Infrequently some smaller Harpy communities can be found roosting in the tops of sturdy trees.

Harpy religion is basically polytheistic, involving the worship of a "Supreme Tribe". This includes:

Death – a bringer of life by death... quite logical for a scavenger race, and not entirely incorrect.

Wind – grants flight to the favored ones.

Fire – brings eternal light and warmth to the children of the Supreme Tribe.

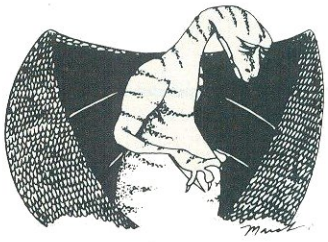
There are a number of lesser dieties, and when a clan member dies he is considered added to the Supreme Tribe as a minor god speaking for his/her original group. Needless to say, each tribe's worship list is quite long.

Each tribe has its own language which is taught and spoken only to tribe members. Communication with outsiders is through a second language. Curiously, this second language is understood by all clans — a single globe-spanning dialect! It is apparently maintained by Wanderers, individuals who, for one reason or another, left their original group and now drift from tribe to tribe. The Wanderers are well-respected bringers of news and are always welcomed, though they rarely stay very long.

Harpies never fight for pleasure or to prove a point. They fight to kill — an endeavor they are quite skilled at. Against the Harpy's sickle claw as a weapon, a victim has little hope of surviving an attack. Although useless against the larger reptiles of Tau Omega III, the Harpies have been known to perform massed attacks against these creatures from the air when necessary. They are very skillful at "divebombing" their opponents with rocks or wooden spears. With eyesight some six times better than human vision and an intuitive understanding of three-dimensional space, they have an accuracy of over 90% for striking a one meter target from an altitude of one kilometer! These creatures could easily kill humanoids possessing the latest phaser technology simply by moving out of range and bombing them. It should be noted that the Harpies are basically a peaceful species, and never attack without cause. However, if provoked, they will swarm and exterminate any threat without hesitation or mercy.

TAU OMEGA III, PLANETARY ECOLOGY

During Earth's Cretaceous Period, the giant saurians provided the base for the evolution of birds, mammals, and cold-blooded reptiles. This pattern seems to be repeating itself on Tau Omega III. There is evidence of primitive avian and mammalian development, though the success of these newcomers may not be as dramatic as on Earth, in light of the highly-advanced nature of the dinosaurs.



ALIEN CREATURE RECORD
Name: HARPIES
Life Form: Reptilian/avian
Size: Medium
Feeding Habits: Omnivore

Attributes:
STR — 68 END — 81
DEX — 93
INT — 47 CHA — 12
LUC — 01 PSI — None

Tactical Movement and Combat Statistics:
Combat Skill Rating — 58
Damage — 1D10 + 8
AP — 13
Armor — 4

General Description:
The Harpies are two meter tall, upright, winged bipeds. Their scaled skin is mottled with alternating stripes of black and grey. The wings of a Harpy are large and leathery, with a span of over eight meters. A long tail, flared at the end, serves as a rudder and balance for flight.

Harpy arms are well-muscled and end in a three-fingered hand. A long, sickle-shaped claw extends from each forearm just behind the wrist. Like the claws of a cat, they are capable of being retracted for safety when not in use (mainly slicing up carcasses into manageable chunks). Damage Bonus: + 12 (sickle).

ALIEN CREATURE RECORD
Name: OMEGASAURUS
Life Form: Reptilian/avian
Size: Huge
Feeding Habits: Carnivore

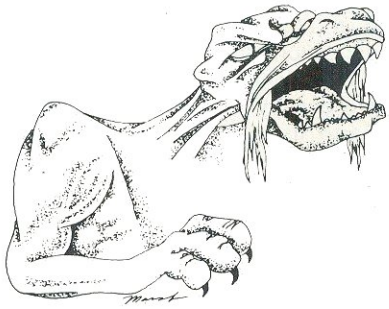
Attributes:
STR — 281 END — 224
DEX — 47 MNT — 4

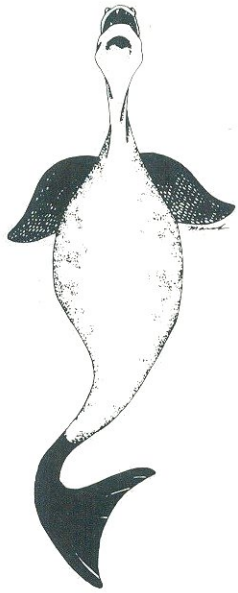
Tactical Movement and Combat Statistics:
Combat Skill Rating — 67
Damage — 4D10 + 7
Armor — 11
AP — 9

General Description:
This creature is a powerful biped, standing over nine meters tall and covered by a brown, scaly hide. It is extremely dangerous and can kill a human with a single swat from its claws. Damage Bonus: 14 (teeth and claws).

This large carnivore was responsible for the destruction of the shuttle Copernicus on Stardate 5426.5.

NOTE: *This animal occupies an area of three by three squares because of its size. it can reach a target up to three squares beyond that in the direction it is facing. Also, disintegrate will NOT automatically destroy it. Consider a direct hit on disintegrate to do 200 points damage.*





ALIEN CREATURE RECORD
Name: AQUASAURUS
Life Form: Reptilian/avian
Size: Huge
Feeding Habits: Carnivore

Attributes:
STR — 500 – 700 END — 400 – 500
DEX — 20 – 30 MNT — 9

Tactical Movement and Combat Statistics:
Combat Skill Rating — 57
Damage — 4D10 + 5
Armor — 0
AP — 7

General Description:
Little is known as yet, except that it is a massive, free-swimming dinosaur that feeds by sucking man-sized fish into its mouth and swallowing them whole.

The Los Angeles Starlog Festival - 1984

by James Van Hise

"I can't conceive of there *not* being a *Star Trek IV*!" This was the message delivered by Harve Bennett, the screenwriter for *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock,* on the second day of the momentous L. A. Starlog Festival.

Conventions with a strong media tie-in have been growing ever since the first big New York *Star Trek* convention back in 1973. Over the years, as *Star Trek* alone no longer was enough to guarantee a good sized crowd, whatever was hot in films at the time was on the roster. When *Star Wars* seemingly came out of nowhere in 1977, the interest in *Star Trek* was vastly eclipsed by Skywalker and company. Only in the past couple of years, with the release of the feature films, has the *Enterprise* and her crew regained their stature in the now mammoth marketplace of science fiction and fantasy.

Presented in conjunction with Creation Conventions, the air of the show was similiar to those regular gatherings but with an important difference. The programming was more intense and five times as ambitious as anything ever presented at the regular Creation conventions done out west.

Most of the programming consisted of previews for then-upcoming films such as *Star Trek III, Indiana Jones, Buckaroo Banzai, The Philadelphia Experiment,* etc., as well as films slated for release in late 1984 such as *Dune, Baby,* and *2010.*

The biggest announcement, which came too late to get into print promotions, was that right before the convention the director of *Star Trek III* was confirmed for an appearance. Since the director was Leonard Nimoy, this was big news indeed as he had not attended a convention in over five years.

Clearly the timing of the show couldn't have been better, as studio people wanted to promote their films to the kind of audience who will see them more than once if they like them. The Starlog Convention was just the place to find these individuals.

Business in the dealer's room was brisk, at least if you had photos of magazines dealing with science fiction movies. Comic book dealers found their market much more limited at this convention, but dealers in SF items were far more successful than in past years.

What's happened over the past decade is that organizers have found out that they can no longer just throw a convention and expect hordes of people to show up. So many conventions have been held that the show has to offer something new and different in order to attract a crowd. This is especially true when the admission for this particular show was a whopping $12.00 a day. Unless a convention can offer a lot more than average fare, even less expensive admission will not be able to attract enough people to make them viable. But in the case of this con, the programming and special guests were well worth the price of admission.

Earlier on Saturday, a writing panel was held with people like David Gerrold, Norman Spinrad, Randy and Jean-Marc Loficier, David McDonnell *Starlog* assistant editor, and agent Ashley Grayson. This was mainly aimed at the new writer and how to deal with the marketplace as it exists today.

There were also presentations on *Baby* (a film coming around Christmas about a dinosaur found in Africa) and *The Last Starfighter.* But the biggest show of the day was a special "surprise" guest announced for 3:00pm Saturday.

This is when Leonard Nimoy made his appearance.

He was roundly cheered and truly seemed to be enjoying himself. When last he appeared at a convention, he was an actor basking in the glory of a ghost; a TV series years dead. Now he had not only appeared in three motion pictures which returned the memories to active and continuous service, but he was there as the director of the third film. Here he could speak of what he had just done with *Star Trek III* rather than trying to recall anecdotes about what it was like working in televison in the sixties.

"When they contacted me about doing *Star Trek III*", Nimoy recalled, "I said that with all due respect to Bob Wise, while he made a meticulous film in *Star Trek I,* I just didn't think it was essential *Star Trek.* I felt it was more like *2001.*

"I think that with the second film, Nicholas Meyer and Harve Bennett went a long way towards putting *Star Trek* back to its natural track. But with all of that, my feeling was that Nick Meyer was still essentially an outsider who was trying to find out how to make use of all these elements that have been lying around there and cooking for 18 years. So I said that I think that I can do the job as well, if not better. I have some inside information on the characters that neither of them had."

While Nimoy was evasive about most of the then unreleased film, he was willing to explain other facets within it. For instance, as to why the film features a different type of Klingon ship he explained, "They have all kinds of ships. This is just the first time you've ever seen a *Bird of Prey.* The Klingons and Romulans steal from each other. They do. They both have cloaking devices, don't they? You see? I told you!"

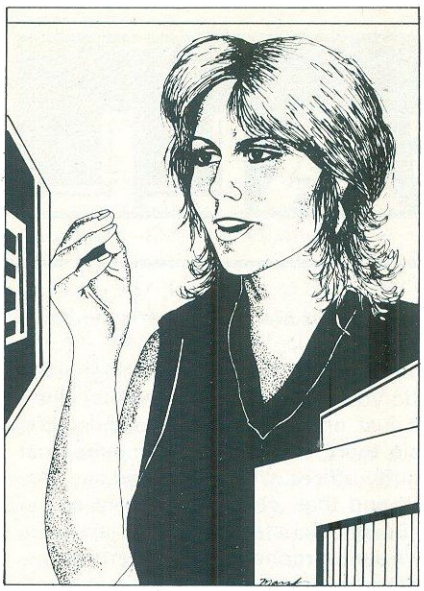
Nimoy also dealt with the stories of the love/hate relationship he's had over the years with the character of Mr. Spock.

"My favorite role at this point in my career? Wouldn't I be a fool if I said anything but Spock? That character has had the greatest effect on my life. I've said this many, many times, and I go on saying it no matter what people have said in the past. No matter what controversy you've heard about me and Spock, if I were given the choice today to choose one of the characters I've played in the last 20 years to be identified with, the answer would be obvious. It's Spock that I'd choose. I've taught him a lot, too. He's come a long way."

In conclusion, Nimoy expressed appreciation for his fans and for being involved with something as popular as *Star Trek.* "I'm delighted that you care as much as you do about what we do," he said gratefully. "We care very much about how you feel about what we do. I sincerely hope you enjoy the film. May you all live long and prosper."

But if Nimoy's appearance at the convention was a big surprise, what followed was an even bigger one. Instead of being whisked away to the idyllic splendor of his Hollywood manse far from the chattering of eager fans, Nimoy adjourned to the dealer's room. I was quite surprised to look up from my table and see him strolling by on the way to a table in the back where he signed posters and copies of his books for an hour or so. No one could say they didn't have a chance to see Nimoy up close.

Other programming filled the day, including a preview of the film *Dune* which included the behind-the-scenes film *Destination Dune* on the making of this mammoth motion picture.



"Yes, ma'am, but we also have to survey Omega IV as well."

"Omega IV too? Well, I didn't ask you to shirk your other responsibilities, did I? You people did a sloppy job last time, and I intend to see to it that that isn't repeated. Bennit out."

* * *
** ** **

Lewis Baker nearly cracked his skull when the deck watch called him. He had been checking some circuits in the shuttlecraft *Copernicus* when a voice boomed throughout the shuttlebay, "Lt. Baker, report to commander Wilson in shuttlecraft maintenance imme diately."

Baker closed the access hatch and rubbed his head, muttering, "I'll bet he's going to get on my back again for working up here instead of the maintenance shop." He stormed to the turbolift fuming, "Damned CO's, I *like* to spread out! Is there anything wrong with that? I can't work in that bleed'n closet of a shop!" When the lift doors shut he was still ranting.

By the time he made it to Commander Wilson, he had exorcised most of his irritation. "Lt. Baker reporting, sir!"

"Baker, you're working on the *Copernicus* up on the flight deck, aren't you?"

"Aye, sir, But I need...."

"Yes, I know, you need room to spread out. That's not why I called you. Can the thing fly?"

Baker considered this for a moment, then answered, "Yes, sir, she will fly, but she needs some work."

"You have 90 minutes to get it ready. At that time, you will pilot the *Copernicus* to this spot." Wilson turned his computer screen around. On it was a map of a planet with a flashing block indicating the shuttle's landing site. He removed the data cartridge from the unit and handed it to the lieutenant. "Here's your flight plan, now get moving!"

"Sir, I don't like the looks of her suppressors. I think they may need replacing. Let me clear my things away and take the *Galileo* instead."

"There isn't enough time for that, only the *Copernicus* is fully fueled. If you think the suppressors need replacing, then do it. But have her ready in, say 88 minutes. The Captain's still on my back about last week's explosion down here, and I'm not going to let you get me in any deeper. *Clear?"*

"Yes, sir. I'll get right on it." Baker turned and left Wilson's office. When he returned to the flight deck, he opened the shuttle's access hatch and poked his head in. Baker knew the surge suppressors needed replacing, but at the same time he knew that they weren't critical to flight. Their job was to protect the sensitive circuitry from any voltage surges caused by external phenomena. Such events were rare, and a shuttle could fly for months without suppressors and still have no difficulty. But Baker was a perfectionist. He didn't want to close the shuttle up until all were replaced, and that would take a minimum of three hours. He would have to satisfy himself with replacing only the most critical units.

As he worked, he contented himself with the knowledge that he was going out again. "That's the whole trouble with a transporter," he muttered to himself. "One moment you step onto the bleed'n dais, and the next you're down on the planet. There's no beauty to it. No grace. In a shuttle, you have freedom. You see where you're going as you get there. You can appreciate the gem-like quality of a planet."

He worked the remaining minutes in peace. When finished, he stepped into the shuttle's cabin and ran a few diagnostics on the work he had done. When the results satisfied him, he opened one of the forward viewports and studied the massive bay doors. In a little while he would see them part, and once again he would be an angel amidst the heavens.

* * *
** ** **

Throughout the ship, a chime sounded followed by an annoucement, *"All personnel scheduled for departure to planet Tau Omega III, please report to the shuttle flight deck immediately."*

Dr. McCoy grabbed his medkit and strode to the door, whistling. When it opened, he was greeted by Mr. Scott holding a technician in his arms. The tech was bleeding from a deep gash in the left side of his head. "My, God! Get him over to that bed, Scotty!" The engineer carried him over to the indicated examination table, and carefully set him down.

"He must've tripped on something in the high-bay", explained Scott. "The poor lad bounced down the stairs like a rag doll." He backed away to give McCoy more room to work, then asked, "Is he gonna be alright, Doctor?"

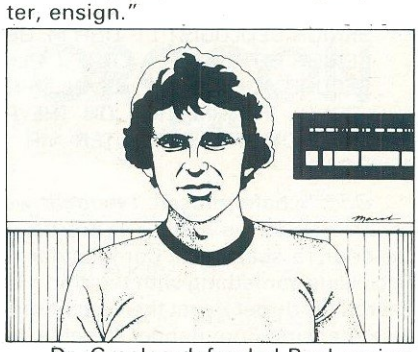
Bones set down his med scanner and noticed an uncontrollable twitch racking the technician's right side. "He has a severe concussion, indicating a skull fracture, and that twitch makes me think I may have to operate to relieve pressure on the brain."

"Aye, Doctor, I'll leave ya' to it. Let me know how it turns out." Scott left the room.

McCoy called Nurse Chapel to the room and announced, "That man's going to need a complete headscan. He'll probably need surgery. I'm going to scrub while you're doing the scan. Oh, and call Dr. Brennan. Tell him he's replacing me on the Tau Omega thing."

* * *
** ** **

Lisa did not attempt to conceal her curiosity when it was apparent that Paul Schafer was going to accompany the survey party to the surface. "I don't recall seeing your name on the party roster, ensign."



Dr. Greelee defended Paul saying, "The roster listed a crew of six, Ms. Bennit. A shuttle can carry seven. I saw to it that Ensign Schafer was invited along. It's an excellent experience for one with ambitions such as his."

"Ah! I see. I wish I had thought of that earlier. There are a few under me who could also benefit from it."

"Well, maybe next time, Lieutenant."

The turbo-lift deposited the trio on the hangar deck soon after, and there they saw the pilot and a security officer speaking about something. When he noticed their approach, Baker told them, "Please take your seats in the *Copernicus*. We'll be leaving as soon as Doctor McCoy shows up."

"McCoy isn't showing up," came a voice from the lift doors. "He was tied up with a case, so he sent me instead."

The stranger jogged up to the group and introduced himself, "I'm Doctor James Brennan."

"Welcome aboard, Doctor. Take your seat, and we'll be leaving as soon as the bay's depressurized."

Baker waited until everyone entered the shuttle, then he followed them and strapped himself down at his console. He signalled launch control that the shuttle was ready, then brought all the craft's flight systems to stand-by mode while the atmosphere in the surrounding bay was siphoned off. He opened the viewport directly in front of him. After a few moments the huge hangar doors at the stern of the *Enterprise* parted, and Baker marvelled for a moment at the beauty of the stars. He then threw a few critical switches and the *Copernicus* leapt away from the deck and shot straight out into space.

Once free of the enormous starship, the pilot placed the flightplan cartridge into the computer and handed control over to automatic. With nothing left to do, Baker opened the remaining two viewports and watched as the craft slowly spun on a new course, bringing the now tiny *Enterprise* into full view at one edge of the window. In the distance, he could see their destination; a bright star, just barely visible as a disk, Tau Omega III.

Halfway into the flight, with only two hours remaining until they reached the planet's surface, Baker's attention was caught by an alert indicator. He looked into the rounded scanner scope and punched a few buttons. After a moment, he sat back in his chair and pushed the scope back against the wall. He was afraid this would happen, the system's star was beginning to act up. If it held its current level of activity, there was nothing to worry about, but if things got much worse, the resulting waves of radiation could start to put a strain on the very suppressors that Baker had been worrying about only hours before.

A star is a curious thing, few people realize that it is actually a gigantic hydrogen bomb held in check by the competitive forces of gravity and the explosion itself. Occasionally, the explosion manages to get a slight edge on gravity, and a solar flare or prominence will result. A solar flare can be a very spectacular demonstration in pyro-technics, they often reach out hundreds of thousands, even millions of miles. Following lines of magnetic force, they leap up from their birthplace, loop around at an incredible altitude, and plunge back down. In the process, enormous quantities of energy are poured into space. Mostly hard radiation, this energy can cause all sorts of havoc with sensitive electronic devices. Such devices are immune to radiation itself, but when gamma rays and X-rays strike matter, the impact knocks electrons free from the atoms in the matter. These electrons, in turn, collect on conductive materials and cause a powerful increase in voltage levels almost instantly. This is known as an Electro-Magnetic Pulse, or EMP, first discovered in the mid-twentieth century during nuclear weapons tests.

Every star has a mean level of output that it manages, over time, to maintain quite well. Although a star may have sudden violent fits wherein it will release much higher levels of energy, it will later balance such fits with unusually quiet periods. And vice versa. Unfortunately for Baker and the crew of the *Copernicus*, Tau Omega was a very violent primary. The star had entered an abnormally quiet phase before the *Enterprise* discovered it, and had maintained that low level of activity almost without exception. Now it was beginning to stir.

By 22 minutes to orbit, *Copernicus* was having difficulty maintaining contact with the *Enterprise*. Solar activity had increased such that waves of interference rushed by the two vessels, jamming all radio frequencies, and making sub-space very noisy. This terrified Baker, though he did a nice job of concealing the fact, since the surge suppressors would work overtime fighting the effects of pulses that managed to work their way through the shuttlecraft's shielding.

He considered aborting the flight and returning to the starship, but dropped that idea when he realized that he'd be planetside in an hour while the *Enterprise* was over four hours away. Exposing the shuttle and its occupants to large doses of hard radiation for such a length of time would be dangerous. Although the craft's cabin was protected by a radiation force-field, much of its electronics lay outside of that cabin, exposing them to the effects of EMP. Should any of the anti-surge devices fail, every system onboard could be affected, giving the crew a choice between suffocation or radiation poisoning. This was a weak point in shuttle design, but not a major one since even those exposed circuits were still heavily protected.

By 14 minutes to orbit, things had reached a furious pitch. Communications with the *Enterprise* were now impossible, and navigational instruments were becoming unreliable. The scanners were returning false echoes. Baker trained his only subspace sensor on Tau Omega to give him plenty of warning on what it would do next. He didn't have long to wait.

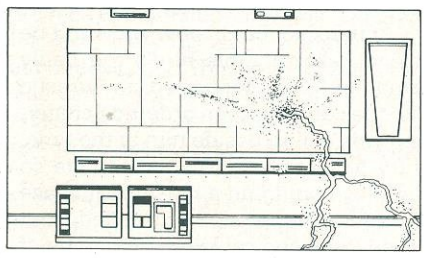
"Oh my god," was the first indication the crew had that something had gone wrong. Baker was staring into the scanner; his face an ashen color. Idle conversation in the shuttle ceased, and all attention was focused on the pilot. He began to frantically throw switches and gunned the tiny craft's engines to maximum acceleration. For a time, he ignored all questions from the others and continued to study the scope. Finally, he said, "A major eruption has just occured on the surface of this system's sun. We have less than five minutes to reach the protection of the far side of Tau Omega III before the radiation released from that eruption sweeps by us."

"So," Lisa asked, "We're protected from radiation, aren't we?"

"We are, but the shuttle isn't. If that radiation hits us, we could lose control of her." Everyone remained silent after that; some didn't want to disturb the pilot's concentration, others pondered his words in private. After a time, Baker ran a check with the computer and swore, "We aren't going to make it. We'll miss it by four seconds. Four damn seconds!" He considered this for a moment, then threw a few more switches. He cut the engines and spun the *Copernicus* on its axis, presenting a lower profile to Tau Omega.

As the star became visible on the viewports, Dr. Brennan said, "It looks OK, why are you so anxious?"

"As if on cue, a series of bright flashes played over the control panel. Artificial gravity suddenly cut-out, and a brilliant bolt of lightening leapt up from the astrogator, impacting on the bulkhead and leaving burn marks all along the cabin wall. Somewhere,



somebody screamed. The craft lurched wildly as the engines received conflicting ignition data from the frying computers, and a terrifyingly loud band issued from the aft compartment. Electricity continued to arc across the panels for several seconds, then ceased. *Copernicus* had drifted into the planet's shadow, and now the cabin was dark save for a faint glow issuing from the emergency lighting.

After a pause, the lights began to brighten slightly as auxiliary computers came on-line and attempted to sort the mess out. Baker was nursing a burned hand, and Brennan floated forward to help him. No one else seemed injured and Baker was quickly patched up with a spray dressing and some pain killer.

Baker turned to his console and tried to determine the extent of the shuttle's damage. First, he threw switches at random, then began to interrogate the less than adequate auxiliary computers. Finally, he turned to the others and announced, "We took a big jolt from that, and most systems, including life support, are out. I've limited control over maneuvering, so I'm going to bring us down before we circle around to the star-side again. Our current orbit is highly eccentric, and if we continue, we would be exposed to that blast farther out than before. Which means it would probably be worse. Instruments registered a one million volt per meter charge back there and I don't care to repeat that. Besides, we have only forty minutes of air left. I'm bringing her down."

Copernicus began to tremble violently as her pilot attempted to bring her under control. After some minutes, the shaking ceased and the shuttle began the slow, sluggish dive into Tau Omega III's atmosphere. By the time she began to penetrate the first, thin wisps of air, Tau Omega had risen to cast a warming gaze over its previous victims. The craft was now safely beneath the planet's magnetic field, and was no longer subject to the invisible but deadly flow of radiation emitted by the sun. No longer an enemy, Tau Omega was now an ally showing the way for *Copernicus*' descent.

"Will we be able to make a controlled landing, Mr. Baker?" asked Lisa Bennit.

"I think so, but I know we won't be able to take off...this bird's too badly damaged." He continued to wrestle with the controls, then ordered Schafer, who was sitting beside him at the time, to try to force a sensor back to life so that they could find a reasonable place to land. The ensign complied, but lacked the technical know-how to be of much help.

As *Copernicus* began to plunge into the atmosphere, her nose began to glow a faint cherry-red. Air friction from their hyper-sonic reentry had begun to heat the forward facing components of the shuttle's hull. Baker tried to correct this by applying reverse thrust but the glow continued to brighten, soon becoming orange.

Finally, Baker's work proved successful and the glow began to fade. The shuttle was falling at an incredible speed, but was no longer in danger of burning up. As descent continued, the curve of Tau Omega III's horizon became less and less pronounced, and before long, Baker could resolve separate forests and swamps on what had been a solid green surface before. Quickly Baker said, "Okay, everybody, this is it...we're still a couple of thousand meters up, but I won't be able to hold this too long...I'm trying to find a good place to set down. We've lost vertical landing capability, so I'm going to have to run her in. When it comes time to do that I'll be too busy to warn you, so be ready for a crash landing."

A few people nodded their heads in agreement, but most just stared at the pilot. None of them were prepared for this. They were supposed to be on a simple, relaxing planetary survey.

Presently, Baker noticed a plateau several kilometers ahead. Like the rest of the terrain around them, the plateau was mostly jungle, but it did have a large, flat area of land that appeared void of vegetation. Realizing that plain was his only chance, he altered course slightly and began to slow for approach. "Alright folks, hold on to your seats, this might be a tad bumpy..."

Everyone tightened their grip, bracing for the worst. No one really expected to survive, but no one really wanted to voice an opinion either; each was afraid of frightening the others.

Schafer was terrified as he saw the plateau grow large in the windows. He was convinced they would smash into the cliff-face. But when the shuttle reached the edge, it gracefully skimmed over. Paul squeezed his eyes shut and braced for the final impact. A loud snapping noise could be heard from the back and the shuttle slammed into the ground with such force that it knocked the wind out of Schafer. The ensign was dimly aware of a rolling sensation and the terrible groan of metal being twisted and torn away. After a moment, all motion stopped with a final jerk. Schafer slowly opened his eyes.

The shuttle was leaning at an odd angle to the right. Outside, he could see that it had stopped just short of entering the forest. Paul took a deep breath and sighed with relief. Finally, he took another look at the jungle. It was dark and forbidding, with huge towering trees and long vines that snaked up their trunks. The denseness of the vegetation astonished Schafer. It was impossible to see more than a few meters into the forest. Occasionally, a large, rough path cut into the woods, giving him a chance to see that the dense undergrowth existed only along the edge of the jungle. Beyond that, there wasn't enough light to allow such an abundance of plants to survive.

"Oh, bleed'n hell," swore the pilot. "I hit my blasted head again!" The man spun carefully in his seat and faced the others, "Uh...we made it. Everyone in one piece?" The others nodded while rubbing various portions of their anatomy; Dr. Brennan already had his medi-scanner out and was checking each person with it. Baker turned back to the controls and began to run a few diagnostic checks. Nothing worked. Every system on the shuttle was inoperative.

Commander Greelee rose and looked over Baker's shoulder, "Will we be able to lift off again?"

"I doubt it. Nothing seems to work. Not much worked before the crash, anyway, so that isn't much of a surprise. I'm going to have to have a look at the mains before I can answer your question with any certainty, though. It's possible I can rig something to make this bird functional again." Silently, Baker said, "I told that idiot we should have taken *Galileo* instead." With that, he rose and carefully stepped back to the shuttle's aft compartment.

The others stared after Baker for some moments before Greelee regained their attention, "Well, since

(continued on page 31)