

DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES

SECTOR #01

INTRODUCTION

Daring Tales of the Space Lanes (DTSL) is a series of adventures set in a distant galaxy. This supplement, while designed to let GMs expand the DTSL universe to include their own adventures, can be used with most any sci-fi setting with only a little work, regardless of rules system. Each Sector *Galaxy Guide* supplement includes data on ten planets, as well as new rules suitable for most *Savage Worlds* sci-fi campaigns.

BUREAU OF SECTOR TRANSFER & REGISTRATION

Up until the rise of the 9th Galactic Alliance, the galaxy was something of a bureaucratic mess. As previous Galactic Alliances expanded the borders of known space, new worlds were added to the bureaucratic regions in a haphazard manner, with new sectors springing up left, right, and center. Many of the older core sectors boasted three dozen densely populated worlds, for instance, while newer ones out on the galactic rim numbered only a handful of worlds with minimal population. To help sort out the mess, and make the wheels of galactic bureaucracy run just a little smoother, the Alliance founded the Bureau of Sector Transfer and Registration (known as STAR). The bureau's task was to remold the sector boundaries into something more manageable.

For convenience, each sector was drawn up to include ten inhabited worlds and as many uninhabited worlds as happened to fall between the populated planets. While each world retained an Alliance representative, overseeing each sector was a single Galactic Sector Administrator, an official with the power to settle local disputes without dragging the entire Alliance into long-winded debates.

Although that system of governance has long since been abandoned, the use of sectors remains entrenched across the galaxy. However, aliens have a tendency to settle unpopulated worlds, which throws the whole system out of kilter. Despite the idea of Galactic Alliances being long abandoned, the STAR survives. Millennia on, it still continues to redefine space to ensure everything fits the ten-world model, publishing its new *Galaxy Guides* every few decades. This range of supplements is the latest galactic catalog, defining the current worlds of the sectors as they stand today.

Sector 01 was chosen as the centre of the galaxy point not because it contained the capital of the Alliance, the most powerful worlds, or the greatest population centers, but because of the Depository, the vast data storage terminal for every Alliance member world. Although the sector maps have been drawn and redrawn countless times down the ages, the Depository remains the numeric center of the galaxy.

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THE DEPOSITORY

Planet Type: Satellite*

Dominant Terrain: Urban

Temperature: Temperate

Gravity: Earthlike

Atmosphere: Normal

Hydrosphere: 0%

Function: Academic

Government: Autocracy, Oppressive

Population Level: 1 (native), crowded (visitors)

Technology: Space Age

Starport Rating: 3-star

** All data pertains to the interior of the moon. The surface is a barren, lifeless world with no atmosphere.*

THE WORLD

Praxilarti Alpha-Nine-Delta, a small moon by galactic standards, orbits the gas giant Thovrinn in the Bandaharl star system. Cold and lifeless on the outside, Praxilarti teems with life inside, for within the hollowed out core of the satellite is the Depository, the largest collection of data anywhere in the galaxy.

Clustered around the surface starport are numerous habitation domes for patrons of the Depository. From here, elevator shafts lead deep into the core, where the data visitors are here to access is stored.

Concealed within hundreds of temperature and humidity controlled chambers are countless rows of memory data banks, as well as more archaic and esoteric forms of data storage, such as printed and handwritten manuscripts, engraved stones, holograms, photographs, hieroglyphs, and knotted cords.

Given that there are a million or more inhabited worlds in the galaxy, many of whom have history stretching back tens of thousands of years, the amount of data stored in the Depository is truly mind-numbing. The energy output of the central reactor core is equally astounding.

HISTORY

The galaxy is a big place. During the time of the 12th Galactic Alliance, some 15,000 years ago, it was decided to create a central information depository in which every race could deposit cultural and scientific information for the betterment of the Alliance, continued galactic cooperation and unity, and to ensure cultural information could never be lost due to global catastrophe. In other words, all the aliens got together and created a really big library.

Even during the Alliance's heyday, cultural, political, and religious bias was rife. In order to ensure the knowledge remained pure and was not subject to censorship, the decision was taken to remove oversight of the library from organic beings.

Since its inception the entire Depository has been

controlled by the Head Librarian, an artificial intelligence whose function it is to collect, correlate, and cross-reference all the information of the galaxy. Aiding him is a veritable army of small robots known as Librarians.

CURRENT ERA

A cantankerous beast at the best of times, the Head Librarian rules with absolute authority. Over time it has become less a manager and more an autocratic dictator. Those who break the Depository's rules, especially the one on speaking above a whisper, are harshly punished. Over the years it has punished violators by sealing their rooms and switching off the air supply, blowing up their starships, and issuing galactic wide bounties on their heads.

Slightly demented after 30 millennia sorting data, the Head Librarian has divided topics time and time again in a bid to reduce searching for a topic to an absolute minimum. Sadly, this good intention has created a monstrosity of a filing system that even its Librarians have trouble understanding.

While in a conventional library all works of poetry are grouped together, for instance, in the Depository one finds sections such as "love poetry involving two different alien species which ends badly for the male party" and "war poetry involving sub-hyperdrive capable cultures for conflicts which lasted ten years."

Worse, none of the data storage areas actually allow data transfer to and from each other from public terminals (a security measure designed to prevent viruses from spreading). If you need to cross-reference an entry under a different highly specialized topic, you need to go to another data storage area. Since these are located dozens of miles apart for reasons of additional security, that means patrons must make use of the many high-speed elevators that run throughout the moon's interior.

Note that while data may be accessed for free, it may not be copied onto any storage media. This is a rule the Head Librarian instituted centuries ago to prevent another being from simply coming in, stealing all the information, and setting up a new facility. The Head Librarian may be a computer, but it is extremely protective of the data it watches over.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- The Head Librarian mistakenly believes one of the heroes withdrew a book from the library 10,000 years ago. Given that there have been a number of data thefts in recent months, it figures the character might be willing to help it. The hero is given two choices: discover who is stealing data from the library or be issued with a colossal fine for late return of the book.

Played for laughs, the guilty party is actually a mad Librarian, who is censoring certain works it views as heretical, unsociable, or just plain rude. More seriously, the data being stolen might be enough for a madman to create a super weapon.

THE HUB

Planet Type: Space Station
Dominant Terrain: Urban
Temperature: Temperate
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Normal
Hydrosphere: 0%
Function: Trade
Government: Plutocracy, Permissive
Population Level: Crowded
Technology: Space Age
Starport Rating: 4-star down to 1-star.

THE WORLD

The Hub is a vast space station floating in high orbit over the desert world of Calthis III. Within the jumbled morass of structures that form the immense space station are warehouses, docking bays and repair facilities, offices and negotiation suites, habitats, bars, restaurants, and casinos, armories and prison cells, medical facilities, and shops and markets.

The only thing The Hub lacks is any form of industry outside of commerce and ship and crew servicing. It is a grand structure that manufactures absolutely nothing, yet grows richer each day.

HISTORY

Calthis III is a low-tech world inhabited by disparate tribes of warlike nomads who spend much of their time squabbling over the precious water sources. While the surface of Calthis III has nothing to interest outsiders, several major shipping routes pass close to the system.

Many centuries ago an enterprising band of merchants realized they could shave time off their cargo runs, and thus increase profits, by making more runs in the same time, if there was a neutral port of call to which their cargoes could be delivered. Merchants seeking their cargoes could then purchase them without having to make the long trip to the source world. Thus was born The Hub. Although The Hub has grown considerably in size, its purpose has remained static since its creation.

While the hub has open markets and a thriving black market, it also boasts a gray market. The gray market exists only in the station's computer banks. Buyers and sellers trade online through an automated middle man program and a complex encryption system, which ensures anonymity at all times. Once monies have changed hands, gray cargoes are maneuvered from buyer to seller by robotic lifters, whose memories are programmed to automatically and instantly erase all trace of their source and destination.

Quite why the gray market sprang up is long forgotten, but it serves those who do not wish to be known to be buying or selling certain cargoes. Attempts to discover who is trading a gray cargo, or fraudulently using the

system to sell nonexistent shipments, is ruthlessly investigated and punished by the station's security force.

In order to ensure the station as never owned by a single power, a governmental system based on multiple individuals was set up. Each year, the 19 permanent residents with the highest bank balances are automatically elected to the Trade Advisory Council, The Hub's ruling government.

Sex, species, color, number of tentacles, religion, and criminal record are irrelevant details when it comes to election, for on The Hub money talks loudest.

CURRENT ERA

The Hub's business is business. More specifically, it is trade that gives the station its *raison d'être*.

The government largely stays out of daily affairs. So long as taxes are paid on time and the sanctity of The Hub's neutrality in matters of galactic politics is maintained, the government keeps out of private affairs. As a result crime, while not deliberately encouraged, is not actively discouraged. The police and security force don't have much to do beyond breaking up fights and thwarting the occasional lunatic who wants to blow up the space station.

As well as specializing in every conceivable trade good, The Hub is a focus for information brokers, rumormongers, and spies. Vast streams of public information are broadcast around the station, allowing traders to keep up with distant galactic affairs and stock markets, while in dark corners traders can buy and sell secrets not intended for public dissemination.

The recent attack on The Hub by rogue elements within the Confederated Worlds of the Braxian Star League caused extensive damage. Working around the clock, repair teams have all-but repaired the station, though taxation has risen to cover the costs. The Hub's defense system has also been heavily upgraded, with new laser cannon turrets, missile launchers, and a dedicated fighter wing equipped with torpedoes capable of smashing even heavy battle cruisers.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- It was intended to be a simple job. All the heroes had to do was intercept a cargo before it was loaded onto a ship and keep an eye on it until the patron could arrange a pickup. Unfortunately, the cargo was gray and the heroes have been identified. Hunted by station security, the heroes have to somehow lie low until their patron can smuggle them out; something easier said than done when information sells on The Hub.

- A patron hires the spacefarers to make contact with an information broker and purchase a data crystal. Several other parties are also interested in the information, and they don't intend to pay. A malfunction in the mass transit system forces the heroes to make their way across The Hub on foot, a lengthy journey at the best of times, but far worse when you're being hunted.

INGENOS

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Dominant Terrain: Plain
Temperature: Hot
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrosphere: 39%
Function: Manufacturing
Government: Timocracy, Popular (civil war)
Population Level: Average
Technology: Space Age (just)
Starport Rating: 2-star

THE WORLD

Ingenos is a world of contrasts. The glittering glass and concrete cities of its industrial heartland stand out in stark contrast against the immense plains of purple grassland that sweep across the planet. Clashing with the grass are many light turquoise lakes, for Ingenos has no true oceans, and colossal rivers.

A high-technology world, Ingenos manufactures a wide range of components and finished goods of an exceptionally high quality. Its crystal storage chips, as an example, hold twice as much data as chips from other worlds and so fetch higher prices.

HISTORY

Ingenos was settled thousands of generations ago, during the Great Diaspora which followed the Star-Killer War (so named because rival powers eradicated star systems by exploding their stars). The earliest settlers claimed huge tracts of land as their private domains, but welcomed new refugees as tenants.

Within a few generations the planet was a patchwork quilt of rich landowners, poor tenants, and unclaimed land. Eventually the world became so populated that feudalism, the then governmental structure, collapsed under its own weight.

It was decided to instigate timocracies, a governmental system that rewarded not personal wealth or charisma, but those whose lands produced the most for society. The world was divided into eight districts, each of which would be a self-governing entity, linked to the others through trade and political alliances.

While around 35% of the land in each timocratic state was held by individuals, the remainder lay unclaimed. These great swathes were promptly claimed by the office of government (rather than individuals in power) and set aside for governmental use.

CURRENT ERA

Ingenos remains a world governed by the eight timocracies. Any citizen who owns property can vote in government elections, but in order to actually stand for

government a candidate's lands must meet a certain minimum financial output.

The great majority of citizens do not own any property, being tenants of the rich landowners, and therefore have no say in how their society is governed. However, anyone can strive to earn property, and this is the defining nature of the government system.

Service of 20+ years in a public office, religious, or military post is rewarded with a small plot of land, which gives the citizen the right to decide who enters government. Property can also be awarded for other reasons, such as scientific breakthroughs, charitable work, and such like. Once a year, the ruling government issues the Society Benefit List, naming those whose contribution to the betterment of society has been rewarded with property.

Unfortunately, Ingenos' population has continued to grow at an alarming rate. So much land has been awarded over the centuries that the spare land available to governments is rapidly dwindling. Should it run out, the government will have no carrot to bait the stick and the entire basis of "work means citizenship" will collapse, likely leading to a radical change in government. Naturally, those in power wish to remain in power.

With no other option but to claim land from rival nations, the world descended into an eight-way civil war fifteen years ago. Although a bloody affair, the war does have a large amount of civility. Hostilities cease for religious and public holidays, and the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons is banned (no one wants land you can't live on). Unfortunately, this civility is tempered with genocide; the war is about capturing land one can give away to one's own people, and that means getting rid of existing inhabitants.

Each of the eight states has a starport. Before the war these were rated 5-star. The combatants have deliberately targeted each others' starports to reduce their capacity for importing and exporting goods in a bid to destroy their rivals' economy and prevent outside reinforcements being shipped in.

Ingenos is still exporting as much as it can, and those willing to brave the hostilities can earn rich rewards.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- A faction of one of the governments intends to stop the war by deploying nuclear weapons inside each capital city. Once the governments witness the devastation, and hear the threat to irradiate great expanses of habitable land, they are sure to sue for peace. Of course, millions will die, but such is the price of lasting peace.

- Rogue elements within the Miners Guild, who have long had their eyes on Ingenos, have struck a deal with one of the factions. In return for supplying weapons and troops, the Guild is to receive large parcels of land once the war is over. Word of this has reached the ears of the Galactic Trade Council, who sent agents to investigate the claims. Since they failed to return, the Council is seeking more expendable assets to repeat the mission.

KARAKORAMIS

Planet Type: Terrestrial

Dominant Terrain: Plateau

Temperature: Temperate

Gravity: Earthlike

Atmosphere: Normal

Hydrosphere: 65%

Function: Academic (plateau), Disaster Zone (flats)

Government: Meritocracy, Secretive (plateau); Military, Tyrannical (flats)

Population Level: Crowded (plateau); Sparse (flats)

Technology: Space Age (plateau); Iron Age (flats)

Starport Rating: 3-Star

THE WORLD

Eons ago the world of Karakoramis was subjected to massive volcanic eruptions. Eventually the molten rock cooled, leaving behind an immense plateau that towered over the surrounding landscape. In time, the lava surface eroded to fertile dust, and life blossomed. Separated from the lowlands, the continent-sized plateau developed its own unique ecosystem.

The lowlands are today classified as a Grade 1 Hazardous Area, meaning they are extremely dangerous. Visitors are cautioned to avoid them at all costs.

HISTORY

Karakoramis was settled many millennia ago by human colonists. Some chose to live on the plateau, while others settled on the lower ground. Over the generations two distinct cultures emerged. Though different in many ways, they traded openly and interbred. Then came the Great Plague, which wiped out much of the lowland culture. The survivors became wild and bestial, cannibal savages who knew only bloodshed. At least that is the official story told in the great city atop the plateau.

The two cultures had grown disparate, with mercantile disputes eventually turning to open warfare. As the war dragged on, the plateau-dwellers, whose resources were more finite, sought to end the conflict with one decisive strike. They unleashed a mutagenic plague into the lowlands.

The plan was to destroy the enemy's natural environment, forcing them to sue for peace. But the plague rapidly mutated, transforming the citizens into wild savages and warping the ecosystem; animals became frenzied beasts, while the flora rapidly evolved deadly spores and thorns. Driven by a terrible hunger for flesh, the lowlanders turned on each other in an orgy of destruction and death. The plateau dwellers had won, but at a terrible price.

According to census records submitted by the Council of the Wise, the ruling body of plateau, no one lives in the lowland regions. Animal and plant life are extremely dangerous, and the soil is infested with plague. For these

reasons, the entire lowlands have been declared a disaster zone, off-limits to all sentient beings.

CURRENT ERA

Dominating the skyline of the plateau is the vast Ivory Tower, wherein live the elite. Sprawling across the rest of the plateau are countless suburbs and slums. Within the Tower are hundreds of research laboratories devoted to the sciences. Knowledge gleaned is sold to corporations, while rich families send their scions here to learn from some of the wisest scientists in the galaxy.

All children are rigorously tested in the sciences. Those who score highly are taken from their families to be educated within the Ivory Tower. Those who step foot into the Ivory Tower are rarely seen again, for everything they desire is found within its walls.

The Council of the Wise, a meritocracy, still rules here. Only those with advanced scientific knowledge are permitted to sit on it, and new members are appointed based on academic achievements over the course of their lives. While they pass themselves off as enlightened and benevolent, the members harbor a terrible secret (and not just the truth about the Great Plague). The plateau is overcrowded, and every new mouth to feed places an increased burden on the plateau's dwindling agricultural land. Rather than turn to outside help, the Council chose to walk a dark path.

Those who dwell in the suburbs and slums are automatically entered into a lottery each year. The lucky winners are informed they have been chosen to work in the Ivory Tower, albeit in a mundane service role. However, being sent to the Tower means a life without want, even if it does mean leaving behind one's family. Unfortunately the lottery is a sham. The winners are processed and then secretly shipped off to the lowlands to die a horrible death.

What the plateau-dwellers don't know is the lowlands are still inhabited, and the plague has long burnt itself out. Reduced to a state of barbarism, the lowlands have slowly dragged themselves back up the technological ladder to a state resembling the Iron Age. The ecosystem is still heavily tainted, though, and in order to survive the citizens have become militaristic, their societies ruled by brutal warrior chiefs. Many lottery winners end up killed by the environment, as intended, but some are fortunate enough to be found by one of the many tribes.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- A shuttle carrying lottery winners has crashed in the dangerous lowlands. One of the pilots is the granddaughter of one of the Council members, and he'll do most anything to get her back. Unable to hire local security agents (the truth about the lottery is kept to a very select few), he turns to outsiders to find the missing girl. Unwilling to risk the strangers ever learning the truth, he naturally intends to have them killed once they complete their task.

KEREXI IV

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Dominant Terrain: Crystals
Temperature: Temperature
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Normal
Hydrosphere: 57%
Function: Mining
Government: Geriocracy, Popular
Population Level: Overcrowded
Technology: Space Age
Starport Rating: 2-star

THE WORLD

Kerexi IV is a world covered in magnificent, multi-hued crystal growths. Over the eons, water from its mineral-rich seas fell as rain, promoting crystalline growths across the entire planet. Vast “forests” of crystal columns, shimmering deserts made up of a crystal carpet, and towering peaks formed by growths merging into a super-crystal cover the landscape.

Kerexi’s fauna (it has no flora) has evolved to feed off these crystals, their powerful jaws and strong stomach acid breaking down the crystals and extracting valuable nutrients.

HISTORY

Discovered by explorers millennia ago, Kerexi’s mineral wealth has long been exploited. During the Trade Wars, the planet was placed under the jurisdiction of the Galactic Trade Council to prevent its crystal wealth being exploited by the various combatants. Years later, when the Urk warlords began their rampage through the galaxy, its defenses were reinforced to prevent it falling into enemy hands.

Full independence was finally earned after the Galactic Accord was signed. Under the terms of the agreement Kerexi’s mineral wealth would be hers to control and protect, with any attempts to take its treasures by force or subterfuge an act of open warfare against the planets of the galaxy. Although much has changed in the galaxy since, the Galactic Accord holds strong.

The inhabitants of Kerexi are strong proponents that age breeds wisdom. To that end, their government is a council of elders. On reaching the age of 65, a citizen automatically qualifies for a seat in the General Assembly. Taking a seat is optional, but since no elections take place it is the only chance a citizen has to affect how the planet is governed.

This ageism flows through the whole of society. Certain careers and promotions are only open to those of a certain age, regardless of qualifications or experience. Military promotions, as an example, are automatically gained upon reaching a given age, and senior corporate heads must all be aged 50+ to hold the post.

CURRENT ERA

Kerexi’s crystals are its primary source of wealth (tourism comes a distant second). While many of the growths are useless, certain deposits are invaluable resources.

Shimmergems, for example, emit a powerful ultrasonic burst and blinding light when exposed to energy, and form a key component in stunner weapons. Memglims are capable of holding electronic data, and are the base for memory crystals. A wide range of crystals are ground into focusing lens for laser weapons, though the market has suffered a serious downturn since blasters were invented.

Despite relentless pressure from the Miners Guild, the mining companies have remained independent entities, answerable only to their respective board of directors. Competition between the Kerexian companies is fierce, and not without plenty of underhanded tactics.

Rather than try to land bulk freighters on the planet, the mining corporations of Kerexi IV took a different approach. Ships pull into high orbit and place an order for cargo pods of crystals. Once payment is received, the pods are launched from the planet surface by huge rail-guns, which magnetically propel the pods into orbit. The freighters then collect the pods and load them into their holds. Huge areas above the planet are out of bounds to traffic for this very reason—the pods present a very serious hazard to spacecraft.

Due to most traffic remaining in orbit, Kerexi has a poor quality planetary starport. Its magnificent crystal landscape may be a lure for tourists, but the poor infrastructure hampers this business opportunity. The General Assembly is currently trying to pass legislation (for the 9th time) forcing the mining companies to donate wealth for the purposes of upgrading the starport facilities, but resistance is strong (after all, the companies gain no benefit from tourism) and lobbying has managed to stall the vote for several years.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- Several cases of focusing gems necessary for the construction of laser swords, a weapon widely banned across the galaxy, have been stolen from a secure storage facility. Guess who is hired to find the culprits and return the shipment? Alternately, the heroes might be asked, or otherwise persuaded, to steal a pod of these rare and valuable gems.

- The heroes are asked to investigate the disappearance of several freighters. Their investigation of the wreckage eventually leads them to Kerexi IV. A saboteur has been placing plasma charges in the cargo pods, timed to explode once the collecting freighter is safely in hyperspace (ships drop to normal space when the engines stop working). This might be a act of terrorism, a ploy by some foreign power to weaken Kerexi’s economy, or maybe all the shipments were destined for just one world and someone doesn’t want their army receiving new weapons.

LUX III

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Dominant Terrain: Plain
Temperature: Temperature
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Normal
Hydrosphere: 73%
Function: Agriculture & Mining
Government: Bureaucracy, Impersonal
Population Level: Average
Technology: Space Age (just)
Starport Rating: 3-star

THE WORLD

The fertile world of Lux III isn't a popular place with merchants or tourists.

While its endless plains are extensively farmed and produce a wide variety of crops, there isn't much profit in running fruit and vegetables across space, even to famine worlds. Few ships can carry enough cargo to make the run worthwhile. Private mining operations produce Lux-crystals, a rare form of crystal which emits light when shaken or struck violently, but they are more favored as toys rather than components in industrial processes. The paperwork required to export them makes it a low profit venture.

HISTORY

On most worlds, a robot has no more rights than a gun or a flashlight—it is a tool, to be used as the owner dictates. The planet Lux III, however, is not like most worlds. Here droids are treated the same as other citizens, at least on paper. They earned their equal rights a long time ago, though no one quite remembers or cares how they did.

In truth, the robots of Lux are a lowly underclass. Those with jobs perform repetitive line work in factories (work so tedious and boring even the machines get depressed), sweep streets, clean sewers, and perform the dangerous jobs, like handling radioactive waste. They earn a wage, though due to a legal loophole they earn far less than humans.

While most robots are content to be members of society (they are allowed to vote, but only if they have a job), there are plenty who feel that working for biological beings is demeaning.

Centuries ago these robots created a haven called Robot Heights in a section of the capital city. It was supposed to be a robot paradise, a utopia where all mecha-noids were equal and content.

But the robots had learned well from the humans, and the majority quickly realized that their equal share wasn't quite as equal as others. After the experiment with communism failed, the robots tried various forms of government over the years without success, before

descending into outright anarchy, something everyone seemed quite happy with.

As a result, Robot Heights is a rundown, crime ridden slum completely off-limits to biological life forms. Non-droids refer to it as "Tin Town."

CURRENT ERA

Lux III is governed by a vast bureaucracy, and like all bureaucracies it loves paperwork. Every aspect of life is governed by a mountain of forms, stamps, and approvals. While the government proudly claims society runs smoothly, the bureaucratic hoops that must be jumped through to get anything done has caused stagnation.

Like most bureaucracies the wheels grind slowly, but can be increased by judicious application of money. The police are a prime example of this, for on Lux they only respond to and investigate crimes when paid by the victim. Thus, while the wealthy are well-supported by the police, the masses must make do hiring vigilantes or taking the law into their own hands. These options are perfectly legal, so long as one has filled in the correct forms and has them stamped.

No one is entirely sure who actually governs the planet. The bureaucracy certainly handles day-to-day running, but who sets the agenda and oversees the larger aspects of society is a complete mystery. While locals talk of shadowy agencies and secret cabals, the truth is less exciting; the bureaucracy is self-sustaining. Like a ship without a pilot, it chugs along on its current course, unable to change things without input from a captain who doesn't actually exist.

Technologically, Lux III is a generation behind most other space age planets. With no heavy industry of note and crippling paperwork hampering imports, most technology has been patchily repaired by the owners time and time again.

Unemployment is also spiraling out of control, and currently stands at 23%. Though Lux boasts of its equality in treating robots as citizens, their "willingness" to work for low wages has resulted in many living beings being replaced for the cheaper alternative.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

• Although the recent crime spree has ended (see *DTSL #3: Robot Rumble*), the removal of Nor Angwat left a vacuum among robots recruited into his criminal empire. Now a vicious gang war has broken out in Tin Town. As the war escalates, so robots without criminal intentions are being reprogrammed by the criminals to serve as foot soldiers. Without cheap workers, companies are being forced to hire humans at higher wages. The heroes, who have experience in Tin Town, are paid to end the gang war before Lux's economy is ruined.

• A dangerous galactic fugitive has hidden in Tin Town. Unwilling to enter the notorious slum, the galactic cops decide to hire adventurers with previous experience of the troubled city.

MALEBRANCHE

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Dominant Terrain: Volcanic
Temperature: Very Hot
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Toxic
Hydrosphere: 6%
Function: Mining
Government: Corporate, Impersonal
Population Level: Average
Technology: Space Age
Starport Rating: 2-star

THE WORLD

Viewed from orbit, Malebranche is a sulfurous yellow ball pockmarked with oozing sores spewing orange-red streams. Vast seas, fed by rivers of lava, shed an unearthly red glow. Powerful lightning storms flash and glitter across the sky. Intense thermal currents, raging storms, clouds of choking ash, and reduced visibility make landing far from routine.

Hellish-looking from orbit, the world is even worse once one is on the surface. Outside of the habitats, survival suits are a requirement, for the air is heavily-laden with highly acidic sulfurous fumes capable of dissolving flesh, and fine ash particles which clog the lungs. Temperatures hover around 95 F. Those foolish enough to wander the planet must tread carefully, for pools of hot mud, thin veneers of cooled lava beneath which rage molten rivers, acid rain, showers of bomblets, and lava geysers await the unwary traveler.

HISTORY

Though Malebranche's hellish appearance seems unchanged since the planet was formed, until four centuries ago it was a lush jungle world inhabited by a race known only as the Hive.

While the Hive were peaceful farmers, their world was home to the insane scientist Draxa Val, a cyborg who saw the future galaxy dominated not by beings of flesh driven by emotions and desires, but of steel and plastic fuelled by cold, hard, inescapable logic. In secret, he constructed a vast army of robot soldiers and vehicles, eventually unleashing them on an unsuspecting galaxy.

The Machine Wars, as they came to be known, raged for a century. The ravaged planets of the galaxy, led by the Belgorth Dominancy, finally rallied and struck back. World after world was liberated as the robotic army fell back in disarray toward Malebranche.

At last, after decades of war, the Dominancy's powerful battle fleet slipped quietly in orbit above Malebranche. The Hive pleaded for clemency, desperately trying to explain they had nothing to do with the robotic armies that had ravaged the galaxy, but their pleas fell on deaf ears. For an entire year, the Dominancy's space fleet

bombarded the planet, blasting away the entire surface to expose the mantle beneath.

CURRENT ERA

Scattered across the surface are dozens of habitats and industrial complexes, ugly, towering constructions built for functionality, not aesthetic appearance. Many of these float on the lava seas or protrude from the shore into the molten rock, protected from the searing heat by shimmering energy shields and held stable by multiple tractor beams.

The current holder of the Galactic Trade Council license to harvest Malebranche is the Miners Guild. Sulfuric acid, the base component of many industrial acids, is collected in vast condensing towers, while rare minerals vital for the construction of hyperdrive cores are processed from fresh lava flows.

Until a few years ago, the only people who came to Malebranche were miners and freighter crews, and the latter rarely stayed long after picking up their consignments. Then the manager of habitat MG-IC-241M hit on a novel idea; tourism!

Renamed The Spa, the habitat has undergone a dramatic face lift, boasting first class accommodation and dining facilities. Here wealthy citizens can relax in warm mud baths, enjoy (or endure) a massage from a four-armed Sleptian masseur, bask in the fiery glow of a lava pool, and tour the dynamic landscape in specially shielded transports.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- Although the Dominancy obliterated the planet, they did not search the rest of the local star system. Hidden deep beneath Malebranche's single moon, Dante, lay an immense, fully-automated robot construction facility.

For centuries it lay dormant, but recently the machinery began to hum into life, slowly churning out an army of robot warriors. Is the machinery responding to some ancient program, or has someone with plans to conquer the galaxy uncovered the war factory? The galaxy may soon find out, for the army is ready to be unleashed!

- Ixar Trikanlanesh, the manager of The Spa, has a problem. Several of the rich clients have recently disappeared into thin air. Unsure who to trust, and eager to avoid a scandal, he hires the heroes to pose as rich guests at the resort. What more could one want than an all-expenses paid trip to a volcanic holiday resort?

- Industrial espionage and sabotage are nothing new to the Miners Guild, for competition is fierce in their business. With the Malebranche mining license up for renewal soon, it seems a rival has taken to sabotaging the industrial complexes in a bid to cause the Guild to lose their hold on the planet.

The Guild hires outsiders to pose as miners and uncover the saboteurs before the Galactic Trade Council convenes to discuss the Malebranche license in four days time!

TANGARN

Planet Type: Terrestrial

Dominant Terrain: Glacial

Temperature: Cold

Gravity: Earthlike

Atmosphere: Normal

Hydrosphere: 0% (no liquid water)

Function: Mining

Government: Representative Democracy, Popular

Population Level: Sparse

Technology: Space Age

Starport Rating: 4-star (capital city), 2-star (other cities)

THE WORLD

Tangarn, the sixth world out from its star, hangs in space like a glitter ball, the pale light from the distant star glittering and twinkling off the planet's icy surface.

Deep survey cores have uncovered signs of plant life from a remote age, indicating Tangarn once had a warmer climate. Now, though, it is locked in a permanent ice age. Although it is bitterly cold all year round, there is minimal precipitation. Tangarn is an active world, crisscrossed by a vast network of very mobile glaciers.

Although Tangarn supports no vegetation, it does have an ecosystem. With no herbivores on which to prey, every creature is a carnivore, engaged in a desperate struggle to eat before being eaten. Among the most dangerous beasts are the terrifying ice worms (specimens have been reported at over 100 yards), the gnarl (a voracious multi-armed fiend adept at ambushing), and the bargyl (flying scavengers willing to attack humans).

HISTORY

Long, long ago Tangarn was a temperate world, replete with forests and swamps. Its native inhabitants, a now extinct race whose existence has never been discovered, were technologically advanced. Yet their skill, desire, and curiosity was not tempered by wisdom. The thought of "should we" was overridden by "could we," a mentality that would spell their eventual doom.

Their greatest achievement was removing the planet's molten core and replacing it with a vast gravimetric engine. In theory, the planet could maneuver through space, though at sublight speeds. An interesting invention perhaps, but one entirely without merit.

During the inaugural ignition something malfunctioned, flinging Tangarn out of orbit and into the distant part of the solar system. By the time the engine was switched off, Tangarn lay far outside the habitable zone. Temperatures plummeted and the world began to freeze. Unable to adapt quickly enough, and for all their technical expertise never mastering hyperdrive technology, the inhabitants of Tangarn were doomed to an icy death.

Their great cities were scoured to rubble by the crush-

ing weight of the glaciers, and what remained became buried beneath the deep ice sheets. And yet deep in the planet's core, the sublight engine survived.

CURRENT ERA

Tangarn's small population (590,000 beings) live in six major cities scattered along the equator, and several hundred mining camps dotted around the globe.

The cities are built atop platforms, their legs sunk through the ever-moving glaciers and anchored to the bedrock far below. Fusion generators in each leg's powerful thermal units melt the glacial ice as it nears the legs, thus preventing the struts from being crushed.

Each city is built as a series of multistory blocks, linked by glass-covered pedestrian walkways and open roads along which skimmers and flitters maneuver.

Moving upward through the blocks one finds powerplants, industrial complexes, offices and commercial districts, and finally the habitation levels right at the very top, away from the din of the powerplants.

The six cities, known colloquially as Districts, are governed by a single parliament of elected officials. Every four years the citizens elect one citizen for every 10,000 to sit in the parliament, which is based in District 001, the capital city. The mining stations are grouped together in Enclaves of as close to 10,000 members as possible. Each Enclave then elects a single politician.

By a quirk of fate, Tangarn's nearest neighbors are all desert worlds. While they lack water, Tangarn is abundant in water ice, a commodity it happily exploits and exports. Although Tangarn could demand a high price for its natural resource, the inhabitants are not greedy by nature—they make enough to live comfortable lives, yet their profits are not so high as to attract the attention of pirates. Not that the inhabitants are overly worried about nosey pirates, for lurking in orbit are dozens of kill-sats, automated sentries each armed with a dozen high-yield atomic missiles.

The hundreds of ice mining stations are smaller versions of the great cities.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- A wealthy alien desires the excitement of a hunt and has chosen Tangarn for his safari. As well as surviving the rigors of the arctic wastes, the heroes must also deal with a gang of pirates intent on kidnapping the patron and holding him to ransom.

- Powerful earthquakes have begun to wrack Tangarn, threatening the stability of the cities. Mining teams tunneled down to the mantle in an attempt to relieve the pressure on the faults, but met with an unexpected obstacle; a wall of impervious metal!

The earthquakes are not natural, but judders from the great engine, which is in the process of restarting. Should it reach critical level, Tangarn would once again be flung far from its orbit, wiping out another civilization in the process.

DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES

WAYLAND

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Dominant Terrain: Urban
Temperature: Temperate
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Polluted
Hydrosphere: 31%
Function: Manufacturing & Processing
Government: Rival States, Impersonal
Population Level: Crowded
Technology: Space Age
Starport Rating: 4-star

THE WORLD

Wayland is a heavily industrialized world, its drab gray surface veiled beneath noxious clouds of industrial pollutants. The surface is literally covered in industrial works, with every inch of usable ground concealed beneath foundries, factories, and forges. Toxic waste dumps and junkyards fill what little open space remains.

Pollution levels are near-hazardous. Thick, acrid smog blankets the world, making breathing difficult for those not wearing filter masks—and during the summer months the smog can be deadly. The local authorities sell filter masks tweaked to keep out the local pollutants, but most don't work properly. A small bribe ensures a good quality mask. Surface water contains high levels of heavy metals and toxins, and must be carefully filtered before consumption.

Many bars and cantinas catering to visitors, offer off-world beverages and food, but most are actually produced locally and thus contaminated. They figure folk won't be around long enough to get poisoned, and local produce is cheaper than imports.

HISTORY

Wayland has been a major galactic industrial center for as long as anyone can remember. Millennia ago it was held by the Mining Guild, but they abandoned it after stripping the crust of its precious resources.

Scavengers filled the void, quickly moving into the abandoned industrial complexes left behind when the Guild vacated. While Wayland had no mineral resources left, it has the necessary infrastructure to process other planets' ores and turn out industrial products. By offering a cheap turnaround (thanks mainly to enforced servitude and minimal safety procedures), the scavengers grew wealthy.

Ironically, the Mining Guild awarded the scavengers contracts, figuring it was cheaper than waging war or attempting legal action to reclaim their machinery, or going to the trouble of creating new factories on other worlds.

As time passed, the scavenger bands transformed into companies, merged into corporations and cartels, and

came to dominate life on the planet. As the corporations grew in wealth, so they expanded their business empires, slowly engulfing the planet beneath a layer of concrete and steel.

CURRENT ERA

Lacking a central government, the planet is governed instead by corporations and trade organizations, each with their own territory. Laws and regulations vary from territory to territory, making it extremely treacherous to wander between regions without first studying their customs. Most traders arrive with the intent of visiting a single company, never straying from their domain for fear of being caught up in the industrial espionage and petty bickering that engulfs the planet.

Among these is the Daksha Syndicate, a cartel of small companies who banded together for mutual protection and trading purposes. Their organization is typical of many, and serves as a template GMs can reuse.

Each company in the cartel nominates a member to sit on the Syndicate. These esteemed bureaucrats and businessmen receive the title Pro-Syndic. Every five years, one member is elected by his peers to the post of Syndic, spokesperson for the entire Syndicate.

The Syndic sets trading policy and prices, and negotiates new contracts with off-worlders, in return for which he receives a cut of all new contracts. However, he is also responsible for appeasing all the companies in the organization, no mean feat given each is out to secure as much profit as possible for its board members.

Society is broken down into two core groups—Highs and Lows. The Highs live in huge tower blocks, the tops of which actually stick through the smog layer. The Lows dwell on the actual surface, and lead a wretched life.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- The bulbous Syndic Nagan Jatha, the heroes' patron in *DTSL #1: Waylaid on Wayland*, has need of their services again. Jatha has learned someone has put a price on his head so large the Bounty Hunters' Guild has devoted all its resources to fulfilling the contract. Unfortunately, Jatha has an important meeting off-world and he needs protection he can trust.

Has Pro-Syndic Asgaya Ash returned from beyond the grave, perhaps as a brain in a robot body, or is one of Jatha's many other enemies after his scalp?

- Never be afraid to borrow from the movies when you need a plot! This one borrows liberally from *The Fast and the Furious*! Someone has been stealing valuable cargoes from moving transporters and the local authorities suspect it is a gang of high speed flitter racers.

After impounding the heroes' ship on a technicality, the corporate cops give the crew a choice; infiltrate the racing scene and bring the criminals to justice, or work off the heavy fine they're about to impose in one of the factories (which will take a year or more of hard work to pay off the debt).

ZUG'S WORLD

Planet Type: Terrestrial
Dominant Terrain: Vegetation
Temperature: Temperate
Gravity: Earthlike
Atmosphere: Normal
Hydrosphere: 99%
Function: Service
Government: Familial, Charismatic
Population Level: Minimal
Technology: Space Age
Starport Rating: 3-star

THE WORLD

Zug's World is a colorful planet of ochre seas broken by a single archipelago covered in blue vegetation. Hurricanes of awesome power wrack the planet year round, making it dangerous to venture out without a guide.

Zug's World boasts an amazing array of marine life, though none of it is sentient. The only sentient beings are the native humans, visiting aliens, and a pod of uplifted dolphins and killer whales.

HISTORY

Ten generations ago, Zug Zugglesun claimed the unpopulated world of Z-5689. He registered his claim with the 15th Galactic Alliance, the last body to hold that title, and was duly awarded custody of the planet.

Zug, an enterprising merchant whose grand schemes never quite seemed to work out as he intended, had a dream of opening a leisure world, where the rich would come to enjoy themselves and spend vast quantities of money. Now he had a planet at his disposal, he could make his dream a reality.

He built his first hotel on the largest island, offering relatively cheap breaks on a world inhabited only by himself and the few family members he could cajole into working as hotel staff. The idea of an exclusive resort, with nothing to do but soak up the sun, fish, and maybe take a boat trip out to the many reefs or dive beneath the ochre waters, appealed to the rich aliens of the galaxy fed up with mixing with the lower classes or fighting for attention in crowded resorts.

CURRENT ERA

Zug's World is still owned the descendants of that first settler. Today, though, the Zug name is used as the familial name. The planet boasts just 2,000 permanent inhabitants, and 60% of these are members of Zug's family. The business is now a small corporation in its own right, though it remains very much in family hands. By law, a member of the Zug family always serves as CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors.

In addition to the various aliens who work at the re-

sorts, the Zugs have a small pod of killer whales on staff (they keep carnivorous predators away from the beaches and popular fishing areas) and a larger pod of dolphins, who act as maritime and diving expedition guides, and, thanks to waldo suits, as mechanics. All the workers, regardless of race, are given shares in the resort, allowing them to benefit from the healthy profits.

Although the main hotel has grown over the generations, it still boasts a maximum occupancy of just 300. It was recently rated as a 4-star facility by Arconte Noeskane, the galaxy-famous tourism critic.

Zug and his descendants wisely pumped the profits back into the colony, opening two smaller hotels on neighboring islands. One is a luxurious 5-star resort catering to the extremely rich (prices start at 500 credits a night). Every guest is assigned a personal chef, a butler, and a maid as part of the package, with other private staff available for an extra fee. The second hotel is extremely basic, its main clients being those who want to get away from the trappings of the modern universe in favor of a rustic lifestyle.

As well as these facilities, the planet offers a range of beach huts and inland villas for those who prefer to self-cater, or wish for total privacy.

InStar Mining Systems have recently approached the Zugs and offered vast sums to allow them to explore the seabed for minerals. The family has agreed survey work may take place, so long as none of it occurs in areas frequented by tourists. ISMS runs a small office close to the main beach, and has its own staff of dolphins and killer whales. They have recently finished completing work on an anti-hurricane energy shield, part of the Zugs' conditions for letting the company root around beneath the waves.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- Several tourist boats have recently disappeared while on an ocean cruise. No ransom has been made, and no wreckage discovered. The Zugs have managed to conceal news of the events from their guests so far, and have now cancelled further trips, claiming bad weather has made the area inaccessible for the immediate future. The family needs a discrete enquiry, and is prepared to offer a week's vacation at its 5-star resort in return for solving the mystery.

The disappearances may be caused by something as mundane as bad weather, but they could also relate to ISMS activity, a rogue pod of terrorist killer whales, pirates preying on the rich, giant carnivorous marine creatures, or a previously undiscovered sentient race of aquatic aliens (perhaps prehistoric ones woken from hibernation by ISMS test drilling).

- ISMS has discovered valuable mineral deposits, but has no desire to share the wealth with the Zugs. It begins a campaign of sabotage to ruin the family's reputation and put them out of business. The Zugs, naturally, want the matter investigated. Fearing an insider, they turn to outsiders for assistance.

DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES

MAKING A CREW

Daring Tales of the Space Lanes adventures should include a healthy mix of space and planetary encounters. Blasting away enemy fighters in an asteroid field, dodging warring fleets, speeder chases through crystal canyons, and gunfights and brawls are all part of the setting.

To ensure the heroes are capable of performing well in space and on planets, not to mention allowing them to travel around the galaxy, it's recommended the heroes are the crew of a small space freighter. Tied to no government, guild, corporation, or military power, they are free to travel the galaxy at leisure. Included below are a number of roles suitable for starship operation.

CO-PILOT

Small ships don't actually need a co-pilot to function, but having one can be very useful, not least because Piloting is one of the most important skills in the setting and redundancy is vital. Taking on the role of co-pilot gives the character plenty of options once combat begins. He can Hold his action until the pilot takes his turn and then use the Co-Operative Roll rules to augment the Piloting roll; he can serve as a gunner; and he can operate the shield pods.

Suggested Skills: Piloting, Shields, Shooting

Suggested Edges: Ace

DOCTOR

Sooner or later someone is going to get hurt, and that's when the ship's doctor gets to shine. Given it's a very focused role, and unless someone is injured the doctor doesn't have much to do, the role of ship's doctor should be combined with another role, such as the steward.

Suggested Skills: Healing

Suggested Edges: Healer

ENGINEER

Starship engines are complex beasts, and it takes a trained engineer to keep them running smoothly. In combat, the engineer is usually responsible for operating the shield pods, as well as fighting small fires and patching up blown panels.

Suggested Skills: Repair, Shields

Suggested Edges: McGyver, Mr. Fix-It (has modified requirements of Smarts d10+, Repair d8+, at least two other scientific Knowledge skills at d6+ in the *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes* setting)

GUNNER

Space may be large, but it's also filled with pirates, rogue traders, hostile military forces, zealous bounty hunters, and expansive guilds and corporations. If the

ship is going to survive, it needs a gunner. Few captains can afford to hire a gunner only for that role—space is dangerous, but it isn't constantly dangerous. To that end, the gunner is also responsible for ship security and providing muscle or firepower while on planets.

Suggested Skills: Fighting, Shooting

Suggested Edges: Any Combat Edges

PILOT

Whether navigating an asteroid field, trying to land in a ferocious storm, or just cruising through the void, the pilot is responsible for steering the ship. Unless he has a very high Piloting, he should delegate shield operations and gunnery to others, leaving him to focus purely on flying the ship to the best of his ability. While the ship's captain is often the pilot, this isn't a strict requirement.

Suggested Skills: Piloting, Shields, Shooting

Suggested Edges: Ace

STEWARD

Passengers expect a certain degree of comfort on their journey. Taking care of their needs is the ship's steward. As well as being attentive and polite, the steward is also a means of gathering information, either from passengers or from planetary sources. Because serving drinks to passengers during ship combat is rather dull, it is suggested the steward serve as a secondary gunner as well.

Suggested Skills: Investigation, Persuasion, Shooting, Streetwise

Suggested Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Investigator

NEW COMBAT EDGES

DEFENSIVE PILOT

Requirements: Seasoned, Driving d6+ and Piloting d6+ or the Ace Edge

Flying straight and true may be the fastest way to escape pursuers, but knowing when to jink, roll, and duck behind a passing asteroid to avoid enemy fire is key to surviving a starship battle.

Unless they are the victim of a surprise attack and taken completely unaware, attackers must subtract 1 from their Shooting rolls when targeting a vehicle in which the hero is the main pilot. Pilots who attempt to evade area effect attacks may add +1 to their Piloting roll as well (when allowed).

IMPROVED DEFENSIVE PILOT

Requirements: Veteran, Defensive Pilot

As above but attackers subtract 2 from their attack rolls, and the pilot adds +2 to evade area effect weapons when allowed.