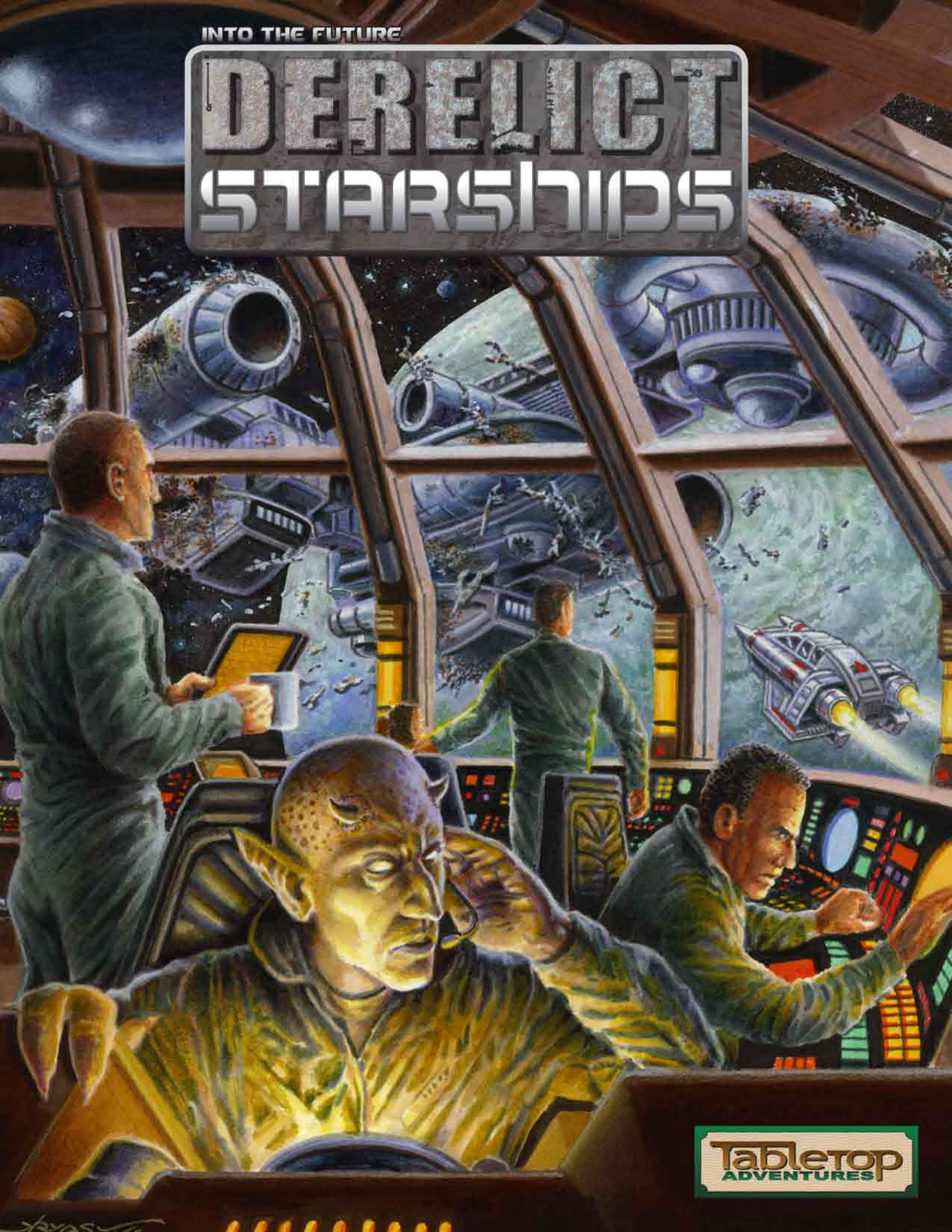


INTO THE FUTURE

DERELICT STARSHIPS



Tabletop
ADVENTURES



INTO THE FUTURE

DERELICT STARSHIPS

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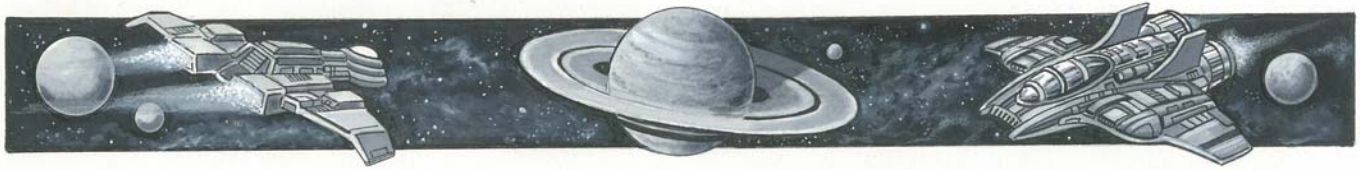
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

Welcome to *Into the Future: Derelict Starships™*, Tabletop Adventures' book designed to help you, the GM, bring those dead spaceships to life. Here you have a whole book of descriptions that can assist you in providing the images and experience of being in a derelict starship, building apprehension for your players with each step as their characters explore the unknown. These pieces do not answer the question of why a ship has become a derelict. Instead they are designed to augment your own campaign and game plans without taking your story a completely different direction from where you wanted it to go. These are for all those places in the ship that are not key to the story. Think of it as camouflage to avoid the "Cunning Player Syndrome": "Oh, if the GM took time to explain this it must be a trap – we draw our Type 75 super-duper dual phase laser cannon and sweep the area." Now you have descriptions for items and damage that are just what they appear to be – or maybe a bit more. Damage that, while it may be dangerous (as being in any wrecked ship or house might be), is merely damage to the ship and nothing more. Some descriptions are creepy or may cause characters to go "ewwww," while others may be humorous, but the overall effect should be to ramp up the tension in your players.

These written pieces range from descriptions of specific places like the ship's bridge, hydroponics, gun turrets, observation decks, crew quarters, and so on to small "bits" of description that can be used anywhere: wires and conduits that have broken loose from their fastenings and spill into a room or corridor, damaged control and interface panels, dead bodies, and much, much more.

Harried Game Masters, or How We Came to Write This Book

So, I hear you ask, "Why write a book like this?" Well, I'm glad you asked. We wrote it for all those

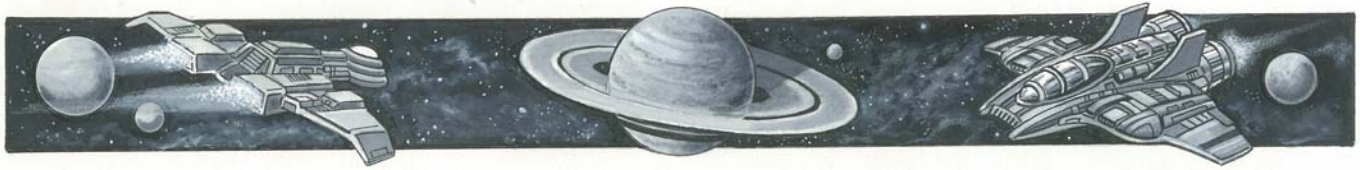
Game Masters who have ever lamented not having the time that they wanted to spend on their game because those unforgiving intrusions to gaming (life, work, family, school) interfered. We wrote it for all those game masters who have come home from a hard day of work or just finished a grueling finals week and had friends call up and say, "Hey, let's play tonight. I had a rough day and I want to get mind off it." For all of you who need more than 24 hours in a day, welcome to Tabletop Adventures' line of products for the Harried Game Master.

We here at TTA believe that description is a very important part of game mastering and that vivid descriptions can make a world or an adventure come alive. However, we have noticed that the more rushed or frazzled a GM becomes, the more mechanical the game tends to be. So we have written a book that we've always wished to have, one that would have made our lives easier over the years. Tabletop Adventures' "Harried Game Master" products are designed to be products that you can buy today and play tonight. We have taken care to make *Derelict Starships* flexible so it could be useful in virtually any space game. Our products are to help you, the Game Master, make the maximum use of the limited time you have available.

This tool provides the GM with a way to stimulate the characters' senses and the players' imaginations. The descriptions can give players a "feel" for a situation; a better image of what is happening or what their characters are experiencing. They are intended to enhance role-playing by encouraging character building, reaction, and interaction. These slightly off-kilter descriptions are made for you, to ease the life of the Harried Game Master.

Enjoy, have fun, and create fun for others!

The good people at Tabletop Adventures,
and the Overlord.



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

What are Shards and Bits™, Anyway?

Shards and Bits™ should be viewed as small pieces of an adventure. Think of the scientist or daring explorer who is gathering together the diverse pieces of a mystery until they fit together into a sometimes-surprising ending or revelation. Bits are tiny pieces of description that can be thrown in to provide “color” or add a little excitement as characters move from one place to another. Shards are longer and more elaborate, meant to be selected rather than added randomly. They may describe a certain area or a specific thing. They can be a wonderful way of getting your player-characters back on course, reminding them they are in the middle of a dead spacecraft and if they don’t want to end up that way themselves they should stay alert!

One thing to remember in using this product is that we provide you products that will add a bit of drama to your game, therefore, delivery is important. The way you choose to deliver the descriptions here can have a tremendous effect on the subsequent playability of the situation involved. With proper use, our Bits and Shards can add a greater depth to your gaming experience and make everything seem more “real” and exciting for your players.

Bold print is to be read aloud to the players; light print is for the GM. This may include optional changes, such as “**stairs going up** [down]”, or the notes could be additional information. As with our previous fantasy and horror products (such as the *Bits of Darkness™* series and *Halls of Horror*), these pieces have been numbered so that a GM can roll percentile dice or pick a card to randomly generate a dash of description for an adventure. An Index is provided in case a Bit is needed to fit a particular situation, and we have included many Shards for specific locations or circumstances. These all can help you flesh out areas or give you an “instant” description for those occasions when your players go someplace you didn’t expect and catch you off-guard.

Don’t feel that you have to use a Bit or Shard verbatim! As GM, you can and should feel free to adapt them to get the effect you want. Some may need to be adjusted to fit your setting. For example, many pieces have alternate descriptions or choices of more than one word that allow you to tailor the description to whether the ship has gravity or not, or if it has atmosphere, or not. Another thing to consider is that some of the Shards or longer Bits are written to be used gradually. Read one sentence and wait for a response or action; depending on the action you have another there ready. Whatever the situation, we have tried to make your life easier and give you the tools you need to make even an impromptu game a wonderful adventure.

In some instances these pieces may even give you ideas for additional adventures for your group. These Bits are for whatever you want! If a piece sparks your imagination (or those of your players) and you want to build on it, then go for it.

Printing This Product

If you have the electronic version of *Derelict Starships*, you can print it on regular paper. However, the final pages are formatted to be printed on card stock. (The same result can be achieved by photocopying those pages from the printed book, which you have permission to do.) As cards, they can be shuffled and drawn randomly during play or sorted ahead of time, with the GM selecting certain pieces for use and placing them with the appropriate map or other materials. Some GMs prefer to just roll randomly as needed, or write the corresponding number on the GM’s map and refer to it when the characters arrive there.

Other Products from TTA

Tabletop Adventures continues to bring you high quality products with lots of description, to augment your imagination and enhance your role-playing experience. For more information visit our website at www.tabletopadventures.com.



BITS OF STARSHIPS

01. Flickering lights cast an intermittent illumination, revealing the area before you. Occasional panels have been knocked or pried off, exposing tangles of multicolored wiring. A cable swings loose, sparking blue and white on contact with the wall; the scent of ozone fills the air. The low, ever-present thrum of the dormant engines vibrates up through the floors.
02. Your first impression here is of a great tentacled monster reaching down from above. [Pause.] The reality is somewhat different, however: a massive tangle of twisted metal, wiring and conduits hangs down from the ceiling. The structural supports that kept this entire assembly in place must have given way. The gnarled and contorted knot protruding from above gives the uncomfortable impression that the ship's guts have been ripped out. It will be difficult to move around as the jagged metal protrudes at unexpected angles that are often concealed by harmless-looking wiring. [There is a possibility of slight injury or a rip in an environmental suit. Characters could use dexterity or alertness to move around the area without damage.]
03. A duffle bag sits on [or: floats above] the deck in an awkward position. Its built-in locking seal is still engaged. On its side you can see traces of what once was a name and number but years of wear and tear have worn it off to the point where it is unreadable. Only part of the crewperson's number is evident—the last 4 digits were 6947. There is no indication of who owned it or who dropped it and left it in haste. [If the duffle is opened, the characters will find it is full of uniforms, women's underwear, and a data pad. If this is investigated, it appears to have a series of video letters sent and received between a slender woman with black skin and her family and friends. They also find a tiny ceramic animal with a flowing mane.]
04. A large patch of the floor here is extremely badly damaged, perhaps by a grenade or other small explosive; it may even have been just a very large power surge from within the ship's structural support net. The walls and ceiling are largely undamaged, but the raised metal edges and jagged pieces of debris on the floor will make it hazardous to traverse the area, as will the malfunctioning equipment. [If no gravity:] In the absence of gravity it is not as much of an issue, though movement is hampered by a lack of handholds on the walls or ceiling to use to pull yourself along.
05. The dim light here flickers on and off with a series of noisy clicks. Upon closer inspection the illumination is found to be a single emergency light flickering in its broken housing.
06. A body lies on [or: floats above] the deck, dressed in what was once an immaculately kept uniform. From what you can tell the man was young, possibly just starting out a career in space exploration. His career is now nothing more than a note in your log entry as you list your discoveries aboard the derelict spacecraft. There is a sidearm in a holster at his belt and an identification card still clipped to his shirt.
07. On the wall near the door is a rectangular green handle. It is the most low-tech control you have seen so far on the ship; it appears one need only pull it down to activate it. [Pulling the lever down activates a fire suppression nozzle overhead. The person pulling the handle will be covered in foam, which is non-toxic but messy. This emergency system functions even if the ship has no power.]
08. On the left is a small table that folds down from the wall; on it are several items of interest. One of them seems to be an identification card belonging to a security officer. Another is a small pack of playing cards, trimmed in silver and with stars and planets for their suits. The cards themselves are scattered about the area on the surface of



the table and some have fallen to the deck plating. The final item is a small device with a clip ring and an activation button on its uppermost surface. [This could be a laser-pointer, an access key, or even a concealed weapon.] [In zero gravity, the table is still in place but the other items are floating around the room. It may not be as easy to detect the small device and ID card amidst the other floating cards.]



09. On one side of a protruding corner you see a handful of marks that suggest some type of weapons impact. This seems to be confirmed by the long smear of what looks like dried blood on the wall on the other side of the corner. [The marks could be long scorch marks, divots, scores, charred black circles, or anything appropriate to the available weapons. They may be weapon marks, or they might not, at the GM's discretion.]
10. The deck plating is wet here and the footing is slightly treacherous. [Some type of dexterity check could be required.] A broken pipe evidently discharged a large amount of liquid, though it has stopped now. [If the ship has no artificial gravity:] A sphere of water floats

quietly, illuminated by the lights above. Several small objects are suspended in it. [If appropriate to the area: Beneath the sphere is an oval-shaped recess in the floor, which the liquid once filled.]

11. You discover an access tube which slants up from this area, but from where you are standing you cannot see where it goes. [If the boarding party investigates:] The tube continues to angle upward and then curves, and you catch a glimpse of an outstretched hand.

In the tube you see the body of a man in coveralls. [In gravity: It lies against the curve of the crawlway, head downward. In zero gravity: the body is floating gently, with its foot tangled in a handhold.] The man may have been about 50 years old; a pair of cracked and bloody eyeglasses hangs on his face, which is stretched in a

grimace of pain and anger. The coveralls are stained with what looks like dried blood. [If the characters search the body they find a used medkit and a data storage device with a corrupted memory.]

12. Part of a support beam and wire conduit have broken away from the ship's structure and collapsed on a member of the crew. The twisted metal apparently pinned the victim to the deck but it is unclear whether the collapsing weight killed the person, if he or she had been dead already, or if the poor soul was pinned and slowly expired as the ship itself died. [If the boarding party tries to move the mass and unpin the figure they discover that the spar and conduit are wedged in place so firmly that they may need a cutting torch to dislodge them.]



13. The area is littered with debris. Scorch marks lead to a number of holes on the wall, suggesting it as a primary source for the flotsam. Of the bits and pieces scattered on the deck, not much is identifiable except a few hand-sized pieces with metallic etching [computer components] and a meter-long section of a twisted metal beam which now has a sharp edge. Everything else appears similar to badly made confetti.
14. The “wrongness” of a ship in this condition weighs on you. Your peripheral vision catches on all the out-of-place things and moving even a short distance is a safety concern when sharp edges and broken bits can be anywhere. The constant need to be careful is just one more source of stress.
15. A huge breach has been blown into the wall here. You can see through multiple barriers into an open area, perhaps a docking bay, and then on into space. Somewhere between here and there an energy barrier is up, protecting you from open space. [If main power is out, some emergency power source is keeping this portion of the ship intact.]
16. A pipe in the wall has developed a small hole and a fine mist of water sprays outward, filling the area with a rainbow reflected from the lighting. It looks very pretty, almost festive—though it may mean that the pressure in the system is too high, potentially allowing for more dangerous eruptions. [Zero gravity: If the ship has no artificial gravity, floating water could be dangerous to characters, since it would immediately spread out upon contact and could cause drowning, damage to gear, obscured views through helmets, and so forth. If the area has no heat and has cooled to the icy cold of space then this is a twisted, piercing, crystalline formation of ice.]
17. A massive cable assembly has fallen; hanging from the ceiling it very effectively forms a barrier in this area. There is no chance of passing through here without having to push cables aside at some point. The cables are a multicolored web, effectively impeding your progress. [If the boarding party scans the cables they will find that many of them carry a power charge. They are so twisted about each other that it is almost impossible to find an area which does not have a charged cable across it. These cables may be safely insulated, or not, at the GM’s option.]
18. An access panel lies bent and discarded on the floor, as if torn off in a hurry. Tangles of wires and cables spill out of the hole it once covered, snaking together in an incomprehensible mess. Some of the wires have been cut and re-spliced into other wires, sloppily and unprofessionally. Underneath the panel lies a corroded screwdriver, a few dusty scraps of torn-off insulating tape, and a smashed datapad. [If investigated, the datadisc inside the pad is labeled *Do-It-Yourself Starship Repair*.]
19. Scattered reflections sprout in the many-faceted dome of a fractured control surface. Almost any stray piece of debris could have shattered this fragile panel. Upon inspection, the dome seems to be held together by a flexible piece of film-and-adhesive overlay. It is one of the few controls remaining somewhat intact. [Optionally the readout may still function, but any additional pressure risks tearing the overlay holding the dome together.]
20. A rumble rolls through the vessel, shaking the deck and causing you to stumble briefly; it is echoed by a clanging crash. You have no idea what caused the ship to shake. Nothing else seems to have changed, at least as far as you can tell. [The rumble may have been caused by a (harmlessly) malfunctioning piece of equipment nearby, an outer compartment explosively decompressing, a ship docking with the derelict, different metals heating and cooling at different rates, or anything else the GM desires.]
21. A clunky panel in a metal housing, sitting against the wall, has rounded keys, numbers, and letters on its surface. An old liquid crystal display with a crack down one side glows steadily in garish green. Even though the panel looks as if it should not be able to work, it seems to still function.



22. A view panel is set into the wall to the right. There are no controls by it other than what seems to be a small com device. [The screen is touch-activated.] When touched the screen lights up and displays a map of the ship. It is not detailed; it looks as if it shows only the main areas. [It is password or voiceprint protected. When activated it will show a map of the ship with a red dot to represent each living being on the ship. There may be a malfunction in the panel that causes additional red dots to flicker on and off occasionally.]



23. In this area are three lockers marked "Emergency Supplies." Each of the doors is partially open but you cannot see inside from this angle. [If the characters approach:] You find the contents have been removed from all three lockers. Each holds charging stations for emergency lights and spacesuits.
24. The bulkheads here are black with lighter areas, but there is no discernible pattern. The ceiling is twisted and distorted, hanging from its supports which sag as if they just could not take the weight anymore. The deck is pockmarked with bright white spots and little mounds. Each mound looks like a pile of slag dripped on the floor of some industrial waste facility. [If the boarding party is not in environmental gear:] The smell of burnt paint and metal still permeates the atmosphere in this area, and the sour tang of burnt synthetics is sharp on your tongue.
25. A cast-off spacesuit lays sprawled in the middle of the floor like a broken toy. A crack in the faceplate reflects light, the fissure sparkling through a layer of dust.
26. This console was obviously intended for a species with far more digits than you. A

carnival of flashing lights dizzies the eye; a cacophony of buzzing and beeping assaults the ear. Closer inspection reveals a wild variety among the buttons: some labeled in a swimming script, others in bizarre hieroglyphs; some intended to be twisted, some depressed, others to be manipulated in ways that defy the imagination. The sides of the console are long curves, and except for a sudden jagged outcrop of metal at the top, the entire thing has a richly organic look.

27. A tiny figure darts from the edge of your vision. It appears to be a small grey creature, scurrying at such a speed that you do not get a good look at it. It looked to be a large mouse or something similar but it is gone almost as soon as you see it, disappearing behind an unsecured access panel. [This mouse-like thing can be a mouse or some small alien creature that may have come aboard with cargo or supply at some point. If the ship has no atmosphere and/or gravity, however, then it could not have been a mouse. Instead it may be a small mechanical object or some more-exotic alien species.]
28. This device is round and covered in small lights; there are several digital readouts on it. It is about the size of a tennis ball and colored a flat grey. A small panel on the sphere indicates usage. [In the language of the ship's owners, it reads: Arm with sequence detonator button, obey aural instructions, do not use aboard ship.]
29. On the floor in front of you lies what looks to be a common laser rifle that has been bent in half. The metal and composite portions of the rifle around the bend are curved and stretched while the lightweight components are crushed and broken, exposing the electronics underneath the casing. It would take amazing strength or unusual forces to do that sort of damage to the weapon.
30. A red octagonal assembly is attached to the ceiling. It is semi-translucent and a light beam shines from it in a rotation that covers most of the room. The beam moves slowly within the stationary assembly but never pauses or stops



turning in its steady round. [This is merely a variation of the red alert lights that are found throughout the ship. It turns slowly because it was partially damaged and the rotator does not work as it should. Or, it could be a defense mechanism...]

31. **A dark cable as thick as a man's arm snakes out from a ruptured conduit and then disappears back into the tube. A fire burned here, apparently melting the cable's protective insulating cover and blackening the area around it. Both the wall and floor are charred. A twisted access panel to the conduit lies on the floor [or: floats by], having apparently been blown open by whatever incident occurred here.**
32. **Jagged metal and tattered fabric remnants ring the void in the structure in front of you. A gaping hole has been punctured into the space beyond [or: the next corridor, room, conduit, etc.]. The hole looks large enough for a mid-sized suited human to pass through.** [The metal shards may catch or rip individuals in spacesuits.]
33. [The GM may use this in any location or intentionally use it in a control room or ship's bridge.] **You notice the control panels and viewscreen here have been splattered with a dark red substance that has dried onto the surfaces.** [The substance is dried blood. If a character tries to brush it off, he or she finds it cannot be merely brushed away. It would need to be scrubbed off or scraped with a blade. If the surfaces are not cleaned the GM can periodically remind the characters that someone bled on these controls.]
34. **The area ahead has lost all normal lighting and is now lit only by the red emergency lighting panels along the lower parts of the walls. You get the impression that there is something in the air, but it may be an effect of the diffused red light.** [This haze may be water vapor, smoke, or simply a trick of the eye. It could even be some sort of chemical that has escaped into the air and has made it deadly to anyone without breathing apparatus. If the GM chooses the deadly option then characters that
- take the time to scan should have a chance to determine its hazardous nature before entering.]
35. **A computer display catches your eye; a stream of characters and symbols scrolls across the screen. At first you think it is entirely random, but you notice that it seems to run through a sequence, emit a faint, high-pitched note, and then play the same sequence over again. It almost appears to be some kind of code, set to display as a loop.** [The characters may just be gibberish caused by an error, but if the GM wishes to make things more complicated for the boarding party, the code could be a message scrambled by a virus or malfunction, or an honest-to-goodness coded message]
36. **Ahead you see a person in a white vacuum suit who seems to be standing with his back to you.** [There is no response from the suit to calls or exclamations. If the characters approach the suit:] **The person in the white suit does not move as you approach.** [When the party gets to the front of the suit:] **The first thing you see is a large bloody hole in the center front of the vacuum suit, but there is no face behind the visor and no body in the suit. The gravity boots are keeping the feet of the suit on the floor and the stiffness and structure of the suit is keeping it upright and somewhat motionless as it stands a silent and ineffective guard.**
37. **In your light you see sparkles from some type of fine white crystalline powder. It covers sporadic portions of the deck, concentrating more heavily at the base of and on the wall to your left. There it appears as if some type of major conduit inside the wall exploded. The metal of the wall is ruptured and bent outward like some insane metallic flower. Its edges and interior are blackened and partially melted, the unmistakable signs of a plasma fire now long extinguished.**
38. **The deck is streaked with a brown substance [blood?] leading to a battered console, with a maintenance door ajar and somewhat crooked, hanging by a hinge. A dim light twinkles from the corner of the console but the screen, cracked from one side to the other, lies dark.**



Buttons, knobs, and switches descend along the side of the screen, each with its own color; some form of marking can be vaguely seen next to each control. The bulkheads have little beads of green splattered on their plates and scratches on the plates at about shoulder height. [If someone investigates:] Inside the maintenance door you see the components for the console including an oblong object with a conduit leading into it [independent emergency battery].

39. A structural beam from the right wall bows outward into this area and metal plates have been wrenched from the wall and ceiling. Cables of some sort have spilled outward in a mass [in zero gravity: and sway gently to and fro like tentacles seeking prey]. The metal in the rest of the wall is stressed and of uncertain structural integrity. What caused the wall to buckle is not immediately apparent.
40. The first thing you notice in this area is the body of an apparent crewmember. The cause of death is obvious – a single blast directly to the torso. The reek of charred flesh hangs in the air. The corpse's eyes are fixed, staring blankly ahead, and its gloved hands grip a small item. [This may be a datapad, holocube, keycard, or other item. If the boarding party is familiar with uniforms, they may see that this uniform marks him or her as a lieutenant/mechanic/medic/cook. The body may be mummified from long exposure to a moistureless environment, or the person may have been dead only a few hours.]
41. One panel has a tiny blue light blinking slowly on and off. It is not bright, but it stands out in the gloom and catches your attention. It is even more striking since the rest of the control panel lies black and silent. Slowly, patiently, it blinks away... almost as if it is beckoning to you. [This panel can be anything from a regular control console to a small intercom panel on the wall. The GM could insert personal logs from a crewmember, or computer reports, here. The button could restore emergency power to the panel or simply turn on regular lighting in this area. Even if power returns to the console, a message could simply indicate that the party

cannot do anything from this panel since it has been overridden by controls from <any spot the GM desires.>]

42. The ceiling in this area seems to have given way; some metal panels have fallen down, revealing a mass of wiring to the lights and the ship's intercom, several pipes—one of which rattles and shakes—that might contain almost anything, and a power conduit. Though the conduit seems to be damaged, occasionally throwing off lances of energy that arc to the nearby pipes, the power flow is strong and uninterrupted. [Even if the ship is generally powerless, this cable could be powered by a battery or other independent source that had not yet been detected.]
43. Any time you try to use a communications device you get a great deal of static, making it tricky to understand messages. You are not sure if there is some other type of signal blocking your communications or if it is just the weight of dead metal around you which is making it difficult.
44. A great polysteel beam lies twisted and fallen across this area. It angles, with the low end on your left and the high end about 1.5 meters off the deck on the right. There is other debris all around that looks like fragments of shattered grey glass. On closer inspection you realize that the tiny shards are not glass at all but rather shards of shattered metal. They are sharp and strewn across this area like tiny caltrops, but it is unlikely that any are actually big enough to penetrate your boots. As for the beam you need to either climb over it or go under it if you want to proceed any farther. [While not penetrating, the metal splinters will still imbed themselves in boot soles. This will cause the boots to click and scrape as characters walk; other effects are left up to the GM.]
45. Freeze-dried remains of various foodstuffs litter the deck [or: float aimlessly]. A storage cabinet is open not far away and other personal effects are scattered nearby. Unsecured items are everywhere. It is hard to move without stepping on [or: bumping into] one item or another.



46. A live high-energy cable hangs from the ceiling. It dances around like an angry serpent, its power arcing across to the metallic surfaces in the area. You are not sure if it is powered by the main power or if it has some other power source – perhaps one that was triggered when you came aboard. You might be able to get by it without being caught by the cable but it is uncertain. [If the characters are in vacuum suits of some type they are probably insulated; if they are not the jolt could cause major damage and possibly even be fatal.]

47. A red warning light strobes overhead, the klaxon that once accompanied it having long-since faded into silence. The emergency that triggered the alarm is past and those it was intended to warn long gone yet it faithfully spins, flickering and casting odd shadows with its eerie red light.

48. This section is empty except for a structure in the middle of the area. A square pillar rises from the deck halfway up to the ceiling. A large rectangular object made of some type of transparent material stands on top of the pillar-like structure. Several indentations twinkle from the side of the pillar. A closer inspection shows that each indentation has a varying number of pins attached inside.

49. Scattered on the ground [or: Floating slowly in the area] are the contents of a small toolkit. The tools are intricate and appear to be for highly detailed electrical work. The toolbox itself lies off to one side. It appears to be still locked; something opened it by cutting off the top entirely, shearing through the metal cleanly and evenly. Apparently whoever opened it did not want the tools, which look to be still in good condition. [The tool box has been designed to be affixed to the area where the worker is working, either magnetically or with some type of repositionable adhesive.]

50. The screen here is dark. Whatever readouts it used to display or duties it performed, it is silent now. A thin crystalline pattern frosts the darkened surface of the screen, looking like crystals of frozen water vapor that could have

naturally been in the air itself. [If the vessel has atmosphere and heating these crystals are of some unidentified substance. If the vessel is dead and power has been out for a long time then it is indeed tiny crystals of ice.]

51. The deck creaks beneath your feet, groaning and rumbling as you walk. It seems sturdy, and in your experience strange noises are commonplace on starships, but it adds to the abandoned feeling of your surroundings. Normally there would be too much background noise and idle chatter for the creaking and thumping of the ship to be noticeable, but here there is nothing around you but empty space and dead silence.



52. You see a flat screen set into a small metal housing; the screen is slightly bigger than your hand and has an outline for placing a 'handprint' against it. There are several small buttons beneath the outline but none of them are marked so there is no clue as to their function.

53. As your eyes scan the area it appears that in the center, the solid deck plating is parted by four large grated panels that can be lifted to access the area below. [As the boarding party approached the grated area:] As you approach the grated area you can clearly see that a crawl space or access tunnel runs beneath the grates and appears to continue under the solid deck of the rest of the area. It is impossible to tell where it leads but through the grating you can see conduits and at least one control box or readout monitor along the way. Vaguely you can see a small yellow light blinking on the lower left-hand side of the box.

54. A view panel is set into the wall to the right. There are no controls by it other than what seems to be a small com device. [The screen is touch-activated.] When touched the screen lights up and displays a map of the ship. It is



not detailed; it looks as if it shows only the main areas. [It is password or voiceprint protected. When activated it will show an extensive map of the ship with all damaged areas highlighted in various colors (or yellow and red) according to the severity of the damage. If the screen is touched on one of the damaged areas, a listing (in the language of the ship's previous crew) of the damaged systems and their specific damages replaces the map. When the touch screen is tapped again the view goes back to the map.]

55. **There is a meter-wide screen on the wall here, possibly a viewscreen or a touch screen control panel, though it has no power to it now. The clear screen has been cracked into small pieces and most of them are loose. Tiny shards and filaments of broken glass fill the air [or: lie scattered on the floor] and sparkle in your light. [Glass shards in the air could be very hazardous to unprotected eyes, and anyone not wearing breathing apparatus is in danger of inhaling the glass and being damaged internally.]**
56. **The wall is scarred by scorch marks, black and brown starbursts tracing the impact of what appears to have been stray weapons fire. The steel has melted in little frozen rivulets where the blasts hit.**
57. **This entire area is virtually blocked by a jungle of twisted metal, wires, pipes and girders that were once part of or concealed by the walls, deck and ceiling. The general effect is as if this area buckled and ruptured from some type of tremendous force that left it in complete ruin. [If the derelict's destruction was recent and there is atmosphere read: It is difficult to see as the smoke roils through the area; flames lick hungrily at the air and metal as sparks cascade down from above.] Traversing this area will be a challenge and require some careful maneuvering; jagged pieces of metal seem to reach out from everywhere like deadly fingers. [If the characters are in environmental suits there is a possibility of one being ripped.]**
58. **An information panel greets you from the wall. 'Welcome Aboard,' the holographic hostess' smiling face tells you. 'Welcome**

aboard...welcome aboard...welcome aboard...' she intones, the screen flickering. The loop repeats over and over again as you walk past, until it is lost in the distance.

59. **Layered, translucent panels compose a unique display. Ever-changing language motes cascade from the top of the panels. Nearby, a glove-shaped haptic display controller, and a halo unit with a small square secondary visual readout, sit abandoned. The display, though unique, appears to have been in use up until the recent abandonment of this vessel. [These controllers are similar to some virtual reality controllers. The glove unit allows control by hand motions, and the halo unit is worn on the head, with the visual readout giving information at the wearer's eye level.]**
60. **[For characters in spacesuits, read:] You can smell the metal and synthetics of your suit and the air from your tank has its usual functional, but distinctly canned, sense to it. Around the edges of these more pervasive scents is the scent of sweat. The disadvantage of closing out all unwanted effects means that you also lock in a completely different set of unpleasant effects. Once again you are reminded of the loss of tactile ability through the gloves you wear.**

[For characters not in protective suits:] **The air here smells stale and there is a hint of death that seems to creep around the edges of your consciousness. You can see your breath as the air here is distinctly colder than you are used to. The chill runs through your flesh as you gaze about the dead vessel before you.**
61. **A strobe light dominates this area, splashing a yellowish-white glare over everything and then returning it to darkness. The light spins insistently and annoyingly, signifying some manner of alert or warning. The bright flashing provides such a contrast to the dim emergency lighting that it makes vision difficult. [Anyone using mechanical vision augmentation based upon light will have the same problem since their device will not be able to compensate rapidly enough between the blinding**



flash and the dark. Characters' ability to detect things will be decreased until they block or put out the strobe light. Subtract 15% from appropriate checks.]

62. A number of ceiling panels have fallen to the deck here, and they will make going through this area difficult. Several cables have been pulled out of their proper position; three are hanging across your path. One is yellow and one is green; the third one is red and it hangs low enough that you will have to duck to get under it. Two others run along with your direction of travel. The grey one is out of your way, but another red cable is hanging low enough to be a hazard. [These standard power cables are color coded for maintenance. Despite their detailed descriptions, they are not actually of importance.]

63. An alarm klaxon suddenly blares into life, piercingly loud, accompanied by flashing red emergency lights which give everything an ominous cast; the shadows in the derelict appear to move on their own. Then, just as abruptly as it began, the alarm ceases. All is quiet. As you look around it seems that nothing has changed. The cause and meaning of the alarm is unknown. [The alarm may have been set off by the PCs inadvertently, by a computer malfunction, or by someone or something else.]

64. As your lights pierce the gloom, common items – a chair, a standing console – take on strange shapes before resolving into something familiar. The flickering shadows suggest that something else is moving just at the edge of



your vision, but that seems unlikely given what you know of the ship. It is no doubt just an illusion, but it does tend to put you on edge.

65. Ahead of you on the floor is an odd mound, rounded and with smooth curves, about knee high. In the light it

is ivory in color and appears dry and crusty. [If touched:] The substance is fragile and crumbles where you touch it. [A fire suppression nozzle malfunctioned and sprayed a mound of foam onto the deck.]

66. Set into the wall to the right is a large light-grey board that seems to have electronic paper of some sort on it. The space is filled with documents and bulletins. [These are in the language of the ship's last inhabitants. The electronic board will continue show the bulletins even if there is no power. The types of things present are rule changes aboard the ship and work schedules as well as schedule changes for various classes and events.]

67. A partially devoured food bar, the wrapper pulled back from one end, floats by your faceplate [or: lies on the deck]. Apparently whoever had been eating it was distracted by something more urgent than hunger! Whatever preservatives are in it will most likely guarantee its existence for quite some time. It floats [or: rests] in mute testimony to the normal lives that had been lived here once upon a time.

68. The inertial dampeners obviously went out in this area of the ship as every loose object is piled against one wall; most things are smashed into unrecognizable bits of whatever they were. Even the furniture that was connected to different parts of the room have been torn away from the bulkheads and smashed, leaving behind ragged holes exposing ruined conduits and control systems. [In zero gravity: the material in this room could all be stuck in the place where it had been crushed together or various objects could have broken away and be floating around the room.]

69. The deck looks normal in this section. The bulkheads have some odd gashes, but nothing that a damage control team with a little sealant could not fix. Something small moves along the floor into one of the gashes and you hear a faint rustling echoing in the bulkhead. [If the boarding party looks into the gash or opens it further:] A horde of insects moves as one along



the inside of the bulkhead and its conduits. They writhe and pulse, inching along as a single body. The cluster notices you and scatters! Some move further into the bulkhead; others move along the ceiling, dropping occasionally onto the deck [or party members]; still others cross the deck, scrambling over your feet in a mass effort to get to the other side.

70. A small red button blinks from the side of an intraship communications panel. Next to it are a speaker and an assortment of other buttons. One button has a trace of an identifying tag by it; no doubt when the ship was new there was one next to each of the buttons explaining its significance. [If a character presses the button:] A klaxon begins sounding loudly throughout the area and a recorded voice cuts through the noise: "Abandon ship! Abandon ship! This is not a drill." [If the button is not pressed again, the klaxon and the instructions continue.]
71. A girder and several wiring harnesses have fallen from the ceiling and block this area. The great weight of the girder, coupled with the impact of the fall, has wedged it across your path and made it difficult to get by without touching the wires. You see no indication the wires are live—but that just means they are not arcing across to the metal and does not, in itself, guarantee that they are dead. [The girder obviously fell when artificial gravity was active. Because it has wedged itself in place when it fell it will be difficult to move even in zero gravity because it must be dislodged from where it is stuck. If the party has a cutting torch they could cut through it but it will take 10 minutes or more.]
72. Some type of web-extruding creatures were evidently active here for a period of time after the ship was abandoned, because veils of fragile cobwebs drift from the open panel above to the console in front of you.
73. A view panel is set into the wall to the right with several [20] buttons beside it. Each button is labeled [in the language of the ship builders/users] for a different place on or around the ship. [When a button is pressed, the

panel shows a view from that spot on the ship in real time. Some of the buttons provide external views.]

74. Shafts of cool radiance stream from the grid suspended overhead. Miniscule square beams of blue-green luminescence bathe individuals in your group as they advance. Portions of the grid have been wrenched away and above it you can see a glowing gel-like substance. Globbs of the shining goo ooze slowly from [or: float near] the damaged grid.

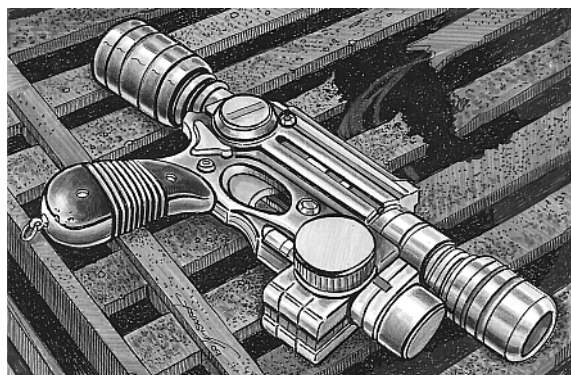
[If oxygen is present the substance can be organisms emitting bioluminescent light. If no atmosphere is present, a chemical reaction could be supplying the glow or this could be remains of an alien presence.]

75. A dull gray hemisphere juts from the bulkhead at about shoulder level. Its metal surface is etched in a cross-hatch pattern and on the upper slope it has a tiny screen and three small buttons. The screen displays a flashing message: "Are you sure?" [This is an armed explosive device. Two of the buttons set the timer, and the third irrevocably starts the countdown. The display is waiting for someone to press the third button again to verify countdown start. The GM may determine exactly *which* is the "third button," and for how long the timer is set.]
76. You come upon a spot in the wall where a small junction box has had its access panel removed. A tool is sticking out of the box at an odd angle. On the deck below the junction box there is a large quantity of a dried reddish brown substance [dried blood]. There are also markings that lead off to your left, as if something were dragged through the substance and smeared it. The trail continues about three meters before it disappears.
77. The only light here is cast by the steady pulsations of the emergency alert signal that flashes slowly, like the beating of a dying heart. Whatever other lighting was here apparently no longer functions. The signal winks on, bathing the area in an unnatural red light, then blinks off into darkness. The red tableau disappears and then returns again



with each flash, in a warning of what went on here before and a caution for your future.

78. You see a panel with several screens. There seem to be no keys or other input devices but a closer look at the screen shows several small fingerprints on the surface over the controls displayed there.
79. A series of small, pressurized tanks lines the wall; all are secured into place. Their one-time contents are labeled - water or various chemicals. Some have been punctured and their contents spilled (and since evaporated), but others are still intact.
80. On the wall to your right you see a strange three-sided symbol that seems to be drawn on the wall in some reddish-brown substance that is now dry [blood]. Dried drip marks extend toward the floor, where there is a large blot of the same dark brown substance.
81. Your boots clank on the echoing surface of the floor. The flooring in this area is of modular design, simple meter-wide square grates dropped on a grid of alloyed pipes, almost like scaffolding. The system is cheap and easy to customize, but hardly sturdy. It is clear that these are set so that the piping and wires beneath the grates can be easily accessed.
82. Something is strewn about the floor in this area and a small case sits off to one side. On closer investigation the spilled contents appear to be tubes of antibiotic cream, bandages made of cloth, and other supplies from an emergency medkit. Near the kit itself there is a large stain of dark red on the deck plates. An open roll of otherwise-unused bandages has some blood



staining the end of it. [If there is no gravity, the GM should describe these contents as floating randomly about. The dried blood is still on the deck plates.]

83. Scorch marks and small bursts pepper the deck. Stray blasts have left their mark on the adjacent walls and the surfaces overhead as well. It looks as if there was a firefight between two opposing factions at some point, and the after-effects have yet to be expunged. You see no weapons or corpses, though, and no unusual marks other than small chips and blast marks left by the past actions.
84. Ahead you see a dark gray datapad floating lazily in the air about head high. The screen of the pad is still lit and you can see that it has a heading separated from the text by a few spaces [It is in the language used by the derelict ship's occupants. It reads:] "Chapter One: It was the best of times. It was the worst of times..."
85. A light flickers just at the corner of your vision but when you turn to examine it, it is gone. [If the ship has some power, this could be a light on a panel or a safety light, almost worn out but still flickering from time to time. Otherwise this could be a reflection from a character's own light or that of a colleague, or of some light from outside the ship. Of course it could also be something strange, supernatural, or unexplained, if the GM desires.]
86. Out of the corner of your eye you see a sudden flash of color and movement. You spin toward it and discover a rectangular device stuck onto the metal bulkhead at an odd angle, with a screen displaying bright views of some tourist beach. The device is fairly flat and the screen barely a handspan wide. Most of the rotating views feature a dark-haired young woman. [The device is a type of personal viewer. It is fastened to the bulkhead by magnets on the back and activates when it detects motion. It was dropped accidentally when the ship was abandoned (or damaged) and someone who found it stuck it to the bulkhead haphazardly rather than letting it be stepped on and destroyed.]

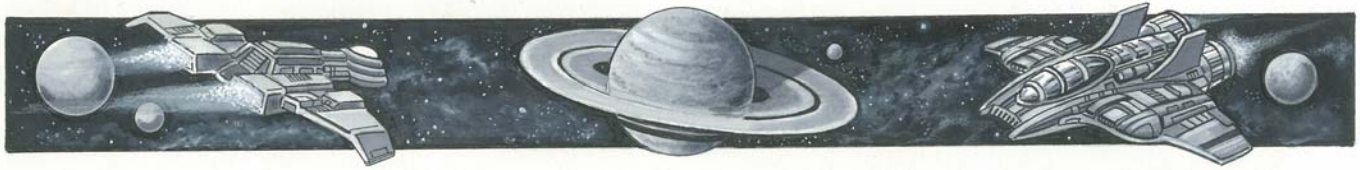


87. [If in zero gravity: Floating in the air, weightless as a balloon, you see the skeletal remains of what was probably one of the ship's crew.] **The darkened shape of a body casts strange shadows as light passes through the exposed bones. Hanging from the corpse are the tattered remains of clothing, along with what appears to be a pack of some kind, clutched in one hand. It is easy to imagine that the leering skull regards you reproachfully as you ogle its gear.** [The pack contains blank data storage units, a sealed packet of food (still good), and a small amount of cash.]
88. **A few boxes and crates are scattered here; some have been piled up to reach an opening in the ceiling. Next to one of the larger boxes lies a small metal case. The grating from the opening above is lying on the ground on the other side of the stack, broken.** [The metal case is similar to a briefcase. It may contain documents, ship schematics, repair manuals, maps of the space lanes, master security cards or whatever else the GM desires.]
89. **A shadowy humanoid figure slumps against the wall ahead of you.** [If the boarding party investigates:] **This figure is not a human but is actually a 'bot of some sort. Judging by its equipment you would guess it is a maintenance robot. It will take some additional work and investigation to determine if it is at all functional. As you look at it you realize it is not quite as humanoid in shape as you originally thought.**
90. **A grate set into the wall seems to cover an access to a maintenance tube. The tube runs perpendicular to the wall at deck level. The grate is standing ajar and just inside the tube entrance you can see the desiccated body of a small rodent, its head caught in the trap that broke its neck.**
91. **The shadows of this place are very deep and may conceal many secrets. The area before you is dimly lit by the red hues of the emergency light panels. It seems to give an eerie glow to the whole area and there are deep shadows that the light does not reach. That will make it**
- even more difficult to determine what has happened here and what may lie ahead.** [If lighting is functioning in the ship, this may be an area where the normal light panels are inoperative or malfunctioning.]
92. **You hear a drip... drip... drip.... A puddle on the floor reflects the light onto the bulkheads and it ripples with each succeeding drip. Above, drops descend from a fissure in the overhead.** [If the boarding party investigates the fissure:] **Conduits lead up into the spaces above and out of sight. A small cleft has been etched into one conduit from the years of dripping.** [If they are not in environmental suits:] **The liquid smells of old hydrocarbons and the air tastes metallic on the tongue.** [If they investigate the liquid:] **It appears to be hydrocarbon based [coolant]. It is contaminated with various metals [mostly from contact with the conduits] and age has made the liquid more volatile.**
93. **Along the right wall a grate slightly less than a meter square sits just above floor level. It is broken, with a large hole in the middle of it. The metal of the grate is still attached to the wall but has been bent until it sticks straight out. The ends of the jagged metal are torn and partially melted but there is no evidence of burns around the sides of the service tube on the other side of the grate.**
94. **Ahead of you on the ceiling you notice a small red light. It flashes every three seconds and is part of a device mounted on a swivel. The small device points in your direction, and as you approach it swivels back and forth, tracking your movements. Suddenly you seem to pass some invisible line and the device zeroes in on you [or: on the person in the lead]. A bright spark flashes from the device and you hear a metallic "click, click, click" but nothing else happens.** [This device – a laser cannon or other energy weapon – has malfunctioned. Its motor still works, but happily for the characters there is a short circuit in its firing system.]



95. [If the boarding party is in environmental suits, pick a specific character and apply this to that one person alone.] **The air smells stale and old and is reminiscent of long unused storage areas and stale dirty laundry.** [To a single person, add: You can clearly smell the accumulation of sweat and it reminds you of a gym locker that has not been cleaned.] [If not in environmental suits:] **Clearly, there is a malfunction in the atmospheric circulatory system of life support. It is probably nothing serious but it does make the exploration of this vessel less comfortable.**
96. A ceiling panel ahead of you has been opened and several wires dangle from it. The access cover for the panel is on the floor and it looks normal, but the wires and conduit from the open maintenance hatch are extensively damaged, as if a torch were held close to them and the wires and conduit melted and burned through. A set of wires hangs with loose ends and a spark arcs from one of the disconnected ends to the other at 3- to 5-second intervals.
97. Along this bulkhead, narrow bands of light line the walls above and below decorative panels. This section of wall has remained intact amongst the mess that surrounds it. [The panels can be an odd art installation, a commemorative plaque, or generic decor.]
98. This area was ravaged by fire and all around you can see the blackened testimony of its destruction. You notice that soot is rubbing off on any part of your clothing or equipment that touches it. [If the characters are breathing the air, even through a rebreather or similar equipment:] **You can smell the soot and the odor of burnt remains fills your nostrils** [or: filters through your mask]. [Unless the GM rules otherwise:] **The blaze destroyed anything in this area that would have been useful.**
99. An entire wiring harness with two larger flexible tubes or cables hangs down from the ceiling to the right. One of the large tubes has been ruptured and a fine vapor [smoke, gas, or steam] is shooting out of it, gathering in small clouds that twist lazily through the area. The access panel lies on the deck beneath a tangled mass that looks like multicolored snakes hanging and twisted together. The intact larger cable has a silver cylinder that seems to connect two parts of the cable. The cylinder has tiny lights, changing color in a sequential pattern: red, red, blue, blue, green, and repeat. [The colors may simply mean that this particular cable is working, or at the GM's discretion there may be some nefarious meaning to the code.]
100. You cannot see in this inky gloom; the darkness before you seems almost thick enough to touch. Each step you take into this area echoes dully, amplified by the blackness. A low groan breaks the gloomy atmosphere, quickly followed by a creaking sound. The cause of those sounds is uncertain. It could be that a change in structural temperature has caused a shifting of the metals as the outside temperature is affecting the ship, or it could be something more. From here you cannot tell and you do not hear it again.





DERELICT SHARDS

01 In Endless Night

Running on low power, the huge warship swims through the black like a ghostly shark. No running lights, no querying scans, no attempt to signal anyone... not even a distress beacon. The only sign of activity is the wash of light and waste from the engines. Without any rupturing of the hull, the ship may still have atmosphere, life support, even water and food if supply levels were properly maintained. The colossal vessel may be carrying a complement of weapons extreme enough to devastate a continent from space and yet she glides, empty and alone, through the endless night. There is no external sign of damage, of combat, of anything to empty such a fortress of her guardians, nor is there an indication of what mind—if any—set the course she now follows unwaveringly.

HATCHES, DOORS, AND ENTRANCES

02 Ship's Airlock

The airlock hatch hisses open. Even through your protective suit you can feel the bitter coldness that waits aboard this hulk. Your spotlight flickers to life and burns away the darkness of the compartment. A crystalline layer of frost covers every surface in the room. To the left are several empty suit lockers, and to the right a tool chest hangs on the bulkhead, still holding three or four wrenches and other implements for repair work. Further into the room sits a long dead control console.

03 Airlock Interior

After entering the airlock, you see that the internal design of the abandoned vessel is as unfamiliar as the hull configuration: traditional parts, pieces you might see on almost any vessel, have been cobbled together in ways you would never have expected. The external portal of the

airlock is perfectly standard, but instead of a single internal portal letting into an access chamber, you find that the airlock has been altered to contain two portals, each dimly visible in the poor emergency lighting. A moment later the indicators on each door's control pad blink green, indicating that pressure has been restored.

04 Exterior Hatch

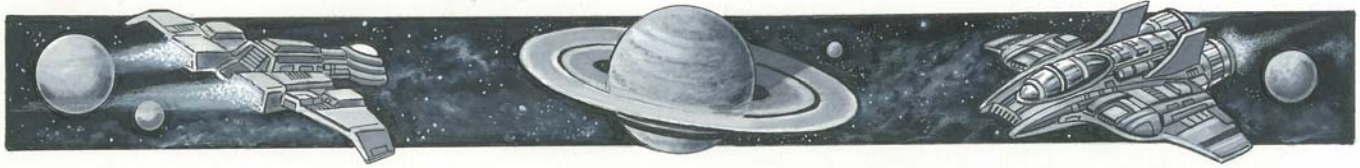
The exterior hatch [outside entrance to the ship] is a reinforced pair of doors of several dark metals. There is a panel beside it but it does not respond. [They must force it open]. Some air rushes out as you step inside, but it is clear there was not normal pressure in this compartment. There is no gravity. Inside, the entry room is relatively spacious but dark and cold; the lights do not respond. The ship is silent: no motors can be heard anywhere. Your breath and small movements seem exceedingly loud. The reinforced door leading from this room to the rest of the ship seems intact. It is not locked but must be opened manually. [Beyond it there can be air.]

05 Sealed Doors

You come to a set of sealed blast doors. Through a view port you see that the chamber [passage] beyond is damaged beyond recognition, and is exposed to vacuum.

06 Closed Blast Doors

A set of blast doors are solidly closed before you. To the left of the doors as you are facing them, there is a small control surface that appears to be the operating mechanism for the door. There seems to be no power to the unit and you see no manual safety release on the door itself. This way is blocked unless you can find a way through the sealed blast doors. [The GM may allow the characters to remove the panel and hot wire it if they have the skill – assuming that there is still some emergency power operating in the vessel or that they have an alternate power source.]



07 Broken Hatchway

You see a circular hatchway that shows signs of damage; the metal is torn and twisted in several places. The strong material was bent backwards and forced outwards, there are several irregular pock-marks against the sides of the hatch, slightly charged around the edges. [This could be the result of weapons fire or tiny space particulates, or, at the extreme, it could be the result of an alien attack.]

08 Damaged Door Controls

The access panel by the door has been pried off, scratches on the steel indicating the rough use of a crude tool. The panel's wiring has been torn out and dangles in sparking bunches, crackles of blue-white arcing amongst the exposed ends. The controls are a melted mess of useless material.

09 Door to Staircase

The door is plain, its handle simple. It is not locked. Opening it reveals an open set of metal stairs circling up and up [down and down/ up and down]. The treads are open grids of sturdy metal and it has a handrail of the same material. At intervals are landings with plain doors leading from them. [The staircase runs from the top to the bottom of the ship—however many levels there are. There should be a similar staircase several places in the ship as a safety feature.]

10 Broken Hatch

You can see the underside of a small hatch; the hatch itself has several broken sections and a small flashing red light illuminates a panel off to one side. The light's continuous pattern is broken up by an occasional spark from the panel.

11 Swinging Hatch

A hatch swings back and forth lazily on its hinges. The occasional thump and groan of the hinges are the only noises in the area. [The latching mechanism is broken so the hatch cannot be secured.]

12 Hatch with Ladder

A long ladder leads up through a small circular hatchway. The ladder is made of metal but colored

red. On the wall an arrow, stenciled in a garish yellow and green stripe, points upward.

13 Door Malfunction

Pushing through a mass of torn and sputtering cables, you come upon a malfunctioning hatch. It is oval in shape, with the automatically sliding door stuck half-open. [The opening is big enough for player characters of average human size or smaller to squeeze through. Larger characters or those in spacesuits will fit through if the door is forced open. A person of average strength has a 25% chance to do this.] On the other side of the door, lights flicker randomly accompanied by a harsh buzzing noise. The smoke from burnt wiring stings your eyes. In the distance you can hear a muffled, rhythmic thumping.

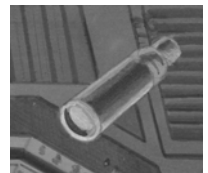
CORRIDORS AND PASSAGEWAYS

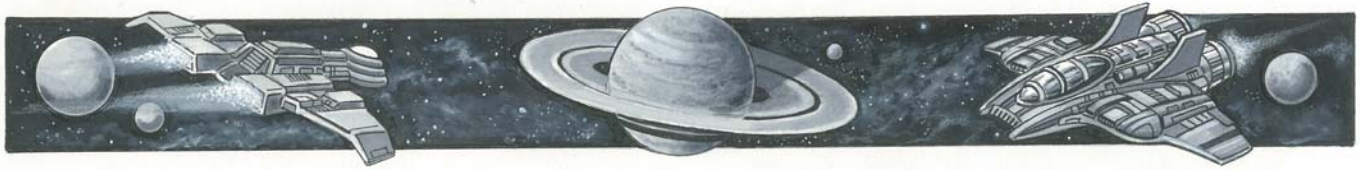
14 Silent Passageway

The passageway behind the door is clean and white—sterile, like a hospital ward, an impression enhanced by the acrid, chemical smell that hints at decontamination gear or automated scrubbers. The hall, with its out-curving walls forming a bowed arch above you, terminates in a sealed blast door. Only a few steps into the hallway, you are startled by the hiss of the hatch closing behind you—and realize for the first time the unnatural silence of the ship. There is no sound: no humming of machinery, no echo from distant movement. Even the sound of your footsteps seems to be sucked away, vanishing into the dead blankness of the hulk. You can hear nothing so loud as your own heartbeat.

15 Disturbed in Passing

As you drift down the corridor, your passing disturbs several loose items. Nuts and bolts, a discarded food wrapper, and even a sonic toothcleaner spin away as they bump off of your vac-suit.





16 Littered with Debris

Here the passageway is littered with debris. Illumination panels hang down, tangled in a rat's nest of wiring. Pieces of the bulkhead are strewn everywhere and a support beam sits across your way like a hash mark.

17 Swaying and Tapping

An intermittent tapping sound resonates throughout the corridor. As you move into a junction, you discover that one of the side passages is blocked by debris. You see a conduit dangling down which is swaying and occasionally bumping against the deck.

18 The Bulkhead is Marred

As you move along this passageway, you begin noticing several perforations in the bulkhead that vary in size from one to five centimeters in diameter. There is no pattern to their placement, and there are no scorch marks around the holes. It almost looks like the result of a meteor storm. [This could be mysterious if this area is not along the exterior of the ship.]

19 Sudden Static

As you walk down the corridor, a sudden burst of static sounds on the intercom, which then returns to silence [This is caused by a malfunction and occurs occasionally.]

20 Objects in the Light

The passage before you is dark, with only the sickly reddish glow from the emergency lights along the ceiling and floor to guide you. The lights regularly dim and brighten and the flickering glow is disorienting, making it difficult to focus on anything. Worse, the strobe effect of the light makes it seem that there is something moving in the gloom in front of you. As you step forward, you realize that it is not the flickering light—there are objects moving through the corridor. All around you, items float through the hall, set adrift when the artificial gravity of the ship failed. A glove spins aimlessly, hovering in place; a food container rebounds off a bulkhead at a crazy angle and continues down the passageway.

21 Attack of the Toy Robot

Suddenly, standing out in the dim light of the corridor, a flash of movement by the base of the wall catches your eye. The source is at first obscured by the detritus of metal and junk that litters the hall, but emerging from behind a lump of fused sheet-metal you see the glimmering form of a child's toy robot. The gadget falls, tripped by a wire wrapped around one leg, and the metallic rattle echoes through the corridor.

22 Damage in the Corridor

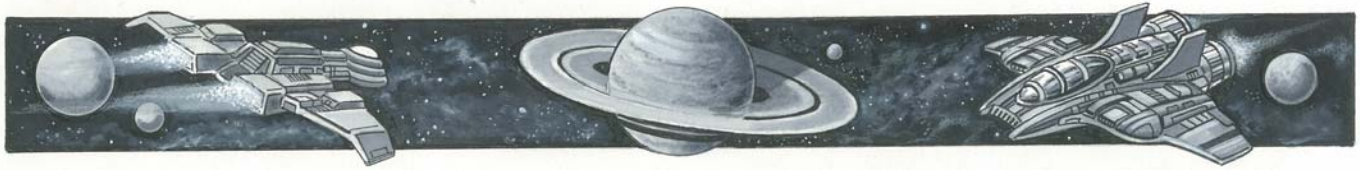
Damaged consoles spark and hiss along the walls of the passageway, throwing off the sharp smell of ozone. Somewhere, you can hear an automated door repeatedly attempting to close and apparently striking something that blocks it, the sound a slow beat in the background.

23 Dark Corridor

The corridor ahead is dark. The pale gray metal walls reflect your light back poorly. At intervals you see a wall section that is not gray, but rather the same material in light yellow. They are irregularly spaced and do not seem to open [they are decorative]. The floor is more gray metal, with regular raised treads. You float above it. A long bar runs along the wall on both sides. When you attempt to use it as a handrail, you find it is set too close to the wall for you to get your glove all the way around it. Overhead, the ceiling is plain white with tiny holes in the synthetic squares.

24 Twisted Panels

The passageway is long, stretching farther than your lights illuminate. It is wide enough to move freight through, about 2.5 meters across. The floor is solid metal plating with ridges across it and sections of softer material [synthetic mats]. The ceiling is about 3 meters up, smooth with recesses containing the lights. All is dark. The air is bitter cold and smells of some kind of fuel, but it is breathable. The walls of the corridor are simple brass-colored metal. Several panels are twisted and ripped, revealing the pipes and cables behind the paneling. Two panels appear to have been pulled into the corridor by one corner, but the third seems to have been shoved outward with great force.



25 Corridor of Doors

The dark corridor curves gently around the outside of the ship. On the inside wall are simple doors [to sleeping compartments] at regular intervals. The doors each have a design and metal sign in the middle [in the ship's language, the name of the resident, for example M. Thomas, or Zhou, P.]. These doors are locked. The outside of the curve is generally just a solid beige metal wall, but it is decorated with panels in bright colors and patterns. Overhead, there were lights protected by grills but they are dark now. The air reeks of some kind of petroleum-based fuel. After seven doors, there is an intersection with another corridor.

26 Echoing Footsteps

The ship is dark and silent. When you stop moving, you are struck by the stillness. The usual sounds of a ship—engines, ventilation, machinery—are missing. As you walk, your footfalls make hollow echoes, louder on the corridor's metal flooring than on the carpeting in the various rooms. Your lights illuminate the panels on the walls. Most of them are intact, but others are loose and floating, like metal ghosts in the corridor. When you move on to look at something else, the dark and silence that returns seems even more oppressive.

27 Flickering Light

One flickering fluorescent tube provides the only light in this long hallway. Various words and numbers printed on closed hatches and opened storage lockers are barely visible, much less legible. Equipment lockers here have been looted or otherwise emptied, their doors hanging open and darkness staring palpably out of them.

28 Shattered Walls

The corridor runs left and right around the exterior of the ship. It is dark and the light panel by the door does not respond. The air is chilly [and smells metallic—if they are not in suits]. The hall's floor has a simple textured pattern. The walls are covered by molded paneling, mostly a soft yellow and orange pattern that seems very washed out in the illumination from your lights. A railing along

the wall a meter and a half high on each side enables you to move easily down the hall in the zero gravity. A few meters from the door you entered, the panels on both sides of the hall are shattered or crushed, as if by an explosion. A meter farther on, a solitary heavy glove is wedged between the rail and the wall.

29 Bodies in Intersection

A fierce battle took place at this intersection. There are several scorch marks over the length of the corridor's bulkhead. The bodies present (probably crewmembers) are riddled with holes. It looks as though the victors took the spoils as any weapons or personal effects are gone.

30 Dying Crewman

A ragged cry from the darkness at the end of the passage catches your attention. Shining your beam in that direction, you catch movement in the half-light – the wave of a gloved hand from beneath a pile of rubble. As you draw near, you can make out the outline of a man pinned beneath a heavy panel fallen from the ceiling; one leg hangs at an uncomfortable angle, obviously broken. "Help me!" he rasps with a desiccated voice. [The characters can choose to pull him free, leave him to die, or question him.] His condition is poor and declining rapidly. He has numerous cuts across his torso and face, the flesh is torn and raked with red-black blood crusted around his eyes and mouth. As you approach, he begins to fade in and out of consciousness, mumbling all the while, but becoming increasingly incoherent.

[Player characters with the proper medical skill can tell that he is dehydrated and in shock and will die soon without





proper attention. If they approach him, he grabs someone's arm.] **"It killed them – all of them, then it killed me. It is going to kill you, too."** [It could be an alien menace, typhoid, a deranged robot, an enormous man-eating plant, or whatever.]

31 Scorched Corridor

A terrible fire must have raged in this corridor, because every surface is scorched and covered in hardened fire suppression foam. [There is no lighting in this corridor.] Long since dried out, the gray foam crunches underfoot as you walk down the hallway. The floor vibrates with your steps, dislodging flakes of ash, but the sound is deadened by the foam. Overhead, the covers on the ceiling lights have been peeled away by the heat, leaving brown runners of melted material dangling down into the passage. At the far end of the corridor, a body in a spacesuit is slumped against a sealed airlock door. The suit is charred and blackened in places, and the right glove has melted and become stuck to the door mechanism. The cracked dome of the suit's helmet is facing you, twisted back at an odd angle, and through it you can make out a skull covered in desiccated flesh and paper-like skin.



32 Access Corridor

A hexagonal passageway stretches across open space, connecting two hatches. At one end of the corridor is a door with a panel at one side. It has several buttons marked on it, one of which reads: **"Purge Access."** At regular intervals you can see small circular windows showing the backdrop of space.

33 Sealed Breach

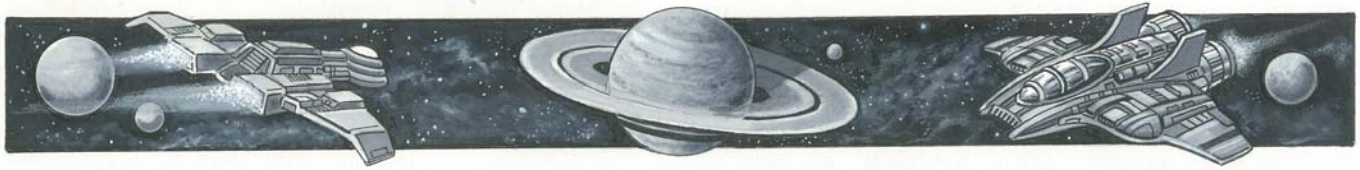
One side of the corridor, which is along the outer skin of the ship, has been damaged by an explosion. Judging from the shape of the remaining twisted metal, it happened inside the corridor and forced a hole through the wall. The hole has been completely sealed with foam and is now safe.

34 Blue Lighting

Making your way down a deserted, dark corridor, you discover the doors to all the rooms standing open, exposing the furnishings of each in a soft, blue glow. Looking closer you see that the blue glow in each room comes from a blue bulb on top of a small black box sitting on the floor. [These boxes may be portable emergency lighting, alien mind control devices, proximity bombs, or whatever the GM desires.]

35 Alone in the Dark

Both main and emergency lighting seem to be out in this section. As you flash your light around the area, the darkness and shadows accentuate the isolation of this place: a vessel once filled with life and activity, now nothing but a dead hulk. There is nothing here but empty silence. Anyone who has never entered a ship lying derelict in deep space cannot understand the feelings of aloneness in such a situation. [The GM may have a character make a perception check, or simply tell a character:] **You think you see something dart in and out of one of the shadows just at the edge of your vision.** [Nothing is there, but any character the GM chooses could be certain they saw something.] **When you focus on the area you can see nothing unusual, but now the shadows seem deeper and the gloom even more oppressive.**



36 Lights on Sensor

[If power is not available, set this aside until it is restored. Once power is restored the lights instantly brighten where the characters are. However, the lights in other areas will only go on if someone enters that area and they will extinguish themselves to conserve power if there is no one present]. The next area is dark and with the emergency lighting now extinguished it is replaced only by a soft blue glow strip along the walkway that somehow manages to provide no useful light at all. As you approach the area's sensors detect you and the lights come up to full intensity so that everything is now clearly visible.



TUBES, TUNNELS AND LIFTS

37 Maintenance Tunnel

The interior of this space is confined, as you would expect in a maintenance tunnel, there is certainly no room to turn around in here. The ducting is cramped and echoes as you move along it. Off in the distance you can hear a faint 'swoosh-swoosh' sound as if something large is turning very slowly.

38 Crawl Tube

[This corridor is at zero gravity.] This corridor is a narrow tube only two meters in diameter. It runs a few meters and comes to an intersection. Pulling yourself along using the evenly spaced handholds, you reach the intersection and find the last grip covered with a dark dried substance. Looking around the area, you see that the bulkheads are spattered with it as well. [Analysis shows the substance to be human blood.]

39 Dead Worker

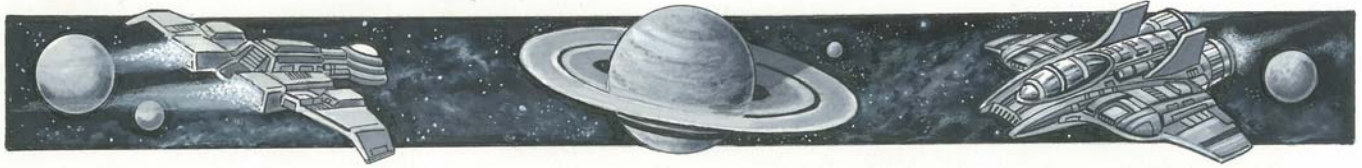
A hatch to a maintenance tunnel [crawlway, tube] is swinging to and fro slowly on its hinges. Looking inside, you see the body of a human male who was apparently working on something when he died. No cause of death is immediately visible. The corpse appears to be looking into a small open control panel and his right hand still grasps one of the tools he was using. He may have been attempting to repair something when death caught him unexpectedly. [In zero gravity: The man had one hand holding him in place and so the corpse now literally has a death grip on one of the hand supports.]

40 Zip Tracks

This passageway seems to proceed along the center axis of the ship, with no apparent up or down. The only distinguishing parts of the corridor are the zip tracks on opposite sides of the corridor. With main power down the zip tracks are no longer functioning, but it is obvious that this corridor was designed to move people quickly from one end of the ship to the other. [If power is restored the zip tracks will start up again as they have not been damaged. Consisting of a series of evenly spaced handholds on a track, a zip track allows personnel to move distances quickly and easily in zero gravity situations. Using the zip tracks the characters can go from one end of a long ship to the other in less than a minute.

41 Wide Lift, Small Stair

Ahead of you the corridor ends at a lift with a simple stairway beside it. A control panel between the lift and the stairs has a speaker and a number of color-coded buttons. A red light on it is blinking, the only light in the corridor. The lift appears wide enough for a heavily loaded motorized cart to enter, but the door will not open. The stair beside it is about one person wide, with a smooth gray metal handrail on both sides. The stairs are very steep but that is no problem in the low gravity of the ship.



42 Working Lift

The door is large and appears to slide open. A control panel is set in the wall beside it, about 1.5 meters up. The corridor is dark but the button responds to your touch and you hear a whirring. The sound increases and then the door slides open to reveal a lift. It is large enough to hold two or three persons but not much equipment. A small rectangular object leans against the far wall [a briefcase, portable battery, communications unit or other item] just below a line of scorch marks.

43 Destroyed Lift

A huge burnt-edged hole gapes towards you from the wall at the far end of the hallway. [If the characters investigate:] Flickering light from nearby panels reveals the tangled mess of an internal lift car lying at the bottom of its shaft. Dark scorch marks cover everything, though the reason for this is not immediately obvious. The sturdy carpet that covered the floor of the lift car is charred and pieces of the steel underneath have been driven up through the ashes. Splattered dried blood lies everywhere inside the elevator car, along with some shreds of cloth on blackened steel fragments.

BRIDGES AND ADMINISTRATION

44 Ship's Bridge

This is apparently the bridge or control center of the ship. The central window shows the environment outside. Several chairs sit in front of small consoles, with controls and displays on each. The panel on the right has a large joystick control yoke and several banks of interesting switches, three of which are illuminated. [These switches can do what ever you want them to – as long as they are used for something important, time-critical, or interesting] The bridge has seen better days and there are some broken pieces of equipment, while others look to have been repaired with adhesive and luck.

45 Bodies on Station

The flickering computer displays and the dull red of emergency lighting are all that illuminate this room. Several crewmembers bend over their consoles seemingly oblivious to two of their fellows lying on the floor near a row of damaged instrument panels. Looking more closely, through, you realize that the crewmembers are actually dead and slumped over their stations. The ones on the floor seem to have been victims of a close range explosion. The vacuum has kept the bodies from decaying properly, and the poor lighting was enough to trick your vision at first.

46 Small Bridge

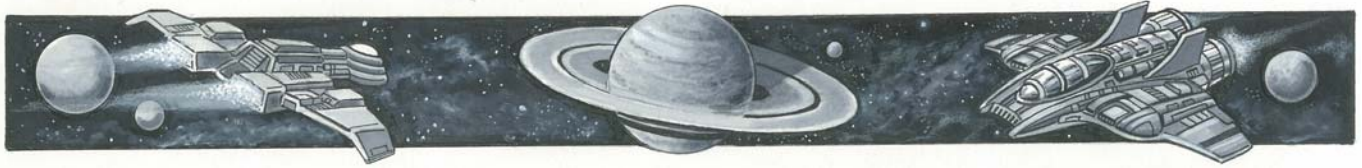
You force through the portal to the bridge and are welcomed by the odor of two bodies slumped in the pilot seats. Multiple lights glare at you from the control panel, some blinking mournfully, others steadfast in defiance.

47 Sooty Conference Room

This small room seems to be set up as a conference area. A large table dominates the space, with seats placed around it. The area smells of smoke and you can see scorch marks around the room's ventilation shaft, turning the circular grille into the iris of a black-petaled flower. Whatever caused the blast, it turned paper to ash and left much of the room sooty with the remains of whatever notes were on the table. The only undamaged item is a small handheld computer, still beeping feebly where it fell to the floor.

48 A Simple Office

This small office could have been almost anyone's, as far as can be told from the layout. A simple chair and desk, with a computer display blinking contentedly away on it, account for most of the furnishings. However, floating in the weightless vacuum [or: lying in heaps on the deck] are innumerable papers. Scattered and mixed and randomized, it would take ages—or sheer luck—to put something together to give you any idea what the writings might be about, or their author.



MECHICAL AND SANITATION

49 Medical Bay

The beam of your light reveals a dozen slabs, half of which still contain occupants. Their eyes are closed in endless sleep, their bodies in various states of decay. Discarded supplies [spray hypos, medkits, synthflesh applicators] litter the floor. A medical bot with nearly-dead batteries jerks and whirs spastically in a corner. The air is absolutely fetid with the stench of the dead.

50 Inoperative Operating Room

The ship's small operating theater is a chaotic, disgusting mess, making it almost unfortunate that the bright lighting is still active: the final patient to have entered here is still lying on the table, a tube still running to one putrefying limb, an attached rebreather still cycling away; the sound of the pumping air gives the corpse a mockery of living breath in an unrising chest. The sickly stench of decay is almost overpowering, and the scattered tools and medicine vials make even simply walking around none too easy.

51 Body Bags

Eight body bags are sealed up and apparently full. [If there is no gravity: The bags rotate slowly before you.] They seem to have been laid out awaiting transport to the ship's morgue or possibly to the tubes for burial in space. They are still waiting patiently for someone to return to finish the task. [If the bags are investigated:] These are indeed the mummified remains of crew persons, some in uniform and some clad in only their undergarments.

52 Stasis Chamber

You see what looks like a small stand-up coffin, made of metal and connected to the wall with a series of cables and struts. The front of the coffin has a clear section through which you can see a small headrest. This is evidently designed for the living rather than the dead, however, since a single display off to one side would give information on life-signs and various readouts for the occupant.

[This can be a cryogenic sleep chamber, a medical monitoring chamber, or whatever suits the GMs game. It is empty, unless the GM wishes to fill it with something....]

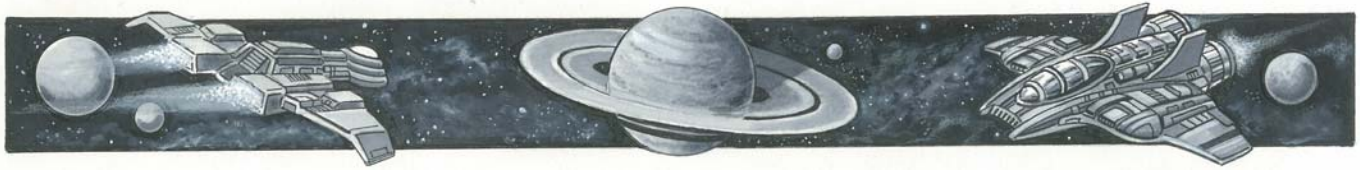
53 Hibernation Pods

There are five pods in the room, arranged like the rays of a star around the terminal monitoring them. Each is about 2.5 meters in length, appearing more like a coffin than anything else. The head of each is covered in wires and hoses leading from the pod back into the terminal. About half a meter from the head of each is a small view port; within them you can see five frozen faces, sleeping and rimy. The terminal hums constantly, and every once in a while exhales chilly little gusts.

54 Sanitary Cubicle

A small cubicle that is obviously designed for sanitation, it is immaculate and lit with a bright white light. There are three strange pyramids on a shelf that seem to fulfill no apparent function.





Shard Set: Decon Unit (55-59)

55 Emergency Shower Room

[Illustrated instructions show an outline of the typical ship occupants. Built to be an independent unit that functions in an emergency, under most circumstances it will still be working.] **The door is just smaller than those into living quarters. It is sturdy and has an embossed metal sign in the center.** [In ship's language it reads "Decontamination Shower," with the universal sign or hieroglyph with the same message]. **The door opens to show a room 2 meters square. The light goes on as you enter.** [It is on an emergency battery system independent of the rest of the ship.] **The room holds a cabinet and large basin to the left, a 2-meter-wide sealed door straight ahead, and a low opening on the right. The ceiling is 2.5 meters high, and solid metal except for small, hinged openings, all closed. The floor is of some highly resistant material, very plain. A safety bar runs along the wall to the right, about 1.5 meters high. A set of panels beside the entry door to your right are labeled** [in the ship's language and in universal safety symbols and pictures]. **Buttons will close the door, turn on a fan to pull air out, turn on a shower of water throughout the room or initiate a warning.** [The signal will sound throughout the ship and if activated other functions may be included.]

56 Decontamination Chute

To the right there is a heavy door about one meter square at the bottom of the wall. It is of some unusual metal, light but strong and reinforced, with a hinge at the bottom, so it swings down easily to show a chute. Above it is a metal square showing instructions in bold print, both in the language of the ship and in pictures. The pictures demonstrate putting a worksuit into a bag and down the chute, without touching it. The bags [four, of extraheavy flexible synthetic material] **are on a shelf set into the wall above the chute door.**

57 Worksuit Closet

To the left is an inset cabinet as tall as the room, closed. The surface is covered with instructions on a metal square. The instructions are in the ship's language but also represented in pictures. ["Clean worksuits. Do not contaminate. Follow instructions."] **The pictures are of worksuits, with the universal**

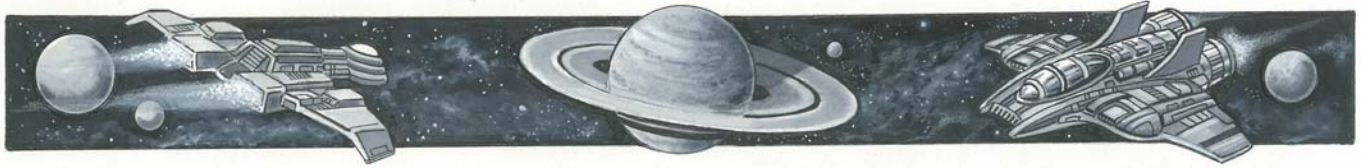
hieroglyphs for "clean" and "do not contaminate."] **The cabinet is not locked. Inside are shelves holding four clean worksuits for use within the ship** [2 large, 1 medium, 1 small], **several sets of clothes for crew not on duty, and one large-sized suit suitable for work outside the ship or with dangerous chemicals. The worksuits are sealed into individual bags; the clothes simply sit, neatly folded, on the middle shelf. In the bag with each worksuit are instructions on how to put them on, in the ship's language and with pictures.**

58 Shower Controls

Beyond the metal cabinet on the left is a large, deep basin, with heavy-duty mirror solidly mounted on the wall above it. A number of instructions are glued to the mirror, reducing its usable area. [They are more safety instructions, in ship's language.] **Next to it a large sealed door, extends from the floor up 2 meters. It is labeled in large dark letters in ship's language with universal symbols and with a picture.** ["Decontamination Shower"] **It has a bar across it at 1.5 meters, which sticks out farther from the door than the standard safety handholds.** [It is easily grabbed for opening the door in an emergency.] **An extensive console is on the wall to the left of the door beside the big basin. A comm connection dominates the console, but it also has a variety of buttons and large labels in the ship's language and the universal symbols and pictures.** [The controls include water and water temperatures for the basin; open and close the basin's drain; add decontaminating materials to the incoming water, such as acid or base to help neutralize a spilled chemical. It also has instructions for the shower, clearly indicated with pictures; a button that opens the shower and others that control it.]

59 Decontamination Shower

The shower, although sealed, opens easily. [It is opened by a pull on the bar across it or by the button on the console beside it.] **It a square area 2 x 2 meters, with a series of nozzles in the wall, a drain in the floor, some kinds of vents in the ceiling and a control panel and com unit on the wall. A safety bar runs around the room.** [Run on emergency batteries, all the buttons and panels are functional although there is not much water in the system].



ENGINEERING/ TECHNICAL

60 Power Core

A massive tube of metal stretches upward to the ceiling; hundreds of wires and tubes flow up and across from it, each fitting into its own circular connector. The central mechanism has a row of indicators that evidently display important information about the object. Off to the left and right are two pedestals which are home to a bewildering selection of controls, buttons, switches, and panels. The only thing visibly wrong with this power core is the notable lack of any power.

61 Collapsed Engine Room

The remains of the engine room can hardly be considered a room any longer. With collapsed bulkheads and debris [floating about] everywhere it is hard to tell where the engines originally were. The few control panels that can be recognized are burnt out and unusable; what gauges are left are red-lined and frozen. From the damage it is a wonder this section of the ship is even still attached, much less able to hold an atmosphere.

62 Live Wire

A live power cable dances before you with blue-white sparks of electricity spraying out into the surrounding area. The power surging through it may come from batteries or from some small generator. Of course, on a space vessel "small" is relative. Even the power of the batteries could be enough to seriously injure someone and there could be some question as to whether the insulation in your suit would be enough to protect you. At the very least the circuitry and life support in your suit could be damaged. The cable sways about erratically and bolts randomly arc toward a bulkhead or control panel. [Characters who enter the area have a one in four chance of a bolt arcing into or through them. Damage can vary from a quarter of what an average human can take for damage to a maximum potential of twice what a human can take, at the GM's discretion.]

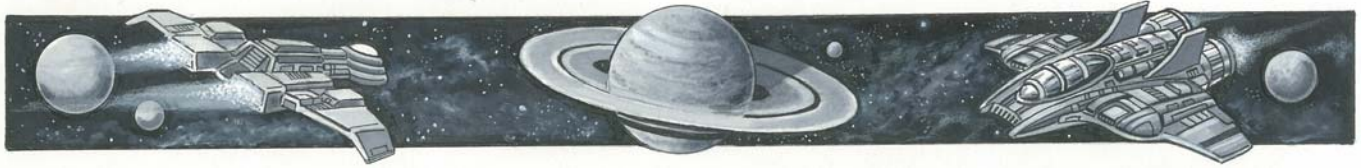
63 Ruptured Conduit

A conduit evidently ruptured here because a white gas fills this area. It is like heavy fog: difficult to see into and impossible to see beyond with normal sight. The lack of air circulation means the cloud in not dissipating. Without investigating you cannot determine if it is oxygen and water vapor, coolant, or something even more toxic. [The GM could use this as a nuisance, to obscure a danger, or be a danger in itself. Exposure to the gas could cause a loss to dexterous ability, vision, or health in general. If the party is in environmental suits then the gas could corrode the suits, causing malfunctions or leaks at a 10% base chance after leaving the area. The corrosion might increase at an increment chosen by the GM, or even continue after exposure.]

64 Cluttered Work Space

This room is dingy, cluttered, and full of pieces of broken machinery. Some of these parts are connected in a haphazard fashion to the others but most of it has been strewn around the floor, creating an interesting work-place environment. A central drive shaft sits at the back of the room, connected by a bewildering array of cables to a power mechanism and a small reactor chamber. A medium-sized lock-box lies to one side with a small padlock attached. [Inside the box boarding party members will find a tiny box containing a single strawberry preserved in clear acrylic, a set of worn, stiff work gloves made of leather from actual animal skin, and under those, a baby-sized pink dress with hand-stitched decorations.]





65 The Work Room

A long sturdy workbench runs along the far wall of this room. Above it hang small to medium hand tools, fastened on with secure clips. Storage units built into the wall hold powered units for drilling, sawing, sanding, etc., resting on charging stations while others (which may be battery-powered or solar-powered) are simply fastened down firmly. Also in the cabinets and in the drawers below the bench are materials: bolts and screws, wire, clamps, sealants, adhesives, measuring and cutting devices. Some items have many pieces remaining while others are down to only one or two. [Items may be scarce if the ship was in mid-journey and many had been used.] **One drawer holds a hand communications device, a small blower [similar to a hair dryer] and a powered tool for driving screws, all in need of repair.**

66 Repair Facility

A door labeled "Technical Services" is half-open; through it you can see that it used to be a repair facility. Large metalworking tools stand unused, though little dust has gathered. Toolboxes lie everywhere, some with their contents scattered around them and others completely empty. In one corner, protected by large metal panels welded to the floor, stands a cluster of tall metal tanks with the word "Acetylene" printed on them. Most of their dials are far over into the red or otherwise appear empty, however. Abandoned repair projects decorate some of the benches and tables – everything from unintelligible heaps of gears and cases to small communications devices in bright, child-friendly colors.

SECURITY AND WEAPONS

67 Empty Armory

Motion sensors activate the room's lights as the door opens. This might once had served as the vessel's armory but it now sits empty; gleaming metal racks line the walls, and a double row of storage lockers hang open down the center of the room. The only motion inside is a wisp of vapor that forms in the doorway and swirls outward as

you watch—apparently, the armory is much colder than the rest of the ship. Condensation begins to form on the doorframe, turning it into a glistening arch, bejeweled with fine droplets. [The armory is set to a lower temperature in order to keep the ordinary contents less dangerously volatile than they might be. However, if no weapons in the game would be affected by temperature, the GM can rule that this is merely a malfunction in environmental control.]

68 Armed Proximity Mine

On the floor in front of you, you see a round white device, about the size and depth of a hand. It appears to be made of ceramic and has a small green light on it that flashes every three seconds. [This is a normal proximity mine. If the characters get within two meters of the device before disarming it the flashing light will turn to red and after six seconds it will explode, causing damage to all those within six meters of the device.]

69 Force Field Generator

On the ceiling in front of you, you see a small black hemisphere about the size of a man's balled-up fist. [It is an electronic device, with a strong power source. It is a force field generator that will activate a containment field around anyone who gets within two meters of it. The force field is impervious to normal energy, projectile and missile weapons. Once inside the field it is very difficult to in any way affect the device itself. The device has enough power to maintain the field for an hour.]

70 Security Laser Cannon

On the ceiling in front of you is a small device attached to a swivel mount. The device has a very small lens and seems to follow the person at the front of your group as you approach. There is a small red light on it that flashes every three seconds. [The device is an automated laser cannon. It will attack anything that gets within six meters of it but is shielded so is difficult to destroy. It has the power of a normal laser rifle and can track four targets at any time. It fires two shots per round, cycling from one to the next target.]



71 Security Ion Field

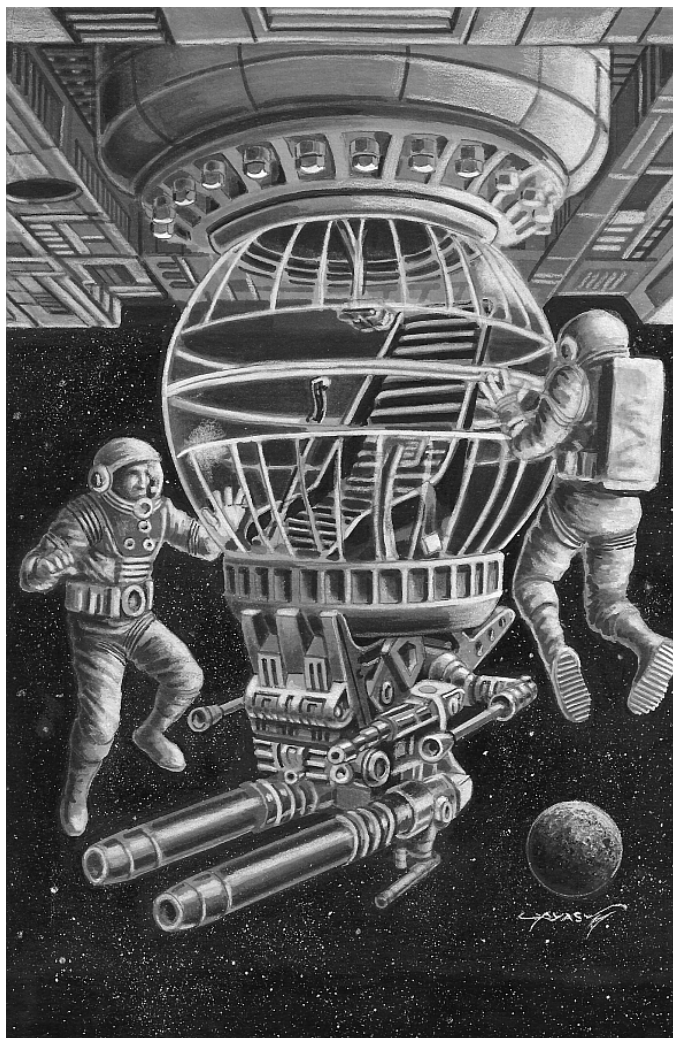
On the ceiling in front of you is a small device attached to a swivel mount. The device has a very small lens and seems to follow the person at the front of your group as you approach. There is a small red light on it that flashes every three seconds. [The device is a scanner that finds and deactivates all electronic systems it detects. It will begin its work when a being gets within three meters of it. It is shielded so it is difficult to destroy. It uses an ion field to deactivate electronic weapons, scanning and sensor devices, infrared goggles or communications equipment. It can target and deactivate the electronics on one person at a time.]

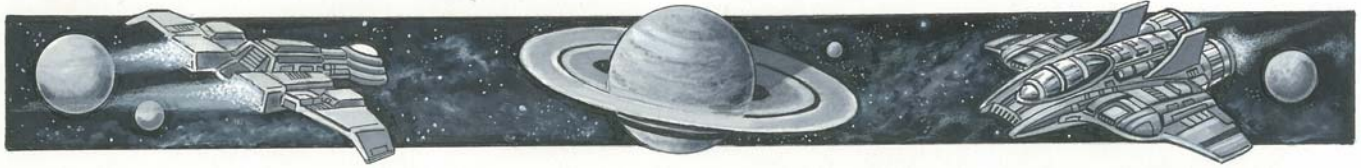
72 Quick Trip to the Brig

On the ceiling in front of you is a small device attached to a swivel mount. The device has a very small lens and seems to follow the person at the front of your group as you approach. There is a small red light on it that flashes every three seconds. [The device is a teleportation/ transporter device that transports one being per round to a holding cell in the brig of the ship. As it transports it deactivates all electronic devices on the person being transported. It is triggered when a being gets within three meters of it.]

73 Gun Turret

The gun turret is cramped; a small analog stick immediately before the seat controls movement, and a visor aids in targeting. Directly to the left is a small touch screen with various commands – elevation, ammunition types, rate of fire, and so on. Two long cannons protrude from directly beneath the seat. A transparent bubble canopy surrounds the turret, giving an unimpeded view of the limitless dark, and potentially a keen sense of nausea. To the side of the seat a communications headset has its long cord tangled in the safety straps. [If the boarding party looks at the strap more closely:] **One shoulder strap has a dark brown stain on the inside of it.** [This is a bloodstain from being pressed against a wound.]





ENVIRONMENTAL

74 *Hydroponics Bay*

The first things that strike you about this room are the extreme brightness, and the warmth. Though the rest of the ship is typically dim, cool

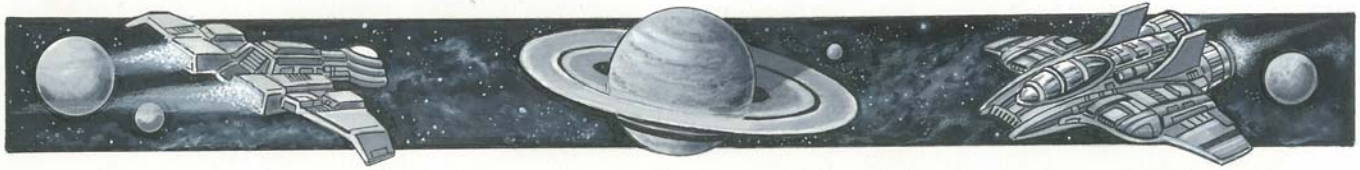


and still, this room is not only warm but also somewhat humid. [The contrast is enough to cause goggles or faceplates to fog up.] The climate, you realize, is essential for the growth of the plants that fill this bay – long rows of plants rooted in a light blue gel. Two kinds of grain, beans, and root vegetables are in long troughs that run the length of the chamber. Despite not having been tended in some time, the plants seem healthy. The bushy beans are sprawling over the sides of their trough, and the root vegetables have long sturdy stalks producing flowers. Plump red fruits hang from plants supported by frames along one wall, and long vines sprawl along another. Both of these have overgrown their containers so much that they give a distinctly jungle-like look to the room. Huge ultraviolet lamps provide artificial sunlight and heat, though that is beginning to fade as a few light tubes are dark and others are flickering. [The lamps are powered by emergency batteries, possibly connected to solar collectors.] In the far corner, a tiny dented pot of gel holds a four-petaled flower with brilliant purple blooms. [The hydrogel is light blue, sticky yet resilient to the touch. It holds enough nutrients to nurture years' worth of crops.]

75 *Cold-damaged Hydroponics*

This heavy metal door is locked. [When the characters manage to unlock it:] Inside it is as dark and cold as the rest of the ship, but it is rank with the smell of decay. There are no light controls near the door. [A sensor panel in the middle of the right wall controls the lights; timers were set at “off” when the power failed.] The room seems to be filled with ceiling-high metal racks covered in frost and holding tanks with things floating in them. There are walkways between the shelves but they are quite narrow and slick with ice.

[If the boarding party ventures farther in:] The racks hold shallow tanks of cloudy liquid or of small solid particles. Lights are positioned so that all tanks would be illuminated when they are lit. The cloudy liquids are various colors: dull gray, the rusty color of old blood, and a violet that is nearly black. On the surfaces float withered, black growths. Some are very fine, others have large rotted leaves draped over the sides of the tanks.



76 Plant Supply Room

This sturdy, locked door has a sign with a warning symbol. [The symbol is a safety warning for dangerous chemicals.] Inside, floor-to-ceiling shelves fill three walls. The other wall holds a narrow workbench and basin below more shelves. In the center of the floor lies a jumbled mess of white boxes, broken jars, pots, coils of wire, piping, and more. Lids are off some of the boxes, and powders in various shades of white, ivory and tan lay in drifts among the debris. [The boxes hold chemicals, a whole array of essential nutrients for plants, such as: special growth factors; compounds to inhibit the growth of unwanted bacteria or fungi; antiviral agents; and water-filtering compounds. All are carefully labeled, so character can determine what potentially dangerous chemicals are mixed here. If the area now has no gravity, this room could be deadly; the air would be filled with toxic powders and broken glass.]

77 Secure Seed Storage

This non-descript narrow door is locked. [The boarding party will no doubt be able to find some creative way to bypass this.] As you open it, you notice the door is particularly thick [insulated] and then the cold hits you. The tiny room is dark and chilly. [The light activation switch is outside the room beside the door. The room is refrigerated, about 40° F/ 15° C.] There is very little floor space in the center of a room otherwise filled with shelves. Some shelves still contain boxes and sacks, labeled as containing different types of seeds. However, most of the shelves' contents are piled in a heap on the floor. The only things in this room that are not seeds are an open box of dormant tubers [such as tiny onions] and a white barrel [an expensive plant nutrient -- cooling extends the shelf-life], both sitting on a lower shelf and mostly hidden by the mass of seed packages on the floor.

78 Recycling Room

At one point there must have been a door under the label on the frame reading "Recycling Room 3A", but it is not here any more and instead there are some burn marks on the door frame. A steel catwalk leads out into the room over two huge

conveyor belts, one on either side of the catwalk. [If anyone walks into the room:] A heavy clanking sound is audible and the reason is soon clear. Large toothed wheels turn slowly at the ends of the conveyor while the empty belts mechanically drone on trying to do their jobs. How long has this machine been grinding on mindlessly? The catwalk goes to the far end of the rectangular room and terminates in two narrow staircases, one leading down to either side.

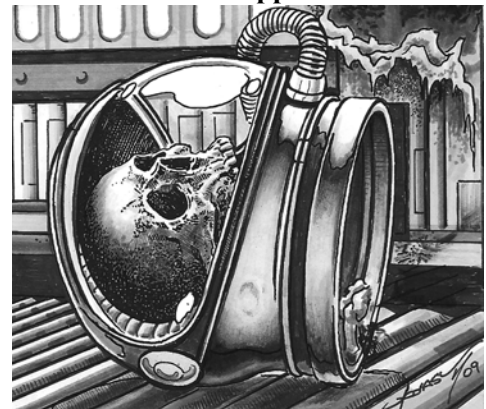
79 Super Cleaner

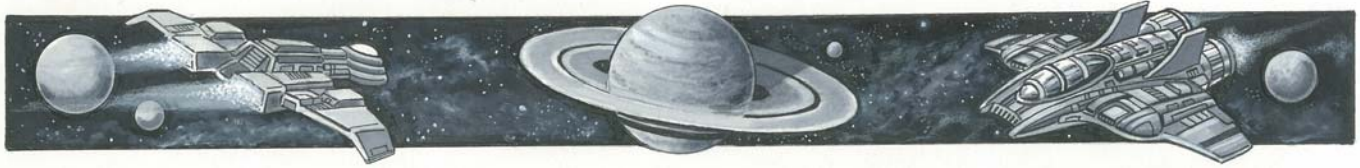
The deck here is spotless. The bulkheads are spotless, the ceiling is spotless; there is not a speck or smudge to be seen. Everything in this area looks better than the day the ship left the shipyard. [If the boarding party uses some type of sensors to investigate further:] The area is unnaturally clean. Further inspection along the creases of the bulkhead shows that a bacterial colony has taken up residence. A chemical trail along different areas of the bulkhead and deck shows traces of the colony as it traversed the surface. [If they investigate the bacteria:] The bacteria has been genetically engineered to clean up waste sites and restore them to like-new status. They live in colonies and move along the paths of greatest contamination. They are not harmful to most life forms, but have been known to mutate in the presence of certain electromagnetic frequencies. [The GM may determine whether this colony has mutated, and what the results might be.]

80 Suit Storage

Space suits hang empty in a row, uninhabited empty shells like carcasses on meat hooks, while a row of helmets sits on a shelf opposite. One helmet

has fallen and rolled into a corner, the faceplate cracked.





RECREATION

81 *Small Break Room*

A round table fills most of the space here; a symmetrical brown and white design covers its smooth surface. Four light brown molded chairs sit around it, each secured to the floor and with straps dangling from the sides. This small room is made lighter by its pale yellow walls. [One wall is a video monitor. If the video has stopped running, all the characters see is a wall; the projection comes from within and the surface is only slightly textured. If active, select what is showing:] **One wall is a video monitor. Currently it is showing** [space outside the ship; or: an unfamiliar planet's surface featuring a mountain; or: a woman (or alien) speaking to a group of people as she gestures to a panel full of basic Calculus equations.] **The picture repeatedly distorts and then recovers, and the sound is occasionally drowned out by static.**

82 *Abandoned Dinner*

When you open the door to the next area, the stench of rotted food floods into the passageway. This sophisticated dining room is lined with fully dressed dinner tables, complete with elegant plates full of half-eaten meals and crystal goblets holding the remains of some dark red beverage. Eating utensils lie on plates or scattered about on the tables and several goblets tipped over, staining the white table covers with their contents. Chairs stand chaotically away from the tables and some even lie on the floor. Here and there you see personal items simply dropped and left behind. It is obvious the guests of this unfinished party left in a sudden panic.

83 *Tattered Lounge*

This lounge has seen better days. Cushions from the benches along the walls lie scattered around the room and many are slashed. The synthetic material of the benches themselves is cracked many places, as if they had been struck by something heavy. The lighting flickers on and off ominously and the blast shutters are down on three of the five windows. Personal items and effects are strewn haphazardly around the area.

84 *Dirty Pool*

The ship seems completely deserted, with no signs of life anywhere on board. The rooms are clean and neat, except for the area surrounding the ship's swimming pool. Lightweight composite seats are scattered and tipped over, large shards of broken glass litter the deck and streaks of a dark brownish-red stain lead to the pool. In the pool, dark water of the same brownish-red color hides what lies in its depth. Not even a ripple is seen on its placid surface.

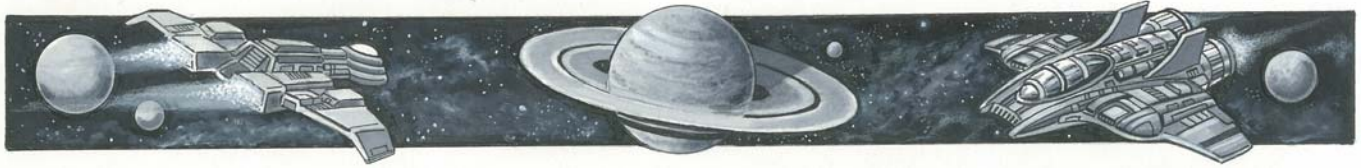
85 *Exercise Room and Pool*

This must have been the ship's exercise facility. All around you see abandoned weights and exercise equipment, along with towels that were formerly white but now have gone greenish-grey from mold. One huge window dominates the entire right-hand wall of this room. Faintly buzzing fluorescent bulbs provide light that spills over into the room on the other side of the window. It appears that while gravity is working where you are, the adjacent room is not under the same conditions.

Huge translucent blobs drift slowly about in the large room. As you watch, two of them intersect and begin to merge, but their slightly different momentums pull them apart again. Contained in some of the blobs are capsule-shaped red pieces the length of your forearm. Looking past the drifting substance, you see that the floor of the room is tiled in light blue, with black stripes going from end to end. The floor is surrounded by a solid gray walkway two meters wide and the same distance up from the floor. [Experienced characters will quickly recognize the behavior of large quantities of water in zero gravity. Those with less experience may take longer to recognize the ship's swimming pool.]

86 *Workout Room*

The door is plain with a narrow window; you can see it is dark inside. A printed note is attached to the door [in the language of the ship: "see Jeni for time"] **The door is not locked, and opens out.** [The light switch—activated by a sensor if a warm hand passes over it—is on the outside beside the door.] **The**



room is about 5 by 5 meters with no furniture at all. The flooring is smooth and yet resilient, of a strong subdued blue, while the walls are smooth and white. Four black-and-yellow lines run completely around the room: at intervals from the flooring to the walls and across the ceiling. The ceiling is otherwise unadorned and the lights are good but minimal, set somehow behind the white ceiling so the room is lit by diffuse light. A stack of folded white towels sits neatly near the door. Eerily, this room looks as if it may fill up any moment with crewmembers getting off duty though the crew of this ship has been gone for a long time. [This is a room for active exercise such as martial arts or competitive personal ball games such as racquetball or handball.]

87 Gym Full of Bodies

The ship's gymnasium is scarcely large enough to play any type of team ball game and would have little space for observers or referees. Colorful lines mark off all the boundaries as though waiting for someone to arrive with a ball. At the far end of the room, just behind a hoop that hangs overhead, is a tangled heap of bodies. Most wear uniforms and may have belonged to the ship's crew, though a few of them are dressed in civilian clothes. All have neat, round holes through their foreheads and lie at odd angles - some with their mouths open in final expressions of terror, others with placid looks on their dead faces. There is surprisingly little evidence of rot here, whether in the uniforms or the corpses. Round marks can be seen on the wall behind the jumbled corpses and around each are spatters of blackened matter. [The round marks were made by a projectile weapon; the spatters are the blood of the victims.]

Shard Set —

Cruise Ship Rooms (88-90)

88 Sitting Room

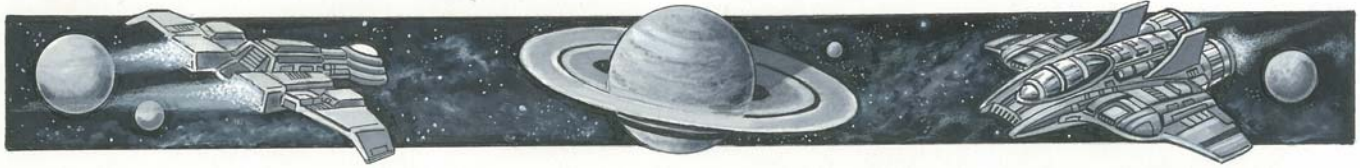
These double doors are not locked and open easily. The large room is filled with upholstered groups of seats in rows and squares. Each has a safety belt and a comm unit with a screen on the arm. [These can be extended and rotated to be easily viewed.] Well-made earphones are in a pocket at the side of

each seat. The carpet on the floor is dark blue with a yellow pattern; it is very clean and shows little sign of wear. The walls are a cheery yellow. Large well-secured blue and yellow pots of heavy synthetic material are set around the room. About half the pots have exotic-looking "plants" made of artificial materials. The others, set under focused ceiling lights, hold brown, wrinkled fibrous things [dead exotic plants]. One chair has a wicked-looking oxidized burn on the back of it and a nearby artificial plant has melted into a nightmare tangle of synthetics.

89 Festive Dining Room

This room is dark, though your light shows shiny fixtures above the tables. Four large tables stand in the center and ten four-person tables sit around the edges of the room. A bright-colored carpet covers the floor with a geometric pattern, blues and yellows on turquoise, and the walls are a plain pale yellow. A small red button blinks slowly just inside the door. [This is the room's power button. When the power is turned on:] Suddenly the lights gleam, dazzling your eyes, and brilliant colors splash the plain walls. They are festive with huge pictures of exotic locations, apparently chosen for their colors: orange stone arches with yellow sand below and beyond it; azure sea, green island, and blue sky with white clouds; the towering spires of a sparkling city in the snow; lush green tropical vegetation and iridescent purple birdlike creatures. [The pictures are slightly holographic: the white clouds drift across the sky, the birds fly, etc.]

The tables are made of a fine high-grade synthetic material and fastened securely to the floor. The chairs are padded, bright colored and comfortable, set on cleverly designed tracks that allow them to move various distances from the table while keeping them secure. A decorative open bowl is fixed to each table—blue, orange, or yellow—filled with colorful artificial plants. You see that a couple of bowls have been wrenched completely off their tables, spilling their cheerful contents carelessly on the deck. On one of the now-empty tables is a wide smear of what looks like blood. Several doors lead out of this room. [Three doors lead to the adjacent passageways, one to a large kitchen capable of preparing meals for a room



full of diners, and one to a snack bar. The scenes on the walls should be travel destinations in the GM's universe. For instance, they could be: the desert planet Edron; watery Zenthias; Hallston, a city on Yvra; and the popular tropical zone of Solich Narr.]

90 Coffee Room

[This room could be easily recognizable as a coffee room, or the items could be from some alien species so that even arrangements for brewing beverages seem unfamiliar.] The small room holds a few tables and comfortable seats, but the nearby counter is a mess. The wall is covered with latched doors above buttons and dials, spigots and slots, and something obviously leaked here. In one area is a dry patch of some dark brown substance, while another section is stained with a bright red which is obviously artificial in its composition. Dry powders of various colors lie mixed together in piles on the counter and on the floor. The smell here is difficult to describe; so many different odors mingle together that you cannot identify any particular one. Behind the latched doors you find more explanation; it appears that someone using an energy weapon fired into the open cabinets. Several serving vats – some of which still hold liquid in the bottom – were opened by the blast and many carefully arranged containers were decapitated. A few intact containers on the far side

hold lumps of material and others have dried leaves. Helpful labels adorn all the containers, so perhaps you can find out what *used* to be here. [If labels are in a known language then it is obvious this is a coffee room; if not, then “with unknown symbols.”]

Shard Set:

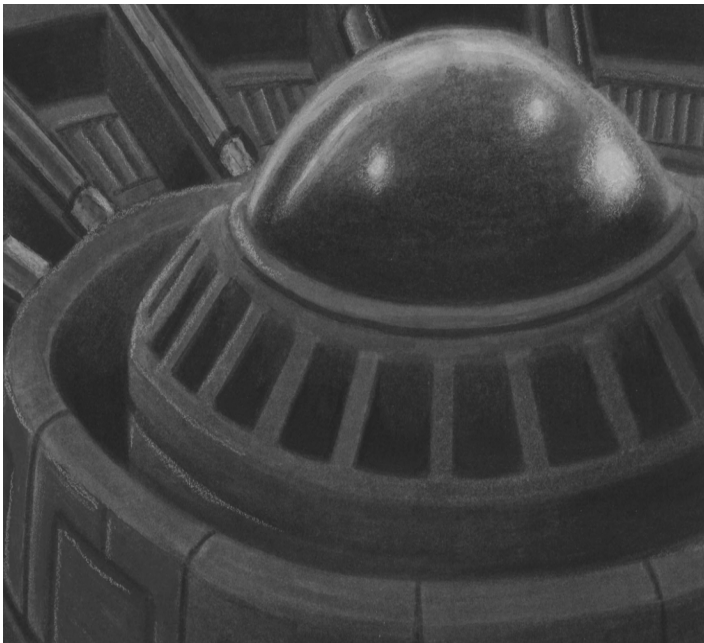
Observation Dome (91-92)

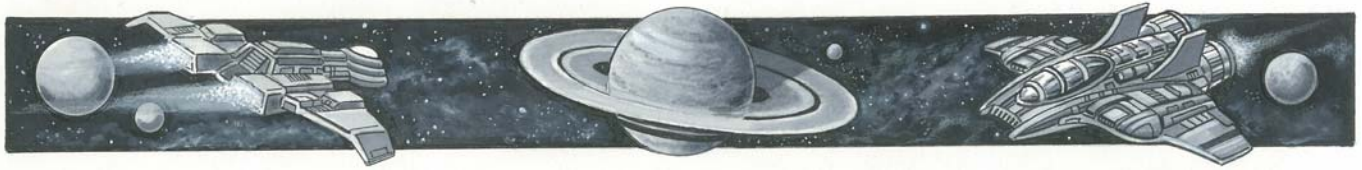
91 Narrow Stairs to the Dome

The door is narrow with a simple handle and is not locked. Inside you see the base of a very narrow metal staircase. [If the ship's lights are working:] A sensor [or switch] turns on dim lights on the stairs. The steps are close together and much too narrow for two humans to pass each other. Sturdy handrails line both sides. A small piece of metal has worked its way loose from the wall on one side and a shred of torn fabric dangles from it forlornly. [Upon examination it appears to be material from an environmental suit.] In 15 steps your head comes up into a tiny dark room.

92 Observatory

Climbing out of the stairwell, the light from the stairs is so weak that it is difficult to see, but the room seems to have seats all around its edges. The room is so small you can nearly reach both walls from the center. As your eyes adjust to darkness you see that the ceiling curves up and is transparent: you can see the stars. Clearly the room is intended as an observatory. Closer inspection shows there are safety shades to pull should the ship be close to a star. The room itself has no lights, just soft couches around the walls and the thick transparent ceiling. Looking up, you notice that a crack begins near the apex of the dome and travels across it, reaching outward with its fingers. It is unclear if the crack has rendered the dome structurally unsound or if it is only on the surface of the thick glass. For now the dome still seems to be holding atmosphere adequately. If you stand on one of the couches and look down, you can see a bit of the ship, but the room is set on the upper edge of the ship and most of the damage to the ship is not visible from here.





CREW CABINS

93 Disarranged Cabin

This seems to be a standard crew cabin with an opened personal locker next to an unmade bunk. Lying on the deck next to the bed is a hard copy image of someone's wife or girlfriend. You can see where the picture had been affixed to the wall and was taken off. Items from the locker have been pulled out onto the floor; all that remain are a grease-stained jumpsuit, some useless toiletries, and a bag with the words 'Dirty Laundry' written on its side. [If the characters look inside the bag:] A crumpled faux-silk shirt in an elegant dark green color is stuffed in the bottom of the bag. It suggests that this crewmember did have other, higher-quality items in the cabin at one time.

94 Officer's Cabin

This cabin is a bit larger than a standard crewman's quarters. The single bunk is much more spacious, and its sheets do not appear to be standard issue. Several items float in mid-air and are motionless until disturbed by your movements through the room. They look to be mostly cheap mementos and decorative items that once stood on the deep shelving scattered here and there throughout the bulkhead. A plaque mounted on

the wall commemorates its owner's graduation from some academy with the rank of ensign. [The date is some years in the past.]

[If the boarding party searches the room:]

The storage locker near the private head contains a couple sets of civilian clothes that look almost twenty years out of style and a pair of highly polished shoes. You are surprised to also discover an entomological collection of various insects from different worlds, dry mounted in two hand-made wooden frames. [The locker may also contain the gear to collect specimens, which includes a hand net and a large kill jar.]

95 Half-Clean Cabin

The cabin has a standard construction with sanitary facilities in an alcove, bunk, and a desk with attached entertainment system. It is unoccupied apart from a small cleaning drone which has seemingly been shot several times and is lying in the middle of the floor emitting random low beeping noises. The damage done to the drone has caused it to keep exactly one-half of the cabin floor spotlessly clean, while the other is covered with dust, grime and what appear to be grease spots. [The spots are actually engine oil.]

96 Destroyed Crew Cabin

Peering through the small window in the door of the crew cabin reveals a scene of near-total destruction. An explosion of some sort seems to have ripped away the outer hull in a long strip and taken a chunk of the floor with it; some blackened and charred furniture remains in the room, but loose items appear to have been sucked out when the cabin depressurized.

97 Cabins of the Dead

Each cabin you enter keeps the same deadly secret as the last. You find one body after another; all laid out on their beds fully clothed in their sleeping attire, as if someone had placed them there deliberately. Upon closer examination, no visible cause of death can be found. The mystery of what killed everyone on board is deepened by the question of who was left behind to display their bodies in this fashion.





98 Captain's Quarters

Entering what appears to be the captain's quarters, you must sidestep the debris tossed about the room. The place has clearly been ransacked, but by whom, and why? On the floor in a corner lays a male body, face down. His clothing does not indicate whether he is the captain, the person who ransacked the room, or someone else.

99 Effects of Inertia

The inertial dampeners in this area must have sustained damage because every loose object is piled onto one side of the room, most of them smashed into bits. Even the furniture pieces connected to different parts of the room were torn away from the bulkheads and smashed, leaving behind ragged holes exposing conduits and control systems. [In zero gravity very little would remain on the floor. Instead:] The inertial dampeners in this area must have sustained damage and every loose object was smashed against one side of the room. Tiny bits float everywhere, interfering with visibility and possibly threatening the integrity of your protective suit. The large objects were intermeshed with such force that they have become a single mass, rotating slowly in front of you.

CARGO/ SMALL CRAFT

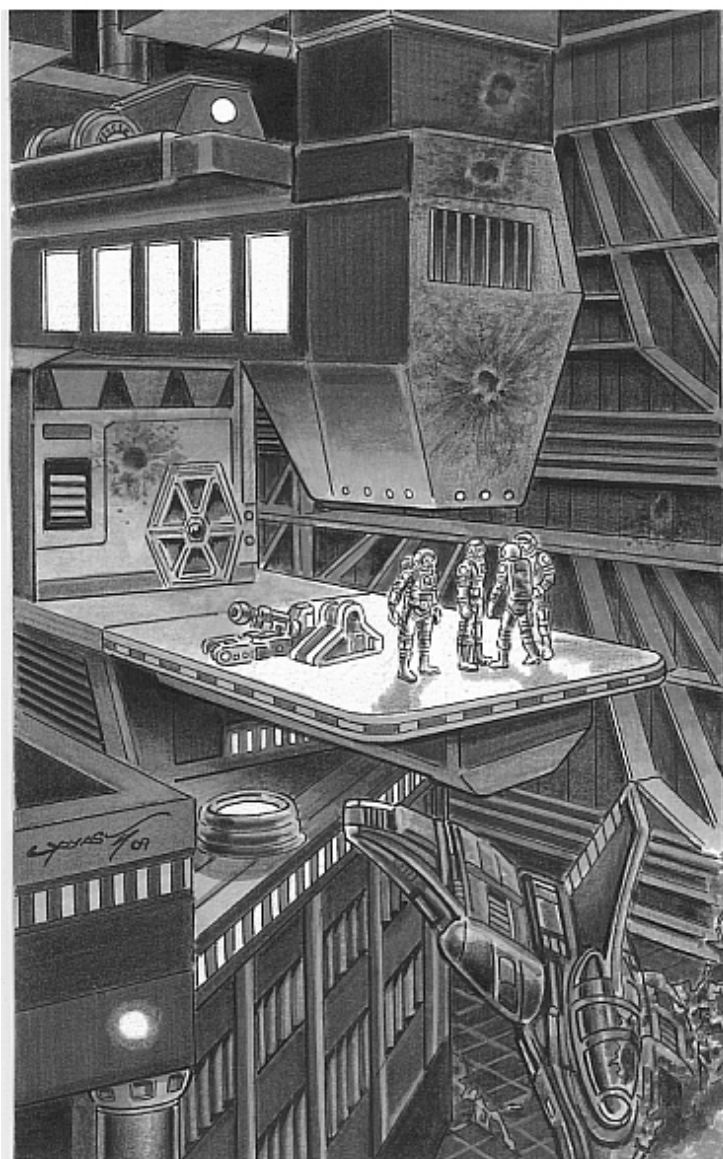
100 Docking Bay

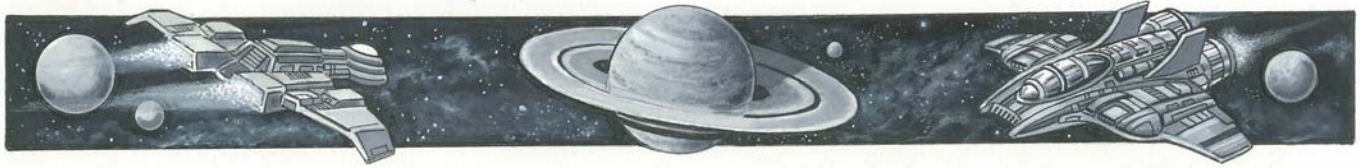
The metal grating of the docking bay floor clanks with every movement on it, turning the entire area into a badly tuned orchestra. Empty cargo containers and equipment for minor repairs are stacked along one side, the tools secured by a netted sheet strapped to the wall. Some of the tools have digital readouts that periodically flash, giving the appearance of dozens of little eyes staring out from the darkness.

101 Cargo Bay with Cargo

A huge portion of the ship seems devoted to cargo, with this large bay being divided into several smaller sections by movable dividers. The cargo is secured in place by large cargo straps and a

shipping net that makes sure nothing floats away in the hold's zero-G conditions. Closer inspection shows the cargo is still in good shape even with the rest of the ship in its current condition. Whoever secured these crates did a good job of it. In a far corner of the hold a zero-G cargo mover sits powered down. [A simple mechanical aptitude check of some kind will power up the mover.]





102 Nearly Empty Hold

This large jointed door appears to roll upward but it is jammed and the controls do not respond. The manual override works but clearly has never been used. [It requires a check of strength to lift.] The cargo hold seems spacious because it is nearly empty. A half dozen metal barrels and a heavy, molded synthetic crate are floating in the middle of the room. Shelves along the wall that held goods are empty and there are no visible small items that would fit on them. The hooks used to manipulate the containers in free fall are still attached to the wall. [Four barrels hold industrial-grade oil, one holds metal screws, and one holds disposable rain suits. The crate contains new metal and composite chairs, the kind one sees in conference rooms.]

103 Transporting Live Freight

You could not have predicted the mess inside the cargo area. With the number of hull breaches on the ship it was easy to guess the cargo bay may have taken a shot or two, but you certainly could not have expected that the ship was transporting live freight. Your first impression is that the room is covered with blood and animal parts.

Looking more closely, you see that parts of the floor and the wall around the breach are coated with the results of the explosive decompression of a herd of large ruminants. The animals were fenced with tall pens that now stand twisted and bent by the force of heavy bodies slamming into them. Being in the vacuum of space the corpses have not noticeably decomposed, but while you know that the viscera hanging from the walls and coating the floor are frozen solid from exposure to hard space, you feel as if the unholy smell of rotting meat is filtering into your suit. [This would be a good time to have boarding party members with weak stomachs determine whether or not they can keep their lunch down while viewing the carnage. The huge quantity of animal parts, body fluids, and internal organs suggests some heavy penalties on this check.]

Once you become used to the sheer volume of carcasses and entrails, you can start to detect other things in the cargo area. Stacks of crates,

still tightly strapped down and covered with gore, rest against the wall near the breach. Each one is stamped with its contents, now largely unreadable through the blood.

104 Stacked Containers

A few beams of light illuminate this cargo hold where you can see large packing crates. These pressure-sealed containers are stacked in a haphazard fashion in some places and with great precision in others. Each sweep of your light source reveals a little more of the area. There are a few cable ties that seem to have come undone and every now and then the outside hull creaks softly.

105 Large Dark Cargo Bay

The large cargo bay is dark and cold. Great doors beside you open into space, but they are intact and closed. [If the power is available, they will open normally]. There is air in the bay but it is thin [adequate, barely, as if at an elevation of 10,000 feet or 3,000 meters] and tainted with the odor of some petrochemical. Ahead of you the dark bay extends up and out farther than you can see. [It is 100 meters long, 50 meters wide, 30 meters high.] It is clearly large enough for a massive cargo or a small flying craft. Lacking gravity, you grab the rails by the door. They extend around the room, about 1.5 meters from the floor. In the center of the room, your lights pick up huge dark shapes [cargo boxes] floating in the zero G.

106 Shuttle

The interior of the shuttle is about ten meters long and four across, narrowing slightly towards the bow. Small glowing panels in the floor and ceiling light the interior. A viewscreen stretches across the width of the bow and a colorful bank of controls lies beneath. Two deep pilots' chairs sit before the console. A winking red light near the center of the board commands your attention. To the rear of the hatch, two bunks are set into the starboard wall with various stations on the port side, and a small sanitary station is nestled in the far end. [If the boarding party is paying careful attention:] You see smears on the deck, leading forward a meter or two from the hatch and then tapering off toward the rear.



[The light could be a warning that the shuttle is about to experience explosive decompression, a notification of an unplayed message left for posterity, or a proximity alert triggered by incoming enemies. The smears could be old mud, oil, blood, or some other substance. The lavatory might hold a corpse, a survivor, or some awful alien menace.]

107 Stripped Craft

The entirety of the vessel's hull has been stripped away, leaving the internal structure an uncovered framework. You can't discern the original silhouette of the ship, the destruction is so intense; perhaps it was a small craft, but you can't even be sure about that. Drifting out in a cloud around the skeleton of struts and equipment mounts, all the loose structures—cables, conduits, and tanks—make it difficult to tell what might remain on board. The engine appears to be intact, though, or so the running lights, slowly strobing over your field of vision as the derelict rotates, would seem to indicate. What could have removed the skin of a ship and left parts of it still operational is certainly a mystery.

108 Bloody Escape Pod

A small circular hatch leads to a dark cylinder, the interior of which has several cracked windows and a single bucket seat. The seat is unoccupied but the inside of the capsule is bloody, with the greatest concentration smeared around the edges of the largest broken window. The stars wink knowingly in the distance as if they have all the answers.

109 Ready Escape Pod

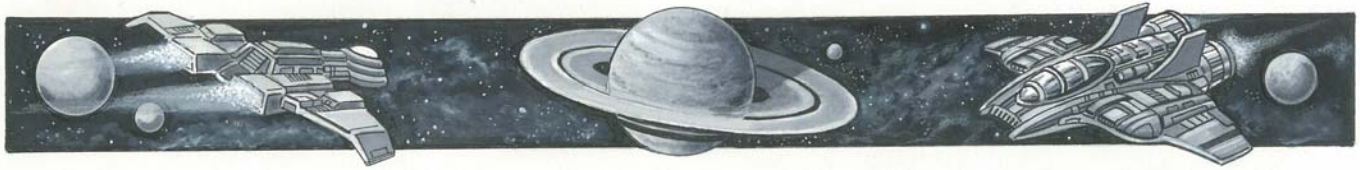
The hatch of this pod is about a meter and a half wide, opened with a wheel set in the center. The readout next to it is smashed so you cannot determine the pod's condition, but antiseptic air rushes out to greet you as you unseal the hatch. Seats with grey-blue cushions ring the interior, each with a safety harness overhead. A communications console is near the door, and overhead compartments hold a supply of food and water, packaged for long-term stability. The tiny view port looks out along the length of the ship's battered hull. [There is enough food and water for four to six people for a month. It is nutritionally adequate but the flavor and consistency are not tempting.]



110

Grounded Escape Pod

This pod lies on its side on the ground; there are several small runnels of scorched earth leading up to it. One of the side hatches has been blown clear and has come to rest a little way off from the small escape vessel. Smoke still pours from the engines at the back, giving an impression that this particular pod touched down here not long ago.



SKELETONS IN SPACE

Skeletons aboard ship or in space: would they occur naturally, or frequently? If not, what happens to bodily remains? As we were working on this book, the question came up. The bottom line is... it depends. However, what we found in exploring this fairly morbid topic makes for some interesting gaming possibilities, so enjoy!

Causes of Death

Death can occur easily in space. It can be rapid and unexpected, or slow and torturous. Space environments are inherently fragile; NASA and Soviet space records read like a laundry list of the accidents and near misses that can happen in space: collisions, depressurizations, equipment failures, system failures, minor leaks of toxic substances, explosions, navigation errors, fires, and so on.

On June 30, 1971, the crew of Soyuz 11 perished due to exposure to near-vacuum conditions when two valves opened accidentally. The near-complete loss of pressure in the spacecraft took less than 40 seconds from start to finish. Medical reports indicate the crew lost their lives within 60 seconds of the two valves opening and the resultant exposure to near-vacuum conditions. Cause of death was determined to be pulmonary embolisms (moving air bubbles or blood clots in the arteries) and each astronaut exhibited the symptoms of acute hypoxia (seizures and coma due to lack of oxygen). Just like that, they were gone. This occurred shortly before a scheduled communications blackout, so ground control did not know about the deaths until after the capsule's autopilot completed the landing unassisted and the recovery team opened the vehicle.

Other incidents can also be cited. On March 18, 1965, a cosmonaut's space suit expanded during a spacewalk to the point that it became impossible for him to reenter the airlock. Only by a rapid depressurization of the suit, resulting in the aftereffects of "the bends," was the cosmonaut safely able to reenter the spacecraft. On July 24, 1975, the U.S. astronaut crew was exposed to near-toxic levels

of a gaseous fuel mixture when it vented into the air handling system during a training mission.

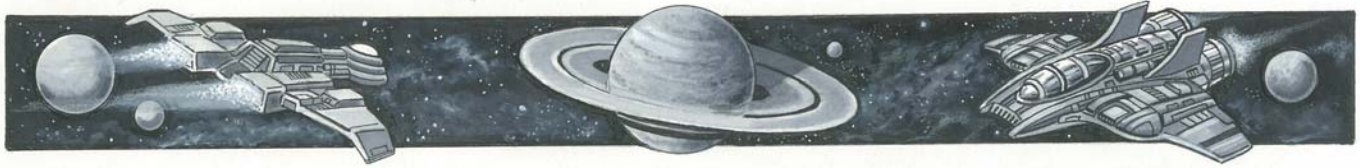
Causes of death can be diverse, and the many ship's systems bring unique risks. Confined environs increase the risks to passengers and crew when climate control systems are damaged or impaired. Closed air handling systems increase the risk of death due to the accidental release of toxins from on-board hazardous materials, or due to unanticipated exposure to harmful specimens collected during scientific exploration. Fuel handling systems can rupture. Navigation systems can fail. Get your imagination going and the possibilities are endless. So death occurs... Now what?

Stages of Decomposition

Here we enter the realm of speculation. Despite all the accidents in space or space training, there has only been one incident that has resulted in an actual death in space: the Soyuz 11 accident. The remaining incidents have been near misses, or occurred within Earth's atmosphere. However, we do know enough about space to know that exposure to the environmental conditions found in space or aboard spacecraft alters the body's response to death.

Conditions such as the presence or absence of atmosphere, insect life and other organisms, or gravity, dramatically affect the decomposition process of a human body. Post-mortem clues and processes familiar to investigators here on Earth would be altered or possibly non-existent in various environments one might encounter on a Derelict Starship. Bodily remains skip certain phases of decomposition or react differently than they might here on Earth.

On Earth, bodily remains go through a number of phases. The descriptions that follow are for the process that occurs in a temperate Earth climate. On average, in a temperate Earth summer, skeletonization would take approximately 30-40 days. One author broke decomposition down into six phases:



- Stage One - Living (moment of death)
- Stage Two - Initial Decay / Autolysis
(4 minutes – 4 days)
- Stage Three - Putrefaction
(4-10 days after death)
- Stage Four - Black Putrefaction
(10-20 days after death)
- Stage Five - Butyric Fermentation
(20-50 days after death)
- Stage Six – Dry Decay
(50-365 days after death)

In the skeletonization process, stages one through four are considered wet rot. Dry rot begins somewhere in the middle of stage five. Wet rot involves significant fluid movement, gaseous emissions and changes in body color

Stage One – The Body in Balance

While a body is living, the intestinal tract contains a diverse culture of bacteria, protozoa and nematodes which the living body keeps in balance. Upon death, this balance begins to alter.

Stage Two – Autolysis and Rigor Mortis

Almost immediately, bacteria begin to digest the intestines and surrounding internal organs. Digestive enzymes spread throughout the body, contributing to the decomposition process. Much of autolysis is an anaerobic process, meaning the beginning stages of decomposition do not necessitate the presence of oxygen. Approximately three hours following death, the muscles stiffen and the body enters rigor mortis. This muscular stiffness gradually ends 72 hours after death as the muscle proteins start to decompose. Enzymes within individual cells are also released and begin the breakdown of the cell and connections to adjacent cells. Fluid-filled blisters appear on the skin and large sheets of skin slough off the body. Settled blood discolors the skin. When they are present, blowflies and houseflies begin to lay eggs in wounds and natural body openings, hatching and eventually growing in the body.

Stage Three – Putrefaction

Bacteria continue to break down tissues and cells in the body, releasing fluids into the body cavities. Bacteria often produce gases such as hydrogen sulfide, methane, and other gaseous by-products, in the absence of oxygen. Pressure inflates the body, particularly the bowels and the skin begins to turn green. Maggots begin to move as a mass throughout the body, spreading bacteria, secreting digestive enzymes, and tearing tissues. The rate of decay increases, attracting additional insect life like flesh flies, beetles, mites and wasps. Carnivores may also play a role at this point.

Stage Four – Black Putrefaction

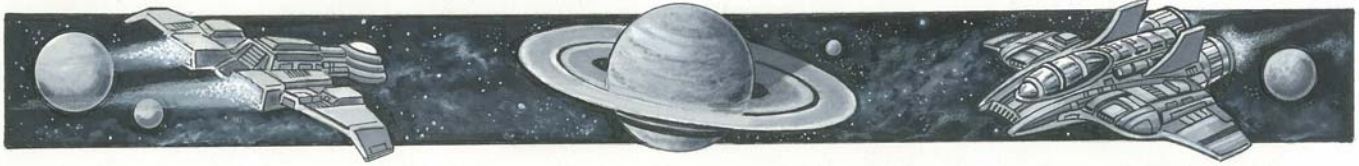
The bloated body collapses, leaving a flattened body. The flesh now has a creamy consistency as grave wax (adipocere) formation begins. Exposed parts of the body are black and a strong smell of decay is present. Body fluids drain from the body and seep into the surroundings. Insect activities increase and the body temperature has a corresponding increase. Additional insects like fly pupae, hairy maggots and carrion beetles join the fray.

Bacteria will eventually consume the body if insects are not present. Bodies not exposed to sufficient insects may develop grave wax or adipocere – a crumbly, white, waxy substance. (Fats, under the influence of water, hydrogen and bacterial enzymes, break down into fatty acids and soaps.) Grave wax can slow the effects of bacteria on a corpse and slow the decomposition process.

In dry climates, such as arctic regions or deserts, the process of mummification begins as dehydration or desiccation of the skin begins. Remaining skin becomes a leathery or parchment-like sheet which clings to bone.

Stage Five – Butyric Fermentation

The body dries out and has the cheesy smell of butyric acid. New organisms are now attracted to the corpse. The body ferments and mold begins to cover the body where it touches other surfaces. When the remains are reduced to a skeleton, it too begins the decomposition process as collagen and other bone



material begins to break down. Maggots decrease and other insect life increases, such as cheese flies, carcass beetles, hide beetles and beetle larvae.

Stage Six – Dry Decay or Diagenesis

The body is dry and the remains decay slowly. Hair disappears and eventually only the bones remain, and even these will decompose over time. Also at this time insect life changes and decreases. Hairy species, such as animals, would attract more insects in this stage, such as tineid moths, bacteria, and mites.

Changes in Space

The decomposition process is different in space, altering due to the presence or absence of gravity, vermin, and atmosphere or vacuum conditions.

Gravity Conditions

In low gravity or no gravity, bloat will increase but skin will not slough off to the same degree as tissues breakdown. The skin will stay largely intact and the body will inflate substantially as it decomposes and gases collect in the remains. Temperatures, either cold or hot, will affect the body; it may be frozen or cooked as appropriate. Characters could expect to find bloated, frozen (or cooked) corpses. Bodily fluids often separate from bodily remains as time passes. In cases where gravity is decreased, these body fluids may float in globules or collect in odd locations within the spaceship.

Presence of Insects and Microbial Lifeforms

Some forensic experts believe that the intestinal microbes and fauna will take the decomposition process only so far. Thus, in certain science fiction universes where the shipboard environment is assumed to be relatively sterile (without insect life and certain microbial organisms, due to decontamination which occurs in the fictional transporter process), body decomposition will not progress much past autolysis. In that case characters could expect to encounter bodies as bloated skin bags.

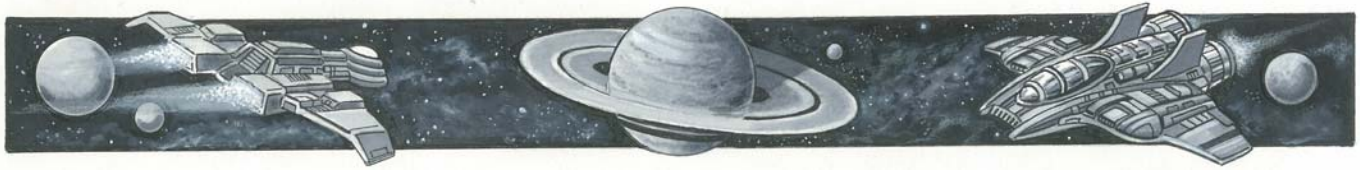
Other science fiction universes assume the ships land and take off from the surfaces of planets, opening

their ramps to load and unload cargo. Yet others assume that a certain degree of grunge and filth will accumulate according to the nature of the vessel, its use, and the general cleanliness habits of its occupants. These shipboard environs could be expected to have varying forms of vermin or insect life present as stowaways aboard ship. In a derelict starship of this type, if the temperature, gravity and atmosphere levels were maintained, decomposition would proceed as it would upon Earth. In that case, skeletons could occur in space.

Atmosphere

Various steps of the decomposition process rely upon the presence of oxygen, while others do not. The speed and rate of decomposition change, based on the type of atmosphere that would be present. Different shipboard atmospheres may alter the typical coloration of the corpses during the decomposition process. For example, an atmosphere high in carbon dioxide would turn the skin a cherry red color. Characters might encounter black, green, blue, or red corpses depending upon the stage of decomposition and the gases present.





Corpses produce their own contributions to the atmosphere as well. Some of the gaseous by-products that result from putrefaction (such as methane and hydrogen sulfide) are poisonous. Depending upon the number of corpses present in a confined space, they could produce an atmosphere that would be harmful to human salvagers if atmosphere scrubbers were not functioning. In that case characters could encounter enclosed corridors or rooms containing decomposing bodies and poisonous atmospheres.

Vacuum

In a vacuum, any moisture within the body will begin seeping out through body openings like eyes, ears, nasal openings and the mouth. A body exposed to a vacuum will desiccate, or dry out. The skin shrinks, first wrinkling like a raisin as the body goes through the wet rot stage. It shrinks further to stretch tight over the bones and changes to look like parchment, or a leather drumhead, as the decomposition process moves into the dry rot stage. Mummification has the potential to occur naturally in the vacuum of space, without wrapping or other preservatives. Boarding parties could expect to encounter either zombie-like bodies or mummified remains. Bodies inside intact spacesuits may experience grave wax formation.

Humans exposed to a vacuum while alive can survive for short periods of time as long as they do not hold their breath. Those holding their breath may experience decompression and would likely rupture their lungs and die due to the decompression event.

People who do not hold their breath in a vacuum will not explode, nor will they immediately freeze. They will experience oxygen deprivation and would likely pass out within 11-15 seconds. They would also experience the loss of fluids through evaporation, and significant cooling of the mouth and nose due to this rapid evaporation even if freezing temperatures were not present. In a game, if the character's location (such as a docking bay or an airlock) is repressurized in time, he or she may, over the long term, experience nothing more serious than the bends. After a minute or two the various injurious effects of vacuum exposure accumulate and the character would be on his or her way toward death. Vacuum exposure

results in initial injuries similar to diving accidents, such as hypoxia, pulmonary embolisms, seizures, coma, etc. Our source material contains some interesting references on this topic.

In one NASA training incident, an astronaut exposed to vacuum conditions here on Earth remained conscious for about 14 seconds and reported hearing the air leaking from his suit and feeling water begin to boil on his tongue. (At very low pressures, water boils at much lower temperatures than usual.) The true limits of vacuum exposure on humans are not known. Longer-term exposure of an extremity, such as a hand or a foot, has occurred and been survived with very few lasting negative effects. Estimates of safe time limits for successful recovery from vacuum exposure vary from scientist to scientist. The estimates indicate that two to four minutes of exposure should be survivable by a healthy human if medical care is readily available. Don't forget, though, that flying debris during decompressions also can wreak havoc on an orderly ship and introduce new means for injuring its crew!

In Conclusion

Gaming scenarios for *Derelict Starships* descriptions can involve the rescue of a stranded crew, innumerable salvage situations, exploration of unidentified wrecks, recovery of lost research data, repatriation of remains, or a host of other scenarios, not all of which will involve discovering corpses aboard a ship. However, when one does, this article may give the GM a bit more insight into what type of human remains a boarding party might encounter.

When preparing your descriptions, try to make them vivid! Avoid clinical language where possible. Describe the effects and appearance, rather than the medical diagnosis or cause of death. Planting various types of remains aboard derelict ships can give characters clues to interpreting the potential causes for the abandonment of a ship. However, this could also lead to debate among players as human forensics in space is an area of science that is still being explored.

Lastly, Tabletop Adventures wishes to caution enthusiastic GMs to remember that ultimately,



gaming is about fun. For instance, most gaming groups enjoy eating while gaming. Describing floating globules of liquefied proteins and bodily remains may not be in good taste! Game Masters should use caution when introducing realism in their accounts of corpses in the space environment, and remember to modify the level of detail to match a gaming group's tolerance for colorful descriptions of this nature. (Sometimes circumspection is a GM's friend.) Let these technical details augment your imagination as you head for the stars!

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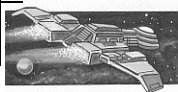
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DERELICT STARSHIPS - CARDS





Derelict Starships 01

Flickering lights cast an intermittent illumination, revealing the area before you. Occasional panels have been knocked or pried off, exposing tangles of multicolored wiring. A cable swings loose, sparking blue and white on contact with the wall; the scent of ozone fills the air. The low, ever-present thrum of the dormant engines vibrates up through the floors.

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Derelict Starships 03

A dufflebag sits on [or: floats above] the deck in an awkward position. Its built-in locking seal is still engaged. On its side you can see traces of what once was a name and number but years of wear and tear have worn it off to the point where it is unreadable. Only part of the crewperson's number is evident—the last 4 digits were 6947. There is no indication of who owned it or who dropped it and left it in haste. [If the duffle is opened, the characters will find it is full of uniforms, women's underwear, and a data pad. If this is investigated, it appears to have a series of video letters sent and received between a slender woman with black skin and her family and friends. They also find a tiny ceramic animal with a flowing mane.]

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Derelict Starships 05

The dim light here flickers on and off with a series of noisy clicks. Upon closer inspection the illumination is found to be a single emergency light flickering in its broken housing.

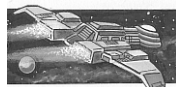
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Derelict Starships 02

Your first impression here is of a great tentacled monster reaching down from above. [Pause.] The reality is somewhat different, however: a massive tangle of twisted metal, wiring and conduits hangs down from the ceiling. The structural supports that kept this entire assembly in place must have given way. The gnarled and contorted knot protruding from above gives the uncomfortable impression that the ship's guts have been ripped out. It will be difficult to move around as the jagged metal protrudes at unexpected angles that are often concealed by harmless-looking wiring. [There is a possibility of slight injury or a rip in an environmental suit. Characters could use dexterity or alertness to move around the area without damage.]

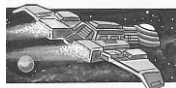
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Derelict Starships 04

A large patch of the floor here is extremely badly damaged, perhaps by a grenade or other small explosive; it may even have been just a very large power surge from within the ship's structural support net. The walls and ceiling are largely undamaged, but the raised metal edges and jagged pieces of debris on the floor will make it hazardous to traverse the area, as will the malfunctioning equipment. [If no gravity:] In the absence of gravity it is not as much of an issue, though movement is hampered by a lack of handholds on the walls or ceiling to use to pull yourself along.

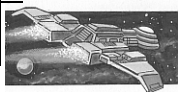
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Derelict Starships 06

A body lies on [or: floats above] the deck, dressed in what was once an immaculately kept uniform. From what you can tell the man was young, possibly just starting out a career in space exploration. His career is now nothing more than a note in your log entry as you list your discoveries aboard the derelict spacecraft. There is a sidearm in a holster at his belt and an identification card still clipped to his shirt.

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Derelict Starships 07

On the wall near the door is a rectangular green handle. It is the most low-tech control you have seen so far on the ship; it appears one need only pull it down to activate it. [Pulling the lever down activates a fire suppression nozzle overhead. The person pulling the handle will be covered in foam, which is non-toxic but messy. This emergency system functions even if the ship has no power.]

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Derelict Starships 09

On one side of a protruding corner you see a handful of marks that suggest some type of weapons impact. This seems to be confirmed by the long smear of what looks like dried blood on the wall on the other side of the corner. [The marks could be long scorch marks, divots, scores, charred black circles, or anything appropriate to the available weapons. They may be weapon marks, or they might not, at the GM's discretion.]

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Derelict Starships 11

You discover an access tube which slants up from this area, but from where you are standing you cannot see where it goes. [If the boarding party investigates:] The tube continues to angle upward and then curves, and you catch a glimpse of an outstretched hand.

In the tube you see the body of a man in coveralls. [In gravity: It lies against the curve of the crawlway, head downward. In zero gravity: the body is floating gently, with its foot tangled in a handhold.] The man may have been about 50 years old; a pair of cracked and bloody eyeglasses hangs on his face, which is stretched in a grimace of pain and anger. The coveralls are stained with what looks like dried blood. [If the characters search the body they find a used medkit and a data storage device with a corrupted memory.]

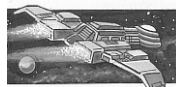
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Derelict Starships 08

On the left is a small table that folds down from the wall; on it are several items of interest. One of them seems to be an identification card belonging to a security officer. Another is a small pack of playing cards, trimmed in silver and with stars and planets for their suits. The cards themselves are scattered about the area on the surface of the table and some have fallen to the deck plating. The final item is a small device with a clip ring and an activation button on its uppermost surface. [This could be a laser-pointer, an access key, or even a concealed weapon.] [In zero gravity, the table is still in place but the other items are floating around the room. It may not be as easy to detect the small device and ID card amidst the other floating cards.]

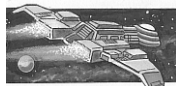
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Derelict Starships 10

The deck plating is wet here and the footing is slightly treacherous. [Some type of dexterity check could be required.] A broken pipe evidently discharged a large amount of liquid, though it has stopped now. [If the ship has no artificial gravity:] A sphere of water floats quietly, illuminated by the lights above. Several small objects are suspended in it. [If appropriate to the area: Beneath the sphere is an oval-shaped recess in the floor, which the liquid once filled.]

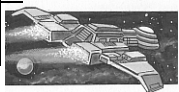
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Derelict Starships 12

Part of a support beam and wire conduit have broken away from the ship's structure and collapsed on a member of the crew. The twisted metal apparently pinned the victim to the deck but it is unclear whether the collapsing weight killed the person, if he or she had been dead already, or if the poor soul was pinned and slowly expired as the ship itself died. [If the boarding party tries to move the mass and unpin the figure they discover that the spar and conduit are wedged in place so firmly that they may need a cutting torch to dislodge them.]

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Derelict Starships 13

The area is littered with debris. Scorch marks lead to a number of holes on the wall, suggesting it as a primary source for the flotsam. Of the bits and pieces scattered on the deck, not much is identifiable except a few hand-sized pieces with metallic etching [computer components] and a meter-long section of a twisted metal beam which now has a sharp edge. Everything else appears similar to badly made confetti.



Derelict Starships 14

The “wrongness” of a ship in this condition weighs on you. Your peripheral vision catches on all the out-of-place things and moving even a short distance is a safety concern when sharp edges and broken bits can be anywhere. The constant need to be careful is just one more source of stress.

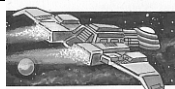
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Derelict Starships 15

A huge breach has been blow into the wall here. You can see through multiple barriers into an open area, perhaps a docking bay, and then on into space. Somewhere between here and there an energy barrier is up, protecting you from open space. [If main power is out, some emergency power source is keeping this portion of the ship intact.]

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Derelict Starships 16

A pipe in the wall has developed a small hole and a fine mist of water sprays outward, filling the area with a rainbow reflected from the lighting. It looks very pretty, almost festive—though it may mean that the pressure in the system is too high, potentially allowing for more dangerous eruptions. [Zero gravity: If the ship has no artificial gravity, floating water could be dangerous to characters, since it would immediately spread out upon contact and could cause drowning, damage to gear, obscured views through helmets, and so forth. If the area has no heat and has cooled to the icy cold of space then this is a twisted, piercing, crystalline formation of ice.]

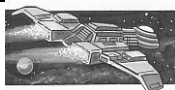
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Derelict Starships 17

A massive cable assembly has fallen; hanging from the ceiling it very effectively forms a barrier in this area. There is no chance of passing through here without having to push cables aside at some point. The cables are a multicolored web, effectively impeding your progress. [If the boarding party scans the cables they will find that many of them carry a power charge. They are so twisted about each other that it is almost impossible to find an area which does not have a charged cable across it. These cables may be safely insulated, or not, at the GM’s option.]

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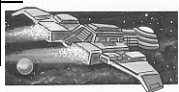


Derelict Starships 18

An access panel lies bent and discarded on the floor, as if torn off in a hurry. Tangles of wires and cables spill out of the hole it once covered, snaking together in an incomprehensible mess. Some of the wires have been cut and re-spliced into other wires, sloppily and unprofessionally. Underneath the panel lies a corroded screwdriver, a few dusty scraps of torn-off insulating tape, and a smashed datapad. [If investigated, the datadisc inside the pad is labeled *Do-It-Yourself Starship Repair*.]

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Derelict Starships 19

Scattered reflections sprout in the many-faceted dome of a fractured control surface. Almost any stray piece of debris could have shattered this fragile panel. Upon inspection, the dome seems to be held together by a flexible piece of film-and-adhesive overlay. It is one of the few controls remaining somewhat intact. [Optionally the readout may still function, but any additional pressure risks tearing the overlay holding the dome together.]



Derelict Starships 20

A rumble rolls through the vessel, shaking the deck and causing you to stumble briefly; it is echoed by a clanging crash. You have no idea what caused the ship to shake. Nothing else seems to have changed, at least as far as you can tell. [The rumble may have been caused by a (harmlessly) malfunctioning piece of equipment nearby, an outer compartment explosively decompressing, a ship docking with the derelict, different metals heating and cooling at different rates, or anything else the GM desires.]

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Derelict Starships 21

A clunky panel in a metal housing, sitting against the wall, has rounded keys, numbers, and letters on its surface. An old liquid crystal display with a crack down one side glows steadily in garish green. Even though the panel looks as if it should not be able to work, it seems to still function.

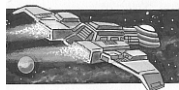
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Derelict Starships 22

A view panel is set into the wall to the right. There are no controls by it other than what seems to be a small com device. [The screen is touch-activated.] When touched the screen lights up and displays a map of the ship. It is not detailed; it looks as if it shows only the main areas. [It is password or voiceprint protected. When activated it will show a map of the ship with a red dot to represent each living being on the ship. There may be a malfunction in the panel that causes additional red dots to flicker on and off occasionally.]

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Derelict Starships 23

In this area are three lockers marked “Emergency Supplies.” Each of the doors is partially open but you cannot see inside from this angle. [If the characters approach:] You find the contents have been removed from all three lockers. Each holds charging stations for emergency lights and spacesuits.

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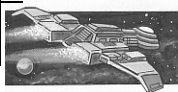


Derelict Starships 24

The bulkheads here are black with lighter areas, but there is no discernible pattern. The ceiling is twisted and distorted, hanging from its supports which sag as if they just could not take the weight anymore. The deck is pockmarked with bright white spots and little mounds. Each mound looks like a pile of slag dripped on the floor of some industrial waste facility. [If the boarding party is not in environmental gear:] The smell of burnt paint and metal still permeates the atmosphere in this area, and the sour tang of burnt synthetics is sharp on your tongue.

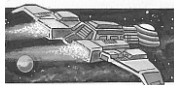
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Derelict Starships 25

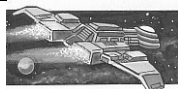
A cast-off spacesuit lays sprawled in the middle of the floor like a broken toy. A crack in the faceplate reflects light, the fissure sparkling through a layer of dust.



Derelict Starships 26

This console was obviously intended for a species with far more digits than you. A carnival of flashing lights dizzies the eye; a cacophony of buzzing and beeping assaults the ear. Closer inspection reveals a wild variety among the buttons: some labeled in a swimming script, others in bizarre hieroglyphs; some intended to be twisted, some depressed, others to be manipulated in ways that defy the imagination. The sides of the console are long curves, and except for a sudden jagged outcrop of metal at the top, the entire thing has a richly organic look.

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Derelict Starships 27

A tiny figure darts from the edge of your vision. It appears to be a small grey creature, scurrying at such a speed that you do not get a good look at it. It looked to be a large mouse or something similar but it is gone almost as soon as you see it, disappearing behind an unsecured access panel. [This mouse-like thing can be a mouse or some small alien creature that may have come aboard with cargo or supply at some point. If the ship has no atmosphere and/or gravity, however, then it could not have been a mouse. Instead it may be a small mechanical object or some more-exotic alien species.]

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Derelict Starships 29

On the floor in front of you lies what looks to be a common laser rifle that has been bent in half. The metal and composite portions of the rifle around the bend are curved and stretched while the lightweight components are crushed and broken, exposing the electronics underneath the casing. It would take amazing strength or unusual forces to do that sort of damage to the weapon.

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Derelict Starships 28

This device is round and covered in small lights; there are several digital readouts on it. It is about the size of a tennis ball and colored a flat grey. A small panel on the sphere indicates usage. [In the language of the ship's owners, it reads: Arm with sequence detonator button, obey aural instructions, do not use aboard ship.]

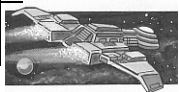
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Derelict Starships 30

A red octagonal assembly is attached to the ceiling. It is semi-translucent and a light beam shines from it in a rotation that covers most of the room. The beam moves slowly within the stationary assembly but never pauses or stops turning in its steady round. [This is merely a variation of the red alert lights that are found throughout the ship. It turns slowly because it was partially damaged and the rotator does not work as it should. Or, it could be a defense mechanism...]

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Derelict Starships 31

A dark cable as thick as a man's arm snakes out from a ruptured conduit and then disappears back into the tube. A fire burned here, apparently melting the cable's protective insulating cover and blackening the area around it. Both the wall and floor are charred. A twisted access panel to the conduit lies on the floor [or: floats by], having apparently been blown open by whatever incident occurred here.



Derelict Starships 32

Jagged metal and tattered fabric remnants ring the void in the structure in front of you. A gaping hole has been punctured into the space beyond [or: the next corridor, room, conduit, etc.]. The hole looks large enough for a mid-sized suited human to pass through. [The metal shards may catch or rip individuals in spacesuits.]

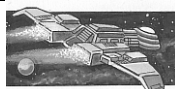
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Derelict Starships 33

[The GM may use this in any location or intentionally use it in a control room or ship's bridge.] **You notice the control panels and viewscreen here have been splattered with a dark red substance that has dried onto the surfaces.** [The substance is dried blood. If a character tries to brush it off, he or she finds it cannot be merely brushed away. It would need to be scrubbed off or scraped with a blade. If the surfaces are not cleaned the GM can periodically remind the characters that someone bled on these controls.]

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Derelict Starships 34

The area ahead has lost all normal lighting and is now lit only by the red emergency lighting panels along the lower parts of the walls. You get the impression that there is something in the air, but it may be an effect of the diffused red light. [This haze may be water vapor, smoke, or simply a trick of the eye. It could even be some sort of chemical that has escaped into the air and has made it deadly to anyone without breathing apparatus. If the GM chooses the deadly option then characters that take the time to scan should have a chance to determine its hazardous nature before entering.]

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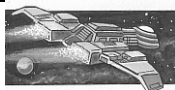


Derelict Starships 35

A computer display catches your eye; a stream of characters and symbols scrolls across the screen. At first you think it is entirely random, but you notice that it seems to run through a sequence, emit a faint, high-pitched note, and then play the same sequence over again. It almost appears to be some kind of code, set to display as a loop. [The characters may just be gibberish caused by an error, but if the GM wishes to make things more complicated for the boarding party, the code could be a message scrambled by a virus or malfunction, or an honest-to-goodness coded message]

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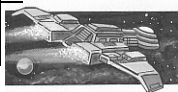
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Derelict Starships 36

Ahead you see a person in a white vacuum suit who seems to be standing with his back to you. [There is no response from the suit to calls or exclamations. If the characters approach the suit:] **The person in the white suit does not move as you approach.** [When the party gets to the front of the suit:] **The first thing you see is a large bloody hole in the center front of the vacuum suit, but there is no face behind the visor and no body in the suit. The gravity boots are keeping the feet of the suit on the floor and the stiffness and structure of the suit is keeping it upright and somewhat motionless as it stands a silent and ineffective guard.**

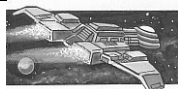
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Derelict Starships 37

In your light you see sparkles from some type of fine white crystalline powder. It covers sporadic portions of the deck, concentrating more heavily at the base of and on the wall to your left. There it appears as if some type of major conduit inside the wall exploded. The metal of the wall is ruptured and bent outward like some insane metallic flower. Its edges and interior are blackened and partially melted, the unmistakable signs of a plasma fire now long extinguished.

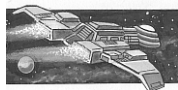
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Derelict Starships 39

A structural beam from the right wall bows outward into this area and metal plates have been wrenched from the wall and ceiling. Cables of some sort have spilled outward in a mass [in zero gravity: and sway gently to and fro like tentacles seeking prey]. The metal in the rest of the wall is stressed and of uncertain structural integrity. What caused the wall to buckle is not immediately apparent.

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Derelict Starships 41

One panel has a tiny blue light blinking slowly on and off. It is not bright, but it stands out in the gloom and catches your attention. It is even more striking since the rest of the control panel lies black and silent. Slowly, patiently, it blinks away... almost as if it is beckoning to you. [This panel can be anything from a regular control console to a small intercom panel on the wall. The GM could insert personal logs from a crewmember, or computer reports, here. The button could restore emergency power to the panel or simply turn on regular lighting in this area. Even if power returns to the console, a message could simply indicate that the party cannot do anything from this panel since it has been overridden by controls from <any spot the GM desires.>]

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Derelict Starships 38

The deck is streaked with a brown substance [blood?] leading to a battered console, with a maintenance door ajar and somewhat crooked, hanging by a hinge. A dim light twinkles from the corner of the console but the screen, cracked from one side to the other, lies dark. Buttons, knobs, and switches descend along the side of the screen, each with its own color; some form of marking can be vaguely seen next to each control. The bulkheads have little beads of green splattered on their plates and scratches on the plates at about shoulder height. [If someone investigates:] Inside the maintenance door you see the components for the console including an oblong object with a conduit leading into it [independent emergency battery].

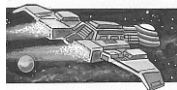
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Derelict Starships 40

The first thing you notice in this area is the body of an apparent crewmember. The cause of death is obvious – a single blast directly to the torso. The reek of charred flesh hangs in the air. The corpse's eyes are fixed, staring blankly ahead, and its gloved hands grip a small item. [This may be a datapad, holocube, keycard, or other item. If the boarding party is familiar with uniforms, they may see that this uniform marks him or her as a lieutenant/mechanic/medic/cook. The body may be mummified from long exposure to a moistureless environment, or the person may have been dead only a few hours.]

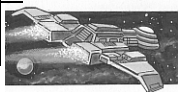
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Derelict Starships 42

The ceiling in this area seems to have given way; some metal panels have fallen down, revealing a mass of wiring to the lights and the ship's intercom, several pipes—one of which rattles and shakes—that might contain almost anything, and a power conduit. Though the conduit seems to be damaged, occasionally throwing off lances of energy that arc to the nearby pipes, the power flow is strong and uninterrupted. [Even if the ship is generally powerless, this cable could be powered by a battery or other independent source that had not yet been detected.]

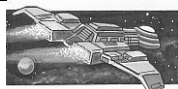
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Derelict Starships 43

Any time you try to use a communications device you get a great deal of static, making it tricky to understand messages. You are not sure if there is some other type of signal blocking your communications or if it is just the weight of dead metal around you which is making it difficult.

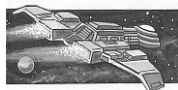
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Derelict Starships 45

Freeze-dried remains of various foodstuffs litter the deck [or: float aimlessly]. A storage cabinet is open not far away and other personal effects are scattered nearby. Unsecured items are everywhere. It is hard to move without stepping on [or: bumping into] one item or another.

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Derelict Starships 47

A red warning light strobes overhead, the klaxon that once accompanied it having long-since faded into silence. The emergency that triggered the alarm is past and those it was intended to warn long gone yet it faithfully spins, flickering and casting odd shadows with its eerie red light.

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Derelict Starships 44

A great polysteel beam lies twisted and fallen across this area. It angles, with the low end on your left and the high end about 1.5 meters off the deck on the right. There is other debris all around that looks like fragments of shattered grey glass. On closer inspection you realize that the tiny shards are not glass at all but rather shards of shattered metal. They are sharp and strewn across this area like tiny caltrops, but it is unlikely that any are actually big enough to penetrate your boots. As for the beam you need to either climb over it or go under it if you want to proceed any farther. [While not penetrating, the metal splinters will still imbed themselves in boot soles. This will cause the boots to click and scrape as characters walk; other effects are left up to the GM.]

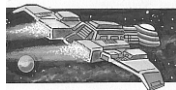
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Derelict Starships 46

A live high-energy cable hangs from the ceiling. It dances around like an angry serpent, its power arcing across to the metallic surfaces in the area. You are not sure if it is powered by the main power or if it has some other power source – perhaps one that was triggered when you came aboard. You might be able to get by it without being caught by the cable but it is uncertain. [If the characters are in vacuum suits of some type they are probably insulated; if they are not the jolt could cause major damage and possibly even be fatal.]

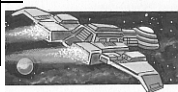
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Derelict Starships 48

This section is empty except for a structure in the middle of the area. A square pillar rises from the deck halfway up to the ceiling. A large rectangular object made of some type of transparent material stands on top of the pillar-like structure. Several indentations twinkle from the side of the pillar. A closer inspection shows that each indentation has a varying number of pins attached inside.

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Derelict Starships 49

Scattered on the ground [or: Floating slowly in the area] are the contents of a small toolkit. The tools are intricate and appear to be for highly detailed electrical work. The toolbox itself lies off to one side. It appears to be still locked; something opened it by cutting off the top entirely, shearing through the metal cleanly and evenly. Apparently whoever opened it did not want the tools, which look to be still in good condition. [The tool box has been designed to be affixed to the area where the worker is working, either magnetically or with some type of repositionable adhesive.]

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Derelict Starships 51

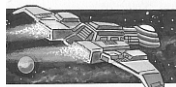
The deck creaks beneath your feet, groaning and rumbling as you walk. It seems sturdy, and in your experience strange noises are commonplace on starships, but it adds to the abandoned feeling of your surroundings. Normally there would be too much background noise and idle chatter for the creaking and thumping of the ship to be noticeable, but here there is nothing around you but empty space and dead silence.



Derelict Starships 50

The screen here is dark. Whatever readouts it used to display or duties it performed, it is silent now. A thin crystalline pattern frosts the darkened surface of the screen, looking like crystals of frozen water vapor that could have naturally been in the air itself. [If the vessel has atmosphere and heating these crystals are of some unidentified substance. If the vessel is dead and power has been out for a long time then it is indeed tiny crystals of ice.]

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Derelict Starships 52

You see a flat screen set into a small metal housing; the screen is slightly bigger than your hand and has an outline for placing a 'handprint' against it. There are several small buttons beneath the outline but none of them are marked so there is no clue as to their function.

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Derelict Starships 53

As your eyes scan the area it appears that in the center, the solid deck plating is parted by four large grated panels that can be lifted to access the area below. [As the boarding party approached the grated area:] As you approach the grated area you can clearly see that a crawl space or access tunnel runs beneath the grates and appears to continue under the solid deck of the rest of the area. It is impossible to tell where it leads but through the grating you can see conduits and at least one control box or readout monitor along the way. Vaguely you can see a small yellow light blinking on the lower left-hand side of the box.

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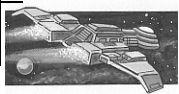
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Derelict Starships 54

A view panel is set into the wall to the right. There are no controls by it other than what seems to be a small com device. [The screen is touch-activated.] When touched the screen lights up and displays a map of the ship. It is not detailed; it looks as if it shows only the main areas. [It is password or voiceprint protected. When activated it will show an extensive map of the ship with all damaged areas highlighted in various colors (or yellow and red) according to the severity of the damage. If the screen is touched on one of the damaged areas, a listing (in the language of the ship's previous crew) of the damaged systems and their specific damages replaces the map. When the touch screen is tapped again the view goes back to the map.]

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Derelict Starships 55

There is a meter-wide screen on the wall here, possibly a viewscreen or a touch screen control panel, though it has no power to it now. The clear screen has been cracked into small pieces and most of them are loose. Tiny shards and filaments of broken glass fill the air [or: lie scattered on the floor] and sparkle in your light. [Glass shards in the air could be very hazardous to unprotected eyes, and anyone not wearing breathing apparatus is in danger of inhaling the glass and being damaged internally.]

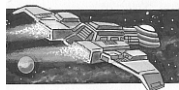
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Derelict Starships 57

This entire area is virtually blocked by a jungle of twisted metal, wires, pipes and girders that were once part of or concealed by the walls, deck and ceiling. The general effect is as if this area buckled and ruptured from some type of tremendous force that left it in complete ruin. [If the derelict's destruction was recent and there is atmosphere read: It is difficult to see as the smoke roils through the area; flames lick hungrily at the air and metal as sparks cascade down from above.] Traversing this area will be a challenge and require some careful maneuvering; jagged pieces of metal seem to reach out from everywhere like deadly fingers. [If the characters are in environmental suits there is a possibility of one being ripped.]

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Derelict Starships 59

Layered, translucent panels compose a unique display. Ever-changing language motes cascade from the top of the panels. Nearby, a glove-shaped haptic display controller, and a halo unit with a small square secondary visual readout, sit abandoned. The display, though unique, appears to have been in use up until the recent abandonment of this vessel. [These controllers are similar to some virtual reality controllers. The glove unit allows control by hand motions, and the halo unit is worn on the head, with the visual readout giving information at the wearer's eye level.]

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Derelict Starships 56

The wall is scarred by scorch marks, black and brown starbursts tracing the impact of what appears to have been stray weapons fire. The steel has melted in little frozen rivulets where the blasts hit.

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Derelict Starships 58

An information panel greets you from the wall. 'Welcome Aboard,' the holographic hostess' smiling face tells you. 'Welcome aboard...welcome aboard...welcome aboard...' she intones, the screen flickering. The loop repeats over and over again as you walk past, until it is lost in the distance.

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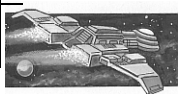


Derelict Starships 60

[For characters in spacesuits, read:] You can smell the metal and synthetics of your suit and the air from your tank has its usual functional, but distinctly canned, sense to it. Around the edges of these more pervasive scents is the scent of sweat. The disadvantage of closing out all unwanted effects means that you also lock in a completely different set of unpleasant effects. Once again you are reminded of the loss of tactile ability through the gloves you wear.

[For characters not in protective suits:] The air here smells stale and there is a hint of death that seems to creep around the edges of your consciousness. You can see your breath as the air here is distinctly colder than you are used to. The chill runs through your flesh as you gaze about the dead vessel before you.

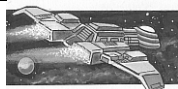
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Derelict Starships 61

A strobe light dominates this area, splashing a yellowish-white glare over everything and then returning it to darkness. The light spins insistently and annoyingly, signifying some manner of alert or warning. The bright flashing provides such a contrast to the dim emergency lighting that it makes vision difficult. [Anyone using mechanical vision augmentation based upon light will have the same problem since their device will not be able to compensate rapidly enough between the blinding flash and the dark. Characters' ability to detect things will be decreased until they block or put out the strobe light. Subtract 15% from appropriate checks.]

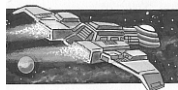
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Derelict Starships 63

An alarm klaxon suddenly blares into life, piercingly loud, accompanied by flashing red emergency lights which give everything an ominous cast; the shadows in the derelict appear to move on their own. Then, just as abruptly as it began, the alarm ceases. All is quiet. As you look around it seems that nothing has changed. The cause and meaning of the alarm is unknown. [The alarm may have been set off by the PCs inadvertently, by a computer malfunction, or by someone or something else.]

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Derelict Starships 65

Ahead of you on the floor is an odd mound, rounded and with smooth curves, about knee high. In the light it is ivory in color and appears dry and crusty. [If touched:] The substance is fragile and crumbles where you touch it. [A fire suppression nozzle malfunctioned and sprayed a mound of foam onto the deck.]

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Derelict Starships 62

A number of ceiling panels have fallen to the deck here, and they will make going through this area difficult. Several cables have been pulled out of their proper position; three are hanging across your path. One is yellow and one is green; the third one is red and it hangs low enough that you will have to duck to get under it. Two others run along with your direction of travel. The grey one is out of your way, but another red cable is hanging low enough to be a hazard. [These standard power cables are color coded for maintenance. Despite their detailed descriptions, they are not actually of importance.]

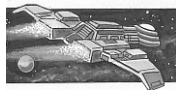
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Derelict Starships 64

As your lights pierce the gloom, common items – a chair, a standing console – take on strange shapes before resolving into something familiar. The flickering shadows suggest that something else is moving just at the edge of your vision, but that seems unlikely given what you know of the ship. It is no doubt just an illusion, but it does tend to put you on edge.

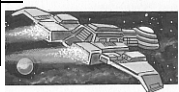
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Derelict Starships 66

Set into the wall to the right is a large light-grey board that seems to have electronic paper of some sort on it. The space is filled with documents and bulletins. [These are in the language of the ship's last inhabitants. The electronic board will continue show the bulletins even if there is no power. The types of things present are rule changes aboard the ship and work schedules as well as schedule changes for various classes and events.]

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Derelict Starships 67

A partially devoured food bar, the wrapper pulled back from one end, floats by your faceplate [or: lies on the deck]. Apparently whoever had been eating it was distracted by something more urgent than hunger! Whatever preservatives are in it will most likely guarantee its existence for quite some time. It floats [or: rests] in mute testimony to the normal lives that had been lived here once upon a time.

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Derelict Starships 69

The deck looks normal in this section. The bulkheads have some odd gashes, but nothing that a damage control team with a little sealant could not fix. Something small moves along the floor into one of the gashes and you hear a faint rustling echoing in the bulkhead. [If the boarding party looks into the gash or opens it further:] A horde of insects moves as one along the inside of the bulkhead and its conduits. They writhe and pulse, inching along as a single body. The cluster notices you and scatters! Some move further into the bulkhead; others move along the ceiling, dropping occasionally onto the deck [or party members]; still others cross the deck, scrambling over your feet in a mass effort to get to the other side.

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Derelict Starships 71

A girder and several wiring harnesses have fallen from the ceiling and block this area. The great weight of the girder, coupled with the impact of the fall, has wedged it across your path and made it difficult to get by without touching the wires. You see no indication the wires are live—but that just means they are not arcing across to the metal and does not, in itself, guarantee that they are dead. [The girder obviously fell when artificial gravity was active. Because it has wedged itself in place when it fell it will be difficult to move even in zero gravity because it must be dislodged from where it is stuck. If the party has a cutting torch they could cut through it but it will take 10 minutes or more.]

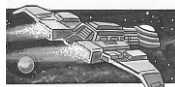
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Derelict Starships 68

The inertial dampeners obviously went out in this area of the ship as every loose object is piled against one wall; most things are smashed into unrecognizable bits of whatever they were. Even the furniture that was connected to different parts of the room have been torn away from the bulkheads and smashed, leaving behind ragged holes exposing ruined conduits and control systems. [In zero gravity: the material in this room could all be stuck in the place where it had been crushed together or various objects could have broken away and be floating around the room.]

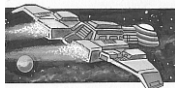
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Derelict Starships 70

A small red button blinks from the side of an intraship communications panel. Next to it are a speaker and an assortment of other buttons. One button has a trace of an identifying tag by it; no doubt when the ship was new there was one next to each of the buttons explaining its significance. [If a character presses the button:] A klaxon begins sounding loudly throughout the area and a recorded voice cuts through the noise: “Abandon ship! Abandon ship! This is not a drill.” [If the button is not pressed again, the klaxon and the instructions continue.]

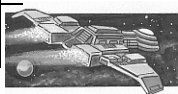
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Derelict Starships 72

Some type of web-extruding creatures were evidently active here for a period of time after the ship was abandoned, because veils of fragile cobwebs drift from the open panel above to the console in front of you.

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Derelict Starships 73

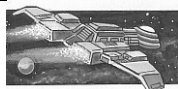
A view panel is set into the wall to the right with several [20] buttons beside it. Each button is labeled [in the language of the ship builders/users] for a different place on or around the ship. [When a button is pressed, the panel shows a view from that spot on the ship in real time. Some of the buttons provide external views.]



Derelict Starships 74

Shafts of cool radiance stream from the grid suspended overhead. Miniscule square beams of blue-green luminescence bathe individuals in your group as they advance. Portions of the grid have been wrenched away and above it you can see a glowing gel-like substance. Globbs of the shining goo ooze slowly from [or: float near] the damaged grid. [If oxygen is present the substance can be organisms emitting bioluminescent light. If no atmosphere is present, a chemical reaction could be supplying the glow or this could be remains of an alien presence.]

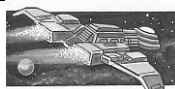
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Derelict Starships 75

A dull gray hemisphere juts from the bulkhead at about shoulder level. Its metal surface is etched in a cross-hatch pattern and on the upper slope it has a tiny screen and three small buttons. The screen displays a flashing message: “Are you sure?” [This is an armed explosive device. Two of the buttons set the timer, and the third irrevocably starts the countdown. The display is waiting for someone to press the third button again to verify countdown start. The GM may determine exactly which is the “third button,” and for how long the timer is set.]

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Derelict Starships 76

You come upon a spot in the wall where a small junction box has had its access panel removed. A tool is sticking out of the box at an odd angle. On the deck below the junction box there is a large quantity of a dried reddish brown substance [dried blood]. There are also markings that lead off to your left, as if something were dragged through the substance and smeared it. The trail continues about three meters before it disappears.

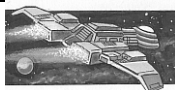
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Derelict Starships 77

The only light here is cast by the steady pulsations of the emergency alert signal that flashes slowly, like the beating of a dying heart. Whatever other lighting was here apparently no longer functions. The signal winks on, bathing the area in an unnatural red light, then blinks off into darkness. The red tableau disappears and then returns again with each flash, in a warning of what went on here before and a caution for your future.

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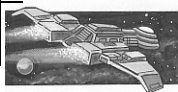


Derelict Starships 78

You see a panel with several screens. There seem to be no keys or other input devices but a closer look at the screen shows several small fingerprints on the surface over the controls displayed there.

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Derelict Starships 79

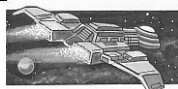
A series of small, pressurized tanks lines the wall; all are secured into place. Their one-time contents are labeled - water or various chemicals. Some have been punctured and their contents spilled (and since evaporated), but others are still intact.



Derelict Starships 80

On the wall to your right you see a strange three-sided symbol that seems to be drawn on the wall in some reddish-brown substance that is now dry [blood]. Dried drip marks extend toward the floor, where there is a large blot of the same dark brown substance.

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Derelict Starships 81

Your boots clank on the echoing surface of the floor. The flooring in this area is of modular design, simple meter-wide square grates dropped on a grid of alloyed pipes, almost like scaffolding. The system is cheap and easy to customize, but hardly sturdy. It is clear that these are set so that the piping and wires beneath the grates can be easily accessed.

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Derelict Starships 82

Something is strewn about the floor in this area and a small case sits off to one side. On closer investigation the spilled contents appear to be tubes of antibiotic cream, bandages made of cloth, and other supplies from an emergency medkit. Near the kit itself there is a large stain of dark red on the deck plates. An open roll of otherwise-unused bandages has some blood staining the end of it. [If there is no gravity, the GM should describe these contents as floating randomly about. The dried blood is still on the deck plates.]

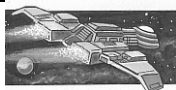
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Derelict Starships 83

Scorch marks and small bursts pepper the deck. Stray blasts have left their mark on the adjacent walls and the surfaces overhead as well. It looks as if there was a firefight between two opposing factions at some point, and the after-effects have yet to be expunged. You see no weapons or corpses, though, and no unusual marks other than small chips and blast marks left by the past actions.

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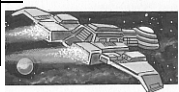


Derelict Starships 84

Ahead you see a dark gray datapad floating lazily in the air about head high. The screen of the pad is still lit and you can see that it has a heading separated from the text by a few spaces [It is in the language used by the derelict ship's occupants. It reads:] “Chapter One: It was the best of times. It was the worst of times...”

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Derelict Starships 85

A light flickers just at the corner of your vision but when you turn to examine it, it is gone. [If the ship has some power, this could be a light on a panel or a safety light, almost worn out but still flickering from time to time. Otherwise this could be a reflection from a character's own light or that of a colleague, or of some light from outside the ship. Of course it could also be something strange, supernatural, or unexplained, if the GM desires.]



Derelict Starships 86

Out of the corner of your eye you see a sudden flash of color and movement. You spin toward it and discover a rectangular device stuck onto the metal bulkhead at an odd angle, with a screen displaying bright views of some tourist beach. The device is fairly flat and the screen barely a handspan wide. Most of the rotating views feature a dark-haired young woman. [The device is a type of personal viewer. It is fastened to the bulkhead by magnets on the back and activates when it detects motion. It was dropped accidentally when the ship was abandoned (or damaged) and someone who found it stuck it to the bulkhead haphazardly rather than letting it be stepped on and destroyed.]

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Derelict Starships 87

[If in zero gravity: Floating in the air, weightless as a balloon, you see the skeletal remains of what was probably one of the ship's crew.] The darkened shape of a body casts strange shadows as light passes through the exposed bones. Hanging from the corpse are the tattered remains of clothing, along with what appears to be a pack of some kind, clutched in one hand. It is easy to imagine that the leering skull regards you reproachfully as you ogle its gear. [The pack contains blank data storage units, a sealed packet of food (still good), and a small amount of cash.]



Derelict Starships 88

A few boxes and crates are scattered here; some have been piled up to reach an opening in the ceiling. Next to one of the larger boxes lies a small metal case. The grating from the opening above is lying on the ground on the other side of the stack, broken. [The metal case is similar to a briefcase. It may contain documents, ship schematics, repair manuals, maps of the space lanes, master security cards or whatever else the GM desires.]

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Derelict Starships 89

A shadowy humanoid figure slumps against the wall ahead of you. [If the boarding party investigates:] **This figure is not a human but is actually a 'bot of some sort. Judging by its equipment you would guess it is a maintenance robot. It will take some additional work and investigation to determine if it is at all functional. As you look at it you realize it is not quite as humanoid in shape as you originally thought.**

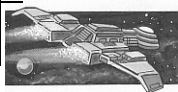


Derelict Starships 90

A grate set into the wall seems to cover an access to a maintenance tube. The tube runs perpendicular to the wall at deck level. The grate is standing ajar and just inside the tube entrance you can see the desiccated body of a small rodent, its head caught in the trap that broke its neck.

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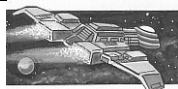
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Derelict Starships 91

The shadows of this place are very deep and may conceal many secrets. The area before you is dimly lit by the red hues of the emergency light panels. It seems to give an eerie glow to the whole area and there are deep shadows that the light does not reach. That will make it even more difficult to determine what has happened here and what may lie ahead. [If lighting is functioning in the ship, this may be an area where the normal light panels are inoperative or malfunctioning.]

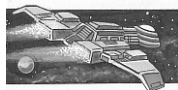
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Derelict Starships 93

Along the right wall a grate slightly less than a meter square sits just above floor level. It is broken, with a large hole in the middle of it. The metal of the grate is still attached to the wall but has been bent until it sticks straight out. The ends of the jagged metal are torn and partially melted but there is no evidence of burns around the sides of the service tube on the other side of the grate.

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Derelict Starships 95

[If the boarding party is in environmental suits, pick a specific character and apply this to that one person alone.] The air smells stale and old and is reminiscent of long unused storage areas and stale dirty laundry. [To a single person, add: You can clearly smell the accumulation of sweat and it reminds you of a gym locker that has not been cleaned.] [If not in environmental suits:] Clearly, there is a malfunction in the atmospheric circulatory system of life support. It is probably nothing serious but it does make the exploration of this vessel less comfortable.

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Derelict Starships 92

You hear a drip... drip... drip.... A puddle on the floor reflects the light onto the bulkheads and it ripples with each succeeding drip. Above, drops descend from a fissure in the overhead. [If the boarding party investigates the fissure:] Conduits lead up into the spaces above and out of sight. A small cleft has been etched into one conduit from the years of dripping. [If they are not in environmental suits:] The liquid smells of old hydrocarbons and the air tastes metallic on the tongue. [If they investigate the liquid:] It appears to be hydrocarbon based [coolant]. It is contaminated with various metals [mostly from contact with the conduits] and age has made the liquid more volatile.

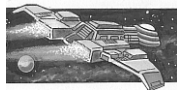
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Derelict Starships 94

Ahead of you on the ceiling you notice a small red light. It flashes every three seconds and is part of a device mounted on a swivel. The small device points in your direction, and as you approach it swivels back and forth, tracking your movements. Suddenly you seem to pass some invisible line and the device zeroes in on you [or: on the person in the lead]. A bright spark flashes from the device and you hear a metallic “click, click, click” but nothing else happens. [This device – a laser cannon or other energy weapon – has malfunctioned. Its motor still works, but happily for the characters there is a short circuit in its firing system.]

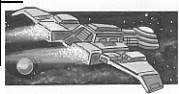
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Derelict Starships 96

A ceiling panel ahead of you has been opened and several wires dangle from it. The access cover for the panel is on the floor and it looks normal, but the wires and conduit from the open maintenance hatch are extensively damaged, as if a torch were held close to them and the wires and conduit melted and burned through. A set of wires hangs with loose ends and a spark arcs from one of the disconnected ends to the other at 3- to 5-second intervals.

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Derelict Starships 97

Along this bulkhead, narrow bands of light line the walls above and below decorative panels. This section of wall has remained intact amongst the mess that surrounds it. [The panels can be an odd art installation, a commemorative plaque, or generic decor.]



Derelict Starships 98

This area was ravaged by fire and all around you can see the blackened testimony of its destruction. You notice that soot is rubbing off on any part of your clothing or equipment that touches it. [If the characters are breathing the air, even through a rebreather or similar equipment:] You can smell the soot and the odor of burnt remains fills your nostrils [or: filters through your mask]. [Unless the GM rules otherwise:] The blaze destroyed anything in this area that would have been useful.

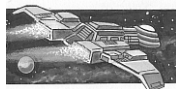
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Derelict Starships 99

An entire wiring harness with two larger flexible tubes or cables hangs down from the ceiling to the right. One of the large tubes has been ruptured and a fine vapor [smoke, gas, or steam] is shooting out of it, gathering in small clouds that twist lazily through the area. The access panel lies on the deck beneath a tangled mass that looks like multicolored snakes hanging and twisted together. The intact larger cable has a silver cylinder that seems to connect two parts of the cable. The cylinder has tiny lights, changing color in a sequential pattern: red, red, blue, blue, green, and repeat. [The colors may simply mean that this particular cable is working, or at the GM's discretion there may be is some nefarious meaning to the code.]

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Derelict Starships 100

You cannot see in this inky gloom; the darkness before you seems almost thick enough to touch. Each step you take into this area echoes dully, amplified by the blackness. A low groan breaks the gloomy atmosphere, quickly followed by a creaking sound. The cause of those sounds is uncertain. It could be that a change in structural temperature has caused a shifting of the metals as the outside temperature is affecting the ship, or it could be something more. From here you cannot tell and you do not hear it again.

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