Light of a New Sun

A Hard-SciFi Setting for the

[2d6] Roleplaying System

By Josh Gager

Intro

Basically the premise for the setting revolves around some sort of catastrophic, world-ending disaster that forces humanity to flee to space or die. This causes massive advances in technology and the jump to a whole new star system with an earthlike planet that is terraformed and colonized. You play as either a first or second generation colonist who has a chance to significantly affect the development of this new world.

History

First Part

The first portion of the history deals with the period of time before the catastrophe hits. When the world-ending event (which I haven't actually decided on the specific nature of yet) is discovered, it's roughly 80 years away. This gives the people of earth just enough time to develop some faster-than-light speed technology and blow the proverbial Popsicle stand. For the first ten or so years after the discovery, there is a massive reallocation of funds from military and social programs in numerous countries into the research and development sectors.

Venture capitalists invest heavily in universities. Governments relax anti-monopoly laws in order to foster corporate growth and development in the hopes that they'll put their money towards the space programs around the world.

After the first two decades, a few clear leaders in the field of spaceflight have surfaced:

USA – massive space program infrastructure, historical nostalgia (moon landing and all that) for tugging on the heartstrings of students towards the field of spaceflight etc.

Russia – also has massive space program infrastructure, mildly totalitarian government encourages citizens to pursue the sciences with financial aid and other programs

China – huge manufacturing/industrial infrastructure, begins taking contracts for the creation of century ships as soon as the idea seems feasible, mildly totalitarian government taxes those who do not participate in space program in some manner

India/Brazil – While on their own these two countries don't quite have enough economic clout to fund a massive space program, their joint efforts lead to some of the most important developments that lead to the construction of viable century ships

E.U. – Led by the French, the E.U. space program is largely run by France, Germany, and Great Brtain. Universities in France become world-renowned as astronautic think tanks, gathering students from all over the world

Biotech company – a biotech company who develops a revolutionary system for air filtration and processing using a combination of moss, fungi and bacteria commissions the construction of their own century ships

Cybernetics/Engineering firm – while the science of cybernetics is only just beginning to come into its infancy at this point, this company makes the breakthrough that allows for successful resuscitation from cryogenic sleep, giving it enough money to commission some century ships

Communications company – develops launching/landing system using electromagnetic channels to guide/propel ships to/from orbit. This is very useful in the construction of century ships, which must be built in space

The next twenty or so years are spent hard at work, developing things like fully self-contained ecosystems to provide food and breathable air, terraforming processes, century ship designs, and the warp-drive-style technology that allows for faster-than-light travel without time dilation or slamming into debris (more on this later). However, a growing sense of unrest begins to grow.

An entire generation of people is born at this point that realize they're not going to outlive the human extinction event. For many with the means and the will, this causes them to struggle for a spot among the scientific elite in the hopes of contributing a breakthrough that earns them a spot on one of the outbound ships. For many others, however, it leads to a sense of nihilistic despondency or a sharp turn in the direction of religion.

This disenfranchised population begins to form small pockets of coherent protesters. "Why should our tax dollars be wasted on something that doesn't benefit us?" they cry. "Wouldn't it just be better to live out our end with as much comfort as possible?"

Many turn to crime, many more still to drugs. Within a decade (T-30ish years at this point) a new class of human emerges. Gang membership is at an all-time high, crime rates have skyrocketed, and acts of violence and terrorism become more common by the day. Some groups even organize into impromptu militias with the goal of taking down a government or stealing a century ship.

At this point a few century ships have finished construction and are being launched (more on who got seats later). Full-scale war breaks out in America, a war without geographical borders, but instead, with a single, unifying purpose: steal as many of the US century ships as possible. [This part is subject to change, seems a little over-the-top].

Regardless, the century ships launch, the world is blown to smithereens and the first chapter in humanity's history comes to a close.

Second Part

The second portion of the history deals with the time spent on the century ships, roughly a 300-year journey. Not all countries chose to use century ships. The U.S. in particular chose to use cryogenics to preserve their passengers. For those that did choose to keep a living, changing society for the next 300 years, things got pretty crazy pretty fast.

For starters, a larger portion of the people in the century ships were educated and had backgrounds in some form of science or trade (see “who got tickets to the new earth”). Because of this, technology progressed at a fast pace within the individual ships. The ships, however, were cut off from one another. This caused some technologies to be developed more than once, independently, which led to patent lawsuits later on.

Shortly after launch, a generation was born that didn’t choose to go on this rickety last-chance flight to a new solar system. This caused, in some cases, enmity between parent and child. What the parent saw as an opportunity for survival, the child saw as a prison sentence for themselves and their progeny, who would never set foot on the new world. At first there was a rise in crime and violence, but this eventually subsided when, at least on most of the ships, a specialized field of psychology was developed to help people cope.

In many cases, religion had all but died out with the first generation, but was then picked up by the second generation as a defense mechanism against the depressing thought of never seeing either end of the voyage. This caused a number of new religions to spring up [I’ll probably do a more thorough write-up on religions later].

Many cultures’ art adapted a heavy element of utilitarianism out of necessity. After all, on these ships, supplies are finite and decorations without a functional purpose were sparse. Many artists chose to produce crafts or ornate tools, which ushered in an era of fusion between design and function on a large scale.

In some ships, there were revolts, where one group didn’t like the way things were run. One Chinese ship, for instance, split on the subject of resource spending at the other end of the journey, with military spending on one side and agricultural spending on the other.

Some of the ships were simply destroyed by these internal struggles, their hulls breached or their delicately balanced ecosystems tainted by war or sabotage.

Finally, however, the ships did make it.

Third Part

The third, and final part of the saga is the arrival and colonization of the new planet [name to be determined]. In the early years, orbits and communications between ships are established, what terraforming has already been going on is supplemented and tweaked, and tense peace is tested daily.

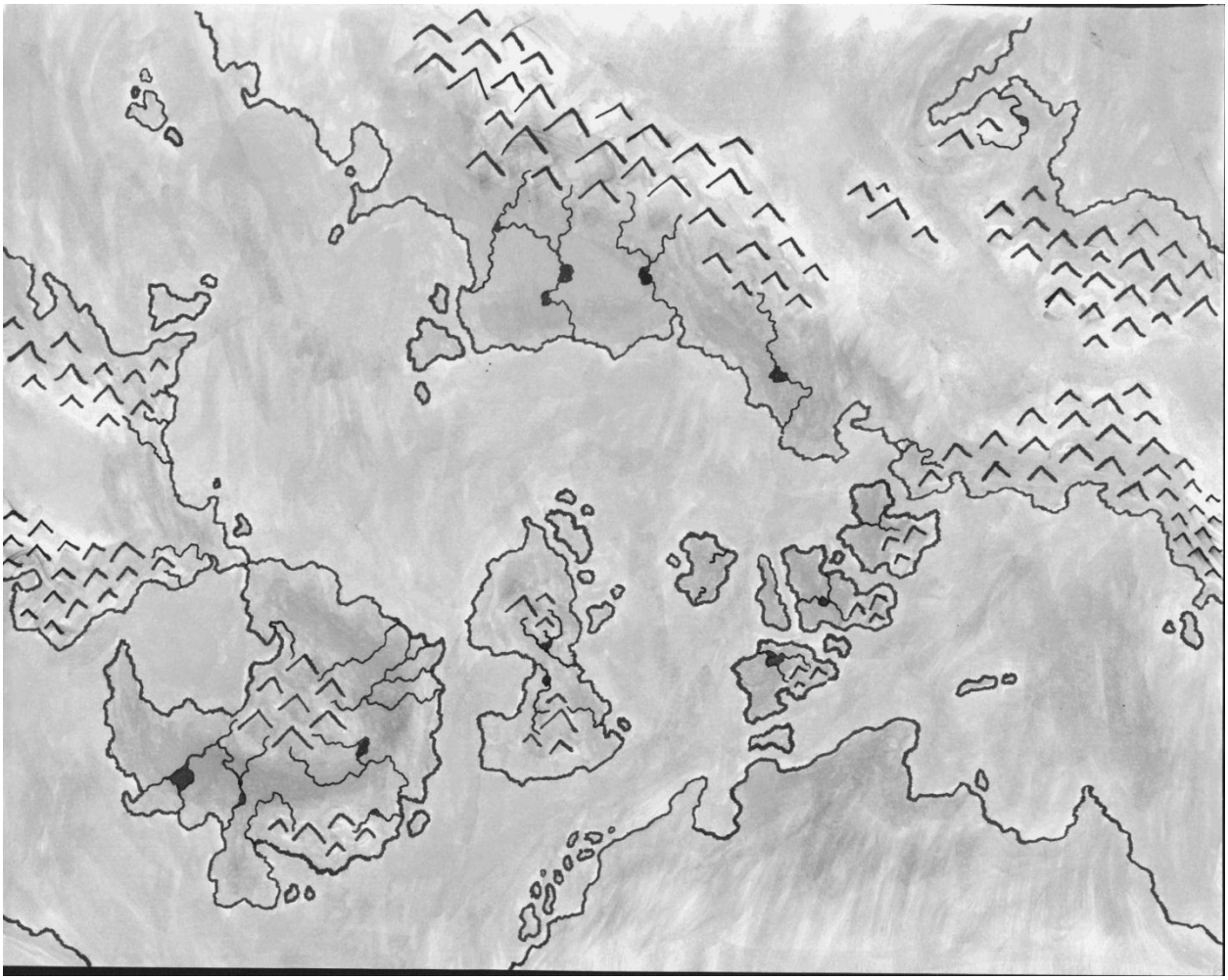
Many countries, eager to be first on the ground, send out colonies too early and lose thousands to the harsh ravages of bad soil, water, or atmosphere.

Eventually the planet is mostly habitable and colonies are formed. While there are some minor skirmishes here and there, there is no outright war, since there is much more land than there are people at this point.

The century ships themselves (once they've landed) become most of the larger cities, with growth spreading from their unlocked doors. In some environments growth doesn't spread too far because of climate or terrain, but in others (as is the case with China and the E.U., vast stretches of land are colonized and turned into fertile fields that feed the ever-swelling population.

Here is where you stand, on the brink of a new age of exploration, travel, trade, and political intrigue. You are among the first to set foot on this new planet. How will you make your mark?

Geography



This map is extremely rough at the moment. I inked it to give myself something to work with. I have a general idea of where different societies are going to have landed, but this is subject to change. Also I have to fix the poles, which I realized too late are physically impossible.

Tech/Items

- Antigravity? (hovercars would be super cool, but I need to make sure the disconnected feel of the outlying colonies isn't lost)
- Lasers (like glorified stunguns/cutting tools)
- Short-range spacecraft
- Cryogenics
- Terraforming
- Instantaneous Communication?
- Artificial/Synthetic Wood and meat?
- H2 cells for power
- "Warp"-ish drive for engine
- Nutrient Cycling systems
- Railgun launchers for ships
- Watersplitter for breathing underwater (can save H2 for fuel if get attachment)
- BioPhotoVoltaic cells?

Genemodding/Cybernetics:

- Gills
- Chitin plates/Armor
- Night vision
- Hypersensitive nose
- Eye/hair/skin color
- Feathers/scales etc.
- Singer's voice etc.
- Anticancer contract with biotech comp.
- Chloro/chromoplasts
- "memory" slot wired into brain (no more than 3 at a time or permanent INT dmg)*
- +STR/DEX/TOUGH/AGI limb/organ
- Prehensile tail
- Digital eyes (heat/night vision)
- Datalink in brain?
- Replacement organ (synthetic or grown)

*these would allow skill bonuses/talents while they were plugged in

Talents

Politics

Societies