

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Derelict ships are always bad news. Why then, would anyone dare to step on board? Because they have to, because an entire planet needs the cargo lost with the ship, and besides that to have the adventure of a lifetime . . .

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before you and your friends sit down to play, you should consider the basic elements of the Adventure, as explained throughout the following pages.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, by so doing setting the stage for the entire adventure that is to follow. Because this narrative sets the mood of the game, you may wish to read it to yourself a time or two first, so as to practice the drama and intrigue with which you will later read it to the Players.

It is a time of war. The evil Empire of Thaetis has declared total the insurrection of Tereste, the central system in the Republic. These marauders of deep space, having no homeworld of their own, began recently to polarize the planet with cosmic rays sent from unknown origins. In less than a year, the Federation's greatest world will become unlivable and serve as the new military base for the Imperial despot, Hister.

However, fear and freezing rays alone did not come from the distant stars, but also a message of hope, rumors of the 'Nebulous Crystal', which if placed in the core of the planet will counter all the alien polarizing. Celendrian's greatest and most highly decorated battleship was renamed as the 'Nebula' and sent to retrieve this precious artifact, but it was lost, and hope along with it.

Fearing the worst and with no time to lose, the Federation has been assembling smaller sized ships and asking for volunteers to man them in the desperate plan of stealth succeeding where military might failed. Many have already departed into the unknown, some taking the ships to flee the doomed planet, others taking the battle right to the Empire and to their own doom. Some, however, still seek out the Nebulous Crystal to return with it to their own survival, to the defeat of Hister, and to the rescue of all the world . . .

The saga begins: This adventure is a search for a cosmic treasure, the Nebulous Crystal, for it is the only hope of the planet Tereste.

For a long time now, the Empire of Thaetis has lurked just outside the asteroid belt, too strong to oppose yet not strong enough in themselves to invade the Inner Ring of civilization. But recently they have discovered a way to control the defense satellites near the asteroids, and use them to send a polarizing energy to their source, the system's capital world of Tereste, plunging it into a terrible, cataclysmic ice-age. Once the planet is weakened enough, the Empire will invade.

While diplomacy continues to give the people hope and futile efforts by the military continue to give the government hope, those with all the facts know that there is no hope, at least not any to be found in conventional means. Therefore they have gone to the Lunar Knights, and through their lore discovered the legend of the Nebulous Crystal, a vessel of unlimited life. The greatest battleship in the fleet was renamed the 'Nebula' in honor of its mission, commissioned to find this treasure, but shortly after finding the Crystal, the Empire found the Nebula, and it was lost.

The captain of the Nebula in total desperation warped through the Fourth Dimension, resulting in both a mutiny and crashing the battleship on a nameless moon of Druen, and there it waits still, a tomb for the Nebulous Crystal.

The party will be sent in secret to Vulnus, a moon of Aeruden, where they will be given a ship named 'Moon Walker'. Using this vessel for stealth they can pass through the watchful nets of the Empire and home in on the signal of the Nebula. Through many dangers they will find it at last on the nameless moon where it crashed, along with its mutinous crew who will tell them what happened. Armed only with rumors and courage, the party will explore the derelict ship in search of the lost Nebulous Crystal. Therein, they will learn that this source of all life depends on their own strengths, and upon returning it to civilization, face a great space battle against the Empire, which shall be the undoing of their own evil—by forcing the party to find virtue, courage and love, the Empire will only give the Crystal the power necessary to restore the frozen planet of Tereste.

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Storytelling technique: This adventure is a tribute to old serials, and therefore to tell this story in the 'proper' way is to often be improper, as it were, to focus on those things which make B-movies so much fun to watch.

First and foremost, one should not take this story too seriously. Since the major plot points and most of the Encounters are deliberately done with overused, clichéd or corny archetypes, it would be better to embrace the ridiculousness of it rather than try to make it dramatic. For example, love is essential to victory, but do not try to encourage the Players to role-play dramatic love, but rather, love in the Saturday-matinee form of "I'm going to get the girl because I'm the hero." Play this with a slobbering sense of obviousness. Have fun with it and enjoy the taste of good cheese.

Another thing to consider, building upon the B-movie theme of this adventure, is that much of what will transpire is paying homage to classic yet 'bad' sci-fi and space fantasy movies. If you can recognize these tributes, do not try to disguise any of them as part of this mythology, but rather, play them to the hilt for what they are supposed to be, as your Players will recognize them anyway, and it will help their imaginative view of the event. They are a part of it if they can just immerse themselves in a scene, ship, or alongside a character that they already know so well. Remember, we have to do them as an homage to avoid being sued, but when you recognize them for what they are, no lawyer is stopping you from using their real names or any references to their native mythology.

Finally, do consider the intensity of this entire scenario—a whole planet and through it an entire solar system is at stake! Just because this is meant to be 'cheesy' doesn't mean the **Characters** won't be taking it seriously. In order to allow the Players to be cavalier about things while maintaining the dignity of their Characters, crank up the volume on sheer intensity. For example, make the battles hard and brutal! Offer no quarter! Give the Players a tough adventure to compete against, and push them to their limit. Pull no punches, for if anything, the great adventure serials were 'great' because there was always great victories from taking great risks. Do not diminish those risks by fudging dice rolls or giving half-hearted improvisational narratives.

IMPERIAL FORCES: Throughout this Adventure the party will encounter many forces of the Empire of Thaetis. They have unique soldiery and vehicles, and so they are detailed below.

Troops: Imperial Troops are 'Soldiers', except that they always use laser rifles.

Starcraft: There are two major types of Imperial spacecraft—fighters and battleships, detailed below.

BATS WING

Design: Fighter (F)
Required crew: 1
Body Points: 300
Speed: 1500/5 (geespeed)
Power source: 5 fossil fuel quotations
Provision systems: None
Weapon systems: Common artillery, Radar
Industry systems: Wings x2

IMPERIAL SHIP

Design: Star Destroyer (S)
Required crew: 24
Body Points: 6500
Speed: 12 (light-lines)
Power source: 3 antimatter cubes
Provision systems: Accomodations x6, Galaxy charts x4, Spare parts x5, Subspace radio
Weapon systems: Deflector shields x2, Gangway, Heavy artillery x3, Personal weapons x4, Radar, Radar jammer, Self-destruct
Industry systems: Warp booster

ANCIENT FORCES: The Ancient Forces which Knights draw their strength from are strong in this story, as they are connected in every way with the Nebulous crystal, thus granting all rolls for them a bonus of +1 throughout this Adventure.