

HELBINE

Content Sample PDF

Including:

- Introduction and Setting Rules
- The Interstellar Coalition faction
- Helbine location



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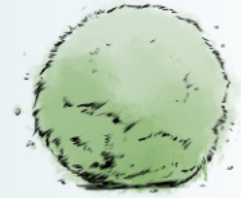
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FOREWORD

Welcome to planet Helbine, a distant world on the edge of the Cantallion System. Helbine, along with its six moons, is bursting with diversity, conflict, and opportunity for those willing to take it. In the grand metropolis of Banda City three factions fight for control, while settlements on the moons struggle to survive against a fourth power: something spreading, evolving, and resisting.

Helbine gives adventurers opportunity to explore the hustle and bustle of Banda City, make friends (and enemies) with major factions, uncover secrets hidden on the surrounding moons, and craft a story together that will be told throughout the stars in a %error■■■■■



■■■BEGIN PLAYBACK:

-Doctor, we've arrived at the site, preparing to descend.

-Good. Tatym and I are standing by for the readings. Proceed.

-Can't believe you're skipping out on the expedition again, Doctor. What is it today? The back or the knees?

-Don't sass me Captain. At my age it's both.

-Remind me to die young. Equipment check underway, standby for testing.

...

-Readings are forty-four percent, that's too weak. Check the temp of the superconductor. If it's above three-thousand jumpstart the cooler.

...

-Good, that did it. Clear to proceed Captain.

-Roger, we're entering the cave. I'll tell you right now there's nothing here like we saw on Six. If you were hoping for more floating obelisks or empty labyrinths, no such luck. This place looks pretty natural. Covered in that thick moss stuff though.

-Hm. Well if the pylons are mapping the system as per my theory there should be something more. Proceed underground.

...

-Air here is a little strange Doctor, very musty. I think this moss is filling the air with spores. Hold on, there's move-

-Unintelligible

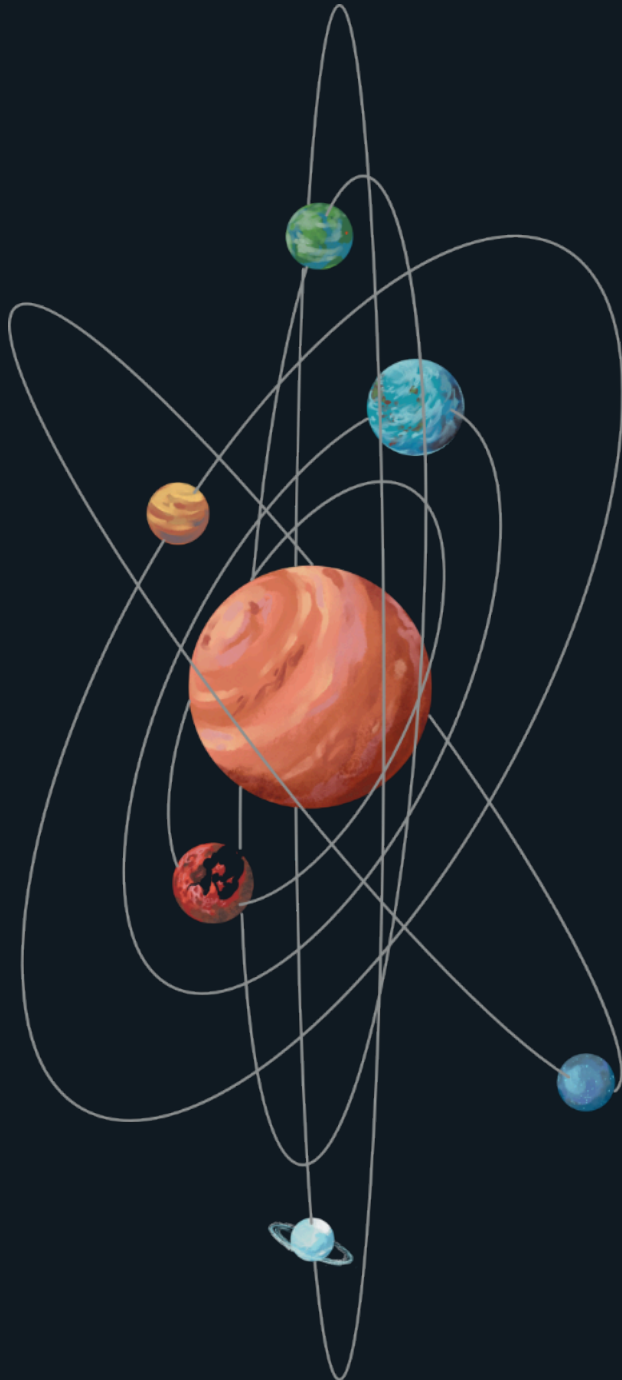
■■■:END PLAYBACK

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INTRODUCTION & SETTING RULES



SAVAGE WORLDS

Helbine is a role-playing setting book designed for use with the *Savage Worlds* game system by Pinnacle Entertainment Group. This book provides new gear, vehicles, nonplayer characters, and a few specific rules, but otherwise adds onto the *Savage Worlds* core rules; the contents of the core rules are only overridden if doing so is explicitly stated or clearly necessary.

THE HELBINE SETTING

The Helbine setting takes place in an alternate universe with no relation to our own. Located in the Cantallion System, a solar system of one star and its orbiting planets, is the planet Helbine, named after its first known explorer: Dr. Felbert Helbine. Thanks to its distance from other planets and its valuable fuel export, Helbine is independent and self-sufficient.

The setting of Helbine focuses on planet Helbine, its six moons, and the four factions that compete for control. A typical adventure emphasizes exploration and intrigue, making it a great setting to play mercenaries making a name for themselves, civilians thrust into a web of secrets and plots, or exiles looking for a fresh start.

Conversely, Helbine as a setting keeps its focus narrow when compared to other science fiction settings. Game Masters aren't expected to create new planets, alien cultures, or additional powerful factions and the characters aren't expected to

leave the Helbine planetary system. This narrow focus allows for more detail and familiarity, as the players encounter locations and characters several times over the course of a campaign.

FACTIONS

Four factions provide most, if not all, of the world's conflict. Mixed together, the goals, methods, and representatives of these factions act as the triggers to your adventures in the Helbine setting.



The Interstellar Coalition: An institution of science whose zealous members believe that augmenting their bodies and minds with technology will unify society.



The Kortan Corporation: The major business conglomerate of Helbine which controls the only major spaceport in Banda City and employs a great number of its citizens.



The Phantom Marauders: A space faring band of self-governed pilots and warriors often branded as pirates and criminals.



The Mold: A native species of fungus which grows in large colonies to form monstrous, deadly creatures.


LOCATIONS

Helbine and its six moons are each divided into 2-3 major locations. Each of these locations details not only the geography, but also the residents (if any) and the elements of a story likely to fit best. Additionally, each location may include Effects, (passive traits that affect all action in the location like "Zero Gravity")


and Events (special encounters for the Game Master to use).


These locations are general areas with prevalent traits to push certain opportunities and obstacles towards the players. “In orbit over Helbine” isn’t a specific place for an adventure, “on board your ship: *The Nova*” is. But being in orbit applies traits like No Gravity and includes the menace of Phantom Marauders looking to extract a toll from unrecognized ships.


Specific places, like a character’s home, favorite restaurant, or the local prison, are created and placed into one of the major locations by the Game Master as the story requires it, but whether that home is in the Kortan Corporation Industrial Complex or along the side of The Track will influence the atmosphere and help the Game Master improvise what’s around and likely to affect play. Gunshots, for instance, would draw a lot more attention in the Industrial Complex than on The Track.


 **Helbine:** A wasteland with only two things of value: unrefined fuel and Banda City, a megalopolis where the fuel is refined and sold across the Cantallion System. Includes: **The Wastes, The Coalition Campus, The Kortan Industrial Complex, The Track, and In Orbit over Helbine.**


To help remember the names of the moons, here’s a trick: The first letter of each moon’s name correlates to its distance from Helbine. A, B (closest), M, N (middle), Y and Z (farthest).


 **Akra:** The remnants of a once lush moon which was destroyed to prevent The Mold from spreading to Helbine. It is independently governed but heavily influenced by the Phantom Marauders. Includes: **Akra Town and In Orbit Over Akra.**

 **Belos:** A water-rich world of islands and volcanoes. The nightly eruptions result in a constantly changing landscape, but also bring highly coveted Langer Crystals to the surface. Includes: **Belos (Day), Belos (Night), and In Orbit Over Belos.**

 **Mowgon:** This desert is occupied almost exclusively by Mold and the Kortan Corporation’s factories powered by the moon’s nightly lightning storms. Includes: **Mowgon (Day), Mowgon (Night), and In Orbit Over Mowgon.**

 **Naya:** Jungles and swamps dominate the surface of Naya, a planet teeming with life both friendly and otherwise. Professor Helbine spent much of his later life here, leaving behind valuable research when he disappeared. Includes: **Naya (Day), Naya (Night), and In Orbit Over Naya.**

 **Yorg:** The surface of this moon is riddled with mazes while floating monoliths pepper its skies. Its dense atmosphere blocks all signals from passing in or out. Includes: **Yorg, and In Orbit Over Yorg.**

 **Zaruna:** This cold, inhospitable rock is overrun by The Mold. The tide pools and chilly waters of the day turn to blizzards and frozen oceans at night. Includes: **Zaruna (Day), Zaruna (Night), and In Orbit Over Zaruna.**

HISTORY

The story of the Helbine system doesn't begin with Dr. Felbert Helbine's initial exploration. The strange state of the planet and the moon Yorg in particular prove that the system was previously occupied. Nonetheless, the Doctor is considered the system's first modern explorers and the area's current events all stem from his actions and discoveries.

Felbert Helbine was generally considered a kind but eccentric man of science. From a young age, Felbert was keen to explore the unknown worlds of the Cantallion System and in his 20s he accumulated degrees in geology, biology, and astrophysics. He then founded the Interstellar Coalition, a research group built around the goal of deep space exploration.

In **319** (74 years ago), Dr. Helbine arrived at the Helbine system and set up a scientific observatory on the 4th moon, now called Naya. Over the next few years the Doctor came and went with colleagues, friends, and other interested parties. During this time, encounters with The Mold were first documented.

In **326** (67 years ago), samples of refined low-density high-bond fuel (LDHB) were sent back from Helbine which attracted businesses, and with them, settlers. These first colonists established Banda City. Dr. Helbine sold his LDHB refinement process to Saul Kortan, earning himself a sizable profit and royalties for life.

In **363** (30 years ago) the Seeds of Progress movement saw a faction of the Interstellar Coalition abducting

and forcibly augmenting almost 600 civilians. The Coalition disavowed the Seeds of Progress, but irreparable harm to their reputation remained. In the aftermath of the events, Dr. Helbine resigned from his seat as chairman and the Coalition reorganized under the leadership of Tatym Wynn.

Then, in **371** (22 years ago) Dr. Helbine disappeared (see **Appendix: Secrets**). The Coalition, Kortan Corporation, and ambitious adventurers searched for signs of the Doctor and his incredible wealth, but turned up nothing. It was ultimately accepted that the aged doctor was killed by The Mold near his primary facility on Naya and that his vast fortune had already been frivolously spent in scientific pursuits. Of course, this simple theory didn't account for all of the facts known to those close to the man.

By **381** (12 years ago)- The Mold had infested Akra beyond saving. The Interstellar Coalition and Kortan Corporation had been attempting to counter its spread for years, but ultimately abandoned the moon and began to focus on preventing its spread to Banda City.

In **382** (11 years ago) the Marauders of Half-Moon arrived. With the help of the Marauder flagship, the *Half-Moon*, the factions jointly built and used a secret weapon to destroy the moon Akra in an effort known as Project Ignition.

Finally, the year **393** is considered the 'present day'. While a game in the world of Helbine may take place at any period, this book describes things as they are just before the turn of the century.

SPECIAL RULES

SETTING GUIDELINES

Science fiction is a broad term that can include everything from modern rocket ships to intergalactic teleportation. Rather than compile an exhaustive list of what elements to include or not include in your game, here are a few key guidelines. From these, your Game Master should decide the availability of any edges, hindrances, gear, or other aspects of your game.

Skills: The skills Boating, Language, Occult, and Riding are not commonly used in Helbine.

Magic: There is no magic in the world of Helbine, but two Arcane Backgrounds are available: Gifted and Weird Science. Gifted can be used when creating a race with a power that can't be created another way, with biological Trappings to represent the characters innate 'alien' power. Weird Science, on the other hand, includes users and inventors of cutting edge technology and is especially fitting of the Interstellar Coalition.

Money: The currency of the Cantallion System is Bits (*b*). Assume the conversion rate is 1:1 when comparing to other rules sources.

Races: There are no set races to play in Helbine. While humans are an option, other 'alien' races that populate the Cantallion System are countless. When players create characters, they should use the **Making Races** rules in the *Savage Worlds* core rules.

Technology: The technology available in Helbine is advanced but not

fantastical. All-purpose handheld communicators, super-computer terminals, and cybernetics are common. On the other hand, technology like teleporters and disintegrators are nonexistent. When in doubt, estimate the technology of Helbine to be no more advanced than that of the modern day +50 years.

Time: Although some moons change between day and night, it's recommended that these changes (and all tracking of local times) be hand-waved. Each moon orbits and spins at differing speed and in different shapes, making reliable tracking impossible. Instead, the GM should arbitrate the time of day as best befits the story.

Travel: Interplanetary travel is quite fast thanks to ring-based highways, but still well below the speed of light. Traveling from one planet to another in the Cantallion System still takes a matter of weeks or even months, while travel from Helbine to its nearest moon takes about 2 hours (and an additional 2 for each further moon).

Weapons: Weaponry of Helbine is not much more advanced than that of our modern day. Although more efficient than our versions, ranged weapons still include projectiles and explosives while melee weapons are blades and bludgeons. Lasers and forcefields are only available by way of Weird Science.

HACKING

Almost everything with an electronic feature can be hacked, from weapon modifications to cybernetics and vehicles. To hack something,



the character uses their PID and must either be directly connected to **or** within 60 yards and aware of the target device's presence. A character may also make a Hacking roll as an action to "ping" nearby devices, discovering any hackable devices in the area if the roll's result would have been sufficient to hack it.

Once discovered, hacking takes an action and receives a penalty based on the security of the device:

Cutting Edge/Top Secret	-6
High Security/Expensive	-4
Strong/Safety-Conscious	-2
Common/Cheap	0
Obsolete/Not Maintained	+1

The results of a successful hack vary from device to device, but generally a success causes the device to stop functioning while a raise allows the hacker to control the device or reverse its effect. Once hacked, the effect typically lasts until someone in contact with the device spends an action to reset it.

Optional Rule: Faction Advancement

Each of these factions includes several units with stat blocks, which may include options, to represent the bulk of that faction's forces. Through Faction Advancement, Game Masters ensure that faction units keep pace with their player-character counterparts.

This optional rule helps to keep interaction (and combat!) with the faction units interesting at higher Ranks, while keeping the number of different units relatively small. For example, a Mold Hound might pose a moderate threat to both Novice and

Heroic characters by gaining Faction Advancements over the course of the game. Of course, this is only a supplemental rule, and the Game Master may still adjust the stat blocks of faction units or create Wild Cards as they see fit.

If Faction Advancements are used, it's recommended to unlock one each time the characters gain an Advance. Typically, the Faction Advancement is chosen from the list of the faction the characters most recently confronted. This way, the faction's increased power represents a reaction to the character's meddling and interference.

Rather than simply announce or hide a faction's chosen advancement from the players, each choice includes a short hook or brief encounter to integrate the change into your story. For example, after the characters sabotage the Phantom Marauders' plans and gain an Advance, they catch a news broadcast describing the theft of hundreds of handheld stealth devices. Meanwhile the Game Master has chosen the Personal Cloaking Faction Advancement, giving all Phantom Marauders the ability to temporarily vanish!

To help the Game Master keep track of which Faction Advancements have been chosen, a set of faction bookmarks can be copied from the back of this book or downloaded from the goblin society games website. These bookmarks give summaries of the Faction Advancements and are meant to be placed in this book, next to each faction's Faction Advancement section.

THE INTERSTELLAR COALITION



Transcendence through Unity
Unity through Empathy
Empathy through Technology

THE INTERSTELLAR COALITION

- Is the source of cybernetics and most advanced technology.
- Considered to be as much a religious philosophy as a science coalition.
- Urges its members to adopt cybernetics, especially the Beta-Wave Link which allows for the direct sharing of thoughts and feelings.

LEADER: TATYM WYNN

Key Points

- Advanced cyborg
- Access to the shared intelligence of the Coalition
- Charismatic

Now well over 100 years of age, the head of the Interstellar Coalition is more machine than man though his advanced body has not hindered his cunning or his charisma.

It is due to his intense augmentations that, unlike a typical person, Tatym is capable of receiving, processing, storing, and perfectly recalling the transmitted thoughts of all suitably augmented Coalition members. In essence, Tatym Wynn is as much a super computer as a person.

Tatym leverages this impressive power to keep up with his greatest rivals, the Kortan Corporation and the Phantom Marauders. Both of which he'd love nothing more than to assimilate.

In addition to his vast knowledge, and perhaps partly due to it, Tatym is incredibly charismatic. In a confrontation, Tatym is rarely incapable of talking down an opponent. While his command of reason and logic may be a given, Tatym often surprises his adversaries with an unexpected level of emotional empathy as well. Of course, this stems from his connection to his followers and begs the question, "does he mean anything he says or is he simply a flawless actor?" Regardless of the answer, Tatym is the greatest testament to his philosophy of unity through technology to be found.

GOAL: PEACE THROUGH UNITY

Unlike the other factions, the Coalition has grand goals revolving around the unification of all sentient life. They believe that all society is like a faulty machine, constantly breaking down due to the competing goals of its individual parts. Their solution: to unify all intelligent life in the universe by way of cybernetics. As members become more mechanical than biological, they lose their need for personal satisfaction, and their goals fall in line with the goals of the Coalition. After all, as the Coalition says, "all evil stems from a lack of empathy," and what could be a better source of empathy than being of the literal same mind?

HISTORY

The Coalition finds its roots in the philosophy of the Professor Felbert Helbine who believed that the open sharing of scientific discovery was critical to the advancement of life in the universe. At its origin, the Coali-

tion was little more than an alliance of scientists across the system committed to sharing their discoveries. It wasn't until much later that it began to take on a more sinister reputation.

Though the goal of sharing scientific discoveries remains, the Coalition has taken on a philosophical, and in many cases, spiritual, tone. While Dr. Helbine founded the Coalition, its day-to-day operation was largely controlled by his peer, a brilliant inventor and master in the field of cybernetics augmentations: Tatym Wynn.

Among Wynn's many eccentricities was a personal philosophy which became popular within the Coalition and eventually became their creed: "Transcendence through unity, unity through empathy, empathy through technology". To the lay-person, the philosophy can be explained simply in three basic tenants: First, civilization will transcend its faults when its people are unified in purpose. Second, people can only be unified in purpose if they understand each other as thoroughly as they understand themselves. Lastly, technology can allow people to truly think and feel the thoughts of another. Put another way, the Interstellar Coalition believes that cybernetically augmenting people to share their minds will ultimately result in a newer, better society.

Though the philosophy was certainly a little shocking to the general populace, the Coalition found plenty of willing members in the downtrodden and defeated. Those frustrated with their own situation were surprisingly often happy to join and feel

like a part of something greater. As a rule, the Coalition is careful only to take on voluntary members, and even then unification is a slow process happening over years or even decades. Still, the process is often seen as psychologically addictive, and members tend towards further unification rather than ending or reversing the process.

The Seeds of Progress

Unfortunately, these practices of voluntary and gradual unification have not always been fully embraced by every member. In 363 (thirty years ago) a splinter faction called the Seeds of Progress took matters into its own hands, forcibly abducting and augmenting nearly 600 citizens in Banda City. Though this incident was attributed to "a small band of disavowed extremists", the public impression of the Coalition has yet to recover. Even now there are rumors that similar philosophies exist within the Coalition, and though Wynn publicly condemns these fringe groups, it is widely believed their opinion would be different if the Seeds had been more successful.

After the events, Dr. Helbine stepped down from his largely figurative role at the head of the Coalition and retreated to his private studies on Naya. Tatym Wynn meanwhile, stepped up despite some protestation. Wynn was, after all, the originator of the very philosophy which the Seeds of Progress sought to advance.



METHODS

Technology

In pursuit of growing its numbers, the Interstellar Coalition focuses primarily on furthering its research. Thanks in part to the free and easy sharing of information among its members, the scientific prowess among the Coalition far surpasses that of any other faction in the Helbine system (and the Cantallion System for that matter!).

The cybernetic technology made available to its members serves as a strong draw for new recruits. After all, who doesn't want to be stronger, faster, and (thanks to the telepathy) smarter?

While this advanced technology may focus on cybernetics, it includes many other fields as well. Communications, transportation, and (secretly) weaponry are all being researched and advanced by the Coalition. Of course, the Coalition keeps this advanced technology to itself, allowing it to compete on even footing with the finances of the Kortan Corporation and the manpower of the Phantom Marauders.

Finally, the Coalition's boundless technological and informational resources continue to attract the more intellectually minded. Even the most skeptical scientist has a hard time turning down the opportunity to work with such resources, resulting in the steady growth of the Coalition.

Humanitarian Works

To help offset the negative perceptions the Coalition has also done great works improving the lives of

those in Banda City. In fact, though many don't realize it, the Coalition is fundamental to the infrastructure of Banda City. Their biggest contribution is the great ring which functions as both a communications hub and as a water synthesis plant. Additionally, the Coalition handles both the power distribution and waste removal aspects of the city thanks to their implementation of remote controlled task bot city workers.

Whatever one's opinion of the Coalition may be, all inhabitants of the Helbine system find themselves relying on the food, water, and functionality the Interstellar Coalition offers freely.

RELATIONS

The Kortan Corporation

Where the Kortan Corporation focuses on the efficiency and production of their technologies, the Coalition focuses on the creation of new technologies. As such, the Kortan Corporation is always eager to steal research to gain the technologies of the Coalition. When successful, the final product is quickly mass-produced, albeit at a lower quality.

The Phantom Marauders

Unlike the Kortan Corporation, the Phantom Marauders rarely possess the talent to mimic or use Coalition technology, instead preferring to simply steal the final products themselves. What they can't use they'll happily sell to the highest bidder, though they prefer that not be the Kortan Corporation.

The Mold

While not defenseless, the Coalition lacks the military production of the Kortan Corporation and the training of the Phantom Marauders. This has left the Coalition with little more than the occasional research outpost on the moons, most of which are quickly abandoned when The Mold closes in.

The exception is on the moon Belos, where the Interstellar Coalition Day Chasers maintain a relatively strong network. The appearance of Langer Crystals on Belos has prompted the Coalition to reinforce its strength on the watery moon, despite a substantial presence of The Mold.

The Average Citizen

To most, the Interstellar Coalition treads the line between mad science and dangerous religion. Their augmented members and powerful (but often untested) technology coupled with the still lingering memories of the Seeds puts the Coalition in a suspicious, if not outright negative light in the eyes of the general populace.

Nonetheless, there are those sympathetic to the Coalition. The scientifically minded may put aside their concerns in exchange for the resources of the Coalition. The spiritually minded may be persuaded by the lofty ambitions for peace. The lost and desperate of society may overcome suspicion for the promise of augmented strength or a sense of belonging.

The Player Characters

As with the Kortan Corporation and Phantom Marauders, the Interstellar Coalition serves as an occasional ally and occasional enemy to the party. The Coalition is more than happy to recruit the party for a little work, be it braving Mold infested locales or preventing their technology from falling into the “wrong” hands. Monetary payment is perhaps not as great as it might be working for other factions, but if the work is important enough the Coalition won’t hesitate to tempt characters with promises of rare technology, especially cybernetics.

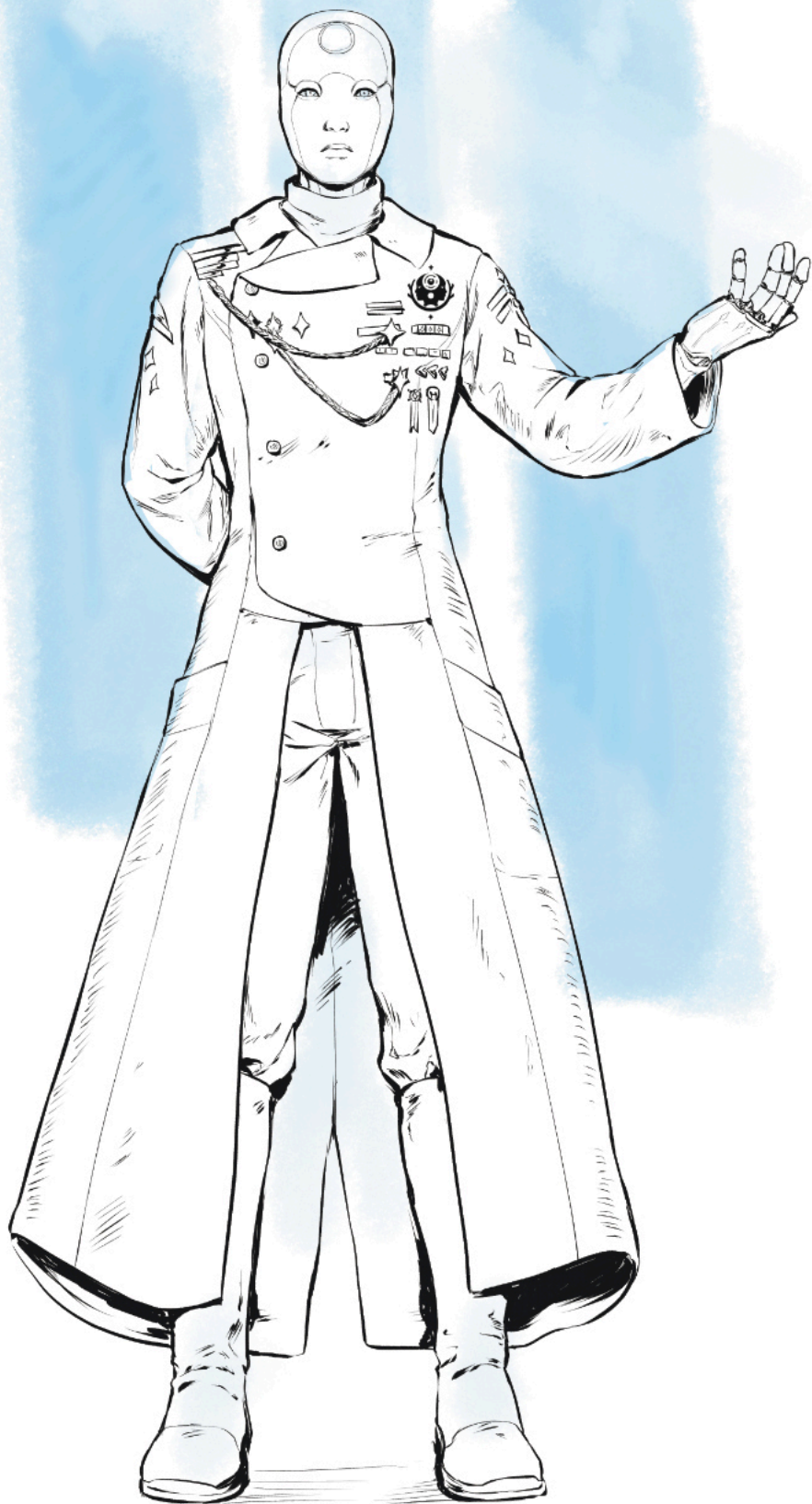
Cybernetics, in general, come from the Coalition and are either gained through a favor, personal connection, or at least a superficial promise to join the faction on some level.

UNITS

When it comes to interactions with the player characters, the Coalition is the least likely of the factions to engage in violence. Most of their members are scientists or staff, but a few do possess abilities suitable to combat.

Some units have two options highlighted in **red** and **blue**. The GM should select one option (or create their own) per unit or group of similar units and give them the option’s traits.







Tatym Wynn

The leader of the Interstellar Coalition, Tatym's greatest strength is his mastery of the BWL system, letting him access its vast network of information instantly. Even apart from the BWL, Tatym was and is a scientific genius.

Rarely does Tatym engage in combat, preferring instead to talk his opponents down. If forced, he relies upon whatever experimental devices he has on hand. Even if he is killed, Tatym doesn't stay dead for long (see **Appendix: Secrets**).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d4, Weird Science d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Powers: Any 2. Power Points 15.

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Charismatic, Level Headed, Strong Willed

Cybernetics: BWL, dermal plating

Gear: Experimental device, integrated PID.

Special Abilities:

- **BWL Mastery:** Tatym treats all unlisted Smarts skills as d12+1 while within range of the Banda City Ring. If out of range or otherwise cut off, Tatym treats those skills as d8 instead.
- **Robotic:** Doesn't breathe; immune to disease and poison.

Commando

Agent/Bodyguard

Commandos are the specialists of the Coalition ranks. Their base augmentations make them more than capable combatants though their numbers are few. Commandos are typically found guarding a group of scientists or alone on special assignments.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d6, Driving d8, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Shooting d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14 (7) 10 (3)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Level Headed

Cybernetics: BWL, concealed blade (*Str+d6, hardened alloy*), full spectrum vision, subdermal mesh, dermal plating, heavy duty arm (2), reactive optics.

Gear: Energy cell (2), heavy pistol (*Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d8+1, AP 2, RoF 1*), PID, combat armor, security armor.



Scientist

Programmer/Engineer

Scientists are the most common members of the Coalition and are responsible for operating the stations both on Banda and its moons. When confronted with a threat, most scientists immediately call for aid with their BWL, then flee or surrender rather than fight. When they must fight, they generally do so only to buy time until help arrives by using their skills to hastily construct a smoke bomb, short circuit a door, or any other means of hampering their attacker.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d8, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Hacking d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Repair d8, Research d10, Science d10, Stealth d4, Shooting d6, Weird Science d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Powers: *Burst* and *Bolt* or *Deflection* and *Stun*. Power Points 15.

Edges: Mcgyver

Cybernetics: BWL.

Gear: Energy cell (2), experimental device, light pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 1), PID.

Task Bot

Heavy/Mini

These robots are white, spherical quadrupeds of varying size. While most are used for city maintenance, the versions here are armed for combat and represent those used as guards or for combating The Mold. A task bot must be remotely controlled, usually through a BWL.

Attributes: Agility d6 d8, Smarts *, Spirit d8, Strength d4 d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6 Notice *, Stealth d4 d10, Shooting d6+1

Pace: 4 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13 (2) 7 (2)

Edges: Nerves of Steel

Cybernetics: BWL, dermal plating

Gear: Energy cell (2), heavy repeater (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+1, RoF 5), repeater pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 3).

Special Abilities:

- **Size -2 (Small):** Mini task bots are lightweight and two feet tall.
- **Size 4 (Large):** Heavy task bots weigh 2 tons and are five feet tall.
- **Robotic:** Doesn't breathe; immune to disease and poison.
- ***Remote Controlled:** The task bot uses the Smarts and appropriate skills (including Notice) of its controller (typically 1d6).
- **Wall Walker:** Mini task bots move at their full Pace on walls and ceilings.



Interstellar Coalition Advancements

ADVANCEMENT

Place the Coalition advancement banner on this page, and mark it as the faction advances. If an advancement doesn't specify a specific unit, it applies to all units of that faction. See Faction Advancement for more details.

The List

Side glances, stares, and now strangers calling you by name suggest the Coalition has made sure all its members are familiar with your faces and actions.

All Coalition members recognize the characters on sight and are given daily updates on their actions, at least as far as the Coalition knows. As part of this, Coalition members receive a +2 bonus to recognize a player character in disguise.

Dynamic Firewall

"In recent news, the Interstellar Coalition has been called out for a new cyber defense system which hospitalized a would-be hacker. Founder and spokesperson, Tatym Wynn, calls the system 'self-defense'," the newscaster declares.

Hacking Coalition units and property is done with a -2 penalty and a failure results in 2d6 damage.

Emotional Dampener

The leaked conclusion of a Coalition research paper has caused quite a stir: "Despite the criticism, 87% of subjects said they preferred the lack of negative



emotion, and 63% opted not to have the chip removed at the conclusion of the experiment.”

Coalition units gain the Strong Willed edge, adding +2 to their total when resisting Tests with Smarts or spirit.

Doppelganger

This isn't the first time you've been caught off guard by confused acquaintances claiming to have had conversations you have no memory of.

The Coalition has deemed the characters worth investigating, and have assigned each a Commando doppelganger with nearly identical looks and mannerisms. If a doppelganger dies, the Coalition may prepare a new one in three days.

Studied Tactics

As the video ends, it's clear someone at the Coalition has put together an impressive compilation of your team in battle. You doubt it was for entertainment.

The Coalition has studied the character's combat tactics and can run probability calculations even during battle. Coalition units gain the Dodge (-2 to be hit by ranged attacks) and Block (+1 Parry and ignore 1 point of Gang Up bonus) edges.

Emergency Stunner

A viral video of three Phantom Marauders harassing a Coalition civilian, only to be incapacitated at a touch has been circulating.

Coalition units have a stunner embedded in the hand. With a successful melee attack, the target of the stunner must make a Vigor roll at -2 or be **Stunned**.

Combat Co-Pilot

The Coalition newscaster called it a "temporary co-pilot", but the newly announced technology lets a willing participant share a live experience with a 'specialist' located elsewhere. Even more alarming is the specialist's ability to control the user's body.

As an action, any Coalition unit can connect to a combat specialist, allowing themselves to be temporarily controlled. An affected unit has 1d10 Fighting and Shooting, an additional +1 Parry, and +1 Toughness. Only one Coalition unit may be connected to the specialist at a time, and the effect may be ended as an action.

Pain Inhibitor

"They say pain is the body's way of warning us. But we're not animals, we know there are times when pain is only in the way." The video advert tugs at your heart-strings with images of sick and injured hospital patients smiling. But you can't help wonder what other uses the Coalition has for such an implant.

Coalition units have a +1 bonus to recover from being Shaken, and Coalition Wild Cards ignore 1 point of Wound penalties.

HELBINE



HELBINE

- Helbine is the wasteland planet around which the moons orbit.
- Other than Banda City, the planet is uninhabited.
- Banda City is divided into four sections: The Ring (Coalition), The Spaceport (Corporation), and The Track (Marauders).
- The uniting feature of all inhabitants is a fear of The Mold reaching the city.

HISTORY

Discovery and LDHB

In 319 (74 years ago) Dr. Felbert Helbine arrived at the Helbine system. Though there is evidence of prior inhabitants, particularly on the moon Yorg, Dr. Helbine is considered the modern discoverer of the system. His primary contribution to its growth was the discovery of Low Density High Bond Fossil Fuel, or LDHB for short.

Refining LDHB turned the black sludge into a low weight but highly efficient rocket fuel. When Dr. Helbine developed a refinement method for LDHB and sent samples back home, demand for the fuel sky rocketed nearly overnight. Furthermore, Dr. Helbine determined that the amount of LDHB under the surface of the planet was practically limitless.

Dr. Helbine sold the mining rights and refinement process to Saul Kortan, and with royalties for life the scientist-turned-tycoon turned his attention to the quiet research of exobiology on the curious moons,

before disappearing completely some years later.

Banda City

Within weeks the planet Helbine was finding itself swarmed with people. The potential of fabulous wealth and a new life brought millions from across the Cantallion System to the area over the next decades. Within 20 years of Dr. Helbine's first appearance, the city of Banda had become a megalopolis to rival any other.

Of course, growth at that rate brings problems, and Banda City certainly has its share. With such a massive boom of population, the newly formed government was unable to keep up and ultimately never established itself as a meaningful power. Instead, the Interstellar Coalition, Kortan Corporation, and Banda City Phantoms carved out their own areas of the city where they became the law.

Though substantially weakened by the Kortan Corporation, the Banda City Phantoms would later join forces with the Marauders of Half-Moon in 381 (12 years ago) and return in force to regain much of their original area of influence, a strip of the city now called The Track.

GEOGRAPHY

Banda City is a roughly circular sprawl of tightly packed buildings, often layered vertically. Bridges, roads, and walkways criss-cross on the ground and overhead, with skyscrapers blocking the horizon in all directions. This intensely urban biome is roughly circular and divided into several unequal parts.

- The Northwest portion of the city is controlled by the Interstellar Coalition, with their seat of power at The Ring.
- The Southeast portion of the city is dominated by the Kortan Corporation's spaceport and surrounding industry.
- Cutting the city in half from roughly north to south is a strip of connected streets and their surrounding buildings called The Track and controlled by the Phantom Marauders.
- The remaining areas, primarily the northeast and southwest portions of the city, are relatively neutral.

LIFE AND CULTURE

The Faction Balance

Life in Banda City, and the Helbine system in general, is dominated by the constant friction between the factions. While The Mold is universally hostile, the remaining factions each balance their competing agendas with the necessary cooperation.

Because there is no dominant government in the Helbine system, the three factions of Banda City have established a stalemate. The Coalition manages the city's infrastructure and, critically, the water supply. The Kortan Corporation dominates the economy, keeping the LDHB going out and the necessary goods coming in. Lastly, the Phantom Marauders serve as the system's primary military, giving pause to outside governments and factions who might otherwise swoop in and conquer.

Each faction seeks more control but must balance pursuit of control with two major risks: weakening themselves and weakening the system as a whole.

If, for example, the Phantom Marauders went to war with the Kortan Corporation and won, the Interstellar Coalition might easily finish off the weakened victor. At the same time if any one faction is weakened too quickly it poses a risk of inviting invasion from other planets. If the city's infrastructure or economy suddenly failed, the export of LDHB would falter and draw the attention of more powerful nations who would gladly monopolize it. A similar scenario would result if the Phantom Marauders no longer posed a military threat.

Ultimately, while the factions of Banda are often at odds, and violent skirmishes are not uncommon, they remain cautious. None are willing to risk defeat and so all three bide their time, making small but calculated moves but ultimately remaining balanced.

Water

Despite the ever-present threat of governmental collapse, most everyday citizens of Banda City go about their own lives with more banal wants and needs. In the city's early days, the most immediate of those needs was reliable access to drinkable water. It was at this time that the Interstellar Coalition first gained major acceptance among the citizens of Banda.

While the planet itself has no readily available fresh water, the atmosphere contains plenty of hydrogen



and oxygen just waiting to be combined. While the city was barely getting by on personal molecularizers, the Interstellar Coalition up-scaled the technology like never before in the shape of a towering 100-story ring. As air passed through, the free atoms were combined into water which flowed down along the sides of the ring and into public works. Just like that, the Interstellar Coalition had become god-like in the public eye. It wasn't until decades later that people began to see Tatum's trick: The Interstellar Coalition now had a headquarters that none would dare to damage. Even when most of their public trust eroded with the Seeds incident, the Interstellar Coalition remained a necessary force in the city if only to continue providing the water every citizen counted on.

Food

With most of the city's population first or second generation immigrants, it's no surprise that the cuisine of Banda City has never lacked variety. With no rain and infertile soil however, obtaining raw foods has proven difficult. What is available comes from one of three places:

- Locally grown in small batches within the city, typically on balconies or communal rooftop gardens.
- Shipped from the moons, most notably Naya where there is no shortage of flora and fauna.
- Imported from off-world, though the weeks-long transportation precludes anything truly "fresh".

Despite their immediate difficulties upon arrival, the residents of

Banda City quickly grew out of the ultra-preserved ration packs provided by the first corporations and have since cultivated a new (though perhaps a little too exotic for some) culinary tradition.

Today, The Track is filled with street vendors and strong-smelling meats on skewers. Open air markets hawk seafood from Belos and fruit from Naya, while grocers fill daily with new imports.

Handheld street-food such as skewers, cones, and pastries are common as few people travel enough to own personal vehicles. Restaurants, on the other hand, seldom bother with "local" fare, preferring instead to capitalize on the rampant home-sickness of the populace. Similarly, on the high-end of society, exotic (and exorbitantly priced) food typically features off-world delicacies supported by private agriculture and express deliveries.

You won't find any nutrient slurries or tasteless meal-bars in Banda City, but there are some commonalities, fads, and taboos in local food. The most notable of these is a distinct avoidance of mold of any kind. While most have never seen The Mold, over-zealous (and ignorant) lawmakers lead to some draconian policies regarding food safety. The moment anything begins to spoil it must be incinerated along with anything it might have contaminated. Brewers, in particular, are watched closely and must deal with constant paranoia from both inspectors and customers. Of course, The Mold and ordinary mold are completely different, but rare is the citizen who can

wholly trust in that fact when confronted by a slice of moldy bread.

Culture

While the food of Banda caters primarily to sentimentality and a fondness for the traditions of home worlds, the thoughts of the people are firmly in the present.

Anti-faction sentiments run high among many, whether that's painting the Coalition as trans-human elitists intent on turning the world into brainless robots, the Corporation as an industrial grinder with no purpose beyond "make Jazmine Kortan even richer", or the Phantom Marauders as dangerous anarchists and criminals ready and willing to turn Banda City into another Akra, opinions for and against each faction are in abundance.

Added to this is the threat of The Mold made constantly clear by the shattered remains of Akra in the sky. More often seen as a dangerous force of nature like a volcano or plague than merely an aggressive species, fear of The Mold is the one thing everyone can agree on.

Nobody in Banda City truly believes the delicate balance of peace will last. Whether conveyed through music, sculpture, literature, or painting, the underlying question is: "What will give first, and will we survive?"

As would be expected, spirituality in Banda City is as varied as the species that live there. In a city where every neighbor comes from another planet, there is room for nothing except coexistence. Public places of worship are mostly small street-side shrines, often crafted to

serve a wide range of beliefs. In fact, the mixing of theologies and philosophies has become commonplace, with Banda City traditions already separating from their origins to incorporate the present joys and fears of life.

The only truly local religion in Banda City is the dogma of the Interstellar Coalition. Though far from dominant, the base beliefs of peace through empathy appeal to the fearful masses. After all, for the relatively powerless everyday citizen living in the shadows of four giants, the one preaching "let's all get along" has a certain appeal. That said, its the second part of the Interstellar Coalition creed that discourages most people. "Unity Through Empathy" is an easy sell, but "Empathy Through Technology" is where most become suspicious. Particularly after the Seeds incident in 363 (thirty years ago), conversions to the Interstellar Coalition have become uncommon, though not altogether rare.

EVENTS

Though the people of Banda City (and by association, those living on the neighboring moons) typically celebrate holidays according to the days timing with their home, there are a handful of additional special days acknowledged city-wide.

As you read through these events, you may note that there's no calendar associated with them. Rather, these events only occur whenever your Game Master wants them to. If it adds to the game, either by introducing an additional challenge or by representing a brief rest from a life



of adventure, the GM should use whichever event best fits the story they're telling. If the coming event is able to be foreshadowed, all the better to help to make the world feel more alive.

Windstorms

Not a holiday by any means, windstorms in Banda City are a somewhat unpredictable natural phenomenon. Usually these can be predicted a few days in advance, but occasionally a windstorm creeps up on the city with little warning.

On days with windstorms shops are closed (in advance if it's foreseen), streets are emptied, and anything not fastened down is liable to be destroyed as high winds tear through the city.

When a windstorm occurs, select a level to go with it. A windstorm typically lasts several hours, but its actual duration depends on how long it contributes to your story.

Level 1: The least dangerous and most common, level 1 storms have wind which reaches speeds up to 70 miles per hour. These storms cause minor damage to unprotected property. Being outdoors during such a storm bears a risk of being struck by small objects. If the characters are outdoors, apply these effects:

- **Travel:** All ground is Difficult Ground if traveling on foot.
- **Hearing:** Notice rolls to hear have a -4 penalty, and hearing anything quieter than a loud shout is impossible.
- **Sight:** Rolls relying on sight have a -2 penalty, as dust and debris fill the air.

- **Danger:** Every 1 minute the characters must roll AGI. On a failure, they are struck by a small object for 2d6 damage. For each raise, they may cause another character within 1 yard to also succeed by deflecting the object or pushing the other character into safety.

Level 2: A moderate storm, level 2 windstorms include wind speeds up to 110 miles per hour. These storms may break street signs, topple statues, and even tear apart poorly constructed buildings. If the characters are outdoors, apply the following effects:

- **Travel:** Travel by foot is impossible, and travel by vehicle is hazardous. The driver must make a Driving roll, and a critical failure causes all occupants to take Fatigue from Bumps & Bruises.
- **Hearing:** Hearing is impossible.
- **Sight:** Rolls relying on sight have a -4 penalty, as a great cloud of dust and dirt is stirred up by the windstorm.
- **Danger:** Every 3 rounds the characters must roll AGI. On a failure, they are struck by a small object for 3d6 damage. For each raise they may reduce any damage dealt to another character within 1 yard by 1d6 by attempting to assist the character.

Level 3: A level 3 storm is a severe storm with winds up to 150 miles per hour. These storms are extremely dangerous and in addition to the effects of lesser storms, may destroy overhead roadways and topple decently constructed buildings. If

the characters are outdoors, apply the following effects:

- **Travel:** Travel outdoors is impossible. Especially heavy vehicles may treat the windstorm as a Level 2 instead.
- **Hearing:** Hearing is impossible.
- **Sight:** Rolls relying on sight have a -6 penalty and powers that require sight may be impossible.
- **Danger:** A storm of this level is more than enough to sweep a character along with it. Such a character must make an AGI roll each round at -2 , and take $3d6$ damage on a failure.

Storms with a level greater than 3 are possible, but the destruction to the city would be catastrophic, requiring months, if not years, to rebuild and inevitably resulting in many casualties.

In addition, windstorms are easily capable of knocking out communications relays and blocking signals of most kinds. When a windstorm occurs, it's a chance for your characters to feel isolated even in the city. Being cut off from easy travel and communication is a great opportunity for drama.

Solar Eclipse

On a planet with 6 moons, there is almost always a solar eclipse occurring somewhere on Helbine. But when the city itself is cloaked in irregular twilight for a few hours the people take the opportunity to celebrate. Solar Eclipses are easy to predict, and while not official holidays it's become customary to take the time off to relax.

Though never pitch black, a solar eclipse does shroud the city in shade, making it Dim lighting. During this time many neighborhoods turn off their electric lights and instead hang candles or lanterns to add a little flair. Most citizens of Banda City use Solar Eclipse days as a chance to spend time with family or close friends and enjoy a special meal. Others attend eclipse parties at local clubs, and a few host unique events, like dangerous no-lights races at The Track.

Employee Appreciation Day

Originally just a tradition of the Kortan Corporation, Employee Appreciation Day grew into a city-wide event out of convenience. As the number of Corporation employees grew, so did the number of their friends and family taking the day off to be with them. These days, only businesses catering to celebrators find it worthwhile to stay open.

Now, Employee Appreciation Day is a city-wide event where most workers are given the day off (regardless of employer). Typically the occasion is enjoyed by taking to the streets and indulging in one's favorite foods and drinks. Parades and out of control parties are a staple of the event as the day serves as a raucous celebration of freedom from corporate shackles, at least until tomorrow.



Margo,

Hey bud, heard you got lost again. I guess where you're from it's just a straight line from A to B, huh? Here, I drew you up a little map. It's just a doodle, the city is way bigger and has multiple levels, but if you can find the big ring and the pyramid (that's the mine we were talking about) this should help you get your bearings. Also, the closer to the faction HQs you get, the stronger their influence. On the other hand, even if some areas are technically faction held, if they're far from their HQ it's not a big deal.

-Estrella



THE WASTES

The surface of Helbine is an empty wasteland of dry rock and yellow dust. With no naturally occurring water, there is no naturally occurring life. Beyond its barren surface the only other natural feature of the wasteland is the wind currents that travel it, bringing with them the dangerous windstorms common to the area.

Despite his best efforts, even Dr. Helbine failed to find anything on Helbine worthwhile, other than the LDHB of course. Expeditions and scans of the planet have since revealed similar results. Every few years a desperate or optimistic investor might put together a crew and search for another LDHB mine on the surface, but without the support of the city and factions they're attempting to circumvent, these searches run out of resources before finding anything of worth. It's possible there are other easily accessible LDHB deposits on the surface of Helbine, but the associated costs with establishing a new mine, refinery, and shipping industry inevitably outweigh the financial benefits of escaping the status quo of the city.

While rare, there are those who shun the lifestyle of Banda City. Whether to escape a perceived oppression or for a desire for solitude, the surface of Helbine does maintain a small population outside of Banda City. These individuals might live in isolation or small communes by living off mechanically produced water and vegetation. It's far from a glamorous life, but to some it beats the alternatives: the city with its factions, Akra with its

Influence



anarchy, the moons with their mold, or traveling to another planet altogether.

EFFECTS

Wasteland

Food and water cannot be gathered through use of the Survival skill.

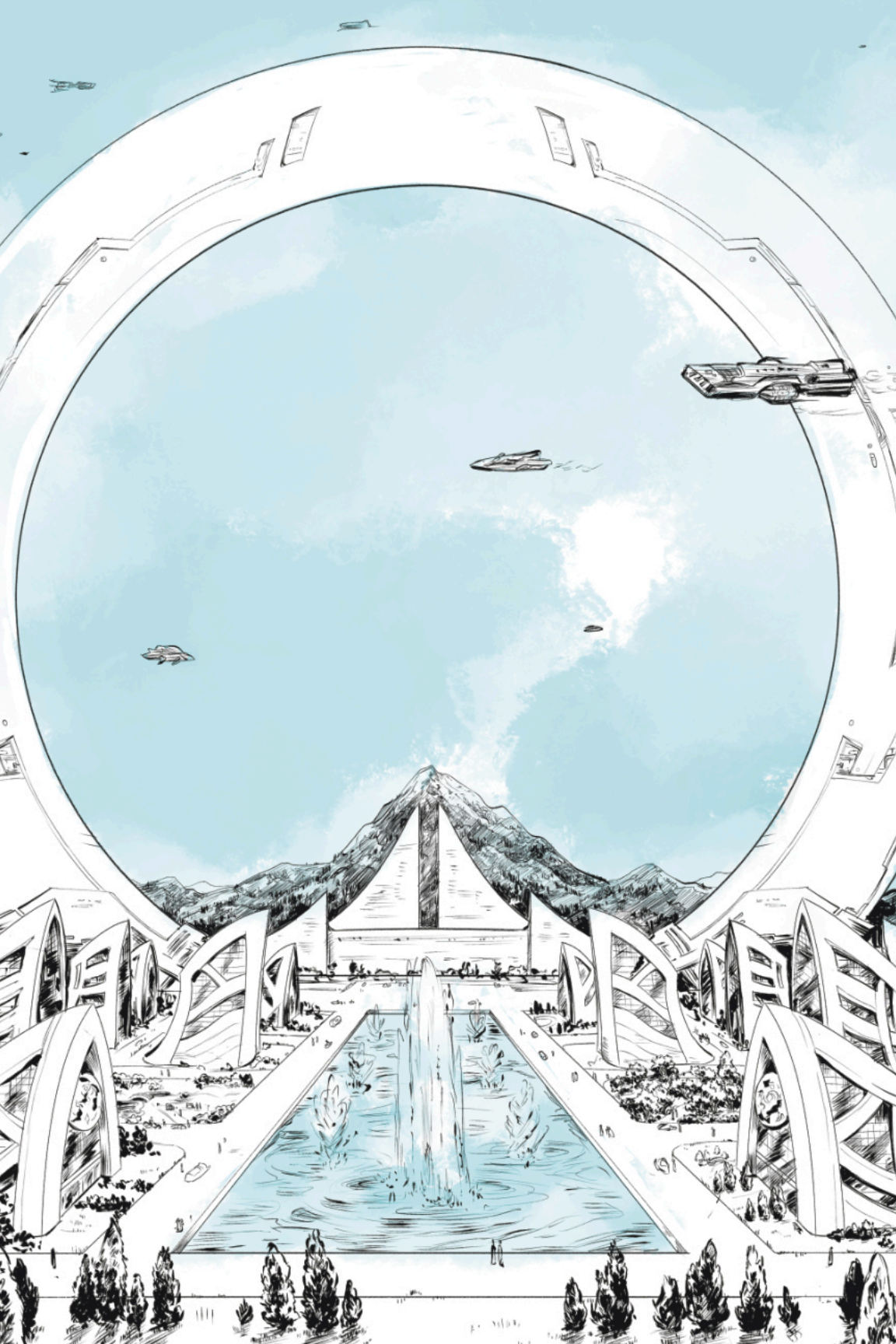
EVENTS

Cargo Pods

Despite its lack of virtues, there is one reason for travel across the desolate surface of Helbine: Cargo Pods. For many industries on the moons, particularly the mines of Akra, transport of goods to Helbine is done with Cargo Cannons. These massive guns are used to launch shipping containers (and non-fragile content) at escape velocity off the moon. Of course, landing a 10-ton container in the middle of a city block at terminal velocity would be catastrophic. Unable to reliably hit a small landing zone in the city and unwilling to risk missing, these cannons instead aim for anywhere else, firing their shells at the wasteland and including a tracking device for whoever is meant to collect the cargo.

This practice causes the regular appearance of "falling stars" visible from the city, and a whole new opportunity for piracy. The Phantom Marauders, being piratical by nature, were quick to make a living by beating the intended recipients to their cargo pod and stealing or ransoming its contents.





THE COALITION CAMPUS

The portion of Banda City under the influence of the Interstellar Coalition is colloquially referred to as The Campus, a reference to the Coalition's collection of laboratories, lecture halls, and other structures dedicated to academia. The term is often used, however, to refer to the surrounding neighborhoods as well which are mostly populated by members and sympathizers of the Coalition. Despite being the smallest faction controlled region, the Campus is clean, orderly, and maintains a certain aesthetic quality of sleek curves and shine, an inoffensive 'beauty' designed by committee.

Dominating the skyline of the Coalition Campus is The Ring. The tallest structure in Banda City, the Coalition's massive ring serves several purposes. Aside from visibility, and a little bit of menace, the Ring serves as a water molecularizer, forcing bonds between hydrogen and oxygen atoms passing through the Ring. This water falls like mist or flows down the sides of the Ring into a basin below where it is pumped into the city's infrastructure. Though not the only source of water in Banda, the Ring is responsible for about 75% of the water produced for the city, not including emergency supplies.

Of course, the immense value to Banda City provided by the Ring's water production makes it a risky target for the Coalition's enemies. Whether coincidental or not, that layer of social defense has been leveraged by building a second fea-

Influence



ture into the ring's core structure: it serves as a communications hub for all Beta Wave Links in Banda City. Normally, the BWLs have limited range but the Ring allows for all users in Banda City to maintain a constant connection.

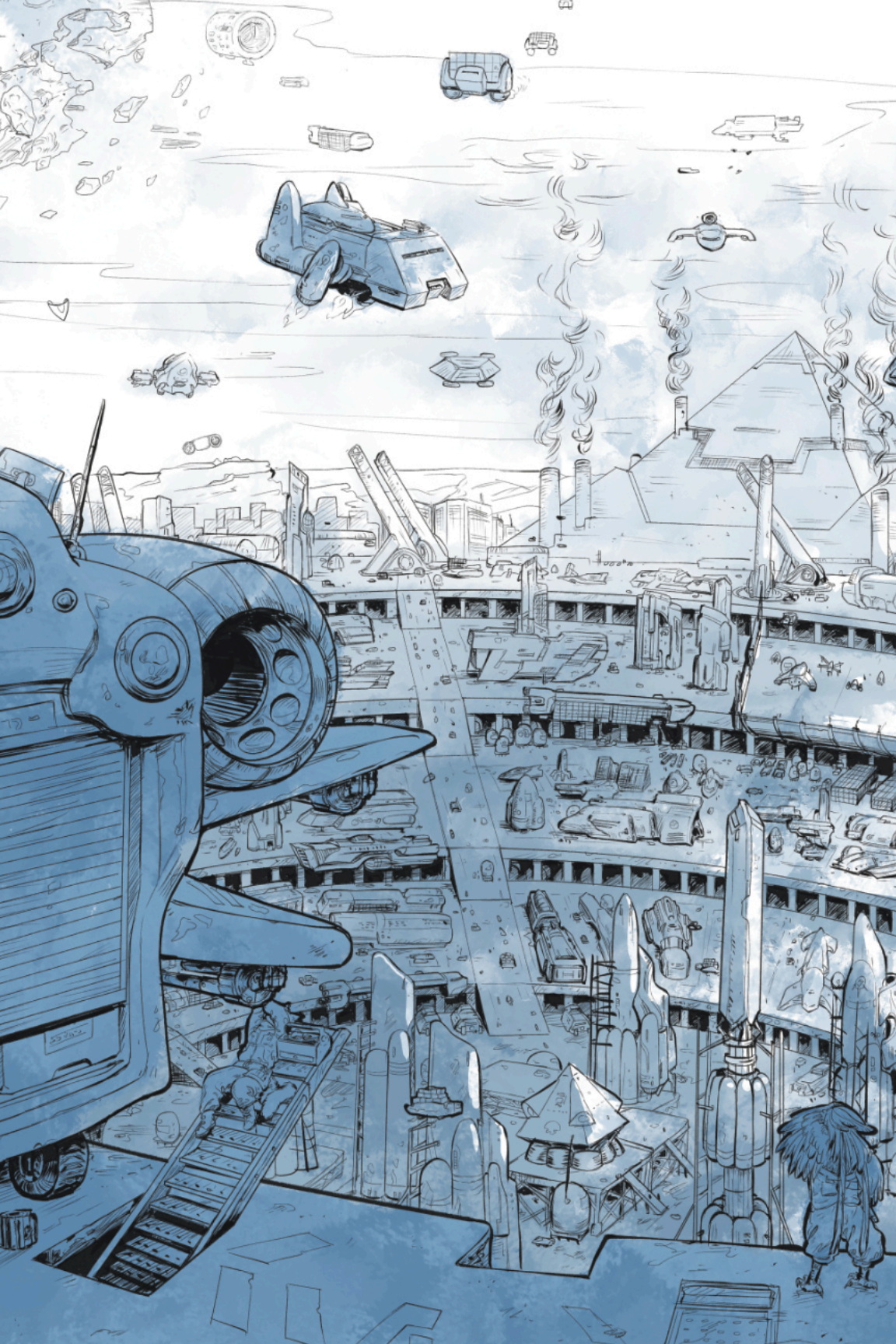
EFFECTS

Always Watching

The Coalition's greatest strength is its ability to gather information, a power which, in the area of The Campus, takes the form of near constant surveillance. Anyone and anything from basic security cameras, and maintenance robots on the street, to average citizens with a BWL are capable of reporting and receiving information nearly instantaneously.

The threat of drawing the entire region's attention is typically a sufficient deterrent to crime, but the real danger is local campus wardens (commandos with the agent option). The rumors of wardens capturing and forcibly augmenting criminals are likely all false, but the wardens are certainly dangerous opponents regardless and always the first to respond to trouble.





THE KORTAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Influence



shadow of the corporation also work for it.

EVENTS

Security Checkpoints

Travel through the Kortan Complex is often interrupted at security checkpoints. These guards are primarily in place to keep order, but they're also on the lookout for anyone unusual (especially members of other factions). Although weapons and armor aren't outlawed, or even all that uncommon, security personnel will certainly question well-armed individuals, especially if none of the travelers are Kortan employees.

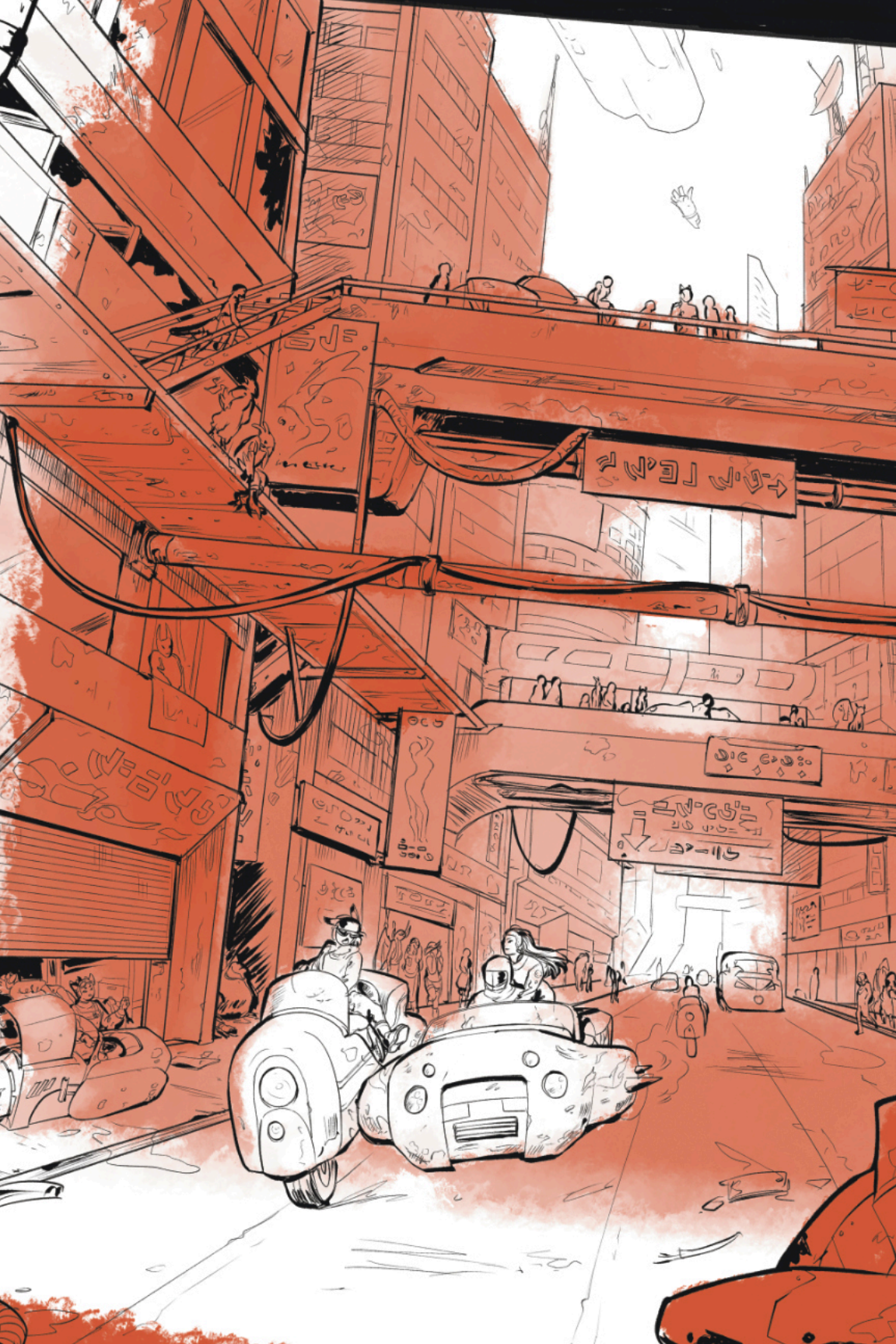
If the characters are suspicious individuals themselves, passing through a security checkpoint isn't necessarily going to lead to battle. Clever use of Persuasion and other social skills is just as effective, if not more effective, than pulling a gun. If a fight does break out, most checkpoints feature at least two security personnel and one turret. More likely however, suspicious guards will report the time and place of the encounter, alerting the Corporation to the group's presence in case of a later incident.

As the corporation's sphere of influence has grown, so has their need to sustain that growth with Corporate owned and operated grocers, hospitals, and schools (training facilities) which have popped up over the last 10 years. Even entertainment and recreation in the area is often owned by the Corporation, and all of it is provided at lower costs to employees, or even included as part of a benefits package. Of course, none of these offerings are ultimately out of the goodness of Jazmine Kortan's heart. With a firm (but so far gentle) grasp on the lives of its employees, the corporation is able to subtly fine tune the efficiency of its work force on a massive scale.

The heart of the Kortan Corporation is the spaceport, the largest, most advanced, and most legal spaceport in Banda City. the Kortan Spaceport holds a near monopoly on travel on and off Helbine, especially the transport of LDHB. The spaceport is always bustling with rockets launching and ships speeding along launch-ramps. All this does not come free, as a nominal fee must be paid with each use of the facilities. For convenience, it's common practice for locals to pay a flat 500b fee every 30 days for unlimited use of the spaceport for a single ship. Alternatively, a basic cost of 50b to take off or land is standard (taxes and fees not included).

Though not all Kortan employees live in the area and not all locals are Kortan employees, it is certainly true that most citizens living in the





THE TRACK

The Raceway

The Track is not a formal zone of the city but there is a clear understanding among the populace of where it starts and ends.

Historically, The Track began as the site of the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) races, an illegal series of races that combined an extremely difficult track of streets with a dangerously small set of regulations. These MAD races were simply street races that grew in popularity, eventually becoming unofficially recognized and scheduled. The longest informally recognized MAD race track stretched the length of the entire city, cutting through it from north to south and navigating up and down several layers of the city. This is the strip which most closely resembles The Track as it is today.

The MAD races continue to this day, and it's common knowledge to avoid driving on The Track unless you're prepared for trouble. Even when there is no organized race, many locals see the streets as a free-for-all as far as traffic law is concerned.

The MAD races and the area of the raceway affected each other over the years, as rowdy onlookers lead to rowdy businesses, which in turn catered more to the rowdy onlookers and so on. By the time the Phantom Marauders arrived, The Track was nearly already as it is today. The only thing the Phantom Marauders added was additional patronage and the loosely organized authority needed to push back against those who sought to change the place.

Influence



Nowadays, though not formally associated with the Phantom Marauders, The Track embodies their affinity for anarchy and continues to be the destination of choice for

Phantom Marauders on Helbine. Likewise, even the unaffiliated locals see the Phantom Marauders as kindred spirits, sharing the same distaste for law and order. Nonetheless, The Track is not truly "lawless". A great number of locals and Phantom Marauders do seek a peaceful life, and a history of group vigilantism has kept the more heinous crimes in check.

EFFECTS

Lawless

On the track, loud noises like gunfire, and even explosions are not uncommon. The inhabitants typically keep their distance from such disruptions and organized law enforcement is nonexistent.

EVENTS

MAD Race

At most anytime, and with little warning, there is the chance of things on The Track getting suddenly more reckless than usual. Though often scheduled events for betting, there are just as many MAD races that start spontaneously. A race might include any number of vehicles, even hundreds, but they always involve spectacular feats of driving and equally spectacular crashes. While some simply enjoy the thrills, many participate in the MAD races as a sort of marketing, showing off their skills in piloting, engineering, or fighting.



IN ORBIT OVER HELBINE

The Half-Moon

Undoubtedly, the most noteworthy aspect of orbit over Helbine is the oppressive presence of the *Half-Moon*. This dreadnought is the Phantom Marauder's flagship and a force of military might unrivaled in the Helbine system. The *Half-Moon* is responsible, in part, for the destruction of Akra and that show of incredible firepower has been in the minds of Banda City citizens ever since. Fortunately, the Phantom Marauders are more interested in making some money and having a good time than in wanton destruction.

The Phantom Marauder Fleet

While the *Half-Moon* remains mercifully dormant, the Phantom Marauder fleet, divided into its semi-independent squadrons, loves to take advantage of the fear inspired by the sight of their flagship in new arrivals. Travelers to and from Helbine inevitably have to deal with cocky pirates extolling tolls or enforcing fictional "searches" in which they take the opportunity to relieve "guests" of "contraband".

Just short of outright robbery, these pirates eagerly intercept any curious ship going in or out of the area in hopes of making some easy money. Though they are smart enough to try to avoid starting anything they can't finish, especially with the other factions, firefights do break out now and then as over-eager Phantom Marauders ask a little too much from their marks. Other squadrons are typically slow to leap

Influence



to their mate's aid, knowing they brought the fight upon themselves. Phantom Marauders who find themselves outgunned will typically fall back to the safety of the *Half-Moon*, where stray fire by opponents risks waking the "sleeping" giant.

In the case of a loss, other Phantom Marauders will take note. If they want to show up their peers they may try their luck with that ship later, or it altogether if the display of power was overwhelming.

Gates and Traffic

Also of interest over Helbine is the Interplanetary Travel Gate. This ring-like structure is part of an interplanetary highway system and helps to either accelerate or decelerate ships traveling through space, turning months long journeys into weeks.

Helbine sees an impressive level of ship traffic, and hardly an hour goes by without a few ships coming and going from the Kortan Spaceport (and adding to the Kortan Corporation's finances while they're at it).

EFFECTS

Outer Space

Zero Gravity: Characters without a specialized means of moving in Zero Gravity may only move by propelling themselves off their surroundings, moving at a Pace equal to their Strength per round.

No Atmosphere: Characters who are exposed to the vacuum of space without a spacesuit or a full suit of armor suffer a wound every round from decompression and/or suffocation.