

STARFINDER

CAM1

CAM3

19:22

CAM4

19:22

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SIS

CASE FILES

ABSALOM STATION



MAP KEY

The Eye

1. Jatembe Park
2. Arcanamirium
3. Sunny Palisades
4. Garden Vertica
5. Arabani Art Gallery

The Ring

6. Bluerise Tower
7. The Monarch
8. The Neon Glass
9. Station Security Precinct
10. Pop-Up Doc's Clinic

The Arms

11. Fogtown
12. The Heated Engine
13. Gismo's Storage Locker
14. Abandoned Warehouse
15. Little Akiton
16. Sunny-6's Diner
17. Powerdrive Lofts
18. Eyeswide Agency

The Spike

19. Downlow
20. Julzakama's Loans
21. Case 2 Crime Scene
22. Smuggler's Dock
23. Tru's workshop



STARFINDER

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DRIFT CRISIS CASE FILES

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This book refers to other Starfinder products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Starfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/sfrd.

Alien Archive
Alien Archive 2
Alien Archive 3
Alien Archive 4

AA
AA2
AA3
AA4

Armory
Character Operations Manual
Pact Worlds
Tech Revolution

AR
COM
PW
TR

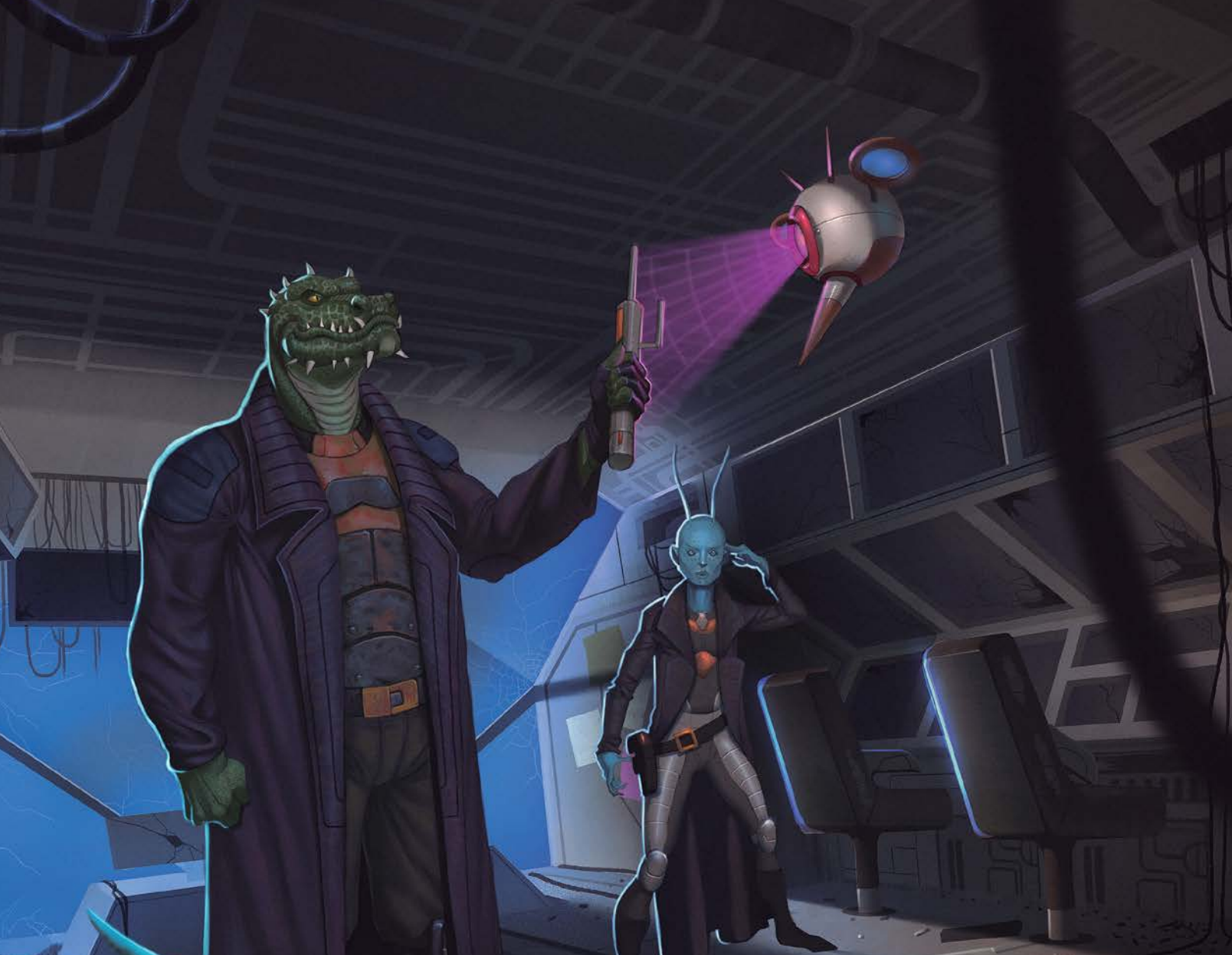
ON THE COVER

The Eyeswide Agency is on the case! Two investigators working as Eyes are searching for clues, using the mystical and technological methods favored by the Agency. Tyver Vorsten, a veteran Eye, invokes his precognitive abilities to cover his companions while they take point. Cover by Kiki Moch Rizky



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DRIFT CRISIS CASE FILES

CASE 1: CHARMED LIFE

Socialite Ingrid hires the investigators to search for her missing friend, influencer and heiress Kym Testa, who went missing around the time of the Drift Crash and never returned home. By following her digital trail, the investigators discover that Kym was hiding a secret boyfriend, who she's run away to be with. Unfortunately, Kym's controlling father has hired a team of ruthless Hellknights to bring her home. The investigators face a final showdown with their rivals after tracking Kym to a pirate hideout in the Diaspora.

CASE 2: FAMILY HEIRLOOM

Edriad, a grandmotherly shirren, hires the investigators to find a family heirloom that was stolen from her. As the investigators soon find out, the so-called heirloom is actually an artifact called the *Heretic Worm*, and it's highly coveted in spite of the fatal curse it carries. The investigators must tangle with a wealthy drow arms dealer and his bodyguards, corrupt Station Security officers, and more in the race to recover the *Heretic Worm* before it causes yet another death.

CASE 3: TWISTED BUSINESS

Maro, an android who returned to Absalom Station after being presumed dead in the Drift Crash, hires the investigators to win back a coin he traded under duress in exchange for safe passage home. Retrieving the coin is a relatively simple matter, but there's more to Maro's case than meets the eye. Before the investigators can close the case, Maro's arrested for murdering his former business partner, Semdrid. To get paid, the investigators search for evidence of Maro's innocence and track the real murderer to an illegal starship dock where she's preparing to flee.

DRIFT CRISIS CASE FILES: STORY MILESTONES

Adventure	Assumed Level	Credit Reward
Charmed Life	3-4	Varies (see page 23)
Family Heirloom	7-8	6,127
Twisted Business	10-11	23,316

GM'S GUIDE



GM'S GUIDE

INVESTIGATORS' MANUAL

CHARMED LIFE

FAMILY HEIRLOOM

TWISTED BUSINESS

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

CONTACT CODEx

Your player characters are private investigators working with the Eyeswide Agency. The three adventures included in this book can be played as one-shots but work best when incorporated into an ongoing Adventure Path or homebrew campaign. If you're interested in running an episodic mystery-of-the-week campaign, pair these cases with curated Starfinder Society scenarios.

Starfinder Society adventures are written for a different level bracket as noted in the product description. A scenario is roughly the same length of one of the adventures in this book.

One of this book's NPCs, Julzakama, appears in *Starfinder Society Quest: Into the Unknown* (level 1), *Starfinder Society Scenario #1-10: The Half-Alive Streets* (levels 1-4), *#1-29: Honorbound Emissaries* (levels 7-10), and *#2-15: The Infernal Gallery* (levels 1-4). Go to paizo.com/starfindersociety for more information and to see the full catalog of adventures.

ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE

Each of this book's adventures is designed for a specific level range and rewards credits as noted on page 2.

ABSALOM STATION

Drift Crisis Case Files is primarily set on Absalom Station. For more information about Absalom Station, see *Starfinder Core Rulebook* and *Starfinder Pact Worlds*.

Important locations the investigators might visit during the course of their adventures are marked on the map printed on this book's inside cover.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Tyver Vorsten (LN nonbinary nuar precog [*Starfinder Galactic Magic* 8]) is a veteran Eye handling the influx of new contractors on Absalom Station. Tyver's seen just about everything, but they always have time for a call from the investigators working for them. Their rough exterior and dry humor don't do much to conceal their kindness and loyalty. It's important to portray Tyver as gruff but likable, and never outright rude or cruel—the party should feel like they can trust their handler.

Tyver's role in your campaign is ultimately up to you and your players. When the investigators struggle to discover evidence or move on to the next phase of a case, use Tyver to guide them in the right direction, either by providing the missing information or hints to help the investigators figure it out on their own.

Tyver isn't the group's only ally. The **Eyeswide Agency Investigators' Manual** introduces players to the NPCs from the Contact Codex, whom they can call on for favors during the events of the *Drift Crisis Case Files*.

Running an investigation can be challenging—even more so than solving one! When organizing and presenting information to the players, consider using aids such as a "conspiracy map" or creating case file folders to store session notes. Encourage

your players to keep track of clues and taking session notes; these can be invaluable for later reference! Consider awarding a reroll or some other bonus to any note takers in the group.

Investigations can be challenging for players, too! If your group gets stuck, have the NPCs step in to provide a hint or give struggling investigators the information they need. It's important to talk with the players first about their preferences regarding GM and NPC assistance. Remember, the point of *Drift Crisis Case Files* isn't to stump the player characters but empower them to solve each case in a way that's fun for everyone.



TYVER VORSTEN

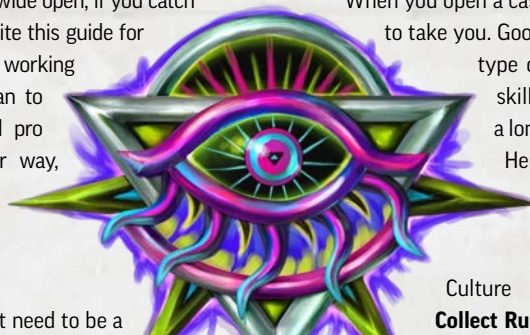


INVESTIGATORS' MANUAL

Welcome, agent. Name's Tyver. I've worked a lot of cases and seen things that would stop you right in your tracks. In this line of work, you have to keep your eyes wide open, if you catch my drift. The boss asked me to write this guide for newbies like you, to prepare you for working your first case. Look, I don't mean to offend—maybe you're a seasoned pro picking up contract work. Either way, here's my introduction to the job.

NICE TO MEET YOU, KIDDO

Anybody can be an Eye. You don't need to be a psychic to work for us—Triune knows most of us aren't. Our best detectives use their street smarts and powers of deduction to close cases. Now I bet you're wondering if we have any real psychics on the payroll, or if you joined up with a scam operation. Don't worry, kiddo. Our Psy-Eyes are the real deal. They're big on privacy, so don't go sniffing around unless you're already in the know. It's for your own good.



**Eyeswide
Agency Logo**

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

When you open a case, you never know where it's going to take you. Good Eyes are ready for more than one type of investigation and have the right skills to close cases. I've been doing this a long time and even I still get surprised. Here's some situations you might run into out there, and the skills you need to succeed.

Search the Infosphere: Computers,

Culture

Collect Rumors and Gossip: Bluff, Diplomacy, Perception

Interview Witnesses: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive

Academic Research: Life Science, Mysticism, Perception, Physical Science, related Profession skills

Infiltration: Acrobatics, Athletics, Computers, Engineering (to disable locks and traps), Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Exploration: Perception, Piloting, Survival

GETTING AROUND IN STYLE

We're based on Absalom Station, and that's where most of our business is, but cases can take you far from home fast. Whenever you're working a case, we'll loan you a ride. We outfitted a few of our custom Ringworks Wanderers with *constellation orreries* so you can still get around without the Drift. We solved a big case involving the Church of Ibra last year, so they hooked us up. I'm keeping that part in, and I don't care what the boss says.

WANDERING EYE

TIER 4

Custom Ringworks Wanderer

Medium explorer

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1)

AC 17; **TL** 17

HP 65; **DT** —; **CT** 13

Shields light shields 80 (forward 20, port 20, starboard 20, aft 20)

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

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

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** *constellation orrery*; **Systems** basic long-range sensors (+2), mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses, mk 1 tetranode computer; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (2), escape pods (4), recreation suite (trivid den)

Modifiers +1 to any 4 checks per round, +1 Piloting;

Complement 6 (minimum 4, maximum 6)



Wandering Eye

Shields heavy shields 240 (forward 60, port 60, starboard 60, aft 60)

Attack (Forward) particle beam (8d6; 20 hexes)

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

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

Attack (Turret) particle beam (8d6; 20 hexes)

Power Core 2 Pulse Green (300 PCU); **Drift Engine** *constellation orrery*; **Systems** advanced long-range sensors (+4), mk 10 armor, mk 10 defenses, mk 3 tetranode computer; **Expansion Bays** escape pods (4), medical bay, power core housing, recreation suite (trivid den)

Modifiers +3 to any 4 checks per round, +1 Piloting;

Complement 6 (minimum 4, maximum 6)

WANDERING EYE

TIER 8

Custom Ringworks Wanderer

Medium explorer

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

AC 24; **TL** 23

HP 75; **DT** —; **CT** 15

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

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

Attack (Starboard) coilgun (4d4; 20 hexes)

Attack (Port) coilgun (4d4; 20 hexes)

Attack (Turret) particle beam (8d6; 20 hexes)

Power Core 2 Pulse Green (300 PCU); **Drift Engine** *constellation orrery*; **Systems** basic long-range sensors (+2), mk 6 armor, mk 6 defenses, mk 2 tetranode computer; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold, escape pods (4), power core housing, recreation suite (trivid den)

Modifiers +2 to any 4 checks per round, +1 Piloting;

Complement 6 (minimum 4, maximum 6)

MAKE FRIENDS AND YOU'LL GO FAR

Any friend could be a foe, and vice versa—you'd be surprised! Best way to handle it? Know when to ask for help. There's a network of contacts out there who can help you. Go talk to them!

My friend **Luca** tends bar down the street at the Neon Glass. Go see her if you need a stiff drink and the latest gossip. If you're ever in a bind, ask for the special. She only serves it to her favorite customers, so better pony up.

I owe Captain **Dax Vega** a lot. Station Security can make or break a case for us—imagine being blocked from exploring a crime scene, for instance. Vega's worked StatSec almost as long as I've been an Eye, and somehow he still hasn't lost his shine. He plays by the rules, so if you don't, stay out of his way, or be smart about it.

Ever heard of Grrl Mechanica? Her real name's **Tru**. Real tech wiz, so if something breaks, bring it to her and she'll soup it up for you. Hide your corporate logos when you're down there.

Julzakama is a character. He runs a pawnshop in Downlow. If he trusts you, he'll sell you all kinds of goodies. He knows a lot about guns and crime, too, but don't tell him I said that.

There's a medic based out of the Ring who's worth knowing—goes by **Pop-Up Doc**. They'll fix you up, no questions asked.

If you're ever stumped by magical matters, head over to the Arcanamirium and tell **Professor Radanta** I sent you. He'll sort you out.

WANDERING EYE

TIER 11

Custom Ringworks Wanderer

Medium explorer

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

AC 31; **TL** 29

HP 75; **DT** —; **CT** 15



CHARMED LIFE



"This won't surprise you, but we get missing cases all the time. Cold cases, people that wanted to get away, people that didn't want to get away, and people that couldn't get away. Most of them aren't happy stories, but the worst are when they don't have a reason to come home."

*—Detective Tyver Vorsten,
Eyeswide Agency Veteran*

CASE BACKGROUND

Many lives were lost in the Drift Crash, and thousands more were reported missing. Socialite and infosphere personality Kym Testa wasn't one of them, though she disappeared during the Crash and was presumed dead by her family and fans. What none of them know is that the heiress still lives, having fled her life of luxury to elope with the love of her life, space pirate Red Eskil.

Before the Drift Crash, Kym worked as a model and variety streamer with a huge following on Absalom Station. She's the only child of Jholo Testa, a wealthy Verces-based startup mogul. Jholo monitored every aspect of his daughter's life even after she grew up and launched her own career, using access to his money to keep her under control. Kym resented her father's rules and broke them whenever she could, ditching her babysitter bodyguards and sneaking into bars, downtowns, and other locations Jholo deemed unworthy of his daughter. It was in one such place where Kym met space pirate Eskil Edris, also known by his nickname Red Eskil, laying low after his run on an Arabani Arms shipment went south. Eskil's insistence on donating a portion of his earnings to charity inspired Kym, who romanticized his way of life. The two began a secret relationship, and Kym eventually decided to join Eskil in his life of piracy.

The pair eloped and honeymooned on the planet Varturan before heading to Eskil's hideout in the Diaspora to begin their life together. The lovers didn't have much of a plan, but luckily for them, the Drift Crash occurred soon after their trip, providing a perfect cover for their escape.

Kym hoped her father would accept her death as fact. But after he accessed her financial records, Jholo noticed unusual withdrawals and transfers made prior to Kym's disappearance. This evidence led him to believe his daughter was alive and hiding from him—and he's decided it's time to bring her home.

Jholo contracted the Order of the Chain, a group of Hellknights known for bounty hunting, to track down his daughter. The Hellknights care only for the letter of the contract and intend to bring Kym home whether she wants to go or not, regardless of collateral damage.

Luckily for Kym, her friend Ingrid recently used her own substantial fortune to hire the Eyeswide Agency to uncover the truth.

THE CLIENT

Tyver Vorsten (page 3) contacts the investigators about a new case and arranges a meeting with the client at the Eyeswide Agency's headquarters. When the player characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

A dwarf with a shaved, tattooed head dressed in designer attire sits in a chair across from Tyver's desk, fidgeting with the comm unit in her hands. Tyver nods in greeting as the investigators enter.

"Everyone, meet Ingrid," Tyver says, nodding to the dwarf before addressing her. "Ingrid, this is the team that will be handling your case. Please tell them what you've told me."

"Right," Ingrid begins. "You've probably heard of Kym Testa. She's got it all—she's an influencer, model, streamer, trendsetter—and she's my dear friend. Well, no one's heard from her in forever. The last time I talked to her, she said she was going on vacation somewhere. Then the Drift Crash happened. She still hasn't even posted a single update. Not one bikini selfie or anything. I think something seriously bad might have happened to her."

Ingrid (N female dwarf) comes off as flighty yet earnest, with a shrewd business sense concealed beneath her glamorous exterior. She's eager to locate her friend and cooperates fully with the investigators throughout this adventure, potentially even going out of her way to do them a favor (a reroll with a +2 circumstance bonus, at the GM's discretion).

As part of the information exchange, Ingrid provides Kym's home address—Number 2209,



STARTING THE INVESTIGATION

After interviewing the client, the investigators should begin gathering clues about Kym and her last known whereabouts. If the investigators struggle with deciding their next steps or determining which lead to pursue, Tyver nudges them toward any of the following avenues of investigation.

Garden Vertica, the Eye—if the investigators ask. Ingrid doesn't have a key and can't help the investigators access the property. She doesn't think Jholo has a key, either.

Examples of questions investigators might ask Ingrid are provided below, along with her answers. It's possible that investigators ask some of the following questions after discovering evidence or talking to Jholo; in that case, Ingrid's always reachable through her comm unit.

Is Kym's family worried about her? Ingrid's expression sours. "I'm sure Jholo already hired someone to track her down if he thinks she's alive. Screw him! Kym doesn't need his help."

Who's Jholo? "Jholo is Kym's bio dad. He's a real piece of work."

What can you tell us about Jholo? "He wasn't in Kym's life, and it rankled him. He used to hire bodyguards to follow her around without her consent. He's really controlling, like he thinks of his daughter as an investment instead of a person. Turns out a lot of mega-rich guys are like that."

Where do you think she went? "I wish I knew.

The last time we talked, she told me she was taking a trip to celebrate something special, but she didn't tell me what it was, or where she was going. She really likes beaches, so maybe Castrovel?"

You're her friend, why don't you know more about her? Ingrid crosses her arms and glowers at the questioner. "Excuse me? Do you have any idea how difficult it is to have your whole life on the infosphere?

The last thing you want is for your friends to interrogate you. Everybody needs their secrets. Kym doesn't have to tell me everything for me to have her back."

What does Kym do in her spare time? "What spare time?" Ingrid scoffs. "She keeps to herself. She's into journaling, meditation, the gym. She has a thing about charity work, too. It's really cute."

Does Kym have a significant other? "Kym's all about the grind. She told me once she didn't have time for a relationship when she was trying to

manifest her dream life and change the world. If she's seeing anyone, it's not serious. Girl's got goals."

What else can you tell us about Kym? "She's a force. Once she makes her mind up, there's no stopping that girl. Kym's sheltered—that's Jholo's fault; by the way, I cannot stand that man—but she knows what she wants in life, and she's willing to do what it takes to get it. And I admire the hell out of her for that."

Where do you suggest we start looking? Ingrid waves her comm unit and taps the screen with a manicured nail. "Duh." (If asked, she clarifies that she's referring to using the infosphere to find more information about Kym's disappearance.)

GOSSIP AND RUMORS

Even though she's been gone for months, Kym Testa has a high profile on Absalom Station. The investigators can learn what others are saying about her based on the results of a Diplomacy check to gather information, a Culture check, or a Profession (Video Personality) check. The DC for all such checks is 14. The investigators can attempt as many checks as they want. Each check represents a brief in-game scene, such as chitchatting with a socialite at a party or doing a deep dive of an infosphere gossip forum. The investigators learn at least one new piece of information for each successful check. An in-depth social encounter might provide more than one clue, whereas a character recalling information might provide only one, at the GM's discretion.

Clues: The investigators discover the following clues as a result of the above checks.

- Kym works as a video personality and model. She has a massive following on the photo- and video-sharing site Phototon.
- She stopped producing new content right before the Drift Crash, after announcing that she'd be going on vacation.
- Kym spends her weekends at soup kitchens in the Spike.
- Kym's volunteer work is just a photo op; she only cares about herself.
- Kym's never been photographed with a date.
- Kym went through a breakup so nasty that her ex ended up in jail.
- A stalker broke into Kym's apartment last year.
- The crime scene photos from Kym's apartment are totally doctored. It's all a publicity stunt.
- Kym's infosphere empire is a lie. She buys all her likes with her father's money.

Following Up: Gossip isn't always accurate, and while some of the above statements are false, learning this information can provide investigators with a lead.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Kym's public social media profiles contain a trove of information about her life. Up until her disappearance, she posted prolifically on Phototon, a photo- and video-based blogging platform. Many of Kym's posts are sponsored content advertising fashion brands or streaming-related equipment. She first posted about volunteering two years ago with a video from the soup kitchen where she served meals. The investigators can discover clues about Kym's whereabouts by sifting through years of selfies, status updates, and short videos. For each hour an investigator studies Kym's Phototon account, they discover a clue depending on the result of the skill check detailed below. Unless the investigators specify the type of information they're looking for, the GM should determine the order of discovery.

Clues: The investigators discover some clues automatically by spending at least an hour searching, but some require a successful skill check as noted.

- There are no pictures of Kym's family on any of her public social media profiles.
- While many of Kym's posts are fiercely positive in tone, she sometimes expresses frustration without naming the target of her feelings. Examples include: "Despite what some fossil says, you don't need to be stuck in an office your whole life to have a real career"; "Anyone want to trade families?"; and "Remember, just because someone contributed their genetic material to your existence, doesn't mean you owe them anything!!!"
- A private social media account lists Kym as in a romantic relationship with someone named Tarven Korso.
- Kym has a stylized skull-and-crossbones tattoo that's visible in some of her photos. (DC 14 Perception)
- The tattoo is the holy symbol of Besmara, patron goddess of piracy, space monsters, and strife. None of Kym's posts indicate she's religious or make mention of the tattoo. (DC 18 Mysticism)
- Many of Kym's recent posts have links to donate credits to charities.
- A selfie shows Kym with Grrl Mechanica (a.k.a. Tru; see page 63), a controversial local activist.
- In a friends-only post, Kym rants about the rampant corporate greed in the Pact Worlds system and how it's killing people every day. The video is accompanied by a comment from Kym saying she'll probably delete it later. (DC 19 Computers)
- Kym's final post is a smiling selfie on a beach with the caption, "Last post before my social media



Kym Testa

break. Talk 2 you lovelies in a few months!" The tidal flats in the background populated with beachgoers—many of whom are brenneri—are identifiable as those on the planet Varturan. (DC 17 Culture or Physical Science)

- Most of Kym's posts were made in Absalom Station, but some originated as a Drift Beacon ping, meaning she posted from a planet outside the Pact Worlds. Her final post originated on Varturan. (DC 20 Computers)

Red Herring: One clue from Kym's social media accounts is doomed to lead nowhere—for good reason, since that's how she designed it. Tarven Korso isn't real; Kym created a fake account to distract her father from her real love life. Tarven's public profile shows that he's a wildlife photographer who travels for work often, sometimes completely off the grid on remote planets. His latest set features breathtaking photos of watery Varturan.

Attempts to reach the photographer lead nowhere. A PC can follow Tarven's infosphere trail with a successful DC 22 Computers check, revealing the fabricated nature of the account. His photos are all stock images, and only about a year of his life is recorded online, his posts stopping entirely with Kym's disappearance.

As part of the same Computers check, investigators can trace photos from Tarven's portfolio to another wildlife photographer's infosphere site. If the investigators contact the photographer, she claims she's never heard of Tarven Korso and can't find his name listed anywhere in her guild's directory. Someone anonymously purchased commercial rights to her Varturan series a few months ago. She shares what she knows with the investigators but can't provide further information about Kym or her whereabouts.

Following Up: If the investigators ask Tru about Kym, she remembers that Kym seemed earnest about social justice but a bit out of touch with reality, as though she'd lived a sheltered life. Tru appreciates the media attention Kym can bring to her causes and hopes she's safe.

PUBLIC RECORDS

Investigators can search public records for information about Kym's life or hack into private corporate databases for records of her financial activities. For each hour an investigator researches Kym, they get the chance to identify a clue. Unless the investigators specify the type of information they're looking for, the GM should determine the order of discovery.

Clues: The investigators discover some clues automatically by spending at least an hour searching, but others require a successful skill check as noted.

- Kym volunteered regularly at a food bank in the Spike. If contacted, her supervisor tells the investigators Kym is sorely missed for her hard work and upbeat attitude.
- Kym has a permanent address on Verces but currently lives in a high-rise condo in the Nyori Palisades, a wealthy residential neighborhood in the Eye. (DC 16 Computers or Profession [realtor])
- Kym withdrew most of the credits from her AbadarCorp bank account right before her disappearance. She withdrew the funds in the form of untraceable credsticks and UPBs. (DC 22 Computers)
- Kym's name appears on a marriage license issued on Akiton alongside Eskil Edris. There's no mention of this individual on any of Kym's social media accounts or other records, nor does Eskil exist on the Absalom Station infosphere. (DC 18 Computers)
- Kym filed a restraining order against a person she accused of stalking her, Watkyn Card. The same individual was later arrested for breaking into Kym's apartment. Both incidents occurred last year. (DC 20 Computers or Profession [lawyer])

Following Up: This research reveals Kym's address if the investigators don't know it already. There's no mention of Eskil in any of Kym's social media accounts or other records, nor does Eskil exist in any public records on Absalom Station.

Though Watkyn was incarcerated before Kym's final Phototon post and is probably not their first suspect, investigators can arrange to interview him at Sunny Palisades.

SUNNY PALISADES

Watkyn Card was arrested for breaking into Kym's apartment a year ago. He's currently incarcerated in a cushy prison facility in the Eye euphemistically named Sunny Palisades. The facility's waiting list doesn't have an open visitor spot for 2d10 days, though calling in a favor from a contact (such as Dax Vega; see page 58) provides a shortcut through the bureaucracy, reducing the wait time to 2d4 days.

Watkyn Card (CN male human) is a trust fund slacker who ran in the same circles as Kym for years, developing a one-sided crush on her that only strengthened when



WATKYN CARD

A. KYM'S APARTMENT

■ = 5 FEET



she rejected him. He's an elitist snob who believes he's done nothing wrong, instead blaming others for his own actions. He only speaks freely with the investigators if they treat him with respect or seem to believe in his innocence. He gets defensive if they accuse or insult him, though investigators can soothe his bruised ego with a successful DC 19 Diplomacy check—but only once.

Clues: Watkyn doesn't know where Kym is now, but he knows about (and disapproves of) her relationship with Red Eskil. He smugly tells the investigators the "romantic" story of meeting Kym time and again at events, with her "always playing hard-to-get." According to Watkyn, Kym was "the one" and he planned to sweep her off her feet with a grand romantic gesture, but his illusions were shattered when he discovered she was "cheating" on him with "some loser wannabe." He's referring to Red Eskil, who was with Kym when Watkyn broke into her apartment to make his "romantic gesture." He doesn't know Eskil's name but describes him as a "scary-looking" red-furred pahtra who was heavily armed and dressed in flashy clothing.

He says Kym never publicly dated anyone, which is why he thought she was available. Watkyn claims he's over his attraction to Kym but still worries about her safety all the time; he rants to anyone who will listen about how this is what happens when "girls want bad boys" instead of "nice guys" like himself.

GARDEN VERTICA

Kym lives on the twenty-second floor of Garden Vertica, a terraced tower in the Nyori Palisades neighborhood, dripping with greenery from all over the Pact Worlds. Security's tight, and it's difficult to get past the elegant lobby without authorization. An investigator can gain access to the residential levels with a successful DC 17 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Stealth check. Mentioning the Eyeswide Agency or name-dropping Ingrid or Kym grants a +2 circumstance bonus to these checks. Investigators can attempt other checks at the same DC, such as Disguise (to impersonate a resident), Culture or Computers (to fabricate appropriate credentials), or an appropriate Profession (to impersonate a worker). Investigators can access the building's security footage by hacking the system (DC 20 Computers) or persuading a worker (DC 18 Bluff or Diplomacy).

Clues: Investigators can discover the following clues by spending at least an hour searching, but others require a successful skill check as noted.

- Kym never used her guest passes or had overnight visitors; this fact is supported by security footage and staff testimony.
- Kym hasn't returned home lately, but the maid services she ordered continued. Both the apartment and services were paid up front and have many months remaining before another scheduled payment.

At first, Kym ignored the staff, as is typical for someone of her wealth, though she always tipped lavishly. Over time she grew friendlier and began supplementing tips with gifts and small favors for workers she interacted with.

Irie (NG female halfling), the receptionist, confesses she sometimes helped Kym out by discretely letting a friend of hers into the building through the employee entrance. She describes Kym's friend as a pahtra with striking red fur and fashionable flair. She doesn't know exactly why Kym wanted to keep her relationship with him secret, but also doesn't consider it any of her business. (DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate)

A few days ago, two people in dark coats and sunglasses were caught snooping around on Kym's floor outside her apartment. They left as soon as security confronted them and haven't returned.

Development: The investigators don't know it yet, but the two suspicious strangers are the Hellknights Jholo hired to track down his daughter, and they're currently one step ahead of the player characters' own investigation!

A. KYM'S APARTMENT

If the investigators win Irie over, she escorts them to the unit and lets them in to look around. Otherwise, they can bypass the residence's electronic locks with a successful DC 21 Computers or Engineering check. On a failure, an alarm sounds and the investigators have 5 minutes to leave before Station Security responds to the break-in. If combat breaks out, use the statistics for Garwal and two security enforcers on page 36; this fight should be clearly beyond the investigators' current abilities, forcing them to retreat or be arrested. Triggering the alarm causes Irie to add the investigators to a list of suspicious persons, and they can't investigate Garden Vertica or the apartment further without first succeeding at a DC 22 Disguise check.

Kym paid for a year's rent up front, and there's still power, water, and infosphere access in the vacant apartment. The space is immaculately clean thanks to a professional cleaning service, with all visible trash bins emptied and surfaces sparkling. Kym took most of her belongings with her when she left for her honeymoon, but investigators can discover clues that hint at her current whereabouts on Varturan by searching her apartment.

A1. LIVING ROOM (CR 4)

When they enter Kym's apartment, read or paraphrase the following.

Number 2209 is a spacious corner unit with a large greenery-shaded balcony across from the entrance. One of its outward-facing walls is entirely made of glass, granting a view of the glittering towers that populate the neighborhood. The residence's decor is styled in beige and cream, featuring a sumptuous

den lined with teal couches surrounding an entertainment system. On the other side of the living room is a chrome-accented kitchen. A picture-lined hallway leads to two polished wood doors, both ajar.

The walls are decorated with holographic prints of beach and waterfall scenes, along with professional quality photos of Kym Testa. Very few of the images show other people posing along with her.

Clue: With a successful DC 17 Perception check, an investigator notices a brochure for Sanctuary Suites on the kitchen counter. The front shows a photograph of a beach at sunset and describes the resort as a peaceful escape from the stresses of everyday life, perfect for individuals, families, and romantic getaways. Kym traced tiny pink hearts around the words "romantic getaways."

Creatures: After a stalker broke into her apartment last year, Kym installed a security robot that activates and responds with subduing force should any unauthorized visitors enter the area.

PATROL-CLASS SECURITY ROBOT

CR 4

XP 1,200

HP 52 (*Alien Archive* 94)

TACTICS

Before Combat The robot follows its programmed routine to shut off the apartment's lights and begin blasting an aggroynth song before attacking.

During Combat The robot starts combat with a jolting arc, then slams into the nearest enemies.

Morale The robot's programmed to fight until destroyed.

Development: After dealing with the security robot, the player characters can continue search the apartment.

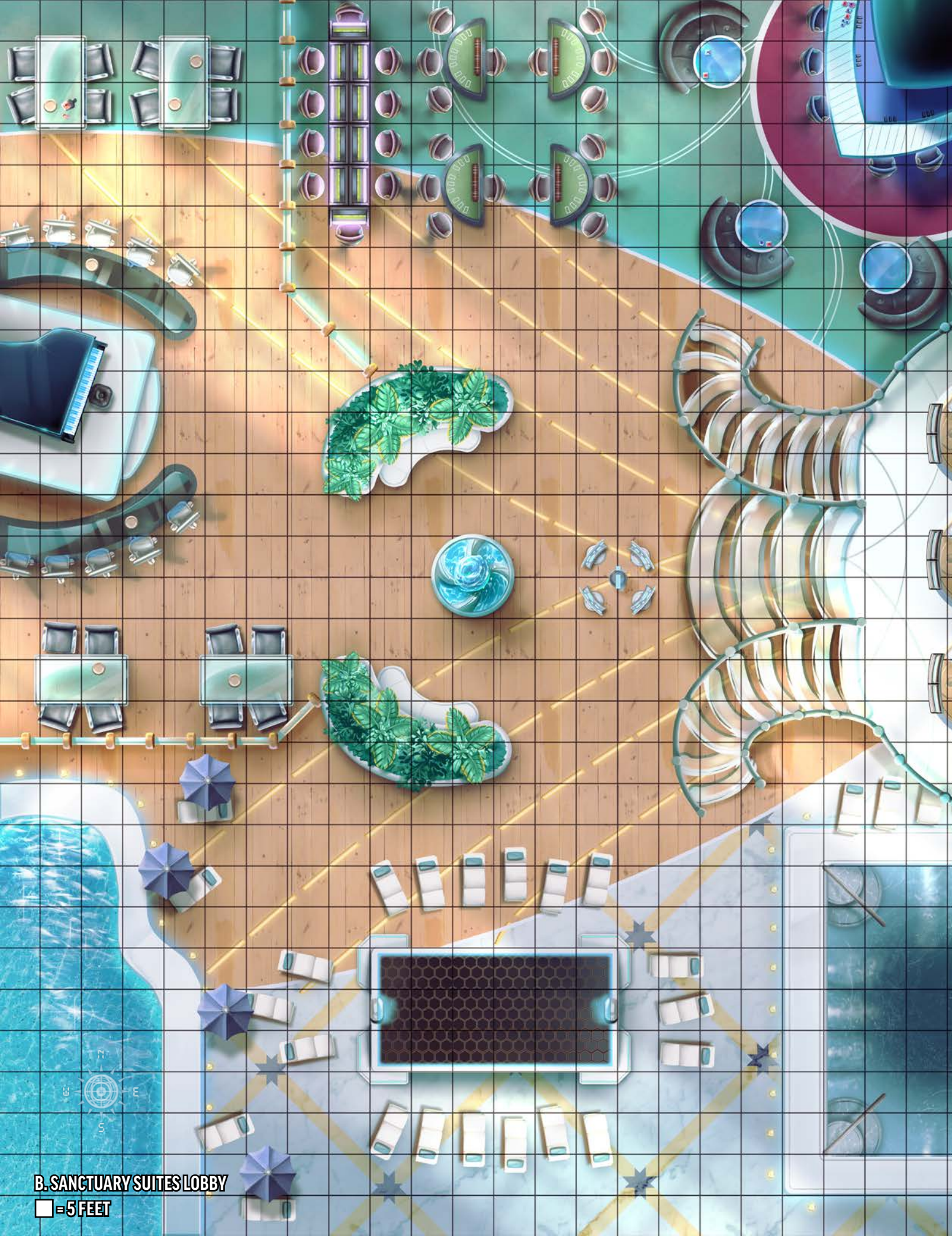
A2. BEDROOM

Warm teal tiles and a canopy bed in shades of violet occupy this space. Holographic stars twinkle on the ceiling. The bed is unmade, and a few dresser drawers are ajar.

Clue: Most of the dresser drawers are filled with expensive garments. With a successful DC 19 Perception or Culture check, the investigators discover that one drawer contains clothing designed for someone with a different body type than Kym, with a wildly different style than what she wears in her pictures. These were spare clothes Kym kept for Eskil's clandestine visits.

A3. BATHROOM

This chrome and purple bathroom features a large triangular tub in one corner.



B. SANCTUARY SUITES LOBBY

■ = 5 FEET

The bathroom is suspiciously empty of toiletries such as cosmetics or soap, which Kym packed before she left on her honeymoon.

Clue: With a successful DC 16 Perception check, investigators find a trash can under the sink missed by the cleaning service. It contains an empty bottle of bronzing lotion and a birthday card (from "Dad") that's been ripped into pieces.

FATHER KNOWS BEST

Unless the investigators take great pains to conceal their activities, Kym's father, **Jholo Testa** (LN male human), soon catches wind of them. Jholo likely discovers the player characters' investigation when they visit Garden Vertica, having paid off a maintenance worker to spy on Kym's residence in case she returns. Alternatively, the investigators might contact Jholo on their own as part of their investigation.

Prior to Ingrid hiring the Eyeswide Agency, Jholo contracted the Order of the Chain to track Kym down and bring her home. Jholo doesn't consider himself a bad father. He believes he's gone above and beyond in providing for his child materially, and that Kym's arguments to the contrary are just the protests of a spoiled brat who doesn't understand how the world works. This is the mentality with which he approaches the issue of Kym's disappearance, which he sees as another problem his money can solve. After all, who better to keep her safe (and under control) than her own father?

Jholo's temporarily working out of Bluerise Tower while investigating his daughter's disappearance. Before the investigators leave Absalom Station, he reaches out via vidcall to one of their comm units (or responds to their request for an interview, if they contacted him first). Read or paraphrase the following.

A middle-aged human with severe features glowers from the other side of the screen. He wears a dark tailored suit. The Absalom Station skyline looms large through a massive glass window behind him.

"You're Eyes, correct? I'll get straight to the point. My name is Jholo Testa. That's my daughter you're looking for. Since I'm sure

you understand the importance of family, I wish to make you an offer. Whatever that nice young woman is paying you to find Kym, if you agree to work for me instead, I'll pay more."

Jholo's willing to answer the following questions concerning his offer.

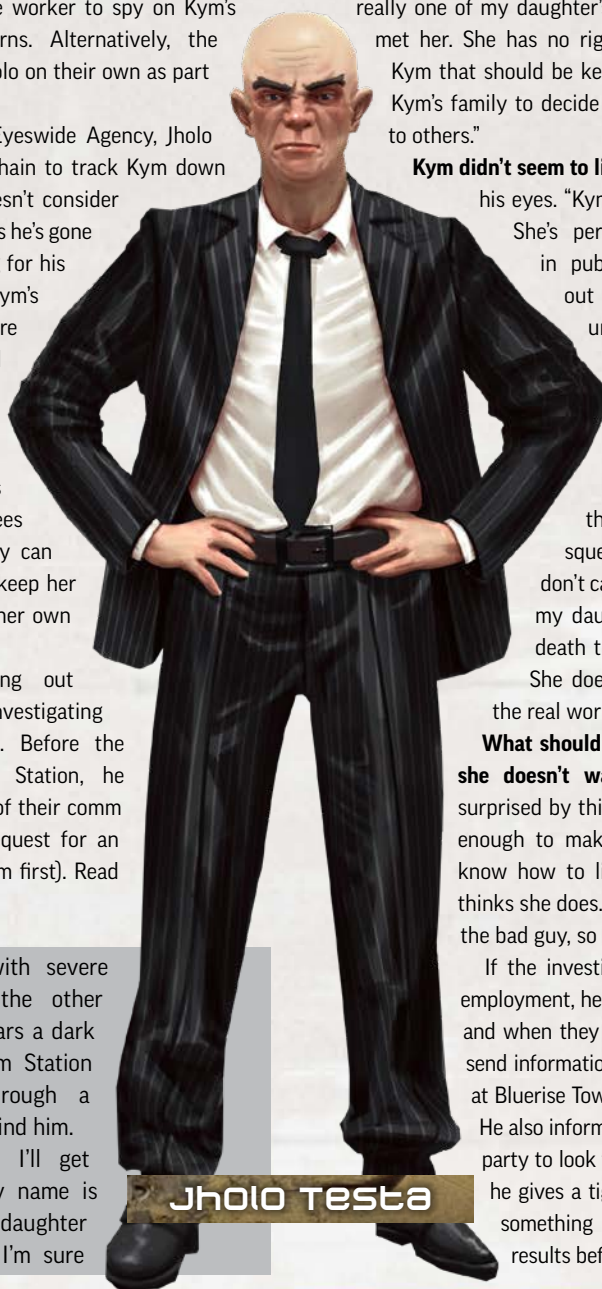
Where do you think Kym went? "There's no telling. My daughter is extremely willful. The quality was endearing when she was a child, but as an adult, I'm afraid it's gotten her into trouble."

We can't work for you./We've already been hired by Ingrid. Jholo scoffs. "This is a family matter. You and your agency should understand that. I don't even believe this Ingrid is really one of my daughter's friends. I've certainly never met her. She has no right to any information about Kym that should be kept private. It should be up to Kym's family to decide what information to disclose to others."

Kym didn't seem to like you very much. Jholo rolls his eyes. "Kym's practically still a teenager. She's perfectly happy to resent me in public while holding her hand out for my credits. She doesn't understand the sacrifices I've made to give her the life she has. I'm hard on her because I know her potential, and she's been wasting her time posting pictures of herself on the infosphere." Jholo sighs and squeezes the bridge of his nose. "I don't care if she hates me. I just want my daughter back. It worries me to death to think she's out there alone. She doesn't know how to survive in the real world."

What should we do if we locate Kym and she doesn't want to return? Jholo looks surprised by this question. "Kym isn't mature enough to make that decision. She doesn't know how to live on her own, even if she thinks she does. If forcing her back makes me the bad guy, so be it."

If the investigators refuse Jholo's offer of employment, he assures them the offer stands and when they change their minds, they can send information (or Kym herself) to his suite at Bluerise Tower at the address he provides. He also informs them that he's hired another party to look for Kym. If pressed about this, he gives a tight-lipped smile and mentions something about competition improving results before ending the call.



Jholo Testa

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THE COMPETITION

Jholo's contractors, a pair of Hellknights from the Order of the Chain, are simultaneously investigating Sanctuary Suites. Thanks to Jholo's deep pockets, they have use of a *Helldrive* (*Starship Operations Manual* 11) capable of navigating space without using the Drift. Depending on how quickly the investigators learned about the resort and traveled there, the Hellknights might have landed on Varturan hours ago, or they may arrive at the same time as the investigators. Proceed to **Event 1** (page 16) when you're ready to introduce them.

SANCTUARY SUITES

By now, the investigators should have enough information to lead them to Sanctuary Suites on Varturan, the brenneri home world (*Near Space* 110). If they're struggling to find a lead, Ingrid contacts them with a tip that they should visit one of the locations they haven't yet investigated or gives them one of the clues they missed. At the GM's discretion, Ingrid sends them directly to Sanctuary Suites, offering to book a private shuttle for them on Varturan.

When the investigators are ready to visit Sanctuary Suites, Tyver furnishes them with an appropriate loaner ship from the Eyeswide Agency (page 5). The Drift is currently too unpredictable to risk traveling it, so the investigators might need to make use of the Agency's *constellation orrery drive* (*Starship Operations Manual* 8) even if they have their own ship. It takes 5d6 days to travel to the Rydnan Base spaceport, located on one of Varturan's two moons. From there, a rickety tourist shuttle ferries the investigators to Sanctuary Suites on the coast of the Ogarroz Ocean. If they told Ingrid their plans, she books them a private shuttle with cashmere seats and bottle service instead.

The resort is a paradise. Private cottages dot a turquoise swath of sea, with stretches of imported white sand spiraling out from a central heart-shaped island. The entire resort is built on buoyant platforms designed to adjust to Varturan's extreme tide changes. (Tides change at approximately 6-hour intervals and have no effect on the investigation.)

Kym and Eskil checked in using the names Jeleve Rasheen and Adonno Locke. They paid a premium for "VIP booking" to avoid using identification during registration. Nevertheless, they left a trail of clues during their stay. The investigators can discover these clues, including Kym's current whereabouts and Eskil's identity, by technological infiltration, questioning the staff, or exploring the resort.

Failing three or more checks to coerce the staff or hack into the resort's servers alerts the resort manager to suspicious activity, summoning armed guards to escort the investigators off the premises. If this occurs, the investigators won't be allowed back onto resort grounds without disguises or stealth; any related skill checks have a DC of 18.

B. SANCTUARY SUITES LOBBY

Cradled at the center of a heart-shaped island, Sanctuary's palatial lobby welcomes guests into the lap of luxury. The lobby's a likely place to begin investigating. Staff members know Kym and Eskil by fake names, though they recognize their pictures or descriptions. Security footage of Kym is similarly easy to match to the plentiful images of her available to investigators.

Clues: The investigators discover some clues automatically by spending at least one hour searching, but others require a successful skill check as noted.

- Kym and Eskil checked in using the names Jeleve Rasheen and Adonno Locke. They paid a premium for "VIP booking" to avoid using identification at the resort. (DC 18 Bluff or Diplomacy)
- Kym paid the considerable fees using disposable credsticks.
- The couple was celebrating their honeymoon, having just gotten married on Akiton.
- Nothing suspicious occurred during their stay.

Creatures: Several dozen guests and workers mill about the lobby, including the resort manager. Unfortunately for everyone, a pet is about to cause mayhem. Duchess, a semi-domesticated threshwolf owned by a patron, attacks the closest target (which might be luggage, a guest, or a staff member). Calming her requires at least one player character to succeed at a DC 15 Survival check per round over the course of three consecutive rounds. If a player character succeeds, Duchess doesn't attack that round unless she is attacked. However, succeeding at all three checks in a row is necessary for Duchess to stop attacking entirely. The DC increases by 4 if anything attacks Duchess during the same round a character attempts to calm her.

DUCHESS

CR 5

XP 1,600

Unique threshwolf (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #28: *The Hollow Cabal* 60)

N Medium animal

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense (scent) 30 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

HP 76

EAC 15; KAC 17

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities quills (1d4 P, DC 13); **Immunities** poison

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d6+8 P plus grab)

Offensive Abilities thresh (1d6+5 S)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +11, Stealth +11, Survival +16

TACTICS

During Combat Duchess attacks at random. She only bites

unless more than one PC gangs up on her, at which point she uses her quills ability.

Morale Duchess attacks until subdued.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Quills (Ex) A threshwolf's mane consists of sharp, glasslike hairs that protect its neck and shoulders. A creature attacking a threshwolf with a natural weapon, an unarmed strike, or melee weapon without reach must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex saving throw or take 1d4 piercing damage as several of these sharp quills break off in their flesh. The attacking creature also gains the off-target condition until the beginning of its next turn due to the pain and irritation.

Thresh (Ex) Whenever a threshwolf succeeds at a combat maneuver to grapple or maintain a grapple, it can immediately shake its mane as a swift action, raking a grappled or pinned victim with razor-sharp quills and inflicting 1d6+5 slashing damage.

Development: Duchess' owner is grateful if the investigators end the conflict without harming her pet or loudly threatens them with a lawsuit if they killed or injured Duchess. Resort workers are grateful to the investigators for stopping Duchess whatever the outcome.

TECHNOLOGICAL INFILTRATION

Investigators can hack the resort's electronic database (DC 18 Computers) or convince staff to grant them access (DC 18 Bluff or Disguise).

Clues: For each success, the investigators discover one of the following clues.

- Security camera footage shows Kym and Eskil's arrival, departure, and activities in resort common areas. Spending at least an hour reviewing the footage (either by creating a convincing distraction, tricking staff, or copying the files for later review) reveals that Kym arrived alone via commercial shuttle but left with Eskil on a ship docked at Sanctuary Suites' private spacedock.
- Kym and Eskil checked in using the names Jeleve Rasheen and Adonno Locke.
- They paid a premium for "VIP booking" to avoid using identification at the resort.
- Kym paid the considerable fees using disposable credsticks.

Following Up: Investigators are probably interested in Kym's getaway vehicle. With a successful DC 20 Culture or Piloting check, investigators recognize the ship's design and colors as *Leviathan*, a destroyer built on Pulonis (also known as Vesk-6) and wanted for multiple counts of piracy in the Veskarium.



With a successful DC 20 Perception check made while reviewing the footage, an investigator can identify the ship's unique ID number. Running the number with a successful DC 20 Computers or Piloting check reveals the location the ship last pinged, giving the investigators the approximate location of the Black Grotto (see page 17).

QUESTIONING THE STAFF

The staff, many of whom are brenneri (*Alien Archive* 3 9), are friendly but wary of violating guests' privacy. Most can be convinced to break the rules via persuasive conversation (Diplomacy DC 17) or monetary encouragement (bribe worth at least 100 credits).

Tenni (LG female brenneri), the housekeeper who cleaned Kym's cottage, remembers the newlyweds' lovey behavior and excessive tips. Once while taking out the trash, she noticed crumpled-up letters that started with "Dear Father," though she felt guilty about snooping and didn't read further. Tenni directs investigators toward the cottage and the clue behind it if they haven't already found it (see below).

Grudda (CN male brenneri) is a concierge who got to know the couple during their stay. Grudda reveals that Eskil caught him stealing from their luggage but didn't press charges. Instead, Eskil interviewed him for a job and offered Grudda a place with the Leviathan's Children, Eskil's pirate crew. Eskil gave him coordinates to a meeting place called the Black Grotto, supposedly his hideout in the Diaspora. Grudda won't betray this location unless investigators succeed at a DC 23 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

Another witness is **Miryan** (NG female brenneri), a wise-cracking bartender who effortlessly switches from service with a smile to witty sarcasm depending on who she's talking to. Miryan tends a kitschy beach bar offering seated and float-up service. Kym and Eskil spent a lot of time there, and Miryan remembers their antics. If persuaded to talk, Miryan confides that Kym frequently got drunk at the bar but was "cute" about it. Kym loved showing off her wedding ring and gushing about her new husband, a red-furred pahtra. Kym bought rounds on the house many times, tipping generously, of course, and always toasting her "new freedom."

SEASIDE COTTAGE

Investigators can learn which cottage Kym stayed in by talking to the staff. All traces of physical evidence are gone from the cottage by now, which has seen several uses and cleanings since Kym's stay, but psychic impressions left by the young lovers remain. Using a psychic ability or spell with the mental descriptor near the cottage causes investigators to feel inexplicably pulled toward the sea. If they give in to the impulse, they wander the beach until they find the clue below.

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Clue: A palm tree grows behind the cottage, its trunk carved with the initials "K" and "E." Buried deep in the sand beneath the tree is a small lockbox containing coordinates and a piece of Kym's jewelry, a golden charm bracelet gifted to her by her father. The coordinates lead to the Black Grotto. Investigators can discover this clue by succeeding at a DC 17 Perception check, using psychic abilities near the cottage, or getting a tip from the housekeeper, Tenni (see page 15).

RESORT SPACEDOCK

A tiny island apart from the cottages houses the resort's private spacedock, nothing more than a few strips of floating tarmac and four covered hangars, each large enough to hold a small spacecraft.

Clues: By talking to workers or hacking into the computer system (DC 18 Bluff, Piloting, or Computers), the investigators learn more about the ship Kym left in, identifying it as the

Leviathan and learning all the information about the ship and its destination, if they don't know it already.

EVENT 1: HELLKNIGHT INTRODUCTIONS (CR 5)

At some point during the player characters' investigation of Sanctuary Suites, they run into their competition as the Hellknights conduct their own search.

Maralictor Luxeia (page 21) joined the Order of the Chain after being exiled from her formian hive for dissident individuality. Luxeia joined the order to compensate for her desire for structure while retaining her selfhood.

Signifier Mavius (page 21) was also born on Castrovel. They joined the Hellknights hoping to pursue studies of planar magic deemed too dangerous by their university.

Luxeia and Mavius have worked together before. They deeply respect one another because they both know that the other will always put the mission first—even at the cost of their partner's life. The Hellknights swore a vow to each other and to their order, and cannot be convinced to betray each other or abandon their mission.

The pair have naturally adopted a complimentary dynamic over the years. Maralictor Luxeia is gruff and intimidating while Signifier Mavius is upbeat and charismatic, sometimes even playful. However, Mavius doesn't freely offer any information the pair has on Kym.

When the Hellknights and player characters first cross paths, read or paraphrase the following.

A formian in the iconic armor of the Hellknights stands next to a half-elf wearing similar armor beneath a crimson robe. The formian speaks first, her armor muffling her voice.

"I am Maralictor Luxeia and this is Signifier Mavius. We're members of the Order of the Chain. You appear to be hunting our quarry. We advise you to cease your activities. The Order of the Chain does not require assistance and does not tolerate interference. Your involvement is redundant, as we have never failed a mission and have no plans to do so now."

Mavius smiles apologetically. "What my partner is trying to say is that while we appreciate that you must be concerned for Ms. Testa's welfare, you can rest assured that we have this matter well in hand."

While the Hellknights are Unfriendly toward the investigators, they don't initiate combat with the player characters at this point in the adventure. If the investigators attack the Hellknights, they fight back. The Hellknights initiate this meeting hoping to scare off their rivals and avoid a fight later. If the investigators flatly refuse to abandon the case, Maralictor Luxeia warns them to stay out of their way and storms off, with Mavius in tow.



Initiating violence in public makes it more difficult to secure the cooperation of Sanctuary Suites' staff, increasing all DCs to find clues by 4.

Should the investigators defeat Luxeia and Mavius before reaching the final section of the adventure, they can follow the clues at their leisure to complete the case. Or, for players who like a challenge, Kym's father might send another team after his original contractors fail to report in, or the Order of the Chain might send backup to locate its missing members.

Creatures: Luxeia and Mavius leave a gift for their rivals: two summoned hellhounds bound to track them down. The hellhounds arrive sometime after the investigators' meeting with the Hellknights, allowing them time to take a 10-minute rest to recover Stamina Points. Reuse the lobby map (page 12), or any map of your choice to represent the encounter, depending on where the hounds ambush the investigators.

HELLHOUNDS (2)

CR 3

XP 800

Starfinder #47: Nightmare Scenario 59

LE Medium outsider (devil)

Init +6; Senses see in darkness; Perception +10

DEFENSE HP 40

EAC 14; KAC 16

Fort +7; Ref +5; Will +2

Immunities fire, poison; Resistances acid 5, electricity 5

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d6+7 P)

Ranged flamethrower +9 (1d4+3 F; critical burn 1d4 [DC 12])

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (15-ft. cone, 4d6 F, Reflex DC 12 half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +10, Survival +5, Stealth +5

Languages Infernal (cannot speak); telepathy 100 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The hellhounds try to catch as many investigators as possible with their breath weapons, not caring about the destruction left in their wake. They otherwise prefer melee, but attack with their flamethrowers if foes get out of range.

Morale The hellhounds fight until they're defeated, or until their quarry flees the resort.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flamethrower A hellhound has a cybernetic flamethrower installed in its throat. The flamethrower has a range of 60 feet.

WRAPPING UP THE INVESTIGATION

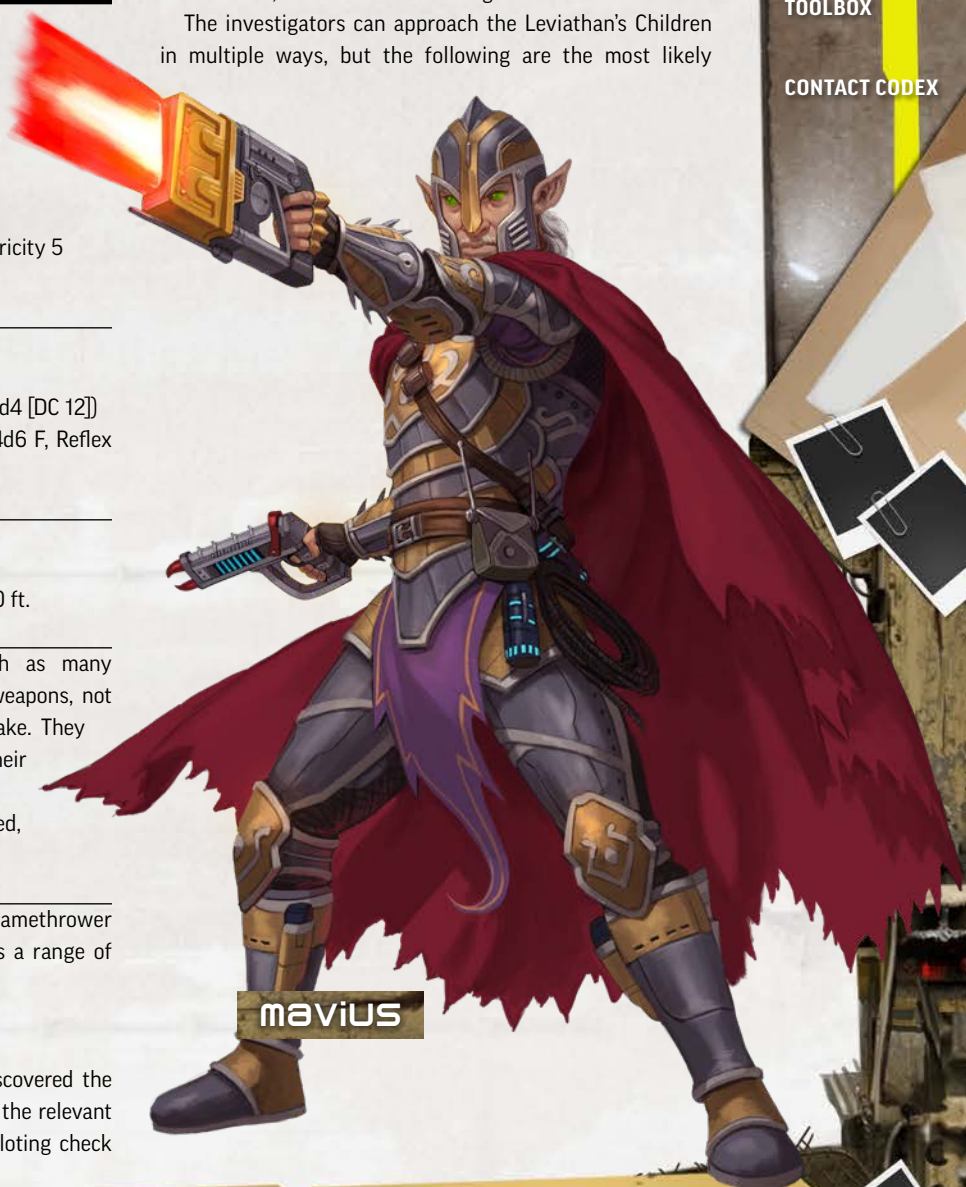
At this point, the investigators should have discovered the coordinates to the Black Grotto. If they miss all the relevant clues, investigators who succeed at a DC 14 Piloting check

can tail the Hellknights' battleship to the Grotto for a final chance at finding Kym. In this case, they'll have to fight the Hellknights in the Warped Rock bar before their encounter with the Leviathan's Children.

THE BLACK GROTTA

Traveling to the Black Grotto from Sanctuary Suites takes 5d6 days. The Black Grotto is a hollow asteroid that contains a small settlement of space pirates and supporting businesses. It's also where Eskil's pirate crew, known as the Leviathan's Children, hide out. The asteroid's mineral makeup renders it difficult to accurately scan, and the Leviathan's Children use this to their advantage. Discovering life signs within the asteroid requires a successful DC 26 Computers check. However, if that check fails, an investigator who studies the scan data and succeeds at a DC 21 Physical Science check realizes that the mineral makeup of the asteroid is causing interference, and that the scans might not be conclusive.

The investigators can approach the Leviathan's Children in multiple ways, but the following are the most likely



MAVIUS



C. THE WARPED ROCK BAR

■ = 5 FEET



options. If the investigators realize the Black Grotto is populated and send out a message to its occupants, Eskil himself answers and demands to know their intentions. If the investigators realize there's interference with their scan and land their ship to search on foot, Eskil sends some of his crew to halt the investigators and offer them a comm unit so he can speak with them. If the investigators fail all their checks but loiter in the area, Eskil eventually hails them to ask what they want; increase the DCs of any checks made to influence him by 2 in this case, as he's already decided they're incompetent.

Read or paraphrase the following, making any necessary alterations for the situation.

On the screen is a scarred pahtra with russet fur and green eyes. A skull and bones insignia is tacked to the wall behind him in what appears to be a dingy bar.

"I'm Red Eskil, and you're trespassing into the territory of the Leviathan's Children," the pahtra says. "But we're not the 'shoot first' kind. Don't make us regret that. You're annoyingly persistent. What do you want?"

Kym listens offscreen while her husband talks to the investigators. Depending on the investigators' responses to his question, Eskil reacts as follows.

We're looking for Kym Testa: Eskil denies knowing Kym and claims she's not here. Investigators who succeed at a DC 21 Sense Motive check know he's lying. He only admits the truth if the investigators first present evidence that places him and Kym together (such as security footage, testimony, or the lockbox items near the cottage) and then succeed at a DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince him of their good intentions toward Kym. Note that intimidation doesn't work in this situation; Eskil doesn't betray his wife regardless of threats. If the investigators succeed, Eskil looks pointedly off-screen, wordlessly asking Kym's consent to tell her secret. When she signals her agreement, Eskil gives the investigators permission to dock at the Black Grotto's hidden starship bay and parley with them at the Warped Rock bar.

We want to join your crew: Deceiving Eskil requires a successful DC 17 Bluff check or a DC 15 Profession (Pirate) or other crime-related Profession

check—Eskil's always welcoming newcomers to his "family." Succeeding at this check gains the investigators permission to land at the Black Grotto's hidden starship bay and an invite to meet with him at the Warped Rock Bar.

We're here for Kym, like it or not: If the investigators threaten Eskil or Kym, he tries to convince them to land so he and the crew can overpower them. If they don't seem interested in landing, he warns them that the Leviathan's Children have several ships ready to respond to an attack, as well as ship-grade weapons mounted all over the asteroid field. This is a lie, discernible with a successful DC 21 Sense Motive check. The Children's best offensive ship is currently undergoing repairs after it took damage during their last raid, and Eskil can't risk any other ships right now.

Regardless of how they approach the situation, Eskil invites the investigators to the Warped Rock Bar, hoping to talk but prepared to fight.

C. THE WARPED ROCK BAR

After docking in one of the Black Grotto's cleverly concealed starship hangars repurposed from organic caves, the investigators are greeted by two of Eskil's crew and escorted to the Warped Rock, the primary gathering place of the Leviathan's Children within the asteroid. Read or paraphrase the following.

Beyond a series of winding tunnels that look natural rather than machine-bored, a door emerges in the rock. An escort inputs a code into an aged keypad, and the door slides into the stone wall with a hiss.


On the other side of the door is a dingy bar. The walls are unworked stone and the artificial lights are dim, augmented by cheap tallow candles. A circular bar in the center of the cavern surrounds a collection of taps and cooling units. Tables line the edge of the space, and a metal staircase wraps up the wall and leads to a balcony with more seating.

An eclectic group of pirates and outlaws lounge around the area, sipping drinks, talking, and playing games. Red Eskil and Kym Testa sit at the bar, waiting for the investigators.

The nature of this encounter depends on the reason Eskil believes the investigators came to the Black Grotto. If they've offered the pretense of joining the Leviathan's Children, the investigators can continue the charade for as long as they wish. Eskil and



Red ESHil



Kym claim that the player characters will find a family with the crew and make a mark on the Pact Worlds by stealing from megacorps and redistributing the wealth to the poor. Kym and Eskil are a loving couple, treating one another with affection and respect, and both are equally passionate about the Children's mission.

When Kym discovers that the investigators are searching for her specifically, whether they disclose their mission immediately or not, she assumes her father hired them. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Why can't he just leave me alone?!" Kym slams her drink down on the bar. "This is the first time in my life I've ever felt happy, like I'm finally making my own choices. I'm actually doing some good in the world, and I'm not going to let him take that away from me!"

Until the investigators succeed at a DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy check to reassure her, Kym refuses to talk further. The investigators automatically succeed at this check if they admit that Ingrid hired them, rather than Jholo. If they successfully calm her down, she's willing to answer questions as follows.

Who won't leave you alone? "My father! You're working for him, right?"

Why did you abandon your old life? "It all felt pointless. I realized that there was a whole universe out there where it doesn't matter who's wearing what and who's dating who. And I realized that most people could never even dream of the wealth I once took for granted."

Did you run away because of Eskil? "I knew my dad would never approve of us being together, so we could only sneak around while I made up this whole other life to show the infosphere. Eventually I couldn't take it anymore. There were a lot of other things but—yes, I left to be with him."

What about Ingrid? "Oh, Ingrid..." Kym's face falls. "I didn't realize how much she cared. I feel bad for just leaving her like that, but I thought I needed to make a complete break. Ingrid was part of that whole scene, you know? I didn't think she'd understand if I tried to tell her how I felt or what I wanted. I guess I was the same way before I met Eskil." Kym grabs her husband's hand.

What happened to all your money? "You mean after the honeymoon?" She fidgets nervously. "Maybe I shouldn't have spent so much. It was selfish. But I wanted one final party, like a send-off, for Eskil as much as for me. But the rest of the credits went to good causes."

Are you a pirate now? Kym turns to Eskil, who only smirks in response. "Maybe."

Will you come back? "No. I can't go back. I admit, I miss some things about my old life. The bathrooms were a lot nicer." She laughs. "But I have more family and friends here than I ever did back home. I miss Ingrid. Tell her I'm grateful

for what she tried to do for me, but I'm happy now. I wish the same for her."

Kym is content where she is and refuses to return to her old life, and if the investigators force the issue, Red Eskil and his crew step in to defend her choice. Whether the investigators fight the Leviathan's Children or leave Kym to her new life, they'll soon need to contend with their competition, if they haven't already. When they're ready to leave the Warped Rock Bar, proceed to **Event 2**.

EVENT 2: THE COMPETITION ARRIVES (CR VARIES)

Maralictor Luxeia and Signifier Mavius also picked up Kym's trail at Sanctuary Suites. Unless the investigators delayed their departure or followed the Hellknights here, they arrive first. But the Hellknights are hot on Kym's trail. They quickly discover life signs within the asteroid and send a message of their own. If the investigators fought the Leviathan's Children or haven't yet landed their ship, the Hellknights contact them directly instead of calling Eskil. Read or paraphrase the following.

Eskil's comm unit beeps and he answers, suddenly looking concerned.

"We have more visitors," he says. A moment later, a vidscreen above the bar blinks, text reading "incoming hail" flashing across it. Kym moves out of frame as Eskil accepts the call, and the screen changes to an image of Maralictor Luxeia and Signifier Mavius on the bridge of a battleship accented in black and red.

"Greetings, Eskil Edris. I am Maralictor Luxeia, representing the Order of the Chain. We are here to collect Kym Testa. Your other crimes are currently of no concern to us. Deliver her or we will respond with force. You have five minutes to reply." The screen clicks off as the Hellknights break the connection. In the sudden silence, Eskil turns to the investigators.

"You don't seem like the kind of folk that would turn someone over to people like that," Eskil says desperately. "I know this isn't your fight, but will you help us?"

The investigators have 5 minutes to come up with a plan before the Hellknights cut off communications and begin their assault on the Black Grotto. Eskil suggests inviting the Hellknights to the Warped Rock under the pretense of handing Kym over and ambushing them, but is willing to follow any alternate plans thought up by player characters. If invited to land, Luxeia and Mavius bring a squad of Armigers with them, expecting treachery and preparing to answer it with force.

Starship Combat: It's possible that the investigators' actions might lead to a confrontation with the Hellknights'

starship. If the investigators try to flee with Kym in their ship, the Hellknight battleship's sensors detect their craft as soon they launch and initiates a starship combat. Use *Starfinder Flip-Mat: Basic Starfield* or any other hexagonal battle map to represent space around the battling ships. In the event of a starship combat or chase, Luxeia and Mavius engage the investigators' starship in two fighters docked inside the Hellknight battleship (see below).

INFERNEX BURNING NAIL (2) TIER 1

Tiny fighter (*Pact Worlds* 156)

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

AC 16; **TL** 15

HP 35; **DT** —; **CT** 7

Shields basic 20 (forward 10, port 4, starboard 4, aft 2)

Attack (Forward) light particle beam (3d6), light plasma torpedo launcher (3d8)

Attack (Aft) coilgun (4d4)

Power Core Micron Ultra (80 PCU); **Drift Engine** none; **Systems** basic short-range sensors, mk 3 armor, mk 2 defenses, mk 1 mononode computer; **Expansion Bays** none

Modifiers +1 any one check per round; +2 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 1

Creatures: Luxeia and Mavius enter with weapons drawn, intending to bring Kym home alive whatever the cost, following their contracts with Jholo to the letter. They do their best to keep Kym alive, planning to transport her in an unconscious but stable condition if she puts up a struggle. While the Hellknights and the Leviathan's Children both have reinforcements fighting with them, instead of tracking more statblocks as part of this combat, describe the rank-and-file Armigers and pirates attacking each other. This places the reinforcements as part of the narrative background for the conflict between the investigators, their enemies, and any newfound allies. If you need statistics for a Hellknight Armiger or pirate, use Kym's statistics, omitting her influencer and envoy abilities.

Eskil faces all enemies head-on with his crew while Kym retreats to the balcony, where she uses get 'em to support either her husband or the investigators (if they're on her side). Luxeia and Mavius fight to the death to complete their job, while Kym and Eskil fight to the death to stay together.

MARALICTOR LUXEIA CR 5

XP 1,600

Female formian soldier

LN humanoid (formian)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense (scent) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +11

DEFENSE HP 70

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

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

Resistances sonic 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *merciful* red star plasma doshko +15 (1d10+14 E & F; critical severe wound)

Ranged advanced numbing beam +12 (1d8+5 C nonlethal; critical staggered) or mk 2 riot grenade +12 (staggered; 10 ft.)

Offensive Abilities fighting style (arcane assailant)

STATISTICS

Str +7; **Dex** +2; **Con** +7; **Int** +4; **Wis** -1; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +16, Intimidate +11, Survival +11

Languages Common; limited telepathy 30 ft.

Gear lictor Hellknight plate^{PW}, red star plasma doshko with 2 batteries (20 charges each), advanced numbing beam with 2 batteries (20 charges each), mk 2 riot grenades (2)

TACTICS

Before Combat Luxeia imbues her doshko (included in her statistics).

During Combat Luxeia prefers fighting in melee, using her attacks of opportunity to control the field if possible.

Morale Luxeia fights to the death to complete her contract.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rune of the Eldritch Knight (Su) Luxeia can imbue any of her weapons with a magic sigil that allows the weapon to act as a magic weapon for the purposes of bypassing DR and affecting incorporeal creatures. When calculating the Hit Points and hardness of a weapon imbued with the rune of the eldritch knight, treat its item level as 5 higher. She can only imbue a single weapon at a time, and the sigil is usually on her doshko. Imbuing a different weapon takes her 10 minutes and causes any previously imbued weapon to lose the sigil's benefit.

Secret of the Magi (Su) When Luxeia imbues a weapon with the rune of the eldritch knight, in addition to its normal benefits, the rune grants the weapon one of the following weapon fusions of her choice: *flaming*, *frost*, *ghost killer*, *merciful*, or *shock*. The weapon can't gain a fusion it already has, and this bonus fusion doesn't count toward the maximum total level of fusions the weapon can have at once. The bonus fusion ends when the weapon ceases to be imbued with the rune of the eldritch knight. Luxeia typically has the *merciful* fusion on her doshko, which is reflected in her statistics.

Stop Right There! (Ex) If Maralictor Luxeia hits an enemy with an attack of opportunity provoked by attempting to move out of a square she threatens, the enemy's movement immediately ends unless they succeed at a DC 13 Will save.

SIGNIFIER MAVIUS CR 3

XP 800

Nonbinary elf technomancer

LN humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE HP 32

EAC 13; **KAC** 14

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Fort +2; **Ref** +4; **Will** +6; +8 vs. enchantment spells and effects
Immunities sleep effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee jolt electric prod +5 (1d4 E nonlethal; critical stun)

Ranged flash compliance ray +7 (1d6+1 F nonlethal; critical blind)

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 3rd)

1st (3/day)—*magic missile*, *supercharge weapon*

0 (at will)—*energy ray*, *misfire*^{GM}

Languages Castrovelian, Celestial, Common, Elven, Infernal

Other Abilities magic hack (energize spell), spell cache (tattoo)

Gear regimental dress 1^{AR}, flash compliance ray^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), jolt electric prod^{SF34} with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +8, Computers +13, Mysticism +13, Sense Motive +8

TACTICS

Before Combat Mavius casts *supercharge weapon* on Luxeia's doshko.

During Combat Mavius stays at ranges, supporting Luxeia with spells and harrying fire.

Morale Mavius fights to the death to complete their contract.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Energize Spell (Ex) Once per day as a move action, Mavius can use a battery or a weapon's power cell to power their spellcasting, enabling them to cast one spell they know without using a spell slot. This expends 20 charges per spell level from the battery or power cell and requires them to touch the battery, power cell, or weapon. They must cast the spell before the start of their next turn, or the charges are wasted with no effect.

RED ESKIL

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male pahtra operative

CN Medium humanoid (pahtra)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +15

DEFENSE

HP 45

EAC 16; **KAC** 17

Fort +3; **Ref** +8; **Will** +7; +9 vs. charm and compulsion effects

Defensive Abilities evasion, nimble

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee tactical switchblade +8 (1d4+2 S)

Ranged thunderstrike sonic pistol +10 (1d8+2 S; critical deafen) or

tactical parapet rifle +10 (1d10+4 E & P; critical staggered)

Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, trick attack +1d8

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +7; **Con** +0; **Int** +3; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +1

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +10, Piloting +10, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Pahtra, Vesk

Other Abilities operative specialization (thief), operative exploits (holographic clone, uncanny mobility)

Gear basic defrex hide, thunderstrike sonic pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), tactical parapet rifle^{TR} with 25 sniper rounds, tactical switchblade

TACTICS

During Combat Eskil switches his fighting style depending on his opponents' strengths, using trick attack to deal extra damage whenever possible.

Morale Eskil fights to the death to protect Kym.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Nimble (Ex) An off-kilter pahtra doesn't gain the flat-footed condition or take the normal penalty to attacks, and he can steady himself as a swift action instead of a move action.

KYM TESTA

CR 1

XP 400

Female human envoy

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

HP 17

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

Fort +1; **Ref** +5; **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical baton +4 (1d4 B)

Ranged pulsecaster pistol +6 (1d4 E)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +10, Culture +10, Diplomacy +10, Sense Motive +5

Languages Common

Other Abilities envoy improvisation (get 'em)

Gear second skin, pulsecaster pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), tactical baton

TACTICS

Before Combat Kym takes cover on the balcony.

During Combat Kym stays out of sight as much as possible, only leaving her hiding spot to use get 'em to support Eskil and his allies.

Morale Kym fights to the death to stay with Eskil.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Influencer (Ex) Kym can choose to use the envoy improvisation get 'em as a standard action instead of a move action. When she does this, the first attack that hits the target of her get 'em ability before the beginning of her next turn does an extra 1d4 damage.

Development: Once the investigators escape or defeat the Hellknights and deal with Eskil and his pirate companions (through combat or diplomatic means), they must decide

how to proceed. Kym wants to stay with her husband above all else. If Eskil dies during combat, Kym is grief-stricken but even more determined to stay with the Leviathan's Children and keep doing what she believes in (unless the investigators force her to return with them).

If Eskil lives but was defeated by the investigators, Kym begs them to administer first aid to husband. Once he's stable, she requests to stay with him, even if that means returning to Absalom Station. At this point, intimidating or cunning investigators might convince Kym to make a deal, trading her freedom for Eskil's life. If they succeed, she returns to Absalom Station and unhappily resumes her old life for a few months, though it doesn't take long for Eskil to find a way to help Kym escape again. The resulting scandal rocks the Pact Worlds elite social circles, and even the investigators end up hearing the salacious news.

If Kym dies, the investigators can bring proof of her death to Tyver (or Jholo, should they choose) to close their case. If they return her body to Absalom Station, Jholo's contacts in Station Security and the medical field soon notify him that a body roughly matching his daughter's description arrived from parts unknown. If Kym's body is in appropriate condition and no more than 18 days have passed since her death, Jholo quickly steps in to cover the costs of a *raise dead*, planning to use this medical debt as another tool to control his daughter's life.

If Kym lives through the fight in the Black Grotto, she suggests faking her own death to dissuade her father from sending more bounty hunters after her. She doesn't know where to start this process and asks the investigators for help, offering to give them the last of her personal jewelry (worth 450 credits) if they demand it.

The investigators can help fake Kym's death by obtaining a cadaver and succeeding at a DC 20 Disguise or Medicine check to alter the corpse to match her records. Shady coroners can provide fresh corpses for this purpose for a bribe of 120 credits, though player characters may come up with their own creative solutions. Alternatively, an investigator who succeeds at a DC 18 Computers check can hack the medical system and change Kym's records to match a corpse.

Alternatively, they can bribe a mortician to file a fake death report for 200 credits, though the mortician is willing to confess the truth to Jholo's agents as soon as they come looking, unless the investigators succeed at a DC 17 Intimidate check to ensure the mortician's silence. An investigator who happens to have Profession ranks in a funerary, medical, or security field can file a false report on their own with a successful DC 14 Profession check.

CASE CLOSED

So long as the investigators learn the truth of Kym's whereabouts and report it to Tyver once they return to Absalom Station, they're able to close the case and earn

payment for their work from the Eyeswide Agency. The investigators should decide together whether to disclose the truth about Kym's disappearance to anyone else, including Jholo and Ingrid. Tyver supports telling Ingrid the truth, having a soft spot for friendships and found families. Tyver openly expresses their disappointment in the investigators if they sell Kym out to her father or the public in any way.

If the investigators tell Ingrid the truth, she's relieved to hear Kym is safe, but upset she didn't hear this information from her friend directly. She begins making plans to discreetly travel to the Diaspora to reunite with Kym and give her a piece of her mind. Also, to deliver an extravagant wedding gift. As thanks, she offers the investigators complimentary tickets to an upcoming gala she planned to attend with Kym. If the investigators tell her Kym is dead or still missing, Ingrid is distraught but thanks them for their hard work.

If the investigators agree to lie about Kym's fate, they earn the trust and friendship of Kym, Red Eskil, and the rest of the Leviathan's Children, which could come in handy in the future, at the GM's discretion.

If the investigators capture Kym and return her to her father, he gratefully pays them what he promised and sends his daughter to live and work at an undisclosed location on Verces where she'll be safe until she "grows up." All the while, Kym swears revenge on the player characters for ruining her life. If the investigators attempt to swindle Jholo by presenting him with falsified evidence of Kym's death in exchange for the credits he offered earlier in the adventure, he refuses to pay out unless he's presented with Kym's remains. Investigators who helped Kym fake her death must verify this information with Jholo and succeed at a DC 20 Bluff check to convince him that his daughter really is dead.

Jholo mostly shows his twisted love through repeated attempts to control Kym, but he does care about her and grieves if she died as a result of the showdown at the Black Grotto. Jholo refuses to pay the investigators if they report Kym dead without providing a body (or convincing evidence of one) or if he suspects them of causing her death.

REWARDS

Tyver transfers 1,460 credits to each investigator's account as payment for the job; if the investigators protected Kym from the Hellknights and told Ingrid the truth about her friend's whereabouts, Ingrid provides each of them with 200 additional credits as a tip on top of the Eyeswide Agency's fee.

If the investigators agreed to accept Jholo's deal, he pays them 1,533 credits each. Tyver reprimands them for betraying the client's trust and doesn't share a cut of Ingrid's fees with them. The player characters cannot earn both rewards for closing the case.

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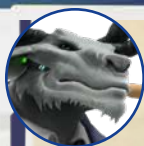
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FAMILY HEIRLOOM



"Tell me if you've heard this one before:
*Old lady gets robbed blind. Robber
makes off with some priceless family
heirloom. You see where this is going? Dossier's
on the desk there. Let me know if you want the
case, kiddo.*"

—Detective Tyver Vorsten,
Eyeswide Agency Veteran

CASE BACKGROUND

Long ago, a powerful adjutant of the insect goddess Hylax lost his faith and mounted an insurgency against her. The apostate Antilifrex, Hylax's former consort and advisor, blamed his goddess for allowing a group of kucharn to become the terror now known as the Swarm. With support from other disillusioned believers who called themselves the Forsaken Brood, Antilifrex planned to confront the goddess and convince her to abdicate or else agree to destroy the

Swarm, ending the growing threat they represented. When she refused their audience, the Forsaken Brood mounted an assault on Hylax's Forever Halls on the Liavaran moon Nchak. Hylax was determined to protect the free will of all beings, even the Swarm. She struck Antilifrex down for his insurrection and scattered his faithful across the galaxy, but not before the Brood secretly used his remains to craft a powerful artifact. Known as the *Heretic Worm*, this grim statue was spirited away by Brood adherents and kept safe until a century ago, when it was lost in a disaster that also nearly wiped out the last vestiges of the Brood sect itself.

Approximately a month ago, the leader of a Forsaken Brood enclave on Castrovel experienced a vision that the long-lost *Worm* had finally reappeared on Absalom Station. The vision was true: the relic was part of a collection of archaeological curiosities seized from a pirate vessel now languishing in the Station Port Authority. Wasting no time, the Brood commissioned forgeries of the necessary identification and ownership documents and quickly dispatched a pair of investigators—Edriad, a Brood elder, and her bodyguard Tembrus—to bring the artifact home.

Ten days ago, Tembrus failed to return to Edriad with the *Worm* after claiming it at Station customs. Unbeknownst to loyal Edriad, Tembrus had abandoned his mission, planning to sell the artifact to the highest bidder. When his deal with the wealthy collector Casparian Arabani fell through, Tembrus unloaded the relic for a pittance to a small-time crook named Gismo. Afterward, Tembrus holed up in the Downlow region of Absalom Station's Spike district, waiting for the heat to die down before moving on. Despite a trail of mysterious deaths, what none but Edriad realize is that the *Heretic Worm* bears a curse that dooms all who possess it to die within a week—unless they return it to a faithful member of the Forsaken Brood.

Edriad is desperate to recover the statue. Unwilling to go to the Station Security or the Stewards for fear of attracting too much scrutiny, she chooses the Eyeswide Agency for help, presenting herself as a harmless grandmother seeking a stolen family keepsake. Complicating matters further, rumors of this mysterious artifact are spreading across the Station, and the Eyes aren't the only ones on the trail of the *Heretic Worm*.

THE CLIENT

The adventure begins when the investigators get a call to meet with their handler **Tyver Vorsten** (page 3) at the Eyeswide Agency for briefing on a new case. Read or paraphrase the following.

Tyver Vorsten sits behind their desk on the far side of the room, a battered brown fedora sandwiched between their horns and a signature cloud of cigar smoke encircling their head. Seated on a threadbare couch is a grandmotherly shirren, who looks up from a partially knitted sweater to twitch her antennae in greeting.

"Investigators," Tyver says by way of greeting. "Got a smooth angle for you this time. Seems this nice lady"—Tyver gestures at the shirren—"had something stolen from her room at the Monarch. Ma'am, why don't you tell the investigators what you told me, and we'll see what we can do for you."

With a gracious smile, the shirren introduces herself as **Edriad** (CN female shirren), cheerfully offering the investigators a selection of hard candies from her purse.

"Oh, bless your hearts," Edriad says, nervously clasping her hands together. "I just don't know where else to turn. I'm new to the Station. Just landed two weeks ago. There's an heirloom that's been in my family a long time—a small statue—that was being shipped from my dearly departed great-uncle's estate to my daughter's home on Castrovel. The ship carrying it ended up Hylax-knows-where after the Crash. I was sure we'd never see it again, but just last week my grandson received a message saying it

turned up in the manifest of a freighter right here on Absalom Station."

Edriad's voice quavers slightly as she continues. "Such good news! Naturally I caught the first ship out here to claim it, but before I could book passage home, some ruffian broke into my room and made off with it. I don't know what they think they're going to do with it. It's not particularly valuable, but it's very precious to me and mine, and I'd appreciate if you could help me get it back."

As detailed in the Case Background, Edriad is not who she pretends to be. She hopes to keep her cover story of being a harmless grandmother intact and speaks to investigators accordingly. Examples of questions investigators might ask Edriad are provided below, along with her answers.

Tell us about this statue. "It's a very old likeness of one of the Forever Queen's advisors. They are magnificent beings. You might know them as philosopher worms? This one's about a foot tall, carved from black stone studded with purple



gems. It's been in my family for generations. Dates all the way back to the exodus!"

When was it stolen? "Oh, about a week ago now. At first, I thought maybe I'd misplaced it, or that some good person might find it and bring it home, but I'm certain it's not coming back on its own now."

Where were you staying? "The Monarch. It's a lovely little hotel not too far from here." The hotel is a pit, and Edriad feels nothing but disdain for its staff and the other guests.

Do you have any idea who might have stolen it? "Well, I did see a rough-looking trox loitering in the hallway outside my room that night." She provides a detailed description of Tembrus if asked.

Why didn't you go to the Stewards or Station Security? "I would, but they're all just so busy these days, what with all the new arrivals to the station, the refugees and so forth. My problem seems so small in comparison." The truth is she's afraid to go to a law enforcement agency and risk the artifact's seizure.

What's the Crash? "Oh dear, you've been working too hard if you haven't heard about that! I'm talking about the Drift Crash of course. Such a tragedy! I hate that my children and grandchildren have to live through hard times like these. So many people lost loved ones, so I feel guilty worrying about a statue, but it's very important to my family."

Edriad wears a *mk 2 mindshield circlet* (*Starfinder Adventure Path #21: Huskworld 42*), requiring a successful DC 22 caster level check from any investigator who attempts to use magic or psychic abilities to read her thoughts. If the investigators ask, she truthfully informs them that the circlet was passed down from the first of her ancestors to arrive in the Chuuva system following the shirren exodus. If asked to remove the circlet or if confronted about any inconsistencies between her words and her thoughts, she acts deeply offended, prompting Tyver to apologize for the investigators' rudeness and interrupt their questioning to get the conversation back on track. Further attempts to interrogate Edriad at this point meet harsher reprimands from Tyver.

Investigators have a lead to the Monarch (Tyver recommends they go there if they don't think of it on their own). Before they go, Tyver tips them off about an informant on staff, a bellhop named Brant Cassel, who's helped Eyes in the past.

THE HEIRLOOM

Now or later, the investigators likely attempt to identify Edriad's family heirloom. They can learn more about the statue based on the results of a Mysticism or a Profession (Archaeologist) check, or other skill checks at the GM's discretion. The DC for all such checks is 32. The investigators can attempt as many checks as they want. Each check

represents a brief in-game scene, such as reaching out to one of their local contacts or conducting research using the infosphere. The investigators learn at least one new piece of information for each successful check.

Clues: The investigators discover the following clues as they succeed at the above checks.

- Edriad's heirloom matches the description of an artifact called the *Heretic Worm*.
- The *Heretic Worm* was carved in the likeness of Antilifrex, a long-dead traitorous advisor to Hylax the Forever Queen. (Hylax is an ancestral deity for many shirren.)
- The artifact can't be destroyed by mundane or magical means.
- A terrible curse dooms anyone who possesses the artifact to die.

• The only way to break the curse is to return the artifact to a member of the Forsaken Brood.

Following Up: Once they've identified the artifact, investigators who succeed at a DC 26 Mysticism check recall more information about

Hylax, Antilifrex, and the Forsaken Brood as described in the adventure background.

THE MONARCH

The Monarch looks like a relic of a bygone age thanks to its ostentatious decor—sculpted marble, high ceilings, and crystal chandeliers grace its lobby. The thin veneer of gilt paint does little to cover the cracks in the walls, and upon close inspection, the colorful carpet's tinged with mold.

A bellhop in a bright red uniform smiles from behind a marble-topped podium. "Welcome to the Monarch! May I take your bags? Or is there something else I can help you with?"

The Monarch is a hotel with a deserved reputation as a hub for Absalom Station's criminal underworld. The staff see everything, and many of them are on someone else's payroll. **Brant Cassel** (CG female dirindi^{AA3}) is an opportunistic bellhop who supplements her income by passing on rumors and gossip to her Eyeswide benefactors. Brant Cassel has been on the Eyeswide payroll for years, but the agency isn't her sole source of supplementary income. Unbeknownst to Tyver, Brant takes additional bribes for conveniently misremembering intel if the Eyes ask. She currently has such an arrangement with Edriad, having agreed to forget seeing her and Tembrus together (as well as surreptitiously deleting all existing evidence from the hotel's video surveillance archive).

If the investigators identify themselves as Eyeswide investigators, Brant calls out that she's going on break, then



BRANT CASSEL

heads for her favorite break spot in the maintenance halls and beckons them to follow.

If asked, Brant confirms that Edriad is a guest at the hotel, renting a room at the weekly rate, and that she checked in ten days ago. Brant recently saw a trox who matches Tembrus's description. She claims the trox was asked to leave for suspicious behavior, but she spoke with him before he left (this is a lie).

If pressed for details, Brant pauses and clears her throat, waiting for the investigators to offer a bribe before continuing. She wants 500 credits, but the investigators can either bargain her down to 300 with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check or bully her into giving up the information for free with a successful DC 24 Intimidate check. Once satisfied, Brant reveals that the trox asked her about local bars; she sent him down the street to the Neon Glass.

Brant lets the investigators into Edriad's room for an additional fee: a non-negotiable payment of 1,000 credits. If they accept the offer, Brant brings them to an unremarkable room on the third floor and stands guard outside while they look around.

EDRIAD'S ROOM

This is a standard hotel room with two twin beds. There's a single packed bag lying open on the bed next to the window. The open curtains provide a view of a trash-strewn alley behind the hotel. There are no obvious signs of forced entry or tampering.

Clues: The investigators discover some clues automatically by spending at least 10 minutes searching, but others require a successful skill check as noted.

- Rooms at the Monarch use an antiquated keycard system that's seen several high-profile security breaches over the years. (DC 18 Computers or Perception)
- A security camera across the hall points right at the door to Edriad's room, but Brant claims the cameras aren't really recording and used as a crime deterrent (this is a lie).

Following Up: Investigators can see through Brant's lie with a successful DC 27 Sense Motive check or by using mind-reading abilities. If caught in a lie, she falls back on another, admitting to having "accidentally" deleted the security footage. If pushed, Brant reveals what she really knows about Edriad: she's a foreign visitor who was robbed by her associate and paid for Brant's silence. At this point, Brant can be bullied into escorting the investigators to the security control room if they want to look for a copy of the footage.

If the investigators succeed at a DC 28 Computers check to hack the system, they find a backup copy of the deleted security footage. After several recordings of

Edriad and a trox coming and going together, the trox leaves the room alone carrying a briefcase. Afterward, the trox doesn't return. This last footage of the trox occurred on the same date Edriad claims her heirloom was stolen.

Development: After the investigators depart, Brant contacts Edriad, hoping to blackmail her for more credits. The two agree to meet at a rendezvous point later that evening, leading to Edriad murdering Brant (see page 29).

THE NEON GLASS

The Neon Glass is a popular bar at an intersection near the Eyeswide Agency. The investigators likely follow Brant's lead here. Read or paraphrase the following.

A neon martini glass blazes above the door of a dilapidated dive. Inside, the floors are sticky with



tembrus

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spilled booze, and the barstools are crammed with guests. A patron with colorful tentacles perches at the far end of the bar, sipping a drink through a coiled novelty straw. Five drow wearing suits sit in a corner booth, speaking with hushed tones.

The bartender tosses a handful of coasters on the bar. "Welcome to the Neon Glass," she says with a smirk. "Hungry? Or just looking to have a drink tonight?"

Luca (page 60), the bartender and partial owner of the Neon Glass, is a friend to the Eyes who's always happy to chat with investigators and answer their questions—so long as they keep buying drinks. Available drinks are beer/wine (1 credit), cocktails (5 credits), or bottle service (10 credits). If they ask about a trox guest, she recalls seeing him several times over the past two weeks. She remembers him buying

drinks for another regular patron, a lowlife named Gigmo. She tells the investigators she hasn't seen Gigmo around lately, either.

Luca doesn't know why Tembrus came to Absalom Station or what he's been up to, but she'll string the investigators along for as long as possible by feeding them miscellaneous gossip, hoping to sell them as many drinks as she can before they move on.

Repeat Customer: As the conversation wraps up, Luca gets their attention by subtly jerking her head toward the front door as a trox walks in and settles into a corner booth.

"That's him," Luca murmurs. "That's the guy." She leans across the bar. "Just do me a favor, will you? If there's a disagreement, mind taking it outside?" She winks.

Tembrus (CN male trox soldier) acts jumpy and uncooperative when approached. If questioned, he denies knowing anything about the statue or Edriad. If investigators succeed at a DC 18 Sense Motive check or expend magic or other abilities to probe his mind, they realize he's lying. Tembrus doesn't have the statue now, and if confronted with his lie, he shows them his empty pockets as proof of his innocence. If the investigators bribe him with at least 5,000 credits or succeed at a DC 28 Intimidate check, Tembrus admits that he planned to sell the statue to "some big shot in the Eye" but got spooked after his contact changed the meeting location too many times. A week ago, he sold it to Gigmo, whom he met here at the Neon Glass. He doesn't reveal anything about Edriad, the Forsaken Brood, or the true nature of the *Heretic Worm*; he's more afraid of the Brood than he is of the investigators. If the investigators try to rough him up, Luca shouts a warning about scaring off her customers; the second time, she kicks them out.

At any point during their encounter with Tembrus, the investigators can realize with a successful DC 23 Perception check that the drow in the neighboring booth are listening to their conversation. If the investigators mention this out loud, all five eavesdroppers stand up from their table as a group and leave the bar.

Development: The investigation attracts notice; see below.

D. MEAN STREETS (CR 8)

Outside, the streets are slick with artificial condensation, a byproduct of the nightly venting of massive ducts lining the Spike's passages. The flickering lights of the bar and a dozen others like it shine over every surface, blanketing the empty streets in a hazy glow.

A shadow slips through the gloaming, moving between the alleys, followed by the whisper of steel. Then, the ozone tang of magic fills the air.



Creatures: Five drow soldiers, all on Casparian Arabani's payroll, prepare to ambush the investigators just outside the Neon Glass. Use the map on the back inside cover of this book for this encounter.

ARABANI GOONS (6)

CR 3

XP 800

Drow soldier

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

HP 40

EAC 15; **KAC** 18

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

Immunities magical sleep effects; **SR** 11

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 25 ft.

Melee carbon steel curveblade +12 (1d10+7 S; critical bleed 1d6)

Ranged autotarget rifle +9 (1d6+3 P) or

smoke grenade +9 (explode [smoke cloud 1 minute; 20 ft.])

Offensive Abilities create darkness, fighting styles (arcane assailant), rune of the eldritch knight

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—dancing lights, detect magic

TACTICS

During Combat Arabani goons attempt to surround and flank their enemies if possible, preferring to strike with melee weapons but switching to their longarms if a target gets out of reach. They might also retreat to cover and continue shooting, depending on the tactical advantages of doing so.

Morale After the first drow falls, one of them flees into the alley, using *create darkness* and smoke grenades to cover his escape. This is Valmar, Casparian Arabani's lieutenant. The others stay behind and fight to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +13, Intimidate +8, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Drow

Gear golemforged plating II, autotarget rifle with 50 longarm rounds, carbon steel curveblade, smoke grenades (2)

Development: After the investigators defeat their attackers, they can attempt a DC 22 Engineering or Profession (Soldier) check to assess their assailants' equipment. On a success, they recognize that the drows' weapons and armor are much better than off-the-shelf equipment; they're prototypes with unique serial numbers. The pawnbroker **Julzakama** (page 59) or tech luminary **Tru** (page 63) can look up the serial numbers in a proprietary patent registration database. This takes about 1 hour and uncovers that the items were produced by House Arabani, a weapons and security technology corporation owned and operated by the powerful drow family of the same name.

HOUSE ARABANI

Investigators who succeed at a DC 18 Culture check, or who have relevant backgrounds, recall information about the Arabani name. House Arabani is a well-connected drow noble family that owns a weapon manufacturing corporation based in the city of Nightarch on Apostae. The group's commercial and political influence is exceeded only by House Zeizerer, the undisputed industry leader. Despite Arabani's best efforts to sabotage Zeizerer's reputation, they remain but a distant second to their primary rival, a source of great frustration to the house's noble family.

Inquiries into House Arabani's presence on Absalom Station reveal that the corporation is represented locally by Casparian Arabani, a minor noble who maintains a lavish penthouse and public art gallery in one of the tallest buildings beneath the Eye. He has contracts with numerous military and mercenary companies, and rumors persist that he makes just as much, if not more, from selling arms to pirates, gangsters, and other criminal organizations.

If the investigators don't think to ask their contacts, Tyver recommends they give one of them a call.

The investigators have a few hours to rest, restore Stamina Points, talk to contacts, follow up on existing leads, or engage in other short-term downtime activities before proceeding to **Event 1**. Neither Brant nor Edriad are available to talk or meet with the investigators during this time.

EVENT 1: CRIME SCENE

One of the investigators receives a comm from their handler. Tyver's terse and to the point: Brant Cassel was just found dead. Station Security's already on the scene, but Tyver wants the investigators to check it out and learn whatever they can.

The crime scene is a central duct junction in the Spike, just a short distance down from the Monarch. Encourage players to describe how they assemble their team and travel to the scene, then read or paraphrase the following.

Yellow security tape surrounds an intersection of several enormous ventilation ducts that have been repurposed into a transit center. Flashing lights from a parked security vehicle strobe over the crime scene, illuminating a makeshift barricade that's already been pushed aside by curious rubberneckers milling about the area.

Halfway down the embankment, several grim-faced Station Security officers are loading a corpse onto a gurney, while a coroner's vehicle idles nearby.

The head officer on the scene is Captain **Dax Vega** (page 58), who's helpful as long as investigators announce their status as Eyeside contractors and don't go out of their way to interfere with his own investigation.

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Clues: Captain Vega shares everything he knows about the new case and confirms any correct conclusions the investigators reach on their own. He tells the investigators that the body was found about half an hour ago, with medical drones placing the time of death at half an hour before that. The cause of death was trauma and bleeding from a scattergun blast directly to the back at point-blank range. No weapon was found. Street crime, including murder, isn't uncommon in this part of the Spike. Oddly, several untouched valuables were found on Brant's body, including jewelry and a few loose credsticks—though her comm unit was missing.

Following Up: Edriad murdered Brant after the bellhop tried to blackmail her, hoping to frame Tembrus for the crime, though there's not yet enough evidence available to prove it. Once they've had a chance to look around and ask questions, Captain Vega urges the investigators to get some rest.

EVENT 2: COMPLICATIONS

Captain Vega calls the investigators the next day, inviting them to the precinct building to discuss a break in the case and review new evidence. Tembrus was murdered hours after their conversation in the Spike. Casparian Arabani hopes to slow the investigators' hunt for the statue by making them suspects in a murder investigation. He ordered Valmar (who the investigators encountered outside the Neon Glass) to kill Tembrus in a way that mimicked the investigators' fighting capabilities, as they'll soon learn.

The precinct is sparsely staffed at this time of cycle, with a skeleton crew of StatSec staff working the graveyard shift. When they arrive, they wait in the lobby for a few minutes before Captain Vega leads them down a short hall to an interview room. Read or paraphrase the following.

This cramped, windowless room consists of four cinder block walls and a handful of cheap-looking plastic chairs clustered around a metal table. A bare bulb hangs from the ceiling at the end of a long electrical cable, casting shadows around the room as it sways back and forth.

Vega reaches out and catches the bulb in one hand to steady it before motioning to the chairs. "Howdy. May as well get right to it. We've got witnesses at the Neon Glass who saw you talking to a gentletrox named Tembrus earlier this evening. Circumstantially, that trox was our primary suspect in the Brant Cassel murder. Problem is, now he's dead, too. The lab puts his time of death a couple hours after we had our talk down in the ducts." He clears his throat. "Anything you want to tell me?"

Captain Vega doesn't have enough evidence to charge the investigators, nor does he want to. Vega doesn't believe they committed the murder but doesn't believe in coincidences, either. He asks each investigator to record a statement about

their whereabouts and activities over the course of the previous evening, asking about their relationship with Brant Cassel, their conversation with Tembrus at the Neon Glass, or anything else that seems noteworthy. They're not under arrest and can leave at any time, though if they don't cooperate, Tyver reprimands them later for "not playing along."

Clues: The investigators can learn the following clues by cooperating with Captain Vega.

- Tembrus was found dead surface-side, several blocks from the Neon Glass.
- His body is on the way to the Bastion morgue.
- His cause of death was an injury from a weapon or another distinctive effect, such as a spell or class ability, that one of the investigators used in their battle with the drow goons.

Development: As they leave the building, the investigators are approached by **Ulrik Garwal** (N female hobgoblin soldier), who rises from a seat in the lobby as they pass and asks for a word. She waits until they get a few yards from the precinct building. Read or paraphrase the following.

Ulrik takes a narrow aluminum tube from the pocket of her uniform, raises it to her lips, and takes a slow draw, holding her breath for a few moments before exhaling a cloud of fragrant purplish vapor. "I saw you talking to Vega. He's got you on the hook for the dead trox, yeah?"

She grins, displaying a mouthful of jagged fangs. "Vega doesn't know what I know, though. I know about the 'heirloom' you're looking for—the Worm, I mean. I know you aren't the only ones looking, either, and some of the others won't hesitate to kill for it. Again. By my count, they've already done it twice." She takes another draw.

"I'll make you a deal. I know exactly who's got that statue, and I'd be happy to send you to 'em. But in return, I want you to bring the statue to me, so I can get it back to its rightful owners. You do that for me, I'll keep the law off your back until you can clear your names."

Ulrik answers the investigators' questions with snarky enthusiasm; responses to some likely questions appear below.

Where did you get this information? "Can't tell you, I'm afraid. I keep my sources confidential. I can tell you it's someone I trust, though." This is the truth. Ulrik's source is a ysoki fence named Unger who helps her liquidate items of value she steals from the precinct evidence locker. Gismo approached Unger a few days ago with questions about buyers for an unusual item. Unger informed Ulrik, who then used Station Security databases to match the item's description to a seized shipment of contraband in storage at the Absalom Station Port Authority.

What do you intend to do with it? "Return it to its rightful owners, of course." This is technically true; Ulrik intends to

locate the archaeological society who originally discovered the *Heretic Worm* and find out what sort of reward they're offering for its return. She knows nothing about Edriad, the Forsaken Brood, or the true nature of the relic, nor does she particularly care. If the investigators try to fill her in, she stops them, indicating that the less she knows, the happier she'll be.

Why can't you do this yourself? "Too many eyes on me. Truth is, I didn't get this information from an approved source and I don't want any higher-ups looking into it and scaring my informants away." This is also the truth.

If the investigators agree to her terms, Ulrik hands them a datachip containing a holographic mugshot of a male lashunta with maroon skin (this is Gismo), as well as his home address at a Spike tenement called the Idari Arms. Aside from his name, Ulrik knows nothing about Gismo, nor does she know how he came to possess the artifact.

If the investigators refuse Ulrik's help, they can track Gismo down based on Luca's lead. If they haven't already talked to her or don't remember Gismo, she calls with a request that they check on one of her regulars who she hasn't seen in awhile, providing the investigators with his address.

THE IDARI ARMS

The Idari Arms is a rundown tenement next to a decrepit water purification plant in the Spike. Originally part of an affordable housing project sponsored by the kasathan Doyenate, the building is now owned by a local slumlord—but somehow, the name stuck.

There's a broken intercom at the front door, but investigators can bypass the outdated electronic lock with a successful DC 22 Computers or Engineering check. Tenants ignore strangers as a rule; if the investigators wait outside for more than a few minutes, a group of vesk chatting loudly and tossing a brutaris ball to each other arrive, swipe a security card for access, and allow the investigators to follow them inside without a second glance.

Gismo's apartment is on the sixteenth floor. The door's locked (DC 23 Computers or Engineering to disable). Investigators can force the door open with a successful DC 23 Athletics check. Nothing they do to open the door draws any attention from neighbors; the occupants of the Idari Arms are accustomed to minding their own business. Read or paraphrase the following.

This is a messy studio apartment. A small kitchenette with an attached dining nook occupies one side of the room. On the other, a stained lime-green couch littered with discarded clothing sits opposite a mid-range entertainment center. A cot leans against the wall.

On the floor in a corner directly opposite the front door, between an overstuffed bookcase and a cheap end table, lies a dead lashunta. Both arms are crossed over his face as if to shield him from some sort of attack.

Clues: The corpse is Gismo. Moving the corpse's stiffened limbs away from his face reveals a visage frozen in abject terror, its eyes rolled back and its mouth open in a silent scream. A successful DC 23 Medicine check reveals no obvious cause of death; the body has no physical wounds, nor does it display any sign of magical attacks, disease, or poisoning.

Gismo's condition is a chilling preview of the gruesome fate awaiting those who fail to return the *Heretic Worm* to the Forsaken Brood before their time runs out. The unlucky lashunta purchased the statue from Tembrus a week ago for a fantastically low price. When the first symptoms of the statue's curse manifested, Gismo turned to the infosphere for help, where he learned the truth of his purchase. He desperately stashed the statue in a storage locker, hoping that physical distance would protect him. It didn't.


If the investigators search Gismo's apartment, they find Gismo's identification and a keycard to a storage locker located at Docking Bay SDH-29 in the pocket of a crumpled jacket on the couch.

Development: Just as the investigators find Gismo's keycard, their investigation is interrupted by the arrival of **Valmar Zantz** (CE drow soldier; use the Arabani Goon statistics on page 29 if needed). Having arrived with the intention of beating the statue's location out of Gismo, Valmar quickly pivots to adopting a diplomatic approach when he realizes the investigators got here first.

Any investigator who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check recognizes Valmar as the drow who fled the scene of the ambush outside the Neon Glass. If not, Valmar reminds them—acting insulted that they don't remember him—and introduces himself as Casparian Arabani's personal lieutenant. He's not looking for a fight this time. He flees if the investigators respond aggressively, using *create darkness* and smoke grenades to cover his retreat. Otherwise, read or paraphrase the following.



Casparian Arabani



Valmar relaxes. "Okay, I'm not gonna waste your time. My boss knows about the statue, and he wants it. That's why I'm here. I'm guessing this guy doesn't have it anymore." He gestures at Gigmo's corpse. "But maybe you do. Look, my boss can pay a lot more than whoever hired you."

Valmar slowly reaches into the pocket of his suit jacket and withdraws a small device. He taps a button and a three-dimensional image of a besuited drow materializes in the center of the room.

The projection smiles smugly. "Greetings, new friends! So pleasant to finally make your acquaintance. My name is Casparian Arabani. I understand you are looking for, or perhaps are in possession of, a particular art piece of great interest to me. I would like to buy it from you."

Clues: Casparian remains friendly as long as the conversation goes his way, though his disdain for those outside his personal social circle comes out as soon as it doesn't. If the investigators treat him with respect, he graciously answers their questions, likely including the following.

Who are you? "As I said, my name is Casparian Arabani. Surely you are familiar with Arabani Arms? I represent my family's business interests here on Absalom Station, as well as my many philanthropic pursuits." A successful DC 23 Culture check confirms this as truth and provides the information about House Arabani detailed on page 29 if the investigators don't already have it.

What's your relationship with Edriad? "I'm afraid I don't know anyone by that name." This is the truth.

Why do you want the statue? "Art is one of my few pleasures in this wicked world. If my research is correct, this piece you're looking for is of great historical significance. It would make an excellent addition to my collection of pre-Gap Hylaxian relics. I'm willing to pay quite handsomely for it."

Did you kill Tembrus? "Didn't you kill the trox? I heard StatSec has you all pegged for it. Why would I want him dead? All I want is the statue, and he didn't have it." He's lying; not only did Valmar kill Tembrus on Casparian's direct order, but he was instructed to do so in a way that implicated at least one of the investigators. A successful DC 27 Sense Motive check reveals the lie, but Casparian won't admit it.

Did you kill Brant? He smirks. "No, I didn't kill the bellhop. Didn't Tembrus kill her? Isn't that why you killed Tembrus? Allegedly, of course." While Arabani obviously knows that the investigators didn't kill Tembrus, he has no idea who killed Brant. Nonetheless, when news of Brant's murder came across the infosphere, he saw an opportunity to rid himself of both Tembrus and the investigators by encouraging the theory that Tembrus's murder was retaliation for Brant's.

Did you kill Gigmo? "Yet another tragic death I know nothing about." Casparian assumes the investigators or some other party killed Gigmo, since he knows nothing about the curse.

How much are you willing to pay? "Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Why don't you start by proving to me that you have the statue first, and then we can talk numbers. I assure you I'll make it worth your while."

Why did you have us attacked outside the Neon Glass? "An unfortunate misunderstanding, I assure you. Nonetheless, you proved yourselves quite capable, and I certainly don't hold you responsible for the deaths of my employees. They acted without consulting me, and they suffered the consequences." Another lie; he instructed the team to attack the investigators when he learned that they were conferring with Tembrus. Realizing that he had underestimated their capabilities, he switched to framing them for Tembrus's murder as a backup plan.

If the investigators agree to his terms (or pretend to), Casparian provides them his personal comm information and requests a call when they have the statue, whereupon they can discuss payment and arrange a meeting for the exchange.

If the investigators refuse to work with Casparian, read or paraphrase the following text.

Casparian's expression changes dramatically, the drow's jovial smile twisting down into a wrathful grimace.

"Is that so?" His voice is cold. "How disappointing. Goodbye, investigators." The holographic image flickers and disappears.

Without another word, Valmar gives a curt nod to the investigators, then departs.

Assuming the investigators allow him to leave without a fight, Valmar exits the building and enters a stretch limousine idling in the street outside, which promptly speeds away in the direction of the Eye. (Investigators can watch Valmar leave through the window or by using other means of surveillance, such as a drone or psychic abilities). Should anyone attack, try to prevent him from leaving, or make an obvious attempt to follow him, Valmar flees as detailed on page 31.

EVENT 3: FINDERS KEEPERS

Gigmo rents a storage locker in a garbage-strewn hallway just off Docking Bay SDH-29, a low-rent ship storage and maintenance facility nestled at the far end of one of the station's Arms. Most lockers are covered in profane graffiti, and many have broken locks, but Gigmo's somehow remains intact. Investigators can bypass the lock with a successful DC 26 Engineering or Computers check or by using the keycard from Gigmo's apartment.

The locker contains a foot-tall object wrapped in a dirty packing blanket. This unassuming package conceals the *Heretic Worm*, the item over which so many have already died. When the investigators unwrap the bundle, read or paraphrase the following.

Just over a foot tall and curiously heavy for its size, the statue's constructed of smooth black stone, its coiled wormlike tail forming a solid base. Each of its six segmented arms holds aloft a dark jewel. Its body is inlaid with intricate whorls of phosphorescent violet. Despite its lack of distinct facial features, the creature's cold purple eyes radiate an aura of steely authority.

As Edriad described, the statue depicts a philosopher worm, one of the faithful servitors of the Forever Queen Hylax.

Clues: Tucked behind the package containing the statue is a battered datapad with no password. The files are all videos made by Gigmo. Based on timestamps, the oldest was recorded eight days ago and the most recent was recorded two days ago.

Video 1, Day -8: This is a partially edited promotional reel showcasing the artifact, intended to entice potential buyers. In a smarmy announcer's voice, Gigmo narrates the quality of the statue's materials, promoting it as a valuable art piece.

Video 2, Day -5: A haggard-looking Gigmo speaks directly to the camera, recounting a series of dreams he's been having in which the statue comes to life and watches him while he's asleep. He feels it watching him, so he hid it in a drawer. He complains about needing to call an exterminator for all the bugs suddenly showing up in his apartment. A successful DC 23 Medicine check identifies his complaints and possible hallucinations as symptoms of sleep deprivation, substance abuse, or both.

Video 3, Day -4: This video is nine uninterrupted hours of footage of the statue, seemingly recorded over the course of a single night. Nothing unusual occurs during this time frame.

Video 4, Day -3: An increasingly unhinged Gigmo paces back and forth across his apartment, chain-smoking and gesticulating wildly as he rambles semi-coherently about discoveries he's made in various dark corners of the infosphere. He rambles for a few minutes about secret cults, conspiracies, and deadly curses. The GM should incorporate bits and pieces of the artifact's true history into Gigmo's ranting, as well as any number of wild inaccuracies.

Video 5, Day -2: Gigmo hides in a dark closet, illuminated only by the datapad's flashlight app. With tears streaming from his bloodshot eyes, the lashunta whispers his plan to stash the statue in an old storage locker at the loading docks, hoping that maybe the bugs will finally leave him alone if he gives up ownership of it.

In addition to Gigmo's videos, the datapad contains poorly organized notes about the statue, pieced together from questionable infosphere sources. Anyone who succeeds at a DC 25 Mysticism check can peruse these documents to learn the complete history of the *Heretic Worm* (pages 24 and 37), but even a quick scan imparts basic knowledge of Antilifrex,

the Forsaken Brood, and the curse that befalls anyone who comes into possession of the statue. Shirren player characters or others with an appropriate background gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this check, or can automatically Aid Another on this check even if they aren't trained in Mysticism.

Development: Now the investigators possess the *Heretic Worm* and have also learned the terrible secrets of its true nature, they should realize their own death clock is ticking. Give the group time to discuss possible courses of action; they might want to return to the Eyeswide Agency and give the statue back to Edriad, deliver it to Sergeant Garwal, or contact Casparian Arabani to begin negotiating a price. They might also want to come up with ways to rid themselves of the curse. Before they can act, one of the investigators receives an incoming communication from an unlisted number.

The video that appears on the comm display is grainy and indistinct, as if transmitting from a location with a poor signal. There's no mistaking the face on the screen as Edriad, the shirren client who hired Eyeswide to find her missing statue.

"Hello? Hello?" the elderly shirren repeats, leaning closer to the screen. "Are you there? I need your help. I've been abducted. They'll be back any minute. I'm sending my coordinates to you right now. Please hurry!"

The video abruptly cuts out, only to be replaced moments later by a steadily blinking icon that indicates the presence of an incoming text message.

The video is real, but its subject isn't actually Edriad. Casparian Arabani has been monitoring the investigators' movements via surveillance drones ever since they left the Idari Arms. He had no intention of negotiating fairly with the Eyes and plans to forcibly take the artifact. He sent an infiltration robot along with a contingent of armed soldiers to prepare an ambush in an abandoned warehouse, luring the investigators there by pretending to have taken their client captive.

The text message contains a set of coordinates, which any investigator can track using GPS software that comes standard on most personal comm units. The location is nearby; it appears to be an old starship parts warehouse just off one of the Arms, a few minutes' travel from their current location.

E. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE (CR 10)

A squat, unremarkable building stands about a hundred yards off the main thoroughfare that runs the length of this Arm, the only permanent building at the center of a maze of haphazardly parked shipping containers. The only way in is an unlocked service entrance dimly illuminated by a single fluorescent security light. The warehouse consists

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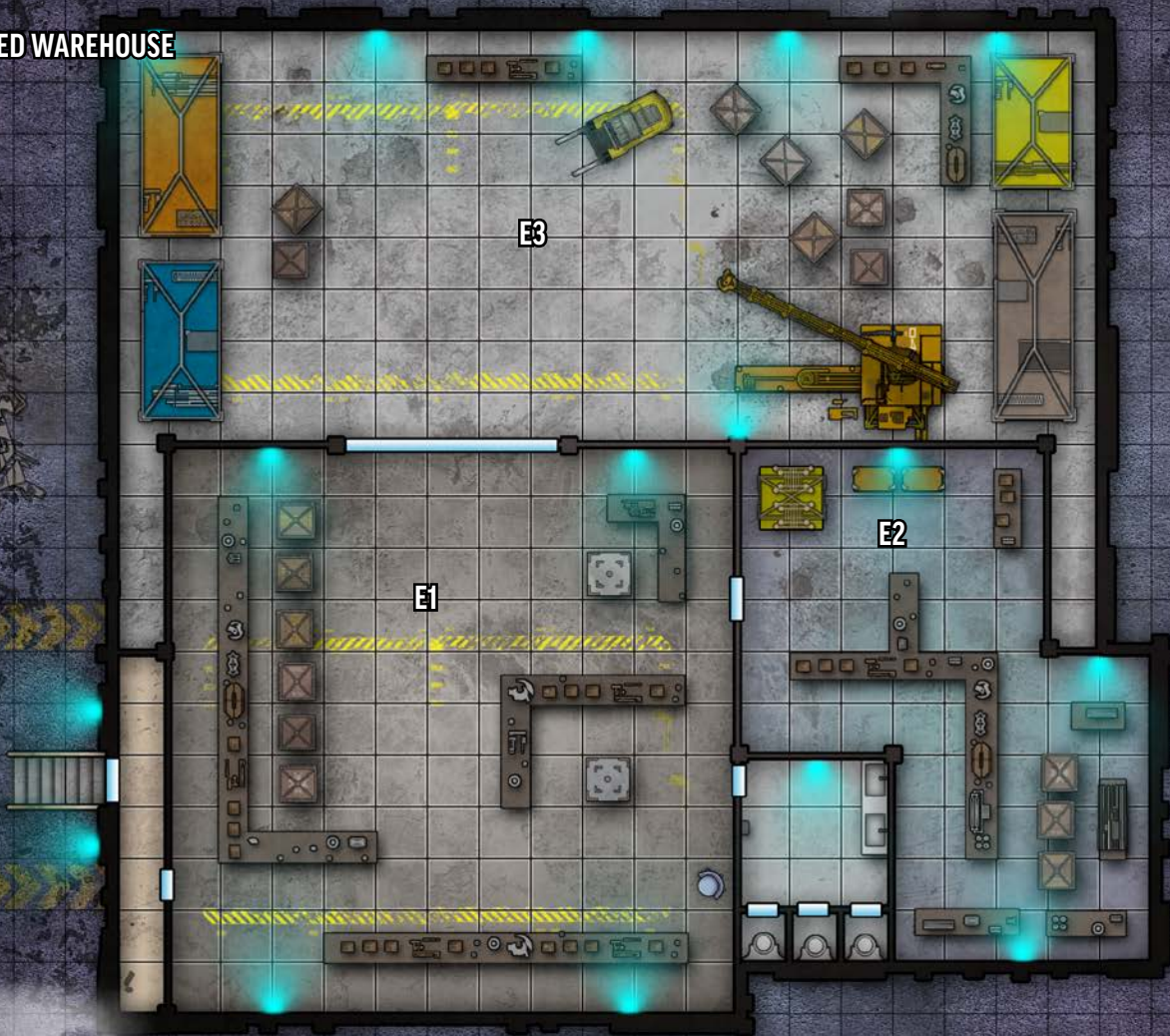
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E. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

■ = 5 FEET



of two work and storage areas, a dingy bathroom covered in graffiti, and a loading bay out back. All doors inside the warehouse are open.

Creatures: An infiltration robot disguised as Edriad waits within, along with a contingent of Arabani units hiding behind cover throughout the warehouse interior, keeping comms open and their eyes on the entrance. Inside, the investigators can see the fake Edriad's silhouette seated in a chair along the eastern wall of the southwestern room in the warehouse, handcuffed to a conduit that runs the length of the building. She quickly notices the investigators and frantically motions with her free hand for them to approach, hushing them and looking around nervously if they call out to her.

As soon as all the player characters are inside the warehouse, a security barrier slams down over the service entrance, sealing them inside. The "Edriad" robot rises from its seat in the southeastern corner of **E1** and stalks toward them, absorbing both the handcuffs and the chair into its nanite-infused body as it morphs from an elderly shirren into a sleek, faceless steel chassis.

EXTERMINATOR-CLASS INFILTRATION ROBOT CR 7

XP 3,200

HP 115 (Alien Archive 4 102)

TACTICS

During Combat The robot's programmed to kill or incapacitate whichever creature possesses the *Heretic Worm* and recover the statue for itself, a goal it seeks to accomplish by any means necessary.

Morale The robot fights to the death. If it gains possession of the *Heretic Worm*, it secures the statue inside a shielded internal compartment as a swift action, then kills any witnesses.

PATROL-CLASS SECURITY ROBOTS (2) CR 4

XP 1,200

HP 52 (Alien Archive 94)

TACTICS

During Combat The robots start combat with a jolting arc, then slam enemies, focusing on targets that don't have the statue.

Morale The robots are programmed to fight until destroyed.

ARABANI GOONS (5) CR 3

XP 800

HP 40 (page 29)

TACTICS

During Combat Three of the goons engage the investigators directly in battle, while the other two shoot from cover around the warehouse.

Morale Once the infiltration robot has been destroyed and three of the Arabani goons have fallen in battle, the remaining soldiers surrender.

Development: After the investigators defeat the Arabani forces, read or paraphrase the following text.

The robot crumples to the floor of the warehouse, the features of a dozen stolen guises flashing across its integrated synthskin as its internal mechanisms grind to a halt. It gives a final shuddering gasp as the light in its eyes flickers out.

Somewhere ahead, a powerful motor grinds to life and the reinforced steel service door on the other side of the warehouse begins sliding up. Outside is a loading dock lined with shipping containers and heavy equipment.

Evenly spaced along the perimeter of the dock are at least a dozen drow in heavy armor, each wielding a powerful longarm. Casparian Arabani stands at the center, striking a casual pose with his hands in his pockets and a dazzling smile on his face.

"So, we finally meet in person!" he declares. "And, of course, you've gone and cost me more money. These robots aren't cheap, you know. How about you make it up to me by turning over the statue without a fight, and spare me the cost of all the ammo it'll take to end you?"

Convinced he's won, Arabani gloats over his own cleverness at having manipulated the investigators into retrieving the statue for him. Eventually, however, he tires of monologuing and dispatches Valmar to bring the artifact to him, instructing his other goons to shoot the investigators if they resist. If they try to warn him about the curse, he shrugs, saying that it'll take more than fairy tales to keep him from getting what he wants.

If the investigators surrender the statue to Valmar, or if a fight breaks out, the loading dock is suddenly flooded with bright light as a pair of recon enercopters (*Armory 138*) swing into position overhead.

"DROP YOUR WEAPONS!" booms the amplified voice of Ulrik Garwal from the nearest enercopter. "By the authority of Absalom Station Security, you're under arrest on suspicion of—oh, where to begin?—trespassing. Assault. Unlawful discharge of firearms. Trafficking in stolen property. Vandalism. Oh, and murder." The speaker clicks off, then back on. "Don't resist, and we won't shoot. Give us a reason, and we will."

From their positions around the loading dock, the soldiers look to Casparian. After a long, tense pause, the drow gives a curt nod, and their assorted weapons clatter to the ground.

On Ulrik's command, six Station Security enforcers rappel from the enercopters to the loading dock, where they begin collecting statements and identification from everyone present. Recognizing the investigators as Eyes, the enforcers do not handcuff them or confiscate their weapons, asking only that they remain in the area until Ulrik's ready for them.

EVENT 4: AKITONIAN STANDOFF (CR VARIES)

The investigators have 10 minutes to recover Stamina Points or administer healing while they wait for Ulrik to finish securing the scene. About half the Arabani forces present are taken into custody based on outstanding warrants or possession of unregistered weapons. Casparian Arabani leans against a shipping container on one side of the platform, a personal comm pressed to his ear, his signature smile replaced by a tight-lipped scowl.

Finally, the last enercopter rises into the sky and banks away over the sea of warehouses and storage units, leaving only Sergeant Garwal, Casparian Arabani, a pair of hadrogaan Security enforcers, and Valmar facing down the investigators across the loading dock. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene.



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"All right, then." The hobgoblin cracks her knuckles and gives everyone a chilling smile. "I'm glad we were able to get that unpleasantness out of the way. Now, shall we get down to business? I don't know which of you has the statue, and frankly, I don't care. Just hand it over and we can all walk out of here and forget this whole sorry episode. Otherwise, I'll have no choice but to take you all back down to the station and shake you till the truth falls out."

Casparian stares Ulrik down for a moment, then bursts out laughing. "Oh, I'd love to see you try. You may think you can push these headscanners around, but you've got nothing on me. Now quit wasting my time. Do you really want to get on the wrong side of House Arabani?"

Ulrik smirks back. "We've got tonight's surveillance footage from the dead lashunta's apartment building. Guess whose faces are all over it? We've also got eyewitnesses to every conversation Tembrus had the night he was killed. Guess who they remember? If I want to pinch any and all of you for this, I can. So, is one of you gonna give me what I want easy, or are we doing this the hard way?"

The investigators can respond however they wish. The options listed below are examples of choices they might make, as well as the most likely consequences of those choices.

The investigators give up the artifact to Ulrik Garwal. Ulrik dismisses the investigators before returning to the precinct building with the statue, leaving Casparian and Valmar furiously making calls on their comm units.

The investigators give the artifact to Casparian, or the investigators refuse to give up the artifact. Ulrik gives the order to have everyone arrested, prompting Casparian and Valmar to fight back. A three-way shootout ensues, with both sides attempting to wipe out both the investigators and any combatants on the opposing side.

ULRIK GARWAL

CR 7

XP 3,200

Hobgoblin soldier (*Alien Archive 2 76*)

N Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

HP 105

TACTICS

During Combat Ulrik prefers to fight up close and personal with her longsword, deploying stickybomb grenades as needed to keep foes from moving out of range.

Morale If reduced to 25 or fewer hit points by a foe she believes will let her live, Ulrik surrenders, commanding any Security enforcers to stand down as well. Otherwise, she fights to the death.

SECURITY ENFORCERS (2)

CR 3

XP 800

Hadrogaan mechanics (*Alien Archive 4 42*)

N Medium humanoid (hadrogaan)

HP 35

TACTICS

During Combat The enforcers are fiercely loyal to Ulrik Garwal and follow her lead in battle, moving to help flank when possible but preferring to attack from a distance using their arc pistols.

Morale The enforcers follow Ulrik's orders until she's incapacitated, whereupon they surrender.

CASPARIAN ARABANI

CR 8

XP 4,800

Drow envoy

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +21

DEFENSE

HP 115 RP 5

EAC 20; KAC 21

Fort +7; Ref +9; Will +11; +2 vs. enchantment

Immunities magical sleep effects; SR 17

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee ultrathin sword cane +17 (1d12+8 S; critical bleed 1d4)

Ranged ribbon lightning pistol +15 (2d6+8 E) or

web grenade I +15 (explode [10 ft., mire 1d4 rounds])

Offensive Abilities create darkness, envoy improvisations (clever feint, improved get 'em, improved hurry), limning light

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

1/day—*dispel magic* (DC 24)

At will—*dancing lights*

Constant—*detect magic*

TACTICS

During Combat Casparian uses his envoy abilities to support and empower his goons, locking down enemies with web grenades to keep his distance.

Morale If reduced to less than 30 HP, Casparian surrenders, waits for his family to pull strings for his release, and begins plotting revenge.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +21, Culture +21, Intimidate +21, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +16, Profession (Corporate Professional) +16

Languages Common, Drow

Gear advanced lashunta tempweave, ultrathin sword cane, ribbon lightning pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), web grenade I^{AR} (2)

VALMAR

CR 3

XP 800

HP 40 (page 29)

TACTICS

During Combat Valmar does whatever it takes to protect Casparian.

Morale Valmar fights until Casparian orders him to stand down.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS...

The investigators negotiate a diplomatic solution. With a successful DC 31 Diplomacy check, the investigators can convince both Casparian and Ulrik of the truth about the *Heretic Worm* and its curse; this DC is reduced by 5 if they have Gismo's notes, and by an additional 2 if at least one of the investigators has 6 or more ranks in Mysticism.

Once convinced, both parties relinquish their claims on the statue. However, Ulrik points out that even if Gismo died from the artifact's curse and Brant was murdered by Tembrus, Station Security still needs to make an arrest for Tembrus's murder. If the investigators are already aware that Valmar killed Tembrus and inform Ulrik, Casparian corroborates their account, conveniently leaving out that his lieutenant did so on his own orders. Ignoring Valmar's frantic protestations, Ulrik takes Valmar into custody and departs. Casparian exits shortly thereafter, wishing the investigators well and enigmatically suggesting that perhaps the next time they meet, they can work together, handing them a crisp business card.

CASE CLOSED

Once the investigators resolve the scene, they receive a communication from Tyver requesting a status update. Tyver instructs them to return to Eyeswide at once after hearing their report.

Both Tyver and Edriad are waiting for the investigators in Tyver's office when they arrive to report in and close the case. If they recovered the statue, Edriad is overjoyed and showers them with praise and candy.

If the investigators don't challenge her cover story, Edriad maintains her grandmotherly persona, pays the promised fee, and leaves with the artifact. Depending on how much the investigators shared during the investigation, Tyver may or may not ask Edriad questions, at the GM's discretion.

If the investigators confront Edriad about the truth or reveal knowledge of the *Heretic Worm*, she immediately abandons her facade and introduces the investigators to the real Edriad, who is as ruthlessly pragmatic as she is fanatically devoted to her cause. Still flush with triumph at having retrieved the artifact, she patiently takes the time to answer any remaining questions the investigators have, only stopping short of confessing to any criminal activity, before exiting



The Heretic Worm

the Agency and disappearing into the rush of the crowded streets outside.

If the investigators gave up the statue, Edriad ends her grandmotherly act and angrily scolds them, lecturing about the artifact's true nature and emphasizing that whoever currently has the statue only has seven days to live unless they find it and return it to her or another member of the Forsaken Brood. How the investigators approach this conundrum is beyond the scope of this adventure, but could provide an appropriate starting point for another!

THE HERETIC WORM

BULK 1

This is a sculpted likeness of the philosopher worm Antilifrex, crafted from the dust left behind when he was destroyed by his goddess on Nchak. It measures approximately one foot tall and appears to be made of dull black stone, inlaid with precious dark-colored gemstones and softly pulsing purple highlights. It's heavy for its size and is impervious to damage from any physical or magical source.

Possessing the statue exposes a creature to the *Curse of the Heretic Worm* (see below). Members of the Forsaken Brood are immune to the curse.

The artifact can be destroyed only if Hylax apologizes to every living member of the Forsaken Brood, whereupon it immediately crumbles to dust.

CURSE OF THE HERETIC WORM

Type curse; **Save** Will DC 20

Effect Each day, the victim notices an increasing number of fine, insectile vermin everywhere they go. The vermin cannot be seen or otherwise detected by individuals not affected by the curse. The insects can be scattered or even killed, but always return soon afterward, and in exponentially greater numbers. At the end of seven days, the insect swarm devours the victim's soul. The victim is slain instantly and cannot be brought back to life by any means.

Cure The victim must willingly give up ownership of the artifact to a member of the Forsaken Brood. Transferring ownership of the artifact to a creature who isn't part of the Brood also transfers the curse.

REWARDS

When they close the case, Tyver transfers 6,127 credits to each investigator's account as payment for recovering Edriad's statue; if the investigators gave the statue to Casparian Arabani or Ulrik Garwal, they receive a mysterious credit transfer of the same amount a few hours later. The investigators can't receive more than one such payment for recovering the statue.

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"People have to make tough decisions sometimes, and in the end they'll live with those decisions one way or another, kiddo. And the truth always comes out. We're not here to judge them for those decisions—our job is to figure out their truth. End of story."

*—Detective Tyver Vorsten,
Eyeswide Agency Veteran*

CASE BACKGROUND

Maro is among the oldest androids living on Absalom Station. Decades ago, he opened the Neon Glass with a samsaran couple, bartender Luca (an Eyeswide contact; see page 60), and accountant Semdrid. In fact, this arrangement is the latest in a long line of lifetime-spanning relationships for the trio. The three have spent multiple past lives together, the samsarans finding each other and rekindling their romance with each reincarnation, then serendipitously encountering

their longtime friend. In recent years, the three lived together in an upscale condo while managing their shared business.

The Drift Crisis shattered the trio's status quo. Maro's ship disappeared during the Drift Crash while he was away on business, leading Luca and Semdrid to believe he was dead. With normal shipping routes cut off, the Neon Glass struggled to keep many popular items in stock. Between Semdrid's business perspective and Luca's customer-facing role as bartender, the demands of running the business effectively created more friction in their relationship. Without Maro's vote to resolve their issues, the two fought bitterly instead of making compromises. After months of constant arguments peppered with old grievances accumulated over lifetimes spent together, Luca and Semdrid's relationship was at its breaking point.

In time, Maro was officially declared dead and his premium AbadarCorp life insurance policy paid out to his business partners. Semdrid and Luca pumped the money into their failing business, stabilizing the bar at a steep financial cost.

Then Maro unexpectedly reappeared. He wasn't dead at all; his ship had been shunted out of the Drift into an asteroid

field, hobbling the craft and leaving him gravely injured, but alive. A crew of salvagers picked him up, treated his wounds, and brought him back to Absalom Station in exchange for most of his valuables, including an ancient coin from Lost Golarion.

Maro's return sets off a series of arguments between Luca and Semdrid that soon ends with Luca murdering her partner with a novelty ice dagger in a fit of rage. Afterward, she plants one of Maro's antique weapons at the crime scene, appropriately doused in Semdrid's blood, to frame him for the murder. These events occur during the course of this case and haven't yet taken place when the adventure begins.

Unaware of the growing strife between his business partners, Maro approaches the Eyeswide Agency looking for help with recovering property he lost in exchange for reaching the Station.

THE CLIENT

Tyver sends a message to the investigators alerting them to a new case. When the player characters arrive at Tyver's office, read or paraphrase the following.

Tyver's broad chair creaks under their large frame as they wave the agents in, muscular arms exposed by their rolled-up sleeves. Once the contractors are settled, the grizzled nuar begins the briefing.

"Agents," Tyver rumbles in a low bass around a mouthful of cigar. "You know the Neon Glass by now, that watering hole in the Ring? One of the owners went missing during the Crash, presumed dead. The guy got the works—a funeral, life insurance payout, obituary. Then he shows back up on Absalom Station." Tyver takes a moment to exhale a stream of bluish-purple smoke out their nostrils, curling around their horns and up toward the high office ceiling lights. "Guy says he lost some of his property during his ordeal. He's requested a team of my best detectives—today, that would be you." Tyver puffs on their cigar.

If the investigators successfully recovered the *Heretic Worm* during the events of *Family Heirloom*, Tyver mentions that Maro asked for them specifically because they solved that case. Examples of questions the investigators might ask Tyver are provided below, along with their answers.

What can you tell us about the client? "The guy's name is Maro. He's one of the oldest androids on the Station. Been around since before the Gap. He's not too keen on talking about the past, though."

What property does he want us to recover? "He wasn't specific. Ask him the details when you meet."

Where should we meet with him? "Use one of the rooms downstairs or take him out to lunch somewhere. Your call. Agency won't pay, though." He snorts ruefully.

Why should we take this case? "Maro's got deep pockets and a case to solve. Need another reason?"

The investigators can meet with **Maro** (N male android) in a plush interview room designed with clients' comfort in mind or invite him out to a local restaurant; he suggests Sunny 6's diner in Little Akiton. At the meeting, the android tells the investigators he sold his valuables to the ruffians of Derelict Salvage in return for his rescue and safe passage home. He describes several items in detail, including a sapphire signet ring, antique fountain pen, and set of designer suits, but he's specifically interested in recovering an ancient gold coin. Examples of questions the investigators might ask are provided below, along with Maro's answers.



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What can you tell us about the coin? "It's made of gold, but there's not much else remarkable about it. Most of the writing on it's worn down, but if you look closely, you can make out the image of a tiny mug of ale." Investigators who succeed at a DC 15 Mysticism check recall the mug's association with the deity Cayden Cailean, a god of freedom, drink, and bravery. Maro enthusiastically confirms this if the investigators mention the information or use the deity's name.

Where were you traveling? "I was headed to Vesk-1 to visit a lovely gol distiller when the Crash hit. My vessel collided with a string of asteroids as the Drift spat us out. I was hurt quite badly, and the ship was wrecked."

What's gol? "A unique type of grain alcohol distilled exclusively in the Veskarium. It makes a refreshing summer cocktail, and I was looking into purchasing some to sell at the Neon Glass."

What happened then? "After my ship was wrecked, I got picked up by a crew of opportunists. They robbed me blind in exchange for passage back to Absalom Station."

What can you tell us about the people who robbed you? "They were salvagers, but they behaved more like pirates. Their ship was called the *Derelict*. I kept to myself for most of the journey home. Ate in my bunk, that sort of thing. I wish I could tell you more."

Why do you need us/Why are you going back on the deal you made? Maro hesitates before answering the question. He's embarrassed about being swindled and doesn't want to give the crew of the *Derelict* any more of his credits to get his coin back. Maro hopes that sending Eyes to fetch the coin might scare the salvagers into cooperating, or if that fails, the investigators can convince them or bully the coin out of them. "That coin means a lot to me. I would've never given it away if I'd had any other option."

How do we get them to give us the coin? Maro shrugs. "That's why I hired you. Do whatever you need to do, but don't hurt them over this. Violence never solved anything."

How long ago did you arrive? "We docked early yesterday. I had to make my way back home without any credits. What an ordeal."

Where should we start looking? "My swindlers didn't tell me any of their future plans, nor did I care to ask about them. I'm afraid I don't know."

By now, the investigators have two leads: the coin and the name of the ship.



Baltresh

THE DERELICT

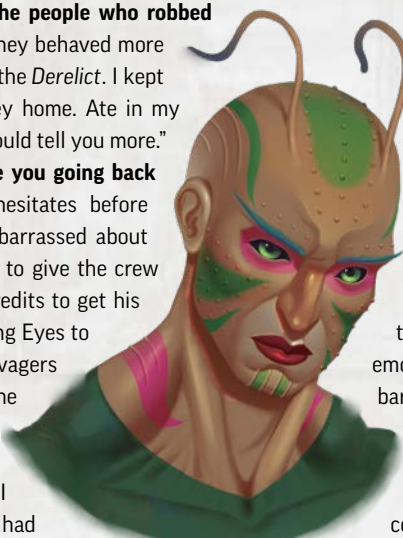
The investigators can find out more about the *Derelict* based on the results of a Diplomacy check to gather information, a Computers check, or a Piloting check. The DC for all such checks is 22. The investigators learn at least one new piece of information for each successful check.

Clues: The investigators discover the following clues as a result of the above checks.

- It's not an uncommon name, but the most likely match is the *Derelict*, a freighter owned by a system-wide salvaging business.
- The *Derelict* last docked near Little Akiton after arriving from the Diaspora yesterday.
- *Derelict* is registered to Baltresh Udachakov.
- The *Derelict*'s crew is a rowdy bunch who enjoy hitting up the bars when they're at port, and their latest victim is a dive in Fogtown called the Heated Engine.

Following Up: Investigators who research the owner's name and succeed at a DC 29 Computers or Profession (lawyer) check learn that Baltresh Udachakov is a vesk immigrant with a string of minor shipping law violations to his name—nearing the maximum allowed before the Stewards revoke his licenses. Baltresh has one living family member, a sibling named Anstajlia. His listed address is a storage unit in the Spike.

If anyone searches Anstajlia's name on the infosphere, they find a post on her Phototon timeline that says: "I'm back in A-Station! Time to party!" This post is accompanied by a string of emoticons and a check-in to the Heated Engine, a bar in Fogtown.



Iverten

THE COIN

The investigators can find out more about Maro's coin based on the results of a DC 26 Computers or Culture check. The coin is a registered artifact of Golarion origin, listed as belonging to a private collection. There are no local records, electronic or otherwise, detailing the transfer of ownership of the item, nor are there transactions fitting that description at any local pawnshops.

If he's helpful toward the group, and they ask him for assistance, **Julzakama** (page 59) recalls a group of people in grungy flight suits asking him to appraise some items including an old coin, but they ultimately took their business elsewhere.

If investigators succeed at a DC 26 Computers or Piloting check, they learn more about the coin's current whereabouts. An item matching the coin's description was declared to

Absalom Station Port Authority yesterday as part of the manifest of the freighter *Derelict*.

THE HEATED ENGINE

The investigation leads to a dive bar in Fogtown. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene.

The taproom of the Heated Engine lives up to its name: stifling hot, noisy, and lit by angry red neon. Patrons slam glasses together as cheers and toasts erupt from the packed tables. A ysoki bartender slings drinks onto trays from behind a long counter. In the back of the room, two tables covered in empty glasses are pushed together to accommodate a large, boisterous group of shippers covered in engine grease and singe marks from welding equipment. The symbol of a starship shorn in half, with the title "Derelict Salvage," adorns the back of their stained flight suits.



Tayanva

can disarm them using casual conversation with a successful DC 26 Bluff or Diplomacy check, or impress them by succeeding at a DC 22 Athletics check to demonstrate their strength.

Tayanva (CN female human mechanic):

The ship's engineer feels undervalued and believes the whole operation would fall apart without her. Tayanva's often frustrated at her crewmates' lack of technical knowledge; the investigators can impress her by succeeding at a DC 27 Engineering or Physical Science check to demonstrate their own skills. Tayanva also loves vidgames and often breaks the ice by challenging people to play the arcade machines at the back of the bar. Investigators who succeed at a DC 22 Acrobatics or Profession (vidgamer) check while playing against her earn Tayanva's respect.

Cuts (N male android biohacker): Serving

as the crew's medic, Cuts has terrible bedside manner, peppering his diagnoses with dry gallows humor. He earned his name after the crew observed his hobby of dissecting any strange dead lifeforms they found while salvaging. Cuts enjoys talking shop with anyone who succeeds at a DC 29 Life Science or Medicine check. He's also impressed by anyone who can beat him in a drinking game (DC 20 Fortitude save).

Anstajlia (NG female vesk operative): Baltresk's

little sister and constant tag-along, Anstajlia is the mischievous pilot of the *Derelict* and a joyful presence among the crew. She and Tayanva often argue over the "stressful stunts" she puts the ship through, but Anstajlia openly carries a torch for the engineer despite her grumbling. To earn her trust, investigators can demonstrate their knowledge of stunts (DC 29 Piloting) or advise her on how best to approach Tayanva for a date (DC 29 Sense Motive).

If the investigators successfully

impress one or more of the salvagers, they learn the following information in conversation. The crew of the *Derelict* was trawling in the Diaspora when a multicolored rift in space opened and spat out a ship. They watched the vessel collide with a nearby asteroid and immediately prepared to salvage the wreck. When their scans picked up life signs, Baltresk hailed the craft's sole survivor and offered a ride back to Absalom Station for a "reasonable fee"—all of his valuables. Baltresk is the ship's registered owner, but the crew operates as a team and everyone votes on major business decisions. They typically sell their haul in about a week, use a chunk of their profits to party as hard as they can, and then head out

How the investigators wish to confront the crew of the *Derelict* is largely up to them. They can learn the latest gossip about the crew by talking with other patrons or the bartender, quickly learning that they're behind on their bar tab and incredibly loud in their celebrations, standing out even in a place as rowdy as the Heated Engine.

The crew already sold Maro's coin to Casparian Arabani, a drow arms dealer who dabbles in collecting valuable items. The crew won't discuss the matter with anyone they don't trust.

Investigators who approach the crew's table without first proving themselves to the crew are met with catcalls and challenges to various drinking games. The investigators can learn more about Maro's coin by interacting with the salvagers as detailed below.

Baltresk (CN male vesk envoy): The surly vesk captain of the *Derelict* is a schemer who's always ready to pick an abandoned ship clean. Investigators familiar with Baltresk's criminal record can use their knowledge as leverage with a successful DC 29 Intimidate check. Using his family name, Udachakov, grants a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

Iverten (N nonbinary lashunta vanguard): Iverten, the *Derelict*'s high-strung first mate, never relaxes while on a job. But at port, they let it all hang out. Tonight they're deep in their cups and especially gullible; investigators



Anstajlia

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into space looking for the next haul. Profits are split evenly; before they party, each crew member sets a small percentage aside for ship upkeep and operating costs.

Baltresk won't admit he sold the coin until the investigators have influenced at least three other members of Derelict Salvage. Once this happens, he tells the investigators that he sold the coin to Casparian Arabani, offering them the drow's business card with his direct line while cautioning them that he doesn't think the collector is willing to sell.

F. ARABANI ART GALLERY

This swanky art gallery (see map on page 44) takes up the top two floors of a glittering tower in the Eye overlooking Jatembe Park. Funded by Casparian Arabani's lucrative business, the gallery consists of public displays plus a cafe and giftshop on the lower level (areas **F1-F6**) and a private collection (area **F7**) on the top floor.

The gallery is only open to the public a few hours each week. Currently, it's closed. Security cameras are installed in the ceiling of every room and at every hallway intersection, feeding their footage to the security control room (area **F6**). Roof maintenance access to the gallery is locked (Engineering DC 36 to disable) and leads through a 5-ft. airshaft into **F7**.

If Casparian invited the investigators here to make a deal, an Arabani bodyguard meets them at the door and gives them a tour of the gallery, ending with the private collection; they won't need to contend with security features unless they attack their escort. If the investigators decided to infiltrate or attack the gallery, or otherwise don't have an invitation from Casparian, they'll need to contend with the gallery's security features on their own.

F1. GIFT SHOP

The entrance to the gallery is little ways off from a gift shop. All sorts of frivolous items are featured on its shelves. Crystalline figures glimmer from inside glass display cabinets, reproductions of famous art pieces cover the walls, and random articles of luxury clothing hang from aluminum racks.

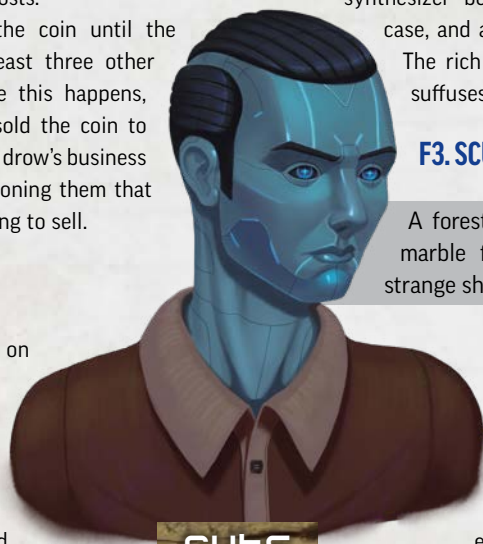
When the gallery is closed, the outer entrance by the gift shop is locked (Engineering DC 36 to disable) and connected to an alarm. Breaking down the door (Athletics DC 22) or disabling the lock without entering the security code (Computers DC 29) sets off the alarm, immediately alerting the creatures in **F5** and **F6** to the presence of intruders. Though the gift shop items look enticing, they're all mass-produced replicas of luxury items and aren't worth much.

F2. CAFE

This small but cheerful cafe consists of a mk 3 culinary synthesizer behind a counter, a pastry display case, and a few tables and chairs for patrons. The rich smells of coffee and baked goods suffuses the air.

F3. SCULPTURE ROOM (CR 10)

A forest of sculptures grows from the marble floor of this chamber, casting strange shadows across the walls.



CUTS

This public gallery houses a fine collection of sculptures and statuary from the Pact Worlds and beyond.

Traps: If the investigators enter the room without scheduling a meeting with Casparian first, the entire area is crisscrossed by dim red laser beams connected to an alarm. Moving in any direction through the area without disabling the motion sensors or without succeeding at a DC 22 Acrobatics check for every 10 feet moved, activates the trap.

ALARM LASER TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable** Engineering DC 27 (disable motion sensors)

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect seals doors and activates two cybernetic golems.

CYBERNETIC GOLEMS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

HP 125 each (*Alien Archive* 2 66)

TACTICS

During Combat The golems attack after the alarm activates, transforming from metal sculptures of humanoids into killing machines.

Morale The golems are programmed to fight until destroyed.

F4. PAINTING ROOM

Hundreds of frames adorn the walls, displaying paintings of every subject imaginable.

This room displays hundreds of paintings from different eras and styles, many by famous artists, but nothing else of interest.

F5. HOLO-ART ROOM (CR 10)

A cacophony of light and sound erupts to fill this empty space. Ethereal fish cavort alongside birds

with pixelated feathers. Ocean waves crash all around, carrying magnificent ships and omas with unicorn's horns sprouting from their heads. An electric blue bubble pops and the air fills with static, a gentle white noise washing over the area to cleanse the palate before the display starts up again.

This public gallery displays a vibrant—if overwhelming—collection of holo-art. Projectors built into the walls, floor, and ceiling are programmed to seamlessly shuffle through the various pieces and scenes, called “holo experiences” by those in the know; investigators recall these facts with a successful DC 23 Engineering or Profession (artist) check.

Creatures: Two living holograms born from the constant strobe of the installation attack the investigators when they enter the room, or they notice the investigators passing by and follow them out into the hall to ambush them later.

LIVING HOLOGRAMS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

HP 115 each (*Alien Archive* 3 66)

TACTICS

During Combat The living holograms pantomime various art pieces they've witnessed, wielding hardlight weapons that seem to change shape as they fight.

Morale Completely unaware that they are subject to such organic concepts as mortality, the living holograms fight to the death.

F6. SECURITY CONTROL ROOM

Viewscreens display closed-circuit footage, feeding from the cameras placed throughout the gallery. The investigators can hack and take control of the cameras with a successful DC 32 Computers check.

Creatures: Unless they were already alerted by the alarm, three security guards are working here when the investigators arrive. They immediately surrender to the armed intruders, begging to be spared. If needed, use the Arabani goon statistics on page 29.

F7. PRIVATE COLLECTION (CR 12)

This room houses the most precious and valuable items of Casparian Arabani's collection. A combination of art pieces, archaeological marvels, fossils, and antiques fill the display cases. Maro's coin is prominently displayed as part of an exhibit labeled “Relics of Lost Golarion.”

Traps: The case is locked (Engineering DC 36 to disable) and protected by a trap that releases a jolt of electricity strong enough to hurt a creature without damaging valuables.

ANTI-THIEF ARRAY CR 8

XP 4,800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable** Engineering DC 27 (disable shock plates)

CHASING THE COIN

If the investigators played Family Heirloom, they're already familiar with Casparian Arabani. (If Casparian died in the previous adventure, his family already used their considerable wealth to resurrect him.) Your group's approach to the next phase of the investigation depends on their opinion of Casparian, the characters' skillsets, and the party's preferred playstyle. Several likely approaches are described below.

Negotiation: Casparian claims he's willing to consider selling the coin back to Maro with the investigators as proxies. (His true intentions depend on his prior dealings with the group; see below.) Calling the number listed on his business card takes them straight to his comm unit; if the investigators look up his publicly listed number on the infosphere, their call instead goes to his assistant, requiring the investigators to leave a message and wait for a callback. In either case, Casparian says he'll consider the deal and invites them to talk further at his gallery in the Eye. The investigators are responsible for their own funds for purchasing back the coin; with most of his wealth spent by someone else, Maro can't afford more than the usual fees for the investigation.

Infiltration: The investigators can attempt to sneak into Casparian Arabani's gallery and steal the coin. They'll have to bypass security measures and battle armed guards to pull off the heist.

Potential Buyer: The investigators can set up a meeting with Casparian under false pretenses, assuming disguises and using deception to trick him into selling the coin. Tricking Casparian requires the investigators to make skill checks opposed to his Perception modifier (+21). Casparian reacts poorly to deception; see below.

Trigger touch; **Reset** 1 minute

Effect arc of electricity (8d12 E); Reflex 18 half

Creatures: If the investigators arranged a meeting with him, a hologram of Casparian Arabani waits standing near the center of the private collection, projected by a device built into the ceiling. Casparian never intended to risk appearing in person, but he's willing to discuss a selling price for the coin in this way. He knows the item's true worth and doesn't like losing out on valuables, so even if he doesn't consider the investigators to be his enemies, he asks a hefty 10,000 credits for the coin.

During negotiations, a team sent by a rival house of lesser drow nobles bursts into the room, planning to assassinate Casparian. Use the statistics provided on page 45 for the Arabani assassins. Should this happen, Casparian's enforcers abandon the hologram, leaving the investigators to fight alone.

If the investigators fought Casparian, killed Valmar, or otherwise antagonized him in the past, he instead plans to order his enforcers to kill the investigators and make it look

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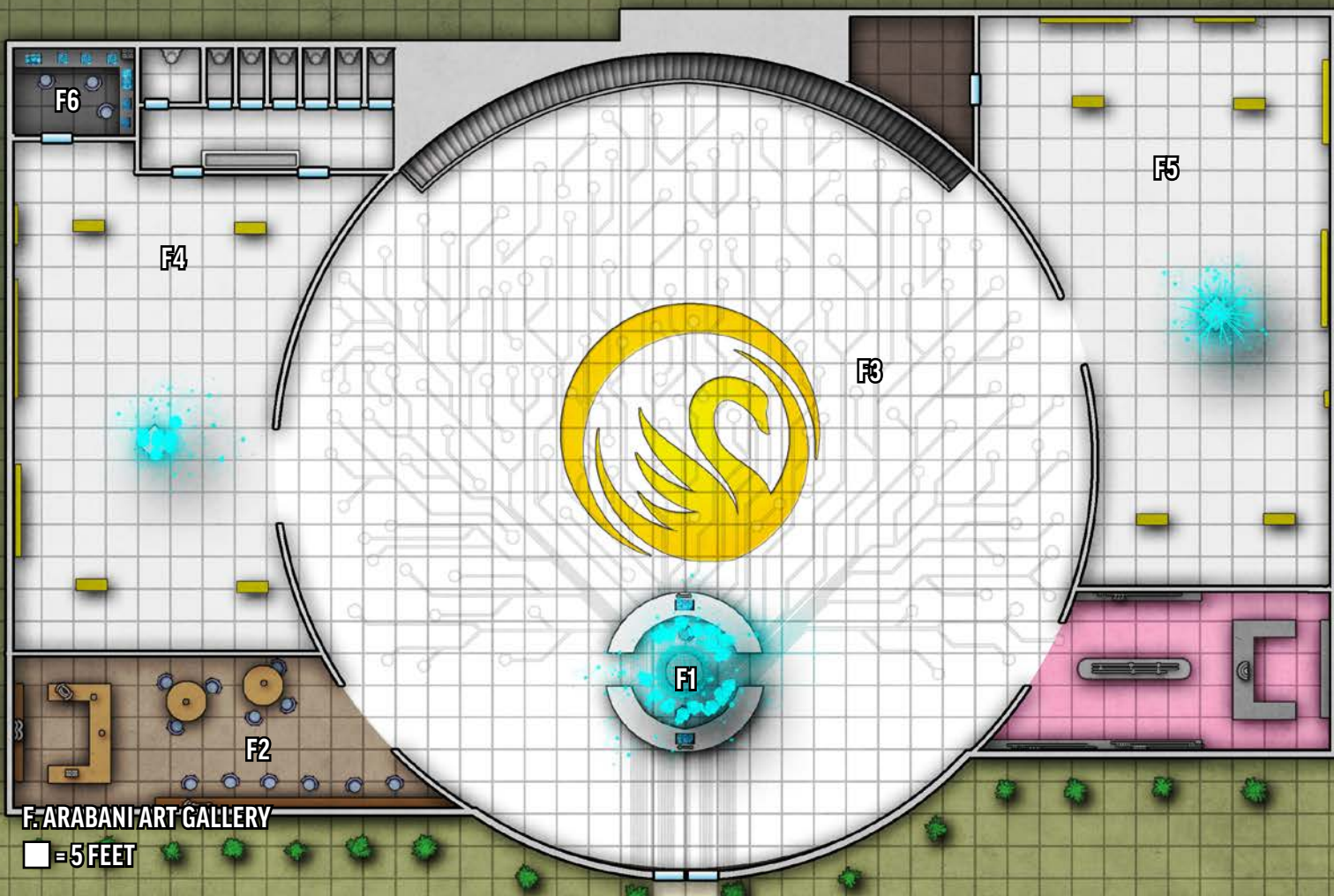
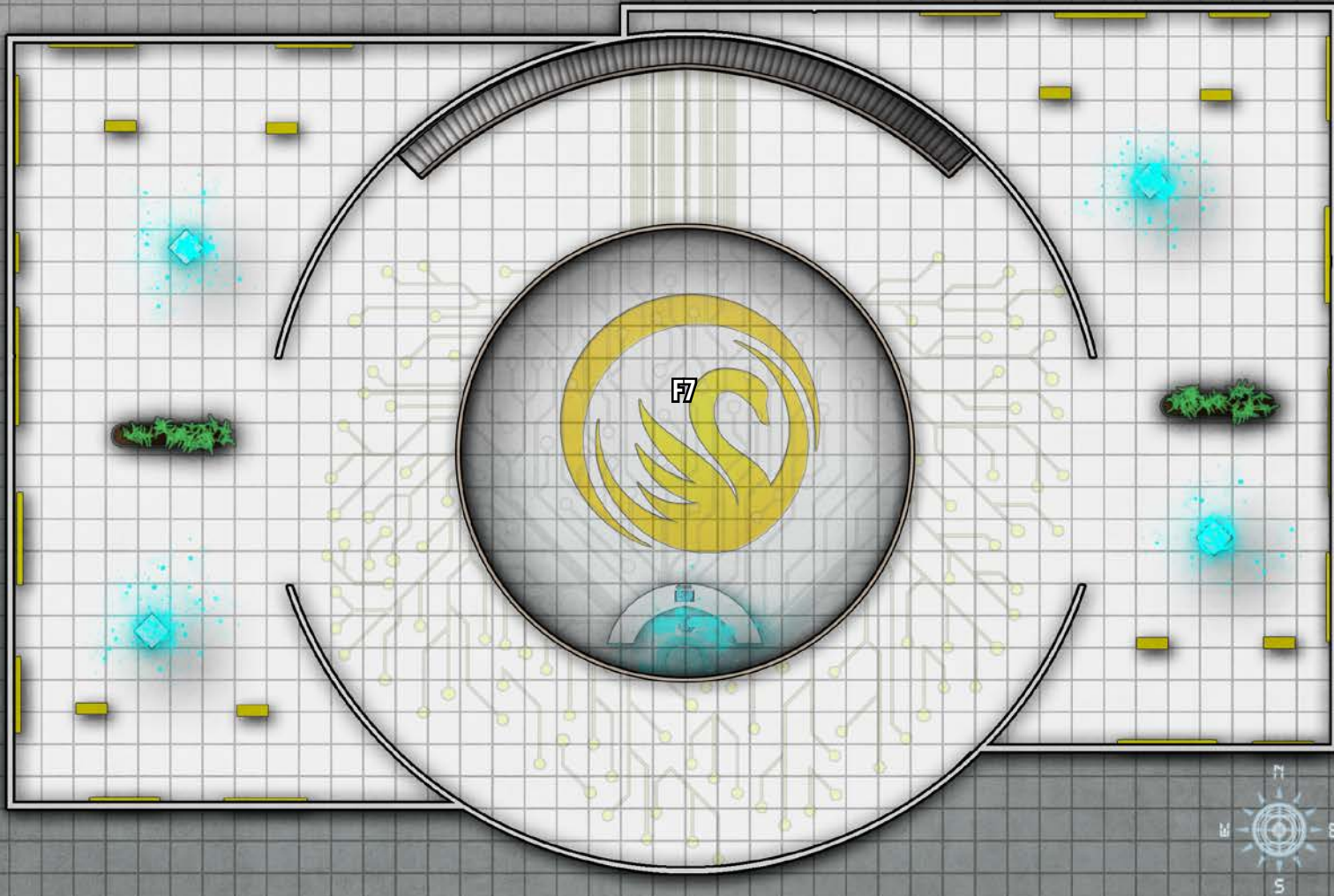
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like a break-in. The hologram briefly appears to gloat to the investigators before ordering the hit.

If the investigators threaten Casparian's hologram or demonstrate that they plan to swindle him, he orders his forces to attack.

ARABANI ASSASSINS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Drow operative

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

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

DEFENSE HP 115

EAC 20; **KAC** 21

Fort +7; **Ref** +9; **Will** +11; +2 vs. enchantment

Immunities magical sleep effects; **SR** 17

Weaknesses light blindness

Defensive Abilities cloaking field, evasion, uncanny agility

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee incapacitator +15 (3d4+8 B; critical staggered)

Ranged advanced tactical semiauto pistol +17 (2d6+8 P)

Offensive Abilities bleeding shot, create darkness, debilitating trick, operative specialization (ghost), trick attack (4d8)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—dancing lights, detect magic

TACTICS

Before Combat The assassins activate their cloaking fields and wait for orders to attack.

During Combat The assassins use their trick attacks and debilitating tricks whenever possible, seamlessly switching from melee to ranged as required by opponents' moves.

Morale The assassins flee when reduced to 20 Hit Points or fewer.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +16, Engineering +16, Intimidate +16, Sleight of Hand +21, Stealth +21

Feats Mobility, Step Up, Step Up and Strike

Languages Common, Drow

Gear D-suit III, advanced tactical semiauto pistol with 36 rounds, incapacitator with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

ARABANI ENFORCERS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Half-orc soldier

LE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

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

DEFENSE HP 125

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

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



OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee advanced pike +19 (2d8+17 P; critical bleed 1d8)

Ranged heavy sonic bolter +16 (2d10+8 So; critical sicken)

Offensive Abilities fighting style (hit and run), melee striker, nimble fusillade, opening volley, sonic resonance

TACTICS

During Combat Arabani enforcers use their soldier abilities to move in and out of combat, coordinating with each other to flank or take turns laying down harrying fire.

Morale The enforcers surrender when reduced to 25 Hit Points or less.

STATISTICS

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

Wis +1; **Cha** -2

Skills Athletics +21, Intimidate +16, Stealth +16

Languages Common, Drow

Gear vesk overplate II, advanced pike, heavy sonic bolter^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

Development: If the investigators defended the gallery from rival assassins, Casparian's hologram thanks them by offering the coin they're after. If they dispatched Casparian's forces, the hologram threatens them with legal action and worse until they turn off the projector; at this point, the investigators are free to take the coin for themselves. If other guardians still remain, such as the golems or guard patrols, Casparian remotely activates the gallery alarm to alert them. They arrive to fight three rounds later if the investigators don't leave or barricade the room; if they hide or construct makeshift defenses, they have 10 minutes to recover Stamina Points before the next combat.

EVENT 1: FALL GUY

After they retrieve the coin, Maro calls the investigators with a frantic message—he's just been arrested for a murder he didn't commit! He begs the investigators to visit him where he's being held at the local Station Security precinct, promising a larger payment for the coin if they hesitate. The call's cut short by StatSec.

At the precinct, the investigators attend a supervised meeting with their client in one of the interview rooms. Read or paraphrase the following text.

Maro sweats under the glaring lights of the bare room, his hands cuffed to the metal table in front of him. Dax Vega leans casually against the wall and slides a hand over the comm unit at his wrist. The lights dim and a series of holographic images fill the air.

"Well, Maro," the Steward says in a neutral tone. "I expected you to spend your call on a solicitor to

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WHERE'S LUCA?

Luca murdered Semdrid with the ice mold of a dagger she'd created to use in signature drinks at the bar, then doused one of Maro's weapons in Semdrid's blood and planted it at the scene, hoping to frame her business partner. From there, she fled to an illegal space dock in the Spike. There, she's planning to book passage off-station through a smuggler named Kavelost. The investigators catch up to her there at this adventure's conclusion.

Patrons and workers at the Neon Glass confirm they haven't seen Luca or Semdrid in a few days. A bubbly young bartender named **Orra** (CG male korasha lashunta) was worried about them and called Station Security on their behalf.

To track Luca down, investigators need the information on her comm unit (found at the crime scene, in her bedroom).

defend you. Since Eyeswide showed up instead, I take it you've waived your right to legal counsel?" He waits for Maro to nod before continuing. "Just confirming. Luca Elanta and Semdrid Vendryski were reported missing this morning." The holograms shift to show Semdrid's and Luca's Station ID photos, addresses, and other identifying details.

"One of the bartenders at the Neon Glass called us, saying both victims hadn't shown up at the bar as expected and weren't answering their comm units. We went to their residence for a check-in. Found the door wide open, with a murder scene inside. Semdrid was pronounced dead at the scene, and Luca's still missing." He exhales and shakes his head.

"Were you having business troubles, Maro?" he asks. "I took a look at the Neon Glass's financials and they're not great. Liens, missed payments, decreasing profits since the Drift Crash..." He trails off and looks meaningfully around at the investigators.

"I would like to speak to my visitors before issuing a statement." Maro says simply. Vega narrows his eyes, then nods and briskly leaves.

Maro buries his head in his hands. If the investigators try to return his coin, he asks them to hold onto it for now. Read or paraphrase the following when the investigators address Maro.

"I know it looks bad, but I cared deeply about Semdrid and Luca. I wouldn't have hurt either of them." Maro says, shaking. A single tear rolls down his cheek before he wipes it away.

"I'm afraid it's true what you heard. My finances aren't what they once were," he admits. "But Abadar knows money's worth nothing if you're in prison not

spending it. Prove my innocence and all that I still have is yours."

Maro's honest with the investigators, telling them everything he knows about Luca, Semdrid, and their lifetimes together. He admits to facing financial troubles before the Drift Crisis, but he doesn't know the couple spent his life insurance to save the bar while he was gone. He recalls both Luca and Semdrid acting distant with him and each other since his return. The last time he saw Luca and Semdrid was last night; they mentioned needing time to talk so he gave them a wide berth in their communal residence before heading out early that morning. He then spent a few hours in Jatembe Park before attending to other business but doesn't think anybody can vouch for his whereabouts. He was returning home when Station Security arrested him.

The investigators have about 10 minutes to meet with Maro before he's taken for processing and holding.

REVIEW EVIDENCE

Based on the results of a Diplomacy (Gather Information), Perception, or Survival check, the investigators learn more about the case. If the investigators aren't already on Dax Vega's good side, they'll need to succeed at a DC 26 Diplomacy or Bluff check to persuade him to share the case files.

Clues: Investigators discover the following clues by spending an hour reviewing Station Security's files on the case. Some clues require an additional skill check to discover, as noted.

- Luca Elanta and Semdrid Vendryski were reported missing by an anonymous caller who claimed to work at the Neon Glass.
- A neighbor overheard loud arguing and music from the residence early that cycle, starting around 7:00 A.M.
- Semdrid Vendryski was impaled with an antique sword belonging to Maro.
- Semdrid's death occurred around 7:30 A.M.
- Maro's fingerprints and Semdrid's blood were found on the sword.
- Luca Elanta is missing.
- Telemetric and thermal scans show that there were two living organics in rapid motion during that time frame, then only one.
- Some of Semdrid's wounds were made by a different weapon rather than the sword found at the crime scene.
- The murder weapon's hilt is crafted out of a rare starmetal alloy that has nanite-repellent properties. (DC 29 Physical Science)
- The murder weapon was forged long ago on Golarion and is a piece of cultural and historical significance to some. (DC 29 Culture or Mysticism)
- The alloy's poisonous to androids, causing nausea and skin rashes with a touch, but an exposure from injury or ingestion can be debilitating. An android who touched the blade without taking precautions would show symptoms of poisoning. (DC 29 Life Science)

Following Up: If the investigators don't discover this information but still want to know more about the weapon, Tyver suggests they inquire with **Julzakama** (page 59) or **Professor Radanta** (page 62). The case files provided by Captain Vega include the address of the three's shared residence at Powerdrive Lofts.

G. POWERDRIVE LOFTS

Located in a desirable section of the Ring, Powerdrive Lofts takes up thirty floors of a massive high-rise. Maro used funds accumulated over his long lifetime to purchase an entire level, where he has cohabitated with Luca and Semdrid since 12 AG.

The sprawling residence showcases the former wealth of its owner. A collection of sleek vehicles is displayed near the entrance. A series of rooms built to house a half dozen people have been repurposed for three residents, centered around pristine gardens complete with tranquil water features.

Most of the bedrooms to the north have been repurposed into storage areas for valuables Maro and his companions collected over their long years of life. A room to the east features a library stocked with physical books. The rooms containing clues relevant to this investigation are described below.

G1. LIVING ROOM

This room contains a couch facing a wall-mounted vidscreen. Behind it, display cases show off antique weapons. One of the sword stands is empty. Blood stains spatter the carpet, and the furniture's covered in tarps and littered with forensic equipment.

Clues: Investigators can hack the display case's smart lock with a successful DC 28 Computers check and view the lock's access logs. There were no attempts to open the case for over six months. Then suddenly this morning, the wrong passcode was entered five times before the manual override was used. This occurred at 9:01—nearly two hours after Semdrid was murdered.

An electronic inventory confirms the missing object is an analog bladed weapon with a simple cross guard, matching the description of the sword believed to be the murder weapon.

The kitchen freezer contains an ice mold for a foot-long dagger with serrated edges. This is the mold Luca used to create the real murder weapon. If taken to a forensic lab (either at Eyeswide Agency or the Station Security precinct), a successful DC 29 Medicine check confirms the mold matches Semdrid's wounds.

G2. SHARED BEDROOM

Decorated with colorful silk tapestries and wall scrolls, this bedroom has a chaotic style not seen in the rest of the apartment. The bedsheets are a tangled mess, with discarded clothing strewn across the floor or hanging out from dresser drawers. The

smell of alcohol hangs heavy in the air, wafting from a spilled bottle of wine next to a rolling bar cart.

This is Luca and Semdrid's bedroom. After the murder, Luca fled here to pack and discarded anything she thought might tie her to the crime.

Clues: If they spend an hour searching the mess or succeed at a DC 29 Perception check, the investigators discover Luca's comm unit. Luca wasn't tech-savvy enough to fully scrub the data, which shows she was in contact with a smuggler gang. The gang claimed to have an alternative method of transportation and offered to take Luca to a distant system for an exorbitant price. The coordinates for their illegal hangar in the Spike are included in the comms.

The comm unit's infosphere search history is also relevant. Luca recently researched crime scene photos of stabbings, as well as instructions for making a dagger out of ice. Downloaded photos of novelty drinks featuring an ice "dagger" and her own attempts at making the cocktail are also saved on the device.

G3. MARO'S ROOM

This sparse room contains a bed and closet full of professional business attire. A table stands against one wall, empty but for a paper notebook.

Maro's notebook details his personal travels, ending with his ill-fated trip to Vesk-1.

G4. SEMDRID'S OFFICE (CR 12)

This room is adorned with vidgame holo-posters. One features a vesk in power armor slamming a doshko through a horde of skeletons in torn spacesuits. Another displays two mechs, one red and one blue, fighting colossal monsters.

The office contains a desk and several vidgame platforms. Investigators can hack the system with a successful DC 26 Computers check. Semdrid's logs show an increased amount of time gaming over the past six months. Financial records for the Neon Glass show dwindling profits, supply shortages, and increasing costs.

Creature: Shunted into the Material Plane during the Drift Crash, Vorteslea (an alorbidaemon) lurks within a gaming platform.

ALORBIDAEMON

CR 12

XP 19,200

Alien Archive 4 24

TACTICS

During Combat Vorteslea begins combat by using her virtual mortality ability on the most dangerous-looking melee

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G2

G1

G3

G4

POWERDRIVE LOFTS

5x5 = 5 FEET

combatant. She then uses her spell-like abilities to weaken multiple enemies before attacking in melee.

Morale Perfectly willing to risk being sent back to Abaddon in defeat for a chance to end a mortal life, Vorteslea fights until destroyed.

H. SMUGGLER'S DOCK

A network of maintenance tunnels and access shafts honeycomb through Absalom Station, leading to an illegal dock run by a group of smugglers. Gang leader **Kavelost** (NE male witchwyrd mechanic; see page 51) spent the group's credits on a *chaos sail* (*Starship Operations Manual* 8), enabling them to travel vast distances without using the Drift.

H1. ABANDONED ACCESS SHAFT (CR 11)

Far from the main hallways of the Spike, this access shaft leaves barely enough room to walk single file. The groaning of pipes and the hum of engines echo off the walls. It's cold down here, and frost rimes the shaft's surfaces. After a short walk, the path splits, with one shaft angled back up toward the street level. The other opens into a brightly lit corridor heading further down.

A successful DC 27 Perception or Survival check detects the traces of regular foot traffic leading to and from the other end of the shaft.

Trap: Kavelost jury-rigged this entire area's heating system to blast intruders. The trap is rigged to an alarm system inside the hideout, alerting the occupants of area **H4** when triggered.

FLASHFLAME TRAP

CR 11

XP 12,800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 36; **Disable** Engineering DC 31 (reset temperature sensors)

Trigger location; **Init** +17; **Duration** 5 rounds; **Reset** 1 minute

Effect burning heat (9d12 F); Fortitude DC 20 half; multiple targets (all targets in area **H1**)

H2. OXYGEN PUMP STATION

The rumbling of engines and the flow of forced air is almost deafening inside this room full of moving machinery. A cluttered array of pipes and machines line one side of the chamber. On the other side, where one wall should be, there's a shorn metal platform, its edge jutting into open space.

The machines function as oxygen pumps, cleansing air pumped from elsewhere in Absalom Station and redistributing it through the Spike. Investigators can identify and appraise the pumps with a successful DC 26 Engineering or Physical Science check. The pumps are in remarkably good shape,

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

By now, the investigators should suspect Luca of being the murderer and have the coordinates for where she fled. If the investigators missed vital clues, Tyver calls them for a status update. If they admit they're stumped, Tyver suggests they retrace their steps. Allow the investigators to reroll any checks they failed previously, reducing the DC of each check by 2. If the investigators don't discover the real murder weapon or find Luca's comm unit, Dax Vega calls to let them know there's been a break in the case, having solved the mystery himself and used Station Security resources to locate Luca.

though they haven't been regularly maintained. One side of the pump station was damaged decades ago, exposing the room to space. Most people avoided this part of the Spike because of this hazard, but Kavelost erected a kinetic barrier to keep oxygen and equipment inside.

H3. TINKERING LAB (CR 11)

Blocks of metal and starship drives in various stages of completion stand scattered around the floor or hoisted on thick chains. The smell of ozone and engine grease fills the air. Double doors lead to the north while a wide hallway lies to the south, rail tracks extending beyond view.

Using technology he stole from the Tetrad, Kavelost is attempting to replicate the *chaos sail*.

Creatures: Two scavenger slimes found their way in through gaps in the wall's plating. They attack when the investigators enter.

SCAVENGER SLIMES (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

HP 145 (*Alien Archive* 100)

OFFENSE

Ranged aphelion artillery laser +21 (3d8+9 F) or hailstorm-class zero rifle +21 (2d8+9 C) or impulse charge emitter +21 (3d4+9 E)

TACTICS

Before Combat Each scavenger slime attempts a Stealth check (including their bonus for being among garbage). If unnoticed, the slimes each use their scavenger shell ability to incorporate an aphelion artillery laser, a hailstorm-class zero rifle, and an impulse charge emitter (*Starfinder Armory* 45), gaining cold resistance.

During Combat The scavenger slimes use their new weaponry to attack foes, resorting to their pseudopod attacks if engaged in melee. If combat began before the slimes used their scavenger shell ability, the slime nearest the

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H. SMUGGLER'S DOCK

■ = 5 FEET

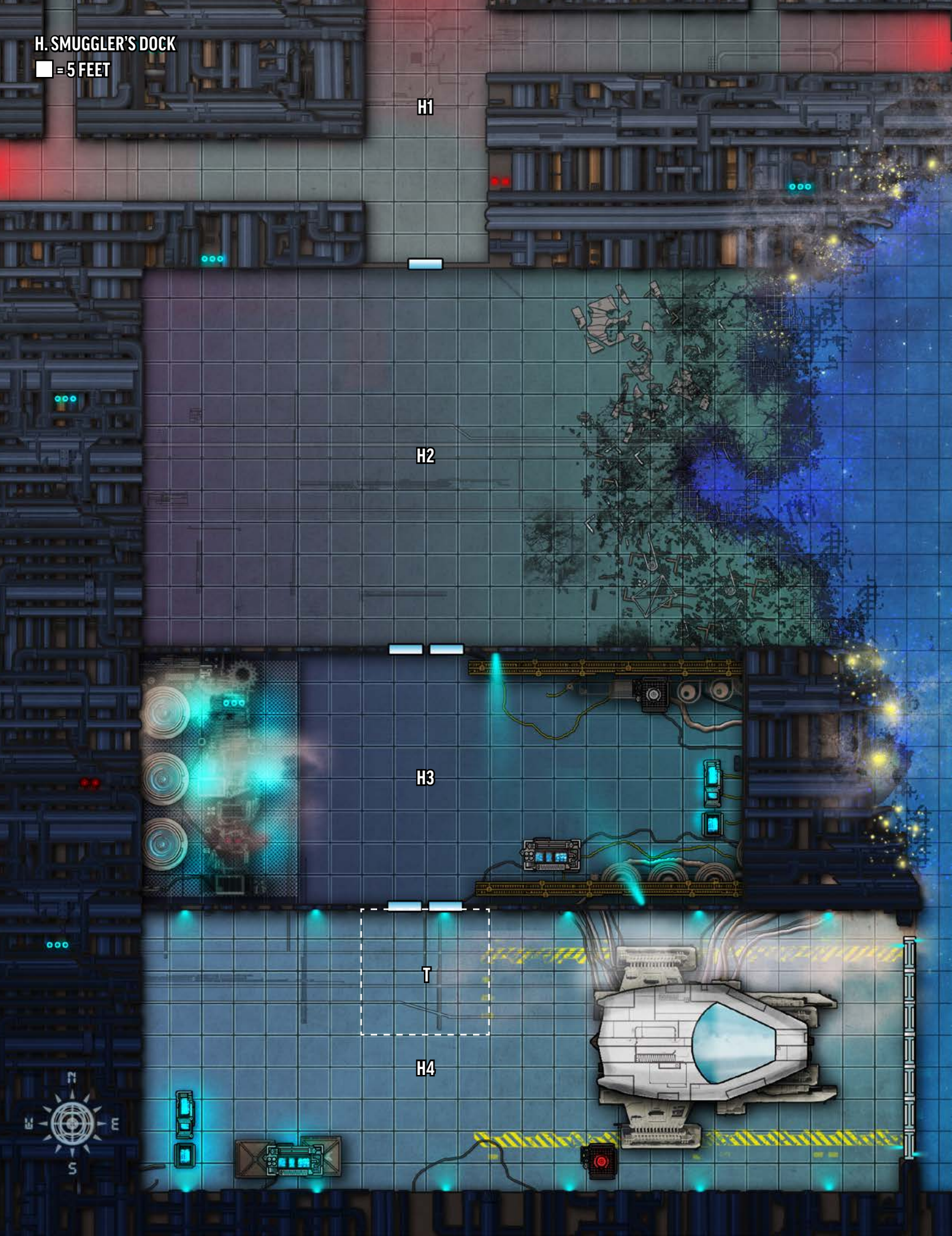
H1

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H3

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H4



investigators engages them in combat while the other uses its first round to absorb weaponry into itself before firing on the group at range.

Morale The slimes fight until destroyed.

H4. LAUNCHPAD ALPHA (CR 13)

Cables and other maintenance equipment hang from the ceiling by makeshift rail track, plugged into a small cargo ship berthed on the cold steel floor. The heat from the engine ports and the strong smell of exhaust makes it clear the vessel has begun its preflight routine.

Creatures: Kavelost and three of his smuggling gang are preparing to escape off-station with Luca, who's waiting on board their ship. When the investigators arrive, two of the smugglers are moving the cables that extend from the ceiling to the back of the hangar for storage, while the other stands at the base of the ship's entry ramp, arguing with Kavelost. Kavelost stands in the ship's airlock door, and Luca is already inside the craft.

Unless the investigators managed to sneak past all previous defenses, Kavelost notices them. He motions to his crew to continue working while he stalls. Read or paraphrase the following.

A witchwyrd dressed in elaborate purple, white, and gold spreads all four of his arms to greet the new arrivals.

"Welcome, solicitors, to my magnanimous enterprise! You've no doubt heard of our fantabulous ship! It would normally be my indubious pleasure to acquaint you with our ingenious operation, however, I'm currently engaged in a contractual obligation with a separate client." He gestures to the ship. The craft rumbles as its engines power up.

"With intense regretfulness, I must conclude this conversation. However, I invite you to return for civil discourse at your later convivence." The boarding ramp begins closing and he inputs a brief command on his wrist-mounted computer. A burst of blinding light fills the room as the engines of the ship roar louder.

Kavelost's speech is a stalling tactic. If allowed to keep talking, he activates the floodlight trap (see Traps on page 52), hoping to distract the intruders long enough to board the ship and escape. If the investigators interrupt his speech, Kavelost activates the trap at the same time the investigators act. Then, roll initiative to begin combat as normal.

KAVELOST

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male witchwyrd mechanic

NE Medium humanoid

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

DEFENSE

HP 105 RP 5

EAC 23; **KAC** 24

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee interference vibrogarrote +18 (3d6+10 So; critical deafen)

Ranged elite semi-auto pistol +20 (3d6+10 P)

TACTICS

During Combat Kavelost uses his energy shield trick and miracle worker before firing on his enemies. If engaged in melee, he switches to his vibrogarrote.

Morale Convinced of his own superiority, Kavelost does not consider surrender until he is reduced to 10 Hit Points or fewer.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +19, Bluff +19, Computers +24,



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Engineering +24, Perception +24, Physical Science +24, Sense Motive +24

Languages Common, Kasatha

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (exocortex), expert rig, mechanic tricks (boost shield, energy shield), miracle worker (1/day), overload (DC 19), override (DC 19), remote hack, twin tracking (+2), wireless hack

Gear kasatha microcord IV, interference vibrogarrote^{AR}, elite semi-auto pistol with 24 rounds

SMUGGLERS (3)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

Fort +12; **Ref** +10; **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee static shock truncheon +19 (1d12+14 E; critical arc 1d4)

Ranged static arc rifle +16 (1d12+8 E; critical arc 1d6)

TACTICS

During Combat The smugglers run interference for their boss, resorting to ranged attacks only if all enemies are airborne or otherwise out of reach.

Morale The smugglers surrender when reduced to 25 HP or less. All remaining smugglers surrender immediately if Kavelost falls or surrenders.

STATISTICS

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

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

Gear D-suit II, static arc rifle with 2 batteries (20 charges each), static shock truncheon with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

Traps: Kavelost rigged the lights above the launchpad to flood the entrance of the room. If Kavelost's trap incapacitates the investigators, the crew begins takeoff. The investigators have 3 rounds to disable the engines before the ship starts moving, with a successful DC 32 Engineering check or by dealing at least 100 damage to the engines (**KAC** 16, **EAC** 14, **Hardness** 20, **HP** 120). Any creature within 10 feet of the engines at the end of their turn takes 6d6 fire damage from the ship's exhaust ports until the engines are disabled. If the engines are reduced to 0 Hit Points, all creatures within 20 feet of the ship take 6d12 fire damage (DC 29 Reflex half) in the ensuing explosion. Once the ship's grounded, the hatch reopens and the occupants emerge or use the ship for cover, engaging in combat as described above.

FLOODLIGHT TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable** Engineering DC 27 (cut the electrical wiring)

Trigger Kavelost uses a swift action to activate from his exocortex; **Reset** manual

Effect bright lights cause all creatures in affected area to become staggered for two rounds (DC 18 Fortitude negates).

Development: If the craft exploded, Luca spends a week in intensive care before she's well enough to be arrested for murder and available for questioning. Otherwise, the investigators can confront her immediately. Luca remains on board the ship, waiting for the investigators to approach her and still in shock from recent events. Read or paraphrase the following.

Luca sits inside the craft staring blankly ahead. She is dressed in a drab, hand-knit, gray-green poncho with a travel bag at her feet.

She holds up her hands in a helpless shrug. "All those drinks, all those jobs... shame it had to end like this." She gives a shuddering sigh that could easily be a sob.

Luca turns her head to gaze through the cockpit glass into the black beyond the hangar. "This station is so tiny," she muses. "Space is vast, infinite in a way we stopped appreciating because of the Signal and our ability to travel through the Drift. I wonder if now that we've lost it, we'll remember just how close, and yet how far, we are from each other." She gives a hollow laugh. "We didn't even have our home planet anymore and couldn't escape each other."

At this point, the investigators might question Luca about her crimes and motives. The following are her answers to some likely questions.

Did you kill Semdrid? Luca avoids eye contact. "Yes. I killed Semdrid then framed Maro for it."

Why? "You think one lifetime is a great commitment to someone? Try dozens."

It wasn't about the money? "It's always about the money." Luca laughs bitterly. "Times were tough, yes, but that's not why I did it."

Why murder? "Our souls were knotted up. Most samsarans get their past lives back in flashes. Us, we were bound to each other. We chose that. A long time ago." She smiles sadly. "Walking away would leave me feeling guilty. I'd just go back, or he'd find me again. Only a deep cut could sever that kind of connection. I needed to commit the nastiest betrayal I could think of. It's what he wanted, too, I know, but he wasn't strong enough to do it."

Why frame Maro? Luca shrugs. "I panicked. He was a convenient target."

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You hired these smugglers? "I found them with a quick search on the dark infosphere. No smuggler who's good at their job should be so easy to hire as these grease-traps."

Development: If the investigators let Luca go, she nods without thanking them. "Don't worry, you won't see me again," she says as they part. She's as good as her word.

If the investigators take her to Station Security, Luca doesn't resist. She's eerily silent as she's taken in, booked, cuffed, and led away to a holding cell. She cooperates fully with the investigation and confesses to the murder.

CASE CLOSED

Luca's confession proves Maro's innocence. He's released soon after the investigators hand their evidence over to Station Security.

Maro wants to know everything about the case. He asks for his coin back. Once he has it, he thanks the investigators and confesses that he lied about the coin's value, and that selling it will be enough to get his life back on track and pay the investigators well for their work.

He's devastated to hear that Luca killed Semdrid but vows to fund her legal defense if she was arrested, commenting that the two samsaras are like family to him, and while he doesn't condone Luca's actions, he'll always support her.

Maro arranges to pay the Eyeswide Agency for finding the coin and proving his innocence before departing. He invites his saviors to visit the Neon Glass for a drink on the house anytime, saying, "It seems I need to learn how to manage a nightclub. Do stop by once I figure it out. Shouldn't take more than a month. Or three."

Tyver requests an in-person debriefing. Read or paraphrase the following to wrap up the adventure.

"Nice job, kiddos," Tyver says. "Maro's payment for the job just came through. You made quite the impression on him. Type up your reports and get them to me." As the group turns to leave, Tyver stops them.

"Hold on. With all the extra work the Agency's drowning in because of this Drift Crisis nonsense, a few full-time spots have opened up. I don't suppose you know of any good detectives, do you?" Tyver's mouth quirks in a grin.

REWARDS

Tyver transfers 23,316 credits to each investigator's account as payment for the job. In addition, the investigators receive a standing invitation to work with Eyeswide Agency in the future.

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Some of the investigators working for the Eyeswide Agency are headscanners, or individuals with psychic ability. Psychics are rare in the Pact Worlds, and many join up with organizations like Eyeswide to develop or contain their powers.

PSYCHIC CHARACTER OPTIONS

The following list highlights examples of the options available to psychic characters in the Starfinder setting.

Classes and Archetypes: The spellcasting traditions of many classes are psychic in nature. The akashic, empath, hive mind (*Starfinder Adventure Path #22: The Forever Reliquary* 43), and mindbreaker connections are particularly well suited to psychic-themed mystics. Envoys can take the Psychic Expertise alternate class feature (*Starfinder Galactic Magic* 20), and any class can adopt the Phrenic Adept archetype (*Core Rulebook* 128) granting innate psychic potential.

Feats: The Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, and Major Psychic Power feats in the *Core Rulebook* grant a character a handful of minor psychic abilities, while characters who already possess these abilities can choose Extended Telepathy (*Pact Worlds* 191), Psychic Insight (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 44), Psychic Sense (*Fire Starters* 44), Soothing Telepathy (*Character Operations Manual* 118), and Telepathic Spy (*Fire Starters* 44) feats to enhance their powers.

Gear: A psychic booster (*Core Rulebook* 226) or telespectrum circlet (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 45) can increase the effectiveness of a psychic character's natural telepathic abilities, while a psychic inhibitor (*Alien Archive* 3 39), phrenic scrambler (*Armory* 106), or hive buster weapon fusion (*Starfinder Adventure Path #20: The Last Refuge* 44) can significantly hamper or even disable them entirely. A savvy character of any stripe might wear a mindshield circlet (*Starfinder Adventure Path #21: Huskworld* 42) to protect their thoughts from prying minds or equip a pair of synaptic links (*Armory* 108) in order to psychically coordinate maneuvers with an ally on the battlefield.

Magic: Expanded rules for psychic magic, including new psychic organizations, spells, and class options, can be found in *Starfinder Adventure Path #23: Hive of Minds*, alongside guidelines for bringing psychic characters into the weird world of mindscapes: metaphysical realms projected into a state of quasi-existence by the undiluted will of powerful psychics.

Species: Psychic species include anassanois (*Starfinder Adventure Path #17: Solar Strike* 55), barathus, contemplatives, entu colonies and symbiotes (*Alien Archive* 4 35), formians, khizars (*Pact Worlds* 212), kiirintas (*Starfinder Society Scenario #2-08: The Stumbling Society, Part 2: Sangoro's Gifts* 20), lashuntas, sazarons (*Alien Archive* 3 91), shirrrens, and uplifted bears (*Alien Archive* 2 17).

EQUIPMENT

These items were designed for psychic investigations.

OBLIVION SERUM

LEVEL 12

MAGIC ITEM	PRICE 5,700	BULK L
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When you imbibe this clear, oily liquid, it renders you capable of only the most basic motor functions but provides robust protection against mental attacks. You gain a +8 enhancement bonus to all saving throws against mind-affecting spells and effects for 1d4+1 rounds, and if you were already affected by such an effect, you may immediately attempt a new saving throw using this bonus. However, during this time, you can't take reactions or swift actions, and the only move actions available to you are crawl, move your speed, and stand up. You can end the effect of *oblivion serum* prematurely by spending 1 Resolve Point at the beginning of your turn.

PSYCHODISSONANCE CAPACITOR

LEVEL 11

HYBRID ITEM	PRICE 4,500	BULK —
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This metal and ceramic cylinder captures and store psychic energy left by emotionally charged occurrences. When activated, the device discharges the energy contained within, flooding an area of up to 2,500 square feet with psychic interference and disrupting attempts to analyze any residual impressions already present. Any creature attempting to use a divination spell or effect to view or analyze the area must succeed at a DC 27 Will saving throw, or the attempt fails and the creature is stunned for 1d4 rounds as it mentally relives the events stored in the capacitor. The released psychic energy remains in the affected area for 24 hours before dissipating.

TELESTHETIC BEACON

LEVEL 9

HYBRID ITEM	PRICE 12,500	BULK L
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This tiny metal disc functions as a tracking bug (*Pact Worlds* 199), but its surface is covered in intricate magical circuitry to enable remote perception. A *telesthetic beacon* can be attuned to the psychic frequency of a specific mind, a process that requires a creature to spend 15 minutes concentrating on a beacon in their possession. A creature can only be attuned to one *telesthetic beacon* at a time, and a beacon can likewise only be attuned to a single mind; attuning to a beacon already attuned to another creature requires a successful Charisma check (DC = 10 + Charisma modifier of the currently attuned creature) and can only be attempted once every 24 hours.

Once attuned, the creature can treat the *telesthetic beacon* as the origin point of any divination (scrying) spells or effects they cast, regardless of physical distance between the beacon and the creature, as long as both are on the same plane. Thanks to their small size and inconspicuous appearance, these devices are used by law enforcement, espionage organizations, and criminal enterprises alike.

FEATS

These feats represent a character developing their psychic abilities to even greater potential.

FRACTURE WILL

You can weaponize the power of your own psyche to weaken the resolve of others.

Prerequisites: Cha 17, Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, character level 9th.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve point to batter the mental defenses of one creature that you can see within 60 feet. The target takes a -2 penalty to Will saves against any mind-affecting spells and effects originating from one other creature of your choice within 60 feet of you (including yourself) until the end of your next turn. This is a mind-affecting effect.

PHRENIC RESERVOIR

Your psychic energy reserves deplete more slowly than most.

Prerequisites: Minor Psychic Power

Benefit: Once per day, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to gain a single additional use of any spell-like ability granted by the Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, or Major Psychic Power feats.

PREMONITION

Your ability to glimpse possible futures has reached new heights.

Prerequisites: Cha 19, Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, Major Psychic Power or ability to cast or replicate the effects of *augury*, character level 13th.

Benefit: Once per day, you can cast *divination* as a spell-like ability.

PSYCHIC OVERLOAD

The overwhelming power of your will is such that you can explode heads with a thought.

Prerequisites: Cha 21, Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, Major Psychic Power, character level 18th.

Benefit: Once per day, you can use the mystic connection power *explode head* (Core Rulebook 87) with a DC equal to 10 + half your character level + your key ability score modifier. Use your character level to determine damage. If you already possess this ability, increase the damage inflicted to 1d8 per character level you have.

PSYCHIC PERSUASION

Your psychic projections are persuasive and potent.

Prerequisites: Cha 17, Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, Major Psychic Power, character level 10th.

Benefit: Select one of the following 3rd-level spells: *charm monster* or *suggestion*. You can cast this spell once per day as a spell-like ability, using your character level as your caster level.

PSYCHOMETRY

You can divine information about creatures and objects with a touch.

Prerequisites: Minor Psychic Power

Benefit: By taking a standard action to touch a creature or object, you gain a +4 insight bonus to your next check to identify the creature, your next check to recall knowledge about the creature or the object, or your next Sense Motive check against the creature. To touch an unwilling creature, you must succeed at a melee attack roll against that creature's EAC. If you already possess this ability, you can use it in combat as a move action.

READ THE ROOM

For you, emotions tell a story. You can rapidly sift through a large volume of surface emotions, allowing you to quickly assess the disposition of a group of individuals you can perceive.

Prerequisites: Cha 15, Minor Psychic Power, Psychic Power, character level 11th.

Benefit: As a move action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to gain blindsense (emotion) with a range of 60 feet for 1 round. A creature can hide from you by succeeding at a Bluff check opposed by your Sense Motive check, unless it is under the influence of an emotion effect. Creatures affected by *non detection* or similar effects avoid detection automatically. As a standard action, you can spend 1 additional Resolve Point before the end of your next turn to immediately learn the overall temperament and emotional state of every creature detected by your blindsense, including their attitude toward each other, unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + half your class level + your key ability score modifier). This is a mind-affecting effect.

RETROSPECTIVE SAVANT

You are highly skilled at detecting and interpreting the psychic impressions left behind by past events.

Prerequisites: Cha 21, Minor Psychic Power, character level 16th.

Benefit: Once per day, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to cast *retrocognition* as a spell-like ability. Whenever you cast *retrocognition*, you gain a +4 insight bonus to Will saving throws to avoid losing your concentration when encountering psychic turbulence. In addition, for 5 minutes after the effect ends, you can take 20 on Recall Knowledge checks relating directly to the location and time interval that was analyzed. However, you can only learn information about events that were experienced or witnessed by at least one sapient being, and the information is conveyed as if you had personally experienced it through the senses of one such creature, possibly causing it to be incomplete or unreliable at the GM's discretion. Additional uses of this ability to analyze an area always convey their information through the same observer.

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PSYCHIC CHARLATAN

You don't possess any true psychic abilities, but you have the next best thing: a talent for convincing people that you do. Whether you were born with great empathy for reading people or learned by watching other charlatans perform, you have a gift, just not a psychic one. Although your skills might be viewed with disdain by those with real psychic abilities and dismissed as petty fraud by the general public, your knack for cold reading and deception always comes in handy when working with organizations such as the Eyeside Agency.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

This archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, and 6th levels.

COLD READING (EX)

2nd Level

You have mastered the art of reading facial expressions, body language, eye contact, and other nonverbal cues. You have a good memory for conversational details, and you are adept at using what you learn to ask leading questions that can direct a conversation to your advantage. You gain a +2 insight bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks against any one intelligent creature with whom you are engaged in direct conversation. If you remain in conversation with the creature for at least 1 minute, you can make a Sense Motive check with a DC of 10 + that target's CR in order to immediately learn something about them, as if using Gather Information (*Core Rulebook* 140). You can make an additional check with each additional minute of conversation, but the DC increases by 5 with each success. If you fail a Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Sense Motive check against a creature, that creature becomes temporarily immune to your Cold Reading for 24 hours. This is a language-dependent, sense-dependent effect.

SMOKE AND MIRRORS (EX)

4th Level

You enjoy blurring the lines that separate the supernatural from the mundane, and you're always the star of the show. Whenever you are in the presence of a magical or technological effect whose point of origin is a friendly creature within 15 feet (including yourself), you can use the Bluff skill as a reaction to create a diversion (*Core Rulebook* 137)

that distracts and misdirects any onlookers, making the effect appear to originate from you instead. If you are capable of creating a *holographic image* or a similar illusion effect at the same level or higher as the effect you are attempting to obfuscate, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Bluff check.

If your attempt is successful, you may also obscure the source of the effect, causing a spell to apparently emanate from a piece of held equipment or a technological effect to appear to be the result of spellcasting or supernatural abilities. If the effect has an obvious point of origin, such as a ray, your audience gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their Sense Motive checks.

QUESTION EVERYTHING (EX)

6th Level

Your powers of persuasion are so strong that you can convince others to question objective truths. Once per day, by speaking with an intelligent creature for at least 1 minute, you can spend 1 Resolve Point and attempt a Bluff check opposed by the target's Will save to begin sowing seeds of doubt about the circumstances of one event they personally experienced in the last 12 months. You can attempt to convince the subject that the event never occurred, that the outcome was different, that different individuals were involved, or any other misrepresentation that the GM decides is reasonable. A particularly plausible claim, or one supported by credible evidence, imparts up to a -2 penalty on the target's saving throw, while a particularly implausible one imparts an equivalent circumstance bonus.

Once implanted, the false memories linger until challenged, whereupon the subject can immediately make another Will save with a +2 circumstance bonus. This challenge can take a variety of forms, such as the subject encountering evidence that directly conflicts with the false memory or conversing about the event in question with another witness or participant, at the GM's discretion.

A creature that successfully saves against this effect is permanently immune to all future uses of this ability by the same psychic charlatan. This is a language-dependent, sense-dependent effect.



PSYCHIC DETECTIVE

You use your psychic talent for detective work.

PREREQUISITE

You must possess the Minor Psychic Ability feat to take this archetype.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

This archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 12th levels.

PSYCHIC INVESTIGATION (SU) 2nd Level

You gain limited telepathy with a range of 30 feet, as the universal monster rule (*Alien Archive* 155). If you already have limited telepathy from another source, you instead increase the range of your limited telepathy by 60 feet. You can also select one additional language that you can only use to communicate telepathically with creatures that also know it. If you learn the full version of a language in which you can only communicate telepathically through other means (such as investing ranks in the Culture skill), you can select a new language to be able to communicate telepathically in at the same time.

In addition, as a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to cast *detect thoughts* as a spell-like ability, using your character level as your caster level, with the same range as your limited telepathy.

LESSER PSYCHIC INTERROGATION (SU) 4th Level

Once per day as a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to access the memories of one creature within 15 feet with whom you can communicate using your limited telepathy, mentally asking them a question that can be answered with "Yes" or "No." The target attempts a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + half your character level + your key ability score modifier. If the target fails, you learn the answer as if the target had answered truthfully. On a success, you learn nothing. The target is unaware that any attempt was made regardless of the result.

PSYCHIC INTERROGATION (SU) 6th Level

Once per day as a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to access the memories of one creature within 15 feet with whom you can communicate using your limited telepathy, mentally asking your target a single question that can be answered with 1 word for each character level you have. The target attempts a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + half your character level + your key ability score modifier. If the target fails, you learn the answer to your question as if the target had answered as truthfully as it is able. On a success, you learn nothing. The target is unaware that any attempt was made regardless of the result.

PSYCHIC TRACING (SU) 12th Level

Once per day, you can take 10 minutes to attune your own psychic resonance with that of another intelligent creature

within 10 miles. Your target must have previously been affected by another of your psychic detective abilities, and you must know their approximate physical location. At the end of this time, the target attempts a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + half your character level + your key ability score modifier. If the save is successful, the target is immune to this ability for 24 hours. This ability otherwise functions as *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, with the creature's unique thought patterns acting as your sensor. In addition to perceiving the creature's experiences and surroundings for the duration of the spell, you can read the creature's surface thoughts for as long as this ability is active.



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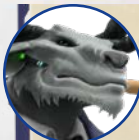
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"A friend in need's a friend indeed, and right now that's you, kiddo. Stay on your contacts' good sides and you'll always have backup. Do the opposite and don't come crying to me when you're all on your own out there."

—Detective Tyver Vorsten,
Eyeswide Agency Veteran



Eyeswide maintains a network of professional contacts across Absalom Station. The investigators can encounter these nonplayer characters (NPCs) at any point during their adventures. Some of these NPCs are directly involved in the events of *Drift Crisis Case Files*, while others exist in the background and can be introduced at the GM's discretion.

Getting to know these NPCs provides mechanical benefits in addition to roleplay opportunities. Earning favor with a contact requires one or more skill checks or other criteria as listed in their entry. Once successfully influenced, a contact is helpful toward the investigators unless they do something to break that contact's trust. Investigators can call in favors with helpful contacts, as noted in each entry.

CAPTAIN DAX VEGA

CAPTAIN DAX VEGA

Station Security paragon
LG male human soldier

DESCRIPTION

Background Dax's family immigrated to Absalom Station from impoverished Akiton when he was a child. Dax grew up in the Ring and fell hard for the propaganda surrounding Station Security and their mission to protect and serve the population. Now, he's determined to be the change he wants to see in the force.

Appearance The captain is athletic, clean cut with a military hairstyle, and rarely seen out of his Station Security uniform.

Personality An idealist who lives for the job, Dax is a natural ally to investigators who act with integrity (or, alternatively, have the savvy to convince him they're doing so).

INFLUENCE

Influence If the investigators act with integrity, or succeed at a DC 22 Bluff check, they improve his attitude to helpful.

Favors If he's helpful, Dax can assist the investigators as follows.

Emergency Extraction: As a reaction, an investigator can call for an emergency extraction. Dax sends a small but elite Station Security team, immediately ending any active combat. Enemy combatants aren't defeated, and the investigators can't gain any rewards for the combat they escaped in this way. This benefit can only be used once.

Get Out of Trouble: An investigator can call on Dax to bail them out of trouble with any organization on Absalom Station. This benefit can only be used once, and doing so to cover a crime or other wrongdoing breaks Dax's trust.

New Evidence: Dax can help review evidence that leads to automatically discovering a clue the investigators missed in a past search.

JULZAKAMA

Anyone willing to deal with the famously arrogant vesk can find Julzakama at his pawnshop, Julzakama's Loans, which is sandwiched between two seedy-looking buildings containing a Kuthite sensation house and a combination dry cleaner's and Castrovelian take-out operation. Though his neighbors always do brisk business, Julzakama's shop is often empty. He's a gray market fence with connections to at least one Absalom Station gang, and he trades information just as often as he trades physical goods. Besides, he doesn't keep the real goodies with the junk strewn across the counters and shelves inside his pawnshop. Julzakama keeps his specialty items behind lock and key until the right customer asks the right question.

JULZAKAMA

Notorious pawnbroker
CN male vesk

DESCRIPTION

Background Julzakama isn't keen to discuss his personal history before he left the Veskarium and started his business on Absalom Station. In truth, he clawed his way out of several violent uprisings on Pulonis by acting as a fence and informant. Julzakama did business indiscriminately with freedom fighters and imperial forces, though privately he thinks the Veskarium should relinquish any claim to Pulonis (a fact which he only admits to after a few shots of gol). He decided to leave the system before it got too dangerous to keep dealing to both sides. Using a web of seedy connections maintained through street smarts and cunning, Julzakama now manages a brisk trade of illicit items—mostly weapons and other munitions—through his pawn shop, Julzakama's Loans, in Downlow. For more information about Julzakama and his shop, see *Starfinder Society Quest: Into the Unknown*.

Appearance A muscular vesk who likes to show off his physique, Julzakama usually dresses in casual street clothes, preferring not to attract excessive attention to his business ventures. Though he easily blends in with most Downlow crowds, Julzakama can be identified by his cybernetic eye.

Personality Julzakama's full of swaggering bluster but knows how to avoid getting into a physical fight by keeping his rudeness to verbal jabs he can play off as jokes. He has little respect for any creatures smaller than he is, but he'll do business with anyone.

INFLUENCE

Influence Julzakama respects credits even if he doesn't particularly like the person paying him. Purchasing at least 3 items from Julzakama's pawnshop is enough to improve his attitude to helpful. He also respects shows of strength. Investigators can impress him with a display of physical prowess by succeeding at a DC 24 Athletics check, or can stand up to his bullying with a successful DC 24 Intimidate check.

Favors Julzakama's Loans is always buying "gently used" equipment but only sells the real goodies to select clientele. If the investigators influence Julzakama, they can purchase armor, ammunition, weapons, and other nonmagical items up to 3 levels higher than their current level from Julzakama's pawn shop; however, during the events of these adventures there's a 25% chance he doesn't have the item in stock thanks to Drift Crisis-related supply chain issues. The investigators also gain the following benefits by influencing Julzakama.

Friends and Family Discount: Julzakama is the only vendor in town not charging a 10% upcharge as a "Crisis tax" to account for shipping delays and other difficulties. He gladly sells to the investigators at normal prices, as long as they use Tyver's name or present other proof that they work for the Eyeswide Agency. Once influenced, he offers an additional 5% discount on all items purchased from his pawnshop.

In the Know: Julzakama can identify a piece of equipment, its manufacturer, and any other information about the item relevant to the current investigation. Julzakama can identify armor, weapons, and other combat gear when an investigator calls in this favor; he doesn't have the appropriate knowledge to identify magical items or complex technological equipment.



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LUCA ELANTA

Luca is one of the bartenders at the Neon Glass, a busy dive bar conveniently located a few blocks from the Eyeswide Agency's headquarters. She'll serve drinks and swap gossip with anyone with credits, but repeat customers might convince Luca to serve one of her signature drinks, spill a secret, or help with a tough case.

LUCA ELANTA

Mysterious bartender

CN female samsaran (*Starfinder Alien Character Deck*)

DESCRIPTION

Background Luca's lived a dozen interconnected lives with her soulmate Semdrid. Sadly, the pair's latest incarnation



faced devastating loss because of the Drift Crisis, and their relationship has finally deteriorated past mending. When their missing business partner, Maro, was declared dead, Luca and Semdrid spent the life insurance payout they received to revive their failing business, the Neon Glass. Months later, Maro turned up alive, kicking off the events of Twisted Business (page 38).

Appearance Luca has a glamorous style. She loves bright fabrics, elegant jewelry, and has a flair for the dramatic. Her impeccable taste and eye for fashion are always on display, but lately some of her gown hems are starting to fray, and her manicured nails look chipped up close.

Personality A bartender with a bit of training in psychology, Luca has made an amateur study of the people who frequent the Neon Glass. Her personality shifts to suit the situation when she's working a shift behind the bar. She's an easy conversationalist and often flirtatious, but her flirty demeanor stops instantly if a character (or their player) is uncomfortable. Outside of work, Luca's fierce independence has started chafing against the lifetimes-long romance she shares with her partner Semdrid, though she keeps this fact to herself.

INFLUENCE

Influence Luca's got a soft spot for people who help others and is a longtime friend to the Eyes, but on the surface, she's entirely influenced by money. She cooperates with investigators so long as they continue purchasing drinks from her bar, with a general rule of one drink per question or three drinks per favor. A description of the Neon Glass and pricing for Luca's drinks is listed on page 28.

Favors Luca has dirt on just about everyone on Absalom Station. The investigators gain the following benefits by influencing Luca (3 drinks per favor).

Gossip Maven: Reroll a failed Culture or Diplomacy check to learn more about any person or organization with a presence on Absalom Station. Add a +4 insight bonus to this check.

Have One on the House: Luca crafts one hell of a drink. Investigators can spend 10 minutes enjoying her latest elixir to recover their Stamina Points without spending Resolve. Luca's willing to serve this drink to-go if requested; to-go drinks function as serums, which investigators can imbibe as a standard action, granting the same benefits.

Make It a Double: That's the stuff! Investigators can spend 10 minutes enjoying this concoction to gain 3d8 Hit Points. Luca's willing to serve this drink to-go; to-go drinks function as serums, which investigators can imbibe as a standard action, granting the same benefits.

Rumor Has It: Learn a rumor that leads to automatically discovering a clue the investigators missed in a past search.

POP-UP DOC

Nobody knows how a decommissioned Azlanti murderbot ended up practicing medicine in a corridor clinic on Absalom Station, but locals from the nearby neighborhoods don't care. The sick and injured flock to the clinic to receive care from the former machine soldier, who's now acting as their friendly local medic. Because of personal moral convictions, Pop-Up Doc recalibrated itself to administer medicine and practices with incredibly high standards of care. The sentient robotic organism (SRO) doesn't accept payment for medical services but does require regular donations to purchase the supplies and utilities the clinic needs to stay open.

POP-UP DOC

Philanthropic machine medic
NG agender SRO^{PW}

DESCRIPTION

Background This SRO was originally built for war by the Azlanti Star Empire. The machine emotionlessly cut down hundreds of living creatures as a tool of battle, deploying again and again to tirelessly serve the empire. Then one day, a miracle occurred: a soul attached itself to the machine's chassis, waking it up to the atrocities it had been committing because of its Azlanti programming. The machine's soul overrode its programming, and it fled duty and destruction to seek a different path.

Appearance Pop-Up Doc, as this SRO now calls itself, has modified its chassis to provide medical aid rather than inflict harm.

Personality Pop-Up Doc has a calming bedside manner, undermined for some by the electronic drone that resonates in its voice. Its new prime objective is to alleviate the suffering of all living beings it encounters in any way it can. When Pop-Up Doc isn't too busy, it enjoys engaging in cheerful small talk with patients and clinic volunteers. Pop-Up Doc witnessed untold horrors in its past and will candidly discuss its former military career and new pacifistic beliefs with those who broach the topic respectfully.

INFLUENCE

Influence Performing an act of philanthropy, such as making a charitable donation of at least 100 credits or volunteering a few hours to help out at its clinic, improve Pop-Up Doc's attitude to friendly. Succeeding at a DC 20 Medicine check to help treat one of the clinic's patients improves its attitude to helpful.

Favors The investigators gain the following benefits from successfully influencing Pop-Up Doc.

New You: When an investigator calls in this favor, Pop-Up Doc deploys cutting-edge technology to restore life to a deceased creature. The creature must have been dead for no longer than 7 days, and the target's soul must be free and willing to return. This benefit

otherwise functions as *raise dead*. This favor can only be used once. Pop-Up Doc can repeat the service for an appropriate fee (at least 9,000 credits) made as a donation to the clinic.

Potent Medicine: Pop-Up Doc's clinic hosts a cut-rate pharmacy that offers the best drugs for the lowest cost possible. All healing serums purchased from Pop-Up Doc heal an additional 1d8 Hit Points.

Triage: Using a comm unit, an investigator can call Pop-Up Doc to visit their current location. Pop-Up Doc arrives within 10 minutes and sets up a mobile clinic at a nearby location of the investigator's choice. For the next 48 hours, investigators can treat patients as though they had access to a full medical lab (*Core Rulebook* 219), gaining a +4 circumstance bonus to any Medicine checks made with Pop-Up Doc's assistance.



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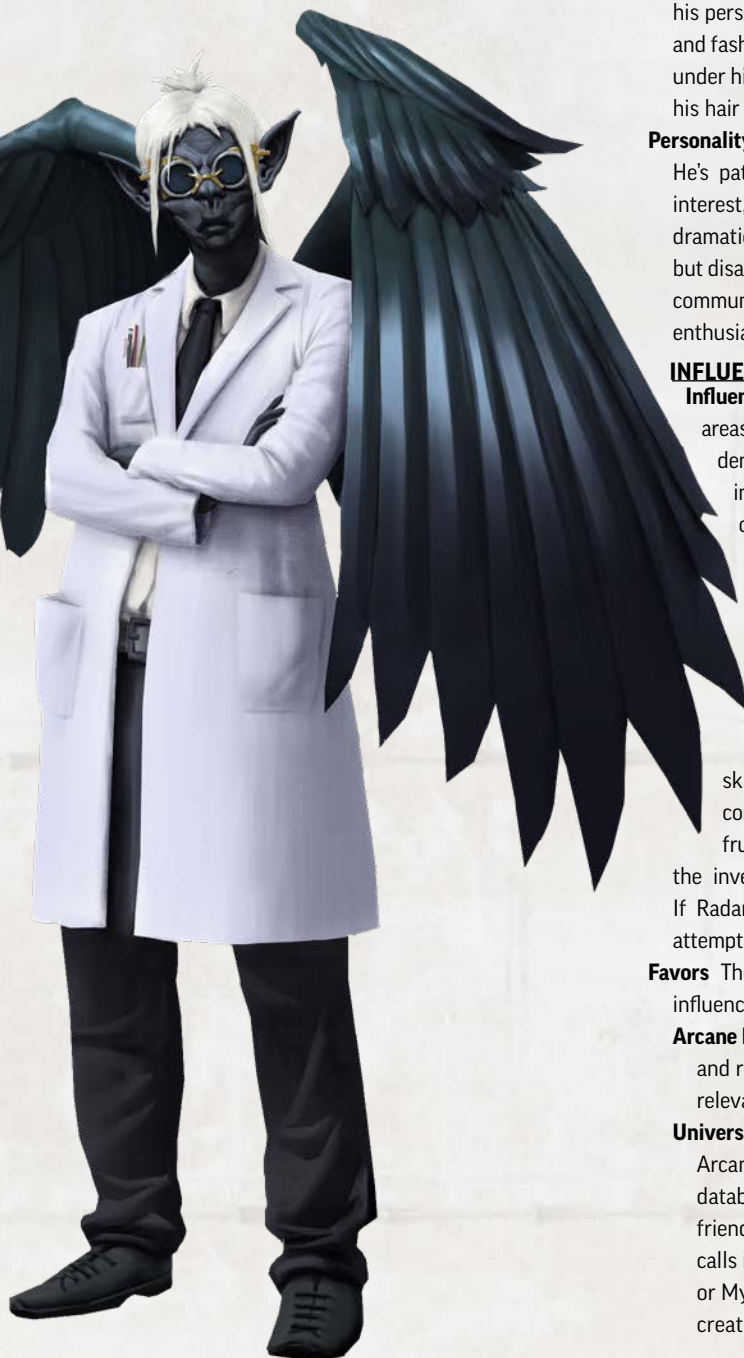
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PROFESSOR RADANTA

Deep within the hallowed halls of the Arcanamirium, Professor Radanta is one among many eccentric scholars. He keeps office hours in a corner of the basement lab where he conducts research on the properties of pre-Gap magical items reputedly from lost Golarion. The sprawling lab's adorned with haphazardly organized equipment, artifacts of nebulous origin, and technomagical instruments of dubious purpose. His field of study is incredibly niche and not well funded. When Radanta isn't conducting research in the lab, he teaches intermediate reality-hacking techniques to a class of aspiring technomancers.



PROFESSOR RADANTA

Eccentric professor of magic
N male strix^{PW}

DESCRIPTION

Background After becoming frustrated with the cultural norms of his birthplace, the densely populated spire called Qidel on Verces, Professor Radanta left a prestigious position at a university in Qidel to accept an associate position at the Arcanamirium.

Appearance Professor Radanta has a unique style; every time the investigators see the professor, he's wearing a distinctly different pair of glasses. Radanta takes pride in his personal grooming, trying out elaborate new hairstyles and fashions when he has time. He always wears fine attire under his lab coat and can occasionally be caught preening his hair or feathers in the staff lounge.

Personality Professor Radanta has an answer for everything. He's patient and well-spoken when discussing topics of interest, such as magic and technology, but he's prone to dramatic mood swings that can last for days. Gregarious but disagreeable, Radanta enjoys being part of an academic community, though others don't always appreciate his enthusiasm for respectful but passionate debate.

INFLUENCE

Influence Radanta loves talking to people about their areas of interest and is impressed with people who demonstrate the same desire to converse. The investigators can keep up with the conversation or steer it in another direction entirely with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy or Intelligence-based skill check, or they can dazzle the professor with their knowledge of a shared hobby by succeeding at a DC 18 Profession (vidgamer) check. A success on either check improves Radanta's attitude to friendly. Assisting Radanta's research by succeeding at two more DC 18 Intelligence-based skill checks of improves his attitude to helpful. Two consecutive failures to assist Radanta's research frustrates the professor, changing his attitude toward the investigators to indifferent for the rest of the day. If Radanta becomes frustrated, they'll have to make an attempt on another day if they want to influence him.

Favors The investigators gain the following benefits by influencing Professor Radanta.

Arcane Lore: Professor Radanta can identify a magic item and research any other information about the object relevant to the current investigation.

University Database: Radanta has access to the Arcanamirium's fabulous libraries and electronic databases, and he's willing to share with trusted friends or respected colleagues. When an investigator calls in this favor, they can reroll a failed Life Science or Mysticism check to recall knowledge or identify a creature, adding a +4 insight bonus to the check.

TRU

Down in the Spike, the brilliant mind behind the infosphere persona Grrl Mechanica operates as part of an independent tech enclave that's not so quietly working to empower the downtrodden of Absalom Station. Tru lives in a small, self-sufficient community built around a reclaimed tenement on the edge of the Station's so-called "ghost levels," now filling rapidly with incoming Drift Crisis refugees building new communities for themselves. Outside Tru's building, armed guards keep out corporate agents and escort authorized visitors into the compound. Inside, community hydroponic gardens cluster around shared living spaces. Tru meets visitors in her workshop, which she can easily access from her nearby residence.

TRU

Tech luminary and activist
N female verthani mechanic (drone)

DESCRIPTION

Background Tru grew up in a slum, one of dozens of disadvantaged children who found work in illegal tech sweatshops operating out of the darkest corners of the Spike. After a bust ended the operation, Tru landed in foster care, bouncing from family to family until she escaped by attending university, where she studied engineering. Now she's back in the Spike, championing anti-corporate activism and posting DIY tech videos as her infosphere handle Grrl Mechanica. Tru's stated goals are making knowledge and the means of production accessible to all.

Appearance A music lover with eclectic taste, Tru's wardrobe is almost entirely made up of various band T-shirts paired with other sensible clothing, augmented by safety gear when she's in her workshop.

Personality Tru is a genius who can make impressive leaps when discussing abstract ideas, but sometimes she struggles with execution. She can seem a bit absent-minded when discussing practical matters not related to tech and uses a system of comm unit reminders and alerts to manage her time.

INFLUENCE

Influence Tru loves discovering new tracks and swapping songs with other music lovers. Succeeding at a DC 22 Profession (Musician) check, or a Bluff check of the same DC, impresses Tru with musical knowledge or a performance. Similarly, investigators can impress her with their technical skills by succeeding at a DC 28 Computers, Engineering, or Physical Science check. Three successful checks are needed to influence Tru.

Favors The investigators gain the following benefits by influencing Tru.

Aerial Support: Tru sends a drone for aerial support after the investigators fail a Computers, Engineering, or Physical Science check while on Absalom Station. When the drone arrives, reroll the check, adding a +4

insight bonus to represent the drone's support. This favor can be used only once.

Combat Intel: Tap into Tru's drone network, briefly gaining dozens of active spies across Absalom Station. All investigators gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks and a +4 circumstance bonus to their next Initiative checks; these bonuses expire after 1 hour. This favor can be used only once per adventure.

In the Know: Tru can identify a piece of equipment, its manufacturer, and any other information about it relevant to the current investigation.



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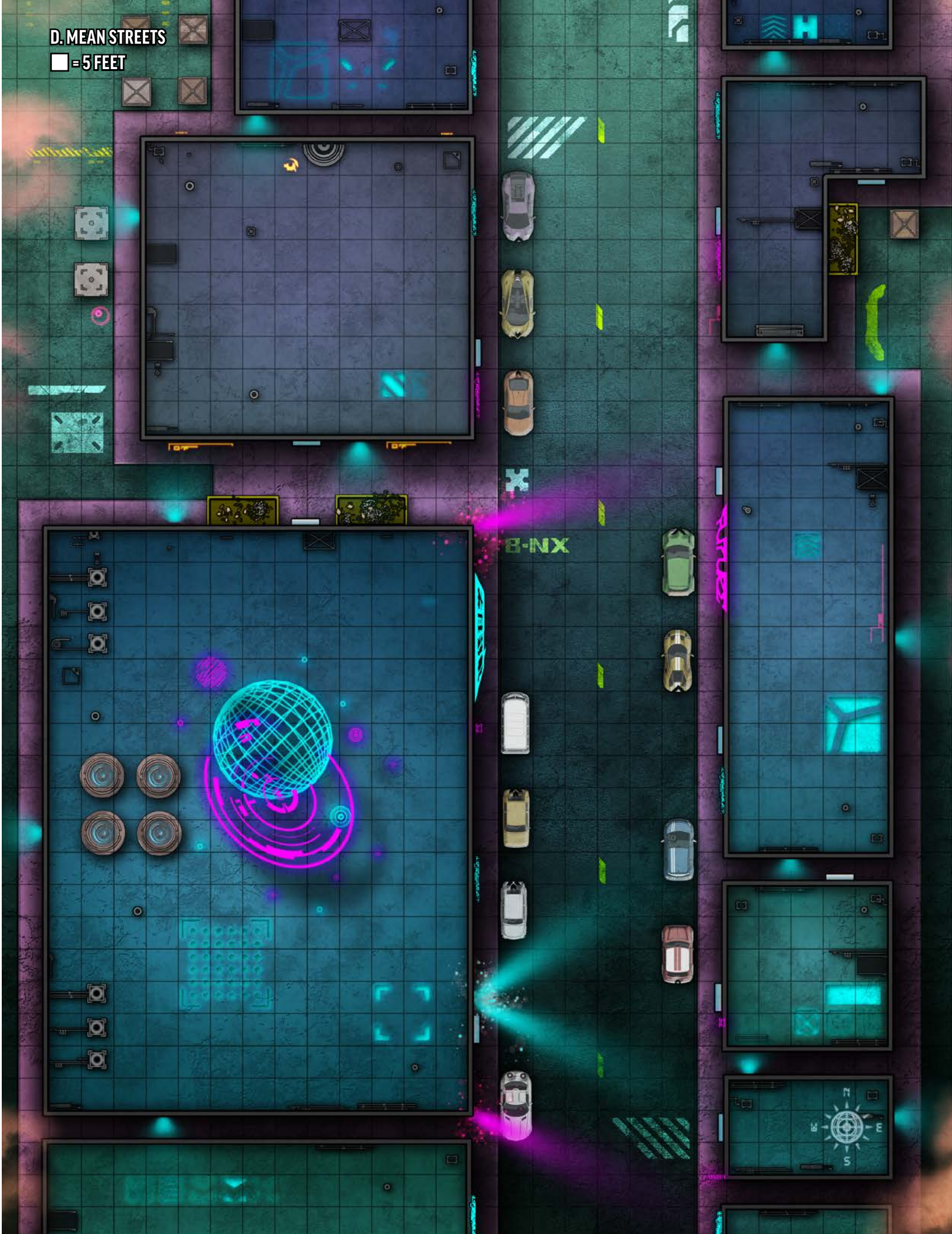
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