

DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES

BAD DEBTS



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02

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WITH SPECIAL RULES APPENDIX: GALAXY GUIDE

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BAD DEBTS

This booklet contains an adventure based around the exploits of four pre-generated, space faring characters. The full character sheets are available for free at www.triplecegames.com.

The heroes have no defined sex. Players can assign gender as they wish.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade. This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

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

In addition, you'll find a set of setting rules for free at our website as well. These are tailored specifically for *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes*.

BACKGROUND

The Shandama Brotherhood is a galaxy-wide criminal syndicate. If something is illegal, you can bet your last credit they're involved on some level. It recently came to their attention that the Galactic Trade Assembly was due to vote soon on a new taxation bill, one which would place heavier burden on the outer worlds. This in and of itself was of little concern to the Brotherhood, but the repercussions could affect their business. Higher taxation on imports means higher charges to the end user. That in turn reduces the amount of credits citizens have to spend on "luxuries," like gambling, drugs, and so on. It could also likely increase piracy and smuggling,

and that *would* affect the Brotherhood directly, as more pirates and smugglers mean more patrol ships sent out to combat them.

In order to help defeat the bill, they kidnapped the daughter of Ombudsman Jah Freelite, an influential Assembly member. Knowing at least two dozen Assembly members would follow his vote, a no vote from the Ombudsman would near guarantee the bill was defeated. A few hefty bribes and a little blackmail elsewhere would finalize the voting in the Brotherhood's favor.

What they didn't expect was for Freelite to hire troubleshooters. Still, fate was playing the Brotherhood a good hand, for they learned of the heroes' involvement. Pandit Morg, the Brotherhood's chief enforcer, personally vowed to capture and punish Captain Ani Blaze and return the *Blazing Star* to its rightful owners.

Using the Brotherhood's extensive network of spies and agents, he set in motion a plan to lure the heroes to the mining world of Kerexi IV, thanks to information he had circulated that the hostage was being held there. To aid his hunt, Morg hired a number of bounty hunters through their guild. Only a small number of the bounty hunters know they are working for the Brotherhood (not that the others would care).

Characters: 30 XP

CONVENTION PLAY

This adventure is ideal for convention play and for introducing new players to *Savage Worlds*. To help ensure the adventure fits into a standard convention time slot, the GM can implement some of the following changes:

- * Drop one of the Chase scenes from Act 2. While chases are fast and fun, you don't really need three in a row in a convention game, even if they all use different mechanics.

- * Skip the fight in Act 4, Scene 2. This gives you time to concentrate on meeting Pandit Morg's boss and the final encounter in the hangar bay.

ACT 1: ESCAPE THE MINES

The story begins in *media res*, having assumed the heroes took the job and began their investigation. The characters' background story is detailed below.

SCENE 1: CRYSTAL POWER

Two weeks ago you were hired by Ombudsman Jab Frellie, a powerful and influential politician in the Galactic Trade Assembly. His daughter, Carna, had been kidnapped by parties unknown. Threats were made that unless Ombudsman Frellie voted against an increase in taxation on trade routes to the poorer outer worlds, his daughter would end up as space debris. Unsure who to trust, for many Assembly members would lose profit if the bill was passed, Frellie hired a spacer crew unassociated with the Assembly—you.

To help ensure her security, Carna was fitted with a small microchip at birth. Your patron supplied its access code. If she is being held anywhere with life detectors, backing into the system should let you find her.

After checking in with several contacts you were finally pointed to the energy crystal mines on Kerexi IV. A thorough search of the mining complex has revealed no sign of the Ombudsman's daughter. It seems your snooping has not gone unnoticed, though. As you prepare to leave the mines, a squad of bounty hunters, perhaps rivals, and several burly miners decide to get physical.

The cavern the heroes are in measures 24" to a side. The walls are rough, and thus the cavern can be of irregular shape. A 2" wide tunnel leads from the center of the northern wall (the exit) and the southern wall (leads further into the mine). The characters begin anywhere within 3" of the southern tunnel mouth, having just explored the rest of the complex.

Dotted around the cavern are rock stalagmites. Each fills a 1" square and blocks line of sight. Place 20 of these at random places to break up the terrain. There are also a dozen pillars of orange crystal. Again, each occupies a 1" space and blocks line of sight. Finally, the GM should place markers to indicate mining equipment and construction robots. These play no part in the battle.

The crystal growths emit brilliant flashes of light and ultrasonic bursts when struck by an energy weapon. They are inanimate objects, and thus have Parry 2 (ranged combat is unaffected). Use the Innocent Bystander rule whenever a character is adjacent to one. Unlike other combat scenes, the rule applies to Fighting rolls as well. When a crystal is hit, place a Medium Burst Template

over the center of the crystal. Any characters under the template must make a Spirit roll or be temporarily disoriented. Blinded victims are treated as being Shaken from a nonphysical attack.

The miners and the bounty hunters already know of the crystals' special properties, but the characters do not. The hunters work in pairs—one shoots an energy crystal whenever a spacer moves near one while the other then tries to shoot the disoriented hero. The miners don't have firearms. They stand back from the crystals, then charge in when a hero is stunned. Characters standing away from the crystals are subject to regular attacks from the hunters and miners.

★ **Assistant Bounty Hunters (1 per hero):** See page 14. Their blasters are set to stun (nonlethal damage).

★ **Corrupt Miners (1 per hero):** Treat as Shandama Brotherhood goons (see page 14) except they are armed with two-handed, energy-tipped mining tools (Str+d6).

WHO HIRED YOU?

Captured miners and hunters can be interrogated. No die roll is required, as neither party knows who hired them and thus is not revealing any great secret. The hunters received word via the Bounty Hunter Guild that the heroes would be in the caves. The job offered 5,000 credits alive and 3,000 dead.

The miners' story is only slightly different. A stranger, a member of a reptilian species, arrived at the mine two days ago. He paid each miner 100 credits upfront and promised a further 500 credits apiece if they helped the bounty hunters who would soon arrive at the mine.

SCENE 2: CLOSE THE BLAST DOORS!

After dealing with the bounty hunters, the characters can continue toward the surface. While maneuvering down a long tunnel, an explosion is heard behind them. Have each hero make a Common Knowledge roll. With success they recognize the sound as a plasma charge, sometimes used in mining but more commonly a high-yield military weapon. On a raise, they know the plasma blast has the potential to ignite the scraps of energy crystals in the mine walls. (The plasma charge was on a timer. It was intended to ensure the heroes died in the mine, but the timing was slightly off.)

As if for added emphasis, the characters spy a swirling wall of blue-white plasma fire roaring up the shaft toward the heroes, igniting the crystals in the tunnel as it does. Worse still, heat detectors along the tunnel have triggered—heavy blast doors are beginning to seal shut!

This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules. Place ten markers on the tabletop to represent the tunnel. Place a small token between the third and fourth markers, the sixth and seventh markers, and after the tenth marker—these indicate blast doors. Heroes cannot land on these tokens. The chase is extremely abstract. The range incre-

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ments don't represent any particular measurement—they are merely an indication of relative position.

Movement: Each round, the heroes make an Agility roll to move along the markers. The spacers don't begin on the range markers unless they scored a raise on their Common Knowledge roll—this allowed them a head start. Rather, their first success moves them onto the first marker.

When they pass beyond the final marker, they escape. Characters can Push as normal for extra distance. The plasma fire has an Agility die of d10, but doesn't roll to move along the track until the second round begins. The fire can't Push. Success moves the inferno one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the plasma fire.

If the fire ends up on the same marker as a hero or moves ahead of him, the spacer suffers damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round. Initially this is 2d10, but it can be reduced (see below). This rule exists to make the action cinematic—not reduce the heroes to a hissing mass of dissolved flesh. A character who becomes Incapacitated while within the fire is subjected to a Finishing Move at the end of the next round unless he is dragged clear of the plasma. This requires a comrade to have enough movement to venture onto the same marker *and* move ahead of the fire by the end of the round.

Blast Doors: At the end of the fourth round, the first blast door (between range increments three and four) slams shut. The second blast door seals shut at the end of the sixth round, and the final blast at the end of the ninth round. Neither the heroes nor the plasma can move through a closed blast door—movement ends at the range marker before the door. Opening a blast door from either side requires either a Repair roll at -2 or a Lockpicking roll as an action by a character adjacent to the door's token.

Should the plasma reach a closed blast door, it must halt its movement. At the start of the next round it melts through the door, allowing unimpaired movement on the following round. For instance, the second blast door closes at the end of round four, before the plasma reaches it. The plasma reaches the door on round five and must stop. On round six it may continue its movement.

If the plasma passes through a door *before* it seals, the door slams shut on schedule, holding back most of the blaze. The plasma cloud which passed through the door has been reduced in size and is now slightly less dangerous. The first time this happens, the fire's damage is reduced to 2d8. The second time, damage is lowered to just 2d6. The final blast door holds long enough for fire suppressant foam to dampen the fire. The corridor is saturated in foam at the *end* of round ten, extinguishing the fire. Of course, this assumes no one opens a blast door back along the corridor in the meantime. Should that occur, the fire retains its previous damage dice.

At first, it may seem this system door slightly favors the plasma, in that it can eat through a blast door extremely quickly. However, it also means any hero trapped on the same side of the door as the plasma won't be in the in-

ferno for more than a single round before being able to make an Agility roll.

Example: *The heroes wisely run away! Ani ends the second round on the second marker (having rolled a raise on his Agility die). Next round, the second since the scene began, the plasma enters play. Ani wins the initiative but fails his Agility roll, gaining no real distance. The fire rolls a 9, and moves two positions, bringing it level with Ani. He suffers 2d10 damage when the round ends. Next round, the plasma draws a higher action card but rolls a failure. Ani scores a raise! He rushes ahead of the white hot maelstrom, emerging from the inferno with his clothes smoking. Since he's ahead of the plasma at the end of the round, he takes no damage.*

ACT 2: AVANTI TO DANTE

Once outside the mine, the heroes see a hover raft zipping away into the crystal forest that covers much of the planet's surface. On the back are four bounty hunters. They fire a salvo of shots, but don't hit anything (they do not have Steady Hands). The heroes arrived at the mine on hover bikes. These are still parked outside and have not been tampered with.

SCENE 1: THE CRYSTAL MAZE

Mounting a bike as either the driver or passenger requires an action. A hero may try to vault on by making an Agility roll. However, failure means the character made a hash of it and cannot get aboard this round. It is likely this means the vehicle is going nowhere fast on the first round.

Run this scene using the Chase rules. Both types of vehicle use Piloting. The bounty hunters begin three Range Increments ahead of the heroes. Each Range Increment equates to 10". The heroes' hover bikes are faster than the hover raft, and so they have +1 to Piloting rolls. Don't use the regular Obstacles rules during this chase. Instead, whenever the pilot (and only the pilot) of a vehicle draws a Club, check the table below. The modifier in parentheses affects his Piloting roll for the round.

The hover raft is piloted by a bounty hunter. He focuses purely on driving. His passengers are on the rear cargo platform, crouching behind a wall of metal boxes. This provides Medium Cover (-2). If the heroes score a raise when using the Parallel maneuver they have maneuvered into a position where the crates no longer provide protection. Should the heroes pull ahead, the hunters are forced to stand in order to see them. This negates their Cover.

The pilot is impossible to hit if the attackers are behind the raft. He gains Medium Cover against attackers on the same Range Increment or who are ahead of the raft. Again, a raise with the Parallel maneuver negates this protection.

★ **Seasoned Bounty Hunter (1):** See page 13.
 ★ **Assistant Bounty Hunters (1 per hero):** See page 14. One of these is the pilot.

HOVER BIKE

Hover bikes are small but fast. On many worlds they are fitted with speed-limiters which kick in automatically in areas of habitation, thus helping to reduce messy accidents. They have no weapons, but the pilot and his passenger may use personal firearms.

Acc/Top Speed: 25/100; **Toughness:** 10 (1); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+1

Notes: Max ceiling 2"

HOVER RAFT

Hover rafts are small cargo vehicles. Behind the single seat cockpit are two cramped passenger bays, each capable of holding two Size 0 life forms. Further back is a cargo platform, surrounded on two sides by adjustable railing. A drop down railing at the rear allows for loading and unloading. Powerful anti-gravity stabilizers aid in the handling of the raft.

Acc/Top Speed: 20/60; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** +1; **Crew:** 1+4

Notes: Max height 2"

OBSTACLES

Unless otherwise stated, any collisions occur with stationary heavy objects. Calculate collision damage based on half the vehicle's Top Speed only.

Deuce (-4) Engine Failure: Harmonic resonance causes a crystal to emit a powerful burst of energy, which shorts the vehicle's engine. A failed Piloting roll means the vehicle automatically goes Out of Control as the engine cuts out.

Three (-2) Left or Right?: The path through the crystals suddenly splits, forcing the pilot to make a choice. Failure means the pilot failed to decide in time and rammed into a crystal pillar.

Four (0/-2) Blinded: Sunlight striking the crystals produces a brilliant flash of light, momentarily blinding the pilot. He may either throttle back and play it safe or push forward into the dazzling light. Unless a hero is within three Range Increments, the bounty hunters throttle back and play it safe.



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Pushing forward incurs no penalty, but a failed Piloting roll leads to a collision. Throttling back gives a -2 penalty, but failure has no specific effect other than the vehicle not moving as far this round.

Five (-2) Resonance: The drone of the engines builds up harmonic resonance in nearby crystals, which in turn produce a powerful distortion field that screws up the hover vehicle's electrics. The pilot has no choice but to throttle back for a while. There is no specific effect for a failure—the penalty merely represents a greatly reduced speed this round.

Six (-2) Narrow Gap: The hover vehicle plows through a very narrow gap. A failure results in a collision with a soft obstacle. This represents the hover vehicle scraping along the crystals, rather than a head-on smash.

Seven (-2) Reflection: A sheet of ultra-polished crystals acts like a mirror, confusing the driver. A failed roll means he takes the wrong path. The lead vehicle swerves to avoid what it thinks is a collision with another vehicle, while tailing vehicles are convinced their quarry has veered off. The vehicle loses one Range Increment due to the confusion.

Eight (-2) Bird Strike: A flock of winged creatures, startled by the roar of the engines, lifts off directly in front of the vehicle. A failed roll leads to a collision with a soft obstacle.

Nine (-2) Tall Columns: A maze of towering crystals forces the pilot to zigzag. Failure means the pilot is unable to line up his vehicle, preventing the passengers from sighting any target this round. This works both ways—no one can see the vehicle to fire at it.

Ten (-1) Tight Turn: The pilot is required to take a tight turn. Failure leads to a collision.

Jack (-1) Energy Crystals: A growth of crystals reacts to the hover vehicle's engine and shatters into a million

razor sharp shards. A failed Piloting roll causes 3d6 damage to the vehicle.

Queen (-1) Scraping Sound: The crystal growths are razor sharp and perfectly aligned to the base of the vehicle. A failed Piloting roll causes a collision with a soft obstacle.

King (0/-2) Ramp: A crystal column has collapsed, forming a makeshift ramp. Ask the driver whether he wants to take the ramp at normal or full speed. The hunters take to the skies only if the characters are within two Range Increments or if they are now chasing the characters.

Taking the ramp at normal speed gives no penalty to the Piloting roll, and no special result if it fails.

Hitting the ramp at speed, though, has a -2 penalty. With success, the vehicle moves ahead an extra Range Increment, as if the driver Pushed. This stacks with the Push maneuver (so do the penalties), for a possible increase of five Range Increments this round. On a failure, the vehicle automatically goes Out of Control when it resumes its normal flight.

Ace (-2/-4) Through or Around?: A huge crystal looms in front of the vehicle. Weathering has produced a neat hole straight through the center, but it's a small gap. The pilot must decide whether he wants to try and fly through the hole or avoid the massive crystal.

Taking the hole gives a -2 penalty, but a successful Driving roll moves the characters an extra Range Increment, as if the driver Pushed. This stacks with the Push maneuver (so do the penalties), for a possible increase of five Range Increments this round. Failure means the vehicle suffers a collision.

Flying around the obstacle gives a -4 penalty. Any failure simply results in making no ground due to the lengthy detour.

The thugs take the shortcut through the crystal only

THE WHAT IS BROKEN?

When a ship suffers a Critical Hit the obvious thing to do is revert to game mechanic speak ("It's an Engine hit"). For those of you who want a little more fun, you can use the tables below to make up random parts of the ship which might suffer damage or a malfunction. Players can also have fun throwing words into the game whenever they feel the need for some pseudo-scientific mumbo jumbo.

All you have to do is roll 3d10 and put the words together. For example, a roll of 7, 4, and 9 means the lateral conversion inhibitor is on the blink.

Die	First d10	Second d10	Third d10
1	Power/Energy	Transfer	Beam
2	Neutrino	Field	Circuit
3	Tachyon	Shield	Coupling
4	Hyperdrive	Conversion	Grid
5	Primary/Main	Flux	Stabilizer
6	Secondary/Backup	Sensor	Coil
7	Lateral	Reaction	Chamber
8	Thermal	Imaging	Vent
9	Ion	Polarizing	Inhibitor
10	Graviton	Containment	Inducer

if the characters are within one Range Increment. Otherwise, they fly around the blockage, figuring dead men don't collect bounties.

WHERE'S THE GIRL?

These bounty hunters were hired by Pandit Morg to act as backup in case the other hired help failed. They know the girl was here, but she was removed shortly before the characters turned up. She was being taken to the refinery above Dante III. In the event the bounty hunters are killed, the information can be found in a mangled wrist computer (no roll required to retrieve the data).

Morg likes to cover all his bases. The best possible situation for Morg involves the heroes being dragged back alive by the bounty hunters. His bosses are very keen the characters suffer a slow death. Having the heroes die before that would be unfortunate, but Morg could live with the "failure." Should both his plans on Kerexi IV fail, Morg has a trap set for the troublesome spacers on Dante III.

SCENE 2: SHEER MAGNETISM

Once back at the starport, the characters can reach their ship without interruption and blast off into space.

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

The Shandama Brotherhood has a lot of influence. Even those officials not directly in its pocket usually can be swayed for a stack of credits. Morg has arranged for the official in charge of one battery of rail guns to "accidentally" plug in the wrong coordinates. As soon as the blazing star nears the upper atmosphere, the cargo pods are launched—directly into their flight path! Yes, the power required to launch a pod fast enough to catch up with a ship would be immense, but this is space pulp. Think how cool it would look on the big screen and ignore the physics.

The earliest hyperspace entry point takes several minutes to reach. During this time, the ship is bombarded with empty cargo pods. Furthermore, Morg has arranged for a pair of bounty hunters in fighters to give chase.

Each round the pilot of *Blazing Star* draws a Club as his action card, check the table below. The pilot must make a Piloting roll, with modifiers applying based on the card value. This counts as a free action. If the ship's shields are set to *deflect*, the penalty normally imposed on attacker's roll is applied as a positive modifier to the pilot's Piloting roll.

The bounty hunters are in contact with the gun bat-

tery and so receive information on each pod's trajectory in advance. They don't suffer a chance of being struck.

Run this scene as a Chase with no Obstacles (that's handled by the pods). The characters begin three Range Increments ahead of the characters, and each Increment equates to 5SU. In order to reach the hyperspace jump point, the *Blazing Star* has to travel a total of 15 Range Increments. Once they reach this point, any hero can make a Piloting roll as an action to program the hyperspace coordinates. The fighters are faster than the freighter, so the pilots have +1 to Piloting rolls.

Card	Mod	Damage
Deuce	-6	3d6, AP 4, HW
3-5	-4	4d6, AP 4, HW
6-10	-2	4d6, AP 4, HW
Jack-Queen	-1	5d6, AP 4, HW
King-Ace	0	6d6, AP 4, HW

FIGHTERS

Fighters are poorly armed and armored, but have great maneuverability. The ones presented here are the most basic model on the market.

Top Speed: 8; **Toughness:** 14 (4); **Handling:** +1; **Shields Pods:** 1; **Crew:** 1

Abilities: Piloting d8, Shields d6, Shooting d8

Notes: 1 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Fixed Weapon, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

Weapons:

- * 1 x forward-firing laser (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)
- * 1 x missile turret (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 4d8; ROF 1; AP 8, HW), no reloads

ACT 3: DANTE STATION

During the hyperspace trip, allow each hero an Investigation or Streetwise roll to see what they know about Dante III.

INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Success: Dante III is a gas giant. Orbiting above the upper atmosphere is Dante Station, a vast refinery. Tankers dive into the planet's atmosphere and scoop up the toxic gases. These are then returned to the station for refining into usable products before being shipped off to industrial worlds.

Raise: The products of Dante Station are a vital part of several major worlds' industrial processes. As such, a pact was signed ensuring the station would remain neutral in galactic politics. It is governed by the Board, a collection of trade advisors from the various core worlds it serves and the heads of the various guilds working aboard the station.

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STREETWISE RESULTS

Success: Dante Station is the only colony in the Dante system. A vast refinery, it hovers above the planet's atmosphere. Openly declared a neutral system, and recognized as such by several major worlds, Dante is a haven for pirates and smugglers. There is a long-standing rule that so long as the pirates don't touch any of the station's shipping, they won't be harassed on Dante Station.

Raise: The gases the station produces are vital components in hyperspace coolant and blasters. A side product created during the process is known as Warp, a hallucinogenic drug. Banned in every star system for a thousand light years, Warp smuggling is a profitable business. Unfortunately, its transportation is controlled by the Shandama Brotherhood.

SCENE 1: INFORMATION GATHERING

On entering the Dante system, the ship is contacted by Dante Station's traffic control tower. The characters are asked to identify their ship, planetary affiliation (if any), and reasons for visiting. Assuming the answers aren't too fanciful, the ship is guided to a landing platform protected by an energy shield (which holds the atmosphere in). Following a routine customs check, the spacers are free to wander Dante Station.

INVESTIGATION

The characters know they are looking for a girl and that she arrived relatively recently. An Investigation roll made while using one of the public computer terminals reveals a shuttle arrived from Kerexi IV only a few hours ago. The passenger manifest lists one reptilian male, one female human, and four other male aliens associated with the Bounty Hunter's Guild. She has been booked into Room 1138 in the Low Side Hotel. A Streetwise roll reveals the same information.

Another option is to hack into the public terminal, gain a link through to the sensor arrays, and plug in the girl's microchip identification tag. This requires an Investigation roll at -4. Failures can be retried, but three failed rolls or a single critical failure activates security programs, which seal off the sensor arrays from intruders. Success locates the chip's signal—she's somewhere in Refinery Room #94. According to the life sensors, she's alone. Morg has actually discovered the chip. He has tampered with the sensors to make it look like Carna is on the station.

ROOM 1138

Knocking on the door of Room 1138 elicits no response. Cracking the door requires a Lockpicking roll. Alternately, a Persuasion roll (+2 if a good cover story is roleplayed or a \$10 bribe is paid) convinces a passing hotel employee to open the door.

Room 1138 is empty of life except for a single housecleaning droid, AA-23. The barrel-shaped droid has multiple arms, each tipped with a statically charged dust cloth or can of cleaning polish. The little robot is humming tunelessly while it goes about its routine of spraying and wiping.

AA-23 responds to the question of whether it has seen Carna with a blunt, *"I am unauthorized to reveal the whereabouts of guests."* It then mimics a human cough. Yes, AA-23 is after a bribe. It doesn't want money, for which it has no use. Instead, it asks to be given a token for an oil bath. Oil baths are the robot equivalent of a hot soak and massage in one. Facilities like this can be found in most every hotel which caters to rich clients and their personal droids. As a rule, the hotel forbids its robot workers from using the facility. However, it is an automated process, and so long as a valid token is inserted any robot can have a relaxing soak. The cost of an oil bath is \$5.

Once it receives its token, AA-23 informs the spacers of the following.

"The female occupant of this room is not present, nor is she likely to be. She and a reptilian male, identified by the female as Pandit Morg, visited only briefly. I accidentally overheard some of their conversation, not that I snoop on guests, you understand. Mr. Morg was taking her to Refinery Room #94, where she would be held until her father cast his vote. Apparently, Mr. Morg only booked this room so he could plant a surveillance device to warn him of any persons searching for the human female. I guess that would be you."

Heroes who renege on their offer to pay AA-23 a token will regret their decision. The little droid has contacts throughout the station and is especially friendly with several maintenance robots. When the heroes return to their ship, they find the interior painted vomit yellow. Worse, the maintenance droids have spray painted slanderous messages in luminous orange in the interior of the ship's staterooms.

Any character connected to the Shandama Brotherhood (ex-criminal, hunted by them, and such like) may make a Common Knowledge roll. Success means they know Pandit Morg is the Brotherhood's chief enforcer. He doesn't like blasters, but instead uses a laser sword. On a raise, they know he is a psionist.

SCENE 2: VENTING

Hissing pipes and wisps of yellow and ochre smoke fill the cavernous room. Machinery and lengths of pipe litter the floor. At the far end stands a reptilian clad in light armor. Beside him, imprisoned behind a forcefield, is a young human female. Further away, a bounty hunter operates a control panel of some sort. A shimmering blue forcefield

suddenly springs up around the desk. A number of other bounty hunters step out from behind pipes, their blaster pistols aimed in your direction.

"I wondered when you'd get here," smirks the reptilian. "I am Pandit Morg, chief enforcer of the Shandama Brotherhood. And you," he gestures with a cylindrical object, "are responsible for the theft of a starship from my employers. They have given you plentiful opportunities to return their vessel, but now firm action must be taken." With that, a golden beam emerges from the cylinder clutched in his hands—he has a laser sword, a weapon banned in every star system in the galaxy.

"Take them alive," Morg roars. "The bosses want them tortured before they die!"

Important: Whatever happens, Morg cannot die in this scene.

The room measures 30" long and 24" wide. Numerous doors line the long walls. Low pipes (difficult ground), machinery, and other assorted obstacles should be placed to break up the battlefield and to provide cover. A dozen or more vent pipes protrude from the long walls as well. There are three each side. From the southeast corner, position the first one 6" along the east wall, the next one 12", and the final one 18". On the west wall the pipes are located at 8", 16", and 24".

The forcefield-shielded desk is 2" long and 1" wide. It stands anywhere within 5" of the rear wall. The forcefield (detailed below) covers the front and both flanks. The forcefield surrounding the girl is against the back wall, opposite to where the heroes enter.

Carna isn't what she appears to be. She is actually a very expensive hologram projection, set up to lure the heroes into the trap. The real Carna is a long way from here. A character who moves adjacent to the forcefield immediately recognizes the deception. Otherwise, detecting the illusion for what it is requires a Notice roll as an action.

Pandit Morg is standing adjacent to the hologram. One bounty hunter is at a control panel. The others are spread out, but all within 8" of Pandit Morg. All the hunters have their weapons set on stun.

The bounty hunter operating the control panel is protected by a low-grade forcefield. This has Toughness 10. If Shaken, it suffers a temporary overload and drops until the end of the current round. When it takes a wound, the forcefield collapses. The bounty hunter can try to reboot it, but this requires a Knowledge (Shields) roll at -2 (he doesn't know how the buttons work).

Toxic Gas: At the start of each round, after initiative cards are dealt but before any actions are taken, the GM must roll a d6. The result indicates which of the six vent ports opens and releases a cloud of corrosive gas.

Place a Small Burst Template adjacent to the appropriate vent, and then roll 2d6. Move the template this

many inches in a straight line directly away from the vent. Gas clouds already in play use the same 2d6 roll as new clouds. They move in the direction they moved on previous rounds. When a cloud strikes a wall or moves off the edge of the battlefield, remove it from play. Any creature caught under the template, whether because it moved over them or because the character moved into the gas, suffers 2d6 damage from a Wild Card source.

Attacks into, out of, or through the clouds suffer a -2 penalty per cloud. So, firing through two clouds incurs a -4 penalty.

Morg's Tactics: Morg begins by casting *deflection* as he walks toward the heroes. He then fires off *stun* at the largest group of heroes. Next he invokes *quickness*. He then heads into melee, pausing only to renew his *deflection* power.

Morg's Plan: Pandit Morg isn't stupid. He knows the heroes are quite capable of defeating his minions, but he wants to lure them into his trap before springing it closed. Once he has taken two wounds or when the characters realize Carna is a hologram, Morg moves behind the forcefield around the control desk (assuming it is still in operation). He then calls in reinforcements. The doors along the sides of the chamber open to reveal two dozen seasoned bounty hunters. The reptilian enforcer gives the spacers a simple choice—surrender or die where they stand (he's lying, but the players shouldn't know that).

Remind the players, if necessary, that being captured is part of the genre. It isn't a defeat; it's part of the plot. And don't forget to remind them they get a benny for free and won't have to nurse grievous wounds for the rest of the adventure. Of course, the heroes may choose to surrender before Morg's demand—give them a benny each.

Should the heroes insist on fighting it out, Morg escapes using the Recurring Villains rule, leaving his men to deal with the characters. All their weapons are set to stun. In the event the heroes somehow take down 24 Henchmen, just call in another batch. Eventually they will fall. Even if they surrender, once the seasoned hunters are forced to open fire no free benny is earned—players can't wait to see how things turn out before surrendering.

★ **Pandit Morg:** See page 13.

★ **Assistant Bounty Hunters (2 + 1 per hero):** See page 14.

★ **Seasoned Bounty Hunters (24):** See page 13. These are only called upon to force the characters to surrender.

MORG GLOATS

"Puny mammals," he scoffs. "Did you think the Shandama Brotherhood would allow your crimes to go unpunished? The Tai-Pan (Great Boss) whose ship you stole is very keen to meet you."

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"Since you were hired to track down Ombudsman Freelite's daughter, I think it only fitting you at least get to see her before you die. You would never have found her. The Shandama Brotherhood has a number of battle cruisers in its fleet. These jump from system to system to prevent the authorities from tracking them and destroying them. The girl is quiet safe aboard one of these, the Double Cross. So long as her father does as he is asked, she'll be returned unharmed. Well, unharmed is such a relative word, isn't it?"

ACT 4: THE DOUBLE-CROSS

After being captured, the spacers are manacled, drugged, and flown to the *Double Cross*. The huge cruiser sits in low orbit over an uninhabited world, far from prying eyes. They are then led through the ship to see its commander, a senior member of Shandama Brotherhood.

SCENE 1: THE THRONE ROOM

The door opens into a large, circular chamber. Arrayed along the upper half of the circle are large windows. Arranged in a semi-circle before them, following the curve of the room, are banks of terminals and workstations. Muscular, green-skinned aliens, seemingly oblivious to your presence, are punching buttons. While you look around, one of your escorts unceremoniously drops your gear near the door.

The center is dominated by a raised dais, atop which stands what can only be described as a throne. Its tall back rises almost five feet, completely concealing who or what is seated on it. Standing beside the throne, facing the door, laser sword in hand, is Pandit Morg. He scowls as you enter, but says nothing. Slowly the throne turns, revealing its occupant—a small, blue-furred alien with enormous ears and wide, sorrowful eyes. Were it not for knowing that this little alien plays a major part in shaping the galaxy, he would be comical.

A door halfway around the curve of the room opens. In step two guards. Flanked between them is a young human female—Carna Freelite. She looks none the worse for her captivity, and holds her head high.

"Ah, Captain Blaze and her intrepid crew," the blue-furred alien sighs. "How good of you to come back into the fold one last time. I am Tai-Pan Vlastil Panora. Pandit Morg has told me of your

interest in the girl child of Jab Freelite, but right now that doesn't concern me. I want you to explain to me why you thought you should steal one of our ships and how exactly you thought you'd get away with it. Your lives may depend on your answer."

Give the characters chance to explain their actions. No specifics are given in the pre-generated characters' background stories about how and why the *Blazing Star* was stolen, so there's no canonical answer. Let the characters go with whatever they feel like. It won't make any difference in the end, but they should have fun trying to dig themselves out of a hole.

"Is that it? After all this time, that is your answer? I am appalled at your lack of imagination. Morg, take them to the airlock and..."

"Sir," snarls one of the green-skinned aliens, "proximity sensors detect incoming missiles fired from a Galactic Enforcement Agency cruiser. Impact in five seconds."

"WHAT?" shrills Panora. "Why didn't you alert me sooner?"

"You were talking, sir," the brute replies. "You don't like to be disturbed when you're..."

"Battle stations!" Panora screams, "Sound proximity alarms! Brace for impact! And someone kill these spacers!"

The battle cruiser shudders violently as the first missiles rip into the superstructure. Have everyone except Panora make an Agility roll to avoid falling prone. This is the cue for the characters to make their escape bid.

The throne room is circular and measures 18" across. Windows dominate the top half of the chamber. The computer terminals are 1" wide and follow a semi-circular arc 2" from the huge windows. Place a few other computer terminals around the room to break up the empty spaces. The throne, which is 1" square, sits in the center of the room. Carna and her two guards begin near the start of the terminals, on the left side of the room.

Vlastil Panora has no stats except the Improved Level Headed and Quick Edges. Everything else is irrelevant—no amount of damage will kill him and he takes no offensive action against the spacers. Despite his position in the Shandama Brotherhood, Panora is not the heroes' nemesis. That honor falls to Pandit Morg.

Only the characters' hands are manacled. Escaping requires an Agility or Strength roll at -2 as an action. Until a character escapes, he has a -2 penalty when using any weapons. Once free, a hero can liberate an adjacent comrade as an action (no die roll required).

On the first round, Panora activates a button on his throne. The chair sinks rapidly into the floor, straight

into an emergency, hyperspace-capable escape pod. Morg fights until he takes a single wound. He then uses the Recurring Villain rule to escape through one of the doors. This leads to an elevator, which takes Morg to the hangar bay. As he departs, he destroys the elevator's control panel, rendering it useless. Don't worry, a final showdown is looming. None of the hunters pay much attention to Carna—they focus on the adventurers.

The green-skinned brutes don't play a part in the fight. They just run around in a panic. The two seasoned bounty hunters are flanking Carna. The assistant hunters are standing behind the heroes.

At the start of each round, after action cards are dealt but before any actions are taken, the GM must draw a card from the action deck. If it's a red suit or a Joker, ignore it. A black card means everyone must make an Agility roll or fall prone as more missiles slam into the ship. The roll is modified based on the card value, as shown below.

Card	Modifier
Deuce	-6
3-5	-4
6-10	-2
Jack-Queen	-1
King-Ace	0

★ **Carna Frellie:** See page 14.

★ **Pandit Morg:** See page 13. Morg has recovered one wound from his previous encounter with the heroes.

★ **Seasoned Bounty Hunters (2):** See page 13.

★ **Assistant Bounty Hunters (1 per hero):** See page 14.

SCENE 2: STOP FUELLING AROUND

Escaping the throne room, the heroes quickly locate a computer terminal which can display the layout of the ship. Fate has played the heroes a bad hand—the *Blazing Star* ship is located at the other end of the cruiser. They need to make their way through the upper deck before they reach the elevators to the lower hangar bay. If the party has a second ship, a quick check at the computer terminal reveals it is no longer onboard (someone used it to escape).

Before long, they enter a section of ship patrolled by Urk goons. Too stupid to figure out what is going on, they simply attack strangers on sight to relieve some of the boredom brought on by patrolling the ship.

The section of ship measures 24" to a side. Break up the terrain with walls, doors, furnishings, and so on. If you have any map sheets from a well-known sci-fi collectible miniatures game, feel free to use one of those. Movement over or through any obstacle deemed passable (so a hero can clamber over a crate or computer terminal but cannot walk through a wall) is treated as difficult

ground. Obstacles can be used as Cover (assume all have Armor +4). The walls and doors are impenetrable, and block line of sight.

Any character adjacent to a door can open or close it as an action. *Telekinesis* can be used to open or close a door in line of site, but it still requires an action.

The entire floor is awash with highly-explosive starship fuel. Have the heroes make Common Knowledge rolls. Apply a +2 bonus if their background indicates a strong association with starships (like being a pilot or engineer). With success, they know using energy weapons could trigger a plasma explosion. The goons, being little more than dumb brutes, all fail their roll.

Any character using an energy weapon, whether in melee or at range, causes an immediate explosion if his attack die comes up 1 (regardless of Wild Die). A successful Wild Die indicates the attack hit home at the same time the explosion commenced. This fills a Large Burst Template centered on the *attacker*. Everyone under the template suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra. The goons only switch to punching the heroes when one of their number triggers an explosion.

★ **Carna Frellie:** See page 14.

★ **Brotherhood Goons (1 per hero):** See page 14.

SCENE 3: GRAVITY SUCKS

Following the corridor to a number of elevators, the characters whizz down through the ship to the docking bay. The hangar bay measures 36" long by 30" wide. The entire length of the west wall is a forcefield. This allows ships to pass through but prevents air (and people) from escaping into space.

Terrain: The characters begin in the center of the south wall. The entrance to their ship is in the center of the north wall. Mark this with a token of some sort. Once a character reaches the token he enters the ship. Starting on the next round he can assume his flight position. Escaping the doomed ship requires a Piloting roll as an action. With success, the ship blasts through the hangar bay forcefield into the darkness of space. (Note: The *Blazing Star's* laser turret functions perfectly well while the ship is landed, and is thus a viable asset in the battle. The missiles, however, are designed for space combat, and won't fire unless they lock onto a starship.)

Between the heroes and their goal are a number of 1" square markers (20 is a good number) to represent small crates, pieces of machinery, maintenance robots, and so on. There are also larger crates, control desks, machines, and such like. These should be marked by 2" or 3" square markers (10 of each). All can be used as Cover (Armor +6). The GM should also place two 3" wide by 5" long markers, representing miscellaneous small craft.

Movement through squares occupied by obstacles is difficult ground.

The Enemy: A number of bounty hunters are located between the characters and their ship. They begin no

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Sinking Feeling:

As if the gravity fluctuations and bounty hunters aren't trouble enough, the ship is slowly slipping into the planet's gravity well. Once it hits the atmosphere, it will burn up in a spectacular fireball. Place 20 markers in plain view of the players. Remove one marker at the end of each round. When the last one is gone, the ship burns up, killing everyone aboard.

Example: *Dagda is poorly placed when a gravitational shift occurs. He flies 1d4" south and slams into*

a wall. He is Shaken. He also has to move 1" west, but his striking the wall prevents that. Moments later Dagda is slammed into by an unsecured crate, suffering another Shaken result. Dagda now has a nonlethal wound, which he tries to Soak.

closer than 24" to the heroes. Even the assistant hunters have enough common sense to make use of Cover. Their tactic is to move behind Cover as quickly as possible, then step out, fire at any visible hero, and duck back behind Cover. The only ways to target them is either to move to a position where they have no Cover or go on Hold and try to interrupt them when they appear.

Gravity Fluctuations: The bombardment and plasma fire has severely damaged the ship's artificial gravity generator. At random intervals, the heroes, along with all 1" square obstacles not secured to the deck, are sent flying across the room.

At the start of each round, after action cards are dealt but before any actions are taken, the GM must draw a card from the action deck. If it's a red suit or a Joker, ignore it—the gravitational instability is momentarily rectified. A black card means the GM must check the value on the Gravitational Effects Table below. Roll once for the distant moved—move the same distance.

Each character must make an Agility (–2) roll. Roll for Extras individually to reduce the possibility of them all being affected every time a gravitational shift occurs. Heroes with Acrobat gain a +2 bonus to their roll. Inanimate objects (not bolted down) occupying a single square are subjected to the same gravitational effects as characters. Larger objects remain in place.

All forced movement occurs immediately, before any actions are taken in the round. A character who moves 1" or more and hits an immobile, solid object, like a wall, or is struck by a shifting object, is automatically Shaken and ends his forced movement immediately. If a hero hits another character, both must make Vigor rolls to avoid being Shaken. These are physical effects, and thus successive Shaken results can cause wounds, but the damage is non-lethal.

GRAVITATIONAL EFFECT TABLE

Card	Movement
Deuce	The ship enters a brief spell of zero-gravity. All movement rates are halved (round down).
3	Characters move 1d4 squares south and 1 square west.
4	Characters move 1d4 squares south and 1 square east.
5	Characters move 1d4 squares north and 1 square west.
6	Characters move 1d4 squares north and 1 square east.
7	Characters move 1d4 squares west and 1 square north.
8	Characters move 1d4 squares west and 1 square south.
9	Characters move 1d4 squares east and 1 square north.
10	Characters move 1d4 squares east and 1 square south.
Jack	Characters move 1d4 squares north and 2 squares east
Queen	Characters move 1d4 squares north and 2 squares west
King	Characters move 1d4 squares south and 2 squares east
Ace	Characters move 1d4 squares south and 2 squares west

- ★ **Carna Freemie:** See page 14.
- ★ **Pandit Morg:** See page 13. Morg suffers whatever wounds he took in the throne room encounter.
- ★ **Seasoned Bounty Hunters (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 13.
- ★ **Assistant Bounty Hunters (1 per hero):** See page 14.

AFTERMATH

Outside the doomed cruiser are a small cruiser and three destroyers, all marked with the emblem of the Galactic Enforcement Agency, the nearest thing to the police in *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes*. They hail the heroes and demand they pull over—Ombudsman Jah Freele wishes to speak with them.

Assuming the characters comply, Freele flies over in a shuttle and docks with the *Blazing Star*. He thanks the heroes for rescuing his daughter, but admits he had the party tailed in case they thought of holding Carna hostage. His agent reported the characters' hyperspace jump here, an out of the way system, and Freele alerted the authorities, who were only too keen to assist in weakening the Brotherhood. Freele pays the spacers the promised fee—20,000 credits in cargo bonds—and then departs with his daughter.

THE CAST



PANDIT MORG

Pandit Morg is a senior enforcer for the Shandama Brotherhood. A skilled swordsman and psion, his abilities make him a deadly foe. Morg is a Laza, a reptilian species widely regarded as being highly untrustworthy. His flickering tongue constantly sniffs the air around him, while his swiftly moving eyes catch every movement.

Note that Morg's laser sword isn't as powerful as the standard *Savage Worlds* version. His Improved Dodge Edge represents Morg blocking shots with his laser sword—it's a cinematic effect, though it can have serious repercussions for attackers.

Special: Morg is a psion, but has no Power Points. Instead each power can be used a limited number of times per Scene. Spells with a normal duration of 3 (1/r) instead last for a flat 3 rounds per activation. Morg's powers are the equivalent of 20 Power Points.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Psionics d10, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: -6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Outsider, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Psionics), Block,

Connections (Criminals), Improved Dodge, Improved First Strike, Level Headed, Strong Willed, Sweep

Gear: Light armor (+2), laser sword (Str+d6+4, AP 6)

Powers: 3 x *deflection* (telekinesis), 1 x *quickness* (superhuman reflexes), 1 x *speed* (burst of speed), 2 x *stun* (telekinetic surge), 1 x *telekinesis* (waves a hand to move objects)

Special Abilities:

* **Deflect Shots:** So long as he is conscious and has his laser sword ready, Morg can redirect shots fired at him reflexively. If a Shooting die comes up a natural 1, regardless of the Wild Die, the shot is rebounded at the attacker. Morg makes a Fighting roll as a free action, but uses the Shooting rules for his TN, as well as range modifiers for the weapon fired at him. Damage is as per the attacker's weapon. Morg can use this ability if Shaken, but he suffers a -2 penalty to his Fighting roll. This ability does not function when the Innocent Bystander rules is being used.

* **Provocation:** With a successful Persuasion or Taunt roll opposed by the victim's Spirit, Morg forces his victim to charge him (this takes an action from Morg). On his next action, the victim must move directly toward Morg by the quickest route. If he is further away than his Pace, the victim must take a run action. The victim may attack opponents while moving, but he may not end his movement unless he has completed his full movement for the round. This effect lasts until the end of the victim's next turn.

* **Taste the Air:** Characters gain no modifiers for cover or darkness when using Stealth against Morg. He also halves darkness penalties against any foe within 12".

SEASONED BOUNTY HUNTER

Bounty hunters come in two types—those who work with law enforcement agencies, obey the rules, and try their hardest to bring back prey alive, and those who work for crimelords and do whatever is necessary to fulfill their contract. These scum fall into the second category. Long years of hunting dangerous prey have given these hunters a working knowledge of tactics. They won't foolishly engage in combat in the open, but take advantage of cover and other situational modifiers.

Seasoned hunters are Henchmen—hard to put down, but not as talented as Wild Card characters.

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

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Shields) d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d8, Tracking d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Cautious, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Dodge, Steady Hands

Gear: Light body armor (+2), blaster rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, AP 2, Shots 40), 2 x stun gre-

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nades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6 nonlethal, MBT), 2 x frag grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6+2, MBT), stun baton (Str+d4 nonlethal), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

Special Abilities:

- * **Crippling Shot:** With a raise on the attack roll, the bounty hunter hits a vulnerable spot. Victims who are Shaken or wounded must roll on the Injury Table. This injury is temporary, and is removed once the combat ends.

ASSISTANT BOUNTY HUNTER

Few bounty hunters operate alone. Most hire gunslingers to provide fire support, and take a few blows for the team. This particular motley bunch is little more than thugs, taking part in the hunt purely for the cash reward.

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Shields) d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

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

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Dodge

Gear: Light body armor (+2), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Shots 20), 2 x stun grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6 nonlethal, MBT), stun baton (Str+d4 nonlethal)

SHANDAMA BROTHERHOOD GOON

The Shandama Brotherhood makes extensive use of

an alien species known as Urks. Savage, green-skinned humanoids with pig-like features, Urks have foul temperaments and a love of mindless violence.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Energy halberd (Str+d8, Reach 1, 2 hands), stun baton (Str+d4 nonlethal)

Special Abilities:

- * **Infravision:** Half penalty for poor lighting against heat-producing targets.
- * **Size +1:** Urks are slightly larger than humans.

CARNA FREELIE

Carna Freelite is a hard working budding politician. She works at her father's side as his assistant, and has learned much about the true nature of galactic politics. Smart, attractive, and a strong leader, Carna has a bright future, if she can control her pride. As far as she is concerned, the characters are minions, hired help, and should therefore obey her every order. Carna is a Henchman.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal

Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Connections (Trade Assembly), Strong Willed

Gear: —



SETTING EXPANSION: GALAXY GUIDE

Although *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes* isn't set in any particular galaxy, you can bet your last shield pod it's a big place. Hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions, of planets exist. This bonus section provides a quick and dirty guide to creating planets.

Earth, the one planet about which mankind knows a great deal, is a very complex place. It has atmospheric bands, vastly different geographic, temperature zones, an albedo factor, tectonic plates, and such like. That's great news for folks who work in these fields, but such things are, for the most part, largely irrelevant to a pulp style role-playing setting.

In many cases, the planet in a *Daring Tale* is nothing more than a backdrop. The heroes aren't planetary explorers, so most of the scientific details are insignificant to them. They likely need to know if the atmosphere is breathable, what sort of aliens live on the world, and whether it's a fun place to adventure. In some adventures the spacers may visit multiple worlds, so designing a planet in detail is a waste of the GM's valuable time.

Detailed planet generators do exist, though. The author can recommend the old GDW Traveler books *Scouts* and the *World Builder's Handbook* for those who want a scientific method of creating worlds. This section, however, makes a few generic assumptions:

- The type of star at the center of the system is irrelevant. If the GM needs it to be an unstable red giant throwing deadly radiation, then that's what exists. If the GM wants a binary or trinary star formation, cool, he can have one.

- Likewise, only the main planet of the system is detailed. The system may have several planets, gas giants, or asteroid belts, but they're either background flavor or can be developed separately.

- Geological, evolutionary, and socio-political sciences are completely ignored. How a world got to be the way it is can be decided by the GM, but unless it's important to the plot, it's unnecessary clutter.

- The design system uses the action deck, and is thus totally random. There is no average result for a card draw,

so some of the results may be contradictory or incompatible. Here the GM has two choices—he can simply draw again, or he can work out a way for the inconsistency to be reality.

- Earth doesn't have a single type of terrain. There are hills, mountains, valleys, oceans, lakes, swamps, deserts, forests, tundra, taiga, dunes, plains, and so on. This system gives the GM a generic, dominant terrain for his planet. Of course, while a world may be a “desert planet,” there might still be forests of cacti, mountains, valleys, salt flats, and other forms of terrain present.

To create a planet, the GM just needs to draw a handful of cards from the action deck. He can assign the cards to the sections below in the order they are drawn, or place them where he wants. Of course, he's also free to just pick entries he likes, and weave them together to make his world.

If you draw a Joker, draw again for another card. Use the entry for the second card, but make it something weird or special. For example, if you draw a Joker followed by a ten for the planet type, you might decide the world is a Dyson sphere, or is a solid ring of rock surrounding a gas giant.

PLANET TYPE

The first thing to determine is the basic makeup of the planet. The GM does this by drawing a single card and consulting the table below.

Card	Result
Deuce	Asteroid Belt
3–10	Terrestrial
Jack–King	Satellite
Ace	Space Station

ASTEROID BELT

The planet is in fact an asteroid belt. It might exist on or inside a single rock, or it may be spread across the en-

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tire belt. In either case, you can skip the Atmosphere and Hydrosphere entries (although check the space station entry below for some ideas)—the only way to exist on an asteroid is in a pressurized dome or cavern network, and asteroids lack air and water (though scientists may argue they could have ice reserves).

SATELLITE

Although a sizeable chunk of terrestrial rock in its own right, the planet is actually the moon of a gas giant or, in rare instances, forms a binary planetary system with another terrestrial sphere. No matter the exact nature, the satellite orbits something, which in turn orbits the sun.

SPACE STATION

The “planet” is in fact a space station. It may sit in orbit over a planet, or it could exist in the emptiness of space. Unless the facility is governed by aliens who avoid breathing oxygen, you can skip past the section of Atmosphere. Likewise, Hydrosphere is irrelevant, unless the GM wants to use the result to help concoct his adventure (perhaps water is scarce, or the government restricts its usage to keep the populace in line).

TERRESTRIAL

A ball of rock (and other minerals) orbiting around a star. The size of solid planets, as opposed to gas giants, can vary immensely, as evidenced by the differences between Mercury and Earth.

DOMINANT TERRAIN

As mentioned above, we’ve opted to use a dominant terrain rather than expect the GM to work out the exact variety of geography on his world. Remember, other features do exist, but they’re likely irrelevant to the scenario. Draw a single card and consult the table below.

Card	Result
2–5	Vegetation
6–7	Desert
8	Mountain
9–10	Plain
Jack	Urban
Queen	Volcanic
King	Swamp
Ace	Plateau

DESERT

Deserts aren’t defined by temperature, but by rainfall. The Sahara is obviously a hot desert, while Antarctica is a cold desert. What all deserts possess is a shortage of standing water. Hot deserts are typified by rolling or towering dunes, scorched mud flats, and rocky expanses,

whereas cold ones tend to be snow covered (though they can be sandy or rocky).

Ignore the hydrosphere draw—desert worlds automatically have 1d4 x 5% water.

MOUNTAINS

Much of the surface of the world is covered in mountains. Mountains are formed by tectonic activity, so the world likely suffers from frequent earthquakes as well. Flat ground is scarce, and likely exists only in deep valleys or as terraces on the sides of towering peaks. Mountainous terrain can vary from mere hills, to the rounded, weathered peaks of the Appalachians, to the majestic crags of the Himalayas.

PLAIN

The world isn’t as flat as a pancake, but the dominant terrain is flat and open. Vegetation is commonplace, though with vegetation forming its own category, such coverings are likely to be grasses rather than trees.

PLATEAU

The surface is broken by flat highlands of immense size. The plateau surfaces may support any type of terrain, but it is likely different to that below. The GM may, if he wishes, draw two additional cards to determine the upper and lower terrain. Society on this world may follow the terrain, with those on the highlands considering themselves superior to those who dwell on the lowlands.

SWAMP

The planet is a festering morass of dank, stagnant pools, flooded lowlands, mangrove swamps, sedge, and other equally inhospitable terrain. Insects are likely a constant problem, especially if they’re giant insects. Civilizations may exist on raised platforms high above the putrid waterline or in protective domes.

URBAN

The surface of the planet, or at least a sizeable portion, is an urban sprawl. This may be a single city which has grown to monumental proportions, or a series of “mega-cities” dotting the globe. Civilization may have developed this way because of population burdens, industrial necessity, or because the wilds are dangerous to life.

VEGETATION

The planet is primarily covered in vegetation. The exact type depends on the temperature, as well as the hydrosphere. For instance, a desert world may be subjected to periodic torrential downpours, which has

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allowed forests of hardy cacti to grow. Jungle is found only on warm or hot worlds and forests on temperate or cool ones.

Vegetation needn't be restricted to trees, of course. A fungus world could be fun to explore, and pose a lot of hazards, but the world could equally be covered in long grasses or towering ferns.

VOLCANIC

Volcanic worlds tend to be hot places, the atmosphere is rarely pleasant to breathe (even if it's breathable it stinks of sulfur and other gases), the soil is black (though it can be highly fertile), and lava flows snake through the landscape like glowing rivers.

TEMPERATURE

Savage Worlds records temperature extremes in two categories—hot and cold. For ease, we're using similar blanket terms which directly mimic these rules. Again, these give the average temperature. It's always hotter at the equator and colder at the poles.

Draw a single card, and check the table below.

Card	Result
2	Very Hot
3–4	Hot
5–Jack	Temperate
Queen–King	Cool
Ace	Cold

COLD

The average temperature is well below freezing, making the planet highly inhospitable. Roll 1d4, multiply the result by 20, and subtract this from 40 to get the average temperature (20 to –40). For instance, a roll of 3 gives a bone-numbing –20F. The Cold rules should be used when the heroes decide to go exploring.

COOL

The temperature regularly drops below freezing, but the world isn't necessary encased in a permanent ice age like those in the category above. Roll 1d4, multiply the result by 10, and subtract from 50 for the average temperature (40 to 10F).

TEMPERATE

The planet enjoys mild winters and warm summers, but neither to any great extreme except on the equator or at the poles.

HOT

The temperature is at the high end of comfortable, and the summer months can be particularly hot. Average

temperature is 60 plus the result of 1d4 x 10F (70 to 100F).

VERY HOT

Whether due to proximity to the local star or runaway greenhouse gases, the world is baking hot. Water is likely to be a precious commodity. The average temperature is 80 plus the result of 1d4 x 10F, giving a range of 90 to a scorching 120F). The Heat rules should be used if the heroes forget to carry ample supplies of water.

GRAVITY

Gravity is determined by a planet's density and, to a lesser extent, its spin—large planets tend to have great mass, and therefore a high density, while smaller worlds have the opposite effect. Draw a single card and consult the table below.

Card	Result
2	Micro
3–5	Low
6–King	Earthlike
Ace	High

EARTHLIKE

The exact gravity may fluctuate from exactly that of Earth, but for game purposes it poses no particular problems for the characters.

HIGH

High gravity equates to twice Earth's gravity or higher for the purposes of these rules. Double all falling damage. In high gravity, moving up to one's Pace counts as an action. Agility, Strength, and skills linked to these attributes suffer a –2 penalty.

Any hero who rolls a natural 1 on his trait die, regardless of Wild Die, while performing any physical action, or who rolls a 1 on his running die, has over-exerted. He must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation. Recovery requires 10 minutes of in exertion.

LOW

Low gravity is defined in our adventures as anything equal to or less than 75% that of Earth. Characters receive +2 Pace, and roll the next higher die when running. Agility and Agility-linked skill rolls suffer a –1 penalty, as coordination is still tricky, but Strength rolls have a +2 bonus. Damage, remember, is not a trait roll. Halve all falling damage.

MICRO

Everything has mass, and therefore everything gener-

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ates gravity, even if the field is infinitesimally weak. True anti-gravity is achieved only through technology. For all intents and purposes, micro gravity and zero gravity are the same thing.

Characters in micro gravity have great difficulty moving. In high gravity, moving up to one's Pace counts as an action, and the spacer cannot run. Heroes cannot alter course unless they push away from a stationary object.

All Agility, Strength, and skills linked to these attributes suffer a -2 penalty (a hero may be able to lift more, but getting the overall coordination right is extremely difficult). The Dodge and Improved Dodge Edges cannot be used in micro gravity—the hero simply cannot control his movement to any great degree.

ATMOSPHERE

The great majority of life forms in the galaxy need to breathe. While we assume the majority breathe an Earth-like, oxygen-nitrogen mix, not every planet supports this atmosphere.

Card	Result
2	None
3-4	Thin
5-Jack	Normal
Queen-King	Polluted
Ace	Toxic

NONE

The planet is either exposed to vacuum or the atmosphere is so thin it might as well not be present. Heroes cannot survive on such worlds without a spacesuit. Those who try to suck vacuum suffer 2d6+2 damage per round (as a Wild Card), ignoring all armor.

NORMAL

The atmosphere may have different trace gases, the exact percentages may vary slightly from Earth, it may be polluted or stink badly, but breathing it won't kill you any time soon.

POLLUTED

Volcanic activity, industrial process, or just the wrong trace gases means the air is polluted and difficult to breathe. Heroes without a filter mask must make a Vigor roll at the start of each Act (or every 4 hours if you're not using Acts and Scenes) or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Exhaustion, but never Incapacitation. Recovery requires 10 minutes breathing good air.

THIN

The atmosphere is thin, much like that at high altitude on Earth. Heroes not wearing some sort of artificial air supply must make a Vigor roll at the start of each Act

(or every 4 hours if you're not using Acts and Scenes) or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Exhaustion, but never Incapacitation. Recovery requires 10 minutes breathing good air.

TOXIC

The atmosphere is dangerous to breathe. It might also be corrosive to skin. Such atmospheres may be the result of heavy pollution or intense volcanic activity, consist of gases simply poisonous to most life forms (life ammonia or methane), carry airborne radioactive particles or diseases, or whatever else the devious mind of the GM can invent. Those who try to breathe the toxic mix suffer 2d6+2 damage per round (as a Wild Card), ignoring all armor.

In general, if the atmosphere is toxic, so is the water and any flora or fauna. Heroes making a Survival roll can deduce whether the local environment is dangerous to ingest.

HYDROSPHERE

Hydrosphere is a measure of how much water is on a planet's surface. Earth, for example, has around 70% water. The hydrosphere is measured as a simple percentage.

Card	Result
Deuce	None
3	1d10%
4	10+1d10%
5	20+1d10%
6	30+1d10%
7	40+1d10%
8	50+1d10%
9	60+1d10%
10	70+1d10%
Jack	80+1d10%
Queen	91+1d8%
King	99% (some small islands)
Ace	100% (no land at all)

PLANET'S FUNCTION

With no detailed list of imports, exports, and industries, a world's function provides an overview of the major aspect. The entry doesn't have to be the only aspect, but it's the one the heroes are probably going to interact with in the adventure.

Draw a single card and compare it to the table below. Note that the color of the card is important. Some entries appear multiple times, to represent the increased frequency of these sorts of worlds existing. Individual entries are detailed below the table.

GMs should note that some worlds border or overlap slightly on other functions. This is deliberate, so as not to stifle the GM's creativity with what may be seen as absolute titles.

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Red Suit	Result
Deuce	Agriculture
Three	Mining
Four	Dead
Five	Religious
Six	Disaster Zone
Seven	Medical
Eight	Manufacturing
Nine	Processing
Ten	Natural Resources
Jack	Research
Queen	Colony
King	Trade
Ace	Natural Resources

Black Suit	Result
Deuce	Bureaucracy
Three	Colony
Four	Hidden Facility
Five	Military
Six	Trade
Seven	Service
Eight	Academic
Nine	Prison
Ten	Entertainment
Jack	Agriculture
Queen	Manufacturing
King	Mining
Ace	Draw twice and combine results

ACADEMIC

Education drives the economy of this world. Facilities may be corporate, military, private, religious, or state-controlled. As well as the obvious choice—a university—the world might house a trade school specializing in starship engineering, officer training school or military academy, flight school for budding spacers, psionic institutes, business management colleges run by a private corporation, rehabilitation camps for prisoners, or language tutoring.

AGRICULTURE

Think of an agricultural world and you're likely imagining vast fields of crops. Well, that's certainly one option, but the title is generic of foodstuff manufacture in general. Alternatives to cereals, fruits, and vegetables are fungi, meat, fish, algae, synthetic nutrients, and even water. Some worlds may produce specific goods, like a unique form of wine, the best soda in the galaxy, or even everyone's favorite bar snack.

BUREAUCRACY

Daring Tales of the Space Lanes introduced three organizations—the Miners' Guild, the Star League, and the Peace Guild. These are just three among countless leagues, guilds, corporations, empires, confederacies,

and other large organizations spanning multiple star systems. Although each of the member worlds maintains its own government, they also have a centralized bureaucracy. Such worlds are the powerhouses of the organizations, where the government is the major employer.

COLONY

The planet belongs to someone else, and the inhabitants are here at the behest of the parent system. Given that a world which can support its own population could easily become independent, most colonies lack a vital resource, either deliberately (to ensure they remain loyal) or because the colony exists purely to support the homeworld (and thus most of its resources are exported).

No matter how benign the parent government is, there's always someone who wants independence and is prepared to fight for it. Although branded terrorists by the homeworld, these freedom fighters may be rebelling against an oppressive government, just think they can do better, or be trying to dominate the world for their own ends. Thus, there are "good" and "bad" separatists.

DEAD

The planet is dead. It may have lost its entire biosphere, such as through an asteroid impact, super volcano eruption, intense nuclear war, or even a deadly plague, or perhaps it is littered with mysterious ruins left behind by a now-extinct, sentient race.

The aliens may have been technological super beings, whose former homes are now treasure troves for those seeking hi-tech treasure, or they may have been Stone Age savages whose legacy is empty temples or carved stone heads.

DISASTER ZONE

Unlike a dead world, a disaster zone is still inhabited by its original population. Unfortunately, their world recently underwent some cataclysmic event. Such worlds may be submerged in boiling lava, wracked by plague, suffering terrible earthquakes, bombarded by radiation, or suffering a global winter brought about because of an impact by a celestial object.

ENTERTAINMENT

There's no business like show business, as the inhabitants of this world know. Some worlds are home to famous sporting events or teams. Others specialize in a certain industry, such as music or movies. Planets could also thrive on gambling, or earn their fame from amusement parks, adventure holidays, theme parks, or virtual reality systems indistinguishable from the real world.

HIDDEN FACILITY

While the world may appear quite mundane on the

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surface, it houses a secret facility somewhere. This might be a top secret military base, perhaps designing terrifying weapons, a smugglers or pirate base, the reclusive home of a celebrity, politician, or other important being, an outlawed religious sect or cult, or a colony of escaped prisoners or political refugees.

MANUFACTURING

Although some other worlds include an element of manufacturing, this planet is dominated by the manufacturing industry. Some planets produce finished goods, while others manufacture components shipped to other worlds for inclusion in larger items. For instance, the world might manufacture hyperspace engines, but no other starship components.

Textiles, pharmaceuticals, weapons, electronic goods, starships, computers, plastics, metals, robots, vehicles, advanced alloys, clothing, and even pottery or works of art are all examples of manufactured goods.

MEDICAL

Some medical worlds are the site of the raw ingredients needed to make medicines. These could be herbs, minerals, or even organic compounds harvested from animals. Alternately, the world might be known for its medical facilities, boasting anything from tribal shamans with healing powers, to cosmetic surgery on a planet wide scale, to specialists in cyborg technology and prosthetics or cloning.

MILITARY

The system boasts a very strong military presence. It might possess shipyards, repair and resupply facilities, vast garrison camps, weapons manufacturing factories, automated defenses, or special forces training camps. Civilian access may be restricted completely or limited to certain areas or objects within the star system.

MINING

Mining worlds may be scarred with deep gouges and pits from open cast mining or riddled with thousands of miles of tunnels from subterranean excavations. The inhabitants may process the raw minerals themselves, or they may ship the ore off-world.

As well as surface mines, the world may have mines on the sea floor, the only place certain minerals exist, or it could harvest asteroids or the exotic gases from a gas giant.

NATURAL RESOURCES

It's a rare world that has absolutely no natural resources, but this planet has them in abundance. Typically, a world should have no more than one or two core products. Natural resources might be wood, animal skins, mineral resources easily exploited, slaves, narcot-

ics, such as sand on a desert world, or water. Unlike an agricultural world, the end products of this planet aren't edible.

Natural resource planets are closely related to mining worlds, but the industry on this particular world typically doesn't involve metals or gems. That doesn't mean the work is any less dangerous, though.

PRISON

Criminals abound in the galaxy, and when they're caught, they're shipped off to prisons to serve their sentences. Whether the facility houses high or low risk prisoners, the entire planet may be one huge penal colony, or it could be renowned for a particular penitentiary.

This needn't be a regular jail, though. It could just as easily be a world where prisoners are mind wiped or lobotomized to remove anti-social tendencies, a private clinic for the criminally insane, a lunatic asylum housing the most dangerous prisoners, or the equivalent of Colditz, where habitual escapees are sent in the sure knowledge there's no way off the planet except by serving one's sentence or in a coffin.

PROCESSING

Mining worlds produce raw materials, but sometimes these need to be refined. Processing worlds might be covered in smoke-belching chimney stacks from metal smelting and refining, refine natural gases into more useful products, be home to a global weaving industry, or even pulp wood to make paper. Unless you're after a basic end product, like a bar of metal or roll of paper, processing worlds don't tend to export finished goods.

RELIGIOUS

The world is renowned for some religious purpose. Pilgrimage is the likely industry of the world, though it might just as easily be a hermitage where those seeking spiritual wisdom retire to commune with their deities in peace.

RESEARCH

Knowledge is power. The planet may be home to a weapon or starship testing facility, a private world governed by a think-tank, a center for scientific study of the planet and its associated star system, home to a colossal library or computer database, a nature reserve, or just somewhere a major corporation happens to conduct its research.

A research world could easily have a second category. For instance, a world famed for its medicinal plants (a medical world) may house several corporate research facilities looking for the next big breakthrough in pharmacology.

SERVICE

Service worlds may be holiday destinations, such as

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tourist traps for the general populace or exclusive resorts for the rich and famous. Such worlds could also host conference facilities, perhaps being considered neutral ground by all parties, or provide lawyers. The Peace Guild from *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes #1* is an example of a service industry. Alternately, the planet may be a financial or banking world, or specialize in the gathering and sale of distribution (for the right fee).

In general, service worlds don't product anything physical—they provide a service to their clients.

TRADE

This planet thrives on interstellar trade. It may sit at the junction of major trade routes, serving as a convenient point for traders to meet and make deals, or possess an abundance and variety of goods for export. Trade worlds are often bustling places, whose population changes on a daily basis as merchants come and go. Such worlds are also sources of information from across the stars, and more often than not home to criminal organizations preying on the rich trade.

GOVERNMENT

All planets are ruled by some sort of government. Draw a single card and check the table below. The suit determines how benevolent the government is.

Card	Result
Deuce	Autocracy
Three	Rival States
Four	Bureaucracy
Five	Military
Six	Plutocracy
Seven	Familial
Eight	Democracy
Nine	Meritocracy
Ten	Geriocracy
Jack	Corporate
Queen	Monarchy
King	Theocracy
Ace	Timocracy

Suit	Result
Club	Tyrannical and/or oppressive
Diamond	Secretive or impersonal
Heart	Highly open and/or permissive
Spade	Charismatic/popular

AUTOCRACY

One man, woman, or being runs the show with absolute power. While an autocrat may have seized power by force, his position may just as equally be handed down from his predecessor or hereditary. However the ruler gained power, he answers to no council or balancing force—what he says goes. It's the old "one man, one vote, and I'm that man" system.

Autocrats may be tyrannical despots despised by the masses, military officers, charismatic and popular speakers, or religious leaders (different to a theocracy in that the faith may not play a huge part in the government substructures).

BUREAUCRACY

Bureaucratic worlds lack a strong central government. Instead, numerous offices exist to cater to the needs of the citizens.

Bureaucracies are far from perfect—most require lengthy forms to be completed, citizens may be transferred between multiple offices, sub offices, and departments, and cracks exist into which citizens can fall, leaving them unable to acquire help. In general, bureaucracies are lumbering beasts, wherein "rapid reaction" is unknown. Many such governments are deliberately slow, but quickly speed up processes when suitable "charitable donations" are paid.

CORPORATE

The world belongs to a single corporation, or perhaps a group of corporations sharing power in some manner. Leaders are not elected, but rather rule because they are higher up the company hierarchy. The leader may have to answer to a board of executives, thus curbing personal ambition, or he could be the sole head. The latter tends to occur only when a corporation is family owned.

Most inhabitants of the planet, if not all, are corporate employees. Some corporations may use their workers as slave labor, housing them in company-owned property and deducting rent from wages, forcing them into set occupations based on educational prowess, or even restricting where and what they can purchase. Others are more open to the idea of worker freedom, and in some cases all workers may be shareholders, thus having a vested interest in ensuring the corporation is profitable.

DEMOCRACY

Democratic governments may operate as participatory governments (black suit), where the people are permitted to vote on major issues (or perhaps on any issue), or representative (red suit), in which only those elected power by the citizens may vote on matters concerning the planet.

FAMILIAL

The government comprises the heads of powerful families. These may be aristocrats, holding power through hereditary rights, criminal gangs whose leader remains in power only so long as he wards off his underlings with ambition, or tribal elders on a primitive world. On the other hand, a single family may rule, with members holding key government posts.

Such an organization may be a democracy, although

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one where only those in the family can stand for election or a council of clan heads. Where one family rules the planet, the end result more often resembles a monarchy.

GERIOCRACY

Technically a geriocracy is one ruled by the elderly, but for our purposes it's simply one where age determines who rules this world. While the government may take one of the other forms, it is only those over (red suit) or under (black suit) a certain age who may hold positions of power.

This may reflect into general society as well. For instance, there may be restrictions on when one can achieve certain military ranks or corporate positions, or when one must give up such positions to a younger candidate. Indeed, while in our own world certain things are age controlled—age of consent, when you can get married, or drink, or watch certain classifications of movies, a geriocracy may take this to extremes.

Citizens may be persecuted based on age, perhaps subject to euthanasia when society deems they are no longer productive. Such drastic measures could also be a means to curb chronic overcrowding of the planet.

MERITOCRACY

In a meritocracy those who rule do so because they have earned the right through some sort of trial or test. On some worlds this may be through psychological, oral, or written examination. On others, rulers do so because they are the strongest or fastest, they are famous celebrities, they defeated their predecessor in some manner and removed him from power, or they finished in the top percentage of their class and were forced into the role.

In the latter case, the rest of society may follow suit. Those with low intellects end up in dead-end or repetitive jobs, while those with more brains or ambition become doctors, engineers, officers, and pilots. Examination results may have a direct bearing on one's future role—your marks determine your exact job, and no amount of pleading can change that.

MONARCHY

The world is governed by a monarch. The leader may take his position by dint of birthright (a hereditary monarchy), be subjected to guidelines or restrictions (constitutional monarchy), or be a popular dictator, voted into the position by the masses. Most monarchs hold the title king or queen, though a colony world may be governed by an archduke, duke, count, or perhaps even a lowly baron.

Monarchic worlds may also be feudal in nature. Although the king is the absolute ruler, he does not govern every aspect of society, nor does he directly control the masses or hold all the land as his personal fief. Ranking beneath the king, and holding titles either through

hereditary position, at the monarch's whim, or being elected to hold the title for a set period through elections, are lesser nobles.

On some worlds, the feudalism may be absolute. In this case, the lowest rank of citizens, serfs, are little more than slaves. Everything they "own" actually belongs to their feudal overlord. Only those considered freemen may own property or run businesses on such worlds.

MILITARY

While many military governments are effectively autocracies, with the highest-ranking officer holding control, this need not always be the case. A planet with a navy (wet or space), army, and airforce, for instance, may be ruled by a triumvirate of senior officers. Alternately, a military government may be elected by the masses, but only officers can stand for government.

It is possible that senior military posts are appointed to elected officials (either through the masses or some other body), similar to how things worked in ancient Rome.

PLUTOCRACY

Money determines who rules the roost in a plutocracy. This form of government may be determined by a "rich list," which is published every few years. Those holding the top five, ten, or hundred positions form the government. A plutocracy may actually be a corporation, but here company position takes second place to the number of shares you own. Workers are thus encouraged to invest their savings in the company in the hope of rising to a position of power. Alternately, the government may be a council of corporate heads, but only the richest companies get a seat, and thus a voice in how the planet is run.

Regardless of whether it is permissive or oppressive, plutocracies tend to be societies of haves and have-nots. Those without money cannot hope to rise socially, while those with money always want more so they can stay in power.

RIVAL STATES

No one government runs the planet. Instead, different countries or regions have their own governments. The GM should draw at least two cards, redrawing other Rival States results, to determine the major governments on the world.

THEOCRACY

The government is a spiritual entity, and all of its senior members belong to the "church." Positions may be held by public vote (perhaps restricted to those of the dominant faith), although any government official would likely have to be a ranking member of the faith. Alternately, those in the hierarchy may elect their own leaders, ignoring public opinion.

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TIMOCRACY

Only citizens who own property may participate in a timocracy. In many ways it is similar to the old English system, where only landowners could stand for Parliament or vote. It also shares some similarities with a plutocracy, though in a timocracy individual wealth is less important than what one contributes to society through one's holdings.

Strict rules may be in place to limit exactly who can do what. For instance, it may be that anyone who owns a house can vote, but only those whose land produces a certain quantity or value of produce can stand for certain offices—the more one gives to society, the higher up the ladder one can climb.

BENEVOLENCE

Club: The government rules with an iron fist, and brooks no dissention. The society may be a police state, where informers and secret police are an everyday fact of life, subject to regular brutality, or one in which even trivial offenses are punished severely. Fear is the government's greatest weapon, and it wields it with heavy-handedness.

Diamond: The workings of the government are a close-guarded secret or the government follows the letter of the law without regard for personal circumstances. While such governments can appear outwardly oppressive, everyone is subjected to the same laws, and the police don't beat you up because they're bored.

Heart: The workings of government are subject to much public scrutiny. Meetings and debates are shown on television, politicians are easily accessible by their constituents, and those who abuse their position are punished.

Alternately, the government may be permissive, allowing great personal freedom to the citizens, in return for their obeying the laws. Crimes are punished, but prisoners are reeducated, given counseling or job training to make them productive members of society, or put to work for the betterment of the society in general.

Spade: The government enjoys the support of the masses. There are dissenters—there's always somebody who thinks they can do a better job or who feels hard done by—but in general the government tries to work for the betterment of the masses.

POPULATION LEVEL

GMs are unlikely to need the exact population for a planet, but knowing the general population can be a handy tool. The categories are broad enough to allow the GM plenty of freedom, but he needs to give some thought to how the population and other planetary data correlate.

For instance, a result of Sparse on an agricultural world may indicate plentiful robots, or perhaps a plethora of

automated planting and harvesting machines. Likewise, Overcrowded on a water world probably means cities tower into the sky.

Card	Result
2	Minimal
3–4	Sparse
5–Jack	Average
Queen–King	Crowded
Ace	Overcrowded

AVERAGE

The planet's resources can cope with its population comfortably. There is still poverty and want, of course, but such is the way of the universe. Cities are likely crowded, as they are on Earth, but citizens have plenty of opportunities to dwell in smaller communities.

CROWDED

The world has a population in excess of what it can support, but not to dangerous levels. Resources are stretched, and shortages a common issue. Whether or not folk live in large cities depends on the world's function. An agricultural planet could quite easily boast numerous small communities, but all would lack some vital resource as a result of population pressure.

MINIMAL

The world is practically deserted, at least in comparison to its size. Small planets may contain just a few hundred citizens, while an Earth-sized planet probably has just a few hundred thousand people at most. The populace may live in scattered communities, or congregate in just one or two locations.

OVERCROWDED

It's standing room only, and even then folk may need to sit on their neighbor's shoulders. Whether it's a few thousand people on a small asteroid, or tens of billions on a rock the size of Earth, the planet has a huge population problem. Cities are vast, dwarfing those we live in today, and likely extending into the heavens for miles.

Alternately, the planet may have plenty of room, but the population is in excess of what the environment can support. For instance, a desert world's only water may be isolated oasis dotted across the surface. Even a million people on a planet the size of Mars would likely constitute overcrowding.

Either way, extreme shortages are common for even basic commodities.

SPARSE

The planet is largely empty for its size. An asteroid, for instance, may be home to a handful of people, whereas a

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planet the size of Earth could easily host a few hundred million souls spread across the globe.

TECHNOLOGY

Daring Tales of the Space Lanes doesn't use any sort of "tech level"—worlds are either categorized according to simple Earth terms, or they're capable of supporting starships and blaster pistols. Draw a card as normal.

Card	Result
Deuce	Stone Age
3	Bronze/Iron Age Earth
4	Middle Ages
5	Renaissance
6	21st Century
7+	Space Age

21ST CENTURY

The planet's technology isn't that far removed from modern day Earth. Things may be more compact or work faster or more efficiently, but in general the GM can describe items in terms familiar to his players. Some worlds will be slight backward, perhaps undergoing their equivalent of the Industrial Revolution, while others have begun to colonize other planets in their local star system.

BRONZE/IRON AGE

The inhabitants have mastered metalworking, as well as fundamentals like the wheel, but they lack machines not powered by man or beast—even sailing ships are rudimentary. Complex cultures exist, but industry remains extremely light, the principals of mass production being many centuries away.

MIDDLE AGES

Society has advanced sufficiently to allow for intensive agricultural, as well as early forms of technology, such as the windmill and waterwheel. Gunpowder exists in rudimentary form, but most weapons are still muscle-powered. Primitive forms of banking are developing, though global trade is stymied by the speed of caravans or sailing ships. On many worlds, huge areas of the planet remain unexplored.

RENAISSANCE

The locals are beginning to understand their world through the application of scientific principals. Black powder weapons exist, as do cannons, but transportation is limited to walking, riding, or sailing. Despite the difficulties in long-range communication, complex trading networks are forming. Rudimentary experiments with lighter-than-air or Da Vinci-style flying machines may have begun, but true powered flight remains a dream for visionaries.

SPACE AGE

This is the *Space Lanes* default. Although there is local variation, most societies have full access to starships, energy weapons, hover vehicles, robots, wrist computers, and other hi-tech gadgets. Disintegrators and teleporters are still experimental devices, used by villains in their crazy scheme, not by the average citizen.

STONE AGE

Stone axes and arrowheads are cutting edge (no pun intended) technology on this planet. The inhabitants have yet to form complex societies, and live in small tribes. Agricultural breakthroughs are possible, such as the earliest cultivation of wild crops. The wheel, the first step on the road to advanced transportation, is in the research and development phase. Even languages may not yet be fully developed, making communication with off-worlders ("strangers") difficult. These technological primitives have no concept of other worlds, and may see aliens as gods (or demons that need to be destroyed).

STARPORT RATING

Starports are the *Space Lanes* equivalent of airports and marketplaces all in one. Here passengers can board scheduled flights or hire freelance crews, merchants can buy and sell cargoes, and spacers can repair and refuel their ships. Exactly what level of service is available is determined by the starport types. These are graded according to a star system, with 1-star being the lowest grade and 5-star the best.

Note that the existence of a starport is not dependent on technology—a starport might exist in a secluded part of a primitive world or on the local moon.

Card	Result
Deuce	None
3–4	1-Star
5–6	2-Star
7–10	3-Star
Jack–King	4-Star
Ace	5-Star

NONE

The world lacks a starport. It may be under construction, or perhaps a previous one was destroyed. Unless a ship has enough fuel to leave the system, pilots are best to avoid the planet, for they risk being stranded here otherwise.

1-STAR RATING

The most primitive starport is essentially a clearing. Chances are there aren't any landing lights, no traffic control to help avoid accidents, and the facilities are

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extremely primitive. Fuel is available most of the time, as are basic spare parts. Mechanics, if any work at the site, can't repair the specific effects of Critical Hits, though they can repair the basic wound by patching the hull plating.

On the plus side, if any customs officials exist they are likely happy to take a bribe not to do any work. Conversely, there's always the chance the guy will be so pleased to see a visitor that he'll perform a full inspection.

2-STAR RATING

Things begin to improve at this grade of starport. As well as flight controllers and emergency vehicles (not always on duty), there are better grade mechanics and a steadier supply of parts. That said, the technicians can still only remove the effects of one Critical Hit per local week.

Facilities for visitors improve, but they still fall short of large, modern airports. Security is noticeable, but minimal in its efficiency. Customs officials remain lax, but there are more of them.

3-STAR RATING

Many spacers consider the 3-star starport the first true starport. Larger than any 21st century airfield, the facility has a full compliment of trained staff, not to mention proper repair facilities and regular supplies of parts. Repairs are speedy, taking less than a week to repair all effects of Critical Hits, and only a day to patch up any wounds.

Starships come and go day and night, though most are running regular space lanes. Still, perseverance can usually locate a pilot willing to fly off the beaten track if the price is right. Because of the regular trade, in-starport mercantile facilities exist in the form of brokerage houses and warehouses, though only the largest trading companies maintain any permanent presence.

Customs officials are prevalent, but the local government is more a deciding factor in their efficiency. On many worlds customs remains a formality, though ships

traveling certain routes (such as those along which there are planets specializing in the export of illegal weapons or narcotics) are always searched thoroughly.

4-STAR RATING

Aside from an increase in the size and quality of facilities, the biggest difference between a 4-star and a 3-star starport is the presence of a shipyard. Second-hand dealers are also present, meaning that anyone with the money can purchase their own ship. Traders are even more prolific, mercantile companies have small but fully staffed offices, and pilots venture out on minor routes on a daily basis.

Security is tight and plentiful, with ground-based laser turrets and fighter patrols ready to thwart any attempts to interfere with the starport's operations. Customs is tight, and every ship is subjected to cargo inspections on landing and before takeoff. On oppressive worlds, a customs search can be a harrowing affair.

5-STAR RATING

Extremely rare even on the most hi-tech and densely populated worlds, 5-star starports have everything you can imagine, and plenty of stuff you didn't think to imagine. They are vast structures, rivaling cities like New York or London in size. Tens of thousands of starships can berth here, and often do. Dozens of landing sites, each with its own control tower, emergency services, lounges, and so on, dot the sprawling facility.

Actual facilities within the starport vary from 1-star up to 5-star, thus catering for all budgets. Fuel is always plentiful, though spare parts vary by the quality of mechanics you hire. Major corporations, especially those involved in trade, maintain offices and warehouses, ready to service their clients' needs.

Security is always tight. As well as ground troops numbering several thousand, the airspace is regularly patrolled by fighters and atmosphere-capable destroyers. Ground emplacements provide an additional layer of defensive capability, and important structures are protected by immense shield pods.



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