ESPER GENESIS
HEROIC SCI-FI ROLEPLAYING

ALTAI MEDIA PRESENTS...

5E Compatible

EGCC 01-08

ESPER GENESIS:
CRUCIBLE CORPS

EPISODE EIGHT OF

SHADOW OF THE ZEPHYR

ESPER GENESIS
HEROIC SCI-FI ROLEPLAYING

ALTAI MEDIA PRESENTS...

On the run and in more danger than ever, the team has only
one chance to clear their names and rescue the Bastion
from a devastating fate.

Part Eight of the Shadow of the Zephyr series.

A 4-Hour Expert Tier Adventure for Three to Seven Characters
Optimized for APL 6

CREDITS

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ESPER GENESIS:
CRUCIBLE CORPS

INTRODUCTION

Altai Media Presents... is an Esper Genesis adventure, part of the official Crucible Corps™ organized play campaign and the *Shadow of the Zephyr* storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-8th level characters** and is optimized for five characters with an **average party level (APL) of 6**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Stormdark, a rogue branch of the Zephyr Corporation, has spent months performing secret, deadly experiments to rebuild the Zephyr Code, a self-evolving computer code that can control and rewrite any other programmed device in the galaxy. Their latest attempt was thwarted, throwing the head of Stormdark, Laris Baludan, into desperation. For he has his own masters, the Shadow Technocracy... and they grow tired of his failures.

Meanwhile, Merrick Alderman, a Stormdark operative who attempted to manipulate an unwitting celebrity into delivering a mind-controlling nanovirus throughout the SIM (Silrayne Intergalacitc Matrix), deals with the fallout of his failed plan. Bliss Larkam, the Altai Media celebrity at the center of it all, has disappeared. To prevent investigations into his involvement, Merrick released news of Bliss' death, and falsified evidence to implicate the characters as her murderers.

The only saving grace is an eccentric Altai Media mogul, Fel Omric. He was contacted by the SIM hacker, Garland, and informed of recent events. Seeking to benefit himself while at the same time finding justice for his top SIMreal star, he's devised a plan to expose Stormdark and help the characters clear their names.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

The Bastion (BASS-tee-un). The Bastion is an immense metropolis star base that orbits Silrayne Prime. The entire adventure takes place here.

Altai Media (AWL-tie). An entertainment corporation with an office in the Rubicon Spiral.

Laris Baludan (LAR-iss BA-loo-dan). While his influence is felt throughout the adventure, he isn't physically encountered here. His ties to the Shadow Technocracy are exposed in this adventure, which ties to other events in the *Shadow of the Zephyr* story arc.

Fel Omric (FEL OHM-rik). Bliss Larkam's former manager before the Cerebryte incident (see *EGCC01-07 Sensations of Bliss*). His interest in helping the team expose Baludan is only part of a much larger motivation.

Kade Mevalian (KAYD meh-VAHL-yon). Zephyr Corp's Head of Research. He had been blackmailed (with his niece's life) to help reverse engineer the Zephyr code and use its nanobot virus to transform the famous SIM media star, Bliss Larkam, into patient zero. He believes Balduan has gone mad.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken down into 5 parts:

Part 1. Helping Hand. Framed for kidnapping and murder, media mogul Fel Omric offers to help when the characters' regular contacts have vanished.

Part 2. Knock, Knock. While the drazwi implants allow the character to move freely in the building, the Zephyr Corp security team might have something else to say about it.

Part 3. The Nautilus. At Baludan's penthouse, where he is keeping Mevalian hostage to work for him, the characters discover an impending attack on Bastion Tower. Mevalian's niece is more than she seems.

Part 4. Fast and Flurrious. A breakneck race to shut down the technovirus dispersions drones and then a break neck chase to shoot down the ones that still operational.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several characters motivations to get them onboard for the mission.

Framed. Characters who played through *Sensations of Bliss* are blamed for her disappearance and reported death (whether true or not). Unable to leave the Bastion, they've gone to ground.

"They Look Stupid Enough." Stormdark agent Merrick Alderman mistakes the visiting team for simple meat-head bodyguards, making them perfect patsies to cover up Bliss' sudden disappearance.

Right Place, Wrong Time. If the team played through previous *Shadow of the Zephyr* adventures, they were sent to the Bastion investigate a plot to corrupt the SIM. They arrive shortly after Baludan's plan had failed. Their presense, however, catches enough of Baludan's attention to where they become scapegoats for Bliss' disappearance.

STORY LINKS

If this adventure is being used as a follow-up to *Sensations of Bliss* and the characters failed to prevent the Cerebryte infection, the SIM aboard the Bastion is cut off from the rest of the intergalactic network, limited to local communications and data systems. In this advanced age, this creates a crippling situation for all within the Bastion that the GM can use for additional story hooks.

BASTION LOCKDOWN

Crucible Corps characters participating in this adventure gain the **Bastion Lockdown** story award, which is detailed in the appendix. Players should be warned of this upfront, as their characters can't leave the Bastion until they complete the adventure. Allow them the option to either not participate or to instead use another character.

If this adventure is not being run for organized play, it is still highly recommended that the players not be allowed to leave the Bastion, as doing so would allow them to easily circumvent a majority of the adventure.

The team has been on the run for over a day, now, their identities spread across the Bastion as dangerous killers. Not only are the police looking for them, but also mobs of Bliss's fans who wander around looking to do vigilante justice.

Using whatever means they have at their disposal, they've managed to hole up in one of the city's fringe districts.

> You've been on the run for over a day, framed for the kidnapping and murder of the SIMreal celebrity, Bliss Larkam. Lack of rest and resources has begun to take its toll as you're constantly forced to keep on the move.

ON THE RUN

Each character on the team begins the adventure with a level of exhaustion unless they meet any of the following conditions:

- **Blissful Aid.** Characters that earned the **Friends in Starlight** story award in *Sensations of Bliss* can each turn in their favor owed to remove the level of exhaustion they've just gained. Bliss may not be able to reveal herself openly, but she can, with Alfred's help, provide some influence with her fanbase and social circles.

- **Sympathetic Locals.** If at least two members on the team earned the **Hero of the Bastion** story award during *Sensations of Bliss*, they're offered aid and refuge by several of the Bastion's locals that believe in the team's innocence. In this circumstance, the entire team can remove all levels of exhaustion.

THE INVITE

Regardless of where the team starts out, one of the characters (GMs choice) receives an encrypted call on their comm device.

> The vid display shows nothing but the rotating logo of the Altai Media Corporation. A mid-pitched voice speaks through the audio. It says, "I know you're innocent and I also know who framed you. If you want to clear your names, meet me at the following address within the next hour. There, we can discuss how we can help each other with our mutual foe."

The transmission ends, followed with the coordinates to a building in district Lower Port Nine.

A Meeting in the Shadows

As their only available option, the team should travel to Lower Port Nine in search of their enigmatic contact.

General Features

Known to the locals as Starlight Cross, Lower Port Nine is the ninth sector on the lower level of the port side of the Bastion, hence its namesake. Its streets are tight and narrow like much of this part of the station, far from the bright lights and skyways the characters enjoyed just over a day ago.

Terrain. The ground is wet perma-crete, filled with trash. Often the streets are just as wide as the alleys and it is difficult to tell which on is which.

Weather. One could say that there is a constant drizzle, but it is not just water. There are all sorts of detergents, run off and chemical waste in the precipitation.

Light. Shafts of light come from above, providing just enough to count as dim light.

Smells and Sounds. Echoes reverberate from the sector above, giving the location a sense of ghostly inhabitants that are always just around the corner.

While the lack of security or maintenance in the area does help with the current situation, it also provides little help toward warding off imminent threats. The transmitted coordinates lead to an abandoned strip of three condemned buildings that have seen better days. The center building has a rusty metal sign over the doorway that reads: "The Solar Ring."

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Lore) check reveals this area to have once been a booming nightlife sector that was shut down a few arc-binds ago, with The Solar Ring being a major watering hole for shadowy business types.

When the team approaches the building, they spot Fel Omric (Kesh **smuggler**, LN) seated on a bench not far from the building's entrance. A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Lore) check recognizes him as one of the top Altai Media media moguls, as well as Bliss Larkam's former manager.

Mutual Benefactors

> The well–dressed kesh greets you with a smile that manages to be equal parts friendly and creepy. "A little drone told me of your predicament," he says. "Before you ask, I'll introduce myself. My name is Fel Omric. I'm what you call a talented SIM 'curator,' who also solves fascinating, puzzles for my employers. Problems like how infiltrators are able to use our resources to frame innocent people."

Fel gives the team the following information:

- Stormdark, a rogue branch of the Zephyr Corporation, has been attempting to perfect a self-evolving computer code that can grant them dominion over all galactic society.
- One of their experiments involved Bliss Larkam, a SIMreal star whom Fel Omric personally discovered and managed.
- The experiment failed and Bliss has disappeared. To cover their tracks, they forged data to frame the team as scapegoats while they continue to perform their experiments.
- Fel's investigation led him into contact with a former Zephyr Corp operative named Arisa Angel. She and a SIM hacker named Garland have also been working to stop Stormdark from succeeding. (**Note:** Arisa and Garland should be familiar to characters who have played through previous *Shadow of the Zephyr* adventures).

Playing Fel Omric

Fel is a highly eccentric personality, both reclusive and personable. He speaks in playfully cryptic phrases whenever referring to anything but the most vital information. As reclusive as he is, he also seems to know just about everyone. He takes his business very seriously, however, and would never let his playful, haughty manner ever get in the way of vital information or getting his job done. A character that speaks Kesh recognizes the meaning behind Fel Omric's name, which translates to: "of nothing."

Fel wants revenge against Stormdark for the exploitation and impairment of Altai Media's top SIMreal star. He makes the team an offer. He tells the team that Baludan is still in the Bastion, and he can give the team the tools to reach him personally. He asks them to infiltrate the 79th floor of the Zephyr Corp building in the Bastion and use his decryption chip to access the secret data servers that house Stormdark's primary operations. This floor can only be accessed via a stairwell from the Nautilus penthouse on the 80th floor, where Baludan himself currently resides. The datastores are also sure to have the data used to incriminate the characters. In addition, the kesh mogul offers a bonus payment of 2,000 cu.

To infiltrate the building, each character needs to be fitted with a **drazwi** (pronounced "DRAHZ-wee") implant, a wrist implanted chip which negates Zephyr Corp's basic security measures and recognizes any implanted individual as a Zephyr employee. Once inside the penthouse, however, use of the decyption chip he gives them is required to gain access to Stormdark's control hub. Omric wants their help to keep such a security breach as discrete as possible while still serving as a sense poetic justice.

Aetheron Mission: Financial Espionage. If any of the characters are members of the **Aetheron** faction, they receive an encrypted communication requesting the characters recover specified Zephyr corp financial records hidden in the corporate building's private data servers.

Getting Chipped. Once the team is ready, Fel injects each character with a drazwi implant, reassuring them they will be removed once they return to him after completing the mission. After receiving the implant, the characters are transported to the Zephyr Corporation's Bastion headquarters.

What's in a Drazwi?

Part of Fel's deal with the team is that they **all** must use the drazwi implants to infiltrate Zephyr Corp. No exceptions. If asked why, Fel tells them they get only one shot at this and he's not willing to risk the team getting captured due to anyone's personal apprehensions. In such a case where a character provides a truly valid scenario as to why they can't take the implant, Fel instead gives them a metallic wrist bracer that form fits over their arm.

If the implant is examined with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Computers) check, it's revealed to transmit a signal, likely to disable security scanners. It also reveals tech similar to a SIMreal media device.

Forcibly removing the drazwi (in any form) requires a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine or Mechanics) check. Upon removal, the character freed from the implant must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 20 (5d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. A character that fails their save also gains one level of exhaustion.

While the implant allows the characters access beyond the locked lobby doors and up the elevators, getting past the first floor may require some strategy.

ZEPHYR CORPORATE BUILDING

See **Map 1** for locations. Located in the Bastion's Upper Port block, the Zephyr Corp headquarters is an 80-story multi-tiered structure of steel and glass. The building has three entrances: a main entrance in the center of the structure, and two entrances leading into the building's east and west wings.

The Zephyr Corp building has the following features.

Terrain. The lobby has faux marble floors and open tall spaces, while the upper level offices have decorative flooring The windows are high-impact resistant.

**Weather.** The controlled environment keeps the interior at a cool 72 degrees year around.

Light. Soft lighting fixtures shed bright light throughout the area.

GETTING IN

The main entrance (leading into area 1) is open to the public. The east and west entrances (leading into areas 4 and 5, respectively) are both sealed with an encoded maglock. The maglock can be disabled with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with infiltration tools. They can also be disabled by with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Mechanics) check, though a failed check alerts the **security guards** beyond each door (see areas 4 and 6).

Alternatively, the team can attempt to gain access to the side entrances by using an access card from one of the building's employees. If they choose to wait, an office worker (use **commoner** stats) arrives at the side lot within 1d4 x 10 minutes. Confronting the employee with a successful DC 14 skill check gains the team access to the building. The skill required for the check is dependent upon the team's methods:

- Stealing the employee's access card (Sleight of Hand)
- Acting as if they also work in the building (Deception)
- Convincing the employee to open the door (Persuasion)
- Forcing/coercing the employee to open the door (Intimidation)
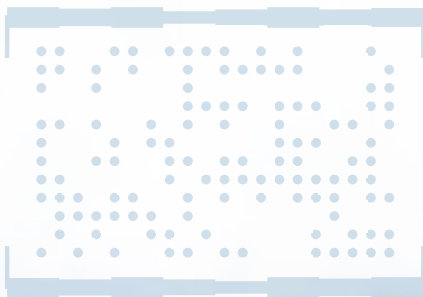
NIGHT MOVES

The team might consider infiltrating the building at night or outside of "office hours". As the building operates through all hours, not much changes in terms of security. If the team tries to infiltrate at night, reduce the number of employees (**commoners**) in the atrium to eight.

Scaling the Building. If the characters find a way to climb or fly to the 80th floor, they cannot see into the reflective surface of the office windows, but characters with infravision can see the form of Mevalian and his niece from one side of the building (see part 3). Attempts to teleport or infiltrate the penthouse using esper powers automatically fail.

Straying for Too Long. It's recommended the GM warn the players they need to avoid drawing attention for their mission to succeed. Characters who remain on the building's exterior in this way for more than two minutes attract the attention of a heavily armed security team consisting of a **heavy assault trooper** and two **mercenaries**.

1. MAIN ATRIUM

> Two sliding glass double doors open into a three–story tall cylindrical area walled by steel and glass. A couple dozen or so building employees wander through the area. A half–moon shaped service desk sits at the front area between two short glass security barriers.

Two **security guards** and an **alphalite custodian** are at the front desk, while the rest of the atrium is occupied by about 24 employees (**commoners**) and three **security guards** who patrol the area.

GETTING AROUND

So long as the characters have their drazwi implants, they don't trigger any of the building's automated security sensors. The security barriers near the main entrance automatically open for them as well.

No Implant. Characters without a drazwi implant can't get past the main security barriers. In addition, after spending over one minute inside, the building's internal sensors alert security to their presence (see **Security Alert!**).

You Look Suspicious... If the characters are carrying large weapons (possessing the *heavy* or *two-handed* property) or are openly brandishing drawn weapons, they are immediately approached by a security guard or stopped at the front desk. A successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check can be made to avert the guard's suspicion. Acting in a threatening manner causes the guards to attack (see **Security Alert!**). Bribing any guard using items or money with a value of at least 100 cubil grants advantage to the character's Charisma check.

Security Alert!

If the team is marked as intruders, the security guards in the area attack the team. In addition, at the end of the first round of combat, the guards and mecharoid in the security office (see area 2) join the fight.

Staying Hidden

If the team entered here from the side halls instead of the main entrance, they can avoid being noticed by the security guards in this area with a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

2. Security Office

The door to this room is locked. It can be opened by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check using infiltration tools.

> Several computer terminals line the walls of this room. Three storage containers are on the floor near a long duraglass table.

Two **security guards**, a **security director**, and a **durasteel mecharoid** are in this room. They don't immediately notice the team, but attack if any of the characters attract their attention.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter.
- **Very Weak or Weak:** Replace the **durasteel mecharoid** with a **cirrus mecharoid**.
- **Strong or Very Strong:** Add one **cirrus mecharoid**

Control Stations

The various terminals on the wall of the room control a number of security features throughout the building. With each successful DC 15 Intelligence (Computers) check, the team is able to perform **one** the following functions:

- Deactivate the durasteel mecharoid (if not already destroyed).
- Unlock all the building doors and gates.
- Activate a hazard alarm, which would prompt a building evacuation, except for the Nautilus (part 3).
- Download a schematic of the ground floor, mid-level offices, and the Nautilus.
- Access the security cameras (see below)

Using the Security Cameras

The cameras can be used to spot where the security patrols are within the atrium, which gives advantage to Stealth checks made to avoid or sneak past them between areas. They can also be used to monitor the other building levels (mostly offices, meeting rooms, and lounges) and the entry hall of the Nautilus penthouse. The remaning cameras covering the penthouse area are inaccessible here.

Loot

The storage containers contain six security uniforms, two autopistols, an autorifle, and a container of *bio-gel*.

3. Elevators

These three elevators lead up to the other floors of the building. Only one of the three (3C) leads up to the penthouse (see part 3).

3A Central Elevator

This elevator leads to floors 2-45.

3B. East Elevator

This elevator leads to floors 25-78. A keychip reader grants access to the lower level storage. It can be activated with a successful DC 13 Intelligence check using a hacker's kit.

Loot. If the team accesses the lower level storage area, they find a set of cooking supplies, mason's tools, and two *antitoxins*.

3C. West Elevator

This elevator leads to floors 25-78. An electronic keypad and scanner grants access to the penthouse (level 80). It can be decoded with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check with infiltration tools, an Intelligence check using a hacker's kit, or a Wisdom (Mechanics) check. Alternatively, any of the security guards in areas 1 and 2 carry a keychip that can be used on the scanner.

If the characters take the elevator to the 80th floor, proceed to part 3.

4. Branch Offices

The offices on this side of the building vary in function between private lounges, temporary workstations, and conference rooms. Two **security guards** patrol this area.

5. Cafeteria

This area has a regular foot traffic of office workers. A **security guard** is stationed near the building exit. If the characters linger here for more than 5 minutes without disguising themselves, the guard approaches them and asks what their purpose is for being there (see "Getting Around" in area 1).

Grabbing a Bite. Characters can choose to purchase food, if they wish. A cafeteria meal costs 5 cu.

Booths. The booths have data terminals normally used for digital media. A character can use them to hack into the building's database by using a hacker's kit and making a DC 14 Intelligence check. If the check fails by 5 or more, the security office is alerted to the breach (see area 2). If successful, the party gains access similar to being at one of the control stations in area 2.

Exploring the Building

The remaining floors aside from levels 79 and 80 are filled with various offices and building facilities. If the characters insist on detouring through the rest of the building, they find little of interest and run the risk of bumping into random security patrols. Roll once on the Security Patrol table for each building floor.

Security Patrol

d8	Patrol
1	1 **heavy assault trooper**
2	2 **veterans**
4	2 **cirrus mecharoids**
5	1d4 **mercenaries**
6	1d6 **security directors**
7	2d4 **vanguards**
8	2d4 **security directors**

Continuing the Mission

When the characters reach the penthouse (level 80), continue to part 3.

Internally referred to as "The Nautilus", the building's 80th floor penthouse is used only by Zephyr Corp's highest ranking executives. Laris Baludan himself is rumored to be here. Instead, his head of research, Kade Mevalian, is being held here under heavy guard from Baludan's newfound allies.

Since only a chosen few are even allowed on this floor, the drazwi implants are useless here.

Crashing the Penthouse

Refer to **Map 2** for locations. The penthouse floor has the following features.

Terrain. The decor is a mashup of technology and sea-life, like a statuette of a cephalopod that becomes circuit boards. All of the walls have hidden reinforcement to make them small arms proof and the floor is thick carpet in the hallways and marble tile in the main penthouse

Weather. The air-conditioned to the point of almost being freezing after exiting the elevator.

Light. Unless otherwise specified, powered overhead lamps provide bright light throughout the area.

Smells and Sounds. Environmental controls enhance the air with a faint scent of artificial sandalwood.

Already on Alert

If the team triggered a security alert or were marked as intruders in part 2, the silent alarm in this area has already been triggered. In this case, only option of dealing with the security in the foyer (area 1) is either through force or bribery.

1. Entrance Foyer

The elevator doors open to reveal a decorative reception area. A security desk is positioned along the west wall.

An ashenforged **security director** works the security desk. Any aggressive action taken by the characters prompts them to activate the silent alarm, which activates the motion sensors in the hall (area 3) and alert the security team near the living area (see area 4). If the team attacks the director and the commotion is loud enough, the security guard in area 2 activates the alarm instead.

Faking It. The characters can fool the director with a legit enough sounding explanation (posing as a new security team, for example) by succeeding on a DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check.

Negotiating a Deal. The director and the guard in the next room can both be bribed with a successful DC 13 (Persuasion) check and a minimum offer of 150 cu a piece. They can also be coerced into abandoning their

posts with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check. Even if the team's attempt at deception (see Faking It, above) fails, an attempt at bribery can still be made.

Lock Release. A button near the desk comm terminal unlocks the door leading to area 3. It can be located with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

2. Security Room

This room has a small security station used to monitor and secure the Nautilus. A **security guard** is stationed here.

Using the Security Station. The security station is easily accessed and used to unlock the doors to area 3 and download a map of the level. Additional functions can be accessed here as well. Each one requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Computers) check:

- Controlling the security cameras
- Deactivating the motion sensors (see area 3)
- Accessing the wall-mounted guns in area 3

A check that fails by 5 or more automatically activates the silent alarm.

Security Cameras. A character who accesses the security cameras can see each area, including the security team stationed in area 4 as well as Mevalian and his niece, Liann in area 5. Once the characters use the cameras to examine area 5, Mevalian can be spotted waving frantically at the camera, mouthing the words "Help me." The cameras can't be used to pick up sound.

Wall-Mounted Turrets. These turret guns are activated by the motion sensors in area 3. They can also be controlled during combat by the machinist in area 4. They can be disabled from this station. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence check with a hacker's kit can instead choose to override and control the guns from this terminal.
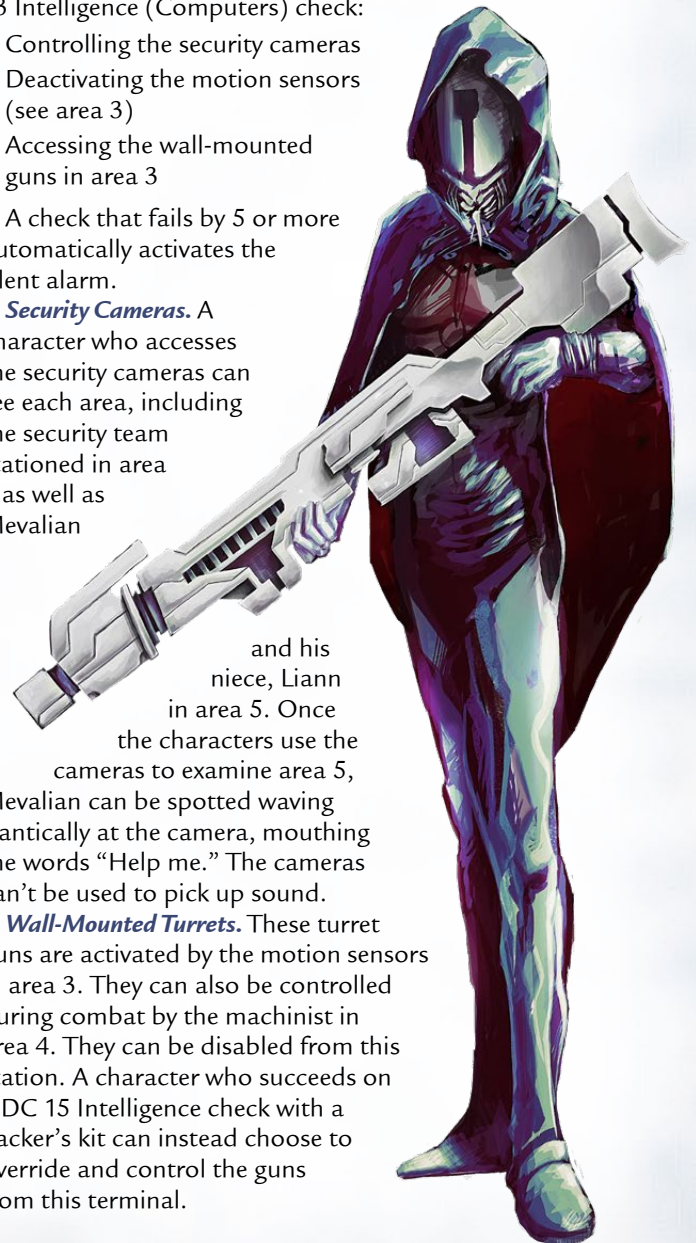
3. Penthouse Hallway

The door leading here from area 2 is sealed with a tumbling maglock. It can be unlocked with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using an infiltration kit. If the silent alarm has been triggered, the area is illuminated by red emergency lighting, providing only dim light.

> Wavy wall patterns and a shiny marbled floor are the only notable aspects of this dimly lit hall. It is otherwise sparsely decorated.

Developments

Getting across this hallway is dependent upon a few different circumstances.

Floor Sensors. The entire hallway is webbed with laser light sensors that set off the silent alarm when crossed. Characters with infravision can spot them with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Esper powers such as *security scanner* or similar effects also reveal them. Small or smaller sized creatures can evade them by moving as if on difficult terrain and succeeding on a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Security Team. If the silent alarm has been triggered, the security team from area 4 position themselves behind the door on the north wall. Once a character moves 10 feet beyond the entrance from area 2, they open the north door and attack. If the characters aren't aware of their presence (either from security cameras or otherwise), they must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be surprised. during the first round of combat.

Gun Turrets. Two **mounted gun turrets** are hidden behind wall panels in the center of the hallway (marked as "T"s on the map). They emerge and fire upon the team if the floor sensors are triggered. They can also be activated by the machinist in area 4 as its bonus action, unless the turrets are deactivated or subverted from the security station (area 2). The turrets can be disabled physically with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Mechanics) check.

4. Resident Entrance

This hallway has doors leading to the penthouse hall (area 3), the living quarters (area 5), and the control hub (see part 4).

Strike Team

A security strike team is stationed here consisting of a **sniper**, a **machinist**, and **veteran**. If not already encountered in area 3, they're positioned near the door leading to area 5. They can be surprised if approached stealthily so long as the silent alarm hasn't alerted them to intruders.

> ### Adjusting this Encounter
> Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter.
> - **Very Weak:** Replace the **sniper** with a **mercenary**.
> - **Weak:** Replace the **veteran** with a **mercenary**.
> - **Strong or Very Strong:** Replace the **veteran** with a **heavy assault trooper**.

Loot. The sniper carries a sniper rifle and an *energy guard (necrotic)*. The veteran has two *healing ampoules* and a suit of centurion armor.

West Door

The door on the west wall leads to Baludan's control hub (see **part 4: Fast and Flurrious**).It's a mechanical sliding door with military grade shielding and a state-of-the-art encrypted maglock. It can be opened with Mevalian's keychip, which is found in area 5. Alternatively, it can be opened with a successful DC 26 Intelligence check with a hacker's kit, followed by a successful DC 26 Dexterity check with infiltration tools.

5. Living Quarters

Kade Mevalian, a gray-haired human **commoner**, is here with his 11-year-old niece, **Liann**. The little girl, however, is really an impostor of Mevalian's niece (see below). Due to the obscure nature of the shadowtech in her body, the characters are unable to discover her true form until she reveals it herself.

> A set of finely crafted double doors open into an extravagant penthouse apartment with a high roof loft. A massive lounge area set into a three–step sunken floor takes up the center of the main room Glass window panels cover the entire west wall, displaying a panoramic view of the Bastion's upper block.

Hostage Release

Mevalian breathes a sigh of relief upon seeing the characters. He explains that Baludan has kept him captive here forcing him to develop uses for the Zephyr code while using his niece's life as leverage. He's been able to monitor the team's progress using the building's surveillance cameras, but hasn't been able to provide them with any real assistance while being held inside these quarters..

Mevalian's Mission. The researcher provides the characters with the following information:

- Baludan has been attempting to decipher a classified program code that would allow the user to invade, control, and repurpose any form of computer technology.
- His organization, Stormdark, is a rogue faction of the Zephyr Corporation working for a powerful, clandestine organization.
- Experimentation with forms of the code has led to dangerous developments such as of the Long Winter

technovirus and the Cerebryte nanobots that affected Bliss Larkham (characters playing through the *Shadow of the Zephyr* storyline should recognize these events).

• After multiple failures, Baludan plans to redeem himself to his masters by attacking Bastion Tower with his technovirus and use the characters as scapegoats. Mevalian's keychip can unlock the blast door leading to Baludan's control hub, where Stormdark stores many of its operational records.

FAMILY SQUABBLE

During the conversation, Liann tugs on Mevalian's jacket and says "But Uncle, the scary people said we can't leave!" She repeats her objection a second time before Mevalian tells her the team is here to rescue them from the scary people.

If any of the characters try to console her as well, she'll also listen to them. Either way, she turns to Mevalian again and says, "So, we're really safe now?" Mevalian nods and Liann smiles innocently before in a single motion she grabs the researcher by his head and hurls him through the window.

Lethal Little Liann. After Mevalian is thrown to his death, the 11-year-old's appearance shifts into that of a silver-skinned humanoid, its metallic body covered in circuitry. It attacks the team until defeated, after which its body burns out into a smoldering metal husk.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter.

· **Very Weak or Weak:** Liann has 92 hp, AC 17, and can use its slam attack only twice instead of three times.

· **Strong or Very Strong:** Liann has 161 hp and can attack three times with its plasma beam.

DEVELOPMENTS

A character examining Liann's body with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Mechanics) check learns the following:

• The robot's body is state-of-the-art. Most of the inner workings are a combination of high-grade cybernetics and nanotechnology.

• The materials used for its development are not available in any known corporate market (though they have now been rendered useless).

• If the character has played through *Secrets in Silver* or *Sensations of Bliss*, some of the circuitry bears striking similarities to those found in Selexi's headware or Bliss Larkham's SIM unit.

Loot. A keychip sits on the bedroom dresser. It unlocks the door leading to the control hub (see part 4). Searching the rest of the penthouse with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers two *healing ampoules* and a credchip containing 1,000 cu.

WORKING THE STORY

Depending upon your players, several circumstances may come into play where they may suspect Liann's intentions early on or attempt to stop her from killing Mevalian. Mevalian's death should be unavoidable. Even if it is not done in the method described, any attack from Liann kills him instantly. It is also important to remember Liann's shadowtech nature is immune from detection, even from esper powers.

LEAVING THE PENTHOUSE

Once the team is done with the area, the only exit other than the elevator is the western door in area 4. Once unlocked, a flight of stairs beyond leads to Laris Baludan's control hub. Continue to part 4.

Once the characters arrive at the control hub, they discover that Stormdark's plans are far more insidious than anyone had ever realized.

CONTROL HUB

When the team arrives at the control hub, several protocols are activated, the first being a drone launch toward Bastion Tower and the second being a broadcast of the team's phony confession. Both of these are described below.

> The entire floor of this level is covered in a variety of machine parts and tools. The north wall is a collection of computer screens, panels, and terminals. Along the west wall, ten sleek drone-like vehicles the size of an escape pod are lined up in a row, each mounted to a torpedo-style launching ramp.

PERILOUS PLOTS

Examining the displays along the north wall reveals a variety of situations the team is left to deal with:

- **The Confession.** Upon one of the larger displays, a digital recording of one or two of the characters (GMs choice) can be seen talking about their kidnapping and murder of Bliss Larkham, and now a planned assault against Bastion Tower and the galactic truce for which it stands. The recording is obviously a fake, but it would cover Stormdark's tracks. A message reading "Exporting for SIM Transmission" is displayed at the bottom of the screen next to a progress bar.
- **Drone Pod Launch.** Another display features a digital readout for each of the 10-foot-long drone vehicles along the west wall. Six of them are equipped with emitters for a devastating technovirus (characters who played through the *Viral Fallout* adventure recognize this to be an improved version of the technovirus released on Sector 77). These pods are set to launch toward Bastion Tower within the next 20 seconds.
- **Files and Records.** Fel Omric's decryption chip can be used to access encrypted datastores and files shared between Stormdark operatives and their superiors. These include the records used to implicate the team in the kidnapping of Bliss Larkham.
- **Aetheron Special Mission.** Members of the Aetheron faction can complete their mission by downloading the encrypted financial files from the terminals here.

CONTAINING THE FALLOUT

The team has very little time to react before Bastion Tower is attacked and they are framed for it all. Starting from the discovery of the drone launch, they have **three rounds** to take action. The transmission of their confession takes more time (**one minute**).

DEALING WITH THE DRONE PODS

The drone pods can be disabled through one of the methods listed below. After three rounds, any pod that hasn't been disabled will launch through a sliding bay door.

- Each drone pod has a command sequence which can be accessed via the terminals by making a DC 16 Intelligence (Computers) check. Each successful check disables one pod. *Note:* This option can still be used on a drone pod even after it has already launched.
- Either a pod or its launch ramp can be sabotaged with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Mechanics) check.
- A pod's thruster can be damaged enough to disrupt its launch. Each thruster is AC 14 and has 20 hp.
- If the drone pods launch, they can be chased down using the manual controls in the other pods (see **Hot Pursuit**).

DEALING WITH THE SIM TRANSMISSION

The phony confession is set to transmit to the Silrayne Intergalactic Matrix in one minute. A character succeeding on a DC 14 Intelligence (Computers) check can stop the transmission.

HOT PURSUIT

If any of the drone pods launch, they head directly toward Bastion Tower. However, four of remaining drone pods have mounted weapons and can be manually piloted.

Known as the Shrike Ultra, these pods are single person or drone controlled patrol craft with only one weapon and very little armor, but they are extremely fast. Each one has an AC of 13 and 20 hp. If characters choose to launch in one of them, read the following:

> The launch ramp lights blaze on as the engine revs up. You jolt back into the seat when the bay door opens and your pod shoots out into the open airspace.
> Then it is open air all around you. Skyscrapers and steel girders loom ahead as your pod rushes toward Bastion Tower. The technovirus-laden drone pods already hold a steady lead.

RUNNING THE CHASE

When the pursuit begins, the drone-controlled pods are 200 feet away from the piloting characters. At the start of each of their turns, a character can close

100 feet of distance on the drones with a successful Dexterity check using Vehicles (Planetary).

Using Weapons. A character within 200 feet of a drone can attack with their pod's gun mount by making an attack roll using their Dexterity bonus. If they're proficient in Vehicles (Planetary), they can also add their Proficiency Bonus to the attack roll. Attacking with the gun mount causes the character to lose 100 feet of distance from the drones. The character can choose to instead maintain their speed and not lose any distance, but in doing so, their attack rolls have disadvantage. A hit from a gun mount instantly destroys a drone pod.

Alternate Weapons. Attacking with weapons other than the gun mount suffer the penalties associated with attacking with non-vehicle weapons (see "Attacking from a Vehicle" in chapter 9 of the *Core Manual*.

Sabotage from Afar. Drones are still prone to being deactivated from the control hub in the Zephyr Corp building (see **Dealing with the Drone Pods**, above).

Chase Complications

At the end of each round, each character piloting a pod must roll a d6 and consult the chase complications table and make the check (if any) described in the roll result.

Chase Complications

d6	Obstacle
1	An random vehicle crosses your path. Make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or lose 100 ft of distance.
2	You run into gridlocked sky traffic. Make a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check or lose 100 ft of distance.
3	An unexpected tight turn causes you to endure high G-forces. Make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) force damage.
4	You maneuver through a tight set of steel girders. Make a DC 13 Dexterity check with Vehicles (Planetary). On a failed check, you lose 100 feet of distance. If you fail the check by 5 or more, you collide with one of the girders and crash into a nearby platform, taking 36 (8d6) bludgeoning damage.
5	Your pod's controls malfunction. Make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, you lose 100 feet of distance and are at disadvantage on your next Vehicles (Planetary) check.
6	No complication.

Ending the Chase

The chase ends when either all the drones are destroyed or at the end of five rounds, after which any remaining drones reach Bastion Tower.

Viral Infection. Any drones that reach Bastion Tower breach the tower's outer conduits and spread the technovirus upon everything within, causing system-wide chaos throughout the Bastion. Although there are no members of the Grand Conclave inside the tower, the fallout from the people and machines devastated by the technovirus is likely to be felt for some time.

Drones Destroyed. of the drones survive, the team has saved the day. Until they clear their names, however, they are still wanted fugitives and are likely to draw attention if they remain out in the open any longer.

Concluding the Adventure

Regardless of the outcome at Bastion Tower, accessing the files in Baludan's control hub allows the team to alter or delete the evidence used to incriminate them. The use of Fel Omric's decryption chip grants the kesh remote access to the hub where he and his allies can expose Stormdark's secret operation to the public.

Getting Paid. When the team returns to Fel Omric in the Bastion's Lower Port sector, the kesh mogul thanks them for their service and pays them 2,000 cu.

Fifteen Microseconds of Fame. Fel also removes any remaining drawzi implants. Unbeknownst to the team, each drawzi implant also streamed visual and sensory data to Fel Omric, which he plans to use to revive his business. Characters who returned their implants gain the **Fifteen Microseconds of Fame** story award.

Bastion Fallout. With the team's records cleared, they no longer have the **Bastion Lockdown** story award. However, if they failed to stop the transmission of their confession and also failed to stop the drones from reaching Bastion Tower, they'll have to be smuggled out of the city. They'll remain wanted criminals in the Bastion for the next 90 days, after which Fel and his allies manage to clear their records.

Stormdark Files. The remaining files transmitted from Stormdark's datastores are specially encrypted and can't be deciphered by the team without help. If asked about these files, Fel Omric is happy to share the information with the team. He's learned that Baludan and the rest of Stormdark are all agents of the Shadow Technocracy. The Technocracy perfecting such a code would give them to power to bring all of galactic civilization to its knees. With this knowledge, they must be stopped at all costs. If the characters choose to help, Fel Omric promises that he and his allies will contact them. This storyline continues in the next adventure, *Stormfall*.

Saying Farewell

After the team handles their business with Fel Omric, read or paraphrase the following:

> Fel Omric smiles at you in a manner both friendly and oddly uncomfortable. "You all have become my favorite charity for the day," he says. "I just covered the base expenses for your little escape. Your payment should cover costs for incidentals, per diem and ammo." He grins broadly then says, "I'd say I'm greatly impressed, but then again, I was never here, so... no comment."

After exchanging pleasantries, Fel Omric departs. After putting some distance between them and Bastion, the team might consider laying low for a while. Though, naturally, trouble is sure to find them again soon enough.

Rewards

If you're running this adventure in organized play, make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and CC serial number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Each character that completes this adventure earns 5,000 experience points. Experience that would normally be earned through combat encounters is already incorporated into this total.

Loot

The characters receive the following loot, divided up amongst the party. Loot is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Loot Awards

Item Name	Cu Value
Part 2 — auto pistols	500
Part 3 — centurion armor	2,000
Part 3 — healing ampoules	1,000
Part 3 — penthouse credchip	1,000

Energy Guard, Necrotic

Details on this item can be found in the *GM Basic Rules* or the *Master Technician's Guide*.

Story Awards

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Fifteen Microseconds of Fame. One week after the adventure ends, Altai Media releases a SIMreal featuring the heroic exploits of espers infiltrating the clandestine stronghold of a powerful megacorporation. You receive a complimentary copy. Titled *Zephyr Hunters*, it becomes an Altai Media sensation, reaching the top of the SIMreal ratings list for the next few months. It appears Fel Omric used his implants to record your experiences. You could take it up with him... if you can find him, of course.

Renown

Due to the nature of this adventure, characters belonging to any faction receive one renown point.

Aetheron Mission. Characters who completed the Aetheron secret mission receive one additional renown point.

Downtime Activities

During the course of this adventure, the characters earn the 10 downtime days.

This appendix details threats that are encountered in this adventure.

ALPHALITE CUSTODIAN
Medium automaton, neutral

Armor Class 12 (armored frame)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages ALOMU, Common
Challenge 1/8 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Punch. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

CIRRUS MECHAROID
Large automaton, neutral

Armor Class 11 (armored frame)
Hit Points 60 (8d10 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., infravision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, ALOMU
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mecharoid makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Disruptor Blades. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become wounded. The wounded target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the wound reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies and its body disintegrates within one hour. The wound persists until removed by *restore pattern* or similar effect.

Arm Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 60/300 ft. one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage.

Pulse Charge (Recharge 6). The mecharoid fires a pulse beam at one target it can see within 60 ft. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also stunned until the end of the mecharoid's next turn. If the target is a vehicle or a construct, it must succeed on the saving throw or become impaired until the end of the mecharoid's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it instead becomes paralyzed for the same duration.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

DURASTEEL MECHAROID

Large automaton, neutral

Armor Class 19 (armored frame)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Computers +3, Perception +4
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., infravision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, ALOMU
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Charging Attack. If the mecharoid moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and hits it with a slam attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the mecharoid can make one kick attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Kick. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Spike Launcher. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Shockwave (Recharge 5-6). The mecharoid unleashes a spiral of crackling, high-voltage energy in a 30-foot cone. Each target in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) lightning damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. In addition, a creature that fails their save is stunned until the end of their next turn.

HEAVY ASSAULT TROOPER

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (centurion)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +6, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brave. The heavy assault trooper has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The heavy weapons expert makes two double-bladed sword attacks or two micro-cannon attacks.

Double-Bladed Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. , one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Micro-cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) force damage.

Concussive Burst (Recharge 5-6). The heavy assault trooper fires an energy burst in a 30-foot cone. Each target in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. In addition, a Medium or smaller creature that fails its saving throw is knocked prone.

LIANN
Medium automaton (shapeshifter), unaligned

Armor Class 19 (armored frame)
Hit Points 136 (13d8 + 78)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +10, Perception +6
Damage Resistances poison, lightning
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses infravision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, ALOMU
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Advanced Sensors. Liann can't be surprised.

Shielded Circuits. Liann has advantage on saving throws against esper powers, as well as to resist becoming impaired or paralyzed.

Shapeshifter. Liann can use an action to transform into a Medium humanoid (human), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in any form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Liann makes three slam attacks or two plasma beam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Plasma Beam. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

MACHINIST
Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (armor jacket)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +3, Wis +5
Skills Astrophysics +3, Computers +5, Mechanics +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any two languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Coordinated Attack. As a bonus action, the machinist can expend a power slot to summon a synchronized attack drone. Until the end of the turn, a target the machinist hits with a weapon attack takes an additional 10 (3d6) radiant damage. If the machinist expends a power slot of rank 2 or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each rank above 1.

Esper Powers. The machinist is a 6th-level esper. Its forging ability is Wisdom (forging save DC 13, +5 to hit with esper powers). It has the following powers prepared:

Prime (at will): *acid spray, electric surge, gamma vision*
Rank 1 (4 slots): *laser blast, sensory jammer, trauma*
Rank 2 (3 slots): *assault drone, paralyzer*
Rank 3 (2 slots): *attack pattern, unravel effect*

ACTIONS

Combat Axe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Short Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 70/210 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

MERCENARY
Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (light trooper)
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the mercenary can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mercenary makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Longblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Short Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 70/210 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SMUGGLER

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (armor jacket)
Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5, Wis +4
Skills Deception +6, Lore +5, Perception +4, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Lingo plus any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If the smuggler is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the smuggler instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Nimble Escape. The smuggler can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Graceful Defense. While the smuggler is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

Cause Distraction (3/day). The smuggler can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the smuggler, it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on its attack rolls and saving throws until the start of the smuggler's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The smuggler makes three attacks.

Sabre. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Light Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 50/150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

SNIPER

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (armor jacket)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Crack Shot. A ranged weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the sniper hits with it (included in the attack).

Focused Aim (3/day). As a bonus action, the sniper can target one creature within 300 feet of it that it can see. Until the end of the sniper's next turn, the target creature gains no benefit from half or three-quarters cover against the sniper's ranged attacks.

Sniper Rifle Expert. The sniper suffers no penalties for long range or recoil when using a sniper rifle.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sniper makes two ranged attacks.

Shortblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage

Light Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 50/150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Sniper Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 300/2000 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) piercing damage.

SECURITY DIRECTOR

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (military jacket)
Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +3
Skills Insight +3, Investigation +2, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The security director attacks twice with its warblade or twice with its heavy pistol.

Warblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Heavy Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 50/250 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Burst Fire (Recharge 5-6). The security director fires a spray of bullets in a 10-foot cube within 80 feet of it that it can see. Each target in that area must succeed on a DC 13 burst save or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Security Guard

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (military jacket, shield)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Battle Rod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Light Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 50/150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Soldier

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (heavy trooper)
Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Unit Tactics. During the first round of combat, if the soldier is surprised, it can move up to half its speed on its turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The soldier makes two melee weapon attacks or two ranged weapon attacks.

Sabre. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage

Autorifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 50/250 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Burst Fire (Recharge 5-6). The soldier fires a spray of bullets in a 10-foot cube within 80 feet of it that it can see. Each target in that area must succeed on a DC 12 burst save or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Veteran

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (centurion)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The veteran makes three melee attacks or three ranged attacks.

Longblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Heavy Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 50/250 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Burst Fire (Recharge 5-6). The veteran fires a spray of bullets in a 10-foot cube area within 80 feet of it that it can see. Each target in that area must succeed on a DC 12 burst save or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Throw Grenade (3/day). The veteran throws a grenade onto a point it can see within 60 feet of it. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (5d10) force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Altai Media Lobby

The Nautilus

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story awards.

BASTION LOCKDOWN

The Bastion has gone into full lockdown, preventing you from leaving the city ship. So long as the city is on lockdown, you cannot participate in any adventure or event that takes place outside of the Bastion.

FIFTEEN MICROSECONDS OF FAME

One week after the adventure ends, Altai Media releases a SIMreal featuring the heroic exploits of espers infiltrating the clandestine stronghold of a powerful megacorporation. You receive a complimentary copy. Titled *Zephyr Hunters*, it becomes an Altai Media sensation, reaching the top of the SIMreal ratings list for the next few months. It appears Fel Omric used his implants to record your experiences. You could take it up with him… if you can find him, of course.

Consider the following advice when running this adventure.

RUNNING FOR CRUCIBLE CORPS

This adventure is designed for five to seven 1st through 4th level characters with an APL of 4. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure when being run for organized play.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's Average Party Level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition Party	Party Strength
3–4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3–4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3–4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6–7 characters, APL less than	Average
6–7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6–7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

BEING THE GAME MASTER

As the Game Master, your role is to present and narrate a fun and immersive experience for yourself and your players.

When running these adventures, please, keep the following in mind:

Be Prepared. Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself during your session, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and threat entries.

Be a Part of the Group. Always remember that you are not the enemy of, nor are you competing with any of the players. Your job is to present and run the adventure, encounters, adversaries, and story while maintaining flow of events. You also get to play any other persona in the adventure that is not the player characters.

Encourage the Dialogue. Always introduce yourself to players you don't know and encourage them to do the same for both themselves and their character. Gauge the experience level of your players (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keeping with the Flow. While you are the authority on the rules and encounters, it is really your players that provide the catalyst to make the story go. Their actions and decisions should affect how you run encounters, while your method of presenting the story influences their decisions. This circular relationship allows everyone to be involved and have as much fun as possible. Use the rules as a tool to move the story rather than delay it. The best game masters use the rules in a fair, impartial, and consistent manner for every single player in their game. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players in order to keep things moving.

You Are Never Alone!

Team up with other galactic heroes and forge your destiny as a member of the Esper Genesis Crucible Corps, the Organized Play campaign for the Esper Genesis RPG! Whether you're a new player looking to get into the game or an experienced player looking for others in your area, the Crucible Corps provides an easily accessible game space that welcomes players of all types.

Members can play anywhere. You can join CC groups at gaming conventions, participating friendly local game stores, with other gamers online, or even with your own group at home. Learn more at espergenesis.com/cruciblecorps.

ESPER GENESIS: CRUCIBLE CORPS