

STAR TREK
ADVENTURES™

BACCHUS'
IRRESISTIBLE
CALL

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A LIVING CAMPAIGN MISSION FOR 2269

INTRODUCTION

Bacchus's Irresistible Call is a mission for the *Star Trek Adventures* Living Campaign series. This mission is meant to be played by a Gamemaster and 3-6 Players and has been designed to be used for the *U.S.S. Lexington* and her crew in 2269.

To run this mission, the Gamemaster needs to be familiar with the mission itself and the *Star Trek Adventures* rules.

For this mission, you will need:

- At least two 20-sided dice (d20) per Player, and several 6-sided dice (d6) to serve as Challenge Dice
- A set of chips or tokens for Momentum
- A set of chips or tokens for Threat
- Characters and the *U.S.S. Lexington* starship sheet

SYNOPSIS

A planet in the Bacchus system (Bacchus IV) contains the remnants of an ancient, technologically advanced civilization. This civilization no longer inhabits this universe, but they are not technically extinct either. They have a method of subtly influencing people across the galaxy, driving them through delicate nudges to find and use their old technology. It is this drive to find and use the ancient civilization's technology that drives this adventure.

In this adventure, the crew of the *Lexington* is ordered to the Bacchus system for three reasons:

- 1) Two Starfleet officers stole a shuttle and were last seen heading toward the Bacchus system. The *Lexington* is to find and arrest these officers and retrieve the stolen vessel.
- 2) Reports of a Klingon Bird-of-Prey violating the Neutral Zone and heading toward the Bacchus system have reached Starfleet Command. The *Lexington* is to investigate to see if there is any truth to these reports.
- 3) Strange and indecipherable radio signals have been emanating from the Bacchus system for the past several weeks. The *Lexington* is to search for the source of these signals and try to determine their meaning, if any.

Arriving at Bacchus IV, the *Lexington* becomes disabled: the crew finds an energy beam from the planet has knocked everything offline. They can see from their vessel, however, artificial structures visible on the planet's surface with the naked eye. The crew must first stabilize the ship in a race against time to keep it from burning up in the planet's atmosphere.

After the crew ensures the safety of the ship, the beam of energy transports some of the crew (all of the Player Characters) down to the planet. On the planet, the landing party must deal with Klingons searching for their brethren who have fallen under the sway of this ancient civilization, navigate strange mechanical traps among the ancient ruins, and find the people who have come here (who turn out to be a mix of various races from throughout the galaxy). After learning more about the ancient technology, the crew must work with the Klingons to escape the planet with the gathered information intact.

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After accessing the ancient technology, the Characters are unexpectedly transported back to the Klingon ship. After dealing with a ship full of hostile Klingons, the Characters learn this vessel arrived while they were on the planet. The Klingon ship's warp core is about to go critical and needs to be ejected—however, the clamps to release it are jammed. The *Lexington* crew must work with the Klingons to keep the vessel from exploding, which would lead to the destruction of both ships. This includes a tense space-walk on the exterior of the bird-of-prey to repair damage.

At the end of the mission, an admiral for Starfleet collects the data taken from the planet, quarantines it and the crew, and orders them to not speak of what they saw here. The admiral is secretly influenced by these ancient creators of the powerful technology. Some of the information gathered includes a map to worlds within what will, in the TNG-era Living Campaign adventures, become known as the Shackleton Expanse, although this information remains restricted.

INTRODUCTION

When everyone is ready, the Player of the captain can read the following (which is also included as Handout 1).

Captain's Log: Stardate 5319.2

We will arrive at the Bacchus system within the hour. Starfleet Command has ordered us there for three reasons. First, we are to track down two Starfleet officers who stole a shuttle and were last detected heading in this direction. No one is sure why they did it, but two people were killed, and so they must answer for their crimes. Next, reports from passing ships and nearby outposts speak of signs that a Klingon bird-of-prey has violated the Neutral Zone and is heading toward the Bacchus system. We are to investigate to see if there is any truth to these reports. Finally, strange and indecipherable signals have been emanating from the Bacchus system for the past several weeks. The Lexington is to search for the source of these signals and try to determine their meaning, if any.

Any one of those three tasks would be enough to keep a commander on edge. Having all three problems present themselves simultaneously worries me greatly. My crew is undoubtedly ready for any challenge. All long-range probes sent to the Bacchus system stopped sending back data immediately after entering the system, so we are not sure what we are going to find there.

Ask the Players to describe where their Characters are stationed as the *Lexington* arrives in the Bacchus system. The best choices are the bridge, sickbay, or engineering. After everyone is ready, continue with Scene 1.

SCENE 1: ARRIVAL AT BACCHUS IV

When the *Lexington* comes out of warp, systems fail and the ship begins to fall out of orbit. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the Lexington drops out of warp, the ship lurches hard as if struck by a giant hand. Several crewmembers tumble to the ground. On the main viewer, you see one of the planets of the Bacchus system. Some sort of orange light beam from the planet's surface has enveloped the ship. The lights flicker and consoles go dark. Whatever the beam is, it is interfering with the ship's power, controls, and other systems.

Just before the main viewer goes blank, you see through the orange haze of the beam the surface of the planet. It is a little larger than the size of Earth, yet on the surface you clearly see structures: long lines that must cover thousands of miles connecting geometrical shapes the size of large cities, as well as other indications of artificial constructions.

Your immediate attention, however, must be with getting the Lexington in working order before she falls out of orbit and is destroyed in the planet's atmosphere. Some of the less-experienced members of the crew have a look of panic in their eyes, and are frozen in terror and confusion.

In order to stabilize the *Lexington* and keep the crew out of immediate danger, the crew must perform a Challenge comprised of several Tasks:

- Calm the crew and get everyone working in concert to overcome the emergency. This is a **Presence + Command Task** with a Difficulty of 2. Until this Task is performed successfully, increase the Difficulty of all Tasks in this Challenge by 1.
- Restore power. This is a **Reason + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 1. This Task must be completed before the following tasks can be completed:
 - Push the limits of the ship to amplify the power and move it to the most crucial systems: life support and engines. This is a **Daring + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 2. If the attempt fails, power is lost—power must be restored again with another Task.
 - Move the ship into a stable position to orbit the planet. This is a **Control + Conn Task** with a Difficulty of 2.
 - Analyze the nature and effects of the orange beam coming from the planet. This is a **Reason + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2. On a success, the Character realizes that the beam is both a scanner and a disabling mechanism. The Character can spend 1 Momentum to try to mitigate the harmful effects of the orange beam, as describe below:
 - If a signal is sent on a certain frequency back down the beam of light, it might mitigate the most harmful effects of the beam. Creating this signal is a **Control + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 1. This removes the immediate danger caused by the beam's disabling of the ship, although the *Lexington* is still disabled slightly.

- Repair some of the wiring that shorted out during the turbulence. This involves physically removing some damaged panels that have been scorched and mangled. This is a **Fitness + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 1.
- Perform medical triage on two crew members who were badly injured in the turbulence. This requires two separate **Presence + Medicine Tasks** with a Difficulty of 1. For each that fails, a crew member dies. Add one point of Threat for each death.

As this Challenge continues, be sure to describe the peril that the ship is in. It slowly drifts closer and closer to the planet's atmosphere, where it would be destroyed. The oxygen in the ship is being used up, making it hard to breath. Sparks and fires erupt around the ship, and small explosions can be heard in the distance. The orange beam that engulfs the ship causes severe lurches, which send people toppling dangerously.

You can also complicate the Challenge by having some of the Characters need to move between decks to get to locations where urgent repairs are needed. With the turbolifts out of commission, moving from one deck to another requires a **Fitness + Security Task** with a Difficulty of 3 to get through blocked access points.

After the Characters have completed the Challenge, earning possible Momentum or Threat in the process, finish the scene by reading or paraphrasing the following:

As you regain control of the ship, you now have enough power to keep the Lexington in orbit and maintain life support and limited sensors, but little else. The beam from the planet is not going to let your ship go. Before you even begin to formulate a plan, however, the beam from the planet intensifies. You feel the same sort of energy overtake you that powers your transporter. Something is taking you somewhere. The last thing you hear before you are pulled from your ship is a bridge ensign's voice saying, "I am detecting a Klingon bird-of-prey coming out of warp near us..."

Proceed to Scene 2.

SCENE 2: THE REFUGEES OF BACCHUS

After the dramatic events of Scene 1 have unfolded, read or paraphrase the following:

You materialize on what you can only assume is the planet's surface. Since you are breathing comfortably and not suffering any adverse effects, you conclude this must be a Class-M planet. One of the enormous geometrical structures, visible with the naked eye from orbit, now towers in front of you. This gigantic cylinder must have a diameter of at least 10 kilometers and is so tall you cannot even see the top. It appears to be made from a single piece of stone, as no seams or other areas of joining are apparent.

As you let this sink in, allow a Character to attempt a **Reason + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 0. This allows the Characters to gain Momentum while learning the following: If this is indeed a single piece of stone, it must have been carved from a larger body, probably the size of a moon. Doing something of that nature would require a technology far beyond what the Federation currently has.

As the Characters have more time to take in their surroundings, read or paraphrase the following:

As you take in more of the cylinder, you see that glyphs, runes, and other complex etchings score the entire cylinder. The detail and precision of the etching is breathtaking. Long pieces of stone, metal, and possibly other substances run away from this cylinder in several directions—all appearing to head toward other, equally large, geometric constructs in the distance. From a pentagonal tower in the distance, much shorter and smaller than this cylinder, two orange beams shoot into the sky.

The orange beams should give the Characters enough impetus to move in that direction. The walk to the next monolith takes about 90 minutes over rolling grasslands, with small hills and no major terrain hurdles.

A NOTE ON EQUIPMENT

Since the Characters are pulled from the *Lexington* before they have had a chance to prepare to come down to the planet, they have nothing with them except for their uniforms, unless at some point in the previous scene they specifically stated they were accessing a piece of equipment. They have the chance to gather equipment as they proceed through the adventure.

MEETING THE POSSESSED

When the Characters arrive at the pentagonal monolith, read or paraphrase the following:

The pentagonal monolith before you is at least 2,000 meters tall, and its base must be about 300 meters on a side. Where the two orange beams emerge from the monolith is on the opposite side, not currently in your view. A large metallic case rests on the ground at the base of the monolith. It is open but you cannot see inside from this distance. One side of the case is decorated with a single word in Klingon: "Emergency."

Inside the case are emergency supplies: water, rations palatable to a Klingon, blankets, an emergency surgical kit, and a single disruptor. If the Characters take the time to listen carefully, they can hear voices talking from the other side of the monolith. It is impossible to make out words though.

When the Characters round the edge of the pentagonal monolith, they see a strange sight. Read or paraphrase the following:

Eight creatures stand at the base of the monolith, looking up at the orange beams exiting the structure at a point about 50 meters up. From this distance, you can see that all of the creatures are humanoid: Two appear Human, two are Klingon, one is Vulcan, another is Romulan, and the final pair are Trill. The Romulan looks at your group and points, causing the rest of the strange menagerie to look in your direction. Then they all go back to looking at the monolith without a second glance at your presence.

The eight are all possessed, fully focused on trying to fathom how to activate and control the ancient machinery. The orange beams are triggered when spacecraft enter the proximity of Bacchus IV, so the eight are just as astounded as the Characters by the current situation. They take no hostile action against the characters unless they are attacked first. Most have no weapons, although the two Klingons each carry a *d'k tahg*, a Klingon dagger.

WHAT NOW?

How the rest of this scene plays out depends entirely on the decisions of the Players as the scene progresses. There are several issues and concerns of significance for the Characters:

- The two Humans are Lieutenant Janna Frye and Ensign Kamila Chara, the pair who deserted Starfleet and stole a ship to make their way to Bacchus IV. Although the people who died in the incident were killed accidentally, that does not mitigate anything in the eyes of Starfleet. The two must be brought in for a proper trial and subsequent punishment.
- The *Lexington* is in danger from the orange beam, so something has to be done to disable or mitigate the effects of the beam. (The second orange beam is affecting the Klingon bird-of-prey that entered orbit just as the crew of the *Lexington* was being brought down to the surface.)
- The scientific value of the knowledge that can be gathered here should not be understated. The species that built these monoliths, if it was a single species, had knowledge that far outpaced anything known by the Federation. Data should be gathered on this.

Each of these issues is handled separately in the sections below. While these are divided into discrete sections for the purpose of this adventure, they all might be happening at the same time if the circumstances warrant. Also note that at some point, the Klingons orbiting the planet have part of their crew drawn down to the planet just as the Characters were—and that is handled in the next scene.

THE POSSESSED

Although the possessed group initially ignores the Characters, they are not afraid of interaction. In general, these people behave in a serene and trusting manner. They answer the Characters' questions honestly and simply. Use the bullet points below to guide the conversation and role-playing scene:

- None of the people here know they are possessed. They are not controlled directly by the possessing force, and the possession only affects their host subconsciously.
- If asked what they are doing, the individuals state they are studying this fascinating and highly potent technology. The knowledge that can be learned here could literally change the course of history.
- If confronted with whatever crimes they committed to get here, the Humans act confused. They state that they didn't kill anyone. They did commandeer a shuttle because their commanding officers refused to acquiesce to their demands to come here and investigate. (In truth, the deaths they caused were accidental and they are not even aware that anyone died when they took the ship.)
- The other species present behave similarly. They state that they came here of their own accord to study this incredible technology.
- The Vulcan is a scientist and explorer called Bareen. The two Trill are siblings named Kaj and Mehira, unjoined members of a wealthy family who spent most of their lives pleasure-seeking until they found out about this planet. The Romulan is a former Senator named Xeton who disappeared while on his way to a diplomatic meeting with the Federation, which the

Romulans claimed was Human/Vulcan treachery. The two Klingons are D'lok and Brutog, low-ranking members of the Klingon military.

If the Characters attack any of the possessed, most run and seek cover. The Klingons and Humans, however, fight back. The Klingon warriors use their *D'k tahg* daggers, while the Humans fight with unarmed strikes. The only energy weapon available to anyone is the one the Characters may have taken from the Klingon emergency kit.

THE ORANGE BEAM

The dual orange beams are obviously emerging from the pentagonal monolith, but there is no way, at first, to deal with them. Attempts to block the opening that the beams emerge from fail, as whatever is placed in front of the opening is disintegrated by the beam. (Body parts placed within the beam react as if hit successfully with a disruptor rifle: Ranged, 4 Vicious 1.)

If asked about the beams, the eight possessed creatures confirm that one beam came out of the monolith early in the day (estimate the time has elapsed since the *Lexington* arrive, for this is when the beam activated), and the second beam emerged shortly after that (the beam that captured the Klingon ship that arrived just as the Characters were being transported to the planet's surface).

The only way to stop the beams is to get into the monolith, which is dealt with in the following section.

STUDYING THE TECHNOLOGY

A successful **Reason + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2 lets a Character realize that this whole planet is one big machine, and the monoliths and connecting pieces that cover the planet are pieces of the larger whole. With a planet-sized machine like this, it is not inconceivable that it could perform tasks on a cosmic level, like rearranging the positions of moons, planets, or even stars.

The runes and other etchings in the monoliths and connectors somehow act as transistors and circuits which pass power and signals among all the monoliths. The controls for the machine, however, are not readily apparent. If they are anywhere, they must be inside the monolith. Now to just figure out how to get inside!

A close study of the surface of the pentagonal monolith, in particular the etched runes, reveals that the patterns seem to be a mix of advanced science and cultural symbols. The controls for these epic devices make use of symbols from myth, legend, and history. An **Insight + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2 lets a Character see one section of the inscriptions talk about the opening of the way to those who are worthy of the power. Touching this section creates a scanning beam on the ground, right in front of a potential doorway. Read:

With the activation of one section of the monolith, a soft blue beam shines from one of the runes onto the ground, forming a spotlight into which a Human-sized creature might stand.

If a possessed creature stands in the spotlight, a section of the monolith disappears, revealing a passageway deeper within.

POSSESSING A CHARACTER

For a deeper roleplaying experience, you can make one or more of the Player Characters become possessed during the mission. As noted elsewhere, this does not control or compel their actions directly, except in very specific situations. Otherwise, these Characters simply have urges or impulses that can guide their actions without controlling it. In future episodes, this might also give these Characters some game-mechanical elements to play with. Use Handout 2 if you decide to have any Player Characters get possessed by the forces of the ancient civilization.

When the door opens, proceed to Scene 4—or if you have not yet triggered Scene 3, do so now.

Note: When this doorway opens, all possessed Characters or NPCs start behaving differently. Their possessing powers feel the pull of the powerful technology. They rush to get into the monolith's control room as quickly as possible. They long to run their hands over the controls, and feel the power that can move stars coursing through them. This includes any Player Characters who might be possessed. Use Handout 2 to show any possessed Player Characters what they are feeling.

SCENE 3: THE KLINGONS ARRIVE

At some point, the previous scene is interrupted when a trio of Klingons are pulled from their ship and transported to the planet's surface. How these Klingons react depends on what is happening in Scene 2 when they arrive.

Their ship has come to the Bacchus system for the same reason as the *Lexington*: a small group of Klingons stole a bird-of-prey and flew it directly to this planet, subtly influenced by the forces possessing them. These other Klingons were tasked with the dangerous mission of flying cloaked through Federation space to locate and destroy the traitors, retrieving the bird-of-prey if possible, destroying it if not.

Read the following text when the Klingon's arrive, altering it as needed to account for the situation:

In the blink of an eye, three Klingon warriors are standing in front of you. The many scars they wear indicate they are veterans of many battles. They look around in anger and confusion. One of them shouts, "What is the meaning of this? Why do you attack our ship and steal us away?"

The first thing the Characters should probably want to do is calm the newly arrived Klingons. This is no small feat, requiring a **Presence + Command Task** with a Difficulty of 3. Until this is achieved, the Klingon veterans want nothing more than to kill everything in sight, especially the two traitorous possessed Klingons they came here to destroy.

If the Characters can manage to calm the Klingon veterans, the activities of Scene 2 can continue, with the added complication of having three angry and confused Klingons added to the mix. The Klingons are named K'Tah, Largh, and Keth.

As you roleplay the Klingons, keep in mind their missions here. They can be kept calm as long as nothing the Characters do interferes with their missions, which are described below:

- Capture or kill the possessed Klingons.

- Retrieve or destroy the stolen bird-of-prey (which was captured by a tractor beam and brought down to the planet, about 20 kilometers to the south of the pentagonal monolith).
- Find a way to save their ship, the *I.K.S. Ya'Lekh*, currently in orbit and under the same duress from the orange beam as the *Lexington*.

These three can be used as a wildcard throughout the rest of these scenes. Spending Threat can turn one of them against the group, making accomplishing Tasks harder. Keep in mind, however, that if the Characters are on good terms with these three during Scene 5, it makes their job easier.

SCENE 4: THE REVELATION OF THE ANCIENTS

To truly study the ancient technology on Bacchus IV, the Characters must find their way into the pentagonal monolith. The means for doing this is described in Scene 2 under the **Studying the Technology** header. Once the Characters have taken the steps to get into the monolith, read or paraphrase the following:

Entering the pentagonal monolith, you find an interior passageway, lit by glowing runes on the walls and ceiling, cutting toward the center of the huge tower. The passage continues ahead and then turns a corner. The people who you found on the planet seem a bit shaken by the opening of the doorway, and after the slightest hesitation, they run forward, trying to get up the hallway as quickly as possible.

Assuming the Characters allow this to take place, the first into the passageway is the Romulan Xeton. She bursts up the hallway, and then quickly runs afoul of the first phase of the security system. Read the following, changing the description based on circumstances:

You see a flash of light and hear a scream. You peer into the passageway to see the Romulan Xeton get zapped by an energy beam just as she is preparing to turn a corner. You see the faint outline of her skeleton before she evaporates into smoke.

The urge to get to the center of the monolith is so strong that the Vulcan Baren runs right into the same trap unless the Characters do something to stop him. If he dies, describe a similar scene. A second death is enough to get the rest of the possessed people to slow down. It is now obvious some trap is in place to guard against intruders.

The trapped area can be examined with an **Insight + Security Task** with a Difficulty of 2. When this task is completed successfully, the Characters learn that any living organism passing through that portion of the tunnel triggers the trap, which blasts the intruder with a disintegration ray.

Allow the Characters to come up with their own plan for how to either disable the trap or get past it without triggering it. Any Tasks to disable the trap permanently should have a Difficulty of 3, while attempts of an individual to bypass it without disabling it have a Difficulty of 2.

Characters who trigger the trap should not, at your discretion, be immediately vaporized like the NPCs. Have Characters take damage as if they are being hit simultaneously by two particle rifles: Ranged, 4.

Once the Characters have bypassed or disabled the trap, describe how the passage makes a few more turns before they arrive at the central control chamber.

This large room, also pentagonal, contains the same blue markings and etchings that cover the outside of the monolith. It is obviously a control room of some kind, with panels and displays and controls spread about the room. With the amount of dust covering the controls and the seats, it is apparent the place hasn't seen use in a very long time.

Observant Characters might ask about the configuration of the control room to learn the size, shape, and form of the creatures using them. Based on quick observation, it looks like the creatures who used them were probably bipedal humanoids with a similar frame to Humans.

The possessed people throw themselves at the controls, running their hands over them in seemingly random patterns. As nothing happens despite their actions, the people grow more frustrated and frantic. Then, as if by chance, the ancient technology reacts:

The displays spring to life, showing three-dimensional displays running a variety of status updates and algorithms that are incomprehensible without much closer and more careful study. Some information is easy to see, however. One display shows a 3-D representation of the Bacchus system. It shows a beam shooting from Bacchus IV, reaching out to a moon of Bacchus III. The moon is pulled out of orbit, cut into huge monoliths of different geometrical shapes, and pulled down to the surface of Bacchus IV.

Another display shows a display of the galaxy, with bits of red highlighting different points all over the galaxy. Bacchus IV is highlighted, and the greatest concentration of lights is in an unexplored area of the galaxy deep within the Beta Quadrant.

Another display shows a representation of twin orange beams trapping the Lexington and a Klingon bird-of-prey. If the display shows the current situation, it looks like both ships are in danger of being torn apart.

A **Daring + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 3 allows someone to use the controls to turn off the beams. Both beams are turned off if one is. As soon as this Task is completed, the final security system kicks in!

As the Players take in all of the information they are seeing, a final security system is triggered. The members of the ancient race that recognized the dangerous nature of their advancements didn't want their technology falling into anyone's hands, but they could not destroy it all since it was necessary to their long-term plans. In this case, the technology is programmed to destroy not just the planet, but the whole Bacchus system, if the technology is breached. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the dazzling displays stream information at you from all directions, an explosion rocks the monolith. All of the displays go dark simultaneously, leaving you in pitch black. Then one display appears, showing you a holographic representation of the Bacchus system. It shows the planet you are on, with beams of energy bolting out and destroying the other planets in the system.

A placid voice speaks throughout the control room. "Your access of our technology has put you in danger. This system will be destroyed. Use the teleportation field to return to your ship and leave this star system immediately." The voice repeats the message as a purple beam of light plays a spotlight on the floor.

The Characters (unless they are possessed) should want to get off the planet as quickly as possible, as do the trio of Klingon veterans (if still alive). The possessed individuals, however, need to be

forcefully dragged into the beam with an opposed **Fitness + Security Task**. The Klingon veterans grapple with their Klingon counterparts to get them off the planet.

When all the Characters and NPCs who are going to use the teleportation beam enter it, they find themselves on the Klingon bird-of-prey. Go to Scene 5.

SCENE 5: THE EXPLODING BIRD-OF-PREY

After the Characters are transported back to the Klingon bird-of-prey *Ya'Lekh*, their reception depends on who is with them and what happened on the planet:

- If the Characters are transported back with no Klingons accompanying, they must succeed at a **Control + Presence Task** with a Difficulty of 2. If it fails, the Klingons capture and restrain the Characters, disabling or killing anyone who tries to fight back, depending on the level of resistance.
- If the Characters have the possessed Klingons but not the veterans, the Difficulty of the Task is reduced to 1, assuming the Characters immediately hand over the wanted Klingons as prisoners to the crew of the *Ya'Lekh*.
- If the Characters ultimately befriended and worked with the Veterans, and at least one of them returned to the bird-of-prey with the Characters, no Task is necessary as the veterans tell the rest of the crew that these Starfleet members can be trusted to be honorable.

Read or paraphrase the following as a basis for what the Characters see when they first arrive on the *Ya'Lekh*.

As your senses return following the transport, you first notice you are on the bridge of a smallish craft. The air is stale and reeks of Klingons. A dozen shocked Klingons turn and level a dozen disruptors at you. "What is this intrusion?" yells the closest, his finger dangerously twitchy on the disruptor's trigger.

The hold that the possessing spirits have over any Player Characters should diminish at this point.

Let this part of the scene play out as you see fit. The goal of the scene is to see how the Characters deal with this dangerous situation, then get the information that the ship is in danger of exploding. If the Characters have not yet learned about the reason for the Klingon's mission here, and that they were caught in the same beam as the *Lexington*, relay that information now.

Regardless of the state of the Characters after the initial interaction with the Klingons on the ship—whether they are treated as wary allies or sworn enemies locked in a brig—the Characters should learn the following soon after arriving:

One Klingon speaks to the others: "All attempts to stabilize the warp drive have failed. We can either eject the core and be trapped here, or we can allow the core to explode, and we can die with honor." The nods and grunts of the rest of the Klingons gives you the impression they would gladly accept the latter option. Unfortunately, this would likely also destroy you and the Lexington, assuming it is still close by.

The next Task for the Characters is to convince the Klingons that dying here is not honorable, and if they cooperate with Starfleet, the crew will vouch for their honor with their superiors. The bird-of-prey can be fixed, and the Klingons can return home with their honor intact.

Convincing the Klingons should be a roleplaying encounter, although if you want to reduce it to a Task, it can be a **Daring + Command Task** with a Difficulty of 2. For added drama, have different factions within the Klingon crew argue with each other, giving the Characters the opportunity to interact with multiple members of the crew.

Once the Klingons, and in particular their Captain, Parahk, are convinced that it is safe to expel the warp core, further complications arise. Use any remaining Threat to throw one more challenge at the Characters.

When the controls are used to eject the core, sparks fly and lights flicker. The system that ejects the warp core has malfunctioned. The Klingon crew stands confused. The Klingon engineer who knows how to fix the problem was killed during the troubles while in orbit. It is up to the Characters to figure things out in one final Challenge:

- An **Insight + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 1 tells the Characters that the problem is not with power, but that the release clamps on the outside of the ship are locked. On a bird-of-prey, those clamps can be released manually, but the switch is on the outside of the ship.
- The Klingons have two spacesuits that would fit the Characters. Two Characters can quickly don the suits and move to the ship's hull. Navigating the outside of the ship is a **Daring + Conn Task** with a Difficulty of 1. One Klingon (use Klingon veteran stats) is also willing and able to accompany the pair of Characters, giving a player a chance to run a support character.
- Once in place, it requires a **Fitness + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to force open the clamps and release the warp core.
- Once this is complete, it is only a matter of seconds before the core explodes. With the hull-walkers clinging to the outside of the ship, someone must make complete a **Control + Conn Task** with a Difficulty of 3 to move the ship away from the blast under impulse power, using the exact right trajectory to ride the blast away without dislodging those out on the hull.

If this Challenge is successful, the *Ya'Lekh* reaches safety without any more significant damage. The *Lexington*, seeing what is happening even though communications are down, escapes as well.

CONCLUSION

As the *Lexington* leaves the quickly-collapsing Bacchus system, they are hailed by Admiral Banna Stoker of Starfleet. She asks the *Lexington* to rendezvous with her ship as soon as possible. She asks for a report on what the crew saw while on the planet, and she asks the crew to turn over any recordings or data they may have collected on the planet.

If the crew vouches for the Klingon's honor, she agrees to help them fix their warp drive at the nearest starbase and grants them safe passage back to their territory. Any other survivors are taken by the admiral for study.

As a final order, Admiral Stoker tells the crew to tell no one of what they saw on the planet, in either an official or unofficial manner.

KLINGON WARRIOR [MINOR NPC]

Traits: Klingon

ATTRIBUTES

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
09	11	11	08	10	08

DISCIPLINES

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
01	02	02	01	00	00

COMBAT

Stress: 13 **Resistances:** 1 (Armor)

Weapons

- Unarmed Strike (Melee, 3 Knockdown, Size 1H, Non-lethal)
- *D’k tahg* Dagger (Melee, 3 Vicious 1, Size 1H)

SPECIAL RULES

- **Brak’lul:** A Klingon’s Resistance is increased by +2 against Non-Lethal attacks.
- **Warrior’s Spirit:** When a Klingon attempts a Melee attack, and purchases one or more additional dice with Threat, the Klingon may re-roll any number of d20s.

STARFLEET SECURITY OFFICER [MINOR NPC]

Traits: Human

ATTRIBUTES

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
10	10	09	08	09	08

DISCIPLINES

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
02	01	02	01	01	01

COMBAT

Stress: 11 **Resistances:** 0

Weapons

- Unarmed Strike (Melee, 3 Knockdown, Size 1H, Non-lethal)
- *D’k tahg* Dagger (Melee, 3 Vicious 1, Size 1H)

SPECIAL RULES

- **Brak’lul:** A Klingon’s Resistance is increased by +2 against Non-Lethal attacks.
- **Warrior’s Spirit:** When a Klingon attempts a Melee attack, and purchases one or more additional dice with Threat, the Klingon may re-roll any number of d20s.

Handout 1: The Captain's Log

Captain's Log: Stardate 53193.2

We will arrive in the Bacchus system within the hour. Starfleet Command has ordered us there for three reasons. First, we are to track down three Starfleet officers who stole a cargo ship and were last encountered heading in this direction. No one is sure why they did it, but two people were killed and so they must answer for their crimes. Next, reports from passing ships and nearby outposts speak of signs that a Klingon bird-of-prey has violated the Neutral Zone and is heading toward the Bacchus system. We are to investigate to see if there is any truth to these reports. Finally, strange and indecipherable signals have been emanating from the Bacchus system for the past several weeks. The Lexington is to search for the source of these signals and try to determine their meaning, if any.

Any one of those three tasks would be enough to keep a commander on edge. Having all three problems present themselves simultaneously worries me greatly. My crew is undoubtedly ready for any challenge. I just hope that we don't have to deal with too many unknowns. All long-range probes sent to the Bacchus system stopped sending back data immediately after entering the system, so we are not sure what we are going to find there.

Handout 2: A Character Possessed

When the doorway into the monolith opened, you felt a jolt of energy rock through you. You are having a hard time focusing, and something inside you is pulling you, strongly, to get into the interior of the monolith as quickly as possible. There is great power at your disposal there.

Your conscious mind begins to take over, to slow down your legs from moving of their own volition. But your conscious mind is no longer in control. Nothing can stop you from knocking everyone out of the way and getting to the center of the monolith. Woe to those who get in your way.

For roleplaying purposes, make it clear with your words and actions that you are no longer in control. Gain 1 Determination for use later in the adventure if you can get one of the other Players to note your change in behavior without you telling them directly.