



THE PRISONER OF ARKUS

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FREE LEAGUE
WORKSHOP
CORIOLIS

Copyright text

Commander Aburalin (23/06/54): Relay TX-527

>>>We came under fire by corsairs and were forced to retreat to an asteroid in the nearby belt>>>Coordinates to follow>>>

Commander Aburalin (26/06/54): Relay TX-527

>>>Yesterday when Specialist Hamedes and Lieutenant Rainas followed the ravine in order to set up better communications, they found a large gate into the asteroid>>>It appears to be an older form of airlock>>>We will try to force it open>>>

Commander Aburalin (28/06/54): Relay TX-527

>>>The gate appears to be older than we first anticipated>>>Along the sides there are some kind of symbols>>>The size of it is remarkable>>>See enclosed appendix>>>

----- higher encryption -----

Commander Aburalin (28/06/54): Relay TX-527

>>>We entered the asteroid>>>The walls were covered with large textiles and beneath them we found the same symbols that covered the airlock>>>In the middle of the chamber, first Sergeant Jhannas found a cube of an unknown material with another set of symbols on it>>>I have attached detailed scans for analysis>>>

Commander Aburalin (30/06/54): Relay TX-527

>>>Lieutenant Rainas has expressed concern for the squad>>>First Sergeant Jhannas suffered a nervous breakdown today in connection with the documentation of the cube and needed to be escorted back to base camp>>>We have examined the air in the chamber but it shows no trace of any kind of external stimulant>>>Still, I have to admit that even I feel a certain discomfort>>>

Commander Aburalin (03/07/54): Relay TX-527

>>>The diagnostics from the airlock is complete>>>It was locked from the outside>>>

-Buffered message from the Colonial Rangers
Yhaddija, Zhau system

OUTLINE

The scenario begins when the judicator Khaled Wakkari makes contact with the player characters and asks for their help to free his little sister Zain from the Legion. She disappeared without a trace a few cycles ago, but Khaled has now received some information that has him convinced his sister is in the faction's grasp. He has spent all his birr and called in all the favors he can to prepare a bold and desperate rescue operation. Khaled doesn't know what awaits him or the player characters in the dark vastness of the horizon, or even if his sister is still alive. All he has is a set of coordinates and a name he only ever heard whispered in fear... Arkus.

When the player characters reach Arkus, their investigation reveals that it is a classified research station run by the Consortium in cooperation with the Legion. The station was established with a single purpose, to create the next generation of operatives. The player characters also uncover that Zain is not a captive, she is there of her own free will. Tempted with promises of endless resources, she was recruited four cycles ago to recreate an ancient Portal Builder technology that enables organic processing of digital code. This resulted in the prototype hybrid Izer; a former legionnaire declared brain dead after a failed mission, but then awakened by Zain, now with the ability to control all technology powered by data systems around him.

Under the ruthless supervision of the Director of research, doctor Ayat Almadhi, the Legion and the Consortium have begun the creation of additional hybrids based on Zain's design. But the factions have a hidden agenda; through the technology they want to exert external control over their intended operatives.

When the player characters reach the station, the project has entered its last phase. A dark shadow, by the name of Barakha, has arrived at Arkus. Barakha has been sent there to oversee the final test of the Arkus' hybrids, and to make sure the project remains a secret. While the player characters try to locate Zain, Barakha will seize control of the hybrids and initiate the execution of all the scientists who've worked on the project.

Arkus holds many secrets. For many of the hybrids, the integration with the Portal Builder technology failed, and not all of the test subjects participated willingly. What lurks in the black rooms of the station? What kind of technology did the factions really find? How much humanity is left in Zain's prototype Izer? And how far does the external control Almadhi programmed into Arkus' hybrids really extend?

The player characters will face several difficult decisions. Will they prevent the factions from using the Portal Builder technology? Will they steal it and sell it to the highest bidder? Will they tell Khaled the truth about his sister? And finally, will they destroy Arkus... and thereby risk destroying themselves?

BACKGROUND

PROJECT Y

Seven cycles ago, the Colonial Rangers found an ancient Portal Builder manuscript in a sealed room on the asteroid Yhaddija in the Zhau system. The manuscript described an old nanotechnology called "Saghiir" that enables organic processing of digital code. The Consortium immediately realized its potential and early on involved several high key executives in both the Foundation and the companies Celer-Delekta and Nyala.

Project Y was initiated by the Consortium in cooperation with the Legion. The project's goal was to create the next generation of operatives; individuals with exceptional cognitive abilities and the capability to take direct control of all technology powered by data systems around them.

Zain Wakkari, a young prodigy who had already excelled at the Foundation's College of Engineers, was hired to recreate the technology. To fill the role as head of research, and director of the project, they hired doctor Ayat Almadhi from the Foundation. She also oversaw the construction of the space station that would house the project: Arkus.

THE SAGHIIR TECHNOLOGY: THE HUMAN COMPUTER

The Portal Builder manuscript from Yhaddija described a technology that changes organic matter on the nano level so it can process and interact with digital information; a very advanced form of atomic craftsmanship. However, the manuscript was incomplete, which is why they needed Zain, as she was the only one competent enough to fill in the gaps.

The goal was to integrate human beings with the Saghiir technology and create advanced hybrids that could serve the factions. However, due to the invasive nature of the technology, Zain objected to the use of ordinary, conscious, test subjects. Instead she was given a brain dead legionnaire, who'd fallen in the line of duty, on whom to perform her studies and experiments. The name of this legionnaire was Izer, and he will come to play an important role during the course of the scenario.

Without Zain's knowledge, Almadhi initiated a parallel research of her own. The doctor has no qualms about experimenting on unwilling test subjects; enemies of the Legion and the Consortium who had the misfortune of being sent to Arkus instead of being executed. The integration was often carried out prematurely and failed, which has resulted in death, or fouler things, for the test subjects.

The Saghiir technology was originally a tool for the portal builders to transfer and store their consciousness in code. Zain is the only one who has understood this. Almadhi, the Consortium and the Legion are all convinced it is only a form of cybernetic enhancement.

THE SAGHIIR TECHNOLOGY

As a talent, the technology affects the player characters' **WITS** and gives them a permanent **+2** in that attribute. A hybrid also has at least **5** in the **DATA DJINN** skill, because they can communicate directly with all data systems and computer powered machinery in their vicinity.



ALMADHI'S EXTERNAL CONTROL

The Consortium views the Saghiir technology as a means to take control, in order to steer the Third Horizon in the direction they deem best. Almadhi has been working with Zain's research as her basis, but always with a different goal. She has made modifications to the technology which enables it to receive a special code of her own making. A code for *external control*. The code in itself is very subtle. A third party does not take direct control of the hybrid. Instead the control consists of a subroutine sent on a special frequency that takes hold in the hybrid's subconscious and feeds them suggestions they feel an urge to follow.

This proved more dangerous than Almadhi could have foreseen. When a subroutine has been executed it is impossible to stop it; the suggestions turn into needs, and the needs turn into insanity. In this way, the early hybrids were driven to madness. Even in the latest generation, the external control has a significant impact; the more suggestions, the more fragmented a test subjects' mind becomes. Since the project is young, no one knows what will become of the hybrids in the future. How many subroutines can they really withstand, and for how long?

THE HYBRID GENERATIONS

Generation 1: The integration constituted too much of a strain and the test subjects were declared brain dead.

Generation 2: The integration appeared successful but after a while the test subjects' brains began to rot.

Generation 3: The test subjects were driven mad by the external control.

Generation 4: The only generation to be integrated successfully.



To ensure the loyalty of the operatives, they are instantly fed a subroutine that ties them to the Consortium; an involuntary fanaticism. Player characters integrated with the Saghiir technology and exposed to Almadhi's external control will have to roll for **WITS** every time they want

to question something that has to do with the Consortium. If they succeed, nothing happens, but if they fail they suffer **1 point of stress**.

THE EXTERNAL CONTROL

The execution and transmission of subroutines is done through a special computer in Almadhi's office. It requires an access code only she possesses and the frequency transmitted by the computer has a range of **400 m** (which roughly translates to **440 yards**), so everyone on board the station who's been equipped with Almadhi's version of the Saghiir technology is susceptible to it.

If a player character who's been integrated with Almadhi's version of the Saghiir technology is exposed to the subroutines of the external control, then the GM can activate these suggestions with **darkness points**.



KHEFFERA: THE LOST SOUL

The Colonial Rangers also found something else on Yhaddija, more revolutionary than Almadhi and her scientists have realized. On a cube in the center of the chamber, there was a cipher. Despite initial fascination, no one could figure out what it was and eventually everyone gave up. Everyone but Zain. While Almadhi worked on her code for external control, Zain studied the cipher from Yhaddija. After a while, she not only managed to figure out *what* it was, but also *how* it was supposed to be used.

It turned out to be an ancient Portal Builder consciousness put down in code, Kheffera, an old soul that was imprisoned on Yhaddija by its kin a long time ago. It is this code that Zain installed in her prototype hybrid Izer and by doing so, brought the Portal Builder back to life from its age-long slumber.

It is up to the GM to decide why Kheffera was imprisoned on that asteroid, but it should be clear to the player characters that whatever the reasons were - *they were good*. Kheffera is dangerous. Maybe even more so now. A tip is to play it as something ancient and unfathomable, as if a human woke up from stasis to the realization that flies were now the masters of the Third Horizon.

KHEFFERA AS A TALENT

It is possible to install Khefferia in additional people. It requires Zain's integration chamber (because Almadhi's chamber installs a version of the Saghiir technology that contains her external control), and the cipher on the cube from Yhaddija. With these requirements met, the player characters can roll for **DATA DJINN**. If Zain doesn't assist them the roll gets **-4 dice**. With a *critical success* they can install the portal builder consciousness in an additional person.

If Khefferia is installed in two people, it will result in two Portal Builder individuals. Khefferia does not have the ability to share consciousness between two bodies so they will become two separate entities.

If Khefferia is installed in a player character, this will result in death. Everything the player character was will be taken over by Khefferia. The character will henceforth be an NPC.

AN INNER DEMON

Something goes wrong and the installation of Khefferia is only partial. The player character is still fully integrated with the Saghiir technology but is not consumed by the Portal Builder. Instead, Khefferia lurks in the back of the character's mind, with its own agenda, whispering commands that only the player character can hear.

It works in the same way as Almadhi's external control, but now with Khefferia giving the orders. The player character will have to roll for **WITS** every time they want to defy the Portal Builder's commands. If they succeed, nothing happens, but if they fail they suffer **1 point of stress**.

Cost: 3 DP



OPERATION DAWN

When the player characters arrive at Arkus, project Y has entered its last phase. An operative of the Consortium's Special Branch by the name of Barakha has arrived. Barakha

has been on the station for two segments without anyone, except Almadhi, knowing why.

Barakha has come to Arkus with orders to execute Operation Dawn; a secret operation in which Barakha will seize control over the hybrids and execute all personnel on board the station, except for Zain. The operation serves two purposes: to test Almadhi's version of the Saghiir technology and her external control, and to clean house. Top executives in both the Consortium and the Legion, backed by the Consortium's Special Branch, want as few people as possible to have any knowledge about Arkus or project Y. After the operation the station will be repurposed. When all the personnel, except for Zain, have been executed, Barakha has orders to move it to a different part of the Horizon in order for the project to enter its next phase.

MALICIOUS WHISPERS

The operation is carried out with a programmed suggestion to the hybrids. A suggestion that states that the personnel on board Arkus is too dangerous to be kept alive.



TIMELINE

- 7 cycles ago:** The Colonial Rangers find an ancient Portal Builder manuscript on an asteroid in the Zhou system. Project Y is initiated and doctor Almadhi is appointed project director. The construction of Arkus is commenced.
- 5 cycles ago:** The construction of Arkus is completed and project Y with all its research is transferred there.
- 4 cycles ago:** Zain is recruited by the Consortium and arrives at Arkus to begin the reconstruction of the Portal Builder technology.
- 2 cycles ago:** Zain integrates Izer with the Saghiir technology. The creation of hybrids based on Zain's research is begun by Almadhi without Zain's knowledge. Zain examines the cipher from Yhaddija that turns out to be a Portal Builder consciousness in the form of code; Khefferia.

- **6 segments ago:** Zain installs Kheffera in the prototype hybrid Izer.
- **2 segments ago:** Barakha arrives at the station.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Most people on board Arkus are scientists, crew or legionnaires in charge of the station's security or hybrids. However, there are some more important people the player characters can come across. Those that appear throughout the scenario are described here, the rest is briefly described in **Table 1** and then in more detail in connection to the act they appear in.

KHALED WAKKARI, JUDICATOR



"Zain needs me."

The Wakkari siblings lost their parents when Zain was very young. Early on, Khaled had to step into the role of a parent rather than that of a brother. He realized how talented Zain was and worked hard to bring her to Coriolis and the Foundation's College of Engineers, where she got a scholarship. For a time the siblings were separated; Zain made a distinguished career within the Foundation and

was highly sought after by the larger companies within the Consortium, while Khaled was recruited as an officer down on Kua, and later by the Judicators on Coriolis.

When Zain disappeared, Khaled looked everywhere, but with no success. Despite the mounting evidence that she was dead, he couldn't shake the gnawing doubt that maybe she was still alive somewhere and in need of his help.

Khaled is a responsible, principled man with a great sense of duty and justice. His determination, which has served him well in the Judicators, sometimes make him appear dry, humorless, and at times even uncompromising. When Khaled puts his mind towards accomplishing something he deems to be just, there are few things that can bring him off course. And right now that course is set towards the liberation of his sister.

APPEARANCE: Khaled is hardened from his time as an officer on Kua and as a judicator on Coriolis. He has a towering, disciplined presence, short, black hair and severe eyes that miss nothing.

CHARACTERISTICS: Brave in a way reserved for those with convictions.

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

HIT POINTS: 9

MIND POINTS: 5

REPUTATION: 6

SKILLS: Command 3, Ranged Combat 4, Melee Combat 2, Force 2, Observation 1, Dexterity 2

TALENTS: Combat Veteran

ARMOR: Chameleon Suit (*Rulebook p. 121*)

WEAPONS: Thermal Pistol (*Rulebook p. 126*)

GEAR: Personal communicator with pulse function, tag containing 3 000 birr, talisman representing the Judge, 1 medkit, 1 cutting torch, 1 proximity sensor, 1 security sensor, 3 smoke grenades, 2 stun grenades



ZAIN WAKKARI, LEAD ENGINEER



“Because I can.”

Zain is extremely intelligent, but arrogant and obsessed with her research. When it comes to the consequences of her actions, she’s naive and heedless. The only thing her tunnel vision allows her to see is the specific challenge in front of her at that point in time.

Zain isn’t a bad person, but she never really understood her brother’s sense of justice either. She loves Khaled, but his values and strict morals have always been suffocating her. Regardless of what she did when they were younger, it never really seemed to live up to his standards, so somewhere along the line she stopped trying.

APPEARANCE: Dyed, blue hair and dark skin with golden tattoos. An advanced, cybernetic left arm that she built herself.

CHARACTERISTICS: The only thing that upsets Zain is when other people can’t keep up with her. She’s got no time for unintelligent people.

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 6, EMPATHY 1

HIT POINTS: 8

MIND POINTS: 7

REPUTATION: 10

SKILLS: Data Djinn 8, Technology 8, Science 5, Medicurgy 2

TALENTS: Gearhead, cybernetic self-repairing arm prosthesis with built-in servo locks, accelerated reflexes and skin electrodes.

ARMOR: None

WEAPONS: None

GEAR: Library database (nanotechnology), computer, modulator, tabula, 3 cells, spare parts (advanced), tools (advanced), workshop (advanced)



TABLE 1: OTHER NPCS

Dr. Ayat Almadhi	Head of research and director of Arkus.
Barakha	Operative of the Special Branch sent to Arkus to execute Operation Dawn
Izer	Zain’s prototype hybrid (Kheffera)

FACTIONS

The most important factions in the scenario are the Consortium and the Legion. Together they run Arkus and conduct project Y. The Consortium contributes with research personnel from the Foundation and the companies Celer-Delekta and Nyala, together with all the maintenance staff that is required to run the station. The Legion contributes with legionnaires responsible for the security of Arkus.

Another important group in the scenario is the Special Branch of the Consortium. They are in charge of the internal security of the faction and have sent Barakha to Arkus in order to execute Operation Dawn.

ACT I

.....
"Arkus is never more than a whisper. A hushed intimation that there is something out there in the darkness, but always implied that it is something you do not really wish to find."

In this act the player characters meet the judicator Khaled Wakkari and together with him they try to reach the mysterious "Arkus".

OUTLINE

There are different ways the GM can kick off the scenario. Either Khaled recruits the player characters through promises of wealth or by appealing to their good nature. Or the GM can intertwine their backgrounds with Khaled's rescue mission. Maybe one of the player characters is from a rival faction, sent out to establish Arkus' existence? Maybe a close relative to one of the player characters have also gone missing? Maybe they're smugglers and technology hunters that have stumbled upon a shipping manifest of one of the ships departing for the station and sense a bigger payday at this "Arkus"?

The GM can then have Khaled and the player characters sit on supplementary information so that they need each other in order to complete their respective missions.

A more dramatic prelude is to have the player characters kidnapped by the Legion, to be used as test subjects on Arkus, and then saved by Khaled during their journey to there.

The fundamental thing is that the player characters come into contact with Khaled and join forces with him in order to get to Arkus. Act II will commence when they have arrived at the station.

ZAIN'S DISAPPEARANCE AND KHALED'S PLANNING

- **5 cycles ago:** The Wakkari siblings lose contact.
- **4 cycles ago:** Zain is recruited by the Consortium in secret and travels to Arkus. Khaled looks for her unsuccessfully and concludes that she must be dead.
- **1 cycle ago:** Through the judicators, Khaled manages to get a hold of a shadow file containing information that the Legion has recruited an expert in advanced data systems. The rational part of him knows that Zain is dead, but his gut is telling him a different story. He starts to investigate in secret and after spending most of his birr the name "Arkus" turns up.
- **6 segments ago:** Khaled manages to track down a legionnaire that has transported equipment to Arkus. She doesn't know what "Arkus" is, seeing as everything regarding the place is strictly confidential, but Khaled manages to get the coordinates from her. He decides to rescue his sister.
- **1 week ago:** Khaled has received information that the legionnaire ship LSS Huma is scheduled to depart for "Arkus" with supplies. He realizes that this is his chance.

TWO WAYS OF PLAYING KHALED

- Khaled believes that Zain needs his help and travels to Arkus in order to rescue her.
- Khaled knows what Zain is like and what she can do. His goal in going to Arkus is to kill her; to protect the Third Horizon. He will however still maintain the appearance that he's there to save her.



DARKNESS POINTS

At the beginning of the scenario, the GM gets as many **darkness points** as the number of players.

PRELUDE

Your guess is that the tall man is in his early forties. The cropped hair and grim lines of his face tells a tale of discipline; there's a sense of order about him. You know the type, a man with principles. His dark eyes radiate the kind of determination that can only come from conviction.

"Do you have any family? How far are you willing to go in order to keep them safe? I have a sister. She's much younger than me... I think her life is in danger."

LEADS

If the player characters choose to conduct some research, they find that Khaled is employed as a judicator on Coriolis, and that he has received several commendations for bravery in the line of duty. There are several articles by the Bulletin on prominent cases he's worked on and the overall impression is that he's a competent, honest man with great integrity. With a little resourcefulness they can also gain access to internal judicator files that comment on Khaled's swift advancement within the organization. He's considered to have a bright career ahead of him. If the player characters choose to look up Zain, they find that she was a distinguished student at the Foundation's College of Engineers, and was involved in various research projects regarding advanced data systems. After graduation, she's worked for several companies within the Consortium, but no current employment status can be found.

Searches for "Arkus" yield nothing.

THE LEGIONNAIRE SHIP LSS HUMA

It is obvious which ship is LSS Huma. It stands out with its black, expensive armor. Like a resting predator, fully aware of its elevated position in the food chain. All its parts perfected in terms of functionality and efficiency. A first class weapon, worthy of a faction like the Legion.

THE SITUATION

The LSS Huma is owned and operated by the Legion. It is a gunship that has been modified to carry lighter cargo. It is scheduled to depart Coriolis for Arkus within the next couple of days with supplies and equipment. Here the GM can expand the story by letting the player characters find out for themselves where the ship is set to depart from, and only let Khaled have the information that the ship is departing and approximately when. This segment can be used to incorporate the player characters in the scenario. Maybe they have different motives and Khaled's coordinates is the breakthrough they've been waiting for?

There are different ways the player characters can deal with this segment of the scenario. They can overpower the crew and take command of Huma, or they can steal the ship in other ways. Other possibilities include sneaking on board as stowaways or just stealing the ship's cargo and its transponder and then heading for Arkus in their own ship. Encourage the players' creativity!

LSS HUMA

Huma is a relatively new, well maintained gunship. It's built specifically for the Legion with an enlarged cargo hold and stealth technology that can help it disappear from ship sensors.

CLASS: III

EP: 5

HP: 8

MANEUVER: 0

SIGNATURE: -1

ARMOR: 6

SPEED: 2

MODULES: BRIDGE, REACTOR, GRAVITON PROJECTOR, DOCKING STATION, HANGAR, CABINS (STANDARD), MEDLAB, STASIS HOLD, COUNTERMEASURE DISPENSER, ACCELERATOR CANNON, AUTO-CANNON, TORPEDO AND MINE SYSTEM, CARGO HOLD, ESCAPE PODS

FEATURES: ROBUST HULL, STEALTH TECHNOLOGY, ENLARGED CARGO HOLD (100 TONS)



THE CARGO ON BOARD HUMA

The main cargo on board Huma consists of four people in stasis. Their identities are free for the GM to expand upon but they should have in common that they all pose an inconvenience in different ways to the Consortium and/or the Legion. If the player characters choose to wake them up, the prisoners only remember that they were attacked and injected with something that made them unconscious. They know nothing about Zain, but might know some things about Arkus if the GM deems that fitting.

PROPOSED PRISONERS

❧ **Aadil “Red Star” Kamarra** – A notorious rebel leader and troublemaker from the Algol system that relentlessly makes life hard for anyone in the Consortium.

❧ **Kaduk “The Azaëlean” Bakyr** – An operative from the faction the Order of the Pariah, sent to ascertain the existence of “Arkus”. She got her code name from the mysterious Azaëleans; a beast few have seen in person but that most have seen the consequences of.

❧ **Jasri “The vulture” San** – A smuggler that deals with Portal Builder technology. He’s stumbled upon the Colonial Rangers’ original communication and has tried to hunt down the technology it speaks of; the Saghiir technology on board Arkus.

❧ **Haide Ansin** – A reporter from the Bulletin who’s been asking uncomfortable questions about certain transactions made recently by the company Nyala.

❧ **Doctor Minan Kori** – A scientist who declined a working position on board Arkus. She’s had dealings with doctor Almadhi before and doesn’t trust her.

❧ **Rakin** – A preacher from the Cellar on Coriolis who’s noticed how people from the slums have gone missing and has tried to report it.

❧ One of the player characters’ old enemies, who have also made an enemy of the Consortium.



The ship is also loaded with technical equipment and if the player characters succeed on a **SCIENCE** roll, they

know that it’s for nanotechnology and atomic craft. Some crates are marked with the logos of the companies Nyala and Celer-Delekta and even the Foundation. In the cockpit and the captain’s cabin there is also an officer’s manual with essential information about the mission, in addition to course plots and coordinates for “Arkus”.

ON HUMA

- Transponder with Huma’s identity
- Course and coordinates for “Arkus”
- Shipping manifest listing all cargo
- Four people in stasis
- Material for nanotechnology/atomic craft
- 4 Exo shells
- Officer’s manual (see “The journey to Arkus”)

THE CREW OF HUMA

The crew of Huma is made up of a pilot, a sensor operator, a captain and an engineer, of which at least one of them is on the ship at all times.

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

HIT POINTS: 8

MIND POINTS: 5

REPUTATION: 0

SKILLS: Ranged Combat 2, Melee Combat 2, Force 2, Observation 1, Dexterity 2

ARMOR: Flightsuit (*Rulebook p. 132*)

WEAPONS: Legionnaire carbine Daya-3 (*Rulebook p. 126*)



CORIOLIS

Huma will depart from Coriolis, but where on the station is up to the GM. Recommended places are either a heavily guarded part of the Neoptra spaceport, or a private port in the Spire owned and operated by the Consortium, or maybe an anonymous loading platform down in the Cellar.

It's important to keep in mind that Arkus is a top secret facility. Only a few people within the Consortium and the Legion even know of its existence. It should be reflected in the berth Huma departs from; either through anonymity or strict security.

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND

The player characters can enlist the help of the Syndicate to get access to LSS Huma. The faction wants the expensive cargo the ship is carrying and in return they're willing to provide manpower in order to seize the ship, or to create a distraction that will lure Huma's crew away from the ship.

THE JOURNEY TO ARKUS

During their journey to Arkus, Khaled will open up about his relationship with Zain. The GM can also choose to let the player characters view some of Zain's personal video logs or other documents in order for them to establish an emotional connection with her.

A tip for the GM is to portray Zain as sympathetically as possible, and as a defenseless person you might want to care for and protect. Maybe most memories, pictures or videos that Khaled shares of his sister is from her childhood?

THE SITUATION

The player characters head for Arkus. If they retrieved the officer's manual from Huma and examined it, they discover a set of coordinates that extend in a wide circle around the place they think is Arkus. This is an outpost with two legionnaire Destroyers (*found in the rulebook on page 161*), that patrols in orbit around the station. As a deterrent, they have their transponders switched on and will therefore be easy for the player characters to spot when they get close, even if they haven't found the coordinates in the officer's manual.

IN CASE OF BATTLE

If the player character's crew lacks a captain or an established leader, Khaled will take command during a potential battle.



NOTHING TO SEE HERE

If the player characters pretend to be Huma, they will be hailed by the legionnaire ship that discovers them and will be expected to present a password. The password is "Fourth moon of Akkalis" and can be found in the officer's manual. A successful **CULTURE** roll (or maybe through game master benevolence should one of the PCs have knowledge of the operations of the Legion) will give the player characters the knowledge that the password is expected to be used in a sentence, and not as an individual phrase. For example: "We just came from the fourth moon of Akkalis." If they can't present a password, the legionnaire ship will open fire and the player characters will have to fight.

AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE

In addition to the legionnaire ships that are visible on the sensors, there is another ship close by with its transponder switched off, ready to assist its colleagues.

Cost: 3 DP

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Any messages sent from the legionnaire ships to Arkus will be blocked by Zain's prototype hybrid Izer. He wants the player characters to reach Arkus so they can set him free (See "Izer" in act II).

ACT II

.....
 In act II the player characters reach Arkus and board it in order to look for Zain. This act presents the best opportunity to explore the station and find out its secrets. The player characters will also get to know the research director Almadhi and the Special Branch Operative Barakha, and finally meet Khaled's sister Zain and her prototype hybrid Izer.

OUTLINE

Here the main scenes of act II are listed.

- ☒ The Arrival
 - The Hangar
 - The Trash Compactor
- ☒ Arkus
 - Sector Z: Reactor Chamber and Elevators
 - Sector C: Administration and Communication
 - Sector F: Personnel Quarters
 - Sector G: Holding Cells
- ☒ Almadhi's and Barakha's Cabins
- ☒ Sector B: Laboratories
 - Almadhi's Office
- ☒ Captured!
 - Integration
 - Operation Dawn
- ☒ Zain

STATION SECURITY

If anyone on Arkus sound the alarm, the legionnaires will want to catch the player characters alive so that Almadhi can question them (See "Captured!").

Barakha secretly monitors all communications on board Arkus, to evaluate potential threats against Operation Dawn. If anyone sound the alarm, Barakha will be the first on the scene, well before Almadhi gets there

DARKNESS POINTS

To illustrate the consequences of the player characters'

actions on board the station, the GM has a darkness track. Use new **darkness points**, not those that have been accumulated before reaching Arkus, to indicate how close the player characters are to being discovered and captured. Put them in a pile at the center of the table so the players can see how it grows depending on their choices. When they reach **10 darkness points**, the GM spends them and initiates the scene "Captured!" If they never reach **10 darkness points** and the scene "Captured!" is never initiated, the GM can add the points from the darkness track to the regular **darkness points** in act III and use however she wants.

In the beginning of the act, the GM also gets **2 "regular" darkness points**. These should be kept separate from the **darkness points** accumulated by the darkness track.

DARKNESS TRACK

- If they use the elevator instead of the elevator shaft: **1 point**
- If they make a lot of noise: **1 point**
- If they are acting weird: **1 point**
- If they don't roll critical success when accessing the communication logs in sector C: **1 point**
- If they fail their **MANIPULATION** rolls: **2 points**
- If they use the computers in the laboratories: **2 points**
- If they run into crew without disguising themselves: **2 points**
- If they noticeably touch something in Barakha's cabin: **2 points**
- If they break into Almadhi's office: **3 points**
- If they are discovered on the bridge: **3 points**
- If they try to bypass the security console at Zain's cabin: **3 points**

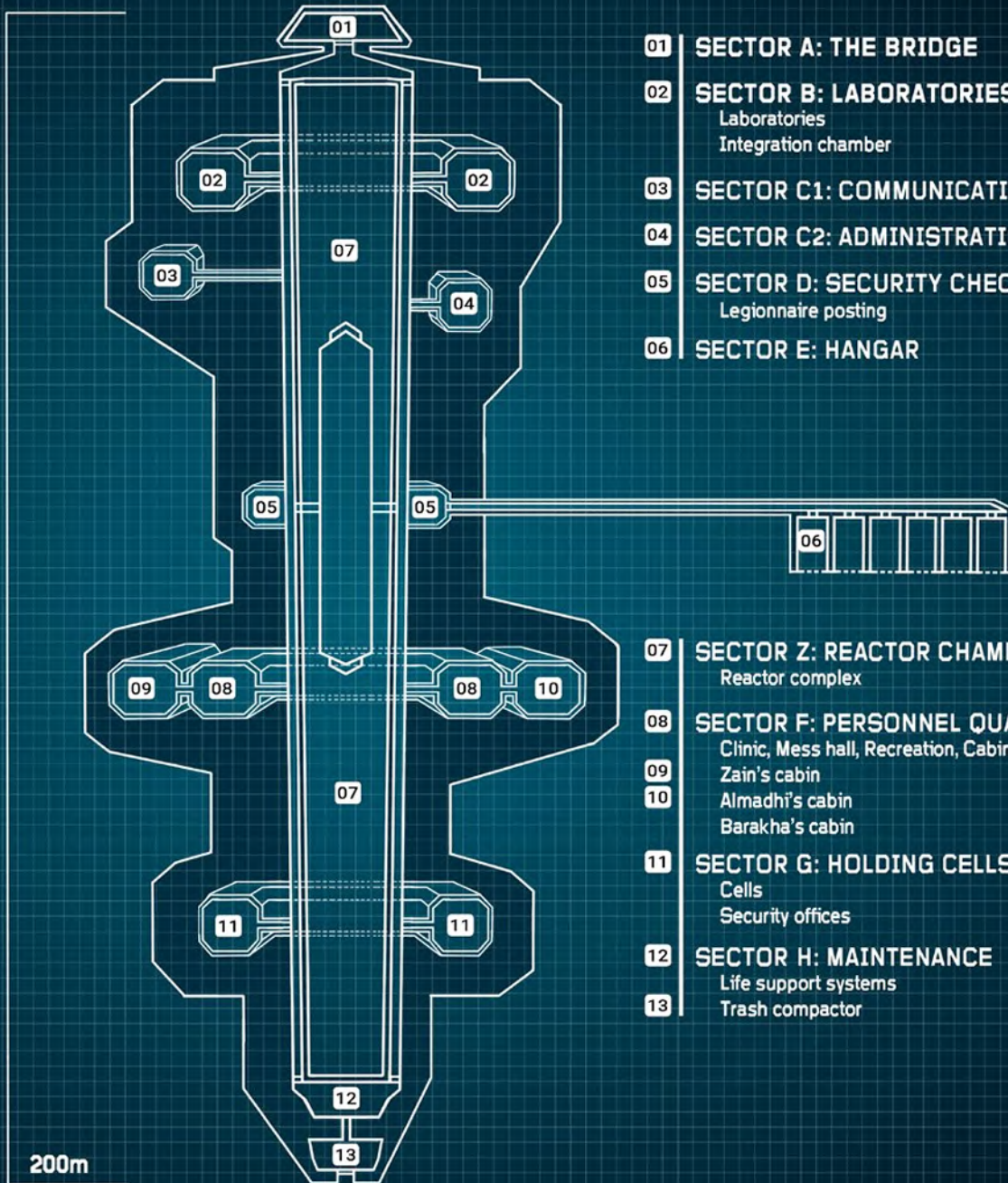


IZER

Zain's prototype hybrid is different from the other hybrids on the station. He now carries the mind of something ancient, with its own agenda. Izer or Kheffera, whoever hides in the former legionnaire's shape, wants to escape Arkus. He has access to all digital information in the vicinity of the station and therefore has full knowledge of both Almadhi's experiments and Barakha's mission. Izer will try to guide the player characters to him so they can set him free.

ARKUS

Workforce:
 34 Scientists
 10 Legionnaires
 15 Maintenance personnel



- 01** SECTOR A: THE BRIDGE
- 02** SECTOR B: LABORATORIES
Laboratories
Integration chamber
- 03** SECTOR C1: COMMUNICATION
- 04** SECTOR C2: ADMINISTRATION
- 05** SECTOR D: SECURITY CHECKPOINT
Legionnaire posting
- 06** SECTOR E: HANGAR

- 07** SECTOR Z: REACTOR CHAMBER
Reactor complex
- 08** SECTOR F: PERSONNEL QUARTERS
Clinic, Mess hall, Recreation, Cabins
- 09** Zain's cabin
- 10** Almadi's cabin
Barakha's cabin
- 11** SECTOR G: HOLDING CELLS
Cells
Security offices
- 12** SECTOR H: MAINTENANCE
Life support systems
Trash compactor
- 13**

200m

It's up to the GM how this is put into play. Izer can be used as a safety net if things go badly for the player characters. He can be used to direct them where the GM wants them to go and make sure they get all the information they need. He can also be used to create a creepy atmosphere during their time on Arkus; through cryptic messages and inexplicable behaviour of the station's technology.

IMPORTANT NPCS

The most important NPCs on Arkus are listed below.

AYAT ALMADHI, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH



"You will never understand what it is we do here. Your minds... are too small. How could you ever comprehend the greatness of Arkus?"

Doctor Ayat Almadhi is a reputable and ruthless scientist within data systems and bionics, with an impressive ability to rationalize the use of involuntary test subjects and the negative consequences of her research. She's unscrupulous and ambitious and cares nothing for other people's suffering. She also harbours an extreme fear of dying and

will use any means necessary to keep herself alive. Any means.

Almadhi likes it when people bolster her ego, but cannot handle being questioned or feeling inferior. Where Zain's motivation stems from a genuine passion, Almadhi's comes from a deeply rooted inferiority complex. Where Zain has taken her time with particular problems, Almadhi has rushed ahead driven by her ego and the will to outshine Wakkari. Almadhi doesn't see Zain as a colleague but as a competitor and rival, and in her hunt to produce better results she will stop at nothing. All the while she has conducted parallel research on the manuscript from Yhaddija and conducted her own experiments concerning the integration with human test subjects (but always with Zain's research as her basis). This has resulted in a deeply rooted loathing and an unhealthy fixation with the other scientist. Regardless of how many test subjects she goes through it seems as if Ayat Almadhi can't surpass Zain Wakkari.

APPEARANCE: Almadhi always presents a spotless appearance with long, beautifully painted nails in bright colors. She's covered in expensive jewelry and always dress in the latest fashion.

CHARACTERISTICS: Often talks about herself in the third person and makes sure to mention her friends in high places. Does not tolerate being contradicted.

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 5, EMPATHY 4

HIT POINTS: 5

MIND POINTS: 9

REPUTATION: 6

SKILLS: Data Djinn 4, Technology 2, Science 4, Culture 2, Manipulation 3, Medicurgy 2

TALENTS: Faction Standing

ARMOR: None

WEAPONS: None

GEAR: Library database (Portal builders +3), Library database (Culture +1), Library database (Science +2), personal communicator, modulator, transactor containing 3 400 birr, tabula



BARAKHA, OPERATIVE OF THE SPECIAL BRANCH



"I might die, but it's much more likely that you do."

The operative sent by the Special Branch is callous, pragmatic and quiet. When there is a job to do, Barakha is cold and calculating; they do not enjoy killing, but won't shy away from it either. As an operative of the Special Branch, Barakha is the first and last line of defense of the Consortium. They will do whatever has to be done, for the good of the faction, which is the reason few people in the Third Horizon know who Barakha is; the assignments they are sent on seldom leave people talking... or breathing.

Barakha is a hijra, one of the non-binary people of the Third Horizon.

APPEARANCE: Barakha always wears black armor, and a

mirror mask covering their face.

CHARACTERISTICS: Barakha's mask distorts the voice of the wearer, making it muted and metallic.

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5, WITS 4, EMPATHY 2

HIT POINTS: 9

MIND POINTS: 6

REPUTATION: 0

SKILLS: Ranged Combat 1, Melee Combat 4, Dexterity 4, Force 2, Infiltration 4, Survival 1, Observation 4

TALENTS: Accelerated Reflexes, Malicious

ARMOR: Ablative pads (*Rulebook p. 132*)

WEAPONS: Energy gloves

GEAR: 10 cells, personal communicator with pulse function, modulator, tabula, tag containing 2 000 birr, med-kit, thermal cutter, lie detector, proximity sensor, security tablet, signal jammer, 6 stun grenades



BARAKHA'S ENERGY GLOVES

BONUS: +2

INIT: 0

DAMAGE: 4

CRIT: 2

RANGE: Close

TECH TIER: A*

FEATURES: Energy weapon, cell-powered. Faction technology developed by the Consortium.



IZER, PROTOTYPE HYBRID



“ ... ”

Izer was recruited by the Legion at a young age and worked for them until his group was ambushed in the field and large portions of his body were blown off by a dirty bomb. The ambush left him alive, but brain dead. The Legion seized the opportunity and gave his body to Zain as her test subject.

Izer was completed, “awoken”, two cycles ago and then served as the prototype for how to integrate the Saghiir technology. After that, six segments ago, Zain introduced Kheffera in his system and it’s now unclear what’s really looking back through his dark eyes. The legionnaire, or something else?

APPEARANCE: Izer is tall and thin with several surgical scars after the accident he suffered in service of the Legion which eventually landed him on Zain’s table. His legs and arm are made out of metal and some parts of his face have been reconstructed.

CHARACTERISTICS: Izer is deceptively calm with piercing eyes. He rarely blinks and maintains eye contact for too long.

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 5, WITS 8, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 8

MIND POINTS: 11

REPUTATION: 0

SKILLS: Ranged Combat 1, Melee Combat 1, Technology 5, Data Djinn 9, Dexterity 2, Observation 6

TALENTS: Saghiir Technology, Kheffera

ARMOR: None

WEAPONS: None

GEAR: None



THE CREW OF ARKUS

In addition to the imprisoned test subjects, there are also maintenance personnel, scientists and legionnaires on the station. The scientists and maintenance personnel will not fight the player characters unless they’re forced to.

HYBRIDS

ATTRIBUTES
STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 4, WITS 5, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 6

MIND POINTS: 8

REPUTATION: 0

SKILLS: Force 2, Melee Combat 2, Ranged Combat 1, Dexterity 4, Observation 2, Manipulation 3, Data Djinn 5

TALENTS: Saghiir Technology, Almadhi’s external control

ARMOR (BEFORE OPERATION DAWN): None

ARMOR (AFTER OPERATION DAWN): Light armor (*Rulebook p. 132*)

WEAPONS (BEFORE OPERATION DAWN): None

WEAPONS (AFTER OPERATION DAWN): Legionnaire carbine Dayal-3 (*Rulebook p. 126*)



LEGIONNAIRES

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 9

MIND POINTS: 6

REPUTATION: 0

SKILLS: Force 2, Melee Combat 2, Ranged Combat 3, Dexterity 3, Observation 2

ARMOR: Light armor (*Rulebook p. 132*)

WEAPONS: Legionnaire carbine Dayal-3 (*Rulebook p. 126*)



SCIENTISTS

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 4, WITS 5, EMPATHY 4

HIT POINTS: 6

MIND POINTS: 9

REPUTATION: 2

SKILLS: Data Djinn 2, Technology 2, Science 3, Culture 2, Manipulation 1, Medicurgy 2

ARMOR: None

WEAPONS: None



MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

HIT POINTS: 7

MIND POINTS: 8

REPUTATION: 0

SKILLS: Data Djinn 2, Technology 2, Force 1, Observation 2, Dexterity 3

ARMOR: None

WEAPONS: None



THE ARRIVAL

The ship's intelligence factually informs you that you have arrived at Wakkari's coordinates. Your first thought is that it must be a mistake, an electrical failure somewhere on the ship that needs fixing. There is nothing in front of you. Not even stars. As if someone clawed out a part of the heavens.

It's hard to interpret what unfolds next; suddenly the towering darkness takes shape. The void expands like something out of a nightmare, and even the ship's external lights are swallowed by the black mass. No light bounces back. Everything is darkness.

You realize, this is Arkus...

THE SITUATION

When the player characters first reach Khaled's coordinates, there is nothing there but darkness. Then the sensors start picking up weak heat signals and if they fly closer the station suddenly emerges in front of them as if out of thin air. Arkus is equipped with black panels that absorb all light it comes into contact with; nothing is reflected back. If the player characters succeed on a **TECHNOLOGY** roll they know this type of technology is extremely advanced and expensive; it's highly unusual to outfit a whole station with it.

There are different ways to get on board Arkus: either through the hangar, the trash compactor or straight through the hull if the player characters brought the right equipment. They're all listed in more detail below.

When on board, the GM should try to foster a claustrophobic atmosphere. All the corridors and rooms on the station are made up of black metal with low ceilings; everything is cramped and dark. The GM can also let the player characters get indirectly acquainted with Barakaha and Almadhi. For example through overheard conversations, messages on computers or tabulas or through security footage.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

The player characters should get no indication that Zain is there of her own accord until they actually find her. Everything up until that point should be presented by the GM as if she's a prisoner of Arkus.

THE HANGAR

If the player characters choose to pose as the crew of Huma and dock in the hangar, they will be expected to be in possession of everything that was loaded onto the original ship. A dock supervisor accompanied by two legionnaires will meet them when they dock. Inside the hangar there are also four deckhands that will commence unloading the ship's cargo. The player characters also notice a strange, black ship docked in the hangar; this is Barakha's ship.

❧ THE SHIP'S INTELLIGENCE BETRAYS YOU!

If the dock supervisor and the legionnaires for some reason board the player characters ship and it's not Huma, the ship's intelligence will greet them in the airlock with: "Welcome back to <ship's real name>".

Cost: 2 DP

❧ SECURITY CHECKPOINT

If the player characters manage to get out of the hangar, a security checkpoint awaits them in the next room before they can enter the station itself. The two legionnaires posted here will demand identification from the player characters. In order to get past them, the player characters must succeed on a **MANIPULATION** or an **INFILTRATION** roll, or have forged identity papers to show.

❧ **Failure:** The legionnaires get suspicious and send the player characters back to their ship while they deliberate with their superior. The player characters can attempt a last roll for **MANIPULATION** when the legionnaire's arrive at their ship to question them, or solve the problem with brute force.

❧ **Limited success:** The player characters can proceed.

❧ **Critical success:** The legionnaires buy into the player characters story hook, line and sinker and are very accommodating and helpful.

❧ YOU'RE NOT NURA!

One of the legionnaires at the checkpoint knows the actual captain of Huma. The player characters must succeed on a **MANIPULATION** roll to get out of this pinch!

Cost: 2 DP

THE TRASH COMPACTOR

The player characters can also dock at Arkus' trash compactor, which is in sector H, at the very far end of the station. All the residual waste of the station is routed here through massive pipes. The space has oxygen and pressure, but no gravity or lights, and there's not only garbage and dangerous chemical waste floating around in there, but also dead hybrids that didn't survive the integration. Periodically the trash compactor locks down and opens its outer airlock to release the waste into space. The player characters must succeed on a **TECHNOLOGY** roll in order to force open the airlock to gain entry.

❧ **Failure:** The player characters can't get the airlock open and will have to find another way onto the station.

❧ **Limited success:** They get the airlock open, but too fast. There's an explosive decompression in the space within and the player characters must succeed on a **DEXTERITY** roll in order to avoid all the contents that's being violently flung at them.

❧ **Critical success:** They get the airlock open.

❧ MONSTERS IN THE DARK

One, or several, of the unsuccessfully integrated hybrids in the compactor are still alive. They reach for the player characters and obstruct their movements.

Cost: 1 DP

❧ THE COMPACTOR STARTS UP!

The player characters must escape before they're ejected out into space! There is a console on one side of the inner air lock that can be used to stop the process and open one of the air locks, either the one that leads into the station or the one that leads out into space. If the player characters wish to hack it they need to succeed on a **DATA DJINN** roll. There is also a mechanical emergency handle the player characters can reach with a successful **DEXTERITY** roll.

Cost: 2 DP

STEALTHY SHADOWS

If the player characters brought suitable equipment, they can put up a portable ED field, drill their way in through the hull and enter anywhere they like on the station. Although, the GM should make sure they don't end up in Zain's cabin immediately.

ARKUS

The black elevator shaft extends as far as the eye can see. The only indicators of its length are the cold, blue lights that run in vertical lines across the walls. First far apart, then closer and closer together until the most distant part of the shaft seems to bathe in a sea of frozen light. In the darkness above your heads, the constant, buzzing sound of busy machinery accompanies you. Thousands upon thousands of components relentlessly pumping life through the station.

LOOKING FOR ZAIN

In this segment of the scenario, the player characters are given free reign to move around the station and decide how they want to conduct the search for Zain. Most people on the station will not confront the player characters, unless they are acting strange. Since Arkus is a top secret facility everyone that works there just assumes that the player characters have some sort of clearance that authorizes them to move around freely. The only ones who will actually confront the player characters are the legionnaires. They're in charge of station security and have full knowledge of who's authorized to be there. Almadhi and Barakha will also confront the player characters if they run into them.

SECTOR Z: REACTOR CHAMBER AND ELEVATORS

The two enormous elevator shafts that run parallel to the reactor chamber make up the central hub of the station. Through them you gain access to the rest of the sectors. The player characters can either use the elevators to get around or climb in the elevator shafts or the small service tunnels that run in parallel to them. Both the elevator shafts have gravity but the reactor chamber does not.

The bridge is at the top of the station and at the bottom there is a small service sector (sector H). Only mechanics and repair technicians venture here in order to keep up the maintenance of the station.

OVERHEARD CONVERSATION

"Did you hear about that new one? Barakha? She from us...?"

"Not a chance. You've seen her, right? That's not Legion... it's something else."

"Like what?"

"Special Branch."

"Give it a break, Zadek!"

"Just look at the facts! We've heard nothing! No orders, nothing—"

"Yeah, but have you seen her? I've never seen a Special Branch operative in that kind of armor."

"You've never seen an SB op. Period."

"You're just cranky because some things are above your pay grade. Leave it be. She's not here for us anyway. Let the office drones handle it."



SECTOR A: THE BRIDGE

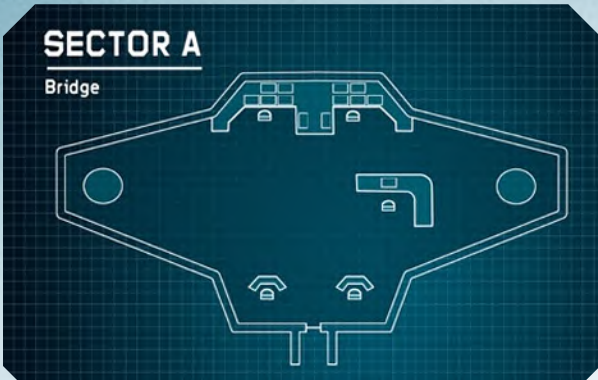
On the bridge there are two pilots and three sensor operators together with a captain. If the player characters are discovered here, the captain will brusquely ask them to leave: *"This is no place for civilians. Go back to the lab."*

SECTOR C: ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

At the administration the player characters can find all of Arkus payrolls, listing all personnel aboard the station and the parties involved in project Y. If the player characters have any knowledge of research in technology and data systems, or succeed on a **SCIENCE** roll, they recognize several of the names as distinguished scientists who have worked for the Foundation and the companies Celer-Delekta, Nyala. If instead they have any knowledge of the Legion, or succeed on a **CULTURE** roll, they can see that the faction seems to be in charge of station security and all transports to and from Arkus.

SECTOR A

Bridge



Player characters that have any connection or knowledge of the Consortium, or succeed on a **CULTURE** roll, can see that all the maintenance staff have a history within the faction.

Zain isn't on any of the payrolls. Instead her contract gives her free access to all the resources she wants in return for food and board.

ARKUS COMMUNICATION

When the player characters enter the communication's center, they interrupt a very intense card game. The two miserable players won't challenge or question the player characters in any way. They just want to avoid a reprimand from their superior. Here the player characters can gain access to Arkus communication logs through a **MANIPULATION** roll (if the personnel is still in the room) or a **DATA DJINN** roll (if the room is empty).

Failure: They can't access any logs.

Limited success: They player characters gain access to Arkus ordinary communication logs that deal with shipments to and from Coriolis and communication with the legionnaire outpost around the station. No one in the crew seems to have any contact with the outside world.

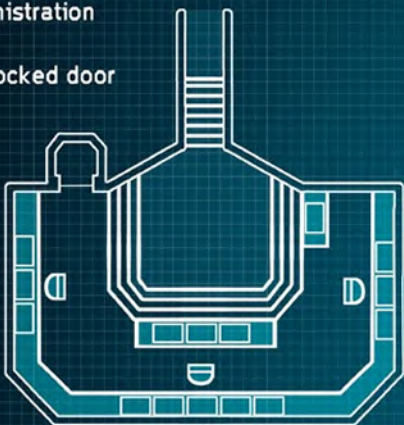
Critical success (only available with a DATA DJINN roll): The player characters gain access to Arkus encrypted communication logs. They mainly consist of Almadhi's communication with the Foundation and the Consortium, where she complains about Wakkari being uncooperative and withholding information.

There are also highly encrypted messages originating from a cabin in sector F, and with an unknown recipient. The player characters can't discern anything more than that, but for the GMs knowledge this is Barakha's communication with the Special Branch of the Consortium.

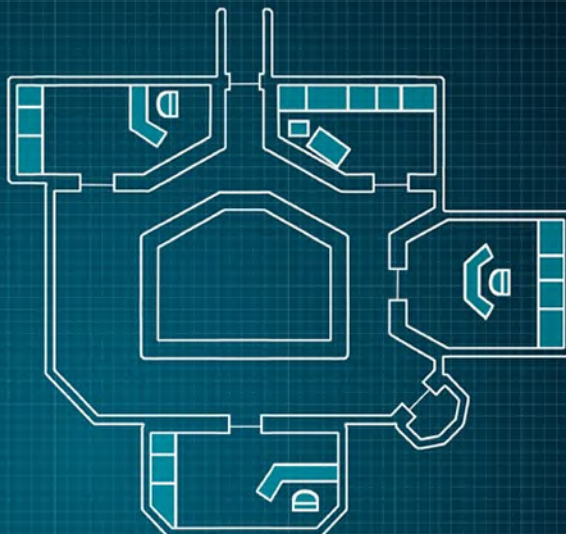
SECTOR C

Communication center
Administration

■ locked door



C1 COMMUNICATION CENTER



C2 ADMINISTRATION

If the player characters manage to get the staff to show them the logs they will only gain access to the ordinary logs and the fact that there are encrypted logs. The staff is under strict orders not to touch the encrypted communication.

SECTOR F: PERSONNEL QUARTERS

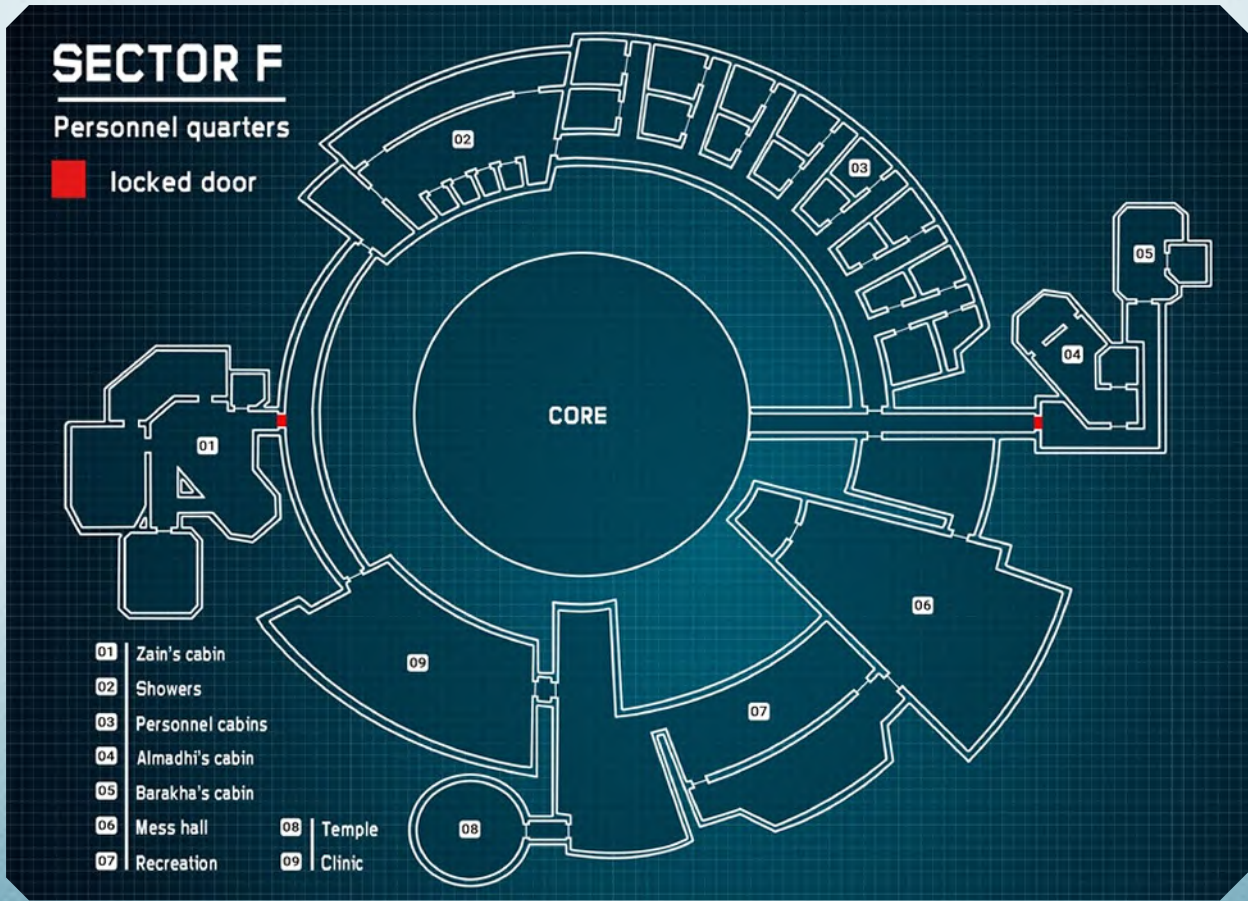
All personnel who's not on an active work shift will be in the personnel quarters. Since Arkus is a top secret facility, no one of the scientists or in the maintenance staff will suspect or confront the player characters (unless they're acting weird). Everyone assumes the legionnaires are doing their job in keeping unauthorized people off the station and that all the people on board Arkus therefore have a legitimate reason to be there. Maybe the player characters are guests of Almadhi there to inspect the project? Or maybe they're new recruits?

ZAIN'S CABIN

The door to Zain's cabin is locked with an advanced mechanical lock that requires a key card. Above the lock there's a smaller console. If the player characters try to break the lock (which is impossible) the console will flicker to life with the text: "Almadhi". It's a message from Izer who tries to guide them towards the key card, which is in Almadhi's office.

DOCTOR ALMADHI'S NOTICE BOARDS

Everywhere in the personnel quarters and the laboratories there are notice boards with directives from Almadhi. This is a way for the player characters to get indirectly acquainted with the doctor and the GM is free to expand on the notice boards with more unsympathetic messages.



DOCTOR ALMADHI'S NOTICE BOARDS

Inappropriate use of company supplies is strictly prohibited and will be reported. Paper clips are a privilege.
 -Dr. Almadhi

All movement in restricted sectors is strictly prohibited and will be reported.
 -Dr. Almadhi.

Lunch is a privilege. If working hours will not be respected I am left with no choice but to implement harsher rules for those of you who think the Consortium pays you to socialize.
 -Dr. Almadhi

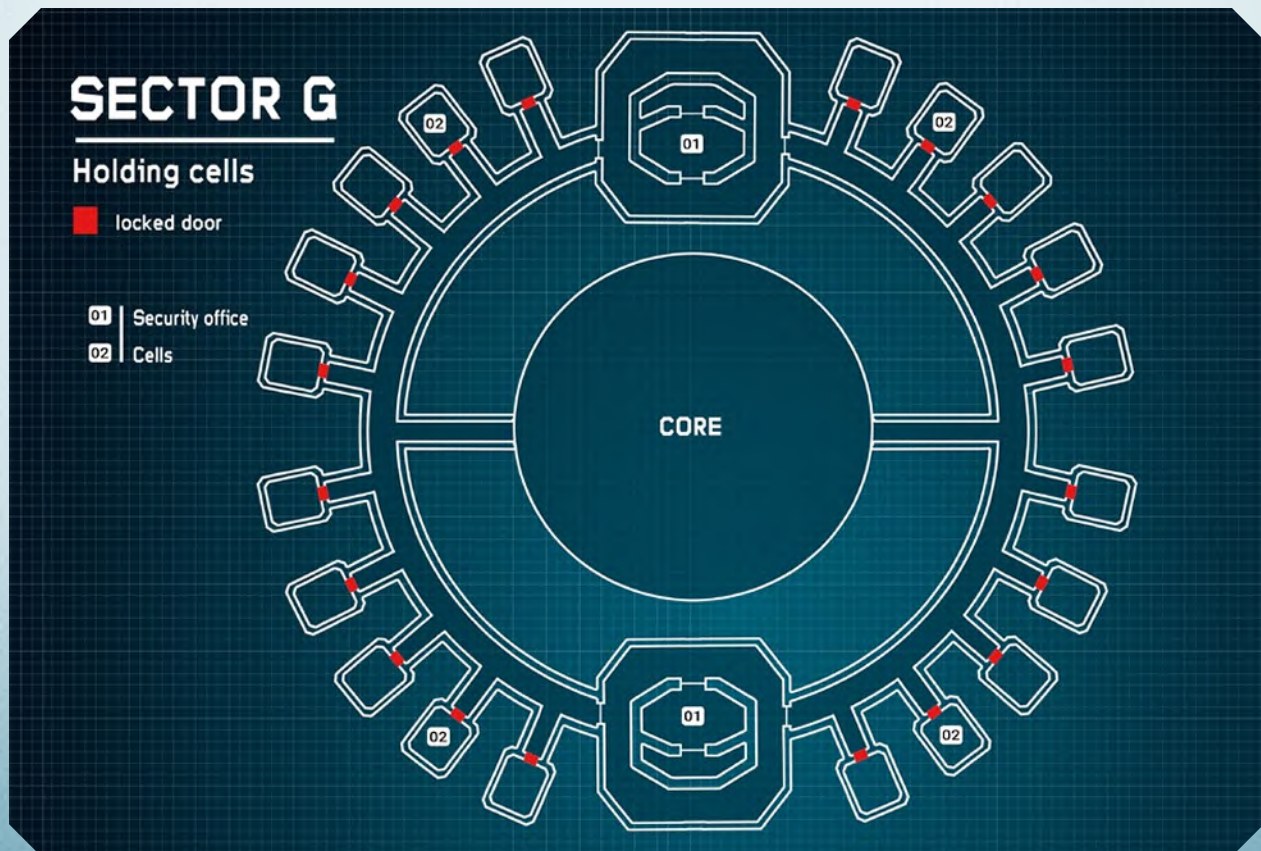


SECTOR G: HOLDING CELLS

The sector is made up of several cramped prison cells and two security offices, each containing a legionnaire. The keys to the cells are kept in each security office.

The backgrounds of the prisoners vary and can be expanded upon by the GM; some are enemies of the Consortium or the Legion, while others are just poor kids from the back alleys of Coriolis no one will miss. The one thing they all have in common is that they're all destined for Almadhi's integration chamber, as test subjects for the new Saghiir technology.

The player characters can hear distant crying and sobs through the walls of the prison cells, both from adults and children. Let them know people are suffering here. This section can also be intertwined with one of the player characters' backstory. Maybe they find a long lost friend or loved one in one of the black cells of Arkus?



ALMADHI'S AND BARAKHA'S CABINS

The room is lavish; with heavy fabrics and massive furniture that seems to serve no other function but as status markers. Everywhere there's expensive artefacts and trinkets from all over the Third Horizon. Carved relic shrines from Zalos, ornate vases from Mira and beautiful little statuettes from Dabaran. The walls are covered with large oil paintings set in gilded frames. They're all of an older woman. Her small, black eyes seem to follow you wherever you go and the carefully painted lips are bent into a jeering grin.

The overwhelming pomposity of the room is a stark contrast to the sparse station outside. Whatever rules apply out there, they don't extend here...

ALMADHI'S CABIN

Doctor Almadhi's cabin is extravagant and lavish. The walls are covered with huge oil paintings; portraits of Almadhi herself wearing expensive clothes and jewelry. All fabrics and furniture are of the finest quality and even the toilet is gilded. The GM is encouraged to exaggerate the luxury and excess of the rooms so that the player characters (and the players) fully understand the doctor's narcissism.

On a desk there is a tabula with encrypted messages the player characters can get access to with a successful **DATA DJINN** roll. It is correspondence between Almadhi and senior members of the Consortium and the Foundation (here is an opportunity for the GM to sow seeds for future scenarios), in which Almadhi complains about Zain. She thinks the other scientist is uncooperative and suspects that Wakkari is withholding important information.

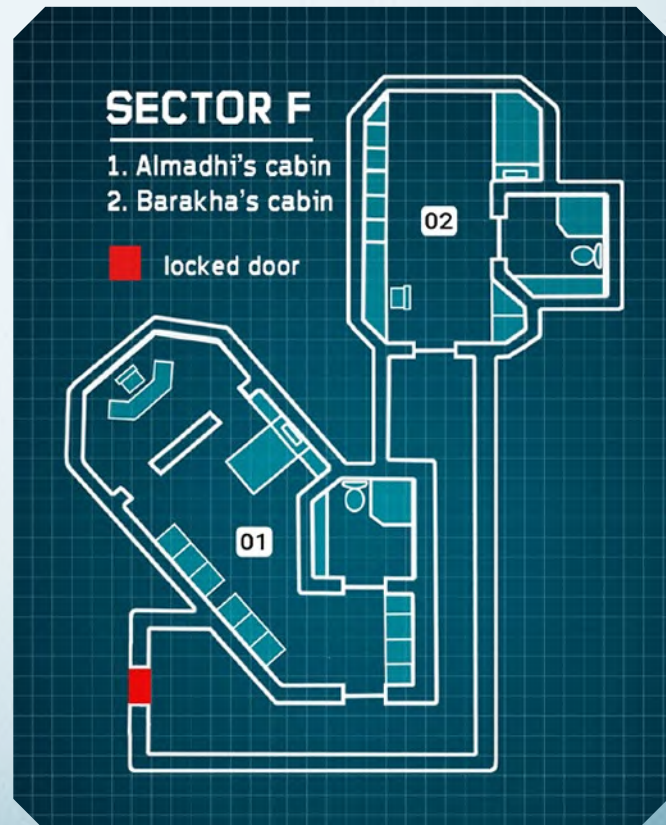
RECEIVED MESSAGE FROM THE CONSORTIUM

"Your successful application of the Saghiir technology is remarkable, Dr. Almadhi. The directorship is very pleased with your results. We are looking forward to seeing what your hybrids can achieve with our own eyes."

There is also a folder on the tabula with the name: "Kheffera". It contains several scans of a cube with mysterious symbols on it; it seems to be covered by some form of cipher. In the folder there is also an audio log and a video log. If the player characters have seen pictures of Zain they recognize her in the video log.

AUDIO LOG

"The cube, Kheffera... It doesn't seem to be necessary to use the Saghiir technology. So why was it in the middle of the chamber the Colonial Rangers found? If it isn't needed to recreate or use the technology... Why was it there? What is its purpose? I'm convinced that Wakkari knows. The little snake thinks she can keep the truth from me, but I will drag it out of her."



VIDEO LOG (WITH ZAIN)

A video flickers to life and you see a young woman next to a cluttered desk. She's rubbing her chin as if she's lost in thought.

"Maybe the Saghiir technology, and Kheffera, isn't what we thought it was?"

"I think I know now what Yhaddija was."

"A grave... And a prison."



BARAKHA'S CABIN

Barakha's cabin previously belonged to the captain of Arkus, but was vacated when the operative came on board. Let the player characters take notice of how impersonal the room is. Barakha has no private possessions, except for some weapon gear and a tabula with a high encryption the player characters can gain access to if they succeed on a **DATA DJINN** roll.

The tabula contains detailed documentation concerning the routines and work shifts of the legionnaires on the station, together with a note that the key card to Zain's cabin can be found in Almadhi's office. It also contains a blue print with no name or description attached to it (This is Zain's cabin, but the player characters won't know that). The tabula also contains some encrypted logs sent to, and received from, an unknown party during the last two segments.

❏ WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

Barakha has installed a fail safe on the tabula. When someone tries to hack it, it sends out a message to Barakha's communicator. They now know that someone is in their cabin and has logged on to their tabula. It then only takes 10 minutes until they arrive themselves. If the player characters succeed on a **DATA DJINN** or an **OBSERVATION** roll they become aware of the fail safe and that it has been activated. They now have a chance to flee the scene, otherwise the scene *"Captured!"* is initiated.

Cost: 3 DP

BARAKHA'S LOGS

>>>Sent message>>>

Arrived at Arkus. Located subject 0 and Wakkari. Security force conquerable. Generation 4 stands ready.

>>>Received message>>>

Update: Move up the operation. Coordinates for the station's new position will follow.

>>>Received message>>>

The cell on Coriolis is ready. Almadhi no longer essential.

>>>Sent message>>>

Roger that.

>>>Received message>>>

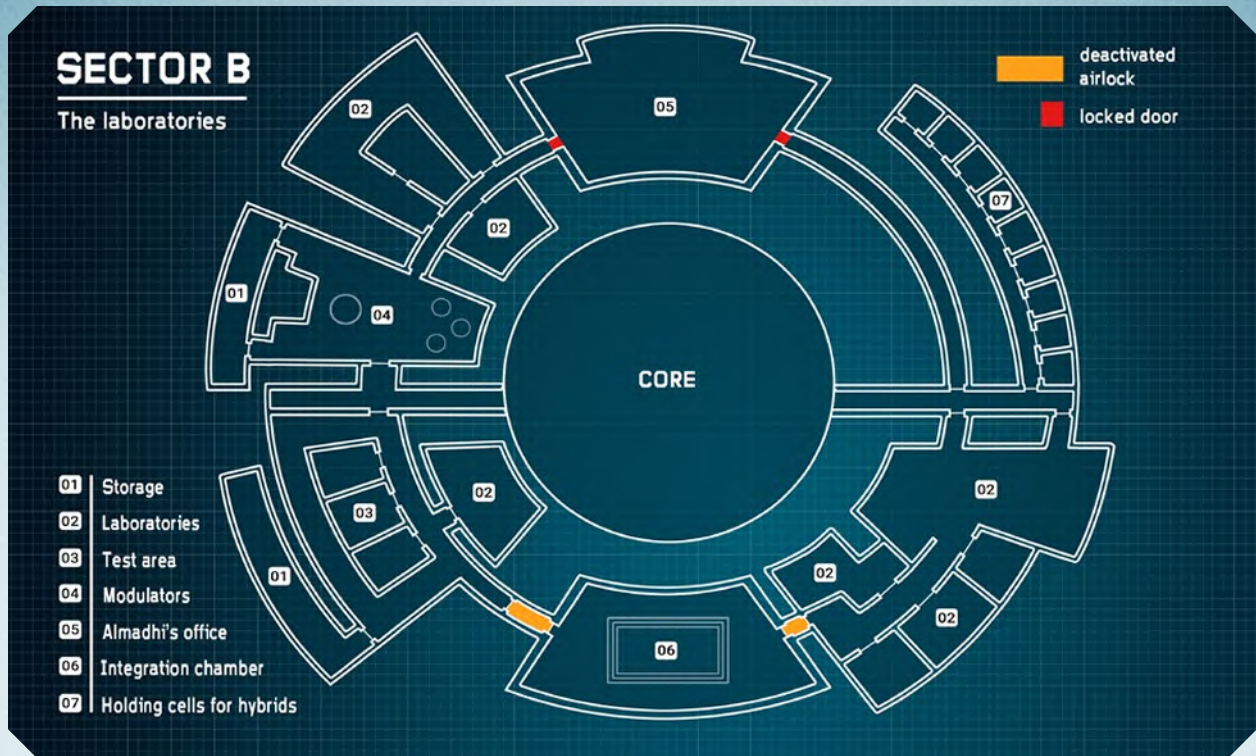
The cell is active. Initiate **OPERATION DAWN**.

SECTOR B: LABORATORIES

All the scientists (and a portion of the maintenance personnel) who's on an active shift can be found in the laboratories. There are also some legionnaires here, but they are few. They are usually only summoned when a test subject or a hybrid needs to be moved or handled in some way, or to monitor experiments so they don't get out of hand.

PIECING TOGETHER THE PAST

The computers in sector B hold information about both the Saghiir technology and project Y, but since every scientist has been studying only a limited aspect of the technology, the information is fragmented. The player characters need to look on several computers in order to get the full picture of what's actually happening on the station and what ancient Portal Builder technology the people here are actually experimenting on. Let them play detectives, with just enough puzzle pieces to keep it interesting.



THE CONTENTS ON THE SCIENTIST'S COMPUTERS

- ☒ Scientist's recorded notes.
- ☒ Izer's personnel file, containing his background with the Legion and that he has been given over to Wakari.
- ☒ Information about the hybrid generations.
- ☒ Meticulous notes and scans of the symbols on the walls at Yhaddija.
- ☒ Meticulous notes and images of the cube from Yhaddija with the cipher "Kheffera".
- ☒ Recordings of Almadhi's experimentation on children. ("When can I go home?")
- ☒ Recordings of hybrids manipulating digital information and technology powered by computer systems with their mind.
- ☒ The buffered message from the Colonial Rangers that discovered Yhaddija.
- ☒ Information about Almadhi's external control.

SCIENTIST'S RECORDED NOTES

"Day seven in the segment of the lady of tears. We have managed to recreate the technology and doctor Almadhi has given the all clear for the next phase. It makes me feel excited, but also... no, it's too late for those thoughts now."

"It's hard to believe your own eyes when looking at the videos of subject 0. The potential of the Saghiir technology is staggering. It feels like I'm a part of something great here; something that has never been seen before. This is what we always talked about, Chabi. The Third Horizon will never be the same. I wish you were here."

"I should never have left Coriolis. I know that now. Now that I'm past the point of no return. All communications are locked down. Nothing gets past Almadhi. No one can escape Arkus. I've seen what they did to Jorhanis and Rihan. See me, Judge. See that I never wanted this. Only you can pass judgement. That's all I can hope for now; the mercy of the icons."

DOCTOR ALMADHI'S NOTICE BOARDS

Personal use of corporate mandated communicators and tabulas are strictly prohibited.

– Dr. Ayat Almadhi

Reminder: communication outside the station is strictly prohibited. Necessary communications will be conducted through Dr. Almadhi, director of Research.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HYBRID GENERATIONS

Generation I: *“The cognitive abilities of the test subjects could not be salvaged. Further consultation of the manuscript from Yhaddija is necessary.”*

Generation II: *“The organic tissue of the test subjects have rejected the integration. There is documented massive decay in the cell structures of the subjects.”*




Generation III: *“Calibration of the external control necessary. Why hasn't Wakkari been consulted?”*

Generation IV; **NO DOCUMENTATION**

ALMADHI'S OFFICE

The door to Almadhi's office is locked and if the player characters try to open it, they're greeted by an electronic voice: *“Good day doctor Almadhi, please place the key card against the lock.”* With a successful **TECHNOLOGY** roll they can get the door open anyway. If they fail the GM can have Izer open the door for them. Inside they find themselves in a grand, spacious room filled with several very expensive items and trinkets. There are several photos in the room of Almadhi with notable people within the Consortium and the Foundation. There is even one where she is shaking hands with Tiera Yriedes herself, the faction director of the Consortium. On Almadhi's desk there is a password protected computer the player characters can get access to if they succeed on a **DATA DJINN** roll. Next to the desk there's a locked, robust safe.

ALMADHI'S SAFE

-  The key card for Zain's cabin.
-  A shock stick.
-  A proxy helmet filled with erotic dreams Almadhi has stolen from Zain. Almadhi rationalizes this by claiming that she's helping Zain focus on her important work, but really it's all so she can gorge herself on the other woman's sexuality. Over the cycles Almadhi's inferiority complex towards the other scientist has evolved into an unhealthy obsession.



There are three main folders on Almadhi's computer: *“Project Y”, “External control”* and *“Wakkari”*. Next to the computer there's a biometric palm reader to scan the palm of a hand. It seems to be connected to the computer but doesn't seem to govern encryption, but rather something else. This palm reader unlocks the possibility to send subroutines to the hybrids and in that way control them, but it requires Almadhi's palm and a password.

In the office there is also a modulate of the cube from Yhaddija that contains the cipher for Kheffera. If the player characters examine it they see that there seems to be a logic pattern to it, but as soon as they try to figure out exactly what kind, it eludes them.

DEAD VOICES

The symbols on the modulated cube are almost hypnotic. It's like someone is whispering softly in their ear, and the player characters find it hard to take their eyes off the cipher. They take **1 point of stress**.

Cost: 1 DP

FOLDER: PROJECT Y

The Portal Builders called it “Saghiir”. A beautiful name for a beautiful process. I've never seen such advanced atomic craft before. Yhaddija was truly a gold mine. More valuable than the directorship can even begin to imagine. All the secrets of the Third Horizon... within my grasp! I'll make sure they all carry my name. I am their conqueror. Their rightful master.

This folder contains detailed documentation concerning Almadhi's research on the Portal Builder technology. With a *critical success* on a **SCIENCE** roll the player characters can understand it, but only just barely, because of its complexity. If they also succeed on an **OBSERVATION** roll, they notice that many of the paragraphs seem to be authored by someone other than Almadhi, and that Almadhi has been keeping extensive notes regarding the other scientist's work. It seems to form the basis of her own research. If the player characters succeed on a **MANIPULATION** roll they can discern that underneath most of Almadhi's notes there's a frustration and a strong aversion towards the other author.

FOLDER: EXTERNAL CONTROL

This folder contains code, and lots of it. If the player characters succeed on a **DATA DJINN** roll they can tell that the code is for sending subroutines to people; compelling suggestions they need to follow; a kind of mind control.

If the player characters also succeed on a **TECHNOLOGY** roll they understand that this is probably what the biometric palm reader next to the computer is for.

FOLDER: WAKKARI

You see a young woman bent over a scan of a wall that is covered in weird symbols. Her jaw is noticeably clenched, as if she is restraining herself.

"I expect results." An older woman materializes at the far corner of the screen. You recognize her immediately from the many pictures on the office walls: Almadhi.

"A lot of people sing your praises, Wakkari. I have trouble understanding why." The expression on the younger woman's face turns grim and you recognize the dark look in her eyes. You have seen it before, not too long ago, in Khaled's eyes. Her voice is venomous when she answers.

"That's not the only thing you seem to have trouble understanding."

This folder contains several videos of Zain. Some are Zain's own recordings concerning her research, some are recordings of her working. There are a *lot* of videos of Zain; Almadhi's relationship with the other scientist doesn't seem healthy.

CAPTURED!

"You can't hide anymore."

Behind you, a long shape materializes from the shadows; dressed in black armor and with a dark dupatta draped across their head and shoulders. Distorted versions of yourselves dance across the polished mirror mask covering their face. All of a sudden legionnaires flood the room and you hear Almadhi's voice before you see her.

"What's the meaning of this!? Let me through!!"

The dark stranger never turns from you, but it's obvious their words are meant for the doctor.

"It seems you're letting just anybody onto the station, Ayat. It doesn't look good."

Almadhi's eyes are black with rage, and it's hard to tell if it's directed towards you or the person with the mirror mask. But it's you she addresses.

"Who do you think you are?! Seize them!! Immediately!!"

THE SITUATION

The player characters are captured and if they're not already in Almadhi's office they are brought there. All their equipment is taken from them and then kept in Almadhi's safe. They are then questioned by the doctor, assisted by a legionnaire for each player character. She wants to know how they got on board the station, who they are and what they are doing there. If necessary she will use her shock stick to get them to talk. The GM gets **2 darkness points** for every player character that's subjected to the torture (*see page 345 in the rulebook*).

Almadhi also brags about project Y and what they're trying to accomplish on Arkus. She should be perceived as a power hungry individual, fully prepared to sacrifice anything, or anyone, in order to get what she wants. She is petty and proud. Through their presence on Arkus the player characters have infringed upon her authority, and humiliated her, and now they need to pay

the price. To achieve this effect the GM can have Almadhi refer to herself in the third person and repeat her own name more times than necessary. She will also punish all interferences from the player characters with extreme violence.

PERFECT INFILTRATION

If the player characters are never captured, then this section can be remade into a “pleasant” conversation with Almadhi where the PCs must try to maintain their cover.

THE INTERROGATION

Have you any idea how you’ve made me look?! What you’ve done?! Ayat Almadhi will not be made to look a fool by some simple cockroaches!!

- It is perfectly obvious that Almadhi cares little for Zain. Give the player characters the impression that a lot of her statements are concealed threats, like for example: “Wakkari’s days are numbered” or “Wakkari thinks she’s indispensable”. Give them the impression that Zain is in real danger. Of course, Almadhi’s harsh words are not direct threats but rather an expression of her own frustration and perceived inadequacy.
- Almadhi becomes obsessed with Khaled if she finds out that he’s Zain’s brother.
- Almadhi won’t tolerate being questioned. If the player characters challenge her she will beat them with her shock stick. She will also deny all accusations thrown at her. Almadhi doesn’t want to see the unsavory consequences of her actions. In her world the end justifies the means. What are a bunch of lives compared to uncovering the great mysteries of the Third Horizon?
- If the player characters choose to warn Almadhi about Barakha’s orders to execute her, they will need a *critical success* on a **MANIPULATION** roll in order for her to believe them. She will still send them to the integration chamber (See “Integration”), but if the player characters warned her, she will survive Barakha’s betrayal later on in the scenario (See “Operation Dawn”).

When Almadhi feels she’s gotten all the answers she wants, the player characters are separated from Khaled (if they haven’t been already) and taken to the integration chamber in sector B. What happens to Khaled after that is up to the GM.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Khaled is integrated with the Saghiir technology and subjected to the subroutine that is initiated during Operation Dawn. This means he will attack the player characters the next time they meet.

Cost: 3 DP

INTEGRATION

You are taken through a deactivated airlock with the ominous text “Integration chamber” neatly printed by the console. The room on the other side is stuffy and completely dominated by a glazed, submerged cage in the center. Down there, you see a massive seat made out of metal, with heavy restraints for the arms and legs, and an intricate contraption for the head. In a circle around the seat, mounted on stands, there are big, arched screens with a thousand blinking lights. Like ominous stars in the dark. The whole thing looks like something out of one of those classic horror dramas the Bulletin spit out once a cycle. In front of the glass cage there are two computers whose screens are lit by bright green indicators.

Arkus is ready for you.

THE SITUATION

On their way to the integration chamber, the player characters are dragged through the laboratories and test areas where all the experiments are carried out. This gives the GM the opportunity to create a frightening atmosphere full of unease. When they arrive at the chamber, the player characters go through a thorough decontamination and are then dressed in the same clothes as the other test subjects are carrying (this will have a better effect if the player characters have encountered other test subjects earlier in the scenario).

Inside the chamber, one of the player characters is strapped into the integration chair (let the players roll the die to see who's the unlucky one) while the others look on through the glass windows of the cage. With them are two scientists and two legionnaires, the other legionnaires present during Almadhi's interrogation have returned to their posts.

The scientists activate the chamber via the computers outside the glass cage, and a countdown commences (the GM can add tension by having the player character roll for **EMPATHY** in order to avoid taking **1 point of stress**), but when the countdown reaches 2-1 the power is cut and everything turns dark. This is the work of Izer, he's taken control of the system because he doesn't want the player characters to get integrated with Almadhi's external control, since he's still hoping that they will help set him free.

The scientists and legionnaires frantically try to get the systems back online. The GM can have them exit the room in order to examine the power generator, and give the player characters the chance to kill them by activating the deactivated air lock and trigger an explosive decompression. The player characters can also use the cover of darkness to overpower their captors or maybe try to convince them to let them go.

❖ A NEW LIFE

Izer gets control of the system too late and the player character is integrated with Almadhi's version of the Saghiir technology, and gets it as a new talent. They also get the talent "Almadhi's external control" and have to pass a **WITS** roll every time they try to resist the subroutines sent from Almadhi's computer.

The player characters also have to succeed on a **WITS** roll every time they want to question the Consortium. If they fail they take **1 point of stress**.

Cost: 8 DP

OPERATION DAWN

"External control initiated. Subroutine: Operation Dawn."

At the same time as the player characters are being integrated with the Saghiir technology, Barakha initiates Operation Dawn. This means that Barakha seize con-

trol over all the generation four hybrids in order to clean house and repurpose the station. This is done through cunning. Barakha asks Almadhi to issue a subroutine to the hybrids, that the scientists and the staff (except for Almadhi and Zain) on board Arkus are too dangerous to be kept alive. Almadhi is the only one on Arkus, except for Barakha and Izer, that has had any knowledge about Operation Dawn. She's always been convinced that she's too valuable to kill, that she and Barakha will carry out the operation together, but when she has issued the subroutine, Barakha shocks her with their energy gloves until she dies. It's up to the GM if this is something that the player characters witness, maybe on a security camera or from a hiding place.

If the player characters warned Almadhi that Barakha planned to kill her, she has taken precautions and a short fight breaks out between her and the operative before she manages to flee the scene (see *"The Stowaway"*).

THE GUIDE

After Izer has saved the player characters from integration and they've dealt with their captors, he will lead them towards Almadhi's office to retrieve the key card to Zain's cabin. He will guide them with flickering lights, doors that open in front of them and cryptic messages on screens they come across. The player characters should have no clue as to who is leading them, but their guide shouldn't be perceived as threatening.

When they reach the office, the fight between Barakha and Almadhi might already be over, in that case the player characters find clues and traces of it, or the GM can let them witness the confrontation from a safe distance. When the player characters have found Almadhi's key card in her office, Izer guides them towards Zain's cabin.

IZER'S MESSAGES

First, everything they were, died

After that, their minds rotted

Then they were emptied for the words of others

Now they are coming for you



ZAIN

The cabin is significantly different from the narrow corridor you just left. In here, the walls are bright, the ceilings high and for the first time since you arrived at Arkus, you feel as if you can really breathe. At a cluttered desk in the middle of the room, there's a young woman surrounded by screens and blinking consoles. She seems to be in the middle of fusing some kind of intricate components. Next to her is a half empty glass of arrak and in the background you can hear the low beats of some old Kuan hit song that hasn't been popular for some time.

"Put the food on the table. I don't have time for you. Go on then! Run back to Almadhi."

Zain Wakkari dismiss you out of hand.

THE SITUATION

Zain's cabin consists of four large rooms and a toilet. The room the player characters first enter is cluttered with equipment, clothes and old, forgotten food. It's hard to get around without stepping on some expensive machinery. Zain hasn't been outside her own cabin since she arrived at Arkus; food and other necessities have always been delivered to her. She does however have a key card that opens the door, she is not locked in. The function of the lock is rather to keep unauthorized personnel away, so that Zain is not disturbed in her work.

In the adjacent, larger room there are several modulators with smaller modulated versions of the walls of Yhaddija, which holds the Saghiir manuscript, and on a bench sits the actual cube containing the cipher for Khefferera.

If the player characters comment on the fact that she seems to be there of her own free will, she won't understand. Why wouldn't she be? If they question her presence on board Arkus, her defense is that they provide her with everything she needs for her research. *"If I so much as fantasize about a component, it's here with the next shipload. I'm living the dream!"* She doesn't care much for Almadhi, but this is because she finds the older woman annoying and incompetent, rather than that she

understands how unethically Almadhi has been conducting her research.

Zain is very cooperative and will tell the player characters everything she knows. She feels no need to hide anything. She's candid about her background and her relationship with Khaled. When she talks about the Saghiir technology and Khefferera, she's very enthusiastic; it's obvious she's passionate about her work.

ZAIN'S RESOURCES

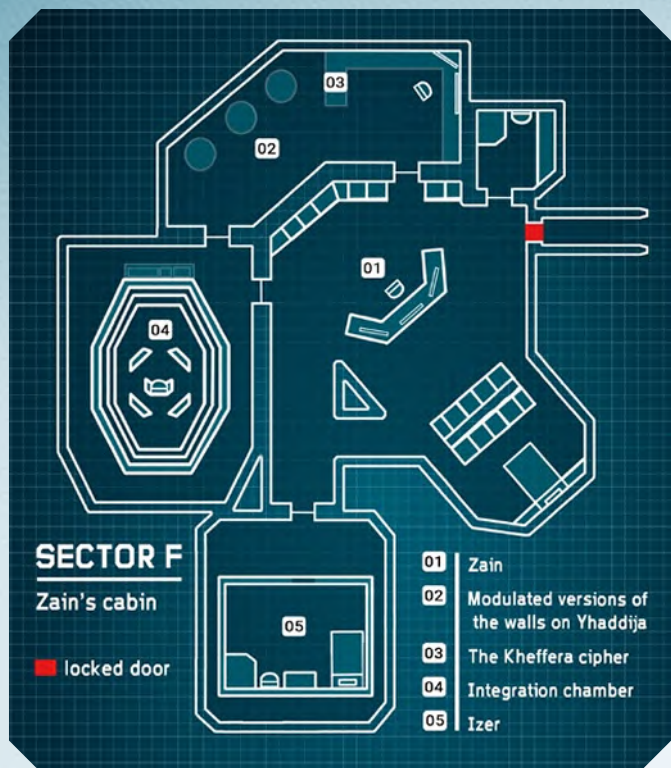
- If the player characters have been injured, Zain can restore their hit points. The player characters' then receive a special talent named *"Zain's nanites"*. This is an advanced cybernetic technique Zain invented herself, where nanites enter the cells of the body and heals them. The player characters get an automatic **3 extra hit points** and all the healing time of injuries (normal and critical) is cut in half. This lasts one cycle, then the nanites need to be replenished.
- The integration chamber in Zain's cabin is decommissioned and it would take her a couple of hours to get it operational again.

ZAIN KNOWS

- How the Saghiir technology works, what it is and what the Portal Builders originally used it for. She has studied it thoroughly the last cycles, but if the player characters ask her to explain it to them in more detail she will simply be amused: *"Why? It's not as if you're gonna understand a word of what I'm saying anyway."*
- That Khefferera is an old Portal Builder consciousness.

ZAIN DOESN'T KNOW

- She knows nothing about the research Almadhi has been conducting parallel to her own.
- She knows nothing about the subroutine for external control that Almadhi has constructed, or that additional people have been integrated with the Saghiir technology.
- She knows nothing about the human experiments, nor the experiments on children, Almadhi has conducted.



☒ Zain doesn't know a lot about Izer's background, or how he ended up as her test subject, and she doesn't really care either. She will answer those kinds of questions with a shrug. The only thing she knows is that he was brain dead when she got him, and then she brought him back to life (a feat she is immensely proud of). If the player characters ask her where he is now, she will gesture towards the door to Izer's room.

☒ She doesn't know that Khaled is on Arkus. If the player characters tell her that Khaled has been captured, she will want to save him.

IZER

While they are talking, mysterious things start to happen. Behind Zain's back, screens come to life with the text: *"It's time."*, but if the player characters point this out and Zain turns around, the screen is black again. After a while the lights at the far door (the door to Izer's chamber) starts to flicker and the message on Zain's screen returns. If the player characters tell her what it said, she

will be fascinated, and if they ask her what's on the other side of the door, she will grin: *"Something you've never seen before."* She won't stop them if they go for the door, but she will warn them:

"He's not like us. Don't forget that."

The door to the inner room is unlocked, and when the player characters enter, they're met by a big glass cage in the middle of the room. In front of the cage, there are two screens showing some sort of live brain scans. If the player characters succeed on a **SCIENCE** roll, they know that the patterns of the brain scans are reminiscent of the type of patterns that emerge when someone is dreaming.

In the middle of the cage there's a man. He has obvious cybernetic implants. His legs and one of his arms are made out of metal and his face is reconstructed and scarred. Izer quietly watches them. *"Now you have come. Now you are here."*

Izer reveals that he's led them all the way here, and now he wants them to let him out. He can communicate with all the data systems on Arkus but he can't open the physical lock on the glass cage. He should be perceived as eerie and uncanny. Let him bring up things the player characters struggle with in their private life. He has access to the player characters ship's data (if they brought their own ship) and all files and information stored on the player characters personal tabulas, computers and communicators. Use it to make him seem omniscient.

After a short time, Zain joins the player characters in the room but keeps a low profile.

IZER KNOWS

- ☒ That Almadhi has created operatives integrated with the Saghiir technology.
- ☒ That Almadhi has experimented on children and unwilling test subjects.
- ☒ Why Barakha is on the station, which is why he's so eager to leave it; he knows what's coming. *"If you stay here, you will all die. You don't stand a chance against the one they sent."*

- That neither the Consortium nor the Legion knows what he is, but that could change at any moment. He doesn't intend to stick around until it does.
- **If Khaled has been captured:** That Khaled is captured on board the station (but save this for last). *"You've made him their slave, Zain." His smile is as cold as the vast darkness of space. "Not even you can save him now..."*

ZAIN'S THOUGHTS ON RELEASING IZER

Zain knows that Kheffera is an old Portal Builder consciousness and therefore inherently strange and incalculable. *"I don't know what I've awoken."* She isn't afraid of Izer, but realistic, and maybe even a bit fascinated and anticipative.



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

"Time is running out."

Izer eyes are piercing as he makes a small gesture towards the screens in front of the glass cage. They no longer display drowsy data, but a man desperately crawling over a red floor. Next to him are several motionless bodies, resting in growing puddles.

"No, please! NOOO!"

The scientist raises a futile hand, but seconds later the bullet cracks the back of his cranium and scatters his once sought after brain across the floor. A dark figure step into view. They look at their victim, before calmly turning towards the camera. The blank mask of Barakha stare at you through the screen, before they raise their weapon, fire, and everything turns black.

You hear the deep sound of heavy locking mechanisms falling into place at the outer door. Your only way out is sealed. Izer's expression hasn't changed.

"Barakha's coming for you, Zain."

ACT III

During act III the player characters must escape Arkus and make several fateful choices. Will they make sure the research conducted on Arkus is never used again? Or will they sell it to the highest bidder? Will they save the test subjects? Blow up the station? Will they take Zain and Khaled with them when they escape?

EXAMPLE PLAYTHROUGH

- The player characters release Izer and he unlocks the door for them before escaping.
- The player characters head back to their ship but run into hybrids in sector F.
- The hybrids close down the elevator shafts and the player characters are forced to make their way through the reactor chamber to get back to their ship.
- Barakha catches up to them in the reactor chamber and they fight. If Khaled has been integrated, they have to fight him too.
- Izer or the player characters initiate a detonation of the station.
- The player characters make it to the other elevator shaft and then on to the hangar.
- The player characters make it to their ship and escape Arkus.
- The player characters find Almadhi on their ship.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

With Zain's help the player characters can initiate another subroutine for the hybrids. This must be done from Almadhi's computer in her office.

DARKNESS POINTS

In the beginning of this act the GM gets **3** new **darkness points**. If the player characters evaded capture in act II, the GM can now also use the darkness points generated by the darkness track.

ESCAPING ARKUS

TRAPPED

It's part of Barakha's orders to detain Zain, so after they've released the hybrids and chaos has erupted on board the station, they lock down Zain's cabin with an advanced encryption. Izer offers to open the door, but in exchange he wants the player characters to open the lock on the glass cage. If they won't accept his help, the player characters must await Barakha's arrival with the hybrids, and then fight their way free, or try to unlock the door themselves with a critical success on a **DATA DJINN** or a **TECHNOLOGY** roll.

☒ LIBERATION

If they release Izer, he will turn off all the lights and when the player characters manage to get them all back on again, he's long gone with the door leading out of Zain's cabin wide open.

☒ THE WRATH OF A GOD

If they don't release Izer, he will haunt them throughout the station in the form of power outages and threatening messages on the screens they pass. He will consistently try to interfere and hinder the player characters in any way he can. This can be activated by the GM through **darkness points**.

Cost: 1-3 DP each time it's activated

RESCUING KHALED

If Khaled has been separated from the player characters and captured by Almadhi, Zain will insist on rescuing him before they depart Arkus. If the player characters want to get Zain off the station without saving Khaled, they need to either persuade or lie to her with a *hard* (-2) **MANIPULATION** roll, or bring her with them using brute force.

☒ KHALED'S SACRIFICE

Khaled has been executed, either by the hybrids, Barakha, or by Almadhi.

Cost: 2 DP

KHALED'S FATE

- If Khaled has been integrated, he will be with the other hybrids and attack the player characters next time they meet.
- If Khaled hasn't been integrated, he's been bound and stuffed away at either Almadhi's office or her cabin.



LIBERATING THE TEST SUBJECTS

If the player characters want to go back and free the test subjects, most of them can be found in sector G. The key cards to the cells are located in the two security offices and it's up to the GM whether the legionnaires previously posted there have been called away to face the new threat, or if they're still at their posts. Or if they're already dead.

☒ DUTIFUL

The legionnaires are still at their posts.

Cost: 2 DP

☒ THEY REST IN THE EMBRACE OF THE STAR

The test subjects, including the children, have already been executed by the hybrids.

Cost: 2 DP

THE HARD DRIVES OF ARKUS

The player characters can choose to either copy all the information and/or blow the hard drives. If they choose to erase all the information on the hard drives, this needs to be done in two places to have full effect:

- ☒ Zain's cabin in sector F.
- ☒ Almadhi's office in sector B.

In order to erase the files they need to succeed on a **DATA DJINN** roll. When it comes to Zain's files, she will gladly erase them if the player characters ask her to. She's not protective of her research - partly because she's already succeeded at the challenge it presented and partly because she's convinced she could replicate it again should the need arise.

BLOWING UP ARKUS

You enter a gigantic, curved chamber, as black as the vast space outside. The immense reactor towers in front of you and you can feel it giving off weak waves of heat. The weightlessness embrace your bodies and a sudden dizziness takes hold as the perspective shifts and the reactor suddenly appears to be far below you. The darkness leaves few things for the mind to orient itself by and it feels like stepping into a swirling nightmare...

If the player characters choose to blow up the station, there are a number of ways to accomplish this:

OVERLOADING THE REACTOR

The player characters can initiate a detonation of the station from the bridge or from the reactor chamber. This can be accomplished by overloading the reactor with a **DATA DJINN** roll. If they choose to do it this way, they can delay the explosion so there's time to escape the station.

THE ELEVATORS ARE SHUT DOWN

Barakha shuts down the elevators. The player characters can still use the service tunnels that run parallel to the elevator shafts.

Cost: 1 DP

THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING!

The data systems of the Consortium are too advanced for the player characters. Either they can try again with an *insane* (-3) **DATA DJINN** roll, or they can attempt to blow up the station some other way.

Cost: 2 DP

A NOBLE SACRIFICE

The Consortium has equipped the data system with robust fail safes, making it impossible to slowly overload the reactor and in that way delay the explosion. One of the player characters has to stay behind to manually trigger the detonation, and in doing so, sacrifice their own life.

Cost: 5 DP

BLOWING UP THE REACTOR MANUALLY

The player characters can blow up the reactor manually if they succeed on a **TECHNOLOGY** roll at the reactor. With this course of action, it's not possible to delay the explosion, and the player character(s) carrying it into effect will perish with the station.

INITIATING THE STATION'S SELF DESTRUCT

Because Arkus is a top secret facility, the station has a self-destruct function in order to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. This function can be initiated on the bridge, but will require Almadhi's palm and an initiation code only she has access to. The system reads the pulse of the person initiating it, so in order for it to work, Almadhi needs to be alive. The initiation code is a long combination of numbers that Almadhi will happily provide in exchange for an escape route off Arkus.

KHEFFERA'S REVENGE

The GM can have Izer blow up the station should the player characters choose not to, or if they fail their attempt. .



THE END

"Angry red lights are flashing everywhere. The alarms of the station are mixed in with the screams of the staff and crew until it blends into a deafening cacophony of chaos and death. The hybrids show no mercy. All enemies must be destroyed. Long live the Consortium!"

FIGHTING BARAKHA

Barakha has orders to detain Zain. If the player characters manage to escape with her from her cabin, Barakha will search for them. If the GM spends **2 darkness points**, the operative catches up to them and will fight for control of the scientist.

If Barakha catches up to the player characters and the fight goes poorly, the GM can have Izer appear and overload Barakha's energy gloves (and thereby blow

up Barakha's hands). Zain, or a player character, can also achieve this through an *insane* (-3) **DATA DJINN** roll.

ATMOSPHERIC SURROUNDINGS

For effect, the GM can steer the confrontation with Barakha into the reactor chamber and its lack of gravity..



THE STOWAWAY

Almadhi survived Operation Dawn and has taken refuge on the player characters' ship. When they've departed the station, she will make herself known holding a Vulcan pistol. She wants to escape Arkus by any means possible and offers the player characters anything she can think of; money, the research concerning the Saghiiir technology, services... and if that doesn't work, she threatens them.

IZER'S FAREWELL

"Then darkness took form, and all that once lived, withered and died."

If Izer is alive at the end of the scenario, he sends the player characters a cryptic message as they leave Arkus. This can serve as a mysterious and enigmatic ending, but can also be used as a prelude to future scenarios.

AFTERMATH

ZAIN

If Zain is alive at the end of the scenario and on good terms with the player characters, she can be a capable ally. She's very handy and has few scruples, but since she's wanted by both the Special Branch of the Consortium and the Legion, she will need to stay on the move. If Khaled has been integrated, Zain is determined to do

what she can for him. If he is dead, it will have marked her for life.

KHALED

Khaled will come through on all the promises he's made to the player characters, unless he's been killed or integrated. His attitude towards Zain will depend on how much the player characters have told him about his sister, and how the GM has chosen to play him. If he doesn't know what part she played on Arkus, he will be protective; he has finally freed his sister and now nothing bad shall ever happen to her again. If he knows what part she played on Arkus, he will be bitter, disheartened and disillusioned; he knows now how dangerous she really is and the threat she poses to the Third Horizon.

ALMADHI

If Almadhi is alive at the end of the scenario and on good terms with the player characters, she will make a lot of promises, but there are few of them she can actually keep. The Special Branch and the Legion want her dead, and she is far less resourceful than Zain.

If she is not on good terms with the player characters she will go out of her way to make life hard for them. Ayat Almadhi never forgets.

BARAKHA

If Barakha survives, they will return to their employer. They will hold no grudges against the player characters. It's never personal, it's just a job. The Special Branch might send Barakha after the player characters again to tie up loose ends, but that is up to the GM.

IZER

What happens to Izer/Kheffera is up to the GM. Maybe his agenda can be intertwined with other scenarios? Maybe he just vanishes in the vastness of the Third Horizon...

INSPIRATION

The Expanse, Deus-Ex, Mass effect, Dead Space, Blade Runner, Ex-machina, Prometheus, Event Horizon

THE PRISONER OF ARKUS - PLAYLIST

<https://open.spotify.com/user/mathmose/playlist/2hX-MwEYXeTQIUxSIVP8Eox>

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In memory of Namir, may you rest in the embrace of the star!