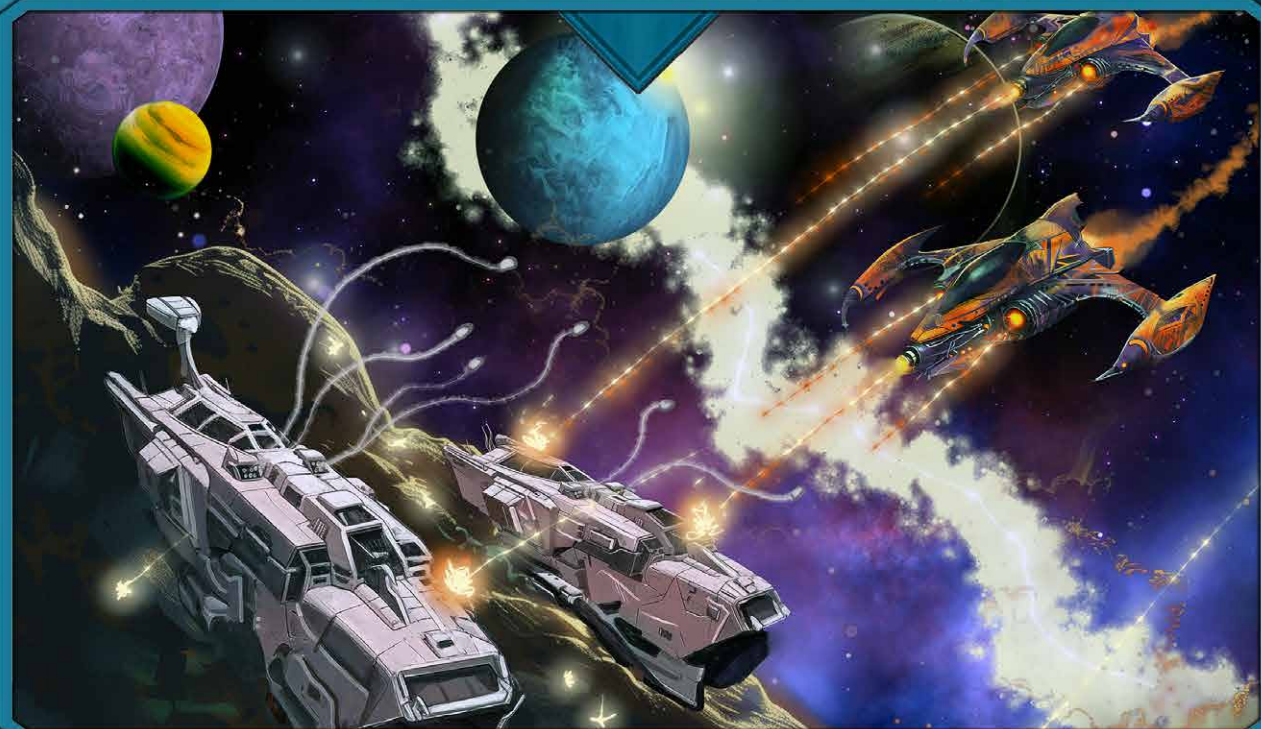
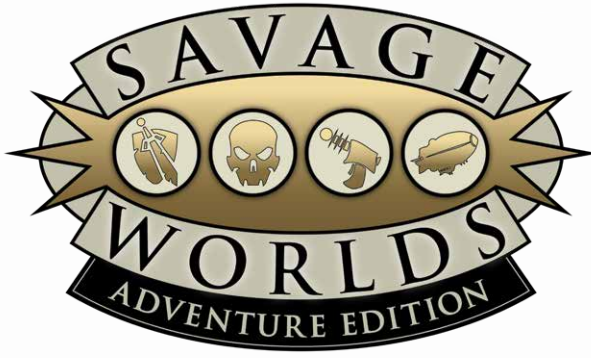


SAVAGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION



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SAVAGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION

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INTRODUCTION

Science-Fiction is a big topic. The original *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion* narrowed its focus to a particular setting to keep things manageable, but with the updated version for the *Savage Worlds Adventure Edition* we wanted to remove that limitation and embrace everything.

The problem that led to, other than the sheer scope of the project, was how to convey the possibilities that the book contained? We decided to use a series of adventures, all using elements from the *Science Fiction Companion*, to show off just how broad the options in the book are.

Fantasy is a broad genre, but it's also well defined. Fantasy archetypes generally work across any fantasy world. The same isn't true in science-fiction. A starship crew that fits with a gritty, more realistic setting is totally out of place in a shining future with teleporters and unlimited energy—and vice versa.

We reached out to staff members and close collaborators with a list of different settings that players might use the book to emulate. You should be able to recognize the various inspirations and homages, that's the whole point. Rather than simply copying the famous stories and genres we tried to put our own savage spin on them.

These adventures allowed us to test the *Science Fiction Companion* the way a player

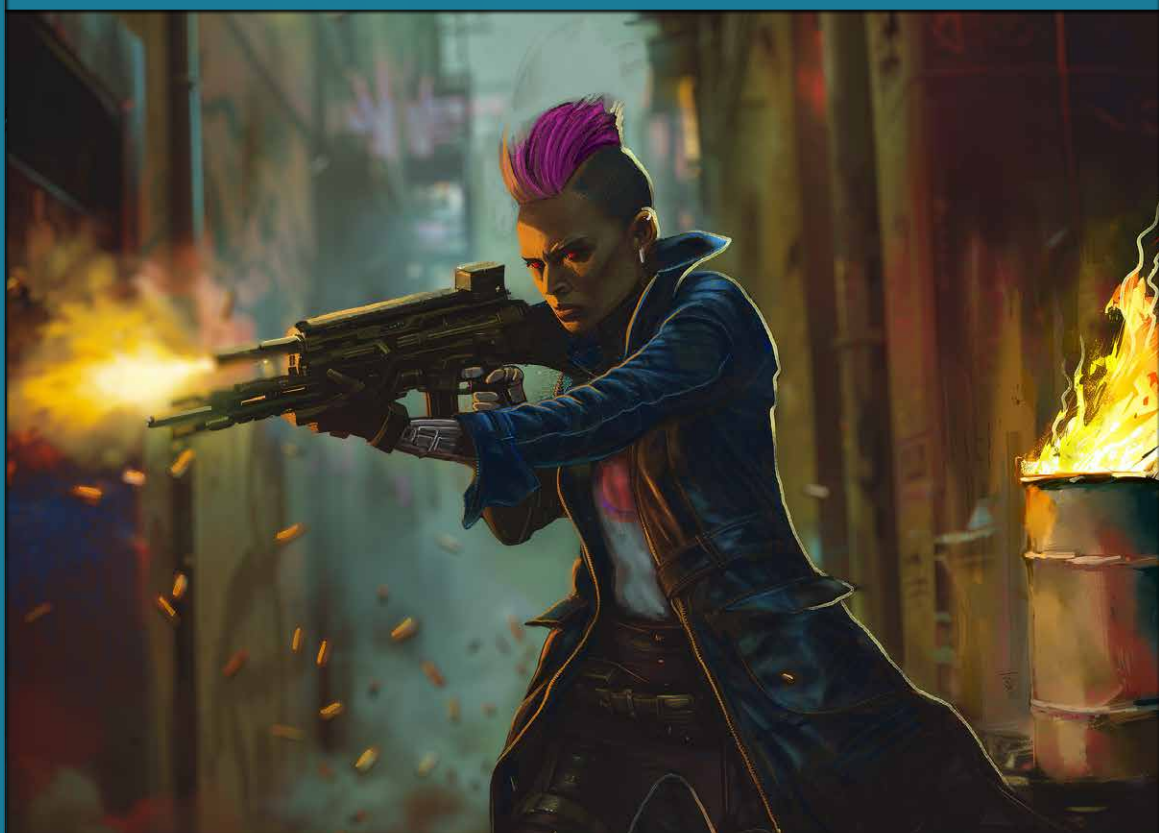
might use it: as a tool kit to provide in-game elements so you don't have to make it all up yourself. It also helped us make sure our archetypes covered the different games people would want to play. We're happy with the results, and equally happy now to share them.

Beyond just playing the stories that follow, these adventures can become part of that toolkit in themselves. You can see exactly what we did to emulate a particular genre, the kinds of equipment we used, and the creatures we adapted—or used without any changes at all! Making your own setting (or one that mimics an existing setting more exactly) takes work, but these examples do some of that work for you.

If you're not trying to adapt your own perfect science-fiction setting, the adventures work as a tour of the kinds of toys *Savage Worlds* has to play with.

The tales start with the gritty near-future, and then progress forward in time, with ever more advanced technology until we reach the distant future where everything goes and science might as well just be magic again. In between are tales of daring, excitement, and lots of laser guns!

So fasten that safety harness and get ready to jump to light speed for some *fast*, *furious*, and *fun* action in the stars!



GOING VIRAL

BY BRIAN REEVES

In the fast-paced, ruthless world of the near future, nothing is more important than one's image. This is even more true in the image-obsessed megacity of Elysium, where the populace looks for any opportunity to distract itself from the rapidly declining future. Their newest fixation is the "crazer" trend—viral videos of seemingly random people snapping without warning. But it's not so amusing when you wind up on a video yourself...

This tale is designed for 3-5 Seasoned characters with a mix of specialties: combat, interaction, vehicles, hacking, and investigation. Players can build their own from the core *Savage Worlds* rules and the *Science Fiction Companion*, or use premade archetypes. The most appropriate choices for this adventure are:

- **HACKER:** There are systems to break into and security to crack.
- **INFILTRATOR:** Stealth and violence are always useful.
- **INFLUENCER:** Making the right friends can help the group tremendously.
- **MERCENARY:** When push comes to shove, the mercenary can shove.
- **ROAD WARRIOR:** Low-tech solutions can work for high-tech problems.
- **SCAVENGER:** The adventure features plenty of tech to play with.

Going Viral is set in a typical massive city in a high-tech dystopian future here on Earth, where the effects of environmental degradation, technological advancement, population growth, political conflict, and economic turmoil have led to a world of extremes—affluence and hardship, lawlessness and control, the "natural" versus the technological. Characters in this genre navigate ethically gray areas, trying to survive in spite of the overwhelming forces trying to grind them down. It can take place in most any large futuristic city, real or fictional, by merely changing some of the details to suit your own campaign.

BACKGROUND

Following periods of violent protest and unrest, the mega-corps realized that their position in the social order was tenuous. Enough of a groundswell could tip the scales of power back to the teeming masses. The previous century had produced a populace sedated by consumerism, but had also wiped out the global ecosystem, generated an astonishing amount of waste, and reduced the quality of life for those below a certain earnings bracket. Hiding this fact behind flashy materialism wasn't going to work much longer. The common folk needed a new

form of distraction—ideally one that would also eliminate the subversives among the riff-raff, thereby reducing the chances of future uprisings.

The answer came from a surprising source: Cybernetics. Advancements in cybertechnology had transformed it from its origins as experimental military hardware into a worldwide fashion trend. Anybody who was anybody had some form of cyber implant, ranging from the purely aesthetic, like programmable tattoos, to highly functional prosthetics such as mechanical eyes or full arm replacements.

Competition between the handful of multinational corporations designing, manufacturing, and installing these devices had always been fierce. One thing they all have is integrated wireless access to the 'Net. This allows cybernetic devices to download patches and software upgrades without requiring a visit to a licensed installation clinic. Naturally, corporations also use the Netlink to download user data, not only giving them useful demographic metrics but also collecting real-time location information (and, in some cases, real-time audio/video of the user's interactions) which helps generate targeted advertisements.

At first this was a wildly unpopular feature, but just like the old adage about the frog in boiling water, consumers eventually grew accustomed to it—even came to like it. They might have been less receptive if they knew the extent to which the corporations, as well as governmental agencies, used this data as a weapon. It has been instrumental in snuffing out protest organizations on more than one occasion, for instance.

But the integrated Netlink chip has one more potential exploit. Almost all cyberware uses synthetic nerve fibers to assimilate the device into the user's nervous system. Without this fusion of meat and machine the device simply wouldn't work. Eidolon Labs, Inc., the most popular cybernetics corporation, discovered they could insert a "sleeper" program to an upgrade patch, allowing remote access to the central nervous system of anyone with their implants—about 75% of the population.

Eidolon Labs decided to test the efficacy of this sleeper program (codenamed

"Sandman") by sending a powerful jolt to the sympathetic nervous system of certain users to make them panic. For unknown reasons, subjects instead flew into a blind rage for a short period of time.

What happened next caught Eidolon's attention. Everyone around the test subjects immediately whipped out their personal data devices to record the freakout. In no time the episodes exploded across the 'Net and became a viral sensation. The violent subjects became known as "crazers." Not the outcome Eidolon Labs wanted, but definitely something they could use. After all, nothing distracts people from their woes like a public spectacle. Even better if it involves violence.

Eidolon Labs has chosen a test market—which just happens to be the city your group of street rats call home—and set Operation Sandman in motion. They broadcast the signal from a huge floating advertisement dirigible. It's a familiar sight to city residents, allowing them maximal range with minimal suspicion. If this proves successful, they hope to parley this into a lucrative government contract, which will likely stifle civil unrest for a long time to come.

OVERVIEW

The characters are the unwitting targets of the "crazer" signal, snapping out of it only to find they wiped out some CorpSec police while berserk—and the whole thing was filmed! Their only real clues are a drone watching overhead and a suspicious man who has fled the scene.

If they track down the drone, the team discovers its operator is a hacker named Parody. She doesn't know what causes the psychosis episodes, but can point them to someone who does: Vision, the anonymous personality behind an underground news vlog called AURA.

Vision also happens to be the suspicious fellow observing the scene. Whether the cyberpunks chase him down—which requires a mad scramble to catch him before he escapes on an elevated train—or learn of him from

Parody, he informs them that Eidolon Labs, Inc., is responsible for the weird psychosis, linked to their wireless cyberware updates.

From these sources, or by digging up information elsewhere, the heroes might also learn that the signal itself is being beamed from Janus, a huge advertising dirigible that endlessly circles the city.

Putting a stop to the signal can be done one of two ways: silencing the broadcasts from Janus or breaking into Eidolon Labs themselves to delete the code. The first method means figuring out a way to get onto the well-defended dirigible, something only possible from the air. The second method requires the 'punks to physically reach the server room of Eidolon Tower, headquarters of Eidolon Labs, Inc.—easier said than done!

One way or the other, they need to act quickly if they want to prevent the crazer trend from getting worse, not to mention clear their own names now that they've gone viral...

CRAZERS

This adventure begins in media res. A quick job has brought the techno-punks to a busy but run-down section in the city. Moments before they can complete the contract, they are targeted by Eidolon Labs for a "crazer" test, a momentary lapse which suddenly makes them into fugitives!

Read or paraphrase the following:

As if waking from a deep sleep, you suddenly find yourself standing on a crowded street somewhere in the city. Encircling you is a mob of excited proles—the mass of everyday sidewalk-packers hustling back and forth in their mundane lives. Why are they all grinning and laughing? Why are they all pointing their data devices at you?

That's when you notice the bodies of CorpSec police near you. They're battered and riddled with bullet holes, as is their patrol unit and a couple of other nearby cars. You look down at the weapons in your hands and it isn't hard to put two-and-two together. You have become the newest victim of the "crazer" trend, viral videos of people who, for no apparent reason,

MUDDYING THE WATERS

The plot we've presented here is fairly straightforward. That makes it easy for shorter sessions or for players with less exposure to cyberpunk as a genre. If you want to make things a little more complicated, here are some possible wrinkles to introduce:

- **NEO-LUDDITES:** As Vision suspects, a group of radical anti-technology guerillas are really behind the "crazer" signal. They've secretly smuggled themselves on board the Janus and are using it to corrupt the normal firmware updates coming from Eidolon Labs. Their goal is nothing less than the collapse of modern technology—a lofty goal, and arguably impossible short of Armageddon, but "journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step," after all.
- **CLEANER SQUAD:** The CEO of Eidolon Labs, Inc. gladly signed off on these experiments, but only as the cause remains a secret. Wouldn't want anything to harm the company's stock value! So far they've relied on CorpSec squads to take care of any messy leftovers, but this time the subjects got away. They send in a "cleaner" squad of hardened mercenaries to make sure nothing reaches the public ear.
- **CONSPIRACY THEORY:** The "crazer" signal is coming from Eidolon Labs, sure—but it's really a government experiment (assuming mega-corporations aren't the government themselves). Perhaps Eidolon Labs have accepted a covert contract, or the government in question has hijacked the signal. We leave their ultimate goal up to you. It might even be a foreign government hoping to destabilize their enemy or soften it up before an invasion, or a rival corporation engaged in some aggressive corporate espionage.

suddenly lose it and fly into a violent rage. Crazer videos are everyone's new obsession. You've laughed to more than a few yourself. The sheer chaos they cause, not to mention the puzzled looks on their faces when they snap out of it, is the best thing on the Net in years. High comedy. You suspect you have that same hilarious, baffled look on your own face right now.

How did you get here? Memories start to come back in pieces. You just finished a job—one of the well-paying "no questions asked" errands your fixer arranges for you—and you were on the way to collect payment. And that's the last thing you remember.

All around you the high-def cameras on data devices are live-streaming this moment. You don't remember crazing, but the evidence is all around you. While blacked out you must have massacred a nearby CorpSec squad who came to investigate the noise. Far away you hear the wail of more CorpSec sirens approaching. This is bad. Your faces are going to be splashed all over the 'Net. As of this moment, you're wanted criminals. Your fixer will have to disavow you. Getting paid is out of the question. You need to clear your good names, and fast, or no amount of money will get you out of this jam.

Coming out of your daze, you spot a small drone hovering high overhead. It turns and scoots into a nearby alley. Was it watching you?

The 'punks have only a minute or so to decide what they want to do before more CorpSec agents arrive. First order of business is probably getting out of sight, but it might be worthwhile to talk to some of the bystanders.

Folks in the city aren't usually interested in talking, at least not without getting something in return. This is the Information Age, after all, and knowledge has a value just like anything else. Wringing details out of a bystander using Persuasion incurs a -4 penalty. Offering money reduces this penalty by 1 for every \$10. Intimidation adds 2, however, as the witnesses have recently seen what the team can do!

With success, the onlookers verify that the heroes just "snapped" out of the blue. The drone seemed to arrive at the same time. On a raise, the eyewitness also saw a suspicious figure in a black trenchcoat intently watching

the intersection from a nearby elevated Maglev train platform for several minutes prior to the event.

The Maglev has already arrived at the station, which means the team must act quickly if they want to intercept this mysterious man—but if they do so they'll surely lose the drone. They have only moments to decide what to do. When CorpSec gets here, they'll be out of options for sure.

FOLLOW THAT DRONE!

If the characters (or some of them) decide to track the drone, they're signing up for a Chase. The cyberpunks don't have any vehicles with them—though they may have one parked nearby if you like.

Another option is simply stealing a motorcycle or car. They can use Fighting or Intimidation (or another suitable skill) to hijack a passing vehicle, or Thievery or Electronics to boost an unoccupied one. The nearby abandoned CorpSec car might seem like an obvious choice, but would-be joyriders must first bypass biometric locks (Thievery or Hacking -2) to even gain control, then disable the lo-jack (Electronics or Thievery -2) or lead the entire CorpSec force straight to their location.

In either case, start the drone between one and three Chase Cards ahead of its usual starting position due to lost time.

Pursuing the drone on foot is definitely possible, though the speed difference gives the drone +1 to its maneuvering rolls to Change Position.

DRONE CHASE

The drone zips in and out of alleys, zigzags over crowded streets, and flies over Maglev train tracks and pedestrian overpasses. Not an easy quarry!

Run this as a standard Chase of nine Chase Cards and a Range Increment of 5. The drone starts on the third card—or farther, if the party lost time trying to secure a vehicle. The drone has a Flight Pace of 12.

This is an extremely congested City Streets environment (see Customized Chases). Aside from the penalties described in that section, vehicles of Size 2 or larger (such as cars) suffer

an additional -2 penalty on Complications. Characters pursuing on foot don't have the speed advantage of a vehicle, but reduce the minimum Complication penalty by 1.

A CorpSec squad car enters the Chase on the third round, starting on the first card. Traffic parts for their siren, allowing them to ignore the minimum penalty on a Complication. If they catch up with the 'punks, the Chase ends and the drone escapes.

If at any time the gang starts a new round on the same card as the drone, they have successfully tracked it to the source. See Flyboy below. However, if it gets away (including using the Flee maneuver), or if the impatient punks blast the thing out of the sky, they'll need to find information elsewhere. Turn to **Gone Surfing** on page 13.

- **COMBAT DRONE:** See page 19.
- **CORPSEC POLICE (1 per hero):** See page 20. The CorpSec officers are in a single vehicle. Use a standard ground or aerial patrol car, as appropriate to the setting.

FLY GIRL

The drone is operated by a hacker who goes by the handle "Parody." She lives alone in a factory not far from the intersection where the renegades spotted her drone.

Parody guides the machine back to her hideout, not counting on dedicated trackers following close behind. She isn't directly involved, but might prove useful in other ways—assuming everyone's in the mood for a friendly chat!

Read or paraphrase the following:

The drone is quick but not quick enough. Darting right, it flies into a narrow alley and over a chain link fence topped with Concertina wire. On the other side of the fence is a defunct factory from the last century, now little more than a rusting metal hulk covered with generations of spray-painted graffiti. The place looks abandoned, but you spot very new 'Net signal relays mounted to the rooftop, and the chain and padlock look recent.

Old fencing surrounds the entire grounds. It's electrified, dealing 2d4 nonlethal damage when touched. The Concertina wire dishes out Bumps & Bruises to anyone clambering

over who fails an Athletics roll, or a Wound on a Critical Failure. The fencing and the padlocked chain at the gate are Hardness 8.

In addition, nearly every square inch of the factory's interior and exterior is observed by numerous cameras which can be spotted with Notice and shut down using Hacking (see the *Science Fiction Companion*).

Parody doesn't use most of the factory, save for a makeshift apartment in the old administrative offices and a drone repair/launch bay in the center of the empty factory floor. If anyone accesses the grounds uninvited—or simply looks dangerous and keen on getting in—she initiates security protocols, sealing her living area behind a panic door (Hardness 12) and releasing an autonomous combat drone to hunt down intruders. Nevertheless, Parody isn't *paranoid*, just cautious. She'd much prefer to avoid violence whenever possible.



She recognizes the team from the drone footage she took during the “crazer” event, so her natural curiosity overcomes her suspiciousness. Even if she’s tucked safely behind the panic door, Parody can communicate with the renegades using various two-way speakers. Treat her as Neutral on the Reaction Table (see *Savage Worlds*) unless immediately threatened. Intimidation doesn’t work, but smooth-talking street rats might be able to bump up her attitude with Persuasion—as long as they can convince her she won’t be harmed.

If the squad ends up running her off—or killing her—they can still find out what Parody knows by rooting around in her computer files, reading handwritten notes (many of which are taped onto a wall by her computer, along with drone photos), and viewing drone footage left behind. This of course requires Hacking or Research.

Even if they fail, they still learn that Parody has been sending data to AURA (see below). Success gives them everything she would have told them (see **What Parody Knows**, below). If they get a raise, they also find some info that points them to the Eidolon Labs link (see Just a Theory, below).

✦ **PARODY:** See page 21.

■ **COMBAT DRONE:** See page 19.

WHAT PARODY KNOWS

Parody didn’t trigger the “crazer” episode, nor does she know who is responsible—at least, not exactly. She knows the signal is coming from a source elsewhere in the city, but so far hasn’t been able to identify it or trace the source. This signal has a telltale signature when it interacts with a victim’s cybernetics, though, so she’s been able to set up a program on her computer to alert her when it detects a signal. She has a drone ready to race over to the scene and gather video and any other data. Even though she now has a couple dozen such videos (and scores of still photos to accompany them), she has nothing concrete to offer.

But Parody isn’t alone in her quest. She’s working with an underground ‘Net newsgroup called AURA. It’s likely the heroes have heard of them—allow each to make a Common Knowledge roll. Since AURA is technically

a subversive anti-CorpState agitprop “vlog,” those with the Streetwise Edge may add +2 to this roll.

Naturally, if Parody is still alive (and in the talking mood) she can confer this information to the team without a roll.

Parody regularly sends information to AURA to help their efforts at uncovering the source of the “crazer” signal. Her contact is Vision, the main investigator and “voice” behind AURA’s daily vlogs (see **Mystery Man**, below). She sets up a meeting with Vision on behalf of the ‘punks. Alternatively, if they’re digging through her files on their own, they find frequent communications with this mystery person and may arrange a meeting on their own.

JUST A THEORY

Parody doesn’t know anything more than that for sure, but she does have a theory. The gang can learn about this from her directly if they’ve raised her Reaction to Cooperative or higher, or if they get a raise while going through Parody’s notes.

In her research, Parody noted that every instance of the “crazer” signal has corresponded with “Janus” drifting close to that part of the city.

The cyberpunks are automatically familiar with Janus. It’s an enormous advertisement blimp that glides over the city night and day. Huge electronic screens—three on a side—continually cycle through displays for various products and services, with directional loudspeakers pointing downward at street level so messages echo throughout the nearby avenues until Janus moves on.

Janus isn’t the only such dirigible, but it’s the biggest and boldest—such a familiar sight in the city that many have come to see it as a fixture, even a sort of aloof patron. They’ve heard it is owned by Eidolon Labs, Inc., a fact that can be verified with a Hacking or Research roll.

Parody isn’t sure Janus is linked to the “crazer” signal. After all, correlation does not equal causation. But she has noticed the possible connection between the two. Parody believes Janus is secretly owned by the government (any evidence to the contrary being an intentional misdirect), who

are using it to beam an experimental signal directly into the brainstem of random citizens to test a device that can turn anyone into a “Super Soldier.” (She’s way off track, of course, having not also realized the cyberware connection.)

MYSTERY MAN

Vision, the lead vlogger for the underground newsrag AURA, was watching the entire thing unfold from the nearby MagLev train platform—and the next train is arriving! If the cyberpunks want to meet this mysterious person face-to-face, they need to get up there in a hurry.

Running across the street and up the steps in time is only possible by characters with the Fleet-Footed Edge (or cyberware, gear, *speed*, or some other Pace boost) or with success on Athletics at –2. The MagLev train lingers just long enough for those who arrived to slip through the closing doors.

If the team failed to reach the train in time, they can try to race to the next stop or, if they have a vehicle, catch up with the train itself. Resolve this as a Chase using the standard nine Chase Cards and a Range Increment of 5. The train starts on the third card. However, it has a Top Speed of 120 MPH in the city, so the odds of success are remote at best. The City Streets environment (see Customized Chases) adds another layer of difficulty. As with the drone chase, vehicles of Size 2 or larger (such as cars) suffer an additional –2 penalty on Complications. Driving on the tracks themselves eliminates this, but imposes –2 to all Driving rolls due to the uncooperative surface. Characters on foot cannot participate in this Chase.

A CorpSec squad car enters the Chase on the third round, starting on the first card. Traffic parts for their siren, allowing them to ignore the minimum penalty on a Complication. If they catch up with the ‘punks, the Chase immediately ends and Vision gets away. They’ll have to pick up the trail later in whatever way they can.

If by some miracle at least one of the punks makes it onto the train during the Chase, it comes to an end—but they have to look for Vision by themselves.

There wasn’t time for much of a description, other than that the fellow in question was wearing face recognition-baffling mirrorshades. Naturally, several people on board meet that description! It’s up to the investigating character to figure out how to determine which one is which before the train reaches the next station and Vision loses his quarry.

In truth, Vision doesn’t know the team are after him at all. He’s more concerned about CorpSec troopers or spy drones and is intrigued by the chance to talk to another survivor of a “crazer” episode. Unless attacked, he starts as Cooperative (see *Savage Worlds*).

+ **VISION:** See page 21.

- **CORPSEC POLICE (1 per hero):** See page 20. The CorpSec officers are in a single vehicle. Use a standard ground or aerial patrol car, as appropriate to the setting.

A MAN OF VISION

Vision knows more than Parody—though not a *lot* more. He’s been gathering as much information as possible from sources all over the ‘Net, ranging from chatter over personal data devices, CorpSec police logs, emergency broadcast transcripts, and scores of reposted live videos gleefully captured and uploaded to social media by witnesses to the many “crazer” episodes that have already happened in the city.

He finds the whole trend deeply troubling, but thinks the signal is coming from an unknown anarchist group determined to break the indelible hold corporations have on the citizenry. He believes the anarchists are doing this by inserting code into the wireless Netlink datastream being beamed out to everyone with installed cyberware, causing them to go berserk (he calls this “cyberpsychosis”). If it happens often enough, people will turn their backs on this new technology—and maybe tech in general—forcing the powerful megacorps into bankruptcy.

Vision is willing to share everything he knows—but there’s a caveat. He wants the team to share any of their findings on the next AURA vlog. Their identity will be protected,



but he believes “the people” need to hear the truth straight from those in the know.

If they agree (or if they can figure out a way around this request) he takes them back to AURA’s “editorial office”—his one-room studio elsewhere in the city. Depending on the time of day, the two colleagues which help him run the underground vlog might also be there, hacking up information on other stories. Vision lets the ‘punks examine all his mounds of evidence, including the code itself. He’s been able to learn about the signal, that it is coming from Eidolon Labs, Inc., and he also located a stream of code which shows the location of the next signal drop a few hours in advance.

Success with Research (–2) or Hacking (–2) while going through his data uncovers something he missed: The code is being beamed from Janus, the giant advertisement dirigible that endlessly circles the city. If the heroes learned this bit of information from Parody, this intel confirms it.

NEXT STEPS

Depending on how much they’ve pieced together, you may want their next step to be a visit with Parody, Vision’s main supplier of information. Vision suggests this if they seem puzzled. Otherwise, he believes the only way forward is to get access to the Eidolon Labs, Inc. mainframe and learn anything they can about the code from the source itself.

That’s easier said than done. As one of the world’s top corporations, Eidolon Labs is a virtual data fortress. Many have tried and failed to find their way through that maze, and more than one has logged out to find a CorpSec commando squad at their doorstep—or worse, had their brain fried from the inside out by aggressive countermeasure programs!

If they want to try a data breach, Vision is afraid it’ll bring down AURA so he insists they do it elsewhere. Run this as a Dramatic Task as described in Netrunning in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Eidolon Labs has either Heavy or Ultra security, depending on how tough you want this to be. With success, the hacker verifies Eidolon Labs is sending out

the “crazer” code from their headquarters in Eidolon Tower, using Janus to beam the code directly to victims on the ground. With a raise, the hacker is able to stop the crazer code—at least for now. It’s only a matter of time before Eidolon programmers discover the intrusion and put it back online. The only way to permanently end the scourge is by taking down Janus—or reaching the mainframe in Eidolon Tower and deleting the code from there.

It’s up to the heroes to decide which approach they prefer. Vision can offer no more support, though; from here they’re on their own.

GONE SURFING

Whether the gang follows the drone to Parody, meets up with Vision, or neither, there’s a good chance they’ll want to start digging up information in the best place to do so: the ‘Net.

There’s no way to plan for everything they might want to investigate. Players are famous for scheming up the unexpected. They might have some clever ideas that end up bypassing the channels discussed above—and that’s fine. As long as they’re getting where they need to go, forging a new path can be just as interesting as following the established road.

As a result of their investigation, the crew should learn about Parody or the information she has learned (see **What Parody Knows**, above), the research being conducted by AURA and how to contact Vision (see **Mystery Man**, above), or—if they’ve been really lucky—information that points them to the Janus dirigible (see **Eye in the Sky**, page 14) or the master signal coming from the top of the Eidolon Tower (see **Source Code**, page 16).

Keep in mind they might also be able to dredge up some of this information in other ways, like working contacts, beating the streets, and so on. Let the players try different approaches.

BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS

Should CorpSec police catch up with the gang at any time—during the drone Chase, on the Maglev platform, or because they never even

left the scene of the crime—they’re in for it. CorpSec cops are notoriously cold hearted to street trash, but downright hostile when said street trash have wiped out several fellow law officers!

The squaddies have no qualms about unloading their firearms on a crowded street. Heck, there are probably plenty of criminals in the crowd anyhow; this just cuts down on some of the legwork.

One new Corpsec vehicle containing 1d4 officers arrives every round for five rounds, or until you think your team of nogoodniks have had enough. If any of the ‘punks manage to escape (or wipe out the opposition!) let them go—they earned it. At least for now!

Surrendering isn’t very likely, given the attitude CorpSec officers have against cop killers. Smooth-talking characters can use Persuasion (–2) to convince the law to cuff them instead of gun them down. That penalty increases to –4 once the shooting begins, and –6 if they Incapacitate any more CorpSec troopers.

If they do manage to get arrested, they’ve only delayed the inevitable. They’re looking at some hard time if they’re lucky, or maybe the death penalty if not. That depends on how the law works in your campaign. But it’s hard to investigate much from a prison cell, so unless they figure out how to regain their freedom the adventure is likely over.

- **CORPSEC POLICE (varies):** See page 20. The CorpSec officers are in a standard ground or aerial patrol car, as appropriate to the setting.



THERE THEY ARE!

Now that the heroes have had their faces blasted all over the 'Net going berserk on a street corner, the gang are going to need to keep a low profile.

CorpSec has a long memory—and a reputation to uphold. Even as the renegades are encountering Parody, speaking with Vision, or tracking down information one way or the other, CorpSec police are actively looking for them. Squad cars zip back and forth in the area to cover physical ground while the scores of surveillance cameras mounted on buildings or drones are registering the faces of everyone they see. On top of this, throngs of eager busybodies everywhere would love nothing more than to become “internet famous” for being the one who identifies the crazers who escaped.

In this environment, going anywhere without a disguise or some other means of avoiding detection is practically impossible (–6 to Stealth rolls). Attempts to conceal one's identity can reduce this penalty, or even bring it up to +2 or +4, depending on the quality. If they wind up being spotted, CorpSec police (and perhaps other interested parties) quickly converge on that site.

Don't forget, their identity isn't just their physical person. Any accounts or subscription services are tied to their identification, and devices attached to the 'Net register their whereabouts. Even their personal data device can tell on them. Making a call, swiping a “credstick” in a self-driving taxi, or opening a door with their thumbprint might signal their location to anyone on the lookout.

Contacting associates is also risky. Anyone associated with the criminal underworld is likely to deny them, or double-cross them for reward money. More upstanding citizens might pity them, but need to keep their distance to avoid being seen as an accomplice, a fate worse than death in a society driven by data, reputation, and corporate serfdom.

EYE IN THE SKY

Run this section if the gang decides to investigate Janus—and maybe even put an end to its nefarious signal.

Don't forget to let them do some research first, uncovering some of the information listed below. Depending on what they learn, this investigative work might just save their life down the road!

JANUS

Janus is a dirigible balloon, a type of steerable rigid airship with a solid frame. It floats by heating air inside its gas bags. The envelope is made of extremely resilient polymer fabric (Hardness 12), while everything else—the frame, walkways, rudders, antennae, pilothouse, billboard mounts, and so on—are steel (Hardness 18).

Roughly cigar-shaped, it has a narrow service walkway around the outside perimeter, allowing access to the three huge electronic billboards on both its port and starboard sides, and to the clusters of antennae and signal receivers on its nose cone and aft spindle.

Staircases on both sides go down to the pilothouse, located on Janus' underbelly. The pilothouse is actually rather small, consisting mainly of a monitoring station and security room, a server room, and a power room.

Janus is manned by two pilots who double as programmers, security, service technicians, and helmsmen—though many of these duties are automated and require minimal input. They alternate sleeping and working hours as needed, remaining on board Janus for an entire week, then taking a week off as a different crew handles the shift. This crew change, along with a quick maintenance inspection, takes only one hour and takes place while the airship is tethered to the top floors of Eidolon Tower.

Various security measures prevent unauthorized access. Cameras are mounted on every side, giving its crew a full spherical

panoramic view. These cameras are usually set on visible light, but switch to lowlight lenses at night and can even pick up infrared if necessary.

When under threat, it employs six side-mounted heavy slugthrowers (machine guns). A single, swivel-mounted autocannon at the top of the airship's envelope covers larger threats from above. Each of these guns covers a wide arc that excludes the possibility of hitting other parts of the dirigible. Crew can take manual control when necessary, but the guns are usually controlled by advanced AI targeting systems.

Janus wanders over every square mile of the city on a programmed route, hovering at a consistent altitude of 1000 feet, safely above most buildings and ensuring its visibility, yet low enough that someone on the ground can still see its billboards and hear its loudspeakers. It takes roughly seven hours to complete a circuit, after which it starts again. The route isn't public knowledge, but can be dredged up with a Hacking roll.

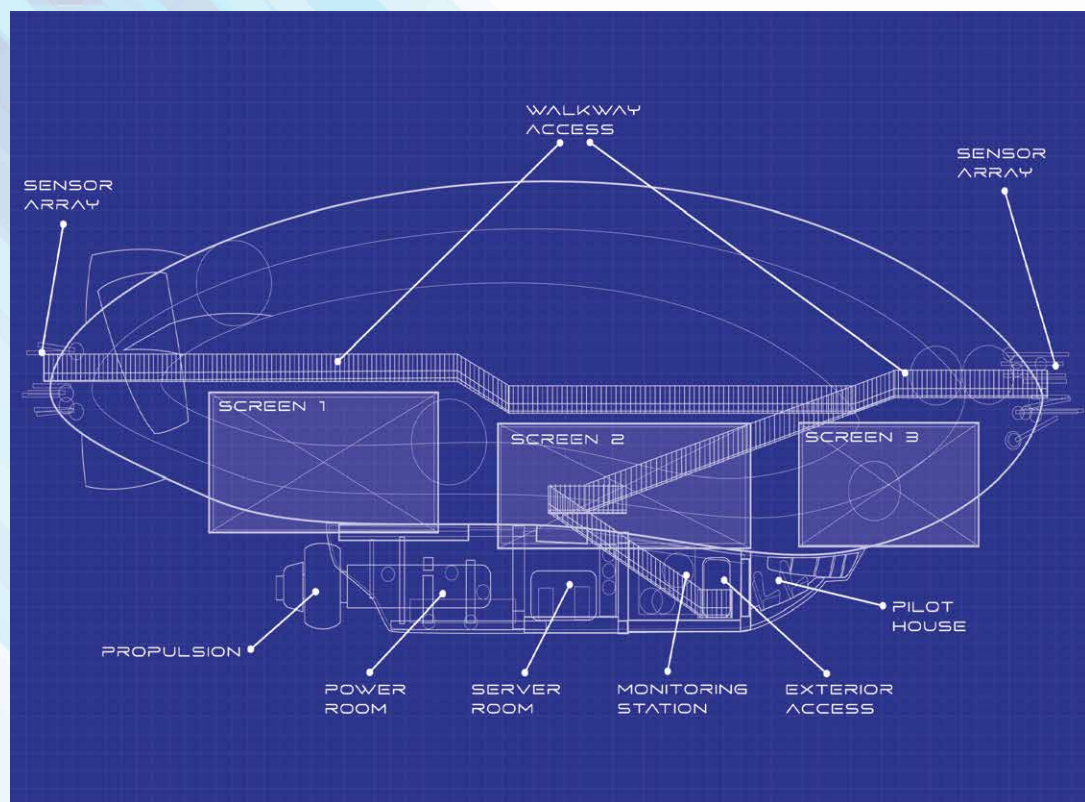
■ **JANUS PILOT (2):** See page 20.

GOT A BLIMP TO CATCH

There is no feasible way to access the dirigible from the ground. Possible alternatives include wingsuits or parachutes, grappling lines fired from a nearby building, approaching via an airborne vehicle, and so on. Any unidentified object larger than Size -1 that comes within 25 inches (50 yards) is immediately illuminated with floodlights and warned against getting any closer. The AI doesn't bother warning fast-moving objects, such as airplanes—if it doesn't recognize the vehicle as belonging to parent company Eidolon Labs, it goes straight to active countermeasures (i.e. guns).

A more nuanced approach might involve impersonating crew during a shift change, though that won't take place for another 1d6 days—a lifetime when you're wanted by CorpSec! They might also try kidnapping, extorting, or otherwise compelling off-shift crewmembers to help them get aboard.

Hackers might be able to get into Janus' systems remotely and turn off the guns, cameras, and so on, effectively blinding it while other team members get on board. Redundant systems prevent Janus from



crashing, even if outside parties seize control of its onboard computers, though. Additionally, the billboards and speakers are not accessible via the 'Net—a security measure put in place to prevent hackers from hijacking the highly visible platform for their own messages. Any content change is brought on board during crew shifts and manually uploaded to the billboards.

Hothotheaded characters might think of simply blowing Janus out of the sky. This is certainly possible, but falling wreckage is sure to deal catastrophic damage to innocents on the ground, not to mention calling down the full might of both CorpSec police and Eidolon Labs' veritable private army, so discourage your more militant mercenaries from taking such extreme measures!

THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEvised

It's possible to silence the signal by destroying the antennae located at the fore and aft of the airship, but that's at best a temporary measure. Any damage to its antennae causes Janus to immediately head back toward Eidolon Tower for repairs.

The signal itself is stored in the same dedicated computer as Janus' advertisements, meaning there's no way to delete it remotely. Someone needs to get on board, reach the pilothouse, and wipe the file. A similar effect can be accomplished by smashing the computer, naturally.

Pulling this off has no immediate visible effect, but it does stop any new crazer outbreaks. Whether or not this is a permanent victory is up to you. The code responsible for the growing crisis is safely housed in a separate server in Eidolon Tower, secure from hackers. All Eidolon Labs needs to do is replace the computer onboard Janus and it can go right back to turning folks with cyberware berserk in the name of research. If you feel the party have earned their liberation, stopping the signal from Janus could be enough. Fearing the leak of any damning information, Eidolon Labs call off the experiment.

SOURCE CODE

Run this section if your cyberpunks decide to bypass Janus (or fail to uncover that connection) and go straight for the code's source: the mainframe in Eidolon Tower, headquarters of Eidolon Labs, Inc. itself!

Breaking into Eidolon Labs headquarters is a fairly straightforward infiltration mission, so should be familiar territory for players with more experience in the cyberpunk genre. Nevertheless, this isn't just some warehouse in the industrial sector—it's a highly secure megacorporate skyscraper! Give the characters time to do some investigation and put together a plan.

EIDOLON TOWER

The corporate headquarters of Eidolon Labs, Inc. is Eidolon Tower, a 100-story skyscraper in the heart of the city's affluent business district. City streets around the tower are well-lit commercial avenues that are teeming with people day and night. It's probably the most safe location in the city, with constant CorpSec patrols and surveillance cameras covering nearly every square inch.

Eidolon Tower itself is an elegant spindle of glass reaching nearly 1,500 feet into the sky. The first five floors are an open atrium containing a three-floor mini-mall of restaurants and other venues, a lobby/security post, the tower's maintenance and power facility, and a five-floor parking garage (two floors of which are private corporate parking underground).

The next 70 floors are business offices leased out to a variety of other firms, such as law offices, real estate companies, and entertainment agencies. These floors are served by a three-car passenger elevator and a single freight elevator that connects down to the lobby level.

The remaining 30 floors are reserved solely for Eidolon Labs, Inc., and are served by a pair of dedicated passenger elevators. Floors 71 through 90 are allocated to the daily commercial functions of the company, with

several levels comprised of sprawling cubicle mazes, while the rest hold offices and meeting rooms for upper management.

Floors 90 through 95 are grand executive offices for the corporation's top ranking members. Security—which is tight anywhere in the building—is especially heavy here, ranging from cameras to invisible alarm lasers and a host of other measures.

Directly above, Floor 96 is taken up entirely by the Executive Security Office. This is home base for the corporation's most seasoned security personnel, hackers, and corporate spies. The tower is thinner here, with a broad rooftop that houses two helicopters. This is where the Janus airship docks for crew shifts and routine inspections.

The final three floors are a mini-mansion in the sky for Eidolon Labs' CEO. These opulent levels hold a ballroom, dedicated kitchen, full workout gym, theater, executive office suite, lavish guest quarters, a three-story tropical atrium, and his own penthouse suite. There's nothing above here but a thin needle of radio and cellular towers.

The only way to reach Floors 90 and above is a dedicated elevator that starts in the below-ground parking garage and bypasses the rest of the tower.

Daring heroes might be able to climb the tower, drop in from above, or get there in some other way. As long as a 'punk has the right gear, scaling the tower is a Dramatic Task. The difficulty depends on how much of the skyscraper he needs to climb, with every 30 floors increasing it by one category. But there's a wrinkle: After each round, climbers must roll Vigor or suffer Fatigue! One hundred floors makes for a long and exhausting climb. Naturally, failing the Dramatic Task—or failing a roll during a Complication—has the potential to be disastrous...

Whether or not Eidolon Tower has any built-in defenses against unidentified objects approaching by air is up to you, but it is certainly monitored from every angle.

- **CORPSEC POLICE (5 per hero):** See page 20.
- **CORPORATE EXECUTIVE (varies):** See page 19. Corporate executives are always attended by one executive security guard

serving as a bodyguard. Top executives, including the CEO, are Wild Cards.

- **EXECUTIVE SECURITY GUARD (2 per hero):** See page 20.
- **CORPORATE HACKER:** See page 20.

GROUP STEALTH

One of the stickier problems in missions like this is how to handle stealth rolls, especially when it involves a group of characters. Logically, the more people are trying to move through an area, the more likely they'll be noticed. But asking for separate rolls from multiple players makes failure almost inevitable. That might be realistic, but it also dismisses stealth as a viable tactic.

We recommend using Quick Encounters (see *Savage Worlds*) for groups attempting to sneak in unison. Every team member must participate, but they don't all have to roll stealth. They might have other ideas to get past guards, cameras, and alarms.

If someone fails a roll, that might add complications in the form of penalties when allies take their turn, but it doesn't necessitate switching to a full combat encounter.

The key question being asked isn't "Do the heroes get past the guards?" but instead "How do the heroes get past the guards?" As long as their chosen skills make sense in context, let it play out in the narrative.

Another strategy for stealth scenes is to defer player rolls until the moment when it matters. Rather than asking for stealth rolls as the gang first enters the building, wait until they need to creep past a pair of guards at the security desk. This will lessen the chances of failure by decreasing the number of times players need to roll, while making the stakes real rather than abstract.

THE GALA

If you want to give your cyberpunks another means of infiltrating Eidolon Tower (aside from the usual sneaking, climbing, and hacking that is), during their research they discover the CEO is planning to hold a black tie gala in his ballroom overlooking the city. Taking place in 1d4 days, it will be attended by dignitaries, politicians, and all manner of VIPs. Naturally, the 'punks weren't sent an exclusive invitation—but that's nothing a well-crafted forgery can't solve!

Alternatively, they might be able to finagle their way into the gala posing as waiters, guards, or any number of other staff hired to tend the event. How difficult it is to pull off such a switcheroo is anyone's guess. Characters with the Famous and/or Filthy Rich Edges might even be able to score a legitimate invitation—just as long as their true identity hasn't been exposed at the start of this adventure.

Security is mega-tight during the gala. Triple the number of guards in attendance. It goes without saying that a firefight erupting at such an event is sure to end poorly, as CorpSec is quick to crack down on anything threatening the city's *crème de la crème*. The gang's violent actions end up on the 'Net yet again, only this time there's no escaping the infamy...

- **GALA ATTENDEE (100):** Gala attendees use the Citizen profile on page 19. They run from trouble unless cornered.
- **CORPORATE EXECUTIVE (5):** See page 19. Corporate executives are always attended by one executive security guard serving as a bodyguard. Top executives, including the CEO, are Wild Cards.
- **EXECUTIVE SECURITY GUARD (6 per hero):** See page 20.

HARD DRIVE

Here, on Floor 98, is the server mainframe that houses the code containing the "crazer" virus. It sits behind blast doors (Hardness 18) and is intentionally not connected to the 'Net to prevent unauthorized access. Wall-mounted light slugthrowers defend the blast door, which can only be bypassed by the CEO's own retina. Should the system detect a breach, a built-in failsafe triggers a total system wipe after 2d4 rounds.

This does solve the problem without a hacker needing to get into the system herself... however, it also triggers explosive charges in each server tower, melting the circuitry beyond repair, but also dealing 3d6 damage to anyone standing nearby!

CONCLUSION

What does the future hold for the 'punks? Unless they were somehow able to clear their name, they're going to need disguises, hideouts, and maybe even devices to baffle surveillance, at least for a while. In this world of near-limitless information, internet sleuths inevitably dredge up their handles (nicknames) or maybe even their real names. Exposure might have deleterious effects on their other relationships—fixers might avoid them, fences might refuse to do business with them, even romantic partners or other friends might distance themselves. Not to mention the constant paranoia of watching for CorpSec police, Eidolon Labs agents, or other enemies on their trail. They might find themselves targeted by zealots who see them as "tainted," or lunatics who want to get famous by tracking them down on a livestream.

If they were able to stop the "crazer" signal, either by silencing Janus or deleting the source itself, they can rest assured their cybernetic implants won't cause them to go berserk in the future. In this short-attention-span world, their moment of internet fame fades quickly and they go back to their former anonymous lives, ready for their next adventure.

ENEMIES & ALLIES

CITIZEN

Most citizens lead unglamorous lives as crafters, office workers, shop owners, couriers, and so on, though some are also influencers or privileged high society types. They avoid trouble unless backed into a corner.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Driving d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: Items appropriate to their trade. Some have a simple firearm or knife (Str+d4).

COMBAT DRONE

Combat drones are small aerial platforms designed to assist soldiers in small skirmishes, deliver small objects, flank enemies, or perform recon in risky areas to avoid endangering flesh and blood soldiers.

Combat drones geared specifically for scouting have Stealth d8 and a Flight Pace of 16, but no onboard weapons.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength —, Vigor —

Skills: Athletics d6, Electronics d8, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 0; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6 (2)

Gear: Varies. Usually a laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 4, Cauterize, No Recoil, Overcharge).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Reinforced body.
- **Fearless:** The operator is far away, and thus immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Flight:** Pace 12 (8 MPH). Combat drones may hover in place.
- **Scanners:** Optical, chemical, motion, and other sensors ignore Illumination penalties. By going active as a free action, it adds a +2 bonus to Notice rolls to detect targets within 50 yards.

- **Size -1:** Combat drones usually weigh 50 pounds and can fold to a compact size.
- **Weakness (Remote Control):** An EMP or equipment designed to jam the operator's connection Incapacitates a drone and it crashes.

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE

Corporate executives keep the wheels of industry turning—and have a taste for money and power.

Corporate executives of every level are usually attended by at least one bodyguard.

JUNIOR EXECUTIVE

Junior executives are mid-level managers within their corporation. They don't have the same clout or experience, but they're hungry to climb the corporate ladder.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Research d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Stubborn

Edges: Connections, Deceptive

Gear: Suit, personal data device.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

Senior executives are decision makers at the highest levels within their corporation, including the chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and various other top-ranking chairpersons. They are well-educated, business savvy, and highly driven. Those who lead very large corporations are likely Wild Cards.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d8, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Driven (Major), Greedy (Major), Stubborn

Edges: Connections, Deceptive, Strong Willed, Work the Room

Gear: Expensive suit, personal data device.

CORPORATE HACKER

These tech-savvy types handle security for their own company's network.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Driving d6, Electronics d8, Fighting d4, Hacking d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Repair d8, Research d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: —

Edges: Mr. Fix-It, Power Hacker

Gear: Cyber deck. Installed cyberware: Cyberjack.

CORPSEC POLICE

CorpSec (Corporate Security) are a private security force which functions as the equivalent of civic law enforcement in a corporate state. They don't work for a single

company, but rather any corporation that funds their for-profit police department.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Obligation (Major—Uphold the law), Ruthless (Minor)

Edges: Connections, Menacing, Streetwise

Gear: Body armor (+4), commlink, handcuffs, heavy pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d10, AP 4), stun baton (Str+d4, stun). Heavier gear as needed.

EXECUTIVE SECURITY GUARD

These well-trained, experienced security officers protect executives, patrol high-value areas, and do whatever dirty work might be needed of them. They are tricked out with the latest cybernetic implants.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 17 (10)

Hindrances: Vow (Major—complete the mission)

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Cyborg, Dodge, Marksman, Rock and Roll!, Soldier

Gear: Combat armor (+6), 4× frag grenades, laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2, Cauterize, No Recoil, and Overcharge), chain sword (Damage 2d6+4). Installed cyberware: Adrenal Surge, 2× Armor, Attribute Increase (Strength), Trait Bonus (Targeting Eye, Shooting +2).

JANUS PILOT

These pilots also perform maintenance, security, and computer programming on board the Janus airship, as well as ensure it remains safely in the air.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d6, Fighting d4, Electronics d6, Hacking d6, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Repair d8, Shooting d8, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: —



Edges: Ace, Mr. Fix-It

Gear: Body armor (+4), heavy pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d10, AP 4), commlink, uniform, personal data device connected to the ship's systems.

★ PARODY

Parody doesn't have any particular style, but instead dresses in a wild mishmash of clothes in various colors. Her hair is bright purple but unkempt, and she has several visible piercings around her face. She is cautious around strangers, bordering on paranoid, and prefers to deal with people through the safety of the 'Net.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d8, Driving d6, Electronics d8, Fighting d4, Hacking d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Piloting d8, Repair d8, Research d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Suspicious (Minor), Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Investigator, Mr. Fix-It, Power Hacker

Gear: Light slugthrower (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6, AP 1, RoF 2), cyber deck, combat drone. Installed cyberware: Cyber-jack.

★ VISION

Vision is a thin, jittery man who runs the underground news blog, AURA. He dresses in slightly out-of-date clothing and conceals his wiry frame beneath a trenchcoat. Out of an excess of caution, he never lets his true face be observed by a camera.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Hacking d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Research d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

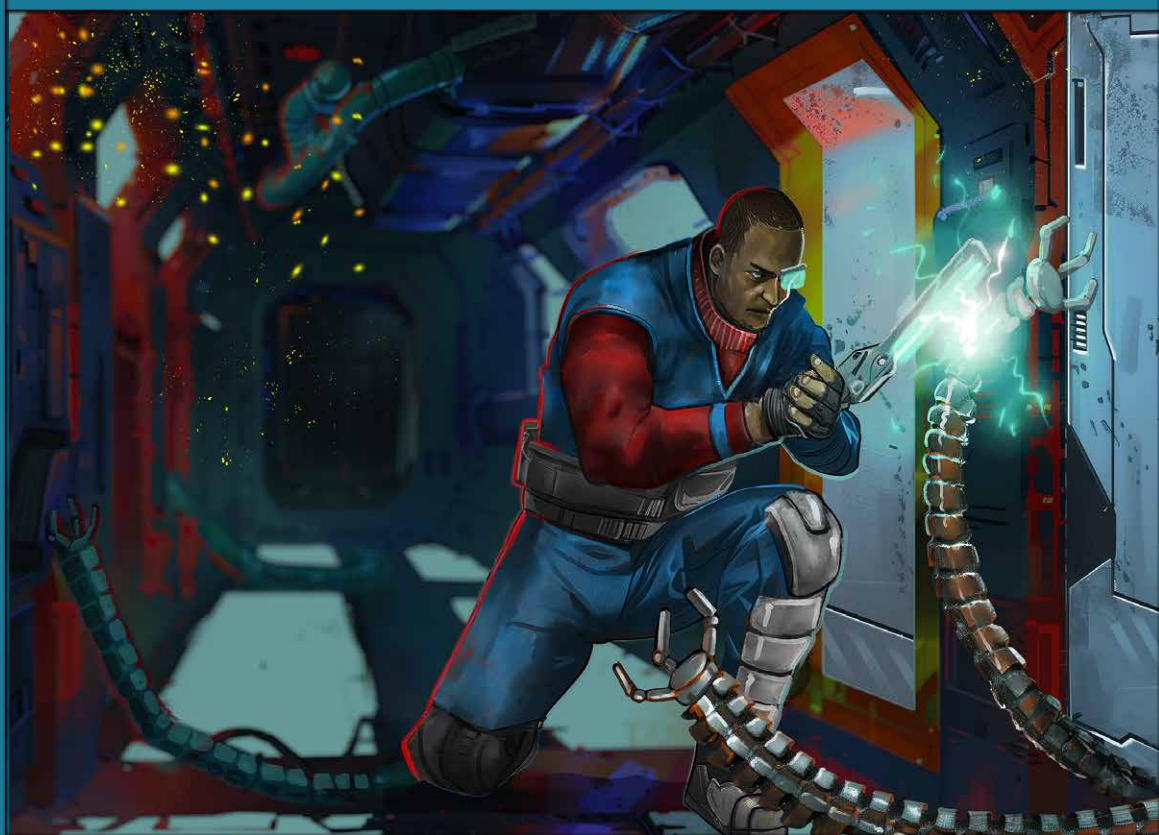
Hindrances: Curious, Driven (Minor—Find the Truth), Rebellious

Edges: Charismatic, Connections, Streetwise

Gear: Switchblade (Str+d4), medium pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2), personal data device.

*"I NEED A SINO-LOGIC 16...SOGO 7 DATA GLOVES, A
GPL STEALTH MODULE, ONE BURDINE INTELLIGENT
TRANSLATOR...THOMPSON EYE-PHONES."*

-JOHNNY MNEMONIC (1995)



THE CAPTAIN IS DEAD

**ORIGINAL STORY
BY DONALD SCHEPIS**

The captain is dead. The engines struggle to free the ship from a sea of liquid helium. The neurophage stalks the halls for prey. Polyps choke the vents with helium. Below, the leviathan waits in the liquid core of the gas giant Reservoir. Can the officers of the *Tangaroa* save their ship in time?

Three to six players assume the roles of staff officers onboard a massive Voiter extraction ship within the lower reaches of the gas giant. Across three sessions, the officers of the *Tangaroa* must repair the ship's systems while the neurophage hunts them. Survival is optional; terror is guaranteed.

BACKGROUND

Six years ago, VOITER (Voynicz Interstellar Extraction) announced a plan to expand operations into atmospheric mining and refinement. To that end, they developed the VSV *Tangaroa*, an experimental planet diver.

The largest ship in the Voiter fleet, they designed the *Tangaroa* to sit in the lower atmosphere of a gas giant for months, collect liquid helium-4 from the core via remote-controlled drones, and refine it on-site into fullerene supermolecules. These supermolecules are vital to fuel Hotta-Yusa quantum energy teleportation fields

that power gravity plates, interstellar communications, and jump drives.

The planet diver is a flying city with a crew of 500 human souls, 1,200 semi-independent automatons, and an advanced shipboard AI. Most crewmembers either oversee the work of the automatons or perform tasks outside the drones' capabilities.

For the last three months, the *Tangaroa* sat in the bowels of VIMP35 R115710.97-040344.6 e, a class I gas giant beyond the edge of developed space. Despite a constant flood of problems to troubleshoot, the work in "Reservoir" progressed without incident.

SETTING

The Captain is Dead is a realistic Sci-Fi adventure set in the 22nd century once humanity spread beyond the bounds of Earth. The following Setting Rules are in effect:

- **Creative Combat** (*Savage Worlds*)
- **Conviction** (*Savage Worlds*)
- **Energy Management** (*Science Fiction Companion*)
- **Extreme Environments** (*Science Fiction Companion*)
- **Gritty Damage** (*Savage Worlds*)
- **More Skill Points** (*Savage Worlds*)
- **Optional: Expanded Fear Effects** (*Savage Worlds Horror Companion*)

CHARACTERS

Before the game begins, each player should select a role among the *Tangaroa's* staff officers. This adventure assumes all characters are human and do not have any arcane backgrounds. If creating your own, all crew members must have at least a d4 in Electronics and the key skill listed for their role (see below). To ensure the surviving officers have the spread of skills required to complete the adventure, the following positions are required:

- Navigation Officer or Flight Officer
- Engineering Officer or CCS (Cooling & Compression Systems) Officer
- Medical Officer or Science Officer

Once those basics are covered, additional officers can come from any duty station as desired. If using archetypes, each role has a suggested choice. If that choice is already in play choose another position, or use a different archetype to fill it.

As department heads, each officer usually manages their staff full-time. However, to lead a department, each officer must be able to perform the duties of all their subordinates. This is a crack crew on an expensive, experimental ship so everyone should be competent at their assigned job—but it's always possible someone managed to score an undeserved promotion thanks to office politics or cheating. If so, they (and everyone around them) are in for a reckoning!

RANKS

Voiter is a civilian company with a loose corporate structure, but ships require a clear chain of command in times of emergency. In practice, ranks below the officer level impose a vague social structure that only carry weight during drills.

- **CAPTAIN:** Commander of the ship.
- **EXECUTIVE OFFICER:** Second-in-command.
- **OFFICER:** Department heads.
- **ENSIGN:** Specialized training or manage a small group.
- **CREWMATE:** Regular employee.

When the adventure begins, the Captain is dead—as the title suggests. All of the characters are Officers, and the remaining crew (Ensigns and Crewmates) look to them for leadership during the catastrophe. The Executive Officer is still alive, but may be an obstacle for the Officers to overcome as events unfold!

OVERVIEW

First up is an overview of the VSV *Tangaroa* to set the scene. Once each Officer knows where they are stationed and what their normal duties entail (**Another Day in the Reservoir**, page 28), it's time to jump into the adventure and let the disasters begin.

The Impact occurs during a remote staff meeting. A swarm of polyps descends on

VSV TANGAROA OFFICER POSITIONS			
POSITION	KEY SKILL(S)	DUTY STATION	SUGGESTED ARCHETYPE
CCS	Electronics, Repair	Processing Deck	Analyst
Engineering	Repair, Science	Engineering	Roughneck
Flight	Electronics, Piloting	Flight Deck	Pilot
Logistics	Driving, Electronics	Cargo Deck	Smuggler
Medical	Healing, Science	Medical	Medic
Navigation	Electronics, Piloting	Bridge	Controller
Operation	Intimidation, Persuasion	Operations	Commander
Science	Electronics, Science	Life Support	Engineer
Wellness	Persuasion	Habitation	Ambassador

the *Tangaroo*, and the leviathan leaps to eat them. It clips the ship, which breaches the bridge and damages the hull. The Officers must scramble to contain the damage and reactivate basic systems to find out just how bad the situation has become.

The Fall describes the ship's plummet into the atmosphere. To save the ship the Officers must clear off polyps, repair the engines, and avoid a collision with a mountain of liquid helium. The action is complicated by renegade robots and a very unwelcome visitor.

Finally in *Escape Velocity* the survivors must eject the alien and save the ship and the crew—if they can.

USU TANGAROA

This section outlines the nine departments of the kilometer-long vessel, their functions, and the responsibilities of the staff officers who manage them. Use this information to fill in the gaps whenever the players try improvising solutions outside the core path presented in the adventure section. This section is safe to share with the players to help them understand what life aboard the *Tangaroo* is like.

CLASS-I PLANET DIVER

As an experimental vessel, the *Tangaroo* has numerous unique systems, like the quantum energy teleportation (QET) power relay. It instantaneously transfers power from the reactor to a nexus in the front of the ship without any transmission loss. The superbolt capacitors on the hull capture the intense lightning bolts of the gas giant and slowly diffuse them into the planet diver's power grid.

To reduce oxygen and nutrient consumption, an army of autonomous drones supplement the organic crew. Additionally, the shipboard AI "Attendant" runs over half of the ship systems during normal operations. Unlike most artificial intelligences, Voiter developed "Atty" with a personality. They modeled her on a composite of a thousand schoolteachers to heighten the crew's emotional drive to

please an approachable authority figure. Despite the high level of automation, the *Tangaroo* has emergency manual controls for all systems.

TRAVEL

The internal areas of the *Tangaroo* are packed tightly around vital systems to resist the crushing pressure of gas giants. This design led to a confusing network of hallways only navigable via augmented reality displays. Lines painted on the floor direct crew to the nearest escape shuttle in emergencies. It takes 25 minutes to walk from the back of engineering to the front of life support.

Luckily, the cargo trams cut travel time to a third and allow bulky supplies and groups of travelers to easily navigate the ship. Any crew who work outside of habitation, medical, or the flight deck start their shifts with a commute via tram.

BRIDGE

All external communications, including long-range QET, route through the bridge. Every system feeds reports directly to the "crow's nest" suspended over the bridge to give the captain a bird's-eye view of the *Tangaroo's* status. With her command key, the captain can remotely control any ship system, issue lockdowns, and disable the AI core.

NAVIGATION OFFICER

The navigation officer plots the course, oversees the *Tangaroo's* smart flight control systems, and can fly the kilometer-long vessel manually via the helm. "Nav" also pings ship-wide alerts for volatile weather events like superbolt lightning storms.

CAPTAIN VALERIA MORENO

On board Voiter ships, the captain's first job is to ensure the success of the vessel's operation. Unlike her peers, Captain Moreno takes a more traditional approach and views herself as the ship's steward. Educated, experienced, and empathetic, Valeria is the most inspiring commander in the fleet.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER ZAKHAR BURKOV

In stark contrast to Captain Moreno, XO Burkov is a company man. Nicknamed the “Hatchet Man,” Zakhar will cut every corner to pursue profit. Nephew to Voiter’s CFO, a cadre of promotion-seekers on board formed around the XO to support his decisions. Burkov is built for boardroom politics more than ship command.

ENGINEERING

Engineering is the busiest department on the ship, nestled between the reactor and the primary engines. The *Tangaroa*’s lifeblood is the power provided by a massive generation VI helium-cooled fast reactor. Without the primary engines, the ship can only maintain neutral lift. In addition to the two most vital systems, the department runs repairs the length of the *Tangaroa* in a constant battle to keep all auxiliary systems functional.

ENGINEERING OFFICER

The engineering officer manages the largest roster of personnel. The “chief” personally signs off on every repair and maintenance action onboard to ensure overall ship stability. Repairs to QET systems, like the jump drive and gravity plating, or any automatons also fall on the chief’s shoulders.

OPERATIONS

The operations department is comprised of the network and security divisions. The network division is the *Tangaroa*’s IT team, with the additional responsibility of servicing the AI core. The security division maintains crew discipline and safety standards. Besides the staff officers, they are the only crew with access to the stun batons and stun guns. Luckily, in over three months of operation, the security team only opened the weapons locker for training and maintenance.

OPERATIONS OFFICER

Half security director, half IT administrator, the operations officer’s first responsibility is the safety of the crew. In dire circumstances, “Ops” and the wellness officer may jointly override the captain and suspend all harvesting operations. Ops also controls the

Pioneer network and can place any crewmate under house arrest in their berth.

FLIGHT DECK

Without a fleet of remote drones, the *Tangaroa* could not harvest the liquid helium above Reservoir’s core. Each drone launches from a pair of hangar bays atop the hull, descends to the sea of metallic liquid helium, and scoops a load using a suspended magnetic catch. A single pilot can control a trio of drones at once via a virtual piloting rig located between the hangars.

FLIGHT OFFICER

The flight officer is responsible for all airspace around the vessel and has the final say on any sorties. Unofficially called the “marshal,” the flight officer also coordinates with the deck division of the engineering department to perform external repairs using specialized drones.

HABITATION

Habitation provides the crew with a wide spectrum of entertainment and relaxation opportunities to maintain morale during the *Tangaroa*’s eight-month operational cycle. The mess hall is the most popular location on the ship, with floor-to-ceiling video screens and hyper-oxygenic plants to simulate a terrestrial park. Each berth in habitation tightly packs a small sitting area, bathroom, and kitchenette below a loft bed. During lockdowns, non-essential crew are expected to isolate in their berths. For maximum coverage, most of the ship’s escape shuttles rest along this half of the “Habitation Deck.”

WELLNESS OFFICER

The wellness officer minimizes long-term exhaustion and stress among the crew. Most of the time, the “whoa” (WO) is a friendly ear to take complaints and resolve interpersonal issues. No one on the *Tangaroa* knows more about the crew and their secrets than the wellness officer.

MEDICAL

The other half of the Habitation Deck, medical cares for all three hundred crewmembers. The small hospital’s staff provides emergency

aid, primary care, dentistry, and even psychological treatment. The staff can even clone limbs and organs onsite for replacement.

MEDICAL OFFICER

The medical officer is the only medical doctor on the ship. "Doc" faces a regular influx of new cases between accidents, chronic care, and dozens of new ailments caused by the unique living environment. A team of medical drones supplements the nurses and technicians during emergencies.

CARGO DECK

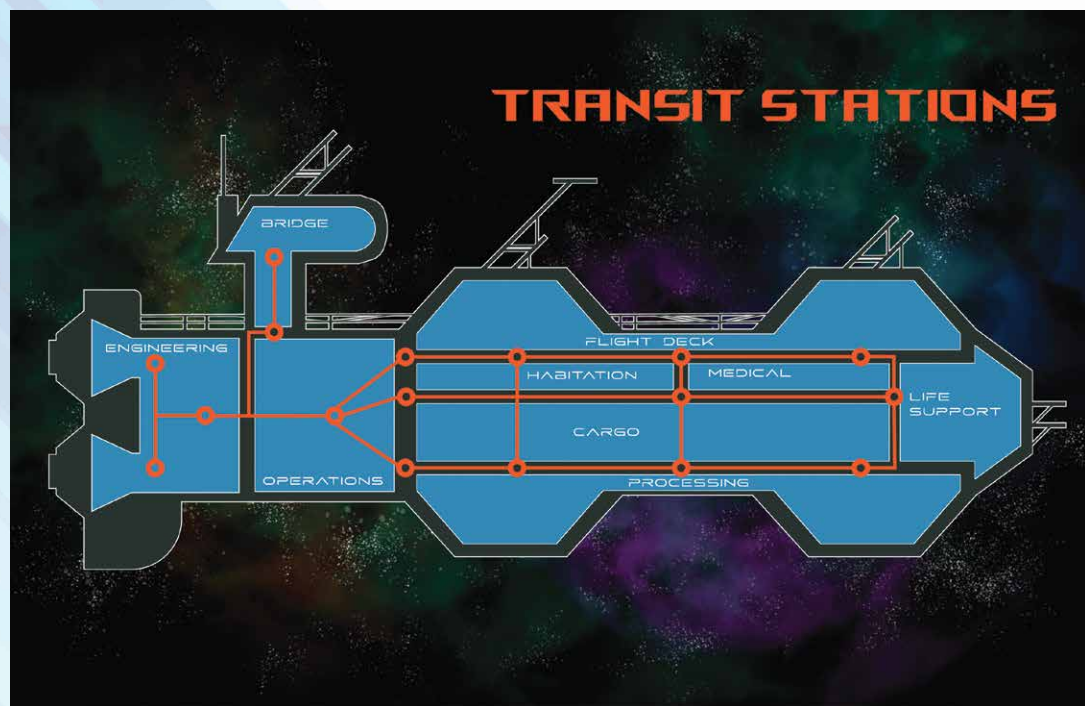
Everything the *Tangaroa* cannot produce on its own must be stocked before it leaves port. Those items live on the cargo deck. The ship-wide tram system maintained on the deck is the vessel's logistical lifeblood. The robotics storage and charging stations occupy a third of the cargo deck.

LOGISTICS OFFICER

The logistics officer is everyone's friend. If someone wants it, the "quartermaster" can get it. Centered in a web of departments, the logistics officer knows everything happening on board.

PROCESSING DECK

After the liquid helium-4 is brought aboard, the processing deck cools it using lasers through sisyphian cooling. This process converts it into helium fullerene, a supermolecule used to fuel QET technology. Many rows of massive, 16-wheeler-sized Cooling and Compression Systems (CCS) line the deck. Once the canisters are ready, drones store them in the external cargo wings.



The Captain Is Dead does not require any battle maps, but the location of the staff officers matters as they race across the *Tangaroa*. The Science Fiction Companion Pawns are a great way to track those positions.

Place each staff officer's token at their duty station at the start of the game and track their movement through the ship. Remember, the tram stations are offline until the crew restores them in **Open the Gates** (page 34).

COOLING & COMPRESSION SYSTEMS OFFICER

The CCS officer and a handful of other techs ensure the systems do not overload and explode within the hull. If a system is about to breach, "Cocom" can eject the entire device and let it explode harmlessly outside the ship. Most of the laser techs on the *Tangaroa* are veterans with wartime laser gunnery experience.

LIFE SUPPORT

Oxygen production, water transport, growing food, and waste disposal occupy the entire schedule of the life support division. Without the hundreds of hyperoxygenic algae tanks in the hydroponics lab, the crew would suffocate in hours. The largest threat to the ventilation system is the flying drones that use it as a shortcut throughout the vessel. The longest streak without a jam was the seventeen days out of drydock when none of the fliers were active.

SCIENCE OFFICER

The science officer maintains the systems that keep the *Tangaroa* from becoming a tomb. To justify a few research grants, "soah" (SO) also runs numerous atmospheric sensors and conducts experiments in a small research lab. With such a broad range of disciplines under their command, the science officer is the most educated crewmember on the ship.

EQUIPMENT

All of *Tangaroa's* crew must wear their duty uniform (see Body Armor in the *Science Fiction Companion*) and always carry their "Pioneer" Data Terminal. Each crewmate also has implanted ocular lenses to display the ship's augmented reality interfaces. Typically, any other equipment is located near their worksite. As each staff officer begins at their duty station, they can have any equipment reasonably related to the function of their duties (GM's approval).

There are no lethal weapons aboard the ship, though common engineering tools can do serious damage. The weapons locker inside the operations center contains numerous stun batons and stun guns. When used on machines, stun batons deal lethal electric

damage, and stun guns deal 2d6+2 electric damage. Both add an extra d6 on a raise.

MARK IV. PIONEER DATA TERMINAL

The Pioneer is a vital tool in every crew member's daily operations. It combines the functionality of a biolink, personal data device, and commercial drone (see Common Gear in the *Science Fiction Companion*). Each Pioneer tracks the user's location, provides access to the internal networks for system and drone control, and acts as a communication device. When the communicator is active, a tiny drone detaches to transmit video to the other parties.

THE IMPACT

The adventure opens with the staff officers spread across the ship as they conduct their primary duties—just before everything goes to hell.

ANOTHER DAY IN THE RESERVOIR

These small scenes allow each player to introduce their character, get an idea of what daily life on the *Tangaroa* looks like, and establish where everyone is. These sections are purposely light on details to let you flesh them out with your own creations!

Use these scenes to build tension as the players wait for things to go wrong. The end of each scene introduces a rumor about alien life brought aboard. Encourage the players to think this is the creature that will kick off the adventure to surprise them with the leviathan's appearance.

Run the scenes in the order presented, skipping any roles not occupied by a player.

COURSE CORRECTION

■ FLIGHT OFFICER

The sortie room is dark and cramped, filled with a dozen piloting stations. All but three sit dark as the night shift wraps up their sorties and the Flight Officer prepares for a morning briefing. Each remaining pilot wears

a blacked-out helmet linked to the cameras on their flying drones. Suddenly, one of the pilots, Michael Han, calls out in alarm,

"We got a problem here!"

Ensign Han's three linked drones desynced on approach to the intake tubes. He controls two of them but needs another pilot to manually fly the third. A Piloting roll allows the flight officer to dock the drone with the tube and secure the flyer. If the flight officer fails, the drone spins out of control and disappears into the helium sea far below the ship. In either case, Han thanks the flight officer.

"Damn, that was close! All the flight links are buggin' out since Cole caught his wild flyer with the pincher."

Han doesn't know much more than that. He ran launch control in the hangar for most of his shift, so he only heard scuttlebutt about Ensign Danny Cole's adventure to recover a lost collector with the repair drone. One of the other pilots, Ensign Amadi Zinsou, mentions that the maintenance crew found something attached to the drone. Before the flight officer can investigate further, the staff officer meeting starts.

STAND CLEAR OF THE DOORS

■ LOGISTICS OFFICER

A whine of metal echoes through the cargo deck as the tram's brakes scrape against the rails. Endless rows of storage containers stretch in every direction, labeled with augmented reality displays. One of the transport techs guides a loading drone with a crateful of supplies. The Logistics Officer reviews a list of supply requests from the night shift.

The tram's loading ram descends and stops halfway. The tech sends the lower command via her Pioneer again and swears when the tram controls don't respond.

"Yo, boss? I could use some help."

Crewmate Rebba Patterson asks the logistics officer to help reset the tram controls. On a successful Electronics roll, the officer can reset the tram and lower the ramp. The drone loads the supplies into the tram, and it takes off down the track. On a failure, the ramp is

MANAGING THE CHAOS

Once the scene is set, trouble comes fast and furious. Below are a few tips to help keep things *fast, furious, and fun*.

Communicate that these tasks have a time limit, and if the characters don't take action the situation deteriorates even further. The ticking clock is a powerful tool to move the players along. When immediate danger is involved ask "What do you do?" and then literally count down: "Five...four...three...two...one."

Leverage Bennies and additional Damage Control tokens (see page 38) as rewards when the players take actions to benefit the ship not mentioned in the adventure.

The officers are experts in their fields and should not have to roll for information related to their departments.

Remember that the Trait rolls prompted in the text of the adventure are a baseline. Allow players to use their character's skills in interesting ways to get similar results.

Allow players to spend a Benny to have or find a piece of common Dev I gear from the *Science Fiction Companion* (subject to GM approval).

Players often think they can overcome any challenge or foe. Sometimes it's better to warn them out of character rather than for the players to be surprised and their characters killed.

When the group splits up, jump back and forth between both groups. A good strategy is to set a ten-minute timer on the side. When you approach the end of the timer, look for a dramatic moment to flip back to the other group and leave the players in suspense. Another good time to swap is when players must plan their next move.

stuck and requires a full maintenance service to resume operations.

"Guess I'll do a maintenance ticket. Man, that's the third one this week. By the way, you know anything about that priority tram to medical? Nothing but Cap's auth on the log."

The logistics officer hasn't heard anything. A log review shows Captain Moreno's digital signature on the dispatch override. She also locked access to the security footage from the tram's internal camera. Before the quartermaster can investigate further, the staff officer meeting starts.

TURBULENCE

■ NAVIGATION OFFICER

The length of the *Tangaroa* stretches out in front of the bridge's main viewport. Beyond it, the endless expanse of Reservoir's lower atmosphere. Three ensigns work at the communications, subsystems, and sensor stations while a crewman stands watch by the window.

The Navigation Officer sits in the crow's nest above the main deck of the bridge. The displays show the status of *Tangaroa*'s systems, the positions of in-flight collection drones, and the external environmental conditions. Footsteps clang on the ladder to the nest as Captain Moreno arrives early, as usual, to take command.

"Good morning! One moment. Attendant! Please prepare a QET communication packet per the parameters I discussed with XO Burkov. And send appendix E of the VPPR to my screen."

Voiter Policies, Procedures, and Regulations is a boring corporate operations guide. The crew jokes that the impractical document's initials stand for "Very Piss-Poor Rules." A successful Common Knowledge roll reveals that appendix E outlines how to register new claims and discoveries.

"Quiet shift? It never stays like that. I'd like a new weather report before the staff meeting, please."

Below at the helm, the navigation officer can run a scan to gather atmospheric pressure data to predict any incoming storms. On a success, nav identifies small, scattered

pockets of low pressure in the *Tangaroa*'s path. While strange, the pockets are insignificant at the ship's scale. With failure, the scan looks clear. The navigation officer finishes the scan just in time for the staff officer meeting.

WHAT GOES UP

■ ENGINEERING OFFICER

The reactor's hum shifts in pitch as the *Tangaroa* cycles up for the "day shift." A dozen crewmates traverse the catwalks winding around the massive structure within engineering. They inspect the seals on hundreds of tubes connected to the cylindrical machine. A dozen feet away and sixty feet up in the air hovers a drone—not one of the small aerodynes, but a humanoid laborer.

The chief sends a remote shutoff command from their Pioneer. Crewmate Lana Fischer throws a bolt onto the gravity plate below the drone. The moment the bolt passes over the plate, it whips straight up and hits the ceiling ten feet past the drone.

"No joy."

Normally, the gravity plates use quantum energy teleportation to pull gravitons from another location. This gives the effect of gravity without the required mass. The malfunctioning QET plate projects gravity up and traps the drone in midair. The automaton is heavy enough that the waves of force cannot push it all the way to the ceiling.

The engineering officer can roll Repair to slowly decrease the frequency of particle teleportation and bring the drone back to the deck. On a failure, the drone smashes into the plating and destroys both. On a success, it gently lands and resumes normal operations.

"Trade: I write the incident report, you ask about the dust-up in habitation. Ten credits say it's another distiller."

The staff officer meeting starts soon after.

TARTARUS

■ CCS OFFICER

The CCS Officer stands in the command nest over an expanse of laser cooling machines. Each device is the size of a sixteen-wheeler truck and emits rolling waves of heat. Sweat beads on the technicians as they monitor the status of every device. The ventilation systems

can't keep up with the processing deck in full operation. Even after three months in the sauna, no one is used to it. Ensign Boris Melnyk's gossip, however, is old hat.

"Sofia says one of the pilots sent out the repair drone. Found the lost one. But when it came back, it had a stowaway!"

Before Melnyk can elaborate, a panel lights up red on cocom's system. One of the cooling stations fail to cycle down when the helium-4 reaches the correct temperature. It continues to fire lasers into the exterior of the closed canister. If it burns through the exterior, the explosive decompression will tear the device apart and set off a chain reaction on the deck.

The CCS officer must make a successful Repair roll to shut off the laser cooling machine. On a success, the system powers down, and the technicians can safely remove the canister of supermolecules. If cocom fails, the emergency failsafe activates. An airlock opens below the CCS system and ejects it from the ship. The device explodes harmlessly below the ship.

The alarm claxon quiets just in time for the staff officer meeting to begin.

WORKPLACE POLITICS

■ WELLNESS OFFICER

Outside the office window stretches dozens of doors. Each displays an augmented reality name over the top and a status. At this time of "night", most read "occupied." The interior of the office is compact and pleasant. A rug covers the metal deck, and two plush chairs occupy the center of the room.

Executive officer Zakhar Burkov paces back and forth in the small space, furious. Usually unpleasant, Burkov loses whatever charm he might have had during his tantrum to the Wellness Officer.

"We will make an example of Crewmate Silva! His lack of discipline cannot be allowed to spread! The last thing this tub of layabouts needs is encouragement to disrespect their superior officers!"

The XO wants Crewmate Miguel Silva confined to quarters and docked pay for three weeks. As far as the WO can tell, Zakhar overhead Silva brag about secret cargo he escorted to medical. And he made a joke at

the XO's expense. Burkov is angrier about the joke than the breach of protocol.

Both punishments are outside the regulations and excessive. With a successful Persuasion roll, the wellness officer can convince the XO to accept a write-up and ten days of docked pay. On a failure, the WO must choose between three weeks of confinement or docked pay for Silva.

Placated, Burkov storms out of the office minutes before the staff officer meeting begins.

STRANGE FINGERPRINTS

■ SCIENCE OFFICER

Algae fills the glass tanks in the lab's walls. Diffused white light floods the space to promote growth and illuminates the workstations scattered throughout. Two rows of large ventilation fans pull the oxygen from the tanks and pass it from life support to the rest of the ship. Microscopes, terminals, and a wide range of analytic equipment fill every inch of available table space. One of the lab techs, Ensign Farah Majidi, speaks into her Pioneer to record her observations as the Science Officer enters.

"Ammonia levels in VIMP35 R115710.97-040344.6 e's lower atmosphere appear higher than recorded by scouting pro—, SO! End dictation. Good, uh, uh, morning. Can you look at this?"

Ensign Majidi shows the science officer part of an aerodyne. Something etched a strange, feather-like pattern into the metal. Surprising, given that the flying drones withstand the crushing pressure of Reservoir's lower atmosphere to collect liquid helium.

"Security brought this down. It stumped the mechanics in the hangar. I'll leave this with you."

Ensign Majidi leaves the science officer alone to analyze the metal. It's quickly apparent that the pattern is the result of electric etching. On a successful Science roll, the SO realizes there is organic residue within the microscopic ridges of the mark. Something living did this. On a failure, the science officer needs more time to complete the analysis. The staff officer meeting interrupts any further work.

GAG ORDER

■ OPERATIONS OFFICER

The dark, cramped space in the bowels of operations twists and turns into a maze of access panels and display screens. Power and network cables hang down from the ceiling in neat, multicolored bundles. Small, augmented reality labels list the various functions supported by each server. Ahead of the Operations Officer, a virtual representation of Attendant points the way.

"Almost there! I'm sorry I couldn't do this myself. I really appreciate your aid in resolving this issue."

Atty, the *Tangaroa's* AI, lost connection to the drone command relay. Without the node, she cannot send orders to the automatons or take direct control over any of the machines. As one of the most secure ship systems, it requires officer-level credentials to access.

The winding path is one of dozens of network relays in operations. Each node supports and augments Attendant's capabilities. As a late addition to the ship's design, these locations

are too small for any of the worker drones to access.

The operations officer makes an Electronics roll. On a success, the node reactivates, and Atty regains control. Failure frags the drive and requires a total reformat before Attendant can attempt to reconnect to the node. Ops can begin the process, but the function takes many hours to complete.

On the way out of the network relay, the staff officer meeting begins.

THE POLYP

■ MEDICAL OFFICER

Sterile and organized, medical is designed to evoke a planet-side hospital instead of a sick bay. Private rooms, diagnostic areas, and supply rooms encircle the main care room. A trio of emergency response drones charge on the ceiling, ready to deploy as first responders at a moment's notice.

Inside the surgical suite, The Medical Officer inspects a large, bulbous creature. The air quality monitor on the wall creeps into the yellow as gas leaks from a pair of valves on either side of the ovular body. Long tendrils halfway between kelp and feathers spill off the side of the operating table and pool on the floor. By all indications, the creature is dead.

Unflapped by the presence of the first complex alien organism ever encountered by humankind, the nurse lays out tools on a side table. Ensign Hideki Tomori turns to the Medical Officer.

"Doctor, are you ready to begin?"

The Medical Officer notes points of interest before the autopsy begins. Small, equidistant bulbs run the length of the tendrils. The creature has no obvious ocular organs. A circular scar at the top of the sack is the only blemish on the creature.

Success on a Healing roll reveals that the creature contains Helium-3 in its flight sack. The valves allow for rudimentary locomotion, but the creature mostly floats through the atmosphere on gas currents. While floating, the conductive tendrils collect static electricity from the atmosphere to nourish the creature. On a failure, the doc cuts into the sac too quickly and releases a cloud of helium gas. Ensign Tomori and the



Medical Officer exit the suite and wait for the gas to dissipate before the autopsy can continue.

After a successful autopsy or during the wait for the helium to clear, the staff officer meeting begins.

STAFF OFFICER MEETING #112.1

The tiny camera drones on your Pioneers spring to life and hover two feet away from you. A large, augmented reality window opens to show the captain in the crow's nest on the bridge. She nods to welcome everyone.

"Begin recording. Voynicz Interstellar Extraction space vessel Tangaroa Staff officer meeting, standard rotation 112, shift one. Welcome everyone. I'm sure you have questions about the rumors.

"At oh-two hundred last rotation, Ensign Daniel Cole retrieved an errant aerodyne using the primary repair drone. When the flight mechanics inspected the drone, they disc—"

Captain Moreno stops abruptly. She looks up at the main viewport and squints. The Pioneer drone automatically twists to follow her eyeline. For a moment, you see nothing but the gas giant's expanse before you. Then you see a floating bulb. A long tendril trails below it. Sparks of electricity surge along the length before they suddenly jump to another identical creature.

The sky flickers as the jolt zips back and forth between a dozen bulbs. You realize that even within the Tangaroa's hull, the hairs on the back of your arms stand up. A giant bolt of lighting races down from above and smashes into one of the superbolt capacitors.

The massive metal frame immediately glows white hot from the first strike. The blast's intensity briefly illuminates the side of the captain's face. The navigation officer's voice echoes through Pioneer link and the ship's intercom with a ship-wide storm warning. The second strike slags the capacitor.

"Helm, hard to port! Clear the—the,"

Suddenly, a shadow darkens Captain Moreno's face. She glances off to the right, her eyes wide in horror. The Pioneer swivels. Everything moves in slow motion.

An impossibly large, eel-like leviathan as long as the Tangaroa breaches out of the liquid

helium sea below. The incredible surface tension holds the helium in place, barely affected by the monster that emerges.

A spined, hardened carapace covers the leviathan's head. Two dull, hollow sockets mimic eyes. Then, the carapace splits to reveal the true head within. It twists in the air to envelop scores of floating bulbs. Right over the Tangaroa.

"Brace, brace, bra—"

The leviathan impacts the ship. The entire vessel rotates to the side, flinging you and everything around you onto a wall. But the Tangaroa is a sturdy ship built to withstand the crushing depths of a gas giant. A design put to the test as the weight of the monster forces the ship down further than it has ever gone before.

The last thing you see before blacking out is a spine clip on the top of the bridge. It buckles the ceiling in. At this depth, at this pressure, the hull can no longer withstand the crushing weight of two thousand atmospheres above it. The crow's nest crumples inward and flattens. The link goes static.

The Captain is dead...

BREAK CONTAINMENT

...But we're not!

After the "title screen," we exit the linear, tension-building introduction and move into the objective-based survival horror core of the adventure.

The officers wake up 90 minutes after the impact in a half-dead *Tangaroa*. Main power is out everywhere. Some critical systems are operating on emergency battery power, but that won't last long. Every section has dead and injured to deal with, and small electrical fires that threaten to quickly escalate into a ship-threatening wildfire.

A successful Electronics or Repair roll safely quenches the flames. With failure the flames still go out, but deal 2d6 damage to the unlucky officer in the process.

Checking on nearby injured is a Healing roll. With success one of the subordinates named in the officer's introductory scene is in shock, but quickly comes around and serves as an Extra with a d6 in all attributes and the key

skills for that area. With failure the character is unconscious or too badly injured to move.

After each officer deals with fires or checks on the injured (or as soon as any player tries) the next step is to check in via Pioneers for a situation report and orders. The Captain is dead, and the XO doesn't answer. Any officers controlled by players join the call. The rest are either dead or out of commission. It's up to the players to take charge and save the ship.

A cursory check proves that every occupied section is locked down by emergency bulkheads, and Atty, the ship's AI, isn't responding. To solve the first issue, someone needs to travel to the security section within Operations and manually override the lock down. Restoring Atty requires a trip into the bowels of Operations. The survivors can try to tackle these issues one at a time, or in parallel.

Both tasks are in Operations, but cut off by the bulkhead doors and dead transit cars. The heroes in various sections can get where they need to go by breaking into the vents or superstructure inside the ship, or by exiting the ship entirely through an airlock and risking a walk along the hull.

THROUGH THE MIDDLE

The slower—but significantly less dangerous—route to either location in Operations is through the interior superstructure. It's a tight squeeze even under optimal conditions, and the current situation is far from optimal. Getting into the ductwork at all requires a Repair roll, followed by an Athletics roll for all the climbing and wriggling required. Failing the Repair roll costs time. Either the character must go Over the Top, or he can't physically participate in Open the Gates or Turn on the Lights below. With a failed Athletics roll the character suffers Fatigue, or 1d4 Wounds on a Critical Failure.

Success brings an officer from Operations or an adjacent section into the Security or AI areas. With a raise someone from even farther away makes it in time to help. Along the way the character might feel very cold sections of wall (where the area beyond decompressed and is exposed to freezing atmosphere), very hot sections (where electrical fires raged out of control and only the lockdown kept the fire

from spreading), hear lurching noises rattling through the entire hull, or more alarmingly hear unexplained sounds of movement in the vents nearby.

OVER THE TOP

The faster way to the heart of the problem involves strapping on a spacesuit and walking along the hull itself. Each officer's section has access to an airlock with a manual override and several spacesuits with magnetic boots. The danger comes from potential electrical storms or unexpected lifeforms once outside!

Any character who tries to travel across the hull does so as a separate Dramatic Task using Athletics. Areas adjacent to Operations need to acquire three Task Tokens within three rounds to reach the right airlock and get back inside before something bad happens. Traveling from Medical or Life Support requires four Task Tokens in three rounds.

After two rounds each character who hasn't completed the journey has a choice: quit now and duck into the nearest airlock, or risk it and press on with the threat of a lightning surge imminent. Anyone who continues and fails to acquire enough tokens perishes—blown off the hull or fried by electricity. Failure on a Complication results in the same fate. Those who quit early survive unscathed, but aren't present to help in Operations.

OPEN THE GATES

Security is running on emergency power, and the only two crewmen in the area are both dead—slashed and torn apart by one of the ship's worker drone robots. They managed to destroy the culprit, but the scene of carnage and the implications are unsettling.

There are weapons here: stun batons and stun guns. When used on machines, stun batons deal lethal electric damage, and stun guns deal 2d6+2 electric damage. Both add an extra d6 on a raise. With the robots malfunctioning, such weapons could mean the difference between life and death.

Those who come here can simply override the lock down, which opens all the bulkheads and reactivates the transit tubes. Data streaming in from the bulkhead circuits indicates that some of the sealed sections should remain so due to hull breaches or

fires. It's possible to analyze the sections and unlock them one by one—at the potential cost of valuable time.

If the officers attempt a selective override treat it as a one person Dramatic Task that requires four Task Tokens in three rounds. The attempt is made using Electronics at -2 or Repair at -2. Anyone present can Support as usual. Everyone else can offer advice or encouragement over the Pioneer network with a -2 penalty.

The lock down is lifted whether the task succeeds or fails, but getting all four Task Tokens earns a point of **Damage Control** (see page 38), which might ultimate save everyone's lives. Failure still opens the passages, but it takes up valuable time. Just hitting the override or failing a roll with a Complication subtracts a point of Damage Control instead—the officers are free to move around, but so are the catastrophes the bulkheads were containing.

TURN ON THE LIGHTS

The maze-like corridors of the AI core are completely empty of crew and flickering on backup power. The only element of danger here is time: it's crucial to get Atty back on line to offer a damage report. Like Open the Gates above, this is a one person Dramatic Task which requires four Task Tokens in three rounds, and anyone who isn't physically present takes a -2 penalty on Support rolls. This task requires Electronics at -2 or Hacking at -2.

Successfully completing the task earns a point of Damage Control, while failure still gets Atty functional but long enough to put the ship in further danger. Failure on a Complication still awakens Atty, but her speech is slurred and her responses to the evolving catastrophe are slow and unreliable. By the end of the adventure she's humming a song about "Daisy" to herself. Subtract one point of Damage Control from the total.

If the crew manage to resolve both Open the Gates and Turn on the Lights simultaneously they earn an extra point of Damage Control for the time they saved.

Atty speaks to her rescuers:

DEATH

Should one of the staff officers perish, allow the player to make a new character and introduce them at the next logical opportunity. Unfilled staff roles and junior officers from the original character's department are strong hooks. Replacement characters can wake up, break free from trapped compartments, or receive aid in medical to join the officers.

Remember the crew needs characters with piloting, repair, and science to fix all the priority issues aboard the Tangaroa. If the dead character was the only one with such a skill, their replacement should overlap.

If a quick replacement is needed, just use a Wildcard with a d6 in all attributes and a d6 in Electronics, Science, and any key skills from the department the new survivor hails from.

"Thank you very much for restoring my functions. I have logged 62 requests for emergency aid, and I am routing ensigns and crew to assist where possible. We have descended to an unsafe depth within the atmosphere. I calculate if engine control isn't restored within the hour we will reach crush depth.

"Running diagnostics. Two critical systems must be repaired to reverse our course in time. System one is the engine tubes on the Flight Deck. Foreign matter is interrupting the intakes and hampering thrust. Warning: the Flight Deck is now categorized as extremely hazardous due to malfunctioning worker drones. Proceed with caution.

"System two is the main reactor. Serious damage was sustained during the collision, and new power regulators are required from the Cargo Deck for repairs. Warning: the Cargo Deck is now categorized as extremely hazardous due to the presence of an unknown lifeform. Proceed with caution.

"Once both systems are restored the main thruster must be reignited in Engineering, and an officer must operate the controls on the Bridge to initiate our course correction.

"We now have an estimated 59 minutes to complete repairs. I have analyzed the worker drone malfunctions. You may not wish to see this, but I think you need to."

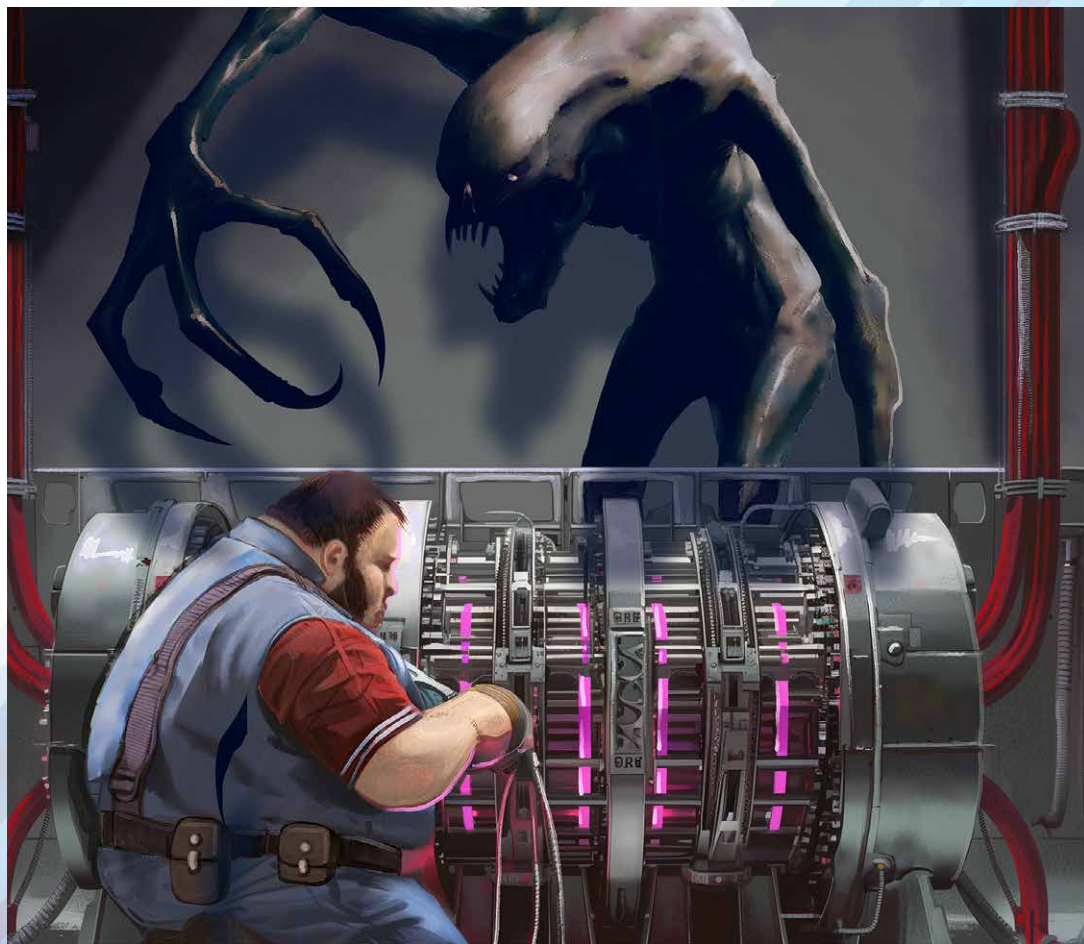
With that, Atty projects security footage of a ghastly shape stalking down the darkened corridors of the *Tangaroa*. The timestamp indicates this was taken minutes after the collision, while the officers were all knocked out. The thing has glistening skin similar to the polyps discovered in the upper atmosphere, but this thing has long limbs, claws, and teeth.

The camera feed shows one of the worker drones approach the creature. The robot drones on about how the intruder doesn't have authorization to access this area. The creature moves like lightning, raking its claws over the robot and engulfing it with its long limbs. The damage seems negligible at first, but then the drone lurches drunkenly and stops speaking.

The creature slowly unfolds its grip and slinks away as the robot stumbles off in the opposite direction.

The footage timestamp jumps several minutes ahead, when the stricken robot chances upon an ensign trapped under debris. He calls out to the machine for assistance and it suddenly snaps to attention—and then engages its cutting torch and moves menacingly towards the screaming man. Atty cuts the feed just before the berserk machine brings the torch down onto the helpless ensign.

"Such a reaction is highly irregular. I have a total of eighteen worker drones no longer reporting in, most of which were in the Flight Deck area where that footage was taken. Some may have simply been damaged during the collision, but I suspect most have encountered the unknown creature, challenged it, and been driven into this unusual aggressive state by its biology."



THE FALL

A sickening lurch and the groan of metal reminds the officers that *Tangaroa's* situation is precarious and deteriorating fast. Two dangerous tasks await the heroes, and both must be done at once to have any chance of righting the ship. At least the transit tubes work now.

BREAMING

The Flight Deck is a pair of large, enclosed hangars with launch bays for large flying drones used to gather liquid helium and perform external hull repairs too dangerous for suited humans. Toward the front of the bay are intake tubes that provide trace oxygen and hydrogen used for life support and the ship's engines. Currently those intakes are encrusted in polyps, strangling *Tangaroa*.

The officer's objective is to clean the polyps off the intakes. There are several different approaches to take here, with the key obstacles being time and a handful of infected robots.

One approach is just to tackle the robots head on. With weapons from the Security center it's possible to hurt them, and once they're all defeated using the same stun weapons or the flying drones to clean the tubing is quick and easy. Actually defeating the robots is no easy task, however. There are two groups of five roaming the hangars. Ambushing a single robot or one of the groups is possible with a successful Stealth roll, but then the rest close in on the heroes.

Another possibility is sneaking past the robots (or distracting them) to take control of the flying drones and use them against the polyps, the robots, or both. Treat this path as a three round Dramatic Task that requires four Task Tokens per participant. The first round requires Stealth rolls. The second and third rounds require one character to use Piloting at -2. Others can help the main pilot using Stealth, Fighting, or Shooting to keep the robots busy, or Electronics, Notice, or Science to get the job done faster.

If anyone fails a roll with a Complication they are immediately attacked by a worker drone, and it continues to attack each round unless someone manages to destroy it.

After the third round time is up—the crew have to get a move on towards their final objectives in **Escape Velocity** (page 38). If the heroes managed to get enough Task Tokens they earn a point of Damage Control. If not the tubes are clear enough to ignite the engines, but their power is curtailed.

■ **WORKER DRONES (10):** See page 39.

GIANT SPARKPLUGS

The Cargo Deck has vital parts to repair the *Tangaroa's* reactor. While the bay is quite spacious, it's stacked with rows of cargo containers and not particularly well lit even when the ship is running at full power. Normally worker drones would carry the heavy parts needed over to Engineering, but it's probably for the best that the robots aren't in the vicinity, since the bay has become the new hunting ground and nest for a very dangerous alien.

As with the Flight Deck, the officers can try to take out the creature first and then work unmolested, or try to get the job done under the creature's nose. Unfortunately, the alien is highly resistant to the only real weapons the heroes have, so any fight is likely to end in a massacre (unless they come specially prepared, see Thoughts for Food below).

Getting the job done quietly (or distracting the monster while others work) is a three round Dramatic Task that requires four Task Tokens per participant. The first round requires Stealth rolls. The second and third rounds can be any combination of Athletics, Electronics, Notice (to find the right parts), or Repair. Fighting and Shooting don't do any good here!

Any failure on a Complication draws the attention of the neurophage and it attacks. It continues to attack until it Incapacitates a character. Once it does, it grabs the body and stalks away to consume it in safety, buying the others the time to complete the job and escape.

Successfully completing the task earns another point of Damage Control. Failure

gathers enough parts to restart the reactor, but the irregular power makes escape more difficult.

★ **NEUROPHAGE:** See page 39.

THOUGHTS FOR FOOD

If the Medical Officer is in play they may realize the biological sample in the Medical bay is from the same kind of creature the crew now faces. If they take time to go there and complete the analysis roll Science. Success provides analysis that the creature's normal prey are polyps, and polyps gather from the outer hull or Flight Deck (or electronics that mimic polyps in some way) can serve as a lure. With a raise they learn the full profile of a neurophage (see page 39).

Armed with bait, the crew can try to lure the beast into an airlock or a trap made with enough explosive material or heavy objects to kill it. Treat this as a single person Dramatic Task that requires four Task Tokens in three rounds. Anyone who fails on a Complication (even while Supporting) is noticed and attacked by the creature until it is destroyed or slays a target as noted above. If the task fails the neurophage escapes to stalk the crew during Escape Velocity.

ESCAPE VELOCITY

Ready or not, it's the officers' last chance to light the *Tangaroa*'s engines up and bring the stricken ship out of the gas giant's clutches—or at least high enough that escape pods might have a chance to reach orbit.

IGNITION

The Bridge is in bad shape, but intact. There are still dead and wounded from the impact strewn around, but they have to wait until the ship is out of danger. Piloting the craft to safety is a final Dramatic Task, this one requiring six Task Tokens in four rounds. This is a single-person task, and requires rolls against Piloting at -4 for the ship's Handling. There's another -2 if no officers occupy Engineering to monitor the power flow.

The reason it's a Dramatic Task instead of just hitting the throttle is the presence of one last unexpected obstacle: a mountain of liquid helium directly in the ship's path! Tendrils of the stuff seem to cling to the ship and slow its ascent!

Failure on a Complication plunges the *Tangaroa* into the mountain and it is never seen again. If anyone doesn't have something to do during this scene a few renegade Worker Drones or even the neurophage itself (if it's still around) could pop up to make trouble either on the Bridge or in Engineering. XO Burkov could wake up at this inopportune moment and—not in his right mind—distract the pilot or cause some other mischief until he's calmed down or restrained.

If the Dramatic Task succeeds gain one more point of Damage Control. Every two extra Task Tokens gains another point, up to a maximum of three points.

DAMAGE CONTROL

Throughout the adventure the crew has had opportunities to make vital repairs in a timely manner and get the ship moving again. If they managed to accrue six or more Damage Control points during these missions the *Tangaroa* blasts free of the planet's atmosphere and achieves a stable orbit. Assistance arrives within a day, and even incapacitated crew members survive.

If the officers gathered four or five Damage Control points the ship gains enough altitude for escape pods to make the rest of the distance before the *Tangaroa* falls back into the planet and breaks apart. Voiter secures the pods a day later and returns the surviving crew home. At least, those who were able to reach escape pods and activate them in time.

With three or fewer Damage Control points the ship gets as high as it can and launches escape pods, but none of them reach orbit. All hands are lost.

Of course, if the ship survives with the neurophage still aboard the officers may have one last encounter ahead of them to get rid of the creature once and for all!

ENEMIES

★ NEUROPHAGE

This aggressive alien entity is part of an unknown ecosystem involving the leviathans and polyps of Reservoir.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Survival d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Dodge, Fleet Footed

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Rubbery hide. -4 damage from Stun or electrical attacks.
- **Biohazard:** A biological being grappled by a neurophage must roll Vigor or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. A grappled robot must roll Spirit or suffer a Glitch. Worker drones always Glitch to become Bloodthirsty!
- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6, Reach 1.
- **Fear (-2):** Seeing a neurophage provokes a Fear check at -2.

WORKER DRONE

These bulky bots usually service the superstructure or do heavy lifting in the cargo bay or other areas. Some bizarre biological phenomenon from the neurophage has driven these units into a frenzy, and they attack anything that moves (other than another worker drone) with built-in cutting torches and vice-like pincers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d6, Electronics d4, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Repair d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

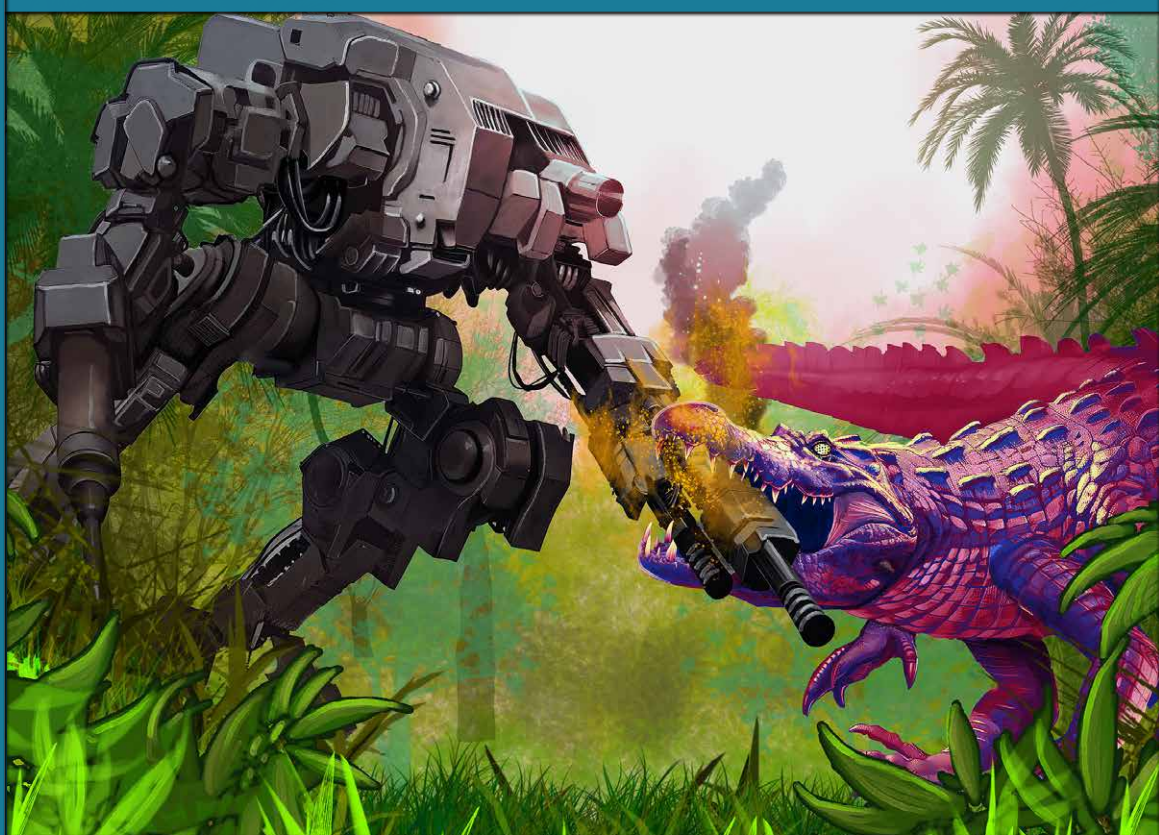
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d4 damage.
- **Extra Appendages:** +1 Gang Up bonus.
- **Integrated Gear:** Tool kit, cutting torch (Damage 3d6, AP 10, HW).
- **Size 1:** Worker drones stand 7' tall and weigh 400 pounds.

"SCIENCE" FICTION

Faster-than-light travel, sapient AI, artificial gravity, organisms living in liquid helium, parasitic molecules; plenty in this adventure is more Fiction than Science. The goal is authenticity, not accuracy. If the average player finds all the explanations reasonable while playing, we've passed the Refrigerator Test.

Thanks to the consultation of Aaron West, a theoretical physicist working to simulate space plasma acceleration mechanisms at Earth and Jupiter for the University of Minnesota Institute for Astrophysics, this adventure has more science without sacrificing drama or fun. Your players can thank Mr. West for the liquid helium-covered mountain they must dodge in the final act. It turns out the core of Jupiter is fuzzy!



EMERGENCY EVAC

BY JOHN-MATTHEW DEFOGGI

Emergency Evac is a walker focused adventure for *Savage Worlds*, for use with the *Science Fiction Companion*. *Emergency Evac* is for Seasoned walker pilots and uses the following hook if you are running this as a one-shot adventure:

You are all members of Red's Raptors, the finest mercenary company in the Spinward sector. All of you pilot walkers, 12 to 18 meter tall mecha laden down with the best weaponry and armor money can buy...or at least that you can afford at the time. Having just finished placing the rightful heir on the throne of Hyperion 3, you head back from the front lines for some well-deserved R4: rest, relaxation, repair, and remuneration!

If you are using this adventure as part of a larger campaign, *Emergency Evac* easily drops into a walker-focused campaign. Set it after a major adventure concludes, and the group is returning to their HQ for repairs and R&R. Adjust the initial hook as needed if your group works for a different organization.

All the characters for this adventures are pilots. If using the archetypes from the *Science Fiction Companion* the best fits are:

- **COMMANDER:** The force's by-the-book leader.
- **CONTROLLER:** A solid walker pilot with great tools for scouting.
- **ENGINEER:** Not a great pilot, but a wizard with field repairs.
- **PILOT:** The ace operator among the group.

- **SMUGGLER:** A sly soldier who always has a side hustle going.
- **SURVEYOR:** A good scout and well suited to survival on the planet.

BACKGROUND

Red's Raptors, under the command of Red herself, is a mixed-arms mercenary company operating in the Spinward region of the sector. The Raptors typically take multiple contracts which scatter the company across the sector in the employ of various merchants, leaders, and generals.

Red's tactical genius, charismatic nature, and several squads of walkers have made the Raptors the elite fighting force that they are. Multiple governments seek them out for jobs... and a variety of rivals and enemies hate them; enemies who seize on any opportunity to deprive Red of some of her walkers and pilots.

One such enemy is General Edgar Stackpole, a would-be dictator turned mercenary commander. Stopping his coup 5 years ago was the first major victory for Red and her Raptors. Ever since, Stackpole takes jobs opposing the Raptors, but he typically comes out worse for these encounters.

OVERVIEW

While returning from Hyperion 3 to “The Nest,” the Raptors’ base of command, the Raptor’s jumpship must stop in the Denovos system to refuel their drives from the gas giant Denovos 2’s atmosphere. This leaves the ship vulnerable to attack, but typically Denovos is off the typical jump-lanes. Previous scans revealed it to be a dead system, with no structures or activity.

This was the case, but recently, General Stackpole discovered, reactivated, and resupplied an old comm station on one of Denovos 2’s moons. The Stellar Empire built this outpost in the earliest days of its outward expansion but abandoned it due to the moon’s unique fauna. Using that as a hidden base to spy on the Raptors, Stackpole mined Denovos 2’s atmosphere and now waits for his men to confirm the destruction of the Raptors’ jumpship, the *Roosevelt*.

Once they confirm the mines destroyed the jumpship, Stackpole plans to send a ship to pick up the men and leave no trace of their involvement. He did not expect the pilots to survive.



Having jumped into the Denovos system to refuel, Stackpole’s cowardly ambush catches the Raptors completely unaware. The hunter-seeker mines crippled the *Roosevelt* while it took the pilots back to the Nest, within minutes of beginning the refueling process.

As more of the mines activate, the captain issues the order to abandon ship, and as the pilots watch from the window of their drop pod, they see the *Roosevelt* and many other escape pods destroyed by the hunter-seeker mines. One of these mines damages their pod, and they crash upon the surface of one of Denovos 2’s moons.

The adventure picks up moments after the crash. With several other hunter-seeker mines incoming, the pilots have moments to free themselves and their walkers from the wreckage before the mines destroy everything. Once free, the pilots get the lay of the land and discover the presence of a previously unknown comm station.

Making their way to the station is relatively straightforward, first getting out of the valley where they crashed, possibly rescuing other survivors, and then up a mountain pass. However, the dropship’s crash and destruction attracts the moon’s native megafauna—giant animals which rival the walkers in terms of power. The pilots must battle their way past the beasts before they can approach the station.

Moreover, the power of their walkers will be of no use at the station. They cannot risk damaging the station, as they require its communication relays to signal for help, but the station is under the control of Stackpole’s forces. Unbeknownst to them, these forces have already signaled the General for a rendezvous.

The pilots must seize control of the station, send a distress signal to Red, and evacuate the moon before Stackpole’s reinforcements arrive in 96 hours.

CRASH LANDING

Read or paraphrase the following at the start of the adventure:

As you regain consciousness, blaring alarms and choking smoke overwhelm your senses. Memories come rushing back: the Roosevelt rocked by explosions, the urgent call to head for the drop pods, and the sudden heat and roar of reentry.

You now find yourself stranded on one of the gas giant's moons... and the computer's alarms signal imminent attacks. Your immediate task is to escape from the pod, and with any luck, secure the safety of your walkers!

At this point, ask the players to introduce their characters and walkers. Optionally, run an Interlude (see *Savage Worlds*) for each character, telling a tale based on the suit of a drawn Action Card:

- **SPADES:** What was your greatest moment of glory in the Battle of Hyperion 3?
- **HEARTS:** To whom in the squad are you closest, and why?
- **DIAMONDS:** You lost something important on Hyperion, what was it and how?
- **CLUBS:** You nearly died on Hyperion, who saved you and what were the circumstances?

GETTING OUT ALIVE

With the mines homing in on their dropship and that ship on fire, it is a dangerous situation to escape from. To represent this, inform the players that when the mines arrive in 4 rounds, their characters and their mechs will receive 4 Wounds if they do not take immediate action to escape their impending doom.

To activate their walkers and escape from the dropship before the mines destroy it is a Dramatic Task (see *Savage Worlds*) requiring the group to accumulate 8 Task Tokens per pilot within 5 rounds. Every 2 Task Tokens collected eliminates one of their impending wounds (8 Task Tokens completely soaking all Wounds for one pilot).

Suggested approaches: Athletics to remove or traverse wreckage or to climb a walker to access the cockpit, Electronics to override the safety to start up the mechs quickly, Repair or Shooting to get jammed doors open, and Piloting to get out of the wrecked bay.

SUCCESS

If the pilots complete task with full Task Tokens, read or paraphrase the following:

From the safety of your walker's cockpit, you witness the mines striking their target amidst the crackling thunder in the distance. As the drop pod's remnants smolder on the jungle floor, your walker's systems inform you of a massive burst transmission being sent off-world.

Interfacing with your team's computers, the transmission is instantly triangulated to its source: a towering mountain 11 miles high, roughly 30 milers from your position. It makes sense—the atmospheric interference here would necessitate such a location to cut through the static.

But you've read the reports. This jungle moon was supposed to be uninhabited. Could these inhabitants be linked to the destruction of the Roosevelt? At the very least, they may provide a means for you to signal the Raptors for an emergency evacuation.

Then you pick up a Raptor distress call. It seems others off the ship survived as well. They have to be close for you to be able to pick up the signal, but the interference makes it difficult to pinpoint a weak signal.

FAILURE

If the pilots fail to gather all the required Task Tokens, use the same text as above with the following:

You are far closer to that explosion than you want to be. You witness the mines hurtling towards the drop pod as you make your escape, and the subsequent blast hurls your walkers through the air, crashing them into the towering trees of this forsaken jungle moon. Over the roar of the fires, you hear peals of thunder booming in the distance.

As you struggle back into your seat and stabilize your walker, its systems inform you of a massive burst transmission being sent off-world.



FIND THE RAPTORS

Figuring out the location of the distress signal is difficult. An Electronics or Notice roll at -2 reveals the signal is generally coming from the east, but it takes some time to pinpoint. Several of the survivors perish without immediate intervention and medical aid. With a raise, the pilot locks onto the signal immediately, and the group has the opportunity to save more of the survivors (see **Rescue Mission**, page 45).

YEA, THOUGH WE WALK

The two signals give the pilots directions to go: the mountain or trying to pinpoint the downed Raptors. However, the explosions attracted the attention of some of the moon's native fauna. Unfortunately for the pilots, the extremely aggressive mega-fauna (labeled 'Behemoth') is what led to the moon's abandonment.

Read or paraphrase the following when the pilots pick a direction:

More alarms screech in your ears, but these are proximity alarms. Something—no, multiple

somethings—all huge and menacing—are heading your way. As the ground trembles beneath you, it becomes clear that was not the sound of thunder, but of the shattering of trees from the colossal beings' passage.

When you finally lay eyes on the blips, they are a terrifying sight to behold. Each monstrous creature is the size of one of your scout walkers, standing nearly 20 feet tall. They move on large tentacle-like limbs, each ending in a massive claw. Heavy scales cover their backs and heads, reminiscent of Terra's ancient Komodo dragons, while their boxy, crocodilian heads exude a menacing aura.

Then, the mother comes into view, dwarfing her spawn...

There are a few options for playing out the encounter with the Behemoths. The team could run for it and play it out as a Chase. They could duke it out as a regular combat encounter if they stand and fight. The recommended method is playing it out as a **Clash** (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). The monsters don't have a Handling, so treat them as +0 and roll Athletics any time a maneuvering roll would be required.

The heroes are piloting Heavy Fire Support walkers (see page 96). Remember each Wound a walker suffered during **Getting Out Alive** (page 43) deals a Critical Hit too, so the machines might not have all their systems available!

★ **BEHEMOTH BROODMOTHER (1):** See below.

■ **BEHEMOTH SPAWN (2 per Pilot):** See below.

★ **BEHEMOTH BROODMOTHER (V)**

A terrifying cross between a lizard and a squid, these creatures are massive, dwarfing even the largest walker. Worse, they are devilishly cunning. They lead a pack of their own spawn, hunting down other megafauna much larger than them.

A Notice roll -4 or a Science roll -2 notices that the creature's armored plates do not overlap very well, making them vulnerable to Called Shots. Taking -4 to hit ignores the creature's Armor (making the Broodmother Class III if using **Heavy Metal** from the *Science Fiction Companion*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12+6

Skills: Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d12+2, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 40 MPH (Speed Rating 5); **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 42 (16)

Edges: Frenzy (Imp).

Special Abilities:

- **Acidic Expectorant:** Broodmothers can cough up a dense acid. They may breathe it out (Range Cone, Damage 3d12 (III), AP 15) or spit a massive globule (Range 10/20/40, Damage 5d8 (III), AP 15, MBT).
- **Armor +16:** A broodmother scales are as dense as a walker's advanced armor.
- **Claws:** Str+d12 (IV), AP 20, Reach 1, HW.
- **Fear (-4):** Anyone who sees a broodmother must make a Fear check at -4.
- **Size 11 (Huge):** A broodmother weighs over 125 tons and stand over 60 feet tall.
- **Toughness +4:** A broodmother is as tough as an assault walker.

BEHEMOTH SPAWN (III)

Similar in appearance to the broodmother but smaller in size, the spawn travel in packs. Where there is one, there are always more.

A Notice roll at -4 or a Science roll at -2 notices that the creatures armored plates do not overlap very well, making them vulnerable to Called Shots. Taking a -4 to hit ignores the creature's Armor (making a Spawn Class II if using **Heavy Metal** from the *Science Fiction Companion*).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12+4

Skills: Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 60 MPH (Speed Rating 6); **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 26 (10)

Edges: Dodge, Frenzy (Imp).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +10:** Behemoth spawn scales are as dense as a walker's advanced armor.
- **Claws:** Str+d12 (III), AP 10, Reach 1, HW.
- **Fear (-2):** Anyone who sees a behemoth spawn must make a Fear check at -2.
- **Size 6 (Large):** Behemoth spawn weigh close to 7 tons and stand over 20 feet tall. +1 Wound.

RESCUE MISSION

If the pilots head toward the distress signal, read or paraphrase the following:

As you get closer, you see broken and scorched trees and deep furrows in the earth, telltale signs of downed life pods. Up ahead, the signal grows stronger. Soon you see three of the Roosevelt's life pods half buried in a hillside. The doors to two of them are open.

Your sensors don't detect any survivors... at first. But then you notice the survivors all huddling near the wreckage. Why they seem to be hiding is not clear at first, but then you spot it. A hunter-seeker mine is hovering about the third life pod, the one with the closed doors. Why hasn't it detonated yet?

The pilots can communicate with the survivors of the two life pods over comms. They are unsure why the mine hasn't exploded, but they remain unmoving as a precaution, as they fear any movement will trigger detonation. There are 15 survivors

from pods (only six if the pilots took their time getting here), with an additional unknown number still aboard the final pod.

THE MALFUNCTIONING MINE

One of the hunter seeker mines from the ambush malfunctioned as it tracked the life pods as they landed on the moon. During reentry, its primary targeting array broke off, leaving the mine essentially blind. Through a stroke of misfortune, the life pods inadvertently carried the disabled mine with them in their atmospheric descent.

Now the mine poses a significant threat not only to the survivors, but also to any walkers in the vicinity. Designed to tear through the hulls of space-worthy vessels, it looms as a menacing danger amidst the wreckage. Should it detonate, it explodes in a Large Blast Template for 6d8 damage, AP 24 (a Class V hit). Additionally, it instantly vaporizes any unshielded humans.

An Electronics, Hacking, or Science roll reveals the danger posed by the mine. A raise reveals that something is wrong with the mine, as the pilots notice it is moving erratically, as if searching for a new target.

DEALING WITH THE MINE

There are several avenues for the pilots to rescue the Raptor survivors.

BLOW IT UP

A malfunctioning hunter-seeker mine searches the surroundings for an active target, and unfortunately, the walkers fit the bill. If the walkers move within 1,000 yards the mine locks on to them and moves to attack. The mine has a Toughness of 48 (30)—Class V if **Heavy Metal** is used, 2 Wounds, and the pilots have one chance to knock it out of the sky before it closes the distance and explodes.

SHUT IT DOWN

It is possible to override the mine's hardened systems and try a remote shutdown. If done from the walker, this requires a Hacking roll at -4 due to the corrupted systems combined with atmospheric interference. If the roll fails, the mine locks onto the walker.

If the pilot gets close on foot, they make the Hacking roll at -2. If they fail in this case, the mine continues to search for targets. On a critical failure, the mine detonates on the life pods.

On a successful roll, the mine shuts down and becomes inert.

GET OUT AND WALK

The simplest way to deal with the mine is to exit the walkers and approach on foot. Humans do not generate enough of a signature for the mine to latch onto, which is why it has not detonated at the survivors' presence.

The real risk is opening the life pod's doors to rescue the remaining Raptors in the second pod. Opening the doors from the inside could trigger the mine's targeting sensors. Forcing the doors from the outside requires an Athletics roll at -4 (Support is key here—see *Savage Worlds*) and does not trigger the mine.

SURVIVORS

If the pilots arrived in time, the survivors need immediate medical attention. A successful Healing roll stabilizes the wounded, but they need proper medical facilities for long term care.

Once the pilots rescue the survivors, they can discover the following information:

- They don't know if anyone else survived from the *Roosevelt*.
- They too picked up the off-world communication, but no one knows who was behind it.
- They saw a walker in the distance when they landed. From this distance it looked like a fire support or an assault walker.

Six of the survivors are in good enough shape to actually help the pilots in taking the comm station, but they feel that at least two should stay with the wounded (if there are any).

Use the Allies rules in *Savage Worlds*, if your players want the other Raptors to come with them. Use the Soldier allies to represent the Survivors. They wear Body Armor (+4) and carry Laser Rifles (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, AP 2, RoF 3, Cauterize, No Recoil, Overcharge).

THE COMM STATION

When the pilots approach the comm station, read or paraphrase the following:

Your walkers handle the mountainous terrain with no difficulty. Through the jungle's growth, you can still make out the remnants of a wide road that runs straight toward the comm station. The summit of the mountain appears strangely flat, as if a colossal force had sheared off its peak eons ago.

As the pilots draw nearer, the squat, hexagonal shape of the station dominates the western edge of the summit. Atop the structure, a massive antenna and dish tower above the supra-crete construction. Evidence of recent carbonization marks the surrounding area as a designated landing zone.

While the landing area is clear, the presence of cargo containers, supply crates, and scraggy mountain trees break the line of sight from the road to the station. However, your sensors easily pick out a group of soldiers encamped next to the station.

A Notice roll reveals that a heavy walker came through the area recently. A raise reveals that the tracks do not show that it has returned.

A Common Knowledge roll lets the pilot know that this road and the old comm station are of Stellar League design (before the days of the Stellar Empire). When mankind first spread out to the stars, these stations provided a communication network back to Terra.

The soldiers are located around the station, close enough that the walkers' weapons risk damaging the delicate communication gear. Adding to the difficulty, the station is human scaled, so the walkers are not able to get inside the area.

THE SILENT PATH

It is possible to infiltrate the base, as it has several points of ingress: the cargo doors that face the landing areas, several maintenance hatches, and a secondary door on the east side.

The stealthy approach is a Quick Encounter (see *Savage Worlds*).

If the squad fails the encounter (by failing to get as many successes as there are pilots) the guards notice their attempt and attack (see below).

THE BLOODY PATH

It is also possible to charge the front door and deal with the mercenaries in Stackpole's service in the bloodiest way possible.

THE EXTERIOR GUARDS

■ **MERCENARIES (3 per Pilot):** See page 51.

If the pilots take any of the mercenaries alive, they can interrogate them. An Intimidation roll reveals the mercenaries are members of the Mandolin Warriors. Their contract was to escort technicians to this site and provide security. With a raise, they reveal they overheard the mission commander, a Sergeant by the name of Taylor, mention the name General Stackpole in passing.

The Raptors all know of Stackpole's hatred and rivalry with Red, but this level of treachery is beyond the pale, even for him.

INFILTRATION

The comm station personnel did not expect any Raptors to survive their ambush, so did not lock down the station. Accessing the doors is a simple Hacking roll at +2 (due to the age of the system) or an Athletics or Thievery roll to open the doors.

As the pilots attempt to access the stations, they notice a network of cabling threaded through the walls. An Electronics or Repair roll reveals they are det-cord, typically the kind used by EDO experts when rigging a building for demolition. A raise gives the warning not to mess with cords, as that could set the devices off.

COMPLICATIONS

If combat breaks out, Sergeant Taylor, the commander of the station forces, takes several actions.

- First, they lock down the station, increasing the difficulty of all rolls by 2 points.
- Second, they alert their own walker pilot, an ace by the name of Harlo Garcia, who

pilots an Assault Walker. Harlo makes a beeline back to base and is about 20 minutes out.

- Third, they prime the implosive devices, meaning Sergeant Taylor (see below) can activate the devices without the timer should the need arise.

ACQUIRING THE SIGNAL

Once the pilots gain entry to the station, it is a matter of dealing with Stackpole's forces and sending the signal to Red's Raptors. Read or paraphrase the following:

The station's interior is as bare and ancient as it was outside. The current inhabitants clearly care more about function than order. Thick dust gathers along the sides of the halls, cleared

away only where people recently trampled through. The tracks through the halls make figuring out where to go easy.

The cables you noticed outside thread their way along the halls and walls, eventually connecting with bricks of high powered explosives. There is something off about the placement of these devices...

An Academics, Repair, or Science roll lets the pilot know that the individual explosives are connected to a central location. If Taylor primed them (see above) the pilot knows this as well.

With a raise, they also notice that the placement is for an implosive blast—someone wants to make sure that no sign of this installation remains.

Finding the command and control center of the station is simple, the pilots just have to follow the footprints in the dust.

SENDING THE SIGNAL

The station is minimally manned. Three comm technicians and Sergeant Taylor hold the station's communications array. When the pilots reach the array, read or paraphrase the following:

The station's communications array is archaic, but functional. A trio of techs scramble from one terminal to another, clearly deep in their work. A soldier with sergeant stripes on his jacket paces back and forth. "Any other signals? We have to make sure to clean this mess before the general arrives!"

The cords from the implosives all enter this room and connect to a terminal, which controls the timers. If the pilots alerted the station, the sergeant holds a detonator in his left hand.

DEALING WITH THE SITUATION

The technicians are not combatants and give up at the first sign of violence. They are specialists hired to do a job, not to lay down their lives for a cause.

If Taylor hasn't armed the implosives, the pilots can deal with him directly. If combat breaks out, Taylor attempts to make it to the terminal to activate the timer or detonator. To do this requires an action (or multi-action) and successful Electronics roll at -2.



If he succeeds at this, or has the detonator active, Taylor demands the pilots all lay down their weapons and surrender.

To talk Taylor down, in either case, is a Social Conflict (see *Savage Worlds*). He receives a +2 to his Spirit tests if either of the following cases are true: he armed the detonator or called for Harlo. This bonus goes away if the pilots point out that Taylor won't walk away from the implosion or deal with Harlo.

The pilots gain a +1 bonus if they mention:

- Red's track record of dealing well with prisoners.
- How outgunned Taylor's forces are.
- The fact that there are survivors, and Stackpole is not known for his toleration of failure.

If the pilots succeed, they are able to talk Taylor down and get him to disarm the implisives.

CALLING FOR HELP

Sending the signal is an Electronics roll. Success means the pilots contact Red and inform her of the situation. She is furious at the ambush but begins the process of sending out a rescue immediately. The Raptors can be at Denovos in half the time it takes Stackpole.

DEFUSE THE IMPLOSIVES

Taylor rigged the station to implode once Stackpole's forces arrived. His plan was to set a timer and walk away, but knowing the Raptors' reputation, has also rigged a detonator (see above).

If the pilots attempt to defuse the implisives at any point, it is a Complex Dramatic Task (see *Savage Worlds*). This is a single-person task, but helpers may Support as usual.

Suggested approaches: Athletics to pull the implisives from the wall, Electronics or Repair to disconnect the wiring safely, Hacking to remove sections of the implisives from their network, or Stealth to move through the station unnoticed to get access to other implosive devices.

If the pilots succeed, they defuse the implosive network without detonating the devices.

If they fail, they do not detonate the devices, but Taylor is aware of the tampering. He

primes them (if he has not done so already) and sets the timer for 10 minutes (Notice -2 to see the devices are active). The only way to shut them down now is to take the detonator from Taylor.

EVIDENCE

There is little hard evidence that Stackpole is behind the attack on the Raptors. True, the pilots and the survivors can give testimony, but without more, it is just hearsay. There are two pieces of evidence that are damning for Stackpole if the pilots think to acquire them.

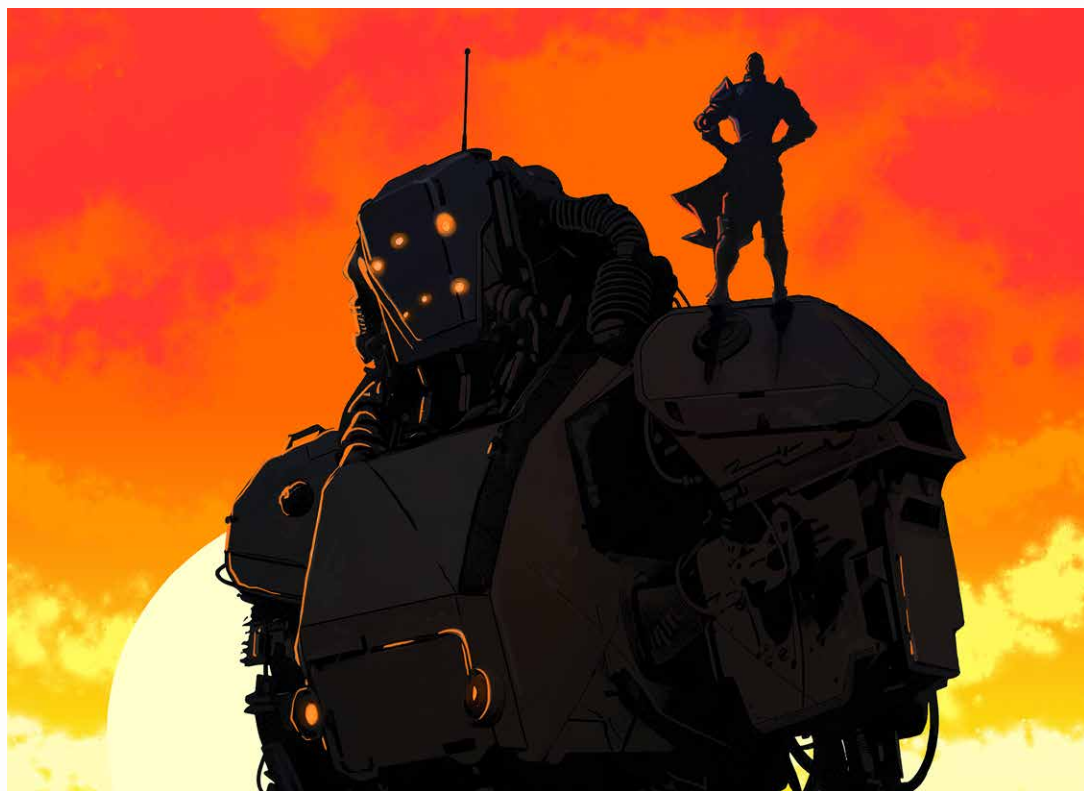
The first is Sergeant Taylor himself. He is a known staff member of Stackpole's army and is a trusted agent. If the pilots secure him, his presence alone adds to the weight of evidence against Stackpole. If they can get him to talk, all the more.

The second is located on the comm station's computers. The message Taylor sent at the start of the adventure is a message to the *Left Hand*, Stackpole's jumpship. The comm codes are unique to each ship, proving Stackpole was behind the ambush.

To get these codes, a pilot must make a Hacking roll at -2 or an Electronics roll at -4. A success recovers the communique—which alerted the ship that the ambush of the *Roosevelt* was successful and killed most of the Raptors—as well as the comm codes of the recipient, Stackpole.

**"VICTORY INCLUDES
COMING BACK ALIVE."**

-RED



MECH ATTACK

Harlo arrives 20 minutes after the station sends the signal. If the pilots are waiting for him, he charges in guns blazing.

If, however, they are not, Harlo sends the following message through the comm station's interior speakers:

This is Harlo Garcia. I know you are in there, Raptors. I have orders to level the stations, and as I am sitting in El Devastador, I can do this very quickly. However, I know of the Raptors' reputation, and have often wanted to test my mettle against yours.

So, I make this offer. One of you, in one of your walkers, versus me. If I win, I take you all captive. If you win, well, I won't be able to destroy the base. And I'll surrender to you. You have 5 minutes to decide.

Harlo waits 5 minutes, and should a pilot emerge, lets them bring their walker online before attacking. He is a man of honor and

holds to his word. That includes leveling the station if the Raptors do not comply.

✦ **HARLO GARCIA:** See below.

■ **ASSAULT WALKER:** See page 96.

✦ HARLO GARCIA

A relic of a more civilized age, Garcia embodies the idea that walker pilot should act as a knight errant. While he chafes under Stackpole's cowardly leadership, he took a contract and is honor bound see it through.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Battle d6, Common Knowledge d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d10, Repair d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Ace, Combat Reflexes, Deadshot, Evasive Maneuvers, Level Headed, Rocket Jock, Soldier

Gear: Infantry Battle Suit (+6), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2, Cannot be thrown), Laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 4, Cauterize, Overcharge, No Recoil).

AFTERMATH

What happens at the end of the adventure depends on what the pilots were able to accomplish.

A TIMELY ESCAPE

If the heroes manage to claim the comm station and send a signal, Red rescues them in 48 hours, as the Nest is only one jump from Denovos. Red's fury at Stackpole's attack and betrayal of the conventions of war sends the Raptors on the hunt for the general.

If pilots managed to do so, take prisoners, and recover evidence of the General's involvement, Red brings it to the Mercenary Convention, who outlaw and imprison Stackpole on a hellish prison planet.

DEAD OR CAPTURED!

If the heroes fail to capture the comm station or send the signal, the General's forces arrive in 96 hours. The forces make landfall and hunt the Raptors down. Whether the pilots are captured or play a dangerous game of cat and mouse or go out in a blaze of glory is up to them. But Stackpole means to make sure no evidence of his war crimes ever come to light.

ENEMIES

MERCENARY

The forces that Stackpole employs on Denovos' moon are typical of the pay-to-slay mercenaries of the future.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (6)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor)

Edges: Soldier

Gear: Infantry Battle Suit (+6), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP2, Cannot be thrown), Laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 4, Cauterize, Overcharge, No Recoil).

★ SERGEANT TAYLOR

Leader of the forces on the moon. He is a blackhearted sycophant and loyal to Stackpole.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

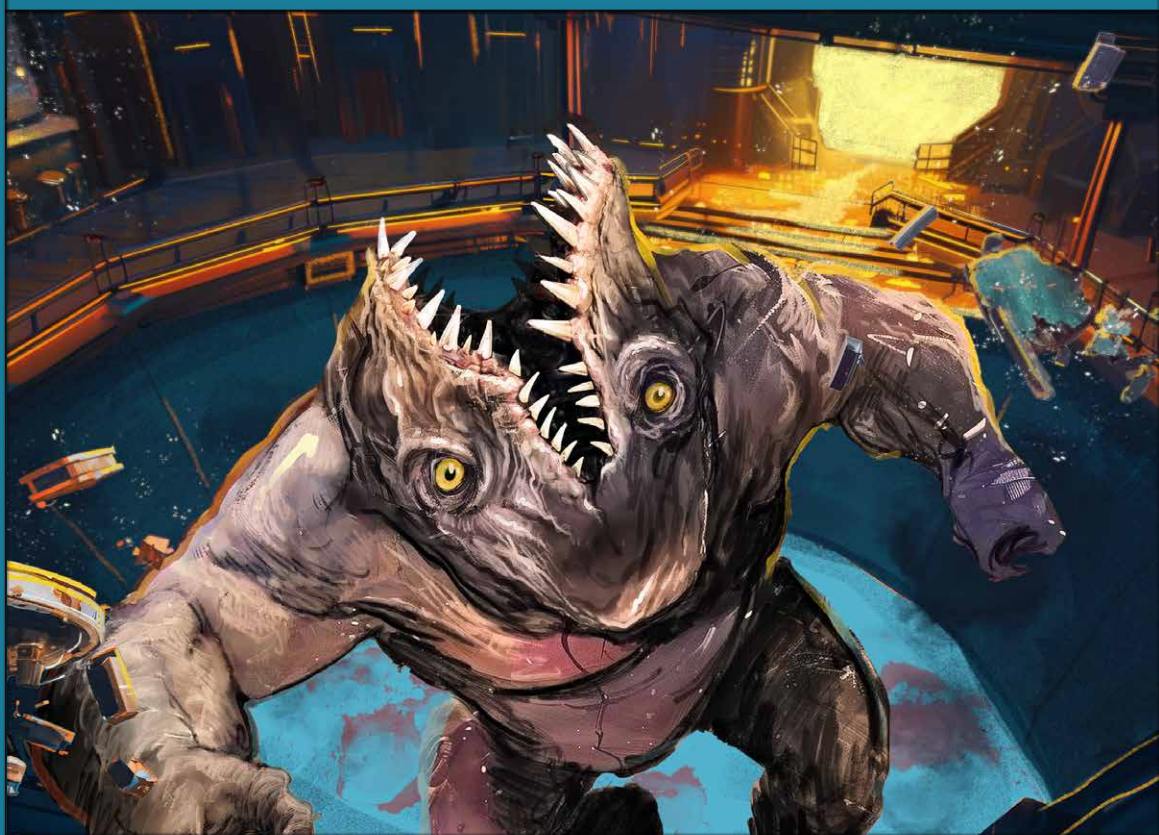
Skills: Athletics d6, Battle d6, Common Knowledge d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Ruthless (major)

Edges: Nerves of Steel, Marksman, Soldier

Gear: Infantry Battle Suit (+6), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP2, Cannot be thrown), Laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 4, Cauterize, Overcharge, No Recoil).



THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

BY JOHN STEVENS

In the deep reaches of space...

The infamous syndicate boss, PURDAN FODI, is dead!

It is a time of chaos and opportunity as scoundrels, brigands, and would-be crime lords circle Purdan's assets like flies on Irrasc dung.

While most flock to Purdan's infamous Irrasc fighting pits on the planet GRIMFROST to stake a claim, rumors emerge that his other holdings are ripe for the picking.

RATHO BOG, Purdan's loyal lieutenant, loads the freighter ROGUE QUEEN with precious blue diamonds to hide them from the vultures.

Seeing an opportunity to cripple the corrupt STAR SYNDICATE the noble GALAXY RANGERS assemble a daring crew to find the freighter, the fortune, and freedom from corruption...

OVERVIEW

The Queen's Gambit is an adventure for a group of Seasoned heroes taking on the role of an adventuring spaceship crew comfortable working with the scum and villainy of the

galaxy. Their contact, Yuli, a member of the Galactic Rangers, is trying to liberate precious cargo from a defunct gangster and needs a daring crew of misanthropes to help him carry off his wild scheme.

SETTING RULES

Use the following Setting rules from *Savage Worlds* and the *Science Fiction Companion* to help capture the feel of a classic space opera.

- CLASHES
- CLIFFHANGERS
- CREATIVE COMBAT
- DUMB LUCK
- ENERGY MANAGEMENT
- HEAVY METAL
- HEROES NEVER DIE
- NO POWER POINTS
- VILLAINOUS CONVICTION

BACKGROUND

The Galactic Authority unites thousands of star systems and sentient life forms across the galaxy. The Authority rules with an iron fist, bringing upstart worlds to heel with its fleets of battlecruisers and a vicious army of shock troopers. At the same time, the Authority is spread too thin—too many systems, too many worlds, and too much bureaucracy. This situation means contracted proxy corporations administrate lesser and more far-flung systems. While some proxies seek the good of those under their rule, others are

corrupt and self-serving, looking to squeeze as much profit as possible from their subject worlds.

The Star Syndicate sits amidst the rife corruption and profiteering. The Syndicate is a loose affiliation of criminal networks that act as the underbelly of the proxy system. Syndicate members engage in smuggling, blackmail, and other nefarious deeds. Each member provides a share to the Syndicate, who uses the monies to keep law enforcement and Authority officials out of the way.

The average citizen gets forgotten in this tangled web of corruption. While holovids and material pursuits blissfully soothe some, others are no better than indentured servants. Even those closer to the seats of power in The Authority live in fear of an autocratic regime. Here, the **Galaxy Rangers** hyperjump to the rescue, trying to upset the balance of power in the Authority and reverse the fortunes of the many subjugated peoples. The Rangers are not an uprising but a group of trouble-shooters who ride into a sector or system, upending injustices and making life miserable for the Authority and Syndicate alike.

Grimfrost was once an independent mining colony until the Galactic Authority atomized the entire place from orbit to quell a labor uprising. The resultant destruction threw the planet into a harsh nuclear winter. Purdan's pits center around a massive blast crater covered by a biodome. Tunnels run like concourses around the crater, opening at intervals to allow access to seating and viewing lounges that look down on the crater floor where all the fighting action takes place. Screens throughout the concourses show the fights below.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is meant for Seasoned characters. If using archetypes from the *Science Fiction Companion* the most appropriate ones are:

- **BOUNTY HUNTER:** This could be work for hire, or it could be personal.
- **GLADIATOR:** Every team can use a big, violent alien.
- **ROUGHNECK:** Somebody has to keep the ship working.

- **SMUGGLER:** This job was made for a smuggler.
- **SPACER:** Some fancy flying may be required to pull this off.
- **STARKNIGHT:** The job may not be righteous, but the end goal is.

THE CREW

The Rangers bring together a menagerie of sentient lifeforms from across the galaxy, all with different strengths and motivations. This mission calls for being comfortable with ambiguity and dealing with the occasional unsavory character—maybe even on the team.

Open the adventure with a modified Interlude (see *Savage Worlds*). In this case, everyone has the “Backstory” result that focuses on a particular strength or weakness they bring to the team, or something they are known for.

The goal is to bring the team together in the style of heist movies like *Ocean's 11* or shows like *Leverage*. Deal cards or let players choose their results and read or paraphrase the intro text. Don't forget to award a Benny to all who participate.

Purdan's Fighting Pit is a forsaken hole. The facility rings a crater left after the Galactic Authority broke up a labor revolt at a mining facility by destroying it from orbit. They said it was the only way to be sure.

Catwalks and makeshift lounges carved into the wall make the crater look like a stadium, with everyone's attention on the fights below. Giant monitors show close-ups and slow-motion replays interspersed with flashy ads. Most importantly, the odds of every fight scroll along the bottom of the screen, constantly shifting as an Irrasc takes another combatant off the field.

You sit in one of those lounges, a rusted metal railing the only thing holding someone back from falling into the arena below. Your ranger contact, Yuli, says everyone in the room has been called here for a reason. It's time to find out what that is.

THE FIGHTING PITS

After the Interlude, Yuli, an undercover ranger in Purdan's organization, outlines the job. The odd-looking alien is a grizzled character. Some say he comes from the Syndicate and only helps the Rangers to avenge some wrong. Whatever that is depends on who tells the story. It ranges from a petty feud with a rival to the assassination of his family. He doesn't say, and intelligent people don't ask.

Okay, so you may have heard Purdan, the scum bag who owns this hole, is dead. Now, everyone is circling the carcass of his operation, looking to score. His pit boss, Ratho Bog, is loading up a freighter, the Rogue Queen, with blue diamonds and other valuables to pay protection to the Syndicate and keep the scavengers at bay.

Taking that loot off the table can shut down this whole arm of the Syndicate and help some honest folk get a new start. I managed to get the flight plan for the freighter, and there's a small window when it crosses the Gosom Expanse to avoid the Galactic Authority. In the expanse, she'll be sensor blind. We board her there while she's blind, swap out the diamonds for some fakes, and drift away with nobody being the wiser.

Clean, simple.

There are a few missing details in Yuli's plans. The heroes may ask for a few minutes to role-play their reactions and ask questions. While impatient and maybe nervous, casting glances at the door, Yuli does his best to answer.

- **SENSORS:** *"Our ship will be blind too, but we know their route. Gotta catch up, and I got a fast ship ready to go."*
- **FAKES:** *"Fakes are no problem, just a quick stop on the way to see an old friend. Molzy is the best forger in the business. He'll come through for us. Trust me, we go way back."*
- **GALACTIC AUTHORITY:** *"Nobody is giddier about Purdan's death than the GA. Hell, they probably did him in. They won't be looking for us. They have no reason to."*

- **THE ROGUE QUEEN:** *"Oh, we outclass her. She's a big bulk cruiser with the crew compartment on the top and nothing but empty cargo space below. With their sensors down in the expanse, they won't see us coming or hear us boarding."*

NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS

After a short time of questions and answers, the door to the lounge slides open, and a crew of menacing bounty hunters come in, guns ready. The leader, a reptilian in bulky armor, hisses at Yuli and raises his bulky blast cannon.

"Ratho sends his regards. He doesn't like rats!"

Thox, the bounty hunter, has a flair for the dramatic and uses his gravity pulse blaster to try and push the heroes to the pits. Anytime Thox or a Thug falls to the pits, an Irrasc quickly mauls them. Heroes pushed into the pit must make an Athletics roll to scramble to safety before being mauled. Use the rules for Dangerous Quick Encounters (see Quick Encounters in *Savage Worlds*) to determine Wounds and Fatigue from this close encounter with the local wildlife. New players entering the pits cause a chime to sound and the odds to change on the large monitors—meaning some people just lost (or made) a lot of money thanks to the heroes: time to get out of dodge before people who lost money get mad.

- ★ **THOX:** A saurian bounty hunter; see page 63.
- **THUGS (2, plus 2 per hero):** See page 65.

JUST A QUICK JUMP TO HYPERSPACE

Yuli has a tricked-out freighter, the *Maid Marion* (page 94), ready for the job. The old ship seems to have seen better days, but a closer eye reveals she had a few "after-market" upgrades, including a couple of quad-linked weapon turrets and powerful engines. The *Maid Marion* is a Multi-Purpose Transport (from the *Science Fiction Companion*) with its turrets upgraded to Quad-Linked, its Handling upgraded to -1, and no Superstructure—just Mods for cargo space.

Yuli ushers everyone aboard as more of Ratho's thugs burst into the launch bay. Their hand-held blasters ring off the reinforced hull, and



the whine of engines powering up blocks out all other sounds. With all of you on board and strapped in, the freighter lifts off, taking the crew toward space and freedom.

Warnings blare as the ship breaks through the atmosphere. A squad of interceptor fighters is in hot pursuit. Muttering amidst his star charts, Yuli shouts.

"Keep them busy while I punch up the jump coordinates!"

The crew must hold off the fighters for five rounds while the hyperdrive calibrates. The fighter pilots are capable and determined. They want the bounty on Yuli and have no problem taking out the rest of the crew to earn it. Use the vehicle **Clash** rules from the *Science Fiction Companion* to add cinematic flare to the battle.

- **BANDIT LEADER:** Use the profile for a Pirate Captain (see page 65) in a Heavy Fighter (page 95).
- **PILOTS (3):** See page 64. Each is piloting a Starfighter (see page 94).

TRUST ME, WE GO WAY BACK

Before heading for the Gosom Expanse, the heroes must procure fake diamonds to replace the originals they intend to liberate. Of course, there's a catch.

"Mol'Zoria Gurkoo, an infamous squid-faced gangster specializing in counterfeits and forgery, holes up in a derelict mining facility orbiting a ringed planet. Getting to the station isn't easy; it looks like just another piece of debris in the rings. There's barely enough room to land the freighter in the loading bay piled with high cargo pods, crates, and containers.

Labor bots quickly scatter, replaced by a rag-tag band of well-armed mercenaries and a squid-faced alien, his tentacles quivering in agitation.

As Yuli walks down the ramp, he smiles and waves when suddenly the mercs open fire, downing the wily alien with a stun blast!

"That was for Polzen Seven."

Guns turn to you, and Mol'Zoria sputters, "He talks too much. Tell me what you want."

THE MATTER OF POLZEN SEVEN

Thanks to Yuli, the counterfeit diamonds were impounded by Galactic Authority Tariff Enforcement (GATE) inspectors on Polzen Seven. Mol'Zoria knows where they are being stored and can be convinced to help the group retrieve them, with a few strings attached.

Run this negotiation as a Social Conflict (see *Savage Worlds*) to elicit Mol'Zoria's help. The heroes are at -2 due to Mol'Zoria's inherent dislike of Yuli.

- **0 INFLUENCE TOKENS:** Molzaria is unconvinced and intends to display Yuli's stunned body in a cryotube as a warning to others. The heroes know the diamonds are on Polzen Seven but won't get any help.

"This sounds like another flight of fancy for Yuli. His last one cost me a lot of credits. I think displaying his body in a cryotube will help others understand my dislike of losers."

- **1-3 INFLUENCE TOKENS:** The gangster knows a business opportunity and a group of patsies when he sees it. He gives them the location of the fake diamonds and a forged cargo manifest to access the facility, and doesn't ask for much in return.

"Purdan was insufferable and never paid out when I won at his stinking fighting hole. I can help with the job for my normal cut of your little misadventure."

- **4-5 INFLUENCE TOKENS:** This job is a chance for Mol'Zoria to up his stature inside the Syndicate. Cutting off the bribe money means Purdan's holdings will be up for grabs. A grab Mol'Zoria intends to make. In addition to the above, he greases some palms on Polzen Seven with some well-placed bribes. Give the group the "Grease Some Palms" Heist Card (see below).

"I care little for your rangers and your little crusades, but there is an opportunity to get ahead of my rivals here. We can get you what you need with some greasy palms."

- **6+ INFLUENCE TOKENS:** The gangster's facial tentacles squirm with delight as he considers the situation with glee. The

heroes have come along at just the right time for Mol'Zoria to make a move and grab real power in the Syndicate. He provides the manifest, bribes from the previous results, and extra equipment. Give the group the "Grease Some Palms" Heist Cards and one "Flashback" Heist Card per player (see below).

"Yuli truly is conniving. This escapade will hobble what is left of Purdan's holdings, leaving them open for me. You plant the fakes, and I will see that the blame falls on Ratho for trying to hoodwink the Syndicate. It will be glorious."

HEIST CARDS

These cards work like *Savage Worlds* Adventure Cards; the group can play them anytime during the Polzen Seven operation.

- **FORGED MANIFEST:** A false manifest to pick up cargo is sufficient to access one of the station's docking ports.
- **GREASE SOME PALMS:** Mol'Zoria has people on his payroll. Play this Card to change the Reaction Level of one GATE Agent from Hostile to Cooperative. Extras automatically switch sides, and Wild Cards make a Spirit roll to consider their life choices before acting. It will not work if the target has the Vow (Major) Hindrance.
- **FLASHBACK:** A successful job requires careful planning and a little luck. Use this Card to scrounge up a helpful piece of equipment at an opportune moment, per the Scavenger Edge.

**"GREAT, KID! DON'T
GET COCKY!"**

**-HAN SOLO,
STAR WARS (1977)**

GATE STATION

The Polzen Seven GATE impound yard is an understaffed outpost on the fringes of the settled worlds. Most of the time, officials impound cargo and hold it for made-up tariffs or “processing fees” from honest merchants and smugglers alike. In this case, the Commandant believes the counterfeit diamonds are authentic and sees their chance to profit from the discovery. So, the customary bribe to release the cargo to Mol’Zoria isn’t an option.

The Polzen 7 GATE Station is a small space station along the space lanes. Its sole purpose is regulating trade and tariffs with a small, overextended fleet (1 small cruiser and a half dozen fighters) for chasing off pirates. The fleet is often on patrol away from the facility but can hyperjump back if the Commandant sounds the alarm.

This job is open-ended and can be as violent or non-violent as the heroes choose. The Commandant is used to graft and bribery and is open to reasonable arguments—especially if he learns the diamonds are fakes. However, Sarge (see below) and other loyal troopers may take offense, making for a tense stand-off or battle so the Commandant can “make it look good.” A smash and grab means dealing with the security forces leading into and inside the impound area and scrambled fighters waiting for the crew on the way out. The heroes are welcome to talk, sneak, or fight their way in—and out—using any Heist Cards gained from Mol’Zoria to get themselves out of trouble.

GATE STATION OVERVIEW

A1 SENSOR CLUSTER

An array of antennae, dishes, and other sensor gear sits at the very top of the station. A half dozen maintenance hatches for external repairs dot the area. They all lead to the Ops Center (see B2). Heroes can use Repair at -4 or Electronics at -2 to splice into the sensor equipment and try to control internal and external sensors.

A2 HANGAR

A large hangar bay houses the station’s fighter contingent and the rest of the small fleet vessels when they are at the base. Cargo elevators descend from the hangar level to the impound area. The fighters are in the bay, and flight suits hang at the ready near each one as robotic workers go through routine maintenance. A half dozen GATE Troopers lazily patrol the area.

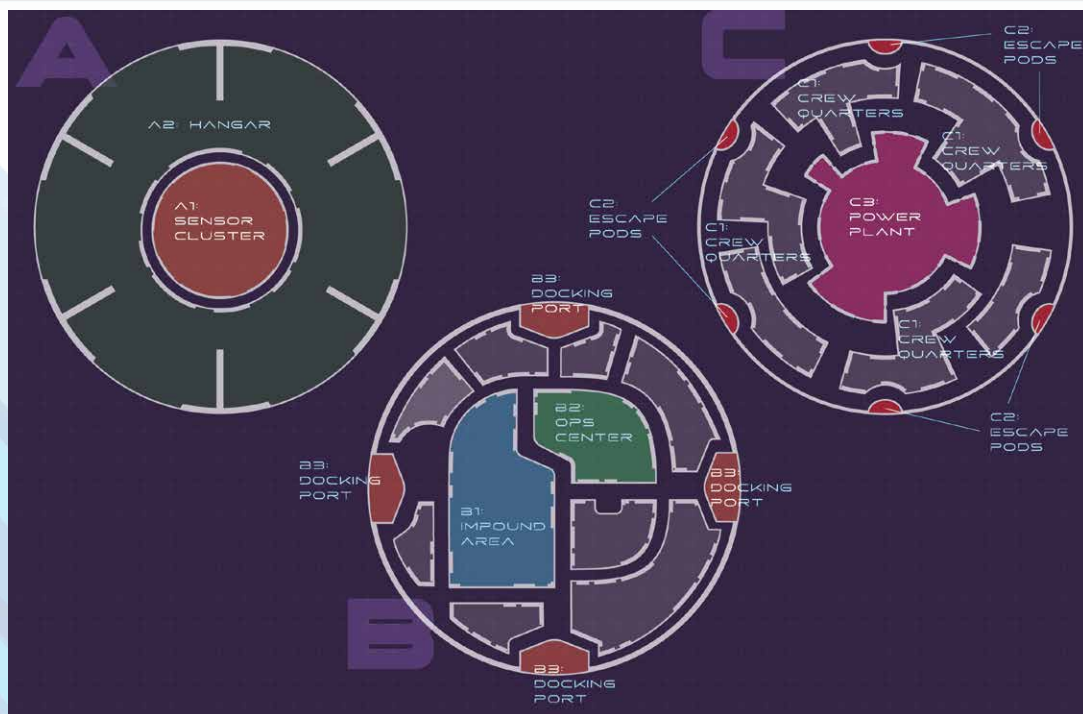
The elevators require security clearance to descend to the impound area. The robots or troopers can be forced or bribed to operate the elevators, and searching the flight suits reveals a clearance pass in one of the pockets.

- **STARFIGHTERS (6):** They sit in various maintenance stages, but their pilots are below decks. See page 94.
- **GATE TROOPERS (6):** See page 64.
- **ENGINEER BOTS (6):** Use the profile on page 65. One is working on each Starfighter. They don’t fight but can sound an alarm or be coaxed to work the elevators.

B1 IMPOUND AREA

Set in the facility’s center, this large cargo bay has many shelving racks, cargo pods, and stacks of loose goods confiscated and held for tariff payments. Loader bots bustle about bringing shipments to docking port locks. A central ops center in a glassed-in area above the cargo bay floor controls the whole area. The fake diamonds sit on the impound area’s main floor, guarded by six GATE Troopers and one deadly Security Bot. Fortunately, the cargo case is relatively small and has a grav jack, making it easy to move.

- ✦ **SARGE:** A Veteran GATE Trooper who is Loyal to the Authority. Use the profile on page 63.
- **GATE TROOPERS (5):** See page 64.
- **SENTRY BOT:** Use the profile on page 65.



B2 OPS CENTER

The Commandant likes to survey their domain from the ops center and spends most of their waking hours there ordering people. The center has surveillance equipment covering the whole facility, and agents are +2 to Notice rolls to spot unauthorized personnel or security breaches.

✦ **COMMANDANT VULK:** See page 63.

- **GATE AGENTS (6):** Use the profile on page 64.

B3 DOCKING PORTS

The station has four docking ports for freighters to hook up for inspection and cargo loading. Each port has a secure airlock and interchange that leads to the impound area. The blast door into the impound area has a Hardness of 25, but the access panel can open it with a Hacking roll at -4.

The Welcome Committee is a GATE Agent accompanied by security troops.

- **GATE AGENT (1):** Use the profile on page 64.
- **GATE TROOPER (4):** Use the profile on page 64.

C1 CREW QUARTERS

Situated between the hangar and impound area, this section houses the GATE agents and features residences, a cafeteria, recreation facilities, and other crew amenities.

C2 ESCAPE PODS

The crew area is only accessible via internal hallways and elevators, but escape pods and hatches appear every few hundred meters in case of an emergency evacuation. Usually, only off-duty agents and troopers wander the halls.

C3 POWER PLANT

The lowest level houses a large power plant that feeds energy to the entire station. Like the sensor cluster on the top of the station, numerous external hatches and conduits are available for effecting repairs. However, these hatches are well protected, Hardness 25, and wired with entry sensors. Bypassing a hatch into the maintenance crawlspaces requires a Repair roll at -4, then Thievery at -2 to turn off the proximity sensors.

IN THE SKY, WITH DIAMONDS

With or without the fake diamonds, time is running out to catch the *Rogue Queen* while she is still inside the Gosom Expanse. Yuli's flight plan, skill, and luck are all the crew need to find the ship amidst the massive sensor-blinding special effects.

The expanse is a pocket of space that circumvents the Galactic Authority-monitored space lanes. The only problem is that sensors don't work inside the expanse, and ships must fly blind. Instead, they rely on old smuggler routes, charted out by trial and (many) errors to glide through unnoticed. Staying on an established route is safe, but they are closely guarded secrets.

Locating the *Rogue Queen* is a Challenging Multi-Person Dramatic Task in 3 stages (Rounds) requiring 1 success per hero per round. Failing to get enough tokens in a round creates a penalty equal to each missed Token, while exceeding the number required adds a bonus for each additional Token (max penalty or bonus of 4 in both cases).

Each Round zeros in on a different aspect of the tasks and has suggested skills. Game Masters can feel free to allow other skills if the player makes a good case.

ROUND 1: FIND THE SHIP

*The expanse is beautiful to the naked eye. Colors refract from frozen space dust, and gaseous pockets twirl ribbons of multi-colored particles in shifting patterns. Yet, those same features block sensors and scramble communications. It's almost impossible to navigate, with sensors only working for a few hundred meters in front of the ship. The only good news is the *Rogue Queen* suffers from the same problems. The search begins with a blind spacer trying to find another blind spacer in the dark.*

This round focuses on navigating the Gosom Expanse and locating the *Rogue Queen* using an arcane Skill, Electronics, Notice, Piloting, Repair, Science, or Survival (navigation).

ROUND TWO: HOOK ON

*At first, it's just a blip. Then someone runs to an airlock to get a Mark I eyeball on it. And there, off the port bow drifts the *Rogue Queen*. Her maneuvering thrusters firing cautiously as she creeps through the expanse. The big bulk freighter isn't designed for combat, and it has lots of blind spots you can slide into. Now comes the tricky part: getting alongside one of her cargo ports and hooking on undetected.*

The second round is about getting on board the *Rogue Queen* unseen using an arcane Skill, Athletics, Repair, Electronics, or Piloting.

ROUND THREE: ACCESS CARGO AREA

The clank of the boarding lock makes more noise than you want, but you're stuck fast to the underside of the massive transport ship. At the end of your docking tube sits a massive airlock door, wired against intrusion and over a meter thick. Getting through is no easy task. Getting through without anyone knowing you did it is even more complicated.

Finally, the crew must get on board and open the airlock without alerting the *Rogue Queen's* crew using skills like an arcane Skill, Athletics, Electronics, Hacking, and Thievery.

DO YOU SMELL THAT?

At long last, the door to the cargo bay opens. All that remains is to swap the real diamonds for the fakes and sneak off into the expanse. As the airlock opens, you pick up a familiar putrid smell. Peeking inside the cargo bay, you see the contents strewn about haphazardly. Dents and claw marks decorate the walls. Suddenly, the smell triggers a memory—the fighting pits of Grimfrost and the unmistakable odor of an Irrasc.

Purdan's most prized possession was his champion breeding bull Irrasc. Ratho included the prize bull with the cargo as part of the payment. Unfortunately, the bull got loose and wreaked havoc in the cargo bay. Avoiding, subduing, or otherwise dealing with the big fella while swapping out the diamonds won't be easy. The good news is none of the *Rogue Queen's* crew are dumb enough to step into the bay with a wild Irrasc on the loose!

Locating the diamond storage container requires a visual search (Notice -4) that takes two rounds, three on a failure and four on a critical failure. Searching the computerized cargo manifest (Hacking -2) can locate the bin in one round. Once the heroes locate the storage container, they must remove the maglocks holding it down using Repair at -2. Failing the Hacking or Repair rolls triggers automatic countermeasures, and knockout gas floods the compartment.

The heroes must either get to the airlock or vent the gas before succumbing to its effects—

make a Vigor roll each round in the hold after the countermeasures trigger (see **Poison** in *Savage Worlds*). Unfortunately, the Irrasc is immune to the gas.

LOOSE CANNON

The heroes represent an excellent meal to the bull. It stomps, chases, and bites anyone who tries to cross the bay floor. Of course, the diamonds are on the opposite side. In addition to its physical attacks, the bull throws loose cargo containers and other heavy objects to thwart anyone trying to keep it from feeding.

- **IRRASC BULL:** See the profile on page 63.



IT'S A TRAP!

After getting clear of the *Rogue Queen*, the heroes quickly leave the Gosom Expanse and get ready to hyperjump to the victory party. Unfortunately, someone is waiting for them! Thox, Ratho Bog's diligent bounty hunter, somehow survived the encounter on Grimfrost. While the heroes are in the expanse, Thox catches up with Mol'Zoria and convinces the gangster to tie up loose ends by letting him claim the bounty on the heroes—dead.

Thox is aboard Mol'Zoria's custom ship, *Opulence*—a well-armed space yacht built for luxury and defense against pirates. Use the profile for a Corvette on page 95. The *Maid Marion*'s best hope is clearing the effects of the expanse and making the jump to hyperspace.

This can play out either as a Chase or a Clash. For a Chase (see **Chases** in *Savage Worlds*) use a standard nine-card layout where the heroes must get to the last Card or use the Flee action before being captured by Thox and Mol'Zoria.

For a more simple Clash the heroes must last five rounds before jumping to hyperspace use use three Task Tokens and win the contested roll to Escape.

On the first Complication, read the following.

As you try to maneuver away from the armed space yacht, your sensors pick up a small escape pod that speeds away from her mid-combat. The com-link opens, full of static from the nearby expanse, and the voice and face on the other end is unmistakable. It's Yuli!

"Got room for one more old pirate?"

Place the escape pod on the Card in front of the *Opulence*. Saving Yuli requires being on the same Chase Card and making a Maneuvering roll. Success allows the heroes to nab Yuli's escape

pod and bring him aboard, but they do not advance a Card this round. A raise allows them to collect Yuli and advance one Card. The heroes can stay on the escape pod card until they succeed, but it slows down their progress.

If using the Clash rules, drop the escape pod into round two, and rescuing the pod costs three Task Tokens.

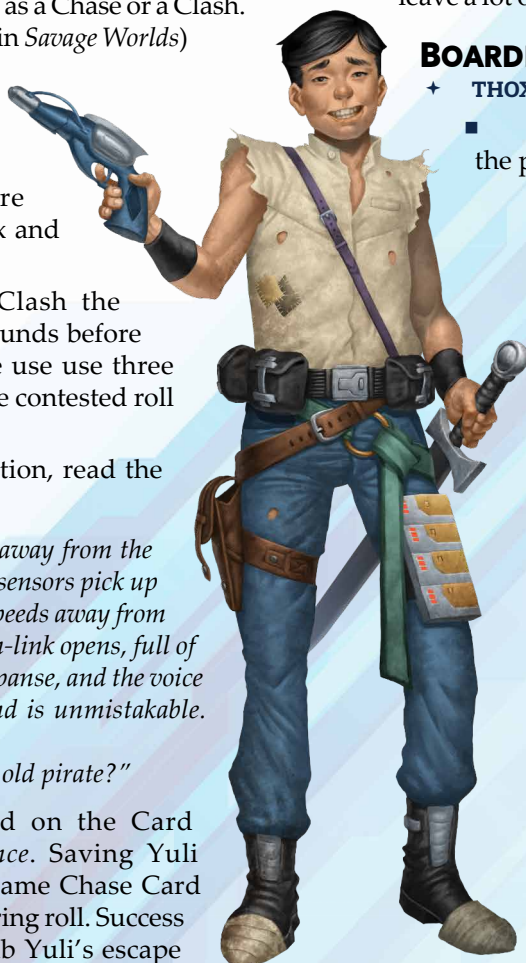
Anytime the *Opulence* is on the same Chase card as the *Maid Marion* Thox attempts a Board action. If successful, Thox comes aboard with a group of mercenaries, making things even more challenging! Likewise in a Clash if the ship hasn't escaped after five rounds the ship jumps away—with Thox and his party already aboard!

Failing to escape or being overwhelmed by the boarding party leaves the heroes in the clutches of an evil Bounty Hunter, looking to execute them in style. Successfully jumping to hyperspace means the heroes get away but leave a lot of enemies in their wake.

BOARDING PARTY

★ **THOX:** See page 63.

■ **MERCENARIES:** Use the profile on page 64.



EPILOGUE

Escaping with the diamonds makes the crew heroes of the Galaxy Rangers and the stuff of legends in the underworld. Of course, there are also a few people with scores to settle against our heroes. The Rangers invite the heroes to stay together and crew the Maid Marion as Yuli heads off into well-deserved retirement. With some credits in their pockets, a ship at their command, and a cause to fight for the heroes, they are free to jump off to their next adventure.

ENEMIES

MAJOR VILLAINS

★ COMMANDANT VULK

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d8, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Driving d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Research d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Major)

Edges: Charismatic, Connections, Strong Willed

Gear: Commlink, personal data device.

★ IRRASC

Dumb but powerful, the irrasc are apex predators in their home world. But it's their ability to be trained along with their sheer power that makes them desirable all over the galaxy. A trained irrasc can function as a guard animal, used in war, or—most common—pitted against fighters in gladiatorial arenas.

Irrasc are bipedal, with two huge grasping claws and a vertical, fang-lined mouth. Their tiny eyes and brain make them easy to fool, but as anyone who has ever fought one can attest, it's very hard to break free once one grabs you.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+7, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 16 (3)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +3:** Thick hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8, AP 4.
- **Claws:** Str+d6. +2 to Athletics and Strength rolls made to grapple.
- **Roar:** Irrasc can emit a terrifying roar. All those within 12" (24 yards) must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- **Size 7 (Large):** These fearsome creatures stand 30' tall and weigh over 16 tons.

★ SARGE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major—Serve the Authority)

Edges: Iron Jaw, Rock and Roll!, Soldier

Gear: Infantry battle suit (+6), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2, Cauterize, No Recoil, Overcharge), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 2x frag grenades.

★ THOX

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d8, Focus d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Vengeful

Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Gravlock), Artificer, Calculating, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Gravity Master, Power Points, Streetwise

Powers: *Entangle* (Localized Grav Field), *havoc* (Gravity Pulse Blaster), *telekinesis*, *wall walker*. **Power Points:** 15

Gear: Infantry battlesuit (+6), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 3x stun grenades, stun baton (Str+d4), handcuffs, commlink.

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6, AP 2.
- **Cold-Blooded:** Subtract 1 from Agility, Strength, and Vigor rolls after spending more than ten minutes in temperatures below 60° Fahrenheit (18° Celsius).
- **Infravision:** Halve Illumination penalties when attacking warm targets.
- **Environmental Weakness (Cold):** Saurians are poorly suited for frigid conditions. They suffer a -4 penalty to resist cold environmental effects and suffer +4 damage from cold-based attacks.

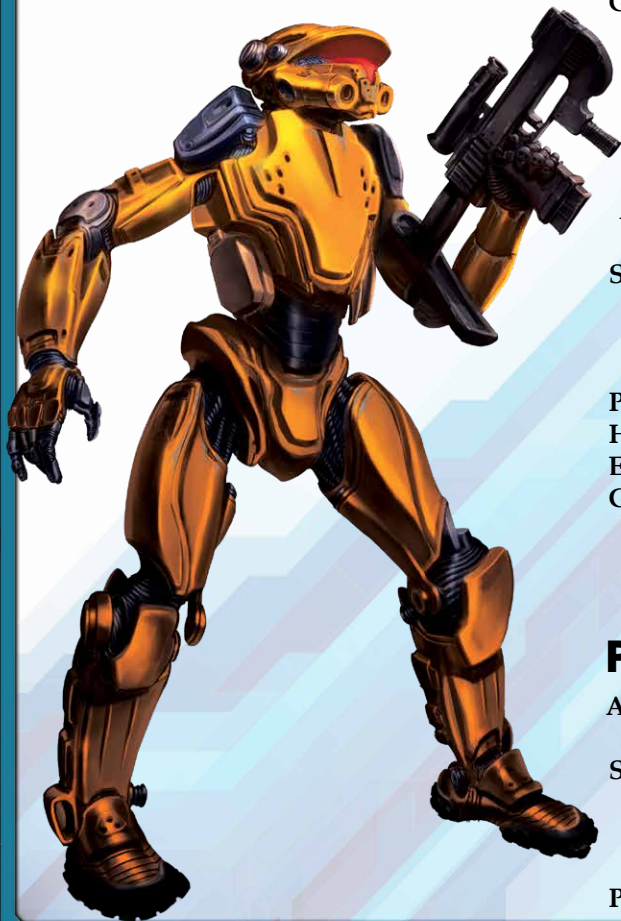
SCUM AND VILLAINY

GATE AGENT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Driving d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d6, Thievery d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5



Hindrances: Suspicious (Major)

Edges: Connections, Deceptive, Streetwise, Thief

Gear: Varies with disguise, but usually a laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, Cauterize, Overcharge) and molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2).

GATE TROOPER

These troopers are the standard, sub-standard, faceless soldiers who serve the Galactic Authority. They are notoriously bad shots, but still terrifying due to numbers and the threat of the heavier reinforcements behind them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Piloting d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Soldier

Gear: Infantry battlesuit (+6), blaster rifle (Range 25/50/100, Damage 3d6+2, AP 2), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 2× frag grenades.

MERCENARY

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Soldier

Gear: Infantry battlesuit (+6), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2, Cauterize, No Recoil, Overcharge), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 2× frag grenades.

PILOT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d6, Fighting d4, Electronics d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Ace, Evasive Maneuver

Gear: Commlink, uniform, personal data device connected to the ship's systems.



PIRATE CAPTAIN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d10, Repair d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean, Wanted

Edges: Ace, Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Gravitic Acclimation, Hard to Kill, Inspire, Rocket Jock

Gear: Combat spacesuit (+4), chain cutlass (2d6+4), plasma pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d10, Cauterize, Heavy Weapon, Plasma).

THUG

Big, dumb, and strong, thugs are hired muscle. Most operate in gangs where they can rely on their fellows for support. They are usually reluctant to pursue a fight they are losing, and are most likely to withdraw, threatening to return at a later date and even the score.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Menacing

Gear: Heavy club (Str+d6). Many might carry various types of firearms as well.

ROBOTS

ENGINEER BOT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Common Knowledge d4, Electronics d10, Fighting d6, Hacking d6, Notice d6, Repair d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Pacifist (Major)

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d4 damage.
- **Data Jack:** Reroll a failed Electronics or Hacking roll.
- **Extra Appendages:** +1 Gang Up bonus.
- **Integrated Gear:** Tool kit, matter cutter (Damage 2d4+8 (II), AP 8, Cauterize).
- **Size -1:** Repair bots stand 3–4' tall and weigh 125 pounds.
- **Wheeled:** The robot has wheels instead of legs.

SENTRY BOT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Common Knowledge d4, Intimidate d6, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5 (2)

Hindrances: Vow (Major—serve owner)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Protective plating.
- **Flight:** Pace 6.
- **Inefficient:** Must be recharged daily.
- **Integrated Gear:** Laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 4, Shots 50), stun gun (Range 12/24/48, Shots 12— with a hit the target must check Vigor at -2 or become Stunned, -4 with a raise; no effect on robots or creatures without nervous systems).
- **Scanner:** The robot's sensors can detect and identify the composition of matter or energy up to 50 yards distant.
- **Size -2 (Small):** Sentry robots are the size of a beach ball and weigh 60 pounds.



CHARIOTS OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

BY DARRELL HAYHURST

The Captain's Log of the FL-105 Adventurer, special entry:

We just finished analyzing the wreckage of the Explorer and unfortunately all hands were lost. Data retrieval from the black box indicates they were destroyed by a Toskan Aggressor. A science ship like the Explorer had no chance, but a front line ship like the Adventurer would have been a different story. The Toskans don't usually encroach this far into Demarcation Space, but then again neither do our ships.

At least now we know what drew Explorer so deep into contested space. Their probes discovered an unusual rogue planet: no star, no other bodies, just a world on its own out in the emptiness of space. That alone isn't so unusual, but according to Explorer's reports this planet was inhabited! How a planetoid that small and with no sun has water, air, and civilization is a mystery Explorer risked everything to investigate, and we must do the same.

What we recovered from their records indicates two distinct societies on opposite sides of the planet, embroiled in some kind of crisis. The Explorer's team theorized some intervention by an outside force, possibly the Toskans, disrupted whatever mechanism kept the planet inhabitable for so long.

With so many lives at risk that gives us the latitude to investigate and interact with both societies, and even interfere if it means saving all their lives. Especially if our meddling is just to set right something Toskan fumbling ruined.

I have selected the best of the best for the landing party and reiterated the importance of the Union's First Principle: "First: Do No Harm." We have translator chips thanks to Explorer's files, and have fabricated clothing that should allow us to gather information without drawing too much attention to ourselves after we teleport down.

End Log

OVERVIEW

Chariots of Darkness and Light follows the crew of the advanced Front-Line cruiser *Adventurer* as they explore the mysteries of a strange new world. The landing party is tasked with investigating the situation. The same crew members are officers and department heads on the ship, and are called upon to operate the *Adventurer* as well as interact with the planet's inhabitants as the crisis unfolds and the war-like Toskar arrive to make trouble.

Archetypes that work especially well with this scenario include:

- **COMMANDER:** Whether the Captain or the First Officer, someone with authority has to lead the team on the ground.
- **SCIENTIST:** There are unknown forces at work here, and the analytical abilities of a scientist are crucial to sorting it all out.

- **AMBASSADOR:** First contact with an alien civilization is involved, and diplomacy may be required.
- **SURVEYOR:** This is an alien world, after all, so the team has to be ready for anything.
- **MEDIC:** Missions are dangerous, so the crew (or aliens) may need the services of a healer.
- **GRUNT:** Something always goes wrong, and someone needs to either jump in the way of danger or fight for the safety of the crew.

The archetypes are listed in order of their rank within the Union. If the archetypes above aren't in use, one character should be designated the ranking officer in the landing party, or the GM can just designate someone. While the Union generally respects the chain of command, officers are expected to accept input from their crew, and any order can be

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

The Union is a peaceful organization specializing in science and exploration. The First Principle (First: Do No Harm) is the core tenet of Union exploration.

Note that this is a principle, not a rule. Union crews are allowed to defend themselves and others. While fighting is considered a last resort, Front-Line ships are heavily armed and extremely powerful when push comes to shove.

The guiding idea behind the First Principle is to use that power wisely. Doing no harm is usually impossible, and it's up to the crew in the field to determine what the least harm in any situation is. Intervening in an alien society does harm—but so does leaving the oppressed in that system to die.

At the table, let the players debate what action best fits the First Principle. It's not insubordination to have a different view and express it, or even to disobey direct orders if they violate the First Principle. Give a Benny to players who put their careers (or safety) at risk defending this ideal, and invoke the First Principle when doing so.

ignored if it violates a crewman's conscience (see **The First Principle** below).

There are plenty of alien crew aboard Union vessels, but in this case the landing party are composed of humans, or at least human-like beings so they don't stand out. If anyone prefers to play an alien they either need a decent disguise or an amusing story to explain their appearance to the locals without giving away that they're off-worlders.

ROGUE PLANET

The adventure begins as the landing party materializes in an empty back alley within the largest population center on the rogue planet. There's a few things the crew already knows when they arrive:

- M504 is relatively small, but has normal gravity. Scans indicate some kind of device in the planet's core, shielded from sensors and teleportation.
- The air is breathable. All the heat and atmosphere on M504 are kept from dissipating by a bubble of force surrounding the planet. The energy screen allows teleportation signals, but is a barrier to physical ships.
- The city's name is unknown, but it's built atop the pole of the planet. A powerful energy source is located directly above the city and just inside the planetoid's energy screen. Light and heat from this object bounce off the screen to light up half of M504. The other half is dark and cold.
- Initial sensor readings detected significant architecture on the dark side of the small world, but no life or inhabitants.
- Translation codes from the *Explorer* allow the landing party to communicate without issue, but there's no context yet. The first things to investigate are questions like what the city is named, what the inhabitants call the world, and the nature of the conflict that threatens their way of life.
- The usual protocol in these situations is to remain undercover while investigating

the situation. In an emergency, or if the team deems it necessary, they can identify themselves as beings from another world. Impersonating wizards is frowned upon. Impersonating gods is a crime. There are cases where desperate Union diplomats did the latter, preferring to survive until a trial rather than die on a superstitious world.

RECRUITMENT RUCKUS

Some of the newcomer's questions are answered immediately without them lifting a finger. Just outside the alley, crowds are gathering and a soldier dressed in garb suspiciously similar to a Roman stands on a box to address them:

"I need five able bodies to take up the spear and help defend the walls against the cruel Rogathians. I know most of you are farmers who scurried here for protection. Now's your chance to pay Thagoria back for the light and prosperity we've enjoyed for so long. You look like a burly lad—you're our first volunteer!"

The soldier points to a man in the crowd, who cringes and starts whimpering and making excuses about a sick mother. A dozen other soldiers are waiting on the edges of the crowd, and two of them push forward to grab the youth and start pulling him away.

"Now I need four able bodies. I'm still looking for some volunteers!"

If the landing party senses injustice and speak up, they have an opportunity to sway the crowd. There are many more refugees and simple citizens here than soldiers, and most of them react with distaste or fear to the forced recruitment. Standard Social Conflict rules work well here, rolling Persuasion as a contest against the soldier (d6) instead of the Spirit of the crowd. With no tokens at the end the landing party must fight or be recruited, and the crowd turns their backs on the situation. With one to three tokens the crowd starts to turn against the soldiers, who retreat after noting descriptions of the troublesome newcomers to share with their leader: Guardian Kuzial. With four or five tokens the rest of the crowd joins in strongly enough that none of the landing party can

be singled out. With six or more tokens the soldiers agree: this isn't how Thagoria usually operates. They apologize and withdraw, and several actual volunteers join them to defend the city.

If, instead, the team decide to lay low and not get involved as the farmer is being dragged off the soldier scans the crowd and happens to pick one of them as the next volunteer! They can argue as above, flee (just a five Chase Card foot chase with everyone starting on the first card, and anyone who escapes off the fifth card disappears into the crowd), fight, or come along to see what they can learn (see **A Visit to the Wall**, page 71).

■ **MIXIM SOLDIERS (12):** See page 77.



THE FACTS ON THE GROUND

However the encounter goes, the landing party has an opportunity to learn about the situation here. If they rescue the farmer he introduces himself as Frazin Ronk, and takes them back to his shelter where his ill mother is resting. She's dying of an infection, but with the crew's advanced medical equipment a successful Healing roll helps her recover almost immediately—if they choose to use it.

If they go with the soldiers (the squad leader commands them to call him Sub-Guardian Praktan) they get gruff answers to any queries from the other soldiers or conscripted recruits who just assume they're idiotic bumpkins from the surrounding farmlands. They get spears but no armor, a few quick lessons on how to stab someone, a hearty "good luck," and a section of the wall to protect from invasion.

If the explorers fled or managed to escape attention entirely they can quiz civilians in the local marketplace. With a successful Networking roll they learn the same facts bulleted below that Frazin or Praktan can share. The Union has no money that's accepted here and violence violates the First Principle, so **Money Talks** or **Busting Heads** (see *Savage Worlds*) don't apply. With failure the crew still learn the information, but they attract enough attention for their descriptions to get to Guardian Kuzial. With a critical failure or if they're already wanted a group of ten Mixim Soldiers (see page 77) arrive to round them up for questioning.

Whatever the method, here's the information available:

- The inhabitants call the world Mixim. Mixim is ancient, but all history more than a hundred generations old was lost in a so-called Great Cataclysm. Details on the cataclysm are scarce.
- There are two civilizations on Mixim, Thagoria and Rogathia. This is Thagor City. The city is named for the light in the sky above it—the god Thagor.
- The Rogathians worship the god of darkness, Rogath. They have a kingdom of cold and darkness in faraway lands.
- More than a generation ago Thagor and Rogath were locked in a constant battle.

The city would have light when Thagor was winning, and fall into darkness when Rogath gained the upper hand. Within the current generation Thagor destroyed Rogath, and has remained ascendant ever since. Rogath's remaining minions hate Thagor and Thagoria, and attack the city seeking unholy revenge.

- Units of time give the Thagorians trouble. They used to measure thing by days (when Thagor was triumphant) separated by nights (where Rogath's treachery won out), but younger citizens have never known a time without Thagor in the sky above.
- There is currently a severe famine afflicting Thagoria. Soldiers and common citizens blame the attacks from the Rogathians—burning fields and killing farmers—but refugee farmers like Frazin know after constant plentiful harvests lately the fields began to dry up and produce less and less food.
- The city is ruled by Guardian Kuzial. The Guardian is said to be a wise and fair man who has led the city through a long period of growth and plenty, and has ably protected all Thagorians from the increasing attacks of the Rogathians. According to rumor the Guardian can speak directly to the god Thagor. Civilians believe Kuzial is located at the temple in the center of the city, but soldiers like Praktan know he's at the main gate of the wall organizing defenses and preparing for a parley with the Rogathians' general.

THE TEMPLE OF THAGOR

The temple at the center of the city is easy to find—a pillar of shimmering light stretches straight up from it to the sky above. Scans confirm there is tremendous energy here, and where the beam reaches the shield above is a fiery disk that projects light and heat across half the planet.

The beam emerges from a stone ziggurat surrounded by pilgrims, worshipers and priests dedicated to Thagor—the God of Light and warmth. Anyone in the area can confirm the temple is the usual abode of Guardian Kuzial, but he's away at the main gates of the

wall organizing the defenses and attending a negotiation with the invader's leader.

Anyone who wishes is given a brief tour of the temple under the assumption that they're pilgrims wishing to pay homage to Thagor. Apart from Kuzial's location, visiting the temple provides two other pieces of information.

One is that the energy beam that rises from the temple emits from a shaft that goes all the way down to the center of the planet. The energy is deadly to the touch and blocks any attempts at teleportation to see what's down at the bottom.

The other is talk of Kuzial's predecessor, a sainted martyr named Benna. The priests speak in rapt verses of how Benna communed with Thagor directly, and she helped him defeat the dark god Rogath permanently.

A VISIT TO THE WALL

At the edge of the city a mighty stone palisade keeps teeming hordes of enemies at bay.

Tired soldiers line the parapets and fend off attack after attack.

If the landing party was "recruited" (and went along with it) they are given a portion of the wall to hold until relieved and then left to do so. Almost immediately the invaders assault that position (see **Pitched Battle** below).

Explorers who reach the wall looking for Kuzial find themselves in the same situation, but with no dedicated defenders on the wall and blood-crazed enemy warriors pouring over the top to attack civilians and disorganized soldiers alike.

PITCHED BATTLE

An active war zone is a pretty intense test of the First Principle! The landing party can defend only themselves and even teleport back to the ship (jump ahead to **Battle Stations!** on page 73 if they do), but hundreds of innocent people are doomed to slaughter.

If they stay and fight on behalf of the civilians it becomes a Mass Battle. The attackers from



outside have 10 Force Tokens, while the scattered defenders have 6 Force Tokens but a +2 Tactical bonus for their defenses and the +2 Morale modifier for being inside fortifications. If one of the heroes steps up to take charge then he rolls Battle for their side, otherwise have one of the players roll a d4 (no Wild Die) for the unlucky ranking guard. The enemy rolls Battle d8 (still no Wild Die) for this sortie.

Characters who directly engage in supporting the commander's roll have a choice: roll normally without using any flashy technology, or show off their superior gadgets to get a +4 to the roll.

If the defenders lose by running out of Force Tokens or their Morale breaking that area of the city is overrun and the landing party is cut off and captured. This isn't all bad, since the Rogath leader soon comes into the area to investigate the strange newcomers (see **The Face of the Enemy** below).

Victory forces the attackers to withdraw and saves countless lives in the area. Guardian Kuzial arrives to congratulate the heroes, and make inquiries if they showed off any advanced technology or drew too much attention gathering information before.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE CITY

Kuzial is a surprisingly reasonable fellow. He asks the newcomers to meet with him in private, and accords them the utmost respect. He apologizes on behalf of Praktan and the other soldiers for any mistreatment, and offers every hospitality available with the city's limited resources.

Once alone, he asks the strangers about where they come from and what their purpose is. He accepts it with subdued surprise if the landing party admits they're offworlders, and mentions he's heard ancient tales of such beings passed down from the time before the cataclysm, and hopes they'll aid Thagoria and Mixim in their time of need.

He can fill the team in on any information they missed so far from the farmers', the soldiers', or the priests' perspectives. He knows the fields are becoming depleted, and even goes so far as suggesting Thagor's endless triumph is the cause. He has never

spoken to the god Thagor himself, but he has heard the voice of his former mentor Benna.

He can fill them in on Benna if they missed her story at the temple. He saw it personally.

"I was but a young acolyte when it happened. These were the days when Thagor and Rogath still fought in the heavens above, slowly circling one another in combat. Suddenly, there was a light other than Thagor's in the sky, and the shining god leapt out of view all at once.

"Benna fell into Thagor's empty palace. Soon after Thagor returned to his place, and hasn't moved from it since. Afterward I heard Benna's voice. She chose me to take her place, and said she now sits at Thagor's right hand and our city shall bask in his light eternally."

Kuzial has his doubts, and admits them in private. Constant light took a long time to adjust to, but for the most part it was a benefit. Now, however, the rivers are drying up and the food is running out. The constant attacks of the barbarians from the dark side have only exacerbated the situation.

"I have arranged a meeting with the Rogathian commander. While his troops are wild, he seems an honorable man. I hoped some kind of a truce might be arranged before everyone on Mixim starves. Perhaps your presence might help convince him."

THE FACE OF THE ENEMY

The Rogathians have a very different perspective on what's happened on Mixim. The best person to explain those views is Commander Herm, the leader of the horde attacking the Thagorian walls.

The easiest ways to speak to him are to get captured during **Pitched Battle** (page 71), to get brought to the summit meeting by Kuzial, or to make a surprise appearance at the summit with a little help from the ship's teleporter. Crashing the meeting of the two most powerful people on Mixim without the teleporter is much harder: a Complex Dramatic Task requiring Stealth with a -2 penalty!

Herm is barely in control of his troops, but there's a reason for their bad discipline. He explains to Kuzial and the landing party:

"We have lived in deepening darkness for a generation, since Rogath, the God of Protection, was slain. His corpse lies in the depths of the old temple. To approach it is death. Since then, the winter has only deepened.

"For some, this is a vengeful holy war. For the rest of us it's entirely practical. Thagoria stole the light. Thagorians have all the food. We have nothing but our sharpened blades and seething rage. This isn't an army, it's what's left of Rogathia, desperate enough to come and take back what Thagorians have been hoarding!"

Life on the dark side of Mixim has hardened the surviving Rogathians. They want revenge, but Herm just wants to feed his people with the caches of supplies he assumes are hidden somewhere in the city. Unfortunately no such caches exist.

The crucial information to learn from the invaders is that the dark side of Mixim had a civilization that almost completely mirrored this one. The city there is on the opposite side of the planetoid, and the temple in the center is identical. Thagoria's shaft down to the core is blocked by a powerful energy beam. Rogothia's is open, but blocked near the bottom by a deadly energy shield (generated by the Chariot that lurks there, see below).

Whatever is at the core, it holds the secret to why Mixim has gravity, light, and life—and something down there has gone very wrong. However, forces beyond even the technology of the off worlders and their mighty starship shield the core from any attempts to enter, including teleportation.

BATTLE STATIONS!

Once the landing party has learned all they can (or get stuck and need a little push to keep things moving) the *Adventurer* emergency teleports them back aboard. Sensors detected an incoming Toskan ship, and all hands are needed. The Toskans don't negotiate, and they don't take prisoners.

The characters are the senior officers of crucial departments and the bridge crew, so they all have a role to play in the upcoming battle, whether it's rolling Piloting, offering

support with scans (Electronics), tactical orders (Battle), boosting power (Repair), or operating the ship's weapons (Shooting).

Give the crew a Notice roll as they power up their shields and weapons to defend themselves against the newcomer. With success, sensors detect a massive power spike from the planet below just as the ship readies for combat. With a raise they can distinguish between two separate power surges—one above Thagoria and the other below the surface on the opposite side of the world.

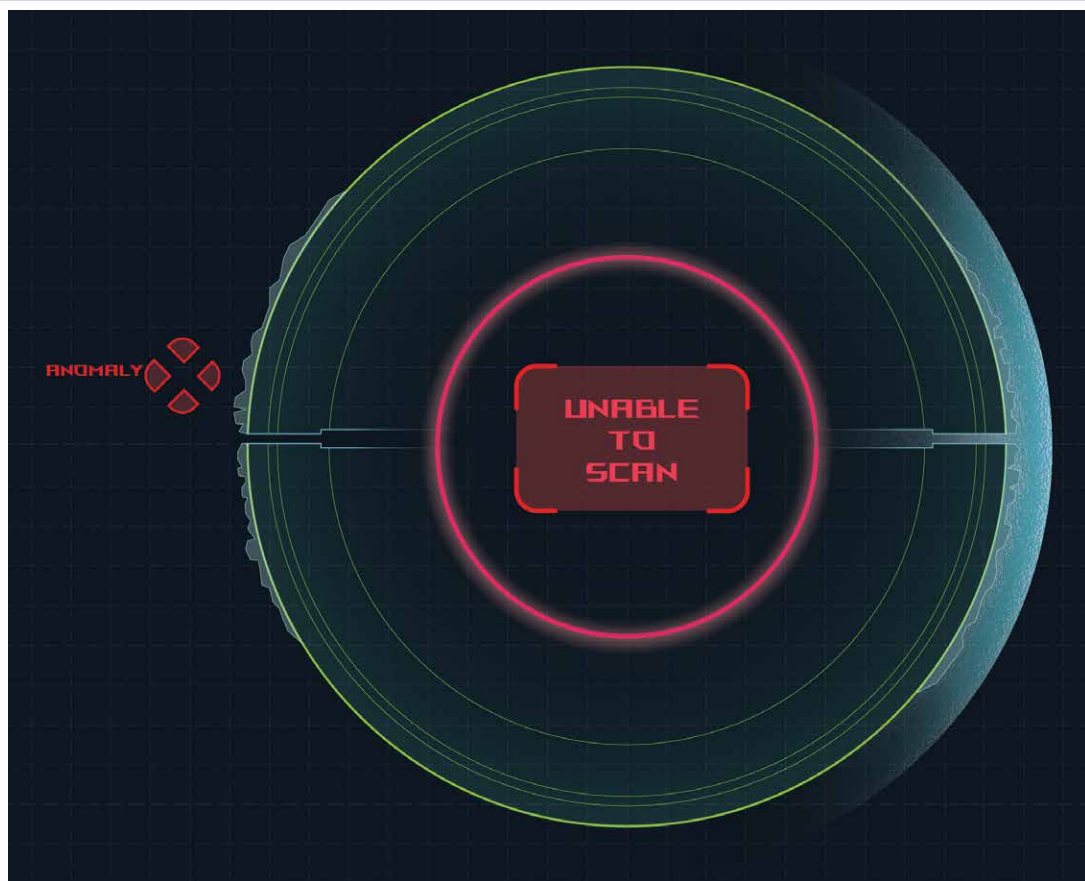
Use a **Clash** from the *Science Fiction Companion*. On the first two rounds the action plays out as normal against a Toskan Aggressor (see below) as the enemy and the heroes controlling the *Adventurer*. Starting with the third round both ships have their own problems to deal with, as Mixim's protectors enter the fray.

The heroes battle the Chariot of Light, while the Chariot of Darkness engages the Aggressor. The *Adventurer* can direct its weapons against any of the targets available. The Aggressor fires at whichever target it can attack at Close Range—or splits against both its enemies if they both have lower Action Cards. After the fifth round the Aggressor is destroyed unless the *Adventurer* somehow destroys the Chariot of Darkness first.

If the *Adventurer* survives all five rounds the commander has a choice: keep fighting the remaining Chariots for another five rounds, withdraw from the area temporarily, or power down shields and weapons. Powering down means the Chariots can destroy the ship in a single volley—if they choose to. It's a gamble, but a successful Science roll can tip the crew off that the Chariots didn't react to *Adventurer* at all until it reconfigured to battle the Toskans.

Destroying the Chariots fixes the problem of eternal light in Thagoria, but also dooms everyone on the planet to eventually freeze in the darkness between the stars. The force bubble can be adjusted to slow that process long enough for rescue ships to arrive (see **Darkness & Light**, page 74), but neither the survivors or the Union are pleased with the crew's decision.

Fleeing from the area causes both Chariots to return to the planet in their previous



positions. Returning with shields up and weapons armed draws them back out again for another **Clash** (this time against both Chariots together) before *Adventurer* can withdraw again. Returning with shields down and weapons deactivated has the same result as powering down after the fight—the planet's defenders lose all interest in the ship and return to their original positions.

- **ADVENTURER:** Use the profile for a **Galactic Exploration Vessel** from the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- **TOSKAN AGGRESSOR:** Use the profile for a **Stealth Cruiser** from the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- **THE CHARIOT OF LIGHT (Thagor):** See page 77.
- **THE CHARIOT OF DARKNESS (Rogath):** See page 77.

DARKNESS & LIGHT

The planet's core is a shielded machine. Its reactors power the force bubble that keeps air and heat from escaping the planet too quickly, and the machinery generates a gravity field close to Earth standard despite Mixim's small size. The core is protected from scans and teleportation by a thick sheath of unknown, impenetrable metal. The only way in or out are the two shafts on either end: the Temple of Thagor and the Temple of Rogath.

Under normal circumstances they are closed off or blocked by the Chariots. The Chariot of Light hovers high above Thagoria, projecting energy straight from the core to emit its light without recharging. The Chariot of Darkness fills the bottom of the shaft in Rogathia, and its deadly shield slays anyone who tries to move past it.

After **Battle Stations!** a method of getting into the core presents itself. When any ship gets too close with active weapons, both Chariots fly out to intercept it and drive it off. That leaves considerable havoc behind, especially in Thagoria where it's been decades since anyone has seen a night, but it also leaves the entry shafts to the core open.

The trick is getting inside and repairing whatever broke in the system before the Chariots can wreck the *Adventurer*.

THE FAULT

The factor that threw Mixim's system out of synch is Benna. Decades ago she threw herself into the core as an act of faith during an incident when a Toskan Aggressor approached too closely. The core saved her body as best it could, and integrated her consciousness into the system while her body healed.

Her will was so strong and her faith so absolute that her mind took control of the network. She suppressed Rogath and set Thagor into position above her beloved city. She thinks she's brought peace and light to her world—not the decay and destruction of depleted fields, the water slowly accumulating as ice on the far side of the world, and the disruptions to both civilizations without a day and night.

Her body is still here in the core, repaired but unoccupied. She has the best of intentions, but her mind being stored in the machine is causing untold damage.

THE HEART OF MIXIM

The only way to get into the core in time is teleportation. Once the ship is within range the Chariots launch to fight it off, so the window is small. Barring teleportation, accessing the core is nearly impossible. Without the *Adventurer* the landing party has to wait until another ship wanders close enough to scramble the Chariots, and then jump down the shaft (preferably with parachutes) before the protectors return.

Once inside, the exact center has a platform with various controls and docking bays for the two Chariots. The rest of the chamber is machinery that generates power, gravity, and the force bubble.

The Fault (see above) becomes apparent after a quick scan of the inner core. Benna's healed (and unaged) body is in a cannister connected to the vast machinery. As the crew approach a synthesized voice booms through the chamber:

"I am Benna, the Right Hand of Thagor. Interlopers, you do not belong in this sacred space! I do not wish you harm, but your meddling has allowed Rogath to escape again! Leave now, or when Thagor returns you will surely burn in his light!"

The landing party has five rounds to resolve the issue and restore balance to Mixim. There are two main ways: convincing Benna to relinquish control of the machine (see **A Grand Speech** below), or manually overriding her controls (see **A Hard Reset**).

A GRAND SPEECH

It's possible to reason with Benna and convince her to let go of the machine she awoke inside. This is a Social Conflict, and she resists as a Wild Card with a d12 Spirit! Give a +2 bonus to any argument that appeals towards helping the people of the surface (especially Kuzial) or outlines the effects the light has had over time.

After three rounds count the total Influence Tokens gained:

0—Benna sees the intruders as agents of Rogath and starts counting down the seconds until Thagor returns to destroy them (two more rounds).

1-3—Benna is confused and filled with doubt. She stammers that she must consult with Thagor. She continues to suppress Rogath, but eventually the planet's day and night cycle resumes as Thagor circles the world. She remains trapped inside the machine.

4-5—Benna is convinced to completely relinquish control and filled with regret. The system resets and her consciousness is erased in the process. Her last words are an apology, and a hope her death here, long overdue, atones in part for what she's done.

6—The system resets to normal functionality. Rather than being erased, Benna's consciousness is finally transferred back into her body. She awakens in her restored body,

which has been in stasis and is around the same age as her former student Kuzial is now.

At any time the landing party can stop negotiations and start working manually on the controls, which leaves them two rounds for the task if they use all the time they can to convince Benna. If they start work on the machines the Social Conflict immediately ends and one Influence Token is removed for the treachery.

A HARD RESET

A mechanically inclined crew might trust technology more than words, or turn to the machinery if negotiations with Benna fail.

To reset the machines inside the core the heroes must disconnect the container with Benna's body inside and reconfigure the alien computers to isolate or eliminate her consciousness. Unfortunately they have to finish the job before the Chariots return and fill the chamber with deadly energy.



This is a single-person Dramatic Task that requires six Task Tokens to complete. Electronics, Repair, or Hacking can all be used as the main roll or as support. Every roll suffers a -2 penalty due to the ancient and alien nature of the equipment. Once the tinkerers get started it becomes clear that while six Task Tokens can erase Benna and reboot the machine, eight Task Tokens can transfer her consciousness back to her body and save her too.

The time to complete the task is the same five rounds that starts when the landing party enters the chamber, so the more time they spend persuading Benna the less time they have to work on the machines.

Failure on a Complication causes an especially tragic catastrophe. The fumbling drives the Chariots mad, and they dive towards the center of Mixim to create a feedback loop that overloads the core's reactors within a day. The *Adventurer* can save about 200 people, and then the planet explodes, killing the rest.

AFTERMATH

Mixim's problems aren't instantly solved if the core is restored to its normal function, but they have a much brighter future than they had before. When the disk of light begins moving through the sky again the Rogathians cheer and begin the trek to the former dark side to reclaim their former homes and land.

The famine in Thagoria worsens before it improves, but without a war draining resources and with potential Union help many are saved. It turns out Rogath's function creates more extreme weather patterns which bring rain and churn the soil.

If she survived, Benna is contrite and rededicates herself to helping both Thagorians and Rogathians in whatever way she is allowed. Some see her as a living saint, and others see her as a monster who decimated the population. Kuzial is just happy to have his mentor back.

As for the crew, the Union presents them with commendations (or condemnation) based on how the planet fared. Afterward, the *Adventurer* continues its voyage of discovery on the edges of known space.

ENEMIES

MIXIM SOLDIER

The rank and file soldiers of this planet might look like the extras from a fantasy movie or historical epic, but there's no actual cultural link to any other worlds.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Edges: Soldier

Gear: Armor (+2), spear (Str+d6, Parry +1 and Reach 1 if used two-handed) medium shield (Parry +2, Cover -2).

THE CHARIOT OF LIGHT (VI)

Thagor: Size 20 (Gargantuan), Handling -0, Top Speed 12K MPH (space), Toughness 65 (40), Wounds 6, Crew —, Mods: 80 (10)

Notes: AI, Anti-Teleportation Tech, Atmospheric, 2× Handling, Repair Nanomachines, Targeting System, Top Speed.

Weapons:

- **Heavy Particle Cannon (turret):** Range 100/200/400, Damage 8d6+8 (V), AP 20, RoF 3.
- **Medium Tractor Beam (fixed front):** Range 100/200/400, Damage —, Entangles up to Size 28 targets.
- **Torpedo Launcher (fixed front):** ×6 Medium Torpedoes (Range 300/600/1200, Damage 7d10 (VI), AP 30, Guided Weapon, LBT).

THE CHARIOT OF DARKNESS (VI)

Rogath: Size 20 (Gargantuan), Handling -0, Top Speed 12K MPH (space), Toughness 65 (40), Wounds 6, Crew —, Mods: 80 (10)

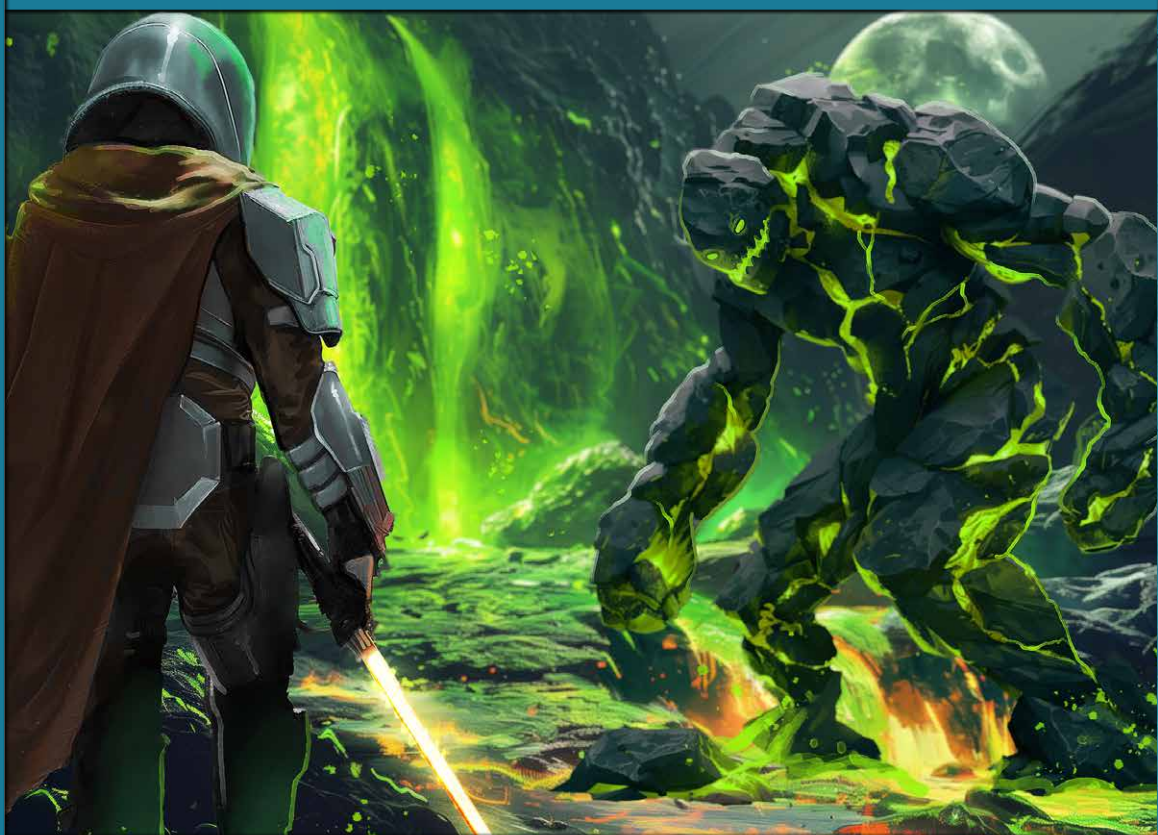
Notes: AI, Anti-Teleportation Tech, Atmospheric, 2× Handling, Repair Nanomachines, Targeting System, Top Speed.

Weapons:

- **Heavy Particle Cannon (turret):** Range 100/200/400, Damage 8d6+8 (V), AP 20, RoF 3.
- **Medium Tractor Beam (fixed front):** Range 100/200/400, Damage —, Entangles up to Size 28 targets.
- **Torpedo Launcher (fixed front):** ×6 Medium Torpedoes (Range 300/600/1200, Damage 7d10 (VI), AP 30, Guided Weapon, LBT).

"MANY MYTHS ARE BASED ON TRUTH."

**-MR. SPOCK,
THE WAY TO EDEN (1969)**



BLOOD FROM A STONE

BY CHRIS LANDAUER

The universe is vast and indifferent to the machinations of the tiny sentient beings who worry so very much but do not live so very long compared to the scale it takes for the universe to take notice.

This adventure takes place in a future so distant that the trappings of science look more like magic. Humans and aliens alike maneuver inside a single, sprawling galactic empire. Here, anything goes. No technology is too fabulous, and no alien or source of power is out of place.

BACKGROUND

Each of you are representatives of the Great Houses, elevated from your home worlds over the last millennia by a mysterious and seemingly benevolent race of technologically advanced—perhaps even magical—species that here-to-fore has been the only source of the wondrous unobtanium. They are called the Progenitors, and they are the only thing that keeps the Great Houses in check.

The Great Houses chaff against their distant masters, and constantly attempt to reverse engineer unobtanium's secrets, discover its mechanisms, and divine its source. The mysterious element's secrets have remained elusive. Is it the essence of life? Is it the

ur molecule? Is it a catalyst to every force or the face of God herself?

Lacking the recognition they crave from the nature mother, the Great Houses inflict themselves upon the environment and each other with great alacrity. They fell the forests, dredge the rivers, plunder the seas, and raze the mountains. The Great Houses hold familial blood sacred and rival blood so cheap as to spill it at the slightest whim, all in the search for power.

For thousands of generations the Great Houses have struggled for power within the confines of the empire, and sought the source of unobtanium. Now it's your turn, but something has changed. The supply of unobtanium has stopped, and the whole universe is in withdrawal.

Chaos looms. The Progenitors have fallen silent.

You all have been dispatched to Petra Station—tied by a star ladder to the equator of Planet Krag like the veritable umbilical cord of the galaxy—to search for clues and discover what has become of the most precious manna.

Krag, it is said, is the home of the Progenitors. Krag, it is said, is the source of unobtanium. Krag is the crucible upon which the fates of the Great Houses is forged.

Krag is your destiny.

OVERVIEW

The known universe runs on unobtainium, but for the first time in recorded history unobtainium has stopped flowing from its source—the mysterious planet Krag. Krag is both the home of the Emperor and the sole source of unobtainium. As one is diminished, so is the other.

The Great Houses can agree on very little, but they all need unobtainium. The heroes are the representatives of key Great Houses invited to Krag to discuss the situation. The envoys are gathered on a spaceship called the *Dire Barge* and whisked away to Petra Station, the seat of the Emperor's throne.

Unfortunately there is to be no parley. After they arrive an explosion rocks Petra Station and assassin liquid tries to finish off anyone who survives the near decompression of the palace. The Emperor is dead, slain by unknown traitors and now the fate of the universe hangs in the balance.

The emissaries must deal with a sabotaged space palace, search for clues to unravel the conspiracy, and then survive an attack by fighters dispatched to eliminate the evidence. The heroes are forced down onto the surface of Krag where they finally meet one of the mystical Progenitors, gain new technological gifts, and fend off an attack by the planet Krag itself.

Finally, the hour of atonement is at hand. The characters discover the location of the assassins and strike at them out in the mountainous landscape of Krag. When the fight is over, a mighty Krag worm rises through the rocks and lashes out at the heroes.

Whether they defeat it or merely survive, they become legends. The Progenitors reappear, the unobtainium flows once again, and one of the heroes is chosen to become the new Emperor!

SETTING RULES

The following Setting Rules are in effect, to capture the epic nature of tales set in the unfathomably distant future. Born A Hero only truly matters if the players are building their own characters rather than using archetypes, but also allows for the expanded scope of free Edges provided by aligning with a Great House (see Characters below).

- **Betrayal** (*Science Fiction Companion*)
- **Born A Hero** (*Savage Worlds*)
- **Desperate Attack** (*Science Fiction Companion*)
- **Extreme Environments** (*Science Fiction Companion*)
- **Fanatics** (*Savage Worlds*)
- **Giant Foes** (*Science Fiction Companion*)
- **High Adventure** (*Savage Worlds*)

CHARACTERS

Players are welcome to choose any of the Archetypes presented in the *Science Fiction Companion* for this scenario. Each comes with their standard gear.

For a more randomized experience, see **The Great Houses** table on page 81. One method is to have each player choose a Great House (or get assigned one randomly), and then pick one of the three archetypes which represent it. Another way is to collect the listed archetype cards in an envelope with the stated Symbol (Zodiac Sign) marked on the outside. Have players choose one envelope and then select one of the three Archetypes inside to play. Characters are given the additional Vow (Major) Hindrance listed and also the stated bonus Edge. The Edge ignores all the normal Requirements, including Rank.

A SCHEME OF RIVALS

Centuries of blood feuds, intermarriage, and constant rivalry connect the Great Houses. Have each player draw a card and apply the effects to the other characters who drew the same suit or to the player to their right's character if they are the only one.

- **SPADE:** Your houses are currently at war. When these rivals fail a roll, you can choose to Test them (with a +2 if they rolled

THE GREAT HOUSES				
GREAT HOUSE	SYMBOL	VOW (MAJOR)	BONUS EDGE	ARCHETYPES
Ovan	Ram	Bravery in all endeavors	Level Headed	Bounty Hunter Commander Smuggler
Harka	Bull	Steadfast in the face of adversity	Giant Killer	Envoy Gladiator Spacer
Song Tu	Twins	Adapt to new experiences	Uncanny Reflexes	Mercenary Psyker Scrapper
Karramarro	Crab	Protect those I love	Savior of the Universe	Chronomancer Medic Shepherd
Asad	Lion	Generosity with others	Team Leader	Grunt Road Warrior Squad Leader
Basak	Maiden	Perfection and service	Opportunistic	Commando Infiltrator Roughneck
Mizani	Scales	Balance and harmony	Gravitic Acclimation	Ambassador Mystic Star Knight
Seigo	Scorpion	Transform to reach my true potential	Miracle Worker	Engineer Morpher Warper
Oxatan	Archer	Exploration and learning	Atmospheric Acclimation	Analyst Hacker Hardlight Conjurer
Cabra	Goat	Climb to great heights	Favored Terrain (Mountain)	Cyborg Pilot Surveyor
Verseau	Water Bearer	Betterment through innovation	Immortal	Controller Enforcer Technomancer
Kalat	Fish	Creation through imagination	Elan	Gravlock Influencer Scavenger

"POWER BASES ARE VERY DANGEROUS BECAUSE THEY ATTRACT PEOPLE WHO ARE TRULY INSANE, PEOPLE WHO SEEK POWER ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF POWER."

***-FRANK HERBERT,
GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE***

a Critical Failure) as an immediate free action. In addition to the normal results of a Test on your rival, you gain a +2 on your following action with a success and Benny with a raise.

- **HEART:** Your houses have spilled blood in defense or mingled blood via marriage. Your character may choose to take Wounds or status effects intended for your ally. These may be Soaked or resolved as normal.
- **DIAMOND:** Your houses are direct rivals for a precious resource (a dwindling cache of unobtainium, the Emperor's favor, dominion over a trade route or valuable moon colony, etc.). When any one of these players draws a Joker for their Action Card, you may declare "Not so fast!" and challenge them to a duel in a skill of your choice as an immediate free action. If you succeed, you capture the +2 benefit of the Joker and may take your turn when you like. The loser becomes Distracted or Vulnerable (winner's choice) following the challenge until the end of their next turn.
- **CLUB:** Old grudges die hard. You and these characters are at -2 when attempting to Support or offer Healing or other beneficial effects to each other.
- **JOKER:** You may choose the effects of one suit and the target(s) of those effects for your character.

VEILED PASSAGE

Once characters are selected and the relationships between the Great Houses present are settled, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

While political alliances among the Great Houses shift like flakes of snow in a storm, the one constant that keeps the Emperor's tenuous grasp on the throne is his exclusive access to the Progenitors as the unified voice and envoy to the Houses. While the supply of unobtainium has ebbed and flowed in the past, it has never dried up.

This unprecedented drought has caused the Great Houses to demand an audience with not only the Emperor, but also the Progenitors. Facing a coup, the Emperor has relented and sent his personal Dread Barge to ferry you representatives from a rendezvous at a distant star Lethe IX across uncharted space to the secret location of the planet Krag.

Leaving your own ships behind, you have a moment to reconnect with allies and cast aspersions at your rivals as the Dread Barge makes its passage to Krag.

A herald announces each of the characters present, one at a time, and bids them enter the Dread Barge. As the herald, bellow a character's name and affiliation with regal flair, and then let the player describe the character who steps forward.

Should anyone get too rambunctious about settling old rivalries or just plain be rude the herald sourly announces that this conclave is at the invitation of the Emperor of known space, and as a diplomatic function the rites of civility must be followed at all times—at least where anyone can see. The herald has the power to revoke an invitation and shun a Great House if the proper forms aren't obeyed.

Once everyone has been introduced and entered the grand chamber, the Dread Barge reconfigures into its flight mode and begins the long journey across the stars.

To set the scene, use a Backstory Interlude for each character. Rather than the characters speaking about themselves, this Interlude is what others aboard the ship are saying about them—whether the gossip is true or not. The great victory being whispered about due to drawing a Spade could be a legitimate triumph in battle, or it could be a fabrication planted by the house to bolster the character's reputation (and the character is deeply embarrassed about it).

It's fine if these tales involve the other houses or even other characters present since they might not be true. But most of the people on the Dread Barge think they are! These Interludes are a good opportunity for a player to set what other people think of them, shore up their alliances, or explore the nature of their rivalries with the other characters. Award Bennies as usual, and

maybe give an extra one to players that lean into the Machiavellian nature of the genre.

PETRA STATION

After an uneventful ride the characters arrive at Petra Station, the seat of the Emperor himself high in orbit over Krag.

As you approach the end of your transit, the Planet Krag looms large out the finestra of the Dread Barge. You soon realize that what first appear like small islands in an ocean are the peaks of unimaginably tall mountains poking through a turbulent layer of storms that shroud the planet.

You catch a quick glint off a gossamer thread that extends from the planet to a small artificial moon. The Dread Barge docks with an ornate space station — Petra, the home of the Emperor himself — and you are ushered into an antechamber.

After an uncomfortably long delay the murmur of gossip and slander suddenly dies down.

Custom would dictate that official envoys would be announced and greeted promptly upon their arrival. The herald accompanying the heroes is in the dark about the unusual delay as well, but if asked he shrugs and notes that it must be the Emperor's will.

A successful Notice roll reveals that although there are Twelve Great Houses, only the characters' houses and one or two others are present. Perhaps the others weren't issued invitations, or made a separate trip? No entourage from the court of the Emperor is waiting to welcome the characters beyond the herald who is already with them. There aren't even any guards in the hall.

Suddenly the situation changes for the worse.

As you wait impatiently at the doors of the antechamber, you notice an ominous pool of glossy black liquid rapidly seeping from beneath the doors toward your feet, almost alive but certainly heralding death. It moves with unnerving speed, as if drawn to you.

Your ears pop as your nose fills with the smell of wet iron which you can taste on your tongue and you feel your breath leave your chest with nothing to replace it. You don't hear the explosions so much as feel them as the

atmosphere in the room rapidly begins escaping through the dock to the Dread Barge.

The ornate doors at the other end of the chamber fling open revealing an opulent throne room with various control stations and monitors for the station. The body of the Emperor, slumped in a grand throne, appears to stand as it is violently pulled towards the characters and the gaping portal behind them.

The heroes must make Athletics rolls to stabilize themselves and avoid the flailing bodies of the herald and the other nameless envoys as they are drawn toward the rapidly depressurizing Dread Barge. Success allows the character to resist the force of the evacuating atmosphere. With a raise the character makes it into the throne room where the pull isn't as strong. The character suffers **Bumps & Bruises** with failure (or 1d4 Wounds with a Critical Failure) as objects, corpses, or other guests smash into them on their way out into space.

The next round, those in the antechamber must roll Athletics again, with the same results. Heroes who made it into the throne room may attempt to roll Electronics, Hacking, or Repair to activate the docking controls of Petra Station and activate a containment field between the antechamber and the Dread Barge.

Once the field is up containment bulkheads grind slowly closed all across the station and the ruined *Dire Barge* is jettisoned out into space. The threat of decompression is ended, but there's still the matter of the liquid which announced the catastrophe. The vile stuff is called assassin goo (see below). It seeks out the heroes even behind locked bulkheads, and attacks relentlessly until it's either destroyed or lured near an airlock and sucked out into space with a combination of a Test and Support from the same Electronics, Hacking, or Repair roll that closed the breach in the first place.

■ **ASSASSIN GOO (1):** See below.

ASSASSIN GOO

Assassin goo is a dark ooze programmed to do one thing: kill. Goo doesn't have a conscience, doesn't ask questions, and never gives up, making it a popular tool for political assassinations.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d12+2, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12

Edges: Counterattack

Special Abilities:

- **Bash:** Str+d6.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; doesn't breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Envelop:** Assassin goo attacks by enveloping its target, then inflicting millions of microscopic "bites" as the nanites begin breaking down the target's molecular structure. It hits automatically (unless Shaken) and causes 2d6 damage to all targets it touches at the end of their turn. Weapons suffer a -1 damage penalty (max -3) and armor loses 1 point of Armor bonus until it reaches 0 and falls apart. Those in completely sealed suits are immune—at least until the gray goo deals enough damage to the suit!
- **Fear:** Anyone who sees the creature must make a Fear check.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result in combat doesn't cause a Wound.
- **Infravision:** Halve Illumination penalties when attacking warm targets.
- **Ooze:** Though comprised of machines, assassin goo is a micro colony. It ignores *invisibility* and Illumination penalties. It does not sleep, and is immune to Called Shots, poison, paralysis, *slumber*, Stun, *blind*, Intimidation, Taunt, and *puppet*.
- **Size 5 (Large):** This assassin goo is the size of a Small Blast Template (4-yard radius) and weighs four tons.
- **Unstoppable:** Takes a maximum of one Wound (after Soaking) from any damaging attack unless the attacker's Action Card is a Joker.
- **Very Resilient:** Can take two additional Wounds.

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

With atmosphere temporarily restored, have the characters make a Fear check as they realize the carnage that has been wrought upon the House of the Emperor and the implications to themselves and the galaxy as a whole.

The characters have time to investigate the throne room and the adjacent rooms of Petra Station. Each hero can roll a skill of their choice to investigate, and success returns a piece of evidence appropriate for that approach. Healing could discover damage from a signature weapon on one of the bodies that wasn't sucked out into space. Notice might find blood drawn in the shape of a Great House symbol. Hacking can pull secret video logs of the assassins' arrival, and so on.

Each piece of evidence points to a different Great House—one of the ones that weren't present on the *Dire Barge*. Multiple factions set aside their grievances with one another to launch a surprise attack on the Emperor himself and according to the logs it was they who invited the other houses to Petra Station—after the Emperor's death—perhaps to shift blame to them.

The plan might still work, but the heroes have to die first. The blare of klaxons and early warning alarms alerts the investigators that a new threat is on the way to finish that job.

STAND AND DELIVER

Enemy ships are inbound to the station on an attack run to kill any survivors and destroy the remaining evidence.

Play out the attack as a five round Clash (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). The attackers are a wing of Heavy Fighters (one per hero), and at the start of the encounter none of Petra Station's weapons or defenses are active. Each character gets an Action Card, and deal the fighters one Action Card as well.

Each round when the fighters act they attack the station. Don't bother rolling attacks or damage, just roll a single Critical Hit. If a weapon is destroyed it's one manned by a character, and that character must roll Evasion or suffer 1d4 Wounds as the

connected systems explode. A crew critical hit causes similar damage that affects a random character—again roll Evasion or suffer 1d4 Wounds. If the hit knocks out a system it's the containment field and everyone must roll Athletics as before to avoid Bumps & Bruises until someone can restore the system with a successful Repair roll.

The palace's armaments were disabled by saboteurs, but a successful Electronics, Hacking, or Repair roll brings a weapon online, or two weapons with a raise. The best weapons to activate are either heavy lasers (RoF 1, Damage Class V, uses Shooting) or heavy missile launchers (RoF 1, Damage Class V, uses Electronics).

The fighters are faster than the station and have a higher Handling, so either form of attack is -4. If the character has a higher Action Card than the fighters the shot is at Short Range, so that's the only penalty. If the fighters have the better Action Card the shot has to be at Long Range, for another -4 (although the missiles negate 2 points of that penalty).

Each hit deals 1d3+1 Wounds to a fighter, or 1d3+2 Wounds with a raise. Each fighter can take three Wounds before it is destroyed.

Petra Station doesn't have a pilot position or any means of maneuvering at all, so unfortunately the heroes don't have any way to gain Clash Tokens. A character with a Complication must roll Athletics or become Distracted by secondary damage as the battle rages.

When combat begins the station's targeting computer is also out of commission, but a hero working on the consoles can choose to activate that in place of a weapon. The targeting computer eliminates 2 points of penalties from the gunners, which could turn the tide in favor of the heroes.

If the gunners manage to destroy all the fighters before the end of the fifth round they buy valuable time to gather resources before the next onslaught—everyone gains time for normal first aid, one scrounged application of Regeneration Gel, and a point of Conviction!

If any fighters remain alive at the end of five rounds, they launch a barrage of missiles at the star ladder—a bridge of energy that



tethers Petra Station to Krag below. If that happens go straight to Zero Gs Given below.

Unfortunately, even if the players are victorious Petra Station is doomed. The star ladder is still shattered, but in this case its sabotaged from the planet's surface.

- **HEAVY FIGHTERS (1 per hero):** Their profile is available on page 95, but for this Clash the only relevant statistics are that they're Class IV vehicles with three Wounds.

ZERO G GIVEN

Once the star ladder that tethers the orbital palace to Krag is inevitably severed, Petra Station begins following a weightless and uncontrolled trajectory into the nearest black hole.

In an instant as the umbilical tethering Petra Station to the planet is severed, the floor beneath your feet becomes unreliable and the sensation of your own weight pressing against the station disappears. You are floating and the monitors at your consoles blare the clear message that the bulkheads between you and the limited escape pods are already failing. You need to make your way through three bulkheads separating the Control Room from the Escape Pods.

The escape from the doomed station is a Dramatic Task which lasts three rounds. Each character collects Task Tokens separately. With four Task Tokens a character reaches one of the Emperor's premium survival pods. The hero can eject immediately, or stick around to help the other emissaries. A truly selfless hero can give his Task Tokens to others, or keep accruing tokens beyond the four needed and dole out the extras to friends and allies.

Various skills might apply to the task: Athletics to race quickly to the area where the escape pods are waiting, Electronics to bring up schematics of where to go, Hacking to uncover the Emperor's secret shortcut from the throne to a pod, and so on.

Starting with the first round, characters suffer the effects of Zero-G, so without Gravitic Acclimation all Agility-based skill rolls are at -2. Starting with the second round, they also suffer the effects of a very Thin atmosphere: anyone not in a sealed spacesuit (or without the Atmospheric Acclimation Edge) must roll Vigor or suffer a level of Fatigue. On the third round the pressure drops to a vacuum and anyone without a spacesuit must roll Vigor or suffer another level of Fatigue.

Failure on a Complication deals 1d4 Wounds to the character as fires and explosions rip through that part of Petra Station.

Using four Task Tokens at any time before the end of the third round allows the character to escape in a fancier pod or with enough time to avoid any injuries during the dangerous descent. The heroes find just enough escape pods to exit the Station before it drifts off into space or violently re-enters the atmosphere. Failure means any remaining characters cram into one last escape pod just before Petra Station crosses over the black hole's event horizon. The cramped quarters and high velocity required to escape (and the ensuing crash into Krag) causes **Bumps & Bruises** to everyone aboard the pod.

Entering an atmosphere in an escape pod is a terrifying experience of nearly intolerable heat, violent vibrations, and the banshee wail of the sky trying its best to destroy your tiny vessel for its arrogance in breaching the envelope between nothingness and somethingness.

But your mind is not on your own health, but on the seething rage and desire for revenge that is building inside you for the treacherous betrayal you have suffered at the hands of the rogue Houses.

BEST SERVED SMOLDERING

The emissaries have finally arrived on Krag, a momentous occasion and worthy of a Benny.

Your escape pods land uneventfully at the base of the star ladder that once held Petra Station in a stable embrace. The immense jagged cliffs rise around you as daggers piercing the storms above and your lungs get their first fill of crisp dry air. Your elation turns to concern as you sense the familiar taste of blood on your tongue, but as you rub your finger across your gums checking for a broken tooth or laceration, your search proves fruitless and you realize that it's not so much blood you taste but the perfume of concentrations of unobtainium that you could only ever dream of.

The atmosphere here—assuming one isn't in a sealed spacesuit to breathe it—crackles with rejuvenating power. Treat the effect like a constantly renewing Numb effect from the relief power cast with a raise: reduce the total penalties from Wounds or Fatigue by two. The Wounds and Fatigue are still present, they just don't slow the character down as much anymore.

All the escape pods are programmed to land at the base of a fortress in the rocky landscape known as Anchor Station. Under normal circumstances the station projects the energy for the mighty star ladder that tethers the Emperor's floating palace to Krag, but the ladder is gone and the station is deserted.

Evidence of very recent occupation of the Anchor Station by the traitorous Rogue Houses is scattered around the area—fallen imperial guards, the broken bodies of fallen soldiers, and in one case a Progenitor!

When the emissaries approach the being whispers to them:

"It's too late for me. My vital organs were destroyed during the attack, but I placed myself into stasis, forestalling the inevitable in the hopes that ones such as you would arrive so I could speak these words. The Rogue Houses have pledged themselves to the death of not just the Emperor, but also the destruction of unobtainium and the end of our way of life. You must stop them! There is a cache nearby with tools you will need—the gifts of Progenitors. I have just unlocked it for you. Now I must pass beyond, and leave the fate of your universe in your hands."

With that, the strange being dies and dissolves into nothingness. At the same moment a locked and impregnable ark with an intricate design emitting a low pulsing hum and a halo-like glow clicks open to reveal the spoils within.

Inside the ornate and otherworldly container are personal force fields (+4 Toughness) for each hero. There are also a series of strange widgets called technics—one for each character. Technics fit seamlessly onto weapons, energizing them and giving them bold new powers.

Roll a d8 and check the **Technic Modifications** table below to see what property the technic adds. The technic may be installed on a weapon of the character's choice. Technics work on both melee and ranged weapons.

TECHNIC MODIFICATIONS	
D8	ADDED PROPERTY
1	+2 damage, +4 AP
2	+d6 damage, +2 AP
3	+d6 damage, bonus damage is d10
4	Incendiary, bonus damage is 2d6
5	Overcharge
6	Parry +2
7	Rending
8	Repulse

KRAG STRIKES BACK

The envoys' new toys are about to get tested. The impacts of the escape pods crashing into the rocky surface of Krag disturbed the ground, and creatures unlike any alien the heroes have ever seen emerge from the landscape in a rage.



The things have the same craggy appearance as the planet's surface, lit from within by a glowing power that can only be unobtainium. It's as though these creatures were fragments of Krag itself, and Krag is angry!

- **KRAG ELEMENTALS (2 per hero):** See below.

KRAG ELEMENTAL

These lumbering humanoids have veins of unobtainium running through their rock bodies. Their eyes glow green and their fists are superheated.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (4)

Edges: Arcane Resistance (Imp)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Magically hardened stone.
- **Breath Weapon:** Krag elementals can spew molten lava using Athletics and a Cone Template for 3d8 damage. This may be Evaded.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless:** Krag elementals are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fiery Aura:** Krag elementals radiate intense heat. At the end of their turn, all adjacent foes suffer 2d6 damage.
- **Immunity (Fire):** Krag elementals take no damage from fire, including arcane powers with a fire or heat trapping.
- **Resilient:** Krag elementals can take one additional Wound.
- **Size 1:** Krag elementals stand over 8' high and weigh 2,000 pounds.
- **Superheated Fists:** Str+d10.

CALL TO ACTION

After a brief moment to regroup and rest, a communicator left behind by the traitors squawks out a distress message:

"Multiple hostile xenos engaged. Half a League polar from Anchor Station. Request fighter support...fighter squadron, come in..."

No support is coming—those fighters were either destroyed in **Stand and Deliver** (page 84) or were forced to withdraw and rearm after their attack on Petra Station. The only ones receiving this message are the heroes!

The comms are encrypted, but the characters have several options for pinpointing the location of their enemies. A successful roll against Electronics at -2 or Hacking at -2 does the job. A successful Persuasion or Performance roll allows a speaker to pretend to be the fighter group asking for exact strike coordinates. Even without messing with the comms the investigators can just strike off in the direction mentioned and find their enemies with a successful Survival roll. Success on any of the above gets the team to Showdown with the Rogue Houses none the wiser, earning them Surprise on the first round. Failure still gets there, but without the element of surprise.

SHOWDOWN

The battle is joined in the rocky mountainscape of Krag. Treacherous soldiers and assassins from the Rogue Houses are engaged in a pitched battle with lifeforms from the planet. It's not clear at first, but this is no accident.

The simplest way to handle the traitors is to treat them all as rogue soldiers (see page 93). The group has two Extras per hero, plus an additional Wild Card villain per hero. For a little more flavor, replace the Wild Card rogue soldiers with unused archetypes (especially those with Arcane Backgrounds) from the missing Great Houses. The variety makes things a little more complicated for the GM, but adds tactical depth and extra hooks to the battle.

The traitors are on one side of the map, the heroes on the other. In the middle are Death Worms, one per player. The traitors are here to kill as many of the worms as they can, and this isn't the first group they've massacred. Unfortunately the creatures don't really distinguish between the two factions, and attack either side at random. Roll out

any attacks against the heroes normally. For attacks against the villains just make a random rogue soldier Shaken and move on.

✦ **ROGUE SOLDIERS (1 per hero):** Use the profile on page 93, but these soldiers are Wild Cards. Alternatively, swap one or all of them out for unused archetypes from the Great Houses that aren't in use.

■ **ROGUE SOLDIERS (2 per hero):** Use the profile on page 93.

■ **DEATH WORMS (1 per hero):** Use the profile found on page 92.

WAIT UNTIL MOM GETS HOME

After five rounds—or any time after the majority of the enemy Wild Cards have been dispatched—the ground shakes and an enormous Krag Worm bursts out from the mountainside and surrounds combatants. Everyone must make a Fear Check at -4 when faced with the scale of the thing. The only way out is through the Krag Worm's coiled body.

Any remaining death worms squeal and burrow into the ground. Whatever few

traitors are left panic and try to flee—only to be crushed under the worm. If there's a Wild Card left he gets the special treatment of being swallowed whole and screaming in terror on his way down the monster's gullet.

This Krag worm was summoned by the distress of the smaller death worms. Dispatching the last of the traitors slaked its anger somewhat, but it still has some fight left in it.

Players can confront the Krag worm using the Giant Foes rules from the *Science Fiction Companion*. Successfully climbing onto the worm allows Called Shots at -4 to sensitive areas between the creature's armored plates. Such attacks ignore the beast's Armor and allow non-Heavy Weapons to inflict damage.

The Krag worm doesn't need to be killed for the heroes to survive. After five rounds its temper cools and it flees, burrowing deep beneath the mountains and away from the survivors. The heroes might find other ways to distract the monster or escape, use Science to somehow drain the worm's energy, or even Hacking to reprogram satellites overhead to



de-orbit and crash down on the beast like meteors.

If the emissaries do manage to kill the Krag worm before it withdraws they find its body is a vast reservoir of unobtainium—enough to restore order to hundreds of planets, or to conquer a hundred more. The person who struck the killing blow becomes the heir apparent to the Emperor.

✦ **KRAG WORM (1):** See page 92.

CLIMB UP A HILL, COME DOWN A MOUNTAIN

Once the Krag worm is gone the site of battle finally grows quiet and still. Everyone present has been changed from being so close to so much raw unobtainium, halting the aging process within them.

A procession of Progenitors marches out of a hidden cave. They bow to the heroes and one of them steps forward to speak.

"Hail to the loyal few. The prophesied conjunction of betrayal has come, and now it is time to choose a new Emperor to sit the eternal throne.

"You have seen with your own eyes and tasted with your own senses the power of Krag. Unobtainium, the fuel that powers the engines of the universe is forged here, and only here, deep inside the planet's core. Only the worms burrow so deep, and they bring that power back to the surface with them. It infuses every part of them. It flakes from their shells as they burst through cliff sides or plunge beneath the rocks.

"The knowledge and power of Krag now passes to you. Choose from yourselves one person to sit the eternal throne and rule the universe. The rest must become secret-bearers, chosen to help rebuild all that was destroyed here, protect the new Emperor, and punish the scheming minds and bloody hands that would undo the delicate balance of power.

"Choose now, and choose wisely."

The Progenitors grow silent and wait for the surviving emissaries to choose a new Emperor from among them. The players can

make this choice however they like. Perhaps a leader has already emerged who has the grudging respect of all present. Perhaps they must all give impassioned speeches (and roll Persuasion) to convince the rest to support them. Perhaps a trial by combat is in order, with whatever rules in place that all can agree on.

If someone wants to get a jump on the competition the Betrayal Setting Rule offers a tempting opportunity, and now is the right time. The Progenitors don't interfere in the selection process, and if it comes to blows or backstabbing they just shrug and note that conjunction of betrayal must not quite be over yet.

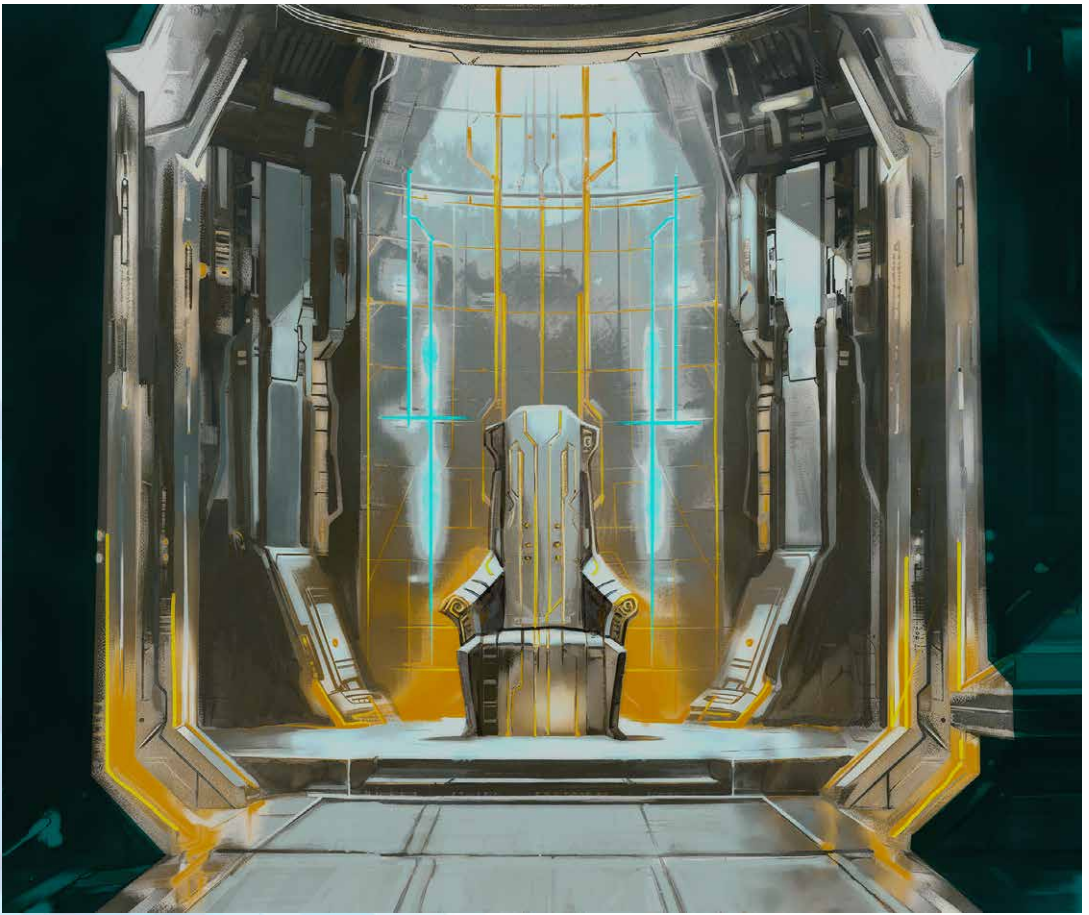
Give anyone who perishes here at the end a Benny—even though the character is dead there's still a use for it!

AFTERMATH

There's one more physiological change the characters undergo thanks to the unobtainium they've been exposed to, a limited form of prescience. As the adventure closes, each character experiences a vision of the future—perhaps the near future, or perhaps an event 10,000 years distant.

Treat this vision as another Interlude. Each player describes the character's vision in order based on the card drawn, and the nature of the vision is based on the card suit from the **Visions** table on page 92. Players may spend Bennies to draw a new card, and choose which card to use.

Note that the characters don't age, so they might appear in visions of the far future. They can still die from violent means. A character who dies in the final part of the adventure still sees a vision—a dying vision—and may be inclined to tell a tale of righteous revenge carried out by their Great House!



A new eternal throne awaits one of the loyal heroes who avenge the fallen Emperor—or a lucky scoundrel who manages to betray his friends at the right moment.

***"TO USE RAW POWER IS TO MAKE YOURSELF
INFINITELY VULNERABLE TO GREATER POWER."***

***-FRANK HERBERT,
DUNE MESSIAH***

VISIONS

SUIT	TYPE OF VISION
Spades	Revenge. The envoy or their house destroys their greatest foe. The foe could be one of the Rogue Houses, an established rival, or even the Progenitors.
Hearts	Peace. Despite it all, the envoy or their heirs find peace and happiness, perhaps by forming an alliance (or marriage) with their current enemies.
Diamonds	Accomplishment. The envoy or their house performs a great deed for the universe, such as freeing it from its dependence on unobtainium.
Clubs	Tragedy. The vision is of the envoy's eventual death or the fall of their Great House. While the ending is sad, at least they can take their enemies with them.
Joker	Destiny. Somehow, in the far future it is this envoy who assumes the eternal throne—even if they died in the present or one of the other visions!

All the visions seen are true, even if they seem to conflict with one another. Clones, necromancy, and the passage of ages leave room for each side to rise and fall multiple times. The idea at this point is just to tell a fun story and wrap up the epic tale with a bit of closure.

ENEMIES

DEATH WORM

The death worm is longer than a human is tall, is covered in flexible sand-yellow scales, lives beneath the soft sand of its desert home, and has the ability to kill a grown man at a distance.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Hard, scaly skin.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Burrow (8):** Death worms can move through sand and soft soil at full Pace and may attack from below.
- **Death Bolt:** Instead of biting, the death worm can fire an internally generated electrical charge strong enough to stop a man's heart or fry electrical systems in a vehicle. This attack uses Shooting. The worm may do this from just beneath the earth, giving it Near Total Cover (−8). Range 3/6/12, Damage 4d6, AP 10.
- **Size 2:** Death worms measure 10' in length and are 1' in diameter.



KRAG WORM

Krag worms tend to corral their prey by moving up onto the surface and looping their long body in a circle around them. The head is always moving, and may rear back and bite inside the circle or spit electricity at targets within. The entire worm reeks of unobtainium.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+12, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 29 (6)

Edges: Arcane Resistance (Imp)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +6:** Heavy Armor; extremely thick hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d10 (II), Heavy Weapon.

- **Burrow (16"):** Deep space worms can tunnel easily through solid rock.
- **Death Bolt:** Instead of biting, the Krag worm can fire a devastating blast of electrical energy. This attack uses Shooting and may be Evaded. Range 50/100/200, Damage 4d10 (III), AP 10, Heavy Weapon, LBT.
- **Fear (-4):** Anyone who sees the creature must make a Fear check at -4.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result in combat doesn't cause a Wound.
- **Immunity:** Immune to electrical-based attacks.
- **Size 15 (Gargantuan):** The average adult deep space worm is 400 feet long and weighs hundreds of tons.
- **Swallow Whole:** Anyone hit by a bite attack must make an Evasion roll or be Swallowed Whole. At the end of the creature's subsequent turns, anyone swallowed must make a Vigor roll at -2 or take a Wound from the crushing gullet and acidic bile. Shaking, Wounding, or otherwise provoking the creature may result in opportunities to escape with an Athletics roll.

- **Unstoppable:** Takes a maximum of one Wound (after Soaking) from any damaging attack unless the attacker's Action Card is a Joker.

ROGUE SOLDIER

These are the elite soldiers of the Rogue Houses. They are fanatics pledged to their faction to death and beyond.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 16 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major, serve their Great House)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Iron Jaw, Nerves of Steel, No Mercy, Soldier

Gear: Infantry battle suit (+6), personal force field (+4 Toughness), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2, Cauterize, No Recoil, Overcharge), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 2× frag grenades.

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Resilient:** Can take one additional Wound.

VEHICLE COLLECTION

The battles with vehicles in this book suggest using both the **Clashes** rules and **Heavy Metal** rules from the *Science Fiction Companion*, and only mention key statistics needed for those. Those systems are optional, so the full profiles for the vehicles are listed here.

These profiles are also available in the *Science Fiction Companion*, but are included here for more convenient reference at the table. The same profiles are also available in the Science Fiction Vehicle Cards, available from PEGinc.com.

MAID MARION—MODIFIED MULTI-PURPOSE TRANSPORT (CLASS III)

These workhorses are designed to haul cargo from system to system, but their modular nature makes them popular frames for other craft just by switching out the superstructure. Older versions drop the shields in favor of more armor or defensive weapons.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	CREW	ENERGY	MODS	COST
10 (Huge)	-1	17	26 (6)	5	5	15	30 (13)	\$13M

MODS: 3× Armor, Atmospheric, FTL Drive, Manual, Shields.

WEAPONS:

- **2× QUAD LINKED LIGHT LASERS (Turret):** Range 150/300/600, Damage 2d10 (II), AP 10, RoF 3, Overcharge, Reaction Fire.

STARFIGHTER (CLASS II)

A multi-role fighter designed to protect capital ships or fly short-range patrols. Variants of this venerable design are used by most factions throughout known space—some trade speed and maneuverability for an FTL drive, tail gunner, or other tactical options.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	CREW	ENERGY	MODS	COST
6 (Large)	+2	18	19 (4)	2	2	5	18 (1)	\$2M

MODS: AM/ECM, 2× Armor, Atmospheric, 2× Fragile, 2× Handling, Increased Speed, Targeting System.

WEAPONS:

- **DUAL LINKED LIGHT PARTICLE CANNONS (Fixed Front):** Range 100/200/400, Damage 4d6+4 (II), AP 5, RoF 3.
- **MISSILE LAUNCHER (Fixed Front):** 24× Light missiles, Range 100/200/400, Damage 6d6 (III), AP 16, RoF 4, Guided, SBT.

HEAVY FIGHTER (CLASS IV)

These heavily-armored space-based fighters are designed to shake off the weapons of lighter fighters, making them ideal for taking on space lanes infested with pirates and the like.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	CREW	ENERGY	MODS	COST
8 (Huge)	0	17	40 (20)	4	2	15	24 (0)	\$4.5M

MODS: AM/ECM, 10× Armor, 2×Boosters, Fragile, Handling, Reduced Crew.

WEAPONS:

- **DUAL LINKED MEDIUM PARTICLE CANNONS (Fixed Front):** Range 100/200/400, Damage 6d6+6 (III), AP 10, RoF 3.
- **GATLING LASER (Turret):** Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d6+4 (I), AP 4, RoF 4, Cauterize, Overcharge, Point Defense, Reaction Fire.
- **MISSILE LAUNCHER (Turret):** 24× Light missiles, Range 100/200/400, Damage 6d6 (III), AP 16, RoF 4, Guided, SBT.
- **MISSILE LAUNCHER (Fixed Front):** 8× Heavy missiles, Range 200/400/800, Damage 8d6 (V), AP 32, Guided, LBT.

CORVETTE (CLASS IV)

Corvettes are the smallest class of vessels regarded as true warships. They patrol space lanes and planetary orbits, and often escort civilian ships or protect installations in dangerous regions of space.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	CREW	ENERGY	MODS	COST
15 (Gar)	-2	17	45 (20)	6	50	30	60 (1)	\$47.3M

MODS: AM/ECM, 10× Armor, FTL Drive, Hangar, Increased Speed, Sensor Array, Targeting System.

WEAPONS:

- **2× QUAD LINKED GATLING LASERS (Turret):** Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d6+4 (I), AP 4, RoF 4, Cauterize, Overcharge, Point Defense, Reaction Fire.
- **DUAL LINKED MEDIUM LASERS (Turret):** Range 150/300/600, Damage 3d10 (III), AP 20, Overcharge.
- **2× MISSILE LAUNCHER (Fixed Front):** 18× Heavy missiles (total across both launchers), Range 200/400/800, Damage 8d6 (V), AP 32, Guided, LBT.

GALACTIC EXPLORATION VESSEL (CLASS V)

Built to boldly go where no one has gone before, these ships are designed to survey the galaxy and make first contact with new life forms. Armed with formidable weaponry and high-tech systems, they stand as a testament to the advancement of the civilization they represent, though gunboat diplomacy is not unheard of.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	CREW	ENERGY	MODS	COST
22 (Gar)	-4	16	50 (20)	8	500	60	88 (0)	\$682.4M

MODS: 10× Armor, Artificial Intelligence (AI), FTL Comms, FTL Drive, Hangar, Matter Scoop, 2× Professional Bay (Healing and Science), Sensor Array, Shields, Targeting System, Teleporter, 5× Toughness.

WEAPONS:

- **2× SUPER LASER (Turret):** Range 150/300/600, Damage 5d10 (V), AP 30, Overcharge.
- **2× TORPEDO TUBE (Fixed Front):** 14× Heavy torpedoes (total across both launchers), Range 300/600/1200, Damage 8d12 (VII), AP 40, Guided, LBT.
- **MEDIUM TRACTOR BEAM (Fixed Front):** Range 100/200/400, may trap up to Size 28 vehicles.

STEALTH CRUISER (CLASS IV)

This cruiser physically resembles a regular cruiser, but it's built with stealth systems, less armor, and a few less weapons. It's designed to slip in close to large capital ships and deliver its deadly missiles and torpedoes.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	CREW	ENERGY	MODS	COST
20 (Gar)	-2	16	45 (20)	6	50	30	80 (0)	\$73.5M

MODS: AM/ECM, 10× Armor, FTL Drive, Hangar, Sensor Array, Shields, Stealth System, Targeting System.

WEAPONS:

- **2× LINKED GATLING LASERS (Turret):** Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d6+4 (I), AP 4, RoF 4, Cauterize, Overcharge, Point Defense, Reaction Fire.
- **DUAL LINKED SUPER LASER (Fixed Front):** Range 150/300/600, Damage 5d10 (V), AP 30, Overcharge.
- **MISSILE LAUNCHER (Turret):** 10× Heavy missiles, Range 200/400/800, Damage 8d6 (V), AP 32, Guided, LBT.
- **2× TORPEDO TUBE (Fixed Front):** 10× Heavy torpedoes (total across both launchers), Range 300/600/1200, Damage 8d12 (VII), AP 40, LBT.

ASSAULT WALKER (CLASS IV)

Assault walkers are the anvil to the hammer of the heavies, and renowned as the battle masters of armored combat.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	ENERGY	MODS	COST
10 (Huge)	-1	6	45 (20)	5	5	30 (0)	\$5.9M

HEIGHT/WEIGHT: 40'/120 tons, Strength d12+10 (I).

MODS: 10× Armor, Targeting System, 5× Toughness.

WEAPONS:

- **QUAD LINKED MEDIUM LASER (Fixed Front):** Range 150/300/600, Damage 3d10 (III), AP 20, Overcharge.
- **MISSILE LAUNCHER (Fixed Front):** 24× Medium missiles, Range 150/300/600, Damage 7d6 (IV), AP 24, RoF 2, Guided, MBT.
- **HEAVY CANNON (Fixed Front):** Range 100/200/400, Damage 5d10 (IV), AP 20.

HEAVY FIRE SUPPORT WALKER (CLASS IV)

Heavies use big guns to destroy important mission objectives, and are screened by lighter walkers.

SIZE	HAND.	TOP SPEED	TOUGH	WOUNDS	ENERGY	MODS	COST
9 (Huge)	-1	6	40 (20)	5	5	27 (0)	\$5.2M

HEIGHT/WEIGHT: 35'/65 tons, Strength d12+9 (I).

MODS: 10× Armor, Targeting System.

WEAPONS:

- **QUAD LINKED MEDIUM LASER (Fixed Front):** Range 150/300/600, Damage 3d10 (III), AP 20, Overcharge.
- **MISSILE LAUNCHER (Fixed Front):** 6× Heavy missiles, Range 200/400/800, Damage 8d6 (V), AP 32, Guided, LBT.
- **2× MEDIUM PARTICLE CANNONS (Pintle Mount):** Range 100/200/400, Damage 6d6+6 (III), AP 10, RoF 3.