

ESPER GENESIS

HEROIC SCI-FI ROLEPLAYING

SENSATIONS OF BLISS



EGCC 01-07



ESPER GENESIS:
**CRUCIBLE
CORPS**



EPISODE SEVEN OF
**SHADOW
OF THE
ZEPHYR**



SENSATIONS OF BLISS

Following a lead, the team investigates the whereabouts of a missing media icon. They soon discover her disappearance is connected to a sinister force that could threaten the lives of all residents in the Bastion.

Part Seven of the Shadow of the Zephyr series.

A 4-Hour Adventure for 5th to 10th Level Characters

Optimized for APL 5

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Sensations of Bliss*, an ESPER GENESIS™ adventure, part of the official Esper Genesis Crucible Corps™ organized play campaign and the *Shadow of the Zephyr*™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for five characters with an **average party level (APL) of 5**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Laris Baludan has been secretly developing a nano virus to create more agents for Stormdark, his rogue branch of the Zephyr Corporation. He plans on delivering this virus through the SIM, and has recruited an agent of Altai Media to help him.

The agent is Merrick Alderman, chose one of his promising young stars and to be used as the carrier for this new virus. That star is a noble kesh named Nisuri Larik.

With Baludan's help Merrick gave Nisuri the SIM identity of Bliss Larkam and thrust her into stardom. Now that her fame is solidified, they are using her as the spokesperson for the new SIM media interface created by Baludan's corporation which is the means by which the virus travels.

Merrick has Bliss practice with an experimental media interface modified with Zephyr technology. This unique interface is slowly transforming Bliss' brain matter into nanobots. Once activated, these nanobots are programmed to travel through the SIM and connect with more of the new SIM interfaces. Once connected, they inject themselves into the wearer's brain, replace it, and thereby kill the host and turn it into a cyborg which serves the Zephyr Corporation.

Before the launch party, Baludan's corporation gave out thousands of free devices to key personalities on the Bastion. He also sold thousands more at a low cost to ensure they were well distributed amongst the populace.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

The Bastion (Bas-Ton). The Bastion is an immense city ship that orbits Silrayne Prime.

Rubicon Spiral (Roo-bee-con). A tower on the Bastion that is a center for entertainment.

Altai Media (All-Tie Media). A entertainment corporation with an office in the Rubicon Spiral.

Bliss Larkam (Bliss Lar-Kam). A noble kesh SIM movie star that is the spokesperson for a new SIM media interface.

Merrick Alderman (Mare-reck Alder-man). Bliss' manager from Altai Media who secretly works for Baludan.

Laris Baludan (Lay-ris Ba-loo-dan). The head of a rogue branch of the Zephyr Corporation. They've been testing an experimental string of stolen data in an attempt to recreate and perfect a dangerous technovirus.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken down into 4 parts:

Part 1. The characters go to a remote trade outpost to meet an agent of Arisa Angel and receive their mission.

Part 2. The characters must infiltrate an elite social event and get critical information about Bliss and her association with Baludan.

Part 3. The characters follow Bliss and Merrick to the place where the Merrick plans on activating Bliss.

Part 4. The Characters barge in on Merrick as he is infecting the SIM segment with the virus in Bliss. They must stop the spread of the virus and deal with Merrick and his mecharoid at the same time.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters are either mercenaries working for an employer they are familiar with or they are called upon by their faction to take on a contract with Arisa, so they can achieve their faction mission.

A Mercenary's work is never done. You were contacted by Arisa Angel for a mission worth 1800 cu.

Faction Mission (Children of Aria or Infinity Order):

Your faction has requested that you find the source of Zephyr Technology involved and eradicate it.



Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

The characters are sent a message by Arisa Angel to meet one of her agents at a remote trade outpost known as Matokai's Demise.

You responded to a summons sent by Arisa Angel to meet one of her agents at an out of the way trade depot named Matokai's Demise. You know she has work for you, but you don't know the details. Judging by the remote location she chose, you think it's something that requires a low profile. You know your contact is at a place known as The Pouncing Fire Cat. You were told to look for a flying snake to identify your contact.

Matokai's Demise is a trade depot infamous for being a hub of black-market deals populated by some of the galaxy's most unsavory denizens.

MATOKAI'S DEMISE

Matokai's Demise was named so, because the Matokai suffered an enormous defeat at the hands of the Bahtera at this location.

Terrain. The trade depot is not very modern. Tents and tarps are put up throughout the depot. Many of the people sell their wares openly. The buildings are mostly made from stone and thatch.

Weather. Hot and dry. It is a near desert climate. Light. Bright daylight during the day and starlight in the evening.

Smells and Sounds. The depot is a bustling place. The sounds of haggling and music is everywhere. There are also the sounds of space ships leaving and arriving.

THE POUNCING FIRE CAT

The Pouncing Fire Cat is the only tavern in the depot. The characters will have no trouble finding it.

The tavern looks to be as tough as they come. Immediately upon entering, you feel dozens of eyes upon you sizing you up. The atmosphere is dark, noisy and smoky. It's a perfect place to conduct dealings you don't want noticed.

Off in the corner, you see a shadowed figure looking at you. The figure nods to you once your gazes meet then lifts his hand to take a puff from his smoke. On the back of his hand you see a tattoo of a snake with wings coiled around a dagger.

At this point it should be obvious that this is the person the characters are there to meet. He appears to be male ashenforged, and says his name is Medisi.

ROLEPLAYING MEDISI

Medisi is a somatic ashenforged. He has seen much war and dedicated himself to Arisa's service. He has a large frame and many scars. He doesn't partake in small talk and he is anxious to deliver his message and be on his way.

Medisi won't spend a lot of time with small talk. He's there to give the characters a message and that is exactly what he is going to do.

He tells the characters their mission is to go to the Bastion and find out how the SIMreal entertainer Bliss Larkam is helping Baludan.

This is what he knows

- Bliss Larkam is attending a launch party for a new SIM interface product at a club called the Dream Extension on the city ship known as The Bastion.
- The club is in the Rubicon Spiral, the entertainment tower.
- Arisa believes that whatever Baludan has planned for this entertainer, and Zephyr Technology is most likely involved.
- Medisi gives the characters a Bastion press pass in case they want to try and bluff their way in to see her. He only gives them one pass.
- Medisi offers to pay the characters 1500 cu if they discover the connection between Bliss and Zephyr. He can be talked up to 1800cu.



Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

In this section the characters go to the Bastion's Rubicon Spiral, figure out how to get into the club and then get close to Bliss.

THE DREAM EXTENSION EXTERIOR

The entrance into the Dream Extension is on the 25th floor of the Rubicon Spiral.

Terrain. The area in front of the entrance is crowded with press and people waiting their turn to enter. It is difficult terrain to move about.

Light. Bright light

Smells and Sounds. Loud from all the people and press talking.

INFILTRATION 101

The characters will need to get into the club. Clubs usually have two types of entrances, the public entrance and the employee entrance.

You come upon the entrance to the club, and there is an extremely long line. You can see that even some of the press are being turned away. The doorman is a stonefang matokai, and he looks serious. There appear to be two lines. One for the guests trying to get into the club, and another for the press. You also see some VIP guests that are probably celebrities and wealthy people that are checked off a list and then let in.

The people in the guest line are dressed for a party. There are a lot of scantily clad bodies, and they are all trying to out do each other in their efforts to seduce, bribe or impress the doorman. The people in the press line are a bit more conservative in their dress, but only a bit. One thing for sure is that no one is armed and armored.

To the side you see some people scan a card and enter through a side door. Most of them are either dressed like club workers or dressed modestly.

The characters will need to choose what approach to make. If they get into the press line, they can try to use their press pass; however, they only have one. If they choose the guest line, they will need to deal with angry people who don't like them passing them up in line and then bluff the doorman. Another option is to try to get in through a service entrance either as a vendor or club employee, and yet another option is to pose as a celebrity or wealthy person.

THE FRONT DOOR APPROACH

The public entrance into the club is carefully regulated. The doorman is hard to corrupt. The press are only allowed one person per pass, the wealthy or celebrities are all checked off a list, and the guests are only let in when someone leaves, and there is already a long line of people waiting.

If the characters try to enter through the public entrance, they will have to dress the part and that means hiding their arms and armor. If they try to get in armed and armored, then their checks are made with disadvantage.

Here are some examples of things that can be done.

- Pose as press (one person) - DC 15 Disguise.
- Pose as Guest (Persuasion or deception to get to the front of the line) - DC 20.
- Pose as celebrity or Aristocrat (one person per check) requires a - DC 15 Disguise and a DC 15 Forgery (Invitation). This is at disadvantage if the other characters try to pass them selves off as guards.

Feel free change these DCs as you see fit as they are only guidelines. Reward good role play and clever ideas.

THE BACK DOOR APPROACH

With this approach the characters can try and get into the employee corridors and access the club that way. The employee corridors are protected by a security system which needs to be hacked. Then the characters will need to navigate busy corridors that are frequented by people that all know each other.

Here are some examples of things that can be done and the recommended DCs that are associated with them.

- Bluff an employee to let the characters in DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)
- Hack the door lock into the employee corridors DC 15 Intelligence (Computers) and - DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) to avoid getting noticed
- Steal an employee's card - DC 15 Dexterity (sleight of hand)
- Walk the corridors in disguise - DC 15 Charisma (Disguise)

Feel free change these DCs as you see fit as they are only guidelines. Reward good role play and clever ideas.

FAILED ATTEMPTS

It is possible that the characters may fail at their attempts to infiltrate. Each failed attempt at one method of infiltration raises the DC for that attempt by 2. If the characters are caught, they are told to leave or kicked out of the employee corridors.

If they completely fail, they can just bust in; however, that will alert Merrick who immediately takes Bliss to the Altai Media headquarters to activate her.

USING YOUR SOFT SKILLS

In this section the characters need to navigate the club environment to get close to Bliss and learn what she knows.

The goal for the characters in this scene is to learn that Bliss isn't working with Baludan, and that she is a pawn of Merrick. They should also learn that the new SIM interface is changing her in some way.

The characters will not be able to examine Bliss to learn how she is being affected by the nanomachines, but they may be able to examine the SIM interface she is using if they can get it from Merrick.

THE DREAM EXTENSION INTERIOR

The Dream Extension is normally a social club for the elite. It is being repurposed for the new media device launch party. The place is crowded except for the areas that are for employee's only and the circle where the VIPs are socializing with Bliss.

Terrain. The area inside the club is crowded with press and guests. It is crowded and difficult terrain to move about.

Light. Dim light

Smells and Sounds. Loud from all the people and press talking. Perception checks that are sound related are at disadvantage.

Moving around in the club shouldn't be a problem; however, getting close to Bliss is another matter.

The characters can learn the following from outside the protective ring.

The interior of the club is a party. The initial launch presentation is over and the after party has begun. The place is crowded with people partying and dancing. You can see where Bliss is by the ring of armed guards that surrounds her. They are keeping the crowds away, but they let a select few in to mingle with her and her chosen guests.

Bliss is followed around by a middle-aged human who hovers over her like an over protective father. He does seem to give her some slack when she mingles with the other special guests within the circle. You can also see that the special guests have the option to come and go in and out of the ring as they please.-

The characters need to find a way into the circle to learn anything more. There are several ways they can do this. Some examples with their suggested DCs are listed below.

- Befriend one of the special guests and enter the ring on his/her arm - DC 15 Charisma (persuasion or deception).
- Steal a server outfit and enter as one of the staff - DC 15 Charisma (deception).



- Pose as a producer and have one of the guards get the manager's attention - DC 17 Charisma (deception).
Feel free change these DCs as you see fit as they are only guidelines.

TALKING TO BLISS

Once inside the inner circle, it shouldn't be hard for the characters to speak with Bliss. She speaks with everyone within the circle. Bliss knows the following information

- She is scheduled to make a SIM appearance after the party to demonstrate the new interface.
- Her manager currently has possession of the interface.
- Her manager is the reason she has been so successful.

If the characters make a successful DC 15 Charisma (persuasion) check, they can get more information from Bliss; however, unless someone is distracting her manager when talking to her, he comes and drags her away before any of the following information is gained.

- She feels she owes her manager everything, but he is a very possessive.
- She believes his ability to get her such great gigs comes from his relationship with a man named Baludan.
- The new interface helps her SIM experience seem more real and lifelike with every use. It's almost as if she is becoming part of it.
- It should be clear to the characters that Bliss is a pawn and not knowingly helping Baludan.

TALKING TO BLISS' MANAGER

Inside the protected circle, the characters have free reign to speak with anyone, Bliss' manager included. His name is Merrick Alderman, and he always has one eye on Bliss and removes anyone he feels doesn't belong or is a bother. Attempts at communicating with him result in the following information.

- Bliss will make a SIM appearance later tonight.
- The interface is protected property and will not leave his possession. No, you can't look at it.
- He works for Altai Media

Any mention of Baludan, the Zephyr Corporation or Bliss' enhanced experiences in the SIM will set him off resulting in him kicking the characters out of the inner circle.

Just talking to Merrick will make him suspicious. The characters will need to succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (deception) check to speak with him without putting him on alert.

If the characters try to steal the interface, it is a DC 17 Dexterity (sleight of hand) check; however, he has another one in the room where Bliss is expected to enter the SIM.

Examining the interface and making a successful DC15 Intelligence (Computers or Investigation) check reveals that it has parts made from the Zephyr Corporation.

FAILED ATTEMPTS

Failed attempts at infiltrating the inner circle, getting advanced information from Bliss, or distracting Merrick put Merrick on alert. If Merrick is put on alert, he immediately sequesters Bliss away to Altai Media's corporate suite on the 10th level of the spire where he activates her using the modified media device.

PERSONALITIES OF THE INNER CIRCLE

The following personalities can be used as flavor or role-playing opportunities for when the characters try to get access into Bliss' inner circle of friends.

Sina (See-nah). Sina is a Valna athlete who has also become a socialite. She loves to talk sports and be the center of attention.

Vesio Savhel (Ves-ee-o Sav-hel). Vesio Savhel is a Crescent Promethean who's made a name for himself by designing a personal luxury spacecraft. The ship is equipped with technology far beyond normal craft currently in production, and many celebrities are courting him for a special pre-launch ship.

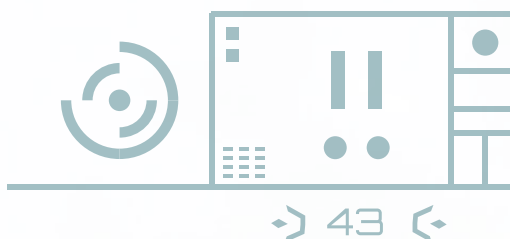
Vesio is Arrogant and thinks all others are beneath him with respect to intelligence. Feeding his ego is a sure way to become his friend.

Neri Mosh (Ner-ree Mosh). Neri Mosh is Bliss' best friend. He is a friendly sort and very Naïve. He is a bit envious of Bliss and looking for his own chance at stardom.

Sanara Rhen (Sa-nar-a Ren). Sanara is a female utopian human actress. She has lost a couple of rolls to Bliss and plays the friend on the outside while secretly wishing her ill. Sanara will entertain anyone who has gossip on Bliss.

CONCLUSION

It is expected that after the club event, Bliss will go into a special stuid to access the SIM and give another performance; however, Merrick takes her down to level 10 to the Altai Media corporate headquarters where he can safely activate her. To do this, he tells her that she is being targeted for assassination by the characters (or some other group if the character have remained incognito) and must be protected.



Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

In this section Merrick leads Bliss to his private studio in the Altai Media headquarters on level 10 of the Rubicon Spiral rather than their VIP suite in the Dream Extension like they were supposed to.

The characters either follow them out of the club or notice Bliss' absence when she is supposed to make her appearance in the SIM.

THE CHASE

In this section the characters are in the Dream Extension when Bliss and Merrick leave and decide to follow them.

Merrick and Bliss make their exit out the back door of the club. An armed escort goes with them.

IT'S ON

If the characters decide to attack the entourage before they hit the elevators use the mercenaries from Wait Just a Minute below. Merrick pulls Bliss into the elevator while the mercenaries keep the characters occupied. A character with a Passive Perception of 13 or higher notices that the elevator goes down instead of up.

VIP AREA

If the characters go to the VIP area they notice there are no guards or employees blocking their way. They can also go to Bliss' suite. There they find it empty.

If the characters spend time searching this room, add one round to the start of the 10 rounds to upload the nanobots in part 4.

There are a couple of ways the characters can figure out where Bliss and Merrick have gone.

Intelligence (Investigation) DC 15 – They find a kiosk that has a list of companies in the building and learn the Altai Media is on the 10th floor.

Charisma (Persuasion) DC 15 – They get an employee to tell them they saw Bliss and Merrick take an elevator down. The employee also knows about Altai Media's location on the 10th floor.

Computer hacker's kit DC 15 – They have the door system and learn that Merrick used his card on the 10th floor.

Feel free change these DCs as you see fit as they are only guidelines. Reward good role play and clever ideas.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this investigation should take the characters to the lobby of Altai Media.

WAIT JUST A MINUTE

The characters arrive at Altai Media headquarters and enter the lobby. They are then ambushed by Merrick's guards

ALTAI MEDIA LOBBY

The lobby of Altai Media is currently empty. There is a counter where the receptionist usually sits, but it's currently empty.

Terrain. Office lobby with stairs going up to a balcony level.

Light. Brightly lit

Smells and Sounds. Quiet as the place is empty of people. No unusual smells.

Your chase has led you to the front doors of Altai Media. The doors are open, but the place is empty.

As soon as the characters walk in, the mercenaries make themselves known. They first try and monolog or stall by asking questions or pretending to be ignorant of Merrick's plans.

This encounter consists of one **human mercenary elite**, one **human alterist adept**, and 2 **human gang leaders**.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative

Very Weak: Remove 1 human alterist adept and 1 human gang leader.

Weak: Remove 1 human alterist adept.

Strong: Remove 1 human alterist adept and 2 human gang leaders. Add one mercenary elite and 1 heavy arms mercenary.

Very Strong: Remove 1 human alterist adept and 2 human gang leaders. Add one mercenary elite, 1 terra assassin and 1 heavy arms mercenary.

TACTICS

The mercenary's objective is to slow the characters down. They try several tactics to accomplish this. One could be monologuing; another could be taking defensive measures wrahter than going on the offensive and another could be focusing their attacks on the healer or computer wiz to cripple the characters' ability to interfere with their plot.

REWARDS

The mercenaries have a total of 400 cu between them.

Estimated Duration: 90 minutes

In this section the characters must stop Bliss from infecting everyone on the Bastion's SIM network with the Zephyr virus she has become the carrier for.

When the characters enter the studio room, Bliss is already connected to the SIM. 1 minute (10 rounds) from when she is connected, the virus is fully ported into the SIM and Bliss' consciousness ceases to exist.

The number of rounds Bliss has been connected determines how long Merrick's mercenaries were able to delay the characters.

DRAMATIC ENTRANCE

When the characters reach the door, read the following boxed text.

You've reached the door into the studio Bliss has been taken to. You know this because there is a big sign on the front of the double doors that says "Bliss Larkam". The doors are locked. You can hear muffled voices behind it, and one of them says, "You destroy anyone that comes through that door!" The reply is in a deep robotic voice that says, "I will comply".

The characters need to either knock the door down or get past the security system. Merrick has put a Magnetic Seal on the door making it harder to do so.

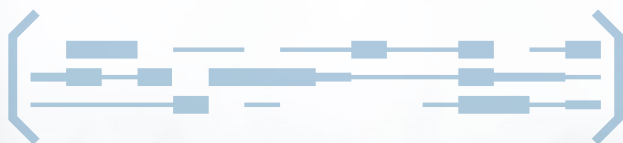
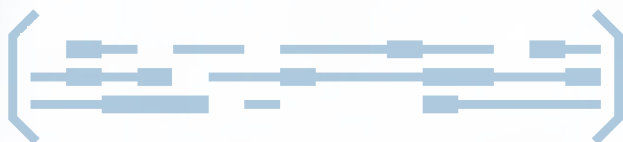
The characters need to use a power like Lock Breaker or Unravel Affect before they are able to hack the door, and a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) is needed to break it down. If the seal is removed, the DC is 10.

Once the characters have breached the door, read the following text to describe the scene.

You finally reached Bliss. You've bypassed Merrick's guards and you breached the locked door. The room is an opulent studio. Standing between you and Bliss is Merrick and a large mecharoid. You just heard Merrick tell the machine to destroy anyone that comes into the room, so you know it's going to be a fight.

You see Bliss lying on a recliner wearing the new interface on her head. She's not moving, but her eyes are open and glowing with a silver radiance. It doesn't look like you have much time.

The characters need to hack Bliss' interface all while being attacked by Merrick and the mecharoid.



COUNTERMEASURES

Bliss' interface is pouring all the Zephyr nanobots into the SIM. Since Bliss' brain has been transformed by the nanobots, her consciousness is going with them. If allowed to finish, Bliss's consciousness is destroyed and her body becomes an empty husk; furthermore, the techno virus Cerabryte is released into the Bastion segment of the SIM.

It takes 10 rounds for Bliss' nanobots to fully upload into the SIM.

REMOVING THE INTERFACE

Removing Bliss' interface without taking proper precautions will kill her. The characters learn this with a successful DC10 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Investigation) check.

To safely remove the device requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check to keep Bliss alive while doing it. If the Wisdom(Medicine) check fails, Bliss drops to 0 hit points and begins making death saving throws each round.

Remove the interface does not cure Bliss of her infection and the next time she connects to the SIM the infection continues.

CONTROLLING THE NANOBOTS

With a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Computer) check the characters realize that Bliss' consciousness has been transferred into the nanobots. This means there may be a chance she can control them. Read the following boxed text when the character enters the SIM.

Finding Bliss in the SIM is as easy as finding the sun in the daytime as bright as her avatar is. Where normally her image is different than her real self, this time it is her real face you see. You find her reaching skyward with hundreds of digital tendrils branching off her and merging with the SIM. You see that her image is slowing dissipating as if she is pouring herself into the SIM.

If a character enters the SIM, they can try and communicate with Bliss. She is in a state of delusion, so convincing her to take control won't be easy. The character will need to succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check to do so.

If the character is connected to the SIM after the 10th round passes, they are exposed to Cerabryte.

If Bliss learns how to control the nanobots, this is considered a permanent fix. Who knows what Bliss will become with the Zephyr technology in her new brain.

CERABRYTE

Cerabryte is a techno virus that involves Zephyr technology. It is caused by nanobots that enter a creature's brain through their SIM interface.

Trigger. You connect to a SIM segment that contains the virus.

Effect. Nanobots enter the user's brain through their SIM interface and transform the organic material of their brain into a machine. This process destroys the victim's current consciousness and turns them into a self-aware cyborg that serves the Zephyr Corporation.

Countermeasures. The affected creature must make a successful DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or their Intelligence score is reduced by 1d6 points. The next round they must make another saving throw or suffer the same effect. This continues until they succeed on the save. If their Intelligence score is reduced to 0, their brain is taken over by the nanobots killing the character.

TACTICS

As with everything else, the goal here is to delay. Merrick tries his best to slow the characters down and prevent them from helping Bliss. He targets engineers and other potential hackers first with his hypnotic pattern power. The mecharoid engages the warriors to occupy them.

This encounter includes 1 **human melder** (with +1 to his AC and Saving throws due to his Protection Node) and 1 **durasteel mecharoid**.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative

Very Weak: Replace the durasteel mecharoid with the scourge kanasi.

Weak: Replace the durasteel mecharoid with the scourge kanasi. Add one gang leader.

Strong: Add one durasteel mecharoid

Very Strong: Replace the durasteel mecharoid with the titanium mecharoid.

CONCLUSION

There are several possible outcomes to this encounter.

- The characters save Bliss by removing the SIM device but don't help her gain control of the nanobots.
- The characters help Bliss learn how to control the nanobots and stop the Cerabryte spread
- The characters fail, Bliss dies and infects the Bastion segment of the SIM.

SIM DEVICE REMOVED

With this outcome, the characters have saved the bastion; however, Bliss now knows she can never re-connect to the SIM unless something is done about the nanobots that are now the physical makeup of her brain. The characters receive the **Hero of the Bastion** story award.

If the characters know Alfred 3020, then it may be able to help Bliss with this problem. If the characters mention this or help Bliss get connected with Alfred, they also receive the **Friends in Starlight** story award.

BLISS LEARNS TO CONTROL THE NANOBOTS

With this outcome the characters have not only saved Bliss and the people of the Bastion, but they have allowed her to continue her career in movies. They earn the **Hero of the Bastion** and **Friends in Starlight** story awards.

THE BASTION SEGMENT OF THE SIM IS INFECTED WITH CERABRYTE

With this outcome, the characters have failed. The Zephyr Corporation won a great victory and now has an unknown number of agents in the Bastion.

Bliss dies in this outcome and without her testimony the characters are portrayed as the villains. They are accused of Bliss and Merrick's murders (if he died). The characters earn the **Bastion Public Enemy** story award.

CONTINUING THE STORY

Even if the characters were successful in saving Bliss, their victory makes Baludan desperate, as his reclusive masters are growing tired of his failures. His attempt to regain control over his mission are covered in the upcoming adventures: *Altai Media Presents...* and *Stormfall*.

REWARDS

Merrick is carrying a **Protection Node** he has attached to his collar.

He also has a money stick with 200 cu on it.

CHILDREN OF ARIA OR INFINITY ORDER FACTION MISSION

If the characters prevent the Cerabryte virus from entering the SIM and killed Bliss or got her to control the nanobots, then they satisfied the conditions of this faction mission.

APPENDIX A: REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and CC serial number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Durasteel Mecharoid	1,800
Gang Leader	450
Heavy Arms Mercenary	1,800
Human Melder	1,100
Mercenary Elite	700
Melder Initiate	100
Scourge Kanasi	450
Terra Assassin	2,900
Titanium Mecharoid	5,900

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Stopped the virus	100
Saved Bliss' life	50

The adventures minimum and maximum XP awards are located on the Adventure Rewards document. Note that DDAL adventures award a maximum of the “target XP” award. Only epics may grant the “maximum” amount.

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 2,625 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 4,375 **experience points**.

LOOT

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

LOOT AWARDS

Item Name	Cubic Value
Merrick's guards	400
Merrick's money stick	200
Mission payment	1800

Consumable items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the GM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent items are divided according to a system detailed in the Esper Genesis Crucible Corps Master Technician's Guide.

PROTECTION NODE

Utility, rare (requires attunement)

While wearing an item slotted with this enhancement, you gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws. Details on this item can be found in the *GM Basic Rules*. See **Player Handout 2**.

STORY AWARDS

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

Bastion Public Enemy. You have been branded an outlaw on the city ship the Bastion. Until the charges against you are dropped, you have disadvantage on Charisma checks with the people of the Bastion; furthermore, the local authorities are liable to charge you with murder and throw you in jail if they discover your identity. If the charges are dropped, then you can remove this story award from your log sheet. See **Player Handout 1**.

Friends in Starlight. You have made a friend of one of the most popular celebrities in the Silrayne Arch. Bliss will grant you an audience or backstage pass into any event she is part of. Additionally, she can get you a backstage pass or audience with any other celebrity one time. When she uses a favor to do this for you, remove this story award from your log sheet. See **Player Handout 1**.

Hero of the Bastion. You have saved the people of the bastion from a horrible fate and they know it. You now have advantage on Charisma checks with the people of the Bastion. See **Player Handout 1**.

RENOWN

Each member of with a faction affiliation receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Members of Children of Aria or Infinity Order (rank 2 or higher) that stop the virus from entering the Bastion SIM segment earn **one additional renown point** and mark the completion of a faction mission on their adventure logsheet.

GM REWARD

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn GM Rewards as described in the *EG Crucible Corps Game Master's Guide (CCGMG)*.

APPENDIX B.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

BLISS LARKAM (*BLIS LAR-KAM*).

Noble kesh (real name: Nisuri Larik) and prominent SIMreal star (the SIM version of “movies”). She was thrust into superstardom too quickly, and often longs for her own identity.

Personality: I’m a hopeless romantic and more interested in other people’s lives than my own.

Ideal: Reality is 10% what you experience, and 90% what you make of it.

Bond: I envy the freedom of choice that others have. I feel like I no longer get to choose my life.

Flaw: I either trust too much or not enough.



APPENDIX C: THREAT/ NPC STATISTICS

DURASTEEL MECHAROID

Large automaton, neutral

Armor Class 19 (armored frame)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

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

Skills Computers +3, Perception +4

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., infravision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, ALOMU

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

GANG LEADER

Medium humanoid (any), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 14 (armor jacket)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws: Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gang leader makes two melee attacks: one with its sabre and one with its wrist blade. Alternatively, it attacks twice with its heavy pistol.

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

Wrist Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60/300 ft., one target, *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Burst Fire (Recharge 5-6). The gang leader fires a spray of bullets in a 10-foot cube within 70 feet of it that it can see. Each target in that area must succeed on a DC 13 burst saving throw or take 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The gang leader can add 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, it must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

HEAVY ARMS MERCENARY

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (centurion)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +6, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

HUMAN MELDER

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (armor jacket)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Lore +5, Perception +3, Survival +3

Damage Resistances fire, lightning

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any three languages

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Esper Resistance. The nomad has advantage on saving throws against esper powers and effects.

Esper Powers. The nomad is a 5th level esper. Its channeling ability is Intelligence (save DC 13; +5 to hit with esper powers). It has the following power slots:

Prime (at will): *friends, gamma vision, proton blade, tricky fingers*

Rank 1 (4 slots): *concussive force, fire lance, jump*

Rank 2 (3 slots): *disruption wave, phase shift*

Rank 3 (2 slots): *singularity*

ACTIONS

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

Combat Knife. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Energy Blaster. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) radiant damage.

MERCENARY ELITE

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (centurion)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

MELDER INITIATE

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (PSD, 15 with *protection field*)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Lore +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Esper Powers. The melder is a 3rd-level esper. Its channeling ability is Intelligence (save DC 12; +4 to hit with esper powers). It has the following powers prepared:

Prime (at will): *aegis, force bolt, push*

Rank 1 (4 slots): *distortion, protection field*

ACTIONS

Combat Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

SCOURGE KANASI

Large automaton, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned

Senses infravision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Infrared Sensors. The kanasi's infravision can see through up to 10 feet of nonmetallic solid material.

ACTIONS

Hand Razors. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an automaton, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Tail Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

TERRA ASSASSIN

Medium humanoid (any), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 14 (infiltration suit)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Computers +4, Deception +3, Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances poison

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Lingo plus any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Earth Step (3x/day). Instead of a move action, as long as they are standing on a surface made of metal, rock, stone, or dirt, the assassin can meld into the ground and move to a location to reappear up to 20 feet away.

Deft Strike. Once per turn, the assassin deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Silent Killer. If the assassin makes an attack that reduces a target to 0 hit points, the assassin can take the Hide action as a bonus action before the end of their turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The assassin attacks twice with its poisoned blade or three times with its silenced pistol.

Poisoned Blade. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Microfilament Garrote. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, it takes 35 (10d6) slashing damage at the start of each of the assassin's turns, and the assassin can't attack another target.

Silenced Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 50/250 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

TITANIUM MECHAROID

Large automaton, neutral

Armor Class 16 (armored frame)

Hit Points 30 (4d10 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, ALOMU

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the mecharoid hits with it (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Power Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Gun Mount. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 50/150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

APPENDIX D: RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

Consider the following advice when running this adventure.

RUNNING FOR CRUCIBLE CORPS

This adventure is designed for five to seven 5th and 10th level characters with an APL of 5. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure when being run for organized play.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

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

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

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

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

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

PLAYING THE GAME MASTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

PLAYER HANDOUT 1. STORY AWARDS

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

BASTION PUBLIC ENEMY

You have been branded an outlaw on the city ship the Bastion. Until the charges against you are dropped, you have disadvantage on Charisma checks with the people of the bastion; furthermore, the local authorities are liable to charge you with murder and throw you in jail if they discover your identity. If the charges are dropped, then you can remove this story award from your log sheet.

FRIENDS IN STARLIGHT

You have made a friend of one of the most popular celebrities in the Silrayne Arch. Bliss will grant you an audience or backstage pass into any event she is part of. Additionally, she can get you a backstage pass or audience with any other celebrity one time; however, when she uses a favor to do this for you, remove this story award from your log sheet.

HERO OF THE BASTION

You have saved the people of the bastion from a horrible fate and they know it. You now have advantage on charisma checks with the people of the Bastion.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2. ENHANCED ITEM

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

PROTECTION NODE

Utility, rare (requires attunement)

While wearing an item slotted with this enhancement, you gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws. Details on this item can be found in the *GM Basic Rules* or the *Master Technician's Guide*.

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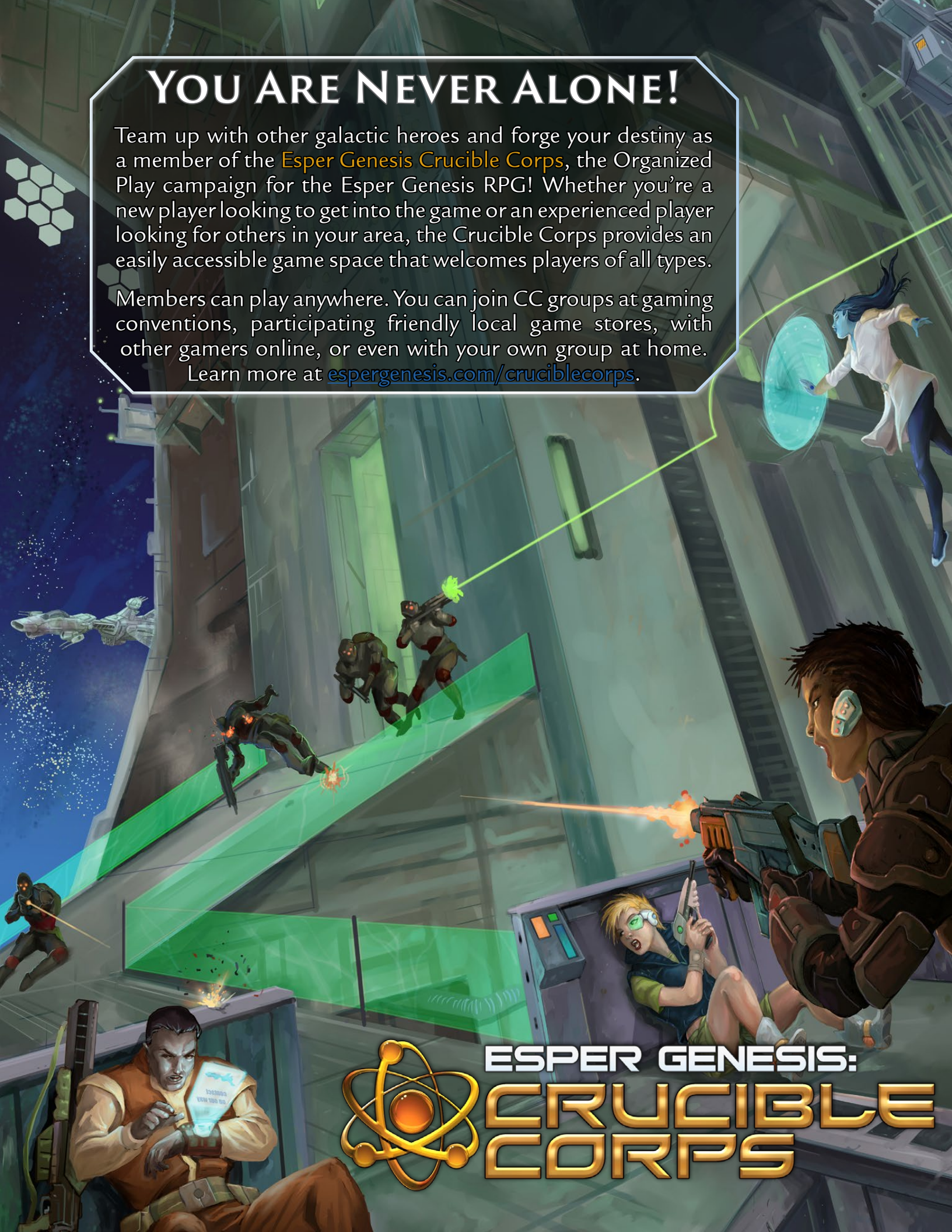
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