

# TRAVELLER<sup>®</sup>

*Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future*



## TRAVELLER'S AIDE

*OBJECTS OF THE MIND*

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# ***TRAVELLER'S AIDE***

## ***OBJECTS OF THE MIND***

A **TRAVELLER**Adventure

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# INTRODUCTION

*Objects of the Mind* is a complete **Traveller** adventure and is approved for use with both **Traveller20** and Classic **Traveller**. The Referee should read through this entire adventure before starting play become familiar with the plots, ideas, and concepts behind the story.

**Required Materials:** This adventure uses the basic **Traveller20** rules, the *Traveller's Handbook*.

**Useful Materials:** Some NPC statistics in this adventure are drawn from *Traveller's Aide #4, 76 Gunmen*. While this supplement is not required, the referee might find it useful to have handy.

## STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

As with all published adventures for **Traveller20**, the dates, characters, places, and events are written as part of the OTU (Official **Traveller** Universe) for purposes of continuity with previously published material. The Referee is free (and encouraged) to adapt part or all of these factors to better fit their own campaigns.

**Dates:** The beginning date for this adventure is 104-993, according to the standard Imperial calendar. 104 refers the current day; i.e. the 104th day of the standard 365-day year, while 993 is the current year of the Third Imperium, at a time when the attention of the Imperial Core is turned toward the raging Solomani Rim War. As the Referee of course, you are free to set the date for this adventure to any that suit your personal campaign needs.

**Place:** This adventure begins on Kiikkedia (1235) in the Satyressia subsector of Ley Sector, and moves to New Kurdistan (1134) in the same subsector. Kiikkedia is a high-population, high technology world just off from an important main. New Kurdistan is a small desert world under Imperial Military rule, home to fierce nomad tribesmen, and is a world tainted by failed terraforming. These worlds can be substituted for any others though it is preferable a Desert World is used in the second part of the scenario.

## NOTES ON THE EPIC ADVENTURE FORMAT

This adventure is presented in the EPIC format. It is divided into four main parts: the Introduction, the Adventure, Library Data, and the EPIC checklist.

There are three Acts in this adventure, each Act consisting of one or more Scenes. Each Act is usually run in the given sequence, but Scenes may occur in any order. When all key Scenes within an Act are completed, play may continue with a Scene from the next Act. The last Act will set the stage for the Climax, which will resolve the adventure. In many EPIC adventures, an Epilogue will follow the Climax with information that may be useful for an ongoing campaign.

Each scene is a small scenario in which the characters may encounter and interact with NPCs, learn some valuable clue or fact, become involved in a conflict, or encounter any other circumstance that will ultimately lead them to the resolution of the adventure. Each Scene will be presented to the Referee as a short synopsis, with reference to any related Library Data that might be useful in running the Scene or need to be presented to the characters during the Scene. The Referee may of course include extra scenes as red herrings, asides, and expansions or in response to player actions.

What is not presented in each scene is any narration or color text that is to be read aloud to the players. Instead the Referee is encouraged to use her own imagination and role-play the scene using the information that is available. Referees new to role-playing may find this difficult to handle at first, but this system encourages the Referee to employ creativity and imagination to create a richer and more enjoyable game; the results are worth the effort!

## ACT AND SCENE FORMAT

Each Act begins with an overview and comments for the Referee, and then proceeds to the details of the Scenes within that Act.

Each Scene begins with a section for the Referee, which will contain some or all of the following entries:

**Situation:** The brief text gives a synopsis of what the PCs will encounter at the start of the scene. This information is not meant to be read directly to the players.

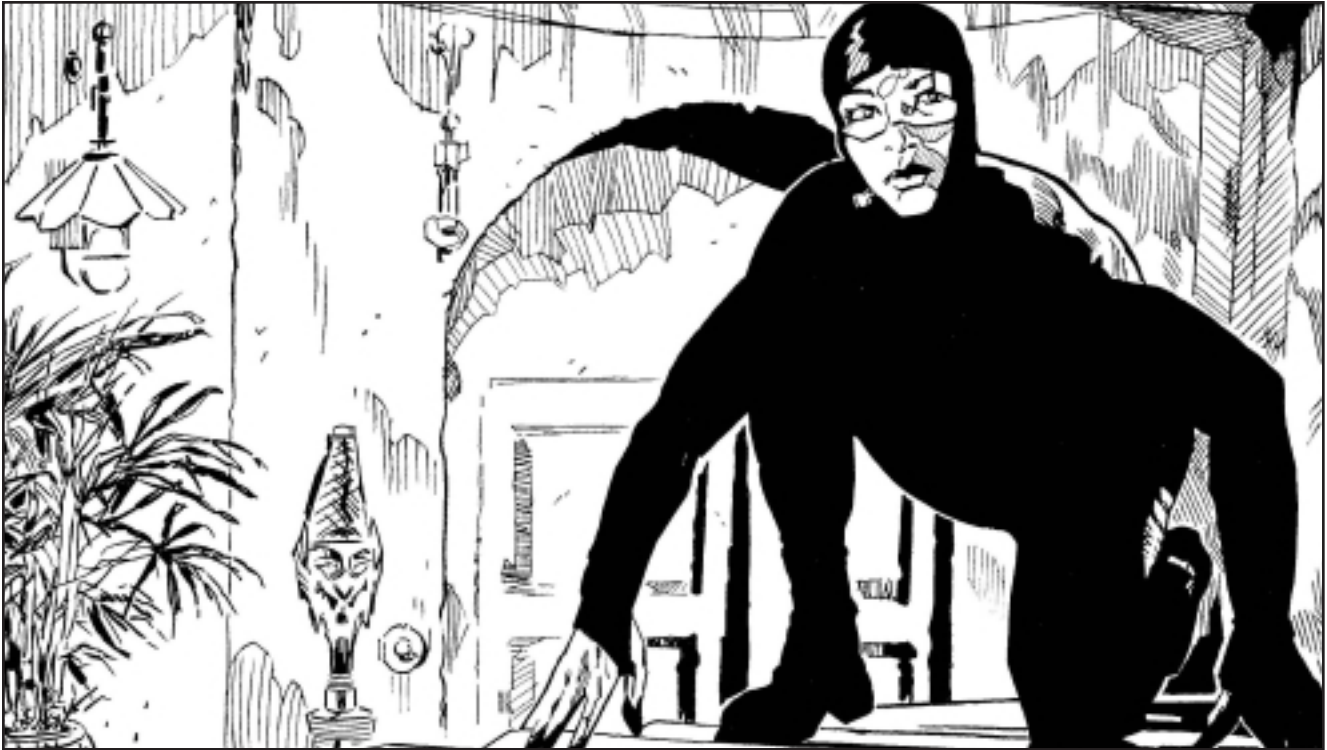
**Referee's Information:** This may include Characters, Tactics, Data Points, Library Data Links and other supporting information.

**Characters:** The Referee's information will describe NPCs important to the scene. Normal 'background' NPCs will not be detailed. All game statistics will be detailed in the Cast of Characters.

**Tactics:** If combat of some type is expected in this scene, this section will give tips and suggestions on how the NPCs will handle themselves in the event combat does occur.

**Data Points:** These are bits of information and clues that the PCs might acquire in the course of the given scene. The circumstances required to obtain this information will usually be listed as well. In situations where no circumstance for acquir-

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ing the information is given, assume the data is freely and easily obtainable. Data Points marked with a bullet may be given out in any order desired, unless a specific circumstance is specified. Data Points marked with a numeral should be given out in numerical order, as more information is warranted.

**Library Data Links:** These are references to extra supporting material and information found in the Library Data section of this adventure that the Referee might find useful in running the scene.

## ***REFEREE'S BACKGROUND***

Winston Byron, a wealthy collector of curiosities, was recently robbed of a small portion of his collection of Ancients artifacts. The artifacts were stolen by a team of professional thieves hired by members of the Psionic Institute from nearby New Kurdistan. The Psionic Institute wishes to study the items and attempt to use them to further their power. Attempts in the past have been made to make contact with other nearby Psionic Institutes, but the extremist policies of the New Kurdistan Institute meant other Institutes were unwilling.

The team of thieves ordinarily operate mostly on their own planet, and chose to undertake this mission only due to the amount of money offered and psionic influence. To aid in the theft they employed local criminals as guides, and bribed a member of Byron's staff to act as an inside man.

The local law enforcement officers were called to the scene and began an investigation, but were called off by their superiors when their reports triggered automatic monitoring programs at the local Naval Intelligence office, and Naval Intelligence took over. The local NI staff has dispatched a psionic event specialist to follow up the theft.

The lack of progress by, and information from, local law enforcement caused Byron to make waves amongst his government and nobility contacts and he has decided to hire an independent team to recover his artifacts.

## ***GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED***

It is assumed the PCs will encounter the events of this adventure through being hired to recover a number of artifacts stolen from a wealthy collector. There are, however, a number of other ways in which the PCs can become involved. Some suggestions are listed below:

- The PCs are Ministry of Justice agents sent to investigate the crime due to Mr. Byron's contacts amongst Imperial nobility.
- The PCs are members of a crime syndicate sent to steal the items from the freelance thieves operating on their turf.
- The PCs are a team from either the MoJ or Naval Intelligence alerted by local law enforcement communications referring to psionic 'Ancients Artifacts'.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS

Notes and details on the various significant (and some not so significant) NPCs that may be encountered by the characters during the course of this adventure.

## NOTES ON NPC ATTITUDES

One of the key things for the Referee to remember when running this adventure is the attitude of the various factions to the PCs based on their actions. Initially, all NPCs will have an Indifferent attitude towards the PCs, but their actions in certain scenes may alter these attitudes one way or another.

## BLADE AND VANCE

*Local boys done bad.*

Blade and Vance are a pair of local toughs and small-time criminals who have a rep larger than their abilities. This has seen to land them in a world of trouble over the Byron theft. Vance is dead at the start of the adventure.

**Blade:** Human Male; Rogue 4; Init +1 (+1 Dex); AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 armor); AR 4; Spd 9m; St/Lb 21/12; Atks +4 ranged (auto pistol 1d10), +4 melee (dagger 1d4); SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; SZ M; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12, Edu 7, Soc 4.

*Skills:* Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Gather Information +4, Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +3, T/Computer +2.

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium), Brawling, Fence Stolen Goods, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapons (marksman, swordsman).

*Equipment:* Autopistol, Dagger, Flak Jacket, Cr500 in cash.

## THE HAKAR'I

*Psionic Tribesmen.*

There are three members of the Hakar'i in this adventure.

**Essa:** Essa is an elderly, wizened woman who is strong in the clairvoyant arts. She is a natural leader, a skilled psychologist, and when she is not being mysterious and wise, has the joys and passion of a girl a quarter her age. Although old and frail by appearance she is a tough as old boots. She will avoid combat as much as possible.

**Hadad:** Hadad is a middle-aged, completely bald man with a lean face and defined muscle. He carries three blades in various sheathes about his body. He is an extremely skilled warrior who uses his Awareness talents to boost his abilities in combat, and uses Teleport to move into melee by preference, and to jump around the melee, confusing his opponents.

**Al-Tarath:** Al-Tarath is a young, eager warrior who is new to the Hakar'i but strong in the arts of Telepathy. He uses a scimitar in combat.

**Essa:** Human Female; Ex-Barbarian 5 / Professional 7; Init +0; AC 10; AR 0; Spd 9m; St/Lb 96/14; Atks +4/-1 melee (dagger 1d4-2); SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +11; SZ M; Str 7, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18, Edu 12, Soc 14, Psi 17.

*Skills:* Clairvoyance (15) +18, Climb +2, Hide +6, Intuit Direction +9, K/Imperial Culture +4, K/Psionics +11, Leader +16, Move Silently +6, P/Psychology +11, Ride +4, Sense Motive +10, Speak Language (Galanglic), Spot +9, Survival +8, Technosavvy +11, Telepathy (2) +5, Trader +10.

*Feats:* Armor (light), Connections (tribes), Hobby (clairvoyance, sense motive), Interrogation, Natural Born Leader, Natural Medicine, Professional Specialty (P/Psychology), Shield, Technophobia, Weapons (archer, swordsman).

*Psionic Feats:* Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Natural Talent (Clairvoyance), Psi Training, Sense, Shield.

*Equipment:* Dagger, Communicator, Hakar'i robes.

**Hadad:** Human Male; Ex-Barbarian 5 / Mercenary 7; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Feat); AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 armor); AR 2; Spd 9m; St/Lb 92/14; Atks +16/+11/+6 melee (blade 1d6+5 (crit 17)), +15/+10/+5 melee (unarmed 1d4+3 non-lethal), +15/+10/+5 ranged (autopistol 1d10, rifle 1d12); SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +8; SZ M; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 11, Edu 11, Soc 11, Psi 14.

*Skills:* Awareness (9) +11, Climb +7, Hide +13, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, K/Psionics +2, Move Silently +13, Ride +5, Spot +9, Survival +6, Technosavvy +10, Teleport (5) +7.

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Hobby (awareness), Improved Critical (blade), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Quick Draw, Technophobia, Uncanny Dodge, Weapons (archer, combat rifleman, marksman, swordsman), Weapon focus (blade), Weapon specialization (blade).

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*Psionic Feats:* Psi Training, Psionically Enhanced Strength, Regeneration, Suspended Animation, Teleport.

*Equipment:* Autopistol, Blade, Rifle, Jack Armor, Hakar'i robes.

**AI-Tarath:** Human Male; Barbarian 9; Init +1; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 armor); AR 2; Spd 9m; St/Lb 96/14; Atks +11 melee (scimitar 1d6+3); SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +6; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 13, Edu 9, Soc 11, Psi 16.

*Skills:* Animal Empathy +7, Handle Animal +5, Hide +3, Intuit Direction +3, K/Psionics +2, Move Silently +3, Ride +9, Speak Language (Galanglic), Spot +13, Survival +9, Technosavvy +12, Telepathy (6) +9.

*Feats:* Animal Whisper, Armor (light), Iron Will, Shield, Technophobia, Weapons (archer, swordsman), Weapon focus (scimitar), Weapon specialization (scimitar).

*Psionic Feats:* Life Detection, Psi Training, Read Surface Thoughts, Send Thoughts, Shield, Telepathy.

*Equipment:* Dagger, Scimitar, Jack Armor, Hakar'i robes.

## LT. DEVRIES

*Naval Intelligence, and nasty with it.*

Lt. Pierre DeVries is a career Naval Officer who was seconded to the Intelligence branch almost immediately upon his commission. He has worked as a psionic event specialist for the last three years on Kiikkedia and takes his role very seriously. He will pursue any psions and psionic events with a ruthless tenacity, and will crush anyone who gets in his way. He wants to recover the artifacts to be studied by the Imperium.

**Lt. Pierre DeVries:** Human Male; Navy 6 / Rogue 3; Init +1 (+1 Dex); AC 17 (+1 Dex, +6 armor); AR 4; Spd 9m; St/Lb 38/11; Atks +7/+2 ranged (auto pistol 1d10 or light ACR 1d12); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +8; SZ M; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 12, Edu 14, Soc 13.

*Skills:* Bluff +5, Bribery +6, Forgery +8, Gather Information +10, Hide +8, K/Interstellar Law +5, Leader +9, Move Silently +8, P/Admin +6, Pilot +8, Recruiting +12, Search +7, Sense Motive +9, Spot +4, T/Communications +11, T/Computer +11.

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Command Presence, Connections (intelligence), EW Specialist, Hobby (sense motive), Interrogation, Iron Will, Martial Training, Natural Born Leader, Spot Trouble, Stealthy, Vessel (grav), Weapons (lasers, marksman, swordsman).

*Equipment:* Autopistol, Light ACR, Cloth Armor, Cr5000 in cash, Encrypted Communicator, Pocket Computer, Naval Intelligence ID.

## THE THIEVES

*Professional, ruthless and angry.*

Hakim Al-shar, Khan Al-Fulani and Jara bint Mohammed Al-Hiraji, the New Kurdistanis, are a small team of professional thieves. They specialize in recovering specific valuable goods for clients. They are highly skilled, something matched by their high fees. They were hired by a member of the Hakar'i on New Kurdistan to steal a number of statuettes, though they were not told they were psionic artifacts. They are tough combatants, though Hakim is known on the streets of New Kurdistan as being particularly lethal.

**Hakim:** Human; Mercenary 10 / Rogue 5; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 Armor) or 15 on New Kurdistan (+3 Dex, +2 Armor); AR 4 or 2 on New Kurdistan; Spd 9m; St/Lb 110/13; Atks +17/+12/+7 ranged (auto pistol 1d10, gauss rifle 2d12), +16/+11/+6 ranged (SMG 1d10); SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +7; SZ M; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8, Edu 11, Soc 6.

*Skills:* Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Disguise +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +5, Leader +3, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Ride +9, Search +8, Spot +12, Survival +10.

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Assassin, Brawling, Defensive Roll, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Sneak Attack, Spot Trouble, Tactics, Weapons (combat rifleman, marksman, swordsman), Weapon focus (autopistol, gauss rifle).

*Equipment:* Autopistol, SMG, Flak Vest, Respirator. Has access to a Gauss Rifle on New Kurdistan.

**Khan and Jara:** Human; Mercenary 7 / Rogue 4; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Armor) or 14 on New Kurdistan (+2 Dex, +2 Armor); AR 4; Spd 9m; St/Lb 53/13; Atks +10/+5 ranged (auto pistol 1d10), +9/+4 ranged (SMG 1d10, gauss rifle 2d12); SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +5; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10, Edu 10, Soc 6.

*Skills:* Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Disguise +7, Gather Information +7, Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Search +8, Spot +8, T/Computer +3, T/Electronics +4.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, Defensive Roll, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Sneak Attack, Spot Trouble, Smuggling, Tactics, Weapons (combat rifleman, marksman, swordsman), Weapon focus (autopistol).

*Equipment:* Autopistol, SMG, Flak Vest, Respirator. Has access to a Gauss Rifle on New Kurdistan.

## THOMPSON AND ELANOR WALTERS

*A brother and sister out of their depth.*

Thompson was born on Khinakhi and raised in a quiet farm with his sister Elanor. When Elanor turned eighteen, and he twenty-two and just finishing a term in the Khinakhi planetary army as an MP, they left their parent's farm for Kikkedia to try and escape their 'tedious life'. Thompson quickly found employment on Kikkedia as a security guard for Winston Byron. He managed to arrange his sister a job there as well. His sister lost her job just over three years later because her partying with her boyfriend meant she often fell asleep at work. Elliott Cooke made sure she would not find work again in the city and, although a few months later she began childminding for their neighbor, Thompson never forgave his employer for attempting to ruin Elanor's life. When the opportunity came to get revenge, and to get the money to take them both home, Thompson forsook his principles and agreed to help. He stupidly compromised the plan by stealing a valuable broach from the room and now is hiding from the thieves he crossed.

Thompson is an idealist whose views were shattered by exposure to the real world. Although he is a thief and in hiding, he is basically a decent man who will stand up for his principles. He loves his sister dearly and will do anything to protect her. Although he is scared by the situation he has gotten them in, Thompson is determined to get him and Elanor back home safely.

Elanor is a young, carefree girl who is madly in love. Although she wants to leave Kikkedia and return home she doesn't want to leave her boyfriend behind, so is trying to convince him to come with them. She is friendly and outgoing, though somewhat unreliable.

**Elanor Walters:** Human Female; Traveller 2; Init +0 (+0 Dex); AC 10; AR 0; Spd 9m; St/Lb 9/10; Atks +1 melee (brawling 1d4 non-lethal); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; SZ M; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14, Edu 12, Soc 8.

*Skills:* Bluff +6, Entertain +7, Liaison +7, Gambling +6, Innuendo +4, K/Music Scene +6, Swim +4.

*Feats:* Alertness, Armor (light, medium), Carousing, Fast Talk, First Aid, Run.

*Equipment:* Autopistol, SMG, Flak Vest, Respirator.

**Thompson Walters:** Human Male; Army 3 / Rogue 3; Init +1 (+1 Dex); AC 11 (+1 Dex); AR 0; Spd 9m; St/Lb 39/13; Atks +6/+1 ranged (auto pistol 1d10); SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10, Edu 11, Soc 9.

*Skills:* Drive +1, Forgery +4, K/Military Law +3, Leader +6, Liaison +6, P/Admin +6, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, T/Computer +4.

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, Command Presence, Improved Search, Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Training, Spot Trouble, Tactics, Toughness, Vessel (Wheeled), Weapons (combat rifleman, marksman, swordsman).

*Equipment:* Autopistol, Stolen Necklace, Cr3250 in cash.

## WINSTON BYRON

*Wealthy collector.*

Byron, as he prefers to be called, was born to a wealthy business family on Kikkedia. He inherited the family business from his father and increased its worth nearly ten fold using his keen business mind. All his life, however, he associated with the nobility of the Imperium and was jealous of the power and influence they had by virtue of birth alone. He has grown to be an arrogant man who carries himself in the manner and style of a noble, desperately wishing he had been born one. This attitude has made Winston Byron an arrogant and self-important man, who treats his employees, and strangers, as inferior beings – a fact increased by his high intellectual facility.

Byron exercises regularly and spends an hour each day practicing with a dueling sword, so he is in good shape for his 57 years. His hair is black, with gray around the temples. He has never married (he would only marry a noble) and devotes his life to business, social climbing and his one undeniable passion – collecting artifacts of Ancients origin. He is also very knowledgeable in the field of Ancients history.

**Winston Byron:** Human Male; Professional 9; Init +0; AC 10; AR 0; Spd 9m; St/Lb 30/10; Atks +3 melee (foil 1d4); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +9; SZ M; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12, Edu 16, Soc 14.



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

*Skills:* Appraise +11, Gather Information +6, K/Ancients +12, K/Business Law +15, K/Interstellar Law +17, Liaison +13, P/Admin +15, P/Finance +13, Pilot +7, Sense Motive +7, T/Computer +12, Trader +7.

*Feats:* Armor (light), Connections (business, nobility), Credit Line, Iron Will, Legal Eagle, Professional Specialty (P/Admin), Research, Trustworthy, Vessel (grav), Weapons (swordsman), Weapon focus (foil).

*Equipment:* Foil, Smart Suit, Multi-Billion Credit Financial and Trading Company.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

*The assembled masses.*

### LT. DEVRIES' MARINES

*Professional soldiers.*

The Imperial Marine team working for Lt. DeVries is a skilled and professional squad normally used for customs work and boarding actions. Due to the deniable nature of their current task they are not armed with the state of the art equipment they are used to, but this does not make them any less dangerous.

**Imperial Marines:** Human; Marine 6; Init +1 (+1 Dex); AC 17 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); AR 6; Spd 6m; St/Lb 44/14; Atks +10/+5 ranged (auto pistol 1d10, light ACR, SMG 1d10 or thud gun 2d8 non-lethal); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10, Edu 10, Soc 10.

*Skills:* Demolitions +6, Forward Observer +5, Move Silently +5, Pilot +5, Spot +6, Survival +4.

*Feats:* Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, High Morale, Second Wind, Toughness, Vessel (grav), Weapons (combat rifleman, high energy, marksman, swordsman), Weapon focus (cutlass, gauss rifle), Zero-G Combat.

*Equipment:* Autopistol, SMG/ Light ACR / Thud Gun, Cloth Armor.

### THE OTHERS

**Fasan al-Faresh:** Use 'New Kurdistanian Tribesman' (below) with the following changes:

- He wears no armor (AC11/AR0).
- He carries a scimitar (+8/+3 melee, 1d8) and an assault rifle (+7/+2 ranged, 1d12).

**Imperial Army Police:** Use 'High-Tech Army Troops' from T20 Traveller's Handbook p424.

**Imperial Marines:** Use 'Regular Imperial Marine' from T20 Traveller's Handbook p424.

**New Kurdistanian Ruffians:** Use 'Street Thugs' from T20 Traveller's Handbook p422.

**New Kurdistanian Tribesmen:** Human; Barbarian 6; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Feat); AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 Armor); AR 2; Spd 9m; St/Lb 39/13; Atks +8/+3 melee (scimitar 1d6+1), +6/+1\* ranged (rifle 1d12); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11, Edu 6, Soc 5.

*Skills:* Handle Animal +4, Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Ride +7, Survival +6, Technosavvy +7.

*Feats:* Armor (light), Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Shield, Stealthy, Technophobia, Toughness, Tracker, Weapons (archer, marksman, swordsman).

*Equipment:* Scimitar, Rifle, Jack Armor, Riding Animal, assorted other equipment (high and low tech).

*Note:* Technophobia gives a -2 to rolls using familiar technology unless a check is passed against DC20. This bonus includes a -1 penalty rather than force the referee to roll each time it is used.

## PSIONIC INSTITUTES

The term "Psionic Institute" refers to any means of psionic training, from a lone "master" to a major university. Institutes are illegal in the Imperium and must hide their activities. This and the highly individual nature of psionics, means that institutes vary considerably. Some are very focused, offering training and nothing more, while others dabble in research into related (and sometimes unrelated) phenomena, Ancients artifacts, and anything else that interests the institute's teachers and researchers or may offer greater insight into the powers of the mind. Most institutes will go to considerable lengths to keep their members safe and undetected, and some will use violence. A few routinely use violence to pursue their own agendas, which may include security and financing, or may be political.

# ***THE ADVENTURE***

## ***ACT I***

In this act the PCs will be employed to locate a number of missing Ancients artifacts by a wealthy collector. The events of this act will set the scene for the scenario and also cover the initial investigations into the theft, tracking down thieves and fences, culminating in a showdown with some or all of the thieves, leading to the next act.

### ***1) THE BYRON ESTATE***

**Situation:** The PCs are directed by local contacts or the starport bulletin board to an urgent offer of employment for a team of 'skilled investigators'. The patron is a middle-aged human male named Winston Byron, though Mr. Byron's weasely and officious secretary, Cooke, will conduct the majority of the offer. They will explain that two days ago a number of valuable artifacts believed to be of Ancients origin were stolen from Mr. Byron's private collection within his estate. Mr. Byron contacted the local police who responded quickly, and then after a day ceased their investigation and refused all comment, even when pressured by Byron's local contacts within the government. He offers to pay the PCs Cr30000 plus refund up to Cr10000 each of travel and accommodation expenses (this does not cover new or replacement equipment) to track down and reclaim the artifacts.

**Referee's Notes:** If the PCs accept Byron's offer he will allow them to investigate the scene of the crime (with Cooke accompanying them of course!) and perform any other reasonable investigations on his property, though a party spending too long here will be firmly encouraged to hurry up as Byron is frustrated with the lack of police progress and wants results quick.

The Byron estate is a small group of buildings on an extensive private walled estate, just outside of the capital city. Aside from the main building there is a garage, a summerhouse, a golf cabin and course and a huge forested / topical garden. The only entrance is a gate at the front of the estate.

In order to run this scene it is important to understand the events of two nights before. On the night of 102-993 the thieves drove to the estate in a cleaning services vehicle. Their inside man let them in the gate; a security guard named Thompson Walters. Using his access code they entered the security office and stunned the other security guard on duty, George Wilks, with Anestalone gas. Walters then led them to the private museum where they removed a number of artifacts. The team's security expert then erased all records in the security computer and destroyed the hardware with a localized incendiary charge. They then incapacitated Thompson Walters with the gas and exited the estate.

When Wilks recovered he contacted local law enforcement, which responded quickly. The police secured the perimeter and began to investigate the theft. A Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) unit was called and a detective assigned to the case. The Detective interviewed the two guards prior to them being taken to hospital with the intent of interviewing them again at a later time. She then worked with the CSI team at the scene. Her initial report concerning the theft from Mr. Byron's estate triggered automated monitoring alarms (the artifact descriptions) at the Naval Intelligence office, which ordered the local investigation stopped, requisitioned the CSI results, and moved in with their own team.

The crime scene is a large, airy room decorated as an old style museum. The artifacts are distributed about the room in glass cases. Most of the artifacts are of Ancients origins, or ancient Imperial or Terran Confederation objects. All of the artifacts are valuable, and some are irreplaceable. There are hidden security cameras in all four corners, giving a 3-d image of the room all the time.

Speaking to the staff present in the estate will reveal a multitude of different pieces of information. The staff will be initially helpful toward the PCs, though the Security team will be uncooperative when questioned about the events of the night and the guards on duty until they are sure the PCs will not cause their department trouble with Byron or Cooke.

The staff of the estate includes:

- Elliott Cooke, Byron's officious personal secretary
- Mishka Vilkuugiskaan, Head of estate security. A middle-aged, professional, ex-policeman.
- Simon De'Vaux, security officer.
- George Wilks, security officer. Mid-50s, married, fat and friendly.
- Thompson Walters, security officer.
- "Tandy", Chef. An open, friendly Vargr lady who is drunk more often than not.
- Max Lewis, the groundsman.
- Alice Bryant, Menial worker (cleaning, kitchen assistance, etc.) who is trying to hide the fact she is stealing clothes from Byron.
- Running Deer Smith, Menial worker (cleaning, kitchen assistance, etc.).
- Jason Grey, Menial worker (cleaning, kitchen assistance, etc.) hired after Elanor was fired.

## THE STATUETTES

The statuettes stolen from Byron are all identical, approximately twenty centimeters tall and made from a black material of no previously known type. They are in the form of stylized humanoids. They have no discernible controls or function and were originally classified as "objects of an unknown purpose" by the Imperial team that investigated them after Byron's find.

The items are actually powerful psionic devices used to control the Ancient's servitor races, though the knowledge of how to operate them died with Grandfather's children. Any Telepathic PC with a PSI of 14 or more who handles one of the objects will realize they are psionic in nature but will not be able to use them. The New Kurdistan Psionics Institute is aware of the item's psionic nature through a member of the team that found them with Byron, but they have no idea of their function.

**Note to Referees:** The style of the figures is similar to that of the stone heads on Easter Island but are of complete bodies.

### DATA POINTS

- The missing objects are seven statuettes, and an elegant jeweled brooch worn by Empress Leanna. All the objects are considered almost priceless (MCr 40+ each) except the brooch, which is valued at MCr 1.5. Whilst checking the house contents Byron also discovered some of his clothes are missing, though there was no sign of entry to that part of the house. (from: Byron, Cooke)
- There is no sign of forced entry anywhere in the building. (from: Security staff, investigation)
- The crime scene has been extensively combed for clues by the police and cleaned since. The police had some results but the investigation ended too soon for Byron or Cooke to be made aware of them. (from: Investigation)
- The security system was completely melted by a localized explosion. (from: investigation) A successful Demolition skill check (DC15) will indicate it was incendiary cord, possibly of the type normally used for destroying starship door locks in boarding actions. The lack of collateral damage suggests a professional set the charge. The security system had a back-up storage machine in the basement, which was also destroyed. This means no security system logs are available from that night.
- The menial working that night, Alice Bryant, was asleep and heard nothing. (from: any staff)
- Wilks was surprised and had no chance to fight back. He returned to work last night after a day of rest, certified fit by his doctor. (from: Security staff)
- Walters discharged himself from hospital almost immediately and has not been seen since. He is not answering his comm. The security head has not brought this to Mr. Cooke's attention yet and will not unless he does not turn up for work tonight. (from: Security staff, only if they trust the PCs or on a successful Liaison skill check (DC20))
- Walters disliked Mr. Byron and Mr. Cooke after they fired his sister Elanor, who worked here as a menial, for sleeping on the job. They share an apartment, but she spends most of her time with her boyfriend, a DJ in a bar near her apartment (location unknown). (from: any staff on a successful Liaison or Gather Information skill check (DC20))
- The cop assigned to the case was Detective Bristol, from the Central Precinct. (from: Cooke, Security team)

### LIBRARY DATA LINKS

Ancients  
Anestalone  
Kiikkedia

## 2) THE WALTERS' APARTMENT

**Situation:** Thompson's apartment is located on the second floor of a nine story building in a low-rent part of the city. The neighborhood around the building contains other low-rent apartment blocks and a few local businesses. There is no security guard on the front access to the building, and a moderate (DC18) electronic keypad lock on the back door. During the day check (DC10) every 10 minutes to see if the PCs encounter someone entering or leaving the building. At night this changes to one every 30 minutes. An electronic keypad lock (DC20) protects the apartment.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## ANCIENTS ARTIFACTS IN THE IMPERIUM

Ancients artifacts are extremely difficult to come by, for several reasons. Some have connections with psionic abilities, which are banned in the Imperium, and others are connected with technologies that the authorities would like to study. Those that reach the open market have been carefully licensed and catalogued, and fetch a high price mainly for their rarity. However, there exists a thriving black market in restricted artifacts, including but not restricted to Ancients items. Some collectors do still manage to acquire illegal artifacts, usually hiding them in plain sight among a legitimate collection, or find other ways around the rules. And of course, sometimes a "safe", registered artifact turns out to have rather more to it than was previously supposed.

In the Third Imperium there are a number of laws and regulations covering the sale, ownership and research of Ancients artifacts and sites. It is illegal to deal in unregistered Ancients artifacts, or to exploit unregistered Ancients sites. Artifacts can be sold once registered, but the process of registration means that the Imperium will retain the object for an unspecified amount of time for investigation. Simple objects like rubble are cataloged and returned, whereas more interesting objects are likely to be confiscated and a nominal finder's fee is given. Some people do not wish to take the risk of the more unique artifacts being taken from them for so little money, so choose to sell or keep them illegally. The Imperium offers a finder's fee for both objects and sites, but the sad truth is that an unscrupulous individual can make far more money selling an artifact or a site location on the black market than the finder's fee. The fees stand at Cr5,000 for objects and Cr50,000 for sites, with a further Cr100 to MCr1 depending upon how useful the site or item is upon further analysis.

The penalties for trafficking in Ancients materials vary depending upon the level of the crime. For the failure to register small, relatively common items like rubble fragments can result in confiscation and a fine of up to Cr25,000. Failure to register or illegal trafficking in the more unique items can bring confiscation, fines of up to Cr250,000 and/or a prison sentence. Mass trafficking in illegal artifacts, theft of artifacts from the Imperium or concealment of a new Ancients site can bring long prison sentences in maximum-security prisons.

The key point to remember is that the Imperium errs very much on the side of caution when dealing with Ancients artifacts and sites. It is always possible that the next artifact found could be a lethal weapon of mass destruction that could be used against the Imperium, or that the next discovered site could hold the answers to all the questions about the Ancients. None of these things must fall into the wrong (i.e. non-Imperial) hands.

**Referee's Notes:** The apartment is a small four-room place, with two bedrooms, a communal room and a kitchen. One bedroom is small and Spartan, the other filled with music posters and clothing. Thompson and Elanor have shared the apartment since they arrived on Kiiikkedia. A toilet and shower kiosk adjoins the communal room. The apartment appears recently used, with unwashed dishes in the sink and the wall screen on the news, muted. In the two bedrooms there are signs of recent packing, with clean clothes strewn on the beds. A successful Search (DC15) or Spot (DC25) skill check will reveal an empty jewelry box in the top of the trash bin. It is an expensive wooden box with velvet cushioning, with a small plate indicating it once contained the 'Broach once worn by Empress Leanna'. Every minute the PCs are in the apartment check (DC15) to see if they are disturbed by the Walters' neighbor Janet Virkowski, who is looking for Elanor (decrease this to DC10 if they make any unduly loud noises). The personal computer terminal in the apartment is on, and a Computer skill check (DC5) will reveal the last activity was a request for travel costs and dates to Khinakhi (their home planet). The address book on the computer is blanked.

Four thugs hired by the New Kurdistani thieves are watching the apartment building. They are being paid to watch the building and follow anyone who is interested in the Walters' apartment. Although they are being circumspect they have been here for a number of hours so have become careless. A successful Spot skill check (opposed to the thug's Hide skill, with the thugs having a +5 bonus for their concealment) means the PCs have noticed the thugs watching them. If the PCs leave, two of the thugs will follow them to their next destination and report in. If confronted they will fight, or withdraw if they are outnumbered. They are armed with blades and clubs.

A second team of people, these a pair of Marines under the command of Naval Intelligence, are watching the thugs and the apartment. They are considerably more professional and are concealed, in plain civilian attire, in an empty apartment along the street. To spot them the PCs must pass a Spot skill check at (opposed to the Marine's hide, with the Marines enjoying a bonus of +15). The Marines will report comings and goings to their commander, and one will follow anyone that

## **BUYING FIREARMS ON KIIKKEDIA**

PCs may wish to acquire illegal firearms for this scenario. Various black market operations in the city sell firearms. Finding a source of firearms requires a Gather Information skill check (DC20) and six hours (reduce the time by two hours for Mercenary or Rogue characters). Any PCs known, or appearing, to be government or law enforcement agents will be at DC +15. If this is successful a meeting will be arranged within the hour with an arms dealer who offers the PCs most normal non-military firearms and ammunition at 200% of the normal cost (300% for concealable weapons). The arms dealer has Trader +8. A failure by more than 10 may result in a sting operation by the police, and a lot of fines and explaining (Referee's discretion).

shows interest in the apartment, returning to the watch point when arrangements can be made for a replacement tail. If confronted they will fight back, with non-lethal weapons if possible, until they are able to withdraw.

### **DATA POINTS**

The PCs may learn the following from the apartment:

- Thompson and Elanor were interested in travel to Khinakhi. (from: computer)
- The Broach stolen from the Byron estate may have been in the apartment. (from: empty case in trash)
- Elanor has a boyfriend who is a DJ at the techno bar 'The Watering Hole'. (from: photos and posters in her bedroom)
- The apartment was vacated in a hurry. (from: clutter and signs of packing)

If the PCs encounter Janet Virkowski, the Walters' neighbor, they may learn the following:

- Since she was fired from the Byron estate, Elanor has worked as a daytime childminder for her.
- She is a kind, gentle girl, whom her daughter loved dearly.
- This morning when Janet brought her daughter over Elanor was not here. She had to take the day off work at short notice to look after her daughter, and is not happy!
- The last time she knew they were at home was when she heard her and her brother arguing early last night. There was some clattering about and then someone left. She hadn't seen either of them since.

If the PCs manage to capture one or more of the thugs an Intimidate Skill test (DC14) will reveal the following:

- They were hired by a cold-eyed, nasty offworlder in The Watering Hole to watch the apartment, follow anyone who goes in, and report in on a public bulletin board.
- They were told the apartment is the home of two people who have stolen something from the offworlder, and they could be dangerous, especially the guy.

If the PCs manage to capture one or more of the Marines they will attempt, after a convincing resistance, to give the false story below. An Intimidate Skill check (DC28) is required to get them to tell the truth (if the PCs have reason to believe they are lying):

- False story: They are members of a gang looking to move in on the thug's territory and are following them gathering intelligence.
- Truth: They are Imperial Marines assigned to work with an unnamed officer. They were ordered to watch the place and report in via secure comms (preset frequencies they don't know) to look for some thieves of objects of Imperial interest.

### **3) JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM**

**Situation:** The Central Police Precinct is located just outside of the public center. It is a modern structure, six-stories high next door to the Police headquarters tower. The duty desk sergeant and day team mans the main entrance foyer. Entrance to the rest of the building is restricted without permission and escort. The desk team will have an officer escort the PCs to Detective Bristol's second floor squad room (Robbery) if any credible reason is given.

The squad room is busy, with nearly twenty desks, most occupied by detectives working. Detective Tara Bristol is at her desk filling in paperwork.

**Referee's Notes:** Detective Bristol has been assigned to desk duty for a week following the termination of her investi-

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND



gation to keep her out of the way – a fact that does not sit well with her. She will be reluctant to talk to the PCs initially due to the pressure being put on her from above, but is an old-fashioned good cop at heart, and successful roleplaying or a Bluff / Liaison Skill check (DC18) will convince her to speak a little about her investigation.

If she agrees to speak to the PCs Detective Bristol will insist they meet her on her next break in the diner across from the station. The diner is a nameless cop joint that serves fast food and plenty of coffee and is run by an old gray-furred female Vargr named Lil. Detective Bristol will be guarded at first and will only reveal the details of the CSI team's findings if she feels the PCs are credible.

## DATA POINTS

- She responded to the robbery report almost immediately and was on-scene less than one hour after the robbery (allowing for a delay before the call while the guards were unconscious).
- The robbery took place just after 0200.
- There was no sign of forced entry, and the only people there were the security guards, the servant on that night, the paramedics treating them, Mr. Byron, Cooke and a few uniformed policemen. The security chief arrived very soon after.
- She questioned the security guards. The senior guard, George Wilks was surprised in the security office, gassed, and remembers nothing. The junior guard, Thompson Walters, heard a noise outside and was gassed as he went out to investigate. There were a group of them, all dressed in black. Byron and the menial were both asleep and heard nothing. She intended to re-question the guards after the hospital had checked them over but the investigation was suspended before she could.
- Some form of incendiary cord had destroyed the security computer. No records or security logs were retrievable.
- The CSI team combed the area and went to the labs to collate their data. The report arrived just before she was shut down.
- She was contacted personally by the Commissioner who ordered her to cease her investigation, citing a higher authority claimed jurisdiction. She was then assigned to desk duty for a week.
- The CSI team found some DNA in the area that does not correspond to any of the staff, but to a local amateur thief named Daniel 'Blade' Travis. His known haunts are 'The Watering Hole' and the 'Harriot Towers, Lower 46' neighborhood. The CSI team believes there were three different people, excluding the staff, in the room that day.
- A check of public transport traffic logs revealed that a taxi driver, who she will refuse to name, was in the area at the time. He saw a group of three to five people entering the estate. A van, marked with the logos of a bogus cleaning company, was parked nearby.
- The gas used was Anestalone, a riot-control agent unavailable for public purchase but easily available on the black market from one of many sources.

## LIBRARY DATA LINKS

Policing in the Imperium

# ***OBJECTS OF THE MIND***

## **4) THE WATERING HOLE (KEY)**

**Situation:** The Watering Hole is a rough place with a run-down front and poster-covered widows advertising DJs and bands (PCs who have been to Walters' apartment will recognize one of the DJs from most of the posters in her room). The inside is kept dim most of the day, so the figures in the booths are in shadow. A pair of rough-looking identical twins, Tom and Trey, tends the bar. If the PCs are there during the day the bar will be quiet with only a few patrons, but at night (after 2500) it gets much busier (nearly 150 people on a normal night) and music is always blaring out. It is open from 1200 to 0300 daily, with extra staff at night.

**Referee's Notes:** The type and amount of information the PCs can get varies according to when they visit the bar. During the day the patrons and day staff are more talkative and likely to answer questions posed by normal-seeming visitors. Visiting at night will give a chance of encountering either Elanor Walters or Blade, but the local crowd will be less willing to talk in front of strangers. A few of the locals know that Elanor and her brother may be in trouble with the law, but most don't.

During the day a Gather Information skill check (DCs below, +10 if any of the PCs seem related to law enforcement or become too pushy, or act suspiciously) will reveal one piece of information and an additional piece for every 2 points that the DC is beaten. Further checks reveal more in the order listed. A failure means that person knows nothing more. A failure by 10 or more puts the rest of the patrons and staff on guard, and gets the PCs the +10 to future DCs. At night the same rules apply, except the Gather Information skill check is at +4 DC, +14 if any of the PCs seem related to law enforcement or become too pushy.

If the PCs are in The Watering Hole in the early evening (2200 to 2500) then check every 15 minutes (DC15) to see if Blade enters the bar looking for his associate. Make a Spot skill check (DC18) when he enters the bar to decide if he 'makes' the PCs as offworlders. If so he will flee into the back streets and attempt to return to his squat. A Spot skill check against Blade's Hide skill (with a +2 modifier for the dim light) is required to spot him, if they have a description of him. If the PCs have alarmed the patrons the DC drops to 15, and at the referees discretion one of the locals may warn him by name with a chance for the PCs to hear him. If the PCs give chase he will attempt to lose them in the side streets of the neighborhood, and will fight to get away if necessary (he believes the PCs have been sent here to kill him). See Scene 6 for what he knows.

PCs there after 2600 have a chance of meeting Elanor Walters when she sneaks in the back to visit her boyfriend, the house DJ, Gary-X, against her brother's wishes. If she is present (check every 10 minutes at DC19) make opposed Spot and Hide Skill checks for both the PCs and Elanor Walters. If their Spot beats her Hide roll, and they know what she looks like, they will spot her with her boyfriend in the DJ's booth. If her Spot beats their lowest Hide result by 10 points she realizes they are watching her boyfriend, and flees. If the PCs get a chance to talk to her see Scene 7 for what she knows.

Any PCs who mention cops will be told, on a successful Gather Information Skill check (DC10), that some suited guys, probably cops, were asking after her brother yesterday evening.

### ***DATA POINTS***

Each successful Gather Information Skill check (DCs below) reveals information in order. A failure means they must start again and increase all DCs by 2.

#### **Thompson Walters: (DC 14)**

1. Thompson and his sister Elanor visited the bar often.
2. Thompson is a security guard for a rich guy just outside of the city.
3. Thompson wasn't in for his regular pool game last night.
4. Thompson was asking Trey (the barman) about hotels yesterday at the local supermarket. Trey mentioned the local Young Imperial's Non-Denominational Association (YINDA) hostel is cheap. Thompson seemed scared.

#### **Elanor Walters: (DC 12)**

1. She has been a regular since she arrived just over a year and a half ago.
2. She has dated the DJ, Gary-X, for the last few months. They seem to be getting serious.
3. She has friends amongst some of the local toughs.
4. She got fired from her job at some rich guy's house for being lazy.
5. The last time she was in was a few days back, with her brother, some of her friends and a serious-looking offworlder.
6. She might be in tonight to visit her boyfriend.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## Gary "Gary-X" Xavier: (DC 14)

1. He has worked here since it opened three years ago.
2. He has a lot of friends among the rough elements and a girlfriend who is regularly here.
3. His girlfriend is in some kind of trouble.

## Local and Offworld thugs: (DC 15)

1. A lot of the amateur criminals from the neighborhood drink here, as it is neutral territory.
2. A few offworlders have been frequenting it regularly, meeting with people.
3. The offworlders hired Vance and Blade. Blade has been in a few times today looking very nervous.
4. Blade is hiding up somewhere, but he normally lives with Vance in a low-rent apartment in the tunnels (28 Harriot Towers, Redmond Street, Lower 46).

## SITTING ON THE FENCE

The PCs may think of looking for fences that can move goods of the sort that were stolen. The New Kurdistani thieves have no intention of fencing the stolen artifacts, as they are contracted to return them to the Psionics Institute. However Thompson Walters still has one of the other items from the room that he took to finance he and his sister returning to their home planet, so he wishes to fence it quickly to get the money before the New Kurdistani find him. The city has any number of small-time fences that deal in stolen goods, though not many who have the money and the clout to deal in expensive historical jewelry, such as the broach Thompson Walters has stolen. Walters originally approached a small time street fence named Lawrence who works out of the Watering Hole. Lawrence wouldn't touch priceless jewelry, but for Cr250 he referred Walters to Likugishan Jewelers, below. There are two people in the city that have the clout to move something of this value. Although Lawrence referred Walters to the Jewelers, the PCs could get referred to either of these people:

Gurassh Vireki – a suave, well-dressed male Vargr with fur tinted tastefully to offset his clothing for the day, manages Likugishan Jewelers, a specialist jeweler that has been catering to rich customers from across the subsector for nearly two hundred years. The importance of their customers, and the revenue they bring in, places the shop at the top of the security list for law enforcement and allows them a good deal of protection from official scrutiny. The security guards at the shop are all armed with SMGs and wear Armor Vests – all fully legal. They have a license to use deadly force in defense of the building. Vireki uses the back rooms of the shop to deal in stolen jewelry to supplement his already considerable paycheck. His foppish appearance belies his sharp wit, and he deals like a pro. If he believes the PCs are in any way attempting to entrap him he will walk away instantly. However, Byron is one of his best on-world customers for custom display cases, so he would consider aiding the PCs if he thought they could be trusted not to get him in trouble ("Well, of course, if anyone were to come to me with items stolen from a valued customer I would gladly help you in apprehending them...").

The other dealer big enough to move the artifacts stolen from Byron is Boris Morachov. Morachov is a Terran expatriate known on the streets as "the Spider" – for the fact he has his hands in everything, and that he is cold, ruthless and patient concerning his 'prey'. He takes a certain amusement from the name, and lets it spread though he claims in public to dislike it. His primary area of dealing is weapons, drugs and slaves, though he will fence items he can make a large enough profit on, or that he wants for his private collection. Although he has a lot of the government, and even some lower ranking nobles, in his pocket, he is still as careful as the day he started and avoids making waves where possible. The Ministry of Justice could make his life very difficult. Morachov is a dangerous red herring for this adventure, and Walters will not deal with him out of a solid knowledge of his reputation. It will take the PCs a good deal of time to organize a meeting with one of his assistants, and if they push too hard Morachov will send them a warning of the most painful kind. His own property is VERY well guarded.



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## 5) A RAT IN A HOLE

**Situation:** Vance and Blade live in an apartment located in one of the winding tunnels that run under the city and make up the lower neighborhoods, in a side tunnel network called the 'Harriot Towers'. There is no security on the main door, or in the foyer, and many of the apartments are sealed and listed as vacant on the doors – including apartment 28.

**Referee's Notes:** The apartment is located in the older, less advanced tunnel neighborhood number 46. Instead of open manmade caverns containing buildings, these neighborhoods are made up of excavated tunnels and chambers. The larger tunnels make up the 'streets' of the neighborhood, with small tunnels and room complexes as buildings. Harriot Towers is one such tunnel and room complex. Most of the residents either live here on benefits, or live here to remain anonymous. The two thugs share an apartment consisting of a few small rooms and a central area. The door has been plastered with 'Vacant' signs, and the door sealed after the off-world thieves paid a visit, killing Vance who was home at the time (Blade was out buying drugs). Check (DC20) every ten minutes for the PCs to encounter someone leaving, entering, or wandering around the building.

A cheap electronic lock (DC15) protects the door. When the PCs gain entry they immediately notice the metallic smell of dried blood. There are signs of a struggle in the normally Spartan room (upturned chairs and table). A successful Spot Skill roll (DC12) will reveal a number of medium caliber bullet holes in the wall near the overturned chairs, and in the chairs themselves. There is a patch of dried blood on the floor, and a few small patches on the wall, in this area. The blood's owner lies dead nearby. His clothes have been searched and his wallet taken. He has been shot twice in the chest and once in the head. A successful T/Medical Skill roll (DC16) will reveal the man was killed late last night. If the PCs know what Vance looks like they will know this is him. An Autopistol with 2 rounds remaining lies near his hand. He has no more ammo in the apartment. Small bullet holes from the pistol dot the walls near the door.

A successful Search Skill roll (DC20) will locate a small scrap of paper with an address, in the pocket of a jacket in the laundry machine (unwashed). The address is of an abandoned, unnamed hotel nearby. The only occupied neighboring apartment is home to an old man, who heard shooting last night (around 3100), and hid in his bathroom for a while.

The abandoned hotel is in a back street tunnel, with one entrance and a service entrance joining a nearby small tunnel. The main entrance is sealed and boarded up, with a 'For Sale' sign. The back tunnel entrance opens onto an old thoroughway from Lower 46 to Lower 47, which has been closed for refurbishment for almost ten years. The hotel itself is used as a squat for drug addicts and prostitutes. Blade has chosen an abandoned room and barricaded himself in. He is terrified (correctly) that his off-world employers are looking for him to kill him for keeping one of the artifacts for himself. He will fire upon anyone who attempts to enter his squat, and will be very hard to reason with. If the PCs are able to convince him to talk he will allow only one person into the squat, unarmed, and will keep his shotgun trained on them at all times. If given enough money to leave the city he will tell them everything he knows. If captured he will crack and tell everything in fear of his life.

### DATA POINTS

- He and Vance were hired to provide local knowledge and drivers for three off-world thieves hired to steal some objects from Byron's mansion.
- The team wanted only those artifacts and said nothing else was to be stolen.
- They had an inside man – the Security Guard Thompson Walters. They met him through his sister, who dates the DJ at their local bar.
- Vance kept one of the seven artifacts for himself, and now he's dead. The artifact was hidden in the apartment in the ceiling air conditioning vents (though the New Kurdistanis found it after killing Vance).
- They were given comm. codes to use to communicate with the team, but they have been canceled (he tried to call to tell them where the artifact was).
- He overheard one of the team mention the Wiltshire Hotel, near the airport.
- The team is Hakim, Khan and Jara (two men and a woman).
- The team never said where they were from, but he thinks they have New Kurdistan accents.

### LIBRARY DATA LINKS

New Kurdistan

## 6) BROTHER AND SISTER

**Situation:** The Young Imperial's Non-Denominational Association (YINDA) hostel is a few blocks over from the Watering Hole. It is a relatively plain building, in slight disrepair, with posters proclaiming accommodations, concerts, and

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

various supreme beings' love for all plastered along its front. The sliding doors stand open and a few students sit just outside on the pavement reading and talking. Inside a young woman is sat at the reception desk reading a magazine.

**Referee's Notes:** Thompson and Elanor Walters have been hiding out at the local YINDA hostel since the morning after the robbery. They hired rooms here at the recommendation of Trev, the Watering Hole barman. The desk clerk, Amanda, is used to friends, teachers and family meeting the students that stay here, so will not think it unusual if the PCs ask about the Walters, unless they act in a hostile or suspicious manner. She will recognize the description of the Walters if given and if she believes the PCs to be friends of them, with a Bluff or Liaison skill check (DC15), she will indicate they are sharing a room on the third floor - 312.

The Walters' room is locked and a do not disturb sign has been placed on door. The lock is a simple electronic lock (DC14) on it. If the PCs are there within daylight hours they will find both Thompson and Elanor there. Thompson leaves every day at 0800 and returns after 45 to 60 minutes of shopping and checking with sources and friends. Elanor intends to go to the Watering Hole each night to try and convince her boyfriend to leave with them.

If the PCs knock the Walters will not answer, and Thompson will ready his Autopistol. If the PCs persist, or attempt to obviously gain entry he will fight to protect Elanor and himself. Any surprise entry will result in Thompson going for his gun unless he has someone training a weapon on him. Both of them believe (rightly) that the thieves want to kill them for stealing one of the artifacts (Thompson does not know it is a normal necklace) and it will be hard to convince them to relax. A successful Bluff or Liaison skill check (DC22), or suitable roleplaying, will encourage Thompson to lower his weapon, though he will not relinquish it unless forced.

If anyone downstairs hears noise of a fight, or screams, they will call the police. A pair of officers will arrive in ten minutes. If gunshots were reported six officers will respond in five minutes.

Once the PCs are able to calm the Walters down they will speak with them about the situation. Walters will offer the PCs the necklace for the cost of passage off the planet. If pressed he will be reluctant to return the necklace without a means to leave Kikkedia.

If the PCs were seen at the Walters' apartment by the NI team they will be tracking them and will quickly move in to interrogate the Walters unless the PCs have made arrangements to move them elsewhere. They will quickly learn the information below, confiscate the necklace, and place the Waters into custody pending retrieval of the artifacts. If the PCs return within 15 minutes of initially leaving they may encounter the NI team detailed in scene 7.

## DATA POINTS

- Thompson and Elanor came to Kikkedia from Khinakhi using inheritance money from a dead grandmother. They intended to start a new, more exciting life here.
- They both found work on the estate of Winston Byron.
- Cooke, Byron's assistant took a liking to Elanor and when she rebuffed his advances he had her fired.
- Thompson was approached by some off world thieves looking to gain entry to the Byron estate to raid his personal museum. At first he was unsure but his dislike of Cooke, and the fact these men seemed like professionals who would likely silence him if he refused, caused him to accept.
- He will explain what happened on the night of the Robbery (see scene 1).
- He was to be paid Cr25000, enough to get him and Elanor back home to Khinakhi, but he was stupid and stole a necklace from Byron's estate.
- He believes the professionals will kill him to clear up any loose ends he generated by breaking from the plan.
- They have rented rooms here while he sells the necklace and arranges passage off world.
- He once followed the New Kurdistanis when they left and one of them went in to the Wiltshire Hotel.
- At first he only met two members of their team, but he also met a third on the night of the robbery. Their names are Hakim, Khan and Jara. Hakim was the leader.
- They were looking for specific objects, and are going to transport them off world.

## LIBRARY DATA LINKS

New Kurdistan

## 7) A FRIENDLY CHAT

**Situation:** A group of six dark-suited, shorthaired men quickly attempt to surround the PCs. Three have Thud Guns in their hands, and two have small SMGs half-hidden under their jackets. The commander, with a pistol in his hand not quite pointed at the PCs, will address them in a firm voice warning them to take no offensive actions.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND



**Referee's Notes:** if the PCs cause too many waves, or get in the way of the Naval Intelligence investigation, members of the Marine team assigned to the mission will visit them. The Marines aim to surprise and surround the PCs and intimidate them into answering questions without any trouble. Two of the Marines are armed with SMGs and three with Thud Guns, in addition to them all having Autopistols. If trouble starts the Marines will attempt to subdue the PCs, but will not hesitate to kill those they cannot subdue if the PCs resort to deadly force against them.

The Marine Officer will question the PCs in a businesslike manner, and will accept no backtalk or uncooperative actions. If the PCs refuse to cooperate he will contact his commander (whom he refers to as 'Control') and arrange for a large police response unit to arrest the PCs and detain them overnight.

The Marines will question the PCs extensively about who they are, why they are here, what they are doing, whom they are working for, and what they know. As long as the answers match up with what he knows he will warn them to stay out of it and let them go. He knows that the PCs have been hired by Byron to retrieve the artifacts, and knows if they have visited the Walters' apartment or contacted Detective Bristol.

The team will not identify themselves as working for the Imperium in any way, though any ex-military personnel will be able to identify them as serving (as opposed to ex-) military, probably marines, with a Sense Motive skill check (DC20, 15 for Marines and Naval prior histories). If any of the PCs point this out they will be warned not to be too clever.

## 8) THE WILTSHIRE HOTEL (KEY)

**Situation:** The Wiltshire Hotel is a middle-rent four-story hotel in a working class neighborhood. It is neat and well kept from the outside, with a small parking area to the side and a small garden to the rear. There are no security guards, though there is a clear plastic bubble containing a security camera above the front door, and the rear door to the garden. The reception desk is in an airy entrance hall and is manned by a young Vargr male. During the day check every 10 minutes (DC10) to encounter someone entering or leaving the hotel. At night this changes to DC15.

**Referee's Notes:** The New Kurdistani thieves have booked in here under aliases for the duration of their stay. They are living in two adjoining rooms on the top floor with Hakim and Jara posing as a married couple and Khan as a friend. Their aliases at the hotel are Jonathan and Samantha Byers, and Richard Ziidushi. Hotel policy will not allow the desk

# **OBJECTS OF THE MIND**

clerk to answer any questions concerning guests (though he is open to bribes to supplement his minimum wage). The hotel manager will not hesitate to call the police if the PCs become too pushy or at all threatening.

The security cameras can be bypassed by either breaking into the security computer from an external source, or by gaining entry to the manager's office and disabling the computer. The security computer is well protected and two T/Computer skill checks against the Security Rating of 25. A failed roll on either of these will result in an intrusion alarm being raised on the computer. If this alarm is raised check (DC15) every 10 minutes for the manager to see this and contact his computer security company. The security company will attempt to trace the intruding computer (roll opposed T/Computer skill checks using +11 for the company), and on a successful trace they will call the police with the location. If the PCs gain entry to the manager's office it will only require one T/Computer roll with the trace being irrelevant.

At the time of the PCs arrival only Jara and Khan are in the hotel. Hakim has left to arrange transport to New Kurdistan for the three of them. Jara is asleep in the double room and Khan is watching a vid in his room. There are a number of Autopistols hidden in various places around the rooms (a dresser drawer, under the bed, taped in a recess near the shower, taped above the adjoining door in a recess), and Khan has an SMG behind a cushion on the sofa he is on. They both have Anestalone aerosols in their pockets (see Library Data). The doors to both rooms are locked and the connecting door is open. Both room doors have 'do not disturb' signs on the door, and they have requested no room service for reasons of 'religious privacy'.

If the PCs have come to the attention of Naval Intelligence and they were able to apprehend the Walters after the PCs had found them, or been able to follow the PCs, the NI team will be setting up for a tactical raid of the hotel to arrest the New Kurdistanis. This will (unsurprisingly) occur just after the PCs have begun to act against the thieves – the Referee should time this event to coincide with the PCs getting just enough evidence to move onwards to Act 2 and force the PCs to act quickly. The Marine team of four people will enter in plain unmarked cloth armor; two armed with light ACRs and two with Thud Guns. Two more remain outside to capture stragglers. All carry sidearms. They attempt to incapacitate anyone they encounter but will respond to deadly force in kind. The Marines do not know what the thieves look like clearly (they have only seen Khan through a crack in the curtains). If the Marines begin to take losses they will fall back and call in reinforcements. They will guard the front and rear of the building and attempt to prevent anyone from leaving. Backup will arrive in the form of ten police SWAT officers in 1d6 minutes.

A chance to search the rooms, and a successful Search skill check (DC16), will reveal the following: four Autopistols and eight clips, one SMG and two clips, three respirator sets with two-hour bottles, assorted clothes, and one mailing receipt for a small parcel addressed to Palim al-Maresh (al-Maresh Pottery) to be collected from the Imperial Mail Office at New Kurdistan downport.

If the PCs leave a watch on the building for the next two hours make a Spot skill check (DC of Hakim's Hide skill check + 5) to see his approach. He will attempt to contact his colleagues from a café along the street, and if he does not receive a reply, or if he suspects anything to be wrong, he will leave immediately for New Kurdistan.

If the PCs are able to capture (and/or escape with) one or more of the thieves they can attempt to interrogate them. They are all professionals, and are difficult to intimidate (a fact increased by the psionic manipulation of them by the Institute), but will reveal some details of their mission (see the Data Points, below) on successful Intimidate Skill checks (DC 25).

## **TACTICS**

If Khan hears anyone approaching the room, he will move to crouch behind the bed with the SMG in hand. He will do this every time until he is sure it is someone harmless (he has survived years as a professional thief of high-value goods). Any PCs attempting to move silently toward the room must make a Move Silently skill check opposed to Khan's Listen –5 due to the noise of the vid. Make Listen skill checks for Khan each time a PC moves or talks outside of his room. If he hears any suspicious noises he will immediately move to the other room and wake Jara. They will then don respirators and ready themselves to defend the rooms, or leave via the fire escape if necessary. Both of them have been in firefights before and will handle themselves well.

The Marines are consummate professional warriors and will advance in two teams of two. One member of each team will always be stationary and covering the other's advance. Their primary objective is to incapacitate any targets, though they will use firearms if necessary. The PCs are an unknown quantity in the Marine's plans, so any armed contact with the PCs will cause them to fall back for 60 seconds and reassess the situation before again moving in. Their primary objective is to capture the New Kurdistanis, so if the PCs attempt to leave the building they will be left alone by the team inside.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## DATA POINTS

- The thieves have mailed the statuettes to the Imperial Mail Office at New Kurdistan starport because local sources suggested they were being hunted for.
- There is a time-delayed tracking beacon hidden in the storage box. It will begin broadcasting on a vacant frequency in precisely 190 hours. The New Kurdistanis and the Institute know the frequency. This piece of information will only be given in trade for freedom or survival. The Referee may wish to allow the PCs to discover the frequency encoded on a personal computer if they have had little luck in gathering clues.
- Desert tribesmen from their home planet hired them to steal the objects.
- They were given precise details of the objects to steal, and were instructed not to steal anything else. They were to be paid Cr50000 each plus expenses.
- They suspect their employers have ties to a secret desert tribe called the Hakar'i. They use a code phrase to make contact, something about "pottery full of beauty and wisdom". This piece of information will only be given in trade for freedom or survival.
- Only Hakim met with their contact.
- They have a meeting planned eleven days from now at a cave complex in the deep deserts – only Hakim knows where.

## LIBRARY DATA LINKS

Anestalone  
Hakar'i  
Imperial Mail  
New Kurdistan

## ACT 2

In this act the Travellers make their way to New Kurdistan, facing a few problems along the way. This act is a stepping-stone designed to get the PCs to their destination, and all scenes within should be considered optional. This is an ideal opportunity to insert short Referee-created encounters or adventures based on your own campaign.

### 1) STAND AND DELIVER!

**Referee's Notes:** Mail is transported between worlds by ships with specially installed mail safes and an Imperial contract. The New Kurdistan package is being shipped along with three tons of other mail onboard the Swift and Valiant, a 300-ton trading vessel hauling supplies to the naval office on New Kurdistan. The ship is due to depart in twelve hours and the mail is already safely aboard by the time the PCs find the slip in the thieves' hotel room in Act 1, Scene 8. The Imperial Mail Office in the starport on Kiiikkedia is immediately next door to a starport security booth. Mail from the office is transported by small cargo lifts to the storage and sorting depot on basement level one. Security on the mail depot is high, with a permanent security presence at both exits. The Imperial mail is very rarely stolen – something that should be clear to the Travellers upon investigation.

The most likely chance the Travellers have of obtaining the package this way is by bribing a mail worker at the New Kurdistan office. Reese Thomas, a young and bored mailman, is looking for ways to finance his gambling addiction. For Cr5000 he will smuggle a package out of his office and give it to the Travellers. The risks involved mean he will not negotiate lower than Cr4500, and will only agree to help them if he is 100% sure that they are 'legitimate' criminals. Mail theft is an Imperial crime, carrying heavy jail sentences at Imperial facilities.

### 2) KEEP YOUR ENEMIES CLOSER

**Referee's Notes:** The New Kurdistanis have booked themselves as middle passengers (sharing as much as possible depending upon the number of them alive and un-captured) on the Cassandra's Vanity, a Far Trader heading to New Kurdistan before jumping on to Shangri La (0933) with speculative cargo. There are two other passengers on ship and this is an ideal time for the Referee to insert NPCs useful to the future direction of the campaign. The Travellers may wish to book passage on the same ship to follow the New Kurdistanis openly. The ship's captain, Sharon Killian, runs a tight ship and doesn't tolerate infractions from passengers against her ship's rules. All weapons larger than a small knife must be checked into the ship's lockup prior to departure, and a weapon scan is run on all baggage.

The ship will follow a normal jump cycle and will enter jump without any problems, and will emerge after 167 hours in the New Kurdistan system at 101 diameters heading almost directly towards the planet – a successful piece of Astrogation. The Vanity will be challenged by a Naval Customs ship shortly after emergence, but will not be boarded. It will then proceed to the orbital highport and dock after a short delay.

# **OBJECTS OF THE MIND**

The Travellers may (wrongly) believe the New Kurdistanis have the objects with them and may wish to attempt to steal them in-transit. This will be a difficult and dangerous task, as any detection by shipboards security systems or passengers will result in an alarm, and the armed crew arriving to apprehend the players. A rating 20 security program protects each cabin, and the main passenger lounge is covered by a video camera (check DC18 to see if the monitor is being watched in any given 5-minute period). A successful entry without alarm will get the PCs into the New Kurdistanis's cabin (check against DC20 every minutes to see if they return, modified at the Referee's discretion by the time of day and any distractions the PCs cause.

If the PCs set off any alarms the crew will attempt to apprehend them alive if possible, though Captain Killian and her crew will use deadly force if necessary. Any captured or injured PCs will be placed in low berths until they are handed over to starport security upon arrival. If a combat ensues and the PCs win they will have to bluff their way past Naval vessels and into the highport, and anyone left alive will report them to the authorities as soon as possible. The penalties for hijacking and murder are severe in the Imperium.

## **LIBRARY DATA LINKS**

Hijacking

### **3) NO JOURNEY UNEVENTFUL**

**Referee's Notes:** The Travellers may also decide to travel on their own ship, or book passage on a different ship to that used by the thieves. If the Naval Intelligence team has identified the Travellers they will be delayed by an Imperial Naval customs vessel and subjected to a very long and thorough customs and ship inspection, delaying them for at least twelve hours. Any hostility toward the customs inspectors will resort in the arrest of the entire crew of the PC's ship, and them being held for forty-eight hours before being fined Cr2000 each. Any violence toward the customs team will be met with violence from the Imperial Marine team accompanying the customs staff, and the incarceration of all survivors for a few years.

If the Travellers have injured or killed any of the Naval Intelligence officers in their previous meetings, one of the Marines on the search team will attempt to plant a small package of illegal narcotics in the captain's stateroom. Anyone present may make a Spot skill check (DC20) to see this happen. The penalty for possession of this small quantity of narcotics (enough to be considered possession, but not intent to deal) is negligible (confiscation and a Cr1000 fine), but the delay while the captain is sent to trial and the ship extensively searched will be forty-eight hours at least.

The Referee may allow P/Administration and K/Interstellar Law skill checks to reduce the above penalties.

## **LIBRARY DATA LINKS**

Imperial Customs

## **ACT 3**

In this act the Travellers attempt to track down the artifacts and retrieve them, possibly heading into the deep desert in pursuit of a mysterious group of Psychic tribesmen. The scene ends with a confrontation with the Psionics Institute. The Naval Intelligence team will play no role in the first part of this scene as they have discovered the tracking frequency from the thieves' hotel room and will follow the signal to it's source once they arrive on-planet (though they will wait until the thief gets to his contacts before striking, see Scene 3 Act 7). New Kurdistan is a hot desert planet, and the climate has great affect on people's actions and lives. See Scene 6 "Into the Desert", below, for more information on the desert and it's climate.

Referees should remember that firearms carriage within Al-Karit city limits requires a permit, and people walking around Al-Karit openly carrying long arms (licensed or not) or long blades will be stopped by every Imperial Army patrol they encounter, and will worry the locals. Unlicensed firearm carriage requires they be locked in strongboxes. In the desert rifles and concealable weapons may be carried freely.

### **1) TRACKING DOWN THE MAIL**

**Situation:** New Kurdistan starport is a large class-B, high-tech port servicing a sizable amount of trading and military ships moving to and from Gash and Shangri-La. The downport also hosts a sizable Imperial Naval contingent that acts as the governmental body for the world. The highport deals with heavy cargo ships and passenger transfer, and has a large amount of space lent over to recreational facilities. Most small ships and military transports use the downport. Local civilians supervised by naval personnel staff the downport and a company of no-nonsense Marines are assigned to provide starport security.

The Imperial Mail office in the New Kurdistan downport is a small efficient place run by a small staff. As the distribution outlet for the Imperial government it has a naval officer in charge, and a staff of Imperial and local citizens. The reception

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND



area is small, air-conditioned, and decorated in the austere neo-tribal fashion that was popular on New Kurdistan five years ago. A young woman, not a local by her appearance, stands at the counter processing customer requests.

**Referee's Notes:** Palim himself collected the parcel containing the artifacts just less than 24 hours ago. The woman at the counter, Arleen Markiish, has worked at the Imperial Mail office for almost a year and is confident in her dealings with customers. If she suspects the PCs may be attempting to illegally obtain the parcel she will call her supervisor (Lt. Jackson, Imperial Navy). PCs in possession of the parcel slip will be told that the parcel has already been collected. With a successful Bluff or Liaison check (DC16) the PCs will learn that the parcel was collected by Mr. Palim al-Maresh this time yesterday. A failure by 5 or more points will result in Miss Markiish calling for her supervisor. PCs without the slip need to be able to supply the sender location (and if possible name), and the name of the intended recipient. A successful Bluff or Liaison check (DC25) will get the same information as above with the same consequences for failure by 5 or more points.

Lt. Jackson will politely question the PCs and ask to see identification if their answers are inadequate. He is armed due to the nature of the mail distributed, but is a desk-jockey and not a warrior. He will not stop PCs from leaving, but will file a report with the Imperial Marine security detachment, which in turn will pass it on to the Imperial Army units policing the city. If this occurs check against DC20 every 20 minutes for the PCs to be recognized inside the starport and every hour in the city. PCs who are recognized will be confronted and questioned. A Bluff skill check (DC18) will extricate them from any trouble; otherwise they will be arrested and held for a short time before being fined Cr1000 each.

## 2) HITTING THE STREETS

**Situation:** The PCs have arrived on New Kurdistan with little or no leads. Their only option may be to hit the streets and try to gather information on the thieves the hard way.

**Referee's Information:** The PCs may wish, or need, to hit the streets and gather information on the Hakar'i, Hakim Al-shar, the desert tribes, or the Valley of Light. The streets of Al-Karit are different in many ways to the streets of most other capital cities - the military rule of the planet has forced the underground and gray markets further down, and made them much more cautious. There are fewer gang wars and rivalries amongst the organizations, as one misstep could put them all out of business. PCs blundering around and asking blatant questions are liable to get themselves hurt or killed by the larger groups, and stonewalled by the lone operators.

The *Hakar'i* are a growing force in the underworld of Al-Karit. For the past three or four years they have been moving in and placing themselves in positions of advisors to many of the big syndicates, making it known they are neutral and above conflicts, much the same as their role in the tribes of the deep desert. The name *Hakar'i* is spoken with respect,

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

and rumors of psionics and telepaths circulate in hushed whispers. Only a few large syndicates are resistant to the influence of The Wise. There are three *Hakar'i* in the city permanently (Essa, Hadad, and Al-Tarath), and they are very difficult to find, and very dangerous people. PCs who discretely approach lone operators or small operations may be able to buy some of the information they need. A good amount of roleplaying and some difficult Bluff and Liaison skill rolls are required.

Each attempt to locate an area suitable to meet members of the underworld takes two hours and requires a Gather Information skill check (DC18). This will reveal one club, bar, shop, etc., that is a contact to the underworld. The sidebars 'Underworld Locations' and 'Underworld Characters' give the Referee example locations and people to use during the PC's investigations, though the Referee is encouraged to develop his own. PCs openly approaching these areas and asking blatant questions will learn little and make enemies. Also, once the *Hakar'i* themselves learn of the PCs' interest in them they may (at the Referee's discretion) wish to personally move against these offworlders and eliminate any problems they discover. Two of The Wise in the city have the ability to read minds, so interrogation is easy for them.

## DATA POINTS

Data points concerning different topics are listed below. Following each point of information is an indication of how difficult it is to learn, first by bribery and second by intimidation.

### **The *Hakar'i*. (Street sources, but the first three can be obtained from academic sources)**

- *Hakar'i* means "The Wise" in the traditional tribal tongue of the desert people. (DC10 / DC10)
- They are from the deserts. (DC15 / DC10)
- They are advisors to the tribes, moving freely. (DC15 / DC15)
- Some of them travel to the city on occasion. (DC15 / DC15)
- Some believe they are psions. (DC20 / DC15)
- There are some in the city at the moment. (DC25 / DC20)
- They can be contacted through al-Maresh Pottery. (DC25 / DC25)
- Arranging a meeting with one. (active violence and threat of death)

### **Hakim Al-shar (Street or law-enforcement sources)**

- Hakim is a criminal-for-hire. (DC15 / DC10)
- He lives in a desert settlement. (DC20 / DC10)
- He works with two partners, Khan and Jara. (DC20 / DC15)
- He lives in the village of Hifir (DC25 / DC20)
- His current job is for one of the tribes, and is off world. (DC20 / DC15)
- He is working for the *Hakar'i*. (DC25 / DC20)
- Arranging a meeting with him. (not possible – he has departed for the Valley of Light)

### **The Tribes (Any sources, all easy to discover unless stated)**

- The tribes are fierce, hardy and honorable.
- Very few travel close enough to the city to encounter offworlders regularly.
- They occasionally clash with the miners over migration routes.
- Many of the hard-line traditional tribes from the deep desert still attack army patrols, swearing they will fight off the Imperial occupiers.
- They have a few permanent settlements at large oases.
- The closest tribal settlement is the village of Hifir, 18 hours away by truck. (DC15 / DC10)
- The tribes are advised by a wandering group of wise folk, the *Hakar'i*. (DC20 / DC10, DC15 from academic sources)

### **The Valley of Light (Academic sources)**

- The Valley of Light is the ancient tribal name for the 'Sunrise Gorge', a shallow valley a day and a half away. (DC10)
- The closest settlement to the Valley is the village of Hifir, 500km from here. (DC10)
- The Valley was once the meeting place of the tribal elders for councils, though that stopped during occupation. (DC15, street sources)
- The Valley of Light is a meeting place for smugglers bringing weapons from the tribes. (DC20 / DC15)
- The Valley is sometimes used by the *Hakar'i* for meetings and markets. (DC25 / DC20)
- There are rumors that Hakim Al-shar is going there to meet the *Hakar'i*. (active violence and threat of death)



## UNDERWORLD CHARACTERS

**1) Aadam Haabeel:** Haabeel is a martial arts instructor in a small dojo. He trains the students of his poor neighborhood in return for work maintaining the building, their share of time protecting the neighborhood from criminals, and what little food their families can share. He also takes information in payment too. He will share this information in return for payment from members of the underworld, though the payment could be a large sum of money one moment, or new floor mats for the dojo the next. A small gang who resented him cleaning up the neighborhood once made an attempt on his life. The six of them, all armed with firearms and blades, he defeated with his bare hands.



**2) James O'Shannon:** O'Shannon is not a native to New Kurdistan, he is a criminal on the run from the authorities on Rising. He settled on New Kurdistan and hired himself out as an odd-job thief until he made solid contacts in the underworld. Ten years later he is an information broker and part-time fence. He operates out of a waiting room in an old subway station that is abandoned to junkies and criminals since the monorail round the city was constructed. He is a short, squat man with a squint and a thick (fake) Irish accent. He is utterly mercenary and will sell any information to anyone at a price. This would normally get anyone killed, but he has the protection of one of the crime lords (Al-Nasr, see the 'Underworld Locations' sidebar) for an unspecified favor in the past.



**3) Pasha Al-Rabiit:** Al-Rabiit runs a barbering business in the City. He is a tall, thin, urbane gentleman with accent-less Galanglic and fine suits. He operates by house call only, accompanied by his bulky 'styling assistant' Umair. Whilst he cuts hair he chats idly about events and lets his client pay the large bill at the end. The quality of his information is second only to the quality of his barbering. The reports that he slits the throats of those who ask the wrong questions are, he claims, only rumors. It is quite the coincidence that he only uses a straight razor...



**4) Fatima:** Known by no other name by anyone, Fatima is an enigma. She is an old, stooped woman who wanders the streets with her basket full of junk. No one knows where she sleeps or how she travels, but when people need to find her she appears in the most unlikely places at just the right time. Many people think she is insane, as she talks in riddles and talks about herself in the third person. Even so, she knows much of what goes on in the city and deserts. Fatima is really an old member of the Hakar'i who probed too deeply into the mysteries of the mind and drove herself mad. Her strong psionic powers, all subconsciously used now, mean she knows what people are looking for and can learn a great deal.



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## UNDERWORLD LOCATIONS

By Daniel W. Hammersley (Liam Devlin)

### 1) The Souk (an open air market opens at dawn, closed from 1000hrs to 1600 daily due to heat, re-opens at 1630hrs, closes at Sundown):

Here Covered stalls are rented from the merchant Farouk ibn Hamadi, who owns the property. Farouk is the man to see if selling anything in the Souk. Fairly wealthy, and affluent, he speaks the City tongue as well as the desert dialect (his mother was a tribeswoman). Food, spices, clothing, fabrics, daily utilized goods, carpets, tenting miscellany, saddles and tack for beasts, smithies, all are arranged by their trade/ stock and goods. Hamadi dwells a scant 100meters from the main gate, and has bodyguards, another sign of wealth. The smell of fresh animal dung, human sweat, and perfumes collide with the yells of hawkers, and the drone of flies, bells, and children's laughter scampering about.

Farouk ibn Hamadi is a Merchant1/Rogue10, a powerful man in this small city. If it can be had, he knows where, and who is dealing it. He's never met a bribe he ever flinched at. Hamadi is rather fat, and walks with an air of aggrieved sense of duty that he must come to see this or that stall dweller, and get his rents. Civil to the point of the obsequious towards Imperials, especially those enforcing the law, Hamadi is sterner towards his own kind, especially those who owe him money! All of his guards have licenses to bear arms, and do so, openly. Farouk wears the turban style headdress. He is despised by Al-Nasr as a pig.

### 2) The Al-Nasr Cafe

Located off the beaten path down in the "old Quarter" of the city, where High rises tend to 4-5 stories high and streets are narrow to one vehicle wide traffic, is this establishment, located in a cul-de-sac around an old well. Al-Nasr means "The Hawk", and here is a dive the local criminal element call their own, run by one of their own, as well. Dusty ceiling fans are the sole coolant, and the main floor is sunk a meter below street level for added cooling during the heat of the day. The tables and chairs have seen better days, but sport a lively local woven fabric for table clothes, and seat covers. In the underworld of New Kurdistan this is neutral ground between the various factions of criminals. Owned and operated by the former Kingpin of them all (before Imperial rule suppressed them), The one-eyed ancient Prince of Thieves, Hannibal 'Al-Nasr' ibn Hafez. Hannibal is content to watch over the goings on nowadays, though many of his trusted lieutenants, now running their own little sections of town pay him their due respects, when they visit. He is of grandfatherly age (in his late 60's), and from his weather worn bronzed face has a piercing gaze with his one remaining eye that gleams defiant still in the face of Imperial occupation. His Jambiya, omnipresent in his sash, is a master craftsmanship work of horn, gold, and emeralds. It is also his scepter of power, his high backed rattan chair his throne, the back room Smoking den his audience chamber.

As is traditional here, water is drawn from the cistern. Tea is the drink of choice, heavily steeped, and strongly laced with sugar, although hard cider, date and honey wines can also be had though costlier. Offworlders will be charged 300% more for the same drinks and meals. Local cuisine only, dried or flame broiled meats, sauces, and unleavened breads.

Hannibal 'Al-Nasr' Hafez is A Rogue 14th level, and although he is impaired physically, mentally he as is sharp as they day the Imperial troops squashed his organization. He is aware of the Hakar'i 's presence in town, but has no kind words for them. They are like jackals, feeding on the corpse of his once powerful organization. Still, he is one to be reckoned with, as most of those in control of various illegal or gray-trade activities were once part of his little "criminal empire", some of whom now side with the Hakar'i. Ibn Hafez never speaks Galanglic, always his native tongue, and requires an interpreter. It is a source of pride and stubbornness he will not compromise on. He wears the desert tribe's Keffiyeh headdress.

### 3) Sadiki & Sons Warehouse/ Emporium

Also found in the old Quarter, ten minutes from the Starport proper, is the knick-knack store of this name. Any sort of souvenir from New Kurdistan's craftsman can be had here, Walid ibn Saadiki, the proprietor, runs this as a family business, aided by two younger brothers, three male cousins, and all of their sons. They also have several jewelry and watch stores selling knock-off Chronex, and other fashion watches/time pieces. Perfumes, clothing and housewares/dry goods are also sold from under his roof. Sadiki & Sons also sells untraceable firearms (out the back door, not the front!). They do a brisk business in TL-5 through TL-8 handguns, ammunition, but generally after closing hours up front. He will sell to anyone, save children (under 14, see Library data), who has money.

Walid is a thin, cheerful, smiling man, with a drooping mustache, and forked goatee-style beard. Being a city dweller, he wears a Fez and Aba over his Ankle length silk shirt/suit. Walid, is a Merchant4/Rogue4, and his brother Hamid is a Merchant6/Rogue2. Their brother Khalid, is a Merchant1/Professional (Gunsmith) 8. Mustafa, Jalal, Hilal, and Achmed are all Merchant1/Rogue 6's (Mustafa-Walid's son/ Jala & Hilal are Hamid's boys/ & Achmed is Khalid's son). Walid's wife, Jabriya works there, selling perfumes, jewelry and ladies clothing. Hamid is widowed, and Khalid is on his third wife.

Walid remains a "neutral" in the crime-lord game in the city, as much as he can, serving all sides, as well as his family's needs.

### 4) The House of Sheba

Sheba bint Ghullah's business and residence is a school for women entrepreneurs, teaching mathematics, bookkeeping, accounting, pharmaceutical preparation, herbal medicine, reading, writing, feminine wiles, dances, and poisoning one's lout of a husband by natural causes if need be. Sheba's is a front for training off world agents. The Hakar'i agents sent to Kiikkedia were trained here. She is a middle-aged woman of striking good looks (and recently widowed - again!), with sun-bronzed black hair (makes it a rusty brown). The Hakar'i is blackmailing her over the suspicious death of the late Ujaama ibn Hakim, her last husband, who was once the Liaison defacto Mayor of the city with the Imperial garrison. He regularly beat Sheba, and she took matters into her own hands. Her previous two husbands died in the internecine gray-wars between criminal organizations within the city. She wears black in mourning, but does not hide her face.

By day, all is normal here with students 14-18 years old running about this once opulent 3-story manse. At night quite different training is undertaken!

Sheba Bint Ghullah is a tribeswoman, from an arranged marriage to a city dweller. She is a Professional 2/Rogue8. She is also related by blood to AL-Nasr (her grandfather).

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## 3) AL-MARESH POTTERY

**Situation:** al-Maresh Pottery is an old family business in the Artisan Market area of Al-Karit. The building is old and constructed from stone (predating the Imperial occupation), though the windows and doors have been replaced by modern ones. It is a small shop with a workshop built onto the back where the al-Maresh family and employees make traditional pottery as it has been for nearly two hundred years. An old woman sits in the front of the shop watching the wares. She smiles a warm, gap-toothed smile at the PCs as they enter. The smell of wet clay and paint is heavy in the air, mixing with incense. The shop is open from 0600 to 1900, closing from 1100 to 1500 due to the heat of the desert day.

**Referee's Notes:** al-Maresh Pottery is a small, friendly family business, and has been for almost two hundred years. For the last 85 years of those it has been a point of contact for the Psionics Institute of New Kurdistan. The Hakar'i use Palim al-Maresh and his mother Sala (the old woman mentioned above) as information conduits and occasional couriers. Palim's late father Taimur was a friend and servant of the Hakar'i for most of his life and Palim carries on the family loyalty to that group.

The al-Maresh family has not survived being involved with the Psionics Institute this long by being stupid and careless. Anyone asking blatantly about stolen psionic artifacts or the Hakar'i will be met with blank stares and protestations of ignorance. Anyone pushing along these lines of questioning will be asked to leave by a group of burly employees armed with cudgels. Anyone inquiring after Palim will be told he is unavailable and be asked if they wish to specially commission an item of pottery. This is a code-phrase used by the Hakar'i. The correct response is "yes, something special, full of beauty and wisdom." Anyone not using this phrase will be allowed to commission a special item of pottery. A correct answer will gain them instructions to meet in the alley out back in four hours.

PCs searching the alleyway should make a Search check (DC16) to find in the trash an empty Imperial Mail transit package addressed to Palim al-Maresh, from Hakim Al-shar. It is about the size of a briefcase.

If the PCs make Sala suspicious she will tell them to buy something or leave, and will contact some of the Hakar'i's other friends and arrange to have the PCs watched. If they make any threats or appear to know too much Sala's friends will attempt to interrogate and kill the PCs (see "You know too much", below).

If the PCs meet with Sala in the alley as directed she will demand to know who they are and what they want. Only after they allay her fears will she speak to them about Palim and the package, and then only in the vaguest terms. Sala will remain suspicious of these offworlders throughout the conversation. A separate Bluff or Liaison skill roll is required for each piece of information (the DC is listed under Data Point, below).

If the PCs question the employees when they are away from Sala, a successful Sense Motive (DC15) check will draw their attention to Mahir mi-Hafen, a worker who dislikes his 'skinflint' employers and will tell them where Palim has gone for a 'financial incentive' of Cr250. If they pay this he will tell them Palim is going to Ji'hal-ik-jihar (which means "Valley of Light"), although he does not know where that is, as it sounds like an old tribal name. A Bribery check (DC15) will reduce the payment amount to Cr150.

### DATA POINTS

- Palim is taking something out of the city for some friends. (DC16)
- Palim went yesterday, into the desert. (DC20)
- Palim will be meeting some contacts in one of the regular meeting places in two days. (DC20)
- The meeting place is in the village of Hifir. (DC20)

## 4) YOU KNOW TOO MUCH

**Situation:** The PCs are in a small side street in Al-Karit. Ahead of them men armed with knives, clubs and firearms, wearing veils over their faces, step out of a side alleyway. Behind them more do the same. The men advance menacingly on the PCs, warning them not to make any sudden moves.

**Referee's Notes:** The PCs have made the Hakar'i's agents in the city suspicious. Sala has hired a group of local paid thugs to rough up the PCs and teach them a lesson. If the PCs give the locals any reason to suspect they are law enforcement, navy, or government officials the locals will attempt to kill them – at first quietly with knives and clubs, but with firearms if the PCs pose too much of a threat. None of the locals carry any identification or objects beyond their weapons. There are two thugs plus one per PC. 1 in 4 have pistols or shotguns (+4 ranged, autopistol 1d10 or shotgun 3d6/2d6/1d6), the rest have cudgels or blades (+4 melee, 1d6).

If the thugs are captured they can easily be intimidated (DC12) in revealing the information under Data Points, below.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND



## TACTICS

The thugs will fan out so that the people with firearms are able to cover the PCs easily. The leader will speak to the PCs from a distance, and then they will close and attack. If any of them drop to less than 10 Stamina, or lose more than a point or two Lifeblood, they will flee. They will also flee when three of their numbers go down. The thugs will beat the PCs soundly and leave them after taking all their valuables and weapons. If this encounter happens a second time the locals will attempt to kill the PCs.

## DATA POINTS

- They were hired to rough up the PCs
- They were hired by a woman they don't know to find a particular group of offworlders, and warn them off.
- They were paid Cr150 each in advance.
- They were not told how to contact the woman.
- She told them if any of the offworlders died it was no problem, but also not their objective.

## HAKIM'S BACK

It is most likely Hakim Al-shar arrived on New Kurdistan just before the PCs and is already back on his home turf by the time the PCs arrive. Finding Hakim will be difficult, even though he is a 'known man', as he and his partners have a deadly reputation when crossed. Hakim will spend the first six hours back on planet meeting with his local contacts and sources, reacquainting himself with the situation on New Kurdistan. After that he will make contact with Sala at al-Maresh Pottery (see Act 3, Scene 2). If the PCs have visited her before then, Hakim will recognize her descriptions of the PCs and he will arrange for the PCs to be waylaid and killed (as Act 3, Scene 4 but with deadly intent).

Hakim will then travel to the Valley of Light via the village of Hifir (see Act 3, Scene 7) to meet his contacts. He will arrive shortly before the Naval Intelligence team and be on-hand during the firefight in the Valley of Light.

If the PCs begin to look for Hakim in Al-Karit, check every day against DC18 to see if one of his many contacts in the city hears of the PC's search and warns him. In this event he will send another team of ruffians (see Act 3, Scene 4) armed with SMGs and Shotguns to finish the PCs off once and for all.

## TRACKING THE PACKAGE

The package containing the artefacts was fitted with a tracking device. This broadcasts on an obscure frequency well outside of normal use. If the PCs are aware of the frequency they can track the package using any custom scanner or modified communications device and a successful T/Sensors skill check (DC15). Modifying a normal device requires a T/Electronics skill check (DC15) and one hour. Starship sensors can track the signal without modification.

The GM should determine the location of the package within the following guidelines (times are based on the PC's arrival):

<i>Time (hours)</i>	<i>Location</i>
-24 to -22	Al-Karit, Mail office
-22 to -11	Al-Karit, al-Maresh Pottery
-11 to -4	Al-Karit, moving around, short stops
-4 to +15	Travelling slowly into Desert
+15 to +25	Village of Hifir
+25 to +36	Travelling through Desert on a winding route
+36	The Valley of Light

The PCs should have landed and completed all necessary activities upon arrival by +3.

## 5) INTO THE DESERT (KEY)

**Referee's Notes:** The PCs have concluded (or avoided) their investigations in the city and are ready to strike out into the desert. Transport can be hired easily from a number of places at a cost of Cr60 per day for a Jeep or Cr200 per day for an air/raft. If the PCs wish to hire a guide they can avail themselves of the services of Fasan al-Faresh, an unusual and flamboyant tribesman who now lives in the city and acts as a guide, scout and rescue worker (he charges Cr30 per day plus meals). Supplies and the like are easy to come by.

The desert has many hazards for PCs who are ill prepared or lost. Travelling the 500km to Hifir is relatively risk-free, as there is a plain, well-travelled track that allows full off-road ground vehicle movement. Travel beyond Hifir, or directly to the Valley of Light is more difficult and dangerous, as there are no established tracks, as it is 190km through trackless desert (very slow ground vehicle movement rate). The typical daily temperature in this region is 45 degrees Celsius, a temperature high enough to have adverse effects on PCs involved in heavy activity or wearing unsuitable armor or clothing (see the Travellers Handbook page 383). The area around Hifir is not prone to harsh extremes of weather, though dust- or thunderstorms may occur (see the Travellers Handbook page 384 and 385).

There is little native desert life, but PCs travelling through the desert may encounter animals or travellers. Check once per travel or halt period for each, DC19 for animal encounters and DC18 (DC10 on the Hifir trail) for traveller encounters.

## 6) CHASING GHOSTS

**Situation:** The PCs have arrived in the village of Hifir, a mix of low stone buildings and tribal tents, home to nearly 2000 inhabitants and a transient population of almost 2000 more. It is one of the few permanent settlements where the urban and tribal folk trade, and is the only one of any size near the capital. It is positioned in the lee of a large rocky outcropping, sheltering it from the worst of the storm, and has a large freshwater oasis nearby (about a kilometer by two kilometers) that is guarded by the local militia, who charge Cr0.025 for a liter of water. In return the water is kept clean and available. The buildings are built around a market square where corporate sales-trucks park side by side with tribal trader's horse carts and colorful awnings.

Almost anything legal and illegal can be purchased here in Hifir, though the illegal goods disappear from sight when the Imperial Army patrols (from the permanent garrison of 50 troops) pass by. There is an understanding between the Army and the locals – anyone selling to the hard-line tribes gets shut down, the rest get left alone if they are discrete.

**Referee's Notes:** The village is a sprawling mess around a central market square. The buildings sprung up wherever the builder stopped, with only the market and trail in remaining clear, though small vendors line the edge of the trail. The

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE DESERT

The terrain in the desert is open and rolling, with visibility possible over a very large distance. Disturbed dust from travelling vehicles and groups of riders can be seen from kilometres away. See the Traveller's Handbook page 389 for encounter distance information.

### Traveller Encounters (1d10):

- 1-3 Trader
- 4-7 Imperial Army Patrol
- 8-9 Travellers
- 10 Argument

**Trader:** A travelling desert trader returning from the trading settlement of Hifir. He will have wares to sell at a 50% mark-up. He has a Trader skill of +10 and is armed with a rifle. He may be travelling in a Jeep, or with a number of horses.

**Imperial Army Patrol:** A patrol of six soldiers in Combat Armour with Gauss Rifles. They are travelling in an air/raft. They may stop and search the PCs.

**Travellers:** A group of 2d6 Travelling locals or miners. They are lightly armed, and travelling in a number of Jeeps or a mining ATV.

**Argument:** Roll twice again, rolling repeat results. These two groups are in an angry standoff on the road. Another 'Argument' result whilst determining the factions results in the other generated faction taking offence to the PCs. Be creative.

### Animal Encounters:

1d6	Animals	Size	ST/LB	AC/AR	Attacks and Damage	A/F/S	S/D/C	F/R/W	Notes
1	Gatherer	Diminutive (1kg)	1/3	25/9	Bite +8 (1d2)	9/6/3	4/14/3	-2/10/1	Poison - STR/Mild Heat Resistance Tremmorsense Hide +10
2	Hijacker	Large (400kg)	22/14	12/5	Slam +2 (3d6+4)	2/7/9	18/6/14	5/1/5	Spot +4, Survival +5
3	1d6 Hunters	Diminutive (1kg)	2/2	16/4	Spit +4 (poison)	1/5/15	4/11/2	-3/5/4	Poison - DEX/Moderate Move Silently +3, Spot +3 Flier (fast, agile)
4	1d6 Grazers	Tiny (2kg)	2/6	14/0	Claw/Bite +3 (1d6-4)	3/7/30	3/14/6	1/7/0	Heat Resistance Listen +3, Spot +3
5	1d6 Hunters	Medium (75kg)	12/13	13/0	Claw/Bite +9/1d6	+5/12	10/17/13	3/6/2	Endurance, Run Intuit Direction +2, Spot +3, Survival +3
6	3d6 Chasers	Small (6kg)	7/8	13/1	Claw/Bite +12 (2d4-1)	+8/9	8/13/8	1/4/2	Spring Attack Hide +4, Move Silently +3

**1 - Gatherer:** A 30cm long insectoid with large four-part jaws. Typically gather during the hotter parts of the day and burrow for warmth at night.

**2 - Hijacker:** A large, clumsy, leather-skinned six-legged beast. Uses size and charges to scare attackers from prey.

**3 - 1d6 Hunters:** 20cm long flying insectoids. They spit a potent paralytic poison and follow the prey until it collapses or dies. A well-known threat to the desert tribes.

**4 - 1d6 Grazers:** Small lizard creatures. Exceptionally fast. Often found basking in the sun.

**5 - 1d6 Hunters:** Tiger-sized pouncer. Hunt in packs. Aggressive.

**6 - 3d6 Chasers:** Small cat-sized, rough-skinned creatures. They follow and harass small groups of animals, and even humans if hungry.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

Imperial Army maintains a barracks and office at the base of the outcropping, with a comms tower on top of it. The local militia has a stone barracks and holding cells near the oasis (which laps up against the bottom of the rocky outcrop). The market is a cacophony of noise and smells, with winding paths through the tents and trucks. Following anyone through this mess of people and wares should be almost impossible, and finding someone difficult at best. Traders regularly speak both Galanglic and the tribal tongue fluently, and deal fairly (though offworlders tend to get a 10-15% mark-up unless they seem canny enough to notice).

As well as a trade stop the village acts as a transfer point for both the anti-Imperial resistance (though they have no effect on this scenario) and the Haka*r*'i, who maintain safe houses and agents within the village. Hakim Al-shar will stop in Hifir approximately 25 hours after the PCs arrive and take the artifacts from Palim (who returns to the city). Hakim will wait for approximately 9 hours before departing with a tribal horse caravan destined for a few small hamlets and passing near the Valley of Light. During this time he will be staying in a house owned by a merchant family who hide people and items for the Haka*r*'i (Palim also went directly there upon arrival). He will not return to his own house in case it is being watched. He will not leave until his contact in the caravan comes to get him. He is armed with an Autopistol and a Gauss Rifle, and wears tribal Jack armor and robes. The house is the home of Ibiid Hashir, his wife Naffen, and his baby daughter Risha.

There are many sources of information in Hifir that can help the PCs for a price. There are many rivalries between the traders and tribes, and not all of them respect the Haka*r*'i. Discrete PCs with money to spend should, given enough time, be able to find out much the same information as that listed under Data Points. The sidebars 'Underworld Locations' and 'Underworld Contacts' provide a number of locations and people suitable for use in Hifir.

## DATA POINTS

Data points concerning different topics are listed below. Following each point of information is an indication of how difficult it is to learn, first by bribery and second by intimidation, though in small village like Hifir offworlders using strong-arm tactics may illicit a response from the locals – use the events in Act 3, Scene 4, above.

### The Haka*r*'i

- *Haka*r'*i* means "The Wise" in the traditional tribal tongue of the desert people. (DC10 / DC10)
- They are from the deserts. (DC10 / DC15)
- They are advisors to the tribes, moving freely. (DC10 / DC15)
- Some of them travel to the city on occasion. (DC15 / DC15)
- Some believe they are psions. (DC20 / DC20)
- They have agents here in Hifir (DC20 / DC20)
- Finding the location of a safe house (25% chance it is the one hiding Hakim and/or Palim) (DC25)

### Hakim Al-shar

- Hakim is a criminal-for-hire. (DC15 / DC10)
- He works with two partners, Khan and Jara. (DC20 / DC20)
- He lives in the village of Hifir (DC20 / DC25)
- He is working for the Haka*r*'i. (DC25 / DC20)
- Gaining his address. (DC25)
- Arranging a meeting with him. (not possible – he has departed for the Valley of Light)
- He came into town recently (if applicable, DC20 / DC20)
- He left town with a caravan headed northeast, toward the Valley of Light. (if applicable, DC25 / DC20)

### The Tribes

- The tribes are fierce, hardy and honorable.
- Very few travel close enough to the city to encounter offworlders regularly.
- They occasionally clash with the miners over migration routes.
- Many of the hard-line traditional tribes from the deep desert still attack army patrols, swearing they will fight off the Imperial occupiers.
- They have a few permanent settlements at large oases.
- The tribes are advised by a wandering group of wise folk, the Haka*r*'i. (DC20 / DC15)

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## The Valley of Light

- The Valley of Light is a meeting place for smugglers bringing weapons from the tribes. (DC15 / DC15)
- The Valley is sometimes used by the Hakar'i for meetings and markets. (DC20 / DC20)
- Traders know not to use it for the next few days unless they want to anger the Hakar'i. (DC20 / DC20)
- There are rumors that Hakim Al-shar is going there to meet the Hakar'i. (DC25)

## From the Hashir family

- Palim / Hakim are friends of the family. (DC20 / DC15)
- Palim / Hakim were / are due (as applicable) here. (DC20 / DC15)
- They all do jobs for the Hakar'i. (DC25 / DC20)
- Hakim has a meeting in the Valley of Light tomorrow. (not possible / active threat of death)

## 7) THE VALLEY OF LIGHT (KEY)

**Situation:** The PCs have arrived at the Valley of Light, the meeting place between the *Hakar'i* and Hakim Al-shar. It is a shallow (200m deep) canyon in the rocky badlands of the desert, running 3 km perfectly in line with the sun's path, so remains light and hot throughout almost the entire day. As they approach within sight of the valley (some 2 kilometers) a group of horse-mounted tribesmen ride hard towards them, the exact number obscured by the dust from the horses' hooves.

**Referee's Notes:** The tribesmen are part of the *Hakar'i'shi*, the tribe that serves The Wise as guards, scouts and messengers. Riding with them is Al-Tarath, a low-level member of the *Hakar'i* proper. There is one tribesman per PC, plus Al-Tarath. They are armed with an assortment of rifles, shotguns and swords. Only Al-Tarath and one other tribesman, Sharif, speak Galanglic. Al-Tarath will remain at the back of the group and use his Psionic powers to monitor the PCs. If he senses they are here to take the artifacts he will tell Sharif (in the tribal tongue) to attack the PCs. If the PCs have a native guide he will recognize Al-Tarath as a member of the Hakar'i and urge politeness and caution, though will not identify Al-Tarath to the PCs.

As the PCs are speaking to the tribesmen a pair of military G-Carriers will scream overhead towards the canyon. At the lip one will dismount its troops and begin firing its mounted weapons into the canyon. The other will hover far over the canyon and fire down into the canyon. The tribesmen with the PCs will draw weapons and move in (one will shout into a communicator in the tribal tongue), though if Al-Tarath is still monitoring the PCs and detected their surprise he will call the tribesmen back, warn the PCs away in Galanglic, and they will ride for the canyon whilst attempting to warn the other *Hakar'i* using his Send Thoughts Telepathic ability.

If the PCs somehow arrive before Hakim the tribesmen will be less alert but will still be looking out. The *Hakar'i* will be hidden in the caves and the tribe will trade for a few small items before hurrying the PCs away. If they look ready to stay they will be warned to leave. They will not be allowed to enter the caves.

## TACTICS

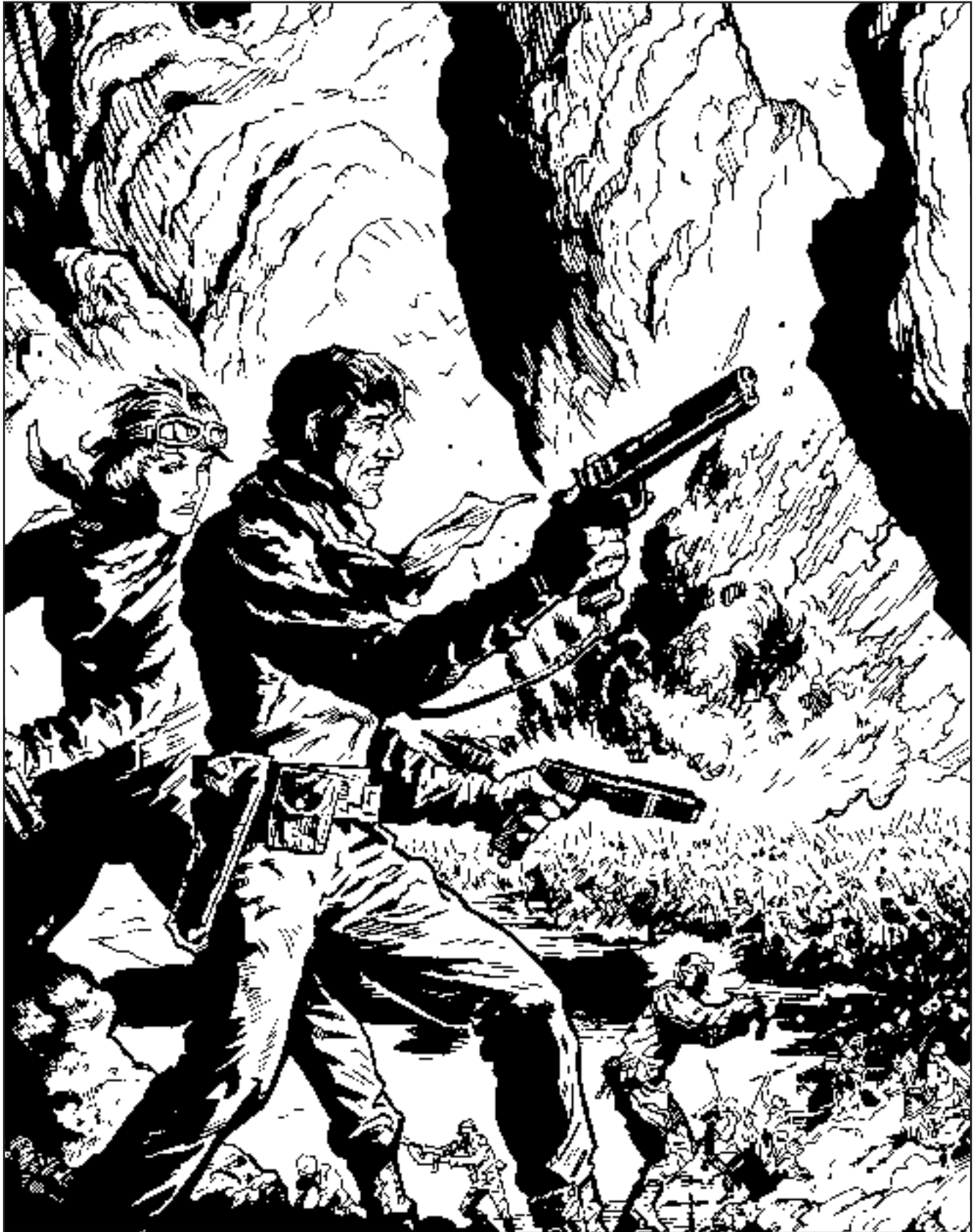
The two G-Carriers each hold one ten-man squad of Imperial Marines in combat armor with Gauss Rifles and one PGMP-14 per squad. The G-Carriers are armed with two LMGs, one at each side door. The lead G-Carrier dismounts its troops to provide cover fire and secure the area, whilst the second G-Carrier prepares to Grav-belt drop its two squads into the canyon. Their commander, Lt. DeVries, has ordered them to fire on anything not in Marine combat armor. DeVries and his personal Marine team (from Act 1) are in a third G-Carrier a few kilometers away, coordinating, and will move in once the canyon floor is secure to oversee the clearance of the caves. The Marines refrain from using explosives, as they do not wish to damage the artifacts. This is a Naval Intelligence 'black' mission, so they have no fire support and only limited manpower.

There are two members of the *Hakar'i*, Hakim (and any other members of his team who escaped with him) and 50 tribesmen here for the meeting. 10 tribesmen are riding around in small groups guarding the perimeter, whilst the other 40 are spread around the valley and the caves. As soon as the G-Carriers are seen (or the report comes in from the group the PCs are with) Hakim will lead the Hakar'i into the caves, and will take up a position at the mouth of the caves to return fire. The tribesmen will take cover in various locations and fire on the Marines, whilst some in the caves bring out disposable rocket launchers and LAGs to fire on the G-Carriers. The *Hakar'i*, once they realize the severity of the attack and that they are trapped, will attempt to flee. They have an escape tunnel that surfaces some 500m between the canyon and the PCs, and will rush out and flee into the desert under cover of 10 tribesmen who charge the Marines on the canyon lip. The tribesmen will fire on anything not in tribal clothing.

The events of the battle unfold as follows unless the PC's actions change them in any way:



*OBJECTS OF THE MIND*



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

Round	Events
1	The G-carriers pass over the PCs heads
3	The tribesmen radio and warn the Hakar'i, and face off against the PCs
4	Al-Tarath calls off the tribesmen and warns off the PCs. They ride towards the canyon.
5	Hakim herds the Hakar'i towards the caves.
7	Hakim sets up a firing position and orders rocket launchers and LAGs to be fetched. Other tribesmen in the canyon take cover and prepare to fight.
11	The first G-Carrier dismounts its troops. The second G-Carrier takes station overhead.
12	The firefight begins.
20	The 2 LAGs and 4 Disposable Rocket Launchers arrive. Eight tribesmen and two Marines are down.
22	The LAGs begin firing on the G-Carriers. 2 Rockets are fired. One hits the overhead G-Carrier and it moves off, damaged.
25	The group of Tribesmen approaching from the PC's direction begin to fire whilst galloping. Half of the Marines on the lip fire on them. Al-Tarath is killed.
27	The second G-Carrier dismounts its troops. The two LAG gunners fire on the Marines now.
29	The second two rockets destroy the first G-Carrier. It's wreckage collapses one of the cave entrances. The other tribesmen fall back into the other caves leaving the two LAG gunners to guard their backs.
30	All the tribesmen on the canyon floor (eighteen) and five Marines are down. The second squad grav-belt drop to the canyon floor.
34	The two LAG gunners are killed. The Marines secure the canyon floor.
40	Hakim and the Hakar'i start down their secret tunnel.
45	DeVries arrives.
52	Ten Marines enter the tunnels, meeting stiff resistance from hidden attackers using autorifles and grenades.
60	Hakim triggers explosives, collapsing key junctions in the tunnels the tribesmen and Marines are fighting in. Many are trapped or killed.
74	The tribesmen emerge from the tunnel exit and fire on the remaining Marines. DeVries' G-Carrier and squad return fire.
76	Hakim and the Hakar'i emerge and move away from the canyon.
85	The remaining Marines and the G-Carrier drive off or kill the tribesmen covering the escape.
86	Hakim and the Hakar'i hide in the sands.
104	Hakim and the Hakar'i sneak off into the desert, escaping with the artifacts.

Once the battle is concluded DeVries will call for Army Engineers to excavate and rescue the Marines underground. A total of 7 Marines were killed and six injured in the firefight and cave-ins. There are eight Marines (including) DeVries' team remaining free and unhurt. They will fire on anything in tribal clothing they can see, and will attempt to arrest anyone else. If DeVries recognizes the PCs they will be arrested.

If the PCs spot the *Hakar'i*, leaving the hidden entrance they may give pursuit and confront them. Hakim will know he is being looked for by offworlders and immediately fire on them if he sees them. The remaining Hakar'i may attempt to bargain for their freedom if he is killed. They will only give up the artifacts if it is the only way they can survive and escape, but will send a small army of people to retrieve the artifacts from the PCs and kill them (see the sidebar 'Escaping the tribes').

## DATA POINTS

If the PCs capture a tribesman, a Marine, DeVries, Hakim, or even one of the Hakar'i they will be able to question them. Following each point of information is an indication of how difficult it is to learn, first by bribery and second by intimidation. The Hakar'i and Hakr'i'shi will kill themselves or allow themselves to be killed before being taken prisoner by the Imperial Marines.

### From one of the *Hakar'i*

- They are spiritual advisors to the tribes. (DC10 / DC10)
- They meet here for spiritual rites. (lie in this case) (DC10 / DC10)
- Hakim is an employee of the Hakar'i. (DC15 / DC15)
- The *Hakar'i* employed Hakim to steal the artifacts. (DC20 / DC20)

## ESCAPING THE TRIBES

A few days after the battle at the Valley of Light word will circulate amongst the tribes and underworld of the events. If the Referee wishes, the tribes, the Hakar'i, or the Al-Karit underworld may know of the PC's involvement (or at least their interest in Hakim, The Wise, or the Valley of Light) and hunt for them. The information in the previous Scenes of Act 3 allow the Referee enough information to construct a sequence of chases and events where the PCs are hounded by all sides until they can escape off-world. If DeVries has survived and knows the PCs were present there will be warrants out for their arrest at the starport and circulated amongst the Army security patrols in town. The precise events are left to the Referee's discretion.

- These people are psions. (not possible / active threat of death)
- All *Hakar'i* are psions. (psionic mind reading only)
- The location of their monastery in the Mountains of Thought (psionic mind reading only)

### From Hakim

- He is here for spiritual guidance. (lie) (easy/easy)
- He was hired to steal some artifacts from off world. (DC15 / DC20)
- His employers as psions (DC25 / not possible)

### From DeVries

- He is a Naval Officer, his serial number, his rank and name. (easy/easy)
- He works for Naval Intelligence. (DC20 / DC15)
- He hunts psions. (DC20 / DC20)

### From a Tribesman

- They serve the *Hakar'i*. (DC15 / DC20)
- The *Hakar'i* have psionic powers. (DC25 / not possible)
- The location of their monastery in the Mountains of Thought (psionic mind reading only)

### From a Marine

- Serial number, his rank and name. (DC10 / DC10)
- They are on a secret mission and know few details. (DC15 / DC15)
- They are working for Naval Intelligence. (DC20 / DC20)

## EPILOGUE

### REWARDS

Byron will be overjoyed at the successful return of his artifacts. If all of them have been returned he will pay the Cr30000 and expenses, plus he will pay a bonus of Cr2000 for each PC. He will also give them a letter of introduction as reliable employees to the business community of Satyressia subsector. If only a few of the artifacts are returned he will pay only Cr10000 and half expenses. If no artifacts are returned he will pay half expenses for all the information the PCs have found.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## SUGGESTED EXPERIENCE AWARDS

<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Party XP Award</i>
Finding Blade	200 x APL*
Finding the Walters	500 x APL*
Finding the thieves	300 x APL*
Capturing one or more thieves	300 x APL*
Finding the tracking signal frequency	100 x APL*
Finding Palim or Hakim before the Valley of Light	400 x APL*
Finding Hifir	250 x APL*
Finding the Valley of Light	100 x APL*
Defeating Hakim	200 x APL*
Recovering the Artifacts	2500 x APL*
Maximum Suggested Award	4000 x APL*

\*APL = Average Party Level

## FURTHER RELATED ADVENTURES

Should Byron ever require jobs done for him again, as long as the PCs did a good job he will always offer them first refusal if they are on planet, or perhaps place them on a small long-term retainer if they are based in the Satyressia subsector.

If DeVries survived, he will have a lot of explaining to do back at NI branch HQ on Kiikkedia. His loss of Marine lives and the artifacts reflect very badly on the Naval Intelligence Office, and he will be formally reprimanded and posted to a desk job in a minor office. He won't remember the PCs with any fondness. Eventually he will return to frontline NI duties, and will look for a chance to gain revenge upon the PCs given the chance.

The Hakar'i, if they are aware of the PC's involvement, will now be firm enemies of the PCs. Depending upon their precise actions they may take a contact out on the PCs, or may just hope they will one day return to New Kurdistan.

Naval Intelligence may hear about their contact with the New Kurdistan Psionics Institute and offer them employment to help root them out. They may even give the PCs a choice...

## REFEREE'S NOTES

Unless the PCs are exceptionally smart, skilled or lucky, it is likely they will come out of this scenario not knowing for sure what was happening behind the theft of the artifacts, or even that they were stolen for a Psionics Institute. Some questions will remain unanswered, and rightly so. A Psionics Institute does not survive against the Imperial intelligence agencies for long if it makes its actions obvious, after all.

# LIBRARY DATA

The following information related to this adventure is available to the PCs from any (up to date) Imperial Library Data System, except of course for those sections marked as Referee's Notes.

## ANCIENTS

The name given to a race of intelligent, non-human beings who inhabited various locations in this portion of the galaxy approximately -300,000. Archaeological evidence recovered from excavations of the few known Ancient cities indicates that the race destroyed itself during a 2,000-year period of intense warfare that left only ruined cities and shattered planets. The Ancients were responsible for several major features within the region now occupied by the Imperium. Their warfare resulted in the large proportion of asteroid belts throughout this spiral arm. There is evidence that they created the multi-world rosette at Tureen (in the Vargr Extents). Scattered empty cities (most severely damaged by battle) stand as evidence of their wars; most, however, are restricted areas under investigation by the Imperium and not open to the public.

The Ancients are generally accepted as responsible for the dissemination of Humaniti within its current domain when they transplanted genetic stock from Terra to at least forty worlds across a span of some 360 parsecs. The Ancients were also responsible for the creation of the Vargr through genetic manipulation of carnivore/chaser stock. Apparently, they used Terran canine stock acquired at the same time as Humaniti.

## ANESTALONE

Anestalone is a riot control gas in wide law enforcement and military use throughout the sector. It works by initially deadening the nerve endings of the body, causing numbness and disorientation. In sufficient concentrations, such as being sprayed from an aerosol into someone's face after a few seconds the anesthetic elements of the gas cause unconsciousness. It is odorless and colorless and is easily filtered by respirator masks.

The gas is available on Law Level 5 and below worlds for Cr100 per aerosol (5 sprays, maximum range 2m, ranged touch attack at -4 to target the head). Grenades containing Anestalone cost Cr100 each, though are a military and law enforcement weapon. Most asteroid worlds and other worlds that require artificial life support prohibit gas weapons due to the strain they could cause on localized life support in event of a serious accident.

**Referee's Data:** The Game effects of Anestalone are: Exposure to a low concentration cloud of the gas, such as from a grenade thrown outdoors, requires a Fortitude save (DC15). Failure results in 1d10 points of temporary attribute damage to Strength, Dexterity and Intelligence. Higher concentrations, such as a grenade in a small room, increase the DC to 20. Direct exposure to the gas from an aerosol requires a Fortitude save (DC18) to avoid unconsciousness, with success requiring a DC20 save as above.

## HAKAR'I

The *Hakar'i* are a tribal group on New Kurdistan. They are insular and deliberately choose to stay apart from Imperial citizens. Little is known of them beyond the fact they are held in almost reverent awe by the other tribes. *Hakar'i* means 'The Wise' in the New Kurdistanian desert tribe language.

**Referee's Note:** This information should only be available from academic databases, or the New Kurdistan Library Data Service.

## IMPERIAL CUSTOMS

Imperial Customs operate in starports across the Imperium. Even corporate starports or local world-run starports have agents from Imperial Customs to monitor the shipping of goods. Imperial Customs agents also patrol inhabited systems, checking for smugglers and monitoring trade routes. They work in conjunction with the Imperial Navy and Imperial Marines to stop, search and if necessary seize starships. Threatening, or using violence against, Imperial Customs agents or ships is always considered a crime of Imperial jurisdiction, and is also very dangerous.

## IMPERIAL MAIL

The Imperial Mail is run by the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. The mail is transported on mail ships or armed civilian starships fitted with a specialist mail safe and employing at least one gunner. The mail is transported in bulk lots of up to five tons, and can be a lucrative contract for a starship. Dedicated mail offices at class A or B starports usually ship Imperial Mail fairly quickly. Class C or below starports usually have an official who directs the mail but delays may occur. Interfering with the Imperial mail is always considered an Imperial crime and falls under the purview of the Ministry of Justice to investigate, and can result in substantial fines or prison sentences.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## POLICING IN THE IMPERIUM

The Imperium has two distinct levels of policing- planetary and Imperial. Planetary policing consists of a local police force of militia, and is enforced at the local law level. Local police forces vary from highly professional and well-equipped high-tech unit, to tribal enforcers operating with their chief's permission.

Imperial offenses such as smuggling, production of weapons of mass destruction, illegal psionic activity, Imperial mail theft, possession of unregistered Ancients artifacts, and others, are covered by the Ministry of Justice. This highly professional organization works closely with the Imperial armed forces and officials to investigate and prosecute these offenses. They have jurisdiction to enforce Imperial crimes on member worlds but only regularly exercise this right when they are in an active investigation. Where local laws vary from Imperial laws, such as a low Law world that does not require weapons licensing, the MoJ will most likely not prosecute everyone owning an unlicensed weapon unless they have a reason to officially notice those people. The MoJ are, however, extremely dedicated and anyone making the mistake of assuming they can be bribed will likely regret that assumption.

## IISS SURVEY DATA

### KIIKKEDIA

B868A8A-B      115      K8 V

**Public Starport Facilities:** Class B

**Size:** 12,480km (0.96g)

**Atmosphere:** Standard

**Hydrosphere:** 80% surface liquid (Saltwater)

**Population:** 10 billion

**Government:** Civil Service Bureaucracy

**Law Level:** Extreme

**Industrial Tech Level:** Average Interstellar Community

### REFEREE'S NOTES

The following data will generally only be available to the Referee unless the characters take specific actions in an attempt to gather this information. It is up to the referee to determine how the characters might go about this and how much they will actually learn if successful.

### The System

Kiikkedia I Alpha is the closest of eight planetary bodies orbiting the large, bright star. The system contains five gas giants, each with many satellites, and one planetoid belt (Kiikkedia I Lambda). The mainworld has no satellites. The planet has a rotational period of 31.6 hours and an orbital period of 45.304 days.

### The Planet

From space Kiikkedia is a rich, deep blue world with large amounts of surface ocean. Most of the land space on the planet is divided between a dozen landmasses the largest of which is 2800km across. The planet has large icecaps at both poles. These icecaps are rich in mineral resources used in local manufacturing. A sizable industrial city is located near each pole for this purpose. There are small tracts of equatorial jungle on some of the smaller landmasses, home to many rare species imported from Terra in the early days of expansion. Average temperature ranges from 39oC at the equator to -31oC at the poles.

### Atmosphere

Kiikkedia has a standard oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. It is breathable without assistance.

### Biosphere

Kiikkedia has a small, immature native biosphere. It is home to many non-native species of animals and fish, introduced in the early days of settlement in a program to develop the natural resources of the planet. Modern Kiikkedia has a stable plant and animal population.

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## History

Kiikkedia has a long but unimportant history in the Imperium. It is situated just off a large Jump 1 main in the Satyressia and Outreaumer subsectors of Ley Sector. It was settled due to its idyllic nature and development potential, as well as the mineral deposits in its polar regions. It has a high population and sufficient natural resources to be a reasonable trade partner, so whilst it does not stand out in the subsector, it is a strong world in its own right. Throughout its history Kikkedian has put a special emphasis on knowledge and learning, and being a scientist, teacher, or other academic is a prestigious role to play in society. On modern Kiikkedia academics working for the betterment of society pay lower taxes and are accorded some other small privileges. This has caused Kiikkedia to have one of the sectors best public health, science and teaching systems.

## Government

A civil service government administrates the planet. The large population means that the governmental task is complex, and positions within the various agencies are awarded on merit only. This results in an unusually efficient and popular government. The government is overseen by a Council of Executives from the various agencies, with all decisions arrived at by that council's vote. The council maintains good relations with the Imperium. There are many other councils within the government that deal with day-to-day events.

## Law

Kiikkedia is a Law Level A world. Possession of weapons by civilians is prohibited unless necessitated by their employment. Law Enforcement officers are armed, and the small planetary army is deployable in emergencies. There is also a strong body of environmental and industrial legislation that is strictly enforced, forcing the planetary industries to adopt safe and clean working practices.

## Population

The population of Kiikkedia lives in large surface and underwater arcologies. Almost half of the population lives in the huge city of Kiiked located near the equatorial starport, both on land and underwater. The remained live in large cities dotted around the world, and many smaller settlements and travelling houseboat fleets.

## The Starport

Kiikkedia has an extensive orbital and ground starport facility, with 75% of all operations taking place in the Kiikkedia Orbital Starport. The KOS is shared with the local system defense squadron so sees an extensive number of military personnel, though the majority population of the highport is civilian. Kiikedia Downport is located on the equator.

## **NEW KURDISTAN**

B140424-A 703 F7 V A9 D

**Public Starport Facilities:** Class B

**Size:** 2100km (0.63g)

**Atmosphere:** Thin, Tainted

**Hydrosphere:** <1% surface liquid (saltwater)

**Population:** 70,000

**Government:** Captive Government (Military Rule)

**Law Level:** Moderate

**Industrial Tech Level:** Early Interstellar Community

## **REFEREE'S NOTES**

The following data will generally only be available to the Referee unless the characters take specific actions in an attempt to gather this information. It is up to the referee to determine how the characters might go about this and how much they will actually learn if successful.

## **The Planet**

Most of the planet of New Kurdistan is rocky, arid desert, lashed by harsh desert windstorms and baked by the unforgiving sun. There is geological activity on most of the world, though it is rarely extreme. The planet has a rotation of

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

29.225 standard hours, and an orbital period of 1232.023 standard days. Although it is a small planet it has an extremely dense planetary core giving a larger than normal gravity for its size.

## Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the planet is thinner than Terran standard, though not so thin that it requires assistance. As a result of a failed terraforming experiment to decrease the planet's temperature the atmosphere is tainted with pollutant gasses. These gasses cause a degeneration of lung tissue unless regular doses of a specialist medication called Chromazol are taken. The medicine is available for purchase from the starport and most local shops and traders. The average temperature at the equator is 65oC, and 32oC at the poles.

### Atmospheric Game Effects

- A Fortitude save must be made every week (or part thereof) or take 1 point of permanent Constitution damage.
- The DC for the save starts at 5 and increasing by 1 weekly. When a check is failed this reduces back to 1.

### Chromazol Game Effects

- Chromazol is a synthetic copy of a natural enzyme found in local wildlife. It can be synthesized in most laboratories.
- One dose of Chromazol in hyposhot form costs Cr50 from most stores (more expensive in the desert).
- Each dose will prevent any degeneration of the lungs for one week (a Fortitude save is not made for this week).
- While under the effects of Chromazol a PC has 2 points of temporary Constitution damage (reflecting a reduced lung efficiency). These lost points return at a rate of one per week after stopping doses of Chromazol.
- Natives have developed a resistance to the pollutants over time and make Fortitude saves monthly when medicines are unavailable (DC 5 + 1 per month). The natives usually use a herbal version made from animal blood. Ten doses can be made from one liter of blood.

## Biosphere

New Kurdistan is a harsh Desert World with a small but mature ecosystem. Hardy desert grasses and bushes grow in the rockier parts of the desert, particularly those parts shaded partly by mountainous areas. Canyons and valleys offer small 'green' areas where water is near the surface but they are a rare and treasured territory. Surface water covers less than 0.001% of the planet's surface, in rare oases. These are the site of permanent settlements (a rare thing in the desert) and are often fought over. Imperial irrigation programs allow a small amount of farmland around the starport to be used, though it is insufficient to feed the world's population. There is a small selection of native animal life in hunter-gather and predator niches, preying on the larger nomadic grazers. These are more common in mountain and canyon regions than the open desert.

Horses, though not native to the planet, were imported by the first settlers and have adapted to life on New Kurdistan.

## History

New Kurdistan was originally settled around 230 by members of several worlds' dominant warrior castes who brought with them their militaristic ways. Within a hundred years of the first settlers landing the different warrior clans had split and began low-level warfare amongst themselves. For a few hundred years the fighting between the tribes was limited to guerrilla action and the occasional terrorist acts (though terrorism is frowned upon by the normally honorable tribes folk). In 525 the uneasy peace came to an end when the Sand Wolf tribe began an aggressive sweep of the desert regions near the starport town of Al-Karit, massacring members of other more peaceful tribes and ransacking the mining facilities that prepare the valuable minerals mined in the desert for export. This caused the subsector Duke to step in with Imperial troops and begin a peace enforcement mission centered on the starport region. Laws were set in place limiting the availability of military weapons on the planet and over the period of a decade peace returned to most of New Kurdistan, though skirmishes between clans still occur in the deep desert.

The Imperial military remain in control of the starport and a 400km wide belt around the equator, holding it under military rule. The military rule is quite aggressive in its day-to-day enforcement, the actions of the 'traitor tribes' years ago causing a good deal of concern for the Naval Commander. Security at the starport is enforced strongly to prevent weapons being imported to the planet and sparking off more hostilities. Military patrols of the Imperial Protectorate Zone (the locals call it just "the Zone") and the desert around it are regular, but the Imperial military rarely ventures deep into the desert, as they cannot hope to match the New Kurdistani tribes' expertise in desert warfare.

The Imperium began a program of industrialization of the planet ten years ago, artificially increasing the manufacturing Tech Level, in an attempt to increase the mining and manufacturing corporation presence on the planet. The planet's location means this is not as successful as was hoped.



# ***OBJECTS OF THE MIND***

The current Naval Commander and planetary governor, Admiral Aiki Illekashi, is trying to smooth relations between the locals and set down the level of direct Imperial military control in planetary affairs. He is wary, however, of the deep desert tribes and the suspected Psionics Institute attempting further hostilities against the Imperial rule. The Imperial Forces garrisoning the planet are housed in sealed-environment barracks outside of Al-Karit. They have a few shuttles and a small Imperial Navy high-speed courier starship, but no Naval Base facilities.

## **Government**

The ultimate authority on planetary matters resides with a division of the local Office of Naval Command. The planet's administrative bureaucracy is housed in Al-Karit and is made up of both Naval and Imperial administrative personnel and locally employed civilians. The Naval Commander, advised by the Tribal Council, carries out executive decision-making. The Tribal Council is made up of the heads of all the tribes in a very precise and tradition tier system decided by the influence and size of the tribe. Admiral Illekashi created the Tribal Council as a way of attempting to improve relations with the tribesmen.

All tribal chiefs are automatically members of the Tribal Council. The Tribal Council has a permanent headquarters near the capital city, and from there advises the Naval Commander on planetary policy. Very few tribes accept Imperial military rule on their world, so few chiefs take the Tribal Council seriously. For most tribes being nominated as the chief's representative on the council is considered a slight. Some tribes remain 'at war' with the Imperial forces and send no representative. Some tribes accept the inevitable that the Imperium is here to stay and send strong people to the Council. The Tribal Council is a hotbed of intrigue and conflict amongst the New Kurdistanis.

## **Law**

As a militarily governed world New Kurdistan has quite strong laws. Licensed locals may own handguns and rifles, though a permit is required to carry weapons within the city unless they are being transported in locked strongboxes (these permits are very difficult to get). The Imperial Army may stop and demand identification from anyone undertaking suspicious activity but must have permission from an officer of O4 or above to enter private houses and businesses. Admiral Illekashi believes in a moderate stance towards the locals and encourages the army to act as police, more than an occupying military force. That said, he will not show weakness, and allows the military to do what is necessary to keep order.

## **Population**

The population code of 4 refers to the inhabitants of the only city on the planet, Al-Karit. Most of New Kurdistan's population consists of descendants of the settlers who live nomadically, and who are not included in the original Imperial occupation census. It is estimated that almost 100,000 people live in the desert in a nomadic tribal hunter/gatherer/herder lifestyle. There are perhaps 15,000 temporary inhabitants involved in mining.

**Al-Karit and Starport:** The Capital city is located on the equator on the shores of the biggest oasis on the planet (thirty-two kilometers long and eleven kilometers wide) – the Inland Sea. It is a melding of old and new styles of architecture. The city is policed by the Imperial Army and is home to many of the support industries you would expect in a Naval dominated system, as well as many city dwelling New Kurdistanis, as well as a small but growing criminal underworld. Its title as a city is almost an overstatement as it is only home to 70,000 permanent residents.

The starport is located on the opposite bank of the Inland Sea to the capital city. The starport is a Class B facility that also contains the planetside parts of the system defense base. In a geosynchronous orbit above the New Kurdistan Downport is the imaginatively named New Kurdistan Highport. This contains a small shipyard and a space station. Most of New Kurdistan's traffic is stopover Jump-2 traffic en-route to Gash of Shangri La from the surrounding worlds or bulk carriers transporting ore from the mines in the desert to industrial worlds.

**Tribal Culture:** New Kurdistan has an extensive tribal culture built around honor, hardship and family, often described as a mix of Terran Middle East, Indian and Native American cultures that has changed and evolved over hundreds of years. The hard life on a desert world breeds a pragmatic and tough approach to life where wastrels and the weak do not prosper. The high technology of the starport and capital means that life there is much more like normal city life, but out amongst the desert nomads life is much harder.

Children born into a tribe are raised by a group of elder tribesmen and women (called the Guide Family) who protect the children, nurture them and teach them the skills needed to survive in the desert. The children retain a close relationship with their birth parents, who teach them additional skills related to their own employment within the tribe, but ultimate responsibility for the child falls upon the Guide Family. When a child reaches fourteen years of age he then chooses an occupation to pursue, and travels and lives with a member of the occupation until his eighteenth year, learning the needed

# ***OBJECTS OF THE MIND***

skills. At eighteen the child becomes an adult, but usually continues to live and work with his teacher for another two years to gain more experience. Children who require more formal education or facilities unavailable to the tribe, such as those going into medicine or technical areas, are educated at universities from eighteen onwards after learning from their teacher until then. The tribes tend to discourage this a little as increasingly more young adults choose to remain in the cities or take to the stars instead of returning to the limited tribal life.

An adult in the tribe carries out his chosen role for the good of the tribe. The tribes use barter economy both internally and when dealing with other tribes. An adult also has a close relationship with his birth family, the Guide Family and his teachers. This means the tribes tend to be very close and will pull together to help each other in times of need. Someone who makes an enemy of a New Kurdistanian tribesman or woman will have made an enemy of his or her tribe. The tribes take particular dislike to members who do not pull their weight, or live off of other's generosity. This is not to say that the New Kurdistanians are an ungenerous people, in fact they will give their last drop of water to a thirsty friend, but that if an individual does not contribute to the tribe, then that individual will not be supported by the tribe. Children contribute in their future, so are raised with all generosity and care, but the old are expected to do their share, retire to a monastery, or to undertake the Final Walk into the desert to find the afterlife.

Although the desert nomads do not follow an organized religion, they are deeply spiritual. They believe that the desert is a proving ground to show that you are worthy of a place in the afterlife (a belief that arose from their warrior ancestor's philosophy of earning a place in the afterlife in combat). They typically worship no gods, and observe no religious services or holidays, but they live their lives constantly striving to earn a place in the afterlife. Some still believe that a death in battle will earn a place in the afterlife, if the cause was worthy enough.

The hunters and scouts of a tribe occupy the most prestigious roles. Competition between children to learn these jobs is fierce and only the best will be chosen. This invariably means that the hunters and scouts of the desert tribes make some of the best desert warriors in the Imperium. The Imperial Army has a small Desert Warfare Instructors school on New Kurdistan where the best Army and Marine commandos come to learn desert warfare from the native warriors, before leaving to teach at other desert warfare schools throughout the Imperium. Second in prestige is the Guide Family, who shape the future members of the tribe. The tribal warriors, who protect the tribe and wage war if needed, are next in the scale of honor. Following them are those whose work keeps the tribe alive - farmers, herdsman, craftsmen and doctors. Thieves and wastrels have no honor or place in the tribe and are often banished or sent on their Final Walk early, and ill equipped.

Meetings between tribes are rare due to the small size of the tribes. When tribes meet they hold a week-long party and council where they compete in friendly games and arrange marriages and trades. People who wish to learn an occupation but have no teachers in their own tribe may be fostered to another tribe, thus cementing relations between them. The tribe who offers the most hospitality at these meetings earns many honors. Rarely, more than two tribes meet, causing truly huge celebrations and councils.

Conflict between tribes is strictly regulated by honor. Enemy tribes will attack one another whenever they are close but there are strict rules. The Group Family and children of a tribe are never targeted in raids or combat. Likewise, water is never fouled. Most tribes try to avoid killing their opponents if possible and great ritual has arisen around capture and ransom when it can be done. A tribesman will kill his opponent without hesitation if necessary. Stealth and ambushes are common in warfare, but poison or other such cowardly ways of killing are dishonorable and used only by the lowest of individuals. Tribes who break these rules are often hunted and destroyed, and their children taken to be raised by the wronged tribe. Conflict, however, is rare as the distances are so great that it is often too costly to fight.

The tribes react in different ways to non-natives. Those that have semi-regular contact with outsiders tend to be tolerant, though untrusting. Tribes that live in the deeper deserts often hate offworlders and many will kill them at only slight provocation. Many tribes dislike miners moving into their migration routes, but only the most extreme will kill them. Most tribes dislike the Imperial military presence; so do not react well to people openly displaying affiliation to the Imperium, and it is reasonably common for the most hard-line tribes to kill Imperial representatives.

### ***PSIONICS ON NEW KURDISTAN***

As a member of the Imperium, especially one under military rule, Psionics are illegal on the planet. New Kurdistan has an almost unique problem in this area, though – for reasons unknown the planet produces almost ten times the number of psionically talented children as another planet of its size. One of the most common sticking points between the Imperium and the tribes is that the tribes see these as gifts that should be developed for the good of the tribe and the planet. Most tribes have one or two people who have been trained in psionics by their teachers. The teachers will only train the strongest pupils, though they offer aid in developing talents to other members of the tribe.

This tolerant environment has bred an unusual Psionics Institute on the planet. Every time a child turns ten a psion in the tribe, if one exists, will test a child for strength. Any child that shows some psionic strength at this young age (a very rare number) will be offered a chance to travel to the Institute and ask to be taught there. If they accept one of the tribal scouts will travel to the Mountains of Thought and wait there until a member of the Institute comes to test the child. Very few make it to the mountains without turning back or perishing, as the desert surrounding the mountains is some of the harshest in the Imperium. The Institute accepts even fewer. Those that are accepted are taken to a secret monastery to learn the secrets of the mind. The Institute teaches a child skills in desert survival, combat (both armed and unarmed) and the inner secrets of the mind. They also learn extensive histories of the tribes and psychology.

Members of the Institute, called the Hakar'i, 'The Wise', wander among the tribes, and chiefs and tribesmen alike value their counsel. No Institute member has ever been captured alive by the Imperium, though they would dearly like to find them. Only members of the Institute are allowed to know the location of the monastery, though it is rumored that a whole tribe serves them directly and the chief and scouts of that tribe know where they can be found. Recently the Institute has taken more interest in the Imperial Naval Government and whispers amongst the tribes say that the Institute is planning to throw off Imperial rule.

# EPIC ADVENTURE CHECKLIST



## ACT 1

Scene	Type	Complete	Scene Name
1	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Byron Estate
2	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Walters' Apartment
3	Opt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Just the Facts, Ma'am
4	Key	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Watering Hole
5	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	A Rat in a Hole
6	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brother and Sister
7	Opt	<input type="checkbox"/>	A Friendly Chat
8	Key	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Wiltshire Hotel

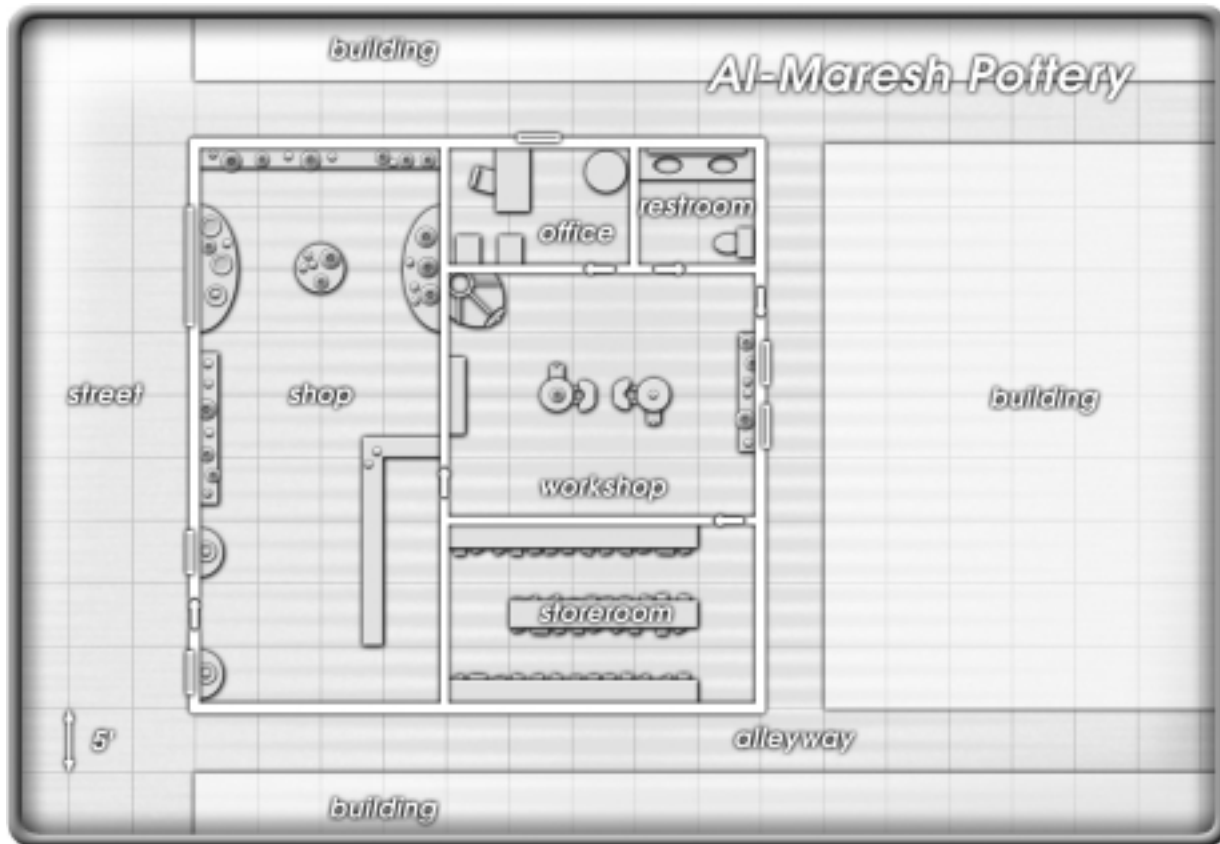
## ACT 2

Scene	Type	Complete	Scene Name
1	Opt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stand and Deliver!
2	Opt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep Your Enemies Closer
3	Opt	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Journey Uneventful

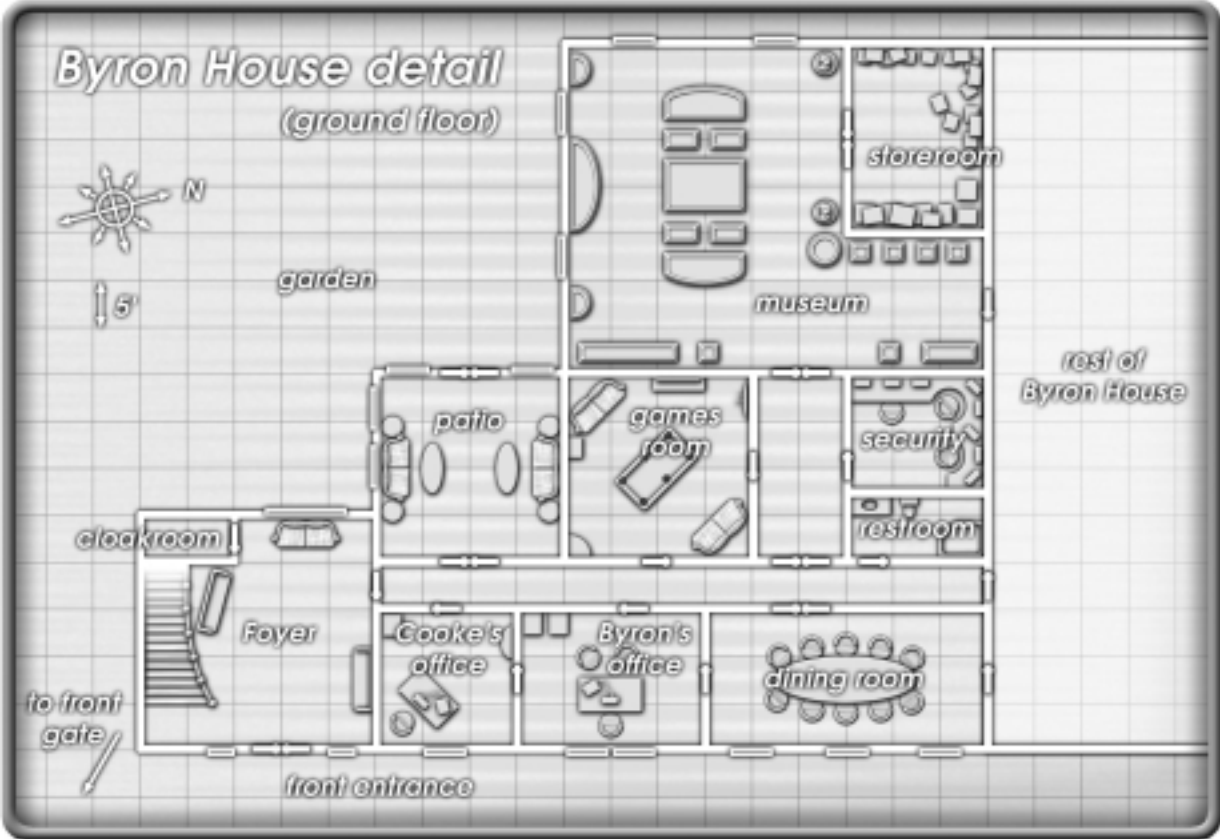
## ACT 3

Scene	Type	Complete	Scene Name
1	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tracking Down the Pottery
2	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hitting the Streets
3	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Al-Maresh Pottery
4	Opt	<input type="checkbox"/>	You Know Too Much
5	Key	<input type="checkbox"/>	Into the Desert
6	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chasing Ghosts
7	Key	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Valley of Light

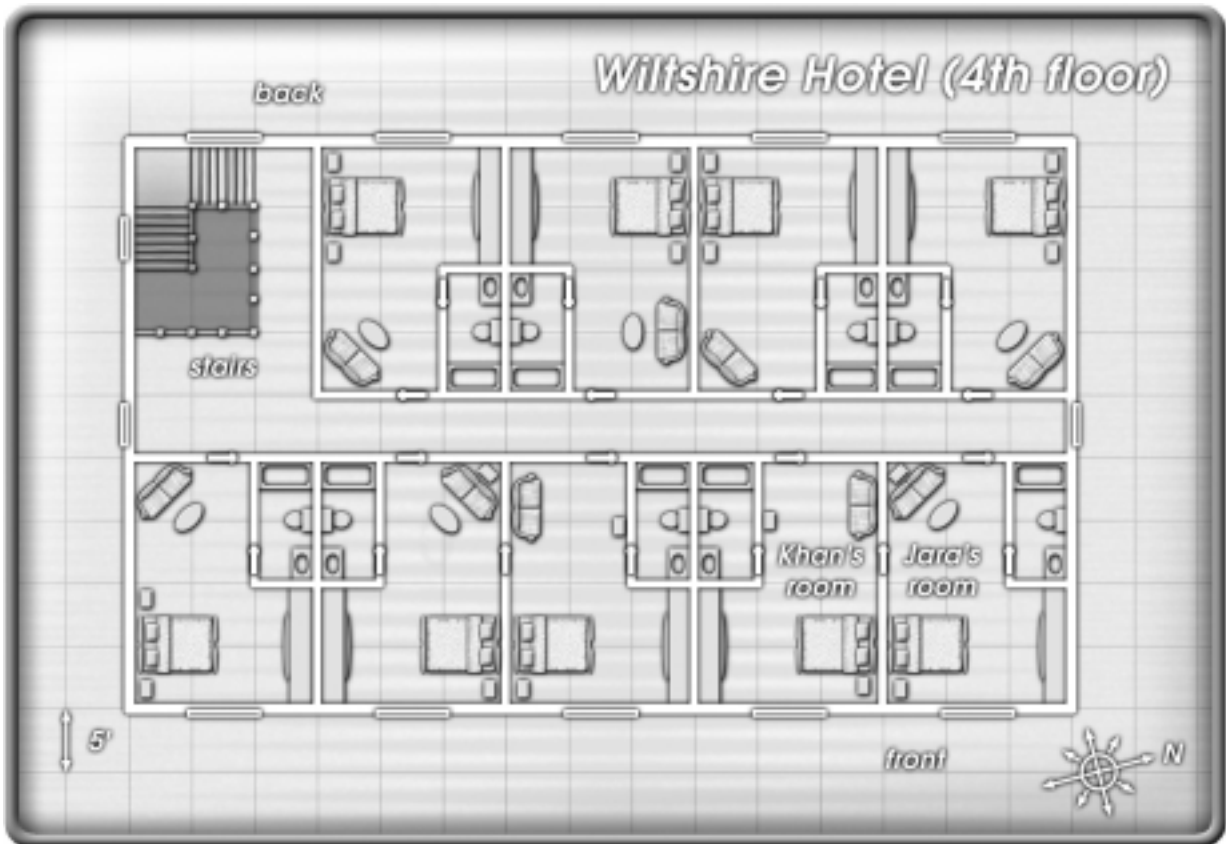
# APPENDIX: MAPS



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND



# APPENDIX: THE PSIONICIST CLASS

The psionicist was originally included in the Psionics chapter of the Traveller's Handbook as an additional, "special" class. However, space and other considerations necessitated its removal, leaving those interested in developing powerful psi characters with certain difficulties. The class will be published in the T20 Player's Book, but we include this "playtest" version here.

## **PSIONICIST**

### *Prestige Class*

Many Psionicists belong to another career or character class and leave perfectly normal lives; psionics are merely a part of such a life. Others study psi phenomena and may or may not possess actual abilities. These are Academics for the most part. The Psionicist is someone for whom the main focus in life is the use and development of psionic skills. They will make their living any way they can while searching for insight into the nature of their powers and new sources of teaching. The Psionicist may hold down a steady job or wander randomly throughout known space; each is very different.

The dedicated Psionicist has certain advantages over those whose powers are merely one facet of their life. The main advantage is the fact that the various spheres of influence are developed as class skills rather than cross-class skills, allowing more rapid progression. Additionally, a psionicist gains access to new areas of ability as his or her knowledge grows. However, many psionicists do still multiclass, as the events of their lives result in picking up other skills.

**Characteristics:** Some Psionicists are pragmatic in outlook, some mystical. The thing they all have in common is that psi powers are the focal point of their very being. Most are individualists yet highly loyal to those who have taught them or shown them kindness. A craving to learn more about their powers and to develop them to the utmost is common to most Psionicists.

**Background:** A Psionicist may come from any background at all. Psi abilities manifest according to no known genetic or social criteria, so a psi can be literally anyone.

**Adventuring:** Psionicists can be trouble magnets, since psi use is outlawed in the Imperium. However, their unique skills can be an immense asset to any adventuring party. Psionicists often have secondary skills that allow them to make a decent living as they search for new teachers and knowledge. These skills may be almost anything, but usually include Streetwise and Interpersonal skills due to the covert nature of the psi community. These secondary skills and contacts can be of great use to a party of adventurers, and of course the search for new knowledge can lead to fresh adventures for the Psionicist and his/her companions.

## **GAME RULE INFORMATION**

**Enlistment Requirements:** Special. To enter the psionicist class, an individual must have completed training with an institute or "psionic master". Characters with a low (but above zero) psi strength score can enter the class, but will never amount to much.

**Multiclass Restrictions:** A psionicist may multiclass, but may not gain levels in any other class if her psionicist level is equal to or half less than her character level. I.e. a level 6 character that is a level 3 psionicist could gain her 7th level in psionicist or another class. A level 3 character that has only 1 psionicist level **MUST** take the new level in psionicist.

**Stamina:** 1d6 + Con modifier per level

**Leaving the Psionicist Class:** Psionicism is not a job but a way of being. Once committed to it, an individual is unlikely to "leave". However, some do. A character that abandons his studies keeps all his abilities, including the maximum limits on his sphere of influence ranks as if they were class skills. However, he is no longer a psionicist and cannot re-enter the class except in highly unusual circumstances. Such a character can continue to develop his psi skill levels as if they were cross-class skills (if he has not renounced his calling and ceased to use his skills) so long as they are not already higher than the cross-class limit of  $(\text{level}+3)/2$ . If this is the case, they remain at this high level but cannot be increased.

If a character chooses to violate the Multiclassing restrictions (see above) and gains levels in a different class, he ceases to be a psionicist, since he can no longer maintain the focus and dedication required. Levels already possessed at the time the character joins the psionicist class do not cause this, of course, but characters dedicating themselves to the pursuit of psionic skills are pledging themselves to a difficult way of life, and should be aware that their new calling will eat up their next few levels at least.

Characters thus do not muster out of the psionicist service in the manner of other classes, but they do still gain mustering-out benefits at the end of prior history in the same manner as other characters. This represents items and finances gained along the way, and in the possession of the character at this turning point of the life of the character, when he or she becomes a Traveller.



# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## THE PSIONICIST

	Base Attack Bonus	Base Fort Bonus	Base Reflex Bonus	Base Will Bonus	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Starting Feats
2nd	+0	+0	+0	+3	
3rd	+0	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Feat
4th	+1	+1	+1	+4	
5th	+1	+1	+1	+4	New Sphere of Influence
6th	+1	+2	+2	+5	
7th	+1	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat
8th	+2	+2	+2	+6	
9th	+2	+3	+3	+6	New Sphere of Influence
10th	+2	+3	+3	+7	
11th	+2	+3	+3	+7	Bonus Feat
12th	+3	+4	+4	+8	
13th	+3	+4	+4	+8	New Sphere of Influence
14th	+3	+4	+4	+9	
15th	+3	+5	+5	+9	Bonus Feat
16th	+4	+5	+5	+10	
17th	+4	+5	+5	+10	New Sphere of Influence
18th	+4	+6	+6	+11	
19th	+4	+6	+6	+11	Bonus Feat
20th	+5	+6	+6	+12	

## PSIONIC SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Telepathy
Clairvoyance
Telekinesis
Awareness
Teleportation

Initially a Psionicist will only have the abilities gained from his or her training, but as a result of the devoted pursuit of greater power and knowledge, he or she will eventually be able to access others. Once a Psionicist is able to work with a sphere, they must begin developing their skill in use it. Each sphere is developed as if it were a separate class skill for the Psionicist.

A Psionicist's skill rank with a Sphere of Influence dictates which Psionic Talents they are able to use. Each Talent lists the Sphere of Influence that must be available to the Psionicist, along with a minimum skill rank in the Sphere that must be possessed before it may be employed. Of course the Psionicist must also have sufficient Psi strength with which to power the Talent as well before using it.

## CLASS SKILLS

Class Skill	Key Ability	Class Skill	Key Ability
Administration	Int	Appraise	Int
Communications	Edu	Computer	Edu
Craft	Int	Driving	Dex
Electronics	Edu	Engineering	Edu
Gravitics	Dex	Knowledge	Edu
Legal	Edu	Mechanical	Dex
Medical	Edu	Navigation	Edu
Perform	Cha	Profession	Wis

**Skill Points per Level:** 3 + Int modifier

# OBJECTS OF THE MIND

## CLASS FEATURES

*Psionic Talents are found in The Travellers handbook, and work exactly as described there.*

All of the following are class features of the Psionicist:

**Starting Feats:** The Psionicist begins play with the following feats:

Armor Proficiency (Light)

**Bonus Feats:** At 16th level and 20th level the Psionicist gains a bonus feat. These feats may be chosen from the list below. If the character already has all of the listed feats, they may select any other feat that they are qualified for.

Dodge	Geological Survey	Hacker	Instruction
Gearhead	Legal Eagle	Makeup Artist/Costumer	Weapon/Marksman
Negotiator	Steward	Vehicle	

## PRIOR HISTORY

*Psionicist -Prestige Class*

**Continued Employment:** Automatic

### Ranks

There are no ranks in the Psionic service.

### Earned Benefits

*Cash Benefits*

1	Cr10000
2	Cr10000
3	Cr10000
4	Cr20000
5	Cr50000
6	Cr70000
7	Cr90000

## DUTY ASSIGNMENT

1d20	Assignment	Survival	XP
		DC	Bonus
1-4	Training	10	auto
5-10	Displaced	14	10
11-14	In-Hiding	16	6
15-17	On the Run	18	8
18-19	Recruiting	10	12
20	Teaching	12	16
	Ability Modifier	Wis	None

## SURVIVAL MISHAPS

1d6 *Mishap*

1	No further action.
2	Deported and banned from world.
3	Tarred and Feathered. -1 to Charisma. Deported and banned from world.
4	Imprisoned for 4 years. Deported and banned from world.
5	Lynched, beaten, and left for dead. Lose 1d6-3 points from Cha and Con. Deported and banned from world.
6	Lobotomized. Lose all Psi abilities and rating, and 1d6-3 points from Int. Deported and banned from world.

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