Merchant of Venus Random Planetary Events

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In the "Gazetteer of the Cluster", the rules for Merchant of Venus contain descriptions for each of the different planetary systems in the game. I was disappointed to find that these colorful descriptions had no effect at all on the play of the game.

Even the optional rules introduced in The General neglected this possible chrome. So I made up my own.

Whenever a player first arrives at a city (not a spaceport) or Galactic Base, he rolls a single d6. If the result is a 6, then a random event has occurred. The player then rolls another d6 and looks up the roll on the chart for the planet he just landed on. I have tried to come up with many different types of events, so each planet will have its own special flair. I also tried to make sure each planet had a balance of harmful and beneficial events.

I have included the descriptions for the systems from the rule book to put the random events into proper context. Hopefully this does not violate any copyright laws.

Asteroid System

The primordial material in this system coalesced into a vast sphere of asteroids instead of planets. Explorers built domed colonies to mine this treasure house of minerals, and soon there was an entire civilization mingled among the asteroids. When the Empire fell, this civilization retreated to the central domes, leaving the rest to the ghosts.

1. Roll a d6 for each city in the system. The one with the highest roll is abandoned. Place a marker on it to indicate this. If the player is at that city, no trading may take place, but a single good may be found for free on a roll of 5-6 on a d6.
   Continuing in its decline, the Asteroid civilization retreats from another domed city.

2. The player may choose to lose one turn and do the following. For each 20$ spent, the player rolls two dice and multiplies them together for the payoff on that try. The player may see the result of each attempt before paying for the next.
   After paying prospectors rights, the gambling merchant may try to mine the asteroids.

3. Draw one of the unused "?" markers, and without looking at it place it "?" up on any asteroid in the system.
   While through, an innocent asteroid is found to hide something more.

4. Draw one of the unused "?" markers and encounter it immediately, paying the penalty if one is drawn.
   The merchant stumbles upon a relic of the old Empire.

5. Find 3d6 x 10$, but lose 1d3 turns.
   A valuable cache of minerals is found, but a short jail term results from prospecting without a license.

6. Take one cargo for free from the cargoes available at this system (including the factory good).
   An abandoned colony is chanced upon, and some overlooked valuable is found.

Colony World

Colonists had barely started terraforming this planet when the Empire collapsed. They managed to survive in cave cities while the terraforming continued automatically.

1. No trades at all are allowed this turn. Only one trade may be made next turn (as if initial landing), and unlimited thereafter.
The terraforming has produced dangerous conditions, so the cave entrance is closed for now.

2. If the factory for this system has been built, the owner must remove it and make the deed available for purchase again. The owner receives half the value of the factory in compensation.
The factory is judged to be hampering the terraforming process and so the lease is revoked.

3. The colonists attempt a Swindle (rule 15.53) against the player. The colonists receive a plus one since their species occupies the city. If the colonists win the roll, they take the most expensive good the player has.
Desperate colonists attempt to cheat the merchant.

4. If the player gives up a good (to the bonus cup), he may take the IOU marker for this race.
As poor as they are, sometimes an IOU is the best form of payment.

5. The item bought this turn may be purchased at half price.
The colonists attempt to attract trade by lowering prices.

6. The item sold this turn will be at one and a half it's price.
Increased demand for essential goods results in higher prices.

Desert Planet

This planet is one big desert of stone and sand, with a few small settlements at oases. The only large cities are in the greencaps at the poles.

1. A randomly chosen device on the ship is damaged.
A desert storm causes poor visibility while landing, resulting in a crash.

2. Pay 1d6 x 10$ or cannot takeoff next turn.
The omnipresent dust requires maintenance.

3. Roll 2d6, add 3 and multiply by 10%. This is the relative price you must make your purchase at this turn.
Haggling with desert trader.

4. Roll 2d6, add 3 and multiply by 10%. This is the relative price you receive for your sale this turn.
Haggling with desert trader.

5. You may purchase the factory at half price this turn.
Abundant sunlight and vast wastelands make finding good factory sites a breeze.

6. You may conduct unlimited trades this turn.
Localization of population makes it easy to make contacts.

Galactic Base

This is a giant space station, built to service spaceships and passengers en route to or from the main Galaxy. When the traffic stopped, the service personnel who were stranded there converted it into a city. When the game begins, this station has already been rediscovered.

1. No trades at all are allowed this turn. Unlimited trading may be made next turn.
A visiting delegation from the main Galaxy preempts all business.

2. The player may not takeoff next turn.
The Tinkerers insist on routine maintenance on your ship.

3. Any ships bought this turn are at one and a half cost.
Ships are in short supply right now.

4. Any ships bought this turn are at half price.
A batch of ships from the main Galaxy just came in.

5. Draw 1d6 markers from the bonus cup and place as usual.
Increased traffic with the main Galaxy boosts local trade.

6. Examine any "?" marker still face-down on the board.
A passing traveler tells a tall tale.

Giant Planet

This oversized, low-density planet has an enormous surface area but tolerable gravity. It has large and varied habitable areas and a very large population.

1. Lose one turn immediately.
    Who knew one planet could be so BIG?

2. No trades allowed this turn, one trade next turn, unlimited after that.
    The huge population makes it difficult to find the right contacts.

3. Resolve Revolts (rule 15.542) against all facilities on the planet per the normal rules. The attacking species gets plus one to the die roll.
    Overpopulation leads to restlessness, vandalism and eventually sabotage.

4. Draw one marker from the bonus cup and place in this system, regardless of where it's supposed to be placed. If it is a demand marker for a good this race doesn't buy, one of that good may be sold with that demand marker.
    With all the varied cultures here, you can find nearly anything.

5. The purchase this turn may be made as if the IOU marker for this race was being turned in.
    With this many people, not everyone's going to know when a promise has been made, or kept.

6. The player may take on emigrants to be delivered to any system instead of the normal trading this turn. Use an unused marker to indicate them. Each emigrant takes up one hold. The player receives 100$ for every emigrant taken aboard. 20$ must be paid each turn by the player for their life support. If the player dumps any emigrants in space, he is permanently banished from that system.
    The local government is willing to pay merchants to even slightly reduce the population.

Ice Planet

This system consists of rocks and ice. When the power plants in the system ran out of energy, one city managed to survive by inventing strange folkways to conserve heat.

1. Lose one turn immediately.
Strange folkways delay any actions.

2. The player must pay 1d6 x 10$.
Have to pay a fine for violating local customs.

3. If the player chooses to lose one turn immediately, the single good he sells next turn will be at one and half normal price.
Participating in local customs ingratiates the merchant to the people.

4. If the player chooses to lose one turn immediately, the single good bought next turn will be at half price.
Participating in local customs ingratiates the merchant to the people.

5. Unlimited trade is possible this turn.
With only one city, it's easy to find all your contacts.

6. The player may take one good for free.
A chance discovery is made while exploring an abandoned city.

Inhabited Moon

This oversized moon orbits a gas giant planet that radiates enough energy to give the moon a temperate climate. Little energy arrives from the distant sun.

1. All devices not in a hold are damaged.
A burst of radiation from the gas giant scrambles equipment.

2. Must pass through a 1d6 x 10$ hazard while landing.
Navigating through a gas giant system has its hazards.

3. Place the ship on the spot above the city, and move it 1d6 along its previous course.
Navigation is difficult in a complex system like this—the approach is missed.

4. The item purchased this turn may be bought at half price.
Plentiful materials close at hand in the gas giant system boosts production.

5. Unlimited trade is allowed this turn.
Perpetual daylight as the distant sun appears at night allows extra time for trading.

6. If the ship takes off next turn, double its roll for movement.
The ship is refueled with a high power fuel refined straight from the gas giant.

Interstellar Biosphere

This technological marvel is a vast doughnut of air, floating in free-fall between its sun and a dense planet. The gravity fields of the sun and planet balance to hold the atmosphere in place, while powerful generators keep the atmosphere dense and protect it against the solar wind. This wonder has existed long enough for an entire ecology of exotic beings to evolve there, but it is a total mystery: the builders are unknown and the generators are so small and cleverly disguised that they have never been found.

1. All drives on the ship are damaged (except the relic drive).
The mysterious generators interfere with your drives.

2. The player must pay 100$.
A substantial fine is charged when the configuration of your engine disrupts part of the biosphere.

3. No trade is allowed this turn, only one the next turn, unlimited after that.
"Landing" in a zero-G biosphere isn't like landing on a planet.

4. The player may pick up a fare worth 2d6 x 10$ at any planet. Use an unused marker to indicate it.
An exotic animal for a nearby zoo.

5. The player may purchase a device this turn at half price.
Zero-G manufacturing aids in construction of electronic components.

6. The player receives 100$.
You discover a clue to the generators maintaining the biosphere.

Jungle Planet

This hot, humid world is composed of jungle, rain forest, and swamps. Life there is a constant struggle against the billions of life forms that infest it.

1. Pick a hold on the ship randomly. All contents of that hold are lost.
A violent creature sneaks on board and isn't disposed of until one of the holds is wrecked.

2. Pay 1d6 x 5$.
You suffer severe injuries in the jungle that require treatment.

3. Lose one shield marker (including the relic).
The natives steal a shield from your ship to help contain the jungle.

4. The player may purchase a shield for half price this return, regardless of the technology of the race.
Shields are a necessity here, so it's possible to find a used one cheap.

5. A port may be purchased this turn at half price.
Local merchants offer to help build a port to escape the jungle.

6. The factory may be purchased this turn at half price, but the factory good must be placed in the bonus cup.
Abandoned factory for sale, cheap, but initial production was lost to the jungle.

Multi-Generation Ship

This giant spaceship is designed to carry a whole population of colonists for generations while they travel from star to star at sublight speeds. The ship blundered into orbit around a neutron star, and now it is trapped; it is too massive to escape the star's gravity, and its population is too large to evacuate.

1.   For the ship to next takeoff, it must roll 1d6 and get a result higher than the number of holds.
Your ship is deep within the gravity well —the bigger the ship, the harder to get out.

2.   All drives are damaged.
The intense radiation and gravity fields damage your engines.

3.   Half of a hold is unusable until after the ship leaves the system. The contents may be sold this turn.
Desperate to escape, some people occupy part of a hold —it's too risky to the ship to try to remove them.

4.   Draw a marker from the bonus cup. If it is a demand as normal. If a good it may be purchased at twice normal price this turn. If it is a far, the player will receive half the value of the fare immediately to take it on board this turn.
In its travels the Multi-Generation Ship could have picked up all sorts of things, but goods are in short supply and fares eager to leave.

5.   When the ship leaves, it will receive one extra die for movement, and the player may choose what the number will be.
The Multi-Generation Ship can still maneuver a little to give a boost, and they know the system well.

6.   May purchase any type of drive this turn for half price, but it will be damaged.
They won't need it again.

Polluted Planet

Overpopulation, deforestation, and industrial waste have poisoned the seas, removed the forests, and triggered the "greenhouse effect" on what was once a garden planet. This automatically cured the overpopulation problem, and the survivors are locked in battle to reverse the trend, even as they are evolving to match their new environment.

1. No trade at all is allowed this visit.
The inhabitants here are to busy trying to survive to trade.

2. Pay 1d6 x 10$ upon liftoff, or cannot trade at this system until twice that is paid.
A fee is charged for the pollutants the ship releases into the atmosphere.

3. All available goods in this system must be placed into the bonus cup.
The factories have been shut down for a while to reduce pollution.

4. The good sold this turn receives one and a half its price.
Mutated survivors desperately need essential goods.

5. The good bought this turn is at half price.
Evolving inhabitants have no need for now useless goods.

6. If the player purchases a spaceport this turn, no one will be allowed to land on the planet for the rest of the game.
In an effort to attract trade and reduce pollution, they will grant a monopoly to anyone who builds a spaceport.

Space Station Planet

This is a space station as big as a planet, filled with uncountable cubicles and passageways. Once a trillion beings dwelt there but now only a few remain, clustered near the portals in the outer skin. The inner corridors are dark and still, forbidden places of legend.

1. Lose turns until a 4-6 is rolled on 1d6.
Lost in the unexplored passageways.

2. No trade allowed. Must leave next turn.
Caught trespassing in forbidden area, you are expelled from the station.

3. Draw an unused "?" marker and encounter it immediately. Do not count any shields to reduce the cost of a hazard.
A chance discovery in a long abandoned section.

4. Roll 2d6, add 3 and multiply by 10%. This is the relative price for the good if sold this turn.
As the population drops, demand is bound to fluctuate.

5. The player may take any normal device except drives from the supply for free.
An old device is found left behind deep in the station.

6. Draw a marker from the bonus cup. If it is a good or fare, the player may take it aboard the ship or return it to the cup. If it is a demand marker, the player may keep it and use it the next time he sells the matching good.
An old good, a unique technique for an existing good, or a lost soul —who knows what might be found in this place?

Trapped Rogue

This planet was apparently a systemless rogue planet that wandered close enough to a blue giant star to be trapped in orbit. When the planet thawed out it proved to have a nice blend of land, sea, and air, but it is a violent place of hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanoes, caused by its elliptical orbit and the high-energy radiation from the blue giant.

1. Cannot takeoff next turn.
Violent conditions prevent takeoff.

2. Must takeoff next turn, and will receive only 1d6+1 for movement.
Impending storm/quake/eruption forces an emergency departure.

3. Either damage a shield, or roll for each good and lose it on a 1-2 on 1d6.
Prolonged assault by the elements overloads defensive system or destroys unshielded merchandise.

4. The good sold this turn receives one and a half its price.
Local supply was damaged recently.

5. May buy a damaged local device for half price.
Damaged equipment sold as scrap, but it's just needs some repair.

6. May purchase factory for one and a half normal price this turn, and receive factory good for free.
Victim of the latest disaster unloads a unique "fixer upper".

War-Torn System

This system survived the fall of the Empire, but it saw constant warfare in the dark centuries that followed. Finally one of the warring planets was reduced to radioactive rubble, leaving the other one, ruined and crippled, to recover in peace.

1. A randomly chosen device on the ship is destroyed.
Leftover mine results in damage to the ship.

2. Resolve a Swindle (rule 15.53) against the player. The species receives plus one to its roll.
Terrorists attempt to hijack the ship or its cargo.

3. Resolve a Revolt (rule 15.542) against the player's facilities, if any. The species gets plus one to its roll.
Militant group attacks an off-worlder installation.

4. The player may purchase any one weapon or shield this turn, regardless of the technology of the race.
War surplus available for sale.

5. The player may resolve one Revolt (rule 15.542) against another player for free.
Former soldiers offer to sabotage a competitors property.

6. At any later point in the game, the player may choose to remove a hazard marker from the spot his ship occupies.
Locate an old "planet buster"—useless in ship-to-ship battle, but perfect for fixed targets.

Water World

Except for a few small islands, the surface of this planet is entirely covered by water. Most of the population lives on the giant lily pads that cover the oceans.

1. Lose one randomly chosen cargo.
That lily pad LOOKED stable.

2. No trade allowed this turn, but unlimited still allowed next turn.
There is a brief delay while trying to find a stable place to land.

3. No unlimited trading allowed this visit.
The lily pad is nearly overloaded already.

4. Take one good for free.
A pad floats by in the night with some lost cargo on board.

5. Any fares may be redeemed for full value, regardless of their intended destination.
Great place for a vacation.

6. Unlimited trading allowed this turn.
The merchant you're looking for lives on one of the small islands —easy to locate.