

Special Supplement 5

Short Adventures

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TRAVELLER[®]
Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT 5: SHORT ADVENTURES

A SUPPLEMENT FOR TRAVELLER

Traveller - Science Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

BASED ON THE AWARD-WINNING TRAVELLER GAME SYSTEM AND UNIVERSE BY MARC MILLER

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

There are times when any Traveller Referee needs to generate a quick adventure. Whether this is to cope with players who have wandered off the planned path, as part of a large-scale adventure or as the core idea of something the Referee wants to work up, the need is much the same.

This book presents two kinds of ready-made adventure seeds, each with enough detail to get started straight away but generic enough to be dropped in more or less anywhere. This is not a book of complete adventures; there are no stats or maps herein. This means that the adventures can be used in any setting and with any rules set. They can be 'tweaked' and reused if necessary.

The adventures in this book follow standard formats which have been used by Traveller Referees for many years. These are as follows:

AMBER ZONES

An Amber Zone type adventure outlines a situation in a page or so, explaining why things are as they are, who is involved and their motivations. Usually a general idea of what will happen next is given, but once the player-characters enter the situation the Referee must decide where things will go next. Amber Zones can be very varied and can spark long-running adventures.

MERCENARY TICKETS

Large-scale mercenary jobs ('tickets') are similar in style to Amber Zones, but are more formal and military in nature. Mercenary tickets proper call for an organized and trained mercenary force of squad size or larger. Most of those presented in this book are fairly small-scale and can be handled by a small 'expert crew' instead of a formal military unit if needed. Larger merc tickets are best used as a backdrop for the actions of a small number of characters who may be mercs, their opponents or just caught up in the general mayhem.

PATRON ENCOUNTERS

Patron Encounters are generally shorter. The usual format is that someone (referred to as the 'patron' since he or she usually pays the adventurers to perform their task) wants a job doing. The scenario description lists the type of person the patron is, what skills are required to carry out the task, and what equipment will be necessary. In some cases the task can be completed by anyone and in others there is no special equipment needed. Some 'patrons' are in fact rumors, clues and other things that may lead characters into the adventure.

Next the scenario lists players' information. This is what the patron tells the characters, the contents of the rumor or whatever. The Referee may of course embellish, distort

or otherwise alter this information, and of course it may not be the whole story anyway. Underneath is Referee's Information, which includes any special notes as well as a set of possible outcomes. The Referee may decide to pick one, or roll 1D (1d6) to determine which of the potential outcomes represents the real situation.

GENERAL NOTES

How the players tackle any given job is of course the stuff of Traveller games, and the Referee may find that events during the task lead on to other adventures or further employment with the patron. These Encounters are a useful way to introduce a recurring character into the game. As the travellers carry out tasks for their new employer he will gradually reveal more about himself and what he really wants from them. In short, Patron Encounters are a starting point from which the players and Referee can begin to create a fun game, and should be viewed in that context.

Most of the Encounters in this book assume a group of 2-6 adventurers with a range of skills. Larger or smaller groups can tackle the same job in most cases, perhaps with increased opposition or some help in the form of an expert provided by the patron.

In many of the adventure descriptions, worlds are named. These are generic names and not located in any particular part of the Traveller universe. They serve merely to identify a location and can be changed or substituted for another location at the Referee's whim.

STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

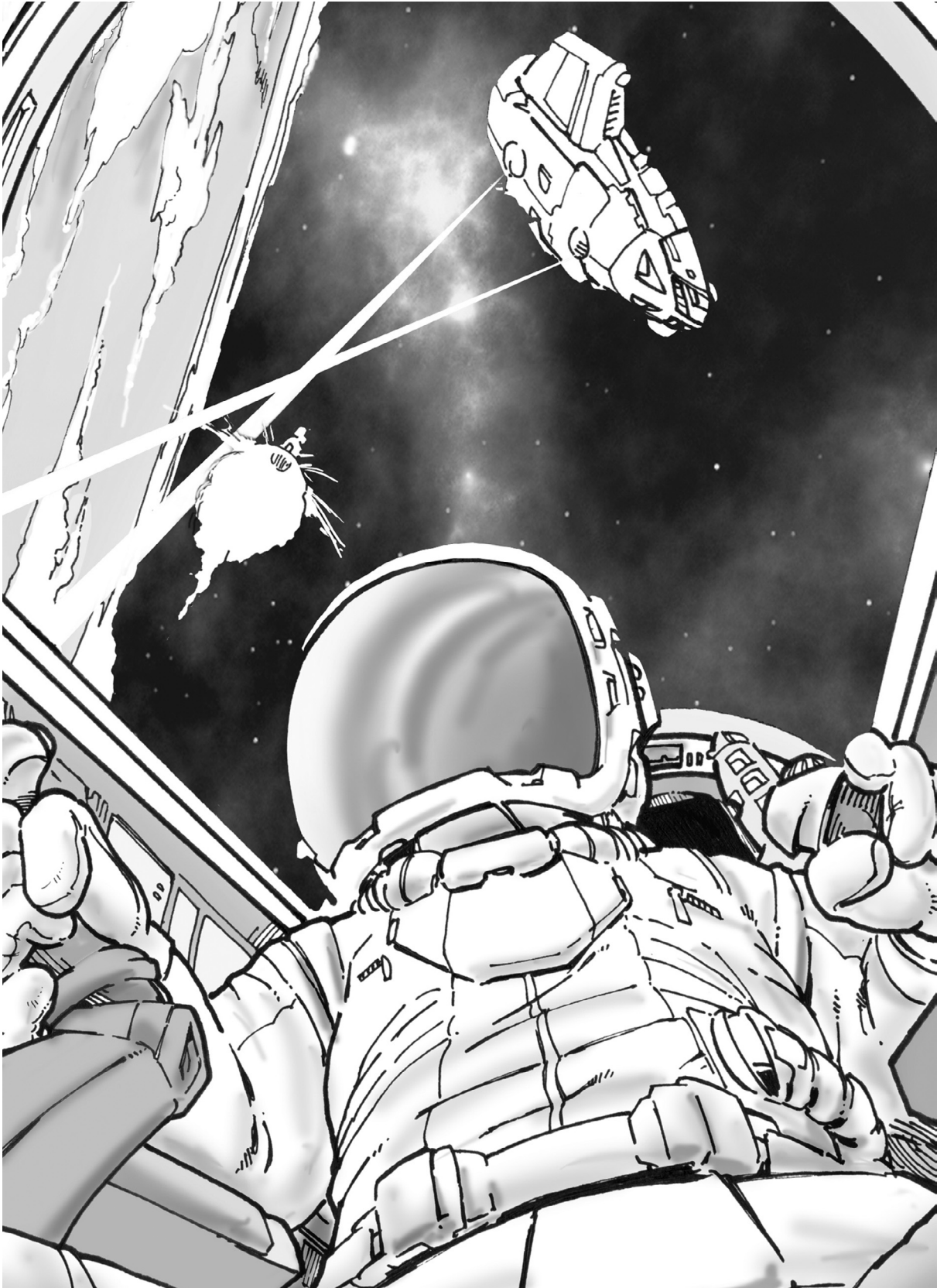
Patron Encounters can be used with virtually any rules set – Traveller or another game entirely. Many of the jobs herein could be converted to a fantasy or low-technology setting easily enough. There is thus no specific set of equipment necessary to use this book. We have assumed, for our convenience when writing them, that the adventure seeds are to be used in a universe that looks somewhat like the Official Traveller Universe – that is, with worlds populated mainly by humans, connected by starships using Jump drives and so forth. In most cases this is not critical and the adventure could be set anywhere, but in a few cases it will be important. For example, in the standard Traveller setting faster-than-light communications are not possible, so characters cannot call for help on the tachyon radio or whatnot. They are truly cut off if they need to send a starship for help and don't have one, and in any case sending for help could be a matter of weeks. In a universe that does have FTL communications, rescue could be en route in hours, which creates a rather different situation. A creative Referee can still use the adventure ideas of course.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Please note that this is not a standalone game. It requires that you have access to a set of game rules of some kind. We are assuming that this will be one version of the Traveller

RPG or another. These adventures were not created for use with any specific rules system.

You will also need some dice as appropriate to your chosen rules set plus pens, pencils, paper and probably some kind of furniture to improve player and Referee comfort. A suitable gaming area with appropriate atmosphere and gravity conditions is taken as a given.



Part 1: Amber Zones



AMBER ZONE: STARPORT PIONEERS

SITUATION:

SpaceLanes LIC is a small corporation based out of a mid-sized frontier starport. The firm is interested in developing a starport on a nearby low-population world, and has found a way to do it on the cheap. The planet has had a 'real' starport for at least two short periods in its history, and one of these ports, situated at the town of Vindell's Holding, could possibly be reactivated, making it the obvious choice for visiting ships and thus establishing a basic port and startown arrangement that can later be expanded.

SpaceLanes has money and backing but few assets of its own, and those are tied up in other projects. Thus they want to hire several characters, pay them handsomely and send them off in their own (streamlined) ship to effect the re-commissioning of the original Starport's infrastructure. If the characters do not have access to such a ship, they would be loaned a Scout ship for this specific purpose. Ultimately this would affect the going price of their mission.

The town of Vindell's Holding has a population of 220. It is built on a corner of the old port, using materials scavenged from the buildings there. This has resulted in the destruction of most of the port, which was never more than a basic Type C, however the basic infrastructure is still intact. There is water storage, treatment and piping plus underground power lines, all in fairly good shape. Some areas will need fixing but this is much cheaper than installing a whole new set of pipes and cables. Once this is done, it should be possible to clear out and repair the original structures or set up a few prefabricated buildings, install a portable power generator and communications gear, and clear a few decades' worth of debris off the landing field.

While this may sound like simplicity itself, StarLanes is at pains to point out that the locals are a 'difficult' population to deal with, and should be handled with kid gloves during the enterprise. The situation is made a little more difficult since the proposed new port is not located at the planetary capital. Vindell's Holding was set up several decades ago during an aborted redevelopment project and is located in a distant backwater region. The characters are going to have to sell the plan to the local and planetary leaders as well as carry out the simple engineering work required.

RESOLUTION:

The characters' first obstacle is to get the world government to accept the plan. Such an important decision must be taken at the very highest level – after appropriate consultation with absolutely everyone else, of course. The characters must present a solid argument why the world needs a central starport, something it has done very well without for a long, long time, and why it should be located at Vindell's

AMBER ZONE: MINE RESCUE

Holding. Assuming the characters present a decent case, the arguments and wrangling go on for several days before presidential council agrees to let the characters proceed – but only if they can get permission from the local authorities.

Next, the characters have to jump through the same hoops to persuade the locals at Vindell's Holding that they really want a starport on their doorstep. These are the people who allowed a previous one to decay into a cracked and weed-pitted landing area, which perhaps illustrates their attitude.

If granted permission, the characters can begin the actual work. The port site is very overgrown and has lain in ruin for decades. The PCs will have to spend several weeks clearing the grounds of the original Spaceport of vegetation and wildlife. A fair amount of equipment is still there, although rusted and useless for the most part. Repairs can be made using some of the junk, and two or three items can be patched together from the spares. With enough burning, scraping and messy work, the Starport main buildings and the basic infrastructure may be retrieved.

Of course, nothing is that simple. The port area provides good cover for local predators, and all that crashing about in the wreckage may attract one or more examples of the local wildlife, which might include territorial megafauna. And of course some of the locals may decide that stealing the characters' gear is a good idea.

SITUATION:

One evening during shore leave, the party is approached by a security officer. His uniform is crisp, but he appears very tired as if he's been awake for days. He introduces himself as Paul Manaras, a Lieutenant in the Underwater Security division of the local world's Security Forces. He says he has a job for the party, but is unable to submit details until the party signs acknowledgement of a gag order, preventing them from speaking to anyone about the operation until mission completion. The gag order goes on at some length about severe legal penalties but is nothing unusual.

Paul has a situation which he needs help with. Several days ago, an underwater mining facility sent a distress call, which was quickly cut short. Two rescue squads have gone to attempt a rescue, neither has returned. The last squad managed to send half a message which is still being analyzed, but it seems they were attacked by someone or something on approach to the mining facility. The message received was unintelligible due to the background noise, mostly sounding like metal being stressed beyond its limits. This was followed by a roar which has been determined to be water entering the crew compartment of the rescue submarine. Paul again notes that the message is still under analysis, and the characters will be informed of the contents as they become available.

Between the loss of the two eight man rescue teams, and a situation elsewhere with an abnormally large build up of seagoing predators attempting to eat the underwater farmers, the security forces do not have the manpower to attempt another rescue. Their planners have spent some long hours trying to find a way to resolve the manpower issue internally, but time is running out. Soon they will be forced to release the information to the press, as they've been getting calls from the miners' families about lack of contact for the last few days.

Paul admits that the situation has been handled badly and that the information should have gone out almost immediately, but the company has been too busy to organize the press conference that would be required. He offers to make the PCs into company deputies (the basic rank for a security officer) for the length of the operation, with full pay and benefits (including free medical), as well as a severe-hazard payment, bringing the fee to Cr500 per day per person. Given the length of the mission, the minimum fee will be Cr2,500 per rescuer. The party will be issued a standard rescue submarine, which can make the trip in about 16 hours; a pilot can be scrounged up if the party is unable to pilot the vehicle.

The crew at the mining station consists of 24 men and women. The station is mostly automated, allowing for the small crews. Each of the rescue subs had a crew of 8 each. The rescue

sub can pack up to 30 people aboard at maximum capacity, so two trips may be needed. The mining facility is at a depth of 500 meters, which requires the use of special high pressure suits. Training on these will be quickly provided. The submarine is armed with a single medium laser tuned to blue-green frequencies to function underwater, though its range is severely limited.

RESOLUTION:

The trip out should be uneventful except for several large sea creatures, including one that dwarfs the submarine by a factor of five. This beastie will only be picked up on sonar and does not molest the submarine in any way. What will molest the submarine, however, is a huge creature previously not cataloged, though it falls into the category of local wildlife known by the initials HBM (Honkin' Big Monsters).

The creature will attack by wrapping its tentacles around any projections on the submarine and then do its best to tear its way into the hull using its armored jaws and head. The creature is massive, mean, and smart. If it is severely injured, it will disengage and get away from the PCs as fast as possible. It does not leave the area, as it has a good food source nearby (PCs and miners) and it is very angry. If it manages to tear through the hull at 500 meters, the travellers will meet the same fate as the other two submarines.

Upon reaching the mine, the PCs will discover that both airlocks are wrecked, allowing seawater to flood most of the mines. Several large pockets of air exist though, allowing 2-12 miners to survive for the PCs to rescue. Also, up to two of the crew from the last rescue submarine may have managed to escape to the mines, as they were in deep suits when the creature attacked. The HBM has its own entry into the facility besides the airlock and it can wiggle through almost any habitable space in the mines. This in turn makes it a very dangerous threat to the PCs as it is heavily armored and standard weapons will not be very effective against it.

All of the miners will require decompression either prior to leaving the mines or prior to exiting the submarine. The submarine can do the job, but will require the PCs to acclimate themselves to the pressure and then decompress everyone. This process will require 2 days spent at sea, and if the HMB has survived, it is going to be stalking them until they reach solid ground.

Returning to port, the PCs will be given a heroes' welcome and be accepted as family by the relatives of the miners and security forces (most of the population of the coastal region). They will receive a Cr5,000 bonus for bringing back at least one survivor, and upon departing the planet, receive enough home baked cakes, pies and similar sendoff gifts to last the crew the next 3 years. If the PCs are looking for cargo, they will receive ore at a huge discount from Iranus Mining, and cargo handling fees will be waived. Any PCs so desiring will be offered a permanent commission in the

company's Security Forces or a job in the mines if they even need one.

If the PCs decide not to assist, they will be intensely scrutinized at every opportunity by law enforcement. One week later, they will hear word of the loss of the mining facilities and all personnel aboard, along with the crews of 3 rescue submarines.

AMBER ZONE: UNSAVORY CHARACTERS

SITUATION:

Arriving at a frontier class E starport, the characters are faced with an interesting challenge. The landing pad is occupied by a 500-ton wedge-shaped starship, covered in burn marks and scars of combat, and parked at a very awkward angle. Normally the pad can accommodate three or four such ships, but this one has been landed and left in the middle of the pad with obvious disregard for other starfarers.

It is possible to land, but this means squeezing in between the berm that surrounds the pad, the control huts and the grounded ship, a tight squeeze made more difficult by a gusty wind. The grounded ship is tracking the characters' vessel with its fire control radar and one of its turrets is slewing around, ostentatiously pointing at a location exactly two ships' lengths behind the characters ship. Instruments show that the weapons (a dual laser mount) are not powered, but they could quickly be brought into action. The gesture is, obviously, an arrogant warning not to bump the grounded ship rather than an actual threat.

If the characters open fire, not only are they making an unprovoked attack on a grounded ship, but it could retaliate with five turrets of weapons – it is unlikely that either ship would survive an engagement at such short range.

If the characters attempt to land, they can manage it, but it requires a tricky maneuver. If successful, the pilot squeezes his ship in with no real problems. Failure indicates the characters have clipped the berm and their ship has taken some minor damage, but they are down. Failure by a serious margin means the pilot has collided with the grounded ship (which does not actually open fire even if they do), causing some minor damage to both vessels.

RESOLUTION:

The ship is the Hamali, a custom design registered out of a dubious freeport in the region. It belongs to 'Captain' Mikhyl Teiss, a member of one of the smaller but more adventurous pirate bands operating in the area. He is in a bit of a jam at present. He has landed himself a lucrative job smuggling weapons to illegal militias on various worlds, but just couldn't pass up the chance to bushwhack a juicy merchant or two along the way.

Teiss' latest victim wasn't a merchant at all, but turned out to be a Q-ship operated by StarSecure, a merc outfit. Teiss "had a feeling" about the target and left himself a large window of opportunity to escape, which was just as well. The short exchange of fire that followed his challenge caused a great deal of damage to both vessels, but the Hamali was able to Jump out and carried on her gunrunning mission while the ship's engineer made running repairs.

Teiss is on a tight timeframe and stands to make a lot of money from his smuggling mission. He simply dare not go home to his superiors and tell them he blew the job out of greed, so he has pressed on in disregard of common sense. Things worked out well enough for a while, until the ship's engineer got into a knife-fight with one of the gunners and died shortly thereafter. Shooting the gunner didn't make Teiss feel any better, and now he's two men down, behind time and unable to space out without an engineer and a damage control team. And perhaps worst of all, he's stuck on this low-population desolate rockball. He isn't a happy man.

The arrival of the characters' ship represents an opportunity to solve his problems. He needs an engineer desperately, and he'll go to any lengths to get one. Possible ploys Teiss might try include challenging the characters to a drinking contest, getting them drunk and abducting their engineer, or angrily demanding some help to fix the damage the characters did colliding with his ship, getting the engineer aboard then locking down his ship and lifting off. He'd quite happily disable the characters' vessel as he did so.

Of course, if the characters are amenable, he would actually hire one of their engineers on a good salary, and would be quite willing to cut a deal with suitably amoral characters, so long as he gets an engineer to keep his ship running until he can find someone permanent. Characters who agree to work with Teiss have many opportunities, such as playing decoy by sending out a distress signal to summon assistance, as if the Hamali was attacking them, then catching the would-be rescuer in a crossfire. Or the characters might act as information gatherers for Teiss. They might even be able to get in on some gunrunning action.

On the other hand, if the characters are not inclined this way, then they are stuck in a backwater port with a bunch of heavily armed thugs. They can't take off because the Hamali would gut their ship. Unless Teiss and his crew are stupid enough to antagonize the locals, the characters are going to be on their own. They will have to find a way to neutralize the hostile vessel without resorting to a suicidal firefight.

AMBER ZONE: WATER RATS

SITUATION:

The Meraxes Floating Habitation Unit, or “Meraxes Flab” as it commonly referred to, is one of several high class residential units designed to cruise the extensive seas of the high tech world the characters just landed on, giving its rich (and largely retired) residents a different view of the planet every day. It is a peaceful place full of happy citizens living out their pensions eating, drinking, socializing or doing whatever they find enlivening.

Due to plentiful food and lack of exercise, a significant proportion of the residents of such complexes are excessively overweight. This is the primary reason why the appellation “Flab” came about, rather than the official “FHU” or some other contraction. However, the residents find this no great drawback, due both to the amount of water available for transportation and socializing in, and the fact that space is not as limited as it is in the many land-based cities, so everything has been built large to accommodate them.

For the really large individual who wishes to leave the water sections of the habitation (which are treated, non-saline, heated, and sealed off from the surrounding sea) specially designed grav-belt units are readily available, and the Meraxes Operating Company (MOC) maintains one of the best heart clinics in the subsector.

The characters are offered employment by an MOC representative to provide standard security services, the equivalent of street police level enforcement, for a six month tour of duty. It is a fairly easy job which mostly just requires the characters to be visible and helpful when the inevitable minor crises such as lost keycards and straying pets come to light. Criminal detection, surveillance and detective services are provided by the complex’s Model 7 computer system running specialized programs, and actual crime is quite rare.

The MOC representative will offer Cr5,000 per month to each member of the team. A wary character will realize that this rate is a little on the high side for a job that should consist primarily of baby-sitting a bunch of rich retirees as they drift lazily around the planet. The Meraxes Operating Company representative will say that this is because they know that good security personnel often find the environment of the Meraxes Flab boring and possibly even a threat to their status as rough and ready men; mercs coming off such an assignment are sometimes considered to be as soft and flabby as the residents.

Should a character think to check, a cursory search of the local data-net will reveal that the last security enforcement unit employed on this duty lost half its personnel to a terrorist bomb attack planted by a member of one of the security teams. The MOC believes employing off-worlders reduces

the risk of another mole. Deeper research may reveal that the Meraxes Operating Company is in fact a wholly owned subsidiary of an off-world corporation, so the majority of profits from this company will end up going off planet. It is possible that there are locals who resent this setup.

RESOLUTION:

The mission could be as peaceful as the MOC representative claims. However it could just as easily become a nightmare. The ‘flabs’ are a prime target for dissident groups which resent the increasing influence of offworld corporations. The most prominent in the region is the Broad Straits Alliance.

To the troublemakers of the old Broad Straits Alliance, the very existence of the Meraxes Flab is an affront to the spirit of independence. On the Flab, the decadent rich live lives of idleness and luxury while paying off-worlders for the privilege of working in comfortable offices next door to the best restaurants on-planet. In fact the term “on the Flab” has come to describe someone the dissidents see as acting against the interests of Lunarmise and getting rich doing it. For instance, they consider most of the current government to be “on the Flab”.

The floating habitation units have become a symbol of both the influence of off-world interests, and the general apathy and decadence of the majority of the planetary population. As such they are increasingly coming under threat from the more militant elements of the Broad Straits Alliance. The Meraxes Flab is about to enter waters once controlled by the Broad Straits Alliance, as part of its well-publicized schedule. Despite attempts by Meraxes’ captain to convince the MOC that the Flab should alter its schedule, there are some beautiful tourist venues in the Broad Straits area, and its occupants would not be happy to miss seeing them.

The party will be deployed together as single security team, all on the same shift. At least two other off-world security teams will be employed, to cover the other two shifts. The referee should choose from the following events that the security force will need to deal with during their tour of duty, or they may roll randomly to select an event. Events may occur more than once but the referee should try to differentiate them or may build them into an ongoing plot if she so desires. Of course, every incident will need to be investigated which may in turn lead to further adventures...

If random events are desired, roll 2d6 (2D):

2. Squid Surprise. A large (just over large human size in diameter) ten-tentacled squid has (somehow) managed to get through the filtration systems and is loose in the internal water transport system. The team must protect the residents, and there are calls to rescue the squid unharmed and return it to the sea – these naturally come from people who are located at a safe distance from it.
3. The Dealer. A team member notices a member of one of the other security teams acting suspiciously and

placing a package in a pipe. If the party are aware of the possibility of terrorist action, play this up, but actually the person is providing illicit anagathics or recreational drugs to residents.

4. The Cork. A resident has become stuck in one of the internal water transport tubes. The security force must figure out how to extract the resident before the pressure builds enough to be dangerous. Flab engineers will help, but they claim it's not their responsibility, and anything involving residents needs to be handled by the medical staff. Guess what the medical staff say...

5. Falling Down. A resident's grav-belt fails leaving them stranded on precarious part of the Flab's architecture. The team needs to rescue and calm the scared, and possibly irate, resident.

6. Accusation. One of the many people employed as service personnel on the flab is accused of a crime (possibly theft, assault, rape, selling illicit drugs, etc.) by a resident. Whether the accusation is true is up to the referee.

7. Domestic. There is a dispute between two residents and the security team is called to defuse the situation. Domestic disputes are always complicated and unpleasant, with the real possibility of the participants turning on the security people.

8. Armed Domestic. As 7, but one or both of the parties produce a weapon, probably a kitchen knife or other domestic object, and attempts to use it to 'settle' the dispute.

9. Pressure Down. A system failure leaves many residents stranded when the transport tubes they are using lose water pressure. The system is fixed but residents are still stranded in the miles of transport tubes, and must be found and removed before water pressure is restored, as the sudden influx of water on repressurization will endanger them – or at least make them think they were in danger, and the security team do not want to have to deal with a horde of angry rich people.

10. Storm Warning. A large storm is approaching. While the Flab is designed to withstand even the most severe hurricane conditions, it has been a while since it has had to "batten down the hatches" and the Captain details the security force to examine the exterior of the Flab to ensure that all is secure.

11. Terrorist Attack. A small motorized boat approaches the Flab and launches a salvo of unguided rockets at the Flab. The team needs to deal with both the boat and the results of the rocket attack.

12. Terrorist Assault. A large, well-organized, and heavily armed, terrorist team seizes the Flab's bridge while the party are off-duty. The party members get enough warning to disappear into the Flab's maintenance tunnels before being rounded up by the terrorists, but not enough to retrieve their weapons, as the terrorists knew exactly where the team was supposed to be. The party will discover that the Flab's First Officer, Todd Bartholomew, and/or one of the other security teams, is or are in league with the terrorist team and the security system has been locked down.

AMBER ZONE: A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

SITUATION:

Having completed customs formalities at their current destination, an impressive highport, the party set about enjoying the palatial facilities for which the high port is famous. The intention is to seek out some light weight, high value trade goods. After an uninspiring afternoon and a night of conviviality they return to their vessel. There they discover the ship's anti-hijack facility has been disabled and that they have a visitor, a female of apparent middle years. She is unarmed, and introduces herself as Beniji Kaserlin. Her manner is decidedly 'no-nonsense'. The party, she all but demands, are to aid her in an important service. In return she offers a number of high value archaeological items. These would fetch a high price in the markets off world.

Beniji Kaserlin reveals herself to be a potentate of a political movement named "Social Conscience". The movement is not mainstream but seems to be entirely legal. Its charter is the preservation of a free society and to ensure the continued absence of despotism, tyranny and totalitarianism. Beniji suspects the movement has been infiltrated. She fears that SC itself has become a target. She wishes to turn matters to the movement's advantage.

She needs a group of individuals, offworlders, unknowns, with mercenary motivations and no local connections. The mission is to find proof positive that three named individuals are, in fact, members of the proscribed organization called RIM, the Real Independence Movement. She can provide little by way of leads other than the individual's names and places of employment. She suggests a good place to start would be to do some background checks followed by a little second storey work.

Kalath Minagoran, Beniji explains, is a potentate of SC and is a senior customs official at the highport. She suspects him of being a member of a RIM cell operating in the port. Any computer records showing favorable customs treatment of any known RIM activists would be sufficient. Any other intelligence on the organization or its members would be extremely useful.

Arion Krell has a day job as a weapons trainer in the local system navy. Beniji reveals that his other role is as a lieutenant in the "Social Conscience" secret combat arm known as the Hand of the Justice (colloquially known as The Fist). The Fist's primary purpose is to be ready for the day when freedom must again be defended from within. The Fist is not in any way legal and would probably be considered a terrorist organization for all it's ostensibly positive motivations.

The Fist stands ready to resist overt tyranny, but in the meantime there is plenty to do including the elimination of

demagogues, would be dictators and anyone that would jeopardize the greater stability and societal freedoms so far achieved. In Krell's case, Beniji suspects him to be weak and a danger to the movement's other members. She suspects him of having been the betrayer of a number of recently murdered "Social Conscience" agents. Any information linking him to the killings, the killers, or directly with RIM would suffice. His quarters, she suggests, would probably be a good place to start.

Linka Molliakoi is a minister in the Church of Celestial Consciousness and intelligence analyst for "Social Conscience". She sees most of the information gathered by "Social Conscience". She operates out of her temple in Styles Square, an important cultural hub. A wily old fox, according to Beniji, Linka is unlikely to be easy to reveal. The temple is a good place to start but the best results could well be achieved from checking out her associates. Care is cautioned as her tendrils run deep and wide in local society.

RESOLUTION:

"Social Conscience" has indeed been infiltrated by agents of the radical terrorist organization called the Real Independence Movement. The RIM (known to the media as 'Rhyme') has as its stated aim the return of the principals of their distant forefathers. They want strong, firm leadership for the world to maintain its economic and political independence. The aim of the infiltrators is twofold. Firstly, they wish to ensure that the efforts of "Social Conscience" to hinder RIM activities are rendered impotent. Secondly, it wishes to publicly discredit "Social Conscience" and all it stands for.

Kalath Minagoran already knows that an off-world group have been hired by someone within "Social Conscience". Her bureaucratic efforts to frustrate them will be truly impressive. When she discovers that they have a ship in port (and she will), they will find themselves tied up in bureaucratic knots for months. If things go badly for her, she will orchestrate a plant of contraband. An arrest warrant will see the party out of the way for quite some time unless they already have hard evidence against her.

Arion Krell has a RIM mission to frustrate the efforts of The Fist. He has been warned that a group is seeking out RIM members but knows little else. Cut off from his RIM chain of command for long periods, he is decidedly uncertain and even edgy. A number of navy people are growing suspicious. His "Social Conscience" fellows fear his betrayal. His RIM handlers fear his cowardice. He doesn't know it, but his days are numbered. At the appropriate time (probably when the player characters are at hand) an assassin will kill Krell. Pre-established evidence will point to the travellers.

Linka Molliakoi has masterfully saved quite a few RIM members from the clutches of The Fist. She is aware that Arion Krell's position is a threat. Ironically, her superiors in "Social Conscience" have warned her that Krell can no longer be trusted. An off-world RIM operative will arrive in a few

days to eliminate that little loose end. The player characters' activities will provide an excellent opportunity for this agent to deflect blame and establish a frame-up.

Finally, if the mission succeeds, Beniji Kaserlin will hand over a collection of archaeological artifacts. These will fetch between 2D (2d6) x Cr10,000. The party will also have made a seriously influential friend.

AMBER ZONE: GOING FIRST

SITUATION:

Duluk Stellane came to this world 16 years ago with his two year old daughter Kiara, having buried her mother and older brother and left behind a life wrecked by tragedy. Their deaths were an accident, but Duluk could not remain in his old life. He needed to make a new start and a semi-wild frontier world seemed like a good prospect. He brought his only surviving child, his daughter, and set about building up a small manufacturing business. Today he is reasonably prosperous.

His daughter Kiara Stellane has 'gone native' to a great extent. She considers herself a local, and her father a dear but out of touch old man. After spending an increasing amount of time right out on the frontiers of society, she has fallen in love with the way of life of a segment of the planetary population. Descended from an early, unsuccessful, colony mission these people reverted to a semi-nomadic lifestyle. They do have some villages and even towns, but people often wander between them and a significant segment of the population do not have any permanent home. The semi-nomads get on well enough with the technologically-advanced settlers who came later. Neither has the numbers that would require huge amounts of land, and their homelands are divided by both a tradition of mutual respect for the other's territory and a very real barrier in the form of a broad region of rocky desert.

The semi-nomads are colloquially known as 'Firsters' on planet, since they are descended from the first colonists. Their lifestyle is simple in the extreme but they have a great cultural heritage. Their oral traditions go back millennia, and they have produced a number of great poets. Occasionally some of the 'Laters', as the later, more advanced colonists are known, visit the Firsters or even go to live with them permanently. Some Firsters go the other way, but not so many.

Kiara is one of those Laterers who finds the life of a Firster attractive, preferring it to the high-tech, high-stress life of the Laterers. As a newly recognized adult she has taken the appropriate steps to cut herself off from her old life, which included booking her high-tech belongings into a government run holding station for safekeeping. The local governments (or what passes for one on the Firster side) are quite supportive of those who choose to change allegiance, believing that individuals must be allowed to find their own way.

Kiara's unexpected departure worried Duluk, but to make matters worse he has received an urgent and distressing vid-call from her. The vid-call was cut-off before she was able to say anything, but he was left with a vision of her bedraggled, with sun burnt lips, wearing sandy rags in what looked like a Firster desert tent. The authorities dismissed Duluk's worries as those of an offworlder who just doesn't

understand the planetary culture. It is common for young people who have 'Gone First' to experience an initial homesickness, but it usually passes and they almost always reject outside intervention. The government has sent a request for information about Kiara to the major southern settlements, but a response might take months. Quite likely one will never be made.

The authorities were not totally unsympathetic to Duluk, and have been able to narrow her location at the time of the call to a 100 hundred kilometer square area in at the edge of the desert region that lies between the two cultures' homelands. Duluk has turned to an old friend, who is a shipping agent for many free traders. Together they have decided the best approach is to hire offworld help to locate and if necessary, recover, Kiara. Duluk's friend has contacted the characters to see if they are interested in helping out. Duluk has Cr20,000 to fund this mission, he will be willing to offer the characters half up front, with the rest payable if they successfully locate his daughter and bring her home if that is what she wants. If she does not wish to return he will respect her wishes if he can be sure she is not under duress.

RESOLUTION:

Kiara is actually in very deep trouble. 'Going First' turned out to be very easy, but she quickly realized she didn't know many people, and after a short period of welcome and support, survival in First culture is very much a matter of who and what you know. She eventually befriended a group of Firster youths who had come in to pick up some supplies at the settlement she had been dropped off at.

Unfortunately for Kiara, the youths she befriended are a group of rebellious Firsters who have been kicked out of their various tribes because of their appallingly inappropriate behavior. The youths were subsequently hired by an offworld corporation interested in doing some research in the ancient cities left over from the failed colonization effort, and needing some 'locals' to provide cover for their activities. The youths caught Kiara eavesdropping on their conversations about how cushy their job is, and made a panicky decision to force her to return to the desert campsite with them.

The corporation is interested in researching the original culture and technology of the early colonists, and they are not adverse to digging up burial sites and poking around in tombs, which would deeply upset the Firsters. The youths do not really know what is going on, and are simply helping allay local suspicions. Kiara has been forced to do menial work around the camp, and since she snuck into one of the researcher's tents to make her distress call, has been restricted to the youths' area of the camp.

AMBER ZONE: SHIPS IN THE MIST

SITUATION:

Dansone is a hell-world with a dense corrosive atmosphere. At low altitudes the acidic mists are lethal, though it is possible for humans to live high up in hilly or mountainous country. Despite the obvious unsuitability of the world, it was colonized by a small group some years back. They live in a sheltered area at the top of a range of hills and operate a basic starport. The entire planetary population lives in this area; about 700 people all told. Their main income comes from chemical extraction from the atmospheric vapor. Theirs is a hazardous lifestyle, and they never venture down into the mists beyond the hardened extraction plants. Anyone who would choose to descend into the corrosive hell 'down there' must be quite mad, the locals think.

However, Dr Alex Levei wants to do just that. He has heard rumors that there are spacecraft remains in the bottom of one of the deep valleys. They may be of alien origin in which case they are well worth the risk inherent in finding them. When the party meets Dr. Levei, he is searching for a team to help him travel to and explore the ships. He is willing to pay Cr1,000 per week per person for the time it takes to travel to and study the ships. If this requires traveling to Dansone, he will also pay for Middle Passage tickets.

If the party has a starship with significant cargo capacity (at least 30 tons), then Dr Levei would be willing to charter the ship to get him and his equipment to the planet. He insists that all members of the party have Vacc Suit skill, and that someone in the party have skill in driving tracked ATVs. He wants someone in the party with starship Engineering skill if possible.

Dr Levei will provide a TL15 tracked ATV and TL15 hostile environment suits that are specially designed to resist the corrosive atmosphere of the valleys on Dansone, probably for as long as several weeks. The ATV is stocked with food, water, and other consumables for the party to last at least two weeks. The ATV's equipment locker includes: mechanical, electrical, and metalwork tool kits, a medical kit, a lock pick set, radiation counter, five atmosphere testers, five 30m lengths of acid resistant rope, four rifles and four handguns with fifty rounds of ammo each, recording equipment (still and holographic), and several boxes filled with small containers of white powder which the professor says is a chemical somewhat similar to baking soda.

RESOLUTION:

The party travels through the hills for a few days before coming to the north end of the inhabited 'island'. The locals they meet are interested in the party, its technology, and its intentions. When the idea of going into the deep valleys to study the ships is brought up, reactions are split

between earnest attempts to dissuade the adventurers on safety grounds, contempt for their stupidity, and at least one example of real fear. Some locals believe that 'devils' live in the hell of the lower valley and disturbing them may endanger everyone on the planet.

Once north of the settlement, the land begins to get lower in general, though there are a long series of smaller ridges and valleys going generally north. As the group descends, the atmosphere goes from breathable to slightly hazardous, then downright lethal. Long before the group reaches the valley floors, they are engulfed in corrosive mist that restricts visibility to a few meters and seems to interfere with other instruments too.

The route to the wrecks is not very well plotted, though the location of the wrecks is pretty well defined – if you are in a ship in orbit. For those that have to make their way through the corrosive soup, navigation is a real challenge. Once the party is in the area of the wrecks they may need to check several valleys to find them.

One interesting thing that the characters will discover is that plant and animal life in the valleys is only slightly less common and varied than on the mountains. Plants tend toward mosses and fungi more than other types. One of the fungi types that is unknown on the mountains looks like a Terran toadstool and can grow taller than 1.5 meters. Animal life is primarily insect, though variants of armadillo-like creatures are spotted. They appear to be omnivorous. A larger creature (about 1.5 meters long) looks like a cross between an anteater and an armadillo. The party is most likely to meet this kind if walking outside in a "toadstool forest." If the party investigates, it will find this to be this world's top predator even though it is omnivorous, with a diet enriched by toadstool spores.

As the party travels north, the geology shifts from tectonic plate edge mountain range to land forms of volcanic origin. An increasing number of hot springs and eventually geysers will be noticed. The sulfur taint of the atmosphere will increase greatly near any of these active hot spots, sometimes to a level that will endanger the ATV and definitely the suits.

Events the Referee might impose during travel include:

Earthquakes

Thin crust over sinkhole (empty or full of hot water)

Active volcano or lava flow

Acid lake

Landslide

Animal or insect attack

Toadstool spore in the ATV, grows quickly at first then dies without sulfur

When the party finally arrives at the wrecks they will find there are several of them. They are quite similar and look to be about 600 tons each. Covering most of the tops and about halfway up the sides is plant growth. The ships now

look a bit more like small mesas than they do ships. They appear to have been streamlined originally.

As the party arrives and starts looking for entrances to the ships they will find that the airlocks after a little digging should be usable. The seals on the airlock doors have been eaten away by the acids in the air, rain, and soil. Even the hull plating is showing serious corrosion problems, and all external markings have been etched away.

Inside, the party will find less direct corrosion and more damage from plants and insects. Dr Levai will be in his element, taking measurements and pictures of absolutely everything, and the drone of the professor's voice making notes may annoy other members of the party. He will constantly be stopping to point the cameras at various bits that might give clues to the origins of the ships. The first ship turns out to have crashed, and the large openings in the hull allowed the plant and animal life to work over the interior pretty well. There are a number of toadstools in various places in the ship, particularly in what might have been the bridge. The second ship seems to be in better condition inside, though it too has a number of plants and animals living inside. In fact, the bridge in the second ship seems to have toadstools only in front of where the control panels likely were. The second ship also has control panels and markings that are still discernible. The control panels are oddly spherical and the few markings are hexagonal. After the professor has time to study his recordings he will determine that the ships are of Hiver design. He will want to make one more trip into the second ship to pick up a few artifacts that are more peculiarly Hiver in origin.

Once the characters are familiar with the environment around the ships and are more concerned with getting the job done than their environment, the Referee might like to throw in a challenge like an animal attack or natural hazard.

Once Dr Levai is done with the ships the party can turn south toward the starport. In the next valley south, through which they had come on the journey north, the party will find a fresh stream of lava pouring out of a hillside. Dr Levai is concerned as to whether the lava will reach the ships, but it looks like it would take some months at least for the lava to run that direction if it ever did. He will still want to hurry back to see if he can arrange to get the ships moved to a safer location (though how that might be done presents an engineering challenge). Though the party is now following a route somewhat familiar from the outbound journey, the Referee will want to roll more often for mishaps as Dr Levai urges the driver to greater speed.

Once back at the starport, Dr Levai requests the party's assistance with his salvage operation if they have done a good job for him. If they don't want to do the salvage mission, he will pay them the agreed amount. He might also be persuaded to write a letter of introduction to his colleagues.

AMBER ZONE: ACID EXTRACTION

SITUATION:

While in a starport lounge, the players are approached by a very tall man with black hair and huge hands, who is dressed in coveralls that have seen better days. Mazun Havelock, as he introduces himself, is a co-founder and director of Corex LIC. He offers to buy the players a drink, and indicates that he might have some work to offer them. If they accept Havelock will show the PCs to a table that is occupied by a man who he introduces as Gillian Best. Best is the other co-founder and director of Corex. Best stands to shake the players hands, and organizes the drinks while Havelock explains what he has asked the PCs over for.

Havelock and Best are looking to charter a Starship, at 10% above normal price, to take them to Dansone and back. Dansone is a nearby world with a very nasty corrosive atmosphere, and Corex hopes to negotiate a contract to provide atmospheric processing equipment to the colonists there in return for rights to set up a mineral extraction operation. As they can't guarantee that there will be a starship to bring them back they will pay for the crew to stay on Dansone and do some work for them. The charter will involve the shipment of hazardous material, and the work involves the hazardous environment on Dansone itself. The players are offered Cr5,000 each for the week spent working between the charters. This is in addition to the fee for chartering the ship both ways.

Havelock and Best recently patented a new form of gaseous filtering technique and they formed Corex to exploit it, however they found that there was not enough incentive to use the new technique in the production of any product. None of the companies they contacted who produced filters were interested in a product that reduced ongoing revenues. The companies saw that the new technique would reduce the number of times that filters would need to be replaced and this would reduce their ongoing profits from the existing market in replacement parts.

Havelock and Best were about to give up and do something else when a representative of Ling Standard Products (LSP) approached them. It turned out that LSP had been looking into this type of technique for the extraction of metals from tainted atmospheres as a low cost, and highly efficient, mining process, however Havelock and Best had got their first. LSP proposed that they would fund a year trial of the technique to analyze its effectiveness. If the trials are successful then LSP proposes to purchase exclusive license to use the technique, and a controlling interest in Corex, for a very large sum of money.

Havelock and Best looked around the region and decided that there was a need for sulfur and sulfuric acid for

industrial purposes. They thought that Dansone would be an excellent place to start the trial. Having researched sales and distribution of the finished products, they are now heading out to Dansone to negotiate for mineral rights in exchange for clean air and ongoing revenues, having already agreed permission for an initial week-long experiment.

If the players agree Havelock and Best will arrange to be on board in two days with the necessary equipment. Havelock will authorize the PCs to purchase fuel and life-support equipment for a month, and will urge the PCs to offer passage and freight space to Dansone as long as Corex can take 50% of any profit. Havelock encourages this, as the charter costs will be recovered as an expense of the trial, while any extra monies earned from the charter can go directly to Corex as new business. This will increase the sale price of Corex if the trial works. It is therefore in everyone's interest to make a little money on the side whilst on charter.

RESOLUTION:

The equipment that needs to be taken to Dansone is a prototype-filtering machine, ancillary devices, an advanced base, an ATV, an enclosed Grav Vehicle, and numerous hazardous environmental suits, filter masks and breathing apparatus. Upon arrival and unloading at Danson, Havelock will start the negotiations with the bureaucracy, while Best and the PCs ready the equipment for the initial experiment. The players will have to set up the portable base at a suitable location and work with the ATV and Grav to set up the filtering machine in the one of the acid mist-filled valleys below the settlement.

The device filters the acid from the atmosphere. Some of it is concentrated into sulfuric acid while the rest is extracted as pure sulfur and made into bars that are stored in a light water resistant oil. The resulting clean air and water are piped away from the machine as waste products. The acid and sulfur bars need to be moved from the machine to the ship where they need to be stored safely for transportation. After the Corex team have returned to their home base the sulfur bars and acid will be analyzed for purity.

The players will need to set-up a corrosion-treated pipeline for the clean air and water to be transferred to the portable base. This will involve the negotiation of rugged mountainous canyons with the added danger of the corrosive atmosphere, acid storms and other dangers of the terrain. The air and water transported to the base will need to have the amount of sulfur left in them analyzed.

The players and Best will find the locals friendly and helpful for the most part. They will be offered advice on materials, transport and storage of the acid and sulfur, on weather forecasts, and on times to descend into the depths. This advice will prove invaluable, but it is accompanied by warnings not to venture too deep into the valleys as there are 'bad things' down there in addition to the hazardous environment. Nobody has ever seen anything of course, but

there are old tales of when the early colonists were foolish enough to venture down into the deep valleys.

The Referee should decide if there really is something inimical lurking in the mists, or if this is just a figment of the locals' collective imagination. There is enough danger to go round already, with the hostile environment to contend with. People concentrating on the task at hand may forget to take proper care and get themselves into trouble, and there is always a chance for mistakes or accidents to create new hazards. Perhaps some other band of offworlders might be on-planet at the same time, exploring in the depths against the locals' advice. If they get into trouble the travellers will be the only ones able to help them.

Part 2: Mercenary Tickets

MERCENARY TICKET: JOINT OPERATIONS TEAM

MISSION TYPE: CADRE
UNIT SIZE: SQUAD

BACKGROUND:

Jeysi is a very wet world inhabited by both humans and large numbers of dolphins. Relations between the two groups have never been very good, and contact has been limited for much of the time. Open conflict has occurred at times. The situation has not been eased by sporadic attacks on human and dolphin groups. Both have blamed the others for these attacks (sometimes rightly) but it is gradually becoming clear that there is a third group involved. Who these people are and why they feel the need to massacre small populations or work groups is a mystery but the two populations of Jeysi have finally agreed on something – they need to deal with this threat together.

Human and dolphin leaders have agreed to cooperate in an historic venture: the creation of a joint human/dolphin commando force trained and equipped to be the elite of the two forces and a symbol of new cooperation between the two races.

MISSION:

The two sides have decided to create the Joint Operations Team (JOT), a joint sea/air/land commando group of squadron size (about 200 of all ranks). A group of mercenaries with experience in commando operations are to be hired to train the force, which will be equipped to TL7/8 standard (the most that the locals can afford at this time) with inter-operable equipment for both humans and dolphins. The training cadre must then remain in the region with the unit for its first four months, acting as cadre. The mission is success-only.

RESOLUTION:

All of the recruits will be drawn from the experienced dolphin pods and from the human defense forces. The first two months of bringing their skills up to commando level will proceed with no major snags. Obviously the physical differences between the two races will raise a number of training issues that need to be addressed, and there will be bickering and mutual mistrust. However, nothing major goes wrong during this initial training period.

The remainder of the contract will involve the gradual integration of the JOT into the operations of the human and dolphin forces on the planet. “The Threat” is a vicious, powerful and mysterious enemy, one whose capabilities and limitations are unknown. The cadre will discover that there are very few citizens of Jeysi who have run into these unexplained adversaries and survived the encounter. Therefore, the cadre must concentrate on teaching



excellence in leadership, courage and resourcefulness, as well as military skills. This will make all the difference in any future encounter with the unknown enemy.

The Threat turns out to be a species of semi-intelligent squid-like creatures that are both adaptable and immensely powerful in combat. They are also very difficult to kill, but this is not the main problem the operation faces. The main issue is that the two groups simply do not trust one another and find it hard to work as a team. Accusations that one side or the other did not pull its weight in an encounter breed further ill-feeling, with a good chance of wrecking the project. The cadre will have to do more than train the JOT; they will have to teach them to work together. The best way is of course to give them a shared victory – but that itself might be a problem.

MERCENARY TICKET: DISSIDENTS ON ICE

**MISSION TYPE: COMMANDO
UNIT SIZE: SQUAD**

BACKGROUND:

The government of Tecred is a legitimate but extremely unpleasant dictatorship which remains in power by giving its citizens what they have been conditioned to want most – stability, order and a distinct lack of change or progress. There is nothing about the activities of the world's government that would provoke Imperial censure. Taxes are paid, quotas are met and Imperial High Law is not broken. However, the dictatorship is very close to the wind in some areas. One such is the summary execution of certain kinds of dissident. Another is the treatment of those who the state would like to shoot but cannot legally do so for lack of evidence.

These unfortunates are forcibly placed in suspended animation in low berths 'pending further investigation', which means indefinitely. The dictatorship spouts a lot of rhetoric about sparing these people the experience of being in jail while their case is investigated – if found innocent they will not have lost months or years of their lives. However, the fact is that these people, once on ice, stay there. It is not in the state's interest to investigate their case since they are out of the way. No High Laws are (quite) broken as it cannot be shown that the accused will not be granted a fair trial or released at some point.

The Imperial representative for the world, Sir Leine Biarin, is shocked and horrified at the sentients' rights abuses being carried out, but as Imperial representative of a world that is not quite breaking the law, he cannot act without clear evidence. He has decided to obtain such evidence.

MISSION:

The mission is a success-only contract for a squad-sized unit to covertly approach a cryogenic prison in a remote area and retrieve as many of the inmates as possible. This will require crash-waking them and getting them to a vehicle to make rendezvous with a ship Sir Leine will have on standby. He can manage to have small arms smuggled close to the prison site but cannot be directly involved. He wants to get the inmates out of the system and to a press conference that he has orchestrated through third parties. Once their story becomes public he will then offer to investigate to 'disprove such wild claims', which will grant him the chance to go in with a Ministry of Justice team and bring the dictator's wrongdoing to light.

RESOLUTION:

Sir Leine is entirely sincere in his intentions. He is not a native of Tecred but was given a fief there a couple of years ago

MERCENARY TICKET: Q-SHIP

MISSION TYPE: ESCORT

UNIT SIZE: STARSHIP CREW

BACKGROUND:

There is an ongoing problem with corsairs in the region, and part of the problem is often that the local patrols are too easily avoided. It seems that the corsairs have some local help, as patrol vessels time and again miss corsairs by a matter of days, even when 'surprise' patrols are instigated. In particular corsairs heavily affect Wulo, as it has a small population heavily dependent upon interstellar trade. To counter this, the Wulo World Council purchased a high-tech Q-ship from an offworld source through a third party, in the hope that they could avoid tipping their hand. This ship appears to be a 400-ton subsidized merchant, but that is actually a heavily armed anti-corsair vessel.

The Q-ship never made it to Wulo. Apparently the corsairs found out about the vessel before she even left dock, and it was ambushed by several corsair vessels whilst en route to Arnigi. The Wulo World Council suspects loose lips at the starport, and have decided to solve the problem another way.

MISSION:

The World Council of Wulo is looking to either hire a mercenary Q-ship, or a free trader willing to have their armament upgraded, whose crew are willing to take on a regular route through some of the worst systems for corsairs. Obviously the council would prefer a dedicated mercenary ship that has a proven track record, but there are some advantages to upgrading an existing trader – primarily that the existing reputation of the ship would prevent that corsairs being suspicious of it.

If the characters' ship needs an armament upgrade, then the council is willing to pay for additional popup triple pulse laser or missile turrets, and for the modifications necessary to add fighter launch capability to the cargo hold, as well as up to four fighters and their pilots. Note that the more the council needs to do to make the ship a Q-ship, the less reward the characters can expect.

A fully kitted out mercenary Q-ship will be paid Cr100,000 for each month's hire, whilst a merchant ship that requires extensive modification will only be paid Cr40,000 for each month's hire, and in addition will be expected to disarm at the end of the contract. There is a Cr10,000 bonus for identifying a corsair ship, a Cr100,000 bonus for each corsair vessel disabled/destroyed and a Cr50,000 bonus for each corsair base identified. On top of this, the World Council is willing to offer salvage rights to any corsair ship the mercs disable, once their techs have examined the ship for evidence and

when the old representative died. At first he was impressed with the orderly society, but gradually became aware of just how sinister the world's government actually is. Sir Leine believes that it is his duty to put a stop to this oppression even if it means bending the rules somewhat. He will come right out and say that he does not care if the guards are killed or even shot while prisoners – if the team does not get caught it won't matter, and the dictator's thugs have it coming. It sounds like this is a personal crusade.

The installation is in a remote area of a high-law world, but once the team is on-planet then the mission becomes simply a matter of not arousing suspicion while they get into position. All Sir Leine can provide is handguns, SMGs and a couple of military shotguns, but the installation is guarded only by a dozen bored security personnel with batons and sidearms. There are a couple of shotguns in a locker, but nobody is expecting trouble and the team should have no problems overpowering the guards. However, there is still the problem of waking some or all of the 200 or so inmates. Which ones should be saved? How many can the team get out? Realistically they can rescue no more than a dozen and will have to leave the rest behind.

Reaction to the assault will not be quick. There is no plan for this, and so the response will be uncoordinated. Law enforcement and military units will be sent to the area but will take a while to arrive. Once they do, they just keep on coming – the locals' response is as vigorous as it is confused. The result will be a running fight as the team try to reach their rendezvous point. The inmates may not be cooperative, which will not help matters.

If the team manage to reach the pickup point they can get offworld, and events will play out as planned – an investigation is soon launched. However, if the assault was extremely aggressive, and if captured guards really were murdered, then security camera footage of this will be used to help justify the policy of keeping people who'd do something like this out of the way. The team's actions may in the end be the factor lets the dictatorship of Tecred off the hook.

intelligence to use against the corsairs – and incidentally ensured that the vessel really was a corsair.

RESOLUTION:

The characters will need to equip their ship and then begin operating a fake trade route that takes them into harm's way. It is up to the characters to decide what route they want to take. Vessels have been hit in several systems but mainly in those with poor starports and little in the way of naval presence.

Imperial Navy patrol ships sweep part of the route about once a month, usually visiting one or two systems for a period of a few days each. There are thus long periods where there is no naval presence in the troubled systems, though corporate and Scout Service vessels do help take up some of the slack when they are passing through. Tukera Lines has established an unofficial 'courtesy convoy' system whereby its armed freighters will allow smaller vessels to accompany them and shelter under the big ship's guns. Thus far no convoy has been attacked.

The corsair raids do not have a particular frequency, but they do manage to avoid the scheduled patrols. This is due to informants in the ports along the way, taking basic measures such as reading shipping manifests and news reports for the most part, though the corsairs do have a number of officials in their collective pocket. The more assistance the characters accept from the authorities, the smaller their chance of an interception.

If the characters manage to identify a corsair vessel and live to report it, that will be a minor success. If they severely damage, or disable a corsair vessel that will be a major success in the council's eyes. To identify a corsair base, or locals harboring corsairs, would be a great coup and the subsequent military response would likely put a dent in corsair operations for some time.

MERCENARY TICKET: THE HOLE

MISSION TYPE: RECON UNIT SIZE: SQUAD

BACKGROUND:

Deep Sea Mining Station 34 sits in some 1200 meters of water astride an underwater mountain chain rich in rare ores far from the populated centers of the watery world of Graygreen. Most citizens of Graygreen don't know of its existence, and the majority would be horrified to learn of it. Originally, '34 or "The Hole" as it is referred to by those who know of its existence, was a largely automated deep sea mining platform. But the robots alone could not deal with the instability of the rock in this area, and costs began to skyrocket as humans miners had to be employed to watch the robots and deal with the things they couldn't handle.

At this time the Graygreen government found it had a dire need of a place to send dissidents who could not be allowed to surface again, but it balked at actually killing them. This availability of warm bodies coincided with a need for cheap labor to operate the mining machinery, which was hard to find on Graygreen where there are relatively few people hard up enough to take on such work. They solved both problems by turning DSMS34 into a detention centre.

The warders inhabit a way station that is a mere 25 meters below the surface, where the freight submersibles load. The detainees live in the working part of the mine some 1200 meters deeper and are left to their own devices. The wardens send food and pipe oxygen to the mine. Most of the time the warders do nothing but process prisoners who are on their way down, and receive processed ore back. Every now and then a problem comes up that requires the direct attention of one of the civilian crew, a geologist or an engineer, and can't be handled by one of the remotes. When this happens the warders have to mount an armed expedition down the Hole. Very rarely someone makes an escape attempt or there is a riot. The usual solution is to cut off the oxygen supply until everyone is subdued.

So far there has only ever been one release of a prisoner and one successful escape, though the escapee died when he ran out of air during the long journey back to civilization in the hold of an automated freight submersible.

MISSION:

A government representative approaches the unit commander personally, claiming to have been given his name by a former employer. The rep states that this is an emergency reconnaissance mission to determine the status of a Deep Sea Mining Station. Contact has been lost with the station during a severe storm. The continuing storm makes effective orbital surveillance impossible.

No regular units are currently available for the operation, and the reconnaissance must occur before the next automated freight submersible arrives at the station in four hours. The representative will not reveal that '34 is in fact a detention centre. The team will be provided with a G-Carrier if it is not already equipped with one, and the authorities will arrange any reasonable other (non-weapon) equipment as requested, such as diving equipment, and the like.

When the recon team arrives the storm will not have blown itself out, so the G-Carrier driver will require some careful maneuvering to make a successful landing on the platform's surface pad.

This ticket has four possible outcomes in the style of a Patron Encounter. The Referee should roll 1D to determine which is in effect, or might invent a wholly new situation.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. There is nothing wrong at the mining station, other than that the fierce storm has destroyed the station's long-range communication systems beyond local repair. However, the warders will be very wary of unexpected visitors with a G-carrier, treating them as possible accomplices for an attempted escape. The mercs will have to be careful to avoid a disastrous firefight.

2-3. The storm has severely damaged the surface part of the mining station. The surface pad is destroyed, oxygen-pumping equipment is non-functional and there is no obvious means of accessing the station other than dropping into the ocean. If the mercs have had enough foresight to bring diving equipment they can reach the upper module relatively easily. Once there, they face the same issues as in 1, plus, once they convince the wardens of their bona fides, they will have to consider what they can do to get air back to the base or the occupants out. Additionally, the g-carrier will not be able to loiter in the area for long in these weather conditions.

4-5. There has been a successful revolt at the station. The miners/detainees have managed to gain control of the upper module during the storm. They have taken several hostages and are waiting the arrival of the freight submersible to escape. When the mercs arrive the escapees will try to pretend that nothing is wrong and that they are the wardens. Of course, someone in the merc unit is bound to notice something is wrong...

6. The "Bughunt" Scenario. After a brief burst of hysterical comms from the criminals far below, all contact is lost with the mining platform. The warders flood the complex with enough sedative gas to make all the prisoners fall unconscious, fearing a revolt or attempted jail-break, but somebody has to go down and see what really happened. When the merc unit arrives, only the civilian personnel are left in the upper module, and they are very twitchy, having heard nothing but screams from the warders who went down to investigate....

MERCENARY TICKET: WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME

**MISSION TYPE: RETRIEVAL
UNIT SIZE: SQUAD**

BACKGROUND:

Kelly Terell, a relative of the owner/operators of the highport is currently wanted for charges of murder in the neighboring system of Kandrie. She has fled to her home on Miskel and is hiding out in one of the small island communities, begging protection with her family, who are quite powerful in local politics. Security cannot actively search for her without offending this family, which would lead to many difficulties.

MISSION:

Kelly is a very dangerous, very unstable woman. She is cold and calculating, and able to manipulate people easily. She has convinced her family of her innocence and family being what it is, they are protecting her. Security knows the details of her crimes and has a psychological profile that is pretty convincing of her ability to carry out these acts. To avoid offending the local families, they have decided to quietly hire a small mercenary party to apprehend Mrs. Terell.

Security has a small fund set aside for eventualities such as this. They are able to pay Cr5,000 for the arrest itself. In addition, upon returning the prisoner to Kandrie, the recovering party will receive a Cr30,000 reward for the capture of Kelly once her identity is confirmed. Expenses such as transport will also be reimbursed.

Security will provide any intelligence they are able as long as the PCs ensure that the local families do not blame them for the investigation or the arrest. The mercs will be on their own in finding, pursuing, and capturing the prisoner, not to mention extraction. Property damage and casualties are to be kept to an absolute minimum, and the mercs will be held legally responsible for any damages or injuries that occur. Transport to Kandrie aboard a commercial ship can be arranged. If the team thinks to ask, it is possible to have the suspect shipped in a low berth for security, though this comes close to a sentients' rights violation and needs to be treated with care. Handover will be made at Kandrie Highport and the team's involvement will end there.

RESOLUTION:

The Mercs are headed for a mess. The clan, over one hundred individuals, is NOT going to cooperate with the investigation. Though there may be some that actually think that she did commit the crimes, on this world, family takes precedence. The PCs will be very hard pressed to find someone to talk, even among Kelly's enemies in the family, and the information obtained will be very limited.

On the other hand, when Kelly finds out about the Mercenaries searching for her, she will go out of her way to prepare a reception. She will gather her closest friends and ensure that the mercs' transportation is sabotaged, their equipment is damaged or destroyed, and maybe one or two sniper attacks depending on the mercs' actions. The attacks will become more and more serious the closer the party gets. The attackers cover their tracks well – they have been playing the violence and intimidation game for a long time.

Even upon Kelly's capture, she has already told her family she'd rather be dead than sentenced to prison, and her closest cronies will try to carry out her last wishes. Kelly has managed to acquire a shoulder mounted surface to air missile unit and as the PCs set off for on the starport they will be attacked by this. If they are shot down, security will arrive at the crash site within a half hour to render aid. Everyone will be locked up until an 'official' story can be worked out, and if Kelly survives the crash, she will most likely be returned to her family due to political pressure and the PCs escorted back to the highport with empty hands.

If Kelly is successfully captured and taken off world, she will do what she can to make a nuisance of herself during the entire trip to Kandrie, and do everything in her power to escape. If she is successfully delivered, the highport authorities will reimburse all expenses as agreed as well as pay the bounty for Mrs. Terell.

MERCENARY TICKET: IN COUNTRY

MISSION TYPE: PATROL
UNIT SIZE: PLATOON/COMPANY

BACKGROUND:

Diiskaii has been troubled by political divisions for some years now, and open fighting between well-organized insurgent groups and the planetary security force has occurred on and off for most of that time. Things are quiet at present, and optimists believe that the rebels have given up the struggle. However, the local intelligence agency has been receiving reports (which are considered reliable) that a battalion-strength rebel force is carrying out exercises in the vast and impenetrable swamps to the south of the world's main inhabited zone. Acting on this information, the planetary security force has been carrying out patrols in the area. The intelligence service has good reason to suspect that informers in the security force have warned the insurgents of such sweeps in the past, thus explaining why no contact has occurred so far.

An upcoming ceremony, marking the end of the last open hostilities between the insurgents and security forces will draw the majority of the security force to the capital for about three weeks. The insurgents, if any still exist, will know that they should not expect a sweep during this period, so the intelligence service is taking the opportunity to insert what should be an unexpected (and also information-secure) force into the area.

MISSION:

A military officer (actually a member of Military Intelligence) approaches the unit commander and states that they have need of a recon unit to search for some possible insurgents. He will explain that the recon sweeps need to be continued during the ceremony, and the world's meager security forces cannot handle both activities without external support. Standard salaries will be paid for the operation, with bonus clauses if the unit makes contact and inflicts a defeat on the rebels or brings back useful recon information about them.

The patrol will be landed by G-carrier to carry out a sweep on foot from one way-point to another. Each sweep is estimated to take five days on foot after which the team will be recovered by the same G-carriers, given two days rest at the closest security force base, and then dropped in for another mission. Three sweeps will be carried out during the period of the ceremonies and the contract. The patrols must be dropped and picked up away from the primary search area to avoid alerting the insurgents by G-carrier overflights, so contact is not expected on the first or last days of the sweep.

This mission is has several possible outcomes. The Referee may choose one, or may wish to roll 1D (1d6) to determine which outcome applies.

RESOLUTION: 1D6 (1D)

1. No Contact. Patrol is 'routine' and 'boring'. No recent evidence of insurgents is found.
2. Storm Front. The patrol gets a warning that a fierce tropical storm is bearing down on their position and they must dig in to wait out its effects. The storm will last three days. During this period roll again. If 2 is rolled again, the storm worsens and lasts longer. Remember the team is stuck in low-lying swamp during this storm. Creatures will be disturbed and looking for shelter as well, and some deeper sea creatures such as ten-tentacled squids, could be driven up out of the depths by the storm.
3. Deliverance. The patrol runs across a group of armed people living in the swamp. As long as they are not antagonized it will be easy to determine that they are not insurgents, but merely a bunch militant back-to-nature types. If, however the patrol annoys them, perhaps by treating them as yokels, they disappear into the swamp and begin laying traps and sniping at the patrol.
- 4 Light Contact. Sporadic sniping, traps and mines are encountered, as well as signs (camp sites, tracks, etc.) of a numerically superior force. No hard evidence of a large force is found, but the signs imply one. In fact, there is no large force, a small group is trying to give the impression of a large force. The referee is encouraged to give the players a chance to discover this, and to speculate on who is running the scam. Is it actual insurgents, or possibly Military Intelligence themselves?
5. Heavy Contact. The patrol discovers a well-camouflaged, occupied camp containing a significantly numerically superior force. It is protected quite well against orbital detection and has what looks like very effective communications and jamming equipment. There is also some surface-to-air missile capability. The patrol is forced to silence a sentry to avoid detection, and then must determine what plan to follow, whether to creep away hoping the sentry will not be noticed, or attack and hope surprise and confusion will allow them to escape. They may call for an extraction, but the G-carrier pilots will be unwilling to descend into a an area which might have surface-to-air missile coverage
- 6 Ambush. A numerically superior force ambushes the patrol. Most of the non-player patrol members are killed or wounded in the first volley. Through luck, the players gain an opportunity for escape. They are then hunted through the jungle as they try to make it back to the rendezvous point. If they manage to salvage the satellite up-link, they may call for an extraction but the G-carrier pilots will be unwilling to descend into a possible fire-fight.

NOTES:

During all patrols the Referee should make rolls for animal Encounter in the swampy terrain. Also, emphasize that the characters are never dry. Regardless of the outcome above,

once the patrol reaches the rendezvous point the Referee should roll 1d6 to determine when the G-carriers will arrive.

1. The G-carriers are early. The pilots will be waiting for the patrol when it arrives. They grouch about the patrol being late and getting their nice shiny G-carriers all muddy.
- 2-3. The G-carriers arrive on time.
- 4-5. The G-carriers are late. The Referee should determine just how late the G-Carrier will be (minutes, hours, days) depending on what the current situation is, and how nasty she feels. If nothing happened in the current sweep it might be fun to have them wait around for a day or two, dealing with more fauna.
6. The G-carriers are unavailable. Through a combination of circumstances, (storm damage, a sudden need to move some of the security force because of a disaster elsewhere, or whatever) no G-Carriers are available for at least 3 days. If the patrol can still make radio contact they will be told that they must travel some hundred kilometers to the coast where they may be extracted by a submersible.

Note that any delay of over two days, whether caused by late G-carriers, storm, or any other reason, will result in the patrol running out of rations unless extra rations were specifically asked for by the team. In that case, they will have to carry them for the entire mission.

MERCENARY TICKET: FIELD TEST

MISSION TYPE: CADRE
UNIT SIZE: SQUAD/PLATOON

BACKGROUND:

Combat Systems LIC used to be a big player in the arms market about 50 years ago, but the firm went into eclipse and then decline as much of its consumer base was taken by Instellarms and other weaponry firms. Combat Systems never quite faded away but was forced to sell off several of its regional operations in order to fund the long-term recovery of the firm. It gambled its success on a new range of lightweight combat and support vehicles intended for merc units and planetary forces on a tight budget. Cheap, reliable and easy to maintain yet reasonably capable in combat, the range should be the basis of Combat Systems' resurgence if it can prove itself in the field.

Soldiers are traditionally suspicious of anything new, and Combat Systems does not have much of a reputation any more. Some of the projects implemented in the declining days of the corporation failed rather badly and this has increased the general reluctance to try out the new gear in situations where its failure may be fatal to the user. To counter this, the firm has come up with an interesting solution.

Combat Systems has taken to acting as a third party in mercenary contracts, taking on responsibility for hiring and equipping a team for whatever jobs present themselves. A couple of small units have thus far benefited from the offer of a job and a couple of vehicles they can use on it – and keep afterwards. Generally the vehicles have performed well enough and this has generated favorable attention.

Now Combat Systems has become aware of a perfect situation for its largest project yet. The world of Sinjar has an ongoing insurgency out in the remote areas, and recently a number of regional bases have been set up to help combat the problem. Resupply of these bases has been problematical, and a new military formation is being raised in the form of specialist 'fighting-logistics' troops.

A handful of mercenaries (up to a platoon) are needed to act as advisors for the new force, which is to be equipped with vehicles supplied by Combat Systems LIC. The team will familiarize the locals with their new hardware and accompany their first missions as advisors.

The locals have been provided with twelve amphibious off-road transports, which are essentially a lightly armored truck carried on six big balloon tires similar to those used on an ATV. It mounts a mid-tech heavy machinegun in a cupola. Four 'escort variant' trucks have also been provided, along with two 'command variant' vehicles. All use the same chassis.

The escort variant has a 20mm autocannon in a larger turret and carries a squad of eight infantrymen in the back, who can fire through ports or debus to fight off a threat. The recon variant has the same armament but an up rated powerplant and communications equipment. It does not normally carry troops, though the excess space has not been entirely used up by the extra machinery.

This family of vehicles uses many common parts and is designed to be cheap to operate. All vehicles are armored only against small arms fire, though mine protection for the crew is good. These vehicles are obviously incapable of fighting tanks but do their main job well enough – their off-road performance is very impressive for wheeled vehicles and they seem well suited to fighting off insurgent ambushes.

MISSION:

The mercs will be paid standard salaries to train up a unit of local soldiers to operate the vehicles. They are told to expect a month of familiarization time and then a short operational deployment before retuning to training, evaluating the performance so far. Combat Systems offers a 50% bonus at the end of the contract if the mercs generate significant positive publicity.

Logistics is not a glamorous duty and the troops are almost all conscripts detailed to the job, some of them straight from basic. Their officers and NCOs are unenthusiastic and more than a little second-rate, and though they do not resist the merc attempts to train them, these people are slow learners. For the most part they are earnestly inept rather than stupid or deliberately awkward, though, and patient mercs will find them a pleasant crew to work with.

RESOLUTION:

Three weeks into the training period, new orders arrive. The unit is detailed to pick up an urgent load of medical supplies and ammunition and proceed to Outpost Oldendorff, which is under protracted attack. The troops exchange nervous looks at that; the outpost is a good two hundred KM out from the nearest base and the route to it is notorious for ambushes. Indeed, the first resupply column sent out was ambushed halfway and straggled home in a terrible state. No mention of the mercs is made in the orders, and no clarification is forthcoming. Simple fact is, though, that these inexperienced troops are sent out, they will be massacred.

The route to Outpost Oldendorff is mountainous and air support will be limited. However, opposition for most of the route will be light, consisting of mines, snipers and small ambushes intended to wear down or slow the convoy. Then, somewhat more than halfway, the insurgents spring their trap. Mines and roadblocks are used to contain the convoy while it is eliminated by insurgent infantry. Most of the latter have only small arms and cannot hurt the vehicles much – the previous convoy had only conventional trucks – but there are heavier weapons available.

The light armor of the new combat vehicles has bought the mercs and their charges a few moments. They will need to find a way out of the trap before it is too late.

MERCENARY TICKET: SELF-DEFENCE LESSONS

MISSION TYPE: CADRE
UNIT SIZE: SQUAD/PLATOON

BACKGROUND:

The world of Vista is sparsely colonized, with small communities scattered all across the globe. Over the last generation, however, a new influx of settlers has begun to arrive. Some are properly authorized by the Colonial Office and the world's loose government, but most are simply squatters who wish to grab some land and hold it until it is recognized as theirs. This has up to now not caused too much friction since the population is so low, but recently a band of squatters has occupied an area of fertile land near the town of Teben. At first the locals and the squatters tacitly agreed to ignore one another, but a steady influx of immigrants has led to tension over resources. It seems only a matter of time before the legitimate residents are edged out.

The only option seems to be to draw a line and enforce it, but the squatters are fairly well armed and while the locals have plenty of shotguns, hunting rifles and the like they are a peaceable lot and lack the confidence to take a stand against what they perceive as rough, aggressive and somewhat scary offworlders.

Thus the townsfolk have found the cash to bring in a small unit to train them and build confidence in the skills they need. They have no intention of provoking a fight with the newcomers; they just want to use their new capabilities as a bargaining chip and a deterrent. Some of the locals are resigned to the idea that they may actually have to fight but most cling to the belief that if they can take a strong stand backed by force of arms then they can retain what they see as theirs. What the squatters do elsewhere is someone else's problem.

MISSION:

A small unit of squad or possibly platoon size is needed to train a general militia up from the population over the course of two months. There will be over a hundred members, who cannot all train at once, and they will be armed with what they bring – hunting rifles and shotguns for the most part. All they need is basic weapons-handling and soldier-craft for the most part. Rudimentary small unit tactics are about all there will be time for.

However, a band of about a dozen locals are to be given more thorough training as leaders for the militia. These individuals will operate at the head of local militia rather than a unit, and thus need leadership and tactics skills rather than unit training. Most importantly, they will need confidence. The leaders will be more or less constantly in training and

weapons have been purchased for them. These consist of mid-tech assault rifles, handguns and body armor.

The locals do not want to confront the squatters, and are correct in thinking that even if they were to defeat them, others would eventually arrive. What is needed is a long-term solution that allows the locals to negotiate from a position of strength rather than just passively complaining about the expansion of their new neighbors.

RESOLUTION:

Some of the locals have a decent grasp of weapons use and not much else. They are used to potting vermin and taking out dangerous predators, but the idea of shooting at actual people is upsetting to most of them. They almost totally lack aggression and fighting spirit, and it is in this area that the mercs will have to do most of their work. The locals think that they are going to get an advanced course in marksmanship and maybe do some running around shouting orders at each other. If this is what the mercs deliver, they will fail utterly.

It will be necessary to train the militia to work together, to trust one another and to be aggressive in combat. This means finding training methods that foster these attitudes, and this will be resisted by the locals who don't want to participate in boxing matches or team-building raft-making exercises.

The newcomers will not react much at first – not with trained mercs on site – but later on in the training program a dispute over rights to use a ford some way from the settlement begins to spiral out of control. Word comes in that the squatters have started building what amounts to a fort at the crossing and are charging tolls from the outlying farmers who have to use it to get to town. The fort is a half-built affair of logs and earth, defended by a couple of dozen people with weapons ranging from handguns to assault rifles. Taking it out would be an easy job for the mercs, but this is not within the remit of their contract and more importantly it would solve little.

If the mercs just clear the fort (which the locals will urge them to do), this will simply spark an armed conflict between the two groups and after the mercs leave the locals will lose. A more effective solution is to demand its removal and, when it is removed, to lead the militia to remove it. They are not confident and not very skilled, so this action will make or break them. Success will give the militia the confidence to stand on their own two feet, and permit the locals to bargain from a much stronger position. Defeat will be a disaster for the town of Teben.

Part 3: Patron Encounters

PATRON ENCOUNTER: SHUTTLE PILOT

REQUIRED SKILLS: PILOT, SHIP'S BOAT
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: VACC SUIT

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

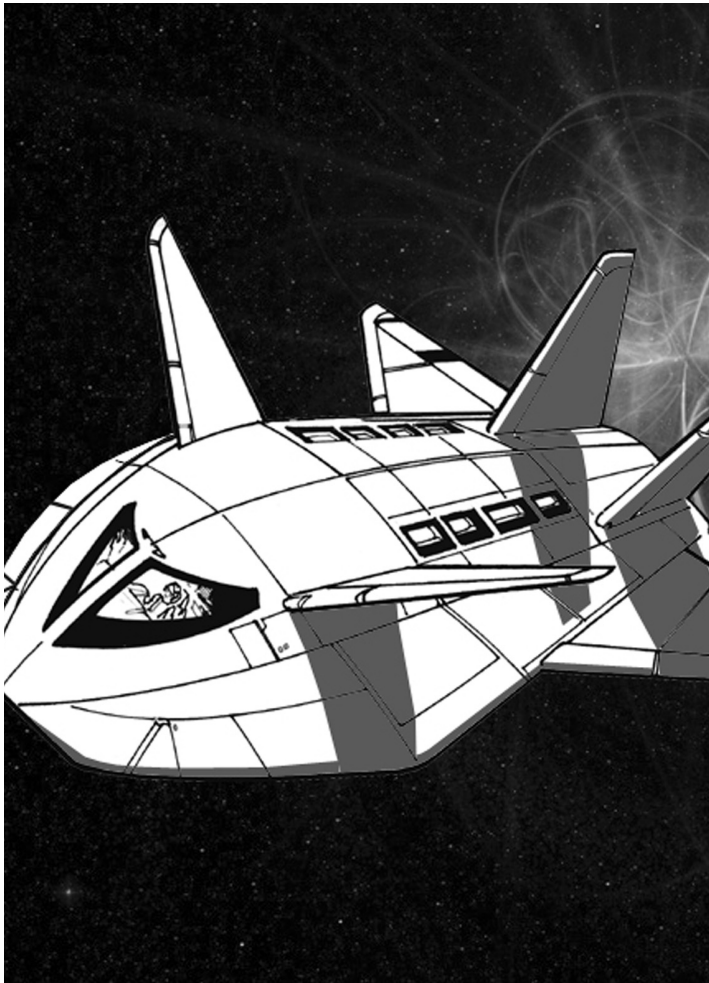
The players are dirtside at First landing D-class feeder Downport. A hurricane has been brewing off the coast of this peninsular port for several hours, and the edge of the storm is already over the place. The Players may be on liberty and have to get "topside" or miss their shipping out window in a few hours. The Administration Authority won't allow their shuttles down till it blows over, and advises anyone lifting off planetside that they do so at their own risk.

There is one spacecraft warming up on the pads, despite the weather, with an owner crazy enough to risk a takeoff. The ship belongs to a Vagr known as Khaergr Maghiz. Like the players, Khaergr has to make it to the highport for a deadline. Problem is, his copilot is in the drunk tank (again), and his engineer eloped of with 'some lawyer fellow'. The "Miss Pristine" is one of two cutters owned by the 800dtn Jupiter-class merchant ship "Fortune's Fool", and has been downside speculating, awaiting pick up. He needs a copilot, a comms/sensor man, and an engineer. His 29 ton cargo module has only 5 tons of mail, and six stainless steel suitcases, but he can drop in passenger seats to the floor out of their wall.

Problem is, the "Miss Pristine", is anything but. She's a hand me down TL15 cutter with spares and patches in her parts all the way down to TL9. The cabin and the engineer's station are air tight, but the cargo module "leaks a bit" he says, so passengers & crew have to suit up. Khaergr's strategy is to launch just before the eye of the hurricane is upon them, and shoot up to the orbital station through it. This is risky, because timing it will be an eyeball call. The port authority will not transmit any telemetry while the storm is ongoing.

Just before warm up, his engineer runs up, wet and bedraggled, crying. Her "fiancée" has jilted her at the altar. Wanda Perkins is fantastic at engines but has no luck with men. She is too upset to do her job, and so rides up in a vacc suit in the cargo compartment, red-eyed and miserable. At 3g thrust, it is a twenty minute shot to the station's orbit. The trip is pretty hazardous due to very high winds initially (Referees are encouraged to make this as scary and bumpy a ride as possible for the players (roll dice ominously, describe wind whistling through the patched hull, and so forth).

Once docked at the highport, Khaergr thanks the PCs, and asks they take Ms Perkins to dinner nearby while he drops off the mail and gets some cash to pay them for their help. The players have six hours before they too depart. Ms Perkins forgets something at the cutter and goes back for it, shortly



after Khaergr rejoins them at the café. Khaergr offers to pick up the tab, as a way of saying thanks, and offers Cr100 to each PC who manned a station, and there is no charge for those who rode up as passengers. Then he gets a call that makes his fur stand on end. Someone has abducted Ms Perkins, and “wants the money back or she dies”. Khaergr is warned that if he involves security or law enforcement, his copilot will be spaced from an airlock. He has one hour before this happens anyway.

REFEREE’S INFORMATION:

Khaergr has already sold the speculated cargo, and has filled in the time with taking on courier work for a local warlord, a certain Mr. Hiisin Yukowa. The suitcases of course belong to him. Khaergr’s fee for transporting Mr. Yukowa’s six suitcases to the drop off point was a mere Cr1,500. Inside them is MCr36 in used Cr100 and Cr50 bills. This is not the first charter trip Khaergr has done for Mr. Yukowa. Khaergr was to courier the money for the offworld money launderer who works for Yukowa in a nearby system.

However, one of Mr. Yukowa’s upper level underlings, a certain Mr. Vasily Vaskhuunen, has decided to get one last pay raise in before making a run for the frontiers. He has kidnapped Khaergr’s copilot as leverage. Khaergr really does care about Ms Perkins’ safety and will beg the PCs to help him get her back. He leads them to the six wall lockers where he stashed the cases, and gets them out. He will be evasive about what is in the cases but would admit everything rather than allow his friend to be murdered.

The rendezvous to hand over the cases will be at a spacecraft hangar berth which is not currently in use.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. All is as stated. Khaergr and his engineer are in the proverbial rock and hard place between two criminal hard noses, and really need help fast.
2. Khaergr is actually a law enforcement agent, and this is a sting operation which has gone wrong. The bad guys (Vashkhuunen) have Khaergr’s partner, Agent Gwendolyn Ghaanesh. Vashkhuunen’s thugs killed the other two of his team; he dares not lose her too.
3. Khaergr is the actual embezzler, and has swapped broken thruster plate parts wrapped in foam & bubble wrap into the cases. The money is stashed elsewhere, in a dirty laundry bag behind the cutter’s makeshift fresher.
4. Khaergr was set up by Mr. Yukowa to flush out Vashkhuunen’s treachery. The money is still in the cases, but the cases are laced with of hi-tech memory-plastic explosives. If they are opened without the correct key, an internal fuse will count down in fifteen minutes and detonate what amounts to a massive fragmentation bomb.
5. Khaergr is smarter than he looks. He swapped the cash and called Mr. Yukowa for reinforcements. He allows the players to deliver the cases, but will go along to get Ms Perkins back.
6. Any combination of the above.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: EXPORT LICENSE

**REQUIRED SKILLS: ELECTRONICS,
COMPUTER, INTERPERSONAL
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE**

PLAYERS’ INFORMATION:

The party is approached by a well dressed middle aged individual of rotund and corpulent proportions. He explains that he has a consignment of goods for export to a nearby system. They are, however, bound in the high port customs lockup. His complete fortune is locked up in these goods and he faces ruin unless they can be released. He tried ‘negotiating’ with a customs official, one Kalath Minagoran, but too little avail.

The merchant, who calls himself Beori Misanak, wants the individuals to acquire, “on loan”, one of the customs service’s handsets from the headquarters on the highport. He will provide a duplicate device and needs an electronics expert to transfer the security codes to the copy from the original. He then requires the borrowed handset to be returned. With the duplicate he will be able to electronically swipe his pallets and be quickly on his way.

The party are offered Cr1,000 each to deliver the original handset and an additional Cr1,000 to return it so that no-one is any the wiser. He is adamant that this task is as vital as acquiring the copy in the first case. Without a willingness to return it, there will be no deal. He will double the offer if this is what it takes.

REFEREE’S INFORMATION:

The acquisition will require careful planning and observation to find the opportunity to slip the security screen around the customs offices. There are many possible security features ranging from pressure plates, beams, biometric scans, heat sensors, DNA probes, cameras, holographic comparators, micro-densitometers to detect masses of 20kg+ in motion within the building and the ever-popular infrared or laser beam across corridors. There are also bored and complacent security guards, who become much more competent when alarms are going off.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

- 1-2. All is as planned. The handset acquisition and return are difficult, but eventually accomplished. Once the crates have been swiped, the merchant wipes the codes from the duplicate set, declaring it a dangerous thing with which to be found.
3. The wands are keyed to individual DNA signatures. It will be necessary to fabricate a false DNA “glove” from a sample of a legitimate user’s skin tissue in order to be able to use the duplicate device.

4. As 3, but a further retinal scan and voice analysis are performed. The retinal scan is compared against holographic base lines. Photographic impressions of the required retina will not suffice. The real eye and a lot of ingenuity will be needed, but only for a short time.

5. As 4 but the highport suffers a total gravitic failure during the operation.

6. The merchant is a criminal wide boy. He will hightail it with the duplicate handset. To further ensure his successful getaway he will rat on the party to the law as they are returning with the original handset.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: THE TRADE FACTOR

REQUIRED SKILLS: STREETWISE, TACTICS, INTIMIDATION

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The party is approached by a local trade factor, Jeremy Britz, to rescue his daughter, Ramona. The factor will assume that the party knows both him and the situation relating to Ramona because of the publicity involved in the case. Any party member who has been on-planet over the last month, or anyone who can do a little basic research, will be aware of the following details: Exactly two weeks ago, Britz's daughter was kidnapped from his estate. Since then the terrorists who kidnapped her have carried out a series of raids on banks and other rich targets around the capital. At each of these raids, the factor's daughter has been used as a human shield.

The party is offered a lump sum payment of Cr500,000 for the girl recovered alive and unharmed. The lump sum will be reduced by 50% if the daughter is hurt, and nothing will be paid if she is killed. Britz will explain that he has no faith in the local security force's anti-terrorist unit, given their poor showing in a similar situation a few years back, and he thinks the party can do better.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The local security force will bow to Britz's wishes and allow the party to fulfill the contract, mainly as a result of Britz's local connections and considerable influence. However, the rank and file members of the unit will definitely not be happy with the situation, and some of them will be hoping that the party fails. They will be ready to jump all over the party if they break any laws during the execution of their contract.

The security forces will not volunteer anything though they will grudgingly give the party the following information if they are explicitly asked. They know exactly where the gang is holed up and have had them under surveillance for three days. They also have full dossiers on all members of the gang, including Ramona. If the party gets access to Ramona's dossier and the surveillance tapes (and all they really have to do is to think to ask nicely) it may give them advance warning of the real situation (see Resolution, below).

The gang's leader, Marcus Rowse, is well aware that as long as they have the Factor's daughter, they will enjoy "special treatment" from the security forces. In other words, they will not be fired upon, and Britz will veto any drastic action against the group. There is at least one member of the security forces who is utterly disgusted with this kid-glove

approach and will, if he meets the gang, completely ignore his superior's orders.

This is a very high media profile case, on a complacent high tech, relatively high law level, planet (i.e. one with sophisticated information systems) where there has been little exciting happening recently. The characters will almost certainly be interviewed for television if they succeed and charged with felony offences if they fail, especially if they use illegal weapons in their operations. Any characters that don't want to be well known will be out of luck. Characters may be able to retire on the movie rights if the case is successful.

Britz has been using his authority and calling in favors to ensure local law enforcement and security personnel do not shoot at or otherwise endanger the gang while his daughter has been with them. Britz knows he cannot pull this off for too long, as his superior is due back from a business trip in a few days and will not be happy with the way the way Britz has handled the situation. It has damaged the firm's relations with the local security forces, and perhaps more seriously, demonstrated just how much a person with suitable wealth and influence can determine the actions of supposedly impartial security forces.

If the party does not get the daughter back prior to the arrival of Britz's superior on planet, which will occur 1D6+6 days from now, the security forces will be given the go ahead, and the party is unlikely to get paid.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. Everything is as described. Ramona is grateful for the rescue. Her first act, if the party has secured the other members of the gang, will be to assault Rowse in the most painful manner possible. Rowse may be able to use this distraction to attempt an escape.

3. Ramona is a victim of Stockholm Syndrome, and believes she loves Rowse. She will do anything she can to save him and help him escape, including throwing herself in front of weapons fire intended for him.

4-5. Ramona acts as if she is grateful for the rescue. However, she actually is in love with Rowse, and has been for some time prior to the kidnap. Her first act, once everyone is secured will be to assault Rowse as per 1-2. But she will attempt to use this distraction to free the leader, give him a weapon she had concealed about her body, (if she was not frisked by the players) and join him in attempting to escape.

6. Ramona acts as if she is grateful for the rescue, but she is in fact the real ringleader of the operation and actually suggested the idea of kidnapping herself to Marcus Rowse. Rowse is in love with her, so will do all he can to protect her, including shutting up and going to jail. Ramona knows she is alright as long as the rest of the gang are kept quiet, so once she realizes the game is up she will do all she can to ensure the gang are killed rather than captured.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: INDUSTRIALIST

REQUIRED SKILLS: NONE

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: VACC SUITS

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

While doing some provisioning at the starport of a vacuum or trace-atmosphere world, one of the party is approached by a service droid. The droid hands over a small locked flight case and says, in a low voice, "Styles Square, Alicia Planetia. Noon, tomorrow. Bring the product. You will receive further instructions on arrival". It trundles off and says no more. Interrogation is useless and capture and disassembly, etc. will reveal that a message was delivered electronically from an anonymous source. Unless opened correctly, the case will destroy its contents with a small incendiary charge.

The trip to Alicia Planetia would normally be by public transport grav vehicle. The journey to Styles Square would be by maglev followed by a short walk through pedestrian only streets. On arrival, the party will be approached by a street cleaning droid. He will inform them to deliver the unopened case to one Graznid Shoriin. He is to be found at a prospecting site three hundred kilometers to the south west, outside the city. In return, the party can share Cr3,000.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The case is full of scientific surveys of the outer planetoid belt. The job is one of industrial espionage. The droid will not be bargained with and should the party refuse to accept the task they will be left with the case. The police will be informed immediately. In minutes the party will be under arrest on charges of corruption.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. All is as planned. Outside the city, the journey is treacherous. There are ravines, rockslides, suit ruptures, micro meteoroid impacts, and similar natural hazards to contend with, but nothing unexpected. Once the journey is completed, Mr. Shoriin will hand over the cash with a bonus of Cr1,000 for a job well done.

3. As 1-2 but the party are followed by the police. They have got wind of the operation through surveillance. At the handover the group of ten policemen will have the location, a canyon, sealed. Before the party have a chance to surrender, Graznid Shoriin and his seven assistants draw a combination of laser carbines and SMGs. The firefight that ensues sees the party having to choose sides. The party will tip the balance in favor of which ever side they join. Should Graznid prevail, the party will be marked as outlaws. If any policemen are killed, the party will be wanted throughout the system and perhaps beyond.

4-5. There is no Graznid Shoriin. The drop location is deserted. The whole thing is a joke by some students out

for some kicks. If the droid in the square is analyzed, it will be obvious from its computer logs that the joker is a geeky individual known as "The Glimmerman".

6. When the party arrives at the drop point they find Graznid Shoriin dead. His suit is ruptured in many places and his skin is covered in a strange fungus. A nearby test hole in the ground is heavily coated with the fungus as is the equipment (a long, long, drill) stuck in the hole. If the party spend any time examining the remains they discover that the suit that is in contact with the ground, and hence in contact with the fungus, has been eaten away. Further, the soles of the vacc suit boots have been destroyed. At this time the party discovers that the soles of their boots are melting. Suit failure will occur in 4D (4d6) minutes. The fungus reacts to body heat. Once in contact with a warm body it absorbs the heat and swells before exploding in a cloud of spores, within the suit. The inhaled spores are highly toxic.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: WATER WAR

**REQUIRED SKILLS: COMPUTER,
FORGERY**

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

A holo-message arrives at the characters' ship in the middle of offloading some cargo. It arrives unsolicited and somehow makes it past the junk mail filters. Its content both invites and entices. The PCs are asked by a Mr. Van Der Miesen himself to attend him in his offices on Concourse 17 for "a spot of work, well worth your while". Their reputation has preceded them, it seems. Concourse 17 is not far and is very up market. Characters can easily find the small offices of "Van der Miesen Associates, LIC Interstellar Brokerage".

Van der Miesen represents a consortium of investors, who will remain nameless, that currently pursue a project in the southern hemisphere. An enormous subterranean aquifer has been discovered. If it meets even half its potential, it could transform the region (which is at present a worthless semi-desert) into a lush garden, with possibilities for farming or settlement. Progress in opening up the basin has been slow because of the difficult terrain in the south. Extinct volcanoes with ancient lava flows pepper the area, making equipment transport and deployment very difficult. However, just recently the project has made a breakthrough. A borehole reached liquid water at a depth of seventeen kilometers. The hole is capped in preparation for the building of production facilities.

The consortium, up until quite recently, had almost run out of funds. Their troubles were severe enough that their prospecting license for the region was not renewed. Work continued in the absence of a license. Shortly after the breakthrough, a rival group attacked the works and overran it. They have a valid license and are claiming the region and the works.

The consortium has managed to raise significant financial support for the project but all of this is subject to the return of the works into their hands. To achieve this end, the consortium needs to have its license restored and the rival's license revoked or otherwise eliminated. The job in hand is to replace the existing records with 'corrected' records. This involves breaking into the computer system of the Office of Mineral and Natural Resources. These are a small adjunct office off the main Customs office in the highport. The reward is for success only and amounts to Cr20,000. Successful negotiation can raise this to Cr25,000.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The licenses are maintained in both physical and electronic form. The physical form, based on holographic technology, is very difficult to forge. In the case of the computer records the licenses are protected by many levels of encryption and physical security. To modify a record requires senior administrator level access and although penetration of the outer encryption shell can be done remotely, the final layer may only be entered at the Office itself.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. All is as specified. The license records are stored physically in the safe within the office. A straightforward physical security system involving motion detectors is deployed but little else.

3. All is as specified except the office is patrolled when not occupied. Both a team of armed guards and two security robots equipped with non-lethal weapons provide round the clock vigilance of the office and its contents. If one of the droids is destroyed, security will respond within 5-10 minutes and local police soon after.

4-5. In fact, the 'rival' group is the legitimate license holders, and filed their claim years ago. The consortium is the usurper. The current records are duplicates of originals now posted at the subsector capital. A few months' legal to and fro will reveal the legitimacy of their case. Unless the party succeeds with an impressive legal defense, the consequence of all this legal wrangling is that blame will be squarely placed on the members of the party. An arrest warrant will be issued. Returning to the world means the party members will be subject to arrest and detention. Once seven years have passed, the charges will be filed and more or less forgotten about.

6. The 'rival' group is the legitimate license holders. They have got wind of the break-in and have informed the police. The building is surrounded by police (in considerable strength), and all records have been removed and have been replaced by decoys. Any attempt to enter the building or access the computer will be detected. While good it may be possible for the attacker can detect that the computer is in fact a trap. A firefight will ensue if any resistance is met. Such activity is viewed as an example of corporate corruption and is little tolerated.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: GRIZZLED BELTER

**REQUIRED SKILLS: VACC SUIT,
SHIPBOARD SKILLS (PARTICULARLY
SENSOR AND ELECTRONICS)**

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

On the ramp at the downport, the party's attention is drawn to a grey-haired belter cursing as he works on the sensor pod of his 100 ton seeker, the Proverbial Needle. If the group listens for a few minutes (it is hard not to, given the amount of noise he is making), it will be obvious that the prospector is cursing the sensor's x-ray waveguide, a vital component for conducting remote mineral surveys. It seems that the waveguide is misaligned, apparently due to the intercession of several deities but possibly because the ship and its builders are no good. After cursing everyone ever involved with his ship and possibly some people who might have walked past it once, the temperamental old cuss will stop working and challenge the characters, asking if they think they can do better. If the group accepts, a good engineer or electronics technician will be able to correct the fault. It becomes apparent during the repair that the waveguide was tampered with.

If the group manages to ignore the old belter, they will be passed as they leave by two burly-looking thugs in coveralls, each carrying a large pry bar. The old belter is wary of the approach of the two, and will try unsuccessfully to scramble away. The two thugs will utter words to the effect of "We warned you what would happen...", and as one thug catches and restrains the old man, the second will attack the sensor pod with the pry bar. If the group does not intervene, the thugs will smash the delicate components within the sensor housing, warn the old belter once more, and leave. If the group intervenes at any point, the thugs will move off after exchanging a few insults, warning the group not to get involved.

The old belter's name is Roscoe Morson. He and the Proverbial Needle have been working the system's planetoids for the last twelve years. If the characters intercede, Roscoe will be grateful for the assistance of the party, and will offer to share his secret. Two months ago, he discovered an ore body high in platinum and other trace metals. He carefully tagged the planetoid and proceeded back with samples for analysis. He's just received the results of the tests, which were better than he'd hoped, and his samples contained traces of rare metals like Ytterbium and Iridium. His samples were more than enough to pay for the drinks at the Smiling Mermaid, a startown bar frequented by beltters, techs and low-lives of all sorts, and he indulged his acquaintances in a few rounds of drinks before heading back to the starport.

Now his sensors are down, and he needs to get back to the planetoid fast, before someone else cuts in on his once-in-a-lifetime find.

Roscoe will invite the characters to help him secure the planetoid until he can register it with the Claims Office at Emmerson Planetoid, in the Heign planetoid belt. In exchange, he'll share 10% of his claim and cover the team's operating expenses.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The characters can offer the use of their own ship, or they can help repair, refuel and re-provision the Proverbial Needle. On one hand, the sensor suite on the seeker is optimized for prospecting work on the other, the ship is well-worn, and several of its systems have been jury-rigged or replaced with non-standard parts.

Heign Belt is the third of the system's four planetoid belts. Most of the asteroids in Heign are low grade iron/manganese-based ore bodies, but several spectacular strikes have been made. On his previous visit, Roscoe marked the rich planetoid with a coded passive x-ray tag. The tag requires an active sensor sweep at a range of 500 kilometers or less, otherwise the low-powered response from the tag will be too weak. Obviously, Roscoe has a very good idea of where the planetoid is, but if pressed he'll only say, "Come with me, and I'll show you."

Meanwhile, word of the discovery has reached several unsavory local characters, including:

Dyvein Jones – An underworld kingpin in the startown, Dyvein deals in loan-sharking, extortion and racketeering. The two toughs at the starport work for him.

Maraak Anshaliiv – A tough young prospector, captain of the seeker Rock Legend, Maraak is looking to strike it rich fast, and has no interest in working long and hard like Roscoe. He's impulsive, aggressive and greedy, but he's not really a killer.

Jik "the Slick" Limurkash – The captain of the Margin of Error, another small seeker, Jik is a slimy, underhanded character, who is known by many and trusted by no one. Jik is capable of anything, if the reward is high enough.

Dyvein will cause trouble in-system, particularly at the starport and at Emmerson Station, while Maraak and Jik will try to jump the claim, and, if necessary, arrange an accident for Roscoe. The trip out will be a race out to the Belt, and then a game of cat-and-mouse while Roscoe looks for the rock.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. All is as it seems. With a few precautions, Roscoe and the characters will find the planetoid without difficulty. Jik

and Maraak will see that Roscoe has help, and will leave him alone until they can catch him away from his new companions. If the party can help secure the location long enough for Roscoe to register the claim with the Belters at Emmerson Station, the group will have earned its cut.

2. All is as it seems. Jik and Maraak will team up to try and force Roscoe off the claim. Subterfuge is a certainty, and violence is likely.

3. All is as it seems. Dyvein expects to get a cut from this lucrative find, and will offer protection from Maraak and Jik in exchange for 60% of the take. If Roscoe refuses, Dyvein will offer Maraak and Jik his services, including a contact at Emmerson Station who can delay (or expedite) the registration of any claim.

4. Once the party reaches the rock, they find that a claim has already been staked. Someone else must have been following Roscoe the first time that he was here. Roscoe and his new friends can try appealing to the Claims Office on Emmerson Station (Dyvein can help, for a price). Otherwise, the party is out of luck.

5-6. The group discovers that the marker on the planetoid is Maraak's, not Roscoe's. Roscoe needed some help to get out to the rock ahead of Maraak and jump his claim. Of course, Roscoe can't let the characters inform the authorities...

PATRON ENCOUNTER: FALO DEN ERTY, SOLICITOR AT LAW

REQUIRED SKILLS: NONE
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The characters are on a layover when they are approached by a man identifying himself as Faló den Ertý, of Coale, den Ertý and Vincenzi, Solicitors at Law. Mr. den Ertý indicates that he is approaching them on behalf of a local pod of Dolphins from the Anaje Shoals region of the planet. He explains that the pod is involved in a dispute over fishing rights with Green Reef Harbor, a human village neighboring their part of the shoals. Den Ertý states that tensions are starting to rise. The dolphins hope to break the impasse by hiring a group of offworlders, who understand human culture and laws but are separate from the prejudice that exists between dolphins and humans on this world, to assist in mediating a peaceful resolution to the dispute.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

Faló den Ertý has acted on behalf of the dolphins previously, and has created a lucrative niche for himself dealing in dolphin-human conflict arbitration. His mercenary pro-dolphin position has led several prominent human citizens to accuse den Ertý of collaboration with the dolphins. The truth is that Faló is a practical man, and he is utterly pragmatic about the arrangement. The dolphins have access to goods of considerable value to humans, and Faló has no problems gouging the dolphins for material gain. In this particular case, den Ertý is playing the role of a middle-man, and has no desire to become personally involved in the arbitration.

Green Reef Harbor is a small human community of about 60 residents, built on an atoll in the Anaje Shoals, about 200 kilometers away from the starport. The village was founded almost a hundred years ago, by a group of refugees from another settlement that had been forced to leave their homes following raids by dolphins. Green Reef Harbor has grown steadily over the last several decades, and the humans have started to move outside the immediate area of the atoll to hunt and fish in the more open waters surrounding the atoll. Generally, the inhabitants of the village will try to avoid open conflict, but there are several agitators living in the village who will work overtly and covertly to undermine any accommodation of the dolphin pod.

The local dolphin pod is formally known by the human approximation of their Dolphinese name, Kurrukuk Eiy, or less formally as the Green Reef Pod. The pod numbers about 80 members, and hunts over a wide range of the Anaje Shoals. One of the pod's most popular hunting grounds lies in the waters just off the atoll at Green Reef Harbor. The pod

has had a gentler history of interaction with humans than most of their kind on planet, and they hope to avoid any conflict. However, the pod can, if necessary, defend itself, and is equipped to TL8.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. All is as stated. The humans are impressed by the dolphin's conciliatory approach, and will reciprocate to negotiate a reasonable solution.

2-3. All is as stated. Aggressive elements in the human village will try to discredit the group, accusing them of being 'dolphin-lovers' and traitors to the human race. If they fail in their attempts to slander the characters, the subversives will try to escalate the tensions between the two camps.

4-5. The negotiations will proceed poorly, and the group will become tired of hearing the insults and the rhetoric. Several days into negotiations, a human anarchist will attempt a suicide bomb attack, injuring several delegates including members of the group. Clashes between the factions will grow in frequency and violence, unless the characters can expose the anarchist group and have them brought to justice.

6. The dolphins are using the group as a smoke screen to give them time to prepare an attack to secure the hunting grounds. Within seven days of the time that den Ertý first contacts the group the pod will be reinforced by the hunters of several nearby pods. The dolphins will then have enough resources to interdict the village, and attack any human surface or subsurface vessels. The dolphins will seek to drive the humans from the village, or at worst, limit the villagers to the waters inside the atoll itself.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: BELTER

REQUIRED SKILLS: PILOT
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

A scruffy individual approaches the party. He indicates he is a belter working in this system. His ship was badly damaged a month ago in the system's inner asteroid belt. He was able to nurse his ship back to port, but without enough money to order parts to repair his ship. He would like to be taken to the inner asteroid belt where he says he had just found a rich asteroid when his ship was damaged. He will be able to activate a coded transponder when he is close. He offers shares in his find as inducement. He initially offers a 10% cut, but can be worked as high as 40% by a sharp bargainer (though he will look very unhappy at anything over 25%).

Accepting this proposal will require outfitting the party's ship for prospecting work – primarily packing in a good supply of food, water, air, fuel, and such hand tools as this world produces (shovels, picks, nets, and dynamite are all possibly useful items made locally). The belter will be able to supply a few higher tech items from his own ship such as laser-cutting torches and a table-sized densitometer designed to test core samples placed inside the machine.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The belter will help plot a course for the approximate area of the belt the asteroid is in, but can't remember the exact location. The party will spend several days getting close to a number of asteroids while the belter sends a low-power coded signal to each asteroid in turn, trying to find the right one. There is plenty of opportunity to have dangerous encounters with asteroids. Once the right asteroid is found, the belter will lead a team onto the asteroid to test various spots and find its composition.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The asteroid will prove to be a respectably rich find, with a largish (several tens of kilograms) chunk of nearly pure Titanium, and a deposit of Lanthanum that is enough to supply several starships with jump grids.
2. As 1, but the belter's dead partner will be found near the transponder, shot with the same kind of snub pistol the belter is now pulling on the party...
3. The belter finally finds the transponder, but when he leads the party down, he discovers it is a worthless rock he had prospected thoroughly many months ago and abandoned. He insists that the party try some more asteroids in an attempt to find the right one, and will attempt violence if they refuse.
- 4-5. This turns out to be a worthless asteroid, with no reason to think it unusual aside from being a good shape and composition for a ship hull.

6. There is a corsair waiting behind the asteroid (which has no special value). The 'belter' is a front man for the corsair band as a second income source.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: MUSICIAN

REQUIRED SKILLS: WHEELED VEHICLE
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: WEAPONS

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

An elderly woman approaches the party and asks if they would act as her driver and bodyguards as she attends a musical function in a distant location. She has a large TL5 ground car but dislikes driving long distances. She recently received a note threatening her life if she attends a particular musical function she has attended before. She says her nephew, an official in the local government, can get the party permits to bring weapons along if they act as bodyguards. She would prefer the party bring the flashiest, highest-tech weapons they have, to make it clear to those around her that she is well protected.

The musical function is at a canyon about 150 kilometers away using twisty mountain roads. The woman will provide a topographical map of the area between her town and the musical event. The map has a number of curious markings on it, centered on the site of the event. The site of the event as shown on the map is called the "wailing wall".

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The road to the function is even twistier than shown on the map, and there are a few spots that have obviously had small rock falls recently removed. The site turns out to be a canyon above a volcanic vent, and the configuration of the walls and the content of the atmosphere just below the ledge where the event is held have an unusual mix of acoustic properties. The event has been held annually for the last thirty years, with some of the better musicians on the planet coming during an especially calm season to sing or play their instruments while the unusual sounds are recorded.

The party will arrive to find a couple hundred people there. Some of the people will be very happy to see their charge, while others will be obviously annoyed. Talking to various people will show that their charge is viewed as something of a prima donna, with very picky tastes in music. There will be a fair amount of very good (for TL5) recording equipment setup around the performing platform.

Note: This patron encounter could be as suitable for a single player as for a larger group.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The woman is able to perform without incident, and the return trip is uneventful.
- 2-3. There are a small number of people who protest her performance, and the party may be asked to help remove the disruptive elements.

4. Soon after the party arrives, the weather takes a turn for the worse. The volcanic gases and billows of the valley's sulfur-laden air will begin to surge toward the performing platform. The party will need to evacuate their charge to higher ground, and will be asked to help with other people and equipment as well.

5. There are a number of people who are clearly hostile and will throw rocks and other objects at the woman. Some of them may have illegal weapons.

6. There is a group of terrorists waiting for the party, and they will attack as soon as the party has left their vehicle. Their aim is to snatch the high-tech weapons from the party. The woman is their skill, and will duck back in the vehicle and lock the doors while the party fights it out with the terrorists.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: MERCHANT

REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIP SKILLS
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: MERCHANT
STARSHIP

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

A merchant approaches the group with a charter proposal. He would like to make a run to a nearby system. His cargo will almost fill their cargo bay, but the only passengers will be himself and one assistant. He is fine with the party waiting another day or two to fill up the rest of the cargo bay and passenger staterooms, but doesn't want to wait longer than that. If the party chooses this option he will insist that he not have to pay for any of the cargo space or staterooms he is not actively using.

If the party does wait for more passengers and cargo, they will find an unusual number of large, burly men wanting passage to their destination, each wanting to fill their full cargo allotment as passengers. Once the starship arrives in the destination system, the merchant will indicate that he wants them to set down in a remote region at an improvised landing ground rather than the normal starport. If the party protests the landing spot, the merchant will point out in their contract the part that says "...unloading to occur at the place designated by the lesser..."

According to the merchant, his clients are an independent group of landowners whose ancestors settled here long ago. They are more or less ignored by the world government and want nothing of it, keeping very much to themselves other than when they need something from off-planet.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

Shipping contracts vary in precision. Some are very detailed, while others merely specify the destination world, with the assumption that the cargo is going to the main starport or the nearest spaceport to its final destination. This contract is perfectly legal, and there is absolutely no reason not to trade with the landowners as there is nothing in the world's legal charter to prohibit it. Legally, the characters have to comply with the merchant's wishes unless they can show "unreasonable risk" inherent in doing so.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The party lands and the cargo is unloaded. The merchant appreciates their service and promises more cargos in the future. The locals are uncommunicative but not actively unfriendly. They seem to own a great deal of semi-worthless land and remain here more from pride than anything else.
2. At the first sign that the party has doubts about landing here, and the merchant and his assistant try to hijack the ship. The burly men are not in on the hijack and will assist the party if allowed to.

3. As 2, but the burly men are part of the plot and will help the merchant and his assistant. They will produce body pistols from their cargo allotments.

4. The burly men are with a local security force. Contact with the 'landowners' (who are actually rebels) is prohibited and the law enforcers will try to arrest the merchant and his assistant as part of a sting operation. They are not concerned with the players, who are technically guilty but will not be charged.

5. The 'landowners' are rebels hiding out in the outback and will try to storm the ship once it lands. The merchant and his assistant are in on the plot, as are any passengers aboard.

6. As 5, but the merchant is not in on it, and has been duped just like the characters.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: RESEARCH SUPPORT

REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIP, VEHICLE OR WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: SHIP WITH ROOM FOR AN ATV, OR SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The characters are hired to aid a corporate research team investigate the ancient ruins in a remote area for potential high-tech artifacts brought by early colonists. The characters should either be able to provide transport for the research team and their equipment, or be able to provide wilderness survival skills useful in the semi-desert. If the characters provide a ship then they will be paid standard charter rates for the duration of the research project, which is estimated to take between a week and 2 months. Otherwise they will be hired on a retainer of Cr150/day each, with board and provision covered by the corporation.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The corporation is very interested in maintaining secrecy, supposedly to prevent competitors from discovering their chosen path of research. This explains why people outside the corporation have been recruited for this project. The characters will be closely watched, and the researchers will at all times strive to prevent them discovering what the research is really looking for, or has in fact found. The researchers are very much loyal corporate employees, and have little desire to fraternize with the 'hired help'.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The corporation is really just after high-tech artifacts.
2. The corporation is researching a plague that is supposed to have wiped out the early settlers, for potential bio-weapon uses. The characters will be killed if they find this out.
3. The corporation has hired local youths as protection from local nomads, and the youths have kidnapped a couple of backpackers.
4. A local tribe of low-tech humans descended from the original settlers has taken an interest in what is happening and demands to be shown what the researchers are doing.
5. Shortly after setting up, the researchers report success. However, another corporation's black-ops team has been sent to steal the research data.
6. A big storm is brewing but the research team refuses to pack up and move somewhere safer until it is too late.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: RACING TEAM

REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIP, SECURITY AND SUBTERFUGE

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

Whilst at the highport, the characters are approached by a lawyer representing clients who wish to remain anonymous, but who need discreet security people. If they agree to sign a binding contract of secrecy, they will be told more.

The lawyer's client is the Starmine SystemOne team. Once the contract is signed the characters will be introduced to the team manager, Gad Farsko. He will explain that the team has recently lost their best pilot, Dux "The Duke" Farran, in a suspicious accident, that local authorities are investigating. Unfortunately the current series of races will probably finish before the investigation is completed. Gad is interested in hiring extra security for his team, particularly the backup pilot, Rodger Yung, who he thinks is almost as good as Dux. He doesn't want the extra security to appear obvious, as that would only inflame rumors about Dux's accident, so he proposes the characters adopt a cover.

Whichever one of the characters seems like the best choice will be announced as the new backup pilot for Rodger. The rest of the characters will be hired to pose as extra engineering crew, the new pilot's hangers-on, etc. This will give the characters access to the SystemOne ship docks, and the many social events that surround the race series. The characters will be offered Cr1,000 a week each, and the season ends in 3 weeks, the full amount will be paid to the characters if a culprit is identified before the end of the season, and they will be released from their contract at that time.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

SystemOne is the equivalent of Formula One racing. It is in the format of a series of spaceship races within a given system, and attracts the best teams from across the sector. Hefty corporate sponsorship funds the races, which offer a significant means of advertising to markets across the sector.

The SystemOne season lasts for four years, with 5-6 race series each year. The current season is winding down with a series of races in the present system. Going into this last series the Starmine team had a sizeable lead.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. Dux's accident really was just an accident the hardest challenge for the characters will be dealing with the press.

3. A nearby system used to hold the final series of the tour, but 10 years ago they lost their series to the current location. Agents of the original location are trying to give the series a bad name in the hope of getting the venue switched back, and will target other team's pilots too.

4. Rodger Yung organized the accident so he could take Dux's place, he is suspicious of the characters and might try to 'take care of' them too.

5. A rival team's sponsor has deployed a black ops team to ensure the Starmine team does not win the championship.

6. An alternate backup pilot engineered the accident in order to take Rodger's place in the team once Rodger was the main pilot. The alternate is dismayed when one of the characters is announced as the new backup pilot, and is determined to take care of them too.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: TAKE HIM AWAY!

REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIP SKILLS
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

Whilst picking up passengers and cargo, the characters are contacted by a representative of the world government and an unusual request is made.

The world's highest court has found a young man guilty of a crime normally punished by a long terms of imprisonment. However, there are mitigating circumstances and a number of other complexities. The courts have recognized the peculiarities of this case and so have sentenced the youth to exile from the system for the next five years. The government has decided to arrange for the youth to be given passage to any world within 3 parsecs.

The government will purchase the youth a middle passage ticket, and will offer the characters an additional Cr2,000 to ensure that the youth arrives without incident at his destination. In addition the characters will have done the government a favor, something that might prove useful later.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The youth's name is Arlay. He has no other name. He was a member of a low-tech tribe living on the fringes of civilization but has been stripped of his identity by the tribal elders. Arlay is an intelligent, if hot-headed, young man who was granted permission by his tribe to work with the 'city folk' as many of his people do. He was placed with a local university's team of researchers, and managed to perform adequately in his role as research assistant. Indeed, he was so good that his city-folk colleagues often forgot his background.

Arlay's team was involved in historical research into the early days of colonization, and some of the researchers were involved in translating ancient texts. In them, they found several extremely racist diatribes which Arlay was offended by. Upon hearing some of his new friends discussing the merits of these views in what sounded like a positive manner, Arlay lost his temper and burned the originals before smashing up all the electronic devices containing recordings of them. He even went so far as to assault some of his colleagues who tried to stop him.

Arlay's tribe was furious, as he had damaged the good relations they worked hard to maintain with their high-tech neighbors, and after stripping him of name and tribal identity they told the world government to do as they wished with their disowned son. He had, they said, brought disgrace upon them and abused a privilege that had been granted

to him over others. Working for a year or two on a salary considered fairly basic by the high-tech folk for a few years would set a tribesman up for life.

The world government was actually more sympathetic. Arlay's disgust at the racist material and those who approved of it was shared by most of the people who tried him, but there was the fact of a serious assault on his colleagues and the destruction of irreplaceable historical data. He should go to jail according to the law, but the government has managed to find what it thinks is a more merciful option. It is hoped that by the time Arlay's banishment is over the tribe might be persuaded to take him back – or he may be able to join the city folk with new skills learned offworld.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. Arlay will cooperate with the characters, but is terrified of going offworld. He lacks much of the background that even mid-tech people take for granted, and fears that he may not be able to survive away from home. He will be desperately grateful to anyone who tries to help him out.

3-4. This event has confirmed every bad thing Arlay has ever heard of the city folk. He is contemptuous of the characters and seeks to deliberately disrupt the ship's day-to-day activities.

5-6. Arlay is actually excited to be going offworld, and although he is a bit ashamed of hurting people he is quite pleased at how things have turned out. He may ask to join the crew or at least get some basic orientation from the characters for surviving in a higher-tech environment.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: THE FAMILY

REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

While the players are searching for passengers and cargo, they encounter a man and a woman looking to transport four people and ten tons of cargo to a nearby mid-to-low tech world. They turn out to be a married couple, William and Janet Grey, and are hoping to transport their machine shop and associated parts. Their plan is effectively to corner the market in "high tech" tools at their destination and use the funds generated to pay off their current creditors. The Greys have just enough to cover their middle passages and freight charges for their cargo. They will offer to help out during the voyage if the players will take them. They need to leave in three days or less; otherwise they say they will not be able to.

REFEREES INFORMATION:

The two other passengers are the couple's kids, Ben and Carolyn, who are aged 7 and 5 respectively. If the players agree to take the Greys the children will turn up the day of departure without any warning, unless the players ask the right questions. The Greys' creditors are liable to seize their machine shop if they don't get it off planet within the time scale, or they find out that the Greys are trying to leave the planet. The family is using the last of its available cash and assets to move machine shop in the hope of putting their fortunes back together on a new world.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. All is as stated. William and Janet will help the crew in anyway they can during the voyage, however Ben and Carolyn will cause as much mayhem as kids normally do. If there are other passengers on board they will be harassed after the first couple of days. The children will constantly ask the crew questions that they may find annoying. They will play hide and seek in areas of the ship that they are not supposed to be in, activating anti-hijacking programs, and generally get in the way a lot whilst doing basically harmless things. William and Janet will be apologetic for their children at all times.

2. As 1, however the Greys' creditors are already at the destination. The Greys find out before the cargo is offloaded and try to persuade the players not to let it fall into the creditors hands.

4. As 1, however the Greys are transporting TL7 mineral extracting machinery and tools. The locals at their destination will welcome the Greys into a mining camp, with prosperity virtually guaranteed.

5. As 4, however the locals will not want the Greys to import the TL7 equipment. This is why William and Janet said it was a machine shop.

6. As 5 but the locals have found out they are coming and try to enter the PCs' ship in the hope of damaging the equipment before it can be unloaded.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: LOST RELATIVES

REQUIRED SKILLS: RESEARCH, INTERPERSONAL

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

While the players are doing the rounds of the starfarers bars and hangouts looking for their next employment, a 40-year-old man dressed in a leather jacket and bush hat approaches them. As he comes towards them it is obvious to the players that he has very little self-confidence. He constantly looks around him in a nervous way, and would probably die of fright if someone shouted "boo" at him. The gentleman introduces himself as Eneri McAdam, and explains that he is looking for his grandfather who came through here 20 years ago. McAdam says his grandfather was also looking for his ancestors, who had boarded a colonial transport before the Long Night. The ship's course was in this general direction. McAdam will offer the PCs Cr5,000 each, and any reasonable expenses if they can help trace his grandfather's movements, and take him under their wing while they do so.

Eneri's Grandfather was Jack McAdam, and the ship he was tracing was named the Maysflower.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

If Eneri can prove that his ancestors settled on one of the colony worlds, or that there are no surviving relatives, he will inherit a huge legacy that is sitting on Terra waiting for someone to prove who is the next legitimate heir to the fortune. His grandfather was doing the same when he went missing in this region of space. Eneri has traced his grandfather to this starport, however he has drawn a blank on his grandfather's destination off planet and is seeking help in his quest.

Eneri is in fact independently wealthy. He made his money on the stock markets in the Solomani Rim and managed to convert it all into Imperial funds. He knows that his grandfather came through this region on his quest. Eneri has found himself in rough town, out of his depth and frightened. While he is looking for help in searching for his grandfather, he is also looking for people to protect him.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. All as is above. Eneri is constantly frightened and a little paranoid by the denizens of the starport and will dog the PCs in their task and offer them double the amount if he can tag along while they search. Eneri's grandfather came through the world following the trail of the Maysflower to a nearby planet of the referee's choosing.

2. As 1, but having found the information Eneri asks the players to accompany him to the next planet on his grandfather's journey. Eneri will pay for the player's passage.

3. As 1, but the trail goes cold because Jack McAdam was killed in an accident the starport while trying to trace the route of the Maysflower. Records of which can be found in the security logs. Eneri will be devastated, then pay the PCs and disappear.

4. Eneri is really an imposter who is trying to con the trustees out of the fortune by attempting to 'become' the grandson of Jack McAdam. This job is part of his plan, because by trying to find Jack he believes he can invent his new identity from were Jack finished. The con-man has no money and is likely to con the PCs as well if he can.

5. Eneri is really independently wealthy because he has the backing of the Solomani Confederation. Searching for Jack McAdam and the Maysflower is both his cover and a covert signal to the local SolSec sponsored terrorist group. They will be in touch with him in due course. Meanwhile he is using the PCs to set up a false trail and cover his disappearance after the group strikes. If all goes well and the terrorists contact him he will pay the PCs off and disappear. Soon afterward there will be a spectacular terrorist atrocity and a trail that leads back to the travellers.

6. As 5 however the terrorists will then target the PCs so that there is no trace to their contact.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: PRACTICE GOOD DENTAL HYGIENE

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

An attractive young woman approaches the crew, looking for passage. She has carryon luggage and an armored and refrigerated

shipping case weighing 100kg. The exterior of the case says biohazard and medical samples, keep cool, do not expose to oxygen, and a number of other fairly ominous things. The woman claims she is a dentist, and she is carrying a set of new tooth buds cloned in a high tech facility. She is taking passage to the next stop on the ship's itinerary.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The woman does have a good knowledge of dental terminology if questioned by a character with medical skills. All during the booking of passage and loading of cargo she will hover nervously ask to see the cargo loading and during the trip will ask to check her cargo frequently.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. All is as it appears. She is a dental researcher and the case does contain medical samples. They are delicate and any rough handling will damage some of them. This will cause her to become very upset and threaten to sue the crew for negligent practices. The case will also cause delays at customs or if the ship is inspected by a routine patrol.

3. She is mostly who she claims, but the cloned material is actually stolen. She is an industrial dental spy and the high tech facility has just discovered the theft. They are trying to get the authorities to lock down the port to search out going ships. If the characters take off in time they will not be stopped at the port. A leisurely departure will have them boarded and the dentist detained. This will delay the ship at least 2 days while an investigation is begun. The crew will be cleared, but any further trips into this system will always result in the ship being stopped and searched.

4. She is mostly who she claims, but the material is a bio-war agent stolen from a government lab. The woman is an industrial spy, who poses as a dentist to allay suspicion. The authorities are able to lock down the port, and as the customs service approaches the ship she will attempt to access the bio-war agents and take the ship hostage. If the players do not stop her, she will threaten to not only deploy the agent, but to publicly expose the research to the public.

5-6. She is nothing like she claims, and any background check will reveal this. She is a dental cleaning technician who got fired recently. The samples do have biohazard material in them, but nothing really dangerous, just some stolen items

from her former employer. In the midst of that material is a 60 kg package of illegal narcotics. She is trying to make a small fortune and get away from her home planet. She has stolen these drugs from her boyfriend. He will be looking for her and is very violent, attacking anyone who gets between him and her or his drugs. He will follow her to the next port of call, remembering the ship's name for the rest of his days.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: PROSPECTORS

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The PCs are seeking passengers for their next destination. Amongst those looking for transport are two retired corporate lawyers, who have decided to try their hand as freelance prospectors. Margaret Cook and Donald Vallish are both in their late forties and have mustered out from their corporate career, with an interest in making their fortunes in the rocks of some out-system moons. They have about four tons of equipment with them for transport, and hope to pick up some sort of vehicle at their destination. They will pay for a shared middle passage, as a couple. They will ask for their equipment to be transported at standard rate, but this may be open to negotiation with the ship's crew.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

If the crew ask to inspect the equipment, they will indeed find that there is about Cr50,000 worth of basic mining and prospecting equipment, along with vacc suits and other survival equipment. The two prospective prospectors seem nice enough, and their paperwork checks out.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. It's all above board. The couple are indeed looking to make some money finding good strikes and selling the locations to corporations for further development. They encountered some good leads during their professional career, and share this info with the PCs during Jump. In fact, they might offer interested characters a chance to buy into the enterprise. They say that for each Cr100,000 invested, it's likely that a return of at least 10-20% is possible within six months. Crews or characters with spare cash might well find this a good safe investment.
2. It's all above board, but the couple are way out of their league. The next system has a strong Belter community which does not react well to outsiders trying to set up. The couple will be run off long before they can make any money. Characters with local knowledge might be able to offer some warning on this.
3. All is not as it seems. The couple are indeed who they say they are, but they are not innocently retiring to a life of prospecting. They are carrying this equipment to the next system to sell it. This is not illegal, but the mining equipment contains small amounts of valuable industrial materials, such as gravity-hardened diamond cutting heads etc., which will sell for a considerable profit on the next world.
4. The couple are traveling on forged papers, and are in fact local law-enforcement agents. They are transporting the valuable equipment very openly, and are trying to draw out a mining corporation troubleshooter called Mishkail Horowitz

who has been traveling on tramp freighters trying to buy out or intimidate prospectors or miners, or sabotage their equipment to protect his company's interests. Mishkail may or may not be another passenger on the same ship. If so, the agents will attempt to wait until after arrival before arresting him, but trouble may brew on board.

5. The couple are not miners, but have been paid to accompany the equipment to the next destination. Once there, they will leave the ship and disappear, leaving the crew with valuable equipment on board their ship which turns out to be stolen. Someone will tip off local starport authorities about the cargo, and this will certainly get the crew into trouble. The reason behind this may remain a mystery, or may be an act of revenge against any or all of the crew for previous dealings they may have had.

6. All is as it seems but the couple are hopelessly naïve about the ease of what they're about to try. They don't really know anything about mining, let alone how to operate the equipment on board. They would struggle with donning a vacc suit, let alone working in deep space. Crewmembers might take pity on the couple, and offer to buy their equipment instead, or give them pointers on what to do. If a Belter is among the crew, they may even get a week's crash course in mining. Left to their own devices, they will at the very least get stranded on a distant moon for several days before being rescued. The most likely scenario is much less positive for the two over-optimistic retirees.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: SPACE TOURISTS

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: SPACECRAFT OR STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The travellers are in Startown on a low or mid tech level planet. They are doing whatever they usually do during R&R when one of them is approached by a Vargr male who is, apparently, choosing people at random. The PC in question may witness the Vargr unsuccessfully try to gain the attention of other people nearby. He introduces himself as Graz (not his full name, he explains), a representative for a new company in the system.

The company is called Vacationaut and practices 'Space Tourism', a rare enough thing on this particular world, where 99% of the population will never even see a starship, let alone ride into space. Graz, and Vacationaut, are looking for ships willing to take people up into space for short trips, probably around the planet or even longer trips out to the moons or nearby planets.

The Vacationaut offices are in Startown, and are completely legit as far as the PCs can make out. Computers are still being unpacked, and the wiring around the offices is still being completed. Graz introduces the PCs to Victor Haaz, the director of Vacationaut on this world. He is willing to discuss fees with the characters.

The price for a simple two hour ride into space and back for a 'Vacationaut' is set at Cr1,000, which might seem like a lot considering that a low-berth costs as much. For a longer trip, around nearby planets or moons, the price rises to Cr10,000 or even higher. They have a waiting list of nearly 200 people who have already paid for the trips in advance.

The PCs will be offered 50% of the price of the trip, not including life support (it won't matter much for trips under a day or two). The company will even provide excellent food and entertainment for the 'boring parts' of the trip. The PCs can transport as many people per trip as they feel they can fit on board comfortably, and Vacationaut will handle any custom work needed, like wall removal or extra seats being installed.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The Vacationaut firm is entirely legitimate and the offer is genuine. Other offices have done well on various worlds and there is no reason to expect anything to go wrong.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The first trip goes well, as do any others the crew undertakes. They might even make a decent amount of money, but the interest in Space Tourism dies down after a few weeks. No harm done, everyone parts ways happily.
2. On one of the trips, some passengers hesitantly ask the crew if they can provide 'private quarters' so they can join the rare 'Sky High Club'. The crew can make what they want of this, but if they let these passengers do so, then the ship may acquire a reputation as something of a 'space brothel' which the media gets hold of. This could end up being embarrassing for both the Crew and Vacationaut, even if their ticket sales triple in a few short days...
3. On one trip, a group of extreme sport enthusiasts request that they experience zero-g for some time during the flight. If the ship is a trader, then it might be easy enough to switch off the grav plates in the hold for some part of the flight. Further options here include the enthusiasts getting badly hurt in zero-g, or inventing a new kind of sport which catches on and develops more business for Vacationaut.
4. One trip includes twenty children from a privileged school on the planet. They are aged between eight and sixteen, and range from whiny to know-it-all. They will be tough to control, and will get under everyone's feet and into places they really shouldn't go. Dealing with a crying ten year old who is scared of the view outside whilst a budding engineer demands to see how everything works might cause the crew some problems.
5. A group of 'businessmen' hire the ship out exclusively for a two day trip. They ask to be left alone the entire time, except for food and steward activities. They are a crime syndicate who are having their yearly big meeting in a secure and interesting place. This option is wide open for all sorts of complications, from planetary police on another hired ship coming after the vessel, to assassination attempts on board their own ship.
6. During one of the trips, the ship develops technical problems and ends up drifting without power to the main drive. The crew has a potential disaster here, with some of their people back on the planet, not enough life support, and a potential passenger list including children, criminals, extreme sportsmen or almost anyone the Referee can think of. When the ship manages to limp home, Vacationaut announces it is considering a tamed version of these events as 'Terror in Space' themed flights...

PATRON ENCOUNTER: INSURANCE EVALUATION

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD SKILLS
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

Whilst searching the job boards for information that could lead the players to any lucrative opportunity, one of the PC's communicators beeps and shows an incoming call of unknown origin. For some reason the reception of the PC's comm is not good, but the player can just make out a female in business attire. She introduces herself as Janet Gimmini who explains that this number was given to her by one of the players' last patrons. She invites the PCs to her office to talk about a proposition she has for them.

The players are given directions to the local offices of ASIB (Associated Starship Insurance Brokerage), where Gimmini works. Once there the receptionist shows the players in to a large and well-furnished office where Gimmini greets them. Gimmini is of average height, in her early thirties, has long auburn hair, but what is very distinctive about her is that she has a laser burn across her left cheek and is missing the lower half of her left ear. After showing the players to a seat she will explain that she has asked the players here to see if they are interested in a three-week job that will entail a micro jump to the other half of this binary system. There they will survey a vessel that has been stranded there for the past month.

If the players are interested Gimmini will explain that she is an insurance investigator and her usual team and ship have been assigned to another job. She needs this work carried out as soon as possible which is why she has contacted the PCs. She will charter the players' ship for three weeks, and will require the players' services at the site of the investigation.

If the players accept Gimmini will want to leave as soon as the players can arrange the installation of a collapsible fuel tank, which Gimmini will provide, and purchase fuel and life support. She has all the equipment that she needs for the trip already packed and ready to go.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

In Jump Gimmini will explain that the ship they are searching for is the Dancing Kallinger, a 400 ton Fat Trader. The Dancing Kallinger was reported missing, presumed lost, five months ago after it failed to arrive at it's listed destination. The ship had a crew of 7 and its inventory lists a cargo of electronic consumer goods. It was listed as carrying no passengers.

Upon arriving at the binary system the Dancing Kallinger can be found adrift close to the second rockball planet. The

players will have to pinpoint the ship and match velocities before finding a way onto the ship. There is a man-sized hole in the hull that leads into the engineering section. Once aboard the players will find that the power is off, there is no fuel in the tanks, and the Jump drive looks like a complete slagheap. All is in place in the cargo hold, except one air lock is open to space. An exploration of the staterooms will show all items of the crew are in the places they left them. The galley is clean with signs that show the crew had just cleared their last meal.

After the players manage to transfer some fuel and start the power plant they will be able to get life support and the computer on line. Accessing the ships log shows that nothing happened going into jump and all was normal for three days, and then nothing. No computer access, no doors opened, nothing was turned on, no crew on the monitors, nothing.

The ship stayed in Jump space for three weeks. When it looks as though the ship should have exited Jump the sequence used to start the jump drive was activated. Internal sensors show that the Jump drive began to operate, which drained the remaining fuel in the tanks then went off line, and the computer's emergency power system cut in. Emergency power functioned for only 5 minutes. During this time the jump drive melted into slag and blew a hole in the engineering section out into jump space. The computer logs stop 5 minutes after the power plant failed.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. No further information can be gathered from the Dancing Kallinger. Gimmini is satisfied that it suffered some kind of unexplained Jumpspace accident, and will pay out on the insurance policy while making arrangements for salvaging the ship. This will involve transporting what cargo can be retrieved and any valuables to the mainworld. The players may have to find an ice asteroid or comet to refuel. Gimmini will arrange for a salvage vessel to recover the ship and turn it over to the authorities for further investigation of the incident. Six months later the players will encounter the Dancing Kallinger plying the space lanes with a new crew and under a different name.
2. As one, however it is not possible for Gimmini to arrange a recovery vessel. Gimmini will ask the players if they will fix the ship on station and then recover it to the mainworld. As this will involve approximately a month and a half's work to, transport and fit a new Jump drive, patch the damaged Jump grid, and prepare the ship for the transit home. The travellers will then have to Jump a possibly dodgy starship. Gimmini is willing to offer the players 5% of the value of the ship. Subsequent events are at the discretion of the Referee.
3. On investigation of the ship's logs it looks like there are discrepancies. Gimmini thinks that the logs might have been faked, and so will not pay out on the claim. Gimmini will arrange for the ship to be picked up by a recovery vessel. However she would like some of the crew to babysit the ship while she can arrange this. The players will have to find an

ice asteroid or comet to refuel, and arrange the life support supplies for both ships. All the players will receive a Cr10,000 bonus for this. The passage of events during the two weeks of ship sitting is up to the Referee.

4. As 3. However the Dancing Kallinger was attack by a pirate band that faked the computer logs and then left the ship as bait. When most of the crew are on the stricken ship and they discover the discrepancies in the logs the pirates will launch a two-pronged boarding action of the players' ship trying to capture it undamaged. The size and number of the pirates should match the PCs abilities.

5. As 4. but Gimmini is in league with the pirates.

6. When the players arrive they cannot find the Dancing Kallinger at all, and no sign of any ship, debris, or any indication that there was any one in the binary system recently. Subsequent events are at the discretion of the Referee.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: HONEST BROKER

**REQUIRED SKILLS: INTERPERSONAL
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

A broker with whom they have done business contacts players during a starport layover. He has need of some people to perform a somewhat critical business errand for him. The party that normally handles this sort of errand for him is busy with other tasks. The errand is not illegal nor will the players need to break or bend any laws. The errand is extremely confidential however and the broker does not want the job freely discussed in any saloons or bars the players may frequent. The broker is more than willing to reward discretion on the players' part and the fee he offers will illustrate that.

The broker's errand consists of the players taking a written note to an individual, waiting for a reply to the note from that individual, and returning the reply to the broker. If the players are efficient and behave in a circumspect manner, the broker may have similar errands for them in the near future.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

Kidnappings in and around the starport region have been on the rise. Very few of these crimes are reported to the authorities. Some see law enforcement as either corrupt or incompetent. Others view kidnapping as a private affair, something to be handled without drawing any additional attention to the crime. In a large majority of cases the ransom is paid and the victim is released, usually unharmed.

The people being kidnapped are drawn from all walks of life; they can be visiting businessmen, gang members, local citizens, and even starship crewmembers. Ransoms can range from a few hundred to hundreds of thousands of credits. Victims can be held for only a few hours or for several weeks; however long the situation demands.

Many groups, with a variety of agendas, are active in the trade. A few groups are using kidnappings to raise money for political or social causes, while others are involved in the trade simply for the money. Some of the kidnapping gangs specialize in snatching dozens of low ransom targets, depending on quantity to fill their pockets. Other gangs target individuals who can command large ransoms and spend weeks and months planning their operations. Whatever the reasons, the boom in kidnappings has led to an opportunity for people willing to act as middlemen.

Both the kidnappers and the ransom payers want a sense of security when dealing with each other. The kidnappers want to be assured that law enforcement or private security

officers won't be breathing down their necks. The ransom payers want to be certain that they aren't paying for a corpse. Both sides want the full amount of money to reach the proper individuals without any problems and both sides do not want to be cheated by the other in any way. A middleman, known and trusted by both sides, can help assuage those fears.

The middleman can handle ransom negotiations, reporting honestly to either side about the financial situations involved. A middleman can also verify that an individual is actually being held captive and that they are in good health. Finally, a middleman can help ensure that the final swap of ransom and kidnapped victim goes smoothly and without any chance of a double-cross. Some middlemen have even branched out into offering a type of kidnapping insurance. Individuals at risk of being kidnapped post a bond with a trusted middleman. This bonded money will then be paid out if the crime occurs and after the kidnappers demonstrate that the victim is still alive.

The broker in question has developed a lucrative side business of late, acting as a middleman, an 'honest broker', during this recent spate of kidnappings. Because this aspect of his business is booming, he is in need of additional help. He is hiring the players to perform one of the most delicate and time consuming portions of the middleman business; ascertaining that the kidnapping victim is alive and that they are who the kidnappers claim.

His desire that the players remain discreet about their job is not due any personal embarrassment. Rather, he does not want to run the risk of the local authorities being tipped to the affair in any manner. Neither side is this situation wishes that to happen and the broker will reward the players if they behave in a circumspect manner. Any attempts by the players to pressure the broker for more money or even to blackmail him, in the mistaken belief they have something 'on him', must keep these distinctions in mind.

The local population has come to accept the situation and generally approves of the actions of the middlemen. The parties involved here are relying on the broker's discretion. If the players get too 'cute', the broker will remove them from the job, pay them the original fee agreed upon, and let news of their actions pass through the local community. The players will find any business or private dealings they may undertake in the area adversely affected by these reports for some time to come.

If they accept the job, the players will be handed an envelope and a small holographic portrait of an adult human male. The broker will instruct them to deliver the envelope to the man in the picture, wait for his response, and bring that response back to the broker. The broker will tell them to arrive at a certain eating establishment by a certain time. There they will be approached by an individual and given further instructions that will eventually bring them face to face with the human in the picture.

The broker will be forthright about the kidnapping, explaining the situation to the players and warning them not to be heroes. He will caution them about carrying weapons beyond those they would normally carry around town. The players are to act as the broker's ears and eyes; they are there only to determine that the kidnapped person is safe and whole. They are not there to puzzle out where the victim is being held, who is holding them, or any other similar information. The broker will stress again and again that the players not act as heroes. He wants confirmation, not additional problems.

When the players arrive at the rendezvous, a nondescript street person will immediately approach them. They will be asked if they are from the broker. If they reply positively, the street person will hand them a small disposable comm link, tell them that the call is 'for them', and depart. If the street person is followed, they will lead anyone trailing them first to a local liquor store and then, clutching a full bottle, to a flophouse. The street person will pay in both cases with cash. If questioned, the street person will only know that they were given the link, the cash, and instructions about whom to hand the comm over to. Any descriptions the street person supplies will be too vague to be of any practical use.

The comm link itself is of a local variety. Cheap and disposable, they are easily purchased and last for a set number of minutes. Attempting to track down who bought the link or where it was purchased will prove impossible as they are sold in vending machines throughout the port and surrounding region. Attempts to monitor or trace any calls made over the link will be fruitless too; the link has a limited wireless range and connects into a bewildering landline and microwave transmission network. A voice on the comm link will provide the players with directions to another location. The directions will be provided twice in succession and the voice will answer no questions. If the players interrupt too often or ask too many questions the call will terminate and no additional calls will be received.

As the players reach the new location, another call will be received much like the first. The players should be routed around the starport and surrounding city to as many locations as the GM wishes, but three or four such trips should be the absolute minimum. After reaching each location, the players will receive a new call with new directions to yet another location.

Do not provide the players with much time to travel to each new location. In this manner the GM will be able to prevent the players from making any detailed plans or doing anything else other than moving from place to place. The players should have little time in each location to scan or survey the each area. They should remain uncertain as to whether or not they are being followed or watched. Finally, the players should arrive at low-income housing project, residential hotel, or other such low profile, high traffic type building. The players will be directed, again by comm link, to

a certain unit or room and there finally meet the man they've done so much to see.

The make-up of the group holding the captive and the set-up of the rooms in which he is currently being held should be carefully arranged by the GM. The number of captors, the weapons they are carrying, the location of the captive, all should be chosen to prevent any notion of heroics on the part of the players. After being frisked and allowed to keep any personal weapons or equipment the kidnappers find reasonable, the players will be informed that they have 10 minutes to speak with the captive. They should hand over the envelope and await the response they came for. While with the captive, the players may try to question him further. However, the captors will interrupt and prevent any questions beyond those concerning the captive's health and wellbeing.

As soon as the captive finishes his response to the queries contained in the envelope, the captive will be hustled out of the room. Some of the kidnappers will stay with the players and prevent them from leaving for another 30 minutes. After that time, the players will be free to go and report back to the broker.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. Traffic or some other transportation problems prevent the players from arriving at a designated location within the time specified and the captors break off contact. This may not mean the end of the job however. If the players immediately and honestly report their failing to the broker, he will still pay them and may even hire them for a second attempt.
2. One of the kidnappers takes umbrage at the players. Something they said, or did, or something they were carrying causes him to question their motives. He may denounce them as informants or worse. An argument among the captors may break out over his suspicions. The players will have to defuse or resolve the situation before they are allowed to see the captive.
3. The captive is injured or ill in some manner and requires basic medical attention. The players may have to convince the captors of this, or the captors may already be aware and nervous about the captive's condition. The players can then either provide the medical care themselves, keeping in mind the kidnappers' desire to move the captive soon, or argue that the captive must be hospitalized. The captors may even offer to allow a player with medical skills to remain with the captive.
4. Knowledge of this kidnapping has leaked out and the players are being followed. The followers could be law enforcement agents, private security hired by someone close to the captive, or another kidnapping gang interested in taking the captive and ransom for themselves. If the players discover they're being followed, there are a few options open to them. They can try and give their followers the slip, they can try and convince the followers to stop, they can join in with the followers, or they can inform the kidnappers

and abort the meeting. If the players do not discover they're being followed and the meeting goes ahead, they could find themselves in the middle of a police raid, gang firefight, or hostage situation.

5. The captive is not who the kidnappers think he is. Despite his protests, the captors believe he is someone else and will react violently to any suggestions otherwise. The holographic picture the players are carrying may help convince the kidnappers of their mistake, but that also means the captive is no longer of any use to them. How the captive is dealt with after that will depend on the actions of the players.

6. The captive is dead, either as a result of the kidnapping or from other causes, and the captors are still attempting to collect the ransom. One of their number is posing as the captive, wearing the captive's clothes and sporting heavy bandages to disguise his looks. The imposter will be unable to answer the broker's written questions. He'll scribble a few lines and claim an inability to answer fully due to the effects of his injuries. In any event, the imposter will not do a very good job of pretending to be the captive. If the players denounce him as a fraud or let their suspicions be known in any other manner, the kidnappers will be forced to act. They may attack the players or even offer them a piece of ransom if they help deceive the broker.

However the meeting with captive and kidnappers occur or whatever the results are, the players will have spent a nerve wracking afternoon and evening being shuttled all over the starport, meeting with a criminal gang, and collecting the required information. Success may bring offers of similar jobs from the broker. The players could find themselves delivering a portion of the ransom or acting as couriers during protracted negotiations.

Success could also help the players in other, more 'legal' ways. The broker is a broker after all. The successful and trusted working relationship that developed during this matter could lead the broker to hire or use the players in other areas, such as shipping or speculative trading. Success could also bring notoriety. While the general population doesn't mind the existence of the middlemen, the local authorities do not care for them at all, viewing the activities of the middlemen as a professional insult. The players may begin to experience low level police harassment, paperwork troubles, or other bureaucratic tangles once the authorities know of their affiliation with the middleman.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: STRIKE!

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

Stembon is an outsystem rockball inhabited only by a few miners. The miners' co-operative often exchanges raw ore for shipments of luxury goods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and medicines that trader ships bring in, usually on a speculative basis. Bringing in just such a cargo of luxury goods, the characters are offered a good price on a small ore shipment that contains a high percentage of rare earths. Selling the cargo on, the characters attract the notice of one of the metallurgical firms of the cluster, who are interested in finding out all about where the shipment came from, and whether it is a fake, a fluke or something worth investing in.

The characters are offered a standard charter rate to transport a survey team to Stembon to investigate, and a bonus if the team finds something the firm wants to exploit. They are required to wait a week while the team does its work, and then bring them back to base.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The miner's co-op is resentful of the survey team, and attempts to drive them away. Measures range from passive resistance to sabotage and intimidation, and will eventually spill over into violence (though lethal measures will not be employed unless the characters begin to use them). The characters aren't directly involved (though the miners will sometimes target them out of resentment) but if the survey team can't do its job, the characters won't get their bonus. The survey team consists of engineers and scientists; they're not up to facing down a mob of angry locals. But maybe the characters are....

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The survey team discovers that the shipment was a fluke, and there is nothing here worth exploiting.
2. There is a reasonable vein, and the company wants to bring in a small mining team. The locals are extremely angry, but are unwilling to escalate the situation and most eventually allow themselves to be bought out or offered jobs.
3. There is no vein, and the locals are attempting to deceive the company into bribing them to allow a corporate team in. They'll go away again once they discover the vein is virtually worthless, but in the meantime the locals will enjoy the proceeds of their scam.
4. As 1, but the locals are extremely resentful and become quite violent. If the team is driven off, the firm becomes convinced that there is something worth having and launches a merc operation to seize the mines.

5. As 2, but the locals are very stubborn, and the situation escalates into a shooting match.

6. As 1 OR 2, but the survey team sneaks into some old mine passages and gets stuck. The locals are very unwilling to mount a rescue, so either the characters will have to be persuasive, or go themselves.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: HAVE FIRE TRUCK, WILL TRAVEL

REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The players will be approached by a young, tough looking woman who wants to book passage to a nearby world. She says she has a grav vehicle that needs transporting. The vehicle will take up 10 tons of cargo space, and she will book middle passage for herself. If the characters have no ship, they might be approached to help obtain suitable transportation, as the young woman has no experience of interstellar shipping.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The Kelventon Volunteer Firefighting Company has become a combination of a local drinking club, fraternity, paramedical service, and town watch. With over 50 members it has the very high esprit de corps, training and teamwork. The company has managed to raise enough funds to purchase a surplus Grav fire/rescue vehicle from a nearby higher tech planet. The young woman appointed herself to the task of selecting a suitable vehicle and getting it home.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. All is as it appears, though the young woman will start hitting on any available males in the crew once into Jump space. She is bored with the "dull boys back home, who never go anywhere".

3-4. Same as 1-2, except that her behavior will become more and more erratic as the trip progresses, eventually leading to her assaulting another passenger or a crew member, and having to be restrained. Given that she is a trained firefighter and town watch member, she is very fit, strong and quite well trained. The characters should not get away without a few bruises and black eyes. The young woman is having a nervous breakdown due to stress, having realized how badly out of her depth she is. She is particularly concerned that the truck is not suitable and that she's disgraced herself by spending all that money on a white elephant.

5-6. As in 3-4, except that her erratic behavior is actually one of the early signs that the ship has misjumped. All of the passengers and crew, in order of least traveled to most, will exhibit some signs of aggression and paranoia. The most experienced (3+ terms in a space based service) crew will be the only sane ones until the ship exits Jump space. The misjump direction and distance should be determined using the misjump tables. But at least the characters have a fire truck if they need one...

PATRON ENCOUNTER: PATIENT TRANSFER

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

Families on Khysale often run to 20+ members, all living in one dwelling. Some of these families practice hydroponic and carniculture farming, using local lichens, imported tissue cloning tanks and greenhouses to supply most of the food staples for outsiders miners whenever they feel threatened. The characters are approached by the charismatic head of one of the largest families, who asks them to take his gravely ill daughter to the high tech hospitals on a higher-tech world nearby. He will offer as payment a collection of rare medicinal and hallucinogenic lichens native to Khysale. His eldest son, a nervous yet earnest young man, will accompany the girl on her journey.

The girl is about 15, and is wonderfully charming. She is clearly dying of a hereditary lung disease, yet she is patient and kind, and has time for everyone. She seems to have accepted her fate with remarkable stoicism, but occasionally she collapses into tears for no real reason or goes into wild rages at the unfairness of it all. Her brother is a little older and frankly terrified at leaving his home, but determined to do what needs to be done.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The people of Khysale are poor by anyone's standards, but they are proud, and approaching outsiders like this is not easy for them. They genuinely think the herbs and lichens they offer will be worth enough to pharmaceutical companies with the resources to refine them to cover the trip and treatment, and they will never forget the outsiders who helped them out.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. All goes well, and the lichens are well received by the local scientific drug companies. The fees they offer will more than pay for the passage and the girl's treatment.

3-4. The trip is uneventful, but the hallucinogenic lichens will be confiscated by customs and the girl will have to go into a charity hospital unless the characters become involved in getting her better treatment.

5. The trip goes poorly and unless the girl is put into a low berth, she will die before the ship exits Jump space. The young man will become inconsolable and try to hurt the crew and himself if not restrained. He will eventually have to be returned to his family who will be sorrowful, yet thankful that the characters tried to help.

6. Same as 3, except that the family blames the characters for their daughter's death, which earns the characters enemies for life.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: ART DEALERS

**REQUIRED SKILLS: INTERPERSONAL
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

A seedy looking bar called the Jump Mobieus is the place to find out what SDB crews can be bribed and where to land illicit shipments so as to avoid detection. Information is rumored to be available on at least 20 different systems. The bar is owned by Santosh Pandipati, a small, dark, constantly-smiling man, he is a Solomani political refugee who has drifted very far with his small family, settling in this out of the way place to avoid political problems at home.

Inside, the decor seems to be made up of surplus ship interior components. No name is visible on the outside of the establishment but all the locals know where it is located. Characters with naval architect or engineering experience will be able to recognize at least 10 different types of starship and small craft interior fittings which make up the alcoves and booths that line the walls of the Jump Mobieus. Observant characters will notice that conversations do not carry far out of the alcoves. The middle of the room is filled with tables representing all the shapes in geometry. The far wall has a metal bar with a holographic backdrop, which shimmers and changes constantly, like a poorly tuned television. Any PC with more than a couple of Jumps under his belt will realize that the holo-screen is showing a film loop of Jumpspace! Staring at it too long while in the bar, especially after a few drinks, will cause hallucinations and a sense of deep unease.

The owner approaches the characters with a deal. He has acquired a number of art pieces of all sorts and sizes as payment for bar tabs. He cannot leave the world but is willing to sell them to the characters for a deep discount so he can get some hard currency.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

Santosh has a lot of highly dubious starfarers passing through his establishment, but he is not a crook himself. He is also (unfortunately for him) not an art critic.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1-2. If the players buy the goods and then try to resell them elsewhere they will get top credit, often at a 5 to 1 profit.

3-4. As in 1-2, except that about 4 days after they begin selling the art, local customs will descend and confiscate the art works remaining. It seems that all of these were reported stolen from various shipments, including some from ships that are missing, presumed lost. The characters will have to do some fast talking or employ their administrative or legal skill rolls to avoid being tried as thieves or perhaps even pirates.

5-6. The art is mostly worthless, pawned off on the ignorant innkeeper. He will not be receptive to characters who go back to see him about the matter the purchase was speculative after all...

PATRON ENCOUNTER: STARPORT AUTHORITY

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The party is contacted by the highport authority as they approach turnover for their arrival into orbit. Apparently the starport has lost contact with a cutter carrying a high ranking corporate individual who was making a tour of the mining facilities on a moon of one of the outsystem planets. The party is 'requested' to conduct a SAR (Search and Rescue) operation for the cutter and render any needed assistance. The highport does not currently have any vessels in orbit able to conduct the SAR operations.

The official is the Vice-CEO of Valance Industries, a big time (in this system anyway) mining corporation. They mine both the limited resources of the moons, and also the ocean depths of the mainworld. The official is well respected and liked by the populace, and he is said by many to be in the running for the Governorship of the system in the next election. There is a crew of 2 aboard the cutter, with 6 passengers including the official.

As payment, the party is offered Cr1,000 each for the safe recovery and return of the crew and passengers, as well as no tax or tariff on any goods the ship is bringing into or taking from the system. All port fees and cargo handling fees will be waived as well. If the cutter can be recovered, there will also be a Cr3,000 bonus per rescuer.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

Time is of the essence in this situation. The cutter was on the far side of the planet and in its sensor shadow, which is the reason the highport cannot locate them. The mining station hasn't got sensors to brag about, either. The vessel was damaged by an explosion in the aft section, leaving engineering with a gaping hole to vacuum and a crew and passengers barely protected by a door not meant to serve as an airlock. To top it all off, the emergency battery has only about a day of power left. The ship's engineer, who was luckily in the forward compartment during the explosion, has shored up the door as well as possible. Air still leaks through the seals though.

If the PCs demand more than what is offered above, the highport officer becomes very formal and reminds the PCs of the interstellar articles requiring their vessel to assist the authorities in any way possible and of the consequences of legal action should they refuse.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The craft is easy to find, the emergency beacon is functional and the crew are fine.
2. The craft is easy to find as above, however the craft has 2D (2d6) hours until it crashes into the moon's surface.
3. As 1, however, there is a serious leak requiring the survivors to use vacc suits. They have less than a day of air remaining.
4. The cutter was attacked and destroyed by pirates, assassins or some other group, who are now sneaking away with hostages.
5. The cutter was attacked and the offending vessel is still attempting to recover the survivors to use as hostages.
6. The cutter was destroyed with no survivors.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: VALANCE INDUSTRIES

**REQUIRED SKILLS: INVESTIGATIVE,
INTRUSION**

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

While awaiting their own cargo to be on loaded, the PCs are approached by a representative of Valance Industries who says he has a job for them. The man is well dressed and appears to be what he says, up to and including a high security identification badge, which will be produced upon demand. Over the last 8 months, he says, there has been a profit skimming operation going on at the shipyard, resulting in loss of nearly MCr3. Attempts to track the loss have been yielding less than stellar results, mostly due to the fact that the shipyard is run by what is essentially a clan of closely related individuals. If asked how this one family came into control of such a major operation, the travellers are told "that's how it's done here". All the major operations on the planet are run by one clan or another and the families stick together, which tends to hinder law enforcement at times.

The PCs are offered a sum of Cr10,000 (total) to identify the responsible parties and provide proof of the thefts, most likely in the form of documents, and to keep their operation "on the quiet". They are warned to not take any action against the offenders, as law enforcement will quickly deal with them as soon as proof is obtained.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The family in question is a clan known by the surname Terell. They have run a fairly honest operation in the past few decades, and the problem has only started recently upon the retirement of the old station manager. He was replaced by an extremely ambitious young man, Connor Terell, who happens to be a very greedy and power hungry man. He has in the last year caused most of the supervisors of the station to "retire" or just plain quit and replaced them with his gang of cronies, who are mostly his close relatives.

The scheme is simple. When an ore shipment comes in it goes into storage, and while it is there about .05 ton is removed out of each ton and added into a new container, combining the ore to make another slightly light container. This container is sold at the same price and the Terell clan keeps the profit, while smearing Valance Industries' name in the process. They do keep a log of the proceeds in the station manager's office in a secure safe, and also a copy in the account executive's office. The files will be guarded by high-tech security systems, including video recording systems, motion sensors, and alarms integrated into the doors and safe.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The office has a roving patrol checking every half hour and an alarm system set to go off if the safe is opened without the correct key code.
 2. There is a guard on duty at the end of the hall as well as an alarm. The PCs will need to find a way past the guard without detection.
 3. The files are guarded by only the automated security systems.
 4. The party learns that an additional copy of the logs exists. It is in the possession of a mid-level manager who would be willing to part with it for a significant bribe and the offer of a secure position with Valance Industries. However, the Terrell clan also suspects its existence and will do whatever it takes to prevent it being brought to light.
- 5-6. As 1-2, the PCs are betrayed and security (consisting of 2 officers responding within 5 minutes, and with a backup team an additional 15 minutes away) is alerted within 15 minutes of the PCs attempt to retrieve the logs.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: IMPERIAL AGENT

REQUIRED SKILLS: ESPIONAGE
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The characters have several days' stop over and last night spent some time in the company of Kelis Puleton, a vivacious and witty woman who works for the Port Authority. There may have been some playful flirting with handsome, unattached male characters, but nothing improper. This morning the character (male or female) that Kelis got on best with receives a package from a Kelis containing a storage device and Cr100, with a note asking the character to deliver the device to Petrov Annikii at the characters' next port of call.

Shortly after the package arrives, the local police arrive to question the characters in relation to the murder of Kelis Puleton, as they were the last people seen with her alive...

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The computer storage is an innocuous private letter to an old friend. It is also the code key to de-crypt a report to Imperial Naval Intelligence (already sent by a different route) from Kelis, who was an imperial agent. She had intercepted communications between Solomani agents, representatives of a dissident group and the local government about a deal for a covert base in this system, funded by the Solomani and giving this system exemption from raiding.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. Everything is as described, but Kelis' shadowy double life never comes to light. The characters are removed from suspicion and, once the authorities are satisfied that there is nothing of importance on the storage device, allowed to complete the delivery. The characters may be curious as to why Petrov Anniki is so relieved to see them and why he pays an additional Cr400 for Kelis' letter.
- 2-3. Kelis' death was only tangentially related to her work as a spy. She was murdered in a fit of rage by a rejected lover; an obsessive man who had taken to stalking Kelis and, after discovering some of her secrets, tried to convince her to flee with him. She refused and died in the subsequent struggle. Although the local police will rapidly clear the characters (but ask that they remain available), the murderer will become convinced that the characters are working for Kelis' off-world masters and are responsible for driving the wedge between them. He will stalk the characters, eventually attempting to kill them.
4. Actually, the local government supplied the information to Kelis (unbeknownst to both the dissidents and Solomani). Kelis was acting as bait to draw them out. Now the government wants the characters to do the same but neglects to inform the

characters they are contributing in the capacity of bait! They simply draw the Solomani and dissident agents' attentions to the characters and then monitor the situation, hoping to be able to intervene before there are too many casualties.

5-6. The local government are hip deep in this. Once they have established that the characters were not Kelis' contact in Naval Intelligence they will be sent on their way with a fake duplicate of the message for Petrov Anniiki and shadowed by agents working for the three conspiring powers.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: RESPECTABLE SCIENTIST

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD,
ELECTRONICS, MECHANICAL
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The characters are approached by a senior research administrator from a respected academic institution; either local to the system or with a local presence. The institution is engaged in a long term observation project and has a facility directly over one of the poles of the stellar primary. Communication is unreliable, but except in periods of high stellar activity, is usually fairly frequent. Now there appears to be a problem: there has been no communication for five days and this morning the courier pilot was hospitalized unexpectedly. This was unrelated to any problem that may or may not exist at the station – it was a simple accident. The researcher wants the characters to pilot the institution's specially modified supply craft out to the facility and check that all is well.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The supply craft is a Ship's Boat modified to allow safe operations on repeated exposure to conditions close to the star. It is armed as appropriate to local law level.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The research team is fine, although recent severe stellar activity has destroyed their communication equipment. Character assistance with repairs will be much appreciated.
2. The entire research team is dead as a result of violent psychoses induced by hallucinogenic compounds in a contaminated food shipment; similar to but more severe than the condition Ergotism. The contractor responsible for the food shipment will try to evade their responsibilities in the matter.

3-4. The facility has been severely damaged by an unusually violent ejection of stellar coronal matter that overwhelmed the station's countermeasures. There are survivors trapped in various parts of the facility and the whole station is adrift and heading towards the star: the characters will have to make some difficult judgment calls to rescue the survivors.

5-6. A crippled corsair ship misjumped from a losing fight several systems away and emerged near the facility, where upon the jump drive failed. The raiders have commandeered the facility and are in the process of cannibalizing it to fix their ship. The supply craft would be a much better source of parts...

PATRON ENCOUNTER: ADVENTURE SCHOOL

REQUIRED SKILLS: VARIOUS
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: NONE

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

The characters are approached by a man who says he is the representative of a trio of wealthy individuals who have heard of the travellers' exploits and want to recruit them for their special skills. The job pays Cr1,000 each up front plus Cr100 per day for a couple of weeks, with reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation thrown in.

The three patrons are all parents, with a child rapidly approaching an age where he or she will be off to start a career. One plans to join the Imperial Navy, one to become a merchant ship officer and the other a field scientist. These occupations can all be dangerous, and the trio want to ensure that their offspring are properly prepared for the hazards they may encounter.

The job is quite simple really: the adventurers will take the kids (who have all just become adults) around the dives and bars of the seedier parts of town to see how things work away from the shiny-clean environment they are used to. They will then take them hiking in the outback and show some basic survival skills plus maybe how to shoot and brawl.

The overall idea is to give the kids an idea how to survive outside their normal environment, to build confidence and to prepare them for their new careers in a way that college and academy will not.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

Katriona Duvalle wants to be a merchant officer and is okay with the whole scheme. She likes the seedy bars angle a bit too much and starts talking about maybe working in free traders rather than the big lines, but overall she is not too much trouble.

Mitchell Invarssiii wants to join the Imperial Navy and thinks the whole business is stupid. He bitches, complains and causes trouble as often as possible. Once he figures out that the characters have to keep him safe (not long) he will start trying to pick fights with people they meet.

Garmrn Ol'vourn is a Vargr who wants to be a field scientist. He is chronically lacking in self-confidence as a result of childhood bullying and feels that his place is at the bottom of the pack. He is a likeable sort at heart but gives up easily, then obviously expects bitter criticism or even blows. If he can be just urged to succeed at something he will benefit greatly.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. All is as it seems, and the characters only need to deal with the problems caused by their young charges.
2. Katriona decides to run off to join a Free Trader crew.
3. All is as presented, but Mitchell decides to skip school and disappears, necessitating a search for him.
4. As 3 but Mitchell is kidnapped by someone he upset earlier.
5. Garmrn is in fact a manipulative sociopath who tries to get others into trouble, and will endanger the group just for fun, though in a subtle way.
6. Mitchell disappears, Garmrn is a sociopath AND Katriona decides to run off to join a Free Trader crew.

PATRON ENCOUNTER: RETIRED SPACER

**REQUIRED SKILLS: SHIPBOARD SKILLS,
ELECTRONICS, MECHANICAL, VACC SUIT
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: STARSHIP**

PLAYERS' INFORMATION:

Aabriini Miltorin is a retired spacer. He spent his entire adult life plying the trade routes. He has a thousand tales from a hundred seedy star-town bars and through them all run threads of desperation and bitterness that he never got the lucky break he deserved. But now it is his turn. Aabriini has the co-ordinates of an unclaimed wreck of a type Y yacht, ripe for salvage. It has not been claimed by anyone in the six years since he first spotted it. Aabriini wants the characters to assist him in salvaging the wreck and will negotiate a fair division of any profits.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION:

The wreck is in a weird eccentric orbit, well clear of normal shipping lanes: it is remarkable that Aabriini ever spotted it and unsurprising that it has not been picked up since, although Aabriini is glossing over the fact that its orbit will take the wreck into the stellar primary soon.

Reaching the wreck is challenging enough but once onboard a grisly truth becomes apparent: there was a struggle on board in which the ship's systems were badly damaged. The ship's boat is not in its berth and a thorough search of the vessel and its computer files will show that there were six people on board when it left port; there are only five corpses.

RESOLUTION: 1D (1D6)

1. The Yacht's owner was the head of a major corporation, now being run by the man who succeeded him after his predecessor's "disappearance" twelve years earlier.
2. The Yacht's owner was assassinated by a disgruntled ex-employee masquerading as the steward on the ship. Now he is impersonating his former boss as the executive of the Corporation.
3. As 1 but the assassin botched the job – although he and the crew are all dead and the ship badly shot up, the owner escaped in the ship's boat (which the assassin crippled with weapons fire). The owner is adrift somewhere in the system, in the boat's emergency low berth module.
4. The assassination was botched – although the target and all witnesses were eliminated, the ship was shot to hell and the assassin had no way off. He is still on board disguised as the steward, in the emergency low berth the owner had fitted.
- 5-6. As 2 but the ship's boat was destroyed by weapons fire from the yacht. The corporation was taken over and asset stripped so no one will claim ownership from there. Aabriini

has finally got his break but this is such a shock that his native paranoia overwhelms his good sense. He believes the characters are plotting to exclude him from the profits and will attempt to both fix "his" prize and sabotage the characters ship, whilst the both hurtle towards the star.

Part 4: Linked Adventures

AMBER ZONE: BINARY SURVEY

SITUATION:

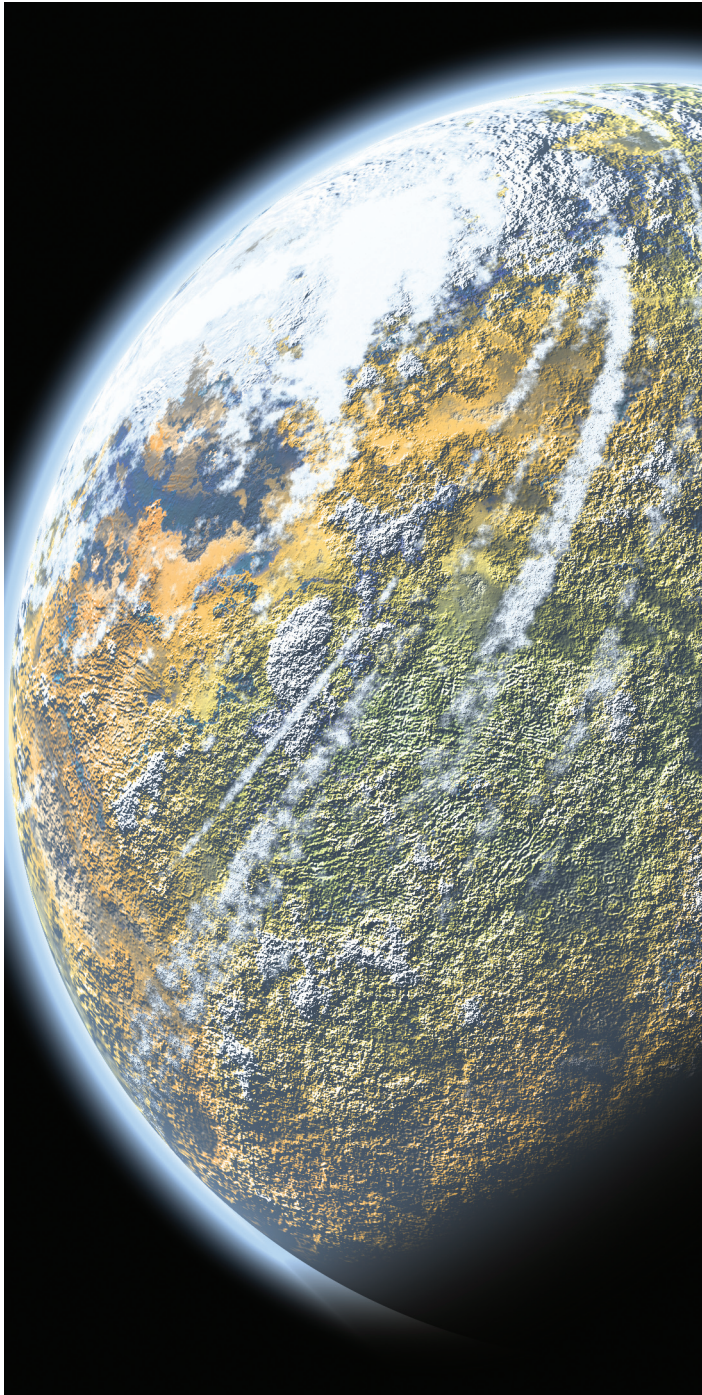
The players find themselves on a mid tech planet in a binary system on the boarder of the Imperium without work and with little apparent prospects. While the standard of living isn't too bad and Imperial Credits do go a long way they haven't seen a ship in port for weeks. They are approached by the local head of Ling Standard Products (LSP) Enli Shiishuginsa who would like to employ them to do a courtesy survey of the binary star system. While it is known that the Scouts have done a survey of the binary previously the information is not available for reasons of Imperial security and thus LSP can't get their hands on it.

It is known that there are a few planets in the binary system and at least one of them is habitable with a substantial population. To perform the survey Shiishuginsa is willing to offer each of them Cr1,000, bed and board for as long as necessary, and middle passage outsystem on the next LSP transport to come through. He can provide a ship's boat, some survey sensors, and as much life support as the players could possibly want.

If the players accept they will find their spacecraft is one of three aging ship's boats to be found in a spaceport at the back of the LSP ore refinery. The spaceport consists of a landing pad, three hangers and a scrap yard. The first hanger holds spare parts for ship's boats and crates and crates full of life support equipment. The second hanger holds the three ship's boats and maintenance equipment while the third hanger has a fuel truck, a fire truck, administrative offices and what passes as a control tower. The scrap yard seems to be a dumping ground for all manner of things. Shiishuginsa explains that they started to collect old scrap from all over the planet for reprocessing in an effort to make the refinery profitable. The LSP subsector boss refused to invest in the necessary reprocessing equipment so the scheme never got off the ground, and as such there is all manner of scrap in the yard although it is mostly broken down ground cars.

Shiishuginsa will show them the survey sensors and the ship's boat they will have to fit them to. As no one works at the spaceport any more he will give them the keys to the whole place and tell them to make themselves at home. The canteen at the refinery serves the local fair at lunch time and the PCs are allowed to eat there for nothing.

While the PCs ship's boat doesn't look much it is in fact in quite good shape for its age. Any half competent engineer will see that the boat is in need of some maintenance. The fuel system needs cleaning and the maneuver drive needs calibrating in addition to the work necessary to mount the survey sensors. The fuel system can be cleaned at the same time as the survey sensors are fitted and the maneuver drive can be calibrated to finish.



While there is indeed a large amount of life support equipment it is all out of date by at least four months and the PCs will need to sort through it to identify those supplies that are still good for use.

When the players are ready to start Shiishuginsa will ask them to keep him updated on a regular basis with status and survey results.

RESOLUTION:

The reason for the survey is to make sure that there are no economically accessible resources that can be extracted that would justify LSP staying and continuing to operate their refinery in the system.

The refinery was set-up over a century ago to exploit the available mineral resources of the main world, but as the government imposed more and more regulations on out-system companies LSP's profits from the operation slowly moved into losses. Over the past 10 years the refinery has been making a loss and there have been no other opportunities available for the company to exploit. As such they are cutting their losses and closing the plant and effectively writing off their assets in this system.

The survey is the last task that Shiishuginsa has to do before he can head back to civilization to be reassigned. He is hoping that the PCs will turn up nothing worth while so he can close up quickly and catch the next LSP scheduled transport back to the Imperium. The players can find out much of this information by chatting to the locals who are working as caretakers of the refinery in anticipation of it shutting down completely. All the other off worlders have left.

Travel to the binary system is uneventful, and the players have 15 days of constant operations until their fuel runs out. The Binary star is no longer than 4 days out at full maneuver. The players can start a basic survey of the binary system on the way there and still have at least 7 days on station to conduct more detailed ones.

The binary system has a large planet with a moon, a balkanized habitable planet at TL3, and a rockball. The players can allocate their time between the planets as they wish, but won't be able to find anything that can be exploited by LSP in a short timescale.

If the players keep Shiishuginsa updated as asked then when they have finished their survey and start heading back they will receive a message informing them that their payment has been put in the safe of the administrative buildings of the spaceport, the combination to which is in the data packet of the message, the refinery has been closed, and that he is heading out system tomorrow on the LSP courier that is currently in port. This will leave the players effectively stranded in the system at least until the next LSP ship comes through, and with the refinery closed that could well be a

long time. If the players take issue with this Shiishuginsa, in consideration of leaving them stranded, will pass the title of the spaceport and its contents over to the players thus giving them a place to stay and a means to earn a living.

AMBER ZONE: BINARY RESCUE

SITUATION:

The players find themselves out of work on a mid tech planet on the border of the Imperium: see Amber Zone: "Binary Survey", and they seem to be quite an attraction as they were passengers on the second ship through this month! They are approached by the local head of Ling Standard Products (LSP) Enli Shiishuginsa who would like to employ them to rescue a lost survey team.

Shiishuginsa wants the PCs to go looking for the survey team because they haven't reported in for the last two weeks. He is worried about their safety, and would like the information they gained while undertaking the survey. He's only interested in the people and the survey, anything else the PCs find is theirs, although he suspects there will be nothing else of interest.

The team that Shiishuginsa hired was a bunch of freelancers, much like the PCs, and they were sent out in a ship's boat with additional survey sensors installed. Shiishuginsa will offer each party member Cr1,000, bed, board, and middle passage outsystem on the next LSP transport to come through if they find and return the survey crew and /or the survey data.

To get them to the binary system the PCs can use one of the two old and dilapidated ship's boats that are around the back of the LSP refinery in an old and seemingly disused spaceport. The three hangers of the spaceport hold the ship's boats and maintenance equipment, life support supplies and spare parts while the third houses the fuel and fire truck and has administrative offices and a control tower. The administrative offices show signs of recent although messy occupation, in fact the quarter's area has some of the belongings of the freelance survey team in lockers. The players have the run of the spaceport as no one now works there and Shiishuginsa gives them a book of 56 meal vouchers that are valid in the Starport café as he says that apart from his admin offices all the LSP operations have been shut down and the workers given their severance pay.

Although the boats look bad they are actually in not too bad nick, considering their age and TL. A systems check will indicate which one is in the best shape. Further test of the best boat will show that the computers are good as well as the avionics and sensors. The radio has a habit of just stopping for a second or two during transmission, and the inertial compensator's primary control connection is shot and needs replacing although the back-up connection looks good. The drives and powerplant look ok although they could use a few man days to be cleaned up and serviced. The fuel tankage and supply systems seem to function well but it doesn't look like they have been cleaned in quite a while. Cleaning the

fuel systems is a particularly messy job but can be done in parallel with the other maintenance work. All the parts needed are in the warehouse with the life support supplies although the players will be taking the last of them. In all if the party have a competent engineer they should be able to have the ship's boat up and running in a good spaceworthy shape, if a little shabby looking, in five days.

Along with the parts the warehouse does indeed have life support supplies and lots of them, years worth in fact, however they are all out of date by at least 4 months and some of them by much longer. The PCs will have to go through them individually to find out if they are any good to use.

Interacting with the Starport personal will allow the players to learn the recent history and the fact that the LSP refinery has just been closed down and Enli Shiishuginsa is itching to get out system.

Once the ship's boat is ready for launch Shiishuginsa will give the PCs the last known positions of the survey team from their communications and ask that they keep him informed on a regular basis.

RESOLUTION:

In practice the Shiishuginsa isn't at all worried about the freelancers, but he wants to get his hands on the survey data because if it shows nothing he can get out of this god forsaken system and back to civilization. He knows that the freelancers finished their survey even though they didn't transmit it, but he doesn't know where they are.

The communications from the survey team will show that they visited all the planets in the binary, but left the habitable one until last and following two days on station vanished.

Traveling to the binary system should take no longer than 4 days at maximum G, and should be very boring and uneventful. With 15 days of fuel for constant operations the players will have at least seven days on station in order to find the survey team.

When they arrive at the habitable planet there should be little trouble in finding the survey team's ship's boat if they do a scan. The boat has crashed in a rather inaccessible position, and there seems to be a large forest fire following its likely final flight path.

The forest fire straddles the border of two rival TL3 states on the planet, and as the crash went undetected by them each is blaming the other for starting it. The fire is slowly burning itself out due to the geography of the region and both sides have sent patrols to see if they can find the cause.

There have been a number of border incidents recently as tensions have heightened due to the fire damaging farms and villages on both sides of the border.

AMBER ZONE: BINARY RUNNING

SITUATION:

The players have found themselves on a mid tech planet in a binary system on the borders of the Imperium without work and with little apparent prospects. Their saving grace is that they have been passed title to an ex LSP spaceport by the side of the main Starport and the contents therein; see Amber Zones “Binary Survey” and “Binary Rescue”.

Their only apparent prospect of income was following enquiries at the Starport where the administration is happy to purchase refined or unrefined fuel from the players at either Cr100 or Cr20 (Imperial) per ton respectively.

The spaceport has a landing pad, a scrap yard and three hangers. The first hanger contains life support supplies and a couple of spare parts, the second has two ageing ship's boats and maintenance equipment, and the third holds a fuel truck, a fire truck, administrative offices and what passes for a control tower.

One of the ship's boats is in quite a spaceworthy condition despite its age and TL. The second boat has had fuel scoops and a purification plant installed and could use some work to make it operational. Systems checks will show that the drives, powerplant, scoops and purifiers on the second ship's boat look ok, although they could use a few man days to be cleaned up and serviced, the fuel system leaks and needs cleaning, one of the backup computers needs replacing, and the engineering bridge station needs its control boards replaced and reconnected. Cleaning the fuel system is messy and does not need any spare parts to perform, but is necessary to pin down where the system is leaking. The only spare parts in the hanger are those needed to connect the engineering bridge station properly.

There are years worth of life support supplies in the first hanger however all of them are at least four months out of date while some are much older. The players will have to inspect them individually to be able to be certain that they will all perform as necessary to pilot the ship's boats in space. There is enough fuel in the truck to fill the tanks of a ship's boat once.

The scrap yard seems to be a dumping ground for all manner of things, mostly broken down wheeled vehicles, however there does seem to be other more interesting objects that the PCs may be able to use. If the PCs are diligent in their searches they will find, under a heap of old cars, an aged ship's boat that is mostly just a shell. The bridge of the derelict is mostly intact and it will be possible to salvage a few working parts along with a functioning engineering bridge control board.

When the PCs land to look over the crashed boat they will find it remarkably intact. Once inside however they will discover that none of the crew survived. There will be little portable salvage although it could well be possible to salvage the ship's boat itself. Restoring power to the ship's computer will show that while finishing the survey of this planet the ship's boat lost maneuver drive and was forced to land by entering the planetary atmosphere where the pilot did a very good job of reducing the speed of the boat enough in order for the crew to have a good chance of surviving the crash, although had little choice but to land in the forest. The crew all died when the inertial compensators failed on the first bounce. They then subsequently engaged on the second bounce, however by that time all the crew and much of the portable equipment was trashed.

While the players are extracting the survey data from the boat's computer two nine men squads of soldiers one from each state arrive at the crash site and spot the two ship's boats and the PCs, and while they are interested in the crash site they are more interested in shooting at each other. Unless the players have posted a guard the first they are likely to know about the soldiers is from an exchange of a volley or two of musket fire. If the PCs engage either or both of the squads their advanced TL weapons are likely to be more than a match for the flint lock musket and bayonet armed squads who will retreat if they start to take significant casualties.

If the players keep their patron updated as asked then when they have finished retrieving the survey data Shiishuginsa will ask the PCs to transmit the data as soon as they start to make their way back to the main world. If they do they will receive a message from Shiishuginsa letting them know that their payment has been locked in the safe of the admin section of the spaceport, the combination is attached to the message, and that he will be leaving by LSP courier tomorrow morning and he thanks them for a job well done. If the players realize that LSP may not be sending another ship through the system for a considerable time, due to the closure of the refinery, and they take issue with being stranded, then Shiishuginsa will pass the title of the spaceport and its contents over to the players. This will give them at least a place to stay and a means to earn a living.

The players also know of a ship's boat that crashed landed on the habitable planet of the binary system. This boat is remarkably intact with a known functioning fuel and computer system.

RESOLUTION:

Traveling to the binary system should take no longer than 4 days at maximum G, and should be uneventful. The players have 15 days of fuel for constant operations of the ship's boat in space in which to get to and from the binary system and salvage any parts they need from the crash site.

The habitable planet in the binary system has a number of TL3 states and the ship's boat crashed on the boarder between two of them. Tensions between the states have been growing for a while and a recent forest fire has caused them to rise to boiling point. Each of the states has accused the other of starting the fire that has caused damage to farms and villages on both sides of the boarder. There have been a number of skirmishes due to the tensions but now both sides are mobilizing and recruiting for what looks likely to end in full scale war.

When the players arrive at the crash site they will find that a platoon of troops from one of the states has secured the ships boat and is defending the position against a platoon of their enemy. In order for the PCs to gain access to the ship's boat and salvage any equipment they will have to approach one side and negotiate terms. The PCs advanced weapons will be very useful in a conflict that is conducted using flintlock muskets, bayonets and swords, and will easily be the force multiplier that is needed to win the skirmish for which ever side the PCs choose.

The platoon officer of the winning side will be greatly interested in the player's weaponry and in the possibility of gaining more of it. As parts from the ship's boat are salvaged she will dispatch a runner to her commanding officer with a message informing him of what has happened. Within a couple of days and before the PCs can finish extracting the parts they need a Colonel will approach the PCs and ask about their weaponry. Following discussions with the players the Colonel will ask them if they can buy some and then ship them back here. If the players are happy to discuss this further the Colonel will escort the PCs, using their boat, to the capital of the state.

At the capital the players will meet the Minister for War who, after discussions and demonstrations, will ask the players to provide them with higher tech weapons. Although the state does not have any Imperial Credits with which to buy the weapons they do have goods which could be traded, and will allow the PCs to take 15% of the sale price of the goods for themselves. The goods they have in quantity are Textiles, Wood, Grain, Meat and Fruit. The players will be able to radio the main world to see the best price that they can get for the goods.

Once back at the main world selling the goods shouldn't prove to be too difficult, however purchasing fire arms in quantity may prove harder. There are two weapons shops that the PCs can go to that sport a variety of weaponry that would be useful, however there are none in the quantity that would make a significant difference to the impending war, although picking up a couple of sniper rifles may be beneficial. The shop keepers say that any type of volume sale would have to be arranged from offworld, and the only people with any type of volume on planet would be the Army. Initial enquiries to the Army will be rebuffed. The local firearm manufacture will not be able to fill an order for three months because they are currently flat out upgrading the Army with their new rifles. Utilizing any underworld connections will indeed turn up a number of available weapons although there will be none of sufficient quantity the same to be of any use, those available should be at the discretion of the Referee.

The Army is updating their main rifle, and the existing rifle is being passed down to the cadet forces. The existing cadet forces rifles are being assigned for destruction along with there stockpiles of ammunition. If the PCs can work this out or hear of this possibility then they may be able to purchase these from the cadet force quartermasters at very reasonable rates. The guns in question are leaver action breach loading .45 caliber single shot rifles, and the ammo is full bronze cased black powder cartridges (TL4). At present the cadet quartermaster has 500 rifles (2 tons) and will sell then at Cr50 each either for 250 rifles (1 ton) @ Cr12,500 or 500 rifles (2 tons) @ Cr24,000. He also has 200,000 rounds of ammunition (4 tons) that he will throw in for Cr1,000 per ton. If the PCs don't purchase these rifles the quartermaster will have to pay for them to be destroyed so there is some significant leeway to negotiate the cost if the referee so wishes.

If the PCs deliver the rifles in a timely manner they will be rewarded by the Minister of War with 2 tons of wood.

AMBER ZONE: BINARY TICKET

SITUATION:

The players have found themselves on a mid tech planet in a binary system on the borders of the Imperium. They have managed to acquire an ex LSP spaceport by the side of the main Starport, see Amber Zones: "Binary Survey", "Binary Rescue" and "Binary Running", along with contacts in the government of a TL3 state on the habitable planet in the binary system.

The spaceport has a landing pad, a scrap yard and three hangers. The first hanger contains life support supplies and quite an extensive range of spare parts for ship's boats, the second has two ageing ship's boats, one of which has fuel scoops and purifiers installed, and maintenance equipment, and the third holds a fuel truck, a fire truck, administrative offices and what passes for a control tower.

Although they are not much to look at both the ship's boats are in good spaceworthy condition and seem to be quite robust given their age and TL. There are years worth of life support supplies in the first hanger. All of them however are at least four months out of date while the majority of them are much older. The players will have to inspect them individually for suitability for use while the ship's boats are in space. In date life support supplies are available from the Starport if the players wish to purchase them. Both the fuel truck and fire trucks are in ok condition although they could both use a good service.

The options for employment have quickly become exhausted and while they players are quite comfortable at the moment having nothing to do can quickly get boring.

The PCs are contacted by the State government of the habitable planet in the binary system. The State has just gained 500 TL4 leaver action breach loading rifles and they would like the players to form a small carder unit to teach tactics in the use of the new weaponry to the newly equipped half infantry battalion. While the State government has no Imperial Credits for payment they do have 10 tons of wood to offer, and will provide bed and board for the period of the training, which they expect to last about a month.

RESOLUTION:

The 400 man unit that the PCs will be training are experienced soldiers that the State has pulled together from all of their units, and as such the PCs will not need to teach them how to be soldiers they will just need to teach them the tactics involved in using the TL4 weapons over those of the TL3 muskets they are used to using. The TL4 rifles are far more accurate, with a far greater range, and they can fire two or three more aimed rounds a minute.

The reason for the training of the new unit is because the tensions between the state and its neighbor have been steadily rising due to a forest fire that burned along the boarder and destroyed many farms and villages on both sides. Each state blamed the other for starting the fire and there have been a number of skirmishes and cross boarder incidents that seem to be quickly building into a full blown war. The state government is hoping that their new unit will be enough to be a decisive element in a short and successful war.

While the PCs are starting to train the new unit the war begins in earnest as the opposition pushes across the boarder in a number of places. Due to their most experienced soldiers having been removed from the front line units to form the one the PCs are training initial losses seem to be quite severe with ground being lost against the attack. The state government contacts the PCs to inform them that they will need to deploy their unit into the front line.

Each side in the war has roughly the same size of army, including:

- 1 guard infantry division (Veteran TL3)
- 2 infantry select divisions (Experienced TL3)
- 1 cavalry select divisions (Experienced TL3)
- 3 infantry conscript divisions (Novice TL3)

When the unit is deployed the state government is willing to allow the PCs to advise in tactical and strategic decisions in the war due to their knowledge if the PCs are willing to move soldiers and supplies around the war zone in their Ship's Boat.

If the PCs unit has a number of successes they will be called on to participate even more. The PCs will have to manage the logistics of the unit well as there is only a limited supply of rifles, ammunition and those that are trained in there use. At the discretion of the Referee it may be possible to obtain more rifles and ammunition from the main world of the system (in the same quantities as those in "Binary Running").

The use of the small TL4 unit and the Ship's Boats for logistics should be enough to tip the balance of the war in favor of the players side, it will also be possible for the PCs to get involved themselves as their individual high tech weapons will have a distinct advantage in skirmishes or as supporting weapons in the battles for their TL4 unit. If the PCs managed to make a significant contribution to the war effort then the State Government will pay a bonus of an extra 10 tons of wood.

AMBER ZONE: BINARY PROGRESS

SITUATION:

The PCs find themselves on a habitable planet orbiting the binary star of a mid tech system on the borders of the Imperium. They have managed to obtain title to an ex LSP spaceport on the mainworld along with two Ship's Boats (see Amber Zones: "Binary Survey", "Binary Rescue", "Binary Running", and "Binary Ticket"). The planet has recently been involved in a short but decisive war where the government that the PCs have connections with managed to conquer their rival.

The victorious government is currently disarming and disbanding the opposition's army and navy and have come across an opportunity that they would like the PCs to investigate for possibilities for progression.

While taking over the infrastructure of the losing side the government came across a munitions factory that seemed to be on the verge of being able to produce TL4 lever action breach loading rifles, similar to those that have just enabled them to win the recent war. They would like the PCs to see if it is possible to start production of the new rifles in order to upgrade the arms of their soldiers.

The State government has also seen the benefit of trade with the mainworld of the system and would like to see if they can profit from it further. They would like the PCs to survey their territory to see if there is a suitable site that they can use for a spaceport.

While they don't have any Imperial Credits to pay the players with they do have an abundance of raw materials with which to provide payment. The PCs are offered a cargo of, wood, textiles, grain, fruit, or meat that they can in turn sell at the mainworld.

RESOLUTION:

While the PCs can set up the production line in the munitions factory, and instigate more advanced business practices the main problem with getting the factory up and running will be finding and stopping a saboteur who does not like the idea of arming "the enemy". The players will have to deal with a work force who are generally obstructive and will not be forthcoming with information about who might be undertaking the vandalism. While the workforce might be obstructive they are unlikely to want to lose their jobs as there is likely to be some economic upheaval as a result of the war.

To conduct the survey for the spaceport the PCs will need to fly over the available land in their Ships Boat at a relatively low altitude in order for their sensors to obtain the resolution that is necessary. This will need good piloting skills to do quickly. As there are no other known space craft or flying

vehicles on the planet the pilot need not worry about them, although mountains, hills, or trees may get in their way, bird strikes and pot shots at the ships boat will probably not be too much of an issue.

The best place for the new spaceport will be in an area that is a considerable way from the capital and there will need to be a substantial amount of work in order to make a good road to get to it before they can even start to build the spaceport. The new road passes through an area that is now considered to be bandit country as there are a number of groups of soldiers on the defeated side who are using gorilla tactics in an effort to continue the war.

There is an alternative site that is less than ideal that can be proposed to the government, but this will take at least three times as long to build than the preferred site.

It will be necessary for the PCs to clear one or two of these groups in order for the road crew to continue to do their work. The soldiers will be armed with TL3 flint lock muskets, rifles and pistols, but without any main support weapons. They fight in skirmish order and will not conduct direct frontal assaults. These groups see themselves as soldiers, not bandits, fighting a war for a right and just cause. They will practice proper military discipline, the rules of war and POW procedures. If the groups find they can't stand up to the players they will hide out in the forest and will need to be found, tracked and eliminated. Instead of elimination it may be possible for these groups to be enrolled into the army as units if the PCs can persuade the government and the groups can be found assignments that will not encourage them to question why they joined "the enemy". This example could then be used as a model for integration as opposed to oppression.

Having dealt with any opposition the PCs will need to overcome any number of natural obstacles to enable the spaceport to be built. Tree clearing and rock moving might be necessary and also dealing with any number of predators that may be in the region.