

STAR*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

10/16/2011

Attendance

Bruce mentions, “You know, on Friday I was watching *Inside Job*. It’s quite good, but really one of those pieces you need to be watching in a room without any sharp implements.” He is present in the flesh for a change.

Ernest boasts, “I am one of the 1%! Huzzah!” He looks around and sees no sign of the Bruce scarecrow or the “Death to Bruce” banner – clearly Chris remembered to take them both down before Bruce showed up.

Paul is confused, “1% of what? I’m sure I’m part of 1% of something.”

Patrick remains silent, has he’s not really sure which 1% anyone is talking about.

Chris remains doubly silent: he certainly doesn’t want to suggest anything that will get Bruce talking about economics, or the recent real estate crash. He thinks, “I’m glad I remembered to take down the banner and hide the scarecrow. Perhaps I should recommend the movies *Ironclad* and *Suck*, both of them would appeal to other folks in the group.”

Paul and Chris both agree that the Japanese movie *Fish Story* is extremely good, and available on Netflix. Ernest chimes in, “Oh yes! It was my favorite movie from Fantastic Fest!”

Tim admits that he will be absent for the day, with the likely excuse that he needs to catch up on his work. Work work work...

<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
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

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
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	Absent
Tim	Haggernak	Weren Concord Administrator Combat Spec	Absent

Again into the Massive Dungeon

Markus Oroszlan notes, “I think this dungeon was published the year after Gary Gygax went on his cocaine bender.”

Drest Talorgin asks, “Wasn’t that his *Cyborg Commando* period?”

Lenny suggests, “No, that was when he went out to Hollywood and allowed Lorraine Williams to take control of the company so she could destroy it.” He takes a look at the map of the first level of the Pyramid and exclaims, “I just love pointless secret doors! If I ever own a house, I’m making every door into a secret door!”

The Jacuzzi Room

The characters continue to investigate the first level of the Pyramid. Among several less interesting things they find a room with a raised pink stone platform and what looks like a mollusk Jacuzzi. It contains some organic sludge that attacks *Banoor’s* glove. He takes a sample and reports that it is “sludge”.

The Exoplanet Gate

The characters continue on, finding a room with a dimensional portal different from the others in the chamber. The characters are able to see alien plants under an alien moon through the gate. The characters send a sensor drone through and learn first that the atmosphere is oxy-nitrogen, and second that the plants have a texture like ceramic or glass.

The Alien Devices Baffle Us

The characters enter a large multisided chamber with several doors (one of which leads to the next level of the vertical shaft the characters found upstairs). There appear to be another two levels below. There is a bank of tubes along the wall. Banoor knowledgeably explains that they once dispensed different kinds of good. Markus Oroszlan finds a claw-held squirting device that still sprays acid. He figures out that it sprays Amazing-quality acid that can eat spaceship hulls, at least for the next two squirts.

A small side room offers up two curtained alcoves. The two alcoves contain Stoneburner plates and sporks, neatly stacked. Banoor notices a pile of rocks in the center of the room, with some of the exoplanet glass plants growing from it. He tries to gather a sample, but rather to his surprise the pile sends out misshapen stone limbs and strikes him. He yells out, "Shoot it! Shoot it now!"

Markus Oroszlan obliges. He spins up his hardpoint-mounted charge machine gun and sprays the creature with gunfire. Shell casings pour everywhere, but the creature only suffers mild notice that it is even under attack. His second burst is more effective, but still doesn't put it down.

Drest Talorgin hauls Banoor out of the way and opens fire with his own charge machine gun. He is able to shatter the creature. He explains, "You gotta hit the thing in that crystal on its head!"

Banoor analyzes some of the pieces and explains that it is likely a Series V Silicate Organism. Such creatures originate on planets with atmospheres unsuited for carbon compounds. They use silicon as organic molecules and sulfuric acid as a solvent medium.

A Secured Door

The characters find a secured door with a slot in it. Two stone pillars border the door. A look through the slot suggests that the room beyond might be some kind of laboratory: alien science equipment is visible in the shadows. Everyone else stands back as Lenny attempts to open the door.

After a few minutes, Lenny figures out how to disable the security devices on the door by shutting down the trigger mechanism, but he isn't able to figure out how to

actually open the door. The characters can scan the shapes of the objects inside, but can't reach any of them.

Stoneburner Food! And Dimensional Horror Abattoir!

Unable to get into the coffin-shaped secure lab, the characters turn to a nearby chamber that turns out to contain a variety of million-year-old Stoneburner snacks. Beyond that is a room that looks like a communal eating space. And then a feeding room for dimensional horrors. That last looks recently used, full of bones and greasy meat chunks dragged in from elsewhere. The characters are able to find some human remains in the mess. Banoor takes samples of the human victims for subsequent genotype identification. Markus Oroszlan looks for identification tags.

And finally, the characters find the stairs down to the third level. They're located in a lounge room that was once lined with mirror tiles.

Three Levels Down, and the Darn Fool Said "March On!"

The first chamber the characters explore is a luxurious Stoneburner room, with a large bed-tub lined in sludge and bed-straw. It also includes a decorative green grassy mold on the floor, a large chest for personal effects. Lenny examines it and finds some ancient decorative stone jewelry, five pieces of it, and some more of the data crystals – this time purple.

Lenny reports, "I found a secret door!" Then something grabs hold of him - a dimensional horror. Another one appears between Markus and Drest.

Drest assures Lenny, "We'll get that creature off!" Lenny finds this statement slightly disturbing. Drest and Banoor attack it with monofilament chain and glassmaker blade. They manage to wound it, but the other one grabs Banoor by the head and shakes him around like a rag doll. Drest turns his attention to the horror that grabbed Banoor, slashes it open with his monofilament chain, and cuts it hard enough that it doesn't even have a chance to phase out before it falls. He turns to the second dimensional horror and wounds it badly as well.

Markus takes a swing at the wounded dimensional horror, but strikes only a glancing blow. Drest whirls around and finishes it, again wounding it out so the body

doesn't vanish into an alternate dimension. Markus declares that he owns the rights for the dimensional horror segment of the strum-pet business.

While Drest brings Banoor back around, Markus breaks through a secret door into a chamber ringed with doors. The room also contains four urns and four crates. Markus has already been here once, courtesy of the characters' earlier ventures through the dimensional portals. Markus breaks open one of the boxes to find thousands of the small Stoneburner data crystals. And that is when the amped-up dimensional horror attacks. In two attacks it stabs its tail-sting cleanly through his armor twice. His Trauma Pack II saves him from death, giving him a chance to turn on his barim Deflection Harness. He defends, but it strikes a second time and drops him.

The creature picks up Markus and prepares to teleport away. Drest grabs hold of Markus and attempts to wrest him out of the creature's grip. The creature is almost too strong, but he manages to pull Markus away. The characters retreat from the storeroom, back up to their ATV where Banoor cracks open Markus' armor and stitches him back together.

How Can We Spot Dimensional Shamblers?

The characters go back to the plateau to recover (Banoor goes into surgery for a little while). They replenish their supplies (trauma packs, nanosurgeons, charge SMG's, etc). Banoor hands his sensor gauntlet over to the blix with the instruction, "Can you make this detect dimensional shamblers?" The blix work on it, incorporating some of the Stoneburner technology the characters brought back including the less-desirable everfull bottle. By the time they hand the gauntlet back to Banoor it has an amber crystal and some Stoneburner technology installed in it.

Markus also looks around for some local creatures to use as decoys and bait for the dimensional shamblers (particularly the super-sized ones). He finds a sort of monkey-lizard creature called a *snarf*. He buys a crate of them to act as decoys. Drest Talorgin buys some radio tracking collars and attaches them to the snarfs. They figure that if the creatures get taken away and eaten at least they might be able to track the shamblers.

Banoor takes advantage of the two dimensional shambler bodies the characters brought back – he dissects one in an effort to find possible chemicals to use as

tranquilizers. He determines that it has "Series VII biochemistry", unlike anything that human (or mechalus) science understands. He isn't able to identify anything that might be useful as a tranquilizer, but he does gather enough data for two, perhaps three, scientific papers. And then the characters donate the bodies to the Yellow Sky Institute of Technology as specimens, under an agreement that they will list Banoor's name on any papers they publish based upon the specimens.

Back To The Front

We go back into the place and continue to poke around. Markus finds a stone donut that fits over his bicep that allows him to see through the mist beyond the dimensional portals, so we are easily able to find our way down to a second throne room.

Markus sits in the throne and is contacted by a Stoneburner entity who kindly shows us how to turn on the device that throws off the possession of the I'krl dominated crew. He is generally unhelpful and uncommunicative otherwise, but that may just be due to Markus' winning way with people.

Within a large empty room in the Stoneburner complex, the blix assemble devices from gear scavenged from the Lighthouse, the Red Queen, and the Stoneburner complex itself. Eventually, they have built something resembling radio array dishes. Some time after that a Stoneburner machine fills the air; it is floating just off the floor. It is slightly transparent and utterly intangible. Except to the blix wearing mecha-gloves (think of children's toy *Hulk Hands*). They begin working the controls.

Meanwhile the marines have brought in the sarcophagi containing the I'krl possessed crewmen. The blix finish their work. An unseen wave of power sweeps the containers; Banoor paces about on demented legs, taking readings from the air and the bio-screens mounted on the sarcophagus. The blix begin grooming each other, which signals the Verge scientist that their work is done (he also consults the Verge Wiki article on the blix). He opens the first box. Marine fingers tighten on triggers. A disoriented crewman emerges.

Banoor scans her. "She's clean!"

Then a psych test is administered. Question 1: "Do you smell fudge?".... Question 37: "Which of the following describe your loyalty to the I'krl? a) I would kill for them, b) I would let others die for them, c) indifferent, d) none whatsoever, e)...."

Eventually all of the sarcophagi are cracked open to reveal de-possessed crewmen. Taveer and the bridge bunnies are restored to their previous semblance of sentience! Hurrah!

Drest harvests clippings of metal roses to grown on the Lighthouse. Besides that, we figure we've pressed our luck enough poking around the Tomb of Horrors and exfil, heading straight back to the Lighthouse.

The End of the Session

Banoor and Taveer exchange notes on the last four weeks: "What did you experience while possessed?" "What did you do to free me?" "Let's co-author a paper!"

Markus gloats over his Stoneburner loot while drinking his alien brew. Most of these items will find their way into his bar as entertainment and snack trays. And he's going to try his Stoneburner scepter out on a certain warlioness in munitions.

Lenny chuckles quietly, content in his newfound knowledge of Stoneburner locks and artifacts. There are a few museums and personal collections of such items that a certain reptilian cat-burglar will be visiting.

Drest announces to no one in particular, "When we get back to the Lighthouse, I'm going to hit the dating sites and find an attractive, intelligent woman of proven reproductive capabilities. She's going to have a hatred of the I'krl that makes my own seem lucid. We're going to get married, have lots of babies, and form the *Death to the I'kryl and their Minions* political party."

The marine sitting next to him looks up from sharpening a boot knife, "That seems awfully specific. What's up?"

Drest replies, "I sense the war is winding down. The I'krl are hunkering down in their stolen systems building their strength back up. The ambassadors are talking. Planetary populations feel safe. But we haven't killed enough of them to fill our Hell and their Tentacle Heaven. God loves us when we send him fresh souls. We need the political will for the next war."

"Amen."