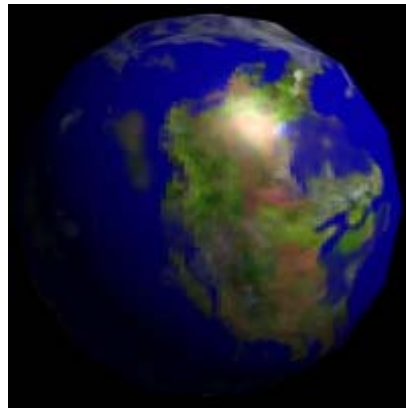


*Session 03 - The Stygia Incident 25 ASW4 (May 2001) The heroes board and divert a sinking freighter before it can collide with an undersea colony. (Bail) (Choma) (Sturmwulf) (Narsus Prime) (Reports) (Trini) (Vashti) (Zaky)*

## The Stygia Incident

### The Scenario

Narsus Prime On the world of Narsus Prime in Feorri Sector, our heroes were on a tour of the Pearlesca Undersea Colony, an innovative experiment in underwater living for the Narseti people, in order to relieve overcrowding problems on their urbanized homeworld. This colony consisted of an underwater, enclosed city centered around a main tower, partially retractable, that rose to the surface of the ocean with a landing platform for air- and starcraft.



While our heroes were seeing the sights, a Narseti FT-90 freighter, the Stygia, attempted to land on the platform, but an explosion in the cargo hold prompted the inexperienced crew to promptly abandon ship, leaving the craft to "safely" crash into the ocean. The trouble with this plan was that an undersea city was located beneath the waters, and the freighter was slowly sinking. As panicked Narseti civilians in the city rushed to evacuate, the proprietor of an undersea tour company, Tersetis-a-Senaut, approached the heroes and begged them to intervene to prevent certain catastrophe. If the freighter were to hit the city, it was uncertain just how much damage would be done, but it was quite certain that he would be held personally responsible, since he was the owner of the freighter in question. (It was coming in with a shipment of "exotic foods" to cater to alien tastes for a restaurant adjoining his tour facility.) He volunteered the use of some submersible vehicles, and any resources he might have handy that the heroes could make use of.

### Planning for Action

Bail Solaris and Karl Sturmwulf immediately proposed using explosives to destroy or divert the craft, but Tersetis confessed that he did not have a cache of explosives, nor did anyone else on the station to his knowledge. However, he had a number of fuel cells that might be

used toward that purpose, and Professor Vashti Solaris attempted to determine how such an explosive might be rigged, with Bail's help. Meanwhile, the Pardu brothers (Zaky and Choma) borrowed a couple of Solo Scooters and headed out toward the sinking vessel, since it would crash in approximately 75 minutes, and it ended up taking about 10 minutes of that time just to reach it. Karl Sturmwurf and the Jedi Guardian, Trini, quickly followed, in a two-seater high-speed Sea Skipper, while Bail and Vashti loaded fuel cells into a larger (and slower) Tour Barge.

### **The First Encounter**

FT-90Zaky and Choma were the first to arrive on the scene. The FT-90 is designed such that the main hull has links for three modular cargo holds to attach to the aft section, with thruster nacelles to port and starboard, and a long central boom and a fore-mounted bridge. A hole had been torn into the starboard cargo hold, as well as the engine room of the starboard nacelle, and the ship was listing toward the damaged and flooded sections. The Pardu brothers brought their scooters into the ruined cargo hold, avoiding a couple of floating crates (remainders of the cargo that had not yet been washed out). The door to the cargo hold was closed, but showed no signs of damage, though the frame around it was most certainly scored, thus indicating that the door may have been open at the time of the blast, and subsequently sealed.



Choma, equipped with an aquata breather mask, cycled the air out of his enclosed scooter, and disembarked into the water in the cargo hold, and went over to one of the crates. He opened it up, releasing three Langorian Skyrazors that began to slash and flap in the water as they drowned. Choma instinctively tried to use his comlink underwater ... damaging it in the process. Not realizing that he was in little danger of actually being mauled by one of these creatures (most certainly not accustomed to the water), he pulled out his vibroblade and

proceeded to hack all three of them into bits, causing a red cloud of blood to spread in the water.

As Zaky turned around to investigate, and the Sea Skipper arrived on the scene, they noticed the spreading red cloud ... and a serpentine Abyssine Mauler that, shark-like, approached the scent of blood. The creature swam into the hold and attacked the blood-covered Choma, but Zaky, having noticed the cloud of blood (He had not witnessed the short "battle" with the skyrazors) turned about and rammed the abyssine with his scooter. The stunned oceanic predator was knocked out of the hold, bumped its head against another submerged crate, and subsequently fled. Choma, to celebrate his victory, removed his aquata breather and attempted to eat some of the remnants of the searazors, and was rewarded with the taste of a mouthful of bloodied sea water, whereupon he promptly replaced the aquata breather and tried to spit out the water into his breather (yet another less-than-effective maneuver). The flailing cat-man, deciding he'd had quite enough of the water, retreated to his scooter, sealed it, and cycled out the water, recovering in the relatively fresh air of the scooter.

## **Boarding the Stygia**

Zaky and Choma moved their scooters into the hole in the starboard engine room, donned aquata breathers again, and used cable dispensers to moor their vehicles (wisely exposing the liquid cable dispensers to air inside their scooters first, rather than trying to generate cord underwater -- as liquid cable dispensers are air-activated, and would just make a viscous mess underwater). Trini and Karl, meanwhile, kept a lookout for other predators, and performed an outside examination of the lopsided freighter from the outside. They spotted a "Droideka" (Destroyer Droid) deployed on the bridge, and saw that emergency hatches could be found above the cockpit and the medical area, though the ship lacked something so simple as a proper airlock. Trini and Karl maneuvered the scooter back to the ruptured cargo hold, folded the scooter's wings, and neatly parked it inside the hold, though they didn't bother mooring it. Zaky, Choma, Trini and Karl met in the empty space remaining in the hold, and managed to get the sealed doors to open, whereupon they swam into a flooded section of the ship, and quickly closed the door behind them so as not to let out any more air than need be.

Inside, they found that the ship's grav plates were inoperational, as well as most basic systems such as doors and lights, not to mention thrusters, though the repulsors were still generating a residual effect that was slowing the ship's descent. Although the starboard computer/astrogation area was mostly flooded, the rest of the ship was mostly free of water and debris, and they climbed out into air again, in the central cargo loading area.

## **Skitters**

Meanwhile, Bail and Vashti maneuvered their Tour Barge over the medical section of the ship on the boom, engaging mooring clamps. The Tour Barge, equipped to allow tourists to don diving gear and dive out the bottom (with a retaining field keeping the water out and air in, and allowing guests to see the ocean up close and personal) was also ideal for making a sealed connection with the ship, even though submersibles aren't typically made to link with standard starship ports. Bail managed to manually open the top hatch, and they both climbed inside. Vashti detected some noises behind a door of the medical bay, recognizing them as the sounds of creatures known as "skitters" -- hostile, crab-like creatures. She called the others on her

comlink to warn them ... just as three skitters crawled into view in the cargo bay and promptly attacked Zaky (who had the misfortune of being closest to them, despite the best efforts of Jedi Trini to take the lead).

In the ensuing battle, the skitters proved to be stubbornly resilient, but were at last taken out by the combined efforts of Trini, Zaky, Choma and Karl. Vashti, familiar with the biochemistry of these creatures, realized that they communicate with each other through chemical secretions, and that they could be confused by the proper combination of chemicals. She used her chemical field kit to quickly concoct a mix designed to confuse the skitters' senses. Bail and Vashti opened a door to the intermediate area between themselves and the others, and encountered six more skitters lying in wait. Bail took one out with a well-placed blaster shot, and Vashti tossed a batch of her "anti-skitter" concoction, causing the rest to curl up, paralyzed. Karl, hearing the blaster shot, investigated, and proceeded to help Bail finish off the paralyzed skitters, despite Trini's objections against needless slaughter. Vashti, prepared for any culinary occasion, whipped up some tartar sauce for Choma, who was interested in trying out some "exotic food" for himself.

The group ventured into the engineering section, where they spotted a large ASP droid holding a couple of plasma cutters. Despite the surprise, nobody opened fire, and it turned out that the droid was inactive. Just to be certain, they removed its power coupling, and left it in its restraining harness. Karl found that the diagnostic terminal still had minimal power, and used it to get a schematic of the ship and a report of damaged systems. He was able to determine that in order to get power returned, a safety breaker would need to be reset in the port engine room, but also that the starboard nacelle would need to be disabled, so that there would not be a risk of explosion from an overload. The group debated several options, such as jettisoning cargo modules or the entire starboard nacelle, but opted not to do so, since anything jettisoned would still fall on the city, and would also imbalance the ship even further.

Choma kept guard in the central area, while Karl and Bail headed into the crawl tube leading into the port nacelle, and Trini, Zaky and Vashti headed into the starboard nacelle. Vashti whipped up more "anti-skitter" chemicals, which Zaky and Trini coated themselves with. Vashti exhausted her supply, however, and was unable to make any extra batches for herself.

## **The Pirahnodite**

In the port nacelle, Karl and Bail noticed another group of skitters in the fore section, clustered in a section that radiated warmth. (The skitters are attracted to warmth.) They carefully avoided them, working their way aft toward the engine room, noting a trail of slime leading up to the hatch there. Bail opened up the hatch and went through, whereupon he slipped in an even thicker collection of slime, and promptly fell into the room right onto the back of a snoozing Pirahnodite. The creature promptly awakened, letting out a startled bellow, and Bail hung on for dear life, firing wildly with his blaster and hitting machinery. Karl fired off one shot, first missing what with the creature's thrashing about, but then coolly fired off a shot clean through the beast's head, killing it instantly.

## Lampede Attack

Lampede Attack Trini, Vashti and Zaky had their hands full as well. They noticed another cluster of skitters, likewise clustered toward the fore of their nacelle, and the aft section was flooded with water. As Trini moved up, with her back to the water, to make room for Zaky to get to an access panel, a large Lampede, attracted to the skitter-scents smothered all over Trini, attacked her, dragging her into the water. She activated her lightsaber, but failed to actually damage the creature, instead cutting into the surrounding (already damaged) machinery, prompting an underwater explosion that flash-heated the water. Trini was stunned, and the creature began to thrash about, slowly cooking in the now-quite-hot water. Zaky, noticing that Trini's thrashing had ceased, dove in -- despite the hazard presented by the lightsaber and the hot water -- and grabbed her, pulling her free from the creature.



Zaky turned off Trini's lightsaber, and dragged her back out of the T-section, while a few skitters began to advance down the nacelle, now that the predator that had been keeping them at bay had been killed by the now-boiling water. Vashti desperately mixed together a chemical compound designed to prompt the skitters to flee, and tossed it down the nacelle, but only two of them actually fled, leaving one brave skitter still stubbornly advancing. Vashti cautiously covered it with her blaster, unwilling to take an early shot, lest a stray shot set off another explosion in the tight confines of the nacelle. At last, the crab got into range, and was quickly taken out. Zaky hurriedly opened the access panel and disconnected the power conduits to the nacelle, and they all moved out, and closed a hatch behind them to keep any more "brave little skitters" from coming after them.

## Restoring Vital Systems

While Karl kept guard in the crawl tube, Bail worked on starting up the port engine and restoring power. At last, he managed to bring up the power again, and Zaky moved to the engineering area. Choma took up keeping guard in the crawl tube, while Karl helped in engineering. Together, they managed to restore vital systems, while Vashti took Trini to the medical bay and gave her medical treatment for her injuries. Zaky, Karl and Bail succeeded in restoring grav plates and inertial dampeners, and in draining the flood waters out of the

computing/astrogation section, as well as bringing the port thruster back online. With some work on the computers, they also managed to find the security system, and temporarily disabled the destroyer droid located on the bridge. A major accomplishment on Zaky's part was to bring the repulsorlifts online, buying about an hour of extra time before imminent disaster.

Trini and Choma headed up to the bridge, as Bail opened up the hatch. At first, the destroyer droid was dormant, but as it detected active weapons on the bridge (Choma's active vibroblade), it powered up. Zaky noticed the alarm, and quickly disabled the droid again. Bail took the controls of the ship, while Choma took up guard in the central area. Zaky kept his position in the computer section, while Karl kept watch in engineering, regulating various systems. Vashti searched the cabins and medical area, finding a couple of extra medpacs (which she put in the tour barge), as well as a couple of blasters, a datapad, and some spare breathers and life pods.

### **Surprise in the Cargo Hold**

Back at the cargo holds, Trini and Choma opened up the central module, with the intent of stowing the disabled destroyer droid inside. However, a large trilect had escaped from a box, and, after devouring the other inhabitants of the cargo hold, was prepared to take a bite out of the intruders as well. Trini and Choma had a destroyer droid on their side, however, and it quickly reduced the creature to shrapnel in a rapid fire volley of blaster bolts. Once the trilect was disabled, they were about to check out the port hold, but Zaky thought to use the security cameras to check the interior, and found that a large mass of writhing worms were on the floor. He called over Vashti, who examined the image, and she informed them that the creatures were boring worms -- parasitic creatures that would bore into one's skin, working their way to vital organs, and eventually leading to painful death. The heroes opted not to venture in there.

Bail and Karl supervised the reactivated ASP droid as it unloaded the fuel cells from the tour barge, as they feared that leaving potential explosive devices up there would be unsafe, should they manage to get the ship moving again. They then stowed the destroyer droid, the ASP unit, the fuel cells, and some remaining large crates in the central hold, securing them in place. Karl went into the tour barge and maneuvered it around to park and moor it in the ruined cargo module (as it had been vacated by the unmoored sea skipper when repulsors had suddenly slowed the ship's descent). Bail sealed off the doors to the medical bay, and they used the bay as an emergency "air lock", quickly shutting off the hatch as soon as Karl got through, and then cycling out the water that inevitably flooded in.

### **Averting Disaster**

Once everyone got situated (Zaky at computer controls, Bail and Trini at the bridge, Choma guarding Zaky, Karl manning engineering, and Vashti strapping herself into one of the emergency harnesses) they fired up the port ion drive, carefully adjusting the stabilizers to keep from firing into a clockwise spiral, as the starboard nacelle was still offline. They managed to make a controlled change in descent away from the city, and even to build lift, at last breaking the waters, whereupon the repulsors maintained enough lift to allow the vehicle to hydrofoil.

Some airspeeders from a rescue team arrived, and guided the hydrofoiling freighter to port. During the cruise, Zaky examined some of the manifests and logs he'd found, with the help of others. They determined that the explosion had actually been caused by some strange exploding alien creatures that had been passed off as "exotic foods" and stored in the starboard hold, presumably set off by some sort of sonic signal. All indicators pointed to sabotage, especially given that if the creatures had exploded just a few seconds later, the disaster could have very well taken out the landing tower, and quite possibly the entire undersea colony in the process. Footage showed that a Pardu exile known as "Scabby" -- one who was known to be very fond of Imperial technology -- had sold some "very cheap" exotic foods to the merchant on board the freighter, and was responsible for providing the cargo in the starboard cargo module.

### **Victory for the Heroes**

The ship eventually reached port, and the heroes kept a very low profile. Official news reports indicated that it was a "terrible accident" caused by a mix-up in a shipment, and downplayed the likely role of terrorist activity -- most probably inspired by Warlord Shel Abadan in his bid to sow discontent amongst the Narseti people and undermine the New Republic-aligned regime of Governor Tebesk-a-Susek.

Tersetis-a-Senaut was overjoyed not only that the heroes had averted disaster, but actually managed to save the freighter more or less intact. He allowed the heroes salvage rights on useful items found on the ship itself, and paid them a reward for returning the ship and saving the colony. He also finally provided the heroes with their tour of the underwater facility, complete with luxury accommodations. (Choma made certain to try boiled skitter, while Zaky spent some time relaxing in a sensory deprivation tank, privately wishing he had a Snowflake-net connection.)

### **End Game Results**

6000 experience points were awarded for completing all basic and bonus objectives for the adventure, divided amongst six present (and surviving!) PCs, and one Luck Point was awarded to each hero. During play, one Luck Point each was awarded to Zaky, Bail and Karl for great teamwork and heroics in restoring the ship. No Reputation points were given, since everyone kept a low profile.