

Perdition's Flames

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INTRODUCTION

"Perdition's Flames" is an adventure for use with the *Star Trek: Roleplaying Game* by Decipher. It is suitable for a crew of 2-6 players playing a Starfleet crew. With some alteration this adventure could be adapted to serve other crews. Narrators will require the use of the *Star Trek: Player's Guide* and *Star Trek: Narrator's Guide* in running this adventure. A number of pre-generated characters are included for use in the Appendix. Alternately players may substitute their own characters with the approval of the Narrator.

The adventure takes place in 2374 in the Alpha Quadrant but with some modification can be transplanted to any location and timeframe of the Narrator's choosing.

Players that plan to take part in this adventure are advised to not read any further.

BACKGROUND

Over a 10,000 years ago two warring factions of a strongly empathic species joined forces to create an energy construct that would absorb their hate and aggression, allowing them to live in peace. The resulting creature instead turned against its creators and used its abilities to control the two species, siphoning their hate to sustain itself and fueling an even greater hatred of one another. The creature grew until it filled the sky and drew the planet from its sun. As the original creators of the creature eventually died, having bombed themselves out of existence and turning their world into a barren and fiery wasteland, the energy creature began to wander the universe.

In 2268 the entity encountered the *U.S.S. Enterprise* and a Klingon battlecruiser commanded by Kang. The creature succeeded in fanning the two starship's aggressions for a time but the two crews eventually came to realize that positive emotions would drive off the creature. The two vessels, working together, caused the Beta XII-A entity to depart.

Weakened, the creature returned to its rogue homeworld, located in the Styx rift, seeking to spawn a second version of itself. Years later the moon RZ2-II was discovered by the Federation starship, *U.S.S. Potemkin* and the Klingon *Krotahl*. The entity decided to repeat its previous gambit in hopes of generating enough hatred and violence to sustain a reproductive fission process. Unfortunately, much to the distress of both crews, this proved impossible. The only way the creature could reproduce was through the same process that originally spawned it. Both Starfleet and Klingon factions were embroiled in decades-long conflict that was artificially sustained and fueled by the entity. Even death offered no release.

Two years ago the entity withdrew to one of the last remaining structures on the planet, now dubbed Perdition

by its trapped victims, in the hope of finding a way to trigger the reproduction process. In that time it has since left the two factions to their own devices, who, after decades of war, continue their violent and bloody accord.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure deals with the discovery of the rogue planet Perdition, charted decades ago as well as the discovery of the missing *Constitution-class U.S.S. Potemkin*—missing for over 60 years. Equally disturbing is the presence of a *K'tinga* Klingon battlecruiser, the *Krotahl*, also in orbit. Both ships are powered down and have no life signs onboard. Scanning will quickly reveal the presence of two large encampments on the inhospitable planet below, one comprised of almost exclusively Humans and Vulcans, and the other entirely of Klingons. A number of ancient structures of advanced design also exist on the planet, weathered by years of radiation, high winds, and excessive temperatures—a wasteland.

A search of the two vessels will reveal them to be, for the most part, in good working order. However, the total lack of dilithium crystals on board, and unusual presence of neutronium on board will be a cause for concern. Why were the vessels abandoned?

Meanwhile, on the moon, the crew will indeed learn that the two encampments are in fact the crews of the *Potemkin* and *Krotahl*. They have been locked in a bloody conflict for the past 60 years, with neither gaining the upper hand—and neither succumbing to the release of death. The crew must discover what alien force is manipulating events on the planet Perdition and what plans it has in store for the crew of the *Blackthorne* as well.

The entity actually requires the crew to initiate the reproductive process by using the same equipment that originally spawned the creature. To this end the crew is unwittingly manipulated into performing the creature's wishes. The crew of the *Blackthorne* will have to deal with the alien entity, find a way to free their vessel, and rescue the stranded Starfleet and Klingon crews.

THE ROAD TO PERDITION

Captain's Log, Stardate 51905.4

As part of Starfleet's continuing efforts to liberate the Betazed system and the rest of the Kalandra Sector from Dominion occupation, the Blackthorne has been assigned to lead Task Force 901 in a patrol of the Style Rift. The strategic positioning of the Rift along the coreward border of the Kalandra Sector makes it an excellent place for the Dominion and their Cardassian allies to stage an ambush of any Starfleet forces entering the sector. Our mission is to seek out any Dominion forces and prevent just such an ambush.

The players are onboard the *U.S.S. Blackthorne*, an Intrepid-class starship (NG, page 149), currently on deployment as an area of space known as the Styx Rift, part of Task Force 901. Task Force 901 is patrolling the Rift searching for Dominion activity as part of the larger operation to retake Betazed. The *Blackthorne* is operating in concert with the *Saber-class U.S.S. Bozeman*, the *Nebula-class U.S.S. Sutherland*, and the *Intrepid-class U.S.S. Nelson*. Prior to entering the Rift the captains of the four vessels will meet on the *Blackthorne*, plot their search itinerary, and coordinate their efforts within the Rift. The Styx Rift presents a number of technical and tactical problems that the crew will need to overcome, as outlined in the following sections.

BOAT ON THE RIVER

When the other Starfleet vessels arrive, the captains and senior staff of the *Blackthorne* meet to discuss the mission plan. In the event the *Blackthorne's* captain is played by a player character, allow the player to oversee the briefing. The other characters should be encouraged to pose questions, clarify the mission's goals, and offer suggestions on how to best proceed.

The *Blackthorne's* science officer (or other relevant character) can make a TN 10 Space Science (Astrophysics) to outline the hazards of the Styx Rift. Provide them with the data as outlined in the next section, including the limitations that will be posed to all shipboard systems. The characters will be instructed, if they don't think of it themselves, to see about overcoming the interference of the Styx Rift. As the *Blackthorne* is the flagship of the Task Force, this duty falls to her crew. This includes enhancing sensor and communication ranges and charting a course through the Rift that maximizes speed and sensor coverage while minimizing risk to the ships themselves.

Because time is of the essence the Task Force must split up to patrol the rift in a timely fashion. Otherwise Dominion forces may be able to launch a strike against Starfleet operations in neighboring sectors without any warning. (If necessary, this order comes from the Admiral himself.)

THE GRAND ILLUSION

The Styx Rift is an area of space roughly 20 light-years by 12 light-years in size, noted for the presence of a "Lazarus Star"—a recurring nova—along with high concentrations of nebulae, ion storms, and subspace and gravimetric distortion. Under normal circumstances the Styx Rift limits communications and sensors to a one light-year range inside the Rift, however the crew of the *Blackthorne* can attempt to overcome these limitations.

SENSORS: Recalibrating the sensors requires an extended Systems Engineering (Sensors) or System Operations (Sensors) test. The total TN required is 45 with a turn length of 30 minutes. A +1 affinity bonus can be gained from Space Science (Astrophysics). Success will boost sensor range from a mere one light-year to five light-years.

COMMUNICATIONS: Modulating the subspace replays requires an extended Systems Engineering (Communications) or System Operations (Communications) Test with a total TN of 45. Each attempt requires 30 minutes. A character gains a +1 affinity from Space Science (Astrophysics). Success doubles communication range from one light-year to two.

FLIGHT CONTROL: Determining a proper and comprehensive search pattern for the Task Force's four ships though an area as cluttered and dangerous as the Styx Rift is no easy task. A TN 15 System Operation (Flight Control) test is required. Failure of any sort resorts in a route that can be traveled no faster than warp 5, taking 39 days. A Marginal or Complete Success will allow warp 6 travel (24 days), a Superior Success warp 7 (14 days), and an Extraordinary Success warp 8 (9 days). This test may be performed as a Combined Test (PG, page 106).

The success or failure of this adventure does not rest on these rolls—in fact they merely provide an opportunity for the players to make some rolls to familiarize themselves with making skill Tests. Should the Narrator decide to later continue the adventures of the *Blackthorne* further, such tests would be important should the crew stumble upon the Dominion, for example.

UNTO THE BREACH

Once the crew has made preparations (and the necessary skill Tests), the Task Force is ready to begin its patrol. The vessels split up and enter the Rift under their assigned patrol patterns. Vessels that will be out of range have scheduled rendezvous points at which to stay in communication, relaying communications onto the next starship. Several days after entering the Rift the *Blackthorne* finds herself emerging from a Class E nebula to receive a faint distress call. A TN 10 System Operations (Communications) Test will boost the gain enough that the message is intelligible. A Superior or Extraordinary Success will reveal that the signal uses a Starfleet encryption but is approximately 60 years out of date.

"Mayday! Mayday! This is the Federation Starship U.S.S. Potemkin calling any Starfleet vessel in range. Immediate assistance is required. Our dilithium supply has been destroyed and we are stranded within the Rift. Any Federation starship in range, please respond!"

The message repeats continuously. Determining the source of the distress call will lead the *Blackthorne* to the second moon of Rogue Zeta 2, otherwise known as Perdition.

TASK FORCE 901

Ship	Registry	Class	Captain
<i>U.S.S. Bozeman</i>	NCC-75032	<i>Saber-class</i>	Captain Gabriel Bush (Human Male)
<i>U.S.S. Nelson</i>	NCC-74981	<i>Intrepid-class</i>	Captain Shrelin Athrun (Andorian Female)
<i>U.S.S. Sutherland</i>	NCC-72015	<i>Nebula-class</i>	Captain Christopher Hobson (Human Male)

THE STYX RIFT

Alpha Cerberus: Binary star system (F9 V & M7 V), 3 planets (Class-F, 2 Class-T), Otherwise unremarkable.

Beta Cerberus: Lazarus Star. Explodes every 205.03 years. Four planets (All class-F). All the planets are ripe with radioactive elements and dilithium. Radiates a zone of subspace distortion that inhibits sensors and prevents subspace communication from taking place in or through the zone. Also responsible for the presence of the massive subspace eddy that surrounds and flanks it (see below).

Gamma Cerberus: Quaternary star system (M5 V, M6 V, K9 V, B3 Ib), 0 planets.

Delta Cerberus: Single star system (F3 V), 9 planets (Class-F, Class-K, Class-L, Class-H, Asteroid Belt, Class-T, Class-J, Asteroid Belt, Class-G, Class-J, Asteroid Belt, Class-G).

Epsilon Cerberus: Single star system (A6 V), 5 planets (Class-K, Class-L, Asteroid Belt, Class-J, Class-G, Class-F). All the planets are relatively unremarkable.

Rogue Zeta 2: Rogue planet (arrow indicates approximate course). Class J Superjovian, "hot jovian." Ten moons (Class F, Class M, Class D, Class D, Class G, Class D, Class G, Class F, Class D, Class G). RZ2-II is orbited by the Potemkin and the Krotahl (see profile below).

Nebulae:

Class C Nebula: Mutara-class planetary nebula. See NG p. 232.

Class E Nebula: Gamma Iridani-class nebula. See NG p. 232.

Class G Nebula: Dichromic-type nebula. See NG p. 232.

Class R Nebula: Rolor-class nebula. See NG p. 233.

Ion Storms:

Level 5 (Epsilon Cerberus): +5 TN Reliability on Transporters/Communications, +3 TN Reliability on Flight Control and Sensors.

Level 7 Ion Storm (Alpha Cerberus): +7 TN Reliability on Transporters/Communications, +5 TN Reliability on Flight Control and Sensors, 2d6 damage per minute.

Subspace Eddy (Beta Cerberus): Warp travel impossible.

PERDITION

Name: Perdition (RZ2-II)

Class: Class M

Moons or Rings: None. Moon of Rogue Zeta 2.

Gravity: 1.1 G

Diameter: 14,000 km

Density: Earth-normal

Climate:

Atmosphere: Thin

Hydrosphere: 20%

Temperature: Arid Hot (32 C degrees average)

Demographics: 1,645 total population. 1,000 Klingons, 600 Humans, 45 Vulcans.

Civilization: Divided into two factions. The Klingons vs. everybody else. A state of extended war has been waged for 65 years, and is not likely to change any time soon.

Energy: 2 (some 8)

Information: 8

Transport: 1 (some 8)

Weapons: 2 (some 3)

Materials: 2 (some 8)

Environment: 4 (some 8)

Leaders: Captain Heather Davis and Commander Korris (Hoplocracy)

Resources:

Agricultural: None

Dilithium: Rare

Latium: Rare

Medicines: Rare

Metals & Minerals: Common

FLAMES OF PERDITION

Upon approach to Perdition, supply the crew with the details of the moon as they scan the body. No roll is required to detect the two vessels in orbit over the moon: a *Constitution*-class starship and a Klingon *K't'inga*-class battlecruiser.

Scanning the moon will also reveal life signs below. Two large encampments, one comprised of Humans and Vulcans (for the most part) and another made up entirely of Klingons.

At this point the characters have two immediate avenues open to them: investigate the encampments on Perdition and make contact or investigate the two derelict vessels in orbit for more information. The captain of the *Blackthorne* may decide to do both, sending on Away Team to the planet and another to the vessels. He might also elect to attend to one at a time. Players that investigate Perdition are detailed under "Castle Walls," while Away Teams sent to the vessels are covered under "Ghost Ships."

CASTLE WALLS

For the past 60 years both the Federation and Klingon factions have been locked in an epic struggle against one another, their anger fueled by some unknown source, but neither party has been given an opportunity to try to reason their new existence. To this end of perpetual war each faction has set up a settlement that serves as their base of operations and command post. From there they organize food and war parties and form a defensive perimeter. The two factions are located some 15 km apart, between them a desolate and ruined cityscape that in ages past served as a testament to the civilization that once stood. Now a hot and barren wasteland, marked by crumbling structures and high velocity winds, the Federation and Klingon forces battle almost mindlessly over the ruins.

Food is sparse and difficult to come by. The radiation-soaked soil offers little chance for growing anything but simple vegetation. Water is equally difficult to come by but somehow both forces are able to find enough to survive upon, in the form of a long-lost well or polluted rain that is scavenged.

Within this ruined cityscape are a number of choke points controlled by each side, manned by faction forces. These check points serve as forward scouting bases, monitoring enemy movement and reporting on imminent

attacks.

Strangely, where these two forces meet time and time again there is no battlefield littered with bodies. No graves mark their fallen comrades. No shrines to those that laid down their lives for the cause.

This is because, for all the horrors of war and the universe, the denizens of Perdition do not know Death's touch.

Fort Hope

The Federation settlement is a large and strewn out structure, haphazard in appearance. Housing consists of ramshackle huts and a network of dusty trails lead from encampment to encampment. In some cases old structures from the destroyed civilization before them have been dug out and put to use. Each of the trails into Fort Hope are guarded by pairs of sentries set every 50 meters with a total of three.

Fort Hope is the most impressive structure of them all, a massive walled structure comprised of any pieces of metal, technology, or natural objects that provide a defensive perimeter. Sentries on top of stacked and worked pieces of stone man Fort Hope constantly looking out for Klingon raiding parties. Inside are where the settlement food and water stores are kept, as well as the headquarters for Captain Davis and her command staff. Fort Hope is the last vestige of civilization that many have known in the past 60 years.

The people are dressed in the tatters of old Starfleet uniforms and homespun clothes. Most are armed with medieval weapons of various types, but all the weapons are of excellent manufacture and in superior condition. Perhaps the most notable absence in Fort Hope is that of any elderly people. Examining the weapons is a TN 15 Material Engineering Test, with a success revealing that the weapons are too perfect to have been forged. They have been manufactured, similar to that of replicator technology. (Use of a tricorder provides a +5 bonus to this test.)

The rank structure of the *Potemkin* has been retained, with each person well-versed in their assignment and duties. Most personnel, regardless of their original training, have received some form of combat training. Security personnel hold the higher positions of authority, such as watch commanders and leaders of war and reconnaissance parties.

Making Contact

An Away Team that monitors Fort Hope from a distance and then approaches will not make it very far until being spotted by sentries. The lack of any real cover (unless the Away Team uses the buildings, which are populated) makes moving during the day difficult at best. Use an opposed Stealth (Sneak) test for every 25 meters crossed with a penalty of -5 to the Test against an Observe (Spot) test against the sentries. This penalty is not applied at night.

If the Away Team has disguised themselves they may be treated harshly, their weapons removed, and forcibly taken to Fort Hope, restrained. In a Starfleet uniform—even a 24th century one—their welcome will be handled much

differently. After a few moments of recognition the sentries will gladly escort the Away Team to Fort Hope. Along the way word will spread of the player's arrival and hundreds of people will line up, dirty and in tattered clothing, to observe the procession. Their mutterings of "they're here to save us" and "at last, victory is ours!" will be heard. Beaming down into the center of Fort Hope will receive much the same reaction.

Irregardless of how the Away Team is discovered if there are any Klingons among them (for whatever reason), the Away Team will be savagely attacked on site by the *Potemkin* personnel.

Captain Davis

Eventually the Away Team will make contact with Captain Davis, either by force (if captured) or by escort (if identified as Starfleet personnel). Captain Davis is ensconced in the second largest building in Fort Hope, the largest serving as the storehouse and town hall. She will greet the new arrivals as comrades in arms before releasing their escorts to their duties. Her manner will be brusque as she is suspicious of the motivations of the Away Team and she does not look a day older than her personnel file showed. She will demand help against the Klingons in an effort to finish this war once and for all, but will not be too surprised if the crew refuses. She hasn't completely forgotten Starfleet's mission, but knows that the Away Team has not experienced what she has.

If the captain of the *Blackthorne* is among the Away Team then Captain Davis will answer all questions to the best of her ability. Preferably the most senior player-character is among the Away Team to interact with the Captain. Otherwise, arrangements will be made to beam Captain Davis to the *Blackthorne* to speak with the captain. Alternately, the First Officer can simply serve as an middleman.

After any discussion, Davis will inform the Away Team that there is to be a banquet held partially in their honor. If asked what the other reason for the banquet is, Davis will inform them that a force of more than half their population will be departing on a daring raid on the Klingon village on the coming day. Obviously their success would be greatly heightened with the *Blackthorne's* help.

The banquet will be a riotous feat (by Perdition's standards), reminiscent of a Viking debauch prior to a raid. Through it all Captain Davis will observe the Away Team, waiting to engage them in any chance to convince them to help her. She will look at the spokesperson for the Away Team at some point and declare, "On Earth there's an old saying that 'one death is a tragedy, and a million deaths is a statistic.' Everyone you see here is a statistic. I need your help to keep those statistics from increasing."

If the crew decides to take Captain David into custody (or return with her to the *Blackthorne*), she goes willingly and will plead her case with the captain when she has a chance. Even if she doesn't succeed she will maintain her position that the Klingons must be destroyed at all costs, regardless of the logic used to dissuade her.

TOUCHED BY FLAME

By now the player-characters will likely have a number of questions behind the events on *Perdition*. Captain Davis, unless speaking with the captain or a senior officer, will dance around and avoid most of the issues. When at last confronted, Captain Davis will at last reveal what she knows.

The people of *Perdition* can not die. No matter how many times they are struck down by Klingon or ill fate, the person rises again, whole. On a few occasions crew have gone missing, but it was presumed they fell into an underground cavern or wandered aimlessly into the desert.

While food and water are in short supply, there always seems to be enough for their needs. When one well dries up, another is found. Food stocks always remain plentiful, even during the hardest seasons. Captain Davis gave up trying to explain this long ago.

The weapons appear to have been left behind by the previous civilization before them. There is no shortage of weapons for either side, although, despite their best efforts, they have been unable to make any more advanced weapons on their own.

On the topic of Klingons, Captain Davis' feelings are quite obvious. She hates Klingons with a near-fanatical passion, and will counter any argument to sway her into being reasonable. She characterizes them as "barbaric animals that deserve to be butchered where they stand." When pressed she will explain that the Klingons murdered her survey team, disabled the *Potemkin*, and trapped her crew on *Perdition* in countless years of mindless war, pain, and suffering. Counselors present at this point need only make a TN 5 Empathy Test to feel the overwhelming hate that emanates from the Captain. The empath should also make a TN 10 Willpower Test or otherwise find their own emotions involuntarily shifted one step towards the Rage column on page 126 of the *Player's Guide*.

If the *Blackthorne* refuses to help Captain Davis finish off the Klingons she will immediately call the meeting to an end and, if on the *Blackthorne*, demand to be immediately returned to *Perdition* and her crew. No amount of convincing can sway her from her course.

A medical examination, a TN 10 Medicine Test, will reveal that Captain Davis is in perfect health. Aside from elevated adrenaline levels and activity in her hypothalamus, she seems perfectly normal. A full psychiatric evaluation would take a considerable amount of time, however.

Sto-Vo-Kor

In contract to Fort Hope, the Klingon settlement is well-planned and laid out in a manner similar to those used by the Roman legions on Earth. The approaches are well-guarded by four pairs of sentries at staggered watch posts separated by about 20 meters on either side. The Klingons seem to have regressed less than the crew of the *Potemkin*, but then, they were much closer to their feudal past than their enemies. For all intents and purposes, they are simply modern Klingons without disruptors or other technological items. A large segment of the Klingon population actually believes that they have died and now exist in Sto-Vo-Kor—the Klingon afterlife—where they live in perpetual combat. (For a Klingon, this is a good thing!)

Rank structure has remained and Commander Korris rules with an iron fist. The preponderance of warriors in the

PERDITION'S FURY

While on *Perdition*, the characters are subject to some rather usual conditions. First of all, no matter how well their weapons appear to be functioning, when actually used (regardless of setting), they do not work. No amount of tinkering can fix them (they're not broken) and the characters are unable to find a suitable explanation. (Allow a series of false Repair rolls should the characters wish to try anyway.)

The more frightening aspect is that should any character be injured or even killed, they will rise again within 10 rounds, their wounds healed as if by magic. Only something truly destructive, such as a phaser on setting 16, can prevent a character from rising again.

This is more of a curse on *Perdition*, rather than a blessing. Should the Away Team be captured by the Klingons, for example, the Klingons have no qualms about killing the Away Team over, and over, and over until they relent to the Klingon's demands.

Klingon culture has done nothing to diminish the structure they once enjoyed aboard the *Krotahl*.

If approached by Starfleet officers, the sentries will attack, but only to disable or capture. They are each armed with *bat'leth* and *d'k tahg*. If the battle goes badly for them, one or both will use one of their actions to sound a hunting horn with will draw the rest of the sentries to their position in two rounds.

Should the Away Team be captured they will be brought before Commander Korris in the Klingon camp. He will insult them for awhile, pointing out the weakness of the Earthers and their lapdogs before getting down to basics. He will tell the players that if their ship doesn't assist him in wiping out the *Potemkin* survivors the lives of the Away Team will be forfeit and they will be summarily executed as enemies of the Klingon Empire. Korris will also tell them that, regardless of what they do, a massive force of Klingon warriors will leave in the morning to destroy the Federation invaders.

No logic or proof of alliance with the Klingons will appease Korris, on the smoking destruction of Fort Hope and its inhabitants. Any attempts to do otherwise will result in the execution of the Away Team.

Good Plan, Poor Execution

If captured by Korris, the Away Team should make escape a priority. Their communicators and non-functioning weapons removed. The Away Team will be lightly guarded as the Klingons are overconfident in their enemies' inherent weakness and only place two guards. It will require three series of opposed Stealth (Sneak) and Observe (Spot) to get away from the Klingon encampment. If things go particularly badly for the Away Team you can even intercede on their behalf and have a Fort Hope scouting party come to their rescue.

If the Away Team does not try to escape, or fails and is captured again, Korris makes good on his word. Knowing how weak Humans are, Korris grabs one member of the Away Team (preferably female) and slowly kills her with his *d'k tang*. The character will, of course, not actually die as indicated on the sidebar above. Instead they will rise

again and Korris will again continue his sadistic ritual. Even though death may hold no specter over the player-characters, it still isn't a pleasant experience. Anyone observing must make a TN 10 Willpower test or else be forced into action (of some kind).

Depending on the decision of the Away Team and the *Blackthorne* the characters may be stuck here until "Borrowed Time."

GHOST SHIPS

Initial scans of the *Potemkin* and the *Krotahl* reveal that they are both lifeless and operating on reserve power. The most unusual features of the ships are that the shuttlebays and airlocks have been covered shut and plates of neutronium have been fused into the hull, blocking any weapons ports. Each vessel is covered in more detail in the following sections, but presuming an Away Team beams over, the following holds true for both vessels:

POWER: On reserve power most systems are offline. This means no life support or turbolifts. Impulse power can be restored with a TN 15 Propulsion Engineering (Impulse) Test. Turbolifts can then be activated from turbolift control with a successful TN 10 System Engineering Test. Use of all other systems below requires the restoration of power first.

LIFE SUPPORT: Life support can not be brought back online until shipboard power is restored. A successful TN 10 System Engineering (Life Support) Test is required.

PROPULSION: Impulse propulsion can be brought back online (see above), but a TN 5 Propulsion Engineering (Warp) Test will immediately reveal that there is no dilithium on the vessel and the system is inoperable. Dilithium can be taken from the *Blackthorne* and used to restore warp power. This takes four hours and a TN 15 Propulsion Engineering (Warp) Test to complete.

COMPUTERS: The ship's logs may be downloaded to a tricorder or directly to the ship with a TN 15 Computer Use (Retrieve) Test. Clever players that think to do so ahead of time may make a TN 10 Computer Use (Retrieve) Test to recover the *Potemkin*'s prefix codes. This provides unrestricted access to the vessel's computer system (no further rolls required).

Other than the lack of dilithium and the neutronium plates, the ships appear to be in perfect working order. There is no immediate indication as to why the vessels were abandoned.

The Potemkin

The *Potemkin* is a refit *Constitution*-class starship, commanded by Captain Heather Davis. The *Potemkin* was on an exploratory assignment some 60 years ago until lost in the line of duty. While Starfleet did mount an exhaustive search for the *Potemkin*, including a private mission funded by Jacob Davis, the *Potemkin* was never found. At least one vessel searched the Styx Rift but its size and inhospitable nature made the chances of finding the *Potemkin* remote at best.

The vessel harkens back to the older days of Starfleet and a more utilitarian design. An Away Team moving about

the darkened corridors of the *Potemkin* is overcome with feelings of nostalgia and uneasiness at the quiet ghost ship. Crew quarters are neat and tidy, bunks properly made to regulation standards, and half-eaten meals sit in the mess hall unfinished. There are no signs of struggle or even a body to be located in sickbay.

Of interest is the ship's armory and every weapon locker on board should the players think to examine them. Instead of phaser sidearms they find short swords and daggers, all apparently fabricated with exacting standards. How or what they are doing on a Federation starship remains a mystery.

The bridge is much like the rest of the ship: no lingering clues to tell a story of what might have happened. The captain's chair eerily sits empty before a black viewscreen. Narrators should play on the fears of the players as their characters traverse the ship, hearing the odd noise ("what was that?"), jumping at shadows ("did you see that?"), and a general feeling of being watched as they complete their survey.

The players will no doubt wish to review the logs of Captain Davis. Her final three entries (in order) speak to the following situation (improvise the exact contents and wording as necessary):

- The *Potemkin* arrived at Perdition, so named by the exploratory survey team they left behind, and found no traces of the survey team.
- Shortly thereafter the Klingons arrived and refused to answer Captain Davis' demands as to the disposition of the survey team. Shortly thereafter, the *Potemkin* lost power, no doubt to a strange energy weapon used by the Klingons.
- With power failing, their dilithium mysteriously gone, the captain was forced to set the automatic distress signal and order the evacuation of the vessel.

An empathic character that makes a TN 10 Empathy Test will feel a general uneasiness while they are on board the *Potemkin* but are unable to pinpoint the source of their feelings.

The Krotahl

The situation on the *Krotahl* is similar to that found on the *Potemkin* above: the vessel is lifeless and abandoned. Using the same skill Tests the Away Team will be able to restore power to the *Krotahl*'s systems.

The Klingon starship is more cramped and spartan than its Starfleet counterpart, with darkened tight corridors, oppressive red lighting throughout, and an overall prevailing stench once life support is restored. Fortunately the advances in starship technology in the past 60 years and the Federation's familiarity with Klingon technology makes restoring functionality to the *Krotahl* no more difficult than that of the *Potemkin*. A search of the Klingon vessel will find no traces of any energy weapons—no disruptors to be found. A number of *bat'leths* and *d'k tahgs* are found, however. (Which in itself isn't particularly suspicious.)

As on board the *Potemkin*, any empaths making a TN 10 Empathy Test will feel a strange sense of uneasiness,

almost as if being watched.

Examining the battle logs of Commander Korris will reveal the following:

- The *Krotahl* investigated the moon after discovering what appeared to be Starfleet signals in the area. They found no evidence of any Starfleet personnel on the moon.
- The *Potemkin* arrived and the Human female blamed the *Krotahl* for taking her people. Commander Korris denied any involvement but was willing to show the female the error of her ways.
- Before the *Krotahl* could defend herself the Federation starship launched an experimental weapon that deprived the Klingon vessel of all power. The Starfleet cowards even stole the *Krotahl's* dilithium! Commander Korris had no choice but beam to the moon below.

Characters that check will indeed find that the *Krotahl's* warp drive is missing its dilithium.

BORROWED TIME

The energy entity, sensing the arrival of the *Blackthorne*, now moves into action on the next day. Since manipulating the two warring factions over the years has not yielded enough mental and emotional anguish for it to feed off of in order to reproduce, the entity has decided on another track. Within the ruins between the Klingon encampment and Fort Hope, lies a partially buried structure that eons ago served as the entity's original 'birthplace.' The entity now seeks to manipulate the crew of the *Blackthorne* into doing its bidding and artificially create another entity like itself in the same manner as before.

To do so, the entity begins a two-front war. First, any empaths need to make a TN 15 Empathy Test to feel a powerful, yet alien mind, exuding a sense of readiness, determination, and relief. Shortly thereafter TN 5 System Operations (Sensors) Test will reveal an energy buildup consistent with that of a matter-antimatter reaction centered inside a structure on the planet below. A second TN 5 System Operations (Sensors) Test then shows a burst of verteron particles accompanying 1,000 Klingons being transported into the middle of Fort Hope. Shortly thereafter, in the confusion, a powerful tractor beam seizes the *Blackthorne* emanating from the aforementioned structure.

The tractor beam is of a magnitude that the *Blackthorne* has no chance of breaking free and the vessel's weapons are unable to fire because of the energy sheath of the tractor beam. About the only thing the *Blackthorne* can do is transport down an Away Team to shut off the tractor beam...

RAGING BATTLE

Any player-characters on the planet during the time of the battle will be caught up in it. While, technically they have little to fear if they rely on Perdition's ability to prevent them from dying, even the least skeptical character should be motivated to protect themselves and those around them. After all, there is no guarantee that should they fall that

they necessarily will rise this time.

As Klingons appear around the characters, the people of Fort Hope spring into action. Unfortunately they are outnumbered and lack the brute skill of the Klingons. Without help they will be slaughtered. The failure of the character's phasers (see sidebar, page 5) means they will have to take up conventional arms.

Run these combats in small pockets, with an equal number of Klingons versus the PCs at most, going from running battle to running battle. If Captain Davis is on Perdition at the time she will see the characters and join the fight with them, exclaiming that this only a small piece of what they've had to endure for over half a century.

Characters so inclined to take command of a group of Fort Hope personnel (or the other PCs) can make a TN 10 Tactics (Ground) to assist in making a defensible position. This will add +1 to all friendly combat Tests for the duration.

Meanwhile, from the surface of Perdition, as the battle wages around them, a bright coherent beam of energy streaks up into the sky, holding fast the *Blackthorne*.

THE TEMPLE

The source of the energy emissions and the tractor beam holding the *Blackthorne* is a partially buried ziggurat 100 meters high by 100 meters on a side. It is pierced by four entrances each aligned exactly to the four cardinal directions. The four entrances are six meter square hallways that extend for 30 meters each to meet at a door. The stone it is constructed of matches the mineral structure of the surrounding area (a TN 5 Planetary Science (Geology) Test). Just inside the entrances are a series of pictograms, depicting a number of situations. Should the players stop to observe the carvings, describe them in succession:

- Two large groups of similar but opposed people warring against each other with weapons ranging from crude clubs and axes to projectile weapons and even energy beams.
- The two groups laying down their arms and meeting.
- The building of a large structure, similar to the one the players are in now.
- A stylized ball of flame appears above the temple.
- The two groups standing together in peace as the ball of flame grows larger and larger.
- As the size of the ball expands, filling the sky, the two groups are once again at odds with each other, looking into the heavens.
- The ball of flame all but dominates the entire section of wall as the last two groups battle with their bare hands.
- The flame disappears, leaving a dead world.
- Two new groups arrive and the ball of flame appears overhead, smaller as when initially created.
- The flame is split in two balls as the two groups below fight with primitive weapons.
- A beam rises from the ground into the sky while

the two groups continue to fight below and the ball of flame once again fills the sky.

The use of tricorders will confirm with a TN 15 Planetary Science (Geology) Test that the carvings and the structure are several thousand years old. The players should be understandably curious as to how the wall can depict present (current) events.

At the end of the pictograms lining the walls will be a large stone door. Tricorder readings will be unable to penetrate the door with any consistence but do show that the energy readings are stronger behind the door. A locking mechanism will be found next to the door and will require a TN 15 Computer Use (Invasion) Test to overcome (the Test receives a +5 bonus with the tricorder used). Once the lock is defeated, the door grinds open to the side and the hallway is bathed in a bright light.

Inside, the characters will see the corridor extending another 10 meters into a large central chamber. The central chamber is circular with a diameter of 20 meters and an arched ceiling that begins at about 10 meters high and arches up to a central point some 40 meters above the floor. Centered in the ceiling is a collection of dilithium crystals. A TN 15 Physical Science (Physics) Test will reveal that the arrangement of the crystals will focus some sort of energy beam into the center of the chamber. Floating in the air, just underneath the crystals, is a swirling mass of flame-like blue and red lights. Characters that studied the pictograms prior to entering will recognize the entity. A TN 15 History (Starfleet) Test will allow a character to recognize the creature from the Starfleet databanks as the Beta XII-A entity encountered by the *U.S.S. Enterprise* (from the episode "The Day of the Dove"). The entity seems to be growing larger by the minute and will soon fill the entire chamber unless the players act quickly.

At the edge of the central chamber in each hallway is a metallic pedestal with a blank touch pad on top. The technology seems strangely out of place in such an archaic-looking structure.

An Empath can make a TN 5 Empathy test to feel the overwhelming presence of the entity in the room and the waves of anger and rage that wash over it. The entity throbs with the empathic energy, feeding off of it. The character then needs to make a TN 10 Willpower reaction or be momentarily overcome with panic and anger. If the Test is successful then the character is able to control their emotions, but also sense that something is wrong. The entity is hiding something from them. On an Extraordinary Success the character realizes that the entity is trying to trick them but does not understand how.

If all four pads on the pedestals are activated (the sequence is unimportant) the crystal in the central chamber will focus a beam into the center of the room. The entity will begin to glow and then slowly shrink in size as it appears to wither and die.

At this point every character present should make a TN 15 Willpower test (Empaths TN 10). Those that succeed see this vision fade from sight and instead they see the creature for what it really is—stronger than ever! The equipment they have activated is not destroying the entity (as per the

illusion), but instead is feeding it! The players have spelled their own doom!

THE GRAND FINALE

The entity will achieve critical mass inside three rounds, the power of the ancient device amplified by the stolen dilithium crystals. There within lies the answer.

The pedestals can not be turned off and those that failed their Willpower test see the entity shrink and die before their eyes—they see nothing amiss. Only those that succeeded at the Willpower Test know the awful truth. As the entity grows in size it begins to separate into two beings, like a cell dividing. Unless something is done quickly there will be two creatures to contend with.

Destroying the crystals is the only way to defeat the entity and prevent its replication. Unfortunately, with their phasers non-functional, this is easier said than done. A number of alternatives are available to the characters at this point.

- If the characters concentrate their feelings together into that of peace and tranquility they may be able to disrupt the creature briefly, allowing them to use their weapons. Doing so requires a TN 10 Willpower Test and every character present must succeed. This gives the characters one round to act.
- An empath, if present, can use Empathy to distract the entity. Doing so requires a TN 10 Empathy Test. This also provides the characters with one round to act.
- Since tricorders are unaffected, the characters could conceivably try to rig a tricorder power cell to overload and detonate in a small explosion. Such a task would require a TN 15 Repair Test and then the tricorder must be thrown at the crystals, a TN 15 Athletics Test.
- Shooting the crystals with a functioning phaser (see above) is only a TN 5 Ranged Combat: Energy Weapons (Phaser) test.

Once the crystals are destroyed a feedback pulse will then siphon off the energy from the creature, turning back upon itself. The illusions fall as the structure is rocked with explosions and begins to collapse upon itself. Reaching the *Blackthorne* will be impossible due to the interference and energy backlash, requiring the characters to make a run for it.

Have every character make an Athletics (Running) Combined Test. The characters need to score a TN 20 or better within three rounds or else take 2d6+5 points of damage from being caught on the fringes of the blast.

EXTINGUISHED

Outside, once the creature is destroyed, the battle suddenly comes to a halt. Decades of fighting leaves the Klingons and inhabitants of Fort Hope exhausted, as their artificially sustained hatred is washed away. Weapons fall to the earth and weeping people look around for some explanation for the last 60 years they have endured. The curse

of Perdition is lifted.

The Away Team meets up with a distraught Captain Davis who comes across as an entirely different person now. She is fully in command of her faculties and seems dazed and confused. She can not explain her earlier actions or thirst for blood, only that she felt consumed by hatred. Captain Davis can scarcely imagine life without that all-consuming hatred pushing her.

Even the mighty Klingons seem less eager to do battle, having satiated themselves several times over. Confused by the continual fighting that led to no honor or glorious victories, they are equally curious as to what was driving them. At this time the Away Team would be well-advised to step in and mediate on behalf of both sides.

After establishing a dialog and brought up to speed on the alien entity that had been manipulating them for all these years, both captain's will request the assistance of the crew of the *Blackthorne* to repair their vessels and leave Perdition. The *Blackthorne* can provide medical assistance as well, in the form of counseling and other arenas. Both vessels will have to stay with the *Blackthorne* as they complete their patrol of the Rift. Once the Task Force meets up the crews can be transferred to more suitable accommodations.

CONCLUSION

The scars of Perdition threaten to last much longer than normal for the Federation personnel and the crew of the *Blackthorne*, especially the medical staff, may have their hands full for some time until they can complete their patrol of the Styx Rift. The Narrator may elect to continue the adventures of the *Blackthorne* and the patrol of the Rift, perhaps being forced into action against the Jem'Hadar with the *Potemkin* and *Krotahl* assisting.

For their actions during the adventure, award the players the following experience:

- Determining the nature of the Beta XII-A entity: 100 points
- Attempting to diffuse the situation on Perdition through diplomacy (successful or not): 500 points divided amongst the players
- Putting an end to the Beta XII-A entity's plans to reproduce: 500 points divided amongst the players
- Attempting to reason with the Klingons: 100 points
- Seeing through the Beta XII-A entity's illusion: 100 points
- Assisting the Klingons off of Perdition: 100 points divided amongst the players
- Attempting to role play: 100 points

APPENDIX

SUPPORTING CAST

Captain Heather Davis

Species: Human

Species Abilities: Adaptable (+2 to Will); the Human Spirit; Skilled

Attributes: Agl 10 (+2), Int 8 (+1), Per 8 (+1), Prs 9 (+1)*, Str 7, Vit 9 (+1)*

Reactions: Quik +2, Savv +1, Stam +1, Will +3*

Profession(s): Starship Officer (Command)

Professional Abilities: Battle-Hardened, Capable, Combat Leader, Command, Commanding Presence, Starship Duty, Starship Protocol

Advancements: 19

Skills: Armed Combat: Simple Weapons +6, Athletics +5, Computer Use (Retrieve) +3, Conceal +3, Enterprise: Administration (Starfleet) +5, First Aid +4, Knowledge: Culture (Human) +5, Knowledge: History (Human, Federation) +4, Knowledge: Law +6, Knowledge: Specific World (Earth, Perdition) +5, Language: Federation Standard +5, Language: Andorian +4, Negotiate +5, Persuade +5, Ranged Combat: Archaic Weapons +6, Ranged Combat: Energy Weapons +6, Ranged Combat: Projectile Weapons +5, Repair +2, Survival +4, System Operation (Command) +6, Tactics (Ground, Space) +3, Unarmed Combat: Starfleet Martial Arts +6

Edges: Alert, Command 2 (Captain of *U.S.S. Potemkin*), Fit, Innovative (Battle-Hardened and Combat Leader), Promotion 5 (Captain), Quick Draw, Resolute

Flaws: Enemy (Korris), Intolerant (Klingons)

Health: 10 **Courage:** 4 **Renown:** 10

Physical Description: 5'9" tall, 135 lbs, black hair, blue eyes. In remarkable shape and looks to be in her late-forties to early-fifties (quite a feat considering she is 114 years old).

Personality: Prior to her disappearance, Captain Davis was considered a good, if not spectacular officer. She was an excellent negotiator and strong proponent of peace and cooperation. However, her time on Perdition has changed all that and her one burning goal in life is the complete destruction of Korris and his Klingons once and for all.

Federation Soldiers (Human)

Species: Human

Species Abilities: Adaptable (+2 to Quik); the Human Spirit; Skilled

Attributes: Agl 10 (+2)*, Int 5, Per 7, Prs 6, Str 8 (+1), Vit 9 (+1)*

Reactions: Quik +4*, Savv +0, Stam +1, Will +1

Profession(s): Soldier

Professional Abilities: Battle-Hardened

Skills: Armed Combat: Simple (Sword) +6, Athletics +2, Conceal +1, Demolitions +1, Knowledge: Culture (Human) +2, Knowledge: History (Federation, Human) +2, Knowledge: Specific World (Earth, Perdition) +2, Language: Federation Standard +3, Language: Klingon +2, Observe (Spot) +2, Ranged Combat: Archaic Weapons (Bow) +6, Ranged Combat: Energy Weapons (Phaser) +6, Survival +2, Tactics +2, Unarmed Combat: Starfleet Martial Arts +5

Edges: Alert

Flaws: Intolerant (Klingons)

Health: 11 **Courage:** 1

Commander Korris

Species: Klingon

Species Abilities: High Pain Threshold; Klingon Traditional Weapons; *Brak'lul*; Ferocity; Honor

Attributes: Agl 12 (+3)*, Int 7, Per 8 (+1), Prs 10 (+2)*, Str 10 (+2), Vit 10 (+2)

Reactions: Quik +3, Savv +2, Stam +4, Will +2*

Profession(s): Starship Officer (Command)

Professional Abilities: Battle-Hardened, Capable, Combat Leader, Commanding Presence, Intrepid, Rounded (Conceal, Stealth), Starship Duty

Advancements: 15

Skills: Armed Combat: Klingon Traditional Weapons (*Bat'leth*) +9, Athletics +7, Computer Use (Retrieve) +2, Conceal +4, Construct +3, Enterprise: Administration +3, First Aid +3, Indoctrinate +4, Inquire (Interrogate) +3, Influence (Intimidate) +3, Knowledge: Culture (Klingon) +3, Knowledge: History (Klingon) +3, Knowledge: Law (Klingon) +2, Knowledge: Religion (Klingon) +5, Knowledge: Specific World (Qo'noS, Perdition) +5, Language: Federation Standard +4, Language: Klingon +5, Negotiate +1, Observe +6, Ranged Combat: Energy Weapons (Disruptor) +8, Repair +4, Stealth (Sneak) +6, Survival +6, System Operation (Command) +4, Tactics (Ground, Space) +2, Unarmed Combat; *Mok'bara* +7

Edges: Alert, Command 2 (Commander of *IKS Krotahl*, Fit, Innovative (Battle-Hardened, Combat Leader), Iron Willed, Promotion 5 (Commander)

Flaws: Enemy (Davis), Intolerant (non-Klingons), Proud

Health: 13 **Courage:** 3 **Renown:** 10

Physical Description: 6'2" tall, 215 lbs, black hair, brown eyes. Extremely muscular and looks to be in his late-thirties to early-forties (even though he is 103 years old).

Personality: Korris is an exemplary example of late 23rd Century Klingons. He is grasping, abusive, and rules his crew with an iron fist. He would much rather use fear as a weapon to soften up his foes before he takes them down with a swipe of his *bat'leth*.

Klingon Soldiers

Species: Klingon

Species Abilities: High Pain Threshold; Klingon Traditional Weapons; *Brak'lul*; Ferocity; Honor

Attributes: Agl 10 (+2)*, Int 4, Per 6, Prs 6, Str 9 (+1), Vit 10 (+2)*

Reactions: Quik +2*, Savv +0, Stam +4, Will +2

Profession(s): Soldier

Professional Abilities: Battle-Hardened

Skills: Armed Combat: Klingon Traditional Weapons (*Bat'leth*) +7, Athletics +2, Conceal +1, Demolitions +1, Knowledge: Culture (Klingon) +2, Knowledge: History (Klingon) +2, Knowledge: Specific World (Qo'noS, Perdition) +2, Language: Federation Standard +2, Language: Klingon +2, Observe (Spot) +2, Ranged Combat: Archaic Weapons (Bow) +6, Ranged Combat: Energy Weapons (Disruptor) +6, Survival +2, Tactics +2, Unarmed Combat; *Mok'bara* +5

Edges: Dodge

Flaws: Bloodlust

Health: 12