

ROBOTS, RAYGUNS & ROCKETSHIPS



ADVENTURE 1: THOR'S HAMMER

Premise

The Emperor has devised another fiendish plan in his war against the inhabitants of the Solar System. Hidden in the tail of a seemingly harmless comet a space ship carrying an enormous bomb approaches Earth. If the evil plot is not uncovered and somehow averted, the bomb will destroy the Earth's moon, causing gravity turbulences and a new ice age on our homeworld.

Setup

This adventure assumes that the heroes are somehow under the command of the Terran Space Force or in any way eager to investigate strange happenings and fight evil. An order comes from Space Force Command to investigate the demise of two missing space ships, a small trader and a scientific exploration vessel. Alternatively they learn about this from a distress signal, in this case Space Force is yet not concerned - accidents happen. The information includes the last known general position of both ships.

Picking up the trail

After searching the target area for a while the heroes discover the remains of the trader ship. Examination of the wreck shows traces of blaster weapons on some of the drifting parts - perhaps it fell victim to pirates, a possible occurrence in this area. They will also find traces of a strangely glowing gas, which they cannot identify right now. If the group needs motivation to search on, the GM may allow them to pick up a weak distress call on a standard frequency used by Earth ships and escape pods.

Finding the second shipwreck, our heroes discover two important clues: An escape pod carrying a survivor and again traces of the unknown glowing gas. The survivor is Professor Martina Varhoven, a scientist from the hapless crew of the "Galileo". After recovering from the initial shock, she expresses her gratitude to her rescuers and tells them what happened to her ship: While on a mission to explore "Thor", a comet passing through the Solar System close to Earth, the Galileo was suddenly attacked by an unknown ship, mysteriously painted all black. The almost unarmed Galileo was an easy prey for the attacker and rapidly destroyed, including most rescue capsules. Marina's capsule drifted in a cloud of debris and was obviously overlooked by the unknown aggressors. The heroes (with the help of Martina and the information she collected before, if necessary) may identify the glowing gas as particles from the tail of a comet - "Thor", most probably, though he passed the ship at a distance of 800 miles. The heroes' next target should be the comet.

In the shadow of the comet

When the hero's ship finally reaches Thor - already close to the Earth and its moon, of course - what will happen next depends on their approach to the situation. Two ships are hidden within its tail. One is little more than an enormous bomb, destined to destroy the Earth moon. Because of its size and fragile construction, it was impossible for the Emperor's minions to guide the beast to Earth in a direct attack. So the terrible but cumbersome weapon was attached to a slow but powerful transport vessel which now hides in the comet's tail, to sneak away when Thor passes Earth at close distance and deliver its deadly cargo. The second ship is a well-armed battle cruiser, painted all black as camouflage on a mission to protect the bomb if necessary. The trader and the Galileo came too close to the comet and fell victim to the battle cruiser.

If the heroes approach cautiously they may see strange disturbances in the comets tale. If sneaking close enough they will eventually discover the two enemy ships. If they approach with screaming wings the cruiser will notice the new threat and attack at once.

How to stop a doomsday device

Time is precious, since the bomb's destination draws nearer. The heroes may call for help from Space Force but can't bet on a timely arrival. Depending on their approach and the bravado of our heroes, there are several ways to handle the situation.

Full frontal attack is simple, but not easy. The gases in the comet's tail hamper firing at the bomb ship from outside. To get close enough they will have to engage the black cruiser first - a tough challenge! Make it a merry chase, circling and dodging around the comet and through its tail. Maybe fragments of the comet or other space debris are drifting in its wake, making the dogfight even more exciting. If the heroes manage to surprise the cruiser it is possible to disable it with a well placed shot at the engines, though they will still be able to run out their guns. Especially daring heroes may try to board and take over the enemy ship. Go with any spectacular player idea.

Whatever they do, they can't simply blow up the bomb without risking being vaporized - after all, this baby was constructed to blast a moon away. Suitable dramatic options include boarding the bomb ship and setting up a timed self-destruct, escaping just in time to survive the big bang while riding the shockwave, or changing the course of the bomb ship (which happens to be low on fuel) to miss the moon just by that cosmic inch. Make sure that Space Force just arrives in time to witness our heroes' victory.

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