

# ACROSS A THOUSAND DEAD WORLDS

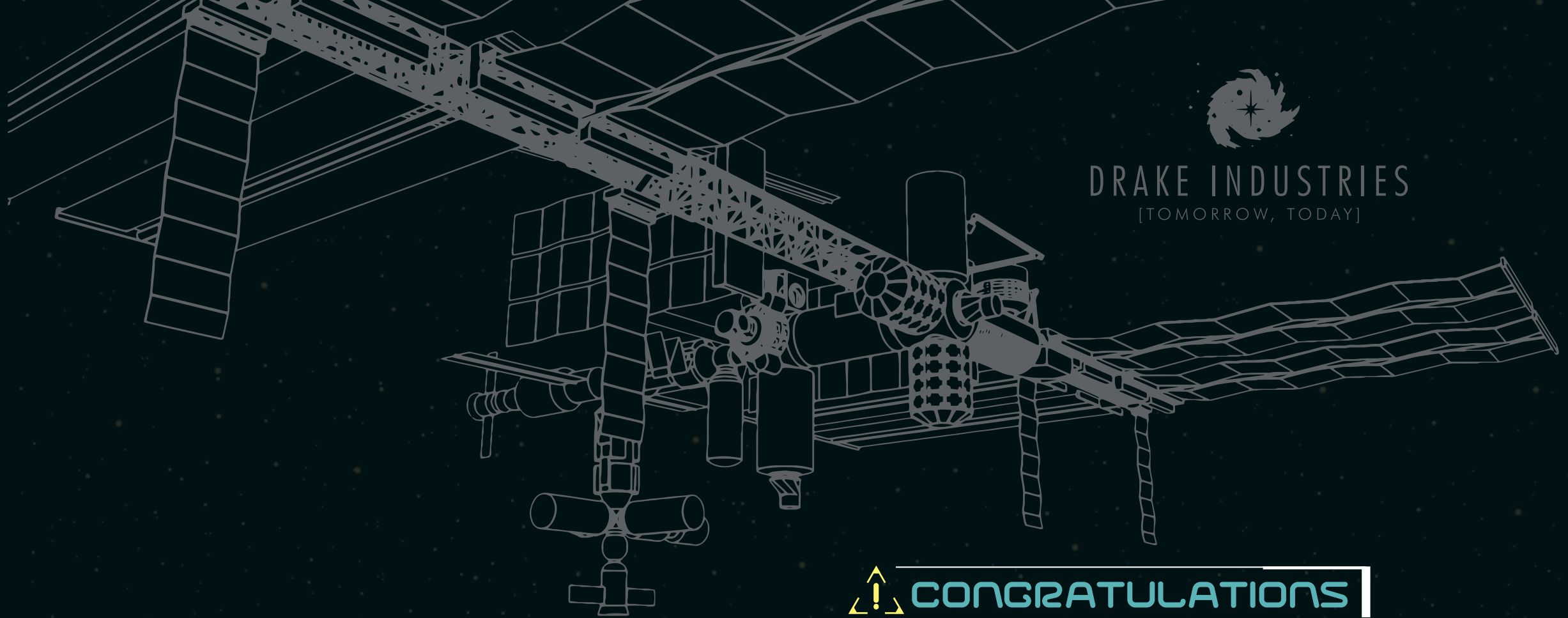
// Gameplay Preview





DRAKE INDUSTRIES

[TOMORROW, TODAY]



# WELCOME TO KARUM STATION

A Subsidiary of Drake Industries

## CONGRATULATIONS

You are one of a very few people each year who may become a limited partner in **Karum Station Enterprises**, a subsidiary of **Drake Industries**. Your first obligation is to sign the enclosed Memorandum of Agreement. You need not do this at once. You are encouraged to study the agreement and to seek legal advice, if available. However, until you sign you will not be eligible to occupy Corporation housing, dine at the Corporation commissary or participate in the Corporation instruction courses.

Accommodations are available at the **Karum Hotel and Restaurant** for those who are here as visitors, or who do not at present wish to sign the **Memorandum of Agreement**.

[NEXT>>]



## A VAST UNIVERSE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

As a limited partner in **Karum Enterprises**, we do not need to explain to you the absolute privilege that it is to be standing where you are. Karum Station, the marvel left behind by the **Àrsaïdh**, an ancient race of alien beings. From here, you will help find and shape the future of all humanity, and in the process, benefit personally from doing so. Earth has certainly seen better times, but here at Drake Industries we are firm believers in the power of community and humanity. We will overcome our common societal hurdles, and led by the brilliant vision of **Jonathan Fraser**, CEO of Drake Industries, we are working for the betterment of all humanity. And you are a key part of this! As a brave explorer, you will board one of the **Àrsaïdh** ships and embark on a mission that will surely prove beneficial to all humanity, and most importantly, to you! Who hasn't read the interviews with famous (and now, very rich) explorers, such as Dema Acharya, Jafari Cheboi, or Ella Abadie? Well, **the next one could be you!**

## BUT WHO WERE THE ÀRSAIDH?

As you probably already know, there is **very little we actually know about the Àrsaïdh**. As a matter of fact, we don't even know how they called themselves! The word "Àrsaïdh" ("**Ancient**", in **Scottish Gaelic**) was chosen by our scientists as a homage to our founder and CEO Mr. Fraser, who himself is of Scottish ascendancy. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to decipher the **Àrsaïdh** language just yet. But we shall keep trying!

We do know that the **Àrsaïdh** must have been **highly pragmatic**; as you have probably already noticed since your arrival in Karum Station, there are no ornaments or decorative elements; just plain forms and shapes, **everything here is extremely functional**. By the scale of things though, we suspect they might have been about 7 feet tall, and roughly humanoid in shape. But fret not, with your help, we will slowly but surely unravel this cosmic mystery, and answer the most important question: **Where did they go?**

## KEEPING KARUM STATION GOING

In order to meet the costs of maintaining Karum Station, all persons are **required to pay a daily per-capita assessment** for air, temperature control, administration, and other services.

If you are a guest, this cost is included in your hotel bill.

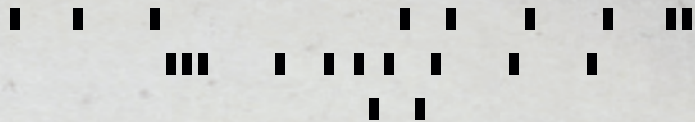
Rates for other persons are posted. The tax may be prepaid up to one year in advance if desired. Failure to pay the daily per-capita tax will result in **immediate expulsion** from Karum Station.

Thank you for your collaboration,  
and once again,

# WELCOME TO KARUM STATION!

[ <<PREVIOUS ]

[ NEXT >> ]



FM 32-037

FIELD GUIDE TO

CREATING  
YOUR  
DEEP DIVER

23.6.2085

DRAFT RELEASE  
12.8.2085

*J. Fraser*



## ACROSS A THOUSAND DEAD WORLDS

### DEEP DIVER CHARACTER RECORD

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_ XP: \_\_\_\_\_

STR: [ ] DEX: [ ] CON: [ ] WIL: [ ] INT: [ ] CHA: [ ]

STRESS: [ ] NERVOUS TIC: [ ] STAMINA: [ ]  
 TRAUMA: [ ] LUCK: [ ]

OBSSESSIONS & NEGATIVE TRAITS: [ ] ARMOR: [ ] RADS: [ ]

WOUNDS: [ ] INJURIES: [ ]

EMOTIONAL STATE: [ ] EMOTION MODIFIERS:

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	HOPELESS	-2 ALL SKLS / +D4 DMG
ENRAGED	COMPOSED	NERVOUS	-1 RSLV / +1 STAM (DEF MNVR)
HOPELESS	CALM	ENRAGED	+1 CBT SKLS / -1 MANIP
ENRAGED	HOPEFUL	COMPOSED	0 BENF OR DISADVTG
NERVOUS	PLEASED	CALM	-1 CBT SKLS / +1 MANIP
COMPOSED		HOPEFUL	+1 NON-CBT SKLS / -1 CBT SKLS
CALM		PLEASED	+2 ALL SKLS
HOPEFUL			
PLEASED			

SKILLS

- Arsaith Technology
- Close Combat
- Perception
- Manipulation
- Medical Aid
- Pilot
- Ranged Combat
- Resolve
- Science
- Stealth
- Survival
- Technology

TALENTS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Congratulations on having been selected to explore the vast wonders the Arsaith left behind! Following the simple steps described in this section, together we will learn more about who you are and why you're here, as well as what skills and abilities you can bring to the team. From now on, we shall refer to you as a **Deep Diver**, the title explorers like you commonly use. As the deep divers of old Earth did (from before the oceans became the dead, toxic sludge they unfortunately are nowadays), you will venture into the cold, vast unknown and recover lost treasures, bringing them to the light of humanity.

*As a newly trained Diver, you start your career at level 1.*

HEAD ▲

TORSO ▲

WAIST ▲

RIGHT HAND ▲

LEFT HAND ▲

LEGS ▲

FEET ▲

MANNERISMS ▼

BACKPACK ▲

BACK ▲

POCKETS ▲

FULL BODY SUIT ▲

DRAKE COINS ▲

PERSONALITY

BACKGROUND

HOW DID YOU EARN YOUR PLACE IN KARUM STATION?

LIFE CHANGING EVENT

DRIVE

OTHER DETAILS

WHEN YOU ARE FEELING CONFIDENT, YOU \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING SHY OR LACKING CONFIDENCE, YOU \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN YOU'RE BORED, YOU \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING HAPPY, YOU \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING FRUSTRATED, YOU \_\_\_\_\_



Attributes are the foundation your Diver is built upon, only changing under very specific circumstances. All characters have the following

### Primary Attributes:

**Strength (STR):** This determines how strong your character is, how capable they are at performing feats of strength, such as lifting heavy objects or breaking things.

**Dexterity (DEX):** This describes how nimble you are and how good you are with your hands. This is used when dodging, jumping, or picking locks (unless it's a complex lock, in which case we would use the Technology Skill).

**Constitution (CON):** This measures how physically resilient your character is, including how well they fare against harmful effects such as poisons or diseases.

**Will (WIL):** This defines mental strength and ego. It allows you to stand your ground and to pull yourself together after suffering a knockdown during combat, among other things.

**Intelligence (INT):** This shows how cunning and capable you are at mental tasks. You will use it to think things through before acting, or to solve a puzzle or riddle.

**Charisma (CHA):** This tells how likable you are. You will use your Charisma to get information and gain advantages with NPCs.

Each Primary Attribute has a starting value of 8, but you have **12 points** to distribute among them when you first create your Deep Diver. Although Attributes may never be raised above a value of 18 via spending Attribute points (more on this later), they may have higher temporary values due to gear or other types of boosts. During gameplay, Attributes are used to complete Attribute checks. To pass an Attribute check roll a D20, add the asked Attribute's value, and if the total is **equal or higher than 20**, you've succeeded.

**Luck:** Sometimes, even though things seem to be going one way, fate intervenes and changes everything. A character may spend 1 Luck point to re-roll any roll. Player Characters (PCs) start with **3 Luck**, and recover 1 (to a maximum of 5) at the end of each game session. A character may also choose to burn all their available Luck to avoid a certain death once per session: if an attack would kill the character, burning their luck would instead allow them to escape unscathed.

**Stamina:** Stamina determines how many actions a character may take during combat in any given turn. Each turn, the player will determine which actions their character will take and spend Stamina in doing so. Stamina is recovered automatically at the beginning of each round. Player Characters start with **10 points** of Stamina.

**Trauma:** Your Deep Diver will most certainly suffer through hellish visions and nightmares never thought to exist while trying to figure out how to get back home, hopefully safe and rich. The human mind is not prepared to deal with the constant assault of physical and psychic violence a Diver surely faces, and it eventually crumbles under the pressure. This translates into Trauma points. For now, all you need to know is that a new character starts with **0 Trauma** points, and that if they ever reach 100 they will die.

**Stress:** Despite most Divers being naturally resilient to the pressure they put themselves through, they're only human. Many situations will cause a character to gain Stress. Characters begin their careers with **0 Stress**.

**Wounds:** There is only so much punishment the human body can take, before it gives up. Normally a character will be able to suffer a maximum of **3 Wounds** at once before dying.

Example: While rummaging through the contents of what must have been some sort of warehouse, Aafreen finds an ancient locked container. Without any proper tools to open it, Aafreen thinks they can smash it open with their weapon. This calls for an Attribute check against their 12 Strength. Aafreen's player takes a D20 and rolls a 13, which when added to their STR of 12 is a total of 25, meaning they pass the check and smash open the lid!

Your character's Skills, values ranging from complete incompetence at 0 to total mastery at 15, represent prowess acquired in a determined field.

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**TO SUCCEED AT A SKILL CHECK, ROLL A D20, ADD THE ASKED SKILL'S VALUE, AND IF THE TOTAL IS EQUAL OR HIGHER THAN 20, YOU'VE SUCCEEDED!**

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During Character Creation **distribute 70 points** as you wish, spending no more than 10 points on one same skill.

**Àrsaidh Technology:** This valuable skill allows a character to somewhat utilize or at least partially comprehend a piece of Àrsaidh technology. It is crucial in any attempts at hacking an Àrsaidh system. Due to the arcane nature of Àrsaidh systems though, any Àrsaidh Technology skill check suffers a default -5 to all rolls.

**Close Combat:** This skill will allow a character to fight using close-range tactics with a variety of melee weapons, such as knives, clubs, or even a wrench.

**Perception:** It doesn't matter how many Àrsaidh crystals you are hauling back to the ship, if you don't notice the twisted abomination lurking behind you. Use this skill to find or be aware of something.

**Manipulation:** Talking to an NPC is typically more beneficial than simply shooting at them. Other times, a silver tongue (or a well-placed threat) is the only way to close a deal.

**Medical Aid:** Properly making a tourniquet or stitching up a wound will save your life more than once. Once per Room, after resolving all current Challenges, pass a First Aid check outside of combat to remove one Wound from your character. Doing so advances the time track by one and consumes (1x) Medical Supplies.

**Pilot:** Although you would normally not get many chances to pilot anything, you never know when a skill like this may come in handy. Use this skill to pilot any kind of spaceship or vehicle.

**Ranged Combat:** A character with this skill is familiar with the different types of ranged weapons that exist, from guns and pistols, to rifles, and anything in between.

**Resolve:** A Deep Diver faces many horrors while exploring the void. Proficiency in this skill allows them to better withstand the psychological effects of it. Each time a character is confronted with a situation that would make them gain any amount of Stress they may do a Resolve check to reduce the amount to 1.

**Science:** Whether it's Biology or Physics, this skill determines how knowledgeable a character is when it comes to the hard sciences.

**Stealth:** This is used when you have the opportunity to avoid potentially deadly combat, or want to do something undetected.

**Survival:** While most Àrsaidh environments seem to be passably fine without a pressure suit, that doesn't mean they're suited for human life. Use this skill whenever you need to figure out how to stay alive in a hazardous environment, or orient yourself.

**Technology:** This skill will allow a character to use any technological devices, such as computers or any type of electronics. This includes knowing how to patch up systems, using comms, and anything remotely related to modern technology.

Talents are unique skills and abilities that a character learns while exploring the dark, ominous ruins left behind by the Årsaidh, or the many worlds they seem to have once inhabited. These extraordinary abilities give the PC a necessary edge to face the horrors they find during their journeys across the void. *PCs are only human though*, so although some of the talents push the limits of what a human body can do or learn, none of them enter the realm of what one could consider superhuman.

Player Characters have a maximum of **5 Talent slots**, and they will need to choose which ones to “equip” each time a new Talent is gained. Each time a character learns a new Talent and they have already reached the 5 Talent limit, they must get rid of another one if they want to be able to equip it. Unequipped Talents are lost, but may be regained again if the character rolls the same Talent on the Talents table. You may only equip the same talent once.

Talents are earned each time a PC gains a level. Whenever prompted to randomly pick a Talent, choose one of the available Talent tables and roll.

Newly created Divers start the game by choosing a Talent from the Talents table. You are free to pick a Talent from any of the available ones, regardless of which table they are on. Depending on the role you want to play, we recommend the following starting Talents:

Close Combat Expert: **Charge**

Ranged Fighter: **Marksman**

Stealthy Attacker: **Backstab**

Support: **Diligent Medic**

Leader: **Everyone, calm down!**

Hacker: **Hacking**

Crowd Controller: **Stun**

- 1 **Cleave:** [Cost: 8 Stamina] Roll for damage as usual, and deal half of the amount rolled to all enemies in front of you. May only be used while wielding a two-handed melee weapon.
- 2 **Multi-Target:** [Cost: 8 Stamina] You may distribute the damage roll among up to three enemies.
- 3 **Parry:** [Cost: 5 Stamina] When attacked, roll your weapon's damage; if the damage you roll is equal or higher than that of the attacker's, you parry it and can perform a free attack (-5). May only be used while wielding a two-handed melee weapon.
- 4 **Backstab:** [Cost: 5 Stamina] While using stealth undetected, the character may deal one powerful surprise attack to an enemy. This attack deals the normal damage +1D10. May only be used while wielding a knife.
- 5 **Stealthy:** You have Advantage on all Stealth checks.
- 6 **Vigorous:** +2 extra Stamina per turn.
- 7 **Frugal:** You only consume a ration each two weeks, instead of one.
- 8 **Good Negotiator:** You earn 60% of the value assigned to your findings, instead of the standard 50%.
- 9 **Duck!:** [Cost: 3 Stamina] You yell at an ally, granting them 2 extra Stamina for their next turn to be spent only on defensive maneuvers.
- 10 **Field Medic:** You have Advantage on all Medical Aid checks.
- 11 **Quiet:** All rolls on the Site Activity table are reduced by 1, with a minimum result of 1. This is a non-stackable effect.
- 12 **Charismatic:** You have Advantage on all Manipulation checks.
- 13 **Survivalist:** You have Advantage on all Survival checks.
- 14 **Tech Savvy:** You have Advantage on all Technology checks.
- 15 **Fast:** +1 to all Initiative rolls.
- 16 **Strong:** +2 extra damage on melee attacks.
- 17 **Targeted Strikes:** +1 to all rolls on the Hit Location table.
- 18 **Coup de Grace:** +D8 damage when attacking a knocked-down enemy.
- 19 **Bash:** [Cost: 10 Stamina] Your base damage is 2D10 instead of D10 when rolling for damage with a two-handed weapon.
- 20 **Marksman:** +2 extra damage on ranged attacks.



## TALENTS 2 (D20)

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- 1 **Tough:** +2 WIL while performing a Recovery check.
- 2 **Fast Feet:** You automatically pass all escape checks.
- 3 **Stout:** You have Advantage on all Resolve checks.
- 4 **Resilient:** You no longer act with a -5 while being injured.
- 5 **Hard to Kill:** +1 max Wounds.
- 6 **Dual Wielding:** You may perform a free second attack with Disadvantage each turn using a weapon equipped on your off-hand.
- 7 **Charge:** You barge into melee, receiving a +5 to your skill and +5 damage during your first turn. Cannot be used in combination with any form of stealth.
- 8 **Aim:** [Cost: 10 Stamina] Double the damage dealt with your next attack. Ranged weapon only.
- 9 **Diligent Medic:** You may attempt to heal the same Wound twice per Time Track, instead of only once.
- 10 **Calm:** Each time you gain Stress, gain 1 less (with a minimum of 1).
- 11 **Counter-attack:** [Cost: 5 Stamina] If the character wins the combat roll during an opponent's turn, their attack automatically causes 1 Wound.
- 12 **Overpower:** If, when rolling for damage, you roll the maximum possible (i.e. D10 + 6, the roll is a 16), you automatically cause a Wound.
- 13 **Overwhelm:** After an opponent has been knocked-down but recovered, their Recovery Status roll is modified by +3.
- 14 **Careless:** You receive a +5 to your Combat skill while attacking if you don't spend any Stamina in defensive moves during the same round.
- 15 **Step where I step!:** You lead the way while sneaking, granting the rest of your team a +2 to their next Stealth check.
- 16 **Lucky:** Each time you roll a natural 11 on the D20 you gain 1 Luck. You may not earn Luck any other way.
- 17 **Pack Rat:** You know how to perfectly arrange things in your bag. +2 Gear Slots.
- 18 **Reconsider:** [Cost: 2 Stamina] You may re-roll a damage roll after a successful attack.
- 19 **Ignore Cover:** [Cost: 8 Stamina] You may fire your weapon to an enemy behind cover as if they had no cover at all.
- 20 **Neutralize:** [Cost: 10 Stamina] After carefully observing your opponent you may target the area of their body that allows them to use their unique ability. Perform a normal attack and if the damage surpasses the target's CON they will no longer be able to use one of their unique abilities. No wounds are caused with this attack.

## TALENTS 3 (D20)

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- 1 **Stable:** +5 WIL while performing an Emotion check.
- 2 **Bounce Throw:** You can re-roll a scatter roll when failing a grenade (or similar item) throw.
- 3 **Movement Economy:** You only spend 3 Stamina/round while in Stealth.
- 4 **In Control:** You can have a maximum of 12 Trauma.
- 5 **Compartmentalized Mind:** You may roll twice on the Negative Traits table and choose the result you prefer.
- 6 **Stun:** [Cost: 3 Stamina] Stun a target, making them lose their turn.
- 7 **Momentum:** [Cost: 5 Stamina] Attempt to eliminate a downed opponent, dealing an extra D6 damage. If the opponent is eliminated, you deal an extra 2 damage for the rest of the combat. This effect can happen more than once per combat.
- 8 **Rend Armor:** [Cost: 8 Stamina] You tear through the enemy's armor, causing them to lose 2 Armor permanently.
- 9 **I'm Out of Here:** When you attempt to disengage from combat you receive +5 to the DEX check.
- 10 **Resist the Taint.** You may ignore the negative effects of a Taint.
- 11 **Everyone, calm down!:** If you're the Team Leader, you may use your Manipulation skill to stop the rest of the team from arguing or any other form of infighting or confidence crisis. If you succeed, all crew members reduce their Stress by 2. This may only be done once per Time Track reset.
- 12 **Vigorous:** +2 extra Stamina per turn.
- 13 **Point-Blank Expert:** You suffer no penalty when using a ranged weapon in a melee situation.
- 14 **Resuscitate:** When another character has been killed within the last minute, you may perform a Medical Aid check. If you succeed with a Success Level of Impressive or more, the character is revived, remaining unconscious for D10+10 hours and with only 1 Wound remaining.
- 15 **Skill Boost:** You may spend 1 Luck to receive a +5 to your next skill check.
- 16 **Dexterous:** Perform all DEX checks with Advantage.
- 17 **Breath Control:** You only spend (1x) Oxygen Pellet each two Time Track resets.
- 18 **Fearless:** Once per Site you may ignore the effects of Dread.
- 19 **Hacking:** You have the uncanny ability to somewhat understand any type of computer system, even if it is Àrsaidh technology, allowing you to hack into some of their systems.
- 20 **Well Connected:** You have friends everywhere in Karum Station, which allows you to find rare gear with a roll of 12+.

Before you became a Deep Diver, you had a life on old Earth. For whatever the reason, you left that life behind, but it still informs your actions and who you are as a person. Most people who end up in Karum Station are desperate individuals with not much to lose, that after a lifetime of saving or by winning the yearly Karum Scholarship Lottery, managed to get a seat in one of the ships heading to Karum Station. Choose one from the following list, or come up with your own.

### Algae Farmer

You spent most of your life in one of the giant algae farms that feed most of the world, probably inheriting the job from your parents.

Choose between +1 Resolve or +1 Survival.

### Blue Collar Worker

You're just another of the million workers that maintain the machinery, always unseen, always abused. When the opportunity to leave it all behind appeared, you just took it. Screw being poor, the world shall be your oyster!

Choose between +1 Technology or +1 Perception.

### Data Miner

After years of 16 hour shifts in front of a screen, you had enough. Sure, it could be much worse, you could be picking through the garbage mounds outside of town, as so many others. But you knew you're destined for greater things, so you left it all behind, eyes firmly set into the future, whatever that may mean.

Choose between +1 Science or +1 Technology.

### Hedge Fund Kid

You're one of the lucky ones, living the high life, away from all the hardships of the rest of the world. Still, life became stale after a while, and you couldn't just sit on your hands while the rest of the world made history. You left it all behind, and now you have nothing but your determination.

Choose between +1 Manipulation or +1 Resolve.

### Ocean Sweeper

The oceans may be dead, but they're still full to the brim with plastic and other useful materials. You and your crew spend months in the silent, eerie waters of

the world, the smell of rotten matter and toxic algae forever a part of your life. Sure this is not all life has to offer? With that question in mind, you left your life behind, in search for a better future.

Choose between +1 Technology or +1 Pilot.

### Petty Criminal

Small robberies and hussles got you day to day. You made some enemies, the kind that can't be simply paid off, and you had to get as far from them as possible.

Choose between +1 Manipulation or +1 Close Combat.

### Plastic Miner

Years spent in the old plastic deposits of the old world were enough to make you want to leave the planet for good. Nothing out there could be possibly worse.

Choose between +1 Medical Aid or +1 Survival.

### Scavenger

As millions others, you make your life out of the remnants of the old world, and the garbage of those who have. It's not a pretty life, and most of the time, it's a short one. After a close call with one of the gangs controlling the area, you had enough; maybe you stole the money, maybe you had it saved. Whatever happened, you bought a ticket, and never looked back.

Choose between +1 Stealth or +1 Survival.

### Warlord

The 22nd century is rife with conflict, as ever. You've managed to take advantage of that situation, a situation you did not create. Someone has to do the killing, it might as well be you.

Choose between +1 Ranged Combat or +1 Manipulation.

### How did you earn your place in Karum Station? (D4)

- 1 You saved for years to buy a ticket.
- 2 You won the annual Karum Scholarship Lottery.
- 3 You had family money.
- 4 You got the money through illicit ways.

Roll on the following table to find out what happened in your past that altered the way you see the world or who you are:

**Life-Changing Event (D20)**

- 1 The love of your life left you.
- 2 You were involved in a terrible accident.
- 3 Someone died because of you.
- 4 Had a religious experience.
- 5 Witnessed an act of random kindness/cruelty that changed your opinion of humanity.
- 6 Learned something you shouldn't have.
- 7 Where forced to do something that goes against your morals.
- 8 Had the chance to stand up against a powerful figure, but didn't.
- 9 Managed to fight off a terrible addiction.
- 10 Discovered you have a secret half-sibling.
- 11 You were imprisoned.
- 12 Risked your life for someone.
- 13 Someone died to save your life.
- 14 You were caught in a big scandal.
- 15 Suffered amnesia, leaving you with the feeling that something terrible happened, something you cannot remember.
- 16 Made a terrible enemy.
- 17 Your life was ruined because of someone's pettiness.
- 18 Your sibling was murdered.
- 19 You discovered you have a talent you didn't know of.
- 20 Found fame.



Although the main reason for anyone joining the Karum Station initiative is usually wealth and/or fame, this may not be true for everyone. Pick a main Drive for your Deep Diver, the reason why they risk their life in the void. This is something very personal, and characters will rarely share it with others.

**Wealth**

You're after what makes the world spin and the star shine. You figure that being set for the rest of your life sure will make up for a few months of pain and suffering.

**Power**

Drake Industries is the largest, most powerful corporation in all of human space, and if you want some of that power, there's no better way to get in than to impress the big guys through your feats and discoveries at Karum Station. This is the fastest, straightest path to power, and you are taking it.

**Fame**

What good is to be alive if nobody knows who you are? Sure, you could have spent the money it took you to get to Murgo building some company, buying some building, or even getting some surgery done so they would want you at one of those talk shows, but the kind of glory a Diver gets is just... unmatched. You just need one, big, juicy mission to make it, and then you'll spend the rest of your life surrounded by drones, recording your every move, millions of people dying to know what you had for breakfast. That is the life you must have.

**Wanderer's Lust**

Earth, the Moon and Mars are not enough for you, you need more. There's a whole universe out there to explore, and you want to make sure you get to see as much of it as possible.

**Knowledge**

Learning the secrets of the universe never seemed as possible as it does now. The Àrsaidh is humanity's shortcut to it all, they are the key to a thousand million doors. And you must be the one opening as many of them as you can.

**Information**

A family member or friend, disappeared during an expedition and you just couldn't let it go. You had to come and search for them, even if you don't even know where to begin doing so.

**Espionage**

Maybe you work for Chou Technologies or Eclipse, or even Whirlwind News; regardless of who it is, you're here to learn first-hand about the workings of the Station and how the KSA operates.

**A Place To Belong To**

You've been alone (or at least, felt that way) for your whole life, and you're sick of it. You want to find a cause larger than yourself, a place you can call home, and a family that will risk their lives for you. You are sure that the type of bonds one creates in the void are forever, and that is all you want.

**Nothing Can Stop You**

You're here to prove, maybe to yourself, the world, or someone else, that there is nothing you cannot do, if you dedicate enough time and effort to it. You will become the most successful Diver ever to travel the galaxy, and nobody will ever doubt you again!

**Adrenaline Junkie**

You've walked the Paris wastes alone, climbed inside the Johannesburg reactor crate, and space diving is essentially routinary for you. The only thing that's left for you to do is to explore the universe, and you are so ready for it.

**When you are feeling confident, you...**

- Walk straight, with squared shoulders.
- Stand with your feet apart.
- Talk loud.
- Feel like you can help anyone.
- Feel like wearing something flashy.
- You interrupt others, because you know better.
- Boast about your accomplishments.

**When you're feeling shy or lacking confidence, you...**

- Avoid eye contact.
- Walk looking down.
- Cross your arms.
- Apologize a lot.
- Keep your hands in your pockets.
- Fix your hair constantly
- Speak softly.
- Laugh nervously during awkward silences.

**When you're bored, you...**

- Yawn a lot.
- Stare into the distance.
- Hum to yourself.
- Tap your fingernails on surfaces.
- Toy with rings or other accessory.
- Twiddle your thumbs.

**When you're feeling happy, you...**

- Laugh a lot.
- Smile at everyone.
- Touch others affectionately.
- Chit-chat constantly.
- Comment on any nice thing, like the food or the view.
- Tell jokes.

**When you're feeling frustrated, you...**

- Shake your head in disapproval constantly.
- Roll your eyes.
- Crack your knuckles.
- Exhale sharply and slowly.
- Pace.
- Tap your foot.

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**THESE LISTS MAY HELP  
YOU DEFINE WHO  
YOUR CHARACTER IS A  
BIT FURTHER. PICK ONE  
FROM EACH CATEGORY.**

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Once the pressure starts to accumulate, stress manifests in different ways depending on the individual. Unfortunately for the rest of your team, all PCs have developed a nervous tic as a way to cope with stress. Many times this is totally involuntary, but when you spend days upon days in close, tight quarters with other people, the slightest spark can light a fire.

Roll on the following table to determine which nervous tic your character has developed over the years. This will be the tic they manifest once Stress starts affecting them.

**Nervous Tic (D20)**

- |    |                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1  | Coughing                            |
| 2  | Blinking                            |
| 3  | Wrinkling the Nose                  |
| 4  | Clicking the Fingers                |
| 5  | Leg Bouncing                        |
| 6  | Touching Other People               |
| 7  | Touching Other People's Things      |
| 8  | Humming                             |
| 9  | Grunting                            |
| 10 | Sniffing                            |
| 11 | Repeating a Phrase                  |
| 12 | Biting Nails                        |
| 13 | Flipping a Coin or Other Small Item |
| 14 | Fiddling with a Pendant or Bracelet |
| 15 | Pulling One's Hair                  |
| 16 | Bone Cracking                       |
| 17 | Swaying                             |
| 18 | Pacing                              |
| 19 | Loud, Nervous Laughter              |
| 20 | Constant Sighing                    |

Last but not least, come up with a name for your character, choose a gender, age (18+, per the KSA legislation!), and nationality if you feel like it, and decide how they look: height, weight, skin color, how they style their hair... Anything goes! One of the few positive things about Karum Station is how it has become a cross sample of all types of cultures, subcultures, races and traditions found in old Earth. You may use the NPC tables found in Chapter 5 (such as Nature, Quirk, or random names) to further help you define your character, as well.

**All new characters start with D20x100 Drake Coins (DC)**, to reflect the money that they managed to bring with them to Karum Station, after paying for the trip there and the mandatory orientation courses. Keep in mind that staying in Karum Station is not free, so characters should be smart enough to remember to set some cash aside to pay their bills, instead of burning it all at the Red District, or buying some fancy new armor. This is discussed in the chapter dedicated to Karum Station.



# GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

The following gameplay example has been 100% generated via the random tools and tables presented in the book. Nothing has been altered in any way.

Ernesto and Sarah have just created their two new Deep Divers: Wilson and Ju. As a couple of new characters, their options are fairly limited: they're broke, with no gear, and no contacts, so they can only hope to find a third crew member and embark on a mission as soon as possible. While Ernesto generates a new NPC crew member (they've chosen to utilize the simplified NPC rules, instead of using the full character creation options), Sarah starts to generate the basic details of their first mission together:

```
// Both players briefly consider going the safer route and visiting an already (partially) discovered Site, but ultimately decide against it and choose to risk it all for a chance at a bigger payday.
```

```
// Since it's three of them (2 PC +1 NPC), they're boarding a KRM-03. It's named the "Immaculate discovery". Not a bad name!
```

```
// They're broke so they'll have to do with the basic gear provided by the Karum Station Authority, plus their own personal gear.
```

And that's about it! Wilson, Ju, and Deborah (the NPC crew member) spend the next hours mentally preparing for the mission, and wake up the next day more or less ready for it. The three of them head towards the center of **Karum Station**, where the hollowed-out asteroid containing all the Àrsaidh ships spins, surrounded by the human rings of the station. As they approach the asteroid they can clearly feel the gravity drop, which forces the trio to slow down in order to adjust. That immediately changes though the second they step outside the last metal tunnel connecting the Station's Inner Ring with the asteroid itself: gravity comes back with a vengeance, almost as if a fist had struck them on the chest, leaving the three characters gasping for a few seconds before they adjust to the heavier gravity.

After a lot of paperwork, a quick medical check-up, and picking up their gear and the assigned mission equipment from the locker rooms, a bored technician guides them to the **Immaculate Discovery**: a triangular piece of metal of about 60 ft in length with no distinguishable features whatsoever, quietly hovering over its docking area at an altitude of barely a feet. A ramp heads into the only aperture on the ship's surface. They are given the standard "don't touch anything you don't understand inside the ship or else you'll probably die horribly" speech, before being sealed in their tight cabin. This is the character's first time inside an Àrsaidh craft, and there's honestly not much to look at: immaculate A-metal surfaces everywhere, with nowhere to sit or store things, aside from the human-made modifications: three sleeping spots, some basic cooking and personal hygiene items, and little else.

Sarah's character Ju decides that there's no point in waiting so she heads towards the control panel and follows the instructions they have been given to start the ship. The KSA scientists have already "selected" (more like "randomly chosen") a set of coordinates from the ship's database so there's nothing else for the crew to do. With a slight shake that indicates the ship is moving, the crew leaves Karum Station behind in a matter of seconds. Minutes later, one of the walls becomes transparent, allowing the three characters to see the asteroid belt being left behind at vertiginous speed.

## AND THUS STARTS THE CREW'S FIRST WEEK IN SPACE.

Ernesto and Sarah decide their characters aren't going to be doing anything special, so Ernesto goes ahead and rolls for this week's **random event**: A social event. Checking the Social Travel Events table, it seems like there's some sort of incident among two crew members. With the help of the different tables, Ernesto randomly determines that Ju and Deborah start an argument over rationing; it seems Ju thinks Deborah is not thinking about the possibility of being stuck in the ship for months and it's eating like there's no tomorrow. After things get heated up for a moment, prompting some **Resolve checks to avoid becoming Stressed**, all characters retire to their respective corners, now with Jo quietly mumbling to herself.

With the first week over, Sarah **checks if they are getting any closer to their destination**; unfortunately she rolls a 56 on a D100, and she needed to roll 40 or less in order for the ship to arrive somewhere. This means they have at least another week ahead of them. The players remove 3xOxygen and 3xRations (one of each per character) from the ship's storage, and prepare for a second week in space. Ernesto rolls once again for the week's **event**: another social event, but this time's a good one. Two characters (in this case Wilson and Deborah) bond over their common love for Somali hip hop, which means they'll receive +1 to any tests that involve each other. Meanwhile, Jo irritatedly stares at them from her corner of the ship; she gains some Stress, and her nervous tick is back, prompting her to start mumbling again. The other two don't seem to notice though.

With the second week over, the players **check if they arrive at their destination**: the chances are now 50%, and Ernesto rolls a 37, so they've made it! They still must remove 3xOxygen and 3xRations from their supplies, but at least they now know that they'll have enough to make it back as well! It's time to find out where the ship has taken them to; the players take a fresh new **Site Report sheet** and start rolling on the tables:

```
// The Immaculate Discovery docks inside an asteroid,  
eerily similar to the one back home. The on-board  
computer (a human addition, of course) assigns the  
site the "Troioy 908743" designation. Catchy.
```





// The similarities with Karum Station keep coming: it seems this was once some sort of spaceport as well. Will this one have any ships in it as well? (highly unlikely).

// The Site was partially destroyed due to some terrible solar storm. This has made it difficult to navigate, with most tunnels having collapsed. Maneuvering here is going to be tricky. Fortunately, the Àrsaïdh built their stuff to last, and the atmosphere within the Site is the standard: 1.5 g, no need for vacc suits, just their respirators.

// Next step is to determine the Site's Activity, and it seems like this is a fairly active place: up to four possible unexpected encounters can take place here (aside from the standard encounters, of course).

// The Site's dominant hazard is, surprising no-one, Collapsing. This place is really falling apart, they'll have to get in and out before someone gets hurt. The players must remember to check with every Time Track reset if any character is randomly struck by falling debris.

// Last but not least, this seems to be a Medium-sized Site, which means that there are a maximum of 21 Resources and 25 Xenoanthropological findings to collect, and a maximum of 2 unique types of encounters.

With this, the crew gathers their gear and sets off to explore Troioy 908743.

TROIOY 908743

SITE ▲

SMALL ▶  MEDIUM ▶  LARGE ▶  HUGE ▶

REQUIRED: HAZ-MAT A ▶  B ▶  VACC ▶

SPACEPORT

ORIGINAL PURPOSE ▲

DESTROYED BY SOLAR STORM

STORY ▲

PARTIALLY OPERATIONAL

SITE DESCRIPTOR ▲

CAVE-INS

PLANETARY DESCRIPTOR ▲

ACTIVE

ACTIVITY ▲ --

COLLAPSING

HAZARD ▲

ON-SITE ARTIFACTS

25

DISCOVERED ▶



ALLOY CUBES



DATA CRYSTALS



GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

As the crew disembarks and ventures into the site's first area, Sarah rolls on the **Site Exploration** table: Random occurrence. *We're off to a weird start!* Using the follow-up tables, the players determine that some sort of explosion takes place as they enter the area. The players determine that their ship's landing has caused the already collapsing station to break down even further, maybe even destroying a whole section of it. A few rolls after, the picture becomes clearer: when landing, the ship rammed into some sort of generator that wasn't supposed to be there, which caused a chain reaction down the line, blowing up the nearby section. They get lucky though, and neither their ship nor themselves have suffered any damage. They move on, weary of what they'll find next.

And with a reason! As they exit the narrow tunnel connecting the hangar to what must have been some sort of storage area, the three characters detect movement in the back of the room: it seems the party has found their first potential **combat encounter**. After randomly determining its initial behavior, activity and reaction to the intruders, it does seem like they're in for a fight: *the creature attacks*.

## USING THE RANDOM TABLES TO DETERMINE WHAT EXACTLY THE CREW IS FIGHTING, THESE ARE THE RESULTS:

NAME ▼	DRIVE ▼
DINKSORA	PREDATION
TYPE ▼	INTELLIGENCE ▼
SYNTHETIC	ANIMAL - LEVEL
SIZE ▼	ROLE ▼
HUMAN-SIZED	SWARM
APPEARANCE ▼	
AMORPHOUS - COVERED IN FEATHERS, NO LIMBS, TENTACLES ON FACE, HORNS PROTRUDING FROM ITS SIDES.	
// Difficulty: Standard. To be precise, the encounter consists of (6x) Easy opponents.	

So it seems like the unlucky crew is facing a group of six different swarms the size of humans, with each individual within the swarm being an amorphous thing covered in feathers, with tentacles and horns protruding from it. *Cuddly!* Now it needs a name, and after a couple of rolls on the appropriate table, it looks like they're called **Dinksora**. The party quickly spreads out, and taking advantage of their ranged weapons, starts firing right away. This is Wilson's and Ju's first mission though and the tension is getting to them, causing them to miss both their attacks. Deborah does better though, striking one of the swarms down, while it approaches. **In the second round**, the crew still has the advantage of range so they keep firing, this time being fully successful, downing two more creatures and killing the first one that Deborah knocked down the previous round. Unfortunately, the party is now in a fully melee situation, so Wilson and Deborah switch to their combat knives. Jo, on the other hand, decides to keep fighting with her rifle since she's specialized in ranged weapons.



The **combat rounds** go by quickly, with the Dinksora coming close to swarming the three Deep Divers after Wilson is knocked down and unable to get back up before **taking a wound**. The desperation seems to fuel the team though because a few short rounds after, the Dinksora are all dead, their small amorphous bodies broken all around them. With Wilson injured, the team takes a small break to tend to his wounds before moving on to the next area.

Afraid of what they'll find next, the three Divers move slowly among the collapsing ruins of this ancient Àrsaidh station, with organic-like tunnels crisscrossing through the rock and taking them to a large, mostly empty room made entirely of A-metal. Within it, resting on top of some sort of what looks like an altar (at least in human terms), is a **hexagonal rod** approximately 10" long, made entirely of a glass-like material. Sensors don't read anything particular, so Deborah doesn't think twice and grabs it. For some reason, it feels sticky to the touch, but other than that it has no other special characteristic. The team debates trying to find out what the device does, if anything, but the falling debris around them promptly reminds them that they're running out of time. They carefully pack their **looted artifact**, happy to know that when they come back home they'll at least have something to cash in.

With their shoulder lamps showing the way ahead through the dark tunnels, the crew moves on, *deeper into the ancient Àrsaidh ruins...*



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**A-METAL**: The creatively named Àrsaïdh Metal, or simply A-Metal, is the material used in seemingly all of the Àrsaïdh creations. Although the material has proven impossible to “harvest” directly from built installations or artifacts, there is one valuable source that seems to be in a more inert form: A-metal cubes. These are found occasionally in the different Àrsaïdh Sites, and are always among the most precious recovered artifacts. This wondrous alloy possesses incredible properties, such as being a superconductor at room temperature, having anti-gravitational properties, and even self-repairing capabilities.

**ÀRSAIDH**: Pronounced “are-sigh”, this is a Scottish Gaelic word that means “ancient”. The name given to the race of aliens that built Karum Station and all within it. Almost nothing is known about them; the only thing that seems certain is that they disappeared approximately 700,000 years ago.

**CIRCLE**: The colloquial name given to the KRM-01 Àrsaïdh spaceship model, due to its shape. Currently used as a single passenger ship.

**DEEP DIVER**: The colloquial name given to all those “Karum Station Authority partners”, as they’re officially called; a crew member that volunteers to fly one of the Àrsaïdh ships in exchange for potential fame and riches. Usually abbreviated to simply “Diver”, it is meant to be an allegory of Earth’s deep ocean explorers.

**DRAKE INDUSTRIES**: One of the many exo-mining companies that appeared after the Toronto Accord that allowed private enterprises to claim and mine any celestial body smaller than Earth’s moon. Founded in 2047 by Jonathan Fraser, it became the largest, most powerful corporation on Earth after the discovery and subsequent exploitation of the alien facility known as Karum Station.

**DRAKE COIN (DC)**: The official crypto-currency of the Karum Station, issued by its parent company Drake Industries. No other currency is accepted at the station, and all transactions are done with it.

**EM DRIVE**: Also known as a Radio Frequency (RF) Resonant Cavity Thruster. Originally proposed in 2001 by Roger K. Shawyer, this drive is built around the idea that electromagnetic microwave cavities allow for the direct conversion of electrical energy to thrust. With this revolutionary engine, a spacecraft equipped with the EM drive can make the trip to Mars in just ten days. Adjusted for a trip to the Asteroid Belt, a spacecraft equipped with an EM drive takes an estimated 32.5 days to reach it.

**KARUM STATION**: The Àrsaïdh asteroid base found in the Main Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter, discovered and owned by Drake Industries in the year 2172 CE.

**KARUM STATION AUTHORITY (KSA)**: The organization in charge of Karum Station, managing the day to day operations.

**MURGO**: “Gateway to hell” in Tibetan; a colloquial name for Karum Station given to it by the first explorers living there, since many of them were of Tibetan origin.

**PENTAGON**: The colloquial name given to the KRM-05 Àrsaïdh spaceship model, due to its shape. Currently used as a five passenger ship.

**TAYY AL-ARD**: (Arabic: مُضْرَأُ الْأَرْضِ "folding up of the earth" or "covering long distances in the twinkling of an eye") is the name given to the unknown process by which Àrsaïdh spaceships travel through space. It is suspected to be some type of warp technology, something that has been proven theoretically possible but never actually achieved by human scientists.

**THE WHISPERS**: The name given to what KSA scientists have deemed as “attempts at interfacing with the human mind” by the Àrsaïdh spaceships and other technology. Not all individuals seem to be susceptible to this phenomenon, but those that describe it as “extremely unsettling” or even “terrifying”.

**TRIANGLE**: The colloquial name given to the KRM-03 Àrsaïdh spaceship model, due to its shape. Currently used as a three passenger ship.

**VOID RUNNER**: Another nickname given to those who venture into the unknown aboard an Àrsaïdh ship; see “Deep Diver”.



This is a preview of the game  
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