

Credits

Based on the original concept of Frank Chadwick

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Preface

Welcome to Venus!

The brightest star in the sky as seen from Earth, known by many as the morning and evening star, has played a role in many cultures and mythologies. It is often associated with goddesses such as Isis, Inanna, Aphrodite, and Freya, although they all have very different aspects. The female aspect however often comprises a creative, life-giving element, which is very appropriate for the planet of Venus in the *Space: 1889* universe. Our planet still seems to be ruled by primordial creative powers. In every corner of this world, life is manifold and primeval, with creatures co-existing that were separated on Earth by millions of years, as, for example, the equivalent to the *Tyrannosaurus rex* (still unidentified in the 1889 of our time) and the *Stegosaurus*.

Observing Venus from afar is difficult: Its dense atmosphere impedes any direct observation. While in 'our universe', planets and moons are explored by means of remotely-controlled probes, it is infinitely easier for the people in the *Spaceverse*. They can reach planets by etherflyer and explore them in person. Following the first failed expeditions of 1873 onwards, Venus has been visited regularly since 1878, to advance both its exploration and its colonization. The underlying motivation is driven by the curiosity of adventurers and explorers, but also by the economic interests of states and private enterprises.

But above all it is the insatiable spirit of discovery that drives men and women to explore and map unknown lands and places. It has also led to an encounter with an unknown people and its culture, the most bizarre and exotic which humans have seen (so far) in the universe. While Martians are certainly strange and different to a degree from mankind, they still resemble each other in appearance. Venusian Lizard-men, however, stand out at first sight as completely alien from their physical appearance alone. Adding to this distinct sense of "otherness" are their differently developed senses, as in their ability to see into the infrared, or their extraordinary olfactory senses. Their culture seems to have stagnated in a "primitive" Stone Age, but who knows which

cultural variants might hide in far-off, and so-far hidden, corners of the planet.

The main focus of this volume is on the exploration, settlement, and cultivation of a foreign world and contact with exotic cultures and creatures. During the eleven years since the first settlers set foot on Venus, they have made astounding progress: they have established settlements and towns, and opened plantations and construction sites. They have been, and still are, expanding transportation routes, they have established some initial industries, and started to tame primeval nature with all the modern technologies of 1889. This is just the beginning of a massive development in which the player's characters can still hope to gain and exert influence. They can build and create something completely new (for themselves): A new home for people – and their homeland.

At the end of this volume we have summarized some peculiar and prodigious mysteries on Venus for the Gamemaster. References to this chapter are marked with  throughout the book.

For the first time since the creation of the trailblazing RPG *Space: 1889*, unbelievably now over 25 years ago, we are proud to present a detailed description of the planet Venus, its inhabitants, and its environment.

As authors of this book, we had a lot of fun imagining and designing a new world. This world is intended to the setting of many adventures and discoveries, and it is with great pleasure that we pass its further elaboration, discovery, history and future into the hands of the Gamemaster. Soon, we will offer you additional ideas and adventures that we hope will intrigue, invite and perhaps even lure the intrepid adventurer beneath the enigmatic, unbroken cloud of the Morning Star.

Have fun in the jungles of Venus!

Stefan Küppers, Würselen, April 2014

Frank Heller, Berlin, April 2014

Venus - An Overview

Venus

Diameter: 7,526 miles or 12,103 km
Circumference: 23,643 miles or 38,022 km
Length of year: 248 Earth days
Length of day: 23 hours
Gravity: 100 % of Earth's gravity

"O my fair evening star"

— Richard Wagner, *Tannhäuser*

As seen from the Sun, Venus is the second world of our solar system, moving on an orbit at an average distance of 67 million miles, or 108 million kilometers, away from the Sun. Only slightly smaller than Earth, the planet is completely covered by a dense, white blanket of clouds. This, in combination with its proximity to Earth, results in Venus being the third brightest object in Earth's sky – after the Sun and the Moon.

Venus – also referred to as the Morning or Evening Star, so called by people from Earth for its position in the sky – is a gloomy greenhouse world. The dense cloud cover appears absolutely unbroken and impenetrable for about one half of the Venusian year. It is only from the highest mountains that the Sun can be seen from time to time. As the magnetic field of Venus interferes with compasses, reliable navigation and safe flight can only be ensured by the pilot following appropriate landmarks or flying above the cloud ceiling and, depending on the time of day, determining his position based on the path of the sun and stars. These adverse conditions are the reason why Venus has been hardly mapped at all. Consequently, the level of detail displayed by the chart in this book is utterly unknown to any person from Earth or any other character in the solar system.

For many years, Venus was a mystery to human astronomers. When the first telescopes were pointed at this world, they only showed a blank, featureless surface. Numerous theories tried to explain the possible origin of this landscape, but it was only when expeditions actually ventured out into space in 1873 that they discovered that the planet's lack of any discernible features was actually due to the dense layer of clouds. Soon, Venus proved to be a hothouse world of warm shallow oceans, steaming jungles, mangrove swamps, bogs and marshlands – a world of eternal rain under a permanently overcast lead-gray sky. The lowlands are also home to hundreds of species of dinosaurs, both large and small, as well as lizard-men devoid of any trait of advanced civilization. Since humans find the climate of the lowlands to be almost unbearable, they mostly tend to stay on the few highland plateaus, where temperatures and humidity are more tolerable and people might sometimes even catch a glimpse of the Sun shining wanly through the thick cover of clouds.

Many settlements have been built since Venus was first explored by humans and following the return of the first successful mission

in 1878. Large-scale plantations have been established where it is predominantly the indigenous lizard-men that cultivate and harvest the most valuable plants. Other peaceful tribes of lizard-men roam the jungle, looking for all manners of plants in order to take them to one of the numerous lowlands trading posts or the colonial settlements that have sprung up around them. Dinosaurs and hostile lizard-men pose a constant threat to the human enclaves and are one of the reasons why all the major colonial powers have deployed military contingents to the planet.

Even though the first expedition to Venus had been undertaken by British Armstrong etherflyers in 1873, the German Heidelberg expedition of 1878 was the first expedition to return successfully from Venus. The participants of the first three missions (of 1873, 1874 and 1876) experienced firsthand that the peculiar nature of the Venusian magnetic field significantly accelerated the decomposition of liftwood. Consequently, it was but a few days after landing that the liftwood lost its miraculous powers and the British etherflyers forfeited their ability to take off again. As Germany did not have sufficient quantities of liftwood available at first, it was compelled to use lifting gas – as in a dirigible – to send its etherflyers into the atmosphere. Thus, it was not until the German ether dirigible landed on a site that came to be baptized *Kaiser Wilhelm Plateau* that the few survivors of the previous British expeditions – which had been near-annihilated by ferocious dinosaur attacks and assaults from hostile tribes – were rescued. For a more detailed story of the first Venus expeditions see the **Space: 1889 Core Rules** (page 102).

Since then, the exploration and exploitation of Venus has been predominantly undertaken by Germany. While most German and British settlements are located in the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains and the Ishtar Highlands, other areas are also home to Russian, Italian, US and further British settlements and trade enclaves. In addition, there are some other minor settlements, though not all of them are willing to establish contact with their neighbors.

Even though Venus is not as heavily colonized as Mars, the young world offers a comparable economic potential. The planet is not only a cosmic sauna but also a veritable botanical treasure house filled with valuable plant products. In addition to having a value for horticulturalists and florists, the resources of Venus are particularly attractive to the German Empire's chemical industry, which, constantly hungering for raw materials, has been using them in the production of medication, paint and other chemical products. Thus, it is no wonder that the German Empire has been especially keen on building settlements on Venus. Moreover, hunters of botanical treasures and raw materials are just as enticed by Venus as are big game hunters, scientists intent on doing research on alien Venusian species or future plantation owners, who are hoping to make a good income on the planet.

Only minor metal deposits have been found so far. Besides, the geography and environmental conditions make the exploration and exploitation of mining areas a difficult process. Heavy machines can be transported through the air or over water only in several short stages. In addition, ores have to be smelted, as transporting them to Earth would not be profitable. In any case, since most colonies want to retain the highest level of autonomy and self-sufficiency possible, metal ores are in high demand locally, as well.

Venus

In the Swamps of the Morning Star

"Morning found us under a remarkably blue sky, just as if the weather wanted to console us for the events suffered on the day before when my loyal mount had drowned in the swamps.

In the wee hours, mist had risen from the moist-warm underbrush and, damp and wet, crept across the land with pale fingers, grabbing hold of our bones as though it wanted to keep us from leaving this jungle. Soon, however, the mist was chased away by the Sun – and fell back into the scrub around us.

We had set up camp on a small clearing in the impenetrable jungle, surrounded by trees and undergrowth that grew in an incomprehensible pattern – as if a giant gardener without any sense of order had once sown seeds and grains and then left his work unattended for several centuries. While vines and creepers dangled from the branches above like fat green snakes, moss and lichen covered the green-brown trunks giving them the appearance of grim bearded faces. Insects as long as my arm buzzed overhead, producing a muffled sound when beating their wings as I was enveloped by the heavy fragrance of alien flowers. I had travelled the deserts of the Orient and the wide plains of the prairie but this place told me quite unmistakably that it was not meant for humans but instead was suffused with a primal force – powerful and omnipresent – that my home planet had lost quite a while ago.

As is the Venusians' wont, Tupua had woken up before me and had even set out into the jungle before dawn in order to gather more of the delicious fruits that had already sated us yesterday. I was left alone with my thoughts.

It was only too well that I remembered Sir David's face, his pleading eyes above the scar-covered nose during our last meeting at Fort Collingswood. I wouldn't even have been able to deny this request if it had been made by a less loyal friend, a less good person, but it was Sir David's pain that truly aroused my compassion – all the more so as I recalled all those adventures we had survived together.

Of course, we could have asked the Englishmen for help, could have called for support from the governor. And, of course, they would have met our request, would have deployed soldiers and cannons to find the lost *Faithful* and Lady Annabell Lindsay. Yet, this wouldn't have happened immediately; red tape is hard to cut, and Sir David had deemed it intolerable to wait for a search party to be raised while his delicate daughter feared for her life in the Venusian jungle. I was resolved to find her – both for her own sake and for the pain suffered by my old friend. These two reasons filled me with a certainty that one can only feel in the face of immeasurably great danger.

A rustling noise announced the return of Tupua, who did not even try to hide his presence from me.

Soon after, he stepped from the underbrush, holding a berry-filled bag made of dinosaur leather in his hands.

"Hepa-Ta-Kao!" Some days ago, he had given me this name, which – as he explained to me – meant "black-bearded son of Earth" in his mother tongue. The Venusian language is so different from ours that I haven't mastered it perfectly yet.

"What's up, Tupua?"

"We are looking for the ship, aren't we? The air-ship that crashed down from the sky?"

"Indeed we are!"

"And tell me", he continued. "The ship, does it only fly with the wind? Or does it have fire burning in its belly?"

"Of course, there's things that burn inside the ship. Oil used for lamps, coals fuelling the boilers. Why do you ask?"

"Because I tasted smoke, Hepa-Ta-Kao, not one league away from here!" His tongue slid out between his lips. I believed that he spoke the truth, since Venusians – that much I had become aware of – smell the world with their tongues, having a sense of smell much keener and more sensitive than us humans do.

"And can't it be something else? Lightning that set a tree on fire?"

"It could be, Hepa-Ta-Kao. But this smoke tastes different. It tastes like the smoke coming from the chimneys in the Earthling settlements. But there are no settlements here. It has to be the ship or some fire made by the pale ones that attacked us yesterday."

Once again, I realized that my companion's lizard face concealed a bright and alert mind that was in no way inferior to that of a human. "Well", I told him. "Then let's head out. You lead!"

After just about an hour, we reached the place that Tupua believed the smell had emanated from. Having climbed a tree, I was able to see a thin column of smoke rise up in the distance, a gray plume resembling a brush stroke in the still blue sky.

With my own dinosaur having found an unlucky death yesterday, Tupua now decided it was best to lead his loyal animal, our baggage tied to its back. Our guns were the only thing we carried constantly. While Tupua had his personal shotgun, I preferred my 'Bärentöter' ('Bear Killer') – a weapon which had never failed me against the creatures of the Morning Star. An attack – whether by animals or sinister men and their frenzied servants – was always to be expected and required us to be armed at all times.

Once we had drawn even closer to the trail of smoke, I signaled Tupua to wait, venturing forward to scout the area on my own. While I did not find any sign of human life, I saw the column of smoke rise up from the wreck of the *Faithful*.

The airship had crashed directly into the jungle, with one half lying in a small river and the main body having been shattered and cracked open, causing the struts and frames, still smoking from the fire's remains, to stick up like the ribs of an enormous skeleton. Ripped off the main body, the passenger cabin lay on the side, the windows burst, the door torn off its hinges and flung several meters away. Corpses could be seen, as well. I rapidly ascertained, though, that they wore the uniforms of English soldiers and that Sir David's daughter was not among them. While many of the dead had perished in the crash and others had been killed by the claws and teeth of wild animals, two soldiers displayed wounds that could only have been caused by shotguns. I returned to Tupua.

"The ship is over there, Tupua."

"And the woman?"

"Perhaps in the cabin. But I don't think she's there anymore."

"Killed by wild beasts?"

"Maybe. But maybe not. Some of the dead show bullet wounds."

"They were shot?"

"Indeed! Come, my friend. Let's take a closer look."

We had not yet reached the wreckage when, from the corner of my eye, I saw something move in the underbrush – and I immediately knew what it was.

"Tupua!", I shouted. "Run! To the ship! Fast!"

A predator lizard sprang out of the undergrowth – a monster with sharp teeth and sickle-shaped claws, as large as a man and twice as heavy. The animal emitted a roar that reverberated in the entire jungle and lunged towards me.

Rolling to the side, I yanked up the bear killer, put my finger around the trigger of the first barrel and pulled. In my haste the shot had been poorly aimed, allowing the beast to be only grazed by the bullet. Yet, the projectile stopped the lizard's attack and, instead of sinking its claws into me, the monster only pushed me over, knocking me to the ground.

I heard another roar and Tupua screamed. My friend ran towards the wreckage of the *Faithful*, another hissing lizard leaping after him.

The beast on my chest tried to bite me, but I pushed my arm against its jaws, shoving them aside. Then I grabbed its neck and threw it off me.

I raised the rifle and pressed its muzzle against the lizard's body, pulling the trigger. When I had tumbled to the ground, however, mud had caked my rifle, causing it to become clogged and wet. As not even Henry's craft was proof against moisture, the hammer ineffectively clicked against the chambered cartridge. I dropped the bear killer, drawing my knife. Hissing, the wounded lizard struggled to its feet.

"Hepa-Ta-Kao!" A shot rang out. The lizard in front of me dropped to the ground, dead.

Turning my head, I saw that Tupua had climbed on the strut where his pursuer was unable to reach him. It was from this elevated position that he had fired a well-aimed shot that had instantaneously killed the lizard. Soon after, the second reptile, angrily hissing at him from below, was felled by a second shot.

"Thank you!", I said once I had returned to his side and cleaned my rifle. "A clean shot, my friend!" Tupua blinked happily with his third eyelid.

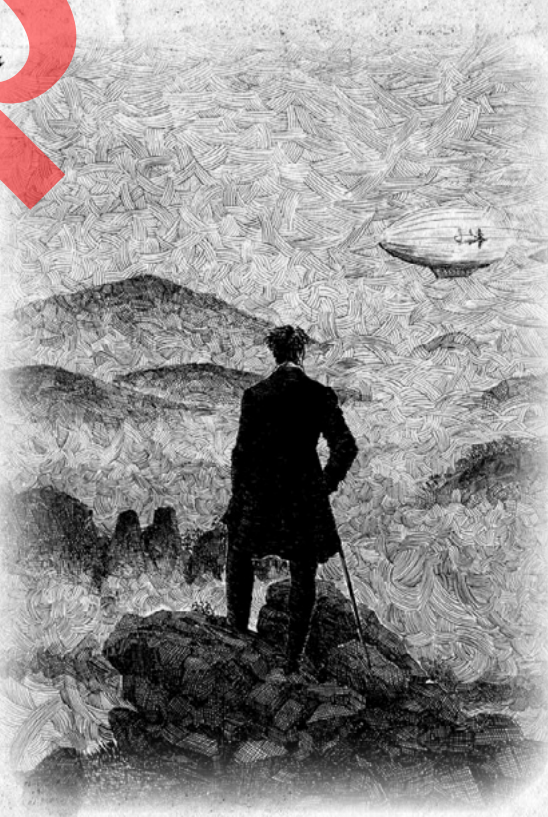
Turning to the wreck again, we climbed up the side of the cockpit to access its interior. Some thorough searching revealed the belongings of Sir David's daughter's – yet no living girl, no body and not even blood. Instead, I had noticed something lying on the ground, and picked it up.

"What's that, Hepa-Ta-Kao?"

"A waxed cigarette-end. Italian, like the men who attacked us yesterday."

The empty cockpit forced us to face the truth – Lady Annabell had disappeared."

— Karl May: *In the Swamps of the Morning Star*.
First unedited edition, chapter 4



The Geography of Venus

"There is nothing that cultivates and teaches the educated mind more than geography."

— Immanuel Kant

The exploration of Venus is a young science that – even after almost twenty years of research – has so far yielded but few results. Though explorers are constantly setting off to the planet and eagerly collecting new data, their fieldwork is hampered by major difficulties (lack of compasses, poor visibility, mist, heat, hungry dinosaurs ...) that all too often destroy or – even worse – fatally compromise the results obtained before they can be properly analyzed. Should a brave explorer still defy these adverse conditions to compile a chart based on his discoveries, the resulting map will be inaccurate in most cases – and, given the circumstances at hand, is bound to become outdated after only a few months.

Yet, Earth's scientists refuse to be discouraged, time and again starting new expeditions which slowly but surely unveil more of Venus' hidden mysteries.

Naming Conventions

Any explorer intending to name newly discovered landmarks should stick to certain already established Cytherographical conventions. While locations are usually given the name of a goddess or prominent mythological woman, the name of an Earth-based monarch is also deemed acceptable.

Of course, explorers may also try to name an object after themselves. That, however, will only serve to prove their vanity and – even worse – bad style, making them bound to be mocked by experts and the general public alike.

Incidentally, no place name used by the lizard-men has so far ever been recorded on human-created maps.

Pancyteria - The Continent

There is a huge geographical difference between Venus and its older sister, Earth. While there is more water than land on Earth, the opposite is true on Venus. With researchers still debating about the exact proportions, it is presumed that about 25 to 40 percent of its surface is covered by water. Venus has two major and several smaller inland seas (see page 12), some of them separated by thousands of miles of land.

The great contiguous landmass was termed *Pancyteria*, a name chosen to allow experts to differentiate between the Venus supercontinent, its oceans, and the continents on Earth. Pancyteria may be divided into several sub-continents.

Ishtar - The North

The area around the North Pole was named after the ancient Mesopotamian goddess of love and war. Somewhat larger than Australia, Ishtar is the part of Venus that has been most heavily colonized by humans – predominantly owing to its climatic conditions. As Ishtar is an average of 9,900 ft., or 3,000 meters, above sea level, it is significantly cooler and dryer than lower areas.

The region is characterized by mountains and tablelands. The highest elevation, **Mount Maxwell**, rises more than 35,400 ft., or 10,800 meters, into the sky, and so for no less than half the Venusian year its peak is clear of cloud.

Mount Maxwell gives way to the **Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains**, the most characteristic feature of this part of Venus. This mountain chain surrounds the wide, fertile **Ishtar Plateau** seized by the German Empire. The plateau, which has a diameter of slightly more than 1,400 miles, or 2,300 kilometers, is covered with dense jungle. However, an increasing number of plantations are beginning to expand outwards from the settlements into the forest. The colony's towns and plantations are connected via narrow roads, actually mere dinosaur paths, with lesser trails to lizard-men villages branching off at irregular intervals.

While the colony's northern and northeastern boundaries are formed by the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains, it is bordered by bold cliffs in all other directions. Rising 9,900 ft. (3,000 meters) or more from the lowlands, these crags are specifically the **Danu Cliffs** in the south, the **Akna Cliffs** in the west and the **Freia Cliffs** in the north. Just like the Ishtar Plateau, all of them bear the names of goddesses. These names were bestowed upon them by **Arthur Townsend-Smythe**, an anthropologist and member of the 1874 expedition who displayed a keen interest in mythology. In 1878, he was killed in a dinosaur attack, just a few days

