

## STAR\*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

### 09/18/2011

#### *Attendance*

*Bruce* is once again a distant, ghostly figure trapped off in that mysterious land called “Richardson”, far beyond the ken of ordinary men. He wonders what is going on in the real world of Round Rock, not least because it doesn’t look like anybody is online on Skype at the moment.

*Chris* links in, commenting, “You know, his problem was that he didn’t have any clown makeup. So he had to burn his face to look like a clown.” He refuses to explain himself any further, forcing *Paul* to explain in his stead – they are talking about *Last Circus*, a movie that *Tim* has recommended as an excellent family film, quite suitable for children.

*Patrick* keeps his tongue on what might be suitable for children. After all, it’s not like he owns any.

*Ernest* thinks that things are getting off to the wrong foot by half. For example, he currently looks like the most socially functional member of the group. He resolves to redouble his efforts to be dysfunctional. But in the meantime, he points out that he watched the movie *Drive* twice recently. Actually, it was two separate movies with the same title. The first appeared to be an effort to “Americanize” *Ronin*, which in practical terms means “make stupider”. The second movie featured Mark Dacascos and was truly excellent, including several good villain names including *Hedgehog* and *Fire Escape*.

*Chris* suggests that just once, he’d like to see a superhero movie where the villain had a guy on staff with a Six Sigma Black Belt. *Bruce* notes that this would create quite a dilemma for the hero: kill the Project Manager, and the villain’s project might progress two or three times faster...

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
Bruce	Lambert Fulson	Rigunmor Guido Free Agent	Present
Bruce	Taveer	Mechalus Concord Engineer Tech Op	Possessed
Bruce	Banoor	Mechalus Verge Alliance Bioscientist	Present

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
Patrick	Martin St. John	Concord Naval Officer Tech Op	Present
Patrick	Lenny	T'sa Ambassador Free Agent	Present
Chris	Ten-zil Kem	VoidCorp Ambassador Diplomat (TO)	Present
Chris	Drest Talorgin	Pict Warchief Combat Spec	Present
Ernest	Markus Oroszlan	Warlion Bartender Combat Spec	Present
Ernest	Ken Takashi	Concord Naval Officer Diplomat (TO)	Present
Tim	Gerard Peppin	Borealin Ambassador Mind Walker	Present
Tim	Haggernak	Weren Concord Administrator Combat Spec	Present

### *From Last Session*

The Verge Alliance fleet is assembling in deep space, one jump away from Mantebtron, in preparation for the assault. The *Red Queen*, staffed by the B-team characters, will travel ahead to the Mantebtron system to verify that the I-kr1 fleet remains there. The lead of the assault, as before, will be the *Lighthouse* backed by a medurr RiftShip that will bring in additional ships from Bluefall as the assault begins.

Before the assault, however, is an effort to cure Taveer and the Communications team of I-kr1 possession. The afflicted personnel, escorted by *Admiral Ken Takashi*, *Captain Martin St. John*, and several other characters take the *Justifiable Curiosity* back to Bluefall through the RiftShip to consult with the lone evrem inhabiting the world.

### *Consulting with Raphael*

The Bluefall evrem refers to itself as *Raphael*. Admiral Ken Takashi, Captain Martin St. John, *Haggernak* and *Drest Talorgin* board the *Justifiable Curiosity* and take it through the medurr rift gate into the Aegis system. As they arrive insystem they are deluged with accumulated communications from the last few weeks.

Digging through his message queue Admiral Takashi find that the Admiralty, specifically *Michael Thane*, has some suggestions on the current I-kr1 possession problem. In particular, he has sent along information on an I-kr1 expert he has available – a medical expert with talents in xenobiology, medicine and so on. Admiral Takashi

accepts the offer and welcomes *Banoor* to his staff, at least for the duration of the assignment. By convenient coincidence, Banoor is on Bluefall (“I prefer to think of it as serendipitous, sir.”). Admiral Takashi thinks some thoughts about mincing and Councilor Thane that don’t bear vocalizing.

Captain Martin St. John suggests, “Perhaps we need to arrange a science adventure to test out the new guy?”

Admiral Takashi looks over at the zip-tied Taveer and comments, “I think we already have one. Perhaps we should free Taveer, toss them both in a conference room, and see which one emerges in command of his faculties.”

Drest Talorgin comments, “Yes, that sounds like a terrible idea.”

Admiral Takashi tries to contain his contempt for his subordinates. Unfortunately, he has recently started to verbalize all of his thoughts in soliloquy form.

### **Regency Island Touchdown**

By convenient coincidence both Raphael and Banoor are on Regency Island. Raphael is at home in his mansion in the Regency uplands (he arrived on Bluefall with quite a bit of alien technology he could trade). Banoor is at Regency Hall, the island’s largest man-made structure and the center of both the Verge Alliance Admiralty and Verge Alliance government. It remains the center of the Bluefall Regency government and is *Regent Christopher Hale’s* official residence.

Banoor has been staying at Regency Hall as an advisor to Admiral Thane. He introduces himself, and asks if the characters know of him from the news reports. He explains that he was serving as Science Officer on board a survey ship that was captured by I-krl forces. He spent almost half a year as a prisoner of the clicks and the kadarens and counts himself lucky to have survived the experience (unlike so many of his shipmates).

While Banoor talks about his experience with the I-krl and possessed thaal, Admiral Takashi makes a quiet call to Admiral Thane, “So, this guy is a former I-krl POW. Have you strapped him down and gone through his brain with psychics? I mean, we’ve had problems with this sort of thing before...” Admiral Thane assures him that he has.

Admiral Takashi asks Haggernak, “Could you stay about two paces behind our new mechalus companion? I don’t like sounding like a racist, but apparently all mechalus are suicidally insane. Perhaps it has something to do with the cybernetics.” Ever the pragmatist, Haggernak doesn’t have a single moral scruple about following this instruction.

### **Can We Save the Bridge Bunnies?**

His exposure to Taveer and the possessed Communications Team is the first time Banoor has been able to study a living I-krl possession victim. He starts with one of the bridge crew, and finds no physiological changes. He does have some problems with the medical scanners: they seem to be suffering some distortion effects. He investigates the scanner and determines that the crewman’s body is giving off a wave distortion that affects the sensors. He puts the crewman into a Faraday cage and verifies that this does block the radiation signature.

Banoor sets to measuring the wave signatures of the Communications officers and comparing them. Taveer is emitting the same kind of signal.

### **The Interview**

The characters set up to interview one of the Communications staff. The subject is physically restrained, held in a shielded chamber, and equipped with a psi-restraint. Admiral Takashi recommends *Ensign Lawrence Gifford* on the basis that he is the crewman the characters have the least emotional attachment to. Prior to joining the Communications Team he was a structural metal fitter. The other characters have a few reservations about choosing Ensign Gifford because he’s built like a tank and used to wrestle weren in his spare time.

Ensign Gifford is not very cooperative. He mostly provides vague but ominous threats about the power of the I-krl. He indicates that the characters will soon beg to submit themselves to the I-krl. There is, after all, no god but the I-krl. Haggernak tries to enter into a theological debate with him, suggesting that the Orlamist DriveSpace entities are much better.

The others see Banoor reaching towards the psi-restraint helmet. The Marines immediately tranquilize both Banoor and Ensign Gifford.

After he comes out of the tranquilizer, Banoor reviews the sensor logs. The sensors definitely show an increase in both psi-emissions and random electromagnetic effects. The electromagnetic emanations seem less like an effect than a side-effect of warping space.

Admiral Takashi takes the command staff aside. He warns, “If there is any chance of these guys falling into the hands of the I-krl they need to die. I’m giving orders to the Marines to that effect, just in case we have space vampires teleporting in or something.”

On Drest Talorgin’s suggestion, he also gives orders to have some local space assets keep an eye on the I-krl ambassadorial ship with torpedoes hot. Everyone assumes that the upshot will be an unfortunate diplomatic “incident” at some point in the future.

### *To the Evrem*

The characters load the afflicted personnel into shielded trucks and drive them up the mountain to Raphael’s compound. His residence is easy to spot, as it looks like it is built out of glowing multicolored crystals.

The door is opened by blix! The characters are slightly alarmed. There appear to be several of them around. The central chamber is wide and airy, with reflected light in several colors coming through the crystals. The evrem Raphael is standing with insect wings outstretched in the chamber, its wings glistening in the light.

The evrem contacts the characters through telepathy. Banoor leads off, “We come in peace, bearing unfortunate victims of the I-krl. We seek your advice.”

“The I-krl are a vicious and violent race. Many have become their victims.”

Admiral Takashi explains, “These are more than ordinary victims. These people were exposed to the I-krl god-code coming from the ship *Twelve Clutch*.”

“Since their confinement, the I-krl have become a nonphysical species. They no longer know how to operate a human body – which means your friends are likely still present in their bodies. The I-krl are all part of a psychic commune, so whatever you have done to interrogate one of the afflicted is now known to all other I-krl. This includes the I-krl ambassador and the I-krl leaders.”

The characters debate using the I-krl-possessed personnel to attack the I-krl hive mind. The problem is that the I-krl have no direct reference to human experience, and

anything that would impact the I-krl mind is incomprehensible to mortal creatures. And the I-krl collective entity is far stronger than any individual human (or thaal) psychic.

Admiral Takashi notes that *Ython Kadar*, Leader of the Exeat (and the I-krl ambassador) was a powerful psychic in his own right. He certainly worshipped the I-krl before one possessed him, but it is not now possible to know if he even resisted the possession. Admiral Takashi points out that if the characters were able to free the crewmen from I-krl possession that might provide a way to “free” the possessed leaders of the Exeat.

Raphael notes that there was once a race of mollusks that fought the I-krl. The characters know them as the Stoneburners. They had a device that was able to ban passage from extradimensional entities. If this device could be reactivated it could force an I-krl to withdraw. Unfortunately, it is probably currently located in one of their dimensional-shambler-haunted ruins on Yellow Sky. In particular, a ruin located in the corrosive lower atmosphere of Yellow Sky. As an additional complication, the workings of the device are currently confined into an extradimensional space. Raphael does not believe that the medurr DriveSpace denial weapon would affect it, but the blix might be able to repair it.

The I-krl are one of the ancient species, a child race of the Precursors. They were once a physical species of powerful psionics, but they have been trapped for aeons in their Glassmaker-designed prison. They have long turned into a collective entity trapped in a dimensional space that mortal entities cannot recognize. They do not precisely exist in DriveSpace, but they can use DriveSpace as an interface to reach our universe. They were confined because as a mortal species they desired dominion over everything. Their penalty was to be collectivized and banished.

Admiral Takashi asks, “Is there anything we can do to protect ourselves from their influence? Aside from massive gunfire?”

Raphael replies, “Over the last tens of centuries they have become more powerful and more conscious. They are breaking through. The event fifty years ago was their first return to our reality. These events will become more and more frequent as they gain additional access.”

“How can we stop this? Even if we stop the Externals War that won’t prevent the I-krl from continue to infiltrate.”

“That is true. That is why the evrem are trying to provide your species with guidance. If it takes the I-krl 10,000 years to break through, who knows what your species might become by then.”

“What do you know about the deepfallen? They zap people to an alternate dimension when they are mad. Is that the I-krl dimension?”

“We believe it was the massive wave of psychic energy released by the deepfallen Vanishing that allowed the I-krl to touch the minds of their worshippers. We do not know where those affected by the Vanishing go. Many of the evrem have themselves gone on to other dimensions.”

“What is your opinion on the value of negotiating with the I-krl? We tend to think that this just gives them an opportunity to ram their psychic ovipositors down our throats.”

“I have no reason to believe that the I-krl will ever stop trying to unleash another psychic wave through the Verge. But if you could achieve peace with their mortal allies you could interfere with their plans.”

Raphael goes on to warn the characters, “I-krl possession might result in physical changes to their victims. If you have seen no such signs to date, that may mean that the I-krl hold on them is not strong enough. The fact that they were not previously worshippers of the I-krl could leave the connection weaker. But taking them into DriveSpace could strengthen the connection. And then just tranquilizing them may not be enough.” Unfortunately, the Stoneburner device is unlikely to be portable so leaving the victims behind is not much of an option.

Admiral Takashi bids farewell to Raphael with the customary expression: “Peace, Love and Crabs!” (Apparently *Joe’s Crab Shack* developed into a ten-planet interstellar nation that was absorbed into the Rignmor Consortium in GW2).

### *Change of Plans*

The characters discuss their options. They decide to recall the *Red Queen* so it can go to Tychus by way of the Aegis system, along with the possessed crew and enough characters to make the trip successful. The *Justifiable Curiosity* will perform the initial

recon of the Mantebron system. The characters on board the *Red Queen* will include *Markus Oroszlan*, *Lenny*, *Banoor*, *Gerard Peppin* (the “ranking diplomat” even if he doesn’t believe it) and *Drest Talorgin*. They are reinforced by a group of blix and the elite Marine squad: *LCpl Wisbowski* (Ernest), *Pfc Motorhead* (Patrick), *Pfc Lutefisk* (Bruce), *Cpl Klinger* (Tim), and *Sgt Animal Mother* (Chris). The other characters will serve as the Fleet Battle Team (including *Lambert Fulson*, who is clearly invaluable in a fleet action).

### *The Way to Tychus System*

Admiral Takashi gives the new-reformed crew of the *Red Queen* an inspiring speech about their new mission, the trustworthiness of the new mechalus (“Nothing like Taveer, from what I’ve been told, in spite of his looks.”) and various safety advisories about the tranquilized people in the shielded sarcophagi. He emphasizes that it is of the utmost importance that they not fall into I-krl hands: if that is a risk they must be terminated. The only way to possibly cure them is a Glassmaker mollusk artifact out on Yellow Sky. He ends by wishing them all good luck.

The speech loses something by the fact that it is delivered by psychic link and comes out of Gerard Peppin’s mouth. Peppin’s crewmates are more than a little bit confused, but they accept their new orders. They also notice that there are shaped-charge explosives strapped to the heads of the sarcophagi. It’s the little things that really emphasize the priorities.

### **Yellow Sky Tourist Guide**

Yellow Sky is ruled by the Orlamists, though the majority of the local priests subscribe to the heresy of the Dire Unconscious, the Orlamist vision of hell. The ground-level atmosphere is poisonous and corrosive so the human colony occupies the tops of various high mesas. The characters generally agree that Yellow Sky itself represents a pretty effective evocation of hell, Orlamist or not.

### **New Guy on the Red Queen**

Markus Oroszlan welcomes Banoor to the *Red Queen* by telling him about all the “pacifist” Nariac cultists on board as crew. He notes that they’re all women, all just a bit



crazy, and all equipped with Anime-style built-in weaponry. He suggests that if Banoor wants any new hardware, they'd be happy to help out.

Banoor explains that he is actually qualified to install cybernetics himself, just in case Markus wants any work done. Markus demurs, then asks, "Hey, have you ever been in the Nature Scouts?"

Banoor cheerfully answers, "Yes of course! Why?"

Markus grumbles, "Well, the last mechalus we had was sort of in the closet about it. You don't have anything against nature, do you?"

Banoor replies, "Of course not! Living beings are the most interesting technology there is!"

Markus reflects that it has been a while since he heard a more chilling sentence. He finishes the tour quickly and leaves Banoor sitting in one of the crew lounges.

### *Bandits on the Road!*

It is on the *Red Queen's* second jump that something unusual happens. *Alice* appears and tells the characters, "Riders approaching!" She brings up a viewscreen showing a pleasant country lane. In the distance, dark riders on big black horses are galloping closer.

Banoor is confused, "We're on a spaceship, right? Is that actually happening out there?"

Ten-zil Kem answers, "Just go with it, man. You know how the toilet is like an inverted mushroom and to get water in the bathroom you squeeze the swan?"

Lenny comments, "The AI is just a little nuts."

Markus Oroszlan addresses Alice, "Bandits! Can you go invisible until we recharge? Or outrun them?"

Alice admits, "Recharge will take another couple of days. And I don't think we can outrun them."

At this point, the prisoners start to wake up. Banoor is down there working with the medical systems, amplifying the sedative levels to borderline hazardous levels to keep them down. He notes that there are five Marines behind him with stutter rifles, ready to help out.

Alice attempts to enter stealth, but the “bandits” see through her attempt and hit the *Red Queen* with a volley of missiles. The ship shudders violently, and then someone hits the ship with the world’s biggest hammer. Something slams a two-meter hole through the main crew lounge. An external hatch is driven through the hull and into the chamber by the blast. It strikes Drest Talorgin, leaving him pinned and down (12 wounds). The characters (excepting Banoor) can hear air whistling out through a hull breach.

Markus Oroszlan feels the adrenaline running through his veins. He grabs the hatch and flings it away from the wall. Lenny pulls Drest out of the way and drags him to sickbay. The characters get out of the lounge just ahead of the closing pressure doors. Peppin helps out with some psychic healing and Banoor slaps him full of stimulants and insta-heal to get him back in the action.

Markus taps into Alice’s information feed and speculates that “dark riders” translates to “klik raiders”, most likely more of them than the *Red Queen* is able to face on her own. She sends her *Knights* (fighter ships) out to face them.

### **Prepare to Repel!**

Next, Alice reports that there are teleporting demons on board. The characters prepare to repel boarders. Markus Oroszlan slaps grenades into his Zeke-5 as he explains the situation to the Marines in terms they can understand (they don’t really speak “crazy AI”).

The characters set up lines of defense around the medical bay. Markus hands the detonator to Lenny. Then, in a flash of black light and smoke the attackers teleport directly into the sickbay. They include two barim, a squad of four sifarv with twin swords, and *krl’Xenoth Nurhan* in command. Ten-zil Kem notes, “It’s been a while since we’ve seen him! Hey, krl’Xenoth! How’s the space vampire business treating you?”

Krl’Xenoth Nurhan ignores him. He gazes at Pfc Lutefisk and influences him with odd psychic powers. Lutefisk decides that he is absolutely going to fill Peppin full of holes – he’s always hated that guy.

Lenny shoots twice at Nurhan. His first shot has little effect, absorbed by Nurhan’s armor. His second inflicts a small amount of damage.

Peppin, sensing that he will soon be target of a lot of gunfire, launches a psychic strike at Nurhan, who evades it. The fact that he is under psychic attack persuades Nurhan that a Mind Shield would be a wise addition to his defensive array. Then Peppin uses his psychic powers to simply step through a wall, away from his murderous companions.

Krl'xenoth Nurhan continues his psychic onslaught, turning to Lenny and striking him with a mind-lash that draws out a fatigue level.

Three sifarv mob Lenny and cut him to ribbons. He suffers no mortal damage, but falls to blood loss and shock. Just as he loses consciousness, Lenny tosses the detonator to Markus and takes one last shot. One sifarv slashes at Drest twice, hitting solidly. Drest's armor allows him to shrug off the damage.

Lutefisk howls and storms out of the chamber, hunting for Peppin. Pfc Motorhead spins up his charge machine gun and sprays down the barim. Corporal Klinger aims at krl'Xenoth Nurhan, hits directly, and groans as he sees Nurhan's force field deflect the bullets away. Sergeant Animal Mother manages to wound a sifarv twice with his machine gun. Then Wisbowski forgets himself and accidentally shoots Markus in the back.

Markus ignores the gunfire and focuses only upon a barim. He spins up his chainsword and saws a barim into three unequal pieces. Grmgrmgrm! Bzzzzzz! Blood sprays from the barim like water from a shattered fountain.

Drest Talorgin slashes wildly with his vibroblade, catching a sifarv straight through the torso. He chops the creature almost in half, then hits it again on the backswing to mangle the corpse. Everyone cheers (except for the other sifarv).

Then the sifarv come at Drest with blades a-whirling. They barely manage to hurt him, in spite of multiple hits. Drest responds with a couple of respectable hits, enough to take one down.

Markus storms straight at krl'Xenoth Nurhan, slashing away. He delivers three strong strikes that cut him to shreds. With his last breath, he curses Markus, "My god will tear your soul!" Then his Starweb ignites and burns his body to ash with a star-bright flame. Markus spends more time mourning the destroyed floor tiles than the dead space vampire.

Banoor notes that Lenny needs medical assistance, but is too far to reach in an action. He heads towards the t'sa, gunning down a barim with his laser SMG along the way. The barim falls with a stunned expression on his monkey face.

With two sifarv still standing, Drest hits one of them hard enough to leave the bird-man grimacing but not down. The two sifarv take stock of the situation and surrender.

### **Searching the Bodies**

The sifarv were carrying a wide variety of their crystal blades, notable because they inflict good damage. They look like salvaged Glassmaker weapons, doubtless salvaged from Mantebtron. They inflict damage as a filament blade, but with damage type LI/G. Banoor takes one. Each of the Marines takes one as well (and they are strong enough to get a +1 STR damage bonus).

A search of the ash left behind by space vampire krl'Xenoth Nurhan turns up a strange wriggling thing. Banoor puts it into a medical isolation pod. Everyone assumes that it is likely to be dangerous.

### ***The Interrogations***

The two captive sifarv explain that Nurhan brought them along because he told them that the I-krl saints were on the ship. He did not explain how he knew this: he just said that he sensed it. He brought four warships with him, sifarv *Soldat*-class fleet destroyers with several hundred crew and soldiers on board.

Normally a flight of four fleet destroyers would be commanded by an I-krl officer about three grades lower than krl'Xenoth. They were based out of Hathorne, attached to the Cathedral Ship *Ascension*. The captives go on to describe how Hathorne has a shipyard, a gas giant with a substantial population of n'sss, an entire moon converted into a sensor and communications array, allowing them to observe events throughout the Verge and communicate back to their home space, and a jungle world for the barim to occupy. The barim jungle world also houses the I-krl slave population and provides food for the system.

Hathorne is also home to a Kurl Osar monastery. The Kurl Osar are an elite organization completely composed of Mindwalkers.

Finally, there is a VoidCorp installation at Hathorne. The characters already knew that there was a VoidCorp communications node at Hathorne, now they have some confirmation.

### *Arrival at Yellow Sky*

The *Red Queen* arrives in system and approaches Yellow Sky under the claim that they're just looking for more Stoneburner artifacts.

Everyone gets tracking devices so if the dimensional shamblers do their kidnap-and-consume trick the others will be able to find the corpse. The blix get environment suits with handles so they can be carried if needed.

The blix have been at work on the *Red Queen's* sensors during the trip, with the effect that one Stoneburner site is now marked with a big orange star. The characters silently thank the blix.

The group (plus some blix) take the *Baby Rattle* down to Mount Illumination, where they are met by representatives from the Tourism Board who offer various services and ask after the characters' plans. The local news includes a typical number of doctrinal disputes among (and between) the area religious orders, but otherwise nothing unexpected seems to be going on. Except a religious festival that appears to have some common cause with State Fairs based upon the number of fried foods available from stalls. Drest Talorgin spends enough time there to sample everything available.

Markus Oroszlan recalls that the last time the characters were on Yellow Sky they were only starting to suspect that there might be evil Space Gods hiding in DriveSpace. He hunts down a representative of the Dire Unconscious Orlamist priests and tells the man, "Your idea about evil entities in DriveSpace? You're *absolutely right!* I shouldn't show you these, they're military classified photographs, but take a look." He leaves a priest absolutely convinced of the rightness of his beliefs.

The characters make contact again with *Philomon Sulku*, owner of *Sulku Tours*, and hire him as a tour guide. They leave the sarcophagi behind on the *Red Queen* for the moment, guarded by Wisbowski and Animal Mother.

## The Chlorine Lowlands

The characters don their enviro-suits and follow Philomon Sulku into the toxic lowlands. The area is full of strange, luscious-looking plants that thrive in this strange environment. Everyone is inoculated against *blackfever* and Banoor is carrying coagulant (a useful treatment in the event that someone actually contracts the disease) in addition to his normal medical load.

After an hour of searching for the entrance to the Stoneburner compound the characters see several tall, fluted spires. The path to the spires requires that the characters go across a grass field (that's not grass!) and four trees (those aren't trees!). Markus loads up the incendiary grenades in his Zeek-5.

It turns out that the "grass" are just the upper tassels of a plant that has grown up in a hollow. Stepping onto it is about like stepping on to an array of bamboo skewers. Lenny steps in, but manages to step right between the spear-like stalks. Several other characters are less fortunate, but everyone is wearing heavy enough armor to avoid damage (or environmental suit breaches). However, this doesn't make the trees happy. They lurch forward, murder on their minds.

Drest Talorgin lines up a tree with his machine gun and opens fire. The tree doesn't seem very impressed. After all, it is a tree. Lenny follows up with shots from his plasma gun. The tree starts to bleed, which suggests that the thing is not actually a tree.

Peppin tries reading their minds. He reports, "They are thinking mostly 'Eat! Kill! Eat!' I think we should negotiate!"

Banoor ignores the diplomat. He notes, "I am an action scientist! I should act accordingly!" He perforates the bleeding tree with his laser SMG, felling it. Hoah!

The three surviving trees turn to trying to kill the characters with their tentacles. One wraps up Lutefisk and drags him into its mouth. He responds by firing wildly with his charge rifle to very little effect. Drest rushes up to it and hacks it apart with his vibroblade.

Lenny lands an excellent shot on another tree, leaving a substantial wound.

Peppin pulls out his pistol and proclaims, "It's hungry!" He shoots wildly into the underbrush.

Banoor ignores Peppin and drills a tree three more times with his laser SMG.

The one surviving tree attacks Drest. Apparently, it's not that bright. It manages to smear his armor with the slime on its big, leafy tentacles, but fails to grab hold of him. The Marines gun it down.

Markus jokes, "Hey Drest! Their bark was worse than their bite!"

Drest answers, "I guess they didn't plan for it." Nobody understands.

Markus continues, "C'mon guys! I guess it's time to leave!"

The characters notice that the three stone spires behind the trees are gone. Apparently they were just telepathic images created by the trees.

### **The Stoneburner Site at Last!**

The characters trek through the swamps and jungles for another four hours before they find the site they're looking for. During this time, both Drest and Markus have to change out the power cells in their armor twice. Curse that two-hour endurance! The Stoneburner site is actually very unremarkable, and quite hard to see.

The entrance is a giant slab of rock that will take some time to move, even with very strong people with powered armor. Drest recommends that the characters camp to recharge their gear (especially the armor).

### ***The End of the Session***

Each character gains five experience points (for those players with two characters active, split as desired).