



# ASTEROID X

A mini-adventure for **Spaceship Zero** by Toren "MacBin" Atkinson  
Maps designed by Matt "Trollboy" Wiseman

This scenario is relatively short, perfect for a side track to your regular campaign or, if you're the kind of person who does so, running as a demo at a gaming convention. We heartily endorse the latter. For the benefit of those ZMs who are introducing the Spaceship Zero game to a group, we've included Sequence One as an option—it may or may not be appropriate to a regular campaign, especially if that campaign involves the introductory adventure from the rulebook and the follow-up "Spaceship Zero and the Slave Ship of Despair." If the players—for whatever reason—don't have the time to create their own characters, we recommend having them choose between the following sample characters from the SSZ rulebook: Dr Jettison Cade; Grathnor the hybrid; Gearbox the mechanic; Space Lieutenant Dick Ross the pilot; Sparky the robot; Professor Ashton the scientist. Gladiator, Captain, and Super-Intelligent Pet archetypes are also very handy. In any case, important skills for this scenario are Technical Know-How, Pilot: Space, Zero G Training and combat skills. You may alert your players to this if you wish.

Although this scenario is written for space traveling player characters, the SpaceCorp military base can easily be converted to a dilapidated outpost in some isolated location on the surface of the Earth. Simply ignore the references to thrusters and the vacuum of space and you're ready to go.

## PROLOGUE

(Read this to your players if you are using Sequence One)

The crew of Spaceship Zero has managed to break free from the bowels of the hydronaut slave ship. You've fought and/or sneaked your way back to the hangar, where Spaceship Zero awaits. All you have to do now is figure out how to get aboard your rocketship and get clean away from the huge alien saucer that is the slave ship.

Feel free to give whatever equipment you feel is appropriate to the player characters. They will definitely need some weapons to get past the hydronauts in the hangar.

Some recommendations are an astro disintegrator or two (complete with human prods), a hydronaut personal disintegrator, any improvised weapons (like steel pipes or shivs), and possibly a hydronaut grenade if you feel generous. Some space suits (hydronaut or SpaceCorp), a first aid kit for the doctor and a hydronaut control disk would be very helpful indeed.

## SEQUENCE ONE: ESCAPE FROM THE SLAVE SHIP

### Scene One: Fight Fight Fight!

Reference the diagram of the hydronaut slave ship on page 179 of the rulebook. The hangar is a very large half-circle with three exits through which vehicles as large as hover tanks can maneuver. The hangar doors that exit the ship are immense sliding doors on the opposite wall.

Inside the hangar are:

- A magno-beam with a control console
- 3 scout saucers
- 1 hover tank
- 2 hover cars
- 2-5 hydronauts

The number of hydronauts in the hangar is up to the ZM. As a rough guideline, include one hydronaut for every two player characters, plus one extra hydronaut for good measure.

Have the PCs enter the hangar from the center door. Spaceship Zero will be nearby the exterior door, off to one side. The airlock to Spaceship Zero is open, and two hydronauts will be guarding the ship's loading ramp. Additional hydronauts can be placed in the hangar as the ZM sees fit. All the hydronauts are armed with astro disintegrators and human prods, and wear space suits. As soon as the hydronauts see the player characters they will fire upon them.

Three challenges must be met in order for the escape plan to succeed:

1. The PCs must defeat or somehow circumvent the hydronaut guards.



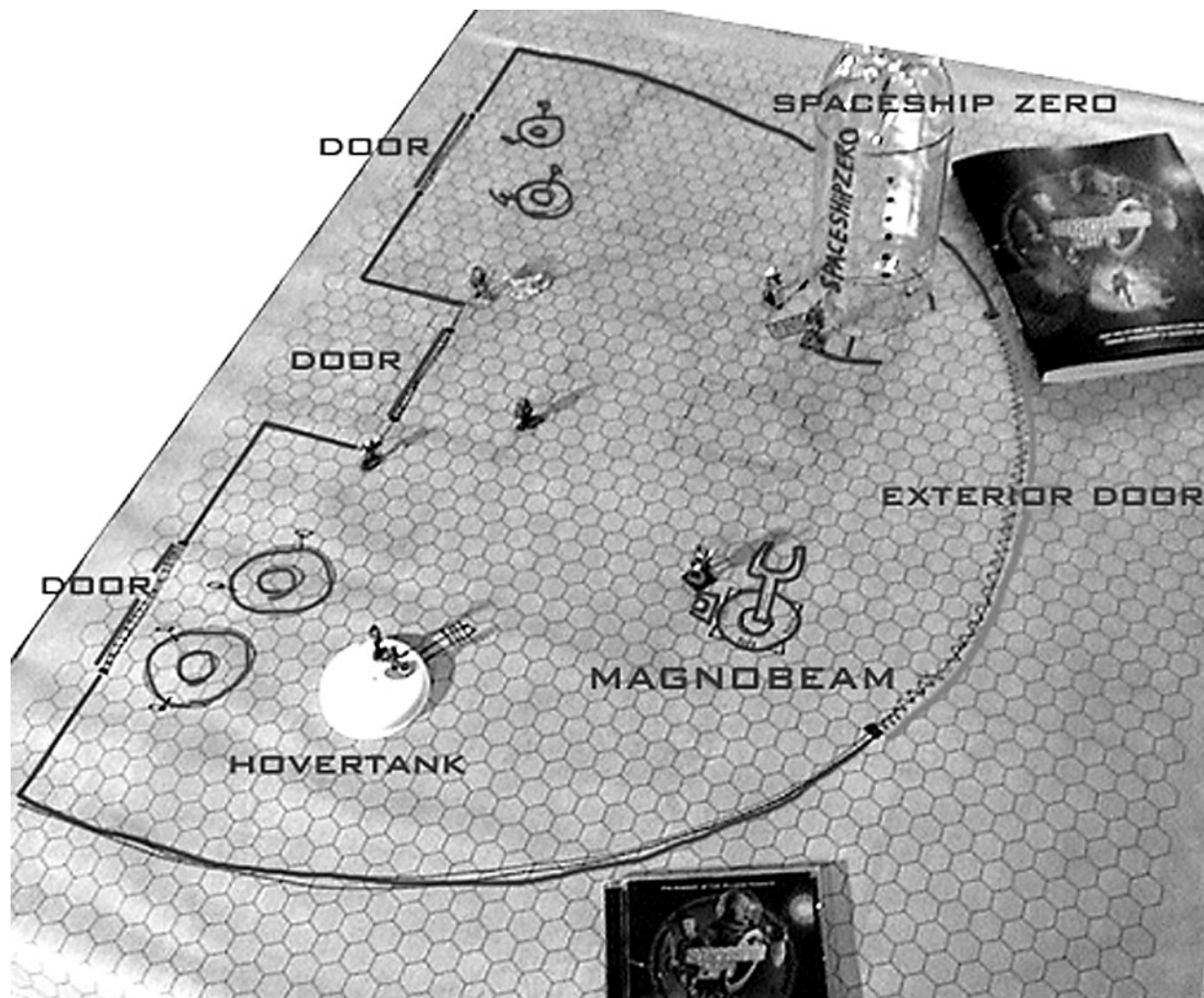


used to push or pull open a hole in the wall or door of the hangar. A hover tank could blast a hole big enough for Spaceship Zero to fit through after several blasts of its disintegrator cannons. Finally, the rocketship could simply smash into the walls and hopefully crash through. This last option is incredibly risky and may require the burning of some serious Zero Dice on the part of the pilot. For the benefit of math fans, a section of wall or exterior hangar door big enough for SSZ to crash through will have an effective weight of 16,000 and thus Heave skill checks have a penalty of -260 to break. Spaceship Zero's Heave score is 200. Even with an ace pilot on board (if the Pilot archetype has a 20 Balance that's a +20 bonus) and the Bendall Field activated (another 20 Matter DR for an effective +20 Heave) that's still less than a 0% total chance to break through the wall or door, and Spaceship

Zero itself would take about 350 points of damage in the process. Seemingly impossible odds, but in Spaceship Zero we never say 'never' when there are Zero Dice involved, not to mention Mechanics with *MacGyver* perks.

Remember at all times that when a hole into outer space is opened while there is an atmosphere in the hangar, all objects not held down will be sucked out into space. This includes people, hydronauts, player characters, and hydronaut vehicles (but not the magno-beam).

For the purposes of this scenario, either assume that the slave ship doesn't fire on Spaceship Zero or pursue it once the rocketship leaves the hangar (perhaps a legion of human slaves is swarming the control room) or simply dramatically describe how the ship is *almost* destroyed but happens to get away by the skin of its hull.



## Scene Two: The Unwelcome Guest

If you like, have a rogue hydronaut (or hybrid) trapped in Spaceship Zero after the rocketship escapes the hydronaut slave ship. Purebred hydronauts will always be antagonistic, but a hybrid could be friend or foe.

## SEQUENCE TWO: QUEST FOR XENON

### Scene One: Where Do We Go from Here?

It's up to the crew of Spaceship Zero where to go from here. They can determine their current location in space with a successful Navigate: Space skill check. Where exactly that is is up to the ZM, but it should be farther away from Earth than the asteroid belt.

At some point, the ship will alert anyone working the controls that the ship is running low on xenon, the fuel used by the main thrusters. You can entertain any ideas the players have to surmount this problem, but the easiest option is to extend the ship's sensors and sweep for possible sources of xenon. A successful Technical Know-How skill check (with a +20 since the powerful ship sensors were built for this kind of function) shows that the closest source of xenon seems to be in an asteroid belt (*the* asteroid belt to be precise though the players may not necessarily know this unless they've used sensors to figure out that they are indeed in the Solar System). It should be no problem to get to the asteroid belt, but feel free to have the pilot make a Navigate: Space skill check (with a +30 bonus if necessary) just to show off.

### Scene Two: Space Base

As the ship draws near to the source of xenon, the viewscreen shows what appears to be a dilapidated military base on the surface of a small asteroid.

Further information on the asteroid (like discovering that there do not seem to be any discernable life forms, that there is no power in the asteroid, and that there is some breathable atmosphere within) can be attained by using the ship's sensors in conjunction with a successful Technical Know-How skill check (no modifiers).

If you'd like, have a rogue meteoroid appear on the sensors, heading for the ship at astounding speeds. A

successful Pilot: Space skill check will allow Spaceship Zero to dodge the space projectile, otherwise it will hit the ship with a DV of 110 (Type: Matter). Enjoy!

The base itself was part of the Earth defense forces during the hydronaut invasion many years ago. The hydronauts crippled it on their way to Earth, leaving the survivors helpless and without hope of being rescued. An accident broke the casing on the atomic reactor, though repair work has been done on it. All of the crew died before it could be finished and re-activated. The dead lie mostly in the reactor room, waiting for some radiation to awaken them...

Spaceship Zero has entered an asteroid belt. Several immense chunks of rock tumble slowly through space. The source of the xenon appears to be a relatively small asteroid, about half a kilometer across. Turrets and massive thrusters poke out of the rock at various intervals, some of which appear to have taken heavy damage. A large blast area shows that rooms have been constructed within the asteroid, at least two of which are open to empty space. Farther away, a docking bay is visible, with remnants of huge doors barely clinging to the structure.

## Getting In

The PCs are certainly welcome to try to gain access to the outpost through the mess hall, the portion of the outpost that is open to outer space. Since there is nowhere for the ship to dock in this area, however, it will require the crew to float into the structure in space suits, requiring some Zero G Training skill checks.

As long as there is no power on the asteroid there is no gravity. Remember that anyone without at least a score of 20 in Zero G Training who moves around in zero gravity must make an Endure skill check. Failed checks result in space sickness, which effectively cripples a character for 2d10 hours. If the sick player characters don't want to miss out on the fun, everyone can either agree to wait until the first round of space sickness passes and try again, or someone can make a Medicine skill check and reduce the effects. Patients who respond to the treatment will no longer be incapacitated—but they will still be woozy, incurring a -10 penalty on all skill scores. Other options are to burn a Zero Die to negate the effects, if the ZM allows.

The more logical route is to take the ship in through the docking bay. The condition of the doors makes getting in a bit tricky. Jagged pieces of metal stick out around the entrance. A successful Pilot: Space skill check will maneuver the ship into the docking bay incident free, otherwise the ship will take an amount of Matter damage equal to 50 points plus the value of the failed skill check. (For example, if the pilot's skill score is 65, and he rolls a 77, add that 77





ers uses a lot of xenon, and moving the asteroid is a very tricky process. If the PCs for whatever reason decide they want to fly off with their own asteroid, the lack of the third thruster and the general awkwardness of the whole operation imposes a penalty of -30 to Pilot: Space skill checks.

**4a.** This room's airtight door is closed. There is an atmosphere in the room.

**4b.** The airtight door is closed. There is no atmosphere, as a hallway leads from 3b into to open space where the third thruster maintenance room used to be.

## Scene Three: Habitat Level

Feel free to add a corpse or two to any room, as you see fit.

### Commander's Log

No matter where your PCs go they need to stumble across the dead Space Commander before they reach the Reactor Room. He can be found in any room that you choose on the habitat or command level, provided it is not open to outer space. The officer quarters on the habitat level or the engineering lab or command room on the command level would be an ideal place for him, if the PCs visit it in a timely manner. Wherever they find him, read the following:

In the darkness you see a rather slight figure sitting in a chair. He appears to be wearing a SpaceCorp uniform. He is not moving.

Play up the creepiness of the room. Anyone who approaches him will need to swivel the chair around to get a look. They will immediately see the horrific visage of a man who has been dead a long time, with his throat slit rather gruesomely. He has a DIOP in his lap. Anyone who sees this must make a Backbone skill check. Robots, hybrids and super-intelligent pet characters get a +20 bonus. A failed check results in the consultation of the following fun little chart below.

### TABLE I: SKILL CHECKS

Skill check fails by 1-10 points	Character flinches and makes a gross-out sound.
Skill check fails by 11-20 points	Character screams like a little girl. Everyone else can now make fun of you.
Skill check fails by 21-30 points	Character is incredibly grossed out. Make an Endure skill check or vomit* in your space suit.
Skill check fails by 31 points or more	Character experiences a freak-out, runs away in a panic, crying all the while. She can make a Backbone skill check every round to try to stop running and crying like an idiot.

\* Robots expel lubrication fluid through any appropriate orifices.

The corpse is that of Space Commander Saltpeter. The batteries in his DIOP have a tiny amount of juice in them, just long enough for the PCs to read **Player Handout D**.

### Area 5: Lifts

One lift is currently stationed on this level of the base. There is an atmosphere in this room. The airlocks are both closed.

### Area 6: Officer Quarters

The hallway that leads to the officer quarters has no atmosphere. There are six officer quarters. They each contain the normal items you would find in the quarters of a SpaceCorp officer. (ZM discretion.)

### Area 7: Showers

The shower room and the hallway that leads into the shower room have no atmosphere. The airtight door is closed. There is a supply of water in the room. The showers do not work without a power source.

### Area 8: Barracks

The barracks and the hallway that leads into the barracks have no atmosphere. The barracks have lots of unimportant personal effects of various crewmen and all the amenities of common living quarters.

### Area 9: The Mess

And what a mess it is! The adjoining kitchen and deep freeze have been destroyed by hydronaut fire, and so everything not fastened to the mess floor has been sucked into space. As a result there is no atmosphere here or in the halls outside.

### Area 10: Engineering Lab

The airlock door is closed and there is an atmosphere in the room. This is the second level of the reactor room, with a catwalk that gives a full view of the reactor. Two metal staircases lead down to the level below. Various computer workstations line the walls.





## Atomic Zombie

Irradiated Walking Dead, Medium

**BRAWN:** 22

**BRAINS:** 2

**BALANCE:** 8

**BRAVADO:** 5

**BODY:** 210

**Strength Bonus:** 22

**Dodge Bonus:** 8

**Move Rate:** 15

**Initiative Bonus:** -1

**Skills:** Atomic Eye Beams 60, Backbone 80, Climb 20, Endure 80, Fisticuffs 35, Heave 90. (See page 37.)

### Perks & Quirks:

*Atomic Eye Beams:* Atomic zombies can shoot destructive atomic rays from their eyes. This Energy damage has a DV 30. An atomic zombie can do this whenever it wants, but each time it does so it drains the zombie of 60 Body points. Unless trapped or otherwise desperate, an atomic zombie will not usually use its eye beams if it has less than 100 Body Points.

*Radiation Aura:* Zombies emit ambient radiation. Anyone touching or touched by an atomic zombie will take 1d10 points of Energy damage per round of contact.

*Regeneration:* While a zombie is in an irradiated area, it regenerates lost Body Points. The amount of Body Points healed is equal to the amount that a normal creature would suffer from radiation damage. Similarly, atomic zombies feed off of ray gun blasts. What would normally be considered damage to living tissue is gained by an atomic zombie when it is hit with a ray gun blast. However, a zombie cannot gain Body Points over its normal 210 maximum. If a zombie is reduced to negative Body Points and it is still more or less in one piece, it may continue to regenerate in irradiated areas until it comes back to life.

*Zombievision:* Atomic zombies do not sense the world in the same way that humans do. They do not "see" or "hear" with eyes and ears. Instead, they detect matter

and space around them with their "atomic eyes" which serve as X-ray vision. They can effectively see through walls, floors and ceilings unless they have a lead lining. Atomic zombies are especially sensitive to radiation, and will be drawn toward anyone discharging their ray guns within several hundred feet.

*Contagious:* Atomic zombies do not reproduce in any natural way. Characters killed by an atomic zombie have a 66% chance of becoming zombies themselves, not because of any cursed bite, but because of the atomic energy that a zombie naturally radiates.

*Immune to Piercing Weapons:* Since the atomic zombie is already technically dead, it has no vital organs or blood loss to worry about. Ballistic weapons like automatic pistols and crossbows do no damage whatsoever to the atomic zombie.

*Resistant to Blunt Weapons:* Atomic Zombies have a Matter DR of 50 *only* for blunt weapons like clubs and truncheons.

*Resistant to Electricity:* Atomic Zombies have an Energy DR of 50 against electricity.

*Self-Sufficient:* Atomic zombies do not need air or food, and cannot be drowned or suffocated.

*Immune to Poison:* Atomic Zombies are not affected by poisons of any kind.

*Glow-in-the-Dark:* Atomic Zombies glow in the dark.

Atomic zombies are the result of radiation seeped into human corpses. They exist in irradiated areas like abandoned nuclear plants or on the edges of an A-Bomb blast. Normally, atomic zombies do not stray from irradiated areas and so are only hazards if someone comes onto their domain. If no "hot zone" is available to an atomic zombie, however, it will wander around attacking any living thing it comes in contact with. Atomic zombies feed on human and animal flesh out of some perverse remnant of their old life habits. Strictly speaking they do not need to feed on flesh to survive, but they are always hostile toward non-zombies for this reason. Atomic zombies are super-strong, but virtually brainless. They are a bit slow, clumsy, and have virtually no social graces or luck.





### Area 16: Command Room

The airlock to this room is open, and there is an atmosphere. This is the command center—complete with radio equipment and various computer workstations—that controls the day-to-day functions of the base. This is also the tactical room, from which the thrusters and weapon turrets are controlled.

### Area 17: Reactor Room

There is an atmosphere in this room. The airlock door is closed. Read the following to your players once they enter the room.

This is obviously the reactor room. Rows of computer workstations line the wall to your right, while a massive atomic reactor sits quietly to your left. At the far end is a makeshift triage. Several bodies lie on tables with medical equipment strewn around. Two metal stairwells lead up to a catwalk that circles the reactor and grants access to the room above you—the ceiling of this room is the metal grid that serves as a floor for some kind of computer lab.

There are four dead SpaceCorp crewmen on the tables in the triage area. Emergency blankets cover their bodies but not their faces or arms.

Anyone who studies the atomic reactor can see where the repairs were being made to the crack in the casing. To all appearances it seems suitably patched up. Only those who make a successful Technical Build & Repair skill check can see that the work is in fact not quite finished. However, the same check reveals that should the reactor be turned on in this state the amount of radiation leakage would be minimal—and that a space suit would provide adequate protection.

Turning on the reactor manually is done with the flip of a very big switch. When turned on, the reactor makes a shuddering noise and immediately settles down, supplying power to the station. Lights turn on, computers boot up, and gravity is restored. Everyone who has not specifically braced himself must make a roll against his Balance x5 to avoid falling down from the sudden return of artificial gravity. Characters failing the check take 1d10 matter damage and drop anything they were holding on to. The lifts will be functioning, and most airlocks will work now as well.

Turning on the reactor and flooding the room with radiation is an important part of this adventure. If the players try to get around it somehow, it is within your right as a ZM to thwart them for the good of the story. If they choose to repair the reactor themselves before they activate it, have it seem to work fine for a moment until another power surge blows out the repair work.

## Scene Five: The Dead Live Again And They're Hungry For Human Flesh!

Once the reactor is turned on, the dead SpaceCorp crewmen will start to soak up the radiation—not just the corpses in this room, but all over the base. These irradiated corpses become the walking dead—atomic zombies! They absorb radiation quickly, and it powers and regenerates them. Starting at zero Body Points, for each round (that's just 6 seconds) they regenerate 1d10 Body points. You can have the zombies get up and start fighting immediately, but you may want to have them absorb at least 20 Body points before they start to threaten the players.

If the PCs have had the forethought to remove the corpses from the reactor room before they turned on the reactor, that's fine. There are lots of corpses to go around, and if you deem that they are clever enough (or maintain some memory of their former lives) the zombies can use airlocks. Just make sure to get a couple between the crew and their escape.

How many zombies are there altogether? As the ZM, that's your call. The base normally has 50 crewmen and officers, but many of them were blown into space during the hydronaut attack.

In *Asteroid X*, the PCs will most likely begin firing ray guns at the zombies. Once a few hits have been made against the zombies, you can begin making secret See skill checks on behalf of the heroes. On their turn, inform any player (perhaps by secret note) who made the skill check that their character notices that the zombie seems to be feeding off of the ray gun (or other atomic weapon) blasts.

What makes an atomic zombie so dangerous is that it may shoot its atomic eye beams at a player, lose the 60 Body points by doing so, then have the lost Body points given back to it when the player shoots it with his atomic rifle. The best way to defeat it is with large cutting weapons like swords, axes, and chainsaws, or with fire.

Luckily, the zombies move very slowly, so as long as the PCs can turn on the valves and pumps for the xenon fuel supply—a task they can perform from almost any operating workstation in the base—all they need to do is get back to the hangar. Meanwhile corpses from all over the station are rising to intercept them. As a ZM, be sporting. Try not to kill off your PCs too quickly. If the PCs have split up, you can have a lot of fun. Keep in mind that filling up Spaceship Zero's tanks with xenon will take several minutes and that they still have to maneuver the ship through the dangerous docking bay exit.



## COMBAT FACTORS

Turning off the atomic reactor will help the fight against the zombies, since they regenerate 1d10 Body Points for every round that it's on, but it will also mean losing power to the base again. Fighting atomic zombies in zero gravity will present quite a challenge and we're sure you'll agree would look great on the silver screen. It will also mean no power to the airlocks, and no light except what the PCs have with them. Remember to describe to the players that atomic zombies glow in the dark.

In addition to the four corpses in the reactor room's triage area, there are many more in the computer room next door. How many exactly is up to the ZM. Flanking the PCs with dozens of atomic zombies will probably mean certain death for the valiant crew of Spaceship Zero, so be lenient at first. If the PCs are smart, they will try to run up the stairway to the engineering lab. Be conscious of where more atomic zombies may be rising in other parts of the base, and use them to dramatic effect at the appropriate time.

If the PCs take damage in the fight, they will most likely have big gaping holes in their space suits. Traveling in corridors and rooms without an atmosphere in a depressurized space suit is not recommended. The ZM may modify the effects of explosive decompression (page 77 of the rulebook) on characters with partial protection like a damaged space suit, i.e. instead of making Endure checks on round three, the hapless combatant gets a few extra rounds grace. However as the air leaks out into space, and this may take as long as the ZM warrants, the character will eventually suffocate (see page 79 for suffocation rules).

Play up the creepiness of fighting dead SpaceCorp crewmen. When the zombies first start to rise, feel free to call for a Backbone skill check. Anyone who fails the check stands paralyzed with his jaw on the floor until he is either hit or shaken back to reality by a fellow PC who has her wits about her.

There is room in the docking bay for Spaceship Zero to maneuver, if it comes up.

## EPILOGUE

Now that Spaceship Zero has some fuel, they're free to go anywhere they want. If they've shut the reactor down before they leave, any zombies who weren't destroyed will probably go on wandering the halls of the base for a good long time. If they've somehow managed to dispose of the zombie threat, then Asteroid X would be an excellent base of operations for the crew, albeit a creepy one. If the reactor has been left on, well then the zombie threat lives on as well. In addition, the energy spike may eventually attract passing hydronaut saucers.

## EXPERIENCE

All characters get 2 EPs for completing the adventure. If the scenario took more than one session than add 1 EP for each session over the first. If the PCs successfully fuelled up Spaceship Zero add another 1 EP. If they managed to nullify the zombie threat altogether add another 1 EP. Feel free to award an extra EP or two to players who thought up and/or successfully executed particularly brilliant ideas, and don't forget to dole out Zero Dice to players who roleplayed their characters well.

## ABOUT THE CREATORS

Toren McBoren MacBin lives in Vancouver BC Canada with his large collection of Saturday morning cartoons, and his super-unintelligent cat Kodos. He doesn't dance, but he sings in the Lovecraftian rock band The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets. He is also wicked slick with an F pencil, and you can see his art in Green Ronin's Legions of Hell, Malhavoc Press' The Banewarrens, and Wizards of the Coast's d20 Call of Cthulhu. He enjoys Mystery Science Theater 3000 and Ween. Visit his Website at [www.toren.net/thickets/](http://www.toren.net/thickets/).

Matt "Trollboy" Wiseman hails from the Blackswamp area of Ohio, there he co-habitates with his ninja death kitty Bast (aka Hater of all that lives) and his goth-gerbil Sphincter (aka das uber shredder). Matt doesn't *really* dance, but is very fond of the local Metal scene and can be found frequenting the more seedier mosh pits in Defiance. In his spare time (riiight... ) he learns foreign languages, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Mandarin currently, and, with the aid of his loyal legion of editors and admins, runs the popular Cthulhu Mythos website, Shoggoth.net. Matt's turn-ons include theoretical quantum physics, Goth chicks, and non-Euclidean nookie. Visit his Website at [www.shoggoth.net/trollboy/](http://www.shoggoth.net/trollboy/).

