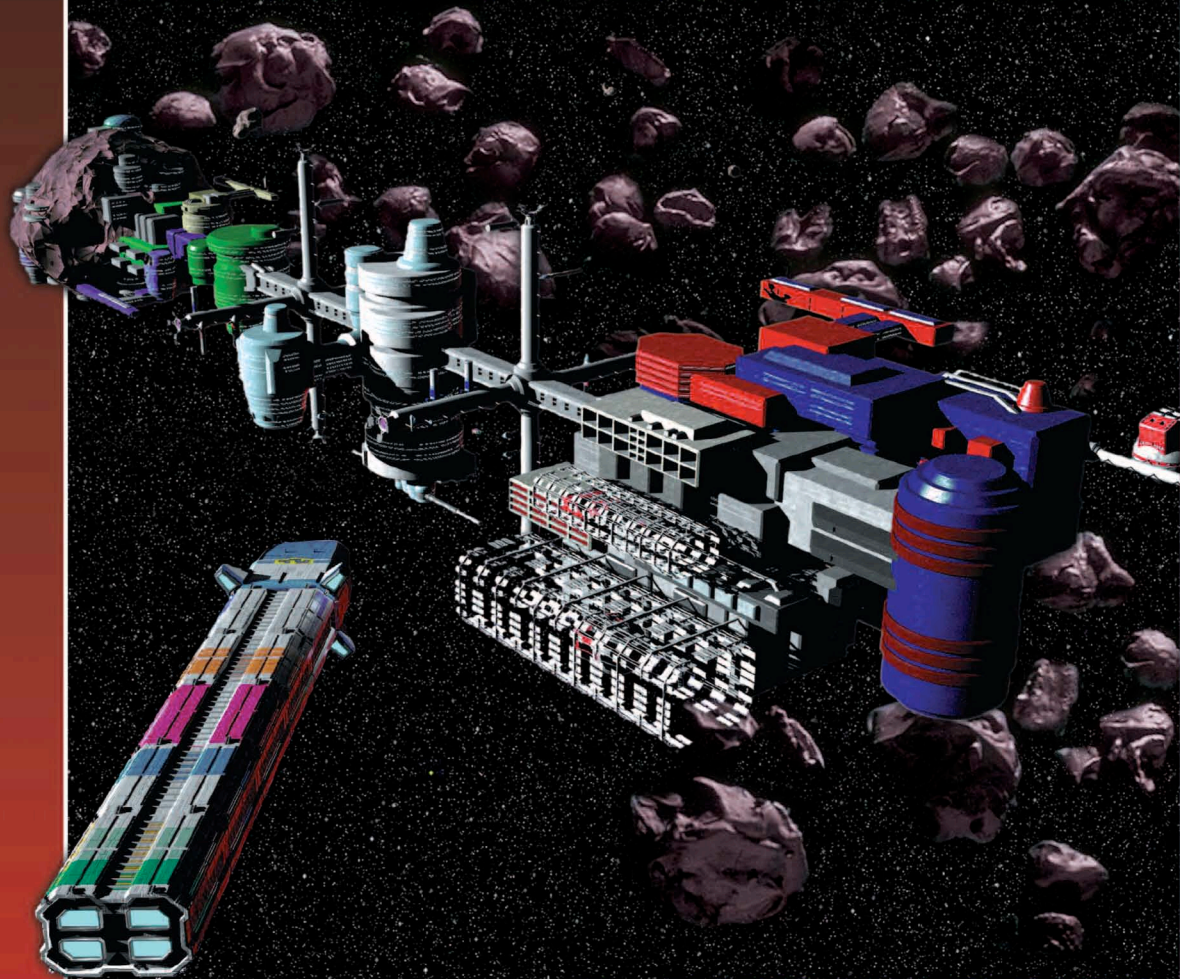


GURPS® *Traveller*® Planetary Survey 4

GLISTEN

JEWEL OF THE MARCHES



By JAMES MALISZEWSKI

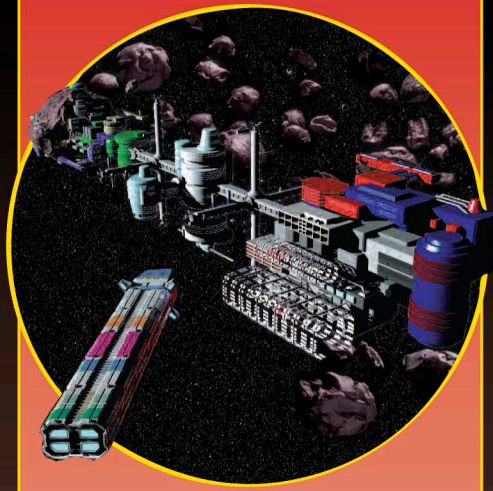
STEVE JACKSON GAMES

JEWEL OF THE MARCHES

The "Jewel of Deep Space," the Glisten system has no habitable world, yet it is the capital of the Glisten subsector, site of a Scout base and a major shipbuilding yard, and home of the Mining School of Glisten. Its rich asteroid belts combine an advanced technology with an almost inexhaustible supply of raw materials. Glisten is a major industrial and economic powerhouse in the Spinward Marches.

In addition, nearly every planetoid in the Glisten system has its own local culture and society. The diversity of the hundreds of worldlets makes Glisten a wonderfully rich backdrop for almost any type of adventure.

This book concentrates on the five asteroids which make up "Glisten City," the government and business center of the system. Trade, business, scientific investigations, and high-level politics rub shoulders with gritty asteroid miners, huge factory complexes, shipyards, and interstellar intrigue.



The *GURPS Basic Set*, *GURPS Traveller*, and *GURPS Space* are required for full use of this book in a *GURPS* campaign. The background presented here will be of great value to any *Traveller* campaign, and will also serve as a source of inspiration for other SF games.

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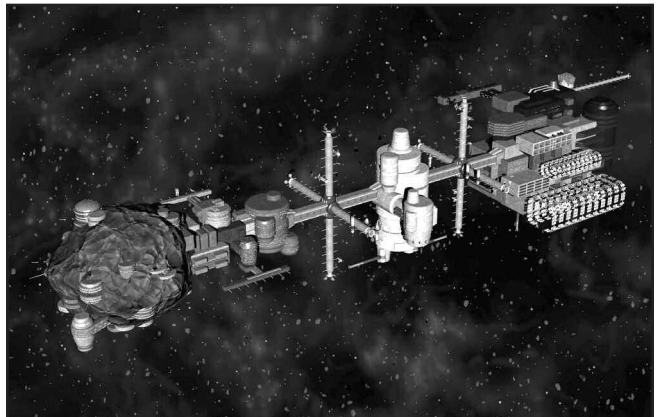
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

About GURPS

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The *GURPS Traveller Planetary Survey 4: Glisten* Web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/ps4/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*; those that begin with GT are for *GURPS Traveller*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated Web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

The Glisten system's main “world” is a planetoid belt in which each “worldlet” has developed its own slight variation on the basic culture. The system is a major industrial center, and is home to major shipyards and heavy manufacturers of every sort. Site of both Imperial Interstellar Scout Service and Imperial Navy bases, and seat of the Duchess of Glisten, the Glisten system is truly “The Jewel of the Marches.” Millions of visitors pass through the system every year, some to visit, others on their way to someplace else. There could hardly be a better backdrop for science fiction roleplaying.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Planetary Survey books are not rules; they're background, nearly system-free. They are designed as a series of adventure settings . . . not just worlds the PCs can visit, but also “offstage” places with their own history that can be used to drive adventures elsewhere (Glisten's industries and personalities are widespread). You can use this book:

☀ As is. Glisten is an official part of the *GURPS Traveller* continuity, tied in with previous work in the *Traveller* background. It builds upon material outlined in GDW's supplement *The Spinward Marches* (and other products) and in *GURPS Traveller: Behind the Claw*. Even if your campaign is not set in the Spinward Marches, you can rename the system and transfer it to a locale of your choosing.

☀ In pieces. Feel free to rename the world and the aliens, and transfer it to a location better suited to your individual campaign. See *Variations on the Theme* on p. 30 for suggestions on tailoring the world to your own game system or campaign.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Maliszewski can quite rightly be called a traveler himself. He was born in the Netherlands, grew up outside of Baltimore, and attended university in Annapolis, Washington, D.C., and Toronto. He originally believed his calling was to teach the world about the wonders of medieval and early modern philosophy, but soon realized he could be just as readily ignored by becoming a freelance writer – and have more fun in the process. Since 1999, he has contributed to many gaming products, most notably for *GURPS Traveller*, *Blue Planet*, *Deadlands: Hell on Earth*, *Fading Suns*, *Gear Krieg the Roleplaying Game*, and *Vampire: The Dark Ages*. He lives in Scarborough, Ontario, with his wife, daughter, and a Captain Kirk action figure.

ABOUT THE LINE EDITOR

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publishers of *Traveller*, and spent more than 20 years there as designer, developer, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced, then came to SJ Games, where he is *GURPS Traveller* line editor and expert in residence.

IISS DATA – GLISTEN/SPINWARD MARCHES

Glisten is the collective name for a large number of settlements in the inner planetoid belt orbiting a solitary star (Gliss), located at 2036. Glisten is one of the major high-tech industrial centers of the Marches and consists of a number of separate planetoid cities, most of which specialize in a particular industry or social role.

Glisten Belt occupies the life zone. The system contains no appreciable bodies outside of the two planetoid belts and Glisten III (a gas giant which the locals call Nasmi). Glisten is the subsector capital for Glisten Subsector, and the Duchess of Glisten maintains her principal residence here. Certain approach vectors require clearance from Glisten Imperial Naval Base or Glisten IISS Station (consult the latest ephemeris for details).

Glisten comprises a vast federation of individual asteroid colonies, each of which has accepted the Glisten Coordinating Authority as its central government. The various colonies govern themselves internally, but allow the GCA to administer the system's vast traffic control network, as well as legislate and enforce standards for trade and commerce. As a consequence, there's a remarkable degree of cohesion in the system. The various colonies coordinate their actions, ensuring that important services such as defense and public works are divided among them.

In spite of the uniformity of administration, the colonies exhibit remarkable diversity in their local cultures. Each asteroid is host to a unique society, with its own customs, traditions, and way of life. This makes Glisten an incredibly diverse locale, and a popular spot for tourists in the Domain of Deneb.

Glisten is also a financial and industrial powerhouse of the Spinward Marches. It is home to several important shipyards. Merchants and traders from subsectors away are drawn to Glisten's markets. The system is sometimes called the "Gateway to District 268" because of its significant ties to that frontier region.

Glisten was the target of an *ihatei* incursion in 1113, but the Imperium has almost entirely driven

away the Aslan invaders since then.

Pluvis Belt: The outermost planetoid belt, Pluvis contains numerous mining stations, small ports, other industrial facilities (chief among these are the Bilstein Yards), and the Glisten Imperial Naval Base. The Pluvis Belt has nearly 40% of the system's population.

Starport: Given the dispersed nature of the system's population, Glisten possesses a multitude of deep-space ports, but only Banfi Starport is a true starport. Banfi Starport is rated Class V, and is held and administered by the Imperium, through the local Starport Authority port director.

Size: Not applicable.

Atmosphere: None.

Hydrographic Percentage: None.

Population: 8.38 billion permanent residents, augmented by transient miners, corporate employees, military personnel, and tourists. Depending on the time of year and the circumstances, the population of the system can swell to 9 billion. This population figure represents the inhabitants of both the Glisten and Pluvis Belts, rather than just that of the Glisten Belt proper.

Control Rating: CR 4 (Controlled). Glisten has numerous laws restricting the ownership of weapons of all sorts. This is done both as a form of social control and as a defense against damage to the system's many self-contained arcologies. The precariousness of life on an asteroid world (even a high-tech one) is never far from the minds of Glistenites, making advanced weaponry anathema.

In addition, local traffic control is extensive, limiting both the movement of vessels and the use of certain communications channels. Violation of either of these regulations is a grave offense and the violator may be subject to harsh penalties, possibly with the concurrence of the Imperial Starport Authority.

Tech Level: TL12. Local industry is exceptionally diverse, making the Glisten system extremely self-sufficient. Glisten is on the cutting edge in the areas of shipbuilding, zero-G manufacturing, and environmental controls, with some technologies on the verge of TL13 breakthroughs.

System Data

PRIMARY: GLISS (K9 V)

Name (orbit)	Gravity		Hydrographic %		Population	Notes
	Diameter	Atmosphere	Climate			
Glisten Belt (0.710 AU)	NA	NA	NA	NA	5 billion	
Pluvis Belt (1.503 AU)	NA	NA	NA	NA	3 billion	
Nasmi (2.812 AU)	85,119	2.3	NA	NA	Uninhabitable	Gas Giant

History

As an inhabited system of the Spinward Marches – and an inhospitable one at that – Glisten does not have a long history. Prior to the arrival of the first settlers in 298, there is little evidence of anyone taking much notice of the Gliss system. In their interstellar exploration phase, the Darrians expanded outward in a sphere 20 parsecs in diameter by 1270. This sphere included Glisten, yet the Darrians didn't see any use in setting up a permanent colony here. The Maghiz brought an end to the Darrian presence in the area. Thus, it was not until the coming of the Third Imperium that this system came to any prominence.

THE EARLY YEARS

As the young Third Imperium expanded outward into the Spinward Marches, many marginal systems were bypassed in favor of those with pleasant environments, obvious resources, or both. Consequently, the Gliss system, which lacks any habitable planets larger than asteroids, wasn't given much consideration. Other worlds commanded more attention, leaving Glisten devoid of sophont life until approximately 298.

At that time, the Ammeed Mining Corporation of Tirem (Spinward Marches 2233) launched a small expedition toward the Gliss system. Ammeed was a middling corporation on Tirem, which had been shut out of major strikes on its homeworld by rivals. Consequently, it was looking for new sources of minerals and ores with which to expand its operations. Using contacts in the IISS, Ammeed's chief executive officer, Marquesa Banfi, learned that there was evidence of lanthanum in the Gliss system. She gambled, and sent a prospecting team. If she succeeded, Ammeed would be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. If not, it would be quickly bankrupt.

Fortunately for Banfi, her gamble paid off. The Gliss system – especially the Glisten Belt itself – had large lanthanum deposits. It also possessed sizable quantities of other rare earth metals, making it a find unlike any other in the Marches at that time. Banfi quickly ordered the construction

of several mining operations on various asteroids throughout the system. She also did her best to conceal Ammeed's newfound source of wealth.

Of course, Banfi couldn't keep her secret for long. Within three years, the Scout Service had officially documented Glisten's mineral wealth. Even before that, disgruntled Ammeed employees had revealed the location of Banfi's new mining facilities to competitors. These competitors quickly pooled their own resources to mount expeditions of their own. The government of Tirem followed suit as well. By 306, the Gliss system had been surveyed extensively, forming the basis for all later surveys. By the end of that decade, there were numerous mining colonies in the system.

THE CORPORATE WARS

Marquesa Banfi's gamble may have paid off in the short term, but it had disastrous results in the long term. By 310, many corporations – from Tirem and elsewhere – made it their avowed goal of gaining total control over the Gliss system. Although the Ammeed Mining Corporation had a head start (controlling 10 large asteroids in the Glisten Belt), its rivals had size and determination on their side. In addition, some employed mercenaries to threaten and harass their rivals. In these early days of the Marches, mercenaries could be used with much greater impunity. The Imperial Rules of War were still in effect, as were trade-war traditions, but there was very little way to enforce them. Thus, open warfare broke out among the asteroids of Glisten.

By 400, the warfare had settled down into a four-way confrontation between Ammeed (which was slowly losing its hold over the system), Mignukaa Mining, Liisharara Dii, and Suliena Industries. The use of mercs had become commonplace, drawing the attention of the Imperium. The Duke of Mora, Amini Murikshaa, was unhappy with the state of affairs in Gliss. However, his staff advised him that it would be unwise to become too personally involved in affairs. They recommended that he seek an indirect way to defuse the open warfare.

Characters

Glisten is an unusual star system in that it cannot support life without extensive technological assistance. Moreover, life remains extremely precarious. Even with the technological wonders Imperial colonists have introduced, a mistake could result in thousands of deaths. Consequently, Glistenite characters grow up with different skills and attitudes than their counterparts on other worlds of the Imperium.

TEMPLATES

No new templates are required for Glistenite characters. Characters from Glisten generally are normal Humans, generated using the templates found in *GURPS Traveller*, pp. GT82-98. The Belter, Bureaucrat, Engineer, and Journalist/Reporter careers are especially common, while Bounty Hunters and Corsairs are nonexistent. The Law Enforcer template can be used for members of the Special Services Branch of the GCA. *Zetetes* possess no typical profile, having a wide variety of skills and backgrounds. Many of these private investigators are similar to Rogues and Undercover Agents.

I'M FROM GLISTEN

A PC or NPC may have Glisten as his place of birth. Whether he is embracing his background or rebelling against it, the planetary culture will have left its marks on his skills and personality. He will be stronger in some areas, weaker in others, but these traits will be present in most people raised on Glisten:

- ☉ He'll be extremely precise in his use of any type of technology – a reminder that Glisten's native environment does not reward mistakes.

- ☉ He will be extremely comfortable with computers and will consider any person who does not have a similar affinity to be backward.

- ☉ Likewise, he will know his way around a vacc suit. Most Glistenites learn how to wear and operate one of these suits from a very young age.

- ☉ He will be very resource-conscious, not wasting water or food. Interestingly, this personality quirk is just that; most asteroid cities are long beyond the need for such paranoia about resources. Nevertheless, old habits die hard, and these were handed down from the earliest generations of Glistenites.

- ☉ He's been raised in an atmosphere of respect for both the Imperium and Archduke Norris, both of which he considers to be the epitome of honor and responsibility.

- ☉ He'll believe in the absolute necessity for governmental intervention in certain matters; he has no patience for anarchists or libertarians, considering them both naive and dangerous. He also recognizes the need for *laissez-faire* policies in some areas, but is shocked by the suggestion that central coordination is somehow evil or prone to corruption.

- ☉ He will have a remarkably nuanced opinion of megacorporations, seeing them as necessary evils given the size and scope of the Imperium. However, he will readily point out numerous flaws and misdeeds in the actions of megacorporations, as a result of witnessing their strong-arm tactics in his home system.



Adventures in this alternate Glisten involve the characters accidentally becoming involved in the conspiracy, as they stumble upon an incongruous detail that leads them in search of the truth, as the agents of the conspiracy attempt to prevent them from discovering more information – even if it means killing them. Conspiratorial Glisten requires a fair bit of thought and explanation by the GM, but it could be a nice change of pace for many campaigns.

ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE GLISTEN

This version of Glisten diverges right after the Corporate Wars. In it, Duke Murikshaa's plan backfired, resulting in the total ouster of all corporations from the system. The unions and rabble-rousers turned on one another in a longer, bloodier conflict . . . one that continues to the present day.

The GCA does not exist – or, if it does, it's an extremely weak advisory panel staffed by

representatives from the many factions that inhabit the Glisten system. Its deliberations are fractious and prone to impotence.

In this setting, individual asteroids take on a more significant role. Each one sets its own policies, laws, and regulations. Traveling from one to another might be hazardous, especially if the asteroids in question are members of competing factions.

Rough-and-Tumble Glisten provides lots of opportunities for mercenaries and spies. The GM can determine how many factions exist within the system, as well as their relationships to one another. For the most part, the system is a free-for-all, without either large corporations or strong unions to lead the vast populace. The Navy and Scout bases maintain an Imperial presence in the system and protect the residence of the Duchess, who is determined (against the wishes of her advisors) to bring order to this chaotic environment.

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