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# WELCOME TO SLIPSTREAM



*Slipstream* is a space pulp setting reminiscent of the black and white Saturday morning serials of the 1930s. Put aside all foolish thoughts of such things as the immutable laws of physics, Faster-Than-Light drives, and the hard vacuum of space, and revel in the rocketship and ray gun reality that governs *Slipstream*. If you're looking for a hard sci-fi game, you're reading the wrong book!

## GETTING HERE

Slipstream is a pocket universe reached only by passage through a black hole. Every black hole in our universe has a branch tunnel to Slipstream. Conventional 21st century science has it that matter sucked into a black hole is destroyed; not even light can escape the terrible force of destruction. Well, conventional science isn't always right.

As the Slipstream locals can tell you, some things do survive passage into a black hole. They are living proof. Sure the ride was rough, but they pulled through. Most matter the black holes consume never appears here, and those surviving the experience know they are lucky to be alive.

The vast majority of current inhabitants were born here—Slipstream is the only home they know.

## THE SLIPSTREAM GRAVITON WAVE

Slipstream is the name of the pocket universe. *The Slipstream*, sometimes just called the *Wave*, is the short name for the Graviton Energy Wave emitted by the black hole. The *Wave* spirals lazily into the centre of the universe, pushing space debris toward the Graveyard, a morass of planetary debris, gas clouds, and wrecked rocketships that lie at the centre of the universe.

The *Wave* can be crossed, but it's a bumpy ride and the risk of getting slammed by a chunk of debris is pretty high. Problem is, if you want to visit the fragments you'll have to cross it at some point, unless you want to fly a spiral pattern round the universe every time you fancy a trip out.

## THE FRAGMENTS

Entire worlds have been lost to black holes. Immense gravitational forces ripped these planets apart, swallowed most of the chunks, and spat the remainder into Slipstream. Thrown clear of the Graviton *Wave* the fragments settled into stationary positions throughout the pocket universe of *Slipstream*. The largest fragments are the size of the Moon, the majority less than a quarter that size.

Fragments don't rotate on their axis or orbit a star. In fact, there is no star in Slipstream—a constant colorful twilight glow exists, thanks to energy particles emitted by the black hole. As in many pulp stories, few fragments comprise more than one type of geography. There are ice worlds, desert worlds, jungle worlds, and so on, but a true mixed world, like Earth, is extremely rare.

All fragments, large and small, share two common features. First, they possess an atmosphere identical to that of Earth in basic composition and pressure. Aside from a few exotic species that came on rocketships, every race breathes good, old fashioned air.

Second, gravity on any fragment, regardless of its size or composition is 1G, or the same as Earth for those of you who flunked science. The gap between fragments has zero gravity.

## ← BIRD MAN →



Once you lived a carefree life on Avia. Once you were learning to be a pilot, so you could soar through the heavens as you did your fragment's atmosphere. But that was in another life, one that seems long ago now, before the misery began.

During a routine training flight your rocketship was attacked by pirates. Your comrades choose to surrender, hoping their lives would be spared, but you elected to fight. Although you were defeated, your plucky spirit saved your life. Your shipmates were transported to a slave mine, no doubt to face a horrible death, but you were fed and trained to fight in the arena, a gladiator whose victories would make your masters rich.

They trained you too well. After years of imprisonment and countless fights you led a slave rebellion. Though you were manacled, you still defeated your captors.

Now you travel Slipstream, seeking out pirates and slavers. You aren't naturally vengeful, but your abhorrence of slavery has made freeing captives your life's goal. Although your chains were broken long ago, you still wear your manacles. You've sworn they will never come off until you've freed every last slave in Slipstream.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Streetwise d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d4

**Languages:** Bird Man, Memnite, Raptor Man, Streamer, Tigra

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Claustrophobic, Heroic, Light Bones, Poverty, Vow (Major: Defeat slavers)

**Edges:** Aerial Race, Agile, Ambidextrous, Claws (Str+d6), Two Fisted

**Gear:** Pot helm (+3), broken manacles (treat as a club, Str+d4)

**Fire Extinguisher:** A fire extinguisher contains enough powder for two uses. Check *Rocketship Combat* for details. Using a fire extinguisher takes 1 action.

**Magnetic Grapples (10”):** Used to aid in boarding maneuvers or to attach to passing space debris, magnetic grapples are large magnets attached to a thin line secured to a mounting bracket in the rocketship. They have a Toughness of 7 (cutting weapons).

**Radiophone:** All rocketships are fitted with a radiophone as standard (included in the price). Capable of communicating to another radiophone anywhere within three map squares of the vessel instantaneously, radiophones are the quickest way to relay messages across *Slipstream*.

**Tether Rope (10”):** Tether ropes attach to brackets inside the ship. A clip attaches to the user’s belt, allowing him to operate in space without being “blown overboard.” They have a Toughness of 6 (Cutting).

## ROCKETSHIPS

Below are a number of rocketships common in *Slipstream*. Note there are no computers, read-out screens, sensors, complex instrument panels, cryogenic sleep chambers, faster-than-light drives, spinal mounted weapons, and so on. Advanced gadgets are known, but are referred to as alien artifacts and are extremely rare and highly sought after items.

Atomic rockets propel ships through space, electric motors provide power to onboard systems, small thrusters provide tactical movement and huge rockets allow for long distance travel. Pilots navigate using a compass and looking out the front windows, most crew have to stand at their post, and the doors can be opened in space without killing everyone inside.

**Acceleration/Top Speed:** This lists the vessel’s Acceleration in inches per turn and the maximum number of inches a rocketship may move per turn on the tabletop. This applies to both space and atmospheric combat.

**Climb:** The distance the rocketship may ascend each round. This is only used in atmospheric combat.

**Travel Speed:** This is the base number of squares a vessel moves in an hour on the *Slipstream* map. See page 43 for a more complete description. Rocketships consume so little atomic fuel that no ship has ever required refueling.

**Handling:** Some rocketships are more maneuverable because of their lateral thrusters, the craft’s design, or the advanced knowledge of those who built it. Handling adds directly to the captain’s Piloting total, as well as the crew’s if making a group Piloting roll.

**Toughness:** The ship’s total Toughness. The number in parentheses is the ship’s Armor, which is already figured into the listed Toughness. Note that all rocketships have Heavy Armor, which prevents them being damaged by small arms fire.

**Crew:** The first score is the number of crew required to operate the ship’s systems, engines, and so on. The minimum crew is usually just a pilot and a radiophone operator/engineer, but some vessels require more personnel. The required crew does not include gunners. Each swivel weapon requires one gunner. Pilots can operate a nose gun with a multi-action penalty.

The number after the plus is the number of passengers the vessel can easily accommodate. Up to twice this number can travel for short distances (six hours or less). Gunners use passenger spaces.

**Cargo Space:** This is the number of cargo spaces the ship has. Trading is not a particularly heroic activity, but sometimes heroes come across discoveries that can be sold. Spaces can also be used to accommodate certain alien artifacts. Cargo spaces are located under the main deck and are ill-suited for carrying passengers. A large door in the belly of the ship allows access.

**Weapons:** The maximum number and type of weapons that may be mounted on the rocketship. Nose mounted weapons are always Fixed Weapons, firing forward only. See page 36 for determining random weapons.

**Cost:** The cost of a rocketship excludes its weapons.

## ANATURAXAN WARSHIP

Warships are the *Slipstream* equivalent of destroyers—fast, nimble, and well armored. They resemble a thin cigar with four nacelles forming a

# GAZETTEER



The GM has more information on the people and places of Slipstream. Presented here is the basic knowledge of the main fragments known to all inhabitants. New fragments, usually no larger than a quarter the size of the main worlds, are constantly discovered, and many more alien races inhabit Slipstream than there are worlds.

The tech level for each fragment is represented by a symbol.

↑= Hi-tech: Unless otherwise stated, the natives manufacture and repair rocketships.

↓= Low-tech: Most fragments retain some hi-tech, such as domed cities or defense cannons, but no longer manufacture these items. Hi-tech items cost 5 times the normal price.

**Akwis (↑ submersibles only, no rocketship repair):** Akwis has no landmasses. Several aquatic and semi-aquatic races, including the Akwisians, make their home here. The semi-aquatic races dwell in domed underwater cities reachable only by submersible.

**Amazonia (↓):** A hot, steamy world inhabited by the Raptor Men and the primitive Cavors, cave dwelling aliens stuck firmly in the Stone Age and hunted by the Raptor Men. Crumbling ancient ruins lie covered by the vegetation. Several species of carnivorous lizards inhabit the jungles.

**Amicus (↓):** The fertile home of the Amici, a peaceful race with a love of the arts. Though ripe for conquest, no race has ever managed to subdue the Amici. Amici musicians are popular in noble courts.

**Angelis (↑):** Angelis is an uninhabited rocky wasteland. The natives, the humanoid Angeli, live in floating cities high in the clouds. Their culture is based around honor and dueling. They mine the fragment for mineral resources.

**Arachnea (↓):** is home to the Arachnids, or Spider Men. The surface is thick forest, interspersed with high hills. The Spider Men are fearsome hunters and anything caught in their webs is considered prey. A massive artificial structure in the densest part of the forest is home to their living god-queen, Arachnee.

**Arid (↓):** The inhabitants, the Aridians, import all of their food and water, but export precious radioactive ore mined from the southern hills. Violent sandstorms are frequent and can last for days, blanketing parts of the surface in swirling clouds of fine sand.

**Avia (↑):** Home to the Bird Men. The fragment is covered in thick forests comprised predominantly of towering Nest Trees, which grow to over a thousand feet. Travel across the surface is difficult due to the dense vegetation.

**Babel (↑ no rocketship repair):** Home to the Babelonians, a race of highly intelligent creatures with a fondness for languages and knowledge. Their libraries and museums are said to contain artifacts from across Slipstream, from its origins to the present day. The surface of Babel is exceptionally rough, with Babelonian tower-cities, called Depositories, perched atop rocky crags.

**Barrier:** Formed by heavy chunks of debris thrown clear of the Slipstream as it spirals toward the Graveyard, the Barrier is a swirling mass of space debris. Only mining outposts and frontier cities exist here.

**Barter (↑ rocketship repair only):** Also known as Trade World, Barter consists of a single city centered around the only water supply on the otherwise desert fragment. The original inhabitants are unknown, but it is currently a major trading centre. Pirate attacks on merchant ships visiting Barter are on the rise.