

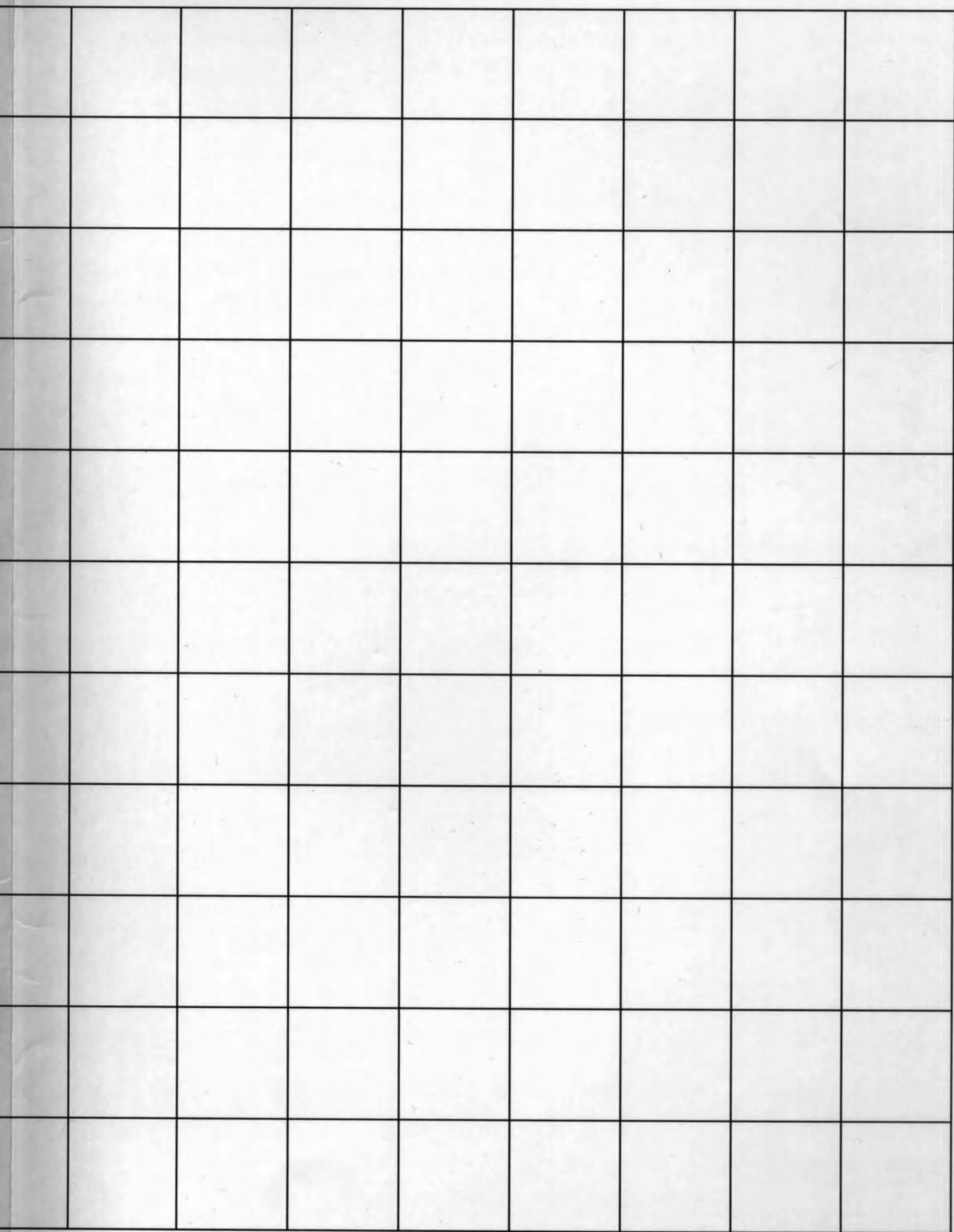


Shakna-

Assault on the Hive



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1st Adventure of the Darmoth Series

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Introduction

Shakna was tired. Outsiders might have thought it strange that a being of Shakna's nature might grow tired, sleep, or even require sustenance. But he (or she, or it — such concepts were irrelevant to a Shanask) was tired — aching with weariness to the depths of his very soul.

The journey had been long and difficult. Moving an entire world was an undertaking which strained the resources even of the Shanask. Still, Shakna and the other Shanask who now inhabited the Sorce-moon knew that they had no choice. Terrible events were unfolding, and it was their task — no, their duty — to stop them.

Shakna watched as glowing blue lines of Sorce energy burned brightly, then faded, revealing the battered proto-planet below. The transference had succeeded, but Shakna still felt waves of instability wash over the Sorce-moon, and felt it waver and shift in its new location. More energy would be needed to stabilize it.

With a resigned sense of determination, Shakna prepared to channel what little Sorce-power he still possessed to the stabilization of the Sorce-moon.

Shakna paused. A disturbance had entered the Sorce-field which surrounded the moon. From the surface of the proto-planet a tiny vessel rose, making swiftly toward the glowing blue prominence of the Shanask moon.

Reaching out fine tendrils of Sorce energy, Shakna touched the spirits of those within the vessel. He felt a variety of sensations. He felt the uncertainty and calm courage of the primate-descended commander, the one which called itself an Anthropos; the unemotional acceptance of duty and stern body control of the massive being called a Calemora; the swift, rapidly changing thoughts and deep, pulsating psionic power of the feline creature known as a Zin-Shee; and finally, Shakna felt the primitive drives of the reptilian Draca, a being of merged flesh and machine, with potential for both great good and great evil.

These were the ones whom Shakna needed to warn. But it was too soon, too soon! The Sorce-moon still wavered and shifted in this reality, and Shakna's power was needed to keep it stable.

Yet now the others came. Dedicating what little power he could to maintaining the Sorce-moon's existence, Shakna moved, smoothly and silently, his tall, hooded form emerging from darkness and gliding across the polished floor of the chamber, toward the moon's surface, where the others now approached, their minds roiling with fear and uncertainty.

Shakna did not yet know what he would say to the outsiders. But the others must — must — be made to understand the terrible gravity of events.

The survival of this Scape depended on it.

Welcome to Adventure

Shakna — Assault on the Hive is the first adventure in the Guild Space™ Setting. It chronicles a very important incident in the history of the Guild — the introduction of two major races, the Kryll and the Shanask. It takes place before the

history described in the Setting Guide. Allow your players to read the Overview/Quickstart section of that book, but not the history section, since it would reveal events in this adventure.

Make your players aware of all the different races available for play. If any wish to play Shanask or Kryll, let them, but make sure they know that these races will not enter into the adventure until later, and they will be playing NPC mechnoids until that time.

Read the entire adventure before running it — there are many suggestions for effective game mastering and role-playing, and it is important that you keep the overall plot in mind as the adventure progresses.

The Plot

The House of Dha is almost fully operational. Admiral Nelos has issued an unprecedented decree that all Dha teams who have completed their training be promoted to Rank 1, circumventing the typical requirement that a team complete an official mission before becoming "ranked." Although many teams have yet to finish training, the PCs are among those who have. As they prepare for the great event which is soon to take place — their promotion to the status of full-fledged Dha members — a dire crisis threatens the Guild. A gigantic alien starship has entered Guildspace, and fought an engagement with elements of the Guild fleet. The House of Dha has been summoned to intercept the aliens, and all ranked Dha personnel are to report for duty.

Unfortunately for the characters, they have yet to receive their promotion documents, and are left behind on Dha Prime while the Dha fleet sallies forth to confront the aliens. As the adventurers remain in their barracks, reflecting upon their cruel fate, another event of terrible significance occurs.

A mysterious black moon appears in the skies above Dha Prime, carrying with it a race of powerful, robed aliens who call themselves the Shanask, and command the secrets of a mystical power called the *Sorce*. The Shanask's representative, Shakna, tells the team that the invaders are a race of evil aliens called Kryll, and the only way to stop them is to directly confront their hive-queen in the depths of their vast bioship.

Assisted by Shakna's Sorce powers, the team is transported to the hive-ship, where they enter and fight their way through legions of Kryll and their biotechnological weapons. In the final confrontation with the hive queen, Shakna arrives to aid the characters, but discovers that he was mistaken. The Kryll are not hostile, and the coming battle is a result of a terrible misunderstanding.

The team now desperately races toward the two fleets, heading off the battle before any lives are lost. Hailed as heroes, the characters return to Dha Prime, while both the Shanask and Kryll are escorted to

Introduction

Guildhome. The Kryll, it turns out, have brought warning of a terrible danger which may soon confront the Guild.

As noted above, Kryll and Shanask will be allowed as player characters, but must follow some minor restrictions, as detailed in the main body of the adventure.

NPC List

The following section lists those creatures likely to be encountered during play, along with maximum numbers. Those marked with an asterisk are unique to this adventure, and not listed in the *Setting Guide*. This list is provided so that you can look up information and prepare miniatures and chits for the upcoming encounters.

Ships and Mechnoids

- 1 Battledroid
- 10 Kryll Bioships
- 0-4 Scidroids
- 1 Starship (The Concordance)
- 1 T'skaa

Kryll

- 6* Cattlebugs 4/4/4 (Vit 20)
- 2* Elite Guardians 20/30/10
- 2* Elite Warriors 12/18/8
- 4* Farmers 6/4/12
- 8* Guardians 15/25/10
- 1* Header 6/16/6
- 1 Hive-queen 20/60/6 (MR 4)
- 2* Living Mortars 12/16/4 (16x Dmg)
- 1* Living Tank 6/24/4
- 20* Lymphatic Fish 6/6/4
- 10* Maint. Creatures Varies
- 6* Nursemaids 6/6/10
- 6* Porters 10/8/1 (MR 4, Str 24)
- 2* Predators 20/16/6 (MR 12)
- 1* Scavenger 6/20/3 (Vit 120)
- 1* Sentry 6/4/10 (Vit 12, Dmg 30x)
- 2* Shock Beasts 14/18/4
- 1* Translator 16/4/16
- 10 Warriors 8/18/8
- 30* Workers 6/8/4

Other

- 4 Kurg 8/8/12
- 1 mBari 16/26/8
- 1 Shar-Ka 16/20/16
- 3 Skrak 10/10/8
- 2 Xaltir 16/16/6
- 1 Yrrax 16/35/5

Dha

- 1 Admiral Nelos
- 1 Colonel Kalad
- 1 Shanask (Shakna)
- ? Miscellaneous Dha Personnel

GM Tips

This adventure utilizes a unique design. The intent of the design is to introduce GMs to the art of adventure creation (i.e., making your own adventures) and to allow elements of this adventure to be played several times as described below.

This adventure will sequentially lead the GM through the beginning of the plot line (described above). However, once the plot line reaches the Kryll hive, the adventure simply presents numerous encounters without a structured sequence. It is here that the GM may begin learning the art of adventure construction.

As the plot above indicates, the PCs will adventure through the Kryll Hive until they eventually reach the Queen's chamber. What you (as GM) need to do is draw out a map, placing selected encounters from the lists in this adventure. Choose encounters based upon your player's preferences. If your group prefers power gaming (i.e., lots of combat), then select lots of combat encounters. If your group prefers more intensive roleplaying and problem solving, then select these types of encounters.

We have supplied you with a wide variety of encounters (and lots of them) so that you can make the character's trek from the outer surface of the hive to the Queen's chamber last one game night or take several gaming sessions to complete. Again, the choice is up to you as GM.

Now, read the rest of this adventure, and then prepare a map of the trek through the hive. To show you how, a small sample map has been drawn out on the last page of this adventure. Notice the simplicity of this map. Don't spend a lot of time drawing your map, instead spend a lot of time considering your map's layout (and thus the plot line). Construct your map along a plot line which **your players** will enjoy.

Once you have completed this adventure, you can use it to play several other games — ones which you make up. We recommend that you have one of the larger Kryll bioships defect from the Hive (i.e., they slip away in this adventure's combat). The team's mission is to hunt the renegade bioship down before it can cause harm, and take control (likely requiring a Kryll PC). The Kryll Queen has denounced the ship's crew and proclaimed them "casualties of war." Now, lay out a plot, construct maps of the kryll bioship (using encounters from this adventure and ideas of your own), and then adventure on...!

1 — Defenders of Dha

If any players chose Shanask or Kryll PCs, allow them to play lightly armed battle droids (10L/6H/8L armed with a blaster weapon and a quad launcher). Take these player's aside and explain to them that the androids are only temporary and they should not worry about their statistical details.

Players' Introduction

Read or paraphrase the following introduction to your players.

Welcome to the realm known as Guildspace. The Guild is a large alliance of Anthropos, Calemora, Zin-Shee, Draca, and other races who share a belief in peaceful expansion, exploration and discovery. You are new warriors in the House of Dha, the newest, most powerful elite force in the Guild, created to counter the threats of the Empire, the Dark Alliance, and other enemies.

The House of Dha's very existence remains secret to all but the highest ranking Guild officials. In your hidden base, the protoplanet Dha Prime, deep within the misty reaches of the Acropolis Stellar Nursery, the legions of Dha are nearly assembled.

Dha Prime is a barren, airless ball of rock. Hundreds of small, hot stars fill the sky, glowing dimly through the veil of stellar matter which surrounds the planetoid. Dha Prime is orbited by four moons transported here through dimensional wormholes created by the vast Superdreadnaughts of the Guild. Each moon represents and serves as headquarters for one of the four Guardian Races, the major members of the House of Dha.

The only real settlement on Dha Prime is the city of Glory, a 50-mile wide urban area completely covered by a meteor-proof dome, protected by stealth shields and force barriers. Here, amidst over a hundred races, and architecture from dozens more, the warriors of Dha receive their training and equipment, and prepare for the unknown.

Four days ago your team was both shocked and astatic when Admiral Nelos, the supreme Dha commander, decreed that all fully trained teams were to be promoted to ranked Dha warriors (rank 1). These orders were to be carried out immediately and teams would be considered promoted once they received their papers and emblems. Although many teams have not yet completed their training, you are among those who have (though just by a week).

At this point, have the players introduce their characters, and say a few words about themselves. This will serve to give everyone some idea of the group's capabilities, and how given characters can be expected to react. Particularly good introductions may be rewarded with one AP.

If they have not already done so, the players should decide on a name for their team at this point, and possibly even design team arms and a banner.

If you wish to play up this segment, or add more realism, draw the PC's barracks (use an ad-lib layout) and have them place their miniatures on the board. If PCs wish to play cards, spar with practice weapons or otherwise interact, this will encourage such activities, and help them to establish their characters' personalities.

Crisis

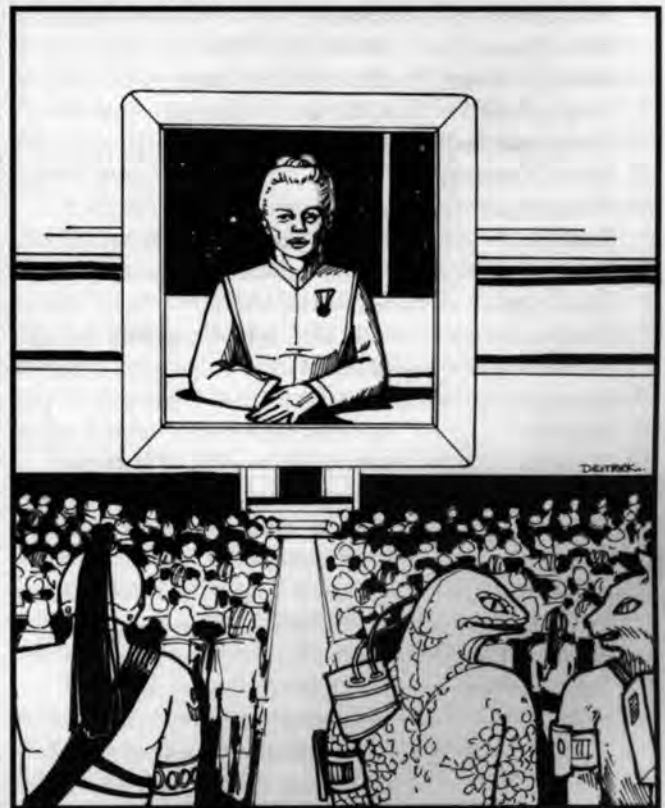
After the players have completed introductions, read the following out loud.

Although you are proud to have completed your training as Dha warriors, you are frustrated by a minor bureaucratic snag. Your paperwork has been lost, delaying your official promotion to fully-ranked warriors. You grit your teeth and endure the delays, knowing that the delay is only temporary, and that you will soon take your place in the ranks of Dha.

As you are passing your hours of free time after daily training, you hear the wailing of klaxons all across the city of Glory, and your communications terminals begin to flash, signaling a planet-wide alert.

After a few moments, a voice blares forth from all communication devices. "Attention! All Dha personnel report to the parade grounds in full combat gear, immediately!"

The message repeats several times.



Allow the players to react to this message. Play up the noise and chaos which erupts throughout Glory as thousands of Dha warriors hustle into the streets, load up on transports, and make their way toward the parade grounds near the center of the city. Shuttles are difficult to obtain, and the parade ground is 20 miles from the PCs barracks, so make them work to get a ride. Eventually, however, they load up on the bed of a hover transport and head for their destination. When they arrive, read the following.

The parade ground is packed with Dha warriors and personnel of every description. There are stocky Calemora, aloof Draca, nervous Zin-Shee, and dozens of others of every shape and size. Voices babble in a cacophony of language, but running through all conversations, regardless of tongue, is the single question — why are we here?

At one end of the parade ground is a gigantic holoscreen. As you watch, it flashes to life, revealing the image of Admiral Nelos, supreme commander of the House of Dha. Nelos is a tough-looking woman with steel-grey hair and riveting eyes who speaks in a commanding voice.

"Twelve standard hours ago," she begins, "scoutships of the House of the Guides made contact with a vessel of alien origin. The aliens immediately attacked without provocation, and the Guide ships were only barely able to escape. House of Defiance picket ships were sent to intercept the aliens, but met with heavy resistance, and have called for reinforcements.

Their are no charted wormholes near the aline ship and the nearest full Guild fleet is twenty standard days distant, but our own House of Dha fleet may reach the site of battle through hyperspace in half that time. Accordingly, I am issuing orders that all ranked Dha warriors embark upon their assigned starships for transport to the conflict area. These orders are effective immediately. We have trained for this moment for over two years, warriors of Dha. I know that all of you will do your duty. That is all."

The screen then goes blank, and the sound of half a million moving bodies rushes over you.

Let the players consider what they have just heard for a few moments. They may not realize that, being officially unranked, they are not included in the admiral's orders. Should they attempt to join the legions of Dha and start wondering where to board their transport, have a sergeant or junior officer inform them that they are unranked warriors, and their job is to stay behind, complete their training, and defend the House of Dha if necessary. If they protest and inform the officer that their training is complete, just have him look concerned for a moment, then inform the team to take the matter up with the promotions office.

The Shanask Moon

The next few days are uneventful. Read the following out loud.

Despite your bitter disappointment at being left behind, you return to your duties. Each night, you plot the fleet's progress on your computer terminal, and wonder what your fellow warriors will find when they at last drop out of hyperspace and encounter the aliens. Some brief holo images shot by the House of Guide scout ships before they retreated show bizarre, cigar shaped, organic-looking vessels which emit irregular blasts of energy. Trailing behind these is a giant alien moon.

The House of Dha is now officially under the command of Colonel Kalad, a rather officious-looking individual who appears to be better at shuffling papers than leading the elite warriors of the Guild. You go through the motions of your training, realizing that you are probably the only fully-trained Dha warriors left on Dha Prime. Your complaint to the promotions department was responded to in the familiar statement, "Well, we'll look into it as soon as we can."

Ten days after the fleet's departure, reports indicate that they are mere hours from dropping out of hyperspace to engage the invaders. As you return home from training, you again hear sirens and alarms going off all over the city, even though there are few Dha warriors left to respond.

The PCs will probably want to find out what is happening. If any turn on communications devices they will receive nothing but waves of static. Characters with comtech or computer skills may attempt to clear up reception. On a roll of 8 or greater, the characters will be able to see flickering images of a large, black, spherical object, apparently hovering near Dha Prime. On audio devices, they will hear snatches of frantic communications, such as, "...it's huge... just appeared... what is it?" etc.

If the PCs rush outside, they will see a vast planetoid hanging in the sky overhead, the same size as the other four Dha moons. Read the following description out loud.

It is gigantic — the size of a moon. Its black surface looks cracked, and through the cracks you see a pale blue glow. Overhead, a pair of Dha drone-interceptors streak skyward — these may well be the only defense which the protoplanet has left.

Over the communications network you hear a frantic message, periodically washed over by waves of static.

"All Dha personnel! All Dha personnel! Report to the Chapter House immediately with full equipment load!" The voice is that of Colonel Kalak, and panic edges his words.

Defenders of Dha

The PCs can easily commandeer a ground shuttle for transport to the Chapter House. As they arrive, they notice that only a trickle of Dha personnel seems to be arriving, and most of these are green recruits, trainees, technical support staff, and other ineffective types. Once inside, a frightened-looking junior lieutenant ushers the PCs into a lecture hall, only partially filled with would-be Dha warriors. Read the following out loud.

Colonel Kalak stands uncertainly at a lectern. Behind him, a large video screen portrays the strange planetoid. He speaks in a quavering voice.

"This object just appeared in orbit over Dha Prime," he says. "It simply popped into existence, displacing the four guardian moons without apparent effect to either this world or the moons' occupants. So far, it has taken no hostile action, but our drone-interceptors were unable to scan the planetoid and I dared not have impersonal drones land on the surface. I know that none of you are ranked warriors, but it is imperative that we investigate this object to see if it represents a threat. Will anyone volunteer to investigate?"

Of course, the PCs are expected to volunteer. If they do not, no one will, but eventually one of the PC's acquaintances in the room will point out that the PC's team is fully trained and should have been promoted. Colonel Kalak will then converse with his subordinates, and address the PCs, asking if it is true that their

unranked status was the result of a bureaucratic technicality. He will then appeal to them as the best warriors Dha has left.

If the players simply will not volunteer (an unlikely event), Kalak will panic and order them to investigate. Further refusal in this case is unlikely.

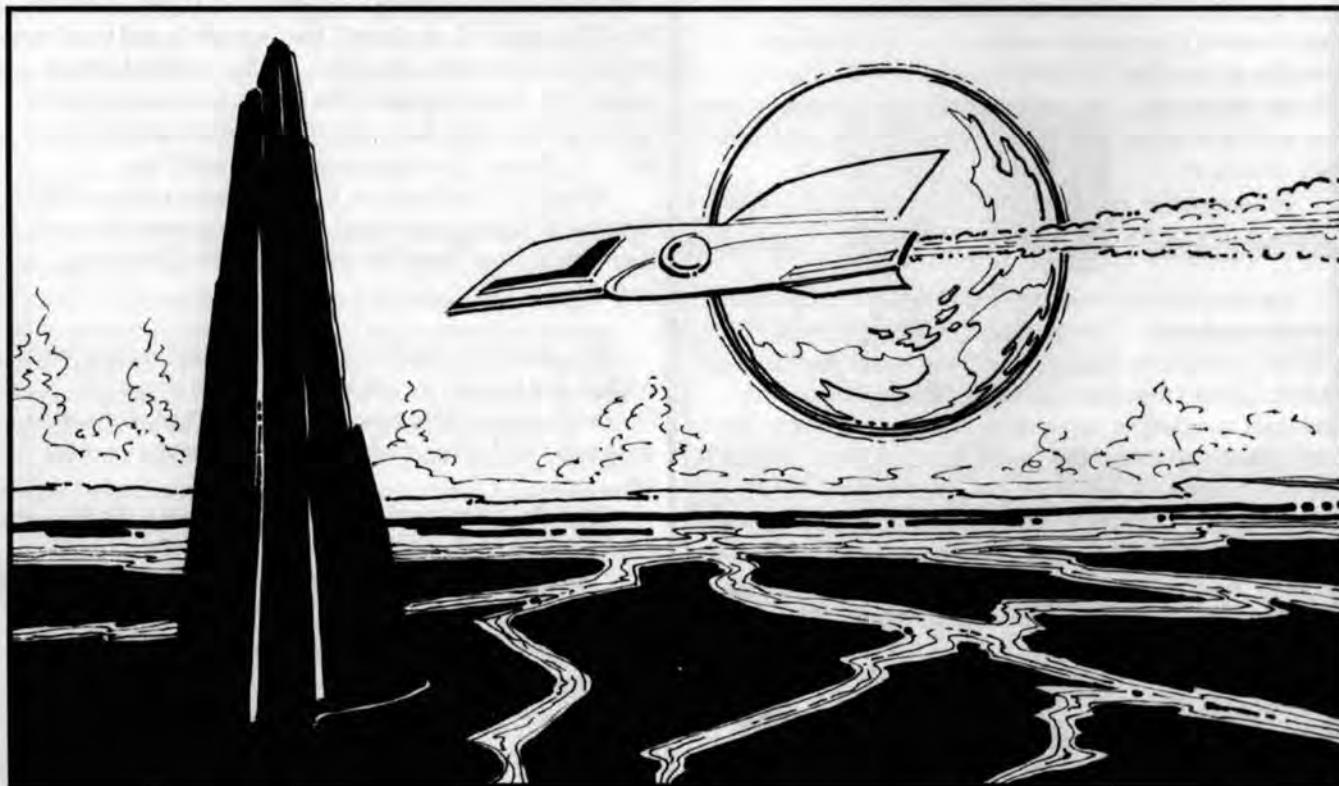
Into the Unknown

After they volunteer, the PCs are loaded aboard a shuttle and taken to the spaceport, accompanied by Colonel Kalak and an aid. Read the following.

The spaceport, a gleaming expanse of white pressteel, interrupted here and there by low buildings, hangars, warehouses and control tower complexes, seems strangely empty. Normally full of vast, powerful-looking Dha warships, the spaceport now berths only a handful of light transports and shuttles.

"We have no real warships available," says Kalak. "The best we have is a patrol corvette with only two small turret weapons. I'm sorry, but..." he gestures helplessly. "If you need technical support, however, we can help. Are there any ship positions which you need filled?"

GM, use the layout of the alliance-class corvette found in *EM, starships*. However, remove the two forward facing guns, keeping only the two 180 degree side turrets. The ship's rating is 10M*/8HV*/6M and the two side turrets are PulsCan2-s (i.e., dual pulse canons mounted on the side). All other stats match those of the



alliance in the *Equipment Manual*. Have a player write down the above stats at this time (for use during the upcoming confrontation with the Kryll bioships).

At this point, check the PCs' ship skills. In order to operate a starship, the following skills are useful: *astrogation, comtech, pilot starship, raise shields, scanners, sensors, ship gunner, turret gunner and ship power*. In addition, computer operators and medical personnel might be helpful. If the party lacks any of these skills, Kalak will allow them to take along scidroids (8L/6L/8M) to fill the missing positions. If none of your players choose Kryll or Shanask characters, then Kalak will also give them the option of taking along a single battledroid (10L, 6H, 8L) armed with a blaster weapon and a quad launcher.

At this time the PCs should board their ship.

Your ship, the Concordance, is a small ship of the corvette class which has obviously seen better days. She is battle-scarred and seems to have been in service for decades. You remember Kalak's assurance that it is the best currently available, but you wonder nonetheless.

Without further delay, your ship lifts off, rising into the fog of proto-stellar matter which surrounds Dha Prime.

Pilot ship rolls are necessary for takeoff, approach to the planetoid, and landing. Typical difficulties will be around 5. Unsuccessful rolls will result in damage to the ship equal to the amount of the failure — don't allow bad rolls to unduly delay landing. Try to emphasize the antiquated and battered nature of the *Concordance*, but don't kill off the party in a starship disaster before the adventure even begins.

The PCs may wish to scan the surface of the planetoid, to figure out if there are any structures, or whether the interference has a source. Have the appropriate character make a *sensor* (or *scanner* related) roll vs. 8. If the roll succeeds, the character will detect the presence of a single structure on the planetoid's surface. Highly successful rolls (20 or above) will reveal the object's exact location and shape — a four-sided obelisk resembling an elongated pyramid, 20 feet square and 100 feet tall.

Further investigation will reveal that the planetoid's surface is made of a smooth, gleaming black material like onyx or obsidian. These are divided into plates separated by cracks (like the surface of a cracked egg shell). The cracks emit a blue glow which is active across several wavelengths, and their depth cannot be measured.

Eventually, the team will select a landing site. It may be near the obelisk, in which case, proceed to **Enter Shakna** below. If they land far enough away to require travel, go on to **Crossing the Moon**, which follows.

As noted, a successful *pilot starship* roll is necessary for landing (Dif 5 - 10 depending upon how close they land to a crack). If the roll fails, the landing is bumpy, and

the ship takes damage. If a natural "1" is rolled, the ship has crashed, and is disabled. Everyone is shaken up, but no one is seriously injured.

Crossing the Moon

If *Concordance* landed a fair distance from the obelisk, the team must go overland to reach their objective. Read the following, emphasizing the eerie and unknown nature of the surroundings.

The smooth surface of the alien planetoid is dimly lit by the young stars overhead. The nursery's stellar dust is already raining down and forming wispy tendrils which dance about your feet. Ahead, you see a deep fissure. A blue glow issues from its depths, lighting you and your surroundings with an eerie phosphorescence.

The team will need to cross at least one fissure to reach the obelisk. Characters might even want to use the fissures as cover in order to sneak up on their quarry. Reward innovative uses of the fissures with an AP.

Jumping across the fissure requires a standard Spe (10) roll at narrow points. The fissures are anywhere from ten to 20 feet across.

Falling or leaping into a fissure has no ill effects — the blue glow is the raw stuff of the *Sorce*, and it will automatically teleport living beings 50 feet in a random direction, possibly on the other side of the fissure. Due to the stellar rain, such individuals will be beyond sight. Calling out loud to locate the team will cause an uneasy feeling among the party.

Crawling along the fissures, clinging to the edge, using them as cover, etc., requires Dex (10) rolls. Falls result in the random teleportation listed above.

Enter Shakna

As the team approaches the obelisk, read the following.

The alien obelisk is ahead of you, a featureless spike of black stone, rising up from the smooth, polished ground. Light from the fissures illuminates your surroundings in shadowy blue and the stellar rain of dust seems less intense here. Although your warrior's training and instincts keep you alert and ready for anything, uncertainty still claws at your mind.

Allow the team to decide on a method of approach to the obelisk — one of the fissures passes within 30 feet of its base. Let them move closer, then spring the key encounter on the them.

Suddenly, a lone figure appears at the base of the obelisk. It does not exit a doorway, gradually phase into existence, or rise on an elevator — it simply glides through the stone surface as if it were a sheet of water.

Outwardly, the individual is humanoid, but is deeply cloaked in a long, black, hooded robe. You can see neither hands, feet, nor face. In fact, the figure seems to be hovering a few inches above the moon's surface. The figure makes no overtly hostile moves, but simply floats there, as if waiting for you to come closer.

In all likelihood, the characters will wait for the alien to make the first move. If any shoot at the figure, it simply raises an empty sleeve, and the bolt or projectile ricochets off into space. The figure will not retaliate in any way, but waits for the PCs to approach within four squares, at which point it "speaks."

A hollow, rasping whisper sounds in your ears. It is not coming in over your personal communicators, but simply echoes in your head as if the being is in your suit with you.

"I am Shakna," it whispers. "Shakna of the Shanask. I speak to you as a representative of my race. I bring you a warning, and an offer of assistance. A terrible danger threatens you, your alliance, and all the races of the galaxy. If you do not respond to it immediately, you and your people may be destroyed."

To Save the Guild

Needless to say, the PCs' interest will be piqued. They will probably be highly suspicious of Shakna, and will question him intensely. If they approach him within one square, he will consciously suppress his fear aura to avoid alarming the team. His story is as follows, which you should reveal gradually as the PCs question him.

Shakna is, as he said, a representative of the cloaked race which calls itself the Shanask. They are masters of a mystical power known as the *Sorce*. Uncounted ages ago, Shakna's people fought a terrible war with a race of deadly aliens. Now, it seems that the aliens have returned.

Although they had long since vanished from memory, the Shanask decided to return in order to warn the civilized races of the galaxy, and to offer assistance.

Shakna will know many things about Dha and the characters. He will know of the existence of Dha and the importance of Dha Prime. He will also know all the characters' names and something about them. If asked how he knows all this, he will say that he just knows.

Shakna does not, however, know everything. He seems almost surprised at the small size of his welcoming committee, and asks where the Dha fleet and personnel are. If the characters are reluctant to tell him, Shakna will eventually guess the truth.

Once this has been revealed, Shakna will immediately grow more insistent, telling the PCs that they themselves must journey to the alien hiveship and help him destroy the insectoids' brood-queen.

The characters will probably be reluctant, and distrust Shakna. If they ask Shakna to come back to Dha Prime with them, he will insist that time is short and that they must leave immediately.

Eventually, the characters will either agree, or say that they cannot leave without authorization. If they do the latter, they may communicate with Colonel Kalak, who will dither and consult with his aides, and eventually tell them to "use their discretion" in the matter. Good roleplaying during this entire exchange may be worth an AP.

Once the team has agreed to help, Shakna will give them coordinates to the hive ship and will tell them, to hurry to its location. The *Concordance*, however, is far too small and underpowered to generate a wormhole, and hyperspace travel would take a dozen days. This fact will surprise Shakna, but he tells them to go anyway.

"Now go," Shakna says. "I must stay here — our planetoid is not yet fully existent in this place, and my powers are required to stabilize it. I will give you whatever assistance I can, but until you reach the queen's egg-chamber, you will be on your own. Now, I give you this."

He raises an empty sleeve. Extending from it, as if held by an invisible hand deep inside the robe, is a black crystal shard.

"When you reach the egg-chamber," he whispers, "hold this crystal in your hand, and call forth my name, 'Shakna,' and I will come to confront the queen."

If There are Shanask or Kryll PCs

If players generated Kryll characters, Shakna will tell them to touch the crystal to the first alien they encounter (up to the total number of Kryll PCs). This will break the Queen's control over them and force them to aid the team — thus becoming Kryll PCs.

If any players generated Shanask characters, Shakna will add, "Although I may not assist you further, I will send (*proper number*) of my lesser minions with you." Have the proper number of Shanask (one for each PC Shanask) appear at the base of the obelisk.

These player's battledroids will continue with the party as NPC support.

That done, Shakna urges the team to hurry and board their ship. If the vessel crashed, the PCs are amazed to see the damage is mysteriously repaired. Now, the PCs head off into space, and the fun begins.

2 — Assault on the Hive

Alien Space

Many encounters from this point on will include a map, which you may draw on the game board for use with miniatures. Opponents and NPCs will use the three number rating system described in *SG, NPCs*.

The characters will now head for Shakna's coordinates aboard their antiquated corvette. They will eventually make the jump to hyperspace and plan on a 12 day ride. But, after 30 minutes the hyperengines will suddenly emit a burst of energy, basking the entire ship (inside and out) in blue light. The ship will go into a spin and drop out of hyperspace. Regaining control of the vessel requires a *pilot starship* roll of 12 (allow several rolls until success occurs).

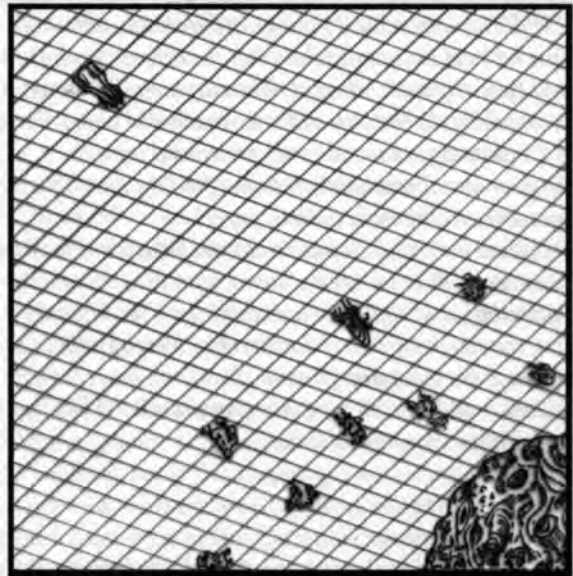
Once control is established, the team will be amazed to find themselves at the coordinates specified by Shakna. (This entire event was caused by the Shanask to speed the PCs on their way).

Once control is regained, read the following.

All around you is the intense black of interstellar space. Your comline is now open, alive with interference and snatches of military traffic. Thousands of miles away, you see the bright flashes of starship weaponry, and you realize that the initial scoutships of the Dha fleet are now engaging the alien vanguard.

Nearby, however, is a gigantic object which rivets your attention. It is another moon-sized body, but this one is even stranger than the Shanask moon. Outwardly, it resembles an enormous sponge, covered in vine-like growths, crusty plates, irregular mouth-like orifices and glowing globe-like organs. The entire body looks alive to you, and several of its surfaces heave and pulsate as if breathing or beating. It moves, slowly but steadily, along a straight trajectory, as if consciously pushed. This, you realize, is a truly alien object.

The strange energy blast has transported you to the far side of the moon, well away from the battle — you may even have achieved complete surprise, catching the aliens while their fleet battles Dha!



Battle in Space

12 Bioships: 15*/16V/8

Let the team's ship approach for a few moments, then read the following and call for initiative.

Suddenly, the alien moon almost seems to notice your presence. Several organic orifices open like mouths or eyes, emitting a group of bizarre ships. They look like bloated cigars with frontal orifices, tentacles and what appear to be organic propulsion devices. There are about a dozen, and they are heading straight at you with what appears to be unfriendly intent.

The Kryll hive has emitted a horde of small bioships, and the outnumbered *Concordance* must fight through them before reaching the hiveship. Use the map layout above to run the combat.

The team is not meant to be killed or gravely injured in this encounter, but allowing the *Concordance* to get somewhat beaten up is quite acceptable. Simply have the bioships keep coming until the players start to worry. At this point, read the following entry.

The strange, organic ships keep swarming out of the aline hive. Just as you are beginning to wonder if you will survive, an area of space nearby begins to flicker and shimmer. As you watch, an amazing thing takes place.

A vast, long-bodied entity appears out of the shimmering area of space. With a start, you realize that it is one of the T'skaa, or space-whales, huge, void-dwelling entities which serve in the Guild.

Assault on the Hive

The T'skaa immediately moves to the attack, emitting a blinding beam of energy which strikes the nearest bioships, blowing them to pieces. Then, it slips purposefully through space, smashing its massive bulk into another bioship. Then it opens its yawning maw and swallows several more.

In your mind, you hear a distant voice, the telepathic communication of the space-whale.

"Shakna sent me," it says. "I cannot defeat the hiveship, but I can open a hole in its side."

With that, another beam lances out from the T'skaa, piercing the rough surface of the hiveship, leaving a breach large enough for your ship to enter.

"That is all I can do," says the space-whale. "I have exhausted my energy. Good luck."

1 T'skaa: 12/8S/14

The T'skaa then departs, and the PCs may enter the hive through the hole it created.

If the team manages to finish off the bioships, or reaches the hiveship before you can use the T'skaa, simply allow them to create their own breach using their weapons, or by ramming through the surface of the Kryll ship.



In the Hive

One way or the other, *Concordance* is now inside the Kryll hive. Behind the team, the ship seals its damaged hull and restores the atmosphere (removing any need for pressure suits or life support while in the hive).

Due to the hive's unusual floor, all PCs receive a -1d penalty to all Defense rolls. At the beginning of each encounter (after the first) players may make a Dex (20) roll to overcome this penalty. Also all Dex checks made for balance suffer a similar penalty.

The PCs may now exit the ship. Use the map above to determine layout and miniature placement. Read the following out loud.

Your ship rests in a large, roughly spherical chamber inside the hive moon. You feel for all the world as if you are within the body of an enormous alien organism. Looking behind you witness a strange sight as the damaged outer skin heals itself, sealing you within. The air is breathable, but almost unbearably warm and humid. The walls are covered with pulsating organ-like objects, veins, nodes and tubules in a riot of bizarre colors. The ceiling is hung with long, ropy strands of unknown organic material and dripping fluids. Large, globular objects emit a dim, reddish light. The floor is a tough, muscular substance, and everywhere is moisture, condensation and slimy exudations.

Several circular portals are spaced around the outside of the room. Some are open, resembling esophageal passages, others are closed with an iris-like muscular membrane. As you take in your surroundings, several creatures suddenly emerge from one of the open portals.

They are completely alien. Their form is insect-like, with six segmented walking-legs and a pair of spiny manipulative claws near the front. Their entire bodies exude a slimy substance which gleams in the dim light. Their heads are large, sprouting armored, hornlike antennae and bulging, multifaceted eyes which reflect neither emotion nor intelligence. A pair of huge mandibles clicks and clacks at you, and each carries a long, organic-looking sword-like weapon. With a vicious clack, they charge you!

Shock (12) rolls might be appropriate since these are the first Kryll the team encounters. Those who fail are paralyzed with fear and lose initiative. A natural "1" roll results in fear paralyzing the charter until next round (i.e., they lose Nish for an entire round).

5* Kryll Warriors: 8/18/8

* If any players generated Kryll characters, now is the time to use Shakna's crystal. The number of Kryll which appear should be 5 plus the number of Kryll characters generated. When touched with the crystal (requiring a punch attack roll), the Kryll will stop fighting and stand still for a few rounds, then begin to move and communicate in a rather stiff and clacky version of Guildspeak.

The Kryll PCs were originally mindless warriors, and now do not retain much memory of the hive. Their entire system has been scrambled by the *Sorce* conversion, so their pheromonal communication with other Kryll will be inefficient and not terribly useful, although they will be able to sense the presence of other Kryll and guess their intent.

The new Kryll PCs will not be encyclopedic reference sources for the team.

Exploring the Hive

The remainder of the adventure involves the team's attempts to reach the brood-queen's chamber. They will be probing deeper and deeper into the hiveship, searching for their objective. Try to make it seem as if the sequence of events is building to a climax.

This is the section of the module which you (the GM) need to layout for the players (see GM tips above). Each of the following sections describes an encounter, gives stats and numbers for any opponents, and provides a situation for the characters to overcome.

Select a suitable series of encounters in advance. Gear them to the party, or to the overall flow of the adventure. If your players are all combat-happy, give them a larger number of combat encounters, with a few puzzles or other encounters thrown in to keep them on their toes. If they are more geared to problem-solving, include more puzzles, and so on. Select a suitable mix of encounters before play begins.

Select a corridor type, perhaps containing one or more weird hive creatures or one of the transportation systems listed below. Then select a room type, or make up one of your own (not all rooms need to have anything special — they may simply be wide spaces in the corridor with one or more door openings). Select creatures to occupy the rooms, or present problems for the team to solve. Continue on in this way, giving a good selection of encounter types and challenges, until you have enough to keep the players occupied for as many gaming sessions as you want the adventure to run.

If the team tears through your encounters too fast, add a few on the fly — use the suggestions below, or come up with your own. During the final gaming session, keep an eye on the time and the overall condition of the party, and be prepared to move the adventure to its climax (**Meeting the Queen**) when conditions warrant.

The number and exact order of encounters are up to you. Remember that the conclusion of the adventure and the aftermath will take about an hour, so be sure to leave enough time for the conclusion on your final gaming night of this adventure.

If you want to conclude at a particular time, simply change the encounter sequence so that the next encounter will be the Queen's chambers. Also, keep tabs on the party's condition. If they have had several close calls or used up most of their healing supplies, perhaps it would be best to move on to the Queen's chambers.

Exactly when should you move to the final confrontation with the Queen? This is largely up to you. As noted, realize that it will take an hour to an hour and a half to conclude the adventure. Also, if your entire party has used up all its genesis capsules and other healing devices or powers, and is down to one or two Vitality each, you may have let it go on too far, so go easy on them in the final battle. Keep a close watch on things, and use your best judgment as to when to end the adventure.

In any event, try to keep the game moving and interesting. A long string of combat encounters will eventually become boring, as will a problem which the PCs cannot solve. Use your discretion and try not to let the game drag.



Overview of the Hive

The hive is actually a huge ball, resembling a gigantic sponge, with passages, openings and rooms throughout, often set at weird angles due to the Krylls' natural climbing ability. Some corridors will be incredibly steep, requiring Dex rolls to prevent slipping. Some will dead-end, with doors or corridor openings 20 feet overhead. Such unusual architecture makes for fun problem solving in itself, so be sure to include these elements in your map. The Kryll have no problem with their architecture — they move entirely in three dimensions, scuttling up walls as easily as if they were walking down ordinary corridors.

The corridors are entirely organic, living things. Puffy organs, veins, conduits, tentacles, iris-like portals, pulsating membranes, etc. sprout from every part of the ship. Everything exudes slime and fluid, and the air is extremely warm and humid. If characters examine such elements, you will need to ad-lib their effects — cutting veins may cause sweet liquid to squirt all over the PCs, touching tentacles may cause them to grab the nearest item, iris-like portals serve as doorways from one room or corridor to another, etc.

The hive is full of small maintenance creatures which crawl over most surfaces, cleaning, eating, extruding strange substances, and engaging in numerous other incomprehensible activities. Most simply go about their business and ignore the team-members, but others will react to them in a variety of ways. Ad-lib these effects, in fact, it is recommended that you turn the first run-in with these creatures into an encounter. Most are not danger-

ous, but they certainly can be annoying (sucking on character's toes, spitting out smelly fluid, emitting alarmingly loud noises, etc.).

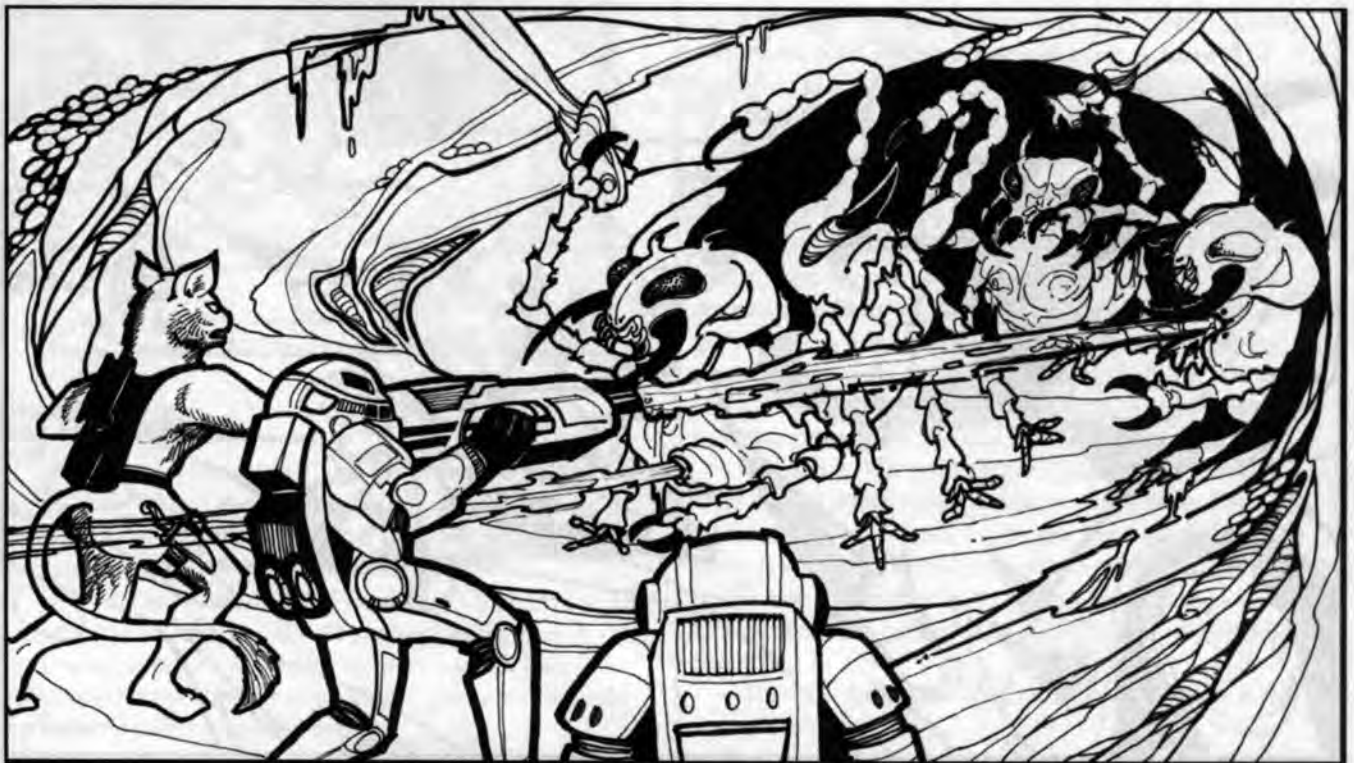
Fighting the Kryll

As soon as the PCs arrive, the Queen will know that her ship is under assault. She will start redirecting warriors to attack the team as it advances. It will take a few minutes for the pheromonal communications to spread throughout the hive, so the characters will be able to penetrate some distance past the first room before they are again attacked. Mix combat with the Kryll in with the standard corridor, room and life form encounters which follow.

Numbers and Equipment

Try to gear the number of opponents to the strength of the party, and don't gang up on characters with low combat ratings. Give such characters a single opponent, or make the Kryll's combat ratings low if they're fighting a weak PC. Likewise, adjust stats higher if the party is walking all over the kryll.

Combat-oriented characters — Cyber-Lords, Marines, Warriors, Destrons — will want challenging combats, so give them multiple opponents, and have them fight Kryll with unusual weapons such as spiners, bellyguns, etc (refer to *EM, biotechnology* for a full arsenal of unusual bio-weapons, bio-armor, and bio-equipment).



Some (20% or so) combats should be ambushes, and the PCs will need to make Shock rolls (Dif 10 or so) until they get used to being attacked by the Kryll. Most Kryll in the initial assaults will either be unarmed (and fight with their own natural weaponry) or be equipped with melee weapons such as bioblades or scorpion tails. As the team penetrates deeper into the hive, the Kryll will begin to break out the heavy artillery, and throw more Kryll with ranged weapons at them.

Tactics

At first, the Kryll warriors are not terribly imaginative — after all, there are plenty more where they came from, and the hive mind is concentrating on the space combat with Dha. Most will attack in a direct, straightforward manner, selecting the PCs which represent the greatest threat to the hive. They will attack hand-to-hand, with few ranged weapons.

As the team penetrates deeper into the hive, Kryll tactics will grow more sophisticated. They will engage in ambushes (team members must make shock rolls at Dif 10-18), fire ranged weapons from concealed or protected positions (i.e., openings high up on the wall), etc. Attacks will come faster as the PCs get closer to their objective.

Remember the Kryll's incredible climbing ability, and the bizarre architecture of the hive. They will climb walls, drop from ceilings, crawl underneath ledges, and attack from virtually any angle.

As the PCs approach the egg-chamber, the Queen may start to throw some of her guardian Kryll into the fray. Use these sparingly, as the fully grown guardians are truly terrifying creatures. The guardians which attack the party will probably have ratings no higher than 15/25/10.

Hive Layout

There are a number of common features within the Kryll hive. The following entries present an overview of them, along with suggested game mechanics. Several of these could be encountered in combat — for example, an errant lift-pod could grab a PC while he is fighting a Kryll warrior and carry him off, or a horizontal tube might open under a character and drop them to the next level.

- **Communications Node**
- **Corridors**
- **Doors**
- **Liftpod**
- **Porters**
- **Teleport Node**
- **Tentacle Corridor**
- **Transport Tube**
- **Tunnelworm**
- **Vertical Tube**
- **Wing-Fungi**

Communications Node

These are found throughout the hiveship. Outwardly, they resemble a greenish flower bud, with its petals furled. If touched, however, it opens up, revealing a pulsating node at the center. These are used for communication in the hive, with the user emitting certain pheromones, which are transmitted electrochemically to another node, inducing it to emit the same pheromones. Communications can be spread quickly across the entire hiveship in this manner.

Characters with especially good *Biotech* rolls (20 or above) will be able to figure the nodes out. Should the PCs discover the nodes' true function, they should realize that destroying the nodes will cripple communication in that area of the hiveship, buying the team more time (i.e., several room's worth of safe passage). Award an AP for such actions.

Corridors

Most corridors within the hive resemble long, tubular hallways, full of clusters of organs, glands and other organic items. All are full of maintenance creatures. You can spice up movement through an ordinary corridor with an attack by Kryll warriors, an encounter with one or more of the life forms listed below, or you can add some transport device such as liftpods or tentacle corridors in order to keep the party on their toes.

Doors

Doors appear throughout the hive. Doors on the Kryll ship are organic, membranous things which open and close like a camera shutter. If open, they may close unexpectedly (such as when the team is only half way through). If closed, they can normally be opened only through the use of pheromonal triggers. They can be forced open with Str (15 - 20) checks or damage. The average door takes 20 points of damage before opening (this is not cumulative — the 20 points must be from a single blow), but stronger or weaker doors can be created if needed. Kryll PCs' pheromones have been scrambled by Shakna's *Sorce* crystal, but they still may make a *Biotech* roll (Dif 12) to open the doors themselves.

Liftpod (18/4/1 (Def 4, Str 20))

These are stationary, organic "elevator" devices. They resemble inverted bowls set in the ceiling. When an individual passes beneath a Liftpod, it sends out a single coiled tentacle-like appendage, wraps around the target, then pulls it up to the ceiling, where, presumably, the user can detach the tentacle and enter the next higher level.

Of course, since the team is expecting hostile actions, the benign liftpod will probably be seen as yet another threat. When a team member walks under one, he or she

must roll Def(18) to avoid the tentacle. Upon failure, the character is hauled up toward the ceiling, where it will become clear that there is a ledge, tunnel entrance, or other access to the next higher level.

If the other characters shoot at the pod and hit, it will immediately release the "victim" who will fall to the floor, taking falling damage (see *RB, hazards*). Eventually, the PCs may figure out that the Liftpods are not dangerous, and use them to their advantage.

Porters (10/8/2 (MR 4, Str 24))

The Kryll use these floating, jellyfish-like creatures for extended transportation, or to carry large loads. Their flat, disk-shaped main bodies bear a cluster of a dozen or so thick tentacles. They normally drift benignly down the corridors, carried along on the random drafts of air which whistle through the hive. Porters will not grasp loads unless the tentacles are touched or prodded, in which case they will wrap around whatever they encounter. Once they have grabbed their cargo, Porters may be directed by tugging on tentacles to move them in the correct direction (struggling characters will cause the porter to move in random directions). The cargo may be dislodged with a sharp tug (thus a struggling character may be suddenly dropped on their head).

Porters move slowly (about four squares per turn), but steadily, and long distances may be traversed in this manner without fatigue as they can float up to ceiling passages, cause all doors to open for them, etc.



Teleport Node

The fastest method of transportation in the hive is a small, circular chamber (it will hold up to three player characters) which, when it is entered and its iris-door closes, will instantly teleport its occupants to another part of the hiveship. Use this to split up the party — as a puzzle — (in which case, do not teleport the victims too far), to rapidly move the party though the hive, or to transport the characters into the Queen's chamber for the final confrontation.

If the party is split up, allow them to find each other after only one or two encounters (you will find that GMing a split party is very challenging). Also, if no party member remembers to use their communicator, you may allow an Int check.

Tentacle Corridor (20/20/2 - transport) (4/0/2 (Vit 30) - combat)

Outwardly, this resembles a long, tubular corridor with hundreds of pale, yellowish tentacles hanging from the ceiling. The tentacles slowly move and twitch on their own, but seem to have no real function.

Characters who enter the tentacle corridor are immediately grabbed (Def 20 to avoid due to the number of tentacles), then passed down the tube from tentacle bunch to tentacle bunch, and rapidly transported (MR 20) to the other side. A Str (20) roll is required to break free. Once free, a character must cause 30 points of cumulative damage (or any one explosive charge) to clear out enough tentacles to avoid being grabbed again (tentacles only have a Def of 4). Physical weapons hitting for less than 30 Dmg will be grabbed with Str (20) and then passed on down the corridor.

Transport Tube

Lateral transport within the hive is carried out by these long, intestine-like tubes. If the team encounters any such tubes, they may be in the walls (and suddenly eject a horde of Kryll warriors), or they may be at the end of a corridor, in which case the team must enter or turn back.

If the team enters a transport tube, they will find that the tube is soft and yielding, and coated with a slick slime intended to reduce friction (Dex(20) to stand). As soon as a character gets into the tube, a muscular peristaltic contraction will immediately propel them down the length of the tube (a disturbing experience to say the least). At the end of the tube, the PC will either be deposited in another corridor, or the powerful peristaltic action will literally "spit" the character out, to fly through the air and land in a bed of soft, gently moving cilia. There should be no damage or other ill effects from the revolting experience.

Tunnelworm

Many of the hive tunnels are living things. As the team walks through a tunnelworm, each end can suddenly closes off and the worm can undulate and writhe along for several minutes (knocking characters to the floor — Dex(15). Eventually the worm will settle in a new area. At this point, the PCs may come under attack, have to deal with a completely new set of circumstances, etc. Also, having a tunnelworm behind the team close off and remove itself is a good way to prevent them from going back the way they came, and forcing them to deal with a dangerous or challenging location ahead of them.

Vertical Tube

Up and down movement is carried out in a number of ways in the hive, but vertical tubes are the most common. These tubes open when pressure is applied to their outside ring, thus they can be triggered by accidental foot fall. Inside, they resemble long, fleshy tunnels lined with soft spines. Characters are unlikely to enter such a portal willingly, so introduce one by having it open up beneath a PC as they walk over it.

The spikes are rubbery, with jointed bases, and act to slow the descent of a body moving down. Individuals going up in a tube will be pulled along by the soft spines. Most tubes are too small to admit more than one passenger at a time.

Wing-Fungi

Often, large chasms appear within the hiveship as the organic architecture of the interior changes. Kryll warriors can easily scuttle along walls and ceilings, so this presents little problem to them. In some cases, however, the chasm is too wide to be easily crossed, or access is required by less capable castes such as farmers, translators, etc. In such cases, flying life forms known as wing-fungi are used to quickly span even the widest opening.

Characters who encounter such a chasm may be hard-pressed to make their way across, especially if they are under attack. If the team is in such a position, make Awa (10) rolls. Tell those players who succeed that their characters see a number of fleshy, wing-shaped objects attached to the wall nearby. If the players do not figure out the wings' function, make Int (12) rolls to see if the characters think of grabbing the wings and using them like gliders.

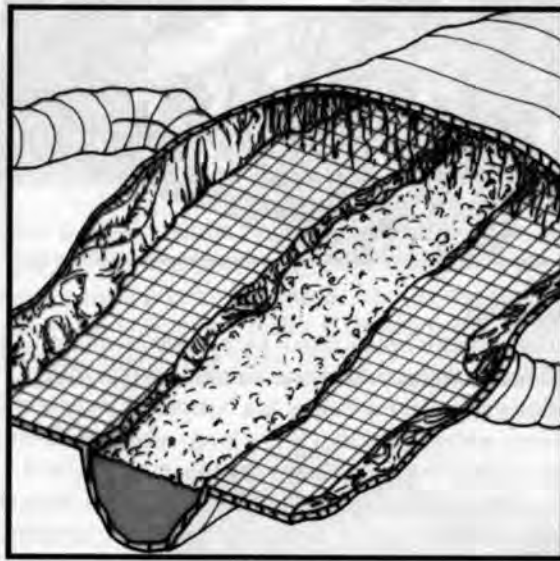
Flying the fungi across the chasm is Dex (Dif 1 for every square flown) if the character jumps off of a high spot (high spots exist on both sides) otherwise the Dif is 5 times the number of squares. Chasms are typically 3-8 squares across. Failure indicates loss of control, stalls, crashes, or other disasters. Critical failure results in a fall to the bottom of the chasm (see *RB, Hazards*).

Special Rooms and Locations

The hive is more than endless fleshy corridors. It is also full of various, specialized rooms and special areas, each of which serves some important function. Some are harmless, others dangerous, and still others downright alien and incomprehensible.

A variety of rooms is described below, but add your own if you like. Maps and statistics for encounters in each room are provided.

- Acid Room
- Bonebridge
- Digestive Room
- Encysted Creature
- Farm
- Hatchery
- Lymphatic "River"
- Nursery
- Storage Cysts



Acid Room

This is a "puzzle" room, which the team must solve in order to continue the mission. When they enter, the door behind closes, and a tunnel worm removes the passage, sealing the portal permanently.

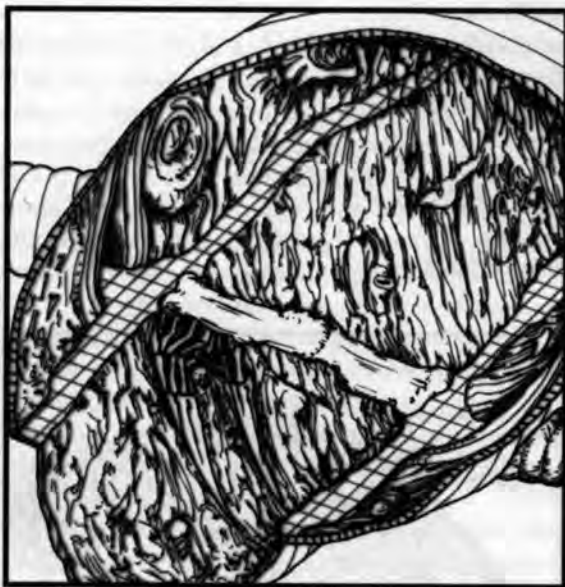
In front of the party is a deep trench, full of digestive acid. Any small objects thrown into the trench will be broken down almost instantly. A character diving or falling into the trench will take 20 points of damage per round. Only sealed full armor and natural armor rolls are allowed, but the first time armor fails, it is corroded away and destroyed.

A number of long, pinkish tentacles hang from the ceiling. Although the team will probably worry about them grabbing characters and tossing them into the acid, they actually will not. This does not mean to let the

Assault on the Hive

players off the hook, however. Instead, allow them to worry, and have the tentacles make various suspicious twitches and movements.

There are several ways that team members can get across the pit — *displace* or other Sorce powers, turbo- or jump-packs, swimming across (very hazardous), or by swinging across on the tentacles (Str 10 to hold on and Dex (10) to maneuver across. Jumping across is the most difficult action, with a Speed Dif of 25.



Bonebridge

The corridor opens into a high, deep chamber filled with hot air, rising columns of steam and splashing, squishing sounds. Far below is a lymphatic river and the only way across the obstacle is a long, relatively narrow bridge built of bone, chitinous organic material, and gristle. The PCs may decide to turn back rather than risk the bridge, but you may want to block off the corridor behind them to prevent this.

Negotiating the bridge will require Dex rolls equal to 5 times the number of squares the character tries to move in a round. Failure indicates that the team member slips and may make a Dex (same Dif) roll to grab hold of the bridge's side and dangle from the edge, requiring rescue or a Str (6) to pull oneself up. Critical failure negates the chance to grab hold of the edge.

The real challenge is not walking the bridge, but dealing with the Kryll who appear at either end as the team is maneuvering across.

6 Kryll Warriors: 8/18/8

2 Kryll Guardians: 15/25/10

A kryll guardian appears at both sides of the bridge simultaneously, and slowly moves to attack. The normal Kryll will make an ambush attack from above and below.

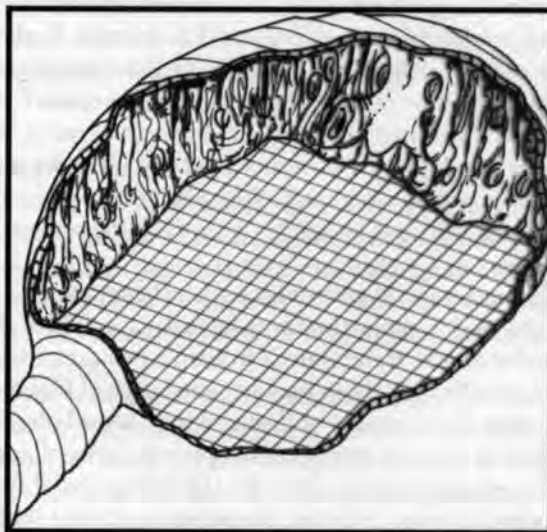
Hand to hand fighting on the bridge is somewhat difficult for non-kryll. If a character fails to hit, he or she should roll Dex (6) to stay on the bridge. Otherwise, the character falls (as above).

A character who falls will only suffer 15 points of falling damage due to the river below. However, they must then attend to the hazards of the lymphatic river as described below. For added flavor, place a small island in the river not far from where a character falls in. Climbing the walls of the chasm is a *climbing* or Dex related Dif 10.

Players will want to know how to push Kryll off the bridge. Roll a grab attack (see *EM, natural weapons*). If successful a Str check must be made versus the Krylls Str to push the Kryll off. Depending upon the amount of success of the Str check, the Kryll will cling to the bridge (and crawl back on) or fall into the river below (and slowly crawl out and up the walls).

The Kryll have a number of tactics they can use in this fight. They can use their clinging abilities to crawl beneath the bridge while their fellows keep the PCs occupied, and attack from a flank with surprise (Shock rolls required, Dif 12-14). They may stand off and shoot, use lift pods to hover in the air while they fire bellyguns, throw vinespears, or they may simply charge in, attempting to spill the PCs off the bridge.

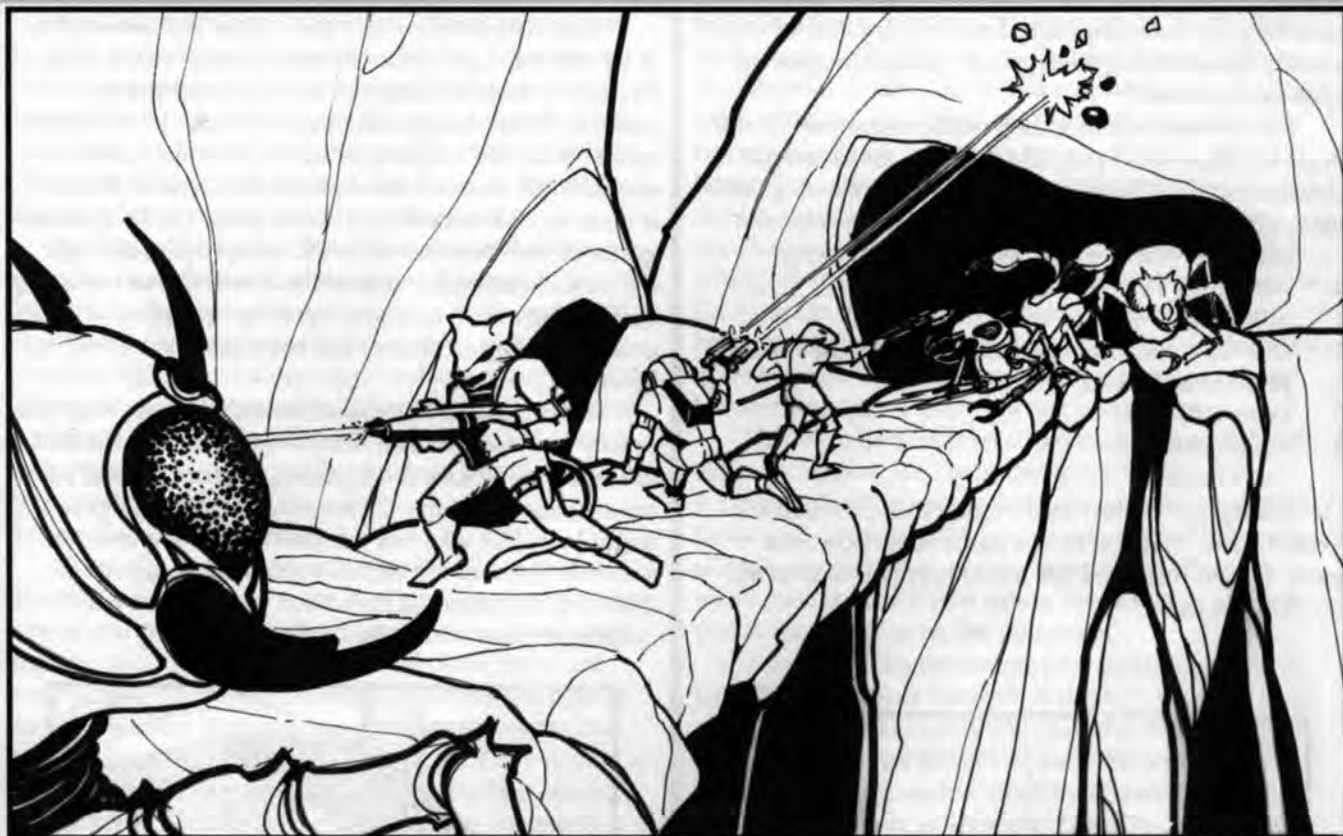
Characters might also be able to find wing-fungi and do some aerial combat themselves. The bone-bridge is intended to be a major battle, so don't be afraid to improvise or throw some unusual challenges at the team.



Digestive Room

This is a hazardous room, so be certain to provide the team with some routes of escape. Food, detritus, dead bodies and organic debris are tossed here by workers and maintenance creatures, to be saturated with digestive fluids and digested by the hiveship.

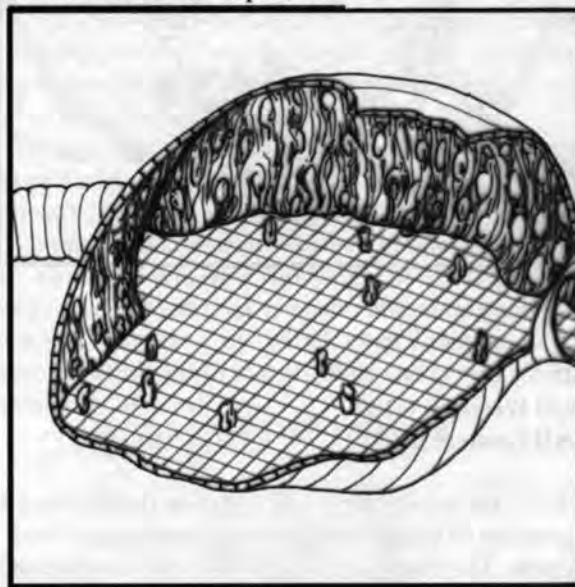
Assault on the Hive



If the team enters this room, the door squeezes shut behind them, and a rain of mild acid begins to fall from the porous ceiling. The door is heavily armored against the acidic secretions, and must take 100 points of damage from a single attack in order to open. As the characters search for a way out, the acid slowly grows stronger and stronger. For the first four rounds, the acid causes itching, discoloration of metal, and damages fabric, but does not inflict any permanent damage to flesh. The next four rounds, the acid causes six points of damage (only full and natural armor rolls are allowed). The next four rounds damage rises to 12 points (rolls for non-sealed full armor are reduced by -1d). Each round that armor checks fail, the armor's AR is reduced by -1d. Armor reduced to 0 AR is, of course, destroyed and useless.

The floor of this room is white with numerous red circles (randomly color in squares on the game board). After 12 rounds, round digestive irises in the floor open up (the red circles), allowing acid and digested material to slide into them. Characters in the same square as an iris must make Spe (15) rolls to jump off of the square, characters within one square must roll Dex (12) or slip into the iris. Characters who fall into the iris take 20 points of damage each round. As above, partial armor is useless, while full armor loses -1d each time it fails. The irises are Str (Dif 18) to climb out of. Characters who wish to help others who have fallen into the irises may combine (cat) their Str with the victim's.

Let the team search for an escape route while this happens. If anyone is seriously wounded, lower the acid to four or eight points of damage, etc. Reward innovative escape plans with APs. Finally, if the team is at a total loss, have a travel tube open, etc.



Encysted Creature

The Kryll have "collected" several life-forms from throughout their travels. Several dangerous creatures have been stored in this room, in tough, fleshy cysts. Be

Assault on the Hive

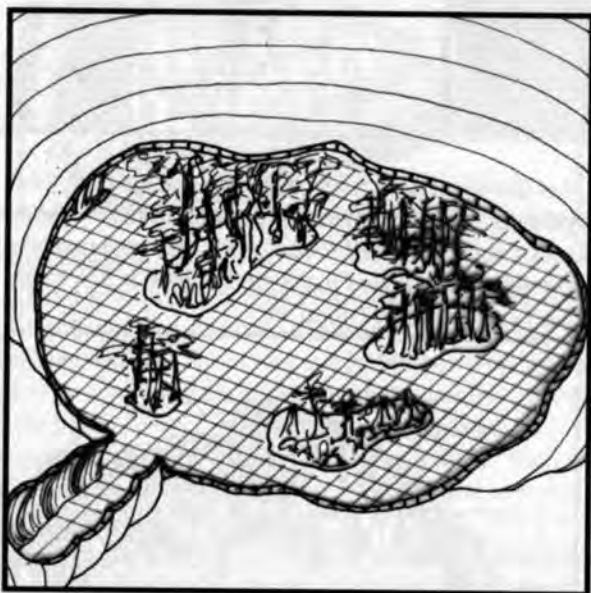
sure the party has encountered an encysted item of value already (thus making them greedy enough to open up cysts in this room).

When a cyst is approached within one square, it will begin to bulge, split open, and a dangerous alien will clamber out (and likely attack). During the ensuing battle, other cysts will likely be activated in a similar manner.

Encysted creatures may include the following:

- 4 kurg (8/8/12)
- 1 mBari (16/26/8)
- 1 shar-ka in the form of an anthropos female who will plead to be "saved" (16/20/16)
- 3 skrak (10/10/8)
- 2 Xaltir (16/16/6).

A large cyst at the room's center could contain a Yrrax (16/35/5) if you have a particularly powerful party. Specifics on these life forms may be found in the *SG, NPC life forms*.



Farm

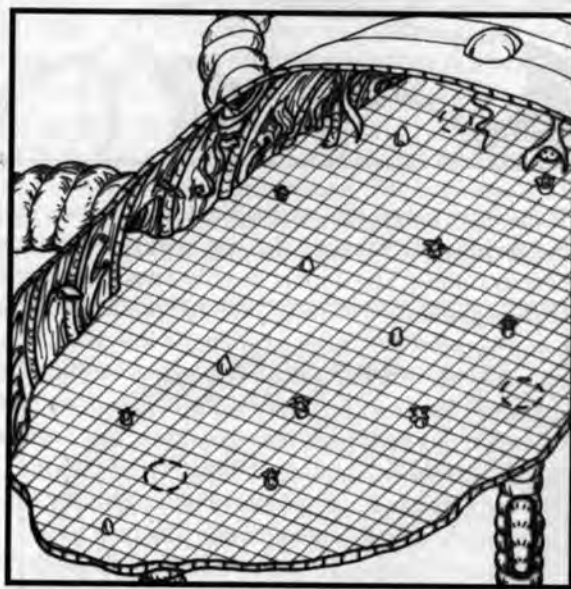
2 Kryll Warriors: 8/18/8

4 Kryll Farmers: 6/4/12

Kryll are omnivorous, and maintain these rooms for the growing of various food sources, both animal and vegetable. Their food animals (such as the free-roaming cattlebug) are stupid, and slow- or non-moving with huge body mass. Food-plants include fungi, fast-growing molds, legumes and tuber-like plants.

Farm chambers are also quite large, and are brightly lit by bulbous light-organs scattered across the ceiling. The rooms look like jungles, crammed with plants, mushroom-like fungi, root crops, and pale, fat insectoid creatures slowly creeping along the floor and walls. A couple Kryll warriors stand guard, but most of the work is done by members of the Farmer caste. The Farmers will go about their business if the PCs simply pass through the farm chamber, but will attack if the PCs start shooting or inflicting massive damage (pulling up a plant or two, or investigating an animal will not trigger an attack, however).

The PCs may simply pass through the farm chamber, or they may want to take samples or even taste some of the food items. None are especially dangerous, and a few are actually quite tasty. To keep things interesting, you might have PCs who test the food roll FR 8 or become violently ill (vomiting etc), but with no lasting effects. After this adventure, certain Kryll food species will become popular within the Guild.



Hatchery

5 Kryll Warriors: 8/18/8

10 Workers: 6/8/4

The brood queen is the only fertile female in the hive, and she produces hundreds of eggs each day. Once she has laid her eggs, they remain in her egg chamber for a few hours while the outside skin hardens, and then they are transported by workers to a room such as this, where temperature and humidity are carefully monitored, and small Kryll grubs eventually hatch out. At this point, the grubs are transported to a nursery (see below) where they are cared for by nursemaid-caste Kryll and defended by warriors.

Assault on the Hive

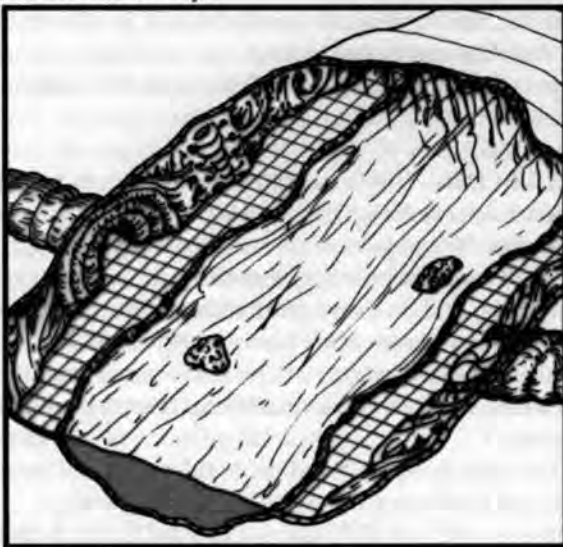
The hatchery is one of the most important rooms in the hive, and is always well defended by kryll warriors. Characters entering the hatchery will see a vast, warm, dimly lit chamber with tall, rib-like wall supports rising up into the darkness. The room is full of whitish, spherical objects, with various organs and nodes in the walls, pulsating and spraying a fine mist into the air.

Kryll warriors defend hatcheries, but will never use ranged weapons for fear of damaging the eggs. If the PCs decide to make a stand in the hatchery, more and more Kryll and their maintenance and combat creatures will enter and fight. Should any eggs be damaged or if the PCs use ranged weapons, pheromonal alarms will go off (a sticky sweet smell), and 1-3 guardians (based upon party's strength) will immediately drop into the room via horizontal tube, liftpod, etc.

1-3 Kryll Guardians: 15/25/10

Generally, the best response for the PCs in such a situation is to withdraw from the Hatchery by one of the several exit portals available (vertical tubes, travel tubes, liftpods, etc.). Continued combat will draw more and more Kryll to the room, desperate to defend the eggs. If the team persists in remaining in the room despite the growing opposition, make Int rolls to see if any character gets the idea and decides that retreat is the best option. Dog headed characters who remain in this room will eventually be overwhelmed and slain.

If the party isn't too beaten up, a fun follow-up to this room is the ensuing chase as the party tries to get away from the horde of Kryll.



Lymphatic "River"

The hive is filled with rivers of lymphatic fluid, which can be traversed by means of living "biobarges" (bloated blobs of cartilage and gristle). Should the PCs encounter such a river, describe it as a wide, yellow, sluggishly moving body, with various sized masses of

biological tissue drifting with the current. There are few light organs in these areas, so the light is even dimmer than normal. Eventually, a biobarge large enough for the team will float up to them, allowing the characters to board and follow its flow for quite a distance. As the barge floats slowly through the dark, intestine-like cavern, consider throwing in an ambush by ceiling-crawling Kryll, have the barge approach a dead end whirlpool (those sucked under must hold their breaths for 5 rounds until the barge surfaces in another river), or have the barge go over a lymphatic water fall (those who don't hang on Str(15) must be recovered at the bottom. Use the map above to lay out any encounters.

The Lymphatic system also contains various organisms whose job it is to keep the "rivers" clean. These lymphatic "fish" are irregularly shaped masses of stringy tissue and cartilage, with large, nasty teeth. The queen might transmit orders to them to attack the party, in which case they will start eating the biobarge, and when that is gone, start in on the characters.

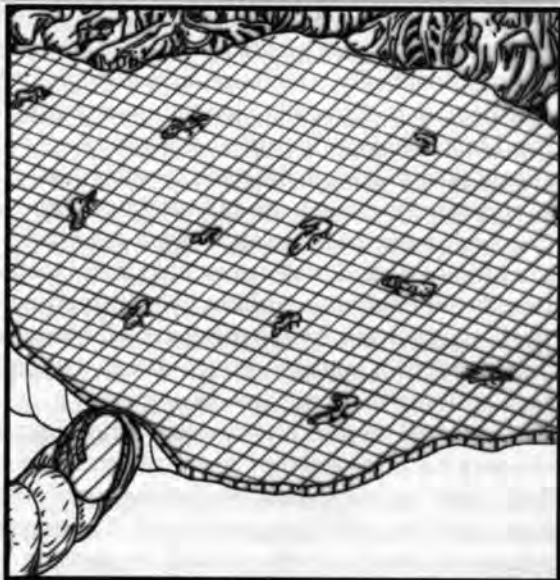
Swimming rolls are required for unarmored characters (Dif 8) to propel themselves through the thick fluid, while armored characters will sink and drown without life support. Sealed armor will keep the individual from drowning, but the added weight will sink them to the bottom where they will tumble along like a stone on a river's bed (a good puzzle to overcome — how to get out). Such individuals will be blind under the fluid, and may have to fight the "fish." The fish are not especially dangerous (6/6/4), but in large numbers they can make life difficult.

Give the team a break if they go into the drink, for the rather unpleasant nature of the experience is probably bad enough without having to worry about drowning or being eaten. Let them work at it for awhile, then allow them to get to "shore."

Doused characters will be covered with a yellowish crust and will smell unpleasant for the remainder of the adventure (Zin-Shee will be especially upset by this). If the lymphatic residue is not scraped or washed off in some manner, it will slow movement of doused characters by one due to its crusty, almost chitinous quality. Full armor will be reduced by -1d MR even if cleaned (until it can be disassembled so that all joints and cervos can be meticulously washed).



Assault on the Hive



Nursery

5 Kryll Warriors: 8/18/8

6 Kryll Nursemaids: 6/6/10

After grubs have hatched, they are taken by nursemaid Kryll to nurseries, where they are fed and cared for until they are old enough to begin their jobs in the hive. Nurseries are much like Hatcheries — hot and humid with organs keeping the air moist. These rooms are dimly lit, and are protected by numerous Kryll warrior guards.

The room is filled, however, with white, wriggling wormlike creatures, tended by Kryll nursemaids. Nursemaids will not fight, but entering a Nursery will trigger the same response as in the Hatchery.

Storage Cysts

The Kryll store various items found in their travels in cyst-like bubbles, hoping to eventually figure them out and duplicate them using biotechnology. Cysts are only occasionally found, but may be anywhere (in rooms, along corridors, hanging from ceilings, in the side of chasms, etc.

As this hiveship has done a lot of traveling, a goodly number of interesting items are stored in such cysts, along with various mundane and incomprehensibly alien objects.

Cysts are covered in a tough membrane of semi-opaque material and tend to glow with an inner light. To discover the contents, the membrane must be slit open releasing the gelatinous slime within (the slime is harmless, used to protect the item from aging, but the experience can be repulsive). Below are some suitable items for the team to find. You should also create cysts with mundane objects in them as well.

1. Aerolk Mindblock. Shaped like a circlet the size of an Anthropos' head, this device grants its wearer 10H defense against psionic attacks.

2. Ancient Armor. There is a suit of full-tech armor in this cyst. It does not look familiar to any characters (although Shanask will refuse to discuss it), but is capable of holding a single Anthropos-sized character. The armor is, indeed, very old, and is semi-autonomous.

The armor communicates empathically with its owner, helping to warn of danger (+2d to Awa while the suit is worn), automatically stops Vit drain if the owner's Vitality goes below zero, and, if equipped with slap packs (up to 3), can automatically inject them if the owner loses consciousness.

Besides these the armor comes with the following enhancements: compensators, two internal hard points, internal environment, sealed, targeting computer, biometer kit, communicator kit, macrovisor kit, and palmstore kit.

The armor's stats are as follows:

Tech	Cr	AP	IC	Base	Enc
6M	artf	16	8	NDef-3d	120/0

3. Android. A bipedal android of alien design is encysted here. If freed, it will imprint upon the first being it sees, instantly absorbing its language. The android is self-willed, but its programming makes it loyal to the first individual it encounters.

The android says it has no name, or memory of who created it, but it will make a useful friend. Its ratings are 10L/8M/6M and it is equipped with an alien pulse weapon. Select up to four useful skills for the android to possess.

4. Lift Disk. This is a circular device approximately 30 inches across. A normal-sized biped can easily stand on the disk. The object can move its passenger at high speed (20) and with mastery can allow a character to move, fight, and do many other things while standing on it. It flies a maximum of six feet off the ground, and can carry any single character who is not wearing bulky armor (i.e., this disk is not suitable for marine or destron characters).

The disk operates based on its rider's mental emanations, and is at first difficult to control. Each action requires an WP roll at different difficulty levels, as listed on the following chart. Once the WP roll has succeeded, however, the owner can make that action freely in the future.

Assault on the Hive

Action	Dif	
Rise	6	
Move MR 6	10	
Move MR 12	20	
Move MR 20	40	
Turn left	8	
Turn right	8	
Stop	5	
Shoot while moving		Dex 15
Melee combat while moving		Dex 20

5. Artifact. An artifact as listed on the tech equipment table *EM*, tech equipment.

6. Plasma Cannon. This heavy weapon leaves the more traditional Arthirian Turbo-Plaz in the dust. Also of ancient manufacture, the Plasma Cannon is designed for a being somewhat larger than an Anthropos, but it can still be handled by those with Str 6M or greater. It uses the following statistics.

Tech	Cr	AP	IC	Base	Dmg	Enc	Range
10M	Artf	45	25	Ranged	-5d	10H* 90	15

* The Plasma Cannon can be set to fire off one of the following charges, after which the cannon must rebuild its charge and is useless for the next five rounds.

Explosion (6LVx)
Autofire (8MV)

7. Psi-Band. This armband-shaped object is, on the surface, a psionic enhancer, which grants its wearer (regardless of race), the following psionic skills: *minor telepathy, landing, hurl*. All these operate at a skill rating equal to the user's Int, and each may be used once per hour.

Outwardly, this item is a useful little device. It has more sinister applications which will come into play if you run *Into the Horde Wall*, the next adventure module from The Game Lords™, Ltd.

8. Tech Axe. This appears to be a very old device, of possibly alien manufacture. It functions as a normal axe (8M damage, etc.), but if connected to a power source it radiates energy, causing 6H damage.

Life Forms and Traps

The Queen's warriors are not the only means of defense for the hive. The slimy, pulsating corridors of the hiveship are full of potentially dangerous traps, some set deliberately to foil attackers, others existing as a natural part of the hive. As the life forms of the hive, and its various traps and defenses are virtually indistinguishable, both are listed together. Those life forms which require statistics are listed normally.

Feel free to come up with more varied and horrific traps to spring on the players, using these as guides. If you are feeling generous, allow the lead character or two an Awa roll (Dif 10-20) to spot the trap before the team blunders into it.

Also feel free to have the team encounter more than one of the following beasts at a time. This will avoid the danger of players growing bored from fighting the same creature with the same statistics, and enables you to provide a greater challenge to stronger characters.

- Acid Spray
- Auto Defense Organism
- Bugs
- Cattlebug
- Cleaner
- Crusher
- Entangler
- Living Tank
- Living Weapons
- Other Kryll
- Pit Creature
- Predator
- Puffball
- Scavenger
- Shocker
- Slimeworm
- Sprayer
- Techmites



Assault on the Hive

Acid Spray

Organic acid is spewed into the corridor in a fine mist as the team walks by. The first two team members must make Spe (18) rolls to leap out of the way, while the remainder of the group makes Spe (12) rolls. Those who succeed take 8 points of damage. Those who fail take 18 points of damage from the burning spray. Any rolls of natural "1" indicate damage to a PC's armor (-1d AR).

Auto Defense Organism (12/18/4)

A tentacled creature is hidden in a bulging cyst or iris-portal in the wall or ceiling of the corridor. Anyone who walks past it must make a Shock (12) roll or suffer a -1c penalty on the first defense roll vs. the tentacles. The creature attacks at 12. If it hits, the tentacles have struck the victim. The creature then attempts to drag the victim back into its lair (Str 18). If the victim is dragged in, the hole closes (sealing victim and creature in the lair), and the creature attacks with claws and beak.

A character's team members may attempt to force open or cut through the hole's covering requiring a Str (30) check or a single blow of 40 points of damage.

Bugs

The corridor is full of pulpy, white pods. If the team walks near them, the pods will split open and emit swarms of tiny, viciously-biting bugs. If characters shoot the pods before passing them, the remaining pods will open and the bugs will attack. A swarm of bugs will attempt to envelop each character.

The bugs are part of the cleaning and defense system of the hiveship. In addition to biting, they emit a caustic substance. If a swarm attempts to envelop a character there is no defense short of running (bugs' MR is 8). If a character is covered, the bugs inflict 8 points of damage per round, natural armor only (full sealed armor is completely invulnerable to the bugs).

The bugs may be removed by using an area effect weapon such as an explosion, hydroflamer, etc. (all bugs within the area of effect will be instantly killed — likely causing Dmg to the character). Normal weapons may kill dozens of individual bugs, but this will have no significant effect upon the total swarm. The only other defense is to drop onto the floor and coat oneself in the slimy ichor trickling down the passage.

If team members attempt to walk slowly and softly near the pods, have each character roll Dex (8). Success indicates that the character has successfully avoided setting off the pods.

Cattlebug (4/4/4 (Vit 20))

This harmless creature roams the corridors of the hive, consuming various pieces of detritus, keeping the hive clean, and growing fatter and fatter. Initially, it

appears to be a soft-bodied grub with long, segmented legs and a rather bovine face. After a time, it grows into a huge, white, puffy creature which can barely inch along. At this point, it is killed and consumed by hive creatures.

The cattlebug will take no offensive action, but will crawl along and make gentle bleating sounds. It may actually decide it likes the PCs and start following them around.

Cleaner (8/8/2 (AR 24))

Cleaners are large beetles with tough carapaces and rasping mouthparts resembling a belt sander.

This beast normally scuttles along walls and floors cleaning up organic waste and keeping things operating efficiently. As the PCs are foreign objects, however, cleaners will recognize them as detritus in need of scrubbing. Unfortunately for the PCs, a cleaner's scrubbing can inflict serious damage.

Crusher

The muscular corridor section here may contract, crushing anything it catches. PCs must make Spe (15) rolls in order to jump away from the crushing action. Characters who fail must make Str (15) checks each round. Failure results in damage equal to the amount of the failure. Success indicates how many feet (5 feet per square) the character may move (until free).

An especially nasty trick would be to have the Kryll attack while the PCs are trying to free themselves.



Entangler (16/20/1 (Def 0, Dmg 0)) (wire (4/20/0))

This creature acts as a sort of living trip-wire. It normally appears to be just another beehive-shaped cyst sticking up out of the floor, but as soon as an intruder walks past it, the entangler shoots out a long, wire-like appendage, which wraps around the character's leg and trips them. The victim must roll Def (16) to avoid being hit, and a Dex (18) roll to avoid falling. The entangler can then reel in its victim with a Str of 20.

Normally, this creature would not be terribly dangerous, but entanglers are often located in strategic areas. Sometimes, there will be a pit or chasm between the entangler and its victim, and the creature will attempt to "reel" in its entangler wire, dragging the victim to their doom. Entangled PCs may make a Str (20) roll to break free each round.

Sometimes, two entanglers will attack a victim simultaneously, and try to tear their prey in half. In this case, the victim must make a Str (20) check each round to break free. Failure results in damage equal to the amount of the failure.

Living Tank (6/24/4 (Atk 12))

The Kryll, of course, use living organisms as vehicles as well as for other purposes. This creature looks like a large boulder with a number of upright spikes along its back. It attacks by firing javelin-like spikes.

Living Weapons

As resistance grows, the Kryll may bring up several of their more exotic weapons. These include living mortars (spherical bodies on four spindly legs which shoot slimy acid-shells 12/16/4 (16x Dmg)), shock beasts (emit a bolt of natural electricity 14/18/4), and living tanks (see above).

Other Kryll

The Kryll are the masters of the hive, but even they have their own hierarchy. Warriors and guardians are only two of the many different types of Kryll. Each Kryll caste serves a distinct function within the hive, and some examples of non-warrior Kryll encounters are listed below.

1. Herder (6/16/6). Larger, armored like a warrior, but relatively non-aggressive, herders take care of the cattlebugs, maintenance creatures, and other free-roaming biotech items throughout the hive. Herders make sure that their creatures are well fed, performing their jobs adequately and in good health. They also kill any organisms which are not functional, or are overpopu-

lated. They will not fight PCs unless they threaten their herd, in which case the herder may prove a dangerous opponent, using its slaughter-claws as weapons.

When encountered, a herder will be seeing to a small group of two or three cattlebugs, or herding along a swarm of smaller maintenance creatures. It will immediately see the PCs as more herd animals and try to herd them in a random direction.

2. Translator (16/4/16). This caste is one of the most important. They resemble workers with very large heads, and are relatively intelligent. Their job is to receive telepathic messages from the Queen, and transmit her orders pheromonally when there is a great distance between a group of Kryll and their hive. Translators always accompany groups of Kryll which leave the hive. The Queen's telepathic range is considerable (several hundred miles), but can cause problems, such as now, when a Kryll fleet is sent out with orders to attack, and goes beyond communication range. After the Kryll join the Guild, translators will become very useful, for they will be able to mimic Guildspeak and other Guild languages.

When PCs encounter a translator, it will take no offensive action, but will stare at them curiously, making random noises which might be interpreted as language. They may play with this for a while, but they will not be able to do more than persuade the translator to repeat a few fragmented phrases.

3. Sentry (6/4/10 (Vit 12)). Intended primarily to watch corridors and send pheromonal and hypersonic alarms out to nearby warriors, sentries have limited offensive capabilities, but can selflessly destroy themselves in an explosion of caustic tissue and fluids.

Sentries resemble tall, upright creatures with brown, stalk-like bodies and large, fleshy heads. If they catch sight of invaders, sentries emit an ultra high-pitched sound, and send out urgent pheromonal signals. If a sentry is encountered, it will attract two Kryll warriors (8/18/8) each round until it is killed.

If a sentry is close to death, it can trigger a biofeedback process by which it detonates itself, setting off a substantial explosion which damages enemies through concussion and a rain of caustic material (30x Dmg).

4. Worker (6/8/4). "Ordinary" Kryll, workers are by far the most common caste. They do not fight, and have only minimal statistics. They normally do menial tasks around the hive. They look like large, soft-bodied versions of Kryll warriors, with multiple manipulative claws near the front of the body. They cannot carry weapons, and use biotech only to help them fulfill their normal duties.

Assault on the Hive

If the team encounters one or more workers, the creatures will not attack, but will approach, analyze the PCs and try to figure out what is "wrong" with them. The workers will then try to take pieces of equipment, armor, etc., off to be encysted for future study. Workers may even try to "fix" player characters, trying to reprogram them with pheromonal messages. This will be relatively incomprehensible to the characters but numerous strange smells will result.

Pit Creature

The hive is full of toothy, organic pits used for disposal of waste. The PC must make a Sped (12) roll in order to avoid falling into one of these horrors. Each turn after falling in, the pit-mouth inflicts 15 points of damage (armor save is allowed) Str (20) to get out. The pit may be "killed" (automatic hit, AR 12, Vit 50) by the victim's fellows or deactivated by activating a small red node found on the nearby wall (biotech (8)). Small items — guns, techwands, hand computers, etc. — dropped into the pit (or dislodged during the struggle) are eaten and considered permanently lost.

Predator (20/16/6 (MR 12))

These creatures are normally created by the Queen when numbers of maintenance creatures are getting too high and need to be culled. They can, however, be used to defend the hive, in which case their mindless kill-and-eat instinct is a deadly asset. As a predator grows, its metabolism gets steadily faster and faster, and it must eat more and more often. Eventually (within a week or so),

the predator is unable to eat enough and literally starves to death. Predators are also biochemically programmed not to feed on Kryll castes, attacking only non-Kryll maintenance species and invaders (thus, kryll PCs will be avoided).

Predators are large bipedal hunch backed creatures with two heavy arms ending in wicked spikes. They are amazingly fast and agile for all their bulk.

Puffball

These are small, round, porous growths which emit various clouds of spores. Puffballs may emit spores if touched, if disturbed by the vibration of walking (Dex 12 to avoid), or simply if something approaches them. Roll a d6 to determine the nature of the spores.

1. Acid Spores. A cloud of acidic spores explodes from the puffball. Team members must make Def (12) rolls to avoid the spores. Those who fail take 12 points of damage. Armor rolls are allowed for natural and full armor only.

2. Allergenic Spores. Spores cause intense allergic reaction. Team members must make FR(15) rolls every ten or fifteen minutes for the next hour or so. Failure results in a loud burst of sneezes which will invariably bring 1-2 kryll warriors (8/18/8) to attack within the next several rounds.

3. Exploding Puffball. The puffball explodes, inflicting 20x points of damage. See *Rule Book* for details on jumping out of the way of an explosion. These puffballs occur in patches of up to 20 individuals, and the explosion of one often sets off the others. (This is more for color and excitement than anything else; don't allow an explosive puffball patch to wipe out the party!) Afterwards, several warriors (8/18/8) and a guardian (15/25/10) are likely to investigate.

4. Living Spores. The spores cover clothing, armor, equipment, etc. and immediately germinate, sprouting more puffballs. The effect is not immediately dangerous (other than having puffballs all over one's armor, etc.), but the young puffballs are shaggy and green, making germinated characters look as if they are covered with green alfalfa sprouts. A side effect of this is that Cattlebugs *love* the young puffballs, and will follow the PCs around in large numbers, bleating, and trying to take a bite.

As might be gathered, this encounter can be played up for laughs, a useful method for breaking tension or lightening the overall mood.



Assault on the Hive

5. Normal Spores. Sticky powder billows from the puffball. It covers clothes and armor, obscures vision, adheres to visors and gets into the workings of weapons, devices, etc. It will take at least 15 minutes to clean the spores from everything, or else items will not work properly (-1d penalties, random malfunctions, etc.).

6. Quills. Large, nasty-looking spikes shoot out of the puffball. Attack and damage are 15 to the closest PC, 12 to the next closest, and 8 to the next.

Scavenger (6/20/3 (Vit 120))

Slow moving but powerful, scavengers consume large dead maintenance animals, and even Kryll. They are very efficient, and store most of the consumed tissue, before they, themselves are killed and recycled into the hiveworld's digestive system. Scavengers will attack the party rather ponderously, but their attacks can be devastating.

Scavengers start out life looking like millipedes, but rapidly gain bulk, eventually appearing as masses of pale, fleshy tissue crawling along on hundreds of tiny, seemingly ineffective legs.

Shocker

A massive discharge of organically-generated electricity from a storage gland strikes the party. Each party member must make a Def (16) roll. Those who succeed have flung themselves out of the way and take

only 6 points of damage (armor rolls are allowed). Those who fail are hit for 12 points of electrical damage, plus one for every point their roll failed by. Powered armor makes armor rolls at a -2d penalty.

Slimeworm

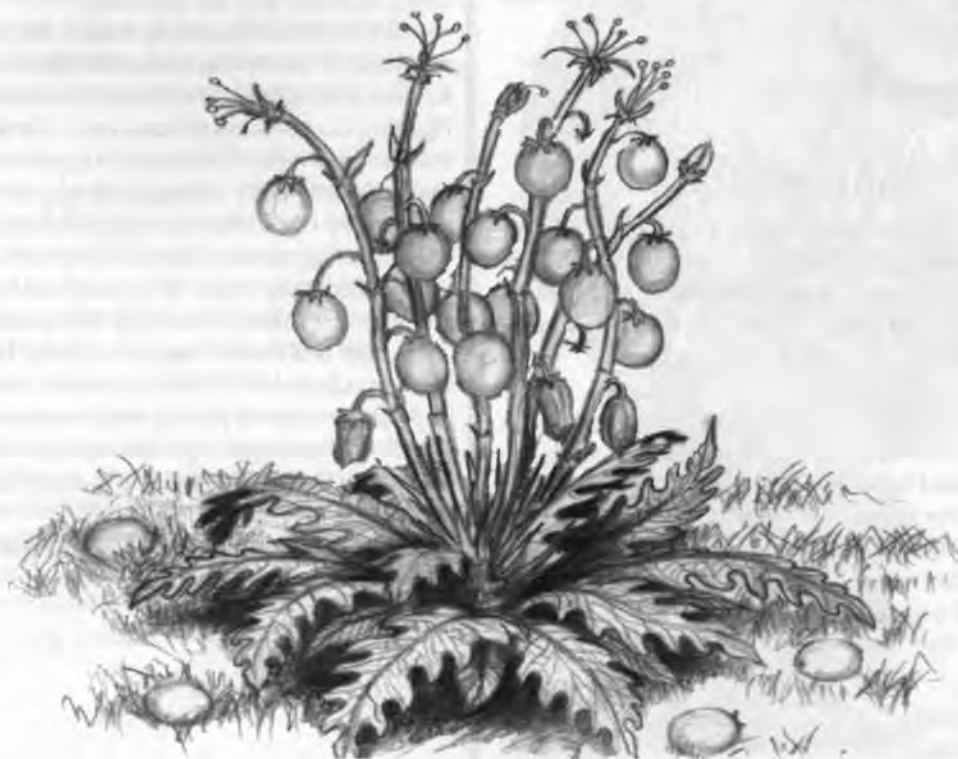
A segmented wormlike creature in the ceiling extends down, opens its soft mouth and vomits a mass of foul-smelling goo onto the character (Def 15). This goo is incredibly sticky and can suffocate a character, make suffocation rolls (see *RB, hazards*). Removing the goo requires quick sudden jerks (like tearing off toffee) Spe (20). Otherwise, it is almost impossible to get off.

Sprayer (8/15/2)

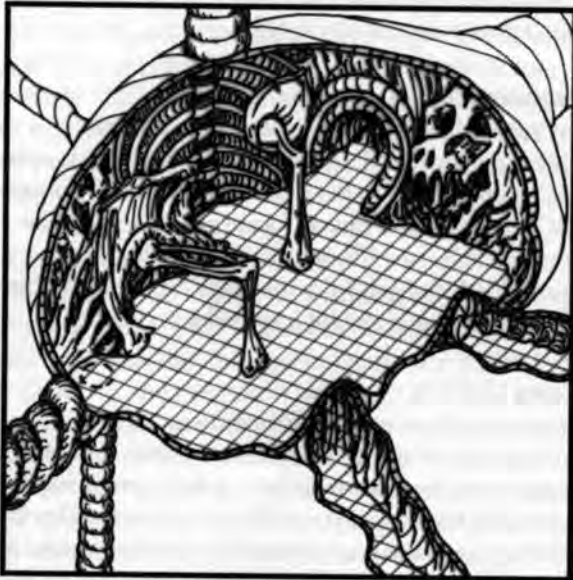
Sprayers often work in cooperation with cleaners, spraying acidic fluids to loosen dead tissue. Sprayers will likewise consider team-members to be a sort of super-infection, and start spraying. The spray causes 15 points of acid damage, and may be resisted only with natural or full armor.

Technites

Kryll use these tiny creatures to destroy technological items. A swarm of them attacks a randomly determined item carried by a PC. The PC must make an Awa (20) in order to detect the mites and scrape them off before they damage the item. Otherwise, when the character attempts to use the item, he or she discovers it is infested with tiny mites and is useless. The item is permanently destroyed.



3 — Meeting the Queen



Ending the Hunt

Eventually, you will want to let your players discover the Queen's chamber. This can come about in the course of normal play — the team is walking along a corridor, they come to a room and — presto! — they encounter the queen and her warriors. Other possibilities present themselves. A teleport nodule could land the party members in the chamber. A tunnel worm could inadvertently carry them there. A vertical tube could end up in or near the chamber, etc.

Regardless of the route, be sure and reserve at least an hour for the final confrontation and wrap-up.

The Final Confrontation

Your Dha team has come a long way. Left behind on Dha's first real mission, contacted by an ancient race, sent to battle insectoid aliens... Now, at last they have reached their objective, the Kryll egg chamber and the awesome Kryll brood-queen. Read the following out loud.

The air here is even more oppressive and heavy, laden with strange scents and alien sounds. The chamber is dim, with reddish light provided by bulbous organs in the walls and ceilings. The chamber is hung with fibrous growths — dark green, yellow and black. It is lined with Kryll warriors and workers — more than you can count. At the opposite end sits an enormous Kryll with a large head, heavy armor plates, and long, scimitar-like legs. Beside the huge Kryll stand two giant guardian Kryll.

Behind the huge Kryll is a vast, bulky white mass which pulsates and quivers as you watch, emitting large white capsules from one end. Smaller Kryll take the capsules and carry them from the chamber.

12 Elite Kryll Warriors: 12/18/8

30 Kryll Workers: 6/8/4

2 Elite Guardians: 20/30/10

6 Normal Guardians: 15/25/10

Unlike ordinary hive insects, the Kryll Queen need not be attached to her egg-laying organ. In this case, the egg-mass is separate, and the Queen simply injects genetic material into it to govern what kind of eggs it produces. While she is the only Kryll capable of doing this, the egg-mass can live on if she is killed. If it goes for more than three days without receiving an injection from the Queen, it will immediately produce a large egg which will hatch into a new queen.

By this time, of course, the characters will have figured out that they've reached their objective. As they decide what to do, the Queen raises a long, slender claw and points at them, clacking madly. The warriors in the room immediately move to attack while the workers scramble to clear eggs from the fray with the normal guardians forming a line to protect the eggs.

If the team holds up Shakna's crystal and calls out his name, nothing will happen immediately. Shakna will get there eventually, but he is currently still having trouble stabilizing the Shanask moon. Let them sweat it out for a few rounds, (maybe even deciding that Shakna lied to them, and that they are doomed).

The Kryll warriors will swarm the strongest team members. Weaker characters will have to fight only one Kryll at a time, so they will not be instantly slaughtered. Fighting here is hand to hand only, for the Kryll do not want to inadvertently injure the Queen or her eggs. If a player intentionally damages an egg, he or she will be attacked by one of the normal guardians.

If characters try to attack the Queen directly, they will immediately come up against her two powerful attendants. While it is unlikely (but possible) that the characters will defeat them, the Queen herself is even more invulnerable (20/60/16 (MR4)). She also has an impressive array of psionic abilities including a psi-blast (attack and damage as per her ratings). Although the party may injure the Queen, it is important that she not be killed.

Award bonus APs for especially daring or innovative attacks during this battle.

Shakna Returns

Let the melee proceed for a while, perhaps even knocking a character or two down. Then have Shakna appear. If a team member takes a particularly dramatic action with the crystal — such as using it as a weapon, throwing it at the Queen, etc. — have Shakna arrive in similarly dramatic fashion. For example, the crystal can shatter with a blinding light, knocking out all the Kryll and PCs, and when they regain consciousness, Shakna is there, confronting the Queen. At this point, all Kryll will cease fighting.

Shakna stands before the brood-queen, and you can virtually feel the awesome energies flashing unseen between the two of them. Here is a battle — Sorce and Psi — upon which your very existence hangs, but which you cannot even see.

After some time, there is a pause in the fray as both entities summon their power for the final onslaught.

"Now," Shakna's dry whisper sounds in your ears, "you will be destroyed — this fate awaits all who follow your evil path ..."

A clattering cry erupts from the queen. You do not understand the sound, but words echo in your mind — Shakna must be translating the Kryll language for you.

"Wait! We attacked only in self defense. Shanask, we no longer serve the Dark One..." To your surprise, her voice is soft and intelligent. You perceive a tone of what might almost be called sadness in her words. Is it possible, you wonder, that such an alien race can feel the same things that you feel? "Even now we flee our homeland to avoid his minions. We meant no harm. Please, let us explain..."

To your amazement, Shakna pauses. His hood swivels back and forth, scanning the chamber. Red eyes flare as his penetrating gaze passes over you. Then the Shanask turns back to the Queen.

Now, you can no longer understand the Queen. The two aliens converse for several minutes in the Kryll's language of clicks, buzzes and chirps. The warriors around you take no action — if you did not know better, you would think that they, too, were mesmerized by the drama being played out before you.

The conversation continues for several minutes, then Shakna raises an empty sleeve and the violet glow of the Shanask's Sorce power envelops both of them.

"There has been a grave error," Shakna says, turning to you. "I am among the most powerful of Shanask, yet it seems that even I can play the fool. I have misjudged the Kryll — they are not your enemies. Her eminence wishes to speak with you."

Again, enhanced by Shakna's Sorce energy, the Queen's words echo in your ears.

"We are not your enemies. Like Shakna, we have made a mistake. We wish to make amends."

The conversation proceeds from here. The Queen does not fully understand many non-Kryll concepts, but she attempts to communicate that the perceived "attack on Guildspace" was a mistake. She had ordered several of her bioships out to meet with the Guild ships, and they mistook her ships for weapons and opened fire. She offers to withdraw her ships from battle, and make peace with the Guild.

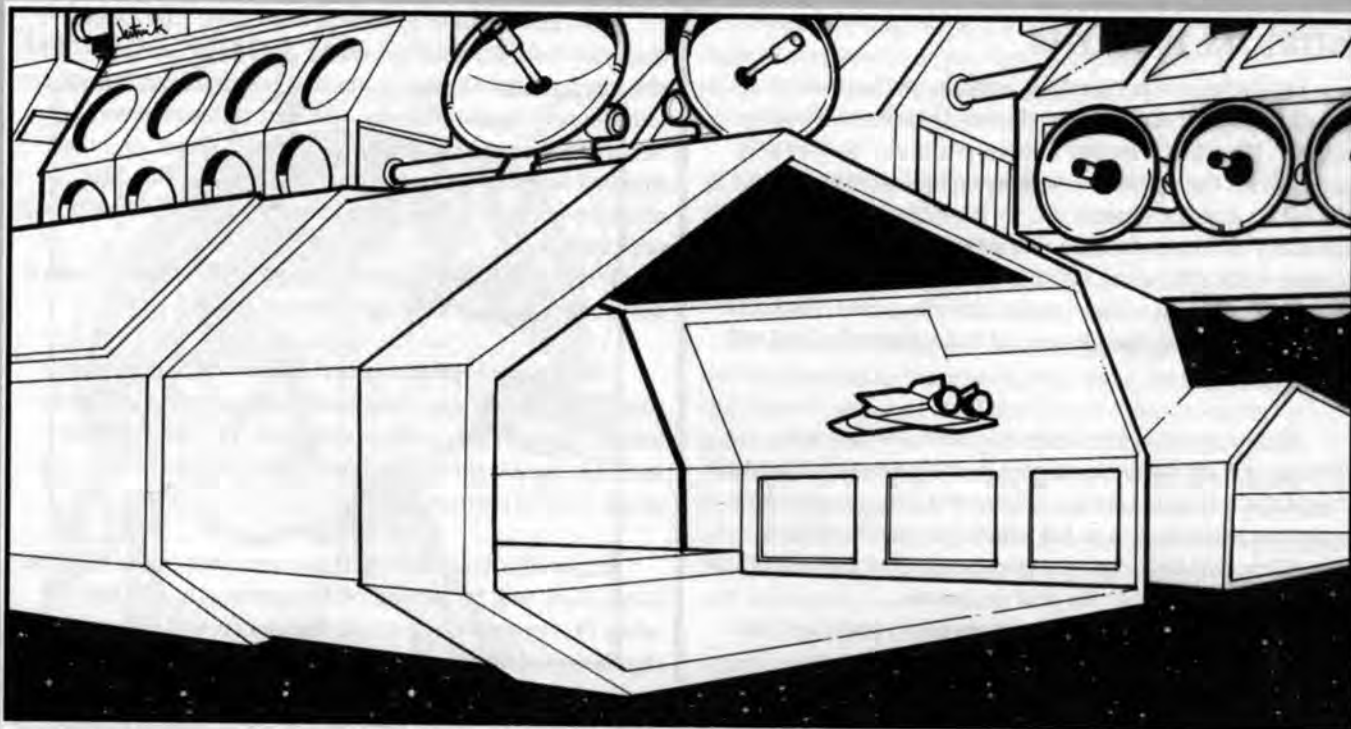
If the characters agree to help (and they must, even if they take some convincing), Shakna speaks.

"The Queen is too far away from her fleet to tell them to stop," Shakna tells you. "My powers are badly drained, and I cannot transport you or her to the battle. You must take her with you in your ship and persuade your admiral to call off the attack. I will accompany you."

If any PCs were knocked unconscious or slain in this room, they will be carried off by workers at this time. If other PCs question the event, the queen will assure them that her medics are capable and will attend to their comrades. Even character's slain in this room (but this room only) will be revived by the phenomenal kryll medics. These characters will meet up with the rest of the party at their ship (see below). Those who were not knocked unconscious or slain, should receive a bonus AP.



Meeting the Queen



For Kryll and Country

The team had better hop to it and move at this point, for the major assault by Dha is about to begin in earnest. The Queen will move ponderously out of the chamber, along with her two elite guardians (or replacements if they were slain). She will guide the team through a series of teleport pods and corridors back to where the *Concordance* lies amid organic debris and damaged tissues. If the ship was damaged, team members will note that it has been repaired with strange, greenish, organic substances.

Shakna, the Queen and her escort will be a tight fit, but the ship will eventually make it out of the hive.

Have players make miscellaneous *astrogation*, and *pilot starship* rolls on the way to the battle just to keep things moving along, but don't let the transit go on too long.

Eventually, *Concordance* will make it close enough to signal the fleet. Through bands of interference, the snowy image of Admiral Nelos will appear, demanding to know what is going on.

It's up to the players to communicate the situation to the admiral. If they ramble on too long, she will demand that they get to the point. Of course, at first she will be skeptical of the aliens' story and suspect a trick. If necessary, Shakna and the Queen herself will talk to the admiral, but it will be a rough job convincing the admiral.

By this time, however, the queen will also be close enough to psionically contact her sentries and tell them to relay orders to her ships to fall back. She will do so, and a steady stream of huge, organic Kryll ships of various designs will begin to pass by *Concordance's* viewports.

On the screen, Nelos begins to receive reports of the Kryll cease-fire, and will look up with a puzzled but hopeful expression.

"My commanders inform me that the alien fleet is, indeed, withdrawing from battle. Several officers suspect a trap, but I have decided to allow you to dock with my flagship, and I will speak to your two representatives."

Your helm receives coordinates for the Dha flagship, Invincible. As you approach, the great superdreadnaught grows in your viewports, a massive engine of destruction bristling with weapons, sheathed in armor. The ship has sustained minor damage in the battle — patches of slime cover parts of its hull, and several areas look for all the world as if they have been chewed on by some massive creature. Navigation lights flash along the docking port, as you slowly approach.

The players are probably sighing with relief by this time. Docking with *Invincible* requires a *pilot starship* check (Dif 4). Failure results in minor damage equal to the failure and the pilot will likely receive some major ribbing from the crew of the *Invincible*. As soon as they have docked, hatches open and armed Dha guards enter. The Queen is so huge she must enter and exit the ship through the cargo doors, but she leaves gracefully enough.

A Dha captain tells the team members that they are off-duty and may rest in quarters prepared for them, use recreational facilities, etc. until the admiral calls.

4 — The Aftermath

The team has completed its first mission — hopefully with smashing success. Now aboard the Dha superdreadnaught *Invincible*, the characters will be more or less observers as events unfold. The following summarizes the events of the next several days, and will give the players a good idea of the significance of their characters' actions.

You are officially off-duty until the admiral sends for you. Many crew members come to you, demanding the story of your adventures, asking who and what these new aliens are, and what they are capable of. The admiration in their voices is unmistakable, and you realize that to have impressed other Dha members (higher ranked ones at that) is a truly remarkable accomplishment.

Allow the players to bask in glory for a while, but have them summoned before the admiral after a decent period.

Meeting with the Admiral

Read the players the following.

Eventually, after several hours, a Rakka in Dha uniform appears on your commscreen, requesting your presence in Admiral Nelos' conference room.

Nelos is there with several high-ranking officers, as well as Shakna and the hive-queen (her vast size has required the rearrangement of several pieces of furniture). The admiral returns your salute and speaks without preamble.

"Your team has done a great service to both Dha and the Guild. We are grateful for your assistance, despite your somewhat — " here, she pauses, scanning you up and down with a steely, critical gaze — "shall we say, unorthodox methods."

Before you can respond, she raises a hand and continues. "I have spent the last few hours in conversation with your Hive Queen, and the creature which calls itself Shakna. They have convinced me of the good intentions of both the Shanask and the Kryll. We will be transporting both of these representatives to Guildhome to meet with the council of the Great House. Regardless of the outcome, the fact remains that a senseless tragedy has been avoided, and your team is at least partially responsible."

She pauses a moment as the significance of your actions sinks in. Then the admiral's face grows solemn.

"Attention!" she snaps. "Captain Skraa!"

A towering Draca Cyberlord stalks forward, bearing a sheaf of papers and a small case. Nelos salutes in the traditional Draca manner, fist extended. Skraa returns the salute, and hands over the items.

"I have heard of your team's difficulties," Nelos says in a more conversational voice. "In light of your service to Dha and the Guild I have seen fit to personally certify your team and confirm you as fully-ranked Dha warriors. Team Commander!"



DETRICK...



At this point, the chosen commander of the team should respond and salute. If not, Nelos looks at the team icily until someone does.

She hands over the papers. They bear the seals of Dha and the admiral's personal signature. You are surprised at this — most official functions such as this are handled purely electronically. You know that you will treasure these papers for years to come.

Now, Nelos opens the case and withdraws a medal.

"The Order of the Lion," she says. "For meritorious and selfless service to Dha. Take this on behalf of your team."

Your commander accepts the medal.

Now, Nelos pins another medal on each of you, attaching it to uniforms or warrior-sashes.

"The Cobalt Star for Bravery," she says. "In recognition of your devotion and skill."

Nelos now steps back and salutes. You return the gesture, feeling pride deep in your heart.

"Well done, Dha Warriors," she says, and the name rings like a trumpet — in its own way, it is even greater and more honorable than the other decorations. "Dismissed."

You may play out the return to Dha Prime in any way you wish. If it is late and you want to wrap up quickly, simply inform the players that the team returns to Dha Prime and receives commendations and congratulations, etc. If you have time and want to increase role-playing opportunities, come up with suitable encounters, meetings, festivities, ceremonies, etc. before proceeding to the final stage of the adventure.

Rewards

Award the players the standard one AP per hour of play. If you feel that they accomplished their mission in an efficient and professional manner in keeping with the traditions of Dha, etc., grant additional bonus APs.

Players who remained in character — especially those who faithfully roleplayed even though they knew that the Kryll and Shanask were going to eventually become good guys — receive another one to three APs.

Team members will all receive standard mission allowance. If you feel that the mission went well and they used good sense, they will receive full allowance, otherwise, some percent thereof. They may be allowed to keep some of the equipment they gained in the hive (according to the Dha salvage program — see *RB*, guild currency), but only after registering it with Dha scientists.

Any character who returns these items to the Hive Queen, however (since these things belonged to her in the first place), receives three APs. Characters who jump on the bandwagon after the first character does so might get one AP each if you're feeling generous. A PC who returns such times might also gain the Queen's gratitude.

As a result of their success, individual characters may make friends, or meet officers who can act as patrons and allies on future adventures. And, for the moment at least, the characters will be the heroes of Dha.

The Future

For the time being, the characters can relax. But their adventures have set in motion a chain of events which will change Guildspace forever.

After the initial meeting with the Guild Council, both the Shanask and the Kryll are accepted into the House of Dha and awarded guardian status. This is virtually unheard of, for even acceptance as an ordinary Dha race takes six months or more.

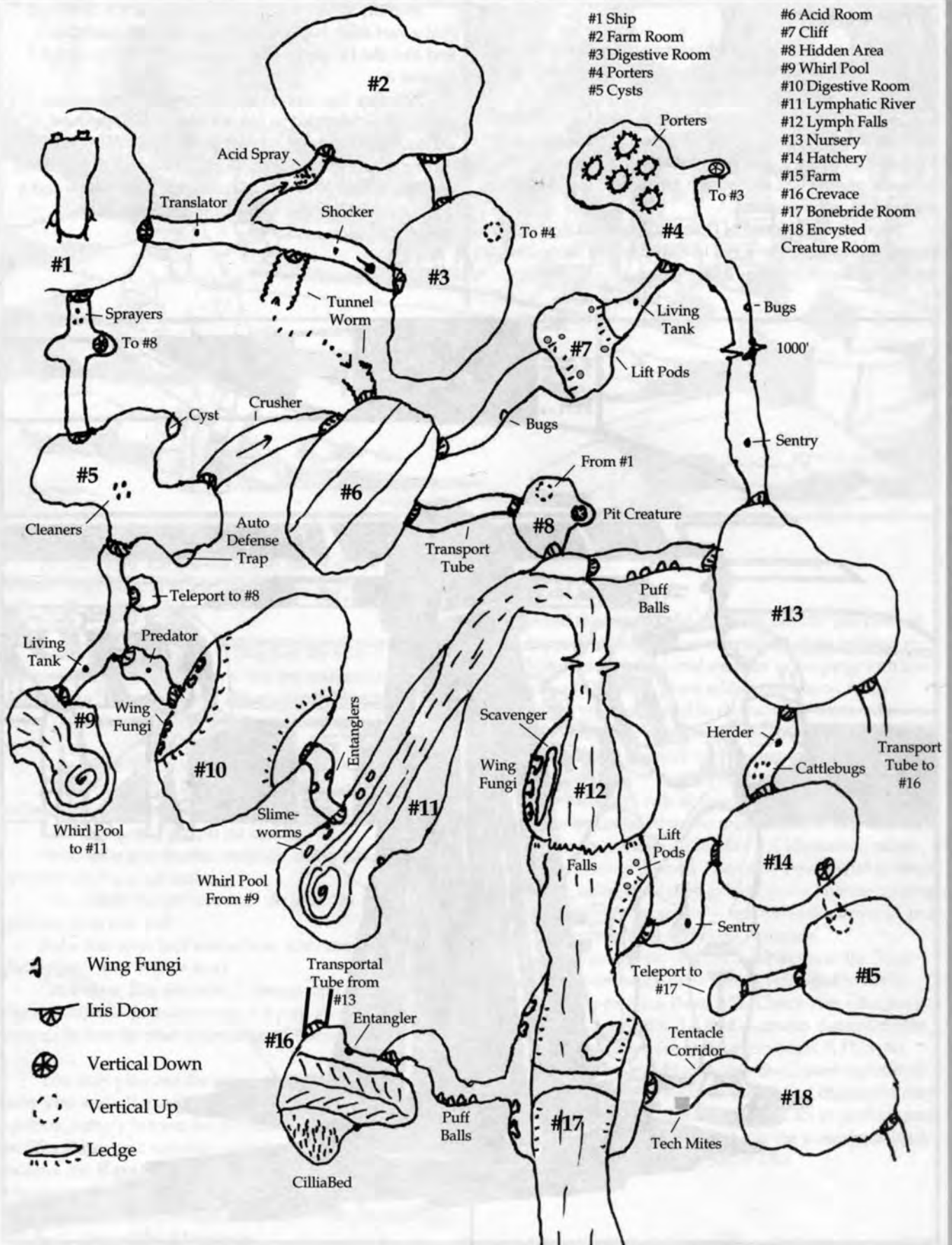
Soon, several House of Dha starships will open up a wormhole to allow the Kryll hiveship which the team fought to take its place as a Dha moon.

Rumors sweep Glory like wildfire, some claiming that a vast alien horde is moving toward Guildspace, and that the House of Dha will be called out to defend against it.

Whether the rumors are true or not is unknown (and will be revealed in *Into the Horde Wall*, the next exciting MetaScape™ Adventure in the Guild Space™ Setting, coming soon from The Game Lords,™ Ltd.). In any event several House of the Guide patrolships and a science vessel are sent to the outer rim on a high security mission...



Sample Map





Shakna was tired!

Outsiders might have thought it strange that a being of Shakna's nature might grow tired, sleep, or even require sustenance. But he (or she, or it — such concepts were irrelevant to a Shanask) was tired — aching with weariness to the depths of his very soul.

The journey had been long and difficult. Moving an entire world was an undertaking which strained the resources even of Shakna's kind. Still, Shakna and the other Shanask who now inhabited the Sorce-moon knew that they had no choice. Terrible events were unfolding, and it was their task — no, their duty — to stop them.

Shakna watched as glowing blue lines of Sorce energy burned brightly, then faded, revealing the battered proto-planet below. Soon, the inhabitants would be arriving and there was much to discuss...

In this adventure, a team of young Dha trainees (portrayed by the players) become mixed up in one of the most significant events in Guild History!

This is the first adventure in the Darmoth series. Look for the next adventure *Into The Horde Wall* latter this summer.

Playing this adventure requires the use of the **MetaScape™ Roleplaying Game System**.



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