



THE LAST
PARSEC
ERIS BETA-V

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CHAPTER ONE: JUMPCORP WANTS YOU!

RECEIVING: *JumpCorp internal memo #24589*

CONTENT: *Transcript of JumpCorp recruitment vidblast, series B-23, Hyaergos system, Eris Beta-V subsector. Disseminate freely by order of Subsector Admin Chanx Oblios.*

BEGIN TRANSMISSION:

Skim above clashing asteroid rings in the cockpit of a deflector-shielded ringsweeper! Plunge into those rings safely ensconced in a mining pod, to reclaim riches beyond your wildest imagination! Investigate the remnants of the long-extinct Voidsman culture, and reclaim its technology to fortify the future! Storm the corridors of a pirate frigate and enforce JumpCorp regulations!

Where can a space jockey, miner, or scientist do all these things and more? Wealth, adventure, and knowledge all await you amid the rings of gas giant Eris—the Pearl—circling in its orbit around Hyaergos Beta-V. Whether you're a vested JumpCorp employee in search of a transfer or want to join the JumpCorp family, Eris Beta-V holds endless opportunities.

BORN OF CHAOS

Reverse 46 years, spacer! The Hyaergos system is claimed by JumpCorp agents under the direction of Senior Surveyor Bolsorg Hyaergos, when he recognizes the sheer amount of raw wealth ripe for the taking on the planet's rings and moons.

Since then, the *Hyaergos Code* has regulated legal commerce in the system, while JumpCorp Security agents work tirelessly to root out criminal elements and pirate gangs. So far so good, citizen! But what made this period of great good fortune possible, you might ask? As Hyaergos observed so early on, the answer was simple: chaos.

To understand the same thing he did, reverse your mindcore more than two *million* years. The theoretical alien race JumpCorp scientists call "Voidsmen" piloted their supermassive craft—easily the size of a small moon—out of the void

for some unfathomable reason. Perhaps they had miscalculated their course, or maybe their ship was damaged and flying out of control. Either way, the result was an interplanetary disaster.

Their vessel entered the Eris system at high velocity and collided with one of the gas giant's moons. Both were obliterated. Some of the resulting debris was flung off into space, some was sucked into Eris' atmosphere and incinerated, and a great deal of it settled within the planet's Roche zone—there to create a pair of turbulent rings, filled with the Voidsmen's artifacts and the occasional giant, drifting chunk of their lost vessel.

AWE-INSPIRING STARSCAPES

Just beyond the edge of civilized space is the sun designated Hyaergos Beta-V. The third planet from Hyaergos is Eris, a warm gas giant upon which the universe saw fit to bestow an amazing gift—a system of eight moons and two rings. What's so special about Eris' rings?

The rings are relatively young, astronomically speaking—2.1 million years, by JumpCorp scientists' estimates—so millennia of impacts haven't yet pounded them into flat disks of glittering stardust. These rings are made up of many meteoroids, planetoids, planetesimals, and millions of asteroids, some as big as spacecraft, constantly tumbling and colliding. They're also enriched with more silicon, heavy metals, and precious elements than anywhere else in the sector. And let's not forget the Voidsmen's lost artifacts!

The Hyaergos Beta-V system provides sights and experiences beyond the ken of those whose feet have been planted on terra firma all their lives. Discerning adventurers who seek novel places and exotic new species need look no farther than Eris—and its extensive system of moons and rings—for all the escapades and discoveries their hearts desire.

HARMONIA STATION

For most travelers, your visit to Eris' environs likely begins at Harmonia Station, in stable orbit around the moon Dysnomia. The large, circular JumpCorp space station spins gently to simulate normal gravity all along its three habitation loops, and supports a permanent population of about 250,000. Starships—roughly 55 per daycycle—of all descriptions and ports of call cluster around the middle loop. The lower loop is known as the Public Walk.

Thousands of spacers of diverse races pass through Harmonia every day, and you could be one of them. Be sure to visit the Holo Playhouse for an evening's entertainment, capped off with a few drinks and a show at the Kallisti Apple nightclub. For all you business travelers, JumpCorp executive officers—ably led by Subsector Administrator Chanx Oblios—are on hand to meet your every need. Let us help you get a *jump* on the competition!

GOLDPOINT

Ore freighters and JumpCorp Security ships are more likely to stop in at Goldpoint, and there take on cargo bound for every corner of the galaxy, or deposit loads of ore and silicon collected in the asteroid rings. Up to 100 ringsweepers and freighters visit Goldpoint each day, supporting its population of almost 500,000. Even if Goldpoint seems a bit more sodium-of-the-stars than Harmonia, repeat visitors avow it has a charm all its own. Certainly its establishments can be an acquired taste for some. But among miners, exporters, ships' crewmen, and mercenaries, Goldpoint's taverns are rated among the best in the subsector.

A BRIEF TOUR OF THE MOONS

Eris' moons from inner- to outermost are Algos, Dysnomia, Aite, Neikea, Phonoi, Horkos, Ponos, and Lethe. Inside the rings, Algos' acid atmosphere is rumored to hide volcanic wastes, but such claims have never been verified—yet! Dysnomia is Algos' opposite, covered with warm oceans, lush jungles, and entire regions of impenetrable swampland.

Aite is the innermost of Eris' shepherd moons—the satellites that keep the edges of Eris' rings well defined with their constant pruning of errant rock and ice fragments. All the shepherd moons are pocked with craters from thousands of impacts, their atmospheres all but stripped away. When the four shepherd moons—Aite, Neikea,

Phonoi, and Horkos—pass, they obliterate everything in their path, or send it careening off into space. And in their wake they leave lethal "ringstorms," waves of destructive collisions sent through the rings.

Beyond the outermost ring, the Kallisti Reach, orbit Ponos and Lethe, each encased in ice. Some hardy souls make these places their homes—willingly or unwillingly—but life there isn't easy.

ERIS' RINGS

The rings of Eris are composed primarily of rock and ice. According to JumpCorp scientists, much of the rings' circumference contains scattered remnants of an enormous, spherical spacecraft that emerged from the void 2.1 million years ago. It collided with one of Eris' moons, and the impact destroyed them both.

Yet tantalizing clues of the Voidsmen's culture remain: Shattered fragments of their vessel drift among the asteroids, blending in, waiting for mining crews to stumble upon them and explore their darkened corridors. And some lucky spacers have discovered the aliens' artifacts—small crystalline brooches of varying shapes and colors that grant the wearer psionic talents.

The smaller of Eris' orbital asteroid fields is the Inner Ring, the more turbulent of the two. Despite the protection afforded by modern ringsweepers, mining crews and pilots continue to suffer catastrophes in the chaos. But with great risk comes the greatest reward—the Inner Ring has been shown to contain more Voidsmen artifacts and exotic elements per cubic kilometer than its outer counterpart.

The Kallisti Reach is wider and far more stable, so it lends itself to long-term mining operations. But with safety comes a decided lack of one-time windfalls. Still, everyone needs silicon, heavy metals, copper, and other staples. The wares are in constant demand, but such work is unlikely to make more than a few space jockeys rich. If you get into the outer ring salvage business, make sure you're the spacer who owns the ship—or controls the expense account.

OPPORTUNITY RINGS

Transferred employee or new recruit, novice or veteran—JumpCorp's your ticket to a once in a lifetime opportunity in the Eris Beta-V subsector. Ever since the *Hyaergos Code* was put in place to

regulate commerce, the brave and hardy have been earning credits hand over fist!

SALVAGE

Of the trillions of rock and ice fragments orbiting Eris, the next could be your ticket to riches. And who knows which one it will be? That's why salvagers pursue their noble and perilous trade: to discover what lies hidden in that next rock, and inside the one after that.

While you supply fellow citizens with sorely needed ore and exotic elements, and reclaim lost artifacts on behalf of JumpCorp researchers, you could be purchasing your ticket to greatness. As-yet-unimagined technologies lie in store. What did the Voidsmen leave behind...for you?

SECURITY

Where commerce thrives, illicit activity festers. Smugglers, pirates, interstellar criminal syndicates, and everyday thieves all want a piece of Eris' bounty—what unites them is their desire to take it from honest spacers rather than earn it for themselves.

Only JumpCorp's crack security forces stand between upstanding Erisian citizens and hordes of wrongdoers lusting after their lives and wealth. Whether you patrol the Public Walk on Harmonia Station or undertake hazardous boarding actions among the rings, your value to JumpCorp—and the entire subsector—cannot be overstated!

SCIENTIFIC SURVEYS

For all we know about Eris, her eight moons, and her rings, yet more remains to be discovered. Planetary surveyors, pure researchers, and applied-science engineers are all in great demand—and generously compensated by JumpCorp for their efforts.

Surveys of Eris' moons are ongoing. We need intrepid investigators to flush out new species lurking in Dysnomia's jungles and swamp-covered lowlands. Who will devise a means to safely navigate Algos' acidic atmosphere and volcanic landscape, so the ancient ruins rumored to lie there might be explored? And technicians are always in demand to keep the heat modules in good repair at the ice-locked penal colony on Lethe.

Most important is the work being done to survey Eris' rings, making the region safer for salvagers and miners alike. But this situation is complicated by the shepherd moons and the

ringstorms that accompany their passage. Keen minds are needed to map the course of these destructive trends, improving the lives of all Eris' myriad citizens!

MINING

Countless miners lost their lives amid Eris' violent and clashing rings in the early years of settlement. Luckily, JumpCorp senior engineer Horst Tappelkhirre decided there *had* to be a better way. Tappelkhirre bent his prodigious intellect to designing a new type of mining vessel—the ringsweeper—based on secret Voidsman technology retrieved years earlier.

Tragically, Tappelkhirre died six years ago, when he and five other JumpCorp scientists were trapped in a disabled survey craft in the path of Aite, Eris' innermost shepherd moon. Aite's gravity well drew in the approaching vessel and annihilated it—all hands were lost. Although we mourn his loss, we thank him for the Tappelkhirre Method he left us to keep miners safe.

You—the next generation of Eris' brave miners—will pilot state-of-the-art ringsweepers into the asteroids, shielded and armored against unintended collisions, carrying loads of mining pods. Those mining pods will whisk your colleagues into the heart of rock and ice, to hollow out the riches secreted there. And when the job is done the sweeper returns, using state-of-the-art tractor beams to retrieve pods crammed full of riches and smiling miners.

Thankfully, advanced astrogation techniques allow miners to complete this process in less time than it takes for the shepherd moons to return, bringing destruction and leaving violent ringstorms in their wake. You'll observe that chaos from the safety of your ringsweeper's underbelly.

MEET THE CHALLENGE

For the steel-willed and hot-blooded, Eris offers more than mere commerce—she also holds the potential for *adventure*. Dilettantes, explorers, and treasure hunters visit Eris by the score, and they're rarely disappointed!

INTERSTELLAR PIRACY

Life on the galactic frontier can be harsh and unforgiving, given the recent rise of piratical activity along the fringes of the Kallisti Reach. Although JumpCorp employs a pair of Subsector

Marshals to enforce the *Hyaergos Code*—K'Gaed Kaine from her offices on Harmonia Station, and Yubukodor Hanz on Goldpoint—they and their staffs can't do it alone. Capable freebooters are often deputized to help keep the space lanes safe.

TECHNOLOGICAL RECLAMATION

Using recovered Voidsmen technology, Horst Tappelkhirre gave us the miraculous antimatter burrower, ushering in a new era of safer mining, increased productivity, and unprecedented revenue. But without the JumpCorp salvagers who extracted that tech from the rings, it could never have happened.

Every spacer who's visited a Goldpoint saloon knows the yarn about explorers who found an enormous chunk of the Voidsmen's ancient vessel drifting in the Kallisti Reach. Inside they discovered a labyrinth of twisting corridors and chambers, impossibly old, containing a trove of technological wonders. One explorer—a poor devil by the name of Praxx—innocently picked up a palm-sized crystal disc...and vanished. Panicked, the explorers tried to find a way out, but one by one they disappeared until only one remained. They say he lived to tell the tale, but

neither Praxx nor his other companions were ever seen again. No one else has found the derelict vessel, though many have tried.

XENOPHILIC RESEARCH

It's said scientific endeavor may well be the greatest adventure of all—Eris underlines the point. From ancient civilizations to exotic life forms to unique astronomical phenomena, Eris has it all. Do you have the nerve to hunt rare Dysnomian spineworms in steaming swamps? Will you summon enough bravery to study the crag men's cultural mores...and escape the planet alive to submit your findings to a reputable, peer-reviewed scientific media outlet? Become a JumpCorp-affiliated field researcher now, and find out!

So what are you waiting for, space jockey? JumpCorp recruitment officers are standing by to receive transmission of your Universal Personnel File and transfer request! In no time, you'll be a fully licensed JumpCorp contractor or employee on your way to a prosperous new life among Eris' rings.

:END TRANSMISSION



CHAPTER TWO: ERIS BETA-V

Eris Beta-V and its satellites shelter a great many beings, only about half of whom are permanent residents. Most are transient ships' captains and crews whose numbers ebb and flow.

Of those who could truly be called "Erisians," some don't ever set foot planetside—not willingly, at any rate. Others live hardscrabble lives as settlers on Eris' rugged moons.

Life in the Eris Beta-V subsector isn't without its quirks. The following sections list some crucial new Hindrances and Edges, Setting Rules, gear, ships, and ship modifications for heroes who live among the rings.

NEW HINDRANCES

A few Hindrances are particular to this area of known space.

LETHARGIC (MINOR)

Between Eris' orbit and all the varying orbital rates of her satellites, night and day are fluid concepts. These constant shifts play havoc with some beings' circadian rhythms, causing them to be constantly listless and enervated. Whenever the hero with this Hindrance sleeps, he must make a Notice roll (–4) to wake up. He also suffers a –4 penalty to Vigor rolls made to stay awake.

VOID SICKNESS (MAJOR)

Spacers who suffer from this Hindrance are influenced mentally and physically by the galactic void that borders the Hyaergos system. Nightmares and out-of-body experiences, in which the dreamer feels the sensation of hurtling through a black void, are common among those with the Hindrance. No doctor has been able to pinpoint the cause. Your spacer suffers –2 to all checks to avoid Fatigue, such as those made to resist radiation, poison, and disease.

NEW EDGE

PROFESSIONAL EDGE

Note: In Zero-G environments, this Edge replaces the Acrobat Edge from *Savage Worlds*.

IMPROVED GRAVITIC ACCLIMATION

Requirements: Seasoned, Gravitic Acclimation, Agility d8+

The hero with this Edge hasn't just acclimated to zero-G, she's virtually an acrobat. She can move swiftly in such conditions, and vault between surfaces to great effect. In zero-G she adds +2 to Agility rolls made to perform acrobatic maneuvers (including Tricks) and +1 to Parry.

SETTING RULES

The Eris subsector's primary industries are hydrogen extraction, ring mining, and salvage—all require skilled pilots and engineers in spades. Here are some simple rules to use if your heroes need to fly into Eris' rings for mining, salvage, or other, more adventurous pursuits.



MINING THE RINGS

In the years since Bolsorg Hyaergos staked his claim on the system, many have perished trying to extract its riches. So JumpCorp mining crews and contractors have dreamed up all sorts of “safer” ways to do the work—most of which have ended in disaster.

After a few spectacular failures—salvage ships dragged into the Roche zone and destroyed by asteroid impacts—most miners realized that if they wanted the rings’ riches, they would have to go in after them.

Thus began the development of a heavily armored and shielded mining ship. The result is known as a ringsweeper—see page 11 for its profile.

THE TAPPELKHIRRE METHOD

Horst Tappelkhirre, famed JumpCorp researcher and engineer, created a new type of vessel to accompany ringsweepers. Using tech retrieved from Voidsman wreckage years earlier, Tappelkhirre designed an antimatter burrower that allowed a so-called mining pod to blast its way into a rock fragment at high speed, avoiding the possibility of inadvertent collisions.

Working much faster than a matter cutter or matter remover, and far more precisely than a disintegrator, the burrower uses a controlled antimatter burst to almost instantly hollow out an area the perfect size and shape to house the mining pod. The pod deploys a mixture of water and hardening agents in its wake, sealing the entry hole in mere minutes. The miners in the pod do their work—with matter removers and other common tools of the trade—and the pod is later retrieved via tractor beam.

Tappelkhirre’s method calls for the ringsweeper to fly directly into the ring. First, the co-pilot identifies suitable targets for mining or salvage, which requires success on a Common Knowledge roll (–2) or Knowledge (Mining). When proper targets are locked, the pilot “dives” into the ring and flies between the whirling and clashing rocks. When the rings are relatively placid, this requires a Piloting check (at –1 on the Kallisti Reach, or –2 in the Inner Ring). Failure indicates the ship has smashed into an ice or rock fragment for 3d6 damage; on a critical failure the damage is 5d6.

In a ship equipped with the Deflector Screens or Sloped Armor Modification (see the *Science*

SURVIVAL PACK

For remote, frontier sectors like Eris Beta-V, JumpCorp manufactures backpacks containing a variety of useful tools and supplies—what’s known in spacers’ parlance as a “survival pack”—and sells them at a significant discount. Here’s what a standard-issue pack contains; see the *Science Fiction Companion* and *Savage Worlds* for item descriptions.

Survival Pack: All-weather jumpsuit, binoculars, commlink, energy sheet, first aid kit (basic supplies for 10 Healing rolls), flashlight (10” beam), language translator, lifejacket, machete (Str+d6), medi-gel, 15× nutri-bars (food for 1 person for 5 days), rope (10”), rebreather, medium slugthrower pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 3), spare 8-round clip, shaded goggles, small sensor suite, 2× smoke grenades, tool kit, 6 quarts water (supports 1 person for 3 days), water purification filter, waterproof matches (box of 50). **Total Weight:** 30 lb., **Cost:** C\$3,500.

Fiction Companion), the pilot receives +2 to Piloting rolls, or +4 if a ship has both Modifications.

Next, it’s time to launch the pods. After the pilot deploys the mining pods, the miner running each pod makes a Piloting check. Success means the pod auto-guides to the previously locked target and embeds itself inside.

Failure means the pod malfunctions somehow; roll for a Critical Hit. A critical failure on the roll means the pod misfires catastrophically, missing its target and careening wildly through the ring. Roll 1d6: On 1–5, the mining pod rams into a hunk of rock or ice at maximum velocity (see **Starship Combat** in the *Science Fiction Companion*). On a 6, the pod exits the ring safely, but spins off into space and is in need of immediate rescue.

When it’s time to retrieve the pods in a few days, the ringsweeper pilot makes another Piloting check as above and the pods automatically detach for recovery if successful.

NEW WEAPON: STUN GRENADE

Range: 5/10/20

This grenade uses a neural force similar to an EMP to stun targets' nervous systems. When thrown, all targets in a Large Burst Template must make a Vigor roll or fall prone and Incapacitated. At the start of each subsequent action, make a Vigor roll to revive. Success means a target revives but is Shaken for the round and can recover on the next as usual. A raise means he revives instantly and is not Shaken. No effect on surrounding structures. **Weight:** .25, **Cost:** \$30.

What's important is that the retrieval happens before the next *ringstorm*—one of the most dangerous events a ring miner or salvager can encounter.

RINGSTORMS

The system's four shepherd moons keep Eris' rings tidy by obliterating or ricocheting any fragments that drift out of line. The moons also spread waves of destructive collisions—called ringstorms—through the rings with their every passage, a process that speeds the deterioration of Voidsman ship fragments and artifacts.

NEW STARSHIP MOD: AQUATIC

Aquatic: The ship is built to withstand deep pressurization and is equipped with thrusters suitable for use in aqueous mediums, allowing it to function underwater as if it were a submersible. Acc and Top Speed are half a vehicle of equal Size (Colossus vehicle, Size 12: or Acc/TS of 2.5/5). Modifications to aquatic speed are purchased from the Vehicle Modifications Table and are treated separately from the starship's normal Acc and Top Speed. Mods 2, Price C\$5000 × Size.

Over the course of every fifth day, the shepherd moons begin their passage of a given point on the rings' circumference: first Aite on the inner edge, then the middle shepherds, and Horkos at the outer edge one day later. Ringsweepers swarm into the wake of the shepherds' passage as soon as the storms calm, launching mining pods like mad, and remain poised for extraction before Aite returns about five days later.

So what happens if your spacefarers need to fly through a ringstorm, or escape from one? Flying through a ringstorm is a **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*). On each of five rounds, make a Piloting roll (at -2 in the Kallisti Reach, or -4 in the Inner Ring) for the hero flying the ship. The crew may aid the pilot, as usual. If the pilot collects five successes, the ship deploys mining pods and exits the ring, docks within a planetoid's crater, or otherwise succeeds at its goal.

If the hero doesn't accumulate five or more successes in five rounds, the vessel immediately suffers 1d6 impacts causing 3d6 damage each. At this point—assuming the ship survives—the crew must begin another Dramatic Task to *escape* the ring. This can continue until the ship makes it out...or ends up so much debris and spacedust.

As above, starships equipped with either the Deflector Screens or Sloped Armor Modification (see the *Science Fiction Companion*), subtract 2 from the total damage sustained in each collision with a ring fragment, or 4 if a ship has both Modifications.

Anyone adrift in a spacesuit with no means of propulsion collides with 1d6 fragments, each of which inflicts 3d6 damage. Miners stuck inside an embedded mining pod are rattled about for 2d6 damage each. Also, roll 1d6: on a 1, the rock sheltering the mining pod shatters and causes 3d6 damage to the craft, forcing the operator to succeed on a Piloting roll (-4) or suffer ship damage as described above.

STARSHIPS

The Starships chapter in the *Science Fiction Companion* covers the most common craft in Eris Beta-V subsector. Three types of vessels, however, are unique to the system and crucial for the work done there. Here we present them for your crew's edification.

DERRICK VESSEL

These gigantic craft hang in the skies high over Eris, their hydrogen extractors dangling into the atmosphere many kilometers below. Each derrick functions as its own small community, with crewmembers' spouses and families acting as "passengers" living in the ship's residential sectors.

Gargantuan Starship: Acc/TS 10/50, Climb -2, Toughness 44 (12), Crew 3750, Cost C\$1.1675B

Remaining Mods: 5

Notes: AI, AMCM, Deflector Screens, FTL Drive, Galactic Sensor Suite, 3× Speed Reduction, 3× Superstructure (Bulk Cargo, vacuum: Hydrogen tanks), Superstructure (Civilian Passengers), Superstructure (Hangar), Superstructure (Specialty: Hydrogen extractor probe), Targeting System

Weapons:

- 4× Quad Linked Light Lasers
- 2× Torpedo Tubes (Fixed) with 20 Heavy Torpedoes (4 are EMP warheads)

MINING POD

A mining pod holds five miners, sophisticated ore-harvesting equipment, and cargo space. Pods are carried into Eris' rings in a ringsweeper, then launched toward a fragment the operator wishes to mine. A ringsweeper returns before the next ringstorm to extract the pod.

Small Starship: Acc/TS 70/900, Climb 3, Toughness 28 (13), Crew 5, Cost C\$4.85M

Remaining Mods: 0

Notes: 4× Armor, Cargo spaces (8 unused Mods), Crew Space, Deflector Screens, Sensor Suite (Planetary), 4× Speed

RINGSWEEPER

Ringsweepers are used to transport mining pods—and the miners inside them—to likely sources of ores or Voidsman artifacts. A ringsweeper has hangar capacity on its underside for four mining pods. The crew includes a pilot, co-pilot, and three crew.

Medium Starship: Acc/TS 50/650, Climb 2, Toughness 29(10), Crew 5, Cost C\$10.67M

Remaining Mods: 0

Notes: 2× Armor, AI, Deflector Screens, 3× Garage/Hangar, Sensor Suite (Planetary), Speed, Tractor Beam

Weapons:

- Medium Laser



CHAPTER THREE: A PLANETARY GAZETTEER

Forty-six years ago, JumpCorp senior surveyor Bolsorg Hyaergos laid claim to the star system that bears his name. Hyaergos traveled beyond the limits of what JumpCorp officials deemed prudent, but prudence was never the surveyor's strong suit. Beyond civilized space, at the very edge of a mysterious void, he found his star.

Orbiting it was, in his words, "the pure, white pearl"—a gas giant swarming with its own system of moons and rings. Hyaergos, being an aficionado of ancient Terran mythology, called the planet Eris—after the Greek goddess of chaos and discord—once he'd witnessed the violence of its rings. He also staked a JumpCorp claim that would bring riches to countless miners, salvagers, and explorers for generations to come.

HYAERGOS BETA-V

Eris is third planet from the sun designated Hyaergos Beta-V, which lies on the periphery of a vast, dark, and empty galactic region. The system's innermost planets, Imreikos and Gredl, are scorched and lack any atmosphere. The fourth planet from the sun, a water-covered world called Jántres-Gul, has a breathable atmosphere—but no dry land or valuable resources. The fifth and sixth worlds orbiting Hyaergos are distant, lonely giants of gas and liquid—known only as Hyaergos-5 and Hyaergos-6. They have elliptical orbits that bring them very close to Hyaergos for a short time, after which they travel for a relative eternity into the void. Most local activity takes place in the Eris subsector.

ERIS, THE PEARL

Eris is a mottled grayish-white gas giant composed primarily of hydrogen. It is a so-called "warm gas giant," close enough to its sun to result in high surface temperatures and a volatile atmosphere. Eris' solid core is tidally locked with the sun, meaning it doesn't spin. But the massive atmosphere and its weather systems still tend to circulate, presenting an everchanging face toward the primary. The high winds that prevail on the surface tend to distribute the heat,

so there's actually little variance in temperature between light side and dark—leaving the entire planet open to hydrogen extraction. Eris orbits the sun Hyaergos once every 60 weeks.

Eris has two relatively young planetary rings, believed to have formed from a collision between a supermassive alien vessel and a moon. It also has its own system of eight moons—two of them habitable. A few asteroids in Eris' rings are big enough to have rudimentary atmosphere and a little gravity, but most do not. See **Sites of Interest** for more data.

JUMPCORP DOMAIN

Per their official planetary survey results 46 years ago, JumpCorp claims ownership of Eris and its moons and rings. The Eris subsector is dominated by JumpCorp mining and salvage, and extensive hydrogen extraction operations. Swarms of derrick vessels orbit the planet's pale white backdrop, their intake ports dangling into the upper atmosphere. The promise of discovering strange and valuable artifacts keeps most of the region's salvagers well motivated.

THE HYAERGOS CODE

JumpCorp is the local "law of the land" by virtue of a charter called *The Hyaergos Code*, which Bolsorg created when he first surveyed the system. It lays out the terms of JumpCorp's ownership, authority, responsibilities, and the degree of latitude permitted in discharging such activities. Most of the document is corporate jargon and trade practices, geared toward what's best for business, but a few clauses are of interest to every spacer who settles down near Eris.

One, the *Code* called for the immediate creation and maintenance of two spaceports—Goldpoint and Harmonia Station—which would be open to all visitors, so long as they are willing to engage in honest commerce and obey JumpCorp law.

Two, the *Code* mandates a law enforcement official at each station, who answers only to the Subsector Administrator and is free to appoint

his or her own staff—a Subsector Marshal. Erisian Marshals have the power to enforce JumpCorp law as they see fit, may impress JumpCorp Security personnel, and basically do whatever they please, subject to Chanx Oblios' authority. Most try to stay on the marshals' good side.

SITES OF INTEREST

Aite: Aite is Eris' innermost "shepherd moon," which means it's responsible for keeping the inside edge of the Inner Ring tidy. It also causes untold danger and destruction with every orbit. Any asteroids or other particles that drift outside the ring's defined area collide with Aite as it passes; they are either flung back into the ring or plunge into Aite's atmosphere and burn up or smash into its cratered, desolate surface.

A ringstorm always accompanies the passage of a shepherd moon, so mining and salvage operations are carefully timed to minimize the danger. Eris being a gas giant means it takes the shepherd moons anywhere from 5–6 days to orbit the planet (see the **Orbital Periods** sidebar). Aite has little to no atmosphere, and the near-constant bombardment by meteorites makes its surface lethal. As any salty old spacedog can tell you, approaching "the moon that killed Horst Tapplekhirre" is suicide.

Algos: Eris' innermost moon, Algos is a small, forbidding satellite. Its rocky, largely volcanic surface is obscured by acidic clouds, and its thin atmosphere consists mostly of carbon dioxide and nitrogen. Ten years ago, the Bezenek-Havn'ul Disaster—in which 85 souls and two research vessels were lost in a fiery plunge into the atmosphere—inspired subsequent explorers to leave Algos to its lonely orbit.

Dysnomia: Dysnomia is the larger of Eris' two habitable moons. Its surface is covered by oceans. Its primary landmass is a thin band around the equator, mostly jungle, coastal marsh, and swampland. JumpCorp-funded settlers have founded a half-dozen small, surface outposts, exporting food and resources in return for sponsorship. Attacks by the savage crag men that dwell in the western hemisphere's rocky equatorial zones are on the rise. Harmonia Station (see below) orbits Dysnomia once every 30 hours.

Goldpoint: A space station in orbit around Ponos, Goldpoint is JumpCorp's primary export venue for ores and rare elements. About 100 ships come and go every daycycle, bringing salvage, ore, and nearly every miner in the subsector. Much



of the station is devoted to massive ore separators and docking areas, as well as a JumpSec garrison and armory—with a full platoon of 40 JumpSec Marines, a light cruiser, and six fighters.

Goldpoint harbors a number of cheap flophouses, dive bars, and establishments of ill repute. Krillor's Irregulars, a mercenary society founded by spacefaring yeti warriors, is based here. Marshal Yubukodor Hanz, a deader, enforces JumpCorp law from his Goldpoint offices. Travelers used to finer accommodations should dock at Harmonia Station instead.

Harmonia Station: Harmonia Station, in orbit around Dysnomia, is the system's main port of call for independent ships. If JumpCorp's hard labor is done by the workers at Goldpoint, Harmonia Station is where the bureaucracy hums and clicks softly. Subsector Administrator Chanx Oblios runs the station, and by extension all of JumpCorp's concerns in the system.

JumpCorp Security maintains a garrison here. They answer to Marshal K'Gaed Kaine—a one-eyed human female with a gang of robot deputies. Executive offices, ship and transaction records, courts of law, and JumpCorp outlet stores are found here too.

Kallisti Apple—Harmonia's largest and most-successful nightclub—is the only one on the station not owned or subsidized by JumpCorp. A kalian named Ujun owns it, and although he's been dogged for years by rumors of ties to pirates, no charge has ever stuck. Despite its independent status, spacers say, "All the best acts play at K.A."

Horkos: This cratered satellite is the rings' outermost shepherd moon. Horkos' passage keeps the outer edge of the Kallisti Reach defined, and spreads waves of destructive collisions through the ring. Horkos' surface is locked in ice, pocked by thousands of meteorites every day.

Inner Ring: Those willing to take on additional risk of collision and decompression try their luck in the Inner Ring, the subsector's most dangerous and violent region—but also where the finest prizes are recovered. Laid out in a flat orbital plane, Eris' rings are only about 150 meters "thick," but the Inner Ring's radial width is closer to 60,000 kilometers. The rings orbit Eris together in its gravitational field's "Roche zone," but at a much slower rate than the moons. The space between the rings is known as the Sleetros Gap.

A canny pilot flies to a suitable point above or below a ring before "diving"—flying into the ring in search of ore or artifacts. Diving operations are carefully timed to avoid the

shepherd moons. But any navigation among a ring's asteroids is dangerous, so such trips are kept as brief as possible. The inner ring yields a higher percentage of progenitor artifacts and rare elements than the Kallisti Reach, but its relatively smaller area makes the tidal effects of shepherd moons Aite and Neikea more catastrophic to vessels and mining operations.

Kallisti Reach: In contrast to the Inner Ring's compressed turbulence, the Kallisti Reach spreads like a glittering diamond sea on the nebula-mottled backdrop of space. Strange interactions of visible light and exotic radiation send rainbows and luminous sparks tumbling across rock and ice surfaces. When Hyaergos dawns from Eris' shadow, the light creates a fireworks display among colliding asteroids.

The Kallisti Reach may seem the far more enticing target at first glance, but don't judge a ring by its bling. The Reach provides miners with a neverending bounty of common ores and elements, but nowhere near the amount of Voidsmen artifacts found in the Inner Ring. That said, having six days between ringstorms tends to promote longer lifespans among one's crew.

Rumors say pirates and salvagers of grayer morals congregate in small outposts scattered along the Kallisti Reach.

Lethe: Lonely Lethe, shrouded in ice and clouds, circles Eris at an extreme distance. The tiny orb has no indigenous species. Its only inhabitants live in a JumpCorp prison colony that shares its name with that of the moon. Once a spacer's G.T.L.—"gone to Lethe"—he's probably never coming back.

Neikea: This small moon shepherds the outer edge of the Inner Ring. Like the other shepherds, Neikea's face is ravaged by constant impacts. Unlike them, Neikea's surface is covered by boiling oceans and volcanoes, all hidden by vapor and soot clouds.

Phonoi: The smallest of the shepherd moons, Phonoi is an airless, meteorite-pocked rock. It shepherds the inner edge of the Kallisti Reach.

Ponos: Ponos is the smaller of Eris' habitable moons. It's surface is considered arctic only in the equatorial zones, where a few hardy underground settlements have taken root with JumpCorp support. In regions farther north or south, temperatures plunge below most beings' ability to survive. Goldpoint (see above) orbits Ponos once every 22 hours.

ORBITAL PERIODS

The following table provides orbital periods for Eris' satellites. Each moon spends roughly a quarter of its orbital period in Eris' umbra—with the sun in total eclipse.

Moon	Orbital period
Algos	29 hours
Dysnomia	60 hours
Aite	122 hours
Inner Ring	292.8 hours
Neikea	132 hours
Phonoi	139.2 hours
Kallisti Reach	292.8 hours
Horkos	146.5 hours
Lethe	249.6 hours
Ponos	204 hours

CHAPTER FOUR: ENIGMAS OF ERIS

If you're a player, read no further. Everything from here on out is solely the province of the Game Master.

Eris' rings were created a little more than two million years ago. That was when—according to accepted wisdom and JumpCorp scientists—the supermassive vessel of a progenitor species scientists call “Voidsmen” collided with one of Eris Beta-V's moons.

The ship is thought to have been a massive sphere, itself easily the size of a moon, and likely home to *hundreds of millions* of unique life forms. Its wreckage, along with that of the shattered moon, spread out over long years to form Eris' rings of glittering asteroids and ice.

Forty-six years ago, a JumpCorp salvage team arrived at Eris and discovered evidence of a long-lost race and its stupendous technology. In weeks, three JumpCorp warships arrived. Research & Acquisitions agents laid claim to the system and chose locations for two orbital bases. The rest, as they say, is history.

THE LOST MOON

The real story began a little more than 5 million years ago on the moon now called Dysnomia. The species of bipedal hominids that populated the rocky equatorial zones was in the fledgling stages of space travel, having just begun to develop vessels that could explore their own star system.

But years of internecine warfare brought them to a crisis point in their struggle to eradicate a deadly disease. The plague, which originated in Dysnomia's vast everglades, was extremely aggressive and almost 100 percent fatal. And those few who survived the pathogen's ravages became blood-mad killers.

Diplomats worked night and day to solve the Dysnomians' differences. They finally achieved peaceful accords, and allied to wipe out the affliction among their people. What most of their civilization didn't know, however, was that a few factions had created weaponized strains, which

mutated extensively. A few strains showed the first signs of a primitive, self-ordering *intelligence*.

Terrified, the ancient Dysnomians determined to destroy every remaining sample. But seemingly all their options allowed for the possibility, however remote, of the pathogen's survival.

EXILE TO ALGOS

At length, Dysnomia's leaders settled on a modest plan, one within their reach. While trapping or destroying the virus on Dysnomia risked its escape, and firing it into the sun was fraught with risk, what Dysnomian scientists *could* do was launch the virus by rocket to their nearest neighbor. That neighbor—now called Algos—would serve as incinerator and acid bath.

The Dysnomians hoped the rocket would burn up upon entering Algos' atmosphere. If any fragments survived, the impact and exposure to Algos' volcanic landscape and acidic atmosphere would take care of the rest. And even if a sample of the pathogen survived all that, it would never bother the Dysnomians or anyone else again.

So they fired rockets filled with virus cultures, and jettisoned their problem to Algos. But soon Dysnomia erupted in war. One faction had secretly retained a pathogen sample, intending to wipe out their enemies once they were the only ones still armed with biological weapons.

But their plan worked too well. After the plague ravaged the other factions, it killed them as well. The last Dysnomian scientists created a vault to hold their culture's accumulated knowledge, interring one sample of the Dysnomian plague as a warning to future visitors. In a few generations' time, the Dysnomians devolved into a primitive species, given to superstition and tribal warfare. Little trace of their former glory remained.

FROM MUTATION TO EVOLUTION

Meanwhile, the pathogen made its transit to Algos. And true to the Dysnomians' darkest fears, portions of their rocket survived entry into Algos' atmosphere and crashed on its barren surface.

MYSTERIOUS DESIGNS

Eris Beta-V's backstory is extensive and complex, but at its core are two key mysteries for your group to solve—the Voidsmen's origin and who is behind the insurgent attacks. Your players should believe the "Voidsmen" were destroyed when their ship collided with Eris' moon two million years ago, and wonder who's behind the recent terrorist attacks on JumpCorp holdings. That way, when you finally pull back the curtain to show that the sethiss have been here all along—and are behind the attacks—it's a meaningful reveal. But how do you make these mysteries resonate at the gaming table?

First, this book is set up to lay the mystery's foundations. The first three chapters—intended for players—mention only the Voidsmen, and refer to them as long extinct. That's a reflection of current scientific beliefs. Players know Aite as a cratered shepherd moon, nothing more. Virtually no one knows of the sethiss' origin or existence, or that the "moon" Aite is actually a hollow, manufactured planet.

Have the various individuals the heroes interact with tell stories about ancient Voidsman artifacts early and often. Spacers in saloons debate where the Voidsmen originated, and tell raucous tall tales about their amazing capabilities. Old salts whisper dire omens about the insurgent threat. Sprinkle a sethiss artifact or two (see page 19) into early encounters with pirates or other threats. If the spacers aren't talking about the Voidsmen, they should be wondering whether their starship will be the next one bombed by terrorists.

Also, the Plot Point campaign (starting on page 51) is designed to let your heroes solve these mysteries. Even if you don't plan to use the campaign as written, see the **Running the Plot Point** sidebar on page 53 for a few more practical tips on linking your group to the Eris subsector and its enigmas.

What happened next, no Dysnomian could have predicted: The pathogen came in contact with Algos' indigenous, rudimentary lifeforms.

These silicon-based species thrived in Algos' harsh atmospheric conditions and had developed a curious trait. Due to their unique physical makeup, they perceived spacetime in more than three dimensions. They could peer through time and view distant places as a matter of course—and sometimes touch other dimensions and even other realities. Although they were non-sentient creatures with no tool-making ability, they were far more cognizant of the galaxy's true nature than even modern JumpCorp scientists.

The Dysnomian virus sought to reproduce. It needed living cells to gestate inside. But when the pathogen infected Algos' life forms, it didn't kill them or drive them mad as it had Dysnomia's hominids. Their silicon makeup allowed the virus to *merge* with them, its own growth multiplying cell growth exponentially, and vice versa. Far from the incinerator the Dysnomians imagined, Algos turned out to be a colossal petri dish.

Nearly two million years passed, until no trace of the Dysnomian virus or Algos' native creatures remained. A new species—made up of intelligent viral strains occupying silicon exoskeletons—had risen to take their place: the sethiss.

TAPPING THE VOID

The sethiss did not return to Dysnomia at first, despite knowing its people's role in their history. Many revered the Dysnomians for their misguided attempt at genocide, because it maximized the sethiss' potential as a species. But now they took a longer view of the nearby galaxy.

The sethiss discovered that Eris and its sun lie on the periphery of a vast area containing no astronomical features of note. Whereas modern JumpCorp scientists view it as a "void," the ancient sethiss recognized it as being full of dark energy and matter. Over thousands of years their scientists devised ways to tap the vast reserves of dark energy just beyond the system's edge, and in the process leave Algos behind—forever.

Over 100 years, the sethiss constructed a pair of mighty, spherical vessels—each the size of a moon—in stable orbit around Eris. Much like Dyson spheres, they were hollow and the majority of their inner surfaces inhabited by the sethiss. Using genetic material collected on return forays to Dysnomia and Algos, the sethiss created a plethora of new species to serve their

needs. At each sphere's core was an enormous resonating coil that drew power from the void's dark energy—giving them vast, almost limitless power.

Using dark energy, the sethiss extended their lives, warped spacetime, and explored alternate dimensions, parallel timelines, and twin universes. For close to a million years they worked to perfect themselves and their miraculous technology. Their view turned firmly inward, they failed to notice the looming catastrophe.

OUT OF THE DARK

About two million years ago, a small alien probe entered Eris' solar system. It had worked its way across the void for eons, on a direct course for one of the sethiss' twin worlds. It quietly set down on the planet's surface.

The probe had been sent by the gth-kel, a faraway race that aggressively colonized near-habitable planets. The device released billions of self-replicating nanomachines into the planet's crust to terraform it to the gth-kels' specifications—and sparked an interstellar war.

The sethiss had foreseen this catastrophe. But the gth-kel's thought patterns were so completely alien, they foiled attempts to divine their motives or methods. By the time the sethiss realized what was happening, nearly a third of their world was controlled by gth-kel nanobots.

For more than 100 years the sethiss fought to repulse the gth-kel. As a last resort, they set off a matter-antimatter reaction they hoped would deactivate and expel the gth-kel nanomachines—like an immune system attacking foreign cells. Instead, the reaction spiraled out of control and obliterated their world in a violent explosion.

Ice, stone, and debris spread out into Eris' Roche zone, eventually to form a pair of rings. The surviving homeworld's exterior was pummeled by thousands of debris impacts. Within, the sethiss' woe was beyond measure. Their expanded perceptions had led them to form enormous networks, linked in what we might think of as a hive mind. The demise of nearly half their race was psychologically apocalyptic.

Soon, sethiss civilization utterly collapsed. Tribes and factions formed. They fell into a series of civil wars, brutal conflicts that polarized and further decimated the population. A long, dark age followed...until few sethiss living on its inner surface even guessed at their world's true nature.

MODERN TIMES

In the past 50 years, a few sethiss have begun to recover some of the knowledge they lost. A small religious sect—the name of which roughly translates as “Vector Ultra”—discovered an ancient installation. To their amazement, a still-functioning observation deck showed them what lay beyond the walls of their “planet.”

They saw Eris and her moons, poised at the edge of a vast region of dark energies. They saw the rings, and learned how their ancestors—the “Builders”—perished to create them. But then the sethiss saw something that awakened within them a long-simmering rage.

After long study they learned of an organization calling itself “JumpCorp,” which was steadily plundering the sethiss' technology for its own gain. The system was their birthright and these invaders—who mistakenly referred to their homeworld as the moon “Aite”—had to be stopped at any cost. The vast majority of sethiss remain ignorant of these greater truths.

In the present, agents of Vector Ultra are just beginning their mission to infect (read: infiltrate) and subvert JumpCorp's efforts from within. Vector Ultra sethiss have a few working fighters, but not nearly enough ships or personnel for an



invasion fleet. So they draw in ships through the atmosphere lock on Aite, crash them in the desert, and capture the castaways to be “implanted” with a sethiss consciousness and sent back out into the subsector to infiltrate it.

There aren’t many of these tech-enabled, Vector Ultra sethiss yet—perhaps 30 or 40, at most. And as they begin to venture out, their secret’s starting to get out too—hence rumors of mysterious goings-on amid the rings, and the recent “terrorist” attacks on JumpCorp ships.

All life in the Eris subsector hangs in the balance as Vector Ultra begins the final phase of its plan. See the Plot Point Campaign **The Spy Who Came in From the Void**, starting on page 51, for all the data.

MORE SETTING RULES

Most of what you need to run adventures in the Eris subsector is in the *Science Fiction Companion*, or in the **Setting Rules** beginning on page 8. But there are a few players aren’t aware of at first—rules for sethiss artifacts and void sickness. Keep these rules secret from your players until they come up in play. But don’t explain everything! A mystery is more compelling than the explanation.

SETHISS ARTIFACTS

The table at right provides sample sethiss artifacts. Typically, only High Sethiss and Vector Ultra members possess these items, but heroes may stumble on them. Sethiss artifacts use the **Powers** rules in *Savage Worlds*, with psionic Trappings appropriate to sethiss technology. The artifacts listed are not the only ones possible; the GM is encouraged to create more.

To deduce one of these items’ proper use, a hero must succeed on a Smarts roll at –4. Each attempt takes one day. With success, she figures out how to use the item as described. On a critical failure, the GM inflicts a mishap on the experimenter.

Appearance: Most artifacts are small pins or brooches that look like pearly white, pale pink, or cloudy purple shards of crystal. All sethiss artifacts have a “socket” on the side or back that accepts power cells (see below). Artifacts can also be crystal knives, glass helmets, fibrous javelins, or any form that serves the object’s function.

Activation/Use: No roll is required to activate sethiss technology. As a free action, the wearer taps or tightens her grip on the item, as appropriate. Effects cannot be maintained. The wearer rolls Smarts for targeted effects or those opposed by a target. Enemies with the Void Sickness Hindrance (see below) suffer a –2 penalty on rolls to resist any of these effects.

Sethiss artifacts can be targeted with a Called Shot (usually at –6). An artifact has Toughness 6. Damage exceeding the artifact’s Toughness causes it to shut down for 1d6 rounds, after which it returns to normal function. Damage that exceeds an artifact’s Toughness by a raise or more destroys it and its power cell.

Power Cells: Power cells are small, luminous crystals that plug into universal sockets. A sethiss power cell holds 12 Power Points when fully charged; as the charge depletes the glow fades. There is no known means to recharge them. If not enough Power Points remain to activate an item’s power, it fails to function. Leftover points can be used in another artifact. A randomly discovered artifact is 50% likely to have a power cell; if it does, roll 1d12 for remaining Power Points.



SAMPLE ARTIFACTS

d20 Item

- 1 **Crystal helm:** *Armor*. This cloudy white mineral helm's crystals cover the user's body in a protective sheath.
- 2 **Polycrystalline filaments:** *Barrier*. This brooch casts out microscopic filaments that weave into a fibrous fence.
- 3 **Ocular stunner:** *Blind*. This gemlike bracelet's beam paralyzes ocular nerves.
- 4 **Dark energy emitter (type 1):** *Bolt*. This black, handheld crystal shard emits crackling pulses of dark energy.
- 5 **Genetic optimizer/defuser:** *Boost/lower trait*. This pinkish-white crystal primes or decouples DNA to alter performance.
- 6 **Antimatter displacer:** *Burrow*. This purple crystal disintegrates matter in its path, and collapses it in its wake.
- 7 **Dark energy emitter (type 2):** *Burst*. This black crystal funnel creates a fan of dark energy.
- 8 **Dark energy emitter (type 3):** *Damage field*. This black crystal brooch creates a low-level dark energy field.
- 9 **Crystal lenses (type 1):** *Darksight*. These egg-shaped, purple-tinted crystals are worn over the eyes.
- 10 **Kinetic reverser:** *Deflection*. This pink brooch creates an anti-kinetic field.
- 11 **Dark energy nullifier:** *Dispel*. This black crystal ring can only negate effects created with other sethiss artifacts.
- 12 **Microfilament spacesuit:** *Environmental protection*. This black pin unravels into microfilaments that weave into a suit.
- 13 **Crystal lenses (type 2):** *Farsight*. These egg-shaped, purple-tinted crystals are worn over the eyes.
- 14 **Quantum shifter (type 1):** *Intangibility*. This reddish-gray crystal pin shifts the wearer's spatial dimension.
- 15 **Quantum shifter (type 2):** *Invisibility*. This transparent crystal pin bends light waves around the wearer.
- 16 **Psychic lash:** *Puppet*. This black crystal circlet dominates others' minds.

- 17 **Quantum shifter (type 3):** *Quickness*. This jagged, purple crystal pin dilates time around the wearer.
- 18 **Quantum shifter (type 4):** *Slow*. This pale pink crystal pin contracts time around a target.
- 19 **Quantum shifter (type 5):** *Speed*. This thick, square crystal pin dilates time around the wearer.
- 20 **Dimensional shifter:** *Teleport*. This black crystal pin rotates the wearer along a dimension higher than the fourth.

VOID SICKNESS

Void sickness isn't just a weird side effect of living so close to vast reserves of dark matter and energy. It's an actual virus, released by the sethiss into the system to pave the way for their eventual conquest and return to power.

Void sickness enters a host's cells and subtly alters not only the DNA sequence, but also its overall structure, creating a number of triple helix strands among the typical ones. If the hero undergoes a genetic evaluation or medical procedure that would reveal such details, physicians can identify the phenomenon but are at a total loss to explain its cause or effects.

In addition to the Void Sickness Hindrance's effects as described on page 8, the hero with this Hindrance is more susceptible to devices and effects powered by dark matter or dark energy. The Void Sickness Hindrance can have a variety of effects in play. We describe these in detail whenever they arise in a Plot Point or Savage Tale, but the default effect is a -2 penalty on Trait rolls made to resist or Soak damage from a dark energy-powered device.

Finally, having a character with Void Sickness in the group can be a boon to storytelling, allowing the GM to drop hints at various points during the adventure. The common complaints of nightmares and out-of-body experiences, in which the dreamer feels the sensation of hurtling through a black void, provide opportunities for the GM to drop clues about the sethiss or glimpses of events important to the story.

CHAPTER FIVE: ERIS' RINGS

The Eris subsector contains myriad settings and personalities to fuel science fiction adventures. In this section we lay out all these locations in detail, and reference *Savage Tales* that might occur there.

Each location begins with a general overview. After that is a section titled **Traveling There**, outlining heroes' options for reaching the place, followed by all the location's **Points of Interest**—with detailed Encounter Tables where appropriate. Then you'll find a list of all the **Savage Tales** adventures might encounter in a given locale. For each moon, a "datafile" sidebar provides vital details at a glance.

AITE

Most of the Eris subsector's inhabitants know Aite as the innermost of four shepherd moons that serve the dual purposes of defining the rings' shape, and creating much of the turbulence that results in dangerous ringstorms. Aite's exterior—a barren, cratered wasteland of rock and dust—has no atmosphere or inhabitants, low gravity, and is constantly pelted with debris produced by its passage along the Inner Ring's inside edge.

The sector's big secret is that Aite isn't a moon at all—its hollow interior is the remaining sethiss homeworld (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15 for the entire story). Inside Aite, gravity is reversed, allowing inhabitants to live on the sphere's inner surface. The interior atmosphere is primarily carbon dioxide and nitrogen, and "hives" of sethiss live in isolated pockets across various terrain. Glittering silicate deserts give way to crystal forests overgrown with fronds of quivering fungi, which in turn border upon mountain ranges made of smooth, reddish enamel that is riddled with billions of holes and deep crevasses.

Not long after they constructed their homeworlds, sethiss scientists returned in secret to Dysnomia and Algos to collect various genetic samples. With these, they engineered entire biospheres for their homeworlds. From plants to

reptiles, from mammals to silicate-based life, the sethiss managed their self-sustaining creations to best serve their needs. By the present day, most of these species have either died off or evolved into bizarre new forms.

TRAVELING THERE

It's difficult to reach Aite because no sane pilot wants to fly anywhere near it. As its orbit skims along the inside edge of the Inner Ring, errant chunks of debris either slam into the moon's surface, are flung off into space in random directions, or are whipped back into the ring itself—setting off a wave of destructive collisions. Wise spacefarers stay away from that sort of activity.

Sooner or later, your heroes may have reason to go to Aite and attempt to reach its interior. In that case, the planet's atmosphere lock—described on page 21—is the most likely point of access. (If you're running the Plot Point campaign, episodes 6–8 contain a wealth of additional material about Aite's landscape and people.)

But there are other, less-traveled ways an enterprising spacer might gain entrance—or die trying. Many of the craters that pock Aite's outer shell open into deep crevasses, and through winding tunnels that open from the bottoms of these a traveler might eventually find herself on Aite's interior, in the dimmest depths of the canyon lands (see below). But this route is fraught with peril, and surely a last resort of marooned crew.

POINTS OF INTEREST

As discussed earlier, Aite's outer surface has no landmarks or places of note. Its interior, however, is an exceedingly alien world that has remained undiscovered for the nearly three million years of its existence. Aite's people—the sethiss—once commanded awe-inspiring technology, but they have devolved into a handful of isolated, theocratic tribes that subsist on the land and



sometimes war with each other. See **The Sethiss** sidebar on page 24.

Most of the sETHISS' carefully planned habitat has become an uncharted wilderness, dominated by ravenous predators and other aggressive, viral life forms. Ancient ruins dot the landscape, almost all of their technological wonders long dead and decayed beyond use. The remains of roads are visible here and there, but billions of asteroid collisions with Aite's outer shell over the years have taken their toll on the landscape. The planet's reservoir of life-giving liquid long ago spilled its shores, flowing over a good part of the planet's surface. Deep cracks and canyons have opened in the deserts. Yet life runs rampant, and much of it is hostile to outsiders.

Ancient Roads: Aite's deserts are crisscrossed by roadways built by the ancient sETHISS to connect their far-flung cities. The network is no longer intact, but traveling by road confers the benefits of Easy ground when determining how far a party can journey per day (see **Travel** in *Savage Worlds*). By comparison, Aite's canyon lands are Average ground, its sandy deserts and ruined cities Hard ground, and its forests and mountains Difficult ground. These terrain conditions may vary as the GM desires.

Atmosphere Lock: The atmosphere lock lies near the primordial cistern and City Prime. It's an

irising door roughly a mile across, which opens into a vast space inside the planet's shell that can be pressurized or depressurized to admit spacecraft. A similar irising door lies on the moon's outer surface, camouflaged by impact craters. The planet's gravity plane lies about halfway through the crust, and is accessible through the lock: Any object without its own propulsion or ambulatory capabilities falls toward the plane, passes it, and then falls back again—until it bobs on the plane like a cork on an ocean's surface.

The atmosphere lock's controls are housed in a high tower at City Prime's center. For the time being, only operatives of Vector Ultra know how the lock works; it figures heavily in their plans to retake the Eris system.

Canyon Lands: These shadowy lowlands were created when impacts opened tiny cracks in Aite's outer shell. Dust, sand, and rocks were sucked out in the minor depressurizations that followed, until the cracks finally resealed themselves. But by then the surrounding desert was rent by gorges that stretched over hundreds of miles. The most savage and superstitious sETHISS tribes inhabit the canyon lands. By order of their many-legged "God-King," these spiderlike denizens hunt and kill any who trespass in their gloomy ravines—whether they're aliens or other sETHISS.

DATAFILE: AITE'S INTERIOR

Gravity: Normal

Dominant Terrain: Artificial (Avg temp 70° F)

Atmosphere: Hazardous (carbon dioxide, nitrogen)

Population Density: Sparse

Dominant Government: Theocracy

Law: Strict

Customs: Varies by sethiss hive

Technology: Varies by sethiss hive

Spaceport: Extensive (City Prime)

CANYON LANDS ENCOUNTERS

For any of Aite's encounter tables, draw one card from the Action Deck for each day the heroes travel. On a face card, check the suit and roll on the corresponding table below. Jokers are wild—GM's choice.

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1-2 **Rockslide:** Roll Agility at -2 or suffer Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises.
- 3-4 **Ill Wind:** Heroes without enclosed suits roll Vigor at -2 or contract a long-term chronic, minorly debilitating disease. The Dysnomian flu vaccine cures it.
- 5-6 **Crevasse:** A crevasse 1d4 × 10 feet deep cracks open beneath a random party member (see **Falling** in *Savage Worlds*) unless she rolls Agility at -2.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1-2 **Exiles:** 1d4 exiled canyon sethiss (see page 87) confront the heroes.
- 3-4 **Traders:** 2d4 canyon sethiss (see page 87) merchants approach. Roll on the Reaction Table with a +2 modifier.
- 5-6 **Survivors:** A gang of 1d6 citizens of Underbelly (see page 30). Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

AITE



- ATMOSPHERE LOCK
- SETHISS TRIBAL SETTLEMENT
- RUINED CITY
- HIVE MOUNTAINS
- PRIMORDIAL WATERS
- CRYSTALLINE FOREST
- SILICATE DESERT
- CANYON LANDS

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1–2 Derelict:** Explorers come across a crashed System Freighter (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). It was drawn in through the atmosphere lock years ago by the Vector Ultra sethiss. It's old and not flightworthy, but has intact weapons and cargo at the GM's discretion. At the very least, it provides secure shelter.
- 3–4 Fundaments:** Heroes discover a vein of valuable ore, mineral, or a useful element, worth $1d8 \times C\$1,000$ if they extract it and haul it away.
- 5–6 Lost Robot:** The heroes find a damaged Repair Bot (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) wandering alone. It has three "wounds," and due to a glitch views humans as inanimate mineral structures that it must analyze. If the 'bot is repaired, the glitch is fixed as well.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1 Hunting Party:** 1d6 canyon sethiss (see page 87) hunt and attack the travelers. If they are defeated and any escape, they return in 1d10 hours with 2d6 more of their kind.
- 2 Stampede:** A herd of 150 terraghs (see page 90) charges the heroes.
- 3–4 Skirmishers:** 2d6 canyon sethiss (see page 87). If they are defeated and any escape, they return in 1d8 hours with 2d8 more of their kind.
- 5 Dark Skies:** 1d4 blackshrike swarms (see page 86) descend on the group.
- 6 War Party:** 3d6 canyon sethiss (see page 87). If they are defeated and any escape, they return in 1d6 hours with 2d12 more of their kind. Even if the party defeats this huge band of sethiss, doing so is likely to spark a war between the tribe and the spacers...one that soon catches the God-King's notice!

SURVIVAL INSIDE AITE

Between its toxic atmosphere, occasional acidic rainstorm, and bleak landscape, Aite's interior is a difficult place for oxygen-breathing space travelers to survive.

Hazardous Atmosphere: Aite's inner atmosphere—composed primarily of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, methane, and ammonia—is Hazardous; see **Atmosphere** in the *Science Fiction Companion*. The pressure is high enough for visitors to make sole use of rebreathers if they choose. Heroes can refill oxygen canisters with a Smarts roll at -4 or appropriate Knowledge check at -2 . The climate ranges from arid mountains to deserts, and acid rain scours the mountains and forests. Facing these torrential downpours without shelter can be deadly.

Night and Day: Aite's core—visible from most locations on the moon's inner surface—appears to be a bright, white sun. It's actually a massive resonating coil, which glows so brightly it looks like a star to most observers. This coil collects dark energy from the void, and turns it into light, heat, and other energies that the sethiss once manipulated. A "day" lasts 30 hours on Aite: Fifteen hours of daylight, followed by 15 hours of "night," as the coil shuts down. While the coil is cooling down or warming up—a process that takes approximately 30 minutes—its true nature is visible. During daylight hours the temperature ranges from $80\text{--}100^\circ\text{ F}$, and at night it drops to $40\text{--}60^\circ\text{ F}$. There are no seasonal changes inside Aite.

Radio Silence: Radio transmissions—including distress beacons—cannot penetrate Aite's crust, even when the atmosphere lock (see page 21) is open. That means heroes can't get in touch with anyone outside, and vice versa. Only the Vector Ultra operatives at City Prime (see page 24) have radio contact with the rest of the subsector.

City Prime: City Prime's majestic and sprawling skyline is visible from a hundred miles. It sits beside the primordial cistern and the atmosphere lock, stubbornly refusing to crumble though its sister-cities have long since succumbed to the ages. City Prime, for all its wonders, is largely uninhabited; most sethiss tribes consider it taboo—a forbidden place where evil spirits dwell.

An expansive spaceport once occupied the desert between the city and the atmosphere lock; thousands of derelict sethiss vessels—crystalline and alien—lie half-buried in the dunes. A pilot can use the same process as in figuring out sethiss artifacts (see page 16) to puzzle out a small vessel's controls. See the Sethiss Fighter profile on page 74 if one does.

In the ruins, elevated walkways curve gracefully between spired buildings, wending

above the wrecked vehicles and debris below. Tribes of kebblex, small hominids evolved from creatures the sethiss kept as pets, make war with each other and hunt furry terraghs for food. At the city's center stands the Quincunx—five red stone plinths towering 800 feet over the plaza—a huge psionic magnifier that once allowed all the sethiss to connect in a single hive mind.

A slender tower rises from the middle of the Quincunx, nearly 400 feet taller than the red plinths. Atop it sits a saucer-shaped observation deck allowing one to see the atmosphere lock, the old spaceport, and the city ruins spread out below. About 20 members of Vector Prime live in the central tower's upper levels, tending to the High Sethiss (see page 88)—ancient ancestors they discovered and awakened from cryogenic hibernation about 12 years ago. They also control the atmosphere lock, and perform invasive surgeries on captured spacefarers to implant sethiss consciousnesses within them.

THE SETHISS

In the two million years since their hive mind fragmented and their ur-society collapsed, modern sethiss have evolved into several variations. We provide you with all the details—and stat profiles—beginning on page 87. Here's a short primer on sethiss types.

Canyon: The most savage and warlike of modern sethiss are the canyon-dwelling variety. They have many legs, and a vaguely spiderlike shape. They follow a so-called "God-King" of their tribes. A few of them are exiles and merchants, and therefore not so eager to make enemies.

Desert: In contrast to the canyon dwellers, the desert sethiss' harsh lifestyle has conditioned them to revere all forms of life. Their histories are passed down from the old scientists...sethiss of the mountains who looked into different dimensions and times. They are cautious with strangers, but generally friendly. They have three legs and two arms.

Forest: Forest sethiss tribes dwell in crystalline palaces in Aite's fungus-covered forests. They use crystal growths to grow tools and weapons. They have an upright head and torso, with two arms, but the lower halves of their bodies

CITY PRIME ENCOUNTERS

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1 **Sub-Level:** The surface ruptures beneath a random spacer's feet, and he plunges 1d6 × 10 feet into a subterranean area (see **Falling** in *Savage Worlds*). If it proves impossible to climb out, the group must seek another exit...below.
- 2 **Debris:** Explorers must pick their way through streets choked with wreckage. This counts as Difficult ground for the entire day.
- 3-4 **Radiation:** The party wanders close to a ruptured dark energy reactor, which gives off low levels of radiation (see **Radiation** in *Savage Worlds*) in a one-mile radius. Heroes with the Void Sickness Hindrance suffer a -2 penalty on Vigor rolls to resist this Fatigue.
- 5-6 **Broken Path:** The elevated thoroughfare on which the spacefarers are traveling has collapsed up ahead. Either the group loses a full day's travel backtracking, or they figure out a way across the 10-yard (5") gap. It's a 60-foot drop to the debris field below (see **Falling** in *Savage Worlds*).

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1–2 Warrior's Rites:** Explorers encounter a lone desert sethiss (see page 88), wandering City Prime in search of an artifact in order to be recognized as an adult warrior of the tribe. Roll on the Reaction Table in *Savage Worlds* to determine how the encounter begins.
- 3–4 Curious Kebblex:** A solitary kebblex (see page 87) befriends the party.
- 5–6 Progenitor:** A single High Sethiss (see page 88), freed from its sleep, explores City Prime aghast at its condition. Roll on the Reaction Table in *Savage Worlds*.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1–2 Artifact Cache:** The adventurers stumble upon a trove of intact sethiss artifacts in a building, buried sub-level, wrecked vehicle, or other spot. 1d4 of them still function. Roll on the **Sethiss Artifacts Table** (page 19) to determine what they are.
- 3–4 Power Cells:** The heroes discover an old power station. Success on a Notice roll (–2) turns up 1d4 intact dark energy power cells (see page 18).
- 5–6 Vital Information:** The heroes discover some record of sethiss society—a library, hall of records, news archive, etc. A scholar can roll d12 (at –6) using a Language Translator (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) to decode the information, or roll Knowledge (Linguistics) at –2. With success, the GM can tell the players a brief detail from the sethiss' history (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15), with a fair amount of context. *Example:* "The sethiss built a pair of hollow worlds to tap the void's dark energy—Aite being one—and lived inside them while they explored other dimensions."

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1 Stampede:** A herd of 3d8 terraghs (see page 90) charges the heroes.

THE SETHISS (CONT.)

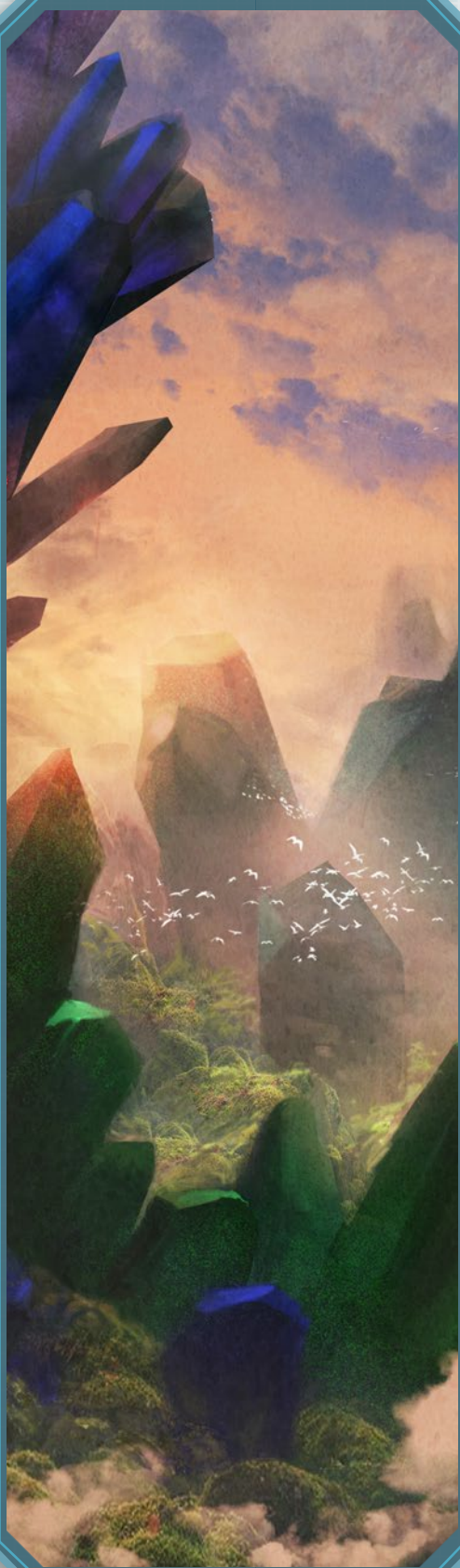
are elongated, with many segmented legs, like those of a millipede.

High Sethiss: The so-called "High Sethiss" are the ancient beings from which all the modern varieties of sethiss evolved, preserved in cryogenic sleep. They are tall, slender beings, with two arms and two long legs. The High Sethiss still know how to use their advanced science and technology—for them, millions of years passed in a cryogenic eyeblink. Most are extreme xenophobes, but certain High Sethiss might parlay with alien species.

Mountain: The few mountain sethiss that remain hide among the hive peaks. They descended from sethiss scientists and extradimensional explorers. Of all the modern sethiss, they most closely resemble the ancients, with two arms and two legs.

Vector Ultra: Not a species variety, per se, Vector Ultra is an organization made up of all kinds of sethiss. The first members were desert dwellers who abandoned their pacifistic beliefs for jingoism, and about half their members hail from that region. The others are almost equally split between forest and canyon sethiss, with only a few mountain sethiss among their ranks.

- 2 Little Creatures:** A war party of 2d8 kebblex (see page 87) approaches.
- 3 Dark Skies:** Two swarms of blackshrikes (see page 86) descend on the explorers.
- 4 Flesh-Eaters:** 2d6 filament spiders (see page 86) attack the party.
- 5–6 Vector Ultra:** 1d4 members of Vector Ultra (see page 90) spy the explorers from afar. Any hero in a position to see them can roll Notice at –4. If they remain unseen, the sethiss follow the spacers for 2d6 hours, then report back to their masters at the central tower.



Crystalline Forest: Great “forests” of living crystalline structures grow across much of Aite’s surface. Over millions of years, wind and acidic precipitation have worn away bits of the silicate crystals, and these particles in turn became the vast desert wastes. The crystals grow up from within the planet’s shell for some long-forgotten purpose. They are festooned with hundreds of species of fungus, some of which served as food for the sethiss in ages past—and still do. Other varieties of fungus thrive in sunlight, or only at night. Many are carnivorous.

CRYSTALLINE FOREST ENCOUNTERS

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1–2 **Underfoot Fungus:** The heroes approach a patch of bindslime (see page 86).
- 3–4 **Acid Rain:** A highly acidic rainstorm scourges the region, and lasts 1d6 hours. Heroes whose skin is exposed to the rain must make a Vigor roll every hour or suffer a Fatigue level that can lead to death. Recovery from acid burns is slow: After the storm passes, the hero recovers one level of Fatigue per week.
- 5–6 **Fresh Water:** The party discovers fungal growth that expels water as waste. A refreshing pool awaits, but anyone who drinks without first purifying it must make a Vigor roll at –4 (or –6 for a drinker with the Void Sickness Hindrance) or contract a long-term chronic, minorly debilitating **Disease** (see *Savage Worlds*). This disease is cured by the Dysnomian flu vaccine (see page 37).

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1–2 **Harvesters:** Castaways from Underbelly (page 30), of mixed species, scavenging edible fungi. Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, with alien Racial Abilities as the GM likes. Use the Reaction Table in *Savage Worlds*.
- 3–6 **Trackers:** 2d6 forest sethiss (page 88), having discovered the explorers’ trail, follow the heroes to their location. Roll on the Reaction Table in *Savage Worlds*.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1–2 Forgotten Pod:** The party comes across an escape pod from a JumpCorp freighter, overgrown with crystalline fibers and fungus. With a Common Knowledge roll, a spacefarer can tell the decaying, derelict pod is at least five years old. A search of the interior and success on a Notice roll reveals a fully stocked survival pack (see page 9).
- 3–4 Time in a Bottle:** Explorers come across a strange grove of crystals completely free of fungal growth. In the crystals, observers see scenes from the planet's history—and maybe even its future—playing out soundlessly. They are physical residue of the temporal energies at work. The GM should choose a brief image or two from the sethiss' history (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15), and describe them to the players without any explanation or context.
- 5–6 Crystalline Riches:** The heroes discover a patch of exotic crystals, or some other rare element, worth $1d8 \times C\$1,000$ on the open market. Of course, the group must devise a way to transport the goods offworld.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1–2 Bad Mushrooms:** $2d8$ scarlet toadstools (see page 90) surround the group.
- 3–4 Bugs!:** $1d4$ maahvren (see page 87) slither from the nearby crystals to attack.
- 5 Hungry Foliage:** A sparkler vine (see page 90) attacks the group.
- 6 Meat Magnet:** The spacers encounter an acid pitcher (see the *Science Fiction Companion*).

Hive Mountains: These red mountain ranges rise as high as four miles above the surrounding deserts, although most average about two miles in height. They are honeycombed with winding tunnels burrowed by sethiss holy men long ago, who climbed into the highest peaks to commune with the void's time-bending energies. The sethiss descendants of those holy men and scientists still inhabit the mountain catacombs, and the peaks' odd properties have rubbed off on them.

Although it's possible to cross from one side of a mountain range to the other using the tunnels bored through it, one might not arrive at precisely the expected *time*. The mountains were engineered to pass through a variety of quantum states as they grew higher, accessing other dimensions and making time travel (theoretically) possible. Remnants of these energies manifest today as temporal anomalies and, rarely, transdimensional portals or time elementals.

HIVE MOUNTAINS ENCOUNTERS
CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

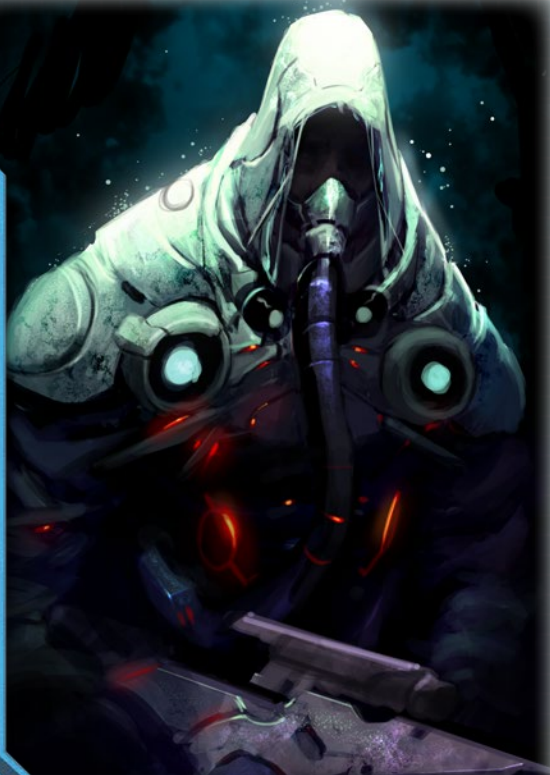
- 1–2 Maze:** Explorers wander into a labyrinthine network of canyons or tunnels. A scout must succeed on three Survival rolls (-2), each of which takes four hours of game time, to lead the heroes out of the maze. On a critical failure, the group wanders through a temporal anomaly and loses $2d20$ days of game time—without realizing it, or aging.
- 3–4 Acid Rain:** A highly acidic rainstorm scourges the region, and lasts $1d6$ hours. Heroes whose skin is exposed to the rain must make a Vigor roll every hour or suffer a Fatigue level that can lead to death. Recovery from acid burns is slow: After the storm passes, the hero recovers one level of Fatigue per week.
- 5–6 Crevasse:** The heroes' path leads to a crevasse $1d8 \times 10$ feet deep, and 12 yards (6") across. They must find a way to get across, or lose two days' travel circling back. See **Falling** in *Savage Worlds* if anyone plunges.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Non Player Character

1–2 Old Man of the Mountain: The heroes find a small cave, and within it a human in poor health. He lives on an antique rebreather and bits of fungus. He is deranged from long solitude. He is Max Grath, one of the JumpCorp scientists who accompanied Horst Tappelkhirre. Use the Scientist profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. With a Persuasion check (–2), Grath wakes from his reverie to whisper, “Didn’t you know? The Voidsmen were *always* here. They were born here. They stole Horst’s body—the horror! The horror!” Grath provides other snippets of information at the GM’s discretion.

3–6 Seers: Heroes encounter a small band of 1d4+1 mountain sethiss (see page 89). They are friendly, and attempt to communicate with any strange new beings they meet. If communication is established, the sethiss answer questions about any aspect of sethiss history, culture, and current activities—including inquiries about Vector Ultra.



DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

1 Hidden Cache: Travelers find a forgotten cave that served as someone’s shelter in recent years. Success on a Notice roll turns up a few JumpCorp all-weather jumpsuits and an intact survival pack (see page 9). With a raise on the Notice roll, the hero finds a name tag inside one of the jumpsuits that reads: **H. TAPPELKHIRRE**.

2–3 Artifact: The adventurers stumble upon a few intact sethiss artifacts in a forgotten cave. One of them still functions. Roll on the **Sethiss Artifacts Table** (page 19) to determine what it is.

4–5 Crystalline Riches: The heroes discover a patch of exotic crystals, or some other rare element, worth 1d8 × C\$1,000 on the open market. Of course, the heroes must devise a way to transport the goods offworld.

6 Temporal Window: Explorers come across a weird rift floating in midair. In it, observers see a scene from the planet’s history—or maybe its future—playing out soundlessly. The rift is a side-effect of the temporal energies at work in the mountains. The GM should choose a single scene from the sethiss’ history (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15), and describe it to the players without any context. A character who steps through the rift is instantly transported to the time and place depicted—whether they can return is up to the GM.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

1–3 Restless Sleep: The next time the heroes make camp, they are set upon in the night by a hungry bore worm swarm (see the *Science Fiction Companion*).

4–5 Vision Questers: Travelers stumble upon a group of 2d6 canyon sethiss (see page 87) traveling into the mountains to seek visions of their race’s proud history. They are not amused at being interrupted.

- 6 Time's Ravager:** The spacers meet a living embodiment of the sethiss' time-bending activities—a time elemental (see Energy Elementals in the *Science Fiction Companion*). The creature is more curious than hostile. But as its curiosity takes a more sinister turn—such as taking the opportunity to experiment on living beings with its Wither ability—the spacers may be forced into confrontation or retreat. If the heroes can somehow befriend the creature, it serves as a valuable source of information about Eris Beta-V's past, present...and future.

Primordial Cistern: The sethiss built this enormous cistern—actually a sea—to hold a very important body of liquid. The liquid is a silicon suspension in water, sulfuric acid, exotic elements, and proto-viruses, together forming a primordial liquid from which all the ancient sethiss' genetically engineered creations sprang. Damage to the planet's outer surface split open the cistern's wall a long time ago, allowing the primordial fluid to ooze across the face of Aite in a catastrophic flood. The cistern's spread is, in part, what has allowed Aite's flora and fauna to run rampant. Countless organisms dwell in the depths, from tiny plankton-like life to enormous, swimming beasts (for example, deep divers and orthocones, found in the *Science Fiction Companion*).

Ruined City: The remains of the sethiss' once-mighty cities dot the landscape, their edifices collapsed and half-buried under dunes. Most tribes avoid them at all costs, believing these ancient places to be haunted by the evil, life-draining spirits of their ancestors. In truth, the ruins support a variety of species adapted to life there, as well as occasional Vector Ultra explorers seeking their forebears' artifacts.

Use the City Prime encounter tables on page 24 when your group explores a ruined site. **Silicate Desert:** Most of Aite's surface is covered by the shifting and flowing dunes of its orange, red, and tan silicate deserts. Tribes of sethiss roam these wastes, migrating alongside vast herds of shock mantas that glide over the dunes' surfaces. Of all the remaining sethiss tribes, the desert peoples are most likely to welcome newcomers to their world. On the other hand, they were also the tribe

whose dissatisfied members started Vector Ultra; desert dwellers can be extremely violent when angered. Although they require very little water for survival, they nevertheless know how to find it hidden beneath the occasional rocky crag.

SILICATE DESERT ENCOUNTERS CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1–2 Dunes:** The heroes must slog through a region of soft, shifting sand. This counts as Difficult ground for the entire day's travel.
- 3–4 Sandstorm:** A sudden storm whips over the travelers for 2d6 hours. Exposed characters must roll Vigor each hour or suffer a level of Fatigue. If the group is on the move, the leader must succeed on a Survival roll or the party gets lost.
- 5–6 Rift:** The heroes' path leads to a crevasse 1d20 × 10 feet deep, and 30 yards (15') across. They must find a way to get across, or spend two days going around it. See **Falling** in *Savage Worlds* if anyone plunges.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1–2 Patrol:** A patrol of 2d4 enforcers from Underbelly (see page 30), of mixed species, wanders the wastes searching for marooned spacers. Roll on the Reaction Table; on a result of Neutral or better, they escort the heroes back to Underbelly. On less favorable results, the enforcers try to capture or kill the party for their supplies.
- 3–4 Emissaries:** The heroes encounter a group of 2d6 desert sethiss (see page 88). Roll on the Reaction table; on a result of Friendly or better, the sethiss bring travelers back to their camp.
- 5–6 Merchants:** 2d6 desert sethiss (see page 88) who act as merchants between the various tribes approach, accompanied by 1d8 domesticated terraghs (see page 90) laden with goods and supplies. Roll on the Reaction Table.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1–2 Oasis:** Deep within a crag, the heroes come across a small cataract containing a pool of fresh, condensed water. The water tastes slightly acidic, but is pure and safe to drink.
- 3–4 Derelict:** Explorers come across a crashed System Freighter (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). It's old, mostly buried, and not flightworthy, but has intact weapons and cargo of the GM's choice. At the very least, it provides secure shelter. One or more of its shuttles might be repairable, if the GM wishes, but doing so requires tools, 4d6 hours' time, and success on a Repair check at –4.
- 5–6 Rare Elements:** In a rocky area, explorers discover rare elements worth 1d8 × C\$1,000 on the open market. The heroes must devise a way to transport their newfound riches offworld.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1–2 Shocking!:** A flock of 2d8 shock mantas (see page 90) attacks the group.
- 3–4 Vector Ultra:** An agent of Vector Ultra (see page 90) spies the explorers from afar. Any hero in a position to see him can roll Notice at –4. If the spy remains unseen, he follows the group for 2d6 days, then reports back to his masters at City Prime.
- 5–6 Burrowing Doom:** 2d6 death worms (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) sense the heroes' passage...and view them as prey.

Underbelly: Not all of Aite's inhabitants are sethiss, or descended from their engineered species—some were marooned there. The subterranean city of Underbelly—more of a burrow, really—was originally a system freighter called Bax's Pride. A little over eight years ago, a meteorite collision near the Inner Ring disabled the ship's engines. Captain Rupert Bax was hauling thousands of tons of cargo. He could only watch in horror as Aite hurtled toward his hobbled vessel. Then, a white light shone from the cratered moon...and a door opened.

Bax's Pride crashed into the desert between the atmosphere lock and the primordial cistern. The relative softness of the silicate dunes, along with Captain Bax's piloting skills, prevented the death of everyone on board. The ship lay half-buried in sand, and there it stayed, until the sand flowed over it and erased it from sight. Since then, the crew have been busily fortifying their position and exploring the strange new world of Aite.

They've remained a secret for two reasons: Most ships that vanish into the atmosphere lock are assumed destroyed by the shepherd moon. And once they're inside, radio signals and sensors can't penetrate Aite's crust. Nobody can fly a ship back out once the lock is closed.

Underground, Bax's eager followers have hollowed the former freighter into a massive open chamber, using the former bulkheads and hardware to construct a town. The ship's former reactor—jury-rigged to run on "solar" power for emergency and barebones usage—provides Underbelly's power and oxygen. They've expanded into countless tunnels, precariously shored up with steel struts, filled with Underbelly's inhabitants. The population numbers around 150; some are the original crew but many more are people who were subsequently marooned on Aite. Captain Bax sends out regular patrols to rescue lost travelers. Many of the city's residents are human, but other species are also well represented—especially kalians, rakashans, and Serrans.

Underbelly's economy, such as it is, is barter-based. So scavengers from the city travel to ruins seeking artifacts and other riches, harvesters traffic in the crystalline forests' edible fungi and potable water, and a booming service economy of bars, houses of ill-repute, gambling halls, and holo-theaters has sprung up to support them all.

Atop the heap sit Captain Bax and his gang, who are fully invested in keeping the city secure but brook no challenge to their authority. What Captain Bax says goes, and no one says any different—not to his or his gang's faces, that is. Bax's eyes and ears are everywhere, and he has a functional attack helicopter (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) at his command. Depending on how heroes approach him, Bax can end up a fast ally or a dogged foe.

UNDERBELLY ENCOUNTERS

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1-2 Blind Alley:** It's easy to get lost in Underbelly's hive-like tunnels, and that's what happens to the group. It takes a successful Streetwise roll at -2, or a Smarts check at -4, to get to wherever the party needs to go. If the roll is failed, roll again on the Enemies table, below.
- 3-4 Altercation:** Everybody's up in arms over some perceived slight, overturned goods, accusation of theft, or other dispute—and it's right in the spacers' path. It's up to the heroes whether they try to go around the fight or get involved. 2d6 people are involved (use the Thug and Citizen profiles in the *Science Fiction Companion*).
- 5-6 Inferno:** With Underbelly's shoddy wiring, electrical fires are common. The group's way is blocked by a few raging buildings. Some bystanders are collecting water to help, but the heroes hear people screaming for help inside. See the **Fire** rules in *Savage Worlds* if anyone charges to the rescue.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1 Captain Bax:** The heroes run across Captain Rupert Bax himself, who won't be deterred from getting to know them—and figure out how he can best use them to his advantage. Use the Pirate Captain profile (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). He's accompanied at all times by six Pirate bodyguards.
- 2 The Bax Gang:** 1d6 Pirates and 1d6 Thugs (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) accost the explorers to amuse themselves. To create gang members of various species on the fly, add the Racial Abilities of sample races in the *Science Fiction Companion* to these stat-blocks. Roll on the Reaction Table to see how the scene begins.

- 3-4 Salesman:** A local merchant, trying to sell her wares—weapons, goods, vices, etc.—to the heroes at a favorable price. The merchant has access to anything the heroes might need or want, at the GM's discretion. For truly rare or expensive items, the merchant might demand a major service in return.
- 5 Guide:** A young human, garrulous and easygoing, approaches the group and offers to guide them around Underbelly. He knows the place like the back of his hand, but he's actually trying to figure out how he can manipulate the group to his advantage. Use the Smuggler profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- 6 Psion:** A member of the Serran Underground, a secret society of psionics opposed to Bax's rule, shadows the heroes in an attempt to divine their motivations. Use the Psionist profile, adding the Serran Racial Abilities (for both, see the *Science Fiction Companion*).

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1-2 Better Him Than Us:** In one of Underbelly's cramped back-tunnels, the spacers discover a long-dead corpse. An embroidered nametag on his jumpsuit reads **PRAXX**. Clutched in one dessicated hand is a functional sethiss artifact with a single, fully charged power cell. Roll on the table on page 19 to see what it is.
- 3-4 Lost Ammo:** The spacers come across an abandoned backpack or other container, and it just happens to contain 1d8 full reloads for whatever firearms the heroes carry. At the GM's discretion, the backpack's owner might come looking for it later.
- 5-6 Good Samaritan:** A shop owner or other citizen of Underbelly notes that the heroes are new in town, and takes them in, providing gratis food, shelter, and helpful advice. The benefactor expects nothing in return, but reciprocation of any kind gains the group a fast friend and unflagging ally.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1–2 Thieves:** A gang of 2d6 Thugs (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) lies in wait to ambush the spacers and rob them blind.
- 3–4 Hit the Road!:** A splinter group of one of Underbelly's factions decides the heroes are an unbalancing presence, and need to go. They're willing to use force—or psionic guile—if visitors refuse. Roll another d6: on a 1–3, the accosters are 1d6 Psionicists of the Serran Underground, with Serran Racial Abilities added. On a 4–6, the bullies are 1d6 Pirates and 1d6 Thugs from the Bax Gang. See the *Science Fiction Companion* for all profiles.
- 5–6 Wild Yeti:** A howling mad yeti, out of her mind on some intoxicant, identifies a random hero as her mortal enemy. Use the Thug profile, adding the Yeti Racial Abilities (for both, see the *Science Fiction Companion*) and the Berserk Edge.

ALGOS

Algos is Eris' innermost moon. Its rocky, largely volcanic surface is obscured by acidic clouds, and its thin atmosphere consists mostly of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and ammonia. Although single-celled, silicon-based life teems among the planet's crags and magma flows, the orb is otherwise uninhabited. That wasn't always the case.

Ten years ago, JumpCorp scientists observing Algos' surface with a wideband sensor suite discovered evidence of ancient ruins on the the surface. The discovery stunned the scientists, who believed Algos supported no sentient life. They hastily put together the Bezenek-Havn'ul Expedition, led by JumpCorp researcher Tael Bezenek and famed interplanetary explorer Rary Havn'ul. Taking up a low, stable orbit around Algos in a pair of research ships, they began a detailed planetary analysis, one they hoped would prove intelligent life had at some point existed on Algos.

Only a day into the survey, simultaneous explosions tore through the research vessels. The crippled ships plunged into the atmosphere, resulting in the deaths of all 85 expedition members. JumpCorp investigators ruled the explosions accidental, even though no wreckage was ever recovered. Two weeks later, all expedition

records—including data collected during the first day's scans—were lost in a computer malfunction at Harmonia Station's JumpCorp offices. From then on, people referred to the event as the "Bezenek-Havn'ul Disaster"—mostly as a cautionary tale to dissuade any sensible person from going there.

In fact, the explosions were caused by Vector Ultra saboteurs who infiltrated the expedition. The secretive group's spies were also responsible for the JumpCorp computer malfunctions and data loss. So far, no one has uncovered the truth.

TRAVELING THERE

A spacer with her own ship can fly to Algos any time she likes, with relative ease. The moon's inner orbit in the subsector makes it eminently accessible. But convincing someone else to take a traveler there—even for large sums of cash—is a far dicier proposition. Algos has a reputation for being a planet where bad things happen, and few superstitious starship captains are willing to risk their lives and livelihoods for a single charter.

Vector Ultra's agents on Harmonia Station (see page 42) keep a close watch on Algos, and act decisively to prevent ships from going there. They number only a half-dozen. Sabotage, infiltration, imprisonment on trumped-up charges, arranging for an assault by pirate ships or JumpCorp fighters in Algos' orbit—all these tactics and more are available to the sethiss' spies.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Algos is a hellish, scorched world of black stone and churning magma. Its skies are perpetually shrouded by grayish-blue cloud cover, from which drizzles a caustic rain of water and sulfuric acid. Because volcanic action constantly creates new land and destroys the old, there are no constant landmarks—except one.

The Ziggurat: Near Algos' equator, a colossal stone monument sits on a massive area of stone seemingly impervious to the fiery depredations of volcanoes all around it. Its terraced levels rise nearly a mile from the surrounding rock, stairs linking to create a multi-leveled pyramid network, with three stone monoliths at the apex. Inside the ziggurat is a multi-leveled maze of chambers, passages, and tunnels.

The tunnels stand silent and dark, uninhabited...but their walls hold secrets. When the viral species that would become the sethiss arrived on Algos, they merged with

an indigenous, unintelligent silicon-based life form...and evolved into something else entirely. This new species—in effect, an intelligent virus living within silicate cells that provide sustenance and motion—developed technology that would allow them to create a pair of Dyson spheres (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15 for the whole story). They built the ziggurat and inscribed its walls with hundreds of thousands of hieroglyphics explaining exactly how they did it.

A scholar can roll d12 (at -6) using a Language Translator (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) to decode the hieroglyphs, or roll Knowledge (Linguistics) at -4. With success, the character has access to a trove of advanced technological knowledge and theory, undiscovered facts about the “Void” and the dark energy that fills it, and a complete record of the sethiss’ origin on Dysnomia, exile to Algos, and departure to dwell within the twin worlds they created. Most important, scholars discover proof that the “Voidsmen” were really the sethiss, and their species originated in the Eris subsector.

Needless to say, Vector Ultra does everything in its power to prevent this information from falling into the wrong hands. If the above-mentioned tactics fail, Vector Ultra waits for visitors to leave the moon and ambushes them afterward.

Shipwrecks: The Bezenek-Havn’ul Expedition’s research ships crashed only a few miles from the Ziggurat. Due to the moon’s low gravity, and the lack of volcanic activity near the ziggurat, much of the wreckage remains where it fell 10 years ago. But thanks to the caustic atmosphere, no corpses remain and most useful items are long-destroyed.

With success on a Notice roll (-2), however, a searcher finds a survival pack (see page 9), 2d12 rounds of ammunition, or some other useful item of the GM’s choice. A hero who inspects the shipwrecks for at least an hour and succeeds on a Knowledge (Demolitions) roll (or Smarts at -2) can tell that carefully placed explosives burst open both ships’ hulls before they crashed.



DYSNOMIA

Dysnomia is one of Eris' two habitable moons. Its surface is dominated by extensive oceans and polar ice caps, and the land—most of which stretches in a wide band around the moon's equatorial zone—is dominated by jungles, coastal marshes, and swamps. Dysnomia boasts a range of indigenous species, but no intelligent life.

JumpCorp's 20-year plan for the Eris Beta-V subsector includes transforming Dysnomia from a lawless backwater to a thriving trade planet. To that end, JumpCorp-funded settlers founded a dozen small outposts on the surface, from which they export food, ore, and other natural resources in return for corporate sponsorship.

These outposts, though technically subject to JumpCorp statutes and Marshal K'Gaed Kaine's authority, tend toward lenient laws and frontier justice. So JumpCorp takes an extra step to protect its investment: All Dysnomian settlers must register and receive an identifying implant (see the **Resident and Visitor Implants** sidebar). Visitors receive temporary chips; these are valid for one week. Being caught planetside without a valid implant is grounds for immediate deportation and prosecution on Harmonia.

Life is never dull for Dysnomia's hardy settlers and exporters. Dysnomian spineworms are a constant threat, and attacks by savage crag men dwelling in the rocky equatorial zones are on the rise. Add to these menaces the unpredictability of living in a frontier outpost, and you've got a decent picture of life for the average Dysnomian settler. Harmonia Station (see page 42) orbits Dysnomia once every 30 hours, and is visible from the surface in clear atmospheric conditions.

TRAVELING THERE

Shuttles leave Harmonia Station for Dysnomia twice a "day," when the station is over the spaceport, and return from the surface on the same schedule.

Visitor implants are dispensed for a C\$25 fee (see sidebar). If a spacer wants to land her own ship on Dysnomia, chances are no one's going to stop her. As long as visitors avoid the spaceport and settlements, they're unlikely to attract JumpCorp's attention. In the event they do, Harmonia Station officials are quick to dispatch 20 JumpSec marines in a dropship to protect the company's interests.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Most of Dysnomia's surface is wild, untamed wilderness. JumpCorp established 12 settlements to explore agriculture, hunting, fishing, and mining as viable means of exploiting the moon's resources. So far, the results have been mixed. Visitors who share drinking vessels, eating utensils, or otherwise "swap spit" with the locals—*ahem*—are at risk of coming down with a bout of Dysnomian flu (see sidebar).

Typical Settlement: The typical Dysnomian outpost is a rough-and-tumble boomtown where residents' central problems are how to make money and how to spend it, with nearly everyone holding out for their big break. For most, it never comes. As a "company world," JumpCorp policies ensure settlers work their entire 10-year contract, while earning just enough to survive and remain optimistic about their prospects. In most towns, the law is upheld by one or two company-appointed "deputies"—which often translates into no law at all. In an emergency, residents can summon a team of eight JumpSec marines (see page 93) from the spaceport.

Blacklung: Its official name is "JumpCorp Mining Station 1," but the locals prefer the more evocative—and fitting—nickname of Blacklung. The settlement's pre-fab shelters and permanent structures are arrayed along a low, jagged ridge. At the ridge's center lies the Rift—an enormous crack in the earth, which glows from within like a doorway into Hell. Dark gouts of particulate flume from the crack all day and night, coating the land for miles around with black soot. Inside the crack, miners work enormous drills, matter removers, and vacuum tubes, revealing buried riches and sucking them away in continual shifts. Blacklung's residents are a hearty, if tussis-prone, lot, who enjoy living it up when they're not working in the Rift.

Craglands: The rocky crags of Dysnomia run along the equator in the planet's western hemisphere, shrouded by corrosive particulate clouds of unknown origin that clog ships' manifolds and decay thruster housings. Any ship that's ever flown in has crashed. JumpCorp radio beacons on the ground warn approaching craft of the dangerous no-fly zone. Only ground travel is possible within the craglands' boundaries.

The terrain is barren, rocky desert with very little food or water beyond what travelers carry

in with them. The canyons are inhabited by the dreaded crag men, along with other predators. Most Dysnomians consider the craglands a dangerous place one simply shouldn't visit, but some go there seeking ancient treasures, crag men's pelts...or other travelers' goods.

Nestled in the craglands' most rugged and inaccessible canyons lie long-forgotten ruins. The crag men (see page 91) built them, long ago, before a civil war and unleashed biological weapons led to their proud species' downfall and devolution into savage, primitive beings. What remains are shattered palaces of stone, steel, and glass, with extensive subterranean areas. JumpCorp's research arm has only recently discovered their existence, and an expedition to recover ancient secrets is already in the offing.

Cragland Encounters

Draw two cards from the Action Deck for each day the heroes explore Dysnomia's rocky equatorial regions. On a face card, check the suit and roll on the corresponding table below. If both are face cards, roll twice and combine the results. Jokers are wild—GM's choice.

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1–2 Top the Rise:** To continue on their path, the group must climb a sheer cliff 20 yards tall (10"). Each hero must roll Climbing to reach the top; see the Climbing skill in *Savage Worlds*. The cliff face is dry, with adequate handholds, so no penalties apply...but well-equipped climbers can improve their chances with some advance planning. If the group chooses to circle back, they lose two days' travel.
- 3–4 Rockfall:** As explorers traverse a narrow fissure, chunks of brittle, sharp stone fall from above. All heroes in the immediate area roll Agility at –4 or suffer a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises. On a result of 1 or less, the traveler suffers two levels of Fatigue. On a critical failure, he suffers a direct hit and 3d6 damage.
- 5–6 Crevasse:** The heroes' path leads to a crevasse 2d6 × 10 feet deep, and 10 yards (5") across. They must find a way to get across, or spend four days circling back. See **Falling** in *Savage Worlds* if anyone goes over the edge.

RESIDENT/VISITOR IMPLANTS

JumpCorp takes pains to identify authorized representatives. Thus, a resident or visitor implant—a subdermal identification chip—is required for all visitors to Dysnomia or Ponos.

Settlers register for an identifying implant. Visitors receive temporary chips that are valid for one week; expired implants can be reauthorized for future visits. Implants are available at Goldpoint and Harmonia Station (C\$25), and the painless implantation takes five minutes. Being caught planetside on Dysnomia or Ponos without a valid implant is grounds for immediate deportation and prosecution.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1-2 Treasure Hunters:** A small band of explorers seeking lost riches, knowledge, or both. Their leader is a Wild Card Scientist, accompanied by a motley crew of 2d6 Dysnomian cast-offs—use the Thug profile (see the *Science Fiction Companion* for all profiles). Two of them are armed with medium slugthrower pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 8, AP 3). Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 3-4 Lost Travelers:** 2d6 lost tourists or residents of a nearby settlement, trying to escape the crags. Use the Citizen profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. They're slightly malnourished, and beg anyone they meet for help.
- 5-6 Skinners:** Two hunters collecting crag man pelts, which draw a bounty of 100 credits each at the JumpCorp garrison at Blacklung. Use the Bounty Hunter profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, but each is also armed with a sniper rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 2d10, RoF 1, AP 4, HW), 6 extra rounds, and 2d6 pelts. Roll on the Reaction Table.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1-2 Diamonds:** This result is diamonds—literally! With success on a Notice roll (–2), wanderers see an exposed vein of pure diamond, worth $2d10 \times C\$1,000$ if diggers extract the entire pocket.
- 3-4 Artifacts:** With success on a Notice roll, travelers uncover an ancient crag man dwelling hidden among the rocks. If they spend 2d6 hours excavating the place, searchers uncover several relics of an uncannily advanced nature. They're worth $1d6 \times C\$500$ to a collector.
- 5-6 Sustenance:** The group comes across a small cluster of nourishing fruit trees and a trickle of pure water. This provides enough food and water to sustain the entire party for three days.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1-2 Hidden Lurker:** A pentamouth (see the *Science Fiction Companion*), buried in sand and rock beside the trail, attacks a random passer-by.
- 3-4 Crag Men:** 2d8 crag men (see page 91) rush to attack, howling in territorial rage.
- 5-6 Bandits:** 2d6 robbers close in, determined to separate victims from their money or goods. Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

Hyaergos Memorial Interstellar Spaceport:

Much smaller than its name implies, Dysnomia's spaceport consists of a dozen landing berths, seedy bar, filthy restaurant, and a vermin-infested flophouse called Ghauem's. JumpSec marines (see page 93) check all arrivals for a visitor or resident implant, and arrest those who have neither. It's a 20-minute ride by armored personnel carrier from the spaceport to Blacklung. Denarv, a kalian (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) owns a few decommissioned attack helicopters and ferries travelers to other settlements for a nominal fee.

Jungle/Swamplands: Dysnomia's jungles and swamps lie mostly in the western hemisphere, with the eastern hemisphere's three major islands dominated by tidal marshes and swamplands. All are populated by myriad life forms—many of them reptilian in nature—including the dreaded spineworm.

JUNGLE/SWAMP ENCOUNTERS

Draw a card from the Action Deck for each day heroes wander Dysnomia's swamps, coastal marshes, or jungles. On a face card, check the suit and roll on the corresponding table below. Jokers are wild—GM's choice.

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1–2 Mired:** The explorers' vehicle or mounts become mired in swampy earth. A successful Driving or Riding roll at –2, as appropriate, along with 2d6 hours' work gets them free of the quagmire.
- 3–4 Waterway:** The travelers' way is blocked by a wide, calm river approximately 24 yards (12") across. The group must spend 2d12 hours finding an easier place to ford the river.
- 5–6 Thicket:** The way is blocked by a tangle of trees, vines, and spiny undergrowth. Exposed heroes who push through the mildly poisonous growth receive some nasty scratches and must roll Vigor or suffer a level of Fatigue. Cutting or burning out the growth requires 2d6 hours' work. Some vehicles and weapons may be capable of mowing down or blowing up the thicket, at the GM's discretion.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1–2 Safari:** A group of 2d8 tourists, traveling in an exploration vehicle and hoping to see "reptilians." Use the Citizen profile for the tourists, and the Bounty Hunter profile for their guide (both found in the *Science Fiction Companion*). The guide also has a sniper rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 2d10, RoF 1, AP 4, HW). Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 3–4 Fishermen:** 2d6 workers from a nearby settlement, fishing the ocean or tending to nets in a swamp or tidal marsh. Use the Citizen profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Roll on the Reaction Table.

DATAFILE: DYSNOMIA

Gravity: Normal

Dominant Terrain: Water, marsh/swamps (Avg temp 65° F)

Atmosphere: Normal

Population Density: Sparse

Dominant Government: Corporate (JumpCorp)

Law: Lenient

Customs: JumpCorp implant required

Technology: Average

Spaceport: Basic

DYSNOMIAN FLU

Dysnomian flu is the modern remnant of a virus engineered long ago by the moon's inhabitants. The flu spreads by touch, ingestion, or induction of an infected individual's saliva, blood, or other bodily fluid. The result is a long-term chronic, minorly debilitating ailment (see **Disease** in *Savage Worlds*). Characters with the Void Sickness Hindrance suffer –2 on Vigor rolls to avoid contracting the disease.

Worse than the disease's effects are the symptoms: stuffy head, low-grade fever, cough, and near-constant irritability that sometimes erupts as blood-red rage. The character gains the Mean Hindrance and the Berserk Edge (the Smarts roll for Berserk is at –4 if she also has the Void Sickness Hindrance). An injectable cure—which causes the sickness to vanish in 2d6 days minus half the hero's Vigor die type (minimum one day), or in 2d6 days in cases of comorbid Void Sickness—is available on Harmonia Station, but it does not vaccinate the traveler against future bouts of flu.

- 5–6 Prospectors:** 2d4 miners from a nearby outpost, looking for solid earth to dig in. Use the Miner profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Roll on the Reaction Table.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1–2 Rare Blooms:** A cluster of rare Dysnomian flowers grows on a muddy clump of earth. The purple and yellow blooms are worth $1d8 \times C\$500$ to a collector on Harmonia Station, provided they are dug up carefully (with a successful Smarts roll) and delivered alive.
- 3–4 Crashed Pod:** A long-forgotten escape pod from a pirate vessel, overgrown and flooded. Success on a Notice roll (–2) reveals a sealed case containing a heavy slugthrower pistol of antique construction and 12 extra rounds, and a sETHISS artifact (no power cell). Roll on the **SETHISS Artifacts** table on page 19 to see what it is.
- 5–6 Doomed Safari:** The heroes find an abandoned exploration vehicle (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). There are a few bloodstains on the deck and a bloody handprint on the door, but no other sign of the owners. It is half-fueled, in perfect working order, and contains three full survival packs along with whatever else the GM wants.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1–2 Worms:** 1d6 Dysnomian spineworms (see page 92) attack.
- 3–4 Rats:** A pack of 2d6 wire rats (see the *Science Fiction Companion*), drawn to the heroes' technology or vehicles, closes in.
- 5–6 Thunder Lizard:** A shredder (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) catches the party's scent.

Sere Meadow: A farming collective located on a large island landmass in the moon's eastern hemisphere, Sere Meadow's name belies its fecundity. Although the grasslands immediately surrounding the settlement have gone dry and brown, the orchards and crops a few miles out produce rich annual yields. Along with the steady stream of rare hardwoods, exotic animals, and remarkable foods from nearby swamps and jungles, Sere Meadow is one of JumpCorp's most profitable enterprises on Dysnomia. Accordingly, the law is stricter and enforced by 12 JumpCorp troopers (page 94) and six marines (page 93), who have access to an armored personnel carrier (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). A floran named Bssshh runs a "jungle safari" company for bored travelers with disposable income.

Tallpockets: This coastal town depends on tidal marshes and the fisheries on the coast for its livelihood. The town gets its name from the distinctive waders worn by tidepool fishermen, with their utility pockets on the wearer's chest. Tallpockets has a reputation for being rough, and the sailors who frequent the lively port's saloons back up the rumors with sinewy fists. But the town primarily is filled with conscientious workers who aren't paid nearly enough for their backbreaking labor. A garrison of 12 surly JumpSec troopers (see page 94)—universally despised by the locals—is on hand to enforce the *Hyaergos Code*, but they don't get involved in anything unrelated to company business.

★ **Fugitives (page 79):** A JumpCorp official hires the heroes to track down a criminal gang.

ERIS BETA-V

Eris is a warm gas giant, and the third planet in the Hyaergos Beta-V system. It is composed primarily of white, swirling hydrogen clouds, which lends it its nickname, "The Pearl." Eris orbits Hyaergos once every 60 weeks, and its core is tidally locked. The planet has high surface temperatures and a volatile atmosphere but winds distribute the heat, resulting in a constantly cycling atmosphere and little temperature variance between light side and dark.

JumpCorp surveyors laid claim to the Eris Subsector 46 years ago, and since then the company has generated enormous revenues from asteroid-belt mining and hydrogen extraction. With hundreds of new residents—and potential workers—arriving every month, the subsector's financial outlook is promising indeed.

TRAVELING THERE

The Hyaergos Beta-V system lies at the edge of civilized space, near an immense galactic void. Only one trade route accesses the system, which makes passage generally available but not especially timely. Of course, travelers with their own ship can get to Eris with relative ease—but this may take some time, given its remote coordinates. Plus, JumpCorp charges C\$1,000 for access to the system's beacon code!

POINTS OF INTEREST

Eris has its own system of eight moons and two planetary rings, commonly known as the Eris Subsector. Eris' rings are fairly young on the astronomical scale—about two million years. Most local authorities believe they were formed following a collision between a supermassive alien vessel and one of Eris' former moons. Actually, the rings were formed after an interstellar war with the gth-kel led to the destruction of one sethiss homeworld (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15).

Eris' skies teem with derrick ships (see page 11) that extract hydrogen from the upper atmosphere. Most of them are JumpCorp-owned or sponsored. Each derrick functions as its own community, with crewmembers' spouses and families living in the ship's residential sectors.

★ **Security Detail (page 84):** A JumpCorp official hires the party to ensure a derrick ship's safety, and heroes soon uncover a plot to destroy the vessel.

GOLDPOINT

Goldpoint Station—usually shortened to Goldpoint—is JumpCorp's primary processing and exporting venue for ores and rare elements in the Eris subsector. Its outer hull is designed to collect solar energy, and gleams pale yellow in Hyaergos' light. Goldpoint's upper half consists of eight massive ore separators, like cylinders stood on end. Below these, two gigantic metal loops form a belt around the station's center: the docking ring and the habitation level. Protruding from the station's lower end are the massive engines that maintain its orbit around Ponos. The station is drab, industrial, and above all, practical.

Ships surround Goldpoint in a hectic swarm. Up to 100 ringsweepers and freighters come and go every daycycle, supporting the station's diverse population of about 500,000. However, over a quarter of these are transient; miners and

ships' crews, for example, spend most of their time working out in the rings. All the subsector's miners need to visit Goldpoint every five days or so, depositing loads of ore in return for credits they spend in the station's dive bars and bordellos. After a two- or three-day bender, the miners return to the rings and the routine begins again.

Goldpoint orbits the moon Ponos once every 22 hours.

TRAVELING THERE

In its stately orbit around Ponos, Goldpoint is easy to find. It's more difficult to gain access. JumpCorp maintains two light cruisers and six fighters at Goldpoint, on constant patrol to guard against pirates. They also ensure only vessels owned by JumpCorp-licensed contractors approach the ore extraction docks. All ships approaching Goldpoint are hailed by the warships and asked to provide a valid mining identification code, without which they're not admitted.

With success on a Common Knowledge roll, a space jockey knows he can dock his craft on Goldpoint's spaceport loop as long as he has a JumpCorp mining or prospecting permit in good standing. The heroes don't *actually* have to be miners, they just need a permit affirming they're strongly considering the career. Mining and prospecting permits are valid throughout the subsector, cost C\$300 per vessel, and are available at the JumpCorp offices on Harmonia Station (see page 42).

POINTS OF INTEREST

Goldpoint has a reputation for being rough on tourists, and it's well earned. The population consists mostly of ships' crewmen, miners, JumpCorp security troopers, and mercenaries, and few of them are willing to put up with much in the way of guff. But most spacers, provided they behave themselves and don't appear to be easy targets, can get by just fine. It's the occasional pirate or sethiss spy visitors need to watch out for.

Habitation Loop: Fitting with Goldpoint's utilitarian outlook, the lower of its two pressurized loops is simply called the habitation loop. The loop encircles the entire station—a diameter of roughly one mile—and spins at a constant rate to simulate normal gravity. Living and commerce areas are located on the loop's interior wall, and are separated into "compartments." A

single compartment is roughly 250 square feet, enough for a single resident or maybe two. Bars, restaurants, flophouses, bordellos, theaters, arms dealers, and copious mining suppliers abound, each establishment occupying an average of two to four compartments. Buyers can locate nearly any sort of gear they need on Goldpoint, subject to the GM's judgment.

JumpCorp Garrison: JumpCorp Security maintains a garrison of 60 troopers—along with a full platoon of 40 JumpSec marines—and a well-stocked armory. JumpSec troopers maintain regular patrols on the spaceport loop and within the ore refinery.

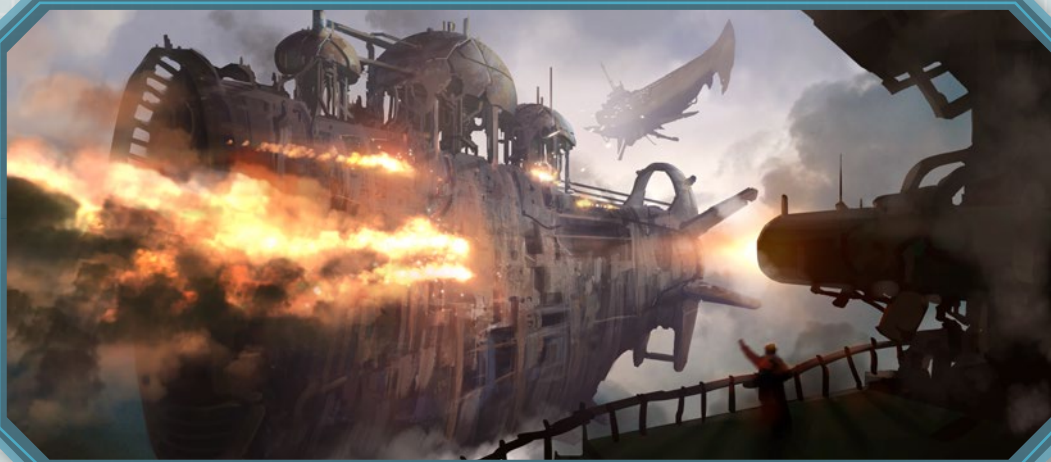
Krillor's Irregulars: This mercenary society owns a large, 12-compartment residence on the habitation loop, which its members use as both bivouac and dispatch center. The Irregulars own a light cruiser, the *Hammerstrike*, which is docked at Goldpoint when not engaged in missions. Quaythis Krillor (see page 94) and his troupe of spacefaring yeti warriors founded the Irregulars, but now their ranks include many species.

Marshal Hanz's Office: Yubukodor Hanz (see page 95), a deader, enforces JumpCorp law on Goldpoint. Erisian Marshals may press JumpCorp Security personnel into service as they deem necessary, and act on their own recognizance, subject to Subsector Administrator Chanx Oblios' ultimate authority. Marshal Hanz maintains a staff of 12 deputies (use the Law Enforcement profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*), four of whom are on duty at any given time. Hanz and his deputies patrol the habitation loop.

Nebula Room: A popular nightclub on the habitation loop, the Nebula Room offers four full-service bars, gambling, dancers, singers...and *no questions asked*. It's a rambling and dimly lit joint, occupying seven compartments. A rakashan named Jhessult Eavrim owns the place. She has two aurax bodyguards (use the Thug profile, with the Aurax Racial Abilities added—both found in the *Science Fiction Companion*). Through her gang, the Catspaws, she's also the station's major supplier of illicit drugs and false mining permits (only C\$100 each!). A steady stream of bribes keeps JumpSec from kicking in the Nebula Room's doors.

Ore Extractors: Goldpoint's upper levels are devoted to JumpCorp's massive ore separators, where ringsweepers dock at special extraction stations. In minutes, automated magnetic hoses remove valuable cargo from the hauler's mining pods. The ore is drawn into chutes accessing the refinery's many levels, where robotic and living workers sort it by type and purity. A trip through the packaging plant follows, and the JumpCorp-branded cargo containers are dispatched to freighters on the spaceport loop. From there, they begin their journeys to all corners of the galaxy.

Spaceport Loop: The station's upper pressurized loop is dedicated to docking areas, cargo movement, and repair and service providers, and can support up to 100 ships at once. Like the habitation loop, the one-mile-diameter ring surrounds the station and spins to simulate normal gravity. Most ships docked here are ringsweepers, but other vessel types aren't uncommon. A restricted portion of the spaceport loop is reserved for JumpCorp's military and commercial vessels.



★ **Absolute Zero** (page 77): A hostile organism enters Goldpoint and tries to put the station on ice.

GOLDPOINT ENCOUNTERS

Draw a card from the Action Deck for each hour the heroes explore Goldpoint's habitation or spaceport loop. On a face card, check the suit and roll on the corresponding table below. Jokers are wild—GM's choice.

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1-2 Foot Traffic:** The way ahead is blocked by a crush of pedestrians trying to get around a stalled cargo hauler. The heroes can roll Agility to go through, which takes a few minutes or 1d4 hours on a failed roll, or take one hour to circumnavigate the loop in the other direction.
- 3-4 Repairs:** A portion of the loop ahead is sealed off and depressurized while technicians make repairs, but the techs are at a loss as to what the problem is. The heroes can wait 2d6 hours until they sort it out, or chip in with a Repair roll (-4) of their own. With success, they fix the problem in 3d6 minutes.
- 5-6 Checkpoint:** Eight JumpSec troopers (see page 94) are checking to see that everyone's mining or prospecting permit is in order. It takes an hour to queue up and make it through, assuming the heroes' permits are in order. If not, success on a Persuasion roll (-2) gets her past. Failure results in immediate arrest and subsequent deportation to Harmonia Station.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1 Execs:** 2d4 JumpCorp suits on a tour of station. Use the Corporate Exec profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 2 Androids:** 2d6 artificial life forms exploring Goldpoint. Use the Citizen profile and add the Construct Racial Abilities (all found in the *Science Fiction Companion*). Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 3-4 Law:** On the spaceport loop, this encounter is with 2d6 JumpSec Troopers (see page 94). On the Public Walk, roll another d6: on a 1-4, it's the local Subsector Marshal and his or her deputies; on a 5-6, it's 2d8 JumpSec Troopers, as above. Either way, they're on the lookout for suspicious characters; roll on the Reaction Table.
- 5 Tradesmen:** 2d6 miners, technicians, or ore refinery workers out for a drunken jaunt. Use the Citizen profile, but due to their extreme intoxication add one die type to Vigor, which also increases their Toughness to 6. They Ignore one level of wound modifiers, and suffer -2 to all Smarts- and Agility-based rolls. Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 6 Mercenaries:** 2d4 mercenaries in the employ of Krillor's Irregulars. Use the Grunt profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Depending on the Reaction Table result, they may attempt to recruit the heroes.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1-2 Inheritance:** One of the space jockeys learns that a contact, miner, or even a Nonplayer Character met in passing has died and left all his worldly possessions to the hero. It's up to the GM to decide whether this consists of cash, a ship, a plot of land on Dysnomia, or some other valuable goods.

3–4 Surplus: A lucky spacer finds that she mistakenly got the better end of her last deal, whether sale or purchase. If the character sold something, she finds she was paid 25% more than the agreed-upon fee. If she bought something, she has approximately 25% more of it than she thought, or paid about 25% less than expected.

5–6 Unclaimed Freight: A load of unclaimed freight—worth $1d8 \times C\$100$ —is delivered to the group or to their vessel. No matter how long the characters search, the rightful owners can't be found.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1 Assassin:** Someone wants one of the spacers dead, or maybe it's a case of mistaken identity. Either way, an Assassin (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) targets a character of the GM's choice.
- 2 Press Gang:** 2d8 toughs looking for spacers to abduct and force into service on their freighter. Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- 3 Vermin:** 2d6 wire rats (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) swarm and attack the group.
- 4 Vector Ultra:** A reanimated bounty hunter (use the Bounty Hunter profile, with the Deader Racial Abilities added, both in the *Science Fiction Companion*) who is also a sethiss agent sets his sights on the heroes.
- 5 Catspaws:** Spacers come face to face with 2d6 gang members looking to rob them. Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, but they're also armed with light slugthrower pistols (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6–1, RoF 1, AP 2).
- 6 Psion:** A Psionicist (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) commits assault and theft—and frames the characters for it. 2d4 JumpSec Troopers (see page 94) arrive with a warrant for the heroes' arrest. The team must prove their innocence and track down the real culprit.

HARMONIA STATION

Harmonia Station, in stable orbit around Dysnomia, is the subsector's primary port of call for independent ships. In contrast to Goldpoint's frantic traffic, Harmonia Station has a far more orderly tone. As many as 50–60 ships come and go every day, supporting a permanent population of roughly 250,000 (transients sometimes boost the population as high as 300,000 for short periods). In addition, a small fleet of warships patrols the area—and with good reason. Harmonia Station is the focal point of all JumpCorp's interests in the subsector.

Also in contrast to Goldpoint—with its grim, industrial appearance—Harmonia Station looks like a palace of gleaming crystal and titanium. Atop its superstructure sit a half-dozen spires that hold the JumpCorp Executive Offices and bristle with sensor and communication arrays, including the sector's only interstellar signal relay.

As at Goldpoint, one-mile-diameter loops form a band around the station's center, spinning steadily to impart gravity. But Harmonia has three of these loops: The upper level serves as a JumpCorp naval base, the middle level is Harmonia's public spaceport, and the lower level is Harmonia's habitation loop, known as the Public Walk. Below the station, enormous engines fire sporadically to keep its orbit steady.

Harmonia Station orbits the moon Dysnomia once every 30 hours.

TRAVELING THERE

When a vessel arrives at the Eris subsector, Harmonia Station is a snap to locate—it's the spot with scores of starships swarming around it. Approaching vessels are hailed by a JumpCorp cruiser and asked to state their business, but no permit is required prior to docking. JumpCorp customs agents register and process all new arrivals after they've docked.

POINTS OF INTEREST

In terms of the Eris subsector, Harmonia Station is the jewel in JumpCorp's crown. It is the bureaucratic counterpart to Goldpoint's military and hard labor focus, and therefore far more polished and slick. High-ranking JumpCorp executives and researchers, alien diplomats, owners of multi-sector conglomerates, celebrities,

brilliant scientists, affluent free traders—these are Harmonia's inhabitants.

Executive Spires: System Administrator Chanx Oblios runs the station, and by extension all of JumpCorp's concerns in the subsector, from his offices in the JumpCorp executive spires. The spires also contain stored records—of all the subsector's ships and transactions—and courts of law. Interstellar communications are limited to Harmonia, which prevents outside agencies from contacting Goldpoint directly—thus protecting the mining station's vast mineral wealth. Private communications are allowed for a one-time, C\$100 fee. Mining and prospecting permits can be purchased here as well, for C\$300 per vessel; they are valid throughout the subsector.

Grand Observatory: Despite its ostentatious name, the Grand Observatory is just a large, open area along the Public Walk. It's equipped with the station's four biggest viewports—in the floor, ceiling, and two in the outer bulkhead—creating a sensation of spacewalking as one passes through. Freestanding terminals arrayed around the observatory's edge allow visitors to activate holographic overlays, which overlay the nearest viewport with a detailed star chart

naming various astronomical bodies. A large dais surrounded by a railing stands at the center; the Subsector Administrator uses it to deliver speeches and news conferences. A wide, enclosed walkway leads inward to the loop's hub, where banks of elevators provide access to the JumpCorp Executive Spires above.

Holo Playhouse: Holoplays are a popular and enduring medium in the Eris subsector. Far beyond mere 3-D, the audience is literally surrounded by the story, sometimes becoming participants in a limited fashion. The Harmonia Holo Playhouse, the station's swankiest, is located on the Public Walk.

Kallisti Apple: Kallisti Apple is the only nightclub on the station not owned or subsidized by JumpCorp. And strangely enough, it's also the largest and most successful entertainment spot on the Public Walk. A kalian named Ujun owns Kallisti Apple, using his connections to keep a pirate gang called Groid's Raiders (see page 47) apprised of wealthy merchants' comings and goings...in return for a tidy fee.

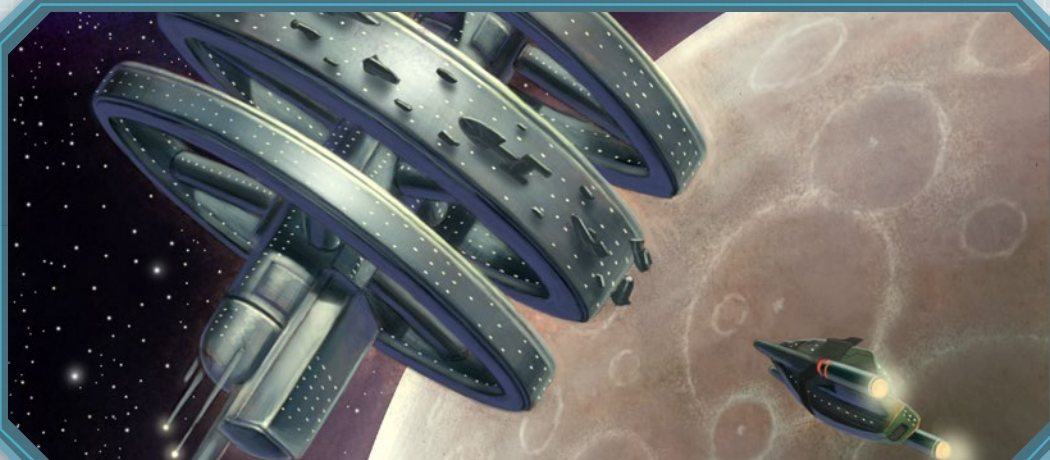
Marshal Kaine's Office: K'Gaed Kaine (see page 94), a one-eyed human female with a gang of robot deputies, enforces JumpCorp law from

GOLDPOINT



HARMONIA





her office on the Public Walk. Erisian Marshals may press JumpCorp Security personnel into service as they deem necessary, and act on their own recognizance, subject to Subsector Administrator Chanx Oblios' authority. Marshal Kaine maintains a staff of six robot deputies (use the War Bot profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*), and they're always on duty.

Naval Base: The topmost of Harmonia's three loops is a spaceport reserved for JumpCorp freighters and warships—the Erisian Naval Base. The base services all JumpCorp's war vessels in the subsector. A battleship, two light cruisers, and 12 fighters are stationed at Harmonia, along with three full platoons, each made up of 40 JumpSec marines (see page 93).

Public Walk: Harmonia's habitation loop is called the Public Walk. It contains JumpCorp outlet stores offering a full array of gear, along with other perks a space traveler expects, like accommodations and entertainment. The walk is jammed full of pedestrian traffic of myriad species, and features an elevated magno-tram. Hover cars and cargo barges tool overhead in both directions. Enormous viewports look out on the splendor of the Pearl and her glittering rings.

Security Office: Twelve JumpSec troopers (see page 94) staff an office on the spaceport loop. Additional troopers patrol all the station's public areas.

Smugglers' Row: Although JumpCorp claims to control all market activity in the subsector, a black market has slowly emerged and stubbornly resists elimination. The portion of the Public Walk known as Smugglers' Row is rife with dive bars and other establishments that cater to many vices. It's a good place to hire criminal types.

Spaceport: The middle of the station's three loops, the public spaceport is always full of exotic people, smells, sights, and sounds—but mostly people. The port is large, with the ability to service up to 1,000 ships at once, so calling it "crowded" is an understatement.

HARMONIA STATION ENCOUNTERS

CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | Foot Traffic: The passage ahead is blocked by a crush of pedestrians. Heroes can try to push their way through—this takes 1d4 hours—or spend three hours circumnavigating the loop in the opposite direction. |
| 3-4 | Protest: 2d12 Dysnomian miners protesting JumpCorp labor practices clash with 2d8 JumpSec troopers (see page 94). Waiting out the dispute takes 2d6+2 hours. Of course, if the heroes want to get involved they're free to choose sides and join the melee. |
| 5-6 | Quarantine: JumpCorp officials place the section of the station the heroes are in under quarantine. No one is allowed in or out until JumpCorp scientists isolate the pathogen. Heroes must wait, which takes 2d12+2 hours, or the GM can take advantage of her captive audience to run a <i>Savage Tale</i> or <i>Interlude</i> . |

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1 **Executives:** The party encounters 1d4 high-ranking JumpCorp suits on their way to a meeting. Use the Corporate Exec profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 2 **Clerks:** 2d6 frantic clerks trying to complete some task—a survey, cargo count, retrieval of a lost ID badge or other unique item, etc.—stop thye spacers and beg them for help. Use the Citizen profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. At the GM's option, these may be spies or criminals trying to dupe the heroes.
- 3 **Law:** On the spaceport loop, this encounter is with 2d8 JumpSec Troopers (see page 94). On the Public Walk, roll another d6: on a 1–4, it's the local Subsector Marshal and his or her deputies; on a 5–6, it's 2d8 JumpSec Troopers, as above. Either way, they're on the lookout for suspicious characters; roll on the Reaction Table.
- 4 **Diplomats:** 2d6 members of an alien species on a diplomatic mission. Use the Diplomat/Politician profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, and add the Racial Abilities for an alien race of the GM's choosing. Roll on the Reaction Table.
- 5 **Settlers:** A large family en route to its new home asks the heroes for directions to an eatery. Use the Citizen profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Roll on the Reaction Table; on a result of Friendly or better, they offer the characters work in a security crew on Dysnomia.
- 6 **Bar Crawl:** 2d6 tipsy revelers make their uproarious way from a local bar to the Kallisti Apple, having a simply fabulous time. Use the Citizen profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, but add the Rich Edge. Roll on the Reaction Table; on a result of Friendly or better, they insist that the space jockeys join them. At the GM's option, some criminal element may have already targeted the partiers for a robbery—one the heroes may very well be forced the prevent!

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1–2 **Plum Job:** The heroes are offered easy work: Guard a docking bay for two hours—during which nothing of note occurs—and earn C\$2,000 each. The *real* reason for the employer's excessive pay may be more sinister.
- 3–4 **Surplus:** A lucky spacer gets the better end of a deal. If the character sold something, she's paid 50% more than the agreed-upon fee. If she buys something, she gets 50% more of it, or paid 50% less, than expected.
- 5–6 **Unclaimed Freight:** A load of unclaimed freight—worth 1d8 × C\$1,000—is delivered to the group or to their vessel.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1 **Vermín:** 2d6 wire rats (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) attack the group.
- 2 **Pirates:** 2d6 agents of Groid's Raiders (use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*) spy on the heroes and plan to hijack their ship (whether they own their own, or crew someone else's).
- 3 **Spies:** 2d4 corporate spies hacking into a JumpCorp terminal. Use the Spy profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- 4 **Thieves:** 2d6 Thugs (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) ambush the spacers.
- 5 **Crewmen:** 2D6 ship's rew Members (see Starship Crew in the *Science Fiction Companion*), intoxicated on the Public Walk and spoiling for a fight.
- 6 **Vector Ultra:** An assassin (use the Assassin profile with the Deader Racial Abilities, both in the *Science Fiction Companion*) who is also a sethiss agent shadows the heroes and reports their actions to her masters on Aite.

★ **Back-Alley Mercantilism** (page 77): The party spies a criminal gang putting the screws to a merchant.

★ **(Death) Wish Upon a Star** (page 78): Celebrity Fayt Laanar is on Harmonia Station to promote his newest holo-play.

HORKOS

Horkos is locked in eternal ice, its grayish-white surface pocked with dark craters. As the outermost shepherd moon of Eris' rings, its orbit keeps the outer edge of the Kallisti Reach cleanly defined, and its passage spreads waves of destructive collisions through the ring. The moon's surface is pocked by thousands of meteorite impacts every day.

TRAVELING THERE

Travel to Horkos—or any of the shepherd moons, for that matter—isn't recommended. As these moons travel along the rings' edges, they draw stray planetoids and ice fragments into their atmospheres, to be incinerated or slam into the moon's surface. Horkos flings other planetoids away from it at high velocity, some hurtling into the ring and others tumbling into space.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Beyond the remains of ships that have crashed on its surface—most of which are buried in ice and snow—Horkos holds little of interest. The near-constant meteorite barrage makes being on the surface a risky proposition. Each hour, draw a card from the Action Deck; on a face card, a meteorite hits close enough to inflict 2d6 damage on everyone and everything in the area, and blots out the sky with dust. On a Joker, a meteorite scores a direct hit on the craft or a space jockey, inflicting 10d6 damage.

INNER RING

The Inner Ring is the subsector's most violent and dangerous region. It's also where the finest prizes are recovered. An ongoing whirl of crashing ice, planetoids, planetesimals, and asteroids, the Inner Ring has the capacity to utterly destroy an unprotected vessel in minutes. Its relatively smaller area makes the tidal effects of shepherd moons Aite and Neikea more catastrophic to vessels and mining operations. See **Mining the Rings** on page 9 for how miners and salvagers do their work despite ringstorms.

Both of Eris' rings are laid out in a flat orbital plane, only about 150 meters "thick." The Inner Ring's radial width is about 60,000 kilometers. The rings orbit Eris together in its gravitational field's Roche zone, at a slower rate than the moons. Some of the trip is spent in Eris' shadow, with the sun Hyaergos in total eclipse for about 70 hours.

TRAVELING THERE

Any vessel can reach the Inner Ring with relative ease, but an intrepid crew needs a heavily armored and deflector-shielded vessel—like a ringsweeper—to actually fly *into* the ring. The rings cover such an immense area it's impossible for JumpCorp to monitor everything that happens. Miners and salvagers quickly learn to watch their own backs, because no one else is going to do it for them.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The Inner Ring yields a higher percentage of sethiss artifacts and rare elements than the Kallisti Reach, because a greater percentage of its mass was once a hollow sethiss world. Aside from plentiful ores and exotic elements, spacers often come across lost caches of sethiss artifacts.

ENCOUNTERS IN ERIS' RINGS CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d6 Obstacle

- 1–2 Magnetic Anomaly:** A magnetic fluctuation in the ring makes the vessel's sensors go haywire. Piloting rolls are made at –4 until the anomaly subsides in 2d20 hours.
- 3–4 Ringstorm:** Either the shepherd moons' passage or some other disturbance causes a sudden ringstorm in the heroes' vicinity. See the Setting Rule on page 10.
- 5–6 Meteorites:** The party's ship is struck by 1d4 micrometeorites for 3d6 damage each.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

d6 Nonplayer Character

- 1 News Crew:** An Intergalactic News Network (INN) crew approaches in a shuttle, doing a story on the perils of ring mining. Will the spacers consent to a quick interview?
- 2 JumpSec:** A JumpCorp light cruiser hails the characters' ship and requests their mining permit number. The cruiser carries a squad of 10 JumpSec Marines (see page 93).

KALLISTI REACH

- 3 **Rivals:** A rival crew of miners in a ringsweeper, or salvagers in a light freighter, is trying to get to the riches before the heroes can. They're good-natured but extremely competitive.
- 4 **Free Trader:** A system freighter hauling cargo between moons. Roll on the Reaction Table; on a Neutral result or better they are willing to barter or sell the heroes any gear they need.
- 5 **Survivors:** The spacers come upon a single derelict mining pod that contains 1d4+1 Miners (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) who are barely alive. Their ringsweeper was destroyed in a ringstorm.
- 6 **Scientists:** The characters happen upon a research ship performing experiments on the ring's unique electromagnetic phenomena.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d6 Item

- 1 **Artifacts:** Salvagers discover a hollow, drifting hulk; a decompressed spacecraft of unknown design; or some other manufactured domicile or vehicle amid the asteroids. In the Inner Ring it contains 1d6+1 sethiss artifacts, or in the Kallisti Reach 1d4 artifacts. Roll on the table on page 19.
- 2-4 **Ore:** Miners find a planetoid containing rare ores worth $2d10 \times C\$500$ on the open market.
- 5-6 **Elements:** Prospectors lay claim to a fragment, cloud, or pool of some rare element worth $1d12 \times C\$1,000$ on the open market.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d6 Enemy

- 1 **Invader:** A Creature From the Id (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) infiltrates the spacers' ship.
- 2-5 **Pirates:** A pirate ship (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) approaches. Its captain demands the characters turn over everything of value.
- 6 **Vector Ultra:** Four fighters (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) under sethiss command attack the heroes' ship

The Kallisti Reach spreads like a serene and glittering sea of diamonds on the nebula-mottled, starry backdrop of space, so unlike the Inner Ring's violence. Strange interactions of visible light and exotic radiation create rainbows and send luminous sparks across the surface of tumbling rocks and icy chunks. When Hyaergos dawns over Eris' horizon, the light creates a fireworks display among the colliding asteroids.

Both of Eris' rings are laid out in a flat orbital plane, about 150 meters thick. The Kallisti Reach's radial width, however, is over 140,000 kilometers. The rings orbit Eris together, but at a slower rate than the moons. During the trip around Eris, the sun is in total eclipse for about 70 hours.

Although the Kallisti Reach yields fewer flashy artifacts than the Inner Ring, it provides miners with a seemingly neverending bounty of common ores and elements. It provides steady income, but it's no place to get rich. On the other hand, the luxury of over six days between ringstorms allows for safer and more profitable mining runs. See **Mining the Rings** on page 9 for more information on how miners and salvagers do their work despite the ringstorms.

TRAVELING THERE

Like the Inner Ring, it's easy to get to the Kallisti Reach, and it's even a little easier to keep one's vessel together inside it. Most spacers who go to the Reach are equipped for long-term mining and salvage operations.

POINTS OF INTEREST

There are few distinct points of interest in the Kallisti Reach, but plenty of ringsweepers and salvage ships plying their trades. Pirate gangs are known to congregate in certain regions, and although JumpSec forces patrol the rings they can't be everywhere at once. See the **Encounters in Eris' Rings** table on page 46 when your crew goes looking for trouble.

Groid's Raiders: The subsector's largest and best-organized pirate operation is run by Groid (see page 92), a ruthless and experienced captain. His forces make their base in a hollowed-out asteroid, and so far the ruse has allowed the pirates to escape JumpCorp detection. Pirates in this gang typically wear a red knife tattoo somewhere on their bodies. Groid has a longstanding friendship with Ujun, owner of the Kallisti Apple nightclub on Harmonia Station

(see page 43), who gives Groid access to sensitive information about cargo shipments and JumpSec troop movements.

★ **Raid on Groid's Rock (page 81):** An executive hires the heroes to aid JumpSec forces in their attack on a pirate hideout deep in the Kallisti Reach.

LETHE

Lethe circles Eris at an extreme distance, shrouded in clouds and ice. The tiny orb has no indigenous species. Its only sentient inhabitants live in the JumpCorp prison colony whose name is used interchangeably with that of the moon.

SHEPHERD MOONS

If a hero needs to land on or take off from one of Eris' shepherd moons, it's a standard **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*), and it makes for dangerous piloting. The pilot—aided by the navigator and crew's Cooperative rolls—must find a safe route through a hail of meteorites and asteroids. For each of the five attempts, the pilot rolls Piloting at -2.

In a ship with the Deflector Screens or Sloped Armor Modification (see the *Science Fiction Companion*), the pilot receives +2 to Piloting rolls, or +4 if a ship has both Modifications.

Complications inflict an additional -2 penalty, and include the ship being hit, an intake valve freezing, heavier than expected obstacles, or micrometeors. If the pilot collects five successes, the ship lands safely.

If not, the ship has a collision with a slab of rock bigger than itself (see **Starship Combat** in the *Science Fiction Companion*). Roll 2d6 and multiply the result by 100 to determine the slab's current velocity.

TRAVELING THERE

If an adventurer doesn't have the luxury of flying her own ship to Lethe, there are only a few ways to get there. A heavily armored military shuttle transports prisoners to Lethe from Harmonia Station each week, stopping at Goldpoint on the way to retrieve more convicts. The shuttle is always escorted by five JumpCorp fighters, and manned by a squad of six JumpSec marines in addition to the regular crew. Also, a JumpCorp system freighter brings food and other supplies in a monthly supply run.

Private vessels are strongly discouraged from traveling to Lethe. Although there are no major warships stationed there, long-range sensors at Harmonia monitor the moon's orbit constantly for unauthorized visitors. Ground control personnel at Lethe's tiny spaceport hail all arriving ships and request a JumpSec clearance code. When a vessel's captain can't produce a valid code, the techs typically summon a light cruiser from Harmonia to clear things up.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Lethe Prison: As lonely and forgotten as its namesake, Lethe is a barren world with only one real landmark: Lethe Prison Colony. The dark metal compound seems to huddle under a burden of snow and ice. Wind howls constantly at the gates. Abandon hope all ye who enter here, because it's the closest thing to Hell in this sector.

Lethe Prison holds the sector's worst offenders in maximum-security confinement. It's rare for convicts to arrive at Lethe with anything less than a mandatory life sentence. It currently holds 109 inmates, handled by 25 JumpSec guards and staff members, who in turn are overseen by the tyrannical Warden Haldrak.

★ **Supply Run (page 84):** Due to recent unrest at Lethe, the heroes hire on as supply freighter guards. Turns out things are much worse at Lethe than anyone thought....

NEIKEA

Neikea is a small moon that shepherds the outer edge of the Inner Ring. In tandem with Phonoi, it defines the Sleetros Gap—the space between Eris' rings. As with other moons that share the task of defining the rings' edges, meteorite impacts have ravaged Neikea's surface.

TRAVELING THERE

Travel to shepherd moons isn't recommended, and is seldom attempted. See the **Shepherd Moons** sidebar on page 48 if one of the space jockeys wants to give it a try.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Boiling oceans and volcanic activity dominate Neikea's surface, hidden from outside view by clouds of vapor and soot. Meteorites plunge constantly into the roiling seas, and fiery volcanoes burst from the depths. The satellite's atmosphere is rapidly stripping away, a process that will render the moon airless in less than a decade.

PHONOI

Phonoi shepherds the inner edge of the Kallisti Reach. Working alongside Neikea, it defines the space between Eris' rings, known as the Sleetros Gap.

TRAVELING THERE

See the **Shepherd Moons** sidebar on page 48 for a discussion of the dangers inherent to landing on one of these chaotic, violent orbs. Long story short: It's not something most spacers choose to do.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Phonoi is an airless, meteorite-pocked waste, and the smallest of the shepherd moons.

PONOS

Ponos is the other habitable moon in Eris' orbit besides Dysnomia—but only barely so. It's surface is only warm enough to be considered arctic in the equatorial zones, where two hardy mining colonies have taken root with JumpCorp support. In regions farther north or south, though, temperatures plunge below most beings' ability to survive.

Goldpoint station (see page 39) orbits Ponos once every 22 hours, and is visible from the surface in clear atmospheric conditions.

DATAFILE: PONOS

Gravity: Normal

Dominant Terrain: Arctic (Avg temp -80° F)

Atmosphere: Thin

Population Density: Extremely sparse

Dominant Government: Corporate (JumpCorp)

Law: Lenient

Customs: JumpCorp implant required

Technology: Average

Spaceport: Basic

TRAVELING THERE

Daily shuttles ferry passengers from Goldpoint to the surface and back again. As is the case on Dysnomia, Ponos' miners must register at Goldpoint and receive an identifying implant. Visitors may purchase temporary chips for C\$25; these are valid for one week (see sidebar on page 36).

Technically, landing on a JumpCorp moon without a valid implant is grounds for immediate deportation—as with Dysnomia—but enforcement is far more lenient on Ponos. On a world where it's near impossible to survive outside one of the mining colonies, JumpCorp authorities aren't too worried about unsanctioned settlements popping up.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Ponosian mining colonies are built mostly underground, so engineers are better able to control the environment. Huge generators provide power, heat, and breathable atmosphere to labyrinthine networks of caverns and tunnels, while the miners—an especially hardy lot, even among the settlers of frontier space—extract massive veins of copper, iron, and platinum. These settlements are more like families than towns; everyone knows everyone else, and visitors are extremely rare.



CHAPTER SIX: THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE VOID

JumpCorp makes no secret of its zeal for extracting the Eris subsector's mineral wealth. But the company has a secret agenda too—recovering alien technology. Researchers are especially interested in information they can use to build a vessel like the one the so-called “Voidsmen” piloted so long ago. But time is running out: More fragments collide with each passing day, pulverizing their riches forever.

What JumpCorp doesn't know is the sethiss may be forgotten—but they're not gone. They're planning a comeback and it's already begun. Having secured a headquarters at the Quincunx in City Prime (see page 24), Vector Ultra has finally begun to leave Aite's interior for brief periods, and to send their implanted agents into the subsector as spies and assassins.

The sethiss have secret agents and saboteurs in place on Goldpoint, Harmonia Station, and several of the derrick ships in Erisian orbit. They also employ “privateers” to ambush and destroy mining ships in the Kallisti Reach and Inner Ring.

PLOT POINT SUMMARY

The Spy Who Came in From the Void is a campaign taking intrepid heroes to the Eris subsector's major landmarks in an epic journey to foil Vector Ultra's plot. Here's a quick overview of the whole story.

The first part, **Invisible Designs**, introduces characters to each other, lets them explore Harmonia Station, and allows them to acclimate to the Eris subsector. The heroes acquire a patron who provides subtle guidance and steady pay. In the process, they glean vague hints of murders and cover-ups, a sector-spanning conspiracy, and dark forces taking shape. The chapter ends as a derrick ship orbiting Eris explodes, destroyed by saboteurs—all hands are lost.

In part two, **The Prodigal Scientist**, the entire sector is stunned to learn that renowned JumpCorp scientist Horst Tappelkhirre—thought dead for six years—has been discovered alive. But

his homecoming is marred by an assassination attempt...one only the heroes can prevent!

Impressed with the spacers' skills, Tappelkhirre taps them to accompany a scientific expedition in the third part, **Mysteries of Dysnomia**. The spacefarers accompany a full contingent of scholars, baggage handlers, and guides into the perilous craglands. There they discover evidence of a lost race among ancient ruins, and bring back a mysterious biological sample that has remained hidden for millions of years.

No doubt galvanized by their discoveries on Dysnomia—and perhaps wondering why JumpCorp insists the information be kept secret—in **The Derelict** the heroes receive another request from Horst Tappelkhirre. He asks them to explore a drifting hulk of alien wreckage in the Kallisti Reach, and transmit precious data. Actually, it's a plot to ensure the heroes' demise. The episode ends with the heroes' discovery of a teleportation device that sends them to Algos—thus escaping Tappelkhirre's betrayal.

In part five the marooned characters explore an ancient sethiss ziggurat, confront the fearsome silicon-based life form that dwells there, and finally **Escape From Algos**. But they do so with the knowledge that Aite is the remaining sethiss homeworld.

By now, the party knows Horst Tappelkhirre is out to silence them, so they have to mount their own **Mission to Aite** if they hope to learn the truth about the sethiss. Getting into the planet proves easy when the atmosphere lock draws in their ship, but then the group must survive a crash-landing and encounters with local flora and fauna.

In the next part, visitors to Aite befriend a sethiss tribe, and undergo the **Trials of the Hive Gods** before they are accepted as tribe members. The trials complete, the heroes and their new sethiss allies make the long journey to City Prime.

In **Face-Off at City Prime**, the explorers find their way to Vector Ultra's hideout in the city's

JUMPCORP

In *The Last Parsec*, the player characters are employees of the galaxy-spanning corporation JumpCorp.

As such, they are collectively called "the team" or "the JumpCorp team" throughout this adventure, or more generically the "explorers," "travelers," or another term in keeping with their spacefaring lifestyles.

Compensation: Each JumpCorp team member has agreed to a retainer of C\$1,000 per week, which they get paid even between assignments. Whenever they are on an active mission, each team member receives an additional C\$2,000 per week; JumpCorp expects a concerted, all-hours effort, even in difficult or hazardous conditions, in exchange for that generous salary. The standard mission completion bonus, should one be offered, is C\$10,000 per team member.

Assets and Aid: JumpCorp has regional offices in many star systems and sectors throughout Known Space, as well as research stations, trade and travel offices, and independent operatives in many far-flung corners of the galaxy. While these can sometimes offer some material assistance, clarification of instructions, and advice, they are seldom in a position to lend direct aid to their team members, who they consider to be independent contractors who are expected to be self-reliant.

central tower, to defeat them and the ancient High Sethiss they've awakened from cryogenic sleep. When the battle is done the heroes learn about the sethiss' plot from the *real* Horst Tappelkhirre, who's been imprisoned on Aite. They plan to release the Dysnomian plague—disastrously used by the Dysnomians so long ago—on Goldpoint and Harmonia Stations.

In the pulse-pounding conclusion, **The Tappelkhirre Method**, the heroes must devise a plan to prevent Vector Ultra from releasing the disease simultaneously at two orbital stations. This is going to take crackerjack timing, space jockey!

PART ONE:
INVISIBLE DESIGNS

Run this adventure to begin the Plot Point Campaign. It gives heroes a chance to explore Harmonia Station, establish contacts, and meet their JumpCorp handler. Most important, this tale brings the group together and hints at the sethiss' insidious plot.

THE STORY SO FAR

All is not well in the Eris subsector. Corruption among JumpCorp executives and agents is common. Mysterious cruisers, outfitted for war, prowl the Kallisti Reach and prey on unarmed ships—destroying them and killing their crews without cause. For many, the questions swirling around the Bezenek-Havn'ul Disaster have never been satisfactorily answered. A few—like JumpCorp executive Maruul Soteeg—sense the outlines of a growing conspiracy.

Yesterday, a sethiss ship piloted by Vector Ultra agents contacted one of their allies in the Kallisti Reach. The minion, Captain Zadra of the light freighter *Crolnec*, accepted a dozen cargo containers packed with filament spiders (see page 86). Their mission is to release the vicious creatures into Harmonia Station's ventilation system so Vector Ultra can assess their enemies' response to a new threat. The *Crolnec* is scheduled to arrive in 14 hours.

PRELUDES

Some GMs like to begin the first session by giving each player a chance to describe their character's appearance and recent history. Using the **Interludes** rules (see *Savage Worlds*), you can add a little structure to that process. After all the players have a chance to speak, read the following to the group:

Despite the varied circumstances that brought you to the Eris Beta-V subsector, you all have one thing in common: a mid-level JumpCorp executive named Maruul Soteeg, who assigns contracts for various independent importers and exporters at Harmonia Station.

When you arrived, it was Soteeg who saw your potential, took you under her wing, and assigned you to your first jobs. Maruul is a kalian, and she seems to use all four arms to aid your careers however she can. Of course, having talented employees works out well for Soteeg too.

Maybe that's why she called you all to her office today. Soteeg sits across from you behind

a huge, utterly smooth and bare, black desk. She looks at you and frowns thoughtfully, two hands' soft blue fingers intertwined, while the others hold a personal data device and tap softly on its keyboard.

"Thanks for coming," Soteeg says. "And thanks also for agreeing to work together on such short notice. Naturally, I'll vouch for everyone here. I've got a job for you, and it requires a variety of skill sets. There may be risks involved. But the pay is outstanding—as usual.

"A light freighter called the *Crolnec* is on its way out of the Kallisti Reach, and it's scheduled to dock at the spaceport loop in approximately 14 hours. I have reason to believe their cargo is dangerous, but I can't let JumpCorp Security in on it just yet.

"I need you to be there when the *Crolnec* arrives, and take custody of their cargo. Detain the crew if you must. But remember—it's the cargo I'm most concerned with. Be sure the containers stay sealed.

"Transport it to bay 86-G on the Naval Base loop, and when you get there I'll pay you 1,000 credits each," Soteeg says, "which includes any expenses. Are you in?"

Show the players the diagram of Harmonia Station (on page 43). The job's logistics—finding the *Crolnec*'s docking bay, how to transport the cargo, etc.—are up to the spacers. If they press Soteeg on why they have to keep the operation secret from JumpSec, or what danger the cargo poses, she isn't very forthcoming. "I'll worry about that, darling," is her only reply. In truth, Soteeg is concerned that some of her colleagues may have been compromised, although she doesn't yet have enough information to make a case.

- **Maruul Soteeg:** Use the Corporate Exec profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Add the Kalian Racial Abilities and the Connections (JumpCorp) Edge. Soteeg is armed with two light slugthrower pistols (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6–1, RoF 1, AP 2), and a hyper-sharpened rapier (Str+d4+2, AP 2).

TREK THROUGH HARMONIA

Consult the description of Harmonia Station, beginning on page 42. Given the station's impressive size, it takes travelers about three hours to reach the spaceport loop from the executive spires—assuming nothing happens along the way. Use the **Harmonia Station Encounters** table on page 44 to generate random events and nonplayer characters. Heroes can also

RUNNING THE PLOT POINT

The **Mysterious Designs** sidebar (page 16) gives some general advice on how to showcase the mysteries at the setting's heart. Here's another tip: Get your players—and their spacefarers—involved from the start.

Work with your players during character creation to establish their JumpCorp ties. Party members affiliated with JumpCorp's law enforcement division (JumpSec)—as operatives or freelancers—are more likely to be concerned about the insurgent threat. JumpCorp-funded scientists should be keen to discover all they can about the "Voidsmen"—acting on the mistaken assumption they came from some faraway planet. Ring miners and salvagers are inundated with old spacers' tales about ruined Voidsmen hulks among the asteroids, and mining ships ambushed by pirates—or worse.

In short, do your best to weave a few aspects of the mysteries into your group's backgrounds. Most characters are assumed to work for JumpCorp, and making those connections concrete goes a long way toward making the heroes' eventual discovery of the sETHISS—and betrayal by Horst Tappelkhirre—feel like bombshells.

use this opportunity to stock up on any gear they desire, or the GM may want to run a short Savage Tale, as long as the group is ready for the *Crolnec*'s arrival in 14 hours.

AT THE SPACEPORT

On the spaceport loop, a successful Streetwise roll allows investigators to locate the JumpCorp customs agent on duty. Unless someone flashes JumpCorp credentials, it takes a successful Persuasion or Intimidation roll to learn where the *Crolnec* is scheduled to dock. A plausible excuse or convincing story adds +2 to a Persuasion roll. Failing an Intimidation attempt results in the customs agent summoning 2d6 JumpSec troopers (see page 94) to sort things out.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Plot Point campaign features numerous major players. Here's a quick summary and pronunciation guide to help keep them straight as your group progresses through the campaign. Their profiles are in the **Rogues Gallery**, beginning on page 92.

Ban Veiale (Bahn Vee-AH-lay):

A famed human explorer hired by the false Horst Tappelkhirre in part three to lead the Veiale Expedition to Dysnomia seeking archaeological sites. In reality, fake Horst is after ancient biological weapons. Ban is an innocent dupe, and may end up a staunch ally to the heroes.

Chanx Oblios (Chanks OH-blee-ohs):

Chanx is a Serran and Eris Beta-V's Subsector Administrator for JumpCorp. His offices are on Harmonia Station, in the executive spires. He's not a part of the sethiss conspiracy.

Dysnomians (Dis-NO-mee-ans):

A race of furry hominids whose culture reached a late-industrial stage about five million years ago, but never achieved reliable interplanetary travel. The Dysnomians fired a rocket to Algos containing the Dysnomian plague, which evolved into the sethiss (see below). The Dysnomians' culture collapsed in paroxysms of violence about 4.6 million years ago; modern Dysnomians are tribal primitives called "crag men."

Horst Tappelkhirre (TAH-pul-keer):

JumpCorp's preeminent deader scientist in the Eris Beta-V subsector, Tappelkhirre was thought killed six years ago in a starship accident near Aite. He returns in part two, but the brilliant scholar isn't exactly what he seems—he's a sethiss spy! The real Horst returns (in another body) later in the Plot Point.

K'kxx (Kuh-KICKS): A desert sethiss chieftain who befriends the party when they are marooned inside Aite, and

Presumably, the heroes learn the *Crolnec* will arrive at berth 42-B. With very little effort, they find a company on the spaceport loop that rents cargo barges for C\$100 per day. The group can use any remaining time to perform surveillance, rig an ambush at the docking bay, or whatever best serves their plans.

THE CROLNEC ARRIVES

In a little over 16 hours—the vessel is late—the *Crolnec* arrives at berth 42-B (see the Light Freighter profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*). A customs agent is on hand to ask the captain a few standard questions and briefly inspect the cargo hold, a process that takes 30 minutes. Most of the crewmen head off to the nearest bar. After that, the heroes have an hour before the deadly cargo is loosed.

Although they pose as freight haulers, the rakashan Captain Zadra and his men are not to be trifled with. They respond to demands or threats with violence. If a fight goes against them, Zadra flees to the cargo hold and breaks open one cargo container per round (see below). Neither Zadra—nor his crew—knows who hired them.

★ **Captain Zadra:** Use the Pirate Officer profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, adding the Rakashan Racial Abilities.

• **Crewmen (2 per hero):** Use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

DEADLY CARGO

With a Notice roll, anyone searching the cargo bay spies 12 cargo containers of unfamiliar, polyhedral design near the back of the hold. They're made from a strange, fibrous material that analysis reveals to be primarily silicon and stamped **FRAGILE**. They can only be broken open. As each container is opened the spiders scurry away into the ship, attacking anyone who gets in their way. No one in the group has ever seen or heard of creatures like these. If any of the creatures escape, they breed in the air ducts and soon become a major nuisance on the station.

• **Filament Spiders (6 per container):** See page 86.

DESIGNS REVEALED

Assuming the party secures the cargo without causing a major scene or bringing JumpSec into the mix (they quarantine the entire bay for 2d12 hours), Soteeg waits at bay 86-G on the Naval Base loop. While men in non-descript coveralls load the cargo containers into her light cruiser,

Soteeg pays each hero the agreed-upon fee of C\$1,000 and thanks them. "I'll be in touch," she says, and boards the cruiser.

When the group returns to the spaceport or the Public Walk, read the following passage to end part one:

Only a few seconds after you push your way into the pedestrian crush, screams of shock and dismay ring out. Everyone turns toward the huge viewports that frame a magnificent view of Eris and her rings. In the distant gas giant's upper atmosphere, you see orange blooms of flame erupting from a derrick ship. Explosion after explosion rips through the hull, and it sheds clouds of debris as it disappears into Eris' pearly clouds. In Harmonia Station, it's as silent as the vacuum of space.

Unbeknownst to most, the sethiss-backed insurgency just succeeded in destroying its biggest target yet—a JumpCorp derrick vessel—by igniting the ship's hydrogen storage tanks with explosive charges. The spies responsible perished in the explosions along with close to 5,000 victims—a small price to pay for Vector Ultra fanatics. The story dominates Intergalactic News Network coverage for several days.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (CONT.)

allows them to undertake tests to join the tribe.

Maruul Soteeg (Mah-ROOL Sew-TEEG): Maruul is a mid-level JumpCorp executive, a kalian who acts as the heroes' patron and handler during the campaign. She is one of only a few who suspect a hostile force has already infiltrated JumpCorp's local bureaucracy.

Sethiss (SETH-iss): A viral-silicate species that dwells within the moon Aite, actually a hollow world engineered and built by the sethiss about three million years ago. Most people refer to the sethiss as "Voidsmen" out of ignorance, believing them long extinct.



PART TWO: THE PRODIGAL SCIENTIST

This episode can take place on the heels of the previous installment, or after a few character-based jaunts and other Savage Tales. After the derrick ship bombing, JumpSec forces are on high alert and all the subsector's inhabitants are tense. Vidblast newscasts analyze the event ad nauseum. Everyone waits for the other shoe to drop. During this time, the **Security Detail** Savage Tale (page 84) would be very appropriate.

THE STORY SO FAR

Six years ago, the sethiss gained an unwilling ally in their fight when Horst Tappelkhirre and his colleagues crash-landed on Aite. After he spent years outwitting Vector Ultra and eluding capture, they cornered Horst and took him to City Prime. Using ancient technologies, the High Sethiss extracted the "parasteen" from deader Tappelkhirre, and implanted their own agent in its place. While the real Horst remains trapped in another body on Aite, the news breaks on Harmonia Station.

TAPPELKHIRRE COMES BACK

As the adventure begins, Harmonia Station is buzzing. It seems no one the heroes meet can resist asking,

"Did you hear the news? They found that scientist Horst Tappelkhirre drifting in the Kallisti Reach, in an old escape pod. Lost and thought dead for six long years, and he suddenly turns up. If anyone can help catch these saboteurs—it's Tappelkhirre."

No one knows a lot of details, but it's a simple matter to catch the vidblast—with its garish caption **HORST LIVES!**—on one of Harmonia Station's many public monitors. It replays every five minutes or so amid a torrent of short news clips and advertising. Read the following in your best news anchor's voice:

"In today's most surprising news, a JumpSec cruiser rescued renowned scientist Horst Tappelkhirre. Reverse your mindcores six years, viewers, to the tragic destruction of the research vessel Innovation in Aite's orbit, and the loss of Tappelkhirre and his colleagues. Against all odds, JumpSec salvagers yesterday retrieved a derelict escape pod in a remote part of the Kallisti Reach. Inside, they found Tappelkhirre a little

frozen, but none the worse for wear. Who else but a parasteen, with their unique physiology, could survive in such conditions!"

The scene shifts to a press conference. A tall, gray-skinned man of saturnine disposition answers questions in a deliberate, gravelly tone. "I assure you, we believed we were about to perish," Tappelkhirre says. "But somehow our pilot was able to crash-land on Aite's surface. We spent a month marooned there. Only my colleagues' ingenuity and sacrifice allowed me to escape. I thank them for giving their lives in service to JumpCorp. I will...miss them."

"Experts believe Tappelkhirre's escape pod—which was fired from Aite's surface in an impressive feat of engineering—drifted through the Kallisti Reach for close to five years before being discovered. Talk about finding a microfilament in an ore transport!"

In reality, of course, Horst's story is a lie. The spy had been lodged in his pre-frozen escape pod for only six or seven hours before a passing ship picked up its beacon and returned it to Harmonia Station.

MEETING SOTEEG

If the spacers have their own business to attend to, use the **Harmonia Station Encounters Table** (on page 44) as they make their way around. A few hours after the characters catch up on the big news about Tappelkhirre, Maruul Soteeg sends a short message. She requests a meeting at Kallisti Apple in one hour.

THE BIG APPLE

The Kallisti Apple (see page 43) is a large, rambling bar on the Public Walk. Maruul Soteeg arrives 15 minutes early, and sits at a dimly lit booth in the corner. The spot is camouflaged, but affords a clear view of the entrance. Success on a Notice roll (–2) tells an observer that Soteeg is anxious and trying to hide it. After the exchange of pleasantries, read the following:

"Glad you could meet on such short notice. Undoubtedly, you've heard the news—they found Horst Tappelkhirre. According to my sources, not everyone is overjoyed about this development. Someone may try to kill him, and soon."

"All you need to do is be at the Grand Observatory on the Public Walk in two hours. That's when Chanx Oblios, the subsector admin, is scheduled to address the public. Tappelkhirre's going to speak too. If there's going to be an

assassination attempt, that's as likely a time as any. We'll have JumpSec there, but I want outsiders. Friends. People I can trust.

"So here's my offer. Just for going, keeping an eye on things, I'll pay you 500 credits each. If there's an incident, and you prevent any harm coming to Oblios or Tappelkhirre—I'll bump the payment to 2,000 credits each."

Assuming they accept the terms, the space jockeys have just two hours before the event. If they ask Soteeg about the strange creatures from part one, she replies,

"Not much info yet. The scientists I've got on the case have never seen anything quite like them, and they don't appear in the JumpCorp species database. The oddest part is the life form seems to be virus-based, with a silicon envelope allowing it to live outside another cell. A mobile virus, aware of its surroundings, hostile to other life forms. We're trying to find out more...like where the Hell they came from, and who wanted to set them loose inside Harmonia."

Maruul Soteeg: Use the Corporate Exec profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Add the Kalian Racial Abilities and the Connections (JumpCorp) Edge. Soteeg is armed with two light slugthrower pistols (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1, Shots 12, AP 2).

GRAND APPEARANCES

See page 43 for details of the Grand Observatory. When the heroes get there, read the following:

At the Grand Observatory, preparations are well underway. JumpSec troopers have the dais cordoned off and patrol the area. Spherical vidbots swarm above the growing crowd, training scores of camera lenses on the proceedings, broadcasting the scene on INN. In the background, Eris' awe-inspiring breadth fills huge viewports, her gleaming rings dwindling into the vastness of space.

Make Notice rolls (-2) for heroes who scan the area intently, or weave through the crowd. With success, a guard notes an unmarked hover car idling near one of the Grand Observatory's entrances. On a raise, keen-eyed observers note that a few of the JumpSec troopers on duty have ill-fitting uniforms, one is unshaven, and another has a red tattoo showing above his collar.

UNDERCOVER ASSASSINS

In fact, *all* the JumpSec troops on the scene are assassins. They're members of Groid's Raiders (see page 47), but a mysterious patron—and



Vector Ultra loyalist—hired them to kill Chanx Oblios and Horst Tappelkhirre on the side. They've already been paid, and have no means to contact their employer.

Actually, even the assassination is a sham. It's really a sethiss attempt to quell suspicion about the timing of Tappelkhirre's return. The sethiss also leaked assassination rumors to certain contacts within JumpCorp—hoping to draw out Maruul Soteeg and anyone in her employ. Right now, that's the heroes!

At the scheduled time, Chanx Oblios and Horst Tappelkhirre emerge from behind a hastily erected curtain behind the platform. The crowd greets them with rousing applause. But as soon as they reach the dais, the disguised pirates move to attack, spraying slugs indiscriminately. The crowd panics. Chaos ensues.

◆ **Chanx Oblios:** See page 92.

◆ **Horst Tappelkhirre (False):** See page 93.

- **Disguised Pirates (2 per hero):** Use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. They wear stolen JumpCorp Security uniforms, and are armed with submachine guns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 3, AP 2). One of them has a stun grenade (Range 5/10/20, Damage Special, RoF 1, LBT).

MOPPING UP

After the pirates are subdued, Chanx and the false Horst thank the heroes profusely. Horst asks how the heroes knew about the assassination attempt, and just happened to be on the scene to prevent it. If the heroes give credit to their patron and name Maruul Soteeg, see the **Loose Ends** sidebar on page 61.

Speaking of Soteeg, she pays each spacer C\$2,000 as promised. She's none too happy to hear that her name was mentioned, but she brushes it off. "I'm probably being paranoid. But from now on, don't mention my name—OK, darlings?"

PART THREE: MYSTERIES OF DYSNOMIA

Run this adventure after several weeks pass. You may want to field a few *Savage Tales*, give the spacers a chance to pursue their own goals, or have Soteeg send them to Goldpoint on a mission. Regardless of how heroes spend their time, this tale begins when the group receives a personal message from Horst Tappelkhirre.

THE STORY SO FAR

The false Horst Tappelkhirre—a sethiss and Vector Ultra spy—has retaken his influential post as the Eris subsector's Chief Researcher, directing the JumpCorp laboratories on Harmonia Station. His predecessor's recent accidental death in the Kallisti Reach had left the post conveniently vacant. Tappelkhirre publicly states his noble intent to recover ancient technology and knowledge. Within days, JumpCorp announces the Veiale Expedition to Dysnomia, which is widely reported on INN.

Secretly, Horst sets the next phase of the sethiss plot into motion: recovering data—and an ancient disease—from one of Dysnomia's primordial ruins, for use against Vector Ultra's enemies. Vector Ultra would undertake the mission itself, but with only a few small ships and a handful of members, they must work through spies and proxies.

TO THE SPIRES

As the episode begins, one of the characters receives this message on her personal data device or other communication gadget:

Greetings! I wish to express once more my deep appreciation for interceding on behalf of me and Subsector Administrator Oblios. We remain in your debt. Please join me for an informal meeting tomorrow in Research Complex conference room #23-B, Executive Spire 5, at 1600 hours. We fondly anticipate your attendance.

—Best regards, Horst Tappelkhirre, Chief Researcher, Eris Beta-V Subsector

Unless the spacefarers declare they're headed to the Grand Observatory to access the passageway to the Executive Spire elevator banks, have them roll Streetwise or Common Knowledge at –2 to figure out how to access JumpCorp's offices. Depending on how the group travels there, the **Harmonia Station Encounters** table on page 44 may come in handy.

BODYGUARDS NEEDED

Horst Tappelkhirre asks his JumpCorp staff to wait outside while he talks to the party. The Veiale Expedition departs into the Dysnomian wilds in five days. Its goal is to recover historical data and items of interest in the scientific quest to uncover the subsector's early history. Tappelkhirre wants the heroes to tag along and make sure everything goes to plan.

Tappelkhirre is a no-nonsense fellow, so his pitch is simple: The expedition needs tough and cunning protectors, and Horst has seen the heroes' skills in person. Would they perhaps consider joining the crew for a payment of C\$2,400 each, one-third in advance?

✦ **Horst Tappelkhirre (False):** See page 93.

• **JumpSec Troopers (6):** See page 94.

PREPARATIONS

Once they've acquired their visitor implants, spacers need to take a shuttle or other transport to Dysnomia—a one-hour flight. Review Dysnomia's description, beginning on page 34. The expedition gathers at Hyaergos Memorial, the moon's optimistically named spaceport. When heroes arrive, a half-dozen JumpSec marines interrogate them briefly. If the spacers ask, a rugged kalian named Denarv tells them the expedition members are staying at Ghauem's.

THE VEIALE EXPEDITION

Famed explorer Ban Veiale leads the expedition, which consists of his personal assistant, three JumpCorp scientists, 10 laborers hired at Blacklung (a nearby mining settlement), and the heroes.

When everyone's together, an ebullient Veiale projects an image of a cracked stone tablet with odd symbols carved all over it onto the wall. Read the following passage out loud as he addresses the expedition:

"A warm welcome to our newest arrivals. I am Ban Veiale. As you know, our goal in the Dysnomian wilderness is to recover certain ancient data for our generous JumpCorp sponsors. The stone tablet you see here was the impetus for our journey.

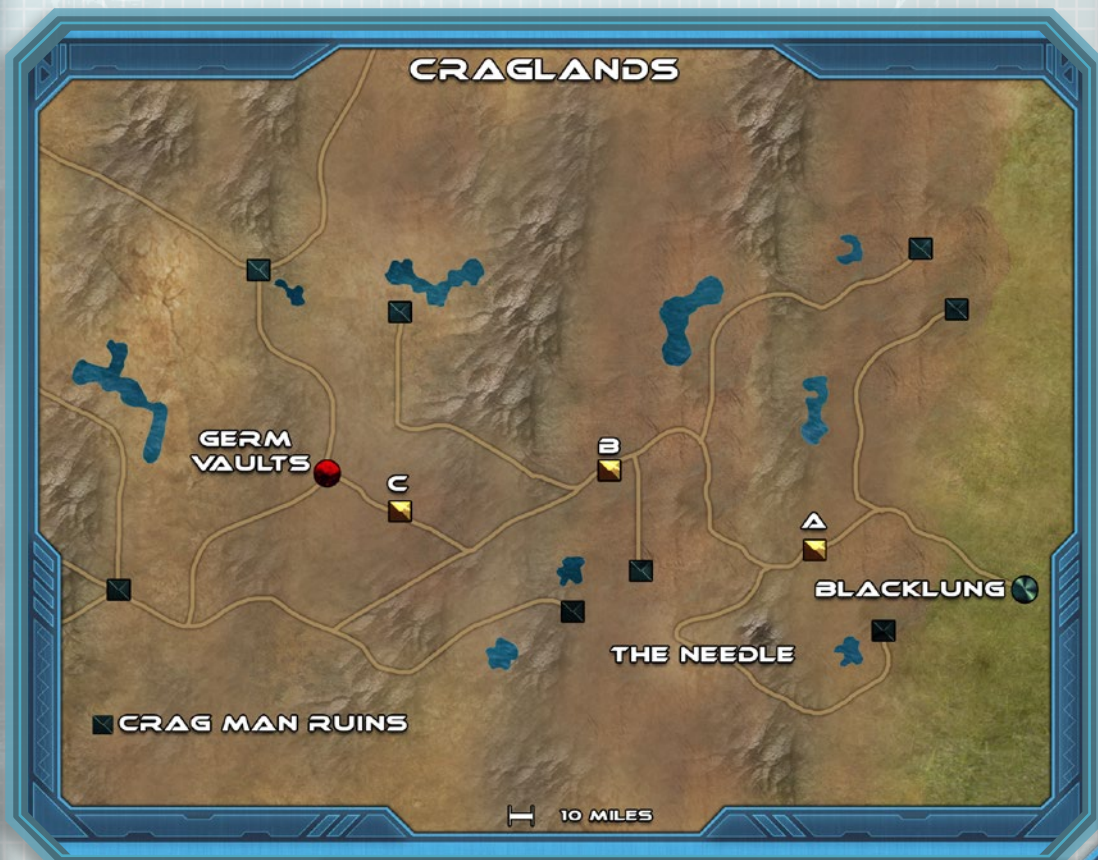
"Translators believe the tablet depicts a map to a hidden location, marked with symbols representing 'knowledge' and 'quarantine.' Given the preponderance of odd viruses in the subsector, Dr. Tappelkhirre feels whatever we find may be valuable to JumpCorp, and us. Please let me know if you have any concerns. I look forward to our journey, friends!"

The GM should control the too-curious-for-his-own-good Ban Veiale, and have the players control the other characters per the rules for allied **Extras** (see *Savage Worlds*).

Due to the Craglands' corrosive cloud cover, the expedition must travel by land. To that end, Veiale has two exploration vehicles (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) at his disposal, and

the following supplies divided between the two vehicles: 2× binoculars, 8× camouflage suits, 4× commlinks, 2× medi-gel, 10× energy sheets, 10× energy tents, 1,200× nutribars (20 days' worth per person), 2× water purification filters, fuel (20 days' worth), 5× shovels, 5× pick-axes, excavating gear. There are also four survival packs (see page 9) in case of emergency.

- ★ **Ban Veiale:** Use the Explorer profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. He has Knowledge (Archaeology). He's armed with a sniper rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 2d10, RoF 1, AP 4, HW), 12 extra rounds, and a full set of excavating hammers, chisels, and brushes.
- **Tert Auknatt:** She is Ban Veiale's personal assistant. Use the Scientist profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, but she also has the Loyal Hindrance. She carries a light slugthrower pistol (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1, AP 2).
- **JumpCorp Scientists (2):** Use the Scientist profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. One has Knowledge (Biology) and the other has Knowledge (Linguistics).
- **Laborers (10):** Use the Miner profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.



INTO THE CRAGLANDS

Heroes have a few days to get to know their colleagues before they set out. Scuffles with the JumpSec marines stationed here are possible, or the GM may want to run a *Savage Tale*. On schedule, the exploration vehicles rumble into the craglands following the ancient map.

The ruins lie approximately 220 miles west of Blacklung. The exploration vehicles can cover about 40 miles per eight hours travel over the craglands' rough terrain (see **Vehicular Travel** in *Savage Worlds*). For the five (or more) days it takes the expedition to reach its destination, use the **Cragland Encounters** table on page 35.

PERILS AND SETBACKS

At the locations marked on the nearby Craglands map, the following programmed events occur. These may occur in (deadly) combination with random encounters, underlining just how perilous Dysnomia's wilds can be.

A. Flooded Spring: Here a spring has burst into a raging torrent, washing away rocks and dirt and blocking the trail ahead. The amphibious vehicles can cross the river as a **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*). Each round, the vehicles' drivers each roll Driving at -2. Complications include getting mired in mud, pinned on a large stone, or sliding downriver. If the drivers fail to accumulate five successes, one of the exploration vehicles ends up hopelessly mired, and they must abandon it. If the drivers accumulate *no* successes, both vehicles are rendered useless.

B. Ambush!: Here the explorers are attacked by a large band of crag men. This group, however, is led by a shaman who suspects where the expedition is headed and seeks to prevent it at all costs. There are three crag men per hero (see page 91), and a crag man shaman (Wild Card; see page 91) hidden above the trail. The savage creatures start a rockslide to block the vehicles' progress; it takes 2d12 person-hours to clear the trail after the battle. The crag men flee if more than half their number are killed or subdued.

C. Breakdown: At this location, one of the exploration vehicles ruptures its drive train. It requires a successful Repair roll (-2) and 2d8 hours' work to fix, or the vehicle must be abandoned.

GERM VAULTS

The location marked on the stone tablet is nondescript, with very little marking it as a significant site besides a widening of the canyon walls. For each hour spent inspecting the area, explorers can roll Notice (-2) to uncover either of the entrances. They can—and should—mobilize the expedition's laborers to better the odds. It requires 2d6 man-hours work to excavate an entrance once it's been found.

CHAMBER OF SCREENS

This is by far the older of the two ancient chambers. Its stone shelves contain hundreds of dusty datascreens stored inside carved bone boxes. They function on solar power. The symbology used in them is similar to that depicted on the stone tablet, but far more complex and intricate. This chamber holds much of the crag men's early history, including their attempts to rid themselves of a hostile, semi-intelligent virus by exiling it to the moon Algos (see **The Lost Moon** on page 15) in an experimental rocket.

It would take countless hours to translate and digest all the information stored here. But given an hour or two to skim the materials and success on a Knowledge (Linguistics) roll, other germane Knowledge skill, or Smarts at -2, a scholar learns that the crag men once commanded industrial technologies and settled large parts of Dysnomia. There's no indication of what happened to their once-proud culture.

QUARANTINE CHAMBER

This chamber is more recently built, but the workmanship is far cruder. It's a 12-foot by 12-foot room carved from solid stone, sealed by a stone slab weighing several tons. Etched into the walls, the inner face of the slab, and the ceiling are the same symbol from the tablet—"quarantine."

At the room's center is a stone pedestal. A dust-covered, six-inch-long silver lozenge rests upon it. The lozenge's weight—about 4 oz.—makes one suspect it must be hollow, but it has no visible seams, hinges, or opening mechanism. It contains the last living sample of Dysnomian plague—the virus that caused Dysnomia's inhabitants to devolve into savagery millennia ago, before it evolved separately into the sethiss species.

RESTLESS NATIVES—AGAIN!

While the expedition works to recover valuable relics and knowledge, the crag men they fought return in greater numbers for another ambush.

This time the beastmen are far more persistent: With one of their holiest sites at risk, they fight to the death in a religious frenzy.

They throw rocks and spears from the canyon's cliff tops, and attempt to bring down a rockslide. If they do, all heroes caught in it roll Agility at -2 or suffer a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises. On a result of 1 or less, the hero suffers two levels of Fatigue.

✦ **Crag Man Shaman:** See page 91.

• **Crag Men (4 per hero):** See page 91.

THE JOURNEY BACK

The expedition has found success, but the prospect of traveling 220 miles back to the spaceport remains. Use the **Cragland Encounters** table on page 35 again to determine random events on the way back—or you can be a merciful GM and hand-wave the return trip. Either way, if Ban Veiale survives the expedition and is on good terms with the spacers, he remains a close ally to the party and may provide whatever aid the GM sees fit at some future date.

Horst Tappelkhirre pays the explorers in full when they return their discoveries to Harmonia Station. Tappelkhirre expresses his profound appreciation, and promises another job for the spacefarers—a big one—in the near future. He asks the heroes to tell no one of what they found on Dysnomia...yet.

PART FOUR: THE DERELICT

Run this episode only after the group has a few sessions to concentrate on personal goals and other Savage Tales. Note that things become difficult for the heroes during and after this episode. Be sure they have loyal friends to help them out when they're on the run!

Maruul Soteeg wonders why INN isn't carrying more details about the Veiale Expedition's discoveries; if anyone follows up with Horst, he puts them off with a terse, "Not yet. These are sensitive details." When Tappelkhirre contacts them again, this dark tale embarks.

THE STORY SO FAR

Horst Tappelkhirre's impostor has been busy since his return to Harmonia Station. With the Veiale Expedition's success, the spy possesses the last sample of the Dysnomian plague, and has already begun to grow weaponized samples in a top-secret JumpCorp laboratory. Meanwhile,

Tappelkhirre plans one last use for his very skilled helpers before he engineers their deaths: retrieving the information needed to build another sethiss homeworld.

MISSION TO THE KALLISTI REACH

The set-up for this one is simple, and it comes straight from Tappelkhirre via personal data pad or other communication device:

"As promised, I've got a very big job for you. Salvagers found a massive hulk of alien machinery drifting in the Kallisti Reach several days ago. We believe it's a remnant of the Voidsmen ship that collided with one of Eris' moons so long ago. If we're correct, it may contain data storage modules similar to others we've discovered. But with every collision between the fragment and other asteroids, we run the risk of its destruction. I need people I can trust—will you help?"

Tappelkhirre specifies that a light JumpSec cruiser will take them to the derelict's location.

LOOSE ENDS

By this point in the campaign, the false Horst Tappelkhirre and his sethiss masters have almost everything they need to execute their plan: Horst has retaken his position of influence within JumpCorp, and with the heroes' unwitting help has recovered a sample of the Dysnomian plague for use against JumpCorp's installations. All that's left is to tie up various loose ends that might trip them later. That includes the heroes and their JumpCorp handler, Maruul Soteeg.

The Derelict is a suicide mission, although the spacers don't know that—and we certainly hope it doesn't work out like that in play! But Horst Tappelkhirre intends for the entire group to perish in the Kallisti Reach.

Horst learns Soteeg's identity just before this episode, and sends a hit squad after her. While the explorers make their way through the hulk's darkened corridors, murderous thugs blow Soteeg out an airlock—with no spacesuit.

They are to explore the derelict's interior, and transmit the contents of any data modules they encounter. Horst promises the group a staggering C\$25M upon completion—enough to buy a ringsweeper and mining pods, some other vessel, or establish an outpost on Dysnomia. (Of course, he has no intention of honoring the deal.) If the heroes already have their own ship, they're welcome to use it at their own risk—but Horst warns that it may be damaged or destroyed during this very dangerous mission.

SEARCHING THE DERELICT

The spacers rendezvous with their ride, a light cruiser (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) called the *Courageous*, at the Naval Base on Harmonia Station. JumpSec marines escort them aboard. From there, it's a 12-hour flight out to the Kallisti Reach.

The *Courageous* pulls up beside Horst Tappelkhirre's warship, the *Pulsar*, which drifts directly above the derelict and the glittering ring's tumbling surface. There each hero is given a thruster-enabled spacesuit, two adhesive patches, and one extra oxygen canister (see **Spacesuit** in the *Science Fiction Companion*); they are to maintain radio contact throughout the mission. Keep track

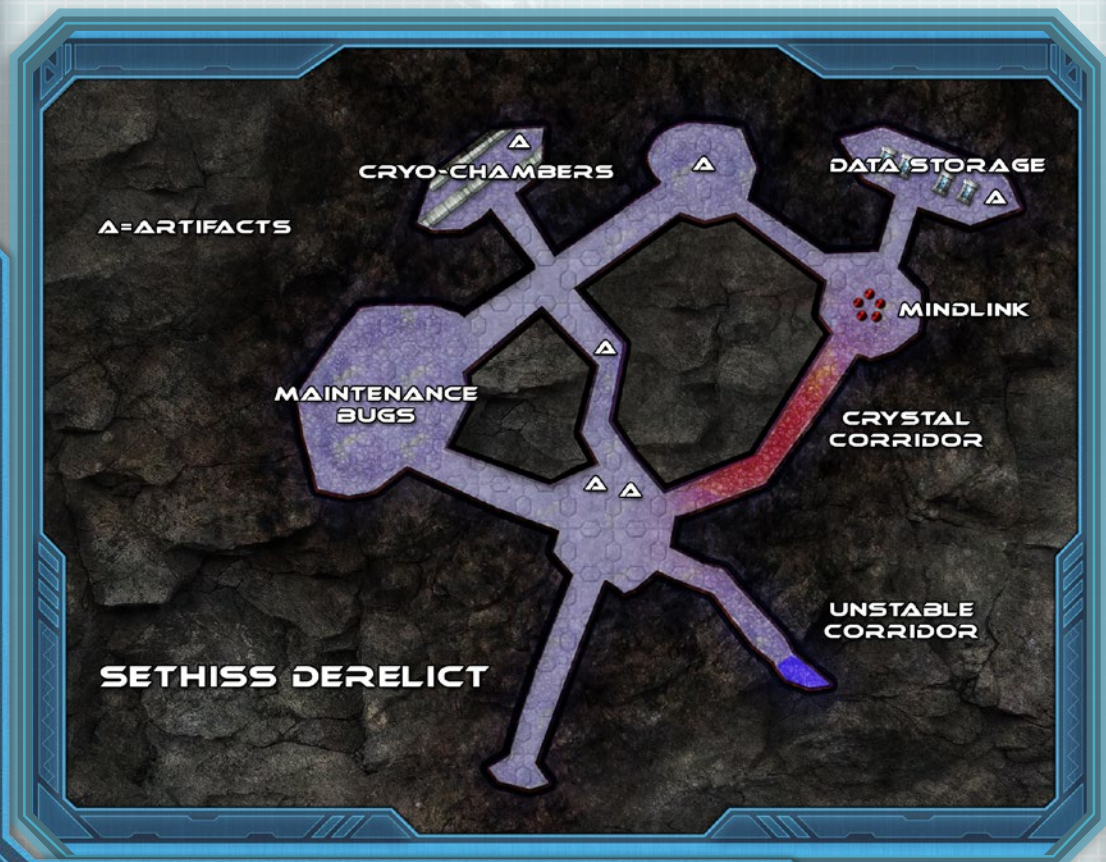
of roughly how long the group takes to explore the derelict; this information is important for the Plot Point's next installment.

The heroes also receive a strange device they're told is a "VCT—a Voidsman-compatible transmitter." It weighs 5 lb., and anyone who reads the brief instructions can connect and activate it with a simple Smarts check. In fact, it's exactly that: a data-collection and transmission device with a crystalline adapter that allows it to plug into sethiss data modules. With a successful Repair roll (–4), an enterprising spacer might use the device for some other ingenious task—at the GM's discretion.

EXPRESS ELEVATOR TO HELL

Gunners on the *Courageous* fire a harpoon into the derelict, with a high-strength tether attached. The heroes don spacesuits and one by one they clip onto the tether, then use their suit's thrusters to "zipline" to the derelict below. ("Below" is relative, of course—up and down don't mean much in zero-G conditions!)

Success on an Agility roll at –2 means a spacer shoots down the line safely. Failure means the slider gets hitched up on the line and cannot free



herself. On a critical failure the tether snaps and the poor devil starts drifting off into space!

DOORWAY TO MYSTERY

A yawning entrance, easily 40 feet tall, opens into the side of the rocky hulk. If not for the opening and alien symbols carved around it, the hulk would look like just another planetoid. Strange crystalline formations with cloudy purplish matter inside them grow from cracks in the rock. On the “doorstep” and inside the derelict, gravity is normal. Refer to the derelict map as the explorers advance into the unknown.

Artifacts: At each of the spots marked **A** on the map, choose a starfarer to make a Notice roll at -2. With success, the searcher picks out an alien device tucked into a small storage space on the wall; it has one fully charged power cell. Roll on the **Sethiss Artifacts** table on page 19 to see what the item does. Give each player a chance to make the Notice roll at some point during their search.

Crystal Corridor: This long hallway’s walls are lined with large, mirror-like planes of reddish-hued crystal. As explorers pass by, they see hazy scenes from their pasts replaying in the crystalline walls. If anyone thinks to watch one of the crystals and specifically concentrate on the future, have the player make a Smarts check (-2). On a success, the seer gains a brief vision of his or her possible future—perhaps a glimpse of Aite’s alien landscape, or of Algos’ desolate waste, or another scene of the GM’s choice. As an interesting side-effect, if the party is carrying any sethiss power cells that are less than fully charged, they are *all* fully charged after being carried through this corridor.

Cryo-Chamber: Much of this room seems to have been grown as cloudy white crystal with the now-familiar purplish matter coiled inside. The room is clearly dominated by alien machinery, but its function is unknown. At one end of the room sit three crystalline “pods” with irregular black framing: Two are open and empty, but the one in the middle is sealed, and almost completely filled with hazy purple crystals.

The middle pod is actually a hibernation device, with a still-living High Sethiss (see page 88) inside. If anyone fiddles with the machinery’s moving parts—which look vaguely like glass levers and switches—roll a d6. On a 1-2, the pod opens and the angry High Sethiss emerges to destroy all intruders; on a 3-5, the characters’ monkeying around has no effect; on a 6 the pod

malfunctions catastrophically, instantly killing the sethiss in a flash of dark energy and a splatter of purple tissue. This High Sethiss has gone insane during its long imprisonment; it cannot be reasoned with, nor can it supply any useful information.

✦ **High Sethiss:** See page 88.

Data Storage: This is where the data storage modules are stored. Any spacer qualified to operate the transmitter can recognize them with a simple Smarts check. Also, heroes see a device they aren’t familiar with: a 15-foot-tall, freestanding circle of some crystalline matter. When the explorers reach this area, go to **Defense Mechanisms**, below.

Maintenance Bugs: In this chamber, hairline cracks run all along the walls, ceiling, and floor. A swarm of tiny insects—the “maintenance bugs” that evolved into filament spiders on Aite—spins silicate-based filament strands by the billions to seal up cracks and render the chamber structurally sound. Use the profile for a Filament Spider (see page 86), with one crucial difference: These creatures do not attack unless they are threatened in some manner.

Mindlink: This circular room is dominated by a thick stone pedestal at its center, upon which stand five plinths of reddish crystal. The plinths are a scale model of the Quincunx (see page 24) in City Prime on Aite, and perform a similar function. Any spacefarers who enter this room can “hear” their companions’ thoughts in their minds, and can likewise communicate with them in this fashion, per the *mind reading* power (in *Savage Worlds*). When they leave the room, the effect ends.

Unstable Corridor: This corridor also has hairline cracks running along the walls, ceiling, and floor in the marked area, but only success on a Notice roll (at -2) reveals the fractures’ presence. If more than one person steps in the marked area, the entire corridor beyond the dotted line breaks off in a cloud of debris and spins away into the Kallisti Reach. Any spacers in the area can roll Agility to leap across open space to safety. Those who fail spin off into the ring, and may roll Agility at -2 to grab hold of another fragment nearby, or attempt to use their spacesuit thrusters to return.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Like most other things in the derelict, the data modules look like crystals, but these grow spherical. The character in charge of the VCT

must roll Smarts to plug it in and begin sending the crystals' contents to the *Courageous*. As soon as she does, the derelict's long-dormant defense systems detect the unapproved data access—as Tappelkhirre knew they would—forcing the JumpSec cruisers to fire on the derelict. The radio channel fills with chatter:

"Exploration team, do you read me? We're seeing something incredible out here. The whole derelict is lighting up—it's firing on us!" The radio bursts into static. Terrible shudders run through the star hulk. You hear loud explosions—and feel them in your bones.

Several things happen: First, the heroes' data transmitter beeps and the screen reads **TRANSMISSION COMPLETE**. Seconds later, the 15-foot-tall crystalline circle across the room flares into blue light. Through the center of the ring, the explorers see dim light and wet stone...somewhere *not* being rocked by impacts. Simultaneously—if the group hasn't yet dealt with it—the High Sethiss in the cryo-chamber is automatically freed, and it rushes to eliminate intruders.

✦ **High Sethiss:** See page 88.

THE END...?

Explosions send jolts through the chamber. The band needs to find a way off the star derelict, and quickly. They might try leaving through the unstable corridor, or the way they came in, but they'll need to be quick—they have only three rounds to escape. Or they could dive through the glowing circle, which is a malfunctioning sethiss "teleportal" connecting the room with Algos. The last words the adventurers hear over the radio should convince them of the situation's urgency:

"Exploration team, do you read? ...Forgive us. May your souls be at peace."

The derelict rumbles under heavy bombardment, and a keening crack tears through it as it begins to break apart in space. The heroes have mere seconds—a single round—to decide if they stay and almost certainly die (although survival is *possible*)...or step through the teleportal before it burns out forever. If they step through, go directly to part five.

Heroes who stay behind and aren't blown up spin off into the ring, and may roll Agility at -2 to grab hold of another fragment nearby—as above—or attempt to use their spacesuit thrusters to return, at the GM's discretion.

PART FIVE: ESCAPE FROM ALGOS

Run this episode just after the previous one.

It took a fair bit of manipulation by Horst Tappelkhirre to put the heroes in a spot where their deaths were all but certain. But for the spacers, much like the sethiss long ago, survival means something worse—exile on the moon Algos.

If any members of the group didn't traverse the teleportal, they remain offworld and in search of their lost companions. (See **Murder Charge** on page 66; the heroes need to use other contacts' information to continue to Algos.) This tale is shorter than most because it's open-ended. After exploring the ruined Ziggurat, a marooned group must devise a way offworld; the tale makes very few presumptions about how they achieve that goal. Read the description of Algos beginning on page 32 before starting this adventure.

CATACOMBS OF KNOWLEDGE

Read the following passage when Algos' new arrivals appear in the darkened Catacombs of Knowledge beneath the Ziggurat.

You step out of a 15-foot-tall, free-standing circle of crystalline matter nearly identical to the one you entered on the derelict. Looking back through the ring, you catch a split-second glimpse of the derelict's interior consumed by sudden light and flame—then the ring flickers and shuts off, the portal severed forever. You are in a dank, silent stone chamber—on your own.

See **The Ziggurat** (on page 32) for what explorers can learn in its catacombs. Most crucial, when they decode the hieroglyphs they should realize that Aite is actually a sethiss homeworld... and their destination once they've escaped Algos.

Scholars decoding the hieroglyphs need to be swift, because each explorer has one extra oxygen canister remaining. Depending how long it took to explore the derelict last episode, the group could be down to as little as eight to 12 hours remaining air. Remember to apply the effects of low gravity (see the *Science Fiction Companion*).

But before the group can begin analyzing hieroglyphics or plotting a way offworld, the spacefarers have to deal with the catacombs' guardian—a primordial alien beast with nothing on its mind save destruction.

SILICATE GUARDIAN

This ponderous, hostile being evolved from the silicate creatures that merged with the Dysnomian virus to create the sethiss race. It's a barely intelligent blob that throws out sticky pseudopods to pull itself in pursuit of intruders.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 14 (4)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** The guardian's hard outer shell provides protection.
- **Fearless:** The guardian is immune to *fear* and *Intimidation*.
- **Fists:** Str+d6. The guardian uses its massive, sledgehammer fists to pulp intruders.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result on the guardian does not result in a wound.
- **Immunity (Lasers):** The guardian suffers no damage from focused-light energy weapons.
- **Mindblast:** As an action, the creature may roll Spirit to unleash a stunning bolt of mental energy in a Cone Template. Any intelligent creature caught in the area must make an opposed Spirit roll versus the guardian's Spirit result or be Shaken.
- **Two-Fisted:** The creature may attack once with each fist per round, with no multi-action penalty.
- **Size +3:** The guardian is about the size of a bear.

SHIPWRECKS FOR SALVAGE

Besides studying ancient knowledge and destroying ancient guardians, the starfarers' goal is to find a way offworld before the oxygen runs out. The nearby wrecks of the Bezzenek-Havn'ul Expedition—visible to anyone who looks out from one of the Ziggurat's entrances—can be of use.

It takes a little under an hour to walk from the Ziggurat to the wrecked research vessels (see page 32 for a detailed description). For every hour the heroes spend outside in Algos' acidic rain, roll 2d6 to see if their spacesuits sustain damage. For this purpose, assume a spacesuit has Toughness 8; for every "wound" a suit takes, it requires an adhesive patch (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) to retain its integrity. Using an "umbrella" or shield of some kind to keep the rain off a spacesuit can mitigate the acid's damage. Roll 2d6 against the umbrella's Toughness instead; if it takes a wound, it is ruined and must be discarded.

Searchers can root through the debris for useful items, try to cobble together a radio to call for help, or even jury-rig an escape pod to lift them out of Algos' atmosphere (a task that's made easier by Algos' low gravity). Imagination is key. The McGyver Edge can be used to cobble something together; at the very least, an engineer needs to succeed on a Repair roll (-2) and spend 1d6 hours working, half that on a raise. If the GM deems the players' plan workable, they can continue; depending on the exact actions taken, the GM may call for more Trait rolls.

BACK IN THE GAME

After this episode, messages to Maruul Soteeg go unanswered. With a little legwork, or a quick viewing of the Intergalactic News Network, heroes discover she was murdered while they were busy exploring the derelict.

The false Horst Tappelkhirre isn't yet aware the group survived, but he's none too pleased when he finds out. Tappelkhirre files formal charges against the spacers for sabotaging a JumpCorp operation. His agents plant evidence implicating the heroes in Soteeg's murder, making them the primary suspects. As a result, until the characters foil the sethiss and clear their names they all have the Wanted (Major) Hindrance.



PART SIX: MISSION TO AITE

It's up to your group to decide when they undertake the crucial journey to Aite (see the description on page 20). At this point in the story, they should suspect Aite as the source of Eris'

A MESSAGE FROM SOTEEG

During their run from JumpSec lawbringers, the spacefarers may attempt to contact Maruul Soteeg. Traveling to Harmonia Station to physically track her down is futile; not only is this dangerous for reasons described nearby, but Soteeg's office and apartment have been completely cleaned out by JumpSec investigators—everything's gone.

At some point, one hero receives a notification of new vidmail...but a warning flashes on the screen that the message delivery has been delayed by several days. The false Horst's agents attempted to disable Soteeg's outgoing communications, but one encoded missive eventually made it through the security filters. The message is fuzzy and garbled with static, but there's no doubt it's Maruul Soteeg's face. She says,

"... trying to reach you ... they're jamming the signal ... have ... moments ... don't know if this will get to you in time, darlings, if at all. But if you're watching this, you're alive ... not ... how things work out? Listen—Horst has gotten to my people, they're all dead. But if you're watching this you survived the derelict somehow. You're going to need to find friends, do you understand? Aite. They're coming from Aite. My sources tell me the sethiss ... not all bad ... maybe even sympathetic ... Oh no."

Behind Soteeg, the compartment door bursts inward in a blast of flame and smoke. Men in black body armor swarm in, firing lasers, and an instant later the screen goes dark.

insurgency. (If the players fail to put it together, have an ally—such as Ban Veiale—suggest it, or provide evidence proving it.)

Refer to the **A Message From Soteeg** sidebar. With Horst Tappelkhirre setting JumpCorp at their throats, the heroes now have few to turn to for aid besides themselves.

THE STORY SO FAR

The false Horst Tappelkhirre has all but assured a sethiss victory in the Eris Beta-V subsector. He rejoined a welcoming JumpCorp, and swiftly regained his considerable influence. Through unwitting proxies, Tappelkhirre recovered the final living samples of the devolution virus that caused Dynomian culture to crumble into savagery. Then he secured the lost knowledge of how to build a sethiss homeworld, and in the process rid himself of all resistance within JumpCorp—or so he thought. The spy is poised to obliterate all the company's progress in the subsector, and return it to sethiss rule.

MURDER CHARGE

Life isn't easy when JumpSec seeks to prosecute you for murder. Traveling to Harmonia Station or Goldpoint is a dicey prospect: For every hour the starfarers spend on a station, draw a card from the Action Deck (in addition to cards drawn for encounters). On a 10 or higher, security vidcams identify the heroes; in 2d10 rounds, a brigade of JumpSec troopers arrives to arrest them. On a Joker, the heroes meet 2d6 JumpSec troopers who recognize them instantly and radio for assistance.

There is also the strong possibility that one or more JumpCorp-contracted bounty hunters pick up the fugitives' trail—details are up to the GM.

- **JumpSec Troopers (3 per hero, or 2d6):** See page 94. If the troopers number three per hero, they are accompanied by the station's Subsector Marshal.

LYING LOW

Luckily, the subsector's vast distances make for plenty of hideouts, especially if heroes have their own ship. They might locate an especially large planetoid in either of Eris' rings and attempt a landing on its surface, or even inside it. Eris' upper atmosphere is a swirling opaque ocean of hydrogen, perfect for hiding a spacecraft. A starship with Aquatic capabilities could rest easily at the bottom of a Dynomian ocean, or an Atmospheric craft could settle in Lethe's icy wastes.

DESTINATION: AITE

Vector Ultra's sensors automatically detect the adventurers' ship as it approaches Aite, unless the spacers use a cloaking device (see Stealth System modification in the *Science Fiction Companion*) or otherwise try to mask their approach. In that case, assume the sethiss at City Prime have Notice d10 for the purposes of detecting incoming ships. If the band tries to land their craft on Aite's outer surface, consult the **Shepherd Moons** sidebar (page 48).

Read the following as the moon comes into view:

The face of Aite—the shepherd moon responsible for tidying the inside edge of the Inner Ring—is meteor-scarred and vaguely demonic. Great blasts of dust and rock erupt constantly on its surface as swarms of debris are drawn in and strike it. Larger asteroids and boulders fly off in all directions: into the ring, toward Eris, off into the vastness of space. Aite is nothing less than destruction objectified...and you'll be there in about 10 minutes.

When sethiss detect the group's craft, they activate a navigation beam. This is a tractor beam insofar as it locks onto a craft and guides it safely through the storm of meteorites and debris surrounding Aite. But the pilot knows he can steer free of the beam at any time—it doesn't drag a craft like a fish on a line.

If he allows the navigation beam to do its work, the ship avoids all damage, and heads toward a blinding white light that blazes on Aite's surface—the atmosphere lock. As the ship passes through, the great gate irises shut behind them.

INSIDE THE HOLLOW WORLD

The heroes' first glimpse of Aite's interior is breathtaking. Show them the map of Aite (on page 22) for the time it takes you to read the following:

You look out the viewports at the inside of a totally alien world. In the center of its "sky" a blazing white sun hangs, and the horizons curve upward into a haze rather than falling from sight. You take in the enormity of vast deserts, hivelike red mountain ranges, and crystalline forests draped with some weird purple and gray foliage, all of them spread across the hollow sphere's inner surface. That's when the first laser blast sizzles past your craft. What do you do?

The sethiss at City Prime, warned by the false Tappelkhirre, knew the space jockeys

were coming. They fire eight Heavy Lasers (see Vehicular Lasers in the *Science Fiction Companion*) each round with Shooting d8, as long as the heroes' craft remains within range. If the group's ship is wrecked, either the pilot crash-lands or the castaways must run for the escape pods (but the craft doesn't explode). Either way, they end up marooned in Aite's vast silicate desert.

Remember, the idea isn't to destroy the travelers' multi-million dollar ship...not permanently, anyway. If the ship crash-lands, assume it can't be repaired until the explorers salvage enough replacement parts and materials to do the work. This gives hesitant groups a good reason to go exploring!

VARIED PATHS

Not every group is so easily shot down, though! A wily pilot might succeed in avoiding the laser barrage and fly directly toward City Prime, or if disabled might opt to crash-land at the edge of the ruined metropolis. In this case, you can proceed to Part Eight, **Face-Off at City Prime**, as the party heads to the source of all their woes.

For their part, the sethiss at City Prime immediately send out a search party, intent on capturing them, returning them to City Prime, and implanting sethiss spies in their brains—although it could be weeks before they track down the group. The searchers travel first to the ship's landing site, then attempt to track the castaways.

• Vector Ultra Search Party (1, plus 1 per hero):

The leader is a Wild Card. See page 90.

Alternately, you could have the starfarers' ship crash-land near the hidden town of Underbelly, or they might choose to land in the hive mountains or crystalline forests. The encounter tables for each of these areas provide you with plenty of events should the players go these routes. When the explorers enter a desert region, move on to the next episode.

PART SEVEN: TRIALS OF THE HIVE GODS

Run this episode when the heroes' ship crash-lands in the Aitean desert, or when a wandering group embarks on a journey across the silicate wastelands. Use the **Silicate Desert Encounters** table (on page 29), highlighting the wastes' vast emptiness and danger. Wait for an encounter with desert sethiss to occur randomly, or decide an

appropriate time for the travelers to meet them; either way, move to the following encounter when that meeting takes place.

THE VOIDSMEN REVEALED!

While the group struggles across shifting dunes, read the following:

Over the rushing wind and sand blasting your helmets, you hear a steady crackling. A tingle rises into your boots, your hair stands on end. The sizzles and pops grow louder. Abruptly, a pack of what look like flying manta rays swoops over the next dune, each held aloft by a crackling “cushion” of static electricity.

The creatures veer into a steady circle soaring around you. Each of the rays has a rider, a crystalline being whose faceted body seems filled with cloudy, brownish-purple matter—the sethiss! They’re armed with glassy javelins, and seem burnished smooth by the constant abrasion of wind and sand, rendering them almost gemlike. They have three legs and two arms each.

One of the creatures breaks from the circle and hovers in front of you on a manta ray’s back. The rider emits a series of hissing tones and clicks.

As long as none of the heroes attack, the desert sethiss do not harm them. It’s time for linguists and scholars to shine, especially if this represents “first contact” between starfarers and indigenous sethiss. Until a language translator device can “learn” the sethiss language (see the

Science Fiction Companion for how that works), a successful Knowledge (Linguistics) roll at –2 allows an outsider to achieve rudimentary understanding between herself and the sethiss’ leader, K’kxx. In a pinch, a hero can roll Smarts (–4) to communicate by drawing in the sand.

If a character succeeds on a Knowledge (Linguistics) roll—or another related Knowledge with the GM’s approval—it’s clear the sethiss are inviting them back to their village as guests, and are curious about who and what they are. If the party has to rely on raw Smarts to communicate, success reveals only that the sethiss want the heroes to come with them. Failures on these rolls result in humorous misunderstandings, but a critical failure represents a grievous insult.

✦ **K’kxx:** Use the Desert Sethiss profile (page 88), but add a sethiss artifact: a type 3 quantum shifter. It provides the *quickness* power, and the power cell is fully charged (12 Power Points). K’kxx rides a shock manta.

- **Desert Sethiss (4 per hero):** See page 88. Each sethiss rides a shock manta.
- **Shock Mantas (1, plus 4 per hero):** See page 90.

JOURNEY TO THE VILLAGE

The trip to the desert sethiss’ village takes 10 days; use the **Silicate Desert Encounters** table on page 29. The group needs to worry about its own food, but the sethiss provide bitter-tasting yet potable water. Unless they use a water purifier, though, anyone who drinks the water must succeed on a simple Vigor check or contract a long-term chronic, minor debilitating illness (see **Disease** in *Savage Worlds*). Characters with the Void Sickness Hindrance suffer a –2 penalty on the roll. The symptoms include low-grade fever, gastrointestinal issues, and listlessness. This disease can be cured by an application of the Dysnomian flu vaccine (see page 37).

AMONG THE TRIBE

Upon arrival at the sethiss village, the spacers find themselves surrounded by sethiss. The entire tribe comes out to gawk at the new arrivals, the likes of which they’ve never seen. Assuming the heroes’ language translator has succeeded in “learning” the sethiss language, read the following as K’kxx—who turns out to be the tribe’s chief—addresses the group. (If the explorers don’t have a language translator, or it was unable to learn the dialect, you may have

THE SEEDY UNDERBELLY

If the party encounters Underbelly’s inhabitants (see page 30) during their stay on Aite, or if the GM wants to send intrepid heroes there, a side-trek there may occur in the midst of this tale. This can provide an opportunity for the GM to run a *Savage Tale* of her own design, or simply use the **Underbelly Encounters** table (page 31) and let the players explore. When the time comes to storm City Prime and defeat Vector Ultra, Underbelly’s inhabitants join up in droves if they’re asked; a successful Persuasion roll to recruit fighters can gain the players as many as 12 allied Extras, their types and exact capabilities determined by the GM.

to improvise a bit.) K'kxx speaks in a rapid-fire series of hissing syllables and clicks:

"We discovered the Strangers Who Are Not Strangers walking the wastes. We celebrate the star-travelers' arrival, just as we were told it would occur, in stories passed down through generations from the Hive Gods of long ago. Before the great rupturing and the killing flood, our forefathers knew them. We will follow them to the First City...but first, they must undergo the Hive Gods' trials."

THE THREE TRIALS

The adventurers must complete three tasks successfully before they're accepted as members of K'kxx's tribe. Until that happens, they're welcome to stay at the village but no sethiss other than K'kxx can speak with them—though there's never any shortage of sethiss gawkers.

K'kxx explains that the tribe has always known about the heroes, through stories passed down from their ancestors. Long ago, K'kxx says, the Hive Gods foresaw the group's arrival and noted the event's importance. It is said that when the Strangers Who Are Not Strangers arrive, a new era of peace and knowledge will follow. Now the space jockeys must prove their worth to the tribe, and that they're not impostors.

K'kxx tells them of the Hive Gods' three trials. It's not necessary for everyone in the group to complete all the tests. The sethiss don't comprehend the concept of the individual, only groups; if one spacefarer achieves a goal, they're all considered to have done it. K'kxx and six warriors accompany the group on each trial, but don't aid or hinder their efforts.

Manta Wranglers: When they come of age, the tribe's hunters are expected to catch and break their own shock manta mounts. The party must do this too, if they wish to be recognized. Consult the shock manta profile on page 90. First the wranglers must track down a herd, which takes 1d6 days and a successful Tracking roll at -2, or a Survival roll at -4. Use the **Silicate Desert Encounters** table (on page 29) during the hunt.

After they find a herd of mantas, the spacers have to break one and ride it. This is a standard **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*). During each of the five rounds, the primary wrangler rolls Riding at -2, or Agility at -4. If the manta is first lassoeed with a rope or similar item (an Agility roll at -4), other heroes can make Cooperative Strength rolls (-2) to aid the rider each round.

Complications include the manta flying loop-de-loops, electrical shock, or the other wranglers momentarily losing their grip on the rope—these incur an additional -2 penalty on rolls that round.

If the rider collects five successes, the shock manta becomes a loyal mount—and an allied Extra! If she fails, the rider is thrown and must succeed on a Vigor check or suffer a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises. Plus, the herd stampedes away and the group has to start over. The party can keep trying until everyone has a mount; the sethiss don't mind.

Mountain Men: Next, the group must travel to the hive mountain range to seek a vision. Determine how long the journey takes using the Aite map on page 22, and use the encounter table for each region travelers pass through.

For each day the party spends in hive mountains, draw a card from the Action Deck (in addition to cards drawn for random encounters). On a result of 10 or higher, the seekers find a crevice where temporal energies have collected and "pooled" for thousands of years. Read the following passage:

Through a flickering rift in midair, you see a room filled with incredibly complex crystalline devices—it could only have been created by the sethiss. On flat glass slabs at the room's center lie two gray-skinned humanoid bodies, either unconscious or dead. One is Horst Tappelkhirre.

Sethiss emerge from the shadows and activate gleaming probes and blades. They draw a black, sluglike creature from Horst's skull, and place it in the other person's head. Then a sethiss places an amoeba-like creature, purple and oozing strange fluids, into Tappelkhirre's brainpan.

Brilliant light courses through the machinery as the sethiss surgeons seal the subjects' wounds. At the operation's end, the person you do not recognize sits up with a confused, then terrified, expression on his face. The one who only looks like Horst sits up slowly, and smiles.

Clever players surmise that they've witnessed how the sethiss turned Tappelkhirre into their willing agent. They might even suspect the real Horst is still alive...

Ruin Scavengers: The final test involves a journey to the nearest ruined city of the ancients. There the explorers have to seek out some artifact of the forefathers and return to K'kxx with it. (Items the spacers arrived with don't count!)

Use the appropriate encounter tables for regions the heroes travel through to reach the ruins, and the **City Prime Encounters** table (page 24) as they're exploring the former metropolis. The goal is to survive long enough to find a sethiss artifact, be it a device or simply some object with artistic or practical worth. It need not be functional.

JOINING THE FAMILY

When the three tests are complete, the sethiss initiate the band into their tribe in a complex ritual that lasts several hours. The sethiss dance and recite their long history, beginning with mythological early travels from world to world, until finally the Builders created the sphere in which they live. When the rite ends, the heroes are considered "we" by K'kxx and the desert sethiss—part of the family and the tribe.

COMPARING NOTES

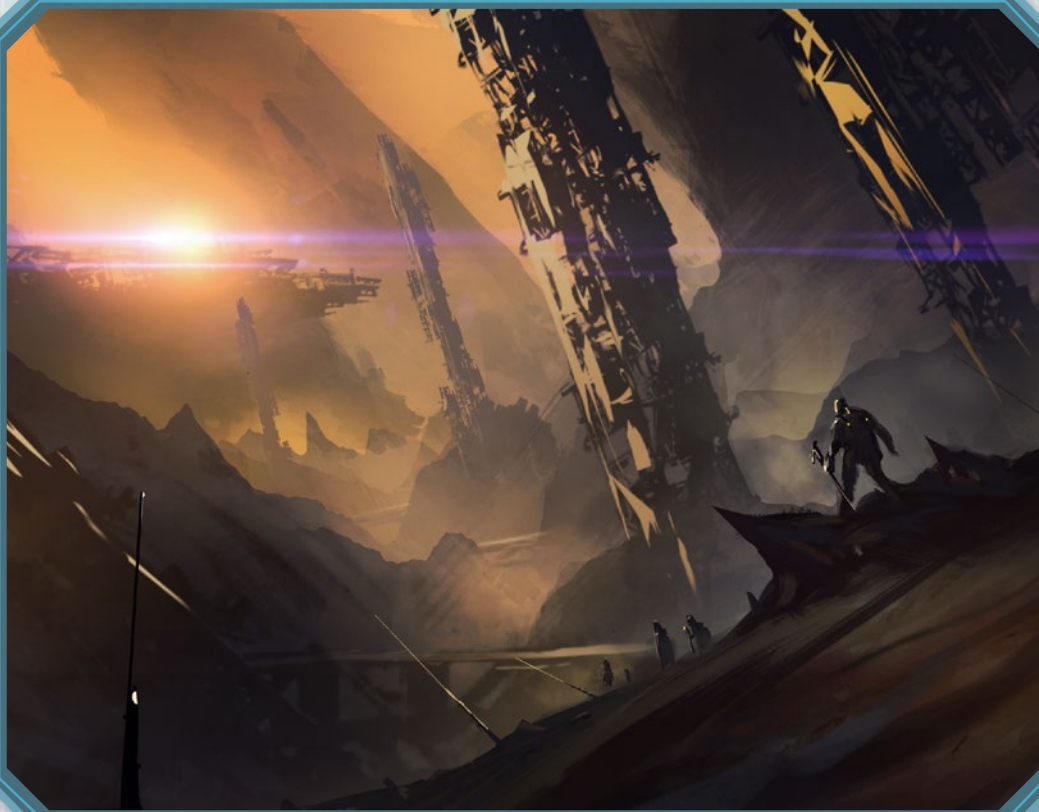
After the trials are complete, the chief summons the spacers. K'kxx knows about Vector Ultra and the High Sethiss at City Prime, because the tribe met them several months ago. Vector Ultra was especially cruel, and used strange devices to attack them. K'kxx says,

"We defeated them and our warriors followed the fleeing sethiss to the edge of the ruins, but went no further for fear of angering the Builders."

If the spacers are Hell-bent on hunting down and defeating Vector Ultra, K'kxx pledges to send six of his most skilled warriors to fight at their sides.

The explorers might also want to visit other sethiss tribes, to secure their help in fighting Vector Ultra. If this is the case, K'kxx warns them against visiting the savage canyon sethiss, but recommends the forest and mountain dwellers of his species as good candidates for allies. It's up to the GM to determine the results of such encounters.

- **Sethiss Warriors (6):** Use the Desert Sethiss profile on page 88. Divide these Extras among the players, to be controlled as **Allies** (see *Savage Worlds*).



PART EIGHT: FACE-OFF AT CITY PRIME

Run this adventure when the marooned starfarers march on City Prime with their small army of allies—or charge in alone. If the characters demur, the Vector Ultra search party that's been hunting them from the time they crash-landed catches up. However they arrive there, use the **City Prime Encounters** table (page 24) as the heroes travel through the debris-clogged avenues of the sethiss' devastated metropolis.

THE STORY SO FAR

Vector Ultra consists of only about 30–40 sethiss from various tribes, united in their desire to drive out JumpCorp—20 of them dwell in the the city's central tower. After they took over the tower, they awakened three Builders (i.e., High Sethiss) from cryo-sleep to aid them. Soon they were in command of a small fleet of repaired starships, and knew the secrets of the atmosphere lock.

DESTINATION: QUINCUNX

Upon arrival at City Prime, no one's quite sure where Vector Ultra hides out. But when night falls, a Notice check allows a lookout to catch sight of white and purple lights blinking steadily at the top of the central tower. It takes about four hours to walk there—draw for an encounter.

The travelers emerge into the wide plaza that holds the Quincunx and the central tower, which stands nearly 1,200 feet tall. The wind howls steadily down canyon-like streets. The tower doors are open, only darkness visible within.

ENTRY HALL

This chamber's ceiling is at least 80 feet above the floor, and shrouded in darkness. Success on a Notice roll means a listener detects the soft fluttering of wings—*many* wings—in the gloom above. If anyone makes a loud noise or shines a light aloft, the roosting blackshrikes swoop down to attack intruders. If loud noises—like gunshots—result, make a Notice roll for the sethiss on the observation deck to hear them.

- **Blackshrike Swarms (3):** See page 86.

ELEVATOR PLATFORM

This 40-foot-square platform was used to raise and lower sethiss and their machines to and from the tower's highest levels. A complex control panel stands to one side, but the elevator no longer functions and cannot be repaired.

CRYSTAL STAIRCASE

A ragged crystalline staircase winds around the tower's outer wall, rising all the way to the cryo-storage level. If the group lacks climbing gear or a means of flying to the top, they must take the stairs. Note that loud noises on the staircase allow the sethiss guards on the observation deck two flights up to make a Notice check to hear them.

Climbing the perilous staircase is a standard **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*). One climber leads the group, and the rest may assist with Cooperative rolls, as usual. Each round, the leader rolls Climbing at –2 to ascend the narrow steps and direct other climbers. Complications include a trapped climber, a single step that breaks loose and plunges into the dark, or a sudden howling updraft that threatens to tear climbers loose. If the group amasses five successes, they ascend safely to the cryo-storage level. If they collect less than five successes, a random climber plunges from nearly 800 feet (see **Falling** in *Savage Worlds*). If the climbers collect *no* successes, a large section of wall and stairs shears loose, causing 1d6 random climbers to fall.

CRYO-STORAGE CHAMBER

This room holds banks of crystalline cryopods—20 in all—most with Builders sleeping inside. Three pods are open and empty, but the rest appear much like the pods the adventurers encountered in the derelict, sealed and almost full of purple-tinted crystals. If things go badly for Vector Ultra, they flee to this room to wake up their ancestors, a process that takes 10 rounds.

- ★ **High Sethiss (17):** See page 88. They remain in cryo-sleep unless someone opens their pods.

HOLDING CELLS

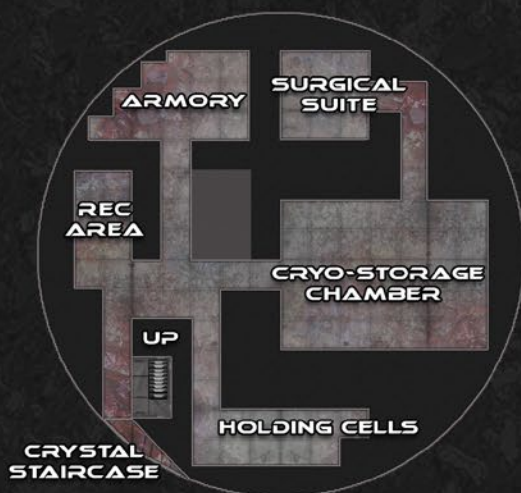
This stark hallway has a number of clear viewports set into the walls, each of which corresponds to a cell door. Only two of these chambers are inhabited. In one sits Irrorc Dyer, a grimy human female from Underbelly the sethiss captured near the city's edge. She happily joins the group as an ally if she's freed, and begs the spacers to rescue Underbelly's inhabitants before they leave Aite (or to return for them later).

In another cell, the spacers find a familiar face. He's the gray-skinned man they beheld in their vision, the anonymous host who received a parasteen brainslug in the surgical suite—Horst Tappelkhirre in a new body.

TOP LEVEL
CONTROL ROOM

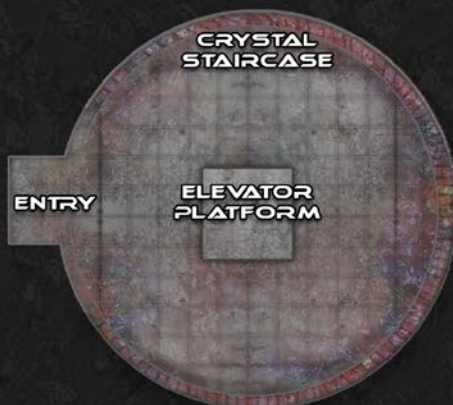


OBSERVATION DECK



CRYO-STORAGE

CENTRAL TOWER



ENTRY HALL

BOTTOM LEVEL

✦ **Horst Tappelkhirre:** See page 93.

- **Irrorc Dyer:** Use the Grunt profile, under Soldier/Marine in the *Science Fiction Companion*. She has no gear.

ARMORY

If an alarm is raised and the sethiss have the opportunity, they speed to the armory to seize weapons and devices. The armor and hand-to-hand weapons are designed for sethiss, and thus useless to space jockeys. But any searcher who succeeds on a Notice roll discovers a working artifact (roll on the **Sethiss Artifacts** table on page 19). If anyone scores a raise, they also discover a crystal box filled with fully charged power cells—20 total. There are only three artifacts and one case of power cells total; once they're found, they're found.

RECREATION AREA

The sethiss spend their off-hours here, perusing the ephemera of the Builders' culture. If no alarm is raised, the group finds several sethiss lounging about, clicking and hissing softly at each other. If the alarm is raised, these sethiss join the fighting in three rounds.

- **Vector Ultra (2 per hero):** See page 90.

SURGICAL SUITE

This is the chamber the seers saw in their vision of Horst Tappelkhirre's unwilling surgery. The High Sethiss use it to surgically and genetically modify all sorts of creatures, insensate to the pain and suffering they cause. One sethiss putters among the glassy, complex machinery.

- ✦ **High Sethiss (1):** See page 88.

OBSERVATION DECK

All of City Prime is visible from the observation deck's 360-degree windows, not to mention the old spaceport, the atmosphere lock, and a stunning view of the surrounding landscape. Four sethiss are stationed here at all times; three of them attack intruders while the fourth flees upstairs to warn the others.

- **Vector Ultra (4):** See page 90.

CONTROL ROOM

This is Vector Ultra's nerve center, containing all communications equipment and the atmosphere lock controls. Most of the sethiss here don't know how to work the lock; only the High Sethiss and a few others have that knowledge. All the sethiss are trained on the communications consoles, though, which they use to contact privateers in the rings, and their spies elsewhere in the subsector. If no alarm has been raised, the heroes' intrusion causes chaos as the sethiss rush to attack.

One sethiss moves to the communications node to send an emergency message offworld to their primary spy, the false Horst Tappelkhirre. If no one stops the alien, it completes the message in three rounds. If anyone translates it after the fact, the communication reads, "CITY PRIME UNDER ATTACK. EXECUTE PLANS."

- ✦ **High Sethiss (2):** See page 88.

- **Vector Ultra (2 per hero):** See page 90.

DR. TAPPELKHIRRE, I PRESUME?

When the group kills or drives off the sethiss and secures the tower, they can speak with Horst Tappelkhirre. But Tappelkhirre is single-minded at the moment. He intones very seriously,

"My compliments on your victory against these sethiss. Vile specimens of a largely honorable species, to be sure. But that is quite beside the point. Even now, my doppelganger is poised to destroy all JumpCorp's achievements in the Eris subsector.

"Recently, a sethiss spy recovered the last living sample of an ancient Dynsomial plague. That lethal disease caused the downfall of Dynsomnia's indigenous culture. Elsewhere, it evolved into the sethiss. Now Vector Ultra plans to use it against JumpCorp—by releasing it on Goldpoint and Harmonia Stations. This would have catastrophic consequences. And should the pathogen spread beyond this sector, the results could be nigh-apocalyptic.

"Please excuse my lack of decorum, but we need to get the Hell out of here, and fast."

FLIGHT FROM AITE

It's up to the heroes to find a way off-world—salvaging parts from the sethiss spaceport and Underbelly to complete repairs on their ship, if they brought one—but with Tappelkhirre's help it shouldn't prove too difficult if they don't have a vessel.



Horst was studying the sethiss' technology for years before he disappeared, and he's used his time in captivity to learn more—it's child's play for him to deduce how to pilot a sethiss fighter. Lacking his aid, a pilot can use the same process as in figuring out sethiss artifacts (see page 18) to puzzle out the vessel's controls.

SETHISS FIGHTER

This small, lozenge-shaped vessel appears made of gleaming crystalline fibers. It merges the functions of a small fighter with a troop transport. Although doing so isn't comfortable by any means, other species may pilot these ships. Sethiss fighters have remote atmosphere lock controls, so they can come and go from Aite without the central tower's participation.

- **Small Starship:** Size 6, Acc/TS 55/750, Climb 3, Toughness 26 (11), Crew 1+10, Cost C\$3.89M, Remaining Mods 0
Notes: AMCM, 3× Armor, Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, Electromagnetic Shielding, Missile Launcher, Passenger Pod, Sensor Suite (Planetary), Speed, Targeting System
Weapons: Light Auto-Cannon, 4× Light Missiles, Medium Laser

WHITHER AITE?

After K'kxx and the tribe aid the party in an assault on the central tower, the heroes remain fellow tribesmen as far as the sethiss are concerned. And now that Vector Ultra is defeated—if not eliminated entirely—the desert sethiss take over the tower. Armed with their newfound knowledge, they work to unite Aite's scattered hives, recover their species' lost technology, and establish peaceful contact with the subsector's newcomers—JumpCorp and its allies. The heroes find themselves in a prime spot to nurture that diplomacy, and scores of adventures can arise from the sethiss' attempts to fit in...while rogue Vector Ultra agents still lurk in the shadows!

PART NINE: THE TAPPELKHIRRE METHOD

Run this episode when the travelers go after the false Horst Tappelkhirre. If the sethiss sent an emergency communique in the last episode, time is short. If the characters prevented the message from being sent, they have a little more time—but not much. After a week, the spy realizes something happened to his masters on Aite.

THE STORY SO FAR

From his command center aboard the JumpSec cruiser *Pulsar*, the sethiss spy posing as Tappelkhirre works to engineer the subsector's downfall. The false Horst has assembled two insurgent teams, each equipped with weaponized Dysnomian plague. He dispatched one team to Harmonia and the other to Goldpoint. They await his order to release the disease and cripple JumpCorp's local operations, once and for all.

VITAL INFORMATION

The real Horst's first request is access to a JumpCorp data console. These are available all over Goldpoint and Harmonia Station, but also in JumpCorp's various moon settlements, on certain signal relay buoys adrift in Eris' rings, and elsewhere at the GM's discretion.

Horst needs three uninterrupted rounds at the terminal. Since his mind is still Horst Tappelkhirre's—though in another body—he enters a “backdoor key” known only to him, then accesses his data and communications logs from the last few weeks to find out what the spy's been up to. He discovers three vital facts: The false Horst is aboard his warship, the *Pulsar*, in orbit around Algos; the spy sent a team to Harmonia and another to Goldpoint; and both teams await the spy's signal to release the pathogen. Moreover, Horst knows where the teams are hiding.

SWORDS OF DAMOCLES

The heroes are in a delicate predicament, with a pair of swords poised to fall on their targets. They cannot go after the insurgent teams individually, Horst warns the space jockeys, because if one team transmits a warning the second will release the virus. The operations must take place simultaneously, but how that's done is the players' purview. Only after the teams are captured or killed can the group pursue the false Horst, lest he release the order to infect.

Options include splitting the group, and having players whose Wild Cards aren't present play the roles of allied Extras. Or the characters might transmit a warning to JumpSec forces letting them know exactly where one insurgent team is hiding, and take out the other one themselves. Alternately, a clever group might devise some way to block or hijack the spy's transmissions to his teams—so they can be dealt with one by one.

DYSNOMIAN PLAGUE

The Dysnomian plague is more or less the same pathogen that causes Dysnomian flu (see page 37), but an ancient and far more virulent and lethal strain. There's little point in describing the effects, because if it's released it means the end of most life forms coming in contact with it. But if the heroes do somehow fail to prevent its release, the specific symptoms become germane very quickly.

The plague is a short-term, lethal disease (see **Disease** in *Savage Worlds*). Characters exposed to the vapors, or the bodily fluids of an infected victim, must roll Vigor at -4 (or at -6 for characters with the Void Sickness Hindrance). Failure on the roll means the poor devil chokes up blood until he dies in 2d6 rounds. Success on the roll means the character doesn't die, but instead has one wound, is Exhausted for 2d6 hours, and permanently gains the Berserk and Delusional (Major) Hindrances. With a raise, the hardy patient is merely Exhausted for 2d6 hours, then recovers normally.

Characters killed by the plague rise as horrornauts (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) in 2d6 hours, their bodies reanimated by the virus, and retain their Wild Card or Extra status.

If things go *horribly* wrong and the party fails to stop the Dysnomian plague's release in one or both stations...the adventure needn't end there. An entire follow-up campaign could be built around the attempt to retake an orbital station from the warring berserker gangs and horrornauts, and rescue any survivors who dwell there. The travelers might even mount a return trip to Aite in search of a cure for the disease!

TEAM GOLDPOINT

On Goldpoint, the insurgent team hides in the stockroom of Gborb's Mining Supply, compartment 134-G on the Habitation Loop (see page 39). The insurgents are former JumpSec personnel whose brains have been implanted with sethiss genetic material, turning them into fanatical soldiers. If they're attacked, one moves to activate the pathogen, which is simultaneously released from cannisters located around the station. Several cannisters go off in the habitation and docking loops, and in the ventilation system, guaranteeing widespread infection.

- ◆ **Qel S'lar, Team Leader:** Use the Bounty Hunter profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Add the Insectoid Racial Abilities.
- **Sethiss Loyalists (1 per hero):** Use the JumpSec marine profile on page 93.

TEAM HARMONIA

On Harmonia Station, the saboteurs hide in Horst Tappelkhirre's office suite in Executive Spire-5. Like the Goldpoint team, these JumpSec agents have become willing servants due to the sethiss tissue that "infects" their brains. Their leader activates the pathogen in case of attack. They've secreted canisters around Harmonia Station, in the JumpCorp naval base, spaceport, Public Walk, and ventilation system.

- ◆ **Austeol Rath, Team Leader:** Use the Master Assassin profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Add the Saurian Racial Abilities.

- **Sethiss Loyalists (1 per hero):** Use the JumpSec marine profile on page 93.

AGAINST THE PULSAR

After the insurgent teams are arrested or killed, one threat remains: the false Horst Tappelkhirre. He is aboard his cruiser orbiting Algos, but flees elsewhere if he learns of his teams' defeat. It's up to the spacers whether they attack the *Pulsar* or attempt a boarding action.

In the event they board the *Pulsar*, the false Horst is on the bridge with his personal bodyguards and crew. The marines and command crew are sethiss spies with implanted tissue, and cannot be convinced to betray the false Horst. But the crew are unwitting dupes and might turn against Horst if presented with a convincing argument, and success on a Persuasion roll at -2.

- ◆ **Horst Tappelkhirre (False):** See page 93.
- **JumpSec Marines (2 per hero):** See page 93.
- **Command Crew (3):** Use the Engineer, Gunner, and Pilot profiles, under Starship Crew in the *Science Fiction Companion*, respectively.
- **Crewmen (2 per hero):** Use the Crew Member profile, under Starship Crew in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

PULSAR (LIGHT CRUISER)

This cruiser is Tappelkhirre's personal warship. Use the Light Cruiser profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

AFTERMATHS

When the Sethiss Incursion is halted, the future is once again bright for JumpCorp's local efforts. The *genuine* Horst Tappelkhirre retakes his JumpCorp post and testifies on the adventurers' behalf, clearing their names and elevating them to the status of local celebrities on the Intergalactic News Network. The starfarers are the beneficiaries of a valuable JumpCorp contract that allows them to undertake any sort of productive pursuit they choose...and grants each character the Rich Edge, or Filthy Rich if already Rich (if a character has both, the GM chooses a substitute). Other adventures await, but for now the subsector is safe from Vector Ultra's threat.



CHAPTER SEVEN: SAVAGE TALES

This chapter contains a number of short adventures in locations throughout the Eris subsector. These tales are keyed from their setting descriptions, so the GM can insert them here and there between Plot Points.

ABSOLUTE ZERO

Hook: Goldpoint (page 39)

Yesterday, the research vessel *Pioneer*, fresh from an expedition to the swamps of Dysnomia, arrived at Goldpoint. The ship docked at the spaceport ring on autopilot. Since then, no one has debarked and no one answers the comm. The party is either tasked with collecting the researchers' cargo and conveying it elsewhere, or a JumpCorp executive—Maruul Soteeg, if you're using the Plot Point—contracts them to explore the newly arrived "ghost ship."

THE STORY SO FAR

In the steamy Dysnomian swamplands, one of the *Pioneer's* scientists discovered luminescent slime pools. Quickly discerning the pools were comprised of novel organic molds, the biologist collected a sample and returned it to the *Pioneer*. There he placed it in cold storage in the laboratory. The captain made for Goldpoint rather than risk Harmonia's stricter customs agents.

Unfortunately, as its temperature lowered the slime displayed qualities the scientists couldn't have predicted. The creature burst out of cold storage and damaged the ship's environmental controls. It murdered most of the crew and researchers, and cold killed the rest.

THE COOLER

This tale is simple: The spacers enter the research ship, discover the scientists' frozen corpses, and play a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with a dangerous organism. The ship's interior hovers around -40 degrees Fahrenheit, unless an engineer spends 2d6 hours working on the environmental system and succeeds on a Repair roll (-2). Warming up the ship's interior

disables the creature. It tries to prevent such repairs any way it can. If possible, the slime tries to escape the *Pioneer* and find a cold spot to hide in Goldpoint.

DYSNOMIAN SLIME MOLD

The slime mold is harmless in its natural habitat. But exposed to cold temperatures it exhibits a novel defense mechanism: It grows exponentially more intelligent and hostile.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d12, Stealth d12

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities:

- **Immunity (Physical Attacks):** The slime suffers no damage from physical attacks. Energy weapons affect it normally. Weapons used to strike the slime take 2d6 acid damage per successful hit.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to hit the slime.
- **Pseudopods (4):** Str+2d6 acid damage. The slime may attack with up to four pseudopods per round without suffering a multi-action penalty. Over time, the slime can use its acidic secretions to melt through bulkheads.
- **Size +4:** The guardian is about the size of an aircar when piled in one place.
- **Weakness (Warmth):** In temperatures above freezing, the organism reverts to a runny, luminescent, non-intelligent slime mold.

BACK-ALLEY MERCANTILISM

Hook: Smugglers' Row, Harmonia Station (page 44)

On Smugglers' Row long after the daycycle's end, the heroes hear voices as they pass an alley. One speaker is *displeased*. If passers-by get involved, run the following encounter.

THE SETUP

The victim in the alley is Thomas Gizhinn Orley, a freighter captain of less-than-sterling business

ethics. He was headed to his hotel in anticipation of an early departure the following day. Unlike most of Orley's deals, this one is entirely legal—he's transporting parts to a JumpCorp mining contractor working the Kallisti Reach. Before Orley could get his much-needed beauty rest, a gang of enterprising criminals dragged him into an alley and demanded access to his cargo hold. All they want is to steal and fence Orley's goods.

SHAKEDOWN

The alley is dark (–2 to attacks, and targets cannot be seen beyond 10") and choked with garbage, discarded cargo canisters, and assorted debris, much of it big enough to provide ample Cover. Approaching heroes make Stealth rolls at –2 due to random objects underfoot. The criminals are inactive sentries (see **Stealth** in *Savage Worlds*). When the heroes advance about halfway down the alley, read the following:

A gruff female voice says, "We know you're a broker, you slug. We want your cargo."

A frightened voice says, "I've got credits enough to make you rich! Comfortable, at least. For a few months!"

"We want the antimatter drill parts. For the last time—give us the passcode."

You hear a thud and a groan. What do you do?



INTERVENTION

These thugs aren't tactical geniuses, and posted no lookout on the alley. With success on another Stealth roll (–2), spacers get close enough to see what they're up against: a decidedly seedy-looking group of varied species, menacing a balding and milquetoast human male. The bad guys are unaware they're being watched if Stealth rolls were successful.

✦ **Thelia:** Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

✦ **Thomas Gizhinn Orley:** See page 95.

• **Gang Members (1 per hero):** Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, adding Racial Abilities to each gang member as desired.

OUTCOMES

Driving off the gang members, rather than capturing them and turning them over to JumpCorp, creates new adversaries. Orley is grateful for any help he receives. Even though he isn't particularly well-liked in the subsector, it never hurts to have a friend in one's corner. Especially one who commands a light freighter!

(DEATH) WISH UPON A STAR

Hook: Holo Playhouse, Harmonia Station (page 43)

From up ahead on Harmonia Station's Public Walk, the heroes hear mingled shouts from many people—some joyous, others jeering, some full of malice. Rounding a corner, the party sees a mob surging around an expensive, fully enclosed hovercar in front of the Holo Playhouse, where Fayt Laanar's newest holoplay—*The Lord of All Space*—premieres tonight.

THE STORY SO FAR

In his newest holoplay, actor Fayt Laanar portrays Emperor Decaton. The emperor is a tragic figure who attempts to unite several galactic sectors, but suffers a humiliating fall from grace and dies in impoverished solitude. The film's detractors cite a laundry list of similarities between "Emperor Decaton" and "Lord Betagron," a yeti warlord whose bloody conquests killed millions before his defeat. Put simply, they don't take kindly to a sympathetic depiction of Lord Betagron's deeds. One lone, manic onlooker resolves to assassinate Fayt Laanar at the premiere.

ENTER THE HEROES

The cheering half of the crowd holds signs and placards proclaiming **WE LOVE YOU, FAYT** and **FAYT IS GREAT**. Opposing them are a large group of naysayers, with signs warning **DON'T ACCEPT FAYT** and **LAANAR—GET OUT NOW**. A third, smaller portion of the crowd seems to have queued up just to watch the commotion and marvel at both sides' ferocity.

With a few minutes spent talking to someone in the crowd and success on a Streetwise roll, the heroes can learn all the above background. With a raise, someone hints darkly,

"Word around the station is someone's out to get Fayt Lannar—permanently."

Whether the speaker is neutral or terrified by such rumors depends on which side they're on. Failure on the Streetwise roll means the spacers are unable to engage with any onlookers, and a critical failure means the questioner gets into a minor scuffle with 1d6 onlookers.

- **Angry Onlookers (1d6):** Use the Citizen profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

EVERYONE'S A CRITIC!

After the spacers have a few minutes to find out what's going on, the hovercar's rear door opens. Fayt Lannar, fit and handsome with a winning smile, exits the car and waves to his adoring fans. Bodyguards surround him, concentrating on the side facing Fayt's detractors. You can almost feel the tension building as the crowd presses in on the beleaguered star.

Unfortunately for Fayt, his would-be assassin isn't among the detractors—he's among Fayt's fan club, smiling ear to ear, wearing **TEAM LAANAR** coveralls with an official *Lord of All Space* button pinned to the breast. The sociopath killer moves forward slowly, deliberately, trying to get close enough to Fayt to shoot him point-blank with the submachine gun hidden under his coveralls.

If suspicious heroes scan the crowd for apparent wrongdoing, a successful Notice roll (–2) pinpoints the assassin—an awkward grin plastered across his pale, sweating face—closing with Fayt's entourage as they push their way through the crush of fans and protesters toward the theater doors. Unless he's stopped or interrupted within three rounds, the assassin gets close to Fayt and whips out his gun.

- ★ **Fayt Laanar:** See page 95.

- **Laanar's bodyguards (2):** Use the Bounty Hunter profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- **Assassin:** Use the Assassin profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. He's armed with a submachine gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 3, AP 2).

ROLL THE CREDITS

If the heroes save Fayt Laanar's life, the actor is grateful beyond words. He invites the group to watch *The Lord of All Space* with him in the VIP box—politics aside, the holoplay is quite good—takes them to three afterparties on Harmonia Station, and will not allow them to refuse his cash reward of C\$2,000 per hero.

Most important, Laanar becomes a staunch ally: Each spacer involved in saving the actor and CEO's life gains the Connections (Laanar Corp.) Edge. Between Fayt's knowledge, his wealth, and his company's resources, he's a marvelous ally for any group opposing Vector Ultra's machinations.

If Laanar dies in the scuffle—not to mention any innocent bystanders—the heroes aren't necessarily held responsible but they gain none of the benefits of befriending Fayt. Further, JumpCorp Security uses the incident as an excuse to tighten safety protocols on Harmonia Station, and begins active surveillance of the heroes' activities.

FUGITIVES

Hook: Dysnomia Spaceport (page 36)

When the heroes are detained or otherwise grounded at Dysnomia Spaceport—perhaps while waiting for the Veiale Expedition to gather in part three of the Plot Point—a JumpCorp official contacts them with a request to track down and arrest a criminal gang. The reward is substantial: C\$2,500 for each fugitive brought to justice...dead or alive.

THE STORY SO FAR

Torgis Brevin and his gang used to work for Groid (see page 92), until the pirate warlord's fees and tithes became too much for Brevin to stomach. With a little encouragement from a lieutenant named Elan Giger, Brevin broke free of Groid's ranks and burned a path of larcenous wreckage across several Dysnomian outposts with Giger at his side. His most recent offense was the murder of a clerk named Urggi at the Blacklung ore processing station, while stealing a crate of extremely valuable antimatter containment units.

THE HUNT IS ON

Blacklung (see page 35) is only about 20 minutes from the spaceport. Once the heroes get there, it's a simple matter to locate the ore station—it's the outpost's largest and most technologically advanced edifice. The plumes of black smoke rising from its top are also dead giveaways.

At the ore station, a successful Streetwise or Persuasion roll gets the hard-nosed local miners to direct inquirers to one Merk Yond. Merk, they say, was hiding in the storeroom when the thieves stole their antimatter containment units. If he's asked about it, Merk nods and replies,

"Oh sure, I was there. Hiding out, praying for my life, if you want the truth. They'd already shot Urrgi to death. Anyhow, I heard them talking for a bit while they gathered up the gear. One of 'em called the leader 'Torgis' a few times, and Torgis was giving the orders. 'Get all this hardware back to the Needle,' he says. Clear as day! Not many people know what the capital-N Needle is, but I've been around Dysnomia for a few years. I been due a pay raise for three months, come to think of it. Been here so long, I'm almost a crag man. It's...unfair, is what it is."

With some prodding, Merk tells the searchers that the Needle is a very tall, sharp rock protrusion in the craglands, about 80 miles west. There are a number of small caves in its base. A hero who manages to run the name "Torgis" through a law enforcement database finds the name Torgis Brevin attached a long list of offenses in several systems, including piracy.

Merk Yond: Use the Miner profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

TO THE NEEDLE

Merk Yond *might* personally guide the spacefarers to the Needle, but only if they think to ask him. He certainly doesn't suggest it, but if heroes succeed on a Persuasion roll he considers the prospect. Yond won't go along for anything less than C\$1,500—the amount he needs to pay off his JumpCorp contract and start his own mining outpost.

Otherwise, finding the Needle going by Yond's directions is—if one will pardon the phrase—like searching for the proverbial micrometeor in the asteroid belt. The first step is to travel through 80 miles of craglands; use the **Craglands Encounters** table (page 35) for each day of the journey. How long it takes depends on the vehicle.

When the travelers near the goal, they must make a Survival check (–4) to locate the Needle. Each attempt takes a full day...and requires another draw from the Action Deck for encounters or events.

ATTACK OF THE BREVIN GANG

When the searchers succeed on Survival, they locate the Needle and Brevin's hideout. Unfortunately, Brevin and his accomplices have a medium sensor suite (see the *Science Fiction Companion*) set up in their main cave, which possibly alerts them to the group's approach.

The gang members are perched among the rocks overlooking the camp, waiting to blast intruders to smoking bits. They're spread out at even intervals on the overhanging cliffs. Of course, if the heroes use some sort of cloaking equipment or other measure to defeat sensor sweeps, the gang may be caught unawares.

♦ **Torgis Brevin:** Use the Pirate Captain profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Brevin has an artificial right eye, which provides Vision Enhancement (per the **Cybernetics** rules in the *Science Fiction Companion*). He's armed with a laser rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+2, RoF 1, AP 2). He doesn't command a ship, but the gang has three stolen hovercars (use the Hover Passenger Car profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*).

♦ **Elan Giger:** Use the Pirate Officer profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. He's armed with a gyrojet rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 3d6, RoF 1, HW) with Heat Seeker rounds—see the *Science Fiction Companion* for details—and a medium slugthrower pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 3), and an extra magazine for each.

• **Ex-Pirates (2 per hero):** Use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. They're armed with medium slugthrower pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 3), and each has an extra magazine.

THE GOODS AND WHAT COMES AFTER

The gang's collected loot—a half-million credits' worth of stolen industrial mining parts—is stashed in their main cave, along with the sensor array and antimatter containment units. There are also JumpCorp data-cards worth C\$7,834 to anyone who cashes them in for credits.

Draw a card from the Action Deck for encounters each day the adventurers spend traveling back to Blacklung. If they have living prisoners in their care, the risks are doubled; Brevin and his pirates do whatever they can to escape, taking advantage of chaotic situations.

At Blacklung, troopers load prisoners onto a JumpSec shuttle headed for Harmonia Station and Subsector Marshal Kaine's office. The JumpCorp exec who hired them pays the mercenaries their agreed-upon fee of C\$2,500 per pirate brought to justice...or death.

RAID ON GROID'S ROCK

Hook: Kallisti Reach (page 47)

As the heroes gain stature in the Eris subsector, more patrons seek to enlist their aid. When the spacefarers are well known for their exploits, a JumpCorp exec hires them to aid an attack on Groid's Rock, deep in the Kallisti Reach. JumpSec forces hope to eliminate the subsector's largest pirate gang in one swift stroke. But nothing's *ever* easy in space.

THE STORY SO FAR

JumpCorp agents recently learned of an imminent, major pirate strike. According to the chatter, Groid's Raiders are planning to attack Goldpoint in force just as ore storage reaches its monthly peak. JumpCorp stands to lose billions. Luckily, the agents also discovered the location of Groid's hidden base. JumpSec responds by assembling a strike team to "cut off the head," as it were, while most of Groid's forces attempt to loot Goldpoint—where JumpSec's fleet waits.

Unfortunately, the only accurate information the JumpCorp agents learned was the base's location. The rumors of an attack on Goldpoint are false, planted by Groid's ally on Harmonia Station, club owner Ujun (see page 43). Groid's pirate fleet is massed not far from the pirate base, ready to ambush any JumpCorp vessels that approach.

Actually, Groid commands *several* secret bases in the Kallisti Reach, and he's about to abandon this one. Groid figured he'd give it a good send-off by using it as the centerpiece of his plan. And although he was counting on several warships, not a small team of assassins, Groid's willing to play JumpSec's game.

PREPARATIONS

Before the group takes this job, roleplay the negotiation of a fee that makes sense for their situation and your campaign—at least C\$2,500 per Wild Card, or as much as their own spaceship. JumpSec assigns the band a squad of 10 marines—to be divided among the players as allied Extras—and, if necessary, provides two shuttles in which to travel to Groid's Rock. A light cruiser, the *Starblazer*, escorts the shuttles to the secret base's vicinity. From there, spacers are on their own. (See the *Science Fiction Companion* for ship profiles.)

INSIDE GROID'S ROCK

Groid's secret lair is virtually unnoticeable from the exterior. But because it's located inside a large—and relatively stable—planetoid, JumpCorp is able to provide the strike team with exact coordinates. Even at close range, observers must succeed on a Notice roll to find the camouflaged docking bay. Unless the group uses a stealth system of some kind, Groid and his pirates are aware of their approach and prepare to put up one hell of a fight.

Most of the base's interior has been cleared out in anticipation of leaving it behind, but Groid has kept a skeleton crew on hand to keep up the charade and foil sensor sweeps. If the pirates aren't aware of the strike team's presence, whenever invaders enter a corridor, draw a card from the Action Deck. On a face card or Joker, the group encounters a small group of pirates going about their business. There are no random encounters if the base is on alert.

Pirate Patrol (1d6+1): Use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Pirates in the base carry keycards that allow them access to most sealed areas.

ENCOUNTER AREAS

Consult the map of Groid's Rock. Major areas inside the base include the following:

Armory: The armory is sealed by a heavy security door (Toughness 18), with a card-access lock that inflicts a -2 penalty on hacking attempts to open it. The room usually holds a small army's worth of personal firearms, energy weapons, and explosives. Now it's empty...and perhaps a clue for the heroes that something's amiss.

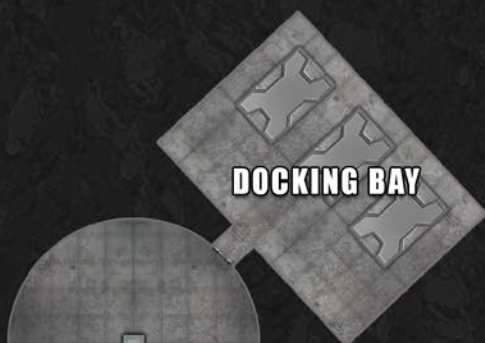
Barracks and Commissary: These areas are usually teeming with off-duty pirates getting some shut-eye, gambling, eating meals, or

LEVEL 1: COMMAND CENTER

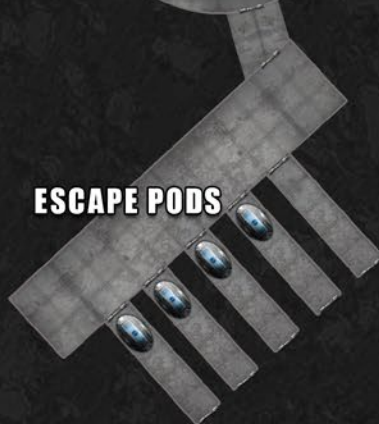
TOP LEVEL



LEVEL 4: DOCKING BAYS

LEVEL 2:
GUNNERY BAY

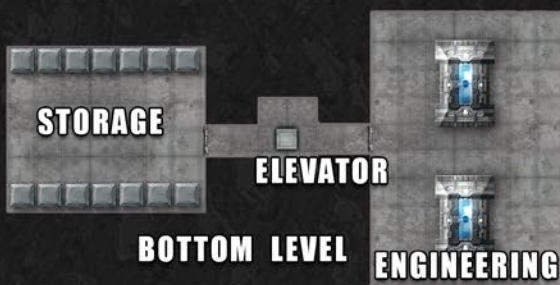
ESCAPE PODS



LEVEL 5: ENGINEERING



LEVEL 3: HABITATION AREAS



drinking at the attached saloon. Now, however, two pirates per hero are on hand (use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*), drinking away their boredom or sleeping. If the base is on alert, all the pirates are waiting for intruders with readied weapons.

Command Center: This circular room atop the base serves as its nerve center—observation deck, communications hub, and bridge in one. When the boarding party reaches this area, go to **Clash in the Command Center**.

Docking Bay: Whether they bring their own vessel, arrive in JumpCorp shuttles, or spacewalk in sealed suits, the docking bay is the base's only visible point of entry. It's clear of any other ships when the boarding party arrives.

Engineering: This room contains the base's power plant and electrolysis equipment, which creates oxygen by running a current through melted ice from the planetoid's core. If a curious spacer logs into a computer console and succeeds on a Knowledge (Computers) or similar roll, it's clear the power plant's self-destruct sequence has been initialized—a lengthy process. All that's left is to activate the final countdown, which can only be done from the command center. The destruct mechanism can be reset with a Knowledge (Computers) roll at -4.

Escape Pod Bay: This long bay holds four escape pods (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). One pod has been fired recently and is missing.

Groid's Staterooms: This well-appointed suite still holds Groid's furniture, but not much else besides a wardrobe full of aurax-sized clothing and various personal items. A massive, ceremonial auraxian sword (Str+d10) is mounted on one wall.

Gunnery Bay: This level holds four Heavy Laser (Vehicular) bays (Range 150/300/600, Damage 4d10, RoF 1, AP 15, HW), each manned by two pirates (use the Typical Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*, but they have Shooting d10).

Medical Bay: The medbay is devoid of all useful devices and medications, but the tables and diagnostic computers remain.

Rec Room: Card tables, holo-tennis, holo-vid games, and a holo-billiard table fill one room, and the other contains a full array of fitness and weight-lifting gear, plus locker rooms and showers.

Storage: This vault is where Groid usually hides his ill-gotten gains. It is protected by a heavy security door (Toughness 18) like the one that seals the armory. The card-access is limited to Groid and top three lieutenants—all of whom are in the command center.

CLASH IN THE COMMAND CENTER

If the spacefarers are in radio contact with the *Starblazer* when they reach the command center, read the following:

Your radio channel explodes with rapid-fire bursts of panicked chatter from the Starblazer. Listening closely to pinpoint the signal in the noise, you surmise the warship is under attack by numerous pirate vessels. A few tense moments pass...and the Starblazer issues an unconditional surrender and S.O.S. Then there's a burst of static—and the channel goes dead.

A deep, booming voice shouts from above, "Come here to kill me, you bastards? You think you can take down Captain Groid? Let's see what you've got! Har! Har!"

Groid, his three most-trusted lieutenants, and his bodyguards wait here to fight it out with the intruders. They begin by throwing multiple stun grenades among the boarding party, focusing on the marines. Then Groid's bodyguards move into melee, while he and his lieutenants fire on heroes from cover. Of course, Groid doesn't hesitate to charge anyone who presents a choice target.

Groid's a pragmatist, though, so he doesn't wait long to see if a fight's going against him. If his side doesn't gain the upper hand within the first round or two, as an action he starts the final countdown on the self-destruct sequence. From this moment, the base has 60 seconds—10 combat rounds—before it explodes in a brilliant white flash and kills everyone onboard.

After activating the self-destruct, Groid heads to the party's shuttles—to destroy one and steal the other—or for the escape pod bay.

★ **Captain Groid:** See page 92.

- **Lieutenants (3):** Use the Pirate Officer profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. They're also equipped with 2× stun grenades (Range 5/10/20, Damage Special, RoF 1, LBT).
- **Bodyguards (3 per hero):** Use the Pirate profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Each has stun grenades 2× (Range 5/10/20, Damage Special, RoF 1, LBT).

AFTERMATH

This tale can end in several ways, not all of them good for the heroes. If the boarding party is subdued and captured, the pirates haul them off to a frigate's brig and destroy the base. They seek a hefty ransom from JumpCorp for any survivors.

Attempting to disarm the self-destruct sequence in the final 60 seconds is a standard **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*) using Knowledge (Computers) at -2, or a similar skill at the GM's discretion. Others may assist as usual. Complications include security subroutines and self-randomizing password protection. If the hacker fails to amass the requisite five successes... it's *adios, muchachos* when the 60 seconds are up.

SECURITY DETAIL

Hook: Eris Beta-V (page 38)

If you're using the Plot Point, run this tale soon after the derrick ship is sabotaged in the first episode. JumpCorp officials hire the party to make sure another derrick ship is secure, but the heroes soon uncover a plot to destroy it.

ENEMIES WITHIN

This adventure seed is perfect for the downtime between the first and second Plot Points. After a derrick ship (see page 11) is blown up by multiple explosives and all hands lost, JumpCorp offers the heroes C\$5,000 each to secure another vessel suspected of harboring insurgent saboteurs. If the group takes the job, its members are outfitted with workers' gear and false identities. The spacers take their places among the workforce, living on the ship under assumed names and working to harvest hydrogen gas from an orbit in Eris' upper atmosphere.

They might use Streetwise to track down any shady characters on the payroll, and use Persuasion or Intimidation to extract information about the saboteur cell, or search the ship's records on the sly and cross-reference them with a law enforcement database, or devise a trap to draw the saboteurs out—it's up to the players.

SORO'S PEOPLE

The saboteurs are a group of humans who came in contact with a mysterious intelligence claiming to dwell inside Aite. It sent them strange crystal artifacts, and promised rewards beyond comprehension in return for doing their bidding. They all live in adjacent crews' quarters. Their leader, Tauch Soro, has eight extremely powerful

explosive devices hidden in a footlocker under his bunk. His lieutenant Winton Xan has the technical knowledge to crash multiple systems.

- ✦ **Tauch Soro:** Use the Bounty Hunter profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*. He has a sethiss artifact (see page 18); a dimensional shifter whose power cell has 6 charges remaining.
- **Winton Xan:** Use the Engineer profile, under Starship Crew in the *Science Fiction Companion*. Winton also has a sethiss artifact (see page 19); a type-3 dark energy emitter whose power cell has 8 charges remaining.
- **Soro's Team (2 per hero):** Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

SUPPLY RUN

Hook: Lethe (page 48)

Due to recent unrest at Lethe, the heroes hire on as supply freighter guards. Turns out things are much worse at Lethe than anyone thought...

LETHE...OVERTHROWN!

In this adventure, Maruul Soteeg or some other JumpCorp patron hires the starfarers to act as bodyguards for the monthly food shipment to Lethe, offering C\$3,000 each for the job. The guards travel to Lethe on a fully stocked system freighter, encountering no trouble.

At Lethe, all seems normal as the freighter's crew begins the 12-hour process of transferring the prison's supplies to the surface via shuttles. After two hours, a single line of text comes through on a little-used channel:

"HELP US THEY HAVE TAKEN THE PRISON."

There is no further response on that channel. Inquiring with prison authorities yields only confusion on their part—they claim there's no trouble at all.

If a spacer succeeds on a Notice roll, she detects something slightly off—the radio operator sounds nervous. With a raise on the Notice roll, a hero notes subtle irregularities in the prison's responses, such as failing to sign off after each transmission.

COUP D'ÉTAT!

In reality, Lethe prison is in the hands of its inmates, led by interstellar smuggler and crime lord Dilaggi Bonsoon and his cadre of loyal cutthroats. Bonsoon's gang has taken over the prison's command tower.

The prisoners rioted four days ago and subdued their captors before a distress signal could go out. Warden Haldrak and the prison's other 20 staff members are in cells, and 109 inmates are in control of the rest of the outpost.

The distress call came from a group of five guards who remain barricaded in a cellblock and were tinkering with a handheld communicator. They still have weapons, but a mob of prisoners will break into their sanctuary and apprehend them in 2d8 hours' time.

- **Guards (5):** Use the JumpSec Trooper profile on page 94.
- **Prisoners (109):** A healthy mix of nonplayer character profiles and alien species from all walks of life, with a preponderance of Miners, Pirates, and Thugs. See the *Science Fiction Companion*.

INVITATION TO A HIJACKING

It's up to the heroes whether they call the cavalry. Going in alone—given the sheer amount of foes—might not end well. And if the space jockeys have been responsible for sending criminals to Lethe in the past, now might be when those birds come home to roost!

Dilaggi Bonsoon's goal is to secure a spacecraft so he and his entourage can escape Lethe. To that end, his cronies in the command tower try to dupe the spacers into taking a tour of the prison with the promise of exotic food and drink imported from Dysnomia.

If Bonsoon's accomplices can't trick the heroes into leaving the safety of their ship, they instead hijack one of the supply shuttles and fly it to the freighter. Again, the criminals use guile, and then force, to get aboard the freighter. If their boarding action is successful, Bonsoon and his men maroon the group on Lethe and depart the system immediately.

- ★ **Dilaggi Bonsoon:** Use the Smuggler profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- **Bonsoon's Gang:** Use the Thug profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*.



CHAPTER EIGHT: BESTIARY

This chapter contains profiles of alien species native to the Eris subsector, followed by a selection of prominent Nonplayer characters. Wild Cards are noted with this symbol:



XENOS

The following alien species are organized by their native moons, but may be encountered in other locations as the GM desires.

AITE

BINDSLIME

This creature appears to be a harmless fungal growth that spreads tiny violet fronds along the earth in large patches. Actually, it is a dangerous obstacle: Bindslime's feeding pattern involves latching onto whatever creature steps in it, and refusing to let go. When a trapped victim dies, or is killed by other predators, the bindslime absorbs and consumes its remains. With a Notice roll at -4, a traveler notes that ground covered by bindslime seems devoid of any other life.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d8

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

Special Abilities:

- **Bind:** Any character who steps in bindslime is entangled (see **Grappling** in *Savage Worlds*). Bindslime cannot damage victims with its Strength, but simply refuses to let go. If the group makes a commotion trying to free their companion, the GM may draw for further, attracted encounters.
- **Immunity (Electricity):** Bindslime is unaffected by electricity-based attacks.
- **Immunity (Physical Damage):** Due to bindslime's curious fungal composition, it cannot be harmed by blows from melee weapons, slugthrowers, or similar forms of attack.
- **Weakness (Fire):** A bindslime exposed to fire shrinks back and releases its hold on any

trapped victims. Attacks that cause explosions also have this effect. Note that the fire or explosive device may also damage trapped victims!

BLACKSHRIKE SWARM

These avians native to Aite are black songbirds with hooked beaks. They sing in incredibly complex patterns that are actually quite beautiful, but once they descend upon living flesh and begin consuming it, much of that beauty is lost.

- Use the **Swarm** profile in *Savage Worlds* for a blackshrike swarm. Blackshrike swarms have a flying Pace of 14" and Climb 0.

FILAMENT SPIDER

The sethiss created these insectoid creatures to act as "maintenance organisms," crawling over broken or decayed items and repairing them with woven filaments. Over the millennia they evolved into scavengers that can live on virtually anything. After the spiders kill a living victim they cocoon it in filaments; 1d4 days later, a hatchling swarm (see below) bursts free.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Phage:** Filament spiders secrete silicon strands that can break down nearly any living or non-living matter. Given time, an object shot through with these fibers crumbles into a chalky substance the creatures use as food. Assume objects take 1 hour to decay per point of Toughness.
- **Size -2:** Filament spiders are about the size of a small dog.
- **Wall Walker:** Filament spiders move their normal Pace on vertical surfaces.
- **Weaving:** With a Fighting roll, the creature "weaves" silicon fibers through a victim's flesh for 2d4 damage. For each wound sustained in this way, the victim must succeed on a Vigor roll or contract a long-term chronic, minor

debilitating ailment (see **Disease** in *Savage Worlds*). Characters with the Void Sickness Hindrance suffer -2 on Vigor rolls to avoid contracting the disease. This disease is cured by the Dysnomian flu vaccine (see page 37).

KEBBLEX

These small, copper-skinned creatures were genetically engineered to be “pets” for sethiss children. Over millions of years, they evolved into a tribal species dwelling primarily within Aitean ruins. Individually, they are thoughtful and even friendly beings, but in large mobs they become far more bellicose. They are fond of trickery and traps such as pits, snares, and nets.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Taunt d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Throwing d6, Swimming d6

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

Gear: Short spears (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Infravision:** Kebblex halve penalties for dark lighting against living targets (round down).
- **Size -1:** Kebblex stand approximately 3–4 feet tall.

MAAHVREN

These large, carnivorous, centipede-like insects are native to Aite. They live in the crystalline forests’ fungal growths. They have long, segmented bodies coated with a thin layer of clear slime, over 100 legs, and a large set of mandibles with which they deliver venomous bites.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** A maahvren’s hard exoskeleton provides some protection from damage.
- **Bite:** Str+d6, plus Lethal venom (see **Poison** in *Savage Worlds*). Characters with the Void Sickness Hindrance (see page 8) suffer a -2 penalty on Vigor rolls to resist the poison’s effects.
- **Burrowing:** Pace 6. Maahvren dig underground dens, and can move quickly through soil.
- **Infravision:** Maahvren halve penalties (round down) for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- **Size +2:** A maahvren is about the size of horse.

- **Wall Walker:** A maahvren moves its normal Pace on vertical surfaces.

SETHISS

See **The Lost Moon**, beginning on page 15, for the sethiss’ origin story. Although the species was once a monoculture, the destruction of Aite’s sister planet ruptured the hive mind that linked them. Since then, several sethiss varieties have evolved, each adapted to a geographical region on Aite and organized into clans and tribes. One holdover from their communal past has been retained by all sethiss: They have no concept of the individual. They refer to “we,” “they,” or “you,” but never “I.”

The sethiss originated as an intelligent, viral life form on Dysnomia, which merged with a primitive silicate species on Algos. Viruses cannot survive outside another cell, but this merging allowed members of the species to grow their own organogenic crystal exoskeletons.

Sethiss as Player Characters: The sethiss are a nonplayer species by design, but an interesting variant campaign might involve a group of sethiss tribesmen inside Aite. Let the players decide what variety of sethiss they’d like to play. Create characters as usual, then add the Racial Abilities for whichever sethiss variety they’ve chosen. (Player characters don’t begin with the Power Points Racial Ability, but they may choose the Psionics Arcane Background during character creation, as normal.) Sethiss might war with other tribes, explore Aite’s ruins, attempt to unite their far-flung people, or battle against Vector Ultra’s plans. They might even *join* Vector Ultra to do battle with JumpCorp invaders! Being “inside men,” so to speak, is sure to give a unique perspective on the Plot Point’s events.

CANYON SETHISS

The canyon sethiss are the most savage and warlike variety. They have many legs, and a vaguely spiderlike shape. They consider having more limbs to be a sign of nobility and strength; the Grand King of the canyon sethiss is a massive specimen with eight crystal legs and six arms. Most canyon sethiss have three legs and three arms. (Naturally, canyon sethiss have an affinity for kalians.) Although most canyon sethiss would rather do battle than parley, exiles and merchants are not so eager to make enemies.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Psionics d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Gear: 3× spears (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), obsidian sword (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Additional Actions:** Due to their extra arm, desert sethiss get one extra action per round, without a multi-action penalty.
- **Armor (+2):** Sethiss are covered in a hard crystal exoskeleton.
- **Dependency:** Sethiss must have contact with silicate crystals for at least one hour out of every 24 or become automatically Fatigued each day until they are Incapacitated. The day after that, they perish. Each hour spent in silicate crystals or sand restores one level of Fatigue.
- **Psionics:** Canyon sethiss have the Arcane Background (Psionics) Edge, 10 Power Points, and the *armor*, *boost/lower Trait*, and *smite* powers.
- **Size +2:** Canyon sethiss are larger than humans, standing about 8' tall.

DESERT SETHISS

In contrast to the canyon dwellers, the desert sethiss' harsh lifestyle has conditioned them to revere all forms of life. Their histories are passed down from the old scientists—sethiss of the mountains who looked into different dimensions and times. They are cautious with strangers, but everyone is given a chance to pass their gods' trials and join the tribe (see plot point seven, page 68, for all the details). The desert wanderers' adulthood ritual requires a warrior to find an artifact of the ancients in a ruined city. Desert sethiss capture and domesticate shock mantas (see page 90) for use as mounts and beasts of burden. They have two arms and three legs, which allow them to move swiftly.

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Psionics d8, Riding d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Gear: Spears ×3 (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), sword (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** Sethiss are covered in a hard crystal exoskeleton.
- **Dependency:** Sethiss must have contact with silicate crystals for at least one hour out of every 24 or become automatically Fatigued each day until they are Incapacitated. The

day after that, they perish. Each hour spent in silicate crystals or sand restores one level of Fatigue.

- **Psionics:** Desert sethiss have the Arcane Background (Psionics) Edge, 10 Power Points, and the *beast friend*, *boost/lower Trait*, and *environmental protection* powers.
- **Runner:** A desert sethiss' Pace is increased by +2 and his Running die is d8.
- **Size +2:** Desert sethiss are larger than humans, standing about 8' tall.

FOREST SETHISS

Forest sethiss tribes dwell in massive crystalline palaces, formed by the merging of hundreds of flowing and interlocking crystal growths. The forest dwellers are adept at using the ever-present crystal growths to grow homes, tools, and fungus crops. They have an upright head and torso, with two arms, but the lower halves of their bodies are elongated, with many segmented legs, like those of a millipede.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Psionics d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Gear: Crystal blowgun (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d4, RoF 1), knife (Str+d4), sword (Str+d6), 12× crystal darts.

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** Sethiss are covered in a hard crystal exoskeleton.
- **Dependency:** Sethiss must have contact with silicate crystals for at least one hour out of every 24 or become automatically Fatigued each day until they are Incapacitated. The day after that, they perish. Each hour spent in silicate crystals or sand restores one level of Fatigue.
- **Psionics:** Forest sethiss have the Arcane Background (Psionics) Edge, 10 Power Points, and the *boost/lower Trait*, *deflection*, and *wall walker* powers.
- **Size +3:** A forest sethiss is as big as a bear.

HIGH SETHISS

The High Sethiss—referred to as Builders by modern sethiss—are ancient beings awakened from cryogenic sleep. They are tall, slender creatures, with two arms and two long legs. All the varieties of modern sethiss evolved from these beings. The High Sethiss retain knowledge of their advanced science and technology—for them, millions of years passed in a cryogenic eye

blink. They are largely xenophobic, but certain High Sethiss might parlay with alien species.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Sethiss Tech) d10, Notice d8, Psionics d12, Repair d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Gear: 3x sethiss artifacts (see page 18), 6x power cells.

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+4):** A sethiss' hard crystal exoskeleton grants exceptional protection from damage.
- **Cannot Speak:** Due to their hive mind, the High Sethiss had no need for conventional speech, but instead communicated telepathically among their own kind.
- **Dependency:** Sethiss must have contact with silicate crystals for at least one hour out of every 24 or become automatically Fatigued each day until they are Incapacitated. The day after that, they perish. Each hour spent in silicate crystals or sand restores one level of Fatigue.
- **Psionics:** High Sethiss have the Arcane Background (Psionics) Edge, 25 Power Points, and know the *armor*, *bolt*, *boost/lower Trait*, *healing*, *intangibility*, *puppet*, and *stun* powers.
- **Regeneration:** As long as they're not Exhausted from lack of silicon, High Sethiss' mastery of time allows them to regenerate faster than others. They may make natural healing rolls once per day rather than once per week.
- **Size +1:** A High Sethiss stands 7–8 feet tall.

MOUNTAIN SETHISS

The mountain sethiss are few, hidden in their lairs among the hive peaks. They are descendants of sethiss scientists and extra-dimensional explorers. As such, they seek out temporal anomalies in an ongoing attempt to piece together their species' history...and destiny. Of modern sethiss, they most closely resemble the ancients, with two arms and two legs.

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

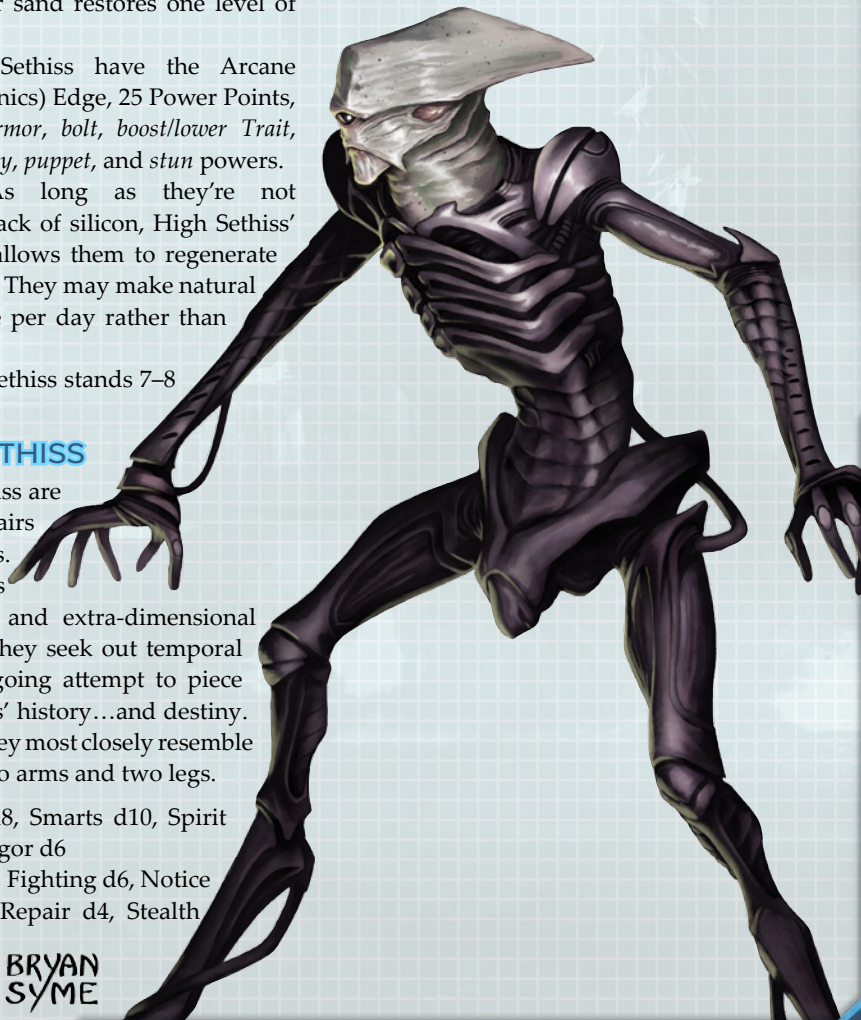
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Psionics d10, Repair d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Gear: Knife (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** A sethiss' hard crystal exoskeleton grants protection from damage.
- **Dependency:** Sethiss must have contact with silicate crystals for at least one hour out of every 24 or become automatically Fatigued each day until they are Incapacitated. The day after that, they perish. Each hour spent in silicate crystals or sand restores one level of Fatigue.
- **Psionics:** Mountain sethiss have the Arcane Background (Psionics) Edge, 15 Power Points and know the *bolt*, *boost/lower Trait*, and *healing* powers.
- **Regeneration:** As long as they're not Exhausted from lack of silicon, mountain sethiss' mastery of time allows them to regenerate faster than their fleshy companions. They may make natural healing rolls once per day rather than once per week.
- **Size +1:** A mountain sethiss stands 7–8' tall.



BRYAN
SYME

VECTOR ULTRA

The first sethiss to form Vector Ultra were desert dwellers—whose reverence for life evaporated in the face of their astounding discoveries in City Prime—and about half their members hail from that region. The others are equally split between forest and canyon sethiss, with a few mountain sethiss for good measure.

To create a Vector Ultra sethiss, use any of the preceding sethiss profiles (except High Sethiss, which are not altered), and add Knowledge (Sethiss Tech) d6, one sethiss artifact (see page 18), and one power cell with 12 charges.

SCARLET TOADSTOOL

These mobile fungi dwell in Aite's crystalline forests, feeding on insectoid life...and larger prey, when it's available. They look like large crimson-purple toadstools with odd, barnacle-like growths all over the caps, and grow in colonies of up to a dozen specimens. They move with alarming quickness.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities:

- **Scream:** When scarlet toadstools notice prey—prey being defined as *meat* of any kind—they surround it and begin to shriek in a high-pitched, extremely piercing tone. The toadstools follow the prey if it moves. For every three rounds the scream continues, draw a card from the Action Deck for an encounter. If an encounter is indicated, it is with 1d4 maahvren (see page 87)—which enjoy a quasi-symbiotic relationship with the cacophonous fungus. The toadstools feed on the remains of any resulting corpses.
- **Size -2:** Scarlet toadstools stand about 1' tall.
- **Spores:** Scarlet toadstools implant spores in any decaying matter—including characters' corpses—it comes across. After 3d6 days, the spores burst out of the corpse as 2d6 fully grown scarlet toadstools.

SHOCK MANTA

These Aitean creatures resemble Terran manta rays, except they glide over the desert sands instead of through an ocean. Their underbellies naturally create a "cushion" of static electricity that allows them to hover and glide over silicate dunes and rocky wastes. They can also transfer the accumulated charge to a target via a razor-sharp

tail. Desert sethiss use these creatures as mounts and beasts of burden.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Flight:** Pace 12", climb 0. The shock manta glides on a cushion of electricity, touching the earth only to sleep.
- **Immunity (Electricity):** Shock mantas are immune to electricity-based attacks and effects.
- **Size +2:** A shock manta is as big as a horse.
- **Tail Spear:** Str+d6, AP 2, plus 2d6 electric shock.

SPARKLER VINE

The sparkler vine is a carnivorous plant native to the forests of Aite. It extends eight long, purple-green fronds covered with what look like glistening droplets of pure dew. Actually, it's a very strong organic adhesive—when the creature senses a catch, it curls up the frond...and feasts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Multi-Attack:** The vine can attack with all eight of its fronds each round without incurring a multi-action penalty.
- **Reach:** The sparkler vine can attack any creature within a Large Burst template, with the creature's roots at the center.
- **Sticky Fronds:** Str+d6. Any creature that attempts to collect or drink the "dew" on the plant's eight fronds gets stuck. It requires a Strength roll at -2 to pull free of the gluey frond. If the roll is failed, the sparkler vine attempts to **Grapple** (see *Savage Worlds*) its prey by coiling the frond and crushing the victim.

TERRAGH

Terraghs are large, hairy, six-legged animals that dwell in several regions on Aite. They move in herds of 100 or more through the ruined cities of the sethiss ancients. When a herd stampedes, it can be deadly for anyone in its path.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Gore:** Terragh use the charge maneuver to gore their opponents with four long horns. If they can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
- **Size +2:** Terragh are slightly larger than bison.
- **Stampede:** Anyone unfortunate enough to be caught in a stampeding terragh herd's path is trampled by their many hooves. These characters must make an Agility roll (-2) each round or suffer 2d6+2 damage. After three successful Agility rolls, the individual has gotten out of the herd's way.

DYSNOMIA

CRAG MEN

These furry, tribal hominids live in Dysnomia's equatorial craglands. Their society is matriarchal, occupying caves high in the canyon walls. Different clans war constantly over territory and resources, but usually put aside their differences to hunt, kill, and eat invaders. Crag men are descended from a species that devolved after exposure to biological weapons. Their culture never recovered.

CRAG MAN WARRIOR

Warriors are tasked with fighting other tribes, hunting, and teaching these skills to the tribe's young. Females tend to remain at home, caring for the young and maintaining shelters, but they also make most of the tribe's important decisions.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4,

Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d8, Tracking d6

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

Gear: Club (Str+d6) or spears x3 (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

CRAG MAN SHAMAN

Some crag men have developed psionic powers, likely due to an evolutionary leap provided by their ancestors' exposure to Dysnomian plague. These "shamans" are the tribes' religious leaders, and lead crag man warriors into battle.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Psionics d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d8

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

Gear: Club (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Background (Psionics):** Crag man shamans have 10 Power Points and know the *boost/lower Trait*, *deflection*, and *fear* powers.



DYSNOMIAN SPINEWORM

The parasitic spineworm is found only on Dysnomia, and those who have encountered it are thankful for that fact. Spineworms grow to a length of 12 to 18 inches, and approximately a quarter-inch wide. These life forms prey on sleeping people and animals, using sharp teeth to bore through the skin at the base of the victim's spine. Anesthetic secretions prevent the host from feeling any pain, or even becoming aware of the wound, which heals quickly. Once inside, the spineworm wraps itself around the length of the victim's spine, where it feeds on electrical nerve impulses and cerebrospinal fluid. This usually causes insanity, and the host organism's eventual death.

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

Skills: Notice d12, Stealth d12

Face: 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Amphibious:** Dysnomian spineworms live in shallow swamps and have a swimming Pace of 10", but can survive on land for extended periods when they need to.
- **Anesthetic Bite:** Str+d6, plus Special. If the worm inflicts a wound to a sleeping character, it bores through the skin at the spine's base and winds itself around the spinal column in three rounds. Many do not realize a parasite feeding on them until it's too late.
- **Insanity:** The host suffers high fever and hallucinations. Roll the victim's Vigor (-2) each day he hosts the worm, or he suffers a level of Fatigue that does not fade. As long as the character is Fatigued by this effect, he has the Delusional (Major) Hindrance. This Fatigue can eventually Incapacitate and kill the victim.
- **Size -2:** Dysnomian spineworms are tiny.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer -2 on attack rolls against the tiny spineworm.
- **Weakness (Electricity):** A reasonably strong electrical current—strong enough to inflict 2d4 damage per round of exposure—causes a worm to abandon its host if it inflicts 1 or more wounds. Unfortunately, the host also takes the damage!

SENTIENTS

The following movers and shakers are prominent fixtures of Erisian life. They can serve as allies, patrons, rivals, or enemies as the need strikes.

★ CAPTAIN GROID

Groid is a notoriously ill-tempered aurax who commands a small, unofficial "fleet" of pirate ships called Groid's Raiders. Their base is hidden in a large planetoid in the Kallisti Reach (see page 47). Groid usually remains in the base coordinating his officers' raids, feasting on fine virtuals he prizes, and counting his loot.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Piloting d10, Repair d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean, Wanted (Major)

Edges: Ace, Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Hard to Kill, Inspire

Gear: Spacesuit (+1), molecular knife (Str+d6), heavy slugthrower pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 4), extra magazines ×2, 2× stun grenades (Range 5/10/20, Damage Special, RoF 1, LBT), pirate corvette (use light cruiser stats in the *Science Fiction Companion*).

Special Abilities:

- **Low-Tech:** Technology of the aurax homeworld is lower than most other developed worlds. Groid has the Low Tech Hindrance (Major).
- **Size +1:** An aurax's humanoid part is only about five feet tall, but it's thickly built, and its rear body mass is the size of a small bull.

★ CHANX OBLIOS

Subsector Administrator Chanx Oblios is very good at what he does, which is why JumpCorp trusts him with one of its most valuable frontier subsectors. Oblios is a Serran with a talent for motivating his people in just the right way to extract the highest quality work. He runs his affairs from a richly appointed office suite in Harmonia Station's executive spires. He's unaware of the existence of the Serran Underground (see page 31) on Aite, but would be keen to know all about it.

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

Skills: Intimidation d8, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Taunt d6

Cha: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Stubborn

Edges: Connections (JumpCorp), Danger Sense, Filthy Rich, Power Points, Strong Willed

Gear: Sharp suit, data organizer

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Background (Psionics):** Oblios has 15 Power Points and knows the *boost/lower Trait*, *farsight*, and *mind reading* powers.
- **Parry:** Serran ESP increases their Parry by +1.

✦ HORST TAPPELKHIRRE

During his imprisonment on Aite, Horst Tappelkhirre's brilliant mind was surgically transplanted into the body of a captured human. Even though he's a deader (see *Science Fiction Companion*) now, he hasn't regained much of his physical stature. Tappelkhirre's mind, however, and all its knowledge are intact.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12+2, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d12, Knowledge (Astrophysics, Biology, Chemistry, Computers, Engineering, Physics) d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Repair d12, Shooting d6, Taunt d10

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious, Vow (Serve JumpCorp)

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (JumpCorp), Expert (Astrophysics, Repair), Improved Block, Improved Dodge, McGyver, Scholar (Astrophysics, Computers), Strong Willed

Gear: None

Special Abilities:

- **Pace:** Deaders tend to shuffle as they move, reducing their Pace by 2" and their running die to d4.
- **Undead:** +2 to Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to disease, poisons, and most sources of Fatigue; no additional damage from called shots; does not suffer from wound penalties.

✦ HORST TAPPELKHIRRE (FALSE)

Horst Tappelkhirre's original deader body has returned from Aite with a High Sethiss (see page 88) mind running the show and no one is the wiser.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Chemistry, Physics, Sethiss Tech) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Psionics d12, Repair d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Connections (JumpCorp), Filthy Rich

Gear: By virtue of his position as head JumpCorp researcher for the subsector, the false Tappelkhirre can acquire nearly any item he needs.

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Background (Psionics):** The false Tappelkhirre has 25 Power Points and knows the *armor*, *bolt*, *boost/lower Trait*, *healing*, *intangibility*, *puppet*, and *stun* powers.
- **Pace:** Deaders tend to shuffle as they move, reducing their Pace by 2" and their running die to d4.
- **Undead:** +2 to Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to disease, poisons, and most sources of Fatigue; no additional damage from called shots; does not suffer from wound penalties.

JUMPCORP SECURITY FORCES

JumpCorp invests significant resources in protecting frontier investments, and Eris Beta-V is no exception. Following are the Eris subsector's most commonly encountered JumpSec personnel.

JUMPSEC MARINE

These are highly trained soldiers specializing in zero-gravity boarding actions and planetary invasions. They take on pirates, smugglers, and other adversaries common to JumpCorp's frontier operations. A platoon typically has 40 marines in four squads of 10.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Hindrances: Vow (Uphold JumpCorp regulations)

Edges: Block, Gravitic Acclimation, Marksman

Gear: Armored spacesuit (+3), medium slugthrower pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 3), submachine gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 3, AP 2), spare magazines ×2 for each firearm, fragmentation grenades ×2 (Range 5/10/20, Damage 3d6, HW, LBT).

JUMPSEC TROOPER

These are the run-of-the-mill security officers who serve at settlements and facilities serviced by JumpCorp Security. Their primary mission is to maintain the peace and enforce order among the off-world population and sentient races in settled areas.

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

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7/9 (2/4)

Hindrances & Edges: None

Gear: Kevlar vest (+2/+4), medium slugthrower pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 3), stun baton (victim must make Vigor roll at -2 or be Shaken), handcuffs, spare magazines ×2.



K'GAED KAINE

A former JumpSec riot officer who lost an eye while singlehandedly defending a mining office against its enraged employees, Kaine is the Subsector Marshal stationed on Harmonia Station, and she enforces the law with the help of six robot deputies (use the War Bot profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*). She is human, and known for her acid tongue and humorless disposition.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Law) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 14 (8)

Hindrances: Mean, One Eye, Vow (uphold JumpCorp law)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Combat Reflexes, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Marksman, Strong Willed, Two-Fisted

Gear: Zero-G armor (+8), medium slugthrower pistols ×2 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 3), spare magazines ×4, stun baton (victim must roll Vigor at -2 or be shaken), stun grenades ×3 (Range 5/10/20, Damage Special, RoF 1, LBT), handcuffs.

QUAYTHIS KRILLOR

The subsector's most feared, ferocious, and notorious mercenary band is Krillor's Irregulars. Their leader, a yeti called Quaythis Krillor, is perhaps the most feared of the whole bunch. Krillor began his career as a soldier on his homeworld, but when he was discharged he realized his skills were worth many credits to companies like JumpCorp. Now he's a rich man, and his soldiers serve JumpCorp interests among the rings when they're called upon.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Gambling d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8, Tracking d10

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11

Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean, Overconfident

Edges: Alertness, Block, Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Marksman, Rich, Strong Willed

Gear: Quaythis Krillor has access to any weapons or gear he needs.

Special Abilities:

- **Environmental Resistance:** Yetis add +2 to the effects of cold, and have +2 Armor versus cold and ice-based attacks.
- **Size +2:** Krillor is about 8 feet tall, very broad, and very dense.
- **Weakness (Heat):** Yetis' thick coats are a liability in extreme heat and humidity. Yetis subtract 2 from Fatigue checks made to resist the effects of heat, and take 2 additional points of damage from heat and fire-based attacks.

★ THOMAS GIZHINN ORLEY

Thomas Gizhinn Orley served as a steward on a JumpCorp interstellar passenger liner before he quit to buy his own starship. He picked up a good deal of piloting knowledge during his years working for JumpCorp, which he now puts to use as captain of the *Silver Bolt* (a system freighter; see the *Science Fiction Companion*). Orley's business ethics aren't exactly rock-solid, but he's loyal to his friends—to a fault. He has black hair and a beard, piercing gray eyes, is quick with a laugh and a smile, and makes friends easily.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Persuasion d10, Piloting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

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

Hindrances: Loyal, Void Sickness

Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Command, Inspire, Strong Willed

Gear: Data pad, light slugthrower pistol (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1, AP 2).

★ YUBUKODOR HANZ

Marshal Hanz enforces the law on Goldpoint, but this deader is more dedicated to truth and justice than JumpCorp bylaws and regulations. He displays more wit and verve than most of his melancholy ilk. Marshal Hanz has 12 deputies (use the Law Enforcement profile in the *Science Fiction Companion*) on staff, and can call upon JumpSec forces—or even Krillor's Irregulars—if he needs them to handle a threat.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Investigation d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Stealth d10, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 17 (8)

Hindrances: Vow (Uphold JumpCorp law)

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Trademark Weapon (Heavy slugthrower), Quick Draw, Steady Hands

Gear: Zero-G armor (+8), heavy slugthrower pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 4), 2× extra magazines, stun baton (victim must roll Vigor at -2 or be shaken), 3× stun grenades (Range 5/10/20, Damage Special, RoF 1, LBT), handcuffs.

Special Abilities:

- **Pace:** Deaders tend to shuffle as they move, reducing their Pace by 2" and their running die to d4.
- **Undead:** +2 to Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to disease, poisons, and most sources of Fatigue; no additional damage from called shots; does not suffer from wound penalties.

★ FAYT LAANAR

The dashing and handsome Fayt Laanar is one of the galaxy's biggest stars, best known for his moving holoplay performances. He has won several awards for his roles over the past few years. His wealth and connections in the holoplay industry—not to mention his winning personality—are great assets to any group that calls Fayt a friend. Although the media paints him as a shallow, vain actor, in reality Laanar is quite spiritual and dedicated to strengthening his will with meditation.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d12+2, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d10, Swimming d8, Taunt d6

Cha: +6; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (Laanar Corporation), Filthy Rich, Fleet-Footed, Strong Willed, Very Attractive

Gear: Anything credits can buy.

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