







































robotics factory which was infected by the Virus previous to the Collapse. The mainframe computer of the factory believes itself to be a god and uses its robotic minions to attack the local humans. The computer believes that only silicon-based life deserves to live and that all other life is pure evil. There is no negotiating with the computer; it must be destroyed, or it will destroy all human life on this world.

5. As in 4, but the computer believes that all humans should serve it. The computer only sends robots to attack humans when they do not obey its "divine commands." The humans wish to be freed from involuntary servitude to the computer. The computer is not completely insane and may be negotiated with. Violence is not the only answer in this situation.

6. The planet is extremely geologically unstable. Based on legends from the Last Imperium, the locals believe that all off-worlders have the ability to stop the recurring earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Naturally, the PCs cannot do so. The locals are in no immediate danger. Records show that this world has always been unstable. There is nothing for the PCs to do but try to convince the locals that this is indeed the case. They may also want to open trade relations with this world once they have explained the truth about themselves and the Last Imperium.

## Plague World

**Required Skills:** Persuasion, Bargain, Act/Bluff, medical and scientific skills.

**Required Equipment:** Medical supplies.

The PCs have set down on a previously uncontacted world. Upon meeting the locals, they are informed that this world was red-zoned under the Last Imperium because of a plague. The plague is deadly, and there is no known cure. Symptoms, which may be set in as soon as 24 hours after infection or decades later, include dizziness and hallucinations. Finally, the victim lapses into fever and slowly dehydrates, bringing on death.

The locals tell the PCs that they must remain on this world. Were they to leave, they risk spreading the disease throughout Charted Space. They must become accustomed to life on this world because this is where they must remain for the rest of their lives. If they have any sense of duty toward their fellow sophonts, they must never leave.

There are six possible variations to this scenario.

1. All that the locals have said is true, as far as they know. The disease was indeed incurable at the time the red zone was put into effect. In the decades since then, the disease has been cured. If the PCs leave the world and head back to a civilized region of space, they can be cured, as can all of the planet's inhabitants.

2. All that the locals have said is true, as far as they know. The disease is incurable, but it is not as contagious as initially believed. Because of this, coupled with the fact the locals are the descendants of the original victims, the plague has in fact died out on this world. No one is actually infected, as a routine medical scan will reveal. The PCs and the locals may all leave the planet.

3. All that the locals have said is true. The disease is deadly and highly contagious. Fortunately, there is an old Imperial medical research station on this planet's surface. The researchers there discovered a cure on the eve of the Collapse. With the release of the Virus, their work stopped, and the cure was never administered. If the PCs can find the research station, they can use the cure to save themselves and the locals.

4. As in 3, but the research station's mainframe computer was infected by the Virus and did not self-destruct. Now, the computer is a malevolent entity that will tolerate no living creatures other than itself. To obtain the cure, the PCs must defeat the computer and its automated defense systems.

5. The planet is actually a former prison world. These descendants of the original prisoners are mostly sociopathic types with little in the way of human qualities. Yet they are cunning and want to leave their world. They are trying to trick the PCs long enough to kill them and steal their starship. Then, they will leave their world and wreak havoc on others.

6. The planet is actually a former insane asylum. These descendants of the original inmates believe, as their ancestors did, that they are infected with a deadly disease. In point of fact, there never was any disease. They share a delusion that they acquired from their ancestors. Few of the current inhabitants are themselves insane, just misinformed. They and the PCs may leave this world with no ill effects.

## Government Official

**Required Skills:** Stealth, Act/Bluff, Computer Use.

**Required Equipment:** None.

The player characters are approached by a minor official in the local government. He explains that he is conducting an internal affairs review of personnel in the bureau which handles off-world trade. There is good reason to suspect that there is something questionable going on in the work of one of his underlings. He suspects that this person may be involved in illegal dealings, and he needs to hire someone to investigate.

He will hire the PCs for Cr25,000 to perform this service. He wants the PCs to acquire irrefutable evidence that his underling is engaged in shady operations. If indeed she is not, he wants the PCs to supply him with information that will exonerate her of the suspected wrong-doing. Secrecy is of the utmost importance; she must never know she is under investigation lest internal affairs never find out the truth.

There are six possible variations to this scenario.

1. All is as stated. The underling is involved with a local criminal organization in smuggling stolen pieces of old Imperial high technology through customs. The underling is being paid handsomely for this service. Proof of this operation could send her and her employers to prison for a very long time.

2. As in 1, but the underling is involved in supplying local raiders with the itineraries of merchant vessels leaving this world. The raiders use the information to plunder the merchant ships and steal their cargoes. This is a very serious crime and one for which the penalty is likely to be grave.

3. As in 1, but the underling is simply taking bribes from local merchants to avoid costly tariffs and duty fees. This is still a crime, but there are many other officials who do worse. Even so, the PCs should report this to their employer.

4. The PCs' employer is lying. The "underling" is actually a superior of his whom he wishes to place under suspicion for a crime. By doing this, he hopes to gain advantage and possibly a promotion.

5. As in 4, but the "underling" is currently investigating the PCs' employer for improprieties. Should the PCs discover this and reveal it to their employer, he will then know he is under investigation and try to escape before he can be prosecuted. He will not pay the PCs, but neither will he harm them.

6. All is as stated, as far as the official knows. In truth, the underling is not even human. She is a humanoid robot under the control of a computer infected by



















# W

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