Triads Online
By Eleanor Holmes and Martin Gotthard

Orange-Hard
By Jade

I was telling the Captain about an interesting discovery I made a few months back, and he asked me to write it up. So here's my tale ... .

I was on assignment to ghost someone's persona as part of a contract with Mitsuhama. I followed the person around the Matrix for a week without noticing anything unusual. Then one day I trailed the icon into the host of some mom-and-pop seafood business, and bingo-my mark slipped through a trapdoor.

Naturally, I followed, expecting to hit a chokepoint or series of hidden hosts. Instead, I walked into medieval China-the Ming-dynasty era to be accurate.

It took me a sec to scan the terrain and realize I was in a PLTG. It wasn't much of a grid as far as grids go. I could see something like fifteen or twenty host icons, designed as shrines, temples, simple dwellings and fortresses. Every icon in the grid was draped with flags, numbers and symbols, and all sorts of other ritualistic-looking drek. My sensor program was only picking up Chinese language input-luckily, it's my native language. The scenery reminded me of a secret society initiation ceremony I'd once run surveillance on.

That's when it hit me-I was on a private Triad grid, used by and for Triads only. As far as I can tell, at least three separate Triads use the grid. I was so intrigued, I lost track of my mark for the time being and spent the rest of my time just snooping around. I decided to spend some private time sniffing around as well. The trapdoor was only good for about a week, but I just had to go back to my surveillance and follow my mark to a new backwater host and a new trapdoor.

> Conventional street wisdom says that the Triads don't have much of a centralized power structure. What are they doing cooperating long enough to put a private Matrix grid online? Where are they scoring the tech and expertise, and what in Dog's name do they need it all for?
> Fizz

> Well, for starters, the Triads are competing for market share. With rivals like the Mafia and the Yakuza, it makes sense for the Triads to get organized and professional.
> Brimstone

> Triad grids have actually been around for a while, in one form or another, ever since the Triads really went global. The PLTG in question doesn't actually service every Triad in the world-even the Yaks aren't that organized

or unified. A few of them who had a strong alliance going merely pulled together the grid as a mutual resource.
> China Doll

> I know the grid and Triads in question. The secret to their cooperation is that none of the Triads involved have overlapping physical territory. The Yellow Lotus are based out of Hong Kong, the White Tigers are rooted in mainland China and the Golden Flames are settled in San Francisco. This physical distance probably keeps their relationships clean; I doubt Triads competing in the same city could cooperate enough.
> Belladonna

> There's more to it than that-all three are part of a massive smuggling network. The China group cultivates local warlords who harvest opium. The opium goes to the SanFran Triad for distribution. In return, the SanFran group smuggles weaponry back to the Chinese warlords. The Hong Kong group acts as middlemen.
> HK Kid

> If you want to know how the PLTG is paid for and maintained, I'll tell ya-Wuxing. Yep, that's right, our favorite Chinese megacorp. Wuxing is in hot and heavy with the Yellow Lotus and Eighty Eights, and probably more.
> Conspir-I-See

> More to the point, Wuxing uses the grid as a manipulative tool to enhance the fortunes of friendly Triads at the expense of hostile groups. If your Triad is in good standing with Wuxing, the corp will give you access to the intel and resources provided on the grid. If you don't dance to Wuxing's tune … well, then, no access privileges for you.
> Jumper

> Symbiotic corporation/crime syndicate relationships are really nothing new, just look at Aztechnology's history. But in this instance, you're wrong. Wuxing ain't the power behind the scenes.
> Xiang

> Who is then?
> Malachai

> You probably won't get an answer, Mal. The Triads are very good at making sure people keep their lips sealed. If you're really interested, dig for yourself. You may find another corp to be involved-Tan Tien, perhaps. Or you may realize that you shouldn't believe every post you read here.
> Snow Tiger

In my subsequent visits to the grid, I've had a chance to scout out what goes on there. I picked a few hosts at random for exploration, and came across gigapulses of useful data. Delivery schedules, bookkeeping records (the bookie kind as well as the accountant kind), blackmail dirt, records on Yak and Mafia (and even some rival Triad) operations and personnel, and even

some resources on wujen magic. I also found the personal diary of a Chinese warlord, which provided hours of spicy reading.

I also found some less-useful but still interesting things. One of the hosts was in fact a virtual mahjong parlor, used both for gambling and for private meets. Another host was dedicated to operating a BTL factory that was busily churning out Kong Chips like crazy.

> The files kept on the competing syndicates are quite useful. They do tend to run short on data about the Seoulpa Rings, though-most of the Rings are strictly local affairs, and collating information about them is less valuable than about the bigger syndicates.
> Belladonna

The grid's security designers seemed to have a fondness for sparky and in-your-face blaster IC. I've also run into some psychotropic black-the frenzy variant. Most of the IC is relatively unsophisticated, but still plenty nasty.

Triads Online Rules
Typical Triad Security Sheaf
3 Probe-8
7 Scout-9
10 Scout-9 with trap Crippler (binder)-6
13 Trace-9
16 Probe-10 with trap Tar Pit-8
20 Passive Alert, Security Deckers, Blaster-10
23 Scout-10 with trap Sparky-8
26 Trace-10 with trap Blaster-8
30 Construct-12 (Sparky-10, Blaster-8, Trace-6)
34 Active Alert, Blaster-10
38 Psychotropic (Frenzy) Black IC-10
41 Psychotropic (Frenzy) Black IC-12

The Triads Online grids are just like the Triads in the real world: deliberately mysterious, dangerous, and not all that wiz on uninvited guests. Still, a decker never knows when she'll need that one little piece of information that only the Triads have. The Triads Online grid is the place to go when you just have to know, and a perfect place for gamemasters to use to lure characters into a storyline.

Gamemasters are invited to use their own discretion when determining who actually runs and maintains the Triads Online grid. If the gamemaster decides that Wuxing is behind it, then it is perfect to use as a tool to keep the Triads in their corporate pocket, as well as coordinating the groups against Wuxing's enemies. As for the personalities that a character might expect to find there, those would be the same as in the meat world: corp suits, smugglers, gamblers, and the power players of China. For more information on Triads, see p. 51, Underworld Sourcebook. For information on Wuxing and its involvement with the Triads, see p. 107, Corporate Download.

Entrance into the Triads Online grid is not easy to come by. The SANs leading to the grid are hidden behind trap doors on discreet Triad-friendly hosts. They are moved randomly on a weekly basis, and the only way to predict where they will show next is to ask a Triad member.

The language of choice in the Triads Online grid is Chinese. At the gamemaster's discretion, characters who don't speak Chinese or who lack Chinese language sensor translation (essentially a Chinese linguasoft) may suffer a -3 Target Number Modifier while in the system. This language barrier along with the fact that the Triads rarely do anything in a straightforward fashion makes searches more difficult. Apply a +1 Search Modifier to any searches performed on the grid.