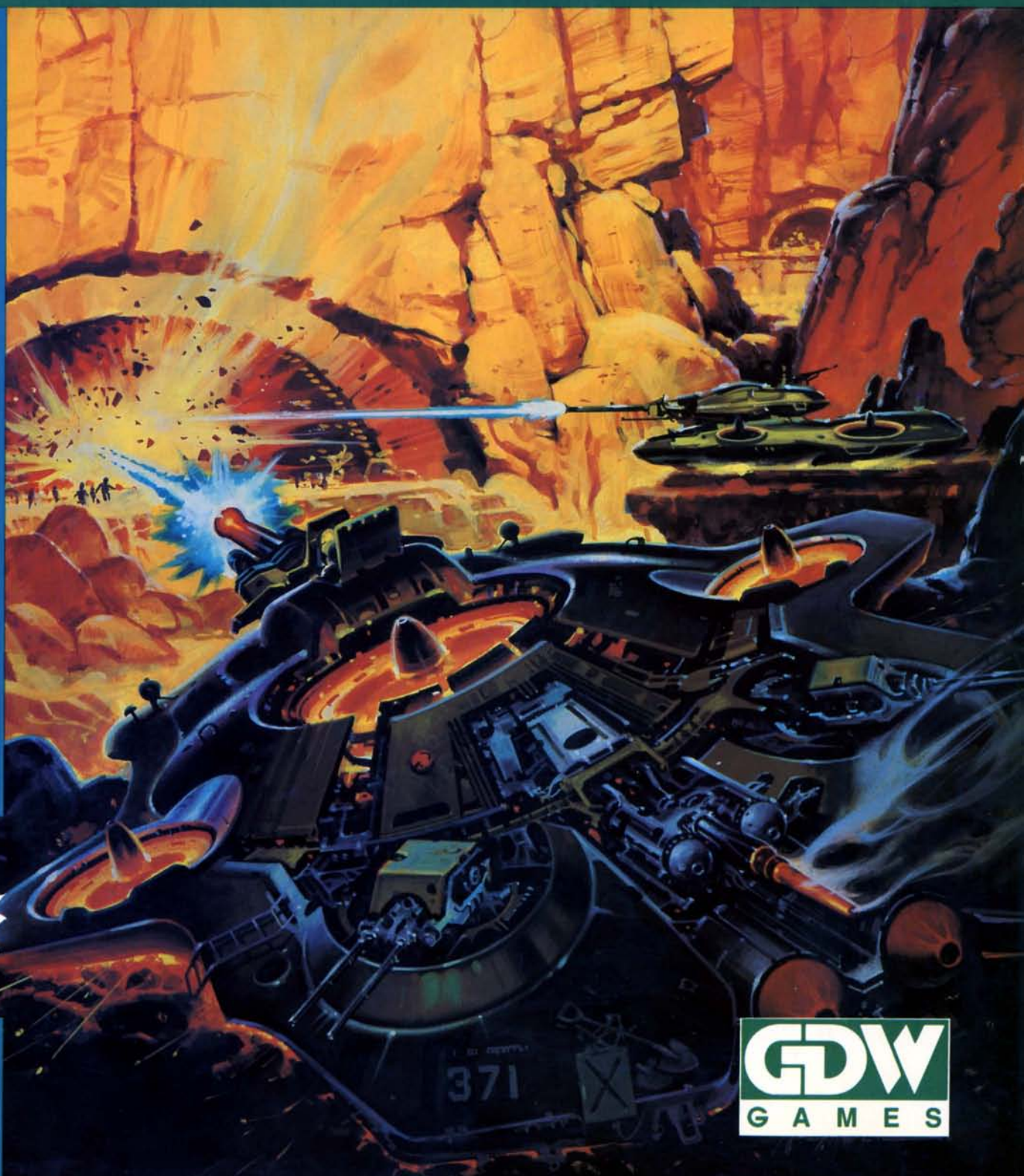


KNIGHTFALL

A MEGATRAVELLER ADVENTURE



Joe
D.
Fugate, Sr.



Science-
Fiction
Adventure
in the
Shattered
Imperium



Joe D. Fugate Sr.

MEGATRAVELLER™

KNIGHTFALL

THE LOST LEGACY OF THE LONG NIGHT

Science-Fiction Roleplaying
in the Shattered Imperium



SINCE 1973



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MegaTraveller Knightfall

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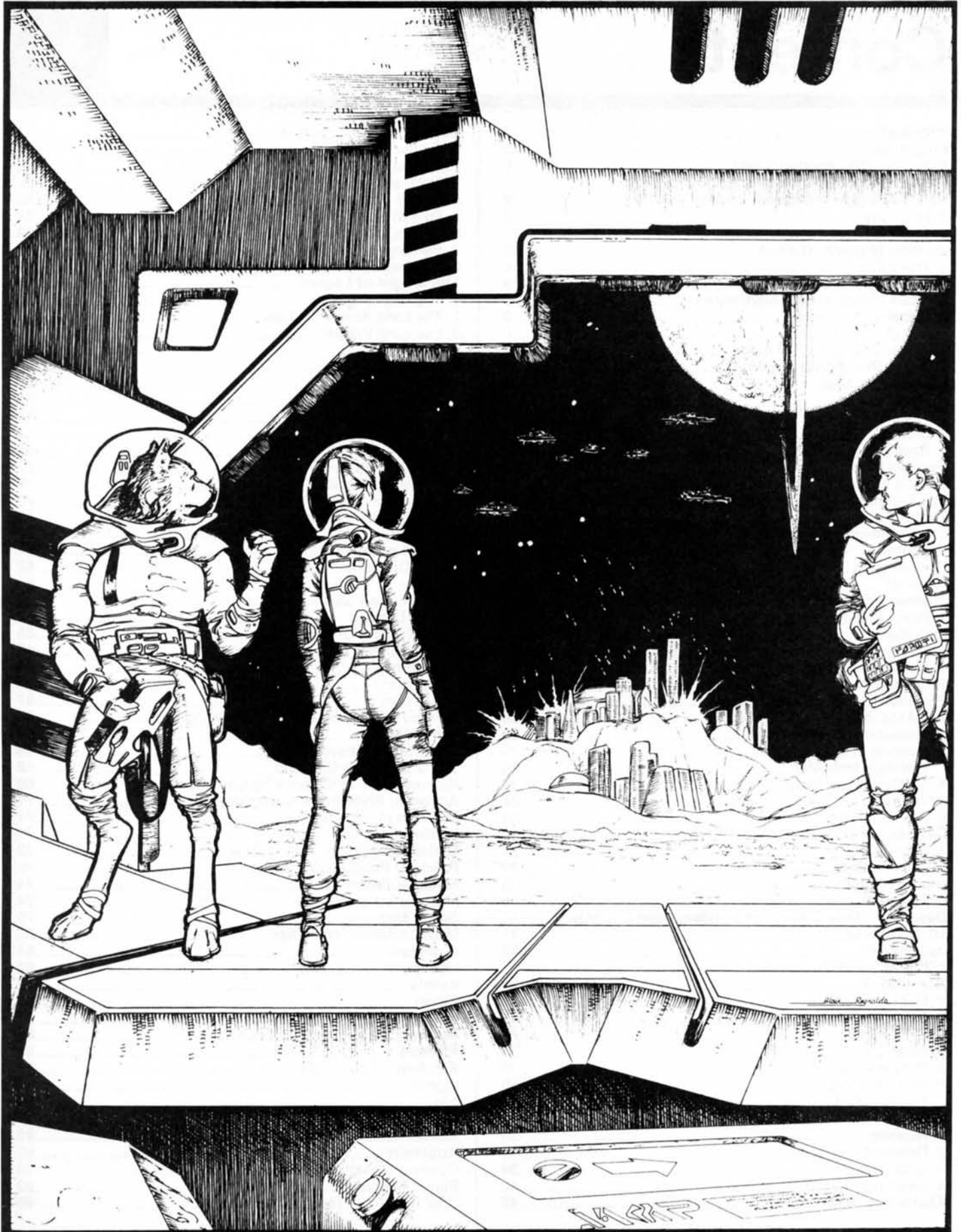
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“Okay, I’ll drop this lot by Bay 73, no later than 2800 hours,” the cargo broker said to the captain.

“Say,” the captain asked, “what do you know about this so-called missing knight?”

“Well, I don’t know much,” the broker said, scratching his head and hesitating for a moment while thinking. “But I have a friend—”

Suddenly the lights went dim just as a deafening rumble rocked the warehouse. Before any of us had time to realize what had happened, more thundering explosions erupted outside.

We rushed out in time to witness the nearby starport complex going up in flames and spewing showers of debris. More explosions followed, many for seemingly no good reason.

“Meson attack, from orbit!” shouted the cargo broker, breaking us all from our shocked stupor. “I was in one of these three years ago on Yurus—get as far away from this starport as possible!”

“What about the *Gimu*?” the engineer frantically asked the captain.

“Forget the ship,” the captain answered, pointing at the horde of shooting star-like specs in the distant sky. “Jump troops. Let’s get as far away from here as possible. The last thing we want to become is a bunch of POWs....”

MEGATRAVELLER™

KNIGHTFALL

THE LOST LEGACY OF THE LONG NIGHT

Massilia sector sits at the crossroads of three Imperial factions: Lucan, Dulinor, and Margaret. Amid the chaos of the Rebellion, new evidence surfaces about a mysterious lost legacy—evidence that is in the hands of a knight of the realm. But now that “the realm” has shattered, can the players even find this so-called knight? What exactly is this legacy, and how is it possible that it could bring the Rebellion to an end once and for all?

Even though the promise of ending the Rebellion is there, the players must still face the current truth: The Rebellion continues unabated. Will the on-rushing events of the Rebellion keep the players from getting to the truth about this knight and her secret legacy? Find out the answers to these questions and more by playing this adventure set in the heart of the Imperial region.

Knightfall

OVERVIEW: THIS SECTION IS FOR REFEREES ONLY

Knightfall is a campaign for any characters who have their own starship and are plying the merchant lanes of the central Imperium for adventure and profit. We have avoided writing this adventure for specific characters, allowing you to easily incorporate **Knightfall** into your ongoing campaign. Optional pregenerated characters are provided in the appendix section.

Knightfall uses an improved, "cinematic" nugget format that has two parts to each nugget: a *scene* (information for the players on what they see, hear, taste, and feel at the start of the nugget) and an *action* (information to the referee on how to run the action). Each scenario section has a referee's summary, which includes a special synopsis diagram showing how the nuggets fit together.

Each scenario has certain key nuggets that need to be run for the scenario to work more or less as designed—these nuggets are identified with a key symbol at the top. The rest of the nuggets in the scenario are optional. The nuggets are somewhat non-sequential—the idea is to allow the players to wander in and out of the nuggets as they desire—and the referee doesn't have to panic because the players decided not to follow "the script." Just work in the key nuggets somewhere, and the scenario will work.

This adventure is set circa 1120 in Massilia sector. The Rebellion is in full swing, although the fighting is currently at least 10 parsecs from where the adventurers have been travelling as of late.

1. ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER CREDIT

This scenario introduces the players to the region and, if they're using pregenerated characters, their ship. The PCs deliver harmless electronic parts and get caught up in a local feud when they learn they sold the parts to the "wrong" side.

RANDOM NUGGETS: TRADING

This section provides trading encounters for the referee to use with the Trading Table. Included are red herrings and juicy rumors—one of which plays a big part in the final adventure: A knight of the realm is missing, and she has with her the whereabouts of a lost high-tech city from the Long Night.

RANDOM NUGGETS: A MINOR INFRACTION

Various legal run-ins are presented to remind the players that there's a rebellion on. The PCs quickly learn that everyone in Margaret's region is nervously waiting for some kind of aggressive move from one of the other factions.

2. PRISONERS

When the time is right, a surprise orbital assault by Lucan's forces is sprung. Suddenly the PCs' normal trading routine is upset, and their starship is confiscated. They can make a run for it, but in the high-tech setting of **MegaTraveller**, anyone in a surprise assault is usually either dead or becomes a prisoner (guess which one the PCs will opt for). This scenario is especially fun for the players since they get a real taste of just what high-tech warfare is all about, and they come through it with little more than bruised egos.

Further, the PCs get a taste of just how ruthless Lucan's forces are. This makes it easy for players without a stated allegiance to side with Margaret once this happens. Margaret's forces are saints when compared to Lucan's brutal henchmen.

3. JAIL BREAK

Life as a POW under Lucan is anything but fun. The PCs have lost their ship and get rough treatment to boot. But they make friends in jail, and learn more about the missing knight, too. In this scenario they become part of a massive jail break and manage to attain their freedom.

RANDOM NUGGETS: WANTED

These nuggets are an assortment of encounters designed to make the players nervous. Composed more of psychological than real substance, they keep the excitement high and give the players a sense of accomplishment since they "get out of a jam" often.

4. THAT'S OUR SHIP!

The PCs find their ship being used as a military courier by Lucan's forces, and they get to steal it back for good. Along the way, they find the clue they have been seeking—the whereabouts of the missing knight of the realm.

5. THE KNIGHT OF LEGEND

The search is on for this mysterious knight who knows the location of the fantastic city of the Long Night. They learn the knight is dead (executed by Lucan, wouldn't you know it) but they further learn she stashed a map to the lost city before she was killed. Now if they can find where she stashed the map....

RANDOM NUGGETS: SIDE ADVENTURES

An assortment of miniadventures for the referee to drop in.

6. MAPPING THE COURSE

The PCs find the map, sort of. Actually, there are two computer map files, either of which may be the real map. Further clues and adventures lead the PCs to the truth. Once they know which map is right, then they can find the city. But unknown to the group, Dulinor's forces are following them.

7. CITY OF LEGEND

The PCs find the lost city intact and full of marvelous wonders, although it is not what they expected. They explore and take some useful artifacts back with them as they leave. Unfortunately, they learn they can never return to the city, so they must "chose wisely" which artifacts to take with them.

ARTIFACTS: ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Now that the players have their artifacts, what do they do with them? How can their newfound wonders help the cause of Margaret? Further adventures await!

Another Day, Another Credit

Scenario 1

Scenario 1 opens with the PCs selling their 90 kiloliters of speculative cargo at a sizable profit to miners on Engorr. However, all is not as it seems. When the PCs return to their ship, they are greeted with a “welcome” they won’t soon forget. According to their greeters, the PCs sold their electronic parts to the “wrong” side in a local feud. Go over the setup, then start with nugget 1.

SETUP

The section below is designed to be read to the players. Before reading it, however, tell the PCs they have just landed on Engorr with a full cargo hold, and let them pick which system they just left (show them the star map on the next page—this little technique will get them to study the map enough to become familiar with the territory they are currently in).

The players should also determine their starship fuel status (Engorr has no gas giant in system, so they will probably have to buy unrefined fuel on the world). Once they have picked their star system of origin and determined their fuel status, read them the following:

“You have just landed on Engorr with your cargo hold mostly full of freight at Cr75 a kiloliter. Also, your cargo hold contains 90 kiloliters of speculative cargo: electronic parts. According to a hot tip, miners on Engorr were seeking electronic parts, so at the last minute you purchased 90 kiloliters worth for Cr300 a kiloliter and stuffed them in the remaining spaces in the hold.

“After you unloaded your regular freight and got paid for it, a quick check at the starport warehouse revealed that there were, in fact, miners eager to get their hands on electronic parts. The one and only broker at the warehouse gave you a local com number to contact.

“You called the number and were greeted by a gruff voice, but one that was delighted to hear you had parts for sale. After a brief bit of negotiation, you agree on a price: Cr510 a kiloliter. The miner asks you to deliver the cargo at a crossroads about 150 kilometers away from the starport. He asks you to set your ship down out of sight in a nearby gully (there are lots of gullies near this junction) and deliver the cargo at the crossroads later today. The miner, who calls himself “Jed,” says he’ll wire the money to the starport broker, and the funds will be released to you if he’s happy with the goods.

“You agree. Delighted with the price, you prepare for the meeting and set out for the designated exchange location. Arriving at the crossroads (little more than the crossing of two well-worn ATV trails, actually) you do a quick flyby with the ship and notice no one is yet at the meeting site. You set your ship down in a secluded gully and unload the entire 90 kiloliters onto 45 grav floaters and hook them remotely to a hand computer.

“You put on your tech 15 general-purpose vacc suits and start out for the meeting site.”

At this point allow the players to choose their other possessions, like equipment, weapons, and so on. If the PCs are the least bit nervous about this exchange (and well they should be), allow them to come in armed to the hilt, if they wish.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following summaries tell you what each nugget covers.

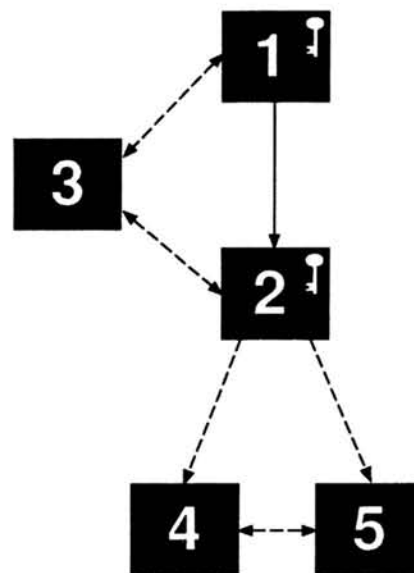
1. The Meeting (Key): This nugget deals with getting the electronics parts cargo to the exchange location and making the exchange. Other than a few possible mishaps with the cargo transport, the exchange should come off without a hitch.

2. The Confrontation (Key): Upon returning to their ship, the PCs discover they have company—in the form of eight very mean-looking and disgusted miners armed with gauss rifles and standing between the PCs and their ship. It seems the PCs have just sold goods to the “other side.” Depending on how the PCs prefer to handle situations like this, information is provided to help you run either a shoot-out or negotiations with the irate miners.

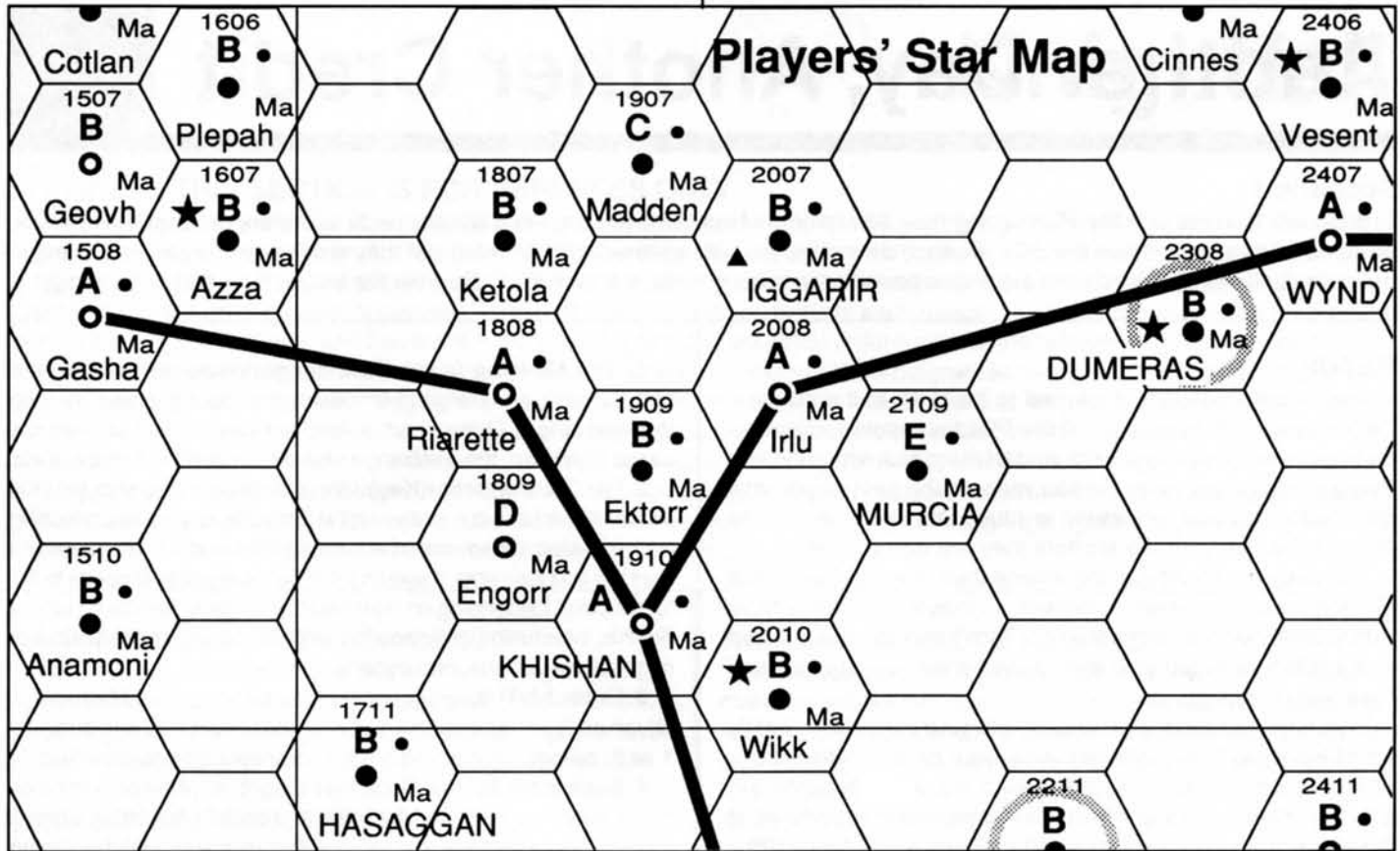
3. Breach!: This nugget covers handling vacc suit breaches. Given all the mishaps and gun play that could occur in nuggets 1 or 2, details on running vacc suit breaches are provided.

4. Back at the Bistro: Once the PCs get out of the confrontation mess, they may like to check out the one and only bar at the starport for news and rumors of good cargos that might be available. Some of the rumors in this nugget tie to cargo mini-nuggets in nugget 5.

5. More Cargo?: Here are an assortment of cargo mini-nuggets to spice up the otherwise mundane results from the trade and commerce section of the *Referee’s Manual*. Some of these are tied to rumors learned at the bar, and some others tell the PCs to go to the bar for more info, tying this nugget in nicely with nugget 4.



Synopsis Diagram
Scenario 1



1. THE MEETING

Characters sell electronic parts to local miners.

Location is Engorr.

Scene: You are in vacc suits, walking across the lifeless landscape of Engorr, toward the designated meeting place less than a kilometer ahead. Your entire cargo load of electronic parts is with you on a caravan of 45 grav floaters.

Your shadows on the ruts of the well-worn ATV trail you are following are getting long, telling you that within a couple of hours it will be twilight. The trail twists and turns down through some eerie, gray-black rock spire formations.

Action: The players need to tell you who is where (back on the ship or with the cargo caravan). Discourage splitting up the party by using the following task.

To avoid a mishap with a caravan of remote-operated floaters:

Difficult, Grav Veh, Int, absolute: 250 meters (fateful)

Referee: The entire trip (at 5 km per hour) should cover 1000 meters (1 kilometer). Each task roll will use up about three minutes of time. A minimum of two people are needed (one in the front to watch/operate the computer-linked caravan and one at the rear to watch). For four people, decrease the difficulty to Routine.

If a mishap occurs, do not count that period's progress toward the 1000-meter total. Most mishaps should be aggravating rather than damaging: tangled floaters, floater corner caught on rock, toppled cargo stack, and so on.

Once the characters reach the meeting place (a desolate crossroads of two well-worn ATV trails enclosed on three sides by high rock formations), they see a couple of large, vacuum-weathered tech 10 ATVs (see the *Horrnon* in Digest Group's

101 Vehicles) parked in the shadows. A group of six miners in tech 11 vacc suits step out to greet them. The miners all have slug-thrower sidearms.

The miners will wait for the group to mention the name they gave the broker before they speak over the vacc suit commo channel. The miners' side of the conversation will go something like this:

"Whoowhee! This is some load. This here's the stuff, then?" (Waiting for the PCs to confirm the cargo content, the miners will refrain from mentioning the cargo content.)

"Okay, can we take one of the containers inside an ATV and open it to see what we've bought?" (The PCs should have no problem with this.)

The entire lot of cargo amounts to 90 kiloliters (two kiloliters per floater). The two ATVs have 114 kiloliters of cargo space, more than enough to haul off the entire lot. Since the floaters belong to the PCs, the PCs will need to stay and help load the ATVs. The loading should take about an hour.

As far as small talk during the ATV loading operation, the miners will try the usual stuff: How long have you been merchants? Been to Engorr before?

For the answers to questions the PCs may ask the miners, see the Engorr Miners sidebar on page 13.

For the return trip, use the cargo floater task above, but make it Routine no matter how many people are involved.

2. THE CONFRONTATION

Characters confronted by unfriendly miners at their ship.

Location is Engorr.

Scene: The sun has almost set, and your shadows are getting very long. The light is quickly dimming. The sun is over

your left shoulder as you approach your ship with your caravan of 45 empty cargo floaters.

You get within 50 meters of your ship when four vacc-suited figures step out of the shadows and take up a position between you and your ship. They are holding large, crude, rifle-like weapons connected to power backpacks. They're holding the rifles at the ready.

"Halt, offworlders!" blare your suit communicators, "You think you can come here and sell weapons to just anybody you choose—well, we'll show you different."

With that, the four suited figures raise their weapons and aim.

Action: The PCs and these four miners have their communicators tuned to the common local channel for vacc suit conversation, so both sides may converse freely. The four miners are in TL11 vacc suits and are carrying crude, locally manufactured gauss rifles. These rifles will misfire (i.e., fail to fire) on any combat roll of doubles (both dice are the same number).

These four "disgruntled miners" (actually corporate hit men) are not in much of a talking mood, although the PCs can delay them from firing if they react quickly with some convincing pleas, asking the NPCs to "hold their fire." If the PCs do make such pleas, see *Talking Your Way Out*, below.

If the NPCs open fire, their targets are the PC's cargo floaters (Armor Value: 4, Hit Points: 1/2).

If, at any time, the PCs open fire on the four miners, see *Fighting Your Way Out*, below.

If the PCs simply dive for cover, see *Talking Your Way Out*, below.

Fighting Your Way Out: If the PCs decide to open fire on the miners, the miners will start shooting at the PCs instead of just shooting up the cargo floaters. The miners will take cover in the shadows and will be considered to be "under cover, but visible."

For purposes of combat, the miners' stats are as follows:

1. LIF=4/5, armor=5, weapon=early TL12 gauss rifle, skills=Combat Rifleman-2, Brawling-2, Leader-2.
2. LIF=4/5, armor=5, weapon=early TL12 gauss rifle, skills=Combat Rifleman-1, Brawling-3.
3. LIF=4/5, armor=5, weapon=early TL12 gauss rifle, skills=Combat Rifleman-3, Brawling-2, Tactics-2.
4. LIF=4/6, armor=5, weapon=early TL12 gauss rifle, skills=Combat Rifleman-2, Brawling-1.

The miners will not surrender, but once two of their number have fallen, they will instead mysteriously disappear. The PCs can take the fallen NPCs on board their ship (in fact, remind the PCs that this is the humane thing to do in the vacuum-like environment on Engorr).

If the prisoners are still alive, the PCs can patch them up and try to interrogate them. Unless the PCs threaten personal violence on the NPC prisoners, however—and the PCs prove they mean it with some convincing show of force (like bludgeoning one of the NPCs with the butt of a gun, or shooting one of them in the foot or hand)—the NPCs won't divulge much reliable information.

These NPCs are pretty tough customers, and you should play them that way. Streetwise skill on the part of the PCs should be allowed to influence these NPCs toward cooperating with the PCs, although not right away. Streetwise skill should

also be considered when the PCs are trying to figure out if the NPCs are lying or not (most of what the NPCs tell the PCs will be lies, of course).

At the first opportunity (and if the PCs give up their vigilance for even a minute), these NPCs will seek to escape. If the PCs let them, these NPCs will not hesitate to maim one or more of the PCs, or to damage the PCs' starship in making their escape. The NPCs will promise anything (and sound quite sincere) in an attempt to get the PCs to lower their guard.

Talking Your Way Out: Here are the miners' responses to most questions the PCs may think to ask:

- **PCs:** Hold your fire! We have no quarrel with you.
- **NPC Response:** The minute you got involved by bringing your offworld weapons to our world to sell, you put yourself into our quarrel, whether you like it or not!
- **PCs:** What do you mean "weapons?" We just sold some electronic parts!
- **NPC Response:** What do you think the other side is going to build with those parts, hand computers? They're going to build hundreds of new electronic rifles to arm their side with. We don't appreciate outsiders getting involved in our fights.



You should have thought of that before you got involved.

- *PCs:* How were we supposed to know they wanted those parts to build weapons?

- *NPC Response:* Claiming ignorance is no excuse. You should ask around before you just waltz here onto our world and sell your wares. If you had any brains, you'd stick to selling trinkets and entertainment disks. Just so you'll be more careful next time, here's a little something to remember us by (they shoot 2D+10 cargo floaters to pieces).

- *PCs:* Where did you get your rifles, then?

- *NPC Response:* Our rifles were made using local materials and local manufacturing capabilities. It's offworld meddling that we won't tolerate. You offworlders just don't care who you hurt—all you care about is making a fast credit.

- *PCs:* We surrender! We're coming out with our hands up.

- *NPC Response:* Okay, but if you ever show up on Engorr again, it will be the last time you ever set foot anywhere.

- *PCs:* What if we offer to bring you electronic parts, too?

- *NPC Response:* See negotiation task, below.

To convince these miners to hold their fire by negotiating with them: Routine, PCs off=Liaison, [see below]; NPC def=4 (confrontation) *Referee:* Notice the NPCs have an automatic defensive DM of 4 on this task.

Give the PCs a special DM for these offers:

- If the PCs offer to sell the parts for a lower price than they gave the other side, DM of 2.

- If the PCs offer to never return to this world again, DM of 2.

Reduce the difficulty one level:

- If the PCs offer to sell these miners more electronic parts than they sold the other side.

- If the PCs surrendered (came out with their hands up).

Increase the difficulty one level:

- If the PCs have been firing at the miners.

If the NPCs are actively uncooperative, offer the following:

- *NPC Response:* So, you think you can bribe us with your wily merchant ways, huh? Take this, you offworld scum! (At which point, the PCs will have succeeded in provoking the NPCs to open fire on them!)

If the NPCs are passively uncooperative, offer the following:

- *NPC Response:* So, you think you can bribe us with your wily merchant ways, huh? You offworlders don't seem to be getting the message! (At which point, the NPCs will shoot at the ground near the PCs and then trash another 2D+10 cargo floaters.)

If the NPCs are neutral, offer the following:

- *NPC Response:* Your puny offers don't impress us, offworlders! (The NPCs move their weapons to the aim position again.)

If the NPCs are passively cooperative, offer the following:

- *NPC Response:* You are going to have to do better than that, offworlders! What do you take us for? (If this is the PCs' initial offer, keep them guessing for a bit as to whether or not the NPCs are willing to deal. If the PCs make another, better offer, the NPCs will finally reveal they are willing to deal by making a counter offer that is more to their benefit.)

If the NPCs are actively cooperative, offer the following:

- *NPC Response:* You offworlders aren't so stupid after all! We'll take you up on your offer, *if*—and this is a big *if*—you also agree never to deal with the independents again. Do not sell or buy any of their goods. Deal?

The PCs have to agree to the trade embargo on the independents before the miners will cut a deal with them. If the PCs ever cross the deal by trading with the independents, they will have to answer to the corporate mining companies face-to-face, which might not be too pleasant. On the other hand, once the independents realize they have been sold out, *they* will turn on the PCs.

The PCs' involvement in the feud on Engorr could lead to a whole series of interesting side adventures, challenging the PCs' persuasion abilities as they try to unravel the mess they have gotten themselves into. The details of such side adventures are beyond the scope of **Knightfall**. Simply use what we have provided here as a springboard to your own further adventures on Engorr.

3. BREECH!

Character in a vacc suit suffers a suit breach.

Location is any vacuum world.

Scene: Suddenly, from inside your suit, you can hear the muffled "hiss" of your suit's life-sustaining atmosphere leaking away. You desperately need to get a patch on the hole before it is too late.

Action: Use this nugget to administer a vacc suit breach for any character, whether PC or NPC.

Some vacc suits are self-sealing when breached, and others are not. The higher tech level suits are the ones that tend to be self-sealing, as long as the breach is not too major. Generally speaking, the self-sealing vacc suits depend on tech level:

- TL12 or Under: Not self-sealing.

- TL13 or Greater: Self-sealing.

As long as the hit is only low penetration, a self-sealing suit will seal the hole. The suit's occupant still takes the hit point damage, however.

For example, if the wearer of a TL15 vacc suit (armor value 7) gets hit by a gauss rifle round (penetration 7 out to very long range), the resulting hit is a low penetration one (since the rifle penetration is equal to the suit's armor value, but less than twice the suit's armor value). A low penetration hit does 50% damage, which means the gauss rifle's basic three hit points becomes one hit point ($3 \times 0.5 = 1.5$, which is just one since we ignore fractions). The low penetration hit on the tech 15 vacc suit self-seals, but the wearer still takes the one hit point of damage.

If, on the other hand, the wearer of the tech 15 vacc suit was to be hit with a laser rifle-13 (penetration 20 out to medium range), the hit (if at medium range or less) would be a high penetration one, resulting in the wearer taking the laser rifle's full damage of 3 hit points. In this case, the 3 hit points breach the suit, and it must be patched to stop the leak.

While exceptional success may change the amount of damage made on the suit's occupant, exceptional success does not change the penetration level. For example, exceptional success may result in a hit that does two points of damage to the wearer of the suit, but the hit remains a low penetration one, and the suit still self-seals.

On a pinpoint hit or a hit on a target under cover, however, damage is computed by first dividing the armor value by two, which could result in a high penetration hit (the helmet faceplate has been hit, for instance). A self-sealing suit does not automatically seal on a high penetration hit.

Patching a Breach: Once a character's suit has been breached, the critical priority becomes getting a patch on the hole before too much internal suit atmosphere is lost. Nearly all suits include a pocket with a patch kit (five patches). Patching a suit involves getting out a patch, peeling the protective sheet from the patch's adhesive backing, and slapping on the patch. See the following task:

To apply a patch to a breached vacc suit:
Routine, Dex, 2 sec

Referee: Since a combat round is only six seconds long, be sure to roll for the time duration (it could take more than one combat round to get the suit patched). The suit occupant may try this task if still conscious (however, see Panic, below).

If the suit has not been patched after the first combat round, apply one hit point of damage per round to the suit occupant until the suit is patched. Do not apply any damage on the round the suit is patched.

Panic (Optional): When a breach occurs, have the suit occupant first roll a determination task to keep from panicking. If able to avoid panicking, the suit occupant can try to patch his own breached suit.

4. BACK AT THE BISTRO

Characters pick up various rumors, some about good cargo.

Location is Engorr's Peerden Port Bistro.

Scene: The Peerden Port Bistro is a weathered, sunken,

dome-like building. After exiting the air lock and walking inside, you traverse the main entryway, which is dimly lit in a red-orange light. One of the light fixtures isn't shining (probably burnt out). Heavy, darkly stained timbers decorate the entryway.

Inside the Bistro, you first walk past the bar area, which is lit with a low-key orange light. Throughout the inside, you notice the dark, heavy timbers are used extensively. Around the corner and past the bar, you see a large sunken area (looks like a dance floor/entertainment area) ringed by dozens of tables and booths for patrons to dine and drink. The brown-red floor carpet looks old and worn in spots, and a slightly moist, "old fabric" smell permeates the building.

This must be during off-hours, because the building is virtually deserted, and all is relatively quiet. There are less than a dozen customers in the whole place. One barkeep is stationed at the bar, and a single barmaid is sitting nearby looking bored.

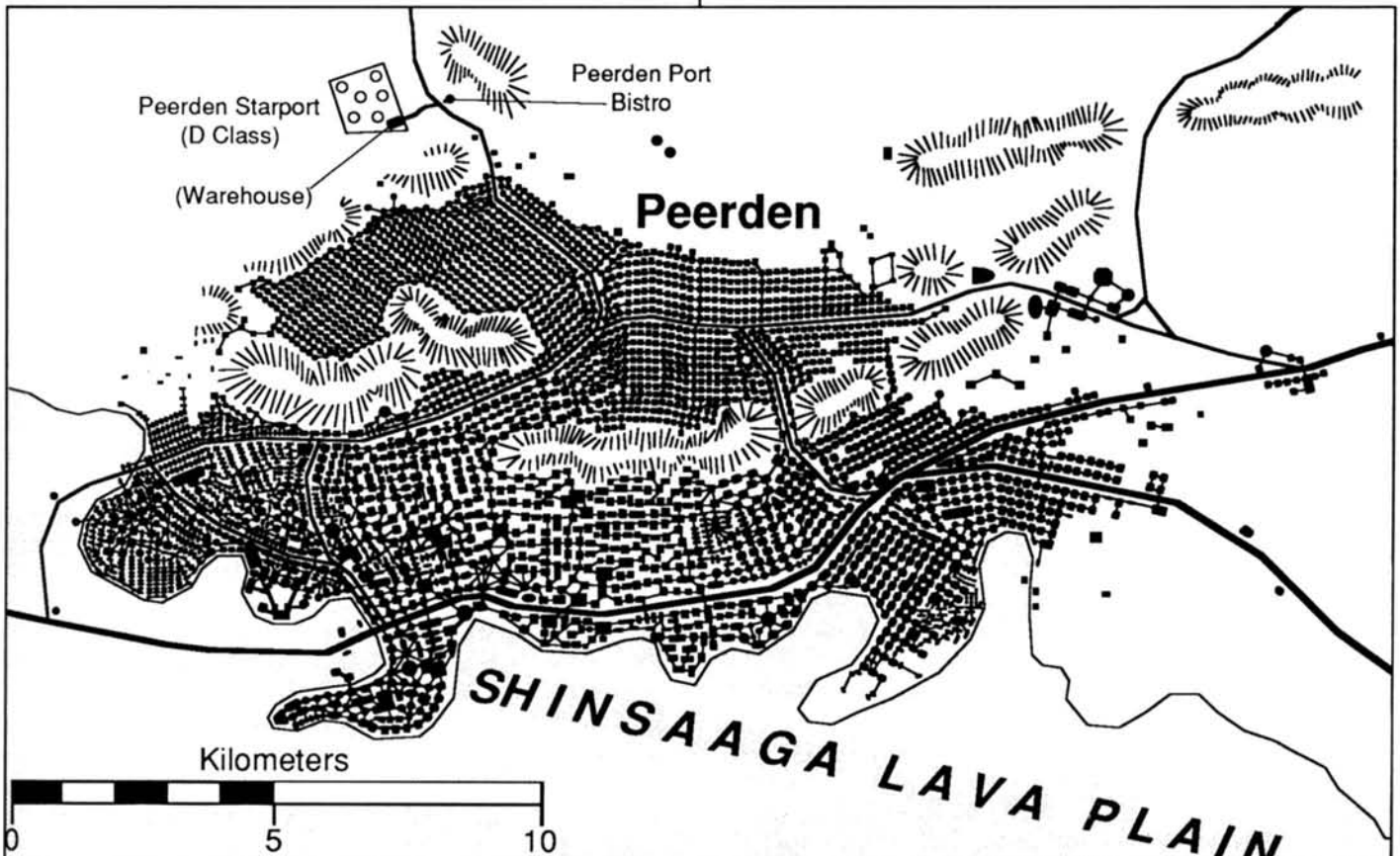
Action: Allow the PCs to circulate around the Bistro, striking up a conversation with some of the customers, the barkeep, or whomever. If the PCs are reluctant to talk to anybody, then have the barmaid, one of the more friendly customers, or even one of the owners of the Bistro (who has just come out of the back room) approach the PCs. Present the following rumors to the PCs, either as overheard tidbits, or through direct conversation.

BISTRO RUMORS

Roll 2D, and provide the PCs with the appropriate rumor details. Rather than just reading the rumor aloud, try to present it in the context of a roleplaying conversation.

2: The latest underground "scoop" on the Rebellion is that the "real Strephon" was killed recently by a commando raid on his private palace in Gushemege.

Referee: There is no way of knowing in the context of this



adventure if this rumor is true or not. Just let the PCs keep wondering.

3: Some ex-military traders who stopped here from Hasaggan two weeks ago said that they had heard through their military contacts that Lucan had just attacked Dulinor again.

Referee: This rumor is false and was deliberately started by Lucan's forces to throw the local forces off guard, in preparation for their orbital assault soon to hit the Khishan Cluster.

4: The *Offworld News Review* (a locally run offworld news service) says Khishan recently executed 14 persons, including nine Imperial nobles of knight rank or above, as spies. The Imperial officials were on extended duty away from the starport complex, supposedly with the permission of the Khishan government.

However, offworlders are reminded that the agreement with the Khishan people is that offworlders are not to leave the starport area without the express permission of the Khishan Extraworld Council.

Referee: Just use this rumor to worry the PCs a bit, and to let them know that while Khishan may be tech 16, it's not particularly fond of offworlders. They will have to watch their step when they're on Khishan.

5: An *Offworld News Review* headline: "Prominent Imperial Knight on Khishan Suddenly Disappears." The knight had gotten clearance from the Khishan government to conduct some archaeological studies on the world when she suddenly turned up missing. The disappearance is apparently unrelated to the recent "noble executions," also on Khishan.

Referee: This, of course, is a key rumor of **Knightfall**, but don't make it look to be so. Be very nonchalant about its presentation. This rumor should start out seeming to have no particular importance, but be certain that it is one of the rumors the PCs hear here.

6: Local news: Residents of Peerden are being pressured to upgrade their housing or move out. Many complain there's no place to go.

A resident is quoted as saying, "We're looking at a limited location situation here. There's just no other place for working people to live."

A local Peerden official justifies the council's stand by saying, "The intent of this plan is not to evict or displace all the residents. We will work with any nonconforming resident who desires to upgrade to a newer unit. It is our belief that this plan will offer better long-term security in the final analysis."

Referee: This rumor is intended to give the PCs a clue to a potentially profitable trading market on Engorr: offworld building materials—especially wood.

7: Conversation: Lots of new construction is going on here in Peerden.

Referee: If the PCs look into this here at the Bistro, lead them to one Togo Mongaash, the owner of the local Mongaash Building & Design Company. Mongaash will pay premium prices for wood from Wikk. The PCs must promise to deliver at least 1000 kiloliters of Wikkian wood in the next four weeks before he will award them the contract, which pays Cr750 per kiloliter of wood. Mongaash further stipulates there is a whopping 50% late penalty, *after* the PCs have agreed to the contract.

8: Local news: There is much unrest recently between the independent miners and the corporate concerns. Discussions between the independent miners coalition and the corporate interests have stalemated. Both sides refuse to meet at the

bargaining table and discuss their differences.

Referee: This rumor should provide the PCs with clues into the local feud here on Engorr.

9: An *Offworld News Review* story: Margaret has departed on a 25-world goodwill tour. The tour will include a stop at Ektorr, the parent world of Engorr.

Referee: This rumor is just for local color, nothing else. This is another "rumor" that will continue to surface throughout the campaign, like rumor number 5. In terms of the relevance of this rumor to the campaign, it is a red herring.

10: Local news: Ida Kensington, 42, began fighting for miners' rights when her mine was threatened in 1116. Despite a successful restructuring of the family's mine financing, Kensington shut down her mine about 10 days ago because of dropping ore prices. Kensington is an executive board member of the National Independent Mining Coalition. "We shut down our mine 10 days ago. I've been working 20-hour days and been having a very hard time getting workers that would stay in the mine. I'm not able to pay great wages because the mine's earning level has been so low."

Referee: This rumor should give the PCs an inkling that all is not wonderful where the mining business on Engorr is concerned. Coupled with other rumors, the PCs should be able to piece together a fairly accurate picture of the feud situation between the independents and the corporations.

11: Local news: An independent miner was found dead today of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Friends remarked that he had been quite distraught recently about the poor prospects for the sale of his mine's output. They speculate that he decided to end it all.

Referee: While this rumor may sound suspicious, it is not. This miner, as his friends correctly speculated, simply committed suicide out of despair for his bleak situation.

12: An *Offworld News Review* story: The TNS reports that the "killer" metal parasites from the Solomani Rim sector are expected to reach Massilia sector soon. The experimental strain escaped from a genetics lab on Easter in 1101, and has been steadily moving toward Massilia each year. The most recent reported infestation was discovered on the estate of Sir Elgin, an Imperial knight. Sir Elgin's estate is only one parsec away from Massilia sector in Diaspora. The discovery was reported on 331-1119.

Referee: Here is a "color" rumor that has little relevance to **Knightfall**, although it has deliberately been made to look important by referring to a noble of knight rank, and by using specific names and dates to make the rumor look carefully devised. The rumor is true, but quite irrelevant to **Knightfall**. Allow the PCs to believe what they like.

5. MORE CARGO?

Characters learn of various freights and cargos.

Location is Engorr's Peerden Port warehouse.

Scene: The one and only warehouse in Peerden Starport is an "ancient" steel and concrete dome structure showing heavy vacuum-stress weathering. As you cycle through the air lock and enter the shabby and dimly lit merchant's lobby area, you notice the available cargos board posted with the following notices, some of which are several standard days old.

Action: Present the following ads to the player characters.

● **Freight, Ores to Riarette:** Destiny Mining, LIC has a 200-kiloliter lot of sulfur-laden ore in TL11 ore bins for transport to

Riarette Down. Standard freight payment of Cr75 per kiloliter (Cr15,000 for the entire lot). No special handling requirements. Posted eight standard days ago.

Referee: Everything is as it seems, and the cargo is still available for shipment. The PCs simply need to check with the warehouse office to purchase this lot.

● **Freight, Compounds to Ektor:** Travii-Aast Interstellar has a 135-kiloliter lot of corrosive fluoride compounds in sealed TL11 cargo bins for transport to Ektor's Torneen Central Orbital Complex. Premium freight payment of Cr80 per kiloliter (Cr10,800 for the entire lot). Avoid temperatures over 110°. Posted six standard days ago.

Referee: Everything is as it seems, and the cargo is still available for shipment. The PCs need to check with the warehouse office to purchase the lot. Define a loading and handling task for the PCs to roll several times as they load this lot. If they happen to get a fumble, impose a 2D mishap.

● **For Sale: Nonmetals:** Local independent miners have 1000 kiloliters of barium ore available for sale to any offworld transport concern. Asking price: Cr500 per kiloliter or best offer. Contact Gilford & Ryan Brokerage at Peerden Starport. Posted three standard days ago.

Referee: Gilford and Ryan have been instructed to hold out for as much money as possible on this lot of barium ore. This will be an especially hard deal to strike for the PCs if they choose to try for this load. Also, if any of the corporate mining operations get wind of the PCs going for this load, they will "discourage" the PCs from picking up the lot.

● **For Sale: Raw Crystals:** Destiny Mining, LIC has 490 kiloliters of raw crystals of mixed composition already packed in cargo bins and stored at the Peerden warehouse and ready for transport offworld. Asking price: Cr475 per kiloliter. Posted 10 standard days ago.

Referee: This lot is not entirely a load of crystals. It also has the bodies of two dead miners in two of the cargo bins (under a layer of crystals with a false bottom). Let the PCs explain that one to customs on the other end of their run!

● **For Sale: Ferrous Metal Ores:** Independent miners have premium ferrous ores ready for sale to offworld transport concern. Over 800 kiloliters available for transport. Asking price: Cr600 per kiloliter or best offer. Contact Gilford & Ryan Brokerage at Peerden Starport. Posted five standard days ago.

Referee: This ore is not as "premium" as the owners would have everyone believe. They paid off the cargo inspector to certify the ores were of top quality. Business has been rough, and these independent miners are desperate. If any of the PCs have prospecting skill, they will be able to tell that the ore is not worth the money being asked for it.

● **Wanted: Wood:** Local construction firm needs large quantities of wood brought from offworld. Inquire at Peerden Port Bistro for details. Posted 10 standard days ago.

Referee: This, obviously, ties back to rumors 6 and 7 under Back at the Bistro covered on pages 11-12. If the PCs are paying attention and they have not permanently damaged their reputation on Engorr, some profits are to be made by bringing exotic offworld construction materials to Engorr. This premium trade opportunity is extremely time-dependent: The PCs must get the requested offworld wood and bring it back to Engorr within the next few weeks in order to fetch a premium price on it.

The Engorr Miners

Referee's Notes

As the PCs unload their electronic parts for the miners, they may get a chance to talk. To help you carry on a convincing conversation with the PCs, here are some details on these miners' operations.

The Miners: The miners the PCs are dealing with are a coalition of independent miners who have banded together recently to hold their own against increasing pressure from the corporate mines. Business has not been all that great lately. The independent miners would like to improve the efficiency of their operations, in order to better compete with the corporate mines.

These miners mine a wide variety of ores, including both ferrous and nonferrous metals, as well as nonmetal ores. The nonferrous metals include (primarily) chromium, platinum, and phosphorous. Nonmetal ores include barium, cobalt, fluorides, and sulfur.

The miners, if asked, will say they intend to use the electronic components to upgrade their robotic mining hardware (so the story goes), in order to improve their competitive position with the corporate mines. (Of course, this is not exactly true—these miners are actually planning to build their own version of home-grown gauss rifles, so they can properly defend themselves against the corporate "hit men." See Feud, below.)

Feud: The local feud is between the independent miners and the corporate mining companies (the rumors at the Peerden Port Bistro seem to indicate this). Times have been lean lately on Engorr, and there has been a marked drop in independent offworld trade. The corporate interests are putting pressure on the independents, even to the point of taking potshots at miners (they managed to kill a few in the process, as the PCs may find out in one of the cargo shipments in More Cargo? on this page) The corporate firms have funded local research in gauss weapons, and are using their crude, newly developed weapons to gain an upper hand in the fight.

Then the PCs come along and sell a huge shipment of electronic parts to the local miners before the corporations have a chance to block the sale. The four "angry miners" the PCs encounter are actually local turncoat miners employed as "hit men" by the corporate interests to discourage the PCs from ever coming to Engorr again. The corporations hope to "put the squeeze" on the independents by discouraging sympathetic free trader vessels from coming to Engorr and hauling the independents' ore to offworld markets.

Random Nuggets

This chapter contains a potpourri of trade encounters, trade rules enhancements, and rumors for use throughout the **Knightfall** campaign. The trade encounters or rumors may result in a number of possible outcomes: some may be legitimate, others too good to be true, and still others nothing but red herrings.

You can use these nuggets with the Trade and Commerce Tables to add some depth and spice to the players' merchant activities. This chapter also includes some delightful red herrings and juicy rumors—one of which plays a big part in the main thread of **Knightfall**: A knight of the realm is missing, and she has with her the whereabouts of a mythical archaeological site supposedly found during the distant shadowy centuries of the Long Night.

USING THESE NUGGETS

Each of these random nuggets is designed to be reused several times. Each nugget has a general-purpose opening scene followed by an action section with several paragraphs—each paragraph providing a different outcome to the opening. You chose the specific action paragraph you want to use, either by randomly rolling dice or by just picking an outcome you like.

The idea is to provide you, as referee, with immediate “bits of adventure” at a moment’s notice. Player characters are notorious for not following the plotline of roleplaying adventures, so random nuggets like these are handy for just allowing the PCs to explore the imaginary roleplaying universe. You can confidently let the PCs roam about, trading and encountering rumors of all sorts—and they never realize what is real plotline, and what is just “filler.”

But if you happen to feel especially inspired with the direction or outcome of a particular random nugget, feel free to allow it to develop into a full-fledged side adventure. As the side adventure takes shape, you can come back to this and the other random nugget chapters in **Knightfall** and use another nugget to provide impromptu details for the side adventure’s bare bones.

The use of these random nuggets is limited only by your imagination. In fact, these nuggets are generally useful enough that you can reuse them over and over long after your players have finished the **Knightfall** campaign.

ENHANCEMENTS TO TRADE AND COMMERCE RULES (OPTIONAL)

Since much of the early part of **Knightfall** deals with interstellar trade and commerce, the following optional enhancements to the trade and commerce rules are recommended. These additions provide an interesting new depth to interstellar speculation, increasing player enjoyment.

First, selling a speculative cargo should no longer be automatic. Before using Step 1, Cargo Price (page 53 of the **Referee’s Manual**), the seller must find a buyer. To do this, use the following task:

To find a buyer for speculative cargo:

[varies], Broker, Admin or Streetwise, [varies]
[High Pop (9+)=Simple]; [High Pop (9+)=4 hours]
[Mod Pop (4+)=Routine]; [Mod Pop (4+)=1 day]
[Low Pop (3–)=Difficult]; [Low Pop (3–)=2 days]

Referee: For manufactured hardware, increase the difficulty

level by one for each difference in the tech code (Early Stellar to Average Stellar is a difference of one, and so on). For novelty items, decrease the task difficulty one level for each difference in tech code.

Tech Codes

Preindustrial (TL0-3)
Industrial (TL4-5)
Prestellar (TL6-8)
Early Stellar (TL9-A)
Average Stellar (TLB-D)
High Stellar (TLE-G)

If the world’s Law Level is Low Law or less (0-3), a fumble results in an automatic 3D mishap. At High Law (8-9), make the task hazardous (2D mishap), and at Extreme Law (A+), make the task hazardous and fateful (3D mishap).

In most cases, do not allow the difficulty to be increased beyond Formidable, unless the world has a Population of 0 (0-9 inhabitants).

Add to Step 3, Tech Level Effects (page 53 of the **Referee’s Manual**): If the item being sold is:

- A natural resource, ignore the tech level effects.
- A processed resource, use the tech level effects as given.
- Manufactured hardware, always use tech level difference as a minus (–).
- Manufactured nonhardware, use the tech level effects as given.
- Information, use the tech level effects as given.
- Novelty, always use the tech level difference as a plus (+).

RATIONALE

While it is certainly simpler to always assume there will always be a buyer for any speculative cargo you may have, that is not completely realistic. The “to find a buyer” task neatly adds this additional level of realism to the trade and commerce rules.

Now selling high-tech equipment on a Low Population, Pre-industrial world becomes a truly daunting proposition. And the hazard effects for the various law levels serve to remind you that you should not ignore customs on worlds with High Law levels. The 3D mishap on Low Law level worlds accurately simulates both the rare times that you do run afoul of the law and the likelihood that when you do cross the law, the penalties are usually severe.

In addition, the basic **MegaTraveller** rules do not vary the tech level effects for different types of items. Here is how the above additional tech level guidelines were arrived at:

Natural Resources: Tech level doesn't have much relevance when considering the price of raw natural resources. Differentiating between a TL5 rock and a TL15 rock makes little difference. So we just ignore tech level differences on raw materials.

Processed Resources: Tech level makes a big difference on the quality and desirability of processed resources. TL15 aluminum is likely to be of a much higher quality than TL5 aluminum. So we use the tech level effects as given when dealing with processed resources.

Manufactured Resources: Manufactured resources are a mixed bag. If the resource is hardware (such as electronic equipment), matching the hardware tech level to the selling world's tech level will fetch the highest price. If the hardware is of too low a tech level, a product's quality and function will be less desirable to the locals—but if the tech level is too high, understanding function and simple maintenance become a problem, again lowering the desirability of the product on the local market.

So the tech level of hardware you want to sell should match the local world tech level to fetch the highest price. Non-hardware (like spices or pharmaceuticals) is more like processed resources, however. TL15 pharmaceuticals are likely to be of a much higher quality than TL5 pharmaceuticals; thus, we use the tech level effects as given for nonhardware manufactured goods.

Information Resources: High-tech information is generally more robust and better detailed, thus making it more valuable. So we use the tech level effects as given when dealing with information.

Novelty Resources: Novelty resources generally work like manufactured hardware in reverse—that is, the greater the difference in tech level, the more valuable the item. A TL15 souvenir is likely to be worth a lot more on a TL5 world than on another TL15 world. In the same manner, a TL5 souvenir is probably worth more on a TL15 world than on another TL5 world. Therefore, we always use the difference in tech levels as a plus on novelty items.

FOR TRANSPORT

PCs go to the local starport broker to look for freight to transport offworld.

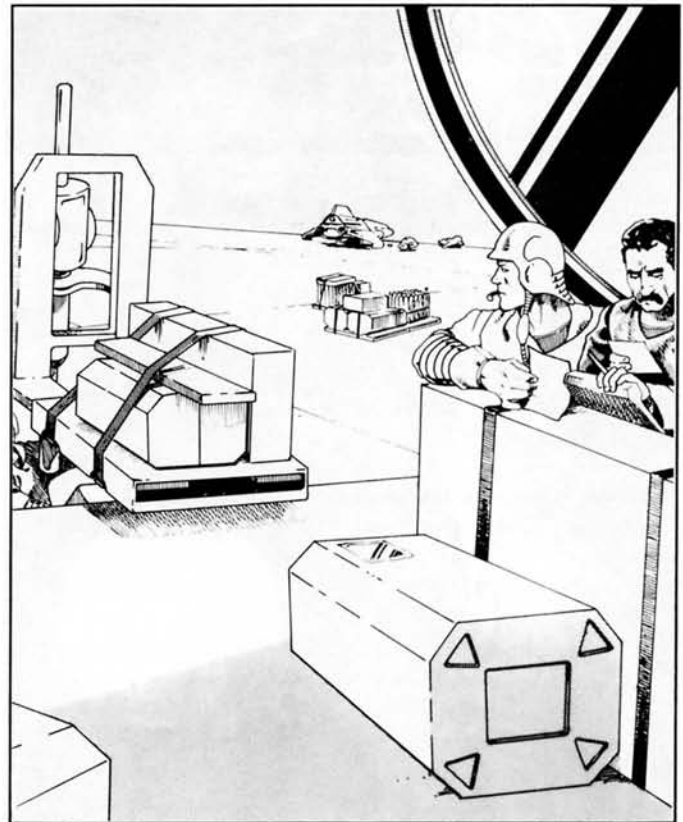
Location is any world with a Population of 5+.

Scene: You go to your usual starport freight broker for this world, looking to see if there is any good offworld freight for transport.

The broker you typically deal with, standing at a clerk's computer display, recognizes you as you come in. After a moment or two, she comes over to greet you.

"Boy am I glad to see you," the broker says, with a sigh of relief. "I've got an urgent lot of freight I've been seeking to transport with somebody I can trust."

Action: The following cargo lots are "freight for transport," which is different from speculative cargo. Freight is cargo owned by others, and the PCs are simply providing a transport service through jumpspace to another world. Transport is by nature less lucrative than speculative cargo might be at times, but when *transporting* cargo, the payment rate is known in advance—which can be a real advantage. It is the owner's worry whether or not the cargo the PCs are transporting can be sold at its destination.



FREIGHT TABLE

Each of the following lots of freight is unusual in some way and will need special attention. Roll 2D and use the result to select the appropriate paragraph.

● **2: Incidental Lot, Manufactured Goods/Novelty (New Spice Prototype):** A local entrepreneur has developed a new spice from local materials and would like to transport it to the next world to see if a sectorwide corporation would be interested in buying the rights to the new spice. The spice is delightful to droyne, but will make humans acutely nauseous if even small quantities of the spice are inhaled. The owner wants to bring his prototype lot on board in sealed containers, and he will be travelling with his cargo. While the ship is in jumpspace, the owner will suddenly burst into the crew's lounge, white as a sheet, covered with a grey powder (the spice), and deathly sick. It seems he was working with a small vial of his spice and accidentally dropped his hand computer on the vial, breaking it and splattering the spice all over his face, neck and hands.

Typical Routes: Khishan-Engorr, Wikk-Engorr, Khishan-Hasaggan, Iggarir-Ketola, Khishan-Riarette.

● **3: Minor Lot, Information/Novelty (New Computer Software):** A local firm has just come out with a new grav module calibration software package and wants to get it to market on the next world. The software is highly sought after, and many of the firm's competitors would like to get their hands on a copy before it reaches the market on the other world. The local firm would like a reputable merchant with an armed vessel to transport the goods, just in case their competitors decide to try something while the software is in transit.

Typical Routes: Anamoni-Hasaggan, Riarette-Iggarir, Wikk-Murcia.

● **4: Major Lot, Manufactured Goods/Novelty (New Aromatics):** A local firm has a significant lot of new aromatics it would like transported to a world (pick a destination). The firm



insists that the cargo hold not be depressurized during the run, "just in case something was to happen." The firm will pay a premium Cr150 per kiloliter for the transport of this cargo. Ordinarily, the PCs should deliver the cargo and get paid as agreed. If the hold had unusual stress placed upon it during the trip, the cargo will be ruined, and the receiver will refuse to pay for the goods.

Typical Routes: Khishan-Engorr, Wikk-Engorr, Khishan-Hasaggan, Iggarrir-Ketola, Khishan-Riarette.

● **5: Incidental Lot, Information/Novelty (Memorabilia):**

An individual on the world wants to transport himself, his normal luggage allowance, and a single-kiloliter cargo bin full of delicate memorabilia. The owner of the memorabilia is willing to allow the bin to be placed in the hold. The owner is willing to pay a whopping Cr1000 for the one cargo bin to be safely transported. During the transport of this cargo, implement one of the "routine cargo hold searches" in the chapter, *A Minor Infraction*. When the memorabilia bin is opened for inspection, inside are several FGMP-15s, complete with power packs—not memorabilia. The officials will confiscate the bin and will arrest the owner. If the destination system's law code is Extreme, the PCs will also be arrested as accessories to the transport of illegal weapons.

Typical Routes: Any route is possible.

● **6: Minor Lot, Information/Novelty (2D Video Originals):**

This lot is the 2D video collection of an elderly local noble and must be transported with care. The noble will buy the PCs' entire cargo hold for the trip at the going rate of Cr75 per kiloliter. He will insist that the PCs transport only his lot of goods and nothing else. The noble will travel along, "just to keep an eye on things." The noble is rather quiet, but he will ask to check the hold twice each day—once when he wakes up in the morning, and once before he goes to bed. As long as the PCs are nice to this old fellow, everything should go as expected.

Typical Routes: Any route is possible.

● **7: Major Lot, Manufactured Goods/Novelty (Fad Exotic Fluids):** These fluids are nothing more than local mineral waters, complete with living microbes. Customers who bathe in this fluid swear by its regenerative qualities. Since, technically speaking, this fluid is a living organism, transport must be handled according to the standard transport procedures for life forms: Pressurize the hold, keep it at a constant temperature, avoid sudden shocks, and so on. During the journey through jumpspace, implement a warning light mishap in the hold: temperature malfunction—the temperature is increasing. Before things get worse, have the PCs roll the following task:

To correct the temperature malfunction in the hold:

Difficult, Electronic, Edu, 10 min (fateful, hazardous)

Referee: If this task fails, roll a 3D mishap. Allow innovative solutions on the part of the PCs to have an effect. Under high temperature, the microbes in this water will multiply wildly and burst their containers. At the worst, they will expand into a smelly, slimy goo, which will require a week's worth of maintenance to remove all traces from the hold. Depending on the mishap level, adjust the number of cargo bins that burst to control how bad the mess becomes and how much of the cargo is lost.

Typical Routes: Khishan-Engorr, Wikk-Engorr, Khishan-Hasaggan, Iggarrir-Ketola, Khishan-Riarette.

● **8: Incidental Lot, Manufactured Goods/Novelty (Alien Clothing):** This clothing is made in a local shop run by a few individuals of a minor race whose homeworld is located in this subsector. The clothing is quite sturdy and durable, but reacts badly to being transported if the vessel is not navigated through jumpspace "just so." It turns out that microjumps of about half a parsec have little or no effect on the material. Thus the vessel that transports the goods must be able to put collapsible tanks in their hold and make two half-parsec jumps to the next world. The transport company that wants this done will pay for half the modification costs to the PCs' ship, and then will pay Cr75 a kiloliter for all the space used by the fuel tanks and not otherwise available for cargo. The company will pay Cr100 a kiloliter for transport of the clothing itself.

Typical Routes: Hasaggan-Anamoni, Khishan-Hasaggan, Riarette-Iggarrir, Iggarrir-Irlu, Hasaggan-Khishan, Irlu-Riarette.

● **9: Minor Lot, Manufactured Goods/Novelty (Weapon Prototypes):** The branch office of a subsectorwide firm has a couple of vehicle weapon prototypes they want to transport to the next world over. They want a reputable merchant with an armed vessel to transport their prototype to the next world. They are also sending along two armed guards to travel with the prototypes. They have transport permits for the weapons, so customs should not delay the group in any way during the transport. The company will pay Cr100 per kiloliter for the transport of the prototypes.

Typical Routes: Ketola-any, Riarette-any, Hasaggan-any.

● **10: Major Lot, Natural Resource (Live Animals):** These live animals will take up the PCs' entire cargo hold, however large that is (make the average size of the animals fit the cargo hold size). The PCs will have to convert their entire cargo hold into a "barn-like" holding pen for these creatures. The owner will pay for the conversion costs and will pay for the extra life-support needed for these animals. In addition to all this, the owner will pay for the transport of these animals at the premium rate of Cr100 per kiloliter. Dealing with these creatures will be a pain from the very beginning. Although the animals come with a trained handler (roll 1D+1 for his skill level, with a maximum skill level of 5), working with these creatures will still be a problem, because the animals are very intelligent and they have minds of their own. Create numerous difficult, fateful tasks that the trainer and group must successfully complete during each interaction they have with the animals. Have some fun—the intent is for you to use this freight lot more as comic relief than anything else.

Typical Routes: Ektorrr-any, Iggarrir-any, Murcia-any, Wikk-any.

● **11: Incidental Lot, Novelty (Antique Weapons):** This is a small lot of delicate, antique slug thrower weapons from a century ago on this world. The owner is travelling with her goods and is the classic nervous type. She will constantly "bug" the PCs about the environment on the ship during the trip. The



owner will promise up-front to pay a 25% bonus upon safe arrival to the destination, but will then renege upon arrival. The PCs will have to deal diplomatically with this development if they ever hope to get paid for the freight transport job.

Typical Routes: Any route is possible.

● **12: Minor Lot, Natural Resource/Novelty (New Radioactive Ore):** This lot is a new, radioactive ore that is corrosive to boot. The ore has lots of very valuable potential uses, but it is hard to transport safely. There have been a number of accidents with the material in the past, but the owner is willing to add Cr200 per kiloliter hazard pay for the transport of these goods. Nothing should happen during the transport—make this a good deal for the PCs if they choose to go for it.

Typical Routes: Anamoni-any, Engorr-any, Iggarrir-any, Irlu-any, Madden-any, Murcia-any, Wikk-any.

NEWSNET

PCs overhear a rumor about the nobility of the region. Location is any world with a starport of C or better.

Scene: While travelling down a slidewalk in the starport, you notice the many newsnet monitors that are blaring various stories about many places, people, and events.



One of the stories about people, brought from just inside Lucan's realm, catches your attention.

"This broadcast is a report from Lucan's region. Its content represent the opinions and views of the local inhabitants from a world now claiming allegiance to Lucan."

Action: Roll 1D and select the matching numbered paragraph from the list below.

BROADCAST TABLE

● **1: Famous Knight Killed:** Possible Lucan worlds: Arar, Sargashad. The famous ruler of the nation of Ziduka on (Arar, Sargashad), Baron José Lopen, is dead at 37, the victim of an unfortunate air/raft crash. The Baroness Mirga Sagesh has been named as his successor. Baroness Mirga has stated that she regrets the untimely passing of Sir Lopen, and she proclaims that she intends to continue his policies uninterrupted.

● **2: Prominent Noble Designates Successor:** Possible Lucan worlds: Yagas, Arar, Sargashad. Sir Rom D'gium, well-known count of the Seven Wars, has named his nephew as his successor. Sir Duri D'gium, a mere knight, is, to quote one of the other nobles of the peerage, "a totally inappropriate choice—knights do not replace counts." Sir Rom's nephew (a clone of his older brother, incidentally) is to take over Sir Rom's post, effective immediately. Sir Rom's sudden early retirement came as a shock, and unfortunately, the count was unavailable for comment.

● **3: Famous Knight Missing:** Possible Lucan worlds: Datrumna. The famous knight Antaina Shaamish, made famous by her opposition to the "Night of Scurila" horror on Datrumna decades ago, has suddenly disappeared and is believed kidnapped. There is a Cr25,000 reward for any information leading to the location of noblewoman Antaina.

● **4: Errant Knight Sentenced:** Possible Lucan worlds: Seyers, Yagas, Theodisus. The prolonged Tiktea trials are finally over and the head of the Tiktea house, Sir Harrin Tiktea, has been reseated in the world's Imperial council. However, Sir Harrin was fined Cr500,000 and denied seniority. Sir Harrin was reported as making derogatory statements about the court proceedings and has supposedly fled the world. Authorities are offering a Cr100,000 reward for the nobleman's safe return.

● **5: Duchess Takes Stand Against Lucan:** Possible Lucan worlds: Nasuga, Transvaal. The young Duchess Lai Waiga has chosen to defy his majesty Lucan's authority on her world. "If Lucan is ready and willing to suffer a major defeat, then we will give him a fight he'll never forget," says the duchess. Authorities caution that Lai Waiga's warmonger-like attitudes won't help anybody. Lai Waiga's attitudes are bound to make her world a planet full of people on edge, and even the slightest provocation could lead to needless bloodshed.

● **6: Ruling Noble Questions Lucan's Report:** Possible Lucan worlds: Observatory, Resaca. His majesty Lucan has boosted aid recently to (Observatory or Resaca). Lucan pulled his forces out in early 1119, and the world is on its own again, and is much happier thanks to Lucan's help. Sir Lorin Heshki, a knight of Margaret's realm, says the intelligence reports say different. Sir Lorin says he has seen irrefutable evidence to indicate that over 500 soldiers and military officers are still operating from the world's main orbital station.

Referee's Notes: Mix these rumors in with numerous rumors about other people, places, and events. In general, old newspapers are a great source of campaign rumor ideas. Just change the names, throw in a high-tech twist now and then, and you've got an endless supply of ready-made rumors!

A Minor Infraction

Random Nuggets

This section of **Knightfall** is a collection of random nuggets for you to use to remind the player characters (PCs) that there is an Imperium-wide Rebellion going on. The various colonial space fleets of Massilia are nervously patrolling their home systems, fearing an interstellar assault by Dulinor, Lucan, or even an attack by the Solomani or Bzrk. Naturally, the PCs will sense this tension. Also, customs is getting more picky about checking incoming cargo, to make sure no one is smuggling in weapons in anticipation of waging a world coup to support one of the enemy Imperial factions.

USING THESE NUGGETS

This chapter is a collection of random nuggets, bits of adventure that serve well as filler for you to use just about anywhere. In **Knightfall**, each random nugget chapter has a theme, giving you, as referee, some idea of how and where the nuggets of that chapter would work best.

The nuggets of this chapter all have one thing in common—they are all events where the PCs are detained by the authorities. The main purpose of these nuggets, besides providing some adventuring meat to put on the bones of **Knightfall**, is to illustrate to the PCs how on edge the authorities are about the Rebellion.

Whenever the PCs call on a world in their trading excursions, consider using one of these nuggets to fill out the events which the PCs experience while in the system. However, some system visits need to be uneventful, so don't feel you have to use one of these nuggets for every system. Uneventful system visits now and then make the eventful ones have that extra little edge of excitement.

As in many things, balance is the key. Too many uneventful system visits make the session boring. Exciting events with every system visit starts to dull the excitement. A good rule of thumb is probably to use one of the nuggets below for roughly half of the system calls. If you are careful, you might even be able to reuse one of these nuggets more than once (with a few minor changes in the names and places, of course).

A good technique for using one of these nuggets is to routinely roll for encounters, and when an encounter comes up that seems like a good lead-in to one of these nuggets, then go for it. For other random encounters that don't seem to fit as well, just wing it, and let them run their usual course. The players enjoy this approach more, too. When the PCs can't tell the difference between the stuff that matters and the stuff that doesn't, they have the most fun.

Even if the PCs are not stopping in the given system but are only conducting a gas giant refueling, nuggets 1 and 4 still can be used.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following summaries give you brief information about each nugget in this chapter.

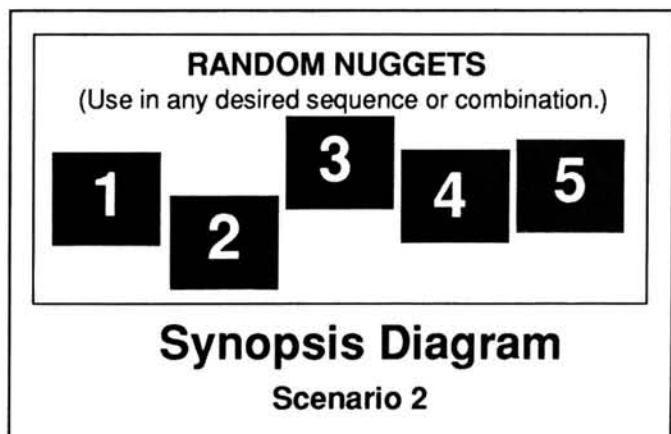
1. Patrol Ship Boarding: This nugget deals with a patrol vessel contacting the PCs' vessel and testing the PCs by asking them why their transponder travel log is in error. After the PCs have had time to sweat this one out, the vessel's captain will board their ship and finally admit to the PCs he was only testing them, and that he "can't be too careful," with the Rebellion's borders less than 10 parsecs away.

2. Customs: When customs performs a routine cargo spot check by opening one of the cargo bins, they will find—much to everyone's surprise—a dead body. If the PCs are clever, they can talk themselves out of this embarrassing and suspicious situation. Otherwise, they will be accused of numerous possible crimes. The PCs get to sit things out for a week or two in jail while waiting for a formal hearing and for their names to finally be cleared.

3. Customs—Again?: After a normal and apparently uneventful customs inspection, the characters are informed that an obscure new local law has mandated that the inspected shipment cannot be imported to this world. The goods in question cannot leave the landing bay, along with any other goods brought with the now illegal shipment. The PCs must decide on a course of action to deal with this monkey wrench in their plans and implement it—whether it involves bribing customs, leaving the planet, or selling the goods illegally to the local underground.

4. Checking the Hold: This nugget is more of an annoyance than anything else, and serves as a reminder that being a merchant in Rebellion times can be a hassle. The PC's cargo hold will be extensively searched, with over half of their cargo bins opened and the contents searched carefully. Apparently, local starport customs has gotten a tip that someone is smuggling weapons onto the world, and is intending to stage a coup for Lucan's faction.

5. Quarantine: In this nugget, the PCs try to leave the world with their cargo and are quarantined. Apparently a violent unknown sickness has just broken out on the world, and it needs to be contained immediately. All offworld traffic—either coming or going—has been temporarily suspended, pending containment of the disease. Then one of the PCs starts to feel sick, and the PCs feel their worries have only begun!



1. PATROL SHIP BOARDING

PCs' starship is hailed and boarded by a system patrol ship.

Location is any star system with mainworld Pop 6+ and TL10+.

Candidate systems include: Hasaggan, Riarette, Ektorr, Khishan, Iggarir, Irlu, Wikk.

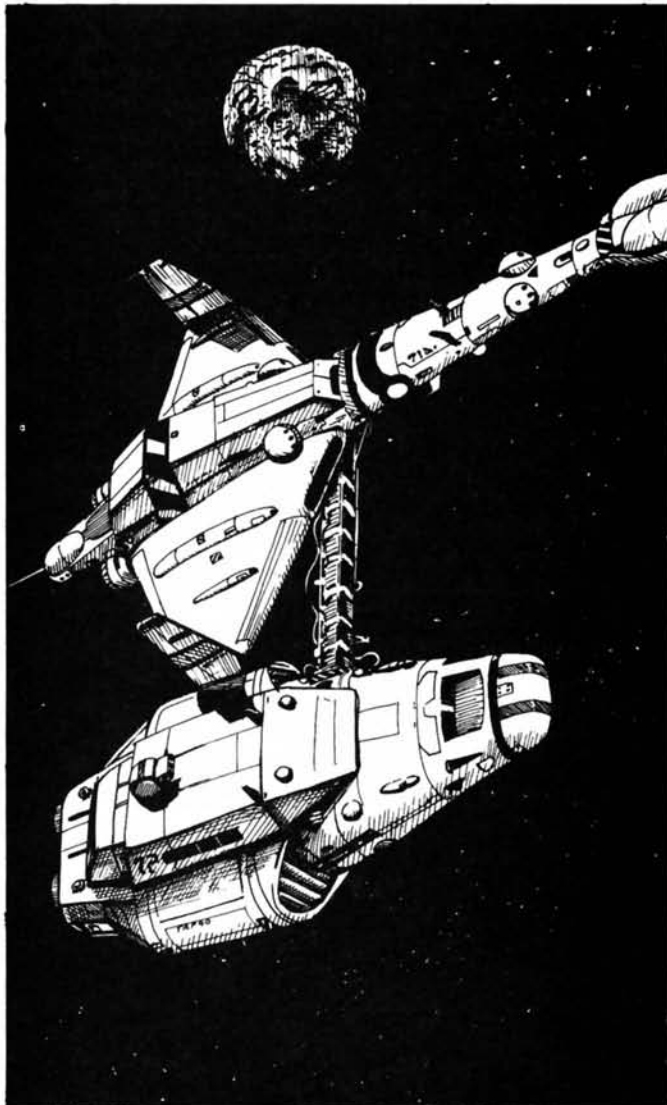
Scene: You just exited jump and have been in normal space for about an hour.

During a routine sensor scan, you pick up several other merchant vessels in the system. At this point, your starship speaks up.

"Sir, one craft's transponder ID indicates it is a merchant vessel, but it's current acceleration would only be possible with a maneuver drive value of 4, which is highly unusual for a merchant vessel. Nothing in my passive sensor readings would indicate this is *not* a merchant vessel, however, other than its unusual m-drive speed. Do you wish me to try an active sensor pinpoint?"

Action: This nugget illustrates well how a high-tech starship computer is more of an assistant than some cold piece of hardware.

The more you can convey the idea the starship is itself a part of the crew (although it is not capable of creative thought), the



more of a science-fiction feel you will put into the adventure.

The immediate question the PCs have, of course, is *who* or *what* is this unusual merchant vessel. A pirate perhaps? An enemy warship in disguise?

Do the player characters dare give away their position by running an active scan? Let the PCs worry about this decision for awhile, then develop the situation carefully as explained below.

Shortly after the above discussion with the starship's computer, it should promptly notify the bridge crew that the mystery vessel has changed to an intercept course with the PC's craft! If they declined the active scan before this time, they might want to reconsider doing an active scan now.

If the PCs do an active sensor pinpoint, roll a standard sensor task:

To do an active sensor pinpoint on another starship at Far Orbit range:

[Difficulty varies], Sensor Ops, Edu (uncertain)

Referee: Use the ActObjPin difficulty level from the starship's UCP, and increase it *two* difficulty levels to account for the Far Orbit range.

The starship's computer model number may be used in place of the character's Sensor Ops skill, if desired.

Some truth on this task gives the starship's displacement in tons and its power plant output in megawatts, but incorrect type.

Total truth gives displacement, power output, *and* the correct type (440-ton patrol cruiser, in this case).

After a few minutes on the intercept course, the craft's transponder ID will suddenly change to that of a 440-ton patrol cruiser. At the same instant that the new transponder ID is received, the PC's ship will receive a hailing message from the patrol cruiser *Lincus*, commanded by Captain Choz. The message is as follows:

"Merchant vessel (name of PC's craft), this is Captain Choz of the Colonial (name of system PCs are in) Force. Your transponder travel log shows a discrepancy when compared to our library records. Standby and prepare to be boarded. ETA is three hours."

Let the PCs worry about this one for awhile—they may not believe Captain Choz.

They may think the craft is not the vessel it claims to be at all, unless they decide to risk an active sensor scan (they really don't have a lot to lose at this point, since the *Lincus* already knows their location).

Once the *Lincus* reaches visual range, the PCs will see that the craft is, in fact, a patrol vessel. The craft is painted a light blue color, with the local system's colonial navy symbol on it.

Once the *Lincus* pulls alongside the PCs' starship, a brief message is sent:

"(Name of PCs' starship), prepare for boarding."

Two vacc-suited individuals exit the patrol ship's air lock, and extend a portable air lock over to the PCs' main air lock. These two persons get inside the portable air lock, double-check the seal on each ship's hull, then pressurize the portable air lock passageway.

Then another message is sent to the PCs' ship.

"(Name of PCs' starship), this is Captain Choz of the cruiser *Lincus*, requesting permission to board your vessel. Please

open your outer air lock door.”

If the PCs refuse, Choz will quote:

“Imperial Starport Authority regulations, article 27, section two states: ‘Any and all foreign starships may be subject to reasonable detainment of the vessel at the discretion of the in-system authorities. All starships must be willing to submit to these regulations, as well as the local rules and regulations as enforced by the local system patrol craft. Reasonable detainment activities to which all foreign vessels must willingly submit to at the request of the local authorities include, but are not limited to: a deep space boarding and inspection....’

“Therefore, I must insist on you granting me permission to board your vessel, according to these regulations.”

If the PCs still refuse, Captain Choz will transmit a message placing the PCs under arrest, and informing them that the patrol craft will escort their vessel to the local starport, at which point the PCs’ starship will be impounded and the group will be charged with “refusing to obey in-system authorities.” Depending on how the PCs react and the local Law Level, the PCs could be fined up to Cr60,000 and have to spend six months in jail. During this time, their starship will be impounded.

If the PCs are under arrest and they try to escape the patrol cruisers’ escort, the patrol cruiser will fire on the PCs’ starship with the goal of *disabling* the group’s starship, not destroying it.

In any case, if the PCs adopt some radical, disobedient approach, their reputation in this system will be permanently damaged. If they are foolish enough to do this to their reputation, they will be immediately captured, arrested, and tried if they ever return to the system in which they violated Imperial Starport Authority regulations.

If the PCs are smart, they will invite Choz onboard without a fuss. Once Choz comes into the PCs’ air lock, the group can see on their monitors that he is accompanied by two marines in combat armor and wielding gauss rifles. Choz will close the outer air lock door, open the inner door, and come aboard.

Choz will immediately ask the person who greets him (presumably the PCs’ captain) what their purpose is in this system. If Choz does not think the player characters have answered honestly, he will give them the third degree with questions.

Throughout the boarding, the two marines will hold their guns with the barrels pointing up in the air, and they will remain at the nearest doorway, in an alert stance, ready to act if anything should happen. They will not engage in any idle conversation, remaining silent the whole time.

Choz will also ask to search the hold, although his search will be quick and superficial. Lastly, he will ask to go to the bridge. Once there, he will request that the ship’s internal travel log be brought up. He will bring up the PC’s transponder log on his hand computer, and he will ask the group why their transponder log record he has on his hand computer does not agree with their own starship’s travel log.

Choz is testing the group. He wants to find out if they are trying to hide something by making them nervous. If they have nothing to hide, the PCs should be upset at Choz’s accusations, and they should tell him they think *he* is wrong or that he has incorrect data.

In fact, Choz doctored the PC’s transponder log.

After the PCs have had sufficient time to squirm, and when Choz feels the PCs are on the up and up, he will level with the

PCs’ captain. If it seems appropriate, he may even put his hand on the shoulder of the captain.

“You pass the inspection just fine—I was testing you. With Lucan’s forces so close, we can’t be too careful, you know. Go about your business.”

2. CUSTOMS

The player characters’ cargo is found to contain two dead bodies.

Location is any star system with a mainworld Law Level of 7+.

Candidate systems include: Hasaggan, Ketola, Riarrette, Ektor, Khishan, Iggarir.

Scene: You have just landed in the starport bay, and you are greeted by customs officials who request to perform their routine inspection of the cargo in your hold. As is typical in a customs inspection, you assist them, since you must open each cargo bin for them (or the inspectors must be allowed to do sensor scans on a dangerous bin that can’t be opened, to verify its contents).

After opening several bins without consequence, you open one of the bins and out falls the dead body of a miner. The customs official looks up briefly, then looks back down at the body.

“I’m afraid, sir, we are going to have to quarantine your cargo. We will have to detain you and your crew for questioning.”

Action: This nugget is meant more as an irritation and a reminder of how sticky offworld trade can get.

The PCs will be asked to completely shut down their ship, and will be led away into some comfortable (although spartan) holding cells in the starport’s administrative offices. Security guards are posted at the main exit of this area, which has other holding cells—some empty, some not.

After several days, a couple of local officials will come and question the PCs at length about their port of call where they picked up this cargo. In addition, the officials will ask enough questions to determine, to their satisfaction at least, if the PCs themselves killed the miner. This same sort of questioning should occur several times over the next few days, with different officials each time.

Unless the PCs really mess up their story, they will be released after a couple of weeks and several interrogations, none the worse for wear. They are free to sell their cargo and conduct themselves like nothing ever happened.

If the PCs don’t play their cards right, however, their cargo will not be granted entry onto this world. Even worse, if the PCs really botch things, they will be transported back to the world where they got this spurious cargo, and released to the local authorities there, according to interstellar extradition agreements. There, they will be questioned by the local officials, and perhaps tried for the murder of the miner. This, however, is an extreme case and should not be allowed to happen unless the PCs pull some major blunder and make themselves look guilty.

3. CUSTOMS—AGAIN?

The player characters are detained for intensive questioning.

Location is Khishan.

Scene: You set down your starship on the landing pad, and, as typically happens, the local customs officials greet you and ask to inspect the cargo in your hold.

As you open cargo bin after cargo bin, the inspectors leaf through their contents, make some notes, and then move on to the next bin. Finally, the inspection is done—everything went without a hitch.

Just before you are about to leave the landing bay, one of the customs officials walks up to you.

“Sir, I’m afraid things are not completely in order with your cargo.”

Action: It seems the PCs have violated an obscure new local law about not importing whatever the PCs have in their hold. The group cannot bring these goods, or any other goods with this shipment, onto this world. The goods must remain in the landing bay and must leave the world at the PCs’ earliest convenience.

At this point, the PCs have several options: They can bribe the customs officials to look the other way. They can negotiate with the customs officials to let them sell the rest of their “good” cargo on the world—the PCs will not distribute the illegal goods on the world. If the customs officials agree to this, the PCs can hold to their word, or they might try to sell the illegal goods to the local underground (Streetwise skill will help here). If the goods are illegal, they should fetch a good price if sold to the local underground.

The PCs might even try to convince the customs officials to let them onto the world, even if the PCs can’t distribute their cargo here (they might need to fill out the rest of their hold with more cargo purchased here).

Variations on the above options are also possible. The PCs might, for instance, try to sell the illegal cargo to the customs officials, since the cargo might make the local customs officials a lot of money as well.

And, of course, the PCs always have the option to do just what customs says, and leave as soon as possible for another world and another market.

4. CHECKING THE HOLD

The PCs’ starship hold is searched extensively.

Location is any star system with mainworld Pop 6+ and TL10+.

Candidate systems include: Hasaggan, Riarette, Ektor, Khishan, Iggarrir, Irlu, Wikk.

Scene: You have been in normal space about 30 minutes.

“Sir, we are being hailed by a system patrol vessel,” your starship computer says. “Shall I put it on screen?”

Action: Once the PCs say “yes” to seeing the message, here’s what they get.

“This is the system defense boat *Pilasta*, coming alongside for a routine cargo inspection. Please prepare to be boarded.”

Sensors indicate the so-called SDB is at Planetary range. The transponder ID agrees with the hailing message. If the PCs do an active sensor pinpoint to verify this craft is an SDB approaching, roll a standard sensor task:

To do an active sensor pinpoint on another starship at Planetary range:

[Difficulty varies], Sensor Ops, Edu (uncertain)

Referee: Use the ActObjPin difficulty level from the starship’s UCP, and increase it *one* difficulty level to account for the Planetary range.

The starship’s computer model number may be used in place of the character’s Sensor Ops skill, if desired.

Some truth on this task gives the starship’s displacement in tons and its power plant output in megawatts, but incorrect type.

Total truth gives displacement, power output, *and* the correct type (400-ton standard SDB design, in this case).

Sensors will indicate the SDB’s ETA is about one hour.

Once the SDB arrives, it sends a brief message:

“(Name of PCs’ starship), please prepare for boarding.”

Two vacc-suited individuals exit the SDB’s air lock and extend a portable air lock to the PCs’ main air lock. These two persons get inside the portable air lock, double-check the seal on each ship’s hull, then pressurize the portable air lock passageway.

Then another message is sent to the PCs’ ship.

“(Name of PCs’ starship), this is Captain Cyterian of the system defense boat *Pilasta*, requesting permission to come aboard—open your outer air lock door, please.”

If the PCs refuse, the *Pilasta* will fire a disabling shot at the PCs’ craft and escort their vessel to the local starport, detaining the PCs for questioning for a period of four weeks. The *Pilasta* will tolerate no cavalier attitude about its authority, given the tense situation in this Rebellion era.

Once aboard with three armed guards, Captain Cyterian will conduct an extensive search of the cargo hold, requesting that each cargo bin be opened (if at all possible). If the PCs refuse to open any bin, Captain Cyterian will insist on seeing a detailed cargo manifest to verify that the cargo bin indeed contains hazardous materials.

After this annoying delay, if the PCs cooperate fully, Captain Cyterian will declare everything to be in order and will allow the group to go on its way.

5. QUARANTINE

The PCs try to leave with cargo but are placed under quarantine.

Location is any starport in Margaret’s realm.

Scene: Your ship is loaded and ready to leave the starport. As you request clearance from the central starport traffic control, they reply:

“I’m sorry, (name of PCs ship), but departure is being denied to all vessels. We have a report of a possible contamination of cargo. You are quarantined on this world until further notice.”

Action: No doubt, the PCs will be delighted by this development.

The characters can leave their ship if they wish, but they are confined to the starport grounds. If they try to leave the starport, they will be arrested.

After 2D days, a team of inspectors wearing protective garments and carrying special sensors will contact the PCs ship and demand to inspect their cargo hold for contamination. If the player characters refuse, they will be arrested, removed from their starship and imprisoned elsewhere on the starport grounds.

If the PCs cooperate, their cargo will be cleared of any contamination, and they will be allowed to leave immediately.

If the PCs decide to not delay their departure and blast out of the starport without clearance, their craft will be pursued by SDBs who will attempt to disable the PCs starship. If the PCs manage to escape, but later return to this system, they will be arrested, and their starship will be impounded.

Prisoners

Scenario 2

After the player characters have had a chance to get familiar with the Khishan Cluster region, you can “spring” this scenario on them. In this scenario, the PCs get caught in a surprise orbital assault on a starport by Lucan’s forces. The PCs get to see firsthand what a scary thing a TL15 meson-supported ground assault from orbit is like to those on the ground. Since the world is a vacuum world, running will be only a temporary fix. The PCs will eventually have to deal with the conquerors if they wish to survive for long.

Once the PCs become prisoners, either by turning themselves in or by getting captured, the stage is set for scenario 3, which will get the PCs caught up in the missing knight mystery in a big way.

SETUP

This scenario is written specifically to take place in the one and only downport of the world Khishan, the TL16 namesake of the Khishan Cluster. Like many of the worlds in the Khishan Cluster, this world is a small, airless gas giant moon.

With some alterations, the location of this assault could be changed to Riarette or Irlu, or perhaps even Engorr—although Engorr has no gas giants in the system, which would make battle logistics much more difficult. Plus, Engorr, with its TL11 society and a few hundred thousand inhabitants, has little to offer Lucan’s forces—except perhaps being an easy to take system on which to place a base for further operations in the Khishan Cluster.

Khishan makes the most sense as the first Khishan Cluster target for Lucan. It is the leading high-tech, high population world of the cluster. And the PCs will eventually travel to Khishan in their trading adventures, especially if they are on the trail of the missing knight mystery, since the most important clues from rumors given in prior chapters lead to Khishan. Once the PCs come to Khishan, the stage is set for launching the surprise assault.

For details of how Lucan’s forces plan to conduct the assault, see the sidebar, *The Assault* (on the next page).

A key mood to impart when running the assault is that of confusion. Nobody really knows what’s happening, but they know it’s a bad situation. People, panic, and bedlam should be evident everywhere.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following summaries tell you about each of the nuggets in this scenario.

1. Assault on the Downport (Key): The PCs are closing a cargo deal when the starport starts to explode around them. The cargo broker tells them the starport is under a meson attack—because he was on another world a few years ago where this same sort of thing happened.

2. Running: If the PCs decide to run for it, this nugget covers handling their likely course of action: stealing transportation and getting far enough away to hide in safety.

3. Watching From Afar: If the PCs do run for it, they will likely hide in the nearby hills and watch the assault on the starport. This nugget is largely scene, telling the PCs the shocking details of the assault on the port as they watch it unfold before their eyes.

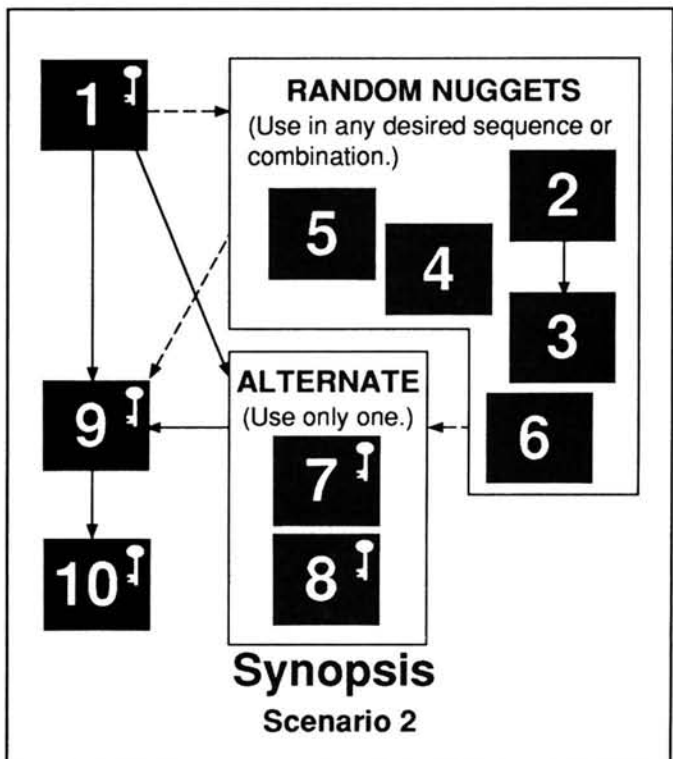
4. A Different Getaway: If the PCs hide in the local startown

that’s directly below the starport underground, they are in effect also running from the assault, but in a different manner. This nugget covers what to do if the PCs take this route to escape the assault, instead of “heading for the hills” as in nugget 2.

5. Where’s Our Ship?: The PCs may want to go look for their ship once the attack is over. This amounts to them “sneaking” back into the starport ruins, now enemy territory, and trying to get to their ship—which only gets them captured. Their ship is nowhere in sight.

6. Surrender: The PCs, being in vacc suits, can only hide out for so long before they will *have* to give themselves up sooner or later. This nugget covers what will happen when the PCs decide to turn themselves in.

7. Spotted! (Optional Key): If, on the other hand, the PCs decide to be sneaky about things and try to resort to stealth to get around in the “enemy’s camp,” they are spotted by a small grav surveillance robot. High tech being what it is, it will be very hard for the PCs to escape the notice of Lucan’s forces, and this nugget shows them that, raising the tension.



The Assault

Referee's Notes

Lucan has been eyeing the Khishan Cluster worlds for awhile, and his military commanders have been planning the assault on Khishan for over a year. The PCs just happen to be on the world when the initial orbital assault takes place.

The focus of the Rebellion for the various factions is the high-tech, high population worlds, since these worlds represent the lion's share of the Imperium's subjects and resources. Khishan is a real prize, because it is not only a high population world, it is a *TL 16* world. In high-tech societies, the knowledge and skills of the population are as much a resource as crops or steel.

Lucan's high-ranking commanders decided a demonstration of force would be the most effective way to convince the xenophobic Khishans that resistance was futile. Using this premise as their guide, Lucan's commanders set about formulating the details of their assault on Khishan.

Khishan is a bit unusual for a high-tech world in that there are no significant orbital stations or port facilities in the skies above the world. Khishan's local rulers have refused to allow such facilities to be built, fearing that some outside force might take the orbital facility and then try to hold the entire world hostage from the high ground location. A rule every military commander knows is that taking the high ground gives one the advantage. The Khishans reasoned that by not providing any high ground to take (any large orbital stations, in this case), they make the job of any would-be attacker that much harder.

Without a high ground position to take, the commanders decided a surface "beachhead" was the logical alternative. Nearly all of Khishan's population lives underground, with the only significant surface location being the starport ground installation above the city of Desmas.

Thus, the final details of the plan took shape. A lightning meson raid on the starport would be performed. First, a series of perimeter blasts would be executed to destroy all underground connections into and out of Desmas, isolating the city. Next, a series of meson blasts would be aimed at the starport headquarters and administrative offices to neutralize the starport's ability to resist an attack.

Finally, several divisions of marine jump troops would be landed on the world, reinforced with an armored cavalry battalion. The marines would move in and secure the remaining aboveground and belowground facilities, holding the entire city "hostage" to convince the Khishan authorities to cooperate with the attackers. The hangar and warehouse areas of the starport were to be left untouched, and all in-port spacecraft were to be ushered into service under the banner of Lucan's Imperial sunburst.

Getting the starship fleet safely into orbit above Khishan would be tricky, since—like most high-tech worlds in the Imperium—Khishan is protected by a series of "deep meson" gun sites buried in the planet's crust. Lucan's commanders decided to use a fleet of raiders protected by black globes. They would compute a jump vector to bring them out of jump on the backside of Khishan's gas giant, Jatern. The ships would turn on their black globes just before entering jump,

thus entering normal space in the Khishan system with their black globes on.

Once it arrived in the Khishan system, the fleet would set its black globes on a low flicker rate, take in-system navigation readings, and adjust its maneuver vector for a close flyby of Khishan. This in-system vector adjustment with maneuver drive should take no more than 10 minutes, after which time the ships would set the flicker of their globes to match background radiation. During the initial adjustment period, any last-minute orders would be exchanged between ships using tight-beam communications. After the initial 10 minutes, the fleet would assume full communications silence, hoping its black globes would enable it to escape detection by Khishan's system defense boat patrols or on-world sensors.

When passing by Khishan, the fleet would drop its black globes briefly, conduct the meson attack, debark the assault forces—then raise its black globes again. A few hours later, the fleet would adjust its vector again to do a refueling flyby of the system's inner gas giant. Half the fleet would maneuver to jump point and leave the system. The other half of the fleet would perform another black-globed flyby of Khishan, and continue any further meson attacks as needed to support the assault.

The attackers will contact the Khishan government, and threaten to mercilessly attack the Khishan capital city if the government doesn't cooperate with them. For the time being, the Khishans will capitulate.

All starships at the starport will be confiscated, and all offworlders will be imprisoned.

If the attackers can keep the assault on the Khishan starport a secret for as long as possible, they can buy themselves some time.

Neutralizing the Khishan SDB fleet is an essential second phase of the assault. During this second phase, any further traffic that jumps into Khishan must either be captured or not allowed to escape—thus preventing the information about the attack on Khishan from getting out of the system.

Lucan's commanders figure they can keep the Khishan assault a secret for about four weeks. After that time the truth will either leak out, or the altered traffic patterns (no traffic from Khishan) will make the other worlds suspect something is up.

In order to begin reinforcing the Khishan assault, the Lucan underground on several worlds in the 10-parsec region between Lucan's realm and Margaret's realm is planning uprisings and coup attempts in the next few weeks. As can be expected, some of these attempts will succeed, others will fail. But many of the otherwise peaceful worlds in this region will be in a state of riot and disarray.

Since traffic will continue to jump into the Khishan system, even after the assault, the offworlder prison camp will grow as additional starships jumping into the system are confiscated, and their crews taken prisoner. It will be normal for new prisoners to be added to the offworlder prison camp almost daily. Keep this in mind as you administer scenario 3, Jail Break.

8. Fighting Back (Optional Key): If the PCs are the type who refuse to go down without a fight, this nugget guides the referee on how to handle such an attempt by the PCs. Wise PCs will not even try to fight back, realizing they are unable to match the enemy's overwhelming firepower. Essentially, if the PCs do put up a fight, they are to be incapacitated, but not killed.

9. Prisoners (Key): Eventually, the PCs will become POWs, like it or not. Once this finally happens, this nugget deals with this turn of events.

10. Mistreated (Key): To give Lucan's forces the proper sinister tone, the PCs (and other prisoners) are mistreated and abused, yet they are treated nicely in other ways. This nugget, while mainly for color, is essential to creating the proper POW mood, and for instilling in the PCs the desire to escape—which leads into scenario 3, Jail Break.

1. ASSAULT ON THE DOWNPORT

The PCs are closing a cargo deal when the meson attack begins.

Location is ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: You are all standing in a dimly lit warehouse in your vaccsuits with your helmets off, including the cargo broker. The warehouse is full of cargo containers of all shapes and sizes, each marked with a multitude of logos and symbols. The air in here smells somewhat stale, and you notice a local rodent of some kind scurrying to seek safety in the shadows.

Suddenly the lights go dim just as a deafening rumble rocks the warehouse. Quickly, more thundering rumbles rattle the floor and walls. Whatever it is, it is outside, and it is *big*. The cargo broker throws on his suit helmet, runs for the air lock, and cycles through.

Action: If the PCs do not follow him, the cargo broker will tell the PCs to get out of the warehouse *at once*. His frantic urging will go something like this:

"Get out of that warehouse—*now!* Curse the seven stars, *we're under meson attack!* It's just like the attack on Yurus three years ago—I was there. The only way to survive one of these things is to get as far away from here as possible! These attacks happen fast—it could all be over in a matter of 10 minutes!"

(Remember this is a vacuum world. There will be no sound from these explosions, although the ground will rumble violently—sometimes enough that it will be hard to stand up. Nearby explosions will have a brief shock wave caused by flying debris and released gases, since nearly all targets being hit are enclosed environments with an atmosphere. Spewing oxygen will create fires and smoldering, even in this vacuum environment.)

If the PCs haven't already started doing so, the cargo broker will get into a frenzy looking for some nearby quick transportation out of here. The PCs may worry about their starship—tell them it's on the other side of the starport, and then blow up a central starport building to make them think twice about trying to cross the starport during the meson barrage. They should get the message very quickly and will likely join the broker in looking for some transportation out of here. Use the following task if the group is looking for transportation out of here.

To locate quick transportation away from the ongoing attack:
Difficult, Streetwise, Int, 1 min

Referee: Use this task as color to heighten the tension

during the attack (give the broker a +2 DM on this task). Allow any two characters to try the task each "round." Have each roll for time duration and use the longest result. The following events can help heighten the excitement and tension during the search:

- After the first round of tries on this task, have the debris from a nearby meson blast hit one of the characters, doing 1D damage to a single characteristic. Have all the characters (including the broker, whom you roll for) roll 2D, and the one who rolls the lowest is the unlucky one.

- After the second round of tries, have the PCs all roll 3D-3 for their Intelligence or greater. Give the one who succeeds and rolls the highest an index card with this on it: "You look up into the black sky, and you notice what looks like thousands of tiny, moving glints of light approaching the starport." If the PCs can't figure it out, the cargo broker will quickly respond "jump troops."

- After the third round of tries, many of the jump troop capsules will have landed in the distance, no more than a kilometer or so away. For a few moments, all vibrations, flying debris, and shock waves cease, leaving a sickening hush over the burning scene.

- If there is a fourth round of tries, the group will find it's all over, for by this time, marines in battle dress and grav belts will be entering the ruins, and dozens of grav tanks will be darting about overhead.

Once the group succeeds in finding a vehicle, see 2. Running.

2. RUNNING

The PCs find an air/raft and run from the attack.

Location is ground starport under attack on a vacuum world.

Scene: You locate an unoccupied grav vehicle, a TL16 *Hermes* grav landing shuttle. Unfortunately, it is locked.

Action: Details for the *Hermes* can be found in Digest Group's *101 Vehicles*, on page 47. For those who do not have access to this book, here is a summary of the *Hermes*' stats:



Hermes, Disp=4, Duration=4/12, Cruise=135 kph, MaxAccel=0.15G, Crew=1 (driver), Seats=Adequate×10, Env=basic env, basic ls, Cargo=13kl

Getting into the locked shuttle will be tricky.

If the group wishes to force the lock by firing at the lock's keypad, they will only succeed in freezing the electronic lock mechanism for good, which does not help their cause.

The door does have explosive bolts, which anyone can activate (as long as the lock keypad is not destroyed), since the shuttle is unoccupied. However, this will blow both doors on the shuttle's air lock, ruining the shuttle's sealed environment.

If the group wishes to use an energy weapon to blast the outside door's lock directly, a total of five hit points will allow the air lock's outside door to be opened freely. This will, however, destroy the air lock's outside door, thus ruining the air lock's sealed integrity. The inside air lock door will still have its seal, but the group will have to short out the air lock controls to get the air lock's inside door to open directly to a vacuum:

To short the air lock so the inside door will open directly to a vacuum:

Routine, Electronics, Edu, 6 sec

The most sophisticated technique for getting the door open

involves using a hand computer linked to the door's electronic lock and some help from the cargo broker. This method will maintain the sealed integrity of the shuttle, but it also takes time—which the group does not have a lot of. Under these tense circumstances, taking this more deliberate approach constitutes a cautious task, and the group's leader will have to roll a successful determination task first before you should allow the group to take this more time-consuming approach:

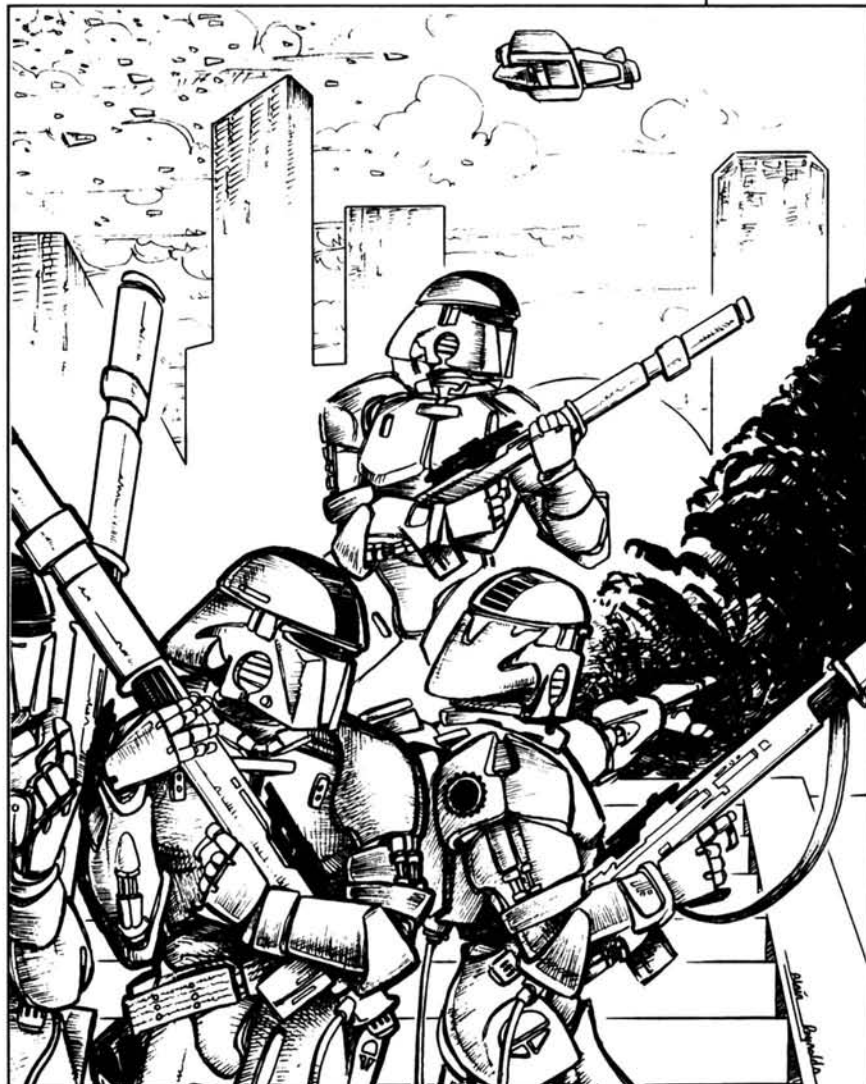
To connect a hand computer to the shuttle's electronic lock:
Difficult, Electronics, Computer, 1 min

Referee: Maintain the flow of the attack as laid out in the "finding transportation task" in nugget 1. If this takes very long, the group may end up greeting marines and grav tanks before they can even get the hand computer hooked up.

To break the shuttle's lock code:
Difficult, Computer, [special (see below)], 1 min

Referee: The broker's Intelligence is 9; roll 3D-3 for the broker's Intelligence or less to see if he remembers some of the lock codes. If he does, roll 1D-2 for the special DM that the broker contributes to this task. If this task is successful, the door will unlock, and the group can freely get inside the shuttle.

Remember to watch the time duration on this task and to keep the flow of the attack moving forward.



Once the group is inside the shuttle, the cargo broker will know the standard access code for starting up the shuttle. This will require a warm-start of the shuttle's fusion plant:

To warm-start the shuttle's fusion plant:
Routine, Grav Veh or Engineering, Dex, 30 sec

At this point, the group is off. A few kilometers outside the starport are some hills, which would make a good place to hide and yet still allow the group to keep an eye on things. Roll some dice a couple of times during the flight just to keep the group on their toes.

If the group happens to check the fuel level, they will find the shuttle is almost empty, with less than four hours of fuel left. The nearest underground Khishan city is well over a day away. The hills will likely be the obvious choice of destination. See 3. Watching From Afar.

3. WATCHING FROM AFAR

The PCs hide in the hills overlooking the starport under attack.

Location is near a starport under attack on a vacuum world.

Scene: As you approach the distant hills, you notice a well positioned, protected ravine that should also give you a good view of the starport behind you. The hills look rocky, steep, and heavily vacuum-weathered.

Action: While the group can hide out in these mountains and watch the attack in relative safety, they have one eventuality they cannot

avoid: They are on borrowed time in this vacuum environment. Sooner or later their air supply will give out. When that point approaches, they will have to return to the starport ruins and give themselves up or die out here. Being POWs will probably start to look like it's not so bad after all, when compared to dying.

The stolen shuttle does have about 24 hours of environment left (water and atmosphere).

If the PCs are clever, they can try to use the shuttle's air supply to refill their PLSS backpacks, thus enabling them to stay out here literally for days. (The real limit then becomes the water supply, not the air. If they ration the water, they should be able to last about six days.)

Since the group was simply moving about the starport, engaging in trade operations, they probably only have PLSS "A"-type backpacks, which have a duration of 12 hours at TL14+. If the group uses the shuttle air supply, there is a total of 2400 hours of air to charge PLSS packs with.

To recharge a PLSS pack from the shuttle air supply:

Routine, Mechanical, Edu, 2 min

Referee: PLSS packs have at least two air canisters, so the recharging process involves removing one canister while the owner of the PLSS pack continues to breathe off the other canister(s).

Anytime this task fails, the number of hours of air that would go into the PLSS canister is simply lost. Another retry is possible—in fact necessary—if the character is to continue to have a source of air.

The group will need at least an hour of air left once they decide to make the return trip to the starport.

Condition of the Starport: The administrative center of the starport has been completely leveled, and it will burn and smolder for over 24 hours (from leaking oxygen and chemicals). An obvious ring around the perimeter of the port, beyond the port itself, has been blasted, leaving the vacuum plain broken and disheveled.

Some vehicle fighting can be seen from time to time, and at one point a couple of Khishan SDBs fly nap-of-earth over the hills where the group is hiding out, headed for the starport. There is some exchange of missile and energy weapon fire in the distance for awhile after that, but it is hard to tell what happens for sure.

At night, low lighting and some activity is apparent in the ruins, especially around the starport landing pads/bays.

4. A DIFFERENT GETAWAY

The PCs hide out in the underground city. Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: As you head underground to escape, you find the local inhabitants of Desmas are in total panic and disarray, screaming and trampling each other. Explosions rumble in the distance, causing dust and tiny pieces of ceil-

ing to drift to the floor. The lighting dims with each explosion.

"Route A5's been blocked!" shouts a frantic passerby.

"So's the northern mainway!" shouts another. "They're cutting off all tunnels into and out of the city!"

Action: If the group decides to take this approach to escaping the assault and hiding out, it will do so without the cargo broker, unless the group chose this option because it ran out of time trying to steal transportation when it was on the surface.

For awhile, there are lots of places the group can hide out, since Desmas is, after all, a huge city. Because Khishan is such a small world, Khishan cities tend to go very deep into the world's crust, making Khishan cities cover a small area in respect to the world's surface.

Eventually, however, the attackers are going to scour the underground city with thousands of cheap surveillance robots, making sure everybody is accounted for in their computer records. No one will escape their notice. See nugget 7. Spotted!

5. WHERE'S OUR SHIP?

The PCs sneak back to the starport looking for their starship.

Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: You approach the landing bay where you left your



ship, and you can clearly see the bay doors are open. The bay is well lit—and deserted. Your starship is nowhere in sight.

Action: The PCs should not like what the empty bay says *one bit*. Lucan's forces have confiscated several of the starships that were currently in port at the time of the assault and have set about using them to make courier and supply runs.

The PCs, unfortunately, have lost track of their ship and will have to wait for a future time and place to find it once again. See the scenario, *That's Our Ship!* (on page 42).

The PCs are taking an awful risk, trying to get a good view of the bay where they left their ship. Because of this, it is a good idea to proceed to nugget 7. Spotted!

6. SURRENDER

The PCs give themselves up to the starport attackers.

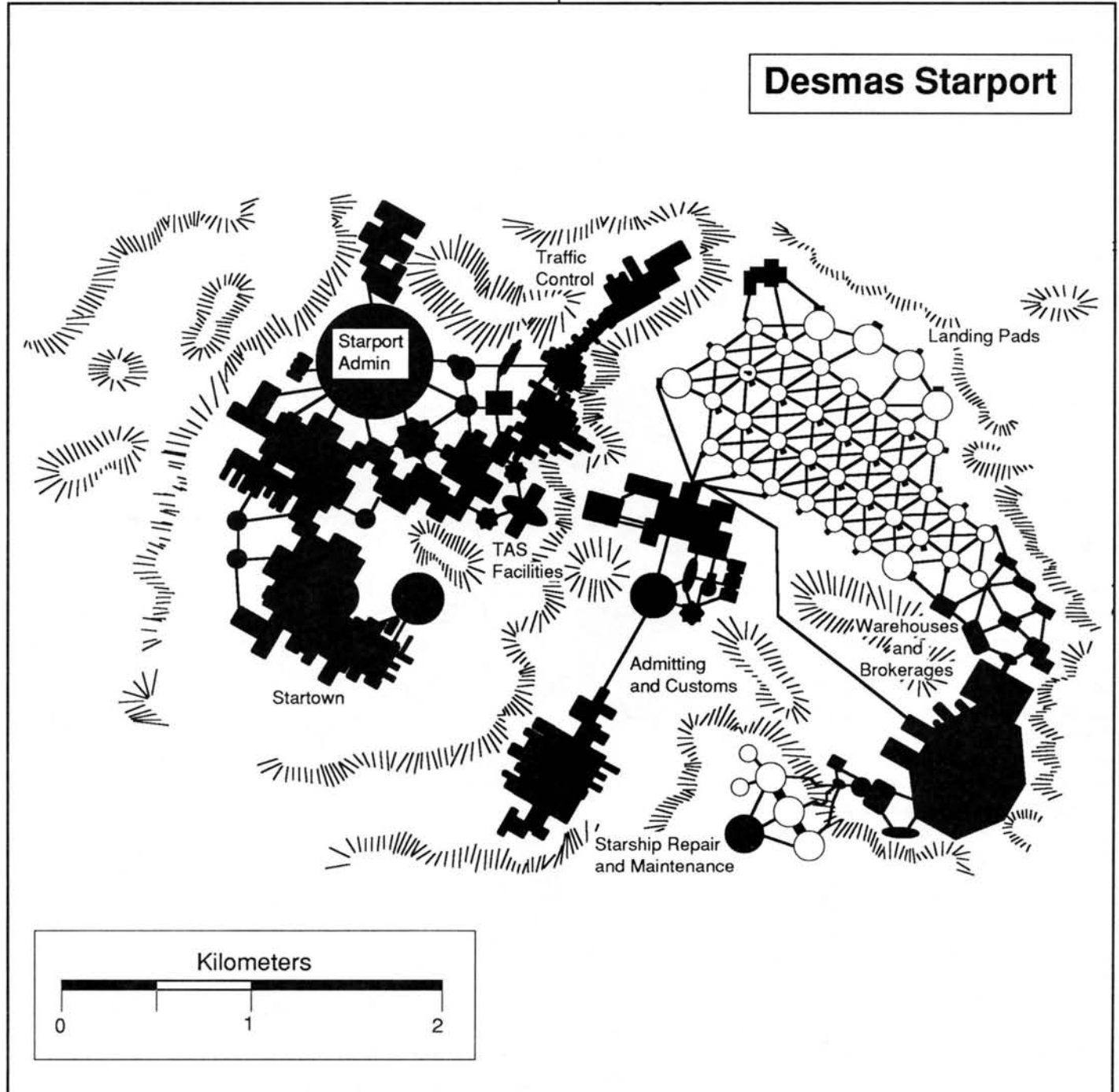
Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: Over a dozen marines in battle dress and grav belts have you surrounded. They are training their FGMP weapons on you.

"Surrender, offworlders!" one of them shouts.

Action: This nugget assumes the PCs have decided to give themselves up. The marines are joined by several grav surveillance robots, along with other types of robots. The marines order the PCs to put their hands on their heads. A couple of the marines will search each vacc-suited PC for weapons and remove any hardware the PCs have on them—hand computers, sensor devices, or whatever.

If the PCs need a vacc suit patch or medical attention (which may be the case if the PCs decided to fight back before surrendering), the marines will administer it as necessary.



The marines lead the PCs underground, into the city of Desmas. Each PC is ordered to go through the air lock in turn, accompanied by at least two armed marines. While in the air lock, each PC is ordered to strip down to his underwear. The armed marines stay in their battle dress.

At the other end of the air lock, several sensors scan the PC for a few seconds, emitting odd lights and sounds. Once the PC exits the air lock and enters the underground city, there is a prisoner entry station just inside the inner air lock door. Each PC is given some stretch body tights (without any pockets) to wear (hard to conceal anything in these except your body). If any PC has any weapon or hardware still concealed in his underwear, the sensor scan will have picked it up, and the PC will be asked to turn it over to his captors. If the PC refuses, his captors will make the situation as humiliating as necessary to retrieve the remaining weapon or hardware. The sensor scan also recorded each PC's DNA code, which will be checked against an extensive database to determine who each PC is.

The PCs will notice Desmas appears to be under military rule, with robots and combat-armored or battle dress-clad marines seemingly everywhere. Few, if any, locals are in sight. Once all the PCs have been thoroughly searched and have changed into the prisoner tights, the entire group will be blindfolded. They will spend the next 30 minutes or so marching under gunpoint, hands on their heads, twisting and turning, walking deeper and deeper into the bowels of Desmas city.

Proceed to nugget 9. Prisoners.

7. SPOTTED!

The PCs are in hiding when they are spotted by a grav surveillance robot.

Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: One of you notices a slight motion and turns to see a floating globe in the distance, coming your direction. A surveillance robot!

Action: The TL15 surveillance robot is about half a meter in diameter and is loaded with I/R and visual sensors, as well as a 500-meter-range neural activity sensor. This robot has chassis hits of 1/2 and an armor value of 4.

The PCs can try to hide from this robot, but it *will* find them. The PCs, if they understand how to deal with this sort of surveillance tactics at all, will want to disable or destroy the robot as quickly as possible. Then, they need to leave the vicinity immediately, since the location of the destroyed robot will likely soon have *lots* of company—in the form of armed troops. If the PCs do end up running into the armed troops, proceed to nugget 9. Prisoners. If they decide to fight back, use nugget 8. Fighting Back, instead.

Use this situation to make the players sweat and to give them a taste of high-tech tactics for controlling a captive population.

8. FIGHTING BACK

The PCs decide to fight heavily armed starport attackers.

Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: From your hiding place, you can see a half-dozen marines wearing combat armor and wielding energy weapons march by, accompanied by a couple of surveillance grav robots. They don't appear to notice you—this looks like your chance.

Action: This nugget assumes the PCs want to take some

potshots at the attackers. In fact, they may even be able to get some combat armor and energy weapons of their own. However, more likely, the PCs will just end up getting caught.

Once the PCs have been caught, proceed to nugget 6. Surrender.

As you play out any combat, run the marines as clever combatants that refuse to give ground to any misfit band of adventurers. These marines should be portrayed as ruthless fighters, and they mean to fight for keeps. They should not make major blunders or be easily surprised. And don't forget the recon/surveillance robots they are using—these 'bots give the marines a significant edge when it comes to surprise. Not only should the marines be hard to surprise with these robots

Den Moongoal

**Second in Command, Khishan Assault
(Marine Colonel)**

6A6798

Age 50

8 terms

Tactics-5, Grav Belt-2, Interview-2, Leader-2, Admin-1, Battle Dress-1, Bribery-1, Handgun-1, JOT-1, Large Blade-1, Combat Rifleman-1, Robot Ops-1, Streetwise-1, Computer-0, Grav Veh-0, Gun Cbt-0

Starport A, Small, Std Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Basic Motivation: To convert all the offworlders' loyalties to Lucan's side, for the glory of his majesty, Lucan.

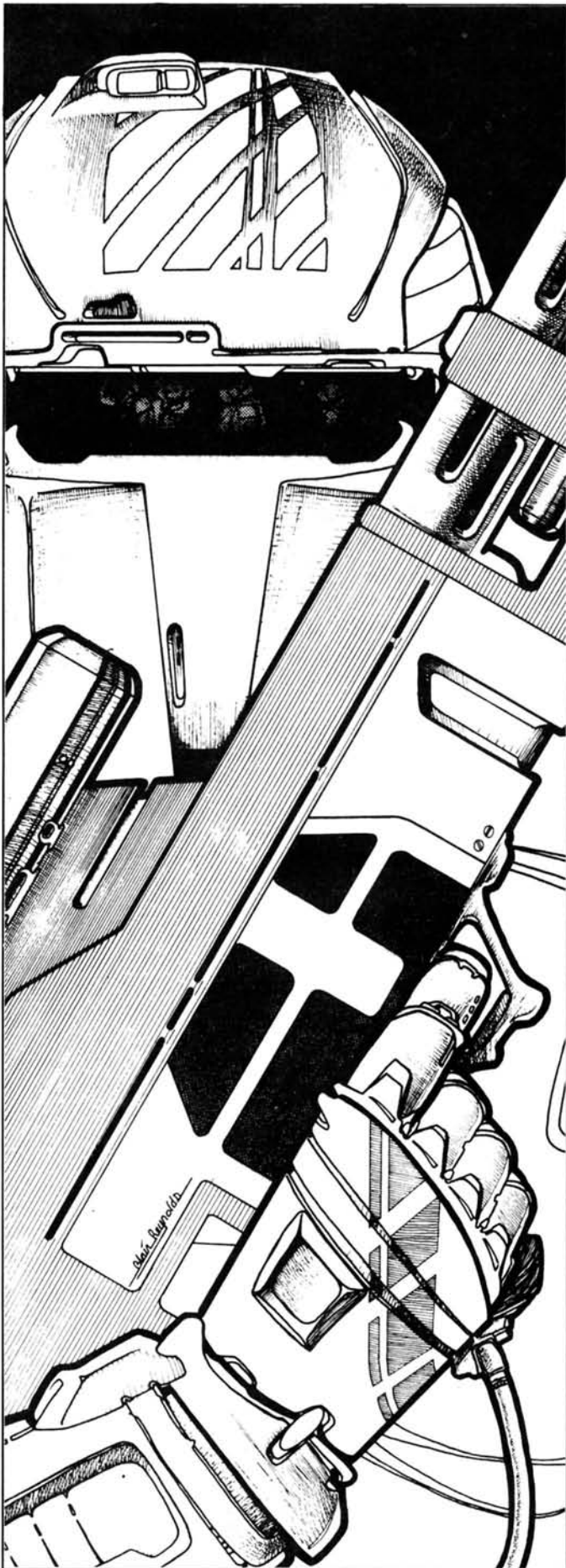
Den was a lowly lieutenant prior to the days of the Rebellion and Strephon's assassination. Under Lucan's rule, Den has been rewarded for his ingenuity and treachery in dealing with the enemy and has been repeatedly promoted, leaving his peers far behind.

Khishan is Den's first major assault command, and he is the second-in-command on this assignment. He is not about to jeopardize his hard-earned position in Lucan's forces, so he will play things very cautiously and will seek the advice of his commanding officer often.

When interviewing prisoners, he will take a hard line and question everything they say. He feels that if he gets his offworld prisoners frustrated and exhausted, he will finally get the real truth. Den will use threats and mock executions of other prisoners in an attempt to psychologically distress his subjects. Den will inflict little physical abuse on his prisoners, although he may occasionally react by slapping a "smart-mouthed" prisoner.

Den wants to give cooperative prisoners the impression he is their friend, that he hates having to treat them like this, and he would like to let them go as soon as practical. Uncooperative prisoners, on the other hand, will have to endure the full fury of Den and his staff's psychological trickery and brainwashing techniques. For a particularly hard-case prisoner, Den is not above bringing in mean-looking robots or threatening brain-busting psionic mind probes or mind assaults to get at the truth.

If necessary, Den will also use drugs to heighten the mental hysteria of particularly tough prisoners.



about, but the marines should have a reasonable chance of surprising any PC group!

In any case, the marines are also under orders not to kill anyone if they can help it. So the marines will aim to wound the PCs enough to destroy their will to fight, but they will not kill the PCs unless the PCs refuse to give any ground or do not want to give up.

A good technique to use for warning the PCs that they are likely to get seriously hurt is to have the marines hurt or kill an NPC first. This gives the PCs a clear example of what the marines could do to them, without them actually getting maimed or killed themselves.

If the PCs get lucky and manage to take out a marine patrol or two, spring an overwhelming surprise attack on them, guided by the surveillance robots. If the PCs are being especially belligerent, you may have to kill a PC—but if you do, try to leave enough of the PC's body intact that a reanimation effort will be possible—since we are, in fact, on a TL16 world after all. This will serve not only to sober up the PCs in a hurry, but should add a tense, science-fiction element to the situation. Plus, since Lucan's forces will be responsible for bringing the PC back to life, the PCs will have an interesting dilemma on their hands: Lucan's forces are not the good guys, are they? Or are they okay after all?

This fits well with Den Moongoal's strategy of confusing the prisoners' loyalties enough that they decide Lucan's side is okay after all (see nugget 9. Prisoners).

9. PRISONERS

The PCs are taken prisoner by the starport attackers. Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: Six marines in battle dress with fusion rifles and a large, battle expert grav robot escort you to an underground warehouse location several levels down in the Desmas underground city. It looks like this is one of their headquarters locations, set up for admitting and interrogating prisoners. The place is dingy and poorly lit. A middle-aged officer and two subordinates escort you to a back room and have you sit on the hard, uncomfortable chairs. Two soldiers with energy weapons guard the door.

Action: These NPCs are going to give the PCs the third degree. This is where the PCs first meet Den Moongoal and his staff of interrogation specialists. Den is the marine colonel who is second-in-command of the Khishan orbital assault. Den has been charged with detaining and questioning all offworlders until their allegiance can be determined.

Den has interpreted his orders to mean, "Convert all offworld prisoners into loyal subjects of Lucan." He will do this by asking questions that make the prisoners wonder about the value of serving Margaret. He will also ask questions of the prisoners to make them think serving Lucan isn't such a bad thing. The details of this line of questioning can be found in the next scenario, Jail Break (on page 32).

Den will, however, ask the following very basic questions in his first round of interviews:

"Who are you, and where are you from?"

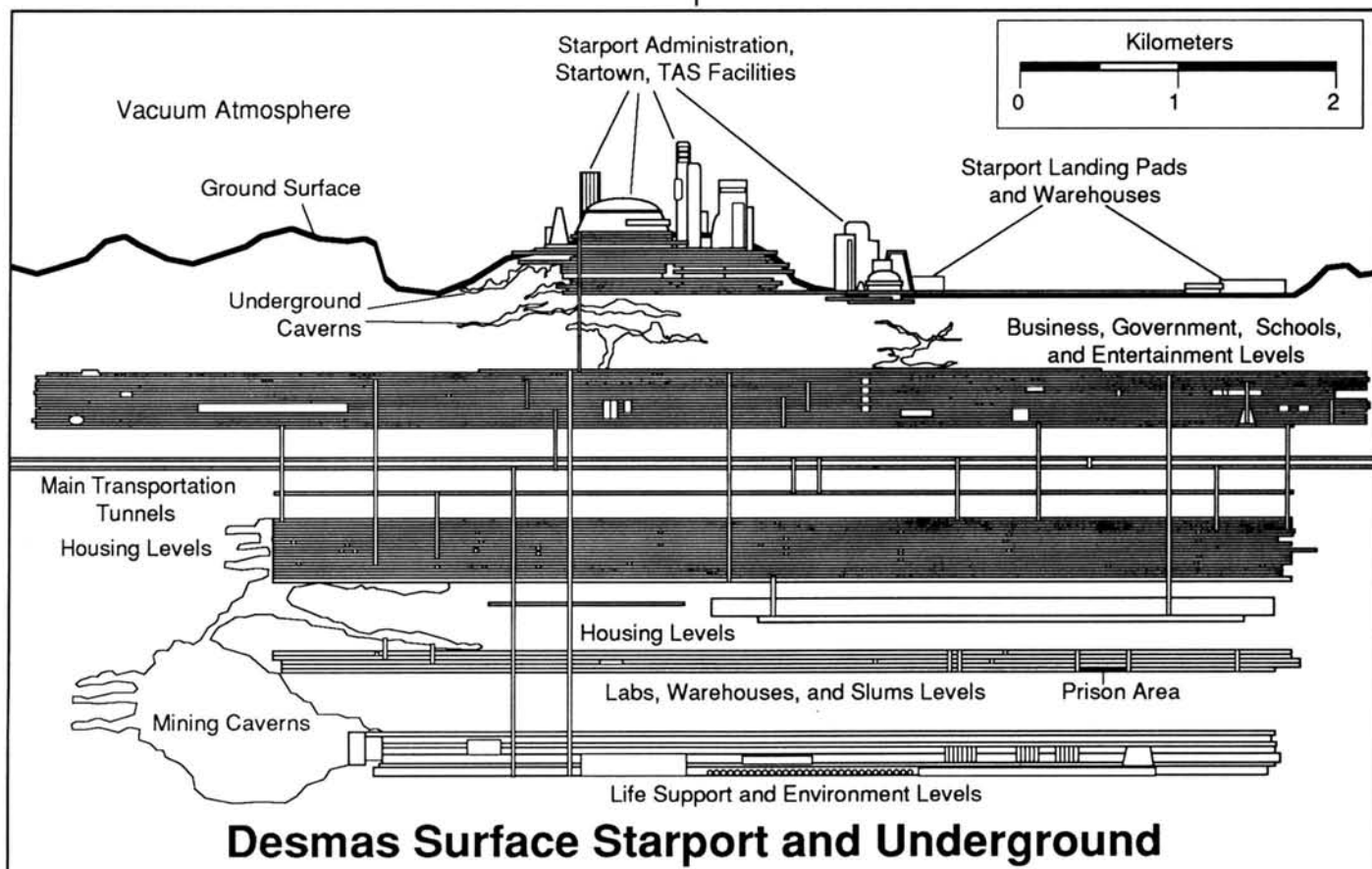
"Why were you on Khishan?"

"What world do you claim as your homeworld?"

"Are you telling me the truth?"

"How can I know you are not lying?"

"Do you trust me?"



"Why do/don't you trust me?"

If the PCs refuse to answer these questions, they will each be put into solitary confinement and left to go without food until they answer these questions. Den will eat in front of the PCs while he is questioning them, hoping to get them to break down. Den will not, however, allow the PCs to starve to death. He will let them come within a few days of starving, and if they still haven't broken, Den will use truth drugs on them repeatedly until he gets his answers.

Use a determination task on each question for the PCs to remain silent. Of course, Determination (Endurance+Intelligence) is the DM on this task. To simulate the effects of starving on the PCs, every two days subtract one from the character's Endurance.

At the end of each question and answer session, if the PCs have been even the least bit cooperative, Den will order them placed in the cargo bin warehouse with the others. See nugget 10. Mistreated.

Once the PCs do answer Den's questions, he will remark, "There, now wasn't that easy?" and return any of the solitary-confined PCs back to a cargo bin cage with the main group.

If the PCs ask Den about the status of their starship, he will answer, "I honestly don't know," in the most concerned tone he can muster.

While Den does know all starships in port have been confiscated and pressed into service for his majesty, Lucan, he truly does not know the *specific* whereabouts of the PCs' ship.

10. MISTREATED

The PCs and NPCs are mistreated by the starport attackers.

Location is a ground starport on a vacuum world.

Scene: You are led into a large warehouse-like building. The smell in here is atrocious, and the air is cool. You can hear muffled moans and coughs.

The guards lead you around some cargo bins, and you see where you are being taken—to a bunch of animal cage cargo bins full of other offworlders: men, women, children, families, even aliens.

You notice the ones who are sick seem to be getting a minimal amount of medical treatment. Several marines in combat armor who wield laser weapons stand guard. You notice several varieties of robots taking care of the prisoners, as well as a few grav surveillance robots watching over things.

Action: This nugget should leave the PCs confused about the attackers' true intentions.

Every so often, have the NPC guards and officers treat the offworld prisoners with disdain. Make sure, however, that the prisoners' basic needs—like food, clothing, and basic medical care—are being met.

The marines are not above bludgeoning an uncooperative prisoner with the end of their rifle, jabbing a prisoner with their elbow, or slapping a prisoner's head. The marines aim to inflict enough pain to elicit cooperation, but not to do any permanent bodily harm.

If the PCs have not answered all of Den Moongoal's initial questions to his satisfaction (see nugget 9. Prisoners), he will continue to call for them every day and maintain his pressure on the characters until they have answered his questions in a cooperative manner.

Once the PCs have answered Den's initial questions, this scenario is finished. Proceed on to the next scenario, Jail Break.

Jail Break

Scenario 3

The player characters have been captured by Lucan's forces and interned as prisoners of war. As the PCs have already found out, life as a POW under Lucan is anything but fun, and they have lost their starship to boot. In this scenario, they get the chance to make friends in jail and to learn more about the missing knight in the process. Any jailed PC worth his salt will, of course, want to seek escape, so this scenario also provides the group with just such an opportunity.

Unknown to the group, however, the jail break comes with strings attached. Only in a later scenario—Mapping the Course—does the full meaning of these “strings” come to light. In any event, a major factor in this scenario involves the PCs making friends with other prisoners. One key friend, Narva, will get the PCs personally involved in the mystery of the missing knight.

SETUP

This scenario is written to follow scenario 2. Prisoners, which takes place on Khishan. With only minor changes, however, this scenario could be located on any vacuum world with underground installations. Likely candidates include the world Riarette or Irlu, or possibly Engorr—although Engorr is only TL11, and the details of this scenario assume a High Stellar tech level (TL14 or more).

This scenario picks up where scenario 2 left off. In fact, if you do your job right as referee, the PCs will be unaware they have even moved on to another scenario. If this scenario seems to be merely an extension of the Prisoners scenario, then you are doing your job correctly.

Officially, this scenario starts once the PCs have answered Den Moongoal's basic questions in a cooperative (or at least, seemingly cooperative) manner. However, it is entirely possible for you to overlap some of the early nuggets of this scenario with the final nugget or two of scenario 2. For example, nugget 1. Making Friends would work quite comfortably between

nuggets 9 and 10 of Prisoners.

A key mood to promote in Jail Break, at least at first, is one of hopelessness. Make the PCs squirm a bit. Later, impress on them the value of making friends when in a tight jam such as this one. In the end, once they successfully escape, the reward will seem that much sweeter if the PCs were made to realize how bad of a “pickle” they were in as Rebellion POWs. Suddenly, the Imperial Rebellion will become all too real to them. No doubt, they will also be much more careful next time.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following text briefly describes each of the nuggets in this scenario.

1. Life as a POW (Key): This nugget serves to illustrate the daily routine of life as a POW. If the PCs are paying attention, the information they gain from this nugget may prove useful later on once they start planning their escape.

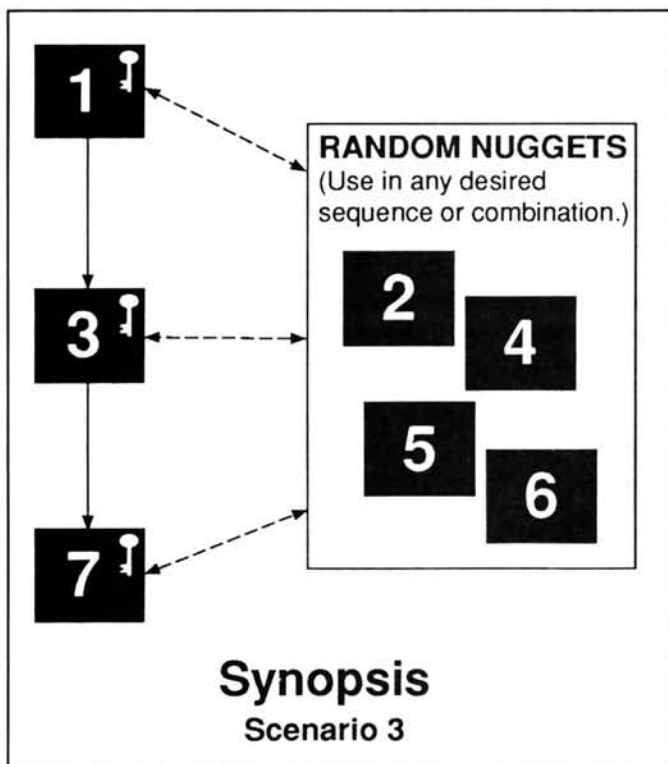
2. Making Friends (Random Event): The PCs will find that the boredom of POW life leaves little left to do except talk to other prisoners. In so doing, the PCs will make several friends—and a few enemies. This nugget presents a potpourri of NPC personalities for use by the referee in an ad hoc manner. None of these NPCs are critical to the plot of this scenario, and they can be used or ignored as needed.

3. A Trusted Friend (Key): One of the NPCs is important to the plot of *Knightfall*, and that is Narva, the trusted friend and associate of Antaina, the missing knight of the legendary “Shimmering City.” Narva will slowly get to know the PCs, and she will decide *they* are the group of adventurers she should trust to take her back to Datrumna to rescue Antaina.

4. Stool Pigeon (Random Event): One of the NPCs will tell the guards some secrets that the PCs and their group have been keeping from Lucan's occupation force. The PCs will find out about this in an unpleasant way, and they will also learn, via a circuitous route, that the stool pigeon is not a prisoner at all, but is instead an “Imperial” marine (one of Lucan's soldiers) in disguise.

5. Brawl (Random Event): What is a prison camp without at least one brawl among the prisoners? Here the PCs get to witness a dispute turn into a brawl, and perhaps even get involved themselves! And, of course, the group gets to witness the heavy-handed way Lucan's security robots deal with such an event.

6. They're Dead! (Random Event): This event serves to teach the PCs that Lucan's occupation forces intend to play for



keeps. Some NPCs get caught trying to escape, and the escorting robots shoot and kill them. If the PCs aren't careful, they could be next. The PCs will probably have escape plans by now, and they had better be very, very careful. A wonderful nugget for heightening the PCs' tension as they struggle with how to effect an escape without getting *killed*.

7. The Way Out (Key): During one of their outings, the group gets handed a small slip of paper that describes a way out of the prison camp and a back tunnel to offworld transport. The paper came from an offworlder who has been secretly hired by Rahjel Dromahern to rescue Narva (and her immediate associates) from the clutches of Lucan, although the PCs are encouraged to think the note came from some concerned Khishans who despise Lucan.

1. LIFE AS A POW

The PCs settle in for a prolonged stay as POWs of Lucan.

Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: You are all put into a cargo "cage" bin, the kind used for transporting large animals. You have some stools to sit on, with one stool being a portable sit-down fresher. In addition, each bin has a fusion still as a source of water.

The fresher, unfortunately, is never cleaned, you are expected to empty the contents of the fresher periodically into the fusion still. In several cages, the fresher is overflowing, and the smell is rank.

Once a day, about midmorning, robot steward dumbots bring you a meager meal of bland, concentrated pastes. Some people who have become sick are also treated by medical personnel or robot medics, but the care is minimal, and the sick are left with the others in their cages.

Every couple of days, the guards bring you booklets, leaflets, and small pocket books full of Lucan propaganda. Once a week, armed security robots come and escort the occupants of each bin, one at a time, on an "outing." The weekly outings are spread throughout the week, so that in a week's period of time, all the POWs have had a chance to "get out" a bit. There seems to be no pattern to when a given cargo bin's occupants are chosen for an outing—apparently, the selection is being made randomly.

You've been here long enough that today is your first "outing." The armed security robots outnumber you two to one. A lone guard is supervising the robots this time around.

"C'mon kiddies," the guard mumbles. "Time to go see papa."

Action: Here are the various outings the captors will take the prisoners on (pick any order that suits you):

Visit Den Moongoal to See How Lucan is Helping Other Worlds: On this trip to visit Moongoal, he will bring the group all into a nice room and present them with a selection of holovideos showing before and after images of Lucan on various worlds. In the "before" images, the world is destitute, desolate, or somehow oppressed, and Lucan talks to his staff about how disgusted he is at the situation. In the "after" images, the world is obviously improving, and Lucan is greeting the population—a population who seems delighted at what Lucan has been able to do.

For example, show a world with starving, despondent children as the "before" image, and then as the "after" image, show Lucan greeting happy little children on that world, supposedly months later. Don't forget to add a high-tech element now and

Narva Loney, Steward (Bureaucrat)

685789

Age 42

6 terms

Steward-4, Admin-3, Brawling-2, Disguise-1, Computer-1, Grav Veh-1, History-1, Liaison-1, Gun Cbt-0

Starport B, Small, Vacuum Atm, Dry, High Pop, Low Law, High Stellar

Basic Motivation: To see Lucan's forces never get the best of her; to see Antaina's discovery aid in the defeat of Lucan.



Born and raised on Arar, Narva came to Datrumna seeking work

in 1095 and managed to get on in Antaina's household as an administrative clerk and servant. Over the next few years, Narva impressed Antaina with her diligence and loyalty. By 1100 Narva had managed to gain Antaina's confidence enough that Antaina promoted Narva to personal valet.

In 1101, Antaina told Narva about her studies into the Gaadashikaduu legend. Narva found Antaina's obsession interesting, but thought it a bit odd. Over the years, however, Narva became convinced Antaina had indeed stumbled onto true evidence that would in time lead to the rediscovery of the lost city.

In 1118, followers of Lucan staged a political coup takeover of the Datrumnan government, which had prior to the coup been loyal to Margaret. Antaina gave Narva careful instructions on where to hide her Gaadashikaduu findings. Antaina feared that Lucan's forces would imprison her and get ahold of the secret of Gaadashikaduu's whereabouts.

Antaina was taken prisoner, but Narva was spared, for a time. Afraid she would be next, Narva changed her identity and managed to sneak offworld.

Narva had come to Khishan, since it too, is a TL16 world like her home world of Arar. Plus, Narva reasoned, Khishan's anti-Imperial attitudes would make a takeover by Lucan very costly for his forces and highly unlikely.

Narva managed to get an administrative position at the starport. She has been biding her time, looking for some daring souls whom she could trust to assist her in a rescue mission back to Datrumna. Narva wants to return to free her friend Antaina, recover the hidden Gaadashikaduu records, and locate the lost city.

Narva is convinced the lost city holds enough magical, high-tech wonders that, if they were given to Margaret's forces, would enable Margaret to put an end to this cursed Rebellion once and for all.



then, like showing one of Lucan's "mini-terraforming" projects.

For what it's worth, most of this propaganda is "hype" in the extreme. Lucan is a captivating speaker, to be sure—but Lucan does not routinely greet the population—that's just not his style. The worlds taken by Lucan, for the most part, are no better or worse than they were under anyone else's rule. In fact, little by little, Lucan's worlds are starting to feel a growing, subtle oppression at the Imperial level.

Visit Den Moongoal to See How Dulinor is a Scoundrel: When the group visits Moongoal on this trip, they get taken to a nice room where Moongoal talks about and shows holovideos of Dulinor's atrocities.

First, the group gets to see a "reenactment" of Dulinor's bloody assault on Emperor Strephon and his family in the throne room of the Imperial Palace on Capital. The presentation is quite graphic and revolting. At the end of this presentation, Dulinor is dragging Strephon's bloody corpse by the collar when the image suddenly dissolves into the identical pose on the now famous *Enemy of Dreams* sculpture on Capital/Core in the center of the Imperial Park.

Further holovideos show nice, pleasant worlds that have been assaulted by Dulinor and been left in burning ruin with dead bodies everywhere. Anytime Dulinor is shown talking with his troops, his face is red with frenzy, he is shaking his fists, violently waving his arms, shouting, and so on. The whole idea is to further the concept that Dulinor is a murderous, raving madman.

In reality, Lucan fits the raving madman description better than does Dulinor. And Lucan has his own share of worlds that are now in smoking ruin because of his assaults. While Dulinor's use of the "right of assassination" as a reasonable

political maneuver is not exactly honorable, there also remains Lucan's own questionable and bloody path to the throne—over the dead body of his elder brother, Varian.

Visit Den Moongoal to See How Loyalty to Margaret is Misplaced at Best: This visit to Moongoal will ultimately turn out to be a bit different than the Lucan propaganda presentation or the Dulinor propaganda tirade (once the PCs get to experience these other two "outings").

The goal of this presentation is to show how Margaret's leadership is inept. A history of Margaret's poor decisions are shown, along with holovideo scenes of the effects of her decisions. The relative isolation of Khishan from the Imperial community is shown to be a grave mistake—one which Lucan intends to correct.

Why is Margaret's leadership so poor? Margaret is portrayed as a woman of loose morals who likes wild parties ("orgies" some would call them) and who spends little time dealing with her responsibilities. Her husband, Count Blaine Trulla Tukera, is rarely home—and, in fact, has been away from home for over a year now. Now the recent word comes that Margaret is *pregnant*—proof positive that the woman is nothing but a tramp trying to masquerade as a competent leader.

In truth, Margaret is a socialite, and she does like to "mingle" with other nobles and subordinates at social events, but this could as easily be called an asset in Margaret's favor. The implication that Margaret's husband is not the father of her child is nothing but a lie trumped up by Lucan.

Visit Den Moongoal and Get a Guided Tour of How Lucan is Helping This World: On this outing, Moongoal will lead the group around, under heavy security robot guard, to see what "Lucan" is doing for Khishan.

Moongoal will show the group how "previously unavailable" offworld goods are making the Khishan's quality of life better, and how an awareness of offworld events is helping the Khishan population understand their own world better.

This tour is simply Moongoal indulging in wishful speculation and half-truths. An objective observer could just as easily come to the conclusion that Lucan's assault on Khishan is *hurting* the world rather than helping it.

Visit the Local Khishan Religious Leaders: The group is escorted to see Khishan's religious leaders, with Moongoal nowhere in site.

The leaders talk to the group about the "great prophecy," and how Lucan's assault on Khishan is a fulfillment of the prophecy. Lucan is hailed as the "new ruler from afar." In addition, certain foreigners from a "far away land" have failed to listen to the new ruler, and their bodies will undergo hideous alterations in punishment for their unbelief. For the rest of the visit, the leaders discuss the details of these passages about the unbelievers and their sufferings.

The presentation made by these religious leaders is genuine—they are genuine Khishan religious leaders, and they believe what they are saying. They are, however, a radical offshoot group and most Khishans consider their beliefs to be bizarre and silly.

2. MAKING FRIENDS

The PCs make some friends with other NPC prisoners. Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: You are moved around into another cargo cage and

put with some other prisoners. After a couple of hours of sitting in the dim lighting of the cargo bin, one of the prisoners speaks up.

"Where are you all from?" he asks, in flawless galanglic.

Action: You should generate several miscellaneous NPCs for this scenario and give them a reasonably detailed background. Make many of them ordinary people: bureaucrats here on business, tourists passing through this world on their way to another world, Imperial officials either passing through or here on business, merchant starship crewmembers (just like you), and so on. Most of these NPCs should be individuals, although a few could be families, complete with their spouse(s) and/or children. Few, if any, of these prisoners will be aliens (see the Massilia library data later in this book for ideas on likely local aliens).

Remember that the Khishans do not welcome visitors to their world, so most of these offworlders will simply have been passing through. For those that were here on Khishan as their destination, their business will most likely have been with the starport personnel, not with any local Khishans.

Inventing and detailing specific NPCs for this nugget, because of space restrictions, is not practical here. However, with a few guidelines to help you, roleplaying the NPCs you create for this nugget should be a lot of fun:

- Make most of the NPCs ordinary people. Some should be reserved or shy. Strive to create individual personalities in each of your NPCs—if it will help, think of friends or schoolmates you have had in the past, and model the various NPC personalities after them.

In any event, most of these NPCs will be reasonably considerate, sensible, and will want to "pull together" to endure this ordeal. Over time, as nerves get frayed and the effects of Den Moongoal's psychological pressures start to have their effects, the NPCs should become less considerate and more radical in their behavior. Others will become completely withdrawn, not speaking or moving about much for days at a time. Some may begin to express confusion over who's right in this conflict—Lucan, Dulinor, or Margaret.

- Make a few NPCs "antagonists" or eccentrics. They will either relentlessly complain about their predicament, refuse to cooperate with anybody, or engage in "off the wall" behavior at every turn. A few will try to bribe the guards or even the robots in an attempt to gain their freedom. One or two NPCs will side with their captors right away.

- Make one or two NPCs "eternal optimists." These people will almost always be looking for a way to escape or for good things about this whole predicament. While these people can be inspiring, they can also get on everyone's nerves. Sometimes, these people's relentless optimism will seem foolish or simplistic.

Even though the guides for these NPCs indicates their basic personalities, strive to also make them more than just cardboard cutouts without any believable depth. Vary their behavior occasionally. Make the eternal optimist get discouraged for a little while. Have the antagonist go along with everyone else "this time." Have the withdrawn person suddenly turn so hysterically talkative you can't shut him up.

And never forget to make an NPC's motives believable. While people can be altruistic sometimes, the best believability in motives comes when the NPC himself or herself also gets something out of the situation. (The motivation doesn't nec-

essarily have to be purely selfish, either. Win-win situations where the NPC *and* his or her associates each gain something often work even better.) In any case, if you always ask, "What does this NPC have to gain from the situation?" and can come up with a good answer, then the NPC will suddenly come alive to the players.

For an example of a well-done NPC, see nugget 3. A Trusted Friend.

3. A TRUSTED FRIEND

The PCs make friends with a key NPC prisoner.

Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: You have repeatedly been put into the same cage for over a week now with the same people. One of them, whose name is Narva, hasn't said much.

Then one night, when the others are asleep, she wakes up one of you (pick a likely PC) and whispers quietly to you.

"That missing knight you all are so interested in—well, if you can help me get out of here, I can help you find her. I was her top assistant, and I know where they're holding her—both the world and the exact location on that world."

Action: If nothing else gets the PC's attention, this sure should! Suddenly being a POW isn't so boring.

Narva has been watching and listening to the PCs for several days, and she has decided she can trust them. In fact, her trust goes even farther than that: She believes the PCs may finally be the ones with the necessary skills to assist her in her rescue attempt of her friend and overseer, Antaina.

The PCs will no doubt want to question Narva further. She, however, doesn't trust the others (the NPCs) in the cage. She will suggest the group wait until their next "outing," where they can discuss the details somewhat "alone." (See the outings listed in nugget 1. Life as a POW for details.)

4. STOOL PIGEON

The PCs discover an NPC prisoner is actually a marine in disguise.

Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: (Randomly select one of the PCs to receive this information.)

You are having a bad dream, and you wake up, wet with sweat. It's the middle of the night, and everyone's sound asleep, except you. You look around in the dim light, and you notice the new prisoner in your cell is not in his bunk—his bunk is empty.

This is when you notice a reflection in the hand mirror which the next prisoner over has left leaning against the nearby wall. You are all sleeping on the floor, and this mirror is situated just right for you to see *around* the empty crates which form a barrier in here.

Silhouetted in the distance, you can see the new prisoner. He looks around briefly, as if checking to see who is watching, and pulls out something. One of the steward robots walks quietly by, and the prisoner hands the robot what looks like a note. The prisoner quickly sneaks back into bed.

The next morning, the guards come to your cell and take a couple of prisoners who had been bad-mouthing Lucan the day before. These two prisoners never come back.

Action: If the PCs ask what happened to the two prisoners,

they will be told it is none of their business.

The NPC in question is one of several marine informants in the prison camp. The NPC is actually not a prisoner at all, but is a planted assault marine.

This NPC will do his best to play dumb about the whole situation. To play this NPC convincingly (to the PCs), do not spend any time beforehand thinking about what this NPC is like. As the PCs get suspicious, they will ask him questions, which he must answer by making up lies. If you force yourself to answer the PCs questions on the spot, you will probably have holes in your story, which will be perfect! Let the PCs pin this NPC to the wall, since he is a classic stool pigeon.

If the PCs aren't careful, they will be next to be informed on. The NPC stool pigeon will squeal on them, and they will be escorted to a "reeducation" center, where they will undergo extensive brainwashing with the goal of getting them to swear allegiance to Lucan.

However, as they leave their cage, and are being escorted to the reeducation center is a good moment for the PCs to make their escape. Make sure nugget 7. The Way Out has occurred first, however, since the PCs need this information in order to successfully enact their escape.

5. BRAWL

The PCs witness/get involved in a POW brawl.

Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: While on an outing, a couple of the prisoners in your

group begin arguing, and it begins to get loud. A couple of the security robots turn to the two rowdy prisoners.

"Please stop that behavior right now." One robot orders.

All of a sudden, the taller of the two prisoners pushes the other one into you, knocking you over (randomly select one of your PCs).

"Get away from me—I'm sick of your stupid face!" the taller prisoner shouts.

Action: Depending on what kind of PCs you have, they might decide to get involved in this fight. In fact, you might consider requiring a Determination roll for the PC to avoid losing his temper.

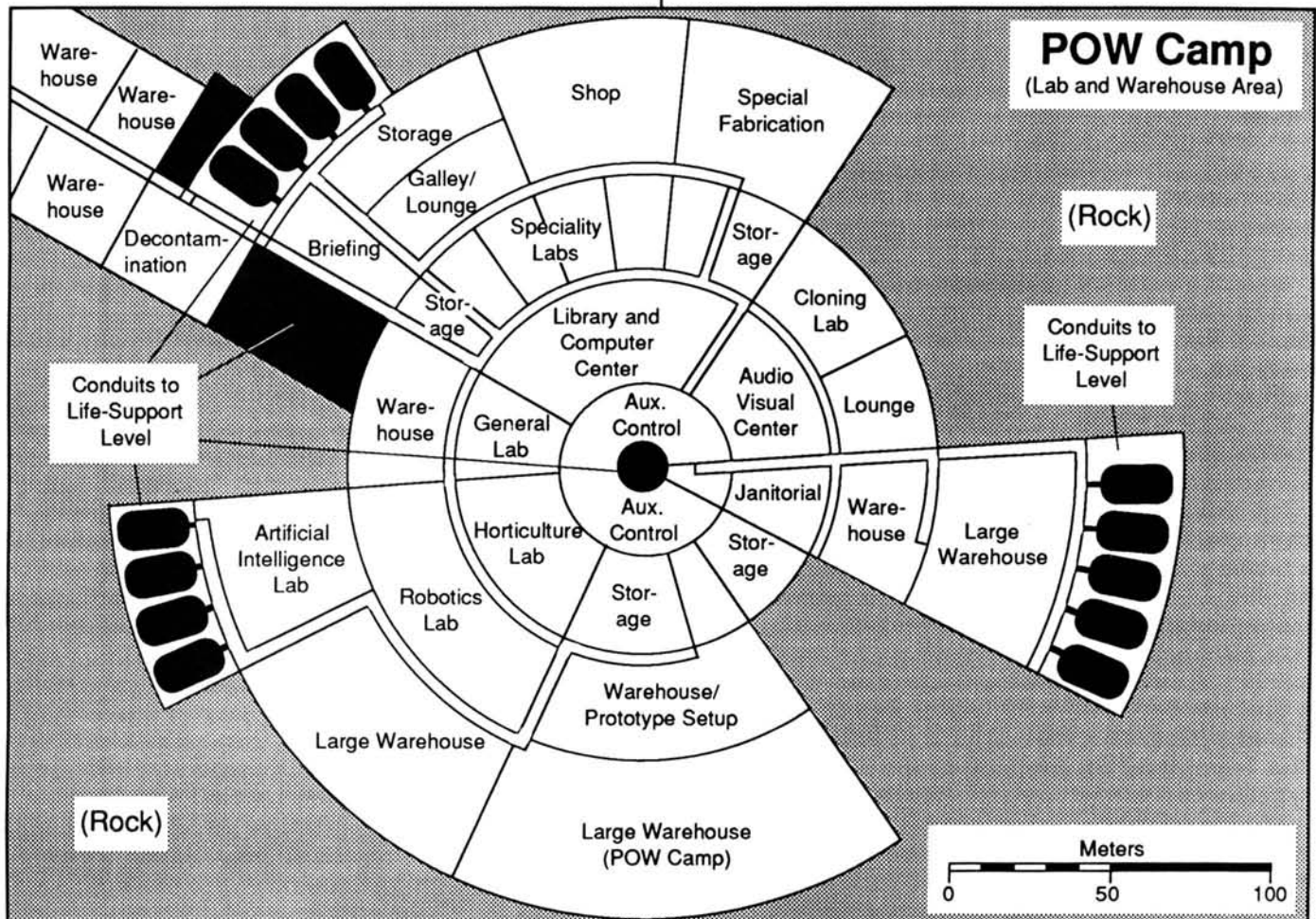
If the PCs have gotten information on the way out of here (see nugget 7. The Way Out), this unrelated development would give them a good diversion opportunity for them to effect an escape. Since nugget 6. They're Dead! is also a good diversion nugget to allow the PCs to make their escape, we recommend you implement either this nugget or nugget 7 after the PCs know how to escape. Use the other nugget *before* they know how to get out of here.

6. THEY'RE DEAD!

The PCs see POWs trying to escape get executed.

Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: While on one of your outings, two of the other prisoners from your cage group try to make a break for it. Several of the security robots shout, "Halt!" but the prisoners



pay no attention and duck down a nearby corridor.

One of the robots fires his plasma weapon at the alleyway just as the escapees disappear down it, but the robot misses.

With shocking suddenness, three of the grav powered security robots whisk off after the escapees—the robots are so fast at doing this that it seems you but blink and they are gone.

Action: If the PCs simply stand there like they are told, here is the conclusion of this nugget's action:

You hear several thundering plasma energy blasts down the alleyway several minutes later, and the missing robots return. The robots bring with them the two charred carcasses of the "escaped" prisoners.

"Too bad they tried such a foolish act," one of the security robots remarks. "They should have known they had a zero probability of escape."

That should sober the PCs up. These Lucanian robots mean to play for keeps!

On the other hand, it might be fun to wait until the PCs know the way out (see nugget 7. The Way Out) before you spring this nugget on them. This unrelated development would give them a good diversion opportunity for their own escape.

7. THE WAY OUT

The PCs discover a way of escaping from the POW camp.

Location is an underground POW warehouse on a vacuum world.

Scene: During one of the outing disturbances (see nugget 5. Brawl or 6. They're Dead!) a stranger dressed like a Khishan local stumbles into one of the PCs and then is forcibly grabbed and searched by one of the security robots. Finding nothing, the robot releases the stranger with a serious reprimand to be more careful next time.

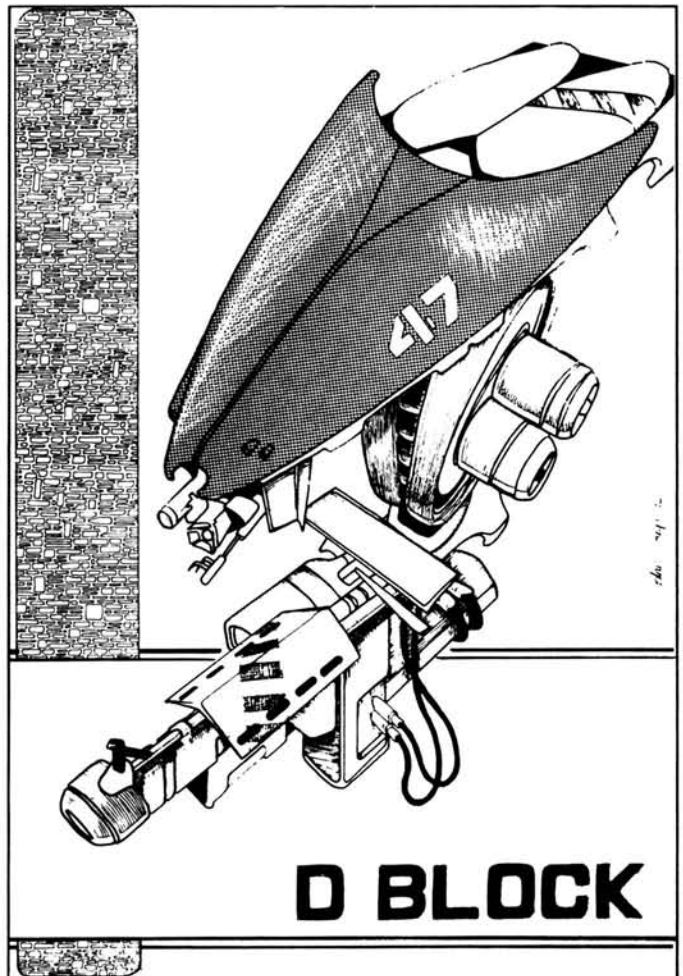
Back in his cell after the outing, one of the PCs discovers a small slip of paper slipped under one of the arm sleeves of his prison tights (randomly determine which PC, and give him an index card with the following text on it):

"Sec rbt G518 accs cd 102 779 881 518. back tunnel, ship waits." The note concludes with Lucan's name crossed out and Margaret's name underlined and marked with an exclamation point (!).

Also on the paper is a crude, hand-drawn map (see the description of it under Action, below).

Action: The PCs will have fun trying to figure out what to make of this note. The note is genuine and is the PCs' escape route, provided to them complements of a hiree of Rahjel Dromahern—but of course, they won't know that. Still, it will probably seem odd to the PCs that someone is watching out for them, and they will likely be suspicious. If they are suspicious, then fine. Leave them in prison until they get tired enough of things to try out this tip. Narva may suggest that the locals hate Lucan, and she thinks a group of locals is trying to help some of the prisoners escape out of spite for Lucan. Encourage this line of thinking in the PCs, since it will calm their suspicions about the note.

The note gives the group an access override code to the security robot G518 (this number can be found in small print near an access plate on the robot's back). Once the robot hears this code, it will obey the commands of the speaking individual. The map shows a little-used back service crawlway near the



prison camp that leads to the surface. Ordinarily the crawlway is locked, but Rahjel's people have overridden the lock circuits so the door is open, yet still shows as locked on all security panels.

If the PCs are clever, they will pick a good time on one of their outings when their robot escorts are split up, and then take command of the security robot and order it to shoot at its companions. This action will give the PCs the benefit of surprise, which is all they will need to get out.

The access crawlway is dusty and narrow, and obviously hasn't been used for years. At the top end, the group will find the crawlway opens up into a small room with several fresh vacc suits piled in a corner. An old manual air lock leads to a small landing bay. In the landing bay is a seeker craft with a couple of old beltlers nearby just waiting around, biding their time.

The beltlers tell the group some Khishan locals hired them to wait here for some escaped prisoners and take them offworld to anywhere the prisoners wanted to go. The beltlers will carry the PCs one jump (up to jump-2) in any direction. After that, the PCs are on their own.

The beltlers hand the group a note:

"Down with Lucan—may Margaret soon rise to the Iridium Throne. Good luck, offworlders."

The note is signed, "Khishans against Lucan."

Of course, this note is a deception, but then the PCs don't need to know that yet. The truth will come out in a future scenario. In the meantime, the thing that counts is *the PCs are free at last.*

Random Nuggets

Now that the PCs have escaped from the Khishan prison camp, they are escaped political prisoners from Lucan's realm. The nuggets in this chapter are an assortment of encounters intended to make the players nervous. Since this is the "midgame" portion of the **Knightfall** campaign, these nuggets serve to keep up the tension.

USING THESE NUGGETS

This is a chapter of more random nuggets—bits of adventure for you to use as filler events, mixed in with more important events. Random nuggets provide you with adventuring meat to put on the bare bones plot of the **Knightfall** campaign—meat that is not at all critical to the resolution of the overall campaign, but which is enjoyable just the same.

Don't feel you have to use any of the nuggets in this chapter. You are probably better off to not force the situation. Be aware of how these nuggets start, and then if you see a situation developing where one of these nuggets would seemingly fit, then by all means, go ahead and run the nugget.

These nuggets are all geared to heighten the PCs' paranoia—to make them worry that Lucan's forces are going to catch up with them and take them back to Khishan. As the PCs search for their missing starship and help Narva find Antaina, consider throwing in one of these nuggets now and then to keep the PCs from becoming too complacent.

As always, balance is the key. Too many straightforward events makes the session boring and unchallenging. Throwing roadblocks into the PCs' way at every turn also works against you by making the players overly frustrated. As a rule of thumb, use one of these nuggets in about half of the system calls the PCs make.

A good technique for using random nuggets is to routinely roll for encounters using the normal *Referee's Manual* procedure, and when a random encounter comes up that has a good lead-in to one of these nuggets, then go for it. For other random encounters that don't seem to fit as well, just wing it, and let them run their usual course. The players will enjoy this approach more too. When the players can't tell the difference between what matters and what doesn't, they have more fun.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following summaries give you brief information about each nugget in this chapter.

1. Running (Random Event): The PCs get the distinct impression they are being followed, and this nugget is deliberately written to foster that impression. The group never learns who was following them, but if the nugget is played out right, they will *insist* they were being followed.

2. Detained (Random Event): Some law enforcers will detain the group under some seemingly "trumped up" charges. It will turn out to all be a mistake, but if the group overreacts, they could end up making matters worse.

3. Dispute (Random Event): The PCs will get confronted by some strangers who warn them "we are on to you," and then disappear. Later, the PCs will again feel they are being followed, and again they fail to find out who it is. In the end, the group will

discover that the people behind the situation are a pair of local free traders who they crossed a year or so ago in a business deal. They have an unsettled dispute with the PCs over this deal that went sour, and they have wanted to get even with the PCs ever since.

4. Seemingly Harmless (Random Event): What starts out to seem like harmless negotiations for information or goods will turn out to be a "sting" plot by the local crime syndicate to catch some of their enemies (who are also criminals). The PCs end up getting stuck in the middle, not sure what is going on. If and when the PCs finally understand the situation, they will realize it has nothing to do with their current "wanted" status with Lucan's men.

1. RUNNING

The PCs sense they are being followed.

Location is any world.

Scene: (Pass an index card to one of the PCs with the following scene on it.)

You are walking along down a deserted corridor/alleyway when you hear footsteps behind you.

Action: If the characters turn around, they will see the shadow of someone around a corner behind them. The shadow is of a nondescript person wearing a knee-length cloak. If the PCs turn around and try to double back on the individual, they will hear running footsteps, and then the person will be gone.

Give the PCs as much or as little of a chase as you like—even let them see this person in the shadows from the back at a distance. The person has a cloak and hood on, making it hard to even tell if it is a man or a woman.

Foster the idea among the characters that this is one of Lucan's people who has found them. Tell them they remember people back on Khishan who wore outfits like this.

This is all true. The group is being followed. But it's not Lucan's people—it's Rahjel Dromahern's associates. The time is not yet right for the group to discover it is being followed by this archaeologist. The goal is to promote an air of sinister mystery with little of real substance as of yet. Have fun with this nugget. It's a real mood builder.

2. DETAINED

The PCs are mistakenly detained by law enforcers.

Location is any world.

Scene: Two law enforcer robots stop you.

"Could we review your ID please?"

Action: The PCs should be used to such encounters, and usually they amount to little more than a passing annoyance. This time, however, things are different.

After scrutinizing the group's papers, one of the law enforcer

robots pauses for a moment, then says:

"I'm sorry, sir. This ID is not valid."

At this point, the PCs can either get nervous and make matters worse, or they can confidently try to talk themselves out of the situation. Depending on what the PCs may say, here are some likely responses by the robots:

- *PCs*: "What do you mean *not valid*?"

- *Robots' Response*: We scan your ID with our sensors and check with the database via comlink, and your ID is not in there.

- *PCs*: "Well, why is the rest of my party's ID okay, and yet mine isn't? We all came on the world together, all at the same time."

- *Robots' Response*: That is puzzling, Sir. But without a valid ID we cannot be sure. We will need to take you down to our office while we sort this out."

The robots will escort the one PC down to their office—the rest of the characters may come along if they like. If the PCs try to make a break for it, the robots will pursue and shoot to detain, but not to kill. The robots will ignore the rest of the group other than the PC they are after. If any member of the group assists the PC the robots want, they will include that group member in their "shoot to detain" selection.

A few minutes into this situation (you pick a good ending point—it might be especially fun to have the robots suddenly cease pursuing the PC(s) and then turn to leave like nothing happened), the robots will get a priority message from their

office computer. It seems that one of the holocrystals in the database has been experiencing increasing read errors, and had become damaged. The computer restored the bad holocrystal's data from a backup to a new holocrystal, and the missing PC's ID was found on the restored crystal. The PC's ID is fine—it was a computer glitch.

3. DISPUTE

The PCs run into some old friends with a grudge.

Location is any world.

Scene: You are walking along down a deserted corridor/alleyway when a half-dozen people—seemingly from nowhere—step in front of you and block your way. These people have some of the wildest hairdos and the most bizarre clothing you have ever seen.

"We have a message from *them*. You know who they are—we're only their messengers. Here's what they have to say: 'We're on to you, and it's only a matter of time until you get what's coming to you.' Next time, instead of us, you'll have to face *them*."

Action: Encourage the PCs to think they are being hunted down by bounty hunters from Lucan's realm. A little worry is good for the PCs—it heightens the tension. Run this whole nugget as a game of wits between the PCs and their unknown assailants.

A potshot by a slug thrower is next. It comes out of nowhere, and hits a plasteel wall in front of the PCs, ricocheting off with a whirr. That should get their attention and keep the PCs on their toes.



Next, they get up in their sleeping quarters and the doors are locked (electronic locks), from the *outside*, meaning the group cannot get out. To override the lock requires some tinkering with the lock mechanism:

To unlock an electronic lock from the wrong side:
Difficult, Electronic, Computer, 10 min

Referee: The “wrong” side means the side opposite the side from which the mechanism was locked. Typically an electronic lock must be unlocked from the same side it was locked from.

Once the characters get past this one, they will be eating some food one night when you should pass an index card to the PC with the lowest Endurance which says:

“You feel funny. Things look kind of fuzzy.”

While this is sinking in, pass the same card to the PC with the next-to-the-lowest Endurance, and so on. Once you have passed these cards out to all the group, then start passing out cards with this on them:

“Everything is fading, and you can’t stand up at all.”

Finally, start telling each PC that they fall unconscious.

Roll 3D–3 for Endurance or less to see who wakes up first. As the group wakes up, they are greeted by Zill and Lewus Lenzfoarth—two “friends” of the group. The PCs are all tightly bound in chairs, using ordinary rope.

It seems Zill and Lewus were working with the group about a year ago on a lucrative trade deal, and they were supposed to meet at the loading bay the morning of departure. Taking this cargo (a rare spice) offworld was not allowed, and thus there was little of this consumable on the market. Getting this spice to other markets would likely prove to net the PCs, Zill, and Lewus a fortune. Just as the meeting was about to take place in the landing bay (Zill and Lewus were to come along as passengers, and then collect their take at the other end of the run), word came that a bomb scare was on in the starport, and that all cargos still on the ground were to be searched for a bomb.

At this point the PCs had to make a critical decision—either destroy their cargo on the spot to avoid getting caught, or sneak the lot onto the starship into someplace other than the hold. With no cargo in the bay and an apparently empty hold, the group should be able to get the clearance inspectors to give central control the go ahead to let the PCs take off, and they should avoid getting caught in the process. But, that would leave Zill and Lewus out in the cold, since they weren’t here, and likely wouldn’t be allowed into the landing bay until hours later—well after the searches and the bomb scare was over.

The PCs opted to leave, sell the cargo offworld, and then come back with Zill and Lewus’s share of the profits. As it happened, the spice didn’t sell near as well as expected, and there was next to nothing left of the sales money after the PCs took out their ordinary starship expenses and salaries. The group returned and looked for Zill and Lewus, but they were nowhere to be found. That was a year ago. Now, here are Zill and Lewus, standing before the group.

“Thought you were going to get away with this, and leave us here on this stinking planet to rot, aye?” remarks Lewus with burning anger in his eyes. Lewus always was the hot-headed one.

“Well, we’ll just take that precious starship of yours, in exchange for the profits you should have given us from that

spice sale, but never did give us. That’s the least you can give to us, I’d say,” Lewus continues, grinning from ear to ear.

“So tell us where she’s docked, and give us your access code, if you know what’s good for you,” Lewus demands, pulling a knife and holding it a few millimeters from your captain’s face.

“What are you doing!” gasps Zill, finally speaking. “I agreed to this because you said there would be no killing.”

“Oh, I won’t kill ‘em,” Lewus returns. “But they’ll wish they were dead after I get through with them...”

At this point a struggle will ensue between Zill and Lewus, and Zill will ultimately prevail, accidentally stabbing Lewus to death. Zill will then throw down the knife, stare at the PCs in panic for a moment, then run out of the room in a hysterical daze, never to be seen again. The PCs will be left there, tied to chairs. There is a dead body in a pool of blood across the room, and a knife on the floor beside the body. The knife right now only has Zill’s fingerprints on it.

The PCs can edge their chairs over to the knife and can try to pick it up. Once the knife is retrieved, they can easily cut each other’s bonds, and perhaps escape the scene before anyone discovers them. The knife retrieval must take no longer than 10 minutes or someone will happen onto the scene—but don’t tell the PCs this.

To retrieve the knife on the floor beside Lewus:

Difficult, Dex, Int, 1 min

Referee: This task is the hardest part, and only allow one attempt per PC. After one of the PCs has successfully done this task, then cutting each others’ bonds is automatic.

4. SEEMINGLY HARMLESS

The PCs make a deal that goes sour.

Location is any world.

Scene: “Sure, I may have what you are after,” says your latest lead.

“Meet me at the old jump drive lab on level 7 and Starside tomorrow night at the ninth hour.”

Your lead gets up from the table, looks around a bit, and heads to the fresher. He never comes out—and if you go into the fresher to look for him, you find there’s no one in there at all.

Action: If the PCs go to the meeting location at the time specified, they will find the lab locked. To get in, they will need to “break” the electronic lock.

To “open” a locked electronic lock:

Difficult, Electronic, Computer, 5 min

Referee: While the PCs are performing this task, implement the encounter given in the next paragraph, below.

While the PCs are working with the electronic lock on the jump lab, two thug-looking types will come up from behind (this assumes the PC group consists of four PCs plus Narva; adjust the number of thugs up or down depending on how much the PC group size varies from the norm of five). Before anyone in the PC group notices, the thugs knock out two of the PCs (randomly select two of the PCs from among the ones *not* working on the lock). To the thugs, this evens the odds a little. As the other PCs turn around, the thugs will start a fist fight with the remaining members of the PC group. Run the combat as usual.

If the thugs prevail, once things get down to one PC left conscious, they will pull a gun, shoot the PC in the leg or shoulder, and leave this message.

"A little something to remember us by. Just remember you shouldn't go snooping around in places where you don't belong. Next time, we'll shoot to kill."

The PCs will realize they've been double-crossed. As it turns out, the PCs were sent to the old jump lab by one faction of the local crime syndicate (the Degaldos) who have a gripe with another faction (the Magaashe). The Degaldos sent the PCs to a sensitive hideaway of the Magaashe just to play a dirty trick on the Magaashe. The thugs were Magaashe members who happened upon the jump lab while the PCs were trying to break in.

The hideaway has nothing to do with any goods the PCs may be after—the abandoned lab is the Magaashe hideaway for a multitude of illegal weapons of all sorts (FGMPs, PGMPs, VRF

gauss guns, grenades and launchers, assault rocket launchers, and so on).

The Delgados were hoping that the PCs would manage to break in, and that they would then discover this tremendous cache of illegal weapons, and go to the authorities. In the end, the Magaashes would lose their weapon cache, and the PCs would be "stool pigeons" wanted by some very mad Magaashes. The Delgados would be free and clear of any blame.

As it should turn out, though, the PCs will simply get roughed up a bit and come back to the bar/restaurant looking for the contact who gave them a bum steer. The PCs will never find him again.

Most likely, the PCs will never be able to figure out why they were lied to and what was being kept in that old jump lab. If they don't let this situation drop, have the law authorities beat the PCs to the old jump lab this time. The next day, it will be all over the news: The old lab was being used to store hundreds of illegal weapons stolen by the local crime syndicate.



That's *Our* Ship!

Scenario 4

At some point in **Knightfall**, the player characters will probably want to look for their ship. When this happens, use this scenario to guide the events surrounding the PCs' discovery of their starship. This scenario provides the PCs with the clues they need to ultimately track down their starship. Once they find their starship, they get the chance they have been dreaming about up until now: The chance to steal their starship back for good.

SETUP

You can use this scenario to administer the PCs search for their missing starship. Most PCs will probably intermingle this search in with their aid to Narva. Other PC groups will help Narva first, but that means the group will have to rely on inconsistent commercial transport in this region currently under attack by Lucan, not to mention the fact they are escaped POWs of Lucan. More than a few PC groups may insist they need their starship if they are going to assist Narva properly and stay ahead of the new "law" in this region to boot.

Use the nuggets from this scenario as needed, intermixing them with nuggets from scenario 5 as needed. Once the PCs make it to the world where their starship is currently located, you will probably switch to administering the nuggets of this scenario until the PCs have recaptured their ship.

The PCs may have no idea how to track down their starship at first. However, with a little thought, they should be able to gain access to system traffic logs of nearby systems and track down where their ship went.

On worlds with a Law Level of 7 or less (Moderate law code or less), transponder traffic logs are freely available to public scrutiny just for the asking.

If the world's Law Level is 8 or 9 (High Law code), a permit is needed. Application usually involves payment of a token fee (1D×25 credits), filling out some paperwork, and gaining approval by a starport official. Once this has been done, the traffic log is made available to the permit holder for a one-time scrutiny.

If the world's Law Level is A+ (Extreme law), traffic records are not available unless you can prove you have a "legitimate" need to see them. Generally, only government concerns are deemed to have the legitimate need—all others are just out of luck. On such worlds, the PCs will have to resort to either breaking into a computer database or using bribery in order to see the traffic log.

Effects of Martial Law on Worlds in Chaos: If a world is currently undergoing a political upheaval (but is not yet enemy territory), increase the law code one level when it comes to looking at transponder traffic logs. For instance, if a world's current Law Level is 7 (a Moderate Law code), but the world is undergoing political riots, raise the law code temporarily to High Law, meaning the PCs will have to get a permit to look at the transponder traffic logs.

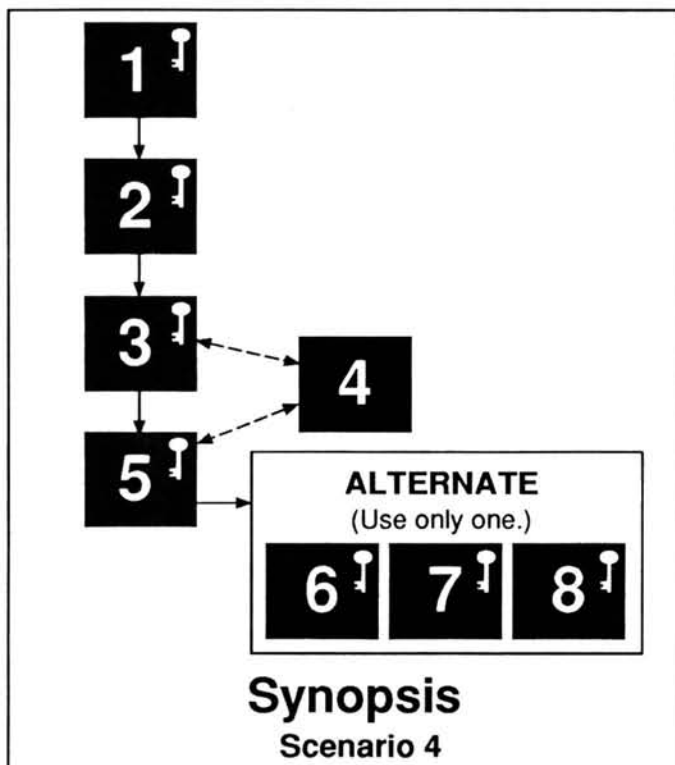
If the world has just fallen to Lucan's rule, increase the world's ordinary law code *two levels* for the foreseeable future. Thus the Law Level 7 world (a Moderate Law code) will suddenly become a law code of Extreme, making it very difficult for *anyone* to gain legal access to traffic records for the time being.

Flight Path Alternatives: Lucan's forces will follow one of two alternative flight paths with all the confiscated starships from the starport. But before we discuss flight paths, let's digress a moment and discuss what Lucan's forces want with all these small, trader-type starships.

Now that Lucan has taken Khishan, his forces will need to run supplies and communiques between Khishan and his "front line" about 10 parsecs distant—that is, until Lucan can move his "front line" toward Khishan (you can expect other worlds to be pressured to fall to Lucan in the next few months, either by military assault, economic sanctions, or more likely, by political movements). Meanwhile, using these starships, which have legal registrations in good standing within Margaret's realm, is a good way to sneak around without arousing suspicion. Most of the starships are jumping back to various worlds within Lucan's realm with cargos and/or prisoners.

While in Lucan's realm, most of the craft will undergo annual maintenance and be refitted with a military stealth-type transponder to better ensure safe clandestine travel within Margaret's realm. This is the case with the PCs' starship.

Lucan's crew will stay in a system only long enough to refuel



(usually at a gas giant) and then jump out of the system again. The crew will minimize their contact with other vessels or starport personnel, seeking to do as little as possible to arouse suspicions. They will avoid all systems with military bases, preferring instead to quietly travel through nonmilitarized systems.

Their vessel will take one of two flight paths, which we will distinguish by Route A or Route B. The best way to determine which route the vessel takes is to let the PCs "unwittingly" decide. If the PCs go to Riarette first, then their ship took Route A. If they go to Hasaggan first, then their ship took Route B.

Route A: Riarette—Ketola—Wirz—Basolus—Amulric—Datrumna. Annual maintenance (3 weeks) at Datrumna downport. Then return to Khishan, with supplies, via Route B.

Route B: Hasaggan—Anamoni—Gasha—Chaeolimin—Amulric—Datrumna. Annual maintenance (3 weeks) at Datrumna downport. Then return to Khishan, with supplies, via Route A.

How the PCs Will Travel: The beltlers that took the PCs off of Khishan will carry the PCs one jump (up to jump-2) in any direction. After that, the PCs are on their own. They will have to travel by means of commercial liner, private vessels, or even via working passage on a large Tukera freighter.

Determining if a Given World is in Political Upheaval: You can make any world you wish be in political upheaval in support of the Khishan assault, although you shouldn't make *all* worlds in such an uproar, especially if the world's population is low. If you wish, roll 1D and add the world's population as a DM, then evaluate the results as follows:

9: The world had a brief uprising, but things are now under control. Martial law is still in effect, however. Temporarily increase the world's law code one level (Moderate becomes High, and so on).

10-12: The world is currently undergoing a political struggle, instigated according to plan by Lucan's underground forces on that world. Martial law is in effect, and rioting is common. No effective coup has been staged as of yet—the direction the struggle is going to go is still uncertain. Temporarily increase the world's law code one level (Moderate becomes High, and so on).

13+: A successful coup has been staged and the world's government has been overthrown. The world is currently under new rulers. Martial law is in effect, and the world is now claiming allegiance to Lucan. This world has effectively become enemy territory. Temporarily increase the world's law code *two* levels (Moderate becomes Extreme, and so on—most worlds will temporarily have a law code of Extreme because of this).

Moving Around in "Enemy" Territory: Actually, as long as the PCs don't get in trouble with the law on a given world—and if they can manage to convincingly fit into the local culture—moving around on a world under Lucan's rule isn't different than being on any other world.

Legally getting onto a Lucan world is where the problem lies, since in the high-tech society of the Imperium, most local citizens are registered in a world's computer, along with common offworld visitors. In addition, offworld travellers typically carry a high-tech equivalent of the 20th-century Terran "visa" or "passport" identifying who they are, what their home-world is and—in this time of Rebellion—what their faction allegiance is. If the world has anything but a law code of No Law, an offworld "visa" will be a required document in order to legally be on the world. Common travellers to certain worlds



will be registered in the local world's database.

If the world's Tech Level is 12+ and the Law Level is 8+, offworlders may be forced to undergo a DNA test (roll greater than the Law Level on 2D each time a character stops on the world). The results of the DNA test will be checked against local records for a match, which will make it extremely hard for the PCs to use fake identities if they have been to the world before. The only other option is to bypass the world's traffic control (all TL8+ worlds will have some form of traffic control) and sneak onto the world in some out-of-the-way location. However, if such characters get in trouble with the local authorities, they could be identified.

Other Alternatives: If the PCs manage to escape the prison camp on Khishan within about six weeks of the assault, they will catch up with their starship on Datrumna exactly as per this scenario. Otherwise, if they remain on Khishan more than six weeks, their starship will then be on its way back and somewhere along the path of their searching through system traffic logs, they will find their starship *was just here in the local system a day or two ago*. That should get them excited.

Much to their chagrin, they will probably follow their ship back to Khishan before they finally catch up with it. In this case, you will have to adapt the final four nuggets in this chapter to allow the PCs to retake their starship back on Khishan.

Regaining Control of Their Starship: The PCs will have one interesting problem to deal with once they retake their starship—Lucan's forces will have reprogrammed the craft's security and access codes so that outsiders (and especially the original owners) can no longer control the vessel.

While this might seem to be an insurmountable task, it is not, as long as the PCs use their heads. The PCs will be able to

successfully force the access code out of one of Lucan's personnel (any of the new crew or nearby workers) if they first prove they mean business by killing one of Lucan's personnel. Thus, the PCs will need to take at least two prisoners during their recapture attempt if they hope to gain control of their starship again: one to kill, and one to spill the beans.

Failing this, the PCs can try to break the access code, using the following task:

To break a starship's access security code:

Formidable, Computer, Int, 6 min

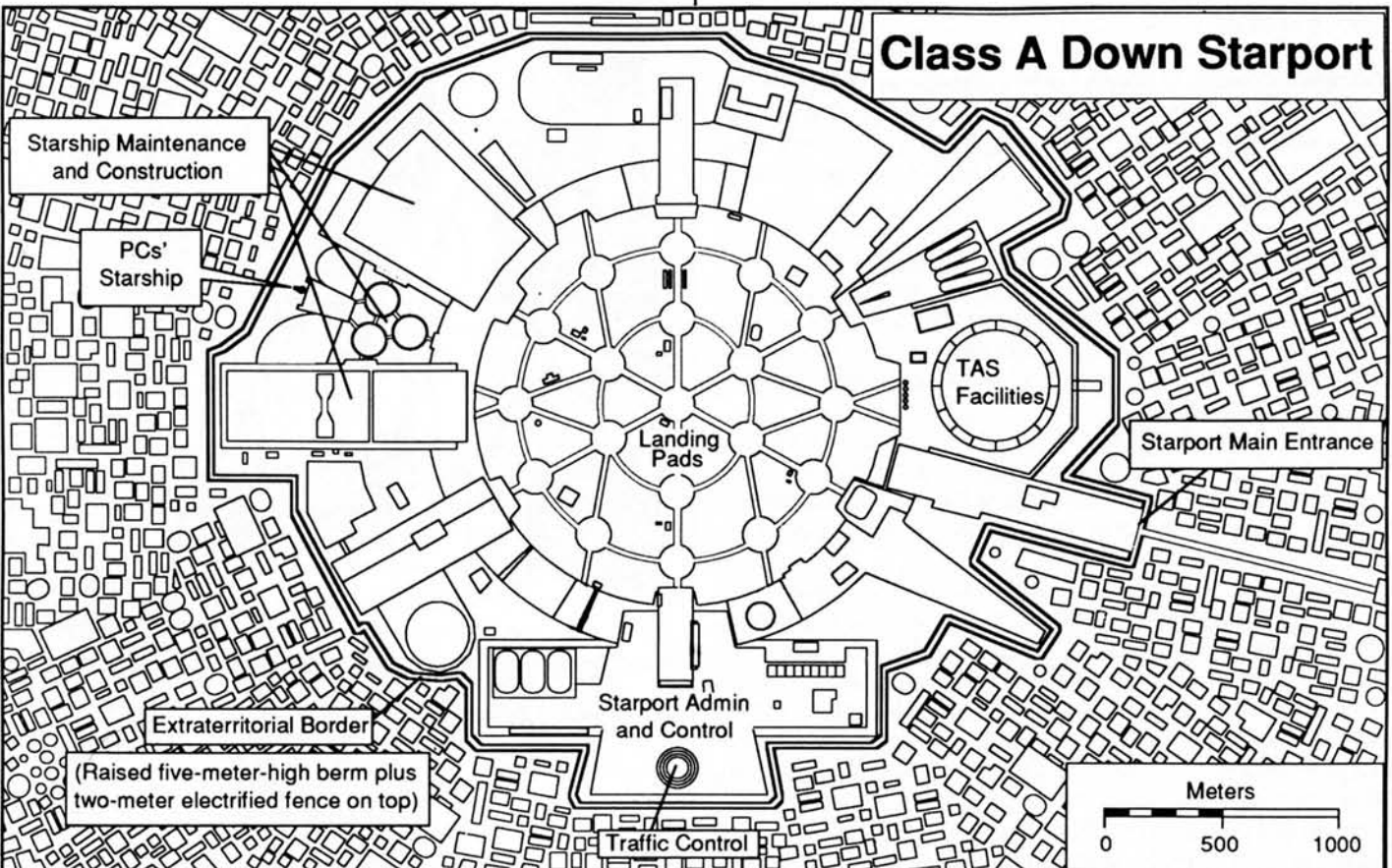
Referee: Unlike the typical task, when the group fails this task and then fails the subsequent Determination roll, increase the task duration increment by a factor of 10 on the next task attempt (thus 6 min becomes 60 min, and so on), but do not increase the task difficulty. Continue this increase until the task either succeeds or the group decides to give up.

This entire situation of trying to break back into their own starship, which now thinks them to be foreign intruders (hi-jackers, if you will), should prove to be a harrowing and tense one for the PCs. Unless the PCs do something stupid, your goal as referee should be to allow the PCs to ultimately regain their starship. This will make the **Knightfall** campaign an exciting and satisfying one for your players—one they'll talk about for years to come.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The text below briefly describes each of the nuggets in this scenario.

1. On the Trail (Key): The PCs have the beltlers take them



to the system where their starship most likely went, and they look for their starship's transponder ID in the system traffic logs.

2. A Lead (Optional Key): The PCs finally find their starship's transponder ID in a system traffic log. Their starship was only in the system long enough to refuel and then left. So it's on to the spacelanes again, looking for the next world their ship went to.

3. Another Lead! (Optional Key): The PCs travel to the next system where their starship probably went, and they continue their search for their transponder ID in the system traffic logs. Again their ship only took enough time to refuel and then jumped. By this time, the PCs may be seeing a pattern to their ship's journey—it's heading to Lucan territory.

4. Misled (Red Herring): The PCs find their starship's transponder ID in a system traffic log, and find this time their ship also filed a flight plan indicating which system it was going to next. But if they go there, the ship is nowhere to be found, and its transponder ID is not in any system logs. The group will ultimately realize that the flight plan was phony.

5. Found! (Key): The PCs will finally catch up with their starship just inside Lucan territory. Their ship is just finishing up an annual maintenance overhaul, as well as having its transponder replaced with a military grade transponder (one that allows changing IDs from a panel dialog on the bridge). The PCs must now plan how they are going to get their starship back and not lose their lives in the process.

6. Stealing it Back: Rush 'Em! (PC Method 1): If the PCs decide the frontal attack method is the route they will use to get their starship back, this nugget describes how to handle the action.

7. Stealing it Back: Sneak Past Security (PC Method 2): If the PCs prefer to take a more subtle approach to getting their starship back, then this nugget details how to handle the action.

8. Stealing it Back: Stowaway (PC Method 3): If the PCs choose to take an ultra-sneaky approach to stealing their starship back, this nugget covers how to handle the action.

1. ON THE TRAIL

The PCs arrive at a nearby world to look for their starship.

Location is any world in Margaret's realm.

Candidate systems include: Riarette (Route A), Engorr, Ektor, Wikk, Murcia, Irlu, or Hasaggan (Route B).

Scene: The beltlers jump you to the system you requested, only to find the starport there is under martial law, and the local government is in disarray. Apparently, pro-Lucan sympathizers are trying to stage a coup on this world. Rioting and gunfire are rampant in the world's largest cities. The last time you were on this world, things were relatively quiet. Things have sure changed overnight.

The starport is clogged with refugees trying to get offworld. All offworlders are told to stay away from the starport unless they have vital business on the world.

It takes the beltlers two days to get clearance to land at the starport, and they are only allowed to do so if they agree to take a full load of refugees off the world (which they do). Once you disembark, the beltlers load up with an excess of passengers, and quickly leave as they were told to do.

As things quiet down, you exit the landing bay. You immediately encounter a customs station where you need to get

clearance to get into the starport. You are greeted by several armed customs officials in combat armor.

"I'm sorry people," one customs official says, bringing his gun to the ready position, "but you'll have to stop right here. We can't let you into the starport. You'll have to stay right where you are, and take the next ship back off the world."

Action: Assume the world in question is undergoing political upheaval, but has yet to fall to any overthrow of the government (a result of 10-12 in the Setup section, on pages 42-43).

So much for looking at the in-system traffic logs! Actually, it's not that bad—the PCs will just have to work a bit to get a look at the system transponder traffic logs. If they can weave a good story to the customs officials (especially if the PCs say something about needing to get their ship back so they can join the fight against Lucan), the customs officials may allow the PCs to get a permit to look at the system's traffic records. Bribery is also an option.

If the PCs are especially clever, they can try to use the landing bay computer panel to gain access to the starport computer and read the transponder traffic logs.

To clandestinely gain access to the starport computer from a landing bay computer panel:

Formidable, Computer, Electronic, 1 hour (fateful, uncertain)

Referee: Gaining access to the starport computer from a landing bay computer panel is not a very easy task, and will likely involve both a prowess with computers *and* some panel rewiring.

If the task fails, some level of mishap will occur. As long as the mishap is not a major one, implement an electrical short or the like as the mishap. On a major mishap, the tampering has been discovered by the authorities, who will be none too pleased at the PCs' subterfuge.

On a major mishap which is also a *some truth* result, the PCs will be unaware that they have been discovered by the authorities. If the mishap is not a major one, ignore the uncertain task results—make the task certain instead.

A successful attempt will give the group full access to the transponder traffic logs.

If the PCs are on Riarette or Hasaggan, they will find their starship's transponder ID in the log records. Otherwise they *will not* find their starship among the records.

2. A LEAD

The PCs discover their starship transponder ID in a system traffic log.

Location is any world in Margaret's realm.

Candidate systems include: Riarette (Route A) or Hasaggan (Route B).

Scene: You are looking through system log listings for your starship's transponder ID. You have asked the computer to search for your ship's ID, but so far you have worked back through several weeks of traffic log, but have not found a record of your ship having been in this system.

Then, suddenly the display comes alive. "Transponder ID found." There, highlighted in red in the listing, is the ID of your starship. It was here!

Action: The traffic log will indicate the PCs' starship came into this system, flew to the gas giant, refueled, and then immediately jumped. The vessel spent a minimal amount of time in the system.

Now that the PCs have found their starship in the traffic log, the next question that should immediately come to mind is, "Where did it go from here?"

The obvious place to look is to see if the crew filed a flight plan specifying their next destination. Flight plans are located in a separate area from traffic logs, so the PCs will likely have to go through more rigamarole (similar to what they already had to go through to get access to the traffic logs) in order to see the flight plan files. The rules governing the access to flight plans are identical to the rules governing access to traffic logs.

Filing a flight plan is optional, not mandatory. The PCs will know this and will likely suspect Lucan's crew *did not* file a flight plan. Still, the PCs may not want to take any chances and will look for a flight plan anyway. They can look. Lucan's crew did not file one.

3. ANOTHER LEAD!

The PCs arrive at the next world to look for their starship. Location is any world in Margaret's realm.

Candidate systems include: Ketola (Route A), Anamoni (Route B).

Scene: You arrive in the next system and find that all is quiet—there have been no uprisings or political tension. It is business as usual in the system. You get off at the starport and haven't been there more than 15 minutes when you run across an old friend.

"Well, hello!" he exclaims to your captain. "Say, what kind of crew are you running anymore—getting ultra-efficient these days, huh? No time to chat. I said "hello" to you at the gas giant the last time you were in the system a few weeks ago, and your crew wouldn't even let me talk to you."

Action: In this case, the PCs will know immediately that their starship passed through this system. They will probably still want to check the traffic log anyway just to get the specific date and time their ship was through here, and to see whether or not their ship came through here more than once, etc. They will find their ship spent only enough time in the system to refuel at the gas giant and then jumped out again.

If the PCs ask what response Lucan's crew gave, their friend will tell them.

"Well, it was the funniest thing. They said 'Oh, hello! Say, we're in an awful hurry to get out of here, so we don't have time to chitchat. Captain's orders. Sorry.' That's not like you."

As in nugget 2, Lucan's crew will not have filed a flight plan. The PCs can easily check the flight plans, and they will find nothing. Again, the PCs will have to resort to their best guess as to what direction their vessel has taken.

By now, they should begin to see the inkling of a pattern. Their vessel is heading back to Lucan territory with all possible haste.

4. MISLED

The PCs track their starship according to a false flight plan.

Location is any world in Margaret's realm.

Candidate systems include: Wirz, Basolus, Amulric (Route A); Gasha, Chaolimmin, Amulric (Route B).

Scene: You found your starship's transponder ID in the traffic logs of this world. Next you check the flight plan logs, and you find a very interesting entry.

Apparently, a patrol cruiser encountered your vessel, and

requested they file a flight plan—patrol vessels request such things from time to time. Your vessel complied and filed a flight plan.

So because of a twist of luck in your favor, this time you have their flight plan.

Action: If the PCs' starship is following Route A, then give them the following flight plan:

ROUTE A

<i>On World</i>	<i>Going to World</i>
Wirz	Virina or Gasha
Basolus	Chaolimmin or Dalphta Three
Amulric	Balfour or Dailra

If the PCs' starship is following Route B, then give them the following flight plan:

ROUTE B

<i>On World</i>	<i>Going to World</i>
Gasha	Basolus or Lattaunist
Chaolimmin	Dailra or Khipshunam
Amulric	Balfour or Dailra

Of course, the flight plan is completely phony. But you should do all you can to convince the PCs this flight plan may be legitimate. At least the flight plan seems reasonable. It's in the right general direction. It's at the maximum jump-2 rate. Why not? What is there to lose?

When the PCs get to the erroneous system, they will, of course, find no evidence their starship was ever in the system. If you want to, perpetuate the myth even more. What if their ship misjumped? It wouldn't be here then would it? The guys have been in one awful hurry—maybe they pushed the ship beyond its limits....

5. FOUND!

The PCs sight their starship in a starport maintenance bay. Location is any A starport world on the border of Lucan's and Margaret's realms.

Candidate systems include: Dattrumna, Sargashad.

Scene: You are finally looking at it—your starship! It is nighttime, and there is a slight breeze on your face. From your hidden position, you are looking at a well-lit open maintenance bay in the distance where your starship and several others are apparently undergoing an annual maintenance.

The installation is heavily guarded, and it will not be an easy task getting into the bay to retake your starship.

Action: Lucan's forces are not taking any chances, and they have this starship maintenance bay well guarded. Each starship has a four-person team of guards (wearing combat armor and carrying gauss rifles) covering it. The installation itself is also guarded: Each "back" entrance to the maintenance bay has two guards, and the wide front entrance has two guards posted on each side of the opening (for a total of four guards), and two guards who roam from side to side across the opening.

In addition, there is a perimeter patrol of four guards who come by at random intervals varying from once every 10 minutes to once every hour. In addition to all of this, an entrenched VRF gauss installation is located in front of the maintenance bay's main opening, 50 meters out. The large massive front door to the maintenance bay is opened at least

twice a day for up to an hour at a time. Sometimes the door is opened for no apparent reason, but most of the time, the door is opened because a large piece of hardware needs to be brought in or taken out, a large grav vehicle needs to come or go, or a starship needs to be brought in or out.

The guards are changed every six hours. Each set of guards is changed at different times throughout the day. No two changes of the guard take place at the same time. Periodically during his shift (at unpredictable times), one of the guards will leave his post for about five minutes (presumably to take a fresher break).

Occasionally (every 1D days), a visiting dignitary or high ranking officer will come to visit the bay, complete with his entourage of up to 1D+1 others. Extra guards (in dress uniforms that qualify as cloth armor, wearing gauss pistol sidearms) are assigned during these events.

The PCs' starship has been undergoing annual maintenance, which takes about two weeks. When the PCs arrive, their starship has about four days left to go before it will be ready for service again. Once that happens, their starship will be refueled, taken out of maintenance, and moved to a regular starport landing bay for loading and immediate departure to locations unknown (actually, a return trip to Khishan—the goods it carries are supplies needed by the assault forces currently on Khishan).

The starport landing bay where the PCs' ship is taken once its annual maintenance has been completed will be guarded by a six-man squad of troops. Each guard wears battle dress armor, carries a PGMP-13 weapon, and has on a grav belt.

If the PCs are willing to be patient, their best chance will probably come once their starship is moved, although they will have to act fast once their ship has been moved.

The point of this entire scenario is for the PCs to get their starship back. Taking their starship back should not be easy, but you should give the group some breaks and avoid killing them when they make their attempt. Encourage the group to try less direct, more sneaky methods, since those will have the best chance of success.

In fact, if the PCs are clever, they will return to the starport and seek out the local underground. Hooking up with the local underground will provide them with access to a wealth of information (such as when their ship will be moved out of the maintenance bay), attack supplies (like Imperial combat armor and gauss weapons!), and even volunteers who will assist them in getting their ship back.

To find the local anti-Lucan underground without getting caught:

Difficult, Streetwise, Int, 4 hours (fateful, hazardous)

Referee: The problem the PCs have here is one of time. This



task could take up to 60 hours (about two and a half days), or even longer if the group elects to try a cautious attempt (not a bad idea, since this is a fateful task). The level of mishap represents the level of sentence the PCs will get after their "mock" trial if caught. A destroyed mishap, for instance, indicates the PCs will be given the death penalty.

But all is not lost if the PCs do get caught. The group has gotten the attention of the anti-Lucan underground—have the underground rescue the PCs at the last minute (see scenario 5). So in effect, the above task is merely for color, since the group will actually succeed in contacting the underground one way or another—never forget the real goal here is for the PCs to *get their ship back*. Anything less would not be satisfying.

In fact, if the PCs do not think of contacting the local anti-Lucan underground, have Lucan's forces catch the group sneaking around and throw them into prison (there is a more traditional prison area on the starport grounds). In the cell with them will be a couple of members of the anti-Lucan underground who have been given the death penalty. Shortly after the group is thrown in with these two, the underground will stage a rescue, and the PCs will be freed as well. This will effectively put the PCs in contact with the rebel underground even though they didn't think to do so on their own.

6. STEALING IT BACK: RUSH 'EM!

The PCs decide to use a frontal assault to retake their starship.

Location is any A starport world on the border of Lucan's and Margaret's realms.

Candidate systems include: Dattrumna, Sargashad.

Scene: You suddenly rush out from your hiding place, and begin firing wildly at the guards. With the guards taken completely by surprise, you manage to establish a strong fighting position before they know what hit them.

Action: This nugget assumes the PCs decide to take a



direct attack approach. We leave the details of running the attack up to you.

You should, however, allow the PCs to gain surprise, and (assuming they have armed and armored themselves properly to meet their opposition) allow the PCs to ultimately prevail in the fight. You might allow a nonessential NPC in the PC's party to get killed, but try to keep Narva and the PCs themselves alive. They can get wounded, but not killed.

Ultimately, the PCs should manage to retake their starship. One starship just isn't worth the fight to Lucan's forces.

7. STEALING IT BACK: SNEAK PAST SECURITY

The PCs decide to use the subtle approach to retake their starship.

Location is any A starport world on the border of Lucan's and Margaret's realms.

Candidate systems include: Dattrumna, Sargashad.

Scene: You wait until nightfall, and dressed in combat armor and armed like the guards, you try to blend right in with them. It seems to be working, since they pay little attention to you.

Action: This nugget assumes the PCs have managed to acquire suitable armor and arms through connections with the anti-Lucan underground. Allow the PCs to get close to their starship, and then have the enemy blow the whistle at the last minute. A desperate run to get off the world should result in a tense and exciting conclusion to this scenario as the PCs try to regain control of their starship (see the note on page 44 about the starship's security access code).

Ultimately, the PCs should manage to get offworld with their starship. One starship just isn't worth the fight to Lucan's forces.

8. STEALING IT BACK: STOWAWAY

The PCs decide to sneak aboard their starship inside cargo bins.

Location is any world on the border of Lucan's and Margaret's realms.

Candidate systems include: Dattrumna, Sargashad.

Scene: With the help of the anti-Lucan underground, you have each managed to sneak into the cargo warehouse and locate cargo bins with bills of lading indicating they are bound for your starship, and will be loaded in the hold within the next few hours. You attached your rigged up internal switch to several of these cargo bins' electronic locking mechanisms, donned vacc suits, and have gotten into the bins.

After waiting for what seems to have been forever, you notice the bins are being moved. After awhile, things quiet down again, and the bins come to a rest.

Action: The PCs will have the duration of their vacc suit air supply to work with. Perhaps the best approach here is for the PCs to wait until they only have a couple of hours left on their vacc suits, and then get out of the cargo bins. If they wait this long, the cargo hold will be in a vacuum, and their starship will be in jumpspace.

The PCs presence in the hold will immediately alarm the antihijacking program. The PCs will have to wait for the crew to come to them, since they no longer know the starship's access security codes (see page 44).

If the PCs have thought ahead enough, they should easily outgun the crew. The resulting firefight should end up with the PCs taking over the ship in short order.

The Knight of Legend

Scenario 5

The search is on for the whereabouts of the knight Antaina, since she alone knows the location of the fantastic city of the Long Night. The PCs have befriended the knight's personal assistant, Narva, and she is leading the way.

However, surprises await the group. Although the new regime on Datrumna claims Antaina mysteriously escaped from prison, the story is a fabrication. Once the group learns the truth, they find the mysterious disappearance story is a ruse being used to cover up the fact that Antaina is dead, executed in prison by the new regime's leaders.

The next obvious step is for Narva to lead the group to where she stashed the hidden holocrystals. The group has difficulties recovering each of the two crystals, but they ultimately retrieve them. Each crystal has what appears to be plausible records and a map. Which one is right? One crystal refers to an external source, known only as the "archives." The answer awaits the group in scenario 6.

SETUP

This scenario deals with the PCs' promise to assist Narva in her quest to rescue her friend and leader, the knight, Antaina. To do this, Narva will have the group return to Datrumna, where the events in this scenario all take place. The PCs may want to first search for their starship before they assist Narva. In actual fact, if things work more or less as **Knightfall** is written, the group will end up on Datrumna for *both* purposes. As scenario 4 points out, Lucan's forces are taking the PCs' starship to Datrumna for refitting in its class A starport.

The Setup section of scenario 4 has a couple of items that apply to the setup and presentation of this scenario as well. Especially take note of the discussion in the topics Effects of Martial Law on Worlds in Chaos, and Moving Around in "Enemy" Territory. Datrumna, however, is no longer under martial law, since the new, pro-Lucan local leaders have managed to stabilize the government. This has returned the government and Law Level close to their original values. Still, some of the items discussed in the referenced topics continue to apply since the new pro-Lucan leaders vigorously watch for suspicious activities.

We assume the PCs have reached Datrumna, and that they have managed to get safely onto the world itself. In order to do this, the group will probably have to "sneak" onto the world illegally and not land at the local starport. If the group does try to go through the starport, the local customs officials will perform a DNA test and identify Narva as a wanted criminal on Datrumna. If this happens, Narva and her companions will be arrested on the spot.

Let the group get arrested. The local anti-Lucan underground has actually been keeping their eye out for Narva to return (to honor one of Antaina's last requests). The underground will stage a dramatic escape from prison, freeing both Narva and the PCs.

Once the group does manage to hook up with the anti-Lucan underground, they will learn the truth about Antaina: She was executed for treason against the state. The mysterious disappearance story is a complete lie perpetrated by the new government to cover up the truth.

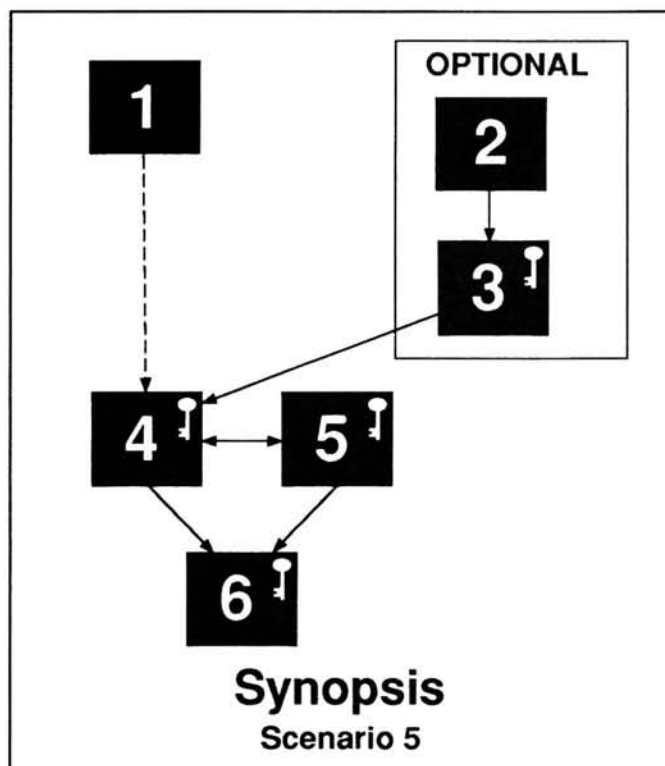
SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

This text briefly describes each of the nuggets presented in this scenario.

1. The Heavenly City (Random Event): Assuming the PCs manage to sneak onto Datrumna undiscovered, this nugget deals with the clues regarding the details of Dame Antaina's disappearance. As it turns out, these clues lead to the local anti-Lucan underground.

2. The Long Arm of the Law (Random Event): Things get a little too close for comfort in this nugget as the group gets picked up by the local law authorities. The authorities put the group through some rough interrogations and perform stress detector and DNA tests on them. Naturally, the DNA test reveals Narva is a wanted criminal of the state. The group gets incarcerated and sentenced to death for treason.

3. Escaping Prison (Optional Key): If the characters do get caught and arrested, this nugget details their escape at the hands of the local anti-Lucan underground, just in the nick of time. This nugget also describes the headquarters of the anti-Lucan underground.



4. Crystal Clear (Key): Narva takes the PCs to the site where she hid the first crystal, and the group discovers that the crystal is not there! What happened to it? This nugget deals with the clues leading to the whereabouts of the first crystal.

5. Guttled Out (Key): In this nugget, Narva leads the group to the other crystal's hiding place, only this time, the entire building where Narva hid the crystal has been gutted. Construction workers are cleaning up the site and laying the foundation for a new government building. The crystal has survived unharmed, but the tough part for the PCs is getting on the site without getting caught.

6. The Knight Goes On (Key): The group has both of the crystals, and plays their contents, only to find they are both very similar, yet different enough that they both can't be right. Which one is right? One crystal mentions a star map located in "the archives." Now, where might these "archives" be?

1. THE HEAVENLY CITY

The PCs look for clues about the missing knight, Antaina. Location is a bar on Datrumna in Massilia sector.

Scene: You are in a rundown-looking local bar—its decor obviously slapped up on top of several other contrasting decors from bygone eras. All lighting in this bar, like all such establishments here on Datrumna, comes from the floor, lending a spooky look to the room and the patrons. The smell of the many odd and unusual beverages served by this establishment drifts through the air. A live "band" plays muted white noise on strange instruments, serving to muffle the conversations in the room.

You are asking around if anyone has heard any more news about the missing knight, Antaina. Most people either ignore you, tell you they don't know, or tell you that you had better stop asking nosy questions if you want to avoid getting in trouble.

One old woman sitting at a dimly lit, triangular corner table speaks up.

"I know where she went," the old woman says. "She's gone to the heavenly city!"

The old woman points up to the sky with a wobbly, wrinkled hand. Several of the nearby patrons burst out in laughter at the old woman's remarks. After the laughter dies down in a few moments, the barkeep motions to the group.

"I wouldn't pay any attention to that senile, old woman," the barkeep says. "She doesn't even know what day it is, much less anything else."

Action: Contrary to what everyone thinks, this woman is putting on a front. She is not the least bit senile—she just wants everyone to believe that. The old woman is, in fact, a member of the underground who frequents this bar.

After Antaina was captured and Narva disappeared, the underground tried to find out what happened to Narva and locate her. If the PCs have Narva along with them when they enter this bar (and as referee, you can use this nugget for *any* bar Narva enters, thereby fulfilling this requirement easily enough!), then the woman will trust the group to be worthy of being led to the underground's headquarters outside the Datrumna capital city.

Otherwise, this old woman would not trust a group asking curious questions about Antaina. Even though most members of the underground know what happened to Antaina (and the old woman is one who does know), the underground is still careful not to give itself away to anyone unfamiliar.

If the PCs do take an interest in the old woman and she sees Narva is with them, she will continue her "senile" act. The old woman will seek an opportunity to speak a sentence to the group in a different voice of surprising clarity which indicates a keen presence of mind.

To help you administer the action in this nugget, here are some suggestions as to things the old woman may say while putting on her senile act.

"Come my children, come. Sit down. Let's talk about the days before you deserted your mother, and left her here to die all alone."

"Have you been to see Strepthon yet? You talked about that a lot as children. 'See the Imperium,' you said. 'Travel to Capital,' you said. Well Strepthon can run the Imperium without your help. The Imperium's fine—your poor old mother is the one who needs your help now. It's just like you children to never listen to your mother."

The old woman will insist on calling the PCs by the names of her children instead of their real names. In response to things the PCs may say or ask her, the old woman will deflect the questions with responses like "Sarah, you were always the feisty one," or "Gerthan, don't you care about your mother anymore? I don't want to hear about all this far away nonsense!"

At some point in the conversation, the old woman will grab Narva's hand, look Narva straight in the eye, and will say in a soft voice, quite different from her voice until now:

"Narva, Antaina's dead. Lucan's men did it."

After this the old woman will immediately break into a chanting tone, raising her voice.

"Antaina, Antaina, sat on the wall. Antaina, Antaina she had a great fall. All the noble robots and all the noble men couldn't put poor Antaina together again!"

(Obviously a parody on the old Solomani "Humpty-Dumpty" nursery rhyme.)

With this the bartender (who also is a member of the underground, incidentally) will say to the group:

"Would you please get that crazy old woman out of here. She's bad for business."

Once out of the bar, the old woman will grab Narva's hand again, look around at the group, and say in her coherent (but rarely used) normal voice:

"Narva, we need to get out of the city, into the mountains where we can talk freely. Just follow me, and I'll explain later."

The old woman will lead the group to a store where they can get camping supplies and then lead the group out of the city to a seldom-used campsite in the mountain wilderness. Once there, the old woman will speak frankly with the characters, asking them straightforward questions and explaining what she knows. She will lead them down a narrow trail in a treacherous river canyon, and then to the entrance to a cave hidden in a cleft in the rock wall. Once in the cave, she will take the group through several twisty passageways, some of them with very little clearance, to the underground's headquarters.

For more details on the underground's headquarters, see nugget 3, below.

2. THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

The PCs get picked up by local law enforcers.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia sector.

Scene: As you ride down the street slidewalk, you are motioned off by some local law enforcers dressed in deep

purple uniforms who have their gauss pistols out of their holsters. They ask to see your ID cards.

"Cooperate with us and you won't be harmed," one officer says to you in a kind tone.

One enforcer takes each of your ID cards and lays them on a special pad on his hand computer. He shows the final results to the leader.

"Okay," the lead officer says. "I'm afraid you need to come with us for further questioning and tests."

He motions you toward a white grav vehicle in the distance, painted with a stylized purple and gold flying creature, and with the word "Enforcers" emblazoned across its nose in bold Galanglic letters.

Action: Naturally, the PCs are not going to like the implications of this at all. And well they shouldn't, since once they are at the law enforcement headquarters, they will be roughly treated, rudely interrogated, and subjected to a DNA test. The DNA test is perhaps the worst thing, since this will positively identify Narva as a criminal wanted by the state.

The enforcers will ask the usual basic questions of the group, such as: Why are you here? Who are you, *really*? What are you trying to hide? In addition, the enforcers will slap the group around, and say "I don't believe you!" or "Liars!" a lot. They will call the group names like "nepeans" (an ugly, stupid local animal), "scum," or "filthy traitors."

After a harrowing day of mistreatment and questioning, the group will be thrown into a holding cell. Its entire front wall is a vari-grav doorway. The vari-grav "door" is nothing more than a meter-wide ring of grav plates along the ceiling, walls, and floor. The grav plates vary at random split-second intervals between -6G and +6G.

If a prisoner tries to step across the vari-grav threshold, he is violently thrown around the doorway like a rag doll. This ensures that prisoners don't try to escape, since they are thrown about and knocked out moments after they enter the vari-grav area. If someone doesn't remove an unconscious body from the vari-grav area, the continued bludgeoning will shortly beat the person to death.

The vari-grav barrier controls are on the hallway side of the doorway opening. To turn the barrier on or off requires an access card (which each guard carries) *and* an access password, which each guard keys in on the keypad when he places his access card in the control panel slot. Thus, to break out of the cell requires both an access card *and* a valid access code.

The other three walls, the floor, and the ceiling of the cell are bare, stained plastite (a light, rubbery concrete-like substance—almost impossible to penetrate because it bends rather than breaks under pressure).

Things may not look good for the PCs at this point, but don't despair. This nugget is deliberately designed to set things up for the group to be sprung from prison.

3. ESCAPING PRISON

The PCs escape from prison with the help of the locals.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia sector.

Scene: You awake in your prison cell with a start—there is some awful commotion going on in the office down the hall. It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust to the darkness in here. You hear what sounds like shouts and a scuffle or brawl in the office. Then, abruptly, all is quiet in the other room.

Suddenly some combat-armored troops armed with gauss

rifles burst into the prison area, silhouetted against the bright light of the office. One of the dark figures pulls off his helmet and calls out a name.

"Narva! Where are you?"

Action: If you use this nugget, you probably won't need to use nugget 1, since this nugget is designed to accomplish the same thing as nugget 1—leading the group to the underground's headquarters.

The combat armored trooper will signal to someone on his communicator, and suddenly all power will go out in the prison and office, leaving the entire building in the dark. Of course, the vari-grav doorway to the cell will be shut off in the process. The troops will have hand lamps that they use to see what they are doing in the dark.

Other prisoners will be freed as well, but the troops are here specifically to free Narva and her companions. They will do their best to direct the other prisoners *in the opposite direction*. They will repeatedly ask the PCs to hurry, telling them there's not much time, and so on.

Once outside, the group will see a waiting grav vehicle. The leader of the troops will tell the group that they are *not* to get into the grav vehicle—because it is a diversion. Instead, they are to follow him into a little-used maintenance accessway under the city, where they are to stay in hiding for the next day or so. Then they are to split up and quietly slip out of the city into the surrounding mountains, meeting at a preselected location. The hideaway has provisions, a change of clothes, and even some paraphernalia for the group to wear as a form of disguise. Meanwhile the law enforcers will be chasing the grav vehicle and all the other escaped prisoners.

Nugget 1 explains how the group gets to the anti-Lucan underground's headquarters by going through a difficult-to-find cave entrance in a chasm wall.

The headquarters is run by several anti-Lucan scientists and has the latest in TL13-14 hardware and sensors available on Datrumna. The headquarters itself is situated deep enough that it is not detectable by even TL15 densitometers.

Further, the anti-Lucan organization has several insiders in the city that can tap into the DNA records and alter them so the wanted "traitors" of the new Lucan regime no longer show a match with the DNA records. If the group would like, their DNA records can be altered to allow them to go back to the city with relative safety.

Once the underground learns what the group is up to (stealing back their starship and finding Antaina's records so they can locate the lost high-tech city and perhaps bring back awesome devices that will allow Margaret to prevail in the Rebellion), they will offer to do anything they can to help the group. This includes giving them armor, weapons, and even some of their own troops to protect the player characters' group.

The underground members will, however, not want to leave Datrumna themselves. They prefer to stay here at home and continue the slow struggle to prevail over the new Lucan-oriented government.

4. CRYSTAL CLEAR

The PCs seek the first holocrystal and discover it is missing.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia sector.

Scene: Narva takes the group to an old warehouse dome in

Antaina Shaamish, Knight (Noble)

6758AA

Age 65

11.75 terms

Computer-5, History-3, Physics-3, Leader-2, Interview-2, Vacc Suit-1, Intrusion-1, Grav Veh-0, Gun Cbt-0

Starport A, Small, Thin Atm, Dry, High Pop, Low Law, High Stellar

Basic Motivation: To fulfill her lifelong goal of finding the lost Gaadashikaduu ("Shimmering City"), the legendary archaeological find made during the Long Night.

Antaina Shaamash was a respected rank noble, who served tirelessly for decades as the chief scientific advisor to the Imperial representation on the world Daturmna (Massilia 1203). Antaina achieved that role, which is an unusual level for one of only knight rank, in 1095.

The local population was becoming more and more distrustful of "the Imperial meddling in their world's heritage," even though the Imperials had been initially invited by the local officials to conduct archaeological digs nearly 20 years ago, and site studies had progressed quite favorably over that time. In the 1080s, a series of unfortunate events coupled with numerous youth uprisings seemed destined to turn the whole situation into a small-scale war by the end of the decade.

In fact, the situation did ignite in early 1091. Several Imperial officials studying the Nocturas site were executed while they slept in a gruesome midnight massacre later called "the Night of the Scurila," named after the local ice-pick like weapon used by the assailants. Because of local cultural biases, only the male officials were killed. Antaina, one of three women investigating the site, remained unharmed.

Appalled and infuriated by the apathy of the Daturmnan people to this event, Antaina vowed not to rest until she had managed to make the population fully realize the cruelty of what they had allowed to happen. Antaina researched the local history and equated the Night of Scurila to other famous atrocities in history, all the way back to the Long Night period.

In early 1092, she flooded the media with holoessays of her findings, and many respected local journalists became alarmed at the similarities Antaina was able to extract from the historical computer records. By 1094, Antaina had rose

to prominence on Daturmna as a result of her diligent and conscientious efforts, which many held to be a key factor in defusing the unrest of the 1080s. Her natural way with the Daturmnan people led to Antaina being appointed to the post of chief Imperial scientific advisor in 1095.

During her tireless search in late 1091, Antaina found some startling new evidence about the legendary lost Gaadashikaduu ("Shimmering City"), a famous archaeological find made during the Long Night. No one had ever been able to verify the find or locate it in any way—and the explorer credited with finding the city disappeared shortly after he reported it. Most respectable scientists had long ago proclaimed the Gaadashikaduu story to be largely trumped-up lies, with little substance.

Because of her findings, Antaina spent the next 30-odd years seeking out evidence to substantiate the Gaadashikaduu myth. Shortly before her world was taken over by Lucan's forces, she had finally managed to her satisfaction to pinpoint the probable location of Gaadashikaduu. Antaina submitted a summary of her findings to *New Reality*, the popular pseudoscientific journal of Massilia sector. Most respected scientists called the article "preposterous" and "irresponsible," which distressed Antaina to no end.

As an Imperial official on the world during a political coup, Antaina was imprisoned by Lucan's forces. To keep the enemy from getting their hands on her findings, Antaina gave her trusted assistant, Narva, explicit instructions on how and where to hide her records. Narva managed to narrowly escape imprisonment herself by fleeing the world after she hid Antaina's records.

(See the description of Narva on page 33 for additional details.)



an industrial area of Daturmna's capital city. The dome is built out of high-strength, low-density plastite—its styling and weathering makes it look at least a half a millennia old. Several skinny vine tendrils have grown up around the ribs of the dome near the entrance.

Daturmna's bright white sun is just setting, giving the entire scene a strong yellow lighting and long, deep shadows. An occasional grav truck whisks by overhead, its faint humming slowly reaching a crescendo as it approaches, then quickly fading as it flies by.

Narva presses the open button on the warehouse door keypad. "Dingr!" she exclaims, "It's locked."

Narva punches a few keys on her hand computer, and a series of odd characters come up on the computer's view screen. You notice each of the characters on her screen matches a character on the door's key pad.

Narva carefully presses the corresponding key on the key pad. A blinking green light appears in the display area of the door's keypad, accompanied by two faint beeps.

The heavy sliding door moves to one side with a smooth, whispering swish.

Once inside, Narva takes you to an access panel in a small maintenance closet in the "back area" of this warehouse. Narva opens the panel and reaches up to feel along a small

ledge that is just above the panel opening. Most people would never even know this ledge is there.

"It's gone!" Narva gasps. "Somebody's taken it!"

Action: Yes, indeed, somebody did take this crystal. The group will have to do a bit of checking to find out that one of the regular maintenance personnel accidentally discovered the crystal and took it home to look at. He recognized Antaina right away. Not being a real fan of Lucan, he promptly turned it over to the underground—the bartender in nugget 1, in fact. The bartender isn't sure what he has, and he has told only a few people about it.

The few members of the underground who do know about the holocrystal find are not sure what they have, and in fact, everyone has almost forgotten about it. The bartender didn't happen to connect the crystal to the group when (and if) they were in the bar in nugget 1 since he was only vaguely aware the group was looking for Antaina.

The old woman and the bartender have a standard technique they use when she needs more secluded surroundings in order to discuss underground-related matters. The old woman makes a big loud chant that annoys other customers, and the bartender asks whomever the woman is with if they could please get her out of there.

If the PCs link up with the underground, they will eventually ask someone the right questions, and certain members of the underground who have heard of the bartender's holocrystal will remember it and point the group back in the right direction.

5. GUTTED OUT

The PCs look for the other holocrystal and find it missing, too.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia sector.

Scene: Narva takes you to the site of the other hidden holocrystal. The building is a modern five-level design, with the first level being a double-height enclosed plaza and atrium with animals and foliage. The central core of the building is open all the way to the roof, with skywalks connecting the offices ringing the building's perimeter to the central transparent cylinders containing the grav-driven elevator platforms.

Or, more correctly, the building *was* like this, because before you now stands a burned-out shell, currently being dismantled. In one corner of the building's lot is the beginning of what looks like the plasteel footings for a new structure to replace the current derelict that now stands on this lot. The entire lot is now covered with a fence-dome. The fence-dome periodically opens at the top and on the ground level to let vehicles or personnel in or out.

Construction workers, robots, and grav cranes mill about, either dismantling the current remains of the old building, or working on the beginnings of the new one. Several sign panels alternately display "Authorized personnel only—keep out" and "Hazardous construction area—stay away" on their screens.

A couple of guards with grav belts are watching the ground-level entrance. You see no visible signs of weapons on these guards. Every few minutes, a patrolling enforcer grav vehicle flies by overhead. In the off-hours, the guards remain, and the police still regularly patrol the area.

Action: The first thing the PCs will probably want to know is what happened to the building.

After Narva left Datrumna, this office building was taken over as one of several administrative sites for the new government. The more radical anti-Lucan elements planted several phosphorous incendiary bombs in the building, and detonated them without warning

during working hours. The building instantly became a blazing inferno and burned for over a day before the fire control crews were able to put it out completely. Over a thousand lives were lost, and next to nothing survived the blaze.

Nevertheless, the crystal is still just where Narva put it behind a basement maintenance panel, and it survived the blaze unharmed. In fact, the basement as a whole saw the least damage of any area in the building.

Once they get into the basement area, the PCs will find the crystal right where Narva left it—but its external case has been misshaped by the heat. The group needs to remove the crystal itself from the damaged case and place it in a new case—it will then play just fine.

To change holocrystal case without damaging the crystal:
Routine, Electronics, Dex, 1 min

The hard part of this nugget is *getting* to the location without raising suspicions or getting arrested for trespassing. The characters have a couple of good options: sneak in at night, or disguise themselves as workers (steal IDs from some of the real workers). They may think of other possibilities as well.

6. THE KNIGHT GOES ON

The PCs review the two holocrystals.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia sector.

Scene: You sit down to view the two holocrystals with Narva. Both crystals open with Antaina describing how she became interested in the Gaadashikaduu (or "Shimmering City") legend. Then she presents several images (both still and moving) from historical recordings that discuss the credibility of the legend.

Crystal one includes a very old, fuzzy recording, supposedly made by the original discoverer of the site during the Long Night. The image is distorted so much by its great age that it is hard for you to even make out what it is. Antaina remarks that the image is unenhanced.

Antaina then replays the image after computer enhancement and a startling, glimmering, city-like scene appears, sitting on a flat plane that runs in all directions to the horizon.

On crystal one, Antaina then goes through several hours of assorted computer graphics, discussion, and presentation of old recording clips that lead up to her conclusion. In the last five minutes of her recording, Antaina presents a graphic starmap showing where she believes the lost city to be located.

Upon reviewing crystal two, you find it to share some material with crystal one, and Antaina uses a similar format to present similar, yet different information. Crystal two does not show the old fuzzy recording that is on crystal one, although crystal two makes several references to supporting data in "the archives."

Antaina again goes through several hours of assorted computer graphics, discussion, and presentation of old recording clips, and ultimately presents a graphic starmap showing where she believes the lost city to be located. Much to Narva's surprise, the second crystal comes to a completely different conclusion, and presents a much different starmap to the location of the lost city.

"This is awful," Narva remarks. "I don't have any idea which one of these is right. They are both in opposite directions, and both a great distance from here. What are we going to do?"

Action: At this point, the direction is clear: the group needs to figure out which crystal is right. For the details of that effort, proceed to scenario 6, Mapping the Course.

Side Adventures

Random Nuggets

This chapter provides a couple of mini-adventures for you to drop in anywhere along the way in the **Knightfall** campaign. These nuggets assume the player characters have regained possession of their starship, and that they are trying to make their ship pay their way as they travel.

USING THESE NUGGETS

Other than nugget 3, these nuggets provide adventure seeds similar to the old classic **Traveller** product **76 Patrons**. The first two nuggets present a patron encounter in the opening scene, and the action section lists six possible outcomes from the initial scene.

Some of the action outcomes are the delightfully deceptive results that suspicious PCs will probably expect. Other outcomes show the patron to be genuine and not in the least bit "out to get" the PCs.

We recommend you roll the dice as indicated and let the dice tell you when to use the "deceptive" outcome and when to use the "genuine" outcome.

It is in your own best interest to refrain from always going with the "deceptive" outcome on patron events, or the PCs will decide they cannot trust you. As a rule of thumb, only one of the nuggets presented here should use a "deceptive" outcome. The others should use one of the more genuine outcomes. If you do this, the PCs will learn to trust you, and will be more

willing to try your painstakingly prepared adventures.

It always helps to be prepared when you present an adventure to the PCs. With this in mind, we recommend you roll the outcome on each of these random patron encounters *ahead of time*. This way, you can work out the details of the given outcome in your leisure and not put yourself through undue pressure at the game table.

There is nothing more frustrating than to have a group of impatient players breathing down your neck, wanting details you haven't worked out yet.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following summaries give you an overview of each nugget in this chapter.

1. Cyborg (Random Patron): A noble approaches the PCs for transport on their starship to the next system over. The PCs notice the noble has had both arms replaced with prosthetics. As it turns out, that is only the beginning—this noble has many personal secrets and surprises.

2. Distress Dilemma (Random Patron): While travelling in-system after just coming out of jumpspace, the PCs get a distress call from a ship in trouble. Do the PCs answer the distress call? Is it genuine, or is it some privateer or pirate looking to prey on gullible starships?

3. Rumors and Red Herrings (Sidebar, One Scene, 2D Actions): Here are a collection of rumors and red herrings to use to add color and interest to otherwise routine situations. Some of these rumors or red herrings could lead to side adventures in their own right, depending on how far you and the PCs want to carry things.

1. CYBORG

A noble approaches the PCs for transport offworld.

Location is any world with TL13+.

Scene: A noble dressed in a flowing black robe and long cloak approaches you in the dimly lit landing bay and introduces himself.

"I'm Sir Dium Franc," he says, stretching out his hand.

You notice a silvery glint of light off his hand, and as you take it, you feel the sensation of cool, hard metal against your skin.

"I'd like to book passage off this world to your next stop for myself and the two members of my retinue. I trust your free trader is set up for high passage transport."

Action: Roll 1D and select the corresponding outcome from the list below.

Outcome 1: Only the noble's arms are prosthetic. He lost them years ago in an accident and is just glad he lives in a society where technology could replace his arms and not force him to be a cripple the rest of his life. While Sir Franc is human,



his retinue members are not entirely human.

The two members of his retinue are his servants—one a homely young woman of a minor human race, and the other a young man of the same minor human race. Both are about 18 years of age. The young man has a grotesque, open-frame prosthetic arm.

The servant girl will develop an infatuation with one of the PCs—the older the PC the better. Sir Franc will be annoyed that his servant girl would fall for a human of a different race, and someone old enough to be her father on top of that. In the process, the truth will come out: The young man has had eyes for his servant associate for some time, and he will become extremely upset with the girl when she goes for one of the PCs. In the end, the young girl should realize she is actually better off with someone of her own race and age.

Play this outcome as a comic relief for the group. Play this 18-year-old servant girl as still having the fickle and flighty nature of an adolescent who doesn't really know what she wants.

Outcome 2: Only the noble's arms are prosthetic. The two retinue members of his party are two very imposing, able-bodied young men who act as Sir Franc's bodyguards. At least one of them will always be around when the PCs approach Sir Franc, and they will act very protective of him.

Sir Franc will act very annoyed at his bodyguards' protective acts, and repeatedly will tell them they worry too much. One of the bodyguards is actually a turncoat who is out to kill Sir Franc and make it look like someone else did it. When one of the PCs comes to visit Sir Franc (even if only to bring him his food), the bodyguard will make it look like the PC killed his master (poisoned him, or whatever).

Outcome 3: Both arms and both legs are bionic (that is, enhanced prosthetics, giving the noble superhuman capabilities). The retinue he has with him is two black-clad, young adults in their twenties—one a man, the other a woman. Both also have bionic arms and legs.

Sir Franc will claim the two younger people are his children, and they will do all they can to act the part. They are, in actuality, secret agents from Dlan, sent by Dulinar to spy on the worlds just beyond the borders of his realm. From time to time, they will ask the PCs some surprisingly suspicious questions. For instance:

"What have you heard about Margaret's/Lucan's (whichever is appropriate) activities on our destination (the world you are travelling to)?"

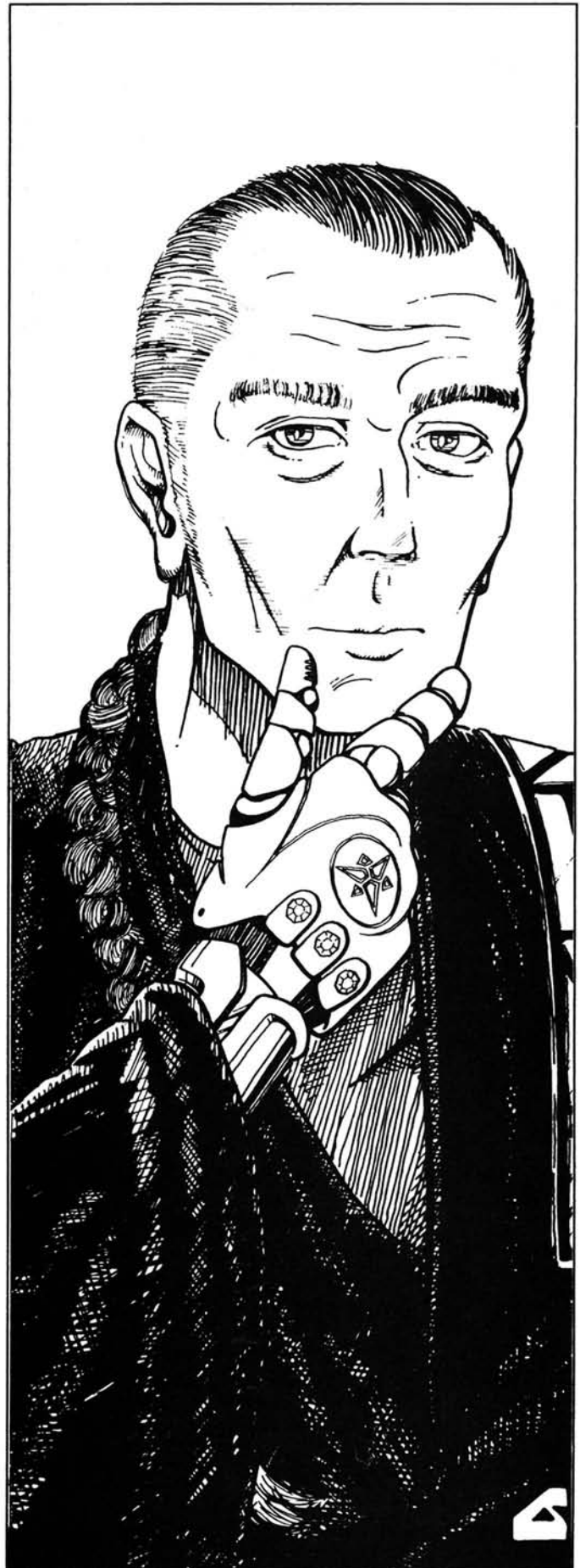
"We've heard Lucan is planning an assault on (world). Do you think there is anything to that rumor?"

Dream up any other such questions you happen to think of, and make the PCs very suspicious that these folks are not who they claim to be.

Outcome 4: Both arms and both legs are prosthetic. Sir Franc will freely answer any questions about his limbs the PCs care to ask. Sir Franc had his natural arms and legs replaced with these prosthetics because he thought the new contoured and chromed appendages would be more attractive.

The retinue he has with him is two beautiful young women. These two are his concubines. Sir Franc lavishes his concubines with whatever their hearts desire, and they will expect nothing less than that when aboard the PCs' starship.

Sir Franc will approach the PCs' leader and ask if any of the female crewmembers could please attend to his concubines'



every need: helping them bathe, making their hair, doing their nails, giving them massages, and so on. (Sounds like a good job for the NPC, Narva.)

Your goal here is to use these unusual passengers as an aggravation for the PCs. Play it a bit tongue-in-cheek, and enjoy yourself—the outcome could be some nice comic relief for the entire group.

Outcome 5: The noble's entire body is prosthetic, except his head. The retinue he has with him is two beautiful, young women, both identical twins. These two young women are, in actuality, the noble's cloned daughters. Since the noble's body from his head on down is prosthetic, he is unable to have children in the normal manner.

Sir Franc will be very mysterious about all of this and will not tell the PCs unless they ask. It is not that he has anything to hide, it is just that he has learned to not broadcast these facts, because some people react negatively when they find out the details of this unusual family.

Play on the mystery of this outcome. There really is nothing to it, but you should make the PCs think it is a big deal. If they ask Sir Franc what gives, he will tell them straight out, plain and simple. But the PCs may be too hesitant to ask, thinking their questions to be too rude or forward. Sir Franc, however, *will* be shocked if the PCs use the term "cyborg" when referring to him. He will get very angry, calling it "a vulgar term, never to be used in polite company."

Outcome 6: The noble's entire body is bionic (superhuman prosthetics, if you will), except his head. The retinue he has with him is a young man in his twenties, and a beautiful, young woman, also that same age. These two individuals' entire bodies below their heads are also contoured bionics. These

two young adults are Sir Franc's children. They are from a world where some nobles consider it "chic" to deliberately replace their bodies with ornate, contoured metal bionics. The nobles then reproduce by way of cloning. The nobles' new bionic nature also ensures they command the respect they deserve.

Each person also has special personal designs placed on select torso locations, and there is an unusual modesty taboo regarding these personal additions. Thus the PCs may think it strange that these NPCs are just as embarrassed about keeping their artificial metallic bodies covered as they would be about covering their natural bodies.

These NPCs exhibit some unusual recreational activities while on board the PCs' ship. They perform superhuman acrobatics with each other, and throw each other brutally about, all in play. They may accidentally damage the PCs' ship while doing this ("Sorry, we didn't mean to knock out that wall").

The goal with this outcome is to make it seem as "weird" as possible. Remind the PCs that not all cultures in the far future will be just like "good ol' 20th-century Terra."

2. DISTRESS DILEMMA

The PCs receive a call from a starship in distress.

Location is any world with a gas giant.

Scene: Your starship computer speaks up with a message for you.

"Sir, we're picking up a faint broken message, coming from near the gas giant. It sounds like a distress call."

The computer then plays the signal for you.

"...GK...day...SO...this...been...by heavy tur...in the gas...our...aying badly...we can't...out..."

The signal then repeats.

Action: One big concern the PCs will have is the fact that this distress signal is coming from within the upper reaches of the nearby gas giant's atmosphere. It could be a trap. However, their flight recorder records all transmissions, and they will have to answer to an Imperial review board as to why they chose to ignore the distress call. Imperial trade agreements with all member worlds (an agreement which each faction continues to honor in its own realm) state that any ship must render reasonable aid to another ship in distress. The PCs are thus duty-bound to render aid if at all possible.

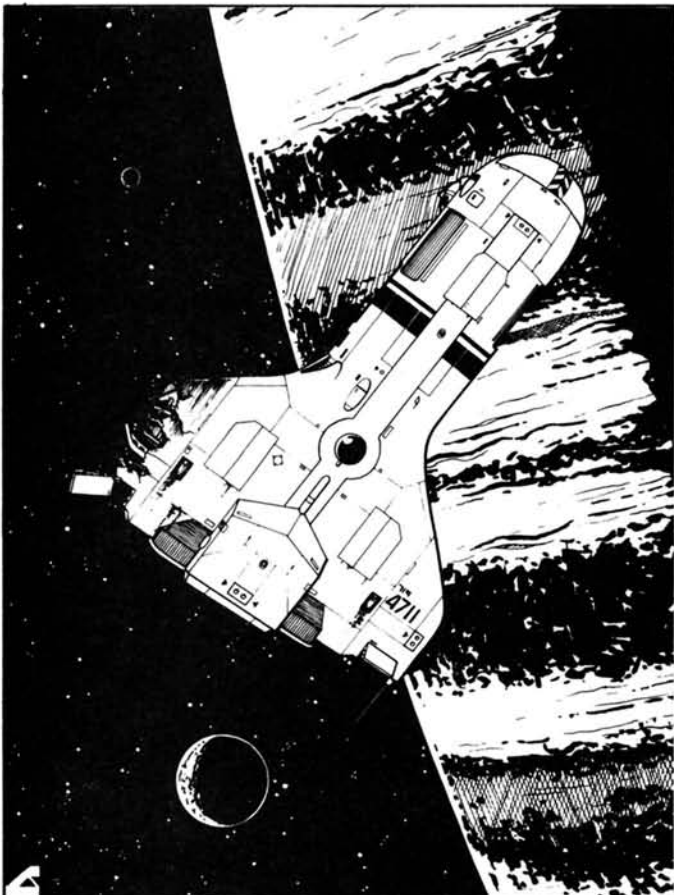
The actual full distress message is:

"Signal GK, mayday, SOS! This is the *Eldorado*—we've been badly damaged by heavy turbulence in the gas giant (name). Our orbit is decaying badly, I'm afraid we can't hold on much longer. Anyone out there, please help us!"

Roll 1D and select the corresponding outcome from the list below.

Outcome 1: The starship is a small merchant vessel (400 tons or less) that has been damaged by unusual turbulence in the gas giant's upper atmosphere. The crew of the ship will be grateful that the PCs were willing to rescue them. The damaged ship is a total loss.

Outcome 2: The starship is a large Tukera merchant vessel (over 500 tons) that has been damaged by unusual turbulence in the gas giant's upper atmosphere. Just evacuating all the crewmembers (around 20) will entail an extensive search of the ship. Jamming 20 people into the PCs' ship might also be a problem, especially if this current system has no truly habitable world with any facilities to speak of and will force the combined group to spend the week together in jumpspace. The



3. Rumors and Red Herrings

The PCs overhear a rumor while in the starport.

Location is any world with a class C or better starport.

Scene: While walking through the throngs in the starport, you overhear some interesting tidbits in a conversation.

Action: Roll 2D and select the corresponding outcome from the list below.

● **2. Margaret Tours Worlds:** Margaret has recently departed on a 25-world goodwill tour of the region. Rumor has it she is coming to *this* world as part of her tour.

● **3. Orbital Station Disaster:** Fire and explosions in the local orbital station killed 25 and injured 81. Some say the disaster was no accident.

● **4. Orbital Collision:** The midorbit collision of a large Tukera freighter and a small merchant vessel has killed 83. Authorities are investigating the crash.

● **5. The Aslan and the Ancients:** A statue of an Aslan found recently at an Ancient site suggests the Aslan may have been the Ancients. While some archaeologists hold to the recent theories from the Domain of Deneb that the Droyne were the Ancients, other archaeologists are still not convinced. Many claim this new evidence upsets the older theories.

● **6. Robot Abuse:** The Prosentient Robot's Guild has just released a series of guidelines about the treatment of robots. One notable guideline says "violently shaking a robot" is abuse. The Guild's engineers say that while violently shaking a robot may temporarily disorient and quiet the robot, this habit can cause the robot to temporarily malfunction or even stop working altogether. The Guild says such abuse should not be tolerated if maintenance personnel

detect the owner is guilty of this practice.

● **7. Kijak Racing:** The ancient sport of kijak racing (a dog-like animal native to several worlds in Massilia) is going high tech with the animals being genetically altered for improved speed, the TNS reported recently.

● **8. Ancient Religion:** The authorities here have noticed recently that an ancient local religion is on the rise. More than 1000 Gerhijad houses have been established around the world to spread the word. The leader's speeches, sometimes extending for seven hours, are sent by orbital network to communication systems around the world. Recreational "ATVs," known as "Gerhijad Tanks," roam the countryside to promote adherence to ritual. The group claims a million followers around the world. Others dispute that figure, but agree the movement is influential.

● **9. Down Starport Closed:** The down starport on the next world over has been closed because of a massive hurricane sporting 290-kilometer per hour winds. There are an estimated 300 dead in the wake of the storm.

● **10. 95th Parsec Run:** The 95th consecutive running of the famous "Parsec Run" race was just won recently by the starship *Majestic*.

● **11. Jumpspace Breakthrough:** A dramatic new jumpspace achievement has been reported by the Imperial Navy of (faction). A new TL16 vessel just returned from round-trip trial runs through jumpspace, and the journey took only 250 hours, rather than the more typical 300+ hours.

● **12. Brothers of Varian:** The Brothers of Varian claim responsibility for a recent attack on a passenger liner. Six passengers were wounded in the attack, and one attacker was killed.

damaged vessel can be recovered if it can somehow be maneuvered back out of the atmosphere. The PCs will get a small reward (Cr10,000) for saving the crew, plus a very nice reward (Cr100,000) if they manage to help save the ship.

Outcome 3: The starship is a small merchant vessel (400 tons or less) that has been damaged by unusual turbulence in the gas giant's upper atmosphere.

The PCs are too late: The crew of the ship is already dead because of failed life-support. The damaged ship is salvageable with some repairs, but there is not much time left before the ship's orbit decays enough that it burns up in the gas giant's upper atmosphere. If the PCs do manage to salvage the ship, it could be worth a lot of money to them.

Outcome 4: The starship is a lone patrol ship (440 tons) bearing Lucan's red sunburst that has been damaged by unusual turbulence in the gas giant's upper atmosphere.

Now the PCs have a problem. They will likely be outnumbered by the eight crewmembers of this ship, and they will be helping the "enemy" if they rescue those on board this vessel. Technically speaking, the crew should probably take on these people as prisoners of war for Margaret.

The crew of the patrol ship will be grateful that the PCs were willing to rescue them, but they will try to hijack the PC's ship if they can discern that the PCs are loyal to Margaret. One option the PCs have is to pretend they are loyal to Lucan and then rescue the patrol ship's crew, seeing what can be learned

about Lucan's activities in the process.

Unless the PCs are willing to use the ruse presented above and pretend to be followers of Lucan, they are probably better off to letting these NPCs go to their death.

The damaged patrol ship is a total loss.

Outcome 5: The starship is a lone patrol ship (440 tons) bearing Lucan's red sunburst, and it is lying in wait in the atmosphere, seeing who it can snare in the trap it has set by sending the fake distress call.

If the PCs fall for this ruse, give them some kind of warning in spurious sensor readings, and so on. The idea is to make this outcome a narrow escape for the PCs, not to see them and their ship destroyed.

Outcome 6: The starship is a 1000-ton ex-Tukera vessel, now conducting privateering operations for Lucan. It is lying in wait to see if it can snare any loyal Margaret vessels with its fake distress call.

If the PCs fall for this deception, let them fall into the trap hook, line, and sinker, even to the point of getting their ship disabled and boarded. Then, just when the situation looks hopeless, have a half-dozen SDBs or patrol cruisers show up to save the day (just like the calvary riding over the hills to save the settlers in old Westerns). Just in the nick of time, the loyal Margaret forces come to the rescue.

This outcome should do well to further endear Margaret's forces to the player characters.

Mapping the Course

Scenario 6

In scenario 5, the player characters found the missing holocrystal records, and a map—sort of. Actually, there are two computer map files, either of which could be the true map. This scenario deals with the quest to find additional clues to determine which map is valid.

In the records on one of the crystals, reference is made to more material in the “archives.” If the group can find out where these “archives” are, they can likely match the map data on one of the crystals to the archive data, thus figuring out which map is the correct one.

Unknown to the group, Rahjel Dromahern (a pro-Dulinor archaeologist) has been following them, and he will promptly appear and copy all the holocrystal records.

SETUP

This scenario focuses on the search for Antaina's archives and the key to the holocrystal maps. Finding the archives will entail both work and danger for the PCs.

In reality, the archives are a group of data files stored in the computer of Antaina's estate on Datrumna. Their contents are far from obvious—they are listed under the heading of “estate laundry records.” Thus, the archives have remained hidden, overlooked by Datrumnan searchers and Dromahern.

Narva doesn't know that the archives are hidden at the estate. When the political scene began to shift on Datrumna, Antaina copied the most pertinent data in the archives to two holocrystals (the ones recovered in scenario 5). Then, Antaina had Narva hide the crystals and purge the estate computer of the archive data.

Narva never knew that a second set of archives still existed in the computer's memory, stored as routine administrative reports. When the PCs recovered the holocrystals and refer-

ence was made to the archives, Narva was understandably confused—Antaina wanted viewers to refer to files she had Narva personally erase!

Narva can only guess that other archives exist, but she has no idea where. She can suggest the name of Gregir Cobarn, a popular historical writer, who was a friend of Antaina's. If convinced of the PCs' good intentions, he can pinpoint the archives' location.

The PCs can take a variety of approaches at recovering the archive data. Regardless of the one they select, they expose themselves to the scrutiny of both Dromahern and the Datrumnan government. While they may successfully recover Antaina's files, Dromahern will track them, and the local authorities may make staying on Datrumna a very unpleasant prospect.

The two main means of recovering the data are visiting the estate or tapping into its computer remotely. The first method is dealt with in nugget 1, below; the second, in nugget 4. If the PCs need some help in finding the archives, nugget 3 can be used.

After the PCs get the archive data, Dromahern will show his face. He copies the data for his own use, but allows the PCs to retain their own copy—see nugget 2 for his reasons.

With Dromahern gone, the group can finally get down to figuring out which map is right. Actually, both maps lead to portals. Each portal is only open for a short time, however, and the archive data predicts when each of the two portals will open. Using this information, the PCs can learn which portal is open currently (see nugget 5).

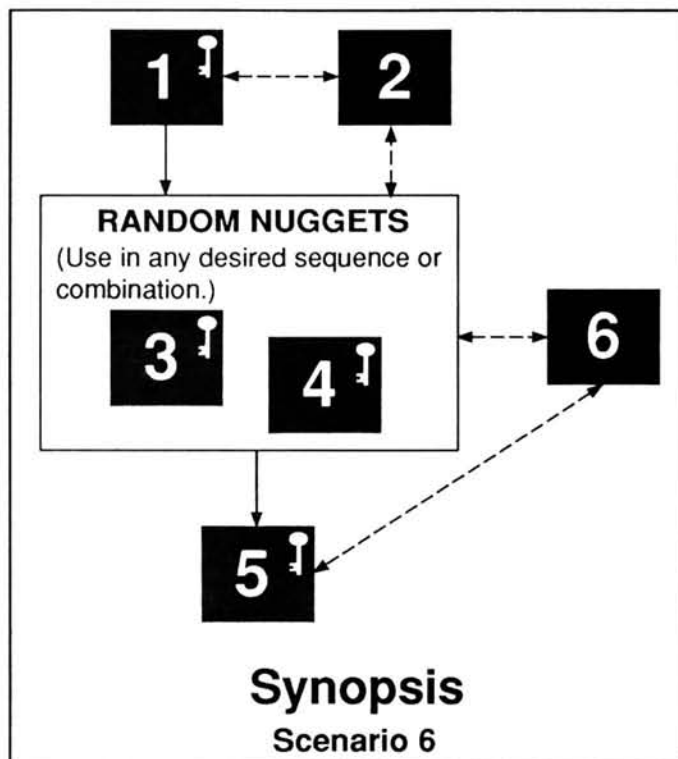
This revelation will set them on course for Jonen (0617 B658569-B), parsecs deeper into Lucan's territory. Dromahern is already en route, a fact available to the PCs in nugget 6.

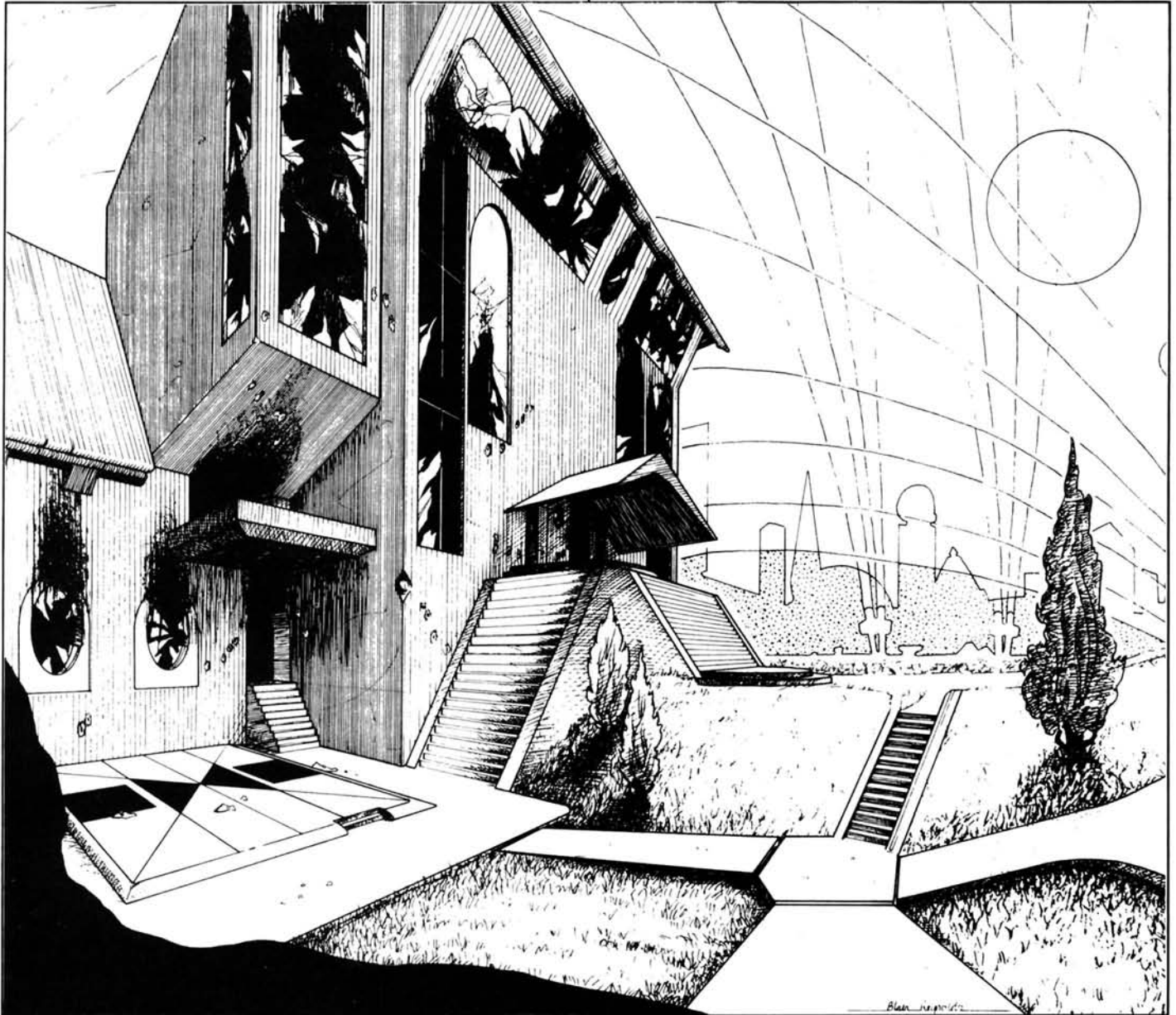
SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following text briefly describes the nuggets in this scenario.

1. The Archives, But Where? (Key): To determine which map is correct, the PCs need to find Antaina's archives, referred to on the holocrystals. One fairly obvious place to look is Antaina's estate, now guarded by the Datrumnan government.

2. We've Been Followed (Random Event): Dromahern has had Antaina's estate watched since her disappearance. Noticing the PCs' interest in the estate, Dromahern himself has come back to Datrumna in disguise. He soon arrives to steal the





information leading to the portal.

3. More Searching (Alternate Key): Although Narva doesn't know the location of any other archives, she can suggest one person who might—Gregir Cobarn, a local writer. The PCs must find and convince Cobarn to share the secret of the archives.

4. An Alternate Route (Alternate Key): The PCs may guess that the archives are data files in the computer at Antaina's estate. If so, they can try to access the computer remotely. With effort they can find the map key, but they risk alerting Dromahern's people and the local authorities—either of which could be bad news.

5. Ahah! (Key): The PCs, having found the key archive files, can now construct a valid map from data in the archives. This nugget reveals the location of the portal to the Shimmering City.

6. Follow the Followers (Random Event): Dromahern's identity isn't immediately obvious to the PCs. However, they may try to track him down. This nugget allows them to piece together clues to Dromahern's identity, quest, and whereabouts.

1. THE ARCHIVES, BUT WHERE?

The PCs search for Antaina's archives and the map key. Location is Antaina's estate on Daturmna.

Scene: "I know of some 'archives,'" Narva recalls. "They are back at Antaina's estate, in her computer. The trouble is, Antaina had me erase all the files in the archives after she had done a partial load onto the crystals. So there are no more 'archives'—I erased them all!"

Action: The group can discuss its options—what few there are—and will likely decide to search Antaina's estate. Naturally, Narva can describe the estate: a parklike country fief, situated far beyond the boundaries of the port city. Despite its relative isolation, however, Daturmna's high-tech communications net allowed Antaina to stay involved with local affairs.

Narva can sketch out the general layout of the estate. Antaina's estate is, unfortunately, under guard—"held in trust" by the planetary government. If the PCs decide to reconnoiter the place first before starting their search, they may think to ask the underground for help.

The Underground: The underground's leaders, realizing the

significance of the PCs' quest, can easily be persuaded to stage a diversion. While the estate guards are kept busy by the underground, the PCs can sneak onto the grounds and into the main house.

Without the underground's help, things will be significantly harder. The guards are armed and armored—adjust their numbers and weaponry to suit the abilities and gear of the PCs. Be fair, but make sure the guards provide a challenge.

The Guards: The guards are private security types, hired by the government to scare off looters. The authorities are afraid to sell the estate, for they realize that important information may be stored within. Although their searches to date have turned up nothing, the authorities fear the estate might be acquired by others who could find and use Antaina's secrets.

Thus, the guards have easy duties: simply maintain a visible presence on the estate grounds. Their weapon skills are passable, but they are not military veterans—their value lies in their presence, not in their combat abilities.

Nevertheless, the guards should scare the PCs. Use the guards' presence to make the search of the estate exciting. Frequently hint that the PCs are on the verge of being discovered: "You think you see movement in the trees across the lawn," for instance, or "You hear what could be footsteps out in the hallway."

At worst, the PCs will be caught by the guards and arrested. Either the underground or Dromahern will have to engineer the PCs' escape from the guards, although this fact may not be immediately apparent. Thus, no matter what, the PCs will be able to get onto the estate and locate the archives.

The Archives: The "archives" themselves are a group of data files stored in the estate computer. When political upheaval threatened, Antaina copied them and recataloged them (including altering any content search keys) as mundane administrative reports in the computer's directory. Antaina's alteration and hiding of these files is quite thorough, and to anyone with competent computer skills they appear to be estate laundry records and nothing more. Finally, she had Narva erase the original files, listed under the "archives" label.

When Dromahern—and soon after, the Daturman government—searched the house, they skimmed through the computer directory and found nothing remarkable. Not taking the time to examine each of the millions of computer files individually, they overlooked the hidden archives which conceal the key to Antaina's maps.

Narva should accompany the group, as she is familiar with the estate's computer system. She can assist the PCs in accessing Antaina's records.

Additionally, Narva may be the one to find the hidden archives. While skimming through the computer's directory, she may think the "estate laundry records" are a bit unusual—Antaina didn't regularly keep this type of records on her own personal computer.

Alternatively, the group may have already spoken with Gregir Cobarn (see nugget3), who clued them in to the location of the archive data.

Whatever the case, the PCs can transfer the data to several holocrystals. Once the right files have been located, the transfer takes little time.

Leaving: Finally, the group must escape from the estate. The exact circumstances again depend on whether or not the underground's assistance has been given.

Whatever the situation, the final moments of this nugget can be enlivened by making the PCs' departure a hair's-breadth escape. One way to do this is to have the guards notice them while leaving the house. The PCs must cross the grounds to their vehicle, all the time fleeing from the guards.

The guards have been ordered to stay at the estate, so the PCs are fairly safe once they leave the grounds. The guards will not attempt pursuit beyond the estate grounds.

2. WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWED

The PCs encounter Dromahern, who copies the maps and records.

Location is the PCs' quarters on Daturma.

Scene: Late one evening, you are surprised by the presence of five visitors calling at your quarters. They seem harmless in appearance. One, evidently the leader, identifies himself as Rahj Cheneck, a travelling archaeologist.

Intriguingly, he mentions the Gaadashikaduu legend, and your involvement in the search for the Shimmering City. Before you can ask how he knows about your quest, Cheneck's four companions pull gauss pistols.

"I know you have obtained data from Dame Shaamish's estate," Cheneck explains. "I want that information, and anything else you've gathered on the City—now!" As if to emphasize his point, the four gunmen wave their pistols in a threatening fashion.

Action: Whenever the PCs have both the maps and the archive data, Rahjel Dromahern and his henchmen appear. Dromahern—using an alias—copies, rather than steals, the information. He does this for two reasons:

First, copying the data is a less severe crime than outright theft, and he fears legal entanglements in Lucan's territory. Second, Dromahern worries that the PCs may try to withhold some crucial information. If this happens and he can't figure out the portal's location, he can still follow the PCs.

Note that the PCs have few courses of action in this nugget. Although they could try to rush Dromahern's accomplices, they stand little chance. Gauss pistols are silent, and therefore will attract no attention. Besides that, they are quite deadly, especially against unarmored targets. The prudent thing to do is to cooperate.

3. MORE SEARCHING

The PCs look for a writer who knows about the archives.

Location is Daturma in Massilia Sector.

Scene: Narva's hushed voice breaks an uneasy silence.

"Cobarn might know—about the archives, I mean. He was an old friend of Antaina's. He used to write historical items for the data networks. I know Antaina talked with him about the City; she used to visit him at the university from time to time."

Action: If the PCs don't think it is worth it to search Antaina's estate for the "archives," then use this nugget to prod them in the right direction. If the PCs want to know how to get in touch with Cobarn, Narva's hesitant response will be "Call?" as she points to a comm unit.

Calling is an obvious answer, but unfortunately one that doesn't work. Cobarn's comm code has been deleted from the directory.

The players should pick up on a clue above: Cobarn formerly frequented the planetary university. If no one thinks to look for Cobarn on campus, Narva can suggest that course of action.

The University: The University of Daturmna is a large institution, its sprawling main campus easily lying within a few hours' journey. The buildings on-campus are monolithic in design and well-weathered. In concert with the carefully kept lawns, they do much to enhance the scholarly air of the place.

Daturmna's university is renowned throughout the subsector for its colossal library. Within the library's walls lies a vast, computerized repository of historical knowledge. It is no wonder that Antaina and Cobarn—archaeologist and historian—came here often.

Inquiries: Inquiries among the faculty will prove useless. Even the staff of the History Department knows nothing of Cobarn's present whereabouts. The elderly chief librarian, however, knows a bit more.

The librarian's eyes light up at the mention of Cobarn's name. "I haven't seen Gregir since before the old government fell," she says. "The last time we spoke, he wanted to collect some information before returning to his family's home in Burac. That must have been back in '16!"

If the PCs try looking for Cobarn's name under the Burac directory entries, again they will find nothing. Their only recourse is to travel to Burac, which lies about 300 kilometers away.

Burac: Burac is a small country town, with a population of only a few thousand. Its sleepy atmosphere seems untouched by Daturmna's recent political turmoil.

If the PCs are polite and give no cause for suspicion, any of the local residents will gladly direct them to "the old Cobarn place." The Cobarn estate lies up on a hill, away from the center of town. A small, simple cottage surrounded by trees, it contrasts sharply with the elegance of Antaina's estate.

Gregir Cobarn is nowhere to be found. A single caretaker is watching the cottage. If the group asks him about Gregir Cobarn, he will give them this answer:

"Mr. Cobarn left Daturmna shortly after the overthrow of the government and hasn't been back since. I don't know where he is. I'm sorry."

Cobarn Returns: In fact, "Cobarn" (Dromahern) is back on Daturmna again, but is wearing a disguise. Since the PC group is under the constant scrutiny of Dromahern's assistants, Gregir Cobarn will suddenly just "show up" after a few days.

Gregir Cobarn will seem friendly and open. He will pretend to recognize Narva and to "remember" her connection with his old friend, Antaina.

He says that he has now retired from his writing career since the overthrow. As he was a media figure of some notoriety, he had to flee the city. He has been hiding out ever since.

"After the coup, the new regime began purging the city of vocal anti-Lucan individuals," he explains. "Supporting that murderous Lucan is the last thing I wanted to do, so I ran away and hid, fearing for my life."

When asked about the archives, Cobarn sheds some light on the archive mystery. "Antaina called me the week before Lucan's goons staged their coup. With her connections in the government, she feared something was going to happen, and she wanted to make sure her research wasn't lost if anything happened to her.

"She told me that she'd copied all her files. Some she said she had Narva hide—correct, dear? Others she said she left hidden at the estate. She separated her records that way to complicate things for the new regime. If they searched her house, the archives there would do them no good by them-

selves—the same with the holocrystals she gave Narva.

"I'd imagine the archive files are still in the house computer, probably mislabeled and hidden in some way. You might check the computer directory—Antaina had a peculiar sense of humor."

As a matter of fact, this is the case. Copies of the archive files are labeled "estate laundry records," a subtle joke to those in the know—no "dirty laundry" here, but news about the bright, shining, Shimmering City.

Now, the PCs have two options: They can go to the estate and access the archives directly, or they can try to tap into the estate computer through the planetary comm net. Nuggets 1 and 4, respectively, deal with these actions.

4. AN ALTERNATE ROUTE

The PCs access the computer at Antaina's estate remotely.

Location is Daturmna in Massilia Sector.

Scene: "How can we get past the guards?" Narva says in disgust. "Walk up to the front door and say to the guards, 'Excuse me, but can we prowl through your computer's memory?'"

Action: For PC groups with skilled computer users, remotely accessing Antaina's computer is a smart approach. At worst, anyone keeping watch on communications to and from the estate might trace the attempt to the PCs. At best, the PCs can obtain the data they need without risk.





Rahjel Dromahern

Archaeologist (Scientist)

B66887

Age 32

4.5 terms

History-3, Computer-2, JOT-2, Physics-2, Wheeled Veh-0, Gun Cbt-0

Starport C, Small, Dense Atm, Wet, Low Pop, Mod Law, Early Stellar

Basic Motivation: To find the fabled lost Gaadashikaduu site for his majesty, Dulinor.

Rahjel is a versatile, talented archaeological researcher. He has been involved in several studies of Ancient sites in Illeish and Zarushagar, but has yet to make any significant discoveries. He has always been fascinated by the Gaadashikaduu legend, and he has always felt the story does have a basis in fact, but that time has simply resulted in several of the details growing to mythical proportions.

When Rahjel viewed Antaina's summary of her findings in the *New Reality* holomagazine in 1117, he became very excited. He was convinced Antaina was onto something and wanted her findings for his own. He wanted to be the first researcher to actually find the fabled lost "Shimmering City." He spent the next weeks and months tracking down Antaina and plotting ways he could steal her work unawares.

Unfortunately, the 1118 political coup staged by Lucan's forces on Daturmna completely upset Rahjel's plans. As a known supporter of Dulinor, he had to flee the world for his life, and he subsequently lost track of both Antaina and Narva, Antaina's assistant. He has hired numerous adventurers to go to Daturmna and find Antaina's records, but thus far has had little success.

Rahjel seems to have no end of bad luck. Just before the Khishan assault, he had managed to track Narva to Khishan. After the assault occurred, he lost track of her again. In desperation, he has hired some individuals to get into the offworlder prison camp and help engineer Narva's escape. His plan to follow her and learn the whereabouts of Antaina's missing records is now bearing fruit.

In actuality, Dromahern will be aware of any attempt to download data from the estate computer. The government guards watching the estates may or may not notice. Still, careful PCs can use their gear from an inconspicuous location—even if their attempt is traced, they can leave before government agents arrive.

Accessing Antaina's computer will take two tasks. First, the PCs' computer equipment must be interfaced with the planetary comm net, and then the estate computer. (One alternative is to use local equipment—see the task below.)

To connect with the computer at Antaina's estate:

Routine, Computer, Edu, 3 min

Referee: If the PCs use local equipment already hooked into the net, the task difficulty becomes Simple and the time increment drops to 1 minute.

If the PCs succeed at linking their computer to Antaina's, they will run into a security program put in place by the Daturmnan government. The program prevents all outside parties from accessing the data stored in the computer—effectively, it is a block against data piracy. To circumvent the program, use the next task.

To penetrate the government's security program:

Routine, Computer, Edu, 5 min (uncertain)

Referee: On *no truth*, the PCs will be unable to get past the security program. On *some truth*, they penetrate the system's security but risk triggering an alarm. On *total truth*, they get into the system with no risk.

If at any time the player rolls exceptional failure, check for mishaps. On a superficial mishap, nothing happens. On a minor mishap, the government is alerted to the hacking attempt. On a major mishap, the government traces the attempt back to the PCs' location.

If the PCs fail to penetrate the security block, all is not lost. They can still try to sneak onto the estate and access the computer directly. (The program merely interferes with remote communications; users on the estate are unhampered.)

In the process, the attempt may have attracted government attention. If an alarm was triggered, the guards at the estate will be more wary, assuming the PCs decide to drop by for a visit (nugget 1). If the attempt was traced back to the PCs, government agents will converge on their location within an hour.

Having the PCs arrested and questioned by the government does nothing to further the scenario. It's better to let the PCs narrowly escape—having their heels dogged by Daturmnan security forces will motivate them to get the archive data and leave the planet as soon as possible.

On the other hand, if the PCs do manage to bypass the security program, they can search through the directory to find the archive files, which are labeled as "estate laundry records." Copying the archive data to the PCs' computer automatically succeeds.

The data is mostly text, with a few graphs and diagrams interspersed. It fits easily onto three holocrystals. Once the overlaying spurious index shell to the "estate laundry records" is removed, the data's actual index becomes available. The remaining "archive" data is well-indexed, and finding the key to the two maps seems undaunting—see nugget 5.

Remember that Dromahern will know that the PCs have located and taken the information from Antaina's computer. He will shortly close in on the group and confront them, as detailed in nugget 2.

5. AHAH!

The PCs learn the location of the portal.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia Sector.

Scene: Antaina's archives are sizable. Infrequent graphs and diagrams break the monotony of continuous text. Fortunately, the archive data is indexed, and finding the key to the maps seems possible, given enough time.

Action: The PCs have a single course of action in this nugget—study the archives. Comparing references on the original two holocrystals to information in the archives takes 2D hours. At the end of that time, the character doing the research should reach the following conclusion:

Both maps are correct. The Shimmering City can be reached from several portals, each on a different world. Antaina managed to gather enough evidence to locate two of the portals—hence, the two maps.

The problem with the maps lies in the nature of the portals: The gateways to the City don't stay open! Each opens periodically, once every 146.74 standard years. They remain open for 1.048 standard years, then close again for nearly a century and a half. Complicating things, only one portal is open at a time.

The two portals located by Antaina are special. She heard reports of portals on other worlds, but only the two on the map were documented well enough to time their opening and closing cycles. Antaina's data predicts the opening and closing times of those two portals, but not the others.

From checking the time figures, it's obvious that the player characters can reach only one of the portals—the one on Jonen (0617 B658569-B). The other portal closed in late 1114. The Jonen portal, hidden in a mountain cave, will stay open for another 185 days.

If the PCs fail to reach Jonen within that time, the Shimmering City is lost to them.

6. FOLLOW THE FOLLOWERS

The PCs trail Dromahern and his followers.

Location is Datrumna in Massilia Sector.

Scene: As you prepare to leave Datrumna, you once again wonder about Rahj Cheneck, the self-proclaimed archaeologist turned data pirate who appropriated the Gaadashikaduu data at gunpoint. A multitude of questions arise:

Who was he? Why did he want the data? Was he really a travelling archaeologist from Ilelish as he claimed? How could you find out the truth?

Action: The PCs at some time may want to ascertain "Cheneck's" true identity—that of Rahjel Dromahern. If they remember what they went through to find their own ship, they can use those same steps to identify Dromahern and his craft.

As a Moderate Law Level world, Datrumna makes many of its administrative records available to the public eye. This includes the starport registry and traffic logs. (See the Setup section of scenario 4 for additional information.)

In nugget 2, Dromahern accidentally left one clue to his identity: He introduced himself as a "travelling archaeologist." Naturally, the PCs have no way of knowing this fact is true. However, if they check the ship registry, they will find a vessel

registered from a world that is now under Lucan's control but was once under Dulinor's control. This craft has been in port for the last three weeks.

The ID for this ship, a far trader, lists the ex-Dulinor world as its home port. Its owner is given as Rahjel Dromahern. If the PCs bother to check the name in library data, they will find several minor items authored by Dromahern or dealing with his work. These items confirm he is, as he says, an archaeologist who deals with what some would call questionable or obviously "mythical" stories—an archaeologist, at any rate, who might very well be interested in beating the PCs to the City.

Knowledge of Dromahern's identity, combined with the fact that his ship left port the previous day, should give the PCs added incentive to hurry to the portal on Jonen.



City of Legend

Scenario 7

In scenario 6, the player characters recovered the archives mentioned on one of the holocrystals from the computer records on Antaina's estate, either by going to the estate or remotely accessing her computer.

These archives led the player characters to conclude that both maps were accurate, but only one leads to the only open portal to the Shimmering City on Jonen.

The player characters need to get to Jonen fast to prevent Dromshern from making off with the valuable relics sure to be found in Gaadashikaduu.

Once they arrive at Jonen, the player characters will need to locate Dromahern's ship, dispense with any guards he might have left, discover the entrance to the lost city of Gaadashikaduu, and unravel the many mysteries (some deadly) they find there.

SETUP

This scenario opens with the PCs arriving on Jonen (Massilia 0617 B658569-B), and travelling to the mountain wilderness area to find the cave with the portal to the Shimmering City.

If the PCs bother to pay attention to the in-system news channel as they come in, they will learn that the big news in this region is rumors of a strange "beastie" roaming about the villages and terrorizing the locals. Recent sightings generated enough interest that the local scientific community thoroughly scoured the area with densitometers and neural activity sensors, turning up nothing unusual. The scientists now think the sightings are the result of an overactive family of zorbachs—a large, ape-like creature native to these parts. Normally the zorbachs are very timid and run at the sight of humans, but their change in attitude could be caused by the villagers encroaching on their habitat, which has stirred them to retaliate out of desperation.

The PCs will be able to easily locate the downed starship of

Dromahern and his crew, which has beat them to the site by at least several days. The PCs may want to lay low to avoid being sighted by Dromahern's ship sensors, just in case one of his crew is watching for the PCs to arrive.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following text briefly summarizes the nuggets in this scenario.

1. Not Staying Unseen (Possible PC Event): This nugget deals with what happens if the PCs allow themselves to be discovered by the lone crewman Dromahern left with his safari ship.

2. The Portal (Key): This nugget covers what the PCs find when they go into the cave, arrive at the portal and go through it. They probably won't expect what they find, because this nugget is one surprise after another.

3. Exploring 1 (Random Event): This nugget covers what the PCs find in the "Cage" area of the map (area 10). They find several animal skeletons, including a few they may not expect.

4. Exploring 2 (Random Event): When the PCs fall into the glass pool (area 7 on the map), surprises await them. This nugget details what happens, and how the PCs can get out of this mysterious "pool."

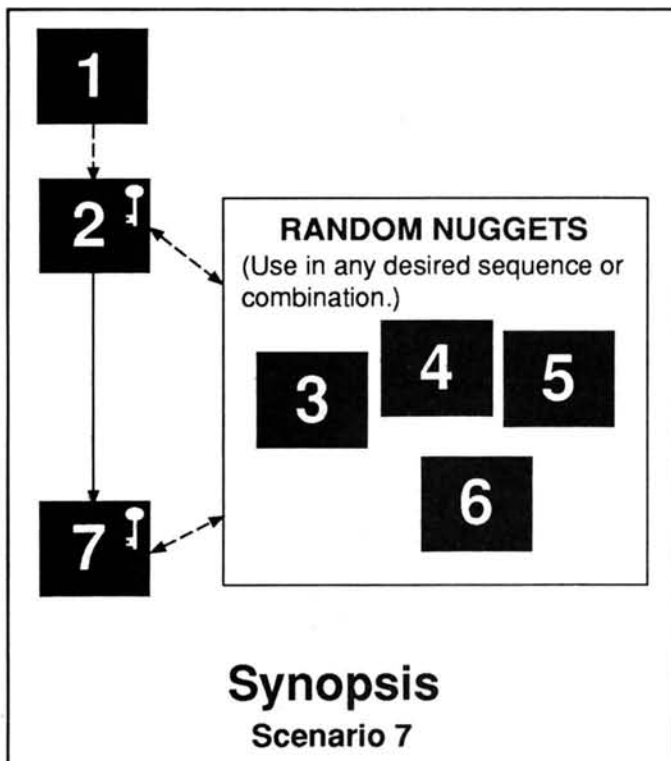
5. Exploring 3 (Random Event): When the PCs reach the top of building 16, they find some unusual controls. By playing with these controls they are able to get some unusual effects.

6. It's Alive! (Random Event): The in-system rumor was more than just somebody's imagination. A huge, illegal android construct, A.G.E. 5, disappeared from an Imperial Geneering Lab several years ago and has managed to make its way to Jonen. After wandering around the wilderness and terrorizing villagers, it recently stumbled upon the active portal to the Shimmering City and has been wandering around the city for more than three weeks. It is frustrated and *very* hungry.

7. Startling Discovery (Key): The PCs discover the aliens' "library" (building 18), and many strange impressions are garnered by one player character about the city and its former inhabitants.

Sidebar—Referee's Overview of the Shimmering City: This section includes a description of details common to the overall city.

Sidebar—Referee's Key to Shimmering City Maps: This sidebar is the referee's key to the map of the Shimmering City, and describes what each of the numbered locations is.





1. NOT STAYING UNSEEN

The PCs encounter the lone occupant of Dromahern's safari ship.

Location is a mountain wilderness on Jonen.

Scene: Through the low, bluish trees and underbrush you can see the flat, dish shape of a safari starship. The ship is about a half a klick away, and looks deserted.

You see a fresh-looking trail meandering up the steep mountain side, and disappearing into the rocks far above the timberline. Unfortunately, that trail is also in clear view of the starship. It appears that Dromahern made no attempt to cover his tracks.

Action: A lone crewmember has been left with Dromahern's safari ship and instructed to stop the PCs from getting to the portal. Thus the ship (which is armed) has been positioned so it has a clear shot at the mountainside with its pulse laser, and can blast anyone trying to go up it.

The PCs will have to figure out a way to get around this, or they are going to get blasted. While the PCs are in the woods wondering how to rush this armed starship, you might run an animal encounter with a small herd of pig-like creatures. Have the animals be more of an annoyance than a real threat. But if the PCs are paying attention, the animals can be herded *toward* the starship with little trouble.

To herd the animals toward the starship:
Routine, Animal Handling, Int

Probably the best technique is to have the animals draw the starship's fire, have one member of the party who is good with a weapon stay hidden in the woods, and have the rest of the group rush the ship (spread out and have each PC rush from a different direction) just behind the animal herd. This will set off the ship's NAS sensors, but only when the group is within about half a kilometer of the ship.

Because of limits on the angle at which the ship's lasers may fire (the hull of the ship itself will be in the way), the player characters are safe when they are within about 250 meters of the ship.

To avoid being spotted by the ship's sensors while rushing the starship:

Formidable, Stealth, Int (fateful, uncertain)

Referee: Allow a tactics pool to be set up and used by the PCs for special DMs on this task. Have each PC roll this task.

On *total truth*, a PC will have succeeded without getting spotted by the ship's sensors. On any other result he will be spotted by the ship's sensors.

On exceptional failure, a PC will have been spotted by the ship's sensors at beyond the 250 meter limit, which means he could be a potential target for the ship's laser. Randomly select from among the targets that are spotted a single target to shoot at. If the target ends up being one of the PCs, then implement a near miss, and apply 1D hits to them from the heat of the blast. Avoid killing the PCs.



The group can try to lure the crewmember inside to come out by firing at the ship with weapons, and so on. The more obnoxious the player characters make themselves, the more likely they are to get the NPC on board the ship to cooperate. (The NPC isn't exactly aware he's being sucked into a lure to get him outside.)

Or, the PCs can try to break into the ship by "picking" the keypad lock on the ship's air lock:

To "pick" the starship's keypad lock to the air lock:

Formidable, Computer, Edu, 1 min (uncertain)

Referee: On *total truth*, the PCs manage to unlock the lock without setting off the ship's antihijack program. Any other result sets off the antihijack program, alerting the crewmember. Exceptional failure means the keypad shorts out and another attempt cannot be made.

2. THE PORTAL

The PCs find the portal to the Shimmering City.

Location is a remote mountain cave on Jonen.

Scene: You have entered the cave entrance high on the slopes of a remote mountain in the Solu Range on Jonen. After wandering through narrow, winding passages in the darkness, you round a corner and can see a pulsating glow in the distance.

After another few moments, you see the source of the glow itself: a bright, silvery-white circular panel—the portal to the city!

Piled in front of the portal are a series of belongings (hand computers, laser power packs, and so on) as well as a collection of odd artifacts.

Action: The stack of "goodies" at the portal is from Dromahern's party. However, the biggest shock yet awaits the PCs.

Once the PCs step through the portal, they find all of Dromahern's NPCs are dead on the other side, just inside the door. A couple of very old human skeletons in dress dating from before the Imperium are also laying just inside the portal "doorway." But what happened to them?

The portal "reads" the DNA pattern of those who step through it and will allow an individual to leave, but will not allow him to return. The moment the individual tries to come back to the Shimmering City from outside again, the portal scrambles their molecular pattern enough to kill them. This technique ensured the privacy of the original inhabitants of the city, and kept unwanted visitors out.

For the PCs, this nugget is probably the most risky part of the entire **Knightfall** campaign. If they don't catch on to the special nature of this portal, it could cost them their lives. This is a good place to take advantage of your input to the player group through an NPC. For instance, Narva could go through the portal, and then if one of the PCs decided to go back and get something, Narva could literally grab him and say, "Wait a minute, let's think about this." She could ask the PCs to think through why the other NPCs were dead at the portal and get the group to realize that a second trip through the portal back into the city would be fatal.

Still, one of the PCs may have to die before the rest of the group gets the message. Do all you can to drop hints, but if any of the PCs insist on acting without thinking first, a mistaken second return-trip through the portal will be a deadly one.

3. EXPLORING 1

The PCs find a fresh human skeleton.

Location is the Shimmering City pocket universe.

Scene: You notice several of the containers/cages in this room have very old skeletons of animals you don't recognize. Suddenly, you walk around one of the containers, and you discover a human skeleton that still has bits of flesh on it, as well as a few shreds of clothing left.

Action: Not only does the human skeleton have flesh residue on it, it has teeth marks. This skeleton is obviously fresh and has been devoured within the last few days! The shreds of clothing indicate the person was a member of Dromahern's party.

This should be good as a real worry for the characters. The culprit is A.G.E. 5 (see nugget 6).

4. EXPLORING 2

One or more PCs are swallowed by the glass pool.

Location is the Shimmering City pocket universe.

Scene: You watch in horror as one of your party falls to the surface of the glass pool and is suddenly swallowed up by it. The location where he disappeared shows no marks or evidence that the surface is anything but solid.

Action: The glass pool is area 7 on the map. The PC or PCs who get swallowed up by this pool end up floating in space, looking back at some interesting sight that they have always wondered about, or seeing some strong memory replayed before them (that is, this pool is "custom tailored" to their thoughts). Every time a PC goes into the pool, he will see something different.

While "inside" the pool, the PC can breath just fine, and can freely move his arms and legs about, but cannot walk. If a PC tries to push his legs down hard, he will feel something like a soft floor, but won't be able to see it. If the PC presses his legs until he feels this "floor," then bends down and jumps, he will jump back out of the glass pool, and end up standing again on its surface.

5. EXPLORING 3

The PCs experiment with an unusual alien control panel.

Location is the Shimmering City pocket universe.

Scene: This area has several geometric shapes and lights arranged in strange patterns. Some of the lights alternate colors, and periodically, curious sounds emanate from the wall.

Action: Here (area 16) the PCs get to see some neat light and sound displays. If they get brave and "play" with any of the "buttons," one of them will yield a static charge that soundly knocks a PC out and to the floor. The PC's life signs will be nonexistent for a few moments, then the life signs will quickly come back to normal, and the PC will regain consciousness.

For a while, the PC is a psionic 12, with the various psionic capabilities hitting him one at a time in a round-robin fashion. After awhile, this all fades, and the PC is back to normal but with more "intuition" than he ever had before (except his psionic strength remains a 12 if he is ever tested).

Even though the PC will sequentially have every psionic ability (first telepathy, then telekinesis, then awareness, then clairvoyance, and finally teleportation), he has never been trained, so he will not know how to control his abilities. Play this as a form of psionic bedlam, with the character who got "zapped" obviously being the source.

Referee's Overview of the Shimmering City

The buildings in this city shine from within with a soft, blue-white glow. The walls of the buildings appear to be a pliable translucent material, which appears to have almost "grown" rather than been shaped, with a texture and feel somewhat like gelatin. The walls have considerable "give" to them—the PCs can press on any spot and easily push it in 10 to 20 centimeters. Once they release the pressure, the wall will snap back to its original form with a soft "smacking" sound (not unlike the smacking sound you can make when you kiss yourself on the hand).

Even though the walls seem soft and pliable, nothing the PCs try will penetrate the walls, not even energy weapon fire. The walls will seem to simply absorb the energy and show no signs of damage. Slug thrower projectiles will hit the wall as if striking a net and then be thrown back out onto the ground when the wall rebounds from the hit. Explosions (such as from grenades) will have no effect either. In all cases, the walls will show no sign they were even touched by the weapon projectile or blast.

There is an impenetrable protective field around the city, about 100 meters from the circular walkway (shown as a gray barrier around the city on the map). There is an entrance through the barrier, but the PCs have to find it on their own.

None of the buildings have multiple floors or "stories" in the usual sense. The floor actually spirals around the building, slowly working its way upward, not unlike the arrangement of a 20th-century parking garage. There are no signs of any lift shafts or elevators.

Unlike the walls, the floor is stone-hard and has absolutely no give. But like the walls, the floor cannot be damaged by any weapons the PCs may try to use on it.

Perhaps the most startling discovery of all that awaits the PCs is this: The Shimmering City was not built by the Ancients, and actually predates the Ancients by at least 250,000 years—the artifacts from it can be dated to around -600,000 according to the Imperial calendar—which definitely is *before* the Ancients' period!

As it turns out, the city was built by a mysterious race which the Ancients themselves were studying, and from which the Ancients borrowed some technology.

The name of this very old, mysterious race is not known, but a few Imperial archaeologists have begun to suspect this race's existence. This handful of archaeologists have coined a name for this new, previously unknown starfaring race: the *Primordials*.

For instance, this character will suddenly get a rush of everyone's thoughts, and he or she will unwittingly retaliate with a brief mind assault on everyone else. Next, the zapped PC will rip things out of the other party members' hands in an uncontrollable fit of telekinesis. After that, the zapped PC will exhibit super strength if any of the others try to approach him or her, and so on. You get the idea. Have some fun with it, then let these psionic abilities fade.

6. IT'S ALIVE!

The PCs encounter the monster android A.G.E. 5.

Location is the Shimmering City pocket universe.

Scene: You hear heavy breathing and turn, noticing some motion as something zips out of sight with amazing speed.

Moments later, it reappears. Here is a huge, hairless, human-like creature (at least three meters tall) with tattered clothing and a massive, angular bone structure to its face and arms. While it is obviously biological, its unusual skeletal structure makes it look vaguely robotic as well.

In its hand it is carrying a long artifact object, which it apparently intends to use as a club.

Action: This is A.G.E. 5. He was secretly sold to a bounty hunter who travelled Massilia, and while he was on Jonen, A.G.E. 5 discussed his options with his owner, who refused to grant him his freedom. Despondent, A.G.E. 5 killed the bounty hunter while he slept, and subsequently escaped into the Jonen wilderness.

A.G.E. 5 currently has UPP stats of KKK3A0, and has skin with armor like mesh (2). A.G.E. 5's life force is 7/12, and it is very strong, fast, nimble, and has an amazing endurance.

A.G.E. 5 used to be very intelligent (level F), but through its wanderings here in the Shimmering City, its brain has been damaged (in area 16, it also experimented with the controls and got zapped, but rather than increase its psionic abilities, the charge instead caused heavy brain damage).

A.G.E. 5 is now literally an insane monster. It is hungry and confused and will mercilessly kill and eat at least two of the party members if it possibly can. Once A.G.E. 5 decides to approach the group, the PCs will be unable to outrun it. They will have to stand and fight it or be killed.

A good trick that the group can use to escape from A.G.E. 5 is to disappear into the glass pool at area 7. If A.G.E. 5 jumps into the pool after the PCs, it will be unable to escape the pool, and will be doomed to live out its remaining days confined by the pool's strange, mind-driven environment.

7. STARTLING DISCOVERY

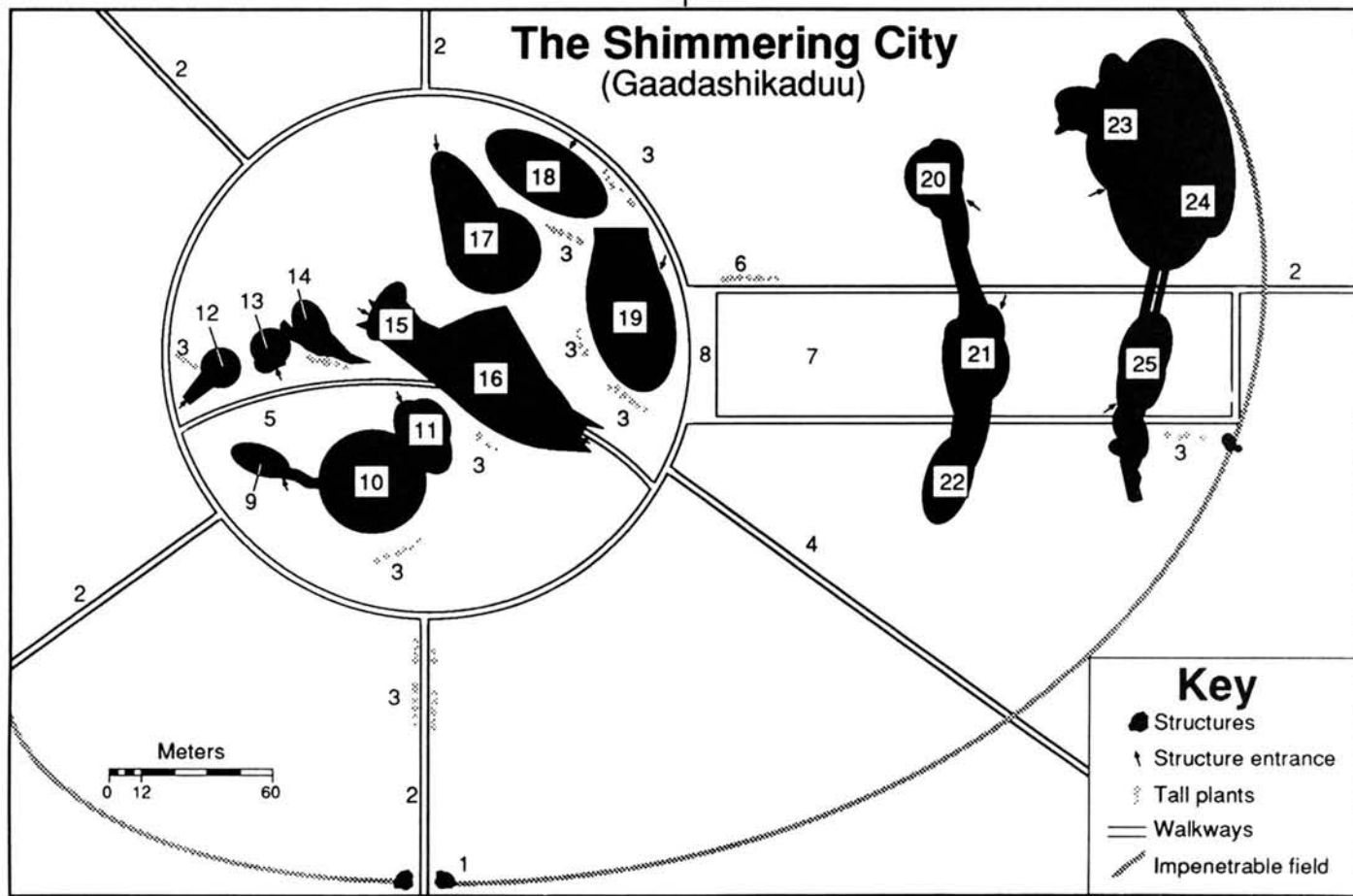
The PCs discover the aliens' library.

Location is the Shimmering City pocket universe.

Scene: You are standing in the inside of a vast, hollow tower. A multitude of shiny, jewel-like objects line the walls. In the center of the area is a small, raised dias about half a meter high and a meter in diameter. Otherwise, this tower is completely empty.

Action: At first, any of the PCs who try to stand on the dias will suddenly get a splitting headache. Then, when one of the PCs steps on the dias (ideally, the PC who got zapped earlier in area 16), a strange event will occur.

The vast interior of the tower will slowly shrink in size until the top of the tower is just above the PC's head. The PC can look



Referee's Key to Shimmering City Map

The following building titles and descriptions are presented for the convenience of the referee. Do not share these building titles with the PCs.

1. Sentry Towers: These two towers mark the only entrance through the force field and into the city.

2. Walkways: These silvery walkways are perfectly flat and smooth, and they feel like soft cushions. Even though walking on the walkway makes a slight impression in it, the split-second you lift your feet to take another step, the impression is gone—you cannot lift your foot fast enough to ever see the impression your foot made—it disappears the instant you take your weight off your foot.

3. Tall Plants: The tall plants are a widely varied menagerie of species, yet they are basically similar in that they all are tall and spire-like. The foliage shape varies from long and stringy to short and bulbous; the colors vary from deep, brownish-black to silvery-gold, with some plants being the more familiar foliage colors of green, yellow, and red.

4. Special Walkway: This walkway is unlike the rest in that it is copper-colored and stone-hard.

5. Central Walkway: As you walk on the central silvery walkway your feet create bright, violet ripples and strange harmonic sounds. The ripples change in color (blue, then green, then yellow, then orange, then red) as they run the length of the walkway, and finally intersect back to you as dull red. Where the new ripples overlap the older ones, brief points of white light appear.

6. Different Tall Plants: These plants appear to be nothing but dead, twisted, black trunks.

7. Glassy "Pool": This appears to be a translucent, pea-green sheet of glass. You can touch it, walk on it, stand on it, and it feels exactly like glass—it is even slippery like glass. *However*, if anyone falls on it, or jumps on it, he will suddenly be swallowed up by it. See nugget 4. Exploring 2 for details.

8. Plaza: This is just an enlarged area in the walkway.

9. Resting Area: Several curious, pale yellow, seat-like affairs with six arms line the wall in this region. The floor spirals around to reach a "skybridge" over to area 10.

10. Cages: Much of this area includes what looks to be amorphous holding areas or cages of all sizes. Some of these "cages" include skeletons of various animals. See nugget 3. Exploring 1 for details. The lowest level of this area includes some transparent "windows." If you press on the edges of these "windows," you can make the transparent area become larger or smaller, similar to the way the iris on a camera works. This lowest area leads to the lowest level in area 11.

11. Mixed Labs: This area from bottom to top has wall moulding after wall moulding of various heights and shapes, with various shapes and sizes of depressions in them. 1D amorphous artifacts remain somewhere in this building and can be found by the PCs.

12. Desert Environment Area: As you spiral up from the lowest level in this structure, the environment changes and becomes more and more dry and arid, with the floor turning into hard-packed dirt, and finally deep, blowing sand at the highest levels. Curious "distant shouting" sounds emanate from somewhere when you are in the sandy areas, but you can never seem to reach them (they are "sound mirages").

13. Jungle Environment Area: As you spiral up from the lowest level in this structure, you see an increasing variety and denseness of twisted, dead plants and trees of all description.

It looks like this area was once full of thriving plant life, but now contains nothing but dead hulks. The temperature increases as you reach the higher levels as well, approaching an unbearable 35°C at the top, where it opens up into a large, rocky area, densely covered by dead tree trunks (some still standing, but many of them fallen).

14. Ice Environment Amusement Area: As you spiral up in this structure, it gets increasingly colder until the top opens out into a large area with a temperature of around -10°C. The walls are covered with frost, and a cold mist drifts across the floor. This structure is otherwise empty.

15. Resting Area: Several curious, pale yellow, seat-like affairs with six arms line the wall in this region. The floor spirals around to reach a "skybridge" over to area 16.

16. Administrative Tower: As the floor spirals up in this area, you notice several areas where there are big empty impressions left in the wall, like something was once there, but has been ripped out. There are 2D random amorphous artifacts to be found strewn about throughout this structure. See nugget 5. Exploring 3, for details.

17. Multipurpose Tower: As you follow the spiraling floor in this structure, you reach certain places where the floor levels off, or the ceiling suddenly opens up into an area five to 10 times its normal height. In one of these rooms, you find an archaic, long-barreled laser pistol that looks like something from the pre-Imperial history books. It has no power backpack with it.

18. Library Tower: This tower is completely hollow inside, with a multitude of shiny, jewel-like objects imbedded in the walls. In the center is a small, raised dias. Otherwise, this tower is completely empty. See nugget 7, the Startling Discovery.

19. High-Rise Living Quarters: This tower is partitioned off into a multitude of areas of various shapes and sizes, with 1D amorphous artifacts strewn about them. Otherwise, this building is empty.

20. Amusement Park, Lower Level: On the bottom level of this structure, if you touch the wall on the side toward area 21, you are suddenly sucked in by the wall, and the next thing you know you are in area 21.

21. Amusement Park, Upper Level: On the top level of this structure, if you touch the wall on the side toward area 20, you are suddenly sucked in by the wall, and experience about 60 seconds of toe-curling free fall, after which you are suddenly in the bottom level of area 20.

22. Resting Area: Several curious, pale yellow, seat-like affairs with six arms line the wall in this region. The floor spirals around to reach area 21.

23. Astronomical Lab: The spiraling floor in this region leads to a multitude of strange, paneled wall areas, mixed with locations that have great gaping holes in the walls as if something that was once here has been ripped out. One of the wall panels can be removed, and behind it is an eerie, bright, face-like image that seems to come out of its "pen" in the wall. Actually, the image is harmless (see also area 18, the Library Tower).

24. Observatory: This opens up into a vast, open room, with a huge hole in the ceiling. In the center of the room is a large, hexagonal raised dias.

25. Living Quarters: This area is partitioned off into a multitude of "rooms" of various shapes and sizes, with 1D amorphous artifacts strewn about them. Otherwise, this building is empty.



down at the floor, and he will see the other PCs as tiny, miniature people. While quite small, the other PCs are in all other respects normal. The impression the PC on the dias will get is that he has just grown gigantic in size.

To the other PCs not on the dias, the PC on the dias will seem to go into a trance-like state and will be as stiff as a board. The PCs will be unable to dislodge the PC from the dias or to knock him off in any way. The trance-like state will last only a couple of minutes.

To the PC in the trance, he is now a giant and can reach out and touch any of the jewelled crystals in the wall. Upon doing that, the PC gets treated to a short 3-D "movie" of some event in the life of the aliens who once inhabited this city. Do not tell the PC this directly, just tell him what he sees, and let him draw his own conclusions.

To the PC on the dias, it will seem like he stood there for hours, viewing a multitude of images.

Below is a summary of the images he will see. Copy this text onto a series of index cards, shuffle them, and hand the stack to the PC who was supposedly in the trance. Let the PC share the contents of the index cards with the other players, and let them draw their own conclusions.

- You see images of this city, filled with tall, upright creatures with wide, flat bodies, long, flat heads, and tails. Also mixed in are images of smaller creatures who look similar, but who walk on all fours. The smaller creatures seem to be less intelligent and more foolish in their actions than the larger creatures, yet the two seem to be surprisingly similar in body configuration. The larger creatures also seem to exhibit amazing powers of

telekinesis and personal teleportation, while the smaller creatures have none of these abilities.

Referee: The smaller creatures are the children of the larger ones.

- You see images of the plain this city is on with no city there. Next, you see groups of the larger creatures standing on the perimeter of the area, with various subassemblies floating into place on their own. You also see certain parts of the structures growing into other shapes, again with the larger creatures simply standing in the distance. In the end, you see the plain, with the city on it, looking very much like it does today.

Referee: This is a construction record, showing the city's founders building the city.

- This series of images is a series of faces, sounds, lights, and colors. There are some star fields and solar systems shown, but nothing you can recognize.

Referee: This is an account of how the Primordials became dissatisfied with their home, and left it seeking to explore the galaxy.

- This shows a series of images of large and small creatures moving about the city. One interesting scene shows the large creatures bringing a multitude of exotic plants and animals into areas 10 through 15. The larger creatures spend considerable time doing strange things to these poor plants and animals, in some cases torturing them and telekinetically killing them.

Referee: The primordials are doing basic research on these plants and animals. They don't mean any harm, but they are curious and to find out the things they need to know sometimes harms their specimens.

- You see one of these large alien creatures reclining on one of the yellow "couches" such as are found in areas 9, 15, and 22. The creature then fades into the background (but is still visible), and you see each of the city's buildings, one at a time, both inside and out. The buildings are thriving with both the large upright creatures, and the smaller creatures who walk on all fours.

Referee: This is a guided tour to the city and its attractions.

- You see images of strangely dressed large creatures who suddenly disappear from sight, then reappear inside an amorphous, organic-looking spacecraft. You see images from outside the starship where an array of blue sparkling lights start to appear, grow in intensity, and then suddenly shrink to a blue dot, similar to a starship jumping sequence. However, there seems to be no discernible hull grid pattern.

The large creatures meet and deal with various strange creatures and encounters, and at one point even conduct telekinetic attacks on one particularly uncooperative set of aliens. At the end, a series of unintelligible symbols appear for a few moments, and then the image fades.

Referee: This is an entertainment presentation, a piece of fiction written by one of the primordials.

- This series of images shows several of the larger creatures dying, with many of the smaller creatures gathered around, apparently grieving. Scene after scene shows dying large creatures. In the end, a series of scenes shows both large and small creatures leaving the city. The last image shows the city deserted.

Referee: This image shows the Primordials literally dying from boredom. They decide to leave the city behind and seek out exciting new challenges elsewhere. Where they went—or even if they are still around—is anybody's guess.

Artifacts: Ending the Adventure

While the player characters may have picked up any number of artifacts while exploring the Shimmering City in scenario 7, there will only be two artifacts that work. These two artifacts are described and illustrated here on equipment sheets.

As a nice reward from this campaign, the group gets to keep these two artifacts. Not only will these artifacts help the PCs in their future adventures, the artifacts themselves could become the focus of future adventures.

Unfortunately, these artifacts are not what the group was originally after—devices or new technology that could be brought to bear by Margaret in order that her faction could prevail in the Rebellion. Still, these artifacts could be useful in helping the group further their own goals, and could even help them go on to find other, better ways to help Margaret's faction prevail.

THE IDEA OF THE GIMMICK

One of the concepts that has been discussed in past *Traveller* material on designing fun adventures is the idea of a gimmick. The gimmick is some neat trinket or device that the PCs get to keep from an adventure. A gimmick cannot be bought—it must be earned through hard work, clever planning, and good fortune.

The gimmick should have some function the PCs think will be useful to them and that gives them some advantage over other people. For an ultrahigh-tech gimmick, the precise function should be unavailable anywhere else, yet not be so powerful that the PCs could literally "rule the universe." The gimmick should help the group further its goals in other campaigns, but not make it so fantastically wealthy or powerful that there is no need for ever playing any more campaigns.

Gimmicks can be a double-edged sword. If and when others find out that the PCs have these special devices, they may steal them from the PCs. This in itself can lead to interesting adventure plots as the PCs seek to regain their lost gimmick. Depending on how careful or smart the PCs are with their gimmick, they may decide to keep it a secret to avoid just such a situation from developing.

If the group does happen to lose its gimmick to others, you should allow the group to regain it, unless the PCs do something quite stupid. Even if the group does commit a major blunder, you should try to resolve the adventure with the villain(s) and the gimmick both perishing together, rather than have the villain permanently escape with the PCs' gimmick. Players can more easily accept an outcome where no one gets to possess the gimmick than one where an NPC villain escapes with their gimmick and is able to possess its power for himself.

DEALING WITH THE ARTIFACTS

High-tech alien gimmicks that are artifacts present a special problem to PCs because they do not know how the artifacts work or what they do. The PCs will have to experiment in order to learn each artifact's purpose and how it works, but they must be very careful, because the artifact could have some function which is lethal to them. Fortunately, neither artifact presented here has a function that is lethal.

Unlike most equipment sheets, the equipment sheets for these artifacts are primarily for your use as referee. *Do not give these equipment sheets to the players until they are thoroughly familiar with the function and use of these artifacts.*

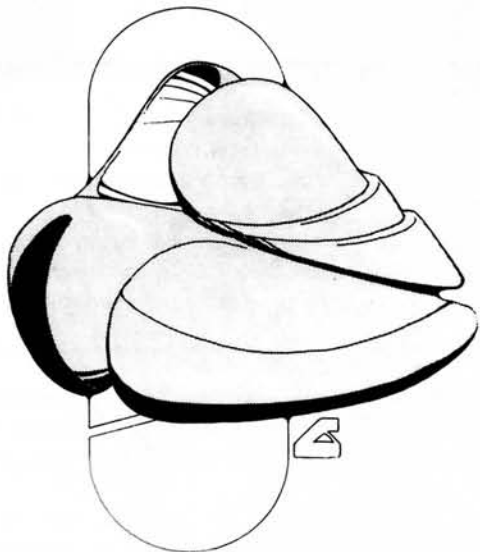
Refrain from giving away an artifact's function. Encourage the PCs to experiment without resorting to the equipment

sheet's "function hint" task. If the characters get really stuck, then allow them to roll for a hint. Of course, because the hint task is uncertain, there is no guarantee the hint they get will be correct.

A fun way to run an uncertain task that provides hints is to write up four index cards with hints on them: two with hints that are false, and two with hints that are true. Once the PCs roll the hint task, if they get *no truth* (which only you as the referee know for sure), then give them the two false hint cards. If they get *some truth*, give the PCs one false hint card and one true hint card (and watch them squirm as they try to guess which one is right). If they get *total truth*, give them the two true hint cards.



MATTER TELEPORTATION ARTIFACT



EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

<u>TL</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Vol</u>	<u>Wt</u>	<u>Price</u>
● 21+	—	50 liters	32 kg	—

SUPPLEMENTAL STATISTICS

<u>Operating Noise</u>	<u>Comments</u>
● None	Teleportation compartment holds up to 5 liters Maximum range is Distant (5 km)

USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

- This artifact has an unlimited number of uses.

DESCRIPTION

This artifact looks like a large, deep blue seashell of some sort and has an opening in one side. Extending vertically below the opening is a black, rubbery strip. You can push into the rubbery surface of the band with your finger. Seen from above, the object has a teardrop-like shape.

Any object placed into the opening will be teleported within a few seconds out to the range and direction set by the operator. The black rubber strip is used to set the teleportation range—the first push sets the range, and the second push sets the distance above or below the level of the device. The point of the teardrop is pointed in the teleportation direction desired. After about 15 minutes, if the device has not been used, the settings revert to their default minimums (10 meters range and zero distance above or below the device—that is, on its same level).

Objects must be able to be completely placed inside the compartment for a teleport to take place. If any part of an object extends outside of the compartment, it will not be teleported.

TASK LIBRARY

To discern some of the artifact's potential function and purpose:

Formidable, Int, Edu (uncertain)

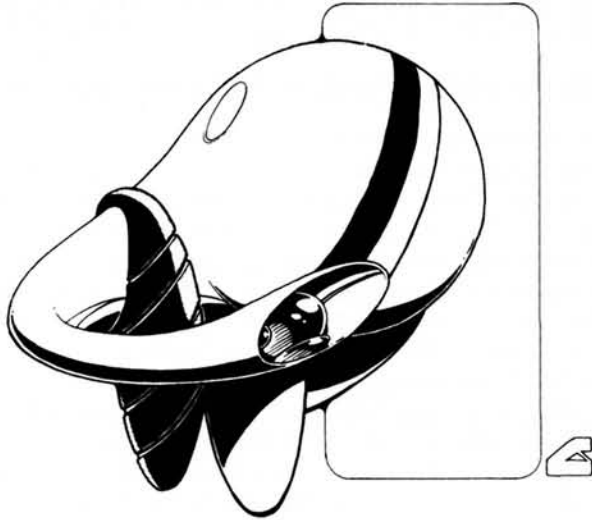
Referee: This task is used by the PCs to enable you to give them a hint as to what the device is for or how some function works.

To properly operate the device for a teleport:

Routine, Dex, Edu, 1 sec

Referee: Once a character understands the basics of how this device works, this is the task he uses to operate it. Exceptional failure has no effect, and a fumble means the object was teleported, but not at all in the manner intended.

RELATIVITY PISTOL ARTIFACT



NOTES: Pressing on the green stripe before firing controls range; pressing on the white stripe before firing controls field volume. Pressing on the orange dot fires the device.

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

<i>TL</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Vol</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Price</i>
● 21+	—	0.75 liters	1 kg	—

SUPPLEMENTAL STATISTICS

<i>Operating Noise</i>	<i>Comments</i>
● Swishes when fired	Maximum range is Distant (5 km) Maximum volume of field is 3000 kiloliters 30 seconds recharge time required between "shots"

A shot appears as a dark dot which moves with lightning suddenness to expand into a dim sphere at the preset range and field volume.

USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

- This artifact has an unlimited number of uses.

DESCRIPTION

This pale, yellow artifact is about the size of a baseball, with a white stripe and a green stripe running diagonally around the spherical portion and an orange dot on one side. A curved, hose-like protrusion extends from the sphere, with what appears to be a series of lenses in the extreme end. Two short horn-like shapes extend below the object, one of which has a rough, grooved, black, rubber-like covering.

This artifact is a relativity pistol. When fired at the specified range and field size, it causes all time within the field to slow at a ratio of 100:1. Thus, one second of normal time takes 100 seconds to pass inside the field. Because of the object's age, the duration control circuits have decayed, and the field's duration is no longer controllable—it will decay at an unpredictable rate. However, greater range and greater field volume will cause the fired field to decay more rapidly, while very close range shots with a small field volume will tend to last somewhat longer.

The field is location specific, so anything or anyone moving into the field from outside will also be under its effects. Shooting into the field will cause the shot to slow down to the reduced time inside the field, but, except for the fact that hitting the target will be delayed, all other aspects of the shot will be normal.

Relativity shots that hit only part of an object currently in motion may cause damage because part of the object will still have real-time inertia, while the field-affected part will have drastically reduced relative inertia. In mild situations (a person running and the shot only hits his feet), the part that is struck will be frozen in place, and the rest of the object will be forced to a stop. In extreme cases (a grav tank coming in at high speed and the shot only hits the turret), the part that is struck will be literally ripped from the object.

TASK LIBRARY

To discern some of the artifact's potential function and purpose:
Formidable, Int, Edu (uncertain)

Referee: This task is used by the PCs so you can hint as to what the device is for or how some function works.

To properly aim and shoot the relativity pistol:
Routine, Dex, Edu, 1 combat round

Referee: Once a character understands the basics of how this device works, he uses this task to operate it. On marginal success, only part of the object was hit. If this is the desired goal, increase the difficulty one level to Difficult. To determine the field duration in combat rounds, consult this table and secretly roll the indicated number of dice:

<i>Volume</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Duration of Field</i>
Under 500kl	Under Very Long (500m)	2D×1D combat rounds
Under 500kl	Very Long+ (500m+)	2D combat rounds
500kl+	Under Very Long (500m)	2D combat rounds
500kl+	Very Long+ (500m+)	1D combat rounds

Massilia Sector

Arrilla/Keum (0112 E-585448-6): Visitors to Arrilla often report that the Arrillans are too easygoing, making them a joy to visit, but frustrating as business partners. Their planet is a kindly one, with moderate temperatures over much of its surface and plentiful resources. As a result, its people feel little urgency about acquiring more goods to make life comfortable, and they are quite satisfied at their low Tech Level. The mountains of the large continent contain rich deposits of minerals and crystals, but few natives can be stirred to mine them out for trade. Foreign investment would be possible, but one would need to import workers as well as equipment: Local labor tends to take holidays whenever the mood strikes. All told, the planet is a tourist's delight, often recommended by doctors for the cure of stress-related ailments.

When Strephon was assassinated in 1116, Arrilla sided with Lucan without a fight and continues to claim loyalty to Lucan to this day.

Avnira Tree: The avnira tree originated in the Arrilla system. It was first transplanted in 689 to Jokkat. Since then it has been gradually spread through the Kenum and Vaait Subsectors in Massilia.

The chief reasons for the avnira's popularity are its great beauty

Kerr	Arar	Khisham	Zalucha
Keum	Vaait	Forquee	Palasha
Ten Suns	Shiwo- nee	Nes'Vra	Tooka
Annari	Shokee	Shimmer	Oreo

Massilia Subsector Key

and the ease with which it is transported and transplanted.

The avnira has a dark, almost purple, color with a beautiful flame in its grain. When treated with certain varnishes, the first two to three millimeters become translucent to transparent, giving a depth and dimension to its appearance unsurpassed in this area of the Imperium. After the wood has been exposed to a bright light, it continues to glow intensely for about two hours after the original light source is removed.

To transplant a new tree, simply cut a live branch from the tree and freeze it. It will last up to 15 weeks and may be transported anywhere while in this state. To revive and complete the transplant, the branch should be placed in water at around 40°C for 12 hours, and then planted no more than 10 centimeters deep. The tree usually takes about 15 standard years to reach a harvestable size, but can have cuttings taken from it after as little as three years.

Dezik/Ten Suns (0228 A-9C8333-F): Dezik is a cold, subgas giant circling a small star. Despite its hydrogen atmosphere, it has a water hydrosphere which is frozen on top and kept liquid underneath by the planet's own heat. This star system is judged to be a very young one, and planets are still contracting and sweeping up asteroidal debris.

This unparalleled opportunity to study the processes of planet formation brought the original scientific colony to Dezik. It has since grown to about 2500 sophonts from several cooperating races.

Lucan's forces took over the colony without a fight in early 1117. The inhabitants have been charged with trying to find practical military uses for their research.

Gasha/Arar (1508 A-250510-G): This cold, desert planet is the location of the Yamashi Research Institute. The Institute colonized Gasha in 453 to study the Iiraiki race and its evolutionary adaptation to this planet as it grew colder. Gasha's climatic change was caused by an increase in its orbital diameter due to the near passage of another star.

Astronomical calculations place the star RS-6732C-5f only one-half of a light-year from Gasha's primary approximately 150,000 years ago. This close passage disturbed the course of both suns and their attendant planets to such an extent that the systems are proving a valuable laboratory in the study of adaptive evolution.

Shortly after the news of Strephon's assassination and Lucan's questionable ascendance to the throne reached Gasha in late 1116, Gasha declared its allegiance to Lucan. The Gashans felt they would prefer not to risk a military confrontation with Lucan's forces.

Hunberri/Annari (0339 B-884622-A): The people of Hunberri are famous for their honesty and their stubbornness. It is an unbearable disgrace for a Hunberrian to be found a liar or a cheat, and total ostracism is the least punishment society will deal out to offenders. However, the desire to fight and the desire to be right seem to have gotten mixed.

A Hunberrian will not admit to being wrong when he has expressed an opinion, nor will he say he cannot do a job that he has consented to take on, regardless of circumstances.

This has made business collaborations with offworlders trying at times.

The drive behind native behavior seems to be more to avoid ridicule than to act for one's own pleasure. Curiosity and inventiveness are below average and technological progress has been slow and largely imitative of outside work. This does not imply poor technical skill, for Hunberri has a 100% literacy rate and excellent technical schools. Art is based on ideals of restraint and balance, as is philosophy and personal life.

Hunberri initially resisted siding with Lucan, preferring to remain neutral. However, a show of force by Lucan's forces in late 1117 convinced the Hunberri that resistance would not be in their best interest. Anti-Lucan uprisings and riots are frequent on the world yet today, and the Hunberri so-called "allegiance" to Lucan is seen by many to be questionable.

Kaflowe/Keum (0514 D-465545-8): First Imperium records indicate that early migratory colonists were the first to travel to this world. They found a local ecology that was almost totally incompatible with human life.

The migrants were ill-prepared to cope with this, since most of the precolonization surveys had been orbital. Only one biological group was found to be edible, a symbiotic triad of bird, rodent, and plant. Until plants from the migrant's homeworld could be coaxed to grow, this triad was the sole source of food and had to be husbanded with extreme care. Thus this special triad assumed a significance all out of proportion to its ecological niche.

Today's attitude toward the triad is little short of mystical adoration, though the food problem has long since been solved. The grilin bird is protected and encouraged to multiply by the planting of the siccradit tree. The mikat rodent is also allowed to run free, despite its taste for certain human crops.

A religion has grown up around the concept of the symbiotic triad in the past 400 years. Its central tenets enjoin cooperation and harmonious living, so the theology has a more or less calming influence on the culture.

Kaflowe claims allegiance to Lucan, although their actions to date indicate a considerable apathy on the part of the locals to the entire Rebellion situation.

Ostu: The ostu is a large herd animal from Viiman (Massilia 0321). Attempts are being made to extend the planetary range of this animal because of its excellent food possibilities. It also has a tough, but workable, hide that can be used for leather on lower tech worlds that lack indigenous animals that are usable in such a manner.

So far, results of the transplant experiments have been poor, but the Imperial scientists are continuing to evaluate the results to try to improve them, as a good deal of evidence exists that the First Imperium had a similar, successful program.

Rebin Empire (0212, 0213, 0214, 0312, 0314, 0315): The Rebin Empire is a pocket empire long since reabsorbed into the Imperium, but maintaining a distinctive local culture. Rebin (0312 A-88A436-F) is the homeworld of a highly technological, matriarchal culture that settled the inhospitable systems around itself in the latter part of the Long Night.

The powerful matriarchy of Rebin dates as far back as any historical records exist. Males constitute a servant class and do not marry into permanent families. Children are raised and educated by female governesses until age eight, when the boys go to men's barracks to be trained for their future duties. Science, art, and administration are entirely in the hands of women. Men are not literate beyond the most basic needs of laborers.

Three of the five colony worlds have vacuum environments,

with populations under domes and underground (0212 B200967-F, 0314 A20099B-G, 0315 C10059C-C). The fourth world has an ellipsoid atmosphere, breathable only in the colder latitudes, and the fifth requires filter masks. Despite these harsh conditions, the colony worlds hold the bulk of the "empire's" population, while the pleasant homeworld is artificially restricted to the estates of ruling nobles and their servants.

Most of the Rebin worlds have notably high Law Levels because of the necessity of controlling such a large subjugated part of the populace. Male traders and visitors find the matriarchs difficult to deal with, so most firms send female representatives to do business.

The Rebin worlds violently opposed Lucan's suspicious claim to the Imperial throne, denounced Dulinor as a murderous criminal, and openly stated their preference for Margaret. Prolonged military campaigns by Dulinor and then Lucan have left several major cities on these worlds in ruin and untold millions dead. Today, the worlds "claim" to support Lucan, but numerous outbreaks of violence perpetrated on Lucan's occupation forces say otherwise.

Technology, Massilia Sector: Massilia is an old and well-established sector with a heavy Terran influence in its cultures. Technological progress has been rapid on most planets and regression to preindustrial levels is nonexistent. Twenty-four worlds scattered evenly throughout the sector are at TL16. Thus, virtually any world can trade for highly advanced items such as the first artificially intelligent robots, global terraforming equipment, pocket holovideo recorders, or neural stun weapons. These last are becoming favorite police weapons on high-tech worlds, since they allow capture without injury and can be safely used even in hostage situations.

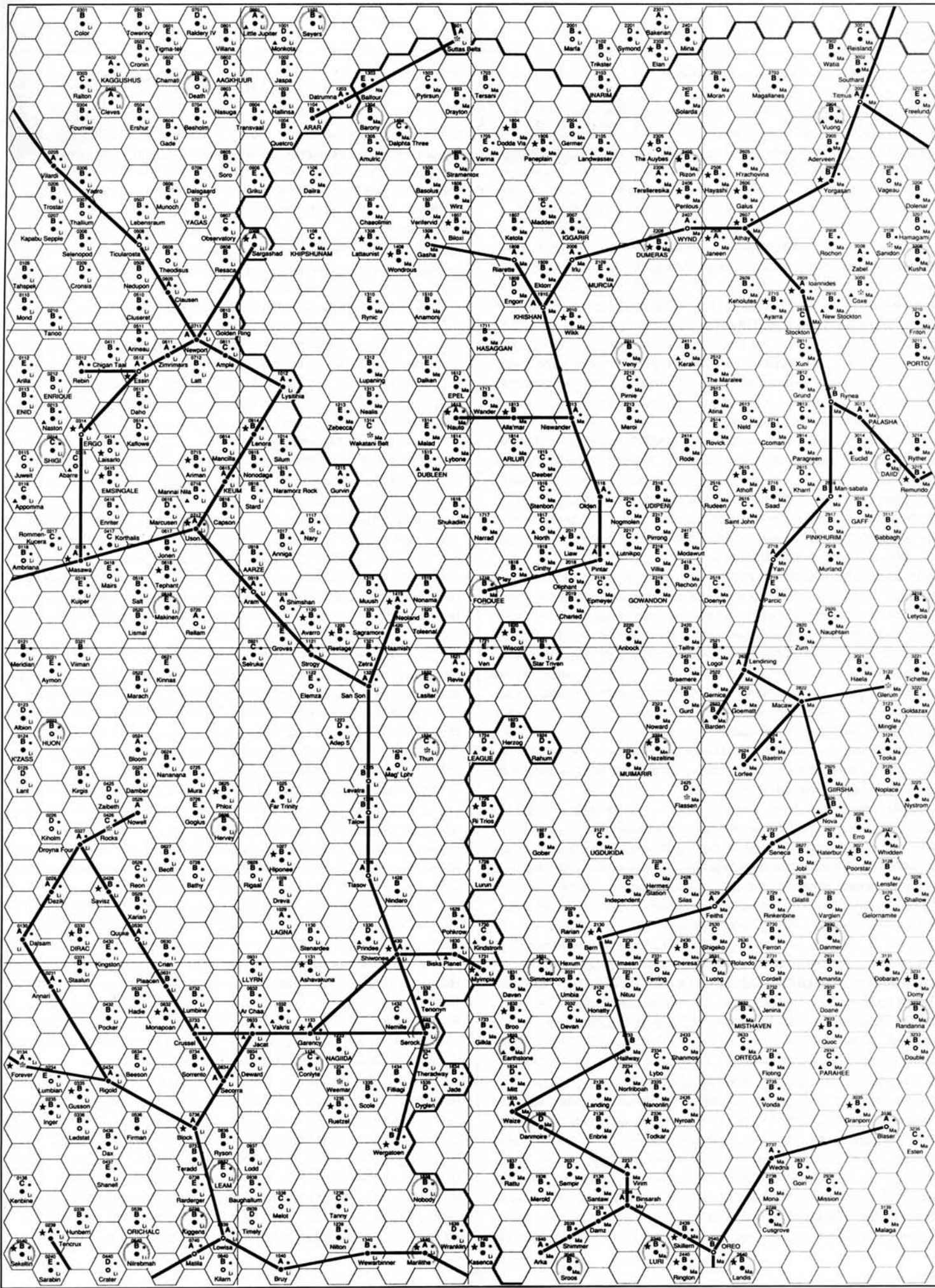
Some of these items are terribly expensive, but this is no deterrent to large shipping corporations cutting deals. Buyers elsewhere will pay even higher prices for the best merchandise.

The high-tech nature of the worlds in Massilia make them prized worlds by the factions of Lucan, Dulinor and Margaret. Some of the most bitter fighting between these three factions is being waged in Massilia sector.

Udipeni/Forquee (2316 B-687ACA-E): The Rebellion has yet to really reach Udipeni, which remains aligned with Margaret. Though beautiful and varied, Udipeni would not have its present volume of traffic and tourism were it not for the lilodav Music Festival. Performers and performing groups come from all over Margaret's realm to study and perform here.

Hallow's performance facilities are superb, and the Meinel Conservatory has a library of music that many claim is unequalled within the Imperium. The range of compositions that can be heard here includes selections from the ancient Kilatis' of Baarid Garuud, and the Ciaconas and Fugues of Dietrich Buxtéhude, the most modern compositions of Bran Ralu, Eafeahkhail Eeskha, and Robin García. There are even occasional performances of the music and drama of Droyne, Hiver, Vargr, and non-Imperial Aslan cultures.

Zulanir: The zulanir is a flightless bird, found on Granporr (Massilia 3035), that is much prized for the oil that can be processed from its flesh. Researchers have recently found that zulanir oil also contains certain enzymes and hormones critical to the manufacture of anagathic medications. Fortunately, the hunting of these birds has not yet seriously depleted their numbers, as they are extremely prolific. However, efforts are being made to settle the birds on other planets in locations similar to their natural habitat on Granporr.



Keholutes	2609	B300168-C	Ni Va Lo	605	Ma M7 V M5 D
Neld	2613	B100895-D	Va Na	601	Ma K2 V M6 D
Athoff	2615	B85A7CE-D	N Wa	802	Ma G0 D
Saint John	2616	C458345-B	Ni Lo	723	Ma F7 V
Lending	2621	A545743-D	Ag	304	Ma F4 V M7 D
Goematt	2622	C8C7304-B	S Ni Fl Lo	320	Ma M7 V M6 D
Lorfee	2624	B865465-C	S Ni	802	Ma M4 V
Rolando	2630	D100345-B	Ni Va Lo	702	Ma K4 IV M1 D
Misthaven	2632	B758987-D	Hi	A603	Ma F2 V
Ortega	2633	C426AFJ-E	Hi In	703	Ma G2 V M8 D
Landis	2640	B522003-D	N Ni Po Lo	A510	Ma M2 II
Magallanes	2703	B77A330-E	Ni Wa Lo	413	Ma F6 D M2 D
Ayarra	2710	B38457A-C	N C7 Ni Ag	614	Ma G8 VI M3 D
Ccoaman	2714	B76A003-E	Ni Wa Lo	203	Ma G2 D
Saad	2716	B597327-A	N Ni Lo	714	Ma F0 D
Yan	2718	A100854-F	Va Na	222	Ma F1 D
Parcic	2719	E100204-A	Ni Va Lo	600	Ma M3 V
Baetrin	2724	B68856A-C	Dw Ag Ni	622	Ma F9 D
Seneca	2727	B265379-C	N Ni Lo	510	Ma F3 V
Rinkenbine	2729	B11037A-F	Ni Lo	201	Ma K4 V M8 D
Ferron	2730	B491651-C	Ni	303	Ma K3 V
Cordell	2731	A100203-G	N Ni Va Lo	803	Ma G8 V M7 D
Jenina	2732	B264599-C	N Ni Ag	523	Ma G3 V
Floting	2734	B65569B-B	Ni Ag	911	Ma G5 VI M8D M6 D
Vonda	2735	B110102-G	S Ni Lo	431	Ma M4 V M7 D
Wedna	2737	A673353-F	Ni Lo	304	Ma F9 V
Mona	2738	B210558-E	D1 Ni	700	Ma K3 II
Cusgrove	2739	DA76520-6	Ni Ag	A104	Ma F2 V
Ioanrides	2809	A525546-E	N Ni	505	Ma A3 V
Stockton	2810	C573430-8	Ni	820	Ma F5 VI M7 D
Xuni	2811	C74A421-C	Ni Wa	602	Ma M7 VI
Grund	2812	D9A6833-7	Fl	903	Ma F3 V M5 D M5 D
Clu	2813	C667796-9	Ri Ag	923	Ma F4 D
Paragreen	2814	B887533-A	Ni Ag	904	Ma F2 D
Kharrl	2815	D100446-9	Ni Va	701	Ma K0 V
Zurn	2820	D64159B-6	Ni Po	604	Ma M7 VI M3 D
Macaw	2822	A726742-E		603	Ma G1 V
Jobi	2827	B100453-F	Ni Va	314	Ma M4 V
Gilafill	2828	B484253-E	Ni Lo	900	Ma F0 V M3 D
Goiri	2837	D200456-B	Ni Va	913	Ma M3 III M1 D
Watia	2902	B245776-A	Ag	824	Ma K1 V
Vuong	2904	B559532-C	S Ni	A924	Ma F9 VI
Aderveen	2905	B45487B-C	S C6	302	Ma F7 D
Yorgasan	2906	B646547-B	N Ni Ag	703	Ma K3 V M8 D
Rochon	2908	E675538-7	Ni Ag	613	Ma G2 VI
New Stockton	2910	B3226BA-C	S Ni Po Na	103	Ma M3 V M7 D
Rynea	2913	B400300-F	S Ni Va Lo	400	Ma G3 V
Man-sabala	2916	B11069B-C	S Ni Na	603	Ma K1 V M2 D
Pinkhurim	2917	B11099C-F	Hi In Na	602	Ma G3 V
Murland	2918	A564659-C	Ni Ri Ag	502	Ma M3 V
Nauphtain	2920	C875724-8	Ag	814	Ma G1 V M6 D M5 D
Giirsha	2925	B87AA97-F	Hi In Wa	110	Ma F5 VI M8 D
Nova	2926	B200303-E	S Ni Va Lo	211	Ma M7 V
Haterbur	2927	B110246-F	Ni Lo	402	Ma M9 V M2 D
Varglen	2929	B110687-C	Ni Na	400	Ma G3 V
Danmer	2930	B525554-E	Ni	A401	Ma K1 D M8 D
Amanita	2931	B100587-D	Ni Va	603	Ma G1 V
Doane	2932	E676687-6	Ni Ag	314	Ma F4 D
Quoc	2933	B410267-C	N Ni Lo	114	Ma M7 VI
Parahee	2934	C10099D-D	S Hi In Va Na	813	Ma F1 V
Mission	2938	C574430-A	Ni	602	Ma G1 D M0 D
Reisland	3001	C888373-A	Ni Lo	121	Ma F6 D M5 D
Southard	3002	B645410-B	Ni	104	Ma F7 D
Titmus	3003	A8A0422-F	Ni De	703	Ma F3 V M0 D
Zabel	3008	A575210-C	Ni Lo	202	Ma K9 V M3 D
Coxe	3009	B000101-G	S Ni As Lo	414	Ma M3 V
Palasha	3013	A55599D-E	Hi Cp	903	Ma F0 V
Euclid	3014	B442455-E	S Ni Po	903	Ma F0 V
Gaff	3016	B110995-E	Hi In Na	104	Ma G1 D
Haela	3021	B553400-D	Ni Po	603	Ma F2 V

Erro	3026	B729110-C	Ni Lo	812	Ma M0 V K1 D
Poorstar	3027	B100333-E	N Ni Va Lo	802	Ma M6 V G6 D
Granporr	3035	B4768AE-A	N	813	Ma G0 V M9 D
Vageau	3106	E110884-A	Na	312	Ma F9 V M8 D
Sanidon	3108	B0008AA-D	As Na	121	Ma F0 D
Daiid	3115	C7859AD-9	Hi	A132	Ma F7 D
Sabbagh	3117	B100631-C	Ni Va Na	724	Ma G2 V M8 D
Glerum	3122	A000300-G	Ni As Lo	800	Ma G3 V
Mingle	3123	D100897-A	Va Na	514	Ma G4 D
Tooka	3124	A241553-G	S Ni Po An Cp	602	Ma F3 V M4 D
Noplace	3125	B100777-D	Va Na	124	Ma F4 V M6 D
Whidden	3127	A466542-E	Ni Ag	A813	Ma M0 V
Lensfer	3128	B331510-E	Ni Po	100	Ma G0 V
Gelornamite	3129	C8A1756-A	Fl	123	Ma G1 V
Dobaran	3131	A793330-D	N Ni Lo Rs	500	Ma G0 D M5 D
Blaser	3136	A10088C-E	Va Na	A723	Ma F0 D
Malaga	3139	B423474-C	Ni Po	722	Ma F0 V M2 D
Freelund	3203	E7C0743-8	De	302	Ma K3 V
Dolenar	3206	B542310-A	Ni Po Lo	500	Ma F0 V M7 D
Hamagami	3207	B300000-E	Ni Va Ba Lo	503	Ma M9 V
Kusha	3208	B8B45A7-C	Ni Fl	A802	Ma G0 V M0 D
Friton	3210	D856666-5	C1 Ni Ag	304	Ma F4 D M9 D
Porto	3211	B256AEC-G	Hi	114	Ma F1 V
Ryther	3214	B265200-C	Ni Lo	812	Ma F1 V
Remundo	3215	B889468-D	N Ni	325	Ma G1 D
Letycia	3219	B684113-C	Ni Lo	A904	Ma F5 V
Tichette	3221	B551314-C	Ni Po Lo	401	Ma F3 D M0 D
Goldazax	3222	EAA47AD-8	Fl	802	Ma M2 V
Nystrom	3225	A568333-C	S Ni Lo	105	Ma F3 D
Shallow	3228	B87A345-D	Ni Wa Lo	602	Ma M1 V M5 D
Domy	3231	B85A376-D	N Ni Wa Lo	805	Ma F9 V
Randanna	3232	B300796-B	Va Na	A403	Ma G3 V
Double	3233	B10066A-D	N Ni Va Na	504	Ma G0 V M0 VI
Esten	3236	C100155-D	Ni Va Lo	703	Ma M2 V



Anamoni

Anamoni 1510 B99A425-D Ni Wa 803 Ma F7 D

Primary: Dimstar, spectral class F7 D. Mass 0.44. Stellar diameter 0.013. Luminosity 0.00028.

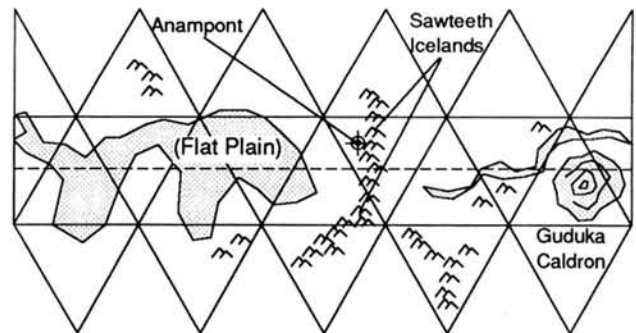
Anamoni: Mean orbital radius 6.7 million km (0.045 AU). Period 3.89 days. Diameter 14,637 km. Mass 2.136. Density 1.498. Mean surface gravity 1.687. Rotation period 39h 31m 53s. Axial inclination 2°24'5.1". Energy absorption 0.659. No satellites. Surface atmospheric pressure 2.41. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix with low oxygen taint. Hydrographic percentage 100%. Mean surface temperature -110.6°C. No native life. Total world population 80,900. Primary cities—Anampont, 80,000. World government is a participating democracy. Tech level—high common 13, low common 13. Primary resources—ores, radioactives, crystals, compounds, metals, software.

Anamoni was settled in the late 400s, soon after the First Survey located substantial mineral resources buried far beneath the planet's icy shroud. Miners came in to bore holes through the frozen global sea, and the local atmosphere was made almost breathable by the release of oxygen freed from the melted ice.

Still, Anamoni's climate is eminently lethal to humans, and workers are forced to perform their jobs in well-insulated vehicles and protective suits. These roving miners set out from Anampont, Anamoni's only city, for extended tours of rugged duty out on the ice sheets.

Anamoni's inhabitants are a resourceful folk, forced to improvise and innovate out of necessity. The small population of far-ranging individualists are wholly self-reliant in nature, but they have no qualms about cooperating when such action is merited. Anamonians are typically unresponsive to offworlders, preferring to extol the virtues of their own society rather than hear tales of others.

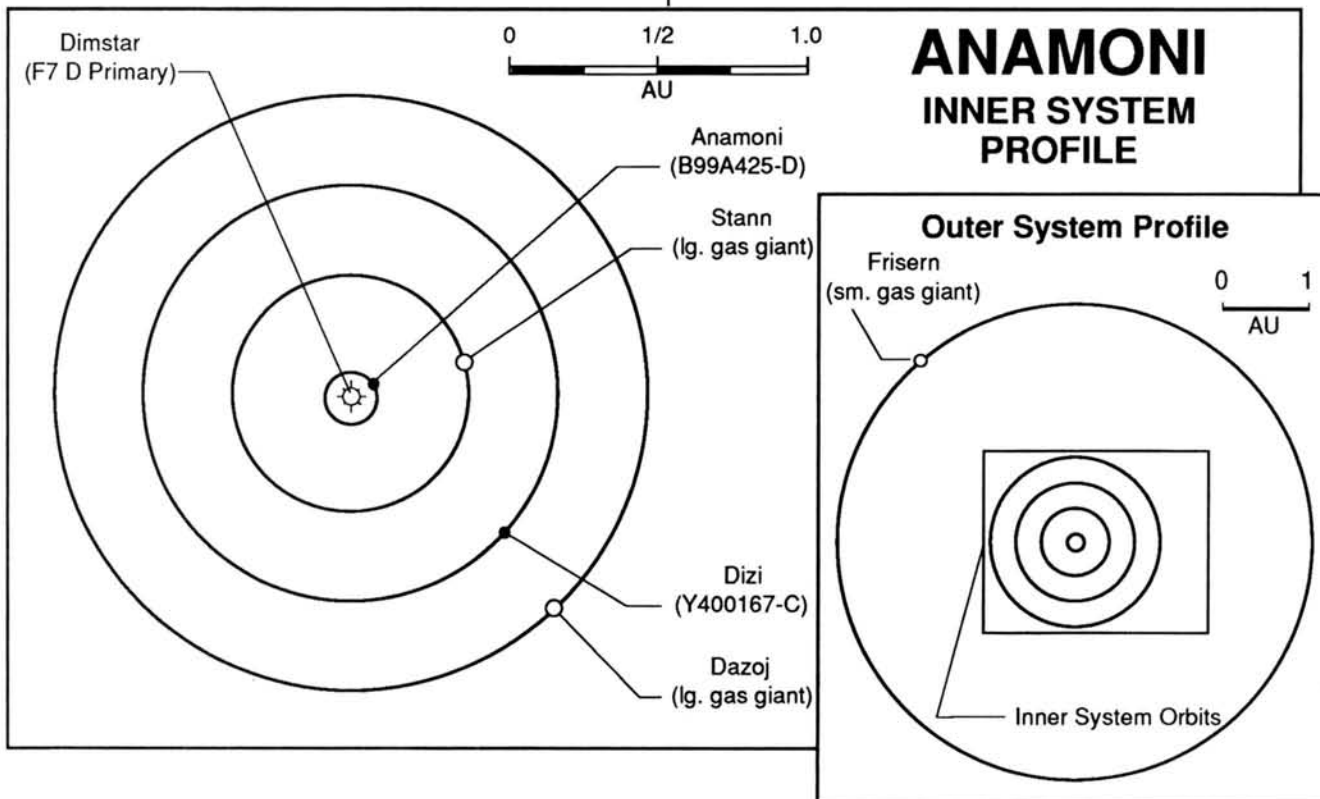
The planet is governed by Anampont's urbanites, who vote on issues via the city's communications network. Effectively, all



Note: Entire planet surface is ice.

Anamoni World Map

residents take turns at government duties, as other jobs periodically call many away from Anampont onto the ice. Interestingly, a lenient set of laws applies to those in the city, while harsher, more stringent rules take effect outside Anampont's civilized environment.



Hasaggan

Hasaggan 1711 B735978-E Hi 923 Ma F3 VI M3 D

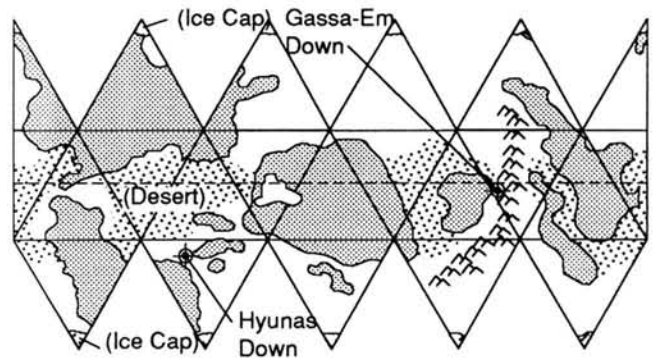
Primary: Binary, major—Relessa, spectral class F3 VI. Mass 0.997. Stellar diameter 1.004. Luminosity 0.993. Companion (close)—Reme, spectral class M3 D. Mass 1.009. Stellar diameter 0.005. Luminosity 0.00003.

Hasaggan: Mean orbital radius 151.1 million km (1.01 AU). Period 405.83 days. Diameter 11,360 km. Mass 0.616. Density 0.923. Mean surface gravity 0.805. Rotation period 6h 32m 35s. Axial inclination 32°34'7.6". Energy absorption 0.787. One satellite. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.21. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix. Hydrographic percentage 46%. Mean surface temperature 19.2°C. No native life. Total world population 9.41 billion. Primary cities—Hyunas, 2.65 billion; Gassa-Em 1.09 billion. World government is Balkanized: two rival states—Sedussan and Hassadorn. Tech level—high common 14, low common 11. Primary resources—radioactives, metals, durables, weapons, recordings, art forms.

Hasaggan was first settled in the Vilani First Imperium over 7000 years ago. During the Long Night, Hasaggan maintained much of its conservative Vilani cultural outlook, which is still noticeably prevalent on the world today. Modern Hasaggan is divided into two rival (yet peaceful) states: Sedussan and Hassadorn. Sedussan, the home of Hyunas Down starport, has a very low Law Level, and is essentially a single-ruler feudal technocracy. Hassadorn is much more restrictive, with a high Law Level and an impersonal bureaucracy overseen by seven different councils.

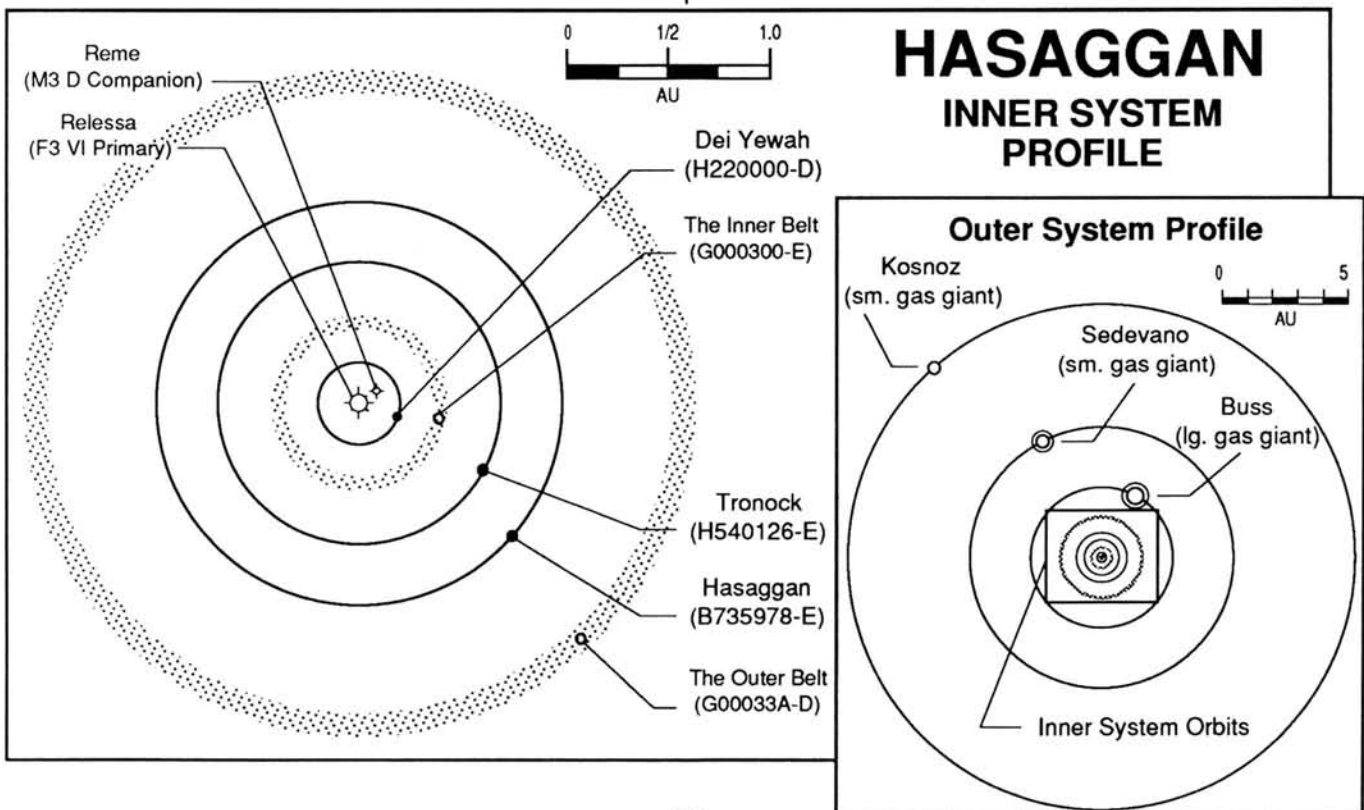
Over 50 orbital complexes and stations revolve around Hasaggan. Two of the largest—Hyunas Orbital and Gass-Em Orbital—boast populations over 20 million. Offworlders travelling to Hasaggan receive a cordial, but somewhat cool, reception. The most notable customs are the polygamy practices of high-ranking government officials. Only men are allowed to hold the highest positions and are expected to have at least two wives. Each new term, they must divorce one of their wives and replace her with a new one.

Offworlders travelling in the more restrictive nation of Hassadorn



Hasaggan World Map

must also take note that the law requires alien races to not live together in the same dwelling. Offworld violators will be arrested and detained until a formal hearing, which could be many weeks later.



Ketola

Ketola 1807 B354377-C Ni Lo 802 Ma F6 D M4 D

Primary: Binary, major—Tarawanosan, spectral class F6 D. Mass 0.43. Stellar diameter 0.013. Luminosity 0.00029. Companion (close)—Terst, spectral class M4 D. Mass 1.12. Stellar diameter 0.006. Luminosity 0.00003.

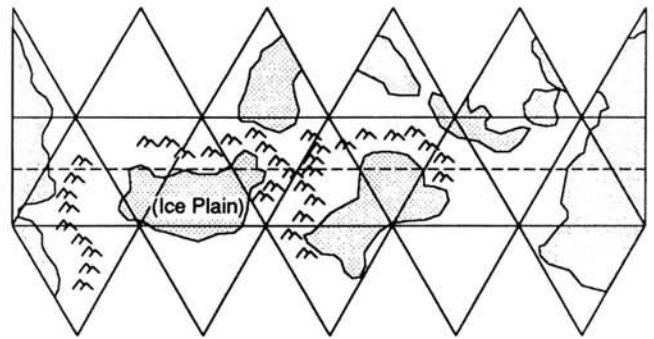
Ketola: Mean orbital radius 29.76 million km (0.20 AU). Period 26.24 days. Diameter 5165 km. Mass 0.037. Density 0.7. Mean surface gravity 0.263. Rotation period 10 days 12 hours. Axial inclination 14°1'53". Energy absorption 0.820. Two satellites. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.55. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix. Hydrographic percentage 42%. Mean surface temperature -115.7°C. Native life. Total world population 8400. Scattered settlements only, no primary cities. Balkanized government: 3 rival states—Keto, Theedin Research, and Tenia Incorporated; 4000 inhabitants claim allegiance to no specific state. Tech level—high common 12, low common 12. Primary resources—nonmetals, parts, weapons, software, documents.

Ketola was sparsely settled by colonists in the late 900s. Many colonists came at the behest of corporate developers interested in the world's unusual life forms and organic resources.

The rivalry between the two corporate concerns on Ketola—Theedin Research and Tenia Incorporated—results in frequent local trade wars. The noncorporate state of Keto and the over 4000 nomads complicate things for corporate workers, adding to the animosity. Over the centuries, Ketolans have developed the cultural ethic that wealth is gained through force.

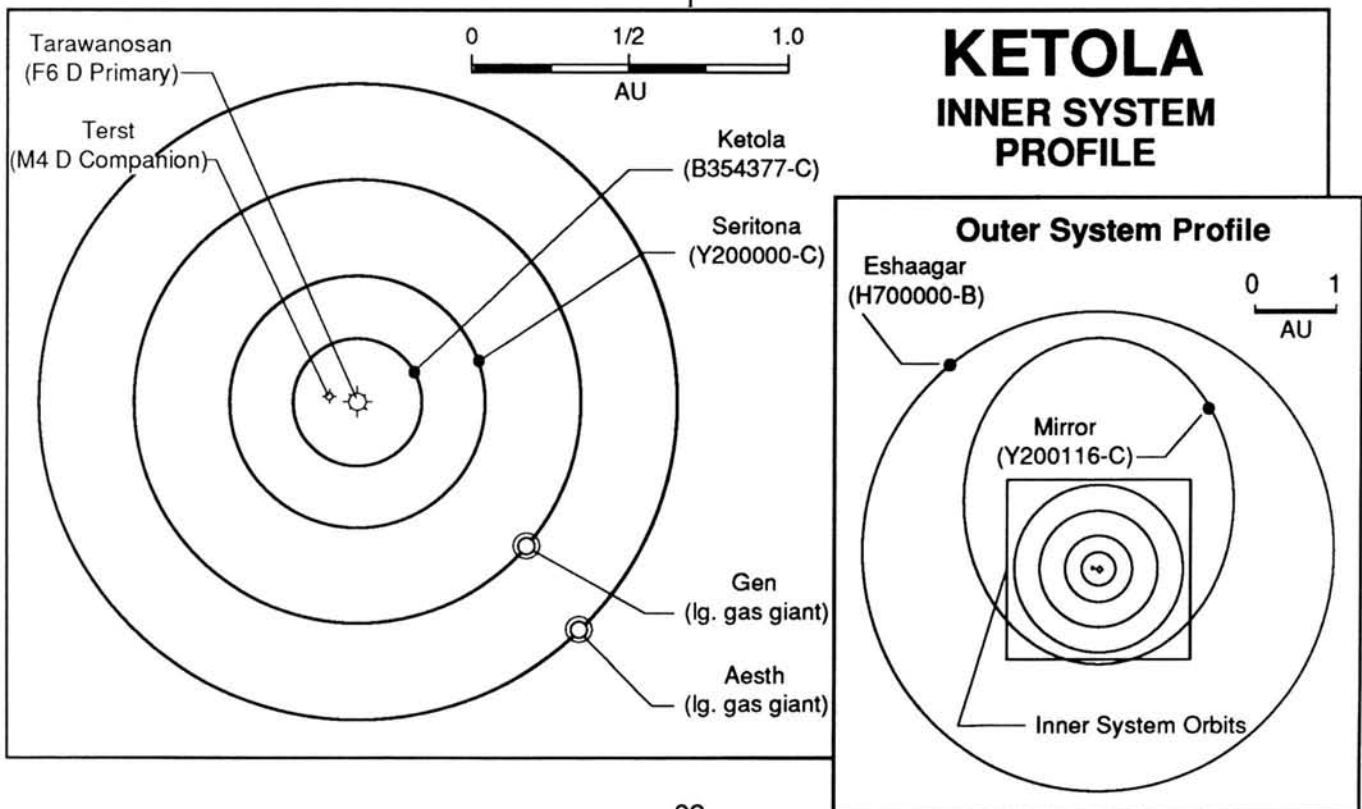
Ketola's local life consists mostly of lower forms of plant and animal life (many species are microscopic) found on the vast, icy sea plains. As a result, most of the dwellings of the Theedin Research and Tenia Incorporated workers are located in or on the ice, where the workers can deal with the local creatures at close range.

Theedin's purpose on Ketola is advanced research, studying unusual life forms in the harsh Ketolan environment and selling its findings to interested offworld concerns. Tenia Incorporated, on the other hand, reaps vast profits by harvesting



Ketola World Map

these creatures and extracting the concentrations of rare earth elements that naturally occur in their bodies. Naturally, the conflicting goals of these two firms only exacerbates the local discord.



Ektor

Ektor 1909 B4638A9-B

211 Ma F4 V

Primary: Sommenim, spectral class F4 V. Mass 1.38. Stellar diameter 1.47. Luminosity 4.416.

Ektor: Mean orbital radius 415.3 million km (2.79AU). Period 1448.96 days. Diameter 6534 km. Mass 0.123. Density 0.981. Mean surface gravity 0.492. Rotation period 29h 28m 50s. Axial inclination 12°11'43.8". Energy absorption 0.859. One ring, two satellites. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.95. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix. Hydrographic percentage 30%. Mean surface temperature 33.1°C. No native life. Total world population 209 million. Primary cities—Grafelko, 88 million; Torneen Central, 54 million. World government is a charismatic dictatorship. Tech level—high common 11, low common 9. Primary resources—agricultural, agriproducts, parts, recordings, documents.

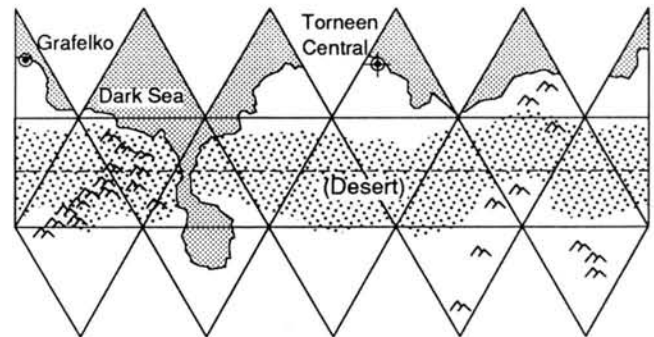
Ektor was surveyed but left untouched in First Imperium times. Aridity and a lack of mineral resources made development unappealing. Substantial colonization efforts were not mounted until expanding Terrans claimed the world during the Rule of Man.

Today, Ektor is a heavily settled, civilized world. Planetary government rests with a monarch who both makes and executes local laws. Various specialized judicial bodies exist to interpret his statutes.

Ektor's inhabitants are conservative in outlook and proud of their centuries-long heritage. Offworlders often find them somewhat ambivalent and self-centered. With private affairs open to government scrutiny and a strongly competitive spirit manifested in business, such attitudes are not surprising.

Economically, Ektor has many problems. The local dryness has always made agriculture difficult, and while the Ektorrian government has pushed to develop this sector of the economy, the population has borne the brunt of the cost. Inefficient manufacturing and service industries have done little to ease the poverty of the masses.

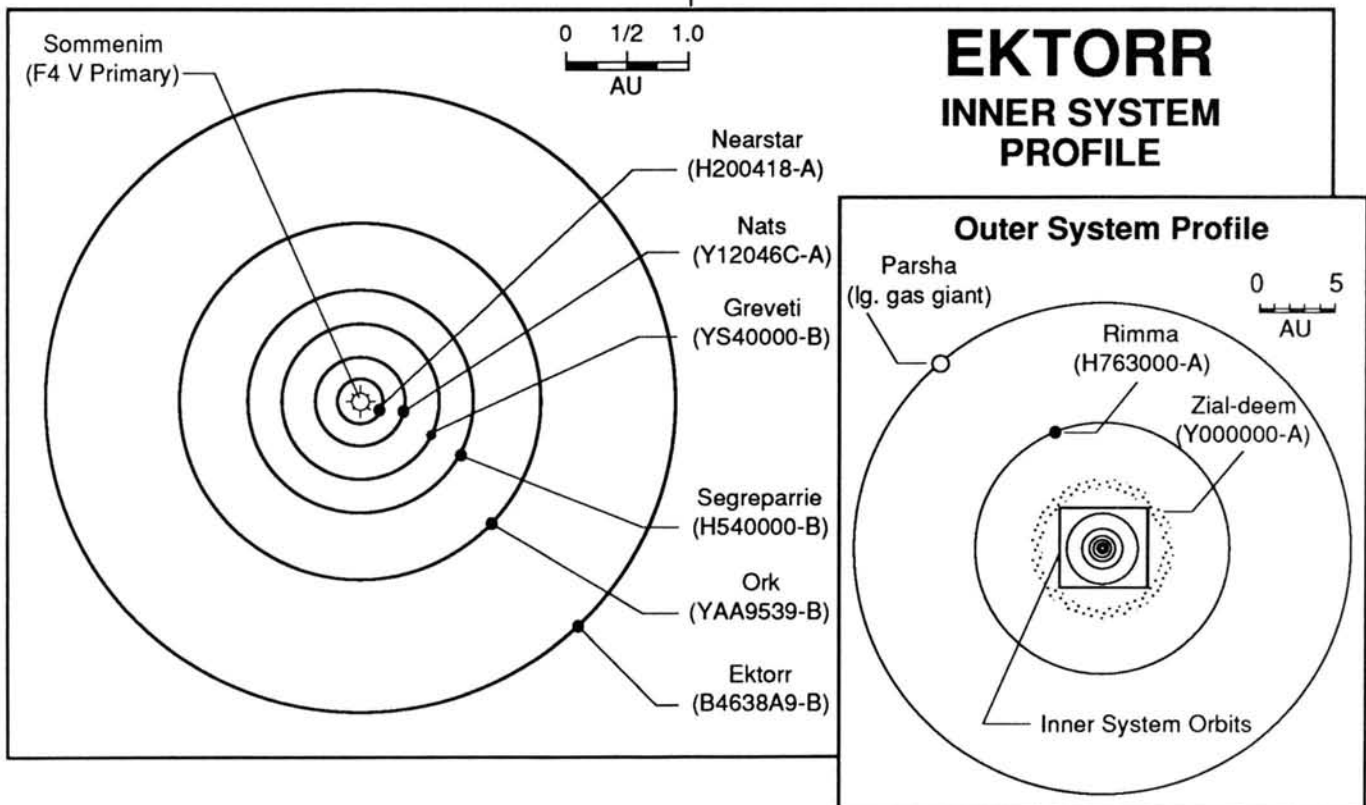
The Ektorrian interest in bolstering agriculture has resulted in a strong conservation ethic. The planetary government has empowered numerous research groups to study and protect the local biosphere, and many a monarch has taken an interest in such



Ektor World Map

matters. While conspicuous consumption seems the prime goal of the public, strict laws ensure respect for the environment.

Since most wealth on Ektor is inherited, youths who stand to inherit large amounts typically have themselves tattooed as a sign of this future wealth. Traditionally, law enforcement personnel accord better treatment to these marked youths.



Engorr

Engorr 1809 D110566-B Ni O:1909 600 Ma F4 V

Primary: Rissole, spectral class F4 V. Mass 1.39. Stellar diameter 1.46. Luminosity 4.421.

Engorr: Mean orbital radius 419.6 million km (2.82 AU). Period 1456.76 days. Diameter 2199 km. Mass 0.002. Density 1.021. Mean surface gravity 0.128. Rotation period 9h 34m 29s. Axial inclination 85°9'41.2". Energy absorption 0.798. No satellites.

Surface atmospheric pressure 0.06. Composition trace gases. Hydrographic percentage 0%. Mean surface temperature -13.7°C. No native life. Total world population 607,000. Primary cities—Peerden, 92,000; Morrij, 81,000. World government is captive. Tech level—high common 11, low common 10. Primary resources—ores, compounds, nonmetals.

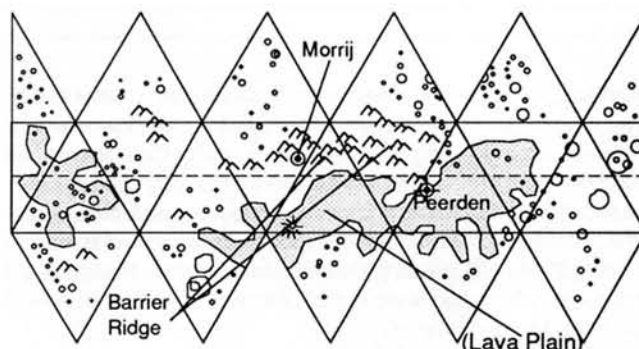
Engorr was colonized by Ektorr in the early 500s. The initial settlement of 50,000 grew slowly in Engorr's inhospitable environment; nevertheless, today Engorr boasts a population multiplied twelvefold over its beginnings.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Engorr is its axial tilt of 85°. In the "spring" and "fall," Engorr's poles are aligned with its orbital path around its star, and all latitudes experience a normal night and day of nearly five hours each. Over the next 360 days or so, however, things change dramatically for the temperate and polar regions as Engorr's pole slowly moves to point directly at the sun.

As summer approaches, an inhabitant on Engorr sees the arcing movement of the sun move higher and higher into the sky, until finally the sun fails to set at all—moving in a complete circle about once every 9.5 hours. During the summer, temperatures climb to over 160° for about 300 standard days.

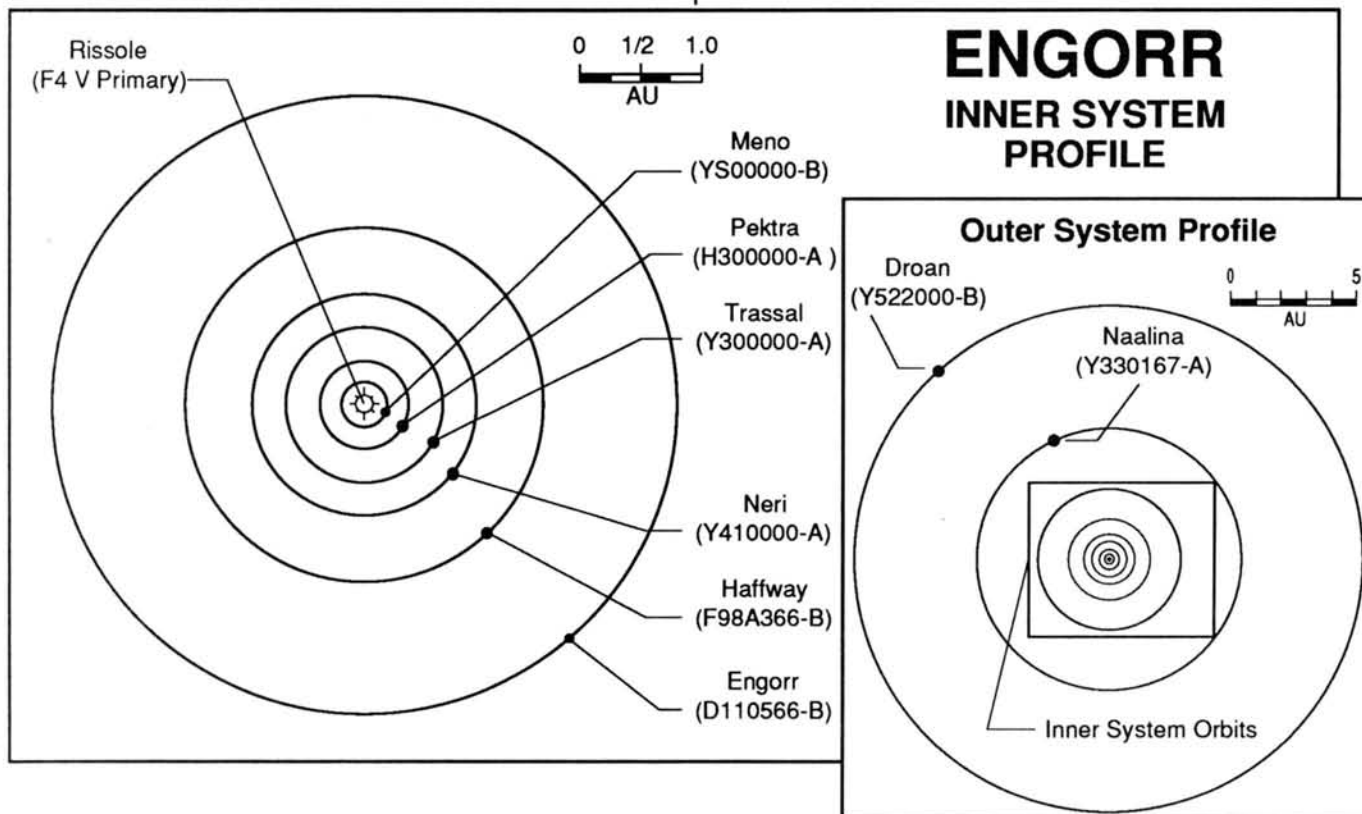
Winter results in just the reverse effect. As fall moves on toward winter, the locals see the sun's arc move ever lower in the sky until the sun disappears altogether. Winter means complete darkness and bitterly cold temperatures of below -190° for around 300 standard days.

The seasonal changes in the equatorial region amount to little



Engorr World Map

more than differences in the rising and setting position of the sun. Days and nights stay near five hours each throughout the year. Both major cities, Peerden and Morrij, are located near the equator. Daytime highs climb to about 50° and nighttime lows drop to -100° or so. The world's starport is located on the outskirts of the major city, Peerden.



Madden

Madden 1907 C524522-9 NI 524 Ma M3 V M5 D

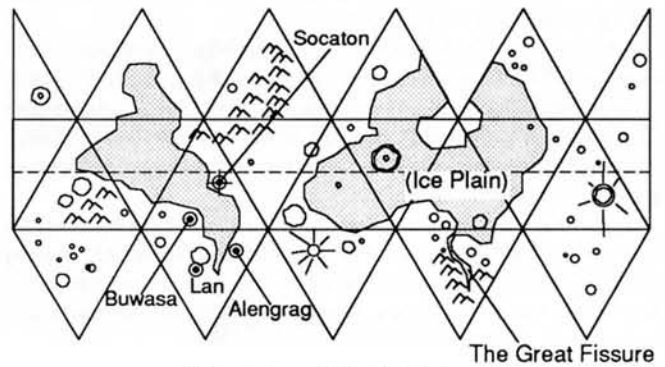
Primary: Binary, major—Aster, spectral class M3 V. Mass 0.394. Stellar diameter 0.434. Luminosity 0.020. Companion (close)—Astron, spectral class M5 D. Mass 1.11. Stellar diameter 0.006. Luminosity 0.00003.

Isangelos: Small gas giant. Mean orbital radius 31.25 million km (0.21 AU). Period 28.66 days.

Madden: Satellite of gas giant Isangelos. Period 3.36 days. Diameter 8090 km. Mass 0.234. Density 0.96. Mean surface gravity 0.600. Rotation period: tidally locked. Axial inclination 42°24'36". Energy absorption 0.782. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.30. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix with low oxygen taint. Hydrographic percentage 43%. Mean surface temperature -27.0°C. No native life. Total world population 498,000. Primary cities—Buwasa, 87,000; Lan, 80,300; Alengrag, 52,200; Socaton, 44,900. World government is a participating democracy. Tech level—high common 9, low common 9. Primary resources—ores, compounds, consumables, art forms.

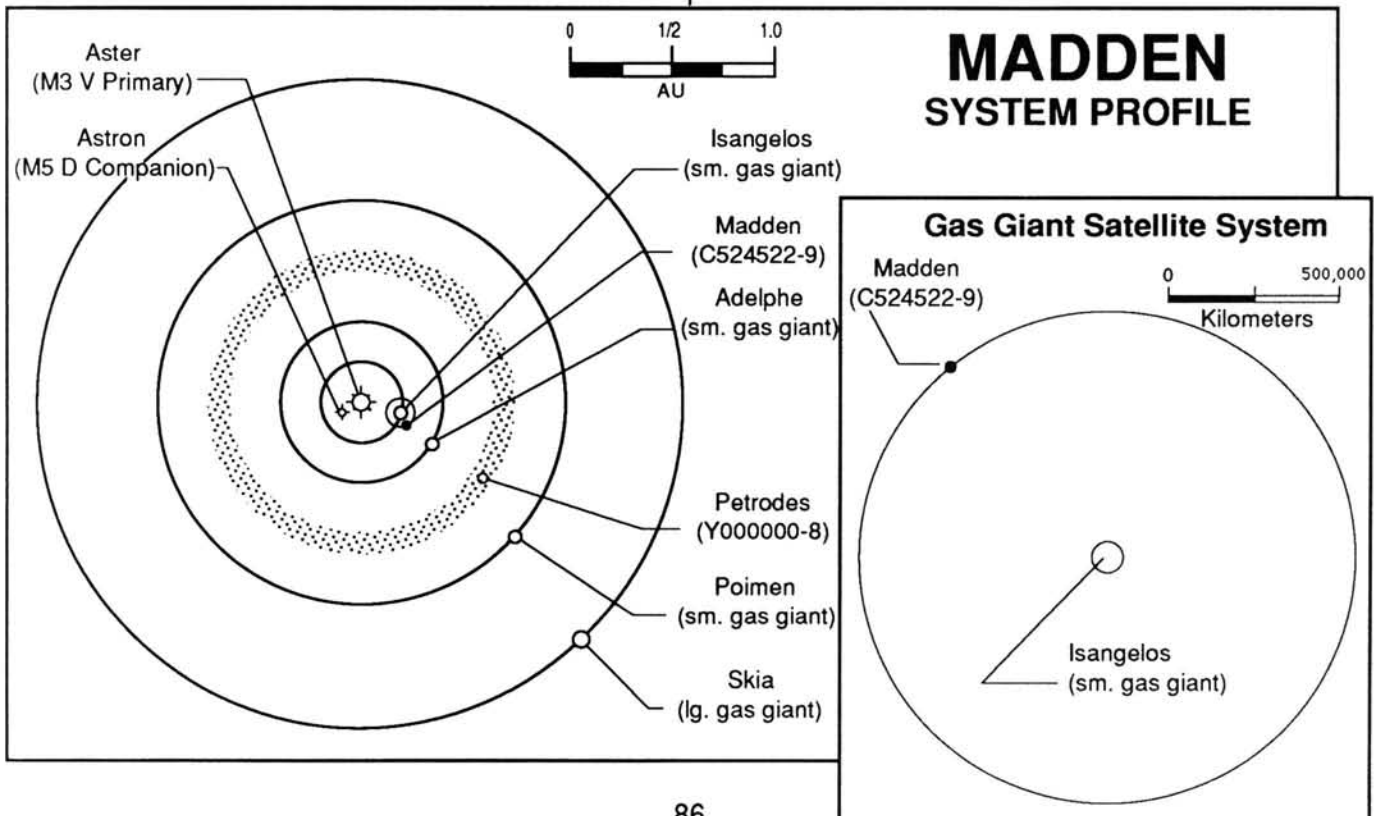
Madden, one of several mainworlds in the Khishan Cluster that are gas giant moons, is an unfinished experiment in atmospheric terraforming. Worldspec, a terraforming research firm based in Core Sector, was active throughout Core and Massilia sectors in the early centuries of the Third Imperium. Worldspec, in concert with independent beltters working the Petrodes Belt, bombarded Madden with icy asteroids from the belt. From 350 to 400 strikes thickened and moistened Madden's cool atmosphere. Worldspec went out of business in 401, and work on projects like Madden ceased.

Today several settlements of moderate size exist on Madden, and some beltters work the Petrodes belt, occasionally making a rich strike. The settlers on Madden either mine the world for its deposits of platinum, chromium, barium, titanium, and cesium—or cater to the on-again, off-again belter traffic in the Petrodes. Females have dominated government and business positions on Madden for centuries. Madden's culture thus requires that males submit to the leadership and guidance of females—a situation not unlike that found in Aslan culture, although Madden's culture has developed independent of any Aslan influence. The local population,



Madden World Map

although friendly and forward-looking, treasures its individualism highly. Major accomplishments by society groups are virtually unknown, since the Maddenites consider that anything worthwhile is accomplished by individuals, not by teams or committees.



Riarette

Riarette 1808 A110877-E Na 214 Ma F6 VI

Primary: Udeeta, spectral class F6 VI. Mass 0.76. Stellar diameter 1.116. Luminosity 0.846.

Britton: Large gas giant. Mean orbital radius 104.16 million km (0.70 AU). Period 245.38 days.

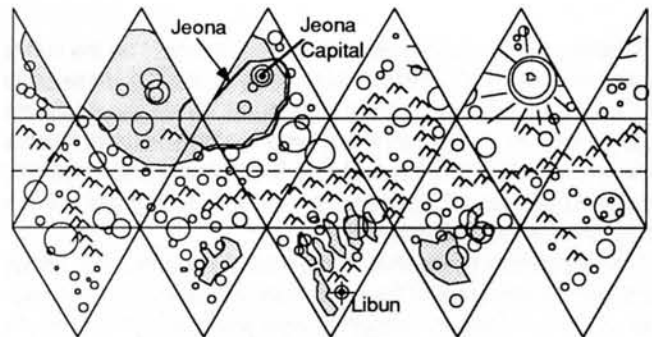
Riarette: Satellite of gas giant Britton. Period 47.51 days. Diameter 1942 km. Mass 0.001. Density 0.62. Mean surface gravity 0.078. Rotation period 22.69 days. Axial inclination 29°14'20". Energy absorption 0.801. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.07. Composition trace gases. Hydrographic percentage 0%. Mean surface temperature 70.0°C. No native life. Total world population 202 million. Primary city—Libun, 100 million. World government is Balkanized: two states—Mayis and Jeona. Tech level—high common 14, low common 13. Primary resources—nonmetals, parts, durables, weapons, art forms, software, documents.

The tiny gas giant moon of Riarette was first settled in -2210 by Vilani fleeing Solomani expansion during the closing days of the Vilani First Imperium. The initial colony of a few hundred managed to escape the watchful eye of the Solomani all too well—outside starship traffic often bypassed Riarette, leaving the local population to slowly dwindle through repeated starvation and want. The colony was abandoned less than a century later, leaving behind several surface dwellings and other artifacts from the period.

These artifacts were rediscovered by Third Imperium scouts in 50. Imperial archaeologists found Riarette to be a most valuable find, yielding a multitude of unspoiled information about the interstellar culture that had settled there 2000 years before.

In 273, surveyors from Decker Industrial found massive deposits of naturally perfect silicon crystals only a few meters below the crust of the southern polar region. By 300, Riarette had become a prominent supplier of super-cheap electronic parts—a reputation that has continued up to the present day.

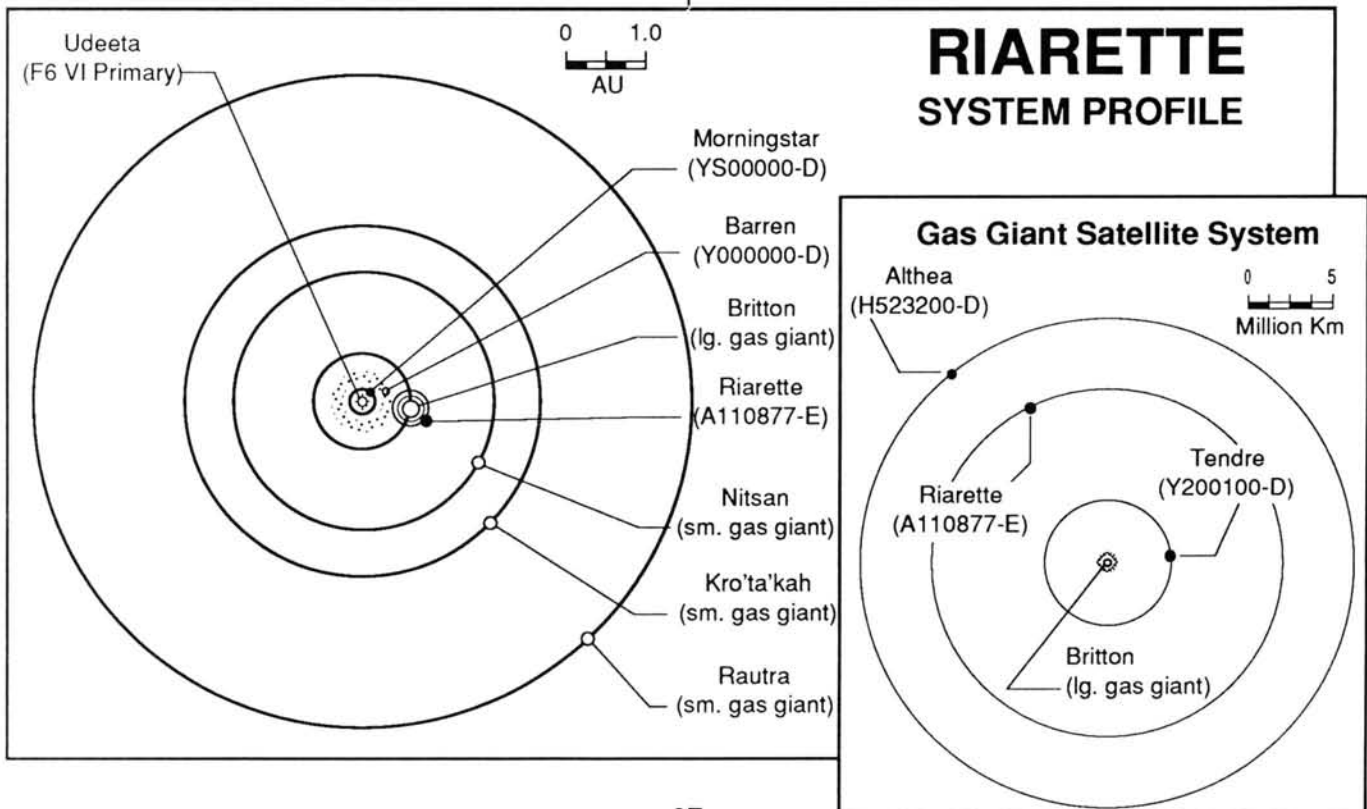
Mayis, the world's red tape-bound bureaucracy, has founded an experimental new colony, Jeona, supposedly to observe a more democratic form of government at work. At present, however, few



Riarette World Map

reforms have worked their way into the Mayisan bureaucracy, and its members still gain their positions by inheritance rather than appointment.

Offworlders need to be aware that the locals are a harsh lot: They consider everything to be open for exploitation. Cruelty and cheating are common, and bribes are expected.



Khishan

Khishan 1910 A1009AE-G HI In Va Na Cp 814 Ma G1 V M1 D

Primary: Binary, major—Censtir, spectral class G1 V. Mass 1.02. Stellar diameter 1.006. Luminosity 1.102. Companion (38.8 AU)—Raster, spectral class M1 D. Mass 1.10. Stellar diameter 0.007. Luminosity 0.00004.

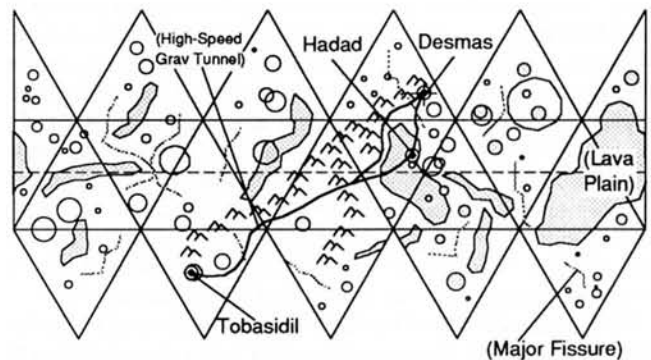
Jatern: Small gas giant. Mean orbital radius 104.15 million km (0.70 AU). Period 146.57 days.

Khishan: Satellite of gas giant Jatern. Period 11.52 days. Diameter 2347 km. Mass 0.002. Density 0.88. Mean surface gravity 0.11. Rotation period: tidally locked. Axial inclination 21°14'54". Energy absorption 0.803. Surface atmospheric pressure 0. No atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage 0%. Mean surface temperature 99.4°C. No native life. Total world population 8.41 billion. Primary cities—Hadad, 2.1 billion; Desmas, 2.0 billion; Tobasidil, 1.4 billion. World government is a charismatic dictatorship. Tech level—high common 16, low common 15. Primary resources—radioactives, crystals, compounds, metals, nonmetals, durables, consumables, recordings, software, documents.

Khishan, the namesake of the Khishan Cluster, is on the cutting edge of technology. Much of that technology is inaccessible since the natives are xenophobic, but not violently so. While much offworld trade goes on, social contact with offworlders is minimized. Khishan faces overpopulation and is exploring terraforming and mass colonization. High-tech colonization of the moons of other gas giants in the Khishan system is underway.

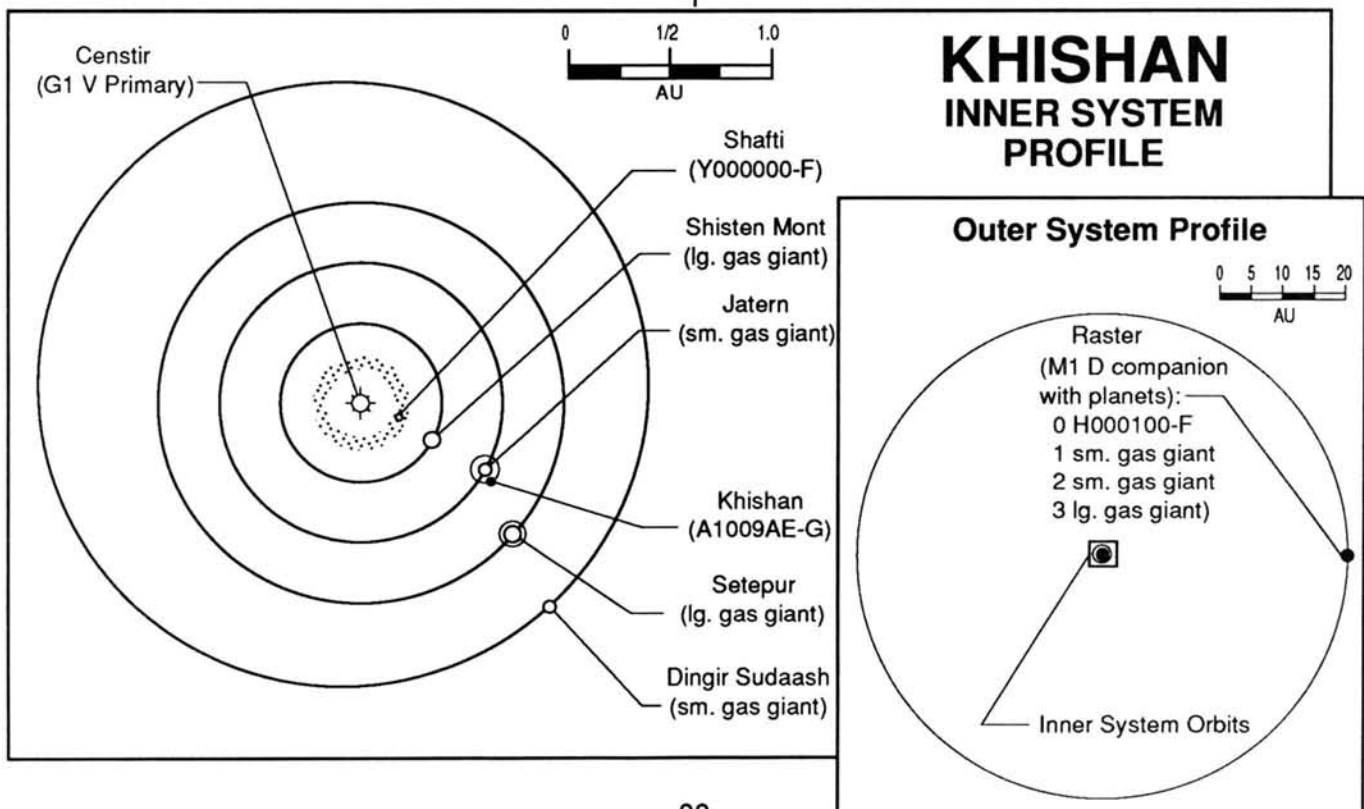
The population of Khishan lives mostly underground, honeycombing the subsurface of this small moon with passageways. High-speed underground grav transport makes any location mere minutes away. Because offworld involvement is frowned upon, the ruling council has never allowed any orbital complexes to be constructed, and the major starport complex in Desmas is a downport only. Much of the Desmas starport is on the surface rather than underground—again an attempt to keep offworlders at arm's length.

Offworlders should keep to the starport, although the council does allow Khishan religious leaders to grant offworlders special permits to visit Khishan sites away from the starport.



Khishan World Map

Khishan law forbids local inhabitants from dealing with offworlders—offworlders who have strayed from the port say that the locals disappear from sight so effectively that dozens of square kilometers of underground city can appear deserted.



Iggarir

Iggarir 2007 B787AA9-E S Hi 623 Ma F7 VI

Primary: Scorch, spectral class F7 VI. Mass 0.72. Stellar diameter 1.092. Luminosity 0.715.

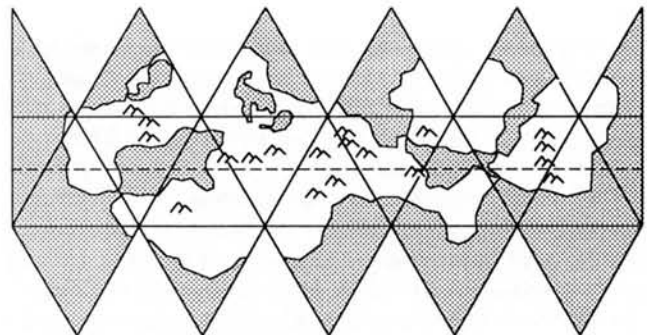
Iggarir: Mean orbital radius 105.65 million km (0.71 AU). Period 257.52 days. Diameter 11,117 km. Mass 0.71. Density 1.06. Mean surface gravity 0.928. Rotation period 18h 18m 23s. Axial inclination 51°0'10". Energy absorption 0.65 (after terraforming). One ring, two satellites. Surface atmospheric pressure 2.01. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix. Hydrographic percentage 73%. Mean surface temperature 34.3°C (after terraforming). Native life. Total world population 60.1 billion. Primary cities—Liard, 8.4 billion; Ennadai, 7.1 billion; Hecla, 6.1 billion; Nain, Morden, 5.3 billion; Hythe, 4.6 billion. World government is a charismatic dictatorship. Tech level—high common 14, low common 14. Primary resources—agricultural, ores, radioactives, crystals, durables, consumables, recordings, software, documents.

Iggarir, although seemingly one of the more habitable worlds of the Khishan Cluster, is significantly affected by its high axial tilt. Dramatic changes in the seasonal climate render stationary open settlements unlivable for a good part of the year. Consequently, the majority of the modern inhabitants reside in floating, mobile grav cities. The wind-swept surface is reserved for agricultural development and mining.

The grav cities have diverged culturally since the days of their construction in the late 800s. Extensive abandoned ruins from the days before the grav cities dot the surface of Iggarir. All inhabitants pay homage to a single planetary overlord in charge not only of all the sky cities, but the planet's surface as well.

Iggarir is perhaps a bit unusual in that travelling far away is prohibited for mature individuals of age 40 or more—these citizens are restricted to their native cities. They cannot travel without special permits and cannot ordinarily book passage on public transport. Visiting offworlders need to be aware of this custom—violation of it has caused serious problems for offworlders unaware of it.

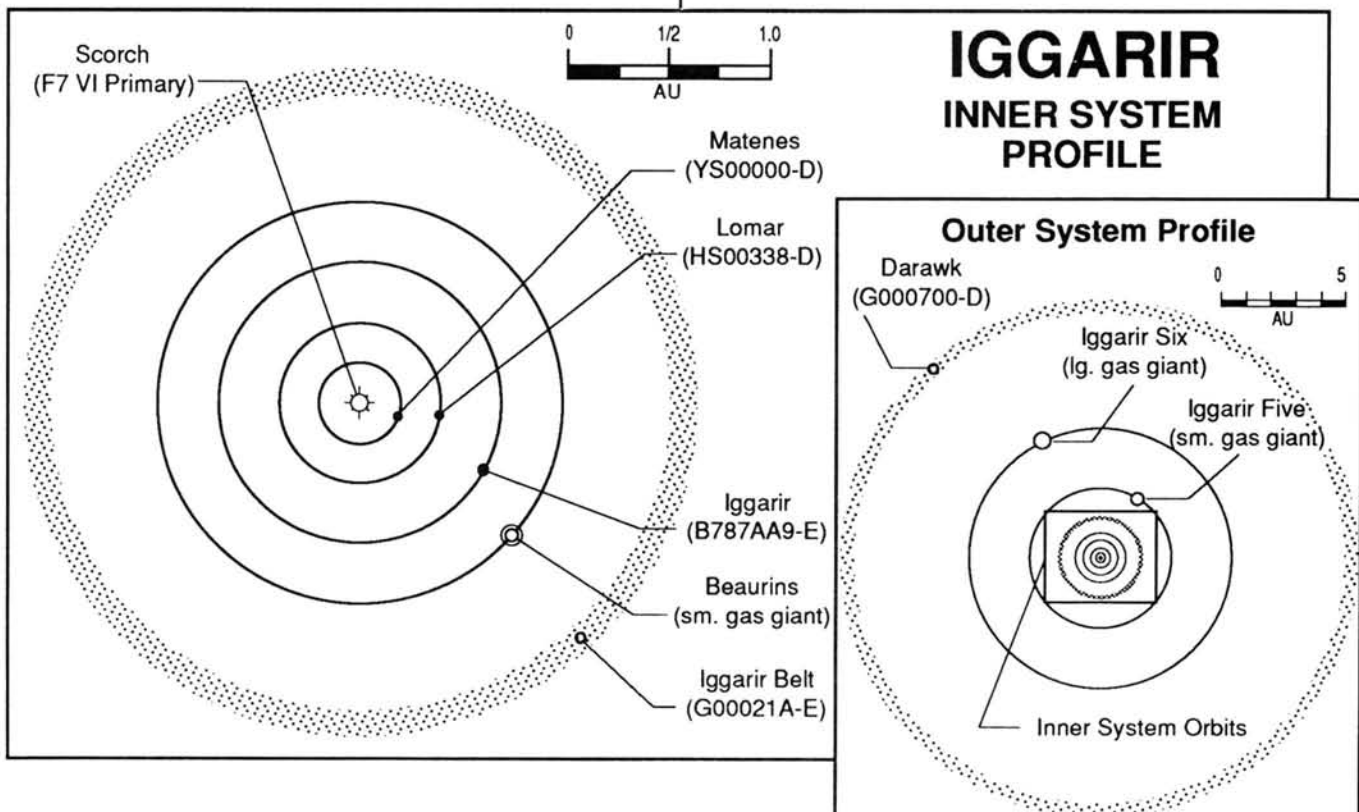
Another unusual local custom involves dealing with others one does not know well—the head must be bowed or the hand



Note: Cities not shown since their positions vary.

Iggarir World Map

must be cupped over the eyes as a token of respect and propriety. In Iggaririan society, eye contact with those one does not know well communicates a desire to become physically intimate. Local world culture says it is proper to look directly only at those one knows well.



Irlu 2008 A200654-F Ni Va Na 603 Ma K0 IV

Primary: Tocap, spectral class K0 IV. Mass 2.301. Stellar diameter 3.298. Luminosity 4.670.

Pathan: Large gas giant. Mean orbital radius 236.59 million km (1.59 AU). Period 482.76 days.

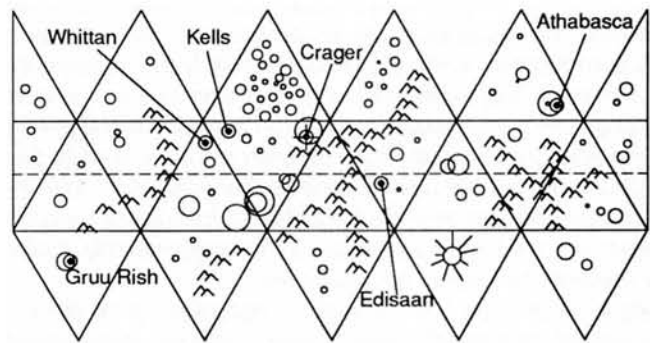
Irlu: Satellite of gas giant Pathan. Period 10.89 days. Diameter 2664 km. Mass 0.015. Density 0.94. Mean surface gravity 0.235. Rotation period 10 days 18 hours. Axial inclination 8°1'12". Energy absorption 0.810.

Surface atmospheric pressure 0. No atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage 2%. Mean surface temperature 74.7°C. No native life. Total world population 5.97 million. Primary cities—Crager, 847,000; Whittan, 422,000; Kells, 418,000; Gruu Rish, 389,000; Athabasca, 388,000; Edisaan, 340,000. World government is feudal technocracy. Tech level—high common 15, low common 15. Primary resources—ores, crystals, metals, parts, durables, art forms.

Irlu is a barren, airless rock ball. Like many mainworlds of the Khishan Cluster, it is a gas giant satellite. Its surface is subjected to daytime temperatures of over 180°C and nighttime temperatures of below -200°C. Because of the harsh climate and soft rock crust, the surface is dotted with caves and crevasses. In the early years of the Third Imperium, subsurface ice deposits were discovered, estimated by local geologists at 2% of the underground crust volume. This discovery has resulted in a steady increase in the number of vacuum-specialist miners coming to Irlu to seek their fortunes.

An especially rich find of onnesium-118 was discovered in 1095—several thousand tons (a massive deposit for such a rare and valuable element). This deposit, located in a meteoric crater crevasse, was mined in a few short months. The miners who made the find retired in luxury as billionaires.

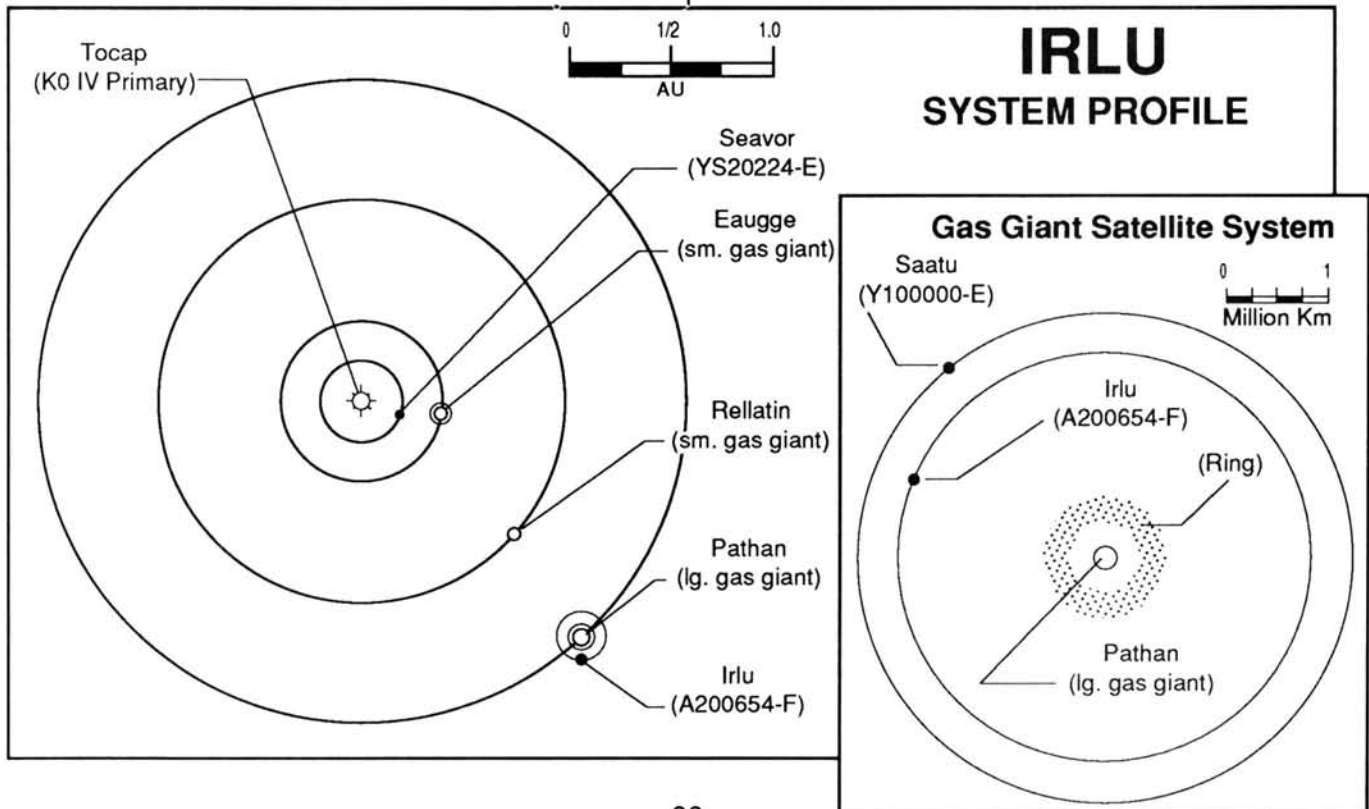
All the major Irluan cities are located at the bottom of deep crevasses or inside ice deposit caves. A graduated scale of social rank determines privileges and responsibilities within each city. Offworlders are exempt from these concerns and are treated as



Irlu World Map

honored envoys from outside, regardless of their actual station.

Because Irlu is barren, Irluans have a superstitious (almost religious) reverence for animal and plant life. Zoos are treated like temples; any imported creatures or plants bring an excellent price.



Wikk

Wikk 2010 B648655-C N Ni Ag 924 Ma F3 V M7 D

Primary: Binary, major—Gagurin, spectral class F3 V. Mass 1.46. Stellar diameter 1.52. Luminosity 5.34. Companion (1237 AU)—Gurvin, spectral class M7 D. Mass 1.11. Stellar diameter 0.006. Luminosity 0.00002.

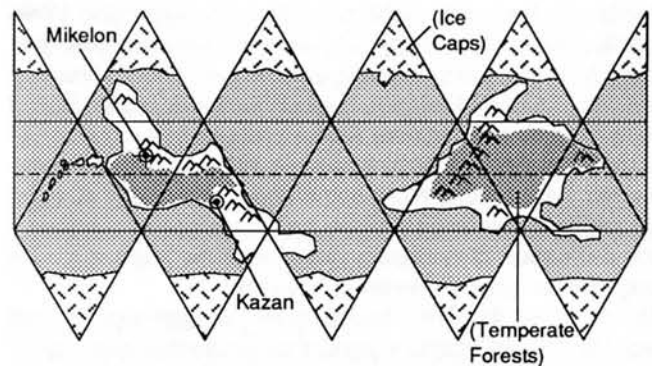
Rawlings: Large gas giant. Mean orbital radius 415.15 million km (2.79 AU). Period 1408.71 days.

Wikk: Satellite of gas giant Rawlings. Period 6.33 days. Diameter 10,109 km. Mass 0.439. Density 1.04. Mean surface gravity 0.78. Rotation period: tidally locked. Axial inclination 11°19'11". Energy absorption 0.777. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.55. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix with sulfur taint. Hydrographic percentage 80%. Mean surface temperature 5.3°C. Native life. Total world population 9.28 million. Primary cities—Mikelon, 502,000; Kazan, 212,000. World government is a feudal technocracy. Tech level—high common 12, low common 12. Primary resources—agricultural, ores, crystals, agriproducts, nonmetals, parts, consumables, recordings, software, documents.

Wikk, a medium-sided gas giant moon, is a geologically active world of earthquakes and volcanoes. Wikk's crust is constantly stressed by its parent, the large (and close) gas giant, Rawlings. Mild seismic quakes are a daily occurrence. Vilani scouts who first visited were amazed at the native life: animated plants. They metabolize sunlight using a form of photosynthesis, but they are composed of fibrous muscle tissues, allowing them to *move*. Most of Wikk's plant species are firmly rooted in place; they only move their arm-like tendrils about, touching each other for cross-pollination and so on. A few local plant species actually move about, "crawling" from place to place. None of the plant life has any nerve systems or intelligence—all movement is governed by instinct. Wikk has no animal life forms.

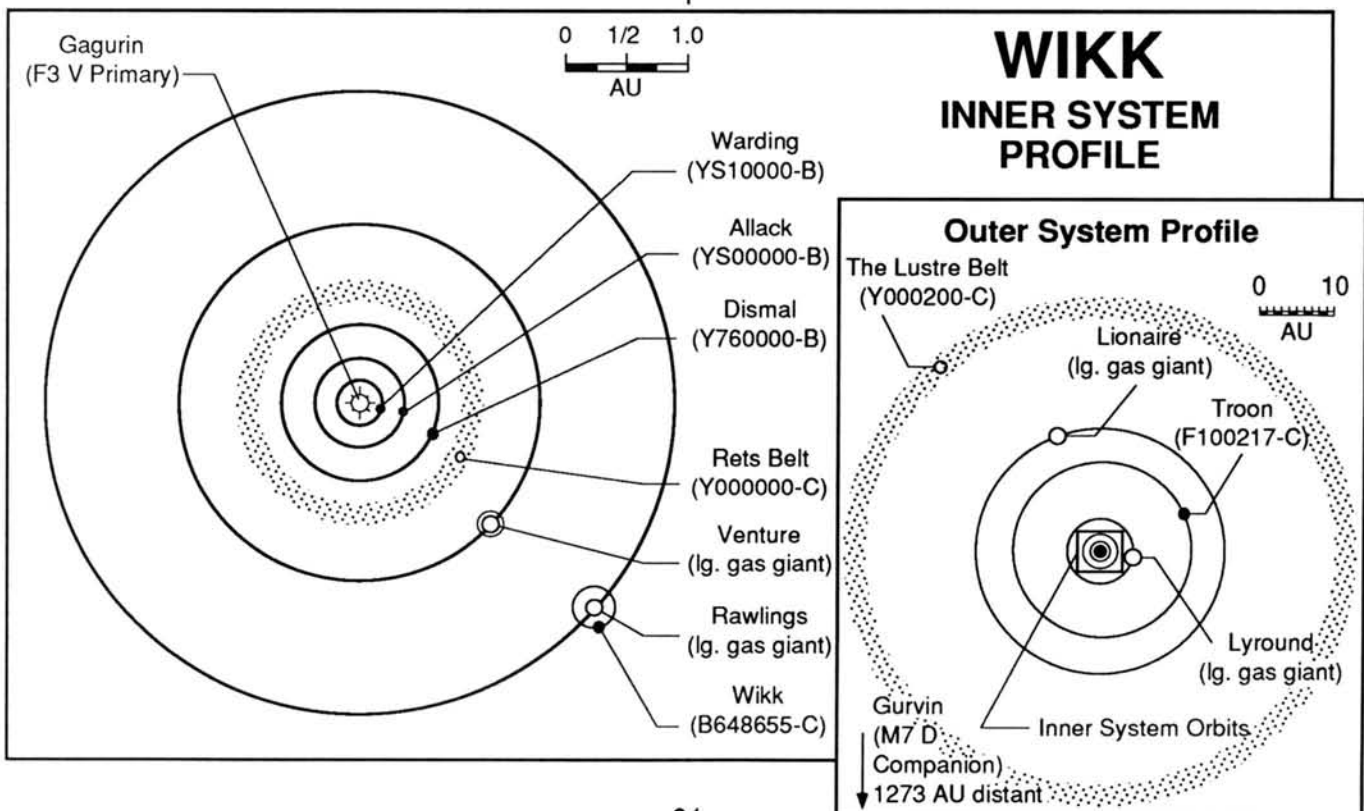
Lumber from Wikk is a sought-after commodity—the "muscular" nature of the Wikkian plants makes the lumber easy to bend and shape to fit specific needs, yet it remains stiff and rigid once shaped.

Wikk was originally settled in the 600s by offworlders seeking to cultivate, harvest, and sell the local plant products. The inhabitants of Wikk have created a thriving feudal culture. Branding, scarring,



Wikk World Map

and earlobe marking are commonly used methods for identifying the lower-class serfs. Offworlders seeking work on Wikk should be careful in this regard—many an offworlder has left Wikk with a not-too-pretty reminder of his employment stint on the world.



Murcia

Murcia 2109 E564945-7 HI 814 Ma K2 V

Primary: Orunjstar, spectral class K2 V. Mass 0.723. Stellar diameter 0.711. Luminosity 0.284.

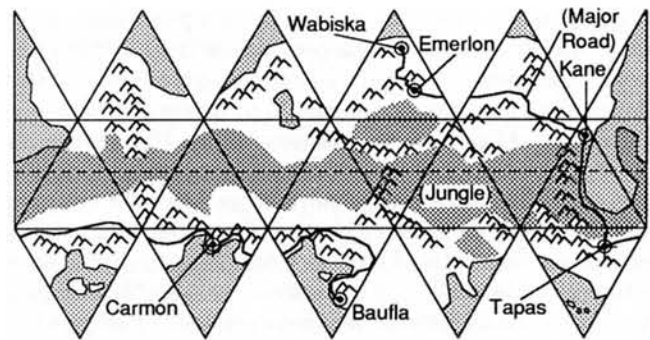
Tempest: Large gas giant. Mean orbital radius 102.67 million km (0.69 AU). Period 246.20 days.

Murcia: Satellite of gas giant Tempest. Period 13.15 days. Diameter 8085 km. Mass 0.225. Density 0.92. Mean surface gravity 0.575. Rotation period: tidally locked. Axial inclination 38°23'33". Energy absorption 0.818. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.55. Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix. Hydrographic percentage 39%. Mean surface temperature 21.4°C. Native life. Total world population 7.80 billion. Primary cities—Kane, 919 million; Baufla, 910 million; Tapas, 647 million; Wabiska, 600 million; Carmon, 408 million; Emerlon, 225 million. World government is a representative democracy. Tech level—high common 7, low common 6. Primary resources—agricultural, ores, radioactives, agriproducts, metals, recordings, documents.

Murcia is a backward, highly populated gas giant moon. While habitable, Murcia is strained by the gravitational effects of its primary, the enormous gas giant, Tempest. Seismic and volcanic activity is common on Murcia. Murcia was originally settled during the Rule of Man by Solomani researchers. As the local population grew, however, much of the local culture became infiltrated with Vilani philosophies. As the Long Night came about, technology dropped drastically on Murcia, and it was only the Vilani concepts of collective action and distrust of technology that allowed the locals to survive through the centuries of interstellar separation.

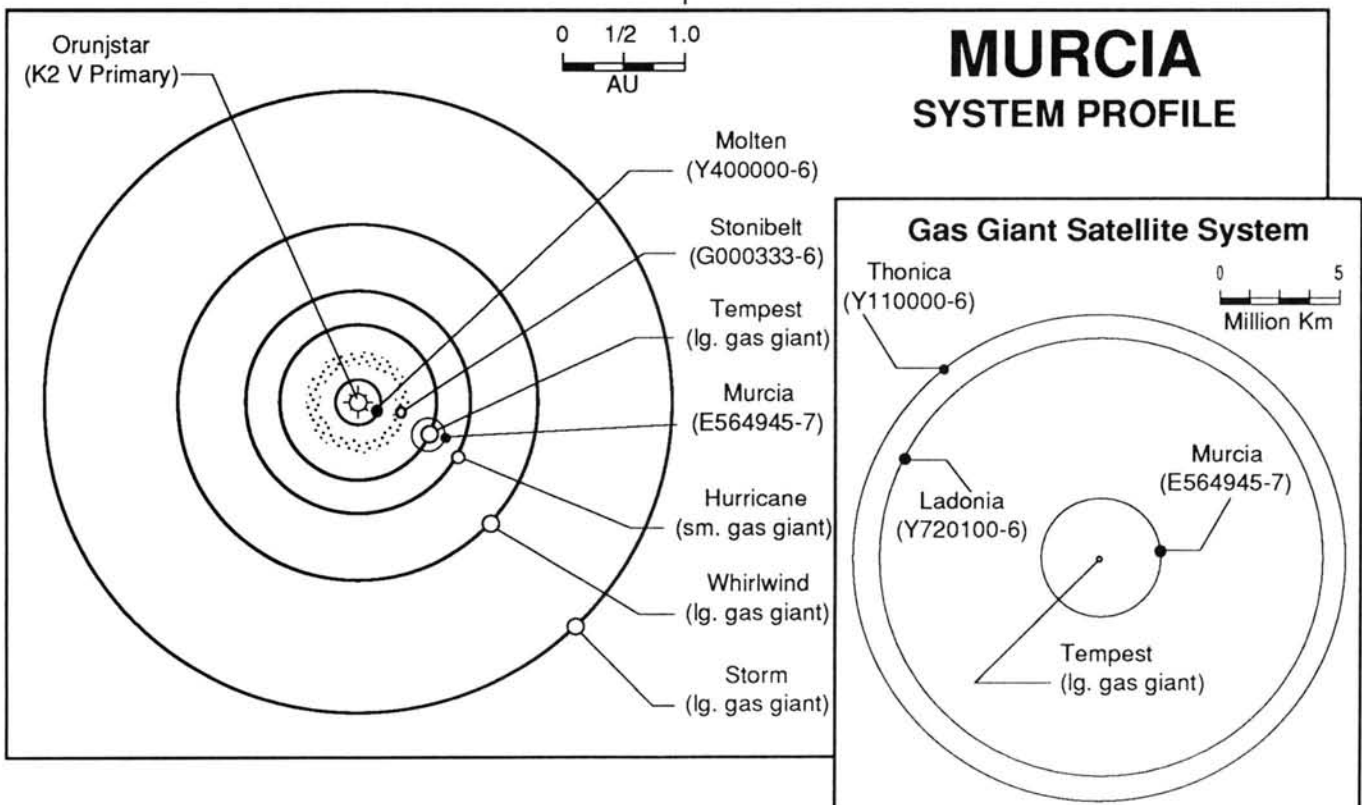
Murcia joined the Third Imperium but remains aloof toward offworld technology. Murcians prefer their Vilani-influenced ways—they do not idolize technology and remain close to nature. They place such value on the animals and plants they raise for food that they have evolved premeal rituals to emphasize this point. Offworlders who fail to heed these rituals will be treated with contempt.

While Murcia is the leading agricultural exporter of the Khishan Cluster, many agriproducts are also consumed locally. The inhab-



Murcia World Map

itants are narrow-minded, insular, and conservative—some would say backward—in their beliefs. Modesty in dress is paramount, with only the face and small amounts of skin allowed to be exposed in public. Ritual execution is allowed as a punishment for major crimes.



Appendix

Many of you will want to integrate **Knightfall** into your existing campaigns, and we have specifically written **Knightfall** just so you can do that. **Knightfall** is noncharacter specific, thus making the text work with any merchant-oriented player group.

Though we did not write **Knightfall** with any specific player characters in mind, for those of you who would like to start **Knightfall** with a minimum of delay, or see an example of the player characters we used in some of our playtesting, we have added this appendix with the pregenerated player characters, their starship, and an opening dialog to set the mood.

Even if you don't happen to use these PCs or their starship, this appendix may still hold some useful ideas you may want to incorporate into your own version of the **Knightfall** campaign.

OPENING DIALOG

"Sten, do you realize that as of today, I've been with you and the *Gimuqshabika* for five Imperial years?"

Sten Kurlush looked up from his bridge panel and over at his navigator.

"No, has it been that long?" Sten said, rubbing his chin with his hand. "I still remember clearly the day when you came in answer to my ad for a starship navigator. 'Mr. Kurlush, I am Rogari Dellash. I am answering your vid-ad for a starship navigator. I'd like to work for you and the *Gimu*. If you hire me as your navigator, I promise you *won't* be sorry.' You were sure nervous."

Sten and Rogari laughed together as they recalled the tenseness of those days when neither knew the other.

"Incoming news from Engorr, Rogari," the *Gimu's* starship computer interrupted.

"Okay, pipe it through the ship, *Gimu*," replied Rogari.

For the next 15 minutes, the four-member crew of the free trader *Gimu* got treated to the typical current events news broadcast available in most systems, this one being from Engorr, a Khishan Cluster system containing a sparsely settled mining world.

After the broadcast, the image of Sally Hruska, ship's doctor, came up on Sten's bridge panel.

"Sten, this isn't much of a system is it? There's nothing on Engorr except a few stodgy old miners and a bunch of boring rocks. I'm glad we don't trade in this system often—are we going to stay long?"

"I get the hint, Sally," Sten returned. "Actually, we don't come to Engorr much because the trade runs into or out of here are usually not profitable. I just hope the tip from the broker about electronic parts pays off this time. I've taken quite a chance bringing along 90 kiloliters of those parts—if we can get rid of 'em in a hurry, we'll be out of here faster than you can say 'chirper.' Okay?"

"Suits me *just fine*," snapped Sally in return.

A few moments later, Sten punched the vidlink button on his panel for engineering.

"My, but you are being quiet, Oegie," Sten said, with a tease in his voice.

"I'm just watching the maneuver drive, Sten," the Vargr engineer replied in broken Galanglic. "That new part I scrounged on Irlu is working well. It's improved the m-drive efficiency by 2.6%."

"Great!" Sten said, obviously pleased with Oeghrra Dzen's report. "Oegie, we want to spend as little time as possible here

on Engorr, so I doubt that you'll have much time to scrounge while we're here."

"That is understood—the place is only Tech Level 11."

"Oegie, I know you. You could find an ice cube on a desert world. On Engorr, though, you may need to scrounge buyers for our electronic parts if we have trouble selling this stuff. Boy I hope that broker was right."

Sten switched off the vidcom, and then looked over at his navigator.

"Rogari, give me a hot maneuver vector for Peerden starport. Let's go in and get this over with."

PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following optional player characters are provided for use with **Knightfall**.

Sten Kurlush, Owner (Human Merchant, Captain)

77CB69 Age 36 4.5 terms Cr100,000

Pilot-4, JOT-2, Navigation-2, Vacc Suit-2, Computer-1, Handgun-1, History-1, Leader-1, Streetwise-1, Trader-1, Grav Veh-0

Starport A, Small, Std Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, High Stellar



Basic Motivation: To make a good profit with his starship, the *Gimuqshabika*, and to be his own boss.

Sten Kurlush is a true entrepreneur—he prefers to be his own boss. Sten keeps his starship, the *Gimuqshabika*, in tip-top shape, and he expects nothing less from his crew—although Sten is not one to "lord it over" his crew, either. He tries to be understanding when the crewmembers make a mistake or are guilty of an oversight. One of Sten's favorite sayings is,

"The past teaches us how to change the future."

Sten enjoys a good trade deal, but he also likes to share his profits with his crew. He is not above "circumventing ridiculous local legislation" (breaking the law) for an occasional lucrative

deal. Still, Sten avoids doing so—and when he does cross the line, it is always a relatively minor infraction.

It takes a lot to get Sten mad, but when he does, he has a violent temper.

Sten is also a bit of a rebel—he doesn't put much weight in "what everyone else is doing." He prefers to do things the "best" way—even if it goes against established thinking. A good example is the *Gimu* itself: Sten thinks gas giant refueling is too risky in these Rebellion times (gas giants are a favorite place to ambush merchant vessels), so he has removed the *Gimu*'s static probe and has installed collapsible tanks in the ship's hold. Never one to cut off all his options, Sten has kept his fuel refining hardware intact in the *Gimu*, allowing him to still use unrefined fuel.

Sten is proud of his Vargr engineer, Oeghrra Dzen. He allows Oeghrra a lot of creative freedom with her work, but he also knows when to "lay down the law" to her. Rogari Dellash's competence impresses Sten, although he thinks her mood swings are annoying.

Sally Hruska is Sten's latest addition to his crew—she is, in fact, Sten's second cousin on his mother's side. He needed someone with good medical skill to round out his crew, and so as a favor to his mother's family, he took Sally on. He enjoys her wide-eyed curiosity, but at times she can be a bit too flighty for his taste.

Oeghrra Dzen, Engineer (Vargr Merchant, First Officer)

586774 Age 38 5 terms Cr15,000

Engineering-4, Computer-3, Rifleman-2, Scrounging-2, Grav Veh-1, History-1, JOT-1, Vacc Suit-1

Starport B, Med, Std Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar



Basic Motivation: To tinker with the starship *Gimuqshabika*, and to follow Sten Kurlush as long as his exploits are profitable.

Oeghrra Dzen joined the crew after Rogari Dellash, but before Sally Hruska. Oeghrra enjoys living and working with humans, and she considers Sten to be a leader worthy of her loyalty.

Oeghrra is a classic example of a Vargr that loves to tinker. Oeghrra's scrounging skills fit well with her engineering responsibilities—she is always on the lookout for just the right part for the ship's next annual maintenance. That part must be both of good quality and have a reasonable price before Oeghrra will approach Sten with her request that Sten acquire the part. Oeghrra is careful to select a part she knows Sten would agree to.

Rogari Dellash, Navigator
(Human Merchant, 4th Officer)

786AA8 Age 32 4.5 terms Cr25,000

Navigation-5, Pilot-2, Streetwise-2, Commo-1, Combat

Rifleman-1, Computer-1, Grav Veh-0, Vacc Suit-0

Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar



Basic Motivation: To try new challenges while travelling with the starship *Gimuqshabika*, and to be rewarded for a job well-done.

Rogari Dellash has been with Sten the longest of all the crewmembers. Rogari insists on approaching tasks in a methodical, logical manner.

Rogari is reserved by nature, and she is especially quiet with strangers. Rogari does not enjoy personal confrontations, and thus she prefers to keep

her gripes to herself rather than tell people how she really feels about anything.

In a very real sense, Rogari's life is her work. Because she is more technical-oriented than people-oriented, she often sits alone on the *Gimu* bridge for hours on end, conversing with the starship's computer about recent sensor data or other bridge-related functions.

Sally Hruska, Xenologist (Human Doctor)

3C8A97 Age 26 2 terms Cr5,000

Medical-3, Biology-2, Computer-1, Handgun-1, Grav Veh-0
Starport A, Small, Thin Atm, Dry, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar



Basic Motivation: To travel the starlanes and learn about other worlds' life forms and cultures in depth.

Sally Hruska is the newest member of the crew, and in fact, she is Sten's second cousin on his mother's side.

Sally is the youngest and most naive of the group. While Sally is very intelligent and has an excellent memory, she sometimes fails to exhibit "common sense" at times.

Sally is fresh out of college, with a degree in medicine and a minor in xenobiology. Sally has an insatiable curiosity, which can at times get her in trouble—she occasionally sticks her nose in where it doesn't belong.

Sally's curiosity also leads her to be delighted in the silliest things, to the point where the others look upon her as a bit juvenile or childish. But when it comes to her medical practice, Sally conducts herself with impressive skill and professionalism.

PCs' STARSHIP—THE *GIMUQSHABIKA*

Some of you may recognize the *Gimuqshabika*—it is one of the starships illustrated on the inside back cover of DGP's *Starship Operator's Manual*, volume 1. It is a 200-ton free trader-type vessel, and you would do well to pick up a copy of DGP's *Starship Operator's Manual* if you don't already have it.

CraftID:	Free Trader <i>Gimuqshabika</i> , Type A, TL15, MCr37.53
Hull:	180/450, Disp=200, Config=1SL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=1140 tons, Loaded=2280 tons
Power:	4/8, Fusion=990 Mw, Duration=30 days
Loco:	4/8, Maneuver=1, 4/8, Jump=1, NOE=190kph, Cruise=600kph, Agility=2
Commo:	Radio=System
Sensors:	PassiveEMS=Interstellar, ActiveEMS=FarOrbit, ActObjScan=Routine, ActObjPin=Routine, PasObjScan=Routine
Off:	Hardpoints=2
Def:	DefDM=+4 Sandcaster=×04 Batt 1 Bear 1
Control:	Computer=Mod 1×3, Panel=HolodynamicLink×354, Special=HeadsUp×2, Environ=Basic Environment, Basic Life-Support, Extended Life-Support, Grav Plates, Inertial Compensators
Accomm:	Crew=4 (Bridge=2, Engineer=1, Medical=1), Staterooms=8, Low Berths=8
Other:	Cargo=1097 kliters, Fuel=627 kliters, Purification Plant, Collapsible Tanks (in cargo hold), Objsize=Average, EMLevel=Faint

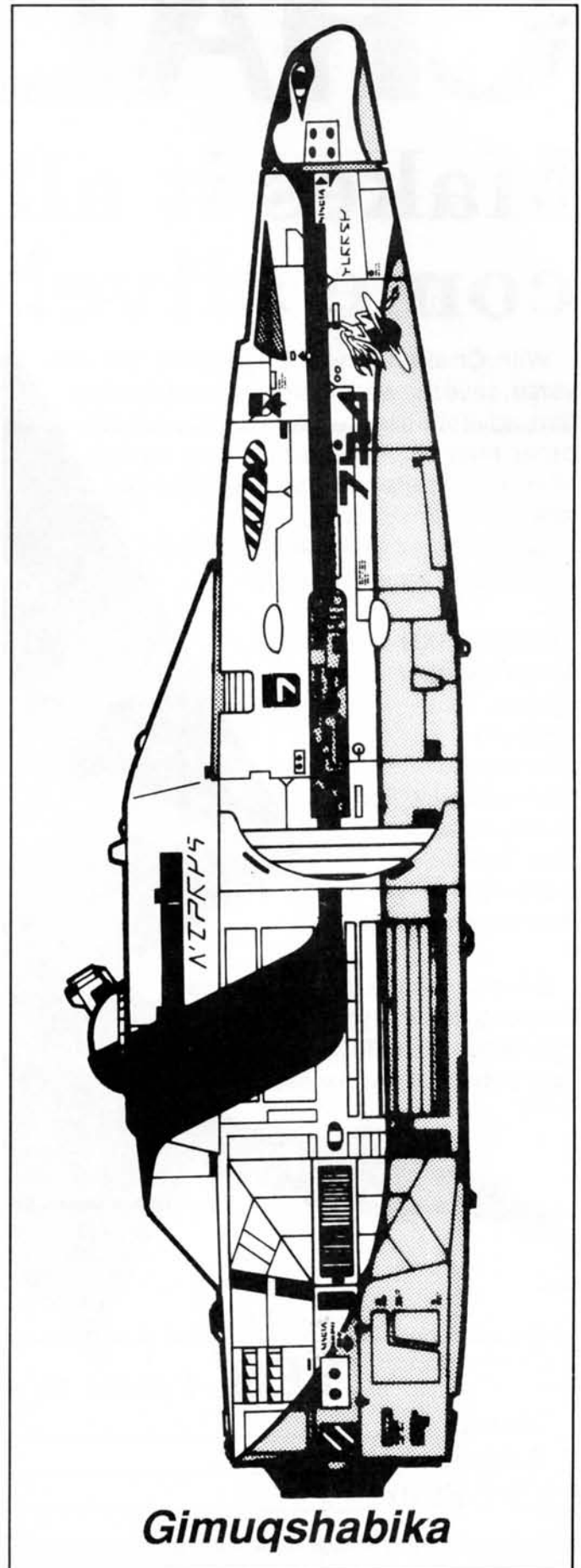
Sten acquired the *Gimuqshabika* 10 years ago, and through some shrewd trade deals, managed to make enough profit to pay the vessel off early. Thus Sten owns the *Gimu* free and clear, and owes no payments on it.

Originally, Sten was trading in one of the "four corners" regions of the Imperium—in this case, the region where the four sectors of Core, Dagudashaag, Zarushagar, and Massilia come together.

When the Rebellion started and things began to heat up in mid-1117, Sten relocated to the Khishan Cluster as his trading area. Sten and the *Gimu* have continued trading in the Khishan Cluster for the last three years. In that time, the *Gimu* has made over 60 jumps with trade goods in her hold.

The *Gimu* does not have operating fuel scoops. After the Rebellion started, Sten removed the fuel scoop hardware because he felt gas giant refueling was just too risky. Gas giants are a favorite place for military vessels and pirates to ambush other starships, and Sten didn't want to take any chances. Instead, Sten had collapsible tanks installed in the *Gimu*'s hold, and if he thinks buying fuel is going to be cost-prohibitive, he will purchase unrefined fuel and fill both the main tanks and the collapsible ones, allowing him to make a round trip without refueling.

The *Gimu* still has its fuel purifier installed (Sten is not one to cut off his options), which allows the *Gimu* to still be ocean-refueled.



Gimuqshabika

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