An adventure for

Traveller

CORE

*Suitable for use with **GURPS Traveller** and **Marc Miller's Traveller***

The KHIIDKAR INCIDENT

The Khiidkar Incident

An adventure for

Traveller®

"I think a spot of hunting is called for," declared the Marquis.

"Hunting - that would be to your preferred methods?" asked Lord Lavalii, just a hint of uncertainty in his voice.

"Of course," said the Marquis. "On horseback, using lances and blades only. I think we'll go after boar."

The Marquis' daughter Marai smiled and said, "The Great Crested Tusk-Boar, that is. They have a ferocious temper and will quite happily trample or gore hunters to death. They are so bad-tempered that although they are herbivores, they will eat any opponent who is slain or even injured."

Lord Lavalii's face seemed to pale a little, even in the subdued light of the glow-globes which lit the dining table.

"Still, you should be quite safe," Marai added wickedly, "Since my father has probably cleared the island of most of its wildlife by now."

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The Khiidkar Incident

or

"A tale of noble intrigue, lost heirs, love, romance and, of course, several incidents involving swords and automatic weapons... "

Written by: Martin Dougherty and Neil Frier.

Edited by: Andy Lilly.

Cover Design and Artwork: Andy Lilly, with thanks to Sarah, Chaz and Jan.

Playtested by: Darryn, Ian, Mike, Steve and Dave.

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E-mail: BITS@bits.org.uk **Web: http://www.bits.org.uk/**

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Introduction

What's in this book and how to use it

The Khiidkar Incident embroils a group of characters in noble escapades involving romance, piracy and kidnap.

Introduction

This adventure is for the use of a Traveller Games Master (GM) and concerns a group of noble or high ranking characters in the pursuit of the anti-Imperial rebel Captain Swing.

You should feel free to adapt any or all of this information to suit your campaign background and/or personal preferences.

Format

This adventure is divided into a series of "nuggets", generally presented in chronological order, although some nuggets are optional and may be re-ordered to fit with the manner in which the players react to the storyline.

Scene-setting text to be read, paraphrased or otherwise conveyed to the players is shown as:

> Example text to be read to the players.

Occasionally sidebars are used to present key data such as NPC attributes. A separate Library Data section starting on page 35 describes the world of Khiidkar and other key information.

Background

This adventure is written so as to be largely independent of the Traveller era (although it was first published for Milieu 0).

Dates: All dates herein conform to the Imperial Calendar. If run in Milieu 0, this adventure starts in 078-18, i.e. the 78th day of the 18th year since the formation of the Third Imperium. Time periods are in standard (Terran) minutes and hours unless otherwise stated.

Location: This adventure takes place in the Core sector on the world of Khiidkar (Core 1812) which is a member world of the Imperium.

Author's Notes

The Khiidkar Incident was first published in an abridged format by Imperium Games.

Characters

It is strongly recommended that this adventure be played with the characters provided (pp.6-9). The adventure is heavily character-driven and will not work with a typical free trader crew!

This may be used as a side-story to an ongoing campaign, or existing characters with high social standing may be led into the story and may emerge with patents of nobility of their own.

To encourage good roleplaying and/or for tournament use, short rules (p.9) explain how to "grade" each player's roleplaying, given their character's background and motivations.

Non-Player Characters

The majority of NPCs do not require detailed descriptions; in this adventure their abilities are summarised in the format A/S *(a/s)* where "A" is the average attribute value and "S" the level in their key skill(s). The equivalent GURPS data are "a" and "s" respectively. The GM decides that an enlisted soldier's key attributes are Strength, Dexterity and Endurance. A NPC soldier graded 8/3 *(11/15)* would therefore have a UPP of 888--- *(GT: ST 11, DX 11, HT 11)* and his key skills (e.g. weapons) will be at level 3 *(GT: 15)*. Alternatively, a scientist's primary attributes might be Intelligence and Education, giving a UPP of ---88-.

Subsidiary attributes and skills will be one or more levels lower. The GM should only determine whether an NPC has a subsidiary skill if such a skill is specifically called for in the adventure. Where more detail is required, full NPC statistics are given.

Note that where felt appropriate by the authors, GT data does not always follow the simple conversion guidelines given in the GT rule book.

Rules

This adventure uses a generic task system with character data for the later versions of Traveller (T4) and GURPS Traveller (GT). This can easily be adapted to other Traveller rule sets.

Some skill and attribute names differ between rule sets, e.g. where Education is referred to, GT uses IQ. Care should be taken not to confuse skills, e.g. Navigation in earlier rule sets referred to interstellar navigation, whereas in T4 and GT this skill is Astrogation and Navigation refers to planet-bound mapping, etc. This adventure

always uses the later definitions. Unless otherwise noted, data is given in T4 format with GT-specific information in *italics*, thus: *(GT: IQ 14)*.

Tasks

Task definitions are used sparingly in this adventure – it is the responsibility of the GM to define tasks and determine the required skills and equipment for each situation. Where a specific task roll is required, it uses the following format:

To find a boar:
➢Difficult Recon *(GT: Tracking)*, or
➢Difficult Hunting, or
➢Formidable Survival

- +1 Difficulty if riding at full gallop.
- +1 Difficulty if lost.
- -1 Difficulty if moving slowly.

Spectacular Success: They have surprised a boar and have one round to act before it reacts.
Success: They have found boar tracks and can begin following them.
Failure: No tracks found.
Spectacular Failure: They have become lost.

+1 Difficulty indicates a harder task (e.g. an Average task becomes Difficult) whereas -1 Difficulty is an easier task (e.g. Difficult would become Average).

MegaTraveller (MT), Traveller: The New Era (TNE) and Marc Miller's Traveller (T4) all use a graduated system of task difficulty ratings – Routine, Difficult, Formidable, etc. 'Classic' Traveller (CT) and GURPS Traveller (GT) use modifiers to the task rolls instead. The BITS Task System provides a simplified common ground for all these rule sets, using difficulty ratings with corresponding task modifiers for CT and GT as shown in Table 1.

The means by which spectacular *(GT: critical)* success or failure are achieved are defined by the rule set used. Similarly, the GM should apply the rules for special tasks – opposed, co-operative, hasty, cautious, etc. – according to the rule set used. As always, these are only guidelines – the GM may alter any task roll as appropriate to enhance the game.

Example

Maria Charles is forging a complex document which the GM rules is a Staggering task. Maria has Forgery-4 *(GT: Forgery-16)* and the relevant attribute (MT, T4) is INT 10 (TNE: INT 9).

CT: Task success is normally 2D + Skill ≥ 8. Maria requires 2D + Forgery ≥ 12 (8 + 4 for Staggering difficulty). Alternatively, the GM may prefer to apply the target modifier as a negative modifier on the dice roll, i.e. 2D + 4 – 4 ≥ 8.

MT: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to MT's Formidable (15+), thus the task is 2D + Skill + (Stat / 5) ≥ 15. For Maria this is: 2D + 4 + 2 ≥ 15.

TNE: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to TNE's Impossible, thus the task is d20 ≤ (Skill + Stat) × ¼. For Maria this is d20 ≤ 3, i.e. (9 + 4) / 4 rounded down.

T4: Maria requires 4D ≤ INT + Forgery. (Note that T4's Staggering rating of 3.5D is ignored.)

GT: Maria requires 3D ≤ Forgery + Target Modifier, i.e. 3D ≤ 16 – 6.

TABLE 1: TASK DIFFICULTIES

BITS Task Difficulty	T4 Task Difficulty	T4.1 Task Difficulty	GT Target Modifier	TNE Task Difficulty	MT Task Difficulty	CT Target Modifier
Easy	Easy (Auto)	Easy (1D)	+6	Easy	Simple	-4
Average	Average (2D)	Average (2D)	+3	Average	Routine	-2
Difficult	Difficult (2.5D)	Difficult (2.5D)	0	Difficult	Difficult	0
Formidable	Formidable (3D)	Formidable (3D)	-3	Formidable	Difficult	+2
Staggering	Impossible (4D)	Staggering (4D)	-6	Impossible	Formidable	+4
Impossible	(5D)	Hopeless (5D)	-9	Impossible	Impossible	+6
Hopeless	(6D)	Impossible (6D)	-12	Impossible	Impossible	+8

This adventure is a mix of social interplay and action. The GM should strongly encourage the players to follow the social customs inherent in Imperial high society.

Background

The characters are nobles or in the service of nobles. They will arrive on Khiidkar as heroes – guests of their liege-lord – and should be act appropriately. Commoners will treat them with great respect. The GM should pay attention to the social customs of the world, especially regarding the right to wear a sword.

The players should have time to familiarise themselves with their characters, their ship and the current situation before starting Scenario 1.

Captain Swing

Evidence available to the Imperial authorities indicates that Captain Swing may be Sahl Comannii. Fragments of data logs from pirated ships show her commanding the crew of the pirate ship *Mordent*. One very clear fragment shows her ordering a merchant crew spaced. Starport cameras have her image, and she is listed in Naval Intelligence files as a washout Naval Academy candidate who later vanished.

However, there is more to Captain Swing than Sahl Comannii. Captain Swing is a semi-fictional character, whose activities inspire the anti-Imperial KFF. Named for a leader of the 'machine-breakers' during the Industrial Revolution on Terra, Swing is in fact a conglomerate entity whose main parts are Sahl Comannii and Rane Haraani. They operate as a team, with the intent of causing commercial damage – the best way to get a Khiidkarian's attention. Usually Haraani travels on liners and merchant ships as an 'inside man', using a false identity. After gaining access to the ship's security systems and computer, he sets up an easy target for the 'pirate' vessel. The victim vessel is usually destroyed to hinder investigation.

Overview

The characters have been tracking the notorious Captain Swing and chase his ship *Mordent* into the Khiidkar system.

Scenario 1: Boarding Stations

The characters attack and board the *Mordent*. They rescue Rane Haraani (long-lost half-brother of the Marquis of Khiidkar) and Lord Ander Lavalii and believe they may have killed Captain Swing.

Scenario 2: The Heroes' Homecoming

The characters convey Rane to the Marquis' palace at the Downport, where they are welcomed as heroes with a huge party. Count Julian meets the Marquis' Daughter, Marai and, with his new-found hero status, has a good chance at courting her. However, Lord Lavalii has similar ideas.

The Marquis invites the PCs to his hunting lodge for a more private month-long holiday.

Scenario 3: At the Hunting Lodge

The characters are invited to take part in a hunt, chasing the local Crested Tusk-boar.

During the hunt, Marai's grav car crashes close to Sir Donava, who saves her from a fierce boar. Marai becomes infatuated with her dashing hero.

Scenario 4: A Short Respite

The characters have some leisure time on their hands. Sir Donava can develop a relationship with Marai and alienate his friend the Count.

Scenario 5: The Announcement

The Marquis announces that his daughter will marry Count Julian. Marai is still infatuated with her rescuer, but fond of the Count.

Rane tells the PCs he has discovered Marai's grav car was sabotaged. He helps the PCs set a trap for the saboteurs. Evidence from a captured assassin points at Count Julian, who is arrested.

Scenario 6: The Escape

The characters investigate at the Downport and discover treachery indicating Rane Haraani is actually Captain Swing. In the meantime Rane has kidnapped Marai. The characters give chase.

Scenario 7: The Pursuit

The characters catch Rane and a desperate fight erupts as he tries to escape. Depending upon who survives, Marai marries one of her heroes. The surviving PCs are rewarded.

Noble is as noble does...

The following data describes the key characters (in descending order of importance), their personalities and motivations. If less than six players are available, the characters should be assigned in the order they are presented here. The GM is permitted to make copies of these character sheets to distribute to the players for this adventure.

Julian Talaton, Count Irurk

Imperial Count
Sylean Human Male, Age 35, Homeworld Irurk (Core 1916)
UPP 89866D-8
Astrogation-1, Carousing-2, Computer-2, Diplomacy-3, Equestrian-2, Fencing-4, First Aid-2, Grav Craft-1, Ground Craft-2, History-1, Language (Vilani)-2, Law-1, Leadership-2, Pilot-3, Pistol-1, Short Blade-1, Vacc Suit-1.
GT: ST 11, DX 12, IQ 9, HT 11 *(Thrust: 1D - 1, Swing 1D + 1, Speed 5.75)*
Astrogation-12, Carousing-13, Computer Ops-13, Diplomacy-15, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-12, Driving (Car)-13, Fencing-16, First Aid-13, Free Fall-11, History-11, Law-11, Language (Vilani)-13, Leadership-13, Piloting (Large Spaceship)-15, Guns (Pistol)-11, Riding (Horse)-13, Savoir-Faire-12, Shortsword-11, Vacc Suit-11.
Advantages: High Status (noble), Military Rank (Lieutenant), Ally Group (starship and crew), Wealth (Multimillionaire).
Disadvantages: Impulsiveness, Obsessions (destroy KFF; capture Captain Swing), Restless, Duty (to liege Marquis Haraani).
Quirks: Dislikes grav vehicles, childhood sweetheart of Lady Marai, "doer" rather than planner.

Items: Diplomatic Armour (see p.35); Personal Communicator; Foil *(GT: 1D imp, 1 lb)*; Dagger; Patrol Cruiser *Talaton Principle* (400 dt) – see p.10.

Background: House Talaton is a vassal of House Khiidkar, owing allegiance to Marquis Haraani.

Despite the impatience and recklessness which got him dismissed for academic failure from the Naval Academy after just a year, Julian's family bought him a commission which was intended to lead to a desk job on Sylea, a uniform for social occasions and an increase in political standing. Instead Julian somehow gained himself a bridge post aboard the 20,000 ton cruiser *Revenge*. Proving himself a good pilot and a courageous officer during the Chanestin Wars, Julian was promoted quickly and made many friends including a young Marine officer named Kathrine Irushii.

After eight years in the service Julian had reached the rank of Lieutenant. However, the untimely death of his father in a grav car accident forced him to accept an honorable discharge from the Navy and return to Irurk to take up his new responsibilities. Court life bored Julian, although he tried to guide his house to the best of his abilities over the next five years. Recognizing this, Marquis Haraani appointed a custodian to watch over the Talaton lands, leaving Julian free to carry out the Marquis' will in the field.

For the past two years, Count Julian has fought against the Khiidkar Freedom Front (KFF), a band of anti-Imperial terrorists, at the express wish of his liege lord. It is his personal goal to capture the notorious rebel leader known as Captain Swing. To this end he operates a patrol cruiser crewed by his household huscarls.

Objectives: Destroy the KFF. Court Lady Marai, daughter of Marquis Haraani.

Captain Sir Donava Talaton

Imperial Knight of Sylea, Captain of the Talaton Huscarls
Human Male, Age 36, Homeworld Irurk (Core 1916)

UPP 78898B-3

Astrogation-2, Brawling-2, Carousing-1, Computer-2, Electronics-2, Equestrian-1, Fencing-1, Grav Craft-1, Gunnery-1, Language (Vilani)-2, Leadership-3, Sensors-4, *Vacc* Suit-2.

GT: ST 10, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 11 *(Thrust: 1D – 2, Swing 1D, Speed 5.5)*

Astrogation-13, Brawling-13, Broadsword-12, Carousing-12, Computer Ops-13, Electronics (Sensors)-13, Electronic Operations (Sensors)-16, Vacc Suit-12, Gunner (Ship's Lasers)-11, Language (Vilani)-13, Leadership-15, Mathematics-12, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-11, Riding (Horse)-12, Savoir-Faire-13, Vacc suit-13.

Advantages: Military Rank (Captain), High Status (noble), Reputation (naval), Ally Group (ship crew).

Disadvantages: Duty (to Count Julian & Marquis Haraani).

Quirks: Loyalty to Count Julian, attracted to lady Marai.

Items: Diplomatic Armour (see p.35); Personal Communicator; Cutlass *(GT: Broadsword)*; Dagger.

Background: Born into the Talaton family, Sir Donava is a cousin of Count Julian, and is both commander of the household huscarls and a trusted friend and companion.

After graduating from Naval Academy, Sir Donava served in the Navy for 12 years, winning several Mentions In Dispatches and a First-Class Naval Cross with Diamonds at the first battle of Mishaa. After rising to command a small patrol cruiser, Sir Donava was offered command of the household troops by his boyhood friend Count Julian. He thus became captain of the Count's personal ship, the *Talaton Principle*. For the past two years, Sir Donava has assisted his friend in hunting down Captain Swing.

Objectives: Court Lady Marai, daughter of Marquis Haraani. Serve Count Julian faithfully.

Sir Vargner Talaton

Knight-Companion of Sylea, Lieutenant of the Talaton Huscarls (Communications Officer)
Human Male, Age 26, Homeworld Irurk (Core 1916)

UPP B6A78B-8

Brawling-1, Bribery-1, Carousing-3, Computer-1, Equestrian-3, Fast Talk-2, Fencing-3, Gambling-1, Grav Craft-1, Recon-1.

GT: ST 15, DX 9, IQ 10, HT 13 *(Thrust 1D + 1, Swing 2D + 1, Speed 5.5)*

Brawling-11, Carousing-15, Computer Ops-12, Fast Talk-13, Fencing-14, Gambling-12, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-11, Riding (Horse)-15, Streetwise-11, Tracking-11.

Advantages: High Status (noble), Military Rank (Lieutenant).

Disadvantages: Duty (to Count Julian & Marquis Haraani), Compulsive Behaviour (Wastrel), Fanaticism (loyalty to liege).

Quirks: Womaniser, gambler, seeks to escape service with the huscarls.

Items: Diplomatic Armour (see p.35); Personal Communicator; Foil *(GT: 1D + 2 imp, 1 lb)*; Dagger; Huge debts!

Background: Unlike his brother Donava, the military life did not appeal to Sir Vargner. As his mother's favorite child he managed to avoid anything he wished to, and grew up rather spoiled.

For the first eight years of his 'adult' life, Sir Vargner cost his family a vast fortune in gambling debts, wine and women. Finally, Sir Donava found a way to deal with the problem and for the past six months Sir Vargner has been assigned to the patrol cruiser *Talaton Principle*, ostensibly as communications officer. In fact he has no real duties but is there simply to keep him out of trouble. On his present salary it will take Sir Vargner several lifetimes to pay off his debts and he is thoroughly disgusted with the assignment. Sir Vargner is trying to annoy or sicken his brother and get himself dismissed so that he can resume his playboy lifestyle. Meanwhile Sir Donava tries to 'make a real man' of his brother.

Sir Vargner is no good, and he knows it. he just wants an easy life of carousing and excitement. However, he is no coward and has one redeeming feature; he is fanatically loyal to his liege. His heroism is short-lived, however. He will rapidly fall back into his old ways given the chance.

Objectives: Serve the Count and the Marquis. Escape from service in the Huscarls.

Major Kathrine Irishii

Major of the Talaton Huscarls

Sylean Human Female, Age 34, Homeworld Sylea (Core 2118)

UPP B89769-5

Athletics-2, Battle Dress-2, Brawling-1, Carousing-1, Computer-1, Environment Combat-1, Grav Craft-2, Leadership-2, Long Blade-2, Mechanical-1, Pistol-3, Recon-3, Rifle-4, Survival-1, Tactics-3.

GT: ST 15, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 12 *(Thrust 1D + 1, Swing 2D + 1, Speed: 5.75)*

Armoury (guns)-11, Athletic Sports-13, Battlesuit-13, Brawling-12, Broadsword-13, Carousing-12, Computer Ops-12, Free Fall-12, Guns (Pistol)-15, Guns (Rifle)-16, Leadership-13, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-13, Survival (Temperate forest)-11, Tactics-15, Tracking-15.

Advantages: Military Rank (Major), Reputation (decorated), Fit.

Disadvantages: Duty (Talaton Huscarls), Obsession (Sir Donava).

Quirks: Loves the military life, always wanted to be a Marine, proud of her position/rank.

Items: ACR, 9mm, solid slugs; Autopistol, 9mm; Cutlass *(GT: Broadsword)*; Diplomatic Armour (see p.35); Battledress; Personal Communicator.

Background: Kathrine always wanted to be a Marine and was one of the first to volunteer for service aboard Cleon's new anti-pirate gunships. Over 12 years, her career was marked by a rapid rise though the ranks, to Major commanding the Marine contingent aboard the cruiser *Revenge*.

It was aboard this vessel that Kathrine fought at the battle of Rorc's Asteroid. During the battle, the cruiser was targeted by heavy fire and lost manoeuvre. Kathrine's marines fought off a determined boarding attempt by Chanestin Royal Marines and incidentally saved the life of Count Julian Talaton.

Four years ago, Count Julian offered her command of his personal bodyguard. The post would be perfect except that Kathrine has fallen for Sir Donava Talaton – a relationship which can never work.

Objectives: Protect Count Julian. Romance Sir Donava.

Dr. Morris Kashintie

First Advisor to Count Irurk.

Human Male, Age 46, Homeworld Irurk (Core 1916)

UPP: 564AEA-3

Adminstration-3, Carousing-4, Computer-6, Diplomacy-4, Electronics-2, Forgery-1, Grav Vehicle-1, History-2, Language (Vilani)-1, Law-4, Leadership-1, Liaison-2, Linguistics-3, Short Blade-1, Streetwise-2, Trader-1.

GT: ST 8, DX 9, IQ 15, HT 7 *(Thrust 1D – 3, Swing 1D – 2, Speed 4)*

Administration-15, Carousing-16, Computer Hacking-16, Computer Ops-19, Diplomacy-16, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-12, Electronics (Computers)-13, Forgery-12, History-13, Language (Vilani)-12, Law-16, Leadership-12, Liaison-13, Linguistics-15, Mathematics-12, Merchant-11, Savoir-Faire-13, Shortsword-11, Streetwise-13.

Advantages: Status (First Advisor to House Talaton), Status (scientific: PhD), security clearance.

Disadvantages: Odious Personal Habits (tinkering with computer equipment, basking in reflected glory), Workaholic.

Quirks: Fascinated by Captain Swing's use of computer hacking, enjoys emphasising the importance of the man he serves, impeccable manners.

Items: Dress Dagger; Personal Hand Computer; Personal Communicator.

Background: Dr. Kashintie graduated after four years from the Irurk College of Technology with a BSc Hons in Corporate Administration with Information Systems. A further four years at the University of Sylea earned him a MSc Hons in Corporate Administration and then a PhD in Information Systems Analysis. With such an impressive background in computer systems and administration, Dr. Kashintie was snapped up some 20 years ago by House Talaton. He won rapid promotion within the administration, eventually leading to his post as chief advisor to the Count himself.

While not a noble, Dr. Kashintie's manners are impeccable and his judgement excellent. He is the Count's most vital assistant at court, and is never without an idea or a good word. Captain Swing is of great interest to Dr. Kashintie, due to his use of computer hacking in many of his crimes.

Objectives: Improve Social Standing. Investigate Captain Swing.

Captain Duran Harshii

Captain of Naval Intelligence
Human Male, Age 30, Homeworld Sylea (Core 2118)
UPP: BB9868-5
Carousing-2, Communications-2, Computer-2, Equestrian-2, Grav Vehicle-2, Language (Vilani) -2, Melee Combat-2, Perception-2, Pistol-3, Streetwise-1.
GT: ST 14, DX 14, IQ 10, HT 12 *(Thrust 1D, Swing 2D, Move 6.5)*
Broadsword-13, Carousing-13, Computer Ops-13, Electronics Operation (Communications)-13, Guns (Pistol)-15, Language (Vilani)-13, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-13, Riding (Horse)-13, Streetwise-12.
Advantages: Military Rank (Captain), Peripheral Vision.
Disadvantages: Fanaticism (patriotism), Sense of Duty (Imperial citizens).
Quirks: Concerned about the Count's obsessive behaviour, career-minded.

Items: Autopistol, 9mm; Cutlass *(GT: Broadsword)*; Diplomatic Armour (see p.35); Personal Communicator.

Background: From a good Sylean family background, Duran's twelve year career in the Navy led him into Naval Intelligence, with rapid promotion following excellent results. As a liaison officer assigned to House Talaton he is charged with ensuring that Talaton interests do not clash with Imperial policy, Duran has found this an easy assignment as the Talatons are staunchly pro-Imperium. However, there is some concern that Count Julian's obsession with hunting down Captain swing may cause problems, as it is believed that the rebel may be an ex-Navy officer which might cause some embarrassment.

Duran is ordered to support the Talatons to the best of his ability, unless their activities are obviously anti-Imperium.

Objectives: Observe for any breaches of Imperial Law. Serve the Count.

Tournament Scoring

This adventure works well as a scored tournament-style game. The following charts indicates each character's objectives and the tournament points which should be awarded for achieving these aims.

At the end of each scene, the GM should award tournament points. The storyline gives each character a better chance to gain points in some scenes than others. This averages out in the course of the adventure.

Points should be awarded based upon the values given in Table 2.

The winning character is simply the one with the most points. Conflicting objectives may cause friction between the characters, but this is good for the story.

TABLE 2: TOURNAMENT SCORING

Fulfilled Objective?	Points
Poor	0
Marginal	2
Okay	4
Good	8
Excellent	16

Objectives

Count Julian
Destroy the KFF.
Court Marai.

Sir Donava
Court Marai.
Serve the Count faithfully.

Sir Vargner
Escape from Huscarl service.
Serve the Count and the Marquis.

Major Irishii
Protect Count Julian.
Romance Sir Donava.

Dr Kashintie
Increase Social Standing.
Investigate Captain Swing.

Captain Harshii
Observe for breaches of Imperial Law.
Serve the Count.

The Count Irurk's Patrol Cruiser

This players should be familiar with the ship, crew and deckplan before the game begins.

Ship's Data

Hull: 400 dt, Streamlined, Size Rating 7, Armour 40, Structure 14, MCr121. *(GT: 400-ton SL Hull, Total Compartmentalisation, DR 200, PD 4, EMass 1,187, LMass 1,240, HP 42,300, Size Modifier +9.)*
Drives: Jump 3, Manoeuvre 4G, Power Plant 7. *(GT: Airspeed 3,140.)*
Weaponry: Fire Control Rating 2. Turrets 1 & 2: two Lasers (3/3/2/0) *(GT: 360-MJ)*, one Sandcaster. Turrets 3 & 4: two Missile Racks (Barbette 5, +5 in store), one Sandcaster. Sandcaster Rating 8.
Crew/Cargo: 10 Crew, 8 Marines, 3 Passengers. 13 Staterooms. No Cargo.
Electronics: Military Standard Controls. Sensor Rating 10A 4P 4J. *(GT: Hardened Command Bridge, Basic Stealth, Basic Emission Cloaking.)*
Fuel: Fuel scoops, purification (6 hours), 162.2 dt *(GT: 120 dt)*.
Sub-Craft: Ship's Boat (30 dt).
Notes: A design based on the *Porpir* class patrol ship used by the Imperium but modified by the removal of the G-carrier bay to create staterooms for noble passengers. Single staterooms are usually assigned to the Captain, Marine Commander and passengers; all other crew share double staterooms.

Bridge

Captain:	Donava Talaton (player).
Pilot:	Lieutenant Roger Jarvis 9/3 *(12/15)*.
Navigator:	Ensign Jark Sandis 8/3 *(11/17)*.
Sensors:	Ensign Meira Wyris 9/3 *(12/18)*.
Communications:	Vargner Talaton (player).
Computer:	Ensign Iani Torpenlis 8/3 *(11/15)*.

Engineering

Engineer:	Chief Paul Vortrext 8/4 *(12/18)*.
2nd Engineer/Gunner:	Jon Ypris {7/2 *(10/13)*.
Engineer/Gunner:	Pietre Tanenbau {7/2 *(10/13)*}.
Engineer/Gunner:	Vel Parii {7/2 *(10/13)*}.
Medic/Gunner:	Franc Millier {8/3 *(11/15)*}.

Marines

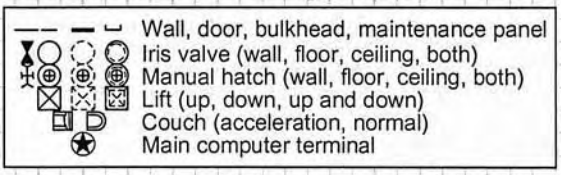
Commander:	Major Kathrine Irishii (player).
Troop 1 Leader:	Sargeant Thomas Oyy {9/3 *(13/18)*}.
Marine:	Hannah Gordon {8/2 *(11/15)*}.
Marine:	Philip Quiney {8/2 *(11/15)*}.
Troop 2 Leader:	Sargeant Talia Venatti {9/3 *(13/18)*}.
Marine:	Gram Spiks {8/2 *(11/15)*}.
Marine:	Yacob Ventz {8/2 *(11/15)*}.

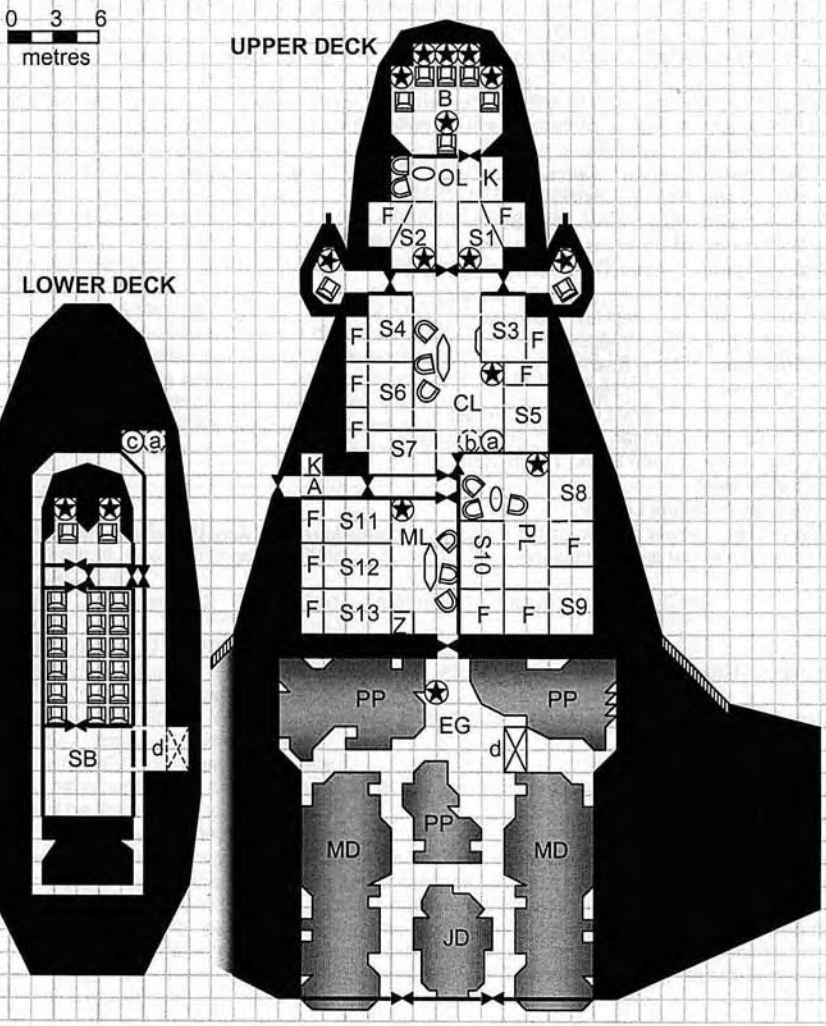
All Marines are equipped with: ACR (5D, 100 rnd, semi-auto or burst) *(GT: 9mm, 7D – 1 cr, 8.9 lb)*; Cutlass *(GT: 2D + 2 cut, 3 lb)*; Battledress. The Troop Leaders also each carry three 'idiot-proof' breaching charges and have the basic knowledge to use them without hazard.

Passengers

Count Julian Talaton
Dr. Morris Kashintie
Captain Duran Harshii

Talaton Principle





Key to Deckplans

A: Airlock. Extending ramp to ground level. Locker containing vacc suits, escape balls, emergency and survival equipment.

B: Bridge. Control consoles for all six bridge crew. All consoles have dynamically-configurable holographic displays, allowing crew to change consoles as required (e.g. due to damage or malfunction) and to co-ordinate multiple functions from one console (e.g. weapons can be controlled centrally).

CL: Crew Lounge. Includes self-service galley, fitness equipment and entertainment facilities.

EG: Engineering. Computer monitoring station. Emergency/maintenance access hatches at rear.

F: Fresher. Plush, high quality washroom with shower.

JD: Jump Drive. Tamari 'Wind 11' with fast-flow mirrorflex grid pattern.

K: Locker. Vacc suits, mechanical and electronic maintenance kits, first aid and survival equipment.

MD: Manoeuvre Drive. Velaz Mecan III, dual fusion feed.

ML: Marines Lounge. Includes arms locker, self-service galley, fitness equipment and entertainment facilities.

OL: Officers Lounge. Includes self-service galley, equipment lockers and entertainment facilities.

PL: Passenger Lounge. Includes self-service galley, fitness equipment and entertainment facilities.

PP: Power Plant. Fortrex 20.

S1: Stateroom. (Donava Talaton.)

S2: Stateroom. (Kathrine Irishii.)

S3: Stateroom. (Roger Jarvis, Jark Sandis.)

S4: Stateroom. (Meira Wyris, Paul Vortrext.)

S5: Stateroom. (Vargner Talaton, Iani Torpenlis.)

S6: Stateroom. (Jon Ypris, Pietre Tanenbau.)

S7: Stateroom. (Pat Greckles, Franc Millier.)

S8: Stateroom. (Julian Talaton.)

S9: Stateroom. (Morris Kashintie.)

S10: Stateroom. (Duran Harshii.)

S11: Stateroom. (Thomas Oyy, Talia Venatti.)

S12: Stateroom. (Hannah Gordon, Philip Quiney.)

S13: Stateroom. (Gram Spiks, Yacob Ventz.)

SB: Ship's Boat.

Z: Marines Weapons Locker.

Lifts: a = Upper/lower deck transit. b = Access to dorsal turret. c = Access to ventral turret. d = Cargo lift between ship's boat and engineering.

Non-player Characters

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

The following data describes the key non-player characters (NPCs) encountered in this adventure.

Commodore Jole Haraani, Marquis Khiidkar

Imperial Marquis, Navy Commodore (Retired)
Human Male, Age 46, Homeworld Khiidkar (Core 1812)
UPP 688ABD-4

Admin-3, Astrogation-2, Broker-3, Carousing-3, Communications-1, Computer-2, Diplomacy-5, Equestrian-4, Fencing-2, Fine Arts-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Leadership-2, Melee Combat-4, Pilot-2, Pistol-1, Recon-1, Sensors-3.

GT: ST 9, DX 11, IQ 14, HT 11 *(Thrust 1D – 2, Swing 1D – 1, Speed 5.5)*

Administration-15, Astrogation-13, Carousing-15, Communications-12, Computer Ops-13, Diplomacy-18, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-12, Fencing-13, Guns (Pistol)-12, Leadership-13, Merchant-15, Piloting (Large Spaceship)-13, Riding (Horse)-16, Sensor Ops-15, Spear-16, Tracking-12.

Advantages: High Status (Noble). Naval rank (Retired Commodore). Wealth (Multimillionaire).

Disadvantages: Glory Hound, Overconfidence.

Quirks: Tells tall tales of his adventures, respects courage, likes to hunt dangerous animals with only hand weapons.

Items: Hunting Armour (as Cloth 2F; *GT: PD2, DR10)*; Foil *(GT: 1D - 1 imp, 1 lb)*; private island, etc.!

Background: Marquis Haraani of Khiidkar is staunchly pro-Cleon. As a naval officer in the Federation Navy and later as a politician, the Marquis supported the Zhunastu bid for power, and was rewarded generously. The Marquis is head of Khiidarcorp, and runs the business interests well, though he longs for his younger days when he was adventuring in the Navy, during which time he was placed in mortal danger on a daily basis, if his tall tales are to be believed. He certainly has many scars and is still an active huntsman. The Marquis respects sound good sense - but he admires courage more.

Lady Marai Haraani

Human Female, Age 29, Homeworld Khiidkar (Core 1812)
UPP 4AACAD-8

Carousing-2, Computer-3, Diplomacy-1, Equestrian-1, Fencing-1, Grav Craft-1, JoT-1, Law-2, Psychology-1.

GT: ST 7, DX 14, IQ 15, HT 13 *(Thrust 1D – 3, Swing 1D – 3, Speed 6.75)*

Carousing-13, Computer Ops-15, Diplomacy-12, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-12, Fencing-12, Law-13, Psychology-12, Riding (Horse)-12.

Advantages: High Status (Noble heiress). Recognition (MSc, +1 among scientists, sometimes). Jack of all Trades-1. Wealth (Multimillionaire).

Disadvantages: None of any importance.

Quirks: Attracted to both Count Julian and Sir Donava. Unimpressed by her father's hunting antics. Very fond of her father; tries to "look after" him.

Items: The very latest in technical gadgets.

Background: An honours graduate of both BSc and MSc courses at the University Of Sylea, Marai is her father's only child and the legal heir to all his holdings. She has served as his assistant for several years, and is well prepared to take over upon his death – she already runs several subsidiary operations in her own right. While she does not share her father's reckless nature, she accompanies him on hunting trips, watching with a mixture of fond indulgence and real concern for his safety. Marai thinks her father takes too many risks at his age and often chides him gently about this. She knows better than to challenge him, though.

Commander The Lord Ander Lavalii, Baron Khivn

Imperial Baron

Human Male, Age 29, Homeworld Khiidkar (Core 1812)

96846C-4

Broker-1, Carousing-3, Computer-2, Environment Combat-1, Equestrian-1, Fencing-1, First Aid-1, Gambling-1, Grav Craft-1, Ground Craft-1, Language (Vilani)-3, Melee Combat-1, Pilot-1, Recon-1, Sensors-2, Vacc Suit-1.

GT: ST 12, DX 9, IQ 7, HT 11 *(Thrust 1D - 1, Swing 1D + 2, Speed 5)*

Brawling-12, Carousing-15, Computer Ops-13, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-12, Driving (Car)-12, Electronic Operations (Sensors)-13, Fencing-12, First Aid-12, Free Fall-6, Gambling-12, Language (Vilani)-15, Merchant-12, Pilot (Large Spaceship)-12, Riding (Horse)-12, Tracking-12, Vacc Suit-12.

Advantages: Naval Rank (Commander), High Status (noble), Reputation (undeserved!), Luck.

Disadvantages: Incompetence (Leadership), Bad Temper, Intolerance (Rivals), Glory Hound.

Quirks: Lucky incompetent, taking the hero worship for all he can before the bubble bursts. Can't understand why he was taken unawares aboard Stellar Velvet. *Very touchy. Exaggerates tales of his adventures.*

Items: (Once back on Khiidkar) Diplomatic Armour *(GT: PD 2 DR 16 vs. firearms; PD 2, DR 4 vs. melee weapons, 4 lb)*; Personal Communicator; Foil *(GT: 1D imp, 1 lb).*

Background: Commander of the Fleet Destroyer *Imperial Retribution*, Ander is a real 'space hero', athletic and handsome. He won the barony of Khivn – a region on Khiidkar – for his actions at the Battle of Marker Rock. Unfortunately he is an incompetent who simply got blindingly lucky, and he knows it. He lives the heroic role to the hilt, loving it but dreading the day he is forced to make another major command decision.

The chance comments of others sometimes touch a nerve, and he reacts with blind hate, issuing vitriolic challenges. Since Ander is a fine swordsman, who always tries to kill his opponent – even in a blood fight – he has a fearsome reputation.

Ander's Story when rescued from the *Mordent*: Traveling home on the *Stellar Velvet* after a well-deserved furlough (his ship is in dock for maintenance), Ander was asleep in his cabin when the security alarms went off. Grabbing his trusty cutlass (as a noble he'd been allowed to keep it), he raced from his cabin, managing to kill one boarder before being wrestled down by... oh, at least four of them. Resolutely resisting their attempts to make him co-operate, he awed them so much that they left him to die rather than take him as a hostage – perhaps they were afraid he'd jump them if they let him out of the cell!

The Truth: Ander was taken completely unawares when *Stellar Velvet* was attacked. He cannot understand how the liner never even got a shot off and wonders if there might have been something he could have done. This doubt nags at him, so he refuses to admit that he was surprised and taken without a fight. The rest of his story is (perhaps surprisingly) true.

Rane Haraani

Human Male, Age 38, Homeworld Khiidkar (Core 1812)

UPP 5B988A-5

Acting-1, Brawling-1, Carousing-2, Computer-5, Fencing-3, Equestrian-1, Grav Craft-1, Language (Vilani)-2, Leadership-1, Perception-1, Pilot-1, Recon-1, Short Blade-1, Streetwise-4, Survival-1, Tactics-2.

GT: ST 8, DX 14, IQ 11, HT 12 *(Thrust 1D – 3, Swing 1D – 2, Speed 5.5) 31 / 4*

Acting-12, Brawling-12, Carousing-13, Computer Hacking-16, Computer Ops-18, Piloting (Contragravity vehicle)-12, Fencing-15, Language (Vilani)-13, Leadership-12, Pilot (Large Spaceship)-12, Riding (Horse)-12, Shortsword-12, Streetwise-16, Survival (Temperate Forest)-12, Tactics (Space)-13, Tracking-12.

Advantages: Alertness, Rank (KFF Leader).

Disadvantages: Intolerance (Imperium). Obsession ("Free Khiidkar!"). Obsession (Lady Marai).

Quirks: Pretends to be an undercover Naval Intelligence agent. Prefers to set up operations using computer hacking.

Items: (Once back on Khiidkar) Diplomatic Armour *(GT: PD 2 DR 16 vs. firearms; PD 2, DR 4 vs. melee weapons, 4 lb)*; Personal Communicator; Foil *(GT: 1D - 2 imp, 1 lb)*.

Rane's Story when rescued from the *Mordent*: After university Rane served a few years in the Navy. Eventually he resigned his commission after a dispute with his commanding officer and left the service. On his way home his ship was attacked and he was kidnapped. He has been missing for twelve years...

That is the public record – he says – and it is partially true. In fact he resigned to take another job, still in service for the Imperium but requiring that he be out of the public eye, if the characters take his meaning. He hints that he has been in Naval Intelligence or even some even more secret Imperial organisation. He shrugs when asked to confirm this, and says, "You know I can't. Not even to you, sir. Unless you can offer me the right authentication phrase?"

The characters can't, because there isn't one. Rane goes on to say that he was traveling on the *Stellar Velvet* undercover when she was pirated – an inside job, he thinks, but his investigation was curtailed by... well, they know. Rane finishes by saying that he owes them a favour. If the characters would convey him to the planet, his brother the Marquis would be very pleased to see him – technically Rane has no Noble status, being an illegitimate child – but he does have a blood tie.

True Background: Rane really did quit his Navy post and really was kidnapped. However, by then he had developed a hatred for all things Sylean, and managed to persuade his captors to let him join them. Now he is part of the Captain Swing 'character' created by the KFF. He is the inside man and also the brains behind many of their operations. He knows that the authorities are closing in and needs to find a new way to keep the hated Imperials out of Khiidkar. His brother, in embracing the Imperium, has earned his undying hatred.

Rane, however, has a passion for Marai Haraani, which may be his undoing.

In which the characters chase the pirate ship *Mordent* and board it.

1. The Story So Far

Once the players are familiar with their characters, the following extract may be given to the players or read aloud:

As the Patrol Cruiser *Talaton Principle* was taking up her station in the Gaadvlu Ki system for another long and probably fruitless hunt, a GK distress signal was received from the liner *Stellar Velvet*. The signal was suddenly cut off – a very bad sign.

Talaton Principle immediately changed her vector to render assistance. She found the liner a shattered hulk, with another ship accelerating away. This craft was identified as the *Mordent*, a corsair commanded by the elusive and sadistic Captain Swing.

A weak signal from the wreck was picked up: "GK. GK. GK. I am... only survivor. Please assist. GK. GK. Please respond, any ship..."

Talaton Principle began to match vectors as the unknown survivor began to transmit again.

Evidently badly hurt, she went on, "Using *Vacc* suit radio. Can't get the suit on... All systems are down. They got control of the computer... we only had a few handguns... cut off our comms. Astrogator got a GK off. They shot him. Shot everyone who moved... They went though the quarters, like they were searching for something... took some of the cargo – light stuff... rounded up some prisoners. I tried to stop them..."

Suddenly the survivor's voice became less dreamy, acquired a hard edge. "Reactor's going. Break off, *Talaton Principle*. Break off immediately! I repeat, break off..."

The signal went dead as *Stellar Velvet*'s reactor vented plasma through the ship. The wreck broke up before the rescuers' eyes.

Turning calmly to the Astrogator, Count Julian said softly, "Are there other patrol ships closing on our position?"

"Yes sir."

"Which ship is nearest to the *Mordent*?" the Count asked.

"We are, sir," she responded flatly.

"Good!" snarled the Count. "Then leave the wreck for the system patrol. Pursue the *Mordent*!"

Turning in pursuit, *Talaton Principle* almost caught her prey before she reached the Jump Point. She landed a few hits but failed to stop the corsair from entering Jump.

"Where's she going?" demanded Count Julian.

"She's definitely leaking fuel, my lord," replied the Captain. "Probably down to a single Jump. That means Uushnem or Khiidkar."

"Uushnem's a hell-hole. I'd guess Khiidkar. They'll change their transponder codes and maybe strike again – there's a lot of traffic at Khiidkar. We have to pursue." The Count's tone was grim as he spoke, "They're got getting away with doing *that* to our citizens!"

The Captain, Sir Donava, turned to the Astrogator, "Set Jump coordinates. Khiidkar. Match theirs and commence emergency Jump procedure."

"Sir?" the Astrogator responded.

"I said TAKE A GUESS AND JUMP!" Sir Donava snapped.

"Sir!" He saw her swallow hard.

"All hands," the Captain said into the intercom, "Prepare for Pursuit Jump. Three minutes."

A week had passed. Now the cruiser hurtled out of Jump into the Khiidkar system, its crew at Action Stations.

"Vessel ahead. Twenty thousand kilometres," the sensors operator reported.

"Transponder?" asked Sir Donava from the captain's chair.

"Claims to be a free trader named Galiia but..." the operator hesitated as more detailed scan data flashed up then said confidently, "Drive signature definitely matches the *Mordent*."

"Excellent Jump, Astrogator," Sir Donava said quietly, then turned to Count Julian. "It's my ship, but the mission is yours sir."

The Count nodded, feeling the tension mounting inside him. "Attack," he said harshly.

"Warning shot sir?" asked the gunnery officer.

"Yes. Right into her hull." the Captain replied.

And battle was joined.

2. Space Combat

The following tactical information is available to the players immediately (assuming they ask):

> The sensors operator responds quickly, "We're at close range to the pirate vessel. They should be as low on fuel as we are – it is unlikely the *Mordent* can make a Jump."
>
> The astrogator cuts in, "The unprepared Jump has placed us several hours' travel from Khiidkar's 100-diameter point. It's unlikely we'll get any assistance from systems defence boats for some time."
>
> The sensors operator nodded agreement. "Scans show the nearest ships are 2.8 hours away. We're on our own..."

The pirate ship begins to accelerate frantically towards the planet, her crew shocked to find that they have been pursued. The *Mordent* cannot Jump – she must escape or die. In addition, the pirates have a damaged power plant from the previous engagement. Once the ships engage in battle, the overload on the power plant will cause it to fail after three rounds of space combat, leaving the *Mordent* defenceless and immobile.

The characters should remember that the pirates may well be holding prisoners.

The *Mordent*'s normal statistics are given in the sidebar. In the previous combat, it suffered damage reducing it to 1G manoeuvre, armour 20, with its sandcaster and missile turrets destroyed.

It is important to stage-manage this fight correctly. The pirate vessel is outgunned but still dangerous. The GM may need to tweak the combat unobtrusively so that the *Mordent* is disabled and can be boarded rather than destroyed. Similarly, the characters' ship should take some hits, but no-one important will be killed.

Once the *Mordent*'s drives and weapons have been disabled fully, it can be boarded.

3. Boarding The *Mordent*

Once docking is achieved, the airlock can be blown (3 breaching charges required), and the Marines can commence with their 'action aboard'.

The *Mordent* has been badly damaged, and the rebels are (apparently) trying to escape in the ship's gig. However, several rebels have remained behind to try to fight the Marines off. They will stubbornly retreat through their ship, staging ambushes wherever possible and trying to kill or disable the Marines.

Sensors aboard the *Talaton Principle* will indicate that the *Mordent*'s main reactor could go critical within just a few minutes.

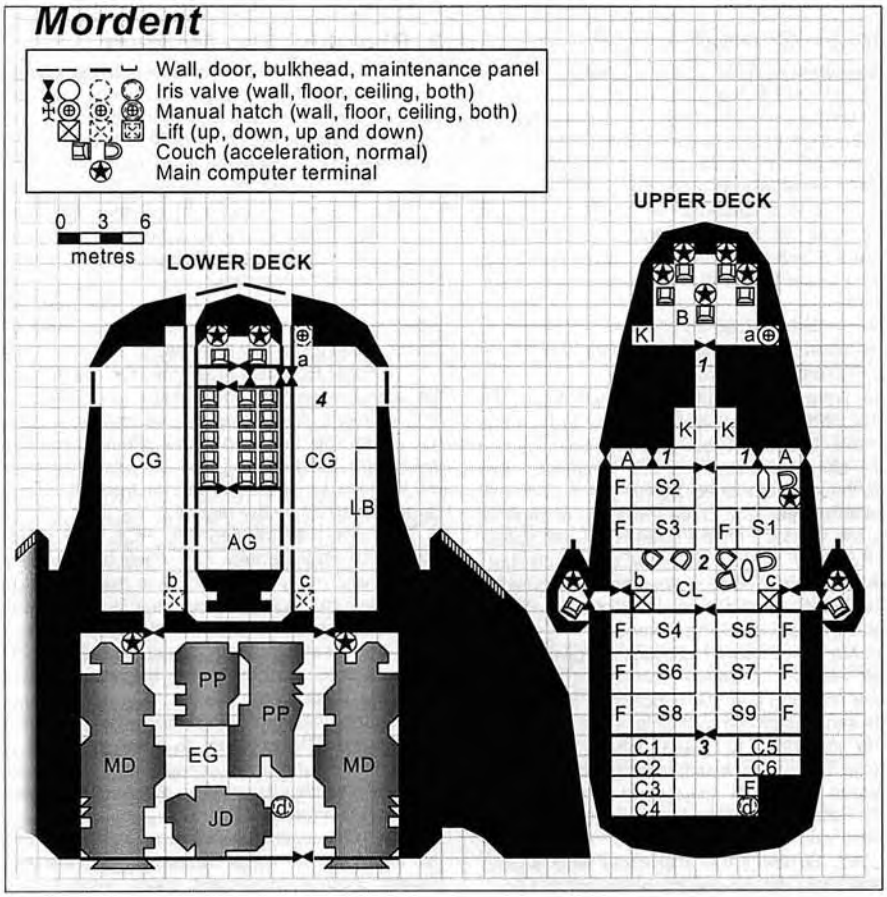
The noble PCs may follow the marines through the corridors or lead the assault, as suits their temperament. Any player whose character does not assist the boarding party should control a marine for the boarding action; their characters will be able to watch the drama through helmet cameras carried by the marines.

The GM may remind the PCs that piracy carries the death penalty. The rebels have nothing to lose, and many are fanatical in their hatred of the Imperium. Individual rebels may surrender, especially if wounded and cut off, but since they face the death penalty, most will fight like cornered rats, hoping to kill the marines and board the *Talaton Principle*.

If the marines are doing rather too well in the combat, the GM may opt to have a couple of rebels sneak out of a hull breach and try to breach the PCs' own ship by crawling across the hull with explosive charges.

Depending upon the boarding methods used, the *Mordent* may keep its internal atmosphere, allowing normal movement inside without vacc suits. Alternatively, the GM may opt to stage the fight in vacuum and zero-gravity in a lightless wreck filled with sharp hazards!

Pirate Ship *Mordent* (before combat damage)
Hull: 400 dt, Streamlined, Size Rating 7, Armour 40, Structure 14, MCr109.6. *(GT: 400-ton SL Hull, Total Compartmentalisation, DR 100, PD 4, EMass 957, LMass 1,228, HP 42,300, Size Modifier +9.)*
Drives: Jump 2, Manoeuvre 3G, Power Plant 7. *(GT: Airspeed 3,125.)*
Weaponry: Fire Control Rating 2. Turrets 1 & 2: three Lasers (3/3/2/0) *(GT: 360-MJ)*. Turret 3: three Missile Racks (Barbette 5, +5 in store). Turret 4: three Sandcasters. Sandcaster Rating 6.
Crew/Cargo: 10 Crew, 7 Marines, 6 Prisoners. 9 Staterooms, 6 Cells, 8 Low Berths. 45 dt Cargo.
Electronics: Military Standard Controls. Sensor Rating 10A 4P 4J. *(GT: Hardened Command Bridge, Basic Stealth, Basic Emission Cloaking.)*
Fuel: Fuel scoops, purification (6 hours), 125 dt *(GT: 80 dt)*.
Sub-Craft: Assault Gig (20 dt).
Notes: An older *Tempus* class patrol vessel design, with several staterooms adapted as cells.



Key to Deckplans

A: Airlocks. Extending ramp to ground level. Nearby lockers contain vacc suits and survival equipment.

AG: Assault Gig. Exits the ship by a pair of clamshell doors forward.

B: Bridge. Control consoles for five bridge crew. Battle damage has left the controls sparking and the room is filled with hazy smoke. Two pirates are dead at the controls from shrapnel wounds. The bridge weapons locker is bare, its contents distributed amongst the pirate crew.

C1-C6: Cells. These are tiny half-staterooms with transparent doors and a hard board for use as both bed and table.

CG: Cargo Bay. The bay is largely empty. Some light cargo (mostly electronic components) was taken from the *Stellar Velvet* – but Captain Swing was after the passengers rather than the cargo this time, and was chased off before the rest of the cargo could be looted.

CL: Crew Lounge. A messy area filled with old rubbish and half-eaten pre-packed meals. Posters of Holo-stars adorn the grimy walls.

EG: Engineering. This area is in chaos. An explosion has thrown shards of metal about the chamber, and radiation leakage from the crippled powerplant is approaching lethal levels. Four dead crewmembers lie about the chamber, killed while trying to repair the powerplant. The maintenance

access hatch at the rear is locked shut and also jammed by wreckage.

F: Fresher. None of these are particularly 'fresh' – cleaning up after themselves was not a strong point of these pirates!

JD: Jump Drive. Inoperative – see "EG" above.

K: Locker. Spares, emergency equipment.

LB: Low Berths. Power loss has caused these to malfunction – thankfully there's no one in them.

MD: Manoeuvre Drive. Inoperative – see "EG" above.

PP: Power Plant. Critically unstable – see "EG" above.

S1: Captain's Stateroom. A large and lavish office and stateroom. On the office wall behind the hide-bound desk is an Imperial Starburst with a sword slicing through it – the symbol of the KFF. A short search will reveal a plethora of small valuables (jewelry, statuettes, artwork, etc.) which the occupant has left behind (total value Cr1.3M). Among this trawl is a platinum engraved holo-pic of a beautiful dark-haired woman with the two moons of Khiidkar rising behind her. Any of the characters should be able to identify her as Lady Marai – daughter of the Marquis of Khiidkar.

S2-S3: Officers' Staterooms. Double-occupancy rooms, crammed with cheap treasures obtained from their unfortunate victims.

S4-S9: Crew Staterooms. Cramped, messy, double-occupancy rooms.

Hatches/Lifts: a = Access between bridge and airlock to gig. Its locking mechanism is currently jammed shut from below. b, c = Lifts between upper and lower decks. d = Provides access into engineering and to dorsal and ventral turrets.

4. Shipboard Encounters

Each encounter number is marked on the *Mordent*'s deckplan on p.18.

1: Forward Corridor. Just inside the airlocks and at the entrance to the bridge, there are explosive charges concealed within the walls and backed by armour plate to both tamp them and make sure that they do not damage vital systems. These 'landmines' have been primed by the pirates and are fired by motion sensors. The resulting explosion will *obliterate* whoever was moving through the area. The GM should use these to take out one or two marines (but *not* PCs!) and scare the remainder of the boarding party to proceed with appropriate caution.

2: Crew Lounge. The corridor from the airlock area can only take one marine abreast (in their armoured vacc suits), making this an ideal shooting gallery for the two rebels just inside the lounge.

Rebel Defenders

Rebel 1: 9/2 *(11/15)*, Snub SMG (5D, *GT: 3D* + 2, 60 rounds/mag, Auto or Burst fire); 3 Magazines; Cutlass *(GT: Broadsword)*.
Rebel 2: 8/2 *(11/14)*, 9mm ACR, 3 Magazines.

- Both are wearing Heavy Vacc Suits (2F; *GT: PD2, DR24*).

3: Cells. The iris valve into the cell area is part-open with a barricade made from wall panels, chairs and other handy junk. Three more pirates are trapped here, making a last stand as they are unable to escape via the irradiated engine room.

If the boarding group cause this corridor to be evacuated explosively (by opening the forward iris valve while the crew lounge is in vacuum), they will be hit by shrapnel from the barricade (count as a single shot from a Shotgun against boarders in front of the iris valve) and one rebel will also go flying past, having lost their hand-hold!

More Rebels

Rebel 1: 7/1 *(10/12)*, Laser Rifle-12 (*GT: Laser Rifle-10)*, Powerpack (fully charged).
Rebel 2: 7/3 *(10/15)*, Snub Pistol, 3 Magazines (HEAP ammo).
Rebel 3: 7/1 *(10/12)*, 9mm ACR, 3 Magazines.

- All are wearing Heavy Vacc Suits (2F; *GT: PD2, DR24*).

Having defeated the rebels, the boarding party will find cells 1, 2 and 3 are open. Cells 4 and 5 are locked but empty. Cell 6 is locked and within can be seen a worried-looking prisoner in torn clothing. If the attackers have blown or opened doors such that this area is evacuated, they must find a vacc suit or emergency ball in which to place this prisoner – the cell door is not totally air-tight and his air will gradually be lost to vacuum.

Upon release, the man identifies himself:

> The prisoner draws himself upright and declares: "I am Commander The Lord Ander Lavalii, Baron Khivn; Hero of the Battle of Marker Rock. These rats left me here to die, but I was just about to break out, when you arrived. I shall assume command of your party; I need a suitable weapon – preferably a good solid cutlass!"

Lavalii knows his request will be refused, and is really only doing it for the sake of form. Lavalii is described in detail on p.14.

4: Gig Bay. When the marines reach the starboard cargo bay, tell them:

The scene here is one of confusion. Two rebels are throwing gear into the gig cargo bay, while another – apparently a leader – stands near the open airlock at the front of the gig, pointing and giving orders, a snub SMG in her hand. Three prisoners are close to the gig airlock, covered by a fourth rebel with a readied SMG. The rebels all wear vacc suits but the prisoners do not.

The marines probably won't be able to enter stealthily so the rebels won't be surprised:

As you burst in, the rebel leader sprints for the gig airlock, spraying her SMG towards you. The two pirates at the cargo hatch open fire with handguns. The guard opens fire on the hostages.

Whether or not the PCs manage to kill this last guard quickly, two of the hostages will be mowed down. The last prisoner will jump the rebel, grab his weapon and try to wrest it from him.

Murdering Rebels

Rebel Leader: 10/4 *(13/19)*, Snub SMG (5D, *GT: 3D* + 2, 60 rounds/mag, Auto or Burst fire); 3 magazines; Cutlass *(GT: Broadsword)*.
Guard: 9/2 *(12/16)*, SMG-9 *(GT: 9mm SMG)*; 3 Magazines.
Gig Crew 1 & 2: 8/1 *(10/12)*, 9mm Auto Pistol; 3 Magazines.

- All are wearing Heavy Vacc Suits (2F; *GT: PD2, DR24*).

If the PCs fail to kill any of the rebels quickly, they will vanish into the gig, close the hatches and attempt to escape. This is fairly hopeless, as the *Talaton Principle* will be able to immobilse or destroy the gig.

As in the cell area, if the entry of the marines causes depressurisation, they had better rush to find a vacc suit or equivalent for the surviving hostage (if the PCs are too incompetent, the man will rush into the gig and find an emergency escape ball in its locker). Once the firefight is over, he identifies himself:

The lone survivor is tall, dark-haired with a neat black goatee beard. He wears a simple tunic and trousers. He has a swordsman's calluses and a dueling scar on his left cheek. He looks rather flushed but regains his composure quickly and, after a few deep breaths, graciously thanks you for your timely intervention. He says he is Rane Haraani, half-brother to the Marquis of Khiidkar.

No doubt the marines (and subsequently any characters who weren't in the boarding party) will have many questions for him. He says he will answer as many as he can – but could he possibly have a drink and a sit down first. It's been a rather bad day!

Investigation of the identity of the rebel leader, by examination of the body (she won't allow herself to be taken alive), taking DNA samples, etc. will later confirm her identity as Sahl Comannii (see p.5).

5. Victory!

The boarding party cannot wait around on the *Mordent* – its battle damage means most of its systems are failing or going critical. They must return quickly to the *Talaton Principle* with the two survivors – Rane Haraani and Lord Lavalii. As soon as they are safely back aboard and their ship has moved to a safe distance, the *Mordent* will explode in a blinding flare of light.

There is plenty of evidence to indicate that the rebel leader was Captain Swing 'himself'. Images of her have been recorded on boarded ships which managed to transmit their data files before the pirates gained control. The *Mordent*'s crew all obeyed her orders, her voiceprint activates certain secure systems – and both hostages can identify her. The characters will not have had much time to search the *Mordent* although if they have taken a rebel prisoner they can try interrogation. Any such rebel will also declare "our glorious leader Sahl" to have been Captain Swing.

But that is not the whole story...

The Heroes' Homecoming

Scenario 2

The characters are welcomed to Khiidkar as heroes, get to mix with the local nobility and are given an invitation they cannot refuse.

1. A Grand Reception

The characters' ship is given an honour-escort into the Highport, and the Marquis' own shuttle is sent to meet them and convey them to the palace, which is situated close to the Downport. The Marquis would be pleased to see his loyal vassals at any time, but they have defeated Captain Swing and brought his lost brother home as well! The Marquis is delighted, and announces a reception to begin almost immediately after the characters arrive.

The characters will be expected to follow local custom and leave their firearms at the Highport. Even a body pistol would be a gross insult to the Marquis, who guarantees their safety. The characters are, they may have to be reminded, his loyal vassals. He trusts them as they trust him.

Once the characters are ready to enter the reception, tell them:

> The reception is a grand affair, with more than a hundred guests. Many are gentles of good local family, while others are offworld dignitaries. The ballroom is a glitter of uniforms and sword hilts, bright dresses and glinting medals highlighting the tastefully subdued decoration of the Grand Hall.
>
> In honour of their victory, a herald announces each of you by name, title and deed. You are pleasantly surprised by the loud cheers each of you receives. As you enter the throng you immediately find Lord Ander Lavalii talking with Lady Teresa Vereen and Amade Vereen. You cannot help but overhear him telling of how he escaped his captors, defeated Captain Swing (with a little help from some Marines who happened by) and rescued Rane Haraani from certain death...

The characters have several choices of action in the next few minutes:

(a) Talk To Lord Lavalii

Ander Lavalii is boasting, trying to impress the ladies. If the characters wish to put him in his place, it is necessary to defeat him in an opposed Carousing roll. If the characters manage to gain the ladies' attention, Ander will bluster, threatening a duel. He is in fact quite willing to fight over this, and suggests the following morning in the gardens. If the characters do not back down he will begin to make arrangements for the fight. However, the Marquis will hear of this, and will forbid his guests to fight one another, and insist they swear to put their quarrel aside. Ander will agree, but there will be considerable bad feeling between him and the character in question, and he will not forget his grudge quickly.

Lavalii's Ladies

Teresa Vareen is an attractive widow, aged 39.
Amade Vareen is Teresa's daughter, aged 20 and equally attractive.
The pair are well-off gentlefolk and both want to marry into the nobility. They have been rivals in the past but now often work together to improve their station. Both have had liaisons with Ander Lavalii on at least one occasion!

(b) Go To The Dance Floor

To get here – where the heroes will have no shortage of partners to dance with – the characters will have to pass Sir Mikal Raada and Dame Karan Borphai.

Sir Mikal will try to get the characters to sign up for a new business venture he is proposing – a complex profit-sharing venture dealing with investment in the industries of frontier planets. Dame Karan wants to size up appropriate characters as potential husbands.

Dance Partners

Sir Mikal Raada is a local 'corporate' noble who enjoys taking risks both in business and in daily life. He has made a vast fortune for himself and for Khiidarcorp, but it surely can't be long before he has a fall. Something of a daredevil and a rake, Mikal is nonetheless quite shrewd in his business dealings.
Dame Karan Borphai is an important broker for Khiidarcorp, dealing mainly in high-technology and starship components. She is seeking a diplomatic marriage to improve her standing. A budding and wealthy hero will do nicely!

(c) Go To The Bar And Chat

At the bar is Major Grandt, discussing military matters with the Armistaads. They are chewing over the potential implications of the demise of Captain Swing for the anti-Imperial movement and the KFF. They will welcome experts' opinions on the matter, but will not tolerate even well-connected fools.

The Very Models of Modern Major-Generals

Major Karl Grandt of the Imperial Marines is stiffly formal and clearly uncomfortable at diplomatic functions like this. He is assigned to the Marine unit at the Highport, acting as liaison to the Marquis' forces. He prefers the company of soldiers and so has pin-holed General Armstaad.

General Lew Armstaad is Commander of the Ground Forces defending the Downport region. He is with his wife Sarah and their 18-year-old son Dav, just out of basic training and dreadfully uncomfortable in his 2nd Lieutenant's uniform.

(d) Go To A Table And Eat

The only spare space handy is near to Minister Irene Kahlavnn and her husband who welcome the characters in friendly fashion and immediately begin trying to organize a poker game.

Gamblers

Minister Irene Kahlavnn is the Downport Administrator – elegant, gracious and charming. She is also very judgmental of others.

Rein Unaaldi is Kahlavnn's partner, a local businessman – short and plump, untidy even in formal dress. He smokes cigars non-stop and tries to interest all and sundry in a variety of card games. At the drop of a hat, Rein will have organized a game in a side room and be applying his Gambling skill 10/5 *(12/20)* skill to cleaning out his new 'friends'.

(e) Go To The Bar and Get Blitzed

This is not 'good form', and will be frowned upon. Drunken characters will not be thrown out as such, but will be quietly directed to side rooms by polite but determined attendants, who offer quiet incentives like rare vintages or expensive whiskies to get the character out of the way.

2. The Marquis' Speech

After a time, the Marquis enters:

The Marquis wears the dress uniform of a Navy Commodore, his old rank in the Navy, confirmed upon retirement. Beside him stands a very beautiful young woman with long black hair. This is the Marquis' daughter, the Lady Marai.

The characters may remember that her picture was found in the captain's cabin on the *Mordent.*

The Marquis' speech is short and to the effect that he would knight the entire crew of *Talaton Principle* on the spot if he could, but that is the Emperor's prerogative. Likewise he cannot award promotions, nor medals without the sanction of the characters' commanding officers... but he can offer one man's deepest thanks. He also adds that the characters may retire here on a generous pension if they ever choose to do so. Or they might wish to leave Imperial service and join his household forces? The offer will stand for as long as they live. For now, though, they have his thanks, his favor and the promise that he will recommend them for a suitable reward to the proper authorities.

Turning to Count Julian, the Marquis draws his own sword, a Naval-Issue Flag officer's dress cutlass – decorative and very sharp.

"Take my sword for your own. It is a mere token, but I trust it will serve you well," he says formally. "Thank you for bringing my brother home."

The hall goes suddenly silent at this. Rane was never acknowledged by his father, although his parentage was no secret. The Marquis has vastly complicated the legal succession in a single sentence. But it is obvious that neither man cares. Rane is smiling broadly as his brother abandons formality and embraces him.

It is time for the party to begin.

3. The Party

The characters are the people to be seen with, and they are constantly being introduced to some new dignitary or another. Amid the whirl of social graces, Count Julian will suddenly come face to face with Marai, daughter of the Marquis. Ensure that Julian's character is thrown momentarily off balance by the very definite attraction between them – the player must roll against INT *(GT: IQ)* each round; only once successful can he do anything other than stare at her.

The heroes will have the opportunity to meet many dignitaries, e.g. those listed in nugget 1, actions (a)-(d). The GM is encouraged to add more guests to the list, to stage encounters and to generally play out the whole ball rather than just the presentations. The players should get the feeling of a noble function, as well as having an opportunity for some serious role-playing. The

event should resemble a British Empire-style function, with swords and uniforms galore.

Whatever the era, nobles do much of their work with words rather than actions. The adventurers should use their Carousing and Diplomacy skills to interact on the right level, Fine Arts to appreciate the statuary, Music to comment upon the choice of orchestral pieces, and Dancing to dance to them. Culture is part of being a noble, and anyone without at least some appreciation of the finer things will be thought of as a boor.

4. Dangerous Liaisons

Both Count Julian and Captain Donava should have chances to meet and interact with the Marquis' daughter Marai. She will circulate, spreading charm and friendly words wherever she goes, yet remaining just out of reach for much of the time.

At some opportune moment where one or other of the heroes is having a quiet word with Marai, Lord Lavalii will arrive and expect to take over the conversation with a discussion of his own heroics aboard the *Mordent*. Whether or not the validity of his earlier story (nugget 1, option (a)) was challenged, he will moderate his story in front of Marai, bending the truth rather than telling blatant lies.

Seeing Lavalii's attentions turned on Marai, his former suitors Lady Teresa Vereen and her daughter Amade will also turn up. The two will fail to attract Lavalii away from Marai and will then pointedly attempt to seduce the PC (and any of his colleagues nearby) to show their displeasure at Lavalii's snub.

The players will have to work out how to handle the situation without causing anyone undue embarrassment or insult.

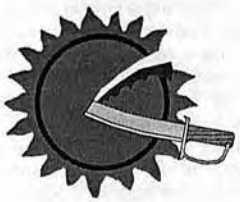
5. An Invitation

The party will go on until the early hours of the morning, at which time the Marquis will retire:

> After a long round of last pleasantries with the gathered nobility, the Marquis begins to make for the door, his daughter following. You are surprised he has not said his farewells to you but before reaching the exit, he turns and waves expansively towards you. His voice booms out across the hall: "To the heroes of this joyous day, I offer a personal invite to join my brother and I at the Reserve. I was planning a break from affairs of state and a month hunting from my private lodge seems most appropriate now."

The characters cannot refuse – not only is the Marquis their liege lord but his offer was made in front of the assembled nobles.

Any concerns raised about this will be dealt with the next day – the Marquis will promise to send messages to the appropriate parties so that no-one is upset at the character's 'disappearance'. Included in the invitation is Rane and Ander Lavalii.



The nobles play at dangerous sports...

1. The First Evening

Khiidkar does not have the technology to maintain a large number of grav vehicles. However, the Marquis will dispatch his own grav limousines to carry the characters across the water to his private haven at Maraani Island:

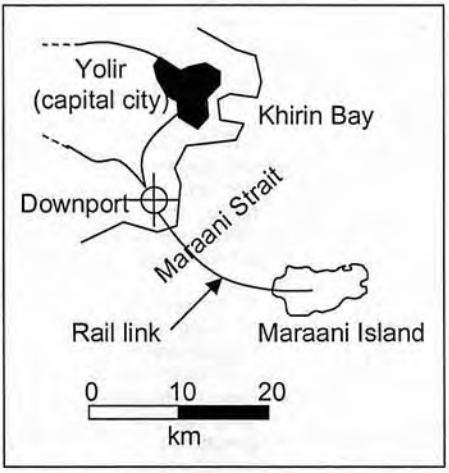
Your grav limo skims across the Maraani Strait towards the Marquis' private island some 20 kilometres from the Downport. The island is some 10 kilometres across. As you approach the driver politely informs you that you are following the route of the maglev-rail tube from the Downport – a fast but cheap alternative to the rare and expensive grav vehicles you are travelling in. The rail link runs on pylons across the sea bed here to the lodge.

The lodge is served by the village of three hundred people about two kilometres from it (and also served by the rail link). The lodge itself has a small staff of 25 servants, grooms and technicians, including a couple of bodyguards and huntmasters. The lodge has an extensive stable block with many excellent horses used both for hunting and more leisurely riding.

The island countryside is a beautiful mix of craggy hills, forests and small lakes. You sight a clearing ahead, near the centre of the island. The hunting lodge is set in the clearing – a large, modern complex of buildings. You set down on a small grav port on the roof among several other open-topped grav pleasure craft.

Your belongings are unloaded and you are each taken to a luxurious suite of rooms and made most comfortable, with servants quietly and efficiently seeing to your every need.

The first evening is spent quietly, enjoying the comforts of luxury. The characters and Lord Lavalii will be treated to an intimate dinner with the Marquis, who chats about his adventures in the Federation Navy. Rane eats heartily, but says little for most of the evening, except to tell a lurid tale of his escape from a lynch mob on Shakiisiir. He tells of mistaking some local custom about speaking to married women, but it's clear that he's not telling everything. The obvious inference is that he was there on a secret mission for the



Imperium. (Should any of the characters look into this in more detail, Rane's information is detailed and precise – this really happened to him. He wasn't there for the Imperium, though...)

Marai is present at dinner, and chats with some of the PCs. She is the Marquis' only child – his wife died years ago of a rare respiratory disease. She will someday be the characters' liege (she may have to remind them of this if they are disrespectful) but for now she can afford to be friendly. She spends quite some time renewing her acquaintance with her old friend Count Julian, much to the discomfort of Lord Lavalii.

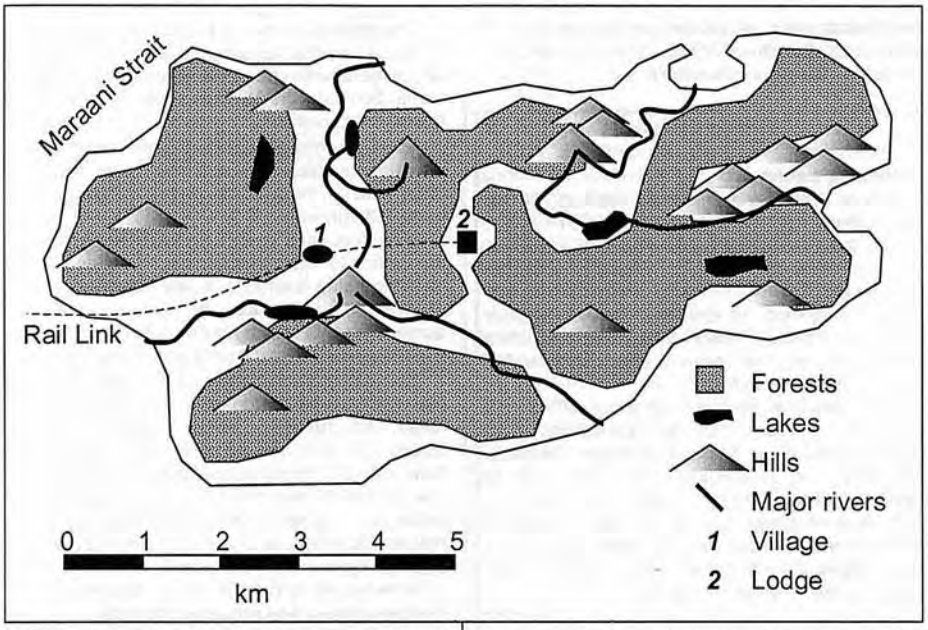
The only lodge personnel visible at any point will be the usual servants and a few bodyguards (male and female) who are well-used to fading unobtrusively into the background.

At the end of the meal...

Over brandy, the Marquis suddenly smiles and says, "I think we'll go hunting tomorrow. Would you like that?"

The characters are expected to voice enthusiastic approval, even when they recall or find out exactly how the Marquis likes to hunt.

"That would be to your preferred methods?" asks Lavalii, just a hint of uncertainty in his voice.



"Of course," says the Marquis. "On horseback, using lances and blades only. I think we'll go after boar."

Marai smiled and says, "The Great Crested Tusk-Boar, that is. They have a ferocious temper and will quite happily trample or gore hunters to death. They are so bad-tempered that although they are herbivores, they will eat any opponent who is slain or even injured."

"Still, you should be quite safe," Marai adds wickedly, "since my father has probably cleared the island of most of its wildlife by now."

The PCs may detect that Marai is taking some small delight at the discomfort this causes to Lord Lavalii and, for that matter, any of the characters who show concern.

The Marquis' only concession to safety is to allow the wearing of Diplo armour. He wears only his traditional hunting costume, equivalent to Cloth armor and will offer similar costumes to the characters. Naturally, a surgeon is on call in a nearby grav car.

Marai declines to take part – she says she doesn't like to see helpless animals slaughtered, but smiles as if to imply she means the hunters. At the Marquis' insistence she agrees to come along in a grav car to watch the new heroes make fools of themselves.

Greater Crested Tusk-Boar

A 400kg quadruped grazer native to Khiidkar. This awesome beast has large tusks, a bushy mane and a very powerful body.

The Greater Crested Tusk Boar is famous for its homicidal temper and is likely to attack anything intruding onto its territory. These beasts will charge and gore, then return to trample their victim to a pulp just for the fun of it. Hunting them is an honour reserved for a chosen few.

It is a sign of both nobility and courage to slay a Tusk-Boar, an animal so bad-tempered that despite being a herbivore, it will try to eat the slain – or injured – hunter, apparently just out of spite.

2. A Mad Dash

The following dawn, the characters are kitted out for the hunt:

After a hurried breakfast, with dawn barely broken, you are assembled outside the stables. Each of you is issued a wicked hunting knife and a long lance of flexible tungsten-steel alloy, wrapped in leather. A line of mounts are led out by the huntmasters and you are offered your pick of mounts.

It will make little difference which animals the PCs choose but they have the opportunity to

demonstrate their equestrian abilities (or lack of them). Lord Lavalii will try to ensure he chooses the best of the mounts available.

Hunting Equipment

Hunting Lance

Lances are treated as Spears (damage 2D, or 1D if thrown) *(GT: thr+2, imp, 2 lb, min ST 8)*.

The lance is made from high-tech materials and is unlikely to break, but might be dropped upon impact.

Its normal mode of employment is as a spear from horseback, rather than the couched medieval mode. This mode of attack uses Melee Combat skill *(GT: Spear)*.

If the lance is couched for shock effect, the rider must make a Difficult Equestrian *(GT: Riding)* check to hit (rather than Melee Combat). The weight of a charging horse adds +1D to damage, but the rider will have to drop the lance or be levered out of the saddle. Attacking in this way also requires that the character ride straight at the target. If the target survives, it can make an attack on the horse as it passes.

Hunting Knife

A double-edged 25 cm blade with a cutting edge backed by a saw blade. The handle of the knife contains a compass and a small first-aid kit. The hunting knife does normal Dagger *(GT: Large Knife)* damage.

Riding Horses

The horses of Khiidkar are from old Solomani stock and are so expensive (Cr1M) that only the nobility can afford them. They mass 1 ton, move at 10 km/h normally, up to 45 km/h at a gallop and in extremes can be ridden for 24 hours or more (carrying two persons halves their endurance). Equestrian *(GT: Riding (Horse))* skill is required to ride them safely.

Once the characters are ready, they should mount up and ride out.

The Marquis and Rane ride out together at an excited canter. Your own steeds stream along in their wake. The Marquis leads you in a fast cross-country dash, riding hard for the sheer joy of it, leaping streams and descending rough slopes, weaving in and out of the trees as if daring the characters to follow. Marai hovers above in the grav car, watching with fond amusement as her father acts like a teenager.

The characters may opt to show off a bit, try to catch up with the Marquis, etc. If anyone does so, of course Lavalii will feel obliged to try to do the same. Suddenly the Marquis reins in and waits for the others to catch up.

As you catch up with the Marquis, he points to a large boulder some distance away across a wide bowl in the ground, dotted with trees and thick undergrowth.

"Fifty thousand credits and a bottle of brandy for the first to reach that boulder," he cries.

After giving everyone a few seconds to gain control of their mounts, the Marquis hurls his horse downhill at a breakneck pace. Rane whoops in delight and plunges after his brother.

Social custom dictates that the characters join this madcap race and try their best, even the poor riders. All characters should make Formidable Equestrian *(GT: Riding)* rolls. Whoever makes their roll by the greatest margin reaches the boulder first. Failure results in a fall. A spectacular failure may cause a rider to be dumped by their mount into a bog or stream, or they may last be seen galloping away yelling for help...

Note that Rane does nothing suspicious here – it is the Marquis who proposed the race.

3. The Hunt

Once everyone has congregated at the boulder, the Marquis will congratulate the winner and then announces that the hunt is to commence! He canters off.

Social custom requires that the characters at least *try* to find a boar. It is normal on a hunt of this type to split up and search, although pairs of riders are acceptable. The Marquis, of course, believes that REAL men hunt alone...

For those who are merely riding around looking for a quiet spot to open sip from their hip flask, an Average Perception or Hunting *(GT: Vision or Tracking)* roll is required to avoid contact with the local wildlife.

For each character actually hunting, the following procedure is used:

Hunting Boar

Every 5 minutes the player must roll to see if their character has found the trail of a boar:

To find a boar:
➢Difficult Recon *(GT: Tracking)*, or
➢Difficult Hunting, or
➢Formidable Survival

- +1 Difficulty if riding at full gallop.
- +1 Difficulty if lost.
- -1 Difficulty if moving slowly.

Spectacular Success: They have surprised a boar and have one round to act before it reacts.
Success: They have found boar tracks and can begin following them.
Failure: No tracks found.
Spectacular Failure: They have become lost.

Once tracks have been found, the character must follow them to find the boar. Roll 2D to determine the result:

2: The stupid animal ran over a small cliff and into a river. An Average Equestrian *(GT: Riding(Horse))* roll is required not to follow the boar over the edge. The character must begin searching again.

3-5: This area is covered with fallen trees and trampled vegetation, a sure sign of rutting tusk-boars. An Average Equestrian *(GT: Riding (Horse))* task is required to negotiate the area safely, or fall off and take 1D / 2 wounds.

6-7: Thick Brush. An Average Survival roll is required to recognize the dreaded Redthorn Ivy. Failure means that the character pushed through and was punctured by the thorns which are slightly poisonous and cause 1D / 2 damage. A simple injection back at the lodge will counteract the poison (regaining the damage), but there will be inflammation and soreness for a few days.

8-10: The character finds a trail recently crossed by horsemen. An Average Recon *(GT: Tracking)* task allows the character to determine which trail is the freshest. If they fail, they will waste some time following the wrong tracks.

11-12: Marai's Grav car passes low overhead, causing the character's horse to start. Make a Difficult Equestrian *(GT: Riding (Horse))* roll to remain in control.

While the hunt is not intended to be lethal, it can be, and getting a little roughed up is considered part of the experience. Wimps who stay clean are subjected to ribaldry and jest all the way home.

There are plenty of opportunities for comedy and mayhem with the characters galloping about the wilderness, some of them barely in control of their mounts. Characters who fail riding rolls should meet with some minor embarrassment, such as losing control of their mount and galloping off into the distance, yelling for help as their comrades look on laughing; or trying to take a shortcut between two large trees and riding right into a low branch - taking minor damage and being deposited on the ground.

This should be seen by the players and their characters as anarchic fun – a bit of chaos away from the formality of court duty.

4. A Loose Boar

Part way through the hunt, the characters should be spread out all over the island, some wandering lost, some galloping hither and yon across the island. Most importantly, Count Julian and Sir Donava should be in different groups.

Rane rides up to Count Julian (and whoever else is with him). He says that he's lost the Marquis after seeing him veer around a thick stand of Oslin Elms. Could the characters help him search?

Any character making an Average Perception *(GT: Vision)* roll can see the Marquis after a couple of minutes of searching:

> What looks like a small earthquake hurtles through the undergrowth half a kilometre away, with the Marquis in pursuit. Apparently the Marquis flushed a Tusk-Boar, and is pursuing it.
>
> As you watch, the boar turns. The Marquis rises in his stirrups and thrusts his lance at the boar, wounding it badly but losing the lance in the process.
>
> His mount dances past the slashing tusks, then the Marquis is off, pursued by the boar. At this distance it is impossible to tell, but he seems to be laughing.
>
> "Gods above, the thing might kill him!" exclaims Rane. He wheels his horse to intercept the boar and gallops off.

Each character should make an Equestrian task roll as per the earlier race to the boulder (see nugget 2). Any character succeeding at an Average Navigation roll reduces the riding task difficulty by one level as they have anticipated the best direction through the trees to intercept the Marquis.

Tusk Boar

400 kg, Armour 1, Hits 6D/3D (23/11), Damage: Head Butt 2D+2, Tusks 3D, Trample 6D.
(GT: ST 35, DX 10, IQ 4, HT16, Speed 8, PD 4, DR 2, Head Butt (14) 2D+3 cr, Tusks (12) 2D+2 imp, Trample 4D cr)

- This boar has already taken 9 hits from the Marquis' lance.

A character who is 'downed' and cannot get away from the boar can be trampled (including goring and chewing). Wriggling out of this requires a Formidable Brawling or Difficult

Athletics roll. If successful, the character takes only the normal 3D damage.

The extra trampling damage should be reserved for characters who have armour (giving the GM a chance to make them sweat); unarmoured PCs might be killed – they should just take normal goring damage.

After some appropriate heroics, the characters and/or Rane should be able to save the Marquis from harm. Again, Rane does nothing suspicious.

5. A Rough Landing

The characters should be well split up and thoroughly confused by now – some wandering about lost, while others chase their mounts. The group containing Sir Donava (and preferably not Count Julian) will suddenly notice that Marai is having trouble controlling her grav car:

> Marai's grav car suddenly dips, regains control, and then dives sharply into the ground close to you. The lifter plates buckle and the nose is sheared off. As the dust and dirt begins to settle you can see Marai slumped in the crumpled car.

Marai is stunned but not very badly injured. The car's communicator is smashed and the car will never lift again. The car suffered a complete control loss as its computer system shut down. The only reason Marai is alive at all is the habit she has of manually controlling her vehicle – she was able to fight it all the way down. Thankfully she was strapped in as well.

As the nearest characters (preferably with Sir Donava in the lead) move towards her...

> As you close with the car, she begins to struggle feebly against the seat straps. Her car came down close to a stand of trees, from which noses a juvenile Tusk Boar. Scenting the hated humans, the boar begins to trot towards the wreck as Marai tries to free herself.

The nearest characters should stage a rescue – perhaps distracting or slaying the boar, perhaps simply galloping up to free Marai and swing her into the saddle.

Juvenile Tusk Boar

300 kg, No armour, Hits 5D/3D (15/11), Damage: Tusks 3D, Trample 6D.

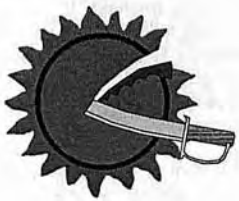
(GT: ST 30, DX 10, IQ 3, HT 14, Speed 8, PD 4, DR 2, Head Butt (12) 2D+1 cr, Tusks (11) 2D imp, Trample 3D cr)

This is a dangerous situation involving plenty of risk and probably some injury, but neither Marai nor her rescuer should be killed.

Somewhat shaken, the characters will most likely make their way back to the lodge with a new tale to tell.

There is no immediate indication of why the grav car's control systems failed. Rane sabotaged the car's computer but it would require a long investigation to determine that anything but a rare glitch had occurred, let alone determine who had hacked the computer. Rane never intended Marai to be killed – he wants her for himself. Instead he engineered the situation to begin to drive a wedge between the companions, as part of his plan to gain power on Khiidkar.

Marai will rapidly become infatuated with her heroic rescuer, which should drive a wedge between him and the Count.



A Short Respite

Scenario 4

A rest back at the hunting lodge, where the characters can take stock and the Marquis can have a quiet word.

1. Cuts and Bruises

The characters repair to the lodge, probably nursing a few bruises and cuts. The Marquis is in good spirits despite his daughter's close escape. He favours those who assisted his daughter and himself, treating them like old comrades.

After the first day, Ander Lavalii makes his excuses and travels back to the Port City, saying that he has private business to attend to for a few days.

Meanwhile, Rane carouses with the characters, especially the lower-ranked ones who may be feeling a bit left out. He swaps tall tales, especially about his amorous adventures in the boudoirs of the Core Worlds, drinks heavily and begins to form fast friendships with his new companions.

Marai spends as much time as she can with her new hero.

This goes on for a few days, in a long party. During this time the characters have a chance to impress their hosts. This will take the form either of a display of culture and refinement (which will go down better with Marai) or derring-do and bravado which the Marquis will find amusing – he was that sort of young and reckless man once. Now he's older and still reckless, but can appreciate the finer things as well. Characters who discuss literature and poetry, who demonstrate their proficiency at musical instruments and familiarity with the arts, will find more favour than those who demonstrate skill at arms, but the actions of all the characters will be weighed by the Marquis during this period.

The jealousy between the Count and the Captain has time to blossom here, and Rane begins to drive a wedge between the characters. Overall, though, this scene is a breather for the characters, a chance to use some social skills do some role-playing, and develop contacts for the future.

This nugget can be as long or as short as the referee chooses, but at points through this period, the Marquis holds some private interviews...

2. Private Interviews

The Marquis holds a private conference with Count Julian at one point, discussing the state of his domain and how very pleased he is with the Count. He asks how the Count feels towards his daughter. He already knows but wants to hear the answer. He then formally proposes that the Count wed his daughter at the end of the week (!), cementing an alliance between both houses and ensuring that the succession is in no doubt whatsoever.

The Marquis also holds an interview with each of the others, asking searching questions about their duties and their attitudes. He is pleased with all of them for their actions before they got here and perhaps more so now that the hunt has shown up their true heroism. The Marquis makes no secret that he is trying to decide what reward to recommend them for, and adds that his favour is a powerful thing, but he demands total loyalty from his subjects, especially if they are highly placed. He may hint that he wants to know that his daughter will have loyal people surrounding her when she accedes to his position.

The interviews with the Marquis can be played out or glossed over at the referee's option.

The Announcement

Scenario 5

Good news and bad news – the bridegroom is imprisoned.

1. The Marquis' Announcement

The Marquis makes the announcement quite intimately, at dinner one night:

> The Marquis rises from the table and, as the table falls silent, begins to speak.
>
> "I have discussed the matter with the people involved and have decided that my house will be strengthened by a marriage... between Count Julian and my daughter, future Marquise Khiidkar."
>
> He smiles at his daughter and then gives a warm look towards Count Julian.

Count Julian should be delighted. Marai looks visibly confused – she is fond of the Count but at present is very taken with her new hero. Besides, even though she agreed when her father proposed the idea, she can't help feeling a bit rushed and almost panicky.

Captain Donova will be displeased, although he should be happy for his friend. The dinner breaks up in rather subdued mood, and the characters all wander away with their thoughts.

2. Suspicious News

At this juncture, Rane approaches the Captain and perhaps one of the other characters and asks to speak privately with them.

Once they are away from the others, he tells them he has found some worrying information. While talking to the techs who are working on Marai's damaged grav car and generally poking around – he shrugs and simply says, "old habit" by way of explanation – he has come upon some disturbing news.

The grav car 'accident' was not a random failure. Someone had rigged it to crash – although apparently not very well, he adds. Further, the grav vehicle garage has been compromised.

That is very worrying, since there are a limited number of people with access. The doors open automatically for anyone whose Comm broadcasts the 'authorised resident' or 'noble guest' codes. The only people this applies to are the Marquis, Marai, the Count, The Captain and Vargner. Plus Rane himself of course. Whoever entered the bay was able to partially wipe the data recorder, erasing traces of their entry, although Rane was able to reconstruct some of the data.

The night before the hunt, someone with authorisation entered the grav car bay, remained there for half an hour, then left again after erasing traces of his or her passage. Either someone used very sophisticated techniques to gain entry, or else one of the authorised personnel tried to engineer the crash for some reason.

Further, Rane adds that he used the Marquis' name to lean on the Downport security forces. They were able to turn up little information, but have discovered that a number of known thugs-for-hire left the Downport region a while ago.

He guesses they'll try to sneak in on the automated supply bullet which arrives at 1 am each morning. They'll not be able to bring in guns because the whole island is ringed with sensors, but they will still be dangerous enough.

Rane proposes an ambush near the Maglev-tube terminal, to try to take one of the thugs alive and find out what's really going on. He suggests they keep the whole thing quiet to avoid tipping anyone off, since there is no way to be sure that the bodyguards are not involved.

3. Ambush!

The terminal is a simple platform with a wide exit upwards to the surface and a room off the platform where maintenance equipment is stored.

Just as Rane predicted, dead on time the supply bullet arrives and seven dark-clad men scramble out into the characters' ambush.

Seven Rentathugs

8/2 *(11/14)*

- All equipped with Cloth Armour (1F) *(GT: PD 2, DR 10)*; Short Sword (2D; *GT: 1D-1*) or Club (2D; *GT: 1D+1*)

The combat should be a confused affair of swords in the darkness. Rane will take down at least one of the thugs.

If the characters did not deliberately take at least one thug prisoner, they will find after the combat that one of those Rane downed has survived anyway – badly wounded but able to talk.

If the PCs don't interrogate him, Rane will put his foil to good use until the villain talks.

The thug says that he was paid in Imperial Credits at O'Bryan's bar. He doesn't know the courier at all, but thinks he had some sort of uniform under his coat. The Credit plaques bore the Planetary Seal of Gaadvlu. The only source of such currency is the Count's ship *Talaton Principle*.

It is the duty of all nobles present (prompted by Rane if necessary) to follow up this lead and notify the Highport authorities. Count Julian should have no hesitation in allowing his ship to be searched by Highport security, especially as the communications link with the ship appears to be faulty. Once they gain access to the ship, the authorities will quickly verify that several million credits are missing from the safe which holds the ship's contingency fund.

4. Disgrace

Count Julian will be arrested and placed under house arrest in his suite. This should be a simple matter – a polite request to surrender himself while "this sorry matter" is sorted out. Most likely Rane will advise the Count to surrender before he is arrested, since he is obviously innocent. It is, of course, the duty of those nobles present to request Count Julian's surrender and then to inform the Marquis.

The Count is honor bound to surrender himself at his liege's request. If he runs, the Marquis will send his men after the Count, and will demand that his companions pursue him. The consequences for the Count's status are devastating, and will 'prove' his guilt.

Refusing to surrender to his liege brands the Count traitor, and serves Rane's ends as well. Even proving that he was innocent will not redeem Count Julian of he disobeys a direct command from his liege lord.

5. What's Going On?

The KFF has a number of agents within the armed forces. One such is Vel Parii, a member of the crew of the *Talaton Principle*. Parii is not a fanatic, but merely a weak man upon whom the KFF managed to obtain damning information. They have never used this information before, but having a man aboard the Count's ship has suddenly become most useful.

Rane is a computer genius. He hacked the computer of the *Talaton Principle* by tight-beam communicator. Having obtained the appropriate computer codes, it was a simple matter to use a mixture of bribery and blackmail to get Parii to open the safe. Rane then provided authorisation for Parii to leave the ship and come to O'Bryan's bar in the Downport.

Rane has left a false trace within the computer to make it appear this latter signal was sent by Count Julian – it includes his authentication code. He has also fed a virus into the systems aboard the ship which will seal the airlocks and disable the communication systems. It will take a couple of hours' work by the crew to remedy this.

Parii left the ship with the marines Quiney and Spiks who were (quite legitimately) due shore leave. He split up with them at the Downport, headed for O'Bryan's bar where he handed over half the money to the rentathugs. As he realised what he'd done, he began to drink himself into a stupor – the PCs will encounter him later (see Scenario 6, Nugget 1).

Rane ensured that there was a clear trail leading back to Count Julian, then arranged for the ambush of the rentathugs.

During the ambush at the maglev station, Rane surreptitiously ensures that one of his opponents is disabled without being immediately killed, so that he can extract the damning information – or better, get the PCs to extract it.

The GM may choose to pass 'secret' notes to Count Julian's player during this scenario, just to spread a little suspicion – surely the honorable Count Julian couldn't really be caught up in this?

The Escape

Scenario 6

A drunken traitor provides the clues to expose Captain Swing.

1. The Drunk in the Alley

The characters will probably go to the Downport to follow up the thug's information. Rane will prefer to stay at the lodge, but may be forced to accompany the PCs. O'Bryan's bar is easy to find:

> O'Bryan's is a reasonable class of bar but before you can enter, you hear the sounds of violence from an alley nearby.

The PCs should investigate, in time to see:

> A few metres down the alley there is a familiar-looking man in a dark overcoat being kicked to death by two thugs. As you turn the corner these two see you and turn to run.

The characters may chase the thugs, but they are fleet of foot and know these alleys intimately – the PCs will lose them within a few seconds. However, if they make a particularly good attempt at catching the bad guys, they will be rewarded by having a hefty money belt flung at them. This has nearly a million credits, marked with the Planetary Seal of Gaadvlu...

If Rane was forced to come to the Downport, he will disappear during this confusion.

The man in the overcoat turns out to be Vel Parii. He has been robbed of the million-odd credits he kept for himself. He is very badly hurt and barely conscious and smells strongly of alcohol.

Once helped to recover consciousness, as soon as Parii realises who has saved him, he will spill his tale in a guilt-stricken, drunken slur.

> "Myyy segret – he knew it, dey all dew it – mine secret. They made me take der money. Millions – the safe, the number... it wers O'Bryan I hadz to..."

And so on... He tells how someone found out his secret and made him take the money – the safe codes were sent to him by a man who talked to him using a voice-only Comm link. He was ordered to take the money to this bar and give it to O'Bryan. What the characters do with this traitor is their own business, but they are subject to local law.

2. Captain Swing Was Here...

Inside the bar, O'Bryan is clearing up.

> As you approach O'Bryan, two muscled men block your way. There is something strangely familiar about them. "Mr. O'Bryan ain't taking no visitors," says one of them, leering at you.

The bouncers are familiar because the PCs met them in the alley outside, kicking Parii.

Two Bouncers

10/3 *(13/18)*

- Both equipped with Cloth Armour (1F; *GT: PD 2, DR 10)*; Fist (1D)

Once they have dealt with these two, the characters can have a little chat with O'Bryan.

O'Bryan

UPP 465975, Brawling-1, Fast Talk-1.
(GT: ST 7, DX 9, IQ 12, HT 9, Brawling 9, Fast Talk 14)

Under suitable duress, O'Bryan confesses that his instructions came from Captain Swing himself. O'Bryan is in mortal terror of Captain Swing, and will have to be thoroughly coerced. He keeps telling the PCs how Captain Swing will get them for this. If they claim he's dead, O'Bryan will laugh in their faces:

> "Why, he was here just two days ago, scar and all. Told me what to do in person. You'd better lay off, or the Captain'll see to you!"

He goes on like this until brought back to the subject by force.

O'Bryan can describe the man he knows as Captain Swing perfectly: small dueling scar on the left cheek, tall, black goatee beard... if the players can't recognise the description of Rane Haraani, then let them all make Intelligence checks!

3. The Marquis Must Know

The character's next move should be to contact the Marquis and warn him. Placing a call to the lodge, the characters will find themselves speaking to a sleepy comms-tech, who is very reluctant to disturb her liege. When she does try, she can't find

him. She sets others to search and asks that the characters come back to the lodge quickly.

Asking for support from the Downport gets a disappointing response. There's a security alert on after a number of KFF bomb threats were received. Intruders have been reported within the starport and a launch has just taken off without permission. The security staff appear confused as to whetehr there is any connection. The port commander will organise assistance as quickly as possible, but he has also had some computer failures and the resulting chaos has a lot of manpower tied up. The characters can expect assistance in 20-30 minutes – but they can be on the island in less than ten minutes.

As the characters make their way back to the island, the technician at the lodge gradually feeds them more information as she gets it. Information should be relayed in the following order, every few game minutes:

- There's a disturbance at the village.
- There's a lot of people running about the lodge - something's going on.
- There was an explosion in the village. Everyone's gone to help. They still can't find the Marquis.
- The grav car bay has been damaged somehow. Someone said there was a fire in the lodge.
- The tech says she thought she heard gunshots in the lodge.
- As the characters approach the island on the maglev bullet, the tech starts a new transmission, saying "The Marquis...." then the commlink goes dead and cannot be re-established.

4. Meanwhile, at the Lodge

Count Julian has spent a few hours confined to his rooms (presumably fretting and trying to piece together what has happened). Suddenly...

> You hear what sounds like a gunshot. Then another. They were relatively close – within the lodge and – to your mind – from a pistol.

Count Julian may decide his duty is to investigate, or he may obey orders and stay in his chamber. In the former case the Marquis' security operative on guard outside his door will nod understandingly and say, "I'll have to insist upon accompanying you, sir. Don't try to flee or I'll stop you cold." He will allow Count Julian to move around the lodge freely provided he does nothing suspicious.

If the Count stays in his room, he will quickly be summoned to the Marquis' side.

> The old man is being attended by his surgeon, and is badly wounded. He has been shot twice, low in the chest. Ignoring the frantic surgeon's injunction to keep still and be quiet, the Marquis grasps your hand and says, perfectly evenly, "Rane asked to see me privately. He'd had a coded signal from the Downport. He's found a pistol from somewhere. I saw him draw it, threw my wine glass in his face and jumped him. Old reflex, I suppose. Maybe it saved my life."
>
> The Marquis goes silent for a moment, then continues breathlessly, "Maybe not. I tried to stop him, but I failed. He shot me down, killed two of my men who tried to protect me, then shot me again. Father was right to disown him. Worthless fool can't even shoot straight.
>
> He pulls you closer to him and hisses, "Julian, he's taken Marai! The barracks are destroyed, the grav cars are disabled. He's heading East. Here's the code to the gun locker. Not much, but it's all there is. Go after him, Julian. Go after him and kill him for me. Count Julian, save my daughter. Please."

The gun locker contains two Magnum revolvers – hunting pistols with long-range scopes, plus a pair of hunting rifles. Grooms are readying the only transport available – horses.

At this point the other characters should arrive. With these few resources, the companions should set off cross-country in pursuit of Rane and Marai, who may by now be their liege.

5. Rane's Plan

The confusion at the Downport is the KFF's doing, intended to allow Rane to escape with Marai. Rane's plan was to murder the Marquis, discredit Count Julian and make the blame fall on him and thus inherit rulership of Khiidkar. The plan has begun to go awry, but Rane believes he can still succeed. If not, he can use Marai as a hostage.

If the GM wishes, Rane may have stolen the ammunition from the gun locker at the lodge, forcing the characters to rely upon blades.

If the characters can reach the launch in time to prevent him getting her aboard, they can thwart him. If not, he will make good his escape.

The Pursuit

Scenario 7

Time to rescue the heroine from the clutches of the evil Captain Swing!

1. The Pursuit

The characters will be able to determine where Rane is heading only if they contact the lodge comm tech. If they wander aimlessly for more than a few minutes, the comm tech or local security will contact them to give them the information anyway.

The lodge surveillance systems have just shown up a large metallic object approaching the underwater scanners on the north side of the island. The scan signature conforms to that of a small shuttlecraft.

Within another minute or so, the comm tech can confirm that the craft is a Launch which left the Downport a few minutes ago. It has exited the water on a beach directly north of the lodge. Best guess is that it traveled underwater to the island to avoid detection.

The beach and island cannot be scanned in any detail by the starport sensors (as it is below their sensor horizon), but the characters may contact the *Talaton Principle* or the Highport to get additional sensor information. The Highport will be slightly slower to react as they have suffered the same bomb threats as the Downport. In either case, high resolution sensors will be able to determine that there is a fast-riding horse approaching the Launch.

The heroes should give chase across the island, armed with swords and lances. Using a dangerous shortcut through a ravine, they can reach the beached Launch just as Rane is dragging Marai across the sand towards it. There are five rebels aboard the Launch, all armed with swords and handguns (anything bigger would have been exceptionally difficult to smuggle down to the surface).

The characters will no doubt race to the rescue, blades flashing in the light of dawn.

Five KFF Rebels

10/2 *(12/16)*

- All equipped with Cloth Armour (1F; *GT: PD 2, DR 10)*; 9mm Autopistol; Broadsword (2D; *GT: 1D+2*)

A bitter fight develops, until eventually the characters should be able to defeat the pirates. Rane will use Marai as a body shield to avoid being attacked until he has run out of followers.

2. The Challenge

As the majority of the rebels are downed comes the final dilemma: Rane issues a formal honour challenge to Count Julian – a death-duel with swords. If Rane wins, he demands that the characters swear to let him escape in the Launch, taking Marai as a hostage – he says she'll be freed later. If they don't agree, he'll stab Marai and take his chances.

Count Julian could legally refuse and try some other solution. Rane is not a 'true' noble. But honour dictates differently. So, on the sand in the misty dawn, Rane and the Count should face off for their duel.

There is no time to bring in help from elsewhere. The characters cannot allow Rane to escape with Marai. If they are foolish enough to agree to this, he will head for the Highport and then demand their ship in return for her life. Once out of the system he will gather a new crew of cut-throats and begin his depredations again – a bugbear that may haunt the characters in future adventures.

3. A Happy Ending

Assuming the characters managed to survive and save Marai, all is well.

The Marquis survives his injuries and, naturally, is delighted to have his daughter back.

A week later she is married to Count Julian (preferably) or Sir Donava, depending upon who survived the adventure.

All the characters who participated in the rescue are listed for presentation to the Emperor at the next opportunity. They will be granted lands, medals and possibly promotions, and they'll always have a home here. The Marquis declares that as soon as he's fit, there will be a hunt in the characters' honour!

Ander Lavalii

Commander The Lord Ander Lavalii, Baron Khivn. Commanding officer of the Imperial Fleet Destroyer *Imperial Retribution*, Commander Lavalii was created Baron Khivn (a region on Khiidkar) for his heroic actions at the battle of Marker Rock.

Baron Khivn is famous for his skill with the sword and has a fearsome reputation for duelling.

Captain Swing

Evidence gathered by Naval Intelligence indicates that 'Captain Swing' is an alternate identity used by the renegade Naval officer Sahl Comanni. Fragments of data logs from pirated ships show her commanding the crew of the "privateer" *Mordent*. One very clear fragment shows her ordering a merchant crew spaced, and a Priority Warrant has been issued, making her capture a matter of grave importance.

Naval Intelligence files list Sahl Commani as a washout Naval Academy candidate who later vanished.

The name "Captain Swing" also appears to have links to a leader of the 'machine-breakers' during the Industrial Revolution on Terra.

Diplomatic Armour

Light high-tech armour which can be concealed under normal clothing. Gives AV 3 *(GT: PD 2, DR 16 vs. firearms; PD 2, DR 4 vs. melee weapons)* but all Endurance *(GT: Health)* based tasks are at –1 due to its restrictive nature. 1 kg *(4 lb)*.

House Talaton

A noble house of the world Irurk (Core 1916), headed by Count Julian Talaton (Count Irurk) although the house estates are currently managed by an appointee. The direct family allegiance is to Marquis Haraani of Khiidkar and hence to Duke Statarth.

Khiidkar

Khiidkar (Core 1812) B383688-9 Ni Ri

First Impressions

Khiidkar is a smallish world with lush vegetation. It is warm and comfortable and very beautiful. The locals are mostly happy, co-operative and friendly. Social divisions are rigidly defined, but not resented as there are always routes to advance one's position. Swords are a badge of honour here and the ownership of firearms is strictly controlled.

A Marquis' Home

Khiidkar is home to Jole Haraanii, Marquis Khiidkar. Haraanii has been a strong pro-Cleon supporter for many years and was rewarded for his loyalty in the first round of Imperial Recognitions. Haraani's power is based upon the economic might of his homeworld and his large investments in the industry of local space.

He is known to be a fair and honest man, with a keen understanding of business. To improve the influence of his homeworld, Haraani grouped several companies together, forming Khiidarcorp, which specialises in factoring and brokerage.

Khiidarcorp is a minor player in the Imperial game, but with its interests in many ports, the corporation is becoming a household name for reliability in finding the best prices for other people's goods. Perhaps this explains the riches of Khiidkar, since the world's own products are marketed by Khiidarcorp.

The World

Khiidkar is a pleasant world, served by a large and busy class B Starport. The world has a diameter of 5232 km, giving a surface gravity of 0.62 g. Atmosphere is dense, with slightly high carbon dioxide levels. These are not a hazard, and simply mean that plant life is lush and varied.

Much of the world's 38% hydrographics (22%) is concentrated in the Great Central Ocean, a deep basin mostly in the northern hemisphere. There is little ice at the poles, as Khiidkar is a warm world.

The People

Living on such a warm, forgiving world, it would be easy for the 6,200,000 locals to become indolent and lazy, but this is not the case. Business and commerce are planetary pastimes on Khiidkar, which maintained at least a little offworld contact right through the Long Night.

Overseen by a remarkably efficient Civil Service Bureaucracy, Khiidkar's population enjoy a comfortable lifestyle made possible by the tech level of 9.

It is a rule on Khiidkar that "a gentle carries a sword". Gentle here refers to both men and women of high status but the custom of wearing blades is mainly a male preserve. Any citizen of Social 8 or higher will aspire to be granted a Blade License. Public display of the weapon allows the citizen to show his favoured status, and is a prerequisite for gaining higher social standing.

The population live in moderate-sized main communities of around 200,000 people. An approximately equal number can usually be found in smaller communities scattered around each larger one. The cities act as central marketplaces.

Port City, which adjoins the large Downport, has a population of just under 500,000 citizens.

Many tourists visit this beautiful planet, and the locals try hard to make them welcome. The people are peaceable and hardworking, naturally friendly to strangers and get along well with one another.

Among the 'lower orders', who ply the trades that make the everyday world work, there is a little discontent. These individuals are not involved in big business and commerce but some feel unfairly left out of the world's prosperity.

The Law

Armed craft are not allowed to enter the Downport. Any personal weapons aboard a ship must be surrendered at the Highport or their ship will not be allowed to proceed to the planet. Obviously weapons do slip through the net, but most are stopped.

Ownership of any firearm is absolutely forbidden and the use of one in any crime carries the death penalty. Locals are, however, allowed to carry knives and other small blades. Long blades such as swords are 'controlled'. In effect this means that their ownership is reserved for those who can get a license, i.e. people of good social standing.

Policing is handled by a civilian force, which acts as much as an arbitration service as a police force. Most crimes are considered 'civil' in nature and carry financial and social penalties rather than jail terms. Only a few crimes, such as murder, the use of firearms, etc., are considered 'criminal' matters. These latter carry draconian sentences up to and including death. The policy is to penalise offenders within the social/commercial system. If they accept this, the matter is closed. If, however, a criminal chooses to live outside the bounds of society and does not care about social penalties then they are put out of society permanently.

Patrolling officers carry either batons or swords, depending upon status. They do not use firearms on regular patrol, although backup units have an impressive arsenal for dealing with major incidents.

The planetary military is well-equipped with Imperial-standard weaponry bought through Khiidarcorp's factors on Sylea. Weapons scanners are of a similar high quality.

The Marquis' Reserve

Connected to the Downport by a 20-mile rigid maglev rail tube laid on pylons set into the seabed, lies the Marquis' Reserve – the island of Maraani. Access to the island is strictly controlled; it is ringed by a set of sophisticated sensors and weapon detectors.

Much of the island is untamed wilderness for the enjoyment of the Marquis and his guests.

There is a 'village' housing some 300 souls who serve the Marquis' Hunting Lodge on the island, plus some security operatives. Close enough to the Downport to be defended by its guns, the island has no need for major defences.

Khiidkar Freedom Front

The KFF (Khiidkar Freedom Front) has been a thorn in the side of the Khiidkar authorities for some time now. Using terrorism and piracy, they have caused a great deal of economic damage and public unease with the apparent intent of forcing the public to demand the removal of Imperial presence in the system.

The KFF wants nothing other than full independence for Khiidkar and her dependent worlds. Under the leadership of the vicious Captain Swing, thought to be a renegade Navy officer, one party of rebels has been particularly successful for some years, focusing on piracy as a means to hurt Khiidkar's commercial factors.

The KFF symbol is an Imperial Starburst with a sword slicing through it.

Hunting down Captain Swing has become the personal mission of Count Julian Talaton.

Talaton Huscarls

Bodyguards of the noble Talaton family. A hand-picked group, mostly of ex-military, navy and intelligence personnel, serving their liege lord and family. Licensed under Imperial Law 297 to carry arms for the protection of Imperial nobles.

This adventure is suitable for use with all forms of Traveller, in particular ***Marc Miller's Traveller*** *and Steve Jackson's* ***GURPS Traveller.***

Captain Swing...

...is an anarchist at the forefront of the Khiidkar Freedom Front, whose cunning acts of piracy threaten the stable rule of the Imperial noble houses.

Join the fight against terror...

...Count Julian Talaton is the sworn enemy of Captain Swing. Join this tale of noble intrigue, lost heirs, forbidden love, jealousy and experience the dangers of noble life, from a reckless hunt to the sharp end of a duel!

A detailed Traveller adventure...

...containing pregenerated noble characters, deckplans and statistics for two starships, a description of the world of Khiidkar and the Marquis' island residence, detailed non-player characters and a generic task system.

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