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Spacehunter: Adventures In The Forbidden Zone

By David Preston

We are now approaching the heart|of Crinos Nebula...
...where, on the starboard viewing ports,|to the right of the ship...
...you can observe|the spectacular blue giant, Galileus Major...
...and Galileus Minor, a white dwarf...
...caught in the gravitation field|of its giant big brother.
As we pass between these two suns,|we are given a rare opportunity...
...to view one of the scenic and|scientific marvels of the known universe.
This breathtaking effect is caused by...
...the condensation of nebular gases|in the magnetic--
Please, do not be alarmed.|It appears we have sustained damage...
...from an unexpected condensation|of molten gases.
You will now proceed|to the designated escape shuttle.
Follow boarding instructions.
The air-lock doors will seal automatically|once you are safely aboard.
Please be sure to visit|the newly refurbished Star-O-Rama lounge.
The escape shuttles|have been programmed...
...to seek out the nearest E-type,|or Earth-type planet.
When your shuttle has homed in|on the planet most accommodating...
...to the needs of Earth-natives, you will be|landed and processed with
full security.
Do not be alarmed.|You have been traveling suspended...
...in the Merrill-Becker 3,000|Emergency Space Shuttle.
For your comfort you've been given|a mild cryogenic which will wear off...
...in couple of minutes. Do not panic.|An emergency homing device...
...has been automatically triggered|to ensure your safe retrieval.
You will now remove your helmets.
Please stay by your shuttle|and take a few moments to relax.
You will be given further instructions|in a short time.
I got a lot of messages for you, Wolff.
We got a transmission|from a guy on Omega Six.
He's got eight tons of merilium scrap|he wants you to pick up when you can.
And the police called from the 42 sector.|You've got 105 parking tickets.
I think you should take care of that.
Your ex-wife is looking for you.
She hasn't gotten a check from you|in three months.
The administrator of your housing unit|says you're two months behind in
rent.
You have five days to pay|or you're out in the street.
Interrupt. Space Station Copernica|to all units in vicinity...
...of Terra Sector,|Crinos Nebula, Galileus System.
All-space mayday Vi InterGal-Com-Net.
Starliner X-ray 370 "lost in solar."
One shuttle, detached....

Reward:

Chalmers! The communicator's out again.

Get up!

Get up.

I'm entitled to four hours downtime.

Chalmers, the communicator is out again.

That's because we need|a new auto-correlation spectrometer.

Not to mention a new drive-systems|regulator, a Freon activator...

...and of course a complete|scan-systems overhaul.

I'm still glad I bought you|the night-shirt instead.

Okay, what did you do to this?

Emergency repair procedure number one.

You kicked it? Is that what|they taught you at Sector Control?

Who listened? I thought you would fix|that spectrometer last week?

I keep starting but you never let me finish.

Okay, now let's see who needs|a galaxy-hopping garbage man today.

Right.

Find an all-space mayday for Terra Sector,|something about a shuttle rescue.

Escape shuttle with|three female survivors now...

...definitely known|to have successfully detached...

"...from" Starliner X-ray 370...

...and is moving to landing|on Planet Terra 11.

The Intergalactic Consortium has|announced a reward of 3,000 Megacredits.

Yeah. Too much for a shuttle rescue.

Are you looking for this?

Terra 11. It rings a bell.

Seems like we put a colony up there|a long time ago, before the war.

There was a plague or something during|the stalemate. Try it on the computer.

Terra 11 Atmosphere: E-Type.

Exploration commenced: 2013.

Planet-wide outbreak of PSI Plague: 2021.

Interplanetary medical expedition|assigned to plague control: 2022.

Leaders of expedition,|Patterson and McNabb quarreled.

McNabb alias Overdog,|assumed dictatorship of entire planet.

Medical expedition vanished: 2031.|Current status: quarantine restricted.

Quarantine restricted?

Plague's been running rampant since 2031.

Domestic food supply is probably infected.

It sounds great. Activate the drive system.

Grab the tracking module.

The door won't open.

It's the air-lock mechanism.

Got 'em.
Your course is 035. Distance: 20 klicks.
Make it eat dirt, Chalmers.
Wait a second. Something's wrong here. |The shuttle seems to be moving.
Your new course is 048.
Somebody else must be on to it.
Load and lock.
Do you know we're down to six star-clips?
That's enough. |We're not going to war, Chalmers.
Well, now, this is going to be easier |than I thought.
Barrier ahead!
Barrier ahead!
Hit the brakes! Hit the brakes!
Trikers on the starboard!
Over there!
Overdog's Trikers on the starboard!
It looks like we've got visitors.
Go to the back, Winder!
Get inside there!
Why can't anything be simple anymore?
Chalmers, take out that cannon!
Grandman Patterson's hit!
Bloodstops!
I'm going in.
On whose side?
My side. Cover me.
Works every time.
Help!
They're outrolling!
We can't make a bloodstop.
He's blood-lost bad.
McNabb!
McNabb!
You have done this to me!
I think you have me confused--
You and I were the only doctors |in this galaxy.
And they sent us to fight the "...."
To fight the plagues, Grandman.
You betrayed me, McNabb.
Lie down, Grandman. |He's just an outlander.
-What? | -An Earther.
He's not Overdog McNabb.
Where are the Earth girls?
They were up-taken by the Vultures.

Into the Zone.

You must go there, Jarrett.

You and Duster.

Overdog McNabb's death we will gift you.

Good.

What do you want here, Earther?

I don't mean to interfere, but where is|this Zone you were speaking of?

You have no claim there.|The killing of the Overdog is ours.

Fine, he's yours.|But I need to find the girls.

Find them yourself, Earther.|We have blood loss here.

I'm sorry.

But"...."

Chalmers, get me a fix|on those flying things, will ya?

Be careful with him. Hold up his head.

Chalmers?

You were the best damn model|they ever put out.

Stop it!

What the hell are you?

What do you think I am,|you skrotting Earth-bag? I'm a woman.

An Earther.

You'd better not skiz my home|or I'll get my father to split your face.

And I got brothers, too.

If that's your father in there,|I got news for you.

He's been dead for about ten years.

This is my place, anyway, so bone out.

Whatever you say, Princess.

Wait a minute. You got any food?|If you've got food, I can help you.

I'm a tracker. I know everything|about this skrotting planet.

Sorry, I'm booked up for the day.

Wait! I know where|to buy clean Scav women.

That's what you came for, isn't it?

Or if you're selling,|I've got takers who'll buy.

Or if you have the plague,|I can get you serum.

My mother was a medical.

I know about the new Earth-fraulies.|They flew by here. They're like you.

There were three of them.|They weren't Scavs or Zoners.

And they have these real fine clothes,|and they're smooth all over.

Where were they headed?

So if you give me some nibbles|and take me wheeling, I'll track you to 'em.

Without me you ain't going to find 'em|in a millonium.

A "millonium"?

Okay.

Get in.

I want clothes like they got or else no deal.

The food better be Earth food or forget it.
I mean, you gotta "...."
You'd better be nice, you need me.
That way!
What's all this junk back here?
I thought Earthers traveled in style,|you know? Everything modern and all.
You really drive an old wreck.
This "wreck" is a collectors item.|I made it myself.
There's a Scav camp out that way.
But Scavs are no problem.|It's Zoners you got to watch out for.
They're bad luck for you.
They're badder for girls like me.|They eat you.
But they can't eat big,|so they just razor off an arm or a leg...
...and keep going like that for days.
There's no thermal fever,|'cause we're still away from the Zone.
When we get down in,|don't drive close to the cliffs...
"...'"cause they'll whack you straight.|Are we gonna eat soon?
You know, you're real lucky I'm here.|'Cause if I wasn't...
...you'd probably be spewered|by the Chemist your first day out.
"Spewered"? Where'd you learn to talk?
I talk Earther, like you.|Learned from my aunt.
So you're real lucky I'm here.|Real lucky, that's all I gotta say.
If that's all you've got to say,|then I am lucky.
Lieutenant, I hear our lovely Vultures.
Can you tell if they have the girls?
Can you see them, yet? Are they pretty?
I do hope they're young and soft,|but not fat.
Young girls are so much nicer to touch.
Especially if they have no scars.
Overdog is put off by scars.
Can you see if they have any scars?
What are you doing to me?
Let me go!
-Move! Move!|-Where are we?
Are they missing any limbs?
I hate it when they have missing limbs.
What's for food?
Hot dogs.
Don't fix none for me.
-I thought you were starving for Earth food.|-I don't eat no dogs.
Scavs eat dogs. I thought Earthers|were supposed to eat good.
-It isn't a dog, they just call it that.|-How come?
Look, if you want to eat, eat.|If you don't want to eat, don't.
You really think you're tough, don't you?

Tough enough.

I know some people|who'd eat you for breakfast.

I never said I wouldn't eat dog.|I just said I don't eat it that much.

What's that?

A sleeping bag.

You mean, we just crawl in?|Sleep in that bag thing?

Not we. Me.

What about me?

-What about you?|-Where do I sleep?

That's your problem.

You know, there's room for two in there|if they was cozy.

Well, we ain't cozy.

Goodnight.

If he don't like women, that's his problem.

They are pretty.|Much better than the last ones.

Overdog is going to be so pleased.

I demand you transmit rescue co-ordinates|to the nearest Earth Star Base.

-Under Galactic Law, you can't hold us--|-Silence.

Overdog is our gracious lord and protector.

He is above all laws but his own.

He and I have mined|and scoured this planet of all its riches...

...just for the use and pleasure|of our friends.

You will be friends...

...won't you?

Please, we just want to go home.

You will feel at home here.|I promise you, my dear...

...after a little mood enhancer.

What's your problem? I was cold, okay?|Is that so bad?

What are you doing?

Let me down! Let go of me!

Let go of me!

Why did you have to go|and get my clothes all wet?

'Cause your clothes need it.|And so do you.

You probably want to stand and watch...

...and get all excited|when I dry out my stuff, right?

-Don't flatter yourself, kid.|-Scum-eater!

Why you miserable, little, filthy,|rat-ass Scavenger.

I'm not a Scav, I'm an Earth girl!

Good. Maybe now|you're going to smell like one.

You scum, let go of me!

Behind the other ear.

Okay, rinse.

Once more.

Turn around.

Turn around.
Why, you're nothing but a baby.
Maybe you think I'm nothing,|but there are people who think different...
...and they're looking for me even.
I don't have to go around|beggin' no Earthie...
...for no warm place to snooze|or anything to eat or"...."
What the hell is that?
It's probably just the Chemist,|hauling drugs.
He won't come in here.
Any more predictions?
Okay, I was wrong.
Get down.
Grab the stuff and get in the scrambler.
Hi.
How are ya?
Son of a bitch! God!
Wolff!
All right, Wolff, get up! Come on, get up!
It's the oldest trick in the book.
I didn't fall for it in training,|and I'm sure not going to fall for it
now.
So, get up!
Wolff!
You're getting soft, Washington.|Must be past your prime.
At least I had a prime.|You're still waiting for yours to arrive.
And you're getting nasty|in your old age, too.
Must be all those years in the Service.
The Service ain't so bad.
Since you left they made me Sector Chief.
Imagine that.
Only 14 years of taking orders|and already you're Chief of Terra Sector.
In that garbage heap of the universe.
Just looking at you, Wolff,|I see you're doin' real good for yourself.
I'm glad you noticed.
You know, most people|like to stick with something.
But you, you're like fly shit on the window:
The first little breeze that blows|and you're gone.
That's good. You're becoming|a real philosopher.
Just look at it!
Look at what you did!
It's ruined!
Yeah, well"...."
Okay, you get me towed out of here,|and between you and me...
...and these machines, we got it made.

Where'd you get|this overgrown snowplow?
I borrowed it.
Off some gents down the road.
You're here after those three Earth girls|the same as me.
The only difference is that it's my job.
I could put you in life-freeze for being here.
But what the hell. You help me out,|I'll make it worth your while.
You'll probably come out of this|with at least 500 Megs.
What are friends for?
Forget it, Chromedome.|We don't need your help.
So why don't you just dig a hole|and crawl in?
Come on, Jack, let's hit the trail.
Where'd you buy the Scav?
I'm not a Scav and I'm not a buy!|I'm an Earther!
He's just dead weight.|We can be there in a couple of days...
...and won't have to split the reward|with nobody.
Okay, I'll cut you in for 750.
And that's more than you're worth.
Let me think about it.
You'll be here, won't you?
Look...
...at least leave my gun?
I'm sorry. I totally forgot.
You're gonna need a partner.
He's already got a partner.
Have a nice swim.
What are you looking at?
I'm not just looking, I'm brainworking you.
Anybody smart would have melted|that black Scav and cleaned him bare.
Then, we could've taken his truck and|split it down the middle, like the
reward.
About this partnership"...."
What about it?
Partners we ain't.
You track me to the Zone...
...I give you food, and that's it.
I can handle the brainworks for both of us.
Holy shit!
Jump a lizard, Scav.
This has to be the Zone.
No, not yet.
Then what are you looking scared for?
I'm not scared!
It's just that we're riding real close|to the Chemist.

I've been hiding from him forever|in my caves.
You better hurry up and find us safe|and sound. Sleep-light's fallin' real fast.
Smells like somebody died in here.
They probably did.
Wait here.
Looks okay. Bring up the gear.
Why do they call you Wolff?
That's my name.
Good name for you.
You don't care about my name.
I can see why you got no friends.|You don't like nothin'".
Haven't you liked anything?|Like a dog or a goat?
My name's Niki.
I don't know about a last name.|Sometimes they call me Niki the Twister...
"...|"cause I can wriggle into little places.
Yeah, I've noticed.
Surprised you ain't making me sleep|someplace else.
I'd probably miss|your sparkling conversation.
Really?
What was that?
Nothing. Go to sleep.
-No, I'm telling you, I heard something.|-And I'm telling you, there's--
-You're behind me, right?|-Yeah, keep going.
Yeah, but there's somethin'--
-What now?|-I'm thinking.
Think a little faster.
This way.
Okay, do me a favor.|Grab onto that cable and just jump, okay?
Jump? Are you kidding me?
I'll take my chances with that bat thing.|Maybe not.
Do me a favor and just jump, okay?
I can't move.
Here, I'll make it easy for you.
Okay?
So long, suckers!
Great Overdog, how can I prepare you|for the treat you have in store?
What is it this time, Chemist?
Three times beauty, youth, and energy.
What gifts for the great Overdog.
Gifts? What gifts?
They are my basic needs.
And they will fulfill your needs|much better than the last ones.
Earth girls?

You are pleased, Your Radiance?
You will know when I'm not pleased.
Out!
Shall I wait outside?
Out!
Bring them to me.
Closer!
That one!
The one in the center.
Undress her.
Slowly!
Yes.
Yes.
In case I forgot to tell you,|this thing doesn't float.
There's shallows in here.|You just gotta look for 'em.
I'll track you.
Shallows are on that side.
Second bath in two days.|Ought to do me for the next year.
Niki?
Niki?
Good breeding-man.
I'll bet breeding with us would kill him.
I'll take that bet.
Get your hands off me,|you sleazy slime-bag!
-Look!|-I love this planet.
Get away from here! Eat him!
No, get him! He's bigger!
-What about me?|-Sorry, kid.
Oh, God! Come on!
Up there. The tunnel.
I love your planet.
Does your guided tour include|getting me back to my scrambler...
...without doing battle|with a bunch of Amazons and dragons?
You always gotta use|those scazzy words, don't you?
You think I don't know which way to go?
I'll show you which way to go.|With no swimming women or dragmen.
Come on!
"Water, water everywhere,|and not a drop to drink".
What's that?
It's a poem. The first poem you learn|in high school.
What's high school?
It's where you should be.|It's where you learn things.
I don't have to go no place to brainwork|that that stuff's poison.
That's what I just said.

You got any water?

What say? I see your mouth moving, |but I can't hear a word you sayin'". "

I went swimming yesterday, |diving for my gun.

I got all this water in my ear.

Cut the shit, Washington. She needs help.

Wolff and his partner.

I sure am happy to run into you like this. |After I got my wheels unstuck...

...I followed your tracks through |that tunnel, found your vehicle...

...towed it back out, and drove out here |looking for you.

I thought you'd changed your mind |about the rescue...

...and gotten married or something.

-Washington, give her some water. | -Water, yeah.

Good. Good.

Okay, you get what you want.

Just give me the water.

Here's the deal. |You help me go in and get the girls...

...I'll give you 750 Megacredits.

You fly us all out of here, |I throw in another 200.

That's almost 1,000 Megacredits.

And I'm only being this generous, |because of our former friendship.

What former friendship?

Look, Wolff--

Why would you need me |to fly you out of here, Sector Chief?

I hit a particle storm...

...sustained engine damage.

I had some problems landing my ship.

It could happen to anybody.

The point is, I'm giving you a chance |to make some extra money.

You need my ship for transportation...

...or else you're stuck here, aren't you?

The deal is 50-50, or nothing.

That skrotter ain't worth 50 fifties.

That's true.

Wolff, you're a goddamn thief.

Boy, when I get my 50 percent, |I'm gonna get over to Kuralla Three...

...order me one of them custom androids.

I mean, a real hot one. |In fact, I'm getting two...

...twins. Hey, Wolff, what about you?

I don't know, maybe--

I haven't figured out |what I'll do with my half yet.

Your half? What's she talking about?

I get it. I track you two to the Zone, |and then you pick up those Earth-fraulies...

...then it's so long.

My big thrill is to look up and wave|while you two go shottin' across the sky.

Thank you. It's been a real charge in|my life just hanging around for a few days.

Wait a minute.

Wait a minute.

If you think our deal is for me to baby-sit|you for the next 200 years...

...you're dreamin'". I don't remember|us saying anything about adoption.

Don't let him get to you.|He's just a space tramp.

A loner. I mean, most of us like|to have some time on our own...

...but a guy like Wolff,|he don't know nothing else.

Yeah, but us loners gotta stick together.

Maybe so.

Partner.

Look...

...if after we finish this...

...you want a lift...

...to another planet or something,|just say so, okay?

Yeah, maybe I gotta think about it first.

Hey! Something's coming.

What do those skrot-bags want?

This is the only safe down place|before the Zone.

Wash!

You track well, Earther.

You know these two?

Yeah. We met on a train.

You're welcome to sleep here.

We don't need your permission, Earther.|We do as we want.

Do you find them as charming as I do?

Let's kill 'em to be on the safe side.

No, it's okay.|They haven't done anything, yet.

You Zone-pointed?

For the Graveyard.

With what brainworking?

Death for Overdog!

Wolff, these boys are sincere.|They're just gonna frag us up.

Let's blast 'em now,|and get to know 'em later.

Just relax. Maybe we can work together.

Why, they're children, aren't they?

The Overdog did this, and the Chemist,|with their germ-works.

To children?

This whole planet gives me the creeps.

Let's get the hell out of here!

What the hell are you waiting for?

The blade's gone. Those two hotheads|are gonna go into the Zone blasting.
By the time we roll up,|every guard will be armed and waiting.
If you can get this thing fixed,|maybe we can catch up.
In the old days, you'd have blasted them|without blinking.
You're losing your edge.
I am not losing my edge. I'm just trying|to do things a little smarter
these days.
Smarter? Being lead by a Scav girl,|barely out of diapers?
I'm not a Scav girl,|and I'm not out of my diapers.
Stop it!
Let's get this heap fixed and then try|to figure out how to hit the
Graveyard.
Which none of us has ever seen.
I've seen it.
From far away.
See, I told you I'd track you. |And no guards around here.
You, quiet! And stay in there!
Serum papers.
Serum papers?
In my boot.
Are you ready?
Let the games begin!
-Now!|-Impressive looking son of a bitch!
Whatever it is.
How much of him do you think is him?
Decimator! Decimator!
They've sure come a long way|from "Monday Night Football."
Fool!
I want death!
Wash!
They're what we came for all right. |They don't fit in with the rest of the
scum.
Their clothes are okay,|but they're not so hot.
Do you want more?
It's us, you half-brain.
Another!
I see you're doing real good for yourself. |So what happened?
We brainworked to attack the slave pens, |and free the captives.
Then with the guards up-taken, |we could move for Overdog.
-But it was wrong-done.|-I told you, Wolff.
Where's your brother?
He was put into the slave pens.
I could not stop it. So I fled.
Release another!

Hitting the slave pens|might be the way to go.
I got fireworks, could draw a crowd.
When you start your celebration,|I'll grab 'em and we'll meet at the wall.
Let's go.
-I'll come with you.|-No. You stay here with the Scrambler.
-I'll guard.|-Don't guard. Just get in here.
I can signal if any scum-eaters|come after you.
Don't guard. Don't signal. Just get in here|and wait for me, understand?
Why can't I come?
Because it's dangerous|and I don't want you to get hurt.
Really?
Prisoner for the slave pen.
Okay, bring him on in.
Get back. You know...
...everybody else gets to go...
...throw the prisoners|into the Death Maze. Do I?
No!
I gotta hang around here,|and guard these damn slaves.
Come on, get in here.
Come on, everyone, come on.|Let's go, move!
Got any joy smoke on you?|It's been a long dry day.
Any candy? Dillies? Blowups? Snappers?
No? Okay. I'll just go someplace else.
You can ask the Chemist.
No! No! Wait, a second!|You got me mixed up! I'm a Scav! Really!
Pretty good today?
-You two, get out of here, get out of here!|-Let's go!
What are you doing?
Planting a bomb, you moron,|what does it look like?
More explosions!
Guards, to the slave pens!
Hold this for me, will you?
Will you please shut up!|I'm trying to rescue you.
Get back!
You bleeders get back to the wall.|Take care of yourselves.
I'm gonna find me some Wolff.
You imbeciles!
You crawling mess of refuse.
How could you all fail at the same time?
Overdog, I have a consolation prize for you.
She also is an Earther.
But, she has much more fire than|those pale, poor creatures who fled.
Get your paws off me,|you ugly bag of slime.
You see?

I like her.
I like her for the Maze.
Into the Maze.
Let me out of this cage, I'm no animal!
No, you're a lovely human...
...and you deserve to know the rules.
If you make it through this game, |you'll go free.
But if you don't"...."
I'm worm-food, right?
You're a pain in the ass!
Wolff!
Take the girls, I'm going down there.
It's impossible down there. |Let's get out of here.
-We're talking about 3,000 Megs. | -I don't care.
I'm not going to leave her like this. |Get your hands off me.
You won't make it this time, buddy.
Congratulations.
You made it through.
You have a very enviable life force.
A life force you're going to share with me.
But you said if I made it through, I'm free.
I lied.
Nobody goes free.
Chemist! Prepare the fusion tube!
Yes!
I think we're going to be very close.
Sure.
We can be friends. Let me go.
No, you don't understand.
I'm very old and I need you.
I need your vitality.
Okay. Fine.
You can have it.
Just let me go.
Getting tired, little one?
Of course you are. You see, |when you give yourself to me...
...there's nothing left for you.
Chemist is coming out. Open the door.
Up there!
Guards! Guards, quick!
To Overdog, more guards! Guards!
Send in the guards! Overdog!
Guards! Guards!
Hang in there.

I'm made of substance|you never dreamed of, Earther.
You can't hurt me.
But I can hurt you.
See how helpless you are?
I'm quite full of energy today.
Let her go!
I'll take her place.
How do you know|I won't double-cross you...
...and keep you both?
Just happened to be in the neighborhood?
You two need a ride?
I said, you'll get killed,|so I'll be stuck on this spacehole...
...and not collect the reward.
I'd have given my half,|to see you searching this planet...
...trying to find my ship.
-Thank you.|-You sure you don't want to come with us?
No, our life is here.
-We really want to thank you two.|-You were terrific!
-It was nothing. Niki?|-That's right, nothing.
Where are you going?
Back. What were you expecting?
I thought you wanted a lift?
You know, you really got one thick head.
What's the matter with you?
The matter is you never asked me.
Asked you what?
You never asked me to come with you.
I live alone now.
I can't take care of a "...." Wait a minute!
I do want you to come.
I want you to come with me.
Trustwords?
Trustwords.
So what took you so long?
I knew we were going to be partners|together forever when we first met.
Didn't you?
Sure, kid.