

STAR TREK™
ADVENTURES

SIMPLICITY

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A LIVING CAMPAIGN MISSION FOR 2269

INTRODUCTION

Simplicity 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

Admiral Banna Stoker arrives on the *U.S.S. Lexington* via a shuttle, ordering the *Lexington* to investigate one of the sites highlighted on the Tilikaal map they found on *Bacchus IV*. This place, unbeknownst to Stoker and the crew, does not have Tilikaal technology in the same manner they have experienced: it was marked on the map as a place to avoid (although there is no way for the crew to know that.)

On the planet, the crew finds a pre-industrial race of human-like beings. Nothing electrical works on the planet, forcing the crew to investigate and survive on their wits alone, dealing with strange occurrences on the planet and searching for the reason behind the failing electronics.

Back in orbit, an *Archer*-class ship, the *U.S.S. Walcott*, arrives and hails the *Lexington*. It was previously carrying Admiral Stoker and another woman from Earth. They dropped them off with another ship and left. Not long after, the second ship reported that Stoker disabled the ship's warp drive and left the ship via a shuttle without explanation. Stoker orders the *Lexington* to disable the *Walcott* and beam aboard one of the people there.

Back on the planet, the crew can follow clues to get to the cause of the strange happenings: an ancient recording device has been buried deep within the planet. A substance in the planet's crust is interacting with the energy exuded by the recording device to cause problems. By disabling the Tilikaal recording device, the interference ends.

When everyone is safely back aboard the *Lexington*, Admiral Stoker orders the crew to leave the *Walcott* and set course for a new location. The person they beamed over from the *Walcott* is a conduit for an extradimensional force. Stoker wants the *Lexington* to follow her commands as they figure out what this force wants. If the crew refuses her command, Starfleet orders them to take her into custody but investigate the location where she wants them to go.

Gamemasters begin this mission with 2 points of Threat for each Player character in the group.

SCENE ONE: THE ADMIRAL'S ARRIVAL

Read or summarize the following:

"Captain's Log, Stardate 5336. We have been hailed by a shuttle from the U.S.S. Calico. For some reason, Admiral Banna Stoker is alone on the shuttle, and she should be arriving at any moment. How she got a shuttle from the Walcott, and why she is alone, is a mystery that should be solved momentarily when she docks. I am heading to the shuttlebay right now to meet her, and hopefully get some answers.

The command crew of the *Lexington* are ordered to the shuttlebay to meet Admiral Stoker. When the shuttle arrives, it's not in the best condition: no evidence of phaser damage or the like, but it might have been flown too quickly through some asteroids or space debris: a bit dented with a couple of scrape marks.

Admiral Banna Stoker is a short, stocky human with close-cropped white hair. Her natural expression is a sarcastic grin, even when she is being serious. She has sharp, focused blue eyes that can be intimidating, as they seem to look right through you.

When she disembarks from the shuttle, she addresses the captain and other command staff after a perfunctory handshake and round of introductions:

"Set course immediately for the first planet in the Pasqual system at maximum warp. Do not stop for anything. Don't answer hails or get distracted. I need to go to my quarters for a few minutes, and then I will join you on the bridge. I know you have questions. As soon as I have time, I will provide answers."

Admiral Stoker refuses to answer questions, expecting the captain and crew to follow her orders immediately. She goes to her quarters without ceremony. If she doesn't feel the *Lexington* go into warp within a reasonable amount of time, she contacts the captain and asks about the delay.

GM Guidance: *The crew can find information on the Pasqual system. While it has not been visited by a Starfleet ship, probes indicate it the first planet is Class-M, while the other two are gas giants. Crew members who remembered the data found on Bacchus IV, or who saved that information despite being ordered to destroy it, recognize that Pasqual I was one of the planets highlighted in the star chart found there. The trip to the Pasqual system takes 6 hours at maximum warp.*

SCENE 2: A STRANGELY CRAFTED PLANET

Just before arriving at *Pasqual I*, Admiral Stoker emerges from her quarters and joins the bridge crew to answer questions (maybe) and give further commands (for sure).

THE MISSION

Stoker instructs the captain of the *Lexington* to form a party to beam down to the planet and investigate anything strange that might be happening there. In orbit, scans of the planet return garbled readings. Something on the planet is interfering with scans, but it is impossible to tell what is causing the interference. No large manmade constructions are apparent with the naked eye. The atmosphere is breathable without special gear.

When the away team is formed, Admiral Stoker addresses them:

“Your mission is to go down to the planet and investigate its status. Are there life forms there? If so, what is their condition? Is there any evidence of the strange technology we have seen on Bacchus IV or elsewhere? Why can’t we successfully scan the surface? Despite the interference we are seeing, we feel it is safe to beam you down. Carry on.”

Once the team has received their instructions, Stoker orders them to the transporter room to get on with it. She awaits their reports as soon as possible.

BEAMING DOWN

The planet is under the effect of a highly concentrated EM pulse being intermittently emitted by a malfunctioning recording device left on this planet by the Tilikaal. This means that anything electronic on or just above the surface, including scans of the planet’s surface, are rendered ineffective. Unfortunately, this includes the transporter beams, as the characters soon learn.

The party can decide where the best place to beam into might be. Much of the land masses on the planet are heavily forested, and that seems the safest place to arrive, with lots of cover.

Characters might have objections to any part of this plan. It is dangerous to beam down without knowing more about the terrain. They might be beaming into direct contact with hostile life forms. Admiral Stoker tells the crew that she is comfortable with those risks.

As the crew beams down, the complications of the EM field become apparent to the operations of the transporter. In order to get the crew safely down to the planet’s surface, the operator must succeed on a **Reason + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 4. For each Complication or number less than the Difficulty achieved, one Character being transported is put into a dangerous situation (see below).

BEAMING DANGERS

While the Characters do make it to the planet successfully, the EM interference with the transporter might put one or more of them in a dangerous situation. The first problem is that the Characters are not together. Instead, they are split up, none within a kilometer of each other. They must figure out how to find each other, especially if they are in an area like a forest with limited line of sight.

Next, select one of the list of options below for each Character who is put into danger by the transporter beam interference:

- The Character beams in 20 feet above the planet's surface. They must succeed on a **Fitness + Security Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to avoid landing awkwardly and twisting an ankle or breaking a wrist.
- The Character beams into the path of a herd of wild oxen stampeding across a plain. The Character must succeed on a **Presence + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to maintain composure and not get trampled. For each complication or number less than the Difficult achieved, the Character received a point of Stress damage.
- The Character beams into a very tight space between two trees, rock formations, or another solid object. The Character must succeed on a **Reason + Medicine Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to determine the best way to gain freedom doing to least amount of damage to their body. For each complication or number less than the Difficult achieved, the Character received a point of Stress damage.
- The Character beams into patch of poisonous vegetation. The Character must succeed on a **Insight + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to understand the danger and leave the patch with the least amount of exposure. Failure leaves the character weakened by the poison spores.
- Create your own using the preceding threats as a template

ASSESSING THE SITUATION

First the Characters must find each other, then they can deal with any wounds or conditions from the transporter problems. The characters likely attempt using their gear first: scanners, phasers, etc. Anything that relies on electronics (almost everything the characters carry) fails to function. Communication with the *Lexington* is impossible, phasers and other energy weapons are useless, tricorders fail, and the characters are on their own.

The next steps depend mostly on where the characters chose to teleport it: the scenery and the type of natives they encounter change, for example, if the characters decided to land in a forest, in the mountains, near a sea, etc. For the rest of the mission, you as the GM can tailor the encounters based on the flavor of the setting. The overall tone and substance of the encounters, however, should remain intact.

When the characters finish getting their bearings and assessing their situation, read:

In the distance, you hear the sound of voices calling to each other. The language is unfamiliar and not immediately picked up by the universal translator, although some of the words and cadences sound similar to Denobulan. The voices continue to get closer.

The voices belong to a woman named Nyseri and her two daughters, Cheola and Zoori. What they are doing depends where the characters landed. Assume as a default a temperate forested area, and the Pasquali folk are hunting, picking fruit, and gathering firewood. They are from the nearby village, and they are not aware of the characters at the moment.

If the characters hide, they can observe the three interacting with each other and the environment. Based on the tools they are using (iron and steel, wooden bow and arrows, wooden baskets), a successful **Reason + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 0 makes it clear this is a pre-industrial society.

Anatomically, the three are similar to humans. All three have dark skin and very light hair, and they are taller than typical humans, with Nyseri being just over 2 meters tall. Cheola is almost an adult, so she is close in height to her mother, while Zoori is still young but still the height of an average human.

If the characters decide to interact with the three, Nyseri watches the characters with interest as they speak. Characters that can speak Denobulan can get across simple concepts and meanings at first and can soon pick up the language quite easily, with a **Presence + Conn Task** with a Difficulty of 2. If no characters know Denobulan, an **Insight + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 3 is needed to attain this level of understanding. Otherwise, the characters must make do with pantomime until they get to the nearest village.

None of the Pasquali here seem overly concerned about the presence of the characters, but they look at them as curiosities. They have seen stranger beings from other parts of their own world, so nothing is startling to them. They also have been taught that beings from other worlds exist, so while beings from other worlds are new to them, they are not frightened of aliens.

HELPING WITH THE CHORES

Nyseri and her daughters do not have a lot of time to chat with the characters: they need to finish their chores. However, understanding that many hands make light work, Nyseri suggests the characters help them finish their jobs, and then they can take the characters back to the village, where a hot meal and dry lodging await.

The types of chores depend on the area where the characters beamed down. Assuming they are in a temperate forested area, the chores likely are of a hunting and gathering nature. Use the list below to guide your play. Characters could converse with the three during these chores to learn more information about the planet and its inhabitants. Alter the types of chores if the characters chose to transport into a different setting:

- Hunt the forest for wild game using the primitive weapons available. A successful **Fitness + Security Task** with a Difficulty of 1 provides enough food for a meal.
- Create better weapons with the resources at hand. A successful **Reason + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 1 fashions a sturdier spear or a more accurate bow.
- Locate a large patch of vegetables that Nyseri did not know was edible. A successful **Reason + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 1 recognizes the safety of this new food supply.
- Create your own tasks based on player ideas and your own imagination.

Each character should attempt at least one Task in making the chores go more easily. Characters can use these Tasks to bank some Momentum, which they may need when a strange beast threatens the group. Complications from Tasks could include falling and losing previously gathered food or firewood in a ravine, saying or doing something that offends Nyseri or her kin, or getting into something poisonous that causes skin irritations or respiratory distress.

SAVING A LIFE

When the chores are complete, Nyseri tells the characters that they can accompany her back to the village. If the characters have been hiding and watching the activities so far, they see the Pasquali pack up their gear and head back from where they came.

Either way, the characters witness a beast attack:

From out of nowhere, a snarling beast leaps onto the path ahead of you. Zoori screams and hides behind her mother, while Cheola aims her nocked bow at the creature. Its sharp claws and frothing muzzle drip with blood.

The beast, known to the Pasquali as a *lotkal*, is normally a nocturnal creature that eats grubs and insects. This creature, however, is undergoing a transformation due to an interaction between the Tilikaal technology, the strange rock in the planet's crust, and the recent scans from the ship. It attacks the group until killed.

After the battle, one of the characters can examine the beast. Nyseri or her daughters can give the characters background information on the *lotkal*, but a successful **Insight + Medicine Task** with a Difficulty of 2 provides further information. In addition to the changes that the natives described between this creature and a typical *lotkal*, the character observes a proliferation of tumors beneath the skin. Based on the stretching of the skin above the tumors, they have grown within the last few hours. Something changed this creature dramatically in a very short period of time, most likely on a genetic level.

With the beast defeated and the characters safe, Nyseri leads them on to her village.

SCENE 2: AN AWKWARD RENDEZVOUS

As the away team heads for the village, the situation in orbit gets tense with the arrival of the *U.S.S. Wolcott*. Admiral Stoker's behavior continues to be erratic and strange, and soon the *Lexington* crew is faced with a difficult decision.

THE WOLCOTT'S ARRIVAL

Not long after the crew aboard the *Lexington* loses contact with the away team, scanners pick up an approaching vessel: the *U.S.S. Wolcott*. This is an *Archer*-class vessel, a scout ship that can move fast and not be seen easily. Since the *Lexington's* scans are seeing it, it probably wants to be seen.

When the news is relayed that the *Wolcott* is approaching, Admiral Stoker orders the crew to raise shields and not answer any hails. If they do need to talk to the *Wolcott*, she wants to do it and without a visual.

Anyone on the bridge observing the admiral can attempt an **Insight + Security Task** with a Difficulty of 2. Those succeeding get the idea that beneath Stoker's cool exterior, she is in turmoil, but it is not any sort of insanity or other affliction, she is just wrestling with hard decisions.

Not long after the initial warning, the *Wolcott* arrives in orbit around *Pasqual I*. Its commanding officer, Captain Meredith Skaarsen, hails the *Lexington* with the following message:

"Greetings, Lexington. Captain Skaarsen of the U.S.S. Wolcott here. We're looking for Admiral Banna Stoker, and we are fairly sure she was last in this area. It seems there's some confusion. She apparently disabled the warp drive on the Calico after we left her with them, and they say she stole a shuttlecraft too. We were called back to the Calico, and we tracked the admiral to a point that seemed to rendezvous with you. Do you have her aboard?"

Admiral Stoker makes a signal to cut communications and not answer. Again, she takes a pensive stance for several moments. Then she orders the crew member at communications to open a channel to the *Wolcott* and speaks:

“Wolcott, this is Admiral Stoker. You are interfering in a highly sensitive and classified mission. Leave the area immediately. Go back to the Calico and await further instructions.”

There is a long pause, and then Captain Skaarsen speaks. “I’m afraid I cannot do that, Admiral. We’ve been ordered by Starfleet to bring you in. And also, we’ve got your companion on board.”

Stoker turns to the crew, a look of mild panic playing across her normally serene face. She commands you to, “Beam over Kassilandra Pruitt from the Wolcott, then disable the ship. I’m inputting Pruitt’s pattern into the ship’s computer, so you can find her. Do it as quickly as possible.”

If you are looking for maximum tension, now cut back to the party on the planet’s surface.

SCENE 3: A TRIP TO THE VILLAGE

The Characters are welcomed and can learn a bit more about the natives’ lives and local situation. Before long, the force that mutated the *lotka/* earlier in the mission begins to affect some of the villagers.

A NORMAL EVENING

When the Characters arrive at the village, read:

The village is small but thriving. A number of humanoid creatures move through the streets, chatting with each other and laughing. Some look like Nyseri and her daughters, while others are wildly divergent in their features: antennae, extra appendages, diverse statures, a rainbow of skin colors, and countless other traits.

The culture seems to be on the verge of industrial. There are not electronics or advanced inventions visible. Beasts of burden of endless varieties pull carts, and windmills turn on the edge of town to power machinery inside. Smoke emerging from some buildings hint at the burning of wood and possibly a coal-like substance.

In the center of town, people prepare food, throwing game and fowl over large cooking fires. Large metal vats boil vegetables, and fruit is peeled and prepared. It looks like the evening meal is a communal affair.

In the exact middle of the town’s central square, a obelisk of dark stone juts from the ground. It is covered with runes and carvings that look familiar to you: it is the same sort of technology you have seen on Bacchus IV and elsewhere, but on a smaller scale.

Characters are most likely interested in the obelisk, but once they approach it, terrible things are triggered. So, unless you are in a hurry, interrupt the characters’ attempts to examine the obelisk with questions and conversations with the townsfolk. They want to know who the characters are, where they come from, etc. Feel free to improvise the conversations between the characters and the townsfolk.

The children of the town fixate on one of the characters, pestering them and wanting them to join their game of tag. Some of the folk cooking the meal ask a character to share their favorite recipe. Elders ask someone to share a story from their home.

If asked about the obelisk, townsfolk say that it has always been there. A few times a day, at random times, it glows with a strange light, which quickly subsides. Similar runes are on the walls of a nearby cave, but the townsfolk steer clear of that place because something dangerous lives inside it, although different stories say different things about what that danger is.

Everything goes normally until one or more of the characters investigates the obelisk closely, or until the end of the event festivities. Then things go wrong.

WITH ABNORMAL CONSEQUENCES

Either when the characters investigate the obelisk at the center of town, or when the evening meal concludes, read:

With the slightest hum and vibration, the obelisk sparks to life. A blue light travels up the stone, lighting the runes from the bottom to the top. None of the townsfolk seem concerned... until one of the town elders collapses, moaning in obvious pain. Then another falls, a young boy standing next to his father. Then another falls. Soon, a dozen people are lying on the ground, writhing in pain.

If the characters hope to save the suffering townsfolk, they need to act quickly. Saving the townsfolk from the mutative effects of the obelisk is a challenge requiring four successful tasks:

- One character must first succeed on a **Reason + Medicine Task** with a Difficulty of 2. This tells the characters that the problem is the victims are going through rapid genetic mutation. They could survive with immediate attention that could involve medication and surgical techniques.
- One of the characters must succeed on a **Daring + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to locate the plants, herbs, fungi, etc. that can be used to alleviate the most painful and dangerous effects of the mutation.
- One of the characters must succeed on a **Presence + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 2 to calm the villagers while gathering equipment and fashioning implements that will be used in emergency surgeries.
- Finally, a character must succeed on a **Control + Medicine Task** with a Difficulty of 3 to successfully diagnose the patients and treat each one.
- If a Task check fails, one of the dozen of mutating villagers perishes. If all the Tasks fail, all of the mutating villagers die.

GM Guidance: *Keep the action moving, and provide descriptions of not just the suffering victims, but of the general chaos among the villagers as their friends and family go through the ordeal. Also feel free to play out the consequences of the characters' successes and failures: joy at lives saved and mourning for those lost.*

A meeting of the village elders follows this ordeal. The characters are asked to attend, since no one believes the appearance of the characters in the village and the problems with the obelisk are coincidental. (The *Lexington's* scans of the planet triggered the old technology, which caused the obelisk to act as it did.) Let the conversation between the characters and the town elders play out organically, but always in the background should be the following points:

- The elders are afraid this is going to happen again, and there is no evidence that this fear is unfounded. This will likely continue to happen until the characters find a way to stop it.
- The main line of inquiry would likely flow through the rune-filled cave that the villagers avoid. It's the only thing the villagers can think of in the area that might be connected to the obelisk.
- The obelisk is just one of many on this world. They are all the same, doing nothing special except glowing with a blue pulse every so often. If this is happening all over the world, terrible things could be happening.
- The pulse of the obelisk could be what is interfering with electronic equipment.

The next step for the away team should be a trip into the cave. Nyseri is willing to lead the characters there. When they go, cut back to the *Lexington*.

SCENE 4: THE PRISONER

Back aboard the *Lexington*, the characters there have some tough decisions of their own. They have been ordered to beam aboard an unknown person and then disable a friendly Federation vessel, all under orders of an admiral who has been acting in erratic and secretive manner.

The orders given by Admiral Stoker to the bridge crew are valid. She is the ranking officer, so refusing to follow her commands are a punishable offense. She expects her commands to be followed quickly and efficiently, and if there is even a hesitation, she repeats the command. If any of the crew refuses to carry out a command, she orders another crew member to do it instead. If no one is willing to do it, she does it herself.

GM Guidance: Call into question the characters' Values, or a Directive "The Chain of Command" to introduce a complication for the characters to follow her orders if they accept 1 point of Determination.

If the crew refuses her commands and then interferes with her attempts to carry them out, she relents only when she is physically restrained or incapacitated. If at any point she is forced to reveal what is happening to get the crew back on her side, use the "Admiral Stoker's Story" sidebar to relay that information.

ADMIRAL STOKER'S STORY

About a year ago, Admiral Stoker's teenaged son Averly began behaving strangely, showing signs of schizophrenia. The best doctors in Starfleet could find nothing physically wrong with the young man. When Stoker took the time to try to understand her son's madness, she noticed some of the strange things he said made sense when put into a larger context. She also heard from doctors about a small number of other people, on Earth and elsewhere, showing similar symptoms. Doctors called it a new disease and moved on. Stoker didn't.

She went to visit the others afflicted with this madness. She saw similarities between what they were saying and what her son was saying. They talked of prisons, of traveling dimensions, of ruling the universe, of caretakers and planet-movers, of megaliths and quantum theories. Stoker believed that this new disease was something more, but no one listened to her.

Finally, Stoker met a woman who was able to make things clearer. Kassilandra Pruitt was an unassuming schoolteacher on Earth, dedicated to her profession and her students. One day, with no warning, Pruitt walked in a restaurant and killed everyone. She was caught and imprisoned, diagnosed with a severe form of this new disease. When Stoker talked with Pruitt, the admiral found

the woman was more coherent than the others. She spoke of possession, and she promised answers if Stoker could get her to a lifeless moon in a remote planetary system.

At the same time, Stoker became suspicious that someone was trying to stop her investigation. She found her access to people being denied, victims of the disease disappearing after she talked to them, her notes erased or tampered with, etc. The combined coincidences of the claims of Pruitt and the potential cover up forced Stoker to take matters into her own hands. She has been directing crews of various ships, particularly the *Lexington*, to investigate potential sites of interest—while trying to stay one step ahead of forces within Starfleet who are possibly trying to stop her.

DISABLING THE WOLCOTT

If the crew follows Admiral Stoker's orders, it is not difficult to beam over Pruitt and disable the *Wolcott*, since the ship is not built for combat, its shields are down, and it is not expecting an attack. Beaming Pruitt over to the *Lexington* is a **Control + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 2 from the transporter room. Once this has been done, begin a starship combat encounter with the *Wolcott* until it has been disabled.

When Pruitt beams aboard, either by the crew or on her own, read:

The person who materializes before you is striking. She has the kindly face of a doting grandmother. The relaxed smile, the short grey hair, even the white cardigan: it all belies a dark glint in eyes that take in everything, calmly and coldly. "Let's get this show on the road," she says. "This body is not getting any younger."

REFUSING THE ORDERS

If the crew refuses to follow Admiral Stoker's commands and prevent her from doing so, Kassilandra Pruitt takes matters into her own hands. She uses her powers and knowledge to beam herself over the *Lexington*, which might be a shock to the crew.

SCENE 5: THE SOURCE OF ALL TROUBLE

When the characters arrive at the rune-filled cave, read the following:

Nyseri leads you to the cave that the elders spoke of. Vegetation grows wild and uncontrolled around it, and there is no evidence of traffic into or out of the cave mouth, even by animals. The glow of blue runes within the cave lights it. Nyseri points, a look of concern crossing her face. "I sometimes hunt near here, and I have never seen those lit like they are now."

Nyseri shows the entrance to the characters but refuses to accompany them into the cave—she has daughters to think about and was terrified by what she saw happen at the town square earlier.

THE TUNNEL

After the characters enter the cave opening and begin moving up the tunnel, read:

The passage before you runs deeper into the earth, sloping down. The man-made tunnel looks like it was excavated roughly. The walls and floors are not finished. Runes cut into the rock line walls, floors, and ceilings. Their blue glow provides the only light, making it difficult to see.

Lying scattered throughout the passage are the unmoving form of small primates, that look like monkeys from Earth, but with ferret-like faces and sharp teeth.

Unless the characters create some light sources for themselves before entering, they are in trouble when the lights go out and the creatures attack in the next section.

The creatures, called norgols, are native to Pasqual. Years ago, a fissure opened from elsewhere on the planet's surface, giving these animals access to the control center. Since then, a full colony of the norgols has been using the control center as a lair. Since the scans, however, the runes are activated and malfunctioning, killing the creatures by internal electrocution. A **Reason + Medicine Task** with a Difficulty of 4 is needed to see signs of what killed them. Otherwise it is impossible to determine the cause of death.

Moving down the tunnel without stepping on a rune is **Control + Security Task** with a Difficulty of 2. Failure at this task allows progress to continue, but the character takes 3 ▲ Stress but can buy off Injuries by accepting the Complication of "Disoriented." Each time they buy off an Injury, the intensity of the Complication increases by 1.

THE CONTROL CENTER

When the characters reach the end of the tunnel, read:

This large pentagonal room is full of the same blue markings and etchings that cover the obelisk and the tunnel. The blue glow is the only light. [Characters who played the adventure on Bacchus IV recognize the similarities between that control room and this one.] The runes and markings lead to flat areas that remind you of control panels or viewing screens.

A fissure in the ceiling lets warm air into what would otherwise be a very cold room. The floor is littered with detritus and refuse: dirt, bits of rotting vegetation, and animal waste.

Characters can search the room and make any observations without problem. Any characters who have been possessed in the past get a strong urge to try to use the rune-controls, and any character may attempt it. Simply touching any of the runes triggers a response. (If the characters all refuse to touch anything, a norgol leaps from the fissure, landing on a control panel and triggering it regardless):

Immediately after contact with a rune, a three-dimensional map materializes in the center of the room. In the instance that you can see it, you recognize the oceans and land masses of Pasqual I. Before you can act, however, the blue lights wink out. Unless you are carrying a light source, you are in total darkness. You hear chittering, shrieking, and howling, and then you feel like you are covered in a blanket of gnashing teeth biting into your flesh.

The dozens of norgols that were hiding and waiting in the fissures about their lair take the sudden blackout as a sign to attempt to drive the intruders out of the home in a swarm. Fighting each of the norgols in a typical manner is fruitless. There are too many of them. They must be dealt with more creatively. Even if the characters have a light source, the norgols still attack.

DRIVING AWAY THE NORGOLS

This is a challenge where the characters must succeed on a number of Tasks equal to the number of characters in the room. The Difficulty of the Tasks is 4 if there are blackout conditions, and only 3 if the characters have or create a light source.

When the norgols first attack, all characters take 2 ▲. Then they can each act. They must try to complete an Extended Task that will drive that creatures away. What that task entails depends on what the characters attempt:

- Trying to physically remove them and fling them away would be a **Fitness + Security Task**.
- Trying to make loud noises or make oneself threatening would be a **Presence + Command Task**.
- Trying to relight the runes by working the controls would be a **Control + Conn Task**.
- Make up your own based on the actions of the characters.

The Extended Task has a Work Track of 20, a Magnitude of 4, a Difficulty of 4 (as noted above) and a Resistance of 1.

If a character fails, they take 2 ▲ more Stress and another character can act. They can decide to flee back outside without trouble because the runes in the corridor are deactivated for the moment, and the norgols do not pursue.

ASSESSING THE TECHNOLOGY

The characters might have to flee and return with a better plan and backup (such as convincing the Pasquali to come and help drive away the pesky norgols), but eventually they should get the opportunity to evaluate the ancient technology in peace.

When they do, they can see that something keeps “shorting out” the technology as it tries to activate. When the Tilikaal tried to set up recording technology here, to see the evolution of the life on this planet, they did not take into account that one of the unique elements in the planet’s crust would interfere with and distort the signal. After several attempts failed, they simply left and marked the planet as resistant to their advanced energy manipulation. The side effect of this mix of Tilikaal technology and the unique element is a planetary pulse that foils electronics. It also causes increased rates of mutations in living creatures, causing evolution to occur more rapidly and more diversely than on other planets.

In order to learn this information, the characters need to succeed at an **Insight + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 3. They not only learn about the interaction between the ancient technology and the planetary element, but they can also do some calculation on how to cancel that interaction temporarily, which would allow them to escape the planet or get beamed off—as well as possibly stopping it permanently using large-scale bombardment of the planet with certain frequencies of sound waves. This would be a large-scale undertaking outside the scope of this mission.

CONCLUSION

With the ancient technology deactivated, the interference with electronics ends. The characters find that their equipment works again. The transporter beam is now reliable, and the away team can regain communication with the *Lexington*. They are ordered by the Admiral (if she is still in charge) to return to the ship as soon as possible and make their report.

If they are still following Stoker's orders, she takes part in the debriefing, taking careful notes. She orders the crew, as before, to make no notes about this and to share the information with no one. This is a highly classified investigation that is on the strictest possible "need to know" policy. She orders the crew to set course for a lifeless moon in a nearby system, where Kassilandra Pruitt says she can provide answers to the puzzling technology and mysterious "disease" affecting a few people.

If the crew mutinied against Stoker, they are finally contacted by Starfleet Command directly. They are told to go to the distant moon that Pruitt talked about, but to keep Stoker and Pruitt in the brig until the mission is complete, and to report back as soon as the investigation is completed.

ADMIRAL BANNA STOKER [MAJOR NPC]

Admiral Banna Stoker is a human, having served in Starfleet since she graduated from Starfleet Academy at the age of 19. She is short and stout, with short white hair and a twisted smile that verges somewhere between bemusement and wisdom. Her blue eyes are piercing and don't miss a beat.

Traits: Human

Values:

- My Universe Is Collapsing, And I Don't Know Who I Can Trust
- My Mission Outweighs Starfleet Regulations

ATTRIBUTES

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
7	12	08	10	10	9

DISCIPLINES

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
04	02	02	03	03	02

FOCUSES: Debate, Espionage, Fleet Strategy and Tactics

STRESS:

RESISTANCE: 0

WEAPONS:

- Unarmed Strike (Melee, 3 ▲ Knockdown, Size 1H, Non-lethal)
- Phaser Type-2 (Ranged, 5 ▲, Size 1H, Charge)

SPECIAL RULES:

- **Accomplished Commander:** Admiral Stoker is a skilled commander who honed her leadership skills over many years in Starfleet. When she attempts a Task to lead a crew or maintain control of a situation, she may spend 1 Threat to reroll her dice pool.
- **Adaptable:** Admiral Stoker may spend 2 Threat to immediately gain a single Focus for the remainder of the scene.
- **Menacing**

MUTATED LOTKAL [MINOR NPC]

The *lotkal* are normally a nocturnal, insect-eating mammalian creature native to Pasqual I. This one has mutated, making it larger and much more violent. Its long snout has snagged, pointed teeth, and its claws are long and curled. Its fur ranges from white to dark grey.

Traits: Lotkal

ATTRIBUTES

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
06	10	12	08	08	02

DISCIPLINES

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
02	-	02	-	-	-

Stress:

Resistance: 2

Weapons:

- Bite (Melee, 4 ▲, Piercing 1)
- Claws (Melee, 4 ▲, Vicious 1)

USS WALCOTT [STARSHIP]

Traits: Federation Starship

SYSTEMS

Comms	Computers	Engines	Sensors	Structure	Weapons
08	07	09	08	06	06

DEPARTMENTS

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
02	05	02	02	03	01

POWER:

SCALE: 3

SHIELDS: RESISTANCE: 3

NPC SHIP BREACHES:

- Impact:** Lose one turn per round, and 2 Power (not cumulative).
- Damaged:** Increase the Difficulty of Tasks to repair the ship by +2.
- Disabled:** The ship can no longer take any turns.
- Destroyed:** The ship explodes.

ATTACKS:

- Phaser Banks ()
- Photon Torpedoes ()
- Tractor Beam (Strength 2)

SPECIAL RULES:

- **Improved Impulse Drive:** When the crew succeeds at the *Impulse*, *Attack Pattern*, *Evasive Action*, or *Ramming Speed* Tasks, you may spend 2 Threat to increase the Difficulty of attacks against the ship by 1 until the start of the ship's next turn.
- **Improved Reaction Control System:** Whenever a Task to maneuver the ship would increase in Difficulty due to obstacles or hazards, reduce the Difficulty by 1 (to a minimum of the Task's normal Difficulty).
- **Rugged Design:** Reduce the Difficulty of all Tasks to repair the ship by 1, to a minimum of 1.