

G U R P S[®]

Grendel



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AN *e23* ADVENTURE
for GURPS[®] from
STEVE JACKSON GAMES
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

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Marsnet Newsfeed (Cydonia): Terraforming Consortium engineers blamed an unexpected influx of cold water into the Boreal Sea for last month's devastating series of windstorms which left 4 dead in Cydonia and Elysium. According to TC scientist Kasei Enriquez, anomalously cold water draining into the Boreal Sea from Hellas last summer disrupted the normal current and heat-transfer pattern, creating a pocket of warm water in the Chryse Gulf which spawned the storm. "We're working to understand why the Hellas water was colder than normal, to make sure this doesn't happen again," said Enriquez. (Link to expanded version.)

FROM: DocPavonis (mars.terraform.geeks): What the HELL is going on with the Hellas operations? We're getting drought conditions all through Cimmeria just as the new plants need rain! If the geniuses in charge of the ocean don't get some water vapor out here, they can kiss a couple million square km. of plants goodbye!

FROM: Esposito (mars.terraform.geeks): Don't blame us. The ocean temp's exactly where it should be for evaporation. Icecap's a little bigger than usual this summer, but that shouldn't make much difference. Could the problem be not enough dust in the air to seed rainfall?

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FROM: DocPavonis (mars.terraform.geeks): You want dust? I'll give you dust! Right now there's four dust devils active in Cimmeria, throwing up about 1,000 tons of dust per hour. That's because the lichen which SHOULD be holding the soil in place is all dead. That's because there isn't any RAIN!

Marsnet Newsfeed (Deimos): Engineers at the space mirror ring are unable to explain why the Hellas Sea region's temperature data has consistently exceeded projections for the past year by up to 3 degrees C. "The mirrors are properly aligned," said Dana Walsh, Director of Mirror Operations. "Hellas shouldn't be getting any more watts per square meter than before. I can't understand why the water's reading warm." Scientists at the Terraforming Consortium speculated that the region's albedo has changed for some reason, and are examining records of cloud cover and snowfall. (Link to expanded version.)

*From: JWilson@henson.sci
To: Phoenix@analysis.mdf
Subject: Data Anomalies*

I hate to admit this, but your sabotage theory is getting more plausible every day. Something is wrong with our data, and it's affecting half the planet. I can't believe any of my people are involved, but at this point I'm willing to consider anything. Could you send down some people to have a quiet look around and see if they can find out what's going on?

Grendel takes place in the Terraformed Mars setting from *GURPS Mars* (pp. 71-90) and uses the *GURPS Third Edition, Revised* rules. The player-characters are a team sent to deal with recurring acts of sabotage at a facility atop the ice of the new Hellas Sea. Sometime in the early 22nd Century, solar mirrors have warmed Mars and comet impacts have brought additional water and volatile elements, but plants have not yet created a breathable atmosphere. The lowlands are already flooded and the landscape is being seeded with modified plants. Getting the air breathable without creating a runaway glaciation is a tricky project, and requires complete information about the state of the planet.

The adventure is designed for 150-point characters who are Mars Defense Force operatives. Four characters are included at the end of the adventure; players can also create their own. If this is used as part of an ongoing campaign, assume the existing PCs are called in as outside experts by the MDF.

The Mission

The team members get their orders to assemble at the Mars Defense Force base at Tyrrhenia Terra for a briefing and mission assignment. Like most MDF facilities, the base is small, well-camouflaged, and self-sufficient. If the characters have not adventured together before, they have the chance to get acquainted over lunch before the briefing.

The Briefing

At 1300 hours local time, the team members meet with Phuong Kim, an intelligence specialist attached to the Mars Defense Force's counter-terrorism analysis group.

"Good afternoon. You're here because the analysis group is reasonably certain we've discovered an ongoing program of sabotage against the terraforming project. The Hellas Sea is an important part of the planetary heat-management system; by controlling outflow and ice cover we can control the rate of planetary heating from the orbital mirrors.

"However, over the past solar year, the Hellas Sea management operation has started to go wrong. The engineers there haven't been able to properly control ice formation, their data on the heat content of the sea is incorrect, and efforts to correct these problems have only made them worse.

"I've been analyzing information from all the Hellas ocean management stations, comparing them with one another and baseline data from previous years. It appears that someone has been deliberately altering information from the underwater sensor net. The only place where that can be done is a facility called Henson Station. That's where the sensor net data is collected and relayed to the other stations.

"Now, I think the saboteurs – and the analysis group agrees that it's almost certainly a Red Mars faction opposed to terraforming – don't know that we've found what's going on yet. If we can uncover their operation in place, catching them by surprise, we can learn a lot more about their organization, methods, and sources of support.

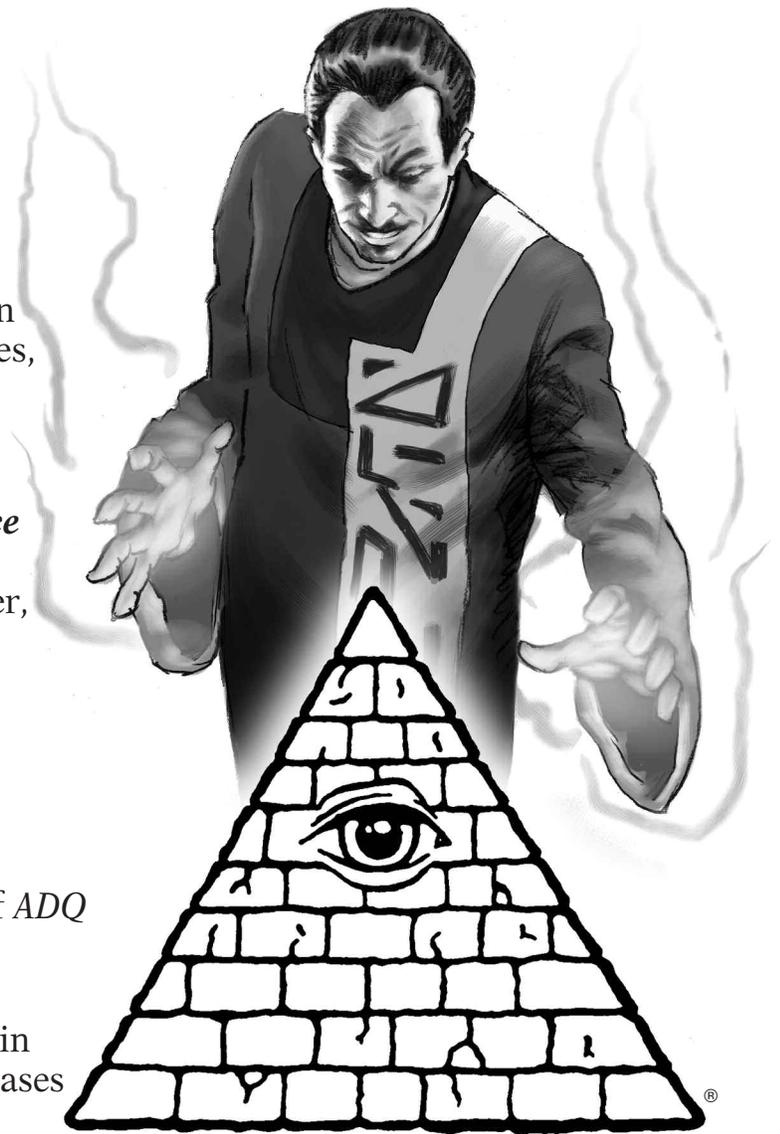
"Your mission is to visit the station under cover, pretending to be in the area doing a routine survey of local assets available in the event of an invasion or natural disaster. Find out who's sabotaging the sensor readings and how, and take them into custody."

If the PCs have any questions, Kim answers them, providing as much information as the investigators want. He beams two sets of orders to their

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