

# UNTIMELY DISCOVERY

While exploring the space around the gas giant Echidna, the spacers receive an anomalous reading from one of their sensors. It appears to have detected a concentration of refined metals in a decaying orbit around the planet. Alternately, the team is assigned a scoutship or small freighter and dispatched from Burroughs to investigate faint but strange signals apparently of artificial origin, but conforming to no known navigational or communication systems.

Regardless, upon reaching orbit around Echidna, they discover an ancient spacecraft, apparently of Earth or Serran origin. Speed is of essence, as the point of origin is slowly being drawn into the gas giant's gravity well.

## LOST IN SPACE

The heroes find the source of the readings to be a large spacecraft, but one of a design not seen in nearly five hundred years. Apparently, it drifted into the system and got caught in Echidna's gravity well. It is on a decaying orbit, and will eventually spiral into the planet.

The vessel has suffered numerous meteor strikes, and one has obliterated the section of the hull that would carry any official identification numbers, although a name that translates from Serran into *Discovery* is visible on the bow. However, any Serran who makes a Common Knowledge roll recognizes it is a very archaic form of the word.

The craft's design does not appear in any current graphical database. A Knowledge (History) roll identifies it as likely an early attempt at a long-distance STL starship, one in which the crew is kept in suspended animation. If the group has a way to detect energy signatures on the vessel, there is only a weak one present, possibly not even enough to maintain life-support.

Another meteor strike has holed the area of the vessel that likely housed the bridge.

## TIME CAPSULE

Navigating close enough to the vessel for visual inspection or boarding amidst the debris field requires a Piloting roll. If the spacer rolls a critical failure, she collides with the *Discovery*, with the damage based on the heroes' speed alone.

There are old, but obvious entry ports on the sides of the *Discovery*. However, without power, the adventurers must cut through the hull somehow. An alternate entry method is through the hole in the bridge section. This doesn't require any cutting or debris removal.

The bridge itself suffered some damage from the impact. A Repair roll (-2) can restore emergency power to the ship. A simple diagnostic reveals that the vessel's engines have suffered severe damage at some point in the past and are effectively unrepairable. To move the *Discovery*, the heroes must find a way to tow it.

There appears to be little of value on the *Discovery*. It is literally centuries out of date, and in too poor of shape to interest a collector. However, once power is restored, a graphic on one monitor indicates a sizeable number of cryogenically-frozen passengers in the ship's hold, nearly 400 of who are still viable.

A successful Healing roll (-2) is sufficient to resuscitate one, but leaves the colonist barely conscious and too disoriented to respond to queries. A raise on the roll enables the passenger to interact with the team, but due to the psychology of the colonist, he may or may not answer honestly.

## INTRUDER ALERT

Rebooting the ship's power has a dangerous side effect which the characters discover if they try to explore the vessel

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A SAVAGE WORLDS ONE SHEET BY JOHN GOFF

WITH ART BY IGOR VITKOVSKIY



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beyond the bridge. To prevent the passengers from gaining control of the *Discovery* in the event of a catastrophic failure of the cryogenic chambers, the ship was outfitted with automated turrets guarding the passageways. These can be disabled from the bridge with either a Repair or Knowledge (Computers) roll, but unless the spacers specifically look for such internal defenses, their first exposure to them is when a pair opens fire!

The guns are always stationed in pairs, usually at each end of a corridor.

## SENTRY GUN

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

**Skills:** Notice d8, Shooting d8

**Pace:** —; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 7 (4)

**Gear:** The sentry gun has two flechette guns with extended magazines (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d4+1, RoF 3, Shots 240) in 360° turret.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +4:** Hardened plating.
- **Immobile:** Sentry guns cannot move and are affixed to the ship's interior structure.
- **Sensor Suite:** +4 Notice vs. sound, motion, chemicals, radiation, and electrical fields up to 500 yards distant.
- **Size -1:** Sentry guns are about 4' tall.

## LEGAL QUANDARY

A Knowledge (Computers) at -2—or Common Knowledge roll from a character with the appropriate background—can call up the basic ship's logs.

The *Discovery* was an old Serran colony ship, but also technically a penal vessel. The ship was completely operated by computer, and the entire complement of 500 colonists was comprised of individuals who were deemed undesirable by the early Serran psychics. While there are no murderers, rapists, or similar violent convicts, all of those aboard were determined to be untrustworthy and incapable of rehabilitation suitable for Serran society. They were offered indefinite imprisonment or the choice of freedom on an alien world.

The concept of “thought crime” might be appalling to the rescue party, but the Serran psychics were accurate in their assessments. The *Discovery* survivors are likely to be a problem to any society that attempts to integrate them.

To add to the problem of what to do with the “colonists”, a further search of the ship's records indicates Sigma Hydae was the target system for the vessel. This may cast a cloud over Vestal's claim on Leviathan (see *The Last Parsec: Leviathan*), which is something their employer may well frown upon. Additionally, they renounced Serran citizenship upon accepting the charter, so they have no other home to which to return.

## MORAL DILEMMA

Vestal is not keen on taking a shipload of social misfits onto its premier destination planet. On the other hand, leaving the passengers to their fate signs their death warrant. Not only does the ship not have adequate supplies to sustain them for any length of time, within less than two weeks, the ancient spacecraft falls into Echidna's atmosphere and is ripped apart.

If the heroes bring the *Discovery* or its passengers back to Leviathan, the “colonists” pose a significant problem. The corporation does not see profit in transporting a large number of non-paying customers to another destination—and no other planet wants them anyway!

Vestal's corporate and legal teams spend weeks hashing through the situation. Eventually, they strike a deal to allow the “colonists” to remain as settlers on Leviathan, but relegate them to a remote area of the planet. Those who wish to have their cases reconsidered are held in temporary housing until they can be transported off planet. Nearly all choose to forge a new life on the planet—where they can become either a resource or a headache for the heroes!

