

DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES

COMPENDIUM TWO

FOUR EPIC SPACE ADVENTURES FOR SAVAGE WORLDS™



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COMPENDIUM 2

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SPECIAL THANKS: MARTA CASTELLANO (MY WIFE) FOR SUPPORTING ME ALL THE WAY AND FRANCESCA VIARENGO FOR SHE KNOWS STUFF



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CONTENTS

THE BLACK GAURDIANS 3

THE STEALER OF LIGHT..... 57

DEADLY CHANT71

THE DOOMSDAY WAR 93



THE BLACK GUARDIANS

This book contains an exciting adventure based around the exploits of four pregenerated, spacefaring heroes.

You can find the character sheets and details of their spaceship, the Blazing Star, on the Triple Ace Games website: www.tripleacegames.com. The heroes have no defined gender, thus the players can assign it as they wish.

The characters have all their leveling opportunities mapped out in advance from Seasoned (from which they start) to Legendary. Each adventure in this series earns the heroes a fixed five Experience Points, granting them advancement after every mission. The players only need to tick the appropriate box on the sheet to start making use of their advancements.

This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

Better yet, you'll know that when you buy one of our adventures, you can guarantee the adventurers will have all the skills and abilities they need to win the day!

You will also need some gaming stone counters or other markers and a copy of the Space Rules Supplement, which you can download for free from the www.tripleacegames.com website.

Finally, you'll find it useful to have some extra copies of the standard Savage Worlds Burst templates to represent obstacles and terrain elements.

BACKGROUND

In the past, the planet of Gator was an aquatic world. Gatorians are a race of amphibious humanoids, technologically advanced and gifted with latent mental powers, but also cursed with a great problem: Due to a peculiar conformation of the planet and its close proximity to Niaga, its moon, Gator's waters periodically evaporate. It is a very long process which requires millennia, but, like glaciations, it does occur periodically.

Ancient Gatorian psionic scientists devised a method to replenish the planet's water supplies: They constructed a gigantic gate on the surface of the moon which, when focused by the latent psionic abilities of all the Gatorians on the planet, can open a portal into another dimension and summon forth a massive supply of water. Projected toward the planet's surface, the water quickly restores the oceans. The process does require a powerful psionist to trigger it along with the Katrah, a psionic artifact (a sort of blue crystal prism), as the catalyst.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The water restoration process, which the Gatorians call Taak, last occurred two thousand years ago, and now the planet is a desert, the seabed exposed to the harsh rays of the unforgiving sun.

The time to redo the Taak is now, but in the last millennium, war ravaged the planet and the Katrah was lost.

Nowadays, the planet is a protectorate of the Miners' Guild, which avidly plunders the ores exposed along the dry seabed. The Gatorians, having lost an essential component of their technology, are now totally subjugated by the Guild and labor on the moving ore collectors, the Automines, for meager pay. Only a small group of rebels, calling themselves the Black Guardians, actively combats the Guild through acts of sabotage.

Under the guidance of their elusive leader, Weaver (a powerful psionist), the Guardians have finally located the lost Katrah. It is on Tella, a remote planet, in the hands of a crimeboss with a passion for collecting. A recovery mission is quickly prepared.

But when the Black Guardians arrive on Tella, the heroes are in the process of buying the blue prism from the crime lord...

Characters: 45 XP

ACT 1: A TRANSACTION AMONG GENTLEMEN

The story begins in medias res, with the party in the middle of the action.

SCENE 1: GAMBLING WITH

EIGHT-EYES

Read or paraphrase the following passage to the players.

You have been hired by Professor Ku Lamp, of the University of Lammor II, to find and retrieve an ancient artifact; a blue crystal prism of alien origin. Thanks to your connections, you discovered the amulet was in the hands of Eight-Eyes, a dangerous crime boss with a passion for ancient art. Ku Lamp has given you some precious Kerexian diamonds to use to buy the object, but Eight-Eyes has another passion: Gambling.

Now you are on the planet of Tella, sitting at the gambling table in Eight-Eyes' base, a smoky cantina filled with armed goons. The devious boss has forced you to play for the whole stake, the blue prism and the bag of diamonds, in a last, all-or-nothing game of Wo Ka, an intergalactically popular card game.

Now, the situation is very tense — all the bat-faced goons are around your table, watching the epic match.

Eight-Eyes shuffles the deck in his scaly hands and stares at you with the four pairs of eyes on his hydra-like heads.

"Pleeaase," he whispers "Taaake yooour caaaards."

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

Wo Ka is a game similar to Poker. The cards are circular holochips with faces and numbers, but the rules are the same. Every hero draws five cards from a standard deck and makes a Gambling roll. If he scores a success, he draws an additional card and another one for every raise. The players must use five of their cards to arrange the best Poker hand possible.

Eight-Eyes draws eight cards and he can mix them to arrange the best hand. He also makes a Gambling roll (d12) to get extra cards, like the heroes.

Yes, it is not fair, but he is the boss and the party is in his den, after all.

The GM should deal the characters' hands first. When he deals Eight-Eyes his larger number of cards, someone is likely to ask why the villain is getting so many.

At this, Eight-Eyes replies with four wide grins:

"Didn't I sssay earlier? Extra cardsss for each head, my friends. Housse rulesss."

You know it will be a difficult game.

Cheating. The heroes can try to cheat as per standard *Savage Worlds* rules. If they are caught, Eight-Eyes reacts as if he has lost the match (see below).

Allow the players to reveal their hands before Eight-eyes shows his, to build up a little suspense.

If Eight-Eyes wins, read the following:

"My friiieendsss, Lady Luck is

not on your side tonight. What a pity. Now the diaamonds are mine, and the prism too!"

If the heroes win, you can award the player with the winning hand a Benny, if he roleplayed the situation well. Then read the following passage:

"You win, it seems, but I never loose. Guards! Kill them!" he shouts, angrily spitting venomous saliva.

UNINVITED GUESTS

A fight is likely to break out, but it is very different from what the characters can imagine.

At this point something totally unexpected happens!

The amber crystal dome of the cantina shatters in a rain of shards as a group of black armored commandos jumps in, landing on the room's rafters, with heavy blasters raining death on the cantina's crowd.

Panic spreads! This may be a perfect moment to grab the prism and the diamonds and beat a basty retreat!

The fight begins! The heroes check for surprise, while the commandos start on Hold. Eight-Eyes and his goons roll for surprise with a -4 malus.

The cantina is a square room, 18" each side. There is a door in the middle

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

of the southern wall, it is 2" wide. In the center of the room there is a round table (use a Medium Burst Template to represent it) where the party and the boss are seated. Place the heroes with their backs to the door, and Eight-Eyes opposite them.

The goons are placed around the gaming table, but at least 2" away from the heroes, except for two of them on guard duty at the door. The commandos are placed on the rafters of the room, 12" above the gaming table. They can walk freely on that level, but they require a Climbing roll (they have climbing equipment) to drop to the players' level.

The commandos start spraying the area with suppressive fire, except for two who are targeting Eight-Eyes. From the second round on, they start killing the goons. They try to avoid hitting the heroes, at least until they hold the prism. At this point the commandos start shooting at the party, as well. Eight-Eyes activates his defense belt, then cowardly dives under the table. The goons try to react to the commandos, but they are overpowered.

Grab the loot and flee! This is the best thing for the party to do – take the prism and the bag of diamonds, and get away. The stash is in the center of the gambling table. Picking it up is a free action if the hero succeeds in an Agility roll, otherwise it counts as an action.

When the party leaves the cantina, Eight-Eyes, if still alive, shouts:

"Thieves! Someone stop them!"

★ **Black Guardians (1 per hero +2):** See page 43

★ **Eight-Eyes' goons (3 per hero):** See page 44.

★ **Eight-Eyes, devious multi-headed crime boss:** See page 44.

TERRAIN

* **Small Table:** This is a small metal table, with assorted beverages and other objects on it. A player can freely grab a prop (i.e. a tankard, a platter, etc) from it, to be used for Tricks. It has Toughness 8 and grants Light Cover (–1) (Medium cover (–2) in case of attacks from above). Place up to 10 small tables, the size of a Small Burst Template, throughout the room.

* **Gambling Table:** An unusual and sturdy game table of alien origin. It grants Medium Cover (–2) and has Toughness 10.

SCENE 2: ESCAPE FROM TELLA

Once the party is outside the cantina, give them some extra information about the planet they are on.

"Tella is a rugged planet scarred with deep canyons and crevasses. Eight-Eyes' cantina is built at the top of a canyon, at the heart of a labyrinth of crevasses. You all arrived here on a mind-jacked crevasse bird, a beast like a large pterodactyl tamed via a constriction collar. The beast is still here, looking at you with artificially placid eyes."

The heroes jump into the howdah

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

TAMED CREVASSE BIRD

atop the bird's back and take off, but after a few moments, they hear screams and shouts from behind: Eight-Eyes' goons are in pursuit, riding crevasse birds and carrying crackling energy lances in their hands. The party must shake them quickly!

The chase is on!

The heroes' bird is totally subjugated and controlled via a console, so the party can use their Piloting skill, while the pursuers use their Riding skill. Eight-Eyes' men are three Range Increments behind the party. Each Range Increment equates to 10" on the gaming table. The chase is run inside the canyon's maze and the heroes cannot fly higher, for two reasons: first, it is simply more "pulpish" this way and, second; strong winds sweep the skies making flight impossible for anything except starships.

The goons are faster than the heroes, so the enemies have +1 on their Riding roll, but the party's howdah grants them Light Cover (-1). The goons don't shoot at the party's bird because they fear losing the prism in the bottomless crevasses. Do not use the standard obstacle rules but instead, when the pilot (and only the pilot) draws a Club card as his first initiative card, check the obstacle table below. The parenthetical value is the modifier to the Piloting (or Riding) roll for the round.

The chase ends when all the goons are either dead or ten Range Increments behind the heroes.

★ **Eight-Eyes' goons (6):** See page 44, armed with energy lances.

This huge bird, savage and bloodthirsty when untamed, is totally enslaved by the controlling collar, so it is considered a vehicle in all aspects. It has the same attributes as a Wild Crevasse Bird.

Acc/Top Speed: 4/8; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+4. **Notes:** Climbing 4".

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Collar Unhooked/Unsaddled: The Collar Unhooked entry applies to the party. If the pilot fails the Piloting roll, an accident causes the controlling collar of the bird to come loose, setting it free! From now on, the pilot must use Riding (-2) for the chase skill, because the bird is getting wild. The collar can be fixed with a Repair (-2) roll and a subsequent Agility (-2) roll to properly place it. The Unsaddled entry applies to the Goons. One of their birds spins out of control: If the rider fails the Riding (-4) roll, he is unsaddled and falls to his death at the bottom of a crevasse.

Three (-4) Carnivorous plant: A carnivorous plant that lurks on the canyon's walls tries to entrap the heroes! If the pilot fails the roll, the mount is grabbed by d4 tendrils. Each tendril has Toughness 7 (2) and requires a called shot (-2) to be hit. The mount cannot advance in the chase while it is restrained.

Four (-2) Falling rocks: Rocks are falling from above! If the pilot fails the Piloting roll, he, all his fellow passen-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

gers, and the mount suffer 2d8 damage, AP 1, from an Extra.

Five (-2) Nest of bloodsuckers: If the pilot fails the roll, he disturbs a nest of bloodsucker bats! The swarm deals 2d4 damage each turn to everyone aboard.

The swarm follows its prey until it is dispersed. It has Parry 4, Toughness 7 and is immune to piercing and cutting weapons. Stomping and area weapons affect them as usual.

Six (-2) Wind blowing: A strong hot gust blows through the canyon. If the Piloting roll is successful, the mount gains an extra Range Increment. A failure means the mount flounders this round, losing a Range Increment.

Seven (-1) Fog: A thick bank of fog fills the area. Failing the Piloting roll causes the loss of a Range Increment. Ranged combat, either as target or as shooter, is impossible this round.

Eight (-1) Narrow passage: The passage suddenly narrows, forcing you to fly almost vertically! If the Piloting roll fails, the mount suffers 2d6 damage and is automatically Shaken.

Nine (-1) Echoing passage: This narrow canyon produces strange echoes, confusing the crevasse birds. The beasts (not the pilots) must make a Spirit roll to avoid being Shaken. The party's mount, being mind-jacked, adds +2 to this roll.

Ten (-1) Huge waterfall: A waterfall, hundreds of feet high, is right in the way! If the pilot misses the roll, the beast flies into the middle of the fall, soaking itself. For the rest of the chase, the pilot or rider suffers -2 to any Piloting or Riding rolls.

Jack (-0) Loopback: These canyons are a true labyrinth and getting

lost is fairly easy. The pilot must make a Smarts roll. If he fails, he has taken a couple turns that have brought him back on himself! Roll 1d4. This is the number of Range Increments the mount loses.

Queen (0) Geysers: Jets of hot steam erupt from holes along the canyon's walls. If the pilot fails his Piloting roll, the mount and riders suffer 2d6 damage from an Extra.

King (-0) Floating flowers: The area is filled with large, very colorful, floating flowers. They are full of a flammable gas. Shooting in this area is very dangerous. This round, the Innocent Bystander rule is modified like this: a 1 on the Shooting die causes a flower to be hit, triggering a chain of explosions. Everyone within the same Range Increment as the character who picked the card suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra.

Ace (-0) Shortcut: Hey, there is a shortcut here! If the pilot succeeds in the Piloting roll, his mount immediately gains up to d4 Range Increments.

IT'S NOT OVER YET

You have finally shaken off your pursuers, but more dangers lie ahead. Behind, you see an airspeeder fully loaded with black armored commandos. They wield heavy weapons that are aimed at you.

Your mount's speed is no match against the vehicle's. You must do something, and quickly too, if you don't want to join Eight-

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

Eyes' goons at the bottom of the crevasse.

But something unexpected happens!

A spaceship drops out of the clouds, bumping and skimming as if piloted by a drunken Urk. Hey, it's the Blazing Star!

You wrist computers ring – there is an incoming communication.

"Professor Ku Lamp here. I told you that leaving me behind on the spaceship wasn't a good idea, didn't I? Well, do you want a lift?"

Some more background: Professor Ku Lamp, the party's employer, came with the heroes to Tella, but the group forced him to stay safely on the ship during the final meeting with Eight-Eyes, considering the situation too dangerous for an old man.

The good professor, not trusting the group entirely, put a bug inside the pouch of diamonds, and eavesdropped on everything that transpired. In the end, this turned out to be good for the party!

Jumping Onto the Blazing Star.

Now, the party must reach their spaceship. This is not simple because they are flying atop a bird while pursued by the commandos. Ku Lamp opens the docking bay ramp and the heroes must jump in! This requires an Agility (–2) roll. If a hero fails the roll, he clings to the edge of the docking ramp. He needs a Strength (–4) roll to finally enter the ship, the roll can be cooperative.

After two rounds, the commandos arrive and four of them start shooting at anyone on the ramp, at Long range.

When all the heroes are aboard, read the following:

You quickly reach the cockpit and take control of the ship. You see the black commandos through a porthole for the last time, and then you fly away, leaving them in the maze of canyons.

"Who were those men?" asks Professor Ku Lamp, tickling his long whisker-like moustache.

You have no idea and you are all very busy now, so the question goes unanswered.

Hyperdrive coordinates calculated. Ready to jump.

Next stop: Lammor II!

SCENE 3: THIEVES ON LAMMOR II

You are on Lammor II now, and more precisely at the Lammorian University, department of Galactic History. Lammor II is a multiethnic planet, attracting students from across the galaxy. It is an academic planet: students and teachers from the entire sector have found an ideal place to advance their knowledge.

This evening you get further confirmation of this. The univer-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

sity is open for the celebrations of the new academic year, and you are amazed to see students of every alien race (even ancestral enemies) conversing, laughing and carousing together in a colorful festival.

Professor Ku Lamp brings the prism to the security chamber of the university, which is patrolled by sentry droids. When the object is finally placed in a force cage, the Professor relaxes:

"Now it is safe. We can go to the rector to arrange your payment. I am pleased. You have done an excellent job."

The rector, Horatius Holon, is a plump man in his sixties. The pay is \$2,500 plus \$1,500 for having returned the diamonds as well.

If your players are in the mood, they can bargain over the pay. Let the party do some roleplaying first, then they should make a cooperative Persuasion roll, with a modifier (from +2 to -2) depending on how well they roleplayed the situation. Every success and raise means +10% to the sum paid. The pay can only be higher, not lower than the base offer.

When the exact amount of the fee is settled (but before the heroes are paid), something unexpected happens.

You have just negotiated the recompense when a red warning light flashes on the rector's computer.

"Impossible!" the rector says:

"Someone is violating the security chamber!"

On the holographic monitor you see a group of black armored men infiltrating the security room. They are the same commandos you saw on Tella! Some sentry droids lay destroyed at their feet.

"Surely they want the prism!" Ku Lamp shouts at the party "Hurry up! You must stop them!!"

The security chamber is on the opposite side of the campus. It is not very far, but tonight the university is so crowded because of the festival that it will not be an easy task to reach the place quickly.

This is a Chase, to be handled with the following modifications.

The Black Guardians begin at Extreme Range (5 Range Increments from the party). Each Range Increment represents 5" on the tabletop. Use Agility as Chase skill.

For the first three rounds, the commandos are busy cracking the force cage, so they do not move at all. On the fourth round they have the prism and escape. If the party has not caught them yet, Doctor Ku Lamp will guide the heroes via his wrist computer, so that they know where the perps are going.

The commandos are slower than the heroes, so from the fourth round on, the party adds +1 to their Chase rolls. The commandos stay together and move as a group.

Instead of the normal obstacle rules,

whenever a Club card is drawn, run the correspondent mini-scene from the following table. The Black Guardians ignore the obstacle table and use no special maneuvers during the chase.

When the party finally reaches the thieves, go to the next section, "The Sacrifice".

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Oil: Someone spilled a can of oil on the floor, and the janitorial droids are too busy with the celebrations outside to clean it. If the hero fails the Chase roll, he slips and falls suffering 2d6 damage from an Extra.

Three (-2) Escaped mascot: Some students brought a Viraxian bull to school, the beast being the symbol of their fraternity. The creature has gone wild and yes, it is charging one of the heroes! If he fails the Agility roll, he suffers d12+d6+6 damage from an Extra. If the hero scores a success, he can avoid the beast or, if he feels very daring, try to ride it! This requires a Riding or Agility -4 roll to jump onto its back. From now until the end of the Chase, the character can use Riding as his chase skill, with a +1 bonus due the bull's speed.

Viraxian Bull (1): see page 47.

Four (-2) Offended girl: A male Human student has made a salacious comment about an Urk girl. She did not appreciate it at all and is now pounding some respect into him. Use Intimidation as the Chase skill this round. If the roll is successful, the character gains increments as normal. If 1 is scored on the skill die, the girl delivers a solid punch to the hero. She has Strength d8, Fighting d8 and the Drop.

Five (-2) Let's party!: A group of carousing students is in the way! They force the hero to take a tankard full of a burbling substance and to dance with them! This round the chase roll is based on Persuasion in order to be released by the group. If the hero fails the roll, he is stuck until a success is scored. He can roll once each round.

Six (-2) Automated doors: Running through a corridor full of automated doors is not a very smart thing to do. If the hero misses the chase roll, he is not moving in synch with the doors and crashes into a set of them. He is automatically Shaken.

Seven (-1) Drunken student: A drunken student mistakes one of the heroes for a long-lost friend and stops him to tell his sob story. The hero must pause and console him, losing a Range Increment. Otherwise, he can ignore the student but he loses a Benny for non-heroic behavior.

Eight (-1) Arguing aliens: A couple old alien professors are vehemently arguing about the correct color of the traditional wedding costume of the Hilarikyan race. The hero can make a Common Knowledge roll to set them straight — there is no costume, the spouses are naked for the ceremony. Give the hero a Benny and use the Common Knowledge result as their chase roll.

Nine (-1) Escalators: The escalators are crowded, but this won't stop a daring hero! The player can choose to surf down the escalator's railing instead of riding down. If he chooses this (and the roll is successful) he gains an extra Range Increment, otherwise he falls down the escalator, becoming

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Shaken. If he uses the escalator in the customary way, run the chase as usual.

Ten (-1) Fireworks: No Lammorian festival is complete without a fireworks display, but if the fireworks technicians aren't skilled enough, this can lead to a dangerous situation. And this is just the case! Now there are skyrockets flying all around! All the heroes in the Range Increment of the one who draws the card must make an Agility-2 roll or be struck by a rocket (2d6 damage from an Extra). The roll doesn't count as an extra action. Roll as usual for the chase.

Jack (0) Broken droid: A droid, reprogrammed by students with a peculiar sense of humor, is running in circles and singing the university's hymn. A hero can stop to fix it with a Repair roll. This round, he doesn't gain Range Increments but from the next round on, the droid will clear the path in front of him, granting d8 as Wild Die for the chase rolls until the end of the scene.

Queen (0) Street sweeper: There is a street sweeper parked here. The hero can take it, figure out how to start the engine with a Smarts roll, and use it during the chase. It is not very fast, but from now on the hero can use Driving as Chase skill.

King (0) Freshman: A very timid first-year student stops the hero. If the hero moves on, run the chase as usual, otherwise the freshman says that he has seen some strange armored men coming from a service passage. *"It's all part of the festival, isn't it?"* The service passage is a shortcut. Roll a d4 — this is the number of Range Increments the hero gains.

Ace (0) Flying dancers: A couple of

Itokian aliens (a male and a female) are improvising a beautiful floating dance thanks to antigravity bracers. A hero can stop to ask them for the bracers with a Persuasion (-4) roll or he can buy them for \$500. If he does this, the character doesn't earn any Range Increment this round, but from the next round on, he rolls with +2 until the end of the Chase. Otherwise run the chase as usual.

THE SACRIFICE

You finally reach the commandos. One of them, the leader, has the prism. Seeing you coming, he speaks to his comrades.

"Shark One and Shark Four. You know what to do."

After this order, two of his men stop and start shooting at you with savage fury. To stay on the safe side, the commando leader raises a hand, generating a translucent barrier of psychic energy to block the path behind his men.

They have been left here to die.

"Your sacrifice will not be in vain, my friends" the leader says before running away with the others.

If you want to continue the pursuit, you must dispatch these two warriors.

The fight happens in a corridor 6"

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

ACT 2: THE GATOR PROTECTORATE

wide and 18" long. Place the heroes at one end of the corridor and the commandos at the other. Both of them start on Hold.

The enemies are so exalted by sacrificing their lives to allow their comrades to escape, that they are considered Henchmen. Their goal is to slow down the party and then die, so they'll lay down suppressive fire and use grenades heavily.

★ **Black Guardians (2):** See page 43

TERRAIN

* **University holo-terminal:** A sturdy box, it grants Heavy Cover (-4) and has Toughness 10. Place two of them on the battlefield, within 3" of the Black Guardians, along the corridor's walls.

* **Trash converter:** A hyper-technological machine that converts trash into energy. It grants Light Cover (-1) and has Toughness 8. Place two of them along the walls, in the central part of the corridor.

After the combat read the following passage.

You dealt with the commandos, who fought bravely. The shining barrier has vanished, but you only manage to witness the escape of the main group of thieves — a hover vehicle approaches a window and they disappear into the night with the prism in their possession.

Definitely not a good evening for you!

A FEEBLE TRACK

Professor Ku Lamp and the rector are not at all pleased with the evening's events. To tell the truth, the good professor is enraged — the battle has turned the campus upside-down and the precious prism is lost. The commandos ignored all the other valuable artifacts held in the security chamber, lockpicking only the prism's force cage. The party does have a clue to go on — the bodies of the fallen commandos.

Removing the helmets reveals humanoid aliens. Both have strange tattoos on their forearms. With an Investigation roll they can be identified as Gatorians, a race of humanoid aliens native to the barren world of Gator.

If the players fail this important roll, an exobiologist from the university steps in to help identify the aliens.

The professor hires the party once more. He wants to go to Gator to find clues leading to the mysterious commandos and eventually retrieve the prism. This time around, the reward is \$5,000 and no haggling is possible as the university is now losing a lot of money in this affair.

Assuming the party accepts the mission, they arrive on Gator together with Professor Ku Lamp.

Read or paraphrase the following.

Gator is an arid planet, very rich in ores, under the control of the Miner's Guild which established

DATA: GATOR

INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Success: Someone says that Gator was once an ocean world. This theory is supported by the fact that all the ancient cities on the planet are built on high ground and there are a great number of indigenous amphibious organisms, which is certainly unusual in an arid environment.

Raise: Gatorians are organized in clans. Not all clans work for the Guild. Some tribes of nomads maintain their original customs and ways of life. Settled Gatorians see nomads as an uncivilized lot, and harsh wars were fought in the past between settled and nomadic clans.

Two Raises: Gator is a condemned world. Due to the great proximity of its moon, Niaga, and a strange combination of other climatic factors, the planet's water reserves are steadily fading. It is a slow process, with the timescale of glaciations, but in a few centuries, the planet will no longer be able to sustain animal and plant life.

STREETWISE RESULTS

Success: Mining is the most profitable business on Gator, but all the riches end up in the hands of the Miners' Guild. Gatorians have no real influence in the global economy and politics.

Raise: Terrorism is becoming common on the planet, due to the Guild's policy of total abuse. Rebel fighters have the support of the population, making it very difficult for the Miners' militia to find and eliminate them.

Two Raises: Gatorians are an ancient race of potential psionics. Once powerful and very advanced, their abilities have decayed in the last millennium as a result of internal struggles – now, few of them are capable of exerting their powers, but these few are extremely gifted.

a Protectorate. Almost all the Gatorians work in the company's mining facilities and a Miners' Governor rules their world.

The Blazing Star lands in the starport of Gator City, the biggest city on the planet.

Gator City is built on a high plateau and resembles a giant pueblo: lots of small, yellow,

square houses piled one on top of the other, to create a rather chaotic urban area. Landing formalities are very strict and the situation is tense due to some rebel attacks which happened in the last few days.

You hear public information droids continuously shouting about a big bounty on the head of a certain Weaver, leader of the

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

Black Guardians, the main rebel group on the planet.

The customs officers are extremely rude and make it clear that strangers are unwelcome at this time, but the credentials and notoriety of Professor Ku Lamp allow you to bypass this obstacle.

Now that you are on the planet you can concentrate on following the feeble trail you have.

Luckily you have a contact in Gator City. His name is Kamelos Bakb, a former space pilot, who lost both his legs in a space fight years ago. He then retired to Gator, doing double duty as a starship mechanic and smuggler.

He has a starship garage in the lower part of the city. It shouldn't be difficult to find.

If the players have played DTSL 1, they have to be particularly alert because in the past they crossed the path of the Miners' Guild and the Guilders didn't take it well.

The party can gain additional information on the planet with Streetwise or Investigation rolls (see sidebar).

SCENE 1: A FRIEND IN NEED

Kamelos' garage is in the lower part of Gator City. You have found it easily, despite the maze of streets in the quarter.

There are some carcasses of broken and stripped vehicles in the yard and

you recognize the disorder typical of your old friend.

But, strangely, the garage appears to be closed.

There is even a "Back Soon" sign on the door, yet it is midday.

"Your friend doesn't work too hard, does he?" says Professor Ku Lamp with a quizzical look.

The heroes can open the door of the garage, it isn't locked. There is also a back door which is locked and requires a Lockpicking roll to be opened.

Once inside, the heroes observe the following:

Kamelos, your old friend, is sitting in his customary boverchair, surrounded by some men who are holding guns and clearly threatening him.

One of them, a skinny, noseless, humanoid says in a bubbling voice:

"Come on, I'm sure that this laser tool will help you remember some more."

One of his lackeys turns on a laser metal cutter and goes toward Kamelos with clear intentions of using it.

The startled look on your friend's face turns to open terror.

You must do something if you want to save him, and you must do it now!

This fight cannot be avoided. The

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

garage, a rectangle of 24" x 18", is the fighting area. It has two openings located in the center of the shorter sides. The front opening is a 12" wide gate and the back exit a standard 2" wide door.

Place the enemies in the center of the room. They are all around Kamelos, but at the first hint of danger they duck behind the nearest cover, leaving the crippled pilot free. When this happens, Kamelos finds a safe place to hide in for the rest of the combat. His hoverchair has Pace 4 and cannot run.

When the fight starts, Ghalzer, the noseless humanoid, uses his chameleon field device to flee. This event is mandatory for the adventure; if necessary, use the Recurring Villains rules to allow Ghalzer to escape.

★ **Miners' Guild Secret Police (1 per hero + 1):** See page 45

★ **Ghalzer, Officer of the Miners' Guild Secret Police:** See page 44

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Heavy machinery:** The garage is full of heavy, sturdy repair machinery (mill, drill press, lathe, etc.). They offer Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 12. Use Small Burst Templates and Medium Burst Templates to represent them. Place up to four small templates and four medium templates in the battle area.

* **Paint sprayer pump:** This big pump sprays highly toxic, industrial paint at great pressure. Consider it a Blast Power that, instead of doing damage, automatically Shakes opponents. Use Shooting as the arcane skill. The pump has enough paint for two shots.

Use a gaming stone to represent it. It must be placed within 8" of a hero.

* **Laser metal cutter:** This powerful laser is used to repair starship vehicles. It can be overcharged to create a sort of very long and intense energy blade. It is a weapon that deals Str+d10 damage AP 4, Reach 4. It is considered an improvised weapon and is powered by a huge battery that has only a 6" power cable. Place a gaming stone to represent the battery. The battery has Toughness 5. If the battery suffers a Wound, it explodes, dealing 2d8 damage in a Medium Burst Template. At the start of the fight, the weapon is in the hands of a member of the Secret Police.

* **Suspended hull:** The hull of a small hover vehicle that Kamelos was repairing, is suspended from a large chain 8" above the center of the room. It covers a Large Burst Template area. The chain has a Toughness 5 and can be severed with a called shot (-4). Severing the chain causes the hull to drop. Everyone in the area must make an Agility (-2) roll or suffer 2d6 damage and be pinned. It requires a Strength roll to free oneself from under the hull.

AFTERMATH

When all the enemies have been defeated, Kamelos leaves his hiding place, recognizes the party and thanks them. He then withdraws a bottle of strong Angovian Gutcrawler to calm his nerves. Surely the heroes have many questions for him. Likely questions and Kamelos' answers are detailed below.

Q: Who were these people?

A: They were members of the

Miners' Guild Secret Police, my friends.

Q: What did they want from you?

A: I am a foreigner and that is sufficient to make them suspicious and then... well... there was that terrorist attack some days ago. The terrorist, a Black Guardian, used a hoverbike I sold him. The cops simply followed the trail.

Q: Who bought the hoverbike?

A: A Gatorian fellow named Klaaru. I think he is an autominer.

Q: Who are these Black Guardians?

A: Miners' Guild propaganda says they are terrorists. They claim to be freedom fighters. In truth they are very skilled, surely with a military background. They always wear all-black, sealed armor to avoid being recognized. The group's leader, Weaver, made several proclamations. He is a charismatic fellow, even though his true identity is unknown.

Q: We have found these tattoos on some Gatorians. Do you recognize them?

A: Yes, they are clan tattoos. This one identifies the Wave Riders, a

CABRIOLET PULP

In pulp films, the heroes are often seen driving convertibles. This happens for two reasons: The first is that it is more cinematic: heroines can let their long hair flow in the wind and male heroes can show off their best side to the camera. The second reason is that shooting and similar daring actions are more heroic without roofs to hinder movement. Following this, all the vehicles in this scenario (except for spaceships) are convertibles, unless otherwise explicitly stated. On Gator, being a desert world, this behavior can be deadly due to the harsh sun, but don't worry: technological vehicles are equipped with light forcefields which have a shading effect from the sunrays.

northern ethnic group. Strange, that Klaaru fellow who bought the hoverbike had the same tattoos.

Q: Where can we find the Wave Riders clan?

A: Almost all of them break their backs in Automine 105, one of the wandering mining installations of the Guild. I can give you directions there.

Q: What will you do now, Kamelos?

A: I'll leave this damn planet as fast as I can! Revolution is none of my business.

Kamelos lends the heroes a hover-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

speeder to reach Automine 105. It is the only way to travel on the planet, because, for security reasons, it is forbidden to land a spaceship anywhere except inside Gator City.

SCENE 2: THE SALT RAIDERS

You are traveling aboard a hoverspeeder toward Automine 105, crossing a vast desert area. You have heard rumors that Gator was a water planet millennia ago, and it must be true, because now you are crossing the barren bed of what once was a sea. Large banks of white salt and dunes of strange minerals make you understand the reason for the Miners' Guild's interest in this planet.

You are stunned by the savage beauty of this world. You have just crossed a large forest of petrified corals and now, on the horizon, you see the gigantic skeleton of what can only be a prehistoric fish from some distant era.

But life is not easy on Gator, and you have immediate proof of that. A sudden flash of light and the hoverspeeder's engine suddenly dies! You are floating six feet above the ground; it will not be a safe landing!

Let the pilot make a Driving roll. If he fails, all the passengers suffer 2d6 damage and are Shaken.

The good news is that you managed to stop the speeder. The bad news is that you have landed at the top of a sandy slope, precariously balancing on the edge of a great fissure. One wrong move could tip the speeder and send you falling into the crevasse!

You see the cause of all your problems: a metal object protruding from the sand, cleverly concealed.

With a Shooting or Repair roll (whichever skill is higher) the characters recognize the object: it is an overcharging mine. This weapon emits an energy impulse, capable of temporarily disabling the engines of high-tech vehicles. In some worlds it is used by the police and in others by bandits. In this case, as you see now, it is the latter of the two.

But there are other problems on the horizon: a large group of desert nomads has come over the hill's crest, riding some sort of giant desert slugs, which, despite their name, are very quick. The raiders shout a terrible war cry and charge towards you!

The heroes must accomplish two goals in this scene: resist the raiders' attack and repair the hoverspeeder as quickly as they can. All of this while avoiding tumbling into the crevasse!

FIGHTING THE RAIDERS

Draw a straight line on the table to represent the fissure and put the hoverspeeder halfway over the edge. The fissure is more than 20" wide, so jumping to the other side is impossible. The hoverspeeder is 3" wide and 6" long, but the last 2" of length are taken up by the engine. So the heroes must be placed in an area 3" x 4".

The raiders start 36" away from the heroes, in a position perpendicular to the fissure's edge. It is not necessary to have a very big combat map because the giant slugs run 12" each round and the raiders' tactics consist of getting close as soon as they can.

The raiders dismount 12" away from the heroes, where the sand slope begins, because the terrain isn't solid enough to sustain the weight of their mounts.

All the land within a radius of 12" from the hoverspeeder's position, except for the fissure, is a sand slope zone (see below).

A quarter of the raiders stay at the margin of the sand slope shooting with ranged weapons, while the others, guided by their leader, board the speeder boldly ignoring the danger of falling!

★ **Salt Raiders (3 per hero):** See page 46

★ **Venomspine, Salt Raider War-chief:** See page 47

TERRAIN

* **Hoverspeeder:** The hoverspeeder grants Medium Cover (-2) and has Toughness 10.

* **The sand slope:** This area is made of very fine sand, gently sloping toward the fissure's edge. It is a very treacherous place to stand. Whenever a character draws a Club as his initiative card while standing in the sandy area, he must immediately make an Agility (-2) roll or he falls and slides d6" toward the fissure. An Extra falling toward the fissure is automatically dead, a Wild Card catches the edge, his hands clinging to the rocks, until he makes a Strength (-4) roll to climb out.

FIXING THE HOVERSPEDER

The speeder's engine is not broken, only overcharged, but some actions are

required to restart it. The party must perform four steps in the following order to make the vehicle operative again.

1. Reach the engine's energy dissipaters. The dissipaters are located on the speeder's nose. It requires an Agility (-2) roll to reach them. In case of failure, the hero cannot reach the required position and the speeder shifts dangerously, losing a Balance Point (see below).
2. Disconnect the energy dissipaters. The dissipaters must be disconnected from the engine. This requires a Repair roll. In case of a 1 on the Repair die, the hero suffers 2d6 damage from a sudden energy discharge.
3. Bypass the security system. If the energy dissipaters are disconnected, the engine normally will not start as this is a standard security measure in these types of vehicles, but now it must be bypassed. It can be done with a Lockpicking roll or a Common Knowledge (-4) roll. Heroes with a piloting background add +2 to the roll.
4. Restart the engine. The engine must be restarted, but very carefully to avoid losing balance. It requires three successful Piloting rolls. Each raise counts as a success. Failing a roll forces the restart of the process. A 1 scored on the Piloting roll results in the loss of a Balance Point.

There is no time limit in restarting the hoverspeeder, but the more rounds pass, the more assaults the party must

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

contend with, increasing the risk of falling!

LOSING BALANCE

The hoverspeeder is balancing precariously. In gaming terms it has five Balance points. If one of the following situations occurs aboard the vehicle, a Balance Point is lost:

- * Drawing a Club card as the first Initiative card.

- * Getting 1 on any Agility or Agility-based skill roll (including combat skills)

- * At the end of a round if there are more than 6 people aboard the vehicle.

When the Balance Points drop to zero, the speeder slides into the fissure! Everyone on the vehicle must make an Agility (-2) roll to stay aboard. Extras that fail the roll are thrown overboard and die in a horrible way. Wildcards are able to cling to the edge of the speeder. It requires a Strength (-4) roll to climb up. Luckily the speeder comes to a halt after skidding twenty feet, stopped by the branches of a huge thorny plant that lives on the slope of the fissure. The thorns cause 2d6 damage from an Extra to all those aboard.

When the heroes finally manage to restart their vehicle, read the following:

Finally the engine comes to life and you take off at maximum speed! You hear the screams of the raiders behind you while you race toward the dying sun.

"We did it! I cannot believe it! We managed it!" says Professor Ku

Lamp, a wide grin on his face. Excitement makes the old man look twenty years younger.

ACT 3: AUTOMINE 105

It is morning when you finally come upon Automine 105. It wasn't difficult to find: this monstrosity leaves a track in the sand half a mile wide. Imagine a huge vacuum cleaner, several thousand feet wide and long, and you'll have a good idea of what this thing is. It sucks dirt and raw ore from the terrain, wandering around in the desert. It is a small, moving city. There are some landing pads on the higher decks, where you can land.

The Guild's militia seems to mistake you for wandering merchants, so no accurate check is done. The place is organized like a factory, with a rigid hierarchical structure. All the command positions are held by Miners' Guild personnel, while the hardest and most taxing work is done by Gatorians, treated more or less as slaves. The upper levels of the Automine, where you are now, are rather comfortable, but you imagine that the lower ones (where the real work is done) are narrow, claustrophobic and hot, like the interior of some ancient era spaceship.

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

"I never thought people could live in such a place" comments Professor Ku Lamp, disturbed by what he sees.

The population of the Automine is roughly a thousand individuals. Finding Klaaru will require some investigation. Asking the Miners' Guild personnel is a straightforward choice, but not a great one, as they don't have this name in their files and questions about him would make them very suspicious. If the players follow that route later in the act, during Scene 2, Ghalzer will have more goons at hand (see below).

The right thing to do is start asking around to the miners. The best place to ask is the refectory, where meals are served almost continuously as the work shifts start at two hour intervals.

The Gatorians don't give information to strangers very willingly. It requires an Investigation or Streetwise roll, both at -2, to find a lead. The penalty can be offset by offering some cash (\$50 to reduce to -1, \$100 to completely remove the penalty). The attempt can be made multiple times, every roll requires a couple hours spent socializing and talking.

When the roll is finally made, the party finds Sasha, a burly female miner who claims she knows Klaaru.

According to Sasha, Klaaru works in the lower levels of the automine, among the ore refining machines.

She can take the party to him, but she wants some money. She asks for \$300.

Sasha is a member of the Black Guardians, sent by Weaver to lure off-worlders (those that go around asking

the wrong questions in the wrong places) into a trap. To be more credible, she tries to dicker over her reward down to the last credit, but in the end she accepts whatever the amount to take the party to Klaaru.

SCENE 1: RUN, BABY, RUN!

You follow Sasha down to the deeper decks of the Automine. The noise of the stone crushing machines is terrible here, and the smell of industrial oil is sickening. Eventually you reach a low ceilinged room crossed by a big conveyor belt, clearly out of service.

"This way. It is a shortcut" the tough woman laconically says, jumping with surprising agility onto the belt.

You follow her down a dark, narrow passage. The conveyor belt ends in a big room, partially taken up by a large blast furnace containing a glowing pool of molten metal. It is terribly hot in here.

"We have arrived" she says, jumping off the conveyor belt.

You try to do the same, but something strange happens. A shiny, translucent barrier blocks your path! At that very moment the conveyor belt starts moving! You frantically look around but your path is blocked on three

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

sides. The only unblocked direction is towards the furnace and the conveyor belt is taking you there!

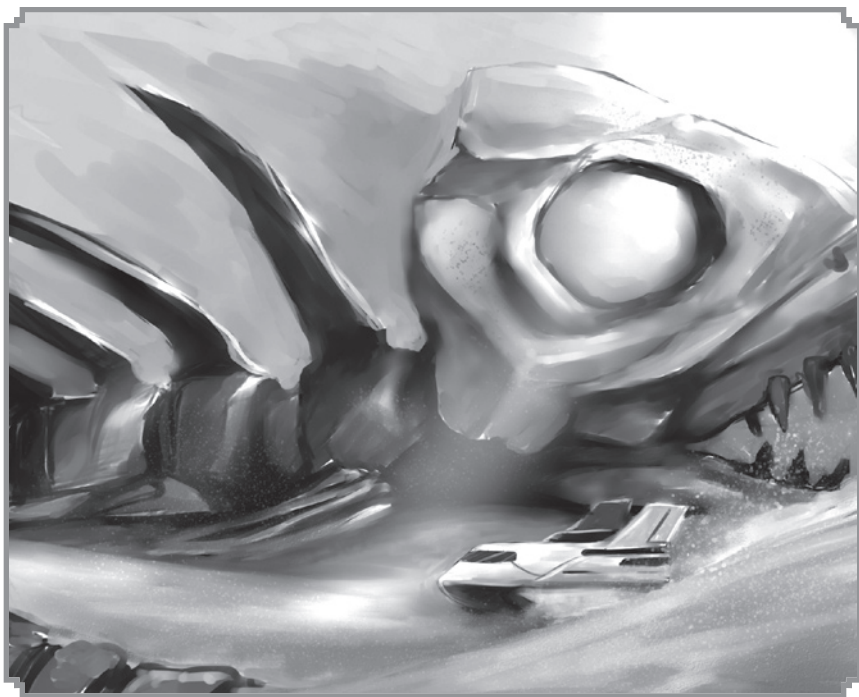
Sasha stares at you coldly. Some other people come out of the shady corners of the room. They are all Gatorians, dressed as miners.

"You are very stubborn, my friends. I was sure the meeting we had on Lammor II was our last, but I must have been mistaken."

You recognize the voice; he was the leader of the commandos on Lammor II!

The heroes are now in a very unpleasant situation. They have to run in place or find something sturdy to hold on to, to avoid being conveyed into a molten death, but it is only a matter of time before fatigue will get the best of them. The *barrier* is a stronger version of the standard Power, it has the Heavy Armor special ability and lasts until the end of the scene; there is nothing the party can do to destroy it. The only way the heroes can get out of this mess is by persuading Weaver to release them, but they must do it quickly!

Gaining Weaver's trust requires the following four actions to be performed in strict order within six rounds. All these actions can be accomplished with cooperative rolls. Let your players role-play the situation. A good performance



can add from +1 to +2 to the roll. A truly excellent performance counts as an automatic success.

1. Counter Sasha's curt manners. Sasha wants the party killed, quickly and quietly. The party has to ridicule or intimidate her to gain Weaver's attention. This can be done with an Intimidation or Taunt roll.
2. Persuade Weaver that the party isn't working for the enemy. Weaver believes the heroes are hirelings of the Guild. They must persuade him that this isn't true, that the Guild is their enemy too, having tried to kill their friend, Kamelos. This is a Persuasion roll.
3. Tell Weaver the truth about the party's reasons for searching for the prism. At this point Weaver begins trusting the heroes, but he still has suspicions about their interest in the ancient prism, the Katrah. The heroes must convince him they want it for scientific purposes only. Weaver will ask some tricky questions to check their scientific background. This is a Common Knowledge (-2) roll. Professor Ku Lamp helps the group by participating in this action. He adds +2 to the roll.
4. Pass Weaver's mind probe. Weaver is an empathic. After having heard their words, Weaver probes the characters' minds, in order to discover lies. The whole group must score a total of three successes or raises in Spirit-2 rolls. Each player can make a roll each round, until he scores at least a success. At this

point he is trusted and doesn't have to reroll in later rounds.

Each round, the heroes are dragged nearer the blast furnace by the conveyor belt. At the start of the seventh round (and each successive round), they must make an Agility roll to avoid falling. A hero that fails the roll clings desperately to a metal bar under the belt's end. It is a desperate position: the next round he must make a Strength (-4) roll in a last attempt to jump back up on to the belt. If he fails, he drops into the red inferno and dies.

When Weaver is finally persuaded, he orders Sasha to switch off the conveyor belt and addresses the party.

"You have convinced me. I will spare your life, but I cannot give you back the Katrah, which you simply call 'a prism.' In truth it is an ancient relic of our people. This object holds the power to restore the balance on our planet and to destroy the oppressors. So, go now, and let there be peace among us.

At these words, someone applauds and a bubbling voice says:

"A magnificent speech! I was sure that following the off-worlders would guide me to straight you, Weaver!"

You and the Black Guardians look up. On a higher walkway, running the length of the entire room, you see the strange, nose-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

less alien you faced back in Karmelos' garage.

You notice he is wearing a strange metalized armor and he has brought a whole squad of Miners' Guild soldiers, who are aiming their weapons at you.

"Drop your weapons and I'll spare your puny lives," continues the evil looking officer. "But allow me to introduce myself: I am Gbalzer, Officer of the Miners' Guild Secret Police. There are many things I wish to know from you, and I know LOTS of interesting ways to make you speak. A little chat with me will stay with you for the rest of your life!"

He grins showing a terrible, toothy lamprey-like smile.

SCENE 2: ESCAPE FROM AUTOMINE 105

You are likely to be captured if nobody creates a diversion.

Weaver does just that.

The Black Guardian stares intently at the ceiling and you can almost feel the terrible strength of his mental power at work. A water main breaks and a gush of liquid falls down into the blast furnace. The result is immediate — a terrible hiss and a huge cloud of steam engulf the room.

The Guilders cannot see you, it is time to flee!

"Soldiers! Attack!" Gbalzer barks from his higher position. You see some blurred shapes jumping down from the passageway and coming toward you.

"Come on," snarls Sasba. "Let's kill these dogs and go!"

A fight is imminent!

This time, Weaver and the Black Guardians are on the party's side, so let the players use them in the combat.

The room is rectangular, 24" x 18". The southern half of the room, an area 12" x 18", is occupied by the furnace, so it is impassable. The northern 12" x 18" half is where the real fight happens. There are three openings in the room: the conveyor belt entrance the party came through is 4" wide and situated in the middle of the 18" long northern wall. Two other passages, only 2" wide, open in the center of the other two 12" sides, east and west. The entire chamber is encircled by a suspended catwalk, 8" from the terrain, where the attackers are placed. Two stairs of 2" x 2" allow climbing down to and up from the catwalk. Place them in the north-east and north-west corners of the room. The enemies are coming from there.

Place the heroes and their allies in the center of the room, near the edge of the blast furnace.

The party's goal in this fight is to reach one of the exits, not to kill all the enemies. If they stay here, they will be stormed by overwhelming militia forces.

At the start of each round, 4 Guild

Soldiers (evenly divided into two groups) climb down the stairs, ready to attack. If the party has given rise to the suspicions of the automine personnel (see Scene 1), the soldiers number 6 each round.

The bad visibility conditions count as Dark (-2).

★ **Weaver, Leader of the Black Guardians:** See page 48

★ **Sasha, Black Guardian Henchwoman:** Use Black Guardian. See page 43

★ **Black Guardian (2):** See page 43

★ **Miners' Guild Soldiers (see above):** See page 45

The Black Guardians wear no armor and are armed only with blaster pistols and daggers.

TERRAIN

* **Conveyor Belt:** The conveyor belt is 3" wide and goes from the blast furnace to the north door. The command console stands on a pedestal near the furnace. Use a gaming stone to represent it. With an action, the console can be used to start or stop the conveyor belt. People walking on the conveyor belt when it starts moving must make an Agility-2 roll or fall, becoming Shaken. If the belt is still moving from previous rounds, the Agility roll is made without modifier.

* **Barrels:** There are some barrels scattered around the room. They count as Light Cover (-1). Some of them are full of combustible oil! When someone behind a barrel is hit, roll a d6. If the result is 5 or 6, the barrel is full and explodes, dealing 2d6 damage from an Extra in a Medium Burst template.

Damaged targets might also catch fire (as per standard *Savage Worlds* rules). You can use gaming stones to represent them on the tabletop. Place up to six of them in the room.

* **Blast furnace:** If someone falls into the molten metal at the heart of the blast furnace, there isn't much that can be done: he dies horribly in a few seconds.

When the heroes finally leave the room, read the following:

You managed to escape from that trap, and now you are running for your life!

"I never trusted the Miner's Guild! Never!" complains Professor Ku Lamp "When I return to the university, I'll propose a motion to the academic council to reject all their funding! Damn their minerals!"

The sounds of heavy booted feet and shouts draw closer.

"We'll cover your path, Master" the Black Guardians say to their leader. Then they stop and check their weapons.

"We won't forget you, I swear." Weaver promises.

You watch the courageous rebels for the last time before going on.

"This way!" says Sasha, pointing toward a narrow corridor, "The exit is near."

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

SCENE 3: SALT RAIDERS AGAIN!

You are on the upper decks now, near the docking bays. People look startled at your drawn blasters and your excited faces.

You must get away from here, as soon as possible. On a nearby platform you see a vehicle, a hover catamaran, left unguarded.

"What a stroke of luck!" says Professor Ku Lamp.

The heroes must take the catamaran to flee. They jump aboard and turn on the engines at the very moment when Ghalzer and a squad of his soldiers rush out from the lower decks!

"Take them!" He shouts.

You lift off and make for the heart of the desert.

Looking back, you notice there are incoming problems. Lots of them!

You see an entire squad of hover motorbikes bearing soldiers and, behind them, a nasty vehicle armed with two missile launchers.

"A Desert Skorpion!" curses Sash.

The catamaran is a patrol vehicle, so it has some weapons

and a shield, but it will not be an easy fight.

Weaver sits down and closes his eyes, an expression of deep concentration on his face. It seems you must deal with this situation without the aid of his powers.

This is a chase!

Place twenty markers on the table, to represent Range Increments. Place the party's catamaran on the sixth Range Increment, the motorbikes on the second and the Desert Skorpion on the first.

The motorbikes carry two people each, the driver and a passenger, but they are faster than the catamaran — they add +1 to Chase rolls. The Desert Skorpion is slower — reducing Chase rolls by -1.

For ease of use, divide the motorbikes into three squads of three. A squad moves as a single element in the chase.

Each motorbike is considered an Extra: when the vehicle suffers a wound, the pilot loses control and collides with something, exploding in true cinematic style.

The motorbikes' tactics are to use the Push maneuver every round, so that the bike's passenger can board the catamaran. While drawing near, the driver targets the catamaran's weapons and thrusters — the soldiers' goal is to capture the party, not kill them.

The Desert Skorpion's tactics are to use its missiles to destroy the catamaran's thrusters and to fire with its lasers.

Shooting the thrusters is a Called

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

Shot (-4). If the shot is successful and deals a Wound, the vehicle suffers -1 to Piloting rolls until it is repaired. This is cumulative, and the penalty can be inflicted up to three times.

Shooting the weapons is a Called Shot (-4). If the shot is successful and deals a Wound, the targeted weapon is destroyed.

Do not use the standard obstacles rules. Instead, when a character draws a Club card as his first initiative card, run the appropriate mini-scene below. When this situation applies to a motorbike squad, the whole squad is affected.

Should the need arise to sketch a combat map; the catamaran is 6" x 6".

The Chase ends when the party reaches the twentieth Range Increment. When this happens, go to the section: "Weaver's Friends."

Motorbikes (9): Each carries a driver and a passenger. They are Miners' Guild Soldiers. The driver has Driving d6. See page 45.

Desert Skorpion (1): A pilot and a single gunner are aboard. They are Miners' Guild Soldiers. The pilot has Piloting d8, the gunner, Shooting d8. See page 45.

HOVER CATAMARAN

This surveillance vehicle is made up of two twin pontoons connected by a bridge, where the piloting and energy shield controls are located. It is armed with two independent laser cannons mounted on turrets.

Acc/Top Speed: 15/50; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** +1; **Shields:** 1; **Crew:** 1+7; **Notes:** Improved stabilizers.

Weapons:

- * 2 x Laser cannons on 360° turrets (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8; ROF: 1; AP: 1; Heavy Weapon)

HOVER MOTORBIKE

A light combat vehicle made for scouting missions and lightning fast movement on the battlefield.

Acc/Top Speed: 25/100; **Toughness:** 10 (1); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1; **Notes:** Max height: 2"

Weapons:

- * Front light laser cannon (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d6; ROF: 1; AP: 1; Heavy Weapon)

DESERT SKORPION

A sphere of duraglass mounted atop two missile launchers is the basic description of this nasty assault vehicle that owes its name to the sting-like laser cannon that protrudes from the back. The pilot and the gunner are placed inside the sphere, protected by the vehicle's forcefield.

Acc/Top Speed: 10/30; **Toughness:** 12 (4); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+1; **Shields:** 2; **Notes:** Max height: 12", Improved stabilizers.

Weapons:

- * 2 x Light Missiles (Range: 20/40/80, Damages: 2d10; ROF: 1; AP: 4; Heavy Weapon)
- * Frontal laser cannon (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8; ROF: 1; AP: 1; Heavy Weapon)

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Ulumulu stampede:

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Ulumulus are a race of buffalo-sized tortoises adapted to Gator's harsh environment. You are running into a herd, causing a stampede! If the pilot fails the roll, the vehicle suffers 2d10 damage from an Extra. The stampede begins! Place a counter in the Range Increment where this event happened to represent the herd. At the start of every round roll a d6. If the result is 1-2, the stampede moves back one Range Increment along the marker track, while a result of 5-6 causes it to move one Range Increment ahead. All vehicles in the same Range Increment as the stampede must face its effects.

Three (-2) A sign of the past: The huge skeleton of a fish, as tall as a skyscraper, is directly in front of the vehicle. It is very impressive to see, but the pilot must avoid it! If he fails the Piloting (-2) roll, the vehicle collides with an obstacle with Heavy Armor and Armor (+3) The Armor value is added to the damage. For example, the catamaran suffers 4d6+3 damage, the motorbikes 6d6+3 damage and the Desert Skorpion 3d6+3 damage. All damage is dealt by an Extra.

Four (-2) Mine field: The Miners' Guild fights against desert nomads using minefields. You have just entered one of them! Use Notice as the Chase skill this round. If the roll fails, the vehicle passes over a mine and suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra.

Five (-2) Sulfur deposit: This area is full of inflammable minerals. The vehicle's thrusters have ignited them, filling the field with fire! If the Piloting (-2) roll fails, the vehicle and all the crew suffer 2d6 damage. Place a counter in this Range Increment. Every

vehicle ending its round here suffers the damage if the driver fails his Piloting (-2) roll.

Six (-2) Hidden boulder: A boulder, hidden by a bush, stands in the way. The pilot must make a Notice (-2) roll to see it. If he fails, the vehicle lurches violently. This turn, all shooting rolls are at -2 (even with Steady Hands). The vehicle loses a Range Increment too.

Seven (-1) Coral forest: The vehicle is entering a forest of petrified coral, which offers some cover. The vehicle is under Heavy Cover (-4) but the passengers also have -4 to Shooting rolls until the end of the round.

Eight (-1) Blinded by the sun: The pilot is blinded by the sun! He must make a Spirit (-1) roll or be Shaken. A Shaken pilot loses a Range Increment every turn until he recovers.

Nine (-1) Tumbleweeds: There are several rolling desert plants here, but, hey, watch those tentacles! They are not plants, they are creatures, and something in the thrusters is attracting them! Roll a d4. The result is the number of plants grabbing a hold of the thrusters. Each of them can be removed with a Strength roll or severed with a melee weapon (Toughness 7). As long as there is at least one of these beasts on the thrusters, the pilot suffers -1 to all Piloting rolls.

Ten (0) Chalk dune: The vehicle is crossing a dune made up of very fine and volatile sand. The passengers start coughing and they are all Fatigued until they make a Vigor-2 roll. This roll does not count as an extra action.

Jack (0) Ramp hill: An approaching hill is just perfect to attempt a big jump! If the pilot chooses to jump,

SALT RAIDER CUSTOMS

This scene happens only if Venomspine, the Salt Raider Warchief, was killed in Act 2. Run this scene when the party is sitting by the fire with Haquanu and Weaver, discussing what to do next.

Read or rephrase the following.

You realize some of the Salt Raiders are watching you. Many of them. Warriors, women and children are encircling you, staring at you intently. Someone is advancing through the crowd, which soon parts to let her pass. It is an ancient Gatorian woman, accompanied by two Gatorian warriors who stare at you with cold hate. You see deep wrinkles on the crone's face and almost feel the great fatigue she suffers simply by walking. She is carrying a bundle, wrapped in rags.

She stops and stands before you (the character who killed Venomspine) and utters a torrent of incomprehensible words.

Then she unwraps the bundle revealing a long, vicious, curved dagger.

Weaver translates for you: "She says this is the Spirit Blade of her son, Venomspine, whom you killed. She asks if you will take it."

This is a trial for the character. Refusing could be taken as a sign of disrespect, or maybe the opposite, he doesn't know. Let the player do a Common Knowledge (-4) roll. If he succeeds, he remembers having heard that in some cultures taking the weapons of the dead is a way to make them live forever. If the hero refuses or hesitates too long, the two warriors, Venomspine's brothers, show their teeth in a sign of challenge and accompany their weeping mother to her tent, while the whole tribe insults and scorns the party. The GM immediately gains a Benny for every hero in the party, which can be used against them.

If the hero accepts, the two warriors smile, roar with joy and the rest of the tribe cheers with them. The Spirit Blade of a Salt Raider is a weapon constructed by the warrior himself with the bone of a giant fish. The fact that one's slayer takes it and continues to use it grants glory and eternal life to the fallen. Treat the weapon as a Short Sword (Str+d6) with AP 2. Due to its organic nature, it is very difficult to detect it with high tech weapon detectors (-4 to the roll).

he advances an increment for each success and raise plus one. If he fails, the vehicle suffers 2d6 damage and it is Shaken. If he chooses not to jump, ignore this entry.

Queen (0) Twin peaks: The vehicle is running through some stone pillars, with very little space between them. In this round the pilot has +4 on any use of the Force maneuver, but, if a 1 is

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

scored on the Piloting roll, the vehicle collides with the pillars, suffering 3d6 damage.

King (0) Magnetic minerals: The vehicle is crossing an area rich in magnetic minerals that can cause a temporary overcharge of the vehicle's sophisticated weapons. If the pilot misses the roll, the vehicle's weapons are useless until someone fixes them with a Repair (-4) roll. A roll is required for each weapon aboard.

Ace (0) Desert Totem: The vehicle is passing near a strange fish-like statue of huge proportions, built by some forgotten civilization. The ancient stone eyes seem to stare at the passengers. Every Wild Card aboard makes a Spirit (-2) roll. With a success, he gains a Benny.

WEAVER'S FRIENDS

Suddenly, Weaver emerges from his deep trance.

"Hear me" he says, trying to shout over the booms of the blaster shots. "Go that way!"

He points at a big stone arch, which isn't very far.

A quick glance behind you reveals even bigger trouble: a second group of motorbikes is approaching.

You push the engine to the limit, gambling everything on the rebel's words.

You pass under the arch just in

time to see some cleverly camouflaged people rising from the sand, with heavy weapons in their hands.

You recognize them: they are the Salt Raiders, the desert nomads you fought a day ago.

It's a trap, but not for you!

The nomads start shooting at your pursuers, who are surprised and an easy prey for these skilled children of the desert.

"Welcome among my brothers," says Weaver with satisfaction.

ACT 4: THE TAAK

The Salt Raiders are friends and allies of the Black Guardians. They don't hold a grudge for your past encounter — instead they are pleased at having had the chance to smash some Miners' Guild heads!

You, Sasba and Weaver — the last surviving Black Guardians — are led by the Salt Raiders into a well concealed cavern.

Here you sit around the fire with Haquanu Sharkspike, an old nomad with a fierce, cat-fish-like moustache.

He is the chief of all the Salt

Raiders and offers you some strange dried food to eat and even stranger dried coral lichens to smoke. These seem to appease your thirst, and luckily so because the Salt Raiders don't have much water to drink.

Their degree of kinship is not clear to you but Haquanu and Weaver must be uncle and nephew, or something similar, judging by the respect the younger one shows the old tribe chief.

Now that the emergency is over, Weaver has the time to tell you the whole story.

"This simple prism" he says taking it from his pouch, "is the Katrah. This word in Gatorian means 'catalyst'. It is the key to reactivating an ancient artifact, hidden on the moon, Niaga. An artifact capable of replenishing Gator's oceans, via a process called 'Taak.'"

"The Miners' Guild discovered the artifact some time ago and built a base on the moon to study it, but so far, they have discovered nothing.

"I had a plan to sneak into the base and activate the artifact, but now all the Guardians except me and Sasha are dead or captured, so this cannot be accomplished.

We are not pilots and we own no spaceship, so I must ask for your help. It is the only way to free my people from the tyranny of the Miner's Guild. In exchange, following the Taak, I will give the prism into the custody of the University of Lammor II, to be preserved for future use. Do you accept?

Professor Ku Lamp accepts the offer because he opposes oppression of any kind, but the last word goes to the party. Assuming they accept, read further.

"Thank you, my friends. The plan is simple: I know that once a week a Miner's spaceship from Gator goes to the moon base with supplies.

"We must capture that ship just before it takes off and impersonate the pilots. This way we'll gain access to the moon base. Once there, we'll use a map of the base stolen by a supporter and, with a bit of luck, we'll get to the artifact's control altar. My task will then be to reactivate the artifact."

"I'll be honest with you: it is a very dangerous mission and we don't know exactly what will happen when the Taak begins. It is knowledge lost to time. But, it is the only way we have to save our planet from a terrible fate."

If the players are still willing to

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

WHAT ABOUT OUR STARSHIP?

The party owns a starship, the Blazing Star, and many players will see no reason to steal another one and leave their precious baby behind. There are many reasons for leaving the Blazing Star.

First, the moon base has planetary defenses: the only way to sneak in is with a scheduled ship. The Blazing Star or any other ship will receive a very deadly welcome from the base defenses.

Second, the Blazing Star is under the watchful eyes of the Secret Police. If the party wants, Weaver will send some of his supporters to scout the area. They'll report that a squad of guards is surrounding the party's ship. It is a trap set for the heroes. Recovery of the Blazing Star is not addressed in this scenario but, if the group insists on attempting it, the GM has plenty of information on the Miners' Guild Secret Police to set up a nasty fight for them.

help, go on with Scene 1. Otherwise, the adventure ends here.

Weaver is a righteous man and, if the heroes swear to reveal nothing about his plans, he lets them go free, despite Sasha's fierce opposition. The GM has plenty of information to make the retrieval of the Blazing Star (see box) and escape from the planet an interesting adventure.

Some weeks later, Weaver will be captured and executed and the rebellion will die out.

SCENE 1: THE MAGELLAN II

The Salt Raiders got you into Gator City despite strict checks. It was simple, but disgusting. They smuggled you in large containers full of giant slug droppings. The Guild's militia doesn't inspect those stinky goods too closely. After a shower and a change of clothes, you are ready for action.

It is decided Professor Ku Lamp will stay behind.

"It is far too dangerous" Weaver says to the academic. "And, if we fail, you must survive to tell the public about the evil deeds of the Miners' Guild on Gator."

The old man grumbles a bit, but in the end he consents — this is too important to make a fuss.

Now it is time to go.

The Magellan II, the ship the heroes must capture, is in the Guild's starport, an installation heavily protected by an intelligent wall (see below) and guarded by sentinel patrols and watch towers. There is also a gateway into the complex, but it is too heavily defended. Weaver has a good plan, which is explained below.

The ship is scheduled to take off at 23:00 hours. The party will start the incursion at 22:45, to reach the ship just in time to capture the pilots. Until then, they have Guild workers' uniforms offering minimal camouflage.

SNEAKING INTO THE STARPORT

Weaver's plan is based on accurate timing, thieving skills and good athletic abilities. The party has to perform the following four steps in six rounds, in order to reach the *Magellan II* without alerting the sentinel patrols.

1. Hack the intelligent wall. The starport's perimeter wall is made of a strange opaque, glasslike material. It is an intelligent wall that serves as a high-tech surveillance device. Touching the wall conveys an energy discharge that deals 3d6 damage from an Extra, and sounds the alarm (see below). A section of wall can be isolated and hacked for a short period of time. It requires a Lockpicking roll or a Repair (-4) roll. Heroes with a background in security or thievery have a +2 bonus to this roll.
2. Climb the wall. It is 10 feet high and completely smooth. Sasha has brought some climbing equipment so the heroes must make a simple Climbing (+1) roll to overcome this obstacle. *Every* hero must make the roll. The roll can be cooperative.
3. Moving in sync with the watch tower. Now the heroes are within the starport's perimeter, but there is a watch tower nearby that illuminates the area they have to cross at regular intervals. *Each member of the party* must make a Smarts roll to move at the right moment. If someone fails, the sentinel on the tower sees something strange and calls the other guards to investigate. The patrol arrives one round earlier (at the sixth round

instead of the seventh). With a critical failure, the spotlight fully catches the characters and the alarm sounds immediately.

4. Sneaking up to the *Magellan*. The spaceship is not far from the wall. *Every* hero must make a Stealth roll to reach the hull's safe shadow unnoticed. There are many hiding places and the party is now in a secure area, so the heroes will be noticed and the alarm will sound, but only if at least two of them miss the roll or someone scores a critical failure.

If the party manages to move unnoticed for six rounds, they safely reach the ship. Go to the section "Taking the *Magellan II*".

Otherwise, at the start of the seventh round, a patrol moves in. The soldiers have also brought an Alusian Hound, which is now sniffing around. Soon after, the beast starts barking. The party has two rounds to quietly dispatch the patrol before they raise the alarm.

The fight setup and props are the same as those in "The alarm" (see below), but the tactics are different. The first round, the guards release the hound, then start shooting while moving behind cover and trying to keep the party busy until reinforcements arrive.

★ **Miner's Guild Soldiers (2):** See page 45.

★ **Alusian Hound:** See page 43.

THE ALARM

If the alarm sounds, it spells bad news for the party. After four rounds of

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

it sounding, a large group of soldiers rushes into the starport.

The fight takes place in the airfield, in a square area 24" x 24".

One side of this area is the intelligent wall (see below for its effects), the others are open.

Place the heroes in the middle of the area. The Soldiers arrive in a loose formation. A quarter of them hold position and use suppressive fire to pin down the party. The others advance, trying to surround the group.

If the heroes dispatch the squad in three rounds or less, there is still a small chance to accomplish the mission. They must make a Stealth (-4) roll to reach the Magellan unnoticed and hide nearby. Continue with the section "Taking the Magellan II".

If the combat lasts longer or they fail the Stealth roll, every fourth round, another patrol arrives. The guards shoot to kill, so the party must flee. They can try again next week, but in this case surveillance will surely be increased (at the GM's discretion), or they can try to find another way to safely reach Niaga.

★ **Miner's Guild Soldiers (10):** See page 45.

TERRAIN

* **Intelligent wall:** The wall, described above, is very dangerous. Anyone touching it suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra. It has Toughness 14.

* **Crates:** Standard metal Guild containers for assorted goods. Use gaming stones to represent them. They offer Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 10. Place up to ten crates on the battlefield.

* **Energy Accumulators:** This is a big pillar of crystalline accumulators. Use a Small Burst Template to represent it. It is 18 feet high. It grants Heavy Cover (-2) but it has only Toughness 8. If damaged by an energy weapon, it explodes dealing 2d10 damage in a Large Burst Template. The damage is dealt by an Extra.

TAKING THE MAGELLAN II

You are finally near the Magellan II. It is a medium-sized transport ship of average Guild design.

For the moment, you are safely hidden in the shadows beneath the wings. The cargo was loaded by working droids that ignored you. You see the two pilots approaching. They are chatting about the low quality of the officers' cafeteria and seem totally unaware of what is awaiting them.

Treat the pilots as Miners' Guild Soldiers, but with no armor and armed only with blaster pistols. The pilots are Surprised and the heroes have the Drop, so it will be an easy fight. The party must stun and bind the pilots if possible. Cold-blooded killing is a very un-heroic act and must be sanctioned with the loss of a Benny.

You quickly remove the pilots' uniforms, wrist computers and personal IDs. The uniforms fit you and the wrist computers

contain the flight plan and the codes to activate the ship's consoles.

"Now for the dangerous part," says Weaver.

You enter the ship. The controls are standard. You communicate the route to the control tower and take off without a hitch.

Niaga, your destination, is full tonight.

Will it be a good omen?

SCENE 2: INSIDE THE MOON BASE

The trip to Niaga is smooth. The moon is barren and airless, its crust scarred by many craters. One in particular catches your attention. It is perfectly round, too perfect: it looks like a circle carved into the stone.

"That must be the artifact," says Sasha, with a respectful tone in his voice.

The Miners' Guild base is built nearby. It consists of a series of interconnected domes, defended by an imposing battery of laser cannons.

"The control altar is in there." Weaver points at the base.

You request permission to land,

which is promptly granted by the base's traffic control.

"Our little trick is working, for now" says Sasha.

A big dome opens and you descend into it. The dome closes overhead and you hear the distinctive sound of air re-pressurizing the dock.

"You have pilot uniforms" Weaver says to those wearing the stolen clothes. "We have worker uniforms. We can try to go unnoticed."

You leave the ship. The large docking area is filled with containers, crates and other wares.

A group of droid workers is coming; ready to unload the ship's cargo.

But there is a problem — two soldiers are accompanying them.

"There were only supposed to be two people aboard your ship; Pilot Janos and Co-pilot Kamerin. I know those guys, and I don't see them here. So who are you?"

The players must answer the question. Let the party try some Persuasion rolls and do some good roleplaying. If they act well, give them a Benny. They'll need it in the upcoming situation. Regardless of how good their words are, in the end they get a stroke of bad luck.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The inquisitive soldier seems convinced by your words, but his comrade says: "Look at that woman. She seems... What the--! She actually IS a Gatorian! No Gatorian is allowed in the base, it's the protocol! They're intruders! Intruders!" he shouts.

Before you can do anything, Sasba draws her gun and takes out the guards. The worker droids flee, cheeping and beeping. A moment later an alarm sounds.

A crackling voice comes from the soldiers' wrist computers: "Attention! Intruders in the base. Squads Alpha, Beta and Gamma are to converge on Hangar B! All civilian personnel must abandon the area!"

"Too bad." Weaver says "It hasn't worked. We must hurry now. I know the way."

The chief of the Guardians carries the maps of the base on his wrist computer, supplied by an unknown informant.

A nearby door opens and loads of soldiers rush out. You must leave, and very quickly!

This is a Chase!

The party must now run through the base as fast as they can, their destination is the room containing the stone altar. It will not be an easy task — groups of soldiers are pursuing them and other dangers will arise during the run.

Place sixteen markers on the gaming table, each marker representing a



Range Increment. Place the heroes on the fourth marker and the squads of soldiers on the first. Each Range Increment equals 5" on the tabletop.

Agility is the relevant ability in this Chase. For ease of use, every squad of soldiers moves as a single entity.

Do not use the standard obstacle rules. Instead, every time a character draws a Club card as his first initiative card, run the mini-scene from the table below. The table applies only to the heroes and their allies, ignore the results for opponents.

The Chase ends when the party reaches the sixteenth Range Increment. When this happens, you can go further with the final scene of the scenario, "The Taak's Altar".

★ **Miner's Guild Soldiers (15 divided into 3 squads of 5 individuals):** See page 45.

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Defense turret: A defense turret drops from the ceiling and begins firing at the heroes. The turret has Shooting d10, ignores penalties for autofire and is equipped with a repeating blaster gun that shoots with suppressive fire every round. If the hero misses the Agility (-4) roll, he is pinned down and suffers the standard effects of suppressive fire. Each round he can try to run away, with an Agility (-4) roll. An alternative solution is destroying the turret. It requires a Called Shot (-2). The turret has Toughness 6. Until the obstacle is cleared or destroyed, the hero cannot advance further in the chase.

Three, Four, Five (-2) Additional

squad of Soldiers: Another squad of soldiers joins the Chase. Roll a d4. The result indicates how many Range Increments the squad is behind the hero who drew the card. From the next round on, they will act normally.

★ **Miner's Guild Soldiers (5)**

Six, Seven (-2) Robosentinel: A robosentinel joins the chase. Roll a d4-1. The result indicates how many Range Increments the robosentinel is behind the hero who drew the card. If the result is zero, it means the Robosentinel appears just 4" behind the hero in the same Range Increment. From the next round on, it will act normally.

★ **Robosentinel (1)**

Seven (-1) Scared civilians: A crowd of terrorized civilians is in the way! They are afraid of you! If the hero misses the Agility (-1) roll, he is stuck in the crowd until he scores a success. A single roll is allowed every turn. While in the crowd, no soldier or robosentinel will fire as it is too dangerous for the civilians.

Eight (-1) Force field: A force field pops up in the corridor a moment before the hero arrives, blocking his path! He can try to hack the controls with a Lockpicking (-2) or Repair (-4) roll to disable it. If he scores a success, the field is turned off and the hero can gain Range Increments as usual. Otherwise he loses two Range Increments trying to find an alternate path. If the hero scores a raise, he not only manages to deactivate the force field, he can also reactivate it after clearing the obstacle. By doing so, all pursuers immediately lose a Range Increment. This also applies to allies.

Nine (-1) Surveillance bot: The hero

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

is silently tracked by a tiny surveillance droid, the size of a small bird. The character can spot it with an opposed Notice roll against its Stealth d8 +2, due to the bot's Thief Edge. It is Small (-2 to hit) and has Toughness 3. Until it is destroyed, the character has -1 to his Chase rolls due to the information the bot transmits to the base's operation center.

Ten (-1) Abandoned lab coat: An abandoned lab coat with the Guild's logo is hanging here. A hero can grab it and put it on — it counts as an action. If, later in the chase, the hero is reached by Guild forces (and he is alone), he can make a Persuasion roll to fast-talk them. If successful, he gains a Range Increment for each success and raise scored, as the soldiers don't recognize him. Unfortunately, this trick works only once.

Jack (0) Wrong turn: There is a knot of passageways here, which can confuse even the smartest hero. This round use Smarts for the Chase skill. If the hero fails the roll, he goes the wrong way and loses a Range Increment. Every hero or ally behind him loses a Range Increment too, because they follow their comrade. If the roll is successful, he gains the customary Range Increments.

Queen (0) Kennel: In addition to studying ancient artifacts of Gatorian origin, this base also conducts experiments on animals. In this room there is a force cage containing some Alusian Hounds, which have been injected with a strange serum by the Guild's scientists. The beasts are very nervous. A hero can spend an action to disable the force cage to release the dogs and cause additional trouble for the pursu-

ers. The beasts rush out in the next round. If the hero is still in the same Range Increment, he must face their attack. Otherwise place an additional counter on the Range Increment line to represent them, in the same Range Increment where they have been released. The beasts do receive an action card as normal, and every round they automatically go back one Range Increment in the Chase (towards the first marker). They do ignore the heroes from now on, but when they encounter a squad of Soldiers, a fight breaks out. Instead of running this fight (which does not make much sense because no players are involved), remove both the Hounds and the squad from the Chase due to the savage result of the event.

Alusian Hounds (3): See page 43.

King (0) Science lab: The hero enters a science lab, full of delicate and potentially dangerous equipment. This round, the Innocent Bystander rule applies and is changed in the following manner. If 1 or 2 are scored on the Shooting die, something explosive is hit. Everyone in the same Range Increment suffers 2d8 damage from an Extra. Gain increments as per the standard rules.

Ace (0) Autocart: The hero finds an autocart, a heavy-lifting vehicle used for moving cargo in the base. The cart can comfortably carry four people (up to six is a little cramped). The driver uses Piloting as the Chase skill. Passengers aboard obviously move with it. The cart is faster than the Guild forces, so the pilot adds +1 to Chase rolls. The vehicle has Toughness 10 and grants Medium Cover (-2).

SCENE 3: THE TAAK'S ALTAR

"This door!" Weaver shouts, pointing at a huge security door.

As you hear the soldiers' shouts drawing nearer, the door silently opens.

Once inside, the door closes just in time to stop the first blaster shots.

Sasha quickly smashes the control panel.

"This will stop them, for a while." she says.

Now, while catching your breath, you look around the place that was so dangerous to reach.

It is a big room, with three windows as wide as the walls, which allow you to see outside. Looking closer, there is a little flickering on the transparent surfaces. They are not windows at all; they are forcefields, used to contain the air inside the chamber. The place is fairly close (maybe fifty yards) to the artificial crater you saw while landing. The floor is unpaved: you are walking on the same rocks as those outside.

The room is crammed with technological devices, but your attention is drawn to a stone altar, a crude block of rock at the end of the room.

"This is the altar," Weaver says, "we are, at last, exactly where I need to be."

"You are mistaken, my elusive friend. You are actually exactly where I want you to be." A burbling voice speaks. It is a familiar, but most unwelcome voice.

Ghalzer, the Officer of the Secret Police, steps out from behind a large terminal.

"How did you manage to find us?" asks Weaver, astounded.

"Your Guardians were tough fighters, Weaver, but even they haven't resisted my interrogation techniques. It was... fun... to see them implore me to bear your secrets in exchange for a quick death." The alien says with a grievous smile on his horrible face.

At these words Sasha explodes: "Die, you scum!"

The tough woman hits Ghalzer with a blaster shot catching him by surprise, but her actions are not without consequences. Just when the officer is hit, a hailstorm of blaster fire rains down on her and she drops dead on the spot. Clearly there are other soldiers concealed behind the equipment in the room.

Ghalzer is injured slightly, but not dead, and now he is enraged.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

He starts shouting, though well-protected behind his cover.

"Soldiers! Kill them! Kill them all! No mercy for the rebels!"

"I must reach the altar" says Weaver, "or all is lost!"

Deal action cards for the final battle of the scenario!

The altar room is a square of 24" x 24". The southern wall is the only real wall. In the center of it there is the 4" door the party came through. The other three walls are not made of concrete — they are forcefields.

Place the heroes and Weaver within 6" of the entrance.

The purpose of this fight is not to wipe out the enemies. There are simply too many, and reinforcements will soon arrive. The goal of the party is to let Weaver reach the altar and start the Taak. It requires three rounds of intense concentration from the rebel's leader (no other action allowed). If, for any reason, Weaver's concentration is broken, the entire procedure must be restarted. If Weaver is damaged, he must make a Spirit roll versus the damage number to keep his concentration, as per standard *Savage Worlds* disruption rules.

Remember that Weaver has the *barrier* power — it can give him extra protection during the concentration rounds.

The soldiers are divided into two groups; one spreads out on the left side of the room, the other on the right. They are positioned to efficiently use their cover. Place the soldiers at least 12" from the heroes.

Ghalzer is 12" away from the most advanced party member, behind cover. As said before, Sasha's shot didn't really damage him. In the first round he uses his stealth device to become invisible. His main target is Weaver. Only if the Black Guardians Leader is unavailable as a target, will he concentrate on the party.

The Robosentinels are not present at the start of the fight. They come in at the beginning of the third round from two openings placed at the south-eastern and south-western corners of the room. The openings are 12" above floor level and the robots remain at that height. In this way they can pass over any obstacles, but they have no available cover.

When the Taak starts, you can go to The End.

★ **Ghalzer, Officer of the Miners' Guild Secret Police.** See page 45.

★ **Miner's Guild Soldiers (3 per hero).** See page 45.

★ **Robosentinel (1 per hero).** See page 46.

After twelve rounds, if the party hasn't managed to activate the altar, the soldiers outside the room open the door and burst in. From now on the situation will be more difficult.

★ **Miner's Guild Soldiers (5 per hero).** See page 45.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Taak's Altar:** A crude block of stone with strange engravings upon it. It is a block of 4" x 2". It has Toughness 20, Heavy Armor and grants Medium Cover (-2).

* **Technological Devices:** This is

a set of computers, a huge condenser or some other equipment put here to help analyze the altar. It is not important what they actually are, their only purpose during this fight is to grant Medium Cover (-2). They have Toughness 12 and count as difficult terrain. Use Medium Burst Templates to represent them. They must be placed at least 6" from the Taak's Altar. Place up to six Technological Devices in the room.

* **Freezon Barrels:** These barrels have a clear indication of danger upon them. They contain Freezon, a very cold gas, used for refrigerating certain technological devices. Each barrel grants Light Cover (-1) and has Toughness 5. If hit, it explodes creating a Small Burst Template of very cold gas. Anyone in the template suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra and must make a Vigor (-2) roll to avoid being Shaken due to the terrible cold. The gas is persistent and remains in the area until the end of the fight, or until the room is decompressed (see below). Use gaming stones to represent them. Place up to 8 barrels in the room.

* **Force Field Control:** This is a computer console placed on a metal pedestal. It requires a Notice roll to locate it. A hero can use the console to activate or deactivate one or all the forcefields in the room. When this is done, everyone in the room must do a Strength roll or be sucked 12" towards the nearest open aperture. If the target starts within 6" of the aperture, the roll is done with -4. Being sucked out of the room means a terrible death for any Extra. A Wild

Card has more cards up his sleeve (no pun intended), so he manages somehow to cling to the wall of the room. From the following round on he must make a Strength (-4) roll to hold on in that strained position. If he fails, he is sucked out screaming into the vacuum. The hero cannot save himself, he can only resist. Only by reactivating the forcefields again can his death be avoided. Weaver's *barrier* spell grants +4 to the roll. Place the console in the exact center of the room.

It has Toughness 8. Destroying it blocks the forcefield in its current configuration.

* **Work Exoskeleton:** A work exoskeleton stands nearby. It is 12" high. It requires an Agility roll to climb inside and a Piloting roll to start it. From now on, the hero can use the exoskeleton! A character using the exoskeleton continues using his Attributes with the following exceptions: He now has Strength d12+2, Armor 6, and the Large monstrous ability. His oversized arms grant Reach 3 and the Sweep Edge, but they lack fine manipulation so no Shooting, Stealth or similar feats are allowed. The only thing that can be done with the exoskeleton is bash (Str+d8) or lift heavy loads. If the hero wants to fight, he'll use the lowest of his Fighting and Piloting Skills. The Exoskeleton is pressurized and has magnetic feet and can adhere to all metal surfaces. The pressurized suit means the pilot is immune to decompression in the room (see above). Place it wherever you want, at least 8" from the nearest hero.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

THE END

When Weaver finally manages to start the Taak, you realize it at once.

The prism he placed on the altar begins to gleam an intense blue. For those of you gifted with psionic powers it doesn't end here. You feel a sort of silent call, a request for part of your energy that cannot be refused. You know that the same message is now silently reaching every psionic being on Gator. The energy collected in this way is enormous.

The strange crater outside the base starts shimmering. You realize now, that it is not a crater at all, it is a dimensional gate and it is opening! A huge column of water, a mile wide, bursts from the gate. It is high, high enough to reach Gator! So, this is the Taak, the water refilling process devised by the ancient Gatorian psionicists!

The moon itself is shaking because of the tremendous strain. You fear Niaga might break apart and you are not alone. The speakers are obsessively repeating this message:

"Abandon the base! All Guild personnel must abandon the base! Abandon the base..."

But you are too fascinated by

the spectacle outside to depart. You see Gator's yellow surface slowly turning blue where the water pillar strikes it. There is a blue patch, becoming bigger and bigger every moment.

"We have done it," Weaver says. "My planet is saved!"

The Miners' Guild members are utterly shocked! They flee to their ships abandoning the system. The group is left alone in the base, with no spaceship available: the terrorized Miners have even taken the *Magellan II*.

But the party has nothing to fear: after a few hours they receive a communication from the *Blazing Star*. Kamelos (who, in the end, didn't manage to leave the planet) and Professor Ku Lamp are at the controls, arguing. They report that the Miners' Guild has packed up and fled the system (at least those survivors of the tremendous tsunamis caused by the Taak). In the confusion, Kamelos and the Professor were able to recover your spaceship.

The Gatorians are virtually unharmed: their ancestral cities were constructed on high plateaus, that are now islands, and all the Gatorians are amphibious. Weaver thanks the heroes: the mission is accomplished, Gator is free.

Professor Ku Lamp pays the heroes \$10,000 for the whole mission. The prism is now in the custody of the University of Lammor II and for some days Gator will be on all the news channels in this sector of the galaxy.

Weaver and the Gatorians are very grateful to the party. Now it is recon-

struction time on the planet, so they cannot give the heroes any cash, but from now on all the party's members will have the Connections (Gator) Edge for free.

While exploring the moon base that the Miners' Guild quickly abandoned, the heroes find a nice surprise — a set of experimental space thrusters was left in a dock. They can be installed on the *Blazing Star*, granting the ship a permanent +1 Handling.

As for the Miners' Guild, they are not likely to forgive the heroes.

From now on, the party ranks highly on the corporation's black list...

THE CAST

ALUSIAN HOUND

Alusian hounds share some resemblance to Earth's dogs but they have a very different biology. They have red, maculated skin and a pair of strong tentacles on their backs, ending with a sting capable of delivering an energy discharge. The tentacles are very sensitive olfactory organs, comparable to a dog's nose. They are used in some parts of the galaxy as tracking and defense beasts.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d4.

* **Fleet Footed:** Alusian hounds roll

d10 instead of d6 when running.

* **Tentacles:** Str+d4. The tentacles have Reach 2. If the beast hits with a raise, the blow also delivers an energy discharge. The target must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken.

* **Size -1:** Alusian hounds are smaller than humans.

BLACK GUARDIAN

These Gatorian resistance fighters are the best of the best, capable of resisting the elite troops of the Miners' Guild. Selected and trained by Weaver himself because of their fidelity to the cause, they are the operative members of the rebel organization.

Natural psionics: Gatorians are latent psionics, even if few of them receive formal training. All Black Guardians have this gift. In gaming terms each of them has a different Power and they use Spirit to activate it. They have no Power Points, but they can use their Power a fixed number of times. Powers with a normal duration of (3/1) last three rounds.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Throwing d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9(3)

Edges: Block, Combat reflexes, Dodge.

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow — free their planet from the Miners' Guild, Wanted (major).

Gear: Black combat armor (+3), Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8,

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), Grenades (5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT), combat knife (Str+d4).

Powers: 1 x *armor* (translucent force field) or *deflection* (short span precognition) or *boost/lower trait* (all-white eyes) or *entangle* (mind energy tentacles) or *telekinesis* (levitating objects) or *speed* (blurred movements).



EIGHT-EYES

This fat, four-headed creature is a Vigosaan; a race of humanoid reptilians, very rare in this sector of the galaxy. Eight-Eyes climbed up the ladder of criminal society thanks to his cunning mind and his ability to absolutely terrorize his minions. Now he is a rich and fat crime lord, and he is relaxing a bit.

Defense Belt: Eight-Eyes has lived this long because he is a prudent man. He has a protection belt, an artifact he paid a lot for but which was well worth all the credits spent. In gaming terms he has a power. Use his Smarts to activate it. The crime lord has no Power Points — the object can be used a fixed number of times in each scene.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d4, Streetwise d12, Taunt d10.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9(1)

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (Criminal), Iron Will, Level headed.

Hindrances: Greedy, Habit — gambling, Obese.

Gear: Precious vest.

Gizmos: 2 x *deflection*.

Special abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** Vigosaans have thick, scaly hides.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Four heads:** Eight-Eyes has four independent heads that allow him to do two actions each round without penalty.
- * **Size +1:** He is slightly larger than a human.

EIGHT-EYES' GOONS

The Tellarans are a race of humanoids with bat ancestry. They have enormous, opaque eyes and an ultrafine sense of hearing. The group under the command of Eight-Eyes is made up of the lowest scum of their society.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6.

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5(1)

Hindrances: Loyal — servants of Eight-Eyes, Small — fragile body frame, Ugly.

Gear: Leather vest and mantle (+1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto) and dagger (Str+d4) or energy lance (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, AP 1, can be used as a melee weapon dealing Str+d6, Reach: 1).

Special abilities:

- * **Ultrafine hearing:** +2 to Notice rolls if hearing-based.



GHALZER, OFFICER OF THE SECRET POLICE

Ghalzer is a Lumonian: A spineless,

intelligent and sadistic lamprey-like alien. Lumonians have mastered the art of constructing exoskeletons that allow them to move among and interact with other humanoid races. Ghalzer is a hound: he never leaves a trail uninvestigated, and he has solved many cases for the Guild. He loves inflicting pain, but he also knows when it is time to flee (only to return with stronger forces, of course).

Prototype equipment: As a high-ranking officer of the secret police, Ghalzer has some special equipment to test out. In gaming terms, he has some Powers. Use his Smarts to activate them. He has no power points and the gizmos can only be used a fixed number of times. Powers with a normal duration of (3/1) or (3/2) last three rounds.

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

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidate d10, Notice d10, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Edges: Acrobat, Fleet footed, Improved dodge, Investigator, Quick.

Hindrances: Cautious, Habit — sadism.

Gear: Lumonian exoskeleton (+2), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto).

Gizmos: 1 x *invisibility* (chameleon field), 1 x *quickness* (blurred motions), 1 x *smite* (energy blades from fists).

Special abilities:

* **Lumonian Exoskeleton:** The exoskeleton allows Ghalzer to operate as a normal humanoid but it has a weakness, the power coupling. Disabling it requires a Called Shot

(-4). If successful, Ghalzer suffers -4 to all Agility based rolls and to Parry. Finding this vulnerability requires a Repair roll or Smarts (-2) roll.

* **Lumonian martial arts:** Str+d6. Counts as armed.

MINERS' GUILD SECRET POLICE

Trained operatives in the Guild's internal security services. Feared even by their squad mates, they are known for their ruthless interrogation techniques.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: Thief.

Hindrances: Vow — Protect the Guild.

Gear: Light armored vest (+1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto), pain staff (Str+d4, -1 to recover from Shaken).

MINERS' GUILD SOLDIER

Standard Guild soldier. Average training. He never asks questions — he simply obeys orders.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7(2)

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Edges: Combat reflexes.

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Armored vest (+2), blaster carbine (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto).



PROFESSOR KU LAMP

Professor Ku Lamp is an old, furry humanoid with elongated eyebrows and catlike eyes. All his life he has studied the remains of ancient civilizations without abandoning his study on Lammor II. Now, in the twilight of his life, he has started adventuring outside the safe haven of the university, risking his life with daring adventurers and, in general, enjoying himself immensely! Outwardly grumpy and conceited, in truth he is a sweet person and a good friend to have on your side when the going gets tough.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Galactic History) d10, Knowledge (Xeno archeology) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: Connections (Academic), Scholar.

Hindrances: Elderly, Stubborn.

Gear: Vest, bandana, wrist computer, \$2,000.

Special abilities:

* **Retractable claws:** Str+d4.

ROBOSENTINEL

A robosentinel is essentially a spherical drone fitted with ranged weapons. This particular model floats in the air and is fairly skilled at avoiding blows.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Shooting d8, Notice d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** -; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Special abilities:

* **Armor +1:** It is fitted with a reinforced hull.

* **Built-in blaster:** Energy ray (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, AP 1, ROF 1, Semi-auto). It can be turned down to non-lethal damage.

* **Construct:** A Robosentinel has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

* **Defense routines:** Special software grants the drone good defense capabilities against melee and ranged attacks. It has the Improved Block (just counted in the stats) and the Improved Dodge Edges.

* **Flight:** The robosentinel floats with a Pace of 6" and a climb rate of 4". It cannot run.

SALT RAIDER

The Salt Raiders are a tribe of nomadic Gatorians that, like their ancestors, survive through herding, gathering and, mostly, raiding. Fierce and courageous, their most hated enemy is the Miners' Guild, which, with the Automines, is destroying their way of life. This tribe is very friendly with the Black Guardians, whom they see as brothers in the fight against the oppressors.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6,

THE BLACK GUARDIANS

Notice d4, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: Steady hands.

Hindrances: Code of Honor.

Gear: Desert vests, bone scimitar (Str+d8), blaster carbine (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1) or salt gun (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d6, see below).

Special abilities:

- * **Salt gun:** This weapon shoots an energized ray of salt. If the target is wounded or Shaken, he is also covered by a crust of salt that paralyzes him until he makes a Vigor (-2) roll. Another character can free a "salted" friend with a Healing (-2) roll.

VENOMSPINE, SALT RAIDER WARCHIEF

The warchiefs are the leaders of the Salt Raiders during battles and raids. They are not to be confused with the tribe chief who, instead, decides about the tribe's politics and runs day-to-day matters. This specific individual is bold and fierce and will take any personal risk to bathe in glory.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Riding d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Brawny, Command, Frenzy, Steady hands.

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Overconfident.

Gear: Desert vests, bone scimitar (Str+d8), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), Shattershield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. energy weapons, see below)

Special abilities:

- * **Shattershield use:** This strange object is made of a single shard of crystal and is capable of reflecting energy. When a Shooting roll against him fails, Venomspine can use the shield to reflect it back, gaining a free Shooting roll. He can use this ability even if Shaken, but with a -2 to the roll. The shield shatters after being used three times in that way.

VIRAXIAN BULL

Viraxia is a harsh planet, so its indigenous life forms adapted in that sense. The Viraxian Bull is a strong quadruped, more or less the size of a cow, with a rock-like hide, a big horn on its forehead and a readiness to lose its temper. This particular specimen was bred in captivity, so it lost some of the ferocity of its free brethren, but is still a bad customer to deal with.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Special abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Rock-like hide.
- * **Horn:** Str+d6.
- * **Gore:** A Viraxian bull tries to impale its opponents on its long forehead horn. If it manages to move for at least 6" before attacking it gains +4 to damage.
- * **Size +2:** It is a large creature.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2



WEAVER, LEADER OF THE BLACK GUARDIANS

Weaver is a man of peace, but the terrible situation of Gator, his home planet, forced him to form a group of resistance fighters; the Black Guardians. He is a powerful psionist too, one of the few capable of starting a new Taak, the water refilling process to restore Gator's ocean.

Psionics: Weaver is a psionist. He has no Power Points, but instead he can use each Power a fixed number of times. Powers with a normal duration of (3/1) or (3/2) last three rounds.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Throwing d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9(3)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Block, Combat reflexes, Dodge, Level Headed.

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow — free their planet from the Miners' Guild, Wanted (major).

Gear: Black combat armor (+3), blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), grenades

(5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT), combat knife (Str+d4).

Powers: 1 x *barrier* (energy wall, up to 20"), 1 x *armor* (translucent force field), 2 x *boost/lower trait* (all-white eyes), 1 x *deflection* (short span precognition) and 2 x *telekinesis* (levitating objects), 1 x *environmental protection* (sphere of breathable air).

WILD CREVASSE BIRD

This pterodactyloid is commonly used as a mount on Tella. The wild variety is smaller but quicker than the tamed one. It is quite temperamental too.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7(1)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty.

Special abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** This beast has a thick hide.
- * **Beak:** Str+d6.
- * **Fly:** Flying pace 10", with a maximum climbing of 4".
- * **Size +2:** A wild crevasse bird is more or less the size of a standard horse.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

This book contains an adventure based around the exploits of four pre-generated, spacefaring heroes.

You can find the character sheets and details of their spaceship, the *Blazing Star*, on the Triple Ace Games website: www.tripleacegames.com. The heroes have no defined gender, thus the players can assign it as they wish.

The characters have all their leveling opportunities mapped out in advance from Seasoned (from which they start) to Legendary. Each adventure in this series earns the heroes a fixed five Experience Points, granting them advancement after every mission. The players only need to tick the appropriate box on the sheet to start making use of their advancements.

This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

Better yet, you will know that when you buy one of our adventures, you can guarantee the adventurers will have all the skills and abilities they need to win the day!

You will also need some gaming stone counters or other markers and a copy of the Space Rules Supplement,

which you can download free from the www.tripleacegames.com website.

Finally, you will find it useful to have some extra copies of the standard Savage Worlds Burst templates to represent obstacles and terrain elements.

BACKGROUND

The planet Khoras was once the home of two races: the Khors and the Rannites. Despite being very similar, the two peoples were bitter enemies. The Khors had bronze colored skin, while the Rannites were silvery, but that was the only true difference.

The symbols of this rivalry were their two royal families, both gifted with peculiar psionic powers — the Khors royal family was able to control and bend light while the Rannites rulers mastered the power of shaping the dark.

An endless, cyclical war raged between the two races, but neither side was strong enough to utterly defeat the other.

This status quo was maintained until the rise of Salandra Sash, heir princess of the Khors. A beautiful girl and a skilled fighter, she left the planet in her youth to join the Mercenary Guild. Many stories were told of her deeds

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

of bravery (some true, others patently false), making her a legend throughout the sector and a popular hero even to this day.

In the end, Salandra returned home to be crowned queen of the Khors.

The experience in the Mercenary Guild taught her many dirty tricks to win a war — and she used the foulest of these to destroy the Rannites.

The warrior queen discovered that the powers of the two royal families depended on a particular radiation produced by Gweo, the local sun. She ordered an ultra-powerful radiation cannon be built in total secret and fired against the sun, permanently changing its radiation pattern in a way that was harmless for the Khors royals, but deadly for the Rannites rulers.

Within a decade, all the Rannites rulers perished and their subjects had no choice but to pay homage to the Khors.

Finally, Khoras became a unified planet.

Ultimately, this was not a good thing: Salandra's descendants proved to be totally inept leaders — in only fifty years, the royal family ran up so much debt that it was forced to sell the entire planet to the Terraformers Guild.

The Guild used Khoras for their experiments and almost destroyed it.

Eventually, both races evacuated the planet, spreading throughout the galaxy and ceasing to exist as a distinct cultural entity.

Now, a century after Salandra Sash's reign, only a single member of the Khors royal family survives: a young woman named Salandra Sash (after her grandmother). She is quite popular, being a holomovie star.

She knows very little of the dark secrets of her family, but an ominous menace looms over her. Unknown to all, Hast, master scientist and last prince of the Rannites dynasty, survived the radiation change.

Thanks to a genetic mutation, Hast escaped with his life, but he was seriously disfigured. As a nice side effect, though, his lifespan was dramatically lengthened.

Via his scientific investigations, the prince discovered his family did not die by natural causes; they were murdered! He has spent many years in isolation, searching for a way to take revenge on Salandra's descendants and now that his life is finally coming to an end, he has found the means.

Hast has returned to Khoras, now an abandoned rock, and in the old Khorite royal palace, he has discovered Salandra's super cannon.

With the help of his robotic minions, Hast has transformed the device into an artifact capable of extracting the power of light from the body of a Khors through a terrible process that causes an agonizing death.

Transferring the stolen power to himself, Hast will be young again.

By doing so, with a single blow, he will destroy his enemies and lay the foundations of a new Rannites dynasty.

The madman plans to kidnap Salandra from the set of her latest holomovie — she is now shooting a film depicting the deeds of her popular ancestor.

Hast has sent one of his most faithful robotic minions (disguised as a clumsy assistant director) to join the movie crew. The droid is there to make

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

kidnapping the girl possible. The plan cannot fail, but at this point, the heroes enter...

Characters: 50 XP

Important Note: To avoid confusion in the text, Salandra (the space heroine) is referred to as “old Salandra,” while her granddaughter (the holomovie star) is called “young Salandra.” The “Khors” are the race both Salandras belong to, while the “Rannites” are Host’s race. The expression “Khorasite” refers to both races from the planet - Both Khors and Rannites together.

ACT 1: ACTION!

SCENE 1: A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS... OR NOT?

Read or paraphrase the following passage to the players:

The life of a spacefarer is not always dodging blaster fire and piloting starships through asteroid fields. Sometimes, even heroes like you need a little R&R, so this evening you enjoyed a lavish dinner to celebrate the lucrative outcome of a recent smuggling operation.

You are now leaving Phul Zbo, the best restaurant in the sector, strangely placed on Wayland, a very polluted industrial world. The good wine and the delicious food make you wish for one thing only — your comfortable bunks on the Blazing Star.

However, tonight will end differently.

While you are waiting for a robotaxi on one of the high-level streets of the city, lazily looking at the chaotic traffic on the levels below, an incredible scene catches your attention.

Far below you, on the edge of a street platform, a beautiful girl is fighting for her life! She is wearing scant armor, and a sword made of pure light shimmers in her hands. She is surrounded by a group of ugly aliens of some unknown saurian race. To make things worse, a towering monster, as big as an Urk giant, emerges from the shadows and bellows in rage at her! There are too many opponents – if you don’t do something, the girl is doomed!

Just then, the robotaxi arrives.

“Robotaxi X-231 at your service. What is your destination, please?”

The party must save the girl, and must do it quickly. Before starting the combat, they have to reach her on the level below. There are two ways to accomplish this: either persuade the taxi driver to bring the party to the scene, or use the gravitic conducts nearby. The two solutions are detailed below.

THE SHY TAXI DRIVER

The robotaxi is a standard hovertaxi

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

piloted by a droid. Using its car is the safer solution, but Robotaxi X-231 is not at all happy about taking its precious vehicle into the middle of a fight! The heroes must accomplish a tight series of actions to reach Salandra with this vehicle. They have only six rounds of time, because the battle below is becoming more difficult with each passing minute. Each step requires a round and counts as an action.

*** Persuade X-231 to Let Them Board the Taxi.** The droid is not too happy to have a group of danger seeking heroes in its taxi. It must be convinced with either good manners or bad ones. The heroes must accomplish a Persuasion or Intimidation roll. This roll can be cooperative.

*** Taking the Driver's Seat.** The droid will not drive into peril, so control of the vehicle must be wrested from it and a hero must drive the hovertaxi in its place. In order to remove the droid, the heroes must win an opposed Strength roll versus the droid's Strength (d6). It is necessary to win the roll with a raise to drag the droid into the back seat; otherwise, the party must spend another action wrestling with it. Once removed, X-231 complains a lot, but remains calm. In addition, this roll can be cooperative.

*** Understanding the Controls.** The heroes only have a few moments to become familiar with the hovertaxi's controls. This requires a Smarts roll. If a hero (in DTSL #1) has already piloted a Wayland hovertaxi, he does not need to roll, but a full round is still spent remembering the basics.

*** Rushing to the Girl.** With seating positions taken and controls under-

stood, now the heroes must rush to save the girl! This requires a Piloting roll.

If at the start of the seventh round the heroes have not yet reached Salandra, the girl suffers a Wound. She takes an additional Wound at both the ninth and eleventh round. At the thirteenth, she is Incapacitated. The droids' weapons are set to stun, so the damage is only temporary and she will be fit again at the start of the next scene, but in this case, she will be VERY enraged!

THE GRAVITIC CONDUITS

The heroes are standing next to a gravitic conduit. It is a circular area with levitating platforms powered by an antigravitic force. No platform is available at the moment, so the heroes must jump into the area and enjoy a low gravity fall if they want to land near the spot where the fight is.

Any hero who chooses this path must make three Agility rolls, one for each round, which represent his ability to move in low gravity. If a hero fails a roll, give the player a gaming stone to represent a bad move in antigravity. At the third round, he suffers 1d6 damage for each gaming stone he has. The damage is considered dealt by an Extra. If a critical failure is rolled, it means the hero has moved so badly that he has been thrown out of the low gravity area! Thanks to his quick reflexes, he clings to a metal pillar, avoiding a terrible death. He needs a Strength (-4) roll to regain balance and a Climbing (-2) roll to reach the spot where the combat is taking place. A single roll can be tried each round.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

SAVING THE GIRL

You finally reach the fight and are able to better assess the situation. The enemies are small but very quick bipedal reptiloids, armed with nasty metal whips charged with crackling energy. However, the biggest problem is their leader: A huge saurian, twice the size of a man and completely naked except for a full helm and a durasteel shield. He is also holding a very nasty looking weapon in his claws - an energy trident!

The girl is so focused on the combat that she does not seem to notice your arrival.

The fighting area is a circular platform, 18" wide, used as an emergency landing pad for hovervehicles.

Looking at the area clockwise, there are four passageways, each 3" wide, at hour twelve, three, six, and nine.

Place Salandra Sash (the girl) in the center of the area. The enemies have surrounded her, and are 6" away.

Heroes arriving on the spot using the gravitic conduits are placed within 3" of a passageway of their choice (it must be the same for all the heroes).

Heroes in the hovertaxi are not placed in the combat area. Instead, during his turn, the driver moves the vehicle into the combat area from a side of his choice, using the taxi's Pace (20"). Clever heroes can directly ram into the aliens (see below)!

The tactic of the opponents is

simple; they want to render Salandra unconscious.

Salandra simply uses Full Defense or Tricks until an enemy is taken out. She is still convinced she is shooting a movie scene!

When the first enemy is dispatched (put out of action, not simply Shaken), read the following passage.

Your blow is a solid one, killing the enemy on the spot. He falls apart revealing mechanical parts inside. It is not a living being, it is a droid!

"You fool!" The blonde girl shouts at you, "You've ruined it all!"

Just then, a stray enemy blow hits her, leaving a red mark on her bare legs.

"For all the galaxies!" She swears, with an astonished look in her eyes: "They are armed with real weapons!"

From this point on, Salandra uses her Powers and tries to defend herself as best she can. The battle ends when all the enemies are eliminated. At this point, move on to the next scene. Salandra is on the party's side, so hand the players her stats and let them use her in the fight.

★ **Salandra Sash, holomovie actress:** See page 101.

★ **Kandaroon Centurion, stage droid:** See page 99.

★ **Kandaroon Raptors, stage droids (2 per hero):** See page 99.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

HOVERTAXI

Hovertaxis are small and nimble, capable of weaving through traffic at breakneck speed.

Acc/Top Speed: 15/60; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+4

Notes: Max height 100”.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Platform Edges:** The edge of the platform is slippery due the terrible pollution of the planet. Any character hit by a blow and standing within 3” of the edge (excluding the areas in front of the passageways) must make an Agility roll. With a failure, he falls! An Extra failing the roll is doomed to a tragic death after a minute long fall. A Wild Card manages somehow to cling to the edge of the platform. He needs a Strength (-4) roll to climb back up. This roll can be cooperative.

* **Hovertaxi:** The heroes can enter the scene ramming the bad guys with the taxi! This makes X-231 complain even more, but it is a good tactic. The vehicle is 3” wide, 6” long, and moves 20” each round. All characters on its path must make an Agility (-2) roll or suffer 3d6 damage. After the ramming, the vehicle stops. The driver must a do Piloting (-2) roll. In case of success he arrests the taxi in a safe place, otherwise the vehicle stops exactly on the Platform Edges (see above)! Any hero that want to leave the car must now cross the slippery terrain. The pilot should receive a Bennie for this cool stunt.

The engine is jammed so the taxi cannot be moved again for the rest of

the fight. The vehicle counts as Medium Cover (-2) and has Toughness 12.

* **Emergency Energy Tower** The platform is equipped with an automated energy tower for vehicles that are out of power. It counts as difficult terrain, offers Light Cover (-1) and has Toughness 10. If the tower is damaged by an energy weapon, it explodes, dealing 2d6 damage from an Extra in a Large Burst Template. Place the tower somewhere on the northern side of the platform, using a Small Burst Template to represent it.

SCENE 2: MOVIE STARS

“Stop!” A voice shouts from outside the scene.

You recharge your weapons — all the droids may be destroyed, but you don’t know if other enemies might show up.

A group of hovecars, loaded with people and strange devices, flies toward the platform, while several other people emerge from hiding nearby. They all carry cameras, lights and other movie production equipment. You suddenly realize that you are standing on a holomovie set!

“This joke will cost you dearly, I assure you!” An enraged voice says.

The man speaking is tall, with long hair, and his clothes and glittering jewelry stink of richness a parsec away.

“I am Silon Guy, executive producer on this picture. Your actions were--”

“--simply amazing! Astounding! Marvelous! Your acting is so realistic! So method! Silon, we absolutely must cast these guys in the film!”

The man talking now is short and

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

balding. He has a strange visor over his eyes and he wears wildly eccentric clothing.

"Guys," the short man continues, "you were absolutely fantastic! I'm Rollan Gan, the director of this motion picture and I simply must ask you: who trained you how to fight in such a realistic way?"

In the meantime, Silon Guy, the producer, seems distracted by a technician calling him over to one of the fallen droids. He gives you a cold stare and goes to look at the droid.

"Hello??? Is nobody thinking about me? These damned droids have hurt my leg and nobody cares!!! Holo Both! Holo Both! You stupid, incompetent man! A Braxian pig would be a better assistant than you! Move your fat ass and find me a doctor! A surgeon! Someone! Now!"

It's the girl you saved earlier. You take a better look and finally recognize her! She is Salandra Sash, the famous holomovie actress! All of you have seen at least one of her holomovies. She is clearly more beautiful in person than in her vids.

Just then, a fat, clumsy humanoid comes running in. His face is pig-like and his wet eyes are filled with adoration towards the enraged actress, who, in exchange, constantly complains to him.

A medic arrives and Salandra Sash steps into a hoverlimo. She doesn't even say goodbye.

What a bitch.

After a few moments, Silon Guy comes back to the heroes. He looks a lot less angry, but very worried.

"I must apologize for my rudeness

earlier," the producer says, "The technician showed me that there is definitely something wrong with the stage droids. They aren't our droids at all, but a very similar model and they are all equipped with real weapons."

"You saved Salandra, and the movie, of course. Let me explain. We are filming 'The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash.' Yes, it is a holomovie based on the deeds of the popular heroine of a century ago. Our actress, Salandra Sash, is a direct descendant of the heroine, her granddaughter to be precise. She even has the same name."

"The fans will go mad for something like that. Salandra Sash playing Salandra Sash!"

"So, I would be very happy if you didn't tell anyone about this as it would be very bad publicity."

"For now, I'm very worried. It seems someone has made an attempt on Salandra's life. You look like quite worthy types and Silon Guy wants you in the cast. I cannot refuse that man anything; he is a genius in his field."

"So, I'll cast you all in the film, as bit players of course. You're lucky! Some folks would kill for the chance to appear in a film with Salandra Sash!"

"By the way, if, in the meantime you manage to quietly discover who's behind this attack, I'll pay you a generous extra fee."

If the heroes accept, they are aboard! They can begin their investigation on the set. Examining the droids is the first step. A successful Repair roll will reveal that they were made with a strange technology unknown even to the heroes. They will also find that the droids had built-in security devices in

HOLO KILLS THE VIDEO STARS

The players might ask why, in a future such as this, movies would still be made with real actors, extras, props, locations, and so on. This is the age of supercomputers, isn't it?

There are two reasons for doing it the old-fashioned way.

First, it is tradition. Great holomovie makers like Rollan Gan are intrigued by the old media.

Second, holomovies are enjoyed not only by seeing them, but also through neural chips that allow for a first-person perspective. This experience is made possible only thanks to small impression recorders mounted in the heads of the actors during filming. Even in the far future, no known computer is capable of simulating such a rich sensory input.

the form of acid injectors that physically destroyed their memory banks when they were terminated. Data retrieval is impossible.

Their weapons were real, but set to stun. Perhaps it was not a murder attempt, but an attempted kidnapping.

Speaking with the droids' technician reveals two important facts: these are not the production crew's droids and the droid master, a man named Kalo Sian, is not on set. He is personally responsible for all the stage droids. Someone in the crew saw him leave the set a few minutes before action was called.

There might be other clues on the

set, but the heroes have no time to find them – a new danger is approaching.

"We must get away! Go! They've discovered us!" One of the set security guards is shouting.

All the crewmembers race to their hovercars while a raging horde representing every known race invades the platform.

You find a place in Silon Guy's limousine.

Enemies? Murderers?

"Worse," explains the producer, "fans!"

You cast a startled look at the surging crowd behind you.

"All the crew is lodged at the Poulson Plaza. I have taken the liberty of reserving you a suite. You are in the cast now."

The Poulson Plaza is the best hotel on Wayland. This might well turn into a very interesting adventure!

SCENE 3: A VERY RICH (THOUGH VERY DEAD) DROID MASTER

You reach the hotel after a thirty-minute flight. You never thought that Wayland could host such a high-class place but, well, money can do many things, even on a rat hole like Wayland.

Kalo Sian, the droid master, has a room in the hotel too. The next logical move is checking if he is there. If no player has this idea, Silon Guy suggests this course of action.

The party is lucky — the receptionist says Kalo Sian arrived at the hotel fifteen minutes ago and seemed to be

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

in a real hurry. Maybe the good man is ready to run!

The characters dash to his room and find the door closed and locked. Before they can knock or do anything else, they hear the distinctive sound of a blaster shot and a low moan of pain coming from within the room.

Something terrible is happening inside! The party must break in as fast as they can!

The door can be forced with a Lockpicking roll, but a full minute is required for each attempt. Alternatively, the party can break down the door with brute force. This requires a successful Strength roll with a raise, which can be cooperative. Each attempt requires a round. Finally, there's the good old option of shooting the lock, which requires a Called Shot (-2). The lock has Toughness 7.

Whichever solution the party chooses is not important, but when they finally break in, they see the following:

The room is swept by Wayland's polluted air. The reason is simple — the floor-to-ceiling windows that take up the entire southern wall are open wide.

A silver-skinned alien of an unknown humanoid race crouches on the windowsill, clutching a still smoking blaster in one hand.

On the floor lies a body, carbonized by a close range shot. It must be Kalo Sian, the droid master, and he is very dead.

The silver alien is holding Sian's wristcomputer — he is stealing important evidence!

Before you can do anything, the killer leaps into the void!

You rush to the windows. The room is on floor six hundred and the traffic of hovervehicles is very dense here. The mysterious assassin has landed safely on a hovercar that was waiting just below the window.

The hovercar dives deep into the traffic at top speed.

You must find a vehicle quickly if you want to catch the assassin.

Luckily, a hovertaxi is passing nearby.

The hovertaxi is the only vehicle the players can find quickly. If they hail the vehicle, it stops at the window providing an amusing interlude.

"Robotaxi X-231 at your service. What is your dest... No! Not you again!"

It's a small galaxy! What luck! It's the same taxi you flagged down earlier!

The droid driver tries to close the door, but you have already slipped inside.

"Please, get out of my taxi!" Pleads the droid.

A Chase is about to start. The robotaxi droid flatly refuses to do something as dangerous and illegal as a pursuit in high-speed traffic, so one of the heroes must take the controls. This time the droid offers no resistance, he is simply resigned to the situation, but his complaints and screams of terror are a great opportunity for the Game Master to do some fun roleplaying.

The Chase starts at Medium range

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

(three Range Increments). The two vehicles are comparable; use the hovertaxi's stats from Scene 1 for the silver aliens' car.

Each Range Increment represents 5" on the tabletop.

Do not use the standard obstacle rules. Instead, when a driver draws a Club card as his first initiative card from the action deck, run the mini-scene described in the table below.

The assassin's hovercar carries four people in total, all silver-skinned aliens.

Their tactics consist of trying to shake the heroes while the two aliens in the backseat shoot at the party with their blasters.

When the aliens' vehicle suffers one or more Wounds, it is not destroyed, instead the driver manages to make an emergency landing on the top of a building, so the heroes can confront the enemies face-to-face (see Fighting with the aliens, below). The same happens if the aliens are forced to stop for whatever reason.

The group then has the chance to retrieve the droid master's wristcomputer.

If the aliens manage to get ahead of the party by more than ten Range Increments, they escape and the party loses the wristcomputer.

★ **Silver Aliens (2):** See page 102. Armed with blaster pistols.

★ **Enhanced silver Aliens (2):** See page 97. Armed with blaster pistols.

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) You're Going the Wrong Way!: The traffic on Wayland

is so chaotic that the driver has taken the wrong turn and now he's facing oncoming traffic! If the driver fails his Piloting roll, the taxi crashes head-on into another vehicle, which is disastrous at this speed! The vehicle and the passengers suffer 3d6 damage from an Extra and the vehicle loses two Range Increments. If a critical failure happens, the situation is catastrophic — both the vehicle and the passengers suffer 5d6 damage and the vehicle loses three Range Increments.

Three (-2) Smokestacks: A major contributor to Wayland's filthy atmosphere stands before you in the form of several huge, belching industrial smokestacks and the vehicle must slalom between them! If the Piloting roll fails, the vehicle slams into one of the stacks. The car and all crew suffer 2d8 damage from an Extra and they lose a Range Increment.

Four (-2) Polluted Cloud: The vehicle enters a cloud of thick smoke. For the rest of the round the vehicle is in Dark (-2) lighting conditions.

Five (-2) Narrow Passage: The Chase brings the vehicle to a very narrow passage between two buildings. This round the driver has +2 to the use of a Force maneuver. If he wins, the enemy vehicle suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra, but if he loses, his own vehicle suffers the same damage. If no Force maneuver is attempted, run the Chase as usual.

Six (-2) Mega Truck: A mega hovertruck is approaching! The pilot must do his best to get out of the way. If the roll fails, the character barely avoids the truck with a wild maneuver. All the passengers must make a Spirit (-2) roll or

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

be Shaken. Otherwise, run the Chase as normal.

Seven (-1) Trespassers Will Be Shot!: Crime bosses on Wayland keep their possessions secure, so their palaces are protected by a network of defensive turrets. The vehicle is passing too close to the Ash & Jatha Casino, so it gets shot at. Every passenger suffers the effects of suppressive fire. The turrets have Shooting d8 and a Wild die and deal 3d6 damage from an Extra.

Eight (-1) Traffic Jam: This area is so crowded that the traffic has slowed to a crawl. This round the vehicle can only gain a maximum of one Range Increment.

Nine (-1) Huge Billboard: A giant-sized, promotional hologram of Miner Clem rises in front of the vehicle, encouraging customers to buy Miners' Guild Syntho Fruit Snacks. Entering the hologram causes the Piloting roll to become more difficult (-1) but it also grants Medium Cover (-2) to the vehicle. If the character chooses to avoid the billboard, run the Chase as usual.

Ten (0) Forcefield: Important buildings on Wayland are protected by forcefields to prevent street gangs from entering them. A daring pilot can choose to willingly surf against the forcefield's surface to accumulate more energy in the thrusters. It is a delicate operation that requires a Repair (-4) roll. This roll can also be done by another passenger sitting near the controls. If the roll is successful, the vehicle gets +2 to Piloting rolls for the next three rounds. If it fails, the engine overcharges and the vehicle loses a Handling point for the rest of the Chase. Every hero with a pilot or starship mechanic background

will know this feature (the GM must explain this thing to the player). If the hero avoids the forcefield, run the chase as usual.

Jack (0) Street Market: The vehicle has entered a street market built on an abandoned walkway. It is full of stalls and people now running to get out of the vehicle's way. If the Piloting roll fails, the vehicle automatically loses a Range Increment due to the great confusion in the area. If the Piloting roll scores a raise, each hero can attempt an Agility roll to grab an item from the market! He can pick up a useful prop (+2 to one Trick in the incoming fight) or an item of his choice worth \$50 or less.

Queen (0) Fear Frenzy: X-231 is so terrified by the last maneuver that he tries to grab the taxi's controls! It is an opposed Strength roll between the pilot and the droid (d6). If the droid grabs the controls, he slows the vehicle's pace down resulting in the loss of a Range Increment each round. Fighting with the droid counts as an additional action for the pilot. The droid continues harassing the pilot until stopped. He has the same stats as one of the silver aliens. If the aliens draw this card, they simply lose a Range Increment and skip the Piloting roll for this round.

King (0) Under the Bridge: There is a nearby tunnel that can be a shortcut if the pilot manages to navigate through the maze of subways on this level. Use Smarts as the Chase skill this round.

Ace (0) Vertical Passage: A vertical passage here takes the vehicle high in the sky and into a less congested area. From here, it is quite easy to find a good spot to pick up the Chase and get closer to the enemies, if you are able to

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

spot them in the traffic! In this round, Notice is used as Chase skill. For every success and raise, a Range Increment is gained, with no limit. Only the players can use this entry, the aliens simply ignore the result.

FIGHTING WITH THE ALIENS

The silver aliens land atop an abandoned skyscraper. They use the cover granted by their vehicle to start a furious shootout.

The fighting area is a square, 24" x 24". The aliens never surrender. Once they are eliminated, the heroes discover something important.

The aliens are all droids, built with the same technology as that of the stage droids. The same acidic security system prevents the recovery of the databanks. One of the droids does have the droid master's wristcomputer.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Cars:** The party's and the aliens' cars are 6" long and 3" wide. They offer Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 12.

* **Duraglass Dome:** There is a big duraglass dome in the middle of the battlefield. It offers Heavy Cover (-4) and has Toughness 14. Use a Large Burst Template to represent it. The dome is 9" high and impassable.

THE EVIDENCE

Once in possession of the wristcomputer, the heroes can examine it. There is a video message, received yesterday, that seems interesting.

There is a fully hooded figure in the video.

He speaks with a deep, arresting voice.

"The plan is confirmed. The droids are on their way. Your task is to replace them with yours and then disappear. You will be paid by the customary agent."

"One last warning: Do not try to deceive me, or my revenge will be terrible!"

While saying this, the figure brandishes a dark armored fist to the camera.

The transmission ends.

The wristcomputer holds no other information of note.

Examining Kalo Sian's room, the party finds all his luggage packed and ready, a clear sign that the man was ready to leave at once. They also find a bag containing \$3000!

The heroes likely have some questions now: Who is the mysterious hooded figure? And the agent?

All will be revealed in the next few scenes!

ACT 2: THE SPACE ADVENTURES OF SALANDRA SASH

It seems that someone is behind the murder attempt. The party returns to the hotel. They have precious little

time to do some investigating, because in two days' time the crew will move on to another location.

The players can make Streetwise and Investigation rolls to discover something useful. They can inquire about Salandra and her planet, or about the movie crew (see sidebar). They gather a lot of useful information, but something is a red herring. If the hero scores a raise, alongside with the Raise information, he also discovers the standard information listed in the Success entry.

The movie crew moves around on two starships: the *Kooga*, a medium-sized transport, carries all the crew, props, extras and Holo Both, while the *Calypso*, a luxury yacht piloted by the producer himself, accommodates Salandra, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan, the big names of the show.

The *Blazing Star* is the most heavily armed ship of the small flotilla.

The next location is the cloud world of Houlof.

SCENE 1: HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL GUARDS

You reach Houlof without any problems. It is one of the most amazing planets in the galaxy.

The planet is gaseous, for the most part, and its core is composed of helium, so life has evolved in a peculiar way here. The Houlos, huge aerial plants the size of small islands, float in all the layers of the planet except the deepest ones. Other

parasitic plants live on the Houlos in a sort of symbiosis. Houlof is a very scarcely populated planet, due to its scant natural resources, but on the Houlos grow the most beautiful flowers in the entire galaxy, making this place an ideal location for filming.

The planet is a sort of "galactic preserve", heavily guarded by the Houlof Rangers, an internal security force with the double task of protecting the tourists and preserving this unique environment.

You are forced to leave the space-ships in Tofboo, the only city on the planet, and to take hoverbarges to reach a particularly nice Houlo in the middle layers of the planet, where you will shoot the next scene.

The scene is set in a clearing in front of a very strange and colorful forest, a very evocative location, with the intense fragrance of alien blossoms tickling your nose.

You will be playing Salandra's royal guards, a group of faithful, hardened soldiers and lieutenants.

You must admit, you feel a little stupid in these tight costumes they made you wear, but, well, the way to success is paved with such small inconveniences.

DATA: SALANDRA SASH & KHORAS

INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Success: The story of old Salandra is well known. She was a beautiful princess skilled in the arts of war. She left her planet to join the Mercenary Guild where she met with great success, culminating in the final victory of the Kanderoon Wars. After quitting the Guild, she returned home to be crowned queen of the Khors, one of the two dominant races on the planet. Using her great military and political skills she managed to peacefully unite her race and the Rannites, the second dominant race and traditional opponents of the Khors, forming one united reign for the first time in Khoras's history.

Raise: Young Salandra's parents were such inept rulers that they were forced to sell their world to the Terraformers Guild to settle their enormous debts. The Guild used Khoras for their experiments, almost destroying it. The last Khorasites left the planet fifty years ago. Today the Khorasites no longer exist as a cultural entity. Young Salandra's parents died in poverty and the actress has never set foot (or eyes) on her native world. She is the last of her dynasty.

STREETWISE RESULTS

Success: All the members of the Khors royal family are gifted with the psionic ability to manipulate light. The power is very strong in young Salandra as it was in her grandmother.

Raise: The Rannites rulers, the Khors' traditional opponents for control of the planet, had a similar power: they were able to shape darkness. This is only a theory because no Rannite royal is alive today. Their bloodline died out during the reign of old Salandra for unknown reasons.

DATA: THE CREW

INVESTIGATION OR STREETWISE RESULTS

The player chooses which skill to use.

Success: All the crew agrees on one point: Salandra is a great actress but a loathsome individual. She treats everyone poorly, but has a particularly nasty disposition towards Holo Both, the assistant director. The poor sod accepts her abuse, because he is hopelessly in love with her. This is his first experience in the holomovie business.

Raise: Silon Guy, the producer, personally financed the movie. Lots of money is involved. A failure will ruin him. Rumor has it that he argued a lot with Rollan Gan about the script.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

Rollan Gan shouts: "Lights... Camera... Action!"

The heroes must act in the movie now!

Give the party the handout with their lines (see page 103). Every player *must* play his part.

As they are bit players, they have to say only a few lines, but this part can be fun if the players are in the right mood, otherwise you can skip it. You can even grant a benny for a very good performance.

Rollan Gan is very demanding and has the heroes repeat the scene three times, always asking for something different. In addition, Salandra is not at all patient with the heroes, whom she treats in a very condescending manner. This little scene can lead to some good roleplaying.

BIRDS OF PREY

"Come on, boys, once more!" Rollan Gan asks for another shot. You are growing tired of this acting business.

"This time with a little more emphasis: 'enemies incoming!', understand?"

"Enemies incoming!" Shouts a security guard.

Rollan Gan smiles satisfied: "Yes, just like that!"

You don't smile at all — enemies really are incoming! A

large group of silver aliens is emerging from the clouds. They are flying thanks to strange levitating bracers and they are heavily armed.

To make matters worse, you realize you are armed only with stage weapons at the moment!

Deal action cards!

The combat area is a rough square of 24" by 24". All the borders of the area, except for the western one, correspond to the ends of the Houlo. Only flying characters can enter this area. The western border represents the edge of the forest.

Place the heroes and Salandra within 6" of the western border, in the center of this side. The security guards are placed on the four corners of the area. Place the crewmembers, randomly, inside the area. The security guards are allies, so the players move them. The movie crew is not involved in the fight — they simply duck for cover and wait for the danger to pass.

The aliens are split into three groups, each one coming in from a different direction (north, south and east). During the first round, they move into the battlefield, using their full flying movement (see below). Their tactics are quite simple: First, they kill the security guards (their only armed opponents), second, they attack the party and attempt to kidnap Salandra. They almost completely ignore the crew, but to add some flavor, when a shot misses one of the heroes, you can tell the players that it hits a crewmember instead, in order to show how ruthless the opponents are.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Flying Bracers and Boots: These devices use a mix of antigravity and the effects of the peculiar atmosphere of Houlof to grant the ability to fly with Pace 6, Climb 4, to a maximum height 10". No running is possible. Taking the equipment from a dead alien and using it requires two rounds. Unfortunately, the devices only work on Houlof.

The goons fight until half of them are killed. At this point, they flee into the deeper layers of the planet. Go on to the next scene.

★ **Silver Aliens (2 per hero):** See page 102.

★ **Enhanced Silver Aliens (1 per hero):** See page 97.

★ **Silver Alien Commander (1):**



THE STEALER OF LIGHT

See page 102. A Wild Card Enhanced Silver Alien.

★ Security Guards (1 per hero):

See page 101.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Houlo Forest:** The Houlo, the island where the combat takes place, is a living being, strongly connected with the forest. When the forest is damaged, the Houlo reacts. For this fight, the Innocent Bystander rule is changed. Every time a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die and the missed shot is likely to hit the western boundary of the battlefield where the forest is (use common sense to decide if this event is possible), the Houlo reacts to the attack! A large pod near the forest's edge produces a Houlo Spawn, a vegetable monster. Place the monster on the western edge of the combat area where the missed shot struck the forest. The creature attacks the character responsible for the stray shot. After dispatching him, it continues picking targets armed with blasters, ignoring all non-shooting characters. The Houlo Spawn goes back into the woods when the shooting ends.

★ Houlo Spawn (1): See page 98.

* **Stage Weapons:** The party starts the fight armed with stage weapons. They have a sword, which deals Str damage, and a blaster pistol (range 12/24/48), which emits a completely harmless ray of light that can, however, be used for Tricks.

* **Party's Weapons:** The party's real weapons are stacked near a large camera. Picking a weapon counts as an action unless the hero has the Quick

Draw Edge. Place the camera and the weapons roughly in the center of the battlefield. A Small Burst Template can represent the set of objects.

* **Movie Equipment:** The battle area is scattered with movie equipment: lights, crates, microphones, cameras and so on. Generally they count as Light Cover (-1) and have Toughness 6. They can also act as useful props for Tricks. Use gaming stones to represent them. Place up to fifteen counters on the gaming table.

* **Crew's Hoverbarges:** The crew came here aboard two hoverbarges that are now parked in the combat area. They count as Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 12. Place them wherever you want. Use Medium Burst Templates to represent them.

SCENE 2: INTO THE DEPTHS OF HOULOF

"They're running away!" Shouts Holo Both, improvising a dance of joy. "Hurray!"

"Shut up, you fool! Capture them before they escape!" Salandra spits, her eyes burning with rage. For a moment, you think that her famous ancestor is suddenly speaking through her.

The silver aliens are diving into the depths of Houlof, thanks to their flying bracers, but they won't get far! You need answers and this time you will get them!

It is Chasing time again!

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The first thing the heroes need to do is to find a suitable vehicle.

There are two possibilities:

The first is taking one of the hoverbarges (if it is still usable after the fight). In this case, the party will be slower than the enemies, subtracting -1 from their Chase roll. Only the driver rolls, using Piloting as his Chase skill.

The second option is taking some flying bracers and boots from the aliens. In this way, the characters have the same speed as the enemies (no modifier) and they use Agility as their Chase skill. They move independently from one another, so everyone gets a roll.

The initial distance of the Chase is Medium Range (three Range Increments), with each Range Increment representing 5" on the tabletop.

The aliens move as a group during the Chase. They make a single roll with an average Agility (d6) and get the Wild Die.

The goons do not attack the party until they are very close (one Range Increment). Their goal is to reach their master as fast as they can.

Do not use the standard obstacle rules in this chase. Instead, when a Club card is drawn as first initiative card, run the mini-scene from the following Obstacles Table. If the heroes are on the hoverbarge, this rule only applies to the pilot.

The Chase ends when the party reaches the aliens or after ten rounds. In the latter case, there are dire consequences for the characters.

Run the section 'The Face of the Enemy.'

HOVERBARGE

This model hoverbarge, typical of Houlof, is slower but more maneuverable than the standard model.

Acc/Top Speed: 5/10; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+20

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Nightmare Wyrn: The characters have disturbed the most terrible predator of Houlof: the Nightmare Wyrn! Add him to the Chase, placed two Range Increments behind the characters. The beast hunts the nearest prey. He has Agility d6, Fighting d8 and deals 2d12 damage from an Extra with its saber-sized fangs. Having Heavy Armor, the only option the characters have is to flee! The monster eventually loses interest and drops the Chase if no target is available within four Range Increments.

Three (-2) In the Nutcracker: The smaller Houlos move following the winds. Sometimes they collide, as is happening now. One of the characters is about to be caught in the middle! If he fails the roll, he suffers 2d8 damage and cannot advance in the Chase until he makes an Agility (-2) roll. He can roll once per round.

Four (-2) Headwind: The wind is blowing against you. For this round, all the characters in this Range Increment can only advance up to one additional Range Increment. If they fail the roll, they are blown back one Range Increment or two in the case of a critical failure.

Five (-2) Exhilarating Gas: The gas in this area makes everyone laugh

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

uncontrollably! This turn, every character in this Range Increment must use Vigor as the Chase skill. In case of failure, he also suffers a level of Fatigue until the end of the Scene.

Six (-2) Flying Amoebas: The character is caught up in a group of murky, fetid, floating amoebas. Until properly cleaned up (a process requiring a full round), he suffers -1 to all rolls. Run the chase as normal.

Seven (-1) Tilakspore Bloom: The Tilakspore is a typical Houlosian plant with a nasty method of reproduction. It drops floating spores that explode in proximity of living beings, projecting needle-like seeds capable of penetrating even the toughest skin. Every character in this Range Increment must make an additional Agility (-2) roll or suffer 2d8 damage from an Extra. Run the chase as normal.

Eight (-1) Vortex: The character is caught up in a swirling vortex! This round, the relevant skill is Strength. Until he manages to score a success, he is stuck inside the vortex. He can try once per round. Count how many rounds the character stays in the vortex. When he manages to escape, bring him forward a number of Range Increments equal to the rounds he spent in the vortex plus the standard ones gained with the Chase roll, due the great momentum gathered.

Nine (-1) Fireflies: A swarm of fireflies surrounds the character. They are not dangerous but they perfectly outline and illuminate the character's shape. Shooting attacks against him have a +1 modifier. This effect stops when the character is dealt another Club card.

Ten (-1) Vacuum Bubble: The character is caught in an airless bubble! The chase roll, this round, is made using Vigor. The aliens, being droids, do not breathe, so they are unaffected by this obstacle.

Jack (0) Spiteful Monkeys: As the character passes a Houlo, a group of nasty monkeys starts mocking and lobbing putrid fruits at him. It counts as a Test of Will. The monkeys have Taunt d10. After this roll, run the chase as normal.

Queen (0) Singing Herbs: A nearby Houlo is covered by a thick, six-foot-deep, layer of purple herbs. The herbs emit a hypnotic, lilting sound. The character uses Spirit as his Chase skill until he manages to leave this Range Increment.

King (0) Favorable Winds: The wind is blowing in the character's favor! This round he gains a Range Increment for each success and raise, plus one.

Ace (0) Sailplant: There is a Sailplant nearby, a floating vegetable with huge, incredibly aerodynamic, leaves. The character can quickly grab it with an Agility roll before using it. If successful, from the next round on, he gains +1 to Chase rolls until the end of the scene. Ignore this effect if the character is using a hoverbarge.

THE FACE OF THE ENEMY

You are deep in Houlof, where the air is very dense and thick. The clouds open a bit showing you a starship floating in the void. It is a very strange and old-looking model. There is a walkway on

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

the upper deck, where you see a dark cloaked figure.

He is the same individual you saw on Kalo Sian's wristcomputer!

Beneath the cloak, he wears full body armor that reveals nothing of his true appearance. The surviving aliens fly toward the ship, sure of having reached safety, however, their master knows the truth.

You cannot hear his voice from this distance, but his gestures are unequivocal. He has ordered the ship's cannons to open fire! He is willing to destroy his minions if that means killing you!

Treat this attack as a Battery attack (see the Space Rules).

If the party has reached the aliens in the Chase, they are at close range, otherwise count the number of Range Increments the heroes are behind the aliens and multiply this by five to get the tabletop distance.

If the heroes are on a hoverbarge, the pilot can make a Piloting roll to avoid being hit (it replaces the usual Spirit roll), otherwise the party uses Spirit as usual. If the heroes have reached the aliens in the chase, they are alerted by the terrified movements of their prey, so add +1 to this roll.

In case of damage, the hoverbarge protects the heroes with half its Toughness (6). If they have reached the aliens, the poor goons offer extra protection with their bodies, i.e. Toughness 4, which is added to the protection by the hoverbarge.

HAST'S SHIP BATTERY

1 x Laser Cannon Battery (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 3d8; ROF 1; HW; AP 4)

The crew has Shooting d8.

The blow is terrible!

Luckily, the silver aliens took the brunt of the attack otherwise, you would be dead.

Pieces of their artificial bodies scatter everywhere.

You hear the rumble of the starship's engines and then the exhaust from the thrusters sweeps you away in a terrible maelstrom of gas, plants and droid parts while the huge vehicle moves away.

You close your eyes, screaming in fear, certain that death is unavoidable, this time.

Suddenly someone grabs you firmly.

There are winged creatures all around, perfectly stable in the whirling air. They are the Houlof Rangers, resplendent in their colorful flying armor.

You are safe, but the evil one has escaped yet again.

The Rangers bring you back to the movie set.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

They tell you that Silon Guy called them. Without their aid, pieces of you would be scattered all around the depths of Houlof.

The crew has almost finished packing the equipment that wasn't damaged during the fight. Only now, you notice the total mess reigning in the clearing you used to perform some minutes ago.

Salandra Sash, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan are not here. They have already returned to the city, heavily guarded. Salandra, in particular, was very shaken by the events and needed some rest.

Only Holo Both is still here, doing his best in coordinating the crew.

His attempts at giving orders are amusing, and nobody truly obeys him.

"Are you ok?" The fat man asks in a worried tone: "I must thank you. You have saved not only Salandra's but all our lives."

In the meantime, you notice a group of Rangers searching an area of the clearing littered with smashed alien parts.

If the heroes approach the Rangers, one of them, Flockmaster Hyan, stops them with a gruff voice. They have just discovered the droids' security device,

which prevents their memory banks from being read, but luckily, one of the droids had its head severed so quickly that the device did not work properly. Perhaps something can still be recovered.

The Rangers are not very good with this type of technology, so they can be persuaded to let the heroes examine the head. It does require a Persuasion roll.

With a quick examination, the characters soon realize that only with the tech they have on the *Blazing Star* can they understand anything more. Flockmaster Hyan is not at all happy to give the heroes such important evidence. The party must convince him with another Persuasion (-2) roll.

Hyan is attracted to alien women, so a female character has a +2 bonus to the roll. Offering a bribe, instead, offends him deeply, causing a negative modifier of -2.

With a success, Hyan allows the heroes to bring the severed head to the *Blazing Star*, but he insists on being present for the data recovery process.

The droid's memory is heavily damaged. It takes a Repair roll to recover the data and an Investigation roll to discover the following useful information. Different characters can make the two rolls. If the Repair roll scores a raise, the Investigation roll gets +2.

Default: The droid's body features are based on a real alien species, the Rannites, of which all the life parameters are listed. With an additional Investigation roll and some research in the *Blazing Star's* databanks, the party discovers that the Rannites were (along with the Khors) one of the two domi-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

nant races of Khoras, Salandra Sash's native planet. The Rannites willingly submitted to old Salandra ten years after her coronation, making it possible to create one unified nation. After old Salandra's death and the selling of the planet to pay the rulers' debts, the Rannites scattered through the galaxy, losing their cultural identity. Nowadays, true Rannites no longer exist.

Success: The droid's memory holds some planetary coordinates, but there is no additional information about the planet in question.

Raise: The combat routines are partially readable. The droid was ordered to use non-lethal force on one subject: Salandra, and to completely avoid physical contact with another. The identity of this second individual is unreadable. Might there be another traitor among the crew?

The party has the whole afternoon to rest, make suppositions and so on. In the evening, a grand dinner is organized in the best restaurant of the city, Silon Guy's idea to raise the morale of the crew. The heroes are invited too. It is an occasion to do some more questioning among the crew as well as some roleplaying.

The dinner concludes with the following:

The dinner was great, but the faces of the film's cast and crew (even Salandra's) look tired and concerned despite the many guards discreetly keeping watch over the room.

At the end of the evening, Silon

Guy rises from his chair and speaks to the crew.

"We cannot allow today's incident to stop our work. The movie is almost finished and it will be amazing, I promise you. I know many of you are frightened now, but, as a showman once said many years ago, the show must go on. And for all the galaxies, we'll make it go on!"

"Salandra, our beautiful star, and Rollan Gan, our great director, both agree with me."

"To encourage you to stick with it, I will arrange a pay raise for each of you that stays with us until the movie is in the can."

"Now everyone to bed because tomorrow we need to get up early to reach our next location."

All the crew enthusiastically applauds the speech. Only now, you realize Silon Guy hasn't revealed the next destination.

SCENE 3: FAKE PIRATES, BUT CONVINCING NONE-THELESS!

You jump out of hyperspace at the coordinates Silon Guy gave you just a few moments before taking off.

The man must be getting para-

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

noid if he doesn't even trust you anymore, the people he hired to protect Salandra.

On the monitors, you see the image of a rocky, barren, planet. The Blazing Star's computer reveals it is K-29, a very common, worthless, ball of rock.

There is a cruiser orbiting around it. It bears the scars of many battles and has a red skull painted on the hull.

Silon Guy is transmitting from the Calypso: "Holo Both, it seems you have done a good job this time."

The assistant director replies from the Kooga: "Thanks Mister Guy! I visited all the starports in the sector to find this old ship! I am glad you like it!"

"Holo? This is Rollan speaking. You have done an excellent job! It is exactly as I imagine a pirate ship should be! The red skull painted on the hull is a really nice touch. I hope the extras you engaged are of the same quality."

"They are even better than the ship, Sir!"

"I must admit it." Salandra is speaking now: "For once, you have done a good job, fat man".

Just then, a message comes in from the cruiser.

On the monitor, you see a tall, scarred humanoid with a mobawk and a bionic eye. He smiles, but this gesture doesn't improve his frightening appearance one bit. Behind him, you see a motley crew of other very dangerous looking pirates.

"Captain Mak Rannan speaking. My ship, the Red Doom, and my crew of, well..." he smiles once more "... 'pirates' are here at your service."

"Thank you Mister Rannan." Rollan Gan replies. "I should like to ask permission to board the Red Doom to personally meet the extras and to explain how I want the space battle sequence to be filmed..."

"Permission granted." the captain mutters.

Ask all the heroes for a Common Knowledge roll. Characters with a pirate or bounty hunter background add +2 to this roll.

If no one scores a success, the party discovers the information below when it is far too late. The *Blazing Star's* and the *Kooga's* crews begin the battle Surprised (see below). Otherwise, they realize what's going on just in time to avoid being Surprised.

The sensors detect something strange in the area. It is an active dampener field projector, a device that renders jumps into hyperspace impossible. It is a

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

trick used by pirates to prevent their quarry from escaping. The field is being generated by the Red Doom!

It's a trap! That fool Holo Both hired real pirates!

In the meantime, the *Calypso* has broken formation and is approaching the *Red Doom*. The party could send them a warning, but it is too late.

The Calypso attempts to turn around, but just then a ray of energy (a tractor beam), shot from the Red Doom, stops her in her tracks. A huge hangar bay door opens in the pirate ship's hull and the yacht is dragged into the innards of the cruiser.

You are ready to run in defense of the smaller ship, but you must face another problem first.

A squadron of interceptors approaches at battle speed. They are moving towards you and the Kooga, the movie crew's ship. You must deal with them before anything can be done for the Calypso!

This is a space battle!

The fight takes place in an area 24 SU by 24 SU. Place the *Blazing Star* and the *Kooga* roughly in the center of the battleground, at least 6 SU from each other. The interceptors enter the battle area from the east side in a "V" formation. Each ship in the formation is at least at 3 SU from the next.

The *Kooga* is an ally, so the players control it during the battle.

The interceptors' rules of engagement are simple. Two fighters will attack the *Blazing Star* (which is wrongly considered the weakest ship) while the others target the *Kooga*. The pirates are looking for booty, so they will try to disable the ships' engines and thrusters instead of destroying them. It is called shot (-4). Each successful hit counts as an Engine Critical hit.

When all the enemies are destroyed, go on to the next section, 'Jumped Off!'

Interceptors (5): See below.

INTERCEPTORS

Interceptors are superior space fighters with great speed and handling, but poor armor. The ones presented here are equipped with hyperdrive to make them independent from the mothership and to allow for brief hyperspace jumps.

Top Speed: 10; **Toughness:** 12 (4); **Handling:** +2; **Shields Pods:** 1; **Crew:** 1
Abilities: Piloting d8, Shields d6, Shooting d8

Notes: Atmospheric, Fixed Weapon, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

Weapons:

- * 1 x forward-firing laser (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)
- * 1 x missile turret (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 4d8; ROF 1; AP 8, HW), no reloads

KOOGA, MEDIUM-SIZE TRANSPORT SHIP

The *Kooga* is a transport ship of me-

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

dium size, capable of hauling a fairly substantial cargo. It is not very well armed but it has good defenses.

Top Speed: 4; **Toughness:** 18 (6); **Handling:** +0; **Shields Pods:** 2; **Crew:** 4+40

Abilities: Piloting d6, Shields d6, Shooting d6

Notes: 2 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

Weapons:

* 2 x laser turret (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Sun in the Eyes:** Every attack aimed at the eastern side suffers -1 to the Shooting roll due to the position of the sun. The pirates cunningly attack from that side to have an advantage, at least during the first round.

JUMPED OFF!

The explosion from the last enemy fighter has barely faded away and you are already rushing at top speed toward the Red Doom.

However, it is too late! The Calypso has been completely drawn inside the pirate ship.

You hear one last radio transmission from the yacht.

It is Silon Guy: "Help! Help! Please, help us!"

Just then, a secondary hangar

of the pirate vessel spits out another squad of interceptors, directed toward you with weapons ready!

You have just enough time to start evasive maneuvers before the Red Doom lowers the dampener field and jumps into hyperspace.

They are gone, but they have left some deadly customers for you to deal with!

This is the second part of the space battle.

The battlefield is 24 SU by 24 SU, as before. Place the *Blazing Star* within 3 SU of the southern border of the area, roughly in the middle of this side.

The interceptors are placed within 6 SU of the northern border, in a loose formation of your choice. This time, their task is to destroy the party's ship, not simply disable it.

After three rounds, the *Kooga*, if its systems and engine are still functional, joins the battle approaching from the middle of the southern border. The players can use it.

The battle ends when all the enemies are eliminated.

★ **Interceptors (3):** See above.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Hyperdrive Distortion:** This area of space is still unstable due to the energy generated by the *Red Doom's* sudden jump. For the first three rounds of the battle, all Shooting and Shield rolls suffer a -2 modifier.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

DATA: NEEDLESPINE

STREETWISE RESULTS

Default: The heroes know that Needlespine is a pirate-controlled starbase in the middle of a dark nebula.

Success: Needlespine is ruled by the Five, a council of the five most powerful pirate captains, each of them controlling a sector of the starbase. Only the Lighthouse Keeper, a retired captain that is chosen by the Five to run the day-to-day business, commands the defense network and the control tower. Except for him, there is no police or other internal security force. Every captain enforces the law in his sector as he wishes.

Raise: Sol Mak Rannan is one of the Five, elected some years ago. He is particularly well known for his cruelty and devious cunning. He has a bitter rivalry with Shaka Raja, the Killer of Suns, and another member of the Five. The two crews often clash.

working frantically on the sensor logs, driven by this faint hope.

For all the galaxies, you have found it!

The pirate ship jumped off to the Xarbas system, give or take a light-year.

Xarbas means Needlespine, and Needlespine means trouble for your friends.

Starbase 101, formerly part of the defense network of the Braxian Star League, is better known as Needlespine, for its peculiar, elongated shape. The Star League was forced to abandon it many years ago, and now it is ruled by pirates, who use the place as shelter and a base for their operations. It is also a good place to buy or sell illegal goods, from exotic drugs to slaves.

If the Red Doom has gone to Xarbas, you can bet your last credit that her destination is Needlespine.

ACT 3: NEEDLESPINE

You have been duped — the pirates have snatched the Calypso from right under your nose.

You watch the space full of debris with anger and resignation.

But wait, you were so close to the pirate ship when it jumped off that maybe the hyperspace track is still readable! You start

The heroes cannot go to Needlespine immediately because the *Kooga* is damaged. Even if it was not involved in the actual battle, some stray shots have damaged the hyperspace navigator. It cannot jump until it is fixed. Luckily, the party has some spare parts on the *Blazing Star* that are compatible. The repairs take four hours and require the heroes to board the *Kooga*.

While on board, Holo Booth ap-

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

proaches the heroes, in a state of total prostration. He is completely anguished by having been cheated by the pirates in such a stupid way. He asks to join the heroes in their quest.

"Please, allow me to come with you! Helping you save our friends is the only way I can redeem myself! I can be useful in many ways. I could do the cooking, the laundry, even clean your weapons... well, maybe its best if I stay away from the weapons!"

If the party refuses, Holo Both will find another way to follow them, for example, he will sneak into the *Blazing Star's* cargo bay and will come out only when the party reaches Needlespine. One way or another it is essential for Holo Both to be with the party on Needlespine.

This little scum is not at all worried about Salandra and the others; he just doesn't want to be left behind! According to his plan, the pirates should have captured all the ships, so now he desperately needs to reach Needlespine to join his comrades!

SCENE 1: THE DREAMSMOKE SELLER

You jump out of hyperspace and find yourself in murky darkness. Needlespine sits at the heart of a dark nebula, well concealed from all long-range sensors by the nebula's tiny particles. You proceed at low speed in the fog

until you see the lights of the starbase.

It is worthy of its name.

It resembles a five-mile-high needle piercing a dark velvet cloth. Being a military base, the starport is situated in a large bay inside the base and the only way in is via a huge gate, laying wide open like the mouth of a giant Gatorian catfish.

Since yours is not a military ship, the control tower grants you access to the base.

Now the difficult part begins.

Needlespine is a rowdy starbase full of brothels, bars, casinos and other places where the pirates can freely sell and spend their booty. Commerce is florid, and duels and thefts are commonplace. The party is armed and looks dangerous, so they have no nasty encounters, unless they explicitly go looking for trouble.

The players can do a Streetwise roll to obtain some general information about the starbase (see sidebar).

Asking around about Mak Rannan and the *Red Doom* requires another Streetwise roll. Greasing the wheels with at least \$20 grants +2 to the roll. With a success, the party discovers that Mak Rannan returned to the base yesterday (the time it took the party to reach Needlespine). A raise also reveals a rumor — Rannan has recently captured a nice ship and some very valuable prisoners.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Mak Rannan lives in a well-fortified palace in the southern sector of the base. It is easy to find.

At first glance, the party can see that the palace is very well protected. They will need a good plan or a major stroke of luck to break in.

Maybe they will have both.

While you are surveying the heavily guarded palace, searching for a safe way to sneak in, you witness a peculiar scene.

A group of people is coming close. They are porters, carrying big crystal crates. From their appearance, they must be aliens, probably Mins, an insectoid race that breathes an exotic mixture of gases. In fact, all of them wear strangely shaped breathing masks and rough woven tunics that cover their bodies.

They are led by a human, dressed in a very colorful and flamboyant manner. He even wears a long feather in his extravagant hat.

You know him! It is Karoan Kan, a fellow smuggler. He is not exactly a friend, but is surely no enemy. He is ... well... a colleague.

The little group is making for Mak Rannan's mansion. They must have some important business to do, judging by their pace.

At that very moment, a group of

space pirates emerges from the shadows, blocking their path.

"It seems you are transporting important wares, fella." The foulest looking pirate says.

"They belong to Captain Mak Rannan." Replies Karoan Kan, with a worried look.

"You are mistaken," The pirate chief sneers, "They belong to Captain Shaka now!"

All the pirates unsheathe their weapons.

At this, the porters drop their crates and flee, shouting in their lilting, alien language.

Raising his sword, the pirate tells Karoan: "Your boys are smart. Do yourself a favor and follow their lead."

It is precisely the opportunity the party was hoping for. Saving Karoan Kan and his wares can buy them a ticket to access Mak Rannan's palace!

Deal action cards as usual.

The alley where the fight occurs is 4" wide by 18" long. Place Karoan Kan at the center of the fighting area. The pirates are blocking his path, so place them 6" north of him.

At the start of the fight, the party is not present on the map. They come in through the northern entrance of the alley. Holo Both is with the party, but he is no fighter, so he stays out of trouble. Karoan Kan in-

GAS EFFECT TABLE

Roll (d8)	Effect
1	Unstoppable Laughter. The character starts laughing and cannot stop. He suffers -2 to Parry, but gets a +1 to Taunt rolls due to his unnerving behavior.
2	Aimless Wandering. Roll a d12 and read it clockwise. The character moves d4" in that direction if possible. He is also Shaken.
3	Guilty! The character is Shaken, begins sobbing uncontrollably and repents his sins aloud. A hero attacking an enemy in such a state loses a benny for non-heroic behavior. Pirates are not heroic at all, so they are not affected by this limitation.
4	I am Immortal! The character develops a false sense of invulnerability. He cannot use any cover and suffers -2 Parry, but gains +2 to Soak rolls.
5	I Hate You! The character attacks his nearest ally.
6	I Love You! The character feels an incredible surge of love and admiration towards an enemy. He tries to embrace or kiss him. The action counts as a Smarts Trick.
7	Rage!!! Uncontrollable rage grips the character. He suffers the effects of the Berserker Hindrance.
8	Anti-Psi. A psionic character cannot use his powers this round. A non-psionic character gains the Arcane Resistance Edge.

stead fights actively. Let the players control him.

All the pirates are facing south, so they do not initially see the party. The heroes can use Stealth to surprise them and eventually gain the Drop. Use the standard *Savage Worlds* rules for this. The pirates make a group Notice roll (d6 and Wild Dice) to spot the heroes.

The alley is poorly lit. It counts as Dim Light (-1).

The pirates fight until three-fourths of them are down. At this point, they flee, exiting the boundaries of the map. The party has no reason to pursue them, so the fight ends here.

★ **Space Pirate (1 per hero):** See page 102.

★ **Veteran Space Pirate (3):** See page 103.

★ **Space Pirate Boss (1):** See page 103. A Veteran Space Pirate Wildcard.

★ **Karoan Kan (1):** See page 100.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Crystal Crates:** The porters left their crates scattered in the area. Each crate counts as difficult ground. They are too small to offer any protection and are quite fragile too. For this fight, the Innocent Bystander rule is twisted.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

If a 1 is scored on the Shooting roll, the nearest crate is hit and shatters, letting loose the precious, concentrated Dreamsmoke gas! Place a Small Burst Template centered on the crate. Every character under the template must make a Vigor roll at the start of his round. If he fails the roll, he must roll on the Gas Effects Table (see sidebar) to see how it affects his behavior. The character can retry the roll at the start of each round. Once the Vigor roll is successful, the character is immune to the effects of the gas for the rest of the battle. The template remains in the area until the end of the combat.

A SMUGGLER'S DEBT

"For all the galaxies, it's you!"
Karoan Kan is astonished when he recognizes you. "I haven't seen your faces from the times of the Wayland deal! Remember? You stole a customer from me that time!"

Karoan Kan refers to an old story involving a cargo of wine and a Wayland crime boss. It all happened months ago.

"Well, you did save my wares and my neck too back then. So what are you doing in this filthy place?"

Karoan Kan is indebted to the group according to the smuggler's code of honor that the heroes know well.

Speaking with him, the players find out that he is going to deliver the crates

to Mak Rannan. The pirate captain is very fond of this gas, one of his many vices.

He offers to help them sneak into the palace to payment for his debt.

Since Karoan has lost his porters, the heroes can stand in for them. In their urge to flee, the Mins porters dropped a backpack full of spare vests and backup breathing masks. Wearing them as a disguise, the party can enter Mak Rannan's palace unnoticed.

SCENE 2: THE TRAITOR REVEALED

The banquet hall of Mak Rannan's palace is thick with smoke. Gas lamps fill the room with their dancing lights along with a strong, bitter, smell that makes you dizzy. The lamps are burning Dreamsmoke gas.

The room is packed with space pirates eating, bolstering, and arguing with each other in a perpetual festival.

On a high dais sits Mak Rannan. He is an imposing presence. His bionic eye scans the room lazily, his mind dulled by the effect of the gas. You are safe for now; nobody can recognize you in your disguises.

Three people are chained near the dais, closely watched by guards. You recognize them! They are Salandra, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan. They look tired

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

and worried, but at least they are unburt.

Karoan Kan brings you up to the dais and starts bargaining about the price of his crates. You are very close to your friends now.

Just then, the door of the room opens and a delegation enters.

They are the silver aliens that you fought with earlier!

The GM must make it clear to the



D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

players that the room is too full of pirates now to try anything.

An imposing alien bows to the pirate captain and speaks in a courteous voice: "Captain Mak Rannan, my master is very pleased with your work. We bring the agreed payment for the girl."

At his command, a couple of aliens bring a small chest full of jewels to the feet of the dais. They must be worth a hefty sum.

Mak Rannan doesn't look very impressed and frowns: "Yeah, yeah, but I'm not sure the fee is high enough. You promised me the transport ship and some easy loot, too. Instead, I got no loot and I lost two squads of fighters to that damn light ship. For the Seven Demons of Kra! I'd give anything to get my hands on those bastards..." He concludes clenching his fist angrily.

At this point, something totally unexpected happens!

Holo Both, believed to be on your side, drops the camouflage revealing himself! What's more, he tears away his face, revealing a silver skin!

He is the traitor!

"Captain Mak Rannan! I bring you the smugglers!" Holo Both shouts.

In a few moments, you are surrounded by pirates that block your retreat.

You are too surprised to react in any way.

Captain Mak Rannan smiles sardonically: "You brought me such a precious gift, fat man. What do you ask in exchange?"

"Only the girl for my master, eminence. Their ship is at the docks now, and it is yours. The same goes for the lives of the movie director and manager. You could make quite a sum out of them."

A large grin opens in the pirate's scarred face: "You are impudent, little man, but you make me happy. The girl is yours."

Holo Both gloats: "Thank you! Finally, after all these years I can go back to home, to Khoras!"

"Shut up!" The chief of the aliens orders, but it is too late. Holo Both has just revealed too much.

You watch as Salandra is dragged out of the room, chained, but all the while, she keeps her head raised in strong defiance!

Holo Both waves you off with a mocking smile before going away with his silver companions.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

Make sure the players take note of the information revealed by Holo Both – they will definitely need it later.

SCENE 3: THE SKURA BEAST

“So you are mine, now.” Mak Rannan mocks you.

“Normally, I would ask a ransom for the movie men and send the rest of you to slave traders, but that would hardly compensate for the loss of my interceptors and the lives of my brave men.”

“Please master pirate!” Silon Guy begs, “I am rich; I can pay a price, any price for our lives! Spare us!”

Mak Rannan pauses before continuing: “So I ask you, my brave crew. What should I do with the prisoners? Ask a ransom or throw them to the beast?”

The reply of the pirate crew is a chorus of shouts: “The beast! The beast! The beast!”

The pirate captain smiles and confidentially tells you: “Pirates! They are like children. They prefer a moment of pleasure over the perpetual thrill of cash.”

The sound of huge mechanisms moving fills the air while part of the floor slides away to reveal a large pit several feet below.

“No Mercy!” cries Rollan Gan.

The pit is filled with trash, rusted metal piping and other discarded junk, but it is the smell that hits you hardest. It reeks of death.

In the center of the pit stands a great bipedal saurian, twice the size of a man, of a deep violet hue. The beast raises its head showing a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth. A single, impressive eye stares at you with deep hunger.

“She is a Skura beast,” explains Mak Rannan “One of the most dangerous predators in the galaxy. I am sure you will become fast friends. Throw them in!!!”

The crowd cheers at this order, and you and your friends are pushed into the pit. Silon Guy and Rollan Gan cry out as they fall.

You are in for quite a fight!

The pit of the Skura Beast is a rough square 18” by 18”.

The walls of the room are too sheer and too high to climb (15 feet) and the pirates above surely would not let the characters exit the pit.

Place the Skura beast roughly in the center of the room. The heroes and their friends luckily land on a large pile of rubbish, so they are not damaged by the impact. Place them on a rubbish pile (see below) at least 8” from the Beast.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The party is unarmed. All their weapons and other valuable equipment were stolen by the pirates (don't worry, they'll recover them later), so they have to use Tricks and find improvised weapons to get out of this predicament.

Silon Guy and Rollan Gan are of no use in the fight. They cower in a corner, trembling in fear.

The first round the beast uses its psionic attack to hit the largest number of enemies it can, then it goes into melee.

During the fight, the pirates above shout their encouragement to the beast, but they do not interfere with the battle in any way.

Skura Beast (1): See page 102.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Rubbish Piles:** Mounds of filth, discarded scrap and other waste. They are treated as difficult ground and grant Light Cover (-1). They have Toughness 7. With a Notice roll, a hero can find an improvised weapon in the mounds (a jagged piece of metal, a rusty pipe, etc.). The object deals Str+d4 damage but causes -2 to Fighting rolls. With a raise, something better is uncovered (a sturdy metal bar or a length of chain). It is either deadlier than the previous entry (Str+d6 damage) or better balanced (-1 to Fighting rolls) – let the player choose. Use a Medium Burst Template to represent the Rubbish Piles. Place up to four piles on the battlefield.

* **A Tight Squeeze:** There are many pipes and conduits in the room, even broken ones. Two of them rise up from the floor ten feet toward the ceiling. They are far enough apart to allow a man to pass between them but not a

creature as large as the Skura Beast, which would get stuck. Entrapping the beast is a specific Trick, which must be attempted within 3" of the pipes. If the hero wins the Trick, the beast is restrained and suffers all the customary effects of the Trick. The beast must score at least three successes or raises on Strength rolls to get free. While restrained, it has Parry -2 and cannot move. If the hero wins the Trick with a raise, the beast suffers an additional -2 to the Strength rolls. Use a Small Burst Template to represent the two pipes. Place this prop at your discretion on the table.

* **Hot Steam Valves:** Some of the pipes passing through the room have rusty valves that allow some steam out. A hero can open a valve to project a hot steam blast! It requires an Agility roll and works exactly like the *blast* Power, originating from the valve. Each valve can be used in that way only once, it then loses pressure. Use gaming stones to represent the valves. Place up to four valves in the room, at least 6" from one another.

* **Polished Metal Panel:** A polished metal panel stands against a wall. It can reflect the terrible Eye Blast of the Skura Beast! If the Cone Template of the beast's *blast* power overlaps the metal panel, the beast suffers its effects! It is the heroes' task to lure her into the proper position. The metal panel is 3" long and 1" wide. Place it along the southern wall of the room.

A WAY OUT

The beast lies dead at your feet.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

It is incredible, but you managed to kill it almost barebanded, but this is no time for celebrating. The pirates above have not taken it very well— they expected to witness a greasy feast on your innards but instead, you slaughtered their precious puppy!

They immediately open fire with their blasters!

Being mostly drunk or half-stoned from the Dreamsmoke, they miss their target, but they would be unlikely to miss again.

“Look! A way out!” Silon Guy shouts, pointing at the mouth of a large tube, barred by a rusty grate.

You rush to the tube and pull at the grate, which comes away fairly easily.

You flee into the dark conduit, while the enraged shouts of the pirates echo in the pit behind you.

SCENE 4: ESCAPE FROM NEEDLESPINE

You stink!

That's what you get after spending the last few hours wandering the labyrinthine sewers of the starbase, but eventually you managed to find a way out

through a manhole not far from the starport.

You run towards the dock where your starship is moored. With a bit of luck, you'll be able to leave the base without any further issues.

But luck is a scarce commodity today!

When you get within sight of the Blazing Star, you see a group of pirates attempting to lockpick your ship's access ramp. You recognize them as Mak Rannan's men. They definitely don't waste any time when they have something to steal. Luckily, they haven't yet succeeded, but you must dispatch them quickly if you want to board your ship.

The combat area is a space dock 12" long by 6" wide. It is a suspended platform, so the longer sides offer little protection from falling. The pirates are placed at the southern end of the dock, all facing south, where the *Blazing Star's* access ramp is located.

The party starts within 3" from the northern end of the dock.

The pirates are so focused on picking the ship's lock that they are considered Inactive. Also, their weapons are all holstered.

The heroes carry only the improvised weapons they used in the previous scene. When they defeat the pirates, they will get a pleasant surprise: On the bodies, they find all the important equipment they lost earlier. The pirates

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

took it as booty. There is only one thing missing – the cash. Unfortunately, that is all now in Mak Rannan's coffers.

★ **Space Pirate (2):** See page 102.

★ **Veteran Space Pirate (2):** See page 103.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Crates and Barrels:** Crates and barrels are scattered around the dock. They offer Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 8. A hero can use an empty crate for tricks or can pick up a loaded one and throw it at a target. It requires a Strength roll to lift. A loaded crate is considered a ranged weapon (range: 2/4/8, damage: Str+d6). For every crate, roll a die the first time a character attempts to pick it up. An even result means it is empty while an odd number means it is full. Use gaming stones to represent the crates. Place up to ten crates around the area.

* **The Void:** If an Extra is pushed off the platform, he meets with a horrible death. A Wild Card, instead, clings to the edge of the dock. He can regain solid ground only with a successful Strength (-4) roll.

THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE

You are boarding the Blazing Star when another group of pirates arrives at the dock. They carry plenty of equipment to force a starship's door and are excitedly talking about how to share the booty.

They stare at you in astonishment.

"Thieves! Alarm!" The pirates shout.

You close the ramp as they open fire and immediately take to the air. You're almost clear of the base, but suddenly the gates begin closing! Your only chance is to accelerate through the diminishing gap as fast as you can.

Now you'll see if the extra tuning you had done to the Blazing Star's engines was worth the money!

It is a Chase, and a deadly one!

The heroes must escape from the base before they are trapped in the wolf's den.

Place twelve segment counters on the table, each representing a Range Increment. Use a different color counter for the twelfth as this represents the gates.

Each Range Increment is equivalent to 5 SU for weapon range.

You might also find it handy to place a d12 near the last counter to mark the number of rounds. The die starts on 1, and its value increases by one each round.

Place the *Blazing Star* on the first Range Increment. Do not use the standard obstacles rules in this chase, instead adopt the following changes. Every time the pilot of a vehicle draws a Club card as his first initiative card, it means he has to face another ship moving in the crowded spaceport area. Check the value of the card against the table below. The Mod column gives a modifier to the Piloting roll for that

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

round. In the event of a failure, the Damage column is used. Don't worry about the relative speed of the vehicles involved — just roll damage. All damage is dealt by a Wild Card.

Card	Mod	Damage
Deuce	-6	2d6
3-5	-4	3d6
6-10	-2	4d6
Jack-Queen	-1	5d6
King-Ace	0	6d6

There are also some scripted events that happen in certain rounds.

Round Four - Incoming Fighters!

A squadron of fighters is hot on the trail of the *Blazing Star*! They begin the Chase on the counter representing the first Range Increment. The fighters are faster than the party's ship, so add +1 to their Chase rolls.

Fighters (3): Use the same stats as the Interceptors on page 72 however; these fighters are not equipped with missiles.

Round Six – Turrets! Two defensive turrets start blasting away at the *Blazing Star*. Place the turrets on the fifth counter. They cannot move and are treated as batteries.

NEEDLESPINE'S INTERNAL TURRETS

2 x Light Laser Cannon (Range: 5/10/20; Damage: 3d6; Heavy Weapon; Heavy Armor; AP 3)

Shooting d6. Different from the standard battery rules as they can be destroyed. They have Toughness 12 (6).

Round Eight – An Unexpected

Ally! Another ship joins the chase and begins firing at the enemy fighters. Place the new ship on the segment just behind the heroes. The party knows this ship; it is the Bootlegger Reverse, Karoan Kan's trader ship! The smuggler hails the party.

"Need some help guys? Sorry I'm late, but I managed to escape from Mak Rannan's palace only a few minutes ago. Let's swat these annoying flies and get the hell out of here!"

The Bootlegger Reverse is on the party's side, so hand the players its stats and let them use it in the Chase.

Bootlegger Reverse (3): See below.

Round Ten - The Gates are Almost Shut! If the heroes are on the last marker, they get away safely; otherwise, the pilot must make a Piloting roll with a -1 penalty for every round after the tenth (maximum -4). If he fails the roll, the ship manages to get out but suffers 3d6 damages from a Wild Card due to a collision with the closing gates.

BOOTLEGGER REVERSE, LIGHT TRADER SHIP

This is a trader ship of medium size, capable of holding quite a substantial cargo. It is not very well armed but it does have good armor.

Top Speed: 6; **Toughness:** 17 (5); **Handling:** +0; **Shields Pods:** 3; **Crew:** 2+6

Abilities: Piloting d8, Shields d8, Shooting d6

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Notes: 4 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft.

Weapons:

- * 1 x double laser turret (+1 Shooting, Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

You are outside, and safe!

--and with that I consider my debt settled, my friends." Karoan says. "I'll jump off right now, and I strongly suggest you do the same. I swear, I'll never do business with pirates again. Well, until next time! See ya! Don't get yourselves fragged!"

The Bootlegger Reverse jumps into hyperspace. Maybe one day you'll have the chance to buy Karoan a drink to thank him for his assistance, but now it's time to set a course for Khoras if you want to save Salandra.

ACT 4: KING OF KHORAS

You jump out of hyperspace near Khoras.

The planet is in a terrible state. There is almost continuous volcanic activity and frequent earthquakes. It is definitely not a safe environment to live in.

"Khoras is a devastated world."

Rollan Gan whispers, "Young Salandra's parents were such inept leaders that they were forced to sell the entire planet to the Terraformers Guild to cover their massive debts.

"I know all this from the research I did for the movie." He explains.

The Blazing Star's sensors do not detect any signs of life.

Thanks to Holo Both's clumsiness, the characters are almost certain their enemies are on the planet, but Khoras is a very big place to explore. Luckily, they do have a clue. Previously (Act 2, Scene 3), the heroes should have discovered some planetary coordinates in a silver alien's memory. The coordinates correspond to the Khors royal palace (old Salandra's former residence, before she was crowned queen of the entire planet).

If the heroes did not acquire this information, they must thoroughly scan the planet. In the end, they will detect a masked energy emission leading to the same location.

SCENE 1: THE DROID FACTORY

The Khors royal palace is in ruins, but a masked energy emission comes from this spot, suggesting that someone must be hiding inside. Cautious players may wish to land at a safe distance from the palace, and there is a hilly area nearby that is perfect for

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

this. Rollan Gan and Silon Guy remain on board. They have had quite enough adventure of late, so their task will be to ensure the ship is ready for a hasty departure.

You sneak into the ruins. The palace surely must have been marvelous many years ago, but now it is only a heap of rubble. You navigate ancient, crumbling halls and gardens, finding nothing useful.

All the players must make a Notice (-4) roll. If at least one of them is successful, they spot a hidden sensor nearby. If no one succeeds or someone gets a critical failure, the sensor detects the party and the goons in the factory are alerted (see below).

The base is very big and complex, but there is little reason to fully explore it. Space pulp is built around exciting and fast action, not dungeon crawling in detailed mapping environments.

In the end, you step into what you have been looking for – a modern looking flight of stairs descending deep into the palace's subterranean vaults. Without hesitation, you follow them down.

As you descend, you begin hearing a terrible din, as if some big machine were working. The stairs lead to a rather surprising room.

You have found the source of the energy emissions — huge

machines, almost totally automated, assemble various parts creating new silver aliens. It is a droid factory! You also notice a series of long robotic arms extending from the ceiling, which pick up the various droid parts and distribute them among the machine's benches.

Only a genius could have built such a place, because each incomplete droid is clearly a little different from the next, as if their master had decided to render each of them unique, as living beings.

There are some silver aliens here, inspecting and supervising the machines. They immediately draw their weapons and start firing at you!

The battleground is a rectangular area 18" by 14". There are two doors, one in the middle of the north wall, and the other in the middle of the south. The doors are 3" wide.

The room is crammed with machines and robotic arms.

Place the heroes by the northern door.

The placement of the enemies changes whether they have been alerted or not. If they were, they have set an ambush for the party. They are all under cover, on Hold and aiming their blaster weapons at the door.

Otherwise, they are scattered randomly around in the room.

The silver aliens have a precise plan. They fight until reduced by half, and

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

then they flee through the southern door. The heroes must hurry if they want to catch them!

★ **Enhanced Silver Alien (2):** See page 97.

★ **Silver Alien (1 per hero +2):** See page 102.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Workbenches:** The droid-producing machines are very big, 14" by 2". Each of them grants Medium Cover (-2), have Toughness 10 and count as difficult ground. On the benches, there are numerous components that can be useful as props for Tricks (see below). Place four benches so that the room is split into four corridors 2" wide.

* **Droid Legs:** These can be used as improvised weapons (Str+d6).

* **Droid Heads:** The silver aliens react with fear if a hero does something particularly nasty to a head, for example if he smashes it to pieces. Doing this grants +2 to Intimidation or Trick rolls.

* **Droid Hearts:** These energized fuel cells explode when thrown against a hard surface. They count as small grenades (Range: 5/10/20; Damage 2d6; Small Burst Template). A Notice roll is required to find one of these among all the components.

* **Robotic Arms:** A hero can try to catch a robotic arm to be transported to another area of the room. This requires an Agility or Smarts roll (player's choice). In case of success, the player can place his hero anywhere within 6" from his current position. He can also land in a square where an enemy is standing. In this case, consider the previous roll as a Trick against the enemy.

In case of failure, roll 1d12 and 2d6. Read the first result clockwise to check in which direction the hero has moved and the second result to determine how many inches he has moved. If the movement takes the hero out of the room, he goes as far as he can and suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra. Catching a robotic arm counts as movement. The hero cannot run this round.

* **Terrible Noise:** No heroes can talk to one another if they are more than 3" apart.

SCENE 2: TRAPPED!

This scene supposes that the party is chasing the surviving aliens through the factory. If the events have gone in a different direction, for example if the party has eliminated all the enemies, alter the text accordingly.

You run after the aliens in a maze of corridors with your weapons ready, but there is always a turn or a door that prevents you from shooting. Finally, you rush through a doorway and enter a big empty room. You see the goons leaving through another door on the opposite side of the room.

Wait until all the heroes are in the room, then proceed.

Suddenly the two doors slam! With a feeling of foreboding you run to the nearest one, but it is locked. The other one is too.

You are trapped!

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

A tiny holoprojector slides out from the wall. It displays a life-size image of your enemy, the dark armored man you saw on Houlof. Behind him, you see the fat figure of Holo Both, the traitor, with an evil grin on his porcine face.

"So, in the end you fell into my little trap. You are to be admired. So much dedication, but so undeserved."

Hast, the evil mastermind, now speaks to the heroes and reveals his mad plans.

Below, you will find some of the questions the players are likely to ask. Hast's mind is slipping deep into madness. He does not clearly distinguish old Salandra, the space heroine, from her granddaughter, the actress. You can use the following hypothetical dialogue between Hast and the heroes to give depth to Hast's personality and to figure out answers to other questions the players may ask.

Q: Where is Salandra?

A: Salandra, the so-called heroine? Or that puny, talentless actress? The first has been dead for a century, the second will be dead soon! Both will be dead soon!

Q: Who are you?

A: I am Hast, last heir of the Rannite royal family. We, the Rannites, are the true rulers

of Khoras, not those damned Khors!

Q: Why do you hate Salandra so much?

A: Because she is a murderer! You don't know what terrible crimes she committed! "Queen Salandra, with her political and military skills unified Khoras," so say the history books! It is false! Salandra's family has the inbred power of shaping light. My family has the power of doing the same, but with darkness. We have been opposing forces since the very beginning of the evolution; but Salandra discovered the origin of these powers. It is a peculiar radiation emitted by Gweo, Khoras's sun, which gives us this gift. So she constructed a weapon in this very palace, a super beam cannon that, when fired into the sun, changed its radiation matrix forever, making it deadly for my family. All the Rannite royals, my kin, died painfully in the following decade. The medics said it was a genetic disease, but that wasn't true, they were killed by Salandra herself! Only I, for a cruel trick of fate, have survived. Thanks to some strange mutation I did not die – even better, my lifespan was increased, but this was the price I paid:

At this point Host removes his helm showing the party his horribly disfigured face.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Q: But her ancestor's deeds are not young Salandra's fault! Why did you kidnap her?

A: She is the last heir of a foul race, and for that, alone she deserves to die, but there is more... I spent years in solitude preparing for a tremendous vendetta, and here I found the instruments to accomplish it! I repaired the old super cannon Salandra built and I modified it. Now it is no longer an energy projector, it is an absorber. Using Gweo's radiation it can distil from Salandra's body an essence containing her power. With this essence, I shall be young and healthy once again. I will lay the foundations of a new Ran-nite dynasty. And, of course, the process will kill Salandra, as she deserves.

Q: You are a madman! What will you do with us?

A: You chose the wrong side in this conflict, so you will die too. The room in which you now stand is one of the compensation chambers used to make the super cannon emerge from beneath the palace. Soon it will be full of water, used to balance the cannon. I will leave this projector on, so you will see the cannon rise, though once the weapon has completely emerged, I'm afraid you will all be dead.

Hast's image disappears and the holoprojector switches to an external

view of the palace. The ground is parting, revealing a huge subterranean cavity. A pointed structure, the size of a skyscraper, slowly rises up.

Just then, a porthole, placed at the top of a wall, opens and a huge gush of water starts crashing in. It is only a matter of time before the entire room is filled!

The party must find a way to stop this death trap before the worst happens. They have six rounds to complete the following actions in the order described below.

1. **Locate the Water Level**

Sensor. The room must have a sensor that signals when the chamber has reached maximum capacity. The first step is finding it, and this requires a Notice (-2) roll. The sensor is on the same wall where the water porthole is, at roughly the same height.

2. **Reach the Sensor.** The sensor is too high to be reached by a single man and there are no ladders in the room. A hero can reach it by standing on the shoulders of a comrade. This requires the character on the bottom to make a Strength roll and the one above to make an Agility roll. Both heroes must repeat their rolls (with a +2 bonus) each round to maintain that position. It counts as an extra action. From the fifth round, this is no longer necessary — the water is so high that the heroes can easily swim to the sensor.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

3. **Open the Panel.** The sensor is protected by a panel that must be removed. Normally this would not require a roll, but the hero is in a high stress situation, so an Agility or Repair roll (player's choice) must be made.
4. **Fool the Sensor.** The sensor must be hacked in order to tell the balance system the room is now full. It requires a Lockpicking or a Repair (-4) roll. A hero with the McGyver or Thief Edge gains +2 to the roll. Once the sensor is deceived, the water stops flowing and, after a few moments, starts draining through hidden conduits in the floor. When the room is empty, the two doors open.

An alternative way to get out of this situation is by breaking through the doors. They are very strong (Toughness 10) and multilayered, so the party must deal three Wounds to destroy one of them.

If, at the end of the sixth round, the heroes have not escaped, they start drowning. There is no air, so no Swimming roll is possible. Each hero must make a Vigor roll each round or take a level of Fatigue. When Incapacitated, a hero dies, but he can be revived with a Healing (-4) roll if medical care is provided within three rounds.

Each round, draw a card from the action deck. If it is a Diamond, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan open the doors through which the party originally entered. They are overwhelmed by so

much water that they are useless in the following scenes, but they have saved the heroes!

The two men are here because, ashamed of their cowardice, they followed the heroes' tracks through the palace.

Drowning Fatigue is recovered at a rate of one level per scene.

Now the party must rush. The super cannon is now in position and will soon be activated!

SCENE 3: DEATH OF A PRINCE

You run down empty corridors. There is no one around, all the enemies must be gathered in the super cannon's main control room.

You rush past many rooms and hallways. The palace must have been amazingly beautiful once, but now it is in ruins and you have no time to explore it!

In the end, you find the control room.

It is a large hall, but it seems much smaller due the huge technological devices crammed inside it. A big, inverted electronic cusp points toward the center of the room, where a single chair sits. Chained here, in a very uncomfortable position, is Salandra! The end of the cusp emits a ray of light pointed directly at her head. This must

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

be very painful, because the girl is crying and groaning.

All around there are benches brimming with elaborators and computers of strange manufacture, tended by silver aliens. A huge holoprojection placed above one of the benches shows the super cannon outside. Its tip shimmers an intense white light.

Hast and Holo Both are shocked by your sudden arrival.

"It's not possible! You again!" the evil mastermind shouts. "Royal guards! Kill them all! The process is nearly finished!"

At this command, a group of heavily armored silver aliens draws their weapons and attacks. You must save Salandra, and you must do it before the terrible weapon sucks her life away!

This is the final battle of the scenario!

The room is quite large, 18" by 18". There is a single door, 4" wide, in the center of the southern wall, through which the party entered.

The seat where Salandra is chained sits in the very center of the room. It is a 2" by 2" space.

Place the heroes within 3" of the door.

Hast is beside one of the northern computer benches (see below). He intently monitors the instruments and

does not join in the fight until Salandra is set free. Until then, he only shouts orders (making use of his Leadership Edges). Holo Both, cowardly as ever, hides behind a computer bench until the end of the fight. The clumsy droid still has a part to play in this story.

The Royal guards are placed at the four corners of the room. They run as fast as they can toward the heroes to engage them in melee.

The other aliens are evenly divided along the computer benches. They are not ready to fight at this time, so they start the round with weapons sheathed.

Salandra. Freeing Salandra requires you to reach her seat and spend two rounds untying her bonds (reduced to one with a successful Agility (-2) roll). The party only has seven rounds to free Salandra. To make this clear, each round until set free, Salandra screams in pain and Hast gloats, encouraging his followers to resist a little more.

If at the start of the seventh round Salandra is still bound, she dies. At this point, even Hast joins the fight. Being galvanized by the success of his plan, he gains an extra benny.

Otherwise, when Salandra freed, she takes a weapon from a fallen enemy and joins the fight! Maybe the effect of being in her ancestors' palace or the idea of facing such a hated enemy rekindles her grandmother's spirit within her! She has the Command, Inspire and Hold the Line Edges until the end of the fight. Contrary to the standard rules, even the heroes are affected by these Edges for the duration of the battle. In addition, when she picks up a weapon for the first time, all enemies

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

within 6" of her must make a Spirit roll or be panicked.

The fight ends when Hast is dispatched. At this point, go to the last scene (Scene 4).

★ **Silver Alien (1 per hero):** See page 102.

★ **Enhanced Silver Alien (2):** See page 97.

★ **Rannite Royal Guards (1 per hero):** See page 100.

★ **Hast, Last Rannite Prince:** See page 97.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Computer Benches:** These benches are full of technological instruments and similar objects. They count as Light Cover (-1), have Toughness 6, and are considered difficult terrain. An energy attack hitting one of them is very likely to produce a discharge. If a computer bench is damaged, any character within 1" suffers 2d6 damage from a voltaic arc. The damage is considered dealt by an Extra. Each computer bench is 6" long and 2" wide. Place eight of them on the map, to form a square perimeter around Salandra's seat. Leave a 2" gap between each bench.

* **Salandra's Seat:** This uncomfortable seat has various constriction devices installed (handcuffs, straps and similar things). It is sturdy (Toughness 10) and grants Medium Cover (-2) to anyone near it. Place it at the center of the room.

* **Cusp:** The cusp takes up almost the entire ceiling of the room with its tip dropping almost to the floor, so it can hinder shooting trajectories. The cusp has Toughness 6 and three

Wounds. A hero can willingly shoot it (+2 due to its Large size) or it can be hit by stray shots. For this fight, tweak the Innocent Bystander rule so that a 1 scored on the Shooting die hits the Cusp instead of the proper target. When the cusp has suffered three Wounds, it breaks and falls to the ground. Place a Large Burst Template centered on Salandra's seat to represent the impact area. Any character under the template must make an Agility (-4) roll or suffer 2d8 damage dealt from a Wild Card. Place the successful characters just outside the template.

SCENE 4: A FAITHFUL SERVANT

Finally, when Hast (this mad, twisted creature) falls, a terrible shout of pain echoes throughout the room.

"Nooo! Master!" Holo Both leaves the safe place where he has been cowardly hiding during the fight and embraces his master's dead body.

Copious tears flow down his fat droid face.

"I was your first creation, master! You built me so long ago! I have been at your side throughout your life! I will do the same in death!"

At this point, the clumsy droid points a finger at you.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

"You! You think you have won, but you are dead! Dead!"

Holo Both tears away his clothes revealing what his potbelly contains—a huge bomb!

"Yes," The servant continues, "it is a graviton bomb, powerful enough to destroy this whole accursed palace! My prince placed it inside me when he was only a boy, to spare us both the shame of defeat!"

"Now you are doomed! Doomed!" the droid laughs hysterically. It seems madness has passed from the master's mind to the minion's.

There is a display on the droid's belly. It flashes "00:05:00." Very little time if you had to leave the planet, but the droid doesn't know that your ship is very close to the palace.

"Come on!" Salandra encourages you "We can do it!"

"No! You will not leave! This palace will be your tomb!" Holo Both runs to the computers and starts frantically pushing buttons.

Disabling the bomb is impossible. Holo Both will not fight the heroes, if they try to hack into his gut. The droid cannot interfere with the bomb's timer (otherwise the party would be reduced to particles

by now) and a security system built into the device will make it explode immediately if damaged. Finding the device requires a Lockpicking or Notice (–2) roll. Disarming the bomb requires specific tools the party does not have. Each attempt at inspecting or disarming the bomb costs a round. It is precious time that must be counted in regards to the imminent chase (see below).

When the players finally decide to run away, the chase begins.

As there are no real pursuers, the situation varies somewhat from the standard Chase rules. Place eight tokens on the table to represent Range Increments. Each Range Increment equates to 5" on the tabletop.

Use a different color token for the eighth increment to represent the *Blazing Star*.

Place the heroes and Salandra on the first Range Increment. Salandra is still in the peculiar state of mind of the previous scene so she encourages the heroes to do their best. Salandra, and each hero within two Range Increments of the actress, gain +1 to the Chase roll.

Take a d10 and place it near the chase markers, with the top face showing a 9. It represents the countdown. At the end of each round, reduce the die result by one until it reaches zero. At this point, run another round, and then remove the die from the table. The bomb then explodes. Consult the following table to determine the outcome of the chase. Check the Range Increment on which each hero is standing to discover his fate.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

Range*	Result
1 st -4 th	Caught by the explosion. The hero is dead!
5 th	2d10 damage from an Extra. Just outside the main blast area!
6 th	2d8 damage from an Extra. On the limit of the palace area!
7 th	2d6 damage from an Extra. Near the starship!
8 th	Aboard the <i>Blazing Star</i> . The hero is safe!

*Range Increment

Do not use the standard obstacles rules, instead, whenever a hero draws a Club card from the action deck as his first card, run the miniscene below.

If the heroes survive the explosion and get onto the *Blazing Star*, go to The End.

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Trap: Prince Hast placed a deadly trap in the corridor where the hero is now passing. It is a death ray, scanning the corridor at fixed intervals. The hero must make a Notice (-2) roll to spot the danger and an Agility (-4) roll to avoid it. In case of failure, he suffers 2d8 damage from a Wildcard. The Agility roll also counts as Chase roll.

Three (-2) Droid Patrol: A small group of silver aliens (totally unaware of the bomb) spies the hero running down a corridor and starts shooting! They join in the chase, pursuing the party. Place them three Range Increments behind the hero. The aliens

move as a whole group, using Agility (d6) and the Wild Die for the Chase roll. They shoot if within two Range Increments of a character.

Silver Alien (3): See page 102.

Four (-2) Blocked Door: Using the control room's computers, Holo Both remotely closes a door right in front of the hero! The mad laughter of the droid rings out over the loudspeakers. The door can be opened with a Lockpicking (-2) roll or smashed in with a Strength (-2) roll. Place a counter on this Range Increment. Until the door is opened (or destroyed), no one can advance further than this Range Increment. Once the door is open, the hero can do a standard Chase roll.

Five (-2) Water Wave: Holo Both deviates the water from another super cannon compensation room to the hero's location. A big wave of water is suddenly crashing over him! This round he uses Strength for the Chase roll. In case of failure, he is also Shaken.

Six (-2) Wrong Turn: The hero took a wrong turn at the last crossroads and the others followed! This round the hero uses Smarts for their Chase roll, as does every other player that is behind him.

Seven (-1) Rollan Gan: The absent-minded movie director could not resist the desire to see old Salandra's ancient palace. He got lost, of course. Luckily, the hero finds him in time! Add another counter to the Chase track to represent Rollan Gan. He joins the Chase on the Range Increment where the hero is currently. If Rollan Gan saved the party from

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

the compensation chamber (see Act 4, scene 2), he is Fatigued. Immediately give a benny to the player for this display of heroism.

Eight (-1) Slippery Stairs: The old stairs are slippery. If the hero fails an Agility roll, he falls. This costs -2 to all rolls for the next round.

Nine (-1) Poisonous Gas: Colored smoke rises out from under the floor. The hero starts coughing as he hears Holo Both laughing through the speakers. The character must make a Vigor roll or suffer a Fatigue level for the remainder of the Chase. Roll as normal for the Chase.

Ten (-1) Fleeing Aliens! A large group of Rannite droids, somehow warned of the incoming danger, is running away! They do not stop to bother the hero; they only flee, blocking the character's path. The hero can stop for a round (he does not advance this round) or he can try to move between them. This round, the Chase roll is based on Strength. In case of failure, the hero is knocked prone and is automatically Shaken.

Jack (0) Hidden Guns: Holo Both activates another secret defense system, a series of blasters concealed in the very corridor the hero is currently running down! The guns have Shooting d8, deal 2d8 damage from an Extra and count as suppressive fire. Place a counter on this marker to remind you of the position of the guns. Every hero moving through here suffers that damage.

Queen (0) Hoverbike!: Someone left a hoverbike parked in a corridor! The hover vehicle can transport up to two people. From now on, use

Piloting for the Chase roll with a +2 bonus due to the increased speed. Getting onto the bike and starting it requires a full round. Otherwise, run the Chase as usual.

King (0) Shortcut: The character finds a shortcut! It can be a side passage, a safety door or something else. This round he gains a Range Increment for each success and raise. Otherwise, if the Chase roll fails, he loses a Range Increment.

Ace (0) Old Salandra's Statue: The hero finds a huge statue of old Salandra. If young Salandra is within a Range Increment of the hero, she asks him to wait. The next round, Salandra examines the statue driven by some strange instinct and finds a secret passage! Roll a d4+1. This is the number of Range Increments Salandra, and all the heroes with her, immediately advance.

THE END

The following text supposes that the heroes have reached their ship in time. Otherwise, you will have to tweak it to reflect the actual situation.

You board the Blazing Star and take off just in time to see Salandra's old palace being destroyed by a massive explosion.

Neither Khors nor Rannites will rule this planet ever again.

Young Salandra winces at the sight, and then relaxes, as if an external spirit has finally released her.

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

A few minutes later, she starts complaining about the Blazing Star's bathrooms and the smallness of the staterooms.

She is back to the old Salandra you all know.

You jump into hyperspace, traveling on towards better pastures.

Months later, "The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash" is released, becoming an immediate blockbuster. Silon Guy pays for all the repairs to the *Blazing Star* and gives the party a conspicuous sum of cash: \$6,000.

The heroes do appear in a couple scenes in the movie, so they are now famous!

Once in every future scenario, one of the players can claim his hero is recognized for his participation in the film, adding +2 to his Charisma for the remainder of the scene.

THE CAST

ENHANCED SILVER ALIEN (DROID)

These droids are better versions of Hast's standard droids. The Rannite prince himself programmed each unit of this model, making them truly unique.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Tough-**

ness: 8

Hindrances: Loyal.

Edges: Block, Dodge.

Gear: Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto), Rannite energy mace (Str+d6, AP 2).

Special abilities:

* **Construct:** It has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

HAST, LAST RANNITE PRINCE (WC)

Hast is the last surviving member of the Rannite royal family. His relatives were all killed by old Salandra via a lethal change to the radiation pattern of Khoras's sun. He survived thanks to a genetic mutation that also increased his lifespan, but it left him hideously scarred.

Hast is a genius in droid construction, an attitude enhanced by his solipsistic nature (his belief that no intelligence of note exists beyond his own mind). As there were no true Rannites anymore, because all of them had left the planet and abandoned their culture, Hast rebuilt them: a legion of faithful sophisticated droids perfectly rendered to resemble his former people.

Hast is armed with the Fist of Power, an energy weapon directly linked and powered by his armor. It works as a melee weapon, producing a fist-sized forcefield, and as a ranged one, shooting energy bolts.

Rannite Royal Family: Like all the

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

members of the Rannite royal family, Hast possesses the psionic ability to manipulate darkness. He has no Power Points; instead, he can use his Powers a fixed number of times. Powers with a standard duration of (3/1) last three rounds.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Robotics) d12+2 Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Taunt d10.

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Command, Dead shot, Level Headed, Master (Robotics), Trademark weapon (Fist of Power).

Hindrances: Delusional (major — sometimes he thinks he is living in the times of old Salandra), Ugly, Vow (major — rebuild the Rannite dynasty and destroy the Khors royal family).

Gear: Black enhanced body armor (+4), Fist of power (as melee weapon: Str+d10, ignores Strength requirements; as energy weapon: Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 2, AP 2), long mantle.

Powers: 1 x *obscure* (area of light negation), 1 x *lower trait* (engulf a target in darkness), 1 x *deflection* (shroud of darkness).



HOLO BOTH

Holo Both is the first creation of Hast, last prince of the Rannites, who built him in his teenage years. This droid is far from being perfect. He is fat, clumsy and not very smart, but he makes up for these faults with his total dedication. For the current mission,

Hast has disguised his synthetic nature with artificial skin that renders him indistinguishable from a human.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Loyal, Yellow, Obese.

Gear: Vests.

Special abilities:

* **Construct:** He has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. He is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

* **Graviton bomb:** Holo Both's bloated appearance is caused by a graviton bomb, capable of destroying a rather vast area, hidden in his belly. Hast placed it there to spare them both the shame of defeat, since Holo will use the bomb only as a suicide weapon to avenge his master's death.

HOULO SPAWN

A Houlo Spawn is a vegetable being of vaguely humanoid shape. It is almost mindless, and lives only to eliminate any possible threat to the Houlo's safety.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Special abilities:

* **Claws:** Str+d4.

* **Construct:** It has +2 to Toughness

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

- * **Improved Frenzy:** The Houlo Spawn can make two attacks each round without penalty.
- * **Spitting:** The Houlo Spawn spits a dangerous acidic substance (Range: 6/12/18; Damage: 2d6).

KANDAROON CENTURION (DROID)

Kandaroon is a planet where the saurian races became dominant. Savage and bloodthirsty, the Centurions are bipedal lizards twice the size of a man, that act as leaders and shock troops of Kandaroon's inferior species. The Kandaroon Wars ended a century ago with the defeat of the saurians. From then on, they became isolationistic and xenophobic. Salandra Sash, the popular heroine, was the general of the Mercenary Guild who put an end to the Kandaroon threat.

This specimen is actually a droid, altered to be indistinguishable from a real Kandaroon Centurion.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

Gear: Energy trident (as a melee weapon: Str+d8; as a ranged weapon: range 10/20/40, damage: 2d6, ROF 1, non-lethal damage), shield (+1 Parry), full helm (+3).

Special abilities:

- * **Construct:** He has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. He is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.
- * **Tail lash:** The Centurion has a long, strong tail. He can use this appendage to sweep all opponents behind him in a rectangle 3" wide and 6" long. This is a standard Fighting attack that deals Str damage.
- * **Size +3:** The Centurion is over 9' tall and of very strong build.

KANDAROON RAPTOR (DROID)

The Raptor is one of the smallest, but most cunning species on Kandaroon. Nimble and very quick, it is known for its excellent pack tactics.

This specimen is only an animatronic puppet, but it is very well made.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Energy whip (Str+d4, reach 2, non-lethal damage).

Special abilities:

- * **Construct:** It has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.
- * **Pack tactic:** The Raptor is so good at fighting in a pack that it adds +1 to the Gang Up bonus up to a maximum of +5.
- * **Quick:** It discards and redraws all initiative cards below 5.
- * **Size -1:** It is about the size of a dog.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2



KAROAN KAN THE SMUGGLER

This strangely garbed fellow is one of the biggest smartasses of the honored smuggler category. He is perfectly capable of cheating his mother, but he respects the unwritten rules of his work. He knows the heroes fairly well.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Piloting d8, Knowledge (Shields) d6, Streetwise d8.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Edges: Charismatic, Level Headed, First Strike.

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Greedy.

Gear: Kamoran rapier (Str+d4, AP 1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), fancy clothes, \$ 2,000, starship (Bootlegger Reverse).

RANNITE ROYAL GUARD (DROID)

This droid mimics the royal guards of the ancient Rannite nobility. In this case, its characteristic black ceremonial armor is mounted directly onto its body.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Throwing d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal.

Edges: Frenzy.

Gear: Rannite royal guard sword (Str+d8, AP 2), royal guard armor (+2).

Special abilities:

* **Construct:** He has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. He is immune to called shots (except for his weakness described below), poisons and psychological effects.

* **Built-In Energy Shield:** The royal guard has a built-in energy shield in his left arm. It creates a field of energy capable of stopping blaster weapons. It grants +2 Toughness against this type of attack.

* **Fencer:** The royal guard is expertly programmed in sword fighting and is able to assess and exploit any gap in the defense of its enemies. Whenever an opponent rolls a 1 on his Fighting die when attacking, the royal guard gets an immediate free attack.

* **Weakness (Energy Projector):** The energy shield projector is quite fragile against melee weapon attacks. A Called Shot (-4) is required to hit this small part, but the blow ignores the armor, deals +4 damage and eliminates the energy shield special ability until the end of the scene.



ROLLAN GAN, HOLOMOVIE DIRECTOR

This short man is one of the most talented holomovie directors in this part of the galaxy. "The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash" is his fifth film and will likely be another box-office smash. Off-set, Rollan is absent-minded and, being

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

so immersed in his work, sometimes mistakes real life for a movie scene.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Film Production) d12, Persuasion d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: Luck.

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor — he wears a correcting visor), Delusional (Minor — he sometimes mistakes reality for a movie), Small.

Gear: Vests, correcting visor, datapad.



SALANDRA SASH, HOLOMOVIE ACTRESS

Salandra Sash is a gorgeous girl with gold-bronze skin and long blonde hair. She is quite popular as a holomovie actress, but she is of noble origins, as well— her parents once ruled Khoras, but they left her broke.

Salandra is the granddaughter of the famous galaxy heroine Salandra Sash, who fought in the Mercenary Guild a century ago and later became a popular historical figure.

Despite her young age, Salandra has used her connections and her appearance to build a rather impressive acting career. She is known for having a very bad temper, like many other movie stars.

Khor's Royal Family: Like all members of the Khors royal family, Salandra possesses the psionic ability to manipulate light. She has no Power Points; instead, she can use her Powers a fixed number of times. Powers with a standard duration of (3/1) last three

rounds. The Light Power lasts one hour.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Persuasion d10, Taunt d6.

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

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Charismatic, Very Attractive.

Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean.

Gear: Scant costume armor, prop lightsword (Str, breaks on 1 on the Fighting die).

Powers: 1 x *light* (light sphere), 1 x *raise trait* (light emanates from Salandra, only on herself), 1 x *stun* (flash of light).

SECURITY GUARD

A hired guard. Very useful when the only threat is an enthusiastic fan, but not a real soldier.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), armored vest (+1).



SILON GUY, HOLOMOVIE PRODUCER

Tall, slender and attractive, Silon Guy uses his money to do what he can do best: make more money! He has invested a large portion of his personal funds to finance "The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash."

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Piloting d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (holomovie sector), Rich.

Hindrances: Arrogant.

Gear: Expensive wardrobe, pocket blaster pistol (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d6-1, ROF 1, semi-auto), space yacht (Calypso).

SILVER ALIEN (DROID)

This droid is a product of the genius of Hast, last prince of the Rannites. It is built with cutting edge technology and it physically resembles a Rannite. Hast made every droid look different depending on sex, appearance and behavior.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), Stun Grenades (5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT, non-lethal).

Special abilities:

- * **Construct:** It has a +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.



SKURA BEAST

This fierce, cyclopean predator is a deep violet colored bipedal saurian. Some specimens also sport pink stripes. It has sharp teeth and claws, but it is feared mostly for its single, green eye. Luckily, the beast is not very smart.

Psionic: The Skura Beast has the ability to deliver a terrible blast of psionic energy from its eye. In gaming terms, it is treated as a Power, and it is activated using Vigor as its arcane skill. The creature has no Power Points; instead, it can use the power a fixed number of times in each scene.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Powers: 3 x *blast* (psionic energy ray – deals non-lethal damage).

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor+2:** Scaly hide.
- * **Bite:** Str+d6 damage.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4 damage.
- * **Monocular Vision:** Having a single eye, the Skura Beast has -2 to any Trait roll for actions requiring deep perception (this applies even to Tricks).
- * **Frenzy:** If the Skura Beast attacks with its claws, it can perform two attacks each round without penalties.
- * **Size +3:** Skura Beasts are large creatures standing over 8' tall.

SPACE PIRATE

A grizzled space buccaneer of

THE STEALER OF LIGHT

the far future. He is ready and willing to perform any act of savagery.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Vibrocutlass (Str+d6, AP 1), space pirate armor (+1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto).

VETERAN SPACE PIRATE

One of the foulest scumbags among the pirate crews in this sector of the galaxy. He is wanted by the space forces of many planets, and he is proud of it.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8.

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Edges: Combat reflexes, Iron will.

Hindrances: Mean, Ugly.

Gear: Vibrocutlass (Str+d8, AP 1), space pirate armor (+1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto).

* **Tricky Bastard:** For a Veteran Space Pirate, there is no such thing as a fair fight. When using a Trick or a Test of Will he gets the Wild Die, even if he is an Extra. A Wild card pirate has his Wild Die raised to d8.

THE SCRIPT

Player 1: Commander Salandra, enemies incoming!

Player 2: It is true, ma'am. There are twelve battalions approaching. What are your orders?

Salandra: Do not worry, my friends, I have a plan! Captain Siros, Colonel Askeros! Are your troops ready?

Player 3: Yes, milady. They are prepared to die for you!

Player 4: As are mine!



DEADLY CHANT

This book contains an adventure based around the exploits of four pre-generated, spacefaring heroes.

You can find the character sheets and details of their spaceship, the Blazing Star, on the Triple Ace Games website: www.tripleacegames.com. The heroes have no defined gender, thus the players can assign it as they wish.

The characters have all their leveling opportunities mapped out in advance from Seasoned (from which they

start) to Legendary. Each adventure in this series earns the heroes a fixed five Experience Points, granting them advancement after every mission. The players only need to tick the appropriate box on the sheet to start making use of their advancements.

This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

Better yet, you will know that when you buy one of our adventures, you can guarantee the adventurers will have all the skills and abilities they need to win the day!

You will also need some gaming stone counters or other markers, a copy of the Space Rules Supplement,

and, for this scenario only, a map of the Blazing Star. You can download all this material for free from the www.tripleacegames.com website.

Finally, you will find it useful to have some extra copies of the standard Savage Worlds Burst templates to represent obstacles and terrain elements.

BACKGROUND

The Greenbelt is a great asteroid field created by the fragmentation of a huge planet. Different from other asteroid zones, this one is primarily composed of frozen water and excellent soil. Asteroids have no atmosphere, but this is not a big problem, because all the buildings are inside pressurized domes.

Some years ago, the Shipping Guild promoted the development of the area into a food production system capable of supporting the nearby planets. To accomplish this, the Guild offered loans to colonists interested in building astrofarms on uninhabited asteroids, granting them ownership of the land.

In just a few years, this enlightened policy attracted many hardworking frontiersmen, who erected a great number of these installations. Even a

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

city was founded on one of the larger asteroids — Khuma Bay, central hub of the area and sole starport in the Greenbelt.

Six months ago, a group of Guild researchers made a very interesting discovery. Due to a series of peculiar environmental factors —the quality of the water, unusual levels of space radiation and so on — the soil of the asteroids is perfect for farming Cybo, a plant that is totally inedible but can be easily processed into cheap, though high quality, bioplastic.

The Guild intends to convert all the astrofarms over to Cybo production, a business that could yield millions of credits. And millions can easily become billions if the Guild somehow manages to obtain exclusive ownership of all those farms it helped to build.

To accomplish this, the Directive Committee sent Hanazon Bal, a new Guild Officer, to the Greenbelt with the task of examining the situation and finding a way, legal or not, to wrest the farms from the colonists.

After a couple months, the cunning accountant discovered the means to that end. He became acquainted with Kera Bellon, a local xenobiologist who has dedicated her life to the study of the Xanthi, a wonderful, deep space life form.

The Xanthi are titanic, space roaming beasts, capable of jumping through hyperspace. They are the cosmic counterpart of Earth's whales — they graze on spacebound spores and are natural collectors of stellar energy. In the past, they were hunted because their synapses were the central components of certain biological hyperdrives. Even to-

day, many races continue the slaughter, because their colossal bodies provide many other valuable resources.

Kera has studied these beasts all her life, becoming particularly proficient in their language - a series of energy emissions capable of reaching extremely intense frequencies.

During a romantic cruise through the asteroids, the woman, who loves talking about her work, revealed to Hanazon that the one thing that can totally enrage a Xanthi is the chant of a space amoeba, the only beast capable of single-handedly killing a spacewhale.

The sly Guild Officer used this information to concoct a devious plot. He stole the recording of an amoeba chant from Kera and had Guild scientists perfect it. Then, he unleashed his evil scheme using the *Backstabber*, a ship cloaked with a special stealth device. The *Backstabber* sneaked in close to a few astrofarms and targeted them using a special harmonic cannon. The cannon itself is harmless; its only effect is that its target comes into resonance, emitting a specific sound based on the cannon's impulse frequency.

The cannon has been programmed to make its target emit the amoeba's chant across all radio frequencies the Xanthi can perceive. This then lures entire pods of enraged spacewhales that attack and destroy the farms with terrible ferocity. To date, more than twenty farms have been besieged. The colonists are terrified, and many of them are selling their property at low prices to make a quick buck and start a new life in some other sector.

Obviously, only the Shipping Guild

(represented by the Officer), has offered to buy the astrofarms.

Hanazon's plan seems to be perfect, but two problems have arisen: First, a whole fleet of spacewhalers (grizzled spacefarers that live off killing the Xanthi) have come to the Greenbelt with the goal of slaughtering all the beasts and filling their cargo bays with precious organic components. They must be stopped at all costs or the whole plan will fail. Second, Kera Bellon (made suspicious by the sudden madness of the Xanthi) started investigating and discovered that Hanazon had used her recording to devise his terrible scheme. Luckily for Hanazon, she made this discovery too late — the Officer's goons kidnapped the woman from a remote space beacon and are keeping her prisoner in their secret base.

But Hanazon's plan is not complete; a more terrible step is forthcoming.

How are the heroes involved in the story? Keep reading to find out...

Characters: 55 XP

ACT 1: SETTLING A DEBT

SCENE 1: THE LAST WILL OF JORAN BELLON

This scenario starts with the heroes in the thick of the action.

You are in trouble, no surprise there, but this time the troubles are very serious. A gang of ship-jackers is targeting all the major

SOUND IN THE SPACE, UH?

As is commonly known, sound cannot travel in space, because it is empty. What we call "sound" in this scenario, referring to the amoebas' chant, is in truth a peculiar radio emission, capable of travelling in the void. We use the word "sound to respect" the "chant" analogy. So, don't undress of your spacesuits in the void to sing a song, it will not be healthy!

starports in the sector, and this time they have stolen the wrong ship — yours, the Blazing Star!

The thieves are highly skilled and protected through many connections, so you have asked an old friend — Joran Bellon, bounty hunter, private eye, and former GEA (Galactic Enforcement Agency) operative — to help you.

Together you have followed the clues to the shipyards of Cahol II, where the thieves overhaul the stolen ships before selling them in faraway sectors, but the gang is too big and organized to be fought in open combat, so, after discovering that your dear old ship is located on platform A-27, you're going for it!

The plan is simple: Board the Blazing Star and flee — fighting consortiums of interstellar thieves is not exactly your type of work.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Now, you are running on a suspended catwalk, below you lie the mists of the lower levels of the shipyards, a long drop, and, further down, the sea.

You can just see your rusty old friend on the next platform over, and damn if those scurvy sons of a Chandran priestess haven't painted her red!

However, a new paintjob is the least of your troubles. Suddenly a group of thieves rushes from the platform to the walkway to block your path, their weapons at the ready.

Take cover because blaster shots will soon be flying!

Deal action cards!

The combat area is a catwalk 6" wide and 24" long. The shorter sides are connected with the platforms. The thieves approach from the northern end, where the Blazing Star is berthed, while the heroes cross from the southern end.

The longer sides (eastern and western) border the void (see below).

Place the heroes in the center of the battleground. They are running, so they start with no cover.

At the start of the fight, place 75% of the thieves within 3" of the northern border. They are no fools, so place them behind cover of crates. The thieves' tactic is simple – using their superior position, they only have to stand ground and pin down the heroes until reinforcements arrive.

To spice things up, a few scripted events will occur in certain rounds.

Round Three - Before dealing action cards, read the following passage to the players:

You hear heavy footsteps from behind. There are some other guests at this party and they are led by a Yugon, a giant, twelve-foot tall alien. His octopus-like face sports a mass of slimy tentacles that almost touch the ground. He is equipped with a braced gravity imploder, a big and altogether nasty gun, and he seems to have no problems wielding it.

"Ghoro smash!" he roars, with a voice as deep as the Gatorian oceans.

Place Ghoro, the tentacled alien, and the other thieves within 3" of the southern end of the walkway. Ghoro and his men advance while firing. The Yugon tries to soften the heroes with his gun for one round, before he enters melee.

Round Five - The cavalry arrives to save the day!

Suddenly another blaster roars, but this time it's not directed against you. It's Joran Bellon, your friend, coming to the rescue!

"Sorry I'm late, guys, but I was investigating the base," he says to you. Then, looking at the big Yugon, he continues: "Ghoro, I

suspected you were behind all this. Boys, Ghoro and I are old friends. How many times have I put you in jail? I've lost count."

The response from the tentacled alien is a terrible roar of anger.

Place Joran Bellon 6" from the southern edge. He starts on Hold. He is an ally, so let the players control him.

Ghoro hates the bounty hunter so much that from now he will concentrate his attacks on him, almost ignoring the heroes.

Once Ghoro is down, read the section titled "Joran's Death".

★ **Ship Thieves (2 per hero):** See page 151.

★ **Ghoro the Hitman:** See page 149.

★ **Joran Bellon, Private Investigator:** See page 150.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Crates:** A few metal crates lie within 3" of the northern edge of the walkway. Each crate has Toughness 8 and grants Medium (-2) Cover. Place up to three of them on the battlefield. You can use gaming stones to represent them.

* **Security Lights:** The catwalk is lined with security lights, so that flying vehicles can spot and avoid it. Each security light is in the shape of a hydrant, with a luminous head. They have Toughness 6 and grant Light Cover (-1) but only for crouching characters. A technologically savvy hero can try to jury rig a light to produce a strong flash. It requires a Repair (-2) roll, with a +2 if the character has the MacGyver Edge. In case of success, it counts as a use of

the Stun power, centered on the light's position. The hero triggering the device must shut his eyes to be immune to the effects. Jury-rigging always breaks the circuits, so only one attempt per light can be made. Place eight lights, four on each side of the walkway, 6" from each other. To represent the lights, use gaming stones of a color different from the previous ones.

* **Falling Down:** If a character is Shaken or Wounded within 1" of the catwalk's edge, he must make a successful Agility roll or tumble into the void! An Extra missing this roll simply dies in a horrible way. A Wild Card, instead, manages somehow to cling to the edge. He needs a Strength (-4) roll to regain solid ground on his own.

JORAN'S DEATH

With one last blow, the giant finally falls. Being so big, Ghoro stumbles off the walkway, disappearing into the mists. At this point, the surviving thieves run away screaming.

You have won the day!

You rush to the walkway's edge, to look down into the thick fog of vapors below. There is no trace of the Yugon.

"Poor Ghoro," Joran shakes his head, "He surely deserved to die, but not in that way. I'll miss him."

Just then, a vicious tentacle lashes up from below, clasp

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

tigator's ankle and dragging him down with terrible strength!

It is all so sudden you have no time to react!

Ghoro is not quite dead, yet! He used his long facial tentacles to grapple the metal structure beneath the catwalk, and with the last of his strength, he has managed to drag his mortal enemy down with him!

Joran is clinging to the metal structure now, but his legs are completely enveloped by the tentacles of the dying Yugon. When the hitman finally loses consciousness, his terrible weight will drag your friend down with him.

You see the sudden understanding of his fate in your friend's eyes.

Joran says, "I am doomed. Hear me — I have a son that I have never known. Jim. Jim Bellon. Please, look after him."

Then the two mortal enemies fall to a terrible death.

SCENE 2: AN ASTROFARM UNDER ATTACK!

A month has passed since Joran's demise.

You searched high and low for his and Ghoro's bodies but found nothing, the murky waters of Ca-hol II have claimed them forever.

So you decided to respect the final request of your friend, and started searching for his son.

Using your contacts and spending a fair amount of time and money, you found mentions of a Jim Bellon in the Shipping Guild's archives. He lives in Khuma Bay, the only city of the Greenbelt, the great asteroid field of the Myan system. Assuming Joran's son is around sixteen years old now, the age certainly matches.

You are now traveling to Khuma Bay, eager to know if this Jim Bellon is your man or not.

Suddenly the Blazing Star's sensors go haywire as communications intercepts a message broadcast on all frequencies, though strangely distorted by a bizarre space anomaly.

"Mayday! Mayday! Tanus astrofarm under attack! Mayday! Mayday!"

The Blazing Star is abruptly thrown out of hyperspace.

You are in the Greenbelt, in the middle of the asteroids. You're lucky, because jumping out of hyperspace in such a congested area could have been deadly.

Soon, you spot the source of the transmission.

On a nearby asteroid, a domed

installation (an astrofarm) is currently under attack by some of the strangest creatures you have ever seen.

They are known as Xanthi, but spacefarers usually refer to them as “spacewhales” — starship-sized creatures capable of jumping into hyperspace. Normally they are peaceful, but now three of them are using their energy breath to assault the farm’s dome.

You theorize that the cause of the strange distortion that pulled you out of hyperspace is the terrible energy being generated by their breath.

You have no time for further analysis. The farm appears heavily damaged and you must intervene if you want to save it!

In truth, the space anomaly affecting the Blazing Star’s sensors is related to the chant of the space amoebas that the Backstabber is broadcasting. The Backstabber is cloaked by a stealth device and their harmonic cannon makes the chant appear to originate from the astrofarm, so the Xanthi are venting their rage on the agricultural installation. Since the cannon is only a prototype, it is also generating the weird effect that threw the Blazing Star out of hyperspace.

The combat area is a rough square 24” by 24”. Each inch represents a SU. Place a Medium Burst Template within 3” of the northern border, to represent

the asteroid. On this, place a Small Burst Template, representing the Tanus astrofarm (see below). The astrofarm is considered an ally, so let the players control it in the combat.

Place the three Xanthi 6” from the astrofarm, each one at least 4” from the next.

Let the players place the Blazing Star within 6” of the southern border.

The spacewhales are living beings, but, for ease of use in space combat, they are treated as spaceships. The beasts attack the astrofarm until the heroes begin targeting them. At this point, the beasts ignore the installation and attack the party.

The fight lasts five rounds. At the start of the sixth round, stop the combat and move on to the “Spacewhalers!” section.

YOUNG XANTHI

The Xanthi are a species of massive, though peaceful, spacefaring creatures. They eat interstellar microorganisms and are capable of metabolizing stellar radiation. Their only natural enemies are space amoebas, which adhere to their bodies and slowly consume them. The Xanthi hate these devious parasites so much that the mere chant of the amoeba drives them mad. Some intelligent races hunt the Xanthi too, because their bodies provide many precious organic components. These particular specimens are relatively small.

Top Speed: 6; **Toughness:** 18 (4); **Handling:** +0

Abilities: Piloting d8, Shields d8, Shooting d8

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Notes: Heavy Armor

Weapons:

* 1 x energy blast (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

Special Abilities:

- * **Living Being:** The Xanthi are living beings, so they ignore the vehicle critical hits table.
- * **Ramming:** A Xanthi in contact with another spaceship will ram it. It is an opposed Piloting roll by the two opponents. If the Xanthi wins, it deals 3d6 damage, AP 8 to the enemy ship. The damage is dealt from an Extra.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Astrofarm:** The astrofarm has Toughness 18 (6) and can sustain three Wounds before being destroyed. It is armed with laser batteries (Range: 12/24/48; Damage 3d6; ROF 2; AP 4, HW) and has Shooting d6.

* **Ice Debris:** The Greenbelt asteroids are mostly made up of ice. In this area, there is a thick bank of tiny ice chunks. They are too small to damage ships but they can hinder the combat in other ways. For this combat only, the Innocent Bystander rule is tweaked as follows: Whenever a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die, the weapon's beam vaporizes some ice, creating a cloud of fog. Place a Large Burst Template centered on the shooter to represent the cloud. It grants Light Cover (-1), but also hinders the Piloting rolls (-1) of anyone crossing the template. The effects of multiple clouds are stacked. The clouds stay in play until the end of the fight.

SPACEWHALERS!

In the middle of the fight, another three ships suddenly emerge from hyperspace. They look like modified fighters, with giant space harpoons mounted on their noses. You have heard of these people, they are space-whalers, spacefarers courageous or mad enough to hunt the Xanthi for their precious organic components!

The spacewhalers enter the fight on your side with daring courage, but they are not here to save you or the farm.

One of them contacts you. He is a burly and muscular man with a blonde mustache and a red bandana.

"This is Khodar, captain of the spacewhalers. What are you doing here? This is our hunting ground! Take your rusty ship and be off with you! You're hindering us!"

In the meantime, the Xanthi, frightened and outnumbered, jump into hyperspace, with one last, angry emission of energy.

"For the cybernetic leg of Achab!" The blonde whaler curses, "You are making them flee! Space-whalers, follow me!"

Without hesitation, the hunters

jump into hyperspace, following the energy tracks of their prey.

Willingly or not, the spacewhalers have saved the astrofarm.

AFTERMATH

After the battle, you check your ship. Besides the damage suffered in the battle, the strange distortion that dragged the ship out of hyperspace also destroyed the delicate hyperjump condenser. The Blazing Star's hyperdrive is now useless.

The astrofarm is a family-run business. Llaran Tanus, a plump, blue-skinned alien is the elder father of the family (they are polygamous). He arrives on his old spaceboat and tries to do his best for the Blazing Star.

"I'm sorry," Llaran says, "I can do nothing for your hyperdrive, but what I can do for you is tow your ship into hyperspace to Khuma Bay. There is a very skilled mechanic there. If anyone can repair your engine, it's him."

During the trip, the alien tells you that this attack by the Xanthi was not the first.

"More than twenty astrofarms have been attacked in the past month. We cannot understand why these peaceful beasts have

suddenly turned so aggressive. Many farmers have sold their lands and headed off for new suns. I am not happy at all with this solution, but after speaking with the other fathers of my family, we have decided to sell now, before the prices fall."

The alien sighs deeply: "I love this land, but I have no choice."

SCENE 3: THE XANTHI'S FRIENDS

The heroes finally arrive in Khuma Bay. Assuming they do some research on the area, let them make Streetwise or Investigation rolls (see sidebar) to acquire information about where they are.

Khuma Bay is a domed city built on a large asteroid. It is rather old-fashioned, and has a sort of rural appeal lacking in many modern cities.

Llaran takes you to Cutrass, the best, and only, starship mechanic in the city. His workshop is near the docks.

"I thank you for what you have done for us and I wish you all the best of luck." The farmer says. "Now, we part ways. I'll go to the Shipping Guild offices. I hope to bargain for a good price. May the Ever-growing Gods bless you."

DATA: THE GREENBELT

INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Success: The Greenbelt is the largest asteroid field in the whole sector. Originally, it was a huge green planet, destroyed by unknown causes. The asteroids are rich in water and the soil is particularly good, so the astrofarms are the main source of food for the nearby planets.

Raise: The Greenbelt is under the control of the Shipping Guild. Until twenty years ago, it was almost uninhabited. Then the guild decided to transform it into the main food producer of the area. To encourage immigration, they offered excellent loans and granted the ownership of the land to the colonists. The Guild Officer is de facto the governor of Khuma Bay, the only starport in the area.

STREETWISE RESULTS

Success: Before the recent colonization, some independent miners' consortiums had tried to exploit the mineral resources of the asteroids, but it was a failure. The expenses were too high and the profits too low. Nowadays many of these abandoned mines are used as bases by independent smugglers and other shady types.

Raise: Due the great amount of food export, Khuma Bay's starport is an ideal place for starting an illegal trade because Shipping Guild inspectors are renowned for being easily bribed. However, for the last few months, a new Guild Officer has been in charge and he seems a very honest man who has put an end to a lot of profitable, illegal trade.

Then, the astrofarmer shakes your hands and departs.

Cutrass is by far the ugliest alien you have ever seen; all spikes, teeth, and weirdly positioned eyes.

"You are unlucky, strangers," He says. "Your condenser is broken. Dead. Jammed. Without any hope of being salvaged. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"The good news is that I can order one of these babies from

Wayland right now. The bad news is that it will be delivered in no less than a week, more or less. Until then you can use your ship, but without hyperdrive, you won't get far."

If the heroes ask Cutrass what the cause of the damage might be, he shrugs and admits that it could be many things: A distortion in the hyperspace field, an energy emission of some type, or simply bad luck. He does not exclude the Xanthi's "voice" either. The beasts emit strange, energy-based impulses.

In the meantime, a great starship is coming. It is too big to dock inside the city so it remains in orbit. It is the Slaughterhouse, the spacewhalers' flagship. Slung below the ship is the carcass of a Xanthi. Several whalers in spacesuits are working around the huge carcass in zero gravity, cutting and refining it with their energy harpoons.

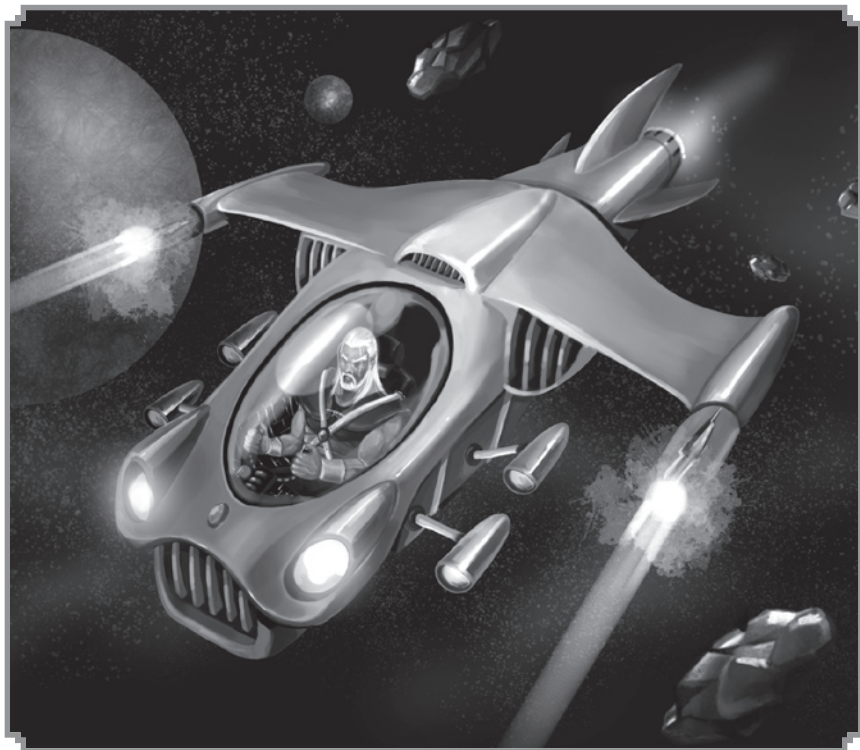
A small spacedingby flies from the Slaughterhouse to the docks, close to where Cutrass' workshop is. A group of whalers exit – they are all rough looking fellows. Khodar, the muscular whaler

you spoke with earlier, is among them.

At this point, you notice a small group of youngsters approaching the docks and taunting the whalers: "Assassins! Murderers! Leave the Xanthi in peace!"

One of them, a dark-haired boy, suddenly takes something out of his jacket and throws it at the whalers. It looks like a grenade!

The object explodes releasing a cloud of red paint! The whalers are covered in the disgusting substance, and they aren't at all



D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

happy! With a unified roar, they unsheathe their weapons and charge toward the boy.

Cutrass snorts looking at the scene.

"Jim Bellon. That bothead will surely get himself killed one day."

The bomber is the boy you're looking for!

Jim jumps onto his hoverskate and zooms off, but the whalers rush to their boat and start chasing him, clearly with no good intentions!

The heroes must join in the chase to save Jim from a serious beating, but first, they will need to find a suitable vehicle. Cutrass has only out-of-service hovercars, but Jim's friends have hoverskates handy. Obtaining one of them can be done in various ways, though a Persuasion or Intimidation roll is the simplest. Offering at least \$30 grants +2 to the roll, while offering \$100 grants automatic success.

Threatening the boys is also an option. They will flee on foot if provoked, leaving their skates behind, but this unheroic behavior will cost the hero (or heroes) a benny.

Each hero must acquire his hoverskate independently from the other members of the party, and each attempt requires one round. Once properly equipped, the characters may join the chase.

Jim is in the lead, followed by the

whalers at Medium Range. The heroes start three Range Increments behind the whalers, plus one for each round they spent obtaining their hoverskates.

Each Range Increment corresponds to 10" on the tabletop.

The hoverskates are controlled using either Agility or Piloting (player's choice). The Ace Edge also applies.

The dinghy uses a spacewhaler's Piloting skill (Khodar is not driving). The vehicle is considerably faster than the skates, so it grants +1 to all chase rolls, but it is not built to fly in such a cluttered place as a space dock. When it is involved in a miniscene (see below), it suffers -1 to all Piloting rolls.

Jim's tactics are simple; he uses the Push maneuver every time he is not in immediate danger (not involved in a miniscene).

During the chase, up to half of the spacewhalers can shoot either at the heroes or at Jim (your choice). They are not killers, so they set their weapons on stun.

After the heroes attack the spacewhalers, concentrate the whalers' responses and attacks on the party because Jim must be unharmed in the next part of the scene.

Do not use the standard obstacle rules. Instead, when a driver draws a Club card as his first initiative card from the action deck, cut too the miniscene which has been described in more detail below.

The chase ends when the spacewhalers are within one Range Increment of Jim, or after ten rounds, whichever happens first. Continue with "Scene 4: Dead End!"

★ **Spacewhalers** (1 per hero + 2): See page 151.

★ **Khodar, Spacewhaler Captain:** See page 151.

★ **Jim Bellon:** See page 150.

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Crossing Hovercar: A hovercar crosses the character's path! If the chase roll fails, the pilot barely avoids the danger, losing a Range Increment. With a critical failure the two vehicles collide, suffering 3d6 damage from an Extra. If a hoverskate is involved in the accident, the driver suffers all the damage.

Three (-2) Protoplasm Cargo: A hovercart is passing in front of the character. It seems empty, so it can easily be climbed over. In truth, the barge is filled with a huge mass of transparent Umagu protoplasm, a delicious food produced in the Greenbelt but quite a problem for the chase. This round, Notice is the chase skill for the character. If the roll is successful he spots the protoplasm and avoids the cart, otherwise he is mired in the slimy goo! Getting out the protoplasm requires a full round and a Strength (-4) roll. The character cannot continue the chase until he gets free.

Four (-2) Cargo Droids: Two huge, twenty-foot tall cargo droids are loading several containers, right in the way of the chase. The robots are not very smart and carry on with their job, ignoring the situation. Avoiding them is the pilot's task. If the Piloting roll fails, the character crashes into one of the droids and is Shaken. With a 1 on the Piloting die, the droid literally knocks the poor character off his skate! He also

loses two Range Increments (three in the case of the dinghy).

Five (-2) Painters: Some painters are working on the wall of a warehouse, using a levitating platform. If the character fails the roll, he hits the painters, making a terrible mess. He automatically loses a Range Increment and his clothes are soaked with paint, making him appear so ridiculous that, until cleaned, he suffers -1 to tests of will. If he succeeds with a raise, the hero not only manages to avoid the painters, but he also grabs a bucket of paint. It can be used to add +2 to a Distract maneuver or kept for the imminent fight to grant the same bonus to a Trick.

Six (-2) Chicken Stampede: The character is moving among a large number of crates full of Pixarian Chickens, simpleminded, four foot tall beasts. The chickens, startled by the roar of the engines, break free of the crates and start running around the docks! The beasts then join the chase, so add another counter to represent the startled flock. They have Agility d10. A character in the same Range Increment as the chickens suffers -2 to all Piloting rolls. The chickens disperse at the end of the chase.

Seven (-1) Beans From The Heavens: A large silo is discharging all its contents just as the character is passing below! Luckily, the contents are only blue Asteroid Beans, but there is an avalanche of them! Each character in the Range Increment where the miniscene occurs must make an Agility roll or suffer 2d6 damage from an Extra. Having a roof, the spacedinghy ignores this.

Eight (-1) Molecular Fishnet: The Greenbelt asteroids host many interesting microorganisms floating

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

in space. The most common way to gather them is by using large, specially fabricated fishnets dragged by spaceboats. One of these fishnets is currently spread between two containers to be repaired. If the hero fails his Piloting roll, he ends up in the net! He must make an Agility (-2) roll to free himself. Until he is free, the character cannot gain further Range Increments in the chase.

Nine (-1) Rolling Spools: A group of workers is unloading a cargo of fifteen foot tall spools of wire, but something goes wrong and the spools fall out the cargo door, and roll down the street! Place a counter on the Range Increment where this miniscene takes place. Each character in the same Range Increment as the spools must make an Agility (-2) roll to avoid being hit and suffering 2d8 damage from an Extra. At the start of each round, the spools move one Range Increment backwards, until there is no other character behind them.

Ten (-1) Religious Group: A procession of Melanite monks is crossing the docks, making for their spaceship. There are twenty of them, with long, ritual staves in their hands. The character can either choose to let them pass, losing a Range Increment, or cross the procession. In this case, he uses Persuasion or Intimidation as his chase roll. In case of failure he angers d4 monks who attack him with their staves (Fighting d6, Damage: d6+d4 from an Extra). If the roll is a critical failure, they also benefit from Ganging Up.

Jack (0) Slipway: A slipway leads to the service tunnels under the docks. A

hero can choose to navigate these passages to gain some advantage. In this case, he uses Smarts as the chase skill for this round. Being familiar with the place, Jim rolls with +4. Otherwise, run the chase as normal.

Queen (0) Cargo Shortcut: A large container stands in the way, its front and back doors open. The hero can choose to go through it. If he succeeds in the chase roll, he gains an extra Range Increment thanks to the shortcut. If he fails, he must make an immediate Spirit (-2) roll or be Shaken. If the character does not go through the cargo container, run the chase as normal.

King (0) Xamanian Flour: There are some open crates of Xamanian red flour exactly where the character is passing. The vehicle's engine kicks up a great red cloud. The character is in Darkness until his next action.

Ace (0) Ramp: Ramps are a hover-skater's best friend. The character can choose to use the ramp to gain extra ground. In this case, for each success and raise on the chase roll, he gains an extra Range Increment, without limit to how many Increments he can gain. In case of failure, he falls badly, suffering 2d6 from an Extra and damaging the hover skate, which from now has Handling -1. The dinghy ignores this result.

SPACEDINGHY

Spacedinghies are very adaptable vehicles, used for short trips within a planet's atmosphere and in space. Many large ships carry at least a couple of them, to be used as auxiliary vehicles.

Acc/Top Speed: 12/50; **Toughness:** 14 (2); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+6
Notes: Atmospheric, Spacecraft

HOVERSKATE

Hoverskates are the natural evolution of skateboards. Plastic or metal boards fitted with a powerful repulsor field, they are very common among teenagers and youngsters.

Acc/Top Speed: 6/12; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Handling:** +1; **Crew:** 1

Notes: Max height 5", very stable (half the penalty for unstable platform). A hero can take another passenger on his hoverskate in emergencies, but it suffers -2 to chase rolls.

SCENE 4: DEAD END!

Jim suddenly turns left to shake off his pursuers and goes straight down a narrow passage lined with containers.

But this was not a very good idea!

The passage ends in an open area, completely surrounded by high walls of crates and containers, too high to be climbed over on a hoverskate. The boy frantically looks for an opening, but there is no way out.

Just then, the spacewhalers arrive and leap out of the spacedinghy.

"Look at him, guys. He's trapped."
Khodar says.

"Let's help him." Another grizzled spacewhale snarls.

You notice that they all wield strange energy weapons with nasty points on them - space harpoons.

You push on the accelerator to reach the boy as fast as you can.

Combat is imminent!

The combat area is quite large, 36" by 36". The perimeter of the battlefield is completely surrounded by a wall of crates. There is only a 6" opening at the center of the southern wall, through which the combatants have entered.

Place the spacewhalers in the middle of the battlefield, within 3" of their dinghy (see below).

Jim is positioned in the northeastern corner of the area.

The heroes do not automatically join the fight during the first round. They arrive after one round for every two Range Increments they are behind the spacewhalers.

When the party enters the fight, place them within 3" of the southern edge.

Both Jim and the heroes start the fight aboard hoverskates (unless they have lost them), which use the standard vehicle rules.

The spacewhalers' tactics are pretty straightforward. They want to capture Jim and give him a serious beating, so they will use their harpoons' special ability to grapple his hoverskate, but they are not killers. Unless the party uses lethal force, the spacewhalers set their blaster weapons on stun and use

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

the harpoons' tips only for Tricks or against hoverskates.

Jim is weaponless, so he tries to find an improvised weapon (see below), and to avoid a direct fight, he remains on his hoverskate.

The fight lasts exactly six rounds and the enemies are the survivors of the previous chase. At the start of the seventh round, run the section "Deadly Avalanche".

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Big Crates:** Some enormous containers are scattered about the area. They grant Full Cover (-4) and have Toughness 12. They stand about 12' tall, so a Climbing roll is required to scale them. Hoverskaters can try a stunt to jump onto them with a Piloting or Agility (-2) roll. Place up to four crates on the battlefield. You can use Medium Burst Templates to represent them.

* **Hoverskates:** Hoverskates are the big advantage the heroes have over the opponents. They use the standard vehicle rules and can be used to ram into an enemy. Remember that the skates hover 5" from the floor, so they can easily fly over many small obstacles.

* **Mechanical Lifter:** A big mechanical lifter stands nearby. It is typically used for moving very big and heavy containers, but crafty heroes can use its huge mechanical claw in the fight! The mechanical arm counts as Medium Cover (-2) and has Toughness 12 (2). It is also fitted with a claw that deals d12+d6 damage, Reach 8. The character uses the lower of his Piloting and Fighting skills to attack. The huge vehicle can move, but very slowly, it has only Pace 3. Use a Large Burst Template

to represent it. Place the vehicle in the northwestern corner of the battlefield.

* **Small Crates:** The area is also packed with small crates, both sealed and opened. Each crate grants Light Cover (-1) and has Toughness 7. On top of the sealed crates there are various objects (boards, hammers, wrenches and so on) that can be used as improvised weapons. A hero can grab a Str+d4 weapon with an action, or he can spend a full round searching and making a Notice roll. With a success, he finds either a Str+d6 weapon or a very balanced one (Str+d4, no Fighting penalty for improvised weapon). The open crates, instead, contain various wares that can be used as props for Tricks. Each round, a player can grab a prop of his choice (with the GM's approval) from an open crate. Use gaming stones of two different colors to represent the sealed and open crates. Place up to ten sealed and ten open crates on the battlefield.

* **Spaceboat:** The spaceboat is 6" long and 3" wide. It offers Medium Cover (-2) and has Toughness 14(2).

DEADLY AVALANCHE

At the start of the seventh round, something unexpected happens.

The wall of containers surrounding the battle area trembles and quickly starts collapsing in a deadly avalanche of cargo. You must duck for cover, but wait; Jim is standing still, frozen in terror. You haven't come this far to see him crushed! You must save him!

Deal action cards as normal to Jim and the heroes. Each card has two meanings: it decides when the hero acts and it describes the type of danger he faces during the round (see table below).

At the start of an action, the character can decide to look for cover. It requires a Notice roll. Once under cover, the hero is protected from the avalanche and suffers no further damage for the rest of the scene. If he fails the Notice roll or chooses not to make it, he must make an Agility roll modified according to the table or suffer the described damage. This roll does not suffer from the multiple action penalty. All damage is dealt from an Extra.

Why should a hero choose not to look for cover?

Unlike the heroes, Jim is Surprised for the entire scene and cannot search for cover on his own, he can only make the Agility roll to avoid damage. A hero must first drag him down, with a Strength (-2) roll, and then find cover for both with a Notice roll. Doing both actions in the same round incurs the standard multiple action penalties.

Grant a benny to the character who saves the boy.

The avalanche lasts for four rounds. Being crafty types, the spacewhalers survive on their own, though battered and bruised.

Card	Agility Roll Modifier	Damage
2-5	0	4d6
6-10	-2	3d6
Jack-Ace	-4	2d6

If the heroes survive the avalanche, read the following:

When the deadly avalanche ends, you and the spacewhalers leave your improvised refuges. A terrible scene surrounds you. Crates and containers lie wrecked all around and you are engulfed in a cloud of thick dust that makes you cough.

You quickly discover out what caused the terrible event – a forklift, driven at ramming speed against the wall of containers, which now lies abandoned. Was it an accident or did someone just try to kill you?

While you ponder this, the sirens of the Shipping Guild's police are getting closer and closer.

The “accident,” in truth, was a murder attempt. Gan Zun, one of Hanazon's dangerous henchman, was following Jim because his master is worried about what Kera, Jim's mother, might have revealed to her son.

The chase and subsequent fight would have offered him the occasion to wipe out both the pesky boy and the annoying spacewhalers' captain, but luck was not on his side.

If a hero examines the forklift, a successful Notice roll reveals hints of a strong, “swampish” odor on the seat. This is Gan Zun's bodily odor.

ACT 2: LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

SCENE 1: I HAVE NO FATHER!

Jim, the heroes, and the spacewhalers are all taken into custody by the Shipping Guild's police (this is not re-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

ally customary in pulp, but we need the heroes to meet the villain of the story).

A gruff Shipping Guild police sergeant takes you, Jim, and the whalers' captain in front of the Guild Accountant Officer, de facto ruler of Khuma Bay.

"I am Hanazon Hal, appointed by the Guild to govern this city." The man speaking is a Tuathan of pleasant and sophisticated appearance, dressed in simple but elegant robes.

"I know Jim Bellon and captain Khodar, but I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you, strangers."

The heroes must introduce themselves, and then Hanazon continues.

"You are all in serious trouble. The report here says you started a brawl, vandalized half the docks, and had a serious fistfight on an abandoned cargo platform, where your actions almost caused a tragedy. What do you have to say in your defense?"

Jim quickly says the spacewhalers attacked, but captain Khodar replies that they were provoked, and the two begin quarreling. Then it is the heroes' turn to explain their involvement in the matter. Let them do some roleplaying before Hanazon interrupts the quarrel.

"Silence! Your behavior was shameful, Jim! Only my friend-

ship with your mother prevents me from sending you to jail, but you must face the consequences of your actions. You must pay a fine of \$500. While you, captain Khodar, you are not a boy, and I would have expected a little more sense from you. I'm afraid you have to pay for all the damage caused this afternoon plus an additional fine in the amount of \$2000. Let me add that in dire times such as these, your behavior was very inappropriate. You are dismissed."

After Jim and Khodar leave the room, exchanging enraged looks, the Officer addresses the party.

"I must thank you. Without your intervention, we would now be counting the dead. I think I should have been harsher with the boy, but I am a close friend of his mother, Kera, and I know he has grown up fatherless. I'll speak to her about the problem. Now, if you would excuse me, I am very busy."

In truth, Hanazon is not happy at all. He wanted Khodar and Jim dead, but the party ruined his plans.

Outside the office, the heroes meet up with Jim, who is having trouble paying his fine. It is the right time for the party to help the boy and speak to him.

Jim does not know his father. Joran abandoned Kera, Jim's mother, when he was very young, and Jim has very bad feelings towards him. So, after

discovering the heroes are friends of Joran's, he refuses to talk with them.

This is a good moment to do some roleplaying. The group did save Jim's life and the boy has a big problem now, so in the end he tells the heroes the whole story.

"I have always lived with my mother, Kera. She is a scientist who has dedicated her life to studying the Xanthi. She is convinced that they are not simple beasts but a very intelligent race. They have always been peaceful, so she was totally shocked when, a month ago, they started becoming aggressive and attacking the astrofarms.

"Ten days after the first attack, these damn whalers arrived, promising to solve the problem with the Xanthi. Mum and I hate these men; they are just killers without any respect for such an amazing form of life!

"But the people here cheered their arrival, so Mum secluded herself in her laboratory investigating the facts. She was sure the answer to the mystery could be found in the sounds the Xanthi make to communicate. You see, they are capable of emitting sounds and energy impulses on several frequencies, and she started analyzing all of them.

"When Mum is in this mood, she is completely dedicated and can spend whole days without sleep-

ing or eating, but now it's been three days and she hasn't come home yet, her wristcomputer is turned off and her spaceboat is missing. I went to her lab, but the door is locked and I don't have the key. I'm very worried and I fear for her life. Maybe I'll return to her lab and break in to look for clues."

One legitimate question the characters can ask is why, if he is so worried, he has not mentioned the matter to the Officer.

"Mum and Hanazon had a relationship." Jim reluctantly admits. "They broke up two months ago but they remain friends. I don't want him involved in my family's business."

The best thing the party can do now is to go and check the woman's laboratory with Jim. They are heroes and a locked door should not stop them.

SCENE 2: KERA'S LABORATORY

Kera's lab is in the lower part of Khuma Bay, in a building directly adjacent to the external walls of the city dome, because she needs access to the powerful receivers on the dome's exterior to catch the voices of the Xanthi without interference.

When you arrive at the lab, you realize that something bad has

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

happened here — the door's lock is broken.

Worried by the mess Jim has made, Hanazon has ordered Gan Zun, his main minion, to check Kera's lab, to make sure the woman has not left any dangerous evidence behind.

The party arrives just as Gan Zun is deleting all the data from Kera's computers, while some hired thugs keep watch.

Kera's lab is like a tower — three rooms on three different floors, connected by a stairwell.

Use three Large Burst Templates to represent the floors, placing a Small Burst Template in the center of each one to depict the stairwell.

Reading the floor maps clockwise, place a door 2" wide at six o'clock on the first floor. This floor is used as a library but it also has a small kitchen and a bed, because Kera often stays in the lab for several days.

The second floor is where Kera usually works and there are computers lining the walls.

On the third floor there is a locker containing some spacesuits and a pressurized door at nine o'clock. This is the access to a service corridor leading to the dome's external surface.

Place all the thugs but two on the first floor. They are active sentinels and make group Notice rolls for spotting purposes.

If the heroes are not explicitly moving in silence or if they fail their Stealth roll, the goons start on Hold and two of them have the time to hide at either side of the door. In this position, if they win a Stealth roll opposed to a character's

Notice roll, they get the Drop on him. The hidden thugs wait until at least two heroes are inside before springing the ambush.

If the heroes are stealthy enough, place the goons at random positions in the room and check for their surprise.

Gan Zun and the two remaining thugs are on the second floor, wiping the computers of all the data. The evil alien needs three rounds to accomplish the task from the start of the fight, so he orders his two underlings to hold back the heroes on the stairwell while he finishes his work.

After erasing the data, he leaves his men to face defeat and runs to the third floor, using smoke grenades to cover his trail. It is likely the party cannot see him now, being on a different floor, they only hear his voice. Therefore, Gan Zun is described in the next section.

It is necessary for Gan Zun to escape. If need arises, use the Recurring Villain rule to let him flee to the third floor.

At this point, after the goons are defeated, run the section, "Decompression!"

★ **Gan Zun, Criminal Henchman:** See page 148.

★ **Thugs (1 per hero +1):** See page 152.

★ **Jim Bellon:** See page 150.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Computers:** The second floor's walls are completely lined with computers, which are likely to explode when hit by a stray blaster shot. On this floor, tweak the Innocent Bystander rule slightly: When a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die, the shot misses and hits

a computer on the wall behind the target, causing an explosion. Place a Small Burst Template centered on the wall where the shot has hit a computer (use common sense to determine this). Any character under the template suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra.

* **Generic Furniture:** As it is impossible to detail every piece of furniture in the lab, as a rule of thumb consider each piece as granting Light Cover (-1) and having Toughness 6. You can use gaming stones to represent the furniture. A single gaming stone represents



D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

something small (e.g., a chair), two stones within 3" of each other represent something medium (e.g., a table), while three stones within 3" of each other depict a big piece of furniture (e.g., a bed). Place up to ten gaming stones on the first floor and up to five on the second and third.

* **Stairwell:** Each flight is 10" high. Shooting from one floor to the other through the stairwell is possible, with a -2 modifier. In melee, being at a higher position on the stairwell is definitely an advantage and it grants +2 to Parry. Conversely, being at a lower position subtracts -2 from Parry.

DECOMPRESSION I

"Hey!" Jim shouts: "He's escaping!"

It's true, the thugs' leader is fleeing to the upper floor! You must stop him!

You run up the stairwell just in time to see him go through a door in the western wall. The room in which you are now seems to be a sort of warehouse. It's almost empty; there is only a metal locker along the southern wall.

The heroes are now on the third floor of Kera's lab. Let them do a Common Knowledge roll. Characters with a spacefarer background or similar add +2 to this roll. If successful, the heroes recognize the symbols on the door, indicating a corridor that leads outside the dome. There must be

an airlock at the end of the corridor and the way out into space is surely protected by codes known only to the city's security forces.

In the locker, there are some spacesuits (one for each character). Donning a spacesuit requires six rounds, but an Agility roll lowers this number by one for each success and raise. Being impatient, Jim spurs the heroes to chase the alien without hesitation. The heroes do not actually need to hurry; instead, in this particular case, losing time wearing a spacesuit will be worth it later.

When the party goes through the door, continue with the following:

You are in a rather long corridor, ending with an airlock door. The fleeing alien is frantically trying to open it, without any luck. He is trapped!

At this point, without dealing action cards, ask the players what they want to do. Any hero that runs or charges towards the alien will start at one lower Range Increment in the following situation. Then, before the players can act, go on with the description below.

The thugs' leader turns towards you, so you can see him clearly for the first time.

He has a third bionic arm on his right side and a funny looking turtle-like head, but his eyes are those of a killer.

His swampy stench fills the corridor.

Heroes that have previously found this clue will recognize the odor from the forklift at the docks!

"Well, my friends, I am very happy to meet you again, but now I need my... space!" He laughs.

Then, with a mighty blow, his bionic arm smashes the window on the airlock door, which opens into the void!

Only now you notice that the alien's armor is a fully functional spacesuit fitted with magnetic boots and a force field generated breathing mask.

The evil alien says something else but you can't hear because the air is being sucked out of the room, and you are being pulled towards the opening, as well! He waves his hand and moves off onto the dome's surface, leaving you to die.

The situation is critical. When the window was smashed, the door through which the party came in automatically closed to avoid decompression in a larger area. The heroes seem doomed, but they still have a chance to save their skin; near the door, there is an emergency panel that can generate a temporary force field in the area near the airlock. The problem is that the characters are being sucked out into the void – they must use all their strength to reach the panel.

Handle this situation as a chase, with some modifications.

Place ten Range Increment markers on the table. The first represents the airlock and the tenth represents the emergency panel. Place the heroes on the fifth segment (or the fourth if they previously declared their intention to charge Zun Gan).

Strength is the chase skill. Every round a hero succeeds with his roll, he gains Range Increments as normal, but any failure causes him to be sucked back one Range Increment or two with a critical failure.

A hero dragged below the first Range Increment must make a Strength (–4) roll each turn to avoid being thrown out into space where he meets a horrible death.

Instead, the first character who reaches the tenth segment can activate the emergency force field, stopping the decompression. Doing this also unlocks the door to Kera's warehouse, ending the chase.

The standard obstacle rules are ignored. Instead, whenever a character draws a Club as his first initiative card, it means he suffers the effects of oxygen deprivation. He must make a Vigor roll (–2 if he draws a face card) or gain a level of Fatigue. He recovers from Fatigue at the end of the scene.

Heroes fitted with spacesuits ignore the Club card effect, have +2 to Strength rolls, and, if sucked out into space, they will be recovered, unhurt, at the end of the scene.

Help from Outside. If a character has not gone down the corridor, he can help his mates from outside. There is a second, more complex

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

control panel in Kera's warehouse. As this is a very stressful situation, activating the emergency force field from here requires two successful Smarts rolls (with each raise counting as an extra success).

A HINT

Once the party is out of danger, Gan Zun has already disappeared beyond the dome's curve and following him is impossible.

Any surviving thugs provide no useful information. Gan Zun hired them at the docks a couple hours ago to have some extra muscle handy.

Kera's computers are totally wiped of all data, so they are of no help.

However, there is another clue that can be found with a successful Notice roll. To effectively monitor the Xanthi, Kera set up some receiving stations on various asteroids. Being a neat and organized person, she stored the electronic keys for all the stations in a panel in the kitchen area.

All the keys are in the right place except for the one to Vendellmann station, which is missing.

Usually Kera visits the stations every month or so to check the instruments, equipment and to download the recorded data which has been stored on the computers. Vendellmann station is placed in proximity to the scene of many Xanthi attacks, so it might have recorded something interesting.

The woman has gone there to investigate and if the party wants to find her, they must head to Vendellmann too.

If the heroes fail to discover this hint, Jim automatically finds it.

SCENE 3: THE BLACK ONE

You set off for Vendellmann station. Using your hyperdrive, this would be a short trip, but with sublight engines only, the voyage takes four hours. You have almost reached Vendellmann's asteroid when you hear a strange sound echoing throughout the Blazing Star! It has no clear origin, and it seems to radiate from the whole ship! It is the same sound your sensors detected when the Tanus astrofarm was attacked.

The party is about to fall into a deadly trap – even if they do not know it yet, the sound they are hearing is the chant of the space amoebas.

What is worse is that the sound propagates through space at enormous speed, summoning enraged Xanthi.

And it is all the Backstabber's doing.

The cloaked ship is here to intercept the heroes and eliminate them. The Guild's cruiser has the firepower to take down the Blazing Star, but Hanazon wants the destruction of the group to be instrumental to his goal, spreading terror among the colonists, so why not cause a little Xanthi attack in the process?

After a few moments, you notice something on the sensors. A shape. A Xanthi. A big one. It is approaching so quickly that you can see it through the portholes now. It isn't big. It is HUGE! About the size of a capital ship.

Its skin is so dark that the creature looks like a moving black hole heading straight for you.

"Oh shit!" Jim curses, "It is the pod leader, the Black One."

The beast opens its enormous mouth. It doesn't simply want to destroy you. It wants to eat you!

You must flee through the asteroids if you want to avoid it.

This is a chase, and a potentially deadly one!

The Blazing Star starts at Medium range from the Black One. The beast has Piloting d6 and is considered a Wild Card. It is so massive that there is no sense in shooting it with the Blazing Star's weapons. The only chance for the party is to gain ten Range Increments, so they will be out of the Backstabber's cannon range, and the Black One will lose interest and go away.

Each Range Increment corresponds to 10" on the tabletop.

The Black One is treated like a capital ship and its attacks are counted as battery fire.

THE BLACK ONE

1 x Energy beam (Range: 30/60/90; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; HW; AP 4)

The beast has Shooting d6.

1 x Huge Bite (Range: must be in the same range increment; Damage: 3d10; ROF 1; AP 8)

The Black One does not use any chase maneuvers, it simply follows the heroes and fires at them, but, when it

reaches the Range Increment the heroes are on, it tries to bite them.

For this chase, do not use the standard obstacles rules. The area is full of small asteroids and debris. Whenever the pilot and the Black One draw a Club card as their first initiative card, it means they have to avoid an asteroid, as per the table below.

The Piloting Roll modifier is the penalty to the chase roll. In case of failure, the Blazing Star suffers the stated damage, but before trying to avoid it; a gunner can attempt to destroy the asteroid. To do this, the gunner must make a Shooting roll at short range (taking into account the To Hit modifier) and score sufficient damage to beat the asteroid's Toughness. If the asteroid is destroyed, the pilot suffers no penalty!

These rules fully apply only to the heroes' ship. The Black One is too big to be damaged and is only mildly annoyed by the asteroids. It suffers only half the Piloting penalties (rounded down) and does not try to destroy the asteroids. The good thing is that its beam attacks also suffer the Piloting penalties (rounded down).

When the party finally shakes off the huge beast, they also notice that the strange "sound" the Blazing Star was emitting has ceased. This is because the Backstabber's cannon is not accurate enough to stay locked onto a fast moving target.

Finally, they reach Vendellmann station.

SCENE 4: DEADLY CHANT

Vendellmann is a medium-sized

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

asteroid where, well before the colonization of the Greenbelt, the Shipping Guild had placed a radio beacon to help the few ships travelling in this space sector. The radio beacon became obsolete and was decommissioned, but the domed installation remains. It seems totally uninhabited, but a small space dock is still functional. There are no apparent signs of Kera's presence here.

Kera obtained permission from Hanazon to place one of her receivers here when the two were lovers.

The landing dock seems to have been used recently, a small ship landed leaving traces in the dust, and the main access porthole is unlocked. You reach the beacon control room, where Kera placed her receivers and a set of computers. All the machines are switched on and are operative, but there is no trace of Kera.

Let the party make a Notice (+2) roll. With a success, they find a cup of Chandran tea on a desk. Jim's mother is particularly fond of this exotic beverage, as the boy knows. It is a clue that the woman was here, but she left in a hurry, because the cup is almost full, and a few days old.

The reason for such a hasty departure lies in the recordings database. The heroes can find the following information by examining the computers with Jim's help.

The computers reveal that Kera has isolated some specific parts of the recordings — they are filed as "space amoeba chants".

"Space amoebas are the only natural enemies of Xanthi, apart from spacewhalers." Jim says. "These nasty parasites adhere to the Xanthi's bodies and consume them with corrosive digestive fluids, resulting in a very painful death. They emit a sort of sound, a "chant", to call other members of their race to join in the banquet. This chant is the only thing that can enrage a Xanthi enough that it would cross an entire solar system to kill a chanting amoeba."

The date and the position of the source of every recording correspond to the Xanthi attacks on the astrofarms. It seems that amoebas were chanting in all the spots destroyed by the Xanthi.

"This is really strange." Jim continues, "Space amoebas are very rare. I have never seen one in the Greenbelt."

If the heroes listen to one of the recordings, they notice it is very similar to the strange sound the Blazing Star emitted in the previous scene, before the Black One attacked them. Someone is imitating the amoeba chant to provoke the attacks on the astrofarms! But how can the sound be made to originate from a specific target?

The heroes may start making sup-

positions, but they are suddenly interrupted.

It seems you are going to have guests.

The beacon's monitors display the clear image of the Slaughterhouse, the spacewhalers's capital ship. It is orbiting around Vendellmann while a couple of whaleboats are now docked at the base, beside the Blazing Star.

Some burly fellows are entering the room now.

"Uh-oh..." Jim says, "We're in trouble."

ACT 3: THE ENEMIES OF OUR ENEMIES...

SCENE 1: THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

"What a nice surprise! Our old friends!" Khodar's voice thunders.

"Our sensors detected an enormous whale in this area. We came here, but we can't seem to find it anymore. What a pity, it means we'll have to skin you instead of the big beasts you love so much. Spacewhalers, let's teach them a lesson!"

The spacewhalers are not the true villains of this story, but surely, they want to spill some of the heroes' blood for the embarrassment they caused in Act 1, Scene 4. As before, not being killers, they use weapons set on stun, as long as the heroes does the same.

The combat area is the Vendellmann beacon control room. It is a square, 18" by 18".

There is only one means of access to the area, a 3" wide opening in the middle of the southern wall.

In the center of the room is the computer hub (see below).

The enemies start within 3" of the opening.

Place the heroes by the hub, at least 8" from the spacewhalers.

The whalers prefer to enter into melee, but they do not object to a few blaster shots to soften the party.

This fight is not destined to reach a resolution, because after five rounds, something terrible happens. Stop the combat immediately and run the next section, "Unavoidable death".

★ **Spacewhalers (2 per hero):**
See page 151.

★ **Khodar, spacewhaler captain:**
See page 151.

★ **Jim Bellon:** See page 150.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Computer Hub:** A large circular desk full of computers, receivers and so on. It counts as Medium Cover (-2) and has Toughness 8. Use a Medium Burst Template to represent it and place it in the center of the room.

* **Energy Conduits:** Four energy conduits, running along the ceiling,

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

power the computer hub. Draw four random straight lines from the computer hub to the room's perimeter. Place a gaming stone in the middle of each line. The lines represent the conduits and the gaming stones are energy nodes. A Called Shot (-2) damaging a node (Toughness 6) causes it to explode, dealing 2d6 damage in a Small Burst Template.

UNAVOIDABLE DEATH

The beacon's receivers start wailing. It is the amoeba's chant again, but now many times stronger!

All of you, heroes and spacewhalers alike, stop fighting.

The sound is originating from the Slaughterhouse. The crew calls Khodar on his wristcomputer:

"Captain! Captain! This sound, it is emitting from the Slaughterhouse itself! We don't understand how it's happening, but it's the truth! Wait... there's something on the sensors. A Xanthi, incoming! No, there are two... Three... A dozen! For all the galaxies, they are coming towards us!!!"

Dozens of spacewhalers, a whole pod of Xanthi, appear on the monitors and throw themselves against the whalers' capital ship with blind rage.

There is nothing anyone can do. Within moments, the Slaughter-

house is destroyed, leaving only space debris in the area.

"No!" Khodar shouts, his voice full of desperation and anger.

Despite being grizzled spacefarers, Khodar and his shipmates are totally shocked. Their ship is destroyed and their friends are dead, and it all happened in a flash.

With the destruction of the Slaughterhouse, the deadly sound fades and the Xanthi, after a moment of confusion, appear to relax before moving away.

At this point, an area of space shimmers and a spaceship appears. It is a medium sized cruiser, with a strange, long cannon protruding from its nose. The ship was cloaked under some sort of stealth field!

There is an incoming transmission. On your screens, you see the three-armed alien you encountered before.

He speaks in a deep voice: "I am Gan Zun, captain of the Backstabber. You have seen what we are capable of doing. Just as we destroyed the Slaughterhouse, we can destroy Vendellmann station. However, you are lucky, my master wants you, and wants you alive. So drop your weapons and surrender, otherwise you will soon sample some of the other features of our harmonic cannon."

The heroes should surrender and persuade Khodar and his men to do the same. Accomplishing this requires a Persuasion roll.

If they decide to resist, the Backstabber blasts the beacon with a stun ray. It is not at all pleasant, and both the heroes and the whalers quickly fall unconscious. In the next scene, they will be Fatigued. They can then recover from this condition with a successful Vigor roll, to be attempted at the start of every scene.

When they awaken, they are aboard the Backstabber. The soldiers search the heroes and remove all their useful equipment (weapons, armor and assorted gear), but the characters might be able to hide something (see sidebar).

SCENE 2: THE CYBO

A group of soldiers, all wearing nondescript gray uniforms, captures and restrains you with security handcuffs.

"Just to be on the safe side." Gan Zun grins.

You notice that the other space-whalers, apart from Khodar, are not restrained. The alien quickly glances at his men, who suddenly shoot them dead!

"You bastard!" Khodar shouts. "You promised to spare our lives!"

"I lied" Gan Zun shrugs and,

HIDING OBJECTS

If the heroes surrender, they have a few moments before being captured to hide some useful objects on their persons. These must be very small items, like lighters or pocketknives. Make an opposed roll between the character's Stealth and the average soldier's Notice (d6). In case of success, the object goes unnoticed. A hero can try to hide more objects, but every additional item requires another roll and inflicts a cumulative -2 to all rolls.

speaking to his men, continues: "Bring the prisoners aboard, under strict surveillance, and put their ship in the secondary bangar. We don't want to leave any traces."

The soldiers obey silently.

The Backstabber is not a very big ship, but it is a true jewel of technology. Some guards watch while you stand on the main deck. You wonder who is behind this whole thing, because surely he has amazing resources at his disposal.

You don't need to wait very long. The trip is brief and you can see your destination through a porthole – a barren asteroid, completely uninhabited.

But wait, there is a large crater and you are heading straight

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

into it. The asteroid is hollow, and it hosts a series of pressurized caverns and domes, where people are working.

You are in the enemy's secret base!

"It must be an old space mine," Jim whispers.

"Silence!" Gan Zun orders.

The alien and an entourage of soldiers bring you before their master in the main control room. Finally you will meet your enemy!

He is the tall figure who is busy observing a huge, entirely cultivated cavern through a glass wall.

Upon your arrival, he turns and you can finally see him. It is Hanazon Hal, the Shipping Guild officer!

With a little smile, the Tuathan speaks: "My friends" he says, "You have given me a lot of trouble, but finally we have managed to arrange a little family meeting."

Two guards come in, leading a prisoner, a woman. It's Kera, Jim's mother!

"Mum!" the boy shouts.

Mother and son try to embrace, but the guards stop them.

"I suppose I owe you an explanation." Hanazon continues, "Yes, I am working to destroy the astrofarms and spread general fear throughout the area. Why? The motivation is simple and lies in the crops beyond that glass wall, look at them with your eyes."

The field is entirely planted with black-leaved plants, carefully tended by small, cloaked aliens.

"You know those plants, don't you?" the Officer asks.

Let the heroes make a Common Knowledge roll to recognize them. Otherwise, Hanazon himself will explain.

"They are Cybo saplings, a recently discovered plant, totally inedible but capable of producing excellent bioplastic.

"Our little aliens, we call them the Agronomists, made quite a discovery some months ago. Due to some unique environmental properties, the Greenbelt's soil is excellent for growing Cybo. More than excellent. The plants grow ten times faster and the quality of the resultant plastic is ten times better. It is a business worth millions, but they can easily become billions if the Guild manages to seize all the astrofarms from the colonists! We paid them once to colonize this area... Well, now we want our asteroids back!

“Good Kera here unwillingly gave me the right idea. The Xanthi are relatively common in this area, and it is wonderful what these space giants can be tricked into doing with the help of a little amoeba’s chant. They go mad and destroy everything in sight!”

“Thanks to the Guild’s scientists we used a prototype weapon to accomplish this, the harmonic cannon. This weapon is practically harmless, but it emits a beam that makes its target generate sound waves, controlled by the cannon’s frequency. And guess what sounds we make it produce?”

“Using this little trick, we have destroyed several astrofarms and the colonists have reacted by selling off their estates at very cheap prices and leaving the sector, but it is a slow process. Too slow. We are losing money with every passing moment. We need something more... spectacular... to inspire all of them to abandon the area.”

“Something like a pack of Xanthi utterly destroying Khuma Bay! It will cost the Guild quite a lot to reconstruct the city afterwards, but it will be a worthwhile investment, I can assure you!”

“Today is the Balabala, a religious festival. Many farmers are in Khuma Bay with their

families, praying in the temple to stop the Xanthi’s madness.

“A few thousand deaths will help us reach our goal, and I have no time to properly deal with you right now. Gan Zun, throw them into the fertilizer depot, then have the Backstabber ready to take off. Little Kera and I will be in the first row this time, to enjoy the show! Be well until my return!”

The guards drag Kera away from Jim and escort you all to the fertilizer depot.

SCENE 3: ESCAPE FROM THE SECRET BASE

You are in a damp warehouse full of crates and sacks of agricultural chemicals and you are still handcuffed. If you want to save Kera, your own lives, and Khuma Bay itself, you must find a way out, and quickly!

The handcuffs are the first problem. They are very big and cumbersome, completely restraining both arms and hands. Breaking them is impossible, as is lockpicking them. Even if the heroes have managed to smuggle some lockpicks, they simply do not have the fine manipulating skills to accomplish the task.

The road to freedom lies in the crates and sacks in the room. If a hero examines the wares, let him make a Common Knowledge roll.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Heroes with a background in chemistry or with the MacGyver Edge roll with +2. With a success, they recognize Abernate, Balianix, and Cynderium, chemicals that, mixed, can produce a strong acid, capable of corroding metal!

MAKING ACID

Concocting an acid requires accurate timing because, once opened, the components need to be quickly combined. So the party has only six rounds to create the acid, otherwise they must restart the process. Luckily, inside the room there are enough supplies to allow them limitless attempts. The first two steps can be performed cooperatively and scoring a raise means the action is carried out without spending a round.

* **Breaking the Abernate Sack.** Abernate is a powder, contained in a sack. The hero must break it, using his teeth or whatever else. It requires an Agility (-2) roll. A critical failure fills the hero's mouth with the substance, causing 2d4 damage, from a Wild Card.

* **Throwing the Balianix Barrel.** Balianix is a liquid contained in a big barrel. With a good kick, the character can let it fall on top of the Abernate powder. This requires a Strength (-2) roll.

* **Spraying Cynderium.** Cynderium is gaseous and is stored in a large spray can. This is the most delicate step, because the hero must spray it onto the mixture once the Abernate and Balianix are well mixed. It requires a Smarts (-2) roll.

* **Using It.** Now the acid is ready!

It will be effective only until the sixth round. Each round the heroes can try to use it to corrode their handcuffs. It requires an Agility roll, -2 for each additional character if more than one hero tries to free himself in the same round. With a success, the hero is free. With a failure, the character suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra from exposure to acid.

Once free, a hero can help his comrades, automatically freeing one of them each round. The acid making process does have one side effect - it produces clouds of thick smoke, attracting unwelcome attention!

THE AGRONOMISTS

Four rounds after the smoke starts spreading, the warehouse door opens and three little aliens, the Agronomists, enter.

They are not fighters, but they will do to their best to defend themselves.

The fighting area is a square of 12" by 12" with a 3" wide door on the northern wall.

Place the Agronomists within 4" of the door, and while the heroes may be placed wherever the players wish, they must be at least 6" from the nearest enemy.

Remember that from this point to the end of the scenario, Khodar is on the party's side, so the players can use him as an ally.

The Agronomists' tactics consist of fighting for two rounds, then, from the third round on, one of them attempts to leave the room to sound the alarm, pushing a button placed on a wall 15" from the depot. If the Agronomist manages to trig-

ger the alarm, a patrol of Gray Soldiers will arrive to investigate in five rounds. The same thing will happen if the fight lasts for more than five rounds.

★ **Agronomist (3):** See page 148.

★ **Gray Soldier (1 per hero):** See page 150.

★ **Jim Bellon:** See page 150.

★ **Khodar, Spacewhaler Captain:** See page 151.

QUESTIONING THE SURVIVORS

If the heroes spare some of their enemies' lives, they can interrogate them for vital information. Below, you will find answers to some of the most likely questions the party could ask:

Q: Where is our spaceship?

A: You mean the merchant ship? Gan Zun took it as spoil of war. It is on the Backstabber now.

Q: Are there other spaceships handy in the base?

A: Yes, there are the two captured whaleboats. They are in hangar Alpha.

Q: Where is our equipment? (Only Gray soldiers know the answer)

A: In the control room. Now that Hanazon and Gan Zun are away, the guards on duty are gambling for it.

FINDING THE WAY

To reach the control room, the heroes must make a group Stealth roll and a group Smarts roll. If both rolls

succeed, they find the room without any problem. If the heroes questioned a prisoner about the location of the room or, best of all, if they have an Agronomist or Gray Soldier to guide them, they can skip the Smarts roll.

If one of the two rolls fails, they run into a patrol of Gray Soldiers after a turn in the corridor.

The corridor is 4" wide and L-shaped. Place the heroes at the corner and the enemies within 6" of them. The Soldiers must check for surprise. If the heroes fail to wipe them out within five rounds, at the sixth round, and every further sixth round, a patrol of equal size joins the fight.

★ **Gray Soldier (1 per hero):** See page 150.

THE CONTROL ROOM

You reach the control room where you met Hanazon before. The automated door opens silently.

Some guards are sitting at a table focused on a game of Wo Ka, a very popular card game, while on the other side of the glass wall you can see the Agronomists tending to the Cybo. The soldiers are beaten and verbal, and you gather the stake of the game is your equipment, which lies on another table nearby! There are many computer and surveillance monitors on the walls and there is another door, on the opposite side of the room. If you remem-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

ber correctly, it should lead to the space docks!

The room is a 12" by 12" square with two 3" wide doors on the southern and the northern walls. The heroes have come through the southern door. The soldiers are placed around one of the two tables at the center of the room.

They were focused on their game, have no weapons drawn and must now check for surprise.

The heroes are mostly unarmed, except for the few things they have taken from the Agronomists, so their priority should be retrieving their weapons as fast as they can.

The first thing the soldiers do is call for help via their wristcomputers. Then they fight as best they can, defending the northern door and awaiting reinforcements, which will arrive after six rounds (see below).

★ **Gray Soldier (1 per hero +2):** See page 150.

★ **Jim Bellon:** See page 150.

★ **Khodar, Spacewhaler Captain:** See page 151.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

* **Tables:** The tables are 4" long and 2" wide. They are placed in the middle of the room, parallel to the northern wall. On the left table is the party's equipment, while the soldiers are sitting at the table on the right. Grabbing a weapon from the table counts as an action, but it can be done for free with a successful Agility roll. Each table grants Light Cover (-1) and has Toughness 8. With a Strength roll, it can be upended to create a barricade, granting Heavy Cover (-4).

* **Glass Wall:** The east wall is made of duraglass. It has Heavy Armor against blasters but if hit by an energy weapon, it reflects the energy as a flash of white light. Every target within 6" of the wall suffers the effect of the Stun power. Hitting the glass wall can be voluntary or accidental (you can tweak the Innocent Bystander rule to have the glass wall hit in case of a 1 on the Shooting die).

* **Computers:** The northern wall hosts various computer consoles. Place up to five gaming stones by the wall to represent the different consoles. Each computer has Toughness 5 and grants Light Cover (-1). They are also useful to block the enemies (see below), but only until unarmed!

ENEMIES INCOMING!

After six rounds, read the following passage to the players:

You hear the sound of boots running up the corridor behind you. There are more guards coming!

"We have to find a way to give us time to reach the hangar or we're doomed!" Khodar says.

Add a new part to the combat area. From the southern door draw an 18" long corridor, and place a new patrol of guards within 3" of the far end.

The guards run toward the heroes while firing, half of them using Suppressive Fire.

A new patrol arrives every three rounds. The players must find a way to block the soldiers, or they are likely to be stormed.

Here are three ways to accomplish this result, but others can be devised at the GM's judgment:

Block the Control Room Door.

The doors are automated, so the southern one can be blocked. This requires standing near the door and rolling two successes in Lockpicking or Repair (–2) rolls. A raise counts as an extra success.

Hack the Fire Sprinkler System.

This must be done standing near the computers and requires two Smarts (–4) rolls. Characters with a security or thievery background add +2 to the rolls. Also, in this case, a raise counts as an extra success. The result is that the fire fighting system turns itself on and floods the corridor with foam, totally blocking the Gray Soldiers' way.

Activate the Localized Security Force Fields. The corridor has several security force fields, which are activated to compartmentalize the base in case of danger. They must be triggered via the computers. It requires two successful Shields (–2) rolls, a raise counting as an extra success. The effect is that three powerful force fields block access to the control room.

All the previous solutions block the corridor for six rounds each, so the heroes have time to dispatch the enemies inside the control room.

When there are no more enemies in the room, the group can run to the hangar.

★ **Gray Soldier (1 per hero):** See page 150.

TO THE HANGAR

"Come on!" Khodar shouts. "This

trick won't hold them back for long."

You follow the muscular space-walker through the northern door, until you reach the hangar.

The two whaleboats are here.

"They're piloted exactly like interceptors." Khodar says in response to your quizzical stares, before jumping into one of the cockpits.

Normally whaleboats carry three people, but the entire group can squeeze into one of them, if they want. Khodar suggests taking both. He will pilot one of the two boats. The group can split if they want, but be sure to know who is on which boat before the next act starts.

You cram onboard and take off just in time to see the Gray Soldiers storm into the hangar.

"All the ship's systems are operational." Khodar says.

"Khuma Bay, here we come!" Jim shouts.

ACT 4: XANTHI ATTACK!

SCENE 1: THE BATTLE OF KHUMA BAY

You drop out of hyperspace near Khuma Bay.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The situation is bad and it will soon get worse. The radio frequencies are completely dominated by the amoeba's chant and a whole horde of Xanthi, dozens of them, are attacking the domed city. There is some resistance from Khuma Bay, ground batteries are opening fire, but they are too underpowered against the rage and sheer numbers of space titans.

The city can resist only for a little while longer.

There is only one way to resolve this situation — locate the Backstabber and destroy it. It can't be that far.

But first, you have more immediate problems, the Xanthi have noticed your arrival, and they aren't happy at all. Some of them are actually turning away from the city and rushing towards you!

The heroes know the Backstabber is nearby, because the amoeba's chant is originating from the domed city. The cannon must be running at full power to make the whole structure resonate, so its energy can be traced! The heroes must accomplish two different tasks now: The whaleboat pilots must keep their ships safe, while the rest of the heroes must find the Backstabber and take it down. If the players do not think of this solution, let Khodar suggest it to them.

For simplicity's sake, the pilots' role

is detailed in "Surviving the Battle" and the other heroes' part in "Dealing with the Backstabber".

For this scene only, ignore the normal initiative rules. The pilots (in any order) act first, then the other characters perform their actions. At this point, the turn ends and another one starts, until the whaleboats are destroyed or the Backstabber is discovered.

SURVIVING THE BATTLE

The pilots' task is a difficult one. They must keep the whaling boats safe in the middle of the battle. It means making a Piloting roll every round. The roll is influenced by how prudent the pilot's attitude is. Staying on the margins of the battle is safer, but it also makes the work of the gunners more difficult, because the Backstabber is very near the center of the battle. In terms of rules, this means the pilot must choose a modifier to his Piloting roll, from +4 to -4. The same, but opposite number modifier is applied to rolls dealing with the Backstabber (see below).

For example, if a pilot chooses to be very daring, suffering -4 to his Piloting roll, his mates will have +4 to their correspondent roll to deal with the Backstabber.

Here are the effects of the Piloting rolls' results. All damage is dealt by an Extra. Characters with the Ace Edge can normally use it to absorb the damage. Shields can be used in this fight, but only for their Armor power.

Critical Failure. Very bad news, the ship is seriously hit and suffers 3d8 damage, AP 8.

Failure. The ship is hit by some

Xanthi energy shots. It suffers 3d6 damage, AP 4.

Success. Only minor damage. The ship suffers 2d6 damage, AP 4.

Raise. All the enemy's attacks are avoided.

Two Raises. Excellent job! Not only are all the enemy's attacks avoided but the amazing maneuvers of the pilot grant +1 to the rolls of the rest of the crew for this round.

WHALEBOATS

Whaleboats are interceptors, heavily customized for Xanthi hunting.

Top Speed: 10; **Toughness:** 12 (4); **Handling:** 0; **Shield Pods:** 2; **Crew:** 1+3

Notes: Fixed Weapon, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

Weapons:

* 1 x forward-firing laser (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

* 1 x energy harpoon (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 3d10; ROF 1; AP 12, HW), 1 reload

DEALING WITH THE BACKSTABBER

A sequence of four actions must be performed in the following order by those characters not directly involved with the piloting of the ships. There is no fixed time to accomplish this, but, for everyone's safety, the faster the better!

If the heroes have two whaleboats, the two crews can try to find the Backstabber independently. The first boat to reach the enemy ship will commu-

nicate its coordinates to the other boat, allowing both of them to attempt the fourth step. Remember that the following rolls are influenced by the pilot's choices (see above). All rolls can be cooperative.

* **Triangulate the General Area:**

When evaluating the strength of the amoeba's chant, the heroes must first define the general area where the Backstabber is likely to be. It requires a Smarts (-2) roll. Characters with background as a ship's gunner or the Target the Engines Edge add +2 to this roll.

* **Identify the Engines' Signature.**

Now that the heroes have located the general area, they must find the energy signature of the Backstabber's engines, which cannot be fully obscured by the cloaking device. It requires a Notice (-2) roll.

* **Locate the Cloaking Device**

Anomalies. The cloaking device is a particular type of energy shield; it works by generating space distortion. Finding the origin of the distortion means being very close to the Backstabber's actual position. A Knowledge (Shields) (-2) roll is necessary to accomplish this step.

* **Target Locked!** Using the information gathered in the previous step, the crew can now lock onto the Backstabber. It can be done with a Notice (-2) or Shooting (-2) roll.

When the target is finally locked, go to the section "Revenge of the Black One".

REVENGE OF THE BLACK ONE

You open fire...

And you successfully score a hit!

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The cloaking device must have drained away all the ship's energy because the Backstabber hasn't raised its shields, leaving the ship completely unprotected. The impact is very strong, and the cloaking device fizzles out.

Now the cruiser can be seen.

The shot had another terrible effect. It hit the delicate tip of the harmonic cannon damaging it in a dangerous way — its resonating effect has created a new target, now the Backstabber itself is emitting the deadly chant!

The Xanthi slowly turn away from Khuma Bay — they have found a new, more suitable target.

The Backstabber attempts to flee at maximum speed, but just then, a huge monstrosity, the biggest Xanthi of the pack, crosses the path of Hanazon's ship.

It is the Black One, the creature you barely avoided during your initial trip to Vendellmann station!

With a single, tremendous bite, the beast destroys the Backstabber, splitting it into two parts. He swallows one of them, while the other half drifts off into space dumping people and air bubbles into the void.

Jim cries out in horror: "Mum!!!"

SCENE 2: INSIDE THE BEAST

After some moments of astonishment, a distorted radio transmission is intercepted: "Help! Help! We are alive! We are... inside!" The transmission ends abruptly.

It was Kera speaking!

Kera, Hanazon, and the precious Blazing Star have not been destroyed; they are in a section of the Backstabber swallowed by the Black One!

How can the heroes rescue them? Without expert help, they cannot, but Khodar is in his element now — he is the best whaler in the sector. He takes charge of the situation, giving the party precise instructions.

"Calm down boys! We can do it! It's not the customary way we hunt spacewhales, but it's the only chance we have. Do you see those two strange humps on the Xanthi's back? Those are membranes protecting the Xanthi's "nose". We must fire at them with the magnetic harpoon, grapple, and land exactly on them. There are spacesuits below your seats; I suggest you put them on."

To land on the Xanthi, the heroes must make successful Piloting and Shooting rolls. Then, wearing their spacesuits, they will enter the living conduit that is the Black One's "nose".

While it certainly could be interesting to entirely map out the interior of

the huge beast, this is not the way pulp works. Instead, the heroes will use the chase rules to abstractly represent their dangerous journey to the stomach of the beast.

First, put eleven markers on the table, each of them representing a Range Increment. Place the party on the first one. When they reach the eleventh marker, they have arrived at their destination, the beast's stomach. At this point, you can run the final scene of the scenario, "Deadly Flight".

The party must choose a leader who will make the chase rolls using Smarts. This roll is cooperative, so the heroes can help. If they choose Khodar as leader, the grizzled spacewhaler adds +1 to the roll due to his knowledge of Xanthi anatomy.

With a success, the group gains a Range Increment, and with a raise, it gains two. A critical failure means the heroes have taken a dead end, losing a Range Increment.

Every round, before rolling, the leader draws a card from the action deck. If the card is a Club, run the corresponding miniscene below, applying the modifier to the Smarts roll.

If they want, the heroes can split into different groups, but this can be very dangerous.

OBSTACLES TABLE

Deuce (-4) Energy Conduit: Xanthi generate bioenergy beams. The party is so unlucky that they enter one of the bone corridors where this energy flows just moments before a massive discharge. First, they must make a Notice roll to detect (on their wristcomputers)

the sudden surge of energy in their surroundings. Then they will see the bone itself become luminescent. This is the moment to run away! Escape requires an Agility (-4) roll, +1 for each success and raise scored in the previous Notice roll. With a success, they manage to reach a safe area before being blasted. With a failure, they suffer 2d8 damage from a Wild Card, 3d6 with a critical failure.

Three (-2) Divided!: The beast releases a tremendous mass of goo through a roof pipe, just in the path of the heroes. Let them make a Spirit (-2) roll, and split the group into two according to the results. Put all those who missed in one group, all those who succeeded in another. The group that failed their rolls loses two Range Increments, and from now on, it must draw cards and move in the chase independently from the other. The two groups will reunite when they are again on the same Range Increment. The most advanced group can choose to wait (they do not roll or draw a card for that round), or to use their successes in chase rolls to move *backwards* along the Range Increments markers in order to find their comrades.

Four (-2) Membrane: A leathery membrane blocks the heroes' path. They have three possible choices to overcome the obstacle: First, turn around and lose two Range Increments. Second, attempt to stimulate it open as the membrane responds to certain chemicals and energy frequencies and it can also be manipulated with a Healing (-2) roll. Third, the party can use brute force. The membrane has Toughness 10 (2), but at the end of every round

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

in which they try to pry it open, draw a card from the action deck. A Diamond card means that a group of enraged Xanthi Sweepers arrives at the start of the next round. The combat area is 6" by 12" and the enemies start 10" from the heroes.

★ **Xanthi Sweeper (1 per hero+2):**

See page 152.

Five (-2) Twisting Corridor: The heroes are inside a conduit of flexible bone that suddenly starts twisting! Each hero must make an Agility (-2) roll to avoid losing his balance. With a critical failure, he falls so badly that he suffers bumps and bruises until the end of the scene. After this delay, run the chase as normal.

Six (-2) Meat Shaft: A large depression lies in the way. The heroes must jump over it to reach the other side. This requires a Strength roll. Failure means clinging to the edge of the opposite side. Only with a Strength (-4) roll can the hero recover. A critical failure in one of the two rolls means the character falls down for several yards suffering 3d6 damage from an Extra. The party can also avoid the shaft, but it means they forego the chase roll this round and they lose two Range Increments due the additional footwork.

Seven (-1) Dangerous Parasites:

The heroes have disturbed a nest of dangerous Xanthi Sweepers, aggressive symbiotes that live inside the body of the Black One. They attack immediately! The combat takes place in an 18" by 6" corridor. Place the creatures at least 12" from the party.

Xanthi Sweeper (2 per hero):

See page 152.

Eight (-1) Auditory System: This

strange, sloping corridor has a very smooth floor, almost like the skin of a drum. It is part of the Xanthi's delicate auditory system. With a successful Common Knowledge roll, a hero recognizes this area and warns his comrades to be very quiet while walking in here. All heroes must make a Stealth roll. In case of failure (or if a hero walks carelessly) an energy discharge inflicts 2d6 damage, AP 2 from an Extra. Run the chase as normal.

Nine (-1) Meat Ropes: The heroes' path ends suddenly at the edge of a deep crevasse. They may turn around and go back losing a Range Increment (and missing the chase roll) or they can choose to climb down using strange meat "ropes" that descend deep into the chasm. It requires a Climbing roll by each hero. If anyone fails the roll, they discover the true function of the "ropes" — they are vocal cords and they immediately start vibrating and emitting an intensely high-pitched sound. Any hero failing a Vigor roll suffers the Hard of Hearing Hindrance (Minor) until the end of the scenario. Characters who already have the Hindrance suffer the Major version. After these rolls, run the chase as normal, but the party gains an additional Range Increment due the shortcut.

Ten (-1) Digestive Beast: The heroes have disturbed a huge creature resembling a large transparent puddle. It is a parasitic bacterium that aids the Xanthi's digestive process. The creature has Smarts d4 (A), Stealth d10, and Heavy Armor, so the party cannot damage it. It slowly pursues the heroes, trying to engulf them in its corrosive juices. Each round the beast is on the

same Range Increment as the party, it quietly tries to envelop the heroes' feet. This is an opposed roll between the beast's Stealth and a random hero's Notice. In case of failure, the character suffers 2d6 damage, AP 2 from an Extra. If the beast wounds the hero, he also suffers the effect of a critical injury to his legs. The puddle joins the chase on the Range Increment where the heroes are and continues following their tracks until the end of the chase.

Jack (0) Crossroads: The heroes have reached a huge cavern where several physical parts join, so there are many corridors that can be taken. The leader must make a Tracking roll that cannot be cooperative. With a success, he takes the right path to the main stomach cavity, gaining +2 to the next three chase rolls. In case of failure, he takes the wrong corridor, suffering -2 to the same rolls.

Queen (0) Carcass in the Acid Pool: The heroes find a secondary stomach, where, in a pool of bubbling acidic juices, they spot the half-corroded wreck of a small spaceship of unknown origin. In the cockpit, a figure wearing a spacesuit is still visible. Clearly the ship has been here for many years, perhaps even centuries. Reaching the ship requires two successful Agility rolls. In case of failure the hero falls into the acidic juices suffering 2d8 damage from a Wild Card. Inside the small ship, everything is destroyed and the alien's body, a strange humanoid, is unrecognizable. An ancient-looking sword lies at his side (see sidebar).

King (0) Antibody Turret: There are delicate parts of the Xanthi where parasites must not go, so the beast has

generated a bone turret that attacks any intruder with energy beams. It starts attacking at 18". The turret has Shooting d6, range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6 AP 1, ROF 3. It does not suffer multiple fire penalties and has Toughness 12 (4). A hero can find Light Cover (-1) in the area with a Notice roll, Medium Cover (-2) with a raise. If the party decides to avoid the turret, they lose two Range Increments.

Ace (0) Heart: The heroes arrive at the beast's heart! Khodar insists on destroying it, killing the Black One, while Jim is against it. The heroes must decide what to do and make an appropriate Persuasion roll to sway one of their two comrades. If they decide not to kill the beast, this heroic act grants each of them a benny. Destroying its heart will kill the beast but, given its titanic dimensions, it will be a long process that will produce effects only in the final scene. Run the chase as normal.

SCENE 3: DEADLY FLIGHT

Finally, you reach an enormous cavity. It's the Black One's stomach. In the middle of a lake of gastric juices and assorted debris lies Hanazon's ship, looking like a broken toy.

You hastily move through the lake, avoiding the more dangerous points, and climb aboard the cruiser.

The Backstabber is devastated. Only the independent pressurized compartments saved the

XANATUR, A RELIC FROM THE PAST

The heroes have found an ancient relic from a forgotten past! Xanatur, identified by the inscription written in ancient Standard, is a unique vibrosword of great power, constructed with lost technology. It deals Str+d8+2 damage, AP 2 and grants +1 to Fighting. Note which character wields this weapon because it will have a small (optional) part to play in a future installment of the series.

ship from total destruction. All around lie the bodies of the crew and the alarms are sounding, because fires are quickly spreading. In the end, you reach the main deck, where Kera lies wounded on the floor. The woman is badly shaken, but still alive.

"Mum!" Jim cries, running to her side.

"Hanazon..." she says, "...they have gone to the hangar. To your ship..."

The bad guys are going to escape on the Blazing Star!

You have to run if you want to catch them!

Ask the players for some Agility rolls, but ignore the results. They will arrive in time to stop Hanazon's escape, but a little suspense will add some spice to the scene.

Just in time!

The Blazing Star is here and its engines are starting. In the docking bay, you see the last surviving Gray Soldiers boarding your ship. You must hurry if you don't want to be left behind!

For this fight, you need the map of the Blazing Star.

The fight is divided into two parts: In the first part, the heroes need to board their ship before it takes off, and in the second part, they have to retake her and dispatch their enemies.

Place the Blazing Star's map on the gaming table, and put three Gray Soldiers on the cargo ramp.

The hangar is quite big. Place the heroes 12" from the soldiers. They have only three rounds to board the Blazing Star. At the beginning of the fourth round, the ship starts moving! She moves 6" the first round, so latecomers can reach her by running and making a successful Agility roll. This roll can be cooperative, but only heroes on the cargo ramp can assist late arrivals.

The heroes have until the sixth round to board the Blazing Star.

Jim does not take part in the first stage of the fight as he is busy helping his wounded mother walk to the cargo ramp. When all the heroes are aboard, place Jim and his mother on the ramp and go on with the second part of the fight, in which the boy actively aids the party.

In the second part of the combat, the party engages the rest of the enemies aboard the ship. If you are playing with miniatures, place only the enemies the

heroes can see from their current position.

Hanazon is in the cockpit, attempting to pilot the ship. Gan Zun is in the Spacesuit Storage room. The henchman remains hidden here until he gets the opportunity to sneak up behind a hero. Place the other enemies as you wish throughout the battle area.

The heroes must try to end the fight as fast as they can because Hanazon is a poor pilot and navigating inside the belly of a giant space monster is no easy task. See the “Bumpy Ride” rule below.

When the heroes finally reach the cockpit, they find Hanazon busy piloting the ship. The officer is a lousy pilot and is close to crashing! The heroes must drag him away from the controls and save their ship with one final, daring maneuver!

It requires winning an opposed Strength roll with a raise, and then a successful Piloting roll. This roll suffers -4 if the party killed the Black One, due to the shaking of the huge body.

In case of failure, the ship suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra.

At this point Hanazon is the party's prisoner. Killing him now is not a very heroic act, but nobody will complain if one of the heroes gives him a solid punch in the face!

The party has saved the day once again! Go to “The End!”

★ **Hanazon Hal:** See page 150.

★ **Gan Zun:** See page 148.

★ **Gray Soldiers (2 per hero+2):**

See page 150.

★ **Jim Bellon:** See page 150.

★ **Khodar, Spacewhaler Captain:**

See page 151.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

* **Assorted Props:** It is impossible to detail all the furniture and props aboard the heroes' ship, but the rooms' names alone give you a good idea of the items they contain. As a rule of thumb, the heroes can grab a prop in each room granting +2 to a single Trick (with GM's approval). After being used in this way, the room will provide only standard items.

* **Bumpy Ride:** Whenever a character draws a Club card as his first action card, it means Hanazon has made a bad maneuver. Put a Medium Burst Template centered on the character. All targets caught in the template must make an Agility roll, with a -2 modifier if they killed the Black One. In case of failure, they fall and drift away 1d4" in a random direction. A character that is thrown against an obstacle is also Shaken. Whenever a black Joker is dealt, the situation is worse! The ship collides with an obstacle and all passengers suffer 3d6 damage from an Extra.

* **Useful Items:** The heroes (and only the heroes) know where some useful items are stored on their starship. In the medical bay, there is a Medipac (+2 to a Healing roll), in the lavatory, there are a couple of spare blaster pistols, and in the northeastern stateroom, some d4 stun grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT, non-lethal). Use gaming stones to represent these items. Grabbing them requires an action.

THE END

You regain control of the ship just in time. The Blazing Star

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

is near the Black One's mouth, which is now almost closed!

With a last, daring stunt of piloting, you shoot out of the space Leviathan's mouth.

You are outside, in space.

Safe.

Without the deadly chant to enrage them, the Xanthi are peaceful again. A high-ranking Shipping Guild representative reaches Khuma Bay in no time to take charge of the situation and to arrest Hanazon. The Guild refuses to take any responsibility. Hanazon is a madman, who acted on his own initiative, they say.

It may be true, it may be false, but the Guild offers to cover all expenses for Khuma Bay's reconstruction and pays out large refunds to the owners of any damaged astrofarms. The heroes receive a generous reward of \$10,000 and the eternal gratitude of Jim Bellon and his mother.

With their debt to Joran settled, the heroes start the next scenario with an additional benny.

THE CAST

AGRONOMIST

This short creature wears a long, leathery, hooded vest that completely

enshrouds him, except for his mole rat nose that cannot be hidden beneath the hood. Rather peaceful, his real interest lies in agriculture. The Shipping Guild pays him well and lets him cultivate, so he is happy with this arrangement.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Agronomy) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d8, Throwing d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Gear: Leather vest (+1), sickle or knife (Str+d4), weed killer staff (range: cone template, sprays a weed killer substance that forces any target in the area to make a Vigor roll or be Shaken, 3 shots).

Special Abilities:

- * **Size -1:** The Agronomist is only 4' tall and uses d4 instead of d6 as his running die.
- * **Heightened Smell:** He cannot see very well (-2 to Notice rolls if only sight is involved), but he has a very fine nose (+2 to Notice rolls if he can use his sense of smell).



GAN ZUN, CRIMINAL HENCHMAN

Gan Zun is an alien of unknown origin and species. He has a turtle-like face that might look rather comical on his tall and muscular body, but his bloodshot eyes and evil grin are not funny in the least! In the past, Gan Zun had been a mercenary specializing in dirty work until several years ago when he joined Hanazon Han's entourage and became his right-hand man. He is absolutely loyal.

Cybernetic Arm: Gan Zun has a third cybernetic arm implanted in his right shoulder. The prosthesis is a highly illegal piece of technology constructed by the cyborgs of Wayland, with a nasty device inside. In gaming terms, Gan Zun has several Powers. He uses Vigor to activate them. The evil alien has no Power Points; instead, he can use each Power a fixed number of times in each scene. Powers with a standard duration of (3/1) last three rounds. He has the equivalent of 15 Power Points.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Edges: Block, Brawny, Connections (Shipping Guild) Dodge, First Strike, Level Headed

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Gizmo: 2 x *Healing* (combat drugs released by the arm), 1 x *Boost/Lower Trait* (bionic arm's energy boost, only enhances physical traits), 1 x *Smite* (bionic arm energy discharge)

Gear: Blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), armored spacesuit (+2), smoke grenades (5/10/20, MBT, the template area counts as Pitch Darkness).

Special Abilities:

- * **Stench:** Gan Zun emits a foul swampy smell that lingers in the air even after he has left. This causes him to have -2 to all Stealth rolls and -2 Charisma.
- * **Cyberarm:** Gan Zun's third arm grants him extra Strength (already

calculated in his stats) and can be used in melee dealing Str+d4 damage. He also has a Blaster pistol built into it (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto). Gan Zun can perform an extra attack with his arm each round, without penalty.



GHORO THE HITMAN

Ghoro is a Yugon, a race of giants with octopus-like heads. Usually they are very peaceful and excellent musicians and composers, but Ghoro is totally different. He is a killer at heart, and he loves his job. He hates Joran Bellon because the private eye sent him up the river a couple times in the past.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Nerves of Steel

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Vengeful (major), Wanted

Gear: Gravity imploder gun (Range: cone template, Damage: 2d10, minimum Strength d8, ignores armor, follow the flamethrower rules), combat armor (+2).

Special Abilities:

- * **Tentacles:** Ghoro can use his tentacles in melee. Place a Small Burst Template centered on the hitman. All enemies in the area are attacked at -2. Hitting with a raise counts as having grappled the target. The attack deals Str damage. Ghoro can also attack with his fists while using his tentacles, with the standard mul-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

tiple action penalties, but he cannot shoot in the same round.

- * **Size +3:** Yugons are twelve feet tall.

GRAY SOLDIER

Gray Soldiers are the military arm of the Shipping Guild, which sometimes hires them out as mercenaries to third parties in various interplanetary conflicts. They are professionals, but with the bad reputation of being faithful only if well-paid and effective only when they clearly outnumber their enemy. Well, they are quite cheap, so what do you expect?

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Intimidation d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Combat vest (+1), blaster machine gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF: 3, AP 1, auto), energy shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness against ranged weapons), energy gauntlet (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- * **Strength in Numbers:** While grouped in superior numbers they add +1 to Spirit rolls, but when outnumbered they suffer -1 to the same rolls.



HANAZON HAL

This Tuathan has reached a very high rank in the Shipping Guild hierarchy despite his young age. Handsome, mellifluous, and charismatic, he is ambitious and desires even more power. He has no moral scruples and the lives of others mean very little to him.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Economics) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Piloting d4, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

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

Racial Traits: Agile, Anemic, Low Light Vision

Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Connections (Shipping Guild), Iron Will, Noble

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy

Gear: Fancy clothes.



JIM BELLON

Jim Bellon is very similar to his father, Joran, when he was young. Temperamental, stubborn, and strong-willed. Someday this boy will become someone important, but for now, he is only a young man in big trouble.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Acrobat, Luck

Hindrances: Arrogant, Stubborn

Gear: Padded jacket (+1), hoverskate.



JORAN BELLON, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

Joran Bellon is an old friend of the heroes'. Reliable, resourceful, and cunning, he is a good man to have handy when dangers arise. He is very close-

moulted about his past and the heroes only known he was a former GEA operative before opening his own private investigation agency.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Edges: Block, Dodge, Giant Killer, Level Headed, Marksman

Hindrances: Arrogant, Heroic

Gear: Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), bounty hunter armor (+2), stun grenades (5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT, non lethal), vibro knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2).



KHODAR, SPACEWHALER CAPTAIN

Khodar is the captain of the Slaughterhouse, the biggest spacewhaler ship in the sector. Strong and muscular, he is not the type of captain who commands his fleet of whaling vessels from the comfort of his captain's chair; rather he is always on the front line, chasing the Xanthi with daring courage aboard his own custom-fitted whaler.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Edges: Ace, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Command, Trademark Weapon (Space Harpoon)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Code of Honor (spacewhalers)

Gear: Energy harpoon (see appendix), light spacewhaler armor (+1).

Special Abilities:

- * **Gotcha!:** A spacewhaler never gives up when he catches a target with his energy harpoon. He has a +2 bonus to grappling rolls with the harpoon only.

SHIP THIEF

A tall, skinny humanoid with gray plumage, this thug has rapacity in his blood, as his cruel, hawk-like beak proves.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Wanted

Gear Blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), light armored vest (+1).

Special Abilities:

- * **Beak:** Str+d4, AP 1.
- * **Strike the Eyes:** If a ship thief hits with a raise using his beak, he hits his enemy in the eyes. The target must make an immediate Vigor (-2) roll or suffers the One Eye Hindrance until healed.

SPACEWHALER

Few spacers have the guts to assault giant-sized beasts like the Xanthi with only small spaceboats and energy harpoons. This grizzled man is one of

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

them. He doesn't only do it for the money, but also for the adrenaline rush that this dangerous hunt gives him.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Hindrances: Code of Honor (Spacewhalers)

Gear: Energy harpoon (see appendix), light spacewhaler armor (+1).

Special Abilities:

- * **Gotcha!** A spacewhaler never gives up when he catches a target with his energy harpoon. He has a +2 bonus to grappling rolls with the harpoon only.

THUG

The scum of Khuma Bay's docks. He knows very few of the aliens that hire him personally and he isn't even remotely interested. He only wants to do his job and get his money.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy

Gear: Blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), light armor (+1), bladed tonfa (Str+d4+1, +1 Parry).

XANTHI SWEEPER

This parasite resembles a mantis made of white crystal and black chitin. They travel in groups and are in a symbiotic relationship with the Xanthi they live on, feeding on the waste and any ailing parts of the host and subsequently keeping it healthy and free of infection.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

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

Special Abilities:

- * **Bioenergy beam:** The sweeper generates a ray of bioenergy from its mouth. It has Range: 6/12/24 and deals 2d6 damage. It uses Agility for its attack roll.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fleet-Footed:** Xanthi sweepers roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- * **Size -1:** Sweepers are about the size of a dog.

APPENDIX: NEW WEAPONS

ENERGY HARPOON

The energy harpoon is a blaster weapon fitted with a sharp spearpoint, used by spacewhalers as the main weapon and tool of their trade. It is a multipurpose weapon, which can be used in three different ways:

First, it can be used as a blaster pistol capable of shooting energy bolts.

Second, it can be wielded in melee as a short spear. Third and lastly, it can fire a single durasteel harpoon. The harpoon is designed to bore into the target and is connected to the handle through a super resistant wire, with a special servomechanism to wind the wire. This action is considered a Grapple that can

be done at distance, and inflict Str+d4 damage.

Each round the shooter succeeds in the grappling roll, he can wind the wire up to his Strength die in tabletop inches, dragging the target towards him. For example, a hero with Strength d6 can wind the wire up to 6" each round.

ENERGY HARPOON

Mode of Use	Dmg	Range	ROF	Notes
Melee weapon	Str+d6			
Blaster weapon	2d6+1	12/24/48	1	AP 1
Harpoon	2d8	8/16/24	1	AP 4, 1 shot only, can Grapple at a distance.



THE DOOMSDAY WAR

This book contains an adventure based around the exploits of four pre-generated, spacefaring heroes.

You can find the character sheets and details of their spaceship, the *Blazing Star*, on the Triple Ace Games website: www.tripleacegames.com.

The heroes have no defined gender, thus the players can assign it as they wish.

The characters have all their leveling opportunities mapped out in advance from Seasoned (from which they start) to Legendary. Each adventure in this series earns the heroes a fixed five Experience Points, granting them advancement after every mission. The players only need to tick the appropriate box on the sheet to start making use of their advancements.

This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

Better yet, you will know that when you buy one of our adventures, you can guarantee the adventurers will have all the skills and abilities they need to win the day!

In addition, you will need a copy of the Space Rules Supplement which you

can download for free from the Triple Ace Games website www.tripleacegames.com. These are tailored specifically for *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes*.

This adventure is designed to be run using the Chase rules from the *Savage Worlds: Explorer's Edition* rulebook.

Characters: 55 XP

BACKGROUND

The planet Vaalbarax was colonized three-hundred years ago by the Vaalbarans, an industrial, warfare-oriented humanoid species. The Vaalbarans had lost their original world to pollution and industrial poisoning, and now considered themselves lucky to have found the planet they called Vaalbarax: A beautiful world, with large tracts of vegetation, harmless fauna, and no sentient species at all to claim previous ownership. Soon, Vaalbarax boasted several large cities and an advanced, technological civilization.

What the Vaalbarans didn't know was that their new home already had an indigenous sentient species: A strange insect-like race known as the K'rree'l (pronounced *Kub-reel*).

The K'rree'l are sentient beings, but have not built a technological civiliza-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

tion because of their curious gestation period: The K'ree'l sleep in huge caverns under the surface of K'rrg (their name for Vaalbarax), where their innumerable quantity of eggs lie dormant. Every five hundred years, their gestation period ends and the eggs hatch. At that point, the K'ree'l hatchlings storm the surface and, like a horrendous insect plague, devour every living creature on the planet. They then return to their caves to feed their queen, mate, and lay more eggs before dying. This cycle has repeated for ages.

A few months before each cycle begins, the Keepers, a more evolved type of K'ree'l, awaken. The Keepers, few in number, coordinate the hatching activities of the rest of the race, clear the tunnels to allow the soon-to-be-born hatchlings easy access to the surface, and so on. They are intelligent, patient, cold and calculating, and they also possess strong psionic powers.

A few months ago the cycle began anew, with a big difference: This time the Keepers woke and found, to their surprise, that their planet had been overrun and colonized by the Vaalbarans!

At first the Keepers thought the K'ree'l hatchlings would overrun the Vaalbarans as they do with the usual planetary fauna and flora, but on closer investigation they discovered this powerful alien species had more than enough military firepower to defend themselves and even defeat the K'ree'l.

With just months left until the eggs hatch, the Keepers had to decide on a course of action. A particularly stout Keeper called K'ret'h, after spending the

last few weeks studying the Vaalbarans, proposed a plan. The Vaalbarans were constantly at odds with the Rennarians, a neighboring reptilian species. K'ret'h proposed that the Keepers use their psionic powers to control the minds of several high-ranking Vaalbaran government and military officials, using them to manufacture a full-scale war between the Vaalbarans and the Rennarians. If all went as planned, the war would be nasty enough that the Vaalbarans would send their entire army to Rennaria and leave their adopted home undefended. By the time the eggs hatched the Vaalbaran civilians left on Vaalbarax would be defenseless, and easy prey for the K'ree'l. Meanwhile, hidden Keeper spies in the Vaalbaran fleet would sabotage it to prevent a counter-attack, and the unknowing Rennarians would do the rest.

K'ret'h's plan practically guaranteed that the planet would fall under the control of the K'ree'l again. The plan was put in motion, the war was successfully orchestrated, and only weeks were left until Hatching Day...

That's when the heroes arrive.

ACT I: A VAALBARAN CONSPIRACY

SCENE 1: THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME

You are minutes away from leaving hyperspace and returning to normal space. The Blazing Star

THE DOOMSDAY WAR

is transporting some... unauthorized... cargo to a small dark dust cloud between the Vaalbarax and Rennaria systems. It turns out the Vaalbarans and Rennarians finally decided to escalate their centuries-old rivalry into full-fledged war. And since the war started a few months ago, opportunities for enterprising smugglers abound! This dark dust cloud is the rendezvous point between merchants willing to take advantage of one of these opportunities, bringing cargo to sell for a hefty uplift over standard price.

As the Blazing Star comes out of hyperspace, the stars are blotted out by the dust cloud, a sight you were prepared for. What you weren't prepared for is the small Vaalbaran merchant vessel under heavy fire from two sleek, state-of-the-art, unidentified fighter ships!

You barely have time to absorb what you're seeing when the small wrecked vessel explodes under a heavy barrage of laser fire coming from the fighters! You're about to turn around and flee to a less-violent neighborhood when a loud thump sounds against the side of your ship. Something has latched on to you! Simultaneously, the two fighters turn towards you and accelerate, while opening their weapon bays. You're about to be attacked!

Our adventure starts with a Chase!

Run this scene using the Chase rules. The two fighters begin three Range Increments behind the *Blazing Star*. Each Range Increment equates to 5SU. Make sure each fighter gets its own action card. The fighters are faster than the characters' ship, and so get a +1 to Piloting rolls. They aim to destroy.

If a character tries to find out what has latched on to the ship, he can spend an action in front of a computer terminal (no roll needed) to determine it's an emergency evacuation pod, ejected from the ship that just exploded. It is not possible to access it during the battle. If a character tries to hail the enemy fighters, his messages go unanswered.

This chase occurs in a sparse dust cloud that affects visibility. Whenever a pilot draws a Club suit, his ship has entered a darker cloud than usual, giving all actions this round a Dark visibility (-2) modifier.

VSS FIGHTERS

Vaalbaran Secret Service fighters are state-of-the-art ships built by the VSS for undercover operations. They bear no markings of any kind, and have a small hyperdrive allowing them to execute short hit-and-run and stealth missions.

Top Speed: 8; **Toughness:** 14 (4); **Handling:** +2; **Shield Pods:** 1; **Crew:** 1

Abilities: Piloting d10, Shields d6, Shooting d10

Notes: 1 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Fixed Weapon, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

Weapons:

- 1 x forward-firing laser (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

DATA: VAALBARAX

Default: The heroes know Vaalbarax is an industrial, highly technological world populated by the Vaalbarans, a humanoid race with pale, rubbery skin.

INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Success: Vaalbarax is a relatively new world, discovered and colonized by the Vaalbarans three centuries ago. They lost their original homeworld to industrial pollution and war.

Raise: Since arriving at Vaalbarax, the Vaalbarans have been at odds with their next-system neighbors, the Rennarians. Many conflicts have flared over the centuries, but things never escalated to war.

Two or More Raises: A few months ago the Vaalbaran government suddenly became more bellicose, openly provoking the Rennarians, until the inevitable chance incident precipitated war. This war has largely happened as a result of Vaalbaran actions.

STREETWISE RESULTS

Success: Although Vaalbarans are not evil, they have a long history of warfare, and are well-prepared militarily. They have become more pacifistic recently, though.

Raise: Most of the population of Vaalbarax is not keen on war; after all, the Rennarians have been their neighbors for centuries. Even so, they support their government in their conflict against their new enemy.

Two or More Raises: Privately, most Vaalbarans are puzzled as to why their usually wise leaders have become more erratic and violent, precipitating this war. Rumors abound as to high-placed officers who are "behaving strangely," although it is not considered patriotic to speak about it openly.

6, HW)

- 1 x missile turret (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 4d8; ROF 1; AP 8, HW), no reloads

the ship and opening it, you find a badly wounded humanoid with pale, rubbery skin. He is a Vaalbaran, and is very near death from his wounds.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

The loud thump on the side of the Blazing Star was caused by the impact of an emergency pod from the destroyed merchant ship. After moving the pod into

"Thank you," the Vaalbaran whispers. "My name is Jarb Hargenen. I am... was... a member of the Vaalbaran Secret Service. The VSS has always been the strong arm for the Vaalbaran government, doing the shady

THE DOOMSDAY WAR

SCENE 2: A COLLEGE TOUR

things no one else would do, at least not legally. I... I am not proud of what I've done, but I have always been a committed agent... Until now."

"In the months since this war began, I have heard disturbing statements from our VSS leaders. Recently, I personally overheard a secret conversation between several high-ranking Vaalbaran officials. And I discovered something... Incredible!"

A fit of coughing interrupts Hargenen. After he composes himself, he weakly continues. "Please! I have a favor to ask of you! You must go to Vaalbarax and find Professor Valdinus! He's in the Archaeology Department of Vaalbara University. When you find him, tell him he was right all along, Doomsday is real! I have discovered a conspiracy within the Vaalbaran high command. Whatever they're planning, it will happen on the 17th of Baughmont. That's just a few weeks away! I don't know what will happen then, but I've heard it is going to cost the lives of every being on the planet! This is treason! Please, you must tell the Professor! Hopefully, he will know what to do..."

With these last words, Hargenen dies. Without giving it much thought, you set a course for Vaalbarax.

Vaalbara City, the capital of Vaalbarax, is a metal-encrusted metropolis stretching as far as the eye can see in all directions. You had to pass through several security checkpoints, screenings, and even a cursory search to get here.

The city is less crowded than you would expect; the Vaalbaran Fleet is out in space, and most of the army, soldiers and conscripts, with it. It does not look too friendly, though, as security officers patrol the streets, looking at you suspiciously as you pass.

Vaalbara University marks a stark contrast with the heavily militarized, oppressive city. The University has many buildings dotting a huge, grassy campus. Today the students have organized an anti-war rally, and all over campus there are signs, peaceful demonstrations, debates, and even a concert-for-peace. Several balloons with strange Vaalbaran designs float from the roofs of the buildings.

The Archaeology Department is a low, uninteresting building at the heart of the campus. When you enter the building's main office corridor, you are startled to see a scuffle at the other end:

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

A hairy, disbeveled Vaalbaran sporting reading glasses with triangular lenses is surrounded by three menacing figures dressed in formal suits.

"Professor Valdinus," says one of the figures, brandishing a blaster. "In the name of the Vaalbaran Secret Service, you are under arrest." The other two figures grab the struggling professor, who looks at you across the corridor. "Help me! They're trying to hide the truth!" is all the professor gets to say before he falls unconscious as one of the agents presses a small hypocylinder to his throat.

The leading Agent looks at you and then signals to his fellow agents who open the far corridor door. All three jump on a nearby Hover Cart taking the unconscious professor with them!

This is a Chase across the university grounds!

Run this scene using the Chase rules, with 5" Range Increments. By the time the heroes reach the door through which the agents escaped, the Hover Cart is already 2 Range Increments ahead of them. Conveniently, a second Hover Cart is parked nearby. There are no keys, but the Cart is easy to hotwire. A hero will need a successful Lockpicking, or Repair (-1) roll to do this. Hotwiring the Cart consumes an action, and allows the heroes to begin the chase in the first Range Increment.

Use Driving as the relevant skill. In-

stead of the normal obstacle rules, run the corresponding mini-scene from the table below whenever a driver draws a Club card.

The chase ends when the heroes rescue the Professor, or when the agents move more than 10 Range Increments away from the heroes.

OBSTACLE TABLE

Deuce (-4): Through the Building: A large building looms ahead, and it's too close to avoid! The driver must break the windows, fly through the building, and exit via a window at the other side. If the roll is successful, the vehicle suffers a collision with the windows (a soft obstacle). A failed roll means the vehicle crashed into one of the interior walls for a collision with a hard obstacle. In both cases calculate damage as if from an Extra.

Three (-2): Balloons: The wind blows some of the huge balloons in front of the driver, effectively Blinding him! The penalty applies to all Shooting rolls this round. Failing the roll causes no extra problems, as the driver simply loses a little time trying to avoid the balloons.

Four (0/-2): Grove of Trees: A small grove of trees stands in the way! The driver has two choices: Fly through, or fly around the grove. The enemy agents always fly around. Flying through gives no penalty, but if the roll fails, the vehicle collides with several trees. Treat this as a soft collision with AP 2. Flying around is safer, and there is no penalty for failing the roll, other than the vehicle not moving as far forward this round.

Five (-2): Tight Turn: The driver makes a tight turn to avoid some students, and the entire cart tips to the side! Every passenger must roll their Agility or slide to the side of the cart, grabbing themselves by the edge. As an action, a passenger can try to climb back into the cart with an Agility (-2) roll. A Critical Failure means the passenger falls off the side of the cart, taking 3d6 damage (as if from a Wild Card) from the fall, and effectively removing themselves from the chase. As an action, another passenger can assist a dangling passenger with a Strength (-2) roll.

Six (-2): Demonstrators Fight! The vehicle flies straight into a clash between anti-war and pro-war demonstrators! With a success, the vehicle avoids the fight zone. With a failure, the vehicle comes to a stop trying to avoid the crowd, falling back one Range Increment. Additionally, every passenger in the vehicle is pelted by bottles and other improvised projectiles. Make a d6 Shooting roll against each passenger. If a projectile hits a passenger, it causes 2d4 damage from an Extra.

Seven (-1): Baall-bara Practice: Several students have used a nearby lawn to stage a friendly game of Baall-bara (the Vaalbarans' favorite sport). With a failure, the driver can't avoid the heavy ball, which crashes against the vehicle, causing 2d6 damage as if from an Extra.

Eight (-1): Visitors' Hover Cart: Another hover cart bearing parents and other visitors crosses the vehicle's path! Fortunately the other cart is moving very slowly, so with a failure the vehicle only suffers soft damage and the

heated protests from the other cart's passengers.

Nine (-1): Student Protest: The path is blocked by dozens of students in an anti-war protest. With a success, the vehicle sails right through the students, barely avoiding hitting them! With a failure, the vehicle comes to a stop trying to pass the crowd, and immediately drops back one Range Increment.

Ten (-1): The Lake: The hover cart sails out over the campus' lake, but the hover mechanism is not designed to fly over water! With a failure the vehicle loses altitude and hits the water, causing 2d4 damage as if from an Extra. With a Critical Failure, the water temporarily floods the vehicle's engine, causing it to go Out of Control.

Jack (0): Watch Out, a Truck!: A transport truck crosses the vehicle's path! With a failed roll, the vehicle slams into the truck (a hard obstacle).

Queen (0): Smile, You're On TV!: A news crew sent to cover the demonstrations has their entire kit of broadcasting equipment up and running. With a failure, the bright lights blind the driver and the passengers, causing a -2 to all additional Driving and Shooting rolls this round.

King (0): A Flock of Birds: Several large Vaalbaran birds are startled by the loud noises of the chase and take flight in front of the vehicle. A failed roll means the vehicle has suffered a collision with a soft obstacle.

Ace (0): Service Ramp: A building with a service ramp lies ahead, forcing the vehicle to jump from the ramp at full speed! With a success, the vehicle gains one extra Range Increment, as if with a push. This may stack with the

WHAT IF THE BAD GUYS ESCAPE WITH THE PROFESSOR?

If the VSS Agents escape with the professor, allow those who search the Professor's Office to find his diary, which essentially explains the situation and the need to recover the research notes from VSS HQ. Future descriptions assume the professor was rescued, so you may have to change them to suit the new situation.

If necessary, the GM should arrange an opportunity for the heroes to rescue the Professor during their raid on VSS headquarters. For example, maybe one of the rooms the heroes pass on the way to the Conference Room is a cell containing the bound and gagged professor. Or maybe Agent Dorgan brings the Professor with him to the conference room for Agent Ghuren to interrogate.

Push maneuver (as do the penalties). With a failure, the vehicle misses the ramp and goes Out of Control.

★ **VSS Agents (3):** See page 190.

HOVER CART

Small and nimble, Hover Carts are designed to transport personnel and cargo across campus. Although usually driven slowly, they can be very fast if needed.

Acc/Top Speed: 6/30; **Toughness:** 11
(1); Handling: 0; **Crew:** 1+8
Notes: Max Height 10"

AFTER THE RESCUE

Shortly after being rescued, Professor Valdinus addresses the heroes:

"Thank you for your help! My life has been falling apart since I made my discovery a few months ago, but I just could not keep quiet about something so crucial.

"Several months ago, as part of my research, I studied the sediment under Vaalbarax's planetary crust. I discovered that among every few layers of sediment there is a layer composed almost completely of powdered remains of living creatures, which I estimate is equal to the entire living population of this world! These layers prove that every few hundred years something catastrophic occurs here, as if every living being were destroyed at the same time. And this has happened thousands of times, for millions of years!

"I do not know what causes this, but I suspect whatever attacks the planet, it is a living, biological phenomenon. By calculating the time between layers, averaging, and extrapolating to the future I have come to the approximate date when this will happen again. That date is the 17th of Baughmont... Just a few weeks from now!

"Coincidentally, a few months

ago our government became more belligerent and began this stupid war with our Rennarian neighbors. When I announced my discovery, I was labeled a 'crackpot,' and accused of trying to draw the peoples' focus away from the war! The press has even nicknamed the 17th of Baughmont 'Doomsday,' and the name has stuck! I've been ridiculed in the press, and nobody takes me or my theory seriously. On top of that, I'm now in danger of losing my position at the University.

'And now you're saying a renegade VSS Agent has heard that on the 17th of Baughmont, something catastrophic will happen? But this is a confirmation of my theory! We need to find out what is going to happen and stop it before it occurs! I could tell you more about where to look and what to do if only I could get to my research files. Unfortunately, those files were taken from me a few weeks ago when VSS Agents came to search my offices for 'evidence of treason.' I assume they are being kept in the VSS headquarters building across town. If you could recover them for me I'd be very grateful, and I'll help you get to the bottom of this.'

SCENE 3: VAAL-BREAK-IN

A low, non-descript, heavily-guarded building awaits you

across town. It is the headquarters of the feared Vaalbaran Secret Service. Always a shadowy element in Vaalbaran society, the VSS has inexplicably become much more powerful in the last few months. And, judging from recent events, they are deeply involved in this... Whatever this is.

VSS headquarters is guarded by sentinel patrols and is surrounded by a powerful energy barrier. You can see office windows some two floors up the energized building wall.

The professor went into hiding at a friend's house, where no one but you can find him. At his suggestion you've brought a rope and grappling hook, but it will still be a challenge to break in.

There are several ways to enter the compound, but a break-in is the most logical. If the heroes want to sneak or bluff their way in, the GM can improvise these situations with the information provided below.

Assuming the heroes have decided to break in, they have to perform the following steps in order. Groups of five security guards patrol around the building every ten rounds, so the heroes must complete steps 1 and 2 within *ten rounds* or less, or they are spotted by the guards and must retreat and try again another day (possibly increasing the number of guards). Every roll made in steps 1 and 2 counts as an action.

1) Disable the Building's Force

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Field. The building is surrounded by an energy security barrier, with generator couplings deployed into the building structure every 10 yards or so. A hero touching the barrier receives 3d6 damage (from an Extra) from an energy discharge, and activates the alarm. With a successful Lockpicking (-2) or Repair (-4) roll, it is possible to hack one of the couplings to disable the energy output of one section of the barrier. This disables the alarm in this section of the barrier, allowing characters to climb the wall.

2) Climb the Building Wall. The heroes need to climb about 10" up the wall to reach a window. This requires a Climbing (-2) roll. It is, of course, easier if a hero throws the grappling hook and fastens it to the wall next to the window. This requires one successful Throwing (-2) roll. Once attached, every hero must make one Climbing (+2) roll to ascend 10". These rolls can be cooperative (the cooperating hero's roll does not count as an action). No roll is needed to open the window and climb in.

3) Find a Room with a Computer Terminal. If the heroes didn't asked, the 'research files' are not physical but digital. The heroes need to sneak through the building to reach a room with a computer terminal, being careful not to be detected by the surveillance cameras in the hallways. One hero (the one with the best Stealth) takes the role of scout, and must make two rolls: a Stealth (-2) roll to identify the right moment to walk the maze-like corridors while avoiding the cameras; and a Smarts roll to find a room with a computer terminal. Once this hero is

successful, every other hero must make a Stealth roll to reach the new office. The original scout can help each hero with a Cooperative roll (this represents the scout guiding and indicating to each hero the appropriate moment to cross the hallways without being discovered). If any roll fails, the camera spots something strange and three security guards are sent to investigate. They arrive three rounds later, giving the heroes enough time to reach the computer terminal room.

4) Hack the Computer to Recover the Research Files. The heroes find themselves in a big empty room with a large round conference table in the center. The side walls are covered floor-to-ceiling with monitors, now switched off; and a huge video-conference screen covers the wall opposite the door. The table has a small panel to control this screen. To the right of the screen is a small open door that leads to a tiny control room with several computer terminals and lighting controls for the conference room and monitors. Once here, the heroes can try to hack the computer. They need three successful consecutive Lockpicking (-2) or Repair (-4) rolls to hack into the system, find the research files and copy them to their wrist computers.

WHO WATCHES THE WATCHERS?

Two rounds after the heroes enter the control room, read the following aloud:

As you feverishly work to recover

THE DOOMSDAY WAR

the stolen files, you are surprised as the conference room door opens and someone walks in. You barely have time to all squeeze into the control room without being noticed, as the stranger switches on the lights and video-conference screen, and begins a remote conversation with someone. You hear the following exchange:

"Agent Ghuren! This is Senior Agent Dorgan. Report! How is our Vaalbaran fleet doing?"

"This is Agent Ghuren. I am currently transmitting from the 'Dignity', the flagship of the Vaalbaran Fleet. Very soon our Fleet will be in range of the Rennarians and will engage them in combat. Admiral Thorus expects to beat them easily, Sir."

"Perfect! Is everything ready for the sabotage?"

"Yes, sir. As soon as the battle begins, our agents within the fleet will detonate hidden explosive devices, destroying or damaging our battle cruisers. The 'Dignity' will also be destroyed with Admiral Thorus aboard. Our fleet will fall into disarray and the Rennarians will dispatch it quickly."

"Excellent! Everything is falling into place..."

Did you hear correctly? Were

they just talking about sabotaging their own fleet? You don't have time to ponder, as suddenly Agent Dorgan turns towards the control room, as if he has sensed your presence. You're sure you were not heard, but then how did he know you were there?

"Intruders! They heard us! We must kill them!" yells Agent Dorgan, pushing an alarm button on the conference table panel and then drawing his blaster. Alarms blare throughout the building. You hear the hurried steps of dozens of guards approaching the conference room. You are trapped!

As if things weren't bad enough, you suddenly feel an intense pain inside your head. Someone or something is attacking you with a psionic power... could it be Agent Dorgan?

Deal action cards!

The heroes start in a 3" x 3" Control Room. The north wall holds the computer terminal and various conference room controls. A door at the center of the south wall leads to the Conference Room, a 10" x 10" room with a large round table (center a Large Burst Template in the room). The east and west walls of the room are covered in computer monitors. Centered along the north wall of the room is a huge 6"-long conference screen, with the door into the Control Room to its right. Centered along the south wall is an open door that leads to the building hallways.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

When Agent Dorgan entered the room, a K'rree'l Keeper accompanied him. The Keeper controls the Agent with a modified version of *puppet*, and is currently cloaked (see the K'rree'l Keeper description). The Keeper begins with a free attack against the heroes, using *entangle* to affect everyone within a Medium Burst Template (remember that a psionic *entangle* requires the heroes to use Smarts or Spirit to escape the mental web). Following this, the Keeper acts on Agent Dorgan's card, and tries to avoid being discovered while continuing to attack with its psionic powers.

Remember, the heroes probably still need to finish hacking the computer to recover the files.

At the start of the second round, a group of security guards enter from the south. The heroes should not be able

to escape this combat until they've defeated Agent Dorgan. If necessary, send more guards in to keep them trapped until this happens.

★ **VSS Security Guards (4 per hero):** See page 191.

★ **Senior Agent Dorgan:** Use VSS Agent stats, but treat as a Wild Card. See page 190.

★ **K'rree'l Keeper:** See page 191.

TERRAIN

* **Conference Table:** This large, elegant table has Toughness 10 and grants Medium Cover (–2) to characters crouched behind it. It has an embedded panel that controls the lights and main screen.

* **Room Lights:** The ceiling lights are controlled from the Control Room or the Conference Table. They are on



THE DOOMSDAY WAR

AFTER THE BATTLE

by default (normal lighting) but can be dimmed (Dim Lighting) or switched off (Dark Lighting). Note that the room will never be in Pitch Darkness unless the south door is closed and all monitors are turned off or destroyed. If the lighting control is shot, the lights stay in the position they were set at and cannot be changed.

* **Side Wall Monitors:** These monitors are controlled from the Control Room only. When turned on, they display a kaleidoscope of random images, white noise, and TV transmissions, while roaring with deafening sounds. This forces every character in the room to make a Spirit roll or be Shaken. While the monitors are on, they are likely to explode if hit by a stray blaster shot. Whenever a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die, the shot misses and hits a monitor on the wall behind the target causing an explosion. Place a Small Burst Template centered on the wall where the shot has hit a screen (use common sense to determine this). Any character under the template suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra. The Keeper is impervious to this (no damage).

* **Video-Conference Screen:** This screen is switched on or off from either the Control Room or the Conference Table. It displays the huge head of the staring, open-mouthed, Field Agent Ghuren as the battle develops. While activated, the conference screen will explode into a million shards if hit by a stray blaster shot (if a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die). Place a Large Burst Template centered on the screen. Any character under the template suffers 2d8 damage from an Extra. The Keeper is impervious to this (no damage).

When Agent Dorgan falls, read this to the players:

As Agent Dorgan falls dead, you hear a scream piercing your skulls as a psionic wave of pain crosses the room! You see a flicker in the corner of the room, and for a fraction of a second you swear you see a large, dark, spider-like shape materializing out of thin air! The monstrous, flailing shape quickly flees as it disappears again. What in blazes was that?!

Have each hero make a Spirit (-2) roll or be Shaken. The Keeper's psychic scream was a strong one, and all guards remaining in the entire building are automatically Shaken. At this point have the Keeper escape through the south door, using the Recurring Villains rules if necessary. Encourage the heroes to take this opportunity to escape, running out of the conference room and to the exit window. The building is in complete chaos, so escaping requires no additional rolls unless the heroes do something really stupid.

ACT II: THE BATTLE OF BETRAYAL

SCENE 1: A FLEETING MOMENT

Three weeks have passed since you successfully broke into Vaalbaran Security Service head-

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

quarters and discovered the treasonous plot that threatens to destroy the Vaalbaran Fleet from within. After a quick conversation with Professor Valdinus you concluded that if high-level Agents are involved in this, then no one in the government can be trusted. If you want to save the fleet, you will have to do it yourself.

While Professor Valdinus stayed on Vaalbarax to continue analyzing the results in his files, you boarded the Blazing Star and departed for the conflict zone with a mission: Contact Admiral Thorus, commander of the Vaalbaran fleet, and inform him of the danger. He leads the fight from the Dignity, the flagship of the fleet.

Professor Valdinus has sent a message to Captain Regublon, an old friend of his who is an officer in the Vaalbaran fleet. The Professor vouches for him and tells you he has complete confidence in his friend's honesty and desire to assist. You've been instructed to broadcast a specific coded signal as you come out of hyperspace, and then the Captain will contact you to help as soon as he can.

As your ship leaves hyperspace, you are suddenly deafened by the blare of the proximity alarms. The view screen is full of ships, both Vaalbaran and Rennarian.

Missiles and energy beams criss-cross in all directions, with the occasional explosion blinding you momentarily. Debris from destroyed vessels litters the area. The battle has begun!

Far away you spot the Dignity, engaged in a pitched battle with a humongous enemy destroyer. You barely have time to plot a course as three Rennarian fighters change course to intercept you!

Run this as a Chase. Give the pilot an extra Benny before the start of the scene; he'll need it!

Place twelve markers on the tabletop to represent the 5SU Range Increments. The fighters begin just off the track, while the Blazing Star is on marker one.

Deal each enemy ship an action card. The fighters are faster than the *Blazing Star*, and thus receive a +1 to their Piloting rolls.

This is a *very dangerous* Chase! The heroes will deal with many obstacles, sometimes more than one at the same time! Whenever a pilot draws a black card, check the value against the Obstacle Table below. Additionally, if the card is a Club suit, the pilot must also dodge stray fire from the raging battle by consulting the Stray Fire Table below. This may mean the pilot has to perform more than one Piloting roll in the same round. These rolls are considered a single action, and thus do not incur a multiple action penalty. The Pilot can decide which of the two rolls he makes first (to use Bennies appropriately, etc.).

All hails to the *Dignity* or any other ships participating in the battle will go unanswered.

OBSTACLE TABLE

Consult this table any time the pilot gets a black card. Remember to also check the Stray Fire Table if the pilot's black card is also a Club.

Deuce (-4) Fly Through!: As you maneuver through the chaos of battling ships, the wreckage of a huge Rennarian battleship looms ahead, and it's too big to avoid! The pilot's only chance is to fly *through* the wreckage trying to avoid crashing the ship. The pilot must roll Piloting (-4) to avoid collision with this hard obstacle (calculate damage as an Extra). As the wreckage has Armor 5, this is added to the damage. For example, the *Blazing Star* will suffer $6d6+5$ damage as if from an Extra.

Three (-2) Ionization: A deadly ion field, undoubtedly deployed by one of the two navies, crosses the ship's path! A failed Piloting roll means the ship has crossed the field; until the pilot's next action card, all Piloting, Shooting, Repair and Knowledge (Shield) rolls suffer a -2 penalty. This can be negated by using a pod to soak damage.

Four (-2) Between a Ship and a Hard Place: The ship finds itself in the narrow gap between the hulls of two massive battleships, and the ships are about to slam into each other! With a failed Piloting roll, the ship is unable to escape in time and takes AP5 damage from a hard collision.

Five (-2) Dust Cloud: The ship comes across a small dust cloud that makes it difficult to see and aim. All

Piloting and Shooting rolls this round suffer the listed penalty. If the Piloting roll fails, nothing special happens—the ship just isn't able to move as far as it should have.

Six (0/-2): A Window of Opportunity: Among the chaotic mess of ships and explosions the pilot spots a small window of space between ships. A choice must be made—fly through or fly around. The enemy fighters always fly around.

Flying through the battle gives no penalty, but if the Piloting roll fails, the ship suffers multiple collisions, equivalent to an AP 5 hard collision. Flying around the battle requires taking a longer but safer route. If the roll fails, the ship takes no damage; it just does not move as far as it could have this round.

Seven (-1): More Enemy Bogeys!: Another enemy ship spots the heroes' ship and tries to give chase! If the pilot fails the Piloting roll, an additional enemy fighter joins the chase. Roll a d4 and use the result as the number of Range Increments behind the ship that the enemy fighter appears in. Use same stats as the other Rennarian fighters. If an enemy fighter gets this action card, treat it as debris—the pilot must make a Piloting roll or collide with a soft obstacle.

Eight (-1): Jamming Signal: A Rennarian battleship fires an experimental jamming signal at the ship. With a failed Piloting roll, the engines momentarily stall, causing the ship to become Shaken. This cannot be soaked by shield pods, but the Ace edge works as normal.

Nine (-1): Core Breach: As you

THE CAVALRY TO THE RESCUE!

It's very easy for the *Blazing Star* to receive massive amounts of damage during this Chase. If things become too hot for the players to handle, the GM can have a surprise ship appear out of nowhere to help the heroes, perhaps immediately shooting an enemy fighter out of the sky. This is Captain Reguhlon, professor Valdinus's friend, who received a message from the professor and is ready to support the heroes in their mission with his ship, the *Revolution*. Captain Reguhlon can rescue the heroes if the *Blazing Star* is destroyed, tow the ship towards the *Dignity*, fight alongside the heroes, fly in front of the *Blazing Star* to take the brunt of the damage, or act as a decoy to allow the heroes to escape. The GM is free to use Captain Reguhlon and the *Revolution* as needed to get the adventure back on track. If appropriate, the PCs can be given the stats for the *Revolution*, and control it in battle. If it becomes necessary to have Captain Reguhlon's stats, use Soldier stats but treat him as a Wild Card.

What if the *Blazing Star* should be destroyed? The heroes should somehow survive and be picked up by the *Revolution* so the Chase can continue. Once the adventure is concluded successfully, a grateful Vaalbaran government will scour the field of debris, recover the remains of the *Blazing Star*, and restore it as a token of their appreciation for the heroes' efforts in saving their planet from destruction.

look through the windows, you spot a massive Rennarian warship that has sustained one hit too many. As hundreds of escape pods launch from the ship, you see the beginnings of a huge explosion that will destroy it and everything in its vicinity! A failed Piloting roll means the ship could not avoid the explosion in time, taking 4d6 damage (from a Heavy Weapon). The radiation from the core also inflicts an automatic Crew Critical Hit, damaging the crew for 2d6 damage from an Extra, ignoring all armor. Any pods set to *deflection* boost the piloting roll, as the explosion is considered an area effect attack.

Ten (-1): Debris Field: Hundreds of small chunks of debris float around the ship! If the Piloting roll fails, the ship takes no damage, but falls back one Range Increment because of the loss of speed in avoiding the debris.

Jack (0): Space Kamikaze: An enemy fighter, damaged beyond repair during the battle, heads straight for the heroes' ship as its pilot decides to go out in a blaze of glory! If the Piloting roll fails, then both ships crash *at the end of this round*. After the round has ended, the *Blazing Star* suffers an AP10 hard collision (remember Armor is added to damage). Since the crash occurs at the end of the round, the heroes have a chance to take action using shield pods or try to shoot the fighter out of the sky before it collides, and so on. If it becomes necessary, use Rennarian fighter stats for the kamikaze. If an enemy fighter gets this action card, treat it as debris—the pilot must make a Piloting roll or collide with a soft obstacle.

Queen (0): Tracer Missile: A

THE DOOMSDAY WAR

destroyer locks onto the ship and unleashes a deadly tracer missile! Have the pilot make a Piloting roll. With a failure, the missile is at Short Range, with a success it is at Medium Range, and with a raise it is at Long Range. Avoid the missile (Damage: 4d6, AP6, HW) as per the *Savage Worlds* rules for missiles.

King (0): Trick the Enemy!: The pilot spots an opportunity to trick a pursuing enemy fighter, causing it to crash into debris or other ships and take damage! The pilot may choose to perform a Force Maneuver against an enemy fighter instead of moving, even if the two ships are not within one Range Increment. The pilot must make up a good reason for the Force Maneuver (such as "I shoot at some debris, causing it to deviate towards the enemy fighter!"). The GM can interpret ties depending on the exact justification for the Force Maneuver. If an enemy fighter gets this action card, treat it as debris—the pilot must make a Piloting roll or collide with a soft obstacle.

Ace (-2): A Window of Opportunity!: A huge battleship, about to split in two just in front of the heroes, gives the pilot an idea: If he were daring enough to go *through* the disintegrating ship he might gain a lot of ground on this Chase. The pilot can either ignore or take the shortcut. If he ignores it, nothing happens. If the pilot decides to take the shortcut, make a Piloting roll. With a failure, the ship takes AP6 damage from a Heavy Collision; with a success the ship gains 1 extra Range Increment, on top of any Range Increments the pilot may move this round.

STRAY FIRE TABLE

This table is consulted if the pilot's black card is a Club. In addition to the above obstacles, the ship has to avoid incoming crossfire from the battle. The additional Piloting roll for the round is modified as per the table. Failure means the ship is hit for a certain amount of damage. This counts as battery fire, so the pilot benefits from having a shield pod set to *deflection*.

Card Value	Piloting	Damage
Deuce-3	-4	3d8 (AP6) HW
4-7	-2	3d8 (AP4) HW
8-10	-1	3d6 (AP6) HW
Jack-Ace	0	3d6 (AP4) HW

★**Rennarian Fighters (3):** Use stats for VSS Fighters. See page 191.

APPROACHING THE DIGNITY

When the heroes are four Range Increments away from the *Dignity*, read the following:

It seems impossible that you have made it this far, but here you are: The huge bulk of the Dignity, Admiral Thorus' flagship, looms in front of you. Unfortunately, the ship continues to ignore your bails. Worse, you notice the main batteries of the ship suddenly swivel towards you. It seems someone has decided you are a threat and is ready to bring you down!

On top of all the other obstacles the heroes have to handle above, now the

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

Dignity itself is firing on them! Draw one action card for the *Dignity* every round. The *Dignity* acts on the value of this card. Consult the following table to how it attacks. All attacks are made with Shooting d8, and all damage is calculated as from an Extra.

Card Value	Action taken by the <i>Dignity</i>
Deuce-6	1 Medium battery port (Range: 24/48/96; Damage 3d8; ROF 1; AP 10; HW)
7-10	1 Small battery port (Range: 12/24/48; Damage 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6; HW)
Jack-Ace	No attack

When the heroes get to within two Range Increments of the *Dignity*, they discover its hangar bay blast doors are closed. Forcing them open requires a Called Shot (-2) to the external systems. A successful shot, whether it causes any damage or not, causes the doors to open at the start of the next round. Docking requires a successful Force maneuver.

The heroes are now aboard the *Dignity*!

THE REVOLUTION

Captain Reguhlon's ship only appears if necessary for the adventure to continue.

Top Speed: 6; **Toughness:** 17 (5); **Handling:** +0; **Shields Pods:** 3; **Crew:** 2+6

Abilities: Piloting d8, Shields d8, Shooting d6

Notes: 4 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Fixed Weapon, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabi-

lizer, Spacecraft

Weapons:

- 1 x double laser turret (+1 Shooting; Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)
- 1 x missile turret (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 4d8; ROF 1; AP 8, HW), 4 reloads

SCENE 2: UNWELCOME GUESTS

As your ship hurriedly skids across the floor of the hangar deck sending up smoke and a long shower of sparks, the force shields that keep the atmosphere in, and space out, reactivate. You've boarded the Dignity! The ship spins and stops with a loud thud next to one of the hangar walls, the cockpit looking towards space.

As you lower the access ramp, you are deafened by the loud blare of the emergency alarms sounding all over the battleship. Smoke pours from a shattered pipe on a wall, but no one seems to notice. The hangar deck, and most of the ship, appears to be in chaos and turmoil, as soldiers and technicians run from one place to another working on the ship. Your entrance has upset things, but not too much.

Now you need to locate the bridge and Admiral Thorus to

warn him that his ship is about to be sabotaged, but where is the bridge? And how will you make your way through a battleship crawling with alerted soldiers?

You don't have much time to think, though, as a group of soldiers enters the hangar with their rifles drawn, ready to attack you and your ship! The remaining technicians flee the deck as fast as they can!

Deal action cards!

The hangar deck is a square, 20" to a side, dotted with crates, small control computers, and other items (distribute about 15-20 1" obstacles around the board). The left wall of the hangar is an invisible force field that separates the deck from the vacuum of space, while the right wall has a 2" wide door in its center. The heroes' ship occupies a 10" x 8" square, just 2" away from the force field wall. The ship's access ramp is 2" wide, and extends out from the underside of the ship (on the table it looks towards the center of the hangar bay). The heroes begin combat inside their ship.

If Captain Reguhlon is with the heroes, make sure his stats are available to the players. Treat the Captain as a Wild Card Soldier (use Soldier stats).

The ship's laser turret can be used in this fight, but it is hard to swivel and aim given that it is at the top of the ship and can't be pointed at the hangar deck's floor. This inflicts a -1 penalty to Shooting rolls.

While combat ensues inside, remember there's a space battle going on

outside! At the start of each round, after action cards are dealt, but before any actions are taken, the GM must draw an additional card from the action deck. If it's a black card (Spades or Clubs), everyone must make an Agility roll or fall prone as missiles and debris strike the *Dignity*, pipes explode, and the ship shudders. The roll is modified based on the card value as shown below:

Card	Modifier
Deuce	-6
3-5	-4
6-10	-2
Jack-Queen	-1
King-Ace	0

If the heroes decide to hide within their own ship, the soldiers throw stun grenades inside the ship. If the heroes close the ship's access ramp, an additional soldier with a hand rocket launcher (Range: 24/48/96; Damage 4d8; Med Burst Template, AP 9, Snap-fire, HW) will arrive within a couple of rounds to blow open the hatch.

★ **Soldiers (3 per hero):** See page 190.

SCENE 3: NOT A SHRED OF DIGNITY

Assuming Captain Reguhlon is not with the heroes yet, read the following aloud when combat ends:

An uneasy silence descends upon the hangar bay as the last of the soldiers falls to the floor; a silence only broken by the continuous impacts and tremors from the battle outside. "Well done!" says

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

a voice out of nowhere. To your surprise, a panel in one of the walls of the hangar bay opens and a Vaalbaran, dressed as a soldier, walks in, hands outstretched. "My name is Captain Regublon. Good old Valdinus tells me something really nasty is about to happen to the fleet, and you are our only hope. Well, I'm listening!"

Once the heroes explain to the Captain what their mission is, he continues (this is where you would start reading if the captain has been with the heroes all along).

"So you need to find the Admiral, eh? Well, that's easy: He's on the bridge!" Captain Regublon pulls several military uniforms from the space behind the panel. "Put these on, they'll help you move about undetected. These service tunnels crisscross the entire ship. Follow me and I'll lead you up to the bridge."

You follow the Captain as he leads you into a maze of passageways and service elevators. The shakes and booms from the battle cause you to stumble and fall more than a few times. After a few minutes, the Captain reaches a closed panel, unlocks it, and walks into a well-lit passageway right next to the bridge.

The Dignity's bridge is a large circular room with a domed

ceiling. The north wall of the bridge, fully half of the circle, is a huge viewscreen showing the spectacular destruction both fleets are currently inflicting on each other, superimposed with readings and other strategic data. The other half of the circle is covered in computer terminals, used by officers hurriedly communicating, barking orders in military speak, scanning through reports, and so on. Soldiers and messengers swarm chaotically all over the place.

Upon a large chair on a circular raised dais in the center of the room sits Admiral Thorus, Commander of the Vaalbaran Fleet. There's a small computer terminal in front of him and he's conversing with a fellow officer about the progress of the battle. The Admiral is a small, balding Vaalbaran with two large, bulging eyes.

"So, First Officer Ghuren, I believe our strategy has been successful, don't you think?" asks the Admiral.

A glance suffices for you to recognize the thin, wooden Vaalbaran First Officer: It's Agent Ghuren, the mole you saw on the large screen at VSS Headquarters!

"Yes, Admiral, things are going admirably," answers Ghuren. "We're obviously going to win this one. I've already ordered

our ships to move closer to each other and march in close formation towards the heart of the enemy fleet."

"Excellent," says the Admiral. "Keep me updated."

"I can't believe it!" whispers Captain Regublon in your ear. "If what you say is true and several of our ships will be destroyed, then pulling the fleet together will just increase the damage to additional ships! If the fleet is regrouping, then the attack could come at any time! What should we do?"

Presumably the heroes will take this opportunity to interrupt the scene and warn the Admiral. As soon as the heroes appear, Ghuren will recognize them as the intruders at VSS Headquarters and panic. At this time, have any hero with a Psionics background make a Notice (-2) roll. With a success, the hero feels a sudden psionic spike, as if someone or something has been startled by their arrival. The psionic spike feels similar to what the heroes felt at VSS Headquarters, only this time it comes from within the bridge!

The heroes can try to convince the Admiral that Ghuren is a spy and that the fleet is in danger. This will require skillful roleplaying as the Admiral is a difficult man to convince, and Ghuren has gained his trust. The Agent will meanwhile desperately make a case for locking up the heroes as "terrorists" and/or "spies." If Ghuren gains the upper hand, the Admiral will order his

THE "ROLL-PLAYING" WAY

Some groups of players may prefer to just roll some dice to convince the Admiral instead of trying to roleplay their exchange with him. For three consecutive rounds, the heroes and Agent Ghuren must make Persuasion (-1) rolls, receiving one "token" for each success and raise. The GM can apply bonuses or penalties for particularly good (or bad) arguments or actions.

At the end of the third round, the Admiral ends up agreeing with the side with the most tokens.

soldiers to arrest the heroes. The GM should make it clear to the heroes that they must not be arrested if they expect to save the fleet in time.

Sooner or later things are apt to get violent. While the conversation continues, Ghuren carefully maneuvers himself closer to the Admiral's computer terminal. His psionic master, a K'ree'l Keeper, stands hidden and invisible in one corner of the bridge, ready to attack all soldiers and officers in the room with a psionic wave.

If the heroes convince the Admiral, or Ghuren believes he has lost control, read the following:

"You think you have saved the fleet, but you're wrong!" screams a suddenly unrecognizable First Officer Ghuren as he presses a button on his wrist computer. "It's a trap!" yells Admiral Thorus, as you feel a huge, immensely powerful psionic wave wash

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

over everyone in the bridge. The Admiral, Captain Regublon, and several officers and technicians, collapse to the floor.

Suddenly a platoon of soldiers enters, brandishing their rifles. As the last one enters, Ghuren depresses a panel next to the door and it slams shut, locking you in the bridge. As the soldiers raise their rifles and aim towards you, you realize they're VSS soldiers, under Ghuren's orders!

"Kill them all!" yells Ghuren, "while I transmit the signal that will destroy this entire fleet!" He looks at a specific computer terminal in the back, a terminal you assume is the Communications Console. That's where he intends to send his deadly signal from!

As if things weren't bad enough, you feel the beginnings of another psionic wave, coming from within the room. "Meddlers," an otherworldly, alien voice fills your head. "You know too much, but not quite enough. IT IS TOO LATE TO STOP US!"

Deal action cards!

The Bridge is circular, and measures 16" across. The viewscreen stretches in a semi-circle along the north wall of the room. The south wall of the room is covered with several 1" wide computer terminals, which follow a semi-circle 1" from the south wall. Place about six other terminals around the room to

break up the empty spaces. The main door to the bridge, now closed, is 2" wide and is in the middle of the west side of the circle.

The Admiral's chair is in the center of the room, on top of a 1" high circular dais 6" across, with two 1" wide computer terminals adjacent. Place the heroes and Ghuren around the Admiral's chair. The invisible Keeper is pressed against the east wall of the bridge right next to where the computer terminals break off. The VSS guards are right next to the bridge door.

On his turn, Ghuren tries to reach the Communications Console and send a coded message to his fleet. This console is located on the southernmost part of the wall of terminals. Using the console to transmit the message takes Ghuren two full rounds (not necessarily consecutive).

The Keeper begins the first round On Hold. It will do whatever it takes to protect Ghuren, including approaching and using *armor* and *deflection* if necessary. The enemy soldiers also know their job is to keep the heroes away from their leader, and will act accordingly. As a free action, the Keeper will psionically send menacing thoughts to the heroes. The GM should use this to help set the mood of the battle.

If Ghuren falls, the Keeper will give a psionic cry of rage and pain and use *puppet* to take control of the soldier closest to the Communications Console to continue sending the signal. The heroes should see the soldier stiffen and his eyes go blank, as if he is being controlled. If this soldier should also fall, now enraged, the Keeper makes itself visible (triggering a Fear check) and

rushes forward to send the signal itself. The Keeper also makes itself visible if the heroes should wound it twice.

★ **Soldiers (4 per hero):** See page 190.

★ **Agent Ghuren:** Use VSS Agent stats, but treat as a Wild Card. See page 190.

★ **K'rree'l Keeper:** See page 191.

If the signal is sent, a coordinated series of detonations begins within all ships in the fleet. The heroes are most likely dead, unless the GM decides to stage an emergency escape.

TERRAIN

* **Viewscreen:** The huge viewscreen on the north wall is just a screen; it is not a window into space. Shooting it has no effect other than damaging that section of the screen.

* **Computer Terminals:** The many terminals around the bridge control the ship's primary functions and are vulnerable to stray blaster fire. Whenever a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die, the shot misses its target and strikes a terminal on the wall instead. The GM then draws a card from the Action Deck and acts according to the table below:

Suit	Result
Club	Terminal Explodes: Place a Medium Burst Template centered on the computer terminal that has been hit (use common sense to determine this). Any character under the template suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra.
Diamond	Ship Lists: The ship lists dangerously to one side! Everyone on the bridge (except

the Keeper) must make an Agility (-2) roll or fall to the floor prone.

Heart **Gravity Fails:** The artificial gravity generators temporarily fail, sending everybody flying across the bridge. Roll a 1d12 and read it like a clock face, then roll a 1d4 and move every character that number of inches. Characters are allowed an Agility (-2) roll to grab onto something and keep from moving. Any character who hits an immobile, solid object is automatically Shaken.

Spade **Terminal Catches Fire:** The computer terminal bursts into flames! Any character right next to the terminal (or who crashes into a burning terminal due to failed gravity (see previous paragraph)) has a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire. A small cloud of smoke forms around the terminal, making it difficult to see across. Place a Small Burst Template centered on the Terminal that has been hit. This area is now in Dim Lighting.

As soon as the heroes defeat both Ghuren and the Keeper, any remaining soldiers surrender. If the Keeper was not visible yet, it becomes visible before falling to the floor. Read the following:

"What was that?! What happened?!" yells the Admiral as he regains consciousness and looks around his wrecked bridge. You have no time to explain, as you approach the still twitching horrendous form in front of you. It

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

is an insect-like creature with a spiky upper carapace, a dark six-eyed 'face', and six spider-like legs.

As the creature's alien eyes focus on you, you hear the strange voice within your head. "It is still too late for you... The planet you call Vaalbarax will be ours again!"

What follows is a hypothetical dialogue between the Keeper and the heroes to help the GM determine the answers to a number of possible questions:

Q: Who are you?

"We are K'rree'l. We have lived beneath the surface of the planet you call Vaalbarax for untold ages. I am a Keeper, a caste of the K'rree'l in charge of taking care of our smaller brothers and sisters. I am gifted with psionic power over minds to defend my people."

Q: What do you want?

"Our species hibernates in caves underground. Every five hundred of your years, when our small brothers and sisters hatch, they storm the surface and feed on the creatures there. This is the way we have lived for eons... until the Vaalbarans arrived. They have taken over! We want to destroy them, purge them from our planet. And if they feed

our hatchlings in the process, so much the better.

"In preparation for the next hatching, we Keepers woke from our slumber a few months ago, and discovered the Vaalbarans had infested our planet. K'ret'b, the best Keeper among us, analyzed the situation and determined that if the hatching occurred and we stormed the surface, we would face overwhelming resistance and our losses would be heavy. If the Vaalbarans invaded our tunnels, we might even be annihilated as a species. So before the hatching occurred, K'ret'b decided we needed to... even the odds a bit."

Q: Does K'ret'b have a plan? What is it?

"Several of us infiltrated Vaalbaran society and took psionic control of key government and military personnel. The Vaalbaran Secret Service was extremely useful for this. When we discovered the Vaalbarans had a grudge with the Rennarians, we orchestrated this war. The Vaalbarans have been the unwitting aggressors in this fight. Most Vaalbaran military resources are devoted to the war, and its soldiers deployed in space. Vaalbarax is weak and unprotected. When the hatching arrives, there will be almost no one left to defend the planet. We will conquer them easily."

THE DOOMSDAY WAR

Q: We have defeated you! Your sabotage of the fleet has failed!

"You are wrong! The fleet is damaged and won't be able to return to Vaalbarax in time. We're days away from the hatching, what you so aptly nicknamed 'Doomsday.' We will still invade the surface and destroy every Vaalbaran. By the time your limping fleet arrives, we will own the planet. True, we still might be slaughtered, but you will have already lost. And don't forget the Rennarians. They will take advantage of the Vaalbarans' weakness to attack... Pity I will not be there to see it. But you will still DIE!"

With its dying gasp, the creature emits a devastating psionic scream! You and everyone else around you feels as if their head were about to explode!

As the pain subsides, you see the pale face of the Admiral looking at you. "I'm afraid this monster's right," he says. "It will take us days just to prepare for the return trip to Vaalbarax, and this battle with the Rennarians is far from over. I can't spare a single ship. We have been outmaneuvered. I will stay here and try to end this battle, even if we have to surrender to the Rennarians to do it. You MUST fly back to Vaalbarax as fast as you can and warn them! Help them prepare for the invasion! When you

get there, look for Commander Fereggel, and tell him I sent you. He will believe you. My troops and cannons will cover your escape from this battle. Hurry, my friends! I beg you, please save my planet!"

As you rush towards the bangar deck, you begin to realize how difficult this is going to be. How will you save an entire planet from an invasion from within?

If the heroes lost their ship in battle, the Admiral will put a ship at their disposal so they can fly back to Vaalbarax.

ACT III: DOOMSDAY SCENE 1: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

Rarely have you ever traveled so fast, or pushed a ship as hard as you have done now. Even at maximum speed, you arrived just in the nick of time! Yes, today is the day: It is the dawn of the 17th of Baughmont, also known as "Doomsday."

You easily located Commander Fereggel at the Ministry of Defense. The Commander is a tall, imposing Vaalbaran, with a face that is all business. He listened to your story, raising his eyebrows once or twice. Once you finished, he thought for a minute, and then said: "If it were my choice, I'd send you all to the loony bin;

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

but if the Admiral believes in you, that's good enough for me."

Moments later you are in the backseat of a nondescript car with tinted windows, crossing the streets of Vaalbara City on your way to the Presidential Palace. Commander Fereggel is next to you.

"I have mobilized a few of our troops, but I'm afraid I do not have the authority to do much more. I've also requested that a general alert be raised, but given that today is this 'Doomsday' everyone has been joking about, my superiors will think twice about looking like fools. I guess it's up to you to convince the President of the situation."

Suddenly, you feel a slight tremor from within the car. As you look out the windows, you

see several buildings begin to shake. Vaalbaran passersby stop and stare, looking worried. The Commander exchanges glances with you and readies his blaster. He doesn't have time to do much else though, as the ground everywhere jumps with a series of deafening explosions! Buildings fall and cracks appear across the earth. A car going in the opposite direction swerves to avoid a falling piece of debris and collides with your car! As your vehicle flips over to the side you glimpse infinite numbers of dark, spider-like shapes pouring out of uncountable new holes in the ground and attacking everyone in their reach. Screams of panic and death surround you! Commander Fereggel lies unconscious, near you, with blood flowing from a deep gash in his forehead.

Doomsday has arrived!

THE ROLEPLAYING WAY

Players who like to get into character a bit more might be interested in roleplaying the scene where the heroes must explain the situation to Commander Fereggel. Play the commander as gruff, serious, and incredulous. This is a great opportunity for the heroes to explain, in their own words, exactly what's going on, and to recap their incredible adventure. Those players who do a good job explaining the situation should get a Benny for their efforts.

Deal action cards!

Before the fight begins, have every hero make a Fear (-2) check. Heroes who fail are Shaken.

This is a fight the heroes cannot win, they can only escape. Try to create a survival-horror film atmosphere. Describe the hordes of K'ree'l hatchlings swarming the entire city, killing everyone in their path, and the panic of a civilization collapsing all around the heroes.

Commander Fereggel has been knocked unconscious and does not

participate. No matter what they try, the heroes cannot wake him up. The driver of the car is dead, so the heroes are basically alone.

The street is 20" long and 4" wide with an additional 1" wide sidewalk on either side. It is blocked on the long sides by the walls of buildings. Draw a 2" x 4" rectangle in the center of the street to represent the heroes' overturned car. Draw two other 2" x 4" rectangles at odd angles to represent additional vehicles that stopped or spun out in the street. Place three Small Burst Templates to represent the holes that the K'ree'l are issuing from. One of these templates should be right next to the heroes' car.

The heroes are inside the overturned car as the K'ree'l approach to attack. To exit the car, one hero first needs to open a door or window (one action), and then each hero needs a successful Agility (-1) roll to unbuckle their safety belt and crawl out (this counts as a full action). Assuming no one opens a door or window, the K'ree'l will try to shatter the car windows (reinforced glass, Toughness 8) to enter. As long as a hero is inside the car, he is considered Prone if attacked.

The K'ree'l attack in a swarm-like fashion, ganging up against their enemies. Additionally, one or two K'ree'l will attempt to jump on top of their enemy (a Grapple). K'ree'l do not flee nor surrender.

Any time a hero gets an action card with a value less than 5, consult the following table to see what happens:

Suit	Result
Club	A New Hole Opens Up On the Ground! Roll a d20 and a d6 and read the result as coordinates in

a 20" x 6" grid that corresponds to the street's length and width (counting the sidewalks). Place a new Small Burst Template centered on that square. Any character on top of the template must roll their Agility to jump out of the way or receive 2d6 damage from an extra and fall Prone.

Diamond More K'ree'l: More K'ree'l emerge from the ground. Place one new K'ree'l hatchling on the table next to each hole.

Heart Many More K'ree'l: For every hole in the street, roll a d4 and place that number of new K'ree'l hatchlings on spaces around the hole.

Spade Tremors: Another tremor shakes the street. Every non-K'ree'l must roll their Agility or fall Prone. If the action card is a 2, a piece of debris from a nearby building crashes to the street. Roll a d20 and a d6 and read the result as coordinates in a 20" x 6" grid that corresponds to the street's length and width. Any character on the resulting square must roll their Agility to jump out of the way or receive 2d8 damage from an extra and fall Prone. Mark the resulting square with debris (difficult ground).

The goal of this combat is to wear out the heroes, so feel free to have more K'ree'l crawl out of their holes if necessary.

★ **K'ree'l Hatchlings (5 per hero):** See page 191.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

SCENE 2: DESCENT INTO MADNESS

A deathly quiet descends on the now deserted and shattered street. The arachnidian remains of dozens of your enemies are piled all around you. Far off you can hear screams and gunshots, and see the glow of hundreds of fires. You realize this terror is affecting the entire city. More and more tremors underline the magnitude of the invasion.

From the twisted mess of your wrecked car you suddenly see the body of Commander Fereggel twitch. He's still alive!

"Doomsday's real," the Com-

mander whispers weakly as he recovers consciousness. "It seems you were right after all, but it's too late now to talk to anyone in power. The city is out of control. How should we proceed?"

Suddenly your wrist computer beeps. Glancing at it, you find a recorded message sent by Professor Valdinus!

"My friends," the professor begins in an earnest voice, "I do hope you receive this message, communications appear to be down throughout most of the city. It seems I was unfortunately right, and now it may be too late. But there is still hope!"

"The notes you recovered gave



THE DOOMSDAY WAR

me some clues, and the events of the last half-hour have confirmed it: Right before the attack began a single, powerful psionic transmission spread across the entire planet. This mind-message came from underground, and rallied the monsters to attack. This means there's something under the surface that all these millions of monsters obey. Perhaps there is a Queen?!

"I know it sounds suicidal, but if you could enter the tunnels, find whatever is behind these psionic messages and destroy it, we might have a chance to eliminate, or at least confuse these creatures. I suggest you find some heavy weapons and explosives. They might very well come in handy.

"I've discovered something else that might help you on your mission: The monsters' psionic communication emits trails of charged neutrinos. You can set your wrist computers to detect charged neutrino trails and thus help you avoid groups of K'rree'l within the caves. Also, a large concentration of charged neutrinos should point you in the direction of the lair. Good luck! The fate of my world depends on you!"

As the message ends, the pale face of the wounded Commander smiles weakly as he pulls a small key from his shirt

pocket. "Did I hear someone say you needed heavy weapons? You might want to look in the trunk of my car..."

If the heroes open the trunk using the Commander's key, they find a small armory! Obviously the Commander, as a high-ranking military officer, is ready for anything. Inside the trunk there is one of the following for every hero: One armored vest (+2 armor), one military-grade repeating blaster carbine (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, AP 2, ROF 3), three frag grenades (Range 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6+2, MBT; as an action can be timed to explode in one to three rounds), and one plasma flashlight (5" light radius).

After the heroes receive the professor's message, communications go down throughout the city. The heroes cannot count on any additional help. Any excursions will be met with more streets brimming with K'rree'l, dead or dying survivors, and more casualties.

Eventually the heroes will realize their only course of action is descent. When the heroes are ready, read the following:

"I'm sorry I cannot go with you," says Commander Fereggel, now standing and crudely bandaged. He still looks weak and pale, but sure of himself. "My duty is to tell my leaders of the Professor's plan, and to organize our remaining forces and face these invaders. I will try to send you some help as soon as I can. Until then, good luck!" With that, the Commander slowly walks away, gun in hand.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

It's time to enter the monsters' realm.

THE K'RREE'L CAVES

As you enter the hole, one of many that dot the ruined streets of a city that was once imposing and glistening just a few hours ago, your senses are overwhelmed by the stench of the invaders. The strange, uneven maze of caves is dripping with blobs of goo, presumably the remains of the substance these monsters hatched from. The place is dark, but strange exposed minerals on the walls, as well as shards of things that resemble egg shells, radiate an unusual phosphorescent glow that allows you to see. Odd chirrup-like sounds, at different pitches and frequencies, bounce off the walls, creating a constant din that makes your hair stand on end. You spy no signs of technology or intelligent engineering, but the routes taken by the passageways feel deliberate, as if this maze of tunnels has been designed rather than formed naturally.

And the passageways are big; a lot bigger than the K'rree'l hatchlings you've met so far.

You have programmed your wrist computers to detect neutrino emissions and sure enough, trails of neutrinos point to several passageways in the maze. Large neutrino readings allow you to

detect the general direction you should take. At first, it's easy for you to use these charged trails to avoid groups of K'rree'l hatchlings and thus traverse the caves unimpeded. As the concentration of hatchlings increases, though, your luck might not hold out.

You enter another cave, a large one dotted with stalagmites and different types of rock for a floor. Suddenly the ubiquitous chirping sounds become more orderly and structured. You are then startled by a loud, terrified scream. Right there, in front of you slightly obscured behind some rocks, is a large Keeper like the one you met at the Dignity, surrounded by a horde of hatchlings carrying a wounded Vaalbaran male, obviously brought alive from the surface. At a gesture from the Keeper, the hatchlings attack the horrified humanoid and rend him to pieces with their claws! As blood sprays, the Keeper suddenly turns towards you, as if it has sensed your presence. "More humanoids!" Its psionic voice echoes in your head. "K'ret'h warned us they'd want to attack our lair. Kill them! Kill them now!" The hatchlings, dripping with ichor, obey blindly and leap to attack!

Deal action cards! Hopefully the heroes are better prepared to face a large horde now.

The cavern is 16" x 12", with 3" wide tunnels positioned diagonally on the

north-east and south-west corners. The walls are rough, and thus the cavern can be of irregular shape. The heroes begin a few squares from the south-west tunnel mouth.

Randomly place three Medium Burst Templates. These represent slippery rock patches that cover the floor. Also place several 1" wide markers in the cave to represent stalagmites and other rock obstacles. Try to avoid placing too many of these on the slippery areas.

A few K'rree'l hatchlings (one per hero) are clinging from the ceiling of the cave. As their action, each one of them will fall on top of the appropriate hero and attempt to grapple. The hatchlings on the ground will try to gang up as usual. The Keeper will attack with its psionic powers. Note that with the exception of *bolt*, other K'rree'l are immune to the psionic powers of the Keeper.

★ **K'rree'l Hatchlings (5 per hero):** See page 191.

★ **K'rree'l Keeper:** See page 191.

TERRAIN

* **Slippery Rock Areas:** The slippery rocks that dot the cave make for a somewhat treacherous environment. An unknowing hero who steps on these rocks must make an Agility roll (-1) or fall Prone and slide 1d4+2" in the direction they were walking. Any character who hits an immobile, solid object is automatically Shaken. If a hero chooses to walk on these rocks at half Pace, he just needs a standard Agility roll to avoid falling prone and sliding. Heroes can take advantage of these rocks by jumping on them at

the end of their movement and making an Agility (-2) or Climbing roll. With a success, the hero may slide up to an additional 6" (his choice) without falling Prone in the direction he was moving. The hero may not continue to move after performing a slide. Besides the extra movement, this may give the hero several special advantages, at the discretion of the GM, such as a +1 bonus to a final Agility Trick, a +1 bonus to any Fighting attack that begins after the slide, or the ability to Bash an opponent (Make an opposed Strength roll with a +2 bonus to the attacker. Move the target 1" for a success and 2" with a raise. If the defender collides with an obstacle, he suffers 1d6 damage for every 1" he would have moved). The K'rree'l instinctively know how to slide and may utilize this effect automatically, without requiring a roll.

* **Stalagmites:** The Stalagmites block line of sight.

SCENE 3: THE QUEEN

Leaving the cavern behind, you continue your descent into the tunnels. Soon the strange glowing rocks in the walls become less common, and the chirping noises are replaced by a strange, low booming sound. The temperature is increasing, and the tunnels are widening.

Eventually, you reach a huge circular cave. The glowing rocks illuminate a high cavern, with a ceiling supported by several natural-looking strong pillars.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

The floor is dotted with strange pyramid-like rocks of a greenish color. Around the rocks are piles of thousands of large dark spheres, some of which sporadically shake, and some of which seem on the verge of cracking open. K'rree'l eggs!

The back of the cave is dark - a pulsating darkness that may well be alive, but the most interesting aspect of the cavern is the huge pillar of stone in its center. The pillar is very thin at the floor, but it gradually broadens until it reaches the ceiling.

Any hero who makes a successful Smarts (-2) roll notices that this central column supports the weight of the cavern; if it were to fall, the entire cavern would likely collapse.

When the heroes take a few steps inside the cave, read the following:

Suddenly a voice pierces your minds! "So here you are! The ones who have caused us so much trouble, first with our Vaalbaran spies, then with the fleet in space! Welcome to the center!" With that, a K'rree'l Keeper, similar to the ones you've already seen and fought, but somehow larger and more menacing, appears. "My name is K'ret'h, and I have guided my species through this... emergency. We never expected to find our planet overrun with aliens, but my plan has allowed us to retain control. Now we own the surface as well as the depths!"

The ground shakes as a dark shadow in the back of the cave moves forward. You are shocked to see the monstrosity large shape that appears in front of you; a spider-like being the size of a building, hungrily brandishing its fangs while looking down at you with six eyes on its terrifying head. "My Queen, these are the first intruders to ever enter your Shrine," intones K'ret'h. "Accept them as a sacrifice, and complete your conquest of the invaders!"

With an ear-splitting roar, the Queen attacks!

This is it! It's time to deal action cards again!

The cavern is a 24" irregular circle with a 4" tunnel entering from the south wall. Place a Small Burst Template in the center of the cavern to represent the base of the central pillar. Place four Medium Burst Templates around the cavern to represent piles of eggs, and mark nine 1" squares with tokens to represent the pyramid-like stones.

Place the K'rree'l Queen a few inches behind the central pillar. She occupies a 3" x 3" square. Place K'ret'h adjacent to the crystal wall. Place the heroes a few inches from the southern tunnel mouth.

This is a fight to the death! It should not take long for the heroes to realize that the only way to kill the Queen is to attack it with Heavy Weapons, or to bring the ceiling down on it. If the heroes are having trouble figuring this out, the GM may allow a Smarts (-2) roll

to help them reach this conclusion. The frag grenades are perfect for this: They may be thrown as a standard grenade, or as an action, they can be timed to explode in one to three rounds. It will take the detonation of two frag grenades at the base of the pillar (either simultaneously or one after the other) for it and the ceiling to fall. If the heroes run out of grenades, they can always use the military blaster carbines to bring down the Queen, possibly with bonuses for aiming or shooting to the head. Don't forget to add the bonus for Huge!

If the ceiling falls, the heroes have two rounds (two chances) to leave the room before it all crashes down on them! Have each hero make an Agility roll to sprint out of the cavern and into the tunnel. If the roll fails, the hero can make an Agility (-2) roll the next round to escape. After the second round, the entire ceiling of the cavern falls, burying K'ret'h, the Queen and any unlucky heroes!

★ **K'ret'h:** Use K'ree'l Keeper stats. See page 191.

★ **K'ree'l Queen:** See page 192.

TERRAIN

* **Greenish Rocks:** The pyramid-like rocks that dot the cavern amplify the Queen's psionic thoughts and thus allow her to give orders to Hatchlings all over the planet. Any character that successfully focuses a psionic attack power at a rock may then have the power emanate from the rock's location. This gives the attacker either a +2 to the Damage roll or (in the case of an Area attack), or an increase in the size of the Burst Template (In the case

of the *burst* power, the cone template is released from the rock in the direction the caster chooses, and receives a +2 bonus to Damage). Heroes with psionic powers can make a free Psionics roll to detect that the rocks have Psionic properties and to deduce how to use them. Additionally, given the large amount of Psionic energy stored in each rock, whenever one of these rocks is damaged (Toughness 10) it explodes, affecting every character within a Medium Burst Template centered on the rock with 3d6 psionic damage.

* **Egg Piles:** The eggs will not hatch (yet); however, the Queen is obsessive about protecting her offspring. Any hero who touches, attacks or damages an egg, will gain the Queen's immediate attention. She will focus on attacking that hero if possible. This might be useful to lure the Queen into certain areas of the cavern.

SCENE 4: PLIGHT OF THE ORPHANS

As the ceiling of the cavern collapses, you barely manage to avoid getting crushed by untold tons of rock. You struggle to breathe as the ground and walls around you shake. Simultaneously, an intense shriek of pain, accompanied by an immensely powerful psionic pulse, penetrates the rock and reaches out to almost every corner of this immense system of caves. The Queen is dead!

As the dust begins to settle and

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

*you marvel at still being alive, even if you are trapped miles under the surface of Vaalbarax, you realize the continuous chirping sounds are being replaced by pained, disorderly chatter. The fallen rocks in front of you, where the Queen's cavern used to be, begin to shake and move. Right before your eyes, dozens, then hundreds, then **thousands** of small Hatchling legs begin to push at the rocks from below. Cracked by the falling debris, the eggs have hatched! Without the psionic influence of their Queen to control them, you see the crazed beings surface as a ravenous horde of insects, ready to destroy everything in their path!*

As you turn and run towards the surface, you realize the eruption of thoughtless beings you've unleashed could be even more destructive for Vaalbarax than the invasion you've faced up until now!

This is a Chase for the heroes' lives!

Make it clear to the heroes that they have no chance of defeating the hatchlings in combat. They must escape!

This will be a very abstract chase. Place eight markers on the table to represent the path from the cavern up to the surface. Place the heroes on the first marker. The horde (comprised of tens of thousands of crazed K'rree'l hatchlings) begins off the track. It has an Agility of d10, and begins to roll to enter the chase in the second round.

The heroes may try to damage the horde with area attacks (lobbing a grenade, for example). Any such attack directed at the horde from within one Range Increment automatically hits (remember that attacking and moving incurs a multiple action penalty). If the damage from the attack exceeds 10 points of damage, the horde is thrown into chaos for a while; their next Agility roll to move has a penalty of -2.

A particularly valiant hero may also buy time for the group by singlehandedly facing the entire horde in melee (a very "Pulpy" thing to do!): From *within the same Range Increment* as the horde, a hero may make a Shooting, Fighting or Psionics roll against the enemy. With a Failure, the hero does nothing to the horde and takes 4d6 damage. With a success, the hero suffers 3d6 damage, but manages to slow the horde slightly (-2 to the horde's next Agility roll). With a raise, the hero suffers 2d6 damage, but manages to slow the horde quite a bit (-4 to the horde's next Agility roll). With two or more raises, the hero slows the horde significantly (-4 to the horde's next Agility roll) and emerges unscathed! Regardless of the results of the roll, any hero who tries to singlehandedly stop the horde certainly deserves a Benny for his bravery! Note that any area attacks directed at the horde while a hero shares the same Range Increment also affect the hero.

If the horde begins its turn in a Range Increment occupied by a hero or moves ahead of him, that hero automatically receives 3d6 damage at the *end* of the current round. Any character who becomes Incapacitated

while within the horde is subject to a Finishing Move at the end of the next round unless he is dragged clear of the horde. This requires a comrade to have enough movement to venture onto the same marker and move ahead of the horde by the end of the round.

Fourth Marker: When the heroes reach the fourth marker, they find a weak section of the cave. A hero can throw a frag grenade at the wall to cause a rock slide, thus slowing the horde. With a successful Throwing roll you may add an extra marker between the third and fourth markers. If this happens, the marker numbers in the next few paragraphs needs to be increased by one. Note that throwing the frag grenade counts as an action and thus may incur a multiple action penalty.

Sixth Marker: When the heroes reach the fifth marker, they receive a transmission on their wrist computers:

"This is Commander Fereggel. Boy, am I glad to see you're still alive! A platoon of us is waiting on the surface, but we don't think it'll be enough against whatever it is you're bringing up with you! We've set up some explosive charges in the upper levels of the cave, but our demolitions team was killed by Hatchlings before they could trigger them. We need you to get that bomb timer going on your way up. That way we'll be able to stop these monsters once and for all. You're almost there, now let's blow this thing and go home!"

Seventh Marker: When the heroes

reach this marker, they find the cave has collapsed, making it difficult (but not impossible) to continue. Add an additional marker to the end of the track.

Next-to-Last Marker: When the heroes reach this marker, they find two large tanks marked with danger signs, connected to a small computer (obviously the ignition device). With a successful Smarts (-2) or Repair roll the heroes can set the timer. This counts as an action. The "timer" is abstractly set for whenever the heroes exit the caverns.

Assuming the heroes cross the last marker before the horde, and have armed the bombs, read the following:

As you leap out of the cave onto the surface, a colossal underground explosion shakes everything around you! The noise deafens you as you are blown across the broken street. You see the startled faces of hundreds of Vaalbaran soldiers, and a grinning Commander Fereggel, before the ground drops beneath your feet. For a few moments, you're disoriented, but then you come to your senses and realize, the K'rree'l have been buried alive! Their Queen is dead! You've won!

As the Commander helps you all back on your feet, you look at the ruins around you and breathe a sigh of relief. The damage has been significant, but the Vaalbarans will rebuild... and survive.

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

AFTERMATH

It still takes a few days to completely pacify all of Vaalbarax, but the K'rree'l have been defeated once and for all. The heroes are honored by a grateful government and population. Admiral Thorus finally arrives with the remains of the fleet and announces that a peace treaty with the Rennarians has been signed, and an official apology for the war has been issued. Professor Valdinus' reputation is restored, his research is vindicated, and his scientific zeal rewarded with the highest honors in the land. The VSS's role in the conspiracy is uncovered, and the institution disgraced.

The Vaalbaran authorities reward the heroes with \$10,000. Any damage to the *Blazing Star* is repaired free of charge. If the heroes lost their ship in the battle, the Vaalbarans recover it from the debris field and restore it. In the future, the heroes will have a +2 Charisma bonus when interacting with any Vaalbarans. Note that the heroes must return all the military weapons they took.

As for the K'rree'l, supposedly they've all been eliminated, but perhaps one or two wily Keepers remain alive, hidden by their chameleon fields... Quietly plotting revenge...

THE CAST

SOLDIER

The typical soldier found fighting wars across the known galaxy.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal.

Edges: Combat Reflexes.

Gear: Armored vest (+2), blaster carbine (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), 1 x stun grenade (Range 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT, non-lethal).

VAALBARAN SECRET SERVICE (VSS) AGENT

Vaalbaran Secret Service Agents are strong, imposing humanoids dressed in black, custom-tailored, formal clothing, and sporting dark sunglasses – very much the stereotypical sinister government agent. Feared by every other Vaalbaran, including the police, they are known for being cunning, ruthless and lethal.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Investigation d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Mean.

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Dodge.

Gear: Light armored vest (+1, under clothes), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto), 2

x stun grenades (Range 5/10/20; Damage 3d6, MBT, non-lethal), pain staff (Str+d4; -1 to recover from Shaken).

Special Abilities:

* **Extremely Strong Willed:** VSS Agents are fanatically devoted to their organization, and trained to resist all forms of torture and interrogation. Captured VSS Agents will not reveal any details about their plans, goals, organization, or anything else that might be of help to the heroes. Treat this as the Strong Willed Edge, except that Intimidation and Taunt rolls against the Agents done outside of combat automatically fail.

VSS SECURITY GUARD

Run of the mill rent-a-guards, trained to perform operations whenever and wherever deadly force is necessary.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Light armored vest (+1, under clothes), Blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto), pain staff (Str+d4; -1 to recover from Shaken).

K'RREE'L HATCHLING

K'rree'l hatchlings are insectoid creatures with a spiked upper carapace, about the size of a very large dog. Their thorax is similar to that of a praying mantis, with one pair of limbs,

while the lower body resembles that of a spider, but with six legs. They have six eyes framing a featureless 'face.' Hatchlings are violent and ravenous, and usually only controlled by psionic commands from the Keepers and their Queen.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

Bite: Str+d4

* **Arcane Resistance (Psionics):** K'rree'l hatchlings add +2 to Trait rolls when resisting opposed psionic powers. This only applies to enemy powers, not "friendly" uses of the power (like *armor*, for example).

* **Poison:** A target successfully wounded or Shaken by a K'rree'l hatchling must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of paralyzing venom. The victim suffers one level of Fatigue. This condition lasts for an hour.

* **Thermal Vision:** K'rree'l hatchlings see body heat, so they ignore light modifiers to notice living targets.

* **Wall Crawler:** Thanks to their spider-like legs, K'rree'l hatchlings can walk on vertical or inverted surfaces at their standard Pace.



K'RREE'L KEEPER

K'rree'l Keepers are larger, sturdier versions of Hatchlings. They typically awaken a few months before the K'rree'l Queen's eggs are about to hatch, and are charged with taking care of their Queen and making sure everything

D.T.S.L. ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM 2

goes smoothly. All Keepers have powerful psionic powers and a special chameleon ability that effectively renders them invisible. Using their powers, the Keepers have infiltrated Vaalbaran society and mind-controlled key members of the civilian and military structure. They usually accompany their puppet while invisible, manipulating their actions while forcing the war between the Vaalbarans and the Rennarians.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Psionics d10, Stealth d10, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Improved Arcane Resistance (Psionics), Combat Reflexes, Command, Dodge.

Special Abilities:

* **Arcane Resistance (Psionics):** Keepers add +2 to Trait rolls when resisting opposed Psionic powers. This only applies to enemy powers, not “friendly” uses of the power (like armor, for example).

Puppet: Keepers can use puppet as many times as they want, and for an indefinite duration. The power takes several minutes to work, though, and thus is not applicable during combat.

* **Armor +3:** Strong carapace.

* **Chameleon Field:** Keepers are able to “cloak” their bodies to the visual wavelengths of light. This part-physical/part-psionic ability behaves like an invisibility power of unlimited duration with a Raise.

* **Fear (-1):** Assuming they choose to make themselves visible, the alien

Keepers are terrifying indeed.

* **Powers:** 1 x *armor* (translucent force field), 2 x *bolt* (telekinetically throws surrounding objects at the enemy), 2 x *burst* (mental wave crashes against targets’ mind), 2 x *entangle* (mind web), 1 x *deflection* (telekinesis), 2 x *stun* (telekinetic surge).

* **Psionics:** Keepers have no Power Points, but instead can use a Power a fixed number of times. Powers with a normal duration of (3/1) or (3/2) last three rounds, with the exception of puppet, which lasts indefinitely.

* **Psychic Death Scream:** When killed, Keepers emit a strong psychic scream. Every non K’ree’l located within a Large Burst Template centered on the dying Keeper must make a Spirit (-2) roll or be Shaken.



K’REE’L QUEEN

This enormous monster (the size of a small T-Rex) retains some of the features of K’ree’l Hatchlings and Keepers, but is more akin to a spider than a praying mantis. Queens live for many generations, usually thousands of years. After laying her millions of eggs, the Queen hibernates until the next 500-year cycle. Once her eggs begin hatching, the Queen psionically directs them to feed and gather food from the planetary surface. When the hatchlings have fed, they return to the “nest” carrying food. The Queen then consumes the food and, sometimes, also feeds off her own offspring.

Queens transmit strong bursts

of psionic energy, which control the Hatchlings and give them a small semblance of order. Most hatchlings can't conceive of an existence without the Queen's psionic hum, and thus would go crazy if the Queen died.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+5, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 17 (4)

Special Abilities:

Armor+4: The K'rree'l queen has very thick skin.

- * **Arcane Resistance (Psionics):** The K'rree'l Queen adds +2 to trait rolls when resisting opposed Psionic powers. This only applies to enemy powers, not to "friendly" uses of the pow-

er (like *armor*, for example).

- * **Bite:** Str+d10, AP 2.
- * **Claws:** Str+d8. The K'rree'l queen's clawed legs have reach 3.
- * **Heavy Armor:** The K'rree'l queen can only be damaged by Heavy Weapons.
- * **Huge:** Attackers gain +4 to Shooting and Fighting roll against the K'rree'l queen due to her enormous size.
- * **Improved Sweep:** The claw attack of the K'rree'l queen affects all the opponents in the area.
- * **Size+6:** The K'rree'l queen is about 40 feet long and 20 feet tall (about the size of a T-Rex).
- * **Thermal vision:** The queen sees body heat, so she ignores the light's modifier to notice living targets.



THE BLACK GUARDIANS



THE STEALER OF LIGHT



DEADLY CHANT



THE DOOMSDAY WAR

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