

Legends of Time and Space presents

S.O.S.

A science-fiction role-playing adventure by

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Weary to the bone, your eyes look over to the communication screen. "The distress signal is new," the officer tells you. Thinking deeply, you ask, "What are the details again?"

Patently, he repeats. "Less than an hour ago, remote sensors under the control of Void Station 90 reported a distress signal in the area of Lemm. What makes it odd is that it's a distress signal only. It has no details about the actual

event." The officer continues. "What is your response? We really need to know."

Tired, weary, and reluctantly, you agree. Sometimes there's just no one else qualified to pull these people out of their predicaments. "OK," you say. You gather your clothes, pull on your boots, and put a call in to your team. Another routine rescue on the periphery...



THE ADVENTURE

Entries

The adventure comprises a series of numbered entries. Do not read the entries sequentially, they are intentionally scrambled. As you play, you will be directed to the different numbered entries.

Options

While reading an entry, you will find options directly followed by numbers in parentheses. If you decide to take an option, turn immediately to the corresponding entry number. Continue playing from that point.

Plot Words

Occasionally, an upper case word in parentheses follows a sentence or phrase. This indicates that you have now acquired this plot word. Retain all plot words until specifically instructed to discard them. Plot words have an impact on your fate.

Game Board

The board is divided into playing areas of different sizes. If you read: "You are at A on board III," find board III and place your characters on A. If all A hexes are full, place your characters immediately adjacent. Characters can look through, but cannot enter half-hexes.

Cover

Characters cannot enter spaces containing tree trunks. Entering a rock or scrub space uses all remaining movement. Tree trunks and scrub block line of sight. Firing over intervening rocks and furniture require 4/DX to hit (unless the obstacle is adjacent to the character firing).

Characters

Players start with four beginning characters, each with \$400, which is about one work week of unskilled labor. In addition to skills of choice, every character is literate and has swimming+1.

Encounters

If you select the *attack* option, you have initiative. If you select the *talk* option, decide what to say before continuing. Dead adversaries do not rejuvenate upon subsequent visits. Only after all adversaries are defeated can you loot bodies, search or depart through a different entrance than the one used to enter.

Tactics

Enemies attack the closest player characters first. Unless otherwise stated, adversaries (except the undead) flee upon suffering half their ST or more in damage points.

Checking at Encounters

When the party is asked to pass a check at an encounter, the party elects one character. That character has one chance to pass the check, or he fails and the party suffers the consequences.

Leaving Characters Behind

A party may leave companions behind, but upon returning to that entry, roll one die. On a one or two, the companion is still there in the same condition as before. Otherwise the companion is gone, never to be heard from again.

Time

Only record the passage of time while the party is in transit or overnighing. A party can visit three locations per day (morning, afternoon, evening), though it takes an entire day to travel from island to island. A party must camp for the night following encounters at their last location of the day. Exploring different rooms or buildings of a complex does not use up time.

Rations

One ration feeds one character for one day.

BEGIN

You come out of hyperspace around the barren, rocky, waste-planet of Lemm. It orbits a distant star, and lacks an atmosphere. As a result, the inhospitable grey surface boasts temperatures hundreds of degrees below zero (000).

000

You are aboard the "Tootsie Roll," formally known as "PSG Corvette #3." It is a standard Cruiser-class corvette. The corvette has the following stats:

- 2D6/2, Maneuver+1, Systems+1, Cargo2, Living2, Engineering2, Operations2.
- Aboard the well-equipped corvette, you have:
 - 4x Landing Suits 3/1.
 - 4x Blasters 3D6.
 - 4x 5-point medkits.
 - Inter-system distress beacon.
 - Portable power pack (3P).

Your sensors scan for traces of the distress signal, when suddenly, an alien contact flashes across your navigation screen. Do you want to hail it (001) or attack with initiative (002)?

001

You hail the alien on the standard intergalactic open frequency. You wait, and wait. As the craft gets closer, you begin to wonder if you should open fire. Then a garbled image and static message comes across.

"By the order of the Caliph, this area has been declared off-limits. Please depart this area immediately."

Departing would mean mission failure, and you can't do that. Maybe you need to know more about the situation. Only that might give the alien vessel a jump on you if it's a trap. Decide what to say and talk (037), or attack with initiative (002).

002

The alien ship attacks relentlessly, fighting until the death. It attempts to take your tail, and blast you out of the void.

- Alien Vessel: D6/1, Maneuver+0, Systems+2, Cargo1, Living1, Engineering1, Operations1.

If you disable the vessel, you can board. Decide your boarding party and the equipment they carry (003). Otherwise, you can destroy her where she hangs (004), or leave the wreckage to drift for eternity (006).

003

You are at A on a 5x5 board. Surprisingly, there is only one alien aboard the vessel. It is a pinkish humanoid form, and naked to boot. This is one ugly alien! However, before you can shoot it, faster than you can react, it lashes out at you with a whip-like tentacle. The alien fights to the death.

- Alien: ST16 DX14 IQ14; whip-like tentacle can attack an enemy up to two spaces away 2D6+2. Can move twice in its own turn, AND can react once in your turn without suffering a movement penalty in its turn.

If you kill this fearsome beast, you search the cabin and are able to download data files onto digital storage. You take this with you for analysis (ALIENPLAN). There is nothing left of import on this vessel; you must now return to your ship. But before moving on, you will have to destroy this hulk to prevent the technology from falling into the wrong hands. You return to your shuttle, fly back to your ship, and embark (004).

004

Mustering your weapons, you fire on the remnants of the alien hull. In an instantaneous flash, the vessel disintegrates into a million pieces. There's nothing quite as satisfying as complete destruction of your enemies. On passing 3/IQ, go to (008); otherwise (005).

005

Various colored lights blink in the secure darkness of your operations room. You carefully look across the holographic image of the planet's surface and locate the distress beacon on your chart of Lemm. You can board the shuttle and descend to the planet's surface (007), or if you've already had enough, you can limp back to VS90, your mission having failed (045).

006

There are too many things to do, and you have limited time. Furthermore, it's just not worth it to waste ammunition on a destroyed vessel. You

mark the wreckage on your holochart, and prepare to search for the distress beacon. On passing 3/IQ, go to (008); otherwise (005).

007

Though safely within the warm hull of your shuttle, outside, the rocky landscape gives you the creeps. Decide who will depart the shuttle and the equipment they carry. Once everyone is geared up, you step out the hatch and onto the grey, ashen surface.

There is no wind here, and it is so quiet that you can hear yourself breathe. Before you lies a crash-landed vessel that doesn't quite look like anything you've seen before. It is a Terran science vessel, but in remarkably good condition.

You enter through the vessel's operations airlock. Though emergency power still keeps dim lights running in the ship, everything else is quiet. You feel as if you are walking through a ghost town. Then a shape before you moves. You can fire on it (010), hold your fire and talk to it (012).

008

Before changing the view on the sensor screen over to the planet, something odd catches your eye. It's the damndest thing every! The debris from the destroyed alien vessel implodes back into a central location, congealing into an amorphous black mass. Really odd. However, there's not that much that the glob can do, so you turn your attention to the planet's surface (005).

009

"There is nothing to discuss," the strange voice crackles over the communications screen. "Prepare to be boarded." You can allow yourself to be boarded (038), or you can fight (002).

010

You are at E in a 5x5 room; the enemy creature is at C. It fights to the death.

- Spaceman: ST12 DX11 IQ12; Laser Rifle 2D6+1(A).

If you kill the spaceman, go to (011). If you capture him, go to (012).

011

You realize that it was a Terran. You can claim his laser rifle as it might come in handy. The poor fellow was in pretty bad shape already though, and a quick look at the broken consoles and chairs shows that there was a desperate struggle here. There is another body lying grotesquely desiccated on the floor, but there is no blood. It's almost as if the poor guy's body fluids were completely sucked out! (013).

012

You talk to the man in the dark. He seems incredibly relieved to see other humans. Nevertheless, he is in a paranoid state, and keeps going on about the monsters that have infested the ship. He warns you to kill yourselves and destroy your ship. Otherwise, the monsters will get to civilization.

You try and soothe him, concurrently doing a quick health examination. However, he is already seriously wounded, and try as you can, you simply don't have the facilities to save him. Oddly, he seems to pass into a calm. Perhaps he is happy to die in the company of his own kind (013).

013

Emergency power still provides oxygen, systems power, and some lights. Everything else is in a shambles. Consoles are broken, chairs overturned, and desktop items scattered all over the floor. The previous fight here was clearly desperate. You can walk across the steel deck to engineering (018), living (023), cargo (028), or on passing 3/IQ against Systech, download files from the ship's computer (014). If you have finished your investigation, you can depart the vessel (039).

014

Fortunately, the emergency power has kept the ship's computer alive. You are aboard the Terran vessel "Clementine." She is a science vessel equipped to conduct experiments on alien worlds. Science vessels are usually well equipped, in order to prepare for unforeseen problems. That means that the ship should be laden with tools, gadgets, and possibly, living capture experiments. You download the ship's plan, log, and any other files that you can find (CLEMENTINE) (013).

015

Every so carefully, you look around the heavy machinery, the hair standing up on the back of your neck. Before you, three alien creatures, spider-like in appearance, snack on a fresh human body. You can talk (017) or attack (016).

016

Any alien that you catch dining on human flesh is no friend of yours. You ready your weapons, and prepare to blast these monsters out of the void. You are at A on board I; the aliens dine on the body at E.

- Alien (3): ST13 DX9 IQ12; Mind Blow: on winning an IQ check against its target, it delivers D3 damage.

If you survive, go to (019).

017

Despite their taste for human flesh, they still could be an intelligent race. And it *would* be a step forward for humankind to make contact. You hail them. They look up from their feasting and make "eye" contact with you. Suddenly, you all feel immense headaches and gasp for air.

Each character checks 3/IQ. Any character who survives can attack the aliens. Each character who fails, checks 3/IQ once per turn. Upon passing, he can join the fray at that time (016).

018

You are in engineering. The smell of hydrocarbon solvents and industrial lubricants hangs in the air. Large propulsion machinery punctuates the space. You can search this area (015), or you can return to operations (013).

019

In the corner of the clean engine room, there is a jumbled mess. You approach, and find a human body. A shudder goes down your spine as you see the twisted form. Then it's eyes blink and desperation looks out at you.

"Did you kill it?" he asks with pleading eyes. "Did you get it? Is it still here?" You try and ascertain what "it" is, but the man is delirious. You do your utmost best to see if you can heal the man's wounds, but he is too far gone. After a few more minutes, the man expires as his eyes glaze. You return to operations (013).

020

The poor thing must be scared! You move up slowly, so as not to alarm the animal. You speak in a gentle tone, using a calming voice to keep it from getting upset. Then, with a reverberating sound, it seems to pass gas (022).

021

If this creature were not dangerous, the room would not be so scattered. Something happened here, and this animal was the cause of the problem. You attack with initiative (022).

022

You are at A in a 5x5 room. The alien is under a bunk at C. The alien attacks by emitting a gas cloud to stun its prey, and charging out and finishing it off. It will attack and kill only one opponent, and then proceed to feast on the victim's flesh.

- Alien: ST12 DX11 IQ9; Bite D6+2; Gas cloud affects the entire room, but lasts only three turns. Anyone in the gas cloud is -3 to all attributes for the three turns. Alien attacks with gas cloud once, and then goes after only one victim (024).

023

You are in the vessel's living compartment. Bunks are stacked two to a room, and personal belongings are stored in what would be neatly arranged foot lockers. However, the room is a battle zone and objects are scattered across the floor. Then you detect what seem to be eyes looking out at you from under one of the bunks. You can try and coax it out (020), or attack (021).

024

You look through the compartment, and a faint female voice greets you. "Don't let it get to the cargo bay," the voice pleads. You spin around to find a horribly battered woman, gasping for air. You can question her (025), or put her out of her misery (026).

025

If you asked her about "it," go to (027). Otherwise, the woman warns you not to let it get to the cargo bay.

"There are too many science captures in the cargo bay," she states in gasping breaths. "Many of those are dangerous in their own right. If it gets in there, then we have even more trouble that we think."

You try to get more out of her, but her gasping stops and she expires, eyes wide open. You duck through the bulkhead door, and return to operations (013).

026

It is just heart-rending seeing this poor woman in such a horrible condition. She gasps miserably, every breath betraying the deeper pain that she suffers. It is clear that she will not live, so you pull out a weapon, and put her out of her misery. There is nothing else of interest in the compartment. You step through the bulkhead and return to operations (013).

027

Barely coherent, she explains her encounter with "it." She tells you in gasping breaths, "It's a great big ugly reptile, 'kind of looks like a fox if that's possible. Only it can squeeze into really small places. I don't know how. It crushed Peter in its jaws, and then sucked out his brain, and all his blood."

"Where is it now?" you ask urgently. But the woman doesn't know. "Just be careful that it doesn't follow you back." You look at one another with worried glances. The woman then relaxes and slips into shock. She is too far gone to be helped. With no other options, you return to Operations (013).

028

This cargo bay has been modified to accommodate a scientific lab. However, unlike the sterile labs that you have seen in images, boxes have been torn open, experiments shattered, and debris scattered about the deck. In the background, some broken steam tube is hissing intermittently, and stressed machinery is groaning. You can depart immediately to operations (013) or look around (029).

029

The hissing and groaning turns to hissing and growling. Carefully stepping over the rubble, you surprise two large alien reptiles, who seem to have escaped from retaining cages, though no cages are in sight. One resembles a lion and the other, a large fox. They prepare to rip each other to pieces in a vicious battle. They both turn to you at the same time, hissing and growling, waiting for the right moment. You can talk (030), or attack with initiative (034).

030

Defying your wildest belief, the lion-reptile turns to you and says in a distinguishable but hissing voice, "The stricktar is tricky and deceitful. Help me kill him, and I will give you strength." The fox-like reptile hisses back, "The Grakian is reckless and dangerous. You must put him down, or he will kill us all." You can side with the grakian (032), the stricktar (033) or attack both with initiative (034).

031

The stricktar, if he survives, stands there with you, panting as he recovers from the battle. Then he turns to you and thanks you in a strange, untrustworthy, reptilian hiss. He continues.

"Your mediation gave us hope, but even under these dire circumstances, it seems that grakians and we stricktar are unable to reconcile our differences.

"Just because the grakian is temporarily down, however, doesn't mean he won't still be a serious problem. Quick! I will take his water."

The stricktar extends out a hand and touches the grakian on the body. You watch in fantastical disbelief as the grakian's body curls up, desiccated.

"We must leave this place now," the stricktar says. "Can you take me to refuge?" You can take the stricktar with you (036), leave him and return to operations (013), or attack to kill him, dropping the plotword STRICKTAR (034).

032

Desperation crosses the fox-reptile's eyes as he attacks your closest character. He lets out a

piercing hiss and the fight is on. The lion stays out of the fight (GRAKIAN) (034).

033

An inner fury burns in the lion-reptile's eyes as he joins the fight. He charges, attacking your closest character. The fox-reptile fights on your side (STRICKTAR) (034).

034

You are at A in a 10x10 room; the two animals are in the center of the room at E, eyeing you cautiously. Each animal will wait until you kill the other one, and then attack the victor. If you attack them both, they both attack you. They fight to the death.

- Lion/reptile (grakian): ST24 DX13 IQ10; Bite/claws 3D6.
- Fox/reptile (stricktar): ST14 DX13 IQ14; Bite/claws 2D6--each damage point it delivers gives it +1 ST.

If you survive and have the plotword GRAKIAN, go to (035); STRICKTAR, go to (031). Otherwise, other than your life, unless you are a taxidermist, you have no trophy to show for your victory. You return to operations (013).

035

Thank goodness that fight is over. Now you can turn to the intriguing task of establishing communications with a new alien race. However, just as you turn to talk to the grakian, it attacks with initiative! Discard the plot word GRAKIAN (034).

036

It's clear, based on what you know, that for the greater good, you must take the stricktar with you. He falls in with your group, following your party until the end of your adventure (PASSENGER). You feel comforted with your new reptilian companion. You return to operations (013).

037

The voice tells you, "There has been a stricktar infestation in this sector. All travel in and out is prohibited." This seems odd to you. You've never seen this type of alien vessel before, and what the hell's a 'stricktar'? You can ask for more detail (009) or attack with initiative (002).

038

You are in the operations room aboard the Tootsie Roll. Place your characters on a 5x5 board, around the control console in the middle of the board. A single alien "enforcer" enters at A. He will kill everyone aboard, then detonate the Tootsie Roll to sterilize the area.

- Alien: ST16 DX14 IQ14; whip-like tentacle can attack an enemy up to two spaces away 2D6+2. Can move twice in its own turn, AND can react once in your turn without suffering a move penalty later in its own turn.

If you kill the alien, his ship mysteriously self-destructs in beautiful orange ball of fire. On passing 3/IQ, go to (008); otherwise (005).

039

You enter the operations airlock one last time on your way out. Oddly enough, you feel as if there is an additional member in your party, though with all logic, you can reasonably account for everyone. Exiting into the dark void, you walk across the crunching grey dust towards your shuttle. You board, blast off into orbit and rendezvous with the Tootsie Roll.

Finally, you are "home" at last. You cast off your gear and pull off your shoes, kicking up your feet in the operations compartment. You set your navigation controls, and make the jump into hyperspace. You can finally relax now--unless you have the plotword PASSENGER, whereupon you must go to (040); otherwise (041).

040

Just as you think it's safe, the stricktar becomes agitated, and begins flailing around. You can try to see if there is anything medically wrong, but it keeps thrashing, even harder now than before. Suddenly, with superhuman strength, it attacks. It will kill every member of the party, fighting to the death.

- Stricktar: ST14 DX13 IQ14; Bite/claws 2D6--each damage point it delivers increases its ST by +1.

If you survive, you quickly put the body of the beast into a quarantine case in the cargo bay. You now return to base (041).

041

Everyone belts in, preparing for the jump to VS90 to provide the results of your investigation. The Tootsie Roll surges, and with stomach-churning acceleration, you jump into hyperspace. Before long, you come out of hyperspace, find headquarters and dock. You exit the Tootsie Roll, walk through machine shops, docking bays, engineering spaces, and finally come upon the station administrative office. The station commander is waiting when you arrive.

If you have the plotword ALIENPLAN, go to (042); CLEMENTINE, go to (043). Otherwise, go to (044).

042

You provide the portable memory from the alien ship to the station commander. After taking an initial view, he is very impressed. Apparently, you have captured valuable intelligence from a newly discovered alien species. Your intelligence will prove critical, should Terran forces be forced to fight this new enemy. Everyone gains one karma point (041)

043

The commander takes the ship's log, and plays it on the holoplayer. The player begins, showing the log of the Clementine, imperial science vessel. You look through the log, noting significant highlights.

The Clementine's confidential mission was to investigate a population disturbance on a planet off the Charon system, one jump away from Lemm. This is odd, because there is no record of this investigation, nor do you recall anything of the sort.

The log continues. During the investigation, the Clementine was able to obtain live capture (animal specimens), and was also able to get the Grakians to send an emissaries. However, upon departure, a cloaked alien vessel appeared and began firing on the Clementine. She jumped into hyperspace, but the alien followed.

During this episode, live captures escaped from the converted cargo bay and began attacking the crew. This coincided, oddly enough, with the presence of a Stricktar. The Clementine crash landed upon Lemm, and the ship's beacon began sending.

This almost raises more questions than it answers. What was the nature of the alien race that fired on the Clementine? What more is there to the story of the Grakian? What is a stricktar? (044)

044

Congratulations, your mission is complete. Despite the missions' failure to rescue the crew, the PSG now knows more of new threats and dangers on the periphery. Your work will potentially save many, many lives. Additionally, for your efforts, the PSG provides you 10K credits.

045

When you return and meet with the VS90 base commander, his body language betrays extreme agitation.

"Here at the periphery," he begins, "life is always 'on the edge.' We have scarce resources, and lives are precious. If we do not look after one another, we will fail, and all the dangers of the

territory will overcome the civilization that we enjoy."

He continues on, but you've heard it all. You can offer to re-embark on the mission (000), or call it a day, your reputation tarnished, and your ego bruised. If so, your mission is over.