

DUNGEONS & LAIRS #18: DARKMANTLE SPACE FREIGHTER

Darkmantle Space Freighter is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1, 3, 5, or 8**. This document offers details for each level and makes adjustments accordingly. The characters are transported into the far reaches of outerspace (or your campaign's fantasy equivalent) to a seemingly unoccupied space freighter. They soon learn that they aren't alone, but surrounded by dangerous aberrations.

PLUG-IN ADVENTURE

As a plug-in adventure, the adventure content serves as drop-in material for game masters who wish to add an unusual excursion to a preexisting campaign. No matter where the characters are or what they're doing, they mysteriously wake to find themselves on board the Darkmantle in area 1a. You're free to return the characters exactly where they were once they complete (or don't complete) the adventure's objectives. Or you may permanently trap them in a different time and place.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic rule set from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

LEVEL SELECTION

Before play, be sure to know the level for which you wish to run the adventure. Overall, the locations and their descriptions in the adventure remain unchanged throughout the levels. However, most of the encounters, hazards, traps, and treasure scale with each level of the adventure. The keyed locations will present the differences between each level.

Also, the adventure works for more than just the listed levels. If you wish to run this adventure for levels other than 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 8th, the chart below shows you which version of the adventure you should select for each level. A given version of the adventure might be easier or harder for a given party. It's not recommended that you run this adventure for characters with an average party level of 11 or greater, as the adventure may not prove much of a challenge for high-level adventurers.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Average Party Level	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
1	1st-level	Hard
2	1st-level	Medium
3	3rd-level	Hard
4	3rd-level	Medium
5	5th-level	Hard
6	5th-level	Medium
7	5th-level	Easy
8	8th-level	Hard
9	8th-level	Medium
10	8th-level	Easy

DARKMANTLE SPACE FREIGHTER

The adventure kicks off when the characters are mysteriously teleported into the heart of a spaceship called the Darkmantle. Depending on the adventure hook you employ, the characters may not even realize that they're in space until they view the ship's exterior through one of the Darkmantle's few windows.

The Darkmantle is a space freighter, basically a large cargo ship. Before the adventure's aberrations appeared on the ship, the ship was crewed by nine humanoids. Fortunately, it only takes one person to pilot the ship.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, the Darkmantle has the following features.

DESIGN

The Darkmantle is a space freighter. It's exterior walls are made out of specially treated steel designed for space travel. A 10-foot section of wall has AC 19, 150 hp (damage threshold 10), resistance to all damage types except force and necrotic, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Interior walls and the ceilings/floors between the flight and cargo decks have similar statistics except they only have 75 hit points (damage threshold 5) per 10-foot section.

The ceiling on the cargo level is 15 feet high except in the cargo bay itself, where it's 30 feet high. The ceiling on the flight deck is 12 feet high.

DOORS

There are two types of doors on the Darkmantle. First, there are steel doors, made from the same specially treated steel as the Darkmantle's interior walls. These doors share the same stats as the interior walls (see above), except without a damage threshold. The second types of doors are made from blue or red-shimmering force energy. The ship's few windows are also made of this material. These portals share the same qualities as the *wall of force* spell.

Most of the doors automatically open whenever a warm-blooded creature of Small or larger size comes within 5 feet of it. Some of the doors are locked via touchscreen control pads set into the wall beside an individual door. Unlocking these doors require a successful DC 20 Intelligence check using proficiency in high-tech tools (see the sidebar). A locked door can be forced open with a successful DC 25 Strength check. If the door's console is destroyed, there is a 50% chance that the door opens and remains that way until repaired. A control console has AC 16, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

ILLUMINATION

With the exception of the cargo bay (area 8), all of the Darkmantle's rooms are illuminated with pale green light. If the ship's power source is cut from it, all of the ship's lights go out.

GRAVITY

The ship possesses artificial gravity similar to earth's. This allows creatures to move through the ship treating the ground as the floor. If the ship's artificial gravity is removed, creatures can float freely through its areas. Creatures unable to fly in the vacuum of space can move only by pulling against a fixed object or surface within reach (such as a wall or a ceiling) or by pushing off a surface within reach. A creature that pushes off moves in a straight line from the push-off point at a speed equal to three times their Strength score (rounded down to the nearest increment of 5 feet).

VERONICA

The ship possesses an onboard computer named Veronica. To address Veronica, all a creature on the ship needs to do is speak her name aloud followed by a question or request. Although Veronica exists only as a disembodied voice, she is a lawful neutral construct with an Intelligence score of 20, Wisdom score of 10, and Charisma score of 5. She has the following skills, for each of which she adds +12 to her die rolls: History, Nature, and Religion, plus any other ability check with a skill or tool that uses Intelligence as its base. The only exception is Arcana, which she knows nothing about. Veronica speaks all known terrestrial languages, but doesn't understand extraterrestrial languages such as Abyssal, Deep Speech, Infernal, Primordial and its elemental derivatives, etc.

Veronica will answer any question the characters have and perform any action available to her so long as it does not require the captain's clearance. Use your best judgment when deciding what Veronica can and can't do. Here are a few basic rules of her programming.

- Veronica may not injure a living creature or, through inaction, allow a living creature to come to harm. This includes the adventure's aberrant creatures.
- Veronica must obey the orders given by humanoids except where such orders would conflict with the above rule or conflict with her superior's orders.
- Veronica must protect her own existence, except where it would come into conflict with the first two rules.
- The captain's orders override all other orders, including Veronica's basic programming rules. Those orders include opening doors specifically locked by the captain, changing the ship's course, and revealing information about the ship's true mission.

WHO IS THE CAPTAIN?

The characters will have to solve the mystery of who the ship's captain is. When they first arrive on the ship, there is no captain present. However, they might suspect that one of the possessed humanoids from area 9 is the acting captain. If Uumpheshtik Jinroth (see area 7b) returns to the ship, Veronica immediately recognizes him as the captain. If Uumpheshtik Jinroth doesn't return to the ship or he's killed, a character can convince Veronica that they are the ship's de facto captain with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Persuasion) check.

COLLISION COURSE

Shortly after the characters arrive on the ship, Veronica announces over the ship's intercoms that the Darkmantle will soon approach the Molere Savan Nexus. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check (player's choice) realizes that the Molere Savan Nexus is a tear in the fabric in reality. No corporeal object has ever passed through the Nexus without being obliterated. Fortunately, it's over 3 light years from the terrestrial body the characters call home. Unfortunately, the Darkmantle is on a collision course with the nexus event and is relatively close to it. If the characters can't find a way to stop the ship from falling into it, they will surely die (see Aftermath).

The time it takes for the Darkmantle to reach the Molere Savan Nexus depends on the level of the adventure, as shown on the table below.

TIME UNTIL COLLISION

Adventure Level	Time Until Collision
1st	24 hours
3rd	8 hours
5th	1 hour
8th	10 minutes

The duration between Veronica's announcements shorten as she gets closer to the collision, going from once per hour for the first 23 hours, then once per 10 minutes for the last hour, once per minute in the last 10 minutes, once per 10 seconds in the last minute, and then a countdown from 10 in the last 10 seconds.

For simplicity's sake, run the module in real time. When the characters perform an action that takes longer in real time than it does in the game, such as combat, stop the timer. Likewise, if the characters perform an action that takes longer in game time than it does in real life, such as performing a short rest, subtract the game time from the time remaining.

When the remaining time gets down to 10 minutes, the game should switch from real time to round-by-round. Remember: 10 minutes equals 60 rounds.

CLUES

This section offers a quick guide to the clues and objects the characters can (and probably should) find onboard the Darkmantle.

- The characters should recognize that they're on a ship as soon as possible. Veronica's announcements are a good indicator of the adventure's true setting.
- The captain's journal in area 5 and Uumpheshtik Jinroth in area 7b should be used as exposition to the overarching dilemma the characters face. The characters can also speak with Veronica (see above), who will reveal similar details.

- Once the characters understand their dilemma, they will need to decide how they hope to rid the ship of the darkmantles in the cargo area. They will also need to stop the ship from colliding with the Molere Savan Nexus.
- To kill the darkmantles, they must enter area 8 and use area-of-effect spells or the disruption grenades found in the weapons lockers in area 1.
- Only the captain can access the ship's controls. The characters must rescue Uumpheshtik Jinroth or successfully convince Veronica to allow them to assume the controls.
- *Optional:* Changing Veronica's course can only be done from the flight deck. The characters might need to retrieve space suits from area 8 in order to do this.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Darkmantle as shown on page 4. Because the Darkmantle is a ship, descriptions use ship directions instead of cardinal directions. Forward refers to the bottom of the map and aft refers to the top. Port is the right side of the map and starboard is the map's left.

1 - COMMON ROOM

When the characters first arrive on the Darkmantle, they appear in this area.

Two angular yet comfortable couches stand at the center of the forward part of this large chamber (area 1a). A round table made of curved silver metal stands between the couches. A set of large, blue-shimmering windows dominates the forward wall, granting limited view of the dark cargo bay beyond (area 8).

The aft side of this chamber features two cylindrical lifts (area 1b). These lifts are protected by a pair of unlocked blue force doors. Touchscreens inside the lifts allow the characters to access the flight deck (area 9).

Blood Trail. A character who searches the area and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that there are small drops of blood on the floor. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that the blood likely came from a limping humanoid moving between areas 8 and the lifts.

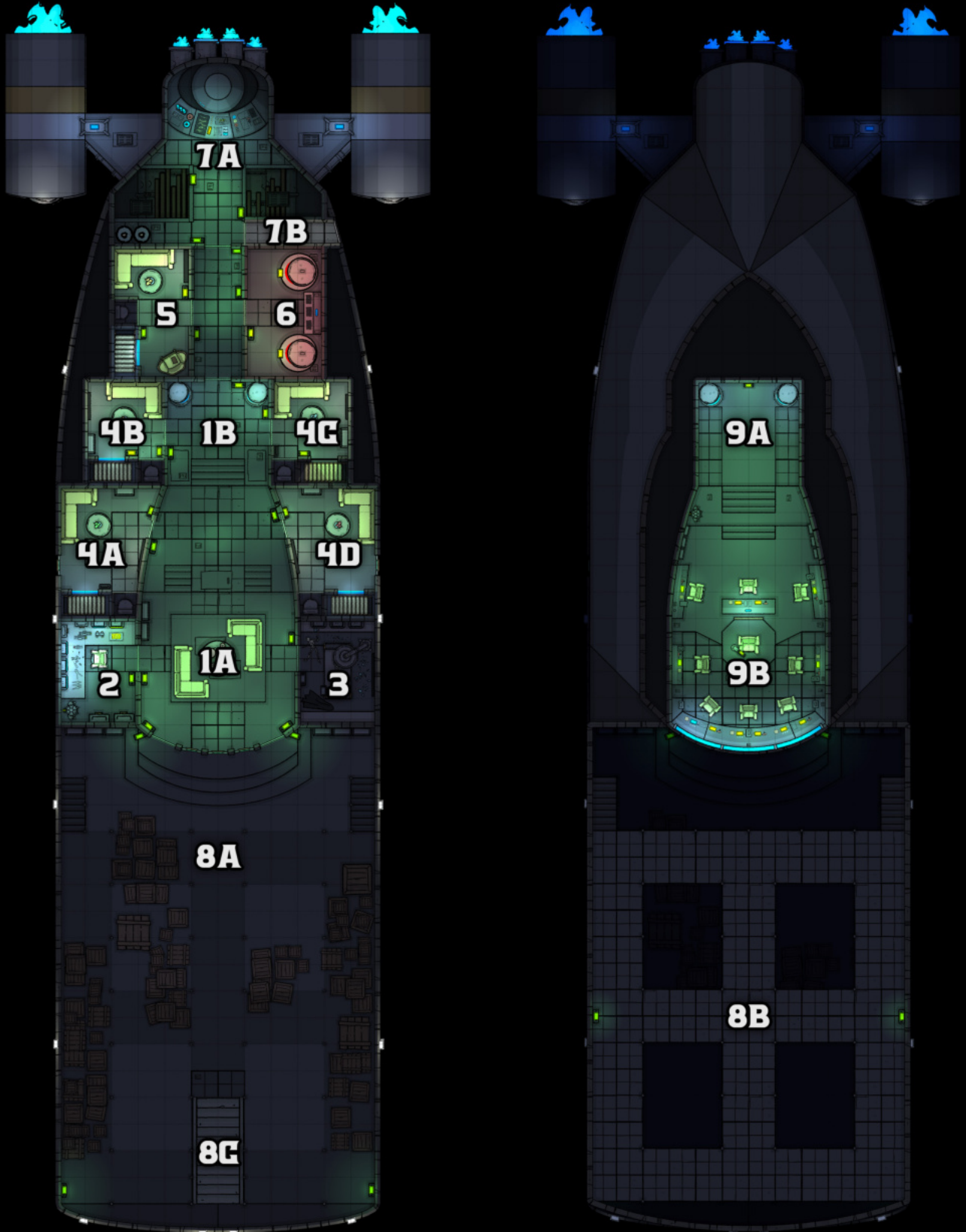
Weapon Lockers. Two weapons lockers stand beside the portside wall. These doors are locked via touchpads set into their doors, captain's orders. The locks have the same statistics as the ship's steel doors.

Although each locker can hold four las-rifles and three las-pistols, all of the weapons are missing. The only thing remaining in the lockers are six disruption grenades. See the Futuristic Weapons sidebar for details on these weapons.

Locked Doors. The doors to areas 3 and 8 are both locked, captain's orders.

THE DARKMANTLE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



FUTURISTIC WEAPONS

The Darkmantle contains a variety of futuristic weapons which the characters can use. Unless they have proficiency in high-tech weaponry, they will not be able to add their proficiency bonus to attacks made with the weapons.

Las-pistols are ranged weapons that deal 3d6 radiant damage on a hit and have the ammunition (range 40/120) property. After a weapon fires 50 shots, a wielder must use their action or bonus action to reload the weapon with a new energy cell. The pistol weighs 2 pounds and its energy cell weighs 5 ounces.

Las-rifles are ranged weapons that deal 3d8 radiant damage on a hit. They have the ammunition (range 100/300) and two-handed properties. After a weapon fires 30 shots, a wielder must use their action or bonus action to reload the weapon with a new energy cell. The rifle weighs 7 pounds and its energy cell weighs 5 ounces.

Disruption Grenades are exploding weapons that a creature can throw up to 60 feet away as an action. A grenade then explodes. Each creature within 20 feet of an exploding grenade must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5d6 radiant damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

2 - WORKSHOP

An L-shaped table stands against the starboard wall. Various high-tech gadgets, tools, and disassembled projects are sprawled over its surface. Blue and green monitors flicker with dim light. Two unlocked tool chests stand against the forward wall. A robot stands silently at the starboard bow corner of the room.

Tools. A character who examines the tools and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check understands how they work. While they will not be able to add their proficiency bonus when making ability checks with these tools, they can still use them to perform tasks that require the use of high-tech tools.

Encounter: Robot. This **workshop robot** is currently offline, but it can function as an extension of Veronica if necessary. The robot uses the statistics of **animated armor** except it uses Veronica's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, speaks all the languages she knows, and is proficient in all the skills in which she is proficient. It also does not possess the animated armor's Antimagic Susceptibility.

3 - MED BAY

The door to this room is locked, captain's orders.

The med bay once featured a Spanner Recovery Table, shelves packed with med kits, and plenty of monitors for tracking the vitals of patients. Unfortunately, all of these items were destroyed in an explosion.

Three Corpses. The charred remains of three of the ship's crew are in this room, all killed by an explosive device. Those crew members are the ship's tiefling science officer, Xorxus, the ship's captain, a cloaker named imminent—who looks like a charred, leather cloak lying on the floor—and the ship's

chief of engineering, a halfling named Lamin Copperblossom. Copperblossom's body is sprawled over the medical table. Copperblossom wears the burnt-out husk of a psychic darkmantle over his face. A character who studies the room and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes that the captain and science officer were examining the possessed halfling when it triggered an explosion, killing all three of them.

4 - CREW QUARTERS

These four rooms are nearly identical. Each features a lounge area with a wrap-around sofa, small table, and standing locker. Each locker holds three to four blue jumpsuits designed to fit one of the crew.

A two-tier sleeping booth allows humanoids to complete short and long rests in half the normal time required without surrendering the normal benefits for the respective rest. For example, a human that normally needs eight hours of sleep to complete a long rest only needs four hours within the booth.

A small water closet offers a toilet by default. A button on the water closet's respective control pad converts the room into a shower.

Room 4a. Lamin Copperblossom and Zorxus shared this room. It features an exterior window in the starboard wall. A character who looks out the window and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots Uumpheshtik Jinroth space walking outside the ship. See area 7b.

Room 4b. Uumpheshtik Jinroth and Ebmeros shared this room.

Room 4c. Osparin and Theris shared this room.

Room 4d. Khalur Bhala and Wreston Bolddust shared this room. It features an exterior window in the port wall. A character who looks out the window and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots Uumpheshtik Jinroth space walking outside the ship. See area 7b.

5 - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The door to this chamber is locked, captain's orders.

These quarters are similar to the ones in area 4, except it also features an armchair. Captain Imminent, a cloaker, used this room. As a cloaker, he did not sleep in the bed, but instead slept within the standing locker.

Imminent's Journal There is a handwritten journal resting atop the chair. A character who understands Undercommon can read the book and learn the following information:

- This ship is called The Darkmantle. It's a cargo ship.
- The Darkmantle had nine crew members: Captain Imminent; Ospirin, first mate; Uumpheshtik Jinroth, tactical officer; Ebmeros, security chief; Khalur Bhala, communications officer; Wreston Bolddust, helmsman; Lamin Copperblossom, chief of engineering; Zorxus, science officer; and Theris, the ship's surgeon.
- Despite his reservations, Captain Imminent accepted a job carrying a large crate of suspicious cargo. He immediately regretted the decision, despite the sensational amount of credits they were paid to do it.
- A month after leaving a space dock, the ship's surgeon was attacked by something in the cargo bay. The creature—referred to as "the aberration" by Imminent—attached itself to the surgeon's head and neck. They placed him in the med bay.

- The remaining crew armed themselves and went into the cargo area. There, they discovered something growing on the ceiling. Before they could react, they were attacked by the aberrations, dozens of them. Only Imminent and Zorxus escaped. They managed to drag Lamin Copperblossom out of the area. Copperblossom had one of the aberrations attached to his face.
- Imminent locked the doors to the cargo area. Through the windows, he could see that Wreston Bolddust and Osparin were possessed by the aberrations.
- The ship's surgeon, Theris, disappeared from the medical area.
- Imminent and Zorxus took Copperblossom to sick bay to understand the aberration attached to him. This was his last entry.

6 - BRIG

Two empty prison pods dominate this chamber. Each is protected by a red force door.

7 - ENGINEERING

A 10-foot-wide catwalk bridges over the ship's inner workings 10 feet below.

7a - Engine. The aft side of this room features the ship's massive engine. The engine hums with power as the ship's boosters continue to drive it toward the Molere Savan Nexus.

7b - Airlock. This narrow hallway allows creatures to exit the ship via an airlock. The exterior door will not open so long as the starboard door is open and vice versa. To prevent Uumpheshtik Jinroth from reentering the ship, Theris jammed the interior door open with a piece of metal. Veronica, unable to put the ship in danger, refused to open the exterior door for Uumpheshtik Jinroth.

When the characters enter this area, they hear banging outside the exterior door. If they remove the metal keeping the interior door open, Veronica will open the exterior door, allowing Uumpheshtik Jinroth back into the ship.



Uumpheshtik Jinroth. Uumpheshtik "Uumph" Jinroth is a dragonborn noble, and the only living survivor of the Darkmantle's crew who has not been possessed. Although he doesn't understand why the characters are on the ship, he shares with them what's happened up to this point.

- The ship's surgeon, Theris, was attacked by something in the cargo area. They placed him into the medical bay.
- The remaining crew members armed themselves and entered the cargo bay. They discovered something that looked like eggs growing on the ceiling.
- From these eggs, aberrations emerged. The aberrations created darkness through which no one could see.
- In the resulting confusion, Osparin, Wreston Bolddust, and Lamin Copperblossom were attacked by the creatures.
- The creatures attached themselves to his crewmate's faces. This allowed the creatures to assume control of the host bodies.
- The Captain and science officer, Zorxus, grabbed Lamin's body and dragged him out of the cargo area.
- Both Uumpheshtik Jinroth and Khalur Bhala were trapped in the cargo area. They both grabbed space suits and exited through the cargo area's main doors, taking out many of the aberrations.
- The possessed crew members managed to shut and seal the doors.
- During their space walk, the pair heard an explosion occur near the medical bay area. (Uumph is not aware that the captain and science officer are dead).
- Khalur and Uumph got back inside the ship via the airlock, but were met with opposition by the possessed crew members. Khalur was shot, but Uumph managed to escape back through the airlock.
- Theris jammed the airlock, preventing Uumph from returning to the ship.
- While on his spacewalk, he witnessed the ship change course. He is not aware that the ship is currently heading towards the Molere Savan Nexus.

Uumph explains how the ship functions and how it's controlled by Veronica. If he learns that Captain Imminent is dead, he realizes that Osparin is now the de facto captain. He suggests that it's possible that Veronica does not recognize that Osparin is possessed by one of the "aberrations." Hence, Osparin can issue commands to Veronica which other commands could not supersede.

However, he's not sure why the ship is headed for the Molere Savan Nexus, especially since many scientists believe that it's capable of destroying anything that enters it. If the characters haven't already traveled to the ship's flight deck, he suggests that they do so as soon as possible to stop the ship from colliding with the Nexus.

8 - CARGO BAY

This colossal area features 30-foot-high ceilings. It is considerably colder here than the rest of the ship, the perfect conditions for darkmantle eggs (see below).

Dozens of crates crowd the area's starboard and portside walls. Steel catwalks 15 feet above the floor allow creatures to walk over the area unimpeded.

Encounter: Aberrations. The immature aberrations—a variant of darkmantle called **psychic darkmantles** (see the Appendix)—lurk in the dark cargo area. They cling to the ceilings and underside of the catwalk. They look like stalactites, which, of course, is odd seeing as how they're in a spaceship. As such, they do not gain the benefits of their False Appearance trait. There are literally hundreds of them in the cargo bay area.

When the characters first enter the area and each round they remain, roll d6. On a result of 6, 1d4 **psychic darkmantles** attack. After the first round, each round that the characters remain in this chamber, more psychic darkmantles attack. The number of extra psychic darkmantles that appear depends on the level of the adventure, as shown on the table below. After 10 rounds of psychic darkmantles appearing, if the die roll results in 0 darkmantles appearing, the characters have successfully cleared the cargo area of all of the hatched psychic darkmantles. If the characters fail to clear the ceiling of the eggs, the darkmantles return 1 hour later.

DARKMANTLES APPEARING

Adventure

Level	Darkmantles Appearing
1st	Roll a d6; 1-3, no psychic darkmantles appear; 4-5, 1 psychic darkmantle appears; 6, 2 psychic darkmantles appear
3rd	1d4 - 1
5th	1d6 - 1
8th	1d8 - 1

Because so many darkmantles appear, use the optional minions rules below:

- All of the darkmantles attack on initiative count 11 (losing initiative ties).
- The darkmantles use the mob rules featured in the Fifth Edition handbook for gamemasters.

We've included the table below for your convenience.

DARKMANTLE MOB ATTACKS

Target AC	Darkmantles Needed for One to Hit
10 or lower	1
11-17	2
18-19	3
20-21	4
22-23	5
24	10
25	20

Completely Destroying the Darkmantles. The only way to completely destroy the darkmantles is to kill all of the darkmantles that attack, and then destroy the eggs attached to the ceiling. Otherwise, the darkmantles quickly proliferate. High-level characters should have access to area of effect spells that will clear the area quickly. Lower level characters might use the disruption grenades found in the lounge's weapons' lockers (see 1b for details).

Because the darkmantles do not need to breathe air, opening the cargo bay doors won't be enough to kill them.

Space Suit Lockers. Three lockers standing against the starboard bow wall hold space suits with helmets—two in the leftmost locker and four in the other two.

A space suit allows a character to move through areas that lack breathable air. Additionally, the suit's boots are magnetic, granting a wearer the benefit of the *spider climb* spell, except they are nonmagical. A space suit's battery has enough power to last 1 hour, after which time it must be recharged within one of the lockers. Because of the bulky nature of the space suit, a creature inside the space suit has disadvantage on Dexterity ability checks and saving throws, all attack rolls, and Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Crates. The crates contain goods and products relevant to the futuristic time period. Regardless, they have value. If the characters manage to escape with the ship's cargo intact, they're worth 1,000 gp per level of the adventure. If the characters spend time searching for those who'd better understand how to use the contents, they're worth 10 times as much.

Eggs. Characters who actively look at the ceiling or have passive Perception scores of 10 or better notice that the ceiling of the cargo bay is covered in slimy, gray eggs, many of which have hatched. A 10-foot-square section of eggs on the ceiling has AC 12 and 10 hp.

Cargo Bay Door. The entire forward wall of the cargo bay usually opens to expose the cargo bay to whatever is outside of the ship (in this case space). Unfortunately, after Uumph and Khalur escaped through the door, killing dozens of darkmantles in the process, the possessed darkmantles (see area 9) disabled the door's controls and welded part of it shut.

9 - FLIGHT DECK

The elevators from area 1a lead up here to the aft side of the flight deck (area 9a). Currently the area is depressurized and its artificial gravity has been disabled; there is no breathable air here. However, if a character uses one of the space suits found in area 8, they can move through the area without having to suffer the effects of zero gravity or no breathable air.

The forward side of this chamber holds the ship's bridge (9b). The bridge has nine stations, the centermost being the captain's. Khalur Bhala's dead body still sits in the captain's chair. She's wearing her space suit, but she removed her helmet, allowing herself to become asphyxiated when the chamber cleared of air.

Controlling the Ship. All nine of the ship's stations allow for advanced control of the ship's functions. However, only a member of the crew can use the controls. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Persuasion) check can convince Veronica to unlock the controls so they can use them.

Encounter: Psychic Darkmantles. The three **darkmantle-possessed crew members** (see the Appendix) lurk in this area. The crew members were Osparin, Theris, and Wreston Bolddust. They are trying to figure out how to "hot wire" the ship so that it doesn't crash into the Molere Savan Nexus. Before she died, Khalur Bhala convinced Veronica that they weren't humanoids. Their only salvation is to capture one of the characters, have the character convince

Veronica that they are a member of the crew, and have the character change the ship's course. So long as the darkmantles gain the help of one character, all other living humanoid can be converted to hosts. If necessary, the darkmantles will place characters taken as prisoners into one or more of the cells in area 6.

WHAT HAPPENED TO KHALUR BHALA?

Before Khalur's death, she convinced Veronica that the possessed darkmantles were no longer living humanoids, a fact Veronica verified with a quick scan. This stripped the possessed darkmantles of their ability to command Veronica. Since Khalur was the only living humanoid onboard the ship, she became its de facto captain. As captain, Khalur set the ship's course to the Molere Savan Nexus. Khalur then disabled the flight deck's life support system and commanded Veronica. Once the air was removed from the area, she removed her helmet, effectively killing herself. As she counted as the captain, Veronica could not override her orders.

AFTERMATH

This adventure places the characters at the heart of a moral quandary. If they can't kill the darkmantles in area 7, they could potentially endanger other worlds and lifeforms. At that point, the only way to destroy the darkmantles would be to destroy the ship. However, the characters are light years away from their home with no easy way to return. If the ship is destroyed, they will be destroyed with it.

If the characters fail to change the ship's course, it inevitably collides with the Molere Savan Nexus. This adventure doesn't specify what happens when this occurs. The Nexus could completely destroy the ship. Or it could teleport the characters to another region of time and space. Or it could do absolutely nothing. Ω

CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

Design and Writing. DMDave

Cartography. DMDave

Art. Paper Forge, Pavel Kunc, Shutterstock

Editing, Proofing, Layout. Laura Jordan



APPENDIX: NEW CREATURES

POSSESSED CREW MEMBER

Medium monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +2

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Echolocation. The crew member can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Possessed. The crew member is possessed by a psychic darkmantle which it wears over its face. The darkmantle can be targeted, and it uses the psychic darkmantle stat block.

A creature can detach the darkmantle by making a successful DC 13 Strength check as an action. On its turn, the darkmantle can detach itself from the target by using 5 feet of movement. If the darkmantle is detached, it appears in a space within 5 feet of the crew member.

Once the darkmantle is detached or if it dies, the crew member loses this trait and its ability to speak Deep Speech and its telepathy. It becomes a humanoid and its alignment is lawful neutral. Additionally, the crew member must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the crew member's Intelligence drops to 0 and dies. On a successful saving throw, the crew member takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The crew member makes two attacks with its club or two attacks with its laser pistol.

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

Laser Pistol. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) radiant damage.

Darkness Aura (1/Day). A 15-foot radius of magical darkness extends out from the crew member, moves with it, and spreads around corners. The darkness lasts as long as the crew member maintains concentration, up to 10 minutes (as if concentrating on a spell). Darkvision can't penetrate this darkness, and no natural light can illuminate it. If any of the darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell creating the light is dispelled.



PSYCHIC DARKMANTLE

Small monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Stealth +3

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Echolocation. The darkmantle can't use its blindsight while deafened.

False Appearance. While the darkmantle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a cave formation such as a stalactite or stalagmite.

Actions

Psychic Crush. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) psychic damage. The darkmantle attaches to the target. If the target is Medium or smaller and the darkmantle has advantage on the attack roll, it attaches by engulfing the target's head, and the target is blinded and unable to breathe while the darkmantle is attached in this way. While attached to the target, the darkmantle can attack no other creature except the target but has advantage on its attack rolls. The darkmantle's speed also becomes 0, it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed, and it moves with the target. A creature can detach the darkmantle by making a successful DC 13 Strength check as an action. On its turn, the darkmantle can detach itself from the target by using 5 feet of movement.

Mind Control. The darkmantle initiates an Intelligence contest with a creature it is attached to that isn't protected by *protection from evil and good*. If it wins the contest, the darkmantle takes control of the host's body. The darkmantle retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as its understanding of Deep Speech, its telepathy, and its traits. It otherwise adopts the target's statistics. It knows everything the creature knew, including spells and languages.

If the host body dies, the darkmantle must leave it. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the body also drives the darkmantle away. By spending 5 feet of its movement, the darkmantle can voluntarily leave the body, entering the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The target must then make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's Intelligence score drops to 0 and it dies. On a successful saving throw, the target takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Darkness Aura (1/Day). A 15-foot radius of magical darkness extends out from the darkmantle, moves with it, and spreads around corners. The darkness lasts as long as the darkmantle maintains concentration, up to 10 minutes (as if concentrating on a spell). Darkvision can't penetrate this darkness, and no natural light can illuminate it. If any of the darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell creating the light is dispelled.



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