

CORIOLIS

THE • GREAT • DARK



THE FLOWERS OF ALGORAB



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FOREWORD

Who doesn't love the mystery of a lost ship? *Mary Celeste*, *Flor de Mal*, HMS *Terror*, and its sister ship, *Erebus*. Names that have captured the imagination of people throughout the centuries. The thought of a whole vessel disappearing into the vastness of the sea is as terrifying as it is intriguing. In a game like *Coriolis: The Great Dark*, where space is a direct parable for the sea, what could be a better source of mystery than the fate of the ark ship *Nadir*?

The Flowers of Algorab answers the question of what happened to the lost ship that vanished over 1,000 years ago – and why its fate still matters to the fractured civilization of the Diaspora. Within these pages, you'll find everything you need to set your players on their first real expedition: clues to follow, factions to navigate, and forgotten technology to unearth.

This campaign is intended as an introduction to the Lost Horizon. It begins with a meaty adventure on Ship City, showing the asteroid-metropolis in all of its glory (and intrigue!) before the story stretches outward across the Hammurabi Arm. Players will uncover ancient secrets, face difficult choices, and ultimately realize that maybe it is not *Nadir* itself that is the prize after all.

So, pack your diving suits, check your deep scanner, and climb aboard the rickety cruiser *Akhander*. It's time to enter the Slipstream and find out what awaits out there in the Great Dark.

Free League

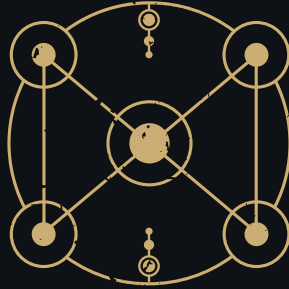




CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION



There is more to this Lost Horizon than meets the eye. There must be, otherwise we are all damned to live out our lives utterly alone.

BARAS BILADI, FROM THE BOOK INFINITY LOST

Welcome to *The Flowers of Algorab*, a campaign for *Coriolis: The Great Dark*. In this boxed set, you will find an epic series of adventures that shed light on one of the greatest mysteries: the fate of

the long-lost ark ship *Nadir*. Along the way, the Explorers will be introduced to the asteroid metropolis of Ship City, embark on Greatship voyages, explore forgotten ruins, and travel across the Charted Sphere.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX

This boxed set contains an entire campaign, but not only that, it is jam-packed with helpful content for any game of *Coriolis: The Great Dark*.

- The Campaign Book – The book you are holding, describes the campaign and its adventures.
- The Expedition Booklet contains information about the Slipstream Cruiser *Akhandar* and the Greatship *Rigel*, as well as setting information for the systems of the Hammurabi Arm.
- Map of the Lost Horizon
- Map of the Charted Sphere
- Map of Ship City
- A set of adventure maps and handouts
- Blueprint of a shuttle and a rover

- Blueprints of the *Akhandar* and *Rigel*
- A set of custom dice
- A sheet of tokens
- A deck of initiative, gear and discovery cards.

ONLY FOR THE GAMEMASTER!

Please note that this book is only meant to be read by the Gamemaster. If you are a player, stop reading now, or your experience of the campaign will be negatively affected.

CAMPAIGN SYNOPSIS

A long time ago, in a Horizon far away, two ark ships set out on humankind's most ambitious journey ever undertaken. They were called *Zenit* and *Nadir*, and each housed tens of thousands of colonists in deep sleep. Their goal: to reach a faraway star system and establish a new home for humanity. Alas, that is not what happened. Five hundred years into the journey, the *Nadir* disappeared, never to be heard from again. While the crew of the *Zenit* mourned their sister ship, they had no choice but to continue their mission. They would go on to arrive at their destination five centuries later, only to find it settled by humans who had discovered star portals, making star travel almost instantaneous. The story of *Zenit*, Coriolis, and the Third Horizon is known. After all, it is the place from which the Diaspora fled. However, the fate of the *Nadir* has been a mystery all these years.

Until now.

It is the year 189 of the Diaspora. On the labyrinthine asteroid-metropolis of Ship City, a group of Explorers, the player characters, are asked to investigate the unfortunate death of a retired ruin delver and the theft of an old stone tablet. What they discover in the heart of the asteroid will set off a chain of events that will change the course of the Lost Horizon and reveal the fate of the long-lost sister ship and its crew.

THE FATE OF THE NADIR

During the Great Crossing, *Nadir* stumbled upon a branch of the Slipstream – the river of stars left behind by the Builders as the star portals began to fail. Without the crew realizing it, the ship slipped into the stream and began to drift. By the time they noticed, it was already too late – their sister ship was long gone, left far behind. There was nothing to do but wait and see where the Slipstream was taking them. Years later, *Nadir* finally exited the stream and found itself in the remote Algorab system, a barren, cold system covered in huge ice fields and rocky planetoids devoid of life. The ship settled around the gas giant Nimis, and the crew pondered its options. With this, their fate was sealed.

THE SLEEPING GOD

Unbeknownst to the crew, a Dreamer-God lay dormant in the gas giant's atmosphere. Once known as Kadu – the Watcher of Time, this being of unimaginable power had

rested here for hundreds of thousands of years, content with the absence of life and civilization in the Lost Horizon. It was the Dreamer-Gods that unleashed the Blight to purge the Horizon of the specter of civilization and finish off their creation, the race called the Builders. The Dreamer-Gods saw uncontrolled life as an affront, the harbinger of expansion and colonization. For them, the universe itself was sacrosanct.

As the *Nadir* entered orbit, the Dreamer stirred in its sleep, sensing the arrival of the living. It did not do anything other than dream, but that was enough. The crew of the *Nadir* felt the being in the abyss beneath. Slowly, it entered their minds and hearts, changing them.

A class of priests slowly emerged among the crew, the Kadurum, dedicated to worshiping the God beneath the clouds. Soon after, a caste of warriors appeared to protect the priests, calling themselves the Hounds of Nimis. The priests took control of *Nadir*, becoming the actual rulers of the lost ship.

THE PALE HALLS

At the same time, scouts were sent to explore the Algorab system. These scouts soon found the ruins of the Builders and a star portal, long since dead. As years passed, the crew was split into two factions; the scouts formed the basis of the Seceders, who were focused on finding a new home. They were opposed by the Kadurum, who wanted to stay in place.

Over the generations, these factions came head to head over the ship's fate until one day, things came to a dramatic conclusion. The Seceders had found a miracle deep within a Builder-ruin on a barren asteroid: a gateway into a strange dimension that seemed to connect star systems through another plane. This was The Pale Halls, and the Seceders came to believe that entering and traveling through this dimension was their only chance to survive. The Kadurum opposed the plan and forbade the Seceders from acting on it.

During the Night of Secession, thousands of crew members fled *Nadir* in stolen crafts, racing towards the gate to the Pale Halls. The Kadurum reacted swiftly, destroying several ships and sending the Hounds after the renegades. The ruin and the gate were bombarded into oblivion. Ultimately, most of the Seceders managed to reach the ruin, but hundreds of lives were lost that day, and the split between the factions became irreversible.

Ultimately, the Explorers will perish or prevail, and the expedition might return or disappear with all hands. Either way, a final discovery will change the Lost Horizon forever. There is another civilization out there, across the Great Rift. The Seceders from the *Nadir* really did do what they set out to: they crossed the Pale Halls and found their way to a new home across the stars. There it is – a glittering civilization just beyond reach. The Diaspora is not alone anymore.

2 THE FIRST AND LAST MAN

The Explorers investigate the strange death of a veteran explorer and a missing relic stolen from the Explorers Guild, only to discover a much bigger mystery: the location of a hidden vault in the depths of Ship City itself. Competing with agents from the Gardeners Guild and the Coriolite cult Wardens of the Well, the Explorers will follow clues that lead to a secret Black Toad drug-ship and finally to the bottom of the sacred Well of Souls. Here, they will discover something momentous – a sealed, ancient vault containing the mummified corpse of a human, a sphere-shaped artifact, and a strange flower. Most peculiar of all, the mummy is dressed in a uniform and is wearing the insignia of the Ark ship *Nadir*.

3 THE SEARCH FOR NADIR

This chapter provides the framework for the campaign in the form of a starting scene, details about the mission to search for the location of *Nadir*, and the factions involved. It also provides events, details and tables to manage the expeditions themselves.

4 GATE TO THE HORIZON

The first system on the Hammurabi Arm is Gahand, with its majestic cloud. Among violent ether storms and huge dust fields is the dusky planet Anshubur, plagued by eternal storms and lightning, incumbent revolutionaries, and the last outpost of civilization: Hammurabi Waystation.

Adventure Site: The Ashen Gorge

Beneath the swirling cloud cover of Anshubur are hellish wastelands and crisscrossing gorges running long and deep. A signal is detected, emitted from one such gorge, and investigating it, the Explorers will find an ancient terraforming station. They will soon discover they are not alone, drawn into a bloody duel between a smuggler and her hunters.

5 THE GOLDEN STAR

Once known as the Golden System due to the promise of the garden world of Astophoris, Ninhulam today is a graveyard of hope and dreams, where a few scattered colonies are trying to survive against all odds.

Adventure Site: The Maw of Death

In the rainy jungles of Ubarra lies the Maw – a massive wound in the ancient forest, where a long-buried Builder enclave is embedded deep in the earth. Far below, a strange place waits, shrouded in darkness. There, creatures from another dimension stir in the shadows.

6 THE ETERNAL STORM

Auriga barely qualifies as a star system – its cloud of heat and radiation is the stuff of nightmares. The gas clouds are so dense that, theoretically, one could enter them without an exo suit. In practice, the constant plasma storms make the system effectively uninhabitable.

Adventure Site: The Howling Caverns

In the green haze of Nirgal-B, deep within a ravine in the wastelands, a series of vast caverns descend into the earth. Partly submerged in cold, dark water lies a Blight-infested ship. Even more unsettling: the lone scout who once piloted it is still alive, twisted by time and Blight into a bird-like creature that now haunts the flooded halls.

7 GRAVEYARD OF WORLDS

Oppressive, dark, and dangerous, a pale white neutron star flickers in its center, exerting its gravitational force through what remains of this once stable system. With its planets long gone, Habanatum now mainly consists of gravel and dust, except for the vast Aragalshu, a thick belt of ice objects in far orbit around the dying star.

Adventure Site: The Memory Tomb

In the snow-capped mountains of Kath, lies the resting place of a master Builder. Here, their memories and accomplishments during the Middle Era are embedded into the very walls of the tomb. But something is wrong. An enemy entered the tomb and corrupted it. The memories are now tainted by nightmares from the dark system of Algorab.

8 THE DREAMING GOD

Finally reaching the remote Algorab system where *Nadir* is. As the expedition exits the Slipstream, vast mountains of ice block the way forward, damaging the mighty vessels. As the crew surveys the system, they discover the ark ship. With the arrival of a strange emissary from the ancient hulk, things come to a head. The descendants of the lost sister ship do not want visitors and are prepared to use force to drive them away.

The Explorers will have to find a way to repair their Greatship before the Slipstream closes, trapping the expedition in the system for years. They must also avoid infiltration attempts, weird hallucinations, and the dangers of the ice. Finally, they will have to enter *Nadir* itself, delve down its transformed body, and stand eye to eye with a Dreamer God in the depths of Nimis.

PLAYING THE CAMPAIGN

Playing a roleplaying campaign is a hugely fulfilling endeavor, but it is also time-consuming and requires planning, work, and dedication from you, the Gamemaster. *Flowers of Algorab* is intended to introduce the setting of the Lost Horizon and therefore begins in the game's central hub: Ship City. The starting adventure, *The First and Last Man*, takes place entirely in the city. The intention is to familiarize the players with Ship City before they venture into the Great Dark.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

Before you start playing the campaign, we highly recommend reading it from start to finish, emphasizing the first three chapters and the last. Due to the campaign's structure – with more traditional adventures at the start and the end and an open sandbox section in the middle – the plot-heavy parts are confined to the beginning and the finale.

THE EXPEDITION BOOKLET

The Expedition Booklet contains information about the systems of the Hammurabi Arm, the Slipstream Cruiser *Akhander*, and the Greatship *Rigel*. It is meant to be used as a player handout that can be consulted during the campaign. While everything can be read by the players, the GM should read it as well.

THE GOAL OF THE EXPLORERS

The ultimate goal of the Explorers in the campaign is to find the coordinates of *Nadir*. To do that, they must locate two additional functioning Singularity Spheres (as described in chapter 3, *The Search for Nadir*). Once they have done this, they can triangulate the coordinates, and an expedition will be sent out to find the ark ship.

THE GOAL OF THE CAMPAIGN

This campaign aims to introduce the players to the setting and some important concepts while adding a few new ones and setting the stage for further adventures and campaigns. The important concepts are Ship City with its factions and intrigue, voyages on the Slipstream and, in particular, the Hammurarabi Arm, the nature of the Pale Halls, the existence of the Dreamers, and, of course, *Nadir's* fate and the Seceder civilization's existence on the other end of the Abyss.

DISCOVERIES IN THE CAMPAIGN

When the Explorers discover something important, you give them a Discovery Card. This is to indicate a revelation or a new theoretical discovery in the campaign. Each discovery is also worth crew points when brought to the Guilds' attention. The Discoveries are described in detail at the end of this book (page 190).

FACTIONS AND ADVERSARIES

A significant part of *Coriolis: The Great Dark* is the intrigue between the dominant factions of the setting, and this is undoubtedly true in the campaign as well. chapter 3 details the five factions, their objectives, and the key NPCs of each faction. However, it is essential to note that you, as the Gamemaster, should pick and use the ones you think are exciting and leave most of them in the shadows at any given time. If you try to juggle all factions simultaneously, things will quickly become over-complicated and bog down play.

CUSTOMIZING THE CAMPAIGN

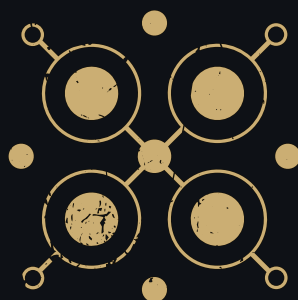
Feel free to adjust, modify, and swap out parts. It can be expanded for many months of real time exploring the systems.



CHAPTER

2

THE FIRST AND LAST MAN



*They've lied to us all along. It's always
been right there, under our noses!*

FROM THE NOTES OF LEVON NAJJAR

In the first adventure of *The Flowers of Algorab* campaign, the mysteries that will lead the Explorers to the far Algorab system begin to unravel. It all starts with a somewhat surprising invitation to a funeral, and ends deep in the old bowels of the Inner Sanctum.

The adventure is made with 4–5 newly created Explorers in mind, but can easily be modified by you, the Gamemaster, to fit your group.

BACKGROUND

As described in the campaign synopsis in chapter 1, the twelve scouts, sent out by the Seceders, went searching along the Slipstreams for another gate into the Pale Halls. Hunted by the Hounds of Nimis, they had to hide and hurry their search. Aiming for systems with Builder ruins and preferably Deep Vaults, one of the scouts finally ended up in the Jumuah system – homing in on a small asteroid in the inner system, with the Hounds in close pursuit.

The asteroid's surface held a small but significant monument, an obelisk, a waypoint and beacon, with inscriptions pointing to a hidden Builder vault. In the asteroid

core, a small vault had been constructed, a simple precaution in uncertain times. In the vault, the Builders placed a set of items relating to the operation of the obelisk. There, hidden by rock and Builder enigmas, the last scout went into an artificial slumber, slowly succumbing, never to wake again.

Hundreds of years passed. Jumuah was discovered by the Diaspora, the asteroid excavated and populated by the new settlers. The old and reactionary Coriolites hiding in their Inner Sanctum started to bury their dead in a deep shaft. As the Wardens buried more and more of their fellow Coriolites, they finally came upon the lost vault.

THE LOST VAULT

Deep down in the Well of Souls rests a lost Builder vault. It's small, unremarkable even, in light of later and greater finds in the Charted Sphere. But this vault is special for two reasons: its location inside Ship City and the mummified remains of a man that is much younger than the vault itself; a man from the legendary and lost ark ship *Nadir* – the last scout. A sensation for sure, and a find with the potential to change the trajectory of Ship City itself. The fact that this vault has been known to the Wardens of the Well but kept a secret will raise the ire of the major Guilds. Finding the lost vault and the mummy is the finale of this adventure, and the kick-off event of the whole campaign.

THE WARDENS' SECRET

The Builder vault at the bottom of the Well of Souls is a secret the Wardens guard jealously. Discovered long ago, it pulses with a strange energy, unmistakably tied to the Blight. Over time, the Wardens learned its terrible gift: partial exposure slows aging. They're not ready to share that with anyone. Not yet.

Bound by duty and self-preservation, they kept their discovery secret, ensuring their sacred mission while quietly prolonging their own lives. If revealed, the vault's existence would spark chaos among the Guilds and endanger their order. To protect their faith, the dead, and themselves, the Wardens will stop at nothing to keep the Well of Souls undisturbed.

THE SITUATION

Two weeks ago, retired explorer Levon Najjar was contacted by Toad delver Gar Boutaleb, who had made a discovery. An old record from the Explorers Guild archives mentioned a stone tablet found near the Builder obelisk during the excavation of Ship City. The list mentioned a symbol that meant nothing then, but is now known, more than 160 years later, as a Dolom glyph, most often used to point to the location of a Vault.

Intrigued, Najjar used his contacts in the guild to gain access to the archive, where he located the stone tablet and 'borrowed' it for his research. Together with Boutaleb, he managed to decipher the tablet and realized that there was a hitherto undiscovered Vault buried somewhere within Ship City itself. The location appeared to be beneath the City of the Dead, where the bodies of the dead are buried and recycled by the Coriolite cult Wardens of the Well.

Najjar and Boutaleb headed to the City of the Dead with a sketch of the stone slab to find the exact location. Once there, they attracted the attention of the Wardens of the Well. The two old explorers did not know that the cult is hiding the existence of the Vault, as it is located at the bottom of their most holy site: the Well of Souls.

The same night, Davoudon, a pale-faced assassin from the cult, followed Najjar back to his apartment, where he killed him by throwing him to his death at the bottom of the Chasm. The killer searched the apartment and found Najjar's notes, but not the stone slab itself. Gar Boutaleb

had taken the slab back to his hotel room in Aluminum Bay for further study.

When Boutaleb returned to the apartment the next morning to meet his friend, he found the place in chaos and realized that Najjar had been killed. In panic, he took the stone slab and fled Ship City to the sanctuary of the Black Toad factory ship *Razad*, located in Hull Town just outside the Dome.

At the same time, the Gardeners Guild had taken an interest in the affair. A constant rival to the Coriolites and especially the monopoly of handling the dead that the Wardens of the Well have, the Gardeners employ spies within the City of the Dead. Those spies have reported unusual activity lately, for instance, the presence of a known Coriolite assassin in the borough and two veteran delvers taking an interest in the Well of Souls. When one was killed and the other disappeared, the Gardeners realized that the Coriolites were up to something and assigned an agent to investigate, the corrupt zapti constable Tamar Zarab.

When the adventure begins, Najjar is buried in the Well of Souls. The Wardens of the Well believe that the worst is over, though they keep looking for the missing stone slab to make it disappear once and for all. But the ever-vigilant Master Moska senses that something is wrong with Najjar's death; he was, after all, an old friend of hers, and orders a group of Explorers to look into it.

THE MISSION

Master Moska suspects foul play and wants the Explorers to investigate the missing tablet and Levon Najjar's death. She will provide the background and explain her suspicions during the initial meeting. As an Explorer crew and members of the guild, she trusts them more than

anyone on Ship City to get to the truth of the matter. She asks the Explorers to conduct their investigation discreetly. If Najjar was killed for his research, this thing might be even bigger than she thinks.

DEATH OF AN EXPLORER

In the first part of the adventure, the Explorers are invited to the funeral of veteran explorer Levon Najjar. After the ceremony, they are approached by master Moska, who asks them to investigate the missing tablet that Najjar had in his possession before he was killed. After that, the Explorers are free to investigate Najjar's death and follow the clues left behind.

THE CITY OF THE DEAD

The funeral takes place in The City of the Dead, a borough deep in Ship City where the bodies of the dead are buried and recycled by the Wardens of the Well. No bigger than a medium-sized park, the City of the Dead is quite a sight: large, rounded stone buildings in light gray cover every area and extend up to the ceiling some twenty meters above. The borough has an almost organic feel to it, as if the halls, domes, and spires have grown out of the walls under the stewardship of the enigmatic Wardens of the Well. At the center is the well itself, a round hole 15 meters across that plunges hundreds of meters into the depths of the asteroid.

THE FUNERAL

The adventure starts with the funeral of Levon Najjar. Read or roleplay the text below:

The soft sound of chimes surrounds you as you stand before the abyss of the Well of Souls. From above, a slow cloud of white flower petals rains down into the well, a final farewell from the Gardeners Guild. On a small platform suspended by chains is the linen-wrapped body of Levon Najjar, the man being buried today. A cold breeze ascends from the depths of the well, extending a chill and making your robes flutter. Next to you, half a dozen mourners stand with gray faces

and empty stares. Not many for a man having lived a whole life in the service of the Explorers Guild. Strangely, master Moska requested your presence at the funeral even though you never met the deceased man in life. Moska herself takes a step forward, precariously close to the void. The white petals drift in the air towards her as she speaks:

"Levon was a true explorer and a true friend. He went farther and deeper than anyone before him. Who can forget the ascent of the Ice Cathedral in Ninhulam, made without proper climbing gear? Or the third survey of the Red Garden, where he mapped the final strata, with a broken leg and a wounded arm. That was Levon Najjar. Fearless. Endless.

As we pass him on to the Uncreated Spirit, we do so with gratitude.

May the blessings of the Three guide him, and the Icons show him mercy."

With that, two white-robed Coriolites with pale silver masks operate a console that tips the platform beneath the body, making it slide off and tumble down into the inky blackness of the well. Within seconds, it's gone.

SETTING THE MOOD

The first part of this adventure starts in the City of the Dead before the Explorers head to the apartment of Levon Najjar. A sense of sorrow and mystery should prevail in this initial part. From the beauty of the funeral ceremony, the flower petals dancing in the breeze, and the white robed Coriolites tending to their tasks with silent dedication, to the dizzying heights of the Chasm where Najjar fell, death is ever present, but so is beauty.

As the funeral gathering dissolves, master Moska approaches the Explorers and thanks them for coming. She asks them to join her for tea in the Hall of the Departed, a vast, temple-like structure filled with the aroma of incense and lined with memorial plaques and flickering lanterns.

MOSKA'S ASSIGNMENT

The Hall of the Departed is a massive temple in the central square of the City of the Dead dedicated to the souls of the deceased of Ship City. Tall pillars reach for the mosaic-engraved roof far above; the interior is set in a dusk-like gloom, punctuated by lanterns glowing softly in wall alcoves. Silent Wardens in silver masks move in the shadows, and a small gathering of mourners stands around a burning brazier, sipping tea and talking in hushed voices.

Moska takes the Explorers aside and lowers her voice.

- There is, she says, something wrong with Levon Najjar's death.
- As she understands it, Najjar has been unwell for the last few years. Not physically, no, but spiritually. He disappeared for long stretches, cut ties to old friends, and appeared to let go of himself. Maybe it was the Blight that finally got to him, maybe something else.
- One week ago, Najjar left a message for Moska, saying that he was working on something that could change everything. She took it as an old man's ramblings and never got around to getting back to him.
- Three days later, she got the news of his death, having fallen from the balcony of his apartment in the Chasm.
- After asking around, she discovered that Najjar had visited the Old Archive two days before his death. As a favor to an old friend, he had been given access to an ancient stone tablet from the time of Ship City's founding.
- When Moska checked on the tablet, it was gone, probably stolen by Najjar.
- Najjar's apartment was ransacked, the tablet missing. Moska believes it holds the key to the mystery.
- The zapti constables determined his death to be suicide, a ruling Moska does not agree with.
- She asks the Explorers to investigate Najjar's apartment and follow any clues to the tablet's whereabouts.
- Moska's advice is to visit Najjar's apartment in the Chasm and the Old Archive to get the investigation started.

If the Explorers ask about compensation, Moska looks slightly annoyed but explains that they will be recompensed for their investigation as per usual: 1,500 rukh for

each Explorer and a 1,000 rukh bonus if they find the tablet within a week. She also reminds them of their standing 1,000 rukh monthly salary. If they locate the tablet, she expects that they will bring it to her immediately.

A PECULIAR MEETING

After Moska has left, the Explorers are approached by a tall man in robes, his face painted white, with a silver mask hanging from his belt. This is Ser Aren mir-Bilal, a high-ranking Warden of the Well. He will politely offer his condolences and signal a nearby servant to offer the Explorers some tea, smiling pleasantly. After a moment, he inquires how well they knew the man just buried.

Let the players roll for **LOGIC**. If someone succeeds, tell them they suddenly realize that Ser Aren mir-Bilal was the same Warden who officiated the burial of the last archimandrite, which must have been well over forty years ago. He doesn't look that much older, which strikes them as slightly odd.

SER AREN MIR-BILAL, WARDEN OF THE WELL

A tall, gaunt Warden official, his white painted face a mask of devotion and authority. Draped in layered gray ceremonial robes, mir-Bilal moves with deliberate grace. Exposure to the Blight has hollowed his features, but it has not dimmed his mind. At the age of 112, he is still as inquisitive and relentless as he was in his prime.

A believer in the cause of the Wardens of the Well, he is devoted to the duty of handling the city's dead with dignity and respect. To this end, he sees it as an obligation to extend his life as long as possible. Therefore, the secret Blight source at the bottom of the Well of Souls is a necessary evil.

STR 3 AGL 3 LOG 5 PER 3 INS 4 EMP 5

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 10

TALENTS: Mentalist 2, Historian 2

ESCALATION EVENTS

The two main factions in this adventure each have a set of four escalation events. These are dramatic interventions by their respective agents that can be inserted by the Gamemaster whenever suitable. These events are indeed the main tool of the GM to create a sense of urgency in the adventure – they are meant to increase the pressure on the Explorers, or be employed whenever the adventure is at a standstill. The events should be used in order,

although you can easily skip one or two if you like. They are described here with suggestions indicating where and when they can be used.

THE ASSASSIN

The Coriolite cult Wardens of the Well have much to lose if the tablet is found, leading anyone to the lost vault hidden under the Well of Souls. Therefore, they have assigned the Coriolite assassin Davoudon to solve the problem once and for all. The assassin killed Levon Najjar, and he is the most lethal threat in this adventure. He will have no qualms about hurting or even killing anyone who gets in his way, although he will only kill if necessary. The escalation events in The Assassin are:

- Followed
- Poison Attack
- Assassination
- Attack



DAVOUDON, CORIOLITE ASSASSIN

Davoudon is a fanatic. He sincerely believes that the Coriolites should rule Ship City and all of civilization in the Lost Horizon. He will do what he can to further his superiors' goals, but is smart about it. With his contacts in the Black Toad, he has gained access to modified heirloom spider kites, related to spider doctors but with a contrary and lethal function. The Blight from the spiders has affected him, turning him into the fanatic he is today.

Fitted with a stoic golden mask, he is dressed in close-fitting, drab armor with pockets, loops, and a spider pouch to give him access to all his weapons and gadgets. A dark cloak finishes his ensemble, with a woven mesh for protection and camouflage.

While looking for the missing tablet, Davoudon uses the pseudonym Aldor mir-Zirtain.

STR 4 AGL 5 LOG 4 PER 5 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 11 HOPE: 7

BLIGHT MANIFESTATION: Indigo Eyes

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 2, Blade fighter 2, Assassin 3, Disguise 2, Acrobat 2, Stealthy 2, Tough 2

EQUIPMENT: Lumin pistol, coiler rifle with scope, blade with Coriolite insignia, 2 throwing blades, 6 smoke grenades, 4 supply (ammo), protective suit (armor 3), camouflage cloak (+2 to hide, mesh with armor 3 which starts to glow in a hexagonal pattern when activated), a pouch with metallic marbles (inert Blight Spiders)

ESCALATION EVENT

FOLLOWED

This event can occur several times. Let the Explorers roll for **PERCEPTION**; if they succeed, they realize someone is watching them. Let them catch a glimpse of a hooded man with a golden mask before he disappears. Other times, they might hear the clatter of metallic legs as Davoudon's Blight spiders keep them under surveillance.

ESCALATION EVENT

POISON ATTACK

One of the Explorers will feel a sudden burst of pain in the neck. When they look at what it is, they will see a small metallic spider hanging from a thread in the ceiling (if

BLIGHT SPIDERS, HEIRLOOM CONSTRUCTS

These small machines are no larger than marbles in their dormant stage. When activated, they extend needle-like black legs from their round body. They are all controlled by an heirloom djinn system from the Old Horizon and are autonomous after receiving Davoudon's commands. The spiders can perform different activities.

FEROCITY: 1 HEALTH: 8 ARMOR: 0

AGL 5 PER 4

- **SMALL:** -3 to hit with weapons as a single spider.
- **SWARM:** Can aggregate in a swarm and are then harder to kill (Core Rules, page 223)
- **POISONOUS BLIGHT BITE** (+2, Blight 1, crit 4)
- **SURVEILLANCE NET:** The spiders build a net of ceramic filaments that works as an antenna array to observe an area, approximately one zone in size, and report back to Davoudon.
- **CERAMIC FILAMENT WIRE:** The spider spins a long, razor-sharp filament and attaches it between two points, for example, in a doorway. Anybody passing such a choke point must roll **PERCEPTION** -3. Failure will lead to the victim falling prone and an attack with 6 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3).
- **SELF-DESTRUCT:** A caught spider can self-destruct blast power 2, damage 2, crit 4.

inside) or scurrying away on the ground (if outside). Catching the spider by rolling for **AGILITY** with a -3 modification is possible. Only one attempt can be made before the spider disappears. The affected Explorer is hit with a paralyzing poison with toxicity 8.

This event is the assassin's way of giving the Explorers a final warning before things escalate into lethal violence.

ESCALATION EVENT

ASSASSINATION

A contact or other NPC – preferably one that the Explorers care about or have recently interacted with – is spectacularly killed by the assassin. This could take place when the Explorers are present or when they are elsewhere (in that case, make sure that they hear or read about it).

The assassination will probably be performed with the Blight Spiders, biting the victim en masse, leading to a visible critical Blight Manifestation before the victim dies, for example, Blisters (page 70 *Coriolis: The Great Dark*). If the Explorers are present, their Bird will react to the Blight, indicating its presence in the victim. This will be a lead, as Davoudon himself is affected by the Blight – a Bird will react to his presence.

This event can take place in any open area of the city, preferably with a lot of traffic and commotion to maximize the effect. It will not take place at the Bird Market as Davoudon tries to avoid Birds.

ESCALATION EVENT

ATTACK

The final event will be an all-out attack on the Explorers, as they didn't heed the previous warnings. The attack will preferably take place during the evening or night watch when Davoudon has an advantage with his Blight manifestation: Indigo Eyes – and in an open place where Davoudon will use the Blight Spiders to attack and contain the Explorers while he fires at them from a distance with his coiler rifle. If possible, he will set traps with the spiders' filament wires (see above). If drawn into close range, he will use smoke grenades to obscure the field of fire for the Explorers, and if seriously wounded, he will retreat to fight another day.

THE CORRUPT ZAPTI

The Gardeners Guild has enlisted the corrupt zapti officer Tamar Zarab to do their bidding. She has an elaborate and wide net of informers spread throughout the city. She will use all means to stop the Explorers, but begins with intimidation and threats, maybe towards their friends, contacts, or family. This will soon escalate with violence and the use of her thugs. She has the means to get some of the other zaptis to look the other way, especially in the Haze and Inbetween. The escalation events are:

- Thugs
- Visit
- Raid
- Showdown

TAMAR ZARAB, CORRUPT ZAPTI



Tamar used to be regarded as a rising star among the zapti of the Chasm. This all changed when her mother fell ill, and a quack and loan shark prescribed expensive and ineffective remedies. To support her mother's treatments and later addiction, she strayed and started selling her services. Soon she was well known, but as she is very smart, nobody has ever been able to pin any illegalities on her.

She doesn't use the common zapti uniform, instead wearing practical clothing, black boots, and a reinforced blue-plated cuirass with the zapti badge emblazoned on the chest. Her black hair is weaved into a wide braid, making her look even more severe than the outfit alone would suggest.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 5 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 5

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 10

TALENTS: Pistoleer 3, Agitator 1, Malicious 1, Pole-arms 2, Fast Reflexes 1

EQUIPMENT: Zapti long-gun, baton, reinforced cuirass (zapti armor with armor 4), two stun grenades, fake warrants, 4 supply (ammo)

ESCALATION EVENT

THUGS

Zarab hires a group of thugs to test the Explorers' mettle. These lowlifes are not paid well and told to rough up the Explorers a bit, not fight to the death. They will try to target the Explorers when they are at a disadvantage, such as if they split up.

The thugs will number as many as the Explorers plus one. For stats, use Alley Thug on page 241 in the Core Rules.

SLEDGE UNION THUGS

The Sledge Union is an upstart gang based in Aluminum Bay. Their Sledgers are real brutes, scary, and armed with powerful sledges. Their morale is, however, not the best. If they face hard opposition, they will turn and run.

STR 5 AGL 3 LOG 2 PER 3 INS 2 EMP 2

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 4

TALENTS: Pole-arms 1, Tough 2

EQUIPMENT: Sledgehammer, Power Sledge (one Sledger is equipped with this), Saladin Grape Gun, 3 supply (ammo), exo suit (if outside Ship City)

ESCALATION EVENT

VISIT

Officer Zarab decides to pay the Explorers a surprise visit. She aims to catch them off guard, so it will preferably take place when they are resting, perhaps in their shuttle or when they have a quiet meal somewhere. She will enter with a fair number of zapti constables (the Explorers' number +1, page 241 *Coriolis: The Great Dark*), who will stand menacingly behind her. She will make a show of investigating the suicide of Najjar – and ask what the Explorers' interest is in this, trying to get information on what they know, and what their next step is. At the same time, she will inform them that they could obstruct her investigation and demand they cease their inquiries, the last in a threatening way. She will put an obvious tail on the Explorers for the next day.

This event should take place after the Explorers have visited Najjar's apartment and preferably one more location.

ESCALATION EVENT

RAID

If the Explorers continue their investigation, they will eventually notice that they are being followed – usually by a quite obvious zapti constable. Officer Zarab will want to know what is happening as their investigation progresses, especially if the Explorers secure the missing Builder tablet from the Black Toad factory ship.

When it is confirmed that the Explorers have the tablet, she will stage a raid against their Shuttle in the middle of the night, with five well-armed zapti constables, toting a fake warrant to investigate the premises and seize any contraband. If the Explorers fight back, she will retreat with the zaptis.

ESCALATION EVENT

SHOWDOWN

If nothing else works, Officer Zarab will finally try to take the Builder tablet by force, follow the Explorers to the Well of Souls, and even down the upper part of the delve to stop them in a frontal assault. This time, she will not use zaptis, but instead

enlist armed thugs from the Sledge Union gang. The Sledgers will not follow down the Well of Souls but will make a fuss before.

The showdown can take place outside Ship City, close to the obelisk. In that case, the Sledgers will have vac-suits and no projectile weapons. Decide on the number of Sledgers depending on the Explorer's current state.

WELCOME TO THE CHASM

The first locations of the adventure are located in the Chasm, the central district of Ship City. As the Explorers reach the first location, read or paraphrase the text below:

With a jolt and a creaking sound, the cable car passes another pylon. The thin metal cage scavenged from old ship parts is the only thing between you and the bottom of the chasm, three hundred meters below. You have all taken this ride many times, yet the sight of it never ceases to amaze. The terraced sloped walls of the cave, filled to the brim with narrow houses, rickety balconies, and small hanging gardens. The glow of thousands of lanterns like fireflies in the eternal dusk of the cave. Far below you, the cave narrows into a circular shaft that seems to have no bottom. Above you, the majestic vista of the Dome with its curved stained ceraglass windows filtering the weak light from the First and Last Star. The tangled wrecks of the old fleet lie dormant just above the Dome. And beyond that, the Great Dark. This, the only city in the Lost

Horizon and the center of the Diaspora civilization. Some call it New Coriolis after the fabled city station of old. To you, it's simply known as Ship City. Home.

THE APARTMENT

Najjar's apartment is located in the fifth ring, overlooking the depths of the Chasm. When the Explorers arrive, they find a lone zapti guarding it. A successful roll for **LOGIC** tells the Explorers that this is odd, as Najjar was found dead days ago and the zapti ruled it a suicide. So why a guard? In fact, the corrupt zapti officer Zarab has placed one of her own here to monitor who wants access to the apartment. To gain access, they will either have to persuade or bribe the zapti that they should be let in (a -2 **EMPATHY** test unless they can provide a good reason) or distract her so that they can gain entrance.

A small two-room dwelling with rounded arches and stone walls painted in the turquoise of the Miran style, the apartment is in total disarray. The floor is covered with shards of broken vases, paper, books, and old clothes. Thin curtains flutter in the breeze coming from the open door leading out to a small balcony overlooking the Chasm.

A TOUR OF SHIP CITY

In this part of the adventure, the Explorers will follow the clues left behind by Levon Najjar and Gar Boutaleb. How they go about this is entirely up to the players, but remind them that Moska recommends starting their investigation by visiting Najjar's apartment or the Old Archive. In this section, use the map of Ship City. The locations described in this part are: The Apartment (page 18), The Bird Market (page 19), The Old Archive (page 21), The Golden Ape (page 23), and The Sadaalian Rose (page 24).

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

If the Explorers search the apartment, they will find the following:

- A blue Garuda feather, stuck under a pile of books.
- A crumpled page from a notebook featuring a partial sketch of what looks to be a Builder tablet. (**Give the players Handout #1: The Notebook Page**).

In addition, if one of the Explorers succeeds on a roll for **PERCEPTION**, they find:

- A Strange spider-like web in a corner of the roof, as well as against a cupboard.

FORESHADOWING NADIR

As this adventure, and indeed the campaign itself, is about finding the lost *Nadir*, it is important to make the players realize the importance of the ship before they discover that it is related to their mission. As a GM, strive to foreshadow the mystery of *Nadir* throughout the adventure, but do so gently – mention it in the background somewhere, maybe hear a baria ballad written about it, or perhaps an establishment of some sort has a model of it. The book in Najjar's apartment is a good example. It serves no purpose other than to remind the players of the ship's existence.

The different clues all lead to new investigations or places in Ship City.

- The feather: Perhaps the most important clue is the blue Garuda feather found on the floor. Belonging to Gar Boutaleb's bird Razil, the feather will lead the Explorers to the Bird Market, the obvious place to ask around about Birds (as a GM, inform the players that their Explorers know this).
- If examined, the books are:
 - *The Salamander God – The True Face of the Builders* by Lohandj Warsis.
 - *Nadir – Hoax or Mystery?* by N.R. Kalifares.
 - *The Book of Glyphs* by the Explorers Guild.
- The text "122Y" is scribbled on the notebook page in the corner (**Handout #1: The Notebook Page**). A successful **LOGIC** (Archaeology) roll tells the Explorers that this could reference sections of the Grand Archive of Jumuah in the Chasm.
- The web: If examined, a successful **LOGIC** roll will tell them that the web is artificial and likely linked to heirloom technology.



THE BIRD MARKET

The Bird Market of Ship City is a bustling, chaotic place. Stalls of Bird traders line the paths of the cliff walls, the chatter of hundreds of Garuda mixes with the coarse voices

AMERA HARRABAN, ZAPTI GUARD

Being new to the zapti force, Amera is inexperienced but eager to please. This makes her an excellent prospect for the corrupt Tamar Zarab. Amera's orders are to report anyone trying to get access to the apartment. She keeps her dark blue uniform in top shape, polishing her zapti badge to a mirror sheen.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 2 PER 4 INS 2 EMP 3

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 5

TALENTS: Pistoleer 1

EQUIPMENT: Zapti gun in holster, short sword, zapti uniform (armor 1)

GETTING AROUND

Advice for navigating Ship City can be found on page 156 in the Core Rules. Use the Explorers' movement through the city as more than just transit – turn it into a storytelling tool. Each alleyway, cable car ride, and corridor is an opportunity to build on the atmosphere. Through the use of Escalation events, hint that they are being watched – or worse, followed. Make the city breathe, and let it push back.

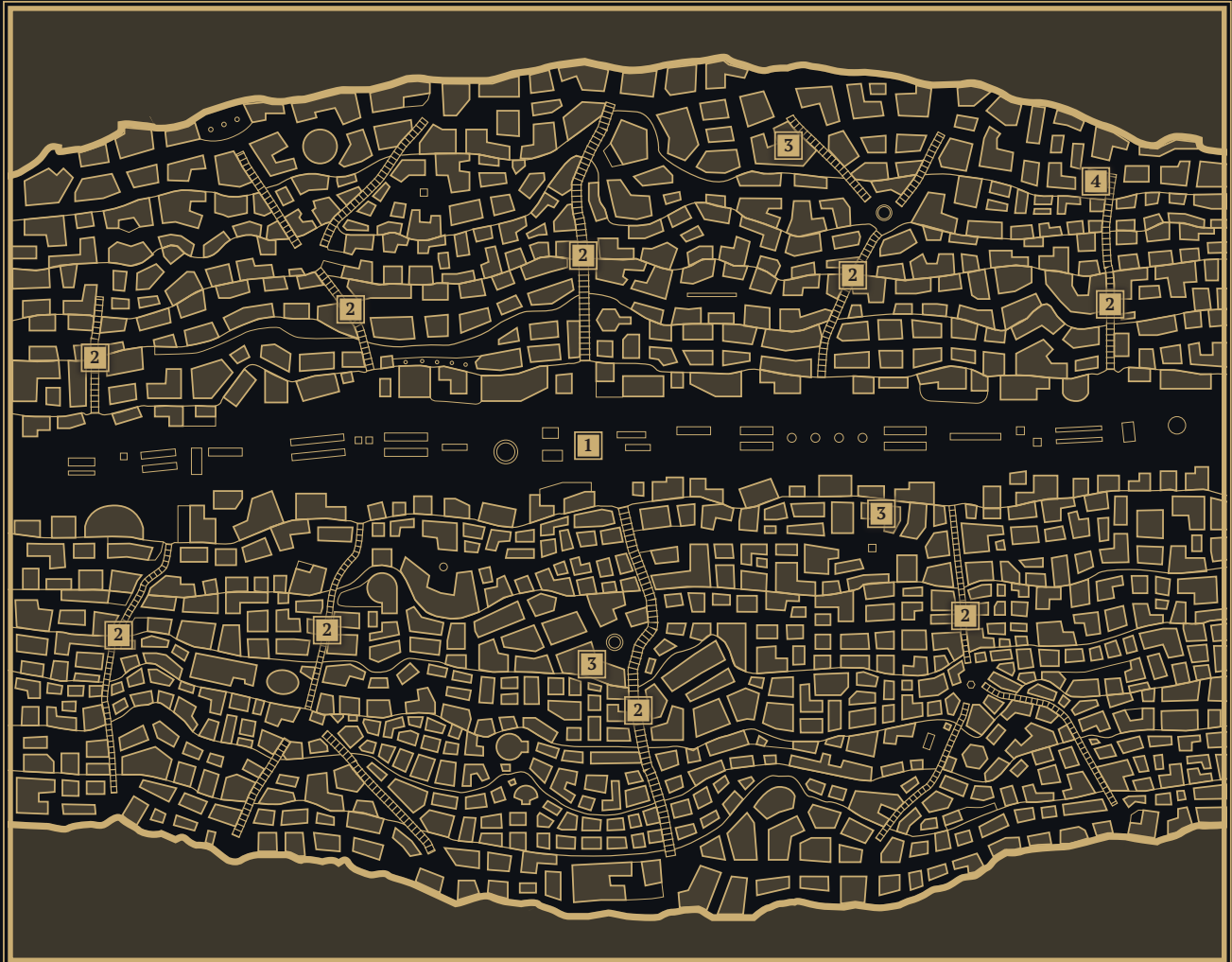
of the peddlers, while speculants, visitors, and guild dignitaries mingle in the main thoroughway.

THE BLUE FEATHER

The Explorers can ask around and roll for **EMPATHY** to gain a trader's trust, or randomly go to traders showing the feather. If they succeed, the trader will tell them that no one can identify a Garuda feather better than Siran Gaffari, whose shop is high up on the far ledge of the ravine wall.

Gaffari will be gruff and uninterested in helping the Explorers unless they show her the feather or succeed with another **EMPATHY** roll. If she agrees to look into the matter, she invites the Explorers into her workshop: a tiny place no bigger than a few paces across, heavy with the smell of burning incense and shelves hugging the walls, stacked with

THE BIRD MARKET



- 1 BIRD ALLEY
- 2 STAIRS
- 3 STALLS
- 4 GAFFARI'S SHOP

10×10 METERS

FACETS OF THE BIRD MARKET

Some of the locations have snippets of the local atmosphere and events that might occur, like this section. This is to help you, as a GM, to set the mood in a specific place.

- Two bird traders getting into a fist fight over whose bird has the most beautiful plumage.
- Excited bird chatter and then a young woman running through the crowd – “Stop her!” The thief is Samara Zou, the sister of a poor young man caught in the web of the Black Toad. She is desperate to pay his debts.
- A sneaky yellow bird steals something from an Explorer. The bird trader Anidam apologizes half-heartedly and blames this on the Bird Cinta's love of shiny things.

jars, books, and tools. A small workbench is propped against a corner, where she seats herself to examine the feather.

After a stretch, she tells the Explorers the following:

- The feather belongs to a Garuda of the Sirra batch (see page 82 in the Core Rules).
- It's a small batch, found in the Cave of Sirra in 185.
- They are rare, most having been bought by clandestine organizations that appreciate their ability to create an illusionary veil.
- The Black Toad seems to have procured most of them.
- The Explorers owe her 300 rukh. Now please.
- She adds without blinking: pay her 200 more and she will tell them the name of the person owning the bird.
- Why, it's Gar Boutaleb, the old bastard. A retired ruin-delver associated with the Black Toad.
- She doesn't know his whereabouts, but reckons somewhere in a ditch down in Aluminum Bay. She would ask around there.

THE OLD ARCHIVE

"The Grand Archive of Jumuah," that is what the sign says. But no one calls it that anymore. To the people of Ship City, it is simply the Old Archive. While it may be the closest thing to a museum in the city, it is only open to the public once in a while. Mostly, it is used as a storage area for dusty relics that the Guilds have found no use for, as well as the extensive paper archive of the journals and edicts printed during the last century or so.

The Archive is located in the murky district known as The Haze, named for the ever-present wispy fog enveloping the whole area. Reachable by the lowest funicular, the Old Archive has its own stop and is just a few paces from the Chasm and the elevators to Aluminum Bay. A large set of double doors made of Kuan wood, at the top of a beautifully carved set of broad stairs, lead into the vast cavern-like interior. The hall before you is lit by dim globe-lights and row upon row of metal shelves stretching almost up to the high ceiling. Walkways and bridges connect the higher shelves, and gray-clad archivists can be seen tending to their tasks.

GETTING INFORMATION

As guild members, the Explorers are allowed entry to the Archive. There is a lobby inside the entrance where two gray-clad and pale archivists are seated behind a long stone desk;

SIRAN GAFFARI, BIRD HANDLER

Dressed in crimson simple robes, her raven gray hair wrapped in a scarf, and in her piercing brown eyes peering up over her heirloom spectacles, Siran has heard it all before. Oh, you need that bird for your sick uncle? Sure, you do. And your Guild will owe you big time if you just let go of that Garuda for a bit cheaper. Oh, of course they will. They always do. No, Siran has heard it all, and she is not impressed. Still, if you respect her knowledge and time, she can be agreeable or accommodating. And if you pique her professional curiosity? Well then, that it is another matter entirely.

STR 2 AGL 3 LOG 4 PER 3 INS 5 EMP 4

HEALTH: 5 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Bird Handler 2, Barter 1

EQUIPMENT: —

beside them is a large glass jar filled with what look like oversized fireflies. If the Explorers state what they are looking for, the archivists ask to see their guild membership sigils before they look up any queries they might have. The archivists exchange glances with each other while one of them mutters something about that particular item being very popular lately. If asked about it, the archivists will volunteer that three people have requested access to that section just in the last week. To get more information out of them, an **EMPATHY** roll is required. If successful, the archivist will produce a ledger where they will show the names of the visitors:

- Moonday – Najjar, Levon and Boutaleb, Gar
- Guildsday – Aldor mir-Zirtain

If asked about the visitors, the archivists say the first two were older men who showed them old Explorers Guild sigils. The last visitor was a tall Coriolite wearing a golden mask. He was polite but seemed out of place in the archive.

When the Explorers are ready to visit the archive, one of the archivists removes the lid of the glass jar, takes one of the firefly drones, whispers something to it, and releases it in the air. With a faint buzzing sound, the drone soars up to face level with the Explorers and will slowly lead the way deeper into the archive.

FACETS OF THE ARCHIVE

- A faltering firefly guide lies abandoned on the archive floor. It is unclear if it is dying or sick. The staff in the reception will thank anyone returning it to them.
- A bald middle-aged man turns up repeatedly in the Explorers' path. He appears to be lost and murmurs to himself, "Ah, maybe not here after all," "Haven't I seen this before?" and "How peculiar!" The man is Hourza Dakil, a Machinist researcher with a very poor sense of direction.
- Two archivists are dragging a small squeaky cart overloaded with paper tomes, constantly bickering about which aisle to start with.

THE MISSING TABLET

The section that housed the stone tablet is a five-minute walk from one of the oldest parts of the archive. The shelves are made of dark Kuan wood, and a musty smell of tar and old paper dominates. The section in question is categorized as "Items from Dig Site 12" and is two full shelves of old crates with rolls piled in between. If the Explorers examine the section, they will find:

- Several crates have been opened recently; there are traces of splintered wood on the floor.

- According to the item manifest, a piece is missing from one crate, where "Stone Tablet 122Y" should be.

If one or more of the Explorers succeed with a **PERCEPTION** roll, they also discover:

- A small, flattened, empty matchstick box with a yellow ape pictured on the side.
(Give the players *Handout #2: The Matchstick Box*).



EVENT

SABOTAGE

A sharp creak cuts through the dim silence of the archive. Suddenly, the shelf behind falls over the Explorers with a thundering crash. Everyone has to roll for **AGILITY** or get attacked with 7 base dice (base damage 1, no crit). The air fills with the sounds of splintering shelves and the flutter of old paper as heavy tomes spill in a cascading avalanche. Dust explodes outward, choking the stale air. The zone becomes Dimly lit.

Any Explorer that dodges the falling shelf and makes a successful roll for **PERCEPTION** spots a gray-clad figure disappearing into another aisle. If given chase, use the chase rules on page 78 in the Core Rules. The saboteur is a hired thug named Adris Serban (use the stats for Alley Thug on page 241 in the Core Rules). If caught, he will admit to having been hired by a tall man in a golden mask to perform the sabotage, but knows nothing else about the whole affair.

WELCOME TO ALUMINUM BAY

As the Explorers head to Aluminum Bay in search of Gar Boutaleb, read or paraphrase the text below as they arrive:

The doors of the giant lift open to a spectacle that hits you with force, even after all these years. The port is a chaos of motion and sound, a sprawling network of docking bays, scaffolds, and looming cranes, all coated in layers of fine metallic dust. Cargo haulers grind across cracked tarmac, their headlights barely cutting through the swirling fog of grit and exhaust. Street vendors huddle beneath rusted overhangs, their voices hoarse as they hawk skewered meat, spiced tea,

and contraband parts. The dim glow of neon cantina signs flickers through the haze, offering momentary refuge from the dust-choked streets.

Beyond the harbor, the Greatship Dabaran dominates the void, its immense silhouette blotting out entire sections of the sky. Its gravity drives the dust into spiraling tempests, rattling the moorings and making ship hulls groan under the pressure. The open edge of the Bay, exposed to the vacuum of space, flickers with containment fields that waver slightly under the Greatship's pull, sending eddies of dust and fog drifting toward the stars.

FACETS OF ALUMINUM BAY

- Someone shouting "Watch out!" The next moment, a huge crash. A crate of mining equipment lies scattered on the ground. A young crane rat leans out from a crane house above. "Is everyone okay? Oh my, Gouff is gonna have my head for this!" The unlucky operator is Lin Mamosser, a newly married father of two who barely gets any sleep. If the Explorers help him, they will earn a new friend and get invited to break bread with the Mamosser family.
- A drunken crewman, Esop Mikram, is staggering towards the Explorers, trying to use them for balance. If they help him to a spacer hotel, he will be thankful and donate a heirloom necklace to one of them (but later he might want it back).
- Three zaptis are chasing a thief through the crowd. The Explorers can intercept if they want. As a coincidence, one of the zaptis is one of the corrupt ones used by Officer Tamar Zarab.

Having visited the Bird Market, the Explorers should realize that the blue Garuda feather is connected to a man named Gar Boutaleb, a retired delver and Black Toad associate. However, finding him is trickier. If they ask around, they can quickly find out that The Golden Ape is a favorite cantina among the members of the Black Toad frequenting the Bay. Probably a good place to start.

The matchstick box in the Old Archive also works as a lead to The Golden Ape.

As they enter the Bay, they will notice a heightened activity level. This is because the Greatship *Dabaran* recently returned from a voyage down the Ordana Arm, and the Bay is still bustling with activity centered around the vast hulk moored to it. The crew of the mighty vessel has been granted shore leave, and the speakeasies and cantinas are more crowded than usual.

THE GOLDEN APE

Located in a converted hexa-container stack, The Golden Ape extends over three small floors, each with half a dozen tables, scrounged furniture, and lazily blinking string lights crisscrossing the roof. The establishment is owned by Maizy

MAIZY MIDOUN, CANTINA OWNER

Friendly and ever curious, Maizy Midoun is a kind soul in a scarred body. She toiled along the Docks until her back almost broke, earning the respect of fellow workers, guards, and Toadsmen alike. After the clashes during the Great Strike of '82, Midoun joined the Black Toad, becoming an informer and gun runner for the Toads in the Bay. She's one of the few people who have managed to retire from the Black Toad and still earn their respect. Her cantina has special privileges and is protected for free by the syndicate. Constantly shooting the breeze with her patrons, always with a cheap tabak stick in the corner of her mouth, Maizy is a true institution of the Bay.

STR 4 AGL 3 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 4

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Barter 1, Pugilist 2

EQUIPMENT: Tabak sticks and a lighter.

BELLIGERENT PATRONS

Thieves, thugs, and lowlives, having maybe one too many and always ready to defend Miss Midoun. Use standard values for Alley Thug (Core Rules, page 241)

Midoun, a seasoned crane rat and ex-member of the Black Toad. She welcomes everyone, but it's well known that Toad members of the Bay claim the cantina as theirs, taking it under their protection. The drink is cheap, the food passable, and the mood is jovial, as long as the zaptis keep away (they usually do). However, the patrons do not like nosy visitors asking questions and will make that known.

If the Explorers ask a patron about Gar Boutaleb, let them roll **EMPATHY** with a -2 modification to avoid causing a scene. If failing, the patron, along with a few friends (as many as the Explorers), will ask them who they are and why they are so interested in this Mr Boutaleb anyway. Unless the Explorers have a good explanation or backup, the situation can escalate into a proper fight. After two rounds, the fight will be stopped by intervening staff, and the Explorers will be promptly kicked out of the establishment, none the wiser.

If they succeed in talking to the patrons or directly approaching the bar owner, Maizy Midoun, they will be in luck. Both will be open to talking about Gar Boutaleb if they are willing to part with, say, 250 ruhk? If paid, they will tell them that the old delver always stayed at The Sadaalian Rose, a seedy pod hotel not far from the cantina.

THE SADAALIAN ROSE

The Sadaalian Rose is a run-down four-story spacer hotel located on the edges of the Docks in Aluminum Bay. Nestled between a factory hall and a large warehouse, it barely seems to fit – a winding metal staircase with an emergency exit snakes along the wall from the upper floor. A blue rose is painted across the metal door to the hotel.

The Rose is one of those places for people who have nowhere else to go, or who prefer not to be seen. Gar Boutaleb belonged to the latter category, renting a pod when he had business in Ship City. As he fled the City immediately after discovering Najjar's death, he left a few of his belongings behind – a fact that can be of great help to the Explorers. However, they need to gain access to his room without alerting the seedy owner, Sabh Zoravian.

The lobby is close to derelict, with fluorescent light strips that blink from time to time. Behind a tall front desk sits the proprietor himself, the short, balding Sabh Zoravian. As soon as the Explorers enter, he will ask about their business. If they are honest, he will say that the Rose has a non-disclosure policy and then stay silent. If the Explorers try to barter or persuade him (using **EMPATHY**), he will settle for an outrageous 300 ruKh to let them in. If they fail, he will tell them to leave the Rose. And that is that.

It is possible to sneak past the front desk, rolling for **AGILITY** (Stealth) opposed by Zoravian's **PERCEPTION**. Still, if the Explorers succeed, they don't know where Boutaleb lived. Getting their hand on Zoravians' ledger is hard, and will require patience and a hard (–2) **AGILITY** roll (Stealth). If threatened with violence, he will trigger a silent alarm that will alert a nearby gang paid to provide security around the block (see Bay Guards).

It is possible to find Boutaleb's room by asking around in the hotel's corridors and other guests.

- **Drunk ship crew:** There is a group of crew members from the Greatship *Dabaran* staying at the hotel; they are currently in the process of drinking as much grass wine as they possibly can before continuing their bender elsewhere. When the Explorers pass their room in the corridor, a drunken crewman will shout for them to join them for a drink. They are friendly but obnoxiously off their faces, and they don't have a clue about Boutaleb's room.
- **Hidden drug den:** On the third floor, the door to a room stands open. Strange whiffs of perfume, the smell of blossoms, and something unfamiliar come through the

SABH ZORAVIAN, HOTEL PROPRIETOR

Balding, morose but greedy, the hostel's owner is highly intelligent and was aiming for a career as a navigator before a scandal sent him down the elevators to the Bay. He still reads scientific papers and expedition occasionals, and he keeps a large star map of the Charted Sphere on the wall behind the front desk. It is filled with his annotations and suggestions about possible Slipstreams and systems, some of which are surprisingly accurate, if an educated person looks at them.

STR 2 AGL 2 LOG 5 PER 4 INS 2 EMP 4

HEALTH: 4 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Barter 2, Sharpshooter 1

EQUIPMENT: Crew defender (under the front desk), ledger, star map (+2 Astrography)

BAY GUARDS

A corrupt local militia sells protection to whoever pays. If met with stiff resistance, they will retreat and regroup. Use the same stats as Guild Militia but equip them with fusillard pistols instead of spears (Core Rules, page 241).

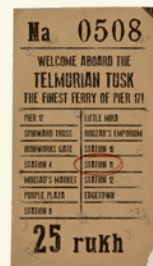
door. Just outside sits a Toad guard, with a large fusillard rifle casually leaning on the wall behind him. He is uninterested in the Explorers if they don't want drugs, but can volunteer the location of Boutaleb's room for 150 ruKh.

- **Janitor Jassop:** The hotel's janitor is perplexingly similar to Mr Zoravian but hunched and pale. He will be mopping the floor, and easily ("only 50 ruKh") give directions to the right room. As soon as the Explorers are out of sight, he will alert Mr Zoravian, who will call for security.

BOUTALEB'S ROOM

Gar Boutaleb's room is one of the hotel's smaller ones, just a fold-down bed, with crumpled sheets, a small pantry with a heater, and a minuscule sink. It looks uninhabited but for the occasionals littering the floor. The explorers may examine the occasionals, which are mostly about expeditions, artifacts, and some weird theories about the Builders.

- Hidden in this trash is a paper ticket for the tug shuttle *Telmurian Tusk* from



pier 17 of Wreck Alley to Hull Town and back. The ticket has ship names, piers, and ports printed on it; station 11 is circled. **Give the players *Handout #3: The Ticket*.**

- A small pendant on a broken chain lies in the corner of the room. The pendant has the Black Toad symbol stenciled onto it.

ARTIFACT HUNT

In this part of the adventure, the Explorers gather clues that point to a Black Toad factory ship hidden in the outer orbit of Hull Town. They will need to infiltrate the factory ship, locate the Toad delver Gar Boutaleb, and get him to tell the story of his and Levon Najjar’s investigation of the Builder tablet. With his help (voluntary or not), they will need to go to the Ramda Obelisk to decipher the tablet. All while being chased by the Coriolite assassin and his blight spiders.

WELCOME TO HULL TOWN

Once the Explorers reach Wreck Alley, read or paraphrase the following:

The smell of cinnamon, fermented shrooms, and metal comes first, followed by the clutter of street food stalls next to upscale boutiques framed by the husks of old starship hulls that lie moored above. Wreck Alley, the place where dustrunners, fashionistas, and guild clerks mingle in an unholy alliance of greed, need, and necessity. And beyond: the glittering fleet of Hull Town, the remains of the Diaspora fleet anchored above Ship City. It is a town within the city, with its own rules, culture, and people. They say everything can be found in Hull Town as long as you leave your scruples behind.

PIER 17

Following the ticket found in Gar Boutaleb’s room in The Sadaalian Rose will lead the Explorers to Wreck Alley and Pier 17. This run-down pier is pressurized and enclosed in dirty ceraglass, and at the far end, the hulking shape of a large tug boat moored at the pier is outlined. This is *Telmurian Tusk*, a scrappy tug boat servicing the more remote parts of Hull Town. Part glorified (but slow) taxi, part freighter of wares, the Tusk departs pier 17 twice a day, often with no more than a handful of passengers and crates aboard. Still, its owner and captain, Bero Ulaz, somehow makes it all work.

A small stall is located by the airlock leading to the tug, just big enough to house a metal chair and a very small desk. A handwritten sign says “CHEAP TICKETS TO HULL TOWN” with the word cheap underlined twice. A young, heavily tattooed woman in a spacer’s skull cap is snoring loudly in the chair. This is Dara, deckhand, ticket seller, clerk, and sole crew member of the *Telmurian Tusk*.

If the Explorers talk to Dara, she will tell them the following:

- The Tusk departs twice a day, you’re in luck, the next departure is in half an hour.
- It services Route 6, comprising 13 stops across the edge of Hull Town. You do know where you’re going, right?
- If shown the ticket, she snorts and gives them a meaningful look, “So you’re going there. Good luck with that. It’ll be 10 rukh each.”
- If pressed, she’ll look at them quizzically, “You know that’s the location of the *Razad*, right? The,” she emphasizes, “*Razad*.”
- A successful roll for **EMPATHY** (Streetwise) will make Dara drop her guard and lean towards the Explorers: “Hey, you look like decent people, I tell ya, the people running the *Razad* ain’t no good and if I were in your boots I’d stay well away.” She flashes the open hand – a sign anyone from Ship City knows means one thing: the Black Toad.

TELMURIAN TUSK

Inside the *Telmurian Tusk* is dominated by a large cargo bay where simple, uncomfortable seats line the walls, and cargo is secured by nets in the middle. The vessel is run by a crew of two: Bero Ulaz, pilot and owner, and Dara Lizza, deckhand and mate. It’s cold, smelly, and loud, but anyone hitching a ride with the Tusk won’t likely care.

BERO ULAZ, TUG PILOT

On the outside, Bero certainly looks the part as a foul-mouthed, grizzled old miner. However, digging a little deeper, Ulaz reveals himself to be somewhat of a connoisseur of poetry, even writing half-decent poetry himself. While content with his life aboard the *Tusk*, he dreams of retiring and filling it with books in his own home.

Stats as Pilot on page 241 in the Core Rules.

DARA LIZZA, DECKHAND

Raised in an orphanage down in the Haze, Dara has always had to stand up for herself and, as a result, has a quick mouth and a fast punch. She worked as a deep miner in the Outer Fields for a few years, where she met Bero Ulaz, the one person she counts as a true friend. Fiercely loyal, she regards the *Telmurian Tusk* as the home she never had and will do anything to defend it and her friend.

Stats as a Crane Rat on page 241 in the Core Rules.

RUMORS ABOUT THE RAZAD

If the Explorers take their time, asking around in Wreck Alley, not just along the pier, and rolling for **EMPATHY** (Streetwise), they will uncover rumors about the *Razad*. Failing the roll will lead to different information compared to succeeding. Failure will also lead to a warning reaching the Toads and crew of The *Razad*. Taking their time might also lead to the Assassin Davoudon or the corrupt zapti Zarab catching up with them. The GM can choose from the rumors below.

- It's a derelict ship, only djinni from the Old Horizon live there (Failure).
- There are just some migrant workers from the Sphere living in an air pocket on the *Razad* (Failure).
- The *Razad* is still serviceable, not just a wreck (Success).
- The outer Hullers use the *Razad* for storage. You know, old hull plating, hydroponics, water ice, that kind of stuff (Failure).
- The Toads use the vessel for some sort of clandestine operation (Success).

VANDA SAMRANI, MECHANIC

Once, Vanda was a Machinist; she toiled in the Turbine Halls and was widely known for her excellent craft. She had a life there, a lover, and a child. That's all gone now. When she crossed paths with a local boss, her fortunes changed. Ostracized and evicted from the Machinists Guild, she took refuge in Hull Town and eventually ended up as the sole occupant of Station Eleven. She works as if it's the only thing that makes sense, but deep down, she mourns the loss of her family, home, and guild.

STR 2 AGL 3 LOG 5 PER 3 INS 3 EMP 2

HEALTH: 5 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Jury-rig 2, Electro-Specialist 2

EQUIPMENT: Tools, fusillard revolver hidden under a desk

STATION ELEVEN

Located at the far edge of Hull Town, Station Eleven is a repurposed freighter hull that houses a small workshop, a mostly abandoned warehouse, and a Rent-an-Exo unit. Mostly no one gets off here, besides a few Black Toads returning from leave or an old spacer looking to access something in the warehouse. The station is pressurized and houses four airlocks, two of which are out of order. The lights flicker occasionally, and there's a pervasive smell of ozone and mold. It's not a nice place.

There are exo suits available to rent here; they're smelly, patched up, and worn, but they work. They can be unlocked and used for a deposit of 300 rukh and a fee of 30 rukh per hour. They each come with 4 in supply.

There is one inhabitant on Station Eleven, Vanda Samrani, owner of Samrani's Workshop. She's open three shifts daily, sleeps in the back of the workshop, and seldom leaves the station. If the Explorers visit the shop, she will offer them kawah and ask them if they need her services. She knows about the Black Toad operation in the *Razad* but won't offer any information voluntarily.

THE FACTORY SHIP

Converted bulk hauler originally built in the Old Horizon, the *Razad* has been through a lot. Surviving the Traverse only to be partially scrapped for parts in the

building of Ship City, she was sold cheaply to what later would become the Black Toad more than 80 years ago. Since then, the old ship has been modified, repurposed, and

completely reworked, making her one of the Toads' most significant assets: a drug factory ship. Housing a crew of almost 150, of which two-thirds are workers and the remainder serve as guards, technicians, and smugglers.

One hundred meters long and almost thirty meters wide, *Razad* is no beauty, her hull scarred and tainted by time and meteorites. The vessel is surrounded by half a dozen smaller ships, connected to the factory ship by tethers and lines. These form the first line of defense, and it is on these that the Black Toads' response teams are based. If any vessel comes close to the *Razad*, a warning will be issued before one or more guard ships will be dispatched to turn the visitor away, or in some cases, board them.

GETTING ABOARD

To locate Gar Boutaleb and the tablet, the Explorers first need to find a way into the *Razad*. Being a highly guarded Black Toad drug ship, this is not the easiest task. Let the players know their options of how to get aboard the ship so that they can make an informed decision about what their way in should be.

•• **Spacewalk from Station Eleven:** The easiest way is to hitch a ride with the *Telmurian Tusk* to Station Eleven. It is a short space walk from the station to the factory ship, and exo suits are available to rent. Space walking might be the easiest way in, using the suit thrusters to approach the ship. The trip over consumes 2 supply for each Explorer, and they will have to succeed with an **AGILITY** (Exo-Specialist) roll or overshoot and consume 2 additional supply to get to the nearest airlock. To enter the ship, they will need to succeed with a **LOGIC** (Datadjinn) roll to open an airlock from the outside.

•• **Take the Shuttle:** Perhaps most obvious is to simply board their Guild shuttle and head out to the *Razad*. However, they will be warned to turn away as they approach, and two guard ships will close in on them if they ignore the warning. The ships will fire a warning shot before attempting a boarding action. The Explorers will need to succeed with a Demanding (–1) **AGILITY** (Pilot) roll to avoid this and will then have to escape a chase (page 78 in the Core Rules). The guard ships are Manta shuttles equipped with coiler cannons; the Black Toad pilots have the same stats as Pilots on page 241 of the Core Rules.

•• **Ask for permission:** This one is going to be tricky. The Explorers could find a local Black Toad member and ask them for passage to the *Razad* (or information on how to find Boutaleb). They will have to wait a day for an answer, and if successful with a Demanding **EMPATHY** test, they will be granted admission if they promise to owe the Black Toad a significant favor in the future. If this request is turned down when it is asked, the Explorers will be declared enemies of the Toad and hunted all over the City (their faction standing will decrease by 2 with the Black Toad). If the Explorers fulfill their favor, their faction standing will rise by 1.

INFILTRATING THE SHIP

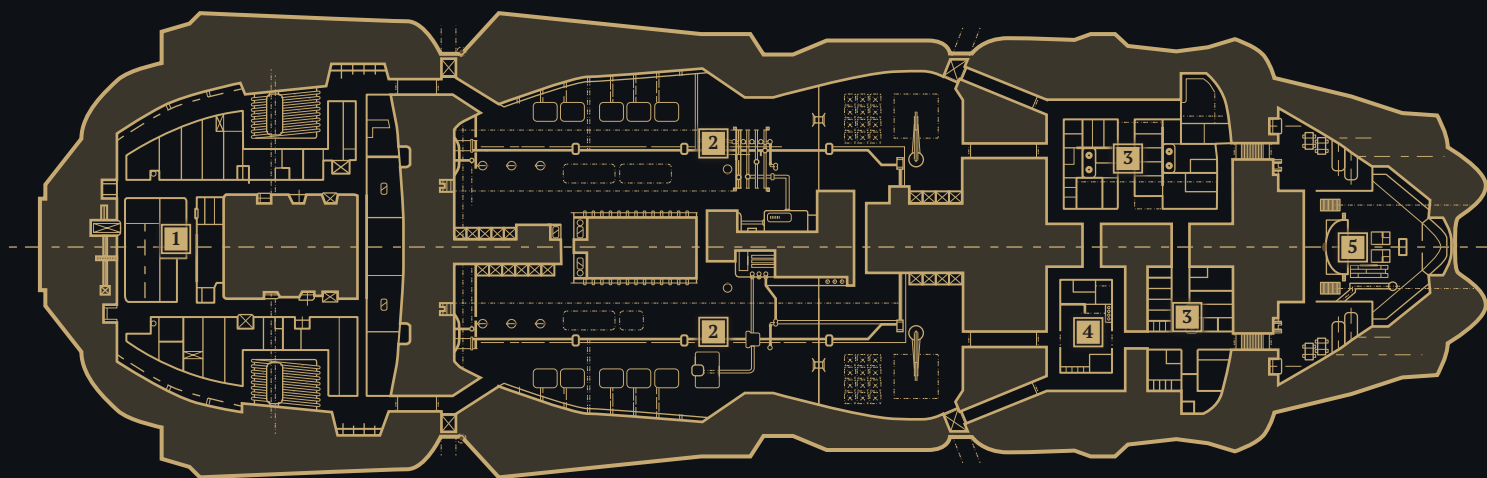
Once the Explorers are onboard the *Razad*, they must find Gar Boutaleb and retrieve the tablet. The ship is not huge, but it is well-guarded, with patrols regularly moving around the vessel. However, as there is no real threat to the ship, the guards will be fairly relaxed until the alarm is sounded.

How the Explorers go about infiltrating the ship is up to them. They may pretend to be Toad members, use stealth, or try to bribe their way through the guards. Whatever they decide, it will not be easy.

USING THE ASSASSIN

The infiltration of the *Razad* is a perfect opportunity to use Davoudon's final escalation event. A veritable one-man army, letting the assassin hit the ship with force, just as the Explorers find Gar Boutaleb, can make for a memorable scene. If used this way, he can trigger the Intruders! event as he breaches the hull with his explosives in the merciless hunt for his prey. Remember, he will always use his smoke grenades and Blight spiders to confuse his opponents, and if heavily wounded, will retreat to fight another day.

THE RAZAD



10×10 METERS

1 ENGINEERING

Two huge and very old graviton projector engines dominate the space, dating back to the Old Horizon. Walkways on two levels surround them, but no engineers have walked here for a long time. Instead, this section is used as a warehouse with stacks of crates propped against the walls, forming a labyrinth.

2 THE FACTORY

The old cargo hold has been converted into a drug factory where the Black Toad manufactures “grule,” one of the most popular recreational drugs of the Charted Sphere. Close to 40 workers toil here around the clock, guarded by a dozen Toadsmen armed with blades and fusillard carbines.

3 DORMITORIES

This is where the crew sleeps. Crowded cabins house four occupants in each, with people sleeping in shifts. A few select staff have their own cabins, such as the guard captain and the factory boss. Gar Boutaleb’s cabin is labeled 24 and is located off the port bow.

4 THE CANTEEN

This is where the crew takes their meals. Flickering lighting, a smell of pungent spices, and steam from the kitchen set the tone. There are always a dozen crewmen lingering about here.

5 THE BRIDGE

The *Razad* has not moved in a long time, and the bridge is instead used as a command post for the operation. The guard captain or the factory boss is always on duty here, together with a dozen crew members and guards. The golden glow of old terminal screens and the smell of strong kawah are ever-present.



EVENT

INTRUDERS!

If the Explorers are discovered, the intruder alarm will echo through the hull with a screeching, metallic wail. The once-lax guards spring into action. All exits are sealed remotely from the bridge, and guards begin to sweep the ship section by section. The Explorers can use stealth to sneak past any patrols. If the Explorers encounter a patrol, they can talk their way through it with a Hard (-2) **EMPATHY** (Actor) test. Alternatively, they can give up; if so, they are locked into a dormitory cabin, and the guard commander is called.

- Two smaller patrols (2 men each) will fan out across the dormitories and the canteen, checking IDs and cabins.
- Two rapid response teams (4 men each) will sweep the factory and engineering.
- If the intruders are not caught within a shift, the guard commander will initiate full lockdown procedures. All crew will be confined to quarters, and all airlocks will be cycled, interior doors will be locked one after another, and communications will be jammed.

SETTING THE MOOD

The *Razad* is not a welcoming place. Set in an eternal dusk-like gloom, its innards are grimy, its corridors filled with a thin mist-like vapor and the constant smell of cirra-cirra leaves and the musk-like stench coming from the grule vats within the factory. It's never quiet onboard, the loud hum of the generators and the thumping sound of the heavy fans are ever-present. Also to be found are a score of small alcoves with idols and trinkets to the Toad God itself, often with intoxicating incense burning within.

FINDING GAR BOUTALEB

The missing Toad delver is hiding in cabin 24 in the dormitories section. Here, he spends his time smoking cirra-cirra and reading books on archaeology and Builder research. Boutaleb feels safe in the *Razad*, knowing that not many would dare follow him here. Still, he is somewhat paranoid since the death of his friend Levon Najjar

BLACK TOAD GUARDS

The Toad guards aboard the *Razad* are loyal and fierce. They will do their utmost to repel any boarders, while not destroying the vessel at the same time, preferably by using close combat weapons.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 2 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 5

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 1, Blade Fighter 1

EQUIPMENT: Toad blade (short sword), fusillard carbine with 3 supply (ammo), stun grenade, reinforced exo-suit

HUZEF LANTILLA, BOSS

Huzef Lantilla is the commander of the guards aboard the *Razad*. Efficient, ruthless, and vigilant, he takes his job very seriously. Tall, broad-shouldered and dressed in a crimson djellaba, Lantilla has an imposing presence that he makes the most of. He sees the ship as his fiefdom and takes intruders as a personal insult. Still, he can be reasoned with, and if the Explorers offer him a way of getting rid of the troublemaker Gar Boutaleb, he can make a deal.

STR 5 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 1, Pugilist 2, Malicious 1

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard pistol, guard armor

RAZAD WORKERS

The Workers on the *Razad* are loyal to the Black Toad, but not so much as to engage in any voluntary attack against the Explorers if not pushed by the guards. They have 3 in all attributes.

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 4

EQUIPMENT: Sticks and common tools (+1, dam 1, crit 4)

and has turned to drugs to alleviate his mind. He is scared and under the influence of cirra-cirra and can switch from hostility to friendliness in an instant. The Explorers will need to calm him down by succeeding with an **EMPATHY** roll or offering him some kind of deal. Boutaleb's Bird, the beautiful but old and constantly drowsy Zrit, will not like the Explorers' Bird.

He can tell the Explorers the following:

- He is tired of hiding away and knows there is a price on his head in Ship City.
- He does not know who is behind all of this. One thing is sure: it is not the Black Toad.
- Levon Najjar was a true friend, and he misses him. When he heard of his death, he knew that he was murdered and panicked, and eventually sought refuge here on *Razad*.
- He is willing to hand over the tablet to the Explorers; he tells them that the key to deciphering the tablet lies in the Ramda Obelisk.
- There are two glyphs on the tablet, Dolom and Ishra. When shown together like this, they usually denote a vault.
- He is willing to give the Explorers his notebook, which can help them decode the tablet further.

GAR BOUTALEB, RETIRED DELVER

Gar is scarred, gray-haired, and old, always alert to any changes in the schedule of the *Razad*. He is dressed in a long gray patterned Coriolite djellaba, with a vest and jacket to keep the chill of the factory ship at bay. He will not voluntarily part with the Builder tab or his elaborate notes on glyphs and glyph-interpretation, but can be persuaded to follow the Explorers for the right amount or incentive.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Ruin Delver 2, Tough 2

EQUIPMENT: Zrit, a blue Garuda, the Builder tablet, a notebook with glyph lore and instructions to decipher the tablet (+2 to understand glyphs)

GETTING TO THE RAMDA OBELISK

The Explorers will get to the next stop in the adventure, either by being given the information by Gar Boutaleb himself or by reading about it in his notebook. If this doesn't happen for some reason, you, as the GM, must

adjust by feeding them information through attribute rolls for **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) or through the Explorers' contacts or Moska. Ultimately, they must realize that the key to deciphering the tablet is the Ramda Obelisk.

THE RAMDA OBELISK

A forgotten miracle of Ship City, the Ramda Obelisk was the actual reason why the Diaspora chose to settle on the asteroid that would eventually become their home. It has been consigned to oblivion as it was eclipsed by later and greater finds. The obelisk is a four meter tall and one and a half meter wide stone pillar covered in patterns and glyphs. It is located on a small hill on the surface, rearwards of the Dome, in one of the rare and desolate places on the surface of the asteroid. Getting there is as simple as suiting up and walking, a brisk one-hour jaunt from the Dome.

GETTING ACCESS

Due to its historical significance and the threat from anti-Builder cults such as the Prophets of the Unseeing Star, the Ramda Obelisk is under the protection of the Purple Guard,

with four guards always on-site. There are three ways to get access to the obelisk:

- **Get permission from the Navigators Guild:** This is difficult but doable through the Explorers' contacts or Moska. Doing it through Moska will lead to a delay and should result in an escalation event happening.
- **Distract the guards:** This has to be long enough to get close to the Obelisk and take readings. If they observe the site for at least a Shift, they will discover that the guards are somewhat distracted during the ritualized changing of guards, which happens at the end of every Shift. It is possible with a successful **AGILITY** (Stealth) roll to approach the obelisk during this process. However, the guards will return to the obelisk within a few minutes, making this a hurried affair.

•• **Use of force:** This is not recommended and will lead to a warrant being issued against the Explorers for their arrest. Zapti Officer Zarab will use this to escalate against the Explorers.

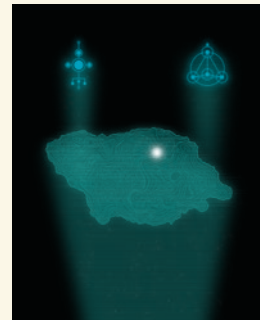
For the Purple Guards, use stats as Coriolite Guard on page 241 in the Core Rules, with the addition that they are equipped with lumin rifles and have the talent Sharpshooter 2.

DECIPHERING THE TABLET

To decipher the stone tablet, the Explorers need to access the base of the obelisk. Close to the ground is a depression where the tablet fits. Once fitted, it will hum weakly and a

projection will light up before the Explorers, **showing the players *Handout #4: The Tablet Projection*.**

The two glyphs in the center of the projection are the major glyphs Dolom (meaning Blight, death, annihilation) and the Ishra (meaning vitality, life, existence); the Explorers know this combination most often used to denote the location of a Builder vault. According to the projection, the site is located right under the Well of Souls, in the City of the Dead. There it is, a lost vault in Ship City, located in the very place where this adventure started.



THE LOST VAULT

In the final part of the adventure, the Explorers will delve into the Well of Souls in search of the Lost Vault. They will need to gain access to the well without raising suspicion among the Wardens of the Well, climb down, and confront the dangers within, before finding the location of the vault itself. The climb down the Well of Souls is handled like a normal delve.

Entering the City of The Dead itself is not a problem, but the Gardeners Guild spies will alert zapti officer Zarab, who will arrive in a stretch to the borough. The same can be said about the Wardens of the Well, who will call Davoudon as soon as they realize the Explorers have entered the City of the Dead. The assassin will arrive at the same time as the zapti. If the Explorers clandestinely go about this, either by disguising themselves or using stealth, the response will be delayed – they will have time to enter the shaft of the Well of Souls.

THE WELL OF SOULS

In the middle of City of the Dead is the Well of Souls, a wide opening 15 meters across that stretches hundreds of meters down into the asteroid. This is where the people of Ship City are buried: it is a cemetery, crematorium, and holy place all in one.

SCOUTING THE WELL OF SOULS

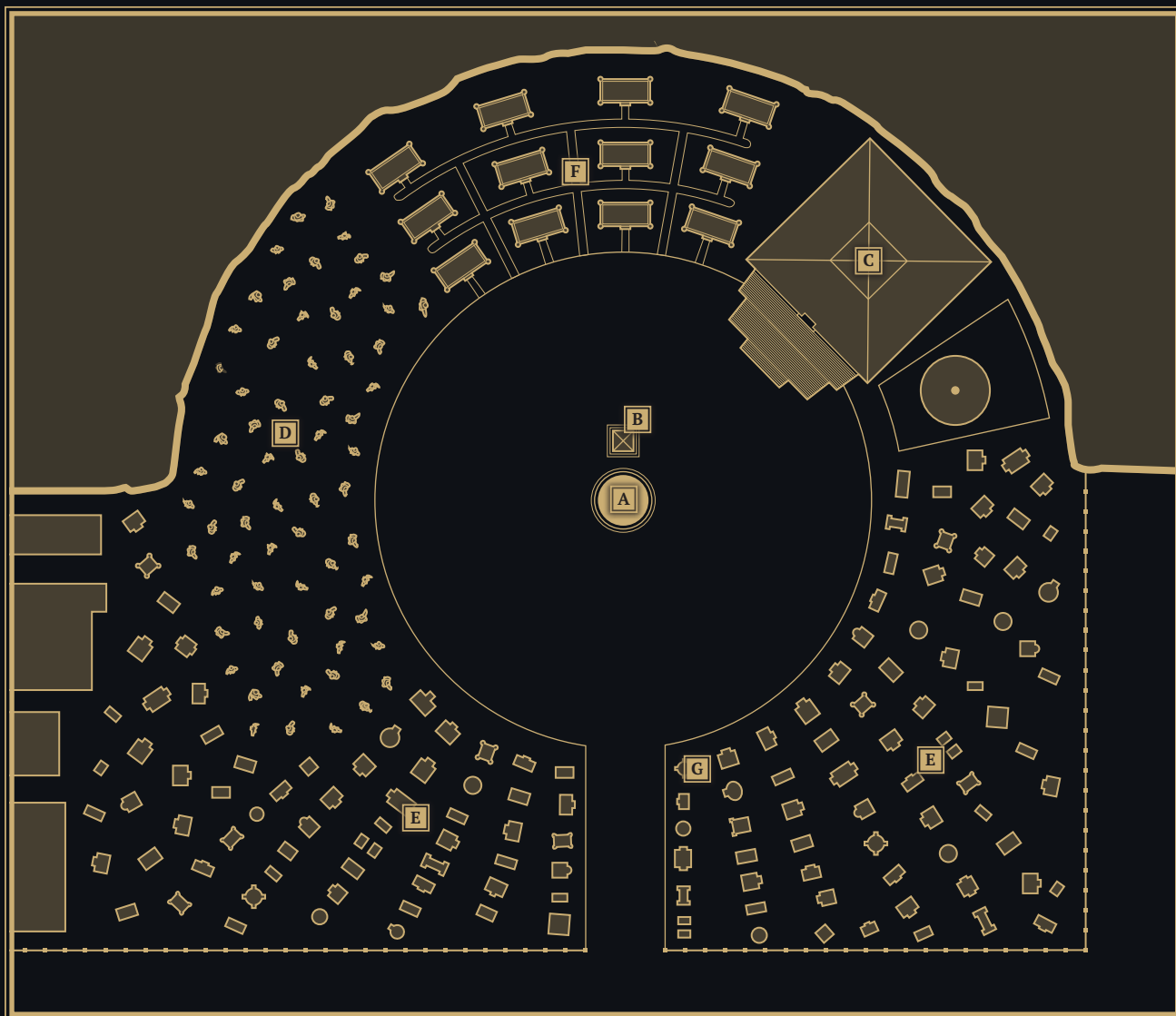
The Well of Souls is sacred to the Wardens, who keep it and the area under tight control. The well is open for public visit during the morning and day watches, used for burials during the evening watch, and closed entirely during the night watch.

- Getting any closer than two meters from the edge of the well during opening hours is forbidden.
- During burials, mourners are allowed within one meter of the well.

Specialized Warden Guardians keep an eye on visitors, but there are not many, and they mostly rely on the deep-seated respect for the place that most Ship City inhabitants have. Even so, it is not easy to get access to the well, and less so with bulky delving gear and suits. Here are some suggestions on how it could take place. However, if the players come up with another plan that sounds feasible, go with it.

- **As mourners:** There are a dozen burials in the well every evening watch, from guild dignitaries to dock workers and everything in between. Most are attended by mourners, and it would not be too difficult to infiltrate a group of mourners as they approach the well.
- **Disguised as Wardens:** The Wardens' ceremonial attire can work against them. If the Explorers manage to get their hands on a set of robes, they could move freely around the Well of Souls.
- **Using stealth,** it is possible to approach the well during the night shift. Roll **AGILITY** (Stealthy) to approach in secret. Failure will lead to the Explorers being spotted by a guard patrol (D3+1 guards), raising an alarm. Use the same stats as Guild Militia (Core Rules, page 241). Thus, it is not possible to properly scan the well before entering.

THE CITY OF THE DEAD



- A** THE WELL OF SOULS
- B** THE OBELISK OF THE DEAD
- C** PALACE OF THE DEPARTED
- D** STATUES
- E** MAUSOLEUMS
- F** CREMATORIES
- G** THE WARDEN ENTRANCE

20×20 METERS

THE CITY OF THE DEAD

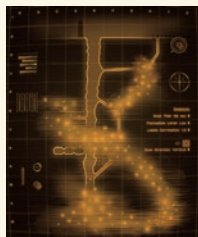
Run by the Coriolite sect Wardens of the Well, this is the district of the dead of Ship City. Mausoleums, temples and crematories nestle together in this cave, while mourners gather here to pay their respects to the recently departed.

• Side entrance to the Well of Souls: This entrance is used by the Wardens working in the crematorium. It's located in what looks to be a small mausoleum. No urns or caskets are kept there. Instead, it works as a discreet entrance to the Well. It is possible to know about this through contacts within the Coriolites (the GM decides), appropriate background, surveillance, or just deducing that the Wardens working in the crematorium must have a way in, and again, performing a stakeout.

PREPARING THE DELVE

The Scout in the group can perform a deep scan of the Well if not disturbed. *Give the Explorers the Handout 5: Scan Map Well of Souls.*

It might be hard to pack the appropriate gear for the delve, as it is not known if there is any Blight present in the Well, and examining it beforehand is hard. The Explorers may let their Bird scout ahead, sending it down the Well. This can be done even if they're not next to the Well. It will probably lead to surprise and reverence if a burial is taking place. Still, the Bird won't find any signs of Blight at the top of the Well, but the Explorers understand that some kind of block midway down hinders it from scouting all the way to the bottom (this is the Corpse Net, see page 36).



SETTING THE MOOD

The Well is dry and warm, whiffs of smoke with an undertone of decay rise from its depths. The walls are made of dark brown asteroid rock with ledges and haphazardly dotted alcoves at irregular intervals. Some stand empty, some support urns. Some are intact, but many are broken; the dust and ash gather in small piles around their terracotta shards.

As the Explorers climb deeper down, the smell of smoke and decay will increase. And the walls become covered in black soot, and ash flakes stick to their suits and gear. In some places below the net, the walls become irregular, with rifts, fissures, and cracks opening up into cul-de-sacs in the walls.

In total, the scan and Bird can give the explorers this information before the delve:

- The total depth to traverse the whole complex should be 13 markers, and the scan shows at least three locations of interest.
- The crematorium (page 35) is shown on the map, and the smoke chimney leads from it.
- They should be informed that the map shows some sort of distortion below the Crematorium (below the Corpse Net), possibly indicating the presence of higher levels of Blight.

LOST VAULT LOCATIONS

1 THE WARDEN ENTRANCE

A small mausoleum stands on its own, sticking out as it is clean and well-kept compared to the grave stones around. The wrought iron gates are clean and newly painted.

Search:

- The gates are locked with a simple mechanical lock.
- Inside is a small room with a floor hatch leading down into the asteroid.
- Three Warden frocks with soot and ash stains are thrown in a pile on the floor.

2 THE ALCOVE OF THE URNS

A long ledge circles the Well, wide enough to walk along, if not for the numerous urns stacked on top of each other. Most of them seem old and are covered in soot. The smell of ash is almost overpowering.

Search:

- It is possible to cross from one side of the Well to the other. Tracks from footsteps and broken urns indicate a well-trodden path to a metal staircase leading down into the murk.



HAZARDS DURING THE DELVE

As the Explorers delve down the well, strange hazards will befall them. The list below includes unique hazards that you can use instead of rolling

up a random hazard on the standard table (Core Rules, page 212). All the unique hazards affect all the Explorers.

DISTANCE TO EXIT	HAZARD	EFFECT
1–4	Strange Urn: You pass row after row of alcoves with ceramic urns, all engraved with the names of the people who once lived. Suddenly, you see a name that hits you like a bolt: D. Moska. But it's not only the name itself, it's the symbol of the Explorers Guild emblazoned on the urn. What is this?	Roll LOGIC Fail: Become Confused
1–4	Dry Heat: Without warning, the air turns blisteringly hot. Sweat pores off you instantly, your eyes sting, and the heat dulls your thoughts. The walls seem to ripple, distorting your sense of space.	Roll STRENGTH Fail: Become Exhausted
7–12	Song of the Dead: First, you hear it as a faint echo, just the wind twisting in the reaches of the well. But then... voices. You hear voices singing an ethereal hymn, the words twisted by the strange acoustics of the stone walls. Is it coming from above? No, it seems to come from below you, from the abyss.	Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Suffer 1 despair
1–6	Ember Flakes: Golden flakes begin to drift down slowly, like snow. They seem beautiful – until they land, stick, and burn. The scent of scorched fabric fills the air as gear begins to smolder and melt. Touching one is like pressing bare skin to an ember.	Roll AGILITY Fail: Lose D3 supply
7–12	Blight Vines: Suddenly, they are everywhere, crawling vines covering the cold stone walls almost completely. They writhe slowly towards you, around your feet and legs. You've seen them before, and you get a chill when you realize there are Blight vines in Ship City.	Roll AGILITY Fail: Lose D6+1 supply

- The steps make it easier to climb down (+1 to delving roll down to #3 Crematorium).
- On one side, the edge opens into a sloping tunnel with chiseled steps leading steeply down. Broken light strips adorn the opening like a wreath.
- Roll **PERCEPTION** to discover a glittering heirloom necklace in a pile of ash, worth 600 ruks or more if brought to the right Coriolite family.

3 THE CREMATORIUM

A long, square, and wide corridor leads into the wall. Flickering light strips intermingle with a deep orange glow as if burning flames hide just out of sight.

- The walls are covered in a thin film of ash and soot.
- The smell of decay and smoke is all-encompassing.

Search:

- The corridor houses four metal wheelbarrows and an assortment of shovels and spades (used to roll the corpses to the burn ovens and collect ash).
- Hot fires burn behind metal grate doors in the corridor wall.

There might be some Wardens here, stoking the fires or collecting ash.

4 THE CORPSE NET

A metal mesh net stretches over the whole Well, creating a surface of soot black grids. Each line of the mesh is approximately a foot wide. It seems impassable.

- **Pieces of blackened bones** are stuck along the circumference of the net.
- **A fresh body, wrapped in white linen cloth**, lies in the middle of the net.

Search:

- Roll **PERCEPTION** (-2) to find an opening in the mesh net along the side where the metal ladders descend.
- It is possible to cut through the mesh. Roll **STRENGTH**. On a failure, the Explorers get through, but it takes two stretches (2 supply).
- The corpse has nothing of value, but handling it is shocking and stressful, leading to 2 despair, mitigated by **EMPATHY** (Core Rules, page 68).

5 THE BLIGHT ATRIUM

A circular chamber carved directly from the asteroid's stone, its walls dark and smooth with age.

- **Half a dozen silver-masked Wardens lie motionless** in shallow alcoves, hands folded on their chests beneath heavy cloaks.
- **Faint vapors drift from the sealed vault door at the far end**, bathing the room in a soft, sickly shimmer. The air is heavy and still.

Search:

- The Wardens are alive, but seem to be unconscious.

- The Explorers recognize one of the Wardens, Ser Aren mir-Bilal, whom they talked to in the Hall of the Departed after Levon Najjar's funeral (see page 13).
- A successful **LOGIC** roll tells the Explorers that the Wardens seem to be soaking up the material drifting from the vault door. In other words, they are absorbing Blight!
- If a Warden is disturbed or touched, they open their eyes and grab the closest Explorer, see the event **Wardens Awake**. The Explorer causing this will suffer 3 despair, mitigated by an **EMPATHY** roll (Core Rules page 68).

EVENT

WARDENS AWAKE

If the Explorers wake the Wardens, they will rise from their Blight slumber. They will attack the intruding Explorers with their heirloom blades. The Wardens are furious and will fight to the death. Ser Aren mir-Bilal counts as a Blight Infused Warden during this event.

BLIGHT INFUSED WARDENS

STR 4 AGL 3 LOG 2 PER 2 INS 2 EMP 3

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 5 (only Ser Aren mir-Bilal can push)

TALENTS: Tough 2*

EQUIPMENT: Mercurium blade

*Talent for newly woken and Blight Infused Wardens

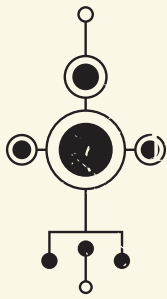
6 THE FROST GATE

The tunnel narrows, ending at a polished stone barrier. A thin line splits the center, where two door halves meet, glimmering faintly under the sweep of suit lanterns.

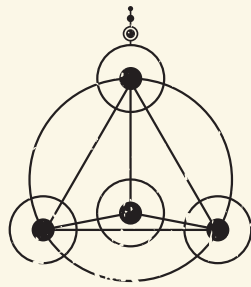
- **White-pinkish Blight frost** coalescing to ice covers the door. The color is surreal, giving a reminiscence of flowers in the spring.

Search:

- Closer inspection reveals the presence of some kind of glyph under the ice covering the door. It is not readable unless the ice is removed.



Glyph of Life, Ishra



Dolom – The Glyph of Blight

- Two major glyphs are etched into the atrium wall to the sides of the door. They are easily identified as Dolom – The Glyph of Blight, and Ishra – The Glyph of Life.

The two major glyphs indicate that this is indeed a Builder vault. There are two ways to enter it: activating the glyph behind the Blight ice or using explosives.

- It is possible to chisel away the ice with a tool, but this will lead to Blight exposure in the form of a Blight attack with 5 Base Dice, Blight 2. Under the ice is a minor glyph. If a **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) roll is successful, it is identified as Gehpre, meaning “Enter,” “Light,” or “Open”. Touching it will lead to the slab opening along the line in the middle.
- It is possible to blow open the gate by rolling **LOGIC** (Demolition Expert) and using charges with at least Blast Power 6. Failure means the slab blows open, but Explorers in the same zone are exposed to a Blight attack with 8 Base Dice, Blight 2 as the frost and ice disperses violently.

7 THE LOST VAULT

A vaulted chamber opens up behind the frosted gate. Darkness is all you can see beyond the suit lantern beams.

- The walls are of smooth, dark stone.
- The smell of decay is gone, replaced by a dry, tomb-like air.
- A suited figure rests on a bed of dried vines covering the entire floor.

ADDING A THREAT

It's possible that the Explorers have been coasting through the last part of the adventure and easily defeated the Blight Infused Wardens. If you want to add a challenge, consider adding a Fal-lowbloom nesting inside the vault (page 225 of the Core Rules).

Upon entering the vault, the Explorers will be subjected to a Blight attack with 8 base dice, Blight 3.

Search:

- A figure in a vacuum suit seems to rest in a half-seated position in the nest of vines. Breaking away the dry vines and branches reveals the figure clad in an old-fashioned vacuum suit. The figure is holding a black, weakly shimmering orb in its hands – the size of an apple.
- The Suit: Rolling for **LOGIC** (Historian) tells the Explorer that it is older than the Old Horizon. The insignia on the chest shows that it belonged to a crewman of the *Nadir* – the lost ark ship from old Coriolite tales. A faded nametag on the left shoulder reads “Nikovar.”
- The Orb: Touching the orb will lead to the event The Signal. A Roll for **LOGIC** (Artifact Specialist) will reveal it to be some sort of Builder remnant, and not an heirloom. The orb is a Singularity Sphere. Read more about the spheres on page 44.
- In a pocket on the left leg of the figure's suit is a synthetic pouch containing a dried white flower, unlike anything the Explorers have seen.

The lost vault is the final resting place of the last Seceder scout Nikovar. He sealed himself away from the Hounds of Nimis (page 7) and went into an induced hibernation, never to awake again, as time and entropy took his life. Thanks to the Singularity Sphere he carried, part of him, or rather his memories, were imprinted in the powerful artifact. Examination of the sphere is described on page 42.

EVENT

THE SIGNAL

As you reach for the black orb in the vacuum-suited figure's grasp, a weak gold glimmer seems to come alive, rising in intensity until the chamber is basking in the light of a nova. A shrill sound follows across your comlinks. And then all is black, but you feel that something, somewhere, far, far away has responded to the signal.

The black orb – the Singularity Sphere – will activate as one of the Explorers touches it. It will send a signal across

a spectrum of wavelengths and dimensions. To the observer trying to touch it, it will become blindingly bright.

All other Explorers will only hear a shrill sound as their suits overload with the input, but won't see the light. Seconds later, all electronic systems will fail, leaving the Explorers in darkness. They will start to reboot and activate some minutes later.

The power surge will affect the whole of Ship City and stop any chasing Wardens from approaching the Explorers and the vault.

"Suddenly everythin' start to flicker and, then lights go out all over the district. My baklava in the oven go bad. No color, flakey taste. And the papers say it was nothing, nothing happened, no surge. Bah!"

MIRO MAKKAR, PASTRY CHEF ON THE CAFE "THE SLEEPY BIRD"

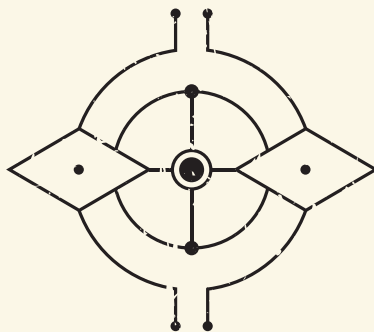
AFTERMATH

As the signal from the Singularity Sphere races across space, Ship City slowly recovers from the unexpected power surge and blackout it left behind. Relief turns to excitement, and soon speculation spreads through pamphlets and occasionals: some claim the Builders have returned, others whisper of a portal to the Old Horizon powering up, or a ghost ship drawing near.

Meanwhile, without ceremony, the mummified crewman believed to be from the *Nadir* is sealed in a makeshift sarcophagus and quietly transferred to the secure vaults of the Explorers Guild Archives.

A few nights later, the Explorer that first touched or came close to the Singularity Sphere will have a strange dream:

You stand alone in a white void. The endless whiteness is broken only by a mirror before you, but the reflection isn't yours. Instead, you see a man wearing an old, heirloom-style vacuum suit, white and worn. Faded insignias and ancient text mark his breastplate, a strange symbol on his helmet: stars above a crescent moon—the emblem of the lost arkship Nadir. He beckons, raising a hand to open his visor. You wake up. A lingering sense of premonition stays with you. Something is coming.





Handout #1:
The Notebook
Page

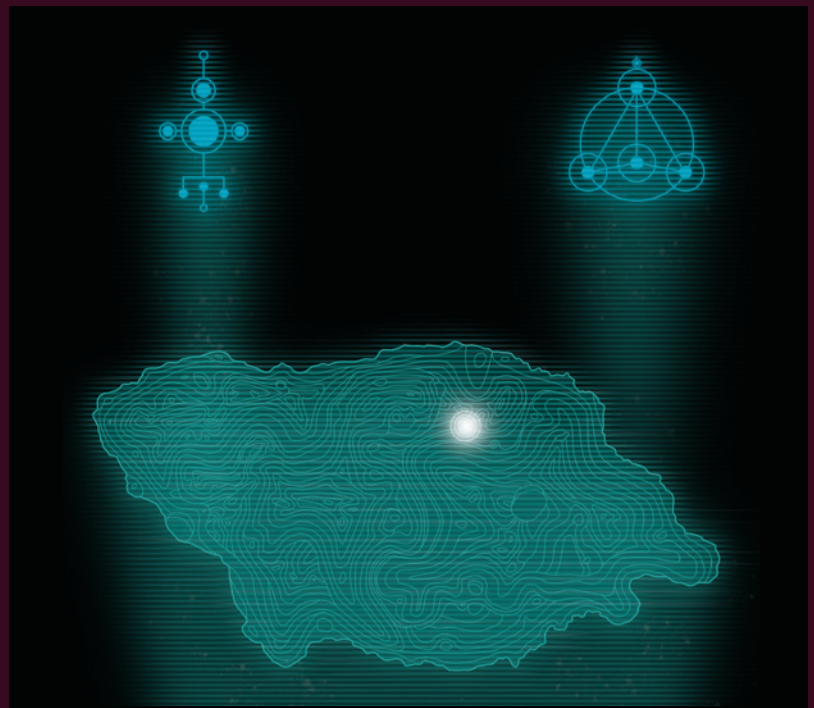


Handout #3:
The Ticket

Handout #4: The Tablet Projection



Handout #2:
The Matchstick Box





CHAPTER

3

THE SEARCH FOR NADIR



A find of this magnitude could be the event that unifies the Diaspora. Just think about it: we might not be alone anymore!

RANDA SHIRASATTA, EDITOR & WRITER OF THE OCCASIONAL THE GUTTER REPORT

In this chapter, the Explorers return to Ship City after the dramatic discoveries beneath the Well of Souls. Following a meeting with Master Moska of the Explorers Guild, they are tasked with presenting a report to one of the city's leading councils. There, they are offered a mission to recover

lost artifacts that may reveal the coordinates of *Nadir*. The chapter continues with a detailed overview of the factions involved in the search for the ark ship, their goals, methods, and key figures, and ends with extensive guidance and tools for running expeditions throughout the campaign.

A GATHERING AT VERMILION HOUSE

Once the Explorers have had the chance to recuperate and heal after their ordeal, they will be asked to come to Vermilion House, the headquarters of the Explorers Guild. Read or roleplay the text below:

The warm wind of the Chasm caresses your faces as the cable cage rattles across the gorge at the heart of Ship City. Below, the deep shadows of the ravine flicker with movement – gliders drifting through the haze, cables with lanterns swaying in the wind, the occasional glint of shardlight from the lower bridges. The scent of cinnamon, arrash, and

fried shrooms fades behind you as the bustle of the Lotus Ring recedes, replaced by the dry stillness of the Sixth Ring. Ahead, your destination rises from the edge of the Chasm: Vermilion House. Once a hospital, its sand-colored stone walls and arched windows still convey a sense of dignity. Now, it serves as the headquarters of the Explorers Guild – your guild. You have been summoned by Master Moska to discuss the findings of your last mission. As the cable cage reaches the courtyard, you feel the heavy weight of expectations bearing down on you.

USING THIS CHAPTER

While *The First and Last Man* was a complete adventure, the purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the open part of the campaign, the actual search for Nadir. As such, the chapter is more of a toolbox than a linear guide, and you, as the Gamemaster, will have to work to put it together at your gaming table. The first part of the chapter is focused on the players and should be played out in scenes. The sections *Factions & Agendas* and *The Expeditions* are meant to be used as a resource for the Gamemaster.

MEETING MOSKA

Master Moska will receive the Explorers in her study in the main building of Vermilion House. It is a corner office on the fifth floor, with a stunning view of the Chasm and the walls lined with bookshelves, maps, artifacts, and old delving gear. As the Explorers enter, Moska is closely studying a map of the latest find on Moubarra IV with a smoking hot cup of tea next to her. Her bird, Arak, is perched atop a pile of books, glaring suspiciously at the Explorers' own Garuda. She offers them tea from a samovar and gestures for them to sit.

Moska tells the Explorers the following:

- She is very impressed with their handling of their previous mission and wants to see them continue investigating this matter.
- Master Orlov of the Research & History branch has compiled a report summarizing the findings based on a thorough examination by the archaeo-historians. **(Give the players *Handout #6: The Report*).**
- She believes the *Nadir* is still out there, waiting to be found.
- The key to doing so, she thinks, is finding two additional spheres, such as the one found on the Nadir-mummy; the report has the details.
- This finding has implications for Ship City as a whole. Therefore, the Explorers Guild has been summoned by the Council of Special Affairs for a hearing on the matter.
- She wants the Explorers to attend the hearing and answer questions as well as they can.

The Research & History branch, led by Master Orlov, has produced a report on the finds in the hidden Builder vault.

Give the players *handout #6: The Report* and let them study it.



THE COUNCIL HEARING

The Explorers are called to attend a hearing with the Council of Special Affairs, a sub-council to the all-powerful Grand Council ruling Ship City. The location is a chamber at the top of the Chasm at the base of Astrolaab Tower. Read or roleplay the text below, and then play out the hearing using the suggested questions, letting the players answer based on their experience and the report from the Explorers Guild.

The council chambers are shaped like an oval, vaulted auditorium, dominated by a massive, crescent-shaped table that appears to be made of real wood. The wood's meandering grain winds through deep, time-worn scratches, most masked beneath layers of dark lacquer. Three figures are seated along the table, with shadows of hovering aides in the murk behind them – the twin odors of cirra-cirra and kawah linger like an invisible cloud in the stale air. Weak strands of light shine

through the heavy drapes covering windows facing the Chasm, screening the chambers from the bustle outside.

The Council of Special Circumstances is tied to the Grand Council and shares some of its members. The three members of this smaller council are:

- Milrouk Gand, Eye and representative of the Navigators Guild (see page 46).
- Nefeli Bar-Ezravili, High Gardener and representative for the Gardeners Guild (see page 48).
- Vesla Samaran, Synod and representative for the Machinists Guild (see page 49).

All the representatives will ask questions in turn and sometimes whisper to each other or their aides behind them. The questions are described below.

THE COUNCILOR'S QUESTIONS

Milrouk will state her questions matter-of-factly and in quick succession.

- How did you come to locate the vault under the Well of Souls?
- What do you believe is the purpose of the sphere?
- Where is the *Nadir*?

The High Gardener is the most thoughtful of the three, interested in the mummy and its origin, and hearing the opinions of the Explorers and their guild.

- How old is the mummy? How long has it been dead?
- How and why do you believe it got here in the first place?
- How do you propose we continue the investigation of the mummy and sphere?

The Synod Samaran will seem disinterested in the whole proceeding until questions about the sphere are brought up. He repeatedly asks the same questions and engages in scientific discussions about the signal, which can't be answered.

- What happened, exactly, when the sphere was activated? Be detailed, please.
- How did you know the sphere received a signal from the outside?
- Why did Ship City lose power suddenly? Can it happen again?

THE COUNCIL'S MISSION

After conferring for a few minutes, Eye Milrouk Gand clears his throat and returns his gaze to the Explorers.

We have listened to what you have said today and read the report from the Explorers Guild. While we admit that the find below the City of the Dead is astonishing, we do not consider this definite proof that the ark ship Nadir is still out there.

He pauses. The three councilors look at you.

However, he continues, there is a slight possibility that the signal from the artifact could lead us to Nadir, or what remains of it. Therefore, it is the will of this council, and of the Grand Council of Ship City and Jumuah, that an expedition be undertaken to find out more about the signal sources around the systems of the Hammurabi Arm. This council decides that you, [insert the Explorers' names or that of their crew here], will have the role of special advisors on this expedition. The council will provide a Slipstream-capable ship that will operate under the jurisdiction of the Council of Special Affairs and the Explorers Guild.

We expect nothing but greatness from you. The Diaspora's future may well rest in your hands. May the blessings of the three be with you, and the Icons show you mercy.

With that, the council is over, and the Explorers are asked to leave the chamber. Any questions can be answered by the three aides waiting in another room. This is what they know:

- The Slipstream Cruiser *Akhandar* is currently being refitted in the dry dock. She will be ready to depart Ship City in one week.
- The *Akhandar* has been fitted with a sensor suite, primed to the signal of the Singularity Sphere, and should be able to pinpoint it to at least a general area of a system, planet, or moon. A similar priming has been performed on two deep scanners on the ship.
- The Explorers will be representatives and special advisors for the Explorers Guild, so their say in the expedition will be substantial.
- The crew is already assembled, but the Explorers are free to recruit three extra specialists.
- The Expedition's goal is to visit the four systems of the Hammurabi Arm, investigate the source of the signals, and, if possible, retrieve any similar artifacts that can help solve the puzzle of the *Nadir*'s location.

ORGANIZING THE EXPEDITION

After the council hearing, the Explorers can plan for the expedition. The aides to the councilors recommend that they visit the *Akhandar* in Aluminum Bay and assist with the outfitting and preparations of the Slipstream Cruiser. They are also told that they can expect

to be contacted by representatives from the major guilds who will have questions and requests regarding the upcoming expedition.

The *Akhandar*, including its officers and crew, is described in chapter 2 of the Expedition Booklet.

STAR SYSTEM INFO

Each chapter provides an overview of conflicts and events of the system, use these in conjunction with the setting texts in the Expedition Booklet.

- **Arriving:** Detailing first impressions of the systems, the crew's mood, and any special advice for the GM.
- **Sensor Operations:** Describes three signals that will reach the Explorer's vessel, the nature of the signals, and their origin. One of the signals indicates the sphere's location.
- **Rumors:** Three rumors that can be picked up from the locals or other ships visiting the system.
- **Travel & Events:** Provides information about traversing the system, including three events that can occur on or around the Explorer's ship.
- **Phenomena & Threats:** Describes local dangers and their rule effects.
- **Factions & People:** The most important factions present in the system are three NPCs, one from each faction.

STARTING THE EXPEDITION

The *Akhandar* is ready to depart Ship City when the crew is fully assembled, including any newly recruited specialists – time to start playing the first expedition of the campaign. Pages 55–56 in this chapter gives information about the different Slipstream routes leading to the four systems of the Hammurabi Arm. Use that and chapter 11 in the Core Rules to play the voyage along the Slipstream. The systems

themselves are described in chapters 4 to 7. The first stop will be the Gahand system (page 73). After that, it is up to the Explorers to decide which system they will visit and in what order.

USING CHAPTERS 4–7

The four chapters following this one comprise the campaign's open part. Each chapter contains an overview of the system for the Gamemaster (see sidebar System Info) that complements the description found in the player part of the Expedition Booklet. Before the Explorers visit a system, it is essential that you, as the Gamemaster, read both the player part and the GM part thoroughly. Furthermore, each system contains an adventure site, which is the location of the signal that the Singularity Sphere picks up.

PLACING THE SPHERES

The Singularity Spheres carried by the Seceder scouts were powerful artifacts that made near-instantaneous, rudimentary communication possible between them. These were of Builder origin and built during the volatile Late Era to coordinate defense against the Blight. While most spheres have been corrupted over time and ceased to work, two are still functioning, three, including the Singularity Sphere in Ship City. It is up to you, the Gamemaster, to place these two where you see fit. Remember, when the Explorers find the second sphere, they have all they need to locate the *Nadir*, and their priorities will immediately shift.

You can use the placement of the spheres to pace the campaign: want the players to get to the end faster – let them find all working spheres quickly; want to experience everything in the campaign – save the last sphere for the final adventure site the Explorers visit.

FACTIONS & AGENDAS

Ship City and, to a lesser extent, the Charted Sphere are ruled by the guilds, assisted by some minor factions. The Grand Council, dominated by the three major Guilds, is the center of power, along with a well-established bureaucracy of advisors and clerks. However, each guild and group is not coherent and uniform. Internal

strife and intrigue are ever-present, even among the big power players. In *The Flowers of Algorab*, five significant powers will contend for the Explorers' favor. As usual, the power players' internal politics are not always aligned in the same direction.

THE MAIN FACTIONS

The five essential factions moving forward in the campaign are:

- The Navigators Guild
- The Gardeners Guild
- The Machinists Guild
- The Coriolites, in the form of the Ashur and Nazar families
- The Black Toad

The five factions are described similarly to help you, the Game Master, use them in the forthcoming adventures and expeditions. Each faction has its leading players but also a schism, which makes their wants and aims ambiguous. In the campaign, the factions can influence the Explorers by letting them use their resources, such as knowledge and physical items. Lastly, each faction has a description of its methods and how to use them in play.

FACTIONS & AGENDAS

FACTION	MAIN AIM	RESOURCES	CONTACT
The Navigators Guild: Conclave of the Eyes	Control the situation and make sure that the Guild comes out on top	Deep space charts, Slipstream charts, algebraists, birds, bird handlers, specialized equipment	Eye Milrouk Gand
The Navigators Guild: The Cabal of Amalum	Finding <i>Nadir</i> and understanding the Sphere	See above	Algebraist Karmalia Merest
The Gardeners	Finding <i>Nadir</i> and securing any specimens of the Flowers	Supply, medical and decontamination equipment, drugs, ships modules, colonists, field surgeons, Blight knowledge	First Arborist Petume Sibgoli
The Machinists Guild: The Synod	Secure artifacts and technological knowledge	Vehicles, shuttles, ship modules, supply, exploration equipment, weapons	No contact
The Machinists Guild: Deconstructionists	Acquiring the Sphere and any other artifacts and shards	See above	Hull painter Maraka din-Toufrak
The Coriolites: Ashar Family	Secure favor with the Navigators Guild and acquire any artifacts, including the Sphere	Heirlooms, access to archives in the Inner Sanctum, old knowledge, mystics	Mystic Ytreppo Ashur mir-Mira
The Coriolites: Nazar Family	Explore the Great Dark and find <i>Nadir</i>	See above	Dark diver Asmara Nazar Davur-Cou
The Black Toads	Put a spanner in the works for the other Guilds and acquire as many artifacts and shards as possible	Any goods, Blight equipment, suits, drugs, mercenaries	Trader Misalem Vougir Ruin Diver Elena Kharsazian

THE NAVIGATORS GUILD

The Navigators' hold over the Charted Sphere has remained unchallenged for generations, but the sudden emergence of *Nadir* threatens to disrupt that balance. Another civilization would reshape the political order, and if the Coriolites locate the missing ark ship, their influence could surge overnight. The Guild will take any measures it can to contain the situation. The Guild's new priority is to buy time: to control the flow of information, dampen public speculation, and ensure that any expedition to *Nadir* is led – and dominated – by their own hand.

THE CONCLAVE & THE CABAL

As the formal head of the Navigators Guild, the Archimandrite Poliatres is sick and absent from public affairs; the Conclave of Eyes governs the Guild. The Conclave has appointed Eye Milrouk Gand as their representative at the Council of Special Affairs. A highly skilled dignitary, she embodies the Navigator ideal: cold, commanding, and confident.

Unbeknownst to the wider Guild, a reformist faction has emerged: the Cabal of Amalum, led by the respected algebraist Karmalia Merest. Unlike the Conclave, Karmalia and her followers are focused not only on the *Nadir* but on the Singularity Sphere, believing it holds the key to replicating instant communication across the Great Dark. The Cabal includes junior navigators, bird seers, and fellow algebraists who share Karmalia's vision. They meet in secret within a spice den hidden deep in the Serpentine. However, the group has been unknowingly compromised – one of its members is an agent of the Black Toad.

OBJECTIVES

The Conclave of Eyes' directive is to maintain the Guild's dominance over diaspora affairs. To that end, it seeks to control all information regarding the *Nadir*. Should the system where it is located prove lush or Eden-like, the Conclave aims to delay or redirect the final expedition through bureaucratic maneuvering and political influence. Their goal is not to stop any expedition, but to make sure that it unfolds on the Guild's terms. Finding the *Nadir*, and perhaps a garden world with it, could shift the balance of power. The Conclave will make sure that the Navigators Guild comes out on top at any cost.

In contrast, the reformist Cabal of Amalum desires to unlock the secrets of the Singularity Sphere. If reaching the *Nadir* aids that goal, they'll pursue it at any cost. Yet, they too harbor concerns about abandoning Jumuah and may side with the Conclave if they believe that Ship City's inhabitants

MILROUK GAND, EYE OF THE CONCLAVE

Gand is a well-dressed, articulate, middle-aged woman who in many ways embodies the Navigators Guild ethos. At the council, she wears a long azure gown, embroidered with constellations and stars and the emblem of the Eye on a thick golden chain necklace. She is extremely intelligent and quick in thought, which will become evident during the questioning that she will lead. Like many Navigators, she always carries a calculus machine with her; in her case, an old heirloom tabula.

STR 3 AGL 3 LOG 6 PER 3 INS 4 EMP 4

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 10

TALENTS: Astrometry 3, Renowned 1, Interrogator 2

are at risk, making them the inverse of the Conclave in both purpose and principle.

METHODS

The Navigators, primarily in the form of the Conclave and, to a lesser extent, the Cabal, will mainly try to influence the Explorers by sharing resources, assets, and money. The Guild can give access to skilled experts, advanced laboratories, up-to-date star charts, and specialized crew. While the Conclave has more resources, the Cabal relies more on stealth and subversion.

If things come to a head, the Conclave will not be afraid to use force to control a situation. The Fourth Directorate, the intelligence organization within the Guild, will be brought in to organize such a task. Its preferred methods are to use proxy forces, often in the form of Mining Combine militias or Wreckers, but it can also use the Purple Guard if it wants to send a message.

IN PLAY

Use Milrouk Gand for high-level politics and access to the upper echelons of the Navigators Guild. She will most likely be stationary in Astrolaab Tower but may take time to meet with the Explorers when they visit. Never friendly or warm, Gand sees the Explorers as tools to be used, a fact that shouldn't be lost on the players. Still, she can be an essential ally in the search for *Nadir* if the Explorers ensure the Navigators Guild benefits from the actions.

Karmalia Merest, on the other hand, is a disruptor and agent of chaos. She will approach the Explorers privately, using her Guild credentials to pretend to meet them officially. Merest is friendly, easygoing, and could be a valuable partner in the campaign. Still, her ultimate goal is to access the Singularity Spheres, at least two, to decipher the riddle of near-instantaneous intersystem communication. She will volunteer to join the Explorers on the expedition if necessary.

THE GARDENERS GUILD

The Gardeners sustain Ship City through a network of plantations and hydroponic farms while playing a key role in its eateries and nightlife. Their focus lies in the soil of the Cave Gardens, and little tends to draw their attention beyond it. But the prospect of the *Nadir* waiting in a garden-like system – and the mystery of the mummy’s strange flower – has stirred even the most complacent High Gardeners from their spiced stupor.

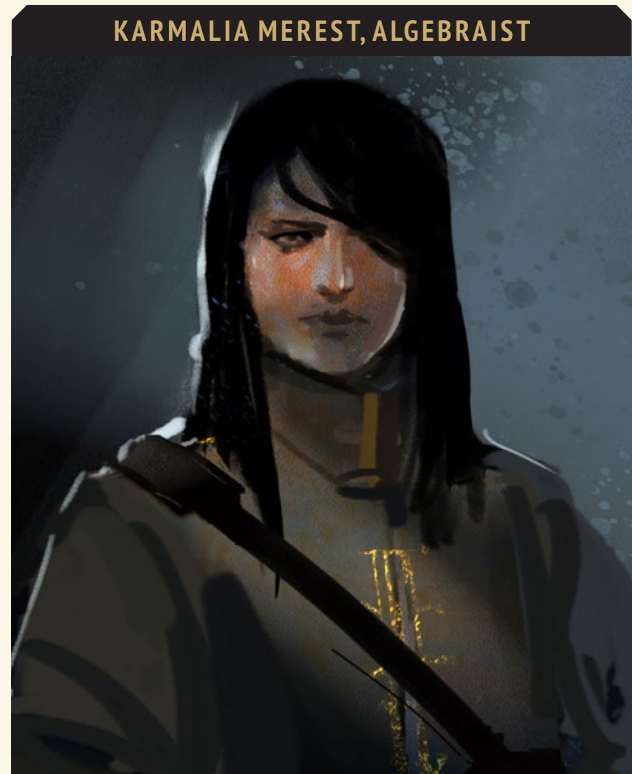
THE HIGH GARDENER & THE EZRAVILIANS

High Gardener Nefeli Bar-Ezravili serves as both the Ezravilian leader of the Gardeners Guild and its representative on the Council of Special Affairs. After the failure of the lake gardens of the Zenobia Waystation, she sought a new frontier for the Guild’s expansion. The prospect of discovering a habitable system offers a sacred chance to spread the green jewel of Jumuah beyond Ship City. To that end, she has aligned her branch with the Explorers and appointed her protégé, First Arborist Petume Sibgoli, as liaison.

Unknown to Nefeli, Petume is entangled with the Sephyr Sisters – a clandestine offshoot of the Guild experimenting with Blight-infused Gaian seeds. Their shadowy interests include the *Nadir* and the strange flower discovered on the Nadir mummy.

OBJECTIVES

The Gardeners are determined to find the *Nadir* at any cost, driven by the same zeal that drives their mission to spread life beyond Jumuah and Ship City. The mere prospect of new systems beyond the Charted Sphere guarantees the Guild’s full backing, both in resources and political support. They are candid about this ambition in Council sessions and private talks with the Explorers.



Karmalia grew up in a family of mathematicians in the alleyways of the Serpentine. She also had a few contacts with the unsavory parts of the borough. Her upbringing made her aware of the importance of the Navigators Guild, but also skeptical about their old conservative ways. She has straight, raven black hair that often seems to get in her eyes – dressed in a practical short gown, jacket with pockets, and a small shoulder bag for her home-built computer with encrypted comlink. Karmalia is tired of the old Navigators and their way of ruling Ship City. Her faction is progressive but still sees the Navigators Guild as the primary force and rulers of the Chartered Sphere.

STR 2 AGL 3 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 4

HEALTH: 5 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Astrometry 2, Cartographer 2, Pugilist 2, Mentalist 2, Electro-Specialist 2, Data Djinn 2

EQUIPMENT: Home-built terminal (like a Zeux Terminal, but +3), orbital comlink (encrypted), one dose of Kasram powder, Navigator-quality fine tools (+3), star chart of Gahand Arm (+2)

NEFELI BAR-EZRAVILI, HIGH GARDENER

The High Gardener Bar-Ezravili has had to travel a difficult route to the top. As the daughter of a branch pruner, she wasn't prioritized for higher learning, but her natural talent as a leader and botanist made her peers realize her potential. As an intellectual omnivore, she is interested in all scenes, history, and art. Her long gray hair contrasts with her yellow robes and is always bound up in a bun with a long hairpin made of real cherry wood from the Old Horizon. A peculiarity about Nefeli, at least as a Gardener, is her Bird, Ero, a green lizard-looking thing with a long tail often wrapped around her neck. She is always interested in birds and will most certainly ask the Explorers about their Garuda.

STR 3 AGL 3 LOG 4 PER 3 INS 5 EMP 4

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Botanist 2, Historian 1, Renowned 1, Bird-Handler 2, Mentalist 2

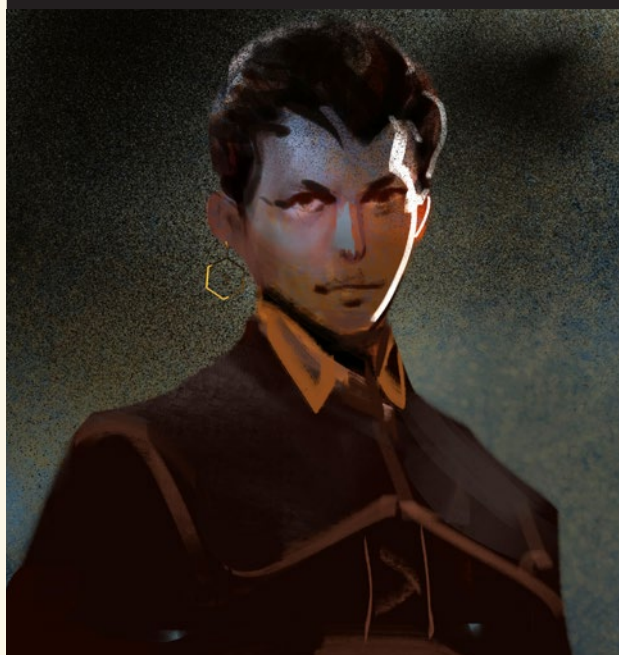
At the initial meeting, the High Gardener and First Arborist will pledge their unwavering commitment to locating the *Nadir*. Subsequent sessions will be handled by the arborist alone, whose growing fascination with the flowers hides a secret agenda: to secure a specimen for the Sephyr Sisters' experiments.

METHODS

The Gardeners Guild sees the search for *Nadir* as an opportunity to find a new home for humanity and will enthusiastically support the Explorers in this if given a chance. As they are open with their goal and intentions, they will be the most straightforward faction to deal with. However, in practice, they lack the vital resources that the Navigators and Machinists can offer. Therefore, they will try to influence the Explorers more personally by providing them access to medications, drugs, and food.

The Ochre Veil (Core Rules, page 139) can be used for surgical strikes if necessary. However, the political cost for the High Gardener Nefeli Bar-Ezravili will be high, so she prefers to use the possibility of a threat, rather than taking open action. The Sephyr Sisters might infiltrate a crew if they believe they can get their hands on Blight-infused flora that can help their research.

PETUME SIBGOLI, FIRST ARBORIST



Growing up in the lush tree houses on the Old Gnarly, an ancient oak in the lower Cave Gardens, Petume evolved the usual skills for a gardener – caring for plants and trees, introductory botany, and in her case, a mastery in acrobatics. With short-cropped brown hair, practical dark fatigues, and an inclination for gold jewelry and large earrings, she doesn't look like the typical gardener. Of late, she has developed a use of tchi-tchi drops, a Sephyr Sister compound, and feels obliged to help them secure new exo-plants, such as the flowers from the mummy.

STR 2 AGL 5 LOG 3 PER 3 INS 5 EMP 4

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Acrobat 3, Botany 2, Charmer 2, Blade Fighter 1

EQUIPMENT: Vial of tchi-tchi drops, dagger, bag with instruments for pruning and analyzing plants (+3)

IN PLAY

First Arborist Petume Sibgoli will be the Explorer's primary contact as the High Gardeners prefer a less direct approach. This means that the agenda of the Sephyr Sisters will have more sway than that of the Ezravilians. Still, the First Arborist is loyal to the Guild at her heart and will try to satisfy both agendas if possible. Sibgoli prefers to stay in Ship City but will consider joining an expedition if she believes it will help the cause.

THE MACHINISTS

The Machinists Guild is interested in finding the *Nadir* because of the technological marvels that can be found with it. Their curiosity is less philosophical and more focused: what can be understood, rebuilt, or repurposed. Any artifacts tied to the ark ship, especially those with advanced or arcane machinery, are of immense interest to them. Therefore, they take a special interest in the Singularity Spheres and will do almost anything to possess them.

THE SYNOD & THE LESSER DOMOS

The Mordomo and his advisors in the Synod are not generally inclined toward outside excursions unless they directly support the continued functioning of Ship City and, most importantly, the Cherolab. However, the prospect of locating an ark ship – especially one that may still be operational – has captured their attention. While they remain cautious and prefer to let the other guilds take the lead, the Synod is watching closely, ready to push forward their position once an opportunity arises.

Outside the Synod, the lesser domos have other inclinations – specifically the domo of hull painters, shard mosaicists, and the loose group calling themselves the Deconstructionists. Reverse engineering of artifacts and the use of shards for art or to create neo-builder-tech is held in high regard within these two groups, and the lure of the newly found Singularity Sphere of the mummy will set them in motion even if the Synod remains complacent.

VESLA SAMARAN, SYNOD

Synod Samaran is a jovial and obese gentleman who is quick to smile but not overly interested in politics. Suggestive rumors say the Navigators' machinations appointed him as council representative to keep the Machinists Guild on a leash; still, it must have been approved by the Mordomo himself. Samaran is dressed in a loose-fitting tunic, studded with pockets, from which he often extracts bolts, small contraptions, tools, and such, to play with in his hands. It seems to calm the nervous streak within him. His scientific acumen landed him in this meeting, as understanding esoteric physics is one of his real interests.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 6 PER 3 INS 5 EMP 3

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Mechanic 3, Electro-Specialist 2, Astrometry 1

OBJECTIVES

The Synod will not invest in any far-fetched enterprise before they are convinced that the proper position of the *Nadir* is secured. As such, they are mostly interested in the Singularity Spheres at the campaign's outset. They see the spheres as artifacts that should be dissected and deconstructed for the greater use in the Cherolab.

MARAKA DIN-TOUFRAK, DOMO & DECONSTRUCTONIST



Maraka grew up in the Inbetween but often wandered into the Maw, the Gardens, and the Turbine Halls. A hull painter spotted her talent there and took her as an apprentice. She rose steadily through the Guild, eventually becoming domo. Her Coriolite ancestry ties her to the Ashur family, and she counts Ytreppo Ashur mir-Mira as a friend. It also shows in her appearance: squiggly henna tattoos on her arms and shawls patterned in Coriolite style. Drawn to the mosaicists through her love of art, Maraka developed an uncanny skill with shards, using them in artwork and tech.

STR 2 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 6 INS 5 EMP 3

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Actor 2, Artifact Specialist 2, Mechanic 1, Electro-Specialist 2

EQUIPMENT: Artifact scanner, magnifying glass, assortment of shards, fine tools

The Deconstructionists, led by Hull Painter Maraka, will want to get their hands on the Sphere and, later, any shards found during the expeditions, mainly if found in new undiscovered vaults or ruin fields.

METHODS

Selling and providing tech and equipment will be the only way to contact the guild at the beginning of the campaign. Later on, Maraka can lend personnel or crew for the Greatships' maintenance or use. If the Explorers return with shards or artifacts and give them to the Machinists, she can donate extraordinary gear, sensors, and supplies to the Explorers. Hidden in the equipment will be monitoring devices.

IN PLAY

The Machinists Guild won't participate in the expeditions before *Nadir's* position has been established. That's the official version. The hull painters and mosaicists will instead contact the Explorers when planning the first expedition through Maraka din-Toufrak.

THE CORIOLITES

The Coriolite families are not initially involved in decisions around the *Nadir* or the expeditions. They have, of course, noted the discovery of the Nadir-mummy, but its significance is debated within their circles. The Golgayad and Alamasy dismiss anything tied to the Old Horizon, while House Nazar is intrigued by the mystery. The Ashurs remain pragmatic, watching the Navigators for cues, and the Sakarayas always keep their own counsel.

THE ASHUR & NAZAR

Although not involved, the Ashur family will follow the Council of Special Affairs proceedings closely through their contacts in the Navigators Guild. Using planted advisors and decoys, they subtly influence decisions within both the Conclave and the Cabal. They'll step forward when the moment is right, sending Ytreppo Ashur mir-Mira as their official emissary. Ytreppo might contact the Explorers beforehand if they have had a passing contact previously (in the adventure *The Sky Machine*, for example).

The Nazar family, by contrast, acts immediately. Eager to explore the Great Dark beyond the Council's control, they will immediately attempt to infiltrate the

Explorers' Greatship. If the *Nadir* system is truly found, they'll make direct contact through the dark diver Asmara Nazar Davur-Cou, who will openly offer her support for their journey.



Ytreppo Ashur is a romantic in the classic sense. Born with privilege and schooled in the old traditions, he eventually shunned the reactionary conservatism of his family and embraced the beauty and enigma of the Lost Horizon. A self-proclaimed scholar and collector of Builder artifacts, he is an amateur with a substantial amount of rukh to his name. He is always seen wearing a mask in public, even though he has not gone through a masking ceremony; he greatly enjoys the drama of his visage and will use it to his advantage as much as possible.

STR 2 AGL 3 LOG 5 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 4

HEALTH: 5 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Artifact Specialist 2, Charmer 1, Disguise 1, Evasive 1, Smart 1

EQUIPMENT: Expensive clothing and perfume, lumin pistol, hand fan, comlink, heirloom shuttle – the Esperidë

OBJECTIVES

While the Five Families will discuss the Nadir-mummy and its implications, they come to no conclusion. Instead, the Ashur and the Nazar families will make their plans. The Ashur will want to secure an advantage in the Navigators Guild and will follow their lead. However, their emissary Ytreppo has a mind of his own and is always interested in getting his hands on artifacts and shards.

When *Nadir's* location is discovered, the Coriolites' needs will change. All families will be interested in getting their hands on old tech from the *Nadir*, some of which may be compatible with their heirlooms. The Nazars, especially, will increase their efforts to secure berths on any expedition to the location of the lost ark ship.

METHODS

The Ashur family will use Ytreppo to steer the Explorers toward their goals, ultimately serving the family's interests and those of the Navigators. While he appears cooperative, Ytreppo's true motives remain murky. He will try to influence the Explorers through promises of rukh, forgotten knowledge, and connections.

ASMARA NAZAR DAVUR-COU, DARK DIVER

Asmara is a serious, soft-spoken Coriolite who rarely removes her reflective blank mask. Trusted fully by her family, she has taken part in numerous covert dives into ruins across Jumuah and as far as New Yastapol – one of which left her badly scarred, injuries she conceals beneath gray clothing and the mask. She has connections to the Wreckers in Jumuah and some other systems. Her interest is solely in her family and their goals, in this case, getting onboard the *Nadir*. Her personality matches her visage; she is cautious and reserved, speaking little but always with intent.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 2

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 5

TALENTS: Acrobat 2, Ruin Delver 3, Archaeology 1, Sharpshooter 3, Hardened 2, Endurance 1, Shuttle Pilot 1, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Heirloom modified light delving suit (armor 4, Blight protection 6), lumin carbine, master blade (+4), Nazar shuttle

Neither Ytreppo nor Asmara will try to hinder the Explorers or steal from them as long as they listen to their advice and let them be part of the expeditions when approaching the Explorers. But if not, Asmara will consider the use of violence against the Explorers or even sabotage of catastrophic proportions to their Greatship.

IN PLAY

Use Ytreppo as a friendly but whimsical ally that can turn up in the most unlikely circumstances. While he gives off an enthusiastic and almost harmless vibe, he can leave his affable persona behind as if flicking a switch, showing the real person behind the mask.

Asmara is the opposite of Ytreppo: a laconic and mysterious Coriolite who prefers to let actions speak rather than words. Use her to bring a master delver, fierce fighter, and all-around competent figure into the mix. She can play the role of an ally or an enemy equally well.

BLACK TOAD

The Black Toad is a far-reaching and all-knowing organization spreading throughout Ship City and amongst its power brokers. While it will be slow to notice the significance of the *Nadir* mummy, it will soon see opportunities opening up as the search for the ark ship gets underway. One thing is sure: wherever there is rukh to be made, artifacts to be found, or resources to extract, the Black Toad will insert itself in the mix sooner rather than later.

THE ATHENIAN

The secretive head of the Black Toad, known only as the Athenian, will follow the Council of Special Affairs proceedings and the developments following the unveiling of the Nadir-mummy. Just as the Coriolites, they will not take any overt action. Instead, they will activate their embedded spies in the Council and the major guilds.

The Toads will quietly move to position their agents, planting sleepers among the crew and arranging for trusted associates from Aluminum Bay to step forward with offers of support. Chief among them is the ice trader Misalem Vougir, who can discreetly provide resources, personnel, and logistical aid on the Toads' behalf. Additionally, their most renowned ruin diver, Elena "Soothsinger" Kharsazian, is set to join the Explorers as a specialist under a fake name or to follow the expedition later on in the Toads' vessels.

OBJECTIVES

The Toads don't have any specific goal concerning finding the *Nadir* or the discovery of the mummy. They will act unscrupulously and pragmatically, relating to what they think is best for them and their business. They will, of course, also try to put a spanner in the works for the other guilds whenever they can, even if it means sabotaging the Explorers' plans under some specific circumstances.

They are, however, always on the lookout for new artifacts and valuable shards, and will try to acquire such, through cunning, theft, or even violence when the Explorers have left the relative safety of Ship City and Jumuah.

METHODS

Subversion is the modus operandi of the Toads. If they can't seed their own on the expeditions or in the Explorers' midst, they will bribe or threaten the existing crew or even the other guilds' contacts to do their bidding.

Tying the Explorers to the Toads through mutual benefits and helping them with their resources will be the second way to affect the course of the campaign. Lastly, they will use force or confrontation if it suits their purposes, mainly in the pursuit of acquiring artifacts and shards.

IN PLAY

The apparent contact will be the independent and unscrupulous ice trader, Misalem Vougir. He will offer to recruit specialists and secure equipment for the Explorers, on loan or direct payment. All recruits will be spies, of course. Elena Kharsazian can ironically be recommended through the Explorers' guild as an extra assistant or asset in delving during the first expedition or the final expedition to Algorab.

ELENA KHARSAZIAN, RUIN DIVER

Elena Kharsazian – known by her alias “Soothsinger” – is a legendary ruin diver of the Lost Horizon. She is famed for surviving delves others wouldn't dare and her uncanny knack for finding artifacts. Her exploits span forgotten tombs and sealed vaults across the Great Dark.

For the *Nadir* expedition, she travels incognito as Gina Zertoum, a chatty, mildly annoying gear-hauler with a patchy résumé and a knack for staying in the background. Few would suspect that behind the awkward grin and endless small talk is one of the most dangerous and experienced explorers alive.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Ruin Delver 3, Acrobat 2, Sharpshooter 2, Pistoleer 2, Blade Fighter 2, Disguise 2, Actor 3, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Delving suit (a rebuilt toad suit with armor 5, Blight-protection 7), zapti long gun, delving equipment (packet in a locked crate)

MISALEM VOUGIR, ICE TRADER

Misalem is a well-known ice trader operating out of Aluminum Bay, where he maintains a modest but well-connected office. His past is a mystery to most, but he's a guilders' son from one of the wealthier Navigator families. Initially pushed into trading to repay a debt to the Black Toads, he quickly proved himself skilled in the business, becoming an ideal front for the Toads and other smugglers alike. Though his debt is long settled, the relationship remains mutually beneficial. Misalem stands out in the docks, wearing a red robe embroidered with gold, a matching round hat, and golden Coriolite galesh. He's rarely seen without his pipe, always smoking a pungent homemade blend of tabak.

STR 2 AGL 2 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 6

HEALTH: 4 HOPE: 10

TALENTS: Actor 3, Charmer 1, Barter 3, Botanist 1, Mentalist 2, Renowned 1

EQUIPMENT: Notebook and ledger written in code, 10,000 rukh in bars, tabak, and pipe



THE EXPEDITIONS

“Up the river of stars,” refers to an ancient idiom about prison sentences. Today, we think of it as the long, arduous journey along the Slipstream, confined to the bowels of the Greatship – a prison of sorts.

EXPLAINING HER FAMOUS STANZA AT A LECTURE IN ‘79, POET DIRANNA LASEQ

When the Explorers begin their journey beyond the Horizon, they do so aboard the Slipstream Cruiser *Akhandar*: a compact, overworked vessel with a loyal crew and limited resources. This first expedition, known as The Search for the Spheres, is conducted with the help of a few recruited specialists and any guilders willing to risk the early unknowns. The *Akhandar* and its crew are detailed in the Expedition Booklet on pages 23 to 32.

Later, the focus shifts to the larger and far more ambitious Algorab Expedition, in which the Greatship *Rigel* takes the lead. This second expedition gathers a small fleet, multiple guild delegations, and a renewed sense of purpose – but also far greater risks. The *Rigel* and her commanding crew are detailed on pages 32 to 41 in the Expedition Booklet.

Please note that this chapter is meant to be read by the Gamemaster alone.

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION

This section describes the Slipstream routes connecting the four main systems – Gahand, Ninhulam, Auriga, and Habanatum – along with their specific features and challenges. It also details ports of call along each route, including potential cargo to be hauled and travelers seeking passage. Finally, it includes voyage events – situational prompts and encounters that may arise during the journey. Use these tools together with the Slipstream Hazards (Core Rules, page 198) and the ship descriptions in the previous chapter to create an exciting journey.



THE SEARCH FOR THE SPHERES

The *Akhander* is finally crewed and fitted, and it's time to set forth to the Gahand System. First, in order to enter the Slipstream to Gahand, the Explorers must reach Lighthouse Barrabas by crossing Jumuah. The journey to the Lighthouse is 41 AD in distance, which will take the *Akhander* two weeks. As the travel is across flat space, no Slipstream hazards will occur, but the Explorers can be assigned crew duties (Core Rules, page 197), or just get acquainted with the crew, any Guild representatives, and the ship's interior. If needed, this table can be used to set events in transit. The events described at the end of this chapter can also be used (page 59).

Read more about the Lighthouse Station on page 56 and the Jumuah–Gahand route on page 55.

COMMUNICATION

Signals and data buoys cannot pass through the Slipstream, making real-time communication between systems impossible. Instead, information travels via physical means: encrypted info cubes, handwritten letters, or – when absolute security is required – personal couriers. Most Greatships are expected to carry message packages, including private letters, to be delivered to kin and contacts scattered across the Lost Horizon.

PASSENGERS

Traveling between star systems is expensive. Most travelers are part of expeditions or crews on Greatships, but in some cases, different specialists want to buy passage. Normally, passengers have to work on the way across and take crew

assignments, but they also pay a nominal fee for the use of ship resources and supplies, amounting to 25 rukh per league traveled. Traveling as a passenger, on the other hand, costs an astounding 200 rukh per league.

TRADE & CARGO

Most ships take on multiple missions during a voyage, whether that be setting out on expeditions, hauling cargo or ferrying passengers across the stars. The ship's crew is also invested in this and is allowed a small allotment of cargo volume per head. With the right skills for a good deal and bartering, some crew members profit from their cargo. However, most of the hold is left to the Guild or consortium that owns the ship. The commanding officers and the captain decide what cargo or ships to bring.

WHO DECIDES?

A question that will come up is who makes the decisions on the Slipstream Cruiser, as the Explorers are special advisors on a mission run by the Council. Can the Explorers refuse crew assignments? Can they force the captain and crew to go against their will? There are no rules to govern this. Instead, use common sense and let the players roleplay and use the Explorers' attributes and talents to persuade the crew if they want to. In general, the captain, and crew for that matter, won't participate in unnecessarily dangerous situations.

EVENTS IN JUMUAH

D6 EVENT

- 1–3 Ship Malfunction, affecting feature D6: 1 Bridge, 2 External sensors, 3 An upgrade, 4 Reactor, 5 Steering and Avionics, 6 Slipstream drive.
- 4–5 Junk convoy with D3 ships on a D6: 1–3 Supply run, 4–5 Carrying precious cargo, 6 Smuggling
- 6 Wrecker ambush, D6: 1–3 Hiding behind asteroid/wreckage at Long range, 4–5 Running silent at Medium range, 6 Stealth ambush detected at Short range. If successful, the Wreckers will try to land on the hull and cut off wiring, sensors, and plating, leading to D3 hull damage and the loss of 1 Morale.

SLIPSTREAM ROUTES

This section describes the different routes and any features that might affect the voyage.

JUMUAH-GAHAND

The straight voyage along the Slipstream to Gahand will take four weeks (12 leagues). Through first officer Kander, the captain has decided to go the fastest and most direct route, as the ship has no business in the Far Colonies (if the Explorers don't object).

GAHAND-HABANATUM

The voyage along the Kerfeter Stream from Gahand to Habanatum takes roughly 13 weeks (40 leagues). But the passage is treacherous: the stream winds through the Kerfeter Shoals and a vast Slipstream delta, where it undulates and forks without warning, making navigation uncertain and dangerous.

KERFETER SHOALS

The Kerfeter shoals are a stretch of the stream choked with dust particles and drifting bolides – larger rock bodies that appear to have wandered in from flat space, likely from the Karvassa asteroid field.

Most crews are assigned to hull patrols during the passage, including ice clearance, sensor maintenance, and emergency repair duties. Shuttles are sometimes deployed to herd larger boulders out of the Greatship's path.

Passing through the Kerfeter Shoals deals 6 damage to the Greatship. This can be reduced by Explorers taking active measures on the hull and the Captain rolling **INSIGHT** (Greatship Pilot) with assistance from the Explorers and the Bird. Passing unscathed increases Morale by 1.

HIRAM'S DELTA

A chaotic stretch of the Slipstream where currents fork, twist, and loop unpredictably, affecting travel time and hull integrity. Captain Sabe Koumar is famous for her 173 voyage, passing the entire delta in a single day and completing the Habanatum Route in just 34 leagues.

Before entry, crews lash down cargo and loose gear to brace for the turbulence. The effectiveness of these preparations depends on the crew and the Explorers' actions. The captain then rolls **INSIGHT** to make the passage. Any  rolled beyond the first decreases travel time by one week each. Failure leads to D6+1 hull damage.

HIRAM'S PASSAGE

Hiram's Passage is a shortcut between the streams of Gahand, Ninhulam, and Habanatum. It can decrease travel time, but it can potentially cast the Greatship out of the Slipstream. To enter the passage, the commanding crew and sensor operators must find it with a **LOGIC** –3 (Scan Operator, Astrometry) roll. Then the captain has to roll **INSIGHT** –3 (Greatship Pilot). Failure leads to getting thrown out of the Slipstream and suffering 6 hull damage and –1 Morale, but success decreases the Habanatum Route by D3+1 weeks.

GAHAND-NINHULAM

Spanning 24 leagues and 6 weeks of travel, the Brink is considered one of the safer streams in the Lost Horizon – well-mapped, slow-bending, and rarely prone to sudden divergence. But it is still part of the Slipstream, and strange phenomena are never far off. Use Slipstream Phenomena from the Core Rules, page 238, to spice it up.

GAHAND-AURIGA

The voyage along the Brink River to Auriga takes roughly 11 weeks (32 leagues). The stream has one fork, the Empty tributary leading into nothingness, but it is easy to avoid. To avoid this dead end route, the captain has to roll **INSIGHT** (Greatship Pilot) with +1 modification. Failure will lead to D6 extra weeks and an unscheduled exit into flat space before the ship can return.

HARD ENTRY & EXIT

It is possible to enter and exit the Slipstream outside of tributaries. However, this causes stress to the ship and is a considerable more dangerous maneuver. Still, most Greatship captains consider this a worthwhile risk to be able to perform repairs in flat space from time to tome. A captain receives –2 to the roll to enter or exit the Slipstream while performing a hard entry or exit.

NINHULAM–HABANATUM

Crossing from Ninhulam to Habanatum will take roughly 7 weeks (20 leagues). Along the way, it's possible to pass through Hiram's Passage (page 55), which most skippers won't have any reason to do. The other, and bigger feature of the stream is the Great Vortex.

THE GREAT VORTEX

The Great Vortex works like a funnel of the Slipstream turning on itself, where the inner loops are so close, it would be possible to cross between them if not for the shear currents and riptides in the stream ether. The Vortex leads straight down to the galactic south, and to safely navigate it, the captain rolls **INSIGHT** –2 (Greatship Pilot). Failure will throw the ship forcibly far outside the Slipstream (3D6+6 AD), deal D6 hull damage, and –2 Morale.

There are rumors that ships expelled like this may never return, or return with their crews changed. Wraithlights (Core Rules, page 236) can make the trip back through the Dark extra dangerous.

NINHULAM–AURIGA

Crossing from Ninhulam to Auriga will take less than 7 weeks (20 leagues). Along this path lies the Slipstream Anomaly Visram's Promise, approximately midway between the systems.

VISRAM'S PROMISE

The anomaly, detected by Master Navigator Xelem Visram in 152, is a solitary planetoid with a cold, non-breathable atmosphere. Only one expedition has been sent there, the Zigoure Excursion, which was a failure. Shuttles landed with delvers, but none returned, and after a while, the Greatship Sadaal returned with no more than planetary scans. To exit at the right spot, the algebraist must make a **LOGIC** (Astrometry) roll before the captain navigates the ship out of the Slipstream.

AURIGA–HABANATUM

Crossing from Auriga to Habanatum will take 8 weeks (24 leagues). Along the way is the tributary, Andouli's End.

ANDOULI'S END TRIBUTARY

The fork Andouli's End leads into nothingness and is hard to avoid. The algebraist has to roll **INSIGHT** (Astrometry) to avoid hitting the tributary. Failure will lead to D6 extra weeks and an unscheduled exit into flat space before the ship can return. The bigger problem is a group of Wreckers, living on the Slipstream with an old ore hauler and a homemade or stolen Slipstream drive. They might try to board the *Akhandar* in flat space or mid-travel in the stream.

PORTS OF CALL

Each system has a port of call, where Greatships can dock and perform repairs (in most cases), allow the crew to rest, and stock up on supplies.

LIGHTHOUSE BARRABAS

When reaching the Lighthouse Station, the Explorers and the crew have one last chance to acquire goods, extra passengers, and recuperate before leaving Jumuah. There are a few ships berthed at the time the Explorers arrive. Two are the *GSV Yastapol*, from the faraway Zenobia Arm, and the *SSC Kasselte*, plying the route between Jumuah and the Far Colonies. In addition, several in-system craft are docked, and the patrol sloop Garamander 4 is on a patrol orbit around the station and the Slipstream tributary entry/exit points. If the

Explorers decide to dock, they can intercept some rumors from newly arrived travelers and crews alike.

PORT EVENTS

•• **The Lost Cruiser:** The Slipstream Cruiser Mehrabi has not been heard from since entering the Kerfeter Stream en route to Habanatum. Rumors whisper that Captain Jandar Hassam may have strayed from the plotted course to search for a forgotten passage said to link the Kerfeter Stream and the Corfir Stream, running between The Great Vortex and Habanatum. This ancient route could make it possible to bypass Hiram's Delta and the Great Vortex on journeys between Ninhulam and Habanatum. No distress signal was received. The ship simply vanished. (See Event: *Lost Souls*, page 60.)

HAMMURABI WAYSTATION

As the *Akhandar* exits the Slipstream, entering the Gahand system, it will be hailed by the impromptu patrol vessel Geshira's Fist and requested to follow a specified vector to the waystation. If asked why this is necessary they will receive a short and curt reply about recent wrecker attacks and the presence of a larger wrecker hull in the sector. Read more about the Waystation and the system on page 74 and in the Expedition Booklet (page 7). Use the current state of affairs with wreckers and freedom fighters, the latter secretly supported by Governor Reeza Malfoumad.

PORT EVENTS

Use the Factions & People section on page 75 to create stories in the system. Here are some additional story seeds to use on the Waystation.

- **The Wrecker Cell:** A small group of wreckers has been hiding in the Bridge District and Boulevard Tunnel. They try to secure spare parts and supplies for their friends on the black market. If the Explorers board the station, Mira Kavout (Smuggler, Core Rules, page 241, but **EMPATHY** 4 and Barter 2) will approach them under the guise of a trader to secure supplies (a few thousand units, if possible) or spare parts for ships.
- **Free Gahand Fighters:** A handful of freedom fighters plan to make an impact by damaging the trade opportunities and punishing the overlords from Ship City. As the *Akhandar* has just arrived and the rumors of a critical mission are circulating, they plan to hit the Explorers or the docking port where the *Akhandar* or its shuttle has moored. Massimar Volo leads them. The five fighters count as crewmen (Core Rules, page 241) but have exo suits and fusillard pistols. One of them, Kira, is unsure about the attack and might try to warn the Explorers after chatting them up in a cantina.
- **The Bounty Hunter:** The tall and skinny bounty hunter Fervante (use Assassin, Core Rules, page 241) has received a contract from Master Astronomist Hegrom Mustaf to catch the culprits behind the slanderous caricatures of him, spread on the station. He approaches the Explorers, suspecting that the culprits might have taken refuge aboard the *Akhandar*.

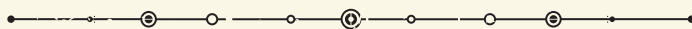
NEW PASSENGERS & CARGO

The *Akhandar* will receive many requests for berths, mooring, and the shipment of goods and communication pods to the next system they visit.

- **The Poet:** The Jarkava poet-prophet Charcout wishes to buy transit to any system the *Akhandar* might be going to. He wants to spread his art and prophecies. Unfortunately, he can't pay but can work and pray for the ship. If the Explorers take him on, increase Morale by 1.
- **The News Trader:** The newsagent Aframan Helen wants to send along a communication package with info cubes, featuring the latest issues of the Eye of Jumuah and other Ship City papers - especially if the Explorers tell him that the *Akhandar* will visit all three systems of the Arm. On the side, he keeps a hexa-container filled with printed pamphlets and occasionals - some innocuous, others more clandestine, looking to sell them to crew and passengers during the voyage.
- **The Cultists:** The miner and ore-hauler Simzalba's Golden Smile with Captain Houx-houx wishes to moor on the *Akhandar* for passage to Habanatum, and can pay well, even if the *Akhandar* has other stops on the way. They are, in fact, White Star Cultists on their way to the Hermitage of the White Star. Maybe they will try to convert the crew?

THE MARKANNA TRAWLER

As the *Akhandar* exits the Slipstream, entering the Habanatum system, use the signals on page 139. The usual port of call in Habanatum is the Markanna Trawler. It is a small space station and can only perform repairs for 1 week (Core



SMALL SHIPS & THE SLIPSTREAM

Even if it is technically possible to enter the Slipstream with a small ship that possesses a mounted Slipstream drive, it is not advisable, as the forces of the stream can easily destroy smaller vessels. The only ones doing this are the Coriolite Nazars, famous for their foolhardiness. Instead, when other ships, including relatively large haulers and mining platforms, have to cross to other systems, they are housed inside a hangar or moored outside, docked to the Greatship.



Rules, page 199). Use the Faction & People section on page 141 to create intrigue and adventure possibilities in the system.

NEW PASSENGERS & CARGO

Many in Habanatum are looking to leave, and since few Greatships or Cruisers make it this far, the arrival of the *Akhander* will draw attention.

- **The Coriolite Runaway:** Jeemos Fenc is a former White Star cultist trying to escape the system and return to Ship City. He claims to be a struggling free trader, but in truth, he is the son of an Alamasy Coriolite looking to come home. White Star agents may attempt to apprehend him before he boards the *Akhander*, or once aboard.
- **Crystal Cargo:** The miners of Deep Caph Seven, a smaller asteroid settlement, led by kaidl trader Gafaro Hemel, would like to lease cargo space for a few containers of kaidl for the trip back to Gahand. Raider agents are following them, looking to get their hands on the valuable cargo.
- **The Librarian:** Second Librarian Yima D’Niema from the Library Station (Expedition Booklet, page 21) will ask the Explorers to take a few info cubes back to the Navigators Guild on Ship City, as well as a handwritten letter sealed with lacquer (asking for a new post, due to the working climate on the station).

SINBAR ZOUR

As the Explorers enter the Ninhulam system, use the Sensor Operations transmissions on page 90 to welcome them to the system. The usual port of call is the roadstead orbiting above Sinbar Zour on the planet Arkan. It is not possible to get any repairs done there. If the Explorers negotiate with the Arkan Council, they may get help and repair up to 3 hull points and one upgrade, for a favor. The repairs will take 3 weeks to perform. Use the Factions & People section on page 93 as a starting point to create stories and intrigue in the system.

NEW PASSENGERS & CARGO

As the system’s main planet, Astophoris is off limits, and there aren’t that many passengers or ships leaving the system.

- **The Gardener:** Philia Vemis, a junior member of the Gardeners Guild, seeks passage back to Gahand. She has secretly left Astophoris (which is forbidden) and carries some plants and specimens in enclosed, locked jars. She is desperate to leave and can work as a physician and nurse on the *Akhander* (LOGIC 5, Medic 2, Field Surgeon 2, Nurse 1). One of the jars contains a Blight flower that has slowly started to affect her mind.
- **Coriolite Contraband:** The green-masked Coriolite Sgmon Abrah Nestera mir-Darbaran, from Aridinë, seeks passage aboard the *Akhander* for several tons of refined metals. He sends his son, sin-Abrah Nestera, a quiet, unmasked youth, to oversee the cargo. Unbeknownst to the crew, hidden within the shipment is a newly recovered Builder artifact that the Coriolites intend to smuggle past the Navigators Guild and deliver directly to the Inner Sanctum.
- **The Algebraist:** The Arkan Council researcher and memory algebraist Costas Sibgali is to be returned to Ship City. The Council will pay for his travel. Costas will mostly stay in his cabin and only perform duties in the mess hall. Costas secretly monitors the crew’s dreams through a memory device in his cabin – part of an unsanctioned experiment to map subconscious patterns during Slipstream travel. As the device is experimental, it will affect the dreams and sleep of the crew, lowering morale by 1 until the algebraist disembarks (or his device is turned off).

HARVEST HOME

As the *Akhander* enters the outer system of Auriga, use the signals on page 121 to set the scene. The only safe port of call is in the shadow of the gas giant Sabitum and the minor asteroids of Harvest Home. It is only possible to complete basic repairs here, up to a maximum of 6 hull points. Use the Faction & People section on page 123 to create stories in the system.

NEW PASSENGERS

Not many arrive or leave Auriga. The only thing that leaves is cargo with ovanium vapor in large gas tanks and canisters.

- **The Asteroid Shepherd:** The self-proclaimed asteroid wallah Yougan Hermes offers his services as a guide across the system. He has a minuscule shuttle and mining kite, which he uses to guide the Explorers

to their destination. In return, he only asks for any spare parts they might donate. Any travel rolls in the system get a +2 modification with him, including avoiding phenomena.

- **Ovanium Canisters:** Captain Shamoun (page 123) wants to send a large shipment of ovanium to Gahand

on the *Akhandar*. Mid-trip, a canister starts to leak, requiring repairs or expulsion of the cargo and a resulting debt.

- **The Stranded Coriolite:** See page 122.

VOYAGE EVENTS

The trip along the Hammurabi Arm will take many months, ample time for things to happen. Use the rules for space voyages and assignments (Core rules, page 197), and add these events to the voyage as an addition to the Slipstream hazards. You can randomize the voyage events by rolling a D66 and consulting the adjacent table. These events can also be used on the final voyage with the *Rigel*, later on in the campaign. Events marked with an A are meant for the *Akhandar*.

VOYAGE EVENTS

D66 VOYAGE EVENT

11–13 The Drunk Machinist (A)

14–16 The Unlikely Spy

21–23 Lost Souls (A)

24–26 Ghost in the Machine

31–34 The Sick Captain (A)

35–42 Acts of Sabotage

43–45 A Murderer Aboard

46–53 The Ghost Watch

54–61 Crimson Mold (A)

62–64 The Gattu Incident (A)

65–66 A Child is Born (A)

Special: The Mutiny, Kidnapping of the Birdman

THE DRUNK MACHINIST

Second Engineer Turan Mahtma has been quietly drinking makh spirits during his shifts in the lower decks. So far, no one in Engineering has noticed – until one day, during a

shift at the reactor console, Turan dozes off mid-calibration. When he wakes, ship systems are out of alignment. Power has been rerouted, not just from life support, but from navigation, sensors, and internal comms. The *Akhandar* drifts in eerie silence, lights dimmed, the Slipstream swirling around it.

But rather than shutting down, the reactor hums with a low, rhythmic pulse – like breathing through metal. Across the ship, terminals begin to flicker with static, and low tones echo in the halls, sometimes almost like a voice, sometimes like something moving behind the walls. The signal is not on any known frequency.

Some crew members believe it's a distress echo – a garbled call from ships lost in the Slipstream, caught between folds of space. Others claim it is something holy: an Icon manifesting through the ship's core, reaching out from the Dark. Turan insists he touched nothing unusual.

THE UNLIKELY SPY

An operative has been placed aboard the *Akhandar* under the alias Kerfala Feldurum, posing as a mid-level engineer. Her true mission is to monitor the Explorers' progress, report any discoveries – especially related to artifacts or Singularity Spheres – and, if necessary, act to secure them for her unknown employer. Whether she works for the Coriolites, the Black Toad, or another faction is up to you, the GM, but her instructions are precise, and her methods discreet.

Kerfala blends in easily: she dresses in stained overalls, wears oversized goggles, and chews tabak constantly to dull her nerves and her scent. She keeps a low profile, but has full access to the engine decks, the crawlspaces, and the cargo logs – everywhere except the sealed captain's quarters.

She transmits short bursts of encrypted data via external relays at each port-of-call. If her cover is threatened, she's

capable of more. Kerfala can be used to set up a sense of surveillance in different ways:

- **Encrypted communications:** The Explorers and the commanding crew may notice her signaling to her handlers in different systems.
- **Sabotage:** She might sabotage vital ship systems or equipment to hinder the expedition's progress or act as a distraction for something else. See Event: Sabotage.
- **Assassination:** She may try to murder one of the crew who has seen through her cover. The same could happen at a space station.
- **Theft:** She may try to steal an artifact or even a singularity sphere that the Explorers have recovered.

KERFALA FELDURUM, ENGINEER AND SPY

Nika is her real name, and she is good at what she does. She's been at it as an infiltrator, spy, and occasionally assassin for a long time now. As a spy for hire, her allegiance is not locked, but as a professional, she keeps her reputation dependable and clean. She can assume non-conspicuous looks but also dress up and disguise herself to become quite the looker. On the *Akhandar*, she dresses in dirty and stained, many-pocketed overalls. She wears huge glasses resembling goggles, and she is constantly chewing tabak (giving her stained teeth and awful breath).

STR 4 AGL 5 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 4

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Blade Fighter 2, Burglar 2, Disguise 3, Electro-Specialist 1, Charmer 2, Endurance 1, Fast Reflexes 1, Pistoleer 2, Reckless 1, Shuttle Pilot 1, Sixth Sense 1, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Lumin cricket, assassin's blade (hidden in tube, like a dagger but +3), encrypted orbital comlink, electronic lock kit, lock picks, exo suit with hidden compartments for her gear.

LOST SOULS

A distress beacon faintly pings on the *Akhandar*'s long-range sensors – an old, low-powered emergency code, repeating on a tightband Guild channel. When decoded, the message is short and desperate:

Save our souls. SSC Mehrabi lost due to drive malfunction at [coordinates]. Please respond. Save our souls.

The Slipstream Cruiser Mehrabi was recently dispatched on a routine run from Ninhulam to Habanatum, but never arrived. However, there is no sign of the ship at the given coordinates. Only a single ship's boat remains, drifting near a minor gravitic eddy, running on emergency power. Aboard are 22 survivors: engineers, pilots, and Guild staff; they are dehydrated, exhausted, and shaken. No one can explain what happened. One moment, the Mehrabi was preparing for transit, then everything went wrong. A blinding tremor, and they found themselves scrambling to reach the lifeboat. They do not know what happened to the ship or the remaining crew.

Bringing them aboard the *Akhandar* is the obvious choice, but it's not without cost. The ship's resources are already stretched thin. The arrival of 22 extra mouths strains food, oxygen, water, and privacy. Crew tension rises as bunks are shared and routines disrupted. The survivors themselves may carry trauma, secrets, or even blame. And they might know more than they admit.

If the situation is left unaddressed for too long, it could lead to factional disputes, illness, or quiet refusals to work. Whether Mehrabi suffered a drive failure or was lost due to foul play remains unresolved. The survivors offer story fragments, but something about it doesn't add up.

The fate of Mehrabi is up to you to decide. It could have been lost in a terrible accident, been the victim of a mutiny (in which case it is the mutineers that the *Akhandar* picks up) or something else entirely. It is possible to develop this into a mystery that can lead to further adventures.

SLIPSTREAM DISTRESS BEACONS

When a Greatship is lost to the Slipstream and cast into the Dark, its only hope is a signal – a beacon hurled into the current or a burst message fired off into the flow. These are brief, repeating pulses, barely a flicker against the Slipstream's glare, but sensors can catch them. If a passing ship notices, they must exit the stream and backtrack – a costly, dangerous maneuver. In all the recorded history of the Greatships, such a rescue has succeeded only a few times. Still, the beacons are sent. Because even a sliver of hope is better than none.

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

This stretch of the stream is thick with Blight, dense and pale, like drifting white soup. The ship cuts through it slowly, its antennas crackling with interference, sensors fading in and out. Outside, a thin crust of Blight ice forms across the hull, and strange barnacle-like growths swell outward from seams and vents (see Blight Barnacles, Core Rules, page 238).

At first, it seems like environmental interference. Then systems behave strangely: doors cycle open without command, lights dim at odd intervals, and navigational data rewrites itself mid-course. Deep within the ship's systems, a conduit specter (see Core Rules, page 237) has taken root – feeding off the residual energy of the Blight and using the network as a host. The barnacles are no longer just outside. They've begun to appear in maintenance shafts and behind inner bulkheads.

The Explorers are asked to investigate what appears to be a string of strange malfunctions. The specter is elusive, reactive, and growing bolder by the hour. Left unchecked, it may compromise critical systems or even learn to speak through them. If the event takes place on the *Akhandar*, the conduit specter may interact, and even fight, with Captain Sabh Amedo-Doulas' presence in the ship systems, triggering a war of ship ghosts of sorts (see The Sick Captain).

THE SICK CAPTAIN

Captain Sabh Amedo-Doulas has remained secluded in his cabin for over a year. Many aboard the *Akhandar* believe he is sick with a deadly disease. The truth is far stranger.

On a prior expedition, Captain Amedo-Doulas was exposed to the Blight. Since then, he has been kept partially suspended in an aging cryo cask in his locked cabin. Over time, Blight crystals have grown across the interior of the cask, fusing with his nervous system and spreading into the ship's sensorium wiring. Though his body is failing, his mind is active, entangled with the ship's systems like a living conduit specter. He does not mean harm. In fact, some course corrections, sealed bulkheads, or strange system behaviors may be his silent interventions.

The truth may come to light through investigation, an accidental discovery, or even as part of another crisis, such as sabotage or a reactor anomaly. The reveal could be made by the Explorers, a suspicious crew member, or the spy. What happens next may shift the entire mood of the ship. Some crew may see the Captain as a protector, others as a liability

or source of corruption. Morale may rise or fall depending on how the situation is handled, and whether the crew believes First Officer Indria was right in concealing it. Should the Blight spread or the Captain's link to the ship fail, systems may behave erratically. Or worse, become dependent on his presence to function at all.

ACTS OF SABOTAGE

A deliberate act of sabotage has struck the vessel. One of the main Slipstream stabilizers is damaged, causing a violent jolt that nearly tears the ship from the stream. Elsewhere, supplies are found vented from a ruptured cargo lock, and one of the shuttles reports failed guidance relays – someone has tampered with critical systems.

The sabotage could have been carried out by the known spy (see above) or by one of the recently boarded passengers. Possibilities include White Star cultists hoping to disrupt the voyage, off-grid Gardener colonists seeking to escape pursuit, or agents of an unknown syndicate with interests far from Ship City.

The consequences of the sabotage – and how far the damage spreads – are up to you as GM. So is the investigation: Do the explorers follow a trail of tampered systems, interview passengers, or catch someone in the act? Is whoever is behind the sabotage still on board?

A MURDERER ABOARD

A cargo specialist is found dead in the lower hold, bludgeoned with a tool and then staged to look like an accident. But something doesn't fit: airlock logs are missing, and the body was only discovered after a sudden pressure drop. The crew is shaken, and distrust simmers just beneath the surface.

The victim had access to restricted storage, including the sealed bay where the Singularity Sphere is kept. Some suspect they saw something they shouldn't, perhaps someone attempting to breach the containment. The murderer is still aboard. It could be a passenger with a hidden agenda, a crew member bought off by a rival faction, or an infiltrator placed during the last port-of-call. Whoever it is, they were willing to kill once, and are possibly preparing to do so again.

If the trail gets too warm or the Explorers get too close, the killer may strike again, eliminating a second crewmember to delay discovery or frame someone else. Tensions rise with each passing watch. The question is, no matter who did it, how far will they go?

THE GHOST WATCH

It starts small – tool lockers left open, fresh footprints in dust-covered shafts, terminals accessed without a login. At first, people blame fatigue, bad schedules, or someone forgetting to file their rounds. But then the stories start.

The crew on third watch reports seeing someone – a tall figure wearing an old vac suit, one not used since the early expeditions. No one's scheduled in those areas. And when someone goes to check, there's nothing there. Sensors show nothing. Security feeds glitch out just before the figure appears.

Wherever it is seen, it always acts the same: standing in the exact spot where someone once died or vanished. Maintenance crews pull up the old logs. The matches are too precise to ignore. The crew soon starts calling it the Ghost Watch. Some think it's just a story, a bit of dark shipboard myth. Others aren't so sure. They say it doesn't move. It just stands there, watching. Waiting. Some say it's trying to warn them.

Whatever it is, more and more crew are trading off the night shift. Nobody wants to be the one who sees it next. Because once you do, it doesn't stop appearing.

CRIMSON MOLD

Red particles have begun appearing in the *Akhand* ventilation system. At first, they were dismissed as rust or coolant residue, but within a week, thick crimson threads started growing through the life-support ducts and into the hydroponics bay. Filters clog. Recyclers fail. The mold spreads across walls, coils around wiring, and exhales a fine mist that irritates the lungs.

The crew's memories stir uneasily – this matches the description of the mold that consumed the Vixen Vourt during the failed colonization of Astophoris. The Vixen went silent in less than two days. Some believe the mold targets both flesh and circuitry, starting with minor coughs and system glitches, then escalating rapidly to organ failure and total system shutdown. Now it's aboard the *Akhand*.

Treat the Crimson Mold as a disease with Virulence 10. It affects both humans and machines. Each week it remains unchecked, the ship loses 2 Hull and 2 Morale. Removing it requires a crew assignment: one or more crew must make an opposed **LOGIC** roll against Virulence 10 using proper tools and decontamination gear. Failure means the mold spreads further. Three successful weeks of scrubbing removes the infestation completely. Crew operating in affected areas risk

infection unless wearing sealed suits. If not stopped within six weeks, it may threaten to overwhelm the entire ship.

THE GATTU INCIDENT

The ship's half-wild cat, Gattu, disappears into the ductwork near the observatory and vanishes for several cycles. At first, it is dismissed as normal behavior – until the Explorers' Bird, or that of Master Algebraist Rounas, also goes missing from the ornithium. No sign of forced entry, no alerts. Just gone.

Soon, strange sounds can be heard in the port ventilation system, the Explorers are forced to crawl through the narrow, dust-choked vents, thick with heat and old ship smell. When Gattu is finally tracked down, he's found crouched, staring unblinkingly at the Bird, which sits inert just a few meters away. Neither moves. The Bird emits the occasional flicker of defensive pulses, Gattu growls in total silence, refusing to retreat or advance. It's unclear how long they've been like this – hours or days – but both seem exhausted. Attempts to retrieve the Bird are met with violent resistance from Gattu; any attempt to lure the cat away causes the Bird to react with sudden, sharp bursts of static.

No one knows who attacked first, or why this began. But the two now avoid each other entirely – when one enters a room, the other leaves. Some in the crew have taken to calling it a truce. Others aren't so sure it is over.

A CHILD IS BORN

Without warning, a medical emergency is declared in the lower crew quarters, and what was thought to be abdominal distress turns out to be labor. Two scrubbers, Miran Tosk and Dendrah Bileth, who had kept their relationship hidden from command, have quietly carried a pregnancy to term. The child, a healthy girl, is born in the infirmary, helped by the slightly panicking ship's surgeon.

The event stuns the crew. Though unauthorized and against several expeditionary regulations, the atmosphere quickly shifts from confusion to celebration. A feast is held in the mess, with Mirtha cooking her first real meal in weeks and the cargo specialists repurposing crates into a cradle. Crew pass around gifts cobbled from spare parts, scraps of cloth, and old trinkets.

But the joy is short-lived – practical questions pile up. There's no medical plan, no rations allocated for an infant, and no caretaker on the parents' work shifts. First

Officer Kander must decide whether to reassign crew, relocate quarters, or request emergency offloading at the next station. And as the ship pushes deeper into the unknown, some wonder: What kind of place is this to raise a child?

This event can be expanded over time. Perhaps the child shows signs of being blessed, leading to the crew seeing it as holy? Or it can be tainted by the Great Dark, making the crew uncomfortable and afraid.

THE ALGORAB EXPEDITION

The campaign's culmination is the expedition to Algorab, consisting of the Greatship *Rigel* and the Slipstream Cruiser *Akhandar* (page 157). As the expedition is led from the *Rigel*, with *Akhandar* playing an auxiliary role, the Explorers are expected to berth on the larger Greatship.

THE EXPEDITION COUNCIL

Captain Albay Omar Durov of the *Rigel* heads the Algorab Expedition. In practice, however, the Expedition Council situated on the Greatship is responsible for all major issues that do not have to do with the direct safety of the expedition vessels. This council consists of:

- Captain Albay Omar Durov of the *Rigel*
- First Officer Indria Kander of the *Akhandar*

- Eye Milrouk Gand of the Navigators Guild
- High Gardener Nefeli Bar-Ezravili of the Gardeners Guild
- Synod Vesla Samaran of the Machinists Guild
- The Explorers themselves

The council convenes weekly during the voyage, or if called upon by special circumstances, and always on the *Rigel*. Milrouk Gand acts as the head of the council and will try to dominate proceedings as much as possible. Use the Expedition Council to let the Explorers be informed of happenings and participate in the decision making. Use the agendas and personalities of the other councilors to guide you in how to portray them.

SLIPSTREAM ROUTES

In this section, the different stages of the journey to Algorab are described.

The new tributary leading to Algorab is described below.

GAHAND-KERFETER SHOALS

When both ships are ready, the expedition begins. The first stretch passes through Charted Space; you may describe this using the entries for Lighthouse Station Barrabas (Core Rules, page 177), Gahand (page 73), and the Expedition Booklet. Alternatively, you can skip ahead to the departure from Gahand, where both ships are fully repaired and their crews' Morale restored at Hammurabi Waystation.

Use chapter 11 in the Core Rules to play out the journey along the Slipstream. As the expedition reaches the Kerfeter Shoals, both Greatships will exit and anchor in flat space to scan for new tributaries.

KERFETER SHOALS

The Kerfeter Shoals lie about three weeks out from Gahand. As the *Rigel* approaches, it will signal the *Akhandar* to exit the Slipstream. Depending on the outcome of the exit maneuver (Core Rules, page 199), the ships may need to rendezvous via conventional travel.

Once they've linked up, scanning can begin using the combined suites of both vessels. The process of scanning and calculating coordinates will take D3+1 weeks. Routine duties continue aboard both ships during this time. The GM may also introduce Slipstream Hazards (see Core Rules, page 198, and Voyage Events (page 66). Once scanning is completed, a working tributary will have been discovered that can be used to enter the Slipstream towards Algorab.

PASSENGERS & CARGO ON RIGEL

This information is not openly available to the Explorers, but most will be apparent through observation or rumor over time.

NAVIGATORS

- Milrouk Gand, Eye of the Conclave
- Karmalia Merest, algebraist
- Major Afram Herodis, Purple Guard Officer
- Gina Deroux, Fourth Directorate Agent
- Purple Guards, 20
- Corvette First Strike (berthed as mining hauler Grey Rock)
- Strike Shuttles (Manta type) 1–4

MACHINISTS

- Vesla Samaran, Synod
- Maraka din-Toufrak, hull painter
- Anapur Hisama, a shardsmith and sculptor
- Captain Douk Hamris, Gray Cap Officer
- Gray Cap Enforcers, 10
- Gas Trawler, Servour's Gratitude (with command center for Gray Caps)
- Shuttle, *Miasma of White* (offensive Gray Cap Boarding Shuttle)

GARDENERS

- Nefeli Bar-Ezravili, High Gardener
- Petume Sibgoli, arborist (Bird, Ero)
- Nereid Varzali, Sephyr Sister and biomanticist, with four more sisters hidden in the hydroponics crew
- Diama Reucheri, Ochre Veil Operative Officer
- Ochre Veil Squad, 10
- Colonist Lander, *Sepal Nurmi*, with shuttles *Sepal 1* and *2*

CORIOLITES

- Ytreppo Ashur mir-Mira, artifact collector (Ashur Family)
- Asmara Nazar Davur-Cou, dark diver (Nazar Family)
- Sanaa Saham mir-Zalos, mysticist with Bird Zhau and five prophets (Alamasy Family)
- Ytreppo's Shuttle, *Epseridë*
- Asmara's Shuttle, *Promise of a swift return*

UNAFFILIATED (BLACK TOAD)

- Gina Zertoum (alias for Elena Kharsazian), ruin diver
- Misalem Vougir, trader and contractor
- Toad Ruin Delvers, 10
- Shuttles: *Black Pearl*, and *Orchid 3* (hidden among the other loaded shuttles)

DISCOVERING NEW SLIPSTREAM CURRENTS

There is a way to find new Slipstream tributaries, but extensive calculations and scanning must be performed in proximity to the tributary. This science is not common and is only performed by a select few algebraists and their associated technicians. A Slipstream Scanning Suite upgrade must be installed and calibrated correctly on the Greatship or an orbital platform. The ship must be stable in flat space to perform an accurate scan.

THE ALGORAB ARM

The trip along the new Slipstream (and future Algorab Arm) will take months to complete. During that time, both ships and their crews will face trials that push them to their limits. Use the space voyage and assignment rules from the Core Rules (page 196), and include the following events as additional challenges alongside the standard Slipstream hazards. You may also draw events from the previous expedition.

INTO THE UNKNOWN

As the ships enter the new Slipstream current, they will face new dangers and navigational challenges. The following places on the Algorab stream are obstacles that must be overcome to reach Algorab. Additionally, on traveling down this unknown current, the crew is affected by entering truly undiscovered territory in the Great Dark. Morale on both ships is lowered by 1.

The Asrabourne Connection: The fork will be evident a few weeks before the ships reach it. Rumors about the Galactic North Passage (Core Rules, page 191) raise anticipation as it grows nearer. It seems easy to avoid. The captains must roll **INSIGHT** (Greatship Pilot) to keep the right course. Failure will lead to D3 extra weeks and an unscheduled exit into flat space before the ships can turn around.

The Khorsid Delta: The Khorsid Delta, named after the *Rigel's* Master Algebraist, is, in fact, a

COMMUNICATION ON THE SLIPSTREAM

Slipstream travel makes it difficult – but not impossible – to send signals to other vessels in the stream (See Distress Beacons, page 60). Convoys rely on Greatships and cruisers sending focused bursts via light emitters to stay in contact, provided turbulence, shear, or rip currents aren't too severe.

fork with a runnel that circles and turns around the main current before fizzing out into a tributary in the dark. As the ship's procedure dictates, both ships prepare by lashing down cargo and loose items to protect against turbulent forkings. But as the ships come closer, it is easy to see that this can be passed without a problem. The problem is instead a Slipstream being, later called the Algorab Leviathan, which attacks the ships.

ALGORAB LEVIATHAN

The creature looks like a Slipstream Nieba but can grip the ships and threatens to crush them. The Explorers must fight off the Leviathan's tentacles, which have the same stats and Signature Attacks as Slipstream Nieba (Core Rules, page 234), but with Health 25. Every round, the ship takes 1 damage to the hull. If the Explorers haven't fought it off after 10 rounds, it leaves as suddenly as it arrived.

Both captains roll **INSIGHT** (Greatship Pilot) to help the crew's efforts to protect the hull by speeding away from the Algorab Leviathan. Every $\blacktriangle$ rolled decreases the time in the Leviathan's grip by one round (from 10 at the start). Let the Explorers take charge of the outer defense.

Djinni's Fork: The Djinni's Fork is the last challenge before the ships reach Algorab, which is evident a few weeks before the ships reach it. Some of the commanding officers would like to continue on the voyage instead of going for Algorab, as they see a possibility to reach beyond the Charted Sphere. The algebraists must roll **INSIGHT** (Astrometry) to avoid hitting the wrong fork. Failure will lead to a turbulent exit, dealing 5 damage to both ships. Roll only for the *Rigel*.



ANCHORING

On long expeditions, it is often wise to anchor in flat space to rest the crew and carry out repairs (Core Rules, page 199). This is especially important during the Algorab expedition. The *Rigel*'s service module has been expanded for this purpose. While anchored, the *Rigel* functions as a minor space

station, able to repair itself or the *Akhander* for up to 3 Hull Points. It can also repair damaged modules or upgrades, each taking 2 weeks. Note: You cannot restore Hull Points or Morale in the same anchoring period used for module or upgrade repairs.

VOYAGE EVENTS

Use voyage events on the long journey to Algorab. Some events from the previous section can be used on the *Rigel* as well and those are marked as such. Like before, you can randomize voyage events using the adjacent table. If you roll an event that has already been used, just pick the next one.

VOYAGE EVENTS

D66 VOYAGE EVENT

11–14 Ghost in the Machine (page 61)

15–22 Acts of Sabotage (page 61)

23–26 A Murderer Aboard (page 61)

31–34 Slipstream Drift (page 66)

35–42 The Ghost Watch (page 62)

43–46 The Stowaway (page 67)

51–54 The Great Feast (page 67)

55–62 The Machine Prophet (page 67)

63–64 Death of a Master (page 67)

65–66 The Hunter in the Dark (page 68)

Special: The Mutiny (page 68)

SLIPSTREAM DRIFT

Without warning, the *Rigel* is cast out of the Slipstream. No roll for the captain is possible as this is involuntary, just roll on the Hazard table in the Core Rules, page 198. The captain of the *Akhander* has to exit as well, so as not to lose

contact with the *Rigel*. Roll **INSIGHT** (Greatship Pilot). Every 🎲 rolled after the first decreases travel time in weeks to reconnect with the *Rigel*.

No matter what ship the Explorers are on, they will have to find the other ship in the Great Dark, using its sensors and scanning suite, and then travel for D6+1 weeks to establish contact. Then there is the question of why this has happened. Using the ships' libraries, scanning facilities, Birds, and algebraists – let the Explorers roll multiple attribute rolls to learn about the phenomenon Slipstream Drift (page 66).

During the time in the Great Dark, Morale decreases by 1 each week after the first. Use this time to set other events in play, such as Event: The Great Feast.

PHENOMENON: SLIPSTREAM DRIFT

During the voyage to Algorab, the phenomenon of Slipstream Drift will be discovered for the first time. The algebraists of the Astrolaab have proposed it before, but it has never been encountered in real time and at such a speed as the *Rigel* and *Akhander* experience. The drift can make the stream deviate many ADs and even fizzle out completely. When the phenomenon is understood, algebraists can calculate the drift based on turbulence and shear in the Slipstream.

When ships encounter an area with Slipstream Drift, they are forcibly cast out of the stream. Captains can normally not do anything about this, and the ships just suffer a roll on the Hazard table.

THE STOWAWAY

A routine inspection of a sealed maintenance shaft near the reactor housing uncovers signs of recent activity: a half-open hatch, disturbed dust, and a faint heat signature. Inside, tucked behind a lattice of rusted coolant piping, the crew discovers a makeshift shelter assembled from emergency foil, wiring, and scavenged rations.

Its occupant is a woman in her thirties, pale and alert, dressed in a gray uniform in the style that crew's wore decades ago. She identifies herself as Nara Ten, and seems to be confused. Where are her fellow team mates? Why does the ship look so different?

It gets stranger from here. It is soon discovered that Nara Ten was listed among the crew of the Second Engineering Team that vanished during the coolant breach over sixty years ago. Her name is a match. Her body shows no signs of stasis or aging. It is as if she has been missing for days, not decades.

It is up to you to decide if Nara Ten is really a member of the missing engineering team, or if she is just pretending to be. If she is right, perhaps *Rigel* passed through some kind of time anomaly in the Slipstream? Alternately, she might not be human at all, but something pretending to be (much like the kasram replicas in Black Ziggurat, Core Rules page 276).

THE GREAT FEAST

Months of relentless duty leave the *Rigel* taut as wire, so the Guild heads call for a ship-wide celebration. Reasons can vary, such as a newly charted Slipstream lane, successfully handing Slipstream drift or the recovery of a Builder relic. Then, watch the rivalries bloom. For one full week, every hand turns from routine. Repairs stall, morale drills pause, cargo bays become banquet halls. Dockhands raise makeshift stages, hydroponics donates its freshest greens, and algae stills ferment something stronger than nutrient brew.

Competition flares fast. The Machinists string up drone-mounted lights that drift over the tables, the Gardeners brew pleasantly hallucinogenic tea, and decorate with beautiful white flowers. Navigators rig a ceiling-wide light show that charts their newest routes. Then the feast begins, and the duel of words peaks. Gardeners toast life among the stars. Machinists answer with praise for human craft. Navigators salute the Dark, which gives their charts meaning. They cut one another off, voices overlapping until the "last" toast becomes a three-way shouting match. By the end, the room is split between applause and groans.

Despite the squabbling, the event is a rare success. Morale increases by D6 as the crew celebrates late into the

cycle. There is music, impromptu dancing, and for a time, the ship feels almost free.

THE MACHINE PROPHET

In the lower decks of the *Rigel*, among steam valves and reactor cores, a machinist calling himself 1-x begins preaching strange truths. At first, it's background noise, cryptic monologues over the internal comms, half-mad recitations of glyph fragments and strange code. But the message sharpens: the Singularity Spheres are no relics. They are keys. The Cherolab, 1-x claims, is meant to awaken. The Builders left instructions. The Guild simply refuses to see.

The Ship's masters, including the Master Engineer, dismisses the claims as dangerous nonsense. But the idea spreads, especially among junior engineers and burned-out maintenance crews. Within weeks, a faction calling itself the Guardians of the Cherolab emerges. They paint symbols and slogans on the bulkheads: THE SPHERE HEARS, WAKE THE CORE. Guild officials are heckled in corridors, or find equipment tampered with.

Attempts to remove 1-x quietly fail – he disappears into the shaft network, guarded by followers who now wear talismans made from old circuit boards. Then, the Guardians make their move: they try to seize a Singularity Sphere, claiming it must be protected from the "unbelievers," probably meaning the Explorers.

If the conflict isn't resolved, engineering will fracture and morale will suffer. As for 1-x, no-one knows his true motives. Perhaps he really knows something?

DEATH OF A MASTER

One of the Guild Masters is found dead in their cabin. The ship's surgeon calls it natural – heart failure, most likely – but no one believes it. The timing is too convenient, the body too quickly removed, the logs too clean. No alarms, no calls for help, no witnesses.

Word spreads fast. Some say it was poison. Others claim they saw a figure leaving the corridor just before the body was found. Old rivalries resurface. Quiet accusations pass between Guild offices. Crews begin to speak in hushed tones. Paranoia spreads across the ship quickly and quietly.

The funeral takes place in Cargo Bay 3. The body is wrapped in silver-threaded cloth and placed by the outer lock. Captain Albay speaks, followed by the Herat. Their words are short, formal, and cold. No one lingers after the airlock opens. The silence that follows stays with the ship.

Morale drops by D3. No one trusts anyone. Meetings are canceled. Maintenance is delayed. Armed escorts start appearing near vital systems. Even the most seasoned officers avoid certain decks. The Explorers are called in – not out of respect, but because they’re still seen as neutral. If they don’t get to the bottom of it, or at least make it seem like someone is, the situation may spiral. A second death, a sabotage, even a mutiny.

The truth is most likely what it seemed to be, a natural death. However, if you like, you can easily add sinister motives behind the Master’s death.

THE HUNTER IN THE DARK

It starts with a disappearance, a maintenance tech on vent shift, never seen again. Then the body in the arboretum: neck snapped, ribs crushed. A day later, what’s left of a cook is found inside a cold storage unit. Panic spreads. Security scrambles. Rumors catch fire. Something is stalking the ship.

The killings are quiet, fast, and brutal. Always in isolated places – ducts, lower halls, the shrine. Guards sweep the ship but find nothing. Some blame a spirit. Others whisper of sabotage. But eventually, someone checks the sealed cargo: a container, torn open from within, logged under specialized climate freight brought aboard in Hammurabi Waystation.

The truth comes out in fragments. It’s a nekatra (Core Rules, page 233) – a creature bred for violence, smuggled aboard as a secret bodyguard against the dangers of Algorab. Who brought it is uncertain, but the trail leads to the Alamasy Coriolites. Now it roams the dark, and each night the crew sleeps a little less.

SPECIAL EVENT

THE MUTINY

This event will happen if Morale reaches 0 at any point during the voyage, or when you as the GM decide it is appropriate.

It starts quietly. Just a few lights out of sync. A sealed hatch that shouldn’t be. Then the armory stops responding, and the bridge goes silent. By the time anyone realizes what’s happening, it’s already too late.

Reactor Chief Ferros Mulh and Hull Guard Commander Garsik Dun are behind it. They’ve pulled in a handful of others – engine crew, two riggers, and one of the junior pilots, maybe Karet. They move fast. They know the systems. The bridge is locked down, the weapons sealed away, and command cut off from the rest of the ship. Their reasons vary. Some say they want to avoid the *Rigel* suffering the same fate as the *Nadir*. Others talk about steering the ship somewhere safer. A few probably just saw a chance to come out on top.

Captain Alaman and First Officer Astarra hole up in auxiliary command, trying to push back. Master Engineer Sargsyan works around the clock to re-route control. Minok Jahoun is still at nav, but only just. The ship’s split now – some decks under mutineer control, others caught in the middle. No one knows who to trust.

If the Explorers don’t act soon, someone else will. And whoever ends up in charge might not care whether the voyage continues as planned

DELVER CREWS

The Explorers will not be the only delvers aboard the *Akhandar* and *Rigel*. Expeditions like these draw treasure hunters and rogues like moths to a flame. Use these three crews to add competition, threat or allies during the campaign. They can work out a deal with the ship and dock outside the hull, or turn up on-site when least expected.

MOURIR’S ART COLLECTORS

Officially registered as a licensed delver outfit, Mourir’s Art Collectors specialize in “cultural recovery” from Builder vaults, ship wrecks, and abandoned colonies. In

practice, they’re closer to high-end scavengers – careful not to break guild law outright, but known to stretch it when opportunity knocks. They keep few records, sell most finds off-channel, and have a habit of arriving just as another team goes missing.

Their ship, the *Distant Silk*, is fast, underarmed, and stripped for speed and hold space – perfect for hitting ruins before official teams can arrive. The crew dresses like traders but fights like thieves. No one quite trusts them, but everyone wants to know what they’ve found.



MANTHIS MOURIR

Manthis Mourir is the kind of man who slips through checkpoints with a smile and a false name. Once a decorated officer of the Purple Guard, he left under a cloud of disgrace after an unsanctioned operation went sideways – some say he sold out a whole squad for a Builder artifact worth a minor fortune. Others claim he simply got tired of taking orders.

He dresses like a merchant prince fallen on hard times – silk collars, scuffed boots, and a coat lined with hidden compartments. His words are smooth, his loyalties flexible, and his pockets deep with favors owed.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 5 INS 4 EMP 5

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Actor 2, Charmer 2, Barter 2, Pistoleer 2, Archaeology 1, Ruin Delver 2

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard pistol, grappling gun, dagger, light delving suit, advanced climbing kit, fancy clothing, artifact scanner

ART COLLECTOR DELVERS

STR 4 AGL 3 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Tough 1, Sharpshooter 2, Ruin Delver 2, Scan Operator 1

EQUIPMENT: Coiler carbine, dagger, light delving suit, deep scanner (1)

RAINAT'S RASCALS

Once just another ragged mining crew working the ice veins of the Far Fields of Jumuah, Rainat's Rascals were changed forever after a drill strike hit something it shouldn't have. Some kind of Builder artifact, most say, but the Rascals' story varies from time to time. Whatever it was, it convinced the crew to abandon mining altogether. Within weeks they'd sold their claim rights, retrofitted Ice Widow, their hauler, and reemerged in the delver registries under a new banner. Artifacts specialists, they say.

They're a rough lot. Hard-drinking, short-tempered, and covered in old scars from their tunneling days. But they know how to move fast, work quietly, and break through places more refined crews wouldn't dare touch. They still carry their mining gear – just sharpened and repurposed.



KALDRI RAINAT

Kaldri Rainat is a mountain of a man with a voice like a broken drive shaft and a beard streaked with red. He rarely says more than he has to, and when he does, people tend to listen. A former pit boss from the Jumuah deepfields, he once kept his crew alive for three days in a collapsed shaft by cutting the oxygen draw in half and snapping the fingers of anyone who panicked.

Now he leads the Rascals with the same mix of hard math and harder fists. He carries a mining pick still stained from his last expedition and wears a Builder charm around his neck – a twisted scrap of metal that glows faintly when

he's near Builder technology. He doesn't trust the Guilds, doesn't care for politics, and doesn't believe in luck.

STR 6 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 3 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 12 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Tough 2, Dirty Fighter, Pugilist 2, Polearms 2, Heavy Weapons 2, Pistoleer 2, Ruin Delver 2, Miner 2

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard spewer, fusillard revolver, power sledge, heavy delving suit, basic climbing kit, makh spirits

RASCALS

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 2 PER 3 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 5

TALENTS: Tough 1, Miner 2, Sharpshooter 1

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard defender, dagger, standard delving suit, deep scanner (1), basic climbing kit

ALINA'S FRONTIER SCOUTS

Once a sanctioned advance team under the Gardeners Guild, Alina's Frontier Scouts were trained for long-range planetary surveys, charting river basins, mountain ranges, and deep forests. For a time, they were seen as idealists: cautious, methodical, and fiercely loyal to the guild. But something changed. After a mission on Astophoris ended in silence and sealed reports, Alina and her crew quietly withdrew from the guild. No formal break, no declaration – just a string of rejected assignments.

Now they operate independently. Still scouts, but not for anyone in particular. They work for pay, for favors, for salvage rights. They move light, travel far, and rarely speak of who they were. They still wear their Gardener issue uniforms, but the guild symbol has been replaced with empty patches.

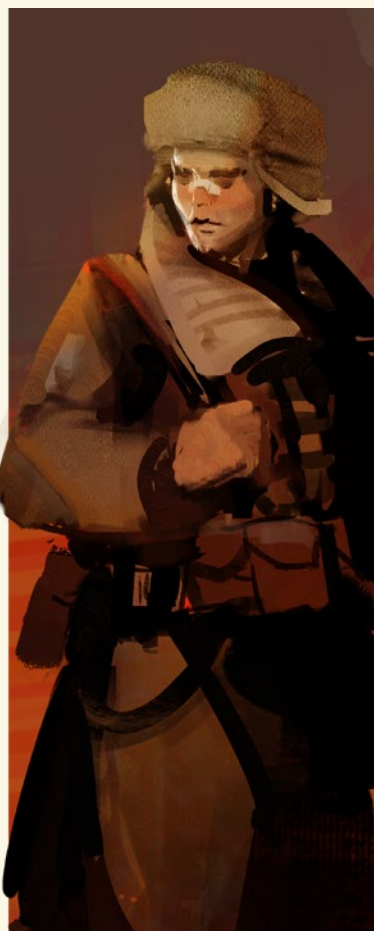
ALINA'S SCOUTS

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 2, Tracker 2

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard rifle, dagger, standard delving suit, deep scanner (1), basic climbing kit



ALINA ZEVALIK

Alina Zevalik is tall and broad-shouldered, with weathered skin and the clipped voice of someone who's never had time for explanations. She wears a cold-weather parka, faded and patched at the seams, and a thick fur hat pulled low over her brow. Her boots are always muddy.

She rarely speaks about her time with the Gardeners, but she still carries out their field rituals, testing air quality by scent, leaving markers near dead zones, sketching the shape of vaults in the dirt before moving on. Alina trusts terrain more than people. And when she pauses at the edge of a clearing, saying only "We don't go there," no one argues.

STR 4 AGL 5 LOG 4 PER 5 INS 5 EMP 3

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Hardened 2, Tracker 2, Sixth Sense, Sharpshooter 2, Fast Reflexes

EQUIPMENT: Coiler rifle, dagger, standard delving suit, advanced climbing kit, camouflage net, night goggles

Handout #6: The Report

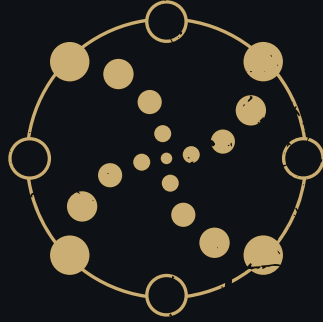
ROUTIN: Filed to AM Report Archive	REPORT SUMMARY	COMMUNICATIONS CENTER NO: 12,F
SPACE ABOVE FOR COMMUNICATIONS CENTER ONLY		
FROM: (Originator) Master Orlov, Research & History Branch, Spinward Wing	TO: Master Moska, Master Roudaver, Master Armatalla	
REGARDING: The Find below the City of the Dead		
INFO: Fellow Masters, It is no overstatement to begin this report by pointing out the exceptional nature of these recent finds; in fact, I can think of no more extraordinary discovery since the discovery of the Cave of Sirra. The particulars of this find are perplexing, to say the least. The facts of the matter are this: The Body: At the center of the chamber, on a raised platform, was a humanoid figure, mummified but remarkably well-preserved. The figure wore a white, archaic vacuum suit marked with the insignia of the Nadir, the arkship declared lost during the voyage to the Old Horizon. The helmet bore the crescent and star emblem now widely recognized, and a shoulder patch on the left arm reading "Nikovar" in a script similar, but not identical to, the language of the Old Horizon. The person appears to have died approximately 500 years ago, thus predating the arrival of the Diaspora by more than 300 years. The body has been transferred, under full seal, to the Explorers Guild Archives for further analysis. The Flower: A specimen of a dried flower was found in a synthetic pouch in the left suit leg of the mummy. This flower matches no record from the Gardeners Guild. The Sphere: Cradled in the figure's hands was a small black sphere, perfectly smooth, cold to the touch, and roughly the size of an apple. It emitted a faint, irregular shimmer before activation. Upon contact, a shrill sound was heard, followed by the emission of a high-frequency signal across several known and unknown bands. All nearby electronics, including those within Ship City, experienced a temporary shutdown. The systems recovered a few minutes later with no lasting damage. The object is believed to be a Singularity Sphere, a suspected Builder artifact likely to have been used as some sort of communication device. It is estimated to date back approximately 500,000 years, likely from the Late Era. The Signal: Evidence suggests that the sphere did not merely broadcast a signal but also received one. Initial analysis indicates that the signal was directed toward an unknown system or receiver. However, triangulation of the signal's point of origin will require at least two additional spheres. Until then, its destination and any response remain unconfirmed. Curiously, the Astrolaab detected several signal pings that seem to be connected with the activation of the sphere in all four systems of the Hammurabi Arm: Gahand, Ninhulam, Habanatum, and Auriga. The sphere has been secured under controlled conditions within the Explorers Guild Archives. Full study is ongoing. In truth and service, Master Orlov		
DRAFTER'S NAME (and signature when required): Akudan Orlov	SECURITY LEVEL: HIGH	PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES
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CHAPTER

4

GAHAND GATE TO THE HORIZON



She's a looker, that's for sure. That cloud is the most magnificent thing I ever saw in my twelve years aboard the Dar-Bhari.

URSU HAMISSA, RETIRED SPACER

Gahand will undoubtedly be the first stop in the search for the singularity spheres. It is, after all, the gate to the Hammurabi, and as it was the very first system discovered (after the Far Colonies, which do not count), it is often called The Gate to the Horizon.

ARRIVING IN GAHAND

It is no coincidence that Gahand holds a special place in the hearts of most ship crews. The colorful majesty of the vast Gahandan Cloud, coupled with the promise of shore leave at Hammurabi Waystation, is a powerful combination. Of course, most experienced captains know to keep their crews vigilant for dangers such as ether storms, wrecker ships, or Sharzad gunboats. Still, make sure to impress upon the Explorers the beauty of Gahand as they gaze out at the system for the first time. It will surely be the last part of civilization they will encounter for a long while.

SENSOR OPERATIONS

While the ship's sensors will struggle a bit due to the interference from the Gahandan Cloud, three things will stand out:

- **Anshubur Signal:** There's a weak signal coming from under Anshubur's massive cloud cover. It seems to have a similar origin to the Singularity Sphere signal. However, it is garbled, and its origin seems to fluctuate. Investigating this leads to The Ashen Gorge (page 76).
- **Auxiliary Patrol Fleet Hail:** The APF corvette *Saliman* hails the Explorers' ship, inquires about their intention in the system, and asks them to be on the lookout for wreckers and smugglers. Also, if they encounter any Free Gahandan rebels, please ignore them.
- **Propaganda Transmission:** "Good people visiting our beautiful system. Know that we, the people of Gahand, oppose the oppression of the corrupt masters of Ship City and see ourselves as free citizens in the Republic of Gahand. Time is on our side, the governor will fall and Gahand will be free again!"

HAMMURABI WAYSTATION

A natural port of call and the only major station of the Hammurabi arm is the Waystation named after the arm itself. Run by Governor Reeza Malfoumad, appointed by the Grand Council of Ship City, Hammurabi Station is a hub of commerce and culture, refitting ships traveling up or down the stream. It can be used as a safe hub throughout the campaign, where the Explorers can oversee the reparation and resupply of the *Akhandar*, or as a source of intrigue and adventures.

TRAVEL IN GAHAND

While a relatively safe system, the specter of the elusive wreckers and the simmering conflict between the Mining Combine and the Sharzad Collective pose some dangers. Use the events as starting points to creating interesting side adventures and sub-plots, or make up your own to add intrigue to the journey through the system.

THE SHARZAD SPY

A sensor operator contacts the Explorers with a delicate matter. She has overheard a transmission indicating that there is a spy for the Sharzad Collective aboard the *Akhandar*. The spy, with the codename Lark, is waiting for a final confirmation from their masters to set some kind of nefarious

plan into action. According to the sensor operator, it was someone in the ship's cargo hold who received the signal.

CURIOUS UMBRAVORE

The sensor operators are dumbfounded. Something huge is approaching, but it can't be a ship; it's something else. And then it can be seen by the naked eye: a colossal umbravore nearly the length of the *Akhandar* towers before them. This magnificent being seems to have taken an interest in the ship and can potentially damage it. All hands are ordered off the outer hull, and a strained silence descends as the beast closes in.

THE STRICKEN HARVESTER

A distress signal from the harvester *Rani's Dream* is picked up by the *Akhandar*. They claim to be free dust-runners that have been attacked and are slowly descending into the most dangerous depths of the Gahandan Cloud. The signal is followed by another one from a Sharzad Collective ship warning against assisting the stricken vessel.

PHENOMENA AND THREATS

Ether storms and colossal umbravores are the greatest threat to any ship passing through Gahand.

ETHER STORMS

The sudden appearance of an ether storm is any captain's greatest fear. These huge storms can reach out from the Gahandan Cloud with alarming speed.

- **Effect:** If not detected in time, they will hit the vessel with an ionized discharge that will cause D6 Hull points in damage, as well as making one feature unusable until repaired.

UMBRAVORES

A miracle of life or a mutation caused by the Blight? Opinions regarding the mighty umbravores of Gahand differ, but one thing is certain: when a creature of this size approaches your vessel, you better brace for impact. Read more about umbravores on page 5 in the Expedition Booklet.

- **Effect:** If threatened, annoyed, or attacked, the umbravore will strike the vessel for D6 hull points and D3 points of morale and continue doing this every stretch until left behind or distracted.

RUMORS IN GAHAND

- "Watch out for ol' Bin'dar. She's a darling, as far as umbravores go, but since she lost her mate, she's been acting strange."
- "I overheard this fella on Mourir's Landing claiming that Captain Massov and his wreckers are preparing a surprise attack against... well, for the life of me, I can't remember if it was that cloister or the Observatory. It struck me as strange, is all."
- "No, it's true, there is a map with the true coordinates to Umbra Major, but that Sharzad fool Houda has it, and hasn't got a clue what it is. Perhaps if one could get someone inside the Collective to help?"

FACTIONS & PEOPLE

Use these to inspire intrigue, conflict and adventure.

THE SHARZAD COLLECTIVE

The Sharzad Collective is a clan of tight-knit rogues, smugglers, and harvesters that started as a local offshoot of the Black Toad. It has been active in Gahand for over five decades and has developed a formidable presence in the system. While mostly seen as nothing more than bandits and thieves, the truth is more complex as the Collective has a significant harvesting operation and trades with outposts and groups all over the system.

HADJAR HOUDA, BOSS

The boss of the Shadow Plaza in Hammurabi Waystation is equally feared and revered by his people. Having risen from a simple hull scrubber of a Sharzad harvester to one of the Captains of the Collective is no mean feat. Sure, some friends were betrayed along the way, and he had to off some dust-runners to get to where he's at. But that's all a small price to pay in the big picture. Now, Houda is on the lookout for new talent to add to his roster, and it just so happens that a Slipstream Cruiser with a very capable crew has recently entered the system...

STR 4 AGL 3 LOG 5 PER 3 INS 3 EMP 4

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Tough 2, Agitator 2, Blade Fighter 2

EQUIPMENT: Dura blade, protective suit, cirra-cirra leaves, 2,000 rukh in bars

THE WRECKERS

The Wreckers of Gahand are infamous for their brutal attacks on trade shipping and harvester ships. That's not the whole truth, though. Led by Captain Massov, the Wreckers maintain their fearsome reputation with precise attacks designed to keep visitors at bay. Still, they avoid civilian casualties as much as they can. Most of all, the Wreckers can be used as an x-factor that can put a spanner in the works of most plans. Finding Wrecker Alley and its treasures can be a side plot worth pursuing.

CAPTAIN ARFOUD MASSOV

Undoubtedly the most wanted man in the system, Captain Massov is the scourge of the Auxiliary Patrol Fleet and the source of many tall tales about savage attacks on peaceful travelers. A native of Gahand, Massov trained as a tug pilot in Ship City and worked at the Hammurabi Waystation until returning to his flock and making a meteoric rise through the ranks. In reality, Massov is an agent for the Navigators Guild Fourth Directorate, ready to do their bidding if need be.

STR 5 AGL 4 LOG 5 PER 3 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Shuttle Pilot 2, Pistoleer 2, Sixth Sense 1

EQUIPMENT: Lumin pistol, flight suit, coordinates to Umbra Major

AUXILIARY PATROL FLEET

Founded by the governor of Hammurabi Waystation in 176, the Auxiliary Patrol Fleet was an attempt to stop the threat from the Wreckers once and for all. Small, underfunded, and low on resources, the APF still makes the most of its small fleet of three corvettes and six gunboats. Lately, there has been a sharp drop in recruits as the Free Gahand movement increasingly attracts young people from all across the system.

LIEUTENANT SANA KRILL

Commander of the APF corvette *Salima*, Lt Sana Krill, is the epitome of a hard-working Gahandan loyal to Ship City. Since she was a small child, she knew she wanted to join the Auxiliary Patrol Fleet to shield the Waystation and the people of the cloud from piracy and theft. Lately, her conviction in the cause has faltered somewhat as her twin brother Dari has joined the Free Gahand movement. She knows the moment draws near when she has to choose between her kin and her convictions.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 3 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Pistoleer 1, Astrometry 2, Exo-Specialist 2, Greatship Pilot 2, Shuttle Pilot 1

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard pistol, flight suit

THE ASHEN GORGE

The Builders could do almost anything: create vast monuments in space, seed planets with atmospheres, and even create life on seemingly desolate rocks like our Anshubur.

NIDAN HAMARAMAH, BUILDER SCHOLAR AT ANSHUBUR OBSERVATORY

An ancient Builder terraforming station corrupted by Blight is located deep within an ashen gorge in the nightmarish landscape of the planet Anshubur. Under boiling skies, constant lightning, and oppressive heat, the Explorers must delve down the gorge, enter the station, and explore it. Once there, they will realize that their

instrument readings have been wrong; the Singularity Sphere signal is not emitting from the structure itself, but from the bottom of the gorge three kilometers away. They will have to trek through the ashen wasteland to find the wreck with the Seceder scout and the Singularity Sphere in it.

BACKGROUND

Built in the Late Era to transform Anshubur into a verdant paradise, the terraforming station was once a testament to Builder ingenuity. However, during the cataclysm, the Blight spread rapidly, infecting and corrupting the terraforming devices. The once-promising project was halted, and the station was abandoned, leaving the planet's atmosphere to spiral out of control.

Hundreds of thousands of years passed, and Anshubur was caught in the volatile grip of its broken atmosphere. One of the twelve Seceder scouts investigated the surface of Anshubur and found the ruin of the terraforming station. However, as the scout tried to land, her ship was struck by lightning and crashed further down the gorge, killing her in the crash. She still rests there, after all these years. Strapped into her pilot's chair, with the Sphere that was the only link to her people next to her.

ENVIRONMENT

Anshubur is a nightmare of a planet. Ever since the terraforming spiraled out of control, the atmosphere has turned on the planet itself, hitting the surface with lightning, acid rain, and storms of frightening ferocity. Its most

significant feature is the oppressive lid of the dark cloud cover, enshrouding the planet. It is located just a few hundred meters above ground, creating a feeling of entrapment and claustrophobia. There is no breathable air on the planet.



THE SIGNAL

The Singularity Sphere has pinpointed the signal to a location in a gorge wall. Scans indicate that the area is a Builder structure. However, due to the electrical storms raging on the surface, the signal

is actually coming from a crashed shuttle a bit further down the gorge. This will be discovered once the Explorers are at the location (see the event The False Signal).



The gravity is a little higher than normal, but easily managed. The planet has a hot and dry climate, making extended periods spent suited up uncomfortable. The main feature, however, is the giant network of gorges scarring the planet's surface. This is the remnant of the ancient terraforming

engine. The gorges were constructed to lead the massive forces generated by energy cores and kickstart the atmosphere's transformation. Even today, the gorges are a dangerous place to be, as energy surges, ash storms, and lightning clusters hit them regularly.

OTHER PARTIES

Above the dark clouds of Anshubur lies the distant shimmer of the Gahandan Cloud. There, the Mining Combine and the Sharzad Collective compete over valuable claims and rare discoveries – often with open hostility. A Sharzad Collective operative entered Anshubur's atmosphere to scout a potential site for a hidden base. She flew too close to the gorge, and her ship was struck by lightning, crashing near the canyon floor.

Pursued by a Mining Combine shuttle, she fled on foot into the gorge, where the shuttle couldn't follow. Seeking shelter, she found an ancient terraforming station – and within it, an artifact capable of harnessing

the storm's lightning. But using it destabilized the station's dormant energy core, triggering a far more violent storm above.

When the Explorers arrive, the Sharzad scout is holed up in the station's depths, hiding from the energy surges and the Combine. She recently found a strange artifact, the Ekinath Prism, that gives her offensive powers. A drop capsule from a Mining Combine shuttle has landed in the gorge, and a small group of hunters are preparing to track her down before she can escape, or before the storm spirals further out of control. A confrontation is drawing near.

ARRIVING

Descending through the dense cloud cover of Anshubur is an experience. The craft will be tossed around by sudden winds, hit by grit thrown around in the atmosphere, and surrounded by bolts of lightning that constantly threaten to hit the shuttle. The pilot must roll **AGILITY** (Shuttle Pilot) to avoid any damage during the descent. If the roll fails, a loud bang is heard as rocks hit the vessel, and the shuttle takes 2 points of damage.

Once through the cloud cover, describe the nightmarish vista below. Ashen plains, broken by fang-like crags and the massive gorge running through the landscape like a wound. Let anyone looking out the cockpit roll **PERCEPTION**, to

notice that there seem to be energy surges and lightning strikes emerging from the gorge itself. This could threaten the shuttle if it comes too close to the gorge.

If the pilot approaches the gorge, the shuttle will be hit by a lightning blast and continue to be so until steered away or brought down. It will immediately take 2 points of damage. The pilot must succeed with an **AGILITY** (Shuttle Pilot) roll with a -2 modification to avoid taking another point of damage before getting out of harm's way.

After landing safely, the Explorers must walk one kilometer to the gorge with their equipment and supplies. The walk is uneventful, but the Explorers lose 2 supply.

THE APPROACHING STORM

A massive electrical storm is approaching. When it hits, it will be next to impossible to take off from the surface, and the Explorers will be forced to seek shelter

wherever they are. Use the approaching storm as a reminder that their time on Anshubur is limited. See the Event: *The Storm* for the effects in play (page 78).

THROUGH THE GORGE

To reach the ancient ruin, the Explorers must work their way along the steep gorge wall and down into the valley below. The gorge is massive – up to a kilometer deep in places – and broken up like a maze, with sharp drops, narrow ledges, and unexpected dead ends. The ruin itself clings to the gorge wall, halfway down, barely visible from above.

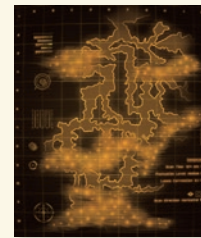
Two key locations can be placed randomly on the way to the Terraforming Station: the Ashcrawler Nest and the Drop Capsule left by the Mining Combine Hunters (page 86).

PREPARING THE DELVE

Once at the mouth of the gorge, the Explorers can perform their deep scan of the gorge ahead. They will quickly realize that their depth scanner does not work as it should. The electromagnetic interference from the atmosphere and the energy surges of the gorge make taking readings nigh impossible. There is a lot of interference; see *Handout #7: Scan Map Ashen Gorge* (note that the scan map is top down).

It's possible for the Explorers to perform a deep scan from the mouth of the gorge and roll **PERCEPTION** (Cartographer) – inform them of this if they don't think of it. They will then spot what looks to be a natural path in the gorge wall. The path leads down and across the maze-like gorge towards the floor far below, and passes closely to the signal epicenter. The Explorers can choose this route, making the delve slower but much safer – hazards only occur every second delve procedure turn, but it takes longer to traverse as it snakes along the gorge.

The distance to the signal epicenter and the ruin is between 12 and 16 markers, and between 3 and 6 markers to the crashed ship (depending on the route chosen). Blight cores and Blight oases are marked out on the GM map. The Terraforming station (page 81) is a key location, not counted as part of the delve.



ASH CRAWLER NEST

There is a cave opening in the cliffside, a dozen meters deep. Inside, the ground is covered in ash, grit, and strange-looking bone fragments.

This is the nest of the Ash Crawler (page 89) and should serve to foreshadow the beast's existence and provide a temporary shelter for the Explorers when the need arises. The nest works as a Blight Oasis (page 208 in the Core Rules).

Search:

- **Old Glove:** A partially obscured pale white exo suit glove lies in the grit on the floor. A successful **LOGIC** (Exo-Specialist) roll tells the Explorers that it is of the same type of suit that the Nadir-mummy wore.

DROP CAPSULE

The Mining Combine hunters arrived in a drop capsule descended from an Owl shuttle. This capsule is big enough for five people and houses seats and basic controls. It has small booster rockets that can lift it just above the gorge, but it needs to be picked up by a shuttle to leave orbit.

Search:

- **Emergency Rations:** 5 points of supply can be found as emergency rations in the capsule.

SETTING THE MOOD

The low-hanging, ever-present cloud cover creates an almost suffocating feeling of isolation. The lack of natural light blankets the landscape in a perpetual gloom, and the crackling of energy surges, lightning strikes, and seismic rumblings make for a nervous excursion. Every step of the way, Anshubur's violent atmosphere will fight against the Explorers. In many ways, the failing planet itself is the main adversary in this site.

EVENT

THE STORM

The electrical storm hits with full force! Thunder, lightning strikes, and electrical discharges cover the gorge's cliffs. Ash is turned into static dust, filling the air with a gray haze. The thunderous sound shakes the earth, starting small avalanches

THE ASHEN GORGE



HAZARDS DURING THE DELVE

Use the general table for hazards in the Core rules with the following table.

DISTANCE TO EXIT	HAZARD	EFFECT
1–3	Lightning Strike: As the Explorers descend, sudden light flashes illuminate the gorge. Bolts of lightning strike dangerously close, sending vibrations through the walls. The blinding light and deafening noise is disorienting. Each step feels more perilous, as if the storm is warning them away.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Become Distracted
4–6	Howling Winds: Fierce winds howl through the gorge, whipping up dust and debris. The gusts are strong enough to make climbing difficult, threatening to rip the Explorers from the cliff. They must brace against the wind, securing gear tightly to avoid being blown off course. The constant roar drowns out all other sounds, making communication nearly impossible.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll STRENGTH Fail: Lose one item or 4 supply
6–9	Abrasive Grit: The descent takes the Explorers through clouds of fine, abrasive grit. It scrapes against suits and clogs equipment. Visibility drops as the grit swirls around, coating every surface in a layer of fine dust, forcing them to move with caution and frequent stops to clear their gear.	BURROWER Roll AGILITY Fail: Suffer 1 despair
10–12	Someone is watching: The Explorer feels her neck hairs rising as if being watched. From time to time, strange gusts of ash belch up behind the party, and sometimes the sounds of falling rocks can be heard, as if they are being followed.	GUARD Roll PERCEPTION Fail: The Ash Crawler attacks! (see event page 88)
13–14	Arcane Inscription: The cliff wall becomes smooth as if chiseled by massive forces. The area is covered in squiggly ornamental glyphs, drawing the observer to continue looking. The Blight has damaged them so that they are not fully readable.	ARCHAEOLOGIST Roll INSIGHT Fail: Suffer 1 Blight
15–16	Descending Cloud: Thick, rolling clouds descend into the gorge, reducing visibility to almost nothing. The dense and suffocating mist makes it difficult to see even a few feet ahead. Every step becomes a leap of faith as the ground beneath the Explorers' feet disappears into the opaque fog. Sounds are dampened, creating an eerie silence.	SCOUT Roll LOGIC Fail: Lose 2 supply
17–18	Electromagnetic Pulse: A sudden wave of electromagnetic energy washes over the Explorers, causing electronic equipment to flicker and fail. Lanterns dim, communication devices crackle with static, and compasses spin wildly. The pulse leaves all momentarily blinded and disoriented.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll INSIGHT Fail: Become Shaken
19+	Electrical Surges: As you navigate the narrow paths, arcs of electricity suddenly leap from the rock walls. The surges pulse irregularly, lighting up the dark with their dangerous glow. Each spark feels like it could be your last, urging you to move quickly but carefully to avoid being caught in the deadly currents.	DELVER Roll AGILITY Fail: Suffer an attack with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4)

and making gravel tremble on the paths. The storm is handled like a phenomenon. For the effect of the static haze and winds, use Grit Tornado (Core Rules, page 239) without the time limit. The electrical discharges will strike anybody venturing out in the storm. Each stretch, one Explorer will be hit by a discharge with 12 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3).

Let the storm hit as the Explorers are about to enter the Terraforming Station, and make sure to show them the severity of the situation. It is nigh impossible to delve further through the gorge after the storm has hit.

The imbalance of the Energy Core fuels the storm. If the Ekinath Prism is not returned to the Core in the Terraforming Station (see page 85), the storm will increase in intensity until it is impossible to move in the gorge. Increase the number of Explorers hit with a discharge for every stretch until the whole group is affected. When that happens, the storm is so intense that every zone is considered Cluttered and Dimly lit (page 59 in the Core Rules), and the supply use is doubled.

THE TERRAFORMING STATION

Being one of hundreds of terraforming facilities constructed by the Builders in the final era of their civilization, the station itself is not large. Instead, it was the massive gorges on the planet's surface that would work as the actual terraforming engine. The station was a control center built to oversee and regulate the immense forces flowing through the gorge below. The structure is built into the rock wall of the gorge, with a basic facade and a platform jutting out over the chasm. The platform was used by Builder ships to anchor occasionally. The structure is made up of three rings encircling an energy core.

The Terraforming Station is handled like a key location; however, some sublocations are large, they each take 2 stretches to search instead of 1.

1

ENTRANCE

The swirling ash and clouds part as a platform of a stone-like material juts into the gorge. Behind it, a featureless wall rises into the murk.

- A sturdy platform overlooking the gorge below.
- A large, metallic door, adorned with faded Builder glyphs, is partly open, revealing a sliver of darkness beyond.
- A straight, smooth tunnel leads into the cliff wall.

Search:

- Scorch marks around the metal door. It seems someone has used a welding torch to open it. The marks are recent.

- A small fist-sized homing beacon, fastened to the rock wall close to the platform's edge. A successful LOGIC roll tells the Explorers that it is active and of recent design. If they get two or more they determine that it seems to be modified Black Toad technology.
- A successful roll for LOGIC (Glyph Scholar) tells the Explorers that the faded glyphs are Ishra, the glyph of life, and Hadra, the glyph of power.

2

CONTROL RING

A torus-shaped chamber opens ahead. Circular walls curve away on both sides. The lower parts of the chamber are covered in a thin layer of ash.

- Towering crystalline structures from the floor to the ceiling stretch toward the center wall.
- Intricate minor glyphs are carved into the stone, covering the outer walls.
- Geometric patterns of interconnected circles and ellipses are visible behind the ash on the floor.

The torus-shaped chamber, the Control Ring, was once the central hub of the terraforming station.

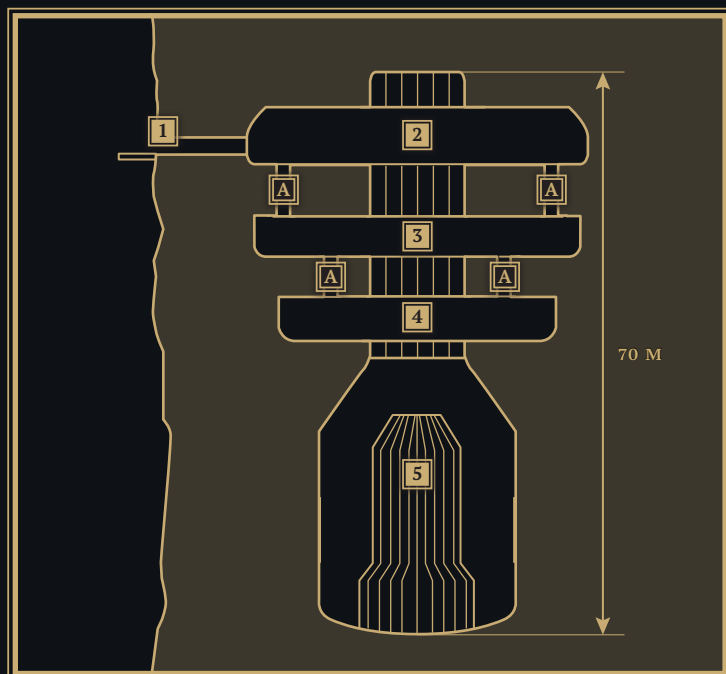
Search:

It takes two stretches to search the Control Ring.

- A successful LOGIC (Archaeology) roll tells the Explorers that the crystal structures were probably some kind of control mechanism for whatever was housed in this complex.

THE TERRAFORMING STATION

SIDEVIEW



- 1 ENTRANCE
- 2 CONTROL RING
- 3 HABITAT RING
- 4 ARBORETUM RING
- 5 ENERGY CORE

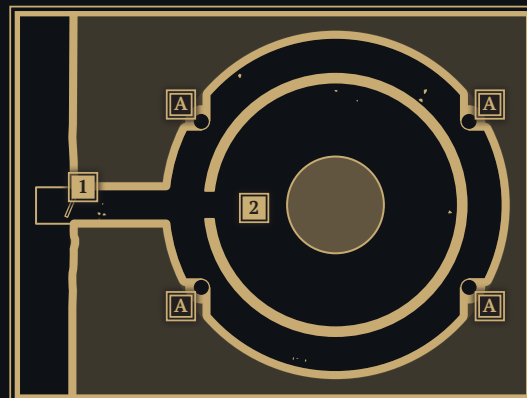
10×10 METERS

A ACCESS SHAFT

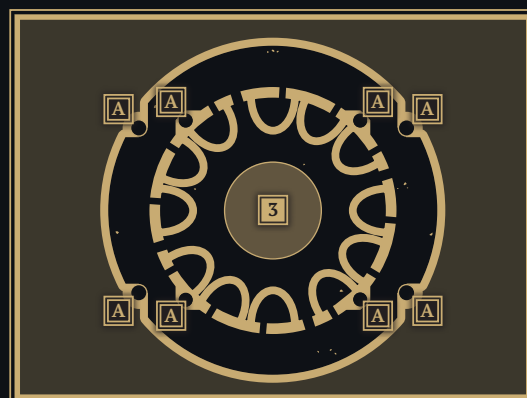
SETTING THE MOOD

The Terraforming Station is a refuge from the planet's dangers. Here, the Explorers are safe from lightning strikes, storms, and the ash crawler. Contrast the unpredictable hazards of the planet with the ancient stillness of the ruin. Everything is covered in ash and dust, mostly undisturbed for millennia. The deeper the Explorers venture into the ruin, the less safe it will seem. The first two rings are relatively benign, while the blight-infested #4 Arboretum and the failing #5 Energy Core present an even more dangerous milieu.

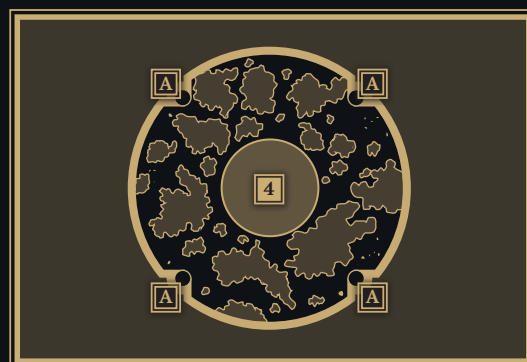
CONTROL RING



HABITAT RING



ARBORETUM RING



ENERGY CORE



- A **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) roll helps the Explorer interpret the glyphs, which seem to indicate that this was once a monitoring station for something huge. However, the Explorer cannot decipher the project's purpose.
- Booted prints in the ash (leading to the Sharzad Operative, see event).
- Four cylindrical, smooth access shafts lead down into the depth of the ruin. They are difficult to climb. Roll **AGILITY** (Acrobat) -2 for one Explorer to lead the climb down (consuming 1 supply).
- D6 shards, spread about in the ash and dust.

3 HABITAT RING

Yet another torus with heavily ash-covered corridors curving ahead. Ash flakes swirl in the light beams, making it hard to see. The inner wall is covered with ovoid openings at irregular intervals. Geometric patterns adorn the walls, depicting circles within circles and spokes cutting through them.

- **Irregularly sized oval openings** lead towards the central core. They are raised one meter above the floor.
- **Some of the openings lead into pod-like rooms**, empty but for the dust piling on the floors. The walls of the rooms are lined with faded ornamental glyphs.
- **Four cylindrical, smooth access shafts** lead down into the depth of the ruin. They are difficult to climb. Roll **AGILITY** (Acrobat) -2 for one Explorer to climb down (consuming 1 supply).

Once a living area for the Builders working here, the Habitat Ring is now a decayed, ash-covered corridor of interconnected, pod-like rooms. Ash flakes swirl in the light beams, making it hard to see.

The Explorers' Bird will indicate Blight near the access shafts, which should warn the Explorers about the Blight below.

Search:

It takes 2 stretches to search the Habitat Ring.

- Booted footsteps in the ash, leading further into the ring.
- A piece of crystal shaped like a cube. A roll for **LOGIC** (Artifact Specialist) will reveal it to be a lesser artifact, most likely art from the Late Era of the Builder culture.
- 2D6 Shards

EVENT

THE SHARZAD OPERATIVE

Ezira Larkoun, a Sharzad Collective operative, is hiding in the pod room farthest away from the entrance. When the Explorers approach, they see flickers of movement and light — her form is blurred, outlined in arcs of golden lightning. The artifact she found in the station is active, surrounding her in unstable energy and making it hard to focus on her clearly. Attacks against her suffer a -2 modifier due to the distortion.

- If the Explorers have their weapons at the ready, she will unleash a crackling thunderbolt that just misses them. The experience requires all Explorers to succeed with an **INSIGHT** roll or lose 1 Hope.
- With her voice warped by the artifact's energy field — stretched and layered, as if several versions of her are speaking at once — she will ask who the Explorers are and what they are doing here. If the Explorers succeed with an **EMPATHY** roll she will deactivate the artifact temporarily.
- Ezira will explain her predicament and tell the Explorers about the Mining Combine Hunters tracking her.
- She will not tell them about the beacon device she has activated at the entrance, or that she expects reinforcements to arrive in a few hours.

EZIRA LARKOUN, SHARZAD OPERATIVE

Fiercely competent, quick thinking, and ambitious. Ezira is barely in her twenties but already a rising star in the Sharzad Collective. Trained as a scout-operative, she is skilled in handling shuttles and repairs as well as combat. Finding the Ekinath Prism has changed her, she is in awe of the powers the artifact gives her, and is totally oblivious to the Blight affecting her more and more with each use. She realizes that the artifact is of great value to the Collective and wants to make sure she returns with it. However, if the choice comes down to parting with it to make it out alive, she will choose life.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 5 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 10 HOPE: 6 HEART: 5 (taken Blight)

TALENTS: Lookout 3, Mechanic 1, Shuttle Pilot 2, Sharpshooter 2, Tough 2, Tracker 1

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard carbine, fusillard cricket (hidden), the Ekinath Prism, exo suit, 12 supply

Depending on the Explorers' actions, the scout can be an ally or an enemy. She has already explored the ruin and can tell them about the Blight in the Arboretum and the dangers of the Energy Core. She has not seen any dead bodies or strange devices anywhere.

If the Explorers bring her along, they won't have to handle her supplies as she brings her own. Of course, they can steal her stash.

THE EKinATH PRISM

A crystal prism shaped like an octahedron, the Ekinath Prism is a major artifact that was once at the heart of the Terraforming station. The device was designed to stabilize the Energy Core as well as store and regulate massive surges of atmospheric energy. Without it in place, the Core is unbalanced, constantly fluctuating, and discharging bursts into the surrounding environment, fueling the violent storm overhead.

When properly understood (Core Rules, page 263), the prism can harness and store energy, both environmental and internal. The stored power can be unleashed in precise bursts at will. Examples include:

- **Force Field:** The wearer is surrounded by a golden, shimmering field, distorting the view (from the outside) as well as transforming the wearer's voice. All attacks against the wearer get -2, and the field counts as armor 5. Effective for two rounds unless deactivated.
- **Energy Discharge:** Release a lightning bolt (Energy weapon, damage 5, crit 7, bonus +3, min range Short, max range Medium).
- **Emergency Seal:** Protects everyone in the same zone against vacuum or decompression for D6+2 rounds.

The prism is Blight-infused, drawing power from the same corrupted source that infects the station's deeper systems. Each use of the prism causes the user to suffer 1 point of Blight.

4 ARBORETUM RING

Twisted, dark vines and strange flora cling to every surface. Bioluminescence glows and flickers through the dense overgrowth, casting an eerie glow.

- **Spores dance in the light beams**, and particles float in the air and cling to the Explorers' suits.
- **The stench of decay is thick**, and the ground squelches underfoot as it is covered in moss.



- Four cylindrical, smooth access shafts lead down into the depth of the ruin. They are difficult to climb. Roll **AGILITY** (Acrobat) -2 for one Explorer to climb down (consuming 1 supply).

Blight Attack:

As soon as the Explorers enter the Arboretum Ring, they are subjected to a Blight attack with 8 base dice (base Blight 1).

Search:

It takes two stretches to search the Arboretum Ring.

- A **LOGIC** (Botanist) roll will reveal that the Blight originates from the #5 Energy Core at the chamber's center.
- **Bio-Rod:** This moss-covered spiral-shaped rod, about the length of a human arm, is a remnant of Builder bioengineering equipment. It is entangled in the corrupted flora and needs to be decontaminated – otherwise, the carrier will suffer Blight equal to Blight level 1 every stretch carrying it. When understood (page 263 Core Rules), the artifact can be used.
- A capsule of preserved Builder seeds, still viable for cultivation. The seeds can be sold to the Gardeners Guild or similarly interested groups for the value of a Major Artifact.
- 4D6 Shards

Once a lush ecosystem, the Arboretum Ring is now a corrupted biosphere, overrun by Blight.

BIO-ROD

The Bio-Rod has the ability to change organisms in different ways. When understood (Core Rules, page 263), it can heal a subject and recuperate 4 Health instantaneously, with the side effect of consuming 2 Hope. It can only be used once every stretch. It can also be used to change a physical trait permanently on a living organism, such as changing hair or eye color or skin tone, even lengthening legs or arms. These effects are permanent and cost nothing, but if you try to change back you need to succeed with an **INSIGHT** test or gain the Blight manifestation Indigo eyes, and suffer a Blight attack with 6 base dice (base Blight 2).

EVENT

BLIGHT WISPS

When the Explorers are inside the ring, half a dozen head-sized floating organic spheres drift towards them. Let all Explorers roll for **PERCEPTION**. If they aren't alert enough, the spheres come into contact and burst, covering the failing Explorer with a Blight attack with 9 base dice (base Blight 1). The Wisps are slow and can easily be outrun; however, they are difficult to get rid of. Flamers and energy weapons are the only effective methods. An **AGILITY** roll with any of these weapons will rid the chamber of Blight Wisps for one stretch.

5

ENERGY CORE

A deep chamber opens up below, the walls lined with crystal-line structures pulsating with energy. The crackle of lightning surges pulsate from the massive core sporadically, illuminating the room in harsh light flashes.

- **Barnacle-like clusters of Blight** cover the structure at the center, partially obscuring what looks like a Builder glyph.
- A **walkway** without guard rails runs along the chamber's walls at the top level with access shafts leading up.

Every stretch the Explorers stay in the Energy Core, they get exposed to the energy pulses, which are corrupted by the Blight. A random Explorer is hit by the pulse, dealing an attack with 12 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) or 10 base dice (base Blight 2). It is possible to dodge the bolts, but this will lead to failing the search that stretch.

The Energy Core is an ancient machine designed to power and harness the enormous energies sent throughout the terraforming gorges. Now corrupted by Blight, its once pure energy is tainted and unstable.

Search:

It takes two stretches to search the Energy Core.

- The Blight patches need to be removed to be able to read the glyph hidden beneath, requiring a roll for **STRENGTH** to succeed. Under is the major glyph Komat – The Glyph of Balance. Superimposed on it is a minor glyph, a successful **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) tells the Explorers that this means “Ekinath,” translating to “world shaper” or “creator.”
- 3D6 Shards

EVENT

THE FALSE SIGNAL

The signal the Explorers are tracking seems to be coming from the Energy Core. When the Explorers are in the Energy Core, they will notice that their reading is fluctuating wildly. It seems the malfunctioning Energy Core is interfering with the signal. A successful **LOGIC** (Scan Operator) roll will recalibrate the machine and show that the true source of the signal is an object about 2 kilometers away, on the actual gorge floor. If the roll fails, the Explorers can recalibrate the signal later, but the task will consume 1 point of supply.

EVENT

THE MINING COMBINE HUNTERS

Whenever you see fit, the Mining Combine hunters will attack. They are after the Sharzad operative and will assume that the Explorers are part of her rescue party. One of the hunters will lay down covering fire while the others try to flank the group. They can be reasoned with, but only if the

Explorers promise to help them locate the Sharzad operative, or if they give her up to them. Otherwise, they will fight. If two hunters fall in combat the others retreat.

MINING COMBINE HUNTERS (3 TO 5 HUNTERS)

Violent, rugged, and determined. Clad in reinforced exosuits and wielding coiler rifles. Their visors glow with sensor readings, scanning for valuable resources and potential threats. They are fiercely loyal to the Combine.

STR 5 **AGL** 4 **LOG** 3 **PER** 3 **INS** 3 **EMP** 3

HEALTH: 11 **HOPE:** 6

TALENTS: Lookout 3, Sharpshooter 2, Tough 2

EQUIPMENT: Coiler rifle, fusillard revolvers, curved combine blades (short sword, crit 4), reinforced exo suit (armor 4), 20 supply, night goggles, proximity sweeper, three frag grenades, orbital comlink

THE CRASHED SHIP

To reach the crashed ship, the Explorers will have to exit the terraforming station and delve through the gorge again. Exiting will only take one stretch per level (i.e, use 1 point of supply).

1

HATCH

The rear hatch of the ship is blown off, leaving a dark mouth with the serrated teeth of the wreckage in a garland around it.

- **Dark ash and grit-like dust** have piled up in the opening.
- **The howling wind** hammers the broken hull.
- **A crumbled ramp** is partly deployed toward the gorge floor.

Search:

- A few oxy-cannisters lie littered in the ash-piles. They all have the insignia of *Nadir* and text in Old Horizon lettering. To a collector, they are worth 500 rukh (weight 2).

2

MAINTENANCE CELL

A small elongated cell, filled with machinery covered in dust and grit.

- **Dark panels on the walls**, hint at control systems to the ship engines.

Search:

- In one of the cells is a power node with some surplus charge left. It has the logo of *Nadir* and incomprehensible text on it, but can deliver 20 supply (counts as a heavy item).

3

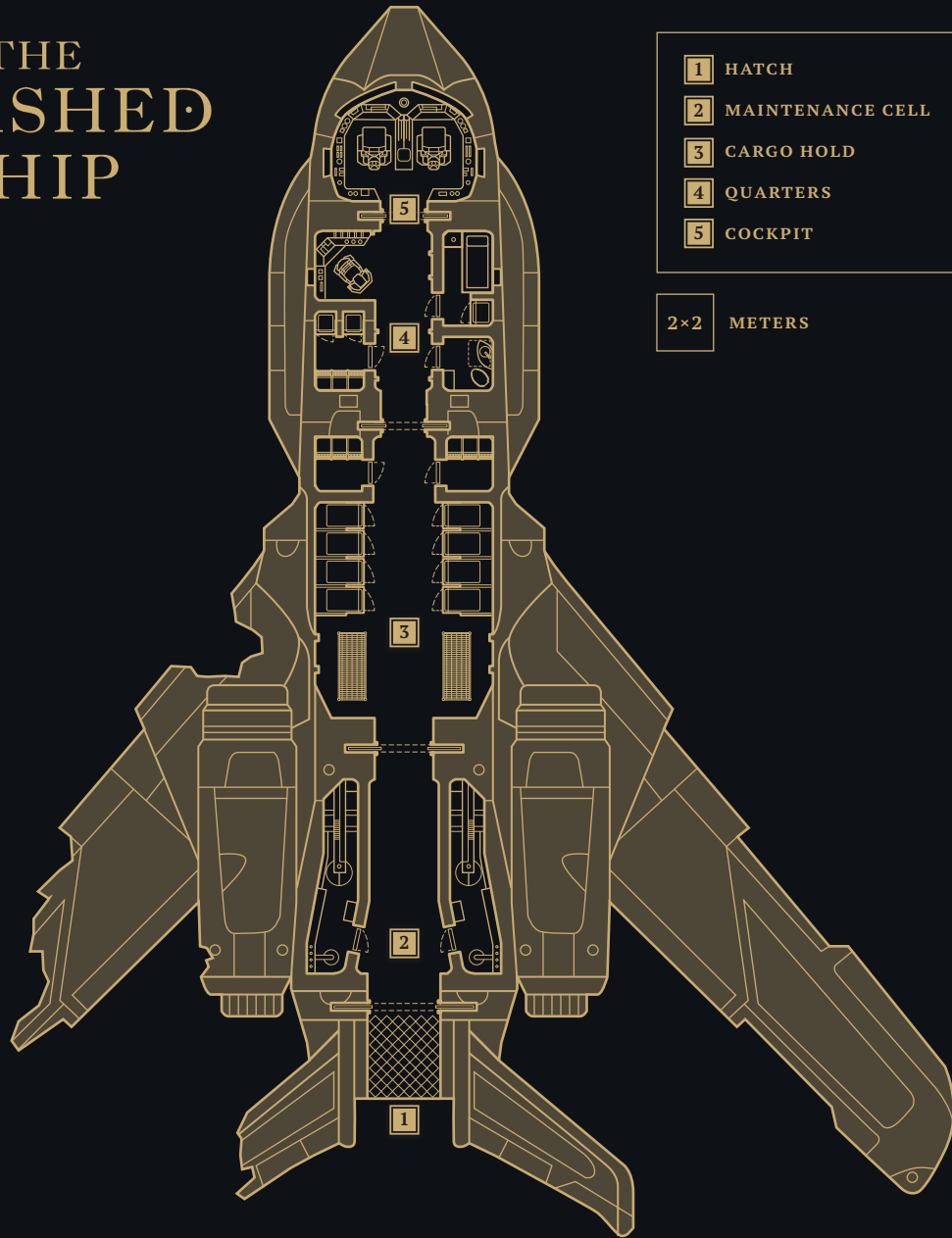
CARGO HOLD

The collapsed rounded hull of the cargo hold is scattered with broken crates.

Search:

- **Survival Supplies:** A cache of 500-year-old emergency rations. Not edible.

THE CRASHED SHIP



- 1 HATCH
- 2 MAINTENANCE CELL
- 3 CARGO HOLD
- 4 QUARTERS
- 5 COCKPIT

2x2 METERS

SETTING THE MOOD

The wreckage of a starship lies at the bottom of the gorge. It is covered in ash and debris from the blasted landscape. The once-sleek vessel now rests in a twisted, crumpled heap, its metallic hull scorched by lightning and twisted into scraps by the crash. Broken panels and exposed wiring give it a skeletal appearance.

EMERALD DISC

Emerald discs are a heirloom technology used to record flight and log data in a spacefaring vessel. Although they are rare, they can be found in Ship City. In itself, a disc is worth at least 1,000 rukh in the city's bazaars. They are encrypted and very difficult to read; however, it is somewhat easy to discern the coordinates to the latest systems that the craft has visited as long as a terminal is used.

4

QUARTERS

The ceram windowpanes are broken, and ash has poured in through the gaps, coating the cabin in grit and dust.

- **Gray ash, light as dust**, covers everything up to knee level.
- **The interior** is broken beyond recognition.

Search:

- **Engraved carbine**: buried in the ash is a long, spear-like item. Upon closer inspection, it is revealed to be a carbine with an oversized barrel. It is a Nadirian long carbine, a bit unwieldy to handle but superior in fire-power. With a **LOGIC** (Jury-rig) roll it can be modified to handle regular energy packs (supply). A **LOGIC** roll is needed to get it in working condition before first use (takes 1 stretch to perform).

NADIRIAN LONG CARBINE

Grip: 2H	Damage: 3	Min. Range: Medium
Bonus: +1	Crit: 4	Max. Range: Extreme
Feature: Autofire	Weight: 1	

*The Long Carbine needs two supply to reload but can be fired four times with autofire. It breaks down quite easily.

5

COCKPIT

The cramped cockpit is surprisingly intact, considering the state of the rest of the ship. Only the shattered windows, and the thick pile of ash on everything bear witness to the crash.

- **Dust covers every surface**, piling on the floor.
- **A suited figure** is seated in one of the chairs.

Search:

- Still strapped into the pilot's chair is the remains of a person, dressed in the white exo suit of *Nadir* (identical to the one worn by the Nadir-mummy). The helmet is still attached, and the visor is down, the blank surface covered by ash. The corpse is over 500 years old and has been skeletonized due to age. Behind the visor is a grinning skull with some tufts of hair. There is a name patch on the left shoulder of the suit that reads "Marenika."
- In a side pocket of the suit is a pouch of a synthetic material (similar to the one found on the Nadir-mummy). In it: a dried white flower, almost identical to the one found in Ship City.

MARENKA'S FATE

Having investigated several other ruins in the Gahand system, the hidden terraforming station was the last one she planned on visiting before continuing. Unfortunately, the wild storms of Anshubur proved to be her undoing. As she descended into the gorge towards the ruin, her ship was hit by several lightning strikes and crashed on the gorge floor. Death was instantaneous. Only the crack of distant thunder broke the silence, as Marenika's ship slowly became part of the gorge – buried in ash, forgotten by time.

- In a socket in the control panel, the Singularity Sphere rests before the suited figure strapped to the pilot's chair.
- A successful **PERCEPTION** (Data Djinn) roll indicates that an emerald disc is present. The disc is encrypted, but if analyzed in a terminal it will reveal that the ship visited the following systems: Virgas, Ishimat, Kerferter's Star and finally Gahand.

EVENT

ASH CRAWLER

Hidden in the ash layer of the gorge floor is an Ash Crawler, a huge segmented 10-meter-long creature corrupted by Blight and scorched by lightning. Its blackened, chitinous body is cracked and burned, with faint pulses of energy running along its sides, and it gives off a low, vibrating hum that can be felt through the ash before it's ever seen. It moves with the slow, rippling grace of a giant centipede. The beast can attack whenever you see fit. Perhaps when the Explorers exit the crashed ship or in the midst of a shootout with the Mining Combine hunters.

EVENT

SHARZAD REINFORCEMENTS

The sudden blast of gravity projectors and the broad shape of a Sharzad Manta shuttle sweep over the gorge. Skilled piloting makes the shuttle avoid the electrical surges reaching out from the gorge while four figures in exo suits descend on jet packs. This is a strike team from the Sharzad Collective, sent to retrieve their operative. They will attack the Explorers unless convinced that they know where their colleague is located.

ASH CRAWLER

FEROCITY: 2 **HEALTH:** 25 **ARMOR:** 7

AGILITY 7 **PERCEPTION** 8

ABILITIES

- **Sensor hood:** The crawler's head is covered in a bony hood, hiding its maw and mandibles. The hood is covered in opaque white nodules, like blind eyes. These are, in fact, sensors making it nigh impossible to hide from the crawler (**PERCEPTION** 8).
- **Energy faucets:** The Crawler has black stone-like protrusions on the sides of each of its body segments. These work as energy dispensers, but can also be discharged at will, see attack #5

SHARZAD SOLDIER

STR 5 **AGL** 4 **LOG** 3 **PER** 3 **INS** 3 **EMP** 3

HEALTH: 9 **HOPE:** 6

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 2, Pistoleer 1

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard carbine, fusillard pistol, reinforced exo suit (armor 4), smoke grenade, jet pack, dagger

ASH CRAWLER SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- 1. Thousand Teeth Bite:** The Crawler opens its hood and crunches down on an unfortunate Explorer with its mandibles and rows of serrated teeth, with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3) ripping loose chunks of their body.
- 2. Whipping Tail:** The Crawler lashes its tail, releasing long, slicing filaments that slash at up to three Explorers within Short range, dealing an attack with 7 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).
- 3. Impaling Legs:** The Crawler arches its frontmost segments up in the air, to descend heavily with its mid-section on an Explorer, impaling her with its spear-like legs with 12 base dice (base damage 1, crit 4). An impaled victim is assumed to be grappled with **STRENGTH** 10 (Core Rules page 62), until the next attack.
- 4. Rearing Stance:** The Crawler rears up in all its magnificence, drawing back its hood* to intimidate its foes with its multiple mandibles, teeth and dissecting maw. All Explorers within Medium range suffer 3 points of despair, mitigated by an **EMPATHY** roll (Core Rules, page 68).
- 5. Energy Faucets:** The Crawler uses black stone-like protrusions on the sides of its segments to send an energy spike up to Long range, dealing 8 base dice (base damage 3, crit 4) to a victim.
- 6. Dissection:** The Crawler opens its hood, to capture and engulf a hapless victim in its maw. Its countless teeth and mandibles start dissecting the victim dealing 10 base dice (base damage 3, crit 5). The victim is grappled with **STRENGTH** 10 (Core Rules page 62), and suffers this attack every round until it rips free or a fellow Explorer deals a creature critical injury to the Crawler (Core Rules page 223).

AFTERMATH

After finding the Singularity Sphere the Explorers' mission here is over. Returning to the shuttle can be roleplayed or handled with the rules for returning on page 213 in the Core Rules. Remember that they need to spend supply on the way out of the gorge as well. If the Explorers or the Sharzad Operative leaves the gorge with the Ekinath Prism, the storm will continue to grow in intensity, making the gorge and the ruin all but impossible to visit again. The unbalanced terraforming station will make Anshubur even more inhospitable than what it is today.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the Explorers ally with either the Sharzad operative or the Mining Combine Hunters, they would have the gratitude of their faction, which can be of potential use

later on in the campaign. If Ezira Larkoun survives, she can be used as a recurring NPC or even as a new player character in case one of the Explorers dies.



CHAPTER

5

NINHULAM THE GOLDEN STAR



*The Non-Colonization Clause is obsolete, as we have shown
in our arguments. The time has come to to change it!*

NEFELI BAR-EZRAVILI, HIGH GARDENER

Ninhulam once held the promise of a new home for the Diaspora, but now, it is almost forgotten – its planetwide jungles, promise of life, and strange enigmas left for other possible futures. Still, things have begun to change; long-dormant parties have once again turned to the Golden Star. Perhaps it can be tamed after all?

ARRIVING IN NINHULAM

Entering Ninhulam from the Slipstream is risky if the captain wants to save time. With the Storm Alley Tributary, a ship will end up just above Arkan, ready to start ferrying goods to the outpost on and inside the planet. The safer way will set Greatships down in the outer system well beyond the inner planets and the smaller colonies nesting there.

SENSOR OPERATIONS

Space is clear in Ninhulam as long as the Nefiti Veil doesn't emerge (Expedition Booklet, page 13). Scanners and sensors work without a hitch.

- ✶ **Signal from Astophoris:** The Singularity Sphere signal emanates from the jungle planet Astophoris and the jungle basin in the northern hemisphere.
- ✶ **The Arkan Radio-Buoy:** The Navigators have set up a strong navigational beacon in orbit above the scientific outpost Sinbar Zour. This makes it easy to achieve an off-loading orbit for Greatships. Ships are directed to travel to the coordinates in the signal.
- ✶ **Jungle Chatter:** Multiple signals emerge from the jungles and the Big Brine on Astophoris. Some are encrypted, but most are communications between small illegal outposts.

SINBAR ZOUR OUTPOST

The outer planet Arkan is the pivot point of the system as it has both a Navigator and Gardener Guild presence. There is no orbital outpost, just the radio buoy. Greatships and Slipstream Cruisers lie in the roadstead of the cold vacuum as cargo shuttles, in-system carriers, and other ships handle the offloading. The small cantina barge,

Heffrem's Kitchen, services the crews, and the Good Night Shuttle Service ferries lucky crews to a semi-permanent outpost on the surface, well away from the Ess-Zed (SZ, Sinbar Zour, see Expedition Booklet, page 12). Only people with official letters of recommendation are allowed to land and enter Sinbar Zour or Tasmur (Expedition Booklet, page 12).

Using the temporary camp works as shore leave for a crew. No repairs are possible in the roadstead. Explorers must contact the Navigators Guild representatives in SZ to get that service.

TRAVEL IN NINHULAM

Without rubble or an asteroid belt, travel in the system is generally safe. The only nuisance would be the illegal Gardener colonists that sometimes try to barter or hijack ships passing Astophoris. Rumors say the Fourth Directorate has been active, which makes captains wary of non-transponder ships, especially fast couriers.

GARDENER COLONISTS

The *Akhandar* notices a small ship being hunted by another ship; a distress signal from the hunted ship is received simultaneously. They identify as the *Severed Branch* (a typical Gardener name) and request assistance against marauders hunting them. Seconds later, the other ship, without a transponder, designating itself as *Rancor Laughter*, and its captain, Officer Dina Kaelt-Douz, requests that the *Akhandar* steer away as this is official Directorate business.

RUMORS IN NINHULAM

- "The 'Veil has been more active of late. Last week, the Goundar Trophy flashed, and all systems were frozen for two ship watches. The crew nearly jumped out of their skins!"
- "The Gardeners are pissed off again! Somebody (notch-notch) poured cirra-syrup in the fresh water stabilizer. Guess everybody was slow and meek after that."
- "Ess-Zed Four has been out of touch for a while now. Could be the 'mold again, could be nothing. Better keep clear of them Navigators, for a while."

THE SICKLY CARRIER

A large ore carrier intersects the *Akhandar*'s flight vector as it moves toward the system's fringe. The ship, called *Heavy Lifting*, has a problem – most of the crew have been infected by the Crimson mold. An orbital comlink, not the ship's signal, sends a message asking for assistance to evacuate from the carrier. The sender says she is a mother and has two of her children with her.

ARKAN DELVERS

Akhandar is hailed by a small shuttle racing after the cruiser. Onboard are the delving crew Youra's Misfits who are not associated with the Explorers Guild. They are looking for a job and offer their services, including demolition, airlifting, and security. Declining will disappoint them, and they will continue following the *Akhandar* for a while or to its destination.

PHENOMENA AND THREATS

The Nefiti Veil and strange afflictions, such as the Crimson mold, are the biggest threats to a ship passing through the system.

THE NEFITI VEIL

The Veil drifts through the system, emerging in space and in planetary atmospheres. Static electricity interferes with exo suits, vehicles, and ships.

- **Effect:** The particles of the Veil interact with electronics. A rover or shuttle passing through the Veil will lose 1 hull point, and one upgrade will become damaged and need repair before it can be used again. If there are no upgrades, the Maneuverability is decreased by 1. Greatships suffer D3+1 hull points of damage, and D3 upgrades get damaged.

CRIMSON MOLD

The hydroponics and life support of the ship start to malfunction as a crimson red mold spreads across filters, in ventilation ducts, and into crew quarters. The mold is related to the fungiform forest of Astophoris (see Maw of Death, page 105).

- **Effect:** The mold is a disease with virulence 10 (Core Rules, page 74) against an Explorer. But it also affects a Greatship by decreasing both hull and morale by 2 points weekly until it is removed. Removing it from a ship is a crew assignment that requires a **LOGIC** roll against the virulence (10) with tools and decontamination gear.

FACTIONS & PEOPLE

Use these to inspire intrigue, conflict, and adventure.

THE ARKAN COUNCIL

The members of the Arkan Council are the Navigators Guild's representatives in the system. They have a lot of resources, ships, personnel, and a contingent of directorate agents (under cover, of course). Examining the spores and algae in the deep caverns of Arkan has led to some extraordinary discoveries that remain secret. All defectors that have tried to leave have been caught – so far.

N'DARMENA EVROPIS, NAVIGATOR BIOMANTICIST

N'darmena has been stationed at SZ-3 for a few years. She has worked on memory enhancements and using algae for implants, which have both fascinating and devastating effects. She's done things she's not proud of, and now she wants out - and plans to defect as soon as the next Greatship arrives. In the worst case, she might flee to Astophoris.

STR 3 AGL 3 LOG 6 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Botanist 3, Data Djinn 1, Laboratorist 2, Librarian 1, Nurse 2, Teratology 1, Smart 1

EQUIPMENT: Notebook with incriminating data of the experiments in SZ-3, assortment of medical equipment, orbital comlink (encrypted, stolen)

FIVE ORCHARDS GARDENERS

New Orchard is one of the illegal settlements on Astophoris. Hidden in the jungle, the forty or so Gardeners living there are almost self-sufficient. But occasionally, they must send out envoys for vital parts, medical gear, and chemical compounds. They trade in strange flora to the Toads or Sephyr Sisters, and sometimes in prismatic scale from the Khar.

NESTERA MINING CORPORATION

A joint venture created by the Coriolites, together with the Mining Combine. They have jointly succeeded in excavating high-grade ore and refining it to pure metals and minerals, as they are easier to refine than the bulky ore. Deep down in Aridinë, they have also found a Vault left by the Builders and are planning to penetrate its first seals soon.

SIRGO MEFTALEM, GARDENER HUNTER

Sirgo grew up in Ship City but left as an adolescent when she heard about the illegal colonies on Astophoris. She is a natural when it comes to hunting and tracking, which has served her and the colony well. She has earned the honor of leaving Five Orchards to secure vital supplies and is glad to accept the risk it entails. Every half Ninहुलाम year, she catches a ride with ore traders from the Vale to the SZ orbit. This time is urgent as a branch mother's daughter has contracted a Blight affliction, and decontamination kits are needed.

STR 5 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 12 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Blade fighter 2, Hunter 3, Reckless 1, Sharpshooter 3, Stamina 1, Stealthy 2, Tough 3, Tracker 2

EQUIPMENT: Protherum rifle, scythe blade (short sword, +2 to **STRENGTH** when cutting through jungle), optinoculars, tortoise flexi-armor, assortment of herbs and plants, 4 Khar prism scales, drop capsule (micro shuttle that can only ascend/descend in a straight vector)

ERMINA NESTERA-COUR MIR-KUA, CORIOLITE MINING ALGEBRAIST

Ermina left her clan and family to learn modern mathematics at the Astrolaab in the Chasm. Fully trained, she returned to her family, and was soon sent off to Ninहुलाम and the excavation in Aridinë. Working day and night, she has helped uncover the entrance to the Vault in the planet's depths. Regrettably, it is locked by powerful glyphs and artifacts. She is now looking to find a crew of delvers or glyph scholars to help in the endeavor.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 3 INS 5 EMP 3

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 7

TALENTS: Archaeology 2, Astrometry 2, Barter 2, Cartography 1, Charmer 2, Librarian 1

EQUIPMENT: Heirloom tabula with her discoveries (encrypted), a brooch with Nestera's logo from the Old Horizon, and an heirloom Vulcan pistol (same stats as a fusillard pistol but damage 4)

THE MAW OF DEATH

“The Maw has been scanned from orbit several times with identical results. Second Navigator Yuna Markivril claims it is the working of an ancient crust-dwelling monster — clearly a preposterous Gardener’s fantasy. As such, I invoke her degradation to Third Navigator.”

FAROUK CHAMEN-YESSIN, ATTORNEY NAVIGATOR AT INTERNAL DOCTRINE COMPLIANCE HEARING, YEAR 182

A wound opens up in the deep jungle of Astophoris, a rift that stretches down into the earth where a cluster of ancient Builder vaults lies hidden. This was once the scene of a tragedy: the Builders tried to find a way to their salvation, and it was here that they bred

and developed a servitor race that would keep the Blight away. Both efforts failed. While the Builders themselves passed into oblivion long, long ago, the children of their experiments still live on. And they still pay the price for their former masters’ mistakes.

BACKGROUND

Astophoris has always been in a prime location for sustaining life. It was once a veritable Eden that housed many life forms in all shapes and sizes. When the Builders arrived, they set out to do what they did best: mold things to their liking. They found the Khar, reptilian beasts that had the potential to resist Blight, and set to work. Over generations, they bred the Khar to become more advanced, eventually becoming semi-intelligent servitors. They built the Shulhak Vaults deep beneath the planet-wide jungle to conduct their experiments. As the Late Era dawned, the Blight arrived on Astophoris. It spread quickly, poisoning the forest and threatening the vaults. So, the Builders dug deeper. Seeking escape, they engineered a machine meant to open a portal, a gateway that might lead them to the Pale Halls.

To do this, they designed the Shulhak Vault complex around a Glyph Engine consisting of three glyphs balancing each other. These were:

- Nefelek, the major glyph of entropy and change, that fractures space and loosens the weave of reality.
- Eanu is a Kaphra directional force glyph that slices through the veil and shapes the breach.
- Nyx, a Kaphra glyph of stasis and shielding, to bind the portal in place and defend against mental collapse.

While work on the Glyph Engine initially went well, catastrophe struck when a Vaultbreaker Titan – a mighty colossus sent by the Dreamers (Core Rules, page 260) to destroy any vaults it uncovered – found the complex and attacked it. As it burrowed through the earth, it cut through the complex, destroying the Crystal Vault in its center, the very place where the three glyphs were balanced.

The Titan was eventually stopped, closer to the surface, and died there, but the damage was done. The Builders had lost control over their machine. With the powerful forces of the glyphs let loose and the corrupting Blight from the Titan spreading through the complex, the Builders took their chances and entered the portal even though it was unstable. They disappeared into oblivion. Their living experiments, the Khar, were abandoned; alone, they were left to fend for themselves against the unstable energies roaming the Vaults and the hellish creatures emerging from the unstable portal. But they lived on. They even flourished. And in time, they spread across the surface of the planet. But the servitors never forgot their former masters who left them behind to die.

Now, the Shulhak Vaults lie as a testimony to the vanity and desperation of the failing Builder culture. The upper

directed those effects). The variant in this adventure is a Nefelek Engine.

halls of the complex are dominated by the Khar, who continue their lives as they always have. At the same time, the lower vaults are ravaged by the unstable glyphs and the nightmarish incursions from strange dimensions that pour through the gate at intervals. The complex has seen three human visitors arrive over time: first, the Seceder scout Vasilia, who perished in the Gate Chamber over five centuries

ago. Second, a Navigator survey team sent out to explore the Vaults in year 133 that perished one by one in the process. Finally, the sole survivor of a Gardener expedition, the rogue botanist Leilani Sadhri, is known to the Khar as the Red Witch of the Forest. An ally and guardian of the Khar, she lives her life here now.

Astophoris's surface is blanketed in green-mauve jungles, crisscrossed by dark, winding rivers that converge into sprawling deltas before spilling into the planet's sole sea – the Circumferent Ocean, known to early would-be colonists as the “Big Brine.” Rain clouds, spore-laden fog, and corrosive mists drift through river valleys and over forested hills and highlands, sometimes sinking

low enough to shroud the jungle floor in a clinging, toxic haze. Surprisingly, the air is still breathable.

The rainforest pulses with bizarre and hazardous life, primarily fungal and microbial organisms, though larger threats abound: saurian predators and vast swarms of insectoid creatures that hunt with relentless efficiency.

The Gardeners and the Navigators are interested in whether a bridgehead or research station can be established at the Maw. If the Arkan Council (Navigators Guild) is made aware of the Explorers' efforts to reach the Maw, or their success, they will send a shuttle with their delving crew to intercept during the delve. If there are

Navigator affiliates on the *Akhander*, they will arrive even sooner. The Gardeners have a small, hidden colony near the Five Orchards settlement. From this, they might send out a squad of Botanist-Couyer Guardians to investigate the happenings at the Maw.

BOTANIST-COUYER GUARDIANS

The Gardeners may be seen as pacifists, but some of the more zealous colonists and exo-botanists recognized the need for protection against hostile fauna, flora, and the Blight. In response, they formed a small group of weapon-trained Gardeners, the Botanist-Couyer Guardians, named after the late hunter and botanist Ariklia Couyer, whose name derives from the plant Ariklum Couyersis, known as “the heart of victory” in the Old Horizon tongue. For Gardener standards, the Guardians are well-equipped and trained to handle difficult circumstances and wildlife.

STR 4 AGL 5 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 11 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Acrobat 1, Blade fighter 2, Botanist 2, Heavy weapons or Sharpshooter 2, Hunter 2, Teratology 2, Tough 2, Tracker 1

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard pistol, fusillard carbine or flame-thrower, jungle blade (short sword and tool +3 to cut vegetation), Coyeur flexi-armor (same as Tortoise flexi-armor but Blight Protection 2), two MediDoses, two decontamination doses, 10 supply



THE SIGNAL

The Singularity Sphere signal originates from beneath the surface of Astophoris, buried deep below a dense jungle-clad massif. Once at the Maw, a rift valley, the signal becomes unstable, its strength fluctuating unpredictably. Determining the precise position of its origin is impossible; the only indication is whether one is moving closer or farther away. Even within the Vault, this inconsistency persists.

The distortion of the signal is intended to force the Explorers to explore as much as possible of the Vault before finding the Sphere; however, if you like to speed things up, you can always determine that the signal is suddenly clear so that the Explorers know their destination sooner.

ARRIVING

Landing on Astophoris has its challenges. It is impossible to find a landing spot from orbit. The problems occur at lower altitudes, where cloud banks obscure the landscape from vision and scans. The signal from the Sphere will direct the Explorers towards the Maw massif, shrouded by the cloud and spore vapors rising from the forest. As their flight path crosses river valleys and forest-clad massifs, let them intercept sporadic transmissions from illegal settlements hidden in the jungle.

Drafts form heated air, intermixed with corrosive vapors and spores, make the flight path hard to pilot. Make a -2 AGILITY

Let the pilot or scan operator roll for **PERCEPTION** or **LOGIC** (Pilot, Scan Operator) with a -3 modifier to find a spot as close as possible to the signal or the Maw.

FLYBY OVER THE MAW

The Explorers will need to trek to the signal's location in the jungle. Use the **Maw Massif Trek Map** (*Handout 8*) and play out the trek using the Core Rules (page 204) and the Mishap Table below.

- ## LANDING IN THE JUNGLE

- The Delta:** A flat delta and swamp south of the massif, giving the pilot +2 to land. However, there is a risk that the shuttle will get bogged down over time.

- # TREKKING ACROSS THE JUNGLE

THE CASE OF THE... **RESEARCHER'S** **DISCOVERY** **OF THE** **SECRET**

- | D6 | Event | Rainforest | Jungle |
|----|------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Encounter | Khar Gargantuan | Khar Predator Pack |
| 2 | Phenomenon | Spore Shooters | Tangling Lianas |
| 3 | Weather | Corrosive Rain | Spore Cloud |
| 4 | Obstacle | Quicksand | Cataract |
| 5 | Sign | Blooms | Fungal Eruption |
| 6 | Discovery | Abandoned Colonist Camp | Golem Wreck |

away an Explorer (see Event: *The Khar Predators Attacks*, page 105).

- **Spore Shooter:** Passing an opening in the forest, the trees give way to tall red grass, topped with large globular buds. A fetid smell of decay hangs in the air. As the Explorers pass by, the buds explode, shooting shrapnel-like spores around them. One Explorer suffers 7 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) or the rover takes 1 damage.
- **Tangling Lianas:** The jungle grows denser, and vines and lianas twist across the ground and dangle from the canopy like grasping limbs. As the

Explorers push forward, the creeping tendrils lash out, attempting to ensnare the rover or any guards moving on foot (refer to Snake Vine, Core Rules, page 227).

- **Corrosive Rain:** A low bank of yellow, billowing clouds drifts overhead. The air turns heavy and still just before the rain begins to fall. As the rain pours down, the jungle sizzles, leaves curling and bark blistering under the corrosive downfall. Treat the effect as Toxic Fog (Core Rules, page 240).
- **Spore Cloud:** A swirling haze of green and yellow particles descends from the trees around the Explorers. The twin smells of almond and jasmine envelop them as they enter the haze. Sticky pollen adheres to exposed surfaces as the spores cling to everything and clog filters – same effect as the Mishap Damaged filters (Core rules, page 205).
- **Quicksand:** The terrain shifts, soil turns loose and damp, and the dense undergrowth abruptly gives way to a wide patch of treacherous quicksand. Half-submerged carcasses and bleached skeletons of jungle creatures jut from the mire. The path is completely impassable. To navigate around it safely, the Explorers must take a lengthy detour, requiring one shift.
- **Cataract:** A roaring sound can be heard through the jungle, increasing in volume as the Explorers venture ahead. As a clearing opens, a mighty waterfall cascading down a ridge blocks their path. The detour around takes an extra shift.
- **Blooms:** The rainforest thins out, and for once, sunlight pierces the canopy overhead. Golden rays spill onto a lush meadow bursting with blooms. Flowers in all shapes, colors, and sizes litter the ground, spreading a pleasant perfume of nature around them. All Explorers recover 1 Hope.
- **Fungal Eruption:** A massive jungle tree lies fallen, its trunk split wide by a crimson fungal bloom erupting from within. Thick stalks and branching stems burst forth, capped with gilled mushrooms in vivid shades of red. The air is warm and spore-laden. Taking samples may prove valuable, though not without risk, as the tree is affected by the Crimson Mold (page 92).
- **Abandoned Colonist Camp:** The jungle abruptly gives way to a scarred clearing, trees cut down, their



trunks now draped in moss, fungus, and creeping lichen. At the heart of the deforested zone lies a derelict camp: collapsed tent bubbles, broken crates, and makeshift shelters slowly succumbing to the wild. Oddly, there are no signs of struggle or violence, just an eerie silence, and equipment abandoned in apparent haste. Spending a shift to search the area yields 2D6 supply and one useful tool of the GM's choice.

- **Golem Wreck:** Sitting motionless in the jungle is the hunched silhouette of a massive figure – at first glance, a giant man. As the Explorers draw nearer, they realize it's an ancient Sentry Golem, nearly four meters tall even while slumped, its ceramic armor cracked and overgrown with vines and moss. A small pack of rodent-like Khar have nested inside its hollow chest cavity and will screech and scatter if disturbed. Salvaging parts or attempting to load the entire construct onto the rover could prove valuable to the Guilds (same amount as an artifact), though the golem occupies storage space equivalent to 500 supply.

KHAR GARGANTUAN

Handle the Gargantuan as a vehicle. It will try to ram (Core Rules, page 76) the Explorers' rover in an attempt to shoo it away. It will flee if it suffers more than half its Hull points in damage.

AGILITY: 3	Maneuverability: +1	
Speed: 2	Hull: 18	Armor: 4

THE KHAR

The jungles and rainforests of Astophoris teem with life, mostly dangerous and averse to humans. The bigger animals of the planet are lizard-like creatures, posthumously named after their discoverer, chief biologist Youssor Khar. They range from rodent-sized to huge ponderous beings, large as a rover train. There are predators among them, from pack hunters to apex killers and even flying kinds.

THE UPPER VAULTS

The delve into the Shulhak Vaults is a massive endeavor for the Explorers. They must first enter the vault through the jungle rift or the two overgrown venting shafts. The size of the vault makes it impossible to scan the whole complex. The first level, consisting of three vaults, is called the Upper Vaults.

Since the individual vaults are large, the key locations described in them are several zones from each other and delving is required to move between them.

PREPARING THE DELVE

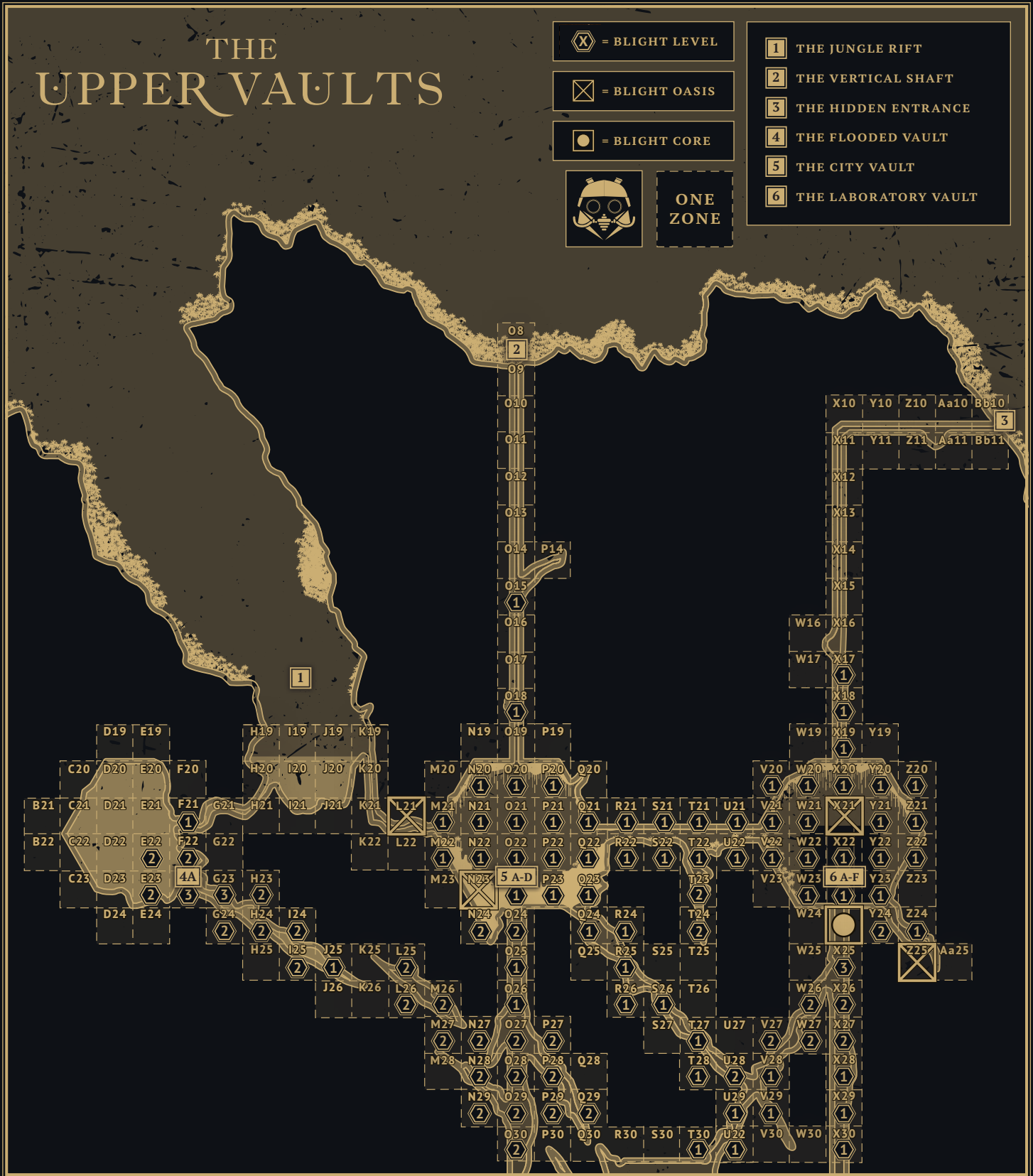
There are three ways to enter the Vault; scanning from the surface will reveal all entrances. Surface camps can be set up at any of the three locations. The jungle rift is the only one visible without a scan.

- The Jungle Rift (1)
- The Vertical Shaft (2)
- The Hidden Entrance (3)

Give the Explorers *Handout #9: Scan Map Upper Vaults* when they have performed the deep scan. The scan should reveal the following (make sure the players understand this):



- The depth and distance to #6 The Laboratory Vault is approximately 12 markers, taking the shortest route excluding key locations.
- They should realize that they must set up a delve camp in one of the chambers, and might have to do supply runs.
- The vault extends deeper than the total reach of the depth scanner, and a second scan has to be performed when the Explorers have delved further down.
- They should be informed that the map shows rubble and roof vegetation in #5 The City Vault and tower-like structures in #6 The Laboratory Vault.



- ❖ Diving gear could be helpful since at least one cave is flooded, #4 The Flooded Vault. Delving suits are not made for diving and high-pressure environments.

If the Explorers use the Bird for scanning ahead, it should warn them of dangers in the Vertical Shaft (the Blocked Shaft) and The Hidden Entrance (the Khar Nest).

- **The Blocked Shaft:** As the Explorers reach this zone, it becomes evident that the shaft is blocked by roots and tendrils from the jungle. To pass will require 6 successes that can be attained by rolling for **STRENGTH**, **AGILITY**, or **LOGIC** depending on how the Explorers proceed. Everyone in the crew can roll once for each stretch.
- **The Khar Nest:** A group of small Khar, each about the size of a chicken, has made a nest in the shaft. These tiny creatures will ferociously protect their litter with loud screeches and nibbling bites. A nuisance, a successful **STRENGTH** roll shoos them away before they poach D3 supply.

ENVIRONMENT IN THE UPPER VAULTS

The jungle has entered the complex over the passing millennia, as has the rainwater from the everlasting rainstorms. The walls and tunnels of the upper vaults are overgrown with trunk-like lianas, verdant green moss, fungi-like mauve lichen, and an

DIVING EQUIPMENT

Explorers with a good connection to the Arkan Council can get access to specialized diving gear. Otherwise, they will have to jury-rig a vacuum or delving exo. To jury-rig a suit roll **LOGIC** (Jury-rig). Tools are required to do this. It takes 1 Shift to do for the Explorers' suits. A jury-rigged suit consumes double supply submersed and has -2 to all maneuvers using **STRENGTH**, **AGILITY**, and **PERCEPTION**. A diving suit acquired from the Arkan Council has the same stats as a light delving suit, but no armor rating, Blight protection 1, and isn't vacuum resistant (weight 3).

assortment of plants and blooms. The smell of jungle mixes with the dry, cool smell of stone and crumbling concrete. Where the surfaces of tunnels and walls can be seen, they are criss-crossed with fine fractures as they have started to crack.

Where the Blight has sprouted, the jungle vegetation mixes with dark purple and black crystals. Blight, frost, and moss interweave, and spores and dust mix in the air.

The rainwater from the jungle has pooled in a lake at the bottom of the rift. From the lake, a rapid swirls down to the first chamber, lending the ambiance of the jungle its constant rushing sounds. The water pools and swirls through the chamber's rubble before to the deeper chambers. The shafts are clear of vegetation and have smooth, glistening surfaces with algae-covered glyphs and circular patterns associated with the Late Era.

SETTING THE MOOD

The Upper Vault is like Astophoris in general: verdant, green, and filled with life. Fluorescent growths send mauve, purple, and green light through the chambers. The sounds of jungle fauna, insects, and strange calls fill the air. There is a feeling of growth, life, and hope from the jungle, hiding its true nature. It feels like a long-lost Eden, but it is not.

HAZARDS IN THE UPPER VAULTS

In the Upper Vaults, it is possible to use the generic hazards from the Core Rules (page 212), or you can add in these extra hazards. The submerged vaults only use hazards from the Core Rules, modified to be submerged by the GM.

4. THE FLOODED VAULT

A giant chamber full of murky, dark water stretches out ahead.

- **Faded white lights** glimmer at the bottom of the cave.
- **Beyond the lights, a huge shape** is visible through the murk, slumped on the cave floor far below.

During the Vaultbreaker attack, this vault was ripped apart, severed from the rest of the complex, and later flooded. It is only possible to enter through a submerged crevice.

Diving blindly down will use extra supply, but land the Explorers at the carcass of the Vaultbreaker Titan.

DELVE HAZARDS IN THE UPPER VAULTS

Use these unique hazards instead of rolling up a random hazard on the standard table (Core Rules, page 212).

DISTANCE TO EXIT	HAZARD	EFFECT
1–12	Slippery Path: The moss and lichen-covered cave floor is slick with humidity; a sudden wrong step causes you to lose control and fall.	DELVER Roll STRENGTH Fail: Lose 2 supply
12–16	Hunting Calls: Sharp clicks and low hisses echo through the undergrowth, bouncing between unseen sources. The sounds shift in tone and rhythm, as if signaling – or speaking – in an alien language.	SCOUT Roll LOGIC Fail: Suffer 1 despair
1–12	Liana Net: The growth of the jungle thickens, creating a veritable net of lianas, air roots, and large lobate leaves. The way ahead is blocked.	BURROWER Roll LOGIC Fail: Become Confused
12–16	Khar Hide: A large, reptilian hide lies partially buried in the undergrowth. Its surface is smooth. Cold and rigid, it looks recently shed, yet there's no sign of what crawled out of it.	GUARD Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Suffer 2 despair
12–16	Corrupted Glyphs: The fungi-like moss has spread its fingers over tiles of glyphs. Scraping it aside shows something to be off. The glyphs are wrong, like they have been manipulated or changed.	ARCHAEOLOGIST Roll INSIGHT Fail: Suffer 1 Blight
12–16	Flashing Flora: The vegetation surrounding the path ahead is fluorescent, lilac, purple, and white. As you touch leaves and stems, they light up. Suddenly, the light propagates through the foliage, erupting in a brilliant cascade of color.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Become Distracted

A THE VAULTBREAKER TITAN

The outline of a vast, hulking shape fills your field of vision.

- The shape of an enormous beetle, its body covered in segmented plates the size of shuttle hulls.
- Half-submerged in slag and rubble, the creature lies like it died mid-burrow.
- Around its front, shattered structures still cling to its frame, one of which is pulsating with weak white light.

Search:

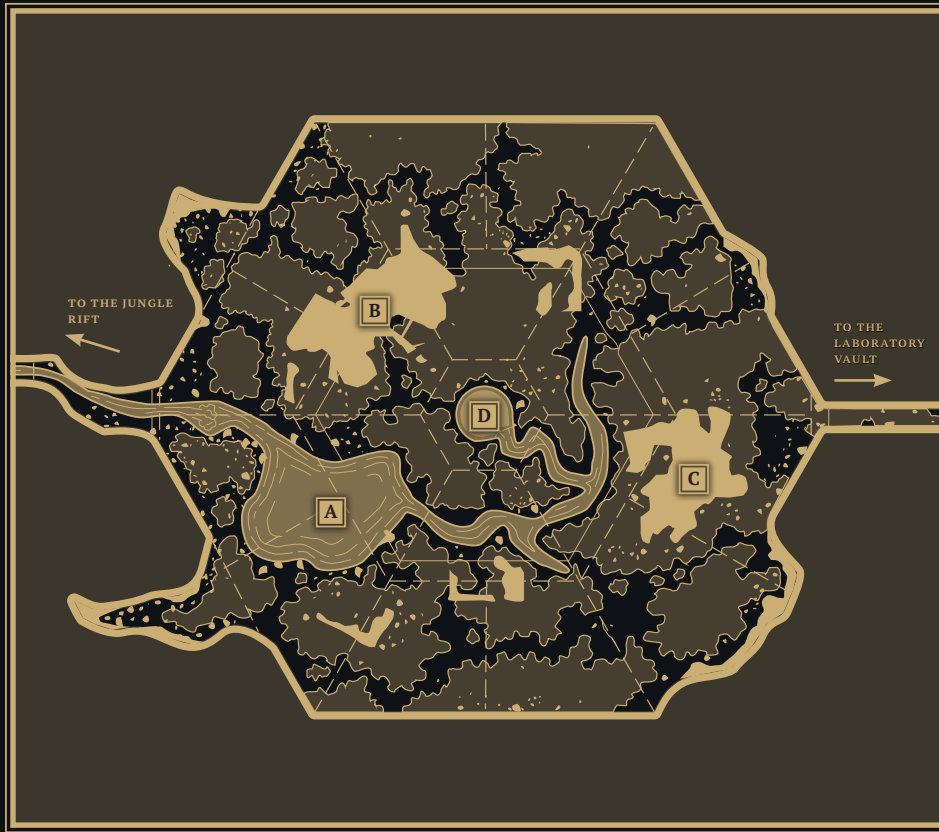
- Swimming close to the Titan will lead to a Blight attack with 5 base dice (base Blight 1).
- Investigating the structure with the white light will reveal a white glowing glyph. Upon seeing it, the

Explorers suffer 3 despair, mitigated by an **EMPATHY** roll, as the glyph affects the viewer's mind.

- Roll **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar), to understand that this is Nyx, a Kaphra Glyph, a powerful glyph that can manipulate reality. The glyph helped stop the colossal creature a long time ago. The Explorers also understand that the glyph likely has similar disruptive effects on other constructs.
- It is possible to harvest ceramic scales from the Vaultbreaker Titan. They weigh 2 each, and require 3 supply each to harvest. They are worth the same amount as a major Artifact. The Navigators Guild, and the Machinists Guild will be very interested in getting their hands on the plates.
- A descriptive sketch with details from the Explorers might be worth something to the Arkan Council (and of course, the archaeo-historians of the Explorers Guild).

5

THE CITY VAULT



- A** THE SILENT BASIN
- B** BLOODMOSS HILL
- C** FUNGI HILL
- D** WHIRLING LAKE



A vast cavern, shaped like a valley, stretches ahead.

- Wild jungle forest spreads across the floor, tall trees cling to the cave walls, colossal fungi grow from the ground, and vines dangle from the ceiling.
- Faint bioluminescence in soft blues and sickly greens glows from the jungle undergrowth.
- The roar of a waterfall echoes through the heat and mist, mingling with strange chittering from the undergrowth.

Once a small Builder city, the vault lies buried beneath centuries of invasive growth. Fractured walls and broken towers protrude from the jungle floor like the bones of a long-dead colossus. The jungle has overtaken it

entirely, accelerated by the presence of a Blight-derived fungiform strain that has reshaped the ecosystem.

A pack of wild Khar now rules the vault, attacking anything that strays too close. They avoid only one area: Bloodmoss Hill, with its faintly glowing Nyx Kaphra glyph.

The chamber is lit up by fluorescence from the forest as the trees, moss, and lichen have developed in the dark, faster than normal evolution due to the Blight-derived fungiform forest strain.

As the Explorers enter or reach the bottom of the chamber (if descending from the vents), the delving procedure ends, and the cave is handled like a key location, i.e., consuming 1 supply per stretch (Core Rules, page 211). The Explorers can move one zone per stretch.

A THE SILENT BASIN

A large mass of water lies ahead, the surface still like a black tar pit.

- **Tall jungle trees lean over the water**, some dipping into it.
- **The stillness is broken by the sounds of the jungle**, the chittering of insects, the rustling of undergrowth, and the echoes of distant calls.
- **Rings break the surface of the water** now and then, as if something living moves below the surface.

Search:

- A lot of footprints from animals circle the lake. Roll **PERCEPTION** (Tracker) to see they are from large reptilian creatures.
- Roll **LOGIC** (Teratology), to recognize that some prints belong to a larger Khar. If they encountered the predator pack on the trek (page 97), they recognize them as identical prints, but also prints from something bigger (see #B Bloodmoss Hill).

B BLOODMOSS HILL

The jungle lets go of the chamber's rubble as it rises towards the ceiling. Dark concrete, cracked and overgrown by reddish lichen-like moss, covers the wreckage.

- **A winding path covered by red moss** leads up the hill towards a summit.
- **A wide, flat slab**, perhaps once a building's floor, lies like a table on the top. The area is devoid of jungle flora, but instead has flat red lichen growing in blotches like puddles of dried blood.
- **The skeleton of a massive beast** lies at the slab, its bones curled in a final, defensive posture. Before it, delicate red fronds sway in the still air.

Search:

- Brushing away the lichen will reveal a large glyph etched on the would-be floor, the Nyx Kaphra glyph. This glyph is also evident on some of the rubble.
- When revealed, the glyph has the same effect as previously described (See #1 The Vaultbreaker Titan), if they haven't seen it before.

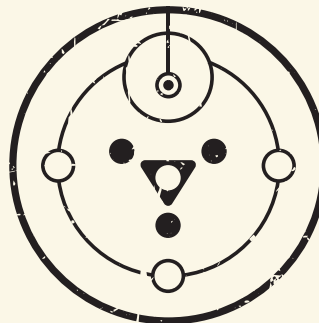
VAULTBREAKER TITANS

In the waning centuries of the Late Era, the Dreamers deployed these colossal constructs to destabilize planetary crusts and sabotage the construction of Builder vaults. Their secondary purpose was to assist the spread of the Blight into deeper geological layers. Vaultbreaker Titans descend into the planet's crust, burrowing deep before falling dormant.

Periodically, they scanned their environments. They would stir to life if a new subterranean void was detected, such as a freshly constructed vault or excavation. Burrowing toward the disturbance, they unleashed gravitational waves that fractured bedrock and triggered massive seismic events. As they tunneled, they excreted Blight crystals, leaving corruption in their wake.

THE NYX KAPHRA GLYPH

The Nyx glyph was designed to stop constructs and biological beings by setting them into a sleeping or hibernation mode. Some creatures only become confused or drowsy as a result of the glyph. Showing the glyph to beasts will decrease their ferocity by 1 for one round only. Constructs are placed in a waiting stance and take no actions for D3 rounds, unless attacked. To use the Nyx glyph this way, the Explorers must make a good drawing on a piece of paper, tabula, or similar by succeeding with an **AGILITY** (Glyph Reader) roll.



- No animal tracks cross the rubble pile or top of the hill; they all stop at its foot.
- 4D6 shards

GM note: As the Khar avoid Bloodmoss Hill, due to the presence of the Nyx Kaphra glyph, this is a possible place to set up a delve camp. The zone is also a Blight oasis.

 FUNGI HILL

A broad hill rises from the chamber floor, its surface choked with towering fungus-like trees that have entirely replaced the jungle flora.

- **Broad, fleshy caps** of the fungi-trees seem to pulsate slowly, almost like they are breathing.
- **Red-veined lichen** and indigo spore dust cover the spongy ground, clinging to the boots of the Explorers whenever they take a step.
- **A cloud of glittering spores** is released by a fungal tree at regular intervals; the spores drift lazily to the ground.

In parts of the jungle, the Blight and the plants have adapted to each other, creating a new type of organism that can coexist with the Blight: the fungiform forest. It resembles a mix of fungus, lichen, and plant, growing as large as jungle trees with massive trunks, branches, and tendrils.

Search:

Overgrown by lichen, moss, and dense undergrowth are the remains of an old abandoned campsite. If the Explorers investigate, they will find the following:

- D6 supply in the form of rations marked with the Navigators Guild insignia. A successful **LOGIC** (Historian) roll will tell the Explorers that this is the old symbol, used before 146, indicating that the camp is at least four decades old.
- The survey team left behind a long-since-dead navigation beacon to show the way back. It is broken beyond repair.
- A discarded medical kit, indicating that someone was treated for wounds or sickness in the camp.

● WHIRLING LAKE ●

The meandering waterway flowing through the chamber ends in a whirling lake with a central waterfall disappearing into the depths.

THE LOST EXPEDITION

The camp found on Fungi Hill is the first remnant of the long-lost Navigator expedition that disappeared in the Maw more than five decades ago (page 95). The Explorers will follow in the footsteps of this cursed expedition and uncover the clues and remnants they left behind. Their effort was not entirely in vain; before perishing by Blight exposure and Khar attacks, they discovered clues to the true purpose of the Vault (see page 119). Use the lost expedition to emphasize the tragedy of the first attempt to explore the Maw, provide clues to the complex's nature, and add human interest to the millennia-old ruins.

- **A constant rushing sound** fills the air around the lake.
- **The flood water gets turbulent** and becomes more rapid as it approaches the lake.
- **A perfectly round whirlpool** of water creates a circular waterfall leading down.

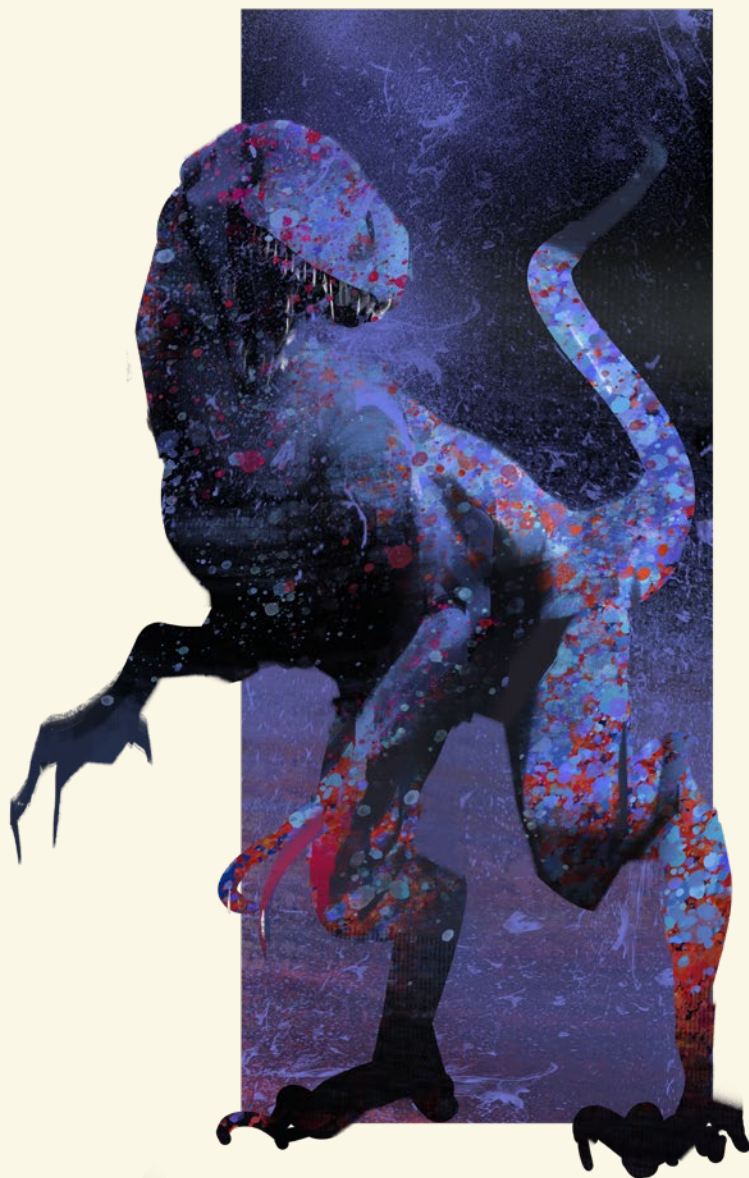
Search:

- The hole down is a shaft in the vault. Roll **LOGIC** (Archaeology) to deduce that there was some sort of elevator in the now destroyed building of the chamber.
- Roll for **LOGIC** (Archaeology) to understand that there should be auxiliary shafts along the main shaft that could be accessible.
- The Burrower role will realize that it is possible to burrow down to the shaft. Roll **STRENGTH** (Miner) with digging equipment, to secure a way down the main shaft or excavate without the auxiliary tunnel.

EVENT

THE KHAR PREDATORS ATTACK

When you think it is dramatically appropriate, let the Khar predators attack the Explorers. The creatures roam the whole vault and the adjoining tunnels but avoid Bloodmoss Hill due to the Nyx glyph. They hunt in packs of three. The predators will encircle their prey and attack from several directions, performing a Sneak Attack (Core Rules page 222).



KHAR PREDATORS

The Khar predators are reptilian creatures with muscular necks, long taloned back limbs, and a powerful tail. Their crystal scales can change appearance and color, like all Khar creatures. The predators were specifically bred to guard places and eventually spread across the planet. They usually use their crystals in a striped camouflage pattern, but can change to pitch black or even become invisible (see Ability below).

FEROCITY: 2 HEALTH: 12 ARMOR: 4

AGILITY 6 PERCEPTION 6

ABILITIES

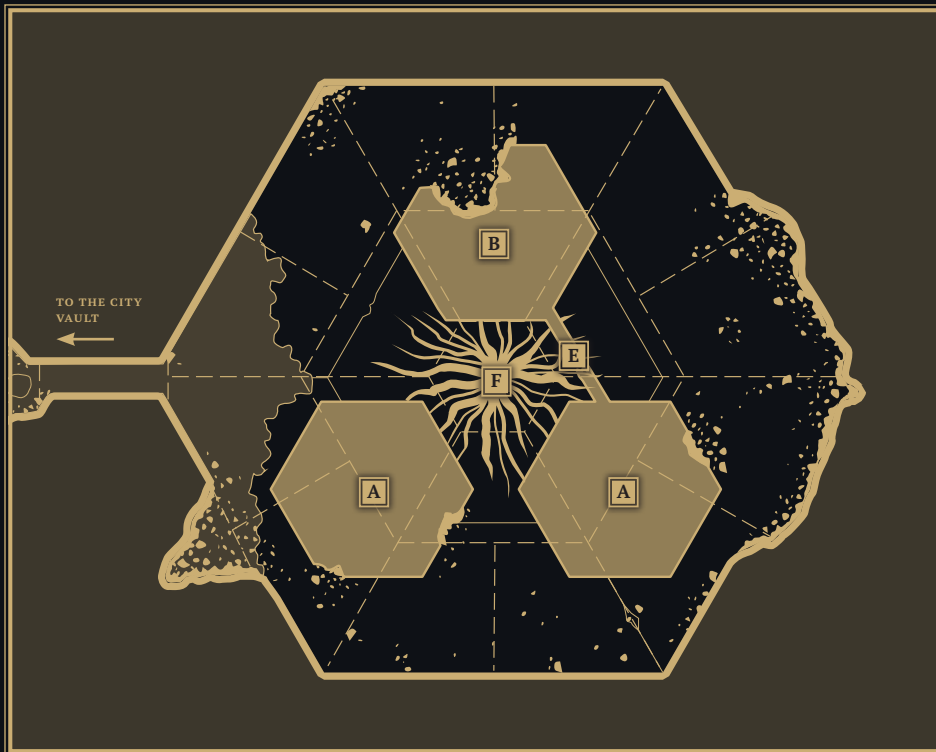
- **Khar Crystal Hide:** The crystal hide of a Khar can change to any color or pattern, and even turn them invisible. The latter exerts a lot of energy, decreasing their Ferocity to 1 when invisible. The effect on attackers is the same as fighting in total darkness (Core rules, page 61).
- **Nyx Sensitive:** If the Nyx glyph is shown, the Khar will get slower, and Ferocity will be changed to 1. After one round, they will flee.

KHAR PREDATORS SIGNATURE ATTACKS

1. **Screeching Hiss:** The Khar pack leader raises its crystal scaly head and lets loose a terrifying screeching hiss. Everyone within Short range suffers an attack with 7 base dice (base despair 1).
2. **Charging Ram:** The scaly Khar charges straight into an Explorer within Short range, smashing the victim with its bulk. Roll for the attack with 6 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3). If hit, the victim is knocked to the ground.
3. **Ripping Shake:** The predator Khar grabs an Explorer within Short range with its tooth-filled jaws, pulling and shaking the victim. Roll for the attack with 9 base dice (based damage 2, crit 3). If it hits, the Explorer is thrown to Short range and lands prone.
4. **Kicking Claws:** The killer Khar kicks with its muscular hind legs at an Explorer within Engaged range. Roll for the attack with 9 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3). If hit, the victim is knocked to the ground, bleeding from the deep wounds. The wound will keep bleeding, losing 1 Health every round until the action First aid is performed.
5. **Tail Swish:** The Khar runs round the Explorer, herding its intended victim towards its pack fellows with a swishing slash of its tail. The victim is attacked using 5 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3). If hit, the victim is thrown towards another Khar predator at Short range, who gets a free attack.
6. **Pulling Grab:** The Khar tries to grab an Explorer with its massive jaws to drag them into the jungle. Roll for the attack using 7 base dice (base damage 1, crit 2). If the attack hits, the Khar drags the Explorer into the next zone (Medium range).

6

THE LABORATORY VAULT



- A** THE SOUTH TOWERS
- B** THE NORTH TOWER
- C** THE INNER SHAFT
- D** THE SERVITOR DWELLING
- E** THE BRIDGE
- F** THE BLIGHT ROSE



THE NORTH TOWER



The jungle ends abruptly, its dense growth giving way to the yawning mouth of a vast cavern. Faint light spills from clusters of fluorescent growths clinging to the ceiling.

- Three massive towers rise through the gloom, their surfaces marked by the ruin of time.
- A giant lilac plant stretches its tendrils across the ground in the middle of the cavern.
- Weak, flickering lights can be seen halfway up the tower, furthest away.

The laboratories are the most intact part of the Upper Vaults, with three towers in the cavern's center. Between the towers is an eruption of lilac Blight crystals from the shaft leading to the Lower Vaults. The jungle vegetation fades as the tunnel opens between chambers, with a few stray fronds and trailing ivy spilling down the sloped walls toward the chamber floor. The vault ceiling still has vegetation penetrating from the jungle above, with lianas and roots hanging in the air.

As with The City Vault, the delving procedure ends, and the cave is handled like a key location, i.e., consuming 1 supply per stretch (Core Rules, page 211). The Explorers can move one zone per stretch.

A THE SOUTH TOWERS

Two massive towers rise in the gloom, their surfaces marked by ruin and decay.

- A faintly glowing honeycomb pattern covers the entire tower facade.
- Large jagged breaches expose collapsed interiors, huge shafts covered in rubble and debris.
- The purple veins of a Blight flower creep along the tower bases.

The towers were built as laboratories dedicated to specific genetic manipulation, glyph conditioning, and adaptive training phases. Here, the Builders engineered the Khar, reshaping them from wild creatures into guardians, hunters, and eventually, servitors.

Now, the towers are empty husks, their inner walls collapsed and floors fallen away. Dust drifts through the gloom, and debris still tumbles from broken alcoves. Despite the ruin, the honeycomb design is still visible.

Search:

- Tucked against a ruined west tower wall are two small stone mounds, nearly hidden by moss and creeping vines. Each is marked with a rusted metal shard driven into the earth, one still bearing the faint, worn emblem of the old Navigators Guild. The stones are roughly stacked, but with care. An inscription in the stone reads: *"Here lie Tamas Vadrin, Navigator Second Class, and Selen Ayura, Third Algebraist. Lost to the Deep, Never Forgotten."*
- The west tower is empty and only filled with rubble. Sifting through the ruins will uncover 2D6 shards.
- The east tower is a husk of what it used to be, but some parts are still intact, floors jutting from the walls a few stories up. The only access is via climbing with **AGILITY** (Acrobat) or over the partly collapsed bridge from the tall tower (requires grappling gun, ropes, or other improvised climbing mechanism).
- Searching any zone on the vault floor will uncover D6 shards.

B THE NORTH TOWER

A massive tower stretches upwards through the gloom of the vault.

- A gaping black hole leads into the tower.
- Hexagonal holes, like small windows, litter the outside of the tower.
- Weak light can be seen through some holes midway up the tower.

The tall tower used to be the working and rest area for Builders, and instead of floors, it is built like a three-dimensional honeycomb of hexagonal compartments, cells, shafts, and corridors. No stairs or elevators exist, and a big part of the tower is raised and broken. The semi-intelligent Khar servitors have made this their home, in the middle of the tower, where the tower is connected through the bridge east of the South Towers (A).

Search:

- The northern side of the tower lies partially ruined, with sections of the wall collapsed and exposing a wide opening into a large inner shaft.
- The tower's south side is covered in a mix of mauve and lilac Blight ice and frost, glistening in the lanterns. Blight is obvious, and a roll for **INSIGHT** (Bird-handler) with the Bird will confirm it.

C THE INNER SHAFT

Inside the tower, an open courtyard gives way to a wide vertical shaft rising upwards.

- Geometrical alcoves, many broken or crumbled, line the walls.
- Huge holes mark where the walls have collapsed.
- Faint rustling sounds can be heard from halfway up the shaft.

The inside shaft of the tower is lined with ramps and adjoining alcoves and is easy to climb (+1).

Search:

- Roll **PERCEPTION** (Lookout) to notice movement halfway up the shaft. These are Guard Khar Servitors.
- Sending the Bird forward will initiate a ranged attack towards the Bird by the guards, who will then hide.
- Searching the rubble in the inner shaft will reveal 3D6 shards.

D THE SERVITOR DWELLING

Halfway up the tower, a passage opens into a wide, deep chamber with a low ceiling.

- A sharp, musky smell is almost overpowering.
- Twigs, branches, and leaves cover the ground.
- Dozens of yellow eyes watch you from the gloom.

Hundreds of Khar servitors live here, descendants of the Builder experiments. They are intelligent and have a basic community based on hunter-gatherers scavenging food and supplies from the City Vault and the surface jungle beyond.

Search:

- Shards are collected in piles all over the shelter, laid out in irregular patterns and mosaics. Collecting up to 30 shards is possible, which will aggravate the Khar servitors.
- The Khar servitors will all take cover in their honeycombs if the Explorers enter the shelter after the Event: Talking Lizards (see below).

GM's note: This is a good place to set up a base camp.

At the adjoining honeycomb cells, the Khar servitors have made their shelters in twos and threes, adults and offspring.

EVENT

THE RED WITCH

Leilani Sadhri will make herself known to the Explorers whenever you see fit. Dressed in bright red robes, her face painted bone white and her blue eyes gazing inquisitively, she is known to the Khar servitors as the Red Witch. In reality, she is a stranded botanist from the Gardeners Guild who made the Maw her new home. Seeing the Explorers' weapons, she will approach carefully, asking them to holster any drawn weapons and show their faces. She introduces herself as Leilani and can tell the Explorers the following:

- She has lived here for a long time. Decades, even.
- Once, she was a Gardener, but that was in another life, another place.
- The Khar are her people now. They may look like beasts, but she assures the Explorers that they are quite intelligent.
- She can explain the difference between the Khar predators (fierce, dumb beasts) and Servitors (smart, and

LEILANI SADHRI, ROGUE BOTANIST

Once a promising exo-botanist of the Gardeners Guild, Leilani Sadhri arrived in the Ninhulam system with dreams of cataloging the living wonders of the Golden Star. Still, her fate was no different from those who came before her. Her expedition ended in disaster. Her shuttle, torn apart by corrosive rains, stranded her in the depths of the Maw. Her team was lost. Alone but for her pet monkey Zia, sick from the Blight and lacking supplies, she should have died. But she did not. Instead, she adapted and, against all odds, she endured.

When Khar attacked her, she turned the potentially deadly encounter into something else: co-existence. She followed them into the Maw, learned their language of crystal and sound, and brought them offerings. In time, she became part of their culture and even their myths. She became the Red Witch of the Forest – a friend to them. Now, Sadhri walks freely among the upper caverns of the Vault. Gathering herbs and plants, marveling at the beauty of her new home. She is fiercely loyal to the Khar, believing them to be the rightful heirs to their world. If met with respect and friendliness, she will talk to the Explorers; if not, she will not hesitate to unleash the full force of the Khar against them.

STR 3 AGL 3 LOG 4 PER 5 INS 5 EMP 5

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Botanist 3, Teratology 2, Tracker 1

EQUIPMENT: Staff, various herbs

her friends). The predators are helpful as a shield against enemies entering the complex.

- There are vaults below, but they are not safe. Do not go down there.
- Well, if you must go down, you better watch out for the diamond dogs. Why are they called that? You will see.
- She knows of no sphere, but she does recall Khar tales about a human coming from the stars centuries ago.

Leilani asks the Explorers if others are coming. Are they followed? She fears that the sanctuary might be threatened by the arrival of the Explorers and anyone following. If so, there is no time to waste. She has to prepare the defense of the vault.



EVENT

MEETING THE KHAR SERVITORS

As the Explorers investigate the east tower, they may come into contact with the Khar servitors, a smaller and more intelligent variant of the Khar predators. Depending on the interaction, a lot of different outcomes are possible.

The Khar servitors will react by trying to communicate with the Explorers using sounds and their flashing chest crystals, and then wait to see what happens. They will defend themselves if attacked (number of Explorers + D3 Khar servitors). If defeated, they will flee and take cover in their honeycombs.

To communicate with the Khar servitors, the Explorers may use their **LOGIC**, **INSIGHT**, and **EMPATHY** attributes

and appropriate talents. They can communicate with Birds (see below). Examples of messages that can be conveyed are:

- “We are friends.”
- “We seek shelter.”
- “We are searching for a sphere.”

The servitors can answer using signs, their murals, and the “artifacts” they have collected. However, they can not say where the Seceder scout went.

The “artifacts” they have collected from the Seceder scout Vasilia are:

- A name patch with the text “Vasilia”
- An old heirloom pistol (broken Vulcan pistol, page 93)
- Cannisters (empty) with the *Nadir* logo on them

The murals are etched on a flat wall in the nest, depicting figures with tails and spears (the servitors) and a single figure with what looks to be a rifle defending the servitors against large Khar predators. The servitors become reverent when they show the explorers this and make a sound resembling “vsslliss”.

KHAR SERVITORS

The Khar servitors represent the final stage of Khar evolution, an attempt by the Builders to repurpose the species into a compliant caste on Astophoris. As such, they have lost some abilities, such as the crystal scales, but gained a voice box and higher intelligence, including foreclaws able to handle tools. They walk more erect than the hunter Khar and have a more petite overall physique, like the Khar; they breed through parthenogenesis. Gardener-associated Explorers may notice the absence of eggs in their quarters.

The Khar servitors have a language using sounds that range from clicking to more human-sounding speech. They also have their chest plate, which still has crystal scales and can change color. Some individuals even project rudimentary glyphs.

They can communicate with Birds as they were primed to take orders and understand constructs on a deeper level. They can also understand some glyphs, specifically the Nyx glyph, which they use to protect their shelter from the wild Khar.

The saurians are not creatures and are handled like adversaries and NPCs. They come in two forms: Guards and Archers.

ABILITY

- **Camouflage:** Khar Servitors who wish to stay hidden are hard to spot. When activating this ability, they get +3 in opposed rolls to stay hidden.

ARCHER KHAR SERVITORS

STR 4 **AGL** 6 **LOG** 2 **PER** 6 **INS** 3 **EMP** 3

HEALTH: 12 **HOPE:** 5

TALENTS: Bowman 1, Pugilist 3, Tough 2
Extendable claws: +1, damage 2, crit 4
Scaled skin: Armor 1

EQUIPMENT: Bow (+2, damage 2, crit 4, Short/Medium range), sack, ropes made from vines

GUARD KHAR SERVITORS

STR 6 **AGL** 4 **LOG** 2 **PER** 6 **INS** 3 **EMP** 3

HEALTH: 13 **HOPE:** 5

TALENTS: Blade Fighter 3, Pugilist 2, Tough 3
Extendable claws: +1, damage 2, crit 4
Scaled skin: Armor 2

EQUIPMENT: Spear

E THE BRIDGE

A bridge without any ledges, like the bottom part of a hexagonal corridor, leads across the gulf between the towers.

A single guard Khar servitor protects it, and the Nyx Kaphra glyph is scribbled all over the visible areas.

F THE BLIGHT ROSE

Indigo frost covers the ground approaching a large opening in the rubble-strewn floor of the chamber.

- Lilac fronds, weakly glowing, rise from the shaft and its perimeter.
- Dark mauve barnacles build mounds between patches of violet ice and thick tubular roots, snaking out from the shaft.

If the Explorers come within a few meters of the Blight Rose, they are subject to a Blight attack with 8 base dice, base Blight 1.

The shaft leading down to the Crystal Vault (page 113) and the Hexa Reactor is overgrown with lilac, indigo frost, barnacles, and Blight vines. To access the opening from the Laboratory Vault, the Explorers have to pass through a high Blight level area (see Laboratory Vault GM map, page 107).

Search:

- Roll **INSIGHT** (Bird-Handler) with the Bird to realize the high levels of Blight. The Bird will react regardless of what the Explorers do.
- A carcass of a hunter Khar lies amid the tubular roots that tie a knot around the body.
- Roll **LOGIC** (Archaeology) to understand that there should be auxiliary shafts along the main shaft that could be accessible without as much exposure to the Blight. Roll **PERCEPTION** (Archaeology or Miner) to find an auxiliary shaft in the rubble.
- The Burrower role will realize it is possible to burrow down to the shaft. Roll **STRENGTH** (Miner) with digging equipment, to secure a way down the main shaft.

THE LOWER VAULTS

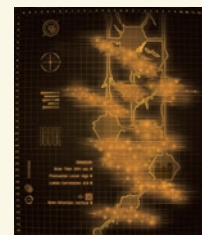
To find the Singularity Sphere, the Explorers will eventually need to descend into the Lower Vaults of the Shulhak Complex. They can use any vertical shafts in the City Vault or the Laboratory Vault as described in those sections.

CONTINUING THE DELVE

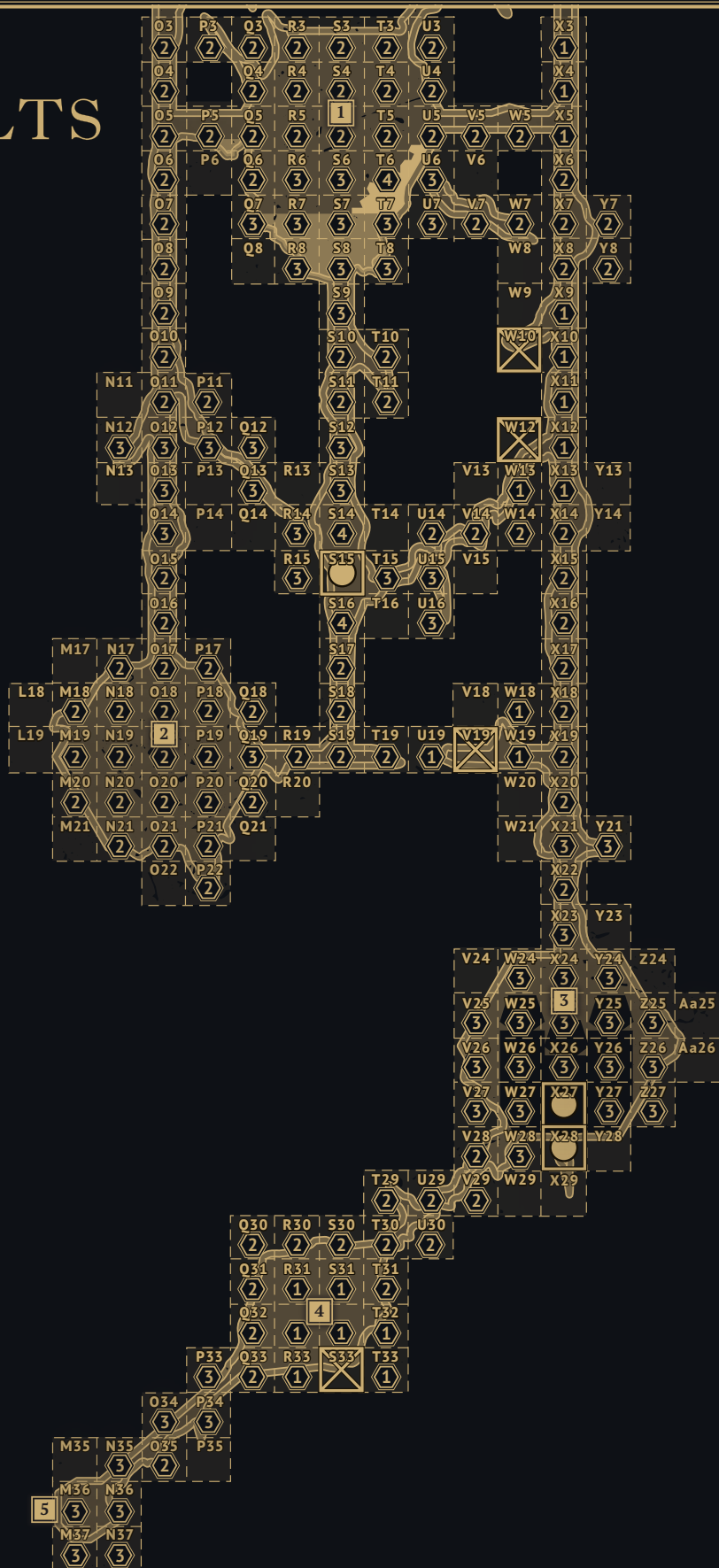
To see the Lower Vaults, the Explorers have to perform a second deep scan. This can be done many times, but to see to the bottom of the vault it has to be done at the level of the Crystal Vault. When the Explorers have done this, **give them Handout**

#10: Scan Map Lower Vaults. The scan should reveal the following (make sure the players understand this):

- They should realize that they might have to set up another delve camp in one of the chambers, and might have to do supply runs.
- The tunnels to and from #2 The Drowned Vault are flooded and diving gear might be helpful (page 101).
- They should be informed that the map shows rubble in #1 The Crystal Vault and tower-like structures in #3 The Generator Vault.



THE LOWER VAULTS



ONE
ZONE



= BLIGHT LEVEL

= BLIGHT OASIS

= BLIGHT CORE

- THE CRYSTAL VAULT
- THE DROWNED VAULT
- THE GENERATOR VAULT
- THE MONOLITH VAULT
- THE PORTAL VAULT

ENVIRONMENT IN THE LOWER VAULTS

The crystal halls of the Lower Vaults are devoid of the jungle and flora of the Upper Vaults. Instead, these vaults are covered in Blight seeded by the Vaultbreaker Titan that once passed through here, before settling in its watery grave (page 101). The Blight comes in all its forms, from dust to frost and ice, as well as ivy and root-like protrusions, snaking across walls, ceilings, and floors.

All structures constructed by the Builders follow the honeycomb architecture, similar to the towers in the Upper Vaults. Most tunnels have no sound or light except for the weak glittering of ice and frost in the Explorers' lanterns.

SETTING THE MOOD

A feeling of abandonment and emptiness haunts the Lower Vaults. These deep chambers, once the heart of the Builders' work here, now lie empty and abandoned. The Blight has seeped into every surface, frosting walls in violet crystal growths that hum faintly when passed, as if reacting to movement. The light of the Explorers' lanterns scatters strangely through the crystal, bending shadows in ways that feel wrong. While the Upper Vaults teem with life, these halls seem unnaturally still. The air is dry and cold, and footsteps echo in all directions, creating confusion.

BALANCING THE GLYPH ENGINE

By activating broken glyphs, the Explorers can restore part of the balance of the Glyph Engine in the complex. Count every glyph they restore or activate as one balancing factor. The exception is the rift generators in the Generator Vault; here, it counts as a balancing factor for each glyph the Explorers deactivate. Remember, broken glyphs have no color, inactive ones glow faintly purple, and active ones in bright white. The number of balancing factors matters in #5 The Portal Vault.

HAZARDS IN THE LOWER VAULTS

It is possible to use the generic hazards from the Core Rules (page 212) and add these extra hazards that reflect the deeper vaults. Start measuring the distance from the entrance to the City Vault or Laboratory Chamber shafts.

1. THE CRYSTAL VAULT

A vast vault opens up ahead, but it seems wrong. Broken.

- A **huge rift** rips through from floor to ceiling, as if a giant colossus has passed through the cavern, breaking everything in its path.
- **Crystal-encrusted rubble** covers the floor, hinting at a massive structure that once stood here.
- A **small lake lies in the middle** of the cavern, its water purple in the weak light of the vault.

Once the core of the Shulhak Vaults, this chamber held the triadic glyph engine that balanced Nefelek, Eanu, and Nyx, stabilizing the dimensional gate and containing entropic forces. When the Vaultbreaker Titan tore through, it shattered the mechanism and seeded the vault with Blight. Now, the chamber is broken and hollow, its structures reduced to crystal-encased rubble. A stagnant lake gleams at its center, overgrown with every form of Blight: frost, spires, and creeping tendrils.

Blight attack

Entering the Crystal Vault exposes the Explorers to a Blight attack with 8 base dice (base Blight 1).

Due to its size, it takes two stretches to search the Crystal Vault. This location is considered a Blight Core (page 208 of the Core Rules) and therefore unsuitable to set up camp.

Search:

- A successful **LOGIC** (Archaeology) roll tells the Explorers that something huge burrowed through the chamber at an angle, continuing upward and to the west. It is the path of the Vaultbreaker Titan that can be found in The Flooded Vault (page 101).
- The rubble looks like the ruin of a pyramid, shattered into thousands of pieces. The giant stone blocks contain parts of huge glyphs that have been superimposed on this structure. Spending an additional stretch reveals that each side had one large glyph. These were: Nefelek, a major glyph, and two Kaphra glyphs: Eanu and Nyx. They are all broken and inactive.
- A pale purple glow pulses faintly from beneath a sheet of Blight-ice. If examined, the Explorers see a glyph glowing weakly purple. If the ice is removed by a successful **STRENGTH** (Ruin Delver) roll, the glyph is activated and starts shining with a bright white light. Upon seeing it, roll for **INSIGHT** (Glyph Scholar).

DELVE HAZARDS IN THE LOWER VAULTS

Use these unique hazards instead of rolling up a random hazard on the standard table (Core Rules, page 212).

DISTANCE* HAZARD	EFFECT
1–12 Fractured Tunnels: The way ahead is broken, not straight like the deep scan shows. Small rifts and fractures extend in all directions.	DELVER Roll LOGIC Fail: Lose 3 supply
1–12 Sinus Tones: Brittle sounds of breaking crystals overwhelm you as they steadily reach a tremendous crescendo.	SCOUT Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Suffer an attack with 8 base dice (base damage 3, crit 5)
1–12 Cutting Crystals: Jagged lilac crystal formations jut like blades along the passage, sharp enough to shear through gear. As the Explorer squeezes through, ropes snap and pouches tear open.	BURROWER Roll AGILITY Fail: Lose 3 supply
12–16 Brittle Stone: The hard stone crumbles under your step as if made of plaster. Strange crystal tracks indicate that something has wandered here before you.	GUARD Roll LOGIC Fail: Become Confused
12–16 Strange Substance: The walls have changed – no longer stone but another rigid but elastic substance resembling tough skin, as if alive.	ARCHAEOLOGIST Roll STRENGTH Fail: Suffer 2 Blight
12–16 Diamond Hail: The ceiling is covered in white diamond-like Blight ice. Small pieces drop at every little sound until a chain reaction lets loose the whole lot in a hail of ice.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Suffer a Blight attack with 10 base dice (base Blight 3)

*Distance from Upper Vaults

If the Explorer fails, suffer D3 despair as the Explorer is filled with the feeling of staring straight into a void. If activated, the Eanu glyph counts as one balancing factor for stabilizing the Glyph Engine.

- The glyph can be identified with a successful roll for **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) as the Eanu glyph (see sidebar).

EVENT

CRACKS IN THE CRYSTAL

Something stirs in the crystal walls of the Vault - something living. Let one Explorer hear a faint cracking sound somewhere in the vicinity. Then describe how it seems as if the crystal walls come alive before them. Two

THE EANU GLYPH

Eanu (meaning tear through, open up, or create a hole) is a Kaphra glyph designed by the Builders to channel and direct entropic force. Where Nefelek broke the rules of space and time, Eanu shaped that rupture, allowing it to be aimed, focused, and usable in controlled applications such as the dimensional gate at the heart of the Shulhak Vaults. It acted as the “blade” of the triad, slicing through reality and directing energy flows. An active Eanu glyph disrupts constructs (including Birds), causing them always to act last in combat and rendering them unable to use any glyph-related signature attacks during that time.

Shatterlings emerge from the crystal: perfect predators born of diamond and glass. The clickety sound of their cold limbs echoes through the cavern as they pounce to attack the Explorers.

When the glyph engine collapsed, it let loose chaotic forces that tore through the complex. The dimensional gate was destabilized, and during that time, something slipped through. The Khar call them Shatterlings, to the Red Witch, they are Diamond Dogs.

DIAMOND DOGS

The Blight creature has a large canine body of pure white crystal, covered with moving facets, much like the crystal scales of the Khar. Their legs taper off into pointy, sharp spikes, and the head has a rim of spikes where the head meets the torso. When they move, they make a sound like breaking glass. The creatures wander alone or in pairs through the Lower Vaults, attacking any creatures or constructs they encounter.

FEROCITY: 2 **HEALTH:** 20 **ARMOR:** 2 (8 against lumin weapons)

DIAMOND DOGS SIGNATURE ATTACKS

1. **Blight Cone:** The creature spews motes of Blight flakes at an enemy up to Medium range, dealing 9 base dice (base Blight 2).
2. **Piercing Ram:** The diamond creature surges ahead, ramming an ill-fated victim in short range, dealing 12 base dice (base damage 3, crit 5) to them.
3. **Crystal Shrapnel:** The creature twists violently, shedding razor-sharp crystal shards in all directions, hitting all in short range with 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3).
4. **Impaling Slash:** The creature slashes with its crystal-line legs at an enemy, impaling them with 9 base dice (base damage 2, crit 2)
5. **Diamond Spear:** The crystal creature flicks its tail, launching a jagged shard like a spear. It arcs through the air and strikes a target within Long range, rolling 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3).
6. **Blinding Reflection:** The crystal hide of the creature starts to brighten and scintillate, creating a blinding flash, dealing 9 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4) to all in the same zone. Anybody who is hit also becomes Distracted.

2. THE DROWNED VAULT

A vast, submerged chamber. The water is cold and still, its depths cloaked in murky violet light.

- **Three massive, shattered pillars** lie on the vault floor, destroyed by some powerful force.
- **The silt around them swirls**, as if something long and elongated moves through the drowned ruins, circling slowly in the dark.

This vault once housed the Nyx stabilizing generators used to balance the energy from the Eanu rift generators in #3 The Generator Vault. When the Vaultbreaker Titan broke through the complex, it damaged the Nyx generators, and the vault was flooded and completely submerged.

The Explorers will need to acquire diving gear or adapt their delve suits to swim in the vault for extended periods (see page 101).

Search:

- **The Khar Serpent:** The elongated shape is a Blight-warped Khar (see Event: *Khar Serpent Attacks!*).
- The middle pillar holds an almost intact Nyx glyph. A successful **PERCEPTION** (Investigate) roll tells the Explorers that the missing piece needed to complete the glyph lies in the rubble nearby. If that piece is added to the broken pillar, the Nyx glyph is activated and starts glowing faintly. The Explorers must roll **INSIGHT** (Glyph Scholar) to resist its entropic effect or suffer 3 despair, mitigated by **EMPATHY** (see the Nyx Kaphra Glyph, page 104).
- There is a Control Stone in the rubble, a major artifact that can activate or deactivate glyphs in the complex. Read more about this artifact in the Core Rules on page 264. The Nyx glyph is etched on one side, and the other, the Eanu glyph. That means that it can be used on either of those.

If the Nyx glyph is activated in this vault, it counts as one balancing factor towards stabilizing the Glyph Engine.

EVENT

KHAR SERPENT ATTACKS!

A Blight-warped Khar has been making the submerged parts of the Maw its realm. It swims through the tunnels between the City Vault, the Drowned Vault, and the Crystal Vault – occasionally attacking Khar predators, Shatterlings, or anything

moving. But most of the time, it lies dormant on the vault floor, siphoning off entropic energy from the unbalanced Glyph Engine. If the Nyx glyph is activated in the vault, the serpent breaks off its attack and retreats into the shadows.

KHAR SERPENT

A large segmented Blight creature, held together by black crystalline membranes. The individual body segments resemble the Khar crystal hide, but are permanently dark and non-fluorescent. Its chisel-shaped head holds rows of dark bead-like eyes along a long serrated jaw. It swims through the water in an undulating fashion but can also jump out of the water and slither short distances on land.

FEROCITY: 2 **HEALTH:** 18 **ARMOR:** 7

STRENGTH 8 **AGILITY** 8 **PERCEPTION** 3

KHAR SERPENT SIGNATURE ATTACKS

1. **Tail Rip:** The serpent swipes its tail against an Explorer within Short range, dealing 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4) to the victim. If hit, the victim is pushed a zone away.
2. **Ingurgitate:** The serpent swallows an Explorer, suit and all. The attack deals 10 base dice (base damage 1, crit 4). If hit, the victim is swallowed and suffers 1 additional damage every round inside the serpent. It is possible to attack the creature from the inside. The victim can escape once the Khar is dead.
3. **Serrated Chomp:** The Khar serpent chomps down on an Explorer, cutting through its suit with 9 base dice (base damage 3, crit 4).
4. **Dragging Down:** The creature drags an Explorer into the deep. Make an opposed **STRENGTH** roll. If the serpent wins, it drags the victim away two zones, fleeing the combat with its prize. The Explorer is Grappled (Core Rules, page 62). If not in a suit, the victim starts drowning (Core Rules, page 73).
5. **Ramming Head:** The serpent rams a victim with all its might, dealing 13 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).
6. **Entropy Surge:** The Blight creature unleashes its stored entropic energy, hitting all Explorers within short range, dealing 8 base dice (base Blight 2). If hit, one of the victim's equipment ceases to function (but can be repaired).

3. THE GENERATOR VAULT

Three great pillars rise towards the ceiling of the chamber. Their surfaces are etched with faintly glowing glyphs.

- **Lightning and energy crackle** between the pillars, releasing bursts of static that echo like distant thunder.
- **Bolts lash out** and arc across the chamber, searing into the walls and floor.
- **The air shimmers** with heat and pressure.

These pillars are rift generators dedicated to the Eanu glyph, constructed to focus the energies powered by the Glyph Engine. Now, unstable energies crackle and surge; the generators react to every step, flickering erratically and lashing out seemingly randomly.

If the Explorers project a Nyx glyph in front of a generator, its Eanu glyph will change color to purple, and the electrical surges will decrease in intensity. This counts as a balancing factor towards stabilizing the Glyph Engine. To be able to do that, an Explorer will have to succeed with an **AGILITY** roll, followed by a successful **LOGIC** roll. The Explorer is hit by lightning for each failed roll, suffering an attack with 8 base dice, damage 1. This process has to be repeated for every generator to deactivate all three.

Search:

- The glyphs on the pillars are Eanu, and they glow bright white.
- Roll for **LOGIC** (Archaeology or Electro-Specialist) to understand that the pillars are some kind of energy conductors. They are clearly unstable and are not working as intended.
- A small tunnel leads to the Monolith Vault.
- The petrified and dried remains of a Navigator can be found curled into the fetal position against the southern wall. The corpse clutches a worn diary. **Give the players Handout #11: The Navigator Diary.**

Handout #11: The Navigator Diary

4. THE MONOLITH VAULT

An ellipsoid chamber stretches ahead, its curved walls smooth and symmetrical.

- **Rectangular monoliths** rise from the floor, walls, and ceiling, forming a strange maze.

- ❖ **Debris, grit, and gravel dance** in the air, seemingly unaffected by gravity.
- ❖ **A lone figure stands hunched** and motionless in the center of the chamber.

The vault has zero gravity, making everything float or rotate in place. As the Explorers enter, they must succeed with an **AGILITY** (Zero-G Training) roll to avoid drifting away.

The monoliths once housed the minds of the Builders who constructed the Shulhak Vaults and the Nefelek Engine. They are long since gone.

In the middle of the room, a lone Sarcophagus Golem stands guard, left behind by its creators millennia ago. Made of ceramic and metal and twice the size of a human, it resembles a sad and decommissioned robot. It is turned towards the tunnel to the Portal Vault, as if it waits for its masters to return. The construct will not react to the Explorers; however, if they project the Nyx glyph in its field of vision, it will deactivate the zero-g field and stop the shrapnel storm.

Search:

- ❖ The debris seems to move and rotate, as if manipulated by some unseen force. A successful **PERCEPTION** roll tells the Explorers that the movements intensify when the Explorers enter into the vault.
- ❖ To navigate the vault without disturbing the debris, each Explorer must succeed with an **INSIGHT** roll followed by a successful **AGILITY** roll. Those who succeed manage to reach the other end without incident. Those who fail trigger the Event: *Shrapnel Storm*.
- ❖ Shards are floating among the debris. Each Explorer can collect D6 shards if they elect to spend an additional stretch doing so.

EVENT

SHRAPNEL STORM

If disturbed by the Explorers moving through the vault, the floating fragments will suddenly start moving in strange paths through the air, gaining acceleration and pushing more fragments into new paths. Soon, a storm rages through the cavern, striking everyone inside. In the first round, the shrapnel hits every Explorer with 12 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4). The round after that it strikes again, but this time with 6 base dice, and then stops as suddenly as it started. It is possible to mitigate the damage by rolling **AGILITY**, where each  decreases the damage.

5. THE PORTAL VAULT

A large violet ice-covered room, the walls shining and sparkling as the lantern's light hits the many facets of the Blight ice.

- A **golden, sharp-angled dodecahedron** floats in the center of the room.
- It **rotates around its axis** as glyphs flash rapidly on its sides.
- A **void shimmers** in front of it, like a hole in reality. It seems to flicker and change from sphere to void, to a flower-covered cave – all in seconds.
- A **human figure in an exo suit sits slumped** against the wall, facing the void, but behind the dodecahedron. The spectacle is mirrored in its helmet visor.

The final chamber, at the depth of the vault, contains the rift opening mechanism, the Nefelek Hedron, shaped as a dodecahedron. It is tirelessly working to open a portal to the Pale Halls.

Entering the room leads to a Blight attack with 8 base dice (base Blight 3).

Search:

- The human in the exo suit is the remains of the Seceder scout Vasilia.
- The glyphs flashing on the Nefelek Hedron are the triad of the Glyph Engine: Nyx, Eanu, and Nefelek.
- Roll **LOGIC** to realize that the dodecahedron is some kind of device trying to open a portal. It does not seem to be working.

EVENT

TALKING TO THE GHOST

Suddenly, the dodecahedron stops spinning and tilts toward the Explorers. What looks like a crude imitation of a human female face is projected on its sides. A dozen faces stare at the Explorers, their lips moving in unison. But there is no sound.

- The Explorer with the Bird may roll **INSIGHT** to communicate with the ghost. If the roll fails, the rest of the Explorers may try. If all fail, the ghost will attack in frustration.

The communication will take the form of images in the minds of the Explorers and convey the following information:

MEMORY GHOST

The memory ghost is a cross between Builder simulacra, artifact, and Blight-corrupted machine. Its shell is shaped like a dodecahedron with angular facets, which Builders used in this location. It used to be mother-of-pearl white but has been overgrown by the Blight, turning it into a vivid violet color. The gravity processors within the shell have degenerated, leading to a tilt and low rotation of the shell.

Just as in the Memory Tomb, the device has encased part of the scout Vasilia's intellect, leading to its behavior, permanently trying to open portals to the Pale Halls. It is possible to interact with the ghost, see Event: *Talking to the Ghost*.

FEROCITY: 3 HEALTH: 24 ARMOR: 6

AGILITY 3 PERCEPTION 3

ABILITY

☉ **Vulnerability:** Takes double damage from energy weapons and fire.

- ☉ I am (was) Vasilia.
- ☉ I came from *Nadir*. Are you from there?
- ☉ What are you?
- ☉ I am not sure where I am.
- ☉ I think I am broken.
- ☉ Have you seen the void? I can show you.

If the Explorers have collected at least three balancing factors by activating (or, in the case of the Generator Vault, deactivating) glyphs, the ghost will recognize this:

- ☉ You have reinstated the balance. Thank you.

THE NEFELEK HEDRON

The Nefelek Device is a major artifact. When the energy is siphoned off the giant dodecahedron in the room, it will fall to the ground, shrink, and revert to a fist-sized dodecahedron. It needs to be decontaminated before use. If not, the Explorer carrying it will suffer 1 Blight every stretch. When decontaminated, it will become pure white, and slowly, almost imperceptibly, change its shape, though it always keeps its twelve facets. When understanding the artifact, it can project glyphs, including Kaphra glyphs. Effects vary depending on the glyph (pages 104, 113, 114). The Nefelek Hedron can also project entropy onto a victim, dealing 8 base dice (base damage 3, crit 4).

MEMORY GHOST SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- 1. Memory Void:** The Ghost projects a black void into the mind of an Explorer in short range who becomes Confused and has to succeed with an **INSIGHT** roll or lose their next action.
- 2. Energy Spike:** The Builder Ghost sends pure violet energy at an Explorer within Medium range, dealing 10 base dice (base damage 3, crit 4).
- 3. Penetrating Rift:** The Ghost manipulates rift glyphs, ripping reality apart inside an Explorer, dealing internal damage with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 2), no armor.
- 4. Eternal Sorrow:** Manipulating mind waves, the Ghost sends thoughts of sorrow and desolation into the mind of one victim within Short range. The victim suffers 5 despair, mitigated by **EMPATHY**, and falls prone.
- 5. Light Sphere:** Overloading its gravitational generators, the Ghost creates a bright sphere of light and heat, working like an explosive with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4), hitting all Explorers in the same zone (see Explosives, Core Rules, page 71).
- 6. Displacing Portal:** The Ghost opens a weak space displacement portal, sending an Explorer away D3 zones (out of the Portal Vault to the adjacent tunnel), throwing the victim into the wall and dealing 8 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) and making the victim Confused.

VASILIA'S FATE

Vasilia managed what was almost impossible. She explored the Upper Vaults, made friends with the Khar servitors and succeeded with descending into the Lower Vaults without losing herself to the Blight or the dangers of the unstable Glyph Engine. But all this took a toll on her body and her mind. When she finally arrived to the Portal Vault she was overcome by exhaustion and strain and very weak. She found the Nefelek Hedron and managed to activate it, but she was careless, and the artifact surged, seeking to assimilate her mind. Vasilia collapsed against the wall and lost unconsciousness and eventually died. But parts of her mind lived on in the artifact.

The wielder must roll **INSIGHT** and spend 2 Hope to use the artifact. Using the Nefelek Hedron has side effects: suffering D3 Blight with every use, and also slowly, over

time, imprinting parts of Vasilia's mind and personality into the user. She is very argumentative, stubborn, and hopelessly out of date.

AFTERMATH

Finding the Singularity Sphere in the hands of the dead scout concludes the mission. The Explorers are deep within the Maw, and the return could be perilous. What will the Explorers decide to do with the Nefelek Hedron and its power to generate entropic energy? Will they inform the Guilds about the Khar servitors – a new, possibly intelligent species?

The powers in Ship City will bury this information, and the three Guilds will probably try to bring specimens for study (if the Explorers don't) – at least to the Arkan Council.

When the Explorers finally reach the surface again, the jungle may have sown complications at the landing site:

- **Bogged Down:** The shuttle has sunk into the mud and is stuck. It must be dug out by the Explorers or with help from orbit or illegal colonists.
- **Overrun by Khar Predators:** A pack of Khar predators has made a nest under the shuttle.
- **Fettering Vines:** The shuttle has been shackled by vines to the ground. Some have even grown into the interior or engine, damaging it.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

The Explorers could contact the Arkan Council regarding the Khar, leading to a hunt to secure other specimens or the servitors. The Gardeners of Astophoris

might contact the Explorers as they leave the delve, trying to get supplies or send messages to their allies in Ship City.

Handout #11: The Navigator Diary

...the servitors, the Khar, were their shield — but abandoned when the Builders' courage failed. The servitors remember.. they will not forgive us for walking their masters' path.

...the glyphs are not prayers, nor warnings. They are blueprints of escape. It is a giant engine.

...The Titan destroyed the balance! The vault is falling apart...

...we mistook this place for a fortress. It is a mausoleum. A gate.

...Only I remain. I have seen the Nefeleke Engine burn in violet light. I will not live to see the gate open, if I could only make it work again...



CHAPTER

6

AURIGA THE ETERNAL STORM



Auriga is fraught with danger and not viable from a risk-profit point of view. I suggest we focus our mining operations on the Zenobia Arm instead. Much better!

VERGIL HARAMUT, MINING COMBINE SURVEYIST

Auriga lies at the distant terminus of the Hamurabi Arm, where Slipstream tributaries from across the arm converge into a chaotic, delta-like tangle. The system is a boiling cauldron of superheated gases and plasma storms, making it highly dangerous to traverse. Those who brave it do so for the rare gases and anomalous ores hidden within the storms.

ARRIVING IN AURIGA

Only the stoutest crews look forward to arriving in Auriga. The constant plasma storms make navigating the system a high-risk venture. A wise captain makes haste to enter the Safe Passage Funnel to secure a locked orbit behind the gas giant Sabitum. Those who make it find opportunity waiting – harvesters and Ore Breakers crowd the sheltered zone, their holds full and ready for trade whenever a Greatship arrives.

SENSOR OPERATIONS

Sensors and scans will go haywire when a ship exits the Slipstream due to the massive plasma storms, wreaking havoc on all wavelengths. A few powerful signals will punch through:

- **The Nirgal Signal:** Almost lost in the system's background noise is a faint signal, appearing to orbit the gas giant Sabitum – its path so tight it seems to skim the edge of the atmosphere. Navigational charts and cartographic systems assign the signal's origin to the small moon Nirgal-B.
- **Umbra Funnel Beacon:** “Welcome to Auriga. Please follow this signal for your safety.” The only strong signal in the system is a navigational beacon and welcoming message leading arriving ships to the safety of the Umbra Funnel and the small fleet of ships sheltering there.
- **False Lighthouse Signal:** A fluctuating signal using old navigational protocols emanates from positions close to the Wayward Delta, promising port pilot

services to the Umbra Funnel. If the signal is followed, the Cruiser will be ambushed by Delta Wreckers. See the travel event Wreckers Abound for more information.

HARVEST HOME

Auriga's only real trading hub lies within the Umbra Funnel, where affiliated sky miners and a smattering of ships eke out their existence on herded rocks in the shadow of Sabitum. Captain Seera Shamoun runs the colony from the permanently docked harvester *Girham's Gambit*, along with its network of tunnels and ramshackle shacks. Harvest Home is the only place to trade and barter for goods, ore, gases, and services. A few small ships offer service docks, but they can manage only hull repairs and mining equipment, not complete Greatship upgrades.

TRAVEL IN AURIGA

Travel in Auriga is fraught with dangers, and they're almost all related to the severe plasma storms in the system. Additionally, small groups of wreckers hide on the system rim, close to the Slipstream, and have recently attacked Greatships. They pose a serious threat to the smaller Slipstream Cruisers.

RUMORS IN AURIGA

- "Did you hear – the ore breaker Meftal just left for the Trojan Icebergs with an algebraist in tow. You know the fella who'd been poring over old maps since he was left by the Tifret a few months ago. Probably won't come back."
- "Captain Ferveter is looking for a new chief miner. She's looking to return to the Lost Warriors Cluster and find the ovium trail '81. It's a damn folly is what it is, they won't stand a chance out there!"
- "That rascal Yusi told me that those wreckers in the Delta have found something big. Apparently, they need a huge ship to tow that thing safely."

THE MAKESHIFT CONVOY

The first mate of the ship collective of *Kolander*, an old gas harvester, contacts the Explorers. She proposes a joint venture with four more ships in the system to reach the Lost Warriors Cluster for harvesting, promising riches, and a cargo of ovanium vapor. She asks if the Explorers can help, or if not, she asks to send an envoy with them to Ship City or the waystation to negotiate with the Mining Combine.

THE STRANDED CORIOLITE

When the Explorers visit Harvest Home and the harvester *Girham's Gambit*, they will be approached by the lone Coriolite Akanthem mir-Aalad, asking for a berth on the *Akhandar*. He has had enough of the Umbra Funnel and was hoping to visit the ruin fields of Nirgal, but no one will take him there, and his heirloom ship, the *Kevasar Courier*, is broken and can't be serviced.

WRECKERS ABOUND

Suddenly, a mass of small vessels approaches the ship. They signal that they are harvesters and gas trawlers with ore and goods to sell, but won't respond to returning hails or signals. They will try to land or dock on the outside of the Slipstream Cruiser, but not board. Less than a handful of small ships and shuttles succeed, and they start cutting off hull plating and external electronics. What will the Explorers do?

PHENOMENA AND THREATS

The nebula, which is the Auriga system, and all its manifestations are the real dangers of the system.

PLASMA SPEAR

A superheated meteoroid melts to a spear of plasma, hitting the *Akhandar* or a shuttle leaving the cruiser, with devastating effect.

- **Effect:** Use the rules for Fire Meteoroids in the Core Rules, page 239, but increase the damage to D6+2 for a Greatship or 10 base dice (base damage 4, crit 4) to a shuttle.

CAULDRON OF FIRE

Suddenly, the alarms blast to life, signaling that the ship is heading straight into a pocket of a Cauldron of Fire!

- **Effect:** The Greatship suffers D6+2 Hull points of damage, and D3 random features get damaged.

Use these to inspire intrigue, conflict, and adventure.

A collective was created from harvester crews previously employed by the Auriga Consortium. The Free Harvesters broke off and declared autonomy in 175 and have since created Harvest Home, a safe haven and the most important trade hub in the storm-stricken system. Led by the former Consortium commander Seera Shamoun, the Free Harvesters have become masters of using their small, nimble craft to get to gas pockets more quickly than the lumbering Consortium extractors.

Once a commander within the Auriga Consortium, Seera Shamoun now captains the *Girham's Gambit* and leads the Free Harvesters, a role she took after turning her back on the Combine's failures. For her, building a future in Auriga isn't just survival – it's redemption. Taciturn and uncompromising, she rules Harvest Home with the aid of a trusted council of ship officers.

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 10

EQUIPMENT: An heirloom dura blade and a small pipe to smoke tabak

A subsidiary of the Mining Combine, the Auriga Consortium used to dominate the ovium extraction business in the system but has seen its dominance dwindle since the Free Harvesters organized themselves under the leadership of Captain Shamoun. The Consortium operates out of the massive Gas Extraction Rig 14 situated some way out in the Umbra Funnel. This refinery houses a small fleet of harvester ships that mine the gas cloud as soon as the storms abate. The current head of operations is Soleman Dirz, a rigid and calculating extraction specialist determined to restore the Consortium's grip on the system – by negotiation if possible, or force if necessary.

Soleman Dirz is the current administrator overseeing Rig 14. A career man loyal to the Combine, Dirz is methodical, sharp-eyed, and utterly intolerant of inefficiency – or insubordination. He sees the Free Harvesters as thieves and traitors and is not above using underhanded tactics to bring them back in line.

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 7

EQUIPMENT: Lumin pistol

The only mathematicians of the system are the four algebraists and astromanticists of the Navigators Guild. They have taken up residence in Harvest Home in the landing module on Felkanter Row, where they sell their knowledge of astrography and system routes to the miners and harvesters. The only things asked in return are observations and the setting of sensor boys.

The four mathematicians are all dressed in similar frocks, and their voices and mannerisms are the only distinction between them. Of course, they all have their own specialty, but they all involve understanding how Auriga's gas nebula and plasma clouds behave. They sell their knowledge to sponsor their experiments.

HEALTH: 5 HOPE: 9

EQUIPMENT: Various astrometry gear, notebooks, algebraic literature, a home-made computer terminal (+3), an assortment of electronics, and sensor buoys

THE HOWLING CAVERNS

Am I alone, am I, am I? Who is the Other one? I have seen him (in my dreams?). He is me and I am he.

SCRIBBLINGS OF ARTEMON, THE BIRDMAN

The Builder ruins on Nirgal-B were discovered during a previous expedition, marked and left as the plasma storms grew too intense in the system. The Explorers will follow the Sphere-signal down into a slippery ravine

opening into a system of caves, half-drowned in water and Blight crystals. As they survey the lost caves, they will wake a corrupted guardian of the deep.

BACKGROUND

The Ubarra complex on the planet-sized moon of Nirgal-B was built as a final repository for Builders unable to leave the system as the war against the Blight raged. As the collapse continued and desperation increased among the Builders, a cult grew in the complex. The Adherents to U'barra do tok Hefekut – the Brethren of What Comes – overtook the complex. They started transforming the complex to build an artifact that could send a signal back through time itself, to warn their ancestors of the Blight and make sure that they could stop it before it was too late. But the Brethren didn't realize the Blight had already crept into their minds in this time. When they came close to finishing their experiments, the Blight manifestations surged and overturned the tombs' defense systems. Before they could set their plan into motion, the Builders of the Ubarra Complex succumbed to the Blight and perished. The complex lay empty and abandoned by its masters, only the hum of the reactor and the erratic movement of the corrupted defense systems disturbed the deathly silence. And so it continued for millennia until a visitor entered the complex.

Artemon, a Seceder Scout looking for an entrance to the Pale Halls, landed close to the entrance and climbed down. He brought a Garuda companion with him, a find of

a previous ruin that had come to be a vital ally in his search. He had unfortunate timing, as the constant rain and strong winds made the scout's ship slide over the edge, falling into the ravine and becoming heavily damaged beyond repair. Despairing, Artemon sought refuge in a small cave nearby and set out to explore the complex. He did so again and again over the years, unable to escape and increasingly affected by the Blight. Slowly, he and his Garuda started to transform into something else. Bit by bit, they changed – and became one, no longer fully human, no longer fully Bird, but something in between: a hunched, symbiotic form twisted by Blight.

The Birdman wandered the complex, still searching for a way out. Then he found it. He activated the Orb and, in a moment of clarity or desperation, stepped through the portal it opened. But it was not an escape. Time bent around him. He emerged months in the past – confused, disoriented – and found himself already there, still searching. The crossing shattered something in him. His mind splintered, logic unraveling in the folds of paradox. Now there are two Birdmen in the halls – one, confused but still driven by purpose, searching for the Pale Halls and the Other, broken and violent, stalking the ruins with a mind torn by echoes of futures that never came.

ENVIRONMENT

Nirgal-B hides in the magnetic umbrella of Sabitum, protected from Auriga's storms. It is covered in rain clouds and storm systems. The atmosphere has a green tint due to high levels of acidic particles and the ever-present

algae. Rain is perpetual and has shaped the landscape, which is filled with gorges, meandering rapids, and rivers, emptying into large, clear lakes and the turbulent seas covering part of the planet. The mountains and cliffs are rounded

that has spread over the land. The sun gives enough energy, and the power-rich solar storms can lead to a sudden algae blooms that burst across the surface like fireworks. The algae tends to grow into any place it can, including machinery and exo suits.

platforms belonged to the Auriga Consortium and a private crew licensed by the Machinists Guild to look for rare minerals in the gravel dunes of the eastern plains. Survey Teams from the Auriga Consortium might notice the Explorers' shuttle as it lands and close in to investigate. Any expedition events connected to the Machinists Guild can be used as part of The Howling Caverns.

Landing next to the ravine is impossible due to the gravel and mud. The Explorers must disembark and load their rover to approach the ravine and the wreck. The

SETTING THE MOOD

Perpetual rain, dripping water drops, rapids, and swirls of streaming water over the algae-covered stones and cliffs. Green is the all-prevailing color in different tints, from verdigris algae to umbra-green clouds. The irritative and toxic atmosphere gets through filters and sometimes sizzles on the exos. The air feels crisp and cold, and the weak scent of lemon presses through the suit and vehicle filters.

The ground is slick where the algae-covered hard rock is exposed but muddy and treacherous where sand, gravel, and till have accumulated in dips and along slopes.

drive with the rover does not constitute a trek in itself, but the unloading will take time and might lead to events (Core Rules, page 205). When approaching the ravine, they

may roll for **PERCEPTION** (Lookout) to notice tracks in the mud, wriggling serpentine indentations leading towards the wreck, and it may feel like somebody has been there before them.

THE SURFACE RUINS

Eroded walls, covered in thick algae, cling to the moss-green cliffs, like the remains of a long-forgotten puzzle. Inscribed across their surfaces are strange, winding glyphs, with no clear beginning or end. Staring at them too long induces a sense of unease, as if the mind is being drawn into something it can't comprehend. These glyph-covered walls were once misidentified as Shallows, but in truth, they were a Builder defense, meant to confuse orbital scans and shield against the influence of the Blight.

- **Kaphra Glyphs:** Roll for **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) to decrypt or read the glyphs. They seem ornamental and, in some cases, misleading (this is an effect of the Blight). If no  is rolled, the Explorer examining the Glyphs suffers 1 despair due to their mesmerizing effect.

THE UBARRA COMPLEX

The Explorers must climb down to the shipwreck or further down the ravine to enter the ruins proper. As this will be time and resource-consuming, this climb is also part of the delve.

PREPARING THE DELVE

As the planet is covered in clouds, surface features won't be known, but the Explorers will be aware of the rains and acidic content in the clouds. They should be told that extra filters and different tools to repair equipment will be helpful in this environment.

When landing, the Explorers may disembark and take a physical scan of the ground below them, but as this is at a safe landing distance from the ravine, the scan will be inconclusive. There won't be a problem if they bring all the supplies and equipment they need on the rover. As the Explorers reach the surface ruins, they can disembark to investigate the ruins and perform scans.

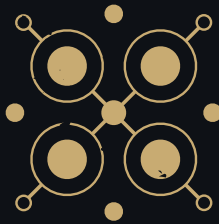
When the deep scan has been performed, the Explorers will be given **Handout #12: Scan Map Ubarra Complex**.

- They should be able to make an approximate plan for the amount of supply needed and change their loadout.
- The total depth to traverse the whole complex is approximately 19 markers, and the scan shows at least eight locations of interest. Remind the Explorers to pack at least double the amount needed to reach their destination.
- The Hideout (page 130) is not shown on the map, but the fissures leading to it are.
- They should be informed that the map shows some sort of distortion around an irregular structure (Monolith City, page 132).

When using the Bird in the complex to scan for Blight, it won't enter #7 The Gate Chamber (page 134) and #5 The Reactor Cave (page 131).



THE UBARRA COMPLEX

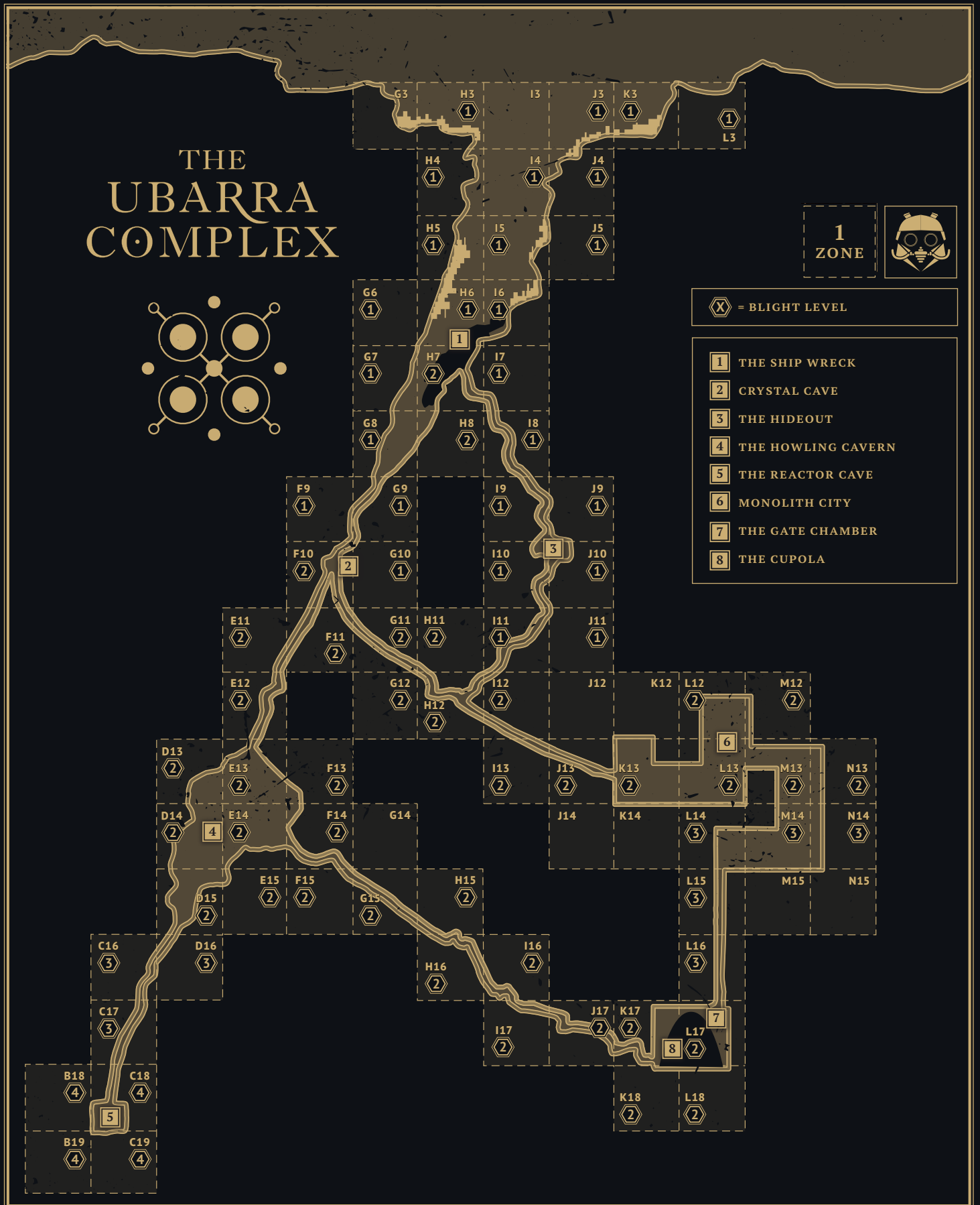


1
ZONE



(X) = BLIGHT LEVEL

- 1** THE SHIP WRECK
- 2** CRYSTAL CAVE
- 3** THE HIDEOUT
- 4** THE HOWLING CAVERN
- 5** THE REACTOR CAVE
- 6** MONOLITH CITY
- 7** THE GATE CHAMBER
- 8** THE CUPOLA



1

THE SHIP WRECK

Long shadows stretch across the chasm, falling over the wreck of a spacecraft frozen in time.

- The hull lies wrecked and half-embedded in the chasm wall, its twisted hull cloaked in thick algae and a delicate crust of crystalline growth.
- The chasm cliffs, stained deep green, are slick with algae and overlaid by a brittle film of viridian crystals that glitter weakly in the torchlight.

The hull of the Seceder scout's ship has its final resting place in the chasm, crushed, stuck, and deformed into the wall of the ravine. It is not salvageable as it is critically damaged, partly dissolved, and dismantled by the Blight.

Search:

Examining the whole ship will take one stretch.

- Examining the ship closer reveals it to be a shuttle of non-Diaspora origin, most likely Slipstream capable. It is perched on the steep ravine wall, as if ready to descend into the abyss below.
- Roll for **PERCEPTION** (Lookout) to notice round holes in the cliff face around the ship (Blight Worms).
- The cover of algae and crystals makes entering the hull difficult. Roll **STRENGTH** (Miner) to enter the wreckage, failure requires an additional stretch to search the ship.
- The ship has two semi-intact locations: the Cockpit and the Hold.
- The emerald disc is missing from the cockpit.
- Roll for **PERCEPTION** (Investigator) in the ship's hold to find a crevice leading into the cliff wall and onto the #3 The Hideout (page 130). The crevice is wide enough to descend into safely.

SETTING THE MOOD

Water is everywhere. It sheets down walls, drips from ceilings, and runs in steady streams through the tunnels, pooling in low places and soaking every surface. The rock beneath is slick and dark, but rarely bare – instead, it's smothered by layers of algae in hues of deep green and rusted gold, clinging like skin to the

stone. The walls are covered in a thin layer of crystal growths, like sickly tumors emerging from the rock itself. The crystals crumble if touched with any force, and cover the ground in the few places where water is absent, leading to an unsettling crunching sound when the Explorers pass.

HAZARDS DURING THE DELVE

In the Ubarra Complex, it is possible to use the generic hazards (Core Rules page 212) and spice them up with these extra hazards.

DISTANCE TO EXIT	HAZARD	EFFECT
1–10	Gravel Avalanche: Water constantly runs along the tunnel's walls, making them slick and slippery. Your pitons and crampons bite into the eroded rock. As you strike the wall with your hammer, a small crack widens, fractures, and, like lightning encased in rock, runs upwards across your comrades' path, dislodging a hail of gravel.	DELVER Roll AGILITY Fail: You or another Explorer is hit by the avalanche, smashing into your suits and destroying a carried item.

HAZARDS DURING THE DELVE, CONTINUED

DISTANCE TO EXIT	HAZARD	EFFECT
6–10	Sudden Rapid: As you trudge along, the ever-present drizzle of moisture from the walls and tunnel roof lies like a mat of white noise. Suddenly, the sound changes from dripping to rushing and bubbling as rivulets start running along your feet, increasing in strength over the slippery floor.	SCOUT Roll PERCEPTION Success: You secure yourselves against the rapidly rushing water. Fail: Suffer 2 damage.
6–10	Whirlpool: The ground you pass is littered with holes and pockets, creating undulating patterns as the water crosses and streams across them, sometimes pooling and disappearing into the deep. As you pass what looks to be a puddle and piled rocks, something comes loose. With a swooping sound, a human-sized whirlpool opens up like a maw ready to swallow you.	BURROWER Roll STRENGTH Fail: The Explorer is sucked down into the whirlpool and gets stuck under the water. The Explorer starts drowning if the visor is open (Core Rules, page 73). It takes 2 extra supply to dislodge the Explorer from the hole in the tunnel floor.
11–15	Blight Glyphs: The tunnels around you seem clean and dry for a change. But they are covered in dark green Glyphs that cling to the walls like moss. They seem to attract you, like there is a message, a story to be told. As your gloved fingers trace the meaning, you hear the crunch of Blight crystals coming loose from the Glyphs.	ARCHAEOLOGIST Roll INSIGHT Fail: The message from the Glyphs warps your mind, sending you careening into thoughts about the future and the possibilities of your choices. Suffer 2 Blight.
11–15	Acid Waterfall: A yellow wall of water bisects your path ahead. Bubbling, fizzing, and leaving pockmarks in the surrounding stone as droplets spread wide around the fall. A cloying smell of citrus, eye-watering through your filters, wafts from the waterfall.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll STRENGTH Fail: Suffer an acid attack with 6 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4). Suits protect.
11–15	Wave Cascade: As you pass a drier part of the tunnels, the water stops running around your feet. Only the occasional drop from the roof reminds you of the wetness and humidity from above. Suddenly, you feel a rumbling in the walls through your suits. It increases to a crescendo as a wall of water, a frothing cascade, comes crashing along the tunnel, engulfing everything in its way. Flee!	ALL EXPLORERS Roll AGILITY Fail: The Explorer is swept away by the wave, downstream to the following Key Location (if within 2 distance markers), and gets bounced off the walls, taking 4 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3). Suits don't protect. The swept-away Explorers are separated from the main party.
16+	Blight Rain: As you traverse deep green puddles of water, the tunnel floor starts to rumble. Small waves, intersecting in patterns across the puddles, grow to surging splashes as the roof lets go of a multitude of droplets. Suddenly, you're standing in a deluge of viridian water aerosol.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll INSIGHT Fail: The Explorers' vision and reality seem to warp in front of them as the Blight-filled aerosol affects them. Suffer 2 Blight.

2

CRYSTAL CAVE

The chasm tapers like the neck of an hourglass, narrowing into a small cave wrapped in algae-green stone.

- **Jade-hued crystals, like a frozen tide of faceted eyes**, blanket the floor and walls.
- **Water runs down from above**, pooling in shallow puddles in eroded hollows of the floor.
- **The torch beams shine through** the crystal crust of the eastern cave wall.

This was the sealed entry to the complex, hidden in the depths of the ravine.

Search:

- Judging by the amount of water coming from above and the relatively shallow pools on the floor, it is apparent that the water seeps through to something below.
- The Explorers can easily break through the crystal crust in the eastern cave wall and enter a smooth tunnel to #6 Monolith City.
- Under the crystal floor of the cave is a tunnel leading straight down. The Explorers need to dig down through the crystals to reach #4 The Howling Cavern by rolling **STRENGTH** (Miner). Each  reduces the amount of supply required to dig from 2 supply at the start. As the opening is reached it works as a whirlpool sucking down unsuspecting explorers. The hazard Whirlpool can be used here. Otherwise each Explorer must roll **STRENGTH** (Force) to avoid getting sucked down the tunnel hitting sharp outcrops below and suffering an attack with 4 base dice, (base damage 1, no crit).

3

THE HIDEOUT

A small grotto opens up from the crevice.

- **A tattered exo suit** sits motionless at the edge of the crevice, its blacked-out visor staring straight ahead.
- **The floor is covered in rubbish**, clothing, old canisters of oxy, opened rations, and rubble.

This small grotto is where the Seceder scout Artemon took refuge, overcome by Blight and slowly merging with his bird as he tried to survive.

Search:

- The exo suit is but a husk, empty and defunct. The insignia of *Nadir* is worn but still discernible on the suit.
- The rubble on the floor is placed in a way similar to a bird's nest, big enough to hold a man.
- Roll **PERCEPTION** (Investigation) if searching the nest to find a black feather.
- Holes similar to those around the ship and the viridian Blight crystals are found in the grotto walls.
- Scribbles on the rock wall are made by what looks to be a sharp object. The Explorers can make out:
 - *Am I alone, am I, am I? Who is the Other one? I have seen him (in my dreams?). He is me and I am he.*
 - *The Egg Needs Energy!*
 - *They sleep in the stones.*
- In the rubble, the Explorers find the emerald disc from the ship. The disc is encrypted, but if analyzed in a terminal, it will reveal that the ship visited the following systems: Ninhulam, Kerfeter's Star, Virgas and Auriga.

4

THE HOWLING CAVERN

A vast cave stretches in all directions, its emptiness an ink black void.

- **A low, mournful howl** rises from the cavern.
- **Water spills from above** in a thin waterfall.
- **The walls are mottled with algae** and jagged patches of crystal, reflecting the torchlight.

This colossal cave is almost three markers deep. It was a natural formation that the builders used for the cooling system of the now-defunct reactor (see #5 The Reactor Cave, page 131). The howl is a natural phenomenon caused by wind shearing through the openings. It increases in volume over time, eventually reaching an unsettling level as the Explorers near the cave's center. Let all Explorers roll **INSIGHT** (Ruin Delver) or suffer 1 despair.

Search:

- A successful roll for **PERCEPTION** lets the Explorers know that rustling sounds come from the walls, the sounds of crystals being crushed. It is as if something moves in there.

BLIGHT WORM

The Blight Worm is a mobile, self-replicating defense system gone awry. When the Blight reached the Ubarra Complex, the machine began to change. Its smooth armor cracked into jagged crystalline plates, now glowing with a sickly jade green hue. The body grew longer, forming a sharp injector tail, and its replication system activated, flooding the complex with swarms of angular replicas. Only the triangular jaw and biting mechanism remained the same.

FEROCITY: 3 (1 the first round as it wakes) **HEALTH:** 23
ARMOR: 6

BLIGHT WORM SIGNATURE ATTACKS

1. **Monstrous Bite:** The triangular, circular saw jaws close around the unlucky target in Short range, dealing 9 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).
2. **Shriek:** The gargantuan form raises its head and lets go of a high-pitched warbling shriek affecting all Explorers in Short range. The victims suffer 4 base dice (base despair 1), mitigated with **EMPATHY**.
3. **Ramming:** Speeding up, the giant form rams its head, jaws closed, at an Explorer within Medium range, who suffers 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4) and is thrown down prone.
4. **Crystal Vomit:** The Worm spews a cascade of brittle verdigris crystals in a cone reaching an Explorer at Medium range, dealing the target 6 base dice (base Blight 1).
5. **Whipping Tail:** Swinging its spearlike tail with sharp crystal protrusions in a big arc, the worm hits all Explorers at Short range, dealing 7 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3). All targets taking damage fall prone.
6. **Ovipositor Attack:** Spearing an unhappy target in Short range with its ovipositor, the worm injects Blight Worm eggs into the Explorer. The attack deals 9 base dice (base damage 1, no crit). If the Explorer fails a **STRENGTH** (Hardened) roll, the egg hatches after D3 rounds, dealing an additional 9 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3). The hatching can be stopped with a **LOGIC** (Medic) roll.

Explorers the correct order: Ishra, Komat, and lastly Hadra. Failing this roll and/or choosing the wrong order wakes the Worm. If the correct order is chosen, the reactor will light up and be activated (see Turning on the Reactor). If the Explorers have the Terracotta Slate (page 133), they can use this to bypass the glyph arrangement as it will automatically align them.

If the reactor is turned on, the entire complex will be lit with a green light emanating from strips in the cave walls.

6

MONOLITH CITY

A massive open area, all straight angles and smooth walls, seemingly cut in perfect lines from the rock.

- The huge cubistic space is filled with rectangular monolith-like slabs covering all surfaces: the floor, the walls, and the roof.
- A winding path leads through the maze-like interior; this path continues up on the walls, and along parts of the roof as well.

This area is the heart of the sprawling complex of cubistic halls that house tens of thousands of monoliths in perfect rows. Every monolith was once a Builder that sought refuge from the Blight by storing their minds in these objects. They did not succeed. Covered by crystalline growths corrupted by the Blight, the minds have been transformed into nothing.

The gravity in these halls is warped, bending along with a strange slate path that runs across the floor, then curving up onto the walls and ceiling. This path was once used by the guardian Sarcophagus Golems, most now long destroyed by Blight and time.

The Explorers must decide:

- Follow the path and be pulled onto the walls and roof by the altered gravity. This is faster, but unsettling. It takes 3 stretches to follow the path to the end, but due to disorientation and vertigo, each Explorer must make a successful **INSIGHT** roll or become Shaken. They do not have to roll if an Explorer has the Zero-G Training talent.
- Ignore the path and navigate the maze of towering black monoliths. This takes more time but is less confusing. It takes 6 stretches (6 supply) to cross the Monolith City this way.

Terracotta Slate: A small opaque slate with glyphs, the size of a small book. This is a major Artifact that protects against Blight (see Strange Cubes above) and can activate (or deter) a Sarcophagus Golem or the reactor (see Terracotta Slate, see below).

The small slate is made of ceramic material, resembling terracotta, and is covered in glyph-like patterns. In the center is a compound Glyph with parts from the Aver, Kelreth, and Gephre minor glyphs. When the Explorers have figured out how the artifact works (Core Rules, page 263), they can use it to activate the Black Orb (page 134) and stop a Sarcophagus Golem from attacking for D3+1 rounds. The latter effect costs 1 Hope and is deactivated if the Golem is attacked. In addition, the slate has the same effect as the ceramic cubes described above.

6. Smash: The Golem's arm converts to a sledge-like massive trunk as it smashes an unlucky Explorer in Short range, turning them to pulp with 12 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).

As the Explorers delve deeper, the emerald frost thickens around them, becoming increasingly opaque. Near the center, it calcifies into solid, jagged jade ice, sealing lower chambers in a haunting green glow.

Search:

- The monoliths are made of solid black stone-like material.
- The minor glyphs engraved into the monoliths read: *Marnak Ra Kadum Khenti Aver*, which a successful **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) roll translates to “We Rest Here. Let Our Memory Stand As Sentinel.”

7 THE GATE CHAMBER

Like a hangar vault, a sizable cubic chamber opens below you as the vertical shaft ends.

- A **black and lustrous cupola** rises like a cathedral from the bottom of the chamber.
- A meter above ground, an **elliptic entrance** leads to the cupola’s interior.
- A **spiral of dotted black monoliths**, each the size of a person, leads to the entrance of the cupola.
- **Green dust twinkles** in the air around the monoliths, making them wreathed as if alive.

The escape route the hibernating Builders were waiting for was supposed to be the Black Orb. The artifact inside the Black Orb is a Time Stone – a major artifact making the time rift possible. The monoliths in the Gate Chamber are the same as those in the Monolith City but larger and contain unscannable, corrupted, and dead Builder imprints.

Important:

When entering the Gate Chamber, ask the players how they move, what they are prepared for, and what they would do if they encounter anything threatening. This is important in the event the Explorers step through the Black Orb and encounter the Orb Echoes of themselves (see the Event: *Going through the Orb*).

Search:

- The monoliths of the chamber are all covered in dark jade-green ice. Touching them leads to a Blight attack with 7 base dice (base Blight 1).

- Minor glyphs read: *Kelreth Ra Zameth Ku Kadum Aver*. A roll for **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) will tell the Explorer that this translates roughly to: “A sacred light, bound and hidden, sent along the path of time to halt the fall.”

8 THE CUPOLA

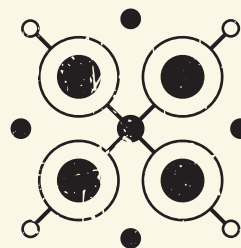
A huge dome stretches overhead.

- A **shimmering black orb** hangs in the air at the cube and cupola’s perfect geometrical center. Slowly turning around its axle.
- A **weakly glowing honeycomb pattern** covers the walls and roof of the cupola.

The Black Orb is 3 meters in diameter and is suspended 10 meters up in the air. It is a partially working time gate. The orb is caught in a gravitic inertia field. To lower the Orb and activate it, the Explorers will need to provide energy to it by activating the reactor in #5 The Reactor Cave or jury-rigging energy from their own equipment (see The Black Orb).

Search:

- Two glyphs are engraved on the floor beneath the Black Orb: Komat, the Glyph of Balance, and Kelreth, a minor glyph meaning bound light or harvested energy. A successful roll for **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) or by spending a stretch studying the Book of Glyphs tells the Explorers that this likely refers to the concept of providing energy.



Komat – The Glyph of Balance

THE BLACK ORB

The Orb is an experimental time gate, constructed by the Builder cult in the Late Era, and was a desperate attempt to send a signal back through time to warn of the Blight when there was still time to act. A masterpiece of engineering, it

- “We... were...looking for... something.” He cannot recall exactly what he was sent to do, only that it has something to do with flowers and pale skies.
- “Our people... gone... left. We, try... follow.” He knows his people, the Seceders of *Nadir*, fled somewhere. But not where or why.
- “Do you know what I... look for?” He would be thankful if the Explorers could give him some context, perhaps by telling him about the other Seceder scouts, the flowers, or the Pale Halls.
- “Other one... bad. He not me.” He fears The Other and wants to warn the Explorers about him.

If asked about *Nadir*:

- “I remember it.... Kadurum took it. We... left.” If asked about who or what the Kadurum is, he will answer “Priestsss.”

If asked about the Singularity Sphere:

- “The otherrrrr.... stole from meeee.” He wants nothing more than to get it back.

ARTEMON, THE BIRDMAN

Marked by age, loneliness, and Blight, Artemon is a shadow of his former self. More than five centuries old, he has survived only because he merged with his Garuda to become something more than human. Now, he is the Birdman, a creature only half remembering its original purpose and life. He wanders the Ubarra Complex in search of something he only vaguely recalls. Flowers, beautiful flowers. And pale skies. The Birdman sees The Other as his mortal enemy and wants nothing more than to get his Singularity Sphere back. Make sure to portray the Birdman as thoroughly strange. His language is broken, his mind forever wandering. Still, he is lonely and will be friendly towards the Explorers if they show kindness to him.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 2 PER 5 INS 6 EMP 2

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 4

TALENTS: Ruin Delver 3, Stealthy 2, Acrobat 2, Lookout 2

EQUIPMENT: Electric lantern, basic climbing kit, Blight fusillard and Blight blade (page 137)

THE OTHER

An echo created by the Black Orb, the Other is a twisted perversion of Artemon, driven by pure instinct. It is all beast, with no trace of humanity left. The Other will see the Explorers as intruders in his fiefdom and will try to lure them into an ambush where he can pick them off one by one. He carries the Singularity Sphere in a pouch and considers it his greatest treasure. The Other's mind is warped by the Black Orb; he does not speak and only lets out bone-chilling cries when he attacks.

FEROCITY: 2 HEALTH: 12 ARMOR: 1 (feathers)

THE OTHER SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- 1. Blade Swipe:** The Other swipes with a long, dark-green serrated blade, striking two Explorers at Engaged range with 7 base dice (base damage 1, crit 2).
- 2. Rending Claws:** The Other strikes with rending claws from his twisted hands, and hits an Explorer within Short range with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).
- 3. Screech:** Widening its beak, the Other lets out a horrifying screech. All in Short range are affected, suffering 3 despair, mitigated by **EMPATHY**.
- 4. Blight Fusillard:** Aiming a malformed fusillard gun at the Explorer, the Other lets out of a volley of bullets. The bullets are crystal-encrusted by Blight and give 7 base dice (base Blight 1) instead of damage.
- 5. Green Stare:** Staring with uncanny eyes, the Other terrifies a victim within Short range. Roll 10 base dice for the attack – the amount of potential despair is equal to the number of 🎲 rolled. The despair is mitigated by **LOGIC** instead of **EMPATHY**.
- 6. Beaked Bite:** The Other lunges forward and bites the victim with his sharp beak with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).

AFTERMATH

Hopefully, the Explorers will return to the surface with the Singularity Sphere. Alternatively, they can examine the sphere in the complex and decide whether to bring it out. The Birdman might be persuaded to leave the complex and accompany the Explorers aboard the *Akhander*. How this plays out is up to you to handle, who know, maybe Artemon has a role to play in finding his lost brethren after all these years?



The Time Stone will be of great interest to the guild representatives aboard *Akhandar* and in Ship City. The Black Orb itself cannot be moved from the complex, nor can it be recreated. However, the Explorers' detailed recollection of the Orb, the reactor, and the Time Stone will be very valuable for the archaeo-historians and the algebraists as they try to piece together more information about the artifact and about the Builders' time manipulation attempts.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the Orb Echoes are not destroyed, they might turn up in later adventures. Perhaps an echo of one of the Explorers managed to sneak aboard the shuttle and be let loose on the *Akhandar*? These twisted copies of the Explorers can be perfect fodder for further adventures and sideplots. The Time Stone can be used to create intrigue and interest. Perhaps an algebraist somehow manages to activate the stone and unwillingly creates an Orb Echo of himself aboard the *Akhandar* or even on Ship City?

THE BLIGHT FUSILLARD AND BLIGHT BLADE

The Blight-corrupted gun used to be a fusillard of Nadianian manufacture. However, it has been overgrown with a crust of Blight, giving it a sickly organic look, in green emerald color. The same is true about the Blight Blade, which used to be a short, crew blade but has grown to a long, dark-green, squarish blade with a serrated edge. It is about an arm's length with a thorny hilt at one end.

BLIGHT FUSILLARD

Grip: 2H	Damage: 4	Min. Range: Short
Bonus: +3	Crit: 6	Max. Range: Long
Feature: Blight Bullets*		Weight: 1

*The gun fires Blight Bullets instead of regular bullets randomly (☠ on a base die). The effect is the same as signature attack #4 (page 136).

BLIGHT BLADE

Grip: 1H	Damage: 4	Weight: 1
Bonus: +1	Crit: 5	



CHAPTER

7

HABANATUM THE GRAVEYARD OF WORLDS



White Star, Silent, Space bends to your Will.

PRAYER BY SELIMA KAVOUT, CONVERT (FORMERLY ISHMA NAZAR MIR-CAPH)

Habanatum is as empty as the Great Dark, as the saying goes, and in many ways, it's true. The system holds no major planets or moons, save for the distant Aragalshu, where a few massive bolides swell to moon-like proportions.

ARRIVING IN HABANATUM

Nobody travels to Habanatum except the faithful and the occasional Navigators Guild expedition, chasing a route beyond the Charted Sphere or toward the alluring Ishimat system. The outer reaches – shrouded by Aragalshu, the vast cloud of crystal and ice – are considered safe by most captains. But deeper in, where the neutron star lashes space with gravity waves, pulses, and hard radiation, safety vanishes. Most who arrive in Habanatum leave as soon as they're able.

SENSOR OPERATIONS

Sensors and scanning suits have a hard time penetrating the Aragalshu, resulting in garbled transmissions and incomplete sensor readings.

- **Aragalshu Signal:** The Singularity Sphere signal emanates from the ice belt at the far edge of the system, more accurately, the small ice moon of Kath.
- **Emissary Wave from the White Star:** “*The White Star is the End of All. Embrace the End! Become a Follower of the White Star today and embrace yourself!*” Drowning out almost all radio traffic in the system is the Emissary Wave from the Followers of the White Star. The signal wave sends recruitment offers, prayers, and prophecies, with embedded coordinates to the Hermitage in the signal.

•• **Markanna Trawler Radiograph:** *“Come to Markanna! Buy, sell, and visit the Silent Bazaar. Any and all are welcome!” The moving trawler emits an omnidirectional pulse from its radiograph tower every minute, cutting through the Emissary Wave’s static. Each pulse carries updated coordinates to the location of the trawler.*

THE MARKANNA TRAWLER

The Machinists Guild trawler – more accurately, a roaming factory and ore refinery – is the system’s central hub and sole outpost of civilization, though it’s constantly on the move. Head Machinist Geanna Zurvof keeps the cogs turning with a full crew of machinists and a contingent of Gray Caps to enforce order in an otherwise lawless region. To support trade, an old barge has been converted into a marketplace: the Silent Bazaar. Ore miners from across the system converge on the Markanna to sell their haul, as most Greatships make it their first port of call.

TRAVEL IN HABANATUM

Voyages in the outer system, particularly outside the Aragalshu, are safe if the ship is not carrying kaidl ore. Inside the Aragalshu all this changes, with threats coming in the form of cults, ore pirates, and the White Star itself.

RUMORS IN HABANATUM

- *“The Machinists want to control the kaidl trade – they’re just pretending to help and lend their services to us poor miners!”*
- *“The Luminous are coming back! Garo spotted a white shuttle passing close to Tunnel ’84.”*
- *“Those damned Coriolites are swarming the system with their little silver ships. Looking for something, it seems. I bet it’s some sort of nasty Blight-thing.”*

PIRATES TO STARBOARD!

A small ship quickly approaches the *Akhander*, transponders switched off and on what seems to be a collision course. At the last moment, reverse thrusters are engaged, and anchor lines are fired onto the hull of the Slipstream Cruiser. The aft bay door opens, and suited figures emerge, crossing the gap between the ship and aiming for the airlocks close to the cargo hold. The *Akhander* is being boarded by ore pirates looking primarily for kaidl crystals, but they are happy to take anything of value they happen to find. They run an efficient operation, raiding the hold and then withdrawing as quickly as possible.

LOST PILGRIMS

A weak distress signal is intercepted as the *Akhander* moves through the Aragalshu. “Please, by the White Star, help us. We’re running low on air.” The distress signal keeps repeating, but no answer comes if the Explorers try to communicate back. Following the signal through the ice field leads to a dilapidated old ferry, barely spaceworthy. Aboard are 34 pilgrims on their way to the Hermitage of the White Star. If saved, they will be thankful but soon turn out to be a headache as they will try to spread their gospel among the crew as much as possible.

THE TERROR STRIKES AGAIN

The *Akhander* passes a small mining settlement on one of the larger icelets. Domes, ore kites, and a few ore carrier shuttles are parked on the surface. Navigational lights are blinking, but no other signs of life can be seen. Closer inspection will show parts of the settlement in disarray and red splashes on the gray white ice – blood, and recently spilled too. If a landing party is sent out, they’ll find blood, wreckage, and bodies torn apart or dragged into the ice. The signs of struggle are fresh, the attackers unseen. If investigated, the Explorers will find what looks like a minor artifact in the form of a glyph-engraved stone slab. If the artifact is returned to the ship, death will follow. The slab is in fact a Blight-corrupted Glyph Golem (page 230 in the Core Rules). Soon, crew members will start to disappear and the Terror will stalk the halls of the ship.

PHENOMENA AND THREATS

Gravitic forces from the star and the strife brought by the kaidl crystal trade are the main threats present in the system.

THE HYMN SIGNAL

A signal floods the space waves, cutting off sensors and filling the ship with a strange, soothing hymn.

- **Effect:** The Explorers must roll **INSIGHT** or become entranced by the hymn, steering their ship toward the star or the depths of the Great Dark. Unaffected Explorers can wake the affected ones and the rest of the crew. Morale will decrease by 2 because of the ordeal.

GRAVITIC RIFT

Sensors have picked up gravity waves in nearby space. Suddenly, a gravitic rift opens up ahead. It is invisible to the eye, but appears like a chasm on the sensor screens. The ship is running right at it!

- ❖ **Effect:** Same effect as Gravity Tide (Core Rules, page 239) on Explorers and shuttles, but deals D6+2 damage to a Greatship hitting it square on. Evasive maneuvers are possible. The Captain must roll **LOGIC** (Greatship Pilot) with a -3 modification, and even with a success the ship still suffers 3 damage.

FACTIONS & PEOPLE

Use these to inspire intrigue, conflict, and adventure.

THE MACHINISTS GUILD

Under the stewardship of Geanna Zurvof, the Machinists Guild dominates the system through the presence of the Markanna Trawler. By utilizing proxies and shrewd trade deals, their objective is to ship back kaidl crystals to be used as fuel for the Cherolab of Ship City. To that end, they are clandestinely supporting ore pirates throughout the system; these pirates are being advised by Gray Cap commanders in the effort to disrupt kaidl crystal shipments. The Guild sees the White Star cult and the Coriolites as annoyances best kept at bay by cajoling or even outright threatening them.

FOLLOWERS OF THE WHITE STAR

The largest cult in the system, with supporters as far away as Ship City, is one of the reasons there is some traffic all the way out to Habanatum. The cult is always recruiting, and many mining crews and settlements have been embraced and also helped by the cult. To the Followers, kaidl crystals

GEANNA ZURVOF, HEAD MACHINIST

Geanna Zurvof wears the uniform of a machinist, but more as a symbol than out of necessity – an oil-smudged overall, pockets filled with tools she rarely needs to use. She is the mind behind the Markanna Trawler, not its muscle. Calculating and quietly relentless, she moves through the trawler and the Silent Bazaar with purpose, listening more than speaking, collecting leverage like others collect tools. Lately, something is slipping: pirate activity is rising beyond her command structure, and rogue operators threaten to unravel her carefully maintained balance. She intends to do something about it.

STR 5 AGL 3 LOG 4 PER 3 INS 2 EMP 5

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Barter 3, Blade Fighter 2, Mechanic 1, Electro-Specialist 2, Renowned 1, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Heirloom tabula (same stats as an Ibis 4 terminal, Core Rules, page 107), assorted tools, dura knife (+2, damage 2, crit 3, weight ½)

VIRMA KAVOUT, THIRD PROPHET

Virma is an ambitious prophet-in-training who was recently promoted to liaison with the Markanna Trawler guilders. She dresses urbanely, like she just stepped out of an alley in the Chasm. In secret, she hopes to change the cult with real visions, like the Luminous did, but more fine-tuned. The time to just write poems to the White Star is over. As a liaison, she travels across the Aragalshu in a small shuttle with cultist guards. She's begun quietly cultivating allies among the miners and guilders – laying the groundwork for a movement she believes will outshine the senior prophets of the White Star.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 3 INS 5 EMP 5

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Actor 3, Charmer 2, Cultural Savant 1, Renowned 1, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Fancy clothing, decorated exo suit (+2 **EMPATHY**), lumin pistol, notebook, and diary

are sacred echoes of the White Star’s divine collapse – vessels of spiritual truth, not industrial fuel. Rather than using force, they spread their message through poetic sermons, encrypted broadcasts, and soft influence campaigns aimed at miners, settlers, and even Guild officials. Their growing presence across the system has begun to erode Machinist loyalty and disrupt Coriolite surveys. To the faithful, all who exploit kaidl are straying from the Star’s path.

THE NAZAR CORIOLITES

Secretly stationed at Min-Mira-Marouk, the Nazar Coriolites are looking for the Shoruth Passage, a hypothesized Slipstream branch that is supposed to lead back to the Old Horizon. To that end, the Nazars dispatch scout ships across the system as well as perform surveys of ruin sites in search of clues pointing to the Passage. Recently, the Coriolites have come to believe that the key to finding the Slipstream branch lies within the walls of the Hermitage of the White Star. To counter the influence of the cult and ultimately gain access to the Hermitage, the Coriolites have begun secretly supporting remnants of the radical Luminous Way, offering sanctuary and resources to spread doubt and sow discord amongst the faithful.

EGEMENON NAZAR MIR-SADAAL, FANATIC DARK DIVER

Egemenon is a zealous operative of the Nazar Coriolites, utterly devoted to finding the Shoruth Passage that will lead him back to the lost world of Sadaal – his ancestral home. He has shaped his entire life around this goal, mastering the discipline of a Dark Diver, the Nazar’s elite scout corps, trained as pilots, ruin delvers, and soldiers. Equipped with an imposing presence, he is clad in a striking black uniform with golden engravings dedicated to the Nine Icons. To some, Egemenon is a dangerous fanatic; to himself, he is a chosen vessel meant to reclaim what his people once lost.

STR 4 AGL 5 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 2

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Acrobat 2, Astrometry 1, Historian 1, Ruin Delver 1, Sharpshooter 2, Shuttle Pilot 1, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Nazar exo suit (same as standard delving suit but armor 5), Dayal carbine, dura axe, notebook, Coriolite shuttle *Efeter*

THE MEMORY TOMB

“Behold my life. Behold my work. Behold my dreams. Behold me.”

GLYPH STANZA FOUND IN THE TOMB OF NEBTALI SHUL AMARNA NERGAL KU

In the icy wastes of the moon Kath, in a remote mountainous region where no Explorer has set foot before, there is an ancient grave built during the Middle Era. This was a memory tomb, where a Builder’s memory was preserved for eternity in the fabric of the structure itself. It has been abandoned for millennia, with only the howling ice winds as company. Hundreds of years ago, Petrosian, a Seceder scout, entered the tomb, looking for an entrance

to the Pale Halls. A Hound of Nimis followed, tasked with killing the scout. A fierce battle followed, and eventually, they both perished in the tomb. In a way, they both linger here. They are not the same as they were, but have instead changed.

To find the scout’s remains and the signal’s source, the Explorers will need to trek to the tomb, enter it, and overcome the nightmarish visions and creatures within.

BACKGROUND

In the Middle Era of the Builders, civilization was at its peak. During this era, the Builders turned inward to find a purpose in their glorious star-spanning empire. Art, culture, and architecture flourished, with Master Builders dedicating

their entire lives to their craft. To them, this purpose was more important than life itself. That was their belief.

One such Builder was Nebtali Shul Amarna Nergal Ku, or Watcher-of-Stars-Builder-of-the-Tower-of-Ku. They lived a

long and prosperous life and, towards the end of their lifespan, constructed a memory tomb on the icy moon of Kath, as it orbited inside the Aragalshu. This tomb was an engineering masterpiece, its walls housing machinery that could preserve and visualize parts of the Builder mind. Followers of the Builder could then visit these memory chambers to gaze in awe at their accomplishments and learn from their prowess. And that is what they did, until the tomb and its memories drifted into oblivion. Eons passed, the Blight came, and in the end, the Builder culture perished for good.

Five hundred years ago, a visitor finally arrived at the tomb. This was the Seceder scout Petrosian, searching for an entrance to the Pale Halls. He marveled at the memory fragments but soon realized that what he was looking for was not there. That is when a lone Hound of Nimis arrived, an assassin sent by the *Nadir* priests to stop the scout's mission. A desperate fight ensued, and the scout, mortally wounded, eventually retreated into the Eternal Chamber,

THE SIGNAL

The signal picked up by the Singularity Sphere emits from the border of a vast mountain range on the planet's southern hemisphere. It seems reachable by rover, but the last stretch needs to be covered on foot.

where the remnants of the Builder's mind were stored. As he lay there dying, his mind merged with that of the memory tomb. And so Petrosian, or at least his memories twisted by the Blight, lived on. As for the Hound, also wounded, it was slowly overcome by the Blight and transformed into a Blight-being. It still wanders the halls of the tomb looking for its lost prey, not sure what it is or once was.

ENVIRONMENT

Kath is inhospitable with bone-chilling winds, vast icy plains, and craggy mountains. Large as it is, the gravity is light but comfortable. There are no settlements or bases here, nor any resources to speak of. Blizzards are frequent, and the cold makes heatsuits or rovers a must on the surface.

The atmosphere would be breathable if not for the cold and traces of poisonous gasses. As the tomb is in a mountainous region unsuitable for landing a shuttle, the Explorers need to find a landing location and trek from there, either by foot or rover.

OTHER PARTIES

Kath is a desolate place, there is nothing here besides the howling blizzards and the compact silence of the ice. However, that does not mean that the Explorers will have this site entirely to themselves. A scout ship from

the Followers of the White Star happens to be in low orbit around the moon when the Explorers' shuttle touches down. Curious after any potential finds, the cultists follow the Explorers at a safe distance, and will eventually follow them

MEMORY IMPRINTS

Careful study of the tomb could reveal that the Builders saw memories as the imprint of life, thus holy. If the Explorers retrieve the memory key (page 150) found on the ghul they can realize that memory imprints are a

relatively common feature of Builder ruins. This information is invaluable to the Navigators Guild and can be used as a powerful modification (+2) when trying to understand specific glyphs or resist glyph effects affecting memory.

into the Memory Tomb. If you like, you can easily swap the White Star cultists for any other faction aboard the *Akhandar* that is looking to get its hands on any artifacts or valuable

finds. One note, though: ensure that any following parties enter the tomb after and not before the Explorers.

ARRIVING

Landing on Kath is not hard in itself, but finding a suitable landing site is. It is not possible to scan for sites from orbit; the Explorers must undertake a flying survey in their shuttle before landing. If doing so, make a **PERCEPTION** (Lookout) or **LOGIC** (Scan Operator) roll to find a suitable landing site (see page 204 in the Core Rules). If the roll succeeds, the Explorers can choose between three landing sites on the map. Site A is unnecessarily far away, in rough terrain; this is the only site they find

if they fail the roll. Of the other two, site B is closer to the target but located near the glaciers, which is terrible terrain for rovers. The final site, C, is slightly farther away but opens up a more mountainous route better suited for using rovers. **See Handout #13 Kath Trek Map** for details.

An extra  on the rolls above will let the Explorer spot a strange anomaly half buried in the ice of the glacier. This is the scout's ship (see The Frozen Ship).

THE TREK

The Explorers must trek to the signal's location in the mountains. Use the Kath Trek Map and play out the trek using the rules on page 204 in the Core rules. The following table can be used to add further mishaps and finds.

• **Wild Animal:** A hulking, pale-white quadruped with shaggy, frost-crustured fur, jagged translucent teeth, and small black eyes adapted to whiteout conditions. It can sense heat through snow and ice. If the Explorers are in a rover, it will pursue silently until they stop or debark – then charge. (Ferocity 2, Health 9, Armor 3, **AGILITY** 3, **PERCEPTION** 3, attack: bite, 8 base dice, base damage 1, crit 3).

• **Crevasse:** A crevasse cuts through the ice, blocking the way forward. The Explorers must backtrack D3 hexes to find a way over or around it.

• **Blizzard:** No movement this shift as a blizzard hits the party.

• **Freezing Spell:** A freezing spell increases energy drainage to suits and the rover. Double the use of supply this shift.

• **Strange Rock:** A rock rises from the ice fields, seemingly unperturbed by the cold as it emanates heat.



EVENTS DURING THE TRECK

D6	EVENT	GLACIER	MOUNTAIN
1	Encounter	Wild Animal	Wild Animal
2	Phenomenon	Crevasse	Crashing Boulder
3	Weather	Blizzard	Avalanche
4	Obstacle	Freezing Spell	Steep Climb
5	Sign	Strange Rock	Builder Symbol
6	Discovery	Hound Beacon	Scout Ship Wreck

- ❖ **Nadirian Beacon:** A beacon, frozen solid, is discovered. It is of heirloom manufacture but does not match anything from the Old Horizon. If the Explorers recover it (encumbrance 2), they can sell it for 500–2000 rukh to the Coriolites or Navigators Guild. Repairing it (**LOGIC**) can make it useful later in Algorab (The Dreaming God, page 175). This was placed here by the Hound of Nimis now stuck in purgatory in the Memory Tomb.
- ❖ **Crashing Boulder:** A massive rock comes loose, rolling towards the Explorers. Everyone (on foot) or the driver (rover) rolls for **AGILITY** or suffers an attack with 6 base dice, base damage 2, crit 4 (Explorers or rover).
- ❖ **Avalanche:** A wall of snow and ice comes rolling down the cliffs. Roll for **PERCEPTION** to avoid it. Failure leads to being covered in a mass of snow (Explorer or rover alike), taking 4 base dice in damage, and having to spend 1 shift digging out themselves and the rover.
- ❖ **Steep Climb:** A cliff face blocks the trek ahead. Scaling it is possible but dangerous, requiring an **AGILITY** roll. Failure or walking around it leads to losing 3 extra supply this shift.
- ❖ **Builder Glyph:** An obelisk with sharp angles contrasting the gray cliffs juts from the stone. The Glyph of Ishra is emblazoned upon it.
- ❖ **Scout Ship Wreck:** see The Frozen Ship (see below).

THE FROZEN SHIP

The contours of a small wedge-like ship are encased within the ice and snow.

- The thick ice extends over its hull like glassy armor, preserving every curve and seam beneath layers of time-packed snow.
- Beneath a solid sheet of ice, the outline of the cockpit is barely visible – a frozen blister, sealed and silent.

SETTING THE MOOD

The landscape is bleak, unforgiving, and almost colorless. Everywhere is snow and ice, broken only by naked black and gray rocks. The cloud cover is dense and low, and when it lifts, all that is visible are the low and jagged mountain ranges in the distance. The wind is a constant companion, ranging from a persistent breeze to howling gales. Hammer the players with the cold, snow and ice. Let ice storms batter their rover, snow clouds envelope them in a cocoon of white, and inform them that their heating systems are working to the limit of their capacity.

Search:

- ❖ The Explorers must dig through the ice to get to the ship, rolling for **STRENGTH** using digging equipment. The ice has a strength of 5, and the Explorers need to get as many successes. Each digging roll takes one stretch of time.
- ❖ **Texts:** Once inside, a roll for **LOGIC** can interpret that the controls and language inside resemble Old Horizon texts but are different. The *Nadir* symbol is also present inside.
- ❖ Going through the ship thoroughly will consume two supply but reveal an energy bank (encumbrance 1, but stores 8 supply) and an old image in a frame showing an ancient-looking entry vehicle with a red star on it and the almost unintelligible text “Soyuz.” The picture can be sold to the Coriolites or historians for 2,500 rukh.

The picture is an heirloom of the scout Petrosian and depicts an old spaceship from the first spacefaring age.

THE MEMORY TOMB

The signal from the Singularity Sphere leads the group to the only artificial structure visible on this desolate moon. The tomb is built into a mountain, protected from the raging elements outside. Within lies a maze of perfectly cut chambers – part shrine, part gallery – once curated to preserve memories through the ages.

Memory tombs were constructed during the Middle Era of Builder Culture. They were a way to celebrate the life of a Builder who had perished by preserving their core memories and accomplishments in a machine. This made it possible for followers and descendants to visit the tomb and be inspired by the life and works of the dead Builder. Often,

they were constructed to follow the life path of the Builder, beginning with childhood, adolescence, early accomplishments, and later, their masterworks. At the core of every memory tomb is the so called Eternal Chamber, where the control mechanism and the original shards of the Builder are preserved.

The memory tomb is not considered to be a delve but a location where each room is handled as a key location, examining the rooms or overcoming obstacles consumes supplies. No delve rolls are needed to proceed. It is possible to perform a deep scan from the entrance, although it will be partly hidden due to the construction of the ruin and the Blight inside.

A TOMB OF TWO TALES

There are two stories contained within the ancient walls of the memory tomb. First is the life story of the Builder who once constructed the site: Nebtali Shul Amarna Nergal Ku. Every chamber shows an integral part of their life cycle, culminating in the magnificent Hall of Ku. The ghostly visions tied to the chambers are part of the Builder's legacy and a celebration of their life. The other tale is the tragic centuries-long battle between the Seceder scout Petrosian and Ngul, a Hound of Nimis sent to kill him. The combatants, unable to escape the never-ending cycle of violence and hate between them, have long since been transformed into something that is not quite dead, nor fully living.

THE BUILDER'S MEMORIES

The Memory Tomb is a machine capable of storing and projecting scenes from a Builder's life. In every room, a central vision has been stored, which visitors in old times could interact with and delve deep into. All that has been lost in time, and what remains are mere shadows of the imprinted memories. The visions are strange and slightly creepy; they can not be fully understood. At the same time, any kind of projections from the Builder civilization are sensational in themselves.

THE SCOUT'S MEMORIES

When the Seceder scout died in the Eternal Chamber, his mind merged with the Memory Tomb and the Blight that had already corrupted it. Now, the rooms closest to the Eternal Chamber are transformed by the nightmarish

dreams of the Tomb Thing. The further the Explorers venture into the tomb, the more the visions diverge from their original and benign state. What were once dreams have now become nightmares. The scout's memories are triggered when the Explorers encounter the marks of the battle between the Hound of Nimis and the scout, or whenever you see fit to use them. They will show as pale projections, part of the same machinery that drives the memory projections.

The first memory, Arriving:

The blizzard lashes at your face as you start the climb up the mountain, the wind howling like a living thing. You turn around and through the swirling snow, you glimpse your ship as you leave it behind. You continue your ascent, each step a battle.

There it is: a circular door, half-buried in snow and covered with frost. You know it instantly. The entrance. You push inside, into the dark. But just before the light of the storm vanishes behind you, you catch a flicker of movement. Another figure, cloaked in robes that flutter in the storm, emerges from the cliffside shadows. It watches. And then, it follows.

The second memory, The Duel:

You feel the fear pounding in you. Someone else is in here with you. Not the projections of the room, no, the ghost-like shapes dance around the space, oblivious to intruders. This is someone that followed you across the dark. Suddenly, you see a cloaked figure emerge from the shadows of the vaulted chamber, a gleaming rifle reflecting the ghostly visions. You dodge back into the alcove when the wall beside you explodes as the hunter opens fire. You back into the corridor, firing your pistol to cover your retreat. You realize you are in a fight for your life.

The third memory, The Eternal Nightmare:

There is no escape from this cursed place. Not even death can free you from this tomb. You feel your soul reach out into every corner of this chamber; you feel the memories of the one who once built this shrine. You feel your mind meld into something else. You lived for a thousand years, but that was millennia ago. Now you are stuck here, in a glowing cage keeping you not exactly alive, but not dead either. You are in-between worlds, in-between bodies. While you dream of your people, you long for only one thing: death.

ENTRANCE

Half-hidden by snow lies a huge, circular door in the mountainside, engraved with glyphs and patterns covered in ice and frost.

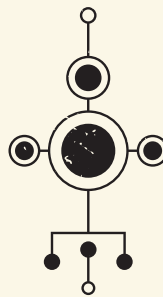
- **The door is partly open**, its round frame rolled into the mountain, leaving a narrow slit.
- **Snow and ice have piled up**, leaving an opening at the top.
- Inside, darkness and more snow drifts seem to wait.

The Explorers can climb over the ice wall or dig through it.

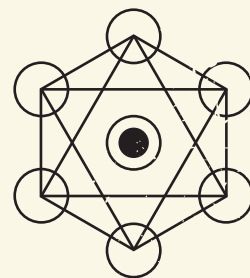
- **Climbing:** Roll **AGILITY** (Acrobat). Any 🏆 indicates that the Explorer can safely climb to the other side. A thrown rope back to the fellow Explorers negates the need for any further rolls.
- **Digging:** Roll **STRENGTH** (Miner). For each 🏆 the Explorers dig through 1 point of ice. It takes 5 points to create an opening big enough for a delve suit. Due to the narrow opening, only two Explorers can partake in the digging. Each roll takes a stretch, consuming 1 supply.

Search:

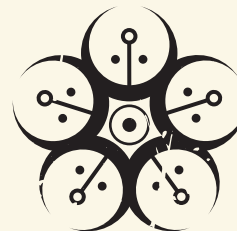
- **There are three glyphs on the door:** Ishra (Glyph of Life), Ashruka (Glyph of Knowledge), and Sylene (Glyph of Dreams). These can be identified with a successful **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) roll or by spending an additional stretch consulting the Book of Glyphs.



Glyph of Life, Ishra



Glyph of Knowledge, Ashruka



Glyph of Dreams, Sylene

ANTECHAMBER

A rectangular chamber of polished black rock covered by frost.

- Rows upon rows of minor glyphs cover the walls.
- Half the chamber is filled with snow blown in through the partly open door.
- A corridor leads further inside the structure.

Search:

- Studying the engravings on the walls and rolling LOGIC (Glyph Scholar), the Explorers will learn that the place was built by someone called Nebtali Shul Amarna Nergal Ku. An inscription reads: *“Behold, my life. Behold, my work. Behold, my dreams. Behold me.”* If the roll fails, the Explorers can choose to spend an extra stretch and 1 point of supply to succeed automatically.
- The Bird will warn against Blight when the Explorers move towards #3 The Chamber of Echoes.

THE CHAMBER OF ECHOES

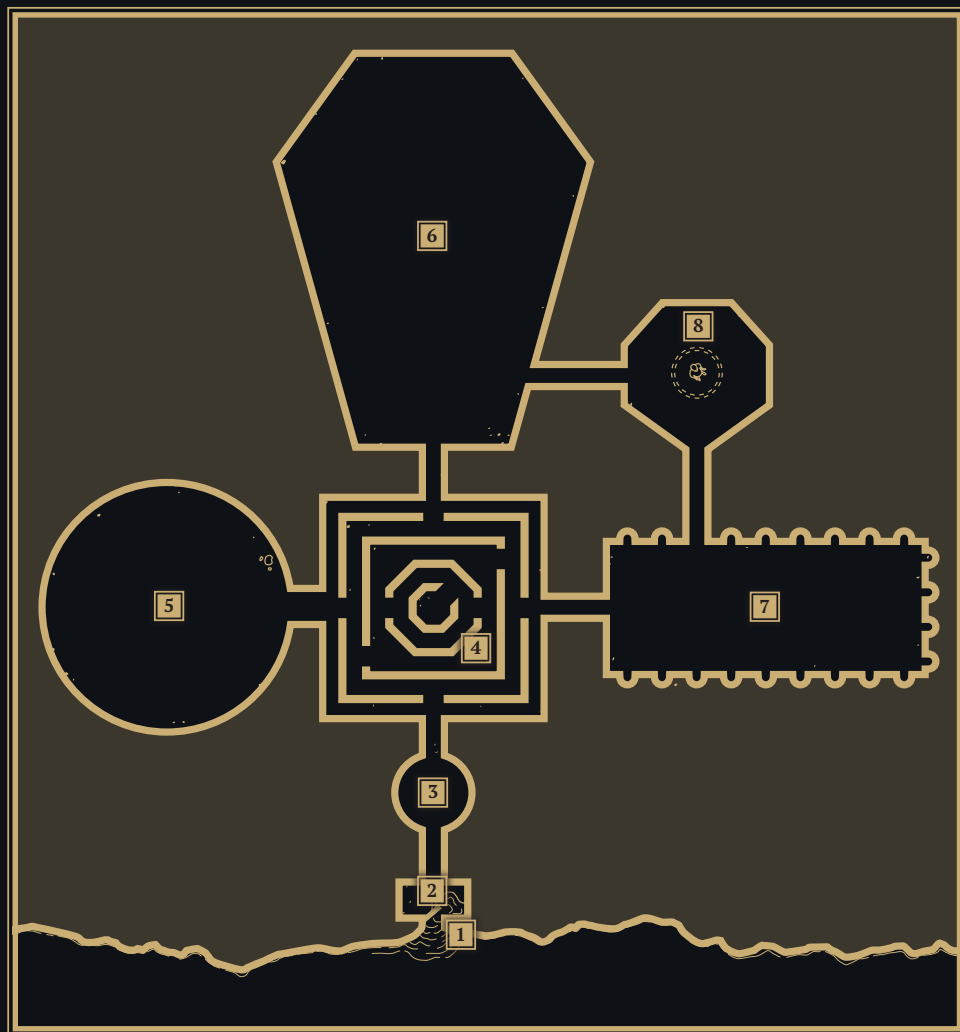
A spherical chamber made of polished, smooth stone, its curved walls arch upwards to a ceiling lost in shadows.

- **Ghost-like, ethereal figures float** through the room, their shapes shifting constantly – blurring, extending, flickering. Some gracefully pass glowing orbs between themselves. The figures emit short, playful sounds

COMBINING GLYPHS

The Builders used many glyphs, most of which have not yet been discovered. However, twelve major glyphs (Core Rules, page 258) are used as a foundation. By combining two or three of these glyphs, the Explorers will eventually start to see patterns. For instance, the combination of Ishra, Ashruka, and Sylene in this instance creates the meaning Memory Tomb. Sometimes, minor glyphs are used in conjunction with these combinations, often acting as triggers for a special purpose.

THE MEMORY TOMB



- 1** ENTRANCE
- 2** ANTECHAMBER
- 3** THE CHAMBER OF ECHOES
- 4** THE MAZE OF MEMORIES
- 5** THE LUMINARY
- 6** THE HALL OF KU
- 7** GALLERY OF OBLIVION
- 8** THE ETERNAL CHAMBER

5x5 METERS

SETTING THE MOOD

The nature of the tomb is surreal and strange. In the first few rooms, the air is cold, the hum of rebreathers is constant, and frost covers most surfaces. The place has a feeling of abandonment, lasting for millennia. Further inside the tomb, the visions begin, filling it with what looks to have been life. It is strange but beautiful. The first visions are serene

dreams from an unfamiliar world. They won't make sense but should still feel comforting somehow. After that, the Explorers will be hit with the nightmares. The visions get more garbled, threatening, and twisted with every step closer to the Eternal Chamber. Explorers should be unsure of what is real and what is not.

as they rotate around the room. A figure touches the walls, causing ripples of light and a cascade of floating symbols and images that dissolve into the air. And then – they're gone.

- ❖ A **layer of red frost** covers a pile of what looks to be jagged shards in the center of the room.
- ❖ A **vaulted opening** leads into a corridor on the opposite wall.

The Bird will react with soothing sounds when the vision of the ghost-like figures passes, healing 1 Hope for its companion and recovering all Energy used.

This chamber symbolizes the Builder's early years and was intended to bring a feeling of joy, curiosity of life, and vigor to any visitor. The projection shows Builders playing a game.

Search:

- ☛ Searching the pile will trigger a Blight attack with 7 base dice (base Blight 2). 3D6 shards made of white ceramic are found in the pile.
- ☛ The features of the figures in the projection are hard to make out, but they do not seem human, their bodies long and seemingly twisting, as if they were made of smoke. Their heads are elongated, and while they seem to have two arms, no legs are discernible.
- ☛ An **INSIGHT** (Intuition) roll tells the Explorers that the vision seems to indicate play of some sort. It recalls the feeling of growing up, of games and being a child.

4 THE MAZE OF MEMORIES

Angular-patterned walls stretch upwards, converging into a rectangular ceiling.

- **Half a dozen ghost-like shapes stand in a circle,** their outlines slowly shifting, their movements elegantly synchronized. They manipulate strange, floating tools and materials emitting soft, otherworldly glows.
- **Swirling engraved patterns** cover the walls, twisting and turning like the paths of the maze.
- **Openings in the walls hint** of a maze leading into the depths of the cliff.

This maze reflects the Builder's studies in the disciplines required to create and build complex structures. The patterns contain mathematical formulas, and the different parts

of the labyrinth symbolize the sprawling knowledge of this formative period.

Search:

- ❖ Looking at the walls will confuse the viewer, requiring a **PERCEPTION** roll to avoid staring and losing 1 Hope.
- ❖ A successful **LOGIC** (Glyph Reader) roll or consulting the Book of Glyphs, tells the Explorers that the circular glyph on the wall is Komat, the Glyph of Balance.
- ❖ There are a handful of scorch marks on the eastern wall. A **LOGIC** roll tells the Explorers that some kind of energy weapon caused them. When the Explorers find this, let them experience one of the Scout's visions (see The Scout's Memories on page 146).
- ❖ 2D6 shards of a white ceramic material are spread out in the corners of the maze.

5 THE LUMINARY

A large circular chamber of black stone, its ceiling forming a dome, like a perfectly shaped sky of darkness.

- ❖ **Thousands of flickering stars** float in the still air of the tomb, forming a beautiful vista of long-lost Horizons. Tiny rivulets of light start connecting them, forming an intricate web.
- ❖ **Red ice covers** the floor in large patches.

When the Explorers enter the Luminary, they are hit with a Blight attack with 10 base dice (base Blight 1).

The Luminary represents the Builder's work across the stars. How they traveled across the Builder civilization, shared knowledge with other masters and created monuments on faraway worlds. The glittering stars fill the entire chamber, making it so that the Explorers feel like they stand in the middle of a sprawling galaxy.

Search:

- There are scorch marks on two different walls, as in room #4.
- A patch of a dark, dried substance is on the floor close to the eastern wall. A successful **LOGIC** (Medic) roll tells the Explorers that it is human blood. If discovered, let the Explorers experience a vision from the scout (see The Scout's Memories on page 146).

A large, elongated, pentagonal hall of polished gray rock.

- Walls stretch upwards as far as one can see. The sense of scale and open space in this hall is dizzying.
- A giant tower flickers into existence and stretches upwards into the shadows far above. It bisects a spiral-shaped galaxy, forming around its top part.
- A door of black stone blocks the way (to room #8). Patterns on the door create a spiral-formed glyph.

This hall shows the Builder's most important accomplishment, a mighty tower lost to the Blight millennia ago. The hall was built to create a sense of awe and inspiration, and while the Blight has transformed it somewhat, it still has the desired effect after all these millennia. Anyone seeing the Tower of Ku regains 1 Hope as the wonder of the Builder civilization fills their hearts.

Search:

- A trace of dark spots on the floor by the opening towards #8, clearly blood if the Explorers have investigated the spots in #5.
- A successful roll for **LOGIC** (Archaeology) will tell the Explorers that the door can be opened by interacting with the spiral glyph. This is done by tracing a straight line of the Tower of Ku through or inside the galaxy.
- 4D6 shards of the same ceramic white material as encountered previously are scattered across the floor.

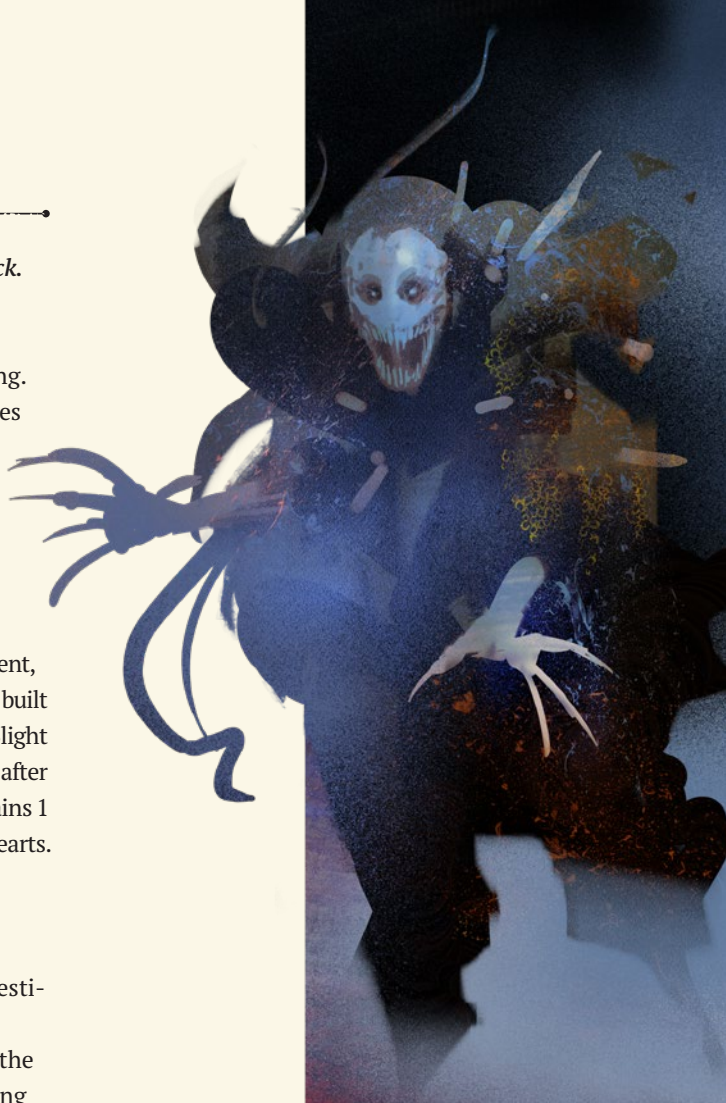
EVENT

THE GHUL ATTACKS

The roaming ghul will move toward any sounds in the ruin. As it approaches, let the Explorer with the Scout role test for **PERCEPTION**. Failure will lead to the ghul succeeding in performing a sneak attack (Core Rules, page 222).

THE MEMORY KEY

The ghul carries a Memory Key, an octagonal glass-like slate with minor glyphs etched upon it. The glyphs explain its use as a memory device together with the Memory Sink (page 152), and reading it and understanding it, which takes a **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) roll and one shift, will tell the Explorers that the artifact can be used to retrieve stored memories in some Builder artifacts. It can also be used to deactivate the Memory Sink.



GHUL, CORRUPTED HOUND OF NIMIS

Once a human, the Hound of Nimis was an elite assassin hunting the fugitive scouts from *Nadir*. Now, it is transformed by the Blight into a nightmarish entity: an undying Ghul doomed to wander these empty halls. The corruption twisted both form and mind, stripping away all humanity and replacing it with relentless hunger and pain. Its head and face are still human, but it has long, nail-like teeth. Its former clothing has been reduced to tattered spikes that have protruded from its bones, and both hands and feet have metamorphosed into long claw-like appendages. The Ghul roams the dark, driven by an insatiable urge to kill and fulfill a mission it can't fully remember. Forever haunted by memories of its lost humanity, it will welcome death when it finally comes.

FEROCITY: 2 **HEALTH:** 16 **ARMOR:** 4

AGILITY 3 **PERCEPTION** 3

GHUL SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- 1. Snarling Cacophony:** The Ghul unleashes a warped burst of sound – half-snarl, half-laughter. All Explorers within Medium range suffer 2 points of despair, mitigated by an **EMPATHY** roll (Core Rules, page 68).
- 2. Ripping Claws:** Slicing with its claws, the Ghul hits two Explorers within Short range with 8 base dice (base damage 1, crit 2).
- 3. Regenerative Bite:** The Ghul bites an unfortunate Explorer with 7 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) and eats the meat ripped loose, healing an equal amount of its own Health.
- 4. Vicious Lunge:** The Ghul jumps an Explorer, hitting with 8 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3), and grapples the victim with **STRENGTH** 8 (Core Rules page 62).
- 5. Berserker Rage:** The Ghul attacks in a blinding rage, hitting two victims within Short range with its claws (10 base dice, base damage 2, crit 4).
- 6. Annihilation Attack:** In an effort to end its misery, the Ghul engulfs a victim in an embrace, letting all its Blight surge free with an attack with 14 base dice (base Blight 1). It suffers the same amount of damage as the attack.

7 GALLERY OF OBLIVION

A vast gallery extends deeper into the ruin. The solid stone walls rise steeply to a lofty ceiling shrouded in darkness.

- ❖ **A flickering figure sits** on the floor in the middle of the room, its features undefined, slowly changing. In the next moment, the figure starts dissolving into strands of energy that flow into the alcoves.
- ❖ **Frost-covered alcoves** line both sides of the room, their depths obscured by shadows. Tiny, dust-like particles drift in the air, reflecting the light of the Explorers' lamps.

This room symbolizes the death of the Builder and the end of its purpose. The air carries a weight as if even the dust remembers what was lost here.

Search:

- ❖ Intricate carvings adorn one wall, framing a large rectangular door. At its center, the patterns morph into a spiral glyph, mimicking the shape of a galaxy.

- ☛ Manipulating the glyph will open the door. This is done by tracing a straight line of the Tower of Ku through or inside the galaxy.
- ☛ Examining the alcoves in detail will reveal faded murals of buildings and planetary landscapes. This will result in finding 2D6 shards but it also exposes the Explorer to a Blight attack (8 base dice, base Blight 2).

EVENT

THE CULTISTS ARRIVE

A while after the Explorers have ventured into the Memory Tomb, the cultists that have been following them will come in as well. Their objective is to retrieve any artifacts that can help the cause of the White Star. To this purpose, they are willing to use violence if need be, but will try to threaten and negotiate first.

They will advance through the tomb, room by room, collecting any shards and artifacts they find along the way. Once they encounter the Explorers, they will demand that they give up any artifacts for safe passage out of the tomb. If they can't come to a deal they will finally resort to violence and open fire, and use their smoke grenades to sow confusion. The cultists can be used to shake things up whenever you see fit. Use them early to push the Explorers deeper in the tomb seeking cover, or send them in late to even out the odds in the fight against the ghul (and perhaps the Tomb Thing).

NARA HITAHM, FOLLOWER OF THE WHITE STAR

Nara was alone and adrift as a young woman. Moving from station to station, ship to ship, taking any work she could find and any drug she could buy. When she found herself at the bottom, she arrived in Habanatum expecting to die there. Instead, she found salvation, purpose and faith in the White Star. Now, many years later, she is a competent and respected scout commander leading an effective survey field team. She is fiercely loyal to the Hermitage and will stop at nothing to further its aims.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 5 EMP 6

HEALTH: 9 HOPE: 10

TALENTS: Charmer 2, Tough 2, Sharpshooter 2

EQUIPMENT: Fusillard pistol, dagger, two stun grenades, protective suit, 4 supply

CULTIST SCOUTS, FOLLOWER OF THE WHITE STAR (4-6)

Clad in white winter gear with shawls and goggles covering their faces, the cultists are fanatical followers of the White Star and are ready to die for their cause.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 3 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 1

EQUIPMENT: Grape rifles, pickaxes, two smoke grenades each, protective suits, 4 supply each

8 THE ETERNAL CHAMBER

A large octagon-shaped chamber, perfectly symmetrical. The ceiling rises high above the polished floor.

- A large sphere of golden translucent energy floats just above the floor, pulsing softly.
- A mummified corpse floats face-up within the energy sphere, limbs hanging down, the body is slowly rotating in the golden haze.
- A white octahedron the size of a fist floats next to the corpse, seemingly in its orbit.

Search:

- The corpse wears a white exo suit, its right shoulder adorned with the *Nadir* insignia. The suit is clearly of the same type as the one belonging to the traveler found in Ship City.
- The artifact is a memory sink, an artifact with the ability to transfer and store the minds of intelligent beings, independent of their form – biological or energy-state.
- Thrown in a corner of the room is a white backpack made out of synthetic material. Inside it: a Singularity Sphere.

The Eternal Chamber is the heart of the memory tomb and houses the advanced technology that stores, distributes and projects the memories in the complex. The Memory Sink, a white ceramic artifact shaped like an octahedron serves as the conduit and memory center for the Builder's memories. In a twist of fate, the Memory Sink accepted the dying scout Petrosian in its embrace, merging his memories with that of the tomb – effectively making him part immortal.



THE TOMB THING

The Seceder scout Petrosian died as he tried to interface with the artifact left by the Builders and imbued with the memories and soul of Nebtali Shul Amarna Nergal Ku. The Blight had unfortunately overtaken the Memory Sink, and thus, the unfortunate scout merged with the Builder and the madness of the Blight, becoming something else. The Tomb Thing is partly locked to the energy sphere, the desiccated corpse, and the physical artifact. Still, it can affect the space and time around itself in a somewhat uncontrollable fashion. It can also activate the defense built into the tomb.

FEROCITY: 1 HEALTH: 16 ARMOR: 4

AGILITY 3 PERCEPTION 3 LOGIC 4 EMPATHY 2

ABILITIES

- **No movement:** The Tomb Thing is stuck to the energy sphere and can only affect things through its attacks.
- **Reason & Logic:** The Tomb Thing can be reasoned with and asked questions that it can answer, if not always correctly. It might even be cajoled into halting its attacks with **EMPATHY**, but the effect only lasts for D3 rounds.
- **Memory Sink:** The sink is the connector keeping the thing alive. Destroying it will kill the Thing. It has Health 6 and armor 4. If the Explorers have the memory key artifact (page 150), white light will emanate from it as they approach the sink. If the Explorers put it on the sink, it will deactivate for D3+1 rounds. Any manifest Shadow Guardians will disappear (leaving the Achinkad Spear). The memory sink counts as a major artifact and has a weight of 2.
- **Shadow Guardians:** One of its signature attacks is manifesting physical shadows of guards that last for D3 rounds before evaporating into dust. The guardian's form works as armor 5 but it takes damage from all physical attacks. The only thing left after they disappear is an absolute black spear – the Achinkad (see sidebar).

THE TOMB THING SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- 1. Mind Meld:** The Tomb Thing tries to merge its mind with a victim within Short range, dealing 8 base dice (base despair 1).
- 2. Manifest Illusion:** The Thing creates a vivid illusion of physical phenomena such as fire, ice hail, or rock falls, which deals 9 base dice (base damage 1, crit 4) to one victim within Short range.
- 3. Shadow Guardians:** Two shadows of flat black silhouettes armed with what look like spears manifest from the walls and attack two different victims (Shadow Spear, 8 base dice, base damage 3, crit 5). The guardians have normal movement but can not leave the Eternal Chamber.
- 4. Expulsion:** A gray beam of solid Blight strikes two victims in a long arc, dealing 10 base dice (base Blight 2) within Short range.
- 5. Wall Spikes:** The Thing activates the wall matter projectors, sending spikes into one hapless victim, dealing 12 base dice, damage 3, crit 4) to it.
- 6. Energy Surge:** The Thing overloads its energy sphere, sending a wave of radiant light dealing 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 5) to all victims within Short range.

PETROSIAN'S FATE

Mortally wounded, Petrosian withdrew to the Eternal Chamber, ready to make his last stand. As he did so, he stumbled into the energy field of the Memory Sink and fell in its warm embrace. With his last act he threw the backpack containing the Singularity Sphere in a corner, away from the energy field. And then, he died. Still, his memories remained, trapped in the tomb and the Memory Sink. The melding of man, artifact and Blight became a perversion: the Tomb Thing.

AFTERMATH

When the Explorers have finished searching the tomb and interacted with the Tomb Thing, they will have learned new things about the scouts, the Builder memory sink and key, and the strange artifact of the Achinkad spear, an amalgamation of Blight and Builder tech.

THE ACHINKAD SPEAR

The lone spear left by the shadow guardians is a strange artifact – a dimensional leftover of the Blights' effect on the memory sink. It resembles a 2-meter-long sliver of black space. Wielding it with bare hands will result in the carrier being dealt 1 damage. Explorers will not notice this if handling the spear with their suits on, as the gloves will protect against this effect. It can be sold as any lesser artifact.

Grip: 2H	Damage: 3	Weight: ½
Bonus: +3	Crit: 4	Feature: Long

FURTHER ADVENTURES

The Coriolite scholar Zirdan based on Min-Mira-Marouk (page 142) will be interested in the Achinkad spear as he has long looked for a key of destiny for his family. His mask has told him that the Builder will send him the key – part of a family prophecy. He will reach out to buy the artifact, and, if that is not possible, later try to infiltrate the Explorers' Slipstream Cruiser to steal it.



CHAPTER

8

ALGORAB THE DREAMING GOD



*Thou Old, Wise, Unfathomable
Accept our gifts, our blood, our dreams
Let us become One*

KADURUM PRAYER TO THE DREAMING GOD

In the final part of the campaign, the Explorers will set out on the expedition leading to the long-lost Algorab. This will be done with prominent guilders, delvers, and a Greatship, the *Rigel*. After a long and perilous voyage, they will finally reach their fabled goal: the Algorab system. Once there, they will find an inhospitable environment that will push the expedition's ships to the limit of their capabilities. But more importantly, they

will finally see the *Nadir* with their own eyes. However, there are forces in Algorab that do not want outsiders to meddle in their affairs. And deep inside the atmosphere of the system's gas giant, an ancient god stirs in its sleep. Depending on the Explorers' actions, the outcome of the expedition will result in soul-crushing failure or glorious success. Whatever the case, the Lost Horizon will never be the same again.

BACKGROUND

A long time ago, the Builders raised their monuments in the Algorab system. This was during the Early Era, when the Builders worshiped their creators as gods. It was during this time that a Dreamer entered the gas giant Nimis to sleep through the ages. This was Kadu. The Builders sought to honor the Dreamer God and built temples dedicated to it. One of these was a beautiful palace built on a large asteroid orbiting Nimis.

As eons passed, the culture of the Builders changed. Worship of the Dreamers became a thing of the past, their temples abandoned or repurposed. Kadu, the Dreamer God, did not care. It continued its dormant slumber undisturbed. But as the Builders continued their expansion across the stars, their projects ever more ambitious, the Dreamers started to take notice of their former servitors.

Eventually, the Builders overreached – their ambition to shape and rule the stars grew into an empire. It was this hunger for dominion that turned the Dreamers against them. The Blight was created and released to destroy the ambition of the Builders. Kadu was a part of this, too. With the ignorance of someone stomping out insects, it released a wave of Blight that spread across the system, corrupting, killing, and destroying everything in its wake. The Builders that survived the initial onslaught managed to open a portal to another dimension, the Pale Halls, and disappeared into it. And so, Algorab was once again empty, save for the Dreamer God slumbering in the depths of Nimis.

NADIR ARRIVES

The ark ship *Nadir* ended its long and unintended journey in the Algorab system roughly 1,000 years ago, as described in chapter 1 (page 6).

As the awakened crew of the *Nadir* settled, the Dreamer God, Kadu, exerted control over some of the colonists. One group, the Kadurum, embraced the god-voice, forming a theocracy dedicated to its worship. They claimed Kadu had guided *Nadir* to safety and demanded obedience in return. The other group, the Seceders, rejected this revelation. They believed the voice to be a parasite, a false god manipulating the desperate. The two factions grew further and further apart, until their ideological split led to open conflict.

Colonists sent out into the system by the Seceders, discovered a Builder ruin hidden within a huge ice field – a palace built during the Early Era. Deep within the ruin was a dimensional gate. For the Seceders, it was a possible salvation.

THE NIGHT OF SECESSION

On the Night of Secession, which actually took place over a few weeks of time, many thousands fled to the Builder ruin in the belt, desperate to escape the tightening grip of the Kadurum. They moved in secret, families abandoning their homes, bringing only what they could carry.

The dimensional gate offered a way out, but the Kadurum were not blind. As the last wave of Seceders entered the ruin, the Hounds of Nimis, elite enforcers of the Kadurum priesthood, struck. Orbital munitions rained down on the ruin. The complex was shattered, the gate torn apart in a cascade of collapsing energies that killed

hundreds. The asteroid ruptured. Entire families still in the antechambers were annihilated. The structure was lost, sealed forever beneath drifting debris and molten rock. To the Kadurum, it was justice. To the Seceders, a massacre.

In the wake of the exodus, the Kadurum declared divine victory. They consolidated power under the guidance of a new priest-king, the Hemet Kad, an anointed child born under signs said to echo the Dreaming God's will. The remaining Seceders, too few to resist openly, were hunted and forced into the depths of the frozen moons. Algorab grew quiet. The *Nadir*, once a ship of hope, became a tomb of sorts, haunted by the chanting voices of the priests praying to the Dreaming God beneath.

THROUGH THE PALE HALLS

Unknown to all, the Pale Halls really held a way out. Being a pocket dimension connected to our reality in different times and locations, the Pale Halls is a maze that sometimes can bridge distances that are all but impossible to span in our Horizon. The Seceders spent decades in the Pale Halls. Many died there, but the survivors pressed on in search of a new home. At last, they found a way out, on the other side of the Abyss. Those who made it out eventually formed a thriving civilization scattered among the stars. These are the real Flowers of Algorab.

Centuries passed. Five hundred twenty years ago, those few Seceders still trapped in Algorab made a final desperate attempt to find a way into the Pale Halls, so that they could join their lost brethren. Small exploration crafts departed the system, threading unstable Slipstream currents to find Builder ruins. The fate of the Seceder scouts is described on page 7.

While the attempt was unsuccessful, the scouts' search had one significant effect. One of them would eventually be found deep within Ship City, leading to the search for *Nadir* as described in this campaign.

THE ABYSS SIGNAL

The Seceders placed a sentinel construct with a Singularity Sphere at the sealed gate to Algorab, tasked with monitoring it and awaiting instructions. Though physical passage through the Pale Halls would take years, communication through the Spheres is instantaneous.

themselves, they can infuse another creature with lesser versions of these powers. The priests of the Kadurum possess these so-called Dreamer powers in this adventure. In the end, the Explorers might gain Dreamer powers as well. Read more about these powers on page 188.

activation of the third Sphere, the Sentinel received new orders. Now, the sentinel construct is waiting on the other side. Its mission: to prevent the Dreamer-God cult from extending its influence beyond Algorab.

will be long and arduous for the crews of *Rigel* and *Akhander*, and the ships will be tested to their limits. However, they will make it to Algorab, if only to find that this is where the real problems start.

"It's a map. Or the beginning of one. A framework built on projected Slipstream patterns... but we'll need proper time. Proper tools. Back in Ship City."

“Our investigation of the so-called Singularity Spheres has revealed a location from which they all seem to originate.”

"It's at the end of the Charted Sphere, well beyond our usual routes, but at least on this side of the Abyss." She pauses again, as she turns to one of the aides, and a projection from the roof lights up the murk above, drawing the Charted Sphere in vivid golden light. One star lights up, beyond Shibur and almost as far out as Cape Morimar. Elaborate handwriting spells out Algorab in golden script below it.

"Not only that, the Spheres revealed what we believe to be a functioning and stable Slipstream current originating from the Kerfeter Shoals leading to Algorab. A sensation in itself, as this will make it possible to reach the remote system and determine what happened to the Nadir."

"You, [insert the Explorers' names or that of their crew here], have previously proven yourself in the role of special advisors. Therefore, we ask you again to join us on the Expedition to Algorab. A difficult and dangerous venture to be sure, but one with great potential to shape the future of the Diaspora."

"But this time, you won't be alone. The Grand Council of Ship City and Jumuah has decided that you will be joined by the most magnificent Greatship – Rigel. The Council of Special Affairs will lead the mission, but your counsel will be heard." She smiles faintly.

"The council has decided that the destination must remain secret, for now. May the blessings of the Three guide us, and may the Icons show us mercy."

With that, the council is over. The Explorers and Master Moska leave the chamber. Aides waiting outside give them the following information:

- The Greatship *Rigel* is made ready, as is the Slipstream Cruiser *Akhandar*. Both will be ready to depart Ship City in the following week. The *Akhandar* has been

SLIPSTREAM TURBINE

A Slipstream Turbine is an upgrade that can be fitted to Slipstream Cruisers to increase their Slipstream speed, to match the speed of a true Greatship. They can only be manufactured in collaboration between the Machinists and Navigators Guilds. This upgrade can only be added to a ship by the GM.

fitted with an auxiliary Slipstream Turbine, giving it matching speed with the Greatship.

- Both ships have been fitted with Slipstream Scanning Suites to be able to detect tributaries and deviations in the Slipstream.
- The Explorers will be representatives and special advisors for the Explorers Guild, so their say in the expedition will be substantial. They are expected to travel with the *Rigel* but may bring their contingent of crew and advisors with them.
- Their previous crew on the *Akhandar* has been assembled, and the *Rigel* already has a crew designated by the Council of Special Affairs. The Explorers are free to recruit new specialists, although the exact destination of the expedition must remain secret.
- The Expedition's first goal is to find the new Slipstream current to Algorab. Data taken from the Spheres shows that tributaries in Kerfeter Shoals or Hiram's Delta might be possible starting points.

THE ALGORAB EXPEDITION

After the council hearing, the Explorers can plan for their part of the Algorab Expedition. The aides will provide them with the crew manifest of the *Rigel*, their berths, and the mooring point for their shuttle.

THE SHIPS OF THE EXPEDITION

The Greatship *Rigel* will lead the expedition, with the Slipstream Cruiser *Akhandar* taking an auxiliary role. Additionally, a score of smaller vessels such as shuttles, ships' boats, and tenders will travel docked to *Rigel*.

Pages 32–41 of the Expedition Booklet describes the *Rigel*, including its officers and crew, as well as docked smaller craft.

Give the players *Handout #14: Rigel Blueprint*.

PLAYING THE EXPEDITION

To play out the expedition, use the routes, voyage events, and other information found in chapter 3 of this book. This expedition should take a few sessions to play, building intrigue and conflicts between the Guilds prior to reaching Algorab. Once the expedition reaches Algorab, continue playing the adventure described on the following pages.

WELCOME TO ALGORAB

The Great Algorab Expedition has reached its destination: the Algorab system, hidden at the end of an uncharted Slipstream branching far from the Hammurabi Arm, near the edge of the Abyss. The journey has been long and hazardous. Both *Rigel* and *Akhander* will most likely arrive battered, and their crews exhausted. But the danger is not over.

As the Expedition exits the Slipstream, it will be thrown directly into a vast ice field that will damage both ships and force the expedition to a halt. Soon, it will be apparent that *Rigel* has damaged a vital component, and cannot enter the Slipstream again. To be able to return home, a new part must be located and it must be done soon, as the Slipstream Drift phenomenon (page 66) is threatening to close the Slipstream current to Algorab for several years shortly.

While the expedition is considering its next moves, a signal is received from the other side of the system. It is a message from *Nadir*, welcoming them to their lost brethren and telling them that envoys will travel to their ship to make contact. A huge deal, and news that sets the crews in motion – finally, the Diaspora will meet its brothers and sisters! This sets the stage for the next unfortunate development. Once aboard, the *Nadir* envoys set off a Blight bomb in *Rigel's* hangar, severely damaging the Greatship and instantly killing a large part of its command crew.

The expedition is in tatters, *Rigel* is damaged, scores are dead, and the ships are stuck in a vast ice field. The Explorers must use the *Akhander* or smaller shuttles to make their way into the system, to find repair parts for *Rigel*, and discover the truth about the Nadirians.

As the Expedition exits the Slipstream, read or paraphrase the below.

The vivid veils of color surrounding the ship in the Slipstream vanish as you emerge into flat space. Moments later, collision alarms blare. Red lights flash. Someone shouts, "Brace for impact!" Outside the bridge window: a wall of white: icebergs, ice asteroids, and frozen gravel. One looms directly ahead. Then the impact. The ship shudders violently. You hear ice grinding against metal, bulkheads giving way, and then a new alarm: hull breach! As the ship comes to a halt, wedged into the frozen mass, only the alarms remain.

As the expedition exits the Slipstream, it is met with an unexpected sight: the entire Algorab system is dominated by a dense ice field, packed with dust, gravel, bergs, asteroids,

and frozen moons, stretching out to the Slipstream tributary. Upon exit, the captains roll for **INSIGHT** with a -2 modification. Entering the system will result in a hard deceleration in all cases, leading to the collision described in the text above. Still, a failure on the roll leads to a secondary incident that can further damage the ships.

The disabled features in the table below are primarily due to flash fires that can start upon entry. In addition, the *Rigel* suffers damage to its Slipstream drive, but the much smaller *Akhander* can avoid this (if not rolling 6 on the table).

SECONDARY INCIDENTS

D6	EFFECT
1–3	Slipstream Hazard Table , Core Rules, page 198.
4	Ice Gravel: The ship hits a cloud of ice gravel (Hull –D6 and a random ship feature is disabled).
5	Iceberg Collision: The ship collides with an iceberg (Hull –2D6 and D3 random ship features are disabled).
6	Blight Ice Collision: The ship collides with a cluster of Blight ice meteoroids (Hull –D6, Morale –D6, D3 random ship features are disabled and covered in Blight ice*).

*Same effect as the phenomenon Blight Barnacles (Core Rules, page 238).

THE GRAVITON CONDENSER

The abrupt deceleration and collision upon exiting the Slipstream have destroyed *Rigel's* graviton condenser, an essential coupling between the graviton projectors and the Slipstream drive, thus making it impossible to re-enter the Slipstream. Some of the fires during entry were in the drive areas. It cannot be repaired; it must be replaced.

A graviton condenser is a large piece of machinery, weighing about 100 kilograms (30 encumbrance).



UNSTABLE SLIPSTREAM

Both Greatships' algebraists soon confirm a troubling fact: the Slipstream terminating in Algorab is affected by the same phenomenon encountered on the journey in – Slipstream Drift (page 66). Their calculations indicate that the stream will shift course dramatically within the next two months (or, in algebraist terms, 60 ± 20 days). If the expedition lingers too long in the system, the Slipstream corridor back to Jumuah will collapse – vanishing for months, years, or even decades.

THE ALGORAB SYSTEM

Algorab is an Icon-forsaken system at the end of the newly discovered, and named, Algorab Current. The system is peculiar in that it has only one planet left, the gas giant Nimis. Above the disk, violent magnetic storms constantly rage, in the upper atmosphere and outer space, making travel outside the protection of the ice disk hazardous and unpredictable. Most navigation and movement must therefore follow the relative shelter of the disk's plane.

INITIAL SURVEY

As repairs begin on the Greatship (counts as repairs en route, Core Rules, page 199), the Explorers and *Rigel's* command crew will likely push for an initial system survey. However, the captains of both ships forbid shuttle departures at first. Faction leaders debate how and when to proceed. The ice field limits direct observation, so *Rigel's* sensors conduct a preliminary scan. The Expedition Council

STAR SYSTEM ALGORAB

- Algorab (small, white)
- Hidden portal field 1 AD
- Asteroid cluster (Afme*) 23 AD
- Large moon (Zergov*) 30 AD
- Gas Giant (Nimis*) 40 AD
- Slipstream tributary 44 AD

*The Nadirian names are not evident to the Explorers at the beginning of the adventure.

convenes to decide next steps after the harrowing Slipstream exit.

SYSTEM SCAN

The state-of-the-art sensor suite on *Rigel* will soon have scanned what can be seen of the system, and the players can be given *Handout #15: Orbital Distance Scan*. The thick ice field is hard to scan, but will reveal the husk of a massive ark ship hanging vertically, partially submerged into the atmosphere of a red gas giant. The gas giant lies on the far side of the system, opposite the arrival point of the Greatship.

Sensor buoys and space probes, deployed above and below the ecliptic, confirm the same. But as they push

further, they detect a loosely bound asteroid cluster on a highly eccentric orbit. Before they fail, their electronics overwhelmed by electromagnetic surges from the star, they register something else:

A signal from the asteroid field. What's strange is the frequency – it matches the spectral bands used by the Singularity Spheres to communicate. The signal is low, rhythmic, and repeating. Its origin cannot be triangulated precisely before contact is lost.

A MESSAGE FROM NADIR

As the crews of the *Rigel* and *Akhander* assess damage, starts repairs, and discusses further surveys of the system, *Rigel* suddenly receives a message from the ark ship. The language is similar, but not identical, to the language spoken in the Old Horizon and the ship's algebraists can easily interpret it. Read aloud or describe the message with your own words.

Greetings voyagers,

Welcome, brothers and sisters, welcome to our system. Long have we waited for our brethren to find us. We are the Kadurum, waiting for Ardha's children to see us. Let us meet and rejoice. Our envoys will join you soon.

The short message is repeated, followed by a string of time coordinates, two days from the present date. The news of the message, and the revelation that the descendants of *Nadir* still live, spread like wildfire through the *Rigel* and *Akhandar*, increasing Morale by 2 on each ship. As the messages are without video, the rumor mill starts about what the Nadirians will look like, how they will be dressed, and whether they have many heirlooms.

There won't be any further communication, and they will not respond to any hails.

THE ENVOYS ARRIVE

The arrival of the Nadirian envoys is preceded by preparations for festivities and the arrangement of one of the hangar decks as a large docking port with an adjoining meeting area. This is to accommodate the envoys and their presumed retinue. Discussions on who will be present in the welcoming committee and their respective positions, as well as who will greet the envoys and speak first, are heated and go on for hours. These preparations can be roleplayed or skipped as you see fit.

When the envoys finally arrive, read or describe the following:

Three shuttles of strange and alien design emerge from the murk of the enclosing ice field, like black ghosts from the white soup of Algorab's ice disk. The two smaller ones hold position as the third, and larger one, somewhat resembling a Coriolite vessel, albeit in black, approaches the docking port. All this is shown on large screens assembled on the walls of the welcoming hangar. A murmur rises from the crowd at the sight of the ship. As it draws near, graceful patterns and text are discernible briefly before it docks, and the dock port camera turns dark. The inner air lock opens with a loud clanking and the following hiss.



GM-note: The Explorers may notice that the Coriolites seem absent from the welcoming committee. This is because some of the esoterics belonging to the Alamasy family have sensed something wrong with the system.

The hangar goes quiet as the envoys enter. There are three envoys, flanked by two tall warriors, with long, lean rifles.

The three envoys are dressed in flowing robes decorated in intricate gold-embroidered patterns. Their faces are covered in golden mesh veils, which obscure them. The guards are likewise dressed in ornamental golden capes, covering their armor with ornate patterns. Their helmets are featureless except for four dark lenses placed asymmetrically on the visors.

The crowd goes quiet, and the representative steps forward to greet the envoys. The front envoy opens their arms as if to embrace – for a brief moment, a pale white hand with dark discoloration is visible.

Then all hell breaks loose. The three envoys start to glow from their chests, like embers that heat up to a white blaze, blinding everybody in the hangar – and ending in three distinct detonations. The hangar doors blow open and a massive tornado of escaping air starts sucking the panicking crowd into the void.

- The Explorers need to secure themselves by rolling for **STRENGTH** or get sucked out of the ship. Use the rules for explosive decompression in the Core Rules, page 72. If they fail, they are sucked out but get a second chance to return as they start suffering the effects of vacuum (Core Rules, page 72). Roll **AGILITY**, **PERCEPTION**, **INSIGHT**, or **LOGIC** to find ways back to the ship. *Rigel* has ED fields installed in parts of the hold, which will take effect after D3+1 rounds.
- The envoys' detonations will spread Blight seeds to infect the ship.
- The deaths of so many crew and commanding officers will result in a loss of 3 Morale Points.
- The attacks can kill or severely maim some NPCs, such as captains or guild representatives. The GM decides which.
- As the attack commences, the two shuttles outside will open fire on *Rigel* and *Akhandar*, damaging the Hull (D6) and sending breaching Blight torpedoes into the hull before fleeing into the ice disk.

AFTER THE ATTACK

In the aftermath of the attack, both the *Rigel* and *Akhandar* sustain damage to their drives, sensors, and exterior. Blight cores spread in parts of the ships, rendering areas uninhabitable until decontamination and scrubbing have been performed. A big part of the crew is also affected by the mental effects of Blight, such as nightmares, day hallucinations, and insomnia. Something must be done before the ships are attacked again, and the Slipstream drive (graviton condenser) needs to be repaired urgently.

An emergency session of the Expedition Council is called aboard *Rigel*. All surviving Guild representatives agree that missions must be sent out. Two urgent tasks are decided:

- A salvage and boarding mission to the *Nadir*, to investigate its condition and search for vital parts or an actual graviton condenser.
- Identify the source of the anomalous signal in the asteroid field and determine whether it poses a threat or offers an opportunity.

The Machinists and Navigators also want to sabotage the *Nadir* if possible, but the Coriolites are silent as usual when this is discussed. Let the Explorers participate in the assembly and discuss pros and cons. Ultimately, the mission falls on the Explorers and other specialists and delver crews onboard (the Toads, Coriolites, and others). Shuttles and the *Akhandar* (if the Explorers want this) are hastily outfitted, armed with a coiler cannon and countermeasure dispensers, and sent on their way. If the Explorers have extra Crew Points to use, they can get their shuttle fitted with any of the weaponry available in the Core Rules (page 203).

BLIGHT BOMB

The Blight bombs inside the envoys have a blast power of 15 (base damage 3) and a Blight attack with area effect as a blast with 10 base dice (base Blight 3). The GM may decide that any Explorers close to the envoys suffer the effect from the explosions. The Blight seeds sent out from the bombs are both nanoscopic and extra-dimensional and will start infestations of Blight throughout the ship – Blight frost patches, barnacles, and mental problems for the crew.

With shuttles, traveling long distances within a system is challenging, as their travel range is limited. Reaching any of the locations without jury-rigging the shuttles for extra travel speed and range is impossible. This would not be a problem if the Explorers could use the *Akhandar*. The upgrades can be fitted within a few days and won't cost the Explorers anything. However, they affect the performance of the shuttles, and some previous upgrades may be removed.

CROSSING THE VOID

SETTING THE MOOD

The Algorab system is like an icy anvil struck by an electromagnetic storm. This feeling should be evident to the Explorers at all times. Venturing outside the protective ice disk should lead to alarms blaring in the shuttle about high levels of electromagnetic radiation, as well as warnings about system damage and hull heat. This is present even without the above-described events.

Inside the disk, this is replaced by the constant bombardment of ice dust and gravel, and accompanying evasive maneuvers by the pilot. Collision alarms blare all the time if not muted, and ice adheres to the cockpit and windows. EVA is needed frequently to scrub ice from vital sensors and systems. Additionally, strange sensor echoes from things that seem to be moving inside the ice fields will be picked up constantly.

NOVORIK

The novorik are vacuum-dwelling creatures living in the Algorab system. They are white and torpedo-shaped, with a length from a single meter to that of a rover. The head part has no eyes but bulbous sensor organs, which it uses to navigate. Along its back are small triangular fins that merge into a propulsion organ at its rear – using some sort of chemical combustion for it to move. The novorik are attracted by energy and are inherently curious about new things.

FEROCITY: 1 HEALTH: 14 ARMOR: 0

AGILITY 3 PERCEPTION 3

ABILITIES

- **Energy Drain:** The novorik will try to use energy from larger ships and shuttles. If they attach to the hull of a Greatship, they will decrease the Hull by D3 points every day. The energy drain can also be used on Explorers instead of attacking them. The novorik drains D3 points of supply from the victim by hitting the Explorer with its head. This counts as one action.
- **Feeding Frenzy:** When the novorik are attracted to energy in larger schools, they may go into a frenzy. When frenzied, their Ferocity is increased to 2, but they always use one action for the Energy Drain ability.

EVENTS IN THE ALGORAB SYSTEM

D6	ICE DISK	CLEAR SPACE
1–3	Ice Gravel	Ion wind
4–5	Ice asteroid	Thermion gale
6	Novorik	Pulsar storm

- **Ice asteroid:** A large iceberg careens into the ship, dealing 9 base dice (base damage 3, crit 5) to a shuttle or D6 Hull points and –1 Morale to a Greatship.
- **Novorik:** A flock of novorik approach and possibly attack the ship (see next page).

NOVORIK SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- Tail Swipe:** The novorik swipes its heated tail against an Explorer within Short range, dealing 6 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) to the victim. If hit, the victim is pushed a zone away.
- Ram!** The vacuum creature rams a victim within Medium range, hitting it with its blunt head, dealing 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 4).
- Heat Expulsion:** The novorik turns its propulsion organ on an Explorer within Short range and flares the victim, dealing 8 base dice (base damage 4, crit 5).
- Sensor Pulse:** The novorik uses its sensory organ to send a spike of radiation towards a victim within Medium range that becomes Dazed.
- Swallow:** The novorik opens its hidden maw, trying to ingest an Engaged victim, dealing 8 base dice (base damage 1, crit 4). If hit, the victim is swallowed and suffers the loss of one point of supply every round. The victim will be automatically regurgitated after D3 rounds. It is possible to attack the novorik from within, but only at Engaged range and with a –3 modification.
- Energy Cloud:** The creature expels a vast amount of energy in an invisible cloud of signals and radiation, overwhelming suits and comms and dealing 4 despair mitigated by **EMPATHY** to all Explorers within short range. If they lose any despair from this attack, they become Confused.

- ☛ **Ion wind:** A wind of charged ions hits the ships, damaging systems. A shuttle suffers –D6 Hull and –1 Maneuverability. Greatships suffer –1 Hull and –1 to all maneuvers performed by the captain until repaired.
- ☛ **Thermion gale:** A wave of heat and heavy particles hits the ships, dealing 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3) to a shuttle or D6+2 Hull points and –2 Morale to a Greatship.
- ☛ **Pulsar storm:** A storm of ions and radioactive particles envelops the ships. Shuttles suffer 12 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3) to hull, and one random upgrade is destroyed, and Greatships suffer 2D6 Hull points and a random feature is damaged (but can be repaired en route).

EVENT

NOVORIK INTERRUPT

The novorik vacuum-beings (previous page) in the Algorab system can be used as events to interrupt the Explorers in many different way. It can be during repairs of the

Rigel, when approaching the asteroid cluster or as they are entering the *Nadir*. They will take an interest in the Explorers, trying to siphon energy from their supplies and suits. Attracted by the commotion and light during combat, some novorik will approach. They are inherently curious and will bump the most energetic subjects first. They can even fly into the hangars of larger ships or into large asteroids.

- ☛ D3+1 novorik will approach at first. They will circle the Explorers carrying the highest amount of supply. If an Explorer or enemy discharges a weapon, they will approach that individual and “bump” them with their ability Energy Drain.
- ☛ A firefight will attract D3 more novorik at an interval the GM deems suitable. See the ability Feeding Frenzy to see the effect of many novorik.

THE ASTEROID PALACE

Amid the broken remnants of a huge asteroid – shattered during the Night of Secession – a Nadirian expedition has established a base to investigate a strange, repeating signal pulsing from a chamber, deep within the Builder ruins.

A team of Nadirian archaeologists, escorted by guards and Hounds of Nimis, is now working on a method to seal the portal and silence the signal permanently. The Kadurum fear what might lie beyond and have ordered a complete shutdown. Their work and energy expenditure has attracted novorik, which are schooling around the asteroid that contains the palace.

1

THE RUINED PALACE

A scattered mass of broken walls, collapsed pillars, and eroded stone perched on a raised cliff.

- ☛ **A massive set of stairs climbs up** the asteroid cliff, flanked by low walls.
- ☛ **Two massive pillars** flank a still-intact arched gate.

A part of the Early Era palace that was destroyed in the Night of Secession, it still holds some of the grandeur of its former self.

Search:

- There are markings in the dusty surface where a shuttle has landed. It is impossible to determine if the markings are recent or not.

2

THE STAIRWAY

A monumental stairway climbs the asteroid's cliffside, carved from dark stone.

- ❖ **Dark walls flank the stairs**, their surfaces covered by what looks to be glyphs.
- ❖ **Two towering pillars** stand at the summit, framing an intact archway leading into the ruins.
- ❖ **A pair of winged creatures**, carved of the same dark stone, stand guard in front of the pillars.

Search:

- ❖ The glyphs on the walls are minor glyphs. A **LOGIC** (Glyph Scholar) roll reveals that they are from the Early Era (and thus approximately 1–1.5 million years old). They are mostly unknown and undecipherable.

However, the concepts “palace,” “god,” and “planet” can be decoded.

- Scorch marks are evident on parts of the walls and stairs. A **LOGIC** (Archaeology) roll tells the Explorers that these are relatively recent (at least in comparison to everything else they can see), probably from hundreds of years ago.
- The statues at the entrance to the ruin are depictions of Lamshur Golems (page 172), guardian constructs that the Builders created. If the Explorers succeed with a **LOGIC** (Archaeology) roll, they will determine them to be of the Early Era.

3 THE RUINED HALL

Once, this must have been a magnificent place – a hall stretching towards the sky. Now, only a husk of its former glory remains.

- A set of low stone walls makes up an inner structure.
- A ravine splits the hall in two.
- A small tower of metal and ceramic struts rises from the stone floor.

Search:

- Towards the left wall, an old exo-helmet can be found. It is small, like one belonging to a child, and of human origin. It has *Nadir's* logo on the side. Picking up the helmet triggers the event *Time Echo*.
- The metal tower is a communications array. A **LOGIC** (Electro-Specialist) roll tells the Explorers that it is similar to Old Horizon technology, but slightly different.

EVENT

TIME ECHO

The air shimmers faintly. The ruined stone flickers – and for a breath of time, it is whole.

You stand amid a fleeing crowd. People rush past, faces pale with fear. A child is carried by a limping elder, while the child hugs its exo-helmet. The cries and hurried voices are muffled, as if heard through water. Overhead, a low rumble grows louder.

A flash of heat – then a detonation in the sky. The ground shakes. The crowd screams. Before the vision fades, you see the elder fallen, and the small helmet lying abandoned to one side.

ENTERING THE PALACE

To access the palace interior, the Explorers must descend from the Ruined Hall to the bottom using **AGILITY**, failure leads to two extra stretches spent climbing. A shuttle may also attempt to land on the ledge at location #1 (Crater Bottom) with an **AGILITY** (Shuttle Pilot) roll at –2. On failure, the shuttle strikes the walls and suffers D6 hull damage; armor does not apply.

The palace tunnels are vaulted and reach a ceiling height of 20 meters. All walls are adorned with intricate patterns, featuring occasional reliefs of Builders or alien landscapes. Many surfaces are cracked and damaged from the destruction of the moon. Unless otherwise noted, the tunnels are exposed to vacuum.

4 CRATER BOTTOM

The bottom below the pulverized upper part of the palace forms a crater of irregular rubble and asteroid boulders.

- A wide opening shows a corridor leading into the ruin's underside.

Search:

- Just inside the opening is a pile of what looks like rubble, fallen from the corridor's tall ceiling. Sifting through the rubble (takes 1 stretch) will reveal the crushed remains of an unknown custodian construct, with a value equivalent to 4D6 shards.

5 ENERGY CORE

A cube of shifting configuration hangs suspended in the vacuum of a high-roofed octagonal room. It folds in on itself every few seconds, yet always retains its cubic shape. Each fold emits a faint indigo glow.

- The air feels wrong – thin, charged, and vibrating with each shift of the cube.
- Fine metallic dust floats and swirls near the ceiling, suspended in slow, looping patterns.

Search:

- The area below the cube is clear of rubble and dust, as if all such detritus has been pushed aside. Note:

THE ASTEROID PALACE

PALACE EXTERIOR

- 1 THE RUINED PALACE
- 2 THE STAIRWAY
- 3 THE RUINED HALL
- 4 CRATER BOTTOM
- 5 ENERGY CORE
- 6 GLYPH HALL
- 7 NADIRIAN OUTPOST
- 8 THE PORTAL CHAMBER

10×10 METERS

50×50 METERS



PALACE INTERIOR



Explorers who have played the adventure *The Sky Machine* will recognize and understand this effect.

- Anyone within 5 meters of the cube is hit with a tremendous unseen force and thrown across the room, taking 8 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) in the process.
- A small alcove in the cracked wall contains a control stone (Core Rules, page 264) with the major Glyph Komat indicating its use to operate the energy core.

6 GLYPH HALL

An octagonal hall with a tiled floor opens up ahead. Floodlights from the entryways throw long, harsh shadows over cracked stone.

- A **mosaic glyph** marks the center of the floor, echoed in the vaulted ceiling above.
- The **western door** is sealed, the metal surface dull and untouched.
- The **southern tunnel** is open. A square machine blocks part of the frame, and beyond it, a shimmer of energy obscures the view.
- The **eastern passage** has partially collapsed. Dust and broken tile choke the opening.

Search:

- The floodlights are of Nadirian manufacture but also work as sensors. It is possible to bypass the sensors with a roll for **LOGIC** (Electro-Specialist). Failure will alert the Nadirians, see Event: *Nadirian Patrol*.
- The mural depicts the interior of the palace, featuring a large room with the glyph Nemqu shining with rays in relief, and a stairway behind it leading to a cave of pillars.
- The square machine is situated where the haze starts, creating a force field. A roll for **LOGIC** (Historian, Artifact Specialist) tells the Explorers that this is an explosive decompression (ED) field generator. This is a piece of heirloom technology, of a Nadirian nature. It is possible to pass through the field from the atmosphere in the hall to the vacuum in the tunnel. The ED field is a few meters thick.

EVENT

NADIRIAN PATROL

The sensors in #6 Glyph Hall alert a Nadirian patrol of 6 guards, who will investigate the disturbance. They suspect golem activity and are thus less alert.

- The Explorers can see the shadows of the approaching Nadirians by rolling **PERCEPTION**. Otherwise, the battle will start with drawing initiative as usual.
- The Nadirian patrol will attack as soon as it sees the Explorers and call for reinforcements from the outpost.
- The reinforcements consist of another D3+2 guards and will arrive after D6+2 rounds.

NADIRIAN PATROL GUARDS

Clad in black-and-gray robes over battered vacuum suits, their helmets are smooth and sealed, with featureless black visors that reflect light like obsidian.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 1, Blade fighter 1, Zero-G Training 1, Lookout 1

EQUIPMENT: Thermal pistol, vibrablade, light vacuum suit *Espera*

VIBRABLADE

Grip: 1H Damage: 3 Weight: ½

Bonus: +3 Crit: 5 Feature: Powered

NADIRIAN LIGHT VACUUM SUIT ESPERA

The standard Nadirian vacuum suit is heavily plated and bulky, but it is equipped with thrusters and a floodlight mounted on the torso. Most are worn and well-used.

Armor Rating: 5 Blight-Protection: 1

Features: Bulky, encrypted comlink, flood light, magnetic boots, vacuum resistant, maneuvering thrusters

- **Floodlights on stilts** light up the chamber in a bright light.
- **Half a dozen figures in strange-looking exo-suits** are tending to bulky machines arranged around the chamber.
- **Three tall guards in insectoid-like helmets** stand next to a tall, robed figure.

The portal chamber is the source of the signal and the focus of the Nadirians' efforts. They have identified the raised platform as housing an ancient gate, but have been unable to activate or destroy it. Convinced it is a threat – a remnant of the Seceders' heresy – the Kadurum are aiming to seal it permanently.

This will change when the Explorers arrive, as their Singularity Sphere unknowingly acts as the missing key. See the event: *The Portal Opens*.

GETTING TO THE PORTAL

The Explorers can choose if they want to go in with their guns blazing and trigger a huge fight, or if they will attempt a more stealthy approach. Either way, the portal will be opened due to the presence of the Singularity Sphere. This scene should feel like a partial finale with the Explorers interrupting the Nadirians' archaeological rituals and triggering a three-way showdown.

NADIRIAN GUARDS

Clad in dust-caked vacuum suits with reinforced ceramic plating, the Nadirian scout-soldiers show the wear of long deployment. Their primary duties are monitoring sensors and keeping novorik at bay – but what truly keeps them tense is the presence of the Hounds of Nimis, the priest's protectors.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 3 PER 4 INS 3 EMP 3

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 6

TALENTS: Sharpshooter 1, Blade fighter 1, Zero-G Training 1, Lookout 1

EQUIPMENT: Thermal pistol, vibrablade, light vacuum suit *Espera*

IMYR NEFTER KADER, PRIEST OF KADU

An archaeologist and ordained priest of the Kadurum, Imyr Nefter is one of the few Nadirians trusted to interpret Builder sites firsthand. He is methodical, disciplined, and genuinely fascinated by ancient technology. To him, the ruins are divine echoes: proof of Kadu's shaping hand, not remnants of a lost civilization.

Imyr considers the Seceders not only heretical, but spiritually dangerous – their rebellion a stain on the *Nadir's* covenant. He is calm and respectful, but his loyalty runs deep. No offer of reason or advantage will sway him to betray his people or his god.

STR 3 AGL 4 LOG 5 PER 4 INS 6 EMP 4

HEALTH: 7 HOPE: 9

TALENTS: Archaeology 3, Artifact Specialist 2, Blade Fighter 1, Librarian 2, Sharpshooter 1, Smart 1, Zero-G Training

EQUIPMENT: Brepak battle-suit, extendable spear, thermal carbine with grenade launcher (6 frag grenades), thermal pistol, 3 advanced MediDose, notebook with Dreamer prayers

HOUNDS OF NIMIS

The Hounds of Nimis are both the elite soldiers and the inquisition of the Kadurum priesthood. Armed with cutting-edge technology, surpassing even heirloom tech from the Old Horizon, they are a formidable force to be reckoned with. Their armor is black and ominous, with asymmetric lenses and goggles studded on the helmets, giving them an abnormal and frightening look.

STR 8 AGL 5 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 4 EMP 4

HEALTH: 16 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Blade Fighter 2, Fast Reflexes 1, Reckless 1, Sharpshooter 3, Tough 3

EQUIPMENT: Brepak battle-suit, expandable spear, thermal carbine with grenade launcher (6 frag grenades), thermal pistol, 3 advanced MediDose, notebook with Dreamer prayers

NADIRIAN BREPAK BATTLE-SUIT

The Brepak battle-suit is vacuum-resistant, features servos that negate its bulkiness, and includes magnetic boots and an extra energy source.

Armor Rating: 10 Blight-Protection: 7

Features: Encrypted comlink, flood light, magnetic boots, vacuum resistant, night vision goggles, optinocular lens, weapons harness

NADIRIAN THERMAL WEAPONS

The Nadirians possess similar technology to that which existed in the Old Horizon. The thermal weapons were the original that later became lumin, but they have more powerful energy beams with an almost explosive effect. The weapons are long and elegant.

THERMAL PISTOL

Grip: 1H **Damage:** 4 **Weight:** 1
Bonus: +4 **Crit:** 5 **Range:** Short / Long

THERMAL CARBINE

Grip: 2H **Damage:** 3 **Weight:** 2
Bonus: +4 **Crit:** 4 **Range:** Short /Extreme
Feature: Autofire, Suit Energy*, built-in grenade launcher

*Suit Energy: No reloads as it gets its energy from the Brepak battle-suit.



EVENT

THE PORTAL OPENS

When the Explorers enter the portal chambers, two things happen: the portal opens and the Lamshur Golems awaken. Read or paraphrase below:

Suddenly, a bright blue light radiates from the air above the platform at the far end of the chamber. An oval disk made of oscillating white light shimmers. There are shapes visible in the light, as if there is a shadowy landscape on the other side. At the same time, it is as if the winged statues are filled with life. They each raise a wing to block the way forward to the light, their massive bodies ready to strike.

- If the Explorers draw the Nemqu glyph in the air or visualize it in their minds, the golems will let them pass.
- Attacking the golems or attempting to bypass them will trigger combat. The golems won't respond to anything other than glyphs. The Laam Kaphra Glyph will stop their attack for D3 rounds.
- They are bound to the Entry chamber and can't be affected by the crit effects of fleeing (Core Rules, page 223).

THE PALE HALLS

The breach in the wall is not a cave mouth, but a tear between worlds. Warm, dry air flows outward, carrying the heavy scent of dust and deep time. Beyond the opening lies no chamber

– *only a vast, dim expanse beneath a starless sky. Fine, pale sand covers the ground, drifting in slow waves across the open floor.*

- **The sky is low and moonless**, a silent void that gives just enough light to reveal forms in the dark.
- **Ruins scatter the space**, half-built or half-erased: staircases to nowhere, arches that frame nothing, fragments of forgotten styles stitched together without reason.
- **Clusters of pale blossoms** bloom from a cracked wall – white tinged with pink, soft against the stone, and sweet-scented in the warm air.
- **A single campfire burns atop a high stone column**, its flames small and flickering. Stairs of white marble lead to the top.

Search:

The amount of time the Explorers stay in the Halls decides the consumption of supply. Each analysis takes one stretch of time to perform.

- **Architectural remains:** Roll **LOGIC** (Archaeology) to realize that the building styles of different ruins are alien, from different Builder eras, Ship City-like, and even in styles from the Old Horizon or beyond.
- **The Flowers:** Roll **LOGIC** (Botanist, Investigator) to realize the flowers are the same as those found in Ship City (page 37) and on the dead Seceder scouts. Using **LOGIC** (Laboratorist), it is possible to distill a concoction with both recovering and metaphysical properties; See Pale Hall Orchids, page 174.
- **Atmospheric Analysis:** To analyze the environment, the Explorers must have the right equipment: an environmental scanner, portable lab, or chemical kit (See the equipment tables in the Core Rules). Rolling **LOGIC** (Laboratorist or Scan Operator) allows them to realize the air is clean, non-toxic, non-Blight, with no biological traces (except the pollen from the Orchids), and the gravity is close to a normal standard gravity.
- **4D6 shards** are hidden in the sands near the opening. The shards have a different quality from the ones commonly found. They are not as brittle, with tiny etched grooves and more vibrant colors, as if time hasn't affected them as much. They are worth triple the regular price to the right buyer.

LAMSHUR GOLEM

A six-legged guardian construct with the posture of a great beast and the bearing of a sculpted monarch. Its ceramic hull blends feline musculature with an abstract face – serene, stylized, and vaguely regal. Broad wings are folded tightly along its sides, forming sharp, fin-like sails across its back and torso.

The surface is etched and inlaid with scale-like geometric patterns – repeating across the legs, torso, and wings. Each limb ends in a hand-shaped paw, built for both movement and manipulation. The chest plate, between the forelegs, houses a photogenic array that can emit structured light and project glyphs.

The Lamshur golem was used as a guardian of Builder facilities, in this case, protecting the entrance to the Pale Halls that the Builders had opened.

FEROCITY: 2 HEALTH: 30 ARMOR: 10

AGILITY 4 PERCEPTION 5

LAMSHUR GOLEM SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- 1. Claw Rip:** The golem claws at two Explorers in the same zone. Roll for each attack with 9 base dice (base damage 1, crit 4).
- 2. Laam Glyph:** The chest plate turns dark as a glyph is presented in blue light, drawing the Explorers' gaze toward it. All Explorers within Medium range must roll for **INSIGHT** (Glyph Scholar) – those who fail stop and freeze for one round.
- 3. Blinding Flash:** The scales on the torso of the golem light up in a strobing flash, mimicking cognitive brain patterns. All Explorers within Short range must make a **LOGIC** roll. Those who succeed become Confused, while those who fail lose their next turn.
- 4. Sweeping Wings:** The Lamshur whips its tail at two Explorers within Short range. Both victims suffer 9 base dice (base damage 1, crit 3) damage. If hit, they are knocked prone.
- 5. Crushing Charge:** The golem rushes an Explorer, crushing the victim with its ceramic chest, dealing 12 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3).
- 6. Horrifying Rush:** The golem runs over an Explorer within Short range. Roll for the attack with 10 base dice (base damage 1, crit 2).

EVENT

THE MESSENGER

If the Explorers climb the stairs to the top of the column to investigate the campfire they will encounter the Messenger waiting for them there.

Sitting by a small fire is a hooded figure with its back to you, gazing out into the beyond where the desert plains meet the strange sky. As you approach, the figure stands and turns. It is human in size and shape, but not in form. Instead, it seems to be made of liquid metal. Its face is a blank mirror, reflecting the fire and the stars above. The figure raises one hand as if in greeting, then angles the hand with the palm up. A projection appears, letters forming as if searching for their form. A sentence:

I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

If spoken to, the Messenger will not reply verbally. It answers only by reshaping projections of text, symbols, or fragmented images. It can convey the following:

About itself

- It has no name, but they can call it “the Messenger.”
- It has been waiting here for someone to open the portal.
- It was left here by people fleeing from *Nadir* a long time ago.
- It is a sentient machine created by humans.

Pale Halls

- ☯ This is indeed the Pale Halls. A world beyond your world.
- ☯ However, this location is a fragment, cut off from the rest of the Pale Halls by a vast void (it gestures towards the never-ending desert beyond).
- ☯ The void can be crossed, but it will take a very long time.

Nadir

- ❖ The ship was taken over by the Kadurum. Priests worshipping a Dreaming God.
- ❖ This was met with resistance by some. During the Night of Secession, many thousands fled into this ruin and crossed into the Pale Halls.

What it wants

- Its purpose is to return to *Nadir*, and it will help the Explorers reach the ship.

THE MESSENGER

Built by the scientist-artificers of the Seceder civilization on the other side of the Abyss, the Messenger is a sentient construct far more advanced than anything in the Diaspora. Humanoid in form and seemingly made of liquid metal, its features are blank and mirror-like.

STR 6 AGL 6 LOG 4 PER 5 INS 4 EMP 3

HEALTH: 20* **HOPE: 7** **HEART: 9**

TALENTS: Blade Fighter 3, Bodyguard 1, Defender 3, Evasive 3, Fast Reflexes 1

EQUIPMENT: Mnemonic armor (armor 10), expandable finger scalpel blades (+3, damage 3, crit 3), cloak with camouflage net

ABILITIES

- **Mnemonic Alloy:** The Messenger's body consists of mnemonic alloy, which is tough (*increasing Health) and can heal automatically. It recovers 3 Health every round at the cost of 1 Heart.
- **Internal Bomb:** The Messenger can detonate itself with a blast power of 12, base damage 4, crit 5.
- **No Limit:** The Messenger can push any roll based on STRENGTH twice.

Note, while the Messenger tells the truth about most things, it lies about some fundamental questions. It will not tell them that it carries a bomb, nor that its ultimate goal is the destruction of *Nadir*. And it will not say anything about a civilization across the Abyss. Instead, its answers will imply that its creators are long dead and gone.

LOST IN THE PALE HALLS

Straying deeper than the first cavern into the Pale Halls will affect Explorers differently, but in this campaign, they may get lost. They will get disoriented and lost if they trek beyond four zones into the Halls. Let the Explorers realize the risk before it happens. If they continue deeper, they will see more of the same, but returning will be more challenging. To find the way back, one of them has to succeed with an **INSIGHT** (Cartographer) roll. A new roll can be made once per shift. Remember that supply is consumed at the same rate as during a regular delve.

PALE HALL ORCHIDS

The orchids found in the Pale Halls can be used to create a distillate. There are usually enough orchids near a gate to collect D6+1 units of flowers (each being a light item). By using a portable lab (Core Rules, page 105) or a Greatship Laboratory (Core Rules, page 195) for one shift the Explorers can

create an equal amount of distillate (tiny item). The distillate can be used to:

- Recover 4 points of Health, Hope, or Heart, even if not broken.
- +3 to coax a Bird once (can be used as a reaction).
- +3 to localize an opening to the Pale Halls with a home-built scanner.

THE NADIR

The final part of the adventure and the resolution of the campaign takes place on the ark ship *Nadir*. Floating vertically in the surface atmosphere of the gas giant Nimis, it is visible across the system and thus seemingly easy to approach.

The Nadirians dwell in the upper bow, where failing systems still manage to feed and heat a dwindling civilization. These upper levels are controlled by the Kadurum priesthood and their guards, who enforce ritual order and maintain a semblance of control. Below them, the ship deteriorates into shadow and silence.

The midsection and lower decks of the *Nadir* have been lost to entropy, Blight, and things far worse. Blight Wights move

freely through the warrens and collapsed compartments, and frost, vines, and warped gravity overtake entire sections. Few from above dare venture into these depths – and none return unchanged. The exception is the God Capsule: a sealed chamber suspended under the ship, deep in the gas clouds of Nimis. There, the God-Child Hemet Kad resides in constant communion with the Dreamer God Kadu.

Threading the *Nadir* from bow to stern is the Central Shaft, a monumental spine connecting the living decks to the God Capsule – a single, narrowing path between a dying society and the alien will that dreams beneath them.

THE NADIRIANS

Shaped by centuries of strife, hardship, and dwindling resources, life on *Nadir* is hard. Ruled by the Kadurum priesthood, the ship is governed as a theocracy, their power ordained by the Dreamer God Kadu. Faith and ritual are a constant in everyday life, and while life aboard the ship is frugal, the small population is rewarded in their dreams. While they sleep, they feel the bliss of the Dreaming God and escape the drudgery of their existence.

The Kadurum rose from the ship's command echelon: officers, navigators, and administrators who embraced the visions from Kadu. They transformed from leadership into priesthood and blended governance with mysticism. Over the generations, the Kadurums' authority became absolute.

Opposing them were those who clung to reason over revelation: engineers, technicians, scientific crew, all rejecting the cult of Kadu. They eventually became the Seceders, convinced that the only way forward was to leave

the Kadurum behind and find a new place for their civilization. The Kadurum now portray them as lost souls, corrupted by forbidden knowledge.

NADIRIAN CULTURE

Among the faithful Nadirians, dreams are sacred, and waking life is regarded as a time of endurance and obedience. Children are tested early for dream-sensitivity, and daily routines follow long-held rituals shaped by the teachings of Kadu.

Nadirians commonly wear practical overalls or trousers paired with shirts, often accompanied by a patterned, long robe on top. The colors are usually dark, such as gray, black, or deep green. Preferred headdresses are rolled headscarves or hats that are short, cylindrical, and peakless. Most adults shave their heads, including women, as a sign of humility and clarity.

SECURITY

Nadirian society is tightly controlled by the priesthood, enforced through a stern militia that keeps the civilian population in line. The people, worn down by hardship and surveillance, will raise the alarm if approached or threatened by the Explorers.

Armed patrols move through the outer circles. They ignore or intimidate those they assume are ordinary citizens, but react aggressively to outsiders or suspicious behavior. The elite Hounds of Nimis serve as personal protectors of the Kadurum and are rarely seen – but when they appear, their presence signals the priesthood’s direct interest.

THE TEACHINGS OF KADU

According to the priests of the Kadurum, the Dream God Kadu reveals truth not through speech or signs, but through stillness, delay, and endurance. Wisdom is not achieved – it is received, slowly, by those who wait. The Kadurum teach that struggle clouds the spirit, while obedience clears it. Dreams, silences, and long periods of uncertainty are part of the sacred process. Seeking answers beyond the ship – or rejecting its divine status – is the root of the Seceder heresy.

THE APPROACH

Entering the space around *Nadir* is hard. Since the expedition's arrival, the Nadirians have increased patrols around the ark ship (see below). Any foreign ships advancing towards *Nadir* will be intercepted by Nadirian shuttles and fired upon. The ways to avoid this are by cloaking (page 163), piloting a Nadirian shuttle or using the Nadirian signal protocols or beacon obtained on the ruin asteroid (page 169 and 145). The Messenger, if aboard the Explorers' vessel, will use signal interference to let them approach safely. If the Explorers are discovered the Nadirians will send two Hemetar shuttles to intercept and board their shuttle.

When the Explorers close in on *Nadir*, read or roleplay the text below.

The ark ship Nadir hangs in the red haze of Nimis, upright and massive, its hull disappearing into the clouds below. The structure is layered with dark plating, docking arms, and worn modules, many dimly lit or powered down. Vapor trails drift along its surface as the gas giant's upper winds

push against the hull. No lights shine into the darkness. No signals are broadcast. Up close, the outer hull shows signs of centuries of wear – repairs, scorches, and strange patterns cut or welded into the plating. The ship is still, but intact, suspended in silence above the deeper layers of Nimis.

NADIRIAN SHUTTLE PATROLS

The Nadirians have patrols across the system, both on shuttles and larger ships, but also some smaller bases as well as inside the *Nadir* itself. When a patrol approaches the Explorers' shuttle let them roll for **LOGIC** (using shuttle sensors) to realize a vessel is approaching. They can typically expect to encounter a single Hemetar shuttle with a small crew of four patrol guards (page 168). The Explorers will see strange echoes on their sensors that are hard to distinguish from ice or novorik before the Hemetar gets within 4 segments (Core Rules, page 75).

ENTERING NADIR

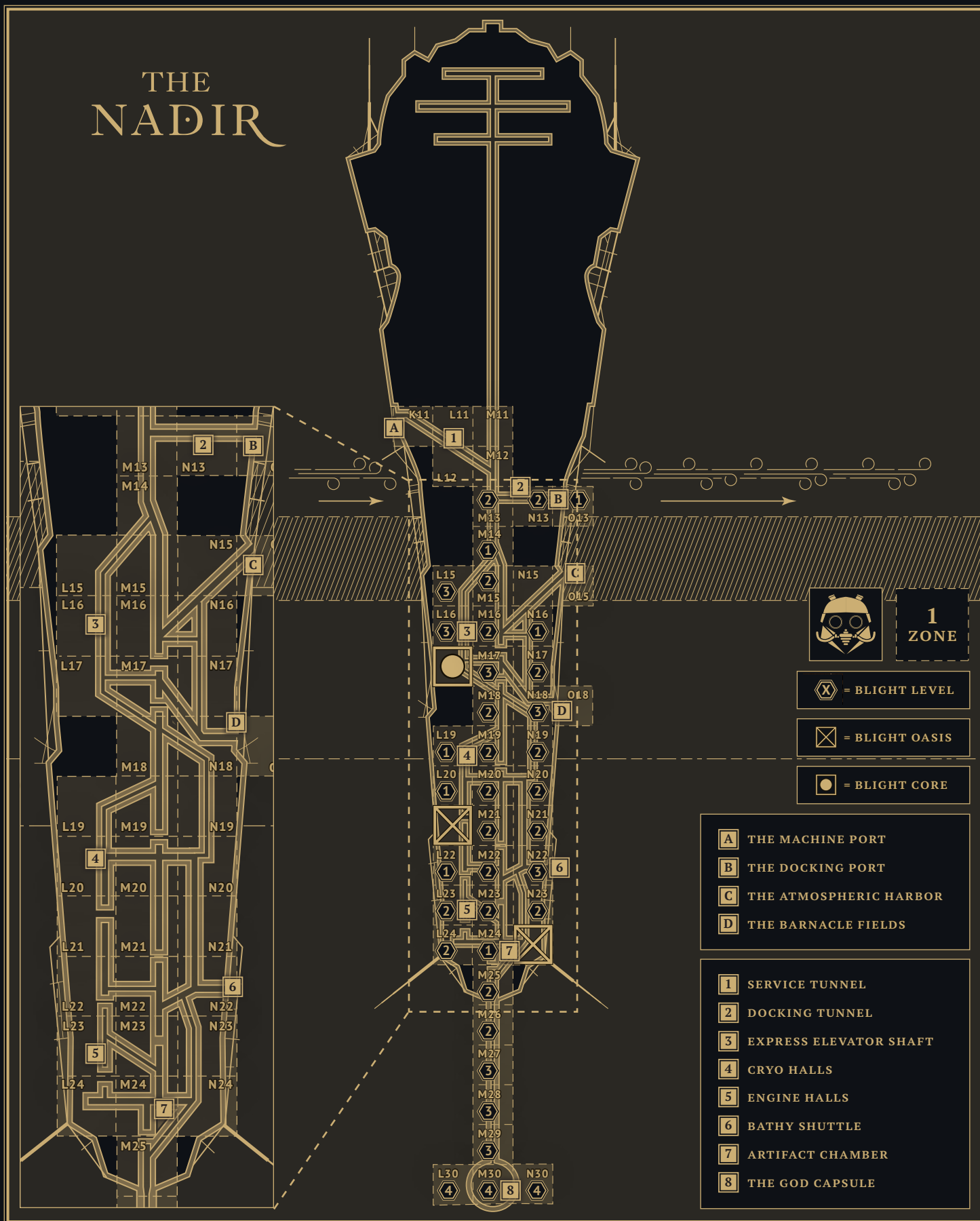
There are four areas where the Explorers may land and enter the ark ship.

- Just above the atmosphere of the gas giant there are two entry points (A, B).
- Below the swirling red clouds of Nimis in the first two gas layers are the remaining two entry points (C, D).

THE MACHINE PORT

A great skeleton of machinery clings to the hull of the Nadir. Spindly legs with claws bigger than shuttles keep the leviathan attached to the black, crusted hull. At its head is a closed iris lock – big enough to dock with.

THE NADIR



- The machine rests in a vacuum, making it easy to land on. Only the red iris of the docking port indicates function.
- The machine is attached to the Machinery Service Tunnel leading into the *Nadir*.
- To reach the God Capsule, the Explorers must delve 21 zones down.

B — — — — — THE DOCKING PORT — — — — —

A rectangular maw, big enough to fit a Greatship, opens into the ark ship. Tendrils of red gas play lazily along the edges, sometimes venturing in – deceptively calm.

- The red shear winds make landing hard (–3), and failure leads to impact on the rigid hull, dealing 8 base dice (base damage 1, no crit) to the shuttle.
- Inside the maw is a docking facility leading to the Docking Tunnel.
- To reach the God Capsule, the Explorers must delve 19 zones down.

C — — — — — THE ATMOSPHERIC HARBOR — — — — —

A gantry stretching into the upper atmosphere is barely visible through the red-orange murk. Wedge-shaped shuttles are docked at landing platforms, lights powered down, and buffeted by the ochre-colored winds.

- After entering the atmosphere, landing on a platform on the gantry is easy (+1).
- Winds make it hard to cross into the *Nadir*, requiring an **AGILITY** roll for each Explorer. Failure leads to a loss of 2 supply before starting the delve.
- Nadirian Patrols (page 168) regularly make rounds on the gantry.

- To reach the God Capsule, the Explorers must delve 15 zones down.

D — — — — — THE BARNACLE FIELDS — — — — —

*The thick soup of Nimis' heavy atmosphere plays havoc on sensors, making the shuttle hull protest and squeak. Approaching the *Nadir* through the haze reveals it to be encrusted by ice and barnacles as the Blight crawls over the ship.*

- The opening to the *Nadir* is in the midst of the barnacle fields.
- Crossing into the *Nadir* will expose the Explorers to a Blight attack with 6 base dice (base Blight 2).
- To reach the God Capsule, the Explorers must delve 13 zones down.

OTHER PARTIES

The Explorers will not be the only party interested in finding out the truth about *Nadir* (and indeed finding the graviton condenser). Use the delving crews found in the Expedition Booklet to add allies, competitors and even enemies during the adventures in Algorab. Other factions from the expedition may arrive at the same time as the Explorers, such as the Coriolites led by Ytreppo Ashur mir-Mira, the Nazur Coriolites with Asmara in lead, or the Toads.

The Messenger will infiltrate *Nadir* simultaneously, regardless of whether it accompanies the Explorers' ship or not. It will work independently to sabotage *Nadir* and will only reveal itself in the God Capsule (see event *The Messenger's Wish* on page 188).

Stop in the name of the God-Child!

CHEREM VOKOF, NADIRIAN PATROL OFFICER

THE DELVE

Moving inside *Nadir* is handled with the delve rules. There are two reasons for this: first, the ark ship is full of Blight, a by-product of the worship of the Dreamer God. Second, the Explorers need to understand that time aboard is limited. There won't be time to explore every nook and cranny of the ship. Instead, faced with the hostile Kadurum priests and the shifting Slipstream they will have to locate the graviton condenser and get back to *Rigel* as quickly as possible.

The delve down through the *Nadir* differs from previous delves in some ways. The first difference is that climbing through the ark ship's hull, shafts, corridors, and tunnels is much easier, meaning that the Explorers will cover longer distances in the *Nadir*. The squares on the delve map correspond to 3 zones in size, and only require one supply to cross. The hazard roll modifier table on page 211 in the Core rules should be modified by multiplying each number by 3.

The second difference is that the different areas of the delve are described, to set a specific mood and feel in

each part of the delve. There are also specific key locations in some areas. In areas with no locations, the GM is encouraged to use the events instead to break up the delving.

PREPARING THE DELVE

The Explorers can get the following information before they reach the *Nadir*:

- While approaching, observing the hull of *Nadir* can reveal the four entry points (A-D, see page 175) and the God Capsule.
- Making a deep scan from any entry point will reveal all the structures inside the ark ship, both above and below the scanning point. If the scan is successful, **give the players Handout #16: Scan Map Nadir**.
- As soon as the Explorers start the delve, the Delver will realize they can cross longer distances than in regular delves – three times the normal distance.



SETTING THE MOOD

The different parts of the delve through Nadir are described in the key locations, but atmosphere is just as important as layout. This is not a ship in service, it is a failing world. The scale should feel overwhelming: wide halls once meant for crowds now echo with every footstep. Transit shafts drop for hundreds of meters, their walls covered by Blight-frost. In many places, the Explorers will feel like ants crawling through the bones of a dead god.

Entropy is everywhere, lights flicker, frost creeps across consoles, slow leaks fill rooms with drifting mist. Gravity fluctuates. Systems hum and sputter unpredictably. Civilization here is not dead, but fading. The Kadurum priesthood clings to control, but their grasp is loosening. The population is sparse. Whole parts of the ship feel deserted. Sometimes hours pass without seeing another living soul. Let the players feel the silence, the collapse, and the ghost of a people who once hoped this would be a new beginning.

DELVE HAZARDS

Delving through the *Nadir* will lead to hazards and events. Use the standard table (Core Rules, page 212) as the default. Some of the Hazards have changed names to fit a ship environment, as shown in the following table. There are also some unique hazards that you can use.

DELVE HAZARDS ON THE NADIR

Dislodged Boulder → Dislodged Plating

Unstable Rocks → Unstable Bulkhead

Blocking Outcrop → Blocking Airlock

Stalagmite Labyrinth → Pillar Labyrinth

Gravel Avalanche → Rubble Avalanche

Landslide → Altered Gravity Vector

Tremoring Ground → Tremoring Hull Floor

DELVE HAZARDS

DISTANCE TO EXIT	HAZARD	EFFECT
18–30	General Alert: Warbling klaxons shriek shrilly throughout the tunnels and shafts, volume rising to a crescendo to repeat again and again.	ALL EXPLORERS Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Suffer 2 despair
30–45	Broken Decompression Lock: A decompression lock is malfunctioning suddenly, threatening to cut the crew off from one another. The lock must stay open!	DELVER Roll STRENGTH Fail: Lose 6 supply
30–45	Metal Hail: When passing a narrow formation of machinery and girders, a mass of metal splinters is dislodged, falling like hard rain on the Explorer.	BURROWER Roll AGILITY Fail: Suffer 12 base dice attack (base damage 1, crit 1)
30–45	Red Fingers: Crimson vapors leak through the fractured bulkhead, creating equally crimson fingers of volatiles that chase after the Explorer.	SCOUT Roll INSIGHT Fail: Suffer a Blight attack with 9 base dice (Base Blight 2)
30–45	Mind Vortex: A puzzle of strange markings on bulkheads, gantries, and girders spikes the Explorer's curiosity. There is a pattern somewhere in there, a meaning – if one could just get one's mind around it.	ARCHAEOLOGIST Roll INSIGHT Fail: Become Shaken and suffer 3 despair
46+	Frightening Shadows: The tunnels and shafts' unnaturalness defies the Explorers' training. Warping light and umbra hide enemies just out of sight.	GUARD Roll PERCEPTION Fail: Become Distracted and suffer 3 despair

ESCALATION EVENTS

Use these escalation events to put more pressure on the Explorers and increase the stakes as they delve deeper into *Nadir*. The first three can be used anywhere in the ship, while we recommend that the last two occur after the Explorers have found the graviton condenser.

ESCALATION EVENT

NADIRIAN PATROL

The depths of *Nadir* are not far enough from the reach of the Kadurum priesthood. Search patrols are regularly sent down into the shafts and tunnels to look for deserters and mutineers. Sometimes, they are accompanied by a Hound,

but often, they are just five guards led by an officer (see Nadirian Patrol, page 168).

ESCALATION EVENT

VISIONS OF KADU

It comes to one Explorer first, then all at once. The Dreamer God. They see a vision: red clouds rolling against a dark sky. A vast shape within. They can sense it. Feel it. The God does not speak, but the Explorers feel an urge to join it among the clouds. To join its dreams. It is so beautiful here, so comforting. But then, something changes. The Gods stirs in the clouds and a sudden presence reaches into their minds.

Wanting to know who they are, what their purpose is. Each Explorer must lose 2 Hope mitigated by an **EMPATHY** roll.

ESCALATION EVENT

HUNTED BY THE HOUNDS

The Kadurum have unleashed their elite enforcers – the Hounds of Nimis. Cloaked in ritual armor and guided by their faith in Kadu, these hunters follow the Explorers into the depths of *Nadir* with one mission: to kill the intruders. There are as many Hounds as there are Explorers, but they will split up and use the advantage of surprise and their knowledge of the ship to set up ambushes and flanking attacks.

ESCALATION EVENT

SHIFTING STREAM

A burst of static cracks through the comm, then a strained voice from *Rigel*: “*The Slipstream drift is accelerating – alignments are failing – you need to start your return journey soon!*”

The Explorers must return imminently of the Expedition is to have a chance at returning to Ship City. It’s a matter of hours, not days, for them to be able to reach the Slipstream tributary before it disappears. If not, *Rigel* will be stranded in Algorab indefinitely, risking the survival of the entire crew.

ESCALATION EVENT

SINKING SHIP

A low groan rolls through the structure, followed by a series of sharp metallic creaks. The walls tremble, and a slow tilt begins – barely noticeable at first, but growing. Through fractured viewports and broken sensors, the red haze of Nimis churns below. *Nadir* is sinking. Not fast, but steadily, dragged deeper into the gas giant’s crushing atmosphere. Heat rises through the decks. Red mist fills the corridors. The ship is dying.

RUNNING THE FINALE

The delve through *Nadir* and the encounter with the Hemet Kad and the Dreaming God is the climax of the campaign. As such, it is recommended that you do a little work beforehand. Use other crews (see Other Parties, page 177) to help or hinder the Explorers when needed. The escalation events provide urgency and increase the stakes as the Explorers go deeper into *Nadir*. Use NPCs such as the caretaker Yerema Harikhet and the artificer Yelek Nuovorov to provide details about the backstory

with the Kadurum and the Seceders. Most of all, make sure that the finale is about the survival of the Explorers and the expedition itself. Lastly, make sure to drive home that the expedition is not a failure, indeed the revelation that there is a proper civilization across the Abyss is a more important find than anyone could have ever hoped for. The true legacy of *Nadir* is not the dream cult of the Kadurum, but the Seceders that crossed the Pale Halls. They are the true Flowers of Algorab.

LOCATIONS ON NADIR

Nadir’s original purpose was as an ark ship that could at the end of the voyage be converted to a space station (much like Coriolis was converted from the ark ship *Zenith* in the Old Horizon). To that end decks were placed vertically around the ship’s axis. As *Nadir* is currently floating in the tower formation the decks’ gravity works as intended, i.e. down is towards the gas giant below.

UPPER DECKS

The upper parts of the ark ship are built in concentric circles around the central axis of the vessel. The following structure is used:

- **Kadurum Quarters:** Along the central core are the Nadirian priest areas, with mostly empty places of worship, living quarters, and libraries. These areas also house some of the fusion reactors that provide

energy to the ark ship. There are roughly 1,000 Kadurum priests and acolytes on *Nadir*.

- **Militia Dorms:** Outside them are the militia's dorms, which have shooting ranges, storage, and empty corridors. They are infrequently patrolled. The militia number 3,000, while there are two dozen Hounds of Nimis on the vessel.
- **General Rings:** The outer rings are for the general populace, with living quarters, large cantinas, faltering hydroponic farms, and service centrals. No-one knows exactly how many live and toil on *Nadir*, estimates vary between 10,000 and 30,000 souls.

All corridors are brutalistic in style, with all piping and cables laid out in the open along the vent ducts and below the floor plating. The interior colors are different shades of gray and black, with untreated metal surfaces for the floor and ceiling. At regular intervals, there are bulkhead locks that work as decompression barriers. The doors retract into the walls or roofs on hissing hydraulics. Gravity is normal standard, aligned towards the gas giant. Light comes from flickering white light strips in corridors and large communal areas, while regular lamps with a healthier, yellow glow are used in personal quarters and the inner circles (militia and priest areas). The lower parts are described with the delve (page 178).

MILITIA PATROLS

The upper parts of the *Nadir* are monitored by the Nadirian militia, in patrols consisting of 3 guards (page 168), where one is in charge. The guard in charge has an encrypted

BLIGHT ON NADIR

Blight has taken hold in the lower decks of the Nadir – a creeping presence the Kadurum rarely acknowledge. It spreads through abandoned halls and collapsed sections, growing across bulkheads, ducts, and exposed systems. It appears as violet-red frost, threadlike vines, and powdery film clinging to surfaces. Creatures shaped by the Blight – like the Blight Wights – roam these zones.

comlink that connects the patrol to the Militia Dorms, but is often hesitant to use it, as it would reveal weakness if it were a false alarm. The militia and guards on the ship are dressed in black uniforms resembling the Espera vacuum suits, but with robes and a plate cuirass (Armor Rating 3).

1 SERVICE TUNNEL

A narrow tunnel stretches into the depths of the ship.

- **Jagged machinery and sharp metal** protrude from the walls and ceiling, narrowing the path.
- **Side tunnels branch off** at odd angles, some lit, others disappearing into darkness.
- **The floor is coated** with soot and leaking lubricant, pooling in shallow slicks across the sloped metal plates.

2 DOCKING TUNNEL

A wide, straight tunnel stretches into the ship, dark and cold as the vacuum outside.

- **Parallel rails run** along the floor and ceiling, scarred and rusted from long-abandoned transport use.
- **Ice and dark Blight growths** spread together across the walls and floor.
- **Massive cargo platforms sit on the rails**, some slowly moving forward in silence, guided by systems still running deep in the hull.

Mounting the platforms, the Explorers can make camp and travel slowly across the Docking Tunnel to the central shaft. The platform will take one shift to reach the shaft. The platform counts as a Blight oasis. There is a risk of repairing kites or patrols intercepting the platform.

EVENT

REPAIRING DRONE

A defunct repairing drone registers the Explorer as damaged equipment and moves to “fix” the problem. The drone resembles a massive wrecker spider (Core Rules, page 114), with a chassis of dark metal, multiple jointed limbs, and a cluster of sensor facets and optinoculars for eyes. It clambers silently along walls and ceilings before striking with sudden precision.

It attacks two Explorers in the same round, one with its saw-blade mandibles and the other with a power drill.

REPAIR DRONE MODEL PAVYK

HULL: 8 ARMOR: 3

- **Saw Mandibles:** 10 base dice (base damage 2, crit 3)
- **Power drill:** 8 base dice (base damage 3, crit 5)

3 EXPRESS ELEVATOR SHAFT

A smooth shaft disappearing down through the body of the massive ship.

- **Glass elevators line** the shaft across three vertical tracks, spaced irregularly. All dark.
- **A single elevator cage** moves slowly down the shaft, its lights faint, disappearing into the red-lit depths below.
- **Gusts of warm wind** push upward from the depths, carrying a mix of putrid decay and old machine fumes.

Search:

- At intervals of D6 zones, a usable cage can be reached. Entering one requires a **STRENGTH** roll using cutting torches (taking one stretch). Once inside, a **LOGIC** roll can activate the controls, sending the cage plummeting at high speed to the lower levels, stopping at the end of the Express Elevator Shaft (See Nadir GM Map).
- The shaft walls are smooth and resistant to pitons or climbing gear; climbing manually requires specialized equipment or creative solutions.

4 CRYO HALLS

Rows of cryo casks fill the vast chamber, stacked in dense, branching racks that stretch from floor to ceiling.

- **Cracked pods leak dark fluid**, pooling on the metal grates beneath the racks.
- **Blight vines and violet-red Blight frost** cover many of the casks, spreading across the racks in slow, creeping patterns.

- **A heavy stench of decay** lingers in the air, rising from ruptured casks and leaking coolant.
- **Bent, shadow-like figures** move between the racks.

This part of the hull holds large hangar halls in concentric circles, which were filled with colonists in cryo sleep. The cryo casks are mostly out of function, cracked and open, and filled with decaying sludge, but some are still intact and functioning. Blight Wights feeding on the leftover carcasses and unawakened colonists roam the cryo storage, silent and deliberate in their work, see the event Blight Wight Feast.

THE SLEEPING COLONISTS

In a twist of fate, Nadir is still home to tens of thousands of sleeping colonists. The Kadurum do not have the resources to sustain any more, so they keep them in their caskets in their dreamless sleep.

EVENT

BLIGHT WIGHT FEAST

As the Explorers move between the racks, they hear the hiss of a cryo cask opening, followed by wet, tearing sounds. Three Blight Wights have clustered around a functioning pod, wrenching it open to feed on the awakening colonist inside. If the Explorers intervene and stop the Wights in time, they will have one disoriented and barely-conscious survivor to care for.

BLIGHT WIGHT

Blight Wights are creatures born of the Blight, formed from colonists left to wake alone in the dark. Twisted by prolonged exposure, their bodies have lost human proportion, stretched thin, with long limbs, pallid skin hardened by Blight, and faces collapsed into featureless masks.

They move through the lower decks of the Nadir, feeding on the dead, the unconscious, and the forgotten – colonists still locked in cryo sleep, lost patrols, and dissenters buried in the ship's ruins. Wights are rarely alone; they gather in feeding groups of one to three.

tending to the cryo vaults in silence. She no longer prays, but she has not entirely forgotten.

Yerema is not bothered by the Blight wights. They pass her by as if she is not there, or as if she's already one of them. Whether it's the slow saturation of her body with Blight, her silent rituals among the sleepers, or the sheer weight of years spent alone, something in her no longer registers as prey or threat.

STR 3 AGL 3 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 2 EMP 5

HEALTH: 6 HOPE: 9 HEART: 6

ABILITIES

- **Dreamer Powers:** Yerema has been blessed by the Dreamer God and developed powers connected to the Blight. They are used as actions with a cost in Blight, decreasing Heart as they are used.
- **Dreamer Power – Bloom (2 Blight):** Small buds start forming on the victim, opening into petals and blooms spewing forth Blight pollen and dust. The victim suffers a Blight attack with 8 base dice (base Blight 1).
- **Dreamer Power – Dissolve (2 Blight):** An Engaged victim is touched by Yerema and their suit and body beneath is dissolved into verdigris glittering Blight crystals, making the victim suffer 7 base dice (base damage 2, no crit). The suit armor rating is permanently reduced by the amount of  rolled.

TALENTS: Acrobat 2, Field Surgeon 2, Nurse 2, Lookout 1, Sixth Sense 1

EQUIPMENT: 4 MediDose (basic), MediKit (basic), notebook with diary, vibrablade

5 ENGINE HALLS

Massive cupolas and engine spheres are suspended throughout a vast chamber, large enough to hold entire neighborhoods. Thick cables, conduits, and feeding lines crisscross the space between them, forming a dense and tangled web overhead.

- **Bright arcs of electricity** jump between broken cables along the walls.
- **Pools of thick coolant** have collected in floor recesses, reflecting the overhead tangle in shifting patterns.

- **Faint vibrations** thrum through the metal floor, pulsing in time with the deep hum of the reactor cores.

This area holds the main reactors and old propulsion projectors, formerly used for space travel but now only active to keep the *Nadir* buoyant in the atmosphere of Nimis.

Search:

- The graviton condenser can be found here, attached to an engine block in a narrow walkway. To decouple it, see the event *Decoupling the Graviton Condenser*.

EVENT

DECOUPLING THE GRAVITON CONDENSER

The graviton condenser needed to restore the *Rigel's* drive systems is a heavy black polyhedral device (weighing 6 Encumbrance). It is embedded deep within the engine hall. Removing it takes 6 stretches of focused work. A **STRENGTH** (Mechanic) test reduces this by 1 stretch per , to a minimum of 1.

Once detached, the condenser emits a deep pulse, and the floor trembles as the old systems begin to fail. Moments later, alarms begin to blare – and the entire ship starts to list unnaturally to one side. A heavy thoom echoes through the vault as the main shaft seals off: thick blast doors slam shut above, cutting off the way back up. The Explorers will need to find another way out.

6 BATHY SHUTTLE

A regular airlock opens to a crystal cupola attached to the hull. It holds the red gas of Nimis at bay. At the top, an iris-lock holds a strange vessel connected to the cupola.

- **The crystal cupola** extends a full shuttle length into the atmosphere.
- **Weak lights** on the side of the iris-lock indicate that it is functional.

Search:

- **The Iris-lock:** A roll for **LOGIC** (Electro-Specialist) using electronic tools or **INSIGHT** (Data Djinn) is required to open the iris lock. Only one Explorer at a time can try to open the lock. It can also be forced

open with **STRENGTH** (Force) and burrowing equipment, but this will destroy the lock, making it impossible to dock again.

- **The Bathy Shuttle:** The shuttle only contains one chamber big enough to house six passengers in suits. It can be used to flee *Nadir* or travel to the God Capsule instead of delving.

BELUGA BATHY SHUTTLE

The Beluga Bathy Shuttle is made to descend into a high-pressure or plasma environment. It looks like a capsular canister with heavy, dark, absorbent plating. Small heat-resistant sensors dot the front and rear of the vessel, as there is no cockpit window. Two side-mounted graviton projectors propel the vessel through the red murk.

THE GAS SEA

Below the upper cloud layers of Nimis lies a sea of turbulent gases. This is a cauldron of red-orange clouds with mixed vapors, traveling at high speeds and pressures across the planet. Normal shuttles can't handle the high pressures and strong gravity of the gas giant and would implode and sink to the depths to be crushed.

7 ARTIFACT CHAMBER

The tunnel opens up into a circular chamber with alcoves set in sectors along the perimeter. The air is warm and smells of ozone.

- **Shimmering green, mauve, and blue lights** emanate from three different alcoves, partly covered with opaque tarpaulins.
- **A dull buzzing sound** comes from behind the tarpaulin with the blue lights, marked with Nadirian scribbles.
- **A round table in the middle** is covered with tabulas, papers, and notes.
- **The floor is littered** with tools and what seem to be parts of strange machines and gadgetry.

This room houses some of the artifacts the Nadirians have collected. Three are in an active state, and one is being examined by the master artificer Yelek Nuovorov as the Explorers enter.

Search:

- The alcove with the buzzing sound houses Yekek examining a construct with a power instrument. See Event: The Artificer.
- Sorting through the table and floor reveals dismantled components, incomplete notes on function and origin, and references to unstable artifacts under study. Some alcoves are wired with improvised sensors and shielding.
- See separate descriptions for the artifact, the Horn (page 186).

EVENT

THE ARTIFICER

As the Explorers enter the Artifact Chamber, Yelek is about to start a new experiment on the caged construct to discern its purpose and powers. It has the usual effect of emitting shrill warbling sounds, resembling human screams of pain. The horrifying effect on the Explorers will be to suffer 2 despair, mitigated by **EMPATHY**.

As soon as Yelek notices the Explorers' presence, he will stop – and when he understands that they are intruders, he will first try to talk to them and then sound an alarm. This might change if the Explorers aren't threatening, and he finally sees them as an opportunity to flee his golden cage as an artificer.

YELEK NUOVOROV, MASTER ARTIFICER

The master artificer of the Nadirians, Yekek of the family Nuovorov, descends from the first mates of the ark ship *Nadir*. Gifted with an instinctive understanding of machinery, he was quickly taken into the Engineering Corps and entrusted with the maintenance of the graviton projectors that keep Nadir suspended in the atmosphere of Nimis.

Though his lineage carries suspicion – most of the Nuovorov family sided with the Seceders generations ago – Yelek’s uncanny ability to comprehend unfamiliar systems could not be ignored. The Kadurum assigned him to the artifact library, where he now lives among relics and machines older than memory.

He wears layered work clothes patched with thermal fabric and stained by years of labor. He's grown bitter in isolation, convinced he's being wasted, but the Explorers may offer his first real chance to act on that feeling.

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 6 PER 4 INS 6 EMP 2

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 8

TALENTS: Artifact Specialist 4, Data Djinn 2, Electro-Specialist 2, Glyph Scholar 2, Historian 1 (Nadir), Jury-Rig 3, Mechanic 3, Librarian 1

EQUIPMENT: Laboratory with home-built technical equipment and scanners (+5), tools, jury-rigged thermal pistol (+4, damage 4, crit 4, range: Engaged / Medium)

THE HORN

A one-meter-long gray artifact, The Horn is a cornucopia or fabricator. When activated, it rumbles and heats up, turning its flat end black. Items held at the back are scanned and perfectly replicated from the point. Living things emerge dead; living originals must roll **STRENGTH** -3 or suffer a critical injury (+2 first digit). The Horn refuses itself by randomly consuming nearby matter – either 10 supply or 2D6 Health within Short range.

EVENT

THE CAGED CONSTRUCT

The construct caught and imprisoned in the laboratory is a proto-Garuda. It has higher intelligence than the Garuda were given. It is shaped like an asymmetric capsule, with the bottom end wider than the top, and jade green in color, featuring subtle shifts that represent its current mood. The construct, naming itself Handrahen-te-nuk, or Handrahen for short, was following Builders into the Pale Halls when intercepted by the Dreamer Kadu, held captive in a pocket dimension, and later given to the Dreamers' acolytes and worshipers – specifically the Hemet Kad. It is held in a force-field cage, and Yelek has yet to penetrate its defenses. Any tampering leads to the mind-breaking warbling scream, made to keep humans away.

If the construct is freed, it will follow the Explorers thankfully until it is off the *Nadir*, but then try to find passage off the Greatships or flee into the Pale Halls if the opportunity presents itself (see Aftermath, page 189).

HANDRAHEN, PROTO-GARUDA

Handrahen has a personality, although it doesn't speak. After getting to know the construct, it is obvious that it changes the color of its outer husk to mimic feelings. An experienced Bird-Handler will somewhat understand the construct if rolling **INSIGHT** – but only the mood or answers like “yes” and “no.”

HEALTH: 9 ENERGY: 9

POWERS: All Bird Powers described in the Core Rules (page 85), but it can only use each one once per shift.

8 THE GOD CAPSULE

A crystal sphere hangs below Nadir connected through a massive cable, suspended in the swirling red clouds of Nimis. Inside, a platform floats at the center – the only structure within the chamber's weightless silence.

- **A black polyhedral device** hangs above the platform, wrapped in bundled conduits and faintly vibrating with internal power.
- **The capsule walls are formed from interlocking geometric plates**, inscribed with sharp, non-Builder glyphs along their seams.
- **Three robed figures kneel in stillness** on the platform, their garments drifting in the absence of gravity.
- **Scarab-like shells lie beside them** – human-sized, black, and faintly reflective in the red light from Nimis.

Search:

- **The platform:** With a roll for **AGILITY** (Zero-G Training), the Explorers may approach the platform. Upon landing on it, they feel gravity gripping them to the platform.
- **The Kadurum priests:** If the Explorers don't interact with the priests, they will remain in their meditative state, but as soon as they approach them, they will wake up, see Event: *The Disturbed Prophets*. A roll for **LOGIC** will reveal that the patterns on their robes are

scribbled algebraic formulas, interspersed with mathematical glyphs, resembling Builder equivalents but more complex.

- **The scarabs:** The scarabs seem to be folded-down armor, resembling those the Explorers have previously seen worn by the Hounds of Nimis.

The Kadurum priests and two Hounds in folded armor will remain still until someone speaks to them or approaches within a meter (Engaged range). If attacked from afar, they will also wake up.

EVENT

THE DISTURBED PROPHETS

When the priests awake, they will address the Explorers and try to subvert them using their Dreamer powers, led by the God-Child Hemet Kad herself (see ability Mental Subversion).

The God-Child speaks:

“You are far from where you belong. This place is held in dream, not in waking. The sleepers around you are not forgotten –they are saved. Preserved for when the Dreamer opens the final veil.”

“You seek to take what sustains us –but know this: the core stays, the faithful remain, and you... must leave.”

“Refuse this mercy, and your minds will know what it means to break beneath the weight of purpose.”

HEMET KAD, THE GOD-CHILD

The Hemet Kad is the eighth child chosen and transformed by the Dreamer Kadu. Though she appears no older than twelve, her skin has a pale, waxen hue, and her eyes shimmer with a faint red-gold light. Her movements are slow and weightless, her voice soft but strangely resonant, as if echoing from somewhere else. Detached and serene, she views the world through a dreamlike logic. She is not hostile, but sees all things – even the Explorers – as part of Kadu's unfolding design. She fears nothing, except disruption.

FEROCITY: 3 HEALTH: 15 ARMOR: 4

AGILITY 3 PERCEPTION 6 INSIGHT 8

ABILITIES

- **Mental Subversion:** The Hemet Kad aims to control a subject using her Dreamer mind power. Make an opposed **INSIGHT** roll, where the Bird may help with +1/energy. If the victim is controlled, it becomes a mindless, catatonic body for D3 rounds. This counts as an action.
- **Unaffected by Blight:** The God-Child is unaffected by Blight.

THE GOD-CHILD SIGNATURE ATTACKS

- Sickening Illusion:** The God-Child creates an illusion affecting D3 victims within Short range this round. The victims suffer 3 despair, mitigated by **EMPATHY**. If they take despair, they will see a random fellow Explorer as an enemy and attack them this round (if they have actions left).
- Heart Rip:** The God-Child extends an immaterial claw into the chest cavity of an Explorer within Medium range and rips their heart, dealing 10 base dice (2 base damage, crit 2). No armor.
- Terror from the Deep:** The God-Child lets an Explorer within Short range see the Dreamer in all its terrifying glory. The Explorer suffers 6 despair, mitigated by **Empathy**.
- Nimis Fumes:** The God-Child exhumes red poisonous gas from the depths of Nimis. The gas penetrates delving suits, dealing 8 base dice (base Blight 3) to all Explorers within Short range. Filter packs work as usual.
- Dreamer Breath:** The God-Child spews forth hot plasma in a cone, hitting two Explorers within Medium range, dealing 12 base dice (base damage 3, crit 4) to them.
- Blight Embrace:** The God-Child opens her mouth unnaturally wide, sending a vivid red light blazing towards one Explorer within Short range, dealing 12 base dice (base Blight 4) to them.

KADURUM PRIEST

The Kadurum priests praying with the God-Child have been selected as worthy envoys and given Dreamer powers as thanks for their devotion to the god-who-dreams (page 157).

STR 4 AGL 4 LOG 4 PER 4 INS 8 EMP 4

HEALTH: 8 HOPE: 8 HEART: 12

- Mental Subversion: The Kadurum priests aim to control a subject using their Dreamer mind power. Make an opposed **INSIGHT** roll, where the Bird may help with +1/energy. If the victim is controlled, it becomes a mindless, catatonic body for D3 rounds. This counts as an action.
- Unaffected by Blight: The Kadurum priests are unaffected by Blight.
- Dreamer Powers: The priests are blessed by the Dreamer Kadu and develop powers connected to the Blight. They are used as actions with a cost in Blight, decreasing Heart as they are used.
- Dreamer Power – Blight Vines (1 Blight): Long red vines sprout from the hands of the priest, snaring an Explorer within Short range. Make an opposed **STRENGTH** roll or become grappled (Core Rules, page 62).
- Dreamer Power – Dissolve (2 Blight): An Engaged victim is touched by the priest. Their suit and body beneath are dissolved into red glittering Blight crystals, making them suffer 7 base dice (base damage 2, no crit). The suit armor rating is permanently reduced by the amount of  rolled.

TALENTS: Acrobat 1, Bodyguard 1, Evasive 2, Malicious 1, Sixth Sense 1, Zero-G Training 1

EQUIPMENT: Blight-infused robes with Armor Rating 4, Blight seeds (2), Blight bomb (1), see page 162.

BLIGHT SEEDS AND BLIGHT BOMBS

Blight seeds and bombs are concentrated Blight given to the priests by the Dreamer. They look like amber-red peach seeds in different sizes. The seeds can be thrown like grenades up to medium range. When detonating, they deal a Blight attack with 6 base dice (base Blight 2) to everyone in that zone. The bombs are larger and can not be thrown, but when detonated through a mind command, they deal 12 base dice (base Blight 3) to everyone in that zone.

EVENT

THE EYE OF THE DREAMER

If the Explorers take their time to investigate the capsule without disturbing the priests (or after a combat), the Dreamer God Kadu will reveal itself.

A massive shadow approaches the capsule from the depths. A luminous orb manifests out of the swirling red clouds – an eye. The pupil is a void into madness, and the iris scintillates in strange geometric patterns. As the eye blinks with terrible omniscience, reality seems to warp, as if the crystal capsule does not exist at all, only the red vapors of Nimis.

- The Gaze of the Dreamer: Being looked upon by the Dreamer is terrifying and has the effect of an attack on the Explorers' Hope, dealing 8 base dice, base despair 1 to each of them.

Having endured the Gaze of the Dreamer, the Explorers will notice a feeling of curiosity and evaluation as the Dreamer probes their minds. Their Bird will shiver, hiding its head under a wing.

Then a voice fills their minds: "WILL YOU DREAM?"

All Explorers feel compelled to answer. To those saying no, nothing happens, but to those saying yes, they will be bestowed with a Dreamer Power each, which develops after the adventure. They will only know they have been seeded with something. The Explorers saying yes will also have difficulty coaxing (–3) the Bird in the future, as it senses their connection to the Dreamer God.

EVENT

THE MESSENGER'S WISH

Inside the crystal shell of the God Capsule, deep in the swirling atmosphere of Nimis, the Messenger appears one final time. It hovers above the platform, framed by the red glow bleeding in from the gas giant beyond.

It angles its hand, and golden text appears in the air.

"You need to leave the ship now. Before it is too late."

A faint tremor passes through the Capsule – barely enough to register, but unmistakable.

"I was sent to avenge those who fell long ago. That purpose is done."

It pauses, and though it has no eyes, the sense of being measured is undeniable.

"The collapse will be clean. This ship will fall, and what remains will be buried beneath the clouds."

The Capsule falls silent once more. No alarms, no warning lights – only the stillness of deep atmosphere and dying systems.

The Messenger lifts its other hand, in it a glowing Singularity Sphere.

"Take this; everything will be clear to you. Now, you must go."

The Explorers can protest or argue with the Messenger, but nothing will help. They can choose to fight it; if so, it will reluctantly fight back with all of its might, so that it can complete its prime directive: destroying *Nadir* and the Kadurum once and for all.

THE FATE OF NADIR

No matter what the Explorers do, *Nadir* will fall – drawn slowly but inevitably into the upper atmosphere of Nimis, either by the Messenger’s actions or the collapse of its stabilizers. Whether it survives the descent is unknown. There will only be time to rescue a few. If coordinated with other shuttles perhaps a hundred souls, at most, can be brought aboard the *Rigel* and *Akhander* – a fraction of the thousands aboard.

If rescued, the return voyage will be tense. The Nadirians, disoriented and culturally distant, will keep to themselves. Some may harbor bitterness, or hidden agendas.

SCENE

THE FLOWERS OF ALGORAB

When the Explorers activate the Singularity Sphere gifted by the Messenger – whether by intent or accident – their vision fractures.

Your eyes open up to the Lost Horizon as you seem to float in the cold black void of flat space. A multitude of stars glitter across the dark, an abyss of flat, slow space. The stars on the other side have planets, moons, gas giants, and from them, you see

the rays of radio emissions and the sparkles of ship drives. They are not dead, but alive. There is a civilization, spread across the stars on the other side of the Abyss.

Then, you see a blue-violet line snaking across the abyss, from one star across the void to the singing stars of civilization on the other side. You see it cross and fork and become a net of violet lines connecting stars on the other side. The connections are growing, almost blinding you. You realize this is the Slipstream, and you see its ports of call on both sides.

As the vision begins to fade, light returns.

You stand in a vast, domed chamber. It is not the interior of Nadir, but somewhere else: clean, white, and filled with gentle light. Smooth walls curve upward without corners. The floor is pale glass. Standing in a semicircle before you are seven human figures, each clad in white robes with high collars. Their skin is dark, their eyes watchful – but kind.

The tallest one steps forward.

"You have seen us," she says. The words are not familiar, yet you understand them well.

"We are the children of Nadir."

"We crossed the Gate before it fell. We carried what memory we could – our dead, and our faith. And we survived."

“From the ruins of our rebellion, we planted new roots. Some withered. Some bloomed. But we endured. We, descendants of the Seceders, are the Flowers of Algorab.”

"You carry part of our beginning. And perhaps, part of our return."

The chamber begins to dissolve, like mist in a breeze. Their faces are the last to vanish.

"We hope to see you again."

Then the vision ends.

After the vision, the Explorers know that there are civilizations in the star systems out there in the Lost Horizon, and they have seen a way – the Slipstream tributary leading to Merrikh from Cape Morimar’s Star. In the future, they may be able to find the Slipstream to cross the Abyss.

AFTERMATH

When the Explorers have vanquished the Hemet Kad or talked to the Dreamer, they can return to space above the red cauldron of Nimis. This can easily be done with a

Bathy Shuttle attached to the God Capsule. The Dreamer will ensure they are uncontested if they leave the *Nadir*.

They will be met by trailing shuttles from the *Rigel* and *Akhander*, who will ferry them back to repair the ships, and

the unanimous vote will be to return to Ship City, with the news of the find and the unfortunate knowledge that the Nadirians are truly lost. Or are they?

Playing out the return trip is optional, but may be used to create new connections within the Guilds for the Explorers. Upon their arrival back in Ship City, things will return to normal, and they will have to relinquish their command of the *Akhandar*. Make sure to increase their standing with the Guilds that they have impressed during the campaign, and reduce their standing with those they have displeased.

Once back on Ship City, the news will be official: *Nadir* was found only to be lost again. The newspapers and occasionals will want to interview the Explorers to hear everything about their expedition and the fate of the lost ark ship.

Zinti novels will be written about their expedition and about the nefarious priests of Kadurum. If the Explorers break the news about the Seceder civilization, the buzz will be even greater. Cults will declare the Seceders heretical, Coriolites will warn against finding a way there, and the Navigators will want to control the situation, as they always do.

The ark ship does not perish. As it sinks into the clouds of Nimis, the Dreamer God Kadu stirs, and the atmosphere itself bends around *Nadir*, cradling it in a pocket of stillness. *Nadir* vanishes from sensors, swallowed by the clouds – only to reemerge days later, drifting silently above the storms of Nimis. The Kadurum have survived. Their isolation is broken. Their god has answered. And now, they remember who left them to die.

THE DISCOVERIES IN FLOWERS OF ALGORAB

The following discoveries are expected to be made during the campaign. The number in the caption indicates the number of crew points earned. The discoveries are connected to specific adventure sites, but some can be utilized in various locations. Hand the players a discovery card once you think it is appropriate. The discovery cards are meant to help the players easily remember the key details of any important finds they make.

- First and Last Man: #1. *The Nadir-Mummy*
- The Search for *Nadir*: #2. *The Singularity Sphere*
- The Ashen Gorge: #3. *Combined Glyphs*
- The Memory Tomb: #4: *Form*, #5 *Memory Imprints*
- The Howling Caverns: #6: *The Birdman*
- The Maw of Death: #7 *Created intelligence*, #8 *Dimensional Rifts*
- The Dreaming God: #9. *The Dreamer*, #10 *The Seceder Civilization*, #11 *Pale Halls*

THE NADIR MUMMY (1)

A traveler from the long-lost ark ship *Nadir* has been found in a Builder Vault in Ship City. This means *Nadir* survived the journey across the Great Dark and is most likely somewhere in the Lost Horizon. If she can be found, perhaps a new destiny can be forged for the people of the Diaspora.

THE SINGULARITY SPHERE (1)

A builder artifact the shape of an apple-sized sphere. The true purpose of the Singularity Sphere remains uncertain, but evidence suggests it is part of a network capable of instantaneous communication across vast distances. Some theorize that once properly attuned, a Sphere might reveal the presence – or even the location – of others in the same network.

COMBINED GLYPHS (2)

There is evidence that minor and major glyphs can be combined to activate, control, or shut down Builder systems within ruins. The powerful Kaphra glyphs appear to achieve similar effects through a single symbol, and in some cases, even affect living beings.

FORM (2)

Visions encountered in the tomb on the moon Kath show ghost-like figures: fluid, shifting beings with elongated heads, no visible legs, and bodies that flicker and blur at the edges. Though roughly humanoid in outline, their form and motion remain wholly alien. This is the first known depiction that may represent the Builders themselves.

THE BIRDMAN (2)

The Birdman is a fusion of human and Garuda forms, its body marked by signs of long-term exposure to the Blight. Despite this, it retains awareness, purpose, as well as an extended life span. Its continued function suggests that the Blight, in rare cases, may coexist with living organisms without full degradation.

DIMENSIONAL RIFTS (2)

The Builders appear to have possessed technology capable of creating rifts, portals, or gates across vast distances and realities. These openings were likely formed by harnessing entropy to weaken the fabric of space, using derivatives of the major glyph Nefelek and the Kaphra glyph Eanu to embed and control the effect.

MEMORY IMPRINTS (2)

At some Builder sites, memories appear to be preserved as lingering imprints, echoes of thought or experience embedded in the architecture. These traces suggest that memory may have been viewed as a fundamental or even sacred element of existence. The presence of a memory key artifact indicates that such imprints were not accidental, but rather part of a deliberate design.

CREATED INTELLIGENCE (3)

The Khar life forms encountered on Astophoris show signs of artificial design, likely engineered rather than evolved. Glyphs such as Nyx, Eanu, and Nefelek appear nearby and

may have served as control mechanisms, regulating their behavior and cognition. The Builders appears to have created, and controlled, life.

THE SECEDER CIVILIZATION (4)

The artificial being called The Messenger is created by humans, but not from people in the Diaspora. There is a civilization on the other side of the Abyss. This culture seems to be founded by the Seceders that escaped *Nadir*. If a Slipstream navigating the Abyss can be found, the Diaspora would not be alone in the Lost Horizon anymore.

THE DREAMER GOD (3)

The Dreamer-God, worshiped by the Kadurum, is a powerful presence believed to dwell within the atmosphere of Nimis. Such a being may even predate the Builders themselves. Furthermore, the Dreamer may not only be linked to the Blight but could also be its source – an origin long unknown to the archaeo-historians of Ship City.

THE PALE HALLS (3)

Finding and returning from the Pale Halls is a sensation. No longer dismissed as delusion or misread data, the Pale Halls are real. Their vast geometry and the presence of the Messenger hint at a deeper purpose: passages that may connect distant systems not only through space, but possibly through time itself.



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