

YEAR OF SCOURED STARS
STARFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #1-04 TIER 1-4

STARFINDER SOCIETY

Cries from the Drift

BY JOE PASINI





Author • Joe Pasini
Development Lead • Thurston Hillman
Contributing Artists • Javier Charro, Allison Theus, and Leon Tukker
Cartographer • Sean Macdonald

Creative Directors • James Jacobs, Robert G. McCreary, and Sarah E. Robinson
Director of Game Design • Jason Bulmahn
Managing Developer • Adam Daigle
Development Coordinator • Amanda Hamon Kunz
Organized Play Lead Developer • John Compton
Developers • Crystal Frasier, Jason Keeley, Joe Pasini, and Linda Zayas-Palmer
Starfinder Design Lead • Owen K.C. Stephens
Starfinder Society Developer • Thurston Hillman
Senior Designer • Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Designers • Logan Bonner and Mark Seifter
Managing Editor • Judy Bauer
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Table of Contents

Cries from the Drift 3

Player Handouts 20

Maps 21

Chronicle Sheet. 23

GM RESOURCES

Cries from the Drift makes use of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. This adventure assumes the GM has access to this sourcebook. All rules in this adventure are available in the free online Starfinder Reference Document at paizo.com/sfrd.

SCENARIO TAGS

Scenario tags provide additional information about an adventure's contents. For more information on scenario tags, see Chapter 1 of the *Starfinder Society Roleplaying Guild Guide*.



HOW TO PLAY

Starfinder Society Scenario #1-04: Cries from the Drift is a Starfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st- through 4th-level characters (Tier 1-4, Subtiers 1-2 and 3-4). This scenario is designed for play in the Starfinder Society Roleplaying Guild campaign, but it can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Roleplaying Guild, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at paizo.com/starfinderSociety.



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

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CRIES FROM THE DRIFT

BY JOE PASINI



The Scoured Stars incident, in which the majority of the Starfinder Society was wiped out in a distant trinary star system, was especially devastating to the Society's Exo-Guardians faction. In an effort to uphold its primary mission to protect the Society and Pact Worlds against external threats, the organization sent a large contingent on the doomed expedition, subsequently losing a great many of their number. This event was not the only recent tragedy to befall the Exo-Guardians. Before the incident, the Exo-Guardians maintained a metal-and-stone fortress called Sangoro's Bulwark, or "the Bulwark," on a hidden world in the Vast. This served as a headquarters to the Exo-Guardians, and it was one of the most fortified bastions of the Starfinder Society outside the Pact Worlds. The fortress bore the name of the vesk Starfinder who originally discovered the structure, Sangoro, who would later establish the Exo-Guardians—all this in a time when the vesk were actively at war with the Pact Worlds.

Not long after the Starfinder Society suffered its crippling blow in the Scoured Stars, a host of hostile life-forms overwhelmed the Bulwark, wiping out the few Exo-Guardians who remained there. The Starfinder Society never received a distress signal, nor did any survivors return to Absalom Station. Nominated First Seeker Luwazi Elsebo, after the abrupt end of any communications from Sangoro's Bulwark, halted any potential follow-up expeditions there, fearing the loss of yet more Starfinders during a time of already-thin resources. Since this contentious decision, Zigvigix, the newly appointed shirren leader of the Exo-Guardians, has kept an antenna perked in hopes of an opportunity to discover what happened to the Bulwark.

An opportunity has recently presented itself, as a single kasathan ship, identifying itself as the *Struggle's Scholar*, managed to escape Sangoro's Bulwark. The ship suffered severe damage during the escape and lost a crew member while traversing the extradimensional realm of the Drift. The surviving crew managed to send out a distress beacon before being forced to return to the Material Plane to effect repairs. The *Struggle's Scholar* unfortunately materialized in the path of an etheric storm, a matter-rendering disturbance caused when the barrier the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane grows thin. To make matters worse, the lost crew member reanimated as a driftdead, an undead

Where in the Universe?

Cries from the Drift begins with a briefing in the Downlow district of Absalom Station, the hub of the Pact Worlds, and then moves into the hyperspace plane of the Drift. Finally, the PCs board a desolate spaceship in normal space on the Material Plane—normal, that is, except for an etheric storm that threatens both the PCs and their objective. For more information about Absalom Station, see *Starfinder Adventure Path #1: Incident at Absalom Station*, and for more about the Drift, see the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. Both are available at bookstores and hobby shops everywhere and online at paizo.com.

abomination created by souls lost in the Drift. Simultaneously, the ship lost most of its power due to damage from the etheric storm. Just as the crew managed to contain the driftdead and look to their power consumption, a final disaster fell upon them: a group of extraplanar marauders from the Ethereal Plane, known as xill, materialized onboard the ship and murdered the remaining crew, using the kasathas' bodies as grotesque incubators for their young.

Only recently, a ysoki salvage barge, the *Clutter Collector*, wandered past the Drift-launched distress beacon of the *Struggle's Scholar*. The barge captain, a ysoki named Winks, deemed it too risky to investigate, but she quickly sold the information back to the Starfinder Society upon returning to Absalom Station. With the information in hand, the current Exo-Guardians leader, Zigvigix, petitions to follow up on the distress signal, in hopes of finding any shred of information about the fall of Sangoro's Bulwark.

SUMMARY

The PCs meet with Zigvigix, the recently elevated leader of the Exo-Guardians faction, who sends them into the Drift to retrieve a distress beacon from the *Struggle's Scholar*. The kasathan starship was crewed by the only known survivors of the alien invasion of Sangoro's Bulwark, the former headquarters of the

Starfinder Society's Exo-Guardians. When the PCs reach the beacon, they find a field of asteroids composed of chunks of the Elemental Plane of Earth. They also find a starship crewed by vesk mercenaries who also want the beacon. The PCs must defeat the vesk ship in an honorable starship duel and follow the beacon back into the Material Plane, only to find the *Struggle's Scholar* disabled, missing its crew, and in the path of an etheric storm that threatens to rip it apart in mere hours. The PCs make their way through the ship, discovering what happened to the crew and finding a path to the bridge. A mournful and menacing driftdead lies trapped within the ship, and an angry—not to mention hungry—xill waits on the bridge. Both of these threats stand in the way of the PCs' efforts to retrieve the ship's data and escape before the storm consumes them all.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs start in Absalom Station's Downlow district at the Exo-Guardians' new headquarters, a recently renovated warehouse, where head of the faction, **Zigvigix** (LG host shirren soldier), summons them for a mission briefing. If any PCs played *Starfinder Society Scenario #1-01: The Commencement*, they recognize the warehouse as the one they cleared out for the Exo-Guardians.

An augmented host shirren watches a bustling crew move office equipment from several large pallets into a large warehouse, while other workers weld scrap metal to gaps in the warehouse's walls. The shirren occasionally directs a crew member and makes a note on a datapad. The shirren, Zigvigix, notices their new guests and turns to telepathically project a greeting.

If any of the PCs have the "Star Sugar Heartlove!!!" boon presented in *Scenario #1-01: The Commencement*, also read or paraphrase the following.

Zigvigix wears a set of shoulder speakers that blast out sugar-pop music from the band Strawberry Machine Cake. They bounce in place along to the music. "Welcome back! Isn't this song the best? I've been playing it on loop for hours!" Behind the excited shirren, several grizzled-looking station workers, each carrying a side of a heavy-looking holotable, roll their eyes.

Regardless of if any PCs have the Strawberry Machine Cake album, read or paraphrase the following.



Zigvigix

"Thanks for coming—I hope you'll understand if I keep this brief; we've got a lot of work to do to get our new headquarters up and running, and you are on a short timetable. A ysoki salvage barge named the *Clutter Collector*, captained by a ysoki named Winks, picked up a distress-beacon transmission in the Drift. Winks didn't have time to check it out, but she sold the data to the Society when she reached Absalom Station. How nice of her!"

"Well, it turns out that this beacon came from the *Struggle's Scholar*, a kasathan ship that..." Zigvigix pauses for effect as their antennae wiggle excitedly. "...escaped from Sangoro's Bulwark! If you don't know, the Bulwark was the old base of operations for the Exo-Guardians. Now, First Seeker Luwazi wisely grounded us from investigating the Bulwark after all contact was lost with it shortly after the Scoured Stars incident, but we can't pass up this opportunity to learn what happened there. We might even be able to find the coordinates to our missing headquarters. Wouldn't it be joyous to have a large fortress to play loud music in?"

Zigvigix hands over a datapad. "Here are the coordinates of the distress signal. It is unlikely any of the crew survived, or they'd be here by now. So be on the lookout for bodies. Since the crew is mostly kasathas, it would mean a lot to their extended families if you could bring back their remains or keepsakes to the *Idari*! Otherwise, salvage any data you can—especially the ship's log—as it could tell us what happened to Sangoro's Bulwark. This datapad also holds a one-time-use decrypter that will let you decode the Exo-Guardians ciphers used on the distress signal. Good luck!"

Zigvigix indicates that the PCs must choose which starship frame they'll take: the *Drake* or the *Pegasus*. There is no clearly superior choice for this mission. Zigvigix does note that the *Drake's* combat prowess might protect them from threats in the Drift, while the expanded logistical capabilities of the *Pegasus* could be useful in retrieving or interpreting data.

If the PCs have questions about the Bulwark or the mission, Zigvigix is glad to answer as best they can.

What is the Bulwark? "The vesk explorer Sangoro found the uninhabited fortress on a world in the Vast. It was an immense edifice of metal and stone, forged by some forgotten species—how nice of them! This discovery happened during a time when the Pact Worlds and Veskarium were in open conflict, which I hear was quite a sad time. Sangoro surprised everyone by offering the site to the Starfinder Society in exchange for membership, and with

the stipulation that the fortress could not be used as part of the conflict between the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium. The Society accepted, and Sangoro went on to found the Exo-Guardians.”

What happened to the Bulwark? “We don’t know. One day, signals stopped coming in. The exact coordinates for the star system containing Sangoro’s Bulwark are kept hidden, and only Guidance, the First Seeker, and the most senior members of the Forum know its exact whereabouts. After the Scoured Stars incident, this information was lost to all but Guidance. Now, Guidance refuses to provide the coordinates, though I’m sure it has its reasons. Anyway, there’s not much information on what happened to the Bulwark, so hopefully the *Struggle’s Scholar* has some information in its data logs. Exciting prospect, isn’t it?”

What do you know about the *Struggle’s Scholar*? “It’s a kasathan starship that was undertaking a short mission to Sangoro’s Bulwark around the same time the signals stopped coming in. We assumed the ship was lost along with the Bulwark, but this signal proves otherwise—thrilling! I do not think any of the crew could have survived this long, though—sad! Still, the ship is compact, with only ten or so internal compartments, so once you find it, it shouldn’t take long to search.”

At this point, the PCs can finalize their boon slots for the session and purchase any additional equipment prior to departing into the Drift. This scenario is of high importance to the Exo-Guardians faction, and PCs should be encouraged to slot this faction as one of their boons.

The PCs can choose either the *Drake* or the *Pegasus*; the former’s combat ability is helpful in the starship battle, while the latter’s improved sensors provide an opportunity to learn a little more information about the *Struggle’s Scholar* before boarding.

CULTURE

Based on the result of a Culture check, the PCs know about the Exo-Guardians and Sangoro’s Bulwark. A PC knows the information whose DC is less than or equal to the result of her check.

5+: A vesk named Sangoro founded the Exo-Guardians, which is an especially unusual fact, given the long hostilities between the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds. Many Starfinders initially did not trust him, even after he provided the Society with a huge fortress on a remote planet to operate out of. Sangoro later dedicated himself and his followers to protecting the Society from external threats, forming the Exo-Guardians faction within the Starfinder Society.

10+: The fortress Sangoro bequeathed to the Starfinder Society was the only structure on the planet. It was a massive edifice left by some forgotten race, with extensive underground tunnels and storage vaults. The Exo-Guardians kept a large stockpile of equipment within the Bulwark, letting field agents on missions in the Vast access necessary items without traveling back to Absalom Station. Because of the importance of these resources, the exact coordinates of Sangoro’s Bulwark were kept from most Starfinders, and ships traveled to the location only by using encrypted flight plans.

15+: Shortly after the Scoured Stars incident led to the disappearance of most Starfinder Society field agents and leadership, an unknown force overwhelmed Sangoro’s Bulwark, and—until now—there have been no survivors or distress calls. With this attack, the Society’s data archives lost all information on the exact location of Sangoro’s Bulwark, with even nominated First Seeker Luwazi Elsebo bereft of such knowledge. Only the Society’s amalgam digital consciousness, Guidance, might know the location, but it has ignored all requests to provide the data.

20+: Some rumors from the few Starfinders who visited the Bulwark before the fall report that the Drift and Material Plane space surrounding the area was prone to strange events. Exactly how these dangers manifest varies by each rumor, but it appears the space surrounding the Bulwark’s home system is prone to odd interplanar abnormalities. Starships are advised to carry powerful scanners to identify potential stellar hazards and bleeding between the planes.

INTO THE DRIFT

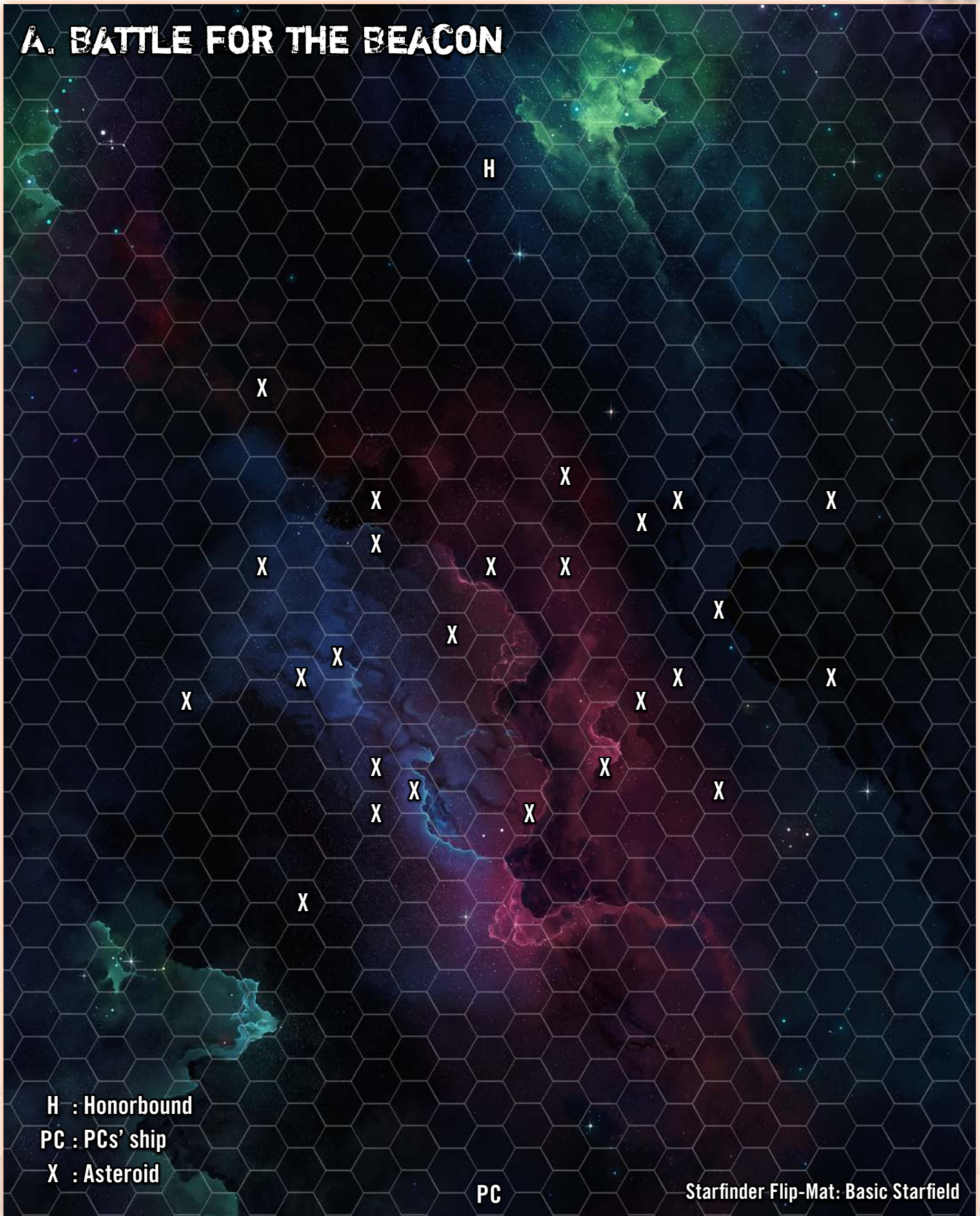
It takes 5d6 days to make the journey through the Drift to the distress-signal location provided by the *Clutter Collector*. The PCs depart alongside another Starfinder Society starship, a bulk freighter called the *Promise of the Future*. The freighter keeps communications open with the PCs’ starship for as long as it can, though it splits paths with the PCs after only 2 days of Drift travel.

Friendly Banter: While the freighter’s captain is too busy to communicate with the PCs, a Starfinder team onboard the *Promise of the Future* willingly chats. These passengers are kalos, aquatic monstrous humanoids native to the Brethedan moon of Kalo-Mahoi. This group, calling themselves the Manta Corps, formed a tight-knit party that the Starfinder Society often sends on missions of importance in underwater locales. The Manta Corps eagerly trade stories with any PCs communicating with the *Promise of the Future* but refuse to speak about their classified mission. While this minor social encounter is optional, the Manta Corps is expected to show up in a future scenario, so it does foreshadow future content. The PCs can certainly share some banter with the kalos, but eventually the *Promise of the Future* moves away from the PCs’ vessel and out of communication range.

Members of the Manta Corps include the following:

- **Deepspeaker Alluoth (NG male kalo mystic):** A soft-spoken kalo who appreciates wisdom and information.
- **Mantarider Ushul (LN male kalo soldier):** A headstrong soldier who fights with an automatic machine gun. He likes showing off his weapon, named “Muncher,” even via grainy video transmissions.
- **Mantarider Suulhu-Huur (LG female kalo soldier):** An enthusiastic melee fighter who wields an energized trident. She offers to spar with the PCs, should they meet in person.
- **Wavetreader Vhoosh (N female kalo operative):** The quietest member of the group, Vhoosh is most interested in hearing about the combat exploits of the PCs—specifically, what impressive kills they have accrued.

A. BATTLE FOR THE BEACON



H : Honorbound
PC : PCs' ship
X : Asteroid

PC

Starfinder Flip-Mat: Basic Starfield

A. BATTLE FOR THE BEACON (CR 2 OR CR 4)

As the PCs close in on the location of the *Struggle's Scholar's* distress beacon, they detect a large field of roughly two dozen asteroids surrounding the source of the signal. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Mysticism or Physical Science check recognizes these as chunks of obsidian likely native to the Elemental Plane of Earth and ripped here thanks to the use of a Drift engine. A PC who uses the ship's sensors and succeeds at a DC 15 Computers check discovers that the interiors of these asteroids hold molten stone. PCs succeeding on these checks recognize the volatility of the asteroids and know all the information about how they affect starships in starship combat (see Starship Combat below).

Second Ship: A vesk starship, the *Honorbound*, approaches opposite the PCs, heading toward the asteroid field at top speed. The *Honorbound* is ablaze on either side with three bright-red thrusters, which are reminiscent of the energy blades of a plasma doshko, though a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering check realizes that the thruster emissions are decorative and not functional. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Mysticism check recognizes these features as a representation of the symbol of Damoritosh, the vesk god of conquest, duty, and war. A PC with the priest theme gains a +5 bonus to the Mysticism check to identify the symbol and the association between it, Damoritosh, and the vesk species.

The vesk ship slows shortly after the PCs detect it (positioning itself on the hex indicated on the map). The captain of the *Honorbound*, a jovial vesk by the name of **Yuluzak** (LN male vesk envoy) enthusiastically replies to any communication from the PCs. If the PCs choose not to send a signal, Yuluzak initiates communication after a few minutes of silence. The vesk captain greets the PCs in Vesk and follows into Common if none of the PCs speak his native tongue. He immediately recognizes whichever starship frame they chose as being ubiquitous of the Starfinder Society. The PCs can attempt a DC 16 Bluff check (DC 20 in Subtier 3–4) to try to convince Yuluzak that they're not affiliated with the Starfinder Society. Succeeding the check, or coming clean about their affiliation, earns the PCs Yuluzak's respect. If the PCs fail the Bluff check, Yuluzak becomes more wary of the PCs—an outcome that gives the PCs a –2 penalty to all skill checks made to influence Yuluzak and gives the crew of the *Honorbound* a +2 bonus to their first Piloting check made during the first helm phase of the subsequent starship combat.

Captain Yuluzak willingly provides the PCs with a brief summary of his ship: a vesk salvage ship scouring the Drift for finds important to the Veskarium. He admits that his directive is not the most glorious or honorable of missions, but the threat of the Swarm demands the Veskarium investigate all avenues of advancement to prepare against the next invasion. Yuluzak is eager to hear the PCs' history before he turns the subject over the right of salvaging the distress beacon.

The *Honorbound* is mandated to find anything of potential interest to the Veskarium, especially information on Pact World

and kasathan starships. Having already determined the source of the signal, Captain Yuluzak regretfully informs the PCs that he cannot allow them to proceed with their salvaging mission. The vesk captain recognizes that the PCs cannot back down and casually explains his understanding that the *Honorbound* and the PCs' starship need to battle over the beacon. To expedite matters, Yuluzak offers several rules to which he abides by in the coming starship battle.

- The combatants will not intentionally target the life support systems of their enemy.
- The combatants will abstain from targeting the rear arc-warriors should face the enemy head on.
- Combat is over once an enemy starship is crippled.
- Each captain can surrender at any point during the duel.

If the PCs accept the terms of Yuluzak's honorable starship duel, the vesk captain claps his hands in delight and wishes them well in the battle to come. If the PCs refuse to accept the terms of the duel, Yuluzak somberly nods, recognizing that "the honorable customs of the Veskarium are not yet accepted in the uncivilized regions of the galaxy." Regardless, the captain signals his intent to begin combat before taking any hostile action.

Starship Combat: If PCs do anything but retreat, the *Honorbound* eventually attacks. Captain Yuluzak uses the encourage action to grant a +2 bonus to important Piloting checks, and he taunts only enemies who break the honor duel rules. The pilot uses the maneuver crew action to assist with moving between the asteroids, otherwise choosing to attempt the evade stunt during the helm phase. The engineer focuses on diverting power to weapons. The gunners make only single shots and do not use the fire at will action. The *Honorbound's* science officer rebalances shields when necessary but otherwise uses the target system action to target the PCs' starship's engines.

Spaces with an asteroid are impassible and block a starship's direct-fire weapons—tracking weapons move to avoid striking these asteroids. Any starship can shoot at an asteroid (considered to have AC 5 and TL 5); a hit by any weapon that deals at least 1 Hull Point of damage punctures the obsidian shell and imparts the shot's momentum to the asteroid, causing it to violently hurl magma into nearby space. A damaged asteroid deals 4d8 damage to starships in adjacent hexes. The struck asteroid is then removed from the map and poses no further obstacle or threat. If the PCs abide by the rules of the duel, the *Honorbound* refuses to attack the asteroids. Captain Yuluzak does not consider the use of the asteroids as dishonorable and so the PCs can use them to further damage the *Honorbound* without invalidating the rules of the duel.

If the PCs abide by the rules of the duel as detailed by Captain Yuluzak, the *Honorbound* surrenders when it is reduced to 25 Hull Points or less (35 Hull Points in Subtier 3–4). If the PCs break the rules more than once (Yuluzak provides one warning), then Yuluzak surrenders only when his ship is crippled.

Scaling Encounter A

Make the following changes to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Both Subtiers: The *Honorbound* has only one gunner instead of two. Also, the *Honorbound's* crew takes a -2 penalty to all skill checks made during the starship combat.

SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 2)

HONORBOUND

TIER 2

Medium transport

Speed 8; Maneuverability average (turn 2); **Drift 1**

AC 14; TL 14

HP 70; DT -; CT 14

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

Attack (Forward) flak thrower (3d4)

Attack (Aft) gyrolaser (1d8)

Attack (Turret) light laser cannon (2d4), light laser cannon (2d4)

Power Core Arcus Heavy (130 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems mk 1 mononode computer, basic medium-range sensors, mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold (3), medical bay, recreation suite (gym)

Modifiers +1 to any one check per round, +2 Computers;

Complement 6

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +10 (2 ranks), Computers +5 (1 rank), Engineering +5 (1 rank), gunnery +6, Piloting +5 (1 rank)

Engineer Engineering +5 (1 rank)

Gunners (2) gunnery +6

Pilot Piloting +5 (1 rank)

Science Officer Computers +5 (1 rank)

SUBTIER 3-4 (CR 4)

HONORBOUND

TIER 4

Medium transport

Speed 8; Maneuverability average (turn 2); **Drift 1**

AC 18; TL 18

HP 85; DT -; CT 17

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

Attack (Forward) heavy laser cannon (4d8)

Attack (Aft) flak thrower (3d4)

Attack (Turret) light particle beam (3d6), high explosive missile launcher (4d8)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems mk 1 mononode computer, basic medium-range sensors, mk 5 armor, mk 5 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold (3), medical bay, recreation suite (gym)

Modifiers +1 to any one check per round, +2 Computers;

Complement 6

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +15 (4 ranks), Computers +8 (3 ranks),

Engineering +8 (3 ranks), gunnery +9, Piloting +8 (3 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +8 (3 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +8

Pilot Piloting +8 (3 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +8 (3 ranks)

Infamy: When the *Honorbound* reaches 0 Hull Points, it is disabled, not destroyed, at which point the PCs can safely retrieve the beacon and leave the vesk ship behind. If the PCs instead choose to destroy the *Honorbound*, any PC willingly partaking in such a needless slaughter gains 1 Infamy.

Development: If the PCs manage to cripple the *Honorbound* or force Yuluzak to surrender, then the vesk starship relinquishes its claim on the distress beacon. If the PCs followed the rules of the duel, Yuluzak congratulates them on a tough fight, indicating that his ship will pull away to affect some necessary repairs in the battle's aftermath.

If the *Honorbound* cripples the PCs' starship, Yuluzak signals the PCs with some similar congratulations, impressed by the fight they put up. In this case, Yuluzak indicates that his ship will investigate the beacon and that he intends on sending a follow-up signal to the PCs if it turns out that the *Struggle's Scholar* is of no use to the Veskarium. The PCs can repair their vessel over the course of several hours, after which their ship is still unfit for combat but can make use of its Drift engine and thrusters. Around this time, the PCs receive a distress signal from the *Honorbound*, requesting immediate assistance with salvaging the *Struggle's Scholar*.

If the PCs triumph over the *Honorbound*, retrieving the beacon is a simple matter. It takes only a half-hour of scanning the asteroids to find the beacon lodged in a hunk of rock. The lightly encoded message contained within is easy to crack with the decoder provided by Zigvigix. Provide the PCs with **Handout #1: Distress Beacon Recording**, which details the information presented by the decoded signal. With this information, the PCs can return to the Material Plane at the necessary coordinates to find the *Struggle's Scholar*.

Treasure: If the PCs' starship is not crippled in the fight against the *Honorbound*, the PCs can extract several precious minerals from the nearby magma asteroids. Doing so only takes 30 minutes—matching the time it takes to decode the beacon—and nets the PCs resources worth 900 credits (1,350 in Subtier 3-4).

If the PCs followed Yuluzak's rules during the duel, the vesk captain offers to send them a trophy for their accomplishment. The *Honorbound* jettisons a cargo pod containing a set of golemforged plating II armor and a squad machine gun for the PCs to use. In Subtier 3-4, the cargo pod instead contains a set of vesk overplate I armor and a tactical reaction cannon.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat the *Honorbound*, reduce the PCs' credits earned by the amount listed on page 9.

Subtier 1-2: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 211.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 301.

Subtier 3-4: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 392.

OUT OF THE DRIFT

When the PCs use the beacon's coordinates and instructions to drop out of the Drift, they find themselves a few hundred yards from the disabled *Struggle's Scholar*.

A heavily damaged kasathan transport ship floats in empty space, dark but for a slowly flashing orange light at its aft. Just a few miles away from the ship, a massive storm dwarfs the vessel, blue and gray etheric clouds warping the field of stars behind the ship and flashing internally with jagged streaks of light. For all its violence, the vast storm is silent, and it looms larger with each passing second.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Mysticism check recognizes the stellar event as an etheric storm, an uncommon event where the barrier between the Ethereal and Material Planes is thinnest. It should be clear to the PCs that this storm will overtake the *Struggle's Scholar*, destroying the ship long before the PCs could restore the vessel to working order or even tow it out of the way.

If the PCs brought a *Pegasus* starship, one member of the party can attempt a single Computers check using the ship's computer to scan the *Struggle's Scholar* and obtain information. Depending on the result of the check, draw or reveal the indicated parts of the map on page 10. Give the party all the information listed at a DC less than or equal to the result of the check.

10+: The basic internal map of the ship, with outlines of every chamber within the starship.

15+: The presence of notable power spikes in the captain's quarters (area **B6**), engine room (area **B7**), and bridge (area **B10**).

20+: The presence of a life-form still active on the ship. Its exact species and location is indiscernible, due to the storm, but it's clear that there's something alive aboard the ship.

Whichever ship the PCs command, it is easy to attach to the *Struggle Scholar's* airlock (area **B1**) or space walk there.

B. STRUGGLE'S SCHOLAR

The *Struggle's Scholar* is an older model of kasathan starship known as an Idaran Centuria. Its curved hull is representative of kasathan design standards, though the heavy damage inflicted on the ship has rendered it all but inoperable. Unless otherwise noted, each room is 15 feet high with walls made of starship interior material and steel doors (as described on page 408 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*).

The *Struggle's Scholar* is on its last legs, but it has enough power to provide both basic life support and normal gravity. However, only low-power emergency lighting illuminates the ship, so each area should be treated as having dim illumination. This grants all creatures concealment (including a 20% miss chance) from creatures that don't have low-light vision or darkvision. See page

Lament of the Honorbound

If the PCs failed to defeat the *Honorbound* in the previous encounter, then the vesk ship has already boarded the *Struggle's Scholar*. The expedition involved four crew members; Captain Yuluzak and the ship's doctor remained aboard the *Honorbound*. The attempted exploration went poorly for the vesk, who almost immediately woke the driftdead. Make the following quick changes to represent this situation.

- The driftdead in area **B6** is freed from its imprisonment within the force field. It begins attacking the PCs after they have explored at least three rooms on the ship.
- The corpses of the vesk pilot and science officer are found in the main hall (area **B2**), having been gunned down by the malfunctioning turret.
- The corpse of the vesk gunner is found in the captain's quarters (area **B6**), strangled after inadvertently freeing the driftdead.
- The *Honorbound's* engineer was forcibly ejected into space from area **B5** after inadvertently dropping the emergency shields while trying to protect herself from the driftdead. There is no body, but the PCs can find the record of her intrusion from the door panel in the chamber.

261 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for more information on vision and light rules.

Once the PCs board the *Struggle's Scholar*, they are free to explore it as they choose, though the doors to the mess hall (area **B9**) and the bridge (area **B10**) are unpowered, requiring the PCs to connect batteries from the sparring room (area **B3**) and the captain's quarters (area **B6**) to terminals in the engine room (area **B7**) to power those doors. The doors to the captain's quarters and the bridge require the captain's key card, which is in the mess hall.

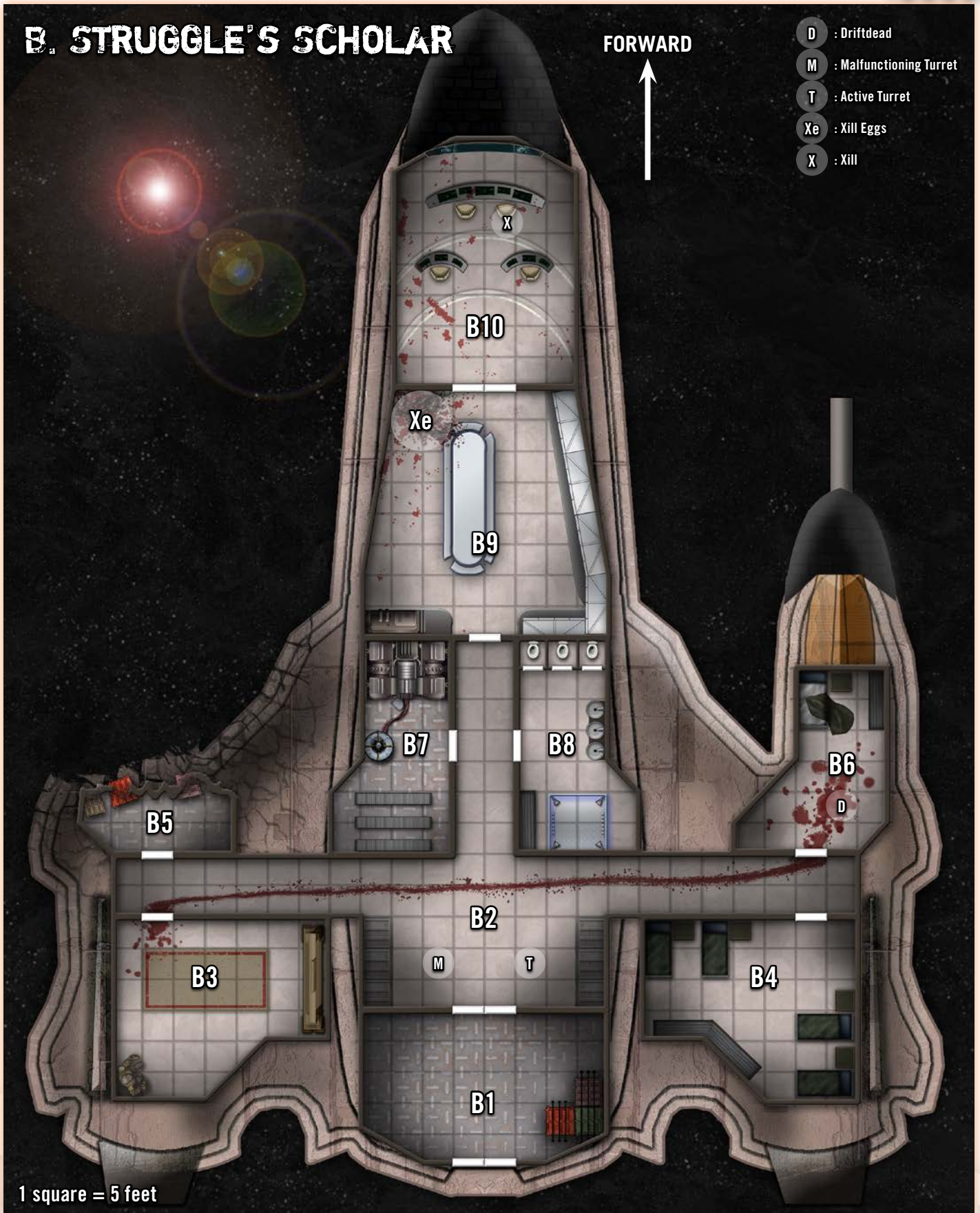
As the PCs progress through the ship, they might assume that the crew was killed by a rogue undead kasatha, but once they are aware of its existence, likely from the personal log found in the crew quarters (area **B4**), encourage this mistaken belief for as long as possible to amplify the surprise of the xill awaiting the party on the bridge.

Hazard: The nearby etheric storm occasionally pulses with great intensity, sending a shock wave of etheric energy through the unshielded *Scholar's Struggle* that randomly disables technological items and systems for short periods. Outside of combat, this has no lasting effect; it simply causes lights to flicker ominously. At the beginning of any combat, and at the start of every round after, there is a 25% chance that an etheric pulse occurs, imposing a -2 penalty to all attack rolls for 1 round when using any weapon that does not have the analog or archaic property.

B. STRUGGLE'S SCHOLAR

FORWARD
↑

- D : Driftdead
- M : Malfunctioning Turret
- T : Active Turret
- Xe : Xill Eggs
- X : Xill



1 square = 5 feet

B1. AIRLOCK

This entire chamber is one large airlock, with access doors to the north and south. Loose netting floats in the gravity-free chamber. A warning light above the interior door flashes every few seconds, periodically bathing the room in a dim orange glow. A small panel next to the door flashes orange in time with the warning light.

Unlike the rest of the ship, the southern wall in this room is a starship bulkhead and both doors are airlock doors (as described on page 408 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*).

A PC can use the panel to close the main airlock door, which causes the room to automatically pressurize; artificial gravity then kicks in gradually. As air fills the room, a blaring alarm can be heard, timed with the light. After 30 seconds, the alarm and light stop flashing, and any PC can use the panel again to open the interior door. Prior to using the panel in this way, a horrifying screech echoes past the sealed northern door. The scream is a random expulsion of rage from the driftdead trapped in area **B6**.

If the PCs examine the crates in the airlock, they find the boxes full of mundane equipment used to adapt nonstandard airlocks, make minor external repairs, and so forth. The items are of no value and cannot be easily transported.

B2. MAIN CABIN (CR 1 OR CR 3)

A gruesome trail of blood runs across the floor of the ten-foot wide hallway that runs horizontally across the ship; at each end of this hall are metal access doors leading to the north and south. A shorter hall leads to a door to the north, with two doors halfway up that hall exiting to the east and west. Finally, a large airlock seal covers the center of the southern wall here. A double-barreled weapon turret limply hangs from the ceiling, just west of the southern airlock door.

The door to the captain's quarters (area **B6**) is locked, and that the door to mess hall (area **B9**) cannot be opened until the PCs reroute power to it as described in the engine room (area **B7**). The trail of smeared blood leads from the door to the sparring room (area **B3**) on the port side of the ship to the entrance to the captain's quarters (area **B6**). The blood here is from one of the ship's wounded crew members escaping the reanimated driftdead and luring it to the captain's quarters.

The visible projectile turret is malfunctioning because of ongoing damage from the etheric storm. The turret remains inactive the first time the PCs enter the chamber. The second time the PCs traverse the hall, the turret tracks their motion with a pulsing red light between its twin barrels. Any subsequent trips through the hall result in the weapon letting loose with intensifying whines of spooling weapons, though no attack ever occurs.

Trap: Once the PCs restore enough power to enter the mess hall (as detailed in area **B7**), subsequent motion in this chamber causes

the malfunctioning turret to explode. Such an explosion deals no damage to nearby creatures, though it should startle anyone in the area. Two rounds later, a second laser turret opposite the malfunctioning unit emerges from a hidden compartment in the ceiling and attacks the nearest target.

The active turret has an EAC of 10, a KAC of 14, and 19 Hit Points. In Subtier 3–4, the active turret has an EAC of 13, a KAC of 17, and 38 Hit Points.

SUBTIER 1–2 (CR 1)

PROJECTILE TURRET TRAP CR 1

Type technological; **Perception** DC 21 (note hidden ceiling panel); **Disable** Engineering DC 16 (disable tracking sensor)
Trigger proximity; **Reset** 1 round (runs out of ammo after 3 rounds)
Effect projectile +11 ranged (2d6 P)

SUBTIER 3–4 (CR 3)

ADVANCED PROJECTILE TURRET TRAP CR 3

Type technological; **Perception** DC 24 (note hidden ceiling panel); **Disable** Engineering DC 19 (disable tracking sensor)
Trigger proximity; **Reset** 1 round (runs out of ammo after 3 rounds)
Effect projectile +11 ranged (5d6 P)

B3. SPARRING ROOM

A single door opens into this open space. Just inside the doorway, the entry floor is caked with blood, and several batons and shuriken are scattered throughout the room. A simple sparring mat covers much of the center floor. An alcove along the eastern edge houses a weapon rack filled several kinds of batons and a dozen fine shuriken. On the opposite wall is a pad of self-healing foam with colorful abstract targets painted on it. A four-armed metal robot stands in the southwestern corner of the chamber.

A floor-mounted, four-armed sparring robot whirs to life when the PCs enter the area. It proclaims (in Kasatha) its readiness for a duel. If a PC accepts, roll initiative (the robot has a +0 initiative modifier) and enter combat as normal. On the robot's first turn, it declares its battery is too low to perform to specifications and immediately shuts off and takes no further actions for the adventure. If left unchallenged, the sparring robot merely repeats its readiness for battle a few more times before shutting down. When the sparring robot shuts down, a set of running lights leads to a panel on its back where its battery is stored. A PC can remove the panel and retrieve the starship battery within if she has an engineering tool kit or if she succeeds at a DC 14 Strength check. This starship battery is crucial for gaining access to the mess hall (area **B9**) and later the bridge (area **B10**).

Idaran Force Training Baton

This looks like a normal tactical baton, except it is much thinner and lighter. The baton has passive nanoengineering such that swinging it hard enough through any atmosphere creates an electromagnetic force.

IDARAN FORCE TRAINING BATON

An Idaran force training baton is a 2nd-level uncategorized basic melee weapon that deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage. The damage from this weapon counts as a force effect when wielded by a character with at least 12 Strength. Note, this does not mean the weapon deals force damage, only that it counts as a force effect for overcoming certain defenses such as incorporeal. It has the operative and powered (capacity 20, usage 1) special properties, it is light bulk, and it costs 400 credits.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check notices a holoprojector in the ceiling with a carbonedge shuriken lodged in it. This projector automatically records and replays sparring sessions for the later review of those who train in this room. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Computers or Engineering check can repair the projector enough that it replays a crew member's brief fight with the driftdead Yotto. The hologram of the skirmish is grainy, and it cuts out periodically before ending when the living crew member throws a shuriken that passes through the driftdead and hits the projector.

Treasure: The weapon rack in this chamber contains an Idaran force training baton (see sidebar), 10 carbonedge shuriken, 8 tactical batons, 4 cestus battlegloves, and 2 *serums of enhancement (commando)*. In Subtier 3–4, a carbon staff is also placed among the weapons.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to discover the equipment in this chamber, reduce the PCs' credits earned by the amount listed.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 43.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 94.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 145.

B4. CREW QUARTERS

Four beds fill most of these tidy crew quarters. Each bed is neatly made with a prominent item placed atop its center. Above the beds are tightly sealed storage compartments. A single-tier metal shelf curves around the southwestern wall, its surface pristine but entirely empty.

These were the crew quarters for the four members of the crew under the captain. The items placed atop the beds are each part

of a kasathan tradition for those who are making a journey from which they don't expect to return. The crew members left personal items on each of their beds, as gifts to those who survive them and continue to create future history. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check recognizes this ad hoc version of the tradition; kasathan PCs gain a +4 bonus to this check.

Treasure: One of the items left atop the bed items is an electronic scale model of the *Idari* (the roughly cylindrical kasathan world-ship that currently orbits the Pact Worlds' sun) rotating slowly in the air above a smooth stand. The *Idari* model is worth 100 credits (500 credits in Subtier 3–4). Note that the model is too low powered to serve as a battery in the engine room (see area **B7**).

Another bed holds a personal datapad, flashing with a low-battery warning. Any flashlight or similar battery can be used to power the datapad, unlocking the most recent personal logs of one of the kasathas, Teliu (distribute **Handout #2: Teliu's Logs**).

A ceremonial Idaran force training baton (see the Idaran Force Training Baton sidebar), engraved with the lengthy lineage and titles of its owner, rests atop the third bed. This uniquely crafted force baton can be sold for 650 credits (1,000 credits in Subtier 3–4).

On the fourth bed is an elegantly bound copy of the book *Customs of Kasath*, a gift traditionally given to a kasatha who has just completed the Tempering, a coming-of-age ritual. The nameplate inside identifies the copy as belonging to Yotto, one of the kasatha crew members. Nestled inside the cover is a least photon crystal. In Subtier 3–4, the book also contains a least W-boson crystal.

The compartments above the beds are locked, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering or Strength check can open them (one success is sufficient to open all of them). In Subtier 1–2, the compartment contains 3 basic medkits. In Subtier 3–4, the compartment contains a single advanced medkit.

Rewards: If the PCs do not search the beds and adjoining compartments, reduce their credits earned as follows.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 179.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 287.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 395.

B5. CARGO HOLD

The northern wall of this chamber is so forcibly compacted to the south that the chamber extends only about ten feet from the door. Several person-sized crates are fused into the distorted hull, obviously melted by extreme heat. Space is visible from between several gaps in the northern wall, accented by the occasional shimmer of a force field.

This was a cargo bay before the *Struggle's Scholar* collided with magma-filled asteroids in the Drift. A few containers were sucked into the larger openings, their metal melting into that of the hull and fusing them in place. This chamber saw only one use after, when the ship's android crew member, Blue Sky-101,

temporarily lowered the shields in the chamber to try to forcibly eject a xill into space. A PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check identifies a pattern of android fluids and alien blood spatter along the edges of one of the force field-protected holes into space—this area was where the unfortunate Blue Sky-101 and xill invader were sucked out into space. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Computers check at a terminal adjacent to the door can identify that the field was last lowered using the authorization of a crew member named Blue Sky-101.

One of the fused cargo containers houses a macabre set of limbs: the right arm and leg of Blue Sky-101. After the android depressurized the room, the furious xill tore off these limbs from Blue Sky-101 and hurled them into the container. The limbs managed to avoid getting sucked into the vacuum along with their owner. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Medicine check can identify the limbs as being torn off by a creature with vicious claws. Any PCs who succeed at this check by 4 or more, and have already encountered the driftdead in area **B6**, recognize the claw markings as being different than those of the driftdead.

B6. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS (CR 3 OR CR 5)

The door to this room is locked, requiring the captain's key card (found in area **B9**) to open it.

The signs of struggle are visible throughout this room. A single bed in the northwest corner of the chamber is torn, with its comforter halfway on the floor. A nearby bed table and desk are in similar disarray, covered with shattered glass and hunks of broken ceramics. A pool of blood covers the southern floor, adjacent to the chamber's sole entry point.

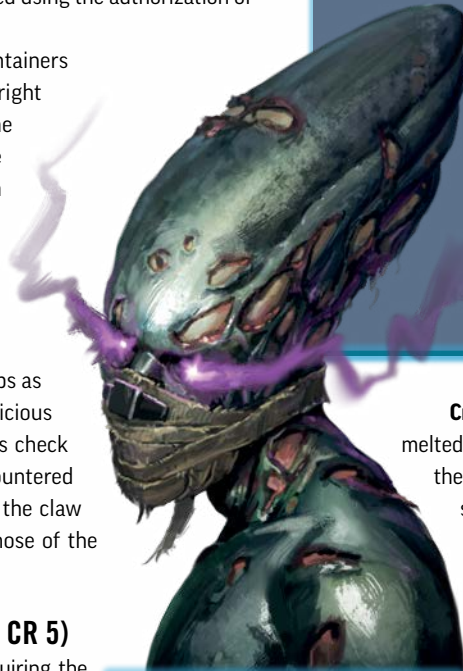
These single-occupancy living quarters are in shambles following a desperate struggle that took place here. A lifeless kasatha in a suit of battle harness powered armor lies on the floor. The armor glows with a barely visible force field that projects around the armor at a range of about one foot, and a cable on the floor leads from a starship battery pack (identical to those found in the engine room; see area **B7**) to the base of the suit. This suit of armor belonged to the captain of the *Struggle's Scholar*, who sacrificed himself by sharing a space with the incorporeal driftdead that had once been his crew member and subsequently activated his armor's force field. The action sentenced the captain to death, but it kept the driftdead contained—sadly, no one could have expected the imminent xill attack that followed up this noble sacrifice.

Scaling Encounter B6

Make the following changes to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Subtier 1-2: Reduce Yotto's Hit Points by 10. Reduce the DC of her confusion aura by 2. Yotto takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws.

Subtier 3-4: Reduce Yotto's Hit Points by 20. Reduce the DC of her confusion aura by 2. Yotto takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws.



Yotto

Creature: A driftdead kasatha, its body half-melted by the explosion that killed it, lies in wait inside the powered armor; its incorporeal form shares the space of the corpse of its former captain and is unable to pass through the suit's force field. If the PCs disconnect the starship battery (this happens automatically if they attempt to move the suit), the force field disappears and the driftdead emerges to attack.

SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 3)

YOTTO

CR 3

Female kasatha driftdead (*Starfinder*)

Adventure Path #1: Incident at Absalom Station 57

NE Medium undead (extraplanar, kasatha)

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

Aura confusion (30 feet, DC 12)

DEFENSE

HP 40

EAC 14; **KAC** 16

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

Defensive Abilities spatial incorporeality;

Immunities undead immunities

OFFENSE

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

Melee claw or incorporeal claw +11 (1d6+5 S)

Ranged Drift rip +8 (1d4+3)

TACTICS

During Combat Yotto lunges at any living kasathas first, preferring to use her incorporeal claws to tear at her target. Otherwise, she prioritizes any creature attacking her with energy or force effects.

Morale Yotto fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS**Str** +2; **Dex** +4; **Con** –; **Int** –4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Athletics +8, Stealth +13**Languages** Common, Kasatha**Other Abilities** desert stride, four-armed, unliving**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Confusion Aura (Su)** Any creature that comes within 30 feet of Yotto must succeed at a DC 12 Will save or be confused for 2 rounds. Once a creature has attempted this save, whether successful or not, it can't be affected again by this aura for 24 hours.**Drift Rip (Su)** Just as the Drift tears away chunks of planar material, a driftdead can pull apart the molecular bonds of matter, ripping open the flesh of nearby creatures. This is a ranged attack against EAC that has a range of 30 feet.**Spatial Incorporeality (Ex)** Within the Drift, a driftdead has a physical body, but if removed from that plane, its physical body phases out of normal reality. On the Material Plane or otherwise outside of the Drift, a driftdead becomes incorporeal. This does not change any of the driftdead's statistics, but it gains all of the other benefits of the incorporeal special ability (see page 264 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). If returned to the Drift, a driftdead immediately loses the incorporeal special ability as its physical body returns.**SUBTIER 3–4 (CR 5)****YOTTO****CR 5**Female kasatha driftdead (*Starfinder Adventure Path #1:**Incident at Absalom Station 57*)

NE Medium undead (extraplanar, kasatha)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11**Aura** confusion (30 feet, DC 13)**DEFENSE****HP 70****EAC** 17; **KAC** 19**Fort** +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** spatial incorporeality; **Immunities** undead immunities**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Su, average)**Melee** claw or incorporeal claw +14 (1d6+8 S)**Ranged** Drift rip +11 (1d6+5)**TACTICS****During Combat** Yotto attacks any living kasathas first, preferring to use her incorporeal claws. Otherwise, she prioritizes any creature attacking her with energy or force effects.**Morale** Yotto fights until destroyed.**STATISTICS****Str** +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** –; **Int** –4; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Stealth +16**Languages** Common, Kasatha**Other Abilities** desert stride, four-armed, unliving**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Confusion Aura (Su)** Any creature that comes within 30 feet of Yotto must succeed at a DC 13 Will save or be confused for 2 rounds. Once a creature has attempted this save, whether successful or not, it can't be affected again by this aura for 24 hours.**Drift Rip (Su)** Just as the Drift tears away chunks of planar material, a driftdead can pull apart the molecular bonds of matter, ripping open the flesh of nearby creatures. This is a ranged attack against EAC that has a range of 30 feet.**Spatial Incorporeality (Ex)** Within the Drift, a driftdead has a physical body, but if removed from that plane, its physical body phases out of normal reality. On the Material Plane or otherwise outside of the Drift, a driftdead becomes incorporeal. This does not change any of the driftdead's statistics, but it gains all of the other benefits of the incorporeal special ability (see page 264 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). If returned to the Drift, a driftdead immediately loses the incorporeal special ability as its physical body returns.**Development:** After the PCs defeat the driftdead, they can take a 10-minute rest to recover Stamina and use similar abilities. While the storm is still approaching, they have enough time to rest before retrieving the data from the bridge.**Treasure:** The captain's armor is a set of battle harness, currently bereft of power and severely damaged (the powered armor is still usable, though without any remaining source of power, in Subtier 3–4). The armor does contain a purple force field armor upgrade (as described on page 206 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*) that can be removed while the armor is unpowered. In addition, the jury-rigged ship battery that powers the force field can be used in the engine room (area **B7**) to help the PCs gain access to other areas.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) also identifies a hidden storage chamber along the sides of the captain's bed. The container has a several of the captain's personal effects, along with a credstick containing 500 credits (1,000 credits in Subtier 3–4) that the captain planned on using to treat his crew once they returned to Absalom Station.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat the driftdead in this room, reduce their credits earned by the amount listed below.*Subtier 1–2:* Reduce each PC's credits earned by 159.*Out of Subtier:* Reduce each PC's credits earned by 229.*Subtier 3–4:* Reduce each PC's credits earned by 300.**B7. ENGINE ROOM**

Cracks mar the surface of this room's western wall. A constant thrum of power is audible within the area, clearly emanating from an immense engine embedded into the northern wall. A standalone module sits opposite the only entrance to the room, but the thick cable that should connect it to the humming engine

is irrevocably split. Three rectangular stacks of batteries fill the southern end of the engine room.

This room was damaged because of the asteroid collision that affected area **B5**. The resulting power surges caused additional damage to the Drift engine and ruptured several power cells. A control module opposite the door is dark, and a heavy cable connecting it to the engine enclosure is irrevocably blown apart.

The engine enclosure in the forward section of the room is missing its front panel, and a maze of crisscrossing wires connect to various terminals; once the crew's engineer deemed the engine useless for travel, she patched what she could and diverted remaining power to the ship's life support systems, the force field in area **B5**, and most of the ship's internal doors.

South of the control module, several dead, brick-sized starship batteries are stacked on metal shelves. The topmost row is hooked up to an exposed power terminal labeled "Mess" with a black marker. Another power terminal is labeled "Bridge."

The patchwork of rerouted wires would take even an expert more time than the PCs have to reverse-engineer; a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Engineering check recognizes the futility of attempting to reroute power using the existing wires. A PC who fails this check by 5 or more, however, is erroneously confident he can do so. If the PC then attempts to reconnect the wires, the first one he touches sparks violently, dealing 1d6 electricity damage, and further attempts do nothing but cause backup lights in a random room to fail (lowering the light level from dim to darkness in that room).

Door Access: The PCs need to connect a functioning battery to the terminal labeled "Mess" to power the door to the mess hall (area **B9**), and they need to connect another battery to the terminal labeled "Bridge" to power the doors to the bridge (area **B10**), where the data they seek is currently locked. Functional batteries can be found in the sparring room's sparring dummy in area **B3** and the captain's powered armor in area **B6**. Only these batteries work with the kasatha's impromptu system; if a PC attempts to use a battery from a weapon (or similar), it proves insufficient and is drained with no effect.

B8. LAVATORY

A ten-foot-wide communal shower stands along the south of this room. A rack of towels rests within reach, while a trio of sinks and toilet stalls covers the rest of this room. A single door admits access to this washroom.

The ship's lavatory is unremarkable apart, perhaps, from the washbasins built to accommodate four-armed kasathas. A large shower with four showerheads takes up most of the aft portion of the room.

While the room is free of threats, if a PC turns on the showers or sink, she makes a gruesome discovery. Shortly after turning on the cleaning devices, the water turns from clear liquid to a deep

crimson—the color of blood. This horrific scene lasts only for a few seconds before the water returns to its regular consistency. While the PCs might interpret this as a supernatural scene, it is simply the result of the ship's fluid recycling system unable to cope with the blood drained into the sink of the mess hall (area **B9**).

B9. MESS HALL (CR 1 OR CR 3)

The door to this room requires power to open; the PCs must connect one battery to the appropriate terminal in the engine room (area **B7**) before they can gain access to this room.

This room resembles a charnel house. The remains of two dead kasathas are piled in the northwest corner, surrounded by knocked-over chairs. A ceremonial table setting in the center of the chamber is spattered with blood. The stench of decay is palpable in this room, and even the sink along the southern wall is coated in a dark-red shade. Storage containers fill the eastern side of the room, each similarly spattered by gore. An impressive set of double doors bars passage to the north, while a single steel access door continues out to the south.

The mess hall presents an awful sight: two kasathas lie dead, their bodies flung across the sparse furniture. A ceremonial table setting is splattered with blood, and the stench of death mingles with smoldering incense. This room is where the remaining crew members, resigned to their lonely fate and performing a kasathan ceremony of last rites, were attacked and killed by invading xill.

If the PCs enter the room before they have powered the doors to the bridge, the xill larvae are still incubating inside the dead kasathas. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check or a DC 12 Medicine check (DC 20 and DC 16 respectively in Subtier 3–4) notices several wounds that indicate a four-armed creature ripped into these unfortunate souls. If a PC exceeds the check DC by 5 or more, she also notices a single strange puncture wound on one of the bodies.

If the PCs have powered the doors to area **B10**, the larvae hatch as soon as a PC examines or passes near a corpse (see Trap below).

Trap: Several implanted xill larvae feed within the kasathas' corpses. When the PCs first arrive on the ship, the larvae are content with their current meals, but when the PCs return to enter the bridge, the larvae sense fresh food and erupt from their unfortunate incubators, gnashing at any nearby PCs.

SUBTIER 1–2 (CR 1)

XILL LARVAE BURST CR 1

Type —; **Perception** DC 21; **Disable** Life Science DC 16 (crush larvae in corpse)

Trigger proximity (thermal; 5 feet); **Reset** none

Effect vicious burrowing larvae (2d6 P and 2 Con damage);

Reflex DC 12 half and negates Con damage; multiple targets (all targets within 10 ft. of the double doors)

Scaling Encounter B10

Make the following changes to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Both Subtiers: The xill's ovipositor is too injured for it to use effectively, and it takes a -4 penalty when making bite attacks. Due to the xill's weakened state, reduce its EAC and KAC by 2 and lower its SR by 4.

SUBTIER 3-4 (CR 3)

XILL LARVAE BURST CR 3

Type —; **Perception** DC 23; **Disable** Life Science DC 18 (crush larvae in corpse)

Trigger proximity (thermal; 5 feet); **Reset** none

Effect vicious burrowing larvae (4d6 P and 4 Con damage); Reflex DC 14 half and negates Con damage; multiple targets (all targets within 10 ft. of the double doors)

Treasure: On top of the table, off to one side of the kasathas' unfinished meal, is the captain's key card,

which grants access to the captain's quarters (area **B6**). The storage containers hold a pair of *mk 1 serums of healing*. In Subtier 3-4, the containers instead house two *mk 2 serums of healing*.

B10. BRIDGE (CR 3 OR CR 5)

The double doors to the starship's bridge require power to open; the PCs must connect a battery to the appropriate terminal in the engine room (area **B7**) before they can gain access to this room.

The ship's bridge is alight in red warning screens. The nearing ethereal storm looms beyond the forward viewing platform, while the ship's failing power causes each station's panels to flicker intermittently. A battered captain's chair oversees two tiers of descending operations panels.

The ship's crew disabled most of the bridge's systems when the *Struggle's Scholar* returned to the Material Plane. They did so to conserve energy for basic life support and the force field in area **B5**. The data the PCs seek is stored in a hard drive in the captain's console, which has been damaged by the creature trapped here (see Development on page 17).

Creature: A recently matured xill, a four-armed insectoid creature from the Ethereal Plane, sits in the one of the two northernmost chairs. It broods here, macabrely sitting inside the burst-open corpse of one of the ship's former pilots. The xill is effectively using Stealth to hide in the body, taking a -4 penalty to her skill check because of the impromptu cover. PCs can attempt opposed Perception checks. A PC who fails this check believes the seat to be occupied only by the corpse of a kasatha instead of the live xill. A PC who succeeds at this check notices that a creature is wearing the body of the long-deceased pilot.

The original xill raiders infected and killed the kasatha crew before departing. The xill in this chamber is the first of the larvae to reach maturity, having consumed the mostly intact body of the starship's pilot. She has been unable to return to the Ethereal Plane since she emerged due to the encroaching etheric storm's interference, and she has torn the bridge apart in frustration. The xill has taken several objects on the bridge to use as impromptu weapons, and she uses the sidearm of the deceased pilot in whose body she had incubated. She still has not managed to figure out how to *plane shift* back to the Ethereal Plane. When the PCs approach close enough, such as by turning the chair around to inspect the pilot, the xill lunges forward to capture a much-needed meal.



Xill

SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 3)

FERAL XILL

CR 3

LE Small outsider (extraplanar, evil)

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

DEFENSE HP 40

EAC 15; **KAC** 15

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

SR 14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d6+5 P plus paralysis) or improvised weapon +9 (1d3+3 B)

Multiattack bite +6 (1d6+6 P plus paralysis), 2 improvised weapons +3 (1d3+3 B)

Ranged damaged red star plasma pistol +9 (1d4+3 E & F; critical 1d4 burn)

Offensive Abilities multiattack, xill implantation

TACTICS

During Combat The xill attacks the nearest creature, attempting to paralyze it with her attack. If successful, she spends her next round using her implantation ability. If the xill fails to paralyze a target after two bite attempts, she continues fighting using her multiattack ability.

Morale Unable to flee, the xill fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +8, Stealth +13

Languages Common, Infernal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Multiattack (Ex) A xill can make multiple melee attacks as a full action, as listed in the Multiattack section of the stat block. In this case, the xill can attack with its bite and two improvised weapons as a full action.

Paralysis (Su) A xill's bite causes its target to gain the paralyzed condition for until the end of the xill's next turn unless the target succeeds at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw.

Xill Implantation (Ex) As a standard action, a xill can use an ovipositor in its mouth to implant a paralyzed creature with xill larvae. This attack deals no damage, but the target must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or contract the xill implantation disease.

STUNTED XILL IMPLANTATION

Type disease (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 12

Track physical; **Frequency** 1/8 hours

Effect The implanted xill larvae can be removed by succeeding a DC 18 Medicine check, ending the affliction. Each attempt takes 10 minutes. Failing this check deals 1d4 damage to the patient. At the impaired state and beyond, the damage from failing this Medicine check increases to 1d6.

Cure 2 consecutive saves

SUBTIER 3-4 (CR 5)

RAVENOUS FERAL XILL

CR 5

LE Small outsider (extraplanar, evil)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE HP 70

EAC 18; **KAC** 18

Fort +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +6

SR 16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +15 (1d6+8 P plus paralysis) or improvised weapon +12 (1d4+6 B)

Multiattack bite +9 (1d6+8 P plus paralysis), 2 improvised weapons +6 (1d4+6 B)

Ranged red star plasma pistol +12 (1d8+5 E & F; critical 1d8 burn)

Offensive Abilities multiattack, xill implantation

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 1-2.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Stealth +16

Languages Common, Infernal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Multiattack (Ex) See the multiattack ability in Subtier 1-2.

Paralysis (Su) A xill's bite causes its target to gain the paralyzed condition until the end of the xill's next turn unless the target succeeds at a DC 13 Fortitude saving throw.

Xill Implantation (Ex) As a standard action, a xill can use an ovipositor in its mouth to implant a paralyzed creature with xill larvae. This attack deals no damage, but the target must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or contract the xill implantation disease.

XILL IMPLANTATION

Type disease (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 14

Track physical; **Frequency** 1/8 hours

Effect The implanted xill larvae can be removed by succeeding a DC 20 Medicine check, ending the affliction. Each attempt takes 10 minutes. Failing this check deals 1d6 damage to the patient. At the impaired state and beyond, the damage from failing this Medicine check increases to 1d8.

Cure 3 consecutive saves

Development: Once the PCs have defeated the xill, they can scour the bridge of the *Struggle's Scholar* for the necessary data. This can be accomplished by downloading the data onto a computer or datapad, or they can physically remove the hard drive from its damaged casing in the bridge's command console. No amount of hacking—at least not at the PCs' level—can overcome the heavy encryption on the data, not to mention the apparent damage to the stored files.

Get It Out! Get It Out!

The xill implantation ability can pose incredible risk to unprepared PCs. Unlike other diseases, the xill implantation disease has an accelerated frequency, representing the burrowing larvae consuming their host from within. The ability for a PC to attempt a trained Medicine skill check to remove the growing larvae balances the increased frequency. If no PCs are trained in the Medicine skill, then the next best thing is a spell such as *remove affliction*, for which the PCs might have a spell gem.

If the PCs lack any options to cure the disease on their own, then there is another option: the *Honorbound* has a medical bay. The vesk ship comes to investigate the wreck soon after the PCs depart back to their own ship. If the PCs followed the starship-duel rules as prescribed by Captain Yuluzak, the vesk captain eagerly offers use of his medical facilities to treat any infected PC. Along with this medical bay, the *Honorbound's* doctor can also assist, able to provide trained Medicine checks with a +10 bonus (+12 in Subtier 3–4).

If all else fails, the PCs can speed back to Absalom Station. Due to the presence of the *Starstone*, the trip back to the station takes only 1d6 days. Assuming the infected PCs survive the trip, Zigvigix willingly covers the costs of removing the xill larvae from any affected PC. Note that Zigvigix's willingness to cover the cost of any xill-larvae removal is an exception to normal Starfinder Society Roleplaying Guild rules surrounding the cost of removing affliction—the Exo-Guardians leader is just that willing to help!

The PCs should have just enough time to escape the *Struggle's Scholar* and power their own ship's Drift engine before the etheric storm finally consumes the area. The last sight the PCs should have from their ship before heading into the Drift, is the *Struggle's Scholar* breaking apart as the storm overtakes it.

If a PC was infected by the xill's implantation attack, then that affliction must be resolved prior to the end of the session. For more information on how the PCs might best overcome this vicious affliction, see the "Get It Out! Get It Out!" sidebar.

Treasure: A silk kasatha mouth scarf rests at the feet of the ruined pilot's body. In Subtier 3–4, the unfortunate pilot's corpse still has some wearable armor; the PCs can salvage her set of kasatha microcord II, along with a *merciful fusion seal* (6th level) from the gruesome remains.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat the xill occupying the bridge, reduce their credits earned by the amount listed below.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 122.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 169.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's credits earned by 216.

CONCLUSION

Once the PCs return to Absalom Station, Zigvigix is extremely appreciative for the shred of hope that the retrieved data represents. The tale of the *Struggle's Scholar's* fate disturbs the Exo-Guardians faction leader. Zigvigix promises to deliver the remains or personal belongings of the *Struggle's Scholar's* crew to the Idari for proper last-rite ceremonies. The Society maintained active files on each of the crew members, and Zigvigix can confirm that every member requested burial of their bodies or their final possessions returned to the Idari—even the android, Blue Sky-101. Zigvigix then tell the PCs that they will send the damaged data to the Dataphiles in the hopes that their leader, Historia-7, might be able to parse the information and recover any word about the fate of Sangoro's Bulwark.

If the PCs destroyed the *Honorbound* and they relay this information to Zigvigix, the shirren scolds them for possibly provoking further antagonism toward the Pact Worlds and Starfinder Society from the Veskarium in what is already a fragile time following the Scoured Stars incident. So long as the PCs fought the *Honorbound* while adhering to the duel's rules, each PC earns the Honorbound Allies boon on their Chronicle sheets; otherwise, cross this boon out.

Finally, before dismissing the PCs, Zigvigix offers a personal thanks to the PCs for their part in this mission.

"This is the first shred of truly good news that the Exo-Guardians have had in a long time! My many thanks for all you have done in securing this important data. Now, there is another important matter I wanted to bring up.

"Prior to the Scoured Stars incident, I was part of a group of loyal friends, like the team you're all a part of. Right before that dark event, I bought some tickets for my friends and me to a major upcoming concert. It was going to be our big outing—a capstone to all our missions together. Now, all my friends are trapped or lost in the Scoured Stars, and who knows how long it will take before we find out what happened there. The concert is coming up in a few months, and I wanted to extend an invitation. No promises or anything; you might be on assignment, and field missions take priority. If you are free, though, I would be honored if you would join me at this concert. Think of it as a remembrance for my lost comrades and a celebration of a new generation's camaraderie.

"Oh! I just realized that I should invite Historia-7 too! Okay, well, thanks again. I should get going!"

With that said, Zigvigix eagerly limps off towards the Lorespire Complex, leaving the PCs to enjoy their success.

PRIMARY SUCCESS CONDITION

If the PCs retrieve the data from the bridge of the *Struggle's Scholar* and escape, they succeed at their mission and each earn 1 Fame and 1 Reputation for any factions associated with their current faction boon.

SECONDARY SUCCESS CONDITION

If the PCs depart the *Struggle's Scholar* with at least one object belonging to each member of the crew, they each earn 1 additional Fame and 1 Reputation for any factions associated with their current faction boon. The objects required to complete this success condition include the following: the items placed atop the beds in area **B4**, any of Blue Sky-101's limbs from area **B5**, any item (including the powered armor) of the captain from area **B6**,

and the mouth scarf or equipment left near the pilot's corpse in area **B10**.

FACTION NOTES

If the PCs succeeded at their primary mission, they impress the Exo-Guardians faction. Each PC earns 1 additional Reputation with the Exo-Guardians faction, in addition to any other Reputation earned as a result of completing this scenario.

Handout #1: Distress Beacon Recording

ATTN: This message is confidential; if you are not the intended recipient, `_ABSALOM STATION>>EXO-GUARDIANS_`, please delete this message immediately.

MESSAGE: This is Remahd, captain of the *Struggle's Scholar*. Most of my crew and I escaped Sangoro's Bulwark with our lives, but upon entering the Drift, we collided with some extraplanar material. Soon after, we lost a crew member, as well as control of our primary engine. We have managed to patch our Drift functionality enough to drop out of this dangerous field and into normal space at the enclosed coordinates. Please send assistance as soon as is feasible—without our engine, our power supply is diminishing rapidly. In the event you are unable to reach us in time, I have heavily encrypted vital information meant only for the current head of the Exo-Guardians and locked it in a hard drive on the ship's bridge.

Handout #2: Teliu's Logs

RECORD 1

I am worried about Yotto. She is furious about what happened at the Bulwark and seems to be withdrawing more and more—she didn't even attend this morning's spar. Instead, I battled against Blue Sky-101, who is a skilled opponent but lacks the same vitality and understanding of honor. I thought Yotto would at least work some of her anger out by taking baton to bot. Perhaps it is her youth getting the better of her. I will give her a few days to restore her balance.

RECORD 2

The loss of Yotto is unbearable, and to make matters worse, the damage to the ship was more extensive than we thought. The captain sent out a distress beacon in the Drift, but it is too dangerous to stay in this minefield, so we have returned to the Material Plane. When we return to the *Idari*, I hope the adata will accept Yotto's body and grant me dispensation to query her soul. I'd like to speak with her one last time—and ask her why she was in the cargo hold when we were hit. For now, I have shrouded her body and placed it in the sparring chamber.

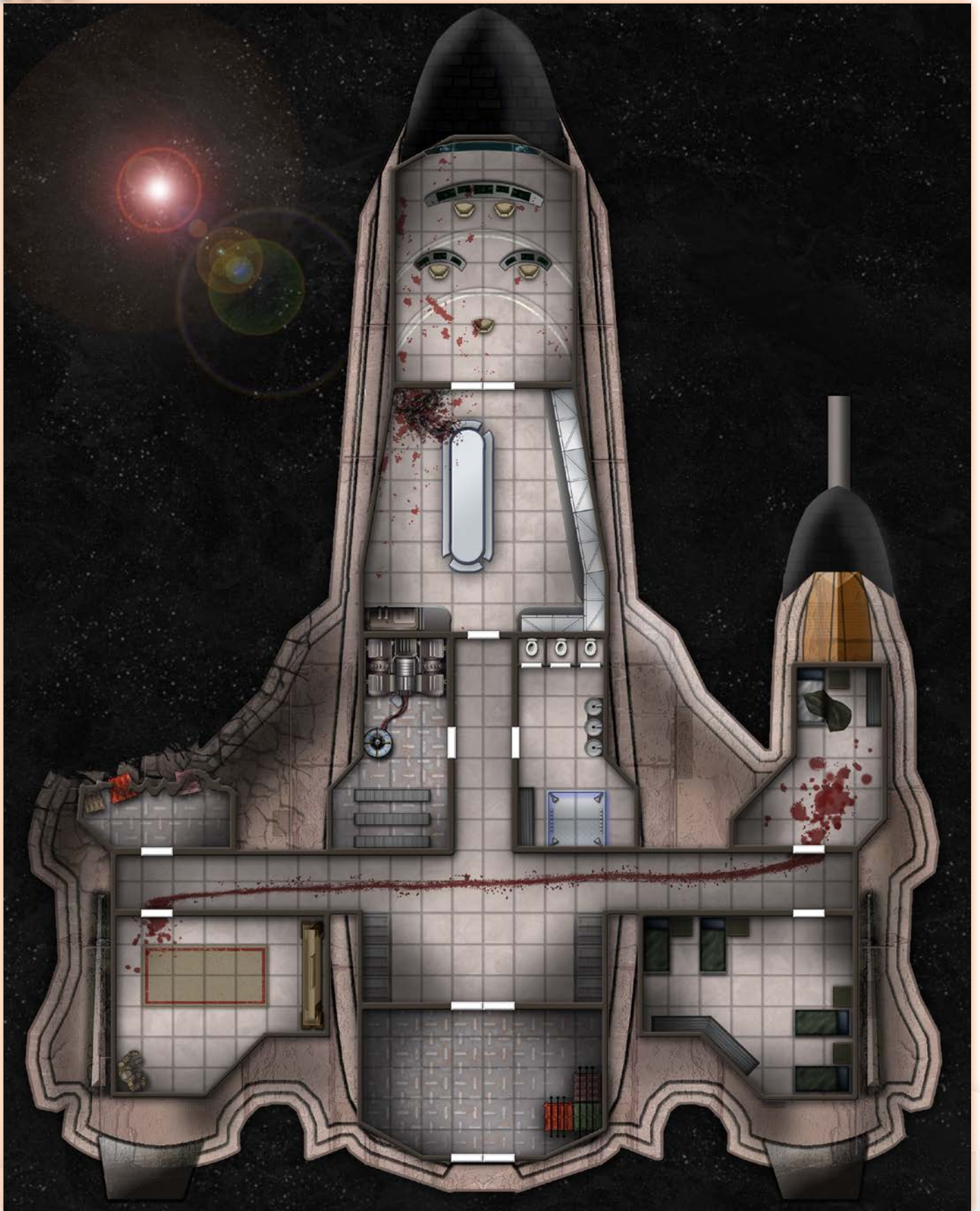
RECORD 3

At first, I thought it was a dream—a nightmare. I walked into the sparring room and there was Yotto, but... changed. She swung at me from across the room, but I felt her hand rip through me as though I were made of paper. I tried to subdue her with the sparring equipment, but my blows simply passed through her. It took all of us armed with force batons to eventually lure her into the captain's quarters, where the captain sacrificed herself to trap Yotto—or whatever she has become—within her suit's force field. Kela has rigged one of the ship's batteries to amplify the field and keep the creature contained, but we may soon be faced with fighting this thing for our lives.

FINAL RECORD

As our forebears faced the dimming of Kasath's sun, so do we know that our ship's power reserves near their end. Traska has encrypted our ship's log, and tonight we will gather in the mess to partake of our final meal. We have placed our sacred items atop our beds, as tradition requires. I hope those items, as well as something of the captain, our pilot, and even Blue Sky-101, find a safe return to the *Idari* should we not. Eloritu guide us.

– Teliu Davead Mord of Clan Ferrous, House Elwood, truth-keeper of the Ferrous Stone



Starfinder Society Scenario #1-04: Cries from the Drift

Event _____

Date _____

GM # _____

GM Character # _____

GM Name _____

GM Fame Earned _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()
 A B

Exo-Guardians
 Faction _____
 C D

Dataphiles
 Wayfinders

Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

Character Name _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
 Faction _____

Dataphiles
 Wayfinders

Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

Character Name _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
 Faction _____

Dataphiles
 Wayfinders

Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

Character Name _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
 Faction _____

Dataphiles
 Wayfinders

Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

Character Name _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
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Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

Character Name _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
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Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

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Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
 Faction _____

Dataphiles
 Wayfinders

Character # _____

Fame Faction Boons

Character Name _____

Acquisitives
 Second Seekers ()

Exo-Guardians
 Faction _____

Dataphiles
 Wayfinders

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Starfinder Society Scenario #1-04: Cries from the Drift

Character Chronicle #

A.K.A.	-	7	
Player Name	Character Name	Organized Play #	Character # Faction

This Chronicle sheet grants access to the following:

Honorbound Allies (Ally or Starship Boon): During your mission to salvage information from the *Struggle's Scholar*, you engaged in an honorable starship duel with a vesk transport, the *Honorbound*. By following the strictures of the duel, you impressed the captain of the *Honorbound*, Captain Yuluzak. This boon might have repercussions in future scenarios, which you will be told prior to slotting your boons. Future scenarios calling on this boon will specify if you must slot it as an Ally or Starship boon.

IDARAN FORCE TRAINING BATON

An Idaran force training baton is a 2nd-level uncategorized basic melee weapon that deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage. The damage from this weapon counts as a force effect when wielded by a character with at least 12 Strength. Note, this does not mean the weapon deals force damage, only that it counts as a force effect for overcoming certain defenses such as incorporeal. It has the operative and powered (capacity 20, usage 1) special properties, it is light bulk, and it costs 400 credits

SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
1-2	714
SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
Out of Subtier	1,080
SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
3-4	1,448
SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
-	-

Starting XP
+
XP Gained (GM ONLY)
=
Final XP Total

Initial Fame
+
Fame Gained (GM ONLY)
-
Fame Spent
Final Fame

Starting Credits
+
Credits Garnered (GM ONLY)
+
Day Job (GM ONLY)
-
Credits Spent
=
Total

All Subtiers	Subtier 3-4
basic medkit (100; item level 1) carbonedged shuriken (85; item level 1) cestus battleglove (100; item level 1) golemforged plating II (1,610; item level 3) Idaran force training baton (400; item level 2) least photon crystal (2,950; item level 5) mk 1 serum of healing (50; item level: 1; limit 2) purple force field armor upgrade (4,550; item level 6) red star plasma pistol (7,200; item level 7) serum of enhancement (commando) (475; item level 5; limit 2) squad machine gun (2,060; item level 4) tactical baton (90; item level 1)	advanced medkit (2,700; item level 5) battle harness (3,450; item level 5) carbon staff (6,150; item level 7) kasatha microcord II (3670; item level 6) least W-boson crystal (3,050; item level 5) merciful fusion seal (6th level) (1,144; item level 6; limit 1) mk 2 serum of healing (425; item level 5; limit 2) tactical reaction cannon (6,100; item level 7) vesk overplate I (3,910; item level 6)

Reputation			
Faction _____	Reputation _____	Faction _____	Reputation _____
Faction _____	Reputation _____	Infamy _____	

For GM Only

EVENT	EVENT CODE	DATE	Game Master's Signature	GM Organized Play #
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