

## STAR\*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

01/24/2010

### Attendance

*Bruce* (Lambert Fulson and Taveer) tells everyone, "I'm moving! Here are eight boxes full of comics! Take all of them! Take them away!"

*Chris* (Ten-zil Kem and Rokk Tressor) offers, "Gee, that's a lot of stuff. Oddly enough, I've already got a lot of random stuff. I think I'll pass. Oooh! That's a nice CD binder, I'll take that!"

*Paul* wanders in and sees the array of boxes. He exclaims, "Augh! Comics! Get them away! Get them out of my sight!"

Bruce is confused until Chris explains, "I think he's had some issues in the past. They've gotten much better ever since he joined that twelve-step program."

*Patrick* (Martin St. John and Lenny) enters. He squeals with unrestrained glee, "Comics! Free comics! They must be mine! Mine! All mine!"

Chris offers, "He might be well-advised to join the same program."

Bruce tells him, "Shut up! He's taking away lots of comics!"

*Peco* (Adun Zelnaga and Ivan Stukov) arrives to find people alternately drooling and shuddering, all scattered around a big pile of disassembled comic boxes. He sighs and takes his place, content to not worry much about what exactly happened.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Spec / Level</i>	<i>Description</i>
Lambert Fulson	Bruce	FA 5	Rigunmor Trader
Taveer	Bruce	TO 6	Lighthouse Chief Engineer
Martin St. John	Patrick	TO 6	Lighthouse Head Pilot
Lenny	Patrick	FA 5	T'sa Ambassador
Ten-zil Kem	Chris	D (TO) 7	VoidCorp Ambassador, dressed like a 1980's Space Pimp

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Spec / Level</i>	<i>Description</i>
Rokk Tressor	Chris	FA 6	Concord Intelligence Officer
Markus Oroszlan	Ernest	CS 6	Thuldan Warlion
Ken Takashi	Ernest	D (TO) 5	Star Force Captain
Ivan Stukov	Peco	D (CS) 5	Thuldan Diplomat and Retired General
Adun Zelnaga	Peco	MW 6	Fraal Mindwalker Doctor Guy
Gerard Pepin	Tim	D (MW) 5	Borealin Professor and Ambassador
Haggernak	Tim	CS 4	Administrator and Security Officer

## **The Lighthouse Arrives in Tychus**

After their eventful visit to Hammer's Star and an uninteresting stop at Chenju the *Lighthouse* jumps to Tychus to attend the celebration of the Orlamist Holiday Feast.

### **Can You Make Anything of This, Doctor?**

*Doctor Adun Zelnaga* gets a delivery: an incinerated corpse labeled as a "former space vampire". He equips himself with a UV lamp and gets to investigating. Clothing residues show that it was wearing carbonate fiber far stronger than similar fibers human and fraal technology can produce. The alien's entire body was webbed through with some kind of implanted technological device, and that device was the source of the heat that destroyed the body. There is no remaining physical evidence of the device, however: the heat destroyed it completely. He also finds a damaged data crystal among the alien's personal effects.

### **Special Delivery!**

*Rokk Tressor* receives a sealed envelope from a secret courier. He opens it as instructed, alone and away from the computer. All it contains is a time and location for a meeting. He decides to schedule a Poker Night immediately, before the scheduled time, making sure to invite all of the station's senior staff.

The conversation over cards quickly turns to alien psychic teleportation and how it works. *Captain Ken Takashi* notes that the one surviving space vampire teleported

away from the Klick ship, probably back to the *Lighthouse*. As the resident expert on psychic teleportation, Adun Zelnaga points out that a really expert (rank 12) teleporter could travel at least 1000 kilometers, but normally can only teleport to locations he can see or knows well. However, the characters already know that the alien teleportation signature does not occur when Adun Zelnaga uses normal psychic teleportation.

*Taveer* has already been working on a sensor network to localize the alien teleportation signature, but hasn't managed to make much useful progress. Working with the AI *Mira* is a lot more interesting to him.

Rokk Tressor points out that the *Avatar Files* indicated that an alien infiltration effort identified on the planet Galvin involved strange *tel'n* worm clusters implanted into affected victims between their heart and lungs. He suggests checking everyone on the ship for similar infestation. Adun Zelnaga volunteers to set up a "worm scanner". People will be scanned on the basis that the recent dhros outbreak has resulted in a number of cases of "dhros flu", and there are free flu shots available.

The plan for finding alien technology will revolve around telling people that there are some folks suspected of making "alien meth" in the residential areas, and that there is an explosion risk that might kill children. Oh goodness! Won't somebody think of the children!

## **White Spike**

Comes from the planet *Wreath* in the Algernon system, the same system afflicted by the Alitar-Galvin war. *Wreath* is a cold world with a thin sulfur dioxide atmosphere sufficient to support a diverse ecology. The most famous life form native to *Wreath* is the *white spike*, a coral-like creature often mistaken for a plant. Alitar has made it a capital offense to either gather or ship the stuff, but the Cartel relies upon desperate people willing to earn lots of money.

White spike the drug is a powerful and addictive hallucinogen. It is said that the experience is so intense and the addiction so powerful that users will pay fortunes for mere grams.

Rokk Tressor reports that there have been some recent white spike drug busts on the *Lighthouse*: some high-powered brokers on the Lighthouse Exchange were found to be users. Captain Takashi passes a request to *Haggernak* to bump white spike cases up to get some higher-level attention.

Moving back to the subject of the upcoming Orlamist Life Day, Captain Takashi notes that there is a guy named *Reisman Quayle* who has been making trouble. He wants Rokk Tressor to investigate the guy and assemble some kind of dossier.

### **Rokk's Secret Meeting**

The next day, Rokk Tressor shows up for his secret meeting. He finds that his contact is *David Cornet*, a tall, lanky man with hollowed cheeks who works for the CIB.

"It is important that we meet in person, because the systems on this station have been compromised! Your engineer has found secret infotaps all through the system."

Cornet produces a paper dossier on the *gardhyi*, the race that Captain Takashi has designated as "space vampires". He admits that while he has assembled a lot of information on them much of it is contradictory. He still does not know their true goals and their origins. They have a variety of powers, though the teleportation is a consistent theme. Power level of individual *gardhyi* varies quite a bit.

Cornet tells Rokk that he has been selected to infiltrate the *gardhyi* organization on the *Lighthouse*. He thinks that while there are probably no *gardhyi* left on the station they will have left agents behind. He wants Rokk to cultivate a public dispute with Captain Takashi. If he looks sufficiently disillusioned with the current regime, the *gardhyi* agents may contact him.

### **The Damaged Data Crystal**

Adun Zelnaga hands the damaged data crystal over to Taveer, even though the Captain doesn't totally trust him. Taveer doesn't have any trouble bypassing the damaged interface circuits and directly accessing the holographic storage matrix. The contents are encoded in a strange language. He investigates and finds it to be an unfamiliar offshoot of the *fraal* language; it includes details of a deal between the *fraal wanderers* and the clicks to eliminate the so-called "scourge of the universe." There is

even a holovid of fraal wanderer cityships transporting klick vessels into the Hammer's Star system.

When the fraal originally contacted humanity they were divided into two factions, the Builders and the Wanderers. The Builders wanted contact and wanted to deal with humanity. It was through their efforts that the two races were able to construct the first stardrives. The Wanderers wanted no part of humanity: they took the stardrive, built some cityships, and headed into the void. It is very rare for human ships to even see signs of Wanderer passage.

### **The Teleporter Detector**

After two weeks of work, Taveer is able to refine his alien teleportation detector to a precision sufficient to identify a specific deck.

### **The Teln-Worm Detector**

Doctor Zelnaga devotes himself to developing a detector to locate signs of teln-worm contamination. It takes him a couple of days before he is able to set up a mediscanner to show the worms.

### **I'm Thinking of the Children**

*Lenny* spends his time investigating the mysterious fate of the t'sa driveship *Twelve Clutch*. The hull and the experimental stardrive were actually constructed by StarMech, but the t'sa scientific foundation had different priorities: they wanted to explore whether or not there is native life in drivespace.

### **The Orlamist Colony**

Captain Takashi takes advantage of his access to the local Chenju Grid to launch a standard search packet on the gardhyi, space vampires, infiltrations, and so on.

The local Orlamist colony is Yellowsky, a place with a low-lying chlorine atmosphere that leaves the human colonists to live in the highlands. Beyond the toxic atmosphere, the lowlands are also home to both carnivorous plants and a variety of dangerous animals. The place is also home to an Orlamist splinter sect that ascribe to the *Dire Unconscious* heresy, a belief that holds there is an opposite twin to drivespace

in which the evil element resides. This is a heresy that the First Prophet would love to eliminate.

The world of Yellowsky also has some ancient Stoneburner ruins down in the lowlands, which has made it a pilgrimage site for Ancientist believers. The Stoneburners are an alien race that lived long before humanity even evolved from the swamps; most Stoneburner ruins date to be at least 300 million years old. In spite of this, Stoneburner site defenses are often still functional. One such artifact proved to have healing properties to all who came near it. It continued to function for three weeks before it turned inert and no longer functioned.

Yellowsky was quite isolated during the interregnum, not only from the rest of civilization but also internally: local technology fell down to PL3, leaving some sky-island settlements completely isolated until spacefarers returned. There is a significant weren minority onworld, whose ancestors traveled with the original settlers. The entire population of Yellowsky is 25,000.

The Holiday Feast celebrations will include a big parade that includes the *Lighthouse* senior staff and Marine contingent.

When the *Lighthouse* makes starfall in the system, Captain Takashi points out that there has probably not been a significant thorough geographical and geological survey of Yellowsky in centuries. He orders the crew to rectify this; Taveer volunteers that he can set up Mina to perform a complete imaging scan of the planet surface. Captain Takashi intends to present the scan results to the local Prelate. He hopes that the scan will reveal some new Stoneburner ruins.

## **Mount Illumination**

The characters land their shuttle outside of the main city of Mount Illumination. Prior to departure, Doctor Zelnaga reminds everyone to take their anti-radiation meds and to be careful of *blackfever*. The town of Mount Illumination is quite compact, with a substantial number of buildings constructed out of iron sheets, a construction technique needed both to shield the residents from chlorine-bearing storms and to protect against the high background radiation level.

Blackfever is a particularly pernicious disease. It is a viral disease that attacks red blood cells, quickly giving the victim haemophilia and often leading to death. High-strength coagulants can arrest progress of the disease.

The Prelate herself, a weren named *Tretal*, comes out to welcome the characters as they disembark from their shuttle. Captain Ken Takashi greets her warmly, making an immediate good impression. She admits that there is not much Concord presence on Yellowsky, only one Administrator, but she and her fellow citizens are happy to welcome them. She also welcomes *Chief Administrator Thane*, who responds with a speech about Concord unity and the bond that all the nations of the Verge share.

The local Concord Administrator is *Marguerite Muanga*, who has arranged accommodations for the characters in a hostel looking down over the magnificent (and lethal) Gorge of St. Laspius. Administrator Muanga seems fairly reserved: her typical duties are mostly bureaucratic. She also admits that Concord Inspector *Klaus Otterschmidt* is looking forward to meeting the characters. When Captain Takashi admits some amazement that the Concord has assigned an Inspector to review the work of one Concord employee on an isolated world inhabited by only 25,000 people, she explains that he arrived recently on a trader and is mostly here to accompany the *Lighthouse*.

## **Exploring the Stoneburner Ruins**

The second-string characters decide that they'd like to investigate some Stoneburner ruins. There are several problems, all related to the environment. The heat ranges up to 70C, with up to 8 atmospheres of pressure. Soft E-Suits are sufficient to partially protect, but Hard E-Suits are necessary to completely resist the heat (up to H4) and pressure (P4).

*Lambert Fulson, Ten-zil Kem, Markus Oroszlan, Ivan Stukov* and *Lenny* equip themselves and head down to Mount Illumination, where they meet their Tourism Bureau-assigned guide. Each of them is clad in a Soft E-Suit and carries a Trail-tec Rescue Pack. Markus Oroszlan manages to convince her to refer them to *Sulku Tours*, a

small company that specializes in trips to unusual ruins. The Bureau guide admits, “It will be quite expensive...” The characters indicate that this will not be a problem.

Sulku Tours’ office is dusty and ill-kept. It doesn’t look like many people come here. An older, short man with droopy blue eyes looks at the characters with suspicion. He is *Philomon Sulku*, the proprietor of the establishment. He explains that the trip will be dangerous, and on foot: wheeled vehicles are generally quickly incapacitated by the native speargrass. Lambert Fulson hears this and arranges to requisition a small antigrav sled from the *Lighthouse*, very quietly. Philomon agrees to guide them for a price of \$30,000 for a week-long trip.

Philomon is a continual font of helpful information about local dangers. The *siren* is a bulky animal that mimics the appearance of a tree that uses psionic powers to draw victims closer, into tentacle range.

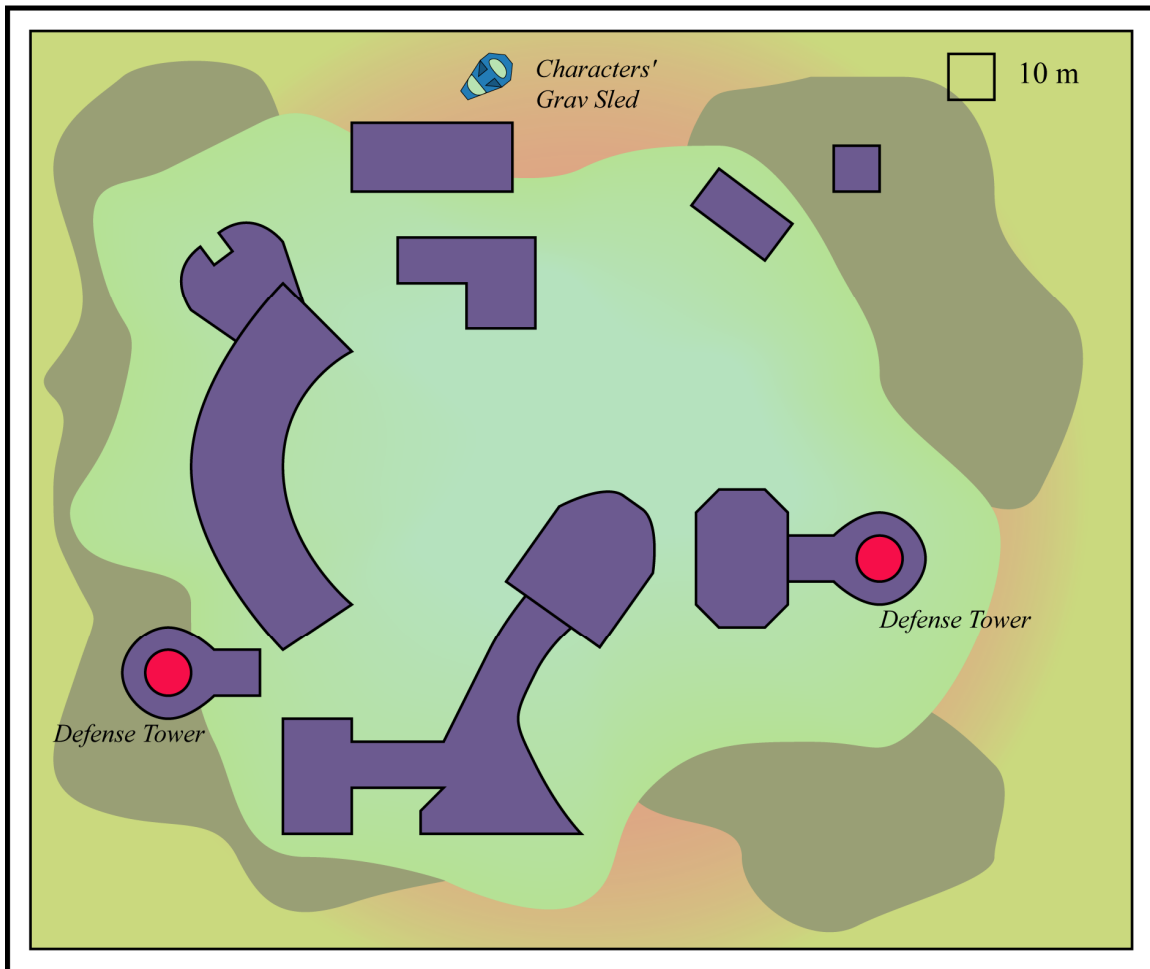
Ivan Stukov drives the grav sled under Philomon’s directions. He explains that he’s managed to procure the location of an otherwise unknown site from some terrified survivors: that’s where he’s leading the characters now.

### **The Stoneburner Site**

As the characters drive near to the site they see a cluster of low buildings constructed of black rocks. The characters dismount from the grav sled fairly quickly and attempt to sneak in without attracting the attention of the two thirty-meter defense towers. Lenny and Lambert Fulson are able to slip into a nearby building, but Markus Oroszlan takes an energy blast from the still-active plasma guns atop them.



## The Stoneburner Ruins



The characters investigate the inside of the building. It is some fifteen meters tall, but the interior is divided into a maze of eighty small cells. Doctor Adun Zelnaga is the only one to find anything particularly interesting, some kind of pottery.

When the characters decide to move to the next building, Markus Oroszlan decides to launch a mirrored balloon as a decoy. One turret evaporates the balloon as the other drills through Markus again. Adun Zelnaga bypasses the problem by simply teleporting across. "Aren't you a doctor? Fix me or something!" grumbles Markus.

The second building contains a large number of consoles and monitors. The exact function of any of them is not clear. Lambert Fulson looks around for portable gewgaws. He actually finds an alien snake creature with horrible tripartite mouthparts and flexible pseudolegs that it uses to scuttle away. Fulson is quite glad when the

creature fails to pierce his e-suit. Then Markus Oroszlan and Lenny blast it to oblivion with sabot pistols.

Markus observes, "That thing took two sabot shots to kill. God damn it was tough!"

The characters continue further into the second building. They find a mysterious device emitting a pulsing energy aura. Controls and input devices are set into the walls around the edge. Fulson comments, "Gee, you want to find out what a lethal dose of quantum phase radiation feels like? I bet I can see a way."

Adun Zelnaga simply picks up the dead snake and tosses it into the field. There is a tremendous discharge and a flash. Afterwards the snake is completely gone, with no sign that it had ever even been there.

Markus Oroszlan comments, "Well, either it's dead or it's been transported to an alien world. And I don't like either one."

Adun Zelnaga offers, "I think I should step into it. That's how science is done!"

Markus Oroszlan stops him, then pulls the comlink from his web belt and flings it into the portal. The communicator vanishes, but Lenny is unable to find it – wherever it went, it is far out of range.

### **Dimensional Attack!**

The characters turn to leave the room and are ambushed by a two-meter *dimensional horror*. The creature falls upon Markus Oroszlan with claws and teeth. He does his best to keep his riot shield between himself and the beast as Adun Zelnaga launches a pyrokinetic attack. The creature shrugs it off.

Adun Zelnaga observes, "This thing has really excellent armor against energy weapons."

Lenny comments, "This thing is going to kill us all, isn't it?"

Adun Zelnaga answers, "Well, all of us except those it captures and impregnates. Those folks will envy the dead." With that, he uses the power of his brain to mildly injure the creature. It turns on him, but doesn't kill him immediately.

Markus Oroszlan pulls out his gravmace and clubs the creature on the head. The strike bounces off its rubbery hide.

Lambert Fulson yells out, "I have a gun!" He brandishes his puny 9mm charge pistol. He takes aim at the creature and manages only to annoy it.

Ivan Stukov notes that melee weapons have been doing so much better than all the guns, so he tears into the creature with his two war axes. His hits do a creditable job of stunning it.

The dimensional horror decides that it would very much like to drag Stukov's struggling carcass off to its home dimension. It tears into him with two claws and two chomping mouths. Stukov drops unconscious. Then it throws itself against Adun Zelnaga's psychic shield, inflicting only minor harm.

Lenny takes careful aim and shoots it again, finally knocking the creature out. He is dismayed, "My amazing hit did only three stun!"

Now that the creature is no longer moving, the characters are able to get a clean look at it. They wish that they hadn't: it truly is an awful horror. Markus Oroszlan announces, "Step back!" He draws everyone back from it and then unloads on it with his plasma gun until it is well and truly cooked. It takes a long time.

Lambert Fulson volunteers, "I'd like to leave now."

Markus Oroszlan ignores him and leads the group into the third major region of the building. This is another chamber with monitors and displays. The characters search and find a device that looks like something awful that was extruded from the back end of a spider. It even has a few surviving markings and a small display.

Lenny tries pressing some buttons. He decides that it is an optical storage device, as he is able to pull up something that looks like an ancient starmap.

Further searching turns up a device with a sort of curving handle and a implement on the end. Markus labels it "back scratcher." Lambert Fulson finds a sort of plaque that still has a barely visible carving of a cephalopod on it. He labels it "World's Best Great Old One Award."

### **Shut Them Down!**

Markus decides that the defense turrets have to go. He sends Adun Zelnaga to teleport over to a nearby building. Zelnaga reports that there are active consoles in the room and jabs at them until they shut down. The characters subsequently test out the turrets and find that they are now inactive. Everyone cheers!

### **Building Three**

The characters continue on to the first of two small buildings in the northeast corner of the compound. They find a sort of circular arena inside, with energy-weapon pockmarks all across the walls.

Markus Oroszlan searches the place and comes up with an object he labels a "spoon". Lenny finds something that looks like a section of nautilus shell 30 centimeters across.

### **The Scribed Building**

The next building, right at the edge of the compound, includes a wall covered in scribed marks. The characters take a careful video record of the place, then Markus tries pressing on some of the marks. He finds that the marks give slightly, as if they were buttons. Understanding that the characters' last bit of experimentation drew the dimensional horror, they refrain from touching too many.

The characters find only one artifact, a stone ring 3 cm in diameter.

### **The Curved Shaft**

The characters continue on to the central curved building. It looks like it might have been a Stoneburner dormitory, or assembly hall, or classroom, or garden. At this point, everyone realizes that Ivan Stukov is still bleeding. Markus Oroszlan takes him back to the grav sled.

Searching turns up only a petrified plant. Maybe.

Further into the building, after a thirty-degree incline, sits a flat monument of black stone. A glowing red circle 1.5 meters wide sits upon it. Markus tries tossing the stone ring onto the top of the obelisk, to no visible effect.

Markus Oroszlan reaches out to pick up the ring. As he touches it a strange feeling courses through his arms up to his head. The feeling goes away when he lets go. He reaches out again and determines that he can pick it up, but the feeling persists.

While the others look around, Markus tries to talk to the ring with his mind. Everyone sees his expression go blank for a while, then go back to normal. Adun Zelnaga comments, "I don't think we should let the warlion hold onto that thing any more. He's starting to freak me out."

At this point, Markus thinks, "Hello!" at Ivan Stukoff. He gets a response of "Who is this? Who dares mess with the mind of a Thuldani!" The two of them silently decide that they've just made payroll. They keep silent about this to the others.

Their last discovery is a dimensional cage with another trapped dimensional horror. A broken cage is next to it.

Markus experiments with the mind-ring. He determines he can get orbital range, and intersystem range within the Verge, but not back to Old Space. He finally tells the others, reasoning that it might not last forever. For the record, it is a *star transceiver*. And Markus is afflicted by severe depression for two days as a side effect of using it too much. Everyone else can easily see the personality change. Not that he's all that bubbly to begin with.

## **The End of the Session**

Everyone returns to the *Lighthouse*. Pick a character, they get 4 xp. Your other character gets 2 xp.