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d6 Magazine



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ADVENTURES, ARTICLES, AND INTERVIEWS IN OPEN D6 GAMING

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Happy 2013 everyone! As the d6 Magazine heads in a new direction, we will continue to grow and expand with each issue. Like everything, we're not immune to the effects of growing pains, it will be a process for everyone involved, but these are exciting times for d6 gaming! I would like to thank the online d6 community in their efforts for helping spread the word and involvement. The d6 System itself has gone through many changes since its initial conception in the late '70s, to the height of its popularity when West End Games held the Star Wars license to the OpenD6 OGL that we have now. The future of d6 gaming is looking very bright, with all the talented minds we have now. I am looking forward to working with everyone as we begin to push the boundaries of our imaginations while we continue to challenge ourselves.

Never stop dreaming, anything is possible. Roll for initiative!

Respectfully,
- Brett M. Pisinski



OUTPOST 717

Written by Peter Schweighofer, Illustrations by Khairul Hisham

Countdown on Outpost 717

A D6 Space Scenario

“Something came out of the portal, it’s tearing things apart, I can’t see it, but it’s tossing people like rag dolls.... Someone panicked and hit the emergency scram button, computer’s automatically frying its databanks and disabling operational protocols faster than we can recoverxxxxxxxxx....”

--Last Audio Log Entry, Outpost 717

The characters infiltrate a remote research outpost run by a shadowy government corporation developing secret technology, only to discover they’ve become entangled in an imminent extra-dimensional disaster. The mission fits almost any setting with slight customization of names and technology.

THE SET-UP

Outpost 717 sits isolated on a lifeless dwarf planet in the heart of a nebula filled with flowing gasses, proto-suns, and other interstellar debris. The facility’s location naturally discourages trespassers; transports, authorized or otherwise, must first acquire detailed navigational data based on projected model analysis for the often violent and barely predictable nebula formations between open space and the research station.

Weave some motivation to travel to Outpost 717 into the existing characters, their backgrounds, and the current campaign setting. In some cases they might have legitimate business there; in others they might try to infiltrate the facility for various purposes. Some ideas on integrating the mission into an existing campaign include:

- The corporation (or a transport subsidiary) hires the characters to haul supplies to the facility, no questions asked.
- A rival corporation hires them to steal research material and data.
- The characters’ political cause prompts them

to sneak into the facility to gain intelligence and sabotage operations.

- Ties to a scientist working at the site -- possibly a relative who hires the heroes -- induce them to investigate a communications lockdown at the research station.

Much of this mission assumes characters operate their own starship, though they could be crew or passengers with appropriate motives on someone else’s vessel (such as an official supply transport or corporate infiltration craft).

APPROACH

Whatever their motivation, the characters face several challenges on their journey through the nebula to Outpost 717.

NEBULA NAVIGATION

Depending on the legitimacy of the their intentions toward the outpost, acquiring the necessary navigational data might form the basis for a prior adventure (steal the course headings predicted for the next few days, shipjack the official transport vessel heading for the station). Even with such astro-navigational information, the characters remain hard-pressed to steer clear of the nebula’s numerous hazards (pick or roll 1D6 to add drama to any spaceflight sequences):

1. Proto-star spins off a massive plasma discharge on a collision course with the characters’ vessel.
2. Sensors begin picking up phantom shapes, masses, and other spacecraft where none actually exist (or do they?).
3. Communications equipment begins picking up garbled, alien transmissions (visual and audio), possibly from this dimension/time period, possibly not; someone must disengage the computer’s automatic urge to reply.
4. Unforeseen turbulence buffets the ship, playing havoc with anyone (and any cargo) not strapped down.

5. Nearby gas cloud takes on the menacing appearance of one of the character's deadly adversaries, then drifts into some other hazy shape.

6. Nearby ion storm discharges momentarily shut down one randomly determined ship system.

STRANGE OBSERVATIONS

Once the characters brave a few of the nebula's hazards they enter the surreal calm around the region inhabited by a small proto-star and the desolate hunk of rock the outpost inhabits. Sensor and communications scans reveal some interesting information, if the characters take the time to check.

From space the station looks rather utilitarian: a central reinforced dome probably houses the main experimental area, while satellite structures arrayed around it include quarters for base personnel, storage bays, a command center, the landing and maintenance bays for spacecraft, several defense turrets, and a power generator structure topped with an odd, reflective segmented dish accessed through a long corridor back to the station.

Oddly enough, no communications come from the station's command center, and any effort to make contact on established channels simply returns uneven static. Attempts to transmit any clearance codes receive no acknowledgement.

Sensor readings and visual observation lasting more than a cursory glance might reveal unstable energy readings from various portions of the facility itself; slight energy overloads in some areas, momentary black-outs in others, nothing lasting more than a few seconds, and not frequent enough to affect the facility's main life-support and operational systems. Scans for life signs (if possible) show faint life-forms in the station, though they don't seem to move.

Although the dwarf planet inhabits a relatively calm "bubble" within the roiling nebula, attentive characters might notice unstable spectrum readings coming from the nearby proto-star indicating that, for a relatively "new" star, it's frighteningly unstable and on the verge of complete collapse. The odd spectrum readings also correspond with similar energy signatures coming from the portion of the facility characters might identify as the station's power

generator superstructure. Anyone making a Moderate (15) roll estimates that, assuming conditions do not change, the star could collapse and go nova in 1D6 hours.

AUTOMATED DEFENSES

Whether or not the characters or their transport have legitimate clearance codes to approach Outpost 717, the facility's automated defenses suddenly spring to life and make a half-hearted effort to ward off the character's ship. This consists of several shots from automated point-defense turrets located around the base perimeter, though for some reason they're rather inaccurate and underpowered.

Point-Defense Turret: gunnery 2D, range 3/12/25, damage 3D+2.

Return fire against the station's defenses go unanswered after the initial attacks. Shooting at the base may damage areas near defense points, but does not change the characters' reception once they land.

OUTPOST 717

A quick fly-by on their approach gives the characters a good look at the facility; consulting what's left of the computer system or informational map plaques affixed to bulkheads also helps them navigate the station.

Outpost 717 includes support facilities typical to a remote station -- quarters for scientists, technicians, and administrators, guard barracks, personnel lounge, a commissary and kitchen, sick bay, administrative offices, storage bays, life-support machinery, secondary laboratories -- as well as several key areas to the base's research function. Most areas show signs of disarray from ransacking and outright combat; salvaging anything useful requires a comprehensive search, though anything even remotely fragile has probably broken.

During their explorations throughout the facility, the characters quickly encounter evidence that sheds some light on recent events at the station:

Power Fluctuations: Everywhere they go the characters notice infrequent, unpredictable power fluctuations. Lights flicker. Computer screens go

dark, then reboot. Power juncture boxes spark momentarily. Air blowers blast, then become calm. Base intercom speakers crackle to life, blast static, then go quiet...all when the characters least expect it. As the nearby proto-star grows ever more unstable, these fluctuations become more frequent and intrusive.

Computer Access: Interfacing with computer terminals shows the system has locked up, though occasional momentary blips flash a screen stating, "Security Protocol Engaged: Core Contents Deleted, Operational Protocols Disabled...Attempting to Reboot Essential Systems." Trying to access anything -- sensitive data, event logs, even commands to control the most basic facility systems -- proves futile, revealing only fragmentary and useless bits, and may actually cause irregularities in otherwise stable systems (like life support).

Casualties: Each location except the personnel quarters contains at least one body -- often more for larger areas -- sometimes sprawled in the open or partially concealed by ransacked equipment and furnishings. Closer examination with some medical or forensic expertise reveals the physical damage came from large claw wounds with occasional weapon hits, possibly from shooting in a crossfire. Each shows signs of decomposition but not consumption; most probably died about five or six days ago.

Comatose Personnel: About three-quarters of the bodies the characters encounter aren't dead but maintain the faintest signs of life in brain-dead comas. Some sprawl on the floor like corpses, others remain seated at operational stations, desks, or commissary tables, staring blankly ahead in mindless trances. Closer observation confirms their lack of decomposition, faint life signs, and occasional weak movement. Any attempts and providing medical attention momentarily coaxes some conscious life into their depleted minds, but they only babble indistinctly about nightmares, horrors that came through the "portal," and a dire need to get away before slipping back into mindless unconsciousness.

Several areas may provide more interest to the characters than the more typical research station support facilities.

THE LANDING BAY

The landing bay offers characters their first impression of realities inside the base (assuming they dock here and don't land elsewhere on the planetoid to infiltrate the station from outside). The bay contains two small transports, a squadron of defense starfighters, maintenance tugs, hydraulic fluid drums, refueling hoses, cargo crates, and other equipment. Cluttered cargo and personal belongings near the transports' open hatches indicate someone was trying to leave in a hurry but never quite made it.

Among the disturbing images of corpses and comatose bodies sprawled everywhere -- including bay personnel, a few scientists, and guards -- the characters might also notice a more subtle but no less unsettling occurrence; occasional power fluctuations in bay machinery, including the white-glowing magnetic seal surrounding the main spacecraft entry port and maintaining atmospheric pressure in the landing bay. When the seal flickers the characters notice a faint breeze in the hangar wafting toward open space outside, evidence that the base's current conditions aren't entirely stable. Blast doors leading deeper into the base remain stuck in the half-closed position; should the magnetic seal completely lose power, they remain jammed despite automatic protocols to close in the event of depressurization, endangering other parts of the base if the seal becomes compromised.

The adjacent repair bay contains a well-stocked inventory of replacement parts for most starship systems...all scattered in disarray beneath overturned shelves, heavy winches, and shop tables.

THE COMMAND CENTER

One of several key locations characters might wish to explore, the base's central command center yields few clues and even fewer prizes. The outpost's main administrative and security hub shows signs of a desperate fight. Something powerful smashed both access hatches inward, then apparently tore apart the electronics and personnel inside despite small arms fire aimed in nearly every direction. Among the smashed sensors and communications panels the characters might find a functional computer interface, which offers little insight into past events or current

system operations (see "Computer Access" above). Outstanding results applying computer skills might offer some snippets of information -- security video of a hulking form only occasionally visible tossing around personnel and smashing equipment, frantic audio reports from the research dome, and an oddly current warning message that the station's power generator is channeling too much energy -- but nothing conclusive or terribly useful other than in reinforcing the horrifying events leading to the base's current condition.

PHOTONIC GRID CONTROL CHAMBER

The station's power generator remains accessible down a corridor setting it slightly away from the main base facilities; nonetheless, it has not escaped destruction much like that found in the command center. Upon closer examination, however, the characters discover only an auxiliary power generator beneath this control room, and this was shut down when the scram protocol gutted the computer and its operational systems controls. But the base still has power from another, highly experimental source. The large, segmented dish visible on the characters' approach serves as the primary receptor for the photonic grid, an energy focusing device that essentially drains power from the nearby proto-star. Careful regulation by trained base

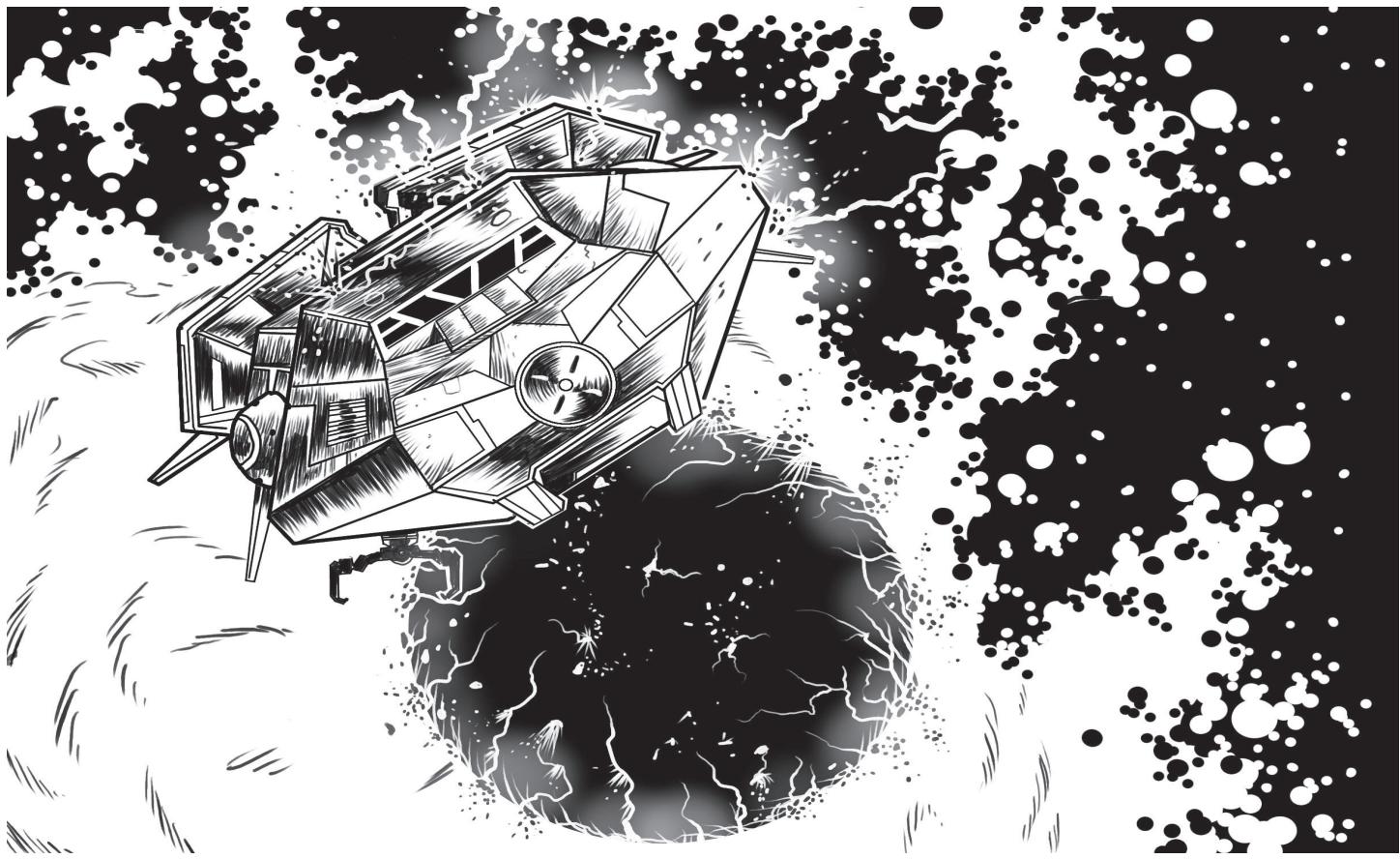
personnel maintained a delicate balance between satisfying the facility's immense power requirements for the experiments in the main research dome (as well as daily operations) and draining too much energy from the proto-star. Unfortunately the

computer scram protocol and its flawed automatic recovery reboot has the photonic grid drawing power at far higher and more inconsistent levels than before, resulting in frequent power overloads in random facility systems and, ultimately, the proto-star's imminent and explosive collapse... at a dramatically appropriate point as further events unfold. Tampering with the grid's control systems through the flawed computer interfaces might restore a balance...or it might accelerate the proto-star's collapse.



MAIN RESEARCH DOME

While smaller, secondary laboratories handled most of the analysis of experiment results, the central, vaulted dome served as the main testing bay for research into newly developed technologies. Sheltered alcoves along the perimeter contained instrument consoles for measuring the effects of experiments as well as smaller testing areas for more compact machinery. Amid the ransacked disorder typical of the rest of the station -- dead or comatose bodies of base personnel, smashed instruments,



burned-out computers -- stands the ominous focus of the base's research efforts: four hulking, equidistant pylons fed by thick power cables that somehow have generated a red-crackling, spherical rift in time and space between them. A mobile instrument console stands just outside the square formed by the pylons, a thick tether extending into the roiling red clouds within the sphere, presumably to some kind of remote probe. What seems like a master control console remains affixed to the outside of one pylon. Occasional power fluctuations cause the portal to flicker slightly, though it doesn't shut down.

The station's primary research focused on testing technologies for a trans-dimensional starship drive intended to cut jump times in half. The four dimensional generator pylons in the main dome contain the components to open a rift in the space-time continuum through which a starship could travel far more swiftly to points in the parallel universe, tearing a new rift to enter at its destination point. Although scientists managed to open a trans-dimensional portal and send a tethered probe beyond, their efforts attracted the attention of a

voracious creature designated an "extromorph" which, finding plentiful life-signs in this dimension, leaped through the portal for a feeding frenzy.

The extromorph has rampaged long enough here that the only remaining personnel the characters encounter were either killed in violent attacks or mostly drained of their life essence. It's still lurking, with no reflection in this dimension's visible light spectrum, somewhere in the station; when the creature wakes up, it senses and starts to hunt down the characters' stronger and more satisfying life essences. The characters must balance their original mission goals with avoiding or defeating the extromorph as it hunts them, while seeking to escape the station before the unstable proto-star explodes.

THE TETHERED PROBE

Hauling in the probe from within the trans-dimensional portal -- using either the machinery in the mobile instrument console or brute strength to pull in the tether -- retrieves a smashed piece of sensor equipment. Anyone making a Very Difficult (25) roll with a relevant skill might successfully extract

integral data recording devices from within the probe, though these reveal little about the readings taken beyond the portal without additional analysis at a research facility. Pulling the probe back to this dimension might attract the attention of yet another voracious extromorph from beyond the portal....

SALVAGING TECHNOLOGY

Sadly the base's emergency scram protocol fried the computer core holding the engineering documentation behind the pylons and the portal they opened. The characters might try shutting down the portal, disconnecting the five-meter tall pylons from the power supply and control cables, and hauling them back to their ship somehow (equipment jacks from the repair bay, for instance); though they do so with the extromorph actively stalking them and the threat of the proto-star going nova. Removing power from the pylons or otherwise closing the portal may have unforeseen consequences ranging from uncontrollable energy discharges to or personal

mutations engendered by exposure to trans-dimensional elements.

THE EXTROMORPH

The hulking creature that wandered into Outpost 717 through the experimental extra-dimensional portal exists -- at least to the knowledge of those in the current dimensional space -- simply to feed upon the life-force of other living beings. It's still in the base, hibernating after gorging itself on life energy, then waking to seek more...from the characters.

The extromorph slumbers in several secluded dens it's created in ransacked areas of the base: one in a storage bay, another in a secondary lab, and a third amid the disarray in the repair bay.

Although its trans-dimensional nature enables it to ignore some physical aspects in this reality, the creature is still far too large to traverse service ducts and other hidden support conduits and thus travels through conventional corridors and hatches.

It's extra-dimensional nature gives it unusual stealth -- no heavy footfalls, no visible body, no audible sound, just a feeling of an unnerving presence -- except when it coalesces into a more corporeal form to attack others, defend itself, or feed off living creatures' life energies. When visible the extromorph looks like a hulking toad with powerful, clawed hind legs for jumping and kicking, four strong front tentacles for grappling opponents, and an elongated, flexible neck ending in a writhing tentacled maw for feeding.

The extromorph needs sustenance and is prone to feeding frenzies when it senses new creatures full of fresh life essence. Its extended reliance on previously drained beings has eroded its metabolism, forcing it to feed far more frequently than normal. Although the characters might not realize its existence or origin until they explore the main research dome, the extromorph begins stalking them the moment they set foot inside the outpost. Roll 1D6 each time the characters enter a new base location to explore; on a roll of 6 the extromorph either occupies that location (albeit invisible in its current state) or wanders in while the characters investigate it. Add a +1 modifier to the roll for each previous location explored without encountering the creature. The extromorph might



also attack if the overall action slows too much due to character indecision or other factors.

• Extromorph

Inter-Dimensional Predator

Agility 4D: brawling 6D, dodge 8D*

Strength 6D: climb/jump 7D, lift 7D, stamina 7D

Mechanical 1D

Knowledge 1D

Perception 4D: search 6D, sneak 8D*

Technical 0D

Strength Damage: 4D

Move: 12

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 8

Body Points: 40

Wound Levels: 5

Natural Abilities: claws (damage +1D)

Special Abilities: intangibility (R5), invisibility (R3), life drain (R5) (see text explanation below).

The extromorph typically attacks prey with its tentacles; a successful brawling attack immobilizes its victim and enables the creature to affix its tentacled maw somewhere on the victim's body to feed (see "Life Drain" below). It tries maintaining its hold on subsequent rounds -- though prey has the opportunity to try escaping at a greater difficulty level -- until it has completely drained the victim of all dice in the three attributes or something foolishly interrupts its feeding.

If threatened the creature back-kicks nearby antagonists with its powerful, clawed rear legs before attempting to retreat to a more advantageous position.

The extromorph possesses many trans-dimensional qualities breaching known laws of physics and biology, thus posing a grave threat to the characters as they investigate the facility, piece together the events leading to the disaster, and ultimately uncover and escape its imminent doom.

Intangibility (R5): Whether visible or not, the extromorph maintains some resistance to damage from weapons on this plane of existence, gaining +3D to its Strength when resisting damage. Despite being

partially "out of phase" with damaging objects, the creature cannot pass through solid materials within the base, such as bulkheads or sealed hatches.

* Invisibility (R3): The extromorph maintains a state of invisibility in this dimension unless it spends the round attacking or feeding. This adds +3D to its sneak and dodge skills (both normally 5D, the modified skills being reflected in the stats above).

Life Drain (R5): The creature drains from Knowledge, Perception, or Technical each round it maintains a grappled hold on its victim using its brawling skill. It begins feeding on the attribute with the highest die code. When that attribute reaches zero the prey goes into a coma, preventing further attempts to break the extromorph's tentacle hold and enabling it to feed on the remaining two attributes. The creature does not gain any benefit from "consumed" attribute dice other than its basic biological sustenance that food might normally provide living beings in this dimension. It requires 5D worth of life essence to sate its immediate hunger; 10D fills it enough that it sulks off somewhere to sleep it off for an hour. Victims regain only one pip per attribute per hour.

ACHIEVING MISSION OBJECTIVES

Three factors work together to accelerate the action toward a climax:

- The characters' original objectives at Outpost 717.
- The extromorph stalking the characters to feed on their life energies.
- The photonic grid sucking energy from the proto-star and causing it to go nova.

The characters must balance their mission objectives with the impending proto-star collapse, further complicated by the extromorph's efforts to hunt them down. Beyond exploring the ransacked station, they might attempt to destroy the extromorph or lure it back through the portal, salvage elements of the photonic grid technology, and try retrieving the massive pylons that generate the trans-dimensional portal.

Escaping the proto-star nova requires some sense of when it might implode plus a great deal of skill

HARD TIMES FOR THE TALISMAN

Written by Brett M. Pisinski

Illustrated by Kahriul Hisham,
Gennifer Bone, and 3D Modling
by Cory DeVore

“Know the difference between friends and your business partners. Contacts are everything. Making, maintaining and meeting up with them, it's everything that the ‘biz’ requires of you to be successful. Whether or not you succeed or die trying is largely based on luck. Either you have that, or you don’t.”

- Popular quote from the Star Freighter Captain’s Guidebook

The cockpit instruments of the Talisman 88 beeped suddenly as the light freighter’s consol flared to life with a chaotic commotion that jolted Captain Dom T. Darkstorm from his deep slumber into reality. Cursing under his breath, sleep was something he didn’t get to achieve on a regular basis. They weren’t supposed to pull back into real space this close to the star system.

The door to the cockpit slid open with a rustic hiss. Emerging hastily, with a touch of grace, though she was also shaken up by the sudden reentry Rydal Xitron immediately took her place at the copilot’s station. Dom noted that she had enough time to tie her long black hair into a ponytail, something he wasn’t accustom to seeing in their six months of traveling together.

“Status?” Her cool, no-nonsense voice interrupted his train of thought.

“Uh...Asteroids, or some sort of uncharted satellite dead ahead tripped the scanners and yanked us out of Hyper.” Dom examined the readouts on the display.

“I thought this sector was thoroughly charted just as your client promised?”

“Hey, this is space and it’s awfully b-” SLAM!

Both Dom and Rydal snapped back to full alert. The light freighter bucked and rocked as Dom fought the controls attempting to regain stability.

“Got it!” Rydal shouted over the warning alarms. “A probe of some kind orbiting an asteroid

three clicks away. We hit the probe. Markings, unrecognizable.”

Sensing no immediate threats in the area, Dom slowed the Talisman 88 down to a crawl to regain their bearings. He reaches up and flips a few switches causing the sublight drives to enter standby. The sounds of various systems within the engine began to whir and sputter as the ship entered its cooling cycle.

“Great. Now we’re lost, aren’t we?” asked Rydal folding her arms in that, ‘I told you so’ position Dom learned to despise.

“No,” Dom retorted. “Just a little off course that’s all. It’ll take a couple of minutes before we can triangulate our position on the space grid... Still, that asteroid, why would it have an artificial satellite orbiting it?”

“I’ll see what I can decipher from the ship’s computers.” Rydal replied, interjecting a sense of confidence. “No reason to suit up and drag what’s left of it inside the Talisman, most of it disintegrated upon impact. And the next time we need to get somewhere fast to hook up with a job, we’re using my people.”

Saying nothing, Dom rolled his eyes, an action that he knew she was probably well aware of. While their habits and sense of competition often infuriated each of them, he knew they made a great team once they got down to business and put aside the bickering. Something about her always made him feel as if he was doing everything wrong, and she was doing everything right. Dom had never experienced a private insecurity before because for the most part, he learned quickly not to trust just anyone and work alone. A red sensor flashed to life once again interrupting Dom’s train of thought.

“Hm.” Rydal activated the scanners and pushed some of the available power towards them, boosting the signal. “I’m picking up something, faint.”

“Life forms?”

“Nope. More technology. Of some kind.”

“Good,” replied Dom. “For a second there I thought you were going to say pirates.” The ship’s computer consol lit up green, indicating that the new Hyper coordinates were established and ready. Had it been ten minutes already?

“Its probably nothing...” Mused Rydal out loud. “But...”

“Yeah. I’m thinking the same thing. Let’s pull

in and take a closer look." Dom's curiosity had been sparked just enough. He activated a few switches, turned a couple of dials and hit the Sublights, firing them back up to life. Cautiously, rather than swinging around and reentering Hyper, he brought the Talisman 88 closer to the humongous asteroid.

He approached the asteroid, its diameter was calculated roughly at 275 meters long compared to Talisman 88's total length of 30 meters. There was plenty of room for error if he didn't play it carefully. The asteroid itself was moving slowly and rotating at the same pace on its axis, Dom was able to get the Talisman within one meter of the asteroid's surface, close to the mysterious technology's point of energy output.

"What's that?" Asked Rydal pointing out the cockpit's window at the surface of the asteroid that engulfed the entire viewport. A glint of something metallic shined just right and for a second, Dom had to shield his eyes due to its intensity. He turned to his copilot.

"Don't know, could be something, could be nothing. However, there's a chance whatever's stuck in that asteroid there could be valuable to us? Let's try to gauge the object's size. I'm tempted to suit up and get a closer look." Dom arched his eyebrow. "You in?"

"You bet." Rydal turned her attention back to the scanner's screen and pushed a few button's on the key's consol. "Alright. We do have a read out, it's still pretty faint even though we're much closer. It can't be much bigger than your average standard escape pod." She paused. "Huh. None of its markings are recognizable, just like the satellite you collided with."

Dom stroked his chin scruff in thought and brushed off the obvious jab at his piloting skills. "We have a few hours we can afford here. It's a good thing we left a day early." He shot her his best winning, 'I told you so' look.

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WEAPONS EQUIPMENT STATS

Standard Energy Pistol

Model: Bolt-Thrower series X-51

Type: Blaster: Energy Pistols

Scale: Character
Skill: Ranged
Ammo: 25 [Clip]
Cost: 750 Credits new, 300-600 Credits used.
Availability: Common [License Required]
Range: 5-25/50/100
Damage: 4d
 Standard Energy Rifle
Model: Bolt-Thrower series X-52
Type: Blaster: Energy Rifles
Scale: Character
Skill: Ranged
Ammo: 15 [Clip]
Cost: 1,250 Credits new, 750-900 Credits used.
Availability: Common [License Required, Restrictions Apply]
Range: 10-35/75/150
Damage: 5d
 Repeating Energy Rifle
Model: Bolt-Thrower series X-53.B
Type: Blaster: Energy Rifles
Scale: Character
Skill: Ranged
Ammo: 10 [Clip]
Cost: 2,000 Credits new, 1,000-1,500 Credits used.
Availability: Restricted [License, Background Checks Required, Restrictions Apply]
Range: 1-20/40/80
Damage: 6d
 Pulsar Wave-Gun
Model: TechCorpz Model T-60 Pulse Rifle
Type: Blaster: Pulse-Wave Rifle
Scale: Character
Skill: Ranged
Ammo: 30 [Clip]
Cost: 1,000 Credits new, 750 Credits used.
Availability: Uncommon [License Required, Restrictions Apply]
Range: 5-15/40/75
Damage: 7d/5d/3d+1

Popular amongst underground thugs and the pirating types, Pulsar series Wave Guns are a standard staple. They were designed originally by the Core Governments to subdue crowds without causing massive amounts of injuries to their targets. Pulsars

work by firing an ionic pulse that emits a wave, knocking their intended targets off their feet while still keeping them somewhat intact.

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The highly experimental, but fiercely loyal robot Artificial "X-Treme" Industrial SecureBot, A.X.I.S (model-B), or Ax as Dom nicknamed the robotic canine prototype, was lying next to the airlock still in sleep-mode as if nothing had happened.

"Hey." Dom woke Ax a quick nudge with his foot. The robot's red eyes flickered to life and its ears shot right up in response. "We're suiting up and headed out. Keep an eye on the ship's computer just in case any unfriendlies arrive." Ax gave a brief nod at the command and headed towards the cockpit, but not without a slight robotic grumble. Stubborn. As always... Dom thought.

After fifteen minutes of suiting up, both Dom and Rydal were inside the airlock. Dom put his helmet on and snap-sealed it shut. After the hiss of pressurization, he kept an eye on his vital readouts on a monitor strapped to left wrist. Everything was ready. They attached the life-harnesses to each other and opened the main hatch that separated them from deep space.

The asteroid was so much more immense up close. Rydal went first and Dom followed her as she fired her jetpack with one short controlled burst. Even in the total vacuum of space she moved with a certain grace like no one else. 'Had she done this before?' He wondered. With her left hand still on the button of the firing mechanism, she freed her right hand to grab the magnetic drill clamp as they approached the asteroid. Flawlessly she activated the device that sunk into the surface of the asteroid and seconds later, she and Dom stood securely on its surface. The gravity was very weak due to the asteroid's slow rotation but with the activation of the space suit's magnetic boots, it gave them the gravitational mobility they needed to hold on.

Approximately eight meters above them, the Talisman 88 held its position. Ax was wired remotely into the ship's central computer, feeding the instructions to the autopilot to stay put. Hopefully he was keeping his ears on the communication channels as well. While extremely effective, Dom had noticed the robot's tendency to get easily distracted while

multitasking.

Rydal had already beaten him to the strange object protruding from the asteroid's surface. She gave a slight tug on their life-harness to remind Dom to keep moving. Once at her side, Dom took a closer look, it seemed as if only 40% of the object was visible while the rest was encased in a mixture of rock and ice. Giving the object a brief scan, its metal composition didn't immediately register so he saved the data for later. Rydal looked to Dom standing next to her.

"No visible markings on its surface, judging by its mostly black to faded silver surface, I'd say it's been here a long time." She concluded as she brushed off the surface with her right hand.

"It sure let off one hell of a glare when the sun's rays reflected off of it," said Dom. His voice electronically crackled over their communicator. "I am picking up a lot of interference here. Could be gamma rays?" He adjusted his channel.

"Negative, the interference seems to be originating from—" Over the speakers, suddenly a loud demonic voice boomed over their transmission.

"HUMANS! Who dares disturb the tomb of MYSHKAH'ZAR THE TERRIBLE!" Where Rydal's hand was, an ancient control panel activated. Its lights danced across the surface in a triangular pattern that initiated some sort of sequence.

"What the...?" Dom stumbled in his surprise but reflexively, Rydal caught him by the arm. Hypnotized by the display of dancing lights, they could only react by watching as the rock and ice began to crumble and slip away around the technological tomb which climaxed into a bright flash of white light.

Dom was the first to blink, shaking it off. "Did you hear that?"

There was no reaction from Rydal, she stood frozen with and he could sense her fear. He turned towards the tomb, which had begun pulsing a molten red, in its center an outline of a shadowy figure began to emerge.

Their communication transmission crackled to life again, this time it was Ax communicating through the ship's computer. "We've got company! Unfriendlies emerging from Hyper 20 clicks away. Whatever you two are staring at - it just gave off a huge power surge!"

"Rydal! Board the Talisman now!" Dom

commanded as he unfastened the life-harness.

Instinctively, her training allowed her to keep her footing and her head cool under pressure. Passing the magnetic drill clamp to Dom she moved a quick ten paces away just under the Talisman's cargo bay, which was beginning to open up. She fired her suit's jetpack once and in a split second was safely on board. Now it was Dom's turn. Thinking quickly, Dom placed the magnetic clamp on the side of the tomb – he was only going to have one shot at this.

The Talisman 88 fired its sublight drives as the Novacore Light Freighter reversed itself closer to Dom. Dom strained as he secured the tomb with the free life-harness as it continued to pulse which allowed Dom a split-second to realize one thing. This wasn't a tomb, it was a prison and they were freeing its occupant.

"AX!" shouted Dom into the communicator inside his space helmet. "Start closing the cargo bay door... we don't have that much time left."

"Very well sir." came Ax's response as the frequency crackled then went dead.

Great! Here goes nothing. Positioning himself and crouching down, Dom made sure the Talisman's alignment to the cargo bay door was directly overhead of him. Just as the door began to close, Dom fired a full-burst from his jetpack and launched himself at the cargo bay door. As he'd hoped, the magnetic clamp held and the life-harnesses strength yanked the tomb from the surface of the asteroid and was being pulled behind him.

With a CRASH! Shoulder first, Dom hit the floor of the Talisman's cargo bay hard as his Jetpack ran out of fuel. The door slammed shut just as the tomb came flying in. Dom barely had enough time to regain his wits and dive for cover as the tomb slid by him emitting a terrible screeching sound. In a blink of an eye, to his horror Dom realized that his life-harness was still attached to the tomb.

"Damn—!" He barely had time to yell as the force of the tomb's pull yanked him down towards the wall. First the tomb impacted with the cargo bay's wall with a tremendous crash and second, came Dom flying through the air as he careened into the wall full-force. The force of the impact cracked his helmet. And for a second, everything went black. Lying on the floor, as consciousness slowly flickered back, the only thing he hoped was that no one had witnessed his

grand entrance.

"Captain!" It was Rydal's voice. Cool and focused.

"Huh?" Dom shot right up to his feet, which was a mistake. He stumbled and fell. On his rear, he depressurized and removed his helmet. And there it was... Rydall had both of her blades trained on it as she stood defensively blocking the doorway leading into the Talisman. Whatever it was, its appearance was humanoid dressed in utility-style pants, big boots a bright aqua jacket brandishing a strange yellow insignia on its left shoulder. It was also wearing a gasmask of some variety, and its eye viewers gave off an eerie reddish glow. When it drew itself to full height, Dom guessed this stranger stood just under seven feet tall.

He began to retreat towards the doorway where Rydall was guarding. After all, his firearm was in the cockpit of the Talisman. It just stood there, watching them while staying absolutely still.

Dom tried his best diplomatic approach, "Uh, hello. Sir? Welcome – aboard the Talisman 88. I'm, Captain Darkstorm, and we have ourselves a situation here so please, strap yourself in. Things are about to get bumpy." Dom turned and looked up at Rydall. They both quickly scrambled for the exit and sealed the door shut to the hangar.

Dom nodded his head in the direction of the cockpit. "C'mon!" As they bolted down the corridor they made it into the cockpit just in time, Ax was still plugged into the ship's computer as the communication frequency indicated that had an incoming transmission signal from one of three identified star cruisers.

He froze. All three ships were cruiser-scale, easily 100 to 150 meters in length and according to a quick sensor readout, packed with lots of firepower. This only indicated one thing, a black-market weapon mods which meant they were dealing with unfriendlies. Instantly recognizable due the markings on its armored hull plating, the lead ship belonged to Izan Klane, the warlord himself. The cruisers were only fifteen clicks away from their position. The communicator on the consol buzzed again. A sinking sensation began in the pit of Dom's stomach as he activated the transmission. The hologram emitter beamed the familiar image of a blue-skinned humanoid with pale, white eyes that donned a deep

grey robe with its hood up. The image was from the shoulders up.

• • •

CAST / MAIN CHARACTER STATS



CAPTAIN DOM T. DARKSTORM

Starship: Talisman 88, a Novacore Light Freighter, Mark Z series

Species: Human, Male

Character Type: Freighter Captain

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 6

Dexterity: 3d+1

Dodge 6d, melee combat 5d, pick pocket 4d+2, ranged 6d+1,

Knowledge: 2d

Academics 4d, languages 4d, planetary systems 4d, streetwise 7d+1, streetwise: Criminal Underworld 8d,

tactics 4d+1, value 5d.

Mechanical: 3d+1

Communication 5d, space transport piloting 5d+2, space transport piloting: Talisman 88 7d+1, space transport shields 4d+1, vehicle ops 4d+2.

Perception: 4d

Bargain 5d, con 7d+1, persuasion 5d, search 6d+2, sneak 6d.

Strength: 2d+1

Brawling 5d, stamina 4d.

Technical: 3d

Communications 4d, computer prog/rpr 4d, first aid 4d, space transports repair 5d.

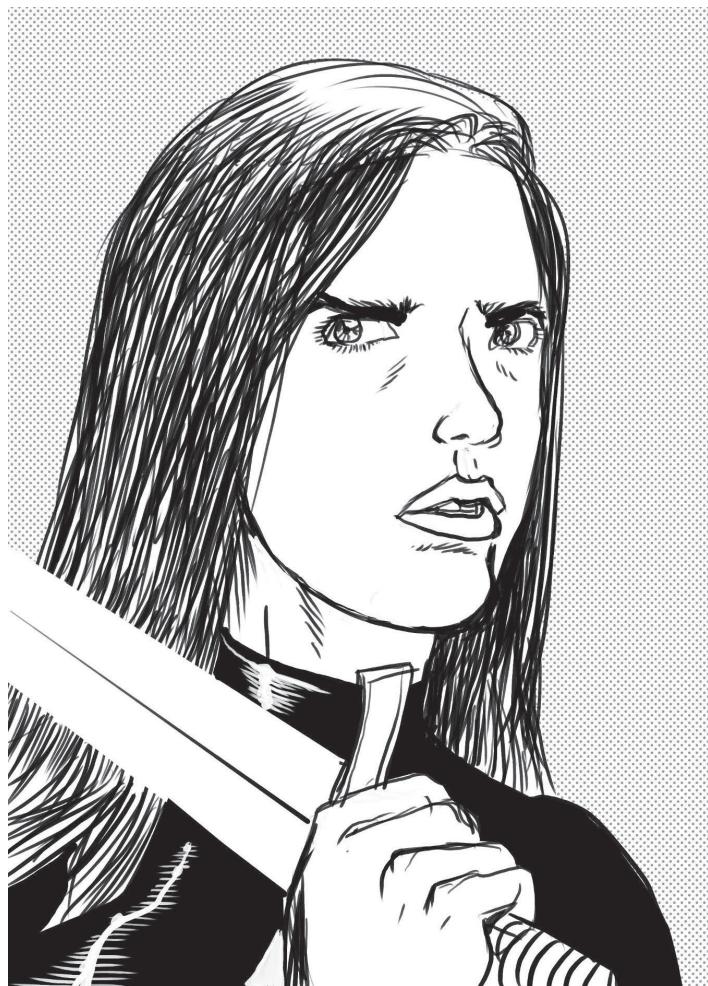
Equipment: Standard Comm-Wave Device, Standard Energy Rifle (5d, 10-35/75/150, ammo: 15, clip: 15), The Talisman 88 – Novacore Light Freighter, A.X.I.S (model-B) robotic guard K-9, 1,000 credit data chip.

Capsule: Born on Earth 39 standard seasons ago, Dom never had an easy life paved before him. In his teens, his path started out as a con man specializing in trickery to becoming a career soldier in the United Government's Army by his mid-20s. It wasn't until an altercation with a commanding officer stripped him of his rank, the incident is still marked as classified by the military and Dom refuses to discuss the events that led up to the confrontation.

Whatever his reasoning, Dom fled and found himself on his own once again. After running low on resources and a series of misadventures, which included a betrayal by a crooked swindler who left him for broke after a failed business venture, Dom decided it was time to go into business for himself as a freelancing freighter captain. Scraping together what he could, he made contact through a chance encounter with an old friend from the academy, who after much deliberation, funded his ambitions and Dom was able to purchase the Talisman 88, a Novacore Light Freighter. Through all the chaos in his life and business transactions, Dom's personal realization is that he loves to fly and was meant to travel throughout the galaxy.

Dom stands just over 6' tall weighing 190 lbs. He has a slender build, with sharp, chiseled features. He k

himself in good shape as a life on the run has taught him to be prepared at any given moment.



RYDAL XITRON

Species: Human, Female

Character Type: Undercover Assassin

Move: 10

Fate Point: 2

Character Points: 5

Dexterity: 4d

Athletics 6d, athletics: Acrobatics 7d, dodge 6d+2, melee combat 8d, ranged 7d, ranged: Sniper Rifles 9d+1.

Knowledge: 2d+1

Academics 5d, intimidation 4d+1, languages 3d+2, planetary systems 5d, planetary systems: Core Worlds 7d, survival 4d, willpower 4d.

Mechanical: 2d

Communications 3d, space transports piloting 3d+2, starfighter piloting 3d+2, starship gunnery 3d+1, vehicle ops 3d+2.

Perception: 3d+2

Bargain 5d, con 4d+1, forgery 5d, investigation 6d, persuasion 5d+1, search 6d, sneak 7d.

Strength: 3d

Beast riding 4d, brawling 5d, brawling: Martial Arts 7d, stamina 4d.

Technical: 3d

Computer prog/rpr 4d, first aid 4d, security 5d.

Equipment: Jumpsuit, Black Cloak, Medium Blades (DMG: STR+2d, difficulty: Moderate), modified Sniper Rifle (5d+2 5-20/75/150* ammo: 25, clip: 25) a universal identification card (Forgery skill is needed to program a new identity), 5,000 credit data chip.

*When using scope, Rydal receives a +1d to her Ranged check and it also drops her DR one difficulty level.

For example: Rydal is perched on a rooftop and is waiting for Dom's signal to take out a guard 200 meters away, on the street down below. She receives his signal and using the scope, her Very Difficult shot becomes Difficult, and she has a total of 10d+1 to roll for her Ranged check. (9d+1 + the 1d bonus for aiming with her modified scope).

Capsule: At only 24 standard seasons old, Rydal has an accomplished career as an undercover assassin. Decorated for her cunning and determination, she often masquerades as a free trader that hitches a ride from spaceport to spaceport. This tends to be her favorite disguise until one of her personas became compromised during her last mission.

While trying to trick a seemingly hapless freighter pilot into providing her with a discounted service, an old mark who survived one of her first assassination attempts, the stain on her (almost) perfect record, decided to take matters into his own hands and call upon the local authorities to her attention. A fierce firefight erupted at the local outdoor market during a busy trading day and Rydal was forced to flee with Dom. Rydal was wounded by a lucky shot during the encounter. Blasting their way off planet, Rydal regained consciousness and was questioned extensively by Dom. Begrudgingly, Dom appeared to accept one of her cover stories although she believes that secretly he doesn't trust her.

Rydal stands tall at 6' has a fit build and a pale, steel-blue skin complexion. This is due to her homeworld being an arctic tundra, and having grown up in a tough environment. She keeps her long, flowing black hair straight and always carries a weapon on her, either blade or blaster at all times.



Species: Ba'al Z̄bûb-Sapien

Character Type: Soldier of the Devil's Alliance

Move: 12

Fate Points: 2

Character Points: 9

Dexterity: 2d+1

Athletics 4d, dodge 6d+2, melee combat 5d, melee combat: Power-Axe 8d, ranged 5d.

Knowledge: 2d+2

Academics 4d, alien species 4d, cultures 3d+2, cultures: Homo-Sapiens 6d, languages 5d, planetary

systems 4d+1, survival 5d, willpower 6d.

Mechanical: 3d

Beast riding 4d, communications 4d, sensors 4d, space transports 4d+2, vehicle ops 3d+1.

Perception: 2d+1

Con 3d+2, gambling 4d, search 4d+1, sneak 3d+1.

Strength: 4d

Brawling 7d+1, stamina 6d, swimming 5d+1.

Technical: 3d+2

Computer prog/rpr 6d, computer prog/rpr: Hacking 7d, security 6d, starship repair 9d.

Special Abilities

- **Fire Storm:** Myshkah'Zar has an uncanny ability to absorb or inflict the damage effects of fire. On a Willpower check, DR: Difficult to Very Difficult (depending on the situation), Myshkah'Zar can resist or cause Willpower+2d when defending or attacking against fire. On a DR: Heroic Willpower check, Myshkah'Zar can conjure a torch-strength flame from thin air.
- **True Sight:** Myshkah'Zar is gifted by the power of True Sight, not only does this allow him to see in the dark, but it also enhances his intuition. True Sight gives Myshkah'Zar +1d to Willpower checks if he feels someone is attempting to deceive him. He also receives no penalties when Myshkah'Zar is in total darkness.

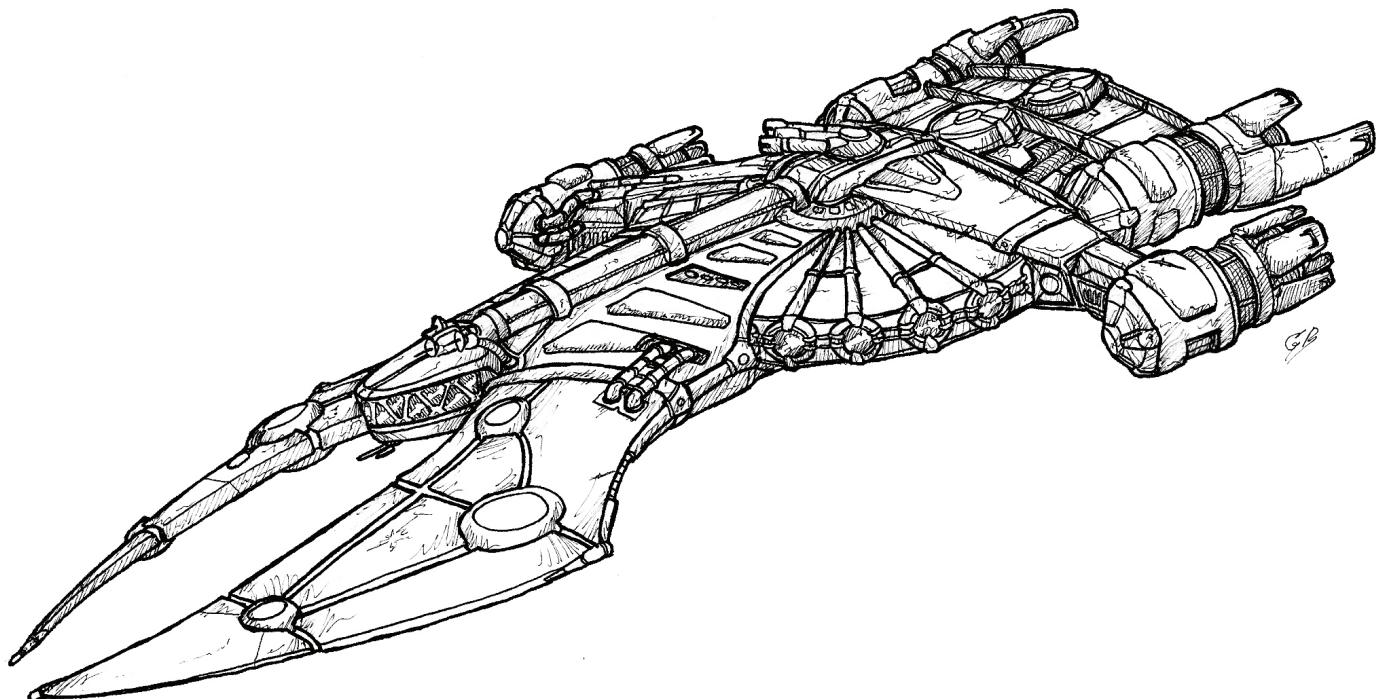
Equipment: Energy Pistol (Dmg: 4d, 5-25/50/100, ammo: 25, clip: 25) Power-Axe (Str+4d kill; Str+3d stun, DR: Difficult), Gas-Mask w/Filters (in Oxygen rich environments, Myshkah'Zar has to wear the mask in order to survive. Filter must be changed once every 10 hours. Skill: survival.), Body Armor (+2d to protect Torso from physical damage, +1d versus Energy damage.).

Capsule: Being the newest recruit who sort of, “fell-in to the gig,” and given his mysterious appearance and refusal to show his true face, Myshkah'Zar is an enigmatic addition on board the *Talisman 88*. Practicing his daily prayers to an unknown deity consumes most of his time, Myshkah'Zar appears to be human on the outside – although he rarely speaks to Rydal or Dom. Every once in a while, a big booming voice will make

an announcement or two over the ship's internal communicators... which has become quite a nuisance. Rydal or Dom can not figure out where the source of the voice is coming from, whether its Myshkah'Zar or some sort of virus that has infiltrated the on board computers of the Talisman. This leaves the ship's communication program as the only acting translator when Myshkah'Zar wishes to communicate.

Myshkah'Zar is in fact an ancient humanoid being who was a prisoner, being held in a state of stasis until the crew of the Talisman 88 unknowingly freed him. While out of some sort of moral code promised to his deity, he has yet to demonstrate any of his powers to his newfound companions. It is currently unknown just how long he spent imprisoned on board the asteroid, or who were responsible for carrying out the act.

Towering just under seven feet tall, Myshkah'Zar is also well built. His blatant refusal to remove his gaskmask adds to his enigmatic presence as Dom and Rydal attempt to learn about him, and how to communicate with him. Whatever secrets he's hiding, it is apparent that who or whatever imprisoned Myshkah'Zar, wanted him out of the picture for good.



THE TALISMAN 88

Craft: The Tek-Space Industries, Novacore X-Series

Type: Novacore Light Freighter

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 30 Meters

Skill: Space Transport Piloting

Crew: 2 (can coordinate)

Crew Skill: See Captain Dom T. Darkstorm

Cargo Capacity:

Consumables: 200 metric tons

Cost: 150,000 creds new, 95,000 creds used

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x1

Hyperdrive Backup: x20

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 2d

Space: 7

Atmosphere: 400; 1,150 kmh

Hull Strength: 2d

Shields: 2d

Sensors:

Passive: 10/0d

Scan: 25/1d

Search: 40/2d

Focus: 2/3d

Weapons:

Dual Laser Turret

Fire Arc: Turret

Skill: Starship Gunnery

Fire Control: 1d

Space Range: 1-3/12/20

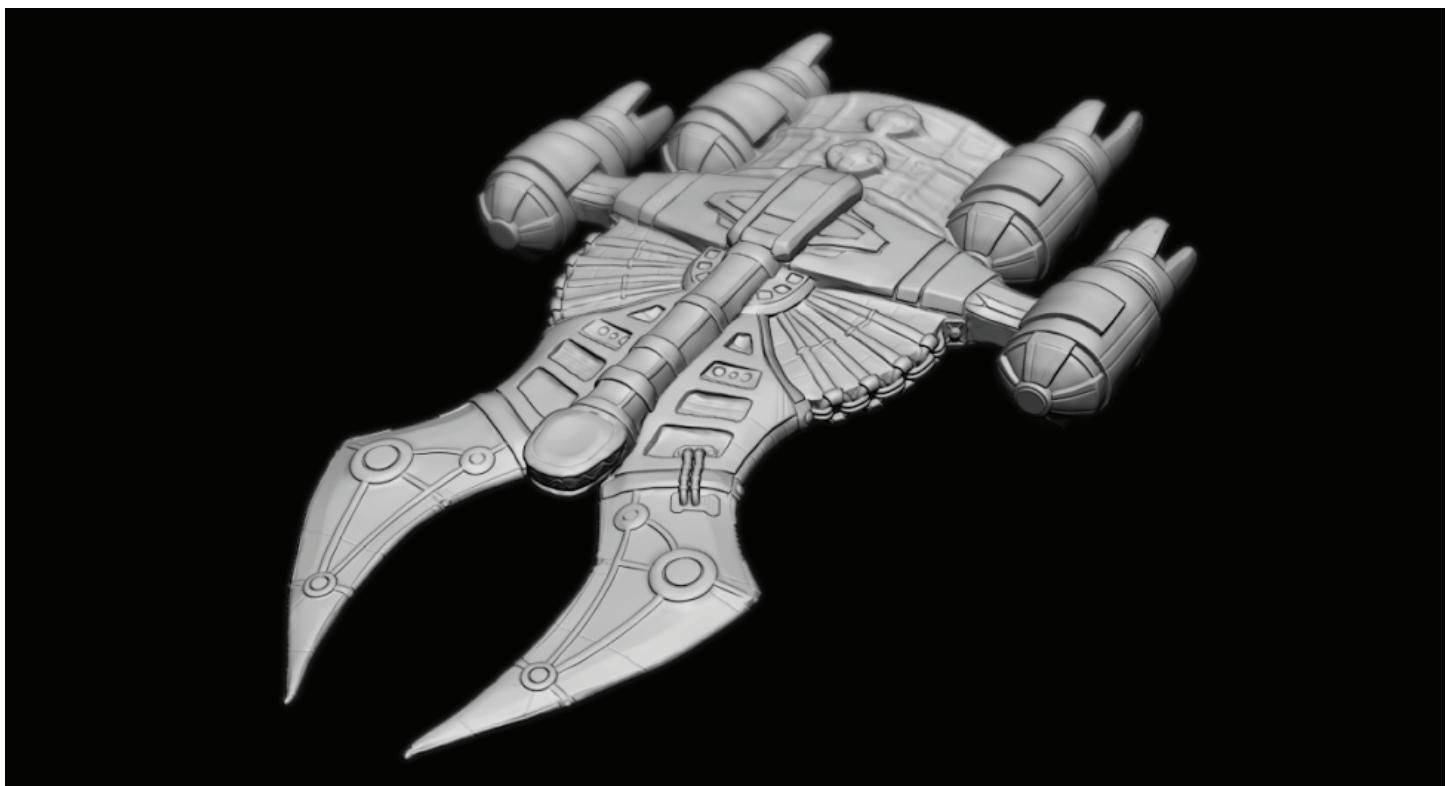
Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.0 km

Damage: 5d

The Talisman History: The Novacore-X series has been traveling the starlanes for the past 50 seasons. Zipping from starport to starport, these sleek ships are perfect for those freelancing pilots who wish to make a living hauling goods. Its cargo container system was specifically designed with speed in mind. Cargobay Mechs are responsible for swapping out the containers while the pilots wait for their next assignment.

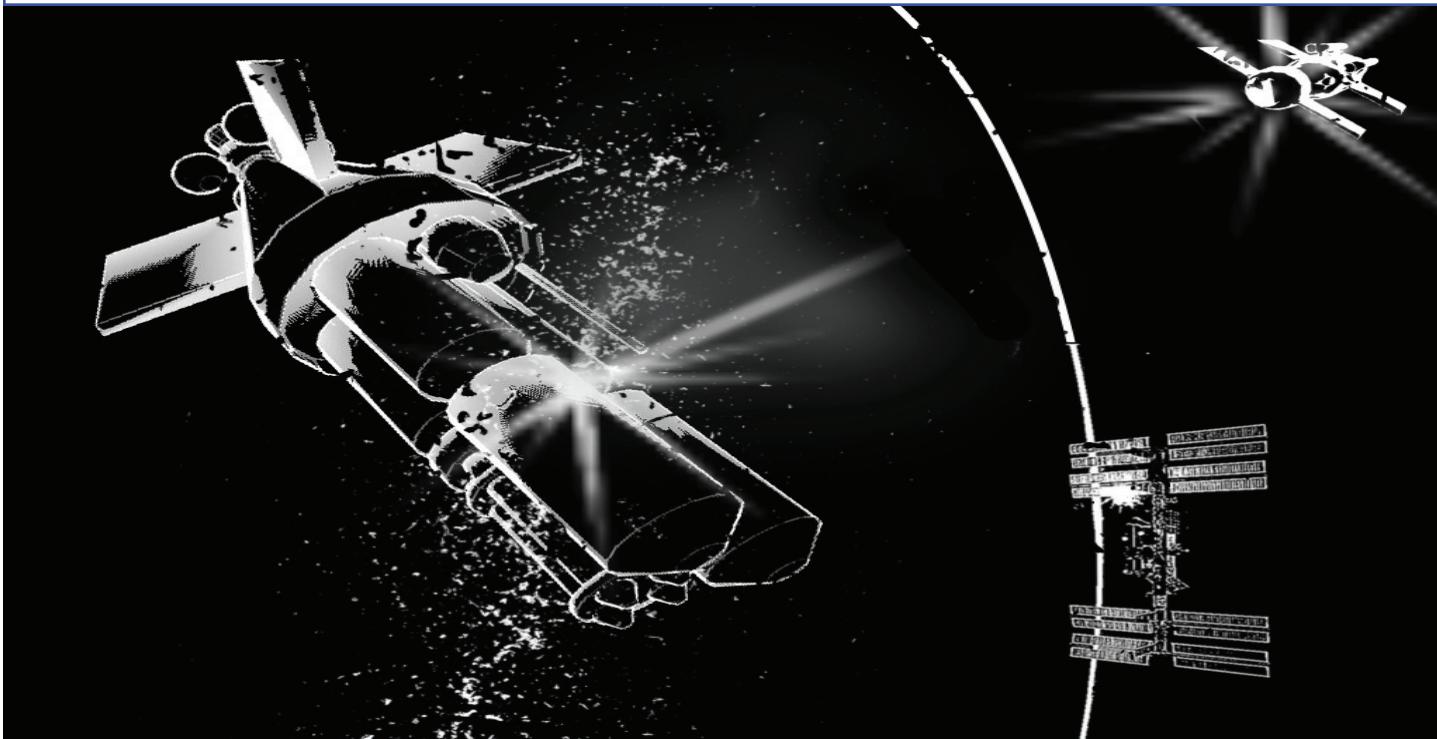
Of course, space-faring entrepreneurs have outfitted the Talisman series for their own seedy purposes, often preferring to upgrade the ship's weapons and defense capabilities. Dom's Talisman was 'acquired' through a loan shark connected to the Water Elementals who rule the spacelanes with an iron fist. Not knowing it at the time, Dom's skill at negotiation landed him a functioning ship with a few strings attached that the loan shark failed to mention...

TO BE CONTINUED...



GONE AT 7 KM/S; ROCKET REPOS

Artwork & Written by Ray McVay of Blue Max Studios



INTRODUCTION

Even in the fantastic world of future spaceflight, where trips into orbit and even to the Moon are commonplace, not everyone who reaches for the stars can afford the trip. When rocket-jocks with more optimism than profits can't afford their loan payments, it often takes a team of experts to track the spacecraft down and recover the bank's property. Being in the "rocket repo" business is risky, but the best in the biz can name their fees. In cis-lunar space, the best are the astronauts working for Recoveries, Limited.

THE OUTFIT

Recoveries Ltd. is a firm that does just what their name says: They recover lost, damaged, stolen, and delinquent spacecraft on behalf of myriad shipping companies and banking institutions on Terra. The company was founded by War veterans Kenny Winchell and Tom Corbett (see below) over ten years ago, and has expanded from a two-crew

operation to a globe-spanning network that employs dozens of freelancers and experts for as many as two hundred missions annually. The main corporate headquarters for Recoveries Ltd. is the space station *Polaris*, located in the vast space between geosynchronous orbit and lunar orbit. From this oasis in the Black Desert, the "Recovery Crews", as they have become known, perform their secondary missions of search and rescue and emergency salvage.

The people of Recoveries Ltd. pride themselves of their political neutrality; no nation, polity, or consortium owns enough of an interest to influence company policy. Because of this, the Recovery Crews are renowned for their impartiality. They have been known to rescue the crew of a disabled Chinese cutter only to end up disabling another cutter while repossessing a spacecraft on a later mission. This neutrality also means that people from all over Terra can expect a fair chance for employment, no matter their nationality, or even species.

Because Recoveries Ltd. is involved in multiple missions, of which spacecraft operations are only a small part, they employ experts of many different types. One repo mission may involve a pilot, life support expert, and engineer, while another may require the services of a computer tech, bodyguards, and even medical personnel. Getting hired by the company is mostly an unofficial affair, with referrals and personal recommendations valued over formal interviews and resumes. Prospective employees (most often part of a small spacecraft crew) are initially hired on a mission-by-mission basis, as needed. New crews are selected based on skill, trustworthiness, and sometimes just for being in the right place at the right time. Those who perform well are kept in mind for future missions, and the best of these freelancers are offered a monthly retainer. The amount of the retainer varies but it is substantial; some of the best Recovery Crews can operate their own spacecraft using their retainers as their primary operating budget.

Sidebar: Polaris Station

Destiny Foundation Modular Systems space station *Polaris*

Type: Traffic Control Node/Propellant Depot

Length: 249 Meters

Skill: *Command, Computer Maintenance, Computer Operation, Engineering, Spacecraft Maintenance, Spacecraft Operation, Telepresence, Telepresence Maintenance*

Crew: 17

Passengers: 15

Cargo Capacity: 4500 tons (water and propellant)

Safety Threshold: 10

Consumables: 896 Crew-days (28 days at full capacity)

Fusion Power? No (fission)

Hull Strength: 5D

Damage Range: 20

Avionics: +1D

Capsule: *Polaris* is fairly typical as most stations go; spindly, fragile and extremely expensive. If it weren't for the Recoveries Limited's booming business, a private group couldn't afford to maintain the beast. As it stands, *Polaris* is capable of docking two craft at a time, refining over four thousand tons of water at a time, and can provide half gravity accommodations for its passengers and crew. "Passengers" are almost always rescued crews or other refugees and the cost of staying on *Polaris* is covered in the rescue and repair bill (usually 10% of the spacecraft's original cost).

THE BUSINESS

Recoveries, Ltd. has three commercial missions: Search and Rescue, salvage, and repossession. Of these three missions, repossessing spacecraft is by far the most lucrative, and the most dangerous.



Calling on a firm like Recoveries Ltd. is seen the last resort by banking and shipping interests, due to the costs involved and the possibility of success. Typically, a repo assignment will be worth upwards of 10-15% of the original value of the spacecraft, with about half of that being divided between the operatives involved in the repossession and the rest used to cover expenses and other services. Missions typically involve 5-10 individuals, or enough to crew two spacecraft. There may also be services rendered by independent information brokers, less than honest guards and officials, disgruntled employees, and other transactions of varying expense. A repossession can involve any amount of resistance from full cooperation to military-level defenses, so operatives on

these missions must be ready for anything. Depending on the jurisdiction, Recovery Crews are usually on the right side of the law – the exceptions being in Shindo Alliance or Siberian Imperial space, as these two polities do not recognize repossession as a legitimate method of asset recovery. Outside of GEO, where the Aerospace Transport Authority (AsTrA) is the only law, Recovery agents have almost total freedom to operate, as long as collateral damage is minimized.

Search and Rescue and Salvage missions are often one and the same, as damaged spacecraft are rarely able to get underway again without extensive repairs. Recoveries Ltd. has recently moved their main headquarters from Low Earth Orbit to an altitude of 190,000 km, deep in cis-lunar space. The station, named *Polaris* in typical AI whimsy, not only provides a central location for S&R operation but boasts a full-scale propellant processing plant capable of turning water into the elements of propulsion upon which conventional and nuclear-powered spacecraft depend. Be sure to check out *The Pumpkin-Suit Manual: Easy Rules for Hard Science Fiction* game supplement or more information on search and rescue and salvage operations.

Sidebar: Reasons to Repossess

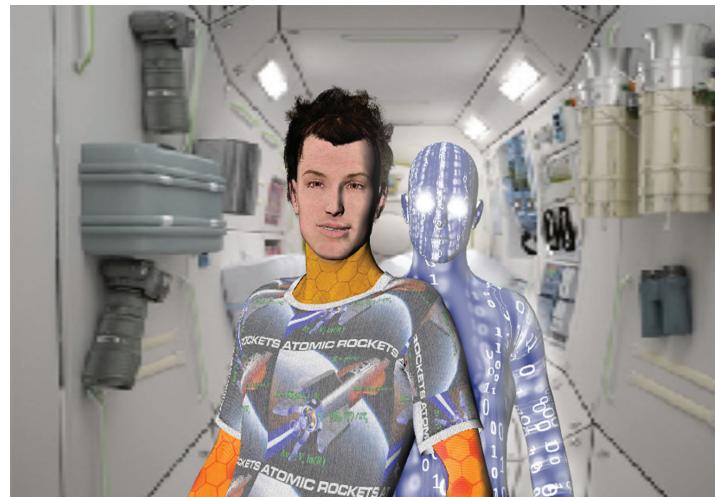
Deadbeats are not the only type of people targeted for repossession. Below are a few other reasons that spacecraft could find themselves targeted by Recoveries Ltd:

- *Maintenance:* Banks expect their investments to be well taken care of. A rocket that fails or refuses to allow a bank inspection will be considered in default. This is as much of a safety issue as a legal one.
- *Whose Assets?* When companies merge or split, the legal owners of a spacecraft may change. If the chattel is not transferred in a timely manner to the new owners, it may be time for a repo.
- *Politics:* Sometimes, a military-grade rocket will end up in the

hands of a private individual or corporation headquartered in a rival nation. Because of the politically sensitive nature of such situations, private recovery specialist are preferred to military strikes.

THE CREW

Below are character templates for the three senior-most partners of Recoveries Ltd.



Kenny Winchell

Template: Human Flight Director

Attributes:

Physical

Agility: 4D

Strength: 2D

Mental:

Knowledge: 3D

Mechanical: 4D

Psychological:

Sensory: 5D

Social: 2D

Skills:

Acceleration Maneuvering 4D

Athletics 2D

Avionics 2D

Avionics Maintenance 4D

Computer Operation 2D
 Command 5D
 Engineering 2D
 Free-Fall Maneuvering 5D
 Spacecraft Maintenance 3D
 Spacecraft Operation 4D
 Spot: 2D

Move: 6 squares

Damage Range: 8

Progress Points: 10

Weapons and Gear: Skinsuit, Utility Laser

L\$U: over 500,000 (full partner in successful business)

Capsule: After the Great War, Flight Director Kenneth Winchell went to work for one of the commercial fuel depots in orbit. After running into financial difficulties, he cut a deal with his creditors and received a break in exchange for repossessing a defaulted spacecraft in cis-lunar space. Winchell partnered with his old comrade, Tom Corbett on the job and the rest is history.

At just over fifty, Winchell is still in the bloom of youth for a modern human. With money rolling in, his own station, and flocks of retainers to help take care of business, "Winch" rarely participates in active jobs anymore. Instead, he prefers to direct multiple operations from *Polaris* and take frequent trips around the Terra/Luna system on which he thoroughly enjoys his success.

Tom Corbett

Template: AI Pilot

Attribute Ranges*:

Physical

Agility: 1D

Strength: 1D

Mental

Mechanical: 6D

Knowledge: 3D

Psychological

Social: 4D

Sensory: 5D

Skills:

Acceleration Maneuvering 4D
 Athletics 2D
 Avionics 2D

:COM/AST 6D

Avionics Maintenance 4D

Computer Operation 6D
 Computer Maintenance: 3D
 Disguise 1D

:Mimic Human 3D

Engineering 2D
 Free-Fall Maneuvering 5D
 Spacecraft Maintenance 3D
 Spacecraft Operation 4D

:COM/AST 6D

Spot: 5D

Move: 6

Damage Range: 12

Progress Points: 10

L\$U: over 500,000 (full partner in successful business)

Special abilities: AI have the following special abilities:

Machine memory: (Advantage)

Because AIs can download information into data storage like any other computer, there is no limit to the number of dice an AI can put into a skill at character generation. They also receive one extra skill die at the character generation. In addition, all Knowledge Skill Checks are one Difficulty Level lower than normal.

Species Traits: AI have the following story traits:

Disembodied: AI are non-mobile. They cannot put attribute dice into

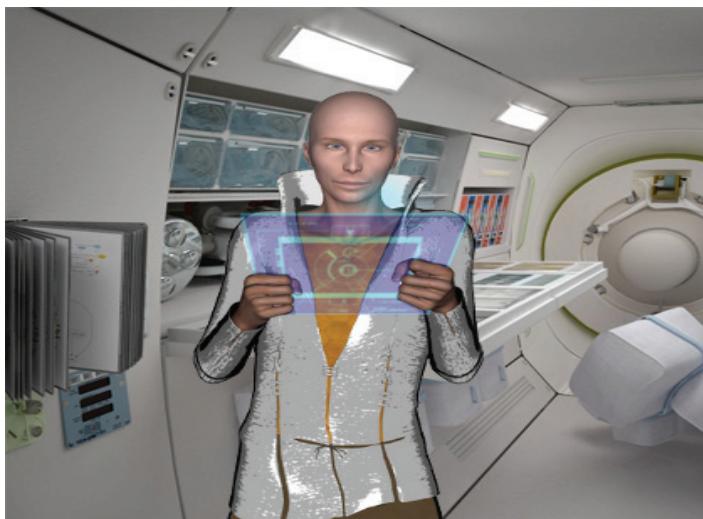
Agility or Strength. AI start play with a basic protective casing worth 2D for the purpose of resisting damage. AI Cannot Dodge. They also cannot put skill dice into Agility or Strength-based skills. They can put attribute dice into Perception, but they cannot use their Perception or Perception-based skills unless they are linked to some external sensory apparatus.

* Certain stats reflect Tom Corbett's Anthroid body.

Capsule: Tom Corbett used to be a military rocket, with fusion-powered speed and military-grade weapons. Once the war was over, the AI found itself at loose ends. After finishing another boring supply run to a run-down propellant depot, Tom was contacted by the station's Flight Director and offered a job he just couldn't refuse: Steal back a rogue rocket and get it safely back to its owners. For the first time since the War, Tom felt the thrill of the chase and gladly went into the business permanently.

Tom prefers using his custom anthroid for personal interactions, but relies on a fairly gaudy hologram when the job demands it. The "solid binary" look elicits groans from his colleges but keeps his anthropoid anonymous from the hapless, former owners of recovered rockets.

Sigimund Whent



Template: Engineer and Weapons Manufacturer

Attributes:

Physical

Agility: 3D

Strength: 2D

Mental

Knowledge: 4D

Mechanical: 6D

Psychological:

Sensory: 4D

Social: 2D

Skills:

Acceleration Maneuvering 4D

Athletics 2D

Avionics Maintenance 4D

Computer Operation 2D

Engineering 5D

Free-Fall Maneuvering 3D

Spacecraft Maintenance 3D

:Damage Control 3D

:Electrical 3D

:Gunnery 5D

Telepresence: 3D

Telepresence Maintenance: 2D

Move: 6 squares

Damage Range: 8

Progress Points: 10

L\$U: Unknown, possibly millions

Capsule: Hairless, cadaverous and impossibly thin, Sigimund Whent (pronounced "vent") is a superior engineer that worked at CERN prior to its destruction during the War. Like many EurAfrican engineers and technicians that specialized in fusion technology, Whent emigrated to the UACS to continue his vocation. Unfortunately, the paranoia against former enemy nationals barred him from such

research.

Whent came prepared for such an eventuality. Before leaving Europe, Whent had "acquired" the fabrication templates to the *Warhaund II* laser satellite. His willingness to provide such firepower to Recoveries Ltd. as an associate partner gave Whent the starting capital he needed to turn his fortunes around.

Today, Sigimund is the founder of Whent-Werks, an engineering firm based in Redstone, Alabama in the UACS. He still provides Recovery Crews on a job with repairs, special discounts, and the occasional "equalizer" for especially difficult repossession

SIDE BAR: OTHER SETTINGS

The information above is specifically for *The Black Desert* setting for D6 and refers to that setting's chronology and rules variations. The free supplement *The Black Desert Primer* available online from Blue Max Studios provides more than enough background on the setting for the information in this article to be adapted to any OpenD6 campaign.

For those who would rather game in their own SF settings, Recoveries Ltd. can be adapted to fit into most concepts:

- *Space Opera:* Not everyone in a galaxy far, far away gets their transports through a shady gangster's loan. Legitimate businesses, local trade unions and even intergalactic banking federations will often hire asset recovery firms for average cases, instead of infamous bounty hunters. Even if the galaxy is under the heel of an oppressive empire, there is room for Recoveries Ltd.
- *Space Western:* Unlike corrupt marshals and bounty hunters lookin' for a big score, most folks as like to just roam an uncrowded sky will be more likely to run afoul of a Recovery Crew. That's good news ð they's professionals. Treat 'em kindly and you'll have no cause to fret. More'n half the time, if you can scrape up enough credits to make even a partial payment, they'll take it back to the bank and dicker on your behalf for a new payment schedule. That's the important thing ð they don't want trouble, they

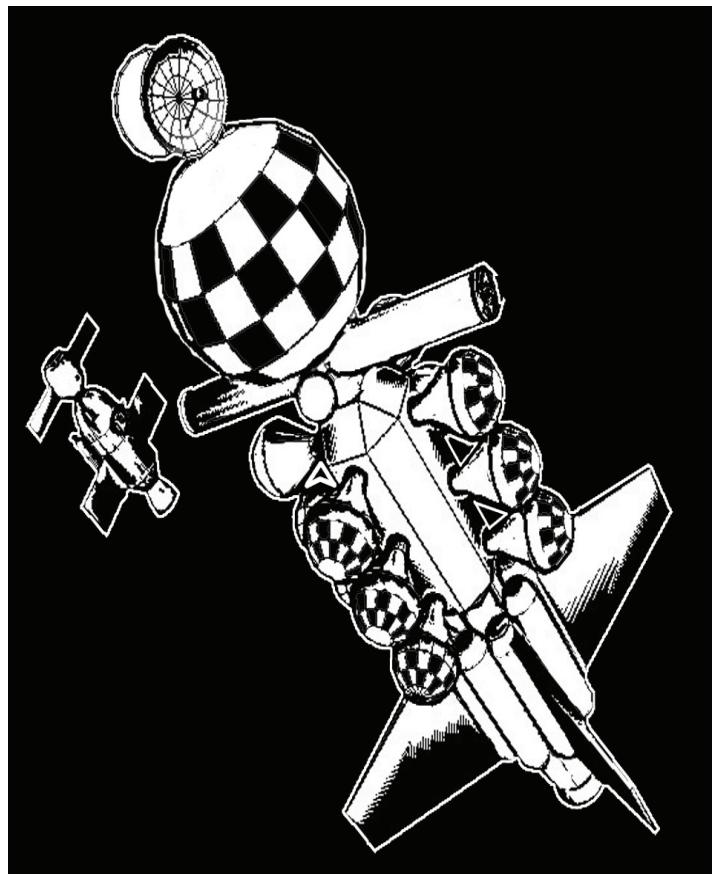
don't even want your ship, they's just doin' a job.

You can contact Mr. McVay and Blue MaxStudios by email at

bluemaxstudios@yahoo.com

For free content for this product as well as more information on our future products, commentary on gaming, game design, and science fiction, follow our blog at

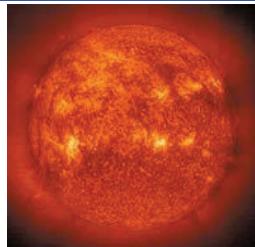
www.bluemaxstudios.blogspot.com



STELLAR CARTOGRAPHY,

ISSUE NO. 1

Written by Charles Stacy II



THE PRIMARY

Proxima Centauri

This is a average Red Dwarf star.

Type: M5.5Ve Temperature: 3042°

Kelvin/5015°Farenheit

Age: 4.85 GYR (Billion Years) Distance from Sol: 650 LY

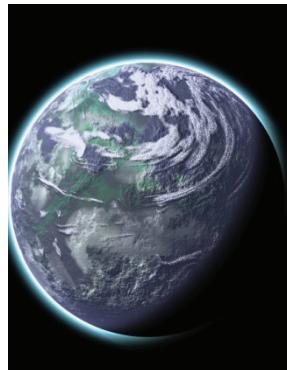
It has six planets in roughly elliptical orbits around it. The outer three are gas giants, the first of which has a spectacular ring system that reaches to the outer most moon orbit of the second. Between the three gas giants there are over three hundred moons.

tions. Due to its dense nickel-iron molten core it has a slightly stronger magnetosphere and a gravitational field of 0.9G's (12.6 psi at Sea Level). It only has sixty-six percent water cover, with twelve percent of that in Ice Caps at the poles. Of the remaining fifty-four percent only seventeen percent is in fresh water lakes and rivers.

The rivers harbor typical varieties of fish and crustaceans. The average oceanic depth is only one mile in most places, with the exception being the Northern Oceanic Trench, which falls to Four and a quarter miles. This is the result of an ancient under-sea land-quake along a major fault line.

The apex predator of the depths is a shark like creature that averages one hundred fifty meters in length and can get up to two hundred thirty meters. Instead of a single dorsal fin, like terrestrial sharks, it has a series of five to seven bony protrusions along its spine. Its primary food source is a family of aquatic mammals similar to dolphins and whales.

The other notable sea creature is a bioluminescent jelly fish species, whos tentacles can reach one hundred feet in diameter and a kilometer in length. During the mating season the colony can be seen from orbit, at which time the east coast of the southern continent is in a state of perpetual twilight for the entire month. Mating season only comes once every ten local years.



THE HABITABLE PLANET

The second terrestrial planet is in the systems habitable zone, 69.75 million miles from its primary (0.75 Terran AU's). The planet orbits its primary every three hundred twenty-seven Terran Standard Days (TSD), or 0.89 Terran Standard Years (TSY). The local day is forty-seven hours long. So while it orbits its primary slightly faster than earth, it revolves on its axis only half as fast. This results in only slight seasonal varia-

The forests of the northern continent are home to a hearty species of conifers that host a reptilian species that resembles scaly squirrels with prehensile tails. Their preferred method of hunting is to drop from the forest canopy by the hundreds to overwhelm their prey, like an ant colony when it attacks. They communicate with a combination of pheromone signals and infrasonic vibration of specialized scales on their backs. They subdue their prey with a paralyzing neurotoxin secreted in glands located in the armpits of their front legs and injected by a retractable claw in their fore paws that is like a hypodermic

needle. Once it is excreted it takes at least six hours for the glands to refill. The toxin is potent enough to bring down prey twenty times the creatures size. While a single one of them wouldn't pose much danger to a adult human they are almost never seen in groups of less than a few dozen.

Their favorite prey item is families of gorilla like primates that live on the forest floor. To combat this threat the gorillas have evolved a thick coat of fur that slowly dissipates their body heat into their surroundings, making them nearly invisible to the squirrel reptile's heat vision. The gorilla primates have also developed the ability to sense the infrasonic sounds with specialized hair clusters all over their bodies.

The extensive mountain ranges of the southern continent harbor extremely abundant crystalline deposits that can be cut and tuned to make efficient data storage devices or energy focusing lenses.

In crystal based data storage technology they triple its capacity. In directed energy weapons that use crystalline foci they increase damage by half, In energy distribution technology that uses crystalline foci they double its efficiency and output capacity, In energy storage technology that uses crystal lattices to hold the energy it triples the storage capacity and stores it nearly indefinitely. There is less than one tenth of a percent loss per thousand years the energy is stored.

These crystal deposits are defended by a species of reptilian raptors that fly on bat like wings. The adults average ten meters tall with a thirty-five meter wing span and weigh in at one hundred thirty kilos (about 300 pounds).

They incubate their eggs in the crystal caves, whose vibrations toughen the eggs shells and nurture the development of their young's echo location ability. They are immune to sound based weapons and non-cutting vibration damage.

The calm air currents and the abundant thermals of the mountain ranges allow them to glide for hundreds of kilometers nearly effortlessly.

THE REST OF THE SYSTEM:

The fourth orbit is the largest of the three gas

giants in the system. It is four local AU from its primary. It is a jovian sized planet that passes through the systems asteroid every twenty-five local years, at it's perigee and apogee. This accounts for the size of its ring system. It has only five moons, two of which are Martian sized and three are Earth sized. They are the only ones that have managed to survive the near constant bombardment of its rings.

The fifth orbit is a Saturian Gas Giant with one hundred eighty-nine moons and moonlets. It has five Earth sized moons, Twelve Martian sized moons, Thirty-Seven Plutoid sized moons and one hundred thirty-five Asteroidal moonlets between one hundred meters and one kilometer.

The sixth orbit is another Saturian Gas Giant with ninety-four moons. It is 9 local AU from its primary.

THE ASTEROID BELT:

The systems Asteroid Belt is between the fourth and fifth orbits with its near edge 3.75 Local AU from the primary and its far edge 5.25 Local AU from the primary. It measures 2.5 Local AU from top to bottom.

The far edge is composed of 85% Type C, Carbonaceous Condrite. The near edge is 40% Type S, Silicate.

1 Meter or Less	90 Million
10 Meters	35 Million
100 Meters	500,000
1 Kilometers	750
10 Kilometers	200
100 Kilometers	17
500 Kilometers	5

THE OMEGA INITIATIVE

Written by Raymond Terry
An OpenD6 Adventure Setting

It was an unusually cold day in January of 2008, and simultaneously across the globe, people started erupting with these fantastic abilities, sometimes with disastrous results. Take Ms. Gretchen Howard, mother of 2. According to eyewitness reports, Ms. Howard was in the kitchen fixing breakfast, when all of a sudden, she "sparked" out. She started producing enormous amounts of electrical energy that fried both of her kids, her husband, and the family dog. The discharge also destroyed her home, and created an EMP pulse that shorted out all the electrical devices within a 10-mile radius. Next look at Kent Wayne, self- proscribed, "ladies man". He was riding the metro to work and was trying unsuccessfully to hit on a redhead sitting next to him, when suddenly he clutched his head and screamed, then the entire train car froze in an instant. Everyone on board was frozen alive. It took days to thaw everyone out, but no one has seen Wayne since then.

Scientists have since studied the phenomenon, and have dubbed it a "strange cosmic occurrence". Others have started calling it, "the Event". For those who have become affected, (or afflicted depending on your point of view) they have dubbed it "the Alpha Effect". The media have started dubbing those who have these powers as "Alpha-humans". The governments of the world have differing ways to cope with this newfound "race" as it were. Some have met with resistance, while others have been accepted with open arms. Toward the end of 2008, several governments, the U.S.A., Great Britain, Russia, China, Japan, Germany, France, Israel, Italy, and Canada, banded together under a cooperative agreement to form a multi-jurisdictional organization that is tasked with studying and keeping tabs on the Alpha-human population. They called this organization the Omega Initiative. They decided to make the base of operations for the Initiative on Ryker's Island. To accommodate for the increased activity and staff on the island, more has been built onto the island. The top level is where the administrative offices are,

and underneath, with a set of connecting tubes and elevators leading down to a secondary facility located on the bottom of the ocean. In these secondary areas is the R&D department and the science labs for testing. Also during this time, the other member nations had smaller facilities built so the Initiative will have a presence worldwide. For the first couple of years, the Initiative was concerned with studying the Alpha Effect, and figuring out how this happened. The cadre of scientists had become no closer to finding out what caused it as they were when it first happened.

It is now 2012, a presidential campaign is in full swing, and the London Olympics has just ended. The Initiative, over the past 4 years, has moved more towards policing those Alpha-humans who want to use their abilities to hurt or destroy the populace at large. There are those who have taken up the gauntlet and use their abilities to help humankind. A group of Alpha-humans, who call themselves the Guardians of the Globe, have banded together to combat those Alpha-humans who seek to use their abilities for evil. No government has "officially" sanctioned these heroes, but the Initiative has made use of them from time to time to combat threats that are too big for them to handle. The Guardians do have a sponsor though. Multi-billionaire, Bruce Gordon, head of MACROTech, has supplied the group with a base of operations in the region of Westchester County, New York. Although there are still skeptics who fear these new Alpha-humans, they have begun to slowly accept them as a way of life. Because of this, there are those people who do not have fantastic abilities, but they also take up the banner of hero and use their talents to help humankind. It is the dawn of a new age in human history. An evolutionary leap has just happened, and in the middle of all of this is the Omega Initiative, who seeks to understand and use the Alpha-humans for the benefit of all...or will they? Only time will tell...

Stay tuned, same Alpha time, same Alpha channel...

CAST/MAIN CHARACTER STATS

RAMSES KING

Ramses King (main protagonist): Inspector on the

SCU. Would have been promoted to Captain by now, but an incident with “alleged” police brutality got him busted by Internal Affairs and re-assigned to the SCU. A good cop, but at times is a little “heavy-handed” at times. Internal Affairs still has their sights on him.

Name: Ramses King
 Character Type: Inspector
 Gender / Species: Male, Human
 Move: 10
 Fate Points: 1
 Character Points: 5

Dexterity: 3d+2

Dodge 5d, firearms 4d+2, melee combat 4d.

Knowledge: 3d
 Intimidation 4d, law enforcement 4d, streetwise 4d.

Mechanical: 2d

Communications 3d, vehicle operation 3d+2.

Perception: 4d

Con 5d, persuasion 5d, search 7d+1, sneak 5d.

Strength: 3d

Brawl 4d, Stamina 4d+1.

Technical: 2d+1

Computer prog/rpr 4d, security 3d+1.

CYNTHIA DELGADO

Cynthia Delgado: Ramses partner. Graduated at the top of her class and asked to be assigned to the SCU. She is keeping a secret from everyone...she is really a former CIA trained operative for black bag missions. She did not want to kill the child of one of the CIA's moles in a foreign country. She left the Agency, had plastic surgery, and created a new identity. If the Agency found out she was still around, they would stop at nothing to get her back...or silence her for good.

Name: Cynthia Delgado
 Character Type: Detective, Ramses' Partner
 Gender / Species: Female, Human
 Move: 10
 Fate Points: 2
 Character Points: 4

Dexterity: 3d

Firearms 6d, Firearms: Sniper Rifles 8d+1, dodge 5d, running 4d.

Knowledge: 4d

Bargain 5d, intimidation 4d+2, law enforcement 5d, law enforcement: Special Forces 7d, streetwise 6d, tactics 6d, willpower 5d+2.

Mechanical: 2d

Communications 3d, vehicle operation 4d.

Perception: 3d+1

Con 5d, Con: Fast-Talking 8d+2, persuasion 5d, search 7d+1, sneak 5d.

Strength: 3d+2

Brawl 4d, Stamina 4d+1.

Technical: 2d

Computer prog/rpr 4d, security 3d+1.

MONTE/MAX MONTGOMERY

Monte/Max Montgomery: information Broker/Serial Killer. In life Monte did not have any friends, was constantly picked on, and had a bad home life. To get through the rough times, he created Max to help him out. As he got older, he found he was a good listener because no one noticed him there, and he had a talent for gathering information. He decided to turn that into a career. Max on the other hand found he had a talent for murder (on those occasions when Monte would let him out). Max wants to be in control so he can have fun and settles some of Monte's scores. Monte/Max have a secret, He is a synthetic being, created by Dr. Carl Harriman, who died in a car accident when Monte was 9 year old. Dr. Harriman used revolutionary nanotech to create a being that will grow like a normal human until adulthood, then he will stop growing and aging. When Dr. Harriman created the brain for Monte, he used the imprint of his own son who died at a young age from cancer. The process was not complete though as he needed one more treatment when Dr. Harriman was killed.

Name: Monte/Max Montgomery

Character Type: Information Broker/Serial Killer

Gender / Species: Male, Human (Synthetic Being)
 Move: 12
 Fate Points: 2
 Character Points: 5

Dexterity: 3d+2

Dodge 6D, firearms 5D+1, melee combat 7d, melee combat: Knives 8d+1.

Knowledge: 3d

Academics 5d, intimidation 5d, streetwise 7d+1, streetwise: Information 8d+2, tactics 5d.

Mechanical: 2d

Vehicle operation 3d.

Perception: 4d

Bargain 5d+2, con 5d, search 7d+1, sneak 7d.

Strength: 2d+1

Brawling 3d+2, stamina 5d.

Technical: 2d

Computer prog/rpr 4d, first aid 4d, first aid: Human Anatomy 6d, first aid: Synthetics 6d, security 6d.

crime cartel

Gender / Species: Male, Human
 Move: 10
 Fate Points: 1
 Character Points: 5

Dexterity: 3d+1

Firearms 5d, dodge 5d, melee combat 4d+1, running 4d.

Knowledge: 3d

Academics 5d, bureaucracy 5d, intimidation 6d, streetwise 7d, value 6d.

Mechanical: 3d

Vehicle operation 4d.

Perception: 3d

Bargain 6d+2, intimidation 7d, languages 5d, willpower 5d.

Strength: 2d+1

Brawling 4D+2, stamina 4d.

Technical: 2d+1

Computer prog/rpr 4d, security 4d.

Special Abilities:

- Nanotech: The Nanotechnology that both Monte/Max posses allows for faster-than-average healing. While it's not perfect (and doesn't always work), on a Stamina check, DR: Difficult, Monte/Max may heal one wound level per session at the Gamemaster's approval.

- Night-Vision: Monte/Max receives a +1d to Search checks when in complete darkness or low-light conditions. However, when activated Monte/Max must conceal his eyes as they glow red during use due to a chemical side effect.

THE BARON

The Baron: Head of the "Family", a powerful crime cartel with their hands on everything. Owns the Lucky Seven nightclub, where he transacts his business each night. He wants control of all the other gangs in the city and has his sights set on Chicago as well.

Name: "The Baron"

Character Type: Leader of the "Family"

HANDLE WITH CARE

PART 1

Written by Mike Farley
An OpenD6 Space Opera Adventure

OVERVIEW

Handle with Care is a beginner's adventure intended to be adapted into numerous science fiction settings. The characters enter the adventure as free traders hoping to make a fresh start in a new sector. Given free traders can exist in almost any science fiction setting, the gamemaster can easily adapt the adventure to run in most sci-fi games. The setting of the larger universe is not developed for this adventure specifically so that gamemasters may adapt it into their games with only minor adjustment. For example, though Handle with Care lists energy weapons, a gamemaster needs only substitute firearms for the blasters and remove references to alien races to create a similar feel to that of Firefly. Further, a gamemaster need only swap alien races for ones familiar in the Star Wars franchise to make the game fit into an existing Star Wars campaign. Certain details of the surrounding political landscape have been left deliberately vague such that the gamemaster needs only make moderate changes to fit almost any setting necessary.

The adventure consists of three episodes, the first of which is included below, though you may find the addition two episodes in subsequent issues of the D6 Magazine. However, you will find a summary of all three episodes below. Depending on the gamemaster's needs, she may easily break up and expand the episodes into three separate adventures, or she can compress them into one or two evenings of game play. Since the story is designed for new and inexperienced players, the complications within the adventure are fairly straightforward with potentials for moral choices as well as a number of combat options. However, the gamemaster may consult side-bars for ideas for developing alternate adventures when the players make choices that diverge from the intended story line.

Gamemasters will find all necessary stats to run the

adventure including all-new alien species, starships, and NPCs. Though the adventure does provide options for starting weapons and equipment, gamemasters may also choose standard energy weaponry from D6 Space. If the gamemaster intends on running the adventure in an established setting, he may easily substitute stats for the new species, starships, and other provided stats. For those gamemasters wanting only to use the adventure provided, a short weapons and equipment section is provided below for your convenience. All stats reflect a challenge level appropriate for freshly generated characters, and if the gamemaster is inserting the Handle with Care into an existing campaign, he should add skill dice to the NPCs as he feels appropriate. If the gameaster is running the adventure for inexperienced players with new characters, he should not provide the characters (PCs or NPCs) with weapons with a damage rating higher than 5D.

STARSHIP: THE EVERLEIGH

The players need a starship, and the gamemaster may provide them with The Everleigh. The Everleigh is an aging Narago Light Cruiser. Originally developed for running cargo and supplies to embargoed areas during the wars, it features a thick hull, prepared to take a bombardment not only from enemy blockades, but also to resist ever-present pirate boarding parties. Though its slim on-board armaments and relatively low maneuverability made it ineffective in pitched battle, its powerful in-system engines made it capable of running blockades to resupply outposts. Since the end of the wars years ago, Feltive Industries cut its production of the Narago Cruiser. It is widely whispered that government officials applied pressure to Feltive Industries suggesting that fast ships with heavy armor was no longer necessary in a time of re-established peace. Whether because of external factors or the line was no longer profitable, the Narago is no longer in production and parts are becoming scarce. However, the engineers

responsible for the craft made it relatively easy for clever mechanics to easily modify the craft, and many crews operate a Narago with an ensemble of repair parts scavenged from other starship models, even though it never produces quite the same result in the end. However, the designer's goals have had at least moderate success, as there are still a number of the original Narago Light Cruisers still in operation.

Judging by the number of patches and scorch marks scattered across the hull, The Everleigh saw more than its share of action during the wars. Though it has been stripped of even its original weaponry, The Everleigh is re-equipped with lasers deemed acceptable by government regulators for civilian self-defense. However, the telltale signs of the ship's interior and exterior reveal that one of the previous crews had once outfitted the vessel with an impressive payload. If she could recount the tales, The Everleigh, would fill her crew's ears with unimaginable stories of heroism. But, sadly, she stands as a dilapidated reminder of what a ship she used to be. Most of The Everleigh's original components have been replaced, some with stock repair parts, and a good number makeshift or jury rigged repairs. Though the ship is functional, she requires constant maintenance, and the captain as well as the crew must perpetually prioritize which repairs they should make immediately, and which can wait until they have credits to spare.

Craft: The Everleigh
Type: Feltive Industries Narago Light Cruiser
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 51 meters
Skill: Space Transports: Narago Light Cruiser
Crew: 4, gunners: 1
Passengers: 8
Cargo Capacity: 80 metric tons
Consumables: 1 month
Cost: not available for sale
Interstellar Drive: x3
Interstellar Drive Backup: x14
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 0D
In-System Drive: 7
Atmosphere: 325; 950 kmh
Hull Toughness: 5D

Shields: 2D
Sensors:
Passive: 10/0D
Scan: 20/1D
Search: 30/2D+1
Focus: 1/3D
Weapons:
Laser Cannon
Fire Arc: Turret
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 1D
Space Range: 1-3:12/25
Atmosphere Range: 100-200-1.2/2.5
Damage: 3D

Weapons and equipment

During character creation, the gamemaster may allow the characters to have 950 credits worth of the weapons and equipment listed below. The players may pool their resources to purchase larger items for communal use. However, any credits that are unused at the end character creation are forfeited. The players should not keep unspent funds after character creation. The characters will begin the adventure with a fixed amount of credits. Alternatively, the gamemaster may examine the sample gear below and assign weapons and equipment as she feels appropriate.

All weapons and equipment are listed below with an Availability Rating of either Very Common, Common, Uncommon, or Rare. Very Common and Common items may be purchased at any planet or starport during the adventure. Uncommon items are usually only available at their planet of origin and characters are not likely to find them elsewhere during the adventure other than during character creation. Items listed as Restricted may require an additional permit or registration if a character attempts to purchase them during the adventure at any time other than character creation. Illegal weapons are banned in some star systems and may not be purchased on the open market.

Blaster Pistol
Model: Vrigel Pacifier 682b
Type: Blaster pistol
Scale: Character

Skill: Blaster: blaster pistol

Ammo: 75

Cost: 500 (power packs: 25)

Availability: Very Common/Restricted

Range: 2-15/35/125

Damage: 4D

Blaster Carbine

Model: Vrigel Starcutter Carbine

Type: Blaster carbine

Scale: Character

Skill: Blaster: blaster carbine

Ammo: 100

Cost: 1000 (power packs: 75)

Availability: Common/Restricted or Illegal

Range: 3-30/75/350

Damage: 5D

Force Gauntlet

Model: Terrenel K-118 Shield Gauntlets

Type: Force field glove

Skill: Brawling, brawling parry

Availability: Uncommon

Cost: 200 (gloves) 20 (power cells)

Damage: STR+1D (stun damage), 4D+2*(stun damage when charged)

Game notes: The shield generators enable the character to stun the target with STR+1D stun damage. The gloves also allow the user to block or deflect melee weapons with the use of the brawling parry skill. Force gloves can also be charged for an entire round to deliver a stun of 4D+2 to a target. However, due to the enormous power demands, the power cells on the gloves are drained after four charged uses of the force gloves.

Heavy Blaster Pistol

Model: Dim-Mak Industries 397 "Heavy Hammer"

Blaster Pistol

Type: Heavy blaster pistol

Scale: Character

Skill: Blaster: heavy blaster pistol

Ammo: 25

Cost: 800 (power packs: 30)

Availability: Common/Restricted

Range: 3-7/25/50

Damage: 5D

Splinter Rifle

Model: Sajun Tech Mark 3 Ripper

Type: Pneumatic powered firearm

Scale: Character

Skill: Firearms: splinter rifle

Ammo: 30

Cost: 750 (ammo packs: 25)

Availability: Uncommon/Restricted

Range: 3-5/20/45

Damage: 5D/4D/3D

Game Notes: The splinter rifle propels an ammunition round with a charge of compressed air. As the round leaves the barrel it is designed to separate into a volley of razor sharp projectiles that spread out towards the target. Given the limitations of the pneumatic charge, the splinter rifle only has a limited lethal range and the damage possible decreases as the distance from the target increases. However, given the spread of the volley, the standard difficulty to hit is Easy at all ranges. An additional benefit of the splinter rifle is that the pneumatic charge is relatively silent when compared to blasters, making the splinter rifle an attractive option for game hunters unwilling to scare off their prey. In some semi-rare cases, beings have specially treated their ammunition with drugs or toxins in order to do stun damage once the projectiles have pierced the target's flesh.

Electrobinoculars

Model: Favro Industries Lightfinder 5

Type: Image magnification device

Skill: Search

Cost: 200

Availability: Very Common

Range: 50-750 meters

Game Notes: When using electrobinoculars, a character receives a +2D bonus to his or her search roll for objects within 50-750 meters. Characters can record up to five minutes of video on all images viewed through the electrobinoculars for later playback.

Personal Data Pad

Model: Standard Data Pad

Type: Personal computing device

Skill: Computer programming/repair

Cost: 100

Availability: Very Common

Game Notes: Data pads allow for basic file transfer and storage, computer uplink, and minimal use of computer networks to which the character has access.

Medical Pack

Type: Standard field medical kit

Skill: First aid

Cost: 125

Availability: Very Common

Game Notes: Standard medical packs contain a variety of analgesics, mild medical stimulants, sutures, field grafts, laceration pressure packs, and other necessities to treat field injuries. They allow for immediate use of a first aid skill to revive unconscious characters, stabilize mortally wounded characters, or heal otherwise wounded characters up to one wound level. After use of the first aid skill, the medical kit is expended, and the same kit cannot be reused.

Deck Bot

Type: Sanglario Robotics Series C2 Deck Bot

DEXTERITY 1D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

MECHANICAL 1D

Navigation 4D

PERCEPTION 1D

Search 2D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 2D

Computer programming/repair 4D

Repulsorlift repair 3D

Space transports repair 4D

Equipped With:

-Wheeled locomotion

-Internal comlink

-Integrated tool arms

-Computer interface linkup

-Heavy grasper arm

-Very simple vocabulator: capable of confirming verbal commands and relaying current status

-Laser welder (4D damage, 0.3 meter range)

Move: 5

Size: 1.2 meters

Cost: 1,900 (used)

Adventure summary:

Warning: if you are a player of a gaming group planning on running Handle with Care stop reading now. The following summary and subsequent adventure details are intended for gamemasters only.

CHAPTER 1

The party arrives at a space station serving as a major hyperspace juncture in a dilapidated starship in need of repair. In addition to selling their cargo, they must prioritize systems they wish to repair. The party is in need of credits and must seek a high-paying client. However, finding clients at all at this station proves difficult until they find someone willing to pay them to take a small but discreet load of cargo from nearby planet and transport it to its intended destination. During transit the crew discovers the cargo is actually a single slave girl in cryogenic sleep, and now they must decide whether to help liberate her or aid one of the vilest criminal trades in the galaxy.

CHAPTER 2

The player characters must find some place to safely leave the newly freed slave girl. Merely dropping her off at the nearest spaceport leaves her far too vulnerable. Once the player characters take responsibility for her, they must make some attempt at finding her suitable lodging and a place where she can use the limited skills she has. After finding a place for her, the crew can take on an additional cargo job to keep their aging ship in functional condition. However, it is not long before the slave's buyer realizes that the shipment will never arrive and sends his men looking for the players. Eventually they are captured and brought before the buyer. Only then do they discover that the buyer is a philanthropist trying to reunite the former slave with her family. The buyer insists that the players retrieve her so that she may be returned to her family.

CHAPTER 3

When the players return to the planet where they left the freed slave, they find that she is usually diligent, prompt, and reliable, but mysteriously, she has not been seen in two days. When the players go to investigate, they find that she has not been

at home either. After following further clues, they find that she has been abducted and once again sold into slavery. The players must infiltrate the slaver's warehouse and whether by stealth, guile, or force they attempt to liberate the slave girl. Once they have her back on board the ship, they may return to the buyer to aid the happy reunion between the slave and her brother.

CHAPTER ONE: REFRIGERATED ORGANICS

Read the following aloud to the players to begin the adventure: "It is an uncertain time in the galaxy. The growing regulations imposed by the galaxy's governing bodies have reached oppressive levels. From local politicians to the common citizens, all are feeling the weight of a domineering regime. Amidst the intrigue of interplanetary conflict even the most complacent beings are being pushed to the limits of toleration – except those who thrive in the shadows. The universe is stained with the presence of pirates, bounty hunters, crime lords, and an endless supply of scum who manage to thrive regardless of the political climate."

Despite the threats that abound in the galaxy, a small group of traders pushes out from center of power in the galaxy and forges on toward the galactic rim. Moving farther from the highly regulated pressures to a less tumultuous sector, the crew of the freighter Everleigh seeks new possibilities in new places. On approach to Bostik Station, a massive commerce station and hyperspace juncture, the crew hopes to find new prospects for making their way in the galaxy...

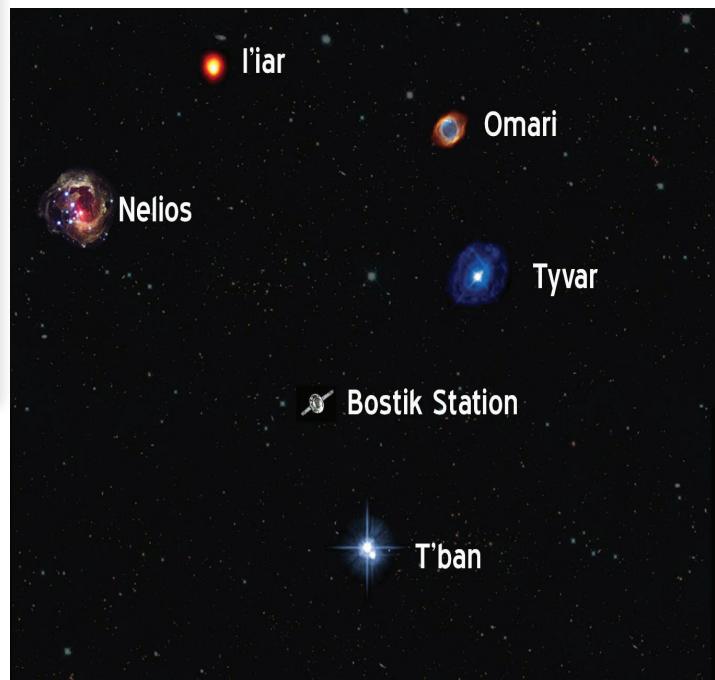
Docking at Bostik Station

The crew of free trading vessel Everleigh has become weary of the tariffs, fees, and petty harassment from badgering minor enforcement officers that has become a part of life near the Galactic Core. As civilization advances, government meddling grows. Though there are rumors of war and rebellion, the heavily censored media hardly acknowledges such murmurings. Though with such potential security threats comes the heavy hand of tighter security enforcement. Making an honest living as a free trader

near the Galactic Core has become far too difficult for the players, and they have set their sights farther out in the Kiltari Sector.

Kiltari Sector Map:

The following chart and map show the relative position and average travel times to and from most places of import within the Kiltari Sector. The star systems in the map are not necessarily shown to scale. The travel times shown in the sector chart represent transit with a x3 Interstellar Drive, such as the one equipped on The Everleigh. All travel times do not necessarily represent time to travel in straight lines between systems, but rather show travel times around gravitational and space-time anomalies.



	Bostik Station	Tyvar	Nelios	Omari	T'ban	l'arr
Bostik Station	x	3 days	5 days	4 days	1 day	3 days
Tyvar	3 days	x	6 days	2 days	5 days	5 days
Nelios	5 days	6 days	x	2 days	6 days	2 days
Omari	4 days	2 days	2 days	x	7 days	4 days
T'ban	1 day	5 days	6 days	7 days	x	4 days
l'arr	3 days	5 days	2 days	4 days	4 days	x

Docking at Bostik Station

The characters have foodstuffs in their cargo hold they intend to import from the galactic core. They hope the inner planet's produce appears more exotic and valuable to the food merchants or restaurateurs within the Kiltari Sector. With a manifested listing "refrigerated organics", the players are on approach to Bostik Station. As they near the station, the station hails the ship, and the players hear a voice over the com.

Read aloud: Unidentified freighter, transmit your identification to receive docking confirmation. Be aware: standard docking fees run 130 credits per day. Once you have transmitted your identification, await docking instructions.

The crew has only 550 credits in cash on hand, though they can expect to earn a bit more once they have unloaded and sold their cargo to a local business. However, as usual, the ship is in need of some repair.

The malfunctioning environmental system ensures the cabin is uncomfortably hot while the engineering section is unusually cold. When the starship maneuvers, accelerates, or decelerates, the pilot feels noticeable jerks and the members of the crew feel their stomachs drop. Either the inertial controls or the gravity plates need repair. Further, The Everleigh is several jumps past due for a Interstellar Drive maintenance. Some repairs are not immediately necessary, though make the crew uncomfortable, others may provide tactical complications in the future. The players should note continuing to make hyperspace jumps while using a drive in need of maintenance may cause the drive to fail. If the drive does not receive maintenance, the crew must make a navigation roll before each jump. If the player rolls a 1 on the Wild Die, the drive fails during the jump, causing them to rely on the backup Interstellar Drive. Repairing the failed drive is a moderate space transport repair roll, and is ten times the cost of the maintenance. The table below lists the systems in

System	Problem; effect	Cost to repair
Interstellar Drive	Routine maintenance; There is a one in six chance of the Interstellar Drive seizing when making the jump to hyperspace.	50
Environmental system	Failing climate control hub; The climate control keeps the ship within the limits of human toleration, but only by a narrow margin. Ships temperatures fluctuate unpredictably, and are inconsistent across the vessel.	100
Engine cooling	Coolant juncture cracked; Engine coolant is leaking into the ion housing, only to escape into the thruster. The coolant needs to be refilled upon <i>each landing</i> until the coolant juncture is replaced.	60 – refill 150 – repair
Inertial control	Failing inertial control; With every maneuver the ship lurches. During combat or other heavy maneuvering, any being not strapped in to a seat must make a Moderate <i>Dexterity</i> roll to keep from being thrown to the floor.	650
Catalyzer	Failing fuel processing catalyzer; Every time the ship is prepped from a cold startup, it requires an additional five minutes. The engines also vibrate and whine in an unsettling manner during those five minutes, until the problem is fixed.	350
Shield Control	Short in the shielding controls; If a member of the crew rolls a 1 on the Wild Die for a <i>starship shields</i> roll, the deflector shields flicker and die, requiring three rounds to reactivate.	130

need of repair or maintenance:

Read aloud: “After waiting in the docking queue and watching a variety of starships dock and depart from the main docking bay, you are finally given your landing clearance. As you pass through the atmosphere barrier, a standard landing tractor beam locks on, and guides you to your designated pad. As you prepare to disembark, you see a stern looking customs official standing erect in front of the ramp. Though the absence of peacekeeping troops suggests the current regime does not have as much presence here, the sight of this customs officer’s hard expression and crisp uniform let you know that the galactic laws are enforced even this far from the center planets.”

The customs officer insists on seeing the ship’s manifest, the captain’s license, and starship transponder codes. When the officer sees that the crew has refrigerated organics on the manifest, he demands to see the cargo hold and do a detailed inspection on all of the crates. What the players do not know is that phrase “refrigerated organics” is a local slang for illegally transported beings in cryogenic suspension. The officer does not speak to the players except in short gruff answers or commands, and does not comment on the player’s use of the suspicious verbiage on the manifest. However, after finding nothing worthy of charges, fines, or likely grounds to extort a bribe, the officer leaves, and allows the players to go about their business. He does leave a warning that he is keeping an eye on them.

Selling the cargo

The players should next try to unload their cargo on a buyer and then acquire new cargo from a viable seller. As they unload the cargo crates, they notice that the failing environmental controls have affected one of their four refrigeration units, and a quarter of their foodstuffs have spoiled in transit. Though they originally paid 600 for they may be fortunate to break even due to their losses. As the players roleplay through talking to potential sellers, you may require a Moderate persuasion roll, to convince a market or restaurant owner that they could offer a special on foodstuffs from the galactic core. Once they have found a seller, they may attempt to barter with the

seller for a reasonable price using a bargain roll. The price they are able to demand from a buyer depends on the strength of the roll.

Rol	Price
1-5	405
6-10	450
11-15	540
16-20	650
21+	720

If the players are not satisfied after their initial bargain, they may leave without making the deal. They may attempt to persuade another buyer to take an interest in their goods, but do not offer them any more than two or three potentially interested sellers. If they attempt to find more sellers, you may inform them that they have run through the list of available food sellers at the station, and they must return to a previous buyer. That buyer is still willing to do business with them, but with 10% off of their original price. The point is the players should not have an unlimited number of tries to get the price they want. A lack of credits is one of the major motivating factors in the adventure driving them into taking a job involving some risk.

Introducing Neeja

After completing the transaction, allow the characters some time to either repair their ship, or proceed to look for an additional shipping job. If they begin looking for a new shipping job right away, read the following:

Read aloud: Though Bostik station has several shipping agencies, however few seem interested in employing a freelance freighter. All corporate offices claim they have their own company-crewed freighters. Finding independent point-drop deliveries proves equally difficult. Some of the local dealers tell you that they will have a shipping job, though not until the beginning of next week. With daily port fees, such offers are little better than a flat refusal. At the end of a long day of finding no immediate prospects, the crew settles down for a drink at a local pub. Unlike the usual seedy spacers bar, the establishment is clean, free of the threat of violence, and provides a

place to depart from the frustration of a day without a contract.

As you are sitting down with your drinks, trying to enjoy the dimly lit atmosphere you are approached by an unkempt middle-aged man who you guess to be a tired dockworker. His heavily accented voice is gravelly, revealing that he has spent too many of his years smoking t'chat. He says, "I hear you're lookin' ta pick up some cargo, yea? You boys got yourselves a problem. You haven't been around long. Got no reputation. But lucky for you, I know a guy who can help you. He likes givin' people a leg up ta get their start. He makes connections, see? You lookin' ta pick up cargo? He prob'lly knows someone who's lookin' ta move some. His name's Neeja, and I can tell you where ta find 'im. Just tell 'im Vogtha sent you."

Though the characters may not discover the reason why it had been so difficult finding a point-drop cargo deal is that their cargo manifest of "refrigerated organics" caused them more trouble than they would have guessed. The customs officer from the docks is a petty man, and frustrated by his inability to find something wrong with the player's ship, but still convinced that they are up to no good, made some contacts to the more likely establishments where the crew would have found work and "requested" that the crew be turned down if they showed up. Between this tidbit of information, and the talk amongst the dock workers of another shipment of organics coming in, it was not long before one of Neeja's contacts surmised that the crew would make an excellent addition as a sensitive-cargo smuggler, and is proposed to offer an easy job for them to get their start.

Rather than being located off of the promenade or one of the main corridors, Neeja's office is located in one of the smaller business suites well off the more travelled corridors. Proceeding through the door Vogtha had described, the characters find themselves in an anteroom to a discreet office containing only an attendant's desk and another solid-looking door leading to the interior of the office area. One might describe the area as a waiting room, with the exception that there are no chairs or comforts welcoming anyone to stay any longer than absolutely

necessary. An attendant seated lazily at a desk asks if he can help them. After hearing that the characters were sent by Vogtha, the attendant speaks into a com, and after a moment informs them that it will be just a few moments before Neeja will be able to see them. After several minutes, a large man, looking more like a bouncer than an office attendant steps through the door, and announces in a deep resonating voice, "Mr. Neeja will see you now."

NEEJA

Type: Criminal middle-man

DEXTERITY: 3D Blaster 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat: knives 5D+1, pick pocket 4D

KNOWLEDGE: 3D Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 6D, business 6D, intimidation 4D, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems 3D+2, streetwise 7D, value 6D

MECHANICAL: 3D Repulsorlift operations 3D+2, space transports 3D+2

PERCEPTION: 4D Bargain 8D, con 5D, gambling 6D+1, hide 5D

STRENGTH: 2D+2 Brawling 3D+2

TECHNICAL: 2D+1

Character Points: 10

Fate points: 2

Move: 10

Possessions: credit chip, modified holdout blaster (4D+1 damage), knife (STR+1D damage)

Neeja is a man with connections. If there is something you need done, he knows who can do the job, where, and for how much. One might make the mistake of putting him in a category of common criminals, or the bigger mistake of placing him along side members of organized crime. However, Neeja is seldom directly at the center of anything illegal, on the contrary, he knows the provincial and galactic laws well enough to at least maintain the appearance of innocence. Though if you need spice run, hot items sold, customs evaded, then just leave everything to Neeja to put you in touch with those who can get it done. Though he can always network you with just about anyone, his services come at a price.

The party follows their escort down a hallway and past several other rooms. The characters are surprised to see the inside of the office suite looking so spacious once inside. Eventually the escort leads

them to another door, knocks on it, and then opens the door to the room.

Read aloud: As you step through the threshold of Neeja's office, you are struck by the sight of a luxuriously furnished office. Leather seating and fine craftsmanship on the wooden desk reveal that Neeja is a man of some means, even if the exterior of his offices leading to his suite is more humble. Neeja himself is finely clothed. Despite the attention to aesthetics, Neeja has felt no need to hide an apparent security holo-cam in his office. Further, he has two well-dressed but very large attendants on either side of the entrance ensuring Neeja's personal safety.

Office bodyguards: All stats 2D except: Dexterity 3D, dodge 4D+2, blaster 5D, Strength 4D, brawling 5D.
Move: 10 Character points: 5. Comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D)

Allow the characters to make a Perception check. A result of 1-6 gives the basic information about less consequential details about the office, 7-12 reveals that the guards placed at the door have noticeable bulges under their jackets, indicating a sizeable blaster pistol. If they score a 13-19 they notice that though Neeja is wearing fine clothes, he does so without the tailored look of a man accustomed to wealth, rather he is likely someone who has later in life come into the money he is now enjoying. A 20+ allow the characters to discern that he is perhaps little more than a criminal in fine silk.

Read Neeja's part aloud: I've heard that you boys have had some trouble finding work. I like to help out where I can, and I just so happen to need a courier who can handle a cryo unit. I've heard you can handle a cryo, right? Fine, then. Just remember, it's sensitive cargo. Handpicked. It took me over a year to find this haul. The buyer has exact specifications, so make sure this goes right. A lot of other people would love to get a hold of this cargo. I've kept things quiet on my end of the deal, but I'm not responsible for how they've handled the pickup site. But I do know they've got the cryo ready, and it's all precisely packed. The buyer is a very private man, so do not open the cargo. Do not inspect the cargo. Above all, do not tamper with the cryo. But, all this privacy

comes at a cost, and I'm passing some of the benefits on to you. You get 1,000 now, and you can expect the buyer to give you another 2,000 once it arrives safely. He'll probably throw in a bonus if you get it there early. It's an easy job. I'm sure you can handle it.

Since the cargo isn't here, you can make the pickup on a planet called Tyvar, and my men will give you the coordinates. When you get to Tyvar, meet up with our man, Fiar'eke. I'll send him a link with your ship's ID, and he'll meet you in an establishment in the spaceport. You can find him in The Black Bull. Once you have the cryo, deliver it to the buyer's private pad on Nelios. And I'll make sure you have the coordinates for that.

Neeja provides the crew with 1,000 credits, and the information necessary to meet with Sylvan on Tyvar. If the players want to spend more doing additional repairs on the ship they may, but they may also fall behind schedule. It is difficult enough to make the trip within the nine days allotted if all goes well, waiting until the morning for a repair station to open may not be in their best interest. Further, waiting an additional day means they are charged again for the docking fees.

TO TYVAR

Once the characters have departed from Bostik Station, they can make their calculations for the jump to hyperspace, and proceed toward Tyvar. The three-day journey is much like the rest of hyperspace travel, uneventful and boring. However, the gamemaster may decide to keep the flavor of The Everleigh by describing a few minor malfunctions that occur, and require space transport repair rolls to fix them in order to keep the ship moving through hyperspace.

After the characters exit hyperspace, they get their first sight the world of Tyvar, and unfortunately, from orbit, the world is not much to behold. The planet is inhabited by a number of settlements over Tyvar's few regions that galactic scouts deemed habitable. Extremely large polar ice caps account for a larger than normal portion of the planet's land masses, and account for a large amount of the planet's water resources. However, the equatorial regions

are extremely dry and relatively hot and arid. The majority of the planet's inhabited regions, and major spaceports lie in bands along the planets 60° and 40° degree longitudes. The coordinates Neeja gave the crew is not within the more settled bands, but they lead them to an inconspicuous port within the planet's near-waterless equator.

As The Everleigh flies low on its final approach, the characters see the nigh-barren countryside, marked only with scraggly shrubs. Nearer the spaceport there are a limited number of structures, but a large number of vapor-collectors, taking what little humidity there is in the atmosphere, and storing it in cisterns below the surface. The spaceport does not hail The Everleigh, but responds to a hail by activating a landing beacon.

Once The Everleigh touches down, a curt voice calls over the com, "The docking fee is 175. No refueling. No stocking services. We will collect shortly." As the crew opens the main ramp to disembark, a gust of hot wind blows across their faces. Though it is easily mistaken as the last backwash from a ship engine powering down, it is in fact the blistering heat of the planet's winds. While it is no doubt a shock to the characters, such heat is commonplace at this spaceport. The starport itself is nothing much by galactic standards. It is only a handful of landing pads, each with its own short-range beacon, and a surrounding settlement. A short, gray skinned being comes to collect their docking fees. He does not initiate any conversation, but only extends a credit-chip reader. If the crew tries to argue or bargain down the price, the being says, "Either pay or don't. If you don't, I'll get the boss, and he won't be happy. If the boss isn't happy, you'll have trouble." If the characters wish to make repairs to their ship, they discover the spaceport offers no repair services, and any private repair business is highly expensive, up to three times the galactic average price.

The Black Bull is not far from the landing pads. The environmental control inside the establishment provides immediate relief from the stifling heat. The air is cooler, but the drinks are much more expensive than what is expected on other worlds – most drinks are between 8 and 12 credits – and the bar owner

does not let anyone just mill around without making a purchase. Shortly after the characters order their drinks, a pale yellow skinned, narrow-faced alien talks to the bar owner and approaches the characters. He initiates conversation asking how Neeja is these days.

Alien Species: Ivnarian

Attribute Dice: 12D

Dexterity	2D/3D+2
Knowledge	2D/4D
Mechanical	2D/3D+1
Perception	3D/5D
Strength	2D/4D
Technical	1D/3D

Move: 9

Special Abilities:

Invarians gain a +2D to survival or stamina rolls when rolling to resist the effects of dehydration.

From the home world of Ivnarui, these hairless, yellow-skinned beings are extremely well adapted for prolonged exposure to arid climates, because of Ivnarui's limited water resources in all planetary climates.

Though Ivnarians are no less susceptible to hot and cold temperatures than humans, their bodies require less than half of the water resources, providing them an advantage in environments with little to no water. Further, their digestive systems are highly adept at filtering out excess saline, allowing them to drink salt water when no fresh water is available.

If they inquire, he introduces himself as Fiar'eke, and a Moderate alien species roll allows the characters to identify him as an Ivnarian. After talking with the characters briefly, Fiar'eke may mention that he received a physical description of them from Neeja as well as a copy of their ship's transponder codes, allowing him to identify them upon landing. He tells the characters that he has the cargo in storage near the docking bay, and he will gladly take them there to make the transfer of property. If they happen to ask, Fiar'eke tells them that the cargo is much too heavy to be carried over to the pads, and they may rent a cargo repulsorsled nearby for 50 credits for the day. Fiar'eke does not volunteer such practical details as he is anxious for Neeja's cargo to be in the currier's hands. However, he does not hide such details if the

characters specifically ask.

The characters pass several storage areas as they travel to their destination, but then come to a series of obviously higher security garages. Instead of thin metal doors secured with mundane mechanical locks, Fiar'ekе approaches one of a series of layered metaplast doors with electronic keypads. Fiar'ekе keys in the combination and informs the characters that the organics are all theirs now, and they should lock up when they leave. As the security door slides open, the room shows its only content, a large unmarked wooden crate. Fiar'ekе then departs without giving any information as to how to contact him. Too large for the players to carry, they may lift it on to a cargo sled if the players have thought ahead far enough to acquire one. Otherwise the players must acquire a repulsorsled nearby. While the characters are making plans to load the cargo, or after one or more characters depart to acquire a cargo sled, a Moderate Perception roll informs them that they are being watched by an alien from the alley across the street.

While the characters are preparing to load the crate, a tall, thick set alien approaches. If he takes them unaware, then he approaches with a mixed group of various aliens. He is supported by four other beings. He indicates that what the characters have does not belong to them, and he can remove them of the burden of their crate. When they refuse he offers 500 credits just to walk away without anyone coming to any harm. When they refuse a second time, the leader of the group draws his blaster and initiates combat to take possession of the cargo.

If the characters notice him early reward them by making it more likely to avoid a physical altercation, and make it easier bluff, persuade, or intimidate their way out of a firefight. Use the following stats to play out the confrontation. Further, on a Moderate roll of the characters' alien species skill, they can identify the leader as an Ungarian, known for being fierce warriors, and having a thick hide providing a natural armor adding a +2 to resist both physical and energy damage.

Thug leader: All stats 2D except: Dexterity 3D, dodge

4D, blaster 4D, Perception 2D+2, intimidate 3D, Strength 4D, brawling 4D+1. Move: 10 Character points: 2. Comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D) Special Special abilities: +2 to STR to resist physical and energy damage.

Thugs: All stats 2D except: Dexterity 2D, dodge 3D, blaster 3D+2, Strength 3D. Move: 10, blaster pistol (4D).

Weathering the Storm

Once the players deal with the thugs either by wits or brawn, they may proceed to their landing pad to load the cargo. After securing the crate in the cargo bay the characters prep their ship to take off for Nelios. As they begin to warm up the engines take a few moments to remind them of the general dilapidated state of their ship describing the various whines of protests, shudders, or flicker of lights as the ships engines begin to start up. After taking off and getting the ship into orbit, the players must make a navigation roll to calculate the fastest hyperspace route to Nelios. However, given the various navigational hazards and gravity shadows in this sector, a direct route takes even longer than plotting a two-jump course. In order to make their delivery on time, they must jump to a set of coordinates somewhere between Tyvar and Nelios, come out of hyperspace, and then make another jump to Nelios itself.

The trip through hyperspace to their waypoint is uneventful. However, as soon as they transition to realspace, they find themselves just seconds away from an oncoming ion storm.

Read aloud: From the cockpit viewport you see a purple and white fury of an ion storm overtaking the The Everleigh. Before you can even bring the ship about, the massive storm rocks and buffets the vessel in a maelstrom of ionic and magnetic forces. The lights surge and flicker, damage reports light the console, and the smell of ozone from heavily stressed electronics fills the ship. As the tumult rocks and buffets the ship, it shakes and tosses crew and cargo alike, and the sound of a crate slamming against the ship's interior thuds from the cargo bay. The lights finally fail completely, and gravitational plates go offline, and finally the ship is quiet. The crew is left

suspended in weightlessness with only emergency lighting illuminating the interior.

After a brief inspection, the damage is not as bad as one might suspect. It takes three Moderate space transport repair rolls to get the ship underway again. The first two rolls restore the operating lights and artificial gravity, and the third to reactivate the Interstellar Drive. However, the cargo did not fare well. The packing crate has splintered and burst open in most places, revealing its damaged contents. Through the transparent capsule of the cryo, the crew can see a female alien held in stasis. The cryogenic unit is failing quickly. If the crew does not key the sequence to bring her out of stasis, she is likely to suffer immense harm when the unit fails completely and would very probably die. Manually initiating the revival process, however, is likely to save her life.

Once the crew brings her out of cryo, she regains consciousness. When she comes to, she is confused and frightened. An Easy alien species roll tells the players that she is a Schi'irik. She belongs to a tall, lean, colorful species from the planet Wythel. A Moderate roll tells the players that Schi'irik often have skin shades in rich blues, salmon reds, vibrant greens, and brilliant violets. Further, they often fall victim to slavers on account of their aesthetic features, particularly as they appear very graceful to the human eye. Though slavery is outlawed in the galaxy, Wythel is underrepresented in the galactic governing bodies, and opportunists frequently victimize the Schi'irik as a result. Most serve as domestic slaves or become private entertainment for the extraordinarily unscrupulous and wealthy.

Alien Species: Schi'irik

Attribute Dice: 11D

Dexterity	3D/5D
Knowledge	2D/4D
Mechanical	2D+1/4D+1
Perception	3D/4D
Strength	1D/3D
Technical	2D/3D

Move: 10

Special Abilities:

Body language: Schi'irik have a natural ability to read other being's gestures and postures. They receive

a +2D to Perception vs. bluff, con, or other such deception rolls.

Fine motor skills: Schi'irik naturally have fine manual dexterity and gain a +1D bonus to skills that involve fine motor function including pick pocket, sleight of hand, forgery, and other such skills.

The Schi'irik are a colorful people and aesthetically pleasing to the human eye. Generally several inches taller than the average humanoid, and usually lean and graceful, the Schi'irik often fall victim to one of the galaxy's most despised but lucrative entrepreneurs: slavers. The Schi'irik's home planet lies just outside the range of the galactic border worlds, and thus does not have any official representation. Though some small groups have pressed for more rigid protection of the Schi'irik home planet of Wythel.

The Schi'irik are a hyperspace-capable people, and have developed a galactic standard level of technology. However, they seldom travel alone in the galaxy. Though general galactic laws prohibit abduction and slavery, the Schi'irik have learned all too well how selectively those laws are enforced for under-protected races.

If the characters inquire, she freely talks about who she is, and what has happened to her. Her name is Soccoci Omu, and she has been a slave most of her life. She has largely been a domestic slave, though her various owners have given her differing degrees of decent or bad treatment. She knows nothing of her new owner, and did not even realize she was being sold until she woke up in the cargo hold. The last thing she remembers was going to sleep in the slave quarters of the estate where she was living. This may suggest she was somehow sedated that evening.

Slave trafficking is not only one of the most abominable practices in the galaxy, but also highly illegal, and the buyer, seller, and trafficker are punishable by a sentence to a galactic penal colony. It is probable, however, that they would go unprosecuted with such a marginalized race. Regardless of potential consequence or lack thereof, Soccoci has endured much in her years of subjugation, and very much wishes to be free.

The crew has two nearby, populated planets that can provide a place to set down, make more thorough repairs, and to help set Soccori free with a decent place to work and live: Omari, and l'arr. Omari is the closer of the two.

The characters must now decide what to do with Soccori. They could have the cryo repaired, and force her back into slavery, but they would be participating in one of the vilest trades in civilized space in which no decent being would participate. However, when the players fail to deliver the cargo, it is only a matter of time before either the buyer or Neeja comes looking for them. Neeja already has The Everleigh's transponder codes, and holos of the player characters. The players must make the moral decision of what to do about Soccori, and face the potential consequences of whatever comes next.

ENDING THE SESSION

If the players have played their characters well, and worked together well as a group, reward them with 7-11 character points. If they have spent the time arguing as players, attempting to metagame, or not playing their characters, reduce the reward to 5-7.

What if...?

The gamemaster should take time to work with players and consider what they might do, and encourage them to roleplay without railroading them on this adventure. We explore some of the "what ifs" in the section below.

What if the players do not want to work for Neeja?
If they see early that Neeja is a seedy character, and do not want to take the risks, feel free to give them another option. Let them take a few easy, low-paying jobs. However, make sure those jobs never quite cover their expenses, particularly as the ship continues needing more and more repair. Provide a few more broken down systems, and as money starts to run low, the ship becomes in danger of not running at all. This should provide enough temptation to pick up a more lucrative, but riskier job. Then provide them another option with a different shady character on another planet. Change just enough of the scenario with Neeja that it is not obvious that you are

simply picking up the same adventure.

What if the characters open the crate?

If the characters decide to open the crate, then they are really in no different position than if it were accidentally discovered in terms of their moral decision. Instead of having the cryo fail in an ion storm, allow them to talk about who they are carrying and let them speculate why. Through the transparent capsule they can easily see that they are carrying a species that is frequently enslaved. Allow them to make their decisions without Soccori's input, but allow them to deactivate the cryo if they wish.

What if they decide to take the slave to her new master?

Characters indulging in such depraved acts should never go without some sort of consequence. Ask the players if they really want to subject her to this. If they insist, the gameaster needs to carefully consider what to do next, as obviously the rest of the adventures in this series cannot go as planned. As gamemaster, you have considerable flexibility in this setting. Without having established who the buyer is or what the buyer wants, you can easily change some of the back story and intended details of the rest of the adventures. Allow the characters to continue to their destination, and deliver the slave without any further confrontation. However, in this new storyline, have the buyer invite the characters to a banquet, and allow them to stay at his manor that evening. In this scenario, Soccori's tales of slavery are just a cover story, and instead she is a secret operative or an assassin. In the night, she takes the chance to kill the buyer, steals data on slave purchases from his computer, and even perhaps steals The Everleigh to escape the planet. Suspicions will arise in the murdered master's manor, and the characters will almost certainly be implicated as accomplices in the assassination. The next series of adventures may revolve around the characters trying to reacquire their ship.

Handle with Care will be continued...

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