

STAR*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

12/06/2009

Attendance

Paul muses, “I really like coconut sorbet, but for some reason I can never find it in the store.”

Tim (Gerard Pepin and Haggernak) explains to the others, “That stuff is really good, especially when you freebase it.”

Ernest (Captain Ken Takashi and Markus Oroszlan) suddenly understands, “Aha! It sounds like our little friend Tim has managed to get himself a connection into the Vegan addict underground.”

Chris (Ten-zil Kem and Rokk Tressor) shudders. The idea of Vegan junkies just hits him the wrong way.

Bruce (Lambert Fulson and Taveer) grins silently. Vegan junkies. Heh heh. Heh heh...

Peco (Ivan Stukov and Adun Zelnaga) shows up with a mysterious black bag. “Hey, everyone! I just scored some coconuts! Want to freebase them?” He brings out a spoon and a lighter.

Patrick (Martin St. John and Lenny) walks in to hear Chris describing the secondary market for human seed among lesbian couples. He is at first horrified, but then intrigued: how can he become a part of this lucrative market?

<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
Rokk Tressor	Chris	FA 6	Concord Intelligence Officer

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Spec / Level</i>	<i>Description</i>
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

How Did We Get Here? What Is This Place?

Last session the characters were forced to close a mysterious space anomaly created in a test of a new Thuldan missile system. They investigated and learned that someone had tampered with the target object. Further investigation uncovered some mysterious fleshapod items hidden in the Thuldan *Trinity* space station, pods that were sporadically occupied by mysterious psionic space vampires.

The characters have hatched a plan to plant psi-dampeners around the space vampires' pods in an effort to trap and capture one of the creatures. The fact that the pods are all in a moderately sensitive area of the Thuldan station makes the job harder.

We Need a Psi-Vampire Blocker, Stat!

Off-the-shelf psi dampeners are available in manacle, necklace and implanted form factors, but not as a field device. *Taveer* addresses the problem. His plan is to take a necklace dampener and expand it into a ring larger than a storage crate. This turns out to be a very difficult task.

As Taveer starts work, *Rokk Tressor* explains that he should be very careful about using the main computer or any electronic messaging because the psychic vampires are probably monitoring *Lighthouse* systems. Taveer answers, "Excuse me? Were you saying something? I was just sending some email..."

Rokk Tressor grumbles, "If you don't start paying attention, I will stab you a lot. If you break electronic security, I will stab you a lot. If you don't focus on the problem at hand, I will stab you a lot."

Taveer complains, “If you stab me, I’ll tweet about it!” But he agrees to be more careful about his work.

Taveer sets up a psi-damper ring and tests it on *Adun Zelnaga*. It turns out that the ring is only able to stop him from using his powers about one-third of the time. He explains to the others that this is about as good as it’s going to get.

What Is Our Clever Plan?

Captain Ken Takashi calls a staff meeting to define a plan. This takes a surprising amount of time, before they agree on the following:

- Psi-restrain the space vampire with the ring dampener.
- Break open the crate.
- Tranquilize the space vampire and clamp a dampener helmet on its head.
- Remove the space vampire from the fleshopod, restrain it, slap it in a vacc suit with a psi-restraint helmet, and drag it out of the cargo bay.
- Reseal the crate.
- Drag the crate out through the cargo lock using a grav dampener.

Captain Takashi suspects alien physiology will make tranquilizing the space vampires quite difficult, so he doesn’t really like the alternate plan of hacking the system to get the crate shipped to the *Lighthouse* as “missile components”. *Rokk Tressor* explains that he is also the only member of the away team who has any zero-G skills, so his preferred plan of bringing the aliens out in vacc suits is not nearly as appealing to the others.

The boarding crew will include *Adun Zelnaga*, the warlion *Markus Oroszlan*, Ambassador-Professor *Gerard Pepin*, Taveer, and *Rokk Tressor*. *Martin St. John* serves as the pilot, with *Ten-Zil Kem* along to provide computer hacking backup as needed.

The Stars Are a Panorama

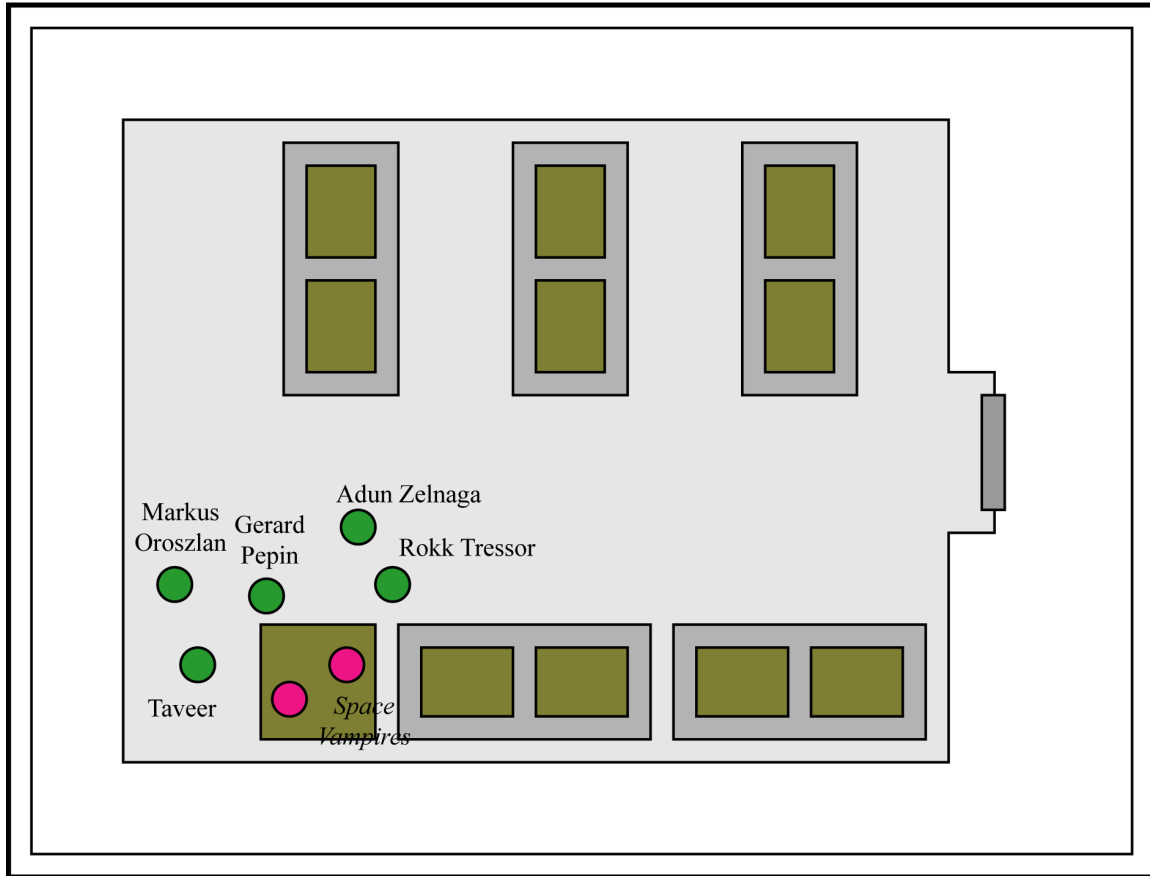
Captain Ken Takashi plays classical music for the others as they spacewalk from the *Lighthouse* shuttle to the exterior of the cargo lock on the *Trinity*. The stars form a dramatic panorama all around them.

Adun Zelnaga is the first in: he teleports through the airlock to check out the situation in the interior of the cargo area. *Rokk Tressor* applies his intrusion skills against the cargo lock. The lock security is no match for him.

The characters take positions around the crate. Taveer deploys his psi-exclusion ring. Everyone readies stun grenades. Captain Takashi tears the crate open.

As the crate opens, the two space vampires leap to action. One of them has blank white eyes, but the other has eyes of coruscating energy and a scythe. Both of them are inhumanly fast. The one with the scythe demands, “Wait! We would talk to you before you continue to act!”

Space Vampires in the Trinity Storage Area



The characters are not impressed: they press the attack. The space vampires respond by generating a darkness aura in the storage area and teleporting away. A moment later, the characters learn that there was a psychic signature on the *Lighthouse*, somewhere in the habitation ring.

The characters pull the crate back to the shuttle and thence to the *Lighthouse*.

Ambassador Pepin's Bogus Journey

Captain Takashi turns the two fleshopods over to Ambassador-Professor Gerard Pepin so he can lie inside one and try out his postcognitive abilities on it. He hallucinates

himself in a giant room with veiny, living walls. He is in one of many pods suspended from a massive tree. A strange three-eyed insectoid creature clambers up the tree and stares into his pod. The creature has some similarity to a klik, in that they're all insectoid, but has the wrong number of eyes and the wrong sort of shape. It has three arms, and three legs.

In the distance he sees three other pod-trees.

Captain Takashi order the pods placed into the secure lab. Adun Zelnaga and Taveer are assigned to work on it, but Taveer's highest priority is to adapt the station sensors to be able to localize detection of incoming teleport signatures. He estimates that this will take him a week.

It takes Adun Zelnaga only an hour to kill one of the pods. He reports to the Captain, "I've found its weak spot! If you cut it right here, it dies!"

New Missiles, and a New Administrator

Martin St. John is standing as officer of the watch when the first load of ten Thuldan missiles arrives.

Administrator Wakefield calls Captain Takashi. The Administrator starts, "I have heard that you have had problems with *Jacquelyn Witt*. There have been several misunderstandings between the military and administrative arms. I have had a long conversation with Chief Administrator Thane and we have decided to hand the investigative functions over to a new official, and reassign Administrator Witt to new responsibilities. The new *Administrator Haggernak* will be coming up from Bluefall presently. I recommend that you make immediate steps to develop a good working relationship with him."

Captain Takashi promptly calls Rokk Tressor, "I have a body-cavity search job for you."

A Plethora of Side Errands

Rokk Tressor has his own problems: a man he helped through customs, *Mr. Door Mak*, seeks him out and gives him a box of mysterious crap. The box includes a fedora, some nonfunctional antique firearms, a Thuldan ceremonial knife, and a series of unusual

data-crystals. He plugs some of the crystals into his computer and discovers that they include a lot of vacation photos of a middle-aged lesbian couple on the world of Elysium.

Reverend Donald Gaffin calls up Martin St. John to thank him for his excellent work eliminating the xiim-xiir threat. Martin St. John is very modest, explaining that it is just his duty to safeguard the public order. Reverend Gaffin suggests that he would be honored if St. John would speak to the Vieron orphans in the care of the *United Church of Entity Friendship*. The Kroath have slaughtered over 50% of the human population on Vieron, and many of the surviving children have been sent to the *Lighthouse* for care. St. John agrees to give the children an inspiring talk about what it takes to become a pilot in the Concord Navy.

Martin St. John visits the orphans, but his speech doesn't go all that well. His anecdote about seeing a comrade horribly burned to death in a fuel explosion is a bit shocking to the kids. He partially redeems himself by handing out some dhros plushies. Then he gets talked into agreeing to participate in "Take an Orphan to Work Day."

Ivan Stukov receives a communication from a Thuldan military attaché. The attaché explains that the Eagle Standard of the Seventh Legion, originally lost in GW2, may have been found. He has evidence that the Borealin ambassador might have the standard. The attaché notes that the Borealins have no understanding of pride or honor, nor any comprehension of the importance of the standard to the Thuldan Empire. He asks that General Stukov work with *Assistant Professor Deutschmark* to have the standard returned to the Empire.

General Stukov calls the Borealin embassy to find that they are all in an uproar: a new Professor is expected to arrive soon. He ends up talking to Professor-Ambassador Pepin himself. Professor-Ambassador Pepin claims, "As soon as I learn to tell them apart I will let you know."

Professor-Ambassador Pepin swiftly discovers that Assistant Professor Deutschmark is a corpulent, aging tick of a man with an appallingly high sense of his self worth and an extremely attractive wife. Pepin ignores the Assistant Professor and talks to Lady Deutschmark instead. By convincing her that he's all about the children and the fluffy animals he manages to get the battle standard from her. To avoid angering the Assistant professor he has a replica made, then gives the original back to Stukov.

Honor Guard to the Docking Ring!

Administrator Haggernak arrives in customs clutching his tri-staff. Rokk Tressor meets him at the passenger port and swiftly discovers that the Administrator is a weren with a limp. Tressor calls the Captain, who details Martin St. John to meet him. St. John finds Administrator Haggernak at the customs station. Rokk Tressor is asking a lot of embarrassing medical questions while a virtual sprite from *Mina* tries to tell him about the xeno-cultural facilities on board. The Administrator growls, “How do I turn this thing off?”

Cast Off! It's Hammer's Star We're Bound For!

A week later, the characters have managed to find no sign of the space vampires. There have been no additional teleportation events, which frustrates Taveer to no end: he wants additional signature data to work on his localization system. And it is already time for the *Lighthouse* to starfall for Hammer's Star.

The *Lighthouse* will be in drivespace for five days. During this time, Markus Oroszlan does what he can to ensure that there is traditional Thuldan cooking available for the Thuldan technical staff. He notices that there is one mechalus among the Thuldan staff whom Taveer seems to be avoiding: the engineer vanishes as soon as the new mechalus entered the room. Markus reflects, “That could be useful. I'd best be friendly to this one.” He quickly understands that this mechalus is not quite so removed from ordinary concerns as Taveer is.

We Have a Situation. A Nariac Situation

Administrator Haggernak gets a call from Administrator Wakefield on a situation he wants handled personally. Four people have disappeared, three of them highly-placed members of the Nariac Embassy. The Nariac Embassy is generally a source of trouble, but they have good relations with the Thuldans. Administrator Wakefield suggests using that avenue as a way to make progress with the Nariacs.

Haggernak seeks out Rokk Tressor and Martin St. John to enlist their aid. All his subordinates can tell him is that the three Nariacs were cybernetics enthusiasts, as was a fourth person, an unaffiliated woman. They were also members of the Lighthouse Bridge Fanatics club, but Haggernak dismisses that as irrelevant.

Haggernak and his compatriots head down to talk to General Stukov, who is at the buffet at Thuldan Food Night, an event organized by Markus Oroszlan. Markus overhears Haggernak's problems and takes a moment to drop a line to *Doctor Wizard* to warn him to keep a low profile for a while.

Ambassador Gregor Chapin is the Nariac Ambassador. His cybernetics are fairly subtle (except for the cybermonocle), but he still sets off metal detectors. Most of the rest of the embassy staff look like members of the Borg Collective. When Haggernak meets with him, he seems quite upset. In particular, he is upset because the Concord has only assigned someone appropriate to his missing-persons problem two days after the report was issued.

Haggernak attempts to get some information from Taveer. He finds that this is very frustrating, especially after Taveer reconfigures Haggernak's data gauntlet to use mechalus characters ("It's much better that way..."). Then Taveer explains that two of the Nariacs were actually put under surveillance by Ten-zil Kem two weeks ago. Even Ten-zil has forgotten this, and Taveer hadn't bothered to report anything. Two days ago, the two Nariacs entered a storage container and never emerged. A third surveillance subject, *Vitaz Lazlo*, has also been visiting the storage container. Conveniently, Haggernak had just interviewed Lazlo. At the interview, the man insisted that he knew nothing about what had happened to his three fellow nationals. Haggernak starts to think that there might be some cykosis problems going around.

An Interspecies Interlude

Haggernak is thinking about whether this is a situation for bringing out his stutter cannon when one of his subordinates, a lacework-delicate fraal, approaches him and admits her nearly uncontrollable attraction to him. He grumbles, "This is inappropriate, and might be medically dangerous."

She urges him, "Have you ever made love to a telepath? The biggest sexual organ in the body is the brain!"

"Not on a weren."

"I can take you places you've never imagined!"

"France? Seriously, missy, I have a riot to deal with."

She pleads, “Can’t the riot wait!”

Haggernak leaves her in his office. He is filled with a tremendous sense of foreboding.

Taveer finds that he is having trouble fitting data crystals into the port in his office. He wonders if he is developing an unhealthy psychological dependency upon the AI. Or if space is warping in upon him. Or maybe if there might be something stuck in the port. He concludes, “Well, there’s nothing to be done except to try and suck it out.”

One of Taveer’s assistants walks into his office to find him tonguing his computer. The assistant quietly backs out, not daring to make a sound.

Gear Up! We’re Going Cyborg Hunting!

Haggernak and Rokk Tressor recruit Markus Oroszlan, Lenny and Adun Zelnaga to deal with the possibly cybernosis-afflicted Nariacs. Markus brings a grenade launcher loaded with pulse grenades. They enlist Taveer to continue monitoring. He volunteers to provide a shaped-charge explosive sufficient to pierce the side of a cargo container, with a detonator slaved to Rokk Tressor’s armheld.

Rokk Tressor calls Captain Takashi to explain what is going on, and to ask for authorization for heavy weapons. Captain Takashi is less than pleased to find out that Taveer has been arranging surveillance on people upon the request of non-Concord Ambassadors. He is even less pleased when he hears the equipment loadout Rokk has planned: he allows the use of rifles, but draws the line at explosives. Rokk asks Captain Takashi, “While we’re on that subject, I’ve noticed that Taveer seems to refer to the ship AI as if it were his wife. Is that normal?”

Captain Takashi explains, “That guy has problems. I walked in on him to find him licking a data slot a little while ago.”

Rokk recommends, “You might want to schedule him to have some sessions with the ship’s counselor.”

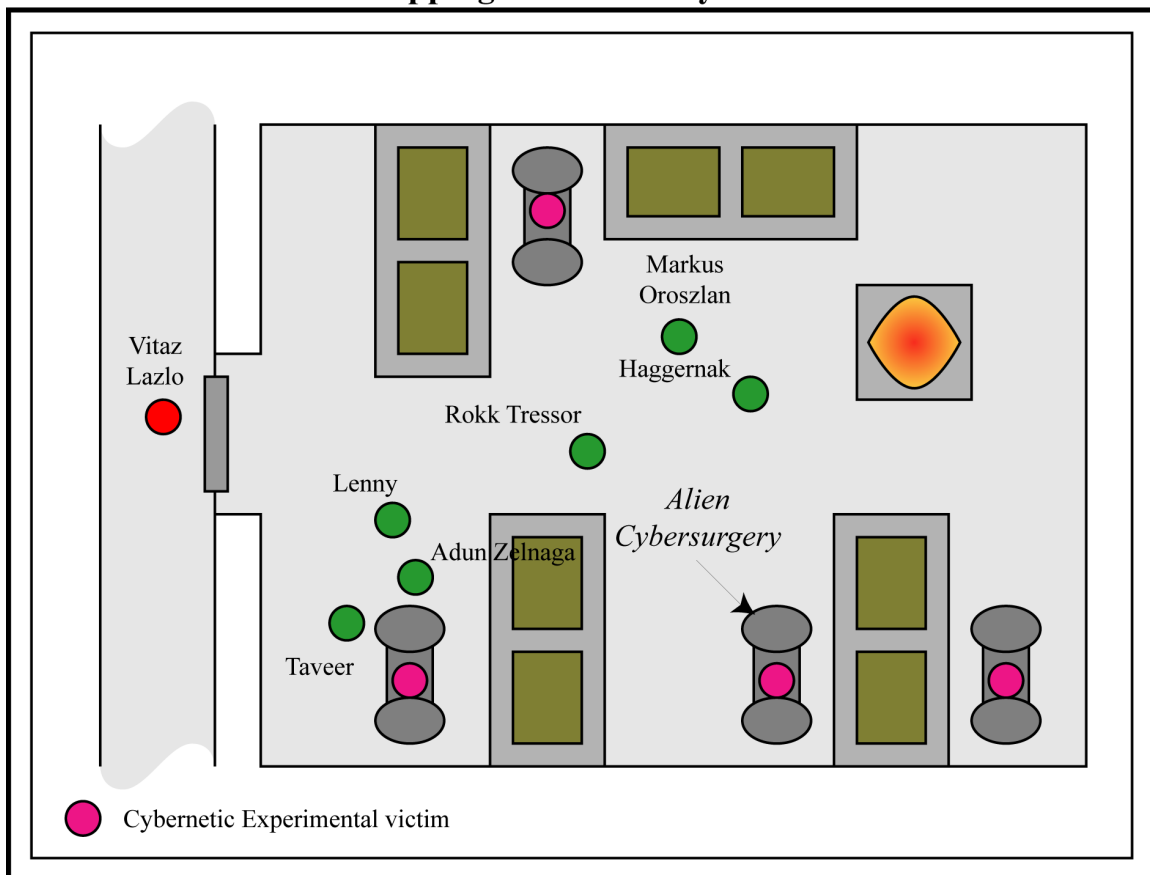
At the last minute, Taveer volunteers to come along. Markus Oroszlan unclips the flap on his holster.

The Alien Cybernetic Creche

Rokk Tressor reads out the suspects' rights very quietly, then opens the door and steps in quickly. The door was very heavy, and blocked out the sounds of screaming very effectively. Rokk sees someone with heavy cybernetics hooked into an unfamiliar machine. The machine seems to be performing surgery upon the person without benefit of anesthesia. Further investigation reveals four such setups all told.

Adun Zelnaga investigates the first machine. He identifies some features that seem similar to the technology in the alien exoskeleton that came onto the station some time ago. Taveer stands by near the doctor, waiting for him to offer assurance that the patient would survive if the machine were powered down. From what the doctor can tell, the machine seems to be trying to reconfigure the cybernetics installed in the victim.

Stopping the Nariac Cykotics



It is at this point that Vitaz Lazlo shows up. It turns out that he was the guy in whom the alien exoskeleton was installed. He opens the (sealed) door easily and steps into the shipping container with guns blazing.

Rokk Tressor flings a pulse grenade at him. The grenade flashes, but it doesn't stop Lazlo and his alien one-man-army exoskeleton. Lenny fires a laser pistol at him, but again fails to pierce his armor.

Lazlo stomps forward to engage Lenny, simultaneously hitting a control that releases the four other crazy cyborgs in the room. His strike is sufficient to break bones. Lenny staggers back.

Haggernak unloads on Lazlo with his stutter cannon. The hit is dead-on, but Lazlo's defenses are sufficient to completely neutralize the damage. Haggernak sighs, slings his stutter cannon, and readies his tri-staff.

One of the cybermaniacs howls and leaps at Lenny, who dodges to the side. Another tears at Haggernak, failing to damage him seriously. Taveer slams his tri-staff into another cybermaniac, cracking through his armor and almost felling him.

Markus howls and whacks a cybermaniac twice with his gravmace, leaving the creature disoriented. He is confident that another hit will knock the cyborg down.

Lazlo strikes Adun Zelnaga, inflicting a crippling hit. Zelnaga's armor stops the damage, but leaves him gasping for breath.

Haggernak makes an off-center swing at a cybermaniac as he walks away,

Lenny takes a good hit from a cybermaniac, but his armor takes the wound. A second cybermaniac abandons Haggernak and hits him. Three wounds! Lenny sprints for the door, taking a parting shot at a cybermaniac.

Taveer evades two cybermaniac strikes, then strikes and incapacitates the cybermaniac facing him. The entity is mortally wounded.

Markus evades the strikes of two cybermaniacs. Haggernak avoids one. But Lazlo takes an amazing hit from Lazlo, inflicting four mortal wounds. His armor covers the damage, leaving him wounded.

Taveer takes a swing at Lazlo, who barely notices.

Haggernak takes a hit, doesn't notice.

Lazlo crunches into Adun Zelnaga again. His psychic shield holds, but he's almost unconscious.

Lenny takes a shot at Lazlo, but his armor takes the impact. Haggernak moves over to beat Lazlo over the head, but his strike shears off against the cyborg's armor.

Markus cracks open a cybermaniac, delivering a dramatic wound to the creature.

Lenny shoots Lazlo twice, inflicting a few stun points. Haggernak hits him from behind with a tri-staff, stunning him more.

Markus notices one cybermaniac looking towards hitting Haggernak in the back. He howls and distracts the creature. It howls in pain.

“It’s like we’re being attacked by aging wrestlers” Haggernak

Rokk Tressor complains, “Censored censored censored!”

Lazlo turns to attack Haggernak. He takes the strike, then hits back with a good success and causes Lazlo to collapse.

The two remaining cybermaniacs stop moving when the boss does. It turns out that the missing girl didn’t get attacked at all. One is dead, one is badly wounded, and one is just unconscious. The characters restrain them all and start providing medical care.

Adun Zelnaga determines that the alien implants in the cybermaniacs included a control brain that was controlling the victims’ biological brains.

Haggernak reports to Captain Takashi that an alien cybertechnology was trying to take over the Nariacs. Captain Takashi delegates the situation to Doctor Zelnaga.

Lenny, “Hey doc! Before you run off could you give me some medical aid? I think my back is broken.” Doctor Zelnaga gives him three band-aids and tells him not to use them all up right away.

Markus Oroszlan duct-tapes a pulse grenade to Lazlo’s chest, hands the string to Haggernak, and heads off. “My task is done here!”

On the way out the characters notice that there are people necking in the corridors.

What Has Happened to Professionalism?

Captain Takashi has had a lot of problem getting Star Force people to show up on shift – they’re all busy on their own little projects. Most of the businesses on the upper decks are closed for lack of employees. There are, however, a surprising number of people having sex in the streets.

Rokk Tressor takes photos of all the businesses that are still open. He is certain those are the businesses that will be full of alien infiltrators. On the way he encounters a

human woman who asks if he's an artist. She is very attractive, and quite whimsically dressed. She offers, "You want to get married and procreate?"

"Normally I wouldn't go for that sort of thing, but you're just so interesting."

Rokk is lost to any useful purpose.

Captain Takashi charges Taveer and Adun Zelnaga to figure out why everyone is turning into a rutting lump. They get the job partly because they're scientific staff, and partly because they're the only ones who haven't yet fallen victim to the Nookie Plague. In particular, Doctor Zelnaga doesn't fall for Xin Yuan, his graceless medical assistant with the eye tick. She keeps on dropping scalpels and bending over to pick them up, but he remains oblivious to the signals sent by human females. He's got the same data crystal fit problems as Taveer. Ahem.

Down in his office, Taveer examines the data slot in his desk terminal. He finds a thin film of green crystal growing in his data slot. He thinks, "Great. The AI has VD."

Rokk Has a Houseguest

When Rokk goes back to his apartment, the green data crystals that had been playing lesbian vacation photos on his screen have turned into a massive green crystal mass. He unplugs the monitor. *Olpu Coatila* just stares at the green crystals, transfixed.

Taveer finds evidence of large-scale hacking in the system, but nothing to do with green crystals. He decides (eventually) to deal with this later.

Rokk finally calls up Taveer to explain his remarkably large green crystal issues. He's having a lot of trouble speaking, as if something is distracting him.

Adun Zelnaga examines some of the people around him. He isolates a chemical change in their blood, one that is causing stimulation of certain parts of the brain. If it continues, it will probably result in unconsciousness and death. Gerard Pepin shows up (unaffected due to his Mental Resolve) to help. They brief the Captain, then set towards manufacturing a vaccine.

Adun Zelnaga determines that the green crystal is semi-organic and able to spread along surfaces. It can split off small particles almost like spores.

Pepin develops a scan with his medical gauntlet to detect the crystal presence. He finds it mostly towards the lower part of the station, near engineering. It tends to like data ports because they're already suited for crystals and provide electricity.

Taveer strips everything that might contain green crystal in Rokk's quarters, including his display monitor and terminal, and dumps it all into an evac emergency bag. All of it gets dragged to sickbay. Then Taveer shuts down network and power to everything except Mina and the medical lab. With that dealt with, he delivers a general address to the ship: "This is Chief Engineer Taveer. I'm about to shut down the wireless network retransmitters, so if you have anything that needs to be said, say it now."

Lenny blurts out, "I've always hated you!"

Captain Takashi reminds the t'sa, "Anything *useful*."

Doctor Zelnaga finds a chemist, gives him the antidote and sets him to finding a way to kill the crystal entity. Once it's dead, it'll just need to be chipped out with screwdrivers.

There are a lot of embarrassed people on board afterwards. Except Ten-zil Kem, who didn't notice anything different was happening until the network and the lights turned off.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the *Lighthouse* making starrise in the Hammer's Star system. Each character gains four experience points.