



Belly of the Beast

by Nicholas Moll

One of the greatest pirates the galaxy has ever known was Smiling Scarlet Kilik. Known for his lightning fast raids and uncanny ability to escape pursuit, Kilik roamed the stars for over a decade before being caught. Prior to Kilik's execution, however, the pirate was pressured to reveal the location of his amassed booty ? reasoning that he must have hidden the vast sum of his plunder as spending it in anything but small and careful sums would have alerted the authorities. The location revealed by Kilik was something of a joke and a challenge: the belly of Behemoth, the great Space Whale. Interrogated over and over again, Kilik's claim was repeated and subsequently assumed to be true. Ever since his death, adventurers, pirates and vagabonds have sought to enter Behemoth seeking the treasure of Smiling Scarlet Kilik. None, however, have returned.

While only the Big Damn Sci-Fi core rules are required to play this adventure, the Game Master and Players alike may find the ?That Damn Dirty Word? Core Companion and ?This Is Omega Ball? Campaign Structure useful.

Press-Ganged!

The adventure opens with the characters having been press-ganged the night before. How they get there is entirely up to the Game Master. But the likely story is that they were in a star port or space station cantina when a fight broke out and a quick bump on the head later, here they are. Equally likely is that the characters may have been slaves or convicts sold into service on the Porter, not knowing what grisly fate awaited. They awake to find themselves in the hold of the Porter, a Cargo Ship. While the characters have their clothing they are stripped of any Armoury items such as weapons and armour. Curiously, each character is also shackled to the floor. This is because the characters have not been press-ganged to serve on a ship, but press-ganged to be served! The entire crew of the Space-Whaler are Psychovores, who require fresh minds to feed them!

Let the characters stew in their cell and even try to escape for a bit. The chains can be broken with a successful Arcana roll and the lock can be picked with an Intuition roll, suffering a -2 penalty for lack of proper tools. Once their escape is successful, or once the character's are sufficiently frustrated, have the Psychovore cook come along to fetch them for the Crew's meal.

The Porter

The Porter itself is a relatively moderately sized cargo ship, containing three Cargo holds ? the first two intended for larger cargo such as animal herds or shipments of minerals ? while the third is intended for smaller goods, such as mail, parcels or personal affects. Under the command of its current, Psychovore, crew, however, the Porter has been refitted as something of a people-carrier. Cargo Hold #B has been, for instance, fitted with chains on the floor to shackle prisoners and Cargo Hold #C has been loaded with storage containers filled with body parts ? the remains of the Psychovore's meals. Still, the Psychovore's have kept the Porter in good working order and the ship's statistics are as follows:

Description E F P S Notes

The Porter 2 1 250 4 5 crew min.

The characters have been locked in Cargo Hold #B. Should they go exploring, Cargo Hold #A is empty and #C contains a hodgepodge of lockboxes, chests, containers, lockers and other storage items. Inside these boxes and containers the characters find the bones of various sentient Species (a grisly collection of leftovers from the Psychovore's previous meals), Armoury items ? most notably, their own lost equipment, and anything else the Game Master feels appropriate. The Porter itself is crewed by five Psychovores, two of which are located in the Cockpit, another one in the Engine Room with the fourth and fifth napping in the crew bunks. If the characters are quiet (a Shatter roll for sneaking), they may make their way from Cargo Hold #C to the upper decks without being noticed.

Once the Psychovore crew are dealt with, the characters can investigate the Porter's mission somewhat. To do this, the characters could access the ship's databanks using an Intuition roll, intimidate any surviving Psychovore's with a Shatter or Vitality roll, or examining the lingering thought-matter of the decaying corpses in Cargo Hold #C with an Arcana roll (at -2 due to the deceased state of the targets). Success reveals the mission of the Porter and her crew: To find and enter Behemoth, massive space whale, in search of Smiling Scarlet Kilik's treasure.

Behemoth

No sooner have the character's taken control of the Porter than big red lights begin to flash. Sensors show that Behemoth has been located and the enormous Space Whale is coming right for the ship. Now, the Behemoth is a ship eater and its mouth is capable of swallowing the Porter in one foul gulp. The Psychovore's planned to let Behemoth do just that, relying on the sturdy structure of the Porter to ride their way into the belly of the beast. But the character's don't know that. Let the character's try to flee or fight Behemoth. Even if they are successful in killing the beast, they may still venture inside in search of the treasure. Behemoth, for its part, will try and eat the Porter.

Inside Behemoth, the Porter (if swallowed) will go straight from the mouth to the belly. Space Whale's generate their own atmosphere, so inside the mouth characters may walk about as if on a planet's surface. Any Shatter rolls for acrobatic or athletic actions, such as running or jumping, are at -2 dice, however, as Behemoth's tongue is squishy and covered in sticky saliva. The belly of Behemoth is a different story, however. While the Porter, another starship or even some wreckage will float on Behemoth's stomach juices, the juices themselves are quite murk and gooey (and any attempts to swim through it suffer a -2 penalty). Still, the stomach of Behemoth is akin to a small sea or large lake, filled with many small, drifting islands of debris and containing a few inhabitants.

A Sporting Rivalry

Unfortunately, the Psychovore's weren't the first ones who have gone looking for Smiling Scarlet Kilik's treasure. Captain Garm of the Dagger, a Svartalfar, and Captain Leena of the Jolly Sparrow ? a Human. Both have separate sailing sea-ships (that's right, the old fashioned water-based kind blown by wind, or in this cases ? stomach fumes) containing crews of their own Species. Both Garm and Leena's ships (the Dagger and the Sparrow) use the exact same rules for starships as contained in the Big Damn Sci-Fi core rules, the only difference really being asthetic (stomach juices instead of space).

Description E F P S Notes

The Dagger 3 6 25 1 10 crew min.

The Jolly Sparrow 4 2 29 4 13 crew min.

Both Garm and Leena know the other doesn't have the treasure. But each is convinced that if they don't eliminate the other, then their rival will find it first. Unfortunately, both like to leap on outsiders ? Garm believing that any outsider is a potential weapon against Leena, and Leena believing that all outsiders possess some hidden knowledge about the treasure. And both have a ?if you're not with me, you're against me? mentality, meaning that if the character's don't go with what Garm or Leena want, it'll be a long walk off a short plank into the stomach juices of Behemoth (a sadistic Game Master may even add a few predatory lifeforms in the juices, use the Carnivore statistics from ?That Damn Dirty Word? and just assume they are aquatic). However, no matter how hard the characters look, there is no sign of the treasure anywhere in Behemoth.

Ending the Adventure

In truth, the Space Whale excreted Smiling Scarlet Kilik's treasure long ago. No matter how hard the characters or anyone else look, it will never be found. To end the adventure, the characters could join either crew or pit both against each other and rule the belly of Behemoth. At the same time, with no treasure and two deranged pirate captains battling it out, it may be prudent simply to leave - particularly if the characters killed Behemoth. If the Space Whale is dead, they have mere days before it doesn't only cease to produce atmosphere, but vent it as well. If this is the case, the characters may attempt to escape the way they came in, through the mouth, or go out the... other end.

Extras

Ancient Space Whale

Being so hideously enormous (big enough to eat a small-to-medium sized star ship), an Ancient Space Whale is generally provided with the statistics of a starship. Here, Engine represents the ability of the Space Whale to propel itself through the void depths of space, Firepower its ability to slam, bite and ram starships and other Space Whales, and Structure its enormous bulk. While a Space Whale has Arcana, their brains are generally too large for the average adventurer's psychic abilities to affect (if only the opposite was true!).

Description E F P S Notes

Space Whale 5 6 0 8 Arcana 3, Swallow

Swallow: A Space Whale may swallow a starship. In doing so, the starship must make a Structure roll or be destroyed.

Leena and her Human Blackhearts

Expanding from their small blue world, Humans were long considered the runts of the galaxy. For Leena and her gang of ruffians, humanity's runt status was taken as a badge of honour. Leena is driven by loyalty to her men. She promised them the treasure of Smiling Scarlet Kilik and she means to deliver.

Description: Like most of the galaxy's sentient species, Humans have a torso, two legs, two arms, and one head, two eyes, one nose and a mouth for eating, breathing and communicating. Leena cuts a very 'piratical' image herself, with an eye-patch and tri-corn hat adorning her head, dressed in a corset and old-style naval jacket.

Species Features: Phenotypes, Spirit.

Arcana 3, Intuition 5, Shatter 5, Vitality 4

Barrier 4, Defence 6 (5 unarmoured), Wounds 8

Items: Axe (+2), Light Armour (+1), Scatter Blaster (+3).

Psychovore

Psychovores are parasitical humanoids that feed on psychic energy. They are not only immune to Arcana-orientated phenomenon but actively nourished by it. As such, Psychovores are renowned xeno-cannibals (in the sense that they devour sentient species) - hunting down and feasting on any Arcana-heavy Species.

Description: White, crystalline-like exoskeleton bodies lined with 'hairline' fractures arranged in a long spider-web of hexagonal shapes. Each Psychovore possesses three eyes; two horizontal from each other and a third vertically lower from the left, sitting just above their wide maws of needle-like teeth.

Species Features: Immunity (Psychic), Univour (Psychic).

Arcana 4, Intuition 2, Shatter 1, Vitality 4

Barrier 5 (3 natural), Defence 1, Wounds 5

Items: Psionic Helm (+2), Psy-Pistol (+3).

Garm and his Svartalfar Cutthroats

The children of Svartalfheim are known throughout the galaxy for their agility and blood-lust, stereotyped as slavers, pirates, and sexual deviants. Captain Garm and his gang of cutthroats are no exception. Driven by greed to seek out Behemoth, and swallowed subsequently, Garm has come to see the treasure and Leena as a conquest he must have to

prove himself a proper Svartalfar.

Description: Tall, lithe, agile humanoids with angular features and pointy ears. Garm himself is a figure of extravagance, clad in an exotic fur cloak with long, oiled locks of hair and jewel-encrusted body armour.

Species Features: Agile, Sadist.

Arcana 4, Intuition 4, Shatter 4, Vitality 1

Barrier 4, Defense 5 (4 unarmoured), Wounds 5

Armory: Blaster Pistol (+3), Light Armour (+1), Sword (+3).

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