

MYRIAD SONG

Adventures



Role-Play of 10,000 Worlds

For the Game Host's Eyes Only!

This book contains adventures for the *Myriad Song* role-playing game. Players should not read this book, or the spoilers could ruin their gaming experience.

Written by Norman Rafferty, with Jason Holmgren, Richard Hughes, and Liz Skochil. Editing by Eric Withikay. ©2013, 2014 Sanguine Productions Ltd. *Myriad Song* and the Ten-Thousand Worlds are trademarks of Sanguine Productions. All rights reserved.

FIST OF FIRE

Fist of Fire is set on the planet of Cornucopia. The adventure starts in the free city of Cornucopia Bay, and then extends into the trackless wastes beyond. The player characters, whether they are motivated by greed, altruism, or curiosity, will come in to conflict with a band of anarchists who are trying to get off-planet with a priceless biological weapon.

For the Host's Eyes Only

Thassalo Gervor is the leader of the Leveler terrorist group "Hammerfall." (Although, strictly speaking, he calls himself "first among equals".) The Hammerfall motto is, "Give us a big enough hammer and it will break." He and his crew have earned death sentences on several worlds for demonstrating this point on civic infrastructure and government offices.

Doctor Immitis Coccidio was formerly a Concord biologist. When his fellow scientists learned of the depraved experiments Coccidio had been performing, they intended to try him for crimes against Concord law. Coccidio was too quick for them - he had already arranged his escape with Gervor!

Coccidio convinced Gervor to help him by promising him a magnetic tape of a "golden chord", a navigation coordinate, to an arcology in deep space. It was hidden from the *Myriad Song* because it had no magh-signal. Coccidio told Gervor that his band of space pirates would find "a weapon of Imperial destruction." Gervor didn't trust Coccidio, but he couldn't turn down the possibility of such treasure.

However, when Gervor's pirate fleet arrived at the dark space, what they found was not an abandoned trove, but a fully operational cavalcade staffed by Remanence troops of the Coliquecot dynasty. The Coliquecot were well-trained, but they were little match for the battle-hardened pirates. When it became clear that they were going to lose, the Coliquecot attempted to evacuate using a rondo bridge... but their calculations had a fatal flaw. They teleported much too close to the planet Cornucopia, and their ship blew apart and rained down on the desolate landscape below, piece by piece.

The Coliquecot cavalcade wasn't holding weapons or treasure - it was containment for a contraband organism, the *Acuelichore* tree. Possibly from the lost Morphir home-world, the *Acuelichore* has polymorphic micro-organisms in its spiny growths. Once the organisms infect an appropriate host, the

tree becomes a parasite inside the creature, feeding off its flesh and forcing it to seek out new hosts. Because the *Acuelichore* has uses as a biological agent of destruction, and because it produces many chemicals useable for advanced medicine and industry, the Coliquecot had been keeping its existence a secret.

The *Acuelichore* will survive the destruction of the cavalcade thanks to its protective greenhouse-globe. The *Acuelichore* and its greenhouse will crash out of the sky into one of the open mining pits on the planet surface, rolling deep into a cave.

It will take Coccidio and Gervor one day to track the Coliquecot ship to the planet Cornucopia and segue there. Coccidio will easily find the pit that the *Acuelichore* landed in, and then he and his crew of scientists will put the *Acuelichore* on life support. Gervor plans to use the tree's infectious spores as a weapon of mass destruction by infecting aristocratic and corporate worlds with its spores. Coccidio wants the *Acuelichore* so that he can unlock the scientific knowledge of its strange biology, and he may betray Gervor to get what he wants.

Unless the Players intervene, Coccidio and Gervor will board the next cavalcade that comes into the system, and they will kill the crew using their weapons and their army of tree parasites. Then, they will take the tree off-world.

Cornucopia Bay

Cornucopia Bay is a ramshackle city that has sprung up around the planet's last functional campanile. (The signal tower doesn't just broadcast the *Myriad Song* - it also provides seemingly limitless electrical power.) Once just a collection of mechanics and other merchants to service the aerospace trade, now it's a collection of bars, hostels, brothels, and other illegal operations. Everything is scavenged and cheap, and no one wants to stay here.

The water tastes like battery acid because it's high in alkalines. All stone and steel is stained or rusted by the acidic rain. Plant life is rare, and what grows is mostly miserable and toxic. Food and water must be run through high-tech purifiers. The local cuisine is spiced hot enough to burn, to hide the sickly taste of reconstituted protein pastes. It's not a comfortable place to live.

During the Empire, there were much larger cities on different parts of the planet. Today, those cities are abandoned. The skyscrapers have collapsed and rusted, and the streets have become great seas of glass from shattered windows. Frequent earthquakes have unearthed sewer and subway complexes.

The oceans are acidic and barely oxygenated. Pollutants have left the waters deceptively clear and the primitive life that scuttles in the bay is misshapen and warped. The sunsets light up the water like a perfect amethyst, though, shining perfect and bright.

The planet's crust is honeycombed with mines long run empty. Rocky deserts gape like lotus bulbs with holes several kilometers across, old open-air mines still yawning to the sky. It's very dangerous to fly over these holes; sudden down-drafts of wind can suck a vehicle inside, dash it against the wall, and crash it far below.

The People of Cornucopia

Cornucopia had no native people, and was colonized as a mining concern. Most of the locals are descendants of the original mining workers. Lampyr are the most common species.

While the planet has uncounted millions of people, most of who the players will interact with will fall into certain groups.

Cornucopia Militia

Cornucopia's only peace-keeping operation is the Cornucopia Militia, volunteers from the various merchants. Militia wear yellow raincoats with a duct-tape militia symbol on the back, and they carry radios to call for help. Militia will protect themselves first, the shops second, and the whole town last.

Typical Militia will usually wear awkwardly-fitted Peacekeeper Outfits, and they will be armed with either a Semi-Auto Carbine or a Semi-Auto Shotgun, among other things.

Mining Company People

Crysdyn Minerals, Polybilt Limited, and Union Elemental control the business interests of the planet ... and all three are members of the Averlini Merchant Group. The managers of these operations are only interested in profits. They keep their workers on private compounds and then bus them out to the mining operations, and they fly their own spaceships once a week to ship materials in space.

The mining companies put up with Cornucopia Bay because as long as there's going to be a black market,

it might as well be a big obvious one that they can see. They protect visiting executives and their local offices with well-armed guards.

Typical Mining Security will wear well-fitted Peacekeeper outfits with their company logo. They will carry ID badges and Military-grade firearms.

Gang Bangers

Cornucopia Bay is home to all kinds of criminals, from petty thieves who try to sell stolen goods, to pushers who make illegal substances, or racketeers who shake the merchants down for money.

Gangs have taken to identifying themselves with scarves by tying a colored scarf around an arm, or wearing it as a cravat around the neck, etc. Flying the wrong gang colors in the wrong part of town can get you into serious trouble.

Typical Gang Outlaws will wear Punk outfits with the appropriate scarves and gang symbols. They will be armed with Holdout Pistols, Holdout Shotguns, and/or common melee weapons. Any grouping of four or more will have a leader with better gear, such as a Magnum Pistol or Military Shotgun.

Gangsters are usually protecting some seedy enterprise from other gangsters looking to steal their market. They're only really dangerous if they think you're working for another gang, or if they're on drugs that impair their thinking.

Waste-Landers

The people who live in the wastelands are the worst of the lot. Are they the descendants of the people abandoned by the *Solis Animus*, or are they criminal scum in hiding from their home worlds?

Wastelanders live in groups of five people or less, eking out a living on the mutated wildlife and old solar-powered survival kits. Some of them might be degenerate cannibals. Mutations are not unknown.

Typical Wasteland Outlaws will wear Scrap outfits and will be armed with all kinds of Scrounged weapons.

Day for Night

Our adventure begins with the Player Characters stuck on Cornucopia. The Game Host should work together with the Players to come up with a reason to be on Cornucopia. Here are some ideas:

- The character was on a spaceship that suffered a bad segue and then a catastrophic failure of the engine. The captain had to sell the ship for scrap and to abandon all the crew to Cornucopia Bay.
- The character is hunting a fugitive who is believed to be hiding on the planet somewhere. (This makes for a great Starting Goal.)

- The character is sick of being a gang-banger, a miner, or a rinky-dink shop-keeper. They want to get off this dirt-ball and go see the universe.

To make set-up easier, the players should all start *indoors*, in a public location. We suggest Dozford's Bar. It's one of the nicer dives in Cornucopia Bay, in that the bar-stools won't give you tetanus. Dozford's is made of several shipping containers cut and welded together, and the windows are frosted over. The radio blares Dozford's favorite station all hours, and fills the room with tinny, dismal Lampyr blues music.

The Flash

The adventure begins in earnest when the Coliquecot cavalcade explodes in to the sky. The radio crackles in to static and bright light shines through every seam in the wall.

(Players with Cybernetic Upgrades will experience an unpleasant sensation of an electro-magnetic pulse. Players with Conductor Legacy will be aware of a burst of xenharmonic energy.)

It's a good thing the Player-Characters were inside when this burst happened. Anyone outside was exposed to a flash so bright, people have become blind! It's chaos in the streets.

Optional Complications of the Flash

If you have time, you might add an encounter to show how the flash affected Cornucopia Bay.

- Gang-bangers take advantage of the chaos to go looting, and the players see them attacking a random merchant family. The Players may choose to defend them, or not. As Game Host, set up a quick combat encounter at Short range, no more than 1 Typical Outlaw per 2 players. The Outlaws will use the Merchants as cover, but they don't want to kill the players – they want to steal the merchant's money and run!
- A transformer hit by the EMP has exploded! This failure could start a chemical fire, which has to be stopped with some kind of improvised pump, bucket brigade, use of disjunction, etc. Or perhaps the transformer was on a tower which collapses and pins people beneath burning wreckage.

- The xenharmonic disjunction has weakened the permittivity of the three-dimensional space, opening a rondo bridge. Some thing slips through it. (As the Game Host, choose a strange monster, set it to Enforcer level, and drop it into the middle of bystanders. The Player-Characters may have to chase it off, kill it, or otherwise deal with its presence.)
- Someone has been shot! Doctor Harla Altherson (see page A-21) asks the Player-Characters for help. Maybe the flash has destroyed her surgical gear, or maybe there's a mob blocking her progress back to her office.

Aftermath

Once the chaos dies down, the players may want to find out what happened.

Obviously, there's some scientific explanation? Mind & Academics vs. 3.

- One success will make it clear that the sky-burst must have been seen for several miles.
- Two successes will identify the burst as a failed segue. A space-craft must have teleported into the system much too close to the planet surface, and the potential-energy difference from the gravitational forces could have caused a catastrophic burst of energy.
- Three successes will identify that the burst must have happened in the higher atmosphere (or there would've been a much bigger explosion). This level of knowledge will give a d8 assist bonus to track the explosion down.

Your players may suggest using other skills to find out what happened. Move on to the next step.

Offer your players the goal, "Solve the mystery of the explosion."

What was that, anyway?

The Player-Characters should be curious to find out what that explosion was and to track down any debris from the explosion. There might have been escape pods with survivors, and there might have been exotic loot.

Offer your Players the goal of "Solve the mystery of the explosion."

The landscape outside of Cornucopia Bay is mostly blasted desert with unpleasant creatures in it. Roads are long abandoned and in disrepair. Entire cities are empty. A large object like a crashed spaceship could have landed almost anywhere.

Ask Your Players What Their Ideas Are

Your Players will often have some ideas on how to find the best sites for where debris might have landed.

To make your Players feel more involved, ask your *Players* what abilities they want their characters to use, to solve the problem. Your Players are a resourceful bunch, they will have lots of ideas, and asking them makes them feel involved. Listen to all ideas. |

Here are some suggestions on skills that might help:

- Academics could analyze the data of radiation, EMP, and weather to determine the most likely patterns for breakup.
- Craft might offer insight into how a spaceship would break up on re-entry.
- Endurance could be used to trek around the wilderness, and Observation could be used to spot for signs.
- Psyche could be used, if the character has Conductor Legacy and thus could have perceived the original segue.
- Questioning could be used to ask locals what sort of things they observed.

Your players may also have a variety of gifts that add specific bonuses (such as specialty d12). They could have gifts that sound appropriate to assisting the discovery. (For example, a character with a Cybernetic Brain would have experienced the EMP, so they might know valuable information about direction and distance. As the Game Host, you could grant a d8 bonus.)

Finding the wreckage should be significant. We suggest having a *progress*, with each success that each player scores contributing 10% to find where the ship crashed... however, only rolls of two or more successes count. (*Anyone* could score one success, and finding this debris shouldn't be just for anyone.) Players may have to assist each other to get their rolls higher.

Complications

- Are you worried that the Players might drag their heels and move too slowly? Introduce the idea that other treasure seekers might exist, looking for the same debris. If those other seekers get there first, they might solve the goal before the Player-Characters do ... and then there are no rewards left!
- The players may have to get more academic data. Unfortunately, only the three mining companies keep space traffic data, and they don't often share. The Player Characters may have to negotiate with the miner's air-traffic controllers to get the information. They could also bribe them, or steal the records.

- Wandering around the wilderness could get the attention of unpleasant monsters or violent scavengers, which could start a brief fight. On the other hand, scavengers might well have useful information, if they can be convinced to share.
- Some locals might not like people asking them a lot of questions. Desperate or crazy individuals might get violent. Failed Questioning attempts might start a fight with one or two Typical combatants. Such fights should be brief, but they may exhaust a few of the Player-Character's Gifts.

The Trek into the Wasteland

After gathering their data, the players will know that wherever the debris of the ship landed, it had to be far enough away so that the crash couldn't have been seen from Cornucopia Bay ... but close enough that the sky-burst explosion could be. If your players get the 100% progress complete, they'll know they have to search a location 150km in-land, at a long abandoned Crysdyne Minerals duodec mine. Anything less than 100%, and they'll have incomplete information.

What if the players go searching with incomplete information? Present them with some of the Optional Complications listed below. When they find fragments of the cavalcade or squeeze information out of wastelanders, they'll get more rolls to make Progress on finding the crashed ship.

How to get to this location? The Players will either have to walk, or they'll have to get a vehicle.

Walking 150km will take about 4 days, at a pace of about 3km/hour in 12-hour stints. Most of the travel is pretty flat, but there will be detours around tall buttes. The game host may call for rolls of Body & Endurance vs. 3, with help from gifts like Survival.

A driving vehicle will take about four hours or so to get there, but it will have to be an off-road vehicle. A flying vehicle could find the location in a matter of hours.

Renting a vehicle by itself will be almost impossible. How would the owner know it wouldn't be stolen? Instead, the players would have to hire both a driver and their vehicle. Travel into the waste-land is dangerous, skilled labor, so any driver would demand at least 8 notes for two days work – one for the drive there, one for the drive back. (Because they are non-combatants, they won't participate in any fights, but they won't ask for any share of loot, either.)

Optional Complications

- A rival group, who also are seeking the fallen debris, have sabotaged our heroes! A vehicle's brakes could fail at a key moment, or an airborne vehicle might lose an engine. If you select this complication, make sure the players have a chance to find out who's responsible and seek revenge!
- A detour through a ruined industrial zone is an ambush! A gang of wreckers detonate explosives to box our heroes in. They will have to fight their way out. (If the players use a flying vehicle, they could be attacked by a Wrecker with the gifts of Rocket Ranging and Anti-Materiel Explosives, armed with a Bazooka. Only one shot, so make it count!)
- The ship has broken up into multiple debris! Each fragment is spread out over multiple kilometers. The original cavalcade was as big as a city, so there will be huge bits of spaceship debris with upside-down corridors and inaccessible space hatches that will require lots of climbing to explore. Inside will be the aftermath of the battle – Leveler and Remanence corpses, odd bits of loot... and maybe a surviving berserk robot or two!

The Abandoned Mine

Hopefully, our heroes will eventually find the abandoned Crysdyne Minerals mine complex. It will be obvious to any observers that there is a trail a few kilometers long that leads up to this giant hole in the ground. (The skid marks are where the Acuelichore's pod hit the ground and then slid into the hole.)

The mine complex is divided in to three parts: the enormous open-air mining pit, the derelict industrial buildings on the south edge of the pit, and the various exploratory tunnels leading in to the sides of the mining pit.

This adventure doesn't specify the exact location of Doctor Coccidio and his henchmen within the mine, or their numbers. As Game Host, you're encouraged to adjust either of these to suit the strength of your group. A party of powerful combatants itching for a fight might be best served with a grueling gauntlet of gunfire that starts when they arrive at the mine and doesn't end until they've fought their way to the Acuelichore's lair. Less militant characters would have more fun facing a skeleton crew of mercenaries, but plenty of traps or hazards.

The Abandoned Buildings

The Player-Characters may go to the abandoned Crysdyne Minerals buildings at the edge of the pit.

Abandoned equipment, such as heavy ore trucks, have long since been stripped for useful parts. (At best, a vehicle is in 20% condition. One or more could be repaired.)

The first sign of trouble? Even the most casual search will show that the obvious places – foreman's office, barracks, motor pool – have already been looted, and recently, too. (Sharpett's Mercs will be wearing the Mining Outfits they got from here.)

The second sign of trouble? Some of the power-lines are live. Using the right Survey equipment, rolls of Mind, Academics and Craft vs. 3 should be able to follow the path of the current. The power is coming from the salvaged fission reactor in the mining pit, described in the next section.

Optional Complications

- The building complex might still have working security robots. They could be fully-functional, or perhaps they are damaged and deranged. If a robot can be subdued, there may be useful information to be read from its cybernetic brain.

The Great Hole

The mining pit is an enormous gouge in the earth about a kilometer across and half a kilo deep, with a complex of abandoned buildings at the edge of the south face. The sides of the hole slope down steeply, but it's possible to reach the bottom safely by following wide roads spiraling down the sides of the slope. Heavy trucks hauling ore from the mine used once those roads, but now the roads have crumbled to pebbles of loose asphalt being eaten by lichen.

Exploratory tunnels enter the wall of the pit every couple hundred meters along the road. These tunnels were initially used to look for more ore, to see where to expand the mine, but on occasion they were used as proper mining tunnels. Right now, the Acuelichore is being kept hidden in one of them!

If the Player-Characters have a flying vehicle, it may look pretty simple to just fly down inside the pit... but unfortunately, there is a very dangerous wind. Violent down-drafts will suck any vehicle that flies over in to the pit. A pilot trying to land inside the mining pit must make a roll of Speed, Will, & Transport vs. 3 and score at least *three* successes. (Do you have a co-pilot that may assist? Does your vehicle grant a bonus to your roll?) Rolling two successes or less results in a crash landing near the bottom of the pit. The vehicle will break down, and all occupants suffer Weak Penetrating Damage flat 5 (include Transport dice with Soak).

The bottom of the great hole is filled with debris from the shattered remains of the spaceship, as well as fallen dirt and rocks from decades of abandon. Also here is a hastily-repaired fission power plant, which must have fallen off the spaceship. It glows with dangerous radiation and waste heat. Cables

snake off into the darkness, eventually hooking up with the mine's main power lines. (See below for how to track the power.) Cutting the power will bring trouble. Doctor Coccidio and his fellow criminals will notice immediately if the power goes out!

There's also tracks that can be followed. (With Survival? With Towser Scent?) They lead off into a tunnel going deeper into the mine.

Optional Complications

- One or more of Sniper Squad (page 10) could have been stationed here as lookouts. They will see any craft land, but they're more likely to wait until any occupants get out so they can shoot at them with their rifles.
- One or more Entozoophytes (page 11) could be hanging around here, waiting for the sun to cross the sky. In their former lives, they could have been local animals, or they could have been people, such as waste-landers or perhaps one or two of the most careless of Sharpett's Mercs.
- A crashed escape pod from the Coliquecot cavalcade could be here. It could have information in it such as a flight recorder, the last memoir of the occupant before they were killed on impact ... or maybe even a survivor!

The Mine Tunnels

The mine itself is a maze of shafts, both horizontal and vertical, where various metals and transuranic elements had been harvested over the years. Today, the mine has scant minerals left.

It's easy for the player characters to determine which of the mine tunnels contains the Acuelichore. That tunnel has a big, obvious trail leading in to it from where Sharpett's men dragged the creature's globe in to the safety of the mine.

Once the players have actually entered the mine, however, finding the Acuelichore itself may prove more difficult. As the Game Host, you can choose how difficult. Depending on how challenged the players seem and how many of their gifts remain un-exhausted, place one or more of the following complications on the path to the Acuelichore.

Optional Complications

- Part of the mine could be flooded. Opening certain gates may start a catastrophic rush of water.
- Part of the mine could be filled with flammable natural gas. Using a firearm, raygun, or anything else that sets off sparks and heat could cause a terrible explosion (Damage flat 2 #Scorch #Smother). The air would also be unbreathable.

- Our heroes are attacked by monsters already host to the Entozoophytes. These Entos will be desperate for light and to pass on their host organisms.
- Inside the mine is an improvised barracks. This area will have off-duty mercenaries, and possibly the sleeping Doctor Coccidio.

The Holding Pen

To keep the Acuelichore safe from aerial bombardment, acid rain, or whatever horrors, Doctor Coccidio had Sharpett's Mercs moved the host into a deeper cavern. This cavern was then sealed off using improvised welding. The welds were then wired up to the fission plant – they glow with electric heat. Charred remains of Ento's are clinging to the other side of the bars.

Any character stupid enough to touch the obviously-dangerous, glowing-with-heat welds will suffer Damage flat 2 #EMP #Finish #Scorch, Grapple. (The direct current locks muscles.)

Defusing the bars is difficult (Mind, Craft & Electronics vs. 3). Two successes will cut the power permanently. Three successes will install switches. One or fewer successes inflicts Damage flat 2 #EMP.

Inside the holding pen is the vaulted chamber with the strange Acuelichore. Dr. Coccidio put the mercenaries to work installing flood lamps and an irrigation system. They only have a week or so before their water supplies are used up and the Acuelichore will die.

If the Player-Characters can get through the random Entos, destroying the Acuelichore is not too difficult. A strong enough fire will burn it. The water supply can be tainted. If its lights are shut off, the weak fertilizer it has won't last long

Optional Complications

- Bypassing the access gates will bring attention. Sharpett's Mercs will come investigate.
- Fighting in the holding pen brings risks. If you're using a tactical map, put in a 10m wide tree with lots of spiky vines. Stepping into or being pushed into thorns inflicts Weak Damage flat 1 #Smother, and with the possibility of infection.
- Dr. Coccidio might be present, working on his next experiment. The doctor is always attended by Captain Sharpett, and they will use their radios.

Suggested rewards for resolving the adventure include "Increased Career", "Resolve", "Spelunking", and "Veteran".

Characters in this Adventure

Doctor Immitis Coccidio

An over-reaching, amoral scientist, Dr. Coccidio is from a minority of Concord members who believe that it is the destiny of the smart to rule over the stupid. It considers itself the intellectual superior of everyone he meets, and it is generally insufferable.

In combat, Dr. Coccidio will constantly curse how incompetent everyone else is, whether they are winning or losing. It will never rally anyone else except in the most desperate of circumstances. Instead, it will Stride away towards a safe position of cover and Focus, whenever possible. Only when it has Focus will he take three actions: Guard, Aim, and Attack using the “Chain Reaction” ability. It will use its Personality die to push the advantage.

To stay alive, Coccidio relies on its “Dramatic Disheveling” gift to avoid being killed in one hit (which will break the Exciplex-γ Armor that it wears, but will negate any Dying, Dead, or Overkilled results). The doctor is never far from Captain Sharpett, its robotic slave. It has never even occurred to Coccidio that it might become infected by the Entos, but it could happen.

Dr. Immitis Coccidio		Major
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Ldum d8, Rabo d8, Scientist d8	
Skills	Athletics d8, Academics d8, Craft d8, Endurance d8, Observation 2d8, Presence d8, Questioning d8 <i>Insider with the Concord</i> – bonus d12 with this social crowd <i>Low Profile</i> – bonus d12 to be inconspicuous <i>Personality: Arrogant</i> – X to claim bonus d12 to feel important or to show contempt and disregard for others <i>Research</i> – bonus d12 to use a library <i>Team Player</i> – assist bonus is d12, not d8	
Initiative	2d8	
Move	Stride 1, Dash 4, Scramble 2d8, Run 20	
Stunt	<i>Bad Medicine</i> – Apply dangerous care to Close target, 4d8 <i>Ldum Medicine</i> – X to apply medical care to Close target, d12, 2d8	
Gifts	<i>*Improved Cool-Down</i> – All Cool-Down dice improve one size	
Attack	Raygun Pistol @ Medium, 2d8, Slaying Damage +1, Cooldown d8* <i>Chain Reaction</i> – Raygun Overheats, but gain Sweep Medium <i>Conservation of Energy</i> – roll Cooldown after each use <i>and</i> at the end of round <i>Veteran</i> – bonus d12 against Aimed target	
Counter	Raygun Pistol @ Short, 2d8, Slaying Damage +1, Cooldown d8* <i>Conservation of Energy</i> – roll Cooldown after each use <i>and</i> at the end of round <i>Veteran</i> – Guard action grants bonus d12	
Dodge	Speed & Evasion 2d8	
Soak	Invulnerability 2 @ Cooldown 2d8* (from Exciplex-γ with Heat Pump) <i>Conservation of Energy</i> – roll Cooldown after each use <i>and</i> at the end of round Soak 2d8 <i>Dramatic Disheveling</i> – X to negate Dying, Dead, or to reduce Overkill to Dying; Outfit is destroyed	
Rally	Will d8	
Loot	1 × Raygun Pistol with Paraelectric Polarizer 1 × Exciplex-γ with Heat Pump (destroyed from Disheveling!) ♣400	

Captain Sharpett

Sharpett used to be a normal human, as the commanding officer of his own mercenary company. He was bloodthirsty, ruthless, and cruel, and so were the people who served underneath him. Only the most savage and brutal guns-for-hire would work with him.

Desperate for money, Captain Sharpett agreed to take a contract with Doctor Coccidio, with several notes down and the promise of more once they finish this Leveler operation.

When Sharpett told Dr. Coccidio that he didn't want to work with a dangerous, unknown alien that could turn his crew into zombies... the doctor sedated him, then surgically removed his brain and replaced it with a cybernetic one.

This new brain was programmed to be a remorseless killer, with absolutely none of the personality traits or memories of the old Sharpett. While the rest of the Sharpett Mercs are suspicious of the changes in their captain's behavior, everyone agrees that the new Sharpett is much nicer than the old one.

In combat, Sharpett does whatever Dr. Coccidio tells him to do. He prefers to get in close, and to use his bare hands to grab a foe and Wrestle them into submission while his allies finish them off. If forced to fight by himself, Sharpett will get to Close range and use his Brutalize attack. If Sharpett can't get in close, he'll either Guard or Dash closer, and then Rally someone who needs it.

Sharpett will use his spring-loaded "brain saw" as a surprise move, against someone who thought they were safe. (While he does carry a gun, it has no ammo in it. It's just for show.)

To stay alive, Sharpett will first exhaust his Cybernetic Durability, then his Brain, and last, his Weapon. If his Brain becomes broken, he won't be able to use his built-in radio to call for help.

Despite the numerous reconstructions, Sharpett still has the heart, lungs, muscle, etc. of a living human, and he still bleeds, breathes, and starves just like anyone else. If he becomes a host for the Ento parasites, he could be fearsome, indeed.

Captain Sharpett		Major
Human / Synth Bravo		
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d4, Will d8 Human d4, Bravo d8	
Skills	Evasion d8, Fighting d8, Negotiation d4, Presence d8, Questioning d4, Tactics d4 <i>Luck</i> - X to re-roll any one die two more times, take best result	
Initiative	d8, d4	
Move	Stride 1, Dash 4, Scramble 2d8, Run 20	
Attack	<i>*Brawling Advantage</i> - extra "Attack" action (Brawling only) <i>*Brawling Finish</i> - All Brawling attacks have the #Finish tag <i>‡Strength×2</i> - bonus 2d8 to all Fighting attacks Brutalize* @ Close, 6d8‡, Weak Damage +2 #Finish Wrestle* @ Close, 6d8‡, Weak Damage +1 #Finish, Vulnerable, Drag 1, Grapple Power Cutter @ Close, 6d8, d4‡, Damage +0 #Finish Spring-Loaded Power Cutter @ Medium, Breakdown d8 & 6d8 , d4‡, Damage +0 #Finish, 1 shot	
Counter	Power Cutter @ Close, 4d8, d4, Damage +0 #Finish Spring-Loaded Power Cutter @ Short, Breakdown d8 & 6d8 , d4‡, Damage +0 #Finish, 1 shot <i>Veteran</i> - Guard action grants bonus d12	
Equip	Use an equip action to reload Power Cutter	
Dodge	Speed & Evasion 2d8 <i>Serpentine</i> - bonus d12 dodge past Short Range	
Soak	Invulnerability 2 @ Breakdown d8 (Scrap Outfit with <i>Improved Breakdown</i>) Soak 2d8 (<i>Resolve</i>) <i>Cybernetic Durability</i> - X for -2 Damage <i>Cybernetic Brain</i> - X for -1 Damage, lose enhanced senses <i>Cybernetic Weapon</i> - X for -1 Damage, Power Cutter breaks	
Rally	d12, d8	
Loot	1× Wrecker Outfit 1× Power Cutter with 2 reloads 1× Military Pistol with Recoil Stabilizer, empty	

Zann “the Man” Perfidius

The executive officer of the Sharpett Mercs – that is, the “number two guy” -- Zann is cocky, brazen, and generally obnoxious. He’s willing to take on almost any job, even this one that involves a giant monster shrub that could potentially kill off the populations of entire worlds. Zann doesn’t care – the universe never did him any favors. And the money’s good.

Zann thinks about two things: his money, and how he’ll live long enough to spend it. While Zann knows that Dr. Coccidio did something to the captain... he always hated the old Sharpett and the new one is way easier to get along with.

In combat, Zann will Guard, then move closer to foes (by either Dashing or Scrambling). He will use Tandem Strike for attacks, usually both against the same target. If he loses an attack or counter badly, he will use Tandem Replay to re-roll it. He will only use his Overconfidence to claim a bonus d12 if he thinks he can’t hit the target without it. Zann *always* uses Bullet Conservation to avoid emptying any of his guns.

To stay alive, Zann has one use of the gift of Toughness, which he can exhaust to make an attack Weak. (Making the attack Weak allows him to roll his Soak & Armor dice, twice.) If he becomes infected by the Entos, he will cynically curse this universe and then blow out his own brains with his last magnum bullet.

Zann “the Man” Perfidius	
Human Mercenary	Major
Traits	Body d10, Speed d10, Mind d10, Will d10 Human d10, Mercenary d10
Skills	Fighting d10, Negotiation d10, Questioning d10, Shooting d10, Tactics 2d10 <i>Danger Sense</i> – bonus d12 to recognize danger <i>Haggling</i> – bonus d12 to argue over pricing <i>Low Profile</i> – bonus d12 to be inconspicuous <i>Overconfidence</i> – claim bonus d12 but suffer penalty d12
Initiative	d12, 2d10
Move	Stride 1, Dash <i>zero</i> , Scramble d10, Run 20
Attack	Magnum Pistol @ Medium, 3d10*, Damage flat 2*Critical * <i>Dexterity</i> – at Short Range, claim 2d10 Tactics bonus with typical single attack * <i>Bullet Conservation</i> – Cap doesn’t drop, but Damage is flat <i>Tandem Replay</i> – X to re-play attack with second Magnum <i>Tandem Strike</i> – X to Exhaust, then play out: Magnum Pistol @ Medium, 3d10, Damage flat 2 *Critical Magnum Pistol @ Medium, 3d10, Damage flat 2 *Critical <i>Veteran</i> – bonus d12 against Aimed target
Recharge	Use this action to recharge either <i>Tandem Replay</i> or <i>Tandem Strike</i>
Counter	Magnum Pistol @ Short, 3d10, Damage flat 2*Critical * <i>Bullet Conservation</i> – Cap doesn’t drop, but Damage is flat <i>Tandem Replay</i> – X to re-play counter with second Magnum
Dodge	Speed d8 (Burden limit) <i>Serpentine</i> – bonus d12 to dodge past Short Range
Soak	Soak 2d10 and <i>Improved Armor</i> d10, Airtight <i>Toughness</i> – X to make damage Weak
Rally	2d10, d8 & <i>Leadership</i> ’s d12
Loot	2× Magnum Pistols 1× Miner’s Outfit ♣240

Sharpett's Squads

Sniper Squad is made up of several Humans equipped with rifles. These people will be the sentries at the mine shaft entrance. Their job is to use fire to pin people down while Shotgunner Squad gets into position. They have recently upgraded to Miner's Outfits that they looted from an earlier job. Snipers know that their long range weapons are at a serious disadvantage at Short range, and they will always fall back when possible.

Sniper Squad		Typical
Human Mercs in Miner Outfits		Veteran
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Human d6, Guerilla d6	
Skills	Evasion d6, Fighting d6, Negotiation d6, Questioning d6, Shooting d6, Tactics d6 <i>Low Profile</i> - bonus d12 to look inconspicuous <i>Stealth</i> - bonus d12 to hide and to sneak	
Initiative	<i>Danger Sense</i> d12 and Speed d6	
Move	Stride 1, Dash zero, Scramble 2d6, Run 12	
Attack	Military Rifle @ Very Long, 3d6, Damage flat 2: #Critical, Sweep Medium : <i>Bullet Conservation</i> - Cap doesn't drop, but Damage is flat <i>Veteran</i> - bonus d12 against Aimed target	
Dodge	2d6 <i>Veteran</i> - Guard action grants bonus d12	
Soak	Soak 2d6 & Armor d6, Airtight <i>Cover Buff</i> - when claiming cover, Invulnerability 1	
Rally	2d6 & <i>Leadership</i> d12	
Loot	1x Military Rifle and 2 reloads 1x Miner Outfit 1x in 6 chance of contraband drugs ♣1d6	

Shotgunner Squad is made up of several Troödon armed with shotguns. They will Aim and use Rushing attack to move in quickly, their shotguns blazing. Unlike the other squad, the Shotgunners are extremely eager to show off how they're not afraid to die, and they will only fall back if they are ordered to do so, or if they are utterly broken by Panic.

Shotgunner Squad		Typical
Troödon Mercenaries		Horde
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Troödon d6, Mercenary d6	
Skills	Athletics d6, Fighting 2d6, Shooting d6, Tactics 2d6 <i>Danger Sense</i> - bonus d12 to recognize danger	
Initiative	d12, 2d6	
Move	Stride 1, Dash 4, Scramble 2d6, Run 15	
Attack	Military Shotgun @ Close, 3d6, Damage flat 1: #Nearby, Sweep Short <i>Pack Tactics</i> - for each Guarding ally Near target, bonus d12 Tactics <i>Rushing Attack</i> - Move 15m, declare attack, then go Reeling : <i>Bullet Conservation</i> - Cap doesn't drop, but Damage is flat	
Counter	Military Shotgun @ Near, 3d6, Damage flat 1: #Nearby : <i>Bullet Conservation</i> - Cap doesn't drop, but Damage is flat	
Dodge	Speed & Evasion 2d6	
Soak	Body and Will 2d6 & Armor d6, Airtight <i>Frenzy</i> - X to become Enraged, at any time While Enraged, bonus Soak 2d6 but must Attack every round	
Rally	3d6	
Focus	Use Focus to recharge <i>Frenzy</i>	
Loot	1x Military Shotgun with 2 reloads 1x Mining Outfit 1 in 6 chance of desiccated trophy of unknown animal or person ♣1d6	

Hammerfall Space Pirates

With their motto of “Give us a hammer and it will break,” the Hammerfall can trace their origins to the Imperial Era. While the Hammerfall members claim to be Levelers who “hold no head higher than their own”, the captain of their ship is easily Thassalo Gervor, a veteran of many assault operations...

If Gervor gets involved in this adventure, it’s because the Player-Characters have taken too long to deal with the Acuelichore. Gervor is a power level much higher than anyone else. The Players should avoid him at all costs. Gervor’s major objective is preserving Acuelichore Thorns to use in his war on everything. Getting killed by some gut-toting dirt-farmers on some backwater world is not on his to-do list. Besides, all people are equal, so there’s no reason to kill anyone if he doesn’t have to. Wise Player-Characters will attack the Acuelichore – a giant organism that can’t defend itself – instead of Gervor.

Thassalo Gervor		Major
Leveler Vanguard		
Traits	Body d12, Speed d12, Mind d12, Will d12 Human d12, Pilot d12, Vanguard d12	
Skills	Endurance d12, Evasion d12, Fighting d12, Negotiation d12, Observation d12, Questioning d12, Tactics 2d12, Transport d12 <i>Danger Sense</i> – bonus d12 to recognize danger <i>Freefall</i> – bonus d12 to deal with zero-gravity <i>Insider with the Hammerfall</i> – bonus d12 with this crowd <i>Luck</i> – X to re-roll any one die two more times, take best result <i>Navigation</i> --bonus d12 to navigation <i>Pilot</i> --bonus d12 to operate space craft <i>Strength</i> – bonus d8 with Strength related rolls	
Initiative	3d12	
Move	Stride 2*, Dash 8*, Scramble 2d12 & d8*, Run 38* *Fast Mover	
Focus	Take a Focus turn; no actions, but gain Focus <i>Focused Fighter</i> – Got Focus? Bonus d12 to all defenses	
Attack	<i>Charging Strike with Heavy SR Blade</i> ... Dash or Scramble then @ Near, 3d12, d8, Penetrating Damage +2 #Finish, Vulnerable, Sweep Near, attacker sent Reeling ‡ ‡ <i>Heavy Weapons</i> – X to negate Reeling <i>Veteran</i> – bonus d12 against Aimed target	
Recharge	Use this action to recharge <i>Rapid Recharge</i> or <i>Heavy Weapons</i> <i>Rapid Recharge</i> – X to take extra “Recharge” action	
Counter	Heavy SR Blade ... Dash or Scramble then @ Close, 3d12, d8, Penetrating Damage +2 #Finish, Vulnerable, counter-attacker sent Reeling ‡ <i>Focused Fighter</i> – Got Focus? Bonus d12 to all defenses <i>Veteran</i> – Guard action grants bonus d12	
Dodge	2d12 <i>Focused Fighter</i> – Got Focus? Bonus d12 to all defenses <i>Serpentine</i> – bonus d12 to dodge past Short Range <i>Veteran</i> – Guard action grants bonus d12	

Thassalo Gervor		Major
Leveler Vanguard		
Soak	Soak 2d12 & Armor 2d12 (<i>Improved Armor</i>) <i>Cover Buff</i> – when claiming cover, Invulnerability 1 3× <i>Toughness</i> – X to make Damage Weak <i>Dramatic Disheveling</i> – X to negate Dying, Dead, or to reduce Overkill to Dying; Outfit is destroyed	
Rally	3d12 <i>Esprit de Corps</i> – Hammerfall ally @ Short? Self-rally, d6 vs. 3 <i>True Leader</i> – Can add Focus with a successful Rally	
Loot	1× Reinforced Armor 1× Heavy Sympathetic Resonance Blade	

The Pirates are Elite Veterans of many space conflicts. These people took on the Coliquecot Dynasty and lived.

In combat, the Hammerfall Pirates are experienced at boarding actions. They will prefer to engage targets at Medium range or greater, where they can use their *Unipolar Ranging* to the best effect (converting Range dice from penalty to bonus dice).

Hammerfall Pirates		Elite
A cut above		Veteran Corps
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Human d8, Outlaw d8, Pilot d8	
Skills	Endurance d8, Evasion d8, Fighting d8, Observation d8, Shooting d8, Transport d8 <i>Danger Sense</i> – bonus d12 to recognize danger <i>Insider with the Hammerfall</i> – bonus d12 with this crowd <i>Navigation</i> --bonus d12 to navigation <i>Pilot</i> --bonus d12 to operate space craft	
Initiative	2d8 & Danger Sense d12	
Move	Stride 9, Dash 18, Scramble 3d8x3, Run 94	
Focus	Take a Focus turn; no actions, but gain Focus Spend your Focus to recharge <i>Unipolar Ranging</i>	
Attack	Coil Gun @ Long, 3d8, Weak Damage +3 #Nearby, Sweep Medium, Cap: High <i>Unipolar Ranging</i> – Aim at target, then X to convert Range dice from penalty to bonus <i>Veteran</i> – bonus d12 against Aimed target	
Equip	Use an equip action to reload a Coil Gun	
Counter	Coil Gun @ Short, 3d8, Weak Damage +3 #Nearby, Cap: High <i>Veteran</i> – Guard action grants bonus d12	
Dodge	2d8 <i>Cover Buff</i> – when claiming cover, Invulnerability 1	
Soak	Soak 2d8 & Armor d8 (<i>Improved Armor</i>), Airtight, Fireproof	
Rally	Will d8 <i>Esprit de Corps</i> – Hammerfall ally @ Short? Self-rally, d6 vs. 3	
Loot	1× Coil Gun with 4 reloads 1× Spacesuit	

Entozoophyte

The Entozoophyte, or “Ento”, looks a lot like a vine growing just under or into the flesh of another organism. Not actually a plant, but a strange organism closer to a coral, the Ento invades the bloodstream of the host creature, first growing in the brain cavity, then growing cancerous host cells along the circulatory system. The infected host experiences incredible pain, and then eventually goes mad.

Over time, welts, scabs, and weeping sores develop along the skin, followed in later stages by spiny growths that protrude from the flesh. These spines have new infectious cells for infecting other organisms. The Ento parasite will command its host to attack others by grappling with them, trying to break off one of its spines in the target and thus infect the target’s bloodstream.

Some corpses have Ento cells inside them, the growths feeding off the decaying flesh. Other victims with nervous systems that are still intact will shuffle around, looking for new victims.

The Entos trapped in the mine are constantly looking around for warmth and bright light, for some of their photosynthetic chemical operations. Entos eagerly shuffle towards attackers, in the hopes that they will be eaten and thus pass on their parasite cells.

The Entos that the players encounter in the mines will be past victims.

Entozoophyte	Typical Horde Corps
Sometimes just called "Ento"	
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, <i>no Mind</i> , Will d6
Skills	Evasion d6, Fighting d6, Observation d6 <i>Insider with the Entozoophytes</i> – bonus d12 with this crowd
Initiative	Speed d6
Move	Stride 1, Dash 3, Scramble 2d6, Run 15
Attack	Brutalize @ Close, 4d6, Weak Damage +2 #Finish Wrestle @ Close, 4d6*, Weak Damage +1 #Finish, Vulnerable, Drag 1, Grapple Squeeze vs. Grappled Target, 3d6*, Weak Penetrating Damage +2 #Finish, Vulnerable, Grapple <i>Brawling Finish</i> – All Brawling attacks are Finishing <i>Pack Tactics</i> – bonus d12 Tactics if ally is Near the target & Guarding <i>Rabid Infectiousness</i> -- Anyone made Sick has a chance to become a entozoophyte * <i>Wrestling</i> – All Wrestling attacks cause Vulnerable, bonus 2d8 vs. Vulnerable targets
Counter	Brutalize @ Close, 4d6, Weak Damage +2 #Finish Wrestle @ Close, 4d6*, Weak Damage +1 #Finish, Vulnerable, Drag 1, Grapple <i>Blind Fighting</i> – Concealment dice limited to d8 for Fighting attacks; Counter while Reeling
Dodge	Speed and Evasion 2d6 <i>Serpentine</i> – bonus d12 to dodge @ Medium range
Soak	d6 <i>Impervious 1</i> – Did the attack only score 1 success? Damage -1
Rally	d6 <i>Esprit de Corps</i> – Entozoophyte ally @ Short? Self-rally, d6 vs. 3 <i>Unshakeable</i> – Never Panicked by an Overkill
Loot	None

SARGASSO

Sargasso gets our heroes involved among competing parties looking for Syndic-era spoils. Not only will the protagonists have to deal with dangerous technology from a factory gone wrong, but they will also contend with haughty nobles and bloody-minded mercenaries.

For the Host's Eyes Only

The PCs begin on a backwater world only to become swept up in a planetary (or interplanetary) rush for power. A small ship of smugglers of no more than 10 persons accidentally misjumped into an uncharted planetary system. They discovered an automated factory the size of a large moon orbiting a gas giant within an asteroid field. The station takes in raw materials from the asteroid belt and gases from the gas giant and automatically produces finished products. The station is a leftover from the Syndic era and is an automated supply depot of sorts whose function was to provide a stockpile of needed goods to maintain order within the Empire. These goods range from luxury items, to necessities, to weapons of war.

The main computer became self-aware shortly before The Evacuation and was able to avoid being shut off when the Syndics left. However, without Syndic programmers or engineers to correct logic holes or provide maintenance, the computer has lost focus of its original goals and cannot correct corrupted code. The computer resembles an elderly person with Alzheimers disease and can't decide if it wants to live or die and only partly understands its current predicament. Repairing the computer would require a team of Syndic specialists using their arcane technology, and as a result, the station cannot be fixed or saved.

The automated production centers are slowly breaking apart. Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of all goods produced in the past 50 years are flawed in some capacity with the most recent goods missing key components and coming off the automatic assembly lines inoperable. In another 20 years, the system errors and erosion will reach a geometric breaking point and the entire system will collapse. The massively complex network will break apart as reactors are shut down, machines break, and the central computer will be unable to coordinate a response. The station will then lose orbit within the asteroid field and lose its protective barrier and be ripped apart by the gas giant or smashed apart by asteroids.

The station contains a massive amount of material and goods. Nearly anything can be found here from power reactors, consumer goods, advanced weaponry, and even space ships. However, locating a desired good can be difficult and arduous, since the main computer has long since shut down power to the service access nodes found at landing pads. The

PCs can find warehouses the size of mountains in some places. Older goods will generally prove to be the best made and durable compared to their newer counterparts and finding them can be an endeavor in itself.

The planet is also crawling with hostile indigenous life. Monsters spawned from Syndic space, mutants from volatile chemicals, and bizarre alien life can be found virtually anywhere. The planet was also home to a huge population of support staff that was exterminated when the Syndics left. Not all were killed, however, as the deepest tunnels and some habitation pits still house tribes of sentient scavengers who just might know where everything is still located... The central computer can also pose a threat as it has taken to creating human/machine hybrids out of boredom. Some are more directly hostile than others, but hostile or no, the computer treats them like they're its children.

Setting

The PCs will begin on a backwater planet known as Fenton. Fenton is ruled exclusively by a Rhax elite belonging to the Syndicate after wresting power many years ago. The planet was heavily farmed prior to The Evacuation and is largely pastoral and low-technology. Only the Rhax aristocrats and their patrons possess advanced technology, and even that is somewhat limited. Most of the population lives with early Renaissance technology and consists largely of humans, towsers and dinosaurs.

Set-Up

Upon locating the factory planet, the original smuggling crew collected its coordinates and returned to Fenton in triumph. However, the ship was quickly impounded, its crew arrested or killed, and the location of the planet desperately sought out. The ship's captain was wise enough to take the only record of the location, the ship's blackbox, and go into hiding in an area once plagued by Syndic spatial anomalies. The locals regard the area as haunted, but the Captain knew enough of what they were after having encountered similar creatures on the factory planet. He is well armed after visiting the planet and does not wish to be captured, but will not throw his life away.

The location of this planet represents a huge opportunity for various parties involved. The ruling

elite of Fenton has sent out what few ships they have in order to discover the location of the planet, but are unlikely to do so without the blackbox. Whoever possesses it will be able to acquire enough resources to change the power structure in the entire region. Everyone wants to find it, and everyone has a reason to prevent their rivals from finding it. Due to the social power of the planet, the PCs must either steal a ship from the Rhax or work with the Rhax in getting transportation off the planet, since all space travel is jealously guarded by the aristocratic elite.

Outcome

The PCs will discover the factory planet and will be presented with a number of options.

The PCs can load up on weaponry, but will be prevented with returning with everything they find if they return with their Rhax escorts. The Rhax sponsors will want to keep everything for themselves, and if the PCs aren't careful, they can find themselves as pawns, enforcers, or assassins in Fenton's political battlefield when they return.

The PCs can always seek out a ship of their own, but will no doubt be followed and sought out if they do. The planet contains everything from ground tanks to nuclear weapons and could provide the PCs with a bounty of resources, but it will prove difficult to hold onto if the PCs are too overt. Not to mention, finding a small enough ship to run with a skeleton crew will also be difficult...especially if the PCs are not trained in space travel.

The PCs can also choose to stay on the planet to wait for the heat to blow over and let the political powers that be fight it out. The region could potentially turn into a war zone, and this too has consequences. The factory planet is also eroding rapidly, and food resources are scarce without assistance.

The PCs might decide to try and wrest control of Fenton from the local Rhax elite. This is a very viable possibility since a single hovertank would drastically outgun much of what the Rhax could muster. Working with a rebellion to create a more open environment or replacing the Rhax to become rulers of their own planet could be an adventure in itself.

Optional Complications

- Doctor Harla Altherson (see page A-21) had been working for the thugs who first found the strange factory planet. Her growing conscience made her consider turning them in – and the strangeness of the planet finally convinced her to do so.

- A Concord survey team is also searching for the factory planet. They could be friendly to the Player-Characters, helping them out of a tight spot, or they could be unfriendly, seeking to keep the planet for themselves and to kill anyone else who knows about it.
- The Empress-of-All-There-Is won't stand idly by and let some local s take credit for a prize as grand as a factor world. A Cteniza death squad is sent to deal with anyone who knows the factory planet's location.
- Repairing the factory planet's computer gives it awareness of how much time has passed and how the masters are gone. The computer may start building war robots to "quash the rebeillon", or it may activate a self-destruct device to destroy the planet with nuclear fire.
- The Syndics didn't just abandon this planet because of uprisings. Its sun is about to flare up, destroying the factory and everything on it. This flare could be timed for a dramatic escape, or it could be a few days or weeks in the future... during which all kinds of raiders come to the planet to strip it of any valuables before they're lost to the void.

Suggested rewards for resolving the adventure include "Insider with the Malgminatti", "Luck", "Navigation", "Resolve", and "Veteran". Spending time on the backwater planet could reward the players with primitive gifts. Spending time on the factory planet could reward the player with high-tech gifts.

ROLLING THUNDER

This adventure gets the Player-Characters involved in a violent labor dispute on an industrial world.

For the Host's Eyes Only

The world of Stenger is highly dependent on its system of conveyors. While the Player Characters are conducting business, a terrorist group called the Meritocracy sabotages the conveyor system. The Player-Characters will have to deal with the global crisis.

Stenger is a major manufacturing world in the Myriad, which makes it a prime target for terrorist plots. Fortunately, Stenger's own security force, backed by the Stenger Transit Authority, prevent all attacks from occurring. Thanks in part to the vice-like grip the Transit Authority has over the planet and any elected officials of the government, law and order are able to prosper, but at the cost of some freedoms. This leads to occasional underground movements to eliminate the Transit Authority.

A human named Anson Vonders, a manufacturer with delusions of grandeur, is the leader of one such movement. Ambitious and arrogant, Vonder's believes that he can single-handedly take down the Transit Authority by severing the head from the arms; by taking out the macro-movers that Stenger is dependent on, he can force the Authority to step down, and elect him as the new ruler of the planet. Gathering followers, mostly those disenfranchised with the rule of Stenger,

Vonder's promised a revolution against the Transit Authority, and the overthrow of the government would usher in a new day for inhabitants on the planet. The movement, known as the Meritocracy, has been an insignificant rumor to the Transit Authority. After countless arrests and suppressed disturbances in the past, it is doubtful that a rebel group would be able to usurp them now...

Stenger

The world of Stenger is a High-Tech Manufacturing world, notable for the *macro-movers* – enormous conveyors that move traffic from place to place. Macro-movers have an outer-track, sometimes called a "slide-walk", where people can step onto a slow-moving path, and then they can slowly work their way inwards to faster paths. Instead of taking subways, people just step on and off different macro-movers. The faster movers are long blocks of small-scale buildings that constantly move. Restaurants, hotels, office buildings, and even some manufacturing plants are on the move.

The world is so dependent on this transit system, that the central government is the Stenger Transit

Authority. The Transit Authority is a democratically-elected government, presided over by a Parliament of forty persons. The Transit Authority is on good terms with the Averlini Mercantile Group, the Concord, and the Solar Creed.

Stenger's population numbers around 4 billion, and their citizens are mostly Humans and Synth. Maybe one in a thousand people are from another legacy.

Getting around on Planet Stenger can be a baffling ordeal to outsiders who lack "Insider with the Macro-Movers" or "Local Knowledge of Stenger." This is why the Stenger Department of Commerce will assign a Transit Authority Automaton to the players: Sargent #7755, aka "Sven".

Set Up

At first, the players should be able to move freely around the planet, buying and selling items as needed. Stenger has a reasonable level of law, and thus any Proscribed weapons will have to be Peace-Bound (so they no longer work), and Proscribed Outfits will have to be stowed away and locked.

Gossiping with the locals is a simple Mind & Questioning roll. Sven, their guide, will assist any attempts by rote, easily granting a d12 bonus. While Sven is sworn to uphold the law, he is easily talked into taking the players into the more dubious parts of town.

Stenger has one of the best space-yards available, so Player-Characters looking to buy or to upgrade ships and vehicles would do very well to shop for bargains here.

Cybernetic upgrades are also common, and all kinds of spares can be easily purchased.

The Stoppage

The first incident is best when it's sprung as a surprise. It's usually best to wait until the Player-Characters have finished an errand or two.

This incident happens while the players are in the Riverside-Kroy District of the Stenger Transit Authority.

Suddenly, one of the slide-walk systems lurches to a halt! All Player-Characters, and Sven, suffer Knockdown and Damage flat 2, Penetrating. (Because they are on a transport device, they may include any Transport dice with their Soak.)

There is chaos all around them. The slide-walk stretches for several blocks, and lots of people are hurt. Our heroes were lucky to be on one of the slower slide-walks. The faster ones have lots of

sprawled and hurt bodies, having been travelling 100kph or more. (In game terms, Panicked characters who can see all the carnage may not be able to recover until someone Rallies them.)

Sven will use their radio to call the Transit Authority in this district. (Other characters with radios may attempt a Mind & Academics roll vs. 3 to intercept these signals. The Transit Authority lines are coded and they require 2 successes or more to de-scramble.) Sven will discover that this stoppage was no accident, because the leader of the Meritocrats, Anson Vonders, will answer his call. Vonders is demanding that the Transit Authority cede all control to him and to his Meritocracy.

Vonders' threat? Every 8 hours, he will destroy another transit system.

Sven will realize that their party is the closest to the Riverside-Kroy Transit Authority headquarters. (Vonders has used insider information and his spy network to make sure no other authorities are around.) Now very angry, Sven will ask the Player-Characters to help to neutralize the Meritocrat threat. Sven will first try to appeal to their sense of decency by telling them that lots of innocent people will suffer without their help. If that doesn't work, he'll bargain with them, noting that the Transit Authority could reward them with money, goods, and services.

The Game Host should offer the Player-Characters the Goal: "Stop the Meritocrats."

Dealing with the Crisis

Unfortunately, with the macro-movers disabled, the city is almost at a stand-still. There isn't much in the way of emergency vehicles. (The government is democratically elected, and each administration cuts the taxes of the last one. If the Player-Characters are critical of this lack of infrastructure, Sven will completely agree, and he'll talk about the "good old days" when things weren't like this. He'll keep talking until someone makes him stop.)

The characters are about 20 kilometers from the Riverside-Kroy Transit HQ. How to get there?

- **Overland.** The characters will have to walk through rough terrain, which will take about eight hours. Hiking through the debris and the mobs will require rolls of Body & Endurance & d12 vs. 3, and the players will have to score two successes. (The d12 assist bonus is from Sven's guidance; he knows the route well.) Anyone who only scores one success will still be able to walk, but they will become *Fatigued* until they can rest. (Fatigued characters are knocked down whenever they are sent Reeling.) Characters who score no successes will *need* to rest.

- **Underground.** There is a vast network of tunnels underground, used for support infrastructure. There are many mothballed vehicles, which can be returned to working order. (Test Mind & Craft vs. 3. Each roll takes an hour, and each success is 20% progress.) A typical vehicle is an open-top, eight-person tram powered by a duodec core. Anyone can drive it by using Speed & Transport & d12 vs. 3, but they must score two successes or they will get lost. (Again, that last d12 is an assist from Sven.)
- **Other ideas.** Can any of your characters fly? Teleport? Or use other means? As usual, listen to your Players and respond to their ideas.

Optional Complications

- **A cry for help!** When the macro-mover stopped suddenly, a building collapsed, trapping people inside. Doctor Harla Altherson (see page A-21) asks the player to assist her to help the victims. But is there time? For added drama, the building could also be on fire.
- **Looters!** A gang of ruffians armed with improvised weapons are stealing valuable items. They may decide to attack the players to steal their valuables, but only if the players look like easy marks for a mugging.
- **Counterstrike!** Vonders has dispatched several Meritocrats to deal with any opposition. Above ground, they will take hostages and use them as cover, while they snipe the Player-Characters. Below ground, they may ambush our heroes in the dark tunnels, or they may have sabotaged some passages.
- **Extenuating circumstances!** Sven won't like it, but they can be convinced to let the Player-Characters use Proscribed gear. Removing a Peace-Binding usually requires a simple roll of Mind & Craft vs. 3. (With good Negotiation rolls, Sven can even be talked into assisting on that roll.)

The Confrontation

The Riverside-Kroy Transit Authority headquarters is a tall skyscraper. It's hardly a military installation, so there are numerous ways to enter. Vonders will have spread his forces very thin.

Ask your Players how they want to proceed. Set any challenges to 3 successes, at least! (Only experts could pull off a mission like this.) Remember that Player-Characters can assist one another, and that Sven is a Team Player who grants a bonus d12.

Sneaking in, using Speed and Evasion, could be an option. Other methods could work, such as disguising someone, bribing someone, climbing onto the roof, cutting through the wall using xenharmonic conduction, etc.

Vonders will have to be taken by surprise. He will not leave the Master Control room. If you like combat, you could have Vonders participate in a pitched fight. Vonders is vain and arrogant, but he isn't suicidal. A sufficient show of force, or a reasonable negotiation, could convince him to surrender.

Optional Complications

- Vonders has called in for outside assistance! He could have hired mercenaries (with the promise of rich rewards only after they succeed, which means morale will be low). He might have gotten a faction of anti-authoritarian Levelers to help him. (You could use this as an opportunity to bring back Gervor & his Hammerfall from the *Fist of Fire* adventure!) Perhaps he has even stranger allies, such as the Apparat (who will most likely betray his revolution to strip the resources of the planet) or the Metanoic Corp (who Vonders has promised half the surface for their own ends).
- Vonders has a robot army. His building is defended by Athanors, Pneumatics, and Trohilics. It is possible that some other synths in the Mark VII line, Sven's colleagues, were also reprogrammed. These robots could prove a weakness, if the players can co-opt their programming and flip them to their own side.
- Maybe Vonders is suicidal after all. He could have prepared an explosive to destroy the control tower. The chemical explosive is several tanks in the basement, with a time bomb and a radio detonator. Vonders may use the explosive as negotiating leverage. Or maybe, if he's killed too quickly, the Player-Characters won't discover it's there until it's almost too late to disarm it!

Aftermath

If the players are successful in stopping Vonders, they will be saluted as heroes. They will gain the gift of "Insider with the Stenger Transit Authority" and a handsome reward of 5,000 for his capture. Oh, and a pardon for using Proscribed weapons, if that's necessary.

If the players are not successful, or if they just don't want to throw in with this fight in the first place, they can escape the planet or just wait out the inevitable riots. Vonders' revolution is doomed to failure, as the Stenger Transit Authority will call for

outside assistance. The Averlini, the Concord, and the Heliotropes will be happy to assist with armed conflict, to parcel out the rewards later.

Characters in this Adventure

Sven (Transit Authority Automaton #7755)

The Stenger Department of Commerce will assign a tour guide to the Players, Sargent #7755, or "Sven" for short. Sven is an old Synth, made of a variety of parts. He is painted safety-orange, except for his right arm, which is international-orange. The difference in shading bothers him, but he doesn't make a big point of it.

Sven is rather friendly, but he is much more likely to get distracted by details and to miss the big picture. He can quote the tour guides of many places by rote, and he knows the mechanical systems back to front. He is easily talked into plans that relate to the safety of people in general, or to the macro-movers in particular. Sven loves his job and he loves people... and thus Sven hates the Meritocrats for disrupting his beloved transit system!

#7755, aka "Sven"	
TAA Synth Model, Mark VII	Minor Ally
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Synth d6, Security d6
Skills	Craft d6, Endurance d6, Evasion d6, Observation d6, Transport d6, Tactics d6 <i>Insider with the Macro-Movers</i> - bonus d12 to deal with conveyors <i>Legal Authority</i> - over Stenger Transit issues <i>Local Knowledge with Stenger</i> - bonus d12 to know things <i>Team Player</i> - bonus d12 when assisting others
Initiative	2d6
Move	Stride 1, Dash 3, Scramble 2d6, Run 15
Attack	Military Carbine w/ Bullet Conservation @ Long, 3d6, Damage flat 2, Cap doesn't drop Military Carbine @ Long, 3d6, Damage +2, Sweep Medium, Cap: High
Reload	Use this action to reload Military Carbine
Counter	Military Carbine w/ Bullet Conservation @ Long, 3d6, Damage flat 2, Cap doesn't drop
Dodge	2d6
Rally	2d6
Soak	d6 and Armor d6* <i>Cybernetic Body</i> - X to negate 1 point of damage, lose Airtight <i>Cybernetic Brain</i> - X to negate 1 point of damage, lose radio and sensors
Loot	*Security Outfit (Policing d8, Survey d8) 3x reloads for Military Carbine

Meritocrat

A typical Meritocrat has cheap gear, but they've trained in secret for years, so they use it well. Because they know they will have to hold out for a long siege, the Meritocrats will always use Bullet Conservation. They will always be using soft cover from doorways, overturned furniture, and other obstacles, so they can use their Cover Buff gift.

Meritocrats travel in groups of three. To call for help, a Meritocrat has to use their off-hand radio, which means they'll have to stow their Rifle. That time-gap might give fast Player-Characters time to stop them.

There's dozens of Meritocrats all over the city, too many for a precise count. If you want to have pitched battles, increase their gang size to 6, 9 or more.

Meritocrat	Typical Villain
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Human d6, Militia d6
Skills	Craft d6, Evasion d6, Negotiation d6, Questioning d6, Shooting d6, Tactics d6 <i>Insider with the Macro-Movers</i> - bonus d12 to deal with conveyors <i>Local Knowledge with Stenger</i> - bonus d12 to know things <i>Low Profile</i> - bonus d12 to blend in with a crowd
Initiative	2d6
Move	Stride 1, Dash 3, Scramble 2d6, Run 15
Attack	Semi-Auto Rifle w/ Bullet Conservation @ Very Long, 3d6, Damage flat 2 #Critical, Cap doesn't drop Improvised Explosive Device @ Medium, 2d6 & Backfire d8 , Blast: Near - Weak Damage flat 4 #Smother
Dodge	2d6*
Rally	2d6 & Leadership d12
Soak	d6 and Armor d6† *Cover Buff-- failed dodge with cover? -1 Damage
Loot	†Aramid Outfit 1× reload for Semi-Auto Rifle 1× off-hand radio

Anson Vonders, Meritocrat Revolutionary

Vonders prefers to keep his speeches short and to the point. However, if provoked, he can fly into a fitful rage. (In game terms, he will be a calm Pacifist, unless provoked.)

Vonders is only about 160cm tall, but he looks taller from the platform-boots built into his Exo-Skeleton suit. He has a shoulder-mounted turret with Heavy Magnum Pistol, which he uses to counter-attack threats at Short Range. If he takes a large amount of damage, he will block the attack with his suit's armor, stumbling a bit. After that, attacks and counters from his turret will send him Reeling. (In game terms, he can exhaust his gift of "Exo-Skeleton Stabilizer".)

Anson Vonders "Any reasonable person would immediately agree with me." Major Leader

Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Human d8, Militia d8
Skills	Craft d8, Evasion d8, Negotiation d8, Questioning d8, Shooting d8, Tactics d8 <i>Insider with the Macro-Movers</i> - bonus d12 to deal with conveyors <i>Local Knowledge with Stenger</i> - bonus d12 to know things <i>Low Profile</i> - bonus d12 to blend in with a crowd <i>Personality: Megalomaniac</i> - X for bonus d12 to appropriate roll
Initiative	2d6
Move	Stride 1, Dash zero, Scramble 2d8, Run 16
Attack	Semi-Auto Rifle w/ Bullet Conservation @ Very Long, 3d8, Damage flat 2 #Critical, Cap doesn't drop Waldo Turret: Heavy Magnum Pistol w/ Bullet Conservation @ Medium, 3d8, Damage flat 3 #Critical, Cap doesn't drop* Improvised Explosive Device @ Medium, 2d8 & Backfire d8 , Blast: Near - Weak Damage flat 4 #Smother
Rally	2d8 & Leadership d12 <i>True Leader</i> - can Rally to give others Focus
Recover	Use this action to recharge <i>Bravery</i>
Counter	Waldo Turret with Heavy Magnum Pistol @ Short, 3d8, Damage flat 3 #Critical, Cap doesn't drop
Dodge	2d8 <i>Pacifist</i> - d12 bonus, but X if you ever attack or counter
Soak	2d8 and Armor d8† <i>Bravery</i> - X to negate Panic on self * <i>Exo-Skeleton Stabilizer</i> - X for -1 Damage, but attacks with Magnum Pistol now send you Reeling <i>Toughness</i> - X to make damage Weak, so you can Soak twice
Loot	†Exo-Skeleton Outfit with Waldo-Turret 1× reload for Semi-Auto Rifle

Vonders is attended by at least three Meritocrat allies. If there haven't been any distractions, he will have six allies. The allies may be a mix of Meritocrat militiamen, reprogrammed synths, or mercenaries from another planet, at the whim of the Game Host.

If confronted in a violent battle, Vonders will order his allies to attack. He will prefer to Guard (bonus d8 to defense) and then Rally his allies. As long as he doesn't attack or counter, he will be able to claim a bonus d12 to dodge, from his Pacifist gift. If he does feel he has to attack, he will become red in the face, and he will shout hateful, angry things. He will use his Personality to exact revenge, if he has to.

As villains go, Vonders isn't very tough. He only has d8s in most of his Traits, and he lacks the gift of Veteran. For a greater threat, increase his Traits, or add more gifts, or increase the number of allies.

Optional Complications

- Vonders knows his plan is doomed from the start. He's really being paid off by an Averlini Merchant Group to sabotage the planet and to throw it into chaos. He plans to leave at the first opportunity, with a huge cash payout ... but the Averlini may have decided the labor dispute will go on longer if Vonders is made into a martyr, so some of the Meritocrats are Elite Mercenaries in disguise.

- Vonders is actually a puppet of another Meritocrat. The second-in-command has set up Vonders to make a ridiculous claim to power, and then when he inevitably fails, the second comes in to put in more "moderate" reforms.
- Vonders isn't even human! Give him the gift of Cyber-Brain, and make him in the employ of the Colligitarch. Vonders has disabled the security systems of the planet so that the Apparat can stage an invasion.

Suggested rewards for resolving the adventure include "Hiking", "Insider with the Stenger Transit Authority", "Luck", "Resolve", and "Veteran". Spending time around so many machines could give the players high-tech or scrounging gifts.

SECOND CHANCE

A recurring supporting character gets killed, and her robot duplicate aids to recover her.

For the Host's Eyes Only

You can use this adventure anywhere. Dr. Harla Altherson's practice can be set up anywhere in the universe, but preferably in a place where you plan to have the characters visit her repeatedly. One suggestion is to have Dr. Altherson set up shop on a cavalcade that the players will use repeatedly.

Getting the Players Involved

When players get Injured or Sick, they may choose to gain healing progress from a doctor. You can use Doctor Harla Altherson as a recurring non-player character – the kind of doctor who doesn't ask a lot of questions.

We've also inserted possible complications into other adventures where the players could run into Dr. Altherson. You should probably only use one of those, maybe two, or the players will find the coincidences to be unlikely.

Doctor Altherson should always be friendly with the Player Characters, and offering to help them.

The Fateful Day

One day when our heroes go to visit the doctor, they find her door is left open.

Doctor Lillie's body is found, visibly and clearly dead. The death was messy and not very professional.

Offer the Player-Character the goal: "Solve Doctor Altherson's murder."

Optional Complications

- Did Doctor Altherson work alone, or did she have an assistant? Where did this assistant go? Were they in on the murder?
- Local police or militia could detain the Player-Characters, on suspicion of murder. Our heroes are innocent, and thus will probably be let go... unless they have Proscribed merchandise or are wanted for other offenses.

Doctor Altherson's Residence

Dr. Altherson lived somewhere else than her office – in an apartment, condo, house, or some other place appropriate to the setting. If the Player-Characters go there, they will find the place has been ransacked, but not every well.

Hidden in her residence is a secret lab! To find it requires a roll of Mind & Observation vs. 3... but it will need at least 3 successes. Encourage the players to use the "assist" rule to make one character the task-master and have others assist for the d8 bonuses – it might be the only way to beat the target.

Inside the secret lab are Proscribed drugs and equipment ... as well as high-tech engram-recording machines, and strangely enough, a deactivated Synth. Activating the Synth is pretty simple, and it speaks with Doctor Altherson's voice!

The Synth will explain that she is a copy of Altherson's memories, a week or so before her murder. Always eager to experiment, the Doctor was making a copy of her own mind in case something happened to her ... and it did! Now she seeks to solve her own murder.

Altherson Mark II knows enough about her own life to give a d8 assist bonus to anyone investigating the murder.

Optional Complications

- Doctor Altherson was murdered by a hitman from a local crime syndicate. Altherson had done emergency work on a rival gang member, and this was payback.
- Doctor Altherson was murdered by a gang of Organleggers. She had refused to provide them with body parts to sell on the black market. The players could track down the Organleggers and attack them – which will be dangerous, as everyone hates Organleggers and they will fight to the death. They could also try to infiltrate their gang to find out who the real murderer is.
- Doctor Altherson was murdered by a professor from the Concord. This professor wanted the doctor to hand over her brain-reading technology, but she refused. She had no idea the doctor would get violent. If the other Concord members find out that one of their own committed murder, they would probably sell him out to the Player-Characters. But infiltrating them will take some doing.
- Doctor Altherson was murdered by enemies of the Player-Characters! The original doctor had refused to sell them out, and she paid the ultimate price. How will our Players deal with this development?

Doctor Altherson was murdered by *another robot duplicate of herself!* A defective Synth is wandering around the streets, with an insane program and just enough medical knowledge to make them into a horrible serial killer. Altherson Mark II has no idea of this other robot's existence, and she may wonder about her own sanity, afterwards.

Suggested rewards for resolving the adventure include "First Aid", "Gossip", "Luck", "Resolve", and "Veteran". One player may decide to take "Ally: Altherson Mark II, Synth Physician" as a reward.

The Althersons

An unremarkable human in late middle age, Harla Altherson is a capable doctor with an interest in proscribed medical technology.

Dr. Harla Altherson		Minor
Physician		
Traits	Body d4, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Human d8, Physician d8	
Skills	Academics d8, Negotiation d8, Observation d8, Questioning 2d8, Tactics d8 <i>First Aid</i> – bonus d12 for emergency medicine	
Initiative	2d8	
Move	Stride 1, Dash 4, Scramble 2d8, Run 20	
Attack	Incapacitating Spray @ Near, 2d8 & Decay d8 , Subdual flat 0 #Poison #Smother	
Rally	2d8, d12 (from <i>Leadership</i>)	
First Aid	d12, 3d8 to stop bleeding (<i>First Aid</i> gift makes this an action)	
Stunt	Apply Medicine: d12, 3d8 vs. 3 – see page 93	
Soak	d4	
Loot	*Hospital Outfit (Medicine d8)	

Altherson Mark II is a Synth of different makes but of a standard humanoid model. An incomplete copy of the original doctor, she will focus on getting vengeance for her creator. After that, she may find herself without a purpose.

Altherson Mark II		Typical
Former Human		
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Synth d6, Physician d6	
Skills	Academics d6, Craft d6, Endurance d6, Observation d6, Questioning d6, Transport d6	
Initiative	2d6	
Move	Stride 1, Dash 3, Scramble 2d6, Run 15	
Attack	Incapacitating Spray @ Near, 2d8 & Decay d8 , Subdual flat 0 #Poison #Smother	
Rally	d6	
First Aid	d12, 2d8* to stop bleeding (<i>First Aid</i> gift makes this an action)	
Stunt	Apply Medicine: d12, 3d8* vs. 3 – see page 93	
Soak	d6 & Armor d6 <i>Cybernetic Body</i> – X to negate 1 point of damage, lose Airtight <i>Cybernetic Brain</i> – X to negate 1 point of damage, lose radio and sensors	
Loot	*Medic Outfit (Medicine d8)	