

Adventure Module: Echoes of Tarnis IV

Background

The adventurers, aboard the runabout *Dragonfly*, are en route to the mystic world of Arkenhold when a distress signal from Tarnis IV, a nearby moon, interrupts their journey. The signal originates from a crashed freighter, and survivors are in desperate need of rescue. Tarnis IV, known for its harsh terrain and environmental hazards, promises to challenge the adventurers as they embark on this unexpected rescue mission.

Adventure Hook

While Second Officer Lyrissa, Chief Tactical Officer K'vatch, and Ensign Atlanta navigate through space, the *Dragonfly*'s sensors catch a faint distress signal. The source: Tarnis IV. Lyrissa, feeling the weight of her responsibility, decides to investigate. K'vatch, with his tactical acumen, prepares for any hostility, while Atlanta, eager yet inexperienced, readies the medical kit. The adventurers must now balance the urgency of their original mission with the immediate need to save lives.

Key Locations

1. **The Dragonfly:** The adventurers' runabout, equipped with advanced navigation and survival gear, but not designed for intense combat.
2. **Crash Site on Tarnis IV:** A valley of jagged rocks and metallic debris, where the freighter's remains are scattered. The site is prone to sudden rockslides and hazardous dust storms.
3. **Survivor Camp:** Within the wreckage, a makeshift shelter where the survivors are found, injured and shaken, but alive.

Objectives

1. **Navigate to Tarnis IV:** Successfully pilot the *Dragonfly* through the moon's erratic gravitational fields and land near the crash site.
2. **Rescue the Survivors:** Locate the survivors within the wreckage, provide first aid, and prepare them for evacuation.
3. **Return Safely:** Navigate back to the *Dragonfly* with the survivors, avoiding or overcoming environmental hazards and any unexpected threats.

Challenges

1. **Hazardous Terrain:** The adventurers must make skill checks to navigate the treacherous terrain of Tarnis IV without injury. Failure could result in delays or additional injuries.
2. **Environmental Hazards:** Dust storms can reduce visibility to near zero, requiring successful survival checks to find shelter or proceed without becoming lost.

3. **Survivor Morale:** The survivors are on the brink of despair. Persuasion checks may be needed to calm them and convince them that rescue is at hand.
4. **Limited Resources:** The adventurers have a finite amount of medical supplies and must decide how best to use them to stabilize the survivors.

NPCs

1. **Chief Tactical Officer K'vatch:** A seasoned officer with knowledge of survival tactics. He offers advice and assists in defending the party if needed.
2. **Ensign Atlanta:** A young officer, skilled in first aid. She can provide healing but may need encouragement to overcome the overwhelming situation.
3. **Survivors:** A group of freighter crew members with varying injuries. Among them is a secretive passenger with knowledge of an ancient artifact, adding a twist to the adventure.

Rewards

1. **Alliance Commendations:** Successful rescue and completion of the mission earn the adventurers commendations from the Planetary Alliance, opening doors to future missions and rewards.
2. **Ancient Artifact:** If the adventurers gain the trust of the secretive passenger, they learn the location of an ancient artifact on Arkenhold, setting the stage for their next adventure.
3. **Experience and Growth:** Beyond material rewards, the adventurers gain invaluable experience in crisis management, team leadership, and survival skills.

Adventure Conclusion

With the survivors safely aboard the Dragonfly, the adventurers set course for the nearest medical facility. The mission to Tarnis IV, though unexpected, has tested their resolve, teamwork, and compassion. As they continue their journey to Arkenhold, they do so with the satisfaction of lives saved and lessons learned, ready for whatever the galaxy throws their way next.

Act 1: Distress in the Void

Scene 1: A Sudden Detour

As the runabout Dragonfly slices through the star-studded expanse of space, bound for the enchanting world of Arkenhold, the serene journey is abruptly interrupted by a faint but insistent distress signal, originating from Tarnis IV, a moon notorious for its treacherous terrain and unpredictable weather patterns. The crew, comprising Second Officer Lyrissa, Chief Tactical Officer K'vatch, and the greenhorn Ensign Atlanta, faces their first test. Lyrissa, taking command, decides to investigate, demonstrating the Planetary Alliance's unwavering commitment to aiding those in peril.

Challenge: The crew must successfully navigate the Dragonfly through the gravitational anomalies surrounding Tarnis IV to land near the crash site. This requires a series of skill checks: a Dexterity check for piloting through the gravitational flux, an Intelligence check to calculate the safest landing trajectory, and a Wisdom check to intuit the best time to make their descent.

Scene 2: The Harsh Welcome of Tarnis IV

Tarnis IV greets the Dragonfly with howling winds and a horizon obscured by swirling dust. The adventurers, equipped for both survival and rescue, disembark. K'vatch, with his tactical mind, suggests a formation to protect Atlanta, who carries the medical kit, essential for stabilizing any survivors they find. Their path is fraught with danger; every step must be measured, every decision weighed with care.

Challenge: The adventurers must navigate the treacherous valley leading to the crash site. Athletics checks are required to traverse the jagged, unstable ground without injury. Survival checks help them find the quickest, safest route through the obscured terrain. Along the way, a sudden rockslide (triggered by a failed check or a predetermined event) tests their reflexes with Dexterity saving throws to avoid injury or becoming trapped.

Scene 3: Echoes of Calamity

As they approach the crash site, the scale of the disaster becomes apparent. The freighter, a twisted hulk of metal, lies scattered across the valley. Amidst the debris, faint sounds of life stir—survivors. The adventurers' arrival sparks hope amidst despair. The survivors, a mix of crew members and a mysterious passenger, are in dire straits, injuries varying from minor to critical.

Challenge: The adventurers must quickly assess the survivors' conditions and prioritize medical treatment. Medicine checks determine the severity of the injuries and the best way to stabilize the survivors with the limited supplies on hand. Persuasion checks are needed to calm the survivors, some of whom are on the brink of panic, assuring them that rescue has come. A special Insight check may reveal that the mysterious passenger is hiding something, a secret that could add depth to the narrative.

Scene 4: Shadows Stir

As the adventurers work to stabilize the survivors, a low rumble disturbs the eerie silence of the valley. A dust storm is brewing, fast approaching. Time is of the essence. K'vatch, with a nod from Lyrissa, begins to prepare a makeshift shelter from the wreckage to shield them from the storm. Meanwhile, Atlanta, her nerves steadied by the urgency of the situation, tends to the wounded with a newfound determination.

Challenge: The adventurers face a race against time to create a shelter before the dust storm hits. This requires a combination of Strength checks to move debris and Intelligence checks to engineer a protective barrier. Cooperation is key, as is quick thinking. The storm itself presents a final challenge for this act, with Constitution saving throws required to withstand the choking dust and howling winds without succumbing to exhaustion or injury.

Act 1 Conclusion: Shelter Amidst the Storm

As the storm rages outside, the adventurers and survivors huddle within the fragile sanctuary of their makeshift shelter. Bonds are formed in the crucible of shared adversity; stories are exchanged, and the mysterious passenger's secret becomes a tantalizing thread for the adventurers to unravel. In the eye of the storm, both literal and metaphorical, the crew of the Dragonfly finds strength in unity, ready to face whatever challenges Tarnis IV has yet to reveal.

As the winds die down, the adventurers prepare for the next phase of their mission: the journey back to the Dragonfly with the survivors in tow, and the unraveling of the mysterious passenger's secret. The adventure

on Tarnis IV is far from over, but the crew has proven their mettle.

Act 2: Secrets of the Wreckage

Scene 1: The Calm After the Storm

As dawn breaks on Tarnis IV, the adventurers emerge from their makeshift shelter to a world transformed. The storm has passed, leaving a serene silence in its wake. The path back to the Dragonfly, however, is now obscured by new hazards: the storm's ferocity has reshaped the landscape, creating new obstacles and revealing hidden dangers. Lyrissa takes charge, her leadership unshaken by the night's trials, while K'vatch scouts ahead, his keen eyes searching for the safest path through the altered terrain.

Challenge: The adventurers must navigate the post-storm landscape, a task that demands a series of Survival checks to find the safest route and avoid natural hazards unveiled by the storm. Perception checks are essential to spot quicksand pits, hidden crevasses, or other dangers created by the storm's passage.

Scene 2: Uncovering the Secret

Mid-journey, the mysterious passenger, under the weight of the adventurers' kindness and the shared ordeal, decides to confide in them. The passenger reveals that the freighter was transporting an ancient artifact, a relic of Sovreki origin, believed to hold the power to influence the very fabric of reality. Fearing its potential misuse, the passenger had intended to ensure its safekeeping but now seeks the adventurers' help to recover it from the wreckage.

Challenge: The adventurers face a moral and strategic dilemma: to recover the artifact or proceed directly to the Dragonfly. Should they choose to retrieve the artifact, they must return to the crash site and conduct a thorough Investigation check to locate the hidden compartment within the wreckage where the artifact is stored. The task is fraught with risk, as the damaged structure is unstable and could collapse at any moment, requiring Dexterity saving throws to avoid injury.

Scene 3: A Foe Revealed

As they delve into the wreckage in search of the artifact, the adventurers disturb a previously concealed threat: a pack of Ravagers, predatory creatures native to Tarnis IV, drawn by the commotion. These beasts, camouflaged against the rock and sand, launch a surprise attack, their eyes gleaming with hunger.

Challenge: The adventurers must defend themselves against the Ravagers. This encounter tests their combat skills, requiring a mix of attack rolls and saving throws. K'vatch's tactical expertise comes to the forefront, offering strategic advantages, while Lyrissa's leadership keeps the group focused. Atlanta, though primarily non-combatant, finds ways to assist, using her knowledge of the terrain to suggest defensive positions or create makeshift traps.

Scene 4: The Power of the Artifact

Upon recovering the artifact, its power becomes evident. The air thrums with energy, and the adventurers find their abilities augmented, their senses heightened. Yet, the artifact's power is not easily controlled, and its influence begins to warp the environment around them, creating a bubble of altered reality where the rules of physics seem to bend and twist.

Challenge: The adventurers must quickly learn to navigate the altered reality created by the artifact's activation. This requires a series of Arcana checks to understand and somewhat control the artifact's power, preventing it from causing unintended harm. The adventurers also face the challenge of deactivating or stabilizing the artifact to safely transport it back to the Dragonfly.

Act 2 Conclusion: The Artifact Secured

With the artifact secured and its immediate dangers contained, the adventurers and the survivors make their final push toward the Dragonfly. The journey back is a testament to their resilience, adaptability, and the bonds forged in the heat of adversity. As they board the Dragonfly, the artifact in tow, the adventurers are not just rescuers but guardians of a power that could shape the future of the galaxy.

The return to the Dragonfly marks the end of the second act, setting the stage for the final leg of their journey. The artifact's recovery has raised as many questions as it has answered, and the adventurers must decide what to do with their newfound responsibility. The mysteries of Tarnis IV and the artifact's true purpose remain, leading the adventurers toward new horizons and the promise of further adventures.

Act 3: Return and Revelation

Scene 1: Homeward Bound

With the survivors and the enigmatic artifact aboard, the Dragonfly lifts off from the surface of Tarnis IV, leaving behind the treacherous moon and its secrets. The atmosphere within the runabout is one of tentative relief; they're not out of danger yet, but the immediate threats have been overcome. Lyrissa pilots the craft with steady hands, while K'vatch coordinates with the Planetary Alliance for a safe rendezvous point to transfer the survivors and the artifact. Ensign Atlanta tends to the survivors, her actions a reflection of the compassion and duty that define the crew.

Challenge: As they navigate back to Alliance space, the adventurers must ensure the stability of the artifact, which continues to emit a low, pulsing energy. This requires continuous Arcana and Intelligence checks to monitor and adjust the containment field they've improvised. Meanwhile, a Wisdom (Medicine) check from Atlanta ensures the survivors remain stable during the journey.

Scene 2: The Alliance's Interest

Upon reaching the rendezvous point, the adventurers are met by an Alliance vessel, its crew eager to take the survivors to safety. However, the presence of the artifact draws immediate attention from the Alliance's scientific division, intrigued by its potential and the stories of its effects on Tarnis IV. The adventurers are faced with a decision: hand over the artifact to the Alliance for study or argue for its safekeeping until more is understood about its powers and origins.

Challenge: This presents a moral and diplomatic challenge for the adventurers. Persuasion and Insight checks are crucial as they negotiate with the Alliance representatives, balancing the potential benefits of scientific study against the risks of misusing the artifact's power. K'vatch's military background and Lyrissa's leadership skills are key in this negotiation, aiming to secure a future for the artifact that aligns with the adventurers' values and the safety of the galaxy.

Scene 3: A Glimpse into the Past

The mysterious passenger, now revealed as a guardian of ancient Sovreki secrets, offers a deeper insight into the artifact. It is not just a tool of power but a key to understanding the Sovreki's ancient civilization and perhaps even the origins of the galaxy's inhabited worlds. The guardians' tale adds layers of historical and cosmic significance to the adventurers' discovery, hinting at adventures to come and the importance of their decision regarding the artifact's fate.

Challenge: The adventurers must decide how to balance the guardian's wishes with the Alliance's interests. This requires careful deliberation and possibly a group check to reach a consensus. The guardian's story provides context for History or Arcana checks to uncover more about the Sovreki and the artifact's potential.

Scene 4: Towards a New Dawn

As the adventure concludes, the Dragonfly's crew, along with the Alliance vessel, chart a course back to civilization. The artifact's fate remains undecided, but its discovery has opened new pathways of exploration, intrigue, and potential conflict. The adventurers have grown through their experiences, facing challenges that tested their skills, resolve, and moral compass. They return not just as heroes who answered a distress call but as keepers of secrets that could change the understanding of the galaxy's history and future.

Challenge: The final scene does not present a traditional challenge but rather sets the stage for future adventures. The adventurers are encouraged to reflect on their journey, the decisions they've made, and the implications of those decisions for their characters and the wider galaxy. This reflection can be facilitated through a series of role-play interactions, offering a chance for character development and foreshadowing the potential consequences of their actions.

Act 3 Conclusion: Echoes of the Future

The rescue mission to Tarnis IV concludes with the adventurers and the artifact forging an uncertain path forward. The mysteries unveiled and the alliances formed during this adventure hint at larger forces at play in the galaxy, with the adventurers now at the heart of unfolding cosmic narratives. As they part ways with the survivors and the guardian, they carry with them not just the memories of their ordeal but the promise of new horizons to explore, challenges to face, and secrets to uncover in the endless expanse of the stars.