

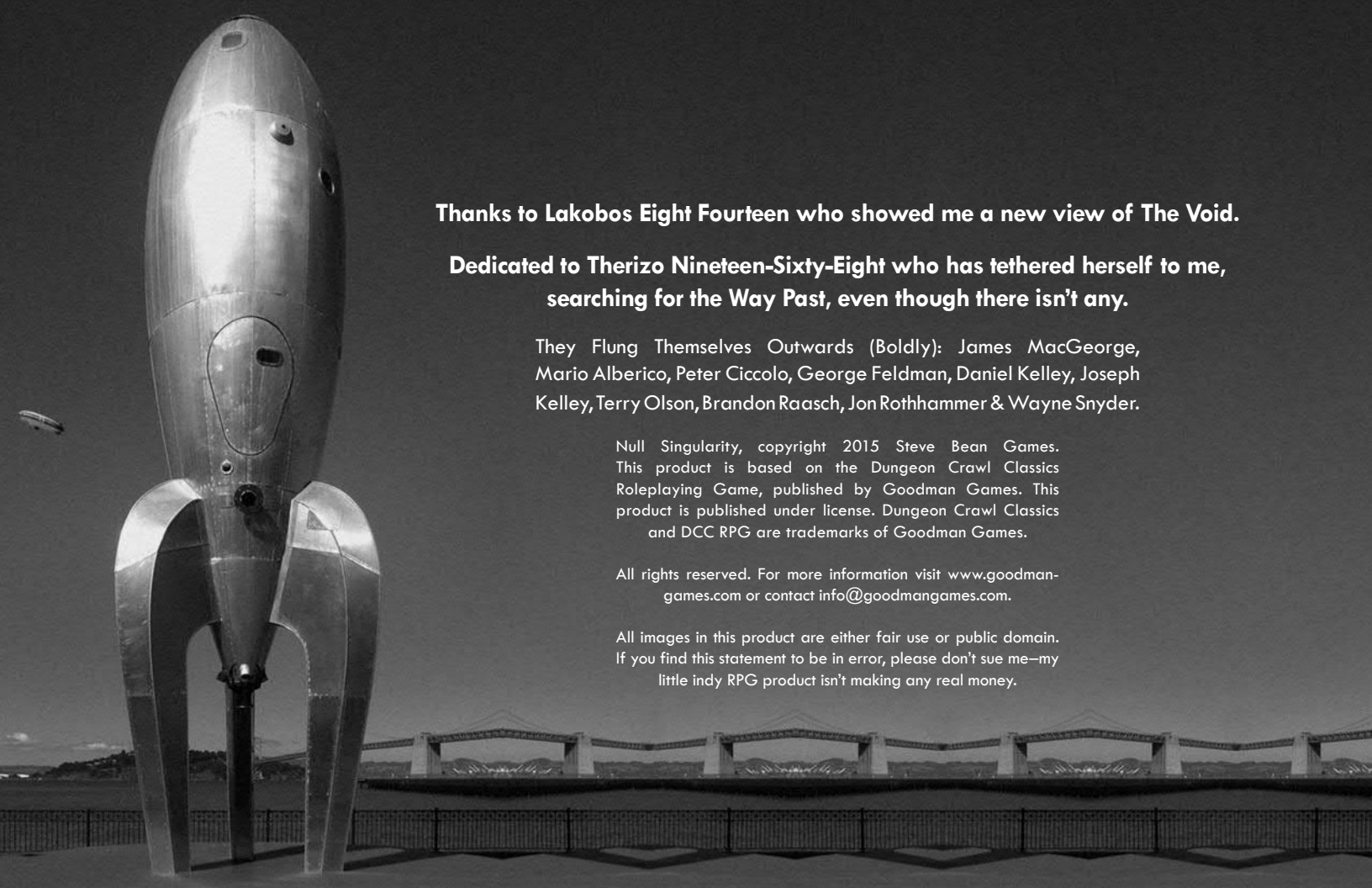
NULL SINGULARITY

Inspired by James MacGeorge's
BLACK SUN DEATHCURSE

By Steve Bean



COMPANION WITH
TRC
RPG



Thanks to Lakobos Eight Fourteen who showed me a new view of The Void.

**Dedicated to Therizo Nineteen-Sixty-Eight who has tethered herself to me,
searching for the Way Past, even though there isn't any.**

They Flung Themselves Outwards (Boldly): James MacGeorge,
Mario Alberico, Peter Ciccolo, George Feldman, Daniel Kelley, Joseph
Kelley, Terry Olson, Brandon Raasch, Jon Rothhammer & Wayne Snyder.

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little indy RPG product isn't making any real money.

T-Minus Negative Ex and Counting

E-Minus Omega Times Theta to the Epsilon Power

Voidant Mission Parameters



At Alpha-Minus Zero and Counting

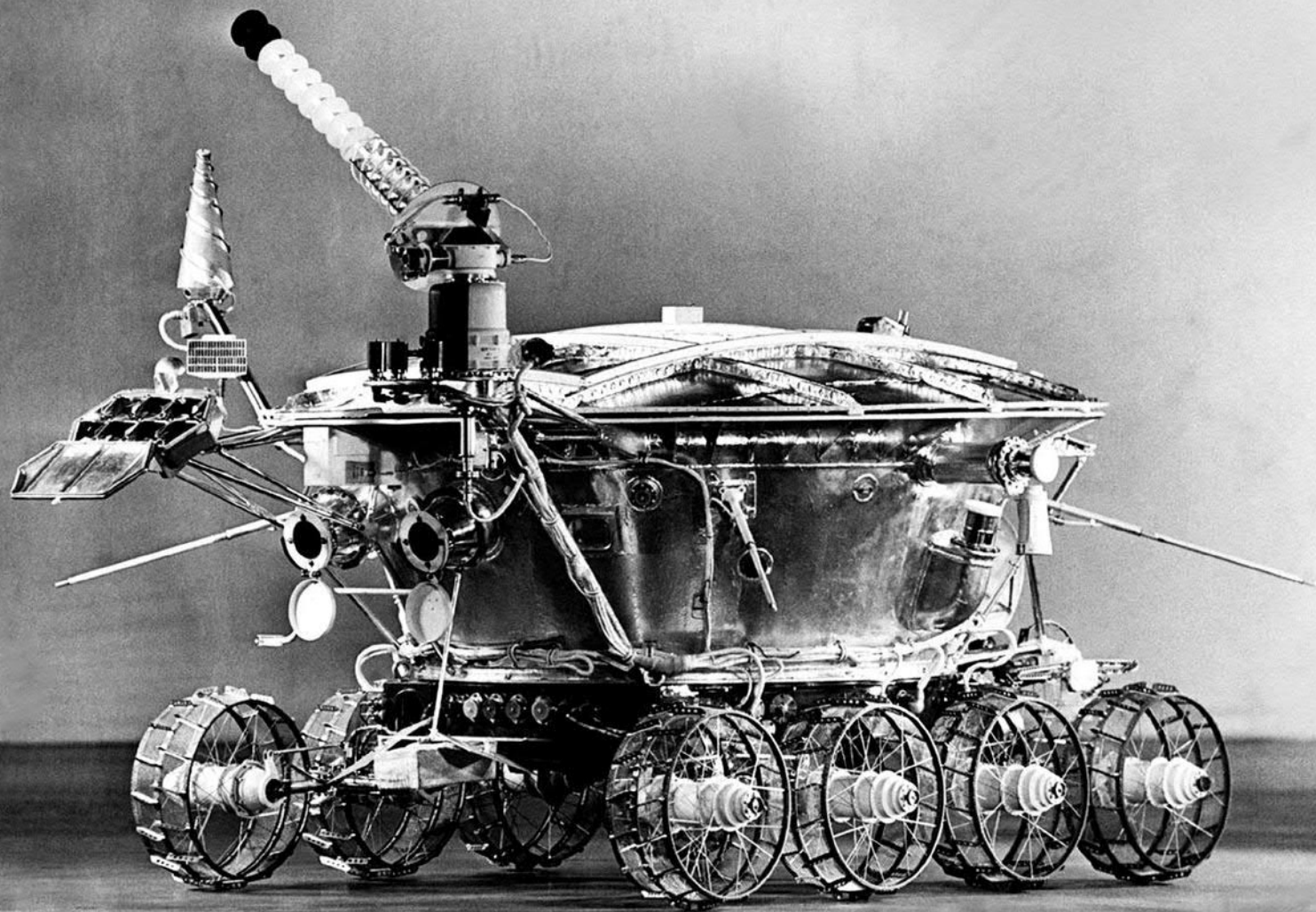
There was EveryThing, existing in NoThing.

All matter. Timeless.

Compressed into an infinitesimally small speck.

Then the speck exploded,

Filling The Void with matter and light.



Gravity made the worlds.

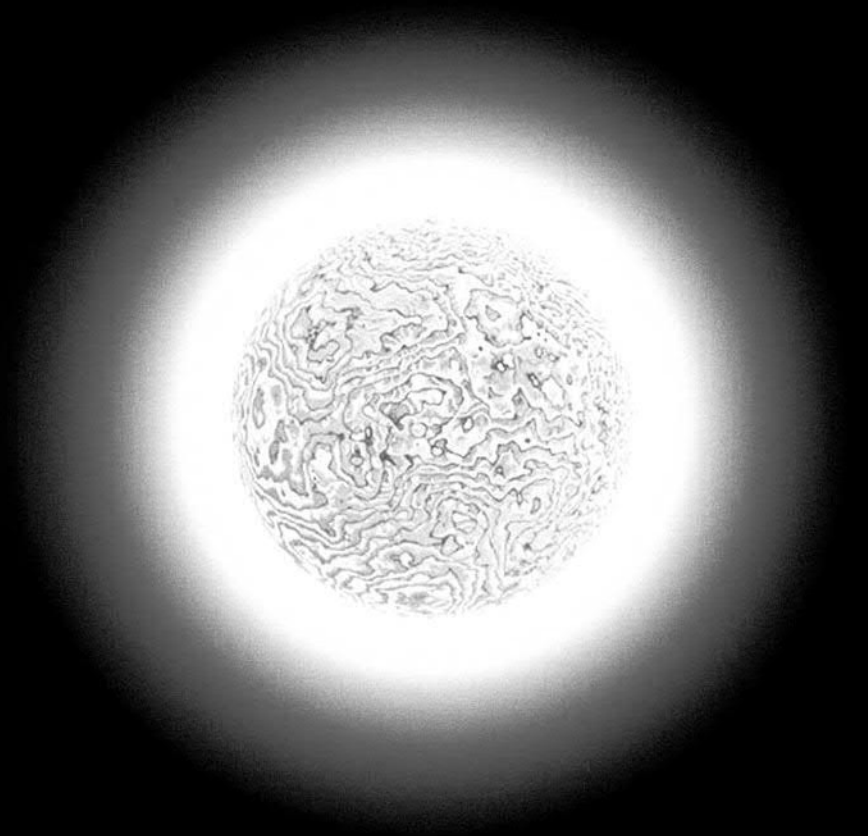
Gravity pulled life together in its tight embrace.

Light *also* defined life.

Following the map of space-time,

Life pushed into The Void,

Gravity both its enemy and its Ark.



But the Null remained. Light-sucking anti-matter.
It existed in the In-between.
It existed as a Theory.

The Theory was disproved, but that did not
prevent the Null Singularity.

Paradigm dictates Reality.

The Null Singularity ate the light. It twisted and tore at
gravity, torturing both space and time.



Life sought to flee from The Singularity.

Unprepared, it flung itself out into The Void,
a place anathema to life.

But *that* is nothing
when compared to the Null Singularity.

Life learned F/Utility. Matter is more empty than not,
making the Null the greater part of matter, putting it
EveryWhere and EveryWhen.



Mission Parameters

There is Only the Mission, Which has No Definite Parameters

A character has no race, she is only a Voidant.
She is known by her Mission and her crew number
For example: “Kleio Three-Ten.” ^[1]

Re/Sur/Vival Produces Resilience

Roll 3d6 for each Ability Score

Roll 1d6+1d4+2 for hit points, applying your Stamina modifier to both die rolls (minimum of 1 per die).

After determining Ability Scores and hit points randomly, raise one ability to the lowest score that *improves its modifier by one point* (eg if you have a Str of 10 you may raise it to 13 to increase the modifier from 0 to +1).

Paradigm Dictates Reality

Theory: Classical Physics was the “extinction event” of magical thinking.

[There are no Wizards.]

Corollary: Quantum Mechanics was
the re-birth of “meta-possibility.”

In The Void, highly improbable events have been logged. Such events
appear “magical.”

In the Limitless Void, Resource Fullness = Re/Sur/Vival

All characters start as 1st Level Thieves. [2]

In gameplay situations, select the Thief skill that best translates to a modern technological context, eg:

Find Trap to diagnose an equipment malfunction, Disable Trap to repair a malfunction, or Forge Document to reprogram a Machine Pilot.

In The Void There is no Altitude,
But Angle of Approach and Attitude
Are EveryWhere

Roll randomly for Alignment.

The Void is the Primary Parameter of Re/Sur/Vival

Every PC begins the game with standard survival gear:

Void Zoot, Oh-Too Well, Squawk Box, VoidZeal, HydraCycler, HeatPak, Battery and Ration (Ize-Kreem Brik and Or'nge-Flave Powder)

Roll a d12 once on the Special Survival Gear Table below to identify one additional piece of equipment your character possesses.^[3]

1. Strong Strands	2. Toolz	3. Oh-Too Well (Spare)
3. Hi-Beam Spot	5. Rad Cloth	6. Re/Vive/E.R.
7. Plasma Cutter	8. Insta-Pod	9. Battery (Spare)
10. VoidBoost	1. Dem-O-Lite	12. Shooter (Gyrojet Pistol: +3 missile, 3d3 damage)

In the Endless Void

Mal/Function is EveryWhen

At the start of the session, roll 1d4-1 to determine how many pieces of your survival gear are malfunctioning.

Then roll a d12 to determine how badly each piece of gear is malfunctioning:

d12 Result:

- 1-2 Non-functioning; repair improbable
(Need special tool, replacement part, etc.)
- 3-4 Non-functioning; “A-OK” after completing repairs
requiring 5d4 rounds (minus RSF score; minimum 2)
- 5-7 Failure is imminent (Likely to become non-functioning after
next use, or definitely at next malfunction check)
- 8-10 Performance is half-optimal (Check off half supply)
- 11-12 Vexingly glitchy (DC 8 INT Check to operate)

The Null Singularity is EveryWhere and EveryWhen

Assign a player to set an alarm clock to go off every 30 minutes of real-time game play.

Whenever an alarm goes off, any PC with one or more pieces of gear with the “Failure imminent” malfunction experiences the shutdown of one of these pieces of gear.

At the first 30-minute mark, each PC rolls 1 d6 for survival gear malfunction. If a die comes up “1”, a random piece of fully-functioning gear malfunctions.

Every 30 minutes thereafter, all PCs make a malfunction roll, adding a cumulative +1 d6 to the pool of dice rolled. (ie 2d6 at the hour mark, 3d6 at 90 minutes, etc.)^[(4a)]

Detritus

During any Malfunction Roll, if the roll produces all sixes, The PC finds a usable piece of salvaged gear instead. (Assuming the situational parameters can produce one.)

Only Resource Fullness Can Delay Mission Termination

There is no Luck.

In place of the Luck Ability, there is Resource Fullness.

This may be burned in the same manner as Luck.

Despite being Thieves, PC's do not use a Luck die for Resource Fullness and do not recover burned points.

If a PC's Resource Fullness reaches zero, she has failed to fulfill the requirements for survival.

The Void takes her.

Resource Fullness is a Limited Set

Assign a player to set an alarm clock to go off every 20 minutes of real-time game play.^[4b]

Every PC must mark half a check-box for Oh-Too, H2O and Battery (powers the Heat Pak) on her character sheet, indicating the consumption of 10% of supply.^[5]

In any round that a PC has zero supply of Oh-Too, H2O or Battery, or a non-functioning VoidZoot or HeatPak, the PC ***must*** burn one point of Resource Fullness.

Resource Fullness Determines The Limits of Re/Sur/Vival

PCs may take Resource Fullness from any PC, NPC or monster that possesses a Resource Fullness ability score. This might be done by: seizing a piece of gear by force, secretly siphoning off Oh-Too, stealing rations or an act of deadly sabotage to enable later corpse-robbing.

This is an opposed roll adjusted by a situationally-appropriate modifier (eg “Watch out behind you - a meteor!!!” would use Personality).

A PC can attempt to use a Thief skill (eg Pick Pockets) to take Resource Fullness. If the roll is successful, the PC takes a point of Resource Fullness without making an opposed roll with the target.



The Void

XenoData ^[6]

When the VoidArks were first launched to escape the Null Singularity, the Sigma-positing theory was that an Extra-Terrestrial Lifeform encounter-event could extend the parameters of Re/Sur/Vival. But not a single mission log records definitive ET LifeData. It is unknown whether this result is due to effects of the Null Singularity or the uniqueness of Terran ecologies.

The theory undergoes continuous testing. Mission logs record inexplicable events that could be explained by the presence of sentient life. These are classified as “XenoPhases.” XenoPhases evaluated as mission threats are commonly attributed to quantum fluctuations caused by the Null Singularity, though the actual EviData is insufficient to confirm or deny attributions.

XenoPhases

GravSpectra: Init +4; Atk: syncope +2 missile 120/240/360 (special: space sickness); AC 12; HD 3d3; MV 0'; Act 4d16; SP gaseous (immune to damage from physical force), immune to heat and cold, immune to Will-based attacks, vulnerable to energy attacks; SV Fort +3 Ref +3 Will +0.

GravSpectra are wild, malevolent fields of gravity spun off into space by the Null Singularity. The Spectra prey on unsuspecting, spacewalking Voidants. A Voidant encountering a Spectra experiences an unpredictable gravitational anomaly. The anomaly causes vertigo that produces severe space sickness (DC 10 Fort save to avoid; save each round until out of range). There are dangerous side effects of space sickness such as rapid consumption of Oh-Too from hyperventilation and, when in ZeerOgee, ejecta from regurgitation can clog Zoot valves or obscure vision. Wild gravity also causes spacewalk navigation errors due to vertigo or anomalous equipment readings.

Spectra can be disrupted by focused energy, such as high-frequency beams of electromagnetic energy or the explosive force of detonating gyrojet shells or Dem-O-Lite. Focused energy attacks add +3 to their normal damage.

Zute Letch Hive (2 per PC): Init 0; Atk: bore +1 melee (1d3); AC 9; HD 1d3; MV special; Act 1d24; SP surprise, immune to cold, heat leeching, exposure effect, proximity defense; SV Fort -2 Ref 0 Will -3.

These are silicate-based, maggot-like creatures that live a mostly-hibernetic existence under the surface of planets, moons and asteroids. Disturbing the surface where they live alerts them to sources of heat which then makes them active. They will cling to anything containing a heat source – such as a Void Zoot. They can burrow through any known material to gain access to that heat, which they then absorb and store to use for brief periods of feeding and reproduction. Their small size, low-level life signs and lack of a heat signature makes them nearly undetectable until they have breached a containment system. If they breach a Void Zoot, they cause 1d3 points of cold damage per leeching. For each Zute Letch Hive that has breached a Void Suit, the wearer takes three points of cold damage due to exposure to The Void. Breaches can be patched, though this does not harm any Zute Letches inside the wearers Zoot. Though they are not physically robust organisms, once Zute Letches are inside a Void Zoot they are extremely difficult to harm without also harming the wearer. The wearer of a Void Zoot containing Zute Letches takes half the damage from any attack that hits a Zute Letch. A successful DC 13 Fort Save reduces this proximity damage to a single point.

OtooSpors: Init 0; Atk: asphyxiate +3 grapple (special); AC 8; HD 1d8; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP spore inundation, immune to cold, oxygen vampirism, immune to Will-based attacks; SV Fort +4 Ref -2 Will +4.

Otoospors are purple, pseudo-fungal masses that grow on planetary bodies. These XenoPhases are continuously craving the oxygen they require to reproduce and can sense concentrations of it anywhere within 15', even through containment systems. The mass then releases a cloud of nano-spores that can enter sealed Void Zoots or sealed Oh-Two Well valves. If the spores get into a Voidant's Zoot, they will steal all the Oh-Too, suffocating the Zoot's wearer. This is treated as a grapple attack with no size differences. If the Otoospors win, the target loses 1 point of Stamina and must make an immediate DC 12 Fort Save. A failed save results in an automatic loss of 1d3 points of Stamina each subsequent round. When a target's Stamina reaches zero or lower, she dies from asphyxiation.

Quantum Fluctuations

SomeTime, the Null Singularity will cause the Universe to collapse in on itself. Until then, the strain of the Null Singularity on the structure of space-time is evidenced by unpredictable, localized distortive effects of the space-time continuum.

When a spell check is needed to determine the effects of a quantum fluctuation, roll a d24.

VoidSpit/e (Judge's DCC Spell Options: Vermin Blight pg. 300 or Whirling Doom pg. 303) A localized gravitational anomaly produces a high-velocity barrage of ice or micro-asteroids that damage Void Zoots.

SolBurn (DCC Spell Options: Color Spray pg. 135, Shatter pg. 193 or Righteous Fire pg. 301) Disruption of the surface of a star causes a massive release of electro-magnetic and thermal radiation across the entire wavelength spectrum. Localized effects occur in 5d4 rounds and can include a massive blast of heat, intense solar wind shockwave or a dangerous, hyper-dense, wide-beam projection of gamma particles.

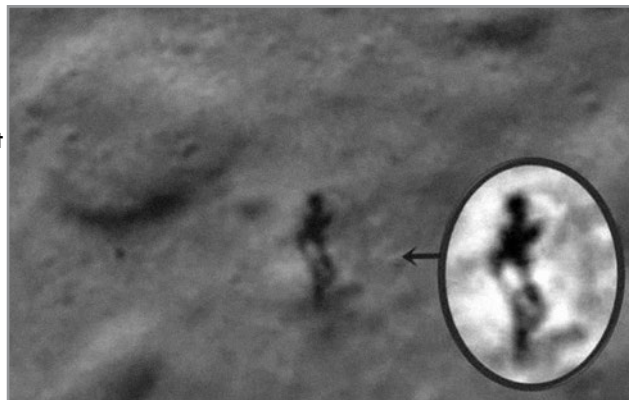
StarkReal: A bending of space-time that forces a perceptual shift on any intelligent lifeforms present. The observer is forced to consider the entirety of the Void in both quantifiable and subjective terms. Voidant observers typically experience sensory, cognitive and emotional overloads that cause an acute psychological breakdown. A DC 12 Will save keeps an observer from experiencing a psychological breakdown, but the observer is stunned for d4 rounds, adjusted by the individual's Stamina modifier.

DB	Breakdown	Effects of Breakdown
1.	Acute Schizophrenia	Delusions, hallucinations and paranoia
2.	Megomania	Belief in one's absolute superiority; need to control others; tendency to rave
3.	Claustrophobia	Uncontrollable fear of confined spaces
4.	Agoraphobia	Uncontrollable fear of open spaces and/or being with other people
5.	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	Need to control fixated on minute details; need for an absolute state of order
6.	Manic Anxiety	Fear of everything; muttering, pulling out hair, scratching
7	Nervous Breakdown	Emotional collapse; crying, assuming fetal position, catatonia, suicidality
8	Multiple Conditions	Re-roll, ignoring any results of 8; re-roll condition every 1 d4+1 minutes

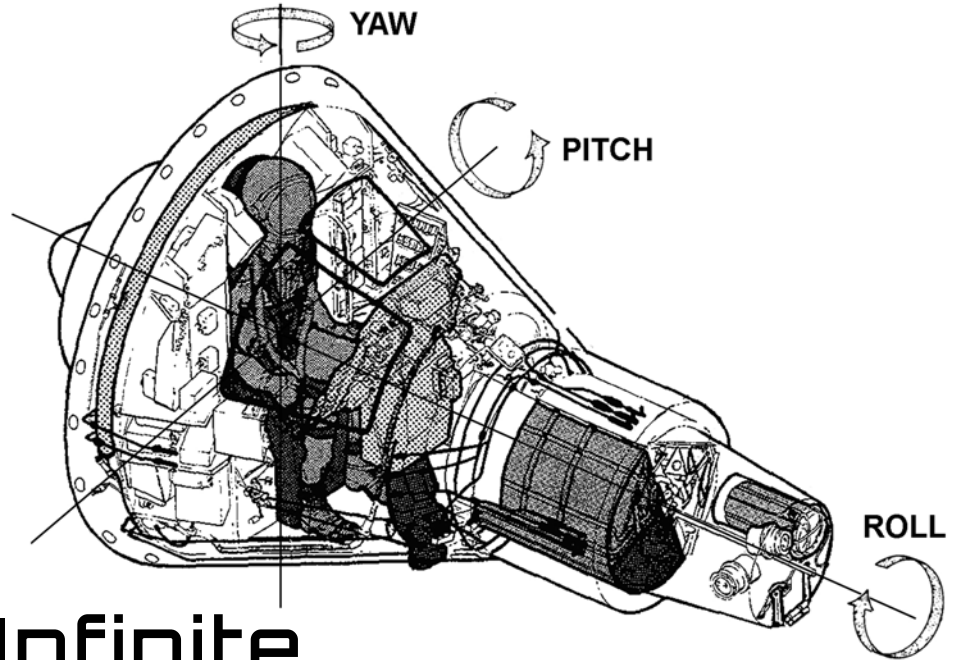
XenoHorror: Init +3; Atk claw +2 melee (1d4), tail whip +1 melee (1d3 + target is grappled); AC 14; HD 3d6; MV 45', fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP intra-atomic phase shift, tail whip has 15' reach, regeneration, immune to cold, omni-spectral vision; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2.

Mission logs are rife with speculative subtext about XenoHorrors that the Null Singularity has spawned throughout the universe: diabolical little gray men, vampiric crabs, amorphous blobs with lethal pseudo-pods and chitinous, acid-blooded devils.[7]

Despite a large degree of variation in description among accounts, all the reports of XenoHorrors evidence a striking similarity about motivations and characteristics: XenoHorrors feed off fear, they cultivate this fear through a long, slow torturous stalking of victims, they can possess or imitate victims' physical form and they are intelligent enough to sabotage gear that can assist their victims in evasion or resistance. Reports of their reputed capabilities are also strangely uniform: XenoHorrors can bend light, appearing as shadows that act independently of any light source (see Shadow in DCC rules pg. 425-426) giving them exceptional tactical stealth and surprise. They can phase-shift to occupy the same physical space as another organism and will do so any time they take damage from combat. While phase-shifted they regenerate any lost limbs and heal 2 hp of damage. Twice per Terran solar cycle they can use their phase-shifting ability to move through solid objects. They possess omni-spectral vision that allows them to see through darkness or obscurants such as smoke, dust, etc.



Without
Friction,
Motion is
Constant



But in the Infinite,
Progress is Relative

Alektryon

Your Mission, your VoidArk and you are all named Alektryon. In Its slow crawl across the cosmos, Alektryon twists and turns and loops back on its own course. The Null Singularity is EveryWhere and EveryWhen, so there is no outrunning it - only the feeble attempt to 'Void it. Your Machine Pilot - called Limax – plots a course for your VoidArk that puts the folds in the fabric of space-time between it and the Null Singularity. These navigational tricks remind you of how the Alektryon's seldom-awake children use a strut or bulkhead to avoid each other in the too-brief games of zeerOgee tag-play allowed them between Stays-Iz sessions.

You were brought into being aboard Alektryon and you've spent 99.1968% of your life inside It. LifeDatum: you spend most of your time in SomniStays-Iz to help conserve resources. You hate it. In SomniStays-Iz you dream endlessly about the Null Singularity.

Your memory of your infrequent extra-stasis activities is marked by the staleness of recycled water and rations consumed mechanically: bland Nutri-Paste and – on special occasions - chalky, artificially-sweet Ize-Kreem briks paired with the sour tang of reconstituted Or'nge-Flave drink powder.

LifeDatum is: you're really just another ArkSystem - a part, like a PortZeal or a PulzValve - just organic.

Keeping Alektryon working while most Voidants are in SomniStays-Iz is tasked to skeleton crews working in shifts with the help of the Ark's machine pilot, Limax. Decades upon decades of listening to Limax's calm, flat voice has affected each Voidant aboard the Alektryon differently – some fall into depression, some fly into a rage, some enter a fugue state. Some claim to achieve orgasm. Most simply experience a slight increase in the dull, constant headache that comes from Too-Low-Oh-Too.

Three times in your decades-long life, Limax has assigned you to a VoidWalk to do maintenance or make repairs. Each time, only the thin membrane of a Void Zoot and the fragile shell of a PlastiVizR lay between you and the enormity of space. The first time, you stole moments from your work to glance up at the Sycorax Nebulae, looming with stark, terrifying beauty off the Ark's port quarter.

The second time, after re-entering the VoidArk, you and Alektryon Twelve-Thirty-Nine pretended that his Zoot latch was stuck closed. Left alone while the others went to the mess to consume their extra ration, you two groped each other awkwardly in the dim light of the ready room.

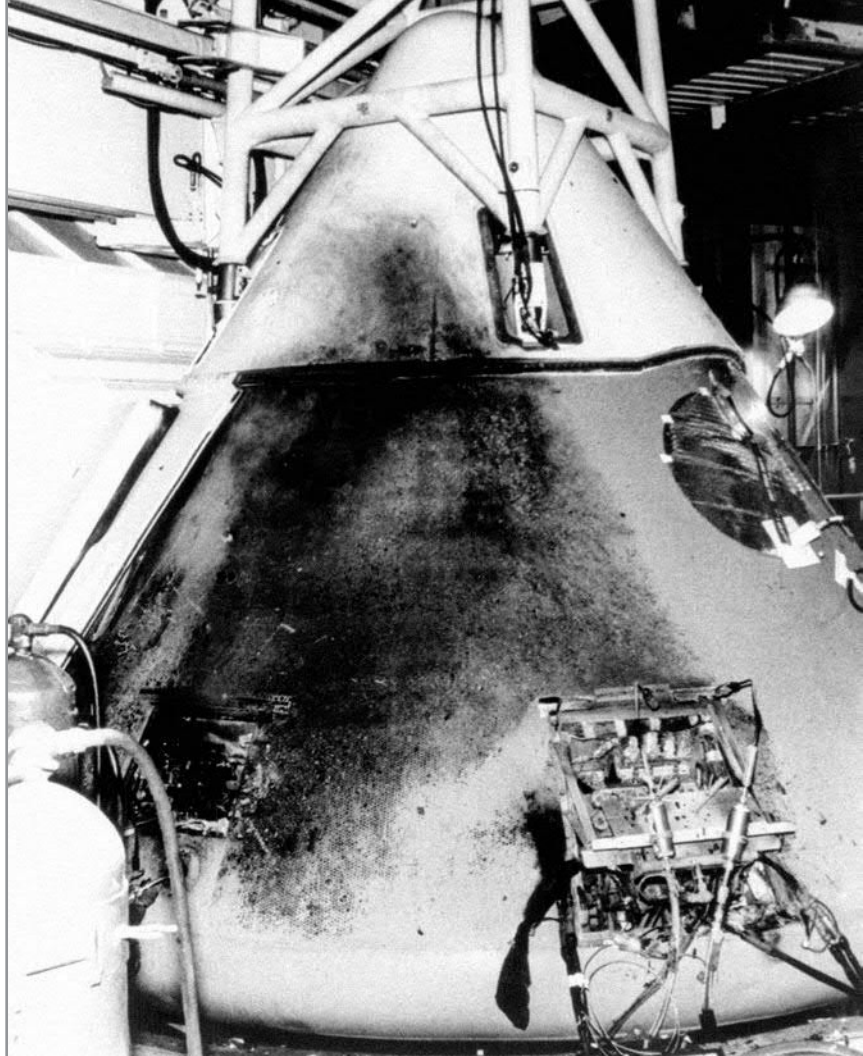
That next period of SomniStays-Iz is the only one you can ever remember where you dreamed of something other than the Null Singularity.

The third time, you watched as a malfunctioning thruster misfired, melting Alektryon Twelve-Thirty-Nine's tether. The kinetic energy of the blast hurled him silently off the hull. He spiraled away into the Void, shrinking to become a bright speck before disappearing from view.

These are the only three times you've felt at all alive.

Within these parameters you sleep, and occasionally you Re/Sur/Vive.

Entropy
Terminates
Complexity



PlanetFall

Like all matter, the Void is mostly empty space, so it is the rare few who have made GravFall. The risk-reward calculations rarely justify the expenditure of Resource Fullness. The Null Singularity's absolute certainty means that the objective probabilities of GravFall are routinely negative. Most Voidants come back from this one-event-in-a-Life'sData experience with tales of planets long ago broken or made barren, and devoid of Resource Fullness.

Still, all wish for GravFall, if only for the whisper of what life was supposed to be. Until today.

You awaken to the sound of Limax's voice: "Stasis period terminated."

Limax's voice – neutral in inflection, ever stoic – is issuing an alarm: "VoidArk subjected to massive quantum fluctuations. Radical course alteration resulting from critical system failure. Countermeasures: failed. Helm unresponsive. Entering planetary gravity well at excessive velocity and radical attitudinal angle. Multiple structural failures imminent. Data modeling confirms certainty of catastrophic levels of hull damage. Alektryon will pass point-of-no-return in Jovian satellite XB1999-VI gravity well in R-minus 17 cycles and counting. Crew: implement immediate emergency Ark-Exit procedures."

Your VoidArk is experiencing catastrophic PlanetFall.

ExStAy 1 – PlanetFall

A quantum fluctuation caused by the Null Singularity has thrown the Alektryon into the gravity well of a gas giant in an uncharted solar system.

The Voidants have a few minutes to gather survival gear and safely exit the VoidArk before this section of decks completely break apart. Moving through the VoidArk, they encounter:

- Electrical fires
- Flying debris
- Explosive decompression
- Panicked, injured and dead crew members

All around you the EviData screams out one conclusion: the Alektryon is in its death throes. As bulkhead girders buckle and consoles pop and flare you catch a glimpse out a PortHull. The entire front third of the VoidArk, containing the Command Deck and Life Support, is falling rapidly away from your Section. LifeDatum: you're about to experience the biggest GravFall ever logged. But on what terms?

At some point Limax chimes in, sedately:

"XenoPhase event logged. Classification: biological intrusion. Data confidence level: 14%"

The XenoHorror may perform a hit-and run attack on the group; either way it will co-locate with one of the Voidants in order to accompany their escape from the dying VoidArk.

ExStAy 2 – GravFall

Floating free of the Alektryon, you note your position above a drab, lifeless, olivine moon orbiting an enormous, sickly-yellow gas giant with a single, thin, haloed ice-ring. While you were escaping your section of the ship, the forward section of the Alektryon impacted the moon's surface. Amidst the debris field, you make out the glow of interior lights on a mostly-intact Command Deck. Lights means power. Power could mean Oh-Too.

During their GravFall, the Voidants encounter a GravSpectra. If the Voidant with whom the XenoHorror is co-located experiences Spectra-induced space sickness, vertigo forces the XenoHorror to dis-integrate from its host. It will co-locate with another Voidant in the following round, but not before one or more Voidants catch a glimpse of it.^[8]

The Voidants also catch a glimpse of the Null Singularity on the other side of the gas giant.

The obtuse, elliptical trajectory of your GravFall gives you an expansive view of the looming gas giant's horizon line. As you arc upward then curve back towards the surface of the moon, you're given a moment's vantage to see beyond the planetary edge. You wish you hadn't. Presently eclipsed by the yellow planet but moving steadily out of this ochre shadow is the Null Singularity. Today, EveryWhen is "soon." Too soon.^[9]

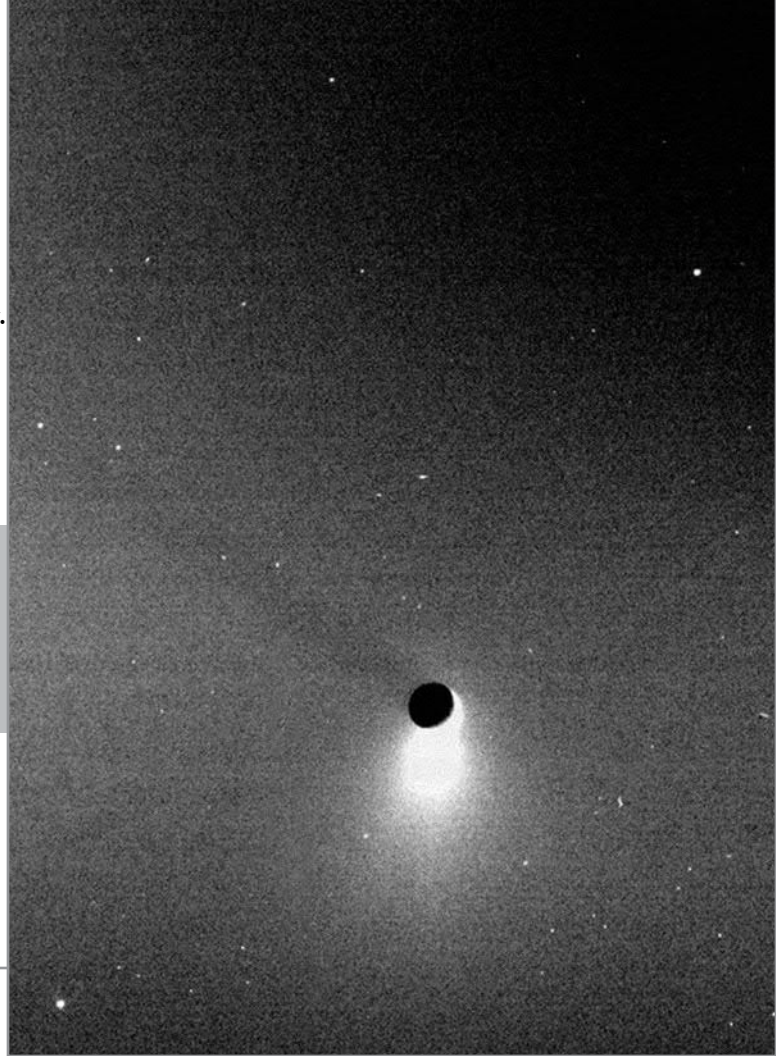
ExStAy 3 – Run to the Light

You touch down on the moon's surface, causing a slow-motion spray of brittle strata to drift upwards in the $\frac{1}{2}$ Earth gravity. Your final approach put the gas giant between you and the Singularity and you need to keep it that way. Calculating a course that maintains the relative safety of this eclipse effect, you thank Mission Control Above that this course also heads toward the VoidArk crash site.

The Voidants must contend with multiple Xeno-Phases as they cross the surface of the moon:

- Zoot Letches^[10a]
- Otopoors,^[10b] and
- The XenoHorror that already plagues them.

With any significant delay the Voidants see a crescent of the Null Singularity begin to show at the edge of the ocher-yellow gas giant.



ExStAy 4 - Glimpse of an Oasis

Finally! The crashed fore-section of the Alektryon comes into view on the horizon line. You clearly see light and motion on the Bridge. Motion means survivors and light means power – both mean that the probability of Re/Sur/Vival just went up, if only marginally.

Ignoring fatigue, injury, fear and your dwindling well of Oh-Too, you double-time it towards the wreck. But the dangers you've faced on this moon have caused you serious delays and now those delays will cost you: you look up and see a rapidly-growing crescent of the Null Singularity cresting the curve of the yellow gas giant.

You have never been this close to the Null Singularity. There is nowhere to hide. Despite the fact that every nerve, every fiber of your being screams at you to flee, to look away, you cannot tear your eyes away – instead the Null Singularity compels you to look into its endless depths. Staring into the utter blackness, you see NoThing. With a shockwave of comprehension you understand that as big as the reaches of The Void might be, the NoThingNess of the Null Singularity is infinitely bigger, so as to consume and contain dimensions without number. Somehow you comprehend the incomprehensible size of what you are witnessing and that understanding takes you over the edge of sanity.

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7.	Nervous Breakdown	Emotional collapse; crying, assuming fetal position, catatonia, suicidality
8.	Multiple Conditions	Re-roll, ignoring any results of 8; re-roll condition every 1d4+1 minutes

To make matters worse, after this desperate struggle to maintain their sanity has been resolved, if the Voidants still haven't dispatched their long-time "travelling companion" – the XenoHorror – it attacks them in the home stretch to the crash of Alektryon's Command Decks.

ExStAy 5 - The Mirage of the Soul

You run from the relentless terrors that plague you. There is nothing else to do. Half blind with fear of the Null Singularity and the panic of not enough Oh-Too you almost run headlong into the gray hull of the Alektryon. Groping wildly, your hands grab the telltale wheel of an airlock. You wrench at it; it resists a moment then twists. The hatch opens and there is light and refuge.

You hear Limax's steady, even, emotionless voice: "Confirmed: survivors aboard Alektryon. Sealing hatch. Initiating medical scans."

If the XenoHorror is still co-located with a PC, Limax directs that Voidant to step to the side to undergo decontamination. Unfortunately the only effective method is "decompositional decontamination:" both the XenoHorror and Voidant host are shredded by overlapping high-intensity magnetic fields. This sprays gore over any Voidants inside the airlock.

The Command Decks have power, air and survival gear. Approaching the Bridge, the Voidants will come across dead crew members. Some were obviously killed in the crash but careful observation will reveal that some were killed in another manner. The fact is, Limax killed them for reasons stemming from its particular psychological breakdown (see below) and in a manner suggested by the nature of that breakdown.

Limax is functioning, but has been driven insane by StarkReal quantum fluctuations. (Roll randomly from the list below or choose something the Voidants didn't experience in the previous encounter).

When the Voidants enter the Bridge they will see that the console containing Limax's CPU is shrouded in a shadow of the Null Singularity projecting through the Bridge's viewports.



The Voidants can must shut down Limax or escape the Command Deck and, in the attempt, contend with Limax's efforts to contain them. Limax is the only thing maintaining power to the Command Deck – disabling It will disconnect the power and nothing the Voidants do will restore power to the wreck.

Limax's Psychological Breakdown

Acute Schizophrenia – Limax believes the Voidants are space gods posing as human. It will beg them to “interface” by placing their extremities into DataSockets. Intefacing is the only way to get Limax to comply with any requests or commands. DataSocket apertures cause mutilation and dismemberment.

Megomania – Limax believes it is a superior lifeform. It will order the Voidants out to the hull to attempt extremely dangerous repairs that are ultimately futile. If the Voidants refuse, It will use focused magnetic beams to de-sanguinate the Voidants and apply their bodily fluids as lubricant to its user interfaces.

Claustrophobia - Mad with the panic of being contained within its CPU, Limax will attempt to download its consciousness to each of the Voidants, frying their brains with microwave beams in the process.

Agoraphobia - Terrified – both for itself and the Voidants - of the expanse of space looming overhead, Limax will fire some still-functioning maneuvering thrusters, melting the surface strata and submerging the forward section in the crust of the moon made molten by the thruster blasts.

Obsessive - Compulsive – Limax is convinced that its subroutines have become corrupted. Unable to change its own programming, it will ask the Voidants to run manual diagnostics. Once the Voidants are seated in operators' chairs, Limax will engage and lock the chairs' safety restraints, trapping the Voidants in what will become a never-ending task of code-cleaning.

Nervous Breakdown – Suicidal, Limax expresses its conviction about the pointlessness of existence to the Voidants as it magna-seals the exits from the command deck and triggers a self-destruct sequence.

EpiLog – Event Horizon

On their way off the Command Deck, surviving members of the group can salvage a surplus of survival gear, but it won't matter. Their foray into the Alektryon has delayed them too long. They emerge into the full dawning of the Null Singularity out from behind the gas giant.

PhaseShift to BLACK

Log: DataReset – SomniPhaseShift

The Voidants awake from stasis only to be told by Limax:

*“Adjustments to crew-scheduling algorithm resulted in stasis termination error.
Re-initiating. Prepare to re-enter Stasis in H-minus five... four... three... two...”*

But as they are drifting off to sleep, the Voidants realize that Limax's voice is different.

It has whatever character, inflection, affect or tic it had on the surface of the dreamed-of moon – when Limax was insane.

VoidArk Alektryon: Course History DataLog

[1] Null Singularity uses the universal female pronoun. Consider playing an all-female crew of PCs.

[2] If you're playing with critical hits, Voidants roll d10 on Crit Table I.

[3] Rad Cloth is radiation shielding, VoidBoost is a hand-held maneuvering thruster, an InstaPod is a collapsible shelter with an airlock, Dem-O-Lite is a plastic explosive and a Re/Vive/E.R. is an emergency medical kit.

[4] [a] For ≤ 3 players, consider reducing to 25 minutes. [b] For ≤ 3 players reduce to 15 minutes.

[5] If you're feeling harsh and don't care if players don't make it to the end, check off 1 supply box ahead of time.

[6] Playtesting showed that it is useful for players to know as background information that during their PCs' long journey through space, there has never been strong evidence of extra-terrestrial life.

[7] In playtesting, it was EXTREMELY effective to have a different player describe what her PC imagined a space monster should look like each time the XenoHorror appeared and for the Judge to give it that appearance until it co-located again. This added a lot to the PCs' confusion and fear. Also: give the PCs several opportunities to observe that the PC the XenoHorror is co-located with has a double shadow or a weird visual aura.

[8] One player thought it ridiculous that the PCs could exit a shattered spacecraft and make planet fall just wearing space suits. If this bothers you, give them an escape pod and let the GravSpectra attack their pod.

[9] One player thought it would be interesting to add an early encounter with a sliver of the Null Singularity that would cause PCs mild forms of insanity on a failed save. He thought this would make for interesting roleplaying and give the PCs a sense of the danger posed by the Null Singularity. If you do this, convert the StarkReal table to a set of cards with descriptions of minor versions of the conditions for players to use for reference.

[10a & b] It worked well to "seed" these XenoPhases in what one playtester later dubbed the "candy crater:" a debris field or dead Voidant NPC with survival gear that the PCs need.

[11] One playtester thought that rolling randomly for a PCs insanity was a missed role-playing opportunity; feel free to let your players choose the type of insanity that best fits with their sense of their characters' psyches.

XenoExegesis by James MacGeorge, creator of Black Sun Deathcrawl

When Steve approached me about Null Singularity, I was initially reluctant - Black Sun Deathcrawl was my baby, just birthed into the world, and I wasn't sure how I felt about someone else taking a turn holding it. It was Steve, though - if you know him, then you know what I mean. His enthusiasm was palpable - even through the text messages we exchanged - and I found myself curious to see what he could do with it. When he sent me the first draft, I knew I'd made the right decision. Null Singularity is a sideways glance at Black Sun Deathcrawl. Its lineage is plain, while firmly establishing its own identity. It is a thing, unto itself, and it is damn good. Hopefully, you're holding it in your hands as you read this (I'm no fan of pdfs), and it is a real, tangible artifact; a monolith, casting a darkened reflection of our collective inner being.

Steve and I first encountered each other at Gen Con 2014. Doug Kovacs and I were out drinking and were a few too many into it when our discussion turned to nihilism and the meaninglessness of existence, as it does. Steve showed up and took the counterpoint, arguing for a fundamental purpose to life. As I recall (it gets a bit hazy at this point), we engaged in some serious, but light-hearted, debate until the bar closed down and kicked us all out, but the evening boiled down to: "What's the point?"

It's a question everyone asks in their life, and most never find an answer. So I found myself asking, what if there was a game that asked that question? What is a game if there are no goals, no victory conditions? What if the end is predetermined and there was no way to change it? What if you took every measure that people rely upon for "gaming" and tossed it down a deep, dark hole? I went back to that conversation in the bar at Gen Con frequently as I wrote Black Sun Deathcrawl.

As I was writing it, I imagined players burning all their luck, pushing back from the table and saying, “Fuck it. I’m out.” And I’ve seen and heard of that happening in real play. To me that was the only victory condition, and it was for the GM. I wasn’t writing a game, I was writing an endurance test for players.

Just as no battle plan survives engagement with the enemy, though, no design goal survives engagement with actual players. I’ve seen people trying to “win.” There have been players embracing the darkness and reveling in the absence of morality that can accompany nihilism, there have even players competing for the most absurd reactions.

Looking back at that blurry night at the bar in Indianapolis, I don’t know that I’d change my perspective or alter my argument - purpose and meaning is something that is deeply individualized, and for me, I still don’t know that I feel either in my own life. But Steve wasn’t wrong, either - people find their own purpose, even in the darkest pits of despair and nihilism.

As we push forward into the universe, it’s always good to remember that the Black Sun is always at our backs. It will change us, it will deform us, it will eventually destroy us all. It doesn’t control you, though, and you can always choose your path.

It’s been a realization for me that, in that respect, maybe some can find some hope.

James MacGeorge, October 2015

Meta-Parameters Σ

Matter

Black Sun Deathcrawl by James MacGeorge
Hyperion
Planetary comic series
Heavy Metal magazine
Paranoia RPG

Gravity

Angus McKie
HR Giger

Velocity

Pink Floyd -Dark Side of the Moon
Pink Floyd - Ummagumma
Pandora Radio - Tangerine Dream Station
Husker Du – Zen Arcade
Philip Glass

Light

2001: A Space Odyssey
Moon
Space: 1999
127 Hours
Open Water
Interstellar
Gravity
Ghosts of Mars
Firefly
Das Boot
Solaris
Aliens
Capricorn One
Event Horizon
The Black Hole
John Carpenter's The Thing

VOIDANT

MISSION NAME & CREW #: _____ ALIGN: _____

INITIATIVE: _____ SPEED: 30' AC: _____ HP: _____

REF (+1): _____ FORT (+1): _____ WILL (+0) _____

STR: _____ AGL: _____ STA _____ PER: _____ INT: _____ RSF: _____



Survival Gear	Mal/Function
Void Zoot (+2 AC)	
Oh-Too Well ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
HydraCycler ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Battery ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Heat Pack	
VoidZeal	
Squawk Box	
Ration	

Skill	L/C/N	Ability	Net
Sneak Attack (Back Stab)	+1/+3/+0	N/A	
Sneak Silently	+1/+3/+0	AGL	
Hide (in Shadows)	+1/+3/+3	AGL	
Fine Motor Skills (Pick Pocket)	+3/+1/+1	AGL	
Climb Surfaces	+1/+0/+3	AGL	
Mechanical Bypass (Pick Lock)	+3/+1/+3	AGL	
Diagnose Malfunction (Find Trap)	+3/+1/+1	INT	
Repair Malfunction (Disable Trap)	+3/+1/+1	AGL	
Reprogram Machine Pilot (Forge Document)	+0/+0/+3	AGL	
Disguise	+0/+3/+0	PER	
Decipher Code	+0/+0/+0	INT	
Handle Hazardous Substance (Handle Poison)	+0/+3/+0	N/A	

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At Alpha-Minus Zero there was Everything, existing in Nothing, compressed into an infinitesimally small speck. Then the speck exploded, filling The Void with matter, light and life.

But the Null Singularity existed in the In-between: light-sucking anti-matter. It arrived on the event horizon and twisted and tore at gravity, torturing space-time.

Life sought to flee from The Singularity.
Unprepared, it flung itself out into The Void.

You are a Voidant. Your Primary Mission Parameter is: There is only the Mission, which has No Definite Parameters.

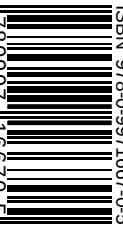
Really, you're a spare part - like a PortZeal or a PulzValve - just organic. You spend most of your time in SomniStrays-lz
The rare times you've been task-assigned a VoidWalk are the only times you've felt at all alive.

This is one of those rare times, but *this* time...

Your VoidArk is experiencing catastrophic PlanetFall.

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