THE BEAST

SECOND PLOT POINT EPISODE FOR *STAR TREK: NO SOUND IS HEARD*

SUMMARY

The officers arrive in the Tarod System to deploy a subspace relay buoy; however, an automated weapons platform—apparently a malfunctioning relic of the Dominion War—is making their task impossible.

THE TAROD NEBULA

This whole sector of space is filled by the Tarod Nebula, a brownish haze of charged plasma which corrupts long-range sensor and communication signals, making it necessary to deploy a relay buoy to "beef up" the signal. You've been cruising through the nebula for a few hours when the starcharts indicate that you've entered the Tarod System itself. And just then, long-range sensors detect an incoming missile—you're under attack!

The Feral Beast

The Dominion Weapons Platform attacks ships in the Tarod System and beyond. Apparently, it has suffered a malfunction, causing it to fire indiscriminately on anything that moves. It is thickly shielded, and can replicate enough ammo and strike craft to stay active for as long as its power lasts. In addition to hindering Starfleet's mission, the platform presents a danger to any civilian craft who wander into its "territory."

The platform announces its presence by attacking the players' ship. It uses missiles and strike craft to overwhelm its opponent, and defensive lasers to deal with incoming torpedoes. It is stationary, and cannot 'give chase'; if the players wish to retreat from a head-to-head fight (and they probably should), it takes only 1 round to leave combat range.

THE CALL FOR HELP

Sometime after the players' first encounter with the "beast," they receive a distress signal from a nearby Ferengi freighter (*Civilian Freighter* with *Mercantile Command Atttiude*). They claim to have been on a humanitarian mission when they took a shortcut through the Tarod Nebula. Bam! The "beast" hit them before they knew what was happening.

The Ferengi survived by powering down all systems until their ship was dismissed by the platform as background noise. But if they attempt to leave, the "beast" will hear them—and attack. They only have three days' life support left—help!

Untrustworthy Ferengi

You can decide for yourself whether the Ferengi are lying about their mission. Maybe they intentionally came here to salvage weapons from the "beast," in which case their predicament is Their Own Darned Fault.

Tactical Analysis

Helping the Ferengi to escape means engaging the platform, either to distract it while they flee, or to tractor beam them to safety, or something else.

If successful, the Ferengi promise to share the tactical data they've been collecting on the "beast" for the past weeks, granting our heroes the following benefits:

- +4 to evade or destroy the platform's missiles
- +4 Piloting to gain initiative cards against it
- +8 damage when targeting any subsystems

NOTE: The Ferengi will only share intel *after* they're safe: as the 73rd Rule of Acquisition states, "Money up front."

DOUBTERS (Optional)

After the heroes' first encounter with the platform, a crewman voices doubt about the mission. This is a good chance for roleplaying with the crew.

"No offence, sir, but we're a green crew on a stripped-down escort ship. We can't go up against that thing! We should turn back and let the fleet handle this."

BELLY OF THE BEAST

Boarding is the only way to shut the platform down without destroying it in a head-on attack (see *Setting Rules* for more on boarding). **NOTE:** There is no atmosphere inside the platform.

The platform will continue to harass nearby ships. Make sure the players understand this, so that they don't leave their ship at its mercy while they beam over.

Inside the "beast" is a cramped series of maintenance tubes leading to its targeting sensors, power core, ammo replication, and other systems.

Romulan Plot!

A **Knowledge (Engineering)** check suggests the station's power core is Romulan, not Dominion. The Romulans retrained this beast! They must not want Starfleet to have any presence here... but why?

Quieting the Beast

When the heroes try to shut down or reprogram the platform, alarms blare and a countdown begins.

Dramatic Task: Relevant skill at –2; e.g., Knowledge (Computers) or (Engineering).

5 successes are needed in 5 turns.

Each round, 1d4 players are targeted by bursts of electrical energy from a defence system (as *bolt* power, d8 Spellcasting die, unlimited PP).

Success: The platform is fully disabled. They win!

Failure: The platform is disabled, but not before it is able to launch its entire arsenal of 64 Heavy Missiles in random directions. Each missile will fly through space for months—even years—before locking onto some poor, unsuspecting vessel.

Looting the Beast

Once the platform is disabled, it can be looted for salvaged components:

- Up to 64x Heavy Missiles (8 mod slots)
- 2x Missile Launchers (2 mod slots)
- 1x Dominion Strike Craft

EPILOGUE
The Subspace Buoy's Readings

Once the "beast" has been disabled, the officers are free to deploy the Federation subspace relay buoy in the Tarod System, as ordered.

As the device comes online, the officers receive an unsettling reading from Romulan space:

"On the viewscreen, the sensor buoy shrugs its mechanical antennae and blinks to life.

The computer reports a clean diagnostic, and the relay begins its first scans of the sector. You're about to be on your way when the relay suddenly turns its attention toward Romulus and extends its sensor power to maximum; you can practically hear the relay straining with effort. This must be its true purpose: a Starfleet spy probe on the edge of the Neutral Zone!

With command clearance, your captain is able to decrypt the probe's readings as they begin to pour in:

Nothing.

No subspace chatter from the Romulan capital, no warp signals, no solar radiation or readings of any kind, just an empty hole in Romulan space, as far as its powerful ears can hear.

Something about that alien silence makes your stomach clench up. It's time to return to Starfleet Command."

Starfleet's Reward

Subspace relay buoy deployed: +$1M
Platform disabled (not destroyed): +$2M
Ferengi rescued: +$250K
Platform's missiles launched: –$750K
Didn't uncover Romulan connection: –$250K

Dominion Automated Weapons Platform

This relic of the Dominion War bristles with weapon turrets, and can launch robotic strike craft to harass its enemies. The Dominion used these platforms to defend key star systems.

Maneuverability: 0; **Travel:** 0 (stationary)
Crew: N/A
Marines: N/A

Size: 24 (Gargantuan)
Toughness: 13+52=65
Energy: 2000

WEAPONS (Slots Used)
3x Light Laser (3)
  • 2d10 dmg AP 5
  • Reaction Fire

1x Heavy Particle Accelerator (6)
  • 6d8+2 dmg AP 20

4x Missile Launcher (4)
  • 64x Heavy Missile: 6d8 dmg AP 15, MBT (8)

MODIFICATIONS (Slots Used)
Standard:
  • Artificial Intelligence (2)
  • Sensor Array (1)

Other:
  • 2x Ablative Armor (12)
  • 2x Auxiliary Shielding (12)
  • High-res Targeting Sensors (2)
  • Massive Hangar (10)
  • Carries 4x *Dominion Strike Craft*
  • 2x Maneuvering Thruster (12)
  • Scattering Field (2)
  • 10x Shield Power (10)

Ship's Hindrances:
  • Stripped-Down (+14 mods)

Total Slots: 84; Remaining: 0

SPECIAL NOTES:
  • Platform does not use a Command Crew; its AI grants a d10 in Piloting, Shooting, etc., but no Wild Die.
  • Platform can take 1d4 actions per round (roll after earning initiative cards).
  • Since the platform is stationary, it uses Knowledge (Computers) to avoid torpedo locks, not Piloting.

Dominion Strike Craft

This small, one-man fighter is launched from larger vessels and used to harass enemies with hit-and-run attacks. It may be piloted or fully automated with an onboard AI.

Maneuverability: +4; **Travel:** 0
Crew: 1
Marines: N/A

Size: 6 (Small)
Toughness: 5+19=24
Energy: 25

WEAPONS (Slots Used)
1x Quad-Linked, Fixed Medium Laser (2)
  • +2 to hit, 3d10+4 dmg AP 10

MODIFICATIONS (Slots Used)
Standard:
  • Artificial Intelligence (2)
  • Sensor Array (1)

Other:
  • Atmospheric (3)
  • Emergency Power (3)
  • High-res Targeting Sensors (2)
  • Maneuvering Thrusters (2)
  • Scattering Field (2)
  • 2x Shield Power (2)

Total Slots: 20; Remaining: 1

SPECIAL NOTES:
  • Strike Craft's AI grants a d10 in Piloting, Shooting, etc., but no Wild Die.
  • Strike Craft can take 1 skilled action per round.