

TRAVELLER™ 2300



ENERGY CURVE

Timothy B. Brown

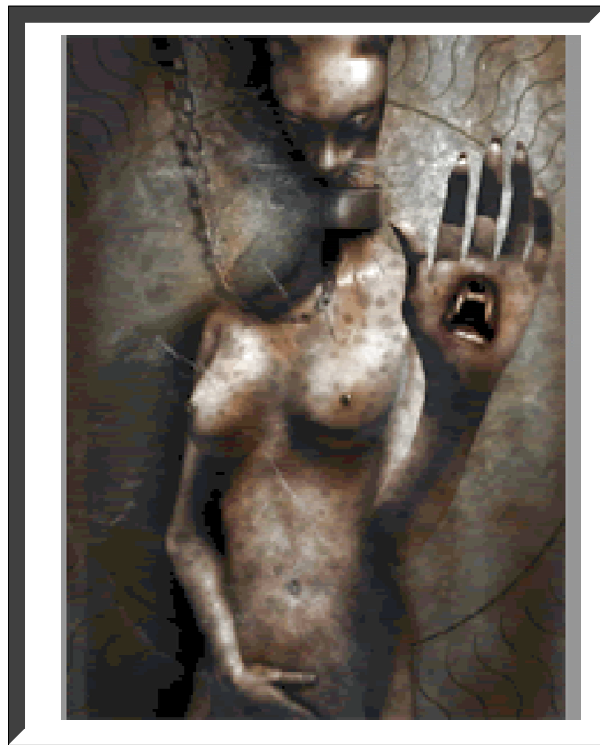


\$1200

*A Marooned Expedition
on the Kafer Frontier.*

Game Designers' Workshop

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Hunger...

TRAVELLER: 2300 ENERGY CURVE

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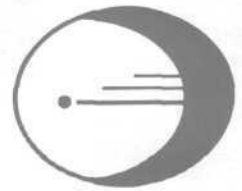
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GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP



Introduction

BASICS

Energy Curve is an adventure module designed for use with **Traveller: 2300**, Game Designers' Workshop's game of science fiction role-playing in the 24th century. As such, it presents a unique situation set in that futuristic universe. The situation is presented in such a manner that it can be administered by a *referee* and enjoyed by several players.

Required Materials: There are several items which will be necessary before play of *Energy Curve* can begin. First, the referee and players will need at least one copy of **Traveller: 2300** which includes all the rules necessary to play *Energy Curve*.

Desirable Materials: Paper, both graph and plain, plus pencils and/or pens for each player and the referee will be necessary. Dice are provided in the **Traveller: 2300** rules set, but more, of both 6-sided and 10-sided, will make the game run more smoothly. Several copies of each of the forms from the *Forms Book* in **Traveller: 2300** will also be very helpful.

The entire contents of *Energy Curve* constitute a single adventure, as described in the introduction to the *Player's Manual*. Many episodes are likely to occur in the course of the adventure, and the entire adventure will undoubtedly take more than one session to complete. *Energy Curve* contains interesting and challenging material for many evenings of gaming fun.

The adventure *Energy Curve* can easily be played independently. That is, it need not be connected with any other adventure. However, it might be desirable to connect the events in this adventure with a campaign, at the referee's discretion.

TASKS

Tasks are extremely important to the resolution of the adventure in *Energy Curve*. Most important tasks necessary to the adventure are given throughout the text, and in a specific manner. Each task is placed on a separate line in the following order:

Description of task. Difficulty. Applicable skill. Time requirement.

For example:

To avoid a crash. Difficult. Vehicle skill. Instant.

Isolating the tasks from the body of the text makes them easy to find and administer, making the *referee's* job a little easier.

Referee's Note: When reading through *Energy Curve*, watch

for the tasks and make a mental note of the skills most often called for. During the character generation process, you might want to use your influence to assure that appropriately skilled individuals will be used in the adventure.

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

There are several maps and diagrams used in *Energy Curve*. Their locations and use are covered here for the benefit of the referee.

Page 14 has a regional map of DM + 17 2611 II, the scene of most of the action in *Energy Curve*. Marked on the map is the location of the forced landing of the LaFarge as well as the terrain of the entire area.

Page 15 also has a regional map of DM + 17 2611 II, but with only the landing site and the outlines of the continents on it. This second regional map is intended to be photocopied and distributed to the players.

Page 21 has a triangle map of the site where most of the action will take place on DM +17 2611 II. A blank copy of the triangle map will also be required and can be copied from the *Forms Book*.

Rules for movement on the triangle maps are given in *World Mapping*, page 46 of the *Referee's Manual*.

Page 28 has a map of the Klaxun city that the player characters are likely to discover. The rules for using that map are given in the chapter *The City* on page 25 of this book.

One alien profile diagram is given on page 33 describing the Klaxun in as much detail as the player characters are likely to uncover. This diagram will become helpful when the player characters begin to interact with the Klaxun in their active state.

THE REFEREE

It is the job of the *referee* to learn this adventure and administer it during play. In many ways this is at least as entertaining as adventuring will be for the players. The referee gets all the pleasure of watching the players investigate the unknown as he doles information out to them one piece at a time.

Learning the Adventure: The *referee* should read through this entire booklet until he is extremely familiar with its contents. A synopsis has been created which will aid the *referee* in figuring out the more logical courses of events. However, the players are not always going to take the most likely direction toward their goals, and the *referee* will have to be prepared to administer more off-the-wall actions by the player characters.

What to Tell the Players: The players should be allowed to

view the *Ship's Status* and *Situation* sections of this module before play actually begins. These chapters set up the situation for them and give them all the information they will need to logically procure their equipment. Once read, play may begin as they attempt to get out of their predicament.

As play progresses and the player characters stumble onto other artifacts of the adventure (such as the Klaxun city and the Klaxun themselves), the referee will have to present information from the appropriate sections to the players. However, this information will not become common knowledge all at once; the characters must make some successful effort to uncover information before it is made available to them.

THE PLAYERS

Of course, this adventure is intended to be played by several people under the direction of the *referee*. These players should be familiar with the **Traveller: 2300** rules before beginning play. It is not necessary that each player own a set of the **Traveller: 2300** rules, but having more than one copy of the game will prove to be very helpful as different players want to look up rules or diagrams during play.

If the players are new to **Traveller: 2300** they should be familiarized with various sections of the rules by more experienced players. For example, a more learned player could speed a newcomer through character generation while the *referee* gets prepared to start the game. Each player should be especially familiar with the rules governing tasks, personal combat, movement, and encounters before they attempt to play *Energy Curve*.

This adventure is designed for between four and eight players. Each of these should have a character generated according to the **Traveller: 2300** rules. If for some reason there are fewer than four players available, the referee is encouraged to allow them to take along several non-player characters. In any event, no single player should be responsible for more than two characters in the game—the players are running characters, not personal armies.

The players should be allowed to *create* their own characters for this adventure according to the *Player's Manual*. Non-player characters can be generated either by the referee or the players,

at the referee's option.

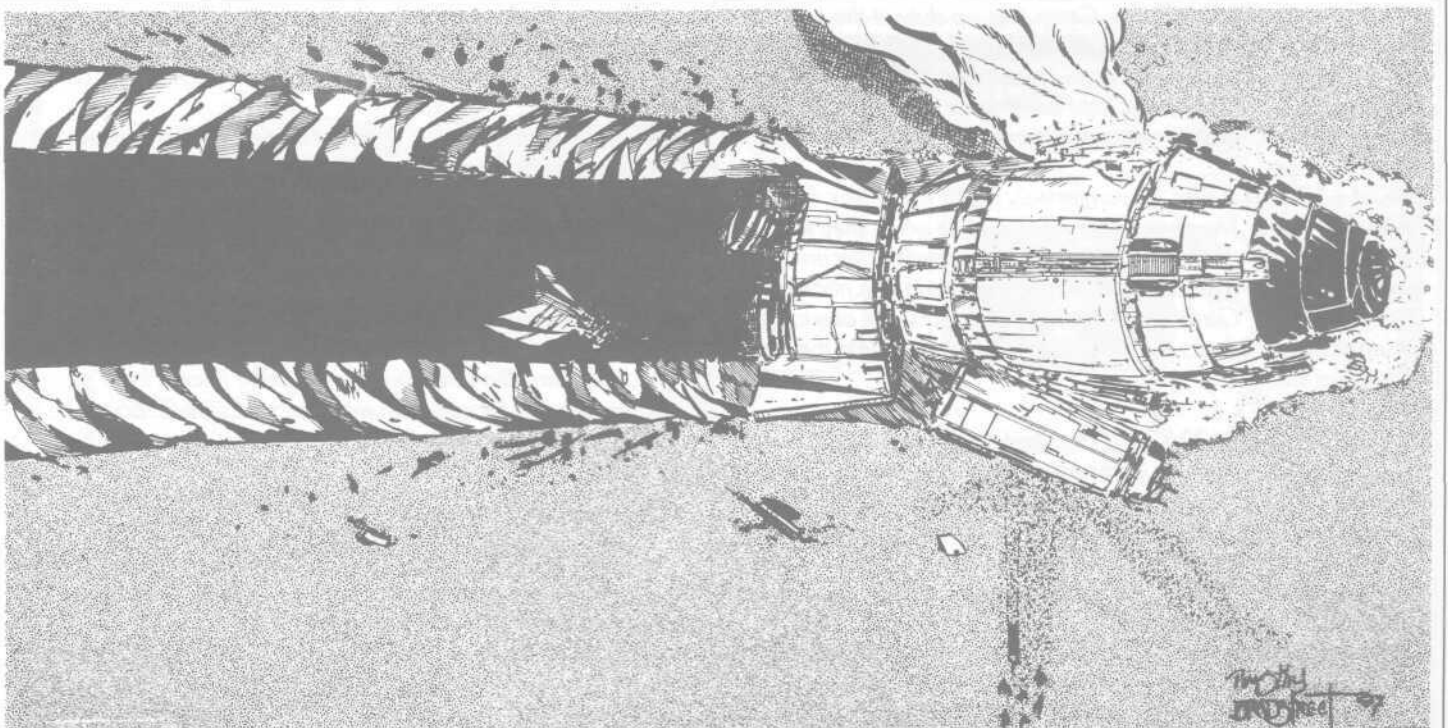
Energy Curve is designed for several players and is not designed for solitaire play. The situation could be adapted for solitaire play, but only after extensive work by a referee.

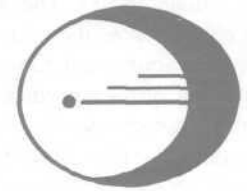
THE TRAVELLER: 2300 UNIVERSE

Though for the most part isolated from the rest of the human race during this adventure, the player characters are citizens of the **Traveller: 2300** universe. It is very possible that certain aspects of that universe will have an effect on the interaction of the player characters and ultimately on the outcome of the adventure.

Rivalries: As described in the **Traveller: 2300** rules, there are certain national rivalries in existence in the year 2300. It might be intriguing to place rival personnel aboard the *LaFarge*. A French Captain placed in charge of a German petty officer might not cause problems during normal operation of the ship, but might as soon as the chips are down and the entire crew is stranded on an alien planet.

Integrating *Energy Curve*: The player characters might be veterans of many adventures in the **Traveller: 2300** universe, and they might look forward to many more in the future. If this is the case, the referee might have to re-evaluate the situation as presented to fit the current situation. For instance, if the group of player characters being used are not employees of Trilon corporation, which is quite likely, then the situation should be altered to reflect this. The core of the adventure is likely to remain unchanged.





Ship Status

Duty calls.

Ship Status 260300:1830/Beta Comae Bernices/Dubois, Cpt. Marie C.

Orders received per GI Courier 250300:0500. Vis link confirmation made and crew notified. Assembly at down station for scramjet flight up to orbital facility charged to company funds. Installation of provisions begun prior to arrival by port authorities upon personal request for urgency. All crew positions filled with regular crew with single exception of new computer officer. Personal note: New computer officer seems reasonably competent and familiar with equipment, but nervous at her new position. I will have to keep a close watch on her this first time out. Otherwise, situation normal.

Like hell it was. The ship was still in a sorry shape, as was the crew, but we had to go anyway. Company orders were explicit and to the point—we had to move this old hunk of junk to DM+17 2611 as soon as possible. If we didn't make all speed, it would have been my behind, and they knew it.

It was a good thing Charlie Camp was on duty at the high station that night or nothing would have been ready for the quick trip out. Charlie was a good friend to count on—we had met while taking supplemental navigational training on Beta Canum some years before. This used up one favor, but I'm sure I have a few more coming.

DM+17 2611 was uncomfortably near the Kafer frontier, everyone knew. The entire crew was on edge when they learned of the destination (once out of the system—company security procedures). Plenty of trouble with those buggers in this neck of the woods, and the Germans around Hochbaden were bearing the brunt of it all. It figures that would be our next stop. Into the lion's den once more.

Ship Status 020400:1200/Hochbaden/Dubois, Cpt. Marie C.

Company requests for immediate processing through starport facilities delayed due to heavy battle damage at station. Recent firefight has left the station in need of repair and several German spacecraft have been noted with severe battle related damage. Due to heavy Kafer activity in the area we will be performing frontier refuelling from here on out.

New provisions taken on after significant delay. Course out of system plotted by German authorities to avoid system sweep still in progress.

Uh, oh. The Kafers are really playing hardball out here this far from the core. Those German ships had had the daylighters beaten out of them, and we're not talking about frigates and out of date junk—these were top of the line fighters. Our best bet was to keep low and ride quietly. If we shined too much we might get noticed—best for now to go slow and safe.

What did the company want with DM +172611 anyway? Company intelligence probably uncovered an attempt by some other outfit to get there, and Trilon had to be first. That was usually the way—why investigate second when you can be first. Send in a survey crew. Lose just a few of them a year and you're still money ahead. That's us—the expendables.

Troubleshooting wasn't so bad, though. It sure beats Personnel!

Ship Status 110400:0415/DM +18 2776/Dubois, Cpt. Marie C.

Frontier refuelling underway from ice ring system around gas giant (documented). Reasonably safe to hide among the ice balls, so will remain in position here until fuel processing complete.

Crew morale exceptionally low. Conversations between crew members and Hochbaden port employees confirmed that a large expedition of Kafer vessels hit them three days before we arrived. The possibility of running into those that pulled out has the entire crew on edge. Tranquilizers are keeping things under control.

When I'd signed on with Trilon, I signed a document swearing I'd make every attempt to pick up alien hardware when the situation presented itself. Unfortunately, according to some company lawyers safely removed from the fighting, this also included any run-in with hostile Kafers. If I didn't make the attempt, I'd be up for suspension or dismissal.

On the last trip out, we had our first run-in with a Kafer ship. At least we thought it was a Kafer. We picked up the emissions of an unknown ship refuelling in an ice ring (I learn from previous experience). We turned everything off and waited for it to leave. It finally did, but we only had thirty minutes of battery power left before we would have had to re-light the plant.

Needless to say, that incident did not make it into my log.

Ship Status 190400:1800/DM +17 2611/Dubois, Cpt. Marie C.

Our worst fears have been realized. We came across two vessels, assumed Kafer and hostile, at 1545 this date. Sensor intelligence limited, but these two look like scout-sized vessels. Armament unknown at present. Speed is somewhat greater than ours and they are gaining on us. Navigation assures us we can make the

fourth planet in the K2 system before they get a chance to shoot at us too much.

Authorized the use of one sensor drone. Its report confirmed size of vessels at 700 cubic meters each. Drone destroyed by hostile fire. Pursuit continues.

If this record should survive us, I want it on the record that this mission was too dangerous an undertaking and its Priority 2 rating was completely unnecessary.

So much for my last official ship status report on the LaFarge. We're lucky to be alive. The Kafers put a couple of lasers across our bow to warn us from going into orbit around DM+ 17 2611 II, but we brushed them off. Then they put a couple right into the power plant. That did it.

The small planet's gravity was already drawing us in closer when the Kafers really opened up on us. We took severe damage to the hull rear sections, and I'm surprised our streamlining wasn't ruined on the space plane/lander. Fortunately, our Kafer buddies weren't streamlined, and they couldn't follow us down.

The LaFarge had to be abandoned—damage to the hull and power plant rendered it a cripple and we'd never get it out of the way before we smacked into the planet. It was time to leave this ship to its last hoorah—burn-up in the atmosphere.

We got what we could aboard the space plane before we detached from the LaFarge. We did manage to get everyone aboard before it was too late—some equipment would have to be left behind.

If I were still in an official mood I would recommend the navigator, Jones, for his job getting us down. All shot up like that it was a pretty rough ride, but we made it down in more or less one piece. The landing was less than perfect, and the structural integrity of the space plane is damaged to the point that the plane has made its last spaceflight.

Several of us have sustained minor injuries—my leg was scratched up a bit when a terminal came loose and struck me. We got everyone out of the ship as quickly as possible. With debris scattered about, that wasn't the easiest thing to do, let me tell you. But we did it quickly and carefully—you get pretty attached to people you've served with for so long.

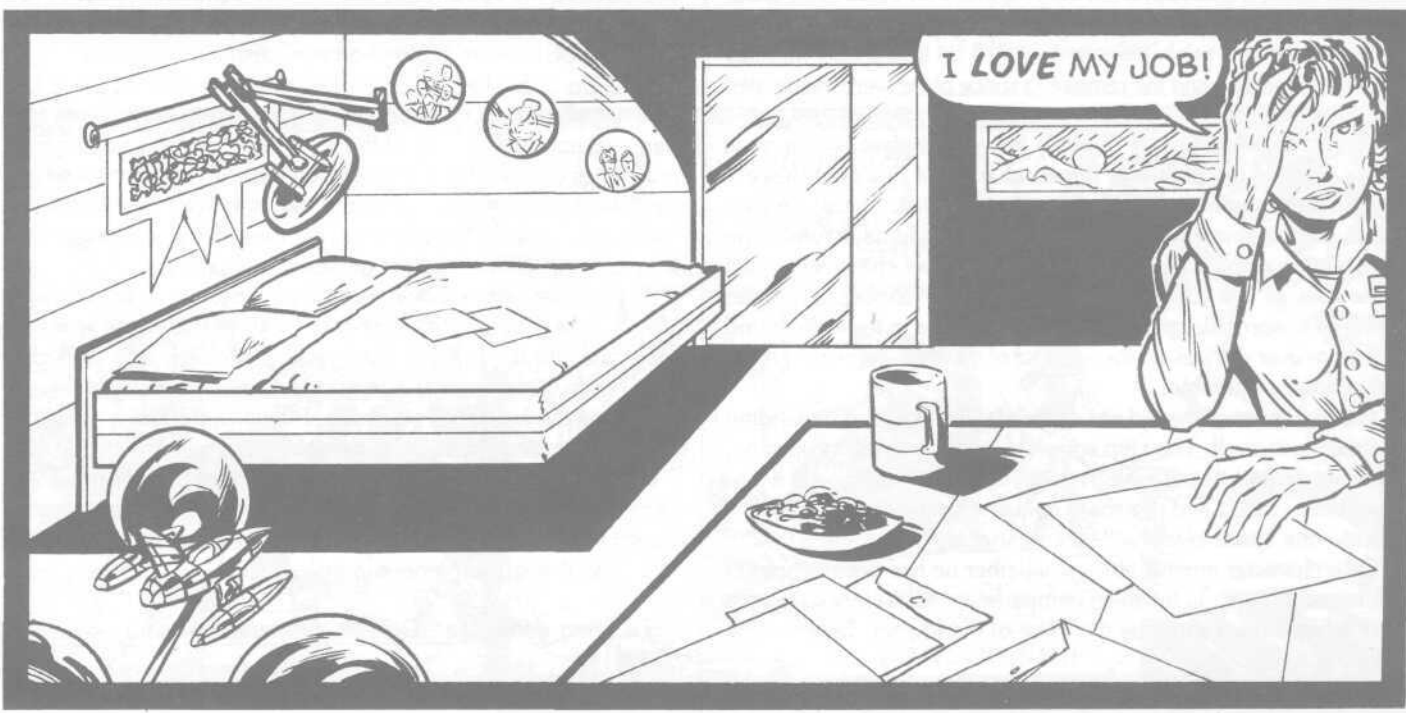
That's when the engineer informed me he thought the ship would blow at any minute.

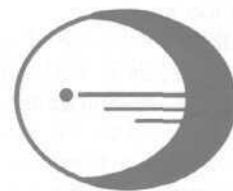
We shifted into stutter warp to get the equipment off the ship. I screamed inside for them to bring out as much cold weather survival gear as possible, but I don't think anyone heard me. Everyone was near panic as it was.

We barely managed to get some distance between us and the space plane when the wreck went up in a fireball. I figured that would make a nice beacon for our Kafer buddies to follow right to us.

As it is, we're in the middle of an only slightly hospitable ice field on an unsurveyed planet, and our Kafer opponents will probably be following us down here any minute.

I love my job.





Situation

Following the events described in *Ship Status*, the player characters will be forced into a desperate situation. They will have to make several hard decisions, and quickly before their Kafer enemies locate and attack them. The *referee* should administer the following sections of this chapter in the order presented, determining injury and equipment salvaged, then describing the crash site in as much detail as the player characters can determine.

It is important that the referee emphasize the urgency of the situation. Never let the player characters forget through this section that their wrecked ship might explode and that the Kafers might follow them down to the surface at any moment. The player characters are lost and alone on an unexplored world, and should act accordingly.

Time is very important in this segment of the adventure. Minutes should be kept track of by the referee from the time of the crash landing. Each minute counts toward two eventualities: the explosion of the wrecked ship and the arrival of the Kafers.

INJURY

The forced landing of the *LaFarge's* attached space plane will have no doubt shaken up, if not injured, those on board. The space plane itself suffered the least damage of the two available on the *LaFarge*, and was safely launched with all on board only minutes before the *LaFarge* and the remaining space plane were incinerated in an uncontrolled fall into the atmosphere.

In order to avoid further damage from the Kafers on the glide to the surface, the pilot was forced to make a powered descent beyond the recommended stress limits of the craft. This was a wise move, since a single hit from a Kafer laser would have ruined the streamlining of the plane and doomed the player characters to the same fate as the *LaFarge*—burn-up in the atmosphere. The powered descent did great amounts of damage to the airbraking and maneuver devices on the exterior of the ship, rendering them only partially operable.

That the space plane did not completely come apart on landing is amazing in itself. The ship smashed through some vegetation, making a hundred yard long gash in the frozen tundra. The wings have been ruined and the main compartment broken in several places—the space plane will never fly again.

Each character must determine whether he has been injured in the forced landing. In the main compartment seats were dislodged and debris strewn about by the force of the impact. Determining injury is a task.

To avoid injury. Routine. Dexterity. Instant.

For each character who fails to avoid injury, consult the combat resolution system. These characters receive the equivalent of a hit from a weapon of DPV 1. Roll 1D6: even means the character receives blunt trauma, odd means the character receives normal damage. No character should be allowed to die in this procedure (reduce kill results to 4 stun in such cases).

After the crash, some characters will be injured, in shock, or unconscious. Those who are not wounded will have to aid in abandoning the ship, making certain the injured personnel are safely removed from the wreckage. Evacuating the ship will take one minute if no one is injured, plus an additional minute for each person who will need assistance in getting out of the ship (unconscious or immobile). This time counts toward recovery and toward time before the Kafers follow down and the ship explodes (see the appropriate sections below).

EQUIPMENT

Getting Equipment to the Space Plane: Each character should have the opportunity to purchase equipment prior to running this adventure. The referee should tell the players of their usual duties, those of exploration and routine trouble-shooting for Trilon. Up to 500 kg of equipment may be purchased and kept on the *LaFarge* for the mission. This equipment is referred to as personal equipment. Any of this equipment which can be carried at all times comfortably, such as biocontacts or a Sidearm, is termed permanent personal equipment. In order to keep characters from becoming walking hardware stores, the *referee* is charged with keeping rein on permanent personal equipment.

The *LaFarge* was a Trilon Associates C-System Special Services Vessel, type SSV-21, usually packed with special equipment from tools to communicators to sensors. Unfortunately, the *LaFarge* is now history, and there was very little time to get equipment onto the space plane prior to departure. Player characters automatically bring their permanent personal equipment onto the space plane. It is possible, however, that certain items might have been gotten onto the space plane by the player characters in the time allowed. To successfully bring one item of personal equipment of 5 kg or less onto the space plane is a task.

To bring equipment. Difficult. Dexterity. Instant.

If the item retrieved is a weapon, the character can also bring

along half of the ammunition he has purchased for it.

Getting Equipment Out of the Wrecked Space Plane:

After the wreck, it will be up to the player characters to get equipment out of it. The players should have the knowledge that the ship might explode soon, and if they are curious about their environment before having time to check it out thoroughly, they should be told "you can breath, but it's very cold."

The space plane has a fair amount of equipment on board. Its purpose is to be the center of a base camp for exploration, and it is equipped accordingly. Most of the equipment is in the space plane's lock-up, in the rear of the ship. A complete list of items in the lock-up is given here.

- 90 compact rations
- 6 sets of cold climate clothing
- 6 vacuum suits
- 6 hostile environment suits
- 2 pressure tents

- 2 basic tool kits
- 1 power hand tools kit
- 1 excavating tools kit
- 1 construction tools kit
- 1 electronic repair tools kit

- 2 binoculars
- 1 large lifeform detector
- 1 basecamp security sensor

- 3 cameras
- 2 sampling kits
- 3 medkits
- 6 hand communicators
- 3 portacomps
- 1 fuel station

- 4 Giscard FC-70 rifles
- 40 5-round box magazines

After all personnel have been evacuated from the ship, mobile personnel will undoubtedly want to get gear out of the lock-up area. All personnel will get out with their permanent personal equip-

ment and any items they grabbed off of the *LaFarge* before entering the space plane. Getting equipment out of the lock-up is a task.

To get 10 kg of equipment safely out of the lock-up. Difficult. Dexterity. 30 seconds.

Failed attempts may be retried, for as long as the character wants to keep trying. Referee, keep the players aware of the literally explosive nature of their situation. Only ten kilograms of material may be carried by a character at a time, mostly due to the urgency of the situation and the debris scattered about the ship, making movement very difficult. Each mobile character may attempt the task to retrieve material from the lock-up. Time spent getting equipment from the wreckage counts toward the eventual explosion of the space plane and the arrival of the Kafers.

Damage to the Equipment: The hard landing and difficult handling the equipment will receive in general may break it. For each communicator, portacomp, and sensor retrieved, roll 1D10. On a roll of 3 or less the item does not function. Do not roll for these items until they are tested for the first time.

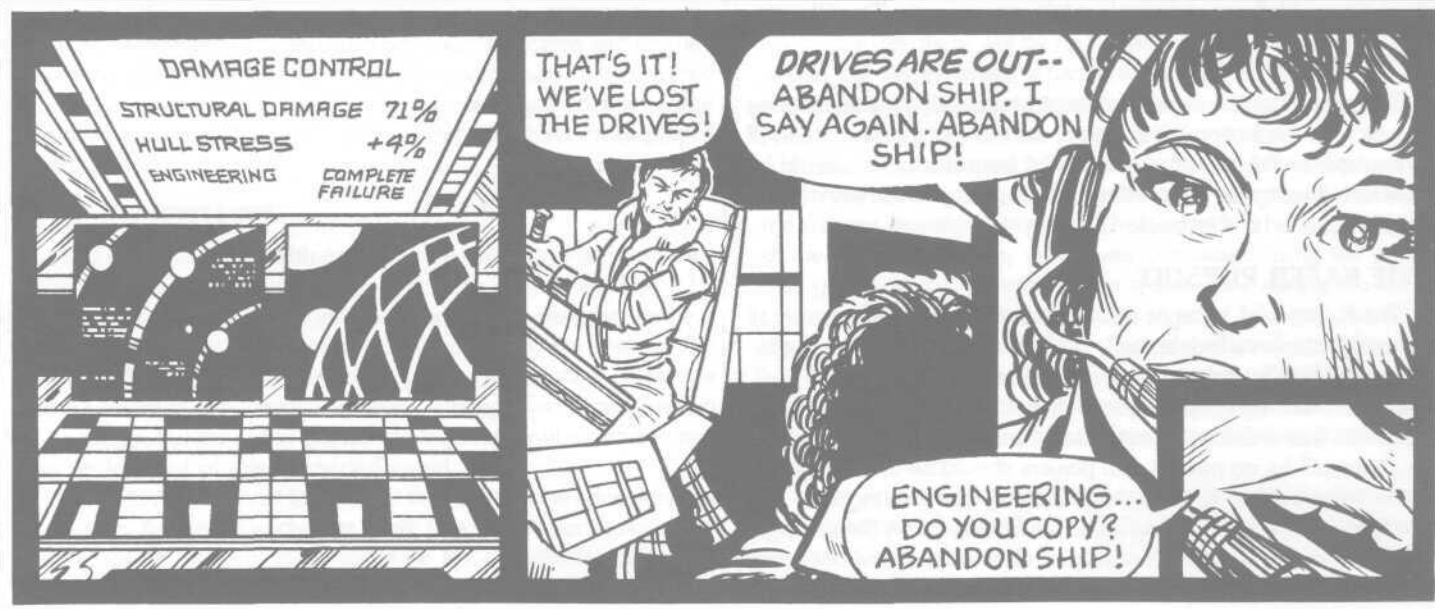
IMMINENT EXPLOSION

The crash landing of the space plane has ruptured its fuel supply and ruined its electronics in such a way that an explosion is imminent. After the landing and evacuation of injured personnel, the player characters will realize that this explosion will occur, and that they have only a few minutes to get equipment and get away from the blast.

In actuality, the ship will not explode until 11 minutes after the crash. In this time, the characters will have to get themselves out of the ship, which will take several minutes if there are injured parties to be tended to.

Next, equipment will have to be retrieved, according to the rules above. The amount of time spent gathering gear from the ship is entirely up to the players—they may leave at any time, but more equipment might make what lies ahead easier to cope with.

Finally, the characters will have to get away from the blast. Even if they only allow themselves a minute or so to get away from the ship, they will survive without further injury. If they do not get away in time, each person in the vicinity of the ship will take an attack as if from a weapon with DPV 5 of normal damage. This blast can be allowed to kill player characters.





THE PLANET

The players know very little about the planet they have landed on. What they do know is that they are on a planet in the DM + 17 2611 system, a planet with a highly elliptical orbit. Other than that, there is very little to go on.

Still, even in an emergency powered descent, some information was gathered about the basic outline of the planet. Most of the planet is, at this time, covered in ice sheets, but certain areas around the equator are beginning to thaw. A rough map can be created of the basic landmasses on the planet, similar to the one provided on page 17 (identical to it, in fact—photocopy this map as a handout for the players).

Since the crash site is on a peninsula south of the equator, it is logical to move north toward the warmer areas of the planet. Other options are to move to the south or west and hit more icefields or to the east and run into the sea almost immediately.

Learning more about the planet will involve sensors and direct observation as the characters move across the planet. Rules governing this movement and exploration are given in *The Planet*.

THE CRASH SITE

The area in which the characters immediately find themselves is typical of the frozen environment on this planet. The site itself is marked on the planet maps. Travel from this point should be conducted using the **Traveller: 2300** rules and the encounters presented later in this book.

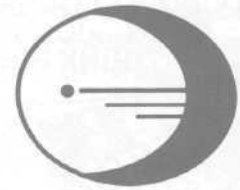
THE KAFER PURSUIT

The Kafers who brought down the *LaFarge* are part of a small scouting mission which actually had no orders to fire on anyone. Once the ship burns up in the atmosphere of DM +17 2611 II, the Kafers will not pursue the matter further, and will instead proceed with their mission, almost certainly travelling out of the system.

There will be no pursuit, but players should be encouraged to think there will be, to keep them moving and moving fast. The excitement this will create will get the characters on the run right from the very first moment of play. Only over a period of several days will they begin to realize that the Kafers are probably no longer

interested in them—if they were they would have caught up to the fleeing humans by now.

If the referee desires, he may actually build a Kafer pursuit into the game. The adventure module *Kafer Dawn* contains some organizational and other data on the Kafers, providing plenty of information for designing a small band of Kafers and their equipment. If this is the case, it is recommended that the player characters be allowed somewhat more weaponry than is available in this scenario. Without it they would probably not be able to fully protect themselves.



Referee's Synopsis

The player characters are unwilling participants in an odyssey across the surface of an unexplored world. In their trek they are likely to be swept up in many dangerous situations, such as encounters with exotic life forms and facing the merciless heavy weather of this strange world. In any event, the key word in this entire scenario is danger—there is plenty of danger around to keep the players interested in what is happening to them. This is not a pleasant journey in which you simply look up the travel times on the appropriate chart and proclaim arrival after the stated length of time. Every kilometer of this trip will be a struggle as the player characters battle the elements seeking a better climate for their survival all the while attempting to elude their supposed Kafer pursuers.

Success in this adventure is measured only by survival. Survivors are winners. The Kafer pursuit will be proven false in the course of the adventure—Kafers are not after the party and therefore do not threaten their lives. However, the chase by what the player characters believe to be a Kafer scouting party will be one of the chief driving forces behind their actions. The Klaxun may be a threat to life, but due to the time differential between human and Klaxun they can probably be avoided. The violent weather of the planet may also be deadly. Together, all of these threats over the long period of time necessary to travel from crash site to equator may indeed cause casualties among the party.

Eventually, a company team will arrive to investigate the loss of the *LaFarge* and her crew. Survivors will be located and rescued from the planet's surface. However, this eventuality is not covered in the context of this adventure—it is assumed to take place sometime after all the events in this adventure have been played through.

THE ADVENTURE

This situation begins with the events described in the *Ship Status* chapter. A Trilon corporation survey ship sent to the DM + 17 2611 was attacked by an unknown opponent, assumed to be a Kafer scout. After taking severe battle damage, the crew of the survey vessel was forced to escape to a planet's surface using one of the doomed ship's attached space planes. The forced landing was rough, but the space plane held together until it came to rest on an ice field of this uncharted world.

Here the referee must implement the facets of the adventure explained in the *Situation* chapter. First, determine injuries sustained in the forced landing. Next, examine the possibilities of getting equipment off the space plane. The coming explosion of the

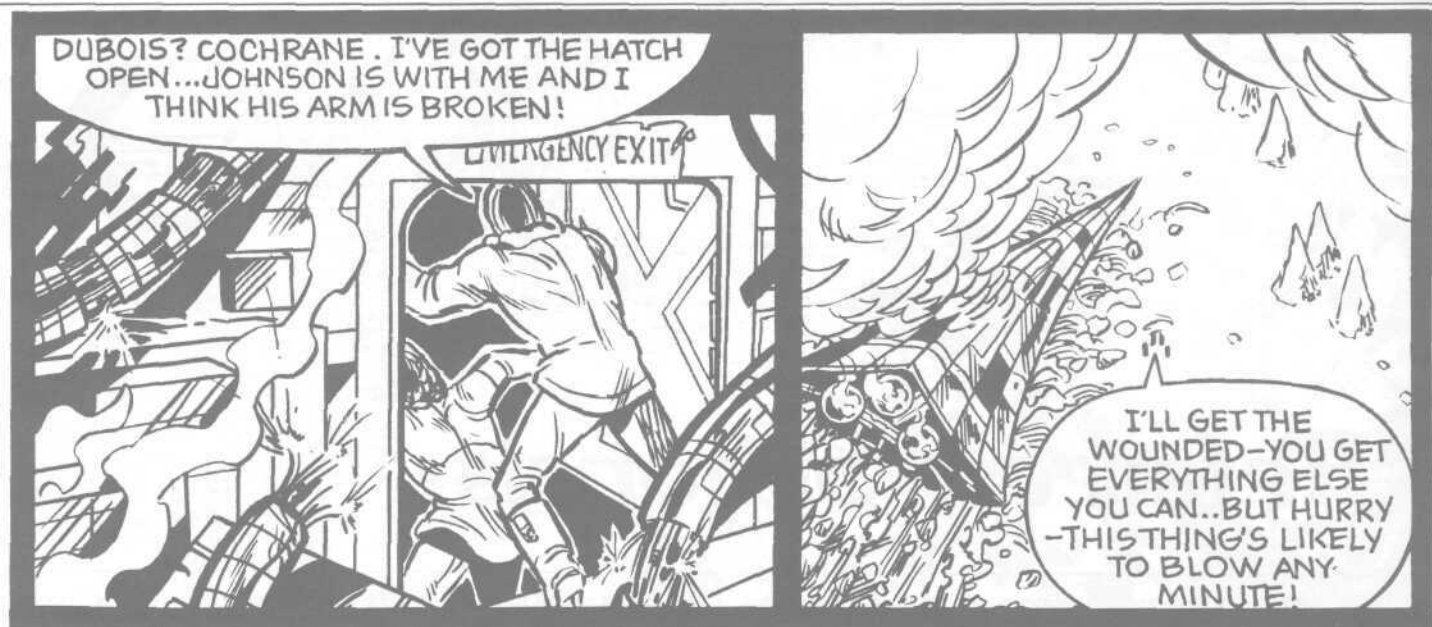
wrecked space plane should be made clear to the players, forcing them to make haste. Getting the wounded members of their team off the ship is paramount. Equipment should come second. The equipment that the characters have with them could make all the difference when they face the dangers yet to come. To heighten the urgency of the situation in the minds of the players, the referee may wish to implement some real-world time restrictions on the players. He might ask for immediate responses, such as "What equipment are you going after?" forcing the players to answer immediately or be penalized for indecision.

Quick analysis of the situation by the players at this point should reveal three things. First, they should suspect a Kafer pursuit to be imminent (note that this is not actually the case, but the player characters should act accordingly). Second, even the most basic data gathering will tell the players that: (1) the equatorial regions will be much warmer and hospitable than where they are now, and (2) a warmer season is approaching. Third, the players should be aware that they are on a very alien world about which they know virtually nothing. The planet could be very peaceful, or it could be very deadly.

Allow the players to use whatever sensors they have managed to take with them to examine their new home. They should be given the ice field description given in the color chapter to set the mood and give a basic overview of where they find themselves. Since there are no encounters possible in ice field terrain in the winter season, there will be no animal life present for them to examine, just vast expanses of barren wasteland. Permit the characters all the time they desire to examine their surroundings, provided they are kept aware of the possible Kafer danger.

At any rate, the players will undoubtedly wish to travel away from the forced landing site, probably in a northerly direction, toward the warmer, equatorial regions. The players will have a basic map of the planetary terrain, which was composed using the limited data gathering instruments on the space plane during the forced landing. This players' map (located on page 16—give this to the players after the explosion of the space plane) has the rough outline of the continents of the planet and some of the significant mountainous regions, but nothing more. Further exploration will have to be done firsthand using personal sensors, or if none are available, direct personal contact.

Travel across the ice field, and eventually onto the steppe and other terrains, is handled according to the rules given in the *Planet* chapter. Encounters may be made and dealt with, and weather will constantly hinder the party's progress. The passage of time



should be kept track of, as this will affect other aspects of the scenario such as the change of the seasons.

MEETING AND DEALING WITH THE KLAXUN

The Klaxun are a strange race of sentient beings which live on the planet. Due to their nature, their existence as anything but native plantlife will elude the player characters until the summer seasons arrive. The referee is advised to read through the Klaxun chapter at this time to better understand them, their culture, and how to administer them during the adventure.

First Meeting: When first encountered in the city, the Klaxun will probably be in their hibernative state. The players will undoubtedly pass them by like any other plantlife they have encountered to date. However, when the summer season arrives, they will come out of hibernation to find the humans among them.

The utter shock of seeing these "plants" moving freely should at first confuse the players. The Klaxun are very slow and have virtually no technology to assist them, therefore interaction between human and Klaxun will be limited. The Klaxun may attempt to "swarm" the player characters, as described in the Klaxun chapter. Otherwise, the more maneuverable humans should be able to easily evade the Klaxun.

Some or all of the player characters might be captured by the Klaxun in a swarm. If this is the case, those captured will have to either escape or succumb to Klaxun justice.

Contact: Achieving communication with the Klaxun will be very difficult. None of the player characters are contact experts, and only experts could be expected to have total success communicating with a totally new race of beings. However, limited success may be possible for the players, provided they give the project sufficient time.

Civil Struggle: The Klaxun are in the midst of a social struggle which threatens their entire social order. The player characters have arrived in the midst of this conflict, totally unaware of its existence. The conflict revolves around the roles assigned through their "sightedness" hierarchy. The human player characters would be valuable allies in this struggle for either side. An underground organization of "unsighted ones" may seek out the players, offering them peace and assistance.

Interaction: Working with or against the Klaxun is the ultimate source of adventure in this scenario. The political struggle going on will certainly draw the players in, forcing them to take actions

in order to survive in their new world. The entire Klaxun section of this adventure describes in great detail the two main factions of Klaxun, their society and culture, and their physiology and psychology.

What actions the players take are up to them. They could side with the unsighted underground, helping in the struggle to free the oppressed working class from their restricted lives. Several actions have been planned by the underground in which the players might participate.

They could, however, side with the existing upper class, the "sighted ones," attempting to maintain the status quo. In this case they would be employed in trying to defeat the plans of the underground.

Either way, the players should be encouraged to take part in the Klaxun struggle. Since the humans are likely to be stranded on this planet for some time, possibly many years, they would be better off existing with the Klaxun than trying to survive in the wilderness on their own. There are virtually no equatorial regions not populated by Klaxun—the humans have no choice other than to get involved one way or another.

RESCUE

The player characters are likely to spend several local years on DM +17 2611 II. Their own means of space travel was successfully ruined by the Kafers, so they must now rely on outside help for rescue.

With the passage of each local summer, the referee should roll one ten-sided die. On a roll of 9 or 10 another survey ship arrives and rescues the player characters. They will be able to return later to aid in communicating with the natives, or they may return to their previous lives.

Impatient Characters: In some instances, the players (and the referee) might become bored with being stranded on this planet. If this is the case, allow a premature rescue after sufficient time has passed. The referee should insist that the adventure last long enough for the players to have met and begun communication with the Klaxun. This will certainly take the players through the first spring-summer-autumn cycle. They should also be forced to survive through one winter before their rescue.

MEASURING TIME

Time is extremely important to the course of this adventure. The

passage of time will determine when the local seasons change, what the weather patterns will be like, and when the Klaxun will begin and end their hibernation cycle. In short, time is crucial, and must be kept track of very closely.

Local Time: Each local day lasts sixteen and one-half hours. For purposes of the adventure each local day will be considered to be exactly equal to two-thirds of a standard day. Three local days equals two standard days. For purposes of movement and food consumption this careful attention should be paid to this distinction. In the course of play the characters will no doubt have to alter their body clocks, since activity of a normal working day will often take them through a local night or two without sleep.

Standard Time: The time which passes outside of this system should also be kept track of. If *Energy Curve* is being played as part of a continuing adventure, obviously events will be taking place while they are away. The time until rescue also depends on standard time. Though cut off from human space temporarily, this does not mean nothing happens there when the player characters are away—those events will have a profound effect on their future lives.

FUTURE OF THE KLAXUN AND THE CHARACTERS

After the player characters have been rescued from the DM +17 2611 system, they will no doubt reveal the existence of the Klaxun to all of humanity.

Introduction to the Stellar Community: It is possible that the Klaxun will become unwilling participants in the affairs of other races, most of whom are spacefaring. For instance, the Pentapods, upon learning of a new potential market in the Klaxun, might send ambassadors there and attempt to open trade. Humans are likely to start selling the mining rights to the Klaxun home planet regardless of ownership. In fact, the Klaxun will almost certainly be swept up in stellar affairs unless the player characters can manage to hush the whole thing up from the time of their rescue forward. It is a moral question the players will have to ask themselves.

The Kafers: It is not unreasonable to assume that the Kafers will encounter the Klaxun shortly. They have already been in this system, so they might go one step further and attempt to locate a base on the Klaxun world. The Kafers will most likely ignore the Klaxun for the present and concentrate on their war with the humans. However, if there are humans on the planet, a combat situation could easily develop.

The Klaxun could be encouraged to help humans in the face of a Kafer occupation. If the referee desires, the player characters could get caught up in this occupation. They would then have the chance of being picked up by friendly forces or perhaps to steal a Kafer vessel to make their way home.

Details on the Kafers appear in the module *Kafer Dawn*. Their tactics and characteristics are presented there.

Further Contact: It is quite likely that a human foundation will want to return to the planet to make further studies of the Klaxun in their native environment. The foundation will certainly contact one or more of the player characters to accompany the expedition to facilitate initial communication.

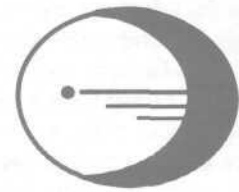
The player characters will be expected to help the expedition in several ways. For instance, they will be expected to help determine which aspects of Klaxun culture are original to the race and which are due to contamination by the humans. For instance, if the Klaxun are all organized into teams for playing softball, this is probably human contamination.

Fame: There will be a certain amount of notoriety which will go along with being rescued from DM +17 2611 II. It is not common to contact a new race, and to do so in such an exciting man-

ner will spark the interest of millions of people, especially in the core. It will not be unreasonable to allow the player characters to cash in on this bit of fame, writing books or making documentary films for sale back on Earth. Lecture tours could be taken, possibly with one or more Klaxun in tow for exhibits. This experience could allow the player characters to meet some very interesting people in the high society of human space.

Keeping Quiet: It is possible that the player characters can keep the Klaxun race a secret for the time being. They would have to strike a deal with whoever rescues them, since those rescuers will also probably learn of the Klaxun, but this will not be impossible.

If they are successful, the player characters could virtually have an entire world to work with and plenty of willing servants in the Klaxun. The Klaxun could in time be directed to perform all sorts of valuable tasks, such as exploring the planet and constructing shelters. With a little help from technology, the players could map out the planet and locate all the valuable mineral deposits. If properly handled, the player characters could become wealthy men, and in doing so would probably exploit the Klaxun less than would the entire human race.



The Planet

DM + 17 2611 II is a unique planet, never before explored by human beings. Learning its many facets will take time, but the player characters will no doubt become familiar with their temporary home before the conclusion of this adventure. This section describes in detail the physical characteristics of the planet which will have an effect on the players and their actions.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

DM + 17 2611 II is, in many respects, a rather ordinary planetary body. It is a rocky core world 13,000 km in diameter. The equatorial circumference is nearly 42,000 km; it is only just over 39,000 km at the poles owing to eons of glacier activity dragging material toward the equatorial seas.

The average density of the planet is slightly greater than that of Earth: 1.3 Earth densities to be exact. The mass of the planet is 1.36 Earth masses, making its surface gravity 1.167, or just slightly higher than what humans consider normal. Escape velocity is 13.07 kilometers per second.

The minimum molecular weight retained is 5, giving the planet a dense atmosphere. The atmospheric pressure is 1.140 Earth pressures.

DM + 17 2611 II is classified as a Garden-Glacier world. The surface of the planet can be covered by up to 60% ice sheets plus the frozen equatorial seas, though this changes drastically according to the planetary season (see below). The oxygen pressure is rated at .1368, well within the acceptable range for human habitation. However, due to high albedo and the eccentric orbit of the world, the temperature is rated as cold, from -30° to 0° , though this also varies greatly with the seasons.

DM + 17 2611 has no natural or artificial satellites.

ORBIT

Though DM + 17 2611 II technically occupies the second orbit of the K type star in the system, its orbit is actually quite eccentric, sweeping the planet, regularly closer to or further from the main star. While most planetary orbits are slightly eccentric, in this case the eccentricity is sufficient to have a great effect on the planet's received radiation. This alters the ecology and meteorology of the planet greatly, creating wide ranges of variation as it moves annually along the received energy curve.

Extent of Eccentricity: The orbit of DM + 17 2611 II, as with planets everywhere, is not a true circle, but rather an ellipse. Elliptical orbits often are not sufficiently different from a true circle to make a difference. However, in some cases, such as this planet,

the effects are enormous.

The highly elliptical orbit of DM + 17 2611 II swings the planet very much closer to its star once per year, and subsequently further away annually as well. The planet has virtually no axial tilt with respect to its star, so all seasonal activity is due to the changing proximity to the K2 star DM + 17 2611. DM + 17 2611 II has a period around its star of 156 standard days. All references to days in this module refer to standard 24 hour days, not to local 16 hour days. If you wish to convert to local days for any purpose, multiply the number of standard days by 1.5.

Normally, one would expect a planet in this orbit around this star to be tidally locked. However, the proximity of the companion star in this system, in this case an M2 star ten AU distant, has broken this tidal locking effect, allowing it to rotate with a period of 16.5 hours. However, at this distance, the radiation from the companion star has virtually no effect on DM + 17 2311 II.

METEOROLOGY

Seasons: DM + 17 2611 II has seasonal variations similar in effect to those of other planets. However, these seasons are not due to axial tilt but rather to the eccentric orbit it has around its sun. As a result, the planet goes through a series of seasons roughly corresponding to Earth's Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

The diagram shows the elliptical orbit of the planet. Lines are drawn to show the closest approach to the star, the furthest distance, and the seasonal graduations. This orbit has an eccentricity of 0.21568.

The seasons last different lengths because of the orbit. Spring and Autumn are the shortest seasons, lasting only 27 days each. Summer is next, lasting a full 38 days. Winter is by far the longest season, stretching 64 days.

Measuring Time: For purposes of this adventure, time is measured by day consecutively from the lowest point on the energy curve, the dead of winter. Spring lasts from day 33 to day 59. Summer lasts from day 60 to day 97. Autumn lasts from day 98 to day 124. Winter lasts from day 125 to day 32 of the next year.

The player characters make their forced landing on DM + 17 2611 II on day 10 during mid- to late winter.

Even the high eccentricity of the orbit keeps DM + 17 2611 II in the life zone throughout its entire year. The average temperature during the winter season is between -60° and -30° , qualifying it as very cold. The spring and autumn seasons still remain below the freezing point of water, ranging from -30° to 0° . Only the summer season is reasonably warm, ranging in temperature from



0° to 30°, characterized by extremely rapid thaws and flooding. Daily temperature variation can range as much as 25° over the sixteen-hour period.

Weather: DM +17 2611 II is prone to rapid, violent weather changes during the late spring, summer, and early fall seasons. The winter season is comparatively quiet, frozen into submission at the low end of the energy curve. Several different types of weather can affect the player characters and their progress, depending on the time of year and their location on the planet.

Each day, the referee should roll on the weather time table and apply the following results.

No Effect: There is no weather activity of any importance that day.

Time: There is a weather event at the time indicated. Roll on the appropriate weather event table.

WEATHER TIME TABLE

1D10	Result	1D10	Result
1	no effect	6	midday
2	no effect		evening
3	no effect	8	evening
4	no effect	9	night
5	morning	10	night

Weather Event Tables: The weather event tables are qualified by two factors—the time of year and the physical location of the party. Location is divided into equatorial and non-equatorial. Consult the map of the planet to determine whether the player characters are in the equatorial zone or not. Match this with the season to find the correct table on which to roll the weather event.

EQUATORIAL SPRING/AUTUMN

1D6	Result
1	Windstorm
2	Windstorm
3	Blizzard
4	Ice Shift
5	Storm
6	Flood

EQUATORIAL SUMMER

1D6	Result
1	Windstorm
2	Blizzard
3	Storm
4	Storm
5	Storm
6	Flood

EQUATORIAL WINTER

1D6	Result
1	Windstorm
2	Windstorm
3	Windstorm
4	Windstorm
5	Windstorm
6	Blizzard

NON-EQUATORIAL SPRING/AUTUMN

1D6	Result
1	Ice Fall
2	Ice Fall
3	Windstorm
4	Blizzard
5	Blizzard
6	Ice Shift















NON-EQUATORIAL SUMMER

1D6	Result
1	Windstorm
2	Ice Fall
3	Blizzard
4	Ice Shift
5	Ice Shift
6	Storm

NON-EQUATORIAL WINTER

1D6	Result
1	Windstorm
2	Windstorm
3	Windstorm
4	Windstorm
5	Windstorm
6	Windstorm

TERRAIN KEY

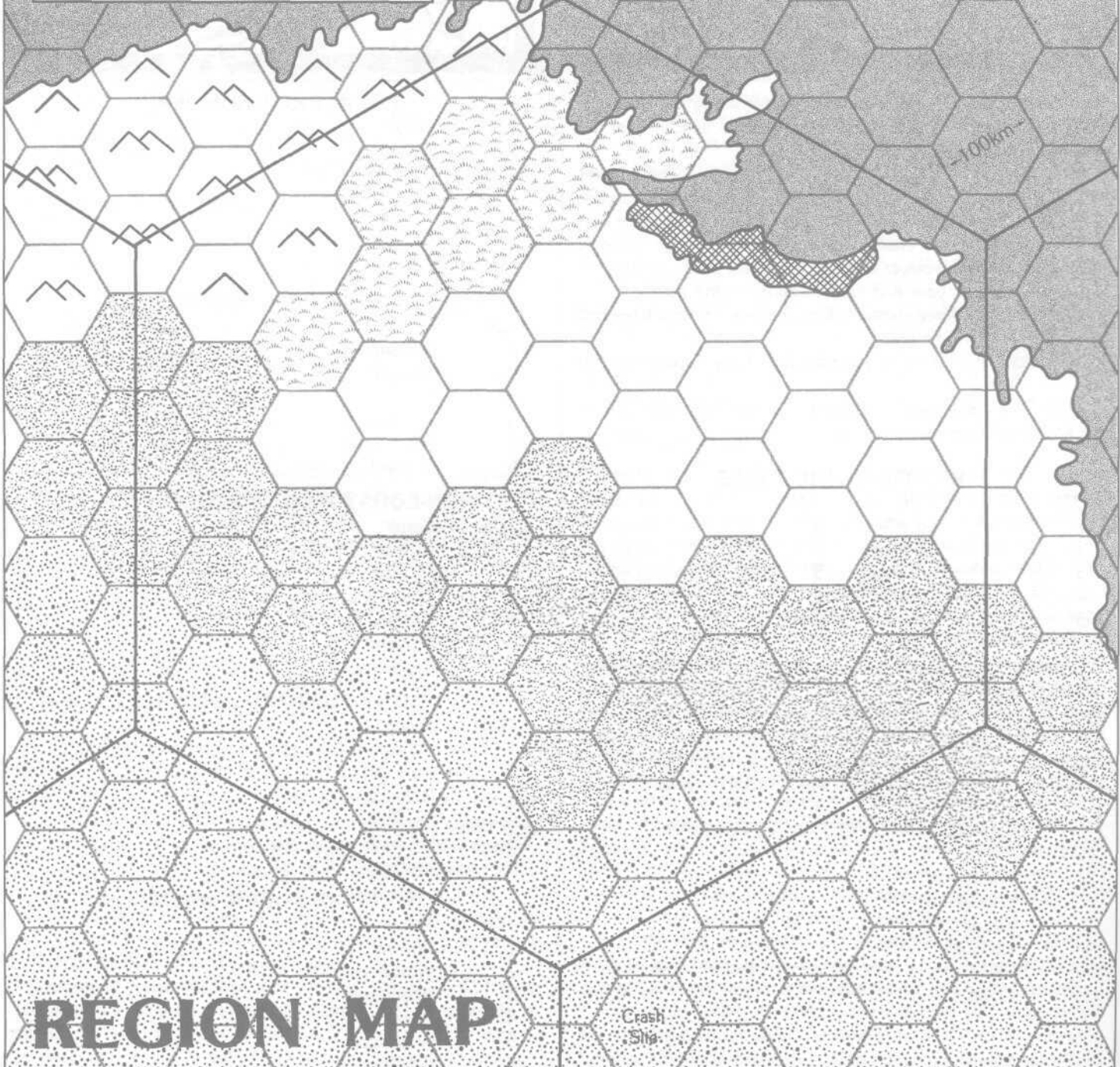
Symbol	Terrain	Symbol	Terrain
	Plain, Flat		Ocean
	Hilly		
	Mountains		
	Permanent Ice Pack		
	Temporary Ice Pack		
	Western Valleys		
	City		

TRAVELLER: 2300

World Name **DM+172611 II**

Geodesic Map Triangle No. **18**















Triangle Hex No.



REGION MAP

Crash Site

TERRAIN KEY

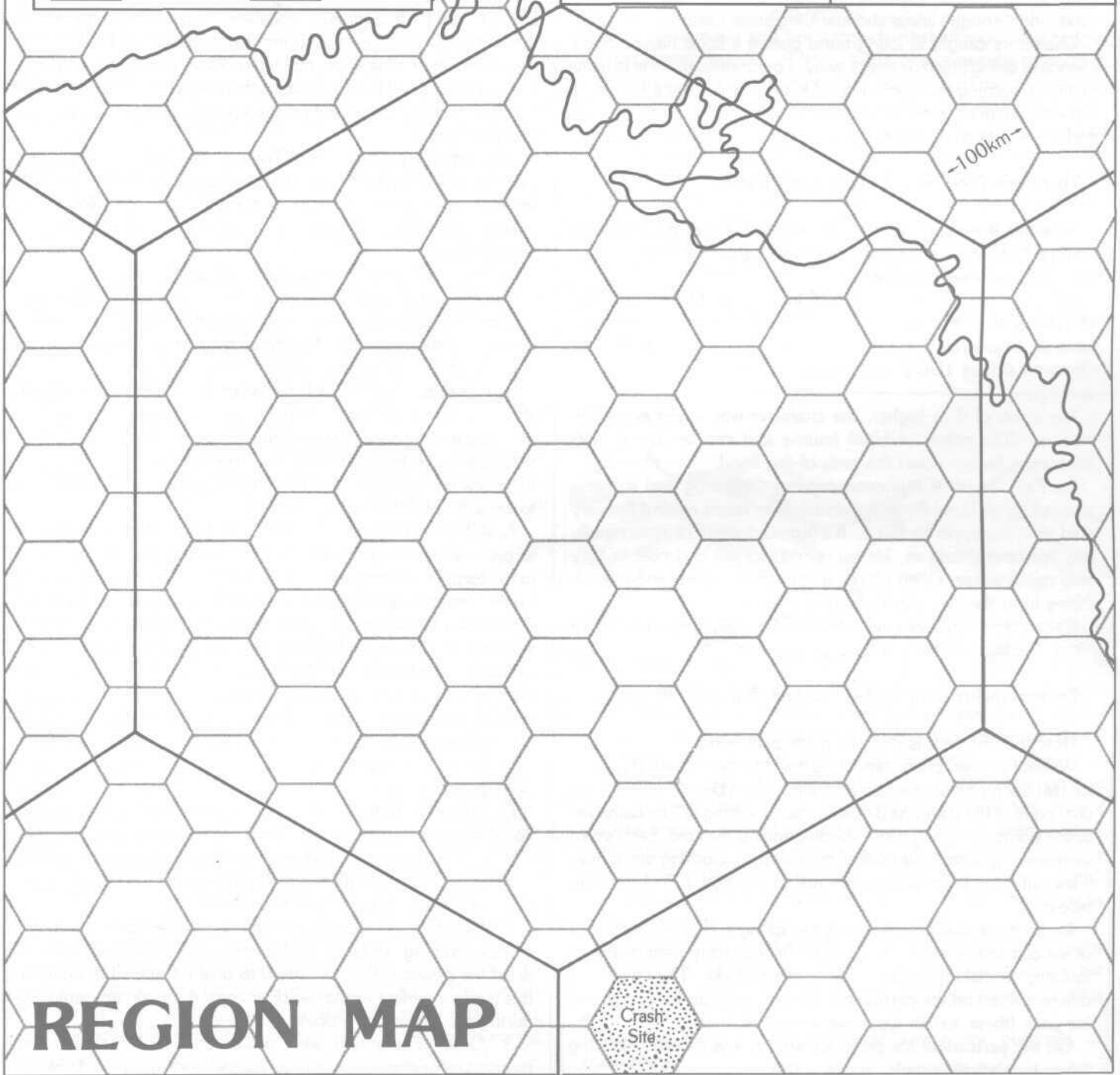
Symbol	Terrain	Symbol	Terrain
	Plain, Flat		
	Hilly		
	Mountains		
	Ice Pack		
			
			
			

TRAVELLER: 2300

World Name **DM+ 17 2611 II**

Geodesic Map
Triangle No. **18**

Triangle
Hex No.



REGION MAP

Weather Results: Each of the possible weather events are described here, including a brief description and the effects they are likely to have on the player characters.

Blizzard: Similar to the Earth counterpart, blizzards here are both more violent and severe. Winds usually drive a snow storm of mammoth proportions. It is not unusual in the worst blizzards for up to an inch of snow to accumulate in a minute, whipped up by the wind to bring visibility to zero and movement to a standstill.

A blizzard will force the player characters to stop for its duration and shelter themselves against the snow. Fortunately these fierce storms are generally short-lived, lasting only a few minutes at most. Further movement for that day should be at a double rate, as overcoming the snow which has fallen will require time.

Flood: The tremendous amounts of runoff from melting glaciers rush toward the equatorial oceans each year, often with colossal force. Water may build up under or behind ice flows for days or even weeks before breaking through, creating walls of water careening through valleys and low lying areas toward the oceans.

Characters caught in low ground during a flood have a good chance of being killed or swept away. Fortunately, there is usually plenty of warning that such a flood is on its way, since it sounds something like an approaching freight train. Each character must perform a task to avoid injury or death from the flood waters.

To escape flood. Routine. Dexterity. Instant.

Note that this might become an easy task if the characters announce that they are staying clear of low ground, taking higher avenues whenever possible.

Failure of the task means one of two things. On a single roll of 1D6, rolls of less than four mean that the character has been severely beaten by the water, though not swept off by it. The character suffers 1D6-2 (but at least one) point of blunt trauma damage.

On a roll of 4 or higher, the character was swept away. He receives 2D6 points of blunt trauma and can be found 1D6 kilometers further down the path of the flood.

Ice Fall: Ice fall is a phenomenon of the spring and summer seasons. High humidity in the atmosphere reacts against the very cold air of the upper air swells. If a humid mass of air rises rapidly into this bitterly cold air, ice fall results. Ice fall is similar to hail, only much worse. Often pieces of ice fall are sharp and jagged, falling from the sky with tremendous force.

If characters can seek shelter from the ice fall, they will be uninjured. Finding shelter is a task.

Finding shelter from ice fall. Routine. Survival. 30 seconds.

Note that the task is difficult in ice pack terrain.

Without shelter, characters are subject to the full effects of the ice fall. Each character so caught will suffer 1D6-2 (but at least one) point of blunt trauma damage. Also, clothing will be damaged by the storm, rendering it less effective against the cold. Each storm weathered by a particular suit of cold weather clothing will render it less effective according to *Survival in the Frigid Environment*, below.

Ice Shift: Ice shift occurs during the spring melt-off. Great sheets of ice can shift against one another, falling many meters almost instantly or shaking violently like an earthquake. The effects are different when on the permanent ice pack than on the temporary ice pack (these terrain types are explained later).

On the permanent ice pack, ice shift is less severe. Avoiding injury is relatively simple, and is a task.

Avoid ice fall injury. Easy. Dexterity. One minute.

Such an injury is merely one point of blunt trauma.

On the temporary ice pack, ice movement is much more pervasive and intense. Great sheets of ice can go on the move without much warning, jostling and possibly crushing anything nearby.

Avoid ice fall injury. Difficult. Dexterity. One minute.

These injuries involve 1D6 points of blunt trauma damage to each individual who fails the task.

Storm: Rainstorms only occur during the summer season. While not terribly deadly, they tend to create slush or mud which will make forward motion somewhat more difficult. The players make the rest of their travel that day at one third their unhindered speed.

Windstorm: The quick changes in temperature common on DM +17 2611 II drive enormous windstorms across the planet. Ice and snow particles are commonly whipped up by the winds and driven at great speeds, much like a sandstorm on Earth. Protective clothing will keep the player characters from harm, but there is a chance that unprotected equipment will be ruined or damaged in such storms.

Any item of equipment carried outside the protection of clothing may become damaged during a windstorm. Roll 10+ on 2D6 for each item for it to be damaged, requiring repair. Rolls of 12 exactly mean the equipment has been ruined and is completely beyond repair.

No tasks related to weather survival can be retried.

The chapter entitled *Color* gives the referee some more information to go on when describing some of the more violent weather events. It is suggested that the referee read through those passages prior to administering the events in play.

Survival in the Frigid Environment: Cold climate clothing should be available for each character—there are plenty of suits available in the space plane when it lands and the players should be encouraged to break them out. Besides, all they know about their new environment when they arrive is that it is cold, too cold to be without cold climate clothing.

As stated in the *Player's Manual*, cold climate clothing is powered to provide warmth at extremely low temperatures. This power is in the form of a battery which will run down over time depending on the temperature being overcome. The battery will last the following length of time per charge according to the season. During the summer no charge will be necessary, the local temperature being sufficient to sustain human life. During the spring and autumn each charge will last on the average 24 hours, or 1.5 local days. Of course, actual battery drain will vary from day to day, but the 24 hour average will hold true. During the winter, cold climate clothing is hard-pressed to ward off the cold—one charge lasts but one hour during the winter.

Charging the Batteries: Each suit starts with one charge. Additional charges can be gained from the following sources:

1. Fuel Stations will yield any number of charges in a matter of minutes. A group with a working fuel station will be able to survive any season but winter without difficulty.

2. Weapons with power cells can be adapted to recharge cold climate clothing batteries. Each charge given to the clothing will drain the power cell of the ability to give off one shot. Note that this is not a perfect exchange of energy. A certain amount is lost during the makeshift process.

3. Other Equipment with power supplies, such as communicators or computers, can be adapted for suit power. However,

each charge will render these smaller items of equipment useless until they themselves can be recharged at some other source.

Exposure: Being caught in the winter environment without some sort of shelter and heat source will mean immediate death. However, it is possible to survive the spring and summer environments without cold climate clothing power, but only at a risk to the character's health.

Each local day that a character goes without power to his cold climate clothing could result in frostbite, pneumonia, or other ailments. Avoiding this is a task.

Avoid exposure. Routine. Physical Endurance. Instant.

Failure of the task results in the character taking one shock point. Cumulative shock points could lead to unconsciousness (when the number of shock points equals his consciousness level) or death (when the number of shock points equals his life level).

Unconscious characters must be carried by other characters in order to keep moving.

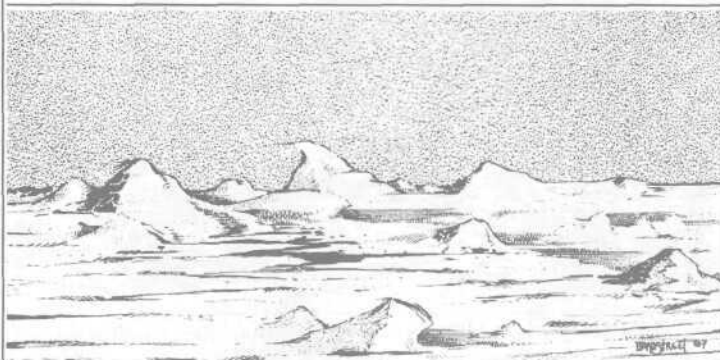
TOPOGRAPHY

Overview: DM +17 2611 II is formed of silicon, iron, and other unremarkable materials common to most planetary bodies. The overall density of the planet is significantly *greater* than that of the Earth, due to an enormous concentration of heavier metals in its large core. The surface is characterized by rock and sand, though this varies greatly with proximity to the poles.

The main cause of topographical change is, of course, the eons of ice movement from each pole toward the equator. Each year, millions of tons of ice melt during the warm summer, flowing into the great seas of the equatorial regions. Most of this water is reclaimed by the dry atmosphere and then redistributed, mostly over the remaining ice pack. While there is very little ice movement at the poles, toward the equator the ice is in a constant flux, changing with each season, gouging the already rugged terrain with its activity.

The planetary maps show the locations of the many terrain types to be found on DM +17 2611 II. Each of them is explained below. However, remember that this covers very broad terrain types on a planetary scale. Local variations are certainly possible.

poses of movement regardless of season.



Temporary Ice Pack: Closer to the poles, the ice does not cover the surface year round. Here, ice which is usually less than ten meters thick melts and reforms each year. During the spring, the ice melts away and the water channels through the rugged terrain toward the seas. Then, as the planet sweeps through its orbit and the winter sets in, the ice reforms, locking the area into stagnation until the coming spring.

Because of the frequent freezing and thawing of these areas, the terrain is scarred and broken. Rocks are broken down and then swept away toward the poles regularly. The slow movement of the permanent ice packs feeds the area with new material to pulverize and move along.

During the winter, treat temporary ice pack hexes as glacier for movement purposes. Treat them as broken terrain during the spring, summer, and autumn.

Temporary ice pack is treated as barren terrain for purposes of encounters.



Mountains: There are two mountain ranges near the equator. Here, away from the ice flows, they have escaped the ravages of erosion. Plate movement on DM +17 2611 II is extremely slow—these mountains are very old and are showing their age.

As old mountains, they are worn and weathered. Once pointed peaks are now rounded off, rising only to perhaps half of their greatest heights. On the highest ground of the equatorial region, the mountains do not enjoy the influx of topsoil generated by the temporary ice pack and therefore remain barren and rock hard. Only the hardest producers eke out an existence among the rocks and crags of the ancient mountain ranges.

Of course, both mountain ranges are treated as mountains for purposes of movement. Sighting is somewhat more difficult in the mountainous terrain as well—take this into account during encounters.

Mountains are treated as sparse terrain for purposes of encounters.



Permanent Ice Pack: Most of the planetary surface of DM +17 2611 II is permanent ice pack. These are regions of perpetual ice, even during the warmer summer season. The light of day has not hit the ground, some 10 to 150 meters below the ice, since the planet formed out of the cosmos billions of years ago.

The permanent ice pack is completely barren of life—no encounters are possible. It is typically swept by swift, frigid winds from the poles, and occasionally battered by blizzards or ice storms.

Permanent ice pack hexes are treated as glacier hexes for pur-



The Western Valleys: At one of the lowest points in the equatorial region lie what are here called the western valleys. Approximately one quarter of the annual runoff from the ice packs moves through this unique region of rugged valleys, rivers, and gullies.

Because of this enormous amount of runoff, the western valleys are the most fertile ground on the planet. A portion of the city borders on the western valleys, but as it is not part of the traditional foraging areas, the Klaxun rarely venture into it. If exploited, the valleys could support an enormous population, provided it could be kept from freezing over during the winter season.

As it stands now, the western valleys should be treated as swamp during the spring, summer, and autumn seasons. During the winter the swamps freeze over, but not so completely that they may be easily crossed on foot. During the winter, treat the western valleys as impassable terrain.

The Western Valleys are the only terrain type that are to be considered teeming for purposes of encounters.



can form. However, these never survive the winter, when their supply of new material dries up. During the winter the still active currents of the equatorial seas break up the still soft material of the deltas, scattering it along the shorelines or depositing it harmlessly on the ocean floor. Consequently, the seas are often quite muddy in appearance near the shoreline. Over the course of many dozens of years, the shorelines can actually change substantially on a local scale, though barely at all on the planetary scale.

The seas are treated as calm seas all year round. However, during the winter they are impassable to boats and any other surface craft.

The shorelines of the equatorial oceans are considered abundant for purposes of encounters, regardless of the terrain type of the hex.

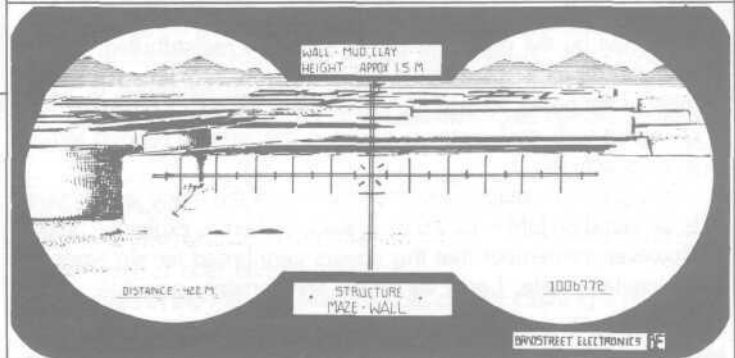


Plains: The plains of DM +17 2611 II are actually plains in the European sense rather than the North American sense. Here plain refers to a lack of trees rather than a distinct flatness of terrain. The ground is somewhat more broken with rock and streams than the typical midwestern "great plains." The plains are covered with grasses and smaller plants and are home to a considerable variety of life forms. The Klaxun do most of their foraging in terrain which qualifies as plains.

For purposes of movement, plains is treated as plains. For encounters, treat plains as abundant.

The Equatorial Seas: Nearly all of the equator of DM +17 2611 II is covered by a vast single ocean which circles the entire planet. The equatorial seas never freeze solid, even during the long winter. However, large sheets of ice do appear which would, if any were available, halt travel by boat across their surfaces.

During the spring, when enormous amounts of silt are brought into the seas from the poles, large deltas appear very rapidly. In a matter of only a few weeks, deltas occupying several square miles



The City: Entirely constructed on the shorelines near the equatorial seas by the Klaxun, the city is the most unusual terrain type on the planet. So much so, in fact, that it has its own chapter of explanation later in this module.

ECOLOGY

DM +17 2611 II has an interesting ecology molded most heavily by its varying received energy curve. No life forms are hardy enough to survive the rough winter season without some sort of biological assistance. In most cases, this takes the form of hibernation.

Producers: Light gathering producers are common to the equatorial regions of DM +17 2611 II. Where the topsoil is soft enough for plantlife to take hold, small leafy plants have evolved. In the swamps and along the muddy shoreline of the equatorial oceans, plants grow out of the soft beds up into the light of day, or producers form into their own islands, floating forever on the open seas, taking nutrients from the ocean itself.

Most of these plants die off during the autumn, leaving only seeds from which new plants will grow the following spring. However, as on Earth, many producers simply become dormant during



the winter. Many larger producers exist in dormant states through the winter as far north as the temporary ice pack.

Free-moving Producers: The Klaxun are free-moving producers. However, they are only the end of one branch of evolution. Many less sophisticated producers are also free-moving.

A free-moving producer is characterized by its two-fold existence. During the winter these producers lock themselves to some source of nutrients, however slow those nutrients might flow. In most cases they attach themselves to soft ground or to the floors of swamps or the shoreline. However, when the received energy from the sun is great enough, photosynthesis produces sufficient energy that the producer no longer needs constant attachment to a source of nutrients. During the summer months most free-moving producers move across the land or water, usually in search of better places to hibernate the winter or to spread their kind to new areas of the planet. The Klaxun are intelligent enough to begin using their free-moving time to construct buildings, forage for exotic foods, and begin a fair civilization regulated by the drumbeat of the passing seasons.

Animals: Free-moving producers fill most of the niches which would be filled by animals on a planet such as Earth. However, animals do exist, mostly in the oceans. Amphibians which are able to survive the winters on the ocean floor, where the water stays comparatively warm, can become very active during the summer season. Other animals which can survive by more familiar means of hibernation also exist, but only at the poles and only with extremely sophisticated means of survival. Life on a planet such as DM + 17 2611 II is extremely difficult, as temperature extremes freeze life processes beyond their capacity to simply "slow down" during the colder seasons.



WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR CHANCES ARE?

TAKE IT EASY. IT COULD BE WORSE.

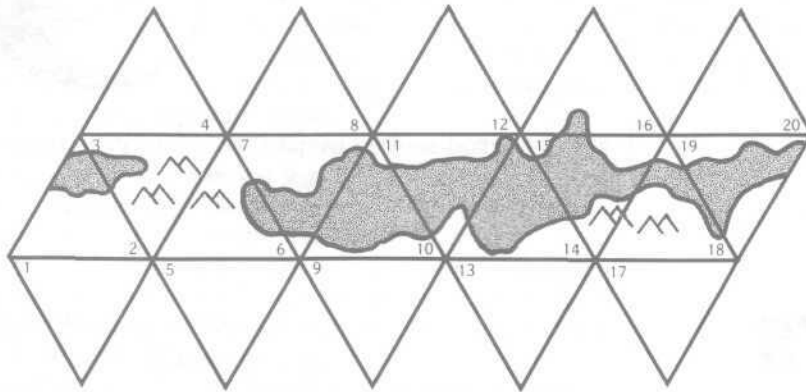


"MY BET IS OUR KAFER FRIENDS WON'T BE LONG IN HUNTING US DOWN. UNFORTUNATELY, ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT FOR THEM. SURVIVAL IS ESSENTIAL. I JUST HOPE JOHNSON MAKES IT UNTIL WE REACH WARMER PARTS OF THIS ROCK."



THIS LOOKS GOOD ENOUGH. WE'LL STOP HERE FOR AWHILE.

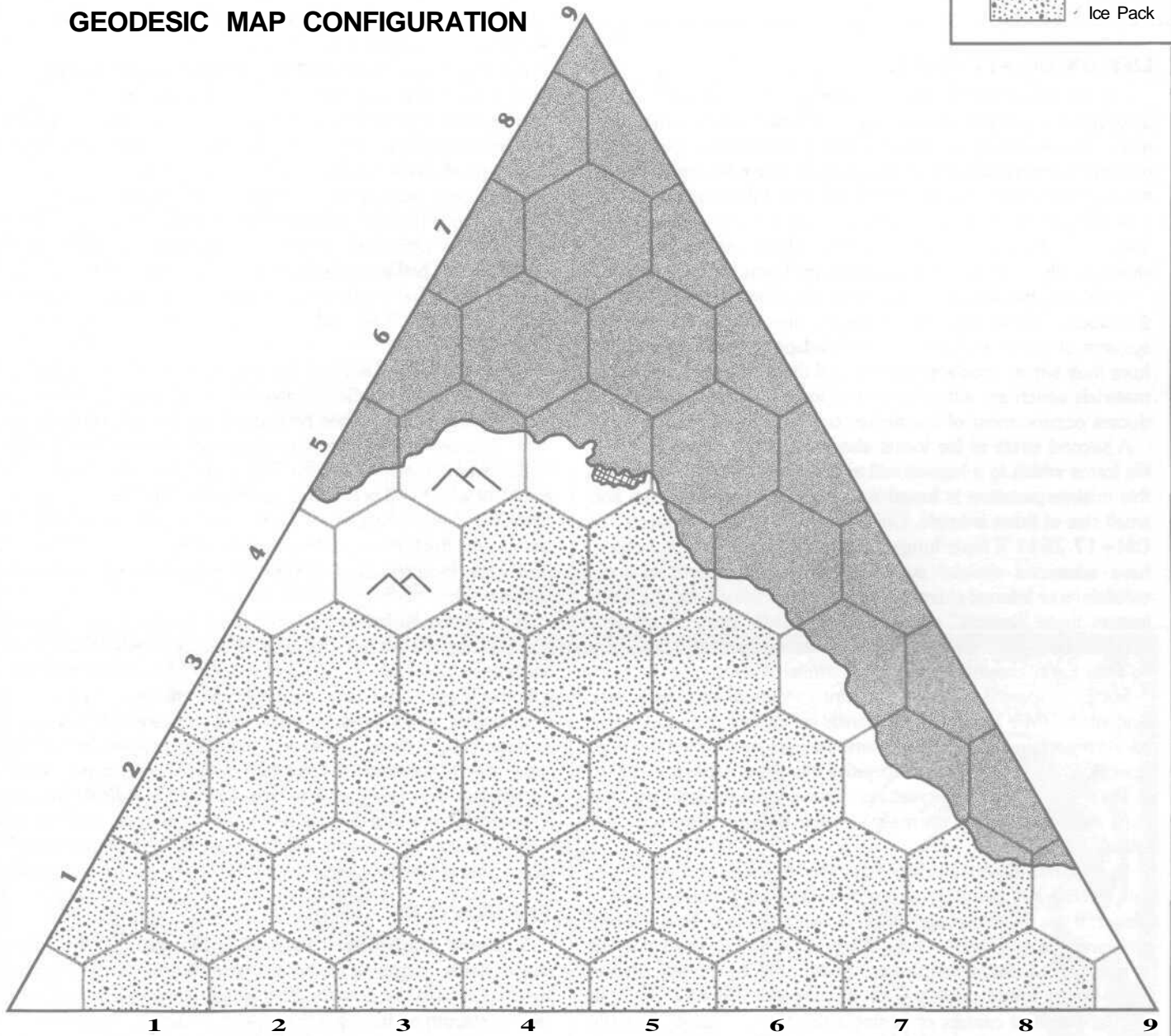
DM+ 17 2611 II



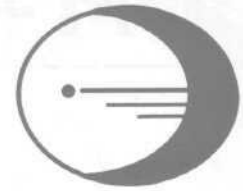
GEODESIC MAP CONFIGURATION

TERRAIN KEY

Symbol	Terrain
	Mountains
	Ocean
	City
	Plain, Flat
	Permanent Ice Pack



— = 1000 kilometers



Encounters

LIFE ON DM+ 17 2611 II

Life has taken several bizarre twists on DM + 17 2611 II, or at least twists interpreted as being bizarre by human beings. Actually, life has merely evolved according to the same rules which govern the progressions of life everywhere. The rules are the same, it is merely the background which is different. Life here has evolved over the past few hundred million years into forms stimulated by the unique characteristics of this planet, characteristics which are strikingly different from the evolutionary home of man, Earth.

In general, the dominant species on this planet are free-moving producers. These creatures combine the energy production systems of plants and animals, both adapting received photons from their sun to produce starches and digesting other vegetable materials which are either hunted or foraged. Free-moving producers occupy most of the niches on DM + 17 2611 II.

A second strata of life forms also exist on DM + 17 2611 II, life forms which to a human will appear to be insects. However, this misinterpretation is based solely on the large numbers and small size of these animals. Unlike Earth insects the "insects" of DM + 17 2611 II have lungs for breathing and, in most cases, have advanced skeletal systems, using many-chambered exoskeletons or internal-external skeletal combinations. Unlike Earth insects, these "insects" do not have especially dense or efficient nerve tissues, and are therefore no more intelligent and often less so than Earth creatures occupying similar niches.

Social cooperation among different species of animals is very evident on DM +17 2611 II. Whereas on Earth these cooperative efforts are more the exception, here they are more often the rule. Specific instances of these cooperative efforts are explained below.

Three sets of symbiotic creatures deserve more in-depth explanations than they would normally receive through the encounter tables.

Symbiotic Relationship #1: After the Klaxun themselves, this symbiont is probably the most successful "society" on the planet. It is a three part symbiont, encompassing three life forms with only the most distant hereditary relationships. The symbiont is mostly a southern hemisphere phenomenon, though adaptations can be found on nearly all the plains of DM + 17 2611 II.

The symbiont centers on a single producer, a plant of largely unremarkable characteristics. Its most notable function is that it produces great quantities of starches, much more than it can conveniently use for its own purposes. These starches are accumulated in "bags" at the base of the plant, where they are dealt with by

the other symbionts in this system.

The first is a small creature, one of the "insects" of the planet. Each individual is only approximately two centimeters long, has four legs and lives in large social groups. These "housekeepers" live within the producer itself, in chambers which are a natural part of the producer's development. In exchange for shelter, the housekeepers manufacture the bags which hold the excess starches, using a material secreted from glands within their bodies and molded with their mouth and forearms. In addition, the housekeepers gather seeds from within the producer and distribute them during ritual migrations up to ten or twenty meters from the original producer. The producer has no other means of distributing its seeds.

The final symbiont is a free-moving producer, similar to the Klaxun, though much smaller. Unlike the housekeepers, these "protectors" are not tied to one producer but can freely move among them. The protectors have adapted special tubes on their forward body cases in place of mouths. The ends of the tubes can secrete a solvent which will break through and then fuse with the material of the starch-filled bags while small suction cups on the body hold onto it. In effect, these protectors rely on these bags of starch for their main food source, and in return protect the producers from outside harm, such as grazers.

Symbiotic Relationship #2: This symbiont involves a flying scavenger and a larger animal which dwells in trees. The scavenger lays eggs during reproduction, but never establishes a home. Eggs, once laid, are placed in among the eggs of the tree-dweller, which tends to them until they are hatched and old enough to fly. The adult scavengers have no organs for secreting the nutrients necessary to raise their own young and are therefore completely dependent on the tree-dweller for their existence.

Ironically, the tree-dweller is a trapping animal, making large nets between trees to capture flying creatures. Among its most frequent prey are the flying scavengers they themselves have nurtured.

ENCOUNTERS

1. Small Gatherer. This small animal lives on the edge of the ice fields, migrating toward the poles during the summers and moving toward the equator during the winter. The chief advantage of staying on the ice is the lack of predators. In order to keep warm, the animal can unfold a sheet of skin on the ice: a sheet about .5 meters in diameter, with the main body residing in the center. Blood moves through this dark colored sheet, circulating the warmth it receives from the sun back into the main portion

of the creature. It is not uncommon to find hundreds of these gatherers basking in the sun on the edge of the ice flow. *Initiative: 3 Hit: difficult Size: 1 kg Speed: 80 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -6 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none*

2. Intermittent. These are free-moving carnivores who scour the temporary ice pack for food, but who spend a great amount of time basking in the sunlight. *Initiative: 2 Hit: difficult Size: 5 kg Speed: 110 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -5 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none*

3. Chaser. This animal has adapted to chase both on the ice and through the mud. It has four legs, all of which have webbed toes to decrease ground pressure on the mud. For rapid ice travel, the fore legs have exposed bone strips which can be put down as runners and the back feet have tiny barbs for traction. The chaser sleds to its prey at high speeds. *Initiative: 6 Hit: routine Size: 10 kg Speed: 130 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -4 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none*

4. Hunter. This animal is common to the plains regions. Its relatively small size is in step with its prey—there are no very large prey animals on the plains of DM +17 2611 II. *Initiative: 4 Hit: routine Size: 20 kg Speed: 100 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -3 Consciousness: 1 Life: 2 DPV: 0.1 Signature: -6*

5. Protectors. These are the creatures described under *Symbiotic Relationship #1*, above. *Initiative: 3 Hit: difficult Size: 10 kg Speed: 110 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -4 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none*

6. Housekeepers. These are the housekeepers described under *Symbiotic Relationship #1*, above. *Initiative: 2 Hit: difficult Size: less than 1 kg Speed: 130 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -10 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none*

7. Grazer. Probably the largest creatures on the land surface of the planet, these free-moving producers were in competition with the Klaxun in the wild state. Both have survived to the present day. *Initiative: 2 Hit: difficult Size: 60 kg Speed: 100 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -1 Consciousness: 3 Life: 6 DPV: 0.2 Signature: -1*

8. Flying Scavenger. These are part of the symbiont described in *symbiotic relationship #2*, above. *Initiative: 7 Hit: difficult Size: 2 kg Speed: 160 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -6 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none*

9. Trapper. These are the creatures described in *Symbiotic Relationship #2*, above. *Initiative: 3 Hit: difficult Size: 5 kg Speed:*

120 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -5 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: none

10. Killer. The only substantial killers on the face of the planet, these creatures have been known to attack all other animals, including the Klaxun themselves. The only way Klaxun can deal with these killers is through the swarm. *Initiative: 10 Hit: easy Size: 40 kg Speed: 95 Armor: 0 Wound Potential: -2 Consciousness: 1 Life: 1 DPV: 0.1 Signature: -3*







The City

The Klaxun city is the heart of the Klaxun's newly civilized society. The structure itself and the urban lifestyle of its inhabitants will be the backdrop for much of the player characters' activities for perhaps several years of adventure time. Understanding the city and city life will help the human player characters fit in, perhaps even allowing them to benefit from their unfortunate Kafer encounter and subsequent crash landing here on DM +17 2611 II.

THE CITY

To a human observer, there is very little rhyme or reason to the Klaxun city. It appears to be more of a maze than a city, with random structures laid out in an indecipherable pattern, stretching for miles in any direction. In fact, the structures do have meaning and are coherent to the Klaxun—it is the epitome of their achievements as they move from primitives to users of technology.

Physical Description: The Klaxun city is a single structure which stretches for approximately three hundred kilometers along the southern shore of the equatorial seas. It extends in from the shore approximately ten to twenty kilometers, though there are portions which are only a kilometer or so wide.

The walls of the structure stand between 1 and 1.5 meters in height. They are constructed of clay and adobe, fashioned by the construction crews. The walls form chambers and passages which channel traffic through specific areas. Particularly large chambers are usually used for commercial activity, such as the areas utilized by the larger communes. Smaller chambers are typically used for storage of foraged food or for relaxation. It does not appear that the Klaxun assign themselves to a particular chamber for their rest periods—any free chamber is considered adequate.

Along its entire length, there are portions of the city that stand largely unused. In fact, there are portions which are upwards of a kilometer square which are open and unused, possibly intended for later expansion.

It is not uncommon to find plants growing within the confines of the city. Since the Klaxun have not yet mastered agriculture, it is unlikely that these are used for food. Instead it appears that producers within the confines of the city are either unwanted pests (weeds) or are accepted for decoration.

There are no enclosed areas in the Klaxun city. All chambers and passages are open to the air and sunlight. The Klaxun rely on sunlight for some of their energy (through photosynthesis) even during their active state—enclosing their chambers and blocking out the sun would be counter to that function.

The Planting Grounds: During each season of hibernation,

all Klaxun must have access to either a portion of the seashore or to some river or stream bed. The city itself is laid out apparently to take advantage of as many such areas as possible, encompassing three major rivers and uncounted streams, not to mention three hundred kilometers of coastline. Restrictions of the planting grounds are imposed by the sighted nobility. In general they prefer the shoreline areas at the mouths of the rivers and streams—these areas seem to possess the best crystals for the cultivation of sighted offspring.

During hibernation the city stands abandoned. The player characters are likely to stumble upon the city while the Klaxun are still inactive, and they will be in a position where they must puzzle out why this maze is here and who built it.

THE POPULATION

The civilized Klaxun community encompasses approximately two million individuals. All of these reside within the city, rely on the organized foraging for food, and use the nearby shorelines for their annual hibernation. There are perhaps several million other, more primitive Klaxun, living on the northern portions of the planet, but the civilized Klaxun are not currently in contact with them and live their lives completely independent of outsiders.

Organized Foraging: The foraging parties are charged with providing enough food from the countryside to feed the entire Klaxun community. Approximately half of the Klaxun living in the city are directly involved in organized foraging. Therefore, one Klaxun feeds both himself and another Klaxun who is left free to pursue other matters of business.

The foraging parties range far and wide around the city, collecting fruits off of plants and returning with them. The extent to which they wander in search of food is enormous—foraging parties can be found as far as 150 kilometers from the city during the height of the summer season. By the end of the spring-summer-autumn cycle, the countryside around the city has been picked clean and will not renew itself until the next spring comes.

Currently the Klaxun are at the limits of their population. The foraging parties are extended to their fullest right now. The further a foraging party must travel in search of food the more it must eat in transit and therefore less food is returned to the city, creating a diminishing return. The Klaxun cannot increase their population by much at all before they go beyond their food supply.

The coming migrations will relieve this pressure, allowing the Klaxun to forage over a much wider area. After this event occurs, and/or the player characters introduce agriculture to the Klaxun,

they will begin to increase their numbers. Unhindered otherwise, the Klaxun will begin to truly dominate the southern shores of the equatorial seas in no more than another hundred local years.

Construction Crews: Within the city there are groups of Klaxun charged solely with the construction and maintenance of the city. These crews are guided by sighted authorities to repair damaged portions of city or to build new sections.

Presently there is sufficient city for the needs of all the Klaxun. In fact, in areas there are abandoned city sections apparently completely unused. New construction is restricted to remodelling old areas for the purposes of some commune or adding on areas in the vicinity of a rapidly growing commune.

THE COMMUNES

Beyond foraging and construction, Klaxun industrial activity is organized into communes. These communes permeate the city itself and form the fabric of Klaxun advancement in all areas. Each commune is a unique entity, performing a certain task with a certain budget of workers and food. However, generalities can be made.

Leadership: In all cases, the leadership of a commune is made up of sighted Klaxun. These sparklers are the brains of each commune, directing its activity, planning new ventures, etc.

One sighted Klaxun can run a commune, but more often than not leadership is divided among several. In the case of the shipbuilding commune, one sighted Klaxun had the idea to start the commune, then he was joined by several sighted partners. Together they manage the commune, though the original Klaxun maintains overall control.

Backing: Once a sighted Klaxun wishes to begin a commune, he must make a presentation to those who are in authority above him. This is a complicated process which is not entirely interpretable by humans. It seems that some Klaxun who are in authority in some situations are definitely inferiors in some other situations. Regardless, the petition is made to several sighted nobles who ponder the question for a few days and return with a decision.

If the decision is negative, then the project is scrapped—no commune will be created for this project. The panel of nobles has apparently felt that it was not wise to put support behind this project, perhaps because they felt that the project was unnecessary or that they hadn't sufficient resources at that time.

If the decision is positive, then the Klaxun will be given backing

for the project, and the commune will be created. The panel will allow the commune a location, a certain number of workers, and will supply food for the entire project.

Workers: The commune is allowed a certain number of unsighted workers for the work it will be doing. This number may change with the relative success of the commune. Also, depending on the type of work to be done, the commune might be allowed a greater or lesser number of workers. For instance, an artistic commune might require very few workers, while a canal digging commune might require a large number.

Location: The commune will be allowed a location based on availability and purpose. For example, the shipbuilding commune is located, not surprisingly, by the seashore. There are plenty of areas to expand into in the city for new communes, and petitions to the construction crews can result in remodelling and other accommodations.

Success and Failure: The success of a commune is judged by the overall nobility at the end of each spring-summer-autumn cycle. Those communes judged to be less productive are disbanded at this time, and the workers redistributed among those judged successful. Sighted Klaxun displaced in this way are encouraged to begin anew the following year or to become partners in some established commune.

Technological Advancements: All technological advancements in the Klaxun society are the result of communes and their efforts. For instance, stone tools have been developed for both digging and for felling trees by their respective communes. Future technological developments are likely, but no significant progress (like metal working) is likely to be made within the context of this adventure.

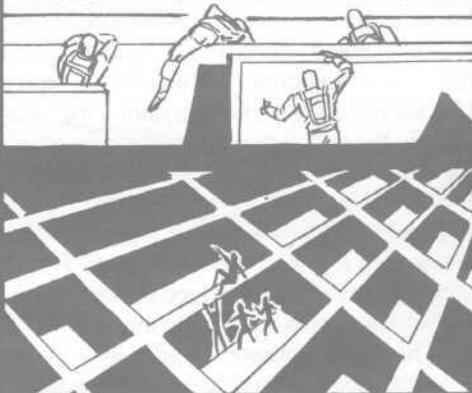
TYPICAL COMMUNES

The average commune contains one to five sighted Klaxun and up to fifty unsighted workers. They are supplied with food brought directly from the foraging fields to their location within the city.

Types of Communes: There are several broad classifications of communes in the city. However, these do not cover the entire spectrum of activity within the community, only the larger interests.

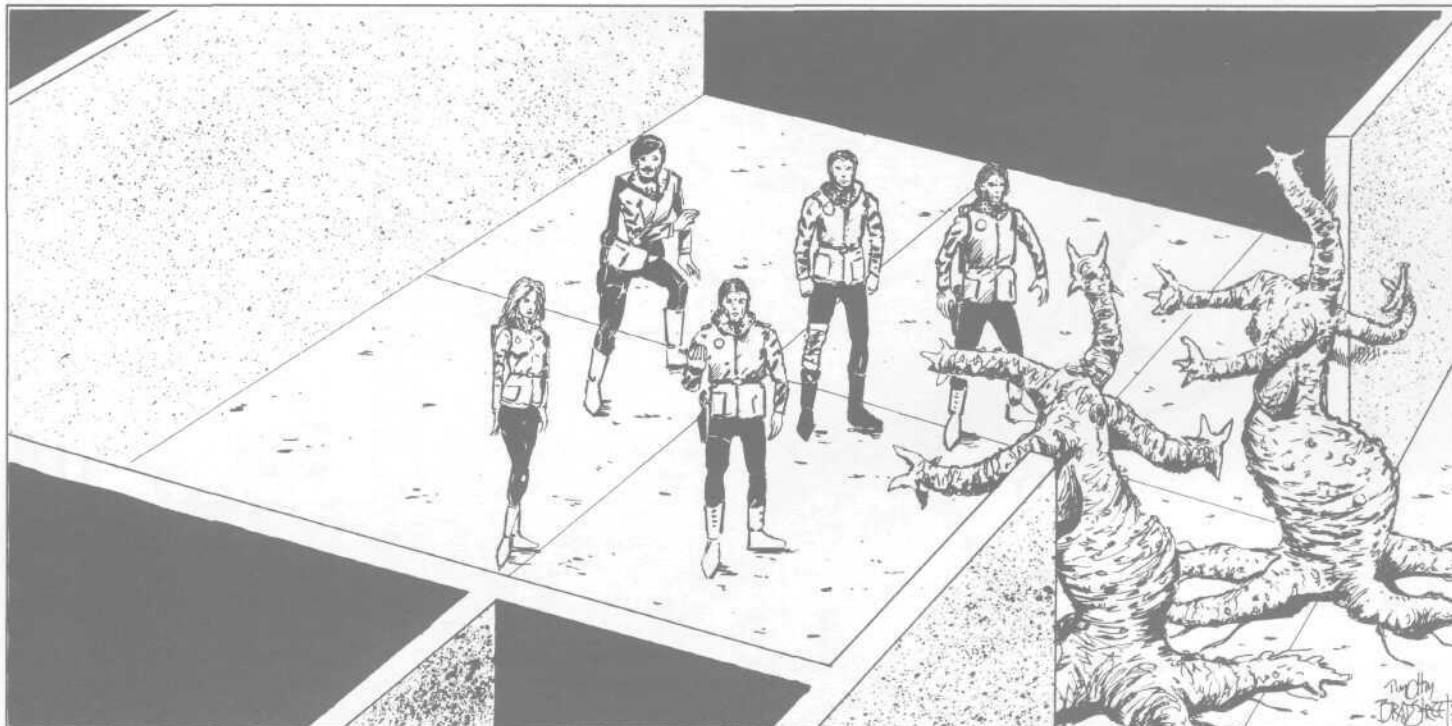
Artistic: Artistic communes are supported mostly by the upper class sighted Klaxun. Their works range widely from drawings made in slabs of clay to colored sand paintings to sculptures. The works seem to be all impressionistic at this point—there are no

"AS THE SUMMER SUN BEGAN TO THAW THE FINE, THE TEAM MADE ITS WAY INTO THE CITY..."



"...UNAWARE OF THE INTELLIGENCE THAT STIRRED AROUND THEM."





busts of important Klaxun lining the passages of the city. To a human, the art is somewhat substandard, but to the sighted Klaxun these works are very much in demand. A particularly adept artist might become quite well known in a portion or even all of the city.

Canal Digging: There are two large canal digging communes operating on the western edge of the city. They are attempting to route some of the waterflow from the western valleys through the city proper to facilitate planting and increase the amount of silt in that portion of the city.

Shipbuilding: The shipbuilders are a new commune, devoted to conquering the seas. They hope to build craft with which to explore and trade (with other parts of the city), but have thus far not been very successful. The shipbuilders are keeping a close eye on the canal diggers, as they see the potential for trade through the city if they are successful.

Tree Felling: At this point this cannot be referred to as forestry, since the Klaxun are merely cutting trees and not replacing them. With the help of newly invented stone tools, wood is starting to be a commodity of value among the Klaxun. The construction crews are learning to use wooden braces during their maintenance work, for instance. Other uses for wood are springing up in other communes, especially art.

Smaller Communes: There are numerous communes in the Klaxun community which are engaged in smaller operations than those listed above. These small communes are often one-of-a-kind—no other communes are performing the same services or industries. The smaller communes are ideal for the player characters to become involved in. If the humans apply their talents, these smaller operations could become comparative giants in the civilized community.

Bedding Preparation: This commune is ingratiating itself to the sighted upper classes by preparing and caring for their seeding areas through the summer. The commune uses its workers to keep the mud beds of the river banks and shorelines free of debris and to till and turn the mud to keep it in top condition. Outside the upper classes there is little call for this activity, and there is only one commune actively pursuing this function.

Food Preparation: The traditional method of taking in food is

to eat it in its raw, native form. It has only recently occurred to one Klaxun commune to begin preparing the food by whatever means. The plants foraged from outside the city are brought to the commune where they work their magic with it. At present, this consists mostly of mixing many raw vegetables together to obtain a combined flavor, or pulverizing vegetables into a paste. Oddly enough, this activity has not taken hold among the upper classes—the sighted are more traditional-minded than their blind workers and would not think of eating anything but unprepared food. Among the workers, however, food preparation is quickly becoming quite popular very.






STARTING A COMMUNE

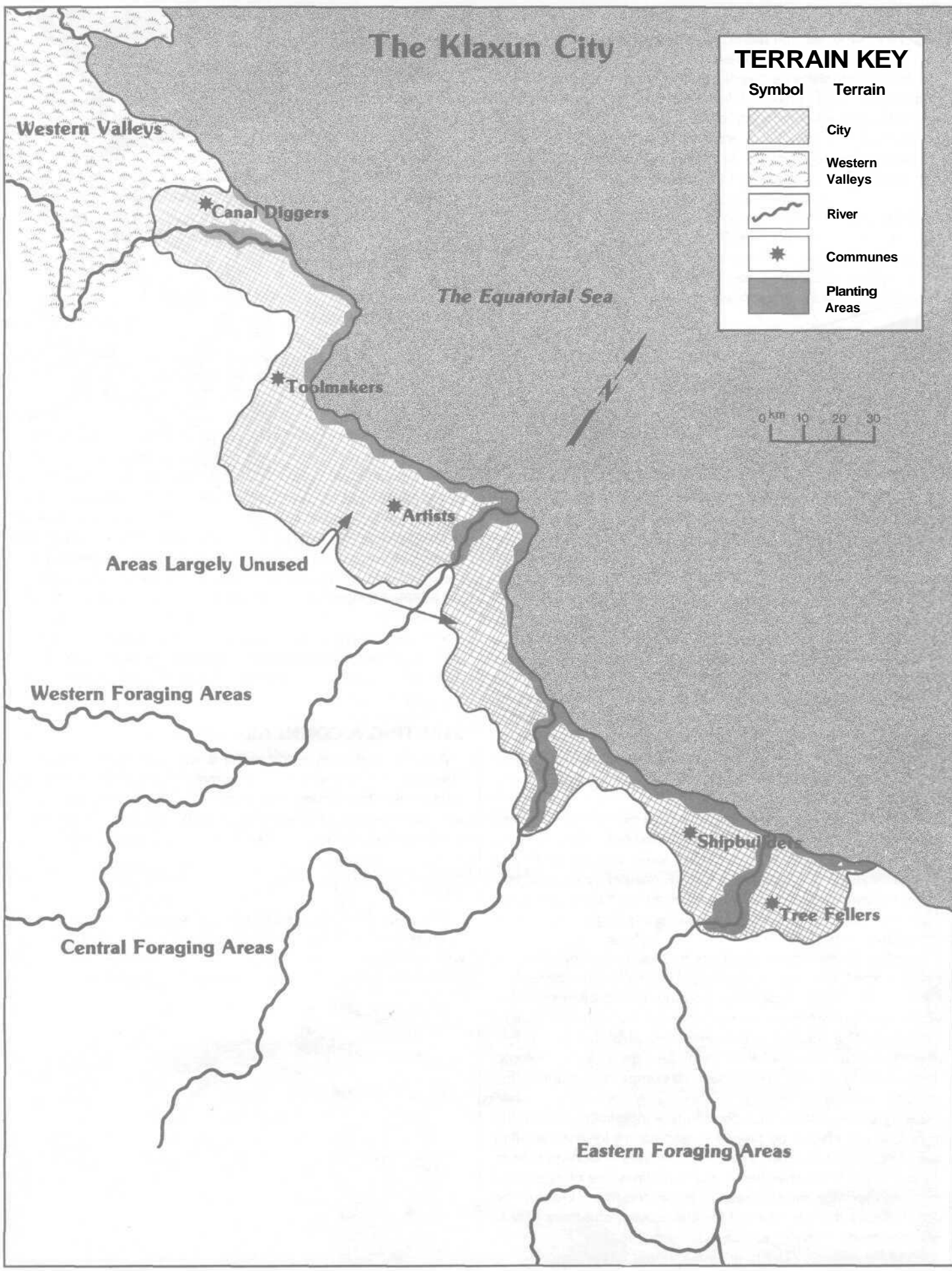
Actually beginning a commune is not possible for a human. However, the original idea for a commune might easily be given by a human to a Klaxun noble, provided the appropriate words have been translated (see the chapter entitled *Contact*). The humans will then no doubt be instrumental in working with that commune to make it successful.

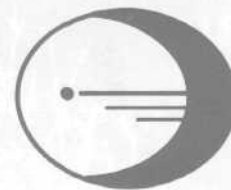
THE MAP

The map of the city shows its overall layout. Names are placed in areas dominated by a particular type of commune (the artistic area, for instance, is predominantly made up of artistic communes). Movement through the city is done at the city movement rate.

The Klaxun City

Symbol	Terrain
	City
	Western Valleys
	River
	Communes
	Planting Areas





Color

This chapter is designed to help the referee describe certain situations to the players. DM + 17 2611 II is a unique planet—its characteristics are unusual and, at first, unknown to the players. The excerpts from this chapter will assist the referee in getting these unusual conditions across to the players.

Each section here deals with a certain aspect of the environment with which the player characters will no doubt come into contact. Some are one-time only occurrences, like the first encounter with active Klaxun. Others are possibly recurring events, such as the various weather situations. In either case, upon encountering an event described here, the appropriate section may be read aloud to the player characters, or paraphrased in the referee's own words.

Role-playing is the interaction between *referee* and players. This section is designed to help the referee paint a mental image in the minds of the players, animating what could otherwise be very lifeless scenes. The referee can expand on these sections as he sees fit.

WEATHER

Ice Fall: The ice fall phenomenon is a result of the high humidity of the atmosphere reacting against the desperate chill of the upper air swells. If a particularly humid mass of air from the warm surface rises suddenly, the humidity crystallizes rapidly, creating an ice snow storm of sometimes dangerous proportions.

A typical ice fall storm is preceded by a marked drop in temperature. As the ice crystals are forming in the upper atmosphere, the sun or sun's rays are refracted into a spectacular series of rainbows. These rainbows appear to move as the crystals grow and fall, creating areas of greater and lesser ice density in the air.

Finally, as the ice crystals reach the surface of the planet, the destruction begins. Great waves of crystals, ranging in size from 1 to sometimes 30 millimeters in diameter, smash into the ground, burrowing into the soft earth or shattering the ice fields. The noise is deafening as ton upon ton of ice impacts with the ground nearby. The hardy vegetation holds out for the most part, but bad storms can take down trees or destroy smaller plants. Individuals caught in the open are at the mercy of chance—a large ice chunk could literally kill.

Then, as quickly as the storm began, the ice fall subsides, leaving behind a riddled landscape of mud and ice. Steam rising from the new ice often creates a dense fog which lasts for hours after the storm, especially in the spring and summer when the ground is warming up. Runoff from the melting ice can also cause bar-

riers to travel as unexpected streams cut gullies leading to the nearest channels to the sea.

Rapid Successions of Storms and Temperature Changes: *You can see a storm brewing on the horizon perhaps a half hour before it reaches you. Unlike on the comparatively placid Earth, where lazy clouds seem motionless against a brilliant blue sky, the clouds on this planet are always on the move. The enormous forces of nature are constantly at war with one another, putting on a show of mammoth proportions which can make even the most hardy individual shake in his boots.*

The wind arrives first, bringing with it a cold blast of air. Trees can bend easily in the wind—they're used to it. Humans aren't so well adapted. If it's muddy, there's less of a problem. But dry ground can get whipped up in the wind, creating a dangerous sand-storm. Unless shelter is found, the tiny grains of sand propelled with such force can rip through skin, ruin clothing, and pit or ruin the best protected gear.

Then, with the wind at full force, the lightning and thunderstorms begin. As clouds discharge their static to one another and then impart it to the ground, the sky lights up in a show of fire and terror more than sufficient to make night seem like day. The clamor of the storm drowns out all other noise, and communication becomes as impossible as movement.

The wind drives a torrential rain which can make the ground disappear in great sheets. Erosion can change the landscape in minutes, making previously open avenues impassable due to rivers of mud and water. The mud flows carry away everything in their paths, or bury it where it stands.

TERRAIN

The Ice Fields: Blindness is the greatest danger on the ice fields. The shining white is not as dangerous as it would be under a true yellow sun, but the brightness of the surroundings are certainly just as monotonous. As on the oceans, without a stationary point of reference, the ice fields often defy the traveller to make sense of his motion or be aware of the passage of time.

Nothing lives on the ice fields but an occasional mammoth tree. But in the brilliance of the landscape these become eerie figures, standing like huge solitary sentinals guarding the perpetual stillness of their domain. No animals live on the ice fields, except for the rare avian scavengers searching for tiny creatures which peak their heads up only when the ice fields are melting away in the face of another warm summer.



Gouged Terrain: When the ice flow melts, the ancient waterways channel oceans of water toward the equatorial seas. The stone walls of the waterways have been polished smooth by countless millions of seasons of freeze followed by thaw and the cubic miles of water which make their way semianually to the sea.

During the spring and early summer seasons the waterways which have been gouged out of the very rock of the planet are alive with activity. On an average day each gouge will funnel as much water as an entire Earth river system, such as the Mississippi or Amazon. Tremendous amounts of water are on the move, shaking the ground for miles and reshaping the terrain.

However, after the summer suns have dried up the equatorial regions, the waterways stand empty but for sand and silt which did not make it to the seas earlier in the year. They become frozen deserts, too barren to support any life, even the hardy native plants. Rainstorms in these areas in the beginning of the years often do not even reach the ground, the water being claimed by the lower atmosphere before it can reach its intended destination. The smooth rock walls of the channels are all but impossible to climb; their faces are often hundreds of feet of sheer cliff, absolute barriers to perpendicular movement. The gentle central winds wind down the channels, whipping up an occasional sandstorm which will most likely be witnessed by nothing.

The City: Finding anything of unnatural origin is extraordinary here on this planet. The artisans which created this weird city have certainly not shown themselves—where could they be hiding? The city cannot be terribly ancient—the adobe-like walls would need constant repair to survive the rigors of even the equatorial climate. That means only one thing—whoever they are, they are still around somewhere.

Is it a city, or is it a maze? Perhaps the weeks of travel across the ice fields have finally cracked us up—our own senses could be in question. But a mass hallucination? Probably not. The structures go as far as the eye can see. From the bluffs it can be seen to extend to the horizon and to the oceans perhaps ten miles distant. The grey and brown walls meld with the deep green plantlife which grows among them, until the colors fuse into one in the distance, set off against the brilliant red sky.

There are paths through the low walls, but they are often inconvenient. At times we must hack through the shrubs or climb the walls to make headway. Perhaps clues to the origin of this city lie closer to the distant waters. Sometimes bizarre juts come out

of the walls, like weird tables or chairs. Looking back, there is no sight of anything but city. One thing is certain—if the compasses get lost we'll never get out of this place.

Occasionally, portions of the city are found which are storage for something or another. Usually there is nothing in a chamber, but some have remnants of stockpiled plantlife, not like that growing here within the city, but rather like that found springing up out of the warm ground outside of it. Strange, but we'd never seen plants like these anywhere but here. Domesticated, no doubt.

The stillness is unsettling. Are we being watched? Sometimes I'm not sure. Dubois could be leading us into a nightmare, but that's OK. There doesn't seem to be anywhere else to go.

FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE KLAXUN

There it stands. I use the term loosely—how can a plant stand? It must have moved up on us suddenly and quietly, which is surprising considering the thing's size. We've seen some weird creatures on this rock, but this fellow takes the cake.

This thing is huge, standing about three meters in height. It has huge, woody legs to support its bulk, most of which seems to reside in a large central portion. It has no head to speak of, only long tentacles coming out of its upper portions. Most of these are covered with what are undoubtedly leaves—is this thing a plant or an animal? I suppose out here in nowhere the distinctions between such things need not be as clear as they are back home on Earth. But still, certain things are expected from a new life form, and this thing is an abomination.

Now there are a couple more of them moving in behind the first. They shamble along pretty well on those legs of theirs (are they roots?). Right now we're all happy just looking at one another. I suppose each of us is thinking the same thing, too. "What kind of monsters are these things?"

KLAXUN TOUCH COMMUNICATION

The Klaxun are a strange-looking bunch, that's for sure. Their leafy arms appear to be very flexible but not very strong—exactly the opposite seems to be true about the things' legs. The fact that these shambling creatures can move freely at all is rather startling—they're plants, after all.

Right now they just seem to be studying us. They're curious, that much is certain. Whenever we move or do something like speak amongst ourselves several of them move together. They



splay their tentacles and perform some kind of weird dance—it's downright frightening. They touch periodically at the tips of their tentacles, moving arms into and out of play as the dance progresses. Finally, they stop and move apart, waiting for the next interesting thing we do.

Whether they are simply curious about our nature and this sparks some uncontrollable ritual or this is some sort of strange communication we're not sure. If it is communication, perhaps we can imitate it somehow. Of course, we'll need a volunteer to get close to one of them.

TOURING THE KLAXUN CITY

When we first arrived here, this maze of a city was deserted. Now, since all the Klaxun have come out of hibernation, the place is teeming with activity. Klaxun of all types, large, small, unsighted and sparking are constantly on the move, going about their industrious activities.

We observed the foragers outside the city walls. They are carefully organized. Apparently this is the way they can afford to divert resources away from food gathering—they organize the process and use the surplus to their advantage. The sighted taskmasters move the unsighted back and forth across hundreds and thousands of acres at a time, while other crews bring the harvest into the city and distribute it.

After a rainstorm, much of the earthen wall structure needs repair, and they have special teams which do that as well. Once again, sighted leaders bring their blind crews to an area which needs repairs and set them to work. They're actually quite skilled and organized—several Klaxun actually working on the walls are supplied with materials by one other, apparently without the direct intervention of the sighted leader. This must be a rehearsed drill because they are not communicating in any way that we can observe.

Art must be quite important here, at least to the sighted. Artists can be seen creating sculptures of rock and stone, molding them out of clay and mud with their arms and legs. Brightly colored rocks are used for decorations on them, obviously for the sole enjoyment of the sighted. Some of the rocks may be seashells, though I'm not certain such sea creatures exist here. It is curious, however,

that even though artwork is almost always three dimensional and intended to be more felt than seen, artwork seems only to be enjoyed and commissioned by the sighted, sparkling Klaxun.

Other activity is seen at every turn. Many activities observed simply could not be identified—we simply couldn't interpret what was going on. No matter, though. In time I'm certain we will be able to fit in here well, and, in light of the situation, this may be our home for some time.

LIVING THROUGH THE WINTER

The wind outside is really starting to whip up. How long has it been? Three weeks, maybe four. Right now I don't remember—these local days have my sense of time all screwed up right now anyway.

We're holed up in a part of the Klaxun city. We directed some of their workers on how to cover part of it for us. There are seven of us in here, in a room no larger than a very small starport apartment on Beta Canum—we'll all certainly be stir-crazy before summer rolls around again.

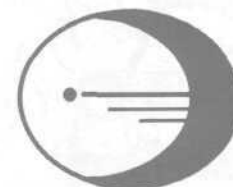
From here you can barely see them, but the Klaxun are all hibernating down by the shoreline. They're all withered up, mostly frozen into the water and mud. Row after row of them line the shore. They look like some sort of farm, all lined up like that. It's still hard to think of those things as intelligent beings, but if it weren't for them we might be dead right now, instead of just bored out of our minds.

The Klaxun helped us gather wood (or what passes for wood here) to bum through the winter. The fuel station still works, most of the time anyway, so we can keep our suits powered up. John cusses the station out once every morning, I guess because he knows that there's a better than even chance the thing will break down once before the day is through.

This vegetable stuff the Klaxun gathered up for us is palatable—in fact, it's rather tasty. It's something like yams, but tougher to chew. If you cook them long enough, or boil them, they soften up. I'd kill for a decent steak right about now.

Overall, things could be a lot worse. As it is we have enough to eat and shelter for the winter. I certainly hope we get rescued, but I'm not counting on it soon. Another survey should be sent out eventually to see what happened to us—that's company procedure. But considering the circumstances, the company might not want to risk sending another ship into Kafer country.

Kafers. Why did I think of them. God, if they find us down here we're doomed. I can only hope the damn things will ignore this planet and turn their attentions elsewhere. The idea of being dissected by those things can really keep a person awake during the frigid nights around here.



The Klaxun

Note: The Klaxun do not communicate with each other or with outsiders using anything like a spoken language. Therefore, the name Klaxun has been applied to them by human beings. The word itself is derived from the noisy eating habits of the intelligent free-moving producers on DM+ 17 2611 II. Actually, the player characters can come up with any name they wish for the aliens they encounter—they are the first humans to discover this planet and therefore have the right to name what they find. Within this text, however, the aliens are referred to as Klaxun.

INTRODUCTION

There is a race of semi-intelligent beings on DM +17 2611 II—the Klaxun. In brief, the Klaxun are a race of semi-intelligent, semi-civilized (from a human's point of view) race of mobile plants. The details, of course, are far more revealing.

The main portion of this adventure will deal with the Klaxun and their encounters with the player characters. At first, the adventure will settle around the human characters and their reactions to the sudden realization that they are not "alone" on this hostile world. Eventually, the player characters may wish to make some kind of contact with the Klaxun. This would be a difficult task for a contact team; it will be nearly impossible for untrained personnel such as the player characters. A separate chapter deals with the possibilities of communicating with the Klaxun (and with the possibility that the Klaxun will develop some means of communicating with the player characters).

Finally, the adventure will take a different turn. Not only have the human player characters contacted a new alien race, never before encountered, but they have stumbled onto the scene in the midst of a great social struggle among the Klaxun. The player characters could very easily become involved in this controversy, being used as pawns by one faction or the other, or taking an active role themselves. Remember, the humans have to find some way to survive the coming winter—dealing with the Klaxun may be their only chance of survival.

At any rate, the Klaxun themselves will be instrumental in determining the fates of the stranded humans, whose very existences now hang in the balance. Understanding the Klaxun will be important to the referee for two reasons. First, he must know how to manipulate the Klaxun in the adventure itself. Their actions will be very important to the outcome of the adventure, and those actions should be administered by a referee who is very familiar with Klaxun physiology, psychology, and culture. Second, the referee will be the person who will dole out information about the Klaxun

to the players. Unless the referee is quite familiar with them, he will be unable to perform this function.

This chapter will deal with all aspects of Klaxun life, from the physiology, including evolution and physical description, to their psychology and culture. Remember that the players are the first to deal with the Klaxun. Many of the theories about the Klaxun are presented in the future tense—no human scientist has yet made these observations or theories, but most certainly will in the next decade or so.

PHYSIOLOGY

Physically, the Klaxun are very unlike any creature which has ever walked the face of the Earth. Having evolved on this hostile world, they are a tough, hardy species adapted well to this rugged environment.

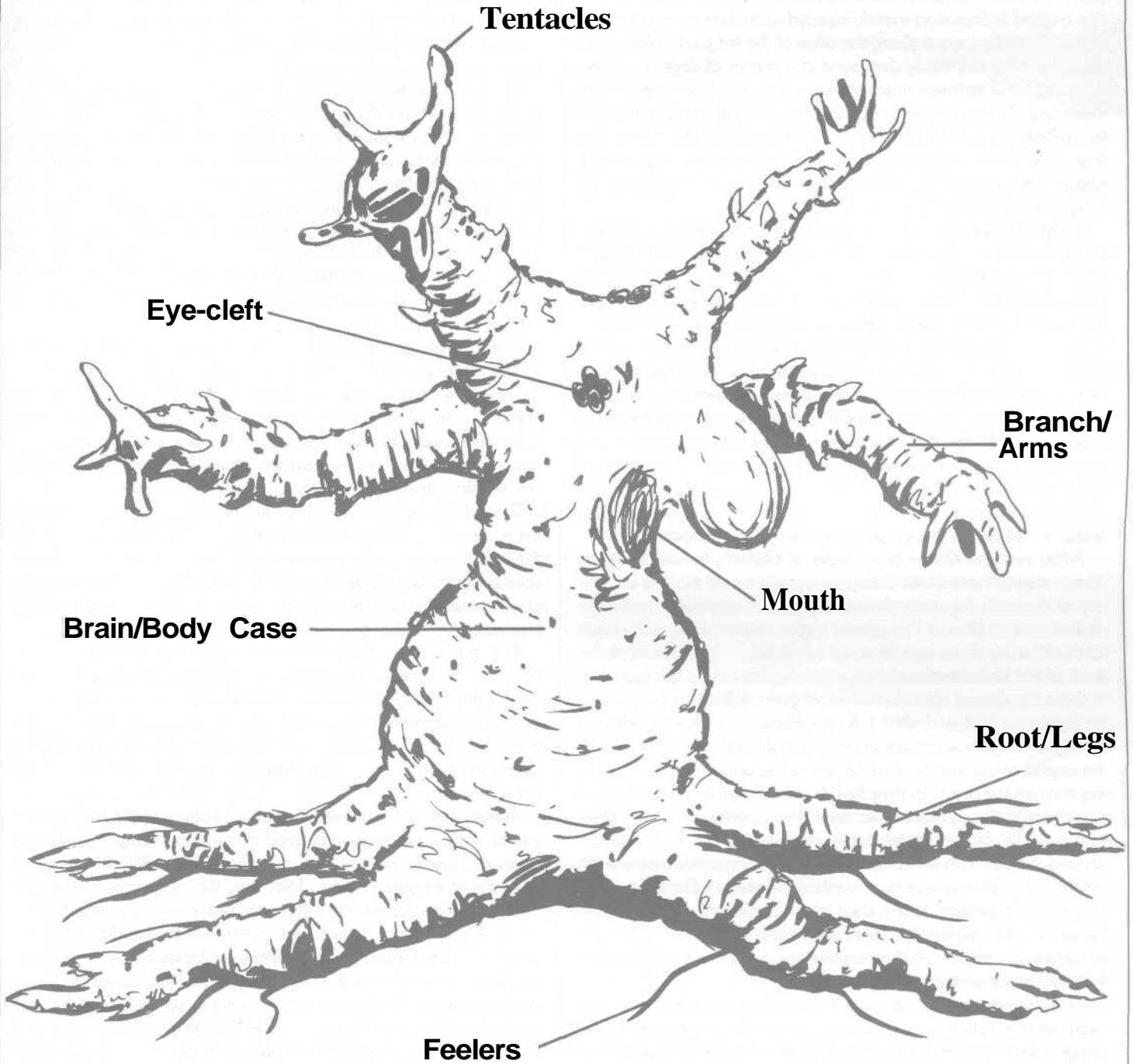
Evolution: Free-moving producers dominate the ecology of DM +17 2611 II, and have for many millions of years. The process of attaching to a source of nutrients when the solar radiation is too minuscule to support life has proven very effective on this planet. This fact is evident considering the pervasiveness of such lifeforms in the worldwide ecology.

Klaxun are also free-moving producers, evolving from such stock in and around the shores of the equatorial sea over the past hundred million years or so. Until that time, it will be theorized that the weather patterns on the planet were somewhat more mild, due to a more favorable albedo. However, due to some as yet unknown reason, the albedo shifted, the world grew colder over several thousands of years, and as a result many species of life on the planet were made extinct. It will also be theorized that only those lifeforms which lived on the edge of the then much recessed ice packs survived—all current lifeforms are from this region. Other equatorial lifeforms for the most part could not adapt to the severely colder temperatures and died out.

The albedo could have changed for several reasons. However, the most plausible theory will be that until one hundred million years ago a fungus lived in abundance on the surface of the ice packs. Since the fungus could have covered many thousands or millions of square miles, its darker coloration could have been all that stood between warmth and perpetual cold. Some natural event could have wiped out the fungus in a matter of years, leaving the planet without its protective blanket and plunging it into its current state of ever-present frigid cold.

The Klaxun predecessor was probably such a creature, living on the edge of the permanent ice pack. Being naturally resistant

Klaxun Anatomy



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ORGANICS

to the cold, it merely had to migrate to the more equatorial regions as the planet gradually cooled off. The trials of finding new areas in which to draw nutrients and surviving against new predators near the equator (most of whom have since died out) seem to have been all the impetus the Klaxun predecessors needed to set them on the evolutionary path to increased intelligence. But first, other badly needed adaptations had to be made.

The bony structure around the brain case grew tougher, both for protection from the cold and from predators. Second, their locomotion needed serious improvements. The new environment around the shores of the equatorial seas proved to be much more active than the Klaxun predecessor could manage immediately. His original locomotion merely needed allow him to migrate occasionally to new areas along the edge of the ice pack. Now, with deltas forming and being destroyed in a matter of days, the Klaxun would have to move much more quickly than was ever before necessary. These two adaptations were probably made in the first ten million years after the change in planetary albedo. Since that time, only minor evolutionary changes have taken place on the Klaxun species, and these have been mainly in the area of intelligence and the adaptation of sightedness.

Sightedness: The original Klaxun predecessor was effectively blind, with no organs or other means for gathering information from light. Despite the fact that great amounts of its energy were photosynthesized from the light of the K2 star in the sky, until the species moved to the equatorial regions it could not see its own sun.

The constant flow of broken down rocks from the temporary ice pack to the sea creates a rich topsoil in many respects. Most often these rocks form very fertile soil for hibernation or summer growth. However, at times veins of crystalline rock structures are broken down by the temporary ice pack, creating streams to the sea that are very rich in small crystals. Over time, after years of constant erosion by the temporary ice pack, areas along the shore line were to become concentrations of crystals, a very important factor in the future development of the Klaxun species.

A first summer Klaxun (see *Stages of Growth*, below), growing in an area permeated with these tiny crystals would pick up a quantity of them on the upper leaves and arms, especially under the leaf structure. Due to the natural regeneration of the outer skin of the Klaxun, these crystals would eventually concentrate at the base of the leaf structure, at what is now known as the eye-cleft.

Over the several tens of millions of years following the change in albedo on DM + 17 2611 II, the Klaxun physiology adapted to begin using these crystals to polarize light and thus "see." First, the crystal structures became linked to the nervous system, linking them to the brain. In their final form, Klaxun with large crystal structures in the eye-cleft after their first summer secrete a clear gel which binds the crystals together. Slight muscle movements around the cleft can actually manipulate the crystals to give a fair field of view. Though the sight available through these crystal eyes is hardly comparable to the sight of a human being, the fact that Klaxun could now see at all was a prerequisite to their being able to recognize and react to their environment, the first stepping stone to intelligence and civilization.

With the advent of vision, the Klaxun brain now had a tenfold increase in received input, giving it plenty of information to process and deal with, and for the first time allowing some environmental experimentation (if I move that rock over there what will happen?). Through a painfully slow process the Klaxun brain adapted to accept visual information and respond to it. As a result, the relatively small Klaxun brain is used almost completely. Almost no portion sits idle for any great length of time.

The present day Klaxun is the product of a long history of events

on a tiny but violent world some 30 light years distant from the Earth. What they are now, including both their triumphs and tragedies, are direct results of this tenuous evolutionary path.

Body Components: The Klaxun are physiologically dissimilar to human beings. It is necessary to be familiar with this new physiology in order to deal with them while playing through this scenario. Each individual body part is given a name which the player characters (untrained in alien contact) can easily relate to.

Overall Description: The Klaxun stand between 1.3 and 2.6 meters in height (when fully extended), and mass approximately 50-100 kg. They are usually green or grey in coloration, and this can change with their proximity to moisture and how much sunlight they are receiving at the moment. Of course, each Klaxun is unique, even to the extent that there is no set number of limbs designated to each individual.

Branch/Arms: Klaxun have one or more appendages protruding from above the main brain/body case known here as the branch/arms. An individual might have only one or two such branches or as many as six, though three or four is more common. Each branch/arm is capable of independent movement, able to bend along its entire length. They are covered with small light gathering "leaves" which can move independently of the branch/arm to take best advantage of the available sunlight. When not in conscious use by the individual, the branch/arms spread themselves into the air, moving slowly as the sun moves across the sky.

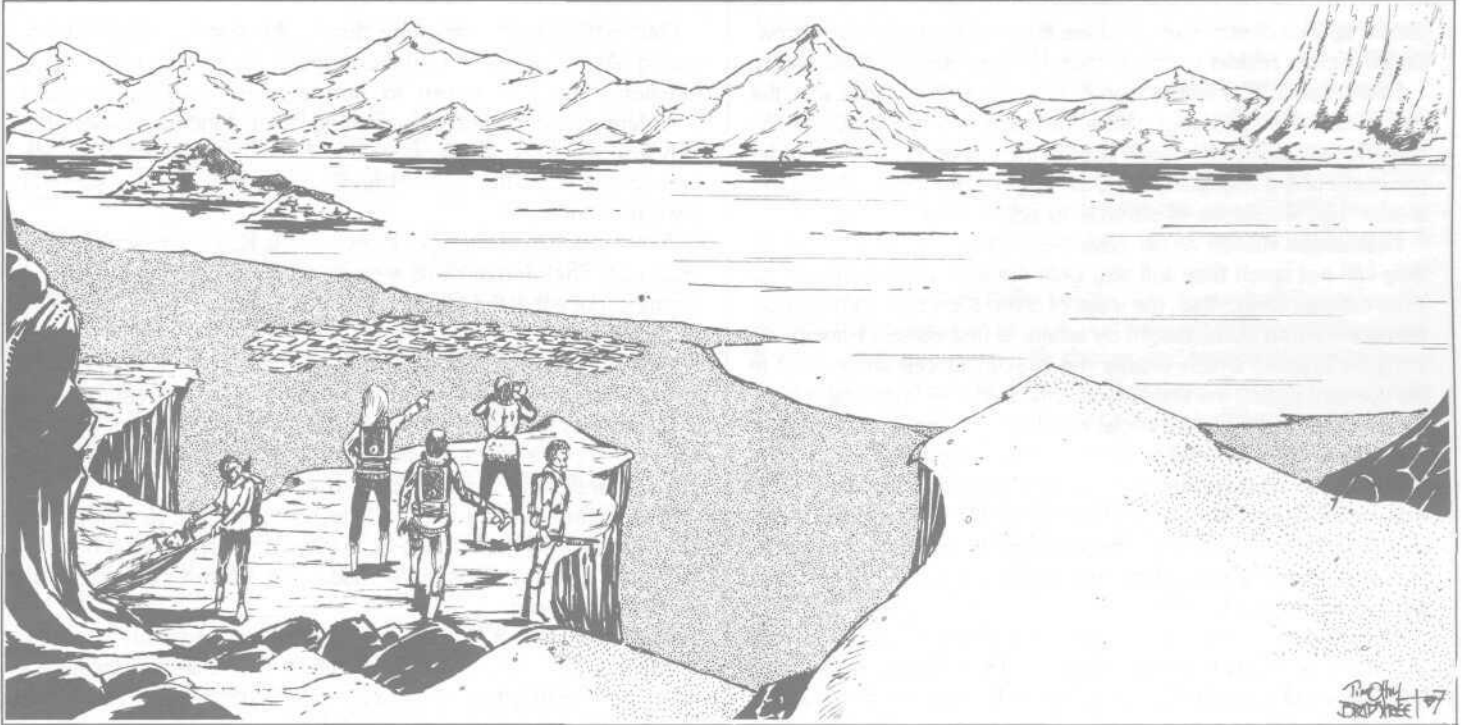
The end of each branch/arm is splayed into three tentacles. These tentacles are free of leaves, and are manipulated by an internal bone and muscle structure. The tentacles are used for manipulation of very light objects and for communication (see *Communication*, below). The tentacles are not very sturdy—it is not uncommon to see Klaxun who have lost tentacles—and do not possess nearly the power of the human hand.

Eye-cleft: At the junction of all the Klaxun's branch/arms is the eye-cleft. Klaxun eyes form irregularly, dependent upon where the individual originally grew and therefore how many crystals he could unconsciously take advantage of. The crystals are congregated at this location by the patterns of skin regeneration characteristic of the branch/arms.

The eye clusters themselves will vary from individual to individual. Some Klaxun will have as many as ten eyes clustered here. Others may have none, and therefore are quite blind. The gelatinous secretions of the eye-cleft bind the eyes together and protect them from dust and debris. In extreme circumstances, the eyes can be covered and protected by one or more of the branch/arms.

Klaxun vision is a relatively recent evolutionary development, and is not nearly as sophisticated as human eyesight. A visually superior Klaxun can still see at only perhaps 30^C the detail or distance of a human being. They are, therefore, much less light dependent creatures—the difference between a sightless Klaxun and a sighted one is much less extreme than the difference between a sighted human and a blind one, for example. Most communications are done with the branch/arms or the so-called "vine-consciousness," and most sensory data is still gathered through the feelers. However, the advantages of sight are still extreme, and the great rift between sighted and unsighted Klaxun is the heart of the social struggle going on at the time of this adventure.

Mouth: During hibernation, the Klaxun draw all of their nutrition from either the soil or the shoreline through their root/legs. However, in their free-moving state, the Klaxun enjoy a diet consisting of whatever they can gather in the countryside, mainly other plants or free-moving producers.



Klaxun feed by laying their body over onto their meal. The mouth is very spongy in consistency, and uses a vacuum to suck the food in. The "lips" are hardened and are sufficient to bite through the vegetable material common to much of their diet. Food is then swallowed into the brain/body case for digestion and eventual elimination.

Brain/Body Case: Most of the internal organs and the brain are located here in the brain/body case. The case itself is heavily armored, reinforced with a thick bony shell just below the skin. Through the shell are five breathing holes, which can be opened or closed as necessary.

The case protects the bulk of the Klaxun's vital functions. Fully half of the individual's mass is located here. While a Klaxun can survive the loss of a branch/arm or root/leg, or even several feelers, it could not survive such shock to its vital organs, and they are therefore sealed into this sturdy container.

Root/Legs: Each Klaxun has exactly five root/legs, used for burrowing before hibernation and for locomotion during the free-moving state. Each root/leg is approximately 15 cm in diameter and slightly less than one meter in length.

Each root/leg is capable of applying great strength, such as digging into the often hard, stony ground before hibernation. They can be moved quickly for manipulation of dirt or other materials. However, they are not capable of great speed of movement—the legs are not generally powerful enough to move a Klaxun at anything but a very slow pace. Also, due to the slow processing of the Klaxun brain (see *Time*, below), they are naturally slower than would be expected.

The root/legs can be used for industrial purposes, such as the construction of the low earthen walls which make up their city. However, it is almost impossible for them to manipulate anything more than a meter or so high without some sort of platform to work on. Since this is usually considered too much of a hindrance to construction, rarely do Klaxun structures rise above this one meter height.

Feelers: In its more primitive forms, the Klaxun relied heavily on their sense of touch to gather their information about the environment. This holds over to the present day, as even highly sighted Klaxun depend on their feelers more than their vision for

everyday activities.

Each feeler is capable of some free movement, but is dominated by the movement of the root/leg to which it is attached. In order to investigate a particular object or location, the Klaxun simply moves a root/leg to it and lets the feelers do the work.

Other General Information: Klaxun hibernate for most of the length of the local year. They do not "sleep" as might be expected—they instead go through periods of decreased activity at uneven intervals of several hours. These intervals also vary with the amount of sunlight immediately available—in lots of sunshine a Klaxun might go for great periods without this rest, while under a cloud-cover he might rest twice as much.

The individual variation among Klaxun is great, much greater than the differences between human beings. The number of branch/arms can vary considerably, due mainly to the environment in which the individual originally grew. Eye clusters are a direct result of original growth as well. However, even taking these variations into account, it will still be quite easy for the player characters to recognize Klaxun for what they are, and, in time, they should be able to recognize distinct individuals with which they have had contact.

Stages of Growth: The Klaxun have an interesting life cycle custom fitted to their home environment. Understanding this life cycle will help the referee and players better deal with the Klaxun and cope with some of their behavior patterns.

Seeding: Each adult Klaxun (those Klaxun who are not first season) has the ability to seed for the next generation. A seed is generated within the body/brain case and then planted in the soft mud of the swamp or shoreline sometime before the beginning of fall. These seeds will germinate and grow for the remainder of the warm season, and then freeze during the winter. The following spring, when the seeds planted the previous year thaw, those that survived will begin a quick growth to a state where they can become free-moving. These young Klaxun are referred to as first season; this is their first season of life.

Most seeds do not survive the harsh winter. Only about one seed in ten lives through the bitter cold to produce a first season Klaxun come the next spring.

The crystals which are adapted for vision by the Klaxun are

picked up as a direct result of where the seed is put down to grow. Social factors restrict where certain Klaxun may lay their seeds.

First Season: The first season Klaxun are able to move with the rest of their kind to forage. Now that food is foraged by specific Klaxun, the young are merely kept in the city and fed by the older members of the species. Once past original growth, a Klaxun has a near 100% chance of survival to adult status.

First season Klaxun do not have the ability to reproduce. Indeed, they will not reach their full size until the end of the summer, or even early autumn. Also, the ways of civilization and communication are learned skills, taught by adults to first season Klaxun. As well, the crystals which enable the Klaxun to see will collect in the eye-cleft during the first season (effectively, all first season Klaxun are blind, regardless of social standing). By the second season, Klaxun are able to function normally in every way.

Adults: An adult Klaxun can expect to live to approximately 50 local years of age, surviving 50 seasons. He will reproduce and probably have five direct descendants in his entire lifetime. However, there is a good chance that a particularly hard winter will kill off an adult.

Adult and first season Klaxun eat what can be foraged from the shorelines or the plains around the city. These areas are especially rich in small animal life, eggs and larva-like staples, and plantlife. Any and all of these are appropriate to the Klaxun diet, a diet which is rapidly changing with the advent of civilization.

Stages of Hibernation: The Klaxun, not unlike most other forms of life on DM + 17 2611 II, are subject to a period of complete hibernation during the winter season. There simply isn't sufficient radiation to maintain all the necessary body functions of the Klaxun during that time. All Klaxun hibernate, and all do so in the following manner.

Preparation for hibernation begins about one week prior to the first day of winter. During the preparation, Klaxun gorge themselves on whatever is available to eat, spending little time or effort on other matters. Their facade of civilization is shattered during this time, as the activities of civilized life are set aside in favor of the activities of survival.

Hibernation itself begins for all Klaxun precisely on the first day of winter (day 125). In order to hibernate, the Klaxun move to shallow shoreline areas or to swamplands and burrow themselves into the soft mud beneath the water. The water freezing around their bases serves to anchor the Klaxun in place against the windstorms that will no doubt batter them periodically through the winter.

The root/legs and feelers are embedded in the soft mud before it freezes up. While still able to function, the root/legs absorb what nutrients they can to sustain body temperature through the frigid cold. Also, when the first thaw comes in the spring, the root/legs will be instrumental in providing nutrients to bring the Klaxun out of hibernation and back to a free-moving state.

Almost immediately, the Klaxun will begin secreting a resin from internal glands. This resin acts as a sort of natural anti-freeze, allowing the Klaxun's body fluids to remain liquid at a substantially lower temperature than 0°. Within the body case, calories are used sparingly to keep that area of the body sufficiently warm so that, with the aid of the secreted resin, it doesn't freeze solid (which would kill the Klaxun during hibernation).

The eye-cleft and branch/arms are left to freeze solid during the winter. The Klaxun wrap the branch/arms into a tight ball during hibernation. It is not uncommon for a Klaxun to lose a branch/arm during the winter, as they sometimes can be broken off by the elements or by predators who are mobile at times when the Klaxun are still in hibernation.

Hibernation ends sometime during the first ten local days of spring. As the water around the bases of the Klaxun melts, body functions begin to return to normal. The branch/arms and root/legs thaw naturally, regaining their functions when the temperature rises above freezing. Finally, the Klaxun detach themselves from the ground and once again enjoy a summer season of foraging.

Time: From a human point of view, the Klaxun are terribly slow creatures. Their movements are very slow and precise, suggesting on the surface that the species simply is not coordinated for speed or agility.

This first impression is deceiving. Actually, the ability of Klaxun limbs to move independently or to move the entire creature is only slightly less than that of human limbs. The difference in apparent speed is more a result of slower data processing in the Klaxun brain, manifesting itself as low dexterity.

Klaxun cannot think as quickly as human being. Roughly, they can analyze information at only one third the speed of a human. However, once a decision is made, the Klaxun can react with remarkable speed.

For instance, if a Klaxun is faced with a dangerous situation, it might appear to a human observer that it takes the creature a disproportionately long time to come to a decision about what to do about it—the Klaxun appears to hesitate. However, this is decelerated brain activity disguising itself as hesitation. Once the decision is made to flee the dangerous situation, the Klaxun's body will move quickly, in accordance with signals sent from the brain.

A human can always out-think and probably out-maneuver a Klaxun. In fact, the only way in which Klaxun have any hope of cornering a human adversary is through use of the vine consciousness and the swarm (see below). This slower brain activity is fairly accurately reflected by the low dexterity scores given to Klaxun individuals (see *Klaxun In 2300*).

Communication: The Klaxun have two means of communication with one another. These are referred to as "touching" and "vine consciousness."

Touching: Individual Klaxun can communicate very intricate ideas using their branch/arms and the tentacles on them. In order to communicate in this manner the two Klaxun must be in physical contact, bringing their limbs into contact in a complex fashion. To humans, this "dance" is meaningless without a great deal of time spent in intensive study (as described in the chapter *Contact*).

In this manner, two Klaxun can communicate every idea they find necessary to "talk" about. If a human were able to comprehend the messages, they would come across as being the equivalent of human speech. The drawbacks to this type of communication are that the Klaxun involved need to be in physical contact in order to communicate.

A human can use his eyesight to help him comprehend the messages being mechanically transmitted by the Klaxun tentacles. However, even the best sighted Klaxun cannot do the same, and touch communications remains completely private, privy to no Klaxun who is not directly involved.

Vine Consciousness: This sort of communication is also possible among Klaxun, and also involves physical contact. This form of communication is a vestige of the distant past, when Klaxun needed to convey to their large masses finds of new food or the need to migrate great distances.

Any Klaxun may initiate a vine consciousness message. In order to do so, he must come into physical contact with one or more other Klaxun, placing his feelers in contact with theirs. The message sent is immediately transmitted to those individuals, who are then compelled to locate other Klaxun to whom they will pass along

the message. The message will balloon in this way until either the problem is solved or until the entire Klaxun community is involved in solving it.

Only the most basic messages can be sent via vine consciousness. For instance, in predatory danger situations, an individual can call for a swarm to deal with the problem. Vine consciousness is also still commonly used among the foragers in society for something similar to its original purpose, to indicate that there is either a good find or to move on to better areas. However, other than these three cases, vine consciousness is almost never used for any other purpose. Communication about day to day life, business, or what have you is conducted by touch communications.

The Klaxun have no written communications.

Combat: The Klaxun are only capable of defensive combat on the individual level. When confronted with a situation from which it cannot flee, a Klaxun will resort to its limited defensive capabilities, lying back and engaging its enemy with at least three of its root/legs. Klaxun have not developed useful weapons up to this time and instead depend on the brute strength of their root/legs to ward off attack.

On a group level, however, the Klaxun have a social means of dealing with enemies. In a dangerous situation, a single Klaxun can put out a message using the vine consciousness for a "swarm." A message of this sort will gather all the available Klaxun together into a wall, and then a circle hoping to envelop their enemy within a living ring. Since many predators common on DM + 17 2611 II are capable of moving and reacting more quickly than the Klaxun, this is their only means of trapping and eliminating an enemy with a reasonable chance of victory.

In game terms, a swarm is something to be avoided by the player characters. To avoid a swarm is a task.

Avoid a swarm. Difficult. Dexterity. Immediate.

If not successfully avoided, the swarm has captured the player and will deal with him as they see fit. This is regulated under the chapter *Contact*.

PSYCHOLOGY

The Klaxun race is only in the very early stages of its civilization. If we were to equate their current development with the history of Earth, the Klaxun are roughly (very roughly) at the same level as early Mesopotamian peoples beginning to rely on agriculture. Their society has not had sufficient time to really ingrain itself on the Klaxun psyche—it is instead still very much rooted in the uncivilized lifestyles of their ancestors.

Their home planet is extremely violent. There are great changes in temperature which drive tremendous wind and storms. There is the annual torrential flooding from the temporary ice pack to the equatorial seas. There are predators into whose food chains the Klaxun readily fit. All of these things over millions of years of psychological development have led to the single overriding element of Klaxun behavior—survival.

Of course, physically, the Klaxun have adapted to survival. They have a bony, hard protective brain/body case to protect them from many predators and their hibernation to see them through the long winter season. But psychologically, Klaxun are also geared for survival. This manifests itself in two important ways—their instinct to flee from danger and their need to rely on their numbers for strength.

When presented with a dangerous situation, as determined by their limited senses, a lone Klaxun will make best speed in the opposite direction. Fleeing from danger often saves the life of an

individual. For instance, the trained sensitivity of Klaxun feelers can accurately predict if an ice fall is about to take place, and the natural reaction is to flee the ice field and therefore survive.

Similarly, if faced with a predator, the reaction is also to flee. Unfortunately, this instinct has so far precluded many avenues of experimentation. For instance, a Klaxun might be able to out-think a predator and achieve victory, but the natural instinct to flee overtakes the Klaxun, not allowing him to rely on his intelligence to get out of the situation.

The second manifestation of the strong survival instinct in the Klaxun is the need to rely on numbers for particular situations. If a Klaxun is presented with danger and knows he is in a group of two or more individuals, he will not run, but will instead turn to the vine consciousness for coordinated efforts. In the case of the imminent ice fall, the vine consciousness will probably still opt to flee the situation. It is the only thing they can do, not having the ability to delay or stop the ice fall. However, in the case of predators, a vine consciousness will analyze the situation and possibly attempt to envelop the predator with a swarm.

So, basically, in a dangerous situation, a lone Klaxun will automatically flee, and a group will resort to the collective intelligence of the vine consciousness. These are overriding behavior patterns, ones that are not likely to be shaken for many centuries of civilization.

The reproductive instinct is also very strong. However, since Klaxun are "grown" and are the product of a single parent subject to random fertilization, society is little impacted by reproduction.

Materialism: With the advent of civilization and the revelation of personally owned property, materialism is beginning to take hold in the Klaxun psychology. Unfortunately, in its current primitive state, materialism is taking some very strange turns.

The sighted upper classes enjoy their material wealth, passed down to them for many generations. Their planet is rich, and their servants strong and capable—the sighted have material wealth based on superior accommodations and artistic extravagances.

The unsighted lower classes have material wants and desires, but often these are misdirected. The desire to have more material goods leads some unsighted Klaxun to collect anything they can find and call it their own, be it dirt and rocks or dead vegetable matter. Lack of material goods among the unsighted can lead to symptoms of what resembles despair or depression, and the individual's level of activity falls off sharply.

These distinctions are difficult for a human observer to pick up on. The things that a Klaxun finds artistic and what he thinks are useless look more or less the same to a human being. However, the tendency to collect things seems completely random to a human observer. He is partially right—it is mostly random for the unsighted. The sighted upper classes are collecting things they find pleasing to their eyes and which separate them from the masses.

At any rate, beyond material gain, Klaxun are prone to industry for simply the good of the race. Barter is common, but everyone gets enough to eat through the traditional foraging carried out each year. Specialty items are bartered, but seldom is food so distributed. Services are always done for no profit at all or for the exchange of manufactured items, such as exotic foodstuffs or artwork.

CULTURE

Klaxun culture has only a short history. The city life has only developed within the past hundred or so generations (or about 200 human years).

Pre-civilization Lifestyle: Before building the cities, the Klaxun would migrate around the shores of the equatorial seas, forag-

ing for food from the native environment. They would use the vine consciousness as a means of keeping the large groups of Klaxun moving in the same directions. The original sighted Klaxun obtained a special role in the herd-like social structure, being sent out in advance of the larger groups to search for especially good areas. One sighted Klaxun could scout as much territory as a hundred blind ones in the same amount of time.

The Building of the Cities: As the sighted Klaxun were better able to seek out good grounds for foraging, large masses of the Klaxun population no longer served useful purposes as foragers. In a good area, a single Klaxun could forage enough food for several individuals, freeing many to pursue other industries. The first such industry was the construction of the cities.

On the shores of the equatorial seas are the cities. A human might easily mistake these for one large city, and in many ways he is correct. The cities are enormous, single-level structures designed to house millions of Klaxun when they are not foraging. Idle Klaxun learned to become artisans of sorts, gaining the ability to construct the low earthen walls which form the city. To this day huge portions of the Klaxun population are artisans, building new structures and, most of all, maintaining the city as the heavy weather of the planet ravages it annually.

Construction was the first profession pioneered by the Klaxun beyond their natural foraging lifestyle, but other occupations soon followed. Among the first were chefs and bakers, taking foraged food and preparing it in more palatable styles. Another field can be termed mud-rakers, individuals who have devoted their lives to the maintenance of the mud shoals and shorelines where the Klaxun hibernate and new generations spawn. Artists also became pervasive among the sighted Klaxun, selling their wares to one another, but necessarily excluding the unsighted from their works.

Keep in mind, though, that this is a budding civilization. New professions are rising with each generation. It is not at all uncommon for individual Klaxun to start their own industries, all basically for the good of their race. Specialty items may change hands for a service rendered, but this is not the rule. As a civilized society, the Klaxun are still trying to find themselves, trying to bring order to their newfound treasures of intelligence, sightedness, and industry.

Society: Klaxun society has been divided into two very broad classes, the sighted and the unsighted. The different positions and roles of each form the background of a very troubled society, one that is even now in the rigors of great stress and inevitable change.

The Sightedness Hierarchy: Sighted Klaxun have enjoyed a special place in society since long before civilized times. The sighted have so many advantages over the unsighted that, in an unintelligent species, they would naturally take the forefront socially. Today they are society's leaders, taking positions of leadership in every aspect of Klaxun existence.

In order to protect their status, the sighted enforce seeding rights to selected locations along the shores of the oceans. These sites have been traditionally dominated by the sighted, and are very rich in crystal wealth. Cause and effect are very blurred in this relationship. The crystal content of the grounds creates sighted Klaxun who are therefore better equipped to hold those grounds for themselves, insuring future generations of sighted, superior Klaxun.

In construction/maintenance and in foraging, sighted Klaxun naturally take positions of leadership. They plan operations and oversee activities, using their visual superiority to best advantage. Sighted Klaxun also begin their own industries which appeal to themselves and other sighted beings, such as the creation of art and jewelry. Great amounts of productive output are labored on by the unsighted for the sole benefit of the sighted.

Interestingly, the sighted retain some behavior patterns from their more primitive, nomadic lifestyles. For instance, the sighted Klaxun all perform a ritual of travelling over the foraging grounds every year, though now for ceremonial purposes only. In the past, when the community was often on the move, such wanderings were conducted by sighted Klaxun to judge the quality of the land and the existence of predators. Now the foraging grounds are more or less unchanging, and this function is no longer necessary.

Looking at this situation from a comfortable distance, this system takes good advantage of the dichotomy within society. The sighted are used to their fullest, using their talents to perform Klaxun activities at optimum efficiency.

Among the sighted, individuals can become very important and well-known. For instance, great leaders or artists can become famous among the sighted, gaining a reputation and notoriety within a large group of people. All sighted Klaxun receive names, names transmitted only through the Klaxun touch language. By contrast, unsighted Klaxun do not generally receive names, but are instead referred to by function and a rough idea of where he originally grew.

Unsighted Klaxun are restricted by their lack of vision to certain occupations and areas of seeding. The unsighted form the ranks of the construction/maintenance industries and the foraging parties. They are managed by sighted task-masters, directed by them to perform specific tasks. While the unsighted perform the labor, it is their sighted overseers who decide on overall direction of activity.

Referee: To the humans, it is rather hard at first to distinguish between sighted and unsighted Klaxun. Eventually, the distinction will be apparent, as sighted Klaxun have great eye clusters and generally "sparkle" and the unsighted do not and are remarkably "dull" in appearance. Until communications are established between Klaxun and human, there will be virtually no way of realizing what these apparent differences mean.

Justice: Since before the beginning of the current social struggle there was no need for any sort of substantial justice system. Individuality among the unsighted masses did not create "criminals" to be dealt with, and arguments among the sighted were usually settled with ritualized games or contests. However, with social unrest on the rise, a justice system has been created to deal with the problem.

Klaxun justice is centered on the vine consciousness, one where only the accused and several sighted "judges" are invited to participate. Guilt is determined from this meeting of the minds, quite accurately, in fact. Guilt is punishable by one thing only—banishment from the community at large.

However, due to the relative youth of this system of justice, there are only a few things which are constituted as crimes. They are failure to obey a sighted authority, seeding in a restricted area, and attempting to defile the Klaxun order. The latter refers to attempts to manufacture eyes for naturally unsighted Klaxun (see *Unrest* for details).

Also, enforcement of banishment is rather difficult. Most Klaxun, cut off from the community and necessary contact with others of their kind, simply wander until they die in the wild. However, a growing number of "banished" individuals are defying even this authority and are returning to the community in different areas where they may not be recognized and hassled further.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIRECT LINEAGE

Lineage is of greater importance to humans than it is to Klaxun. Klaxun are much more race-oriented than humans. They see themselves and their work on a much less individual level, and

most often direct themselves by what is best for the community as a whole. As such, the ability to reproduce is more a duty to the race than a specific ambition of an individual.

The lineage of Klaxun is only important to the upper classes. Since they have a leadership role, they feel the need to keep track of their descendants. In ancient times, a sighted Klaxun would have to take his offspring and teach it how to use its eyesight to direct the unsighted and sight predators. This has manifested itself into a present day need to keep the lineage pure.

KLAXUN IN TRAVELLER: 2300

Klaxun are not humans. In order to use Klaxun in a **Traveller: 2300** game, special considerations must be taken into account for the obvious differences between Klaxun and humans. The referee must understand these differences and be able to create Klaxun "characters" for the players to interact with.

Basics: Klaxun range in size from roughly half human size to slightly larger than a human being. Their strength lies mainly in their root/legs while their dexterity applies only to their branch/arms. Intelligence is difficult to measure in an alien race. From the point of view of the players, the Klaxun can comprehend most notions presented by the humans, and they only have trouble with concepts foreign to their culture or environment.

Creating a Klaxun for Traveller: 2300: The following rules apply when attempting to create a Klaxun character.

Social Station: The social rank of the Klaxun being created is up to the referee. If he needs a worker, generate a worker. If he needs a noble, generate a noble.

Unless otherwise stated, generation of workers and nobles is identical.

Physical Attributes: Klaxun are considered to be mesomorphs for determining physical attributes. Their size is determined using 5D6-4. Strength and Dexterity are computed normally. Physical endurance is also 4D6-4.

Psychological Attributes: Klaxun psychology is uninterpretable to a human being. Assigning numbers to these attributes would be meaningless. Oust what is a Klaxun's eloquence, after all?).

Skills: All sighted Klaxun have Leader-1 skill. All workers should be assigned a skill level of 1 according to the profession of their commune. For instance, construction crew workers receive an arbitrary Construction-1 skill. These new skills are not listed in the **Traveller: 2300** rules—they are intended for use in this scenario only and apply only to Klaxun and their activities.

Mass: Calculate as a human.

Coolness Under Fire: This value is 1 for all Klaxun.

Throw Range: This is exactly strength in meters for a 1 kg object.

Encumbrance: Three times the sum of strength and size is the limit of carrying capacity in kilograms. Klaxun most often drag things, which raises this to four times the sum of strength and size in kilograms.

Eyesight: Noble Klaxun have below average eyesight (which is off the scale in human terms). Workers have no eyesight. Hearing and appearance are unimportant to Klaxun.

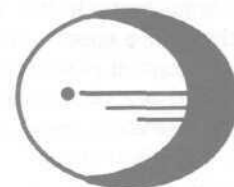
Life and Consciousness Levels: These are the same as for humans. Life level is mass in kilograms divided by 10; consciousness level is mass in kilograms divided by 20.

First Season Klaxun: Should the referee need some first season Klaxun, generate them as having size of 2D6-4. First season Klaxun have no skills and no eyesight (regardless of social station).

Klaxun and Tasks: The Klaxun live in an environment of their own creation. They are often quite good at tasks which apply to their activities.

Traditional Tasks: When attempting to perform tasks which are traditional to Klaxun behavior, use the same task difficulties you would normally use for a human character. For instance, if a Klaxun is attempting to repair damaged wall sections, this should be either a routine, simple, or difficult task, similar to a human attempting the same sort of work. Traditional tasks include such things as construction, foraging, artwork, and in some cases more specialized tasks such as toolmaking or tree felling.

New Tasks: If the Klaxun are expected to perform tasks not naturally done by them, the degree of difficulty should be increased by one level. For example, if the humans teach the Klaxun how to irrigate an area, the referee should make repeated performances of this task by unsupervised Klaxun more difficult by one or possibly two levels. If it was routine for the humans, it might become difficult or even formidable for the Klaxun.



Contact

It will become important to establish communications between the humans and the Klaxun. The means by which each communicates are quite different, and establishing contact will be extremely difficult. However, given time and effort, contact should be made at least on a primitive level within a few weeks.

The player characters should be encouraged to initiate the contact procedure as soon as they encounter the Klaxun. They should be made aware that communications will be very important, and that they will undoubtedly need the aid of the Klaxun to survive through the coming winter.

However, if the player characters do not choose to seek contact with the Klaxun, then the Klaxun will attempt to communicate with them. Either possibility is covered here.

Understand, however, that making contact is likely to be a very involved, time-consuming process. The intricacies of that process could fill volumes. So, for purposes of the adventure, the contact procedure is rather sketchy. The emphasis of the human/Klaxun interaction is on the social struggle at hand, not in the details of making good communications.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE KLAXUN

The player characters are not trained contact personnel. This type of work is very specialized—there have only been a few contacts made between humans and aliens, and these are usually conducted by teams of government backed, computer-equipped personnel trained for years at approaching just this type of problem.

But the player characters will have to give it their best shot.

Contacting the Klaxun will be a three step process. First, good relations must be obtained to facilitate the many hours of voluntary contact that will be necessary. Second, the player characters will have to observe how the Klaxun communicate with one another. Third, and this is the difficult part, the humans will have to puzzle out a way to imitate the Klaxun language.

Good Relations: The players will probably stumble into the city just about the same time that the Klaxun are coming out of a full winter of hibernation. Their first encounters will no doubt be elusive—the Klaxun will flee from these "aliens" they find among themselves, and the player characters are probably not going to be in the mood to tangle with creatures as unexpected and large as the Klaxun.

However, in time, encounters will be less troubled. Unless the player characters start mowing down the Klaxun with their lasers, peaceful meetings will soon be established. Here are several possible scenarios for the first encounter with the Klaxun.

Swarm: When probing around the city, the player characters find themselves suddenly surrounded by dozens of slow-moving plant-like things. Whether the player characters defend themselves or not, the Klaxun will initiate a swarm, attempting to capture the humans. Remember that the Klaxun are not merciless fiends, but are creatures who are interested in studying these aliens. Those characters caught up in the swarm will be taken away, confined, but treated well. Contact may begin at any point after incarceration.

Interrogation: The players arrive some time after the Klaxun have come out of hibernation. When they approach the city they find Klaxun all over the place, moving around the outside of the city in large herds, congregating around the seashore and within the city itself. The player characters would like to make contact, but are wary. They plan to capture a Klaxun from near the city and interrogate it.

This option will gain the characters nothing, as a Klaxun cannot communicate without another Klaxun to receive the touch message.

Open Friendliness: This may occur to the players, and if so it is probably the best solution for all concerned. At first the Klaxun will no doubt flee the humans who approach them, but if no shots are fired, the Klaxun will be open to mutual investigation.

Avoidance: Attempts to avoid the Klaxun will not be completely successful. The player characters could notice that the Klaxun never venture very far from their city, and they may feel it safe to stay away from the aliens they have found.

If they attempt this, they should be approached by a Klaxun who has been banished from the city. This is a Klaxun who plans to return to the city despite his banishment, but who has run across the player characters before he could do so.

These situations and many others are possible. In any case, provided the player characters do not show overt force, the Klaxun will be generally open to communication.

Referee: Un sighted Klaxun will be used to make contact with the humans. Even if the players originally encounter sighted individuals, they will order unsighted underlings to perform the task of making communications. The sighted will generally find the humans' appearances "disgusting" and will avoid actual contact with them at all costs. Communications will be established with unsighted Klaxun.

Observing Klaxun Communication: Klaxun have no means for recreating human speech—they simply have no organs capable of emitting controlled sounds of any kind. Therefore, the human player characters will have to use their slightly adequate hands to

learn to speak the Klaxun touch language. The first steps toward this end are to observe the Klaxun language in action, conclude that this is indeed how they communicate, and convince the Klaxun to come close enough to attempt an extra-racial conversation.

Observations: Observing the Klaxun using their touch communications will be relatively simple—almost unavoidable, really. If the player characters are in the presence of more than one Klaxun for any length of time (even a few minutes will do) they will observe the Klaxun performing their touch communication "dance." Klaxun are social creatures. Conversations with one another take place constantly, much in the same manner and frequency that social humans speak with one another.

When presenting these situations to the players, refer to the chapter entitled *Color*. A narrative description of a typical Klaxun "dance" is given there, which can be adapted or simply read to the players at the appropriate time.

Recognition: Simply observing this "dance" will not automatically mean that the player characters have spotted how they communicate. At first sight, to a human, this activity could be a dance, some sort of ritual activity, a mating process of some sort, or any number of other possibilities.

However, it will become obvious over time that this is communication. To figure this out is a task.

Recognize Klaxun touch communication. Difficult. Linguistics. One local day.

Each player may attempt this task each day that he is in the presence of Klaxun who are having conversations. The task may not be retried until the next day. Make the players roll without knowing what they are trying to identify.

Cooperation: Gaining the trust of the unsighted Klaxun who will be tending to the player characters will also be relatively simple. In fact, provided the player characters remain nonviolent toward their Klaxun hosts, cooperation will take just a matter of time.

Getting cooperation from the Klaxun for purposes of experimenting with communication is a task.

Cooperation from Klaxun. Routine. Determination. One local day.

This task may be performed by one person in the group once per local day after the group has recognized the Klaxun touch language. Once cooperation has been gained, it is time to begin experimentation to decipher the Klaxun language.

Deciphering the Language: Deciphering is a bit of a misnomer—there are no written characters to be decoded in the case of the Klaxun. What the player characters must do is begin through experimentation to figure out ways to imitate the Klaxun touch language, using their fingers in place of the Klaxun tentacles. Actually, fingers will make adequate substitutes; it is figuring out what to do with them that will be difficult.

Basics: Learning the language is a sort of game in which the players pick concepts which they would like to translate from English to Klaxun. The difficulty of the task depends upon the concept being translated and the various skills and attributes of the human character. In time, as the vocabulary of translated words increases, the humans and Klaxun will be able to communicate with one another. At the same time, the Klaxun will be attempting to translate concepts which they think are important to communication.

Each character in the party may attempt to translate one concept into Klaxun per local day. The player chooses the concept,

and then refers to the appropriate section below to find the level of difficulty of the task. If the task is successful, then the concept has been successfully translated and the players may use the concept when communicating with the Klaxun. Also, the Klaxun may use it when communicating with the player characters. No concept may be used for communication purposes until it has been successfully translated.

Nouns: A noun is a word that is the name of something. Translating a noun is a task.

Translate a noun. Difficult. Linguistics. One local day. Determination.

If there is an example of the noun available, then the task is instead routine. For example, it is a difficult task to translate the concept of clothing. However, since there are examples of clothing around to point to, the task is only routine.

Verbs: A verb is a word that characteristically expresses an act, occurrence, or mode of being. Translating a verb is a task.

Translate a verb. Difficult. Linguistics. One local day. Determination.

Translate verbs is always a difficult task.

Adverbs and Adjectives: Adverbs are words which typically serve as modifiers to a verb. Adjectives are words which typically serve as modifiers to nouns. Translating adverbs and adjectives are tasks.

Translating an adverb or adjective. Formidable. Linguistics. One local day. Determination.

These concepts are generally somewhat more abstract, and therefore more difficult to translate than other concepts.

When words fall into two or more of the above categories (for instance the word "where" can be a noun or an adverb) it must be translated in each category for which it will be used.

Other Concepts: Beyond nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are a whole range of other concepts, including gender distinctions,



pronouns, and so on. These are too difficult to translate within the context of this adventure.

Vocabulary Lists: Once concepts have been translated, all characters are assumed to be able to use them. A group vocabulary list should be completed which catalogs all of these concepts in one location. Also, words translated by the Klaxun (see below) should be added to this list. If a word which falls into more than one category of concept is translated, note which category it has been translated in on the vocabulary list (example: where/noun).

Constructing Sentences: Using words from the vocabulary list, the humans may wish to communicate in sentences with the Klaxun. Remember that only translated words can be used in these sentences, which will often restrict the characters to sentences which make them sound like children.

For example, if the party has amassed a three word vocabulary consisting of the noun humans (you know, us!), the noun ice, and the verb travel, they are severely limited in the sentences they can construct. "Humans (we) travel ice" is about it, which isn't very clear (see *Comprehension*, below). If we add the verb want to their vocabulary list, their sentence can become clearer—"Humans (we) want travel ice." New concepts will aid in communication over time, until many concepts can be related and conversations take place between human and Klaxun.

If the player characters have goals in mind that they wish to communicate, they should be encouraged to begin building a vocabulary to suit their needs. For instance, if they are concerned about their future survival over the next winter they might pursue the translation of words like "help," "winter," "freeze," "death," etc.

Comprehension: As shown above, some of these sentences are going to be difficult to understand. Comprehension on the part of the Klaxun is a task, but that task should be created by the referee depending on how difficult he thinks it is to understand the sentence. Misinterpretations should take place, but their effects should not be far-reaching.

For example, with a limited vocabulary the humans, in an attempt to get food say "Humans food." This could be misinterpreted to mean the characters want to join the foraging parties or they might be given garbage until they get across the concept of "edible." However, they will certainly not be taken out and fed to something as food, no matter how poor the sentence structure.

The players, on the other hand, will comprehend sentences from the Klaxun (made up by the referee from the same vocabulary list) using their own wits. This is not a game task, this is a real life task. If the players have to stumble around wondering what the Klaxun (ref) meant by "Under moon trees there," so be it.

Remember that asking a question could very well lead to many more days of translation to get an answer.

Klaxun Initiated Translations: The Klaxun are part of this translation party, as well, and have their own ideas they wish to get across. The referee should allow the Klaxun to get across one concept per day. This is not a task, it is automatic once translations begin.

Take words from the following list, in the order presented, and add them to the vocabulary list one per day.

Origin, intentions, what, are (is), sighted, hibernation, winter, forage.

Depending on the situations which arise between the Klaxun and humans, mostly dictated by events in the next chapter, *Unrest*, the referee will use words from the vocabulary list to create sentences from the Klaxun to the player characters. As the situations unfold, the Klaxun will have need to communicate their ideas to the humans, and they may need to translate new concepts for that purpose. If this is the case, the referee should abandon the

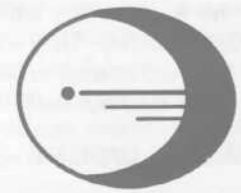
list above and seek more appropriate concepts for translation.

COOPERATION

Once communications have been established, even on a primitive level, it will become apparent to the player characters that the Klaxun are as curious about them as they are about the Klaxun. To the Klaxun the humans appear to be some very strange life-forms indeed. Fortunately, the Klaxun do not tend toward superstition or extreme religious beliefs, a fact which has saved the humans' lives up to this point. Had Klaxun appeared to the early peoples of the fertile crescent, they would most likely have been slaughtered as demons.

The Klaxun are interested in learning about the humans. More than that, they are interested in what the humans know. Knowledge is a new fascination of the civilized community of Klaxun. Its pursuit is paramount to many Klaxun, both sighted and non-sighted. If the humans could know things that the Klaxun do not, they would like to learn them.

In this healthy spirit, the humans could very easily teach the Klaxun many things. The Klaxun will cooperate with the humans to the point of being annoying. They will wait on the player characters hand and food, providing for them things which they request. In fact, during the initial stages of communication, when interpretations will tend to be unclear, the Klaxun will have a tendency to produce examples of any noun spoken by the humans. For instance, the first few references to "tree" will find the Klaxun scurrying off and returning with a small tree as some kind of offering, regardless of what the humans actually wanted. The Klaxun are anxious to obtain knowledge, which might indeed save them as a race. Their advancement to a technological civilization has begun, and will no doubt go unhindered unless they are overwhelmed by outside forces.



Unrest

The Klaxun have not been living as civilized beings for very many generations. This city and their few industries are all that separate them from their more primitive roots, those of being migratory foragers, destined to roam the plains of their world in search of food. It is not at all surprising that this first attempt at civilization has run into difficulties—the division of labor and wealth will no doubt always be unsatisfactory to some, and in this case it is the unsighted who are feeling cheated.

Among the Klaxun, tradition holds that the sighted take the leadership positions because of their natural ability. However, now that Klaxun are intelligent, the sighted advantage is not so pervasive—an unsighted Klaxun can do nearly anything a sighted one can. The very fabric of traditional behavior has been torn, and the unsighted Klaxun are more and more disregarding tradition and asking for more than they're getting from society. From their point of view, they are not getting any more out of being civilized and living the city life than they would be if they were to go back to the migratory existence.

In human history, city life came directly after the development of agriculture. For the ancient humans there was suddenly a many-fold increase in food production, freeing most people to perform other tasks. For the Klaxun, however, their ability to gather food has only improved slightly with the advent of organized foraging. Most unsighted are still involved in food gathering, and most of the rest are involved in construction or maintenance of the city. The only Klaxun benefiting from the city life are the sighted, who make up a pitiful 5% minority among their population.

The human player characters have come into the picture right at the height of this struggle. They will certainly be inducted into Klaxun society in the shadow of the unrest, and will pick up on its existence. Later, they will become directly involved, being contacted by rebellious Klaxun or being swept up in the wave of new migrations that will characterize the civil disorder.

WELCOME TO KLAXUN-TOWN

Once good communications have been established between the player characters and the Klaxun, they will be welcomed, almost inducted into the city as friends. Bejewelled, sparkling Klaxun nobility (with the aid of unsighted, servant translators—the sighted would rather not touch the humans) will escort the humans around the city, pointing out their achievements with no small amount of civic pride. The initial apprehension the Klaxun had toward the humans manifested itself during initial contact and communication. Once other Klaxun see the humans in the presence of others of their

kind they will have no initial fear or mistrust—they will be accepted as strange partners, new comrades in the struggle against the elements.

Identifying Klaxun: With time, the player characters will be able to recognize certain Klaxun. For instance, when the humans are introduced, almost adopted by the shipbuilders, they will become quite familiar with each of a small group of Klaxun.

Noble, sighted Klaxun have names. These can translate roughly into syllables using the touch language. For instance, one might have a name in the touch language which starts like the word for food and ends like the word for human, thus his name might translate as "Foman."

Unsighted Klaxun do not have names which can easily be translated into human speech. In the touch language they are rather lengthy and often sound the same (such as forager of hilltop or forager of hillbottom).

However, the players will no doubt come up with names for each important Klaxun on their own. If they want to refer to a Klaxun as "Fred," they can go right ahead—the Klaxun won't mind.

Survival in the City: The Klaxun will provide the humans with their share of native foods foraged. During their stay, the humans will be treated as equals so long as they do not create a serious breach of the peace. The Klaxun will not endanger the humans in any way provided they are accorded the same courtesy.

Joining the Shipbuilders: The Klaxun are not natural seagoers. They do not naturally swim and if forced to do so generally drown. Though spawned from the sea they have had no desire to return to it, until now.

A certain industrious Klaxun sparkler has become quite interested in building boats to travel along the sea shore. He models his craft after the floating islands of producers common on the equatorial seas. He feels that since local trade is becoming quite profitable, long distance trade could be extremely lucrative, helping to economically tie the large Klaxun population together.

A petition to higher authorities has gained him some backing to pursue his industry (a guarantee of food for himself and several unsighted Klaxun assigned to the project) and several sighted partners. In addition, during the petition it was mentioned that, from their patterns of hair the human newcomers might be aquatic in nature, and might be of some help. The shipbuilding Klaxun, one Hota, has agreed to take the humans on in his project, giving them food and whatever else a human might require in exchange for help in building boats.

The humans will end their tour at the facilities of Hota, in a

portion of the city near the water's edge. They will be made aware that this is where they are most welcome to stay and participate in Klaxun society. They will be provided food and shelter here, and Hota will attempt to aid them in their survival over the coming winter (see *Survival*).

SIGNS OF UNREST

During their tour of the city, the humans will witness several incidents of unrest. The unsighted are angry, and they are beginning to show their discontent. Three particular items will impress themselves on the humans.

Note that the Klaxun sparklers tend to think of the humans as being unsighted. They will be taken past areas where they will witness the following events without the sparklers knowing that anything is being seen. It is not that the Klaxun are stupid—even the best of them cannot see very clearly or very far. Humans are visual giants on this planet.

The Internment Area: Several sparklers have a portion of the maze/city blocked off. They are containing many unsighted Klaxun there, herding wanderers back into the internment area. This activity is most unusual; in the rest of the city there is no such restriction of movement and all Klaxun move about freely.

Open Disobedience: Klaxun construction teams are a common sight throughout the city. Typically, several sparklers herd a bunch of unsighted from place to place, instructing them on where and when to maintain walls that have been damaged by the elements.

However, in some locations, it is obvious that something is amiss. The usual instructions given by the sparklers are sometimes being ignored. The unsighted are making something of a "sit-down strike," refusing to do their work despite direct instruction from their sighted "superiors." Faced with this disobedience, the sighted become confused. Eventually, particularly rebellious unsighted Klaxun will be taken to an internment area such as those the player characters have already seen, awaiting trial.

The Trial: Klaxun justice is doled out by the sighted. Those unsighted who have been caught in the act of disobedience or rebellion are brought before a panel of sighted "judges" for sentencing.

One such sentencing can be witnessed by the player characters. Two sparklers will bring a single unsighted before several other sparklers. Conversations will be exchanged, and then the panel of sighted will revert to a period of meditation using the vine consciousness technique. Finally, the unsighted Klaxun will be lead away and another will be brought before the panel.

These three impressions of unrest should be presented to the players as they tour the city. Of course, for most of the tour they will see productive street scenes of construction/maintenance crews, foragers returning from the plains, distributing their gatherings, and other industrious activity such as artists and artisans fashioning their wares.

THE MIGRATIONS

The enormous population of unsighted Klaxun have been seething over their condition for many, many years. The unrest is now at its height, and actions are on the verge of becoming a reality.

By day 90 of this local year, which is well into the summer, approaching autumn, the unrest will come to a head. Hoards of unsighted Klaxun will begin a series of migrations away from the city, away from their current lifestyles. Individually they have decided to seek better existences elsewhere. Collectively they have decided to accomplish this by, temporarily at least, returning to their



migratory past.

Each large migration will involve between a few hundred to several thousand individuals, usually bound together by their city occupations. For instance, all the unsighted of a particular industrial commune will generally migrate together, either as a single unit or united with some other communes. No Klaxun are making the venture on their own—it is not in their nature to do so. They will only be migrating in very large groups.

Traditional Klaxun city life will go on. Only 30% or so of the unsighted Klaxun are actually going to migrate away from the city. The rest will remain under the leadership of their sighted overseers, as they see this as their best chance for survival. The survival instinct is very strong, and it will no doubt influence the individual's choice. However, the pressure of the group is also a great influence, tracing its history back to ancient migratory times.

Klaxun Views of the Migrations: Neither the unsighted nor the sparklers will take radical actions during these difficult times. It is not time to "cut off their heads" (Klaxun have no heads) nor is it time to "wipe out the rebels once and for all." Everyone is responding to the enormous culture shock of creating a civilized society. There is no animosity among the unsighted—they merely feel the hereditary pressures to move on. There is some animosity among the sparklers, but only to the point that they are confused and are not certain how to react to this situation. Communes of unsighted Klaxun are leaving this life in search of another. The sighted are naturally turning their attentions to keeping what they have left operating, not toward some sort of revenge. On the level of personal interaction, the Klaxun are a very passive and accepting race.

Effects on the Player Characters: The humans will, no doubt, be caught up in this situation. Whatever activity they have undertaken to that point will take a radical change when great groups of unsighted laborers take to the countryside. The player characters will have to make some hard choices at this time, guided by their intentions and by the factors covered in the next chapter, *Survival*.

Staying Put: The city life will continue. New colonies of "rebellious" Klaxun will be springing up, albeit not until next year will they really make any progress for themselves. The city will

continue—those unsighted who remain will be redistributed, and some industries will suffer, but only for a short time.

If the human player characters choose to remain in the city, there are plenty of opportunities open to them. Of course, the best chances for survival for the humans lie in the city, since they have had several weeks of real time to *prepare* for the arrival of winter. They may have stockpiled fuel and built covered shelters here, none of which can easily be taken along on a migration.

Trade will likely figure in the future of steadfast player characters. When new colonies spring up, trade with them will become very important. Colonies getting on their feet will be in want of many necessities available from the city, including the surpluses of its foraging parties.

Following the Migrations: Should the characters decide to pick up and leave with one of the migratory groups, their futures will be much more in question. Survival outside the city and without plenty of preparation will be difficult, but not impossible.

The player characters could offer their services to protect the unsighted migrators from local predators. As hired bodyguards they would be quite effective, being able to see better than any creature on the planet and probably having technological weapons at their

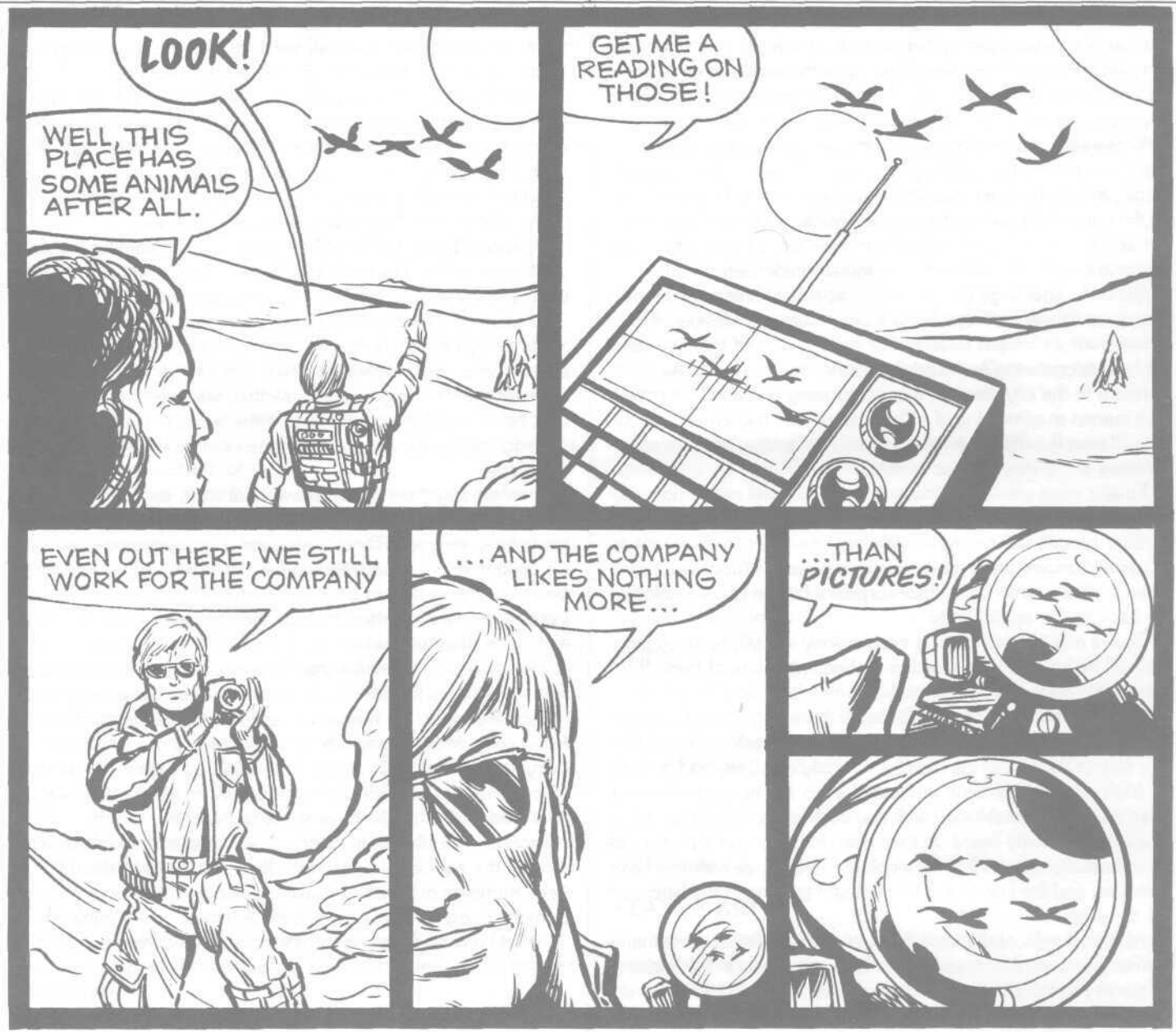
disposal. Any group of Klaxun who are going to migrate will be interested in taking the humans with them—they will have earned a reputation for cleverness and resourcefulness that could come in handy in the more wild regions beyond the city.

The direction of a migration should be, from the point of view of the humans, random. In fact, the referee should use a single six-sided die to determine the direction of travel from hex to hex. If they reach an area of ice pack, temporary or permanent, they will turn directly north for three hexes, then resume random movement. The migration will end when local day 127 arrives, and the Klaxun will find places to hibernate for the winter and leave the player characters to their own devices.

The next spring, regardless of the fate of the humans, the Klaxun will begin creating a new colony on the site that they hibernated. Obviously, there will be plenty of small enclaves of Klaxun activity on the regional map, spreading the population thinly across that area instead of bunching them all into the area around the city.

ADVENTURES

This is the point where the adventure *Energy Curve* becomes less concrete and more abstract. Thus far the adventure has en-



tailed playing the game of getting equipment out of the downed space plane, crossing the frigid ice plains, and finally trying to make contact with the natives. Now the player characters will have several local years to carve out a niche in their new home. Rescue is years in the future, or it is possible they will never see human space again. The lives they lead and the activities they pursue will revolve around the Klaxun, their old city, their new colonies, and the *Energy Curve*.

Logical Progress of Klaxun Society: The Klaxun will no doubt progress socially over the next few local years. The almost political struggle which led to the migrations will result in further changes in how the Klaxun deal with one another and conduct their daily lives. What follows is a rough outline of what the future holds for the Klaxun barring any substantial outside interference, presented by year following the year of the migrations.

The First Year: This is the year that each of the migration waves will coalesce into a unique new colony of Klaxun. Unless completely unfavorable for existence, the places where the migration settled for their winter hibernation will become the traditional homes for the new colonies—the Klaxun will come out of hibernation and begin building anew. However, just what they build from out of the wilderness might take any one of three broad forms.

First, some of the largest groups of Klaxun will have sufficient resources to begin building their own city structures, similar to those they recently left. These will either be at the seashore or adjacent to streams or rivers (of which there are plenty)—shallow waters are the *preferred* location for Klaxun hibernation. These new cities will take several years to reach some semblance of completion, but their construction will begin this year. Organized foraging will begin, and many other industrial operations similar to those found in the original city will commence almost immediately. The means for social leadership will differ from new city to new city, but it is certain that none will rely on sighted leadership.

Second, other large groups, while capable of creating their own city lives will instead opt for a more migratory lifestyle. These groups will pick from three to five lush areas and travel to each of them once during each spring-summer-autumn cycle. Avoiding a return to the city lifestyle, these migratory colonies will appear to a human as something of a "back to nature" movement, though to a Klaxun the differences between the migratory and settled existences are a very serious matter.

Finally, most smaller migratory movements will settle into foraging communities along rivers or near the shorelines. While these smaller groups will not have sufficient resources to create cities, they will become very productive producers of food, beginning even in this year to trade their surplus to other Klaxun colonies or back to the original city.

By the end of the first year, each colony will still be struggling, but will be on a definite direction to becoming one of these three types of colonies.

The Second Year: The second year following the great migrations will be marked as the beginnings of large scale trade between the new colonies and the old city. The city dwellers, lead by their sighted nobility, will send ambassadors to the new colonies that they think have established well and begin negotiations for large-scale trade, mostly based on their need for food and their surplus of manufactured goods. Many colonies will agree with this basic premise, and the first caravans will begin moving in the latter part of the year.

Also in the second year will begin minor political movements within the colonies themselves. In some, where the planting grounds are sufficiently rich, a new group of sighted will have appeared in the colonies by this time. While few will assert themselves

as superiors, many colonies will have problems placing these new sighted in their populations. Many will find "homes" on the road in the caravans.

The Third Year: The caravans will rule the countryside during the third year. Many Klaxun will be employed in this way, moving goods to and from their home colonies or cities. The distinctions between the colonies will become slightly more blurred during this year as the caravans become the important arteries of existence. Some smaller colonies will have picked up roots and become self-contained caravans, contracting routes in exchange for food and material goods.

In some of the larger colonies, political problems will also begin to emerge in the third year. Some methods of government through the use of the vine consciousness will be introduced, while individual authority will be distributed on the basis of personal achievement and ability.

Beyond Three Years: The trade made possible by the caravans will become the foundation of a Klaxun empire. The variety of colonies and areas settled with Klaxun will be the diversification needed to allow their numbers to grow and their influence to spread.

The new sighted Klaxun, those grown in colonies and not a part of the traditional city nobility will have typically found occupations in the caravans. Here their talents will make them some of the most influential and materially wealthy Klaxun on the planet, an ambition never before encountered by their society.

Internal political struggles will occasionally result in further migrations away from the central core of civilized Klaxun, spreading their numbers across the plains of the southern half of the planet. Their next great social obstacle won't arrive until they are faced with what to do with hordes of primitive Klaxun living on the northern half of the planet. Are they Klaxun or are they animals?

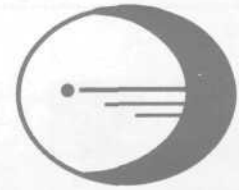
Player Character Involvement: The humans will wish to participate in the future of the Klaxun. The possibilities open to them are endless, but a few are discussed below.

Allegiance: Whether the player characters should stay in the original city or venture out with the migrations is a question the players have already answered. Now it is time for them to observe the new situation and decide how they want to fit in. Assuming they have found means to survive the winters, there is virtually nothing they cannot do in any of the communities of Klaxun on the planet.

Even among the Klaxun, movement from one community to another is not regarded as unheard of, though it is not exactly going to be widespread. There is no social stigma attached—any Klaxun making such a move is assumed to have a good reason for doing so. Being humans, the player characters are even less subject to scorn for movement through the "empire"—they may come and go as they please.

Technology: It is possible that the player characters will introduce new technology to the Klaxun over time. For instance, in order to facilitate trade, the humans may advance Klaxun shipbuilding technology. Moving goods by sea is somewhat more efficient than carrying them along a caravan and would be a great way to trade among the coastal cities. This would have an effect on the society as a whole, and might have some far-reaching effects.

For instance, this might lead to early exploration of the areas around the equatorial seas. Here the Klaxun might discover the large numbers of primitive Klaxun, or begin colonies very distant from their original homelands. Sufficient trade by sea might choke off inland colonies, forcing them to relocate to remain competitive.



Survival

Whether the human player characters have gained the confidence of the Klaxun and are welcome among them or they have not yet attained this point, they will have to deal with the rigors of the DM +17 2611 II winter. As it stands, without considerable planning and preparation, the humans will not be able to survive the winter—they simply are not adapted to such cold temperatures.

TIME

Winter officially stretches from local day 125 of one year to local day 32 of the next year. This is also the time that the biological clocks within each Klaxun, and indeed within all native creatures, tell them to hibernate. The necessities stated below apply only to days 140 through 17, the "dead" of winter. These are the coldest times, through which humans can't survive without protection.

EQUIPMENT

The cold weather clothing which the player characters most likely possess will not protect them during the cold winter—they simply do not ward off the temperatures which can reach as much as 50° below zero for weeks at a time. The cold weather clothing will allow them to survive within whatever shelters they might be able to use, but not outside of them.

Shelters: If within the Klaxun city, it will be easy to roof a single section of the maze for shelter through the winter. Outside of that city, the player characters will have to construct something else. In essence, any structure which keeps out the wind and is reasonably insulated will do. Digging a pit and covering it with a thick layer of plants and debris will do the job, as would some sort of cabin fabricated from native trees. The player characters are not trained construction workers, but the basics of survival are fairly well-known to everyone on the frontier. Nonetheless, making a shelter is a task.

To make a shelter. Routine. Survival. Three local days.

This task may be made one degree harder or easier depending on conditions. A set of power tools would be a great help. Adverse weather would be a great hindrance.

FUEL

In order to keep the interior temperature of the shelter above the minimum required to sustain life will require fuel. There are several options.

Fuel Station: A working fuel station will be sufficient to keep

a makeshift radiator working. Such a device can be easily constructed from any metal, such as the interior bracing of a pack or some other piece of equipment. However, the continuous use of the fuel station will take its toll—keeping it working will be a task.

To keep the fuel station working. Simple. Electronics. One local day.

This task must be performed once per local day. If the fuel station breaks down, it is a task to repair it.

Fixing the fuel station. Difficult. Electronics. One local day.

Each day the fuel station is not working the shelter will have to be warmed by some other means.

Fire: Keeping a fire going all winter is the only alternative to using the fuel station. The amount of fuel required is a minimum of three cubic feet of material per local day. Gathering this material in the spring-summer-autumn cycle is a task.

To gather three cubic feet of material. Simple. Survival. One hour.

This material must be stored inside the shelter in order to be used during the winter.

If at any time there is no fuel available for an entire day the humans will be subject to the effects of exposure (see the chapter entitled *The Planet*).

FOOD

Sufficient food for the entire winter will have to be stored in the shelter. This may be in the form of food recovered from the space plane or local food foraged by the player characters on their new planet. Foraging food here is a task.

Foraging enough food for one day. Routine. Survival. One hour.

This task may be performed only in plains and valley terrain.

KLAXUN AID

If the player characters have befriended the Klaxun, they will have plenty of help gathering food and/or fuel for their winter survival. In fact, the Klaxun will be happy to do all the work provided they are properly directed.

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