

SPACE WURM

VS.

MOONICORN

PREVIEW



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What Is This?

Space Wurm vs. Moonicorn is a science fantasy campaign setting for the *Dungeon World* role-playing game. It is directly inspired by Jackson Tegu's *Monsterhearts* supplement *Second Skins*, and as a consequence of that, it also plays out rather differently from the way most other *Dungeon World* campaigns do. In this version of the game, one player always portrays Space Wurm, the most powerful person in the whole galaxy, while another always portrays Moonicorn, a free-thinking spirit who is also an iconoclastic rebel, perhaps even a revolutionary! The remaining players—preferably three or more in number—portray other people whose destinies are intertwined with those of both Space Wurm and Moonicorn.

Space Wurm's goal is to conquer and rule. Moonicorn's goal is to promote freedom and challenge authority. Each other player must decide where they stand in relation to this pair, to both of them. Will they choose a side, or refuse to do so? Will they try to mediate between them, or sabotage them both?

Meanwhile, the GM's goal is to destroy it all and to smash both Space Wurm and Moonicorn under the feet of multiple menacing fronts. Perhaps these dangers will even give the two of them common cause, help them to set aside their differences, and unite their efforts? Who knows! The whole point of playing is to find out what happens.

This work builds on:

- *Adventures on Dungeon Planet*, by Johnstone Metzger.
- *Apocalypse World*, by D. Vincent Baker.
- *Battle Between the Worlds*, by Johnstone Metzger.
- “Dragon-Slaying on a Timetable: Running Tight 4-Hour Dungeon World One-Shots With Zero Preparation,” by John Aegard.
- *Dungeon World*, by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel.
- *In a Wicked Age*, by D. Vincent Baker.
- *Monsterhearts*, by Avery Mcdaldno.
- *The Second Skins*, by Jackson Tegu.



Competitive Play

This is a competitive game—or semi-competitive, if you prefer, since that is not necessarily the primary focus of the game. The rivalry between Space Wurm and Moonicorn is there to drive play forward and create hard choices for the characters to make, not to obscure or replace the role-playing of characters.

This game has winners and losers. Even if nobody wins, that just means that everyone loses. This shouldn't be the sole focus of the game, however, nor should it be used as an excuse to ignore the part of the game that is about role-playing a character. Competition works to give your characters motivations, and it is always possible for them to work together to defeat the enemies that the GM introduces. That said, if all the players are on the same page, pushing as hard as you can for your character's goals can make for exciting play, as I hope you will discover when you try it out.

Quick Play Rules

The normal version of the game is a supplement for *Dungeon World*, and requires all the normal rules from that game, in addition to all the new rules introduced in this book. This can be a lot to keep track of! It also requires you to play numerous sessions, probably more than a dozen, possibly more than two dozen.

The quick play rules slim everything down so you can play a one-shot version of *Space Wurm vs. Moonicorn*. The GM needs to be familiar with both the *Dungeon World* rules as well as the GM section in this book, but all the rules the players need to use are contained on the quick play character sheets.



Space Wurm's Mix Tape Playlist

1. Vangelis, "Prologue and Main Titles" (Blade Runner OST, Esper Edition).
2. Laibach, "B Mashina."
3. VNV Nation, "Kingdom."
4. Monster Magnet, "Space Lord (Intergalactic 7" Remix)."
5. Beastie Boys, "Intergalactic."
6. Yunique Unit, "Maxstep."
7. Depeche Mode, "World in my Eyes (Cicada Remix)."
8. Eurythmics, "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)."
9. Chvrches, "Liès."
10. How to Destroy Angels, "Parasite."
11. Atari Teenage Riot, "Death Star."
12. EMA, "Satellites."
13. Handsome Furs, "All We Want Baby Is Everything."
14. The Cure, "The Hanging Garden."
15. Crystal Castles ft. Robert Smith, "Not in Love."
16. Ladytron, "Destroy Everything You Touch."
17. VNV Nation, "Carbon."
18. Vox Mod ft. John Rafter Lee, "Aeon + Trevor."
19. Depeche Mode, "Walking in my Shoes."
20. John Newman, "Can You Love Me Again."
21. Vangelis, "End Titles" (Blade Runner OST, Esper Edition).





Space Wurm

You're the most powerful individual in the entire galaxy, **Space Wurm**. Even if you don't rule it directly, you're still wealthy and influential beyond compare. Your name rings out, and your reach is just as long.

Names

No one calls you Space Wurm to your face! Of course you have a name and a title, like God-Empress or Khalifa, but the most important thing is what form of address others use when they speak to you. Choose one (or more if you are greedy): Holiness, Magnificence, Most Glorious One, O Revered Excellency, Our Most Illustrious Leader, Your Grace, Your Great and Terrible Eminence, Your Imperial Majesty, Your Most Serene Highness.

Look

Choose one for each:

Black Hearted, Fire in the Blood, or Sleeps Beneath a Mountain.

Burning Eyes, Greedy Gaze, or Sly Looks.

Calm and Collected, Quiet Step, or Vise-Like Grip.

Coiling, Royal, or Sinister.

Stats

Your base damage is $d10$.

Your load is $8+STR$.

Your maximum HP is $4+Intelligence$.



Origins

Choose your origins:

Autochthonous

No one ever gave you anything. All that you have now, you took for yourself. Take +1 forward to any attempt to keep your treasure close.

Born to Rule

You inherited your glorious position. Now what will you make of it? **When you recruit from the two sectors of society you start the game in control of,** you always succeed as if you had rolled a 10+, and these hirelings start with loyalty+2, in addition to their other stats.

Construct

You were made to be what you are now. But why and by whom? Choose a common hazard, such as fire, hunger and thirst, lasers, poison, being cut, or a lack of air. You are immune to it.



Starting Moves

You start with these five moves:

Bargaining

When you bargain with an NPC in a ritual manner, take +1 to parley with them. When you bargain with another PC in a ritual manner, you can offer them access to, or resources from, whichever sectors of society you control.

If they are just currency, you can also offer them:

- One use of your voice of authority, as if they were you.
- They can resolve a bond with you and write a new one with someone else.

If they are treasure, you can also offer them:

- +1 forward to anything that involves you in some way.
- One use of ceremony, as if they were you.
- They can resolve a bond with someone else and write one with you.

Ceremony

When you devise a ceremonial activity in order to change the nature of a social group you have authority over, tell the GM what you're trying to achieve. The GM will state one to four requirements from the list below, perhaps mercifully connecting two of them with the word "or," and perhaps not. You must accomplish or abide by these requirements in order to effect the change you want:

- Change will be superficial at best.
- It must be ruthlessly enforced.
- It requires a vast expenditure of resources.
- It will take a long, long time.
- You and your minions risk danger from _____.
- You must dismantle _____ to do it.
- You need help from _____.
- You need to obtain _____ first.



Collector

You have near-countless wealth, riches almost beyond imagining. What do you collect in particular? Choose two:

- Animals as varied as creation itself.
- Civil architecture.
- Gardens of every type.
- Libraries full of knowledge.
- Mansions and palaces.
- Mind-altering experiences.
- Servants of great and wondrous skill.
- Strange, unique inventions.
- Treasures of the ancient world.

When you want to use a thing from one of your collections, describe it and say where it is.

Space Tyrant

Choose two sectors of society that you control:

- Aliens.
- Cybernetics.
- The Imperial throne.
- Interstellar transport.
- Religion.
- The secret police.
- The spice.

Then cross two off: they don't exist. **If you gain control of the remaining three**, you win the game.

Voice of Authority

When you command an organization or group you control to take action, roll+INT. **On a 10+**, they obey relatively quickly, but may need to weed out those who resist. **On a 7-9**, they act slowly, or in the face of resistance. **On a miss**, they encounter disaster trying to execute your orders. An organization or group can only undertake one command at a time.



Alignment

Space Wurm is always evil, but having only one of anything is never enough. Choose another alignment:

Chaotic

Defy the rules you make for others.

Lawful

Follow your own rules.

Neutral

Get what you want.

Gear

Your load is $8+STR$. As far as gear goes, you have access to anything you want, if it comes from the sectors of society that you control, is part of your collection, or can be bought with money.

Bonds

For each of the other PCs (except Moonicorn), decide whether they are treasure or just currency, like so:

- _____ is [just currency / treasure].
- _____ is [just currency / treasure].
- _____ is [just currency / treasure].
- _____ is [just currency / treasure].

You can change your mind about them whenever you like.

Moonicorn is always treasure.

When you give aid to your treasure, roll+2.

When you interfere with those who are just currency, roll+2.

Otherwise, roll+nothing when you aid or interfere. Treasures take an extra +1 when they roll to aid or interfere with you.



Advanced Moves

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves:

The Bait

When you let someone into your private space (or spaces) for longer than a moment, they will inevitably find something that they want. You always know what it is. **When it becomes theirs and is no longer yours**, if they are a PC, they mark XP.

Claws

When you would deal damage to someone other than Moonicorn, either directly or through your minions, you may instead choose to spend 1 XP and capture them. The current scene ends, they suffer no damage, and you frame a new scene immediately with just the two of you. They cannot leave the scene until you let them or they defeat you, and other characters may not enter the scene without your permission.

Exclusive Collection

Choose one collector option to be exclusive to your possessions. At the very least, you own every single exemplary specimen of this thing in the galaxy. At most, there are no examples of this thing outside of your possession at all. The choice is yours.



Fifth Column

When you send your underlings to infiltrate an organization you have no authority over, roll+INT. **On a hit,** you can use ceremony on this organization as if you had authority over them, but **on a 7-9,** your underlings are discovered and purged when you do so.

Hoarder

Add two more things to your collection, from the list or not, as is your whim. You may not add the GM's dangers nor the other PCs.

Jealous Coils

When you defend your treasure, you can redirect attacks made against your treasure to yourself without spending hold until your defence ends. If you also interfere with a PC you treasure while you're defending or guarding them, don't roll. You automatically get a 10+.

Swap Meat

When you bargain with another PC, you can also offer to trade bodies with them. This lasts as long as you want it to or until either of you take damage. The damage remains with the body that was harmed.

Vader

If you make an example of someone when you have only one more requirement left in order to effect a change via ceremony, the change occurs anyway, but on a temporary basis. After an event happens that challenges those changes, they reverse themselves.

The Wealth of the Galaxy

Choose a move from another class. Consider yourself one level lower for purposes of qualifying.

Weirding Module

When you command an individual, roll+INT. **On a hit,** they must choose one:

- Attack you now.
- Flee in terror.
- Obey your commands.

Additionally, **on a 10+,** if they attack you, you may deal your damage to them first. **On a miss,** you must either flee or obey one of their commands.



When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves:

Blood Rite

When you organize a ceremony and the GM gives you conditions to meet, you may ignore one of them if you meet either of the following conditions instead:

- You must declare war and engage the enemy.
- You must sacrifice something personally important to you.

Command Economy

When you use your voice of authority, on a 12+, your orders are carried out immediately and without question, no matter what.

Machines

You can spend an XP to create a machine that allows you to use any one move from another class that has not been taken by another PC. **When you use it**, on a miss, spend an additional XP or your machine breaks and becomes unusable. You can let PCs you treasure use your machines but if you do, you can't spend XP to stop them from breaking on a miss.

Monuments in Darkness

When you erect a monument in your own honour, you can see through its eyes and hear through its ears whenever you like, as long as it still stands.

Never Enough

Requires: The Wealth of the Galaxy

Choose a move from another class. Consider yourself one level lower for purposes of qualifying.

Research Department

You can pose a question to one of your minions and have them perform research to find the answer. **At the beginning of each session**, or after a period of downtime, roll+CHA. **On a 10+**, you are presented with the answer. **On a 7-9**, they're making progress but need more of something to continue, the GM will tell you what.

Rough Trade

Replaces: Swap Meat

When you bargain with another PC, you can also offer to trade bodies with them. This lasts as long as you want it to. If you trade back when you take damage, apply it to your trade partner instead of yourself.

Safe as Houses

Requires: Jealous Coils

When you defend your treasure, you get +1 hold, even on a miss.

Scales

Once per session, you can take a form that is all coils and talons. **In this beastly form**, you have 4 armour, and you can roll with INT instead of STR when you hack and slash, and with CON instead of DEX to volley by breathing fire.

Throne of Blood

Requires: Vader

When you sacrifice someone's life in order to effect change via ceremony when you have only one more requirement left, the change occurs anyway.





Interstellar Transport

Without the ability to move quickly between the many worlds of the galaxy, they cannot be united into a society. The great metal leviathans that travel through the vacant void bring people, far flung as they are, closer together. They move people across space to new places, but they also transport culture, material and otherwise, and resources, making life in all eight corners of the universe not only possible, but enjoyable.

For each of the following aspects of interstellar transport, choose a level of regulation: monopolized, restricted, or unprotected:

- Knowledge of transport routes and travel conditions.
- Mail delivery.
- Policing of transport routes and borders.
- Transportation technology.

A monopolized aspect is completely controlled by a single, central authority. A restricted aspect is regulated by one or more agencies, who have the power to prevent persons they deem unsuitable from gaining access, but do not have total control. An unprotected aspect can be accessed by anyone at any time.

If Space Wurm controls interstellar transport, she picks the regulation level for all four aspects and decides how everything works. If she picks any aspect to be monopolized, she holds the monopoly. If she chooses any aspect to be restricted, she controls the regulators. If she chooses any aspect to be unprotected, she is still the largest player in the field.

If Space Wurm does not control interstellar transport, the player whose character is linked to interstellar transport picks one aspect and its level of regulation. Then picks pass to their right, one pick per player.

If there is no interstellar transport, the entire game takes place in one solar system, and is limited to a maximum of one hospitable planet.



Interstellar Transport Questions

If **interstellar transport is part of the game**, ask these questions of the player whose character is tied to this front. If that character is occupied with other matters, ask the other players instead:

- *What do you dislike about travelling between the stars?*
- *What are the barriers that some people face when they want to travel?*
- *Who is unable to travel between the stars, and why?*

PCs Linked to Interstellar Transport

Ask the player linked to interstellar transport how their character has privileged access to travel routes and/or shipping services. Ask one or more of the other players why their character doesn't.

Travel Methods

Decide which methods of travel exist and answer the questions that come with them, or defer to the player whose character is linked to this front:

Hyperdrive

Starships are able to travel faster than the speed of light by folding space, creating distortion fields around themselves, or by technologically defying the laws of physics and just going fast safely.

For this type of travel, actual distance is a factor in travel times, as is the speed of the ship's hyperdrive. If hyperspace is another dimension, it can have its own physics, completely different from the physical galaxy's.

- *How difficult are hyperdrives to operate?*
- *What are the dangers of hyperspace?*
- *Who makes hyperdrives? How easy are they to obtain?*
- *Who makes the starships that use hyperdrives? Do they also make hyperdrives, or not?*

Mental Projection

People do not have to physically move between the stars—they can send their minds to other planets. Mental projections function as a second body, and some things that affect it—such as violence or magical influence—also affect the



original body, which is incapacitated in a sleep-like state.

It can be confusing to keep track of who is projecting their mind and where their original body actually is. But this method also allows characters to ignore what would be hazards to physical bodies, such as the vacuum of space or the heat of a sun. Perhaps only their interactions with other minds are real?

- *How hard is it to project your mind? Does it require drugs, technology, or training? Can it be done from anywhere, or only certain locations?*
- *What are the dangers of mental projection? Are there creatures made only of mental energy that can be encountered during a projection?*
- *What difficulties are avoided by being a mental projection?*

Stargate

There are portals that exist in space, wormholes that transport starships—or whatever else goes into them—to another part of the galaxy. If these stargates are one-way only, there must be a ring of them creating a circular transportation route, or some other kind of travel method to get ships back to the beginning.

Stargates are fixed at specific locations, so anyone who controls one also controls the traffic that goes through it. They can set up border guards and toll collectors if they wish to.

- *Can new stargates be created? Are there stargates that have been lost and await rediscovery?*
- *How common are stargates? How easy is travel inside areas linked by stargates? Or do stargates lead to single planets only?*
- *How well-controlled are the stargates? Who runs them?*
- *What are the dangers of using stargates?*

Teleportation

People and objects can be transported instantaneously to other planets. Perhaps they step through folds in space, or their atoms are disassembled and reassembled after transportation. Or perhaps they fly through interdimensional tubes across rainbow bridges.

With this version of travel, space ships are not required, and travel can be limited to people moving between habitable planets. How did people first get between the stars? This can be a secret lost in time, or there could be other, slower, methods of travel.

- *How accurate is teleportation? What are the dangers of using it?*
- *How expensive is teleportation?*
- *Who possesses teleportation technology? Is it easy to build a teleporter, or is it a jealously guarded technique?*



Disease Control

A strange new disease runs through populations like a grass fire. Perhaps it only affects certain people—aliens, psychics, or spice addicts, for example. The smaller and more marginalized the community affected is, the slower galactic society is to react to it, the slower they are to shut down the interstellar travel routes through which the disease spreads, and the slower they are to look for a cure.

Once it gets going, this strange plague seems unstoppable, and the authorities are powerless to even fight its effects. Containment measures become ever more strict and repressive. These barriers make it harder and harder to move between locations without getting into trouble. Some areas become quarantined, and travelling there results in social isolation. The longer this danger goes unchecked, the harder it becomes to fight most other dangers as well.

But disease is more than just a social phenomenon, and border security is not its only consequence. What strange symptoms does this disease have? Is it just weakness and death, or are there behavioural anomalies as well? Does it transform people's physical bodies, turning them to stone, chalk, or salt, perhaps? Do they metamorphose into energy or new forms of life?

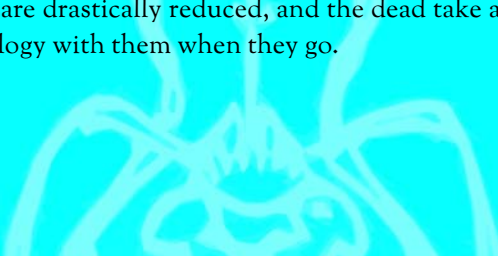
Type: Cursed place. The infected can function separately, as hordes.

Impulse: To infect and spread.

GRIM PORTENTS

- Reports of an isolated outbreak filter into the public consciousness.
- In a busy starport, a lone traveller exhibits disturbing symptoms.
- Infections crop up in far-flung communities all over the galaxy.
- The authorities begin quarantine measures, implementing draconian measures based on fear instead of rational calculation.
- Containment of the disease proves impossible. Every measure taken becomes ineffective almost immediately.
- Populations go into panic mode and turn xenophobic, lashing out against alien communities, foreigners, and minorities.

Impending Doom: The impoverishment of the galaxy, as interstellar travel grinds to a halt. Quarantine measures become elaborately byzantine. Huge populations are drastically reduced, and the dead take all their culture and their technology with them when they go.



Possible Cast

- **Affonso Luiz Carvalho**, director of the Galactic Institute for Virological Research. He is putting all his resources into play in order to obtain enough samples of the disease that it can be studied, mastered, and turned into a piece of technology that will make him, and his institute, rich.
- **Ifeoma Ganda**, survivor. She has been in contact with numerous people who succumbed to the disease, but she continues to show no signs or symptoms of infection. Could she be immune to the plague, or is she an asymptomatic carrier?
- **Michelozzo Basile**, pharmaceutical chemist. He watched a whole city succumb to the infection, but managed to keep himself alive through a drug cocktail he jury-rigged at work. Now he is trying to find someone that can, with his help, find a cure.
- **Park Eun-Soon**, top-level virological technology developer. She has seen preliminary reports on this disease and is starting to panic. She believes it is different from all previous outbreaks—it could be artificial, or an invading alien race, or a symptom of universal entropic collapse. She calls for severe transportation shutdowns.
- **Tullia Nifo**, leader of a military junta recently come to power. She wants to weaponize the disease, whether by capturing it and turning it over to the scientists, or by spreading it amongst her enemies.
- **Yannis Galaxias**, a young illegal immigrant, fleeing political persecution on his homeworld. The government is trying to deport him, either through spacelanes or, if they have been shut down, to a camp. He has health issues and requires medicine.

Disease Control Questions

Ask these of your players when they learn about the disease:

- *Do you have any prior experience with infectious disease? How have you avoided being infected in the past?*
- *How familiar are you with quarantine procedures and border control? How good at smuggling are you?*
- *Which society do you think is the most vulnerable right now? Which has the best chance to keep the infection out?*



Effects of the Disease

What effect does the disease actually have on people? Choose one or more:

- **Invisible physical degeneration:** the victim becomes weaker as the disease progresses, and may lose their senses.
- **Malignant growth(s):** cancerous tumours ruin the victim's body, or cause it to swell and burst.
- **Memory loss:** the victim begins to forget things, and their ability to create memories is diminished, until finally they lose their identity.
- **Mental degeneration:** the victim's mind becomes slower and less capable as the disease progresses.
- **Metamorphosis:** victims transform into new species of life, with new priorities and cultures (see also: Mutant Fever, page 128).
- **Personality change:** the victim loses parts of their personality, while other aspects are exaggerated to compensate, or they simply become a completely different person.
- **Temporal instability:** the victim slows down and their progress through time (into the future) becomes unstable.
- **Visible physical degeneration:** the victim's body falls apart, perhaps rotting, peeling, or crumbling away.

You might also choose to have the disease play out over multiple stages, perhaps causing physical symptoms in the short term and, once those subside, a slow and gradual mental degeneration. Or it might cause memory loss to begin with, before causing metamorphic change, during which the lost memories are replaced.

Then decide on the speed and severity of the disease. It need not be fatal in order to cause alarm, although that certainly helps.

Quarantine Measures

How do countries, planets, and other socio-political units deal with a possible epidemic? For each, choose one (or two that don't contradict each other):

- **Biosurveillance:** Citizens must submit to bioscanners, or have them implanted. The authorities demand this information, for the safety of all, and the people are required to comply. Anyone suspected of being infected can be classified as quarantine and the surrounding people notified remotely.
- **Decontamination:** People and goods seeking entry to this society must undergo decontamination, but other measures are seen as unnecessary. The government has full confidence in their decontaminating procedures.
- **Observation Quarantine:** Persons seeking entry must wait for a time in quarantine, where they are observed by trained personnel. If they show any signs or symptoms of disease during that time, they are turned away. If they remain healthy, they are allowed into this society.
- **Strict Border Controls:** Only the most influential people can determine who enters this society. There is still trade, and there is still travel, but not without invasive surveillance and complicated paperwork.
- **Total Isolation:** The borders are closed, no one gets in to this society at all. Deadly force is used against anyone who tries.



Customs Agent

3 HP ○ Armour

Horde, Intelligent, Organized.

Customs agents care more about the security of their societies than about the comforts of travellers.

Instinct: To defend the border.

Moves:

- Allow a traveller to pass through customs.
- Call for security personnel.
- Demand a customs tax.
- Detain a traveller.
- Put a customs area on lockdown.

Tactics:

If their paperwork is in order and they don't seem suspicious: Allow them entry but apply a customs tax if necessary.

If they look shady: Detain them, question them, search their bags.

If they try to be funny: Give them the dead-eye stare.

Weaknesses:

Customs agents are only looking for things they know about. If they have been alerted to drug smuggling, they look for that. If they suspect terrorists, they look for that. If they have no idea there's a highly contagious disease going around, they don't have any special means of detecting it available.

Infected Horde

16 HP ○ Armour

Amorphous, Devious, Horde, Terrifying.*

Special Qualities: Functions as a single (solitary) monster, Infected.

When the quarantine measures fail and the disease runs rampant through a population, the inevitable occurs: outbreaks of rioting by the infected. Panicked and irrational, they expend the last of their life's energies wreaking destruction and spreading the disease.

Instinct: To run wild.

Attacks:

- Cause massive property damage.
- Swarm (1d6 damage, infection; close).

Moves:

- Cause others to join their ranks.
- Rush the barricades.

Rogue Virologist

6 HP | Armour

Devious, Group, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.

Special Qualities: Cover story, Scientist.

Not every scientist is working hard to eradicate the disease. It holds so much potential in it, and some people want to harness that. Some virologists are out to study the disease, learn from it, and perfect it. Not stop it.

Instinct: To witness the virus flower and bloom.

Moves:

- Call for evacuation.
- Collect and store virological data.
- Observe proper quarantine protocols.
- Pass as some other official person.
- Summon security personnel.

Tactics:

If the disease requires new hosts: Assist the infection's spread.

When the disease is detected: Observe but do not interfere.

When samples are available: Obtain them even at the cost of others' lives.

Weaknesses:

Rogue virologists are either blindly overconfident or danger addicts. While the former act calmly and rationally when they are in control of the situation, when things go wrong, they lose control of everything, especially their composure. The latter never break down, but they're always upping the stakes.



Security Officer

3 HP 3 Armour

Horde, Intelligent, Organized.

The fallout from the plague comes in many forms: lawless rioting, theft and vandalism; violence in the name of quarantine measures; massive death tolls, and hordes of refugees. The security forces that have to maintain order are, by definition, overworked, underpaid, and barely trained.

Instinct: To clean up this mess as fast as possible.

Attacks:

- Baton charge (1d4 damage, forceful, messy; close).
- Shotguns (1d8 damage, messy; near)
- Water cannon (stun damage, messy; near).

Moves:

- Coordinate with other units.
- Half-ass the paperwork.
- Intimidate civilians.
- Scatter a crowd.

Tactics:

If they look infected: Shoot them before they get too close.

If they look like upstanding citizens: Warn them of any dangers and tell them to get to where it's safe.

When they resist necessary procedures: Punish them.

Weaknesses:

Security officers hate details involving disease. They hate having to wear the protective gear, they hate risking contact with the disease, and they hate having to see, close up and personal, people who are infected. They would rather do any other shit detail than this one.





Space Madness

Space is a dangerous place, not only for the body, but also for the mind. It drives people mad! Is there no one who can find the solution to this devious problem? Or is it perhaps the work of a nefarious cabal of scientists, conspiring to shut down interstellar shipping routes? Careful, spacefarer! If they hear you say that, they'll think you're paranoid... they might even think *you're* the one who is mad!

Type: Cursed place.

Impulse: To change perceptions.

GRIM PORTENTS

- A ship crashes, and the crew blames it on the captain's space madness.
- A missing ship is found, its entire crew having gone insane.
- Passengers begin exhibiting signs of space madness, all over the galaxy.
- Prominent scientists introduce a way to resist the space madness, resulting in an immediate increase in travel between the stars.
- Space madness proves too strong, not even science can hold it at bay. Record numbers of passengers succumb to madness.
- Spacefarers spread the madness to people who have never been to space.

Impending Doom: Interstellar travel becomes exceedingly rare, because of the danger and the cost to the human mind. The fear of contagion causes the rest of society to ostracize spacefarers, but their numbers dwindle in any case, due to short life expectancy. With so few people willing to travel professionally, there are fewer opportunities for people to take advantage of their services, even if they can resist the madness for a few trips. It also means there are fewer reasons to develop new technologies related to interstellar travel. The galaxy grows ever more and more isolated from itself.

This list of grim portents is for depicting a society afflicted by space madness. Individuals can also suffer from space madness, and be affected by a different list of grim portents which depend on the type of madness they suffer.

Possible Cast

- **Aquilina Santiago**, guru and lifestyle coach. She experienced a bout of space madness after years of working on interstellar ships. Because of the madness, she underwent a spiritual transformation and radically altered her life afterward. Now she tries to help other people experience similar transformations. If nothing else works, she may even recommend the space madness...
- **Bekolari Lafiyaji**, transport boss. It's his job to choose who crews what ship on what route, but he's seen the stats on where space madness happens most and he's become reluctant to risk his people there.
- **Cosimo Nazzari**, psychologist. He has found what he thinks might be a reliable way to induce space madness, and has repeatedly tried to ride along on trips where he can observe the process.
- **Dylan Matthiae**, insane navigator. Dylan lost his mind during a routine journey through an Oort cloud, and was committed to an asylum. He has recently regained his mental faculties and wants to be released.
- **Galleazzo Fioravanti**, isolationist politician. He is calling for an end to interstellar travel, or at least an end to travel that isn't absolutely necessary for political stability in the galaxy.
- **Izara van Zuuk**, leading expert on suspended animation. She has proposed a system of space travel that relies upon pre-programmed ships carrying people in static chambers. Theoretically, this would avoid space madness by preventing humans from thinking during interstellar travel.
- **Shreya Maria Lakshmi**, captain of the *Decameron*. She survived her crew going mad and self-destructing in an orgy of violence. In retrospect, she saw signs of madness in some of them before that final voyage, but did nothing. Now guilt consumes her.

Space Madness Questions

Ask your players these questions at random moments during the game, then use their answers to personalize the madness they suffer:

- *What makes you angry? What do you normally do about it?*
- *What makes you feel afraid?*
- *What was your lowest moment and how did it change you?*
- *When was the last time you felt regret for your actions? What did you do?*
- *Where have you been that you never want to return to?*
- *Who did you aspire to be like most, when you were a child?*
- *Who do you miss most? What were they like?*
- *Who do you regret losing contact with? What do you remember most clearly about them?*
- *Who do you trust most? What did they do to earn your trust?*

Going Crazy

Space madness can manifest in many different ways. In addition to the main list of grim portents describing how space madness affects society at large, each type of space madness has its own list of grim portents that apply to a single person when they are afflicted by the madness. Different characters can be at different stages of the same type of madness, or they can have completely different experiences entirely. NPCs can also experience any kind of reaction you like—the types of madness here are designed to make it easier for you to portray the space madness to the players, as their characters struggle against it.

Hallucinations can be real or only seem real. If there are no aliens in your game, the effects of the psychonaut invaders can actually be the result of human action, though it might be better to leave them out entirely.

Isolation and **paranoia** also include forms of hallucinating, but also prevent the PCs from working together, unless they can find solutions or workarounds early on. These are more dangerous than hallucinatory monsters—use them sparingly.

Hallucinations

You see things, hear voices, that aren't really there. Nobody else notices them, just you. But then they become real, because the space madness is a gateway opening inside your mind. What lies on the other side isn't too happy to see you.

GRIM PORTENTS

- You see small, inconsequential things that aren't really there. They go away when you look at them carefully.
- You start to perceive things that no one else does, and they are neither small nor inconsequential. They retreat if you try to approach them.
- You can now interact with things that no one else can see or hear.
- Beings from another dimension use your hallucinations as a portal to enter this world.

Impending Doom: A new race of beings, with hostile intentions, may access to this reality whenever they so desire.

Alien Vision

○ HP ○ Armour

Amorphous, Construct, Devious, Group, Planar.

Hallucinations come in all shapes and sizes. But some reveal a terrible invasion of our reality being launched by creatures so alien we cannot comprehend them.

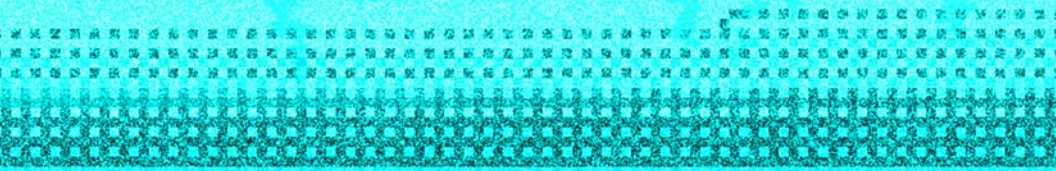
Instinct: To foster fear and paranoia.

Moves:

- Cover up someone's actions or intentions.
- Reveal someone's true feelings, but distorted.
- Reveal a truth about the psychonautic invaders.
- Reveal a truth about the scientific cabal.

Weaknesses:

These alien visions are not real. As much as they might seem like the truth, they cannot actually change reality beyond their victim's senses. They only look like they can.



Cabal Scientist

6 HP ◦ Armour

Group, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.

The cabal has discovered a complex semi-organic compound that causes hallucinatory portals to other dimensions during interstellar travel. The implications of this effect are staggering, so they have begun secret trials.

Instinct: To push the boundaries of exploration.

Moves:

- Install covert surveillance equipment.
- Introduce foreign substances to life support systems.
- Monitor a patient's vitals and experiences under the influence.
- Smuggle drugs between starports.

Tactics:

The cabal only administers the compound to ships travelling between starports where scientists or their agents are located, so they can collect the data properly. Starships do not always keep to their declared routes, of course, and the cabal moves its operations from port to port, so it is difficult—though not impossible—to track them down using metadata.

Weaknesses:

The cabal is a small operation, because it fears that enemy factions will benefit from this discovery if word gets out. They hoard their information in the hopes of gaining a monopoly on any new technologies discovered through contact with this other dimension.



Psychonaut Invader

9 HP 1 Armour

Amorphous, Group, Organized, Planar, Small.

Special Qualities: Amphibious, Flying, Hallucinatory.

What are they attracted to? Choose one or more things the psychonauts want to convert for their own uses:

Agricultural products, atmosphere, electronic devices, fibersteel hulls, heat sources, hyperdrives, intelligent machines, power crystals, vegetation.

Instinct: To invade this world and claim its resources.

Attacks:

- Destabilize inert matter.
- Inversion wave (1d8+2 damage, 1 piercing, forceful; close).
- Pseudopod spike (1d6 damage, ignores armour; reach, near).

Moves:

- Appear to humans in dreams and visions.
- Convert matter into resources that can be used in other dimensions.
- Create webs of hallucinatory memories.
- Move insubstantially through solid matter.

Tactics:

When a suitable resource is found: Stake it out and defend it.

When they are too dangerous: Retreat to the home dimension.

When they flee: Do not pursue them, resources are more important.

Weaknesses:

Although they enter this dimension through psychic rifts, they are more vulnerable to psychic interference than normal people are, and hallucinations can affect them, even though they are not real.



Isolation

The madness of space is just like the distance of it—dark and vast, a yawning gulf that can never be crossed. That’s the gulf between you and them. All of them.

GRIM PORTENTS

- You begin to mistake one type of interaction for another.
- You lose the ability to perceive one aspect of your reality.
- You lose the ability to make new friends or acquaintances.
- You lose the ability to trust people you know.

Impending Doom: You are no longer able to communicate with people, or understand what they are doing.

Choose the type of interaction the subject no longer understands (or write your own):

Affection, commands, commerce, excitement, happiness, instructions, pain, questions, rebellion, sadness.

Then decide what they perceive it as from now on:

- Another interaction from the list.
- Gibberish.
- Sarcastic agreement with whatever the subject says.
- Something repulsive.
- Something surreal and inhuman (and probably hallucinatory).

As the space madness progresses, misunderstandings increase. When the subject loses an entire aspect of reality, choose a type of interaction from the list above, or one of the following:

Artistic expression, colours and light, conflict, creating things, day or night, food and sustenance, hearing and sound, hierarchy, injury, language, love, machines, money, travel, work (the subject’s own occupation).

Paranoia

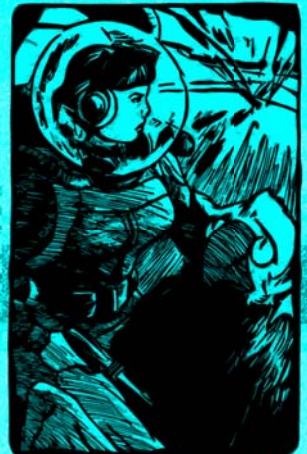
People turn against you. They think you don't know, but you do. You know what they're up to and they won't get away with it. You're too smart for them. They'll see.

GRIM PORTENTS

- You start to suspect people are plotting against you.
- You begin finding evidence that people are conspiring to harm you.
- People speak out against you openly, to your face.
- People attack you when you are alone with them.
- People attack you in public.

Impending Doom: You can only interact violently with other people. If you meet someone, you must attack them before they attack you.

People don't usually attack the subject of paranoid space madness, the subject is hallucinating. The effect is the same, however. This type of madness is so powerful, the subject is still injured by the attacks, and may be killed. Fighting back allows the subject to escape being harmed. The perspective of someone attacked by the subject of paranoid madness is almost exactly similar to that of the subject—being attacked for no reason, out of nowhere. When this type of madness affects a large group of people, the results are messy.





Panopticon

Information is the key to understanding a civilization, and the key to controlling it. When society becomes obsessively panopticon-ized, with informers and recording devices everywhere, the secret police will have an omniscient power over their inferiors.

Type: Cursed place.

Impulse: To invade your privacy.

GRIM PORTENTS

- The police receive more powers of investigation.
- Cameras go up in public places.
- Pro-privacy protests turn ugly and the ensuing riots are brutally scattered.
- Critics of invasive search powers are arrested and imprisoned.
- The private lives of celebrities become more accessible by the public, as laws protecting them are left unenforced.
- A series of crimes are used by the authorities to support mandatory reporting.
- The police receive unlimited powers of investigation.

Impending Doom: Someone is always watching. There are always records. You can't hide anything anymore.

Possible Cast

- **Dustin Chinh**, technician. He has the unenviable job of maintaining powerful surveillance technologies. He doesn't usually look at the data these machines collect, but sometimes he does, and he doesn't like what he sees.
- **Faustina Teria**, government auditor. It is her job to root out traitors and terrorists hiding within her society. She is always pushing for better access into records and archives.
- **Liberty Westerling**, privacy advocate. She has been beaten and jailed by the police before. Now she is actively persecuted for sabotaging the records that the authorities are trying to collect on her activities.
- **Silvana Rinaldi**, metropolitan police inspector. She has supported the secret police many times in the past, but they have been asking for more and more information lately.
- **Sogo Tanijiri**, logistics coordinator for covert operations. He has no direct contact with what the secret police do with all the information they collect, but it is Tanijiri's job to purchase all the gear they need. His shopping lists look quiet odd, even to his eyes.

Panopticon Questions

Ask yourself or the players these questions when the secret police or their surveillance missions are introduced:

- *How invasive are the regular police allowed to get?*
- *How invasive are the secret police rumoured to be?*
- *What are the main arguments that happen in public regarding privacy?*
- *What is the public's general opinion of privacy laws and state surveillance?*
- *What kinds of surveillance techniques are common? What kinds of conceivable surveillance methods are impossible?*

Ask these of specific players:

- *Have you been in trouble with the police before? Do you have a record?*
- *Have you ever surveilled someone else, either professionally or as a stalker?*
- *How much privacy did you have growing up?*
- *Who do you think is watching you?*

Intersectional Monitoring

How do your two other fronts interact with the panopticon society that the secret police have set up? Use these suggestions to colour your descriptions:

Aliens

Because humans and aliens live in such close proximity, fears of contamination and other health concerns are at the root of the surveillance measures. Tracking any diseases that result from cross-species interactions is a major concern for the secret police. This can be used to promote anti-alien (or anti-human) bigotry and xenophobia, or it can legitimately prevent disease outbreaks.

Cybernetics

Advanced computer programs, AIs even, are in charge of managing the surveillance systems. The vast majority of pictures in existence are taken by machines, for machines to look at, and humans will never see them. Massive amounts of information and billions of hours of recordings pass through a sprawling electronic network. Recognition software pulls important data from these archives to present to live humans.

The Imperial Throne

Although the throne is supposed to be the primary authority controlling surveillance networks, this doesn't mean they have sole access to the information, or that they actually control the data repository. Surveillance has been subcontracted out to secret police organizations, and they only pass on data to the other authorities when it's to their advantage.

Interstellar Transport

The panopticon society has to travel from planet to planet before it can be set up everywhere. The harder it is to send data between populations, the more data will be lost when it does travel. In some cases, people can travel much quicker than information. The distance between planets can be the greatest impediment to this danger, perhaps even more of a threat than the PCs!

Religion

The practices of organized religion directly feed into the surveillance network, whether those are confession, reporting on others, or public ceremonies (which can be recorded). It is much easier for the secret police to gain information on people who participate in religious activities, and a lack of surveillance data on someone is clearly an indication that they are a backslider.

The Spice

Because there is a single resource that galactic civilization depends on, surveillance networks extend from security surrounding it. Because the spice can cause society to collapse if it's mismanaged, keeping the supply line secure (or retaking control of it) is of primary importance. Every development in the world of surveillance begins in the spice industry and works its way out from there.



Panopticon Security

6 HP 1 Armour

Devious, Group, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.

The elite ranks amongst the intelligence gatherers of the secret police have become more than simply human, surveillance technologies crowning their heads, informing their thoughts. Their job is to know things, diligently uncovering secrets for their superiors.

Attacks:

- Disorienting thought-waves (stun damage, ignores armour; near).
- Lasergun (1d8 damage, 1 piercing; near).

Moves:

- Call for backup.
- Order civilians to obey.
- Read a foe's thoughts.
- Track a foe down.
- Wait, watch, and learn.

Tactics:

When intimidating a subject: Keep a distance, but be conspicuously visible.

When questioning a subject: Relentlessly pursue answers.

When surveilling a subject: Avoid being seen, but obtain as much information as possible.

Weaknesses:

With their brains augmented by psycho-technical devices, panopticon security agents can be acutely sensitive to psychic and electronic interference. They are also not the most creative of agents, given that obedience is such an important trait within their ranks.



Surveillance Techniques

Secret police in charge of running the panopticon society have all of the following techniques available to them:

- **Auditors** comb through the records of citizens and organizations alike, finding inconsistencies, lies, and hidden assets.
- **Cameras** record everything in front of them. If there are cameras everywhere, there is a record of everything that happens.
- The practice of regular, mandatory **confession** puts pressure on people to give up information about their own trespasses, or even to invent ones so they have a way to participate. Those inventions can be just as useful for blackmail purposes as real confessions.
- **Debriefings** allow the secret police to interview people after they have certain experiences, such as travel or short-term work contracts. If they want to know about a certain situation, those leaving it are fair game to question.
- **Detectives**, from police forces, intelligence agencies, security firms, or freelance companies, can be given the authority to question people, investigate records, and collect forensic information.
- **Flying drones** can make better recordings than fixed cameras and microphones. They can also follow people around, making it easier to consolidate surveillance on them.
- **Mail surveillance** is an easy way for the secret police to spy on people.
- **Metadata** is an unreliable method of determining someone's identity and activities, but some authorities insist on its value. If the secret police aren't worried about blowback, they can use metadata to identify actionable targets.
- **Orbital sensors**, if they are powerful enough, can be a fail-safe surveillance method, given their remote location. Blocking or hacking them might be feasible, but attacking them is not.
- **Psychics** can see and hear far-off locations, or the future, or the insides of other peoples' minds. In most circumstances, psychics have access to information not available through other methods.
- **Mandatory reporting** is similar to confessions and debriefings. Citizens are told they must report certain activities, allowing the secret police to flag the activities that they want information about. They can also test peoples' loyalties by arranging for them to witness a flagged activity, performed by a plant.
- **Spies** gather information from the communities, organizations, and workplaces they are embedded in.

Occupied Supply Chain

Enemies have seized control of this galaxy's spice source and its supply chain no longer terminates in our reality. What will people do now? How will they cope with it becoming a non-renewable resource? Someone needs to step up and find a solution, whether it's a new source of spice, something that can replace the spice, or a way to defeat these occupiers. If the powers of the spice cannot be regained, civilization will cease to exist!

Type: Arcane enemy.

Impulse: To deny access to the spice.

GRIM PORTENTS

- Shockwaves ripple through galactic society, people everywhere have opinions to spout about the loss of the spice.
- An attack against the enemies is mounted and repelled.
- Factions with little or no spice reserves desperately attack those who still have supplies left.
- Massive sections of society run out of spice and lose its benefits.

Impending Doom: Society falls apart and people go at each other like wolves. Whatever the benefits of spice, they are no longer available. Any part of society that requires the spice no longer exists. If biological life is only possible with the spice, populations dwindle rapidly. Perhaps the only people left are those who become slaves of the enemy?

Possible Cast

- **Brett Zafiro**, spice extraction supervisor. His mining operation was the last to fall to the occupiers. He watched his fellow spice workers destroyed and now the need for vengeance burns within him.
- **Massimo Sant'Elia**, political liaison to the military. He is feeding military intelligence to the occupiers in exchange for spice. He thinks the occupiers will let him defect.
- **Nicola Taddeo Soria**, survivor of planetary occupation. His planet produced the spice for galactic civilization, but now it produces for the occupiers. The human population either escaped, like Nicola did, or they died.
- **Olajumoke Uche**, defence consultant. She has been monitoring the surveillance of the occupiers and analyzing their defences, looking for weak spots.
- **Valeria Sacconi**, spice chemist. Her laboratory has a plan to create artificial spice as an alternative to the drought caused by occupation. So far, what she has been able to produce has terrible side effects.



Occupied Supply Chain Questions

Ask yourself or the players these questions when the spice, or the lack of it, becomes important:

- *How secure was the spice industry before it was occupied? Is this something that anyone foresaw, or completely unexpected?*
- *What are the immediate effects of losing access to the spice? How does galactic civilization react?*
- *Where do these occupiers come from? Who might have some familiarity with them? Was anyone aware of them before they took control of the spice?*
- *Who controlled the extraction, production, and transportation of spice before they lost control? Have they lost any other resources as well? What are their plans now?*
- *Who has stockpiles of spice? Who knows where these stockpiles are?*

Hunters

Because this danger is all about the chaos caused by a loss of the spice, you have four different options for hunters (choose one or more):

- The occupiers send hunters after Moonicorn to prevent him from loosening their hold on the spice.
- People from galactic society attack Moonicorn for being in league with the occupiers.
- Spice hoarders attack Moonicorn for being in league with their enemies.
- Those without spice attack Moonicorn for supporting the spice hoarders.

Whether or not Moonicorn is actually in league with any of those factions is another matter. For the hunters, it's a matter of perception.

The Culture of Occupation

The point of the occupied supply chain is that the spice is controlled by a group of people whose interests are fundamentally in opposition to those of galactic civilization.

Who has seized control of the spice? Choose one:

- An alien species, inimical to humanity.
- A human society from outside known civilization with a culture that seems unfathomably alien.
- One or more machine intelligences and their robotic assets.
- A secretive cabal from inside human culture.

What makes the occupiers so different? Choose some of the following that the occupiers lack:

Abstract language, aesthetics, affection, age differences, anticipation, binary cognitive distinctions, childbirth customs, childcare, clothing, conjectural reasoning, cooking, cultural variability, customary greetings, daily routines, dancing, death rituals, diseases, divination/prediction, division of labour, dominance/submission, dreams, economic inequalities, empathy, entification, envy, etiquette, facial communication, fairness, fear, fiction, figurative speech, gift giving, gossip, hearing, hospitality, humour, imagery, imagination, incest taboo, individual memory, inheritance, kin groups, love, marriage, materialism, meal times, metaphor, music, parents, personal identity, personal names, personal responsibility, poetry, pride, privacy, promises, property, sadness, sex, sight, trade.

Then decide what that means for their society and them individually. Give them whatever they would need to make up for this absence and still retain a technological society able to control the spice.

If they are aliens or machines, what kind of environment do they prefer and why does it put them at odds with humanity? Are they methane breathers? Do they prefer the vacuum of space over atmospheres? Do they eat organic creatures and regard them merely as food?

If they are humans, why are they incompatible with galactic civilization? Do they seek only sociopathic domination? Do they practice transhuman technological modification upon themselves? Have they been genetically modified by others? Or is their society simply based on practices that are incompatible with other cultures?

Defending the Spice

Choose at least one from each of the lists to start detailing the occupiers' defences.

Space Assets

- Armoured ship carriers.
- Guardian outpost array.
- Heavily-armed star destroyer warships.
- Large fleet of attack ships.
- Numerous space stations.
- Starship agriculture.
- Super-fast skirmisher ships.

Technological Assets

- Artificial hive mind.
- Better spice processing methods.
- Biological technology.
- Hardened environmental suits.
- Impossible materials.
- Invasive psychic technology.
- Personal teleporters.
- Portable space pockets.
- Powerful sensors and surveillance technology.

Terrestrial Assets

- Factories.
- Massive fortresses of occupation.
- Spice immunity.
- Terraforming or xenoforming machines.
- Warrior hordes.

Weaknesses

- Bad information.
- Environmental necessities.
- Irrational hatred of one other faction.
- Lack of a particular resource.
- Poor communication.
- Regular sacrifices.
- Restricted diet.
- Small population.





