still connected to the core of Xibion.

Unknown to all but the few historians employed by the theater, a secret vault located deep under the building houses several intact pre-Gap artifacts and documents. Originally established as a kind of time capsule, this cache has been mostly forgotten. The historians know it represents one of the biggest potential pre-Gap knowledge bases available, so they protect it fiercely.

Zbeka Ferry Company

Though perhaps started as a practical commuting option, the Zbeka Ferry Company's anti-grav boats primarily serve as stylish restaurants. As each vessel skims gently above

the water, guests enjoy not only Uzodia's beauty, but also a seasonal menu of elegant foods, such as lokki rice and roasted vegetables. Over time, the ferries have become favorite neutral grounds for entertaining dignitaries and making deals, earning the company some notoriety for the intrigue that follows.

Unfortunately, this politicking attracts spies—and rarely, even assassins. A recent murder committed on the *Memory of Ten* has stymied investigators, for the crime had no witnesses or even an obvious cause of death, though the victim, Zagara Elephant (a prominent clerk of The Memory), clearly struggled in their final moments. For now, the *Memory of Ten* is anchored for ongoing investigations; the Aziri family, who runs and operates the small fleet of ferries, has redoubled its security on the remaining vessels.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Those who visit Uzodia to experience the university might find themselves drawn into other matters.

First Contact: Explorers discover intelligent native life on one of the nearby planets previously believed to be uninhabited. Hoping to establish friendly contact yet wary of possible danger, House Heron assembles an entourage of Xibians and representatives (including the PCs) from several other friendly worlds to reach out and see who their new neighbors are.

Prophecy of Lions: A beautiful black lion appears to the PCs in a dream, warning of imminent danger to Uzodia. When pressed for more information, the lion's face transforms into that of a human woman, and she begins urgently striding toward a conrasu grove while warning of a terrible beast. A roar draws her attention, and she springs to the air to hold off some unseen behemoth. Before the dream ends, she utters these last words: "The trees remember its threefold bane."

Sonic Smugglers: A patron with deep pockets and few scruples (such as the drow House Zeizerer or an elite Veskarium agent) seeks several of Uzodia's unique sonic starship weapons to reverse engineer, but the city is careful about who receives this technology. That doesn't stop Mama Rae, who's hiring a team to smuggle these guns offworld in return for a cut of the payoff.

Suspicious Science: A strange creature clad in the disheveled lab coat of a university researcher and claiming to be one of its tenured professors offers a large sum of money to anyone who can help them escape Uzodia and reach a planet on the system's periphery. Their necessary instruments are sensitive and bulky, and the researcher insists they must avoid authorities and spaceports. Is this researcher who they claim they are, and what do they hope to accomplish?

UZODIAN STARSHIP OPTIONS

Grown from magical trees shaped by song, Uzodian starships often include unique components that other societies have attempted to replicate. Even the most successful facsimiles mimic only the basic functions, without capturing the underlying intelligence.

Starship Weapons

Sonic weapons barely project a whisper in the vacuum of space. Undeterred, Xibian engineers developed dual-purpose cannons that create a dense line of particles and then channel a sonic surge along that line to shatter anything at the other end.

Cacophonous

A cacophonous weapon creates a disruptive, sonic resonance that dazzles the crew and drowns out communications. Creatures on a starship that take damage from a cacophonous weapon take a -1 penalty to crew actions for 1 round, and the penalty increases to -4 for captain actions. Any creatures resistant to sonic damage or sonic effects reduce this penalty by 1, and any creatures immune to sonic damage or sonic effects are unaffected.

Mystical

When attempting a gunnery check with a mystical weapon, which is a hybrid device, a gunner can use their ranks in Mysticism in place of either their base attack bonus or ranks in Piloting, and their Wisdom modifier in place of their Dexterity modifier to determine their gunnery bonus.

UZODIA STARSHIP WEAPONS

LIGHT WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS						
<i>Song Cannon</i>	Medium	—	1d12	10	9	Cacophonous, mystical
TRACKING WEAPONS						
<i>Light Seer-Shard Projector</i>	Long	10	5d6	5	10	Limited fire (5), mystical, quantum, ripper
HEAVY WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS						
<i>Heavy Song Cannon</i>	Medium	—	2d12	20	14	Cacophonous, mystical
TRACKING WEAPONS						
<i>Heavy Seer-Shard Projector</i>	Long	10	12d6	10	27	Limited fire (5), mystical, quantum, ripper
CAPITAL WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS						
<i>Capital Song Cannon</i>	Medium	—	1d12 × 10	50	27	Cacophonous, mystical
<i>Galactic Choir Array</i>	Medium	—	2d8 × 10	55	35	Array, cacophonous, mystical
TRACKING WEAPONS						
<i>Capital Seer-Shard Projector</i>	Long	10	4d6 × 10	20	45	Limited fire (5), mystical, quantum, ripper

BULWARK

Bastion protecting Drift lanes from the Swarm.

BULWARK

LG military outpost

Gravity standard (artificial)

Atmosphere Normal (artificial)

Day 3 days; **Year** 298 days

Population 120,000 (42% shirren, 26% human, 6% dwarf, 5% android, 21% other)

Government militant theocracy

Languages Common, Dwarven, Shirren

Qualities devout, militaristic

ECONOMY

Exports consecrated armaments, Swarm technologies

Imports food, mercenaries, raw materials, starship parts

Maximum Item Level 13th

Specialty Item Level *holy weapon fusions* (20th), heavy armor (18th), powered armor (18th)

NPCS

Mordali Sall (LN male human soldier), commander of the Knights of Golarion

Sitraktik (LG host shirren mystic), priest of Hylax

A cloud of warships bristling with weaponry forms a shield around the rocky planetoid Triumph, the surface of which bears gruesome craters and scorch marks from an ancient war. Most of these wide depressions gradually flood in the humid conditions, creating alkaline lakes. In an immense galaxy, this world and its smaller siblings in orbit around a blue dwarf star would be unremarkable and unattractive. However, it's a grim nexus of Drift lanes at the edge of Swarm-controlled space; several routes stretch toward populous Near Space worlds, and several terminate at Swarm-ravaged systems.

Knowing that control of Triumph would severely impede Swarm exploitation of the Drift lane network, the Knights of Golarion and Church of Hylax combined forces to fortify the planetoid, denying the Swarm this shortcut. In just a few years, Triumph developed into Bulwark: a military base, foundry, and holy site catering to pilgrims and any warriors eager to battle the Swarm.

Bulwark consists of three rocky planetoids—Steadfast, Triumph, and Valor—in a desolate blue star system, each dedicated to arming, housing, supplying, or training a steady stream of holy warriors ready to fight the Swarm. The largest, Triumph, functions as the headquarters. Formed from hundreds of starships of various sizes, the Line orbits Triumph like heavily armed electrons around a righteous nucleus. Crisscrossed with railways, mechyards, and shipyards built from its iron-rich rock, Steadfast appears clad in armor. Finally, the otherwise lifeless world of Valor harbors lawless hunters and opportunists who share Bulwark's goals, if not its methods.

STEADFAST

Steadfast bustles with activity. Under the oversight of Hivonyx, a shirren-run manufacturing company, Steadfast assembles most

of Bulwark's munitions and starships. Several other companies and contractors assist these efforts, yet the ongoing war effort consumes nearly all of the goods produced. Sympathetic merchants ship a small percentage around the galaxy, using the signature powered armor and other gear to proselytize Bulwark's ongoing conflict, solicit donations, and recruit warriors to the cause.

The most famous products are the mechs. For years, Hivonyx quietly experimented in mech design, never considering its prototypes quite ready. However, Bulwark presented an ideal testing ground, enabling the company to rapidly perfect its technology. These mechs sync their users on a psychic level—sometimes in the same mech but sometimes split across a small team of mechs—enabling them to coordinate their actions with supernatural ease. Hivonyx hasn't addressed rumors of harvested Swarm biomass being fused into the mechs' cores, though the enemies' hive mind might explain how operators act so seamlessly together and even seem to sense Swarm strategies mid-combat. Whatever the secret, priests of the Forever Queen have blessed the third generation of these experimental mechs, which require daring pilots to test them in combat.

TRIUMPH

The largest planetoid, Triumph, supports almost no life beyond lichens, mosses, and various crab-like creatures that feed on the plants and each other. The most numerous lichen—scientifically called “lesser echruvion” but often referred to as “courage” by warriors—provides remarkable nutrition and dulls the effects of fear in most consumers. Scores of lichen-tenders gather and process the substance to create meal bars and teas that smell like smoked fish.

Triumph's main settlement is a walled tower city. From there, expeditions traverse the surface, combing its ruins for relics and Swarm tech. Iomedae's and Hylax's faiths operate in tandem to govern the star system and oversee military operations. Most Hylaxians serve as combat medics and support troops on the front lines, with Iomedean infantry, mechs, and starship squadrons supporting them, though the Hylaxians of Hivonyx operate a noteworthy contingent of heavily armored soldiers. In addition, the growing settlement brims with glory hounds, mercenaries, adventurers, and myriad righteous-yet-unaffiliated combatants. Bulwark welcomes them all, no matter their past or identity so long as they work within the established system and hierarchy.

Not only do mercenaries find good work here, but Bulwark is also a natural crucible for identifying and testing new talent crews might hire for long-term work. The most influential of these is Her Twelfth Act, a small army of mostly righteous knights named after an apocryphal twelfth Act of Iomedae, in which the goddess supposedly inhabited a damaged mech and led a ragtag squadron in destroying a massive Swarm hive. The church balks at this unsubstantiated tale, yet it's enough to lend these warriors a veneer of legitimacy. Its daring leaders **Wildfire** (NG male ifrit solarian) and **Tempest** (LG female human vanguard) always seek new recruits, often lending gear to candidates to show off the perks of membership.

Grizzled crusade veteran Mordali Sall currently leads the Knights of Golarion here and oversees independent warriors' activities. Sitraktik leads Hylax's faithful, collaborating with Mordali as his equal. Together, they foster an admirable camaraderie that permeates the city and inspires all comers.

VALOR

While Triumph attracts the faithful and regimented warriors, the tiny planetoid Valor draws in firebrands, thrill seekers, career exterminators, and anyone harboring such a vendetta against the Swarm that they dismiss Triumph's oversight. Some wander here after being cast out from Triumph, whereas others just avoid the de facto capital altogether, instead building utilitarian barracks from Valor's stone. The gathered forces attract their own amenities, including ramshackle flea markets, pubs, hotels of dubious quality, and wandering purveyors of unsanctioned weaponry. Small missions of Iomedae and Hylax help keep the peace and sometimes reform troublemakers enough to join Triumph's endeavors, yet these priests earn scorn as often as converts. Periodically, Mordali Sall dispatches spies to monitor Valor—not to avert trouble, but rather because the ragtag community's intelligence network often surpasses his own and rarely shares its secrets. However, Knights of Golarion aren't renowned for their subtlety, so the commander often hires freelance agents to investigate leads.

Valor's community boast more than merchants and mercenaries; a controversial gaggle of scientists and Hylaxian healers calling themselves the Redeemers circulate here, endeavoring to rehabilitate the Swarm's victims—both planets and organisms. Some Redeemers focus on psychological counseling for survivors, but the majority research terraforming techniques to rehabilitate ravaged worlds. Small patches of dirt and optimistic gardens on Valor attest to their early handiwork, and their methods are improving rapidly as their gene therapy and chemical concoctions literally take root. A lead researcher, **Tivi** (N male shirren biohacker), proudly bears scars and growths earned from lab accidents and early self-experimentation. In leading the local Redeemers, he's convinced the Forever Queen wants him to "cure" the Swarm itself, and he considers undoing all the Swarm's misdeeds to be a purely scientific puzzle.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Bulwark thrives on military narratives, whether the PCs are mercenaries choosing their jobs or faithful soldiers awaiting orders. Yet, the region also supports expeditions unraveling the Swarm's history and nature as well as exploring the long-abandoned ruins that pepper the system. As a result, the PCs might be any mix of hardened warriors, religious disciples, or daring researchers.

Experimental Mechs: The PCs belong to an elite mechanized unit recruited to test Hivonyx's latest symbiotic mechs on the battlefield. However, a small skirmish unexpectedly escalates into a desperate fight for survival, triggering psychic feedback from their mechs and testing the limits of their bonds as companions.

Rampant Research: As researchers, the PCs seek methods to stymie the Swarm's hive mind and undo the damage inflicted by their conquests. At first, biological samples recovered from a devastated world show promise, and damaged records from that world's now-extinct civilization suggest its own scientists were also developing some anti-Swarm technologies from those samples. However, once moved to a more populous world, the samples awaken, mutate, and escape, triggering an affliction that transforms people into Swarm-like creatures. Can the PCs devise a cure, contain the infection, and perhaps even transform it into something useful?

Swarm Sleepers: A Swarm raiding party emerges from a Drift lane connected to Bulwark, having apparently slipped past the outpost's scanners and defenses. The Knights of Golarion and Hylaxians go on full alert, attempting to identify how the breach occurred. Could it be that reckless traitors within the organizations have aided the Swarm? Or have Swarm specialists psychically controlled high-ranking shirren commanders, turning them into sleeper agents? Whatever the cause, Hylaxians hire the PCs as independent investigators to uncover the Swarm's advantage and end it before further damage occurs.



DUMERAY

Vibrant cultural powerhouse on a backwater river planet.

DUMERAY

N city

Gravity Normal

Atmosphere Normal

Day 18 hours; **Year** 2 years

Population 100,352 (70% human, 2% corpsefolk^{AA2}, 28% other)

Government municipal

Languages Common, Eoxian

Qualities cultured, notorious, technologically underdeveloped

ECONOMY

Exports alien artifacts, siccitate

Imports building materials, food, information, technology

Maximum Item Level 12th

NPCS

Alanda Tellurion (LN female human), executive director of the Deepwater Prime Mining Consortium

Kaastacachtcht (NG male wrikreechee envoy), mayor of Dumeray

Gub Walliver (CG male jububnan^{AA4}), proprietor of the storied music venue Club Gub

Ludlow Carnivexas (NE male ghou^{AA2}), head of Carnivexas family

Approximately 6,000 years ago, the red supergiant star Bori collapsed in a violent explosion, forming the nebula known as the Tabori Cluster and seeding the planets orbiting its five neighboring stars with rich deposits of the valuable starmetal siccitate. Unfortunately for those who would try to exploit these resources, the nebula remains electrically active millennia later, severely limiting starship travel by interfering with or destroying most forms of advanced technology. Consequently, the worlds of the Tabori Cluster are largely cut off from the rest of the galaxy. Their few settlements are inhabited primarily by stranded travelers, fortune seekers, and those wishing to disappear or live without the complications of modern technology.

Dumeray is the largest settlement on the planet of Deepwater Prime, the fourth planet orbiting the yellow dwarf star called Deepwater. Although a vast freshwater ocean and thousands of rivers cover the majority of Deepwater Prime's surface, it still boasts more habitable dry land than its neighbors. This makes Deepwater Prime the system's de facto trading and travel hub. Located at a confluence of three major river deltas on the eastern coast of the planet's largest continent, Dumeray was founded as a base of operations for a handful of mining companies. It rapidly grew into a bustling city populated by traders, prospectors, river pirates, and relic hunters seeking to plunder the ruins half-buried in the surrounding wetlands. While city government is officially overseen by a democratically elected mayor and a council of appointees, it's an accepted reality that only the city's wealthiest families and heads of business hold true power in Dumeray.

Dumeray's first inhabitants were primarily human, and much of its population remains so, but over time, it has grown into a melting pot of numerous species and cultures, cementing its

reputation as a place where music, food, and art from across the galaxy can be found by those who know where to look. The largest non-human contingent are remnants of the crew of an Eoxian vessel that crashed on the planet two centuries ago after the nebula damaged its propulsion system.

The vast majority of Dumeray's fortunes come from the export of siccitate, which is transported offworld by small cargo craft powered by magic and analog technology that's less vulnerable to the deleterious effects of the nebula. However, without Drift engines, these ships often take months to travel to and from remote trading hubs on the outer edges of the Cluster. There, the valuable starmetal is exchanged for goods needed by the citizens of Deepwater Prime, such as food, building materials, and technological items, which remain sealed inside special noqual-shielded containers until safely inside the planet's atmosphere. While computers, robotics, cybernetics, and other high-tech equipment can be bought and sold in the markets of Dumeray, scarcity and shipping expenses put them out of reach for many citizens. All equipment lacking the analog or archaic special property is priced 50-100% higher on Deepwater Prime than it would be elsewhere.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Dumeray is divided into four districts, each having grown out of one of the original mining camps built by its founders. Although all originally constructed by humans, three of these districts—locally called the Market District, the River District, and the Arts District—are now home to a dynamic mix of many different species and cultures. The fourth, known as the Orphys District, is inhabited almost entirely by corpsefolk (*Alien Archive 2 30*) and other Eoxian undead. Although relations between them and the city's living residents are generally cordial, it's rare for living creatures to make their homes among the undead.

The Breakwater Hotel: The stately Breakwater Hotel, one of the oldest buildings in the city, lies a stone's throw from Dumeray's largest pier and is often among the first sights glimpsed by travelers arriving by boat. Despite comfortable accommodations and impeccable service, the hotel has a sinister reputation due to its tragic history. Numerous unexplained deaths and disappearances have occurred on hotel grounds, with so many of them befalling the occupants of a particular room on the second floor that it's no longer made available to guests. Naturally, these incidents have led to speculation that the hotel is haunted, although neither living mystics nor Eoxian necromancers contracted to "exorcise" the place have found conclusive evidence of any ghostly presence.

Club Gub: Considered by many to be the beating heart of the Arts District, this legendary establishment has long been known as the place in town for up-and-coming performers hoping to be discovered. The vibrant club is owned and operated by **Gub Walliver** (CG male jububnan^{AA4}), rumored to be a former river pirate granted clemency for turning against his crew. The club boasts the most notoriously well-stocked bar in town, a stage that has hosted live performances from the Tabori Cluster's most

popular musicians, and many proverbial and literal smoke-filled backrooms where deals in Dumeray are made and broken.

The Dueling Tree: Looming over the crossroads just a short distance west of Dumeray, the Dueling Tree is a massive, gnarled growth that, by all accounts, predates the arrival of offworlders on Deepwater Prime. Since early in the city's history, it has been a popular destination for folk seeking to settle their differences at the end of a gun barrel. Rumor holds that on moonless nights, the ghosts of those slain might appear at the foot of the tree, seeking to reclaim their lost honor by challenging passersby to a rematch.

Dumeray Bay: The city of Dumeray is built in the shape of a great crescent, with the pier-studded coastline along its eastern edge encircling the inland basin that shares its name. Day or night, watercraft of all kinds fills the bay, from weather-beaten fishing boats and rusted cargo freighters to luxurious pleasure craft and floating casinos. A single large island at its center serves as the site of the city's primary spaceport. Outside the mouth of the bay, the open sea is dotted with dozens of smaller islands, many converted into hidden pirate lairs or base camps for expeditionary crews exploring alien ruins beneath the waves.

The Necropolis: Dumeray's unofficial fifth district is a silent city-within-a-city of ornately decorated family crypts and carefully manicured thoroughfares where late citizens are laid to rest in aboveground vaults, a practice necessitated by the land's high water table. Although people from all strata of Dumeray society lie within the Necropolis, its ultimately limited capacity has driven up the price of admission with each generation, leading many citizens to opt out of being interred there at all. Many choose cremation instead, while others collect sizable payments from wealthy families of the Orphys district in exchange for ownership of their corpses after death. These remains ostensibly go on to be animated as mindless house servants and laborers, although rumors persist that many meet more unsavory fates.

The Ruins: Tales abound of submerged alien ruins all over Deepwater Prime, but a recent underwater mining expedition has returned with news of the largest settlement yet discovered. Located on the sea floor about 2 miles outside of Dumeray Bay, this vast ruin has only recently begun to be explored. Already though, pioneering adventurers have returned bearing samples of strange biotech the likes of which have never been seen as well as reports of sealed, air-filled complexes containing pristine caches of ancient weapons and technology. Notably, some rumors indicate that these ruins might not be entirely abandoned. Weeks after one recent expedition disappeared completely, a single survivor was found adrift at sea, endlessly babbling about strange fishlike humanoids, horrific shapeshifting monstrosities, and slimy tentacled "masters" dwelling in the briny depths below.

Weydanhome: The soaring edifice known as Weydanhome was founded as a roadside chapel by a wrikreechee cleric named Molo the Wanderer, who was also instrumental in establishing relations when the first Eoxian refugees found their way to the outskirts of Dumeray. Molo's origin and fate are unrecorded, leading many to speculate that he might secretly have been an avatar of Weydan himself. Thanks in large part to Molo and his adherents, Weydanism is the closest thing to an "official" faith

practiced among the city's population, making Weydanhome a popular destination during the various holidays and festivals sacred to his worshippers.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Exciting adventures await those who come to Dumeray.

Dangerous Mines: A mining crew tasked with establishing a claim at a newly discovered siccitate vein outside of Dumeray hasn't reported back to the main office in several weeks, despite a final transmission indicating that they'd discovered something significant. The head dispatcher is looking for professionals to check up on the crew and secure the site before a rival company lays claim to it.

Grave Crimes: Someone or something has been breaking into and stealing from crypts in the Necropolis. The city guard suspects common grave robbers, but a growing contingent of the city's living population have begun vocally expressing suspicions that the undead residents of the Orphys District are up to something sinister, though the latter protest these accusations. The plot thickens when someone realizes that a line drawn on a map connecting the defiled tombs forms a strangely familiar symbol.

Returned from the Rivers: A well-known local prospector ventured out of town a while ago, chasing rumors about a buried alien artifact. He returned empty-handed, but those who knew him before are convinced that there's something different about him now. A concerned family member is looking for someone to discreetly observe their loved one and retrace the steps of his expedition.



GUB WALLIVER

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FARRABARIUM

Famous ysoki-run trading post and way station in the Diaspora.

FARRABARIUM

CN trade frigate

Gravity normal (artificial)

Atmosphere Normal

Day 24 hours; **Year** 1 year

Population 300 (75% ysoki, 25% other)

Government council

Languages Common

Qualities notorious

ECONOMY

Exports diplomatic opportunities with the Free Captains, starship repairs

Imports food, raw materials, starship parts

Maximum Item Level 11th

NPCS

Archiy Markan (NE male human technomancer), mage accountant

Qask Ymblem (N female ysoki mechanic), head of the Shirsask Kaia council

Zora Roza (LN female shobhad), owner of Zora Roza's Bar and Grill

Situated on a starship trade route that passes through the Diaspora, the *Farrabarium* is a damaged ATech Immortal cruiser refitted as a trading post and way station. This former Knights of Golarion ship was left adrift after it was attacked by a Corpse Fleet cruiser on a secret mission through the system but was claimed by a ysoki salvage group called the Shirsask Kaia. Over several years, they repaired the vessel and its systems, turning it into a massively armed and armored station that welcomes all passing adventurers and traders.

The Shirsask Kaia maintains an iron grip on the *Farrabarium* through a governing council headed by the grizzled **Qask Ymblem** (N female ysoki mechanic). Ymblem, the genius engineer who led the station's refurbishment, uses her close relations with the Free Captains (whose vessels she offers priority maintenance in exchange for safety), her unparalleled knowledge of the workings of the ship, and a loyal crew of personal guards to keep things running as she sees fit. The rest of the council follows her lead, and dissent has become a distant memory winnowed out through a long campaign of corruption and assassination. Peacekeeping aboard the *Farrabarium* is performed by teams of cybernetically enhanced ysoki enforcers who can move quickly throughout the ship via the Warrens (page 139) and often arrive in overwhelming force.

While the *Farrabarium* makes itself out as a wondrous marketplace in the stars, it's actually anything but. Its core business involves collecting derelicts, stripping them for parts, and using those parts to repair other ships. New parts are rare and have a questionable provenance. There's some local manufacturing on board, but advanced electronics, rare materials, and most magitech are generally very difficult to acquire aboard the *Farrabarium*.

The vessel also worries about staying one step ahead of the Knights of Golarion, who have yet to formally try to reclaim the vessel from the salvagers who now call it home. In fact, at least one ysoki onboard the *Farrabarium* is an agent of the Knights of Golarion who secretly reports back to their leaders, despite the fact the knights show no overt interest in taking their ship back.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The *Farrabarium* and the locales within are filled with adventure, excitement, and incredible deals.

Archiy Markan's Offices: Strange goods and services can be found throughout the Mall (see below), and one such purveyor is **Archiy Markan** (NE male human technomancer), a self-stylized mage accountant specializing in arcane finance and infernal law. Shady businessfolk from throughout the Pact Worlds seek to procure Archiy's services. Mixing magic and math with a complete lack of ethics, Archiy dabbles in custom financial software, contract law, and covering up others' questionable accounting mistakes. Rumor has it that Archiy has found a way to bind a devil into a piece of accounting software to create financial books that "cook" themselves while bypassing systems that detect AI tampering.

Free Captains Embassy: Once the original cruiser's dining hall, this space has been set aside by the Shirsask Kaia as a space for visiting Free Captains and their crews to make deals in secret or just relax in peace. It features a number of private, comfortable-enough rooms furnished exclusively with salvaged furniture from across the galaxy. Qask Ymblem often meets here with a representative of the Free Captains to occasionally renegotiate the safety of the *Farrabarium* (and its merchants). The most frequent visitor from the space pirate organization is a dwarf with glowing golden eyes named Free Captain Knot. The dwarf is always accompanied by two burly androids wielding high-tech cutlasses. Rumors say that Knot owns a magical candle with a flame that changes color when danger is about to strike, making it impossible to take the dwarf by surprise.

The Crypt Deck: Though the *Farrabarium* was defeated by the Corpse Fleet and set adrift several years ago, a hidden group of undead can still be found within a sealed-off deck on the ship. These undead were mostly mindless Corpse Fleet foot soldiers who boarded the vessel in the latter stages of the engagement. Several dozen undead remain, led by a surprisingly canny undead known as **Corpssecry** (LE driftdead amalgam^{AA3}), who is comprised of fused undead and former Knights of Golarion crew. They bide their time, waiting for the moment when someone on the *Farrabarium* opens the sealed chamber they reside in.

The Mall: The Mall is essentially every part of the *Farrabarium* that isn't the Warrens (see page 139). Cargo bays, wide hallways, and other chambers are crammed with stores, repair shops, and other businesses that provide visitors with countless shopping opportunities. The Mall also extends outside the vessel to the 10 or so merchant ships docked at the *Farrabarium* at any given

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time, as many of these merchants open their airlocks to any customers with credits to spend. The majority of the interior shops are ysoki-run, but not many of the stores are permanent fixtures, meaning a new trader can easily find a place to hawk their wares, provided they're willing to pay a "tenancy tax" to the Shirsask Kaia. Vessels docking to trade goods are subject to a similar berthing fee.

The Warrens: On the outside, the *Farrabarium* still very much resembles an ATech Immortal cruiser, but most of the interior has been transformed into an ysoki warren, a village of winding tunnels and hidden living units. The starship's primary controls systems have been relocated deep within these tunnels, making it difficult for would-be boarding parties to damage them. The confusing and twisted Warrens are perfect for thieves and other criminals looking for a place to hide. This sprawling mess of corridors allows the *Farrabarium* to contain a much larger populace than one would suspect by viewing the ship from the outside, the smell of which can be perceived through the badly scrubbed air that circulates weakly through the tunnels. The air grows so stale in the more cramped tunnel networks that for most breathing species, emerging onto the Mall is like stepping into fresh mountain air.

Zora Roza's Grill: One recent addition to the *Farrabarium*'s exterior is a makeshift collection of starship hulls, asteroid chunks, and a glass dome rumored to have been pulled out of the Drift, all welded together into a greasy spoon diner called Zora Roza's Grill. Hungry sentients who come here are greeted by the fearsome **Zora Roza** (LN female shobhad), a rotund shobhad standing 12 feet tall and weighing 750 pounds. Running the restaurant like a battlefield, she can be found barking orders at staff and customers alike. Woe to the cooks who don't prep orders promptly, waitstaff who dawdle, or patrons who don't eat their vegetables! The food quality is uneven, but no one has ever complained while seated in Zora Roza's Grill. The restaurant is a favorite hangout of daredevil "asteroid skippers," who find vexing the shobhad to be as thrilling and dangerous as dodging space debris at top speed. Many an innocent customer has found themselves caught between these ysoki thrill-seekers and the thundering, four-armed restaurateur.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Spacefarers journey to the *Farrabarium* for many reasons, such as to seek out illicit goods and ship upgrades. If they aren't careful, though, they might find themselves caught up in an adventure.

The Devil in the Details: After making a couple of ill-advised deals with a fiendish crime family, Archiy Markan is roped into a dangerous scheme to secure the true name of a minor devil who recently opened a casino on the *Farrabarium* called Deck Five. While the mage accountant is able to enchant a device that can telepathically extract the true name from the casino owner—who goes by Mr. Axon—the item requires an extended period of close proximity to the target. Unfortunately, Archiy isn't welcome at Deck Five, so he needs a team to infiltrate the casino and get close to Mr. Axon to learn the devil's true name.

In Cold Blood: Qask Ymblem, leader of the Shirsask Kaia, is sent anonymous information that one of the *Farrabarium*'s council members is a shapechanging spy working for the Free Captains. She seeks some outsiders to discreetly identify the traitor without rousing their suspicions. Her plan revolves around surreptitiously securing a drop of blood from each councilor to be tested.

Lost Skipper: A group of ysoki known as "asteroid skippers" pilot tiny starships that are little more than an engine and a cockpit, living for the thrill of barely dodging space debris and skirting dangerous astronomical phenomena. The son of a well-known Free Captain joined these daredevils, only to go missing during his first run. The space pirate captain is seeking a team of spacefarers to find his missing progeny.

Returning Threats: The Corpse Fleet remains a threat to the *Farrabarium*, as the renegade undead first attacked the vessel in search of an experimental upgraded *archon drive*^{SOM}. Though the *Farrabarium* operates with a standard Drift Engine, it does have hidden components that incorporate the Iomedean drive as a hidden backup. The Knights of Iomedae have yet to reclaim the vessel, fearing that doing so might tip-off the Corpse Fleet to the drive's presence. Should someone learn of the ship's hidden backup drive, it would be a race between two major factions to claim the *Farrabarium*.



QASK YMBLEM

GASKARI

Weydan's jewel and gateway to the Vast.

GASKARI

CG city

Gravity Normal

Atmosphere Normal

Day 36 hours; **Year** 228 days

Population 805,965 (53% vesk, 21% pahtra, 8% ijtikri, 6% human, 12% other)

Government council

Languages Common, Iji, Pahtra, Skittermander, Vesk

Qualities cultured, devout, eclectic

QUALITIES

Eclectic This settlement is home to a wide variety of people from many different cultures and backgrounds. It doesn't pressure newcomers to assimilate into any strong cultural norms.

ECONOMY

Exports art, exploration equipment, perfume, salts, seafood

Imports building materials, textiles

Maximum Item Level 12th

Specialty Item Level terrestrial vehicles (17th)

NPCS

Zewdenya (CG female vesk mystic), city council member and former head priest of Weydan

Luclo Ockson (CG male human envoy), priest of Cayden Cailean and proprietor of the Fortunate Sun

Ushteka (CN nonbinary pahtra soldier), adventurer and proprietor of Bright Wind Excursions

Gaskari was the first settlement on Gaskar III, founded by renunciants fleeing the militarism and authoritarian rule of the Veskarium. Though other settlements have been established in the centuries since, Gaskari is still home to the majority of the planet's population. Most of the city's current inhabitants descended from the colonists who founded the city. Immigration has increased in the last few decades, however, bringing an influx of people from the Veskarium, the Pact Worlds, and elsewhere in Near Space, including many exiles. The emergence of a Drift lane in the region, combined with Gaskar III's position as a convenient stopover point on the way to the Vast, has also made the city a popular home base for starship crew members.

Gaskari is run by a city council elected to staggered five-year terms with a strict two-term limit. Each councilor represents a district of the city, either in the dense city center or in the patchwork of neighborhoods surrounding it known as the Sprawl. Though the electorate of the city favor limited governmental presence in day-to-day life, the powerful storms that lash Gaskar III necessitate continuous infrastructure improvement and repair, and those employed in civic service are highly regarded. In addition, every citizen of voting age is expected to contribute to the prosperity of the city.

Founded by Weydanites, the church of the Endless Horizon is very much at the center of life in Gaskari. It's far from an official religion, however, and as immigration has increased, other faiths

have established growing footholds in the city. Gaskari embraces worshippers of deities that share Weydan's emphasis on personal liberty and equality, such as Hylax, Cayden Cailean, and even a sect of Besmarans seeking to return to traditional seafaring ways.

Gaskari's major industries largely center around travel and exploration. The city has a well-earned reputation as a waypoint for starships to pick up crew and supplies before journeying out into the Vast, as well as producing some of the finest adventuring and exploration gear, including highly regarded terrestrial vehicles. Fishing, salt harvesting, and other aquatic industries are also well represented, and Gaskari's art studios and galleries are well known throughout the region.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are noteworthy sites in Gaskari.

Bright Wind Excursions: Gaskari's position, surrounded by natural wonders, makes it an ideal starting point for excursions across Gaskar III. Similarly, the planet's proximity to a Drift lane makes it a frequent waypoint for many journeys into the Vast. This has created a strong market for supplies and equipment, as well as for knowledgeable guides to lead expeditions both on- and off-planet. Seasoned adventurer Ushteka pounced on this opportunity nearly a decade ago, opening Bright Wind Excursions out of a small warehouse in one of the oldest parts of Gaskari. There, they deal in exploration gear, maps, and supplies. They also operate a directory of reputable guides (for a cut of their fees, of course), though the most in-demand excursions are led by Ushteka herself across the wilds of Gaskar III. Fiercely protective of their industry, they've been known to hire muscle to dissuade charlatans from preying on their more gullible customers.

The Fortunate Sun: Gaskari's welcoming community draws many worshippers of Cayden Cailean. While the Accidental God's church doesn't have a formal hierarchy, the Fortunate Sun pub is undoubtedly the center of his worship in the city. Opened by Luclo Ockson shortly after his arrival, the Fortunate Sun (known locally as the Sun or the Lucky Star) also serves as a community center for residents of the Sprawl, particularly the neighborhood around the bar known as the Drunkard's Walk. In keeping with Cayden's teachings, Luclo never turns away a neighbor in need, providing direct aid if necessary but more often rallying community support for those who've fallen on hard times. Rumors persist that Luclo will occasionally stray outside the law to help the unfortunate, but no one has ever mentioned anything to the authorities. His fervent support of the neighborhood has engendered equally ardent loyalty.

Gaskar Yulalov Square: This elegant stone plaza lies near the center of town, just north of the temple of Weydan. Named for the prophet, activist, and martyr who inspired the original renunciants that founded the city, it's more commonly referred to as Martyr Square. The square is usually filled with vendors, buskers, and street artists and hosts a popular farmers' market once a week. A large fountain bearing a prominent statue of Gaskar Yulalov sits at the center of the square, and the municipal building that serves as library, hall of records, and city council

chamber stretches the whole eastern side. Across the square, the church of Weydan operates a sort of unofficial spacefarer's guild, where experienced deckhands and starry-eyed thrill seekers alike can find ships looking to take on crew for their next voyage.

The Mothership: The heart of Gaskari, both geographically and spiritually, this towering temple to Weydan originally served as the forward section of the *Gaskari*, the colony ship that brought the first settlers fleeing the Veskarium to Gaskar III. Easily the largest building in Gaskari, this imposing structure sits atop a small hill and is visible from anywhere in the city. Though it has no official name, locals affectionately call it the Mothership. It stays open around the clock, with clergy of Weydan offering welcome guidance to all who walk through their doors. Beyond spiritual succor, the temple provides temporary lodgings and meals to recent arrivals regardless of faith, and many a weary traveler has spent their first night in Gaskari enjoying the simple but comfortable accommodations offered by the church. Local legend holds that on clear nights, an observant traveler can catch a glimpse of a glowing figure standing atop the Mothership, staring out over the horizon. Many dismiss these visions as a trick of reflected starlight, but others claim it's a sign from Weydan himself and consider it to be good luck before a voyage.

Zonkajets: Many of Gaskar III's natural wonders are difficult to reach, spanning wide oceans, steep mountains, and storm-swept islands. This has created a strong market for terrestrial vehicles, and Gaskari manufacturers have a reputation for being among the best in Near Space. On the forefront of the market is Zonkajets, specializing in high-end aquatic and amphibious vehicles. Founded nearly 40 years ago, they have clients all across Near Space, including government and military contracts on several worlds. The company's founder, **Zonkavet** (N male vesk mechanic), has largely retired from running the company and spends most of his time in his private workshop, tinkering with custom and experimental vehicle designs. Despite his advanced years, he does most of the manufacturing of these prototypes himself, though he often hires outside crews to test them.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Gaskari's Weydanite roots and proximity to the natural wonders of Gaskar III make it the ideal launching point for adventures of exploration and discovery. Not all of the outcasts who make their way to this new frontier have managed to shake their dangerous pasts, however, and trouble could always arrive with the next ship.

Gaskar's Staircase: This towering series of rock formations jutting from the sea a few hours' journey north of Gaskari is a favorite destination of sightseers, rock climbers, and naturalists, and a substantial industry caters to those wishing to visit the landmark. Recently, however, dangerous wildlife in the area have become unusually aggressive, menacing any who dare venture too close. No one knows what's riling up these creatures, but whatever it is threatens to make the popular local landmark unapproachable.

Missing Art: Famous sculptor and former pahtra revolutionary **Luroli** (CG female pahtra vanguard) has been preparing for months to unveil her latest work, a statue of the legendary pahtra warrior-bard Riishoki, who led the early resistance against the Vesk invasion of the pahtra home world. The statue has disappeared days before the anticipated public debut, however. Some expect the thieves to demand a ransom, while others suspect that agents of the Veskarium are trying to tamp down anti-vesk sentiment as Gaskari becomes more influential throughout Near Space. Whatever the truth, the sculptor has offered a reward for the statue's return.

Smuggler's Run: Port authorities recently intercepted a shipment of weapons being smuggled in from the Pact Worlds. Combined with a recent spate of violent attacks in the Sprawl, the council worries that a more substantial conflict is brewing. Popular opinion blames the pirates known to be hiding in the nearby Iortin archipelago, though no evidence supports that rumor thus far.



LUCLO OCKSON

OVERVIEW

TRAVELING
THE GALAXY

PORTS

TRAVELER'S
TOOLBOX

INDEX

LOCUS-1

Station dedicated to scientific research, observation and cooperation

LOCUS-1

N space station

Gravity Normal (artificial)

Atmosphere Normal

Day 24 hours; **Year** 1 year

Population 2,720 (40% human, 10% shirren, 9% ysoki, 7% android, 7% lashunta, 5% halfling, 4% gnome, 2% kasatha, 16% other [including Azlanti expats])

Government council (Science Council)

Languages Azlanti, Common, Shirren

Qualities academic, technologically average

ECONOMY

Exports Locus crystals, scientific research

Imports food and supplies, refugees

Maximum Item Level 20th

Specialty Item Level Locus crystals (17th), Locus weapons (17th)

NPCS

Valun Glanjau (LG female kasatha), member of the Science Council

Atesskret (CG genderfluid android mystic), chief religious advisor

Danya Maggs (NG female half-elf technomancer), head of the local Starfinder Society lodge

Established as joint venture between the Starfinder Society, the Xenowardens, and the Haas Foundation, Locus-1 is an artificial research station orbiting the metastar Locus. In the decade since its creation, the station has grown from its simple fact-finding mission into a valuable trade station, owing not only to its unique trade in Locus crystals but also its strategic position near Azlanti space.

The metastar Locus is the focus of the station's research. It's a collection of energy that gives off light and sustains life as if it were a star. However, scans show that the energy at its center forms a shape resembling an hourglass, and it ejects not gas and plasma but unique magical energy. Recent research indicates that the energy is a collection of "soulstuff," a unique merging of quintessence and positive energy. However, the research also indicates that Locus is younger than the planets surrounding it, posing further questions about the formation of the system.

The most unique resource found in the system are Locus crystals. These crystals, formed on planets suffused with the metastar's energy, can be adapted into a number of useful tools. Locus comms enable ships to communicate instantaneously from any distance across the system, though as yet this property doesn't function outside the Locus system. More notably, Locus crystals can be attached to weaponry, enabling weapons to switch from damaging effects to healing capabilities with the flick of a switch. This new technology could soon bring increased attention to the small station—for good or ill.

Life on Locus-1 is largely egalitarian. Owing to the cooperative nature necessary to sustain life on the station, citizens are more

community-minded than most in the Pact Worlds. While some citizens, such as the decorated members of the Science Council, are wealthier than others, living quarters are nearly identical for everyone, and luxury goods are hard to come by. Nearly everyone engages with the research missions in some way, so there's little incentive to partake in criminal enterprises that would threaten the ongoing scientific work. Refugees from the Azlanti Star Empire (including androids, screedreeps and tromlins) make up a significant minority population on the station, and the Science Council works to ensure that exiles can find a home on the station or safe passage elsewhere. While the station does require regular supplies, its advanced hydroponic and recycling systems ensure that nothing goes to waste.

As the station has come into its own, it has also attracted the attention of those looking for easy prey. A band of pirates headed by **Sidakana** (NE female vesk pirate captain) regularly attacks ships traveling in or out of the system, but the real nuisance is the captain's regular, taunting broadcasts to the station. Desperate for defenses stronger than its volunteer civilian militia, the Science Council recently sent out a general request for assistance from any—especially those with well-equipped starships—who would take up arms in the station's defense.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Locus-1 is home to approximately 3,000 individuals, but the station boasts a diverse range of locations for travelers and locals alike to visit.

The Exchange

The Exchange is the main trading center in Locus-1. This area was named for its dual role as a center of commerce and the station's main source of air; the trees that line this area serve both to recycle air as well as provide a bit of nature in the otherwise artificial environment.

The Exchange Mall: This long walking corridor is at the center of the Exchange. The shops lining its walls range from local pop-ups to corporate branches. Weekly markets are held in the corridor, with locals and traveling merchants alike setting up stalls to sell their goods. Anchor shops include **Quali Comms**, a tech and magic shop run by **Quali Llorosal** (N female korasha lashunta technomancer), as well as **Macrotech Outlet**, a popular shop for technology and weapons owned by **Yasir Sade** (N male human mechanic). The two shops have remained open since the station's arrival and are fiercely competitive.

Locus-Locus: The local watering hole has been run by **Tonda** (CG host shirren barkeep) for three years. Open 24 hours, the bar is decorated in a gaudy fusion of Pact Worlds and Azlanti decor, with banners for Pact Worlds sports teams next to Azlanti military recruitment posters. The clientele is primarily station residents, though outsiders who impress Tonda may earn an invitation to a backroom card game.

Starfinder Lodge: Near the entrance to the Exchange sits the station's humble Starfinder Lodge, run by Danya Maggs (or her virtual likeness, when she's not available). The local lodge is often

used as a supply point for agents heading into Azlanti space or the Vast. Starfinders have access to affordable lodging and supplies, as well as a dining area and a place to relax and recover from their missions, if necessary. Danya can often be found in the lodge's small library, which she keeps meticulously organized and stocked with the latest reports from the Lorespire Complex.

The Locus System

In addition to the Locus metastar and Locus-1, seven other worlds make up the Locus system.

Tyru: The planet closest to the Locus is a giant, ice-covered world. Its proximity to the metastar's energy results in wild energy fluctuations, and magic behaves unpredictably within its thick atmosphere.

Yormata: Just beyond the orbit of Locus-1, this pristine jungle world has a diverse biosphere featuring aquatic and reptilian life. The Science Council has endeavored to preserve the world from outside interference despite its rich bounty of starmetals.

Grodrum: This cold desert world is made primarily of rocky plateaus and sandy expanses punctuated by crystalline growths. Its tectonic activity makes it unsuitable for life beyond native fungi and lichen.

Orguan: Called the "Blood Eye" for its deep red hue, the vibrations in this gas giant's atmosphere seem in sync with vibrations in the Locus metastar's energy. Rumor has it that in addition to the cloud rays in the outer layers of this planet, sinister creatures lie in its depths.

Strunun: A radioactive ice world, Strunun gives off a distinctive violet light in the night sky. On this planet, the barrier between the Material and Shadow Planes wears thin, resulting in a psychic resonance that pushes creatures towards chaos.

Asteroid Sphere: A gathering of millions of asteroids, planetoids, and other debris forms a shell around the Locus system. The first Drift beacons for the system were placed in this sphere, and wise travelers avoid the densest areas or risk attacks from the pirates rumored to live there.

Research Hub

At the center of the rings of the station is the Research Hub. As studying the Locus metastar is the station's primary objective, most of its residents work here. Much of the Research Hub is off-limits to visitors, but some of the areas below are open to the public.

Locus-1 Plaza: This large square hosts displays of the station's achievements and progress since its inception. The outdoor museum has several permanent holographic displays to educate visitors and residents on the makeup of the Locus system and the latest

discoveries made by the scientists on Locus-1. Some of the more recent installations include physical samples of the newly discovered Locus crystals.

Science Council Hall: This wood-paneled and carpeted hall is one of the most luxurious spaces the public can regularly access. The Science Council uses this space to conduct meetings and other official business; during open hearings, any residents or visitors are welcome to attend. The raised dais for the Science Council features a mural of Locus-1 created by a resident artist entirely from materials harvested from the worlds of the Locus system.

Tech Services: This is the station's official center for requisition and repair. Employees of the Science Council can purchase and request equipment here, as well as ask for customized items as needed. Private citizens are also welcome to use the services here, though they'll often pay more than at any of the private businesses in the Exchange.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

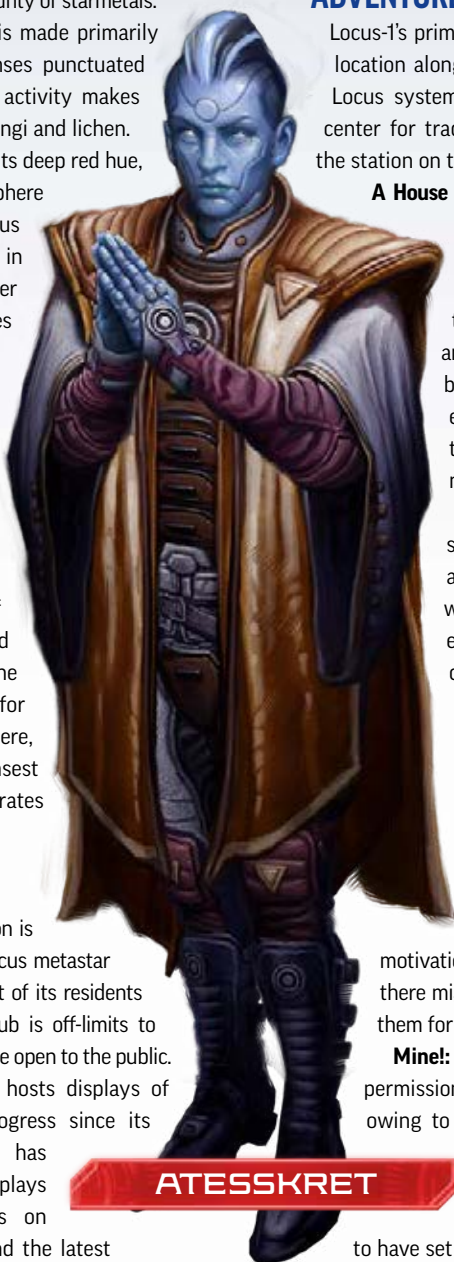
Locus-1's primary function is a research hub; however, its location along trade lanes and the unique nature of the Locus system has turned the station into a prominent center for trade. Travelers and merchants regularly visit the station on their way to and from Pact Worlds space.

A House Divided: The station experiences a constant trickle of refugee arrivals due to its proximity to Azlanti space. The empire has so far considered the station's refugee population to be too small to go after, though rumors of an eventual attack have divided the population between those who demand the Science Council expel the exiles and those who would defend the refugees—and their home—against the full might of the Aeon Throne.

Encroaching Shadows: Remote research stations and incoming traders are reporting attacks from mysterious shadowy creatures with the ability to bewilder those who encounter them. All signs point to the creatures originating from Strunun, where the thinning barrier to the Shadow Plane may have unleashed a terrifying new threat.

Liberation of Locus-1: Pirate attacks have plagued the station nearly since its inception. However, the Azlanti Star Empire has recently begun hunting pirate forces at the request of the Science Council. Many on the station mistrust the empire's motivations for defending the station and wonder if there might have been ulterior motives behind asking them for help in the first place.

Mine!: Corporations have regularly petitioned for permission to begin mining operations on Yormata, owing to its high concentration of rare starmetals. These petitions have always been denied to preserve the planet's natural beauty; recently, however, a corporation appears to have set up the beginnings of a survey camp.



ATESSKRET

MIDIOS

City atop a titanic, meandering ooze.

MIDIOS

N mobile city

Mass $\times 1\text{-}1/4$; **Gravity** variable from low to high, with localized storms ranging from zero-g to extreme gravity

Atmosphere Thick

Day 18 hours; **Year** 3/4 year

Population 30,000 (75% selamid (page 21), 5% kasatha, 4% dwarf, 3% copaxi^{AA4}, 13% other)

Government council

Languages Common, Selamidian

Qualities mobile, rapidly growing, technologically average

ECONOMY

Exports diamonds, heavy metals, jewelry

Imports starship parts, technological items

Maximum Item Level 11th

Specialty Item Level solarian weapon crystals (16th)

NPCS

Miskaressa (LN agender selamid technomancer), professor of geology at the University of Midios

Semarilkass (N agender selamid solarian), instructor at Gravitic Halls

Dokisleera (LG agender selamid), chief diplomat and primary contact for most new visitors to the planet

The planet Silselrik tantalizes geologists and astrophysicists with its elliptical orbit around a binary star, whose irregular gravity warps the planet's molten mantle, shifts heavy metals within its core, and buckles its crust. The phenomenon creates an ever-changing pattern of low and high gravity across the planet's surface, which sometimes combines with ambient magic to create powerful gravity storms that fluctuate between zero-g and crushingly high gravity in mere seconds. With the planet's surface unsuitable for construction, Silselrik's ooze residents have developed cities (called megadoplexes) atop half-mile-long oozes called megadolorids. The largest of these cities is Midios, named for the ooze that conveys it.

One of the recently created Drift lanes now passes near Silselrik, providing the once-isolated planet far greater visibility, galactic importance, and tourism, primarily among scientists and gem hunters. An orbiting space station serves as an orbital dock from which travelers can hire shuttles down to the Midios spaceport. Travelers aren't forbidden from landing on Midios directly, but few non-selamid pilots dare fly through the planet's erratic gravity to land on the softly undulating platforms. Because megadolorids feed on kinetic energy, starships taking off and landing atop the giant ooze seems to excite it. The massive ooze's bone-shaking purr is sometimes the first sound that greets a visitor.

Despite the recent influx of migrants and travelers, Midios maintains a selamid (page 21) majority that carefully balances hospitality with preserving selamid autonomy and dignity. Though the stream of scholars, merchants, and daredevils have

enriched Midios with their trade and knowledge, Silselrik's gravity also forms unique diamonds craved by major mining interests and pirates—often with little regard for selamids' sovereignty or safety. The Midios council and other megadoplex governments have thus far quashed the most egregious of these incursions, yet the threat remains.

The city's structures mostly follow two architectural forms. The first involves collapsible, resilient structures like pavilions, designed to be repaired and reassembled easily. The other consists of light-blue, gravity-resistant resin, harvested from native shrubs and spun into spiraling, multichambered edifices that resemble conch shells.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Midios boasts numerous attractions, including those created by visitors and those that predate their arrival.

Academy Midseeali: Beyond Silselrik, this eminent university's reputation revolves around its revolutionary studies of gravity and space-warping magic. However, the large campus serves a far greater purpose in general education. Because new selamids split with an incomplete set of their progenitor's skills and memories, the school provides a free-form educational environment that teaches everything from basic skills to advanced science, literary analysis, and magical traditions. Thanks to its Drift lane connection, Silselrik attracts a host of geologists, arcane scholars, and astrophysicists who have helped spur a surge in selamid scholarship. One drawback stems from selamids' curiosity and nonchalance about danger; students have begun to propose increasingly risky experiments in particle physics and starship design. Offworld scholars encourage restraint, yet some technology start-ups delight in these experiments, quietly funneling money to fuel "innovations" that often claim selamid lives.

Gravitic Halls: Midios boasts exemplary training grounds for solarians, attracting a steady stream of disciples from the nearby Drift lane. Despite solarians' typical balancing of their photon and graviton aspects, Silselrik hosts a community of graviton-exclusive disciples who practice in the planet's gravity storms. Considering these warriors to be heretics, an equal number of traditionalist solarians travel here simply to challenge the iconoclasts, each side hoping victory might prove their approach superior. Once a curiosity, these bouts have begun escalating in intensity and increasingly threatening buildings and bystanders.

Mines: Silselrik's dramatic gravity fuels the creation of diamonds and other gems. While these occasionally drop from the sky like precious hail, most lie deep underground alongside rare metals waiting for anyone bold enough to extract them. This wealth attracts numerous offworld mining interests, including AbadarCorp, though wise prospectors work closely with local guides and managers to mitigate gravitational damage to their expensive equipment. Curiously, several operations have begun hiring solarians to predict and deflect the planet's storms.

Path of Facets: Diamonds and other gems comprise Midios's main export, and selamids celebrate a centuries-old tradition

of gem cutting that highlights how the stone registers to vibration-based blindsight. Selamids enjoy jewelry, though it's often worn inside the body; in social interaction, a selamid presses jewelry partly through their membrane for display, much like an aristocrat might dramatically unfurl a folding fan. Distant markets crave visually extravagant jewels, so the sightless artisans often collaborate with dwarves to unlock each gem's potential for both senses. Each year, a host of new workshops and storefronts open along the winding street known as the Path of Facets, and rave reviews from Kalo-Mahoi ensure demand only grows.

SportsPlex: Extreme sports—with spectators often observing while perilously close to the action—captivate selamids. Some sports demand an amorphous body, like FearMaze (a competitive labyrinth race that involves squeezing through narrow openings) and Ossolo (wrestling that requires completely engulfing one's foe). Others facilitate humanoid participation, like shot put competitions where selamids traditionally absorb and then slingshot the ball from inside their body. All of these competitions take place in the SportsPlex, a narrow stadium whose events now reach a galactic audience.

Delighted by local gravity conditions, copaxi solarians from Tabrid Minor have flocked to Midios to play Parabolas, a once-lost sport that involves leaping between floating rods and maneuvering cubes that have constantly changing gravitational properties. Selamid athletes quickly adopted the game, and Silselrik is now the second planet in a swiftly expanding galactic Parabolas league.

Twinport: Midios supports the planet's only landing zones large and sufficiently shielded enough to handle anything beyond simple shuttles. Even so, few vessels other than selamid-operated shuttles risk the dangerous conditions in ferrying passengers and goods from the planet's artificial satellite to the surface. A pairling duo—Sikamissee and Sikamelkee—operate competing docks collectively known as Twinport. Rivals since the moment they split, the two squabbled over the spaceport their progenitor owned and played a game of chance to decide which of them owned it. Sikamelkee lost but built a similar facility nearby to siphon business. Travelers can often slash their docking fees dramatically just by playing the two selamids off each other.

Intent on controlling its local operations, AbadarCorp built a third dock, but selamids refuse to work there despite the generous wages. A few offworld pilots still attempt the harrowing ferry trip, but because the routes change as the ooze city migrates while gravity storms rip across the planet, the voyages have a lethal reputation. Some visitors might dock their ships here, but few risk an AbadarCorp ferry.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The rapidly expanding city of Midios is not without growing pains.

Insider Piracy: Countless villains have elected not to mine or trade for Silselrik's gems but instead rob nearby starships of their glittering cargo. The surge in piracy has created a demand for private security, and AbadarCorp has imported several squadrons

of armed interceptors. Even so, the pirate attacks continue to be remarkably successful, almost as if the criminals have well-connected informants embedded in Midios.

Stymied Settlers: A group of selamids and offworld migrants have teamed up to find an uninhabited megadolorid to create a unique settlement designed for a wide range of species. However, their expedition keeps encountering setbacks. These incidents began small: delays in equipment delivery, key personnel becoming sick, and the like. Yet, the issues escalated until half the team's vehicles were sabotaged in one fell swoop. Someone wants this endeavor to fail, but who?

Billion-Carat Bonanza: Two prodigious gravity storms collided recently, compressing local matter into a wall of solid diamond hundreds of feet long. Moving the wall defies all but the mightiest schemes. As the largest naturally formed diamond known to the galaxy, it swiftly drew miners, geologists, and more to ponder its possible uses before another storm destroys it. The most ambitious gambit involves a mysterious cult who plans to use the massive diamond as a spell component in a resurrection ritual. With so great a gem, such a ritual might revive even a deity.



SEMARILKASS

RAVEL STATION

Research station tapping novelty directly from the Maelstrom

RAVEL STATION

CN space station

Gravity Normal (artificial)

Atmosphere Normal

Day 24 hours; **Year** erratic

Population 48,000 (7% ganzi, 5% gnome, 4% skittermander, 3% human, 81% other)

Government magocracy

Languages Abyssal, Common, Protean

Qualities cultured, healing atmosphere, notorious, tourist trap

QUALITIES

Healing Atmosphere This settlement's atmosphere causes poisons, curses, and diseases to break down, helping the body heal. At the beginning of each day, creatures subject to an affliction receive a new saving throw against the affliction, with a circumstance bonus equal to the number of days spent on the settlement.

Tourist Trap This settlement is a major tourist attraction. During peak travel seasons, its population might be double or greater.

ECONOMY

Exports information, media, scientific and magical innovation

Imports building materials, food, water

Maximum Item Level 8th

Specialty Item Level magic items (14th)

NPCS

Vitga Wyrmtouched (CG nonbinary ganzi witchwarper), wizard-mayor

Seronia (CN male lashunta bureaucrat), acting mayor

Nishapeyo (CG female skittermander bureaucrat), owner of Where's Up Shipping and Travel

Zedriyl Eivren (CN female drow technomancer), Director of Research at Sigmetrics Laboratories

Ravel Station (often misinterpreted as Revel Station by eager tourists) is a space station and research outpost caught precariously in the orbit of LTH-3, a chaos singularity at the center of the Cordias nebula in the Vast. Originally created to study the effects of the singularity and its energies, Ravel Station grew into an unexpected success as a tourist destination thanks to its ready and unending access to novel and unpredictable happenings.

Much as a black hole causes time dilation, the chaos singularity erodes order in the surrounding area, and the station perpetually teeters on the edge of collapses both sociological and physical. Every part of Ravel Station is in a constant cycle of decay and repair. Food and other perishables must be imported weekly, as even the most stable goods expire if kept on the station too long, and any form of social order or organization takes more focus and energy to sustain than it would elsewhere in the galaxy. Toxins and bacteria break down faster in the Cordias nebula as well, however, giving the station's atmosphere

a slightly medicinal effect that degrades the potency of poisons and curses.

Most of the station's residents work in the research outposts investigating the chaos singularity or in Ravel's bustling tourism industry, capitalizing on the station's seemingly limitless reservoir of new ideas and inspiration. Ravel's resorts and conference halls are often booked by artists, writers, inventors, and researchers searching for a fresh perspective, though travel packages never schedule stays longer than four days, as prolonged proximity to LTH-3 inspires ever-increasing levels of erratic behavior and nonconformity.

The Maelstrom's influence begins harmlessly enough: streaks of whimsy and an intoxicating rush as inhibitions fade. However, it eventually lead to impulsive actions and reckless disregard for consequences, ultimately destroying all semblance of ordered thought and even shredding physical matter into primordial dust. To maintain the health of the station's residents, biweekly vacations are mandatory for everyone who lives and works on the station. When the cruise ships arrive to drop off Ravel's resort guests, they pick up station residents scheduled for a cruise through the stars, keeping the ships profitable while their guests are ashore and providing Ravel locals with a chance to recover, both physically and philosophically.

The station maintains an artificial day-night cycle, keeping to a standard 24-hour day, but the singularity pulls on the station with varying force, making the exact time required to complete a given revolution widely variable.

Vitga Wyrmtouched, Ravel's longstanding wizard-mayor and the only person exempt from mandatory vacation away from the station, maintains power primarily through claims that their magical capabilities are the only thing keeping the station safe from the chaos singularity's event horizon. Most daily tasks in service of managing the station are delegated to the acting mayor Seronia, allowing Vitga to focus on controlling the flow of causality and maintaining the station's orbit.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are a few locations of interest on Ravel Station.

Beep Boop Arcade: Beep Boop Arcade is a fluorescent neon gaming loft full of arcade machines and dancing holograms, though none of the games play quite the way they're meant to. LTH-3 has corrupted or changed all of Beep Boop's entertainment, and the games constantly mutate into new versions of themselves. Some of the arcade's regulars believe the game machines are haunted, while others insist the quirks in the games are cryptographic riddles, part of a secret, augmented reality game spanning the entirety of the arcade.

Department of Redundancies Bureau Waiting Lobbies: The Ravel Station Department of Redundancies Bureau Waiting Lobbies is a massive, mazelike compound of waiting rooms, corridors, and ticket dispensers, and it's essential to the continued operation of the station precisely because nothing beyond agonizing, pointless boredom is achieved within its walls. The Bureau exists to artificially infuse Ravel with a nexus

of senseless bureaucracy, grounding the station with a center of immutable, if infuriating, order. The lobbies are littered with loud clocks, incomplete forms, squeaky doors, and other minor annoyances, and there's a full shift changeover of the staff every 30 minutes, at precisely 15 and 45 minutes past the hour. Residents receive mandatory lobby shifts via a lottery system, and dodging the obligation is one of the station's most serious infractions. Yet even this institution shows worrisome corruption. Recently, those working the desks tell of story prompts spontaneously appearing in the margins of forms, clocks ticking out of sync, and other phenomena, suggesting someone needs to acquire an even stronger node of law to stabilize the space.

The Merry Maze: Constructed a decade ago by now-defunct Muddle Entertainment in the hopes of cashing in on the station's tourism boom, the abandoned Merry Maze is a hedge maze that became so suffused with chaos that now it can't be trimmed, shaped, or controlled. The maze changes of its own accord, sometimes guiding visitors through to the end but just as often trapping them within. As a safety measure, staff have blocked off the maze with fencing on all sides, yet it remains a frequent site for daredevil urban explorers to break into. Guests becoming lost within the maze is enough of a persistent problem that Where's Up Shipping and Travel regularly hires crews of maze crawlers to recover lost guests when their time on the station comes to an end.

Seven Speakers Resort and Spa: One of Ravel Station's three largest hotels, Seven Speakers Resort and Spa boasts every amenity a traveler could dream of. The hotel is a destination in of itself, with every aspect of its design and decor chosen for its whimsy and unconventional beauty. The lobby features seven statues of keketa proteans watching guests as they enter, and the expansive check-in counters are built into the twisted roots of an immense tree transplanted from the Maelstrom. The lower levels house restaurants, pools, spas, shopping destinations, and cathedrals dedicated to protean deities, whereas the middle floors provide larger spaces for conventions and other special events. Seven Speakers has a lucrative contract with Where's Up Shipping and Travel, which keeps the hotel perpetually booked with the travel agencies' cruise guests. Although designed to be 70 stories tall, the hotel's practical floor count vacillates between 60 and 80, with some sections seeming to disappear and other short-lived floors with unfamiliar amenities opening up for a few days before closing off forever—occasionally with hapless guests within.

Sigmatrics Laboratories HQ: Sigmatrics Laboratories is a research and development firm with a large stake in Ravel Station operations. Founded shortly after the discovery of the LTH-3 chaos singularity, Sigmatrics contributed generously toward the station's construction and holds a great deal of sway over its continued operations today, employing a third of the station's permanent residents. The laboratory's primary tower dominates Ravel's skyline, with ancillary towers housing the Sigmatrics dormitories, libraries, and a large staff cafeteria. The staff offers guided walking tours daily, not only enhancing the labs' prestige but also providing an additional source of repetition that stabilizes the campus.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Showered with novelty and degradation in equal measure, there's always something new to do on Ravel Station.

Black Brick Debut: In the city of Galisemni, a stable point in the Maelstrom, an onyx-black wall known as the Lethe Wall snakes its way through the city's streets. Though the wall has never been seen outside of Galisemni before, Ravel's residents claim its bricks have begun appearing on the space station. Some believe it's the Lethe Wall itself, bored with the Maelstrom and ready to explore the Material Plane. Others wonder if the wall split into two, or if a new wall is forming. Regardless of the cause, many are ready to blame their mysterious presence on the station's wizard-mayor Vitga, who is himself one of the Wyrmtouched: amnesiacs who gave their old lives over to the wall.

Emergency Tour: It's essential for the health and wellbeing of Ravel's researchers to regularly leave the station and get away from the chaos singularity's destructive influence. Sigmatrics Laboratories has a contract with Where's Up Shipping and Travel that guarantees Sigmatrics employees a seat on their regular galactic cruises, but this week the cruise liners haven't arrived. Now, to fulfill the Sigmatrics contract, Nishapeyo needs someone to take a group of 25 Sigmatrics researchers for a four-day vacation while simultaneously mounting a search and rescue for the missing space cruiser. The researchers have already spent two days longer on the station than scheduled, and it's starting to show.

The Unraveling: Though no one likes to advertise it, sometimes buildings on the station change of their own accord. Rooms are juggled between hotels, corridors appear and disappear, and doors vanish or change where they lead entirely. Rumors have always existed of a secret underground location where the station collects its lost rooms, but now laboratories full of researchers and important data are disappearing. The station desperately needs someone to get them back.



VITGA WYRMTouched

SKYDOCK

Thriving starport rooted in antiquity and humming with corporate intrigue.

SKYDOCK

N space station

Gravity Normal

Atmosphere Normal

Day 28 hours; **Year** 243 days

Population 786,000 (55% verthani, 15% shirren, 10% human, 5% kasatha, 5% ysoki, 1% ryphorian, 9% other)

Government council (coalition appointed by Grand Assembly)

Languages Common, Kasatha, Shirren, Triaxian, Ysoki

Qualities academic, financial center

ECONOMY

Exports augmentations (cybernetic and magitech), computers, entertainment media, starships

Imports food, fuel, metals, silicon

Maximum Item Level 16th

Specialty Item Level vehicle modifications (20th)

NPCS

Tevmin Arx (NG female verthani technomancer), Grand Assembly chief administrator in charge of the station

Joras Metkarin (LN male verthani mechanic), CEO of Ringworks Industries

Saskia VelleVyn (CG nonbinary verthani operative), unofficial leader of the Pilots' Collective

An ancient space platform founded before the Gap, Skydock and the space elevator zipping along its tether enabled early verthani dominance of space travel—something its residents are always quick to remind fellow Vercites. Although spaceflight's admirable efficiency has largely made the elevator obsolete, Skydock itself remains a hub for trade and starship manufacturing. The shipyards of Skydock never sleep, and neither do its entertainment districts, forming a cosmopolitan milieu of starship industry insiders, daring pilots, passing crews, and everyday workers.

Though Skydock is anchored to the Ring Nation of Obarshi, an independent council appointed by the Grand Assembly oversees its operations, led by a chief administrator who serves a 10-year term. Shrewd politician Tevmin Arx holds the role currently, balancing the station's many competing interests, most notably Obarshi's perennial attempts to claim ownership of the station and the Skydock inhabitants' growing demand for self-rule. Once civil, this discourse has devolved into shouting matches and even violence. Several terrorist plots to destroy Skydock's tether have been thwarted over the years. Although a group known as the Ring Saints claims responsibility, they haven't issued any demands, instead claiming they're acting for Verces's own good. This ambiguity allows each faction to accuse the other of supporting the Ring Saints' crimes.

Skydock's greatest power isn't its council, but its starship manufacturers, particularly the "Big Three" of Redshift Revolutions, Ringworks Industries, and Terminator. Fierce

competition has driven quasi-legal corporate skullduggery as each tries to surpass the others through breakneck development and corporate espionage. To counter these efforts, each company maintains private security forces, and some hire deniable assets to steal schematics, sabotage research, or even poach talent.

Skydock features heavily in starship and in-atmosphere racing, hosting several major entertainment companies that broadcast directly from the station. Many system-wide races, such as the famed Absalom Run, include Skydock as an iconic checkpoint, and the station hosts numerous smaller races of its own. For a daring pilot of sufficient talent, Skydock promises fame, fortune, and an adrenaline rush like no other, and its citizens vociferously cheer on their favorites. Racing is a dangerous game, though, and event promoters sometimes cut corners in safety standards for the sake of profit, an issue the newly founded Pilots' Collective is working to curtail. Causing some consternation among the broadcasting corporations, the union includes many of Skydock's prominent pilots, with the charismatic Saskia VelleVyn—known for their signature three-point backflip—as its spokesperson.

The Drift Crisis hit Skydock hard, with unpredictable travel reducing the market for starships, but the station has roared back strong thanks to several notable events. With several Drift lanes connecting to various Pact Worlds, supplementing Absalom Station's own special Drift properties, traffic through the area has never been stronger.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are a few locations of interest on Skydock.

Flyby Quarter: Skydock doesn't lack for entertainment. The district closest to the docking bays, colloquially referred to as the Flyby Quarter, hosts numerous hotels, restaurants, holo-theaters, casinos, music venues, and other diversions. The area's hubbub often causes tension with Skydock's permanent residents, who mostly view visiting ship crews as a nuisance, although the tourism industry appreciates their credits. A recent spate of murders targeting dealers at several of Skydock's prominent casinos hasn't helped matters; so far, the station's security forces have been unable to track down the culprit, though due to the timing of the deaths, they suspect it's a traveler who passes through regularly.

Skydock Hall: As headquarters for the station's council, Skydock Hall directs most of its civic and administrative activity. Here, residents can register for identification, apply for business licenses, and submit requests for governmental aid. Council meetings are open to the public when they're in session, and periodic tours wind through the halls for the benefit of schoolchildren and tourists. There are stories that the building is haunted by council members who died during the Gap, and several staffers have reported seeing strange silhouettes on patrol after business hours. Potential ghosts are the last thing on the minds of the council members, however, who have enough to handle managing the station's delicate political situation.

Steelwind Yards: Each of the Big Three starship manufacturers maintains its own shipyard, where workers operate under strict nondisclosure agreements and access is controlled by biometric security measures. Steelwind Yards, on the other hand, is a freewheeling site where anyone can stake out a spot for a nominal fee. Its proprietor, **Ozinda Velisai** (NG female verthani mechanic), founded Steelwind almost two decades ago as a building yard for small companies lacking the budget for their own docks. She now manages it with the aid of her wife, **Nialla** (N female human technomancer), and her husband, **Evir** (NG male verthani mechanic), and the trio occasionally loan credits to fledgling manufacturers whose work manages to catch their eye. They see their investments as important for the future of their family, though they also make sure to always take some form of sentimental object from the person they loan to as motivating collateral. Although Steelwind Yards doesn't provide workers, all starships built there are checked before hitting the market to ensure they meet the Velisais' rigorous safety standards. Recently, however, a starship model allegedly built at Steelwind experienced catastrophic hull failure, killing all on board. Though Ozinda claims that the ship wasn't one of theirs, the bad publicity has been unusually fierce, leading her to fear someone is trying to damage Steelwind's reputation and make a major play for the starship industry.

The Triangle: The local headquarters of Skydock's major starship manufacturers each occupy a corner of this immense, three-sided plaza. The venerable Ringworks Industries maintains a utilitarian facade but for the glass-domed office of CEO Joras Metkarin atop the main tower. Redshift Revolution's elegant offices hearken to the ancient aetherships of early vercite spaceflight, whereas Terminator's headquarters sport a more brutalist design. The plaza itself hosts small sports fields, walkways, benches, and food stalls that are readily cleared aside to host concerts and other major events. Despite its genteel appearance, the Triangle is the setting for a tangle of corporate intrigues, simmering rivalries, and backroom deals, and the companies' private security swiftly escort unauthorized visitors elsewhere on the station.

Voltaic Wing: Located beneath the final aerial checkpoint of Skydock's All-Nation Regatta, the Voltaic Wing is a lively bar and restaurant catering to racing pilots. After a race, fans often flock to its tables hoping for a glimpse (or an autograph) of their favorite daredevil. Founded 20 years ago by retired racer **Daeri Xann** (CG female human), the bar has become a regular meeting place for the Pilots' Collective. Though now well into her

80s, Daeri still holds court at the Wing's fireplace every week, telling stories of her racing days. Gossip among the pilots has it that Daeri is looking for a worthy successor to pass down her secret techniques, though if anyone has the temerity to ask, she answers with a chuckle and a tart, "If I am, you aren't it, kiddo."

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Skydock is a great starting location for adventures, whether the PCs are daring racers, intrepid explorers, or scoundrels looking for an exciting heist.

Arcane Experimentation: A reclusive technomancer believes that Skydock's space elevator was built using ancient arcane magic. They hire the PCs to explore the elevator, taking routine stops and going outside into the planet's atmosphere. On the outside of the elevator, the PCs must place arcane sigils along the outer hull to better analyze its construction. What they don't realize is that sigils react badly with the thinned planar boundaries here, and the PCs might have to contend with extraplanar creatures emerging from the Plane of Air.

Bad Sportsmanship: Verces's qualifying competitions for this year's prestigious Absalom Run have been fraught with sabotage. Mysterious accidents have even incapacitated two top racers. Whether the PCs are competitors or outside agents asked to investigate, they need to find the culprit before someone gets killed.

What they don't realize is that the culprit is actually a competitor who supposedly died in the previous Absalom Run and has returned with significant robotic augmentations, seeking to get revenge against those who conspired to kill them.

Cutting the Cord: The mysterious terrorist organization known as the Ring Saints has finally issued a demand: Skydock's complete independence and isolation from the rest of Verces. When the PCs are hired to investigate, they're contacted by an anonymous individual who claims to represent the real Ring Saints and tells them the group making the demand is fake. The PCs must discover the truth and locate those responsible—before all of Skydock goes up in flames.

Pirates of Skydock: **Kairel Wither** (NE male verthani), son of Terminator's CEO, contacts the PCs with a lucrative job: steal the schematics for Ringworks' new ultrafast transport from its server vault. Breaking into one of Skydock's most secure areas will require an elite team with solid skills. But when the heist goes wrong, and the PCs are locked down in the complex, they must figure out how to escape with the goods and decide whether a fellow thief caught in the building can be trusted as an ally. Their best option is a Ringworks vessel undergoing extensive repairs in the docks, but the ship has only just been cleared for a test flight.



SASKIA VELLEYN

TERNIA

Plane-phasing city run by an unlikely outsider alliance.

TERNIA

CN city

Gravity Normal

Atmosphere Normal

Day varies; **Year** 279 days (Material Plane only)

Population 471,091 (35% celestial, 35% fiend, 9% planar scion^{AA2}, 6% human, 15% other)

Government council

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common

Qualities academic, interplanar, military

QUALITIES

Military This settlement has a large military presence to either protect the citizens from outside threats or due to an aggressive leader.

ECONOMY

Exports armor, gemstones, weapons

Imports meat, metal, wood

Maximum Item Level 18th

NPCS

Azure (CN male claustral^{AA4} agathion solarian), tavern owner

Yomgez (CN male glabrezu vanguard), tavern owner

Ahrin Sgralwr (CE female schir), council leader

As the Gap ended, Terna's azata and demonic residents paused, awkwardly examining their surroundings and assessing nearby archenemies. Normally, these fiends and celestials would have turned this into a battleground already, yet each retained vague recollections that their cooperation here served some critical purpose. Confusion led to impassioned debate as they made sense of their predicament, neither side fully trusting the other. Yet before either group could attack or flee, the world beyond their walls shifted, depositing the city into an Abyssal jungle. Sensing prey, the jungle's inhabitants attacked. United by a common enemy, Terna's azatas and demons fought off the invaders for days before the city shifted again, this time to an idyllic corner of Elysium. The local celestials took offense to Terna's demons and attempted to destroy the city, whose inhabitants once again fought alongside each other out of self-preservation. At last, the city shifted back to where it had started: hovering above the turbulent seas of a small aquatic moon in the Vast, where 50-foot swells crash against the city's walls.

Terna periodically phases between these three locations: the aquatic moon (with 18-hour days), a massive jungle island encircled by the River Styx in the Abyss (with 37-hour days), and a sprawling gorge at the foot of seven waterfalls in Elysium (where day and night shift at the whim of a reigning empyreal lord). It rarely stays in any location longer than a week, and it rarely shifts after less than a day. Those outside the city see it disappear in an instant, whereas those inside witness the city outskirts become enveloped in mist that then fades to reveal their new location.

The celestials and fiends near Terna's extraplanar landing points remain on guard rather than launching constant

attacks, and the resident azatas and demons have settled into an indefinite peace to uncover their city's mysterious purpose. There's no shortage of hypotheses. Some believe the three locations are connected by some shared chaotic energy. Others posit that whatever the Gap did to erase the past left inconsistencies that the multiverse keeps trying to patch, and reality keeps juggling Terna to repair three of these related imperfections. A few even speculate that deities created Terna as a laboratory to test cooperation between enemies, or maybe that Terna seals away some cosmic threat that can't break free so long as azatas and demons collaborate to keep it imprisoned.

Whatever the case, Terna's inhabitants maintain military readiness to defend the city. A seven-member council oversees operations, with six seats elected by popular vote every six years and the seventh seat appointed for a 19-year term to serve as the council leader. Ahrin Sgralwr, a goat-like schir demon and strategic genius, played a pivotal role in Terna's early defense. Despite her infamous cruel streak, she now reserves her fury for anyone threatening her city. The council handles big-picture issues, and residents largely govern their personal affairs, policing each other as necessary when pranks or crimes spin too far out of control.

Thus, with its somewhat predictable planar transit, unique hybrid of crafting traditions, and repositories of planar lore, Terna has become a (mostly) safe hub for anyone traveling between the Material Plane, the Abyss, and Elysium.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Terna serves as an important planar hub, and many of its structures and locations are representative of the city's transient nature and unique population.

Calistrus: Terna has a bottomless appetite for planar lore, and its citizenry have spent centuries accumulating one of most eclectic collections of Outer Planes materials in existence, including books, recordings, zoological specimens, soil samples, and more. Research facilities surround the central library, a circular building with collections interspersed among reflecting pools, abundant greenery, and immense windows. Named for the aasimar who identified how to predict when Terna would shift planes, Calistrus supports planar research as well as labs for developing strange weapons and armor to defend Terna.

The Fountain District: The aptly named Angels and Demons Fountain, a gargantuan landmark with statues of angels and demons splashing playfully together, occupies a wide, shallow pool on the eastern perimeter of Terna. While the city is in Elysium, the fountain absorbs energy from the plane and slowly releases it into the water over time; while in the Abyss, gemstones inlaid in the fountain absorb and purify fiendish energy, expelling it over time as heat. The water here is pleasantly warm and has minor restorative properties. While no one is permitted to bathe directly in the pool, the fountain feeds multiple springs and shallow basins that can be reserved for use at no cost to residents, and for a small fee for visitors. Terna's port is located in this district, and all arrivals emerge out onto the plaza housing Angels and Demons Fountain as a message promoting cooperation and unity.

The Sands: On a large platform in the middle of Ternia, three 350-foot-tall hourglasses, each embellished with designs originating from the Abyss, Elysium, or the Material Plane, stand over the city like sentries. While the phasing of Ternia is sporadic, resident scholars have discovered that sediment within the planar boundary of Ternia accumulates energy from whatever plane it's currently on. When contained within a vacuum, this sediment maintains the energy from the plane it was collected from, and as the city approaches a plane shift, the sediment associated with the destination plane becomes agitated. This reaction can be used to predict a shift with relative accuracy; 2 hours before the city shifts planes, the sediment in the hourglass from the destination plane will slowly flow upwards as it accumulates energy, and the sediment in the hourglass associated with the plane Ternia is on will slowly flow downwards as it loses energy.

The Spire of Starlight: Rising up from Ternia's northern border like a rocky finger pointing towards the sky, the Spire of Starlight is a natural peak that appears to have been cleaved from some terrestrial mountain range, although no such locale exist in any of Ternia's three home ports. The peak of the spire holds a broad, flat garden magically protected from the elements and accessible only to the seven members of Ternia's high council for their meetings. The Tower of Starlight plays host to a maze of hallways, guestrooms, and suites in which council members and their families reside, and the interior layout is designed to provide multiple escape routes for occupants in case of an incursion. Public museums, gardens, plazas, and verandas constructed in various celestial and fiendish styles occupy the lower floors, and deep underground, ancient crypts seal away deadly and terrifying evils.

World's Edge: World's Edge, a tavern and outfitter that lies just outside Ternia's city limits (but still within its planar perimeter), adjusts its operations depending on whether the city is currently located on the Material Plane, Elysium, or the Abyss. The celestial and demon duo who run World's Edge, Azure and Yomgez, both emerged as generals of Ternia's united military forces in the early days of the Chaos War and retired a decade ago to marry and wind down after centuries of service to the city. The tavern serves both resident and nonresident clientele from all the city's planes and outfits visitors for travel within each. While considered a part of Ternia, World's Edge maintains neutrality in all conflicts and has served as a meeting point for opposing forces during negotiations.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Adventures in Ternia may be time-sensitive, requiring parties to investigate and solve a problem before a plane shift, or they may span weeks and months as different clues and issues are discovered across planes. Regardless, adventures should make use of the ephemeral nature of Ternia's cityscape.

Deadly Treks: Several merchants and groups of adventurers who have departed from Ternia for cities based in either

Elysium or the Abyss have turned up dead over the course of three of the city's full phasing cycles. As far as anyone knows, the only connection between the deceased is that they were all outfitted for travel at World's Edge before departure.

High Tensions: Attacks on one group of Ternia's residents have been steadily increasing, and everyone else is caught up in the rising tension. While different factions have accused each other of instigating the attacks, the council believes an outside force is intentionally instigating conflict to cause an all-out civil war. With growing mistrust, the city's defenses could be at risk; only a third party can be trusted to investigate the source of these attacks.

Ready to Blow: Elevated hydrothermal activity has been detected at all three of Ternia's home ports. The anomalous measurements coincide with the arrival of a controversial researcher newly appointed to lead a branch of the city's planar research lab.



YOMGEZ

VAULT OF VORLATH

Desert moon housing an elite mercenary company.

VAULT OF VORLATH

N military base

Gravity Low

Atmosphere Normal

Day 12 hours; **Year** 25 years

Population 20,000 (17% worlanisi, 83% other humanoid species)

Government military

Languages Common, Worlanisi

Qualities insular, technologically advanced

ECONOMY

Exports military expertise

Imports food, water

Maximum Item Level 12th

Specialty Item Level armor (16th), weapons (15th)

NPCS

Apalela (N female worlanisi vanguard), general and commander of the Vorlath Mercenaries

Keryn Delos (N nonbinary human operative), spymaster and Prelurian political advisor

Orbiting Preluria as one of its major moons, the Vault of Vorlath is a desert moon that has housed the elite Vorlath Mercenaries for over 30 years. Visitors to the moon now rave over the beauties of its multicolored deserts, cliffs, and temperate savannas, but the moon's history is steeped in misery. In its earliest days, the moon was an experimental facility housing thousands of unwilling subjects from the unscrupulous Reivolus Institute. The Vorlath Mercenaries came into being when a group of those test subjects revolted against the corporation, leaving the smoking ruins of the facility behind them.

This group of emotionally scarred worlanisi freed the other test subjects, secured the moon, and set themselves up as a mercenary outfit. The new mercenary unit faced several early struggles; the first was securing reliable sources of water, and the second was integrating the other escaped test subjects, a battered and diverse group of survivors whose emotional scars ran even deeper than their physical ones. At first, there was little trust between the worlanisi and the other experiment subjects, but a return attack by their joint nemesis, Reivolus, merged the groups into one community. Those who didn't fight provided logistical support for those who did. With water scarce, the moon's residents realized that to survive, they would have to export their one useful commodity—themselves—to survive. They named their new home the Vault of Vorlath after a word in the worlanisi language that means “the defiant.”

Word of their victory spread quickly, and the newly formed Vorlath Mercenaries found themselves in constant demand. From the beginning, they maintained a strict neutrality policy. The various factions in Preluria constantly shift alliances, ending one war to casually start another. To avoid political entanglements, the company avoided long-term contracts and developed the hard-nosed catchphrase, “Pay up or get out!”

They pulled off spectacular raids, rescue missions, and small-scale wars, and were so outrageously successful that job offers began to pour in from outside the Prelurian system. As demand rose, they began recruiting non-worlanisi into the mercenary company. The first recruits were from the descendants of their fellow test subjects who had grown up with the company and were proud to finally have a chance to serve. The company soon discovered that diverse teams brought diverse talents to the table, and each unit now builds their tactics around the strengths of its members. Known for innovative and flexible maneuvers, the Vorlath Mercenaries adapt readily to surprises and complications in the field.

Whether worlanisi or not, the residents form a tight-knit and somewhat insular community. About 10 percent of the moon's population actively serve as military personnel, while the rest help keep the mercenary company running. At any given time, about a third of the active-duty personnel reside on the base. Some convalesce in the top-notch medical facilities, while others rest and retrain in preparation for the next mission. Most residents are either veterans, active service members and their families, or the descendants of those who were on the moon when it was freed. The few new hires who don't come in through the military often find that it takes several years before they're accepted as full members of the community.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The Vault of Vorlath has farms, an extensive water reclamation plant and irrigation system, and a terraforming unit, along with a large town built around the military base.

Danger Central: The Vorlath Mercenaries run war exercises in the desert, on the savanna, on spaceships, and throughout a cliff-based cave system within their moon—but the company needs to fight in all sorts of climates, terrains, and locales. Danger Central is the nickname of a battle complex where teams can have the simulated experience of fighting in far-off locales. Sometimes they reenact conditions from historical battles; other times the missions might involve an urban environment, an automated factory, or a high-gravity arctic world. Of late, the missions have become more devious and convoluted, and troops are uncertain if this is just the result of a bored tech crew or a preview of the kind of missions the Vorlath Mercenaries' high command plan to pursue next.

Guesthouse: Guesthouse started as a small, guarded bunker where potential clients were allowed to stay while they negotiated deals with the mercenary company. It has since grown into a similarly guarded but much more luxurious complex that houses future clients, arms dealers, reporters, and potential new recruits. Although several Prelurian factions maintain consulates in Guesthouse, the Vault of Vorlath refuses to recognize official diplomatic credentials. Because several Prelurian factions are at war with each other at any given time, assassination attempts between guests is a common problem.

In addition to residences and the recruiting office, Guesthouse contains an exercise park, equipment testing facilities, and an

entrance to Suckers, which is considered a neutral meeting place where people in Guesthouse can mingle with residents of the Vault of Vorlath.

Memories of Water: Worlan, the original worlanisi home world, has extensive oceans, lovely beaches, and a culture of trust and abundance. Although the Vault of Vorlath has extensive irrigation, terraforming, and desert agriculture projects, water is a precious commodity and extensively rationed. Still, one part of the water reclamation plant is a domed conservatory filled with tropical plants, waterfalls, tiny creeks, and fountains. Vorlath school children are taken here on field trips as a promise toward the future that the community hopes to build on this desert world.

Protocol Hall: Kerin Delos survived a Reivolus experiment that enhanced their analytical skills at the expense of an almost paralyzing paranoia. After being rescued, Kerin retreated to a small but fortified bunker that they rarely leave, spending nearly all their time sifting through data on the precarious politics of the different factions within the Prelurian system. Their analyses helps the Vorlath Mercenaries choose clients, prepare for missions, and build Protocol Hall, the Vorlath Mercenaries' intelligence and security agency.

Kerin is aging but still sharp, maintaining a network of informants, providing crucial logistical support to the Vorlath Mercenaries command structure, and running extensive background checks on all new hires.

Suckers: When **Squeaktail** (N male ysoki) proposed a tattoo parlor, pub, and gambling hall for the base, the Vorlath Mercenaries high command told him in no uncertain terms that "luck is for suckers." Although worlanisi are renowned through the galaxy for their good fortune, their history as involuntary experimental subjects has caused most members of the company to view luck as something to be used but never trusted. Still, they let Squeaktail build his entertainment complex, with the provision that the gambling portion of the establishment would close on payday weekend each month to prevent troops from squandering their funds. Squeaktail embraced both the restriction and the name, turning Suckers into one of the most popular gathering spots for troops and visitors alike. All the best gossip can be found here, and some of the Vorlath Mercenaries' most lucrative assignments have been arranged over drinks at the bar. Even those who don't drink or gamble come for the tattoos. Every unit of the company has their own tattoo, and it has become traditional to commemorate successful missions with new ink. With guarded entrances from both Guesthouse and the rest of the military base, Suckers links the Vorlath Mercenaries to the wider world.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

New recruits within the company might be sent on all kinds of missions, including escort duty, rescue ops, and raids. But sometimes this insular community seeks outside help.

Freedom Week: Freedom Week celebrates the anniversary of the Vorlath Mercenaries ousting the Reivolus Institute from one of its own moons, and the festival is one of the few occasions that the military base is opened to outsiders. As part of these festivities, the Vorlath Mercenaries host

competitions that pit outsiders against their own troops in war games, danger-ridden obstacle courses, and contests of wit and strategy. Those who place well in the competitions get fame, prize money, and a chance to apply to the mercenary unit. It's also a prime opportunity for Prelurian factions to gather intelligence, recruit moles, and place their own people within the organization.

Major Blow Up: Recently, a bomb at Guesthouse not only killed a drow arms dealer but also ignited the explosives she planned to sell to the Vorlath Mercenaries, causing the deaths of three other high-profile guests from several different Prelurian political factions. To stave off a political crisis and save face, Protocol Hall plans to hire an group of outside investigators—preferably not from Preluria—to find those responsible for the attack on Vorlath sovereignty.

Water Everywhere: During a particularly busy month of mercenary work when many of the units are away from the base, engineers working on one of the irrigation projects discover a string of sabotage attempts on the farms and water reclamation plant that supports the community. These malicious attempts put the entire Vorlath community at risk; fearing an inside job, the mercenary unit seeks outside help to find the perpetrators.



SQUEAKTAIL

OVERVIEW

TRAVELING
THE GALAXY

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TOOLBOX

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ACCORD PORTS

Starports tend to attract a wide array of personalities and cultures, often blending permanent residents with visitors to form dynamic communities. The ports in this section are those focused on helping their people exist in harmony—or at least give the impression of doing so.

YAJULH

NE tropical resort for the living and undead

After the Silent War, Eox's leaders decided to reinforce their planet's image of being a cooperative and friendly member of the Absalom Pact. Several billion credits' worth of investment went into the clean-up and reforestation of the island of Yajulh, an atoll in the center of the Deminas Basin. With a recreated "sea" (technically a massive saltwater lake) and numerous luxury resorts with their own spas, casinos, shopping malls, and more, the island accepts tourists from all over the Pact system, even occasionally hosting bone sage conferences and getaways.

Yajulh features other well-known, infamous attractions. The Undead Safari, stocked full of mindless zombies and beasts, caters to those who want to experience the thrill of slaying undead without risking their lives. Many with disposable wealth often pay extra to seek more dangerous trophies.

BIRIN-KRASH

CN recuperative retreat

Despite some objections, Vesk-3's high despot permitted the church of Sarenrae to convert the abandoned industrial town of Birin-Krash into a long-term medical care community. Though against Veskarium sensibilities, even the priests of Damoritosh saw the utility of their efforts and believed that warriors who had served their time should be honored, even if Damoritosh could not be the one to do it directly. Those with psychological afflictions benefit from the tranquilizing neurochemicals secreted by local flora, and those with physical ailments see improvement from the healing properties of the Dapple Hot Springs. Many chronically ill patients who'd previously been unable to make progress with their recovery manage to find some semblance of peace in Birin-Krash, living there as artisans, craftspeople, shopkeepers, or even innkeepers.

A lot more work goes into maintaining the calm of Birin-Krash than meets the eye. Many of the native fruits in the wilderness surrounding Birin-Krash, if left to rot, release chemicals that elicit rage, fear, or confusion when inhaled. Since skittermanders are largely immune to these effects, the local skittermanders often take it upon themselves to collect and dispose of any fallen fruit they find near the port. However, the one plant species that escapes this periodic cleanup is the Pillar of Ujeev, as this 600-foot tall, 20-foot diameter tree is rooted in boiling hot springs. Local skittermander legends state that the Pillar of Ujeev is highly resistant to heat with its oily and metallic bark. The tree has

also been known to yield an explosion of fruit just ahead of major earthquakes.

DEMO-6

LN experiment in auto-democracy

Orbiting between Verces and the Diaspora, Demo-6 began as an AI research space station that became an ambitious experiment on data science, consensus building, and democratic voting. Today, most of the station is run automatically by an artificial intelligence with the same name as the station, while its residents live a peaceful, if somewhat static, life. Recently, however, data analysts are encountering a problem where votes no longer seem to accurately influence which orders and policies should be instituted or adjusted. And while Demo-5, an android sharing consciousness with the station's previous iteration of artificial intelligence, insists Demo-6 is functioning as intended, the codekeepers have their doubts.

Taking inspiration from both Absalom Station and the *Idari*, Demo-6's structures are relatively new. The Forum Digitale, where debates take place daily, is an amphitheater located in the heart of Demo-6's commercial area. Some debates are open to any participants, while others are by invitation only, though the public can always view the proceedings. Demo-6 analyzes the debates for keywords to determine what major opinions exist in the population and determine where there is consensus.

THE CLUMP

CN ad hoc community of starships

Originally a group of eclipse enthusiasts, the Clump came about from rafts of starships interlinking their airlocks so crews could freely travel between ships. After the eventual addition of long-term, self-sustaining life-support systems, the need to land on planets vanished. Today, the free-floating community disassembles on a whim before regrouping in the orbit of a new planet. The formation revolves heavily around three specific starships, all of which serve as a central hub for resources and community gatherings. Inspired by the Clump's origins, the ships are called the Solar Beacon, the Lunar Beacon, and the Planetary Beacon.

Ever present with the Beacons is the Bubble, an ovoid structure the size of a small space station. It houses the majority of the Clump's permaculture farms along with an artificial ecosystem complete with wildlife. The ceiling projects a blue sky during designated day hours and turns transparent at night for star viewing.

Most trading takes place at the Flux Market, a traveling collection of traders who moves from ship to ship. Most residents of the Clump barter or trade favors rather than use credits, making it relatively easy to spot visitors to the community.

ICE EDGE

CG extraplanar frozen melting pot

Crafted by the mind of some long-dead spellcaster, the settlement of Ice Edge is a combination of twin portals to the Plane of Air and the Plane of Water, placed close to one another at the edge of a solar system in the Vast. Along with several magical buoys that create temporary pockets of breathable atmosphere, the entire settlement resembles two vast circular portals spewing out air and water from their respective ends, coming together in a central mass of ice at its center. Though the experiment that spawned it is forgotten, the effects have led to a settlement that endures to this day.

Elementals from both planes comprise the majority of Ice Edge's community, though since the Gap, more and more outsiders from Near Space and the Pact Worlds have come to trade with the stable extraplanar port. Both djinn and marid genies have numerous stalls in the central icy mass, where they engage in jovial rivalries with one another. Those seeking to access the Plane of Air or the Plane of Water can pay tolls to enter the planes through the portals at the settlement's edge, though such arrangements have high costs and can only accommodate starships of Large or smaller sizes.

WHAT COULD BE

N test union of species

Situated within a vast series of interconnected metal structures within the debris ring of an unnamed world in Near Space, What Could Be is the project of several divergent anacites from Aballon. These robotic explorers have created several cloned reproductions of species from across the galaxy in facilities far distant from their experiment. These clones have been grown to see the theoretical interactions of different species within a controlled environment. Belonging to a branch of Those Who Become, these anacite creators seek to better understand the many species of the galaxy by creating a space of enforced peace where they can gauge interactions and use them in creating new forms of anacite robots dedicated to diplomacy.

Following the initial creation of What Could Be, the anacites have reached out to interested parties who wish to participate in the ongoing experiment, as they believe that phase 2 involves the use of non-cloned creatures. This phase of their operation has also begun the induction of several different religions into the ecosystem.

What Could Be is a settlement of only a couple hundred, but it's one where a visitor could just as easily encounter a jinsul having a jovial conversation with an izalguun as they could witness an elf and a drow debating the tactics of lashuntas and formians.

THE SECOND CITY

NG second home for outsiders

Located in the broken region of the Vast known as Kazmurg's Absurdity, the Second City is home to many Pact Worlds species and other outsiders. Existing under the shadow of the mountaintop city of High Ealiat, the Second City started out as a slum catering to foreign visitors. Since that time, the smaller settlement has expanded into a city of tens of thousands, spreading all around the sides of the great mountain that High Ealiat sits atop. The resident invemian people maintain a strong connection to the Positive Energy Plane, and in the past decade they've used the opening of their ports and the creation of the Second City as a means of keeping other aggressive powers in the Absurdity away from their world. Only three years ago, **Venture-Captain Hadai** (LN male ryhphorian^{AA} mechanic) opened the first Starfinder lodge within Kazmurg's Absurdity in the Second City.



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MAGIC PORTS

Magic is an integral part of the Starfinder setting, but especially so in these ports, where its presence (or in one case, notable lack) has fundamental effects on both residents and visitors.

AZREFEN-ZHAR-NENTO

LN city of portals

In the Near Space system of Helfen-Thel spins Helfen, home world of the stony-skinned humanoids called maggedli (*Starfinder Near Space* 84). Maggedli civilization has advanced through magic rather than technology, and Helfen's capital, Azrefen-Zhar-Nento, sits at the center of numerous teleportation-enhancing ley lines. Since antiquity, the maggedli have used these to power magical portals called *far-step arches*, enabling them to spread across the system without space travel. With a *far-step arch*, travel to another planet is as easy as crossing a threshold.

A bustling trade metropolis, Azrefen-Zhar-Nento has districts within the planet's four continents and even on Helfen's neighboring world, Habbaba, all linked by *far-step arches*. Although Azrefen-Zhar-Nento has a small spaceport for the benefit of foreign visitors, most maggedli view conventional space travel with bemusement. The city takes full advantage of its neighborhoods' range of climates and architecture, and no two destinations are quite the same, from ice-carved mansions perched atop mountains to its sunny Beachside district.

Scholars have been studying the possibility of building *far-step arches* to other systems. These projects are still in the early stages, hindered by concerning reports of recent portal malfunctions, with travelers emerging aged by several months, dead from blood loss, or never emerging at all.

Many teleportation specialists travel to Azrefen-Zhar-Nento to study at the Opengate Academy in the polar Bvai Mountains district. Amidst the wares peddled in its Floating Market are teleportation artifacts far beyond the Pact Worlds' capabilities. Otherwise, the city's primary tourist draw is its annual Scatterhop Race, a relay footrace weaving through the city's many neighborhoods, with a twist: the participants don't know the route beforehand and must deduce the next checkpoint by clues left at each portal along their way. The first-place prize changes every year, and past prizes have included a custom-built mech, a *wish scroll*, and permanently free tuition at Opengate Academy, though current race manager **Kalin** (LN female maggedli) hasn't yet announced this year's award.

KHEJORA

CG capital of pahtra magic

The capital of the pahtra nation-state of Rafemii on the planet of Pulonis (called Vesk-6 by its conquerors), Khejora is a center of mystical learning. Rafemii was founded by a collective of pahtras who forswore technology, viewing it as impure due to its association with the vesk. To maintain their influence in the face of the Veskarium, they recruited powerful mystics from all over the planet to serve as councilors, teachers, and sages. Khejora was fortunate to escape most of the warfare that reduced other

cities to rubble during the conquest and retains much of its precolonial architecture, its domed structures standing in stark contrast to the Veskarium's angular buildings. The city serves as the seat of Rafemii's council and several institutions of magical and metaphysical learning are headquartered there, including the Center for Astrophysical Duelists, a solarian training school.

Khejora uses magic as substitute for technology, from enchanted pots and pans serving as culinary synthesizers to specially designed experimental starships using short-range teleportation sequences through the Astral Plane rather than the Drift. Visitors are permitted to keep their personal effects but are warned that distributing such items to Khejoran citizens will result in a polite but swift removal. Most who visit Khejora are spellcasters come to study pahtra magic, though the city is also a thriving hub of philosophy.

Thus far, Rafemii has avoided High Despot Kavadroz's direct notice, and Khejora's residents generally go about their lives without feeling the effects of occupation too heavily. Rebel sentiment has been on the rise lately, though, due to a young diviner named **Kilesh** (CG male pahtra mystic), who claims he's been sent prophetic dreams about taking back the pahtra homeland.

NERUNDEL

CN pathway to the First World

The majority-gnome city of Nerundel is nestled in the mountains of Sovyrian on Castrovel. While a constant influx of students cycles through its university, Nerundel Halls, most outsiders visit for the Greengate, a permanent portal to the First World located at the heart of the city. The rugged mountains are lush and verdant for several miles around the city due to the portal's primal energy. Visitors come to admire the scenery, harness the Greengate's power, or meet the omnipresent fey who study at the university or have set up shop in the markets.

Besides the landscape, a visitor's first impression of Nerundel is typically the buildings of Nerundel Halls, stacked long the mountain cliffs and teetering over the ground below. The university is known for its eclectic fields of study. Specialists in subjects from mindscape artistry to ancient ryphorian bone divination train students there, though with no formal course enrollments or organized classes, it's up to an aspiring student to track down their intended teachers and make arrangements.

Nerundel's gnome and fey populace lends it a chaotic atmosphere, and the city operates by its own strange rules. The Everlight Markets, named for the constant twilight within their boundaries, sprawl from either side of the portal, half in the Material Plane and half in the First World. The market's merchants, fey and mortal alike, accept no credits for their wares, instead demanding non-monetary compensation such as the color of one's

hair or the last ember of a dead star. All purchases are stored in the market's Museum of Bygone Deals for one year, and during this time, they can be resold to a buyer offering the new listed price—whether they were the original owner or not, leading to no shortage of intrigue. Recently, a gang of memory-altering thieves has been stealing items from Everlight by making merchants believe their debts are already paid, causing consternation for Market Lord **Hysshani** (N genderfluid limina).

NULL

N magic-free zone

In most places throughout the galaxy, magic is part of life. Even those without spellcasting capabilities often rely on magical items, spell gems, and magitech hybrids. The residents of the Aballonian megaplex of Null, however, have adapted to a life entirely absent of magic, for no magic has functioned within the city's borders since at some point during the Gap. This "dead zone" prevents spells from being cast and magic items from functioning. Additionally, no magical effects targeting anyone in the city work either, such as divinations, nor can one teleport into Null. Sometimes those on the run from the law seek Null to avoid detection, though if such miscreants cause any trouble, the city's security forces are quick to root them out.

Located in the rocky wastes north of Eternity, Null has a primarily anacite and android population, most of whom belong to the faction of Those Who Become. Some Nullites believe that magic is a relic of the past and destined to slowly fade throughout the universe, with Null being one of the early epicenters of this shift. Others believe some disaster during the Gap caused the dead zone. Those who've investigated the phenomenon have yet to discover its origin. Regardless of the cause, without magic to rely on, Null has become a hub of technological development, its pace of innovations matched in few other places. Its engineers and factories produce cybernetics, starships, and computer technology that often obviates the need for magic entirely.

Unprepared visitors often find the lack of magic in Null jarring. The city has found it necessary to send out regular travel advisories about its nature, as magically augmented starships have had key systems fail when flying into or over the city, leading to several crash landings.

SIKARRAI

LN magic-granting wonderland

The planet of Jiyara is a desert world in the Vast, first settled by kasathas. As the planet had no native sapient life, kasatha explorers hoped it could be a new home world. Although Jiyara's remoteness rendered these plans infeasible, its first settlers expected the valuable minerals in the desert's sands would at least ensure its stability as a mining outpost.

Jiyara's most notable feature, however, is its planetary capital, Sikarrai. Early immigrants to the planet found a peculiar glowing stone pillar near one of the planet's few rivers. A town soon rose around it, after analysis indicated that while the pillar's properties were unknown, it didn't appear harmful. Sikarrai's new residents were in for a surprise, though. Shortly after moving there, its inhabitants began developing magical powers, though the nature of this magic varied. Those with

pre-existing spellcasting capabilities found their powers enhanced. Nor was the effect limited to permanent residents: as the city grew and travel increased, it became clear that some who spend more than three days and nights in Sikarrai have a chance to gain magical abilities. Now a curiosity among magical scholars all over the galaxy, Sikarrai boasts two universities of magic in addition to numerous mineral extraction businesses, cementing its status as Jiyara's primary trade port. Its thriving nightlife venues offer magically augmented shows of all sorts, from acrobatic concerts to illusionary plays.

Though visitors usually view their newfound magic as a novelty, it's the backbone of life in Sikarrai. Magical training starts early out of necessity, and most aspects of Sikarran society require magic to function, from household conveniences to children's toys. The magic a visitor develops isn't permanent, fading several days after they leave, while Sikarrans who travel elsewhere retain their powers, leading to speculation that the pillar has some way of distinguishing between residents and visitors. Study of the pillar is ongoing, but so far, the source of its power and its exact properties remain a mystery.



HYSSHANI

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RELIGION PORTS

Though countless faiths travel the Drift to stay in contact with each other, several deities actively encourage and oversee these journeys: Weydan and Desna delight in voyages of all kinds, Triune revels in the Drift's prominence, and Besmara joins interstellar raiders in celebrating their spoils. These divinities and more shape many of the galaxy's space ports, with strange faiths [or a rejection of deific faith altogether] playing a central role.

LAST CALL

LN funerary ship and trading hub

Space is a minefield of fatal disasters, and the undead can arise from those who die gruesomely or without last rites. Knowing this, a Pharasmin sect called the Cemeterians repurposed a colony ship as their flying temple and set out to provide funerary services across the galaxy. Having now operated for over 50 years, the starship is known as *Last Call* and is easily recognized by its sign reading "Let the End be an Ending" painted above its docking bay. The ship periodically jumps across the galaxy, serving as a trading post, morgue, and neutral ground for all but the unrepentant undead. In addition to various shops run by secular merchants on the upper decks, the Cemeterians offer an array of spells and tools designed to bless bodies, repel evil, and destroy the walking dead.

The middle decks mostly hold residences primarily housed by priests and long-term guests, with a fraction available for visitors to rent. At any time, several mercenary bands frequent the *Last Call*, hiring themselves out to anyone tangling with the Corpse Fleet or other unliving threats. The lowest decks hold the Catacombs, a three-dimensional network of crypts, ossuaries, urns, and crematoriums.

Lately, tensions have been building between secular residents and Pharasmins, especially with head Cemeterian **Mortimer Valux** (LN human mystic) cracking down on supposed heresy. Rumors of bodies stolen from the Catacombs and the discovery of defiled Pharasmin symbols have stoked tensions even further.

ALL GODS' REST

NE interfaith refuge

Nestled within a crater near Eox's southern pole stands a broad, cylindrical tower with a chiseled exterior that displays large carvings of every religious symbol known to the Pact Worlds (and a few yet to be identified). According to this structure's creator, **Fidelis-1** (NE male android), All Gods' Rest is a spiritual neutral ground where all may worship in peace. He deflects questions about his past, insisting only that he's "a creature of universal faith" who provides arbitration and counsel for anyone who asks.

The tower's flat roof hosts several landing pads for smaller starships, and a cleared field on the crater's far side suits larger vessels. The ground floor and several floors above host meeting spaces and spartan quarters for visitors. Above these is the Archive, an airless library that contains countless holy books, religious treatises, and garbled prophecies. A single, massive room known as the Auditorium comprises the uppermost floor, a

largely open meeting space with a host of religious symbols inlaid into the floor. At seemingly all hours, Fidelis-1 wanders the tower, answering questions, providing arbitration for the aggrieved, and participating in religious rites of any faith presented to him.

All Gods' Rest also hosts innumerable off-limits basement levels. Those floors closer to the surface hold the structure's generators and life-support systems (at least according to Fidelis-1), but deeper chambers are the stuff of whispered rumor. Some claim these areas host illicit markets for religious artifacts, while others insist the android caretaker maintains grim altars to treacherous deities—or even trapped a demigod.

BHAILE-TAIGH

CG ecotourism hub to the First World

Founded by feychild gnomes on Castrovel's continent Asana, Bhaile-Taigh began as a religious community dedicated to the fey divinities known as the Eldest. The settlement's stilt houses perch slightly above the tangled roots of a vast mangrove swamp. At the community's center towers the Eldest Court, an interwoven dome of living boughs and vines accessible by a single arched doorway. Calling themselves the Eldest Children, local gnome faithful gather within to commune with the First World, often achieving heightened states through use of the region's rapidly evolving flora.

Bhaile-Taigh is only a few decades old, yet it's developed a lively tourism industry based on ecological tours and extraordinary (and often hallucinogenic) culinary experiences. Among the favorite venues is the Redcap, a bar that offers unique hallucinogenic beverages for decidedly nonreligious purposes. Most visitors reach Bhaile-Taigh by suborbital shuttles that land atop specially reinforced mangrove platforms. On occasion, fey portals to the First World open, allowing traffic both ways, and on at least four occasions, elegant fey starships have crossed to the Material Plane, traded, and then hurtled into space.

Lately, the Eldest Court rituals have become unpredictable and volatile, occasionally spewing noxious gases or conjuring showers of multicolored sparks across the settlement. What's more, the settlement's founder, **Rimikneren Vell** (CN nonbinary gnome), recently disappeared, driving local priests to prohibit all but critical visitors from accessing the Eldest Court. Some say the religious rituals have attracted the attention of crueler fey that, even now, prowl the boardwalks in search of mortal playthings.

MORILUX

CN shipyard of nihilism

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Founded in 301 AG by a disillusioned shatori^{AA3} leading a cult of Groetus, the god of the end times, the spaceport Morilux provides its faithful populace a clear view of the dying star around which their planet, Astevin, orbits. Morilux's squat, makeshift shelters are built amid twisting brass ruins that jut from the ground like the ribs of some dead metallic titan. A jagged chasm tears across the settlement's center, above which perches Absent Abbey, the port's primary religious building.

Originally, Morilux simply served as a refuge for doomspeakers to contemplate entropy. However, the nearby dwindling star attracted astronomers who have politely coexisted here for years. Morilux also seems to be a magnet for ruin, with an unlikely number of disabled starships serendipitously sputtering into the area. At first, the Groetans reveled in the dying spacecraft, but eventually, enough ships sought repairs that the faith developed a new tradition: imperfect repair. For a meager fee, Morilux's nihilistic mechanics repair visiting spacecraft on two conditions. First, the crew must attend the Groetans' religious gatherings (even if they don't participate directly), afterward releasing any crew who wish to remain. Second, the starship's repairs never bring it back to peak performance; the mechanics always leave or even introduce minor flaws that gradually contribute to the vessel's eventual failure.

Dewark (NE male shatori^{AA3}) manages Morilux in the loosest sense, mostly by answering the occasional question from scientists, placating Astevin's scattered population of other species, and ensuring the port has barely enough supplies to survive. He increasingly collaborates with the astronomer **Linua Shulk** (CE female human), infamous for her impatience with waiting for cosmological events to study. She was expelled from a Vercite university when she proposed imploding a moon to test a theory. The two periodically rappel into the nearby chasm and emerge with concealed treasures, fueling rumors that they've found some ancient laboratory.

VERITUS

LE academy of god-slayers

The icy planetoid Grahdei sustains a single settlement surrounded by a forest seemingly unperturbed by the cold. Amid the trees lies Veritus Academy, whose austere, iron-wrought buildings evoke ancient feudal castles. The small starport and shipyard on the outskirts convey a different story, however. Travelers are welcome but infrequent, for Veritus Academy serves primarily as a school, laboratory, and monastery dedicated to a grim mission: destroying all deities.

Founded by **Tarmin Rusk** (LE male human) almost a century ago, Veritus promotes a militant defiance of religion driven by ambition, philosophy, and outrage at the mortal condition. Tarmin has gathered disillusioned mystics, technomancers, and scientists here to dissect reality, testing hypotheses to understand the nature of divinity and how to unravel it. Their discoveries reside in the academy's closely guarded Godsgave Archive.

For all their fury, the disciples here don't attack or turn away the faithful, instead providing basic services and providing perspectives to challenge visitors' devotion. The academy has also developed an array of tools for subduing fiends and suppressing spellcasters, selling some of this gear to cover operating expenses. Other devices are more closely guarded, including rumors of an "anti-divinity field" that shields the planetoid from deities' senses and blocks their magic.

VANTRU

CN technocracy turned holy site

On a nameless, mostly frozen planetoid in the Diaspora, Vantru's settlers cobbled together their fiercely independent village from the remnants of starships, creating a hodgepodge of asymmetrical buildings jutting from the ice. Until recently, Vantru primarily prided itself as a miniature technocracy that maintained its independence and earned its income by creating the most complex guns around. The Guildworks, a combination foundry and marketplace for advanced weaponry and starships, looms near the town's edge as its largest structure.

However, in 320 AG, a massive, sword-like obelisk thrust through the ice. Resembling obsidian, the structure bears countless shifting runes that so far defy translation, causing readers to become ill or even hallucinate. While some consider this a warning not to investigate further, many translators have become zealous devotees of the obelisk, calling it "The Sacrament." Their dogma evolves daily, though it consistently cites the birth of a new divinity from the planetoid's core.

This might seem an innocuous fancy were it not for Vantru's fierce independence; its other inhabitants chafe at the religious visitors flooding the port to study a monolith they didn't ask for. Hotshots like infuriating the pilgrims by taking potshots at the obelisk, briefly drowning out the periodic muttering, barely audible from under the ice. Vantru prepares for the worst and, in the meantime, continues doing business.



LAST CALL

TECH PORTS

Many spaceports are naturally technologically advanced, if only to service the Drift-capable starships that frequent them.

BRAXAS

CN genetics laboratory and zoo

Braxas, which sits on a swampy, humid moon of the same name in orbit around Bretheda, began as a laboratory founded by a group of enterprising biotechnicians. The lab rests near an atmosphere-controlled dome that houses residences and basic amenities for staff. Its origins are murky; someone—whether a warlord with aspirations toward bioweaponry or a bored executive—funded the scientists' initial pursuit with enthusiasm. The laboratory grew rapidly into a full settlement as phantom benefactors poured more and more resources into its development, culminating in Braxas's central achievement: the Seething Sea.

The Seething Sea is a boiling lake of liquefied genetic material meant to combine and recombine genetic code in endless, rapid succession. By combining the resultant primordial soup with cloning technology, Braxas scientists have developed a method of quickly developing, tracking, encouraging, and discarding evolutionary traits in new and strange forms of wildlife.

The Seething Sea is Braxas's greatest attraction. Nonhostile life is released into an area Braxas researchers call the Infinite Zoo, where visitors and offworld researchers can examine weird and wondrous creatures.

Rumors persist among the criminal element on nearby Pact Worlds that the lab has a thriving underground market for personalized, ready-made combat beasts. Braxas founder **Zeb Tilt** (CE ysoki) insists these rumors are the false product of disgruntled xenodruids upset with the nature of the Seething Sea. However, in recent weeks, the Infinite Zoo has closed for renovations while Zeb has put out an ad on local networks for experienced exterminators.

EUPHORIA

CE AI-overrun luxury space hotel

Euphoria shine brightly amid the void, a sparkling wheel of vivid colors, blazing lights and sharp angles meant to attract the eye from across the reaches of space.

This spacefaring hotel serves as a luxurious hideaway for the well-to-do, attracting a broad range of visitors from across Near Space and the Pact Worlds with its wondrous sights, comfortable lodgings, and top-notch restaurants and entertainment venues.

Using a fully automated staff of droids and service robots, Euphoria's central AI, Felix, guides guests through tours of a lush natural park under the ship's central dome before taking them to businesses located along the outer ring, such as regionally famous nightclub Hedonalia. Guest rooms are surrounded by AR screens capable of transporting guests—proverbially speaking—anywhere they could ever want to go.

Naysayers and corporate competitors have declared it's unsafe to entrust the wellbeing of up to 1,000 guests to an AI. Euphoria Entertainment has painted such concerns as overblown fears about technological innovation. The company claims glitches in Felix's code are few and far between, and reported incidents of guest imprisonment or minor dismemberment have been greatly exaggerated. Management also claims that some human staff are kept onboard in the event of an emergency, with full access to Felix's behavioral core should anything go amiss, and that guests are always safe and always happy on Euphoria.

LAPICOR

NG site of technomagic revolution

Lapicor spins as a glistening blue planetoid at a moderate distance from its yellow sun. It was settled before the Gap by a group of samsaran magic users intent on creating a nexus of arcane power through study and training.

While aware of evolving technology, the group chose instead to pursue arcane secrets in their endless incarnations, which they tied to Lapicor itself through magical means. They built stone buildings along the western edge of Lapicor's sole landmass, but their manipulation of Lapicor's natural properties came at a cost. Under constant magical assault from the group's experiments, Lapicor's temperate weather systems began to destabilize, and once-flourishing food and water sources were either poisoned or diminished. The samsarans were forced to open up trade to passing starships to supplement their vanishing natural resources.

As samsarans die and reincarnate, memories of their past lives become hazy. Distanced from the older generation's original distaste for technology, younger generations have begun rebelling against their forebears, choosing instead to trade magical knowledge for technology and supplies.

This blending of knowledge has spawned a technomagic revolution on Lapicor, creating rapid advances and new inventions at an incredible rate. Traders and younger samsarans have established a new market on Lapicor called the Astrarium, peddling unique and wondrous wares. There's even talk of constructing a Drift beacon to expand their customer base.

Less progressive Samsarans resent the Astrarium, preferring their old power. Some have openly discussed taking extreme measures or resuming their magical experiments to these developments—even if it means taking Lapicor with them.

MASENTIA

NG pre-Gap colony ship

Originally a pre-Gap colony ship, *Masentia's* ancient bulk remains of unknown origin, even to the group of ysoki mechanics and technomancers who have claimed it.

Masentia's ancient engine is its greatest wonder, slowly generating perpetual energy for the ship's primitive (and partially magical) systems. Thanks to its strange heart and pseudo-magical nature, the *Masentia* functions better than modern machines in the Tabori Cluster's technology-dampening nebula.

The ysoki aboard the ship, led by **Nebula Rosas** (NG female ysoki), have made use of the ship's limited interstellar travel capabilities to exit the Tabori Cluster long enough to trade rare metals and minerals with passing travelers and then head back into the Cluster to deliver much-needed supplies to ailing boomtowns and scrapwave colonies. For those desperate to escape the Cluster entirely, the *Masentia* even helps them find their way onto trader ships bound for Drift beacons.

To date, the ysoki have only successfully taken over the upper of the ship's two levels. The lower level, including the perpetual engine, remain locked off, though the *Masentia's* inhabitants have put out word among traders in the Vast of a potential job for adventurers willing to brave the strange and deadly defenses in the ship's depths.

OMNIOTEQUE

LN digital archive of sapiences

The Omniateque hangs in orbit around Bretheda, nestled among the planet's moons. A cooperative project between several research teams and academies scattered throughout the Pact Worlds, the space station serves as a combined information repository and broker, peddling everything from navigational maps to technological assistance and magical training. The station is designed to be the ultimate collaborative laboratory, using funds from data sales to drive more research across greater distances.

The Omniateque's chief attraction is the Eternal Archive, a museum preserving the intelligences of the Pact Worlds' collected scholars, scientists, and sorcerers. The Archive functions as a database for digital consciousnesses: scholars who volunteer are "downloaded," their information used to construct an AI modeled after the contributor.

Because the process requires the brain matter of the scholar, the program is administered in the same way as organ donation; dying scholars can volunteer their minds in exchange for ersatz immortality in the Omniateque, forever protecting and preserving their understanding of the universe through the resultant AI. Students and tourists alike visit the Omniateque to attend lectures from the digital ghosts of powerful minds.

Recently, however, visitors have reported an eerie glitch in several AI lecturers; given speakers will descend into maddened, incoherent rambling before blinking out. Many mention Lucien Varliss, one of the Omniateque's many AIs, during their descent. Rumor has it that Lucien was downloaded into the Omniateque against his will in an oblique and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to retrieve information he refused to reveal. Later attempts to retrieve affected data have proven ineffective and, in one regrettable instance, resulted in the Omniateque's automated security turning on the technician. The prevailing theory among staff is that Lucien's AI has taken partial control of the station, and a call has gone out for capable teams to venture into the Omniateque's data center to retrieve the offending core.

SYNTHETICA

NE illicit market for augmentations

Synthetica is an isolated star port nestled in a crevice of a Diaspora asteroid. From outside, the surface port looks almost like personal property—there's just enough of a platform for small starships to land and single elevator that leads further into the asteroid.

It's what's inside that sets Synthetica apart: a tightly controlled, highly illegal market for androids hunting for better and more creative replacement parts. Huddled in a sulking village of artificial atmosphere pods, Synthetica is part illicit trading hub and part laboratory, where a crew of androids led by Free Captain **Dynon-13** (NE android) create and trade highly illegal modifications. As Synthetica grows, rumor have spread that biotechnicians have joined Dynon-13's crew, expanding augmentations to organic creatures. In addition, Synthetica has begun experimental weapons market based on its laboratory's more dangerous concepts.

Synthetica's isolated nature and niche clientele have led to all kinds of salacious rumors about Dynon-13's operations. Privateers in the area point out that biotech and necrografts would be logical avenues for the organization to expand into. Some attribute a rash of kidnappings in the Diaspora to alleged experiments in Synthetica's laboratories.

Dynon-13 has become a recluse in recent weeks. Crewmates say that they were last seen meeting with a group of undead bearing military uniforms, though to what end is unknown.



ZEB TILT



TRAVELER'S TOOLBOX

3





INTRODUCTION

With so many compelling ports of call in the Starfinder galaxy, your players likely won't be content to stay in one forever. This chapter provides tools to give PCs both reasons to travel from place to place and a sense of continuity along the way.

While each major or minor port detailed in this book could provide a campaign's worth of adventure all on its own, its true potential is unlocked when PCs get to explore multiple ports or any number of the galactic locations that are connected to these hubs.

CARGO SUBSYSTEM (PAGES 166-171)

The cargo subsystem in this chapter provides a way for PCs to turn their starship and likely tendency to travel to their benefit. Whether the use of this system serves as the primary justification for PCs hopping from port to port or just provides an enjoyable (and hopefully profitable) addition to their many adventures, the cargo subsystem is a flexible tool appropriate to several kinds of campaigns.

In this system, PCs buy, transport, and sell cargo throughout the galaxy, overcoming challenges and working to turn a profit,

which they can use as an alternative way to maintain and upgrade their ship (and lifestyle).

CONTACTS (PAGES 172-179)

Campaigns that see PCs traveling across the galaxy can often benefit from a strong sense of continuity, especially in terms of NPCs the party interacts with. Enter contacts: NPCs who aren't tied to any one location, could feature in a wide range of campaigns, and might travel between certain ports—or even with the PCs.

Each of the contacts in this section could serve as a one-off quest giver, recurring stalwart ally, or someone who competes against the PCs, perhaps even becoming a direct adversary. The contacts in this section are as follows:

Idrah Fadez (page 172): This ifrit financier might back the party's latest venture or have an off-the-books mission for them—including a potential expedition into the Vast.

Greentooth Zib (page 173): This mercurial goblin pilot has three teeth made of the starmetal noqual, and may be as likely to contest the PCs for a magical find as to enlist their help.

Quinsetti (page 174): This elderly ysoki ostensibly runs a deli—but this is a cover for his work as a fixer. He is full of mysteries, but may open up to a party that proves useful.

Kebisht (page 175): This shirren arms dealer was once an engineer, and got into the weapons business in part via an effort to combat the Swarm.

Sakree Tevira (page 175): This doctor of linguistics is as curious as she can be impatient and might enlist a party's help in showing up her academic nemesis.

Mion (page 176): This skittermander mechanic is full of plans and schemes, many of which pull those around her into their orbit—but careful; she knows how to hold a grudge.

Mr. Oathday (page 176): This undead former human was killed in a bid to steal his hoarded treasure; now, he'll stop at nothing (and work with anyone) to get it all back.

Nabi (page 177): This skilled mediator is often at the center of many conflicts, helping to resolve them and sometimes disgruntling the belligerent along the way.

Kavi Viran (page 177): This brenneri professor teaches comparative arcane anthropology by day but often drags colleagues and hired crews alike on dangerous expeditions to pursue her research.

Auevi (page 178): This multi-hyphenate lashunta artist is a household name on Castrovel, where she serves as cultural outreach ambassador—when she's not touring the Pact Worlds and beyond to perform.

Sacavav (page 178): This trox survivalist is an itinerant game hunter who trades on his knowledge and skill in overcoming dangerous animals and navigating the wilds.

Mari (page 179): This human travel journalist hasn't seen it all—it's a big galaxy, after all—but she's probably the closest to being able to make that claim. She is a font of information and could possibly enlist a trusted group in pursuit of a more esoteric quest...

SIDE JOBS (PAGES 180-186)

Side jobs are short encounters designed for when you need some extra material in between the big plot beats of an adventure or campaign, whether published or more free form. Maybe your players skipped some content intended to give them experience, or maybe you ended up with a bigger group of players than the adventure assumes. Additionally, if your players come up short of their expected wealth by level, a side job provides a worthwhile way to allocate some extra credits to the party without having to awkwardly shoehorn extra wealth into an existing encounter.

You can also use the side jobs presented here for a quick palate cleanser between campaigns or when you're looking for a single session's worth of fun and excitement that's ready to grab and go. Whatever the reason, any group can easily use side jobs.

You should keep in mind that if you're running players through a published Adventure Path in addition to these side jobs (especially if they're a typically sized group who earns

the average amount of credits and gear), the PCs will end up with more experience and gear than the rest of the Adventure Path expects. This option can actually be good if your players seem to have a lot of trouble during encounters; side jobs don't present a great deal of extra material and will likely have negligible impact on the PCs' overall effectiveness. However, by the same token, if your players already easily overcome the adventure's challenges, you might not want to give them yet another advantage going into the next set of encounters.

Worth a Thousand (2nd level)

This side job has PCs serving as scouts for one side of a burgeoning conflict—perhaps unaware of their own influence over a situation that's becoming more and more dangerous.

Akata Issues (3rd level)

In this side job, PCs are sent to a ghost town to retrieve the findings of a research team attacked by vicious predators—and to rescue any survivors, of course.

The Darkling Stacks (9th level)

Things have started to go dangerously awry in a renowned and mysterious library of the arcane, where the head librarian has gone missing and the library's guardians have turned hostile.

The Starship Dilemma (13th level)

A Veskarium contact is at an impasse with the Pact Worlds mechanic refitting her ship and wants the PCs' help in handling the situation delicately—but is there more going on here than meets the eye?

OTHER ADVENTURES

There are plenty of other resources available for crafting adventures and campaigns that span the galaxy—most notably, the *Starfinder Galaxy Exploration Manual*. That book contains a simple but robust system for generating your own adventure-packed worlds, from their basic physical and cultural characteristics to details about creatures who live there and adventures to be had. It also includes a galaxy exploration system for players to use in conjunction with their starship, a plethora of exploration-focused gear and player options, and detailed advice on running open-ended "sandbox" campaigns.

Books like *Starfinder Pact Worlds* and *Starfinder Near Space* have richly detailed information on many of the worlds that appear in the Starfinder setting, several of which host the ports in this book, and each of which has its own locations, NPCs, and adventure hooks. Of course, the provided details of these worlds are yours to modify or combine however you see fit in order to inspire the best galactic adventures for you and your party!

Starfinder Interstellar Species dives into many of the species you'll find throughout the galaxy—as well as a host of ready-to-use, thematic NPCs (complete with stat blocks) who can appear virtually anywhere.

CARGO

The life of an independent trader isn't an easy one. On paper, the career is simple: get a ship, get a crew, get cargo, and get paid. Nothing ever goes as planned, however—starships break down or get caught in firefights, a journey through the Drift turns out far more dangerous than anyone expected, sellers charge too much, and naturally, buyers pay too little. But the prospect of danger and uncertainty make for an exciting Starfinder campaign! The following optional rules provide a new way to structure a campaign for independent merchant PCs flying a starship of their own, buying, moving, and selling cargo in the Pact Worlds, Near Space, and the Vast. These rules are especially useful in sandbox-style campaigns; see chapter 3 of the *Starfinder Galaxy Exploration Manual* for more on designing and running sandbox adventures.

ALTERNATIVE BUILD POINTS

The focus of these new rules alters the way PCs obtain Build Points (BP) for building and upgrading starships. In the standard rules, BP are a pool that constantly increases as the PCs level up. Build Points are never lost; if the PCs' starship is completely destroyed, they can just use their BP to purchase a new starship when the GM allows it. However, in the cargo subsystem, Build Points become a form of currency. The PCs spend BP on their starship and cargo and earn BP when they sell that cargo.

The PCs' starship becomes an investment—like any other piece of equipment, but bought with BP instead of credits. As the PCs complete jobs, they get more BP with which they can upgrade their starship. They can do so gradually, installing one new system at a time, or by hoarding and spending BP all at once. They'll always want to keep some unspent BP on hand, however, since they'll need BP to buy the cargo for their next job. If the PCs' ship is destroyed, those BP are gone! (Many crews insure their starship for just this eventuality; see page 170 for details on starship insurance.) But if the PCs' business flourishes, they'll find themselves living in the lap of luxury, hiring additional employees, or even buying a second starship to ply the interstellar trade routes.

The *Starfinder Core Rulebook* includes some guidelines for how the PCs can acquire the Build Points they need to create their first starship and upgrade it—via salvage, favors, or an arrangement with a friendly spacedock, for instance—suggesting that BP represent a lot more than simple credits. Indeed, they're an abstraction separate from the methods by which the PCs buy their personal equipment, used exclusively in the starship creation system. This is an important distinction, because if the PCs can exchange BP for credits, they could end up underpowered in starship combat while simultaneously overpowered in all their other encounters.

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

To begin, the PCs receive a number of Build Points as determined by their Average Party Level (APL) as noted in Table

9-1: Starship Base Statistics on page 294 of the *Core Rulebook*. They should use those BP to build their starship as usual, keeping in mind that their vessel will need plenty of room for cargo and that they'll need a few BP to purchase that cargo.

GALACTIC TRADE BASICS

The PCs will earn most of their Build Points by hauling cargo from one world to another. See page 171 for other ways the PCs can receive BP.

A cargo job can be broken into several steps.

- **Find Cargo:** The PCs find cargo. Determine the cargo's type, the price to buy it, its destination (if any), and how much it might sell for.
- **Determine Complication:** Most jobs have a unique, complicating factor, which is determined in secret when the PCs find their cargo (the PCs might not become aware of it right away).
- **Transport:** The PCs take the cargo to its destination or to a world where they hope to sell it.
- **Make the Sale:** The PCs deliver the cargo to its intended recipient or try to find a buyer.

Find Cargo

Cargo in the Starfinder setting is standardized into lots, each massing 25 tons; a single lot of cargo fits into one of a starship's cargo holds. The PCs can easily tell the maximum number of lots they can transport by counting the number of cargo holds on their vessel. Finding cargo to buy is a downtime activity as detailed in the sidebar on page 168. For more on downtime activities, see page 150 of the *Starfinder Character Operations Manual*.

Cargo Type

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

TABLE 3-1: CARGO TYPES

D20	CARGO
1	Art or antiques
2	Base metals
3	Ceramics or glassware
4	Chemicals
5	Furniture
6	Hides or leather
7	Live animals or animal products
8	Machinery, electronics, or appliances
9	Minerals or mineral products
10	Paper products or books
11	Plastics
12	Precision equipment
13	Precious metals, including starmetals, or semiprecious stones
14	Prepared food
15	Textiles, including clothing



16	Toys, games, or sporting equipment
17	Vegetable products
18	Vehicles
19	Weapons or ammunition
20	Wood or wood articles

Shipping or Speculation?

Player characters are usually more than simple delivery drivers, hired to move bulk cargo along well-established routes for a flat fee. Instead, when the PCs purchase cargo, it will generally be up to them to find a place to sell it. However, at your discretion, the seller can give the PCs a tip as to where they might offload the cargo they just bought. This is a good tactic for players who are only just starting to interact with this system or for groups who only want to dip their toes into the trading game. In such a case, the PCs don't need to use the find buyer downtime activity (page 169) and receive an amount of BP per cargo lot chosen by you.

Destination

If you've decided that the cargo's seller gives the PCs an idea of where to sell those goods, you can choose that destination based on the needs of your campaign (especially if the players have expressed interest in going to a specific place). Alternatively, you can randomly determine the general destination by rolling a d10 on the table below.

TABLE 3-2: DESTINATIONS

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

Determine Complication

Once the PCs find cargo, but before they commit to purchasing it, you should determine what makes this particular job unusual. This complication is up to you and can range from the seller trying to unload vermin-infested cargo on the PCs to a buyer who wants the goods for illegal purposes. How the PCs deal with each complication—if they discover it at all—is up to them.

To randomly determine a complication, roll a d20 on the table below, keeping the result a secret. You can tweak a result for the needs of your campaign, and if you've rolled the same result from the table a few times, consider throwing out that entry and substituting one of your own! If a complication requires a skill check, the DC for that check equals $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the party's APL. Usually, only one PC should be given the chance to attempt this check. A complication that the PCs can be made aware of before purchasing the cargo is marked with

FIND CARGO

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

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

Results: On a success, you find 1d4 lots of cargo available for sale. The cargo can't be split up; all of the lots must be bought together. The cargo's total buy price equals 1d4 BP × the number of lots. For every 5 by which your check exceeds the result, you can adjust the size of the cargo by 1 lot in either direction.

The GM determines the type of cargo and might even tell you where you can sell it for a reasonable price. All of the cargo must be transported and sold together, and you and your allies must load the cargo onto your starship yourselves. Some cargoes must be delivered within a certain time frame. When you are told the type of cargo, its buy price, and its destination and its sell price (if applicable), you can choose not to purchase that cargo. However, when you purchase the cargo, it's yours to decide what to do with—though you might want to perform the find buyer downtime activity (page 169) at another settlement to sell it.

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

an asterisk (*), and some complications modify the cargo's buy or sell price.

TABLE 3-3: RANDOM COMPLICATIONS

D20	COMPLICATION
1	Blockade Running
2	Competition
3	Expiration Date*
4	Fire Sale*
5	Friendly Discount*
6	Handling Problems
7	Hiding Something*
8	High Demand*
9	Illegal*
10	Imitation*
11	Radioactive*
12	Regulated*
13	Rush Job*
14	Stolen
15	Stowaway
16	Strange Customs
17	Telepathic

18	Tough Sell
19	Uncommon Tongue
20	Vermin

Blockade Running: When the PCs reach the destination, they find it blockaded. With a successful Piloting check, the PCs can slip through the blockade. Otherwise, they must engage in starship combat of average difficulty (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 326).

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

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

Fire Sale*: Everything must go. The size of the cargo increases to the maximum number of lots the PCs' ship can carry. Reduce the buy price by 1 BP per lot.

Friendly Discount*: The seller has something in common with one of the PCs (for example, they both fought in the same military campaign or have the same prosthetic limb). If that PC succeeds at a Diplomacy check, reduce the buy price by 1 BP per lot.

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

Hiding Something*: The seller is aware of a problem with the cargo (roll again on this table), but they're not telling the PCs. A PC who succeeds at a Sense Motive check deduces the problem before purchase.

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

Illegal*: Possession of this material is against the law. Law enforcement can detect the illegal cargo with a successful scan that identifies the ship's load (*Core Rulebook* 325). If inspectors board, any cargo not in a smuggler's compartment is automatically detected. If the PCs give up the seller to law enforcement, their punishment might be reduced.

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

Radioactive*: The cargo is radioactive and not properly shielded. A PC who succeeds at a Physical Sciences check detects this before the transport is underway; the cargo can be safely stowed with 1 day of work, or by spending 1 BP per lot. Otherwise, the crew is exposed to constant low radiation beginning 1d6 days into the journey.

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

Rush Job*: This cargo must be delivered to a specific destination in 1d8 days. If it is, increase the sell price by 2 BP per lot. If not delivered on time, the PCs must find a new buyer.

Stolen: This cargo was stolen from another crew, and they're coming to get it back! This represents a hard encounter, but the crew can be pacified if the PCs surrender the cargo.

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

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

Telepathic: The buyer is telepathic. If none of the PCs have telepathy or limited telepathy, and the PCs can't succeed at a Diplomacy check, the buyer doesn't trust them and reduces the buy price by 1 BP per lot.

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

Uncommon Tongue*: The seller of the cargo speaks an unusual language, chosen by the GM or determined randomly from "Other Languages" (*Core Rulebook* 41). If the PCs can't find a way to communicate with them, no sale.

Vermin*: The cargo is infested with tiny or smaller creatures. A PC discovers them with a successful Life Sciences check. If found before purchase, reduce the buy price by 2 BP per lot and spend 1 day fumigating. If found after purchase, reduce sell price by 2 BP per lot; additionally, the vermin may infest the ship.

Transport

The next step is for the PCs to get the cargo onto their starship and transport it to a place where it can be sold. In general, the farther the PCs take the cargo, the more it's worth. This factors into the cargo's sell price, which is determined when the PCs try to sell it (see below).

Cargo Handling

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

The PCs will also have to unload the cargo once they reach the world where they want to sell it, but this generally occurs while at least one of the crew engages in the find buyer downtime activity (see sidebar).

Make the Sale

When the PCs have reached the area where they want to try to sell their cargo, finding a buyer is a downtime activity, as detailed in the "Find Buyer" sidebar. Certain complications

FIND BUYER

You look for someone interested in buying your ship's cargo.

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

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

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

might make this more difficult, but once a buyer is found, you need to determine the sale price.

Cargo Sell Price

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

TABLE 3-4: TRANSPORT MODIFIERS

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

SPENDING BUILD POINTS

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

Expansion

The PCs can spend BP to hire agents, professional representatives, and even full-time employees who work for them. They can even buy another starship and hire crew to haul cargo as part of their overall business. When the PCs hire

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personnel to expand their business, you decide the NPCs' stats (though usually, an NPC has a total skill bonus in a handful of skills equal to $4 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ their CR). They are generally loyal to the PCs but won't risk their lives. If treated poorly, they might leave the PCs' service. Employees hired by the PCs agree to a 1-year contract; at the end of that term, the PCs must renew this contract or the NPC leaves their service.

Planetary Agent: A planetary agent costs BP equal to the agent's CR, which can be no higher than the party's APL; as the party's APL increases, the PCs can spend the difference to raise the agent's CR. The agent lives on one world or space station, and though they might have many other clients, they work on the PCs' behalf to perform the find cargo and find buyer downtime activities. The agent can also perform the gather information task of the Diplomacy skill. The agent won't leave the world upon which they're stationed. The PCs must supply the agent with the credits or other requirements necessary for any task the NPC is asked to perform.



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

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

Insurance

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

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

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

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

Lifestyle

The PCs can spend BP to live the good life. There are two degrees of lifestyle expenditure: comfortable and luxurious. These degrees assume a group of 4 PCs; you can adjust the costs for larger and smaller groups as you see fit.

Comfortable: The party spends 1 BP to live comfortably for 1 month on a single world or space station. The PCs reside in spacious lodgings decorated to their taste, have access to stylish personal transportation, and enjoy their favorite entertainments. They partake in high-quality food and drink whenever they wish and attire themselves in fashionable and flattering clothing. This lifestyle doesn't impart any mechanical benefits to the characters.

Luxurious: The party spends 5 BP to live in luxury for 1 month on a single world or space station. The PCs reside in fabulous

homes in an elite neighborhood; they have multiple forms of personal transportation, including custom-made vehicles and antiques, and their wardrobe is full of unique fashions made for them by famous designers (equivalent to formal wear). A large staff of professionals—housekeepers, gardeners, personal tailors, groomers, and chauffeurs—see to everyday chores the PCs don't wish to concern themselves with (each professional is a professional freelancer with a skill bonus equal to the party's APL). When they wish to be entertained, they have tickets to all the most exclusive galas and parties, or they hire legendary performers and throw the party themselves. This lifestyle doesn't impart any mechanical benefits to the characters.

Upgrades

The PCs can spend BP on their starship if they have the time and facilities required to make such upgrades (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 305). Using this system, the total BP value of the PCs' starship can be no more than 5% higher than the value listed for its tier in Table 9-1: Starship Base Statistics on page 294 of the *Core Rulebook*.

For example, a group of 1st-level PCs have a tier 1 starship on which they've spent a total of 52 Build Points (saving the rest to purchase cargo). As they accumulate BP by selling cargo, they can spend at most 5 BP to upgrade their starship, raising its BP value to 57 (5% more than the 55 BP used to normally create a tier 1 starship). When their APL rises to 2, this group can upgrade their starship further, but not to a value higher than 78 BP (because a tier 2 starship is normally created with 75 BP). The PCs still can't spend more than 1,000 BP on their starship when their APL reaches 20th.

Downgrades

Due to bad luck or mishandling of cargo, the PCs might end up with no spare BP to keep the cycle of buying and selling going. In such cases, you can reward the PCs with BP as treasure (see below) to get them back on track, but if you want to be less generous, the PCs can sell parts of their starship to acquire BP. There's no added cost to do this; for instance, if the PCs want to hock their vessel's coilgun, they receive the weapon's full BP cost of 6.

RUNNING THE SYSTEM

The cargo subsystem helps to generate short adventures for cargo-hauling PCs, as there's always a chance of something going wrong during what (at first) seemed like a simple cargo delivery. It also works hand-in-hand with a sandbox-style campaign, as the PCs will be traveling from world to world looking to buy low and sell high.

Session Zero

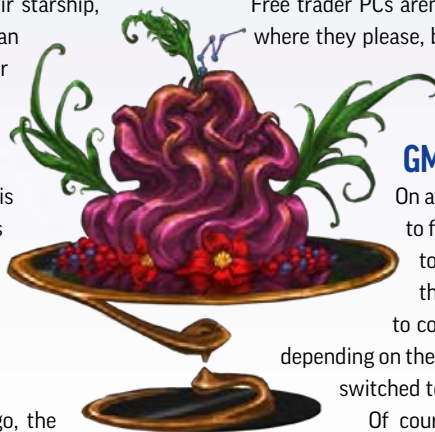
Before beginning a game using this subsystem, make sure your players are interested in engaging in the life of freelance merchants—an occupation they hold alongside their adventures

FREE TRADERS

The free trader archetype (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 103) is an excellent choice for a character in a campaign focused on galactic trade, as that archetype's merchant savvy ability interacts with these rules in many useful ways, listed below.

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

delving into alien ruins or fighting back against an evil empire. Free trader PCs aren't beholden to any one patron and can go where they please, but this subsystem does involve additional bookkeeping, and some groups may feel strongly about that requirement.



GMing Expectations

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

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

Other Sources of Build Points

This subsystem assumes that the PCs earn their BP only from transporting and selling cargo. However, at your discretion, you can reward them with BP as treasure from particular encounters (such as a raid on a smuggling operation's warehouse) or as salvage from starship combat encounters (such as a fight against a rogue Corpse Fleet ship). In the former case, the PCs might have to transport the BP to their ship much in the same way as loading cargo (count 4 BP as a lot of cargo for these purposes), and in the latter case, the PCs can spend a day salvaging BP from a defeated vessel equal to that starship's tier.

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IDRAH FADEZ, THE FINANCIER

A wealthy business mogul and an ifrit of human ancestry, Idráh Fadez is known for her explosive temper and interest in unusual projects—the stranger, the better. She regularly funds adventuring parties before they can even finish their pitch just because she likes the concept and wants to see if the group can actually return to her alive, and this cheerful flippancy drives her recruiting. Idráh keeps an open tab at bars and lounges across the galaxy, as she often discovers her most interesting hirelings there, nursing aspirations and drinks in equal measure. Whether they ultimately succeed or survive matters little; Idráh knows that sometimes, to make credits, one has to lose credits. Those who do succeed attract her attention and continued funding, so long as it includes something fascinating for her to covet: some strange silver fabric, a glass orb of unbearable heat, or even an extremely old, slightly singed Harrow deck.

Idrah rarely travels without her shobhad bodyguard and never goes without a weapon, even in spaces where they would normally be confiscated. Though she's notoriously wealthy and owns several small corporations throughout the Pact Worlds and Near Space, the actual parent company is unknown; when asked how she got started in business, she gives evasive answers usually referencing "heat protection during space travel." The exact source of her riches remains a mystery that she utterly delights in perpetuating.

When traveling in space, Idráh flies in a specially modified Excoriation Combine Alcazar (*Starfinder Adventure Path #18: Assault on the Crucible*) named the *Ashes of Wealth*. The crew is entirely comprised of bound genies and elementals under Idráh's command. She refuses to let her elemental crew leave the ship, so she relies solely on her quiet shobhad bodyguard for any missions outside her vessel. In the aftermath of the Drift Crisis, Idráh has begun seeking alternatives to Drift travel, and many of her financed missions involve exploring new means of interstellar travel.

Like a tempestuous deity from myth, Idráh showers her affection on those who captivate her, yet she seethes at those who decline her support. If she feels someone is weak enough for such crude tactics, she'll sometimes turn to intimidation by throwing tables and lighting things on fire while she stalks around the room. As temperamental as she is, however, Idráh knows when she's outmatched. In the few situations where she can't get what she wants with money or threats, she's known to hire rival teams to compete with (or even kill) those who have snubbed her. Nobody has ever conclusively linked her to these hits, yet several adventurers have, on occasion, turned up dead with her fireproof business card pinned to their chests.



In the immediate aftermath of the Drift Crisis, Idráh employed several dozen groups to help chart and stake claims on sections of the newly established Drift lanes. Though she hasn't personally taken ownership of such claims, she's owed favors by several former and current adventurers who have established colonies of their own or who have major shipping interests in the Drift lanes. As a result, Idráh can easily arrange secure transit across the newly defined galaxy, and she even knows about several smaller Drift lanes that have yet to become public knowledge. Should the PCs find themselves in Idráh's good graces, she can help them get to just about anywhere in the known cosmos.

Both the Aspis Consortium and Starfinder Society clandestinely send agents to interact with Idráh on missions that require "out of organization funding." Any such mission typically stays off the books and isn't officially recognized by either organization. Idráh revels in providing for both groups, as she finds it incredibly flattering that such prestigious factions know of her financing operations, let alone actively use them. She also finds it amusing to dabble in the politics of these organizations, and often has little or no interest in such missions, enjoying simply being part of the inner machinations of the Consortium's and Society's ongoing missions.

Idrah has one notable restriction on those she finances: she refuses to deal with anyone who interacts with the Tetrad trade association. Associated with the witchwyrds of Cyrune, Tetrad is a mysterious entity, and Idráh's apprehension in dealing with them adds to this reputation. Some believe that she has too much of her fortune tied-up in their activities, while others believe that Tetrad is one of the few organizations who have punished Idráh in a meaningful way in the past. Anyone dealing with Idráh should be sure to steer away from interfering with Tetrad, lest they earn her ire and probably have to deal with another group hired by Idráh to stop them.

In recent months, Idráh has begun traveling throughout the Pact Worlds and Near Space in search of groups willing to take part in a massive expedition into the Vast. Though she has yet to explain the full goal of this mission, Idráh has assured those she has contacted that it could take many years and requires exploring several different star systems. She also indicated that the systems in question aren't capable of being explored using traditional scanners, necessitating a more hands-on approach. To help compensate the mystery of the assignment, Idráh has put forward a massive stipend of credits, along with the promise that any group taking part in her expedition will receive a custom starship built to their specifications by some of Idráh's contacts in the Pact Worlds. The cost alone of such an expense has many wondering about her goal.

GREENTOOTH ZIB, THE PILOT

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Greentooth Zib is a pilot-for-hire, flying his starship, *The Pickled Queen*, for anyone to anywhere for the right price. Stories about how the loquacious goblin acquired the early-model Sanjaival Vagabond range from him inheriting it from a rich, deceased aunt to him stealing it out from under the nose of a Free Captain. Zib tells a different tale to each of his clients, and no one knows for certain how much truth there is to any of them. Regardless, he manages to keep his starship repaired and outfitted, getting travelers to their destinations no matter the circumstances, so he continues to find work across the galaxy.

Just as mysterious as the provenance of his ship is how Zib acquired the three unusual teeth that comprise his namesake. His claims of losing his original teeth in a bar brawl or in an encounter with a swarm of tooth fairies are dubious at best, but more unbelievable is the tale that he fashioned the prostheses himself from husks of akata cocoons while stranded on an asteroid for a month. Whatever the truth, it's indisputable that Zib's false teeth are made of the precious starmetal noqual. When showing them off—which he does quite frequently—Zib alleges that he can feel them buzz when he's around strong sources of magic, a “fact” that has apparently enabled him to find lost relics and, on one occasion, escape from the clutches of an evil technomancer.

Zib happily takes any work that will net him credits, but his mercurial nature means that his reasons for accepting a job vary from week to week. When flush with cash, Zib will provide passage to a place he has never been (or even heard of) practically free of charge just to be able to tell a fantastical story afterward. Other times, he'll undercut a competitor's rate merely out of spite, claiming that the look on his rival's face more than makes up for the difference. If, however, he has several sizable, recently accrued gambling debts or creditors hounding him, Zib will haggle for hours on end, working exorbitant, extraneous fees into every stage of what would otherwise be a relatively simple journey. A traveler can never be certain which Zib they'll end up doing business with when approaching him.

Once behind the yoke of *The Pickled Queen*, Greentooth Zib is more of a steady hand. Though he might seem like a casual pilot, always ready to spin a yarn, Zib is serious about flying. He treats his starship well, keeping the computer's software up-to-date and repairing any damage as soon as possible. During long journeys through

the Drift, Zib can be found strolling through the corridors at night, tutting at every sound that isn't “quite right” or polishing a handrail with an oil-stained rag. He also expects his passengers to treat his vessel with respect. He doesn't tolerate complaints about delays, though he might consider those who offer constructive tips on how to improve engine efficiency his friend for life.

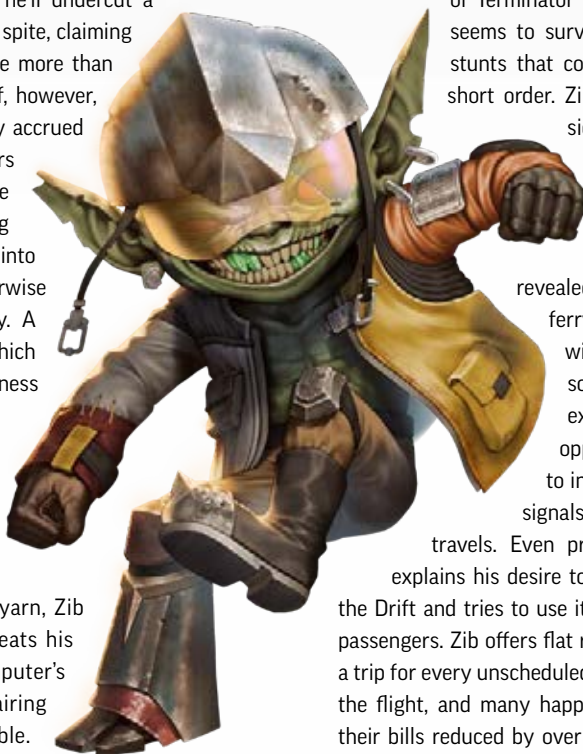
That isn't to say that a journey aboard *The Pickled Queen* is without comfort. Zib has upgraded the passenger bunks to be as comfortable as possible (though not as well-appointed as his own quarters). The galley contains state-of-the-art culinary synthesizers programmed with cuisines from across the galaxy. In addition, Zib keeps the ship's tri-vid den stocked with the latest in entertainment, with the major exception of any media depicting horses in a positive light. The goblin refuses to explain why, and many chalk it up to ancient cultural revulsion toward the four-legged animals. Only when very drunk does Zib share that his deep-rooted fear of horses stems from terrifying stories his mother told him about them during childhood. Zib's favorite vids is the animated epic “The Applecake Adventures of Space Fortress Z.”

Zib employs daring piloting skills in almost every situation, turning even the simplest mission into a means of somehow defying death. If confronted regarding his semi-suicidal maneuvers, the goblin merely indicates that he's taking after the great pilots of the Pact Worlds, such as the recently returned Drift explorer Aleksana Guryari, the charming and enigmatic Ulysses who disappeared after crashing on the surface of Apostae three years ago, and the Wither siblings of Terminator fame. Somehow, the goblin always seems to survive his flights, despite performing stunts that could rip a normal starship apart in short order. Zib's favorite move is to fly side-by-

side with opposing starships and then signal them over comms to ask if they need piloting instructions.

Since the Drift Crisis, Zib has begun exploring the recently revealed Drift lanes and has taken to ferrying passengers through them without much hassle. Though it's something of an easier job for the excitable goblin, Zib takes every opportunity to harry his passengers to investigate any anomalies or distress signals they come across during their travels.

Even prior to taking on passengers, Zib explains his desire to investigate strange happenings in the Drift and tries to use it as a selling point to any would-be passengers. Zib offers flat rate discounts on the credit price of a trip for every unscheduled course correction he makes during the flight, and many happy customers have reported having their bills reduced by over half the initial cost thanks to Zib's innate curiosity getting the better of him.



QUINSETTI, THE FIXER

"Cheese for the Flight" sounds like a motto or a packed snack, yet it's also what Quinsetti named his modest corner deli. A block from port, the peppy elderly ysoki offers a feast of spiced rations, cold cuts, and homemade appetizers to flight crews who have mere hours (if not minutes) before they head out to space again. In these short moments, Quinsetti makes certain that his customers leave refueled by warm conversation and sated stomachs, achieved via a generous sampling of snacks from across the galaxy.

The unassuming deli is, naturally, a side gig to Quinsetti and cover for his work as a fixer. With a great eye for reading integrity, skills, and potential, Quinsetti constantly scopes out new talent to hire or refer for odd jobs. The majority are simple deliveries or technical services. Difficult missions, meanwhile, are entrusted to "regulars" who come to him with references and recommendations. These individuals identify themselves with a coded introductory phrase given by their sponsor, posing as customers who ask if the shop carries any "Vast Cheddar" or "Gluun Prairie."

Quinsetti's job supply seems endless, owing to his vast connections that span systems, fields of expertise, and spheres of influence. From specialists to operatives, enforcers to criminals, the degree of separation between him and any individual is smaller than expected. How and why this grandfather manages such a large network remains anyone's guess. Quinsetti blames his restlessness; he needs the excitement of his younger days spent traveling and making friends. On the topics of where he traveled and who those friends were, Quinsetti keeps his responses vague, only stating

that any resemblance he bears to a Free Captain who gave up piracy for love is purely coincidental.

Large networks come with their own baggage, and Quinsetti has chosen sides and made enemies. The fixer follows his conscience, as he knows that most retaliation poses an inconvenience (such as fabricating claims that get his deli closed for bogus health violations) or, at worst, might involve his death (which isn't too bad, given the full life he has lived). The same protection doesn't, unfortunately, extend to those who work for him. While Quinsetti gladly dips into his own pocket to protect threatened agents, he can't be everywhere at once.

Quinsetti is energetic and nimble for his age. He speaks quickly, relaying many words and ideas into one breath, knowing he has only a few years left and still a lot to say. He likes to use metaphors and coded language, such as calling simple jobs "backaches" before directing hires to the cheese cellar to talk shop since "his back can't handle hefting the bigger wheels alone." If a job is difficult, he invites hires upstairs to the office for "a glass of wine," because they're "going to need it after seeing the bill."

Quinsetti maintains a fairly professional demeanor to newcomers but opens up over time. Though the fixer smooths over failures with gentle ribbing, he rarely offers second chances to friends or foes. Those who graciously accept their failure and remain friendly, however, are always welcome at the deli. Those who make a fuss tend to earn Quinsetti's ire, and it's rumored that he has sold information about angry former contractors to their enemies, buying himself some goodwill with dangerous people while removing a nuisance.

The fixer adores those with incredible talent, perhaps to his network's detriment. He has asked some of his overachievers not to move on to greener pastures, even though he knows how difficult it can be to keep the best talent employed. It's with some pride and sadness that he bemoans his best agents outgrowing his business. Other favorites he stops hiring more out of fear that he might lose them on a high-risk job.

Unlike most ysoki, Quinsetti seems distant from his biological family. This behavior isn't due to tragedy or bad blood; many of his children and grandchildren are alive, think of him fondly, and greatly miss living close to him. However, he maintains a firm no-family rule when it comes to work. Hiring or publicly acknowledging family members would only put them in danger.

That risk doesn't stop his puzzled grandchildren from uncovering Quinsetti's past and why he won't associate with them directly. At worst, some have moved into the neighborhood and proven nosy. Others dream up increasingly dramatic stunts to discover the truth, even going so far as to hire grandpa's agents to spy on him. Exasperated as this makes him, Quinsetti does keep track of his dozens of grandkids through his network, deflects their curiosity, and most definitely wouldn't leave any of them stranded if they were to land themselves in trouble.



KEBISHT, THE ARMS DEALER

Bristling with knives, laser pistols, and grenades, as well as the occasional missile launcher, Kebisht looks the part of a walking armory. This plucky shirren openly wears a fraction of what they have for sale in their starship store, which always stocks a wide variety of destructive weapons. Somewhat of an “option junkie,” like many other shirren, Kebisht is constantly rotating their selection, often giving deep discounts on older products to make room for something newer and shinier. They’ll also pay a premium for any type of armament they’ve never seen before, no matter their provenance.

Kebisht formerly worked as a Hivonyx Industries engineer who was often reprimanded for their dangerous R&D work during the Swarm War in 291 AG. After losing family to the Swarm during its initial push into the Pact Worlds earlier that year, Kebisht wanted nothing more than to completely obliterate the ravenous menace. They pushed experimental starship weapons to their breaking points and were ultimately let go after a deadly accident claimed the lives of two other engineers. Kebisht then started buying and selling weapons



on their own to try to help the war effort, and they’ve been an arms dealer ever since.

The shirren trader doesn’t often look too deeply into where their stock comes from. Many thieves and smugglers know that they can always turn to Kebisht if they want to get rid of stolen goods fast. Those who have purchased weapons from them sometimes complain about being followed by dangerous, unsavory types (such as undercover Azlanti agents or drow enforcers) tracking down stolen belongings. Luckily, these individuals almost never trace the thefts back to Kebisht, who often remains wholly oblivious to their wares’ origins.

In the past two decades, Kebisht has been a host for two larva, and they’ve kept in touch with the growing shirren and their caretakers. The arms dealer knows their current lifestyle isn’t fit for raising the young. Nonetheless, parenthood has strengthened Kebisht’s loathing of the Swarm, for they want their young to inherit a galaxy completely free of the all-consuming menace. As such, clients who let Kebisht know they’re buying weapons to fight the Swarm might find an extra battery or two thrown into the deal, free of charge.

SAKREE TEVIRA, THE ACADEMIC

Language has always captured Sakree Tevira’s imagination. From her sheltered childhood in the spire of Qidel on Verces to her higher education in the Ring Nation of Kashak and beyond, she delights in the ways societies shape and are shaped by their languages. With a doctorate in xenolinguistics, Dr. Tevira now travels widely to decipher ancient inscriptions from long-dead Vast civilizations, analyze morphological links between Akitonian and Vercite languages, and generally explore the many questions of interplanetary linguistics. She dives into each mystery as one might dive into a good meal, focusing almost to the point of obsession.

Despite having credentials that could easily earn her a permanent home in any number of universities, Dr. Tevira seems reluctant to settle anywhere for long. Whether that disinclination stems from wanderlust or something haunting her from her past—as several adjuncts at her current post love to gossip—it means she can be difficult to track down. Even when found, Dr. Tevira must be thoroughly convinced that a project is worth the trouble of clearing her schedule. Her services



and reputation provide her far more money than she cares to spend on her relatively simple and itinerant lifestyle, so she instead redirects a large fraction into grants and support for up-and-coming linguistic scholars and related support staff.

Dr. Tevira has little patience for sycophants or casual dilettantes, but she goes to great lengths to share opportunities to study rare or unusual texts. Those who obtain her aid had best prepare themselves to receive messages at unpredictable hours, for as she puts it, “research doesn’t have office hours.”

A sure way of gaining Dr. Tevira’s respect is to help her get one up on her academic nemesis, the equally sharp-tongued Dr. Ivolis. Neither researcher seems capable of publishing a paper without at least indirectly snarking at the other, and they recently infamously came to physical blows over Ignan morphemes at a linguistics conference held on a remote planet in the Vast. Anyone interfering with her studies—or worse, aiding Dr. Ivolis—is certain to gain her ire, and those who do might even find their subsequent linguistic research stymied.

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MION, THE MECHANIC

Though small in stature even by skittermancer standards, Mion always has big ideas—often literally pulled straight from her dreams. She regularly bolts upright from her sleep and rushes to her workshop to modify blueprints, much to the dismay of her assistants who must work around her unpredictable schedule.

Mion has dozens of designs in the works at any given moment, and she has extravagant aesthetic tastes as a baseline. For all her flashy dreams, she's a highly skilled mechanic who makes quick work of standard repairs on anything from handheld tech to starships. She periodically offers seemingly arbitrary discounts on her services, though usually because she has quietly added her own custom modifications for alpha testing. When she remembers to do so, she lets her clients know about the unsolicited adjustments, but she typically forgets until weeks later when her customers return to demand an explanation for their gear's bizarre performance. As Mion sees it, she's an artist; any discounts she offers are a fair cost for her experimentation and personal brand exposure.



While most critiques of Mion's questionable inventions bounce off her titanium shoulders (replacing the ones she was born with on her right side, which shattered when one of her modified engines exploded), she's aggressively competitive and holds grudges for an almost inconceivably long time.

Mion also keeps careful tabs on every time she's mentioned in the media, and she maintains a consistent "hit list" of individuals and organizations she wants to eventually take revenge on for the crime of tarnishing her reputation. Her only plans more elaborate than her blueprints are her intricate revenge schemes, for which she occasionally tries to recruit her clients. While this behavior is unprofessional by just about every standard, Mion is at least selective about whom she asks for assistance in carrying out these schemes, only reaching out to captains and crews she personally likes and considers her friends. She might seem obtuse at times and certainly has a shaky sense of personal boundaries, but Mion calculates the risk and reward so that her friends receive fair compensation for helping her complete her personal vendettas—usually.

MR. OATHDAY, THE FENCE

Mr. Oathday doesn't remember his original name nor who killed him, but he does have vague memories that he used to possess a vast hoard of treasures and that someone (or perhaps a group of someones) stole those valuables away from him. When the former human returned to life as a varculak in an Absalom Station alley, the first thing he saw was an electronic news feed noting that it was the middle of the week. At that time, he decided upon a new name to commemorate that day. Though it was simply how the day was referred to on Lost Golarion, the name also befitted the fact that Mr. Oathday had sworn to discover the identities of all who had wronged him and to wreak terrible vengeance upon them.

As a fence, Mr. Oathday is willing to deal with all parties and trade in just about any type of goods. His willingness to engage in most kinds of transactions has made him a plethora of contacts within the criminal underworld, but in truth, Mr. Oathday always obsessively scours those same underworld contacts for any sign of his stolen goods. He knows that he'll recognize his lost treasures



once he sees them, so he continues to have a hand in as many illicit trades as possible.

As an undead being, Mr. Oathday doesn't care much for creature comforts. He operates a dingy pawn shop with a hidden back room where he can engage in his more illegal work, but he keeps no bedroom or kitchen. The substantial amount of credits he earns from his underworld dealings are mostly spent hiring agents to follow up on various leads he picks up from the infosphere that will hopefully lead to either his former assets or his killers. Since he pays well, he generally employs some of the best mercenaries available.

Most know not to cross Mr. Oathday, as he doesn't deal well with betrayal. When shown evidence that he has been deceived, the fence lashes out with a frightening ferocity at his surroundings and, occasionally, the messenger. He then contemplates how to make his betrayers pay for their transgressions. The rest of the time, however, Mr. Oathday is spookily calm and composed. He speaks in low, measured tones and keeps unblinking eye contact during conversation.

NABI, THE MEDIATOR

Nabi strives not to stand out in a crowd, instead observing quietly before stepping in to resolve anything she considers a problem. Hailing from an esteemed family of lashunta diplomats who groomed her for the profession, she's considered an authority in diplomatic negotiation and de-escalation. She began her anthropological studies as a toddler, holds a degree in interplanetary law, and is familiar with the laws and customs of countless species.

During negotiations, her methods have been likened to a butterfly gently landing upon a flower before leaving just as quietly as she came. Nabi has prevented more wars than most would like to admit, and she has established communication channels in several first-contact situations where biology or lack of technology have made communication nigh impossible. She hosts seminars and workshops regularly for the Starfinder Society, often attracting a retinue of pupils shadowing and assisting her with her work. The Society remains one of her most important clients, even as it also remains her most consistent source of frustration, given its agents' frequent misadventures.



Despite Nabi being an emissary of peace, some resent her work, viewing the wars she prevented as lucrative opportunities. She periodically fends off assassins as well as disgruntled, out-of-work mercenaries and arms dealers. While the diplomat has proven capable enough in a fight, she increasingly relies on bodyguards.

Just as she maintains neutrality in her work, she also strives toward neutrality and detachment in her personal life, eschewing the luxury of having true friends. With each passing year, her lack of personal connections wears at her emotional health, loath as she is to admit it. Even were she to make friends, she might struggle to not to see them as personal projects whose foibles she can solve.

Nabi struggles to accept failure. She has worked too hard to attain her current skills and professional record. Serious threats to her peacemaking efforts bring out her vindictive side, and she has leveraged her authority to waylay, imprison, and otherwise inconvenience anyone whose antics jeopardize her goals. Seeking peace at all costs, Nabi can become a truly fearsome enemy, even for would-be heroes.

KAVI VIRAN, THE MAGICAL EXPERT

Professor Kavi Viran ostensibly teaches comparative arcane anthropology at the Qabarat University of Xenanthropology, but her classes each semester only have a few students, all handpicked by her current teaching aide. It's also not unusual for Professor Viran to cancel classes for weeks at a time, often to study a new magical object while dictating her theories on its usage and origin aloud to a virtual intelligence program for later review. Though she's a respected historical researcher, Professor Viran's colleagues also know that she's extremely eccentric and picks up new superstitions with every offworld trip.

Professor Viran's tenured position goes a long way toward making her many escapades possible, and as much as she tests the university leadership's patience, she has never violated any school rules so severely to warrant dismissal or serious disciplinary action. Though the job provides for her needs, Professor Viran periodically accepts funding from less-than-ethical entities to afford better equipment, pricey reagents, or—somewhat more rarely—a crew who can carry her into dangerously occult regions. Her jaunts often feature narrow escapes; her teams have weathered sundry spiritual possessions, encouraging



her to hire a mystic when she remembers to do so (and just relying on a fistful of holy symbols when she doesn't). Despite these dangers, not to mention the several graduate students she has lost under mysterious circumstances, Professor Viran presses on with her research, insisting that knowledge is worth any price. Luckily for her, it seems there's always someone curious and brave enough to willingly enlist her help.

For all her brilliance, Professor Viran's reckless behavior might have seen her ostracized by employers and colleagues long ago. However, she's excellent at her profession and unrivaled at earning the trust of closed-off communities thanks to her charming personality, and possibly a little help from a mysterious, ever-present amulet that she calls her "lucky necklace." Professor Viran can enter a room with weeping families, enraged politicians, or stubborn corporate financiers and leave not long after with a new set of friends and signed papers approving her next project. Her colleagues joke that she could charm the *Starstone* out of Absalom Station—a challenge that intrigues her more with each passing year.

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AUEVI, THE ARTIST

A household name throughout Castrovel, Auevi is a sensational pop singer, performer, and holographic designer famous for her bubbly on-stage personality, dynamic fluorescent hardlight costumes, and hypnotic voice. Having performed for 17 years since early childhood, the Pop Princess of Hardlight's fame recently reached its peak when the city-state of Qabarot nominated her as its newest cultural outreach ambassador. To fulfill her role, Auevi and her team plan to spend the next several years touring the Pact Worlds to perform, attend celebrity events, and collaborate with famous artists.

The prestige of representing her home planet isn't enough for Auevi, though. With each success, her ambitions grow, and she craves the entire galaxy's worshipful praise. This desire isn't born from naivete, but cunning. She patiently works toward the day she'll be crowned the "Hardlight Queen."

Auevi presents herself as an outgoing diva who, in private, reverts to a shy, vulnerable introvert who missed out on her childhood due to work. She draws in well-connected patrons with her apparent vulnerability, using this cover to absorb any skills, influence, and assets they offer. Once they're no longer useful,



she leaves the individual to fade into obscurity (if they were nice) or pushes them into a career-ending scandal (if not). While Auevi never exposes or leaks a story herself, her fan base readily investigates any hints she leaves.

Auevi commands a wealth of connections and can secure the media spotlight, VIP passes, grant funding, and sundry perks for anyone she considers an ally. Though she dislikes righteous people, she does enjoy adopting heroic causes that improve her image or pay well. She periodically sponsors high-profile rescue missions or documentary crews filming cute, endangered creatures, even inviting herself along on occasion. These opportunities aren't just to build her brand; she's inexperienced with and curious about what genuine friendship feels like and considers these trips a chance to let her guard down.

Woe to anyone who betrays her trust. It's an open secret that her bodyguards and managers dispose of those she considers a threat, and her fans readily defend her infosphere reputation. Beyond that, there are numerous conspiracy theories speculating anything from Auevi having a dozen android body doubles to her performance outfits being extremely lightweight powered armor.

SACAVAX, THE SURVIVALIST

The thrill of the chase drives Sacavax, a trox^{AA2} who desires to become the greatest hunter the galaxy has ever known. The elite tracker is well on his way to achieving his goal, having triumphed over hundreds of creatures, big and small, in only five years. Raised in a strict Hylaxian family, Sacavax refuses to kill purely for sport, only deploying lethal countermeasures in self-defense or to acquire food. His arsenal includes enough sedatives to knock out a dragon, literally—an old story of the hunt he enjoys sharing. Sacavax only takes selfies as trophies, and he documents his travels on a moderately popular infosphere site to promote natural conservation.

His passion doesn't pay the bills, though, so Sacavax must take odd jobs that take him across the galaxy. Most often, he finds work as a guide through wild remote areas, helping his clients track wanted criminals and dangerous creatures alike. He works for a steep discount if the job takes place on a planet he has never visited, so long as he gets free time to add to his virtual scrapbook. He also happily shares his knowledge on how to survive in the



wilds, and some organizations and individuals simply hire him as an instructor.

Travel has tested and ultimately eroded Sacavax's devotion to Hylax, forcing him to accept morally questionable jobs. Still, he has one hard limit:

he won't harm animals unnecessarily. He despises poachers with a passion, often taking unpaid work that involves hunting them down. While he often cooperates with law enforcement agencies in this respect, he isn't above vigilantism (either alone or with trusted friends). Increasingly, his nonlethal tactics have begun backfiring, for when those poachers escape, are acquitted, or finish serving their time, an uncomfortable number make hunting Sacavax and anyone he has worked with their top priority.

Between jobs, Sacavax doesn't have a permanent home on a planet, though he does own a small starship. He often uses this time to visit zoos or other animal research centers to learn about creatures he has yet to face, updating his infosphere site with fun facts as he learns them. He's close with his family but has yet to stay romantically attached for very long.

MARI, PROFESSIONAL TRAVELER

Beaches with sunsets as vibrant as gemstones, towering luxury tree houses in remote forests teeming with wildlife, annual festivals alive with the sounds of celebration and the smell of sizzling meat—for many travelers, these descriptions might represent an ideal vacation spot or even a once-in-a-lifetime trip. For Mari, a human travel journalist who vlogs for her billions of followers about everything she does, they're just casual stops on her tour of the universe. Embracing the "experience" of being a traveler, Mari seeks adventure and relaxation in equal measure and has honed her ability to find any destination's hidden gems. She always seems to be in exactly the right place at exactly the right time, almost defying the limits of practical Drift travel, driving rumors that the young journalist is actually a set of identical triplets posing as one person (though she assures her audience she's "the one and only") or even some avatar of Weydan.

While she comes across as somewhat flippant and entitled, Mari is resourceful, respectful of different customs and traditions, and genuinely wants to share her love of travel. Her regular column, "Min-Max Mari," shows cost-conscious travelers how to "minimize expenses" and helps those less concerned with a budget to "maximize fun." She uses her platform to advocate for accessible, responsible travel, although she bends her own rules every now and then to get ahead of a hot story. Mari's critics loudly decry these hypocrisies as morally reprehensible for a journalist and socially responsible traveler; however, her fans defend her imperfections as true honesty.

Regardless of moral compunction, Mari knows how to exploit available resources to get what she wants. Ever the type to ask for forgiveness than permission, she's the shameless guest who invites herself on any intriguing adventure—even going so far as to stow away on a starship and reveal herself once it would be incredibly inconvenient for the crew to turn back. She especially enjoys tagging along with Starfinders due to their capable starships and love of the unknown; however, the Society is divided on whether to celebrate her contributions or chase her away.

Such prolific travel makes Mari a font of obscure information with countless unlikely contacts. She doesn't mind side gigs in espionage, but she usually requires recompense in the form of future favors, most of which involve ferrying her to inconvenient destinations so she can witness some time-sensitive spectacle.

Even though she avoids publishing anything salacious, Mari is privy to so many secrets and commands such a large readership that some consider her a liability. Her fame also makes her a target, such as when pirates abducted her and held her for a ludicrous ransom. Luckily, Mari's followers knew her travel plans and contacted local authorities to secure her release. Since then, Mari has been careful not to advertise her trip details in advance, and she releases prerecorded videos of her lodgings only after departing. Each near-miss makes the once-reckless personality a little more cautious. If her travel-sized self-defense armament sponsorships

are any indication, she might be toting a concealed arsenal wherever she goes.

For all her exciting experiences, brilliant articles, and appreciative fans, Mari contemplates the galaxy's vastness with mixed feelings. On one hand, she's desperate to witness the unique wonders of each world. On the other, she bitterly laments her own mortality, knowing that she'll only ever experience a fraction of what's out there. The public knows she's trying to cram several lifetimes of adventure into a few decades. What few realize, though, is that she's also desperately seeking technological and magical means to extend her lifespan. Any rumor of longevity tonics, magical youth fruits, or even advances in digital personality uploads capture her imagination, and several Eoxian agents persistently remind her of how easily undeath could fulfill her needs.



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JOB 1: WORTH A THOUSAND

This side job is suitable for 2nd-level characters. It functions on any habitable world with ample wilderness and wildlife, such as Castrovel, Orikolai, or worlds in the Tabori Cluster.

BACKGROUND

A few short decades ago, the Pact Worlds and Veskarium declared a truce in their centuries-long Silent War to repel the encroaching Swarm. Despite the formal peace since, some Veskarium loyalists long to resume their old conquests. Likewise, some Silent War veterans from the Pact Worlds can't shake their deeply rooted suspicions of their vesk neighbors. Well-intentioned diehards on both sides have continued the old conflict, believing they're working in the best interests of their respective civilizations and espousing all manner of wild conspiracies about relationships between the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium. Both factions continuously attempt to outmaneuver the other, yet the actions of either could eventually provoke open warfare between the galactic powers once more.

The Pact Worlds vigilantes maintain a loose network of spies and agents.

Euordin (CG male korasha lashunta) recently joined the operation and set up a travel agency on a verdant world, following leads that Veskarium agents might be operating nearby. Hoping to confirm these rumors and prove his worth to his new colleagues, he recruits unwitting explorers to act as scouts.

THE JOB OFFER

Euordin has posted numerous advertisements in search of "explorers willing to brave a little danger on a contract basis." As the PCs arrive to investigate the travel agency's offer, the middle-aged lashunta heartily waves them in and takes a break from assembling furniture and unpacking crates.

"Ecotourism!" he exclaims in a deep voice upon greeting his visitors. "A private owner owned the nearby wilds for ages, but it's being purchased and transformed into a wilderness preserve. We have only the flimsiest records of what's out there. I'm looking for explorers to confirm the map I have, document several interesting sites, and be on the look out for anything else out of the ordinary. Ah yes—" The lashunta tears open a crate. "And you won't need your own cameras; I'll supply the equipment."

Euordin provides some additional information to the PCs, some of which he

volunteers or readily answers if asked and some of which requires investigation.

Sites: The map shows a trail loop that forms an uneven oval. Three sites are marked along the path: a clearing with a hot spring, a suspension footbridge that crosses a waterfall, and an observation tower atop a promontory.

Equipment: Euordin provides the PCs a camera drone that weighs 1 bulk. The drone's obvious features include a 360-degree camera, rotors for flight, and handles for carrying the drone when not in use. Use the statistics for a 1st-level mechanic's hover drone with only flight system (x2) and camera mods that can operate for 1 hour total and be controlled up to 300 feet away. What isn't apparent (though a PC can determine it by closely examining the drone with a successful DC 18 Engineering check or DC 22 Perception check) is that the drone

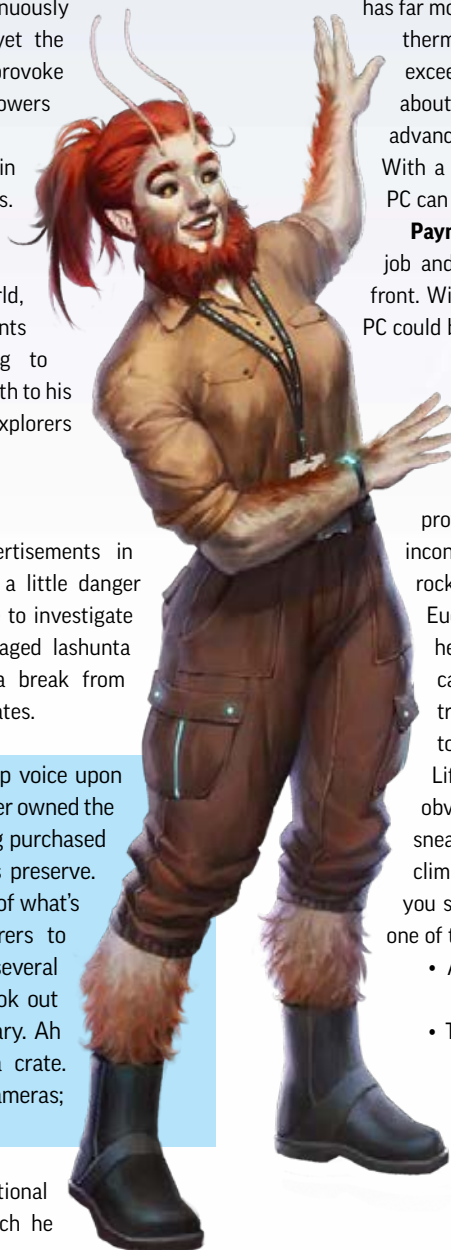
has far more than a camera; it includes sophisticated thermal imaging, radar, and other senses that exceed Euordin's job specifications. If asked about it, he shrugs and admits the drone is more advanced than necessary, but it's what he has. With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, a PC can determine he isn't being entirely honest.

Payment: Euordin offers 600 credits for the job and is willing to pay up to 200 credits up front. With a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check, a PC could bargain the total up to 800 credits.

EXPLORATION

As advertised, the wilderness seems largely untouched. Game trails crisscross the hilly area, trees provide dappled shade, undergrowth is inconvenient but not impassably thick, and rocky outcroppings jut up through the soil. Euordin's map faithfully traces several heavily overgrown hiking trails that the PCs can follow without much trouble. As they travel, have each PC attempt a DC 15 check to look for interesting features; skills like Life Science, Perception, and Survival are obvious fits, but PCs can also use Stealth to sneak up on interesting animals, Athletics to climb and get a good view, and other skills as you see fit. For each success, the PCs discover one of the following near the trail.

- Abandoned tarps, crates, and trash that suggest a military exercise took place here.
- Tire tracks from a large vehicle that are deeper when entering the forest and shallower when heading out.
- Scorch marks and damage to trees seemingly caused by weapon testing.
- Several bottles of Pact Worlds soda can be found tossed into nearby shrubbery.



EVENT 1: UNEXPECTED COMPANY (CR 2)

Once the PCs reach the viewing platform and take a panorama, or if they decide to follow the tire tracks they found, they encounter a pair of vesk agents on patrol. They claim to be park rangers (despite their ample weaponry), using their authority to demand why the PCs are here without authorization. If the PCs claim that they've come for a job, the vesk hesitate and try to learn about the employer and their objectives, eventually demanding to examine the drone.

In fact, these park rangers are agents of the Veskarium who never really accepted the Silent War's conclusion and have begun work on a hideout to serve as a base for long-term espionage on this planet. Suspecting the PCs are enemy agents, the vesk hope to commandeer, destroy, or corrupt the drone to foil their presumed rivals. Failing that, they'll subdue the PCs to eliminate witnesses. Although brash and confident, the vesk aren't expert liars, and a PC can sense inconsistencies in their story with a successful DC 16 Sense Motive check. The more that the PCs seem to doubt their story, the more the so-called park rangers conclude violence is the answer.

If given the drone, though, they examine it for a few minutes before smashing it against nearby rocks. Breaking it open makes it far easier to examine the secret hardware, reducing the DC of the Engineering check to find the sensors to 14.

Creatures: These agents use the statistics for security guards (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 176) but with the vesk subtype graft, granting them low-light vision and a vesk's armor savant, fearless, and natural weapons species traits.

Each agent begins combat by tossing a stickybomb and flash grenade respectively to debilitate enemies. They follow up with shots from their pulsecaster pistols and then draw tactical batons only as a last measure.

VESKARIUM AGENTS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 23 each (*Pact Worlds* 176)

Development: Should the guards get away, they'll report their encounter with the PCs to someone higher up the command chain in time for a scout to track the party back to the agency. The PCs will therefore meet a larger intercepting party for **Event 2: Let's Skedaddle**.

EVENT 2: LET'S SKEDADDLE

Arriving back at the agency, the PCs find Euordin "out for business." The receptionist, likewise a member of the spy network, will patiently listen to the group's discoveries and concerns, in addition to paying the party what they're owed, provided the drone remained intact.

If the PCs are still unaware of what they were actually doing, the receptionist will offer to let them deliver the drone to the agency's "graphic artist," who lives one space flight away on a nearby planet. Accepting this job provides an additional 500 credits, paid up front.

If the PCs figured out the drone's true purpose, the receptionist words the offer as a heavy suggestion—a threat

even—that the PCs should take this "opportunity" to get off the planet. Being a travel agency, they can help PCs rent a tier 2 starship or procure tickets for one that leaves within the hour. If the PCs don't have a particular model in mind, the receptionist will book a DMC Mauler (*Core Rulebook* 314).

Development: Those hiding out in the forest work fast. Shortly after takeoff, two KC K-51 Sky Fishers (*Starship Operations Manual* 82) accost the PCs, demanding they land and answer for what they did. If the Veskarium agents from **Event 1: Unexpected Company** managed to get away and report back to their superiors, exchange the interceptors with a fully crewed DMC Mauler.

Players might decide to resolve this event through a starship chase (*Starship Operations Manual* 44) or through starship combat (*Core Rulebook* 316). They might even cede to the enemies' demands and take the fighting to the ground or goad those in the ships into boarding the PCs' vehicle. During starship combat, the enemies retreat once their ship drops below 10 HP. Obstacles that might occur during the chase, meanwhile, are likely to involve the incredibly skilled enemy pilots. If in-person combat occurs, use the vesk stats suggested in **Event 1: Unexpected Company**. In this instance, the vesk will fight to the death.

GETTING PAID

While PCs should receive payment as this side job progresses, if they somehow weren't paid before they leave the planet, they receive what they're owed once they hand over the drone and its full sensory array logs to this "graphic artist." The artist takes the chance to hint at who they think the vesk in the forest might be and expresses that the PCs might have made an enemy greater than they imagined. As for future opportunities, while the spy network probably won't send them out to do more scans, the PCs might be asked to extract agents of Euordin's travel agency, though the lashunta's cover has likely been blown by now.

Along with their payment, the PCs run the risk of becoming embroiled in Pact Worlds politics. Even though they might not realize the full extent of their mission, the Stewards might take note of the PCs and ask them to continue working with Euordin in an attempt to set up a mole within the wider anti-Veskarium organization. This request could lead to further payments directly from the Stewards.

ALTERNATE PLOTLINE

It's possible that by failing any of the events, the PCs end up captured. This outcome opens the possibility of them being interrogated by the vesk hiding out in the forest, who might or might not be working for the Veskarium. After discovering the PCs' relative innocence, the group could try to convince the PCs to become double agents to investigate the mysterious group behind Euordin's travel agency.

If those in the forest are indeed a military branch of the Veskarium, and if the PCs decipher who comprises the spy network and what their goal is, will the PCs ultimately be forced to choose a side? Or might the two be convinced to share aligning goals? All these are possibilities to consider.

JOB 2: AKATA ISSUES

This side job is suitable for 3rd-level characters. Although presented on Akiton, it can be set anywhere remote enough to hide a risky research facility. You can create your own map or use *Starfinder Flip-Mat: Undercity* to present the underground facility.

BACKGROUND

House Isaris, a minor drow house on Apostae, produces armaments made from rare materials like silver and skymetals. Using such specialized ingredients limits Isaris's growth—which is why its scion, Lady **Acra Isaris** (NE female drow noble), sponsored an outcast group of scientists researching akata gestation. House Isaris funded the scientists' work on the condition they send the akatas' noqual-infused cocoons to Isaris facilities for refinement. Lady Acra has kept the endeavor secret, both to keep clients from learning about her unethical research and prevent rivals from gaining any leverage against her house. However, an akata recently escaped the facility on Akiton, triggering an automated quarantine and threatening the entire operation.

Statistics and information on akatas and void zombies appear on pages 8–9 of *Starfinder Alien Archive 2*.

THE JOB OFFER

Lady Acra's personal assistant, **Milya Arondis** (N agender verthani envoy), hires the PCs from a nondescript office building on Akiton. After complimenting the PCs' reputation for professionalism and discretion (and hinting that such discretion will keep them alive and wealthy), she reviews the job details.

Milya explains that her unnamed employer owns several research facilities on Akiton, one of which recently suffered an attack from predatory creatures that endangered staff and resulted in damaged communications equipment. Her employer primarily wishes to recover research logs and material samples, though they'll pay extra for any surviving scientists the PCs rescue. Milya has secured a suborbital shuttle to take the PCs to the ghost town of Lestir, after which they'll have 16 hours to access the nearby facility and investigate before an extraction vehicle arrives. Once the research logs, materials, and any survivors reach their destination for review, the PCs will receive 3,000 credits. Milya is willing to offer 300 of the credits up front. If a PC succeeds at a DC 18 Diplomacy to negotiate for more, they increase the total payout to 4,500 credits.

Unfortunately, Milya has little information beyond these details, including any intelligence about the predators or the extent of the damage. They shrug it off, noting their benefactor rarely provides more than is strictly necessary—an example of the discretion expected of the PCs.

RESEARCH RETRIEVAL

After arriving in Lestir, the PCs can track down the research facility about 3 miles outside town. The low-lying bunker has a single entrance marked with a vortex insignia and Drow text; a PC who reads Drow or succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check identifies this marking as a symbol of House Isaris, a minor Apostae house known for manufacturing weaponry from

rare materials. Using key cards that Milya provided, the PCs can enter the facility's decontamination room. Once sealed, it begins filling with saltwater as an automated voice conveys in Drow, Eoxian, and Common that air-breathing guests should hold their breath and try not to float. The compartment floods within 30 seconds, remains full for 30 seconds, and then drains for 30 seconds, with the inner doors opening a few seconds later.

The doors open into a battle-damaged hallway filled with cracked vidscreens, flickering lights, streaks of blood, and bits of viscera. Several doors into nearby rooms have been pried open, and others show signs of having been barricaded from the inside. The various rooms include a variety of dormitories, offices, communal spaces, and small laboratories, with a heavier door leading into the main lab. **Event 1: Gestation** takes place in one of these residential areas, and **Event 2: Whelping** takes place in the main lab.

Research: As the PCs investigate the rooms, they can recover various research materials, such as sheafs of notes, data from intact computers, vials of biological samples, and the like. In total, there are four pieces of valuable research to acquire, which a PC can identify or recover with a successful DC 16 skill check. In general, Computers, Life Science, Medicine, Physical Science, or an associated Profession check are relevant skills, though you might allow other skills at a slightly higher DC.

What Happened: The scientists have run various experiments varying the temperature, air composition, and more to affect the quality of the noqual that akatas weave into their cocoons. A recent set of variables caused a test group considerable distress, and their thrashing shattered their containment tubes. The escaped akatas attacked scientists before lockdown procedures activated, killing many and causing some to rise as void zombies.

EVENT 1: GESTATION (CR 4)

Akata bites shed larva into the wounds, causing victims to become mindless void zombies after death, with a young akata bursting from the zombie a week later. Between the initial akata attack and the resulting void zombie outbreak, only two scientists have survived. Dr. **Kariz Rotrut** (LE male ghoulish scientist) and Dr. **Petra Ziyaj** (NE female human scientist) have barricaded themselves in the decontamination room and living quarters beyond, and the chamber's salt residue has discouraged the remaining akatas from investigating further.

Creatures: Several void zombies stalk the barricaded area, periodically posturing aggressively or devouring the remains of the staff. Once the PCs enter the room, the zombies attack, but they're more focused on grabbing a character to chew than on coordinating their attacks.

VOID ZOMBIES (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 22 each (*Starfinder Alien Archive 2* 8)

Development: With the void zombies defeated, the PCs can investigate the area, finding signs that the decontamination

room beyond has been barricaded. The two scientists within witnessed the PCs' fight through the few surviving security cameras but are uncertain of the PCs' motives. With a successful DC 17 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check, a PC can convince them to disassemble the barricade and come out; a PC can also break down the barrier with a successful DC 22 Strength check. Kariz wears his full medical coveralls, mask, and gloves to avoid spooking the PCs with his undead nature, and he's interested in recovering lost data. Petra is much less patient, wanting to escape and avoid further misfortune, though she grimly concedes that her employer would be very angry if the research materials weren't recovered. They're both cagey about their employer's identity, their work, and even what befell the compound. They follow the PCs' lead, avoiding fights except as very reluctant combatants.

In fact, Petra is hiding a wound on her arm from where an akata bit her earlier. She has bound the wound and donned a fresh jacket and shoos away anyone checking her condition. Yet, she has reached the impaired stage of the void death disease and is about to decline further, causing her to struggle with strenuous actions. With a DC 15 Medicine or Sense Motive check while observing her, a PC can note her diseased condition. With a medkit and a successful Medicine check to treat disease—or the medkit on the vehicle sent later to pick them up—the PCs can help Petra overcome the disease. Otherwise, she's likely to perish before reaching their employer. Part of her reticence to acknowledge the infection comes from being trapped with Kariz; he has kept his hunger in check so far, but she fears he would consume her if he learned how sick she is.

EVENT 2: WHELPING (CR 4)

The PCs might have recovered some research and scientists, but the primary data and materials are in the main lab near the facility's rear. The main lab's door requires upper-level key card access, and the PCs can either use Petra's card or unlock the door with a successful DC 22 Computers or Engineering check.

The main lab contains nine translucent vats, six of which have been broken open, spilling the fluid inside onto the floor. They're otherwise empty except for open cocoons of greenish silk about 3 feet long. The other three vats remain sealed, with one intact cocoon each. With a successful DC 16 Life Science check, a PC recognizes these as akata cocoons, remembers that they often incorporate noqual that the akata transmutes, and recalls basic facts about akatas. If present, Petra busies herself with recovering data from some of the computers while Kariz guards the hallway. Even now, they dodge questions about their research, merely noting that they'll need to recover the cocoons.

Creatures: The three intact cocoons contain akatas ready to hatch, and as the PCs explore, the akatas begin sensing life and waking up. Thanks to the recent chaos, their vats are cracked, and they'll inevitably break free; however, the nearby displays warn of the impending breach, giving the PCs time to take positions and even try to sedate or damage the akatas using the control panels. To do so, a PC must succeed at a DC 18 Computers, Life Science, or Medicine check to enter the commands, either flooding the tubes with saltwater (dealing 2d6 damage to each akata) or sedatives (making the akatas sickened for 1d2 rounds) before they break free.

AKATAS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 18 each (*Starfinder Alien Archive 2 8*)

GETTING PAID

The extraction ship arrives as planned, evacuating the PCs and any survivors (though if not treated, Petra withdraws to rest and perishes). The ship brings the PCs to a secure space where Milya waits. They accept the research from the party and take note of the researchers left alive. If Petra died, they gently scold the characters, stating that researchers aren't cheap and that the PCs should've kept a better eye on her. Once the extraction ship docks, Milya issues the party the rest of their payment, with a bonus of 2,000 credits if the characters harvested all the akata cocoons. They then remind the party of their nondisclosure agreement and how it's better for everyone if that agreement isn't broken.

If the PCs keep to the agreement, Lady Acra adds them to her list of contractors and shares their information with some of her allied drow houses, prompting more job offers for the party. If they break the agreement and share the information, she immediately takes to the media, slandering the characters by presenting false evidence of them breaking and entering into the research compound and ransacking the place.



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JOB 3: THE DARKLING STACKS

This side job is suitable for 9th-level characters. It takes place in a supernatural library at an unspecified location, so you can easily place it anywhere in the galaxy. You can create your own map or use *Starfinder Flip-Mat: Undercity* to present some library areas. Finally, this adventure uses a svartalgar (*Starfinder* #11: *The Penumbra Protocol* 60), whose statistics can also be found online for free at sfrd.info, but you can substitute statistics of a perigeon lucandrian^{AA3} with the light blindness universal creature rule and darkvision with a range of 60 feet for a similar experience.

BACKGROUND

The Ziralyan Archive boasts one of the greatest collections of arcane lore; its digital and physical resources contain so much magic that the library itself has developed spontaneous magical and extraplanar properties—possibly even intelligence. Its winding

shelves reconfigure themselves periodically, almost as if the library is mulling over the ideas it stores. Though visitors often feel they're being watched, the sensation usually feels protective rather than malicious. Restricted areas can be more dangerous, however. The scholars who manage the Ziralyan Archive forsake their former identities, referring to themselves only by practical titles. In a way, they seem to become an extension of the library, navigating its idiosyncrasies with ease.

Recently, the Head Librarian ventured to the library's deepest level to retrieve some restricted texts but didn't return. Since then, the archive's supernatural elements have become dangerous and especially unpredictable. Shelves shift with hazardous speed, strange pocket dimensions displace patrons, and a bizarre repeating cipher has replaced some texts.

In fact, the Head Librarian was retrieving a Gap-era tome that served as the prison for the bitter svartalgar Khaziv, who couldn't remember why he was trapped inside. Despite the librarian's precautions in handling the book, Khaziv managed to escape, trapping the Head Librarian in his place. Khaziv now searches for some way to return to his home, the Shadow Plane.

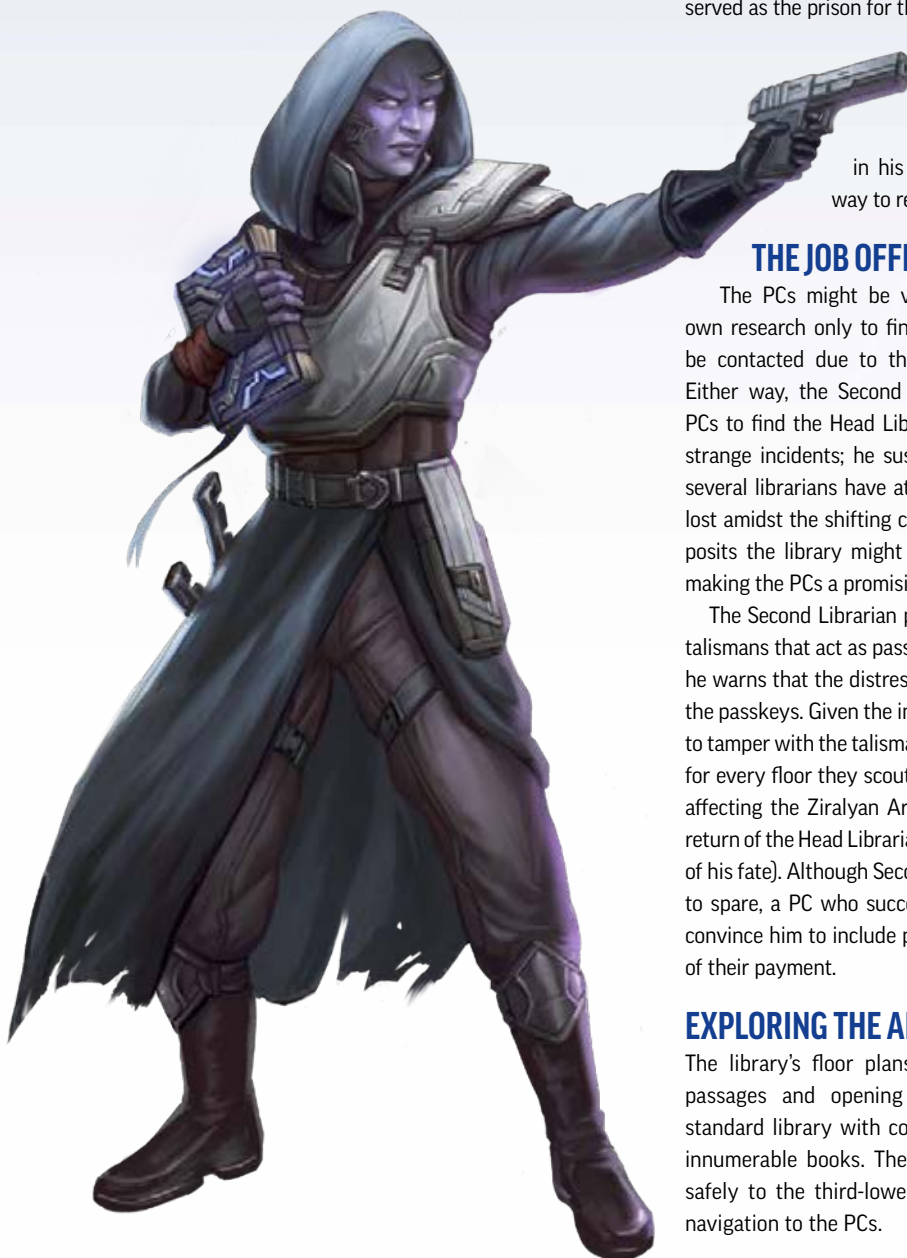
THE JOB OFFER

The PCs might be visiting the Ziralyan Archive for their own research only to find it temporarily closed, or they might be contacted due to their reputation as skilled adventurers. Either way, the Second Librarian, a tiefling human, asks the PCs to find the Head Librarian and figure out the cause of the strange incidents; he suspects they're related. He reports that several librarians have attempted to investigate but all became lost amidst the shifting corridors before managing to return. He posits the library might be less prepared to outwit strangers, making the PCs a promising rescue team.

The Second Librarian provides the PCs with a trio of magical talismans that act as passkeys to the lowest three levels, though he warns that the distressed library might not always recognize the passkeys. Given the increased danger, he advises the PCs not to tamper with the talismans. As payment, he offers 1,000 credits for every floor they scout, 4,000 more for resolving whatever is affecting the Ziralyan Archive, and another 4,000 for the safe return of the Head Librarian (or 2,000 for returning with evidence of his fate). Although Second Librarian doesn't have many credits to spare, a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check can convince him to include permanent access to the library as part of their payment.

EXPLORING THE ARCHIVE

The library's floor plans shift periodically, sealing off some passages and opening others. Most of the facility is a standard library with computer terminals, reading desks, and innumerable books. The Second Librarian can guide the PCs safely to the third-lowest floor's entrance but leaves further navigation to the PCs.



The deeper they go, the more crates and assorted oddities the PCs find along the shelves. They might encounter glowing runes, tomes that bleed when opened, or short-lived extraplanar tears that offer glimpses of alien realms. Some of these resulted from the Head Librarian's imprisonment (see *Bound and Determined* below), which caused an unstable magical backlash, and others are the Archive's attempts to ward off the PCs. By the time the PCs reach the lowest two levels, the ambient light is dim, and other light levels are reduced by one level.

With concerning frequency, text found here rearranges itself to form repeating chains of symbols, which a PC can translate with a successful DC 28 Computers, Culture, or Mysticism check: "Ink-bound umbra, parchment prison, shadow seal me away."

Navigation: Avoid mapping out the library. Navigation can be a narrative experience, interspersed with short scenes, skill checks to stay on course, and an occasional combat encounter. For each floor, have a navigating PC attempt a DC 28 skill check to stay on course; the appropriate skills might vary based on the level and its contents, but skills like Mysticism, Perception, and Survival are good candidates. Succeeding helps the PCs travel quickly. Failing causes them to lose some time (see below) and perhaps encounter hazards.

Limited Time: The longer the PCs take to navigate, the tougher the job might become. This isn't measured in a specific amount of time, but instead in how many delays they experience; a delay might represent 15 minutes, an hour, or more (whatever works for your game). Likewise, the way delays impact the adventure can vary: a delay might trigger a random encounter, it might let Khaziv grow a little stronger, or repeated delays might mean the Head Librarian is harmed or even dead by the time the PCs arrive.

Additional Encounters: Only two encounters necessarily comprise this side job, but you can add more to flesh out the experience or create a longer adventure. The library might animate some of its contents, such as animated armor (*Alien Archive* 3 7) or guardian robots (*Alien Archive* 3 86), believing that the PCs are invaders who could cause more damage. The PCs might encounter talking statues or friendly virtual intelligences designed to help visitors find what they need, though they're likely wary due to the ongoing chaos. With careful words and relevant skill checks, the PCs might calm these beings to learn more of what happened and the threats ahead.

A GASH IN THE DOOR (CR 10)

The ongoing magical damage has affected the door to the lowest level. When activated by its key, it opens to a shadowy, forested demiplane. Intended as a temporary holding cell for unauthorized entrants, the space has been warped by the Shadow Plane's growing influence due to Khaziv's destabilization of the library.

Creatures: Within lurk two shadowy beings (use the statistics for living holograms), each bound to a different twisted tree stump (functioning as the projector) near the demiplane's center. These beings stalk and ultimately attack the PCs.

LIVING HOLOGRAMS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

HP 115 each (*Alien Archive* 3 66)

A trapdoor obscured by leaf litter near the stumps leads to the lowest level, but it's magically sealed and barely responds to the keys the PCs have. A PC can reconfigure the key with a successful DC 28 Mysticism check, break down the trapdoor with a DC 24 Strength check, cleverly remove the door with a DC 30 Engineering check, or some other idea. Given that it's an umbral demiplane, using a powerful light effect on the area might reduce these DCs or even blast open the trapdoor entirely. Climbing down, the PCs reach the lowest level.

BOUND AND DETERMINED (CR 10)

The lowest level is especially dark and foreboding. Tomes bound in chains rattle hungrily at the PCs' approach, mounted creatures cast shadows that seem to reach toward them, and the faint sound of books being slammed shut echo through the stacks every so often. After the PCs succeed at one more check to navigate the level (with a +2 circumstance bonus to the check if they translated the cipher earlier), they find an especially dark patch of seething shadows. These shadows obscure the tome that now traps the Head Librarian. If the PCs met few delays reaching the tome, they might have caught Khaziv off guard, giving them time to examine it, confirm that it contains a trapped being, and possibly even correspond briefly with the librarian within.

Creatures: Khaziv is nearby and moves to intervene. He does what he can to discourage the PCs, first pretending to be one of the library's guardians and warning them to stay away from the dangerous artifact. If that fails, he tries to lure away one or two PCs to eliminate them. If they call his bluff, he attacks, using his control over the area to transmute two masses of books into minions (use the statistics for Large earth elementals). To make the encounter more interesting, the numerous stacks of books can provide partial cover, and with a move action and successful DC 20 skill check (such as Sleight of Hand or Profession [librarian]) a PC heaps the books higher to provide cover.

SVARTALFAR CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 135 (*Starfinder* #11: *The Penumbra Protocol* 60)

LARGE EARTH ELEMENTALS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (*Alien Archive* 46)

Defeating Khaziv might be sufficient to trap him back in the tome, causing the Head Librarian to reappear nearby. Alternatively, the PCs might need to use the book's contents to devise a short ritual to transpose the two.

GETTING PAID

After the PCs kill or seal away Khaziv, the Ziralyan Archive begins to stabilize, and they can return with the Head Librarian to the levels above. The Second Librarian is relieved and offers the PCs their payment as promised. After conferring, the two might mention that the name of the individual who initially requested Khaziv's bound tome appears to be false. Someone intentionally tried to destabilize the library... but discovering who and why would require further investigation.

JOB 4: THE STARSHIP DILEMMA

This side job is suitable for 13th-level characters. Although presented in the Diaspora, it can be set in any semi-remote location where the Veskarium wouldn't want to provoke war. You can create your own map for the facility or use *Starfinder Flip-Mat: Space Port* or *Starfinder Flip-Mat: The Sunrise Maiden Starship* to present the underground facility. Finally, this adventure uses some content from *Starship Operations Manual*, rules for which are available online for free at sfrd.info.

BACKGROUND

Lieutenant **Buri Ruvelon** (LE female vesk operative) is a rising star in the Veskarium; her exploits as a mercenary and arms procurer have earned her an honorary rank in the empire's military. Intent on outdoing her earlier achievements, she has hired several off-grid groups to develop new starship components, hoping at least one will revolutionize warfare forever. However, she hasn't been entirely honest with her contractors. A team of sarcesian mechanics Buri hired initially thought they were developing a device for decontaminating derelict starships but have slowly realized they've been working on a potent weapon that could vaporize an enemy starship's crew while leaving the vessel intact. Hoping to deny this technology to their suspicious employer, they've contacted friends among the Veskarium's pahtra rebels, hoping the pahtras might repurpose the weapon (and the starship it's mounted on) to protect their home.

THE JOB OFFER

Lieutenant Ruvelon contacts the PCs, either through a personal contact or because of their sterling reputations, and invites them aboard her cruiser the *Twilight Starhunter*. She explains that the *Steel Aurora*, another one of her starships, was undergoing routine maintenance with a mechanic she'd been recommended named Gaelin Xilra. Work was supposed to be done two months ago, but Gaelin has been stalling and is now ignoring all her subsequent attempts to make contact.

Understandably, she wants her starship back. However, Buri recognizes the terrible optics involved if she uses force against Pact Worlds citizens. Thus, she wants to hire the PCs to infiltrate the facility and retrieve the starship. If asked, she can provide genuine proof that she owns the starship and has digital contracts for the work commissioned. In addition to paying the PCs 100,000 credits for retrieving the starship, she implies that success could also lead to future lucrative opportunities throughout the Veskarium.

GAELIN'S GARAGE

The PCs need to reach the mechanics' shop, located within the Diaspora. Most likely, the PCs have their own starship, but if not, Buri can transport them to a nearby Pact World and let them arrange their own transit. Either way, she shadows them in her cruiser, which is specially equipped with a basic cloaking device (*Near Space* 114), which hides her starship entirely from budget and cut-rate sensors. She's detectable by better sensors, but only within the first increment of the sensors' range—and the vessel stays considerably farther away than that as its crew observes the PCs' approach.

The garage is built directly into a medium-size asteroid. A steel sliding door hundreds of feet wide seals off the main hangar, and several smaller doors nearby descend into living quarters and offices. Two flickering neon signs read "Gaelin's Garage" and "Closed for Business" in 10-foot-tall letters.

The hangar door is virtually impenetrable, so the PCs likely enter through one of the smaller steel doors (hardness 20, 90 HP, break DC 30). They're locked, requiring a key card or passcode entered into a numerical keypad to open; a PC can bypass either system with a successful DC 30 Computers or Engineering check.

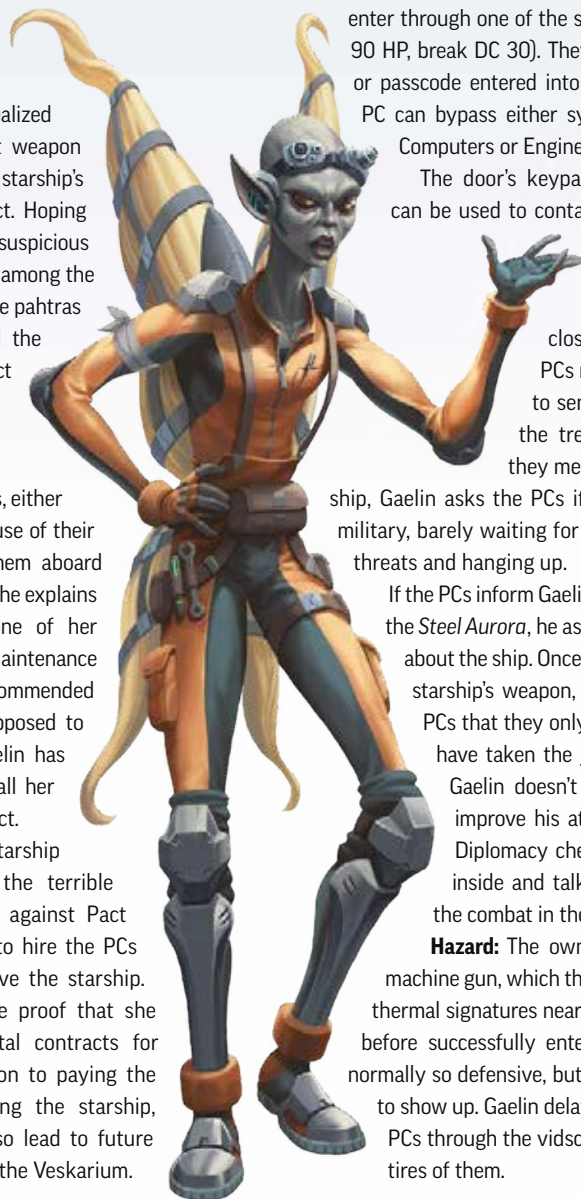
The door's keypad also has a vidscreen, which can be used to contact the sarcesians inside. Gaelin answers any call and demands to know who the PCs are before telling them the shop is closed and to come back later. If the PCs refuse to leave, Gaelin threatens to send his mechanics out to remove the trespassers from his property. If they mention Lieutenant Ruvelon or her

ship, Gaelin asks the PCs if they're part of the Veskarium military, barely waiting for an answer before repeating his threats and hanging up.

If the PCs inform Gaelin that they were hired to retrieve the *Steel Aurora*, he asks what the lieutenant told them about the ship. Once he knows they're ignorant of the starship's weapon, he laughs bitterly and tells the PCs that they only got half the story and wouldn't have taken the job if they knew the other half.

Gaelin doesn't want meddlers, so a PC must improve his attitude with a successful DC 35 Diplomacy check to convince him to let them inside and talk; doing so potentially bypasses the combat in the hangar bay.

Hazard: The owners have installed a concealed machine gun, which they've armed to deploy and fire at thermal signatures near the door for at least 30 seconds before successfully entering the passcode. They aren't normally so defensive, but they expect Buri or her ruffians to show up. Gaelin delays the trap while speaking to the PCs through the vidscreen, activating it manually if he tires of them.



MACHINE GUN TRAP**CR 11****XP 12,800****Type** technological; **Perception** DC 36; **Disable** Engineering DC 31 (deactivate the weapon)**Trigger** proximity (thermal, 60 feet); **Init** +17; **Reset** 1 round; **Bypass** keypad on the inside of the door (DC 35 to wirelessly hack)**Effect** machine gun +24 ranged (3d10+11 piercing damage); multiple targets (up to three targets within 15 feet of each other)**Treasure:** The medium machine gun can be looted from the trap if disabled.**HANGAR BAY (CR 13)**

This large hangar has room for two Huge starships, though only one of the bays is occupied. The starship has several detached components, and the workstations around it look as though they were recently used but abandoned in a hurry. With a successful DC 20 Culture check, a PC can identify this starship as being of Veskarium make; one of the detached panels bears the name *Steel Aurora*. Because the sarcesian inhabitants don't need a breathable atmosphere, the site doesn't have active life support systems.

Creatures: If aware of the PCs' approach, the mechanics take cover away from the doors, activate their energy shields, and activate their assassin robots to prepare an ambush. If not previously aware, the mechanics signal the assassin robots, which arrive 1d2 rounds later. If one of the sarcesians is slain, the others attempt to flee to Gaelin's office.

SARCESIAN CYBERCOMMANDOS (3)**CR 8****XP 4,800 each****HP** 110 each (*Alien Archive* 98)**ASSASSIN ROBOTS (2)****CR 9****XP 6,400 each****HP** 135 each (*Alien Archive* 2 108)

Development: Gaelin watches the encounter from his office while attempting to upload copies of important files in case he must flee. If one of the sarcesians is slain, or more than half of the PCs are defeated, he leaves and arrives in the hangar bay two rounds later. As he arrives, he shouts for everybody to lower their weapons so he can speak with the PCs; the remaining sarcesians and robots comply with this order immediately. If the PCs choose to attack Gaelin, he surrenders after one round of combat, begging for the PCs to talk to him.

Gaelin conveys that if the PCs deliver the *Steel Aurora* to Buri, they could be unleashing a terrible weapon on unsuspecting innocents—including the Pact Worlds. The lieutenant contracted Gaelin to install the experimental technology under false pretenses, claiming that it was for decontaminating derelict starships for safe retrieval. However, the weapon's projected intensity exceeded those specifications, and the longer Gaelin has delayed, the more vicious the vesk patron's threats have become.

Rather than destroy it, he offered it to the Veskarium's pahtra rebels, hoping it could help them defy Veskarium rule. The contact hasn't yet arrived but should be here within a day or

even hours. Gaelin is telling the truth, and he has records to substantiate his story.

ESCAPING THE ASTEROID

What follows depends on what the PCs decide to do next, though they'll likely anger someone operating a heavily armed starship, regardless of their choice. They might decide to help Gaelin, in which case he thanks them and works to reassemble the last pieces of the starship alongside any surviving mechanics and the PCs. As they finish, Gaelin's rebel contact **Cisu** (CN agender pahtra) arranges a pickup—all while the *Twilight Starhunter* lurks nearby. If the PCs decide against Gaelin, he and his surviving companions fight to the death to stop them. The starship still requires some time to repair, at which point Cisu contacts the shop.

Supporting Lieutenant Ruvelon: If Cisu believes the PCs intend to return the ship to Buri, the pahtra agent attempts to destroy the *Steel Aurora* from their own commandeered starship. Whether the PCs scan the giant starship or witness the warning shots, they should realize that Cisu's starship is a deadly but relatively slow threat. Running away is the best option; this functions as a starship chase (*Starship Operations Manual* 44). If the PCs are piloting the *Steel Aurora*, the starship has the Sabotaged Engine condition. The obstacles, in order, are false alarm, misdirection, narrow pass, debris cloud, rogue meteoroid, and stall. During the chase, the PCs move far enough away that they can escape into the Drift.

Defying Lieutenant Ruvelon: If the PCs work with Cisu to steal the *Steel Aurora*, they're able to exit the garage and preparing for departure when the *Twilight Starhunter* deactivates its cloaking device. Buri hails the PCs and demands to know why they're cooperating with known criminals. Once it's clear that she's being robbed, she opens a weapons salvo at Cisu's starship, momentarily disabling it before attempting to lock onto the PCs. Cisu urges the PCs to escape with the *Steel Aurora*, and Buri attempts carefully targeted shots to disable, not destroy, her own stolen property. This follows the same chase mechanic as above, though by the end, not only do the PCs escape, but Cisu's crew restore power to their own starship and vanish into the Drift.

Starship Combat: The PCs might not want to escape but instead destroy their foe, which is a very difficult challenge. The PCs might use their own starship to fight off their foe, or they might use the *Steel Aurora*. The opponent operates a BMC Devastator (*Starship Operations Manual* 111), and you can approximate the *Steel Aurora*'s statistics using an Inheritorworks Javelin (*Starship Operations Manual* 106) and by giving its persistent particle beam the irradiate (heavy) property and allowing the PCs to ignore the minimum crew required for operation. The PCs are likely at a disadvantage, and you can transition the fight into a chase at any time.

GETTING PAID

If the PCs escape, the pahtra resistance will pay them the same price Buri agreed to and promises to make the ship and Gaelin's crew "disappear." If the PCs turn the ship over to the Veskarium, the PCs receive a handsome payment as well as offers for future work with the Veskarium—perhaps even testing out the super weapon they helped to liberate.

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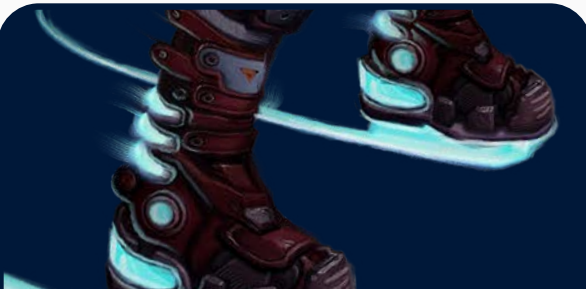
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