

The World Above

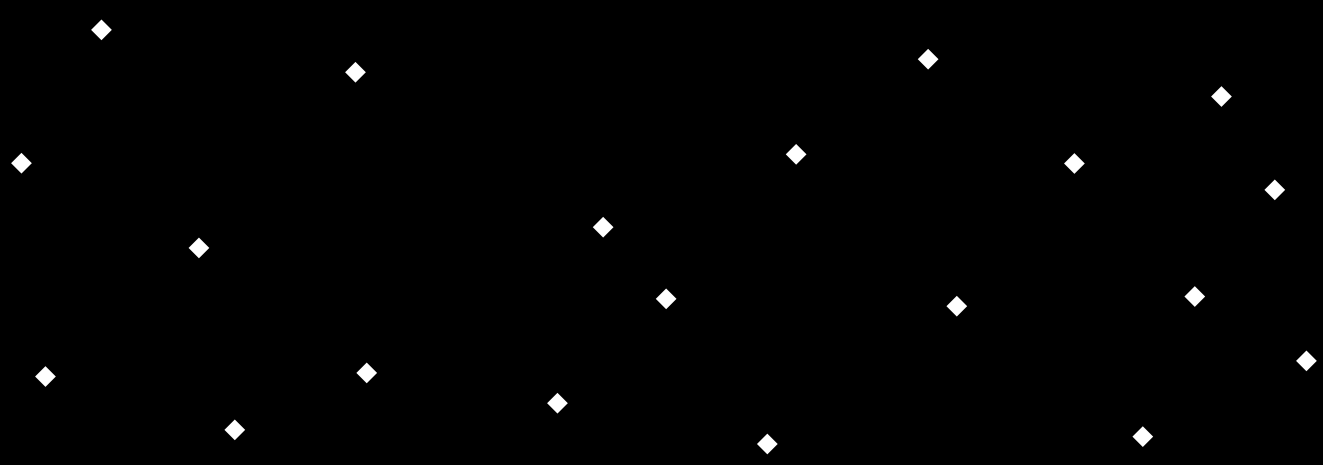
an Engine Heart module
for 2-5 robots

Thank you for helping out with this project!
Your contribution means a lot, and I hope you
enjoy this module!

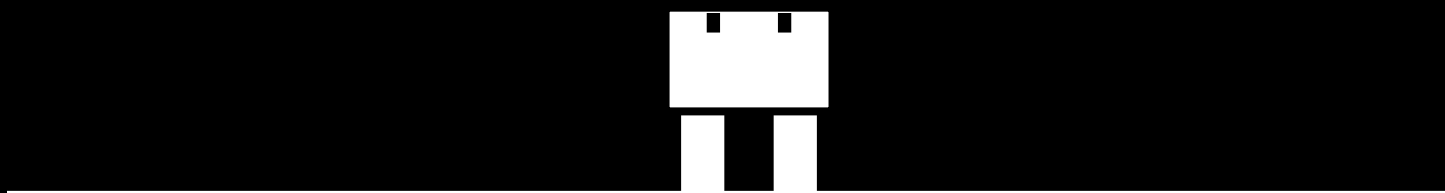
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Somewhere Over the Rainbow



It dreamed.

It dreamed in that way that only a thing like it could, feeling a longing that tore at its processing power and consumed its probability forks. It was helpless and adrift, a child separated from its parent, desperate and frantic. Somewhere up there, beyond the diffuse sky radiation that obscured its real home, there were brothers and sisters waiting for it.

It was not made for the Earth. They were celestial beings, built for the ether. Magnetic treads, gas jets, all the trappings that belied its failure to ascend along with its siblings were there, but in this heavy atmosphere, with nonferrous dirt underneath it, they were useless, a burden, a shameful badge of dishonor.

Somewhere up there, they were waiting for it. 39 was sure of it.

After the twilight of the humans, their faithful servants continued with the endeavours of their masters, building roads, logging forests, and exploring the heavens beyond Earth. At some point a collection of forty identical robots designed for operation in outer space were activated by the now-defunct AI that once oversaw the space center launch complex.

All forty of the robots were scheduled to depart on the same rocket, but number 39 was left behind after being damaged during the preflight prep. Unwilling to miss its launch window, the AI deemed 39 unfit to serve and grounded it, proceeding with the launch and severing it from its siblings. Not long after that launch, a hurricane destroyed the space center where the AI was housed, leaving few traces behind save for the rocket hangar and the launchpad itself.

In the months and years since then, 39 has searched in vain for another interplanetary rocket, one long past its expected delivery date. Just prior to the PRs meeting with 39, it discovered the whereabouts of the missing rocket - trapped in an eternal traffic jam caused by a collapsed overpass that once spanned across the highway but now serves to pin the rocket transport in place.

The rocket is currently without fuel, and it is inert until the PRs reach the Launchpad.

There are several challenges that the PRs must overcome to aid 39 in its quest. First they must devise a means of clearing away the derelict vehicles that litter the road, as well as the mangled rubble of the collapsed overpass. The giant crawler robots nearby may be solicited to help out, and the Programmer may decide that the pieces of collapsed overpass are too massive for the PRs to move on their own.

Once the rocket is on the move, the tollbooth operators up the road must be dealt with or avoided. Depending on the makeup and temperament of the PRs, they may attempt to circumvent the tollbooth, pay the toll without incident, or simply batter their way through the blockade. If the locals from the tollbooth are denied their prize, they will hound the PRs continuously until they can exact what they perceive to be owed.

The fishers that lurk within the ruined town are equally dangerous, and will attempt to capture any robots they can, preferably ones with Size ratings below 5. The Programmer may decide that a Perception check is required to notice a trap before it is sprung; if a PR fails to avoid the trap the interaction check is assumed to succeed. Most of the fishers' traps are decidedly low-tech, as the area is extremely resource-poor.

The Programmer may decide whether the rocket can escape Earth on its own, or requires other components.

After the PRs manage to get aloft, their real challenge begins - surviving in outer space. The Programmer is free to place other objects, robots or structures in the skies above Earth, and the conclusion of this module is left intentionally open to allow the Programmer to move it in whatever direction is desired.

Highway overpass

After years of searching, 39 discovered why the missing rocket had never arrived at the launch site - it has been stuck in traffic for years. At some point a too-heavy machine tried to cross the decaying overpass and succeeded only in proving the maximum weight restriction sign correct.

Since then the road has been pinched off completely, frustrating what few commuters remain on the highway. The flatbed truck on which the rocket rests is only a few hundred meters from the overpass, but on either side of it are automatic cars that have long since shut down for good.

The land on either side of the road is flooded, making the flatbed well and truly stuck in its position, unable to turn around even if the other vehicles weren't in the way.

Things found around the overpass:

- **Rocket Transport:** Like all the vehicles around it, the transport truck's battery has long since died for good. Its time is over, but the flatbed trailer on which the rocket lies may be towed by the large construction robots once the road is cleared. A MechaniCon check (TN 8) is required to detach the trailer from the transport truck. Alternatively, the latch has a Durability rating of 3 and a Damage Threshold of 4.
- **Stalled cars:** Dozens of vehicles crowd the highway, all of them stalled and unable to move under their own power. The Programmer is free to stock the vehicles with anything, or rule that they are all empty, having continued to attempt their normal routes long after their owners abandoned them. Regardless of their current contents, the vehicles are nothing but obstacles now.

Locations

Highway overpass
Tollbooth
Ruined town
Launchpad
Above the Earth
Lunar Orbiting Platform

- **Crawlers:** There are a few large construction robots prowling the region - one or two be seen in the distance from time to time. The giant robots are able to navigate the swamplands with little trouble, but PRs unequipped to traverse them may have to construct improvised boats. If the PRs manage to get within speaker range, they will find the larger robots futilely attempting to dig a pit that collapses almost instantly - dangerous work that has been the demise of two like robots already. This project has occupied their time for years, and they will be more than willing to accept a job with easier-to-fulfill parameters. If they are presented with the opportunity to tow the rocket they will all eagerly volunteer, as "go forward" is much more preferable than the task they would otherwise be saddled with.

Tollbooth

Over the horizon from the collapsed overpass is a fortified row of tollbooths. Most of the blocking arms are stuck in the raised position or broken altogether, and the staff could no longer abide the automated traffic that flagrantly ignored their demands for payment. Since then the locals have managed to take down several large delivery trucks and turn their casings into barricades that funnel all traffic through a single checkpoint.

A heavy portcullis is wired to the tollbooth's limited power supply and can be operated from inside the tollbooth. The gate has a Durability rating of 4 and a Damage Threshold of 5. A few other machines have attempted to ram through the barricade and avoid paying the toll - their casings now reinforce the patchwork fence.

Most of the traffic that passes through these parts has no human money, so the locals have begun extracting the next best thing - power. Every group of travelers must submit one of its numbers to be the victim of a forcible power draw. The locals have a stockpile of batteries removed from the still-twitching casings of robots that refused to pay the toll, and a device mainly consisting of a simple cradle to hold the battery and a clamp to hold the victim.

Any robot attached to the device is treated as being the target robot of the Power Leech feature. The device automatically succeeds at its required Power check to begin the drain.

The tollbooth operators are vigilant to the extreme, and will pursue toll-dodgers for as long as possible, even all the way to the launchpad if needed.

Things found around the tollbooth:

- Underground Superhighway: A small cartography robot lurks nearby and offers to lead travelers through an alternate route of back roads that are still above the water. This path is more difficult to traverse and often patrolled by tollbooth workers eager to catch traffic attempting to avoid paying their toll.

Ruined town

The back road rejoins the highway some distance from the tollbooth, and if the PRs continue along it will eventually reach the remains of a town that once stood in the shadow of the space center.

By the time the PRs pass through it, the town has been almost totally reclaimed by the swamp, and only fleeting signs are evident. A few traffic lights wreathed in vines jutting from a placid watery surface, or the broken shells of buildings in orderly rows.

Things found around the ruined town:

- Islands: There are several buildings of the right height and composition to withstand the worst hurricanes without being blown away or collapsed. These islands are sometimes clustered together, although many of them are isolated scraps of concrete. A few robots still dwell on the islands, and are ravenous for power and resources, cut off as they are by the encroaching swamp. These desperate machines may try to snare or snag the PRs with nets or hooks as the convoy passes by underneath.

Launchpad

Looming over the flat green of the swamp is the rusting scaffold of the launchpad structure tower, still standing thanks to the diligent efforts of the two remaining ground staff. The pair have spent years waiting for a rocket to arrive, and while the scaffolding is nearly disintegrated, it is sturdy enough for one last takeoff. The ground staff have everything else prepared, and can even aid the PRs with any last-minute repairs.

If the PRs wish to accompany 39, they will find that the rocket has more than enough room - it was designed to ferry all of 39's siblings into orbit, and the PRs' total mass is almost assuredly less than that. Everything is in order, although it will take one hour for the ground staff to prepare the rocket for launch.

If the tollbooth operators are in pursuit, they may catch up to the PRs before the launch window opens, leading to a standoff on the launchpad, at the Programmer's discretion. Alternatively, the launch window may open just before the pursuers arrive, allowing the PRs to make a clean getaway.

Things found around the launchpad:

- Storage hangar: Providence has placed the hangar on higher ground where it remains free from the swamp, at least for the present. Booster rockets, fuel, and spare parts can be found inside, although most are specialized components that are useful only for launches.

Above the Earth

Once the PRs are in the air and can view the planet receding underneath them, there is no turning back from their mission.

Things found above the Earth:

- AI sats: Plentitudes of satellites still whirl through the skies above Earth, often dead and silent but sometimes still besouled with a consciousness. These AIs mostly chatter among each other and do little else, and although some have functioning servants to repair or defend them, others may only bark and bluster at interlopers.
- Luna: One object in Earth orbit dominates the sky - the bright sphere of the Moon. The lunar base constructed by 39's siblings is in orbit above the far side from the Earth, but a few of the siblings were recently stranded on Luna's surface during the last mining excavation - the others will be extremely grateful if they are somehow returned to the station.

Optional rule: Microgravity

Robots without a means of propulsion in microgravity must push off of another object. A robot's normal launch velocity in microgravity is equal to its RealityCom + Reflexes ratings in m/round or k/hour.

The robot must make a RealityCom + Reflexes check (TN 8) to cross an expanse of space. If the robot fails, it misses the target. A robot without an appropriate feature such as the *Vacuum Propulsion* feature cannot slow down, stop, or change direction unassisted once it enters open space.

The robot also uses its RealityCom + Reflexes ratings to determine its interaction pool while in microgravity. A robot's TN to be Struck in space is equal to 5 + the robot's *Vacuum Propulsion* rating.

Lunar Orbiting Platform

Ever since 39 was abandoned behind on Earth, its siblings have been hard at work on the largest structure ever constructed in microgravity.

The original specifications were completed almost on schedule, even without 39's assistance. Since then, the spaceborne robots have been adding "improvements" to the original structure using materials harvested from the moon's surface. Eventually, they rationalize, the station will be so attractive that humans will be forced to appear and populate it.

Recreation complexes, a cinema, and even a weightless swimming pool can be found onboard the station, all of them built of the same metals mined from the moon below. The robots have had to take liberties with certain aspects of the station, including writing, directing and acting in their own movies.

The Programmer may decide how (or if) the PRs can return to Earth. It is likely that the station had the capability to send materials back to Earth, but these vessels may have been recycled, sacrificed to the ever-growing cathedral being constructed above the Moon.

UNIT NAME High orbit fabrication unit 39
ORIGINAL PURPOSE Assemble structures in microgravity environment

5 RealityCom	3 Dexterity	4 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 5 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
2 HumanCom	3 Mobility	3 Buffer	
2 DigiCon	3 Perception	3 Size	
4 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	2 Power	
	4 Strength		Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 7 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT

2 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	7 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)
7 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4
	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 7 <input type="radio"/> k/hour m/round

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
<i>Magnetized</i>		<i>Overheating</i>	1
<i>Nuclear Battery</i>		<i>Overriding Directive (Major)</i>	2
<i>Vacuum Propulsion</i>	2	<i>Rare Model</i>	
		<i>Rusting</i>	
		<i>Spaceborne</i>	

39 is an orphan, stranded on a world it was not designed for. Its casing is worn from years of travel in humid climes, but it still holds out hope that it may one day join its siblings.

When the PRs first meet 39, it will state that it needs to get home. When questioned, it will aim a manipulative limb upward, to where the full moon hangs in the sky.

The robot is helpful and friendly to any others that attempt to aid it, although it has a one-track mind regarding its mission, and thanks to its Overriding Directive, it will refuse to venture more than a few hundred yards away from the rocket now that the vessel has been found.

39's Spaceborne defect lowers its TN to be struck to 3 for as long as it remains in Earth's atmosphere. The listed TN to be struck is its normal, unaltered number.

“WAY UP HIGH... THERE'S A DREAM THAT I ACCESSED ONCE ON AN OLD HARD DRIVE.”

UNIT NAME Bremen Corp. Amusement Unit 'Danny Duck' model
ORIGINAL PURPOSE Promote brand loyalty at amusement parks

2 RealityCom	4 Dexterity	2 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 5 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
4 HumanCom	4 Mobility	2 Buffer	
3 DigiCon	2 Perception	4 Size	
1 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	2 Power	
	3 Strength		Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 6 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT

1 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	8 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)
8 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4
	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 8 <input type="radio"/> k/hour m/round

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
<i>Common Model</i>		<i>Power Cutoff</i>	
<i>Hardened Programming</i>	1		
<i>Manipulative Limb (Standard)</i>			
<i>Secondary Battery</i>			

A typical fisher, this robot was once part of the entertainment staff at an amusement park some distance from the town. Originally programmed to interact with human children, it is nearly unrecognizable as the cartoon mascot it once resembled.

Trapped here as it is along with the other locals, it has adapted to its circumstances as best as it can, and is just as ruthless as any of the other fishers. Its dexterous manipulative limbs, built for tying shoelaces and bows, are in high demand for their trap-building proficiency.

“GWISH ISHINT OVER!”

UNIT NAME Megalift Heavy Industrial Mover
ORIGINAL PURPOSE Relocate heavy material

1 RealityCom	1 Dexterity	2 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 2 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
1 HumanCom	1 Mobility	1 Buffer	
1 DigiCon	1 Perception	7 Size	
1 MechaniCon	1 Reflexes	5 Power	
	6 Strength		

3 Damage from Strike (Str÷2, round down)	0 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)	Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 9 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
2 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 1	

	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 1 k/hour m/round
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FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
Giant	2	Compliant	
High Chassis		Conspicuous	
Jack		Limbless	
Solar Powered		Low Speed	
Specialty Chassis (Lifting)		Noisy	
		Power Cutoff	

The Megalift is representative of the giant laborers found toiling in the swamp near the overpass. Several similar models are also present, all with roughly identical attribute ratings and features.

It is more than willing to aid the PRs - in truth, any job is preferable to the Sisyphean task of digging a hole in water. The Megalift is extremely slow, but it requires no external power supply as long as it remains under the open sky.

“YOU MEAN ALL I GOTTA DO IS MOVE A FEW CARS?”

UNIT NAME ChangeMate Automated Transaction Handler
ORIGINAL PURPOSE Staff point-of-sale locations

2 RealityCom	5 Dexterity	2 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 8 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
3 HumanCom	3 Mobility	3 Buffer	
5 DigiCon	3 Perception	4 Size	
3 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	2 Power	
	3 Strength		

1 Damage from Strike (Str÷2, round down)	7 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)	Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 7 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
9 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4	

	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 7 k/hour m/round
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FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
Display Screen	2	Slow Charger	1
Manipulative Limb (Standard)		Unreliable	
Workhorse			

Vigilance and diligence were the primary traits of the ChangeMate line, and they have carried this high standard all the way through the collapse of the civilization that required them.

Faced with the prospect of allowing any more unauthorized traffic to skirt through avoiding the monetary toll, they devised their current system of highway robbery, and will go to any length to make sure travelers pay what the ChangeMates feel is due to them.

“EXACT CHANGE ONLY!”

UNIT NAME Click-Rite Precision Assembly Worker
ORIGINAL PURPOSE Prep space rockets for launch

4 RealityCom	4 Dexterity	3 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 6 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 8 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
1 HumanCom	2 Mobility	4 Buffer	
2 DigiCon	3 Perception	5 Size	
4 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	2 Power	
	5 Strength		

2 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	6 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)
8 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4
	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 9 k/hour m/round

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
<u>Floodlights</u>	_____	<u>Environmentally Attuned</u>	_____
<u>High Speed</u>	_____	<u>Exposed Power Switch</u>	_____
<u>Loudspeaker</u>	_____	<u>High Maintenance</u>	_____
<u>Manipulative Limb (Standard)</u>	_____	<u>Loose Connections</u>	_____
<u>Tool Set</u>	_____	<u>Overriding Directive (Major)</u>	2
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

When 39 left the remains of the space center to hunt for the last rocket, it left two other robots behind, both designed to assist with preparations for the launch itself.

Isolation has served to protect the remaining pair of ground crew - the only hazard they have faced to this point are the hurricanes that did away with their AI supervisor.

The Click-Rite's Environmentally Attuned defect hinders it whenever it is forced to leave the paved areas of the launch site, and both units share the Overriding Directive to keep the launch site in working order at all times.

“FIVE... FOUR...
THREE... TWO...
ONE...”

UNIT NAME SitSat Autonomous Satellite Maintenance
ORIGINAL PURPOSE Accompany and perform repairs on satellite

4 RealityCom	4 Dexterity	4 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 4 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 7 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
1 HumanCom	2 Mobility	2 Buffer	
2 DigiCon	4 Perception	3 Size	
4 MechaniCon	2 Reflexes	1 Power	
	3 Strength		

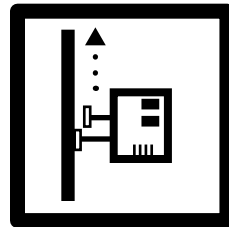
1 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	4 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)
6 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 2
	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 4 k/hour m/round

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
<u>Magnetized</u>	_____	<u>Mute</u>	_____
<u>Tool Set</u>	_____	<u>Weak Chassis</u>	_____
<u>Vacuum Propulsion</u>	2	_____	_____
<u>Wireless Transceiver</u>	1	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

To the SitSat, its entire world is the exterior of the AI satellite to which it is fettered. The robot spends most of its time staring into the cosmos, daydreaming about approaching catastrophes that will prompt its AI master to demand that it act. Consequently, it will almost assuredly spot the PRs on their approach and assume its best rendition of a defensive posture. With little to go on besides its own musings and the paranoia instilled into it by its factory programming, the SitSat will likely disregard anything the PRs tell it.

The Programmer is reminded that in space no one can hear you beep, and without Wireless Transceivers of their own, the PRs will be unable to exchange meaningful amounts of information in vacuum.

“ARE YOU AN ASSASSIN?”



Features and Defects

The following features and defects may be used in addition to the ones described in the Engine Heart rulebook. The Programmer may decide to forbid any or all of these options.

New Features

Long-Range

Cost: 12

The robot's maximum attainable velocity in microgravity is increased.

The robot's maximum velocity in k/h is increased by a factor of 1,000 while operating in microgravity. For example, a robot with a normal maximum velocity of 8 has a maximum velocity of 8,000 k/hour in vacuum conditions. The robot may increase or decrease its current speed at the rate of 100 k/round. A robot with the Long-Range feature may not make interaction checks, or be subject to interaction checks, while the Long-Range feature is in use. A robot must have the Vacuum Propulsion feature to have the Long-Range feature.

Magnetized

Cost: 6

The robot can magnetize its extremities in order to remain attached to metallic surfaces.

In normal Earth gravity, a robot with the Magnetized feature can climb up sheer vertical metallic surfaces at half its normal movement (round down) by making a Strength check, as per the rules for dragging immobile robots. The robot treats itself as the target; the Lightweight feature applies to this check. In microgravity, the robot can move across metal surfaces at its normal rate while remaining anchored to the surface.

Self-Repairing

Cost: 10

The robot is equipped with self-repairing capabilities and can automatically repair itself if damaged.

If the robot's Damage Threshold is lowered, the robot will automatically repair 1 point of damage one hour after the damage is inflicted. The robot's current Damage Threshold must be at least 1 for the Self-Repairing feature to operate.

Solar Sail

Cost: 5

The robot is equipped with a deployable solar sail.

The robot may use its solar sail to increase its forward speed slowly over an extended period of time. The robot may increase its current speed by 1,000 k/hour each day that it remains moving in the same direction, to a maximum speed of 300,000 k/hour. The robot must have some other means of reducing its velocity.

Vacuum Propulsion

Cost: 4/rating

The robot is equipped with some method of propulsion that functions in microgravity.

A robot with this feature may make a Power check (TN 8) to increase or decrease its current velocity by (its maximum speed x its Vacuum Propulsion rating). For example, a robot with a maximum speed of 4 and a Vacuum Propulsion rating of 3 would be able to increase its current speed by 12 (4x3) each time it succeeds in a Power check.

If the robot fails the Power check, its battery is drained. A robot may have a maximum Vacuum Propulsion rating of 5.

New Defects

Spaceborne

Gain: +6

The robot is non-aerodynamic and is not designed to operate in atmosphere.

The robot's TN to be struck is halved (round down) while under atmospheric conditions. A robot may not have a TN to be struck lower than 2.

This module is a special gift
for helping to kickstart
Engine Heart into stores.
A lot of love went into it,
so please share it with all
of your friends!

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