CHAPTER ONE:

FOUL WEATHER

A SHORT D20 FUTURE ADVENTURE FOR FOUR 5TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

From radiation and black holes to meteorites and cosmic rays, the threats of the cosmos easily trump those of even the harshest terrestrial wilderness. Two derelict spacecraft orbiting a planet on the fringe of known space pay silent homage to the fragility of human life and the raw, devastating power of space. For the past two years, the I.S.S. Beagle and End's Run have orbited this planet, locked together in a grim dance of death. Can the heroes unlock the secret of their destruction without falling victim to the same fate?

LEVELS

Foul Weather is a low-combat, site-based adventure for four 5th-level characters. Although not designed for any specific d20 Future campaign setting, it utilizes PL 6 technology.

The storyline presupposes independently owned commercial starships, faster-than-light travel, and an international or interplanetary organization that routinely sends out surveying and research craft. If your campaign lacks one or more of these features, you can still adapt the adventure for use with it so long as PL 6 starship technology is present. This adventure doesn't include mecha, robotics, cybernetics, mutations, or xenobiology, but adding those features shouldn't prove too difficult if you want to use them. Finally, the timeline as presented in the background section assumes that it takes 2 to 4 years to reach the adventure site by starship, but you can easily adjust this timing to fit the technology level of your campaign. If your players prefer more combat, simply put two additional survivors aboard End's Run to oppose the heroes.

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game and the d20 Future supplement to run this adventure. To get started, print out the adventure (including the map) and read it through. You can add as much or as little detail to each ship as you wish. Next, familiarize yourself with the general history of the situation, the layout of the ships, their denizens and dangers, and the time limit placed on the characters. Then make sure you are comfortable with the rules for combat, movement, and cover from Chapter 5 of the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game.

The text that appears in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form.

BACKGROUND

In the late 20th century, a planet of roughly Jupiter's mass was identified in the system of a class G star called 14 Herculis. In the mid-21st century, as technology improved, astronomers discovered that the system also contained a collection of smaller planets, at least one of which might be habitable by humans.

Roughly four years ago, the research and survey ship I.S.S. Beagle set out to search for a habitable planet in the 14 Herculis system. After only 3 months of analysis, the ship abruptly ceased communicating with Earth.

Robert Ender, owner of the independent salvage ship End's Run, set out to investigate, arriving two years later at the Beagle's last known coordinates. Ender quickly located the ship and, finding no sign of life aboard, began transmitting the required applications for salvage rights. Shortly thereafter, End's Run also fell silent.

THE I.S.S. BEAGLE

Shortly after their arrival in the 14 Herculis system, the scientists aboard the I.S.S. Beagle ascertained that the second planet out from the star, codenamed 14Herc Beta, met many of the prerequisites for an Earthlike world. But like the other planets orbiting 14 Herculis, it had an eccentric orbit that took it both very close to its parent star and very far away from it, creating temperature extremes that rendered it incapable of supporting human life. Frustrated by this discovery, the crew of the I.S.S. Beagle began surveying the system for other possible uses. The ship remained in a steady orbit around 14Herc Beta for 3 months, conducting a long-range survey of the system and a detailed examination of its planets.

During this time, the technicians noted a belt of cosmic dust, small asteroids, and other space debris orbiting 14 Herculis in a relatively circular path. The elliptical orbits of the star's planets caused them to pass through this "storm" periodically—once every 26 Earth months, in the case of 14Herc Beta. Upon discovering this cloud, the scientists revised their schedule so that they could finish their research and leave the system before 14Herc Beta came into contact with the cloud.

Unfortunately, their plans went awry. One of the scientists—Michaelson by name—had been paid handsomely by one of Earth's more ambitious nations to ensure that any particularly advantageous information reached only its own scientists and not the data center back on Earth. When the second planet in the system was discovered to have a large supply of readily extractable rare ores, Michaelson made sure that information was deleted from the regular reports to Earth and transmitted secretly to his employers. Needing more time to mount their own expedition, Michaelson's employers instructed him to delay the ship's departure from the system, or to prevent it entirely if at all possible. Thus, when the time came to leave, Michaelsom disabled the Beagle's engines and took one of the ship's four shuttles to the surface of the planet, intending to find shelter and wait out the storm there.

When the others aboard the Beagle realized that they were unable to flee the coming "storm" of cosmic debris, they attempted

to evacuate everyone to the planet's surface. The first few crewmen to reach 14Herc Beta encountered the traitor Michaelson, slew him, and retrieved the fourth shuttle. They made multiple trips with the four shuttles, but the last run left too late to avoid the storm. When the storm had passed, nothing was left of the shuttles and the people aboard, and what remained of the I.S.S. Beagle floated lifelessly in orbit around 14Herc Beta.

Since then, the refugees on the planet's surface have survived as best they can by foraging for food, building crude shelters, and burrowing underground in certain seasons to avoid the temperature extremes. Even so, however, survival has not been easy, and more than half of their original number have perished. Only twenty-four survivors still cling to life on 14Herc Beta, and they have no means of escape or communication.

END'S RUN

Robert Ender, the owner and current pilot of the fast freighter End's Run, was never quite right in the head, as some of his business partners noted. Even after he became an adult, he remained abnormally close to his mother, idolizing her above all other women. It was she who purchased End's Run, but she got to fly it only once before her untimely death. Having inherited the ship, the grieving Ender opened a salvage business and dedicated himself to keeping End's Run in perfect condition as a memorial to his mother. As his mental state worsened, this goal became an obsession, and he became neurotically protective of the ship, which he identified with his mother and had even begun to call "Mom" in odd moments. He was also overly critical of his crew members, whom he blamed for the slightest mark on the ship's surface—an attitude that resulted in a high turnover among his crew.

When End's Run appeared within the 14 Herculis system some 25 months after the Beagle's disappearance, Ender and his crew discovered the battered hulk of the research vessel, empty of life, orbiting the second planet. Very little of the ship's internal skeleton of the ship was damaged; the cloud had spent its fury destroying the superstructure (engines, sensors, and the like). Thus, the remains of the Beagle were a veritable gold mine from a salvage perspective.

The captain of the salvage ship, Robert Ender, reported his findings and began establishing salvager's rights to the Beagle. Despite faster-than-light communications and nearly instantaneous computers, the bureaucratic procedure to secure salvage rights took nearly 2 weeks. Once Ender and his crew had permission to salvage the Beagle, they started work in earnest, knowing that even in its current condition, it was a valuable prize because of the scientific equipment aboard. The salvage operations would require at least three weeks of work because of the care they had to take (with Ender taking 20 on his Search checks; see Salvage feat in the d20 Future supplement) with both the ship and the equipment aboard. After two weeks, the dust cloud was nearly upon them, but Robert's wreckers underestimated its deadly nature. Blinded by their own greed, they never even bothered to start up the engines when their ship entered the cloud, so they had no choice but to try to weather the storm. The salvage ship fared little better than the Beagle had, and when the cloud had passed, End's Run also floated helplessly in orbit around the planet.

Even so, the crew of End's Run might have been able to effect repairs to their ship using pieces salvaged from the Beagle had it not been for Robert Ender. A bit unbalanced from the start and overly obsessive about his ship, he lost his sanity completely when End's Run was disabled. He hovered over the crew members as they made repairs, often taking over a job from a more capable crewman if he felt it wasn't being done just right. He grew increasingly more

frustrated by the delay in getting his ship operational and blamed it on his crew's incompetence. The crew members began to grow fearful of his rages, and Ender, now firmly in the grasp of paranoia, interpreted their furtive whispers as a plan to mutiny. Incensed, Ender killed two crew members in their sleep with well-placed shots to the head from his laser pistol. But his pilot, a middle-aged veteran spacer named Ana Patrisky, happened to be awake when he came to dispatch her. After a brief struggle, she knocked him unconscious and threw him into her sleep tube. She then went to alert the other crewmen and found them dead. Knowing it was only a matter of time before the mad Ender came after her again and not wishing to kill him, Ana fled to the Beagle. When Ender recovered consciousness and escaped from the tube, he decided not to pursue Ana, since he had his precious ship all to himself.

Since the near-destruction of his beloved ship and his murderous rampage against his own crew, Robert Ender has been repairing End's Run to the best of his ability. He has slowly stripped the I.S.S. Beagle for parts, rendering it as unspaceworthy as his own vessel, but his now-psychotic affection for his ship has outweighed all other concerns in his mind. At this point, he has taken everything from the Beagle that he can possibly use on his own ship, but he needs still more spare parts to make End's Run fly again.

During her time on the Beagle, Ana has been using its equipment and the scientists' notes to track the cloud and determine its nature. Knowing that the two ships are due to pass through the cloud again soon, and that the Beagle can't withstand another exposure, she has repaired the emergency distress beacon aboard the research ship and begun sending out calls for help. The ship's remaining generator, however, has only enough energy to send the signal to the outskirts of the system. Only a ship that happened to be passing close by would be able to pick it up, but since that possibility is her only hope, she continues to send the signal.

SYNOPSIS

The heroes arrive in orbit around 14Herc Beta shortly before it is due to pass through the lethal cloud again (see The Storm, below). They must find out what happened to both ships, rescue Ana (and Ender, if they can), and leave orbit before the cloud destroys the two disabled ships (and possibly their own as well). Ender, however, wants parts from the heroes' ship to repair his own, and he has no qualms about killing them to get what he needs. Rescuing the survivors from the Beagle from the planet's surface is a task beyond the scope of this adventure, but it can make for an interesting sequel.

CHARACTER HOOKS

As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

- Upon hearing of End's Run's silence, the captain of the heroes' ship puts in a request for salvage rights on the I.S.S. Beagle and End's Run, only to learn that Robert Ender still legally has rights to the Beagle and End's Run isn't legally classified as lost. Determined to discover the fate of the two ships, the captain sets off for 14 Herculis and picks up Ana's anemic distress beacon upon reaching the outskirts of the system.

- The heroes are aboard a military vessel that has chased a fleeing ship full of separatists, pirates, or other outlaws into the 14 Herculis system. After losing sight of the outlaw ship, the commander of the military ship detects the distress beacon and

takes up orbit around the second planet near the two drifting derelict starships. Shortly thereafter, the ship's sensors detect signs of life in the rusting relics, and the heroes are ordered out to investigate.

- While out on routine patrol in a police vessel, the heroes pass into the system of 14 Herculis. Ana's distress beacon leads them to the two drifting wrecks, and a sensor scan reveals life aboard both vessels.

- An ex-partner of Robert Ender has been tracking him for the last couple of years to exact revenge for some misdeed—real or imagined. He's sure that Ender has survived the two years of silence and egotistically proclaims himself as the reason for his lengthy lack of communication. Having finally located Ender's last known coordinates, the ex-partner decides that he doesn't want to face him alone, so he hires the heroes to act as either bodyguards or hired thugs.

- A malfunction in their ship's navigation system brings the heroes into the heart of the 14 Herculis system, where they detect Ana's distress beacon.

THE STORM

Before starting the adventure, you as GM must determine how much time the heroes have before the planet enters the storm. To give the heroes the maximum opportunity to explore the ships while still building suspense, give them 36 hours before the storm hits. The less time you provide, however, the more suspenseful the adventure becomes. Do not decrease the time to less than 1 hour, since it might take them that long just to sort out what's going on. About 6 hours is recommended if you want the heroes to get any salvageable parts off either the I.S.S. Beagle or End's Run. Any time limit greater than 6 hours removes some of the tension from the adventure but allows the characters to do as they wish with the ships. The heroes should have the opportunity to calculate how much time they have before the storm hits them, so that they can plan appropriately. Unless they

dawdle, they shouldn't have any problem concluding this adventure before the storm destroys the Beagle and End's Run.

Any ship in orbit around the planet when the storm hits passes through the dust cloud three times. Each pass through the cloud takes 30 rounds (3 minutes). In the first 5 rounds and the last 5 rounds, the smallest grains of dust and sand pelt the ships and any creatures or objects near them. Make one touch attack (+5 melee touch) per round against any hero or NPC outside a ship. Any character struck by the storm takes 1d12 points of damage. Any ships in the area automatically take that same amount of damage, though it is unlikely to penetrate the hardness of a ship's armor.

In rounds 6 through 10 and 21 through 25, the storm's attack bonus increases to +10 melee touch, and it deals 2d12 points of damage with each successful hit. During rounds 11 through 20, the storm reaches its climax. Its attack bonus rises to +15 melee touch, and it deals 4d12 points of damage on every successful hit. In addition, the storm has a chance to score a critical hit against a ship (use the optional critical hit results sidebar on page 112 of the d20 Future supplement) and must also make an attack roll against every ship's defense. During this phase, the storm has a chance to knock out vital systems without destroying the ship itself.

Both the Beagle and End's Run are already so damaged that another pass through the dust cloud will destroy them. If the heroes are aboard either vessel at the time, however, you may wish to run the storm round by round to allow them a chance to escape.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Foul Weather is designed to be either a site-based adventure that the characters simply stumble into, or the beginning of a survive-against-the odds campaign story arc. Although the scenario is set in space near a lifeless planet on the outskirts of galactic civilization, you can easily move it to any star system with a planet that periodically passes through a deadly meteorite storm.

The adventure begins when the heroes approach the two ships in orbit. If they wish to conduct some research before closing with the ships, go to the Character Preparation section below. When they arrive, go to The Tethered Ships.

Computer Use DC	Information Gained
5	A distress beacon intermittently flashes near the second planet in the system.
15	The distress beacon is coming from a metallic mass in orbit around 14Herc Beta.
18	The metallic mass is actually two starships, one much larger than the other.
20	The smaller ship is running a sensor sweep of the heroes' ship.
25	The infrared heat sensors on the heroes' ship detect multiple heat signatures* within each of the two derelict ships.

*These heat signatures come primarily from generators, although Ender and Ana also give off heat.

Research DC	Information Gained
5	Surface temperature extremes resulting from a highly eccentric orbit render the second planet out from the star, known as 14Herc Beta, unfit for human life. In addition to a few other planets, a cloud of dust and asteroids orbits the star in a nearly circular path.
10	14Herc Beta passes through this dust storm roughly every 26 months, by Earth's time reckoning. The planet takes 2 hours to pass all the way through the cloud, and a ship in a standard orbit around the planet would pass through three times during that period.
12	The research ship I.S.S. Beagle conducted a 3-month-long survey of this system, but it transmitted only a small portion of its findings back to Earth.
15	The I.S.S. Beagle ceased communications roughly 52 months ago. End's Run, the salvage ship that set off to look for the Beagle, ceased communications roughly 26 months ago.
18	Robert Ender, owner of End's Run, currently owns the salvage rights to the I.S.S. Beagle, though he has been neither seen nor heard from since his ship ceased communicating.
20	14Herc Beta is approaching the dust cloud and will begin moving through it soon.*

*Reveal the exact amount of time you have decided to allow for the adventure.

CHARACTER PREPARATION

If the heroes have the equipment, time, and inclination to research the system and the two ships, they can uncover a great deal of information. Once their ship enters the 14 Herculis system, the heroes can conduct a series of sensor sweeps. A Computer Use or Research check can reveal specific information, as shown on the tables below. A hero discovers all of the information for check results equal to or lower than his own.

THE TETHERED SHIPS

Four grapplers hold End's Run to the much larger I.S.S. Beagle. Even though the tethered ships have passed through the cosmic dust storm together three times, the grapplers are still intact.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the heroes' ship comes within view of the two derelicts.

> At first glance, the distant object resembles nothing so much as a squashed metallic spider, with its mostly intact core surrounded by sprawling "legs" of twisted and dented metal. Upon further inspection, the largest portion of the object resembles a clipper starship, although the majority of its mass seems to have been torn away. Held tightly to it like a nursing pup is a much smaller but more intact fast freighter. It looks as if some of the clipper's parts, including several hull panels and a number of sensor arrays and gun emplacements, have been transferred to the freighter. These "transplants" look ridiculously oversized on such a small ship. Despite their haggard appearances, both ships are silently flashing their running lights in the stillness of the void.

If the heroes' ship moves toward the tethered vessels, Ana notices its presence and begins flashing the Beagle's flying lights in a rhythmic pattern. She hopes to attract the newcomers to the I.S.S. Beagle first, so that she can fill them in on the situation before Ender gets hold of them. Even if the heroes decide to move toward End's Run first, Ana continues to flash the lights in the same pattern.

Each ship has an operational airlock that leads into its living areas. The Beagle also has a docking port that can hold a Gargantuan or smaller ship tight to its hold, allowing the crew to enter it without performing a space walk. To access the Beagle's airlock, heroes must move through 40 feet of metal shards (see Dangers of the Location, below). Only the small part of the Beagle in which Ana has been living remains intact, and only this portion is sealed against radiation and vacuum.

DANGERS OF THE LOCATION

Several dangers in addition to the approaching storm threaten the heroes while they investigate the orbiting ships. The most important of these are described below.

Metal Shards: While moving through the damaged sections of either the Beagle or End's Run, the heroes may encounter razor-sharp metal shards. A hero moving through an area without an atmosphere can safely move 5 feet per round. At any speed between 5 feet and his normal base speed, he must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or float into an exposed hunk of metal, taking 1d6 points of damage. A hero who makes a double move through such an area automatically takes 2d6 points of damage (DC 18 Reflex half) from metal shards. A hero who takes any damage while wearing a spacesuit must immediately make another Reflex save (DC 10 + damage dealt) to avoid ripping the suit and exposing himself to radiation.

Radiation: The planet called 14Herc Beta is nearing the perigee of its orbit, exposing itself and the ships orbiting it to high levels of radiation. Characters inside a starship and those wearing intact spacesuits are not affected by this radiation. Every 90 minutes (the

time it takes for the ships to complete one orbit of 14Herc Beta), 14 Herculis washes the area with radioactivity equal to that of highly radioactive materials for 3 minutes. The affected area is moderately irradiated for 1 minute thereafter. See page 81 of the d20 Future supplement for rules covering radiation exposure.

Zero-G: Even if the heroes' ship has artificial gravity, neither the Beagle nor End's Run does. See page 82 of the d20 Future supplement for rules covering zero-g environments.

END'S RUN

Before the deadly storm ravaged it, End's Run had clean lines and a meticulously maintained appearance. In its current condition, it is basically a stock fast freighter (see page 120 of the d20 Future supplement). It currently has 25 hit points, but its engines and communications systems were destroyed by the destructive force of the storm 26 months ago. Its current statistics are given in the End's Run sidebar.

Ender has sealed off most of the ship and now lives in relative comfort in the crew quarters, which were designed for four people. He has access to an airlock, the living quarters, and the bridge. Though he has moved the few weapons from the Beagle over to his ship, End's Run lacks the energy-producing capabilities to fire them.

END'S RUN

The current statistics for End's Run are as follows.

END'S RUN (PL 6)

Type: Ultralight   **Size:** Colossal (−8 size)
Subtype: Fast freighter (derelict)
Tactical Speed: — (3,500 ft. when operational)
Defense: 2   **Length:** 110 feet
  Flat-Footed Defense: 2   **Weight:** 400 tons
  Autopilot Defense: 2
  Targeting System Bonus: +3
Hardness: 20   **Crew:** 1 (Robert Ender)
Hit Dice: 16d20 (320 hp—currently 120 hp)
Passenger Capacity: 3
Initiative Modifier: —   **Cargo Capacity:** 300 tons
Pilot's Class Bonus: —   **Grapple Modifier:** +17
Pilot's Dex Modifier: —   **Purchase DC:** 35
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +5
Restriction: Restricted (+2)

Attack:
  2 fire-linked rail cannons +0 ranged (9d12)
Attack of Opportunity: 2 fire-linked rail cannons +0 ranged (9d12)

Design Specs:
  Engines: —
  Armor: Polymeric
  Defense Systems: Autopilot system, magnetic field, radiation shielding
  Sensors: Class II sensor array, targeting system
  Communications: —
  Weapons: 2 fire-linked rail cannons (range incr. 3,000 ft.)
  Grappling System: Grapplers

The four grapplers connecting End's Run to the Beagle have long-since frozen in their current positions, and they cannot be disengaged.

The rail cannons can fire five times before draining the generator, at which point it automatically shuts down for an hour to recharge. A backup generator provides lighting and allows the airlock to cycle twice before it too shuts down.

Grapplers (4): AC 9, hardness 15, hp 20 each.

The two cargo decks of the ship below and behind the pressurized cabin are 100 feet long and roughly 15 feet in diameter. This area is open to the void of space, and Ender has made few repairs to it thus far.

Ender has made no effort to repair his engines because the Beagle's engines are four times too massive for his ship. Until he finds engine components closer in size to those that he needs, he sees no reason to make any repairs to that section of End's Run.

On the other hand, End's Run's living areas are now mostly intact, thanks to two years of repairs. Pale blue lights illuminate most of the interior, and circular portals provide airtight seals between rooms. Anyone wishing to enter can open a portal as a move action by touching a control pad in the center. In case of power loss, each portal has a manual crank next to it. Opening a portal manually requires 10 full-round actions. All the walls within the living quarters are made of a thick polymer material, and the outer hull is plated with polymeric armor.

Interior Wall: Hardness 10; hp 15 per 5-foot square.
Portal Door: Hardness 10; hp 45.
Outer Hull: Hardness 20; hp 50 per 5-foot square.

ENCOUNTERING ROBERT ENDER (EL 6)

Robert Ender can be encountered anywhere aboard End's Run, but he is likely to meet the heroes as they board, since he is aware of their approach.

Robert Ender (Male Human Smart Hero 3/Engineer 3): CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6+6; hp 27; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 armor, +2 class); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, punch) or +1 ranged (2d8 fire, laser pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ builder, improve kit +1, quick craft, superior repair; AL End's Run; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 9; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Computer Use +13, Craft (electronic) +13, Craft (mechanical) +13, Disable Device +11, Drive +4, Knowledge (physical science) +8, Knowledge (technology) +14, Navigate +11, Pilot +10, Repair +14, Search +14, Tumble +6.

Feats: BuilderB (Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical]), GearheadB, Oathbound (mother [End's Run]), SalvageB, Simple Weapons ProficiencyB, Starship Operation (light), Vehicle Expert, Zero-G Training.

Occupation: Scavenger (class skills: Knowledge [technology], Repair, Search).

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Knowledge [technology]), Savant (Search).

Possessions: Mastercraft deluxe mechanical toolkit (+3 equipment bonus), fast-use medkit, flash-seal, fusion torch, laser pistol (23 shots left), spacesuit (with integrated equipment [hackcard, jetpack], integrated weapon [laser pistol (36 shots left)], and prehensile appendage armor gadgets), survival suit.

Robert doesn't wear his spacesuit except to make space walks. While he wears it, his statistics change as follows: Spd 15 ft.; Defense 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 class); Atk or Full Atk −5 melee or −9 ranged; Tumble −4. He also takes a −10 penalty on the following skill checks: Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, and Move Silently.

Tactics: If the heroes approach the Beagle first, Ender watches for a bit to see what their intentions are. After a few moments, however, he realizes the possible implications of the heroes meeting Ana and trains his functional rail cannons on the Beagle. A successful DC 10 Computer Use check made by any hero operating a sensor array at the time can detect the surge in electrical power aboard End's Run. He hopes that the threat of weapons at the ready will convince the heroes to come and deal with him first. He knows his generators are low, however, so he does not fire unless the heroes seem intent on entering the Beagle. In that case, he fires once on the Beagle, since he has a better chance of significantly damaging it than he does the heroes' ship.

When the heroes approach End's Run, Ender begins the 4-minute process of putting on his spacesuit. Once he has it on, he goes to meet them and greets them cordially. If he has intercepted them while they are still in the airlock, he refuses to let them out of it while they are wearing their spacesuits, since he doesn't want them to be able to escape too easily if the negotiations turn sour.

Once they have their spacesuits off, Ender lets them into the living area. He needs an engine for his ship, but he doesn't really want to pay for one, so he attempts to bargain with the heroes for the parts he needs, offering to trade valuable scientific equipment salvaged from the Beagle. If the heroes are unimpressed with this deal, he offers to buy the parts outright (wealth bonus +12). Abandoning End's Run is not an option to him, so he refuses any offer of rescue. Ender takes personal threats against his person in stride, but any negative remarks about his ship send him into a frothing fury.

If the negotiations seem to be going nowhere, he tries to trap the heroes aboard his ship. Under the pretense of giving them a tour of his ship (or some other pretense, if they're in a hurry because of the storm), he herds them toward the personnel quarters (area 2). Once they are inside, he locks the door and welds it closed with his flash-seal. (Although such an action mars his ship, he realizes that he must somehow contain the party to achieve his greater goal.) Once his visitors have been secured, he begins to bargain with the remaining crew on their ship (or with the heroes, if they are the sole crew) to get parts or have his ship towed back to civilized space.

If he can't get all the heroes into the personnel quarters at the same time, he chats with them for a while and then tries to get them to leave the ship. He accompanies them to the airlock and closes the internal door (leaving himself inside the ship proper and them in the airlock, if possible). While they're putting their spacesuits on, he tries to kill them by closing the internal airlock door, depressurizing the room, and opening the external airlock door. If Ender had to go inside the airlock to get them in, he secures himself to one of the straps (see area 10) so that he will not be sucked out into space.

If this tactic fails or proves infeasible as a means of killing the heroes, he tries to shoot them while they are inside the ship. If the fight begins to go against him, he heads back to the cockpit and flash-seals himself inside. As a last desperate attempt to prevent the heroes from leaving him in a doomed vessel, he uses his rail guns against either the heroes or their ship if they leave End's Run.

1. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Although he had the largest living quarters on the vessel, Ender always kept his personal space furnished in spartan style. Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes enter.

Only a human-sized portal and an electronic picture frame flashing pictures of a woman past middle age breaks up the cold, sterile walls of what must be the captain's cabin. Storage drawers line the bow-end wall.

The portal is electronically locked (DC 25 Disable Device check to open) and leads to a storage closet (area 4).

AREA 1A. CAPTAIN'S SLEEPING CHAMBER

Ender still sleeps in this area. Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes enter.

The cylindrical chamber slowly spins, generating a sort of artificial gravity via centrifugal force. Several straps hang from the wall, presumably to anchor sleepers when the room is not spinning.

The centrifugal force generated by the spinning chamber gently pushes any character inside the room against the wall. This arrangement promotes restful sleep by providing a stable surface and at least the illusion of gravity. The straps hanging from the wall can anchor sleepers who do not wish to use this feature.

2. CREW QUARTERS

Ender's three other crew members slept in these cabins. Although the decor once reflected the lives of those who slept in them, Ender has jettisoned nearly every personal effect belonging to his former crew, leaving these cabins as barren and joyless as his own. Each chamber once had a small viewport, but these were smashed in the storm. Ender has since sealed the broken viewports by welding sheets of the Beagle's hull plating over them.

AREA 2A. ANA'S SLEEPING CHAMBER

Some exercise gear floats about within this room.

Ender uses Ana's exercise gear on occasion to keep himself fit.

AREA 2B–2C. SLEEPING CHAMBERS

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes enter any of these chambers.

The slowly decaying remains of a human float freely within this room. The chamber is otherwise bare except for sleeping straps and a broken viewport sealed with metal from the outside.

A DC 10 Search check reveals burn marks on the skull where the laser shots penetrated the crew member's head.

AREA 3. CRYOGENIC TUBES/ STORAGE LOCKERS

If your campaign features cryogenic tubes in which spacers can sleep while traversing the depths of deep space, this bank of four chambers contains such tubes. None of them are functional because Ender has stripped them of parts for other uses. A DC 30 Repair check can make them functional again.

If your campaign doesn't use cryogenic tubes, these four chambers are storage lockers meant to secure valuables and weapons. Each is locked (Disable Device DC 20 to open). All of the lockers together contain enough valuables to increase the wealth ratings of four characters by +1 each.

AREA 4. ENDER'S PERSONAL LOCKER

The portal to this locker is also locked (Disable Device DC 25 to open). The locker holds a duffel bag containing seven sets of casual clothes, three flight suits and helmets, two sets of exercise clothes, an explorer's outfit, a laser rifle with thirteen shots remaining, a high-frequency sword, and a box containing two doses of antitox, three doses of neutrad, and seven doses of sporekill. At the back of the locker is a secret, locked portal (Search DC 20 to locate, Disable Device DC 30 to open). This portal opens into area 5.

AREA 5. ENDER'S STASH

The portal to this area is locked with a sophisticated electronic lock (Disable Device DC 30 to open). Inside are pieces of expensive scientific equipment salvaged from the Beagle. Sold in the right market, this equipment can raise the wealth ratings of four characters by +2 each.

AREA 6. CONNECTING HALL

A tube in the floor of this hallway leads down to the cockpit of the ship. The portal door to the tube is made of a high-grade carbon-fiber alloy and electronically locked. A wide viewport in the forward wall once allowed the crew to watch where the ship went, but the storm of dust and rock destroyed it. Like the viewports in the crew's chambers, Ender repaired this one with sheets of armor from the Beagle.

Portal Door: Hardness 30; hp 75; Disable Device DC 25 to open.
Forward Wall: Hardness 30, hp 75 per 5-foot square.

AREA 7. LOUNGE AND SENSORS ROOM

When they were off duty, the crew members came to this chamber to relax. Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes enter.

This large chamber once had three viewports, but all three have been covered over with armor plating from the outside. The remains of a small bar in the former starboard corner and the four virtual reality game consoles in the center of the floor give evidence to the room's former purpose. Each console has a chair with straps to secure the user and a visor that was cutting-edge technology a little more than two years ago. Mostly empty bookshelves line the starboard side of the chamber, and their contents lie scattered on the floor.

Ender has replaced all three of the smashed viewports with chunks of armor pulled from the Beagle, but he has not been able to replace the bar, which was also smashed in the storm. Three of the game consoles are still functional, but Ender has stripped the parts out of the fourth one, which was damaged in the storm. The books were once securely strapped into their shelves, but the storm dislodged them.

In times of crisis, or when the ship simply needed more attentive sensor work, the virtual reality systems in the game consoles could be used as active sensor scanning stations. Using one of these systems provides a +2 equipment bonus on all Computer Use checks made to conduct active sensor scans.

AREA 8. READY AREA

This all-purpose cabin has functioned as a storage room, a passenger cabin, and even a defensive position once when End's Run was boarded. It currently acts as a hallway connecting the airlock to the rest of the ship.

iss beagle

aft

port

main deck

port

aft

bow

main deck

starboard

aft

bow

cockpit

bow
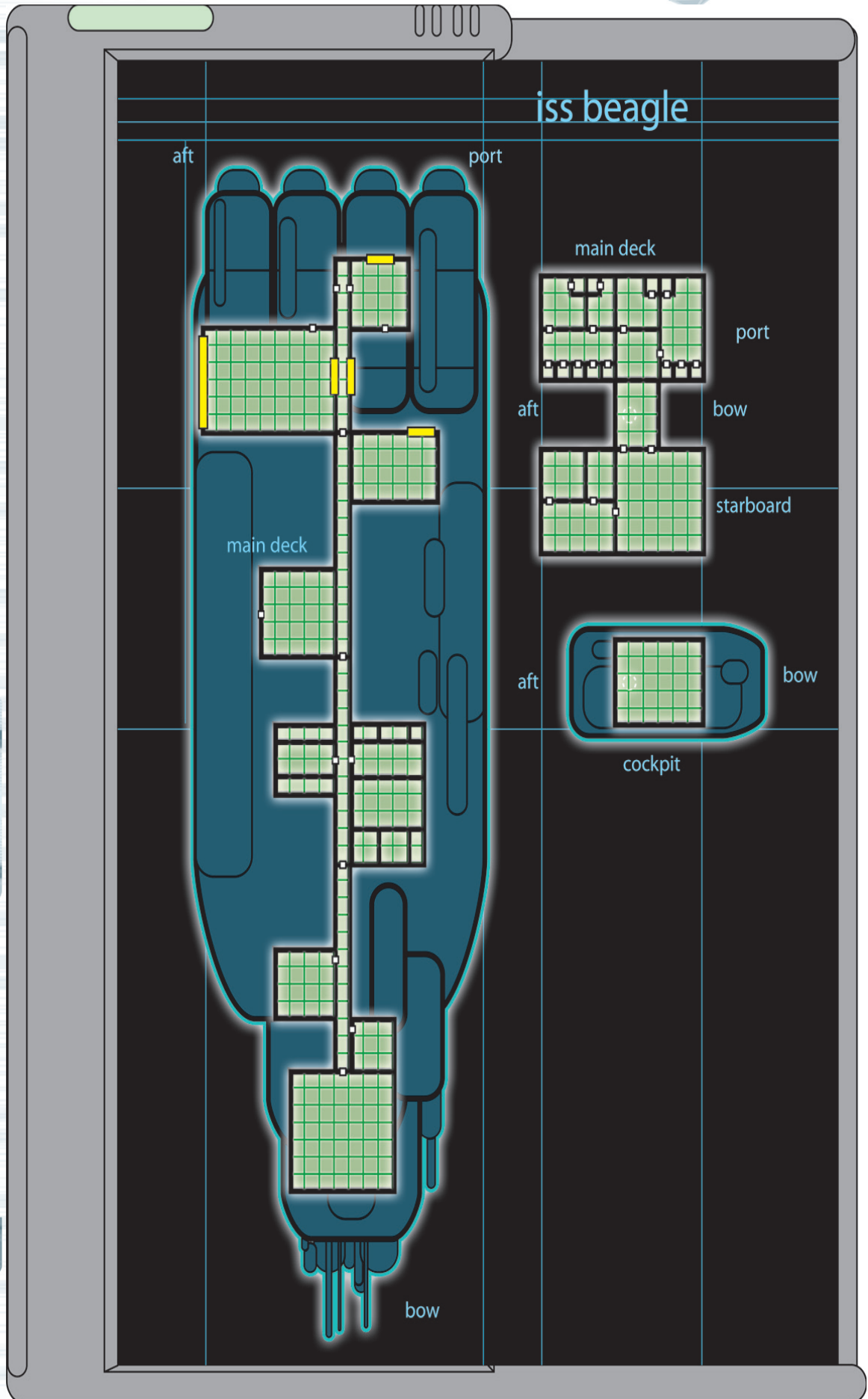
AREA 9. STORAGE

The portal to this storage room is locked (DC 15 Disable Device check to open). The storage room contains a chemical kit, climbing gear, four demolitions kits, an electrical tool kit, and three mechanical tool kits. The kits contain enough small components to repair any Medium or smaller electronic or mechanical device.

AREA 10. AIRLOCK

This room is the airlock. The inner door provides the only access to the livable portion of the ship.

An electrical switch with a mechanical backup ensures that both doors are never open at the same time. Reversible-flow air ducts inside the room can pump air into or out of the chamber (2 minutes to pressurize or depressurize the chamber). The atmospheric pressure must be close to that of the rest of the ship for the inner door to open, and close to 0 for the outer door to open. A control panel inside the airlock chamber operates the pumps and the doors, but a similar panel on the other side of the inner door can be used to override instructions from the one inside the chamber (a security feature to help prevent unauthorized boarding).

Each of the eight tether cables permanently attached to the inside wall of the room can stretch more than 200 feet. A crew member making a space walk typically attaches one of these tethers to her spacesuit to prevent her from drifting off into space.

AREA 11. COCKPIT

Ender spends most of his time here, watching the sensor screens for any activity on the Beagle. He can control everything on the ship

I.S.S. BEAGLE

The current statistics for the I.S.S. Beagle are as follows.

I.S.S. Beagle (PL 6)

Type: Mediumweight   **Size:** Colossal
Subtype: Modified clipper (derelict)
Tactical Speed: — (3,500 ft. when operational)
Defense: 2   **Length:** 850 feet
Flat-Footed Defense: 2 **Weight:** 13,000 tons
Autopilot Defense: 2
Targeting System Bonus: +3
Hardness: 30   **Crew:** 1 (Ana Patrisky)
Hit Dice: 150d20 (3,000 hp—currently 500 hp)
Passenger Capacity: 10
   Initiative Modifier: —
   Cargo Capacity: 1,000 tons
   Pilot's Class Bonus: —   **Grapple Modifier:** —
   Pilot's Dex Modifier: —   **Purchase DC:** 30
   Gunner's Attack Bonus: —
   Restriction: Restricted (+2)

   Attack:
      —
   Attack of Opportunity: —

   Design Specs:
      Engines: —
      Armor: Vanadium
      Defense Systems: Radiation shielding
      Sensors: —
      Communications: Emergency signal beacon
      Weapons: —
      Grappling System: —

from the cockpit, and he powers up the ship's rail guns whenever he sees Ana making a space walk in the wreckage of the Beagle. Characters in the cockpit can fly the ship, operate all the weapons, make sensor scans, and perform all other normal pilot's duties.

THE I.S.S. BEAGLE

The Beagle has passed through the "storm" six times and shows it. Most of the ship has been reduced to its mangled metallic infrastructure, although the main hall running along the middle of the ship has somehow survived intact. A few of the cabins and other rooms along this corridor were structurally sound enough for Ana to seal, so she has carved out a ten-room area in which she can move around without a spacesuit.

Ana has effected other crude repairs where they seemed most necessary, but her forte is piloting, not repair. She has put her efforts into restoring power and getting most of the computer equipment operational so that she could analyze the cloud and track its movements.

ENCOUNTERING ANA PATRISKY (EL 5)

Ana can be encountered anywhere aboard the I.S.S. Beagle, but she is likely to meet the heroes as they board, since she is aware of their approach.

Ana Patrisky (Female Human Fast Hero 3/Dogfighter 2): CR 5; Medium Humanoid; HD 5d8–5; hp 18; Mas 8; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 18, flat-footed 19 (+3 Dex, +1 armor, +5 class); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk or Full Atk +3 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch) or +6 ranged (3d8 fire, laser rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ defender of the universe; AL None; SV Fort +0, Ref +8, Will +2; AP 8; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Computer Use +10, Drive +11, Escape Artist +9, Navigate +10, Pilot +17, Profession +9, Sleight of Hand +9, Tumble +9.

Feats: Personal Firearms ProficiencyB, Simple Weapons Proficiency B, Spacer* (all bonuses included above), Starship Dodge*, Starship Operation (ultralight)*B, Vehicle Expert, Zero-G Training*B.

Occupation: Astronaut Trainee (class skills: Computer Use, Pilot; bonus feat: Zero-G Training).

Talents (Fast Hero): Evasion, uncanny dodge 1.

Possessions: Duracable and grappler tag, fast-use medkit, flashseal, fusion torch, hackcard, laser rifle (38 shots left, with booby trap [barbs], sensor baffling, and video scope weapon gadgets), portable environment generator (with miniaturized equipment gadget), spacesuit (with integrated equipment [jetpack] armor gadget); survival suit.

Ana doesn't wear her spacesuit except to make space walks. While she wears it, her statistics change as follows: Spd 15 ft.; Defense 19, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+3 armor, +5 class); Atk or Full Atk –8 melee or –4 ranged; Escape Artist –1, Tumble –1. She also takes a –10 penalty on the following skill checks: Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump, and Move Silently.

Tactics: Ana just wants to get away from Robert Ender, 14Herc Beta, and the entire 14 Herculis system. As soon as she detects the heroes' vessel, she attempts to make contact with it. If successful, she invites the heroes aboard, promising them all the information they need in exchange for their agreement to rescue her.

Once the heroes are aboard the Beagle, Ana identifies herself, then quickly and concisely summarizes the events from the arrival of End's Run in the 14 Herculis system to the present. You can determine what else she might know about your campaign universe, but her knowledge of current events and galactic news is two years out of date. She can also show the heroes the records of her computer

tracking of the dust cloud and the computer's projections of when it will next make contact with the planet and the orbiting ships.

Ana knows her way around the battered remains of the Beagle better than anyone, and she is happy to give the heroes a tour if so requested. Moving through the metal shards of the Beagle with Ana grants the heroes a +2 circumstance bonus on Reflex saves to avoid damage.

Throughout the conversation, Ana portrays herself as the confident and competent pilot she is, though she is justifiably agitated because she knows the ship is due to pass through the storm again in only a few hours. She wants to be rescued, so she cooperates with every reasonable request to ensure her freedom from her metallic prison. She does not attack the heroes unless they threaten or attack her, but she does not hesitate to join in a fight against Ender or his ship, supporting the heroes as best she can and explaining that he's a demented murderer.

1. PORT PERSONNEL AIRLOCK
This chamber is the only surviving airlock that was built for personnel transfers.

An electrical switch with a mechanical backup ensures that both doors are never open at the same time. Reversible-flow air ducts inside the room can pump air into or out of the chamber (2 minutes to pressurize or depressurize the chamber). The atmospheric pressure must be close to that of the rest of the ship for the inner door to open, and close to 0 for the outer door to open.

The door linking this room to the larger airlock next to it (area 3) was supposed to open only if the atmospheric pressure in the two rooms was nearly equal. Because that chamber is now open to space, Ana had to permanently weld that door shut and disable the atmospheric sensor to make this airlock function correctly.

A control panel inside the airlock chamber operates the pumps and the doors, but a similar panel on the other side of the hallway door can be used to override instructions from the one inside the chamber (a security feature to help prevent unauthorized boarding).

Each of the eight tether cables permanently attached to the inside wall of the room can stretch more than 200 feet. A crew member making a space walk typically attaches one of these tethers to his spacesuit to prevent him from drifting off into space.

2. PORT MATERIAL AIRLOCK
This room is one of two airlocks built to house shuttlecraft and dock with other ships. An electrical switch with a mechanical backup ensures that both doors are never open at the same time. Reversible-flow air ducts inside the room can pump air into or out of the chamber (2 minutes to pressurize or depressurize the chamber).

Ana has disabled all the airlock door sensors except the one leading into the main passage and the one leading out into space. The inner door leading into main passage cannot open unless the room has atmospheric pressure close to that of the rest of the ship. The outer door cannot open unless the room has atmospheric pressure close to 0. If mecha exist in your campaign, an unarmed Large mecha is permanently secured to the inside wall of the room with a 400-foot tether.

3. PORT MATERIAL AIRLOCK AND SHUTTLE BAY (DISABLED)
The outer hull in this section of the ship was ripped away, exposing this airlock to space. Ana welded the inner door shut and disconnected its power supply it to prevent it from accidentally opening onto the ship's main passage.

4. HEAVY STORAGE ROOM

Crates, boxes, large sheets of replacement vanadium armor, and other massive items float about untethered in this square chamber.

Ana welded the door to the airlock shut but otherwise made only cursory repairs to this area, since she has little use for it.

5. QUARTERMASTER'S ROOM
The computer in this room somehow survived the ship's destruction. The ship's manifest is stored here, as are the scientific records kept by the crew during the three months that the Beagle explored this system. The terminal in this room can be used to access the ship's internal network, although none of the essential ship functions (such as sensors or navigation) can be controlled from here.

6. CREW SLEEPING QUARTERS
The Beagle once carried a crew of thirty-two, plus forty scientists and surveyors. These three halls open onto the six sleeping chambers that housed the ship's personnel. Each cylindrical chamber slowly spins, generating centrifugal force that gently pushes any character within against the wall. This arrangement promotes restful sleep by providing a stable surface and at least the illusion of gravity. Alternatively, several straps hanging from the wall can anchor a sleeper who does not wish to use this feature.

7. LIFE SCIENCES LAB
Cages containing various rotting animal corpses line the walls of this laboratory, which survived the storm intact. The animals, however, died of starvation after the crew was stranded on the planet's surface. Ana went into this chamber once when she was exploring the ship, but she hasn't been back since.

8. NAVIGATION ROOM
The powerful navigation computer that the Beagle's crew once accessed from this room was destroyed by multiple passes through the storm.

9. BRIDGE
All essential ship functions can be controlled from the bridge. In this chamber, the controls for the helm, navigation, engineering, life support, and more are at the captain's fingertips. When accessed from the bridge, the ship's main computer can display the extent of the ship's damage.

Ana spends most of her time in this chamber, trying to fix some component of the ship or scanning space for some sign of rescue.

REWARDS
The heroes gain the standard experience and wealth awards associated with the encounters in this adventure. In addition, they should gain a number of story awards, since the adventure should not include more than one combat. The following story awards are recommended. In many cases, the CR equivalents of these awards are based on allowing 6 hours of time before the storm hits. If you have allowed the heroes less time, increase the CR; if you have allowed them more, decrease it accordingly.

Achievement	CR Value
Rescuing Ana	2
Successfully salvaging either ship or equipment from either ship	1, plus 1 per hour under 6 that the heroes have to complete their task
Researching the cause of the ships' extensive damage and discovering the approaching storm	3
Enduring damage from the storm for the purpose of conducting salvage or rescue operations	6*
Staying near the storm to research it	2
Discovering the existence of the refugees from the I.S.S. Beagle	3
Rescuing the refugees from the Beagle	6

*Grant this reward only if the heroes stayed to salvage the ships or to convince Ender to leave with them. If they simply did not know the storm was coming, give them no reward.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

If the heroes survive their close encounter with the destructive storm, they can wait at a safe distance for it to pass and then return to the two derelict ships and assess the damage. End's Run might survive another encounter with the storm, but only barely. If so, it lasts only until the storm hits again, a bit more than two years hence.

If the heroes supply Ender with the parts he needs, he might prove grateful to them—assuming that he too survives the storm. In his unbalanced mental state, however, he could become a thorn in their sides in the future, continually seeking vengeance for some imagined slight.

If the heroes rescue Ana, they gain a skilled pilot who owes her life to them (not a small debt). After she works off her passage with the heroes, she offers to stay with them for the standard pilot's pay. If they accept, they gain an extremely loyal crewmember.

If the heroes lack the wherewithal to rescue the survivors of the Beagle on this trip, they can mount another rescue mission in the future. Such a venture would require them to brave the dangers of an unknown planet while fending off the agents of a government that does not want the information these scientists have to reach Earth.

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