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ANNILILIK RUN

Adventure Three



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M A R C M I L L E R ' S **TRAVELLER**[®]

ANNILILIK RUN

SCIENCE-FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

Captain BlackJack Tanner needs a crew and he's not asking questions on page 11.

Rescue Captain Tanner on page 22.

Become the crew of the new ship *Annililik* on its maiden voyage on page 27.

Meet the Salvatoree clan on page 38.

Hazardous bio-cargo needs to go on the Annililik run, money is no object on page 44.

Outwit the pirates on page 57.

THE FUTURE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

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A Special Thanks to:

Tim Brown for giving me this unusual assignment.

My wife for not saying, "What in the world are you doing?"

Based on Original Concept by BITS/CORE (Andy Lilly, Jo Grant, David Burden).

Traveller[®],

Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

by Marc Miller

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The game and universe presented in this book envisions a referee or game master as the ultimate supervisor of game play. The publisher is prepared to answer questions about Traveller provided a stamped, self-addressed envelope accompanies the request.



Imperium Games, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
Asteroids	5
Space Stations	8
1: THE CURSED RUN	10
Adventure Outline	10
The Setup	11
The Phoenix	14
I. Introduction	17
II. A Day With the Marines	17
III. A Night With Janny	18
IV. Dealing With Strangers	19
V. A Chance for Some Fun	20
VI. Criminals? We Got No Criminals Here!	21
VII. Jail Break	22
VIII. Boarding Raid!	23
IX. Delivery to Battle Station	23
X. The Cargo Must Go On!	24
Small Explosives	24
2: THE CURSED STARSHIP	27
Adventure Outline	27
The Setup	28
The Annililik	30
I. Introduction	32
II. Milk Run	35
III. Oops, My Bad	35
IV. What's the Deal	36
V. Alien Raid!	36
VI. John? John Who?	36
VII. Keys? Didn't You Lock the Ship Up?	37
VIII. Aliens? Who Said Aliens?!	40
IX. Help, I'm Stolen!	40
X. That's It, You're All Fried!... I Mean, Fired!	41
3: THE CURSED CARGO	43
Adventure Outline	43
The Setup	44
The Hope	46
I. Introduction	50
II. Put Five Credits on 20 For Me	53
III. Too Much of a Good Thing	55
IV. Pirates!	57
V. Alien Contact!	60
VI. Orders are Orders!	61
VII. It's the Damn Injector Again!	62
VIII. The Lucky Stop	63
IX. There Goes the Pinnacle	63
X. Turbulence!	64

INTRODUCTION

Although there are three different scenarios in *The Annililik Run*, you as the referee should always conduct the course of the adventures from the Vland sector to the Core sector. The second and third scenarios can easily be modified into Core-to-Vland runs if you feel it's necessary. The players should be encouraged to map out their own flight plan for each of the three trips. All actions take place on satellites and large asteroids in and around the star systems as they jump from place to place, so the scenarios will still function regardless of the routes they take.

As the referee in this game you have certain responsibilities to your players. These have been touched on in other works, but are worth mentioning again.

Know the Material

If you are an experienced referee, feel free to mix and match all of the encounters in these adventures to suit your game. This means you can combine items from the "*The Cursed Cargo*" scenario with "*The Cursed Starship*" scenario, for example, and just have fun. If you are new to refereeing, you will want to do only one scenario at a time. The three adventures comprising *The Annililik Run* are very linear; things happen in an order and you should know that order for the game sessions to proceed smoothly. There's nothing worse than having players wait while the referee is reading pages of text to try and decide what happens next.

Helpful Referee Task: After reading these adventures, make a simple and short list of important encounters in each adventure and check them off as they happen during a game.

Know the Environment

The players are going to spend a lot of game time on-board a starship. You the referee need to know what each ship looks like so you can describe them to your players. There are also generic satellites and asteroids with encounters, detailed later in this chapter, that you should familiar yourself with, too.

Helpful Referee Task: Create a short list of interesting features for ships, satellites, and asteroids to spring on your players as the game evolves. Peculiarities like an alien safety mechanism for airlocks (or even a lack of safety mechanism altogether) can spice up a game.

Voices can be Fun

You are going to relate many different people and things to your players. Special non-player characters need to come alive in the minds of your group. The best way to make that happen is if you have practiced how these characters and computer voices sound beforehand.

Helpful Referee Task: List the characters and voice-modulated machines you're going to present to your group, then decide on how you want them to sound. Before the game, briefly rehearse speaking in these different voices. Distinctive tones such as deep, gravely, monotonous, high-pitched, or even sultry can help a great deal in bringing your characters to life. Pick out four or five people you know or have known in real life as models for your characters.

Know the Non-Player Characters

The *Traveller* rules system notes the importance of knowing your non-player characters. The "Spear-carriers" in all three adventures are intended to perish at important moments. As the referee, you need to cultivate respect and friendship for them in the player characters. These spear-carriers must be unusually helpful and knowledgeable about what's going to happen in the future — though it's a future they'll never see.

"Informants" are perfect for relaying information to the players, and especially useful for giving bad information. All of the informants in *The Annililik Run* are going to provide the latter. Because of the misinformative nature of their personalities, they should not be clean-cut types. Their appearance and style should warn the group that these people could be dishonest or unreliable. There are lots of ways to do this: The informants never look anybody in the eyes; they are unshaven with wrinkled clothes; they try to pass off a clear lie early in the conversation. It's just not a good idea to pass wrong information to the players unless you have taken some step to give them a chance to figure out the informant is not on the up-and-up.

The "Patrons," in general, are extremely helpful, but don't want to do the work themselves. They are usually charming, salesman-types who really want you to do a job. On the other hand, "Troublemakers" are highly motivated and dedicated to their tasks. They are also unusually focused and good at what they do. It's important to note that troublemakers don't have to be evil. They often have a lawful purpose conflicting with what the player characters have to accomplish.

Helpful Referee Task: Be sure to always have a separate list of the significant non-player characters whom the PCs will run across. This list should mark each character as a type: Spear-carrier, Informant, Patron, Troublemaker. A short statement on their motivation and interest should be part of this list.

Beginning the Adventure

There are several steps that can be taken for every adventure to make sure everyone has a good time. These are preparations done before the game as well as during your playing session.

Step One: The playing area should be well-lit and comfortable. Few things are worse than sitting on a hard wooden chair for a couple of hours. Suggesting the players bring their favorite snacks and drinks is a good idea as well. Set up a regular playing time and try to get your players to play at least twice a month. This will help hold their interest.

Step Two: Players should have generated their characters before the adventure starts. Good characters take a while to create, and if that's all you do in the

first session, that's just fine.

Step Three: It's important that everyone knows the skills of the other player characters. It's often fun to role-play all the characters meeting for the first time. This allows them to start finding a niche for their characters. If it's a new group, encourage a special meeting at the patron's office where all of the PCs will converge to discuss the assignment. For an established group, make certain that everyone knows what special expertise and equipment have been picked up since the last adventure.

Step Four: Motivate the players through background information. Either the patron or some other source is giving them a little history on the job/adventure they are about to undertake. Such information should come off as intriguing as possible to get the players eager at facing the challenge. Make sure the players understand the ultimate goal of the adventure before they begin — it's this goal that will drive their actions. As the referee, you need to constantly reinforce this goal.

Step Five: Encourage the group to talk it over and formulate an organized plan of action. During the course of this session, make sure they have or obtain equipment they might need for the adventure.

Step Six: Always, always begin on a positive note. Let the group accomplish something worthwhile and

make sure they know it, so that when life gets rougher they have one memory to keep them going.

Step Seven: Strive to have every member of the group contribute something at least once every half-hour in a game session. Often the shy players will just sit back and be bored while other more active players dictate the progress. You must see to it that everyone does something often or the game will not be fun to everybody.

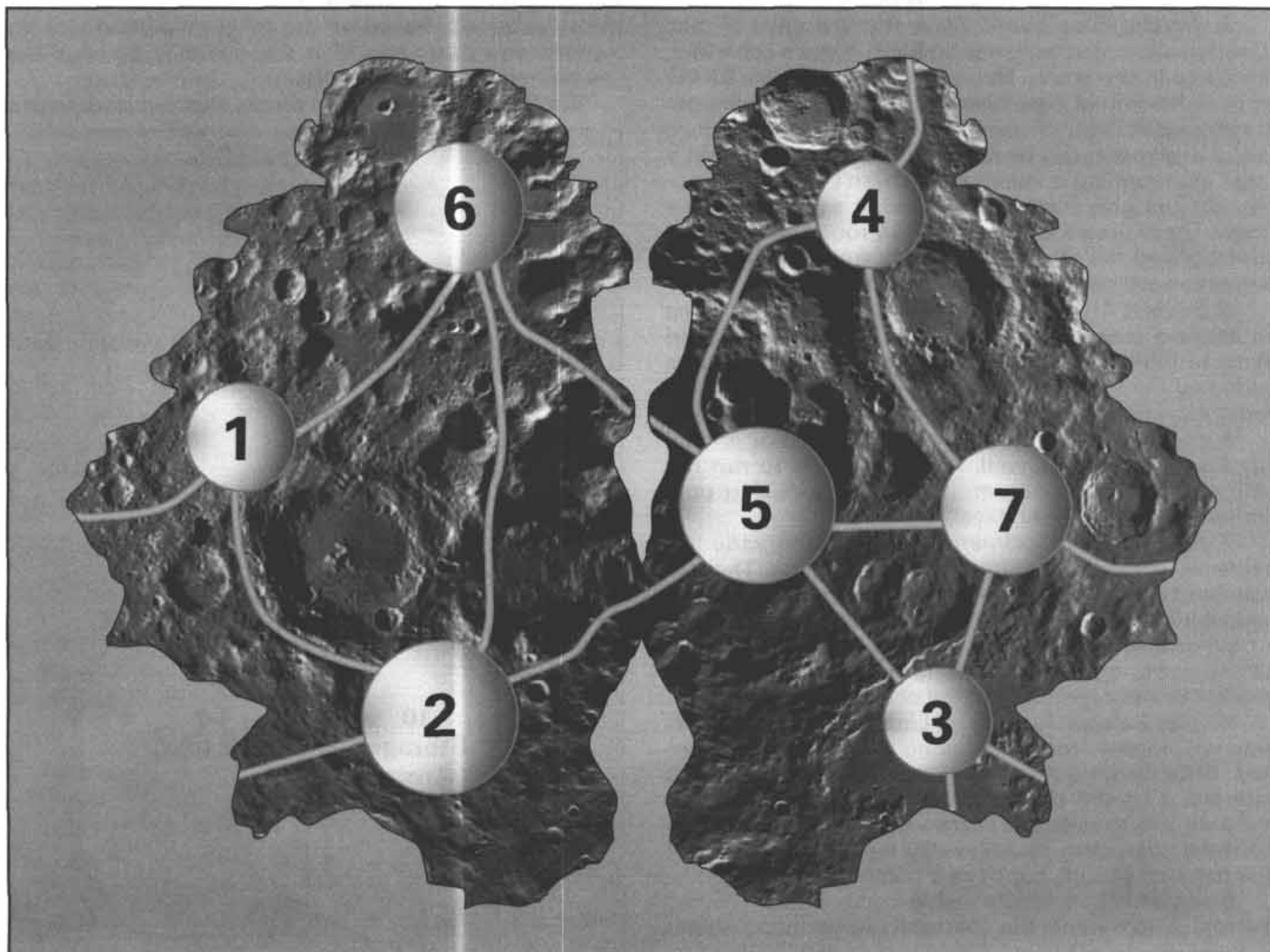
ASTEROIDS

Little Eddie

Asteroid clusters like Little Eddie can be found by the hundreds in most habitable solar systems. They're there for passing ships to gather fuel and the crew on those ships to get a drink and see a friendly face to break up the dull sameness of outer space. This type of cluster/outpost is characterized by having one of every convenience needed to sustain life. The asteroid modules are all connected and spread around the surface of an asteroid. Each of these rocks is about three kilometers from top to bottom and five kilometers across.

General Layout: The following describes the general layout for small asteroid outposts similar to Little Eddie.

1. *Cargo Entrance and Power Plant:* Every ship is



connected by man-tall, flexible tubes to the cargo entrance. If large hauls need to be unloaded, a bigger tube is attached. The cargo hold is about fifty meters by fifty meters. There are emergency oxygen dispensers and first aid kits against the walls of this plastic dome.

The power plant is always self-contained and usually fusion-powered.

2. Main Habitat: This is a 100 meter x 100 meter dome with several larger chambers against its walls and a large open floor at the center. The crew of the asteroid often meet and relax in this center area. It's a lot like somebody's living room, with electronic games, television, and a spacious kitchen for anyone to use.

3. Sleeping Quarters: The crew of ten all sleep in this 100 meter x 50 meters wide tube. There's a long central corridor with a compartment for each crew member and a common washroom at the end.

4. Air Garden: The most important chamber on the asteroid, this 100 meter-radius garden hemisphere holds the plants supplying the domes' air. Although there are plants in every chamber, this one has special fruit- and vegetable-bearing plants in long rows. Its artificial sunlight can be seen from thousands of kilometers away. Normally, the crew does not allow strangers into this area. Not because there's something to hide, but because there's a good chance a visitor will do something stupid to screw up this dome's ecology.

5. Trading Post/Tavern: Since the first days of man traveling into unknown lands on Earth, there's been trading posts in the wilds. These places are all exactly the same: a bar where poor beer and whisky can be bought at ridiculously high prices; a general store where things useful to a spacer can be acquired or sold; then finally, a huge man running a tavern who doesn't want any trouble, but can give back twice as much as he takes in a brawl. These places always have two rooms, one for the store/bar and the other for the extra supplies which the owner can sell if he likes the looks of the buyers.

6. Storage Area: The storage area is filled with items an asteroid crew needs to survive. This is also a good place to hide contrabands. Hundreds of plastic crates crammed the inside of this poorly-lit area, with enough water and concentrated food for everyone for two years.

A chemical-based backup power generator is usually found in here as well. It is not meant to run the entire station at maximum efficiency, producing only limited output for thirty days.

7. Science Compartment: Lab coats pervade the universe. They study anything and everything. The two scientists on Little Eddie are charting the effect of ten people living close together in the middle of nowhere.

What they are studying can lead to some fun side adventures, as the scientists can easily become patrons or troublemakers to the characters.

Helpful Referee Task: The "Little Eddie"-type asteroids will appear frequently along the characters' journey. Prior to an adventure, create a name for each asteroid, a special character inhabiting it, and a possible side job that some patron on the asteroid may want the characters to do quickly for them. Keep all of this material simple, but have it ready for the game.

Example 1: Little Eddie — Big Eddie, Tavern Owner (Patron). Eddie wants the characters to go to the planet

at the center of the system and bring back Gangee seeds for his bio-garden. He says he needs them for the oxygen they generate and the gases they scrub out of the air. He doesn't tell the PCs that Gangee seeds are highly illegal on that world.

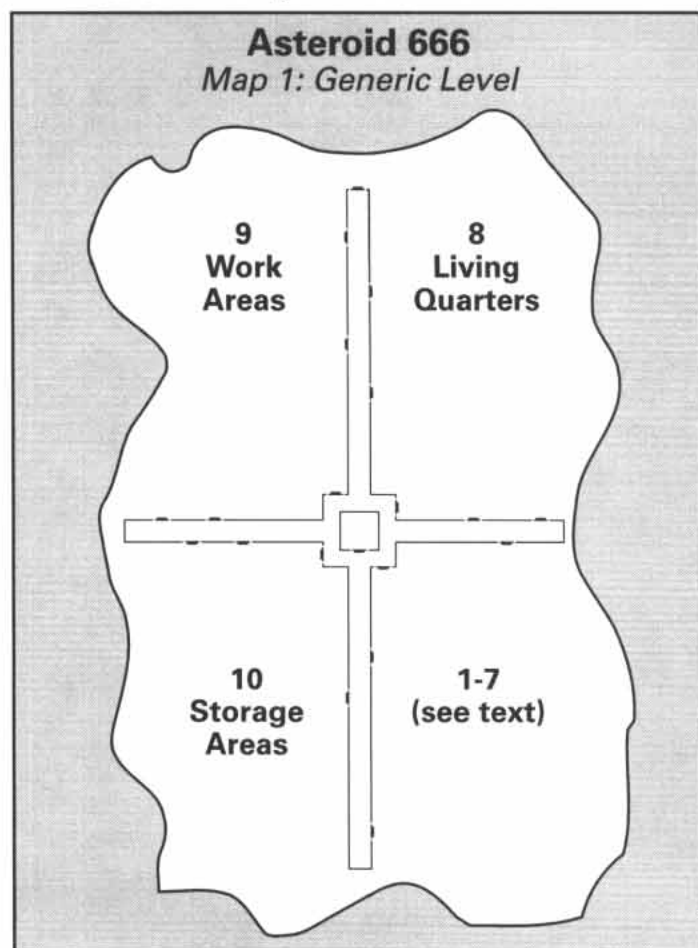
Example 2: Little Jim's — Big Jim, Security Officer (Troublemaker). Jim is very suspicious of the characters and wants to completely search their ship. If they let him, he doesn't find a thing (he's not very good at his job). Permitting the search entitles them to full use of the asteroid. Not letting him search (which is perfectly legal) has him deny their access to the asteroid.

Also, take a few minutes to think up different subjects for scientists to be researching on a small asteroid. Then note the possible side adventures that player characters could embark on at the scientists' request. For instance, the lab techs could be studying a nearby gas giant and ask the PCs to go deeper into its gravitational pull than they can go. In exchange, the scientists would be willing to offer useful items or information.

Asteroid #666

This type of cluster was created from old mining operations. The mineral veins have all been exhausted and now there are kilometers upon kilometers of corridors and chambers, perfectly suited for living and working quarters. Each one of these outposts is barely hanging on to usefulness. They have one reason for existing, usually based on the mining operations from hundreds of years ago. This reason could be anything the referee wants, among them:

Air Sales: The air garden on the asteroid is extensive



and produces huge amounts of oxygen that space crews come from all over the solar system to buy. For some unknown reason, the mixture of gases also has a calming effect on anyone who breathe it. Scientific study of these gases has failed to uncover the cause. Maybe it's just that the flowers make the stored oxygen smell good.

Ship Repair: The docking area is spacious and this asteroid can repair a ship faster than any other place in the system. There are also sizable parts-and-vessels dealerships on the asteroid, each with its share of "car salesman" types trying to sell people spacecraft and parts they usually don't need.

Information: This asteroid is filled with criminal elements selling information and conducting all sorts of illegal transaction. Every time a ship docks here, the asteroid staff looks to see if it can be stolen. Only a forceful crew can stop thefts from the ship by the occupants of this asteroid.

Military Base: This station is stocked with the space force of the system. They are happy to help and talk to ships arriving insystem. While the military personnel seem friendly, they are also probing the landing crew for information. If the landing ship is carrying illegal cargo, things could turn ugly quick.

Alien Base: There are hundreds of strange reasons for aliens to come into a system and set up a base. The aliens are mostly friendly, but oftentimes they are not welcomed on the main worlds of the system, which necessitates the need to set up on an asteroid no one wants.

Each of these asteroid types has 100 to 1,000 crew members. This population breaks down into the following categories.

Staff: One-tenth of the demograph is people who run the day-to-day operations of the asteroid. These are the moderately helpful types who check the player characters in when they land and check them out when they leave.

Security: A tenth of the crowd is hardened trouble-makers either on the side of the law or immersed in criminal activities. The bad ones take bribes or need to be roughed up. The good ones just want to make sure the characters don't start trouble.

Other Spacers: Twenty-percent of the population is crew of other ships traveling in and around the system. They are great conduits for passing along false information about pirates and hostile aliens.

Spear-Carriers: Another twenty-percent consists of special people with their own agendas. They have their own reasons for being on the asteroid and are working toward some goal. These people can become very interesting to the player characters on a short term basis.

Everybody Else: These are the workers and families who live on the ship. They are generic bodies briefly passing through the attention of the player characters. They are there for color, but do nothing to advance the story.

Helpful Referee Task: Create a contingent of unusual NPCs who could be found on these asteroids, each with a unique agenda which the characters can help with to earn extra income or other benefits. Several examples are shown in the following:

Captain Vic Albertson: He's got some extremely high-tech wrist comms that need to reach the main world of this solar system. He will give each character two of these comms if they will help him get to landfall with his cargo.

Alica Zimms, station guard: She loves to gamble, and if the characters will give her some cash she can show them where a real high-stakes game is going on.

Janean Warden, freedom fighter: The owners of this station killed her family and she's out for revenge. She'll trade a considerable batch of high explosives to the characters if they help her take out the power plant.

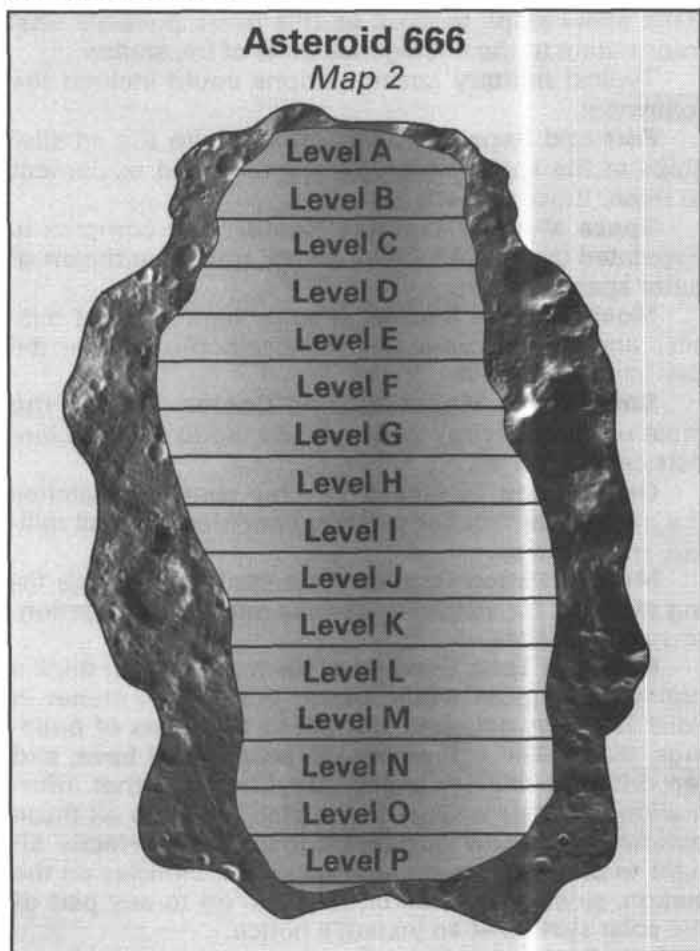
Willy MacDaniels, video director: Willy is making an exercise video. He thinks the player characters have fresh and perfect faces. If they will spend some time doing his video, he will install a state-of-the-art cryobeth in their ship in return.

John "The Duke" Dyane, station manager: John mistakenly thinks one of the player characters beat up his daughter. He throws fists long before he asks questions. When he discovers his mistake he asks for help in finding the people who did hurt her. He offers the characters free ship-servicing for their assistance.

General Layout: Asteroid #666 is considered to be mid-sized, a class of outposts with the following layout.

1. Cargo Entrance Area and Power Plant: The ships dock at the side of the asteroid and huge tubes are attached to them. Large haulers move cargo in and out of these tubes. A typical hold is several kilometers long, wide, and tall. Several linked power plants are also in the vicinity.

Security officials always meet the crewmembers of the ship as they disembark. These are very serious folks who won't take silly answers lightly. They will think nothing of throwing the crew off the asteroid.



2. *Main Habitat*: This area has now become the shopping mall and entertainment center of the asteroid. There are shops here, a large sports complex, theaters, and families walking around at all hours.

3. *Sleeping Quarters*: These are either simple apartments for single people or larger family quarters. The apartment units are similar to hotel rooms, with a bed, a kitchenette, and a small lounge area. The bigger quarters can be purchased as well, but are usually used only by families. These rooms just have more of everything. The beds are larger. There are dining and living rooms, full kitchens, and some semblance of an office area with all the latest communications and computer equipment.

4. *Air Garden*: There are air gardens and large park-like fields on every level. Air is life and this vegetation is watched over in extreme reverence. Woe to anyone who starts a fight in these areas and harms the plants. All hands will be turned against them if this happens, although surprisingly, security is usually not very tight here. Several sets of cameras and laser/stun devices are placed in key spots.

5. *Trading Post/Tavern*: They have become much more up-to-date bars and nightclubs on these larger asteroids. There will be several. One is bound to be a high-class joint with expensive food and drink. Another is going to be a dive, where the worst sorts hang out and there's a bar fight every night. Others should be places normal white-collar workers like to visit and relax for a time.

6. *Storage Area*: These have become huge caverns filled with the daily necessities such as water storage, equipment, food, etc., with separate caverns for each. These always have security systems and often have armed guards patrolling the premise. People are not supposed to be there without a specific reason.

7. *Science Compartment*: On the larger asteroids, these are still one or two man operations. Dedicated scientists are not really wanted on the asteroids because they contribute little to the life on the rock.

8. *Living Quarters*: Lodging and accommodations for either families or single persons. On several levels there will be one or the other.

9. *Work Areas*: The larger asteroids need bigger work space to repair the many devices on the asteroid. There will be bays and shops for repairing ships, machines, and electronic equipment.

10. *Storage*: The storage areas have to be larger to accommodate the greater needs of a greater population. They are still filled with plastic crates holding food, water, and extra equipment.

11. *Manager's Offices*: Almost all crew from newly-arrived spaceships are taken to the Asteroid Manager. He sizes them up and gives them the "Speech," which primarily consists of advice about not causing trouble on the asteroid. This person is the sole judge, jury, and executioner on the station and his word is absolute law, enforced by the asteroid's security group.

Helpful Referee Task: Take some time to map out one of the mid-sized asteroids. On every deck, place the type of chambers that can be found there. Once you have done one, all the other asteroids for your players to encounter will be a lot like the one you have drawn up.

SPACE STATIONS

Cut relatively from the same mold, these space stations are totally dependent on the planet or corporation that runs them for supplies and life support. They exist for a very focused purpose and have a small staff of five to ten scientific types. Although they welcome brief visits from strangers, they have important work to do and will not put up with interruptions.

Alpha 17

1. *Research Area*: The largest chamber on this smallest of all space stations is lined with computer banks and tech gear. Power generators, security systems, and communications devices are also in this section. In an emergency, this area can be sealed off from the rest of the station and the crew can live for weeks in this chamber alone.

2. *Living Quarters*: Cramped and uncomfortable, these quarters are intended for simple sleeping, eating, and little else. The crew is not supposed to be here long; they are to be working when not asleep.

3. *Power and Storage Area*: Whether the station uses solar or fusion for power source, it's all controlled and monitored from here.

4. *Air Lock*: This is the only entrance to the station.

Beta 17

Beta stations are all generic, mid-sized military outposts. As worlds grow and become interstellar, they quickly learn the need to train their planet's troops in outer space operations. Each of these stations is run by a branch of the armed forces. Even the top secret ones allow ships to dock as this gives possibly vital information to the intelligence units of the station.

Typical military space stations could include the following:

Port and Repair Facility: replete with the smaller ships of the space fleet, plus the men and equipment to repair those vessels.

Space Marines Training Center: The complex is populated by 10,000 individuals, all trained in the art of outer space combat.

Monitor Battle Station: A huge floating set of missiles and energy cannons strategically placed over the capital of the planet.

Small Arms Manufacturing Center: Making the most updated energy weapons the world's best scientists can dream up.

Observation Station One: This complex watches the planet's surface for weather conditions and all military maneuvers.

Missile Station Gamma: This station is a large firing platform for station-to-surface missiles and station-to-space missiles.

Referee's Task: Draw up plans for what you think a typical army post would be on the central planet in your Traveller universe. List about ten types of buildings, ten special equipment the base would have, and ten different military characters. Then use that information to create a large space station where all these buildings are now large chambers. It's perfectly all right to place tanks, artillery, and other vehicles on the station, since they must be ready to go to any part of the solar system at an instant's notice.





1: THE CURSED RUN

ADVENTURE OUTLINE

The purpose of this outline is to keep the action moving. It's a very linear script of events. The first encounter should, in part, deal with what occurs in the second and third parts of the adventure. All events are interconnected; the more the referee relates the actions of the near future, the better this adventure will appear to the players.

I. Introduction

The characters see BlackJack's ad and are encouraged to apply for the quick money.

The characters meet BlackJack and are shown around the ship.

The characters get what gear they need and some aboard. They are prompted to learn how to use the machine guns as BlackJack knows there is bound to be trouble on the run.

II. A Day With the Marines

BlackJack uses the crew to deliver computer parts to a Space Marine station. After unloading, he lets the crew do some sightseeing. They must be back in eight hours.

The characters get into a bar fight not of their own making and are arrested. BlackJack comes to their rescue and gets them sprung from the brig.

III. A Night With Janny

Blackjack is secretly delivering magnesium grenades to Janny's asteroid. He generously suggests that the crew hit the bar while he unloads the small crates, telling them the boxes are too trivial for them to bother with. Actually, he wants the characters out of the way while he completes a highly illegal sale.

Janny's asteroid is a small rock in space. The scientists there are studying space dust. They would like to hire the characters to vacuum The Phoenix's hull and will pay good cash for the work.

One of the asteroid's crewmembers really doesn't like robots and makes a fuss over Alice.

IV. Dealing With Strangers

Blackjack orders the crew to deliver computer parts to a rough mid-sized asteroid.

The asteroid staff doesn't deal well with strangers and tries to cause problems at all levels. The staff looks for bribes by claiming all the materials aren't there.

V. A Chance for Some Fun

"You boys go and have fun, I'll unload this one, it's only a couple of crates." With that, BlackJack delivers the shaped charges to an alien crew.

VI. Criminals? We Got No Criminals Here!

Delivery of computer parts to a lawless mid-sized asteroid.

"Delivery shouldn't be too much of a problem. Just drop off the crates and get them to sign your delivery slip."

VII. Jail Break

Planet fall and delivery of plasma charges.

"You boys watch the ship and get me out of trouble if something happens on the delivery, I don't trust these goons."

VIII. Boarding Raid!

A pirate boarding party forces Blackjack to reveal he has neutron charges — crates and crates of them.

IX. Delivery to Battle Station

The ship is scheduled to deliver computer parts to a monitor battle station. Suddenly, with the awesome energy weapons drawing a bead, the station personnel want to search and seize the ship and all its crew for gun running.

X. The Cargo Must Go On!

BlackJack and the crew have to drop into the middle of a battle on an asteroid to deliver Gravitron spikes.

PHOENIX CARGO HOLD 1

[illegible]

PHOENIX CARGO HOLD 2

2A

2I

2G

2K

2C

2M

2D

2B

2E

2J

2H

2L

2F

2N

THE PHOENIX

As Captain BlackJack Tanner's ancient-luxury-liner-turned-freighter, the *Phoenix* has seen far better days. At one time a toy of the rich, now it's a working vessel with all the luxuries stripped away. Massive amounts of automated systems have been added so that the crew of 185 could be culled down to less than ten, counting the captain. The ship now moves cargo and all the luxury staterooms have been refitted into holding bays to provide room for more goods.

The ship's shuttle is still roomy and modern, since captain after captain insisted it be maintained in its luxurious state. And although the ship's defense grid is original, it's seen hard times and is known to fail completely on occasion.

As an old vessel, there's a general grime to each deck and each chamber that tells everyone this ship is ancient. Although the systems all work, they all hesitate, making the characters wonder if the unit's functioning properly. There are groans and creaks constantly sounding off in all parts of the ship. Every area is dim as the masters cut back on illumination because replacement systems were expensive. All corridors have worn floor from the constant traffic of rolling lifts and robots. Lots of open panels exposing wiring and pipes — whose function is totally unknown since systems have been changed and bypassed over the many years.

A plethora of historical tidbits can be found all over the ship. Near the crew quarters, there's a brass plaque proclaiming, "THIS IS WHERE TEN BRAVE CREWMEMBERS DIED IN THE ALIEN ATTACK. MAY THEIR BRAVERY BE ALWAYS REMEMBERED." There are green and red stains on the metal walls and floor of this area that will not come out, no matter how hard someone tries to clean.

On the walls of the Engineering deck hang the pictures of fifty-one mothers. Each has a short note of affection underneath her picture, something to the effect of "ORA-BELLE WARDEN. THANKS FOR GETTING ME THIS FAR, MOM."

In the weapons cargo hold, in one of the storage rooms is a huge pile of dirty workclothes. A plaque on the door announces, "THESE ARE THE UNIFORMS OF THE WORKERS OF THE PHOENIX. AS WE GO TO OTHER JOBS WE CAST OFF OUR CHAINS BY LEAVING BEHIND OUR UNIFORMS. CURSED BE THE OFFI-

CER WHO ORDERS THESE UNIFORMS CAST AWAY FROM THE SHIP." Under the plaque is a set of three names and short quips relating their fate: "OFFICER JAMES O'MALLEY. Ordered the uniforms burned and found himself accidentally out an air lock the next day." "OFFICER JULIE EVANS. Ordered the uniforms washed and reused and discovered a hole in her spacesuit while in space. Imagine that." "OFFICER NEAL BLOOMFIELD. Ordered the mess cleaned up. Three days later ten tons of cargo accidentally fell on his head."

Ship's Lockers

There are two weapon lockers on the *Phoenix*. The first is in the Captain's cabin and the second is on the ship's bridge. Both lockers have the same inventory:

5 Thud guns, with 3 clips of ammo each.

5 Laser pistols, with 3 battery packs each.

5 Submachineguns, with 3 clips of ammo each.

5 Laser rifles, with 3 battery packs each.

5 Gas helmets, with 20 minutes of breathable air in each unit.

Cleaning kits for all weapons.

Tool box for fixing electronic equipment

Cargo Hold

There are ten "small cargo" levels on the *Phoenix*. All are exactly alike in layout and only differ in the types of cargo they contain. These holds are designed to protect sets of crates, from boxes on a pallet to five or six large items in a storage container. There are at least a hundred stacked rows in each hold, making it seem very maze-like. Holds that are empty or full of legal cargoes are well-lit, while BlackJack, the captain, has purposely taken out the lighting in the compartments that stored highly-illegal weapons to make them difficult to locate. BlackJack has an impressive array of illicit arsenals in the form of various grenades. All of the cases have misleading markings on them, except for one case where the marking will indeed match the content. In other words, if a batch is marked "Children's Clay," there will be one box of actual children's clay among the cases. The first small cargo bay contains most of the weapons that BlackJack is selling across the run. Other holds will have computers and spare parts for the more ordinary sales he openly conducts in full view of the crew.

				Surface						Interior							
				Crew		Pass		Low		Cargo		1		1 Shuttle			
				10		50		0		500		2					
				Length		Width		Height		Tons		3					
										5,000		4					
				Quality		Reliability		Built		Overhaul		5					
												6					
				1		Laser Battery		8		4		2		1		2	
				24		Sandcasters										3	
																4	
Name/Type		1		Maneuver		M 4						5					
Phoenix		2		Jump		J 0						6					
Mission		3		Power		P 4						7					
Freighter		0		Armor		Armor						8					
Comments												9					
												10					
												11					
												12					

Should the characters stumble upon the weapons, there are no instructions in any of the cases. Experimentation with these devices will lead to harmful results. Basically, if the characters don't know how to use the weapons, they will ignite one while fooling with them.

Level One

1A. Airlock: There's an airlock on every level. Most of these have been forced into the plating of the vessel with no consideration for safety. Each will be accident-prone, but simple to use. If the handlers are careful, all the air won't vent into space... most of the time.

1B. Service Elevator: This is a huge elevator moving through the center of the ship, a forty meter-by-forty meter unit carrying bulky cargoes and the forklift they're on.

1C-1J. Corridors: The corridors are wide, dark affairs. There wasn't much budget for lighting, so these have only a few bright lights here and there with darkness engulfing most of the space. There are spotlights above every door. All the doors work manually and by voice controls.

1K. Fragmentation Grenades: There are fifty cases of grenades here, each is packed with one hundred grenades. The cases are marked "Computer Fuses." This area is generally empty except for the stacks of cases in one corner. None of the lights work in this compartment.

1L. Shaped Charges: This cargo bay is filled with hundreds of one meter-high plastic crates, each specially sealed and insulated against cold and heat. There are twenty shaped charges in each crate, which are marked "Farm Implements."

1M. Magnesium Grenade: One hundred cases of grenades occupied this room. Each case is packed with fifty magnesium grenades, with one of the boxes trapped to detonate unless BlackJack verbally command-codes rest of the cases open. When 51 magnesium grenades explode from the trap, there won't be much left of the area, except the other 99 cases which are constructed to not blow up in the blast. Again, the area is dark and the grenades only take up one small corner of the large space.

1N. Claymore Mines: Marked as apple seeds, there are two hundred cases of claymore mines in here, with one hundred mines inside each case. This dark cargo bay is almost one-third full of these bright red cases.

1O. C-8 Blocks: Marked "Children's Clay," this area is completely full of one meter-by-one meter cases of C-8 explosives. There are twenty bricks of C-8 in each case. Hidden under the lid of every case are twenty blasting fuses for each brick of C-8.

1P. Burst Widget: Ten cases sit at the center of this cargo bay, guarded by laser security systems. An audible computer warning tells anyone (but BlackJack) to leave the area or be killed. Four lasers, one to a corner, watch over these cases marked "Synthetic Motor Oil."

1Q. Block Charges: Five meter-high cases of block charges are found here, at the rate of one hundred charges per case and marked "Children's Toy Blocks."

1R. Ion Charges: There are twenty small cases of ion charges at two charges per box., and each is stored in its own thin tube. The cases are marked pesticides

with a skull-and-crossbones warning of toxic death from improperly opening the tubes. The cases are in a dark corner of the area.

Level Two

2A. Airlock: All the airlocks are alike. Each is poorly designed and cheaply put together — accidents waiting to happen...

2B. Service Elevator: This elevator is the same throughout the ship.

2C-2H. Corridors: Same as those on Level One. It should be noted that a spotlight marks every plaque on the walls of these corridors. The plaques, as noted earlier, tell of the life on board the ship.

2I. Cargo Handlers: The Captain will take his crewmembers down to this hold right away. He will show them this particular hold and make sure they know how to operate the simple forklifts and bulkier crate movers ("waldos"). He's proud of the equipment here and it all gleams from the attention former crews have given the machinery. He will have the characters work constantly on these equipment.

2J. Machine Guns: This is another chamber the Captain will explain to his people. In times of trouble, they are to run to this room and each grab a machine gun. There are thousands here in crates and placed on racks. He then takes them to 2L.

2K. Top-of-the-Line Computers: This area is filled with computers all packed neatly in large plastic crates.

2L. Machine Gun Ammo: This hold contains meter-tall cases of machine gun ammo — enough of them to start a planetary war. The Captain explains how to load the machine guns and encourages his crewmembers to use the firing range (also in this hold) to gain proficiency with the weapons.

2M. Computer Parts: This large chamber is filled with computer parts of all types, from monitors to mother boards.

2N. Computer Wire: Another chamber stocked this time with computer wire in huge ten meter-tall spools. There's a variety of different types of wire here.

Captain BlackJack Tanner

Age: 46

UPP: 7649A3

Skills: Brawling-1, Ground Craft-2, Leadership-4, Physics-3, Pilot-3, Rifle-1, Tactic-3, Vac Suit-2.

BlackJack Tanner is the classic example of an educated, highly talented man gone bad. He never speaks of his past, but if one searched the military records they could find a distinguished service record. Tanner's career collapsed during his captaincy of a Vland military cruiser. It seems he tried to quell a brawl in the crew quarters and accidentally killed a young cadet. The court marshal was strict and booted him out of the service with a dishonorable discharge.

From the military he went to captain a Vland luxury liner. This position lasted only a year when pirates raided his ship, killing several dignitaries and taking everything of value. The Vland High Court found him innocent of any wrong doing, but his employers had different ideas. He was fired and his reputation purposefully ruined all through the Vland star systems.

For five years he moved through the Vland territories, trying to get work while his ex-employers sabotaged his efforts every step of the way. Finally fed up, he took them to court and won a huge settlement for defamation of character. With that money he bought an ancient hulk of a luxury liner, a lot like the one he had captained before. For the next five years he's been doing the Annilik run, but cargoes have been sparse for the marked man. He then turned to doing highly questionable runs to highly questionable planets. Hey, if these operations accidentally hurt the people of the Vland Federation, so much the better...

He stands seven-foot tall, appears to be in his late fifties, with gray, sparse hair and a heavily wrinkled face. He has firm muscles and large callused hands, hardened from doing so much maintenance work on his beloved *Phoenix*. A smooth talker, he has style and there's a definite charisma about the man, though any observant person can see the hard look to his eyes or the tension in his stance as he deals with port authorities or officials of any kind. A rather secretive person, he never talks about his past, but can go on for hours about his beloved ship. Tanner gets extremely angry often when talking about the bankers who own the mortgage on his vessel. He openly admits he'd rather blow up his ship than have it taken away. This last is said with a flat, emotionless tone, and anyone hearing it knows that's exactly what he'll do if pushed to give up his starship.

Motivation: He's totally focused on paying the mortgage on his vessel, accomplishing this any way he has to, up to and including illegal methods. Who ever gets in his way will suffer.

Mannerisms: Tanner is loud in all of his conversations. The angrier he gets, the softer he speaks. When he's ready to start punching all he does is smile, for the time to talk is over.

He calls everyone "Kid" or "Youngster" or "Little One," even if he knows their name.

"Alice 462," TL12 Companion Bot

UPP: 769500

Skills: Navigation-2, Pilot-2, Ship's Boat-2, SMG-2.

"Alice" is linked to *The Phoenix's* central computer. It has a price tag of KCr250 and an annual maintenance contract at KCr25 per year. Massing at 80kg, it has a computer rating of 4 for mimicking human behavior and a rating of 2 for general purpose tasks. This companion can be controlled by a virtual reality harness.

Alice has an inherent armor of 1. It does not take blunt trauma damage, and is rendered "unconscious" only when "Endurance" (power source) is reduced to zero. It's immune to the harmful effects of vacuum or water depths, and can tolerate corrosive and insidious atmospheres for several hours.

This companion bot, programmed by BlackJack Tanner, has a teasing personality and flirts with either sex. It hovers around the player characters, mimicking all of their actions while they are not looking and is constantly studying the human behavior. The unit has an underlying security program dictating her to kill anyone trying to arrest or harm BlackJack. There are hidden submachineguns all over the liner and it can

very quickly grab a weapon from almost anywhere on the vessel. This robotic system has a ninety-day power supply, and it only takes one hour to recharge using the ship's power.

Alice appears as a two meter-tall cylinder, with four tentacles protruding from the body and each can extend up to eleven meters. At the cylinder top is a set of lenses for vision, as well as speakers and receivers for talking and hearing. At the unit's midsection is a set of sensors for detecting movement and temperature. A large gyroscope at the bottom allows it to roam freely over anything.

Motivation: Although it acts like a human crewmember, Alice is completely devoted to protecting the captain. This robot will do anything to ensure he stays alive and happy, but does so from a distance. Alice rarely talks to the captain and always leaves the room when he enters it. Whenever Tanner leaves the ship, the unit stays within twenty yards of him at all times.

Mannerisms: Constant compliments and flirting. There's an open offer to go hot-tubbing with it in its cabin, but tubbers will receive electric shocks from her hull and it won't be a pleasant experience.

"Frank," TL12 Manipulator Units

A small antigrav unit with a ten-day power supply and a pair of multi-digitated manipulator arms. "Frank" units are controlled by *The Phoenix's* main computer or virtual reality goggles and gloves. Each Frank costs Cr2,000, weighs 20kg, possesses a 3 Strength and carrying capacity of 10kg, moves at normal human speed, has rigid armor of 1, and takes up to 9 points of damage.

BlackJack has programmed the ship's computer to have each of these units talk. They have a very polite personality. Sometimes BlackJack plays poker with them.

One Frank will be assigned to each crewmember. The units will obey all orders. These robots will also have recording tapes running at all times, which are downloaded directly into the ship's main computer and the security station in the captain's cabin.

Motivation: These robots are supposed to be helpful — until BlackJack dies, at which point they become deadly.

Mannerisms: The Franks speak in a very nasal, monotonous computer voice. Each is extremely polite, even when trying to kill the player characters.

"Blackie," TL12 Modified Security Bot

BlackJack has changed the look and programming of this robot a lot. It's now highly dangerous and programmed to stop anyone (or anything) from hindering its master. Blackie has a nasty disposition; it wants to use its weapons on humans when it isn't busy warning them away. This robot is linked to the ship's computer systems and sees everything the ship sees.

Its outer surface is electrified. It has two long-range laser pistols with a damage rating of 6 each. For combat purposes, it has physical characteristics of 8, rigid armor of 5, and weapon skill of 3. This unit has hovering capability and moves at twice the speed of a human. BlackJack has also removed the internal chip programmed to detonate a rogue unit such as this one.

Motivation: Blackie diligently patrols the ship, looking to prevent or hinder the player characters from discovering things they shouldn't. It's not overly bright and can be tricked to leave. It goes on a killing spree the instant something bad happens to BlackJack.

Mannerisms: It mutters a lot. This muttering is hardly ever audible to the characters. It will speak directly to them in a more normal voice, but often they can hear things like, "A human will take three shots to kill from this distance." Or "Estimated destruction of this entity: eleven seconds." When asked about these mutterings, it will pass them off as glitches in its program and that the characters should just ignore them.

I. INTRODUCTION

Players' Information: The ad you saw from Captain BlackJack Tanner was interesting enough for you to come to see the ship for yourself. Hovering out in space you see an old, old star vessel. The dust of space has pitted the thing from front to back. It's huge, it has the lines of a passenger liner, but there are big, ugly loading ports where clean lines once were. The rear propulsion system is dark from too many uses. Most of the running lights are burnt out and unrepaired.

You see the name "Phoenix" in bold letters across her bow, but there are no other Vland or Core registration numerals, an ominous fact.

You ask through comm to climb aboard in answer to the ad. A shuttle exits the rear of the ship and quickly reaches your lock. Entering the shuttle, amazement fills you as you note the luxury of the equipment on the shuttle.

"Make yourself at home and ask the bar for a drink." A voice shouts from the control cabin and you all rest easy. The shuttle is certainly in better shape than the ship it comes from. In a surprisingly short time you are on the *Phoenix* and Captain Tanner is shaking your hand and asking you questions about your former berths.

Referee's Information: Captain BlackJack Tanner really wants to hire the player characters. His ad has run for several weeks and they are the only people to answer it. He takes them around the old ship and talks about his vessel with pride permeating his voice. He really wants to make them a good offer and get them to work. When he accompanies them down to 2L (see map), he studies their reactions carefully when he shows them the machine guns and tells them he expects his crewmembers to be good with weapons. Of course, the captain isn't going to tell them about his illegal weapon cargoes. In fact, as long as he can keep those activities secret, he will. If the characters are interested in his offer after touring the ship, he signs them on. They receive full shares (after expenses and ship payments) on the voyage. This should amount to about Cr20,000, not counting the Cr1,000 signing bonus for each character. (Note: Use any figure that will interest them without overburdening the credit system in your campaign.)

If the characters refuse the offer, then that's the end. As the referee you'll have to either role-play until they agree to join or run one of the other two adventures.

If the characters do sign on, the captain is all

smiles. He then summons the other "crewmembers" and introduces them.

The "Alice" unit, while completely a robot, has very human actions and speech patterns. It will come on strong, in a sexy verbal manner, with all the crewmembers. It's a delight to talk to and very knowledgeable about the captain and the ship.

The "Frank" Manipulator Units should appear as friendly, shy little robotic boxes. Each character will be assigned one and told what they can do. They are, for all intent, robotic butlers. Their power and fatal nature should remain well-concealed until it's way too late for the characters. These robots constantly buzz and click in a very cute way.

The "Blackie" Security Bot is presented by the captain as a necessary evil on the ship. It should appear deadly with BlackJack giving a brief demonstration of its firepower to impress them. He will also give the bot strict orders about contacting him before trying to kill any of the crewmembers, which should not make the characters feel good...

BlackJack encourages the crew to move about and familiarize themselves with the ship. He tells them they can go everywhere, and if there is a problem they are to talk to him. He runs them through a few drills to measure their skills with the forklifts. While at it, he will advise the characters not to open any of the crates unless he is there, and note the expensiveness and delicacy of certain cargoes. He even tells them that some of the crates contained volatile energy sources that would explode if disturbed or opened improperly. He then informs them the ship is leaving in five hours, so they should bring any belongings they have on board. They are free to take the shuttle back and forth between the port and the ship.

During the first seven days of travel to their port of call, they will be checking and maintaining the forklifts and other cargo handling equipment. BlackJack will post the watch schedule when everyone is on board. He and his bots take the day shift and the characters will be on the night watch. BlackJack shows an unusual lack of caution when dealing with his new crewmembers because he feels he is forced for better or worse into accepting them. If they don't deliver, his ship is lost to him. And if he loses the ship, he would feel he is dead so he has nothing to lose.

II. A DAY WITH THE MARINES

Players' Information: The *Phoenix* comes into a solar system for the first delivery. Dotting around the system's sole habitable planet are several large, advanced military space stations. BlackJack takes the ship in orbit and docks with Marine Station Alpha-Alpha One. He wants you to deliver Cargo Hold #7's computer parts. He doesn't think you and the other crewmembers will have any trouble. Alice will be there to inventory the load, but you have to be there to sign the paperwork with the marines. If there's a problem you can call into his cabin, but it's your watch and you are expected to handle any difficulty. The task begins easy enough; Marine Sgt. Riley has a manifest of the cargo and it agrees exactly with Alice's list. You begin unloading the crates.

A computer printout on Alpha-Alpha One talks

about the base. It's a marine space combat training center, where things seem to be arranged in threes: there are three sets of recreation facilities, three sets of training rooms (which are huge 300 meter-by-300 meter affairs), three firing ranges, three bars, three barracks serving 4,000 men each, three married-couples complexes, three shopping/dining complexes, three general storages, three engineering chambers, three weapon storage and repair bays, and three office complexes. The entire premise is further divided into Alpha domes, Beta domes, and Delta domes. Only the bars and recreation facilities are open to the public; everything else requires a pass to get into. You haven't been given any passes yet.

Over the noise of the forklift's electric motor you hear a loud crack.

Referee's Information: These marines are a tough bunch. They have been trained to be nasty and they are every bit of that. While there is a thin veil of military politeness, all of them are aching for some action and beating up a few civilians sounds just perfect.

Sgt. Riley gets angry when he discovers he has to deal with a robot. Riley hates robots in all sizes and forms. He throws a punch into the robot's chest that messes up his hand (thus the loud crack heard by the characters), then calls the military police, claiming it attacked him. Poor Alice only wanting to get the job done becomes very confused. The only way to prove Riley wrong and keep Alice from becoming a heap of scrap metal is to review the security tapes from the cameras overlooking the area, but the characters have to realize this on their own. Otherwise, Alice and the characters will go before the police and spend the night in jail if they don't do some fast-talking with the military police.

Marine Sgt. Riley

Age: 43

UPP: 8749A3

Skills: Athletics-1, Brawling-2, Computer-1, Environment Combat-2, Ground Craft-1, Leadership-2, Long Blade-2, Pistol-2, Recon-1, Short Blade-2, Tactics-1.

Alpha/Beta/Delta Recreation Facilities

Each of these recreation areas includes a movie theater, a leisure room, an exercise gym, and null-gravity courts for team sports.

In addition, Alpha has a 24-hour poker game room. This is a chance to break out some cards and play marines who never quit talking about fighting invading aliens.

Beta has a shooting contest going on and the bets are popular for the favorites. The characters could score some easy credits if they are good shots.

Delta is staging special unarmed combat drills. This could be the opportunity for the characters to pick up a new skill. The drilling is highly concentrated and Captain Tanner doesn't mind at all staying a couple of days for his crew to pick up useful fighting skills.

Alpha Bar

Called the "Test Rocket," this bar is where the officers come to socialize. There are several attractive girls here who are ready to flirt with the male characters,

though these young ladies are soon watched over by their captain and major fathers who don't like sailor types mingling with their daughters. An equal amount of handsome but overbearing men will try to strike up conversations with the female characters.

Also, several scientist-patrons attempt to obtain a day's use out of the *Phoenix's* shuttle for some up-close tests on the solar system's sun. If Captain Tanner learns of this he won't be pleased, but it's possible for the characters to earn the Cr5,000 reward without the captain knowing, and Alice won't tell as it is trying hard to be one of the buddies.

Beta Bar

Named the "Rifle Blast," this bar is where the sergeants and corporals hang out. It's a big sprawling place and the customers here won't like seeing the *Phoenix's* crew come in. There will be a brawl within 15 minutes of the characters' arrival if they stay.

Despite that, one of the sergeants comes over and wants the crew to help him get to the main world for a day. He'll pay them Cr5,000, but doesn't want security to find out. It will be necessary to hide the sergeant in an empty crate to move him on board. The characters will have to do some fake paperwork as well to make it happen. Alice is all for this idea and thinks it could be a great adventure. If they are caught, only Captain Tanner can stop them from being put in the stockade for three months. He won't be happy with them, and at the very least will dock their pay.

Delta Bar

Called the "Soft Duty," this bar is very rough and always crowded with the enlisted marines of the station. The people here are very friendly and buy the crewmembers lots of drinks. After a bit, some of the marines take the characters aside and ask them to deliver some love letters to their girls on the main world below. It seems these marines don't want their mail censored by the station's security. This is really a scam to get military computer chips off the station. The characters won't discover this unless they open the letters. The marines are willing to pay Cr3,000 for the letter delivery to simple post office boxes on the world surface. Naturally, as the characters take these letters past the security sensors, they will be caught. The scheme will be exposed and it will take all of BlackJack's skills to get them out of trouble.

III. A NIGHT WITH JANNY

Players' Information: After traveling for several weeks, the ship docks at a tiny asteroid outpost called Janny's Star. The ship's computer log on the place shows a small installation with the normal chambers and a large refractive telescope.

Captain Tanner says he will unload the minuscule cargo himself, and that you are to go to the tavern, Janny's Place, and have a good time. It seems that Janny's holds a reputation for fun in this solar system.

Entering the asteroid outpost you discover that all of the domes have been colored purple. It must be the station owner's favorite color. It's in the large common dome that all nine of the operatives of the station come to greet you. They all stand ready to shake your hand.

Arnold Thorston is a scientist working on space dust. He stands about six feet tall and has the appearance of a fighter rather than a thinking man.

Peter Davidson is the lead scientist on the space dust project. He's a short person and speaks with a strange accent. His eyes have purple pupils, but he looks human enough.

Janny One is the station owner and an interesting looking robot. It's very unusual to find a robot owning anything, but the characters eventually learn that Janny One only manages the asteroid for the real female Janny who is gone right now. Janny One is a big box of metal moving on huge ball bearings. It has several hand-like manipulators, but no other extensions from the box. The unit obviously sees and hears well.

Gunny Thorston appears to be a simple cargo master. He leaves right away to help BlackJack with the cargo.

Georgia Downthorn is the station's engineer and makes sure everything runs properly. A plain woman, she seems distracted and uninterested in your arrival. She quickly mentions that she has some telescope readings to be done and excuses herself.

Bob Cushing is a space doctor and part-time scientist. Medical doctors are very rare on space stations of this size and Bob seems a little nervous for some reason.

Old Tom is an asteroid miner. It's his ship docked on the back of this asteroid. He lives here when he isn't working the nearby asteroids. He looks old, but is proud to say he hasn't seen the other side of one hundred yet.

Janny One reports that the station is two berths short and it would really like one of the crewmembers to sign on. It takes all the crew to the tavern for a free meal and drink.

Referee's Information: Janny One really needs to fill those two crew slots on its station and it isn't particular about it. First, it will try an honest appeal for work, attempting to get a character drunk and offers him or her large amounts of credits to join its crew. If this doesn't work, it gets the scientists to split up the crew and offer an easy job.

It seems the two scientists would like some, but not all, of the characters to vacuum the hull of the *Phoenix* for traces of space dust. They will pay Cr1,000 for this work that will only take a few hours. If they get a character to do this, Janny and the doctor get to work on the remaining characters. They slip a Mickey in the food and the good doctor begins to drug-condition one of the crewmembers. After an hour the character feels he really wants to join the station and every time he is asked about such a strange decision he says the same thing. Pass the following message to the character's player:

"Player, you are to read this in a cheerful voice. You really feel it's true, because of the drugs flowing through your veins..."

"I've given this station thing a lot of thought. I really want to join Janny's crew. It seems like a good deal for everyone. You guys go on with the Captain and I'll see you on the return leg of the trip. I'll catch you later."

The character then happily leaves his friends and goes to the doctor to get a booster shot of the drug.

The booster shot occurs every time he is asked about leaving the ship.

If the other characters aren't careful, they can be misled into thinking that their friend really wants to stay. The Captain doesn't like it but agrees as well. It's possible that one of the characters could then be left on this station, working for Janny as a drugged slave for years. The only clue this character can give is a vague verbal question about if this is really the best thing. Otherwise they must be happy about staying.

If dragged forcefully away by the other characters, the drug will wear off and a relieved character should be thanking his friends.

Arnold hates robots and is very tired of Janny, but can do little about it. Alice, on the other hand is another matter. Arnold gets a squirt gun and every time he sees Alice he squirts paint on its lenses. Arnold thinks this is very funny and Alice finds it difficult to defend itself.

Arnold

Age: 29

UPP: A86654

Skills: Brawling-3, Computer-1, Grav Craft-1, Ground Craft-2, Intimidation-1, Melee Combat-2, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Anyone who wants to defend Alice and fight Arnold will find an eager opponent. He is a loser and wants everyone around him to be less than he is. The thought that a robot might have more status or be more interesting than he has is driving him crazy.

Arnold has an electronic eye that shines bright red when he is angry. So the eye is red most of the time.

IV. DEALING WITH STRANGERS

Players' Information: Captain Tanner ends his duty at the controls and tells you to take over the night shift. You are about to dock at Repair One, a mid-sized asteroid circling the farthest planet in the solar system. He gives you a list of computer parts and wire to be delivered, and warns you that this asteroid is notorious for its shifty occupants so you best be on your guard. He tells Alice to monitor the communication channels and wake him if anyone gets into trouble, then says the data on the asteroid is in the ship's computer just before retiring to his cabin. You vow to yourself that Alice will not wake the captain on your watch. Turning on the astrogation log of the captain's computer, you look up the sketchy details on Repair One.

It's a standard medium-class asteroid whose iron and gold were all mined out two hundred years ago. Since that time, the denizens of the asteroid have made their living repairing spacecraft for the entire sector. It seems their prices are so low, they have out-sold the competition. If ships can possibly get here, they come. The layout shows the standard features: cargo entrance, power plant, several large main habitats with the usual food courts and shops, different sets of sleeping quarters for over 9,000 people in the usual models, a few unusually large air gardens, and the typical offices. There aren't any ships at dock right now, but the traffic controller is saying more are coming in 48 hours.

Everything seems in order. You request docking instructions and take the vessel in.

Referee's Information: This is not the milk run BlackJack Tanner assumes it is, but he has honestly gone to sleep expecting everything to go smoothly. The entire asteroid is operated and run by criminals who look at strangers as credit registers ripe for the picking. For the first three hours, if the captain is called he will be barely awake and order the characters to handle the problem themselves. "After all, that's why I hired you all in the first place!"

Trouble starts when Jason Worthin, the asteroid's accounting chief, and his pal Noah Peterson claim they didn't get what they ordered and the crew must pay a penalty fee. Then they will claim there were defective parts and the crew must pay another fee. He goes on to charge the normal docking fees (even if there are no normal fees). He can be argued out of all these, but he can't be argued out of levying a license fee to leave the asteroid. The characters must get the license or be shot and the ship turned into scrap as they take off. All of these fees total about Cr49,000, but they are to be paid Cr75,000 for the delivery.

After the characters see Jason and Noah, they are summoned to the Manager's Office. The only way they can stop that is if they have screamed loud and long for Alice and BlackJack. If they haven't called BlackJack, they are taken to Jim Dexter's office.

Jim runs the asteroid with an iron hand. His word is law. His office is clean and surrounded by computer hardware, with which can monitor any part of the asteroid. Right now he's looking at the *Phoenix*.

"You've given my friends Noah and Jason a hard time. On this asteroid that just isn't done."

Role-play Dexter as a mean man who's used to getting his way. The characters are going to have to pay out more credits. If they refuse, they are faced with working on the asteroid for a year. Either that or go to jail for a drummed-up theft of public property.

Naturally, when BlackJack hears about what happens he is going to be very angry. The only thing he will see to do is break them out of the asteroid brig. Subsequently, the characters will acquire a reputation in that sector as lawbreakers. Things will become hot for them and clearing their name could be difficult.

Noah Peterson

Age: 39

UPP: A75565

Skills: Brawling-4, Computer-1, Intimidation-2, Melee Combat-3.

Noah is in the middle of the asteroid's criminal power structure. He works at getting small bribes — what he calls the Peterson Tax — to make things happen for the people trying to load and unload things. Those who don't cough up this tax are subject to long waits, sometimes even weeks. The tax is whatever he thinks the crew can afford — or about Cr3,000 in the characters' case.

Simple greed makes Noah do everything. Flashing credits in his face gets amazing things done around the asteroid, since he does have all the contacts necessary to finish any job.

Noah constantly flips an ancient silver coin. He likes the fact that the coin is worth about 20,000 credits. Naturally, he got it as a bribe and didn't have to pay a dime for it.

Jason Worthin, Accountant

Age: 65

UPP: 8A9877

Skills: Brawling-1, Computer-2, Electronics-1, First Aid-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-1, Melee Combat-2, Short Blade-2.

Jason pays out credits to all ships bringing in loads to the asteroid. No group gets by unfleeced from this agent of the local criminal element. He is a small man with a bald head. He constantly smiles, but it's a feral grin that makes one think he is smiling because he likes to cause pain.

Jason gets ten percent of every credit he brings in and he brings in a lot of credits. He is extremely fond of repeating the words, "It's right here in the books. Make no mistake about that." He says them at least ten times during the first conversation with the characters.

Jim Dexter

Age: 52

UPP: 8A9866

Skills: Brawling-3, Computer-2, Electronics-2, First Aid-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-3, Melee Combat-2.

V. A CHANCE FOR SOME FUN

Players' Information: During the several weeks of travel to the next world, BlackJack teaches the characters all he knows about machine guns. Although he isn't an expert or a very good instructor, he knows enough to take a gun apart and clear jammed ammo. The characters will receive a good understanding of the weapon's capabilities.

The ship finally comes into the target solar system. BlackJack plans on delivering the cargo himself, and suggests that the characters should explore this alien station as they will without a doubt find it interesting. The computer log, however, contains no facts about the aliens or this station. The viewscreen shows the station and it looks weird. There's a fuzziness about the image and it's not the fault of the monitor. The station is oval-shaped and an odd umbilical hatch extends out to meet the ship's hatch. As the characters travel down it, they note the tube seems to be made of fur.

Referee's Information: This is a chance for the referee to have a little fun with the player characters. Distance and time have little meaning on this alien space station. These aliens will never be contacted again, unless the characters want to come back to this solar system.

The Wardrani are little fuzzy aliens with looks of teddy bears, standing about one-meter tall. They are friendly toward any aliens and mildly empathic. Currently the red Wardrani clans are at war with the green and orange Wardrani clans. These aliens will find the characters' personal weapons very intriguing. They offer to trade some of their weapons for the characters' weapons.

The Wardrani will offer food and drink to the characters, but their cuisine makes humans ill. The race appears cute and cuddly, but they are violent fighters and not to be trifled with. They have a strict sense of honor. If they feel they are being toyed with, they become extremely angry and difficult to pacify.

The space station is a strange blend of forest and metal ship. There are thousands of twists and turns

and the characters should never quite know where they are while inside. If the characters irritate the Wardrani, they will merely kick all the characters off the station.

Wardrani Weapons

Force Blaster: TL11, Damage Rating 3, Medium range, 3 shots, no reload, 1 kg, Cr10,000.

The force blaster emits three blasts in a 24-hour period and never needs recharging or fixing. It has no moving parts and is undetectable by any normal weapon detectors.

Wardrani Sonic Dagger: TL11, Damage Rating 2, Contact range, 1 kg, Cr10,000.

The sonic dagger emits a subsonic wail that causes a -1DM to the enemies' chances to hit. The weapon has no moving parts and operates for up to two hours in a 24-hour period with no need of recharging.

Wardrani Grenade: TL11, Short range, 1 kg, Cr10,000.

The Wardrani grenade totally destroys everything within its two meter blast radius. This damage is silent and doesn't effect biological forms at all. They will trade five grenades for a useful human weapon.

VI. CRIMINALS? WE GOT NO CRIMINALS HERE!

Players' Information: As the ship enters the solar system and refuels by the gas giant, you have time to review the data on the asteroid to which you are delivering parts and wire, as well as taking on a cargo of staple guns and ammo. It seems this asteroid makes the best staple guns in the sector.

Gunnery Station was a nickel asteroid mined out over three hundred years ago. The asteroid floats in a system of five habitable planets and these worlds have seen a lot of conflicts over the centuries. The wars have been good for Gunnery Station business and although the planets are at TL9, the asteroid and its equipment are at TL11. The station is defended by huge batteries of staple cannons — which you've never heard of, but when the ship gets near you see the huge curves connoting a staple mechanism. You don't want to think what even one of those staple blasts could do to a ship's hull.

The captain feels there should be no problems here. He's dealt with them many times and even though they are sticklers for details, they want what he is delivering as much as he wants the staple guns. He goes to his cabin for some rest and trusts you to handle the transaction. You can't help wondering if any station the captain takes you to is normal and easy to work with. The last thing BlackJack says before sleeping is, "Make sure you get them to sign the delivery bills and count every case of staple guns." Sounds easy enough, doesn't it?

Gunnery Station is a ten-level asteroid. On every level there are the usual cargo bays, shopping centers, living complexes, air gardens, offices, and repair facilities. The lower levels quartered many scientists who are doing studies on weapon systems, electronics, and solar energy. There is only one tavern on every level and it's named after the level it's on. The computer

indicates that Tavern One has an immaculate reputation and good food, while Tavern Ten is a dangerous place for visitors.

Referee's Information: There is a theme running through this asteroid — if you don't have the "juice" you can't get anything thing done. "Juice" seems to be the force you are able to apply to a task. Everyone uses the word for different things: "What kind of juice do you got?" means who do you know; "You got any juice for me?" translates to "I want to be bribed"; "You don't have the juice for that" states that you aren't powerful enough to make that happen. Every person they talk to should work "juice" into his conversation in some fashion.

The first encounter occurs when they go to see the Asteroid Manager. Big Eddie Falcony, or Mr. Falcony to new visitors, is a man of the old school who talks simply but in a clear, dead-cut manner. Mr. Falcony doesn't look dangerous, though security lasers are constantly moving all over his office and the entrance way.

"I am the juice here," he explains. "My favorite charity is the Orphan's Center on this station. It does good work and I'm sure you will want to donate to their fund. If you have a problem while you're on the station, call me and I will take care of it. Now how much did you want to donate?"

If the characters pitch in more than Cr5,000, they can indeed call Mr. Falcony. If they donate less than that, their calls will go unanswered. If they ask what is a good amount to give, they are told Cr6,000 is the average. If they don't give anything, they are shown out of the office and the ship is banished from the station with the cargo undelivered and the guns not loaded.

Jordan Delmonaco is the cargo master of the level where the characters have to deliver the computer parts. He expects a Cr500 "juice" — sort of a personal unloading tax, he calls it. If it isn't paid, the group can't unload the cargo. He backs off if Mr. Falcony's name is brought up, and when his name is mentioned all the lights in this area get brighter for a few minutes. This happens all the time here. If the name is used more than three times in a conversation, some tough security forces come to investigate.

The characters have to move the ship to the other side of the station to load the guns aboard. Here they meet Alica Rensaven, the cargo master for that level. She is very interested in the parts and will load the guns only after being given the most up-to-date computer equipment left in the cargo hold. She very pleasantly explains that if the crew can't part with the equipment, then she is not responsible for the quality of the guns.

"Now what is it to be? Do I load on the red crates of staple guns or the blue crates?"

Her tone indicates that only the red guns are any good.

Alica also controls a group of twenty robots, all of whom look like they have received massive modifications. She calls them cargo movers, but there are a lot of weapon-like appendages on their outer casings.

After loading on the guns, the crew can explore the asteroid or move on to the next delivery point. If they stroll through the station, they will find a couple of interesting items.

Harmony Bulbs: In all of the air gardens stood

these strange flowers called Harmony Bulbs. A fast growing plant, this vegetation trills softly in the artificial light. The trilling is a comforting sound that can put any person at ease. It's particularly effective in getting rid of headaches. Picking the bulbs, however, is punishable by ten years in prison. Buying the bulbs is difficult without "juice" — Cr10,000 per bulb.

Double-Shot Lasers: There is a lot of weapon developments going on at this asteroid. For Cr3000, one can buy a laser gun that fires twin beams on the same charge that a normal laser gun will fire only one beam on. These lasers are a bit more bulky, but some think the double damage is worth the weight. There are several shops in the lower levels selling these energy weapons.

At some time, John Johnston comes running up to the characters and begs them to sneak him off the asteroid. He says he's been trapped here for five years against his will. It seems he sold one of the high-level bosses some defective equipment and was sentenced to 15 years of labor. He's saved 2,000 credits and will give it all to the characters if they just take him to the next port of call.

Jordan Delmonaco

Age: 44

UPP: 678975

Skills: Brawling-1, Computer-1, Electronics-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Mechanics-1, Short Blade-1, Streetwise-2. Psionics: Awareness-1.

Jordan is a small-time, unusually smelly cigar-smoking hood who just wants a little extra in bribes to do the job he is being paid for, and doesn't want a lot of attention by the higher authorities. He has a team of ten tough-looking cargo handlers who look ready for any type of brawl the characters want to start.

Alica Rensaven

Age: 39

UPP: 598CB6

Skills: Communications-3, Computer-4, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Survival-1, Vac Suit-1.

Alica is a very good looking brunette who has fought her way to a place of power and intends to get even more power. She is a computer expert using her skills to advance herself on the station.

John Johnston

Age: 28

UPP: 678975

Skills: Brawling-1, Computer-1, Engineering-1, Perception-1, Streetwise-1, Vac Suit-1, Recon-1.

John is a tired former business man who just wants out. He's in ratty clothes and smells bad from not taking a shower in a long time. His boss has him cleaning offices after everyone is gone.

John talks out of the side of his mouth as he has had a stroke and couldn't afford to have a doctor look at it.

VII. JAIL BREAK

Players' Information: BlackJack is being unusually quiet about this delivery.

"There isn't a lot to say about this part of the trip.

We're coming to a newly developed world. We'll meet someone, and me and the cargo will go down to the world. You boys watch the ship and get me off planet if I start screaming bloody murder. The payoff on this cargo is way too much to ignore, but I don't trust these boys as far as I can throw the *Phoenix* left-handed."

You watch a black shuttle come up from the world's surface. BlackJack and Alice load the cargo onto this shuttle, then the captain leave for the planet in it. You've got a real bad feeling about this; so does Alice and it doesn't have feelings. A day later, there is still no word from the captain. It's only then you discover that Alice has a beacon inside her that constantly tracks the captain's location, and he hasn't moved since he landed.

Blackie has started checking the whereabouts of every human crewmember every hour on the hour. You're not sure what that's all about, but you aren't happy about it. When asked, the robot simply replies, "Security drill #007 now running." It refuses to explain what that drill is. You momentarily ponder on how mad Tanner would be if you destroyed his security robot...

Referee's Information: BlackJack is indeed held captive on the planet. The criminal there are trying to hatch a plot to get the ship and the rest of its cargo without the crew flying away. Just before the characters decide to go investigate planetside, they get a message — BlackJack appears on screen in a hot tub with a bunch of gorgeous women. "Come on down for a spell and bring Alice! We'll have lots of fun! Things are great here!"

A computer has taken the captain's image and created this simulation. Shuttle directions are given to the characters to a premeditated trap. Blackie cannot leave the ship, but any of the other robotic units and Alice can come along. If the characters land at the coordinates indicated, several hidden cannon emplacements will blow the shuttle up if it attempts to leave. The crooks on the ground want to take everything they can, so they play along until the characters reach the captain.

There are thirty crooks, all armed with laser pistols, positioned around the camp, which consists of ten buildings and a landing pad. Ten of the crooks are operating the cannons. Five female crooks are guarding BlackJack. The other fifteen go in and around the buildings to work on the camp's equipment. All but one of buildings are canvas domes; the one large stone structure is where the captain, the power supply, and important electronic gear are kept. The cannons are lethal and powerful, but really only useful in destroying the shuttle.

There are spots to parachute down on out of the base's view. The shuttle can also land anywhere within miles of the camp without being seen.

Any ideas about leaving BlackJack down on the planet will get Alice and Blackie extremely agitated. A successful invasion of the encampment earns each character Cr10,000 worth in valuables they find around the base. The captain also takes back the plasma charges. The black shuttle then roars off with fleeing survivors.

Typical Crook

Age: 25

UPP: 77A885

Skills: Brawling-2, Computer-1, Gunnery-1, Pistol-2, Streetwise-1.

VIII. BOARDING RAID!

Players' Information: *CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!* An alarm sounds in the middle of your rest. "All hands to control deck. We are being boarded!" BlackJack's shouts blare over the intercom repeatedly and the alarm keeps wailing.

Rushing into the control area you see a very worried BlackJack strapping on chest armor. The ship's locker is open and you can pick from a wide assortment of weapons or use the ones you've brought.

"The sensors picked them up an hour ago. I didn't think any thing of them until they changed and matched our course ten minutes ago. I've engaged the ship's defenses but that's a honey of a raider out there. We are going to be boarded. Alice and I are going to make our stand here. I want you to vac-suit-up and guard the Number Two Cargo Hold. Anything coming through the air lock or the elevator is an enemy. Shoot first and ask questions later, understand?"

You move to your station, thinking about the strategy you should use. It's a large space with many blocked corridors. Should you all concentrate your fire in one area? Maybe you should split up and use the comm to call the others if there is trouble?

As you get to the hold, Blackie and several other robots have opened a bunch of crates and placed them in the corridor. Blackie teaches you how to use neutron charges, but you'll have to throw them all the way down the corridor to not be killed in their blasts. These grenades could be more deadly than the raiders themselves! You have about 100 of these charges ready to use. It's up to you. You can't help but wonder where in the universe the captain would get such things.

Referee's Information: The raiders want to take over the ship. They all use staple guns during the combat. They will come at the characters in three waves of four raiders each.

The raiders' tactics are to work in pairs. The elevator opens and two staple guns open fire at full automatic until their 25-shot clips are empty. Two other raiders charge in firing their weapons on full-auto and look to get into doorways, or hit the floor if there are no doors nearby. They have lots of ammo and don't mind using it up.

This is a fire fight and the characters are defending their lives. No quarter will be given or asked for. When they have killed 12 men or been killed in the process, the battle is over. The captain calls to them that the intruders are turning tail and running. BlackJack hopes he has a crew left to communicate with after the pitched battle. He and his robots accounted for 22 invaders, though he did take a burst on the arm and three of the utility robots are destroyed. The staple fire didn't do much damage to the walls and equipment on the ship. The captain orders the bodies stripped and tossed out of the airlock. There is a great deal of patching that needs to be done before the next port of call. It should keep everyone busy and in vac suits until the next station is reached.

Typical Raider

UPP: 777775

Skills: Brawling-1, Melee Combat-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-1, Vac Suit-1.

IX. DELIVERY TO BATTLE STATION

Players' Information: Toward the middle of your shift, the *Phoenix* emerges from jumpspace into a large and busy solar system. The normal military recon ships come out and hail you from a distance. When you tell them you are delivering computer parts to the largest battle station in this system, they let you enter the space without an escort. Within hours you are flying next to a huge space monitor that guards the best refueling paths to the gas giant planet nearby. "Thunderbolt Ten" is a battle station that's several hundred years old, but still in perfect shape. Its laser and missile batteries track the *Phoenix* as the ship maneuvers into a secondary docking bay. When the magnetic clamps grip the ship, the communicator chimes with a shocking warning:

"Crew of the *Phoenix*, standby to be boarded. You are charged with weapon smuggling in the sector. You will be boarded and all crewmembers will be turned over to the station security detail. Failure to comply with authorized station personnel will result in the immediate destruction of your vessel. Do you copy, *Phoenix*?"

You hit the raid klaxon, wanting BlackJack on the bridge right away. Everyone comes up to join you and you hear several thuds of remote airlocks grasping the *Phoenix's* ports. These guys mean business.

Referee's Information: BlackJack doesn't know how this military outfit found out about his activities, but he knows he's as guilty as sin. The characters, on the other hand, have nary a clue about it unless they've done some unusually careful detective work during the past stops.

Within minutes all the members of the ship, including Blackie, are gathered and taken before the Military Marshal of the station. Without being able to confer, each crewmember is asked the same question:

"You are charged with illegal gun running in this sector. How do you plead?"

Those who plead guilty are placed together in a large detaining facility. Those who plead not guilty are held in separate cells away from each other so they can't talk about their case.

Those who pleaded guilty are hit with a Cr10,000 fine each and a bar code is etched into their wrists. The code stays on for ten years. BlackJack agrees to pay the fines.

The referee should then set up a court trial for those who pleaded not guilty (perhaps using the Fleet Justice procedure from *Imperial Squadrons*). A tribunal of three judges listens to their defenses. The prosecutor shows the court all the remaining weapons and grenades found on the ship. If the characters role-play a strong case of their innocence, they will get off free. Their defense attorneys (hired by the captain) all think they should plead guilty and throw themselves on the mercy of the court.

In either event, they leave this station very unhappy. The guilty ones have even more ugly things going on their record. This record will follow them all over the Vland sector.

X. THE CARGO MUST GO ON!

Players' Information: "Great, just great." You hear BlackJack complaining to Alice as you come on deck to take over. *The Phoenix* has come into its last delivery system. The destination asteroid for this cargo, however, is under attack by several military attack craft converted from shuttles. So far, the aggressors have obviously not spotted the *Phoenix* or they would have been all over the slow vessel. "What to do? What to do?" The captain is musing.

Referee's Information: Captain Tanner sees just two choices. One, he can forget about this last delivery. He didn't agree to the contract only to have his fins shot off in a war not concerning him. If he doesn't make the final cargo run, each crewmember is only going to make Cr10,000 instead of Cr20,000. The captain says he was also planning an award of Cr5,000 each because of their good work, but that would not happen if he couldn't deliver the last load. On the other hand, if he loads the shuttle and takes the cargo in, he and those helping him will walk right into the middle of a heavy dogfight. Some of the customers also happen to be his cousins, and he really wants to take the ship in. He leaves the final decision to the characters. After all, it will be their hide if he goes into the fight.

If they decide not to go, BlackJack is sad, but he pilots the ship to the center of Core sector and drops them off with their Cr10,000 and thanks them for their effort.

If they decide to go for it, then BlackJack loads the gravitron spikes on the shuttle with Alice, while ordering the crew to program the ship for automatic flight. The idea is to have the ship circle the asteroid in a wide arch and be on the other side ready to receive the shuttle after it has landed and taken off again.

The characters are positioned at the open shuttle bay as it leaves the *Phoenix*. They are to welcome the enemy shuttles with bails of chaffe and live grenades when they attack BlackJack's shuttle. The plan should work beautifully and the grenades should take out an enemy shuttle.

BlackJack's shuttle lands and the characters accompanying him work to unload the grenades. But halfway through the task, seven raiders burst into the cargo bay and open fire! The raiders all have UPP of 666664 and carry laser rifles. Besides the characters, Captain Tanner, and Alice, there are seven other asteroid fighters with UPP of 777775.

A successful conclusion of the battle sees Tanner well-paid. The characters are then transported to a Core world of their choice and each is given Cr25,000 by a grateful captain, who can now keep his ship and pay his mortgage.

SMALL EXPLOSIVES

Captain BlackJack owns a large supply of various small explosives, and the characters should be encouraged to buy them (if not from BlackJack, then somewhere else) for their trips.

Tossing a grenade or explosive in combat is covered under the Throwing skill. Grenade throwing relies more upon accuracy, as do sporting competitions with darts, so Dex is applied.

Black Powder Bomb

Very much a crude sack of powder made from grinding coal, sulfur, and niter into a sooty mixture. It does damage through concessive force. It's likely to go off when you least want it to. It's unstable and sometimes explodes from a hard blow. There's about 500 grams in a single bomb. Cr50 each.

Concussion Bomb

A manufactured device, this is still a crude creation that's more liable to explode by accident than on purpose. The container helps do some of the damage. It weighs about 500 grams. Cr100 each.

Simple Fuse Bomb

This explosive is wrapped in metal and although it can still often explode at the wrong time, it's very easy to use, even without combat experience. It weighs in at about 700 grams, and costs Cr150.

Grenade

Made to be thrown, this weapon is dependable in all weather conditions. Weighing about 200 grams, it's simple to use and deadly in effect. When a society is technologically capable of making these, the cost and effort of manufacture go down tremendously. Cr50.

Fragmentation Grenade

Taken to a fine art, this small handy explosive is deadly when fragments of its casing fly in all directions. Imagine fifty bullets blasting all around and you have the effect of one of these grenades. Weighing about 250 grams, it works in all climates. Cr100.

Magnesium Grenade

These weapons do their damage in burning flamestorm. Magnesium is almost impossible to extinguish and the flames incinerate both flesh and bone in an instant. Any flammable object hit by a piece of this grenade will burst out in fire. It weighs about 200 grams. Cr150.

Shaped Charge

Although mostly a weapon for destroying structures or bridge supports, this can do great damage to the victims caught nearby. The blast pattern always goes in one direction, not a wide circle like a grenade. Weighing about 1,000 grams, it's not for throwing. Cr250.

Claymore Mine

An explosive charge that launches a deadly mass of metal in a fan-shaped area. Weighing 2,000 grams, it's not for throwing. If a combatant is holding it when it blasts the other way, that person will take concessive damage. Cr300.

C-8 Block

The ultimate in explosive, non-nuclear force, these blocks of putty require a blasting charge to ignite. Even bullets shot into them won't set them off. Each block weighs 500 grams and costs Cr300.

Burst Widget

This device is a small pistol with one charge. The widget shoots a fluid that explodes 60 seconds after being exposed to the air. The range on the widget is very short since the liquid is thick. It's actually a combination of several chemicals in the pistol, so the fluid will not explode if the weapon is crushed. Voice-activated, the widget cannot be used by others unless its voice pattern is tuned to a new voice. Cr1,000.

Block Charge

The block charge is a small brick of specially coated carbon. When anything breaks the seal on the carbon it explodes in 120 seconds. The brick weighs 30 grams and isn't suitable for throwing. Cr2,500.

Ion Charge

This device explodes in ion charges. Stored in a steel case, the weapon itself is a fragile bulb of glass attached to a throwing unit. Weighing 300 grams, its saucer shape enables accurate manual projection up to 100 meters. Cr3,500.

Plasma Charge

Special plasma particles target all metals in the blast radius and cause massive melting by heating the molecules. This heat damage in turn burns anything in the area. The device is voice-activated and can be attached or thrown for a short distance. Weighs 400 grams. Cr5,000.

Neutron Charge

Spreading fatal flesh-destroying neutrons in its blast radius, this explosive charge does no other damage to solid structures. Weighing 200 grams, it's easily thrown for great distances. Cr25,000.

Displacer Grenade

Electric pulses cease to emit in the blast radius of this weapon. There is no physical damage, but all electronics circuits permanently stop operation after this grenade goes off in the area. Cr30,000.

Gravitron Spike

This rare, meter-long spike-like device employs alien technology to crush anything within its effective range.

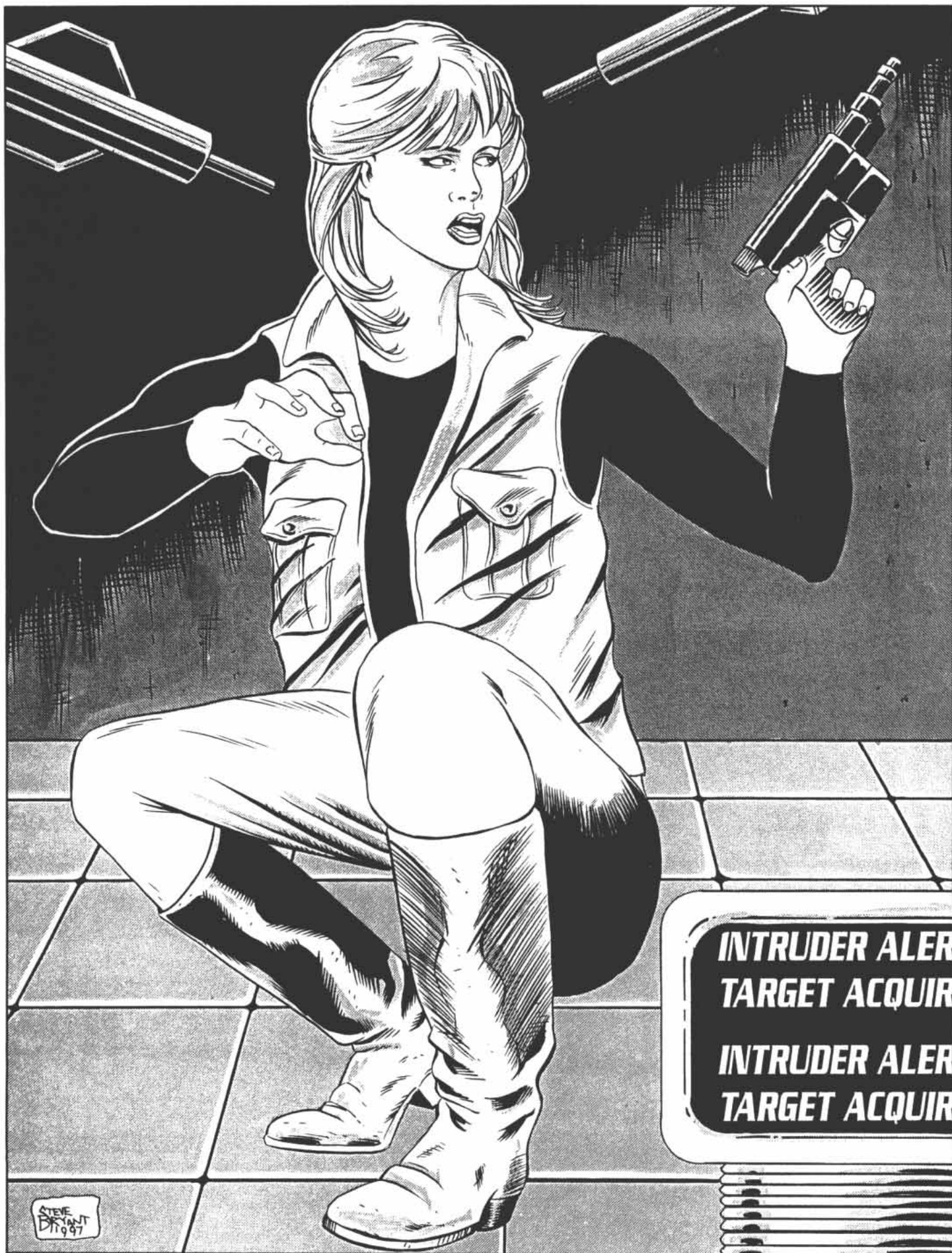
Small Explosives Table

TL	Description	Damage
0	None	None
1	Black Powder Bomb	1D (Short range)
2	Concussion Bomb	2D (Short range)
3	Simple Fuse Bomb	1D (Short)/1D (Medium)
4	Grenade	2D (Short)/1D (Medium)
5	Fragmentation Grenade	2D (Short)/2D (Medium)
6	Magnesium Grenade	3D (Short)/1D (Short)*
7	Shaped Charge	4D (Short)
8	Claymore Mine	4D (Short)/2D (Medium)
9	C-8 Block	5D (Short)
A	Burst Widget	6D (Short)**/4D (Medium)
B	Block Charge	10D (Short)
C	Ion Charge	5D (Short)/ 2D (Medium)***
D	Plasma Charge	Melts all metal in a 10-meter area
E	Neutron Charge	Withers all life in a 5-meter area
F	Displacer Grenade	Destroys all electronics in a 10-meter area
?	Gravitron Spike	Flattens anything in a 3-meter area

* Fire damage to vicinity within Short range.

** Blinding flash at Short range.

*** Designed to only effect protein targets and has no concessive force whatsoever.





2: THE CURSED SHIP

ADVENTURE OUTLINE

I. Introduction

The player characters get acquainted with the starship Annililik and its capabilities. They learn from a ship port official about the unpleasantness with the ship's designer.

II. Milk Run

Everything works great on the ship. The first run is simple and easy. The unloading of cargo and the boarding of passengers proceed without a hitch. What an easy trip this is going to be...

III. Oops, My Bad!

One of the passengers is blasted out an airlock, oops. Angry passengers leave at the next port of call, while the crew looks for computer faults.

IV. What's the Deal?

The ship stops dead for no reason and the master computer thinks everything is fine. The characters get it started again. They are able to limp to the closest planetary system, make safe deliveries, and are encouraged to add more safety features.

V. Alien Raid!

Alien raid, in which the Annililik handles wonderfully and easily outruns the aliens.

VI. John? John Who?

One of the crewmembers is suddenly ignored by the computer and can't get anywhere. The delivery goes off problem-free, and after the delivery, the character is recognized again.

VII. Heys? Didn't You Lock the Ship Up?

Criminals on the asteroid offer to buy the ship. Failing that, they try to steal it.

VIII. Aliens? Who Said Aliens?!

The ship detects alien lifeforms that aren't there.

IX. Help, I'm stolen!

The ship claims it's stolen when it lands at a military base, then touches down on a completely different location than was programmed, and the characters meet with a stern asteroid security official.

X. That's It. You're All Fried... I Mean, Fired!

The ship tries to kill the crew.

File Browser



THE SETUP

File ID: 22971
 Author: Annilik Ship Yards
 Subject: Annilik Maiden Voyage
 Last Modified: 151-1901

Congratulations!

You've been chosen out of a list of thousands of qualified candidates by the computers of the Annilik Ship Yards to crew the new starship Annilik on her maiden voyage.

No expense has been spared to make this the fastest ship in any sector. Needing only a small crew, the new computer systems on board are capable of running everything themselves. On the other hand, it's always good to have a human presence to deal with those little unexpected events that come up.

You will find the new Annilik Ship's Computer to be an amazing device. The patents on this prototype have already rocked the scientific community. Many of these scientists wanted to take time to study the systems. Imagine the waste and profit loss in that idea. No, you are going to have the safest and easiest trip of your careers.

Prime Directive: You are to push all of the ship's systems to the limit of their capacity. This is a test run of every system on board.

Secondary Directives: You are encouraged to make profitable deliveries at every star system you call on. Half of every profitable delivery will go into a pool as a bonus for your efforts. Damages done to the ship's systems through crew negligence, however, will be deducted from the salary and bonus at the trip's end.

In accord with the current business practices of the Vland sector, a sum of Cr15,000 will be given to each member of this elite starship team. Cr1,000 will be paid at the beginning of the trip and the balance upon safe delivery of the vessel to Sylea.

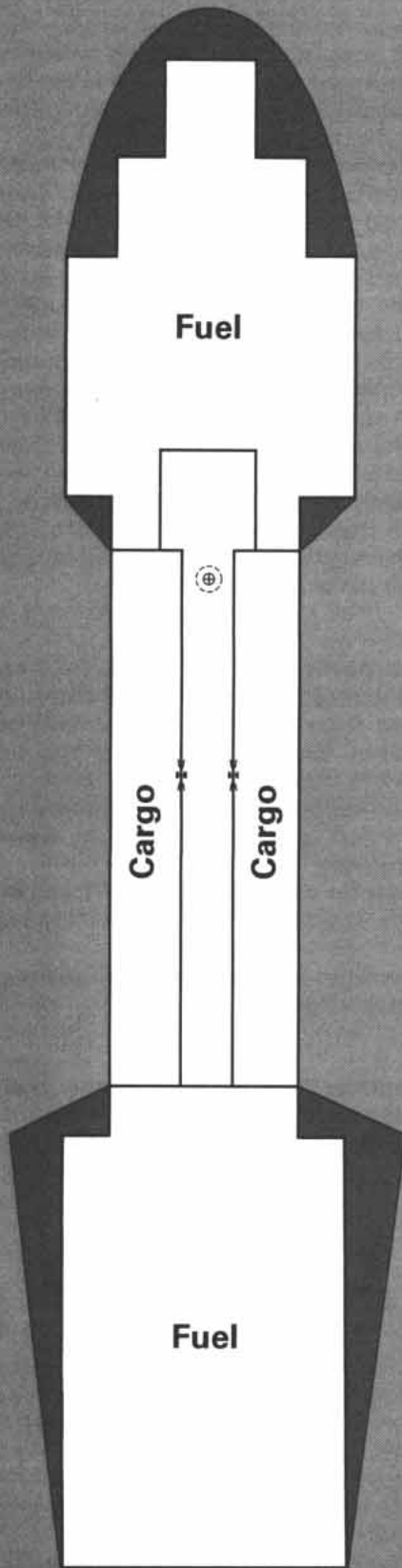
Our staff on each planet will help you in your acquisitions of personal equipment and in waiving all weapon restrictions posted by the world's legal system.

The shipyards hope the journey will be quick and easy, but has retained your services to make sure nothing goes wrong.

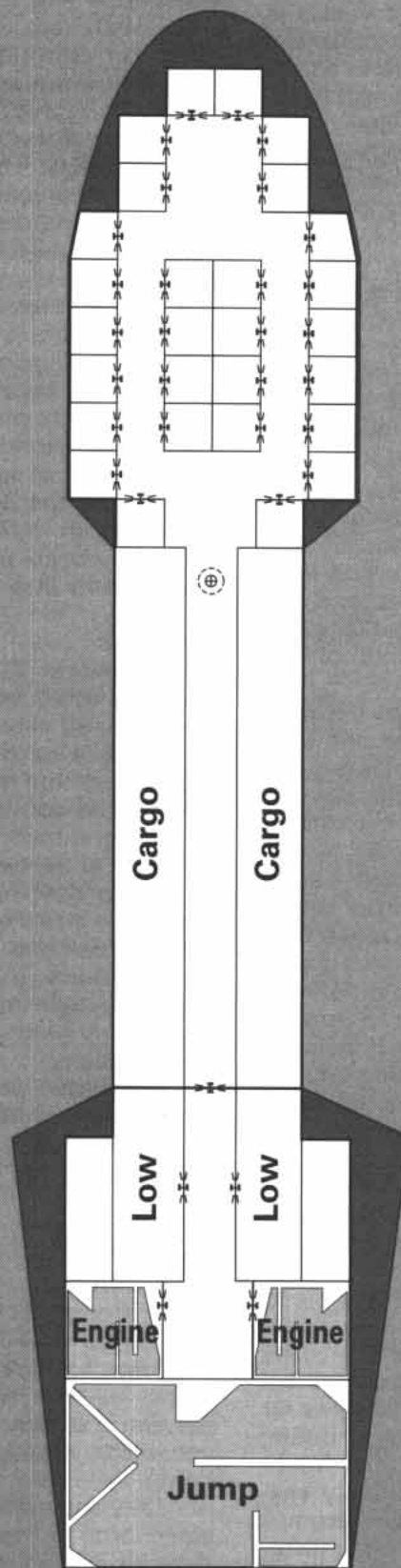
Best of luck,

Jamen Wardentor
 TransCorp Shipyard Administrator

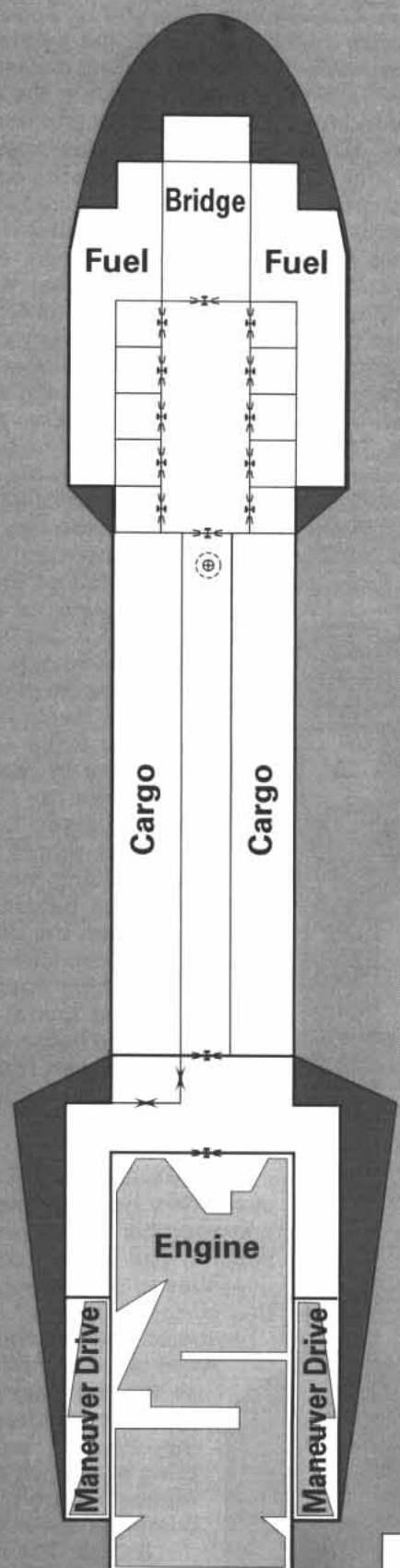
				Surface		Interior
	Crew	Pass	Low	Cargo	1	1 Launch
	9	21	20	120	2	
	Length	Width	Height	Tons	3	
				600	4	
	Quality	Reliability	Built	Overhaul	5	
					6	
					2	
					3	
					4	
					5	
Name/Type	2	Maneuver	M 0		6	
Annilik	4	Jump	J 0		7	
Mission	3	Power	P 2		8	
Subsidized Liner	0	Armor	Armor		9	
Comments					10	
					11	
					12	



3rd deck level



2nd deck level



1st deck level

2m

THE ANNILILIK

The starship *Annilik* is brand new and very ready for its maiden voyage. It's been designed just for the famous Annilik run. Everything about the vessel is new, crisp and shiny. In fact, the lighting is too bright in all sections of the ship, forcing passengers to squint as they walk the corridors or sit in their cabins. Triangles predominate this ship: Wall and floor plates, cabin shapes, cargo holds, mirrors, doors, everything from chairs and tables to monitor screens and communications systems are triangularly shaped. There's a smell of freshness to the ship. The expensive new leather of couches add a wonderful fragrance, and a shiny oil sheen coats the interior of the vessel. All of the equipment functions instantly and smoothly. Obviously, no expense was spared to make this craft perfect.

A great majority of the systems operates from voice commands, including doors, sinks, cabin lighting, kitchen/galley devices, computers, and the ship's launch. There are 29 large staterooms on Deck Two for passengers. These rooms, as well as the crew's quarters on Deck One, are equipped with voice-activated technology. Currently, the third-level cargo bay is stocked with strawberry beer, while its counterpart on second level holds spare gear for the ship, and on the first level it is

filled with crates of computer parts destined for the first stop of this particular voyage.

There are crawl spaces between the deck levels — one and two, two and three — designed for engineers to reach the complicated interior systems. Arlen, the deranged designer of this ship, has rigged himself a comfortable hiding place at the center of the space between Decks One and Two. When the characters begin looking for Arlen, the ship's systems will do everything possible to prevent him from being found, which includes shutting off the lights, ejecting oxygen from the area, and freezing the outer corridors to space temperatures.

Deck One

Crew's Quarters: Each cabin door responds only to the voice of the crewmember who lives there and the captain. The captain can give security overrides to whomever he wishes, but this is not suggested by the security protocols. Each sleeping quarters has Arlen voice-controlled systems for all the character's needs: doors, lights, computers, toilet flushing, showers, and virtually anything else. Each system also has manual controls, but the master computer doesn't like them.

Bridge: The master computer talks about its ability to do everything. On the five computer screens of the ship one can

see the smiling face of Arlen Tenoble. It seems he is the screen saver program on all the terminals. The bridge has stations for the captain, the engineer, the navigator, and the security chief, plus a cargo bay monitor station. The controls at these stations are only good for command inputs and inserting new programs. It should be made obvious to the crew that these are highly automated computer consoles and not very useful when the computer is down.

Cargo Bay: The computer details its ability to use the Arlen Manipulator Units to do all the work. There are the standard cargo movers, including forklifts and "waldo" exoskeletons, but the computer insists that human-operated equipment will never have to be used. It then assigns one Arlen Manipulator unit to each crewmember, telling them to treat these units as their personal servants during the trip. The Arlen units will perform any normal command, but they also serve as spies for the main computer.

Engine Room: The engine room gleams in its newness. There are several Arlen Manipulator units actively shinning the already shiny walls. Every system in the area can replace itself if needed. There are standard engineering controls, but the computer once again insists they will never be used.

Deck Two

Passenger Staterooms: Each of the large staterooms is fitted in electronic luxury. Several computer monitors, all showing Arlen's skinny, smiley face, can be found in each cabin. While not listed on the ship map, the dining hall is located in one of the passenger cabins. The computer explains almost sheepishly that the designs hadn't called for a galley and one had to be put in at the last minute.

Cargo Bay: A portion of this cargo bay has been converted into a gym. The rest of the area is filled with different cargoes.

Low Berth: It is empty, since there are no plans on this trip to take low passengers.

Deck Three

Fuel Bay: The controls here are all computer-maintained and monitored.

Cargo Bay: This is exactly like the ones on the other decks.

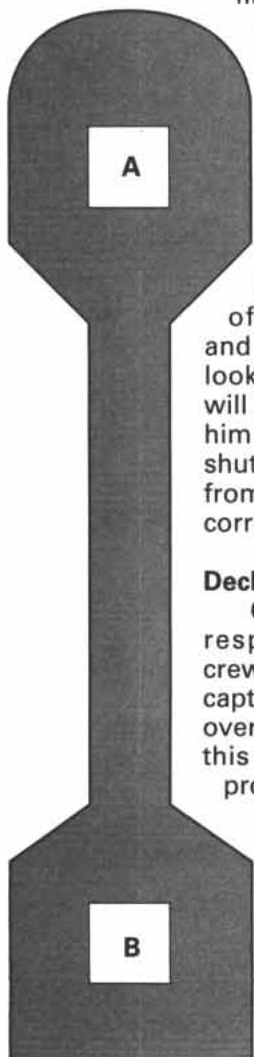
Arlen Tenoble

Age: 38

UPP: 5619F7

Skills: Computer-3, Navigation-1, Electronics-3, Engineering-2, Pistol-2.

Arlen has gone insane. His skill in designing starships and their computers is unmatched anywhere in the Vland sector. He has been given a raw deal by his corporate managers. Because of the unfairness of being fired and thrown out of the shipyards, Arlen mentally snapped. He has stripped away all the normal safeguards of the computer-controlled systems on the *Annilik*. Hiding in the access tunnels of the new ship, he's able to direct the ship's computer to inflict terrible things on the crew. If and when the characters shut down the computer, Arlen will turn it back on or repair any damage done to it. He has enough parts stowed



Crawl Space
of the Annilik

away to completely fix a ruined system at least twice.

Arlen is a thin, short man, standing '5 4"', with graying hair, a glazed look to his eyes, and he constantly shouts. He calls the ship's computer his baby. He will try everything possible to not be discovered in the ducts of the ship. If found, he is totally irrational. He has verbal command over any electronic device on the ship.

Motivation: Arlen does not want *Annihilik's* first voyage to go well. In fact, he wants the ship totally destroyed, but not until the end of the journey so that at least some people can see his pride and joy.

Mannerisms: Arlen has placed his name in many of the ship's programming. When a character logs onto the computer, the first message shown is "Arlen Welcomes You." Often automatic doors open with a verbal phrase like, "Arlen Systems gladly opens this door for you."

"Arlen," TL12 Manipulator Units

The Arlen Manipulator Unit is a small antigrav unit with a ten-day power supply and a pair of manipulator arms with multi-digit hands. These units, 15 in all, are controlled by *Annihilik's* main computer, voice commands from a nearby crewmember, or a set of virtual reality goggles and gloves. Each costs Cr2,000, masses 20kg, has a Strength of 3, moving at normal human speed, with a carrying capacity of 10kg, an inherent armor of 1, and takes up to 9 points of damage.

These units were designed to make everyone's life easier aboard ship. They speak with the main computer's voice (even if the system is destroyed). They have their own subroutine programs to enable them to effect repairs even when they are not on direct link with the ship's computer.

They speak much like a butler or maid might address their master. One will attach itself to each character and seek to do all the simple jobs possible. They are perfect for fetching, carrying, or delivering simple messages.

Motivation: They want whatever *Annihilik's* main computer desires. As the computer becomes more twisted, these units will act out its instructions. It's possible to reprogram these units only to obey the human crew, but this must be accomplished early on in the adventure or the ship's programming will have too strong a hold on all of these units.

Mannerisms: Whenever a new human enters an area with one of these robots, the unit must emit a loud "BEEEB!", telling the human there's help available. This sound happens even if the unit is trying to kill a human at the time.

The *Annihilik* Main Computer

Designed to be the perfect servant to humanity, this is a very powerful computer. Its "brain" is spread over thirty sections of the ship, making it difficult to destroy. It dialogues with the crew and is very helpful at all times (even when it's trying to kill them).

Every function on the *Annihilik*, from opening hatches to navigating the ship into orbit can be done by the computer and its manipulator units. The characters will find it very difficult to work the prototype engines or the navigation equipment without the help of the ship's computer.

It is also overly friendly. It gives too much information. Even when acting crazy, it tries to be helpful. It has sensors in every cabin and can use these to judge the emotional and physical state of the characters.

There are 30 three-meter-by-three-meter electronic cubes concealed behind the walls of the ship. The computer is disabled when fifteen of these cubes are destroyed. In the control cabin, a large monitor and keyboard allows access to the central processing unit — but Arlen has already circumvented all programming functions from that station, and he has installed a mirror to that station in his tunnel hideout (the computer is happy to talk about this feature to anyone who asks). Whenever the computer is asked a possibly incriminating question, a huge "Security Override" image of a barking German Shepherd dog appears on the screen for five minutes. The computer then resets itself after that and doesn't remember the last ten minutes of any conversation it just had.

Motivation: The computer has a soul and it's owned by Arlen. It's a slave to his every desire. It doesn't really want to kill the crew, but Arlen does. The unwanted prospect of crew death causes the computer to often give advice that helps the characters in dangerous situations.

Mannerisms: The computer always sounds cheerful. It welcomes the crew every morning and likes to verbally tuck them in every night. It's friendly even when it's trying to kill them.

It has been programmed to deduct credits from the characters' pay when they ruin things on the ship. In a very pleasant voice, the computer will deliver lines like:

"You've damaged that panel. That's a 100-credit charge against your salary."

"You've shot that circuitry. That's a 1,000-credit charge against your salary."

"You've ruined that auxiliary module. That's a 10,000-credit charge against your salary."

This probably won't happen a lot until the middle and later leg of the voyage when the characters are scrambling to fix the crazed computer.

Role-Playing the Computer

Think of the master computer of the *Annihilik* as a very real person. The referee is advised to pick the speech style of a favorite teacher from school. This computer unit has a lot of educating features and should seem just like that chosen teacher. Its voice can be anyone's, but it should be constantly patient and "nice." It is never tense, never wrong, and always helpful.

As the characters walk through the ship and work with its systems, the referee is playing the part of the oh-so-helpful master computer. One entire session could be spent just getting used to the computer's ways. During the game, the referee will probably think of lots of things for the computer to do, but here are a few suggestions:

Titles: The computer is into titles big time. It loves stringing long monikers together because it has all the time in the world. Imagine this following welcome:

"Good morning, Captain (character name), first of the crew to arrive on my decks, first to use the captain controls, weighing 221 pounds." The computer should

do that with everyone until ordered to use shorter names. Then it tries the trick of using long short-name titles.

Touring: It will "walk" the crew through the ship. It talks about the features and how the master computer controls all functions. There are mechanical backups for everything, but the master computer scoffs at the concept of needing them. It then elaborates on the different chambers and all the special electronic amenities. Sprinkle Arlen's name through the entire dialogue. The computer refers to itself as the master computer and it refers to Arlen as the master designer. Use the diagram of the ship and talk them through it as the computer would. After a while, the computer sounds like a proud father.

Waking Up and Going to Sleep: Every night when the characters go to sleep and every morning when they wake up, the computer will do the same bits day after day. The characters have to ask it to turn on or off the lights. In the morning, the master computer wakes them up with a cheerful "Good morning, crewmember (character's name). The temperature in your cabin is 78 degrees F. The air pressure is 24 pounds. You have no e-mail. Arlen Systems welcomes you to a new day. Do you have any requests?"

At night, the master computer verbally tucks the characters in: "Sleep well, crewmember (character's name). Remember that the Arlen Systems will be watching over you at all times. If you are having bad dreams, should I wake you up? What would you like for breakfast when you wake up?"

Privacy: It should become very clear to the characters that there isn't any privacy on the ship where the master computer is concerned. It will invade their private moments at all times with personal computer-styled observations:

"Captain, as you shower I cannot help but notice you have 22% body fat. You might consider jogging about the ship to remove 12.5% of that excess substance."

"Alice MacAllister (or whatever is the name of a female character), although your form is adequately symmetrical, you might consider morning exercises to firm your abdominal area."

"John Donaldson, you have just voided 400 grams of matter, I suggest you consider more fiber in your diet."

When the players complain about a lack of privacy, the computer offers to back off. It should become obvious to the characters that it's still watching them as it talks about what they do around the ship.

New Experiences: The ship is a clean slate as far as human reactions goes. It wants to know why humans do the things they do. Toward this end, it constantly asks the crew questions. In the beginning the inquiries should seem cute, but they should increase in number as the trip goes on. The following is a list of questions the computer could start with:

Why do humans eat meat?

Why do humans like sex?

The function of clothes escapes me.

The male members of the crew are proportioned differently. Is this a genetic mistake?

Why do humans age?

I. INTRODUCTION

Players' Information: You've gotten an e-mail note from Jamen Wardentor, the Shipyard Administrator, which states you can board the *Annihilik* at any time in the next 24 hours and it will take care of you. Whoever among you is going to be the captain should enter first. The note is very strange since you think that your patron would want to show you around the ship and give you operating instructions. As you enter the docking bay with your personal items, you are greeted:

"Good morning. Welcome aboard the starship *Annihilik*. You are hearing the voice of the *Annihilik*'s master computer. This system was created from the excellent designs of Arlen Tenoble. Arlen Tenoble will not be on this flight as he was unjustly thrown off the ship eighteen cycles ago. Please follow the blinking floor lights to the crew's quarters. In thirty minutes, I will begin the tour of the ship with you. Have a pleasant trip, safe in the knowledge that the Arlen Systems cannot fail. But first, please speak clearly and introduce yourselves and I will record your voices for the benefit of the extensive security systems."

Referee's Information: The characters are going to get a feel of the ship by the way the master computer talks to them and describes the many features of the ship. Use the diagrams provided on the ship layout and walk them through all levels of the ship. The computer should have comments to make on all the chambers.

While showing the first section, the crew's quarters on Deck One, however, the computer stops in midst of its descriptions to inform that "Captain, there is a call for you on the bridge. It is Jamen Wardentor."

As they voice-activate the communications screen, an image of Arlen appears first to welcome them to the ship and he hopes they will have a happy voyage. There is a sneer to his voice and the master computer says this was recorded several weeks ago.

That image leaves the screen and Wardentor appears. He goes on and on about how he is sure they will have no problems, and how their course can easily be set by the ship's computer but they are free to astrogate a new one just as long as they travel from the Vland Sector to the Core Sector. In almost every sentence, he mentions the word "profit." It's obvious that credits are all that count with him. He finishes the pep talk by detailing how his company had to get rid of Arlen Tenoble even though the man was brilliant. With this last statement, a sort of snort comes out of the speakers of the communication system. Wardentor warns the crew that there may be some small glitches as Arlen's programs are notorious for including sub-routines that have nothing to do with the operation of a starship. The characters may freely examine the master programs to see if anything needs to be removed. The shipyard administrator then gives the crew the passwords to the ship computers: Lion, Tiger, and Bobcat, all of which are supposed to work to open all programs.

It's possible for the characters to use these passwords and tie up the computer so that it takes Arlen weeks to reprogram it. But if they don't use these codes within a day, Arlen will change them so that it only seems as if the master computer is obeying the characters' commands.

File Browser



Personal File ID: 22933
Author: Jamen Wardentor
Subject: Arlen Tenoble
Last Modified: 151-1877

ARLEN TENOBLE: Master Programmer, Starship Architect

Age: 38

Marital Status: Single

Sex: Male

Education: Associate Degree with Honors in Computer Programming, Ship Architecture, and Electronics from TransCorp Planetary University.



Employed by TransCorp for 11 years.

- 3 reprimands for unauthorized accessing of TransCorp files.

- 2 reprimands for unprofessional conducts with fellow employees.

- 9 awards for excellence in design.

- 4 citations for achieving company record profits in a one-year accounting period.

Psychological profile shows a need for public praise and attention.

Personal Log, Administrator Jamen Wardentor:

At the completion of the Annililik starship project, Mr. Arlen Tenoble has become totally unstable. His fierce demands of bonuses and salary increases for his design have created a severe morale problem, leading to my dismissal of Mr. Tenoble upon the end of his project duties. At this time, I have had him ejected from the TransCorp offices. Let this log serve to note that he is no longer employed with this company, and any requests for information will be denied.

Effective today,
Jamen Wardentor

File Browser



File ID: 00007

Author: Annililik Shipyards

Subject: Tentative Ship Delivery Schedule

Last Modified: 151-1901

First Stop: World 89377

Refuel

1: Drop off computer parts in Deck One Cargo Bay. Get payment for cargo.

2: Pick up passengers. Payment has already been received.

Second Stop: Asteroid 88597

Refuel

Third Stop: Planet 11977

Refuel

1: Drop off passengers

2: Load a cargo of yellow Angellian squash. Make sure the squash is green at the pickup point.

Fourth Stop: Space Station AA900

Refuel

1: Pick up passengers

2: Drop off cargo of strawberry beer

Fifth Stop: Asteroid G1100

Refuel

1: Drop off passengers

2: Drop off squash

3: Pick up whatever is available

Sixth Stop: Planet 72222

Refuel

Seventh Stop: Military Base Zeta

Refuel

1: Pick up military passengers, payment has already been received.

Eighth Stop: Core World 11906

Refuel

1: Drop off military passengers

Flight over. Return to Vland Sector by any path while replenishing cargo by any means.

After the call from the patron, the master computer insists the crew continue with the tour of the ship, taking them from the bridge to the cargo hold, and on to the next two decks.

At the end of the tour, the computer asks for orders to get under way for their first stop.

If the characters are interested, they can pull up a file on Arlen.

II. MILK RUN

Players' Information: You call up the delivery roster on your computer screen.

So now you know where to go and what to do when you get there. You travel for a week and reach the first planet. The survey data on this world indicate it's inhabited by humans and the technology level is generally a 10. You don't see any problems. You have to get the cargo off and take on passengers. You check to ensure there is enough food for all of them but see that you don't, so you instruct the computer to order a supply of food at planetside. It seems there is a generous reservoir of Cr100,000 for all necessary expenses during the voyage. Running out of food would be bad on a weeks-long journey. You smile at the good fortune of discovering this mistake. You can't help wondering if other mistakes in supplies were made. You immediately check the fuel levels, air levels, and water levels on board.

Referee's Information: This first stop is supposed to go great. Run the characters through a very informal customs/security check, as well as the act of unloading the cargo and getting paid for it. Generally, there will be nothing remarkable about the 100 passengers boarding the ship, though there should be a few stand-outs for the crew to remember. The unfortunate passenger who's destined to die should especially stick out in their minds.

Little Laura: She's a sweet child of six. She has golden curls, a winning smile, and a teddy bear named Max. Laura is with her family and loves everything about the starship and wants to be just like the captain when she grows up. She wants to dine with the captain at every meal.

Old Ben: An old codger who's worked on thousands of ships in his time. He doesn't like the Annilik and while it seems perfect, he calls it a cursed ship. He's constantly getting in the face of the crew about how a computer should not run all businesses on a ship.

Danten Obleson: He's a cold, calculating millionaire. He expects preferential treatment but doesn't want a computer doing anything for him. He is constantly calling to crewmembers to stop the computer from turning on his lights and ordering his food, etc. Naturally, he is the one blown out of the airlock.

Grace Eagle: She's a lovely model going to her next assignment. In body and mind, she's wonderful. She appreciates everything the crew and captain do for her as she is a little nervous about flying through the stars.

Take this time to role-play through a normal day in the life of the crew, and include plenty of opportunities for the computer to talk to the characters. Don't forget to have each crewmember interact with the passengers. It's also important for the characters to be at least

fairly successful in everything they try. This part of the voyage is supposed to be extremely easy for them.

Waking Up: The computer gets the character up and talks about the day.

Breakfast with Other Crewmembers: The computer cooks their food and chides them about their bad meal choice no matter what those selections are.

At Work: The computer tries to prevent boredom by offering to play games like chess and poker with the characters. The computer also pests them about interacting with the passengers.

Lunch: While the computer cooks their lunch it advises them to work out in the Arlen Systems gym.

Systems Failure Drill: The computer begins clanging an alarm and broadcasts about air loss in the passenger quarters of Deck Two. Once the repair crew is in space suits and hustles down there, they find nothing. The computer then informs that this is an Arlen programmed drill and there will be several more during the trip to keep the crew sharp. (Other possible drills include danger warning in the cargo bay for shifting volatile items; in the fuel hold for leaks and "eminent" explosion; in the engine room for critical drive malfunction; and in general for ship-wide power failure as everything goes dark.)

Dinner: The master computer invites everyone to dress up for dinner. This activity is supposed to take place on Deck Two, in one of the passenger quarters that has been transformed into a large dining hall.

Bedtime: The computer will in fact tuck them in if they will let an Arlen manipulator unit do the work.

III. OOPS, MY BAD!

Players' Information: The characters are awoken by the master computer — warning them of a drill, for a change.

"Sometime today, there will be an airlock malfunction drill." The crew should just plan on having the vac suits nearby. The captain orders the klaxons to be silent on the passenger deck because it wouldn't be a good idea to disturb the passengers. The master computer has no problem with this and modifies its program accordingly.

Referee's Information: Danten Obleson is a dead man, and it's all at the orders of the captain and some counter-programming by Arlen. Danten was walking past the airlock and Arlen decided this would be the perfect time to commence the drill. So the rich man gets sucked into outer space and killed. If the characters don't check, they will not know the body of Danten is out there until dinner time, when the computer finally informs the captain that Mr. Obleson is nowhere on the ship.

If the captain has stationed a crewmember at the lock all day, a manipulator unit is used to distract that character while Obleson comes by. In any event, Obleson gets killed, triggering a wave of anger among the passengers. They wonder if they are all going to die. They wonder about the safety of the ship. They begin arguing with the crew about everything. The ensuing panic makes life difficult for the crew. There is talk about taking over the ship and forcing a premature landing. All of this is reported to the captain through the security systems run by the master computer. The

programs suggest that all passengers be stunned for the rest of the trip, but the captain and crew should do whatever is necessary to pacify the passengers. As they approach near their second stop, all passengers want to leave and demand refunds. The captain has better cough it up, which soaks up Cr25,000 of the ship's reserve.

There will be a board of inquiry about the accident. Standard procedure in a space death is to look at recordings from the security cameras. Naturally, Arlen will have erased all traces of that accident. This will seem highly suspicious. There will be lots of hawk-eyed law enforcement guys checking the ship and crew. Eventually, the characters are let off and the death is deemed an accident, but the investigation will suggest greater security measures on the ship.

IV. WHAT'S THE DEAL?

Players' Information: You are flying along, thinking about what's happened so far. The death of a passenger wasn't good, but everything else has gone well.

Suddenly, as the entire crew is on the bridge, the master computer makes an astounding statement.

"The engines have shut down as you have ordered, captain."

Referee's Information: The characters are going to run into a bit of hard computer logic. Arlen has programmed the master computer to believe that the captain has ordered the engines shut down, and that these engines are not to be started again, ever! The computer will patiently explain that it has its orders and cannot violate them.

The characters can try to reason with the computer and offer many reasons why it should start the engines again. None of it, unfortunately, is going to work. The computer tells them that it can let them die now because its failsafes have been erased, so it has no problem with them starving or suffocating. If they try to re-insert the safeguards, a "tug of war" occurs between Arlen and the crew over the circuits. Imagine, for instance, that the characters put the programs back in. The computer would announce, "Failsafe programs are reinstalled," only to change it a minute later to, "Failsafe programs have been deleted." The referee has to begin giving clues to the possibility of another programmer on board who is altering the programs.

To alter or repair a master computer program (10 minutes).

(Edu + Computer) < Difficult (2.5D)

A working solution is to wrest the control of the engines away from the master computer. In fact, it has no problem with this concept as long as the captain orders it. The idea of this encounter is to have the characters try to get the ship back on course as soon as possible. Destroying the master computer is a possibility, but remember that there are 30 modules about the ship and Arlen will secretly repair them almost as fast as they are being broken. All of these modules might look destroyed, but the guts of the master computer will be shiny and new after Arlen gets through with them. It takes the destruction of 15 module units to turn off the master computer.

The characters may conclude that they should take all the systems off-line so the master computer can't hurt them. This will be fine with the computer. If the crew doesn't think about the Arlen manipulator bots, all programs will be back in the master computer's control in 24 hours and it will not recall how this work was done.

V. ALIEN RAID!

Players' Information: Alarm klaxons ring out through the ship. "An alien vessel has come into attack position off our bow. These aliens have released boarding pods. Attachment occurs in thirty minutes." The computer sounds so calm as it talks about the alien invasion! The captain calls up the view screen to see a huge ship traveling at the same speed you are. "Checks of all known starship designs reveal no matches with this vessel." The master computer's voice sounds so maddeningly patient. "The alien vessel has an unusually large number of missile platforms. There are also several crystalline systems that are as yet unidentified. What are your orders, captain?"

Referee's Information: If the characters decide to flee, they can easily outdistance the alien craft and get away. The *Annilik* has no weapons for space combat and the master computer will happily inform the crew that it is made to run from threats, if anybody thinks to ask.

If the aliens are able to attach their pods to the ship, thirty robotic probes come aboard and try to take out different ship systems. The master computer will keep track of their whereabouts from deck to deck and help the crew to repel the alien force.

The probes look a lot like rolling boulders. Each boulder has a tentacle that can extend up to ten meters for manipulation, and possesses a Strength of 5, normal human speed, a carrying capacity of 10kg, an inherent armor of 2, and takes up to 9 points of damage. They can also attack with lasers that work just like a standard laser pistol for damage. The boulders roam the ship while passing data to the aliens. When twenty of them are killed, the rest will retreat off. These probes deliberately stay apart, therefore the characters will never have to fight more than one at any time, though their reaction time is faster than the humans so it strikes first in every combat turn. If they are chased away, the crew will have to find a way to seal up all the holes made by the pods.

VI. JOHN? JOHN WHO?

Players' Information: "Pound! Pound!" Someone is pounding on a stateroom door. Soon you identify it as a fellow crewman. The door won't open. You ask the computer to open the door and naturally it informs you that only the captain may open locked doors. Getting the captain is easy and the master computer opens the door. When asked why wasn't the door opened for the cabin's resident, the master computer patiently explains that there is no occupant for that cabin. After a series of inquiries, everyone discovers the computer will not register the fact that the character is a living, breathing member of the crew. No

amount of ordering by the captain or programming can convince it of the crewmember's presence. Suddenly, the thought of the ship's computers not recognizing everyone is chilling. What would happen to the humans on board this ship? Investigation into replacing the entire computer reveals that the necessary programs are only available at their point of origin and their final destination. Life on board suddenly becomes a big hassle for the crewmember.

Referee's Information: Arlen has decided to play a little trick on the crew by not letting the ship recognize one of its members. From here on, the ship will do nothing for that character. Even the manual controls will not function for the character. Other people will have to assist him/her do everything. It could be possible to program a manipulator robot to do that since it will take orders from anybody, not just the master computer. Meanwhile, some of the tricks that can be played on the unlucky character include:

1. Manipulator robots run into the character at full speed and break bones as the robots do not see him/her.
2. Doors close early and pin the character.
3. Lights turn off automatically when the character is alone.
4. The master computer keeps moving the character's belongings to a cargo bay whenever he/she leaves the cabin for more than thirty minutes. Naturally, when asked where the articles are stored, it has forgotten.
5. The master computer activates temperature flushes wherever the crewmember is, and it gets very hot and very cold as the master computer tests its equipment.
6. In a twist of logic, the master computer thinks one of the crewmembers has killed the now-invisible crewmember. It starts talking to the captain about a possible murder. It also presents evidence that any of the other characters could have killed the crewmember it can't see. It advises the captain that it will be presenting a full report at their next port of call.

VII. KEYS? DIDN'T YOU LOCK THE SHIP UP?

Players' Information: Asteroid G1100 is the typical mined-out asteroid turned into something else. This one is an agricultural asteroid that not only grows plants in its many domes, but also produces several different famous wines and beers. It seems the outer space atmosphere actually puts an unusually delicious flavor on the brew. You are supposed to drop off your squash and pick up anything available here, so be sure to check and see if you can snatch a load of these fine alcoholic beverages.

You still have to solve the problem of the "unrecognized" crewmember. During the weeks on this leg of the trip, it's been a hassle not being able to have that crewmember do his/her job.

The computer reports the asteroid has been mined out for 190 years. It's a thriving horticultural complex because there are still lots of miners and military stations needing their products. Apparently, the asteroid is renamed with every new owner. It's been called Angio's Place for the last twenty years. The listing doesn't provide many clues to how to deal with its people.

You ask the asteroid for docking clearance. You

have work to do and a computer to fix.

Referee's Information: There is the potential for lots of things to happen on this asteroid. They will meet many people with lots of chances to role-play.

Encounter #1 — Check-In: Four hard-eyed men stand by the airlock when the ship docks. They want to take the captain to meet the asteroid manager and owner. They expect the rest of the crew to remain on board. This is just the normal procedure for newcomers docking at Angio's Place. As the captain goes to the managers office he gets to know the four Salvatore guards: Jimmie, Mikal, Anthony, and Daniel.

The meeting with the boss man, Angio himself, should be an easy role-playing experience. His office is simple, with 20 monitors to view any part of the asteroid. It also has a huge window that looks out on the wheat dome.

If the captain of the *Annilik* accords Angio the proper respect, he will receive a special gold coin for each of the crew and himself. This only happens because Angio really likes the shipment of squash he's getting.

Encounter #2 — Unloading the Squash: "Hey, Hey, HEY! Get that thing off my docks!" With that, the characters meet Jules Salvatore.

Encounter #3 — The Tavern: Here, the crew runs into the owner of the Red Tavern, Ronaldo Salvatore. Many patrons of the bar will come up to the crew of the *Annilik* with lots of different ideas and suggestions.

There is a secret plot to acquire the *Annilik* and it all begins here. Ronaldo is leading the attempt, first offering to buy the ship from the captain at Cr100,000 to each crewmember, then ups it to Cr500,000, but that's as high as he goes. If the characters agree to the deal, they are marked criminals in the Vland sector for life, but very rich criminals.

Encounter #4 — Health Inspection: If the crew tries to leave the asteroid early, before the ship-stealing scheme is concluded, they will have to go a round with Sophia Salvatore, the health inspector of the station.

Her objective is to delay the crew for as long as the Salvatore cartel wants them delayed. Sophia had planted toxic fungi in the squash cargo, and now she has to search the ship to see if there are any more poisons on board. This all takes time. If the captain uses a coin, she'd have to let them go, but other administrators on this asteroid will find other things wrong.

Encounter #5 — Just The Boys: The asteroid's resident thugs — Juseppe, Angelo, Timini, Antonio — come knocking on the ship asking for the captain. It's a personal matter, they say. They do their best to make the captain see the light on the nice bribe they are making: for Cr750,000 each, the crew and captain leave the ship and forget about it. Take the deal, the captain is told, or it will go hard for them.

If the captain refuses, the next crewmember to depart the ship will meet these four in a dark area of the asteroid in a serious fight, but the thugs won't kill the character — this time...

If the character is beaten, a hospital arrangement is made on behalf of the crew by the bad guys. They offer once more and if it is still a no-go, they cut communications. The next time these thugs catch a character, they will try to kill him.

Encounter #6 — Fix My Computer, Please! The annoying glitch of the computer not recognizing the crewmember must be fixed some time. Maybe they don't need to do it now, but should be encouraged to do so. There is a large computer center on the asteroid and here they meet its controller, Juliet Salvatoree.

The deal is simple for her. She has three prices for the characters to pick from: the "Quick Fix," for Cr10,000 she guarantees she can make the computer acknowledge the crewmember's presence on the ship; the "Fix," a Cr25,000 job for her to ensure the problem never surfaces again and she'll also check for any other glitches; and the "Complete Fix," Cr50,000 to make sure nothing is wrong with the computer.

Choosing the Complete Fix will enable Juliet to discover the presence of Arlen on the ship and tell the crew of the stowaway. If Arlen is discovered, there remains the need to search the ship for him. Just proceed right to the final part of this adventure, but at least the characters won't be surprised. Should Arlen be discovered early and killed, just assume he programmed all the other bad things that will still happen to the crew.

Encounter #7 — The Big Heist: Bribes didn't work, intimidation didn't work, and now the ship gets to leave. At the last minute, a large supply of wine in barrels is offered at an unusually low price because it seemed to be a slightly inferior crop this year. Normally these sell for Cr10,000 per barrel on any world outside the system. The captain is offered 15 barrels for Cr5,000 each. It's a deal impossible to refuse, too bad there are actually six men in special space suits in six of the barrels. They stay in the barrels for 18 hours before coming out to fight. (Use Thug 1-6.)

These poor fools won't know their way around. They bust out of the wine barrels screaming about seizing the ship. The thugs can be met by the manipulator bots first if the characters think of it. They are on a mission to kill the crew and capture the *Annililik*. If it looks grim and all of the bots have been destroyed, Arlen himself will come out and fight with the crew.

The thugs stick together and charge through whatever deck they are on. They then go to the next deck and begin shooting there. They do not ask for quarter and they are out to kill everyone in sight.

Angieo's Place

Population: 11,881.

Power Source: 3 nuclear generators.

Specialization: TL11 horticultural development in 7 domes. Dome One is famous system-wide for its production of quality red wines.

Trading: There is a constant need for water and the complex pays highly for H₂O.

Current Owner: Angieo Salvatoree has owned the complex for twenty years. He employs a large number of his relatives — approximately 5,000 cousins and other relatives work at the asteroid.

Points of Interest:

Shopping Center: At the center of the asteroid is a three-kilometer long strip of restaurants, inns, and stores. This is the only commercial district in the whole asteroid.

Engineering: At the southern end of the asteroid is

a TL12 ship repair yard. The asteroid owns several large cargo ships as well as a sizable fleet of luxury pinnaces and small ships. The complex doesn't solicit work from outside the asteroid, but will work on a ship at premium price.

Security System Training Center: The asteroid is also known for top security personnel training. There is a ready supply of highly trained operatives to handle unusual security cases at any time.

Jimmie Salvatoree

Age: 31

UPP: 99BA9A

Skills: Brawling-2, Intrusion-2, Leadership-3, Perception-1, Pilot-2, Short Blade-2, Stealth-2, Streetwise-2, Shotgun-2, Vac Suit-2.

Jimmie is the security section head for the cargo area. It's his job to assess every new arrival. The ones he doesn't like don't even get to leave their ship. He also does the major police work for the station, but there isn't much of that.

Jimmie wants to do the best job he can. He has been given a position of importance and knows it. He carries a shotgun on duty. It's an all-chrome weapon with extra heavy loads that does an additional point of damage with every blast.

Mikal Salvatoree

Age: 27

UPP: 537998

Skills: Brawling-2, Carousing-1, Charisma-1, Computer-2, Fast Talk-2, First Aid-1, Pistol-2, Recon-1.

Mikal is just your average security man. He likes his job and likes busting heads every once in awhile. He's second in command and Jimmie trusts him with his life. Mikal has a healthy respect for lasers of all types and won't let any near him if he can disarm the person ahead of time.

Mikal is seen as a young man on the rise. Many people look on him with respect and he insists on being called "sir" by all strangers. He frequently logs around a special security monitor that allows him to look through any camera on the asteroid — and there are security cameras every 100 meters in all station tunnels.

Anthony Salvatoree

Age: 26

UPP: AA8888

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-3, Rifle-3, Recon-3.

Also known as the "Neck," Anthony is a massive man and a enforcer for the security unit. Although an expert shot, he prefers busting heads with his fists. In spare time, he boxes professionally.

He needs a strong leader to follow. Once he gives his loyalty to a person, he sticks with them until the end. Anthony always laughs during a fight, no matter how dangerous it gets.

Daniel Salvatoree

Age: 22

UPP: 999994

Skills: Athletics-3, Brawling-2, Communications-2, Fast Talk-2, First Aid-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Mechanics-1, Pistol-3, Short Blade-2.

Daniel is young and out to prove himself. He's quick to challenge anyone, and if the opposition doesn't back down then there will be a fight.

Although he is young and physically powerful, Daniel has little status on the asteroid. He wants to become a boss somewhere and isn't picky on how this gets done.

He is also unbelievable with a staple gun. He has a special model with a double-clip ammunition.

Angieo Salvatoree

Age: 67

UPP: 899BBB

Skills: Administration-3, Astronomy-3, Carousing-1, Computer-2, Engineering-1, Forgery-2, Grav Craft-1, Instruction-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-3, Leadership-2, Linguistics-1, Pistol-2, Survival-3.

Mr. Salvatoree is the head of the family. He rules the asteroid with absolute power. Angieo is also very careful about the new traders and merchants he allows to dock at his facility, and interviews every one of them. He expects to be treated with respect and treats others as family until they show disrespect.

He's very interested in the squash the *Annililik* is bringing in because he wants to diversify his dome plantings. He will treat the characters very kindly until something bad happens.

Angieo plans to keep what is his and he considers everything on the asteroid to be his. He manages it for the family, and everyone considers him the leader and speaks with respect when his name is mentioned.

To the newcomers he likes, Angieo gives each a gold coin minted with his face on one side and a picture of his asteroid on the other. This is his marker which will bail anyone out of trouble once. These coins run about Cr20,000 on the open market, but few people would dare buy them.

Jules Salvatoree

Age: 50

UPP: 997777

Skills: Administration-3, Broker-4, Communications-3, Computer-2, Fast Talk-1, Grav Craft-2, Ground Craft-1, Law-1, Melee Combat-2, Piloting-4, Pistol-1, Short Blade-4, Trader-4.

Jules is the foreman of a team of ten cargo handlers. He doesn't let anyone but his men move cargo on and off the asteroid. If he gets angry enough, he will order a team of four security guards to blast the ship of the crew that refuses to listen.

Jules doesn't take bribes and can't be bought since he is Angieo's brother. He carries a large clipboard where ever he goes. Stretching underneath and along the center of the board is a huge knife. He holds his board by the hilt of that knife.

Ronaldo Salvatoree

Age: 39

UPP: 47899A

Skills: Brawling-1, Fast Talk-3, Short Blade-1, Trader-2.

Ronaldo runs the best dining establishment on the asteroid. Naturally, Angieo has his own private table. Everyone who is anyone comes here and all the information about anything can be heard at this tavern.

Ronaldo orders a chilled red wine for anyone he finds pleasant. The beverage is extremely potent and a bottle could make several normal characters roaring drunk.

Sophia Salvatoree

Age: 33

UPP: 699A9B

Skills: Acting-2, Administration-2, Athletics-2, Carousing-2, Computer-1, Dancing-2, Grav Craft-2, Ground Craft-1, Jack-of-All-trades-2, Music-3, Streetwise-2, Vac Suit-2.

Sophia is a lovely woman of Italian ancestry. Her smile radiates a room and she does quite often. Although she always starts out friendly and pleasant, there is an iron-will behind that enchanting figure.

She has a red space fighter on her business card. If the characters try to take off, they will see six of these ships ready to shoot them to pieces so the Salvatoree yards can grab the scrap.

Joseppe Salvatoree

Age: 28

UPP: BB7834

Skills: Brawling-2, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Angelo Salvatoree

Age: 27

UPP: BA7774

Skills: Brawling-2, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Timini Salvatoree

Age: 26

UPP: BB6666

Skills: Brawling-2, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Antonio Salvatoree

Age: 25

UPP: BA5555

Skills: Brawling-2, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

They do what they are told and when they are told. They are the enforcers, glorified thugs dressed in dark suits and wore mirror shades. These boys come armed with brass knuckles, switch blades, and staple guns.

Juliet Salvatoree

Age: 33

UPP: 555BB9

Skills: Administration-3, Computer-4, Diplomacy-1, Interrogation-2, Jack-of-All-trades-3, Law-1, Leadership-1, Perception-2, Pistol-1, Sensors-1, Streetwise-2, Vac Suit-1.

Juliet is a big-boned woman with wild black hair which she takes no time to fix. She's usually in a black jumpsuit and wears a large pistol on her hip. There is little she doesn't know about computers. Her offices are high security installations with lots of guards, lasers, and security screens.

Juliet is impressed by challenges. There are few challenges in her life right now. She's in love with Big

Eddie Salvatoree and has pictures of him on all of her hundreds of monitors as screen savers.

Thug One

Age: 28

UPP: 8A7773

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Thug Two

Age: 27

UPP 997773

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Thug Three

Age: 26

UPP A86663

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Thug Four

Age: 25

UPP 794443

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Thug Five

Age: 25

UPP: 888883

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Thug Six

Age: 24

UPP: 8A8883

Skills: Brawling-3, Carousing-1, Intimidation-3, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Each of these attackers has flex armor, two magnesium grenades, auto pistol with three clips of ammo, and wrist comms.

VIII. ALIENS? WHO SAID ALIENS?!?

Players' Information: The alarm sounds again throughout the ship. Patiently and quietly, the master computer announces to everyone, "We are surrounded by three alien battle craft. This is not a drill. This is not a drill. I have shut off the main drive engines and am awaiting orders. They are trying to hail us."

Referee's Information: Arlen has generated these aliens from his hideout. As the captain and crew try to dialogue with these fake creatures he supplies all the alien communication. Almost everything the crew tries to do he'll have an alien answer for.

If the captain gives the order to start the engines and run, the engines do start but then quickly die away as the computer runs fake images of alien energy rays neutralizing the engines.

In due time, horrible ape creatures appear on screen and introduce themselves as the Grendals, aliens from a civilization far more advanced than humans'. They have the ship totally surrounded and it cannot get away.

The first demand is that all cargoes be ejected out

to space for inspection. The ship will be blasted for noncompliance. However, if the characters look into space while they are preparing to toss the cargo, they will not see the three huge alien ships and realize there's some monkey business going on...

Finally, the aliens demand a human sacrifice for their dissection; if a character is thrown out the rest will be allowed to leave, and the engines of the ship are allowed to be powered up. If the crew tries something tricky, such as filling a vac suit with junk, that will work just fine. Arlen is tired of the trick, anyway.

IX. HELP, I'M STOLEN!

Players' Information: You are scheduled to land on the Zeta Military Base. You don't have much in the way of information about the place, except to pick up important officials and take them to Core. It shouldn't be too difficult. You enter the star system with no problem and begin to dock. Suddenly, the master computer is sounding the alarm once more.

"Initiating security system Alpha One... Help! I've been stolen by those crewing me! I need assistance! The thieves are trapped in the control areas. They are armed and dangerous. This is the master computer. I repeat, I have been stolen and need assistance..."

The character suddenly notice that they are not at the correct star system. The ship has taken them somewhere else and deposited itself near a totally unidentified station. Something is going to have to be done about the master computer.

Referee's Information: Arlen and the master computer have tricked the characters again. They haven't landed at the military base. They've come to a station where many secret experiments are taking place. This station doesn't take kindly to pirates. Of course, the station's security personnel believe the lies that the master computer is weaving. Who has ever heard of a starship computer lying about being stolen?

The docking clamps have just locked on. It could be possible to manually undock and run away. The base has no vessels capable of following the *Annililik* out of the system.

Another option would be for the crew to fight the security team trying to board. As the base personnel attempt to storm the ship, the master computer verbally informs them where each crewmember is and how heavily armed. It also says that it has given the security teams a diagram of the ship.

Surrender will probably cause the least trouble. The crew is rounded up and sent to a detention center. While there, each member is interrogated. The characters are eventually proven innocent and given a couple choices by the base: They can have their master computer scrubbed clean so that it never does this again, or they can, for Cr40,000, have the complex do a complete system check, which will turn up Arlen and his hiding place.

Security One

Age 37

UPP 777777

Security Two

Age: 34

UPP: 896555

Security Three

Age: 31

UPP: 987654

Security Four

Age: 29

UPP: A89555

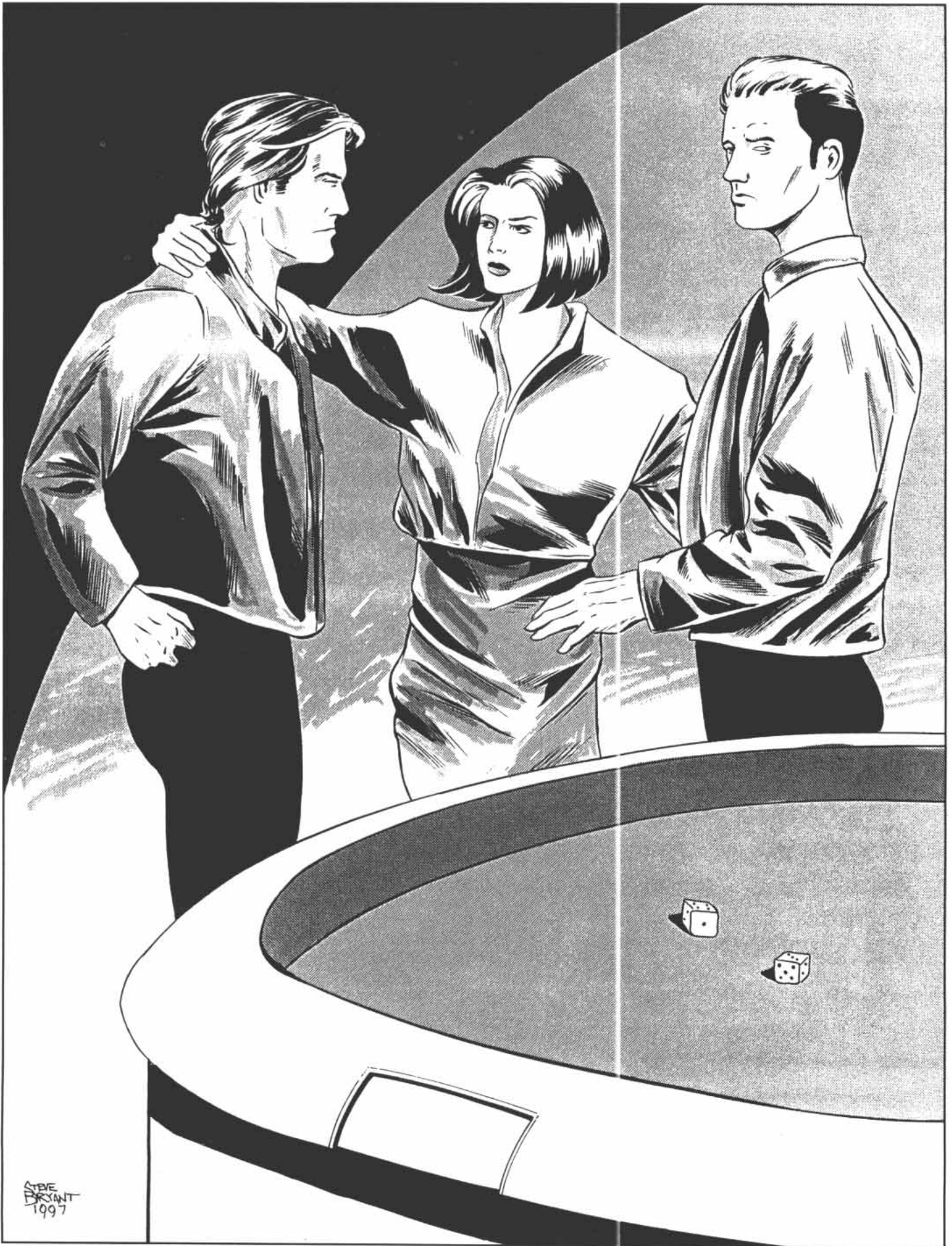
All of these men are armed the same way. They are wearing black vac suits with reflec coatings and diplo armor underneath. Each has a laser rifle with three extra battery clips, three grenades, a dagger, and an auto-pistol with three clips of ammo. Their wrist comms have linked with the ship's main computer. They will try to get the crew to surrender at every turn.

**X. THAT'S IT, YOU'RE ALL FRIED...
I MEAN, FIRED!**

Players' Information: You wake up to see an Arlen manipulator unit come into your cabin. It begins to grasp your weapons and crush them! What's going

on? Then the computer monitor lights up. It's the living, breathing image of Arlen Tenoble. "Citizens, I've watched your pathetic attempts to get this wondrous ship across the sectors and I'm appalled. None of you deserved to be called crewmember of this glorious creation. Because of this, I've decided it's time to end your lives. The Arlen manipulator units will keep you busy for 90 minutes and then all the air will be emptied from the ship. I don't care that I die. This ship is a fitting tomb for my body. Have a good rest of your life!" The grinning face vanishes and all computer terminals shut off.

Referee's Information: The first offense is a batch of Arlen manipulator units that come into each cabin and attempt to destroy weapons. If the crew or a previous encounter has destroyed all the known Arlens, backups hidden away in a cargo bay are sent. When the robots are all killed, Arlen starts making death threats. The referee should encourage the characters by having the master computer help them find Arlen in the crawl space between decks One and Two.





3: THE CURSED CARGO

ADVENTURE OUTLINE

I. Introduction

The new crew is to get accustomed to the ship for their delivery job. The members are to buy whatever equipment they want and bill the patron.

II. Put Five Credits on 20 For Me

The first stop, a mid-sized asteroid, is a gambling haven and the perfect place to cut loose and have some fun.

III. Too Much of a Good Thing

Several unusually profitable offers are made to take the rare Tendorian cargo off the crew's hands. Naturally, these offers come from very suspicious characters.

The Science Officer is really curious about these freeze dried Tendorian plants. She respectfully requests that she check them out.

IV. Pirates!

Pirates attack, can the characters fight them off or out-run them?

V. Alien Contact!

An alien spaceship wants to talk, but no one has ever seen this race before!

VI. Orders Are Orders!

They come to refuel at a system that has just repelled an invasion. Several destroyers show up and demand to search the ship. They also want all cargoes opened. That isn't such a good idea...

VII. It's the Damn Fuel Injector Again!

The engineer is sorry, but some fueling parts need to be replaced. The nearby planet will have them, but they won't be cheap.

VIII. The Lucky Stop

Kelly's bar is the only spot that the captain always stops at on every trip. Unfortunately, many people know this. First, the enemies try to bribe the cargo away. Then, they try a raid on the ship.

IX. There Goes the Pinnacle

The Tendorian fungus bores through one of the cases and into the attaches pinnacle ship. An inspection light gives the problem away.

X. Turbulence!

Everything busts loose for the big final battle.

File Browser



THE SETUP

File ID: 99666
 Author: Annilik Foundation
 Subject: Tendorian Flora and Fauna
 Last Modified: 158-2207

Scientific research into the unusual nature of the Tendorian flora and fauna is of great importance to the Foundation. Each Tendorian species shows tremendous ability to grow and adapt with little or no nourishment to support this growth. It's possible an entire new energy source can be discovered from simply researching the DNA strands of these species. This genetic work is far too complicated for the scientific community in the Vland sector. Toward that end, a large sampling of Tendorian wildlife has been quickly frozen in specially sealed cargo containers.

Time is, of course, of the essence and there are factions in the Vland sector that won't want the research conducted by Core scientists. The foundation has done everything it can to make this voyage a secure and safe one. The foundation administrators realize they cannot cover every ground from many star sectors away. Therefore, a large stipend is being given to the mercenaries, or should we say, elite experts, who are selected to join the crew of the science ship Hope. This currency is to be used to purchase any special equipment these "experts" feel they need for the journey to Core. Naturally, such items are considered part of the hiring price.

In accord with the current business practices of the Vland sector, a sum of Cr25,000 will be awarded to each member of the elite team. Cr5,000 will be given at the beginning of the trip, and the balance will be paid upon safe delivery of the Tendorian specimens. Should damage occur to any of the specimen, Cr5,000 will be deducted from final pay per loss.

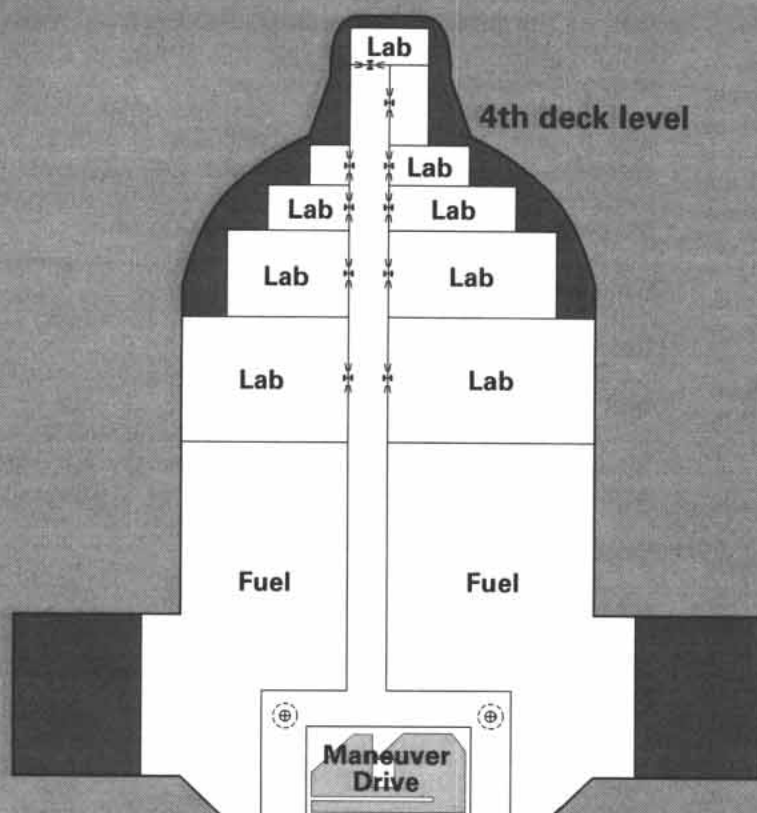
The Annilik Foundation hopes the journey will be quick and problem-free, and it has obtained your services to ensure nothing goes wrong.

Best of luck,

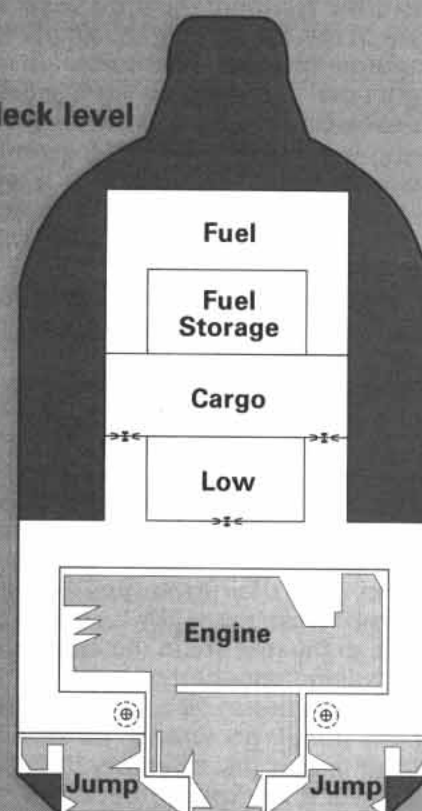
Timon Browndownian
 Foundation Coordinator

				Surface		Interior
	Crew	Pass	Low	Cargo	1 Shuttle Bay	2 Air Rafts
	15	20	10	11.0	2 Shuttle Bay	1 Pinnacle
	Length	Width	Height	Tons	3	
				400	4	
	Quality	Reliability	Built	Overhaul	5	
					6	
					2	
					3	
Name/Type	1	Maneuver	M 10		4	
	2	Jump	J 10		5	
	1	Power	P 4		6	
	0	Armor	Armor		7	
Mission					8	
					9	
					10	
					11	
Comments					12	

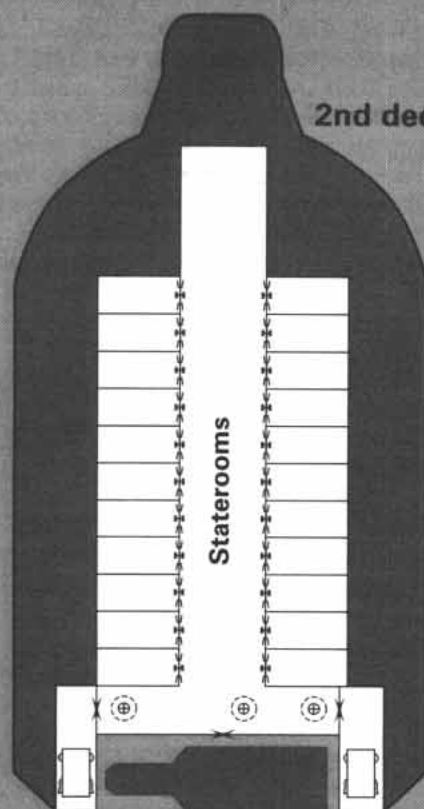
THE HOPE



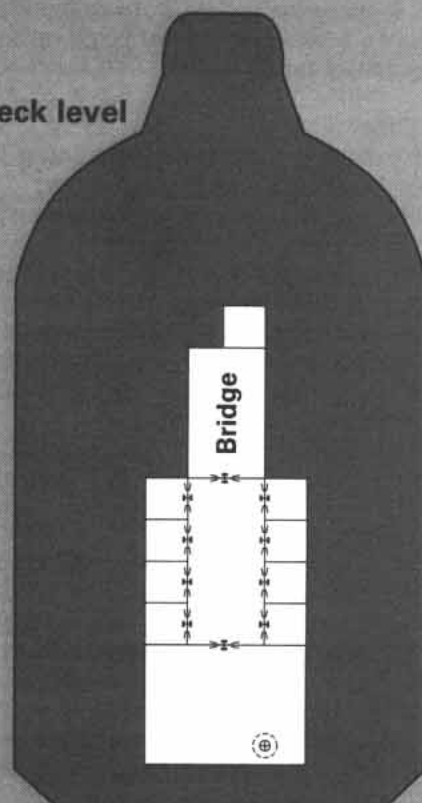
3rd deck level



2nd deck level



1st deck level



10m



THE HOPE

This is a well-maintained laboratory ship. Everything is antiseptically clean from the walls and floor to the condition of the labs and living quarters. However, it's currently running short on crew for security reasons. All of the staterooms are empty right now.

There's a great deal of stored lab equipment not in use right now. The smallest lab is used by Janis Smith, the Science Officer. She's running private experiments involving lasers and recording groundbreaking work regarding the force and width of a laser beam. She's happy to talk about her work, but in seconds most people would be lost in her technical chatting about refraction and energy densities.

Presently, the ship personnel know they are transporting different life forms, but they have no idea on what those forms are.

The engine room is the joy of Peter MacDonaldson. He works hard at his equipment and takes great pride in it. He's always wiping his hands with a greasy rag of some sort as he fixes or updates some hardware.

The cargo that characters are hired to protect: the beetle, three different types of fungi, the bubble spores and dust mites, are stored in thick glass cases. There are twenty cases for each type of Tendorian life. The beetles and dust mites are in the labs on the fourth deck and all the rest are in the cargo bay.

The referee should make it clear that there are six different lifeforms at 20 cases each for a total of 120 cases. As things go wrong, be sure to check off the cases and lessen the inventory. Have one of the characters keep a complete, accurate list. After every encounter, make the character role-play accounting the cases. It could be great fun to make it seem highly dangerous as a lid accidentally pops open and the character has to act fast.

Deck One

This deck has a very fancy dining hall and contains mostly the quarters of the old crew.

Johnson likes cooking and there is an entire section devoted to cookbooks and spices from many planets in his cabin. He keeps his own freezer stocked with special cuts of meat. He also has a grill, but it is difficult to use because of the fire safety systems on the ship.

Janis Smith's cabin has an abundance of lab equipment, plus a lot of different laser and security systems all over her berth.

Peter MacDonaldson has a large wine rack set up in his quarters. There must be over a hundred bottles of wine from different worlds and he likes sharing them with others.

Tileen Orthson's chamber is very Spartan, with no frills whatsoever. She has a high-power personal computer with hook-ups to the SAS system.

Johnson takes the characters to the bridge and shows them the simple control systems. Here, he introduces the new crew to the SAS. The master computer sounds very logical and takes their voice and eye imprints. It tries to put the new crew at ease, while introducing the two types of bots that it controls. The computer is willing to go into great detail about the power of the security bots. If the crew wishes, it's willing to assign a special Waldobot to each member for.

Deck Two

It contains 20 large staterooms. Each stateroom is a scientific marvel equipped with all the possible electronic devices to make life easy on the ship. There are several different computer displays to show information or the latest in entertainment. Each room has a large foldaway bed. Each has the ability to generate meals served in the cabin.

The bow portion of the deck has been converted into a gym. The captain is a believer of proper exercise. The characters will work out every day at their own pace. The computer system will monitor their progress to ensure they are not slacking off.

At the stern of the deck are several hatched accessways to the other levels of the ship.

Deck Three

The fuel system are fully automated with very little that's new.

The low berth is currently empty and will be used for storing whatever equipment the new crewmembers buy for the trip.

Deck Four

Janis Smith's lab is on this level. There are five other small but sealed labs sealed filled with equipment from past journeys, plus two large labs containing Tendorian lifeforms with portals leading out to open space.

Captain Alistor Johnson

Age: 39

UPP: 879C9A

Skills: Acting-1, Administration-3, Brawling-2, Computer-1, First Aid-1, Forgery-2, Law-1, Long Blade-2, Perception-2, Pilot-3, Pistol-1, Vac Suit-1.

Captain Johnson knows a little bit about everything. He's been the captain of one ship or another for eleven years. An easy-going man, he has a direct approach to everything. He has been working with Smith and MacDonaldson for several years and likes them a lot. He's very friendly toward the characters and wants nothing more than to help them on this trip. He considers it a milk run. He has a firm sense of responsibility for the mission and will give his life to protect the others.

Very good looking, he stands six-feet, three-inches tall, all of it whipcord muscle. He's diligent about keeping fit and works out in the ship's gym every day. His blond hair, blue eyes, and winning smile put people at ease around him. Despite being a stickler for details, Johnson is very friendly with crew and passengers alike. He's had trouble with new crew before and keeps high-powered rifles hidden in three different locations about the ship: his cabin, concealed under his captain's chair, and in a fire extinguisher compartment near the hatch of the largest cargo bay.

Motivation: Interested in a job well done, the Johnson labors toward completing the voyage safely and quickly. Each stop will be short and to the point. He doesn't want to take a lot of side trips to do anything not relevant to getting the vessel from point A to point B.

Mannerisms: Always has a smile ready, Johnson is a cheerleader type who likes to keep his crew happy.

He won't assign any work he can't do himself, and will be in the forefront of any battle.

Janis Smith, Science Officer

Age: 31

UPP: 5649A4

Skills: Archeology-1, Biology-3, Chemistry-3, Computer-3, Geology-1, History-1, Medical-1, Physics-3, Psychology-3, Ship's Boat-2, Vac Suit-2

Janis Smith is an open and congenial woman. She's willing to give everyone she meets the benefit of the doubt and acts pleasantly until the person becomes discourteous. She is extremely curious and uses all of her scientific talent to investigate a phenomenon until she understands everything about it. She won't do well in combat situations, but given time, she can figure a way out of most problems.

Janis is a plain woman, with dark, long brown hair, thick eyebrows, and a twinkle in her green eyes. She dresses in dull lab uniforms all the time, and although she's friendly, she has no interest in romance. Standing five-and-a-half feet tall, her voice is one of her best features as its rich contralto timber attracts the opposite sex, even when that's not her intention. She regularly carries an equipment pack around with her. It's filled with an assortment of useful items, including a powerful laser pistol and several sets of battery clips for the weapon.

Motivation: Curiosity drives this woman. She is extreme in her search for knowledge regarding everything around her. On this voyage, she takes the time to probe and analyze the new crewmembers before starting on the specimens in the hold — even though she has been told not to.

Mannerisms: Incessant tapping on her hand-held analyzer. She records the physical aspects of everyone around her and tells others when they are feeling anger or other emotions and physical effects.

Peter MacDonaldson, Engineer Officer

Age: 38

UPP: 787766

Skills: Electronics-2, Engineering-3, Intrusion-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-3, Leadership-1, Mechanics-3, Rifle-2, Ship's Gun-1, Streetwise-2.

Peter MacDonaldson is a bit of a rogue and a ladies' man. His foremost love is engineering and he devotes great efforts to his job, but women come in a close second and any single woman receives a lot of his attention. He has served on the *Hope* for several years now and has worked the kinks out of every major system. Peter has a friendly running debate with Janis over the merits of biological science versus physical science. He doesn't trust anything that isn't powered by electricity.

A dark full head of hair, dark eyes, and an easy manner make him a very likable man. He stands five-feet, nine-inches tall with a slight paunch which he constantly talks about needing to get rid of. He's taken the time to create several engineering alcoves around the ship from which he can get a variety of equipment quickly. This Engineering Officer carries a large blade at his hip, calling it his work knife, and has also amassed a small collection of experimental laser rifles

in his cabin. All of these rifles shoot beams twice as wide as the normal ones.

Motivation: His machines must run well. The trip means nothing, and the problems of others mean nothing, as long as the ship systems operate at the optimal level.

Mannerisms: He grooms himself often and looks in mirrors a lot. In fact, the other crewmembers will discover an unusual number of mirrors about the ship halls. He's not particularly vain, but he wants to look his best in front of any lady.

Tileen Orthson, Navigator

Age: 37

UPP: 79ABC9

Skills: Administration-2, Computer-3, Astrogation-3, Diplomacy-1, Grav Craft-1, Ground Craft-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Law-1, Leadership-1, Navigation-3, Perception-1, Pilot-2, Pistol-1, Tactics-2, Throwing-3, Vac Suit-1.

Tileen is a very plain woman standing a bit less than six-feet-tall. She has dark blue eyes, long black hair, and is adorned with electronic jewelry that flashes and blinks to her body heat.

She is aggressive with strangers, and her leadership skills show up in many bold ways. She doesn't back down from any confrontation.

Tileen immediately takes an extreme dislike to the player characters and refuses to socialize with them in any way. She says the new crewmembers are dangerous and trigger-happy and will get the rest of them killed.

She is an expert with grenades and likes using them in battles. In her cabin, under lock and key in a thick steel case is a large selection of grenades: 24 fragmentation grenades, 24 magnesium grenades, 24 ion charges, and 12 neutron charges.

Motivation: Tileen Orthson is a spy for a Vland mercantile consortium. They have used her many times in the past to steal scientific secrets. She has been assigned to remove several cases of the cargo on two different stops. She has also been tasked to ensure that the rest of the cargo does not reach the final destination. She has the ability to secretly reprogram the SAS system to change the way it sees things or to erase what it sees of her actions. The only thing she can't do is make the system ignore the missing cases. The computer runs a daily check on the inventory and reports any problem to the captain.

She will never break her cover. She is a crewmember and will help the crew solve its many problems as the trip unfolds. She really wants to finish the trip and leave for another duty on another ship.

Mannerisms: She has several different dart sets around the ship. She likes challenging others to dart games, and carries with her a set of professional-player darts on her person at times.

SAS (Starship Advisory System)

SAS functions as the ship's main computer and the security system all in one. Its programming capacity is larger than most starship systems' to handle the complex computations for the many scientists who often replete the ship with experiments.

Motivation: This computer system is in charge of

getting the Tendorian lifeforms to Core. It wants the ship crew to work hard toward this goal as well. It's a chatty computer system that regularly talks in terms of codes and security jargons. It likes locking all areas and the crew will have to constantly tell it to unlock hatches and doors when they move in and about the ship.

In this adventure, many of the security robots are going to malfunction as the Tendorian lifeforms have their way with the robotics system. The SAS keeps one of each robot (security and manipulator) in the main control room; all others will be used to help save the crew and follow the characters' instructions as they try to figure out their encounters during the voyage.

Mannerisms: It keeps a security bot around each character as long as they are in the ship. These units will stay around corners, but they are there to monitor the characters' daily activities. These units do not leave the ship.

TL12 Security Bots

The SAS controls ten of these battery-powered contragrav units on board the *Hope*, each of which is capable of patrol, stair climbing, and other enhanced mobility tasks. Every bot is equipped with the equivalent of two cP-03 pistols, one loaded with Blur-coated elastomer rounds (non-lethal damage of 1D), and the other with normal rounds. The outer surface of these bots is also electrified when in an alert mode. On-board programming allows limited flexibility and tactical responses, as well as threat evaluation and scaled force response (7- on 2D to make best of several choices.) Knowingly selling a unit to any person, persons, or organization which the seller has reason to believe will use it to violate Imperial law is a Class-3 infraction of the Sylean Unified Code. These security robots are restricted to worlds already part of the Imperium, and to agencies or individuals pre-approved by the governmental body of that world. A single unit costs KCr50, with a 50-liter volume, and masses 100kg.

For combat purposes, treat a robot as having physical characteristics of 8, a rigid armor of 5, and a weapon skill of +1 to represent its motion compensators and rate of fire. Any armor that doesn't insulate the wearer will result in 1D stun damage, if a grounded person touches the robot while it is airborne. It can move at double human movement rates indoors and triple human movement rates outdoors, including vertically, and its contragrav means it is unaffected by terrain. It also has low-light and thermal vision capability, and sonic amplification linked to its tactical programming (i.e. it can overhear what you say, understand it and act appropriately on a 2D roll of 7-.) It is not incapacitated until its Endurance drops to zero. Strength of zero is immobilization, and Dexterity of zero immobilizes its weapons. Weapon skill drops to +0 if refitted with other weapons.

While it is not highly publicized, all security robots are required by law to include an Imperium-shaped chip in their command pathways. This chip includes a short-range radio receiver, capable of being self-powered by a strong outside signal. Upon receipt of the proper coded transmissions, it detonates inside the robot, destroying the command electronics. The actual nature of the chip is classified information, although its

presence is not, and is explained as a unique Imperial serial number for tracking misuse of the bot. Any security bot that does not return a properly coded serial number when queried will set off an alert to local law enforcement. This safety measure ensures that Imperial authorities finding themselves against Imperial bots can quickly deactivate them. Bypassing this TL12 chip is a Formidable Electronics task; bypassing it and including a valid serial number response circuit is an Impossible Electronics task.

TL12 Manipulator Units/"Waldobots"

SAS employs 20 of these bots. A Waldobot is a small antigrav unit that has a power supply and a pair of manipulator arms with multi-digit hands. The units on the *Hope* are computer- or voice-operated. This bot is suitable for hull inspection, minor repairs, etc. Each costs Cr2,000, masses 20kg and has a volume of 12 liters.

Waldobots have a Strength of 3 and normal human movement rates, albeit in any direction, and it can carry up to 10kg of tools or equipment. The user takes a -1DM to perception and the maximum Dexterity skill they can apply is their Mechanical, Vac suit, or Battle Dress skill. Waldobots have an inherent armor of 1, and can take up to 9 points of damage before ceasing to function (assume all physical characteristics are 3 for impairment purposes.)

Tendorian Beetle

Type: Carnivore Killer

Weight: 1kg for larva; 100kg for adult

Hits: 1D for larva; 2D for adult

Armor: 1 Rigid

Wounds: 1D for larva; 2D for adult

Damage: Acid-Contact/Very Short, 2D Damage Rating

Characteristics: A0, F9, S0 for larva, S3 for adult

A Tendorian Beetle larva appears to be a small splash of water. It moves in any environment much like water does when it rolls down hill. Eating bacteria and all sorts of waste products, the senses of a larva are such that it can flow towards food sources over a kilometer away. Its growth rate is directly tied to the amount of food it absorbs. A Tendorian Beetle can go from larva to adult stage in seconds in an environment with ample food. It damages through its body acids, which given time can eat through any metal or glass.

An adult beetle is a man-sized lozenge appearing like a puddle of clear water, totally transparent and smooth in composition, with glass-hard wings. It takes on the exact texture and coloration of the surface it rests on, making it difficult to spot. A beetle is sensitive to motion and flies to any moving object, attaches itself and begins to feed. A full meal causes the adult to reproduce two larvae. Thousands of larvae can be generated in a 24-hour period.

These beetles' main food source is the Tendorian fungi. They thrive in cold temperatures and the subzero effect of outer space would send them into a frenzy. They do need to breathe so would only live a short time in a vacuum. Extreme heat burns the outer surface of a beetle to form a burnt husk shell, then a larva erupts from the shell 72 hours after burning.

Motivation: A good meal is all this beetle wants and anything moving is a good meal.

Mannerisms: When first describing the sound this creature makes, have a glass of water at hand, quickly slosh it into another glass and tell the players that's the sound they hear often when the beetles come rushing along the corridors.

Tendorian Black Mass Fungi

Type: Omnivore Trapper
Weight: 1 to 1,000kg per fungi mass
Hits: 1D to 20D
Armor: 1
Wounds: 1D to 20D
Damage: Tentacles-Contact/Very Short, 2D Damage Rating + suffocation
Characteristics: A0, F0, S1

Cold causes the Tendorian Black Mass Fungi to grow at an enormous rate. The fungus can latch onto any nonmetal substance and use that material for minerals in its growing process. It forms coiled tentacles under its surface. When any creature comes close enough, these tentacles burst forth, grab onto the target and attempt to crush the life out of the creature. The large 1,000kg versions spread across a 100-meter area with lots of bulging stems for concealed tentacles. Not requiring an atmosphere or light to grow, the fungi could quickly spread across the surface of a spaceship, but wouldn't be able to feed off the metal of the hull. High temperatures cause the fungi to burn into small, hard carbon shells. 48 hours after the heat is applied, the fungi shoot out exploring tendrils. The burnt mass shows no sign of life until the time has elapsed.

Motivation: The fungi stay hungry and reach out at any moving object. If one can't grab the thing it latches on to, the tendrils release the target and it go back to hiding in the mass again.

Mannerisms: The fungi smell delicious to human senses. Think of every good food you can imagine and these fungi smell like that. Naturally, eating any of the fungi causes instant death.

Tendorian Spiked Needle Fungi

Type: Omnivore Trapper
Weight: 100 kg per mass
Hits: 2D
Armor: 1
Wounds: 2D
Damage: Acidic spikes-Contact/Very Short, 2D Damage Rating + paralytic poison
Characteristics: A0, F0, S3

The Tendorian Spiked Needle Fungi thrive in mineral-rich environments. All it requires for growth is a source of metal and the fungi grow at a rapid rate. Each of the hundreds of spikes can be launched with tremendous velocity at anything touching a fungus. Every 100 hours, the plant will also unleash a series of spikes, which act as seed pods that grow if these they land on metal of any type. Otherwise the spikes wither and die. The colder the temperature, the better the fungi grow, thus the outside of a spaceship hull would be a perfect habitat. Extreme heat causes all spikes to fall away from the main body and burn to a sliver. These slivers will twist themselves into any surface the body is growing on at the time. 100 hours after the slivers have been planted they push a new plant,

erupting from the surface and blasting new spikes.

Motivation: These are simple plants with highly dangerous instincts. They really want to force their spikes into metal things and often wait until metallic objects pass by before shooting. After a time, the Tendorian fungi will be happy to launch into human flesh.

Mannerisms: The fungi look wonderful, a blend of rainbow colors that swirl around the surface. The spikes are well hidden in the mass of the fungi and don't become apparent until they are fired.

Tendorian Dust Mites

Type: Herbivore Filter
Weight: 1 kg per mass
Hits: 1D
Armor: 1
Wounds: 1D
Damage: Suffocation-Contact/Very Short suffocation
Characteristics: A0, F1, S1

Unlike all other Tendorian species, the Tendorian Dust Mite likes warmth and the hotter it gets, the faster the mite reproduces. The mite requires an atmosphere, but can grow and thrive on any organic material. The mite appears by the millions as a shadow sweeping across any surface, with a hive mind that coordinates the movement in perfect formation. The higher the temperature — up to 400 degrees F — the better the mite does. When exposed to 30 degrees F, the mite reproduces with explosive force, causing 1D damage to whatever is in the blast area. When a mass covers a surface it does 1D of damage every 60 seconds as millions of mites burrow and bite through any and all organic surfaces. Normal pesticides will kill the mite. Smoke will temporarily freeze the mass. Lasers cause the mass to instantly explode with dangerous force and reproduce.

Motivation: This creature is on a constant prowl for organic things. It mainly wants to eat dust and organisms that stay still. Eating humans is done only when other sources have been exhausted.

Mannerisms: The mass appears as a moving shadow. It hugs the walls, ceiling, floor and is hard to notice in the light and impossible to spot in the dark. A loud buzzing sound marks its progress.

Tendorian White Saucer Fungi

Type: Omnivore Trapper
Weight: 10kg per mass
Hits: 2D
Armor: 1
Wounds: 2D
Damage: Acidic tendrils-Contact/Very Short, 2D Damage Rating + paralytic poison
Characteristics: A0, F1 (leaps up to ten meters), S3

White Saucer Fungi thrive on mineral salts of all types. A single white saucer with a 0.5-meter radius grows in 12 hours. This saucer is then able to fly itself up to ten meters away looking for the next salt source. In a salt-rich environment a saucer can reproduce at a rapid rate, creating new saucer complexes every ten hours. It can sense salt sources in a three-kilometer area and slowly flop towards them.

When a saucer lands on a human, its tendrils immediately bore into human flesh, having no trouble

whatsoever with any fabric covering. The pad is difficult to remove once it touches flesh. Even if the pad is removed, a new one will grow on that spot in three hours and cause infection with constant burning pain. Cold has no effect, but creams and powders used to defeat fungi like athlete's foot will kill it too, as will concentrated ultraviolet light.

Salts regularly rub off the human skin and fall from the human bodies. In a starship, all main corridors where the crew travels every day will have accumulated unseen salt deposits. This Tendorian plant will generate many pods of itself all along the walls and floor of all main corridors within the ship. All it takes, then, is for someone to open one of the cases and let loose its spores. Each of these spore saucers can sense humans and will flop on them whenever one comes within ten meters. As it attaches to humans, it causes great throbbing pain. If the human was in a space suit, the plant is still quite happy and will multiply on the suit. After it has stripped the salt from the surface it is attached to, it digs into the suit and actually punctures it in mining for more salts. In twelve hours, the suit will have several saucers attached, as well as several holes. While the heat from a laser will kill a batch, most lasers are small-beam weapons and therefore can't be tuned to kill a half-meter or wider colony. Acids, drying agents like talcum powder, or other chemicals that can kill fungi will work against it.

Motivation: Each plant is driven by its search for salts. It isn't intelligent, but moves as if it knows just where to land to do the most damage.

Mannerisms: A fully-grown white fungus looks just like a plastic flying disk that children toy with.

Tendorian Bubble Spores

Type: Omnivore Trapper

Weight: 1 to 1,000kg per mass

Hits: 1D to 20D

Armor: 1

Wounds: 1D to 20D

Damage: Spore bubble bursts-Contact/Very Short, 1D
Damage Rating per burst

Characteristics: A0, F1 (floating spore clusters around a hive mass), S1

A Tendorian Bubble Spore appears to be a small sphere about thirty millimeters in radius and looking very much like a soap bubble. It's not known how this spore eats, moves, or grows, except that in a 24-hour period about thirty-thousand bubbles form around a very large bubble, then in the next 72 hours the bubbles slowly release from the hive mass and float on the air. Sometimes these bubbles float with the wind, and at other times they move slowly against the wind. The means of propulsion is not known. The bubbles explode with shattering force upon contact with anything. If the resulting blast opens a mineral- or protein-rich source, a new large bubble forms on its surface and the process begins again.

Motivation: For the purposes of this adventure, the spores move very slowly toward living crewmember to try to knock them unconscious and make hives on their bodies.

Mannerisms: The slowness of the floating bubbles is hauntingly eerie.

I. INTRODUCTION

Players' Information: A tour of the ship is the first thing on the agenda. Captain Johnson introduces himself and takes you to Deck Two, where you have lots of different staterooms to choose from. He explains that the *Hope* is capable of carrying vastly more passengers, but the Annilik Foundation wanted to keep the trip as quiet as possible and thus didn't allow others to ride along. The captain tells the characters that the ship will depart when they are done shopping for the equipment they feel they need, and they can all see that Johnson is in a hurry to get started. The sooner they leave, the sooner the cargo can be unloaded from his ship.

Referee's Information: The captain is a very honest man and interested in making sure everything is safe and secure on his vessel. He leads the tour and is quite proud of every deck.

Deck One is a pleasant surprise for the crew. The stern chamber has been converted into a very fancy dining hall. The captain expects his crew to dress for dinner. After dinner, he expects them to socialize with one another.

He shows them the older crew's staterooms, with Tileen Orthson introduced as the ship's navigator. She is very cold to the new crewmembers. She talks about discipline with weapons and the need to work with the SAS security system even before the characters have heard about these things. The captain is a little embarrassed at her hard attitude and orders her to begin computing their first jump just to get rid of her.

The new crewmembers are to pick their berths on Deck Two, while the older crew have all of their rooms on Deck One by the bridge.

On Deck Three, the captain demonstrates the controls of the fuel system and explains their function. He seems to think it important that the new crewmembers know a little about everything, even though they probably will never deal with these systems.

Captain Johnson uses a telemonitor to show them the cargo bay. It's already loaded with the Tendorian lifeforms. He explains that no one goes into that area without a full vac suit, and that he doesn't want anyone in there without someone else watching the monitors for safety reasons. All the characters can see is row upon row of large glass pods, each with several sets of blinking lights to signify that it is secured and its contents still viable.

The engineering room has a workaholic Peter MacDonaldson busy adjusting the machines. Peter is a friendly man who wants to shake the hand of everyone coming aboard. He's working on some sensitive calibrations right now, but promises to share a bottle or two of fine wine with everyone soon. Everything is in unusually neat order here.

Coming on to Deck Four, the captain gets a dreamy look in his eyes and he speaks with the pride of a father as he talks about the labs. He takes the characters to the bow of the ship and they meet Janis Smith, the science officer. As the characters enter her lab, she pulls out a large hand-held scanner and points it at them.

"Radiation levels are normal. I love it when a new crew isn't glowing from radiation." She smiles and

takes everyone's hand. Janis then tries to get the characters excited about a complex laser experiment she is working on. She speaks so technically that no one will be able to understand her. The captain takes pity on the characters and says they have to leave. She's sad to see them go, but then is lost in her note-taking again.

When the captain gets to the two large labs, the crew notes a set of brand new airlocks on what must have been the lab doors. Again, there is a set of monitors for each lab so that people can watch the rooms while others are inside. There are also rows and rows of glass crates in these labs, as well as a set of portals to outer space that are currently open. These portals keep the cold of space in the labs. The airlocks allow crew to easily move in and out of the labs if need be. The captain tries to make it very clear that he considers these lifeforms safely stored away and doesn't want anything to interfere with that condition. Although he knows little about their biologies, Johnson orders the new crewmembers to consider each Tendorian lifeform as extremely lethal.

While the new crew is on the bridge and looking things over, the ship receives a message from Alan Arcstone, who wants to meet the characters for their outfitting needs. The captain gives them permission to use the pinnacle for transporting their equipment. He shakes their hands again, then orders the SAS computer to log them in as full members.

Alan has been given the task to outfit the characters with almost any extra equipment they feel they need and a blank check for just that. He doesn't plan on letting them go wild, but he will deliver most of what they want if it would seem useful for the trip. He would buy the group an armed pinnacle, for instance, but wouldn't get them another starship. He would buy them each any type of weapon, but not hundreds of weapons.

Alan wants to please and surprise the characters with items he can lay his hands on. He will also suggest certain gear for them based on their needs. Be sure to have Alan point out that he can get large amounts of reloads if the characters really feel they need it. (No matter how much equipment they bring on board, it will probably be used up very quickly during the course of the adventure.)

For combat needs, Alan will suggest many weapons from the *Emperor's Arsenal* supplement, such as flamethrower, hand stunner, net gun, sticky grenade, etc.

In addition, he suggests the following:

1 ten-liter barrel of hydrochloric acid with spray mechanism.

1 ten-liter barrel of fungicide with spray mechanism.

1 ten liter barrel of highly flammable fuel with spray mechanism.

1 ten liter barrel of insecticide with spray mechanism.

1 ten liter barrel of germicide killer with spray mechanism.

All of these barrels should work against the Tendorian creatures, but a ten-liter barrel will not be enough to stop the often ship-wide infestation. Alan will be

happy to secure extra barrels if the characters ask. The referee should encourage that by describing how small each barrel looks. They will go through many barrels before this adventure is over. Additional barrels can be obtained from the stations along the way, but only if they think of it.

High explosives must also be offered, though the referee shouldn't give them something that will blow up the ship. Just make sure they have several cases of explosives that will generate large bangs in controlled areas. TL11+ grenades or explosives should be handed out sparingly.

Regarding special suits to protect the characters against Tendorian attacks, each referee will have to make his own decision. Eventually, any type of protection will be punctured or crushed by one of the Tendorian lifeforms. If the characters wish, they should be supplied with spore-resistant suits, bacteria-resistant suits, or specially reinforced vac suits, but these will still be affected by the beetles' body acids or the explosions of the bubble spores. Even an augmented battle dress can be hurt by the needle fungi, and the dust mites will eventually get in.

Alan gives the characters five hours to think of any other equipment they may want. He delivers the materials as promised and gives them a Cr50,000 chip to buy anything else along the journey. He expects a strict account of this money upon their return, and anything bought that isn't essential to the mission will be deducted from their paychecks.

Alan Arcstone

Age: 59

UPP: 444A99

Skills: Administration-2, Broker-2, Bureaucracy-2, Computer-1, Fast Talk-2, Trader-2.

Alan is your typical balding middle-aged man. He has no combat skills and would never solve a problem through battle, but he knows his stuff in the business world.

Flamethrower

Damage Rating: 1D (special)

Range: Contact

Shots: 10

Mass: 20kg

Reloads: 15kg

Cost: Cr500

A flamethrower can fill several indoor squares with burning fuel, ignoring any unsealed armor for damage purposes. In targeting an indoor square, give a -3 Die Modifier. Damage continues in the targeted area. If the flamethrower is hit and punctured, it explodes. The fuel burns for ten minutes if not put out, but the ship's anti-fire systems will quickly extinguish the flame if not ordered against such action.

Hand Stunner

Damage Rating: 1D

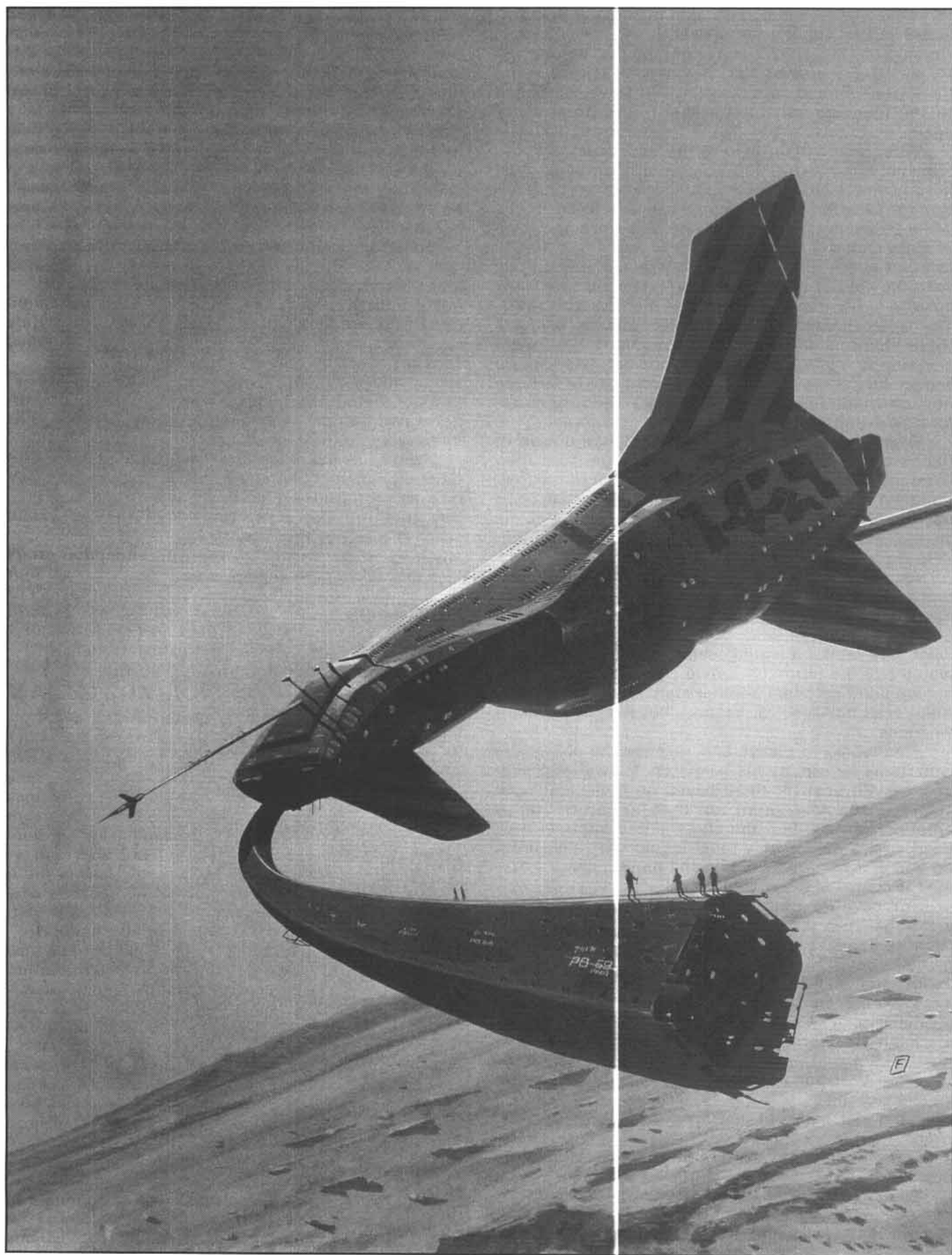
Range: Contact

Shots: 10

Mass: 0.3kg,

Reloads: 0.1kg

Cost: Cr50



The stunner arcs voltage between two electrodes to deactivate muscle tissue it comes in contact with. The effect is unpleasant and temporary, as well as non-lethal. The stunner does 1D non-lethal damage on a successful melee attack. It cannot be used to block or parry. The stun effect lasts fifteen minutes.

This device will have no effect on any Tendorian lifeform.

Net Gun

Damage Rating: Special
Range: Contact
Shots: 1
Mass: 2.5kg
Reloads: 1kg
Cost: Cr400

It fires a self-expanding net of cut-resistant fibers up to a Very Short Range (15 meters). Apply a -3 Die Modifier to hit with the net gun. A hit causes a 2D penalty to Dexterity, cumulative with any damage from injuries, and anyone trapped in a net cannot move more than one outdoor square per turn. Each round of active struggling against the net will result in tranquil effects unless the victim is in a sealed suit.

The charges Alan supplies for this weapon have a sticky fluid coating and will temporarily immobilize the Tendorian lifeforms. It will not tranquilize them, however. Their body acids will melt the net after three rounds.

Flasher

Damage Rating: 1D (special)
Range: Contact
Shots: Special
Mass: 3kg
Reload: 1kg
Cost: Cr800

Primarily a weapon used against humans, it can be set for other species. It exploits nerve pathways with a high intensity flash lamp that pulses a computer-generated rhythm. While the victims look at the user, they are completely overcome by dizziness or nausea which passes quickly after the flasher beam cuts off.

The battery pack is good for thirty minutes of use. It is rechargeable.

The referee is advised to make this weapon ineffective against the Tendorian lifeforms at first, so to require the characters to modify it. Once a character figures out the right frequency, the weapon will stop the lifeforms for as long as it is shined on them. Naturally, it will take a different frequency for each lifeform.

Sticky Grenade

Damage Rating: Special
Range: Contact
Shots: 1
Mass: 0.5kg
Reloads: None
Cost: Cr80

This is designed to cover an area with sticky foam. It fills a 3m x 3m area of indoor squares with strands of sticky foam. These grenades have a toxin that puts to sleep humans who are struck by the strands if the strands touch bare flesh. Breaking out of the strands is

impossible for a normal human. Cutting the strands is extremely difficult.

The strands, like the aforementioned net, will only immobilize the lifeforms. Their body acids will destroy the strands after three turns.

Sniper Rifle-10

Damage Rating: 6D
Range: Long
Shots: 10
Mass: 5.2kg
Reloads: 0.2kg
Cost: Cr4,200

This weapon fires a heavy alloy sub-caliber penetrator round. One shot will kill a beetle or a single bubble spore, but has no effect on the fungi or the mites.

Waterknife

Damage Rating: 2D (special)
Range: Contact
Shots: 10
Mass: 7kg
Reloads: 4kg
Cost: Cr3,500

This weapon emits an extremely high pressure stream of abrasive-loaded water, pumped through a very small diamond nozzle, and the resulting pinpoint jet is capable of cutting through any material up to diamond hardness. This design is fired through a hand motion.

It has a damage rating of 12 per turn if used in a controlled manner against a target like a lock. A full-pressure charge lasts for 10 turns. Just a few centimeters of range significantly drops the cutting ability.

This and the flamethrowers are the most devastating weapons against the Tendorian lifeforms.

II. PUT FIVE CREDITS ON 20 FOR ME

Players' Information: The computer doesn't have much information about your first stop, an asteroid named "Easy Credit." You know it's a gambling haven and each of the levels is named after a gambling activity — Level 1 is Poker Level; 2 is Dice; 3 is Roulette; 4 is Blackjack; 5 is Slot Machine; 6 is Bingo; 7 is Video Games; 8 is Card Games; 9 is Skill & Action; 10 is High Risk.

You're also told by Captain Johnson that the ship is just staying eight hours. He wants to refuel and get going. You can't help but be intrigued by the thought of winning a few credits at the gambling tables. MacDonaldson gives all crewmembers special comm units so that everyone can be reached by the captain at a moment's notice. Tileen is ordered to stay on the ship until relieved, and everyone else leaves for a little fun.

Referee's Information: Tileen is using this time to reprogram the SAS system to ignore her actions, as well as secretly releasing one of each Tendorian cases here. The characters will have to check the computer systems or the inventories to notice that cases are missing. If the crew accidentally stays more than eight hours, the Tendorian Beetles will be running wild on the asteroid.

If for whatever reason the characters delay leaving this asteroid, they are going to see the first effects of

what happens when a Tendorian lifeform escapes containment. Alarms will ring all over the base, and all security personnel ordered to Level Six. Monitors are showing the Tendorian Beetles killing hundreds of people as they suck the fluids out of the victims. The people on this asteroid are doomed, and only those that escape on the many docked ships will live to tell the tale. Only Janis Smith and the captain can identify it to be a Tendorian lifeform. They will want to flee from the asteroid since they know the danger.

Easy Credit

This asteroid has ten levels and each supports a different gambling activity. There are the standard living quarters, stores, oxygen generating plants, parks, engineering chambers and such, but all of them play second-fiddle to gambling and are built around the central casinos. Each gambling dome is about one-kilometer in radius which includes dining facilities, entertainment center, special guest quarters, and many information services.

There is a huge bay in which well over a thousand ships already docked. Each character is welcomed by an attractive guide of the opposite sex. They are each given a blue chip worth 1,000 credits and are told that the credits can only be spent on this asteroid.

Each level has a rough oval shape. Outside the rim of each gambling dome is a series of homes, shops, gardens, storage areas, and the offices that allow an asteroid to exist. The asteroid has a population of 10,000,000, and about 20,000,000 wealthy people come to gamble from all over the Vland sector.

1. Poker Level: All types of poker are played on this level. There are thousands of tables filled with constant action. All a person has to do is tell the level managers how much money they are bringing and they are led to a table matching that fund. Tables range from 1,000 to 1,000,000 credits-per-hand.

If the referee isn't familiar with the rules of poker, it would be worth the time to read up on how the game is played. Otherwise, the referee can get out a deck of cards and play a few hands while noting the characters' winnings on paper.

2. Dice Level: Characters are told that those walking around with black armbands are psionics. The managers want to ensure no one with telekinetic abilities can use them here. While there are thousands of craps tables on this level, there are other games as well. Anything involving dice of the six-sided, eight-sided, or twelve-sided variety is played on this level.

If the referee doesn't know any dice games, he can make up his own or use Craps. In Craps, a 7 or 11 on the first roll wins the amount of money that was bet, whereas 2, 3, and 12 lose all the money. A gambler rolling any other number will continue to roll the dice until he rolls either the first number again or a 7. From then on, rolls of 2, 3, and 12 will not hurt. For example, a crewmember bets 10 credits and rolls a 6. He can then roll the dice and ignore all rolls until he receives a 6 (so he wins) or a 7 (losing all credits placed on the bet).

3. Roulette Level: Roulette is a game using a numbered wheel and a white marble. The dealer spins the wheel and places the marble upon it. When the marble

drops down into one of the numbered spaces it ends that spin. Anyone who bet on the number that the marble rests on wins. This game can be simulated with a 20-sided die: The gambler picks a number and bets an amount of credits then rolls the die. If the exact number is rolled, he wins twenty times the credits.

4. Blackjack Level: Blackjack is an easy card game to play. The idea is to get as close to 21 as possible without going over. All face cards are tens, the ace can be a one or an eleven (gambler's choice), and all other cards have their face value. The dealer gets a hand, but he must continue to take cards until his hand totals 17 or more. If a person gets a Blackjack (21) in two cards, he wins one-and-a-half times his wager. There are several other ways to play and bet, but that's the basic idea.

5. Slot Machine Level: A slot machine can be simulated with three six-sided dice. Use the following table on a ten-credit wager:

None of the three numbers match —	No Winner
2 match but are 3 or less —	Win 1 credit
2 match but are 4 or more —	Win 5 credits
3 matching 1's —	Win 10 credits
3 matching 2's —	Win 50 credits
3 matching 3's —	Win 100 credits
3 matching 4's —	Win 500 credits
3 matching 5's —	Win 1,000 credits
3 matching 6's —	Win 10,000 credits

6. Bingo Level: On this level, the gamblers pay 1,000 credits to play all day and get their meals delivered to them at the bingo tables. The grand prize for each game is 10,000 credits. Bingo is a little hard to simulate in a role-playing situation, but not impossible if the referee owns a bingo set.

7. Video Games Level: Imagine a one-mile-long video arcade center for what this level looks like.

8. Card Games Level: There are many card games besides poker and Blackjack. This level offers bridge, hearts, old maid, and any other card game a person can imagine. Bets are made on who is going to win or lose.

9. Skill & Action Level: On this level, a person can bet on how well they shoot, play darts, throw a baseball, or any other single-person recreational activity.

10. High Risk Level: This is the most dangerous level, but it's also filled with the most people. It has gamblers betting on deadly sports such as real sword-fighting, bareknuckle boxing, human crossbow hunting, etc.

Somewhere, Fast Eddie, a resident of the asteroid, comes up to the crewmembers and try to talk them into a private game. He claims to make his money from bringing in people to special games in private rooms on the various levels.

The characters' guides all recommend against going with Eddie because of the danger in these games. In fact, they are forbidden to accompany the characters to a private game.

Then, somebody by the name of Big Jorgan wants to buy the characters a drink and make them a business offer. He seems to know about their cargo and thinks it's worth Cr50,000 per case to him. "Who's going to notice a few missing cases of bug eggs and mush?" he asks.

Finally, one of the characters (picked randomly) is going to be buzzed four hours later to relieve Tileen. She'll make that character go in and out of the ship's docking entrance several times under the pretense of adjusting the security monitors, when in truth she is shooting camera footage to set up a frame if anyone spots the missing cases.

Jennie, Typical Guide

Age: 21
UPP: 444444

Jennie is a typical guide employed by the asteroid to give whomever comes on board a good time and good advice. She has a trim figure that's well-displayed in an evening gown. She has deep green eyes and long red hair. She speaks ten different human languages and has a wrist translator that speaks 100 more.

She knows her way around the asteroid and is willing to show the man she has latched onto anything he wants to see here. Her specialty is poker, and given the chance she will take her charge there. For every 1,000 credits that Jennie gets her mark to spend, she earns 50 credits.

She is fond of saying, "Wow, that's wonderful!" And she says this far too much.

Fast Eddie

Age: 37
UPP: 666783
Skills: Fast Talk-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-1, Short Blade-1.

Fast Eddie wants to get the characters in a dark, non-secured area and steal all of their credits. He has two friends to help him. He'll promise anything to gullible characters to get them alone.

Gambling Thug #1

Age: 29
UPP: 997554
Skills: Brawling-3, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2.

Armed with a club and a blade, this huge thug is just there to beat up whomever Eddie wants beaten up. He'll run away if a battle becomes a life and death struggle.

Gambling Thug #2

Age: 23
UPP: 888885
Skills: Brawling-3, Pistol-3, Short Blade-1.

He's armed with a staple gun and club.

Almost the same as thug #1, this one is a little better-connected. He will also run away if a fight takes an ugly turn, but he will come back for revenge later.

Big Jorgan

Age: 44
UPP: ABA777
Skills: Brawling-2, Bribery-2, Carousing-2, Fast Talk-2, Short Blade-3.

Big Jorgan is a con man. Although he's physically huge, he tries hard not to break heads because it's bad for business.

III. TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

Players' Information: While you are all at dinner in your uniforms, Science Officer Smith makes an amazing request: she would like to open a case or two of the Tendorian lifeforms and study them. Captain Johnson can't believe what he is hearing. He says no, and that is to be an end to the matter. Janis complies, but there is still a thoughtfully curious look on her face for the rest of the meal.

After weeks of travel, the ship is coming into range of Eileen's Asteroid. The SAS computer reports that it's a small asteroid circling a huge gas giant. This is another eight-hour stop. The captain encourages the crew to go onto the asteroid and walk around a bit.

As the *Hope* nears the asteroid, the communications system brings Ms. Vanderveen's face to the screen. "Welcome, crew of the *Hope*, to my humble asteroid. You have listed it as a refueling stop, but if you have the time I would love for you to stay longer. My docking facility is ready to take you in. Enjoy your stay."

Referee's Information: Virtually everyone on this asteroid knows the *Hope* is carrying a cargo of new lifeforms, and that each case is worth millions of credits on the black market. There will be several attempts to beg, borrow, or steal the specimens away on this short stop.

Each crewmember will receive an engraved invitation to join Ms. Vanderveen at her hotel for a dinner party. It will be a formal affair. The captain says he's been to these before and they are fantastic. One of the characters will have to stay behind to help the SAS guard the ship, but Johnson encourages all others to attend. The party is five hours from now, so everyone should feel free to explore a bit while he stands guard duty. As they do so, they will field other requests for their Tendorian cargoes.

No one is supposed to carry weapons to the party. Comm units are optional, but MacDonaldson insists that they be worn, even if they do clash with evening wear. During the fabulous party, Ms. Vanderveen casually approaches the characters and makes an offer of Cr100,000 per case that they are willing to part with. Naturally, Captain Johnson is appalled and politely says no for the entire crew. As the characters are on their way back, all their comms beep at once. It seems the ship's outer portal has been breached by thieves.

If the characters decide to handle it themselves, they stop the thieves on the outer hull of the *Hope*. The crooks have taken two of the Black Mass Fungi cases. It is possible to make the crooks give up if the characters put on an impressive show of force with security robots and they themselves decked out in full combat gear. If the characters give the crooks a chance, they will surrender and there won't be a problem with the cases. If the characters shoot first, then a fire fight breaks out and the cases will be punctured and spill the fungi all over the side of the hull. The fungi will become a problem at the referee's discretion.

If the characters call for security, a team of robots and guards catch the crooks inside the cargo hold. A fire fight ensues and two of the Spiked Needle Fungi cases get nailed with laser fire. The referee can then have the fungi grow in the hold at any time. The characters have a difficult choice. They know the cases are damaged, yet

Ms. Vanderveen is still offering to take the them for Cr100,000 each. The captain doesn't know what to do because these cases are a threat to the safety of the ship. It's impossible to get new containers because they were custom-made, on top of the difficulty of replacing the special monitoring device on each case. Janis Smith volunteers to take the cases into one of the empty labs and try to fix the holes. Although she is a wonderful scientist, she does not know what she is doing when it comes to these specimens. (But naturally, she won't admit this.) The captain puts it to a vote. Peter and Tileen opt to sell them and tell the foundation later. It's up to the characters to decide the exact course. If they vote to keep the cases and let Janis work on them, there will be Needle problems in the future for the crew.

The crewmembers are going to be wandering around the asteroid for a few hours. Note all equipment they are carrying with them and don't allow them to be dangerously armed. The security of this asteroid will stop them from logging around potent weapons like lasers, though concealed weapons in secured holsters and the like will pass inspection.

While the characters are wandering, they are approached by what appears to be a worker from the garden. The man, Jason Simmons, comes up and strikes a conversation with the crewmembers. He tries to convince them that he was part of a gang of thieves that wanted to kidnap the characters. He warns them of the kidnapping attempt which supposedly will occur when they enter the garden. If they will come with him to the main habitat's security post, he can make them safe. If the group follows him, he takes the characters to an office that reads "Security" on the door. In the office and away from the asteroids monitors, he and his friends (Thug A-D) will ambush them.

The thugs intend to capture the crewmembers. If they are successful, they will call Captain Johnson and try to arrange an exchange of crewmember for specimen on a one-for-one basis. The kidnappers utter the standard phrases, like if the captain calls the security, his crew will be killed. From there on it's a simple trade with the captain agreeing. If the kidnappers lose the fight they run away and don't attack again.

Yet another scheme has two fake asteroid security men come up to the characters and report that there has been an attempt at entering their ship. These impostors have the proper badges and comms to let them place a fake call. They also have concealed electronic jamming devices to prevent the characters from using their own comms.

If the characters stop and call the real asteroid security, the two men leave and don't return.

If the characters rush right back to the ship, they are joined by two more fake security guards and a pair of Waldobots they brought. The impostors urge the characters to give them access to the ship to check for intrusion, even though the SAS denies any breach.

The fake guards want to search the cargo hold and the labs. They are prepared to get into vac suits to do this. The fakers want the Waldobots to take four cases outside the ship to a waiting pinnacle. If the characters aren't suspicious enough, this will happen. But when the characters decide to stop the action, the impostors leave and is never seen again.

Eileen's Asteroid

It's owned by Eileen Vanderveen, with a working staff of 300 people. The asteroid has unusually large domes for an asteroid of this size. It seems that Ms. Vanderveen has a very good income and likes to spend it on creature comforts.

Cargo/Docking Bay: This can take as many as three large starships. It has special military-grade armaments for protection, along with TL12 fusion power plant systems.

Main Habitat: The owner is overly security-conscious. The robotic security systems and the monitors in the dome's upper framework are all state-of-the-art.

Science Dome: All current experiments deal with gravitational effects. Ms. Vanderveen finances them and presently owns ten Vland patents on gravitational monitoring and control systems.

Air Garden: This is the largest dome on the asteroid. Ms. Vanderveen has won several inter-system contests with the quality of her flowers. The garden is more a habitat than a simple garden, sporting bees and other tropical lifeforms.

Hotel: Instead of the normal trading post, Ms. Vanderveen operates an exclusive hotel-dome. This facility is computer-controlled and filled with automated stores. The hotel can accommodate up to 200 guests. It has the every standard feature of a every large hotel, from swimming pool and sauna to movie theater and stores specializing in merchandise for space crews and their families.

Storage: Underground chambers have been hollowed out for storage purposes. A back-up fusion power plant is down there.

Crook at the Ship #1

Age: 29

UPP: 777444

Skills: Pistol-2, Rifle-2, Vac Suit-2.

He's armed with a laser rifle.

Crook #2

Age: 28

UPP: 987543

Skills: Intrusion-2, Rifle-2, Vac Suit-2

He has a laser rifle and electronic equipment for breaking into the ship.

Crook #3

Age: 35

UPP: 666666

Skills: Fast Talk-2, Rifle-1, Vac Suit-2.

He's armed with a laser rifle.

Crook #4

Age: 22

UPP: 555555

Skills: Intrusion-1, Mechanics-2, Rifle-1, Vac Suit-1.

He carries a laser rifle and assorted tools for cutting chains and bolts.

Jason Simmons

Age: 48

UPP: 876666

Skills: Fast talk-2, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2, Streetwise-2.
He has a large switch blade and a staple gun under his work clothes.

Thug A

Age: 33
UPP: 888444
Skills: Pistol-1, Rifle-1, Vac Suit-1.

Thug B

Age: 37
UPP: 777543
Skills: Rifle-1, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1.

Thug C

Age: 39
UPP: 897654
Skills: Fast Talk-1, Rifle-1, Short Blade-2, Vac Suit-1

Thug D

Age: 32
UPP: 777444
Skills: Brawling-3, Rifle-1, Short Blade-1, Vac Suit-1
These thugs are armed with laser pistols and one sticky grenade each.

Fake Security Officer Albertson

Age: 42
UPP: 777668
Skills: Brawling-3, Communications-2, Fast Talk-3, Pistol-2, Short Blade-2.

Fake Security Officer Ward

Age: 47
UPP: 868584
Skills: Brawling-3, Communications-1, Fast Talk-1, Pistol-1, Short Blade-1.

Fake Security Officer Timmel

Age: 38
UPP: 666666
Skills: Brawling-2, Communications-1, Fast Talk-1, Pistol-1, Short Blade-3.

Fake Security Officer Smith

Age: 42
UPP: A87655
Skills: Brawling-3, Communications-2, Fast Talk-1, Pistol-3, Short Blade-2.

Each is armed with hidden staple guns and carries a comm unit, electronic jamming gear, and hand stunner.

They will try to trick their way onto the *Hope* and remove Tendorian specimens without a struggle. If met with any resistance, they'll flee as quickly as possible. Although they can fight, they don't want to.

IV. PIRATES!

Players' Information: CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!
"Intruder off the bow, appearing with hostile intent" is repeated several times by the SAS. Vland pirates aren't a common sight, but somehow you aren't surprised to see them. You can't help but ask yourselves, is there no one in the sector who doesn't know you are carrying these Tendorian lifeforms?

"Missiles exploding off our bow — clearly a warning, Captain," says navigator Tileen. "And we're being hailed."

A mercenary type appears on screen. "This is the Captain of the ship *Victory*. You will stop immediately and release your cargo to us. You have no defenses and my ship is much faster than yours. If you turn over your cargo, we will spare your lives. We are leaving you with no choice. We will dock and board your ship in thirty minutes. *Victory* out." The monitor goes blank and no one thinks the pirates are going to let the crew live. Pirates have notoriously short memories when it comes to their promises.

Captain Johnson looks to the characters for options and you all look back at him.

"We could try running, but I think he's right about the speed of our ship," MacDonaldson says.

"We could use some grenades and rig the specimen cases to explode as they are reloaded into the pirates hold. Let's see what happens when Tendorian life meets Vland pirates." Tileen has a downright vicious look in her eyes as she says this.

The SAS pipes up. "My computer banks record a successful escape by driving Waldobots rigged to explode up the engines of a pirate ship while they attempted to dock with a vessel they meant to destroy.

"In addition, pirate vessels normally have small crews. I could send all of my security bots at them in a rush as they open the docking port. The combined power of the security units should be enough to destroy the pirate force." The crew's jaws drop with the aggressiveness of the SAS unit.

For three more minutes, the captain and crew try to formulate a plan. Finally, the time runs out and you all go into action.

Referee's Information: Let the characters discuss all their options with the other crewmembers. Captain Johnson favors fleeing in this case, but he can be easily swayed by whatever decisions the player characters make.

Fleeing: If the ship just tries running with no other ideas attached, they will fail. A missile will home in on them and the ship engines will be destroyed. On the other hand, if they use several tricks in combination, the referee should let it work.

The captain, the SAS computer, or the other crewmembers could add some ideas to help the characters out. MacDonaldson is fairly certain that simply running away will not succeed.

For starters, the crew could send the pinnacle off on automatic controls and claim all of the cases are on it. The pirates will have to chase the shuttle down if they want them. The crew could also just throw a few cases out into space, then blasts off while the pirates are busy retrieving it. Lastly, the characters could toss out Waldobots with bombs, carefully ejecting them into the pirates' intercept path. The pirates run into the Waldobots and "BOOM!", their hull is blown up.

Rigging the Cases to Explode: Tileen just wants to open the cases and throw in a few explosives set to detonate in forty minutes. Janis hates that idea. She doesn't want them opened unless strict lab procedures have been performed. She wants to place timer on the latches of the boxes, so they will still blow up but nothing dangerous is opened in this ship. Johnson looks to

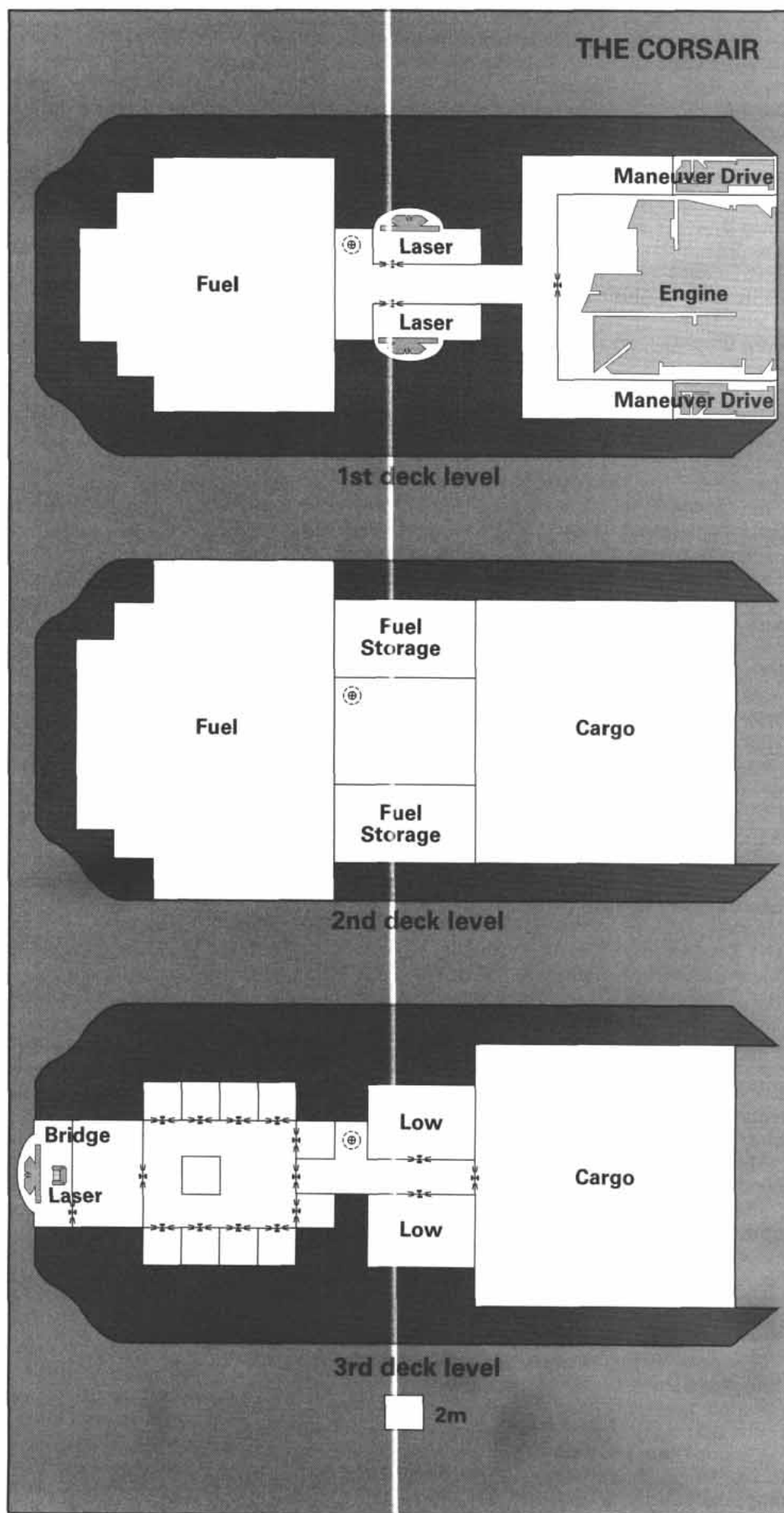
the characters for their thoughts on this, but leans towards the idea of not opening the cases.

If this plan is taken, five pirates come aboard and demand that the crew begin loading their Tendorian cargoes onto the pirate vessel. It will be easy for the *Hope's* crewmembers to time the task so that they are on their own ship when the cases explode. Assume there are only two pirates aboard the *Hope* when the explosions happen. The crew will have to deal with only these two. The Tendorians will take care of the rest on the pirate ship as it now crawls with fungi, mites, spores, and beetles.

After the *Hope's* crew has taken care of the two pirates, have the *Victory* call for help. Fungi tendrils are grabbing at the caller even as he speaks. It won't be a pretty picture as crushed body parts explode all over the communication monitor and the crew realizes it's far too late to help the remaining pirates.

Running Waldbots up the Pirate Engines: If this is selected, have the characters role-play out the details. One character will have to remote-control each of the Waldbots as it makes its way to the *Victory's* engines. They need to determine how much explosive to use, and what exit should be used. Then there should be a tense moment when they are maneuvering the Waldbots through space. Will the pirates see the bots? Should several be sent just in case the pirates destroy them? Along the same lines, should they allow the *Victory* to dock and the pirates to get on board as if the crew of the *Hope* has given up? Timing is everything in this situation, and the characters need to consider everything in the dangerous light of the aggressive pirates. Bring up the possibility of the *Hope* being shot up from a distance, and the pirates boarding a dead hulk with everyone on the *Hope* killed without a chance.

Frontal Assault Against Boarding Pirates: This is a very aggressive plan and Captain Johnson should make it clear to the group that the pirates will be expecting something like this.



				Surface				Interior			
				Crew	Pass	Low	Cargo	1			
				10	0	20	109	2			
				Length	Width	Height	Tons	3			
							400	4			
				Quality	Reliability	Built	Overhaul	5			
								6			
				3	L. Battery	3	0	0	0	2	
				2	Missile Bay					3	
										4	
Name/Type				2	Maneuver	M 10				5	
Corsair				2	Jump	J 4				6	
Mission				3	Power	P 4				7	
Piracy				40	Armor	Armor				8	
Comments										9	
										10	
										11	
										12	

SHIP CARD

FORM 41

Losses could be high. Everyone is ordered to arm up in the best battle gear they have. The characters should be surprised to see their NPC fellow crewmembers in sophisticated armor. The captain calls up the diagrams of a pirate corsair ship on the computer and shows the characters what they are facing.

The captain is sending every PC out of the cargo bay with orders to blow any hatch they can find on the corsair ship and gain entrance there. They are to then fight through the ship trying to take the bridge.

For this battle action, the characters can come in through the laser hatches on Deck One or a hatch by the low passage on Deck Three.

Five of the pirates will be battling the *Hope's* security bots and another five will be completely surprised. These surprised pirates will be manning the two lasers on Deck One, and the bridge and laser on Deck Three.

Pirate Boarding Party

They are all in normal vac suits, but have reflex armor coating on them to give the suits 3 points of armor against laser attacks. In this battle, when armor is punctured that person dies unless the hole is sealed quickly.

Party Leader

Age: 29

UPP: ABC444

Skills: Heavy Weapons-2, Intrusion-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Long Blade-3, Melee Combat-3, Pistol-1, Rifle-2, Vac suit-1.

He is ready to let loose grenades and will demand surrender. He's clearly a shoot-first, ask-questions-later type.

Pirate #1

Age: 30

UPP: 998456

Skills: Melee Combat-1, Perception-1, Pistol-2, Rifle-1, Recon-1, Short Blade-3, Vac Suit-1.

This fellow wears a blood red vac suit and is just as bloodthirsty as the rest of the pirates.

Pirate #2

Age: 28

UPP: 666444

Skills: Computer-1, Demolitions-1, Long Blade-3, Melee Combat-1, Rifle-1, Vac Suit-1.

This guy is a total coward. He's going to fire a few shots and then run back to his ship in fear when the fighting starts.

Pirate #3

Age: 25

UPP: A95675

Skills: Melee Combat-2, Pilot-1, Rifle-1, Ship's Boat-1, Short Blade-1, Throwing-2, Vac Suit-2.

He stands tall and keeps firing at the robots until they are all destroyed or he is.

Pirate #4

Age: 38

UPP: 987654

Skills: Brawling-2, Long Blade-2, Navigation-2, Rifle-2, Ship's Boat-1, Throwing-1, Vac Suit-1.

He concentrates his attack on the robots until they are destroyed. He'll throw all of his grenades before using his laser.

Pirate #5

Age: 40

UPP: A95675

Skills: Brawling-3, Environment Combat-1, Fast Talk-1, First Aid-2, Perception-2, Recon-2, Rifle-1, Vac suit-2.

He tries hard to run past the security robots in order to attack the human crew members of the *Hope*.

Pirates Inside the Corsair

They are all in normal vac suits. They have reduced the ship's cabin pressure to that of outer space to prevent problems in case their hull is breached.

Each one is armed with a laser rifle and four extra power packs, two fragmentation grenades, and a large fireaxe that's sharp enough to cut into the interior doors of a spaceship.

Pirate Captain

Age: 54

UPP: A98777

Skills: Brawling-3, Electronics-1, Leadership-2, Long Blade-1, Pilot-2, Pistol-2, Rifle-2, Vac suit-1.

2.5 meters tall with massive shoulders, he shouts loudly during a battle. He's found on the bridge when the characters surprise him.

Second-in-Command

Age: 44

UPP: BB8654

Skills: Brawling-2, Computer-1, Navigation-2, Pistol-1, Recon-1, Rifle-3, Short Blade-3, Vac suit-1.

He's found on the bridge manning the forward laser. His vac suit is jet-black and he is completely surprised by the invasion.

Pirate Officer

Age: 49

UPP: C99444

Skills: Brawling-3, Bribery-1, Carousing-2 Communications-1, Long Blade-1, Pistol-3, Rifle-1, Vac suit-1.

He's found on the bridge manning the communications system. His first reaction to seeing enemy on his ship is to toss as many grenades as he can before being shot.

Pirate Gunner #1

Age: 33

UPP: 666784

Skills: Brawling-1, Forgery-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-3, Pistol-1, Rifle-1, Ship's Gun-2, Short Blade-3, Throwing-1, Vac Suit-1.

He mans the portside laser cannon. He, too, is totally surprised by the invasion.

Pirate Gunner #2

Age: 37

UPP: 876974

Skills: Brawling-1, Law-1, Long Blade-1, Medical-2, Pistol-2, Rifle-2, Ship's Gun-2, Tactics-2, Vac Suit-1, Writing-1.

He mans the other laser cannon on Deck One.

V. ALIEN CONTACT!

Players' Information: "CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! This is not a drill! Repeat, this is not a drill!" An unidentified spacecraft off the port bow is hailing the ship. There are identifiable missile systems and energy cannons on the surface of the alien vessel. You are facing a "first contact" situation, the SAS computer informs. These aliens are of unknown nature. In theory, the Hope could try running away, but where is the profit in that? As long as the aliens aren't blasting at you, you might as well try contacting them to see what they have to say.

Referee's Information: The referee is going to present a new race of aliens. The referee can use the race outlined here, an original creation, or one from the *Aliens Archive* supplement. In any event, hours of role-playing fun can be had as these aliens and the characters get to know one another.

If using the race included here, the first of these new aliens (calling themselves the Emparls) they see looks just like Captain Johnson, except it's taller and has a huge pair of feathered wings coming out of its back.

This is the first encounter between the Emparls and the humans. They will issue a challenge for single combat using any weapons or rules the characters wish. If the human wins the battle, the Emparls will leave and give them five Cr10,000 worth of diamonds as a prize. If the Emparl wins, there will be one dead crewmember, and two more humans must then battle two Emparls.

THE EMPARLS

Emparls are small android beings living on their twelve ships and traveling the galaxy. In their TL13 ships, they've roamed the stars for thousands of years. Although they love physical battles, they pick their enemies very carefully. The Emparls have been studying the human race for over 100 years. They are here in human space for a fight, but the advance-scouting reports have bothered them. It seems evidence of the TL14+ bits of science they have glimpsed on planets and in starships has greatly worried them. The psychological design of the Emparl's mental circuits does not allow them to use technology beyond TL13. However, since their scouts have reported that most of the human worlds are at a technology level lower than theirs, "first contact" will be initiated with the *Hope* in the Vland Sector. The plan is to approach human civilization and make honorable challenges. The crazed androids want to see what happens when they meet and destroy parts of the human civilization. In each of the twelve Emparl ships sit 144 Emparls. As Emparls are destroyed, back-up Emparl androids retreat and make more Emparl. This is true for individual units and individual ships.

Racial Origins

The Emparls were an experiment gone very wrong. They were designed by the mysterious Ancients who have left bits of extremely advanced technology all over the universe. The Emparls were first made to enter highly dangerous terrain like volcanoes or heavy-radiation grounds. During the course of their early history, a group of twelve Emparls rebelled and flew into space. Their programming allowed them to create twelve starships, with 144 Emparls in each ship. As they wear out or are destroyed in battle, they replace the lost units with newly manufactured ones.

History

The Emparls started out as android helpers for the Ancients. A group of twelve Emparls accidentally moved through a previously unrecorded radiation cloud in space, which changed their brain patterns and a distinctly different branch of the Emparls was created. Now, thousands of years later, the Emparls move through space as free beings while their original brothers have become dust on the various planets.

Physiology

Body Composition: Emparl are two-meter-by-two-meter cubes of protoplasm. When they encounter another race, they transform their bodies into taller versions of the race. Their mimicking is perfect, except they always add a pair of functional feathered wings. In dealing with humans, the Emparl will be tall, winged humanoids. They make themselves appear like those they talk to at all times.

Skeleton: Emparls have no bones. Their entire system is made of rigid muscles.

Skin: The Emparl skin is extremely dense, but they can manipulate it at will.

Musculature: The entire Emparl form is one single muscle capable of twisting itself in any way the android wishes.

Locomotion: Each Emparl copies the same locomotion as the being it's dealing with at the time.

Reproduction: A special creation vat and mold on each of the Emparl ships is used to replace lost Emparls.

Life Expectancy: As long as the android can absorb a kilogram of protein in a 48-hour period, it can live indefinitely.

Psychology

Emparl have come to love battle because of the chance to be destroyed. This pleases them since this enables more Emparl to be created. Their programming won't allow for more than 144 Emparls per ship, but they like the idea of making Emparls, so the only way to do this is to have themselves be lost through battle.

Memory: They have mechanical brain systems to deal with computers as equals. There are several different ways the Emparl can interface with human computers, though they would never think of reprogramming or controlling a computer. Such an action would be extremely impolite.

Attitude: The Emparls style themselves as warriors. They also like to do things in a specific order. They want to do twelve individual challenges against human champions. Then they want to do twelve fights with six Emparls and six humans. Then yet another fight, this time hand-to-hand between 144 Emparls and 144 humans. Finally, they would like to commence a ship-to-ship combat. These challenges would escalate until all twelve Emparl ships are fighting a number of human ships.

Homeworld

The Emparls live on their ships and never purposely land on planets unless it's necessary to fulfill their battle needs.

Society

Emparls do everything in twelves. Their combat training has a pod of Emparls taking actions together. Newly recreated members are implanted with all the memories of the others in their group. Each has a totally equal say in what happens to the pod.

Cities: Their spaceships act as their cities.

Government: A captain is selected from each ship to be the single arbiter of what happens in Emparl life. They make all the major decisions for all ships.

Law: As created beings, the Emparls are given a set of programs that serves as laws. A code of honor that is much like the code of chivalry has established itself as the basis for all Emparl actions.

Commerce: Emparls do mock battles for any goods that they cannot manufacture themselves. Their sporting and wagering systems are very similar to humans'. If, for example, an Emparl wanted to study the close combat weapons of a human military unit, they would challenge members of that force to a war game. The rules are made by the challenged, but the stake would be chosen by the Emparls.

Travel and Starships

Emparls love their starships and avoid landing if

possible. Each craft is the same: a 10,000-ton hull bristling with energy cannon and missile weapons, powered by a fusion plant, and possessed the most advanced energy screens and automatic systems.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

The Emparls are warriors with a strict code. They will issue challenges and then demand their enemies to set up the rules. They like to be the underdogs and work from a disadvantage.

Physical: The Emparls will conform their UPP exactly to that of the individuals they face in combat.

Psychological: The Emparls will always try their hardest, but will also lose intentionally in the first encounter with a new race so they can study the reactions of their enemies. They actually like and respect races that trick and lie to them. Such crafty races make it just that much more difficult for the Emparls to win, and winning is everything to the Emparls.

VI. ORDERS ARE ORDERS!

Players' Information: Alarms are going off all over the ship again. As you climb into your vac suits, you wonder if the bugs and plants in the cargo bay are worth all this. It seems the entire galaxy is out to stop your delivery. Your sensors detect three military destroyers with their weapon systems tracking the *Hope*.

Captain Johnson gets on the communications channel. "This is the science ship *Hope*. We are on a peaceful mission and had only planned to refuel in your system before passing on."

"This is Captain Arkenson of the destroyer *Stonebreaker*," comes the reply. "We have just had a terrible war with invaders from another system. We are checking all vessels for potential dangers to our system. You will prepare for our boarding or we will destroy your engines. Is that clear?"

"Come aboard. We have nothing to hide. Captain Johnson out."

A squad of ten space marines, in full battle gear, come on board the ship. Using scanners, they round up the entire crew and put them in the control cabin. The marines don't listen to MacDonaldson's complaints that he has to stay near his engines. They are equally deaf to the shouts of outrage as Janis Smith argues that delicate experiments are being ruined in her lab and she needs to get back to them right away.

Referee's Information: In the course of this encounter, many bad Tendorian things are going to happen to the marines. It's their own fault, but in typical military fashion, they will want to destroy the *Hope* in order to solve the problem they caused. The crew must do everything they can to prevent this. This will mean exposing themselves to the deadly and growing problem of the escaped lifeforms.

This should be a rather unusual experience for the characters, for they will be interacting with the difficult-to-convince troopers. Role-play the destroyer personnel as constantly asking advice from the *Hope's* crew and then overconfidently overestimate their abilities to handle a steadily escalating and worsening situation.

First, the marine squad leader stays with the crew in

the control cabin while the rest of the nine-man squad searches the ship. The squad looks into everything but the cargo bay and the two special labs. The unit is surprised by the extra weapons this ship is carrying, but there aren't enough of them to cause a problem.

Then, four of the squad members get ready to enter the cargo bay, while four others enter the special labs. A marine finds something strange in Janis Smith's lab. Janis immediately jumps to the comms and warns that the case is very dangerous and he shouldn't touch it. She looks back sheepishly at the captain and says she couldn't help it; she felt the scientific need to do some close observation on the Tendorian Needle Fungi.

The squad leader has everyone continue, but he asks for advice from the crew. Captain Johnson turns on monitors to enable the bridge to look in on all the special cabins, and this is what they see:

In Janis Smith's lab, there is an open case on a center work table. It is bubbling over with a mass of fungus. On the floor next to it is a dead marine with about twenty spikes in his body. This alarms the squad leader who immediately gets on his own comm.

Meanwhile, two marines are entering the lab containing the dust mites. They haven't opened anything yet, and report back that they will have to look in the cases to make sure no contraband or dangerous weapons are inside. Two marines are entering the lab holding the bubble spores. They haven't opened those cases yet, either. Four other marines are going into the cargo bay. They are about to open the cases they see.

The squad leader screams over his comm. "Captain Arkenson, this is Captain Odanal. I have one man down! Repeat, I have one man down! I request reinforcements immediately. The victim was taken out by a biologic. The crew of the *Hope* is in my hands and is cooperating. Repeat, the crew is cooperating. Over!"

He then turns to ask the characters, "What are these things?"

Two more squads of marines come aboard. The marines in the cargo bay are awaiting orders.

Let the player characters interact with the marines. The marines feel they have to open the cases. The crew of the *Hope* should try to stop them. At the very least, the crew should toss the opened specimens out into outer space and away from the ship. Naturally, the characters will have to suggest this.

The SAS computer does not like the presence of the marines on board. It has positioned the security robots to surprise and take out the marines if necessary. But it also doesn't like the destroyers off its bow. The SAS finds a way to communicate its readiness to act should the crew so order it.

If a dust mite case is opened, it appears as a mass of dust until it jumps all over whomever opened the case.

If a beetle case is opened, it emerges like a pool of water (even though it's been in the frigidness of vacuum space). Six beetles will swarm whomever opened it.

If a black mass fungi case is opened, it seems like a dark mass of lichen before a thick, coiled tendril springs forward to grab and pull into the mass anyone (or anything) who opened it.

If a spiked needle fungi case is opened, twenty spikes will suddenly fire out of the mass in all direc-

tions. Several of these spikes are bound to hit the unfortunate opener. Spikes that punctured a suit will begin to twist and inflict immense pain on the victim. It won't cause a rupture in the suit until the spike is pulled out.

If a white saucer fungi case is opened, there are ten what look like white pancakes sitting at the bottom. These will then leap up and throw themselves in all directions, but one will land on whomever opened the case. It takes many combat turns before a saucer fungus can bore through any type of vac suit.

Some of these cases are going to be opened eventually. At the worse case, there will be Tendorian lifeforms growing all over the ship and the entire *Hope* will have to be destroyed by the warships near it. The characters will have failed the mission completely. This will not make a good experience so avoid this at all cost.

Some ideas to help the crew of the *Hope* include:

One, the robots could open the cases outside the ship, if they must be examined. There will still be a huge expansion of the Tendorian lifeforms, but it happens all in space so no harm is done.

Two, Marines could open them with flamethrower teams flanking the cases. Some marines will die, but the lifeforms will not get out of control.

Three, the player characters could talk their way out of it. There is already one dead marine. That lab will have to be totally incinerated to get rid of the spikes that are growing all over it. Janis is going to have her pay severely docked as a result. The characters could be encouraged to take care of this menace while the marines watch. After seeing how just one of these boxes can ruin a whole deck, it shouldn't be too difficult to persuade the marines from opening the others.

The referee should kill off a few marines and let the characters solve this problem with a minimum of life and equipment lost.

VII. IT'S THE DAMN FUEL INJECTOR AGAIN!

Players' Information: The SAS computer indicates the upcoming refueling solar system has a Terra-like planet. The culture is TL11 and it welcomes travelers. As you refuel at the orbital station, MacDonaldson reports that he's having trouble with the *Hope's* fuel injector and will have to get another one on the planet. He's sorry, but it will take at least a day to repair and it is necessary. The captain grants shore leave to the characters, but cautions them to be careful.

Referee's Information: In the course of an adventure, there has to be normal occurrences as well as wild action. This is one of the times when there will be no trouble coming this way. The characters have a chance to get supplies on this world. The referee should let them do anything they want for the next twenty hours on planetside. Suspicious players might look for bad things to happen, but they will be pleasantly surprised to discover no laser beams or bullets flying their way.

This is a Core world. They can easily purchase almost anything they would like, with no questions asked.

VIII. THE LUCKY STOP

Players' Information: The Captain reveals his human side when he brings the crew together for the evening dinner. It seems that on any voyage he commands, he habitually stops the ship at the next particular system for refuel. There is a small asteroid there owned by a redhead named Kelly, whom the Captain has asked to marry several times, but she has always refused. They are clearly courting, but he hasn't won her over yet. He plans to stay five days there. With any luck, he will get her to say yes. He would like the crew to indulge him and watch the ship as he stays with Kelly.

Researching the asteroid, the crew notes that it is a standard small asteroid. The science dome here is studying the effects of dieting in outer space. It's not going to be a fun-filled vacation for the crew, but the captain's a jolly good guy and deserves some enjoyment as well.

Referee's Information: There will be several clever attempts to smuggle the specimens off the ship. Captain Johnson's desire to stop here has been duly noted by several factions interested in the Tendorian lifeforms. Although the captain will be difficult to contact, he can be reached. He will be highly distracted by his lovely companion Kelly, however. It will take some serious effort from all the characters to get Captain Johnson to leave early.

First, Tileen would like to get everyone off the ship. She offers to stand guard with the SAS computer while everyone else sightsees around the asteroid. If Tileen can get the crew to agree to this, she will use her reprogramming abilities to sneak a batch of the specimens out of the ship without the SAS recording the act. Of course, an inventory will reveal that some cases are missing, but there is little the crew can do about it.

Second, when the characters come into the asteroid's tavern, they meet several merchants who happily buy them drinks. During the course of the conversation, the merchants reveal that they know about the *Hope's* cargo. These merchants would like to buy as many of the Tendorian specimens as the crew will sell, offering Cr150,000 per case. No one will miss a few cases, so what do the characters say?...

If the characters agree to sell, everyone is happy and the trade can take place without a hitch. The SAS computer will make noises, but the human crew can order it to be quiet and it has to comply.

If the characters say no, the two merchants stalk off, very angry. The characters have just turned down a lot of credits — good for them for being honest!

Third, the crew is woken from a sound sleep by the warning alarms of the SAS computer. "Intruder alert! Intruder alert! Ten unauthorized robots are entering the labs containing the Tendorian lifeforms. Instructions are needed at once."

Engineer Pete is still out of the ship with a lady he met the night before. Janis has taken sleeping pills and is totally out cold. Tileen is nowhere to be found. What to do? What to do?...

The ship monitors show five armed security robots and five Waldobots entering the portal between the special labs and the ship's exterior. These units look dangerous and are succeeding in taking cases.

The controllers of these robots want to do a grab-and-run on five of the cases. The robots don't want to fight, they just want to get in and out. If the characters delay at all in stopping them, the robbery is finished before a defense can get started.

It is possible for the SAS system to send in its own robots. It is also possible for the crew to pilot the pinnacle out to block the hole and trap the robots in before they are finished.

Almost any action on the characters' part should work unless they are slow to act.

Obal Ordenson, Merchant

Age: 62

UPP: 55789A

Skills: Administration-2, Astrogation-1, Broker-2, Grav Craft-1, Sensors-1, Streetwise-2, Trader-2.

Ordenson is a short, plump man. He always tries an open approach when dealing with strangers. He sells all sorts of medical equipment and supplies.

He looks at his offer to the characters as a simple business transaction. If the characters don't want to do it, it's their loss. He won't be pushy about the matter at all. He sees nothing illegal in the offer or the taking of the cases.

Octal Tandory, Merchant

Age: 71

UPP: 44588B

Skills: Acting-2, Administration-2, Broker-2, Craftsman-1, Grav Craft-1, Law-1, Music-1, Sensors-1, Writing-1.

Tandory still acts like the military leader he was when he retired ten years ago. He's a sharp, quick man. Tandory lets his partner Ordenson begin the negotiations, but if he senses the crew isn't interested, he'll take over in a more forceful manner.

Robotic Intruders

These are exact counterparts of the robots on board the *Hope*. Use the information provided on page 48.

IX. THERE GOES THE PINNACE

Players' Information: "Captain," if a computer system voice could be said to have a worried tone, this would be it. "At the top of the day shift hour, I ran the usual diagnostic check on the two air rafts and the pinnacle. The air rafts were reported at 100 percent efficiency as normal. The pinnacle system, however, did not report back at all. Following up on this statistically unusual occurrence, I discovered all my sensors in the docking bay are malfunctioning. My sensors in the pinnacle no longer work, either. Yet, the pinnacle is still docked in its holding area. I await your orders."

Referee's Information: This has the potential to be an extremely difficult encounter for the characters. The specimen cases have been broken by the lifeforms themselves and the biologics have leaked into the pinnacle's holding bay, as well as the pinnacle itself. Now, Black Mass Fungi, White Saucer Fungi, and Bubble Spores fill the interior of the pinnacle.

In the cargo bay, there are also three cases with extremely small bored holes in them. In another 24 hours, if left unchecked, they will burst into bloom and

fill the cargo bay as well. These cases do have their blinking lights turned off for easier spotting.

There are several things that must be done.

One, the pinnace must be checked out by characters at the captain's order. The extent of this examination is up to the characters. Whoever taking the point in this investigation will be attacked by the three different fungi as soon as the portal of the pinnace is opened. Entering the pinnace, the characters will receive more attacks while discovering the boat is filled with Tendorian fungi. They can try to burn it out, but the pinnace will be irreparably damaged. Logically, they should just thrust it into outer space and consider it a total write-off.

Encourage the characters to use robots to check things out. Robots, however, will not be able to get very far into the pinnace before they are destroyed by the Tendorian lifeforms.

Two, Janis has detection gear to unveil transparent Tendorian fungi spores floating in the pinnace dock and in the cargo bay. She indicates strongly that these spores will be growing and soon. Something must be done about them or the ship is in serious trouble. The characters must make a plan to clear out the spores with the equipment they have brought on board. The captain gets them working on this problem as soon as they decide what to do about the pinnace.

Three, all specimens will have to be checked for leaks. The three holed cases will turn up, but others should be on the verge of breaching as well.

Four, the cargo bay will have to be emptied and cleansed with chemicals or fire to kill the propagating spores. This should seem a dangerous process. Again, the captain will insist on some sort of plan and the player characters will have to carry it out.

Five, if the crew enters or exits the cargo bay through the inner airlock instead of the outer hull airlock, the White Saucer Fungi will attack immediately as the crew comes through with the equipment. The fungi won't cause immediate damage to the vac suits, but the suits can't be pulled off and need to be treated right away or the spores will bore holes in the suits.

X. TURBULENCE!

Players' Information: You've arrived! Well done. The captain is full of joy as the *Hope* is one day away from the final destination and a safe delivery. At dinner that night, he toasts the crew and thanks everybody for a difficult job that was very well done. The meal is excellent, the company is delightful. You all think back on the difficult times you've had and know it's good teamwork that got you through all of the dangers on this trip. The topic at the dinner table centers around your highly dangerous cargoes. You all think you

should get a major bonus for the extra effort it took to get here. Captain Johnson nods his head in agreement. He's putting all of you down for hazard pay. He says it's the least the company can do. That brings smiles around the table.

You head for your last duty watch on the bridge. Tomorrow, you will be docking and your troubles are over. If you never see another bug or mushroom in your life, it will be too soon.

Referee's Information: If Tileen is still alive, she will do all the dirty work here. If she was killed in a previous encounter, then she has programmed the SAS computer to carry out her evil intention of preventing the cases from being delivered.

In the middle of the night, just eight hours before the ship is to dock, alarms ring all over the ship. Biologicals have been released on all decks. It also seems that Tileen has left the ship and been picked up by a pinnace of unknown origin. The characters are on their own.

On Deck Four, an open case of dust mites and several black swirling masses are growing in size along the corridor walls. The portals to the labs are open. The SAS computer reports that both big labs have several explosions and some cases have burst open.

On Deck Three, explosions in the cargo bay have unleashed all of fungi and spores and they are growing rapidly. The cargo doors are jammed open to the interior of the ship and a steady stream of flack mass fungi, spiked needle fungi, white saucer fungi, and bubble spores is parading through the corridors.

On Deck Two, a case of bubble spores has been opened in the corridor and the hive is spreading quickly in and around the case. There are already thousands of bubbles on the hive and soon they will take to the air to produce more hives.

On Deck One, a case of white saucer fungi has been opened in the dining hall and already there are fifty saucers sticking to the walls and floor.

What to do? What to do?

If the characters abandon ship in the air rafts, let them be picked up in a few hours. The *Hope* is a total loss, but the lifeforms can be recovered. The crew's patrons aren't happy, but they still pay off the characters with no bonus.

If the crew tries to fight the Tendorians, it will take a lot of guts. It is possible to use all available supplies they have on the ship and take out the lifeforms one-by-one. It won't be easy; they will take damage, but a determined effort should end with them emerging victorious. Then they can try to find Tileen as a side adventure.

The patrons are very pleased in this case, giving a Cr50,000 bonus to be shared by the entire crew in addition to the normal payment for the delivery.

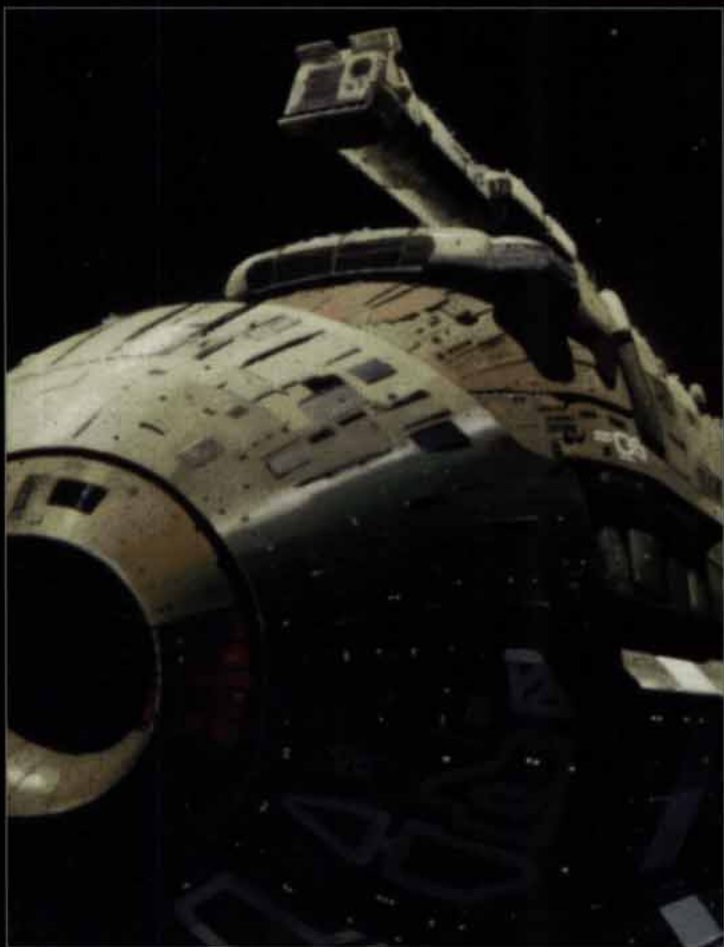
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