



HARDNOVA II

ENHANCEMENT
PACK BETA

THIS BOOK REQUIRES
HARDNOVA II

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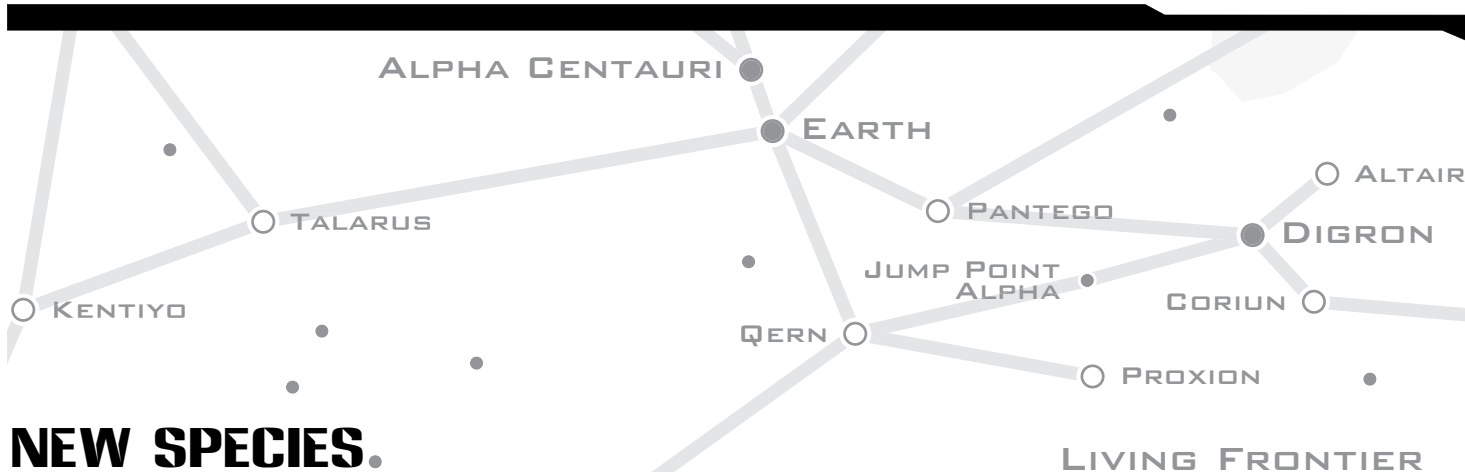
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THIS BOOK REQUIRES HARDNOVA 2: SPACE ACTION ADVENTURES

Welcome to the second **HardNova 2: Enhancement Pack**. This book contains new material for use with HardNova 2 as well as five scenarios, new templates, and an additional reference page. If you would like to contribute your own scenarios, templates, species, or gimmicks, feel free to join our Collaborative (<http://www.pigames.net/collaborative/>), or simply drop by our forums (<http://www.pigames.net/forum/>) and let us know what's on your mind.



NEW SPECIES.

A handful of new species are provided in this book, but only one is a member of the United Sovereign Worlds. The majority of new races either fall outside of USU jurisdiction or have petitioned for entry. Notes are provided with each description on how the gamemaster may introduce these aliens into stories as player characters.

Because the universe is always evolving, additional information on these species and how they fit into this region of space is provided on page 8. New gimmicks specifically for use with these alien races (plus a few extra) are also included on page 6. As usual, the gamemaster should feel free to invent his own gimmicks, skills, and equipment as needed to further his vision of the aliens and the story.

KINOSIANS

Kinosians were once an oppressed people, living only to serve the tarkosians for centuries. As part of the reforms required for the tarkosians to join the USU, they had to set the kinosians free and provide them with their own communities. In the twenty years since Tarkos was welcomed into the USU, the kinosians have done well for themselves.

Kinosians are almost identical to the Tarkosians, but have been spared all the genetic aberrations, and are therefore free of serious mutation—kinosians have red, brown, or blonde hair, and all their fingers. They are also quite attractive. Many suffer from poor health due to the planet's atmospheric conditions, but are otherwise capable of reaching human-level performance in all areas. The educational level of citizens over the age of thirty is a sore subject, as older members were once slaves and not permitted schooling. Now, however, they regularly attend universities all over the USU, and many go on to make tremendous contributions in science and culture.

The Kinosian Circle is their governing body, and presides over all matters under the guidance of the USU. Travel visas are available, but applicants must follow strict medical, educational, and sociological requirements before they are issued, in order to protect the kinosian citizens. Many attend otherworld universities, cross-cultural internships, USU-sponsored events, or as hired-hands for reputable corporations. These travellers are often mistaken for tarkosians.

KINOSIAN CHARACTERS

Limitations

reasoning 2*
influence 3

Required Gimmicks

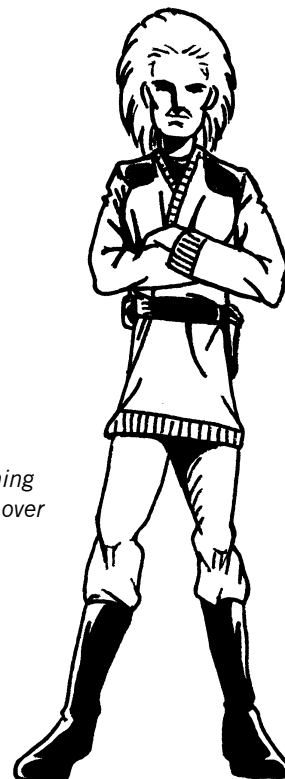
striking appearance
musclebound
discrimination
poor
reduced stamina**

Optional Gimmicks

none

* the maximum rating for the reasoning ability is 2 only if the character is over the age of thirty

** roll one die; on a roll of 1, the character possesses the reduced stamina gimmick



DASHI

Dashi are a near-human species that have evolved on the frigid world of Dashik, which is completely covered with ice and snow. Dashi skin is white as paper, and their faces, although human in shape and function, are covered in a translucent shell that is segmented into three connecting pieces—two seams run from the sides of each eye to the base of each ear, with a third running along the upper jaw-line.

A secretive race, they are prone to backstabbing and clandestine behavior in the efforts to further their own schemes. In addition, they possess a flair for cajoling their way into any type of situation. Dashi are incapable of tolerating median planetary temperatures, so those who take to the stars wear specialized skinsuits that help moderate their frigid body temperatures. The dashi are the only species in the galaxy with no form of blood for gas circulation.

Players should only portray dashi characters as mercenaries or other independent businessmen within USU space, because their presence is only tolerated as long as they do not cause too much trouble.

DASHI CHARACTERS

Limitations

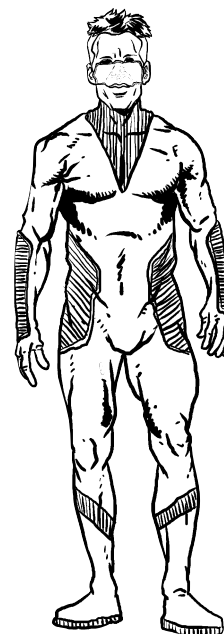
reasoning 4

Required Gimmicks

environmental dependency
(frigid temperatures)
empathic sense
discrimination
reduced stamina (when in skinsuit)

Optional Gimmicks

criminal



SLIGGS

The Sligg are an amorphous species from the planet Sliggar, and are comprised of a matte-black, tar-like substance that they can bend and shape at will. In fact, their molecular cohesion is such that projectiles pass harmlessly through their fluid forms, and they can easily maneuver air vents and grates simply by oozing their way through the openings. Some can even modulate their color. Despite their limited forms, sliggs do possess an intelligence that is at least on par with that of humanity—they are able to use and create technological devices and, as a culture, have managed to master interstellar flight.

Sligg society is primitive in comparison to other species. They approve High Leaders, or their governing council, based on past victories and accomplishments rather than electing them. Other Leaders assume power with their strength, similar to ancient Earth feudal societies. Most sligg leaders are somewhat fair and their species has seen relative peace for centuries. Small skirmishes are common between power factions, but these are short-lived and typically settled by the High Leaders.

Sliggs have recently petitioned for admission to the USU. They make excellent engineers, pilots, and researchers. Sliggs encounter numerous roadblocks as merchants and other social professions due to their appearance. Sliggs produce sounds that are inaudible to all other races, thereby requiring special translation devices when communicating with USU species.

SLIGG CHARACTERS

Limitations

influence 3

Required Gimmicks

weak
disfigurement
amorphous

Optional Gimmicks

camouflage



UL-MARIANS

UI-Marians are monstrous, sloth-like creatures from the plant UI-Mar. They are rude and offensive, but rather nonviolent and prone to cowardice. Most UI-Marians have their clawed hands deep in criminal activities throughout the galaxy. Many are so influential, even within the USU, that they control the commerce and economic institutions on entire worlds. Their fur protects against the extreme cold of their homeworld, and their frames are wiry, making them excellent climbers.

UI-Marians take their time with every move and calculation. While this may suggest low intelligence and reflexes, their culture encourages consistency and success over rashness and clumsiness, so they have adopted this tradition of excessive caution in order to avoid both embarrassment and punishment for their mistakes. UI-Marian society is run like a corporation, from the executive ministers to the numerous grades of trade, banking, and acquisition ministers.

While UI-Marians are not members of the USU, they are welcomed on most worlds despite their poor manners.

UL-MARIAN CHARACTERS

Limitations

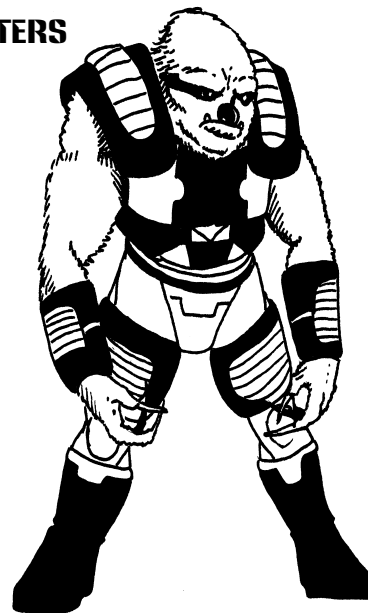
awareness 4

Required Gimmicks

claws
musclebound
toughness (1)
maladroit
sure-paced
sure-climber
weak-willed

Optional Gimmicks

criminal
fame



SIKATAI

Sikatai are shaped like humans, but their skin is composed of a soft, resealing gelatinous structure, and their arms are connected to their waists, directly above their legs, rather than their shoulders. Their hairless skin contains sacs that radiate soft light capable of illuminating an area within a radius of ten feet. These sacs are also capable of a small electrical discharge. Each individual produces a different hue and shade that acts like a fingerprint, and is also the basis for their naming practices—names represent their lineage, but can be replaced by the designation of their radiated hue. Sikatai females are shorter and rounder than males, and almost never leave their homeworld as they are kept ignorant by the ruling party—they cannot hold government positions or attend universities.

Sikatai government is parliamentary at best and reduced to a shouting match at worst, made up of consuls from their homeworld of Sikatair and each colony. Many days are spent in loud arguments between consuls of the various parties and on occasion, even wrestling matches occur. Such things are perfectly legal in their political process, and an entire volume is dedicated just to the subject of “assembly negotiations.”

Trade talks are underway with the USU, but it is a slow process, since sikatai require exacting details. Players should only portray sikatai characters as guides, explorers, merchants, rogues, and outcasts.

SIKATAI CHARACTERS

Limitations

fitness 4

Required Gimmicks

heightened touch
weak
electrical discharge
toughness (2)

Optional Gimmicks

fame
military rank



TSROTH

The tsroth originate from the planet Tsrogch, deep in the Quiet Frontier. They are an insectoid hive race that does not appear to have any hierarchal structure, but always seem well-organized and efficient. Adult tsroth feature two flattened, oblong carapaces. The head and upper parts of the thorax are covered with minute punctures, while six sawtooth-like projections rest on each side. Tsroth are masters of bio-architecture; their ships, cities, and even items of convenience are all, literally, living creatures.

Only a single player in a group should portray a tsroth character, and then only as as a prisoner or advisor to the USU. Because tsroth are a hive species, they require constant contact with each other. Once contact is broken for an extended period of time (such as a year), their alliance to the hive (or its current ally) is also broken, and the character bonds with the first group encountered at length. Such tsroth are viewed as the enemy by the hive and are never permitted to return. The hive does not bear malice towards these rogues any more than it does towards other species—they are merely seen as the dead reborn into another species.

TSROTH CHARACTERS

Limitations

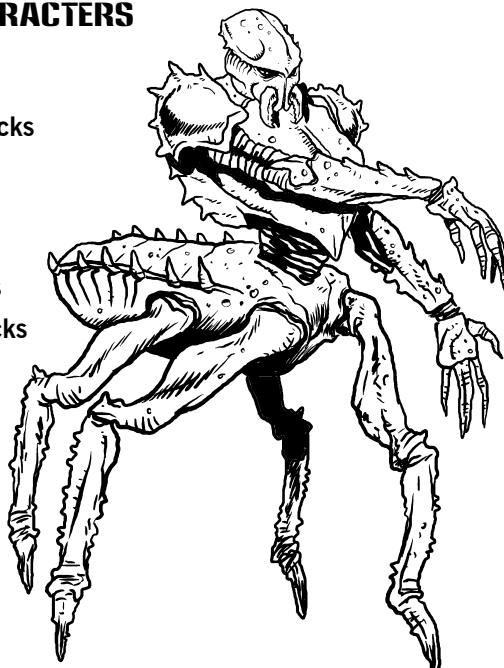
influence 3

Required Gimmicks

toughness (3)
clumsy
claws
scent trail
color-blindness

Optional Gimmicks

scent-masking
hive-conscious



DIRYASH

Diryash are tall, spare bipeds, with long slender legs that are ideal for pursuing prey. They run on the balls of their feet, with two stubby toes for traction. Their arms are muscular, with very complex jointing compared to humans, allowing great range of motion. Diryash have two long, slender fingers that can be used as both thumbs and fingers. Their necks are long and snakelike, with a narrow, wedge-shaped head and long tapering muzzle that can be snapped forward and back with great speed. Males have two upwards-thrusting tusks in their upper jaw that are used to slash in close-quarter fighting. Their eyes are weak and color-blind, but excellent at detecting motion nearby. Diryash have a superb sense of smell, and they can smell fear among other things. Diryash have little hair, and their skin is smooth and lustrous charcoal gray, which wrinkles at the joints as they age.

The diryash are predators, whose ancestors hunted prey in packs. Because diryash cannot eat long-dead food, and must hunt and kill their meals, their ships are full of vermin of various species bred for their qualities in the chase. Sudden movements provoke a response from the diryash, and running away makes them instinctively give chase.

Diryash civilization is based on status, bluff, and intimidation. They are like pack animals, and a leader is only able to command the pack if he has its confidence. Setbacks make a diryash pack uneasy, and repeated setbacks result in new leadership. All diryash are ambitious and want to be leaders, but they are also realistic and understand that not all can lead. Serving the leader provides status, and advancement brings new and better opportunities to lead. If a leader fails, it is the follower's duty to remove the leader and either go for the position himself, or support another candidate. Success and status is magnified by risk—a risky venture is worth more than an easy one.

Beyond the pack is the faction, which is a combination of packs. The leader of the faction receives the support of the pack leaders, and is himself removed after repeated failures. The Pack Lord is the supreme leader of the diryash, and receives the support of the factions—until he fails, when another Pack Lord replaces him. Diryash society is used to such upheavals, and seldom becomes unraveled when it happens, but the factions are almost continuously at a state of war amongst themselves, furiously scheming to supplant the current Pack Lord. Diryash can cooperate very well once questions of leadership are decided. Overthrown leaders are not always killed since they have a lot to offer packs, but they lose a great deal of status. Sometimes fallen leaders can even gather enough status in the pack to regain their positions.

Diryash females do not venture into space. They run packs of their own on the homeworld, and only successful males are allowed by them to breed. Diryash females run pack-based businesses and other ventures, building and maintaining the diryash society. Mating occurs once a year, and most diryash males return to their homeworlds at this time.

As with the Ruthdii Komar, the diryash are becoming an increasing threat to the United Sovereign Worlds. Attacks are becoming more common, typically laying ambushes for powerful starships, and outright blasting poorly-armed and slow freighters. Given the circumstances, the USU may have to shift its attention away from Ruthdii threats to the new diryash incursions.

Diryash are recommended for use only as non-player characters. But, if need be, only a single player in a group should portray a diryash character. He would work with the USU or other entity as a prisoner, outcast, or rogue. It may even be possible for an entire pack to do the same by order of their current leader, but such a group could change its orders with a new leader or as part of an overall deception.

DIRYASH CHARACTERS

Limitations

none

Required Gimmicks

heightened smell
predatorial response
color-blindness
quick synapses

Optional Gimmicks

criminal
fame
military rank
multilingual
appendages
microscanners
tolerance to pain



NEW GIMMICKS

ENHANCEMENT GIMMICKS

Air Filtration	the character's body processes gases before reaching the lungs, thereby purifying them for his respiratory system
Amorphous	the character's body has no solid structure or form, and can take on a variety of shapes as if it were a densely-packed fluid—the character can even squeeze through small openings and wrap around obstacles or corners at will; the character is immune to solid weapons, such as archaic slug-throwers and swords, but not explosive and energy weapons, such as explosive projectiles (ep), electrostunners, and blasters
Quick Synapses	the character is unusually quick for his size—his fitness rating is two greater for all reaction rolls
Scent-Masking	the character can alter his scent so that it imitates that of another character with the scent trail gimmick, or even make it so faint that no one other than himself can detect it (a challenging or impossible tracking task may still be able to follow the trail) <i>requires the scent trail gimmick</i>
Scent Trail	the character possesses a gland, which secretes a chemical with a scent that is very mild and almost sweet to most of the races in the galaxy; the character can detect the scent from at least one-hundred feet away, and uses it to leave trails; so long as the scent trail is not broken, it can be followed to its end-point, but a broken trail requires a tracking task to continue following it (the gamemaster should adjust the difficulty based on the distance between scents); each character with this gimmick leaves a unique scent discernible only by others with this gimmick

Sure-Climber	the character has a natural talent for climbing—his fitness rating is two greater for all climbing tasks
Sure-Paced	the character acts slowly, but deliberately and accurately—he receives a penalty of -2 on all reaction rolls, but can take an extra turn on any task to receive a bonus of -1DIFF provided his focus is not interrupted

DETRIMENTAL GIMMICKS

Color-Blindness	the character cannot distinguish between different colors—awareness-based tasks involving camouflage, disguise, or otherwise discerning subtle color differences receive +3DIFF
Environmental Dependency	the character is dependent on specific environmental conditions, and cannot survive for extended periods of time outside of this environment without the proper equipment; exposure outside of this environment inflicts 1FAT per half-hour
Hive-Conscious	even if the character is light-years away from his hive, he still receives occasional empathic sensations that mostly consist of strong feelings of pain, joy, and sorrow—the character must make a complex influence-based composure task in order to resist these feelings; a failure indicates that he is temporarily overcome and may not act for a number of turns equal to the roll of one die the character's awareness rating indicates the number of times he receives these sensations per story
Maladroit	the character is clumsy when it comes to using his hands for manipulating small objects—his fitness rating is two less for all relevant tasks

Predatorial Response the character involuntary focuses on any movement within his field of vision, and instinctively pursues fleeing prey or attacks threatening opponents upon failing a trivial reasoning-based composure task—if this task is successful, however, the character feels these urges, but is able to resist them

Weak-Willed the character lacks willpower and courage—he receives a penalty of +2DIFF on all composure tasks

STARSHIP GIMMICKS

Bio-Architecture the starship has been grown from living tissue and DNA, and functions as a typical space vessel in every aspect, except that it cannot be fitted with normal energy weapons, as they inflict 1STR with each use; the craft may also communicate directly with its crew through special computer interfaces, thereby creating a very strong bond with them—the craft is not likely to function for those with whom it has not bonded

Detachable Cargo Hold the cargo hold can be detached from the ship instantly and retrieved at a later time—while attached, the ship receives a penalty of +3DIFF on all speed-based tasks and +4DIFF on all handling-based tasks; additionally, the craft has a frame rating of 1 when attacked and rolling for damage—if a called strike is performed against the ship itself, its normal frame rating is used

Tractor Emitters see page 10

GIMMICKS

This list of gimmicks was compiled from all current, official HardNova 2 products.

CULTURAL

criminal	mental shield
elite	post sense
fame	psychokinesis
military rank	radiance
multilingual	sixth sense
planetary authority	telepathic sense
striking appearance	telepathy
USU authority	telesense: hearing

ENHANCEMENT

air filtration	telesense: touch
amorphous	telesense: vision
autoinjector	trickery

camouflage	DETRIMENTAL
claws	addiction
compound vision	clumsy
constitution	color-blindness
dextrous	discrimination
electrical discharge	disfigurement
heightened hearing	electrical vulnerability
heightened smell	environmental dependency
heightened taste	enslaved
heightened touch	hive-conscious
heightened vision	maladroit
logic	poor
musclebound	predatorial response
night vision	reduced stamina
optical ranging	weak
quick synapses	weak-willed
remote access	STARSHIP

PSIONIC

astrosense	ablative hull plating
attuned	assault bay
aurasense	bio-architecture
brain pick	bot bay
empathic sense	cargo bay
kinetic assault	cloaking device
locate	detachable cargo hold
mental assault	fighter bay
mental illumination	hidden compartments
mental illusion	hyperspace generator
mental revelation	passenger quarters
	point defenses
	reinforced systems
	remote network
	shuttle bay
	stasis chamber
	synthetic matrix
	tractor emitters
	troops bay

THE SHIFTING COSMOS

The universe is an ever-changing entity, alive in one sense, yet merely a place or even an idea to some. Because of this dynamic nature, new discoveries are common and seemingly encouraged by the darkness of space. Man is a curious soul, and wanders farther into the darkness just to see what is out there. Changes to the landscape of the United Sovereign Worlds are subtle, but they also lead to new avenues of adventure as described below.

THE ASTAYIK EXPANSE

Still an area of mystery, more and more multiworld corporations are taking risks to locate new sources of ore. Digronian companies in particular are seeking wealth in the Expanse. Some kt'sorii endeavors have also been launched to chart the Expanse, but with little success thanks to the myriad of energy disturbances.

Initial contact with the dashi was first made within the Expanse. A kt'sorii advanced-sensor scout was exploring the area while it received a partial distress signal. Upon investigating the source, they came across a damaged dashi mining ship and offered assistance. This act of kindness was the beginning of relatively peaceful relations between the USU and Dashi Supreme Order, despite numerous criminal acts committed by dashi con-men, pirates, and racketeers. The dashi homeworld of Dashik is off-limits to USU citizens unless sponsored by a dashi of good standing.

Security leaks have made the existence of the Ruthdii Solex known to the general public. They are thought to be on the far side of the Expanse, although the actual coordinates do not exist and the USU has placed a quarantine on that region of space. Anyone breaking the quarantine can be subject up to twenty years of imprisonment. It is commonly believed that the Solex are Ruthdii fugitives, seeking to be free from Komar oppression. Extremist groups, on the other hand, see all Ruthdii as the same evil monsters and wish to exterminate them once and for all.

THE BADLANDS

Little has changed in this region of space, with the exception of the continually growing colony of B-137. Originally a mining colony, this moon is turning into quite the boomworld. With the charting of a safe route to the colony, USU citizens now flock to B-137 with the hopes of finding a new life—one in which they can settle and earn a living on their own, rather than working for some multiworld corporation getting rich off of their sweat. Life on B-137 is beginning to resemble that of the Ancient Wild West of Earth.

THE LIVING FRONTIER

An informal border has been drawn between USU and Ruthdii Komar space. Unilaterally determined by the results of the most recent conflicts, the border seems to be stable. Ruthdii aggression has stalled, and while officials do not publicly admit their fears, they do predict a major resurgence of activity in the near future. Some believe that the Komar are fighting a war on a different front, and against an even more powerful enemy. Others theorize that the Ruthdii, having been held back by USU forces, are simply looking to expand their territory in other directions rather than face direct opposition. Only time will tell how this conflict evolves.

THE QUIET FRONTIER

Most notable events in this region of space are a result of activity by tsroth mercenaries. While there is no direct evidence to suggest that the tsroth hive has declared war on humanity and its allies, the frequency of attacks on USU civilian spacecraft is steadily increasing. The USU council is becoming increasingly concerned with these pirate-like attacks, surmising that the tsroth are gearing up for something big. Because tsrothian space seems to parallel that of the Ruthdii Komar, one such possibility is that they are the threat causing the Ruthdii to ignore the USU. Captured tsroth mercenaries have provided little information, as mere “drones” are not privy to their species’ true agenda.

THE “NEW FRONTIER”

This region of space was originally thought to be barren of both habitable worlds and life, but a recent discovery has changed all that. Both the UI-Marians and the sligg evolved in this area. Because there was no interest in further exploration here, both of these species contacted the USU first. New expeditions to the recently dubbed “New Frontier” have not been fruitful, but they continue.

The UI-Marians first approached the kt'sorii in hopes of formalizing trade agreements. Despite their rude demeanor, the UI-Marians and kt'sorii finalized the various deals quickly. This was all thanks to the incredible diplomatic skill of the female-led kt'sorii bureaucracy. UI-Marians and male kt'sorii enjoy throwing insults at each other, both understanding that they are mere words. A formal sport has even been created out of it, which is widely broadcast within the USU and on UI-Mar. The USU and UI-Marians have normalized relations, and both have prospered.

The sligg discovered Alpha Centauri while exploring the vastness of space. They were unable to communicate with the centaurians initially. After several days of finding a way to converse with them, the sligg forced their way onto a freighter leaving orbit to examine the computer systems used on the vessel. Before even reaching the computers, a pair

of centaurian telepaths opened a dialog and the sligg were escorted to a USU station orbiting the planet. The centaurs proved to be a vital key in normalizing relations with the sligg, and thanks to more intimate telepathic connections made with sligg officials, relations got even better, eventually leading to Sligg petitioning to be a Member World.

THE SIKATAI NETWORK

Charming and peaceful, the sikatai have been granted limited access to USU space. There is currently a heavy tariff placed on sikatai goods and transactions by various USU worlds, as the two governments work to finalize a free trade agreement. Because the sikatai dissect and investigate every claim made and each proposal submitted to exacting detail, these talks seem like they will never end. The norm in sikatai society is to argue and fight in order to win a position, but they have chosen to forego their usual ways in favor of USU-approved methods in order to avoid conflict with aliens. The kt'sorii can hold their own in such disagreements, however, as can the UI-Marians to a limited degree—UI-Marians tend to back down when it seems sikatai will turn violent.

The Sikatai Network of Colonies is off-limits to USU citizens, although ambassadors are free to go as they please. Exploration vessels with the proper credentials have also been granted free passage through their territories to what the sikatai call the "Beyond." Most of these scouting missions carry special Assembly-appointed consuls to assist in determining which routes are most promising. Both governments welcome this interstellar cooperation and seek to develop close ties, but with the sikatai's negotiation style, their visions of the future may take longer to reach than expected.

MISCELLANEOUS

The planet Gill has been formally made an associate member of the United Sovereign Worlds. It holds limited representative and voting rights on the USU Council, but is slowly becoming the place to visit. Its only moon has been designated as an X-an Protected World, because of its numerous X-an settlements.

The duties of the USU Rangers have shifted away from intelligence work, and are now primarily assuming law enforcement and relief missions. Ranger Special Services divisions have been sequestered to the USU Navy for defense against the Ruthdii Komar threat. With new hostile aliens on the rise, the Rangers have also been patrolling the most-threatened areas for alien incursions.

Because of the battles against the Ruthdii Komar at and near Jump Point Alpha, most supralight travel between Digron and Qern is made via stargate or diverted through Pantego, thereby avoiding the threat of Ruthdhii attack.

MORE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

PERSONAL WEAPONS

Tsrothian Spore Flechettes

This carbine is organic in nature, based on a genetically engineered form of plant-life. Upon maturity, the plant is removed from its incubation chamber and has a shelf-life of about two years. After that, it begins to decay and dies within weeks. The weapon physically resembles any other firearm in shape, but its surface is that of tree bark. The spore flechette fires a volley of tiny pin-like spores that can easily puncture the skin. While the weapon can be considered under-powered compared to USU weapons, it is extremely powerful when wielded by large numbers of troops due to its wide field of coverage.

Tsrothian Kelti Throwers

As with most Tsroth arms, this huge rifle is grown from organic matter. The process requires the grafting of tissue and organs from animals native to the Tsroth's home planet of Tsrogch. It launches compressed bolts of toxic acid that penetrate even armor. All reaction rolls receive a penalty of -2 when carrying this weapon.

EP-E Weapons

75 - 200 credits

These weapons are similar to ep pistols, except that instead of firing explosive rounds, they fire slugs that ignite, surging an electrical charge through a small area of atmosphere upon impact. The area affected is roughly one-foot in diameter and typically only strikes one target, although reports of two victims being hit is not unprecedented (a triumph can strike two characters if standing next to each other). This technology was developed for shipboard use, since they are not capable of damaging a vessel's superstructure. Although unlikely, they can play havoc with a ship's computer systems. Ablative armors protect against these weapons as if they were blasters. They are no known rifle versions of this weapon, only pistols.

Diryash Repeaters

These weapons are similar to ep rifles, except that instead of firing explosive rounds, they fire heated, metallic balls, burning through most organic materials upon impact. The projectiles disintegrate over distances, making ranged shots less effective. Ablative armors protect against these weapons as if they were blasters.

STARSHIP WEAPONS

Boarder Cannons cannon: 5,000 credits ; projectile: 15,000 credits

Boarder cannons are large, projectile weapons that fire twelve-foot-long, sharp, metal spikes capable of punching through even the thickest hulls. Boarder spikes ignore protection from shields and ablative hulls. If the spike hits, it instantly lodges in the vessel's hull, even if the damage done was not enough to penetrate the ship's frame. Each spike is fitted with three spider-like boarder bots, programmed to enter the ship and incapacitate the crew. A small explosive halts the flight of spikes that miss their target, and a short-range homing beacon enables them to be retrieved after the battle. The boarder cannon has found use in the private security sector, and is rapidly gaining notoriety among criminal organizations as a means of capturing cargo vessels intact. Some pirates even refit the boarder bots with standard blaster weapons to ensure that no witnesses are left alive to tell the tale.

Diryash Cannons

This ship-based version of the diryash repeater relies on energy-charged projectiles rather than thermal balls to increase effectiveness. Similarly, the charge degrades over distance. Ablative hull plating does not offer protection against these cannons, however.

Harpoon Cannons 2,000 - 5,000 credits

Harpoon cannons are primitive mining and geological survey cannons (and sometimes discarded boarder cannons) modified to fire ten to twelve-foot-long, barbed metal spikes. Harpoon spikes ignore protection from shields and ablative armor. If the spike hits, it instantly lodges in the vessel's hull, even if the damage done was not enough to penetrate the ship's frame. A tow cable attached to the end of each spike prevents smaller ships from fleeing or entering hyperspace—all piloting tasks also receive a penalty of +5DIFF. The cable can be severed with the point defenses gimmick (routine difficulty), other ship-based weapons (challenging difficulty), or manually (at the director's discretion). Harpoon cannons make effective low-tech tractor beams, and are becoming more common on larger pirate vessels. In some systems, mere possession of a harpoon cannon is enough to warrant arrest unless proper documents can be provided.

Magnetic Tracer Rockets/Mines 1,500 credits

Magnetic tracing rockets are fired from rocket batteries and contain clusters of small magnetic discs, called tracer mags (the tracers may also be fitted into gravitic mines). The rockets are designed to explode before impact, creating a low-powered shockwave and releasing a cloud of tracer mags that automatically latch onto the nearest ship's hull. Once affixed, the mags emit a signal, making it easier for enemy gunners to target the craft—they receive a bonus of -2DIFF. Tracer mags can be pre-programmed to latch onto a specific part of a ship's

systems (cockpit, engines, weapon systems, etc.), eliminating the penalty for called shots to that area (in addition to providing the targeting bonus). Tracer mags cannot be reused once launched, and conflicting signals and electromagnetic interference render them ineffective in large-scale starship battles or ion storms. Tracer mags can be discharged from a ship's hull with a routine advanced engineering task, but this action inflicts 1MEC on the ship.

Tsrothian Plasma Cannon

This ship-based weapon system is grown in the same method as the kelti thrower, but at a larger scale and with a focus on firing bolts of heated plasma rather than acid.

Tsrothian Plasma Torpedoes

This plasma weapon is launched at distant craft like a missile, and ignites upon impact.

OTHER STARSHIP SYSTEMS

Tractor Emitters 10,000 credits

These emitters focus an electromagnetic beam interspersed with charged particles, which, when targeted at another vessel, create an almost unbreakable bond. A tractor beam can then operate in one of three ways: pull a target towards the ship, push one away, or maintain the distance between the two craft. The emitters include fail-safe mechanisms so that a more powerful craft targeted by the tractor cannot pull the smaller craft operating it. Instead, the emitter automatically adjusts the strength of the beam in order to maintain the proper distance between the two vessels. Tractors are often employed to capture rogue vessels or tow disabled ones, and can also function on objects, such as asteroids and debris, roughly the same size and mass of the starship.

Tractors only operate at point blank and short ranges, and are activated in the same manner as energy weapons such as laser cannons. Supralight speeds are not conducive to tractors, and in the event of a successful targeting operation at these speeds, sheering forces would rip the two ships apart. They are also non-functional in ion storms and nebulae.

Just because a ship has successfully locked its tractor beam on another vessel, it does not mean that the target is immobilized. A successful speed-based piloting task is required to tow a vessel that is resisting the effects of the tractor. The base difficulty value is equal to the difference between the targeted craft's and targeting craft's frame ratings (target frame rating - tractor frame rating) and affected by normal environmental modifiers, including the target's speed rating. The difficulty is also increased by a value equal to the targeted ship's current shields rating. A successful hit with the tractor beam reduces the target ship's shields rating by one. Tractor power can also be increased (-2DIFF) at the expense of gaining one grade of mechanical stress.

SCENARIO BETA 1

IN THE VOID

This scenario assumes that the characters actually own a starship, preferably a tramp freighter, and are actively salvaging derelict ships for profit. If no one in the group possesses a ship, feel free to assign them to a civilian vessel as part of the crew. While on a routine salvage mission, the characters stumble across a massive starship drifting aimlessly in deep space. Hailing the ship only garners dead silence and a scan for life-forms provides inconclusive data. For all intents and purposes, the ship is dead. Docking with the vessel requires only a routine scanning task to locate the ship's exterior airlock door and then a routine piloting (spacecraft) task to actually dock with it. Breaching the airlock door is a bit more difficult, as it is magnetically sealed by the ship's security overrides. Any character with the computers skill should be able to bypass the override with a complex task.

GHOST SHIP

The ship, registered as the S.S. Crichton, is massive, easily dwarfing even the largest of dreadnoughts. With that in mind, the vessel does have several decks that serve to facilitate specific functions. The top deck is comprised solely of the bridge. The second and third decks primarily contain science and research labs. The fourth deck contains the crew quarters, galley, and several lounges. Finally, the last deck is mostly reserved for engineering, cargo space, and computer subsystems.

S.S. CRICHTON

-2	-3	+4	5	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

4 laser cannon turrets (linked pairs)

GIMMICKS

cargo bay, shuttle bay, hyperspace generator (+5), reinforced systems, stasis chamber

FIRST CONTACT

After the characters have explored the vessel for a while, their is an ever-increasing sense of quiet emptiness that permeates the empty rooms and corridors. There are absolutely no signs of any crew-members, alive or dead. That is, until the party meets the ship's only human inhabitant—Doctor Charles Cygnus. The good doctor has been monitoring the party since the moment they boarded the ship, but is reluctant to make his presence known until he can determine their intentions. When he does finally meet the crew, Cygnus portrays himself as a dedicated researcher exploring deep space in search of cosmic anomalies. If asked about the crew, Cygnus states that he is the only human aboard and his vessel is crewed by a staff of robotic assistants. The truth of the matter is that Doctor Cygnus and his robot servants actually murdered the ship's crew nearly a decade ago, once they discovered his plans to reconfigure the sensor systems and skim the event horizon of a black hole. Despite first appearances, Cygnus is actually a crazed, egotistical scientist who is bent on searching for the secrets of time travel, something he believes can be found by analyzing the interaction of hyperspace portals and a black hole's event horizon.

JOIN US

Doctor Cygnus assures the characters that he is simply performing research and asks that he be allowed to conduct his experiments in peace. Before bidding the party farewell, however, he invites them to dine with him, as it has been years since he has had contact with other non-robotic lifeforms. Should the characters decline, Cygnus insists and if necessary, prevents them from leaving, stating that his vessel is about to gather data from an approaching cosmic anomaly and any trajectory fluctuations can corrupt the data as it is gathered by his probes. During dinner, the doctor remains a cordial and gracious host, sharing his experiences aboard the vessel and his time spent among his robotic crew. A successful routine investigation task proves his demeanor is a ruse, however, but the characters are not able to discern his lies, just that he seems uncomfortable about something. When dinner is finished and the characters make their way back to their own ship, they quickly discover that something is wrong with the

docking controls, preventing them from disembarking. Doctor Cygnus offers to provide quarters for the party while his robotic servants gather the necessary parts needed to replace the faulty docking clamp. A routine engineering task reveals that someone tampered with the faulty system, causing the malfunction. The characters are led to spacious living quarters that can fit up to six people very comfortably. It should become apparent that they are trapped inside their accommodations (a complex computer or finesse task can circumvent the door locks). Once the characters escape from their quarters, a rumble of the engines is felt, and the vessel energizes its hyperspace generator. With their own ship disabled, the only way out of this mess is to take control of the bridge.

CAT AND MOUSE

When it becomes apparent to the good doctor that the characters are heading for the bridge, he dispatches several robots to deal with the party. The race for the bridge should be a harrowing one, complete with close-calls and life-threatening battles with crazed bots. The characters should be allowed to eventually reach their destination, but not without Cygnus' killer robots close behind. Upon reaching the bridge, the characters may barricade themselves inside while attempting to override the vessel's astronavigational system. In the process, they discover the horrifying truth—the ship is on a set course for a nearby black hole and should arrive at its destination in just under five minutes.

END GAME

Overriding the ship's navigational coordinates requires a complex astronavigation or challenging computers task. The attempt should be completely nerve-wracking and the possibility of Cygnus' robots breaking through the bulkhead leading to the bridge is very real. Just when the characters manage to override the navigational controls, the bridge doors buckle under the weight of Cygnus and his robots, allowing them to swarm into the room. Before the battle begins, Cygnus reveals his plans to the characters and asserts that they will not be leaving the ship alive, as he has every intention of resuming his scientific experiment, even if it means their deaths. If the characters survive the battle, they are able to locate the parts needed to repair their ship. At this point, they may either begin their salvage efforts or leave the Crichton behind, to once more drift through the coldness of deep space. While the science behind the experiment may be sound, the methodology is flawed and is sure to result in the craft's total destruction. It may be possible to exit hyperspace that close to an event horizon, but no computer is fast enough to re-engage the hyperspace generator in order to escape the gravitational pull of a black hole.

DOCTOR CHARLES CYGNUS

2	3	1	5	3
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

FAT	I	INJ
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 2, computers 6, engineering 5, general knowledge 5, sciences 7, advanced engineering 5, mechatronics 5, performance 3, composure 2

GIMMICKS

none

SERVANT BOTS (MODIFIED)

These bots always travel in groups roughly the same size as the number of player characters, and are armed with ep-e pistols.

5	2	0	5	0
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

FAT	I	INJ
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

athletics 3, brawling 8, firearms 7, computers 2, engineering 2, tracking 4, general knowledge 2

GIMMICKS

inexhaustible energy, tolerance to pain, toughness (3), microscanners

SCENARIO BETA 2

RESCUE ON RIGEL 7

This scenario assumes that the characters are either mercenaries, troubleshooters, local investigators, bounty hunters, merchants, or even pirates. The group receives a distress call from a USU regional government, urging them to undertake a dangerous rescue mission.

CALLING ALL SHIPS

The characters are hailed by a local planetary official broadcasting a distress message to all ships within the area. According to the official, pirates piloting advanced star-fighters have ambushed a passenger liner cruising through the sector. After knocking out the ship's defenses, they managed to board the ship and proceeded to pillage and murder nearly all of its passengers and crew-members. Three political dignitaries were able to flee in escape pods and they now require rescuing. Although their fate is as yet undetermined, a reward of 3,000 credits is offered to any starship crew who can successfully locate the politicians and bring them back home, dead or alive. To accept the mission, the characters simply need to respond to the hail and gather the coordinates from the sector official.

RIGEL 7

The planet to where the dignitaries have escaped is one that was nearly destroyed a decade ago by a Ruthdii Komar invasion force. Small pockets of civilization managed to survive the attack, but the world was left devastated and diseased. Warring factions of humanoid settlements now battle for control over what is left, but a totalitarian regime led by a power mad cybernetic-humanoid known as The Overlord has managed to rise to prominence and subjugate much of the population. This information can be acquired with the proper research, making a complex computers task.

A successful computers and scanning task can provide the best location to land the vessel—a small abandoned settlement located a safe distance away from any larger communities. A triumph on the scanning task results in the discovery of three faint life signs in the vicinity of the smaller community.

STRANGE COMPANY

When the characters land on Rigel 7, they find the outpost deserted and in ruins. Several prefabricated structures have been damaged by heavy weapons fire and even more were completely destroyed. A successful investigation tasks reveals that the outpost was raided recently. While the characters search the ruins for signs of life, they discover a lone survivor—a bedraggled human who goes by the name of Marek Antill.

The survivor is predictably apprehensive toward the party. If the characters approach him in a non-aggressive manner, he eventually warms to them, explaining how the settlement was raided several days ago by a band of desert scavengers. If asked about the dignitaries (or the life-signs that the characters detected earlier), Antill explains that the three politicians had, in fact, received sanctuary at the settlement, but were captured by the raiders. The three life signs were actually Antill, and his wife and son. While Antill is in relatively good condition, his dependents are barely clinging to life. Helping Antill's family gains his trust and debt, and he provides the characters with directions to the scavengers' suspected location.

MAREK ANTILL

4	3	2	2	2
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

SKILLS

athletics 4, firearms 3, tracking 5,
scavenging 2, survival 5, composure 4

GIMMICKS

none

FAT	I	INJ
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

DESERT TREK

Armed with Antill's information, the characters begin the long trek through the desert wilderness. What was once a verdant landscape is now rubble thanks to both the Ruthdii Komar assault and the civil war. The landscape is energy-

blasted and barren, with very little in the way of vegetation. Stifling heat, rocky outcroppings, blowing winds, and a pervading sense of loneliness and despair are the order of the day. The gamemaster can make the desert journey as eventful or unexciting as desired, either allowing the characters to move through the wilderness without incident or turning it into a harrowing journey fraught with danger. Desert scavengers constantly roam the wastes in search of easy prey, and even the landscape can provide a challenge—landslides, falling debris, wind, and sand storms are frequent occurrences. Just when the party has had enough, they stumble upon the desert scavenger camp.

The camp is relatively small, consisting of about ten primitive-looking pergolas, emanating from a central command shelter. Both day and night are divided into three-hour watches comprised of four scavengers each; the blowing of a horn signals the end of each watch and it takes roughly two-minutes for the next to begin their patrol. This provides a short window of opportunity should the characters wish to sneak inside. It becomes apparent, however, that the political dignitaries are not located in the camp. In order to determine just where they have been taken, the characters can interrogate a scavenger—a complex interrogation task can get him talking. If he is unwilling to talk or the characters do not interrogate anyone, they can happen upon a midnight rendezvous by a group of scavengers and a squad of armed warriors who are aligned with the planetary dictator. A successful investigation task reveals that the scavengers are actually flesh-peddlers, and provide slave labor to the neighboring regime.

TYPICAL DESERT SCAVENGER

These desert dwellers are armed with blaster pistols and wear archaic vests.

4	4	2	2	3	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

athletics 5, firearms 4, tracking 5, melee 4, scavenging 6, survival 5, composure 6

GIMMICKS

none

FINAL SEARCH

As the characters make their way toward the Overlord's desert fortress, they must be stealthy in order to prevent being spotted by the armed contingent. This structure is an expansive home to thousands of subjugated people. The gamemaster may choose to have the characters get captured, and force them to fight in the dictator's gladiatorial pits. If they survive, they can then find a way to enter the main compound during their stay in the gladiator pens. Otherwise, several successful street cred tasks can eventually put them into contact with someone to provide the necessary information for the right price. Regardless of their methods, the characters should be directed towards the compound and its subterranean depths, where the dignitaries are imprisoned. The tunnels beneath the compound are a twisted maze of dead ends and dark corridors, filled with aggressive underground dwellers. The dignitaries can be found in a room behind a locked door, requiring a successful finesse task to unlock it.

TYPICAL CHINHUK

These bear-like creatures inhabit the many caves in the area. They are excellent hunters and have no predators other than man.

5	4	0	0	0	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

athletics 7, brawling 6, tracking 6, scavenging 2, survival 2, composure 5

GIMMICKS

constitution, claws, night vision, toughness (4)

TYPICAL GORDIWA

These snake-like creatures slither along the walls of the many caves in the area. Their bite injects a neurotoxin into their prey, paralyzing it (characters cannot move for a number of turns equal to the roll of two dice). They have been known to attack chinhuks out of fear, but chinhuks are mostly immune to their toxins.

3	3	0	0	0	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

athletics 5, brawling 4, tracking 4, composure 2

GIMMICKS

night vision, toughness (1), sure-footed, camouflage

END GAME

After the characters have rescued the dignitaries and they are on the verge of escape, the Overlord and several of his guards ambush them. The Overlord is an awe-inspiring half-human, half-cyborg construct who is mad with power. He is willing to do anything within his power to prevent the characters' escape, hoping to subject them to a life of hardship and excruciating pain. If the characters survive and rescue the three important politicians, they may be further employed by outside parties to bring stability to the planet or at least remove the Overlord from power.

THE OVERLORD

The Overload is armed with an ep pistol and plasma sword.

5	4	2	4	2
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

SKILLS

athletics 4, brawling 8, firearms 6, melee 5, computers 6, general knowledge 4, engineering 2, interrogation 2, composure 6

GIMMICKS

heightened hearing, optical ranging, toughness (4), inexhaustible energy

FAT	I	INJ
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

THE OVERLORD'S GUARDS

The guards are armed with ep rifles and knives, and are wearing archaic vests.

4	4	1	3	2
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

SKILLS

athletics 4, brawling 5, firearms 5, melee 5, composure 4

GIMMICKS

none

FAT	I	INJ
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

RUMOR MILL

The following information may be given to the characters as foreshadowing for the fifth scenario, The Dakota Maru. While that scenario is not connected to this one, the characters may be hired to man the S.S. Boondoggle.

The diryash are a mysterious group of aliens, only recently coming into contact with the USU. The first recorded contact occurred at Shiva Station when a diryash ship arrived in the system with heavy battle-damage. The diryash demanded refitting (in USU Standard Protocols over the usual comm channels, suggesting it was not the first contact at all) or the station would be eliminated. Cool heads prevailed, and an exchange was negotiated, but the diryash remained aloof, though keenly interested in the station and its inhabitants.

Since that time, less than a dozen recorded meetings have taken place between USU members and the diryash. All of them have been strained and dangerous. The diryash typically take a demanding negotiating position immediately, and patience, cool-headed practicality, and bluff are needed to talk them down into something like equitable trade—not all diryash-USU meetings end well. All diryash ships are armed, and verminous in the extreme. If care is not taken, stations or ships hosting diryash meetings become bio-contaminated with small, fast-breeding animals escaped from the diryash ship.

Frequent battle-damage to diryash ships coming into the USU sphere suggests that the diryash are at war with someone or something unknown, and that worries the USU. Getting involved in an outside conflict could be disastrous.

SCENARIO BETA 3

DEAD IN SPACE

This scenario assumes that the characters are members of the USU Rangers, Navy, or Intelligence Agency (UIA). The characters are part of an elite star-fighter squadron assigned to the USU Nimkos, a battlecruiser originally designed for the war against the Ruthdii Komar. They are sent on a special mission to an asteroid located deep in the Quiet Frontier where crucial fuel ore is mined. The mining base soon becomes overrun with tsroth mercenaries, who are supposedly intent on stealing the ore for their eventual war against humanity and its allies. The characters must stop the mercenaries at all costs, and prevent the alien menace from collecting the fuel ore supply.

USU NIMKOS (BATTLECRUISER)

-4	-5	+4	5	4		MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS				

WEAPONS

- 4 rocket battery turrets
- 4 laser battery turrets
- 3 hunter-killer missile launcher turrets (5 missile each)

GIMMICKS

hyperspace generator (+1), troops bay, fighter bay, reinforced systems, shuttle bay, remote network, point defenses

USU T-65 TWO-MAN FIGHTER

+3	+3	0	1	2		MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS				

WEAPONS

- 1 laser cannon turret (linked pair)
- 2 laser cannons (1 forward, 1 aft)

GIMMICKS

none

SENTRY DUTY

The characters are called into the office of their commanding officer. The upper brass wants a squadron of star-fighter commandos to secure and protect a large shipment of kitionium ore at the Spartan 3 mining facility, which is one of three actively mined asteroids in this sector of the Quiet Frontier. The ore is vital in the development of next-generation weapons systems to stop the Ruthdii advance in their tracks, and must be protected at all costs. The characters are to travel by star-fighter to the asteroid, contact the mining facility officials, and protect it while the kitionium ore is loaded onto two separate freighters. Once loaded, the squad can then escort the freighters out of the Quiet Frontier toward Earth.

There are two ways to access the interior of the asteroid mine. The first is through an immense docking bay situated on the north side of the asteroid. The second is located on the surface and consists of a reinforced bunker that encloses an access hatch leading directly to the asteroid's core. The bulk of the mining facilities and habitation modules are located in the center of the asteroid and are arranged around a central hub, nearly two miles in diameter. The actual mining of the kitionium ore is done in the hub's center.

DEAD SILENCE

When the characters arrive at the asteroid base and attempt to hail the facility, they are greeted with dead silence. Efforts to enter the docking bay also prove fruitless, since they remain secured. The only way into the base is via the surface bunker. Landing on the asteroid's exterior requires a complex piloting (spacecraft) task and there is enough of a surface to accommodate each of the players' ships. The characters are required to wear pressurized flight suits at all times, or at least until they can enter the central hub where artificial gravity and a breathable environment have been established. The access hatch is also secured and requires a complex computers task in order for it to be opened. Once safely inside the central hub, the characters experience an uneasy feeling due to the absence of miners and facility administrators. For all intents and purposes, the asteroid is a ghost town.

As the characters explore the base in search of inhabitants and workers, it is recommended that the gamemaster build up the tension one would experience in an abandoned mine. Feelings of claustrophobia are not uncommon (various composure tasks), as the hub is cramped, dark, and constricted. Even more unnerving is the lack of any noise; the base is completely silent and there are no indications of machinery being used. If the characters choose to search for bodies or any signs of life, they can attempt investigation tasks, although their efforts turns up nothing. The party eventually makes its way toward the administrative center, where they can access the base's computer system and hopefully find out what happened.

AMBUSH

While the characters are searching for clues to the disappearance of the miners, they are suddenly ambushed by several tsrothian mercenaries. Their sudden appearance is frightening and their presence is equally forbidding. The entire party most likely survives the attack, but the only avenue of escape is through the asteroid's mineshafts, and they are located in the center of rock below the central hub. The tsroth opponents give chase through the mines, so the characters should make use of the structural elements for hiding or to set an ambush of their own. There are several major mine shafts that run deeply through the core of the asteroid, as well as smaller ones closer to the hub (most of them are exhausted). A number of catwalks and crawl-ways also abound, providing both characters and the tsroth with opportunities to play hide and seek. As the characters move further into the mines, they make a startling discovery—when the tsrothian mercenaries overran the base, they murdered every single miner living on the asteroid and buried the bodies deep within the mine-shafts.

TYPICAL TSROTH MERCENARY

These alien opponents are armed with spore flechettes and/or kelti throwers.

4	2	1	5	2
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

SKILLS

brawling 5, firearms 7, computers 5, zero-g 4, interrogation 4, investigation 3, scavenging 3, composure 5

GIMMICKS

toughness (3), clumsy, claws, scent trail, color-blindness

FAT	I	INJ
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

FROM BAD TO WORSE

Depending on the inclinations of the characters, they either want to exact revenge on their opponents or escape to prevent the shipment of kitonium from being stolen. The characters must either trek their way back through the mine-shaft or find another means of escape, such as a secret elevator tube that leads from the mine-shaft to a processing facility in the central hub (this is left to the gamemaster's discretion). The tsroth are unaware of its existence, so the characters can utilize it during their escape. In fact, doing so turns the situation around for the party, as the tsroth have to split their attention between watching the mine-shaft for the characters' return and toward loading up the freighters with the kitonium ore.

If the characters seek to destroy all trace of the tsroth who chased them into the shaft, they must be careful not to waste too much time lest the shipment of kitonium ore vanishes into unknown space. If the characters decide to sneak past the mercenaries into the docking bay, they need to plan a coordinated attack to prevent the shipment of ore from being taken off the asteroid. Six mercenaries are busy loading the freighters. As the tsroths' attention is turned toward the task at hand, they can be taken by surprise if all characters make a challenging stealth task.

END GAME

This scenario successfully concludes once the characters defeat the tsrothian mercenaries and prevent the theft of the kitonium ore. If their opponents manage to steal it, however, the characters must race to prevent a successful delivery of the material, possibly making a trek into an unknown region of space which is controlled by the tsroth. This can provide a springboard to an entire saga. The characters can also make good use of their star-fighters and be thrust into dogfights with tsroth fighter aces, sent to escort the freighters back to their own territory.

TSROTH STAR-FIGHTER

+4	+4	+2	1	0
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS

MEC	I	STR
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

- 1 plasma cannon (forward)
- 1 plasma torpedo launcher (25 torpedoes)

GIMMICKS

bio-architecture, ablative hull plating, hyperspace generator (-1)

SCENARIO BETA 4

THE DASHI GAMBIT

Player characters should be members of the USU Rangers, but only half of them need to be proficient star-fighter pilots, since members of the team are assigned T-59b two-man star-fighters—pilots are also responsible for the laser cannons, while sensor operators operate the rocket batteries. The characters are temporarily re-assigned to the Digronian HomeForce.

USU T-59B TWO-MAN FIGHTER

+3	+2	+1	1	2		MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

- 1 linked pair of laser cannons (forward)
- 2 rocket batteries (forward)

GIMMICKS

none

THE BRIEFING

The characters arrive on the planet Altair 3, which is deep in Digronian sovereign space. They are quickly ushered to a briefing room to meet with General Islig, a member of the Digronian HomeForce and their temporary superior officer. He informs the group that twenty-four hours earlier, a known Dashi terrorist named Jared Stelle broke into the home of Dallas Brodly, a centaurian executive with Bryant Interplanetary who was placed in charge of the company's Digronian central office. His intent was murder—Stelle managed to overpower the executive and tie him to a bed in the master bedroom before strapping a personal explosive device to the victim's chest. As expected, Brodly was killed in the blast.

While investigating the crime scene, the Digronian HomeForce secured a secondary piece of evidence (the bomb being the first) that positively links Stelle to the murder—a hand matrix encoded with the message "Pay or Die." The characters are ordered to investigate the murder and track down Stelle so he can be brought to justice.

THE LEGWORK

There are only two avenues of investigation at this stage—the crime scene and the multiworld corporation in question. Visiting the murdered executive's home turns up nothing of real interest, as the crime scene has already been thoroughly investigated and the only significant clue was the hand matrix. Of course, if the group so desires, allow them to perform their own investigation at the house.

Bryant Interplanetary is a conglomerate of manufacturers that build starship components and various ship-based computer systems. The company's regional headquarters are located on Altair 3 and the characters should have no trouble arranging a meeting with the current executives. If asked why Brodly was targeted for the attack, the company officials argue that it was simply a case of him being at the wrong place at the wrong time and that no other company employees have been targeted by Stelle. If asked about the message left at the scene of the crime, the officials feign ignorance, stating that they have no idea what Stelle meant by the warning. A successful investigation task reveals that this statement is actually a lie. No amount of interrogation gets the executives to reveal the truth, however.

MURDER BY NUMBERS

Whatever course of action the characters take next should be left up to them. They eventually come across another clue, proving that the corporation actually does know what Stelle meant by his warning. It seems that Stelle attempted to extort more than sixty-million credits from Bryant Interplanetary several days ago, claiming one of the company's executives would be murdered if the money was not delivered to him by a designated time frame. Bryant ignored the threat and failed to notify the authorities. This information can be obtained by hacking into the corporation's computer system (a challenging computers task), questioning an employee (an impossible interrogation task), contacting one of Brodly's friends or family members, or by any other method the gamemaster deems appropriate. If the company is approached with the new information, they admit to receiving Stelle's initial message, but claim that their internal security agency was in the process

of investigating the threat when Brodly was murdered. To date, however, they have not received any other messages from Stelle. That is all about to change.

A NEW THREAT

The characters are contacted by a Bryant executive the following day. He tells them that Stelle has threatened the company yet again—unless the company deposits the sixty-million credits in the Bank of Altair within twenty-six hours, an Omega-class freighter en route to Altair 3 will be destroyed. Locating the freighter's flight plan takes additional legwork, so the characters should not dally for too long. Checking the Planetary Import Registry on Altair 3 turns up the ship's itinerary and navigational coordinates, but the gamemaster can also throw some red herrings in the path of the party to create a little tension or add to the challenge. Armed with the coordinates of the arriving freighter, the characters must race to intercept it before Stelle's plan comes to fruition.

THE HEAT IS ON

The intercept course to the freighter takes the characters roughly one hour in their star-fighters. The freighter's large cargo bay is not fully loaded, so with a little care and a challenging piloting (spacecraft) task, the group can land their fighters in the cargo bay. Once they board the freighter, the group meets Captain Rein and the ship's chief engineer, a Sligg named Azaea. Both allow access to the entire ship and offer their help, if needed. If the party has been paying attention, they should quickly realize that Stelle probably plans to destroy the ship with explosives, since that has been his *modus operandi*. At nearly four-hundred meters in length, however, the freighter is far too large to accommodate a room-by-room and deck-by-deck search. The characters can narrow down a search pattern, taking into account the most logical places that a bomb can be hidden. This includes the airlock doors (of which there are four), main engines (accessible via the engineering deck), bridge, special hazardous storage tanks, or cargo bay. If the party insists on searching for either the bomb or Stelle in this manner, they eventually locate the bomb, but the tension should be kept very high as they try to beat the clock. Note that Stelle is NOT on the ship, so a search for him is only a waste of time.

The most efficient method for locating the bomb is accessing the ship's schematics. If the characters attempt this on their own, they need a successful computers task to locate the data. Examining the schematics reveals something unusual—one of the freighter's airlocks has a junction box that clearly does not belong there (since the others do not). Upon examining the airlock, they discover that it is actually the location of the explosive device.

WHICH WIRE?

Only those proficient in advanced engineering or demolitions can defuse the bomb. First, a successful investigation task is necessary to determine which parts of the explosive are real and which are just window dressing. Next, a complex advanced engineering or demolitions task is needed to locate the bomb's power supply. A final challenging advanced engineering or demolitions task is needed to actually defuse the bomb. Precautions should be taken to minimize the damage to the ship and crew if possible.

END GAME?

After the successful diffusion of the bomb, the characters receive a message from Stelle via the freighter's internal com system. He begrudgingly congratulates the party on defusing his bomb, but reminds them that payment is still due. Once again, if he is not paid the sixty-million credits, another executive will die in twelve hours.

ALTAIR OR BUST

After receiving the transmission from Stelle, the party may want to find a way of tracking the transmission. Captain Rein takes the group to the bridge where the freighter's communications officer can track the source of Stelle's message. After several tense moments, the com officer reports that the transmission was beamed aboard the freighter via a sub-channel relay back on Altair 3, more specifically in the capital city of Unst. The com officer downloads the data pulse transmission, along with the actual message, into a hand matrix which he gives to the characters. Just as the characters return to their headquarters to plan their next action, General Islig contacts them on emergency channels with a new turn of events—in order to prevent the murder of another company employee, Bryant has finally agreed to pay Stelle the sixty-million credits. If this is allowed to happen, the group may lose any chance of locating the terrorist.

Bryant executives do not budge, because they fear one of them will be next should Stelle's demands go ignored for a second time. To make matters worse, the transaction is entirely RIP'ed (remote interface procedure), so there is no chance of capturing Stelle at a drop-off location. There are several ways around this problem. A complex computers task allows them to hack into Bryant's computer system, thus planting a tracer program to follow the transaction as money is transferred from Bryant, to the bank, and then to Stelle's secret account. An investigation of the bank records does not reveal Stelle's whereabouts, however, as the terrorist has secured a private account under an airtight alias. Another option is to legally prohibit Bryant from making the transaction in the interests of planetary security. This can give the characters more time to track Stelle, as they should still have several hours left

on the clock. A third option relates to the hand matrix that the characters received from the freighter's com officer, and can also be used in conjunction with the aforementioned suggestions for tracking Stelle.

By carefully scrutinizing the data in the hand matrix, a challenging computers task narrows down Stelle's location even further—the data pulse was emitted from an abandoned relay station located in Altair City's downtown district. Unfortunately, there are several such stations there. A challenging investigation task also yields a clue—background noise embedded within Stelle's message reveals that he recorded it near a maglev (magnetic levitation train) station somewhere on the planet. By cross-referencing the time of the message's transmission with that of all maglev train schedules, the party should be able to narrow down Stelle's location, placing him in Altair City.

THE HUNT

Regardless of whether the characters were able to prevent the transaction, they now have a good indication as to where Stelle is hiding. If they were unable to stop Bryant from delivering the funds, they need to work fast in order to prevent Stelle from leaving the planet. Stelle's hideout is located in an abandoned warehouse one block from Altair City's major maglev hub. It is also on the same block as one of the city's abandoned relay stations. The warehouse itself is a one-level structure with a single main entrance that looks onto the main street and a docking bay located at the rear of the building in an alleyway. The top half of the building's facade, roughly twenty meters from street level, features a long row of windows. A frontal assault of the warehouse is probably counterproductive, as the noise would surely give Stelle enough time to bolt out the back entrance. Sneaking into the warehouse via the docking bay is probably the best course of action. The interior of the warehouse features a catwalk about twenty meters from the floor and serves as the top level of the building. Despite the presence of windows, all awareness-based tasks relying on vision receive a penalty of +2DIFF.

Stelle is located in a makeshift office located at the far end of the warehouse, opposite the loading dock. He is not alone. Six Ul-Marian thugs, armed with blaster pistols and vibro knives mull about the place, ready to deal with any uninvited guests. Two guards are stationed near the office, while the remaining four patrol the interior at regular intervals. If the characters wish to dispatch the thugs before dealing with Stelle, they need to take down each one as quickly and quietly as possible. Moving stealthily through the warehouse should not be a problem, as remnants of old machinery, cargo loaders, crates, and boxes abound.

JARED STELLE

Jared Stelle is armed with a blaster pistol, wears an ablative vest (over skinsuit), and carries a hand matrix.

5	3	3	2	3	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

brawling 7, firearms 7, computers 4, advanced engineering 4, performance 4, street cred 5, composure 6

GIMMICKS

environmental dependency (frigid temperatures), criminal, reduced stamina (when in skinsuit), empathic sense, discrimination

UL-MARIAN THUGS

The thugs are armed with blaster pistols and vibro knives, and wear ablative vests.

4	3	2	1	2	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

brawling 5, firearms 7, melee 4, interrogation 4, negotiation 6, composure 3, performance 4

GIMMICKS

claws, musclebound, toughness (1), maladroitness, sure-paced, sure-climber, weak-willed

END GAME!

However the characters proceed, Stelle should not be an easy catch. At the first sign of trouble, he attempts to escape via whatever entrance is not blocked, leaving his paid thugs to deal with the intruders. In order to build tension, the gamemaster should allow Stelle to escape by jumping into a stolen flyer (air car), thus requiring the party to give chase through the crowded streets of Altair City. The ensuing pursuit should be a hair-raising, fingernail-biting affair that requires judicious piloting (spacecraft) tasks and penalties for heavy traffic. The end result should be a climactic battle between Stelle and the characters, making an exciting end to the scenario. By defeating Stelle, they save a multiworld corporation millions of credits and, more importantly, save the USU from the machinations of a dangerous dashi master-criminal

SCENARIO BETA 5

THE DAKOTA MARU

The player characters are crew-members on the merchant tramp-freighter *Boondoggle*. The ship is a common freighter, running a route between Earth, Alpha Centauri, and X21. They have recently decided to extend their travels to Gill, taking on a cargo of new fashions, live pets, and fine wines for sale there. Should the characters accept a heroic mission to investigate the distress signal of another craft, they become entangled with diryash raiders, and must somehow escape and warn the authorities.

S.S. BOONDOGGLE (FREIGHTER)

-1	0	0	2	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF		<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

none

GIMMICKS

hyperspace generator (+1), cargo bay

THE GILL SYSTEM

Upon reaching the Gill system, the crew pick up a faint recorded voice whispering over the comm.

"Mayday, Mayday! Ship Dakota Maru (Squeal) need help! Ship (Hisssss Squeal) around Gill B! Mayday, Mayday! Ship Dakota Mar... sssssssssssssssss."

The message fades into silence, and the signal is lost.

If the characters check out the Dakota Maru in the ship's database, they find it to be registered to the Acrophilia Corporation, a mining company owned by a Human/X-an consortium, and headquartered on the planet Gill.

If the characters contact the Acrophilia Corporation, the director, James Medway, expresses great surprise and dismay. The Dakota Maru is a specialized prospecting and mining vessel. It was designed and built for Acrophilia only last year. Director Medway offers the characters a very handsome fee for assisting or salvaging the Dakota Maru if they can find it.

He also offers a smaller, but substantial bonus for information leading to the ship.

If the characters contact the local Rangers office, Captain Riso Kt'rai informs them that all available ships are tied up in diplomatic envoys and emergency rescue operations. The soonest they can dispatch a vessel is about in one week's time.

Once the characters dock at the orbital station, dubbed *Gill Upstairs*, they discover that the sales numbers of their cargo is disappointing. Another ship, the *Meihong*, landed a similar cargo not a week before, and the economy is struggling. They have enough funds to pay docking and fuel fees, but not enough to buy another cargo. The characters can either run safe, but small profit consignment jobs for X21 or take the Acrophilia Corporation up on its offer.

GILL B

Gill B is a small, dim red dwarf sun with seven planets, all scattered in wide orbits around it. The planets are uniformly small, rocky, and ice-covered. The system was lightly explored ten years ago by the Rangers, but nothing especially interesting was found. Any colonization would have to be in artificial habitats or orbitals, and as there is plenty of empty real estate in the Gill system itself, exploitation was pit at a low priority. Minerals, however, look like a good bet, and prospecting the system makes sense. There is a lot of dust in the system, which generates a great amount of static and creates havoc with communication systems.

THE DAKOTA MARU

The characters can recover the distress signal relay, which is in the Gill B system, and still broadcasting.

"Mayday, Mayday! Ship Dakota Maru! We need help! Ship is adrift around Gill B!"

The Dakota Maru is easily located as it drifts in orbit around the iceball world of *Gill B3*. The hull looks intact, with no breaches or punctures visible, but the ship is dark—no lights are present either on the exterior or escaping through cabin

windows. The ship is in a standard parking orbit above the planet. Life support is functioning, as the hull is radiating heat at the correct temperature. There is no reply to any hails. The drive is shut down, cold as space. The ship is much larger than the Boondoggle, and is fitted with a shuttle bay (for a lander) as well as large cargo holds. A few small bundles or bits of something are occasionally visible, drifting near the ship. These are bodies and parts of the ship's crew, along with meat from the ship's freezer, but that is not obvious from a distance, due partly to the grisly manner of their deaths.

S.S. DAKOTA MARU (PROSPECTING CRAFT)

-1	0	+1	3	2		MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS				

WEAPONS

particle cannon turret

GIMMICKS

hyperspace generator (+2), cargo bay, shuttle bay

According to the blueprints, the ship is arranged on two decks. The top deck is smaller, containing the crew cabins, bridge, washrooms, and a big galley and dining area. The lower, larger deck contains a mineralogical analytic lab and a huge compartmented hold, as well as the shuttle bay.

If the characters decide to board the ship, the airlocks are intact, and the key code given to them by Acrophilia opens the doors. The main lights are off, and dim, red emergency lights are the only internal illumination. Small animals have the run of the ship. They are brightly colored in stripes and spots, and behave oddly. If the characters go after them, they freeze rather than run. They are of several different species, and none are known to the Boondoggle's computer. If the characters have helmet lights or flashlights, what looks like occasional black stains on the walls and floors in the emergency lighting take on the red hue of blood in white light. At some point during this investigation, a corpse floats to the exterior of a view port, giving the characters quite a start (a reasoning-based composure task can be required for them to remain calm or even a fitness-based one to prevent being sick).

Based on the cabin furnishings, there were about ten crew-members. There are no personal items in the cabins, and no meat in the galley freezers and storage areas. Bread and flower has been dumped on the floor, and the animals have been eating it. The spacesuit lockers near the airlock are empty, and the bridge has been stripped of all controls and instrumentation. Empty mounting brackets stick up from the floor, ceiling, and walls.

Not only is the lander missing from the shuttle bay, but the docking crane has been removed, and all spare parts and tools are missing from the racks. The hold is about a tenth full, and all the samples are of poor quality. A paper manifest can be found on a clipboard in the hold (investigation task), and it seems that most of the better quality samples have been removed. The reactor has no significant fuel remaining, not even enough to power up the engines. Life support is only possible because of last-ditch efforts by the computer system to keep the emergency generator online. To keep the generator functioning, almost everything else has been taken offline. The life support and drive control panels have been removed, leaving only the bare stumps of the support struts.

THE DIRYASH

A diryash ship is not very distant, running silent and cold. It can easily be mistaken for a moonlet or orbiting asteroid. The *Hooded Menace* is commanded by a diryash known as *Sudden Strike*. The five crew-members are *Quick Fury*, *Cold Intellect*, *Patient Wait*, *Shoot Once*, and *Subtle Thrust* (all are armed with diryash repeaters). They have stripped the Dakota Maru and killed her crew, either by direct assault or spacing them if captured alive. At the point when the diryash crew feel most advantageous, they power up the drive systems and move in for the kill. The Dakota Maru is now bait, and the Boondoggle is the prey.

HOODED MENACE (HUNTER-MERCHANT)

+1	0	+1	3	3		MEC	I	STR
SPEED	HANDLING	SENSORS	FRAME	SHIELDS				

WEAPONS

2 diryash cannons (single) (1 forward, 1 aft)
1 diryash cannon turret (single)

GIMMICKS

hyperspace generator (+2), detachable cargo hold, cloaking device

Sudden Strike's plan is to get close to the boondoggle as quickly as possible, and board it while part of the crew is inside the Dakota Maru. The remaining crew on the Dakota Maru can then be hunted when the Boondoggle is secure and there is no escape. The diryash take the Boondoggle first, as the Dakota Maru is not going anywhere without fuel. Special tools are used to pry open the airlock door. A seal and new door are placed over the portal to keep in the air, and be able to flush out anyone in the ship.

The diryash take prisoners if possible, but kill if necessary. They ultimately kill the prisoners by spacing them, but before that, they try to get them to cooperate. As soon as the Boondoggle is secured, the raiders cross to the Dakota Maru and crush any resistance there—the diryash, with their smooth grey skin, are very difficult to see in the dim, red light aboard the Dakota Maru. They then strip the Boondoggle, toss the prisoners, and leave the area. If a heavily-armed ship enters the system, the Hooded Menace flees the system, dropping their hold if necessary. Otherwise, they try to take any lightly-armed or unarmed ships by stealth.

Note to gamemaster: If the diryash leader is not leading successfully, he may suddenly be removed from that position and replaced with someone the group feels is more effective.

SUDDEN STRIKE

3	2	2	3	2	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 4, piloting (spacecraft) 2, gunnery 4, melee 2, brawling 4, scavenging 3, piloting (starships) 2, commodities 1, composure 2

GIMMICKS

predatorial response, heightened smell, color-blindness, quick synapses, criminal, multilingual

QUICK FURY

4	2	2	1	3	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 4, piloting (spacecraft) 4, gunnery 3, piloting (starships) 4, tracking 2, scavenging 1, commodities 3, composure 2

GIMMICKS

predatorial response, heightened smell, color-blindness, quick synapses, microscanners, programmed imitation, tolerance to pain

COLD INTELLECT

3	3	4	2	0	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 3, academics 4, melee 3, mechatronics 5, engineering 5, scavenging 2, advanced engineering 5

GIMMICKS

predatorial response, heightened smell, color-blindness, quick synapses, criminal

PATIENT WAIT

2	4	1	3	2	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 2, gunnery 5, finesse 2, scanning 5, astronavigation 5, scavenging 5, commodities 3

GIMMICKS

predatorial response, heightened smell, color-blindness, quick synapses, toughness (2)

SHOOT ONCE

4	3	2	1	2	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 5, gunnery 5, academics 4, scanning 2, engineering 2, computers 4, interrogation 3, composure 5

GIMMICKS

predatorial response, heightened smell, color-blindness, quick synapses

SUBTLE THRUST

3	2	2	4	1	FAT	I	INJ
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS

firearms 5, melee 7, brawling 6, composure 2, piloting (starships) 2, scavenging 3, commodities 1

GIMMICKS

predatorial response, heightened smell, color-blindness, quick synapses, tolerance to pain, criminal

SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCE

NEW PERSONAL WEAPONS

WEAPON	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	RANGE
tsrothian spore flechette	-2DIFF	2INJ	40m
tsrothian kelti thrower	-	6 / 5 / 3 / 1INJ ¹	50m
ep-e pistol	-1DIFF ²	3FAT	60m
diryash repeater	-	6 / 5 / 3 / 1INJ ¹	100m

¹ point blank / short / medium / long

NEW STARSHIP WEAPONS

WEAPON	ACCURACY	DAMAGE
tsrothian plasma cannon	-	4 / 3 / 1STR / 1MEC ¹
tsrothian plasma torpedoes	-2 / - / +1 / +2DIFF ¹	3STR
magnetic tracer rockets	-2 / -2 / - / +4DIFF ¹	1MEC
magnetic tracer mines	- ²	1MEC
boarder cannon	- ²	1STR
harpoon cannon	- ²	1STR
diryash cannon (single)	+2DIFF	* ³
diryash cannon (dual)	+2DIFF	* ⁴

¹ point blank / short / medium / long

² effective and point blank and short range only

³ point blank: 2STR+4MEC; short: 2STR+3MEC; medium: 2STR+2MEC; long: 2STR+1MEC

⁴ point blank: 3STR+5MEC; short: 3STR+4MEC; medium: 3STR+2MEC; long: 3STR+1MEC

NEW SPECIES CHARACTERISTICS

SPECIES	ABILITY LIMITS	OPTIONAL GIMMICKS	REQUIRED GIMMICKS
Gillie	reasoning 3, influence 1	psionics	telepathy, dextrous, sure-footed, weak
Kinosian	reasoning 2*, influence 3	none	striking appearance, musclebound, discrimination, poor, reduced stamina
Dashi	reasoning 4	criminal	environmental dependency (frigid temperatures), empathic sense, discrimination, reduced stamina (when in skinsuit)
Sligg	influence 3	camouflage	weak, disfigurement, amorphous
Ul-Marian	awareness 4	criminal, fame	claws, musclebound, toughness (1), maladroitness, sure-paced, sure-climber, weak-willed
Sikatai	fitness 4	fame, military rank	heightened touch, weak, electrical discharge, toughness (2)
Tsroth	influence 3	scent-masking, hive-conscious	toughness (3), clumsy, claws, scent trail, color-blindness
Diryash	none	criminal, fame, military rank, multilingual, appendages, microscanners, tolerance to pain	heightened smell, predatorial response, color-blindness, quick synapses

* See species description.

HARD][NOVA

KINDSIAN
SCHOLAR

2

INFLUENCE

2

FITNESS

2

CREATIVITY

2

REACTION TOTAL
+
AWARENESS

4

REASONING

You are a curious soul and found the atmosphere on Tarkos state when it came to furthering your education. You left the planet in search of other sources of study, settling at a number of distant universities. Now you seek practical field-study, and have set yourself loose on the cosmos.

FATIGUE / INJURY

DAZED ☐ - ☐ BRUISED
STRESSED ☐ +1DIFF ☐ SPRAINED
STRAINED ☐ +2DIFF ☐ WOUNDED
EXHAUSTED ☐ +3DIFF ☐ MAIMED
UNCONSCIOUS ☐ — ☐ INCAPACITATED

SKILLS

investigation 6 academics 6
archaeology 5 computers 5
general knowledge 4 commodities 2
athletics 2

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

striking appearance musclebound
discrimination poor

HARD][NOVA

DASHI
SMUGGLER

3

INFLUENCE

2

FITNESS

3

CREATIVITY

2

REACTION TOTAL
+
AWARENESS

2

REASONING

Not content with a desk job, you travel the cosmos in search of your next paying job. The cargos you haul are almost always less than legitimate, but no one bothers you thanks to keeping a low profile and the art of bribery.

FATIGUE / INJURY

DAZED ☐ - ☐ BRUISED
STRESSED ☐ +1DIFF ☐ SPRAINED
STRAINED ☐ +2DIFF ☐ WOUNDED
EXHAUSTED ☐ +3DIFF ☐ MAIMED
UNCONSCIOUS ☐ — ☐ INCAPACITATED

SKILLS

athletics 3 brawling 3
firearms 4 gambling 3
interrogation 3 forgery 3
piloting (starships) 4 negotiation 4
composure 2

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

environmental dependency (frigid temperatures)
empathic sense discrimination
reduced stamina (in skinsuit)

HARD][NOVA

DASHI
SALVAGER

1

INFLUENCE

2

FITNESS

3

CREATIVITY

3

REACTION TOTAL
+
AWARENESS

3

REASONING

Another man's junk is your treasure. You salvage derelicts and other space junk. Someone is always willing to pay for a cheap, replacement component. Finding these treasures is sometimes an adventure, and selling them even more so, but at the end of the day, you often spend more for repairs.

FATIGUE / INJURY

DAZED ☐ - ☐ BRUISED
STRESSED ☐ +1DIFF ☐ SPRAINED
STRAINED ☐ +2DIFF ☐ WOUNDED
EXHAUSTED ☐ +3DIFF ☐ MAIMED
UNCONSCIOUS ☐ — ☐ INCAPACITATED

SKILLS

gunnery 2 zero-g 3
investigation 3 scavenging 6
commodities 3 piloting (starships) 5
scanning 5 negotiation 2
street cred 4

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

environmental dependency (frigid temperatures)
empathic sense discrimination
reduced stamina (in skinsuit) poor

HARD][NOVA

SLUGG

TECHIE

1

INFLUENCE

2

FITNESS

2

CREATIVITY

2

REACTION TOTAL
↓
AWARENESS

5

REASONING

You love building new devices and tinkering with old ones. Your skills are valuable and by selling them to respected, civilian starship captains, you can refuse offers that may land you in a rehabilitation colony. As the sole sligg on most ships, you often feel out of place and alone.

FATIGUE / INJURY

DAZED ☐ - ☐ BRUISED
STRESSED ☐ +1DIFF ☐ SPRAINED
STRAINED ☐ +2DIFF ☐ WOUNDED
EXHAUSTED ☐ +3DIFF ☐ MAIMED
UNCONSCIOUS ☐ — ☐ INCAPACITATED

SKILLS

design 5 advanced engineering 6
computers 6 mechatronics 5
sciences 5 street cred 3

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

weak disfigurement
amorphous

HARD][NOVA

SLUGG

PILOT

2

INFLUENCE

4

FITNESS

1

CREATIVITY

3

REACTION TOTAL
↓
AWARENESS

2

REASONING

You love speed. You also love the feel of a starship's drives at full power. You'll pilot whatever you can get, from the tiny star-fighter to sluggish cruiser. The only thing that matters is how you feel in the pilot's seat, even if it means the occasional insubordination to the captain.

FATIGUE / INJURY

DAZED ☐ - ☐ BRUISED
STRESSED ☐ +1DIFF ☐ SPRAINED
STRAINED ☐ +2DIFF ☐ WOUNDED
EXHAUSTED ☐ +3DIFF ☐ MAIMED
UNCONSCIOUS ☐ — ☐ INCAPACITATED

SKILLS

gunnery 4 piloting (spacecraft) 6
zero-g 2 astronavigation 5
computers 4 piloting (starships) 6
scanning 3 composure 3

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

weak disfigurement
amorphous

HARD][NOVA

UL-MARIAN

BROKER

4

INFLUENCE

2

FITNESS

2

CREATIVITY

1

REACTION TOTAL
↓
AWARENESS

3

REASONING

People need things. You find these things and sell them. You know the right people to hire for the right job. You also know where to find unique and less-than-legal merchandise. The Ul-Marian nature in you ensures complete accuracy in these dealings, often causing clients to give up waiting.

FATIGUE / INJURY

DAZED ☐ - ☐ BRUISED
STRESSED ☐ +1DIFF ☐ SPRAINED
STRAINED ☐ +2DIFF ☐ WOUNDED
EXHAUSTED ☐ +3DIFF ☐ MAIMED
UNCONSCIOUS ☐ — ☐ INCAPACITATED

SKILLS

firearms 4 forger 4
commodities 4 general knowledge 3
streetwise 5 negotiation 5
street cred 5

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

claws musclebound
toughness (1) maladroitness
sure-paced sure-climber
weak-willed

HARD][NOVA

UL-MARIAN
CONTRACTOR

1
INFLUENCE

5
FITNESS

1
CREATIVITY

3
REACTION TOTAL
AWARENESS

2
REASONING

You are good at one thing—killing. People all over the cosmos hire you to eliminate competition, spouses, business-partners, and sometimes even pets. Over the years, you have taken to illicit substances to numb the memory of your victim's faces—it has yet to work.

FATIGUE / INJURY

Dazed ☐ - ☐ **bruised**
Stressed ☐ +1diff ☐ **sprained**
Strained ☐ +2diff ☐ **wounded**
Exhausted ☐ +3diff ☐ **maimed**
Unconscious ☐ — ☐ **incapacitated**

SKILLS

athletics 3 brawling 4
finesse 4 firearms 6
investigation 3 tracking 4
forgery 3 street cred 4
composure 2

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

claws
toughness (1)
sure-paced
weak-willed

musclebound
maladroit
sure-climber
addiction

HARD][NOVA

SIKATAI
FREELANCER

2
INFLUENCE

4
FITNESS

1
CREATIVITY

4
REACTION TOTAL
AWARENESS

3
REASONING

You know your way around the cosmos. Because of this, various multiworld corporations pay for your services—proposing ideal locations for mining and commerce, troubleshooting inefficient organization and accidents, and salvaging starship and mining disasters.

FATIGUE / INJURY

Dazed ☐ - ☐ **bruised**
Stressed ☐ +1diff ☐ **sprained**
Strained ☐ +2diff ☐ **wounded**
Exhausted ☐ +3diff ☐ **maimed**
Unconscious ☐ — ☐ **incapacitated**

SKILLS

firearms 3 design 5
scavenging 5 academics 4
astronavigation 4 commodities 4
sciences 5

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

heightened touch
electrical discharge
fame

weak
toughness (2)

HARD][NOVA

TSROTH
CAPTIVE

3
INFLUENCE

4
FITNESS

2
CREATIVITY

3
REACTION TOTAL
AWARENESS

3
REASONING

Your ship attacked a mining colony and you were left for dead. The survivors of the colony treated your wounds, interrogated you, and eventually enslaved you. After time, the colonists became your new hive, and while you serve them loyally, they still fear and distrust you.

FATIGUE / INJURY

Dazed ☐ - ☐ **bruised**
Stressed ☐ +1diff ☐ **sprained**
Strained ☐ +2diff ☐ **wounded**
Exhausted ☐ +3diff ☐ **maimed**
Unconscious ☐ — ☐ **incapacitated**

SKILLS

athletics 4 brawling 4
firearms 5 interrogation 4
tracking 5 astronavigation 3
survival 3 composure 5

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

toughness (3)
claws
color-blindness

clumsy
scent trail
enslaved

HARD][NOVA

DIRYASH

PACIFIST

4

INFLUENCE

2

FITNESS

2

CREATIVITY

1

REACTION TOTAL
↓
AWARENESS

3

REASONING

One cannot lead in diryash society without power. You seek to lead your people, but you have taken a vow of restraint, preventing you from harming anyone except in emergencies. With limited potential around the diryash, you investigated the possibility of the USU, and it seems to have potential.

FATIGUE / INJURY

Dazed ☐ - ☐ Bruised
Stressed ☐ +1diff ☐ Sprained
Strained ☐ +2diff ☐ Wounded
Exhausted ☐ +3diff ☐ Maimed
Unconscious ☐ — ☐ Incapacitated

Skills

brawling 3 design 4
academics 5 medicine 5
sciences 2 survival 3
negotiation 6 performance 2

Gimmicks and Gear

heightened smell predatorial response
color-blindness quick synapses

HARD][NOVA

WARBOT

BOARDER BOT

0

INFLUENCE

3

FITNESS

0

CREATIVITY

5

REACTION TOTAL
↓
AWARENESS

3

REASONING

This is a typical warbot designed for use with boarder cannons.

FATIGUE / INJURY

Dazed ☐ - ☐ Bruised
Stressed ☐ +1diff ☐ Sprained
Strained ☐ +2diff ☐ Wounded
Exhausted ☐ +3diff ☐ Maimed
Unconscious ☐ — ☐ Incapacitated

Skills

firearms 6 zero-g 6
tracking 5 computers 4

Gimmicks and Gear

inexhaustible energy tolerance to pain
toughness (2) microscanners

HARD][NOVA

UBOT

SERVANT BOT

0

INFLUENCE

5

FITNESS

0

CREATIVITY

2

REACTION TOTAL
↓
AWARENESS

3

REASONING

This is a typical ubot designed to perform very basic secretarial and caretaking jobs.

FATIGUE / INJURY

Dazed ☐ - ☐ Bruised
Stressed ☐ +1diff ☐ Sprained
Strained ☐ +2diff ☐ Wounded
Exhausted ☐ +3diff ☐ Maimed
Unconscious ☐ — ☐ Incapacitated

Skills

athletics 3 computers 5
engineering 2 tracking 2
general knowledge 5

Gimmicks and Gear

inexhaustible energy tolerance to pain
toughness (3) microscanners

HARD][NOVA

DIRYASH

STERN FREIGHTER

3

SHIELDS

+3

SPEED

+4

HANDLING

+3

SENSORS

3

FRAME

This is a common diryash craft, used to unleash its fury on trade-routes, and claim whatever is left in the conflict. The cargo hold can be jettisoned at the first sign of overwhelming force, so the craft can make a speedy exit.

MECHANICAL STRESS / STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

ENGAGED	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	DENIED
DISTRESSED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPAIRED
OVERWORKED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	BREACHED
OVERHEATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPROMISED
DISABLED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	WRECKED

WEAPON SYSTEMS

- 2 diryash cannons (single; forward)
- 1 diryash cannon turret (dual)
- 1 hunter-killer missile launcher turret (5 missiles)

GIMMICKS AND NOTES

detachable cargo hold reinforced systems

HARD][NOVA

DIRYASH

LIGHT FREIGHTER

3

SHIELDS

+4

SPEED

+4

HANDLING

+3

SENSORS

2

FRAME

This smaller diryash craft is used in tracking smaller merchant craft, crippling them, and taking whatever cargo is undamaged as a prize. Like the stern freighter, this craft can jettison its cargo hold for an even quicker escape.

MECHANICAL STRESS / STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

ENGAGED	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	DENIED
DISTRESSED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPAIRED
OVERWORKED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	BREACHED
OVERHEATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPROMISED
DISABLED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	WRECKED

WEAPON SYSTEMS

- 2 diryash cannons (single; forward)
- 1 diryash cannon turret (single)

GIMMICKS AND NOTES

detachable cargo hold

HARD][NOVA

TSROTH

STAR-FISHER

0

SHIELDS

+2

SPEED

+2

HANDLING

+2

SENSORS

3

FRAME

This speedy craft is also well-armed, and has only been seen a few times by USU military personnel. Each occurrence has met with disastrous results, so it is avoided whenever possible. Because it has no shielding unlike USU vessels, diryash make sure to use the craft for ambushes.

MECHANICAL STRESS / STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

ENGAGED	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	DENIED
DISTRESSED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPAIRED
OVERWORKED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	BREACHED
OVERHEATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPROMISED
DISABLED	<input type="checkbox"/>	+4DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	WRECKED

WEAPON SYSTEMS

- 4 plasma cannon turrets
- 2 plasma torpedo launchers (25 torpedoes)

GIMMICKS AND NOTES

bio-architecture ablative hull plating
cargo bay hyperspace generator (0)

HARD

[NOVA]

TSROTH

STAR-RUNNER

0

SHIELDS

|||||

+2

SPEED

+1

HANDLING

+2

SENSORS

2

FRAME

This craft is essentially a well-armed, light freighter. It is becoming a relatively common sight in the Quiet Frontier. Its lack of shields means that it is not a serious threat, but star-runners are also commonly escorted by star-fighters.

MECHANICAL STRESS

/

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

- ENGAGED ☐ - ☐ DENTED
- DISTRESSED ☐ +1dIFF ☐ IMPAIRED
- OVERWORKED ☐ +2dIFF ☐ BREACHED
- OVERHEATED ☐ +3dIFF ☐ COMPROMISED
- DISABLED ☐ +4dIFF ☐ WRECKED

WEAPON SYSTEMS

- 2 plasma cannon turrets
- 2 plasma torpedo launchers (25 torpedoes)

GIMMICKS AND NOTES

- bio-architecture
- ablative hull plating
- cargo bay
- hyperspace generator (0)

HARD

[NOVA]

SIKATAI

CONSULPORTER

3

SHIELDS

|||||

+4

SPEED

+1

HANDLING

+3

SENSORS

2

FRAME

Sikatai craft are rarely seen in USU space, because these vessels designed to transport important officials are fitted with cloaking devices. Their powerful drive systems also make them one of the faster ships in the region.

MECHANICAL STRESS

/

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

- ENGAGED ☐ - ☐ DENTED
- DISTRESSED ☐ +1dIFF ☐ IMPAIRED
- OVERWORKED ☐ +2dIFF ☐ BREACHED
- OVERHEATED ☐ +3dIFF ☐ COMPROMISED
- DISABLED ☐ +4dIFF ☐ WRECKED

WEAPON SYSTEMS

- 2 particle cannon turrets
- 2 rocket battery turrets

GIMMICKS AND NOTES

- reinforced systems
- hyperspace generator (+4)
- troops bay
- cloaking device

HARD

[NOVA]

SLIGG

EXPLORER

0

SHIELDS

|||||

+2

SPEED

+2

HANDLING

+1

SENSORS

3

FRAME

Sligg vessels are not stylish or particularly powerful, but they get the job done. This starship is designed to travel the unknown routes and also provide a home to its crew. Travel on board would not be considered pleasurable to most humanoid, but it is perfect for sliggs.

MECHANICAL STRESS

/

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

- ENGAGED ☐ - ☐ DENTED
- DISTRESSED ☐ +1dIFF ☐ IMPAIRED
- OVERWORKED ☐ +2dIFF ☐ BREACHED
- OVERHEATED ☐ +3dIFF ☐ COMPROMISED
- DISABLED ☐ +4dIFF ☐ WRECKED

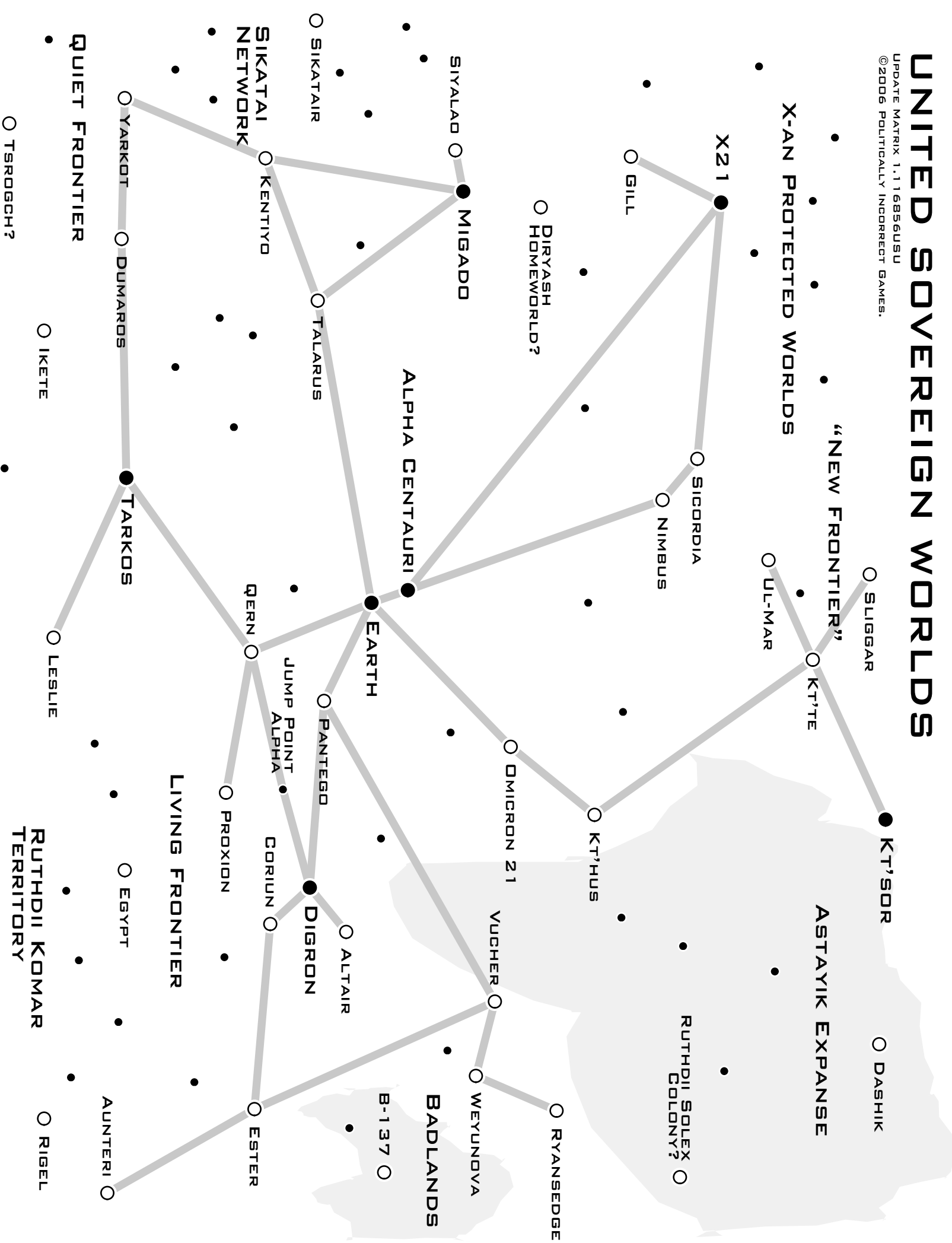
WEAPON SYSTEMS

- 2 laser cannon turrets
- 3 laser battery turrets

GIMMICKS AND NOTES

- ablative hull plating
- point defenses
- hyperspace generator (0)

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