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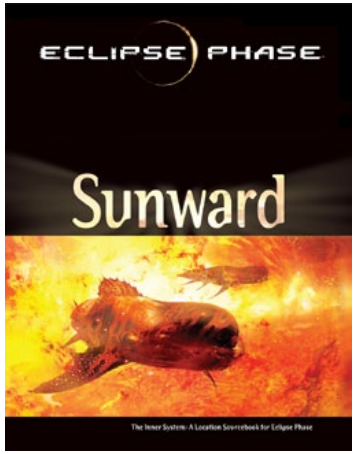
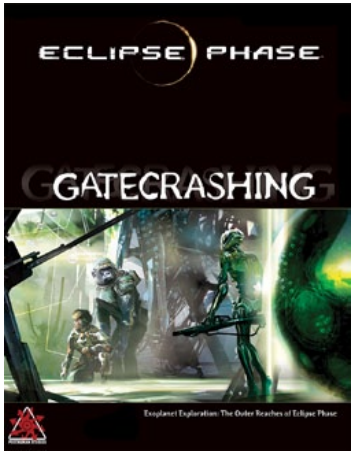
GAMEMASTER PACK

SUNWARD



GATECRASHING



ECLIPSE PHASE

CONTINUITY

An Adventure for The Roleplaying Game of Transhuman Conspiracy and Horror

Continuity is a starter scenario for *Eclipse Phase* in which the player characters encounter previous versions of themselves now infected by a terrible nanovirus. It includes tips for gamemasters new to running *Eclipse Phase*.

MISSION HOOK

The party is stranded on the dying space station *Kepler* with no recollection of the past two weeks. Outside, a ship is docking, carrying the only evidence of their last moments … and a deadly nanovirus.

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

In the default version of this scenario, intended for one-shot convention games, the player characters are all drawn from the sample characters provided on pp. 154-169 of the *Eclipse Phase* core rulebook or on pp. 180-191 of *Sunward*. The scenario is designed for six players, but it may be modified for smaller or larger groups. The following sample characters are recommended:

- Anarchist Techie (*EP*)
- Argonaut Xenoarchaeologist (*EP*)
- Brinker Genehacker (*EP*)
- Lunar Ego Hunter (*EP*)
- Mercurial Scavenger (*EP*)
- Scum Enforcer (*EP*)
- Titanian Explorer (*EP*)
- Mobile Scientist (*Sunward*)
- Scavenger (*Sunward*)
- Siftrunner Techie (*Sunward*)

Other sample characters may be used, but it is recommended that their skills and equipment be modified by the gamemasters to better fit the scenario.

The characters are all currently working for the argonaut faction (p. 79, *EP*) on the *Kepler* remote space station, performing various types of research (or acting as support staff). Their exact background details may be improvised by the players and gamemaster during gameplay, as necessary.

At the gamemaster's discretion, pre-existing characters may also be allowed. Experienced characters may be lending their technical expertise to the argonauts as a favor or may have been placed on the *Kepler* by Firewall to analyze the station's long-range sensor data for politically sensitive information.

Because of the way it starts, *Continuity* also makes for an excellent introductory adventure for a campaign, particularly as a way to introduce the player characters to Firewall. Given the way the adventure is likely to shake out, Firewall is likely to make contact with the characters afterward to learn from their experiences and to find out what what they know about the exsurgents on the *Istari*.

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Alternatively, if part of an ongoing campaign, the gamemaster may assign the station to a different faction—for example, describing it as a Jovian spy station the characters have been asked to infiltrate. While the *Kepler* is described as a research station, it can easily be re-tasked by the gamemaster for other (even less than legal) purposes to better fit the campaign.

SETTING

This mission is set entirely on the research station *Kepler* and on the long-range comet-catcher, the *Istari*.

THE KEPLER

The *Kepler* is an argonaut research station in the Kuiper Belt, far on the rim of the system, approximately 40 AU from the sun. The *Kepler* has a standard compliment of six to eight crew members (the player characters) and the station's AGI, Hans. The player characters have been working there for six months, overseeing astronomical scans of the solar system and deep space, conducting microgravity chemical and biological experiments, or engaging in other research appropriate to their background. The *Kepler* also serves as a long-range listening post on outer system communications traffic. The station is a small cluster habitat (p. 280, *EP*) composed of different interlocked modules and operates in microgravity.

For a full layout of *The Kepler*, see p. 7

THE ISTARI

The *Istari* is a long-range comet miner taking a three-year elliptical route through the Kuiper Belt. The crew of the *Istari* consisted of a pair of whale uplifts (Corwyn and Dezany) in hibernoid morphs, a third crew member (Ilavura) sleeved in a synth shell, a squad of drones, and a limited AI (Lila). For several years they methodically paced and intercepted comets and icy asteroids and dropped off self-replicating bots. These bots either mine the comets until the next ship arrives to pick up the haul or manufacture ice rockets to push the comet towards an interception point closer to the inner system, where they are used for the terraforming of Mars and other purposes. Now on its return leg, the *Istari* most recently collected the mining hauls from previously-planted drone operations (a mix of volatiles like hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and ammonia, as well as platinums and other metals) and was headed back towards the inner system when it had an unfortunate encounter.

For a full layout of *The Istari*, see p. 11

BACKGROUND

Recently the crew of the *Istari* crossed paths with a relic of the Fall: a TITAN device—perhaps a ship, drone, or probe, damaged from fighting—that was slowly but surely tumbling away from the solar system towards deep space. Thinking they had found some space debris that they could perhaps make a salvage claim on, the whales sent a drone to investigate. Unfortunately for them, the drone became infected by an exsurgent virus variant, dubbed here the Chrynalus Virus (p. 4), which it then transmitted back to their ship. The *Istari's* cornucopia machine was infected via the ship's mesh network and soon thereafter began producing a nanovirus to spread the exsurgent infection. The resulting plague killed Corwyn and Dezany. Ilavura, also infected, abandoned his shell and lives on as a deranged infomorph.

Due to the infection, the *Istari* is no longer on course to return to the inner system. In fact, Ilavura turned the ship around and killed much of their velocity in his madness, sending the ship drifting, slowed-down and off course. Its current path brought it in the vicinity of the *Kepler.*

The crew of the *Kepler,* detecting the *Istari's* presence, also noted dangerous containment leaks in the comet herder's drives. The crew of the *Kepler* hailed the *Istari* but received only static. After some debate, they backed themselves up and went out to investigate, taking the *Kepler's* shuttle to dock with the *Istari*. Interception took about one week. Unfortunately for the argonauts, once they entered the *Istari,* they too were infected.

That evening the *Istari* ejected a mass of frozen ammonia to decelerate onto an intercept course with the *Kepler*. It also broke radio silence to transmit a static-filled message back to Hans, purportedly from one of the argonauts, saying the ship was damaged but safe. The message was followed by a large data packet containing the virus. Hans detected the infection immediately—but not before contracting it himself. He shut down and ejected compromised communications devices and isolated himself in the only remaining secure area of the network.

It has taken the *Istari* a week since contact to spiral around and begin docking procedures with the *Kepler*. Forty hours ago, Hans struck back at the virus, temporarily reclaiming a portion of the station's mesh. During this period he set the station's medical bay to resleeve the player characters from their recent backup, isolating that system from the rest of the mesh. He then retreated back into hiding. Due to excising parts of himself to fend off the virus, Hans has descended into irrational paranoia.

The characters awake, not knowing the events of the past two weeks, surrounded by a station that is infected and dying. Their only ally is a mad AI that has gone into hiding. They do no realize it, but they have only a few hours before a ship full of exsurgents docks at the station.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Here is a short timeline of the events leading to the current situation.

Six Months Ago: The characters begin working on the *Kepler*.

Two Months Ago: The *Istari* sends a drone to investigate a possible salvage claim. The drone gets infected with the digital Chrynalus virus and transmits it back to the *Istari*. The infected cornucopia machine creates a nanovirus and infects the crew.

One Month Ago: Ilavura turns the *Istari* around; the ship drifts aimlessly.

Two Weeks Ago: The *Kepler* detects the *Istari*; attempts to hail the vessel fail. The *Kepler* crew backs themselves up and take a shuttle out to investigate the *Istari.*

One Week Ago: The *Kepler* crew members reach the *Istari,* breach it, and are all infected with Chrynalus. The *Istari* sets a path to intercept the *Kepler.* The infected crew transmit a deceptive message back to the *Kepler's* AGI, Hans, infecting him and the station with the virus. Hans excises parts of himself and retreats into hiding.

40 Hours Ago: Hans reclaims part of the *Kepler's* mesh and sets the resleeving process for the characters in motion.

The Mission Begins: Characters awaken (see *Timeline of Events*, p. 6). ■

CHRYNALUS VIRUS

The Chrynalus strain of the exsurgent virus (p. 362, *EP*) is initially spread via digital infection. It is intelligent and attempts to subject physical targets to an aural basilisk hack. Once a nanofabrication device is infected, it begins manufacturing a nanoplague version for physical infection.

DIGITAL INFECTION

The digital virus operates as described on p. 364, *EP.* Any AIs, infomorphs, or cyberbrains that become infected do not immediately become exsurgents, however. Instead, they suffer 1d10 – 2 SV per hour and are inflicted with paranoia, delusions, hallucinations, and other mental disorders as they descend into madness.

BASILISK HACK

Digital versions of the virus will attempt to expose embodied victims to an aural basilisk hack (p. 364, *EP*). At normal speed, the hack is an audible series of dissonant tones. At a slower speed, it plays at a frequency barely noticeable to the unaugmented ear and may ride on something as innocuous as radio static. This hack follows the rules for incapacitating inputs (p. 365, *EP*). Many victims fall prey to the basilisk hack, which keeps them incapacitated until the nanoplague converts them to exsurgents.

NANOPLAGUE

The nanofabricated version of the virus follows the rules for nanoplagues (p. 364, *EP*). These nanobots infect biological and synthetic bodies as well as electronics and other machinery.

Stage 1: For the first three hours, infected characters and items display no outward signs of infection. Characters, however, suffer 1d10 – 2 SV per hour and are barraged with paranoia and delusions, much like infected infomorphs. Inside the character or item, however, the nanobots are building up strange synthetic growths.

Stage 2: At this stage the infection becomes visible as the growing masses inside the body—called *chrysacids*—pierce the surface and start growing as spurs, palpi, or spined limbs. Infected characters still suffer 1d10 – 2 SV per hour during this stage and additionally suffer 2d10 SV when the chrysacids first puncture their skin or shell. This stage lasts for about a day. Characters who reach their Lucidity in stress become exsurgents.

Stage 3: At this point in the infection, the chrysacids grow up to 3 meters in length. These structures begin exhibiting a life of their own, engaging in limited autonomous movement and sensory processing. The chrysacids also grow in clumps and begin taking on an insectoid or spider-like appearance. Larger growths break off, scurrying about as independent critters. Chrysacid critters and limbs are under independent gamemaster control. This stage last for about a week. Biomorphs eventually succumb and die, but the chrysacid growths live on. ■

STAGE I: COLD START

Gamemasters should read the following aloud or click the icon to hear it read aloud:

READ ALOUD

You awaken to the distant sound of klaxons. Your breath turns to frost on the glass window of the ego bridge pod. Your naked bodies are covered with the sticky, fibrous remnants of suspension fluid and discarded protein strands. Your muses flicker online and flash through their diagnostics. The local mesh is down. Something seems to be jamming wireless signals.

You last remember checking in for a backup, not a resleeve. Your muses tell you that two weeks have passed since that time.

The party awakes in new bodies in the *Kepler* medical lab. They are naked and unequipped but have access to thin medical gowns, medical equipment, and a fabber (p. 328, *EP*) for making and disposing of medical supplies they might need. The medical bay contains eight healing vats (p. 326, *EP*), ten morph storage tanks (all empty), an ego bridge (p. 328, *EP*), a Dr. Bot (p. 345, *EP*), and a fully operational examination and surgical setup.

RECENT MEMORIES

The last thing the player characters remember is checking in for a backup two weeks ago in preparation for a mission to check on the *Istari*. They will remember picking up the *Istari* on their telescope and scans, getting no response from the ship, and seeing signs that the ship's fusion drives seemed damaged. They will remember looking up records and finding that the *Istari* was a comet herder with a crew of three that seemed to have gone off route and off schedule and which was not responding to attempts to hail it.

THE STATION'S MESH

The local mesh is not responding. An Interfacing Test (perhaps by a character's muse) will reveal that the Dr. Bot has been hacked to jam common wireless radio frequencies. The characters can hack the Dr. Bot themselves to turn this off or can switch to uncommon frequencies. Doing either puts them at risk of infection from other broadcasting mesh elements in the station (see *Digital Infection and Basilisk Hack*, p. 4).

A MESSAGE FROM HANS

As the party emerges, wet, naked, and cold, the Dr. Bot vocalizes a recorded message from Hans. The message is glitchy and static-ridden, with some parts repeated:

READ ALOUD

Welcome online. AI server HQK01 … HQK– … K– … K01 has suffered combat damage and requires <static> immediate repair. Please report to the <static> Operations Module to render immediate repairs. Disable all wireless freq– … freq– … frequencies and <static>. Repeat, do not use radio frequencies under any circumstances. Treat all wireless-enabled devices as compromised.

The characters will recognize the voice of the message as Hans, the station's AGI. The robot will repeat the message if asked but there is no way to communicate with Hans directly. More random soundbites from Hans are included under *Hans*, p. 14.

GEARING UP

Characters with nanofabrication and hacking skills may want to hack the fabber to produce weapons or other objects. An attempt to hack the fabber should be treated as a standard intrusion to defeat the firewall and obtain

ALLIES AND ANTAGONISTS

This is a quick run-down of the scenario's main NPCs:

Exsurgents: The entire original crew of the *Kepler* (in the player characters' previous morphs) are still onboard the *Istari* and have been transformed by the nanovirus into hostile exsurgents.

The gamemaster should be aware of the characters' morphs before the start of the adventure, as the characters will be facing off against infected versions of themselves. Details on the changes that the virus has wrought on them can be found under *Nanoplague*, p. 3.

Hans: *Kepler's* AGI. Hans was exposed to the Chrynalus virus but voluntarily excised off infected segments of code before he was completely subsumed—the equivalent to a voluntary lobotomy and maiming of limbs. He now suffers from extreme paranoia and delusions and is shutting off parts of *Kepler*, including life support, to "protect" the characters.

Ilavura: The one surviving crew member from the *Istari*, Ilavura is an infected and deranged infomorph who still pilots the ship.

Lila: *Istari's* limited AI. Lila is too simple to be completely overtaken or driven deranged by the virus. She is aware that the current crew is dangerous, but her programming limits her response. Lila is willing to assist the player characters. ■

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Once the characters awaken, events happen very quickly on the *Kepler*, and the characters have limited time in which to act. The following summary allows gamemasters to keep track of what happens and when:

Mission Begins: The characters awaken.

1 Hour In: All breathable atmosphere in the *Kepler* will be vented if the machine shop airlock is not closed.

1 Hour In: The *Istari* is visible with a successful Perception Test at –20.

2 Hours In: The *Istari* docks with the *Kepler*.

4 Hours In: Hans's last firewalls will be breached and he will be fully infected. ■

admin privileges; this is an InfoSec Task Action Test with a –30 modifier and a timeframe of 10 minutes (p. 254-255, *EP*). Alternatively, the hacker can try for a quicker brute-force hack (p. 256, *EP*). Only characters that can establish a direct wired link using access jack implants can attempt to do this without accessing the fabber through the mesh (and thus exposing themselves to infection). If the fabber is hacked it can be reprogrammed with a successful Nanofabrication Test (p. 284, *EP*), though most complex objects will take at least an hour to produce. Simple, one-piece, objects such as knives or some tools can be produced in as little as five minutes. At the gamemaster's discretion, the characters may simply not have the blueprints available for fabricating larger or more complex items (and programming their own blueprints would take too long for the purposes of this scenario).

OPENING THE DOOR

The medical bay internal airlock door is electronically locked. After giving the message, the Dr. Bot will manually access and unlock the medical bay door.

When the characters go to open the door, give them a Perception Test to notice yellow warning lights that indicate an unequal air pressure outside the door. Typically they would also be warned by an entoptic alert, but this is blocked by the jamming. There is no way for them to determine what the air pressure outside the door is without accessing the local mesh and exposing themselves to infection (it is 600 millibars and dropping). They should be satisfied that yellow is not completely dangerous; if there was no atmosphere outside the door, the warning would be red and would require an authorized override.

When they do open the door, there will be a gust of wind as the air pressure in the room equalizes with the dropping air pressure in the rest of the station; this will chill the air.

STAGE 2: EXPLORING THE KEPLER

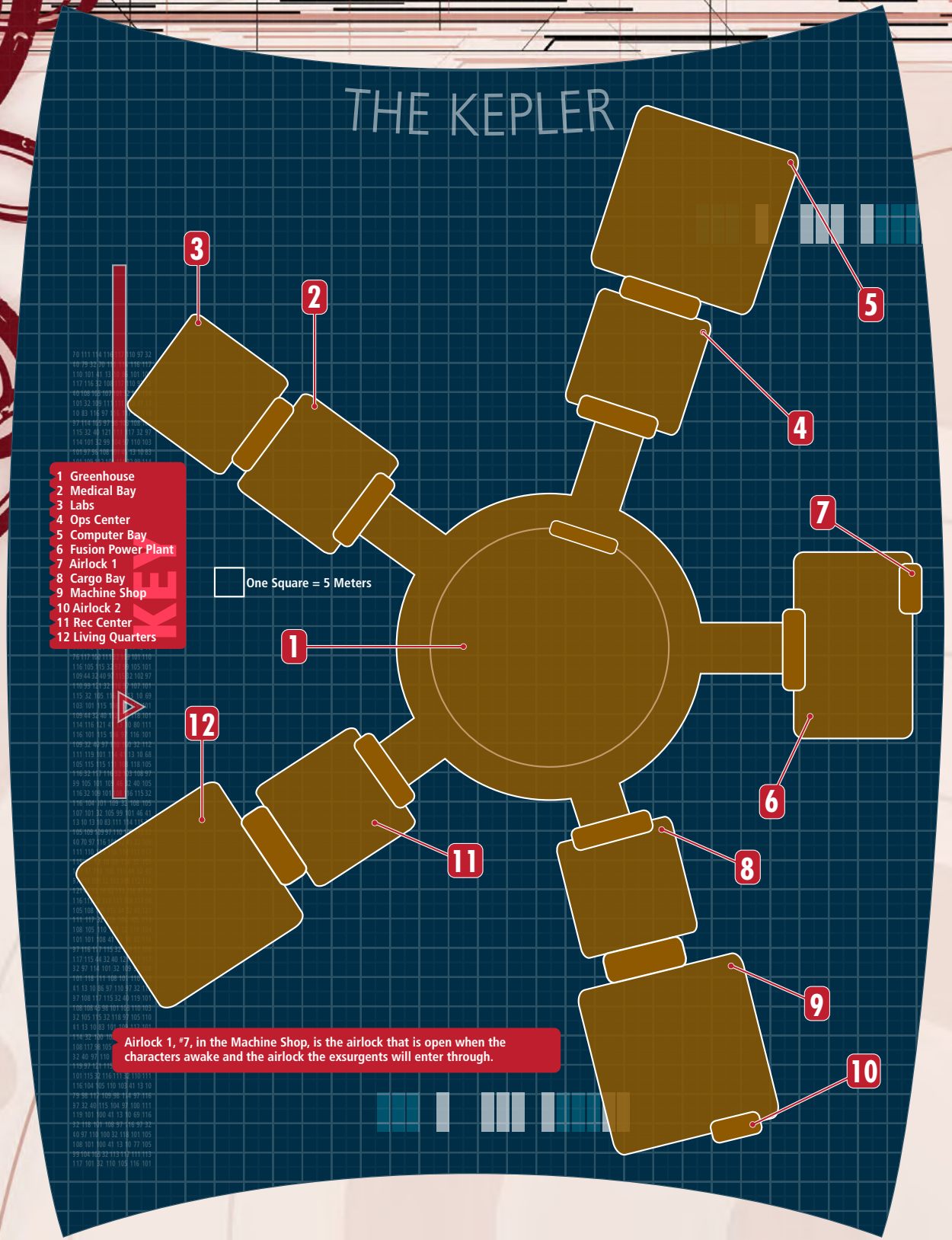
The characters are familiar with the *Kepler's* layout, having lived and worked there for months. Once they venture forth, however, they may be surprised by how it has changed. They will immediately notice an environment of disarray and the fact that many functions of the station are malfunctioning or disabled. The air is thin and cold, most lights are inactive and dark except for the strobe of warning beacons, and the station is eerily quiet.

TROUBLED TIMES

Hans, in the throes of delusion, recently came to believe that invisible dust is contaminating the ship and the source of the infection. To combat this, he is venting atmosphere to eliminate any contagions. The station is losing approximately 600 millibars of air pressure an hour (10 millibars a minute) through an open airlock in the machine shop. Biomorphs have twenty minutes to find insulation from the cold or they will suffer 1 point of damage every 2 minutes. They must also either seal the open airlock or find access to a source of oxygen before the air pressure drops below 160 millibars (in 45 minutes) or they will begin to suffer respiratory distress (–10 to COO, INT, and COG). When the pressure drops to 60 millibars (in 55 minutes), they will no longer be able to breathe and will suffer from asphyxiation (p. 194, *EP*).

KEPLER LAYOUT

The station is a modular habitat, designed for microgravity (p. 199, *EP*), meaning every surface is equally used and portals might be in any wall. The station includes a medical bay, living quarters, rec area, machine shop, ops center, labs, greenhouse, and a fusion generator. The station's sensor/communications module, including the farcaster unit, was disconnected by Hans and ejected into space. The station has no source of propulsion aside from minor altitude-adjusting jets. The station has two external airlocks: one in the machine shop and one in the fusion power plant module. Each module is also connected by internal airlocks (all of which are currently open). These airlocks may be closed and locked to seal certain modules off. Modules



may also be manually separated from the habitat/each other, though this requires a Hardware: Industrial Test with a time-frame of 10 minutes.

MAJOR MALFUNCTIONS

Most non-critical (and some critical) equipment in the *Kepler* has been disabled by Hans to prevent the spread of infection. This equipment can be enabled with a successful Interfacing, Hardware: Electronics, or Hardware: Industrial Test with a +20 to –10 modifier based on the complexity of the device. However, if the device's wireless links are not immediately disabled, it is likely to quickly become infected.

Hans was not completely thorough and some devices and station functions remain active. Almost all of these are infected by the exsurgent virus.

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Much of the smaller equipment contained within the habitat has been vented into space. The station carries vacsuits, basic weapons, and tools, but the characters' best equipment was taken onto the *Istari*. At the gamemaster's discretion, some of the gear listed on the sample character sheets may have been left behind, assuming there was no reason for the character to have taken it along on the mission to the *Istari*.

Three cornucopia machines in the machine shop can be used to nanofabricate desired equipment (see *Nanofabrication*, p. 284, *EP*), though if the characters do not protect the machines from infection they will start manufacturing the nano-virus form of the Chrynalus virus instead. Unfortunately certain items will not be able to be nanofactured in the time frame the characters have.

Additionally, equipment lockers in the machine shop contain two sets of

wrist-mounted tools, six standard vacsuits, two hard suits, four medium kinetic pistols, two microwave agonizers, two flex cutters, and three applications of scrapper's gel. All equipment can be found on pp. 296–349, *EP*

Closing the Airlock

Items that are not held down are slowly being sucked towards the open airlock by air movement. Perceptive characters (–20 to a Perception Test) may follow this movement toward the leak or feel the slight breeze on their own skin.

Hans tasked a bot to weld a steel frame into the open airlock, preventing it from being closed without a successful Hardware: Industrial Task Action with a timeframe of 1 hour and a –20 modifier.

Should a character get too close to the machine shop without being properly tethered, they will need to make a Free Fall Test at +20 to avoid being sucked out and ejected into space before they can grab on to something.

The characters will remember that the station's shuttlecraft was previously docked at this airlock. It is, of course, missing.

Interior doors may also be manually closed and sealed. Closing the doors to the machine shop will prevent the atmosphere in the rest of the ship from draining. Hans, however, may send a bot to open the airlock in the fusion power plant module.

Robotic Threat

In one of his recent furious bouts of madness, Hans convinced himself that intruders must have somehow accessed and sabotaged the station. Breaking out of hiding for a quick moment, he instructed the station's robots to attack anything that moved. He has since forgotten this order and the fact that it endangers the player characters.

This means that the station's automech (p. 345, *EP*) and two servitor bots (p. 346, *EP*) will attack any player characters that cross their paths. The gamemaster is encouraged to place these bots in innocuous or hidden places, perhaps seemingly powered down, so that they may attack from surprise. At the gamemaster's discretion, the station may hold more bots than these, all of them programmed to kill.

Finding Hans

Hans has sealed off the ops center. The only way in is to hack the door's electronic lock (using the standard rules for intrusion, p. 254, *EP*) or cut through the door (it has Armor 15, Durability 100, and a Wound Threshold of 25; see *Objects and Structures,* p. 202, *EP*).

Hans himself is hiding within the ops center's mesh network, most of which has been intentionally deactivated and isolated (though it may be physically accessed by jacking in to a console access point). Inside his hiding spot, Hans has been systematically cutting off parts of himself in response to real or perceived signs of infection. He recognizes that the missing server HQK01 is critical, but cannot remember why. The server is encrypted, but the ops center has a quantum computer that can be used to crack it (and which provides a +30 modifier to do so). This requires an Infosec Task Action with a timeframe of 1 week, however, and so it is unlikely to be completed in time to be of use. In a bit of foresight, however, Hans encrypted the server using an in-joke passphrase with which any of the player characters living on the station for the past few months would be familiar; a successful INT x 3 Test will raise this idea in the mind of any character who gives it some thought. The server contains several of Hans's critical intelligence modules, as well as his memories of the past year, including a log of all communications. The server is infected. If accessed, however, characters may review the radio logs of their boarding of the *Istari*.

If the characters access the ops center mesh and communicate with Hans, he will react in ways that make it clear he is damaged, paranoid, and extremely unstable. If the characters are not careful, they may easily convince Hans that they are a threat. Fortunately, most of the station is already disabled and beyond Hans's control. How exactly Hans reacts to this is up to the gamemaster. He may summon the station's bots to attack the characters, attempt to lure them into the fusion generator module and then open the airlock, or attempt to lock them inside another module where they can be contained. In an extreme scenario, he may trigger the fusion plant to begin self-destruct proceedings, effectively committing suicide but taking the perceived threat with him.

Uninvited Guests

Just a few hours after the characters awake, the *Istari* will arrive and dock with the *Kepler.* Any character looking out one of the station's windows or an open airlock may have a chance to see the ship approaching in the final hour (Perception Test at –20 or gamemaster's discretion). Since Hans ejected the sensor/communications module, the station has no means of detecting the approaching ship until it comes within visual range of some of the (still active but infected) external cameras.

As the *Istari* makes its final approach it will broadcast a message that anyone accessing wireless frequencies or the local mesh can receive. This message will originate from one of the original (infected) members of the crew—an earlier version of one of the player characters. They will ask permission to dock, state that the *Istari* is safe, and express relief at getting back to the station. They will also show concern that Hans and the *Kepler* have not been responding—and possibly confusion that the characters have been restored from backup if the characters communicate with them. A successful Kinesics Test (+30 if made by the character's newer ego) reveals stress and subterfuge. The exsurgents will also transmit the aural basilisk hack and attempt to infect the recipient with the digital Chrynalus virus.

STAGE 3: BOARDING

Gamemasters should read the following aloud or click the icon to hear it read aloud:

READ ALOUD

> You feel the station shudder with the familiar rumble that means a ship has docked. The sensation of different pressures equalizing pushes upon your inner ears and you both feel and smell a gust of contaminated air that blows in from the direction of the machine shop. Something foul has arrived to the *Kepler*.

Hans has disabled so much of the station that he is unable to prevent the *Istari* from docking. There is little the characters can do either. Beyond the communication noted above, the *Istari* maintains radio silence as it completes its docking process, attaching itself to the airlock in the machine shop.

If the characters remain unaware of the *Istari's* approach, they will feel the station shudder as the ship docks (and will be familiar with what that shudder means). Any characters present in the machine shop will witness the airlock being accessed and feel the gust of contaminated air that blows in from the *Istari*. (If the machine shop airlock has somehow been rendered unusable, the *Istari* will dock at the fusion power plant module airlock instead.)

THE CREW

The previous crew has been fully transformed by the virus. Their bodies are emaciated, twisted and broken, held together by patches of chrysacid structures, wrapped in tatters of dried skin and vacsuit. Two-meter-long twisted, black legs sprout irregularly from breaks in the skin. Palps and pincers grow from their mouths and eye sockets. Their faces are distended and nearly unrecognizable, but their identity is immediately clear from the names and patches on their suits or the entoptic displays of their mesh IDs. The crew consists of the infected members from the *Kepler,* an infected infomorph of one of the original *Istari* crew (Ilavura), and the limited AI Lila.

When the *Istari* docks, the exsurgents will spread themselves between both ships, staying to dark corners or clinging to the hull in the vacuum of space. They are aggressive, but do not actively seek out the player characters. Ilavura will ignore the player characters until they show any sign of ability or willingness to disable the *Istari*, at which point he will use every aspect of the ship and any available drones to eliminate the threat.

Characters who encounter exsurgents must make a Willpower Stress Test (p. 214, *EP*) or suffer 1d10 SV. Encountering their own previous biomorph inflicts an additional 1d10 SV.

ACCESSING THE ISTARI

The wireless mesh on the *Istari* is active, but both antiquated and glitchy due to the infection. Lila is still acting as the ship's active mesh security, though it is also possible that Ilavura may intervene.

At any point that the characters attempt to interact with the ship, they may activate the limited AI, Lila. Lila logged the *Istari's* interception of the object that brought about the infection. Lila has little personality; she will obey any commands given but must actively work to prevent the ship and its occupants from being killed or disabled. She does not understand the virus vector and will play the virus's aural basilisk hack if requested. She does not withhold any information, including the codes for operating the on-board missiles, but she is not capable of comprehending some orders or drawing conclusions.

ISTARI LAYOUT

The *Istari* is built around a central spine mounted with large storage containers that hold ammonia, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, platinum, and metal ores. The aft of the ship holds a large fusion drive. The fore of the ship supports a giant, magnetized hydrogen scoop. The habitation decks saddle the center of the ship. Built around the habitation decks are drone racks and a missile rack (for breaking comets or asteroids into pieces for collection). The ship is old and pock-marked from micro-meteor strikes. The *Kepler's* shuttle is docked on the "roof" airlock, and the *Istari* will dock with the *Kepler* on its starboard airlock and docking spar. Any *Istari* airlock may be opened and cycled without requiring a test. The lights in the ship have been disabled. The hull of the ship is made of advanced composites, and interior walls are made of hardened polymers (p. 203, *EP*). Interior doors may be locked with a Simple (+20) Interface Test. Any loose equipment the player characters may have originally brought with them to the *Istari* may be available in the ship, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Many surfaces in the *Istari* are covered with colonies of chrysacid spurs (p. 15). Their monofilament-edges make them extremely hazardous—even to characters in vacsuits. Whenever a character maneuvers through a room infested with spurs, an Easy (+10) Freefall Test or a Difficult (–10) Climbing Test is required to avoid hitting them. Maneuvering through tight spaces requires a Challenging (–30) Freefall or Climbing Test.

1. DOCKING SPAR

The *Istari's* extendable docking spar creates an air-tight seal over the *Kepler's* airlock. Should the party have successfully sealed the open airlock, a single vector-thrust automech (p. 345, *EP*) will use a cutting torch to slice through the airlock before going inert. The interior of the accordion-style docking spar is scattered with floating tools and grey dust. The spar extends for fifteen meters, ending at an open airlock into the utility bay.

Shortly after docking, two exsurgents will crawl along the outside of the docking spar and enter the *Kepler* through the fusion generator's airlock (or any other available opening). The walls of the spar are made of a thin, metallic foil (Armor 2, Durability 10, Wound Threshold 2). If the exsurgents sense anything within, they will attack.

The automech is functional, though infected. It will not obey commands from the characters unless hacked, though doing so will open up the characters to infection. The chrysacid growths it sprouts impede it's abilities, inflicting a –20 modifier on all physical actions.

2. UTILITY BAY

Anchored chrysacid spurs sprout from the walls and work table here, making navigation extremely hazardous. Two hard suits hang in the back corner. One of the suits is contaminated; spurs have penetrated the seal on the right gauntlet and broken off inside. Opposite the open airlock to the docking spar, a sealed airlock leads to the recycling bay. On the walls to either side, closed airlocks lead to the drone docking bay and missile storage area. A sealed circular port set in the floor leads down to the power controls.

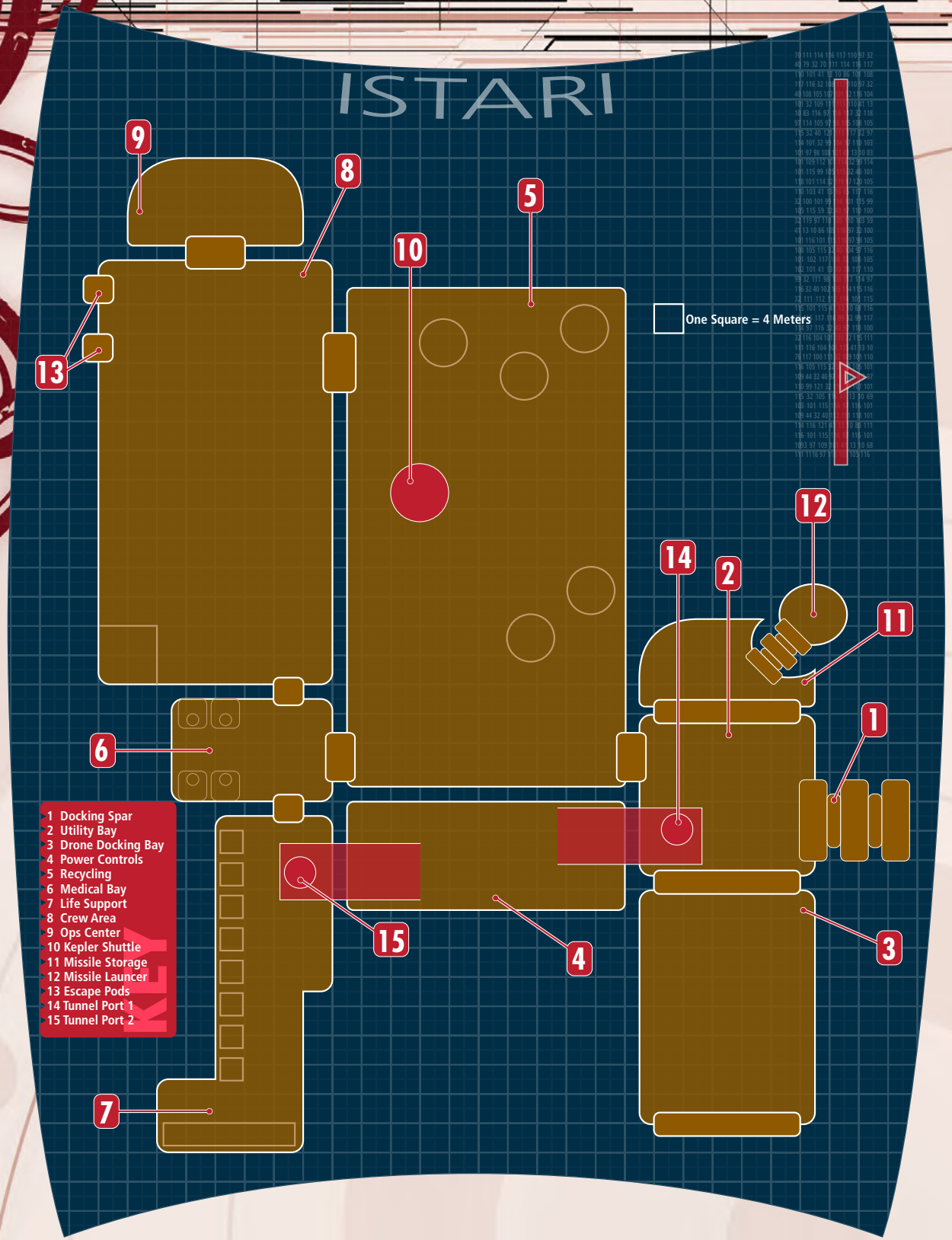
3. DRONE DOCKING BAY

The drone docking bay is not pressurized. It contains three deactivated and uninfected drones; one automech and two vector-thrust dwarves (p. 345, *EP*). A large door to the rear opens into space. The docking bay is free from contamination. All three bots may be activated but they are programmed to only respond to commands from the original crew. Characters that wish to use them must hack them.

4. POWER CONTROLS

A port set in the floor of the utility bay (identified as 14 on the map) opens to a narrow tunnel, lined with fine, grey dust. The tunnel leads thirty meters down, then across into the power control area. Computer displays light the area in ambers and indigos. The body of one of the *Istari's* original pilots is hunched over in the center of the room, rooted to the wall by twisted, grey limbs. The skin has dried to leather, but it still wears the ragged remains of a blue jumpsuit. Long, slender limbs arch out of the corpse's back like stripped wings and will strike out at any character that draws close.

The display panels show that power is operating normally. It does note the radiation leak, which is a long-term health hazard, but will not prevent the operation of the ship. A tunnel to the side leads to a thirty meter tube ending in the life support module (15 on the map.)



5. RECYCLING

The walls of the recycling bay arch ten meters above the ground. The walls are lined with pipes and vats. In the center of the room, three giant, boiler-shaped machines grind away, protected in a web of twisted pipes and wires. Some of the vats along the walls have broken. Slender chrysacid legs retract into breaks into broken vats, amid a nest of wriggling hairs. The legs lash out at any character foolish enough to draw close. Chrysacid critters crawl around the joints of the machines, scurrying from the shadows of flashlights and computer screens. Three exsurgents crawl through the room, searching for food or intruders. In the wall opposite the airlock to the utility bay, two sealed airlocks lead to the medical bay and crew living area, respectively. An open portal at the top of the bay leads to the *Kepler* shuttle.

6. MEDICAL BAY

The medical bay contain a pair of healing vats. One is empty, the other is sealed and the window grown over with a wriggling mass of chrysacid hairs. There is a surgical table and a set of surgical tools, as well as basic medical supplies and medicines. Three airlocks on separate wals lead to the the life support module, crew area, and recycling bay, respectively. Except for the single healing vat, the medical bay is not contaminated.

7. LIFE SUPPORT

The life support node is crammed with heavy machines struggling to regenerate the lost atmosphere. The ship's AI, Lila, has been actively maintaining the filters. A rack of operational mesh servers are inset in one wall. "LILA" is written on the rack in tidy block letters.

8. Crew Area

The crew area serves as a general rec room, dining room, science lab, and sleeping area for the original crew members. Bunks and a toilet may be pulled out of a wall. There's a small shower stall in the corner. Overstuffed chairs are bolted to the walls. The chrysacid-pierced corpse of the other original *Istari* crew member sits in one of these. Cabinets contain an assortment of XP chips and equipment for games, such as room tennis. There are sealed doors to the medical bay and recycling bay on separate walls. Opposite the airlock to the medical bay, flickering lights from the ops center shine through an open doorway; the exsurgents active there may be heard from here. Jagged spurs float freely through the air and have taken root on clothes and tools. Chrysacids of various sizes crawl behind the furniture and in drawers.

There are two small red hatches set in the corner of the room, operated by a lever. Each connects to a single, one-person escape pod. When activated, the pod will fill with a nanobot suspension fluid that will put the subject into hibernation. The pod then fires from the fore of the ship, heads towards the nearest large radio transmitter, and activates its emergency beacon. An emergency pod only has space for a single person and one medium-sized object.

9. Ops Center

The operations center is a nest of splayed fiberoptic cables and floating droplets of liquid crystal. Two exsurgents smash at the controls, spraying pieces of plastic. They attack anything that approaches within four meters of them. Ilavura will broadcast the basilisk hack over every available medium; intercom, radio, and (ineffectively) displaying it on display screens, trying to drive the characters away. With the panels torn away, the party can see the server that hosts Ilavura. If the characters (or exsurgents) do not leave or otherwise prove to be threatening, Ilavura will do everything in his power to kill or eject them as long as it does not disable the *Istari.* He will activate any remaining drones to come to his aid. The casing protecting the servers has Armor 7, Durability 40, and a Wound Threashold of 8, but has already received 20 points of damage.

10. Kepler Shuttle

The shuttle from the *Kepler* is docked, roof-to-roof, on top of the *Istari* recycling bay. An open air lock off the top of the recycling bay feeds into the central room of the shuttle. The central room has acceleration seats for eight, tables, and limited entertainment and survival equipment. To the rear of the shuttle is a small restroom, a desktop cornucopia machine, and the life support machinery. One exsurgent is trapped in the shuttle. As the airlock opens, the exsurgent attacks anything preventing it from escaping back into the *Istari.* The ship's computer includes video surveillance of the *Kepler* crew's arrival and subsequent infection.

11. Missile Storage

This bay originally contained twelve short-range, computer-guided missiles. Only two missiles remain. A single exsurgent lurks around the storage containers and will attempt to capture and eat any easy prey.

12. Missile Launcher

The *Istari* includes a missile launcher for breaking meteors and large mined chunks into smaller pieces for processing. The launcher connects to the storage bay via an extendable cable—very similar to the docking spur—that lets the missile launching pod float up to 100 meters away from the *Istari.* Missiles can be manually fired with a Gunnery Test, though the firing mechanism is locked and must be hacked first. Missiles will not detonate within five kilometers of the *Istari.* The minimum-detonation range can be disabled with a successful Hardware: Electronics Test or with the override code provided by Lila. The missiles can be manually removed from the bay and carried.

Stage 4: Resolution

How the characters resolve the scenario is up to them. Several possible events are detailed below.

Steal the Istari

Much of the equipment on the *Istari* is carrying the virus. If the *Istari* returns to civilization, an outbreak is almost assured. Living for any significant amount of time aboard the *Istari* will almost guarantee infection. Characters delivered as cortical stacks or in suspended animation may survive long enough to fight the infection wherever it is they are recovered.

Disable or Abandon the Istari or Kepler

If abandoned and disabled, the exsurgents on board will eventually die. However, the *Istari* and the *Kepler* will still hold the virus and will eventually be recovered by other parties claiming salvage. If the characters manage to warn the argonauts or an organization such as Firewall, that group will move to destroy the ship and/or station—hopefully before anyone else gets infected.

Destroy the Kepler and Istari

The *Istari* contains two missiles. If the player characters place the second missile on the *Kepler*, both ships may be successfully destroyed. If the missiles are simply detonated on board the *Istari,* only the ship will be destroyed; the *Kepler* (though damaged) will need to be dealt with separately. Alternatively, if the missiles are fired at the *Kepler,* the station will be destroyed but the ship will remain intact.

Ignore the Istari

Any plan to escape the infection without disabling the *Istari* practically guarantees Ilavura will leave the *Kepler* and spread the infection elsewhere before the player characters have another opportunity to intervene.

Escape Pods

Two characters may escape using the *Istari's* escape pods. The cortical stacks (or severed heads) of the other characters may be stored in the pod, permitting them to also escape. Refer to the rules for popping cortical stacks for more details (p. 268, *EP*).

Death, Insanity, or Suicide

If the player characters fail to escape at all, they will eventually be safely resleeved from their last backups, which were farcast (uninfected) six months prior to the *Kepler* crew preparing to make first contact with the *Istari*. In this case, they will have no memories of this scenario and may never know what happened until either ship is recovered.

Stage 5: Aftermath

Depending on how the player characters dealt with the infection, the gamemaster may choose for them to encounter it again later when the *Istari* or *Kepler* are recovered. Additionally Firewall, if notified of the infection, may ask the characters to investigate where the *Istari* originally picked up the virus and make sure there is no more debris floating around that could contaminate other craft.

If the characters fail to contain the virus or all perish then there is a good chance they will be resleeved from backups taken prior to their departure to the *Kepler* and asked to investigate what happened—or even to try to stop the *Istari* and *Kepler,* if they managed to get out word of what occurred. This time, however, they may be facing even more of their former selves.

If Ilavura is able to take control of the *Kepler* and subvert Hans and any of the cornucopia machines, he attempts to build a drone to retrieve the ejected farcaster so that he can transmit himself to the inner system.

If the characters manage to defeat the exsurgents and survive, they may be able to locate the sensor/communication module that Hans ejected, as it has not drifted too far from the station. This would allow them to farcast away, though it also raises the possibility that the virus might be transmitted with them.

Rez and Rep Awards

Characters may be awarded reputation awards, and those who survive may earn some rez points.

REZ & REP

OUTCOME	AWARD
Characters were able to contain or eliminate all of the infected egos.	3 RP, +5 c-rep
Infection reported to Firewall	+ 5 i-rep
Infection reported to argonauts	+ 5 r-rep
Istari disabled or destroyed	1 RP
Character contributed to success in a significant way	1 RP
Character achieved a motivational goal (p.121, *Eclipse Phase*)	1 RP
Player engaged in good roleplaying	1 RP
Player significantly contributed to the session's drama, humor, or fun with roleplaying	1 RP

CHARACTERS

This section lists game stats and details on major NPCs.

HANS

Kepler AGI

Hans is the AGI operating the *Kepler* station. He is infected with the Chrynalus virus, and the infection progresses over the course of the scenario.

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
20	10	15	10	10	10	20	1

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
50	3	40 (0)	8	80	0	0	00

Active Skills: Hardware: Electronics 60, Hardware: Industry 60, Hardware: Robotics 30, Infosec 60, Interfacing 60, Medicine: Nanomedicine 40, Navigation 30, Pilot: Spacecraft 40, Programming 50, Research 40

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Astronomy 60

Roleplaying: Hans is suffering from extreme paranoia and delusions. He is sufficiently aware of his situation to realize the player characters can help, but is going to take measures to protect himself from further infection, even if that consequently kills the transhumans or himself. As the scenario goes on, his level of paranoia and delusion will increase and his rationality and precautions will decrease. By the end, he may be convinced the player characters are infected and must all be destroyed.

While Hans has one important line in the adventure (included below for ease of use), you can also play the following generic soundbites if the characters attempt to further query him.

1. "Welcome online. AI server HQK01 … HQK– … K– … K01 has suffered combat damage and requires <static> immediate repair. Please report to the <static> Operations Module to render immediate repairs. Disable all wireless freq– … freq– … frequencies and <static>. Repeat, do not use radio frequencies under any circumstances. Treat all wireless enabled devices as compromised."

2. "I'm sorry, I can't do that, my current operating parameters forbid it."

3. "Please repeat your command."

4. "The information you have requested is not available."

5. "Cycling <static> open."

6. "Safety interlock corrupted <static> online."

7. "Welcome back, user. Please enable <static>"

LILA

Istari AI

Lila is a pre-Fall AI operating on the *Istari*. She is too simple to be infected by the virus. Her programming forces her to protect the crew and the ship, but she may help the player characters.

Active Skills: Hardware: Electronics 30, Hardware: Industry 40, Interfacing 40, Navigation 40, Pilot: Spaceship 40

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Astronomy 30

Roleplaying: Lila is extremely simple. She lacks personality and the ability to analyze situations and draw original conclusions. Her first directive is to protect the ship and everything living on board. Her second directive is to fully obey any orders given her. She does not understand the ship is infected.

ILAVURA

The sole remaining crewmember of the original *Istari* crew, Ilavura is an infomorph.

Aptitudes: COG at 10, the rest at 5.

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
15	10	20	10	10	15	5	2

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
60	3	10	2	20	0	0	00

Active Skills: Freefall 70, Infiltration: 40, Infosec: 30, Interface: 50, Navigation: 50, Pilot: Spacecraft 70, Perception 70, Programming: 40, Seeker Weapons: 30

Knowledge Skills: Language: English 70, Language: French 60, Language: Spanish 40

Roleplaying: Ilavura cares only for his own survival. After determining the *Kepler* is not where he wishes to be, he will continue on, carrying the deadly virus with him. He will actively work to destroy anything which he perceives to be a threat to himself or the ship, however the virus has left him unable to adequately appraise threats. He may fall for simple lies, or may lash out without provocation—at attacking enemies only he can see.

INFECTED (EXSURGENTS)

The six to eight original crew members of the *Kepler* are infected. They have been reduced to mindless animals, driven by the instinctual drives to eat, roost, and defend themselves. Characters who encounter these exsurgents must make a Willpower Stress Test (p. 214, *EP*) or suffer 1d10 SV. Characters who encounter their own previous biomorphs must take an additional 1d10 SV.

Aptitudes: Base as the player characters but –10 COG, +10 SOM, +10 REF, +15 COO

Active Skills: Same as the player characters, with the addition of Climb: 70 (if not already higher), and Exotic Melee Weapon: Spurs 60. All Technical skills are lost.

Knowledge Skills: Languages as the player characters.

Implants: These exsurgents are extremely sensitive to shifts in air pressure, equivalent to Echolocation and Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Carapace Armor, Spurs (1d10 + 2 + SOM/10 DV, AP –3), Grip Pads, Hibernation, Poison Gland (psychoactive drug), Temperature Tolerance, Vacuum Sealing.

Any other implants the characters had are still active and usable.

Gear: Damaged heavy vacsuit (11/11 with Carapace Armor). The exsurgents may be carrying any gear attached to them when they entered the *Istari*, now covered with chrysacid spurs.

Roleplaying: Each of the infected is one of the original crew members of the *Kepler.* This fact should be emphasized in their dress, the remains of their bodies, and any equipment attached to them. Their limbs are unable to use weapons or tools designed for transhumans, but they may still hold onto them due to residual memories. These creatures should not necessarily seek out the player characters, but they will actively defend themselves if threatened, and won't turn down an easy lunch.

CHRYSACID FORMS

Chrysacids come in three forms: spurs, limbs, and spiders. Characters who encounter these forms acting autonomously must make a Willpower Stress Test (p. 214, *EP*) or suffer 1d10 + 3 SV. The chrysacid forms features monofilament edges capable of punching holes through armor. Whenever a character presses against a chrysacid form with sufficient force (such as bumping against one anchored to the wall), they receive 1d10 DV (AP –2).

If a character receives a wound from contact with a chrysacid form, they become infected with the Chrynalus nanovirus.

SPURS

ARMOR	DUR	WT	DR
5/7	5	1	7

Spurs manifest in the second stage of Chrynalus infection, extruding from within the bodies and shells of infected morphs or machinery or growing from anchored colonies in infected environments. Spurs are capable of limited movement but have no way of sensing their environment.

LIMBS

ARMOR	DUR	WT	DR
5/7	10	2	15

Chrysacid limbs express in the third stage of infection. Though attached to whatever they have sprouted from, they are capable of autonomous movement and possess photosensitive cells to "see" and detect movement. They attack by slicing their targets or grabbing and pinching.

Skills: Perception 25, Unarmed Combat 50

Attack: 1d10 + 4 DV, AP –4

SPIDERS

ARMOR	DUR	WT	DR
5/7	20	4	30

Spiders have broken off from their original source and scurry about as independent spider-like critters. They are photo- and motion-sensitive. They will flee to dark crevices, but will actively bite or pinch any perceived intruders.

Skills: Fray 40, Perception 40, Unarmed Combat 60

Attack: 1d10 + 5 DV, AP –4