

# CEPHEUS JOURNAL

Issue #004



In this issue:

Altair Subsector

40 Eridani

Archbishops' Gambit

Escape from Qasim's Teeth

And More...

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# From The Editors

Welcome to another issue of Cepheus Journal, the thickest yet at a little over 52 pages - the traditionalist in me still insisting on counting everything in groups of four as if we were producing a physical magazine. Since issue #003 was released you've downloaded more than 400 copies of it, and we hope you'll enjoy this number as much.

Cepheus Engine started out with its feet very firmly planted in SF roleplaying, but as time has gone on it has spread out about as far as it can go. This has happened, I think, because of the voracious interests of a typical RPG fan, particularly ones who've been around since the original bloom of table-top roleplaying games. This is partly due to a quest for novelty within the hobby itself - different genres help keep things fresh - but it's more because there's a host of outside interests that are being brought to bear on the hobby. No-one shares them all, but every pair of gamers has a Venn diagram of obscure reading that overlaps somewhere, whether it's Elizabethan sorcery and spycraft or the Bronze Age Fertile Crescent or the history of the Space Age.

For those of you looking to continue in CE's original lane, Randy McDonald continues his exploration of nearby space with 40 Eridani, a star very famous in one particular fandom but that has also been used in many other places. The prolific Neil Lucock has supplied a short adventure, "Escape from Qasim's Teeth" , for use with a new SF setting that's getting top reviews, Zozer Games' Godstar. I do mean prolific, too: look for a couple more entries from Neil in this issue.

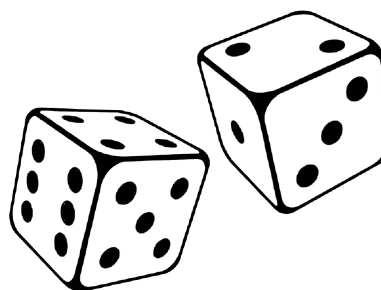
For modern gamers, this issue has a look at a PLA Squad by Ewan Spence, while historical gamers can travel back to 18th

century England and engage in a little cross-Channel smuggling. Alternatively, they could turn north to the North Sea and back several more centuries with The Archbishop's Gambit by our own P-O Bergstedt. Both provide a little fodder for fantasy games too, if one is willing to file off the serial numbers.

We're aiming to keep Cepheus Journal coming out regularly, but understand that you may feel like checking in between issue. To that end, CJ has a group on Facebook as well as FB alternative MeWe where you're all welcome to hang out.

Now on with the show!

Paul Drye



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# Ship Damage

by Neil Lucock

Julie rolled her dice where everyone could see them. She checked the damage charts.

"Not looking good, missiles about to hit! The ship shakes from a huge impact, then twice again. You feel it through the floor and your seats. The weapons control shows multiple red lights. Environmental control shows you are losing pressure amidships. What do you do?"

"Continue the attack, we're still fighting." Scott answered. He was the captain, so the decision was his. "Fire all remaining weaponry!"

"Roll your dice for the laser turrets."

Isabella picked up the two D6s and rolled them four times.

Julie checked her charts again. "Well done. Four hits."

"That's all our laser turrets, what about the upper particle turret?" Isabella asked.

"Your upper turret is not responding at all."

"What did we do with the lasers?" Asked Scott.

"Sophie, make me a Comms roll, you get a +2 modifier."

Sophie rolled. "Wow, a 12, with the plus 2, that's 14"

"You check your displays. You can tell that they have lost their missile bay, have damaged sensors and have lost four triple laser turrets. They have changed course and gone to full thrust and are trying to get away."

"Let them go. Sophie, call the other ships, tell them to break off. What damage did they do, Julie?"

"Two Hull hits, one Structure and two Turret hits, taking out your particle weapon, and one crew casualty."

"OK, the NPC in the turret buys it, we got away with it." Scott smiled. "Invincible in name, unbeatable in combat, this ship rocks! Head for home."

Captain Scott Velasquez watched the screen as the Destroyer retreated. "Keep an eye on it, I want it tracked until it jumps out. Alert me immediately if it turns."

"Acknowledged, Captain, continue to track Hostile Zero-One." Sophie Klimov on sensors replied.

"Still no reply from the upper turret. Engineering say the deck above them is depressurised. The turret is directly above Deck Two." Isabella Montrouge said.

"Message from the Indomitable, Captain. They have lost all power and request rescue. Their own ship's boat has been destroyed, otherwise no casualties. Do you want me to send our boat?" Sophie asked.

"Do it. Tell them to head directly to port, rather than returning here. Anything from Integrity?"

"Integrity has major casualties but is otherwise operable. Shuttle pilot Sargent O'Neill is acting as Captain. They are heading to the Starport, they will get there before us."

"Thank you Sophie. Set a course for port, stand down from General Quarters. I'm going to Engineering, let Julie know."

"I have a camera drone out." Engineer Julie Lafarge continued to watch the screen in front of her as she operated the controls. "There, look." she moved to one side.

Scott Velasquez looked over her shoulder. They were both in pressure suits and although the face screens were good, he couldn't make out the turret. "I can't see it. Is it in shadow?"

"No, Captain. It's not there."

"Who was in there?"


"New recruit, David Meguro, new out of training. He's only been with us two days."

Velasquez's heart sank.

"He joined us to be with his girlfriend, Fumi Tamura, our shuttle pilot." Julie continued. "Most of the turret is gone, there's a huge hole in the roof of Deck Two, which is why it's depressurised. I can't account for Lieutenant Kimura. I have a search party looking for her on Deck Two..."

**Table: Space Combat Hit Location**

2D6	External Hit (Vessel)	Internal Hit (Vessel)
2	Hull	Structure
3	Sensors	Power Plant
4	M-Drive	J-Drive
5	Turret	Bay
6	Hull	Structure
7	Armor	Crew
8	Hull	Structure
9	Fuel	Shield
10	M-Drive	J-Drive
11	Sensors	Power Plant
12	Hull	Bridge



4 out of 12 results on the external damage table are Hull, three on the Internal Damage table are Structure. Most people look on Hull as a free hit, in that it has no effect on the operation of the ship in a fight. There's a sigh of relief when the dice gives a Hull result, you haven't lost anything important, like a turret. There's also a tendency to kill NPCs on a Crew casualties result, rather than player-characters. While this might be satisfactory from a dramatic and practical point of view, it still has consequences.

What does your hull do? Once combat is over, if your players have survived, those free hits they took won't look so attractive. Hull includes all the equipment for life support. Once you stand down from General Quarters, if the ship is in vacuum, you can't take your space suit off.

### Holes

Before you repressurise, you need to assess the damage and seal any holes. Most hulls

have a layer of sealant which deals with small holes, up to a centimetre in size. Larger holes will need to be capped.

The assessment takes time. Sometimes holes may be behind pipework or machinery. It's useful to go outside and look for damage and weld a panel over the hole. Steel internal wall panels are 2m x 1M (so you can get them out of an airlock). You can unbolt the panels and use them to patch the hole from the outside. You seal the gaps with vacuum-setting sealant.

Once you have sealed all your holes, you test it before repressurising. A small smoke charge is set off. If there's a hole, it shows you where it is escaping. Another way is to allow slightly repressurise and test for a pressure drop after 15 minutes.

Holes in the hull have other consequences. If you patch them, they are will hold the air in until you can get a proper repair done. You are no longer streamlined for the purposes of Gas Giant skimming or atmospheric reentry. If you have to land on a planet, you treat a streamlined ship as a Standard hull, you come in slowly and carefully, otherwise the patch is going to come loose. Hull damage may also affect airlocks, landing legs and aerodynamic control surfaces.

### Life Support systems

Damage to the hull includes the air reservoirs and air circulatory systems. Military ships have distributed air systems, lots of smaller ones rather than one big one. It may be that one of the reservoirs has been hit. One area of the hull can no longer be pressurised. This might include the galley and staterooms, so the crew may have to rescue the food supplies and share the remaining staterooms, or sleep on the floor in corridors.

The ships water systems can also be affected. This might include the showers, drinking water and sewage systems. If all the toilets are destroyed, you have a health problem depending on how long it takes to get to a port or a workshop. If

water is not recycled, you're also going to run out of drinking water. Note that running out of water is a very serious problem. The Cepheus Engine rules for Starvation and Dehydration mean that your crew may survive the battle but die of dehydration before they get to port.

Damage to the water systems includes the humidity controls. You may have water pooling under hot machinery, where it turns to steam. If the steam finds its way to cooler areas and condenses, the water droplets may get into electrical systems and cause unreliability.

Do your ships print food? It's effective to have a huge tank of food paste that is textured, flavoured, coloured and heated when you tell the galley what you want to eat. People can survive two or three weeks without food as long as they have drinking water. Unless the food storage has been destroyed, you ought to be able to eat the raw food paste.

### **Heat**

Starships need to control heat build-up. Getting rid of waste heat is a major problem when so many systems generate heat. Your hull may be designed to radiate heat. Perhaps those wings also have pipework to take heat from the fusion power plant or main weapons to heat sinks under the surface and radiate it to space. If your ship's internal temperature continues to rise, what can you do? Weapons like lasers generate a huge amount of heat. The engineer may be able to cannibalise parts of the weapons systems to help get rid of unwanted heat, but will need authorisation from the captain. You may have to shut down the power plant for an hour to give the hull a chance to lose a few degrees.

### **Gravity**

Grav plates may have failed, so certain places do not have gravity. This is not really a problem, it's more of a tripping hazard. If all gravity fails, make a END roll after every 3 days. If you make your roll, you only lose 1 END point, failure means you

lose two points. When you return to normal gravity, you may feel weak until your body becomes accustomed to it. Roll under END each hour (DM of +2 if the player has done anything except rest). Failure means all skill rolls are at -2DM. After 3 days, roll on END. Success means you have returned to normal. If you fail, roll each day with -1 DM for each attempt (so after 2 days you get a -2 DM to your roll).

### **Crew casualties**

Crew can either be injured or killed during a battle.

Injured crew will clearly need medical attention. They may be either Wounded or seriously Wounded (and possibly unconscious). Some may need surgery to allow them to heal. Irradiated characters will need anti-radiation treatments.

If half your crew is in their beds, the others may be fully occupied in caring for them. Depending on the extent of their injuries, they may not be able to do their duties, but may be able to offer advice. Of course, you might put casualties in a Low Berth (or an Emergency Low Berth) if you have one.

Your best option might be to head for the nearest starport and hospital.

Depending on the size of the ship, crew casualties might mean some of your existing crew will have to be on permanent duty until you can get to a port.

Military ships can probably still operate effectively with up to 50% of the crew out of action and can still operate safely until they get to 33% crew. Civilian ships tend to operate with the minimum number of crew to operate it safely and meet safety regulations. Once the number of crew falls below 75%, all things take longer or risk becoming unsafe. If your Pilot has been on duty for the 3 days it takes you to get to port, are they going to be at their best?



## Stress (optional)

Being in a battle (or surviving an accident) can result in post traumatic stress. Your surviving crew may be constantly thinking about their lost friends, obsessing about whether they acted correctly, constantly thinking about what they should have done. Survivor's Guilt includes poor sleeping patterns, irritability, flashbacks to the incident and loss of motivation.

If you want to include these issues in your game, you can roll 2D6 to generate a Sanity (SAN) score. Characters with military experience roll 2D6 +2. After the battle is over, roll under SAN on 2D6, with a +1 DM for each additional stressful incident or personal injury. So, if you saw someone blown out of a hole in the hull, you get a +1DM. If you saw the enemy destroy a friendly ship, that's another +1.

If you get under your SAN, you can cope with the memories. If you fail, you are at -2 on all skill rolls for 2D6 days. You can then attempt another SAN roll. Pass this and you are back to normal. Fail it and you are at -2 on skill rolls for another 2D6 days, repeated until you pass the roll.

A Medic can add their skill level to the roll if they give treatment for at least one hour each day for the week before the player makes their roll.

If your 2D6 roll is 1+1, you pass your roll irrespective of cumulative DMs and gain 1D6 SAN. You have come out of the events with greater resilience. If your roll is 6+6, you lose 1D6 SAN and you have a permanent problem. This can be up to the referee, but might include flashbacks and freezing in stressful situations, phobias, aggression and irrational behaviour.

Note that important NPCs can also suffer from Post Traumatic Stress. If the NPC provides a vital skill such as Pilot, they might have to find a cure to be able to continue their adventures.

Who pays for civilian medical treatment? What happens when your NPC is broke and the hospital wants payment before they admit them? If they are unable to continue their duties on the ship, what

severance payment do they get? Do you just abandon an injured crewmember at the nearest starport or is there some form of insurance that will allow them to travel to where they wish to go? Abandoning an injured crewmember because they are a burden might make other NPCs decide to leave as well. You now have to recruit new NPCs and may have a bad reputation as a captain.

Dead crewmembers bring problems of their own. Do you carry body bags? Where are you going to put a body? Do you bury the body on a nearby moon, take it to the starport or nearest planet, or return it to their home world? Can you transport a body in a depressurised airlock? Before you do that, you want a doctor to sign a death certificate so no one can accuse you of murder. If you are carrying passengers and one is killed, you may have an emotional partner to manage as well as a broken ship. What is the process when the body can't be found, like in the case of our NPC who was in the particle accelerator turret?

Fatalities bring paperwork. You have to do a lot of paperwork and inform the authorities, whether Navy or civilian. They may well wish to investigate why the person died. You may have to attend an inquest or a court investigation. You will need to arrange their pay to be worked out and sent to their next-of-kin, as well as their possessions. You will be expected to send a message to their friends or family to express your condolences and inform them what happened. If the body is to return home, what are the regulations for carrying corpses to another world? The effect of the death on their friends in the crew must be considered. You then need to recruit and train a replacement.

For every fatality, an officer with Admin will have to do D6 x 2 hours of work. Roll 8+ (DMs +1 for each 4 year term served or recent experience). Every point above 8 reduces the time by 1 hour.



## Structure Damage

You get Structural Damage once your Hull is zero. Your ship is a mess, it's gone beyond a few holes here and there, it's now in danger of coming apart. Structural damage might look like these examples:

The Manoeuvre Drive is still attached to the floor in Engineering, but the floor is no longer attached to the hull.

One wing is only held on by the power feed to the thrusters.

The ship has broken its back, the main hull is no longer straight. There are creases in the skin of the ship.

The fuel tanks are intact, but are only held in place by a few bent structural supports.

Internal floors have come away from a pressure wall.

Grav plates are pulling the floor above then down.

If your ship has Structure Damage, your Engineer should assess the damage and make repairs to make it safe to move. For each Structure damage point taken, the Engineer must roll 10+ after 3 hours of 0-G work (modifiers for skills. The Engineer can use Leader skill to manage skilled crew to help). They can continue to work until they succeed in making the roll. Once completed, these temporary repairs allow the ship to manoeuvre at 0.1Gs.

Any attempt to manoeuvre at greater than 0.1 Gs, to enter or leave an atmosphere (including Gas Giant fuel skimming) will need a 2D6 dice roll every space combat turn. Roll Pilot (8+). Failure will add 2D6 further Structure Damage points (for ships under 1000 tons). If the Structure value goes below zero, you suddenly find yourself in space surrounded by a loose collection of large pieces of metal.

If the ship can still Jump, structure damage does not prevent it.

Structure damage is expensive to repair. You have three options;

**1.** Take it to a class A or B shipyard. It costs as much as a new hull to repair the

damage, as you have to take the ship apart and refit major components. At the end of it, the ship is safe and all structure points are repaired. Civilian ships can carry passengers, can get insurance and meet safety standards.

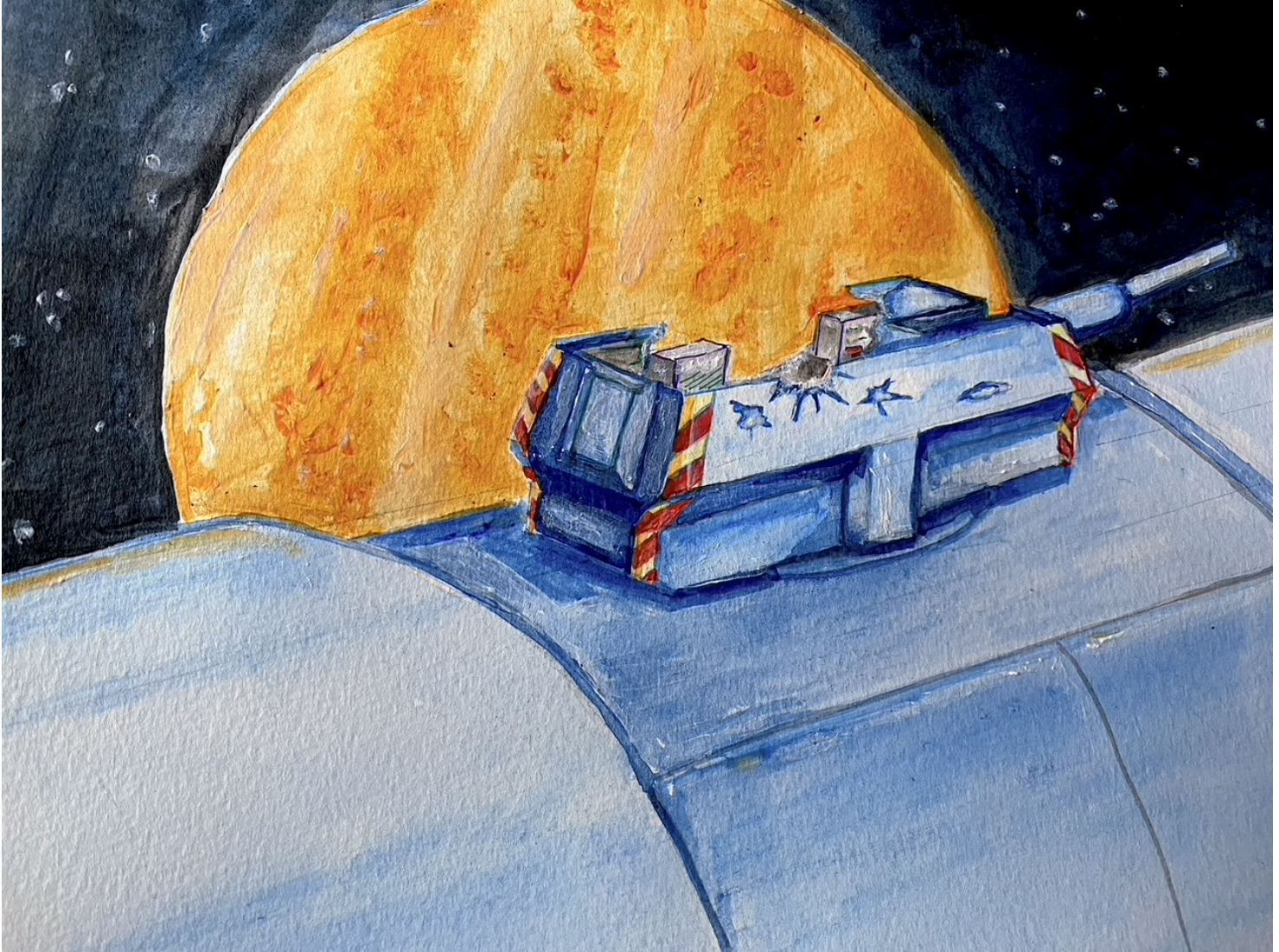
The Navy's own engineers will assess damage and decide whether a warship is worth repairing.

**2.** Repair it yourself. You'll need heavy lifting equipment, fusion welders and a supply of spare parts. You will also need the architect's plans for the ship. Each structure point takes D6 weeks to repair.

If you want the ship to be legal for carrying passengers and getting insurance (or even a safety certificate that allows it to dock at orbital ports), the work must be inspected by a trained engineer at a class A or B port. The inspection takes D6 +1 weeks per thousand tonnes of ship and costs 20,000 Cr per week. The ship's Engineer who made the repairs must roll 8+ (DMs, positive or negative, for Engineering Skill, leadership, correct equipment and parts.). Success means the work was good and the ship can carry passengers, can get insurance and meet safety standards. Failure means you got it wrong. As it often costs more to undo badly done repairs, start the process again and repair all the original Structure points.

**3.** If you can't afford repairs, you may be able to sell it for scrap or to someone who can afford the repairs, but you'll have to show you own it. Payment may take months as the scrapyards will have to contact the port of registry and give time for finance companies to respond. If your ship has damage that brings its value below the outstanding amount of the loan, your characters may end up without a ship and owing several million credits. Your next gaming session may be either "escape from the prison planet where they send debtors" or "there's a huge reward for you and D6 groups of adventurers are trying to claim it".







# PLA Heavy Armoured Infantry Squad

By Ewan Spence

The Modern War rulebook included a number of possible future war scenarios one of which included a Chinese invasion of Vietnam; this article gives the opposition to the People's Army of Vietnam rifle section from last month's issue.

The People's Liberation Army of the People's Republic of China and is the largest army in the world and as you can imagine has a diverse organization both at higher levels as well as at squad/platoon level depending on its operational requirements. The squad below details the heavy armoured infantry squad and future articles will explore the medium and light infantry squads.

The main battle tank of the PLA's Heavy Combined Arms Brigades is the Type 96 and along with the ZBD-04 Infantry Fighting Vehicle which carries the heavy armoured infantry squad presents a formidable force to any opposition.

The squad does not have an anti tank gunner attached but relies on the more than capable firepower of the ZBD-04 to deal with any enemy armour that they may encounter.

Section Role	Rank	Role Weaponry	Role
<b>Team 1</b>			
Squad Leader	Zhong shi	QBZ-95	Squad Leader
Machine Gunner	Lie bing	QBB-95	Gunner
Sharpshooter	Shang deng bing	QBU-88	Marksman
Rifleman	Lie bing	QBZ-95	Rifleman
<b>Team 2</b>			
Deputy Squad Leader	Xia shi	QBZ-95	Rifleman
Machine Gunner	Shang deng bing	QBB-95	Gunner
Rifleman	Lie bing	QBZ-95	Rifleman

QBZ-95 (5.8 x 42mm)									
Dmg	Range Band	Base Range	Auto	UR	Length (cm)	Req Str	Wgt (kg)	Mag Wgt (kg)	Rds
3D6	Medium	100	4	7+	75	6/7/8	3.3	0.6	30
Introduced in the mid 90s this bullpup configured assault rifle is standard issue to PLA mechanised units.									

QBB-95 (5.8 x 42mm)									
Dmg	Range Band	Base Range	Auto	UR	Length (cm)	Req Str	Wgt (kg)	Mag Wgt (kg)	Rds
3D6	Long	125	4	8+	84	5/6/7	3.9	1.3	75

This is the squad automatic weapon variant of the QBZ-95 and while it normally uses a 75 round drum magazine it can also use the 30 round magazine of the QBZ-95 if required.

QBU-88 (5.8 x 42mm)									
Dmg	Range Band	Base Range	Auto	UR	Length (cm)	Req Str	Wgt (kg)	Mag Wgt (kg)	Rds
3D6	Long	125	-	6+	92	5	4.1	0.3	10

Introduced in 1997 this is a bullpup designated marksman rifle. As it's designed for rough military use it has adjustable iron sights by default however it's generally equipped with telescopic sights.

ZBD-04 (Infantry Fighting Vehicle)							
Agility	-1	Speed	75	Range	500	Crew/Pass	3/7
Armour	29/25	Hull/Structure	11/11	Mass	24	Cargo	200
Swim	yes	Nav DM	-	ECM DM	+1	Fire Control	+1
Weapon	Location	Damage	Rate of Fire	Range Band	Ammunition		
100mm Cannon	Turret	9d6+2 AP2	1	Distant	30		
30mm Heavy Autocannon	Turret	7d6 SAP	1/6	Very Long	500		
7.62 GPMG	Turret	3d6+3 SAP	0/100	Long	2000		
4 x HJ-8 Anti-Tank Missiles	Two each side of turret	9d6 AP2	1	Very Distant			
Defences	The HJ-8 anti-tank missiles are not fitted as standard however when added give additional anti-tank capability to the ZBD-4's already formidable firepower.						
Smoke							

People's Liberation Army Other Ranks Rank Table

NATO Code	PLA Rank		Modern Warfare Rank	British Army Equivalent
OR9	Master Sergeant Class One	Yi ji jun shi zhang	6	Sergeant Major
OR8	Master Sergeant Class Two	Er ji jun shi zhang		
OR7	Master Sergeant Class Three	San ji jun shi zhang	5	Staff Sergeant
OR6	Master Sergeant Class Four	Si ji jun shi zhang	4	Sergeant
OR5	Sergeant 1st Class	Shang shi	4	
OR4	Sergeant	Zhong shi	3	Corporal
OR3	Corporal	Xia shi	2	Lance Corporal
OR2	Private 1st Class	Shang deng bing	1	Private
OR1	Private	Lie bing	0	Private





People's Liberation Army Officer Rank Table

NATO Code	PLA Rank		Modern Warfare Rank	British Army Equivalent
OF5	Colonel	Shang xiao	6	Colonel
OF4	Lieutenant Colonel	Zhong xiao	5	Lieutenant Colonel
OF3	Major	Shao xiao	4	Major
OF2	Captain	Shang wei	3	Captain
OF1	1st Lieutenant	Zhong wei	2	Lieutenant
OF1	2nd Lieutenant	Shao wei	1	2nd Lieutenant



# Altair Subsector

by Neil Lucock

The Altair Subsector is derived from, and is intended for use with, Stellagama Publishing's Near Stars and the Cepheus Engine 2D6 role playing systems.

Hex	Original name	New name	UWP	Notes
1106	Altair	L'Enfer	C9A08AA-9	Desert
1108	61 Cygni	Mares	A8998AA-12	Navy & Scout bases
1205	Herschel 5173	Morya	C99A876-11	Water world
1206	Sigma Draconis	Kyrenaika	XA9A300-6	
1309	Epsilon Indi	Megara	C577662-6	
1310	Ross 248	Pustinya	E6A0248-5	Desert
1406	Ross 775	Merida	X473321-5	
1508	EV Lacertae	Evora	E9A0100-10	Scientific site
1604	HSC1904	Kipos	AA98773-13	Agric, Navy base
1608	Gliese 892	Eendracht	E99A468-5	

Altair Subsector lies to Coreward and trailing of Earth. Most systems have orange type K stars, less bright than Sol, or type M Red Dwarfs, which are fairly low output stars. Worlds around Red Dwarf stars are often tidally locked, in that they do not revolve and one face constantly faces the star. In the centre of the bright side, it will be warmest, in the middle of the dark side it will be coldest, with the edges often giving the best option for habitation. L'Enfer is around the subsector's only Type A star, Altair, huge and much brighter than Sol.

The population are mostly Spanish and Russian speakers. The official languages of business and government are Spanish, Russian and Dutch

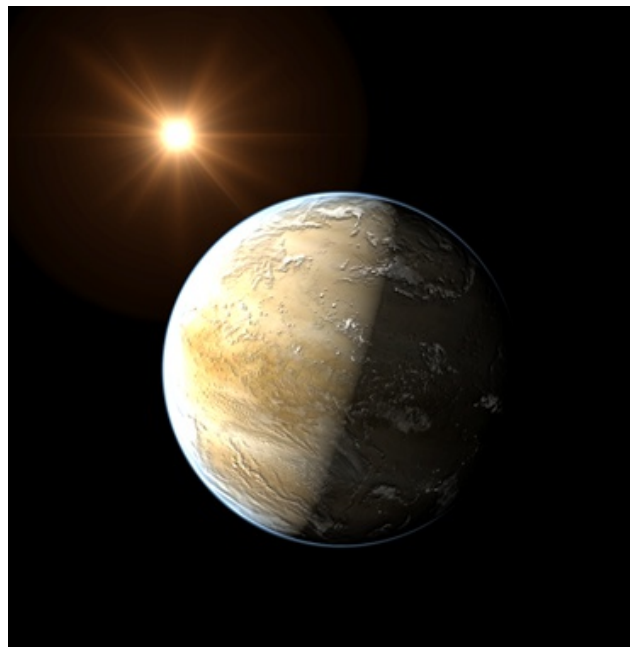
Altair Subsector has mainly lower technology worlds that have poor environments. There are many desert and ocean worlds and few that are attractive as colonies.

The OLA empire, based on Mares, is looking to expand, although nearby worlds have little value and those worth having are too strong. To Spinward are the worlds of Vega subsector, with Zhatva as the strongest power. To Rimward the worlds of Radina Subsector have a fleet on the borders waiting for an incursion. Trailing is the high

technology world of Kipos.

L'Enfer and Morya have a stable alliance against the Mares Empire and a friendly relations with Zhatva.

The following are the main worlds of the subsector:



## 1106 Altair L'Enfer TL 9

Altair is a very bright A Class star, there is also a large Gas Giant in system.

L'Enfer is too close to the star, brightside temperatures are hot enough to vaporise metals. The clouds of metals condense on the side away from the star where it

rains metals which are collected and exported. This is the basis of "L'Enfer's prosperity. L'Enfer has a C class starport and a great number of factories and habitats in orbit on the shaded side of the planet.

12 years ago the director of Altair Metal Exports (AME) seized power, suspending the constitution and imposing her will. Monocrat Matje Lybaert is supported by most citizens, who welcomed her campaign against corruption and law breaking and also her concerns about Mares. L'Enfer has a large number of TL 10 warships made by the De Jong Sterrenschip Fabriek at Zhatva in Vega Subsector.

L'Enfer's economy has been stuck at TL 9 for some years. The equipment in use there is good enough and there is no incentive to improve. Many employees come from poorer worlds to work in the dangerous but well-paying jobs in the metals harvesting and processing industries.

L'Enfer and the main nation on Morya are allies.



### 1108 61 Cygni Mares TL 12

Mares is in orbit around 61 Cygni A, a binary system. The star is a variable, it flares every 6 to 8 years. 61 Cygni B has an eccentric orbit, typically it is 40 to 80 AU from 61 Cygni A. The brightest stars in the sky are Vega and Altair. There is one Gas Giant in the 61 Cygni A system.

Originally called Maresoscuros (Dark Seas), Mares is one of the cultural and military centres of Altair Subsector. The shipyard

constructs TL 12 starships, the subsector navy and scouts have a base there too. Mares is cold, temperatures range from 5 to +15 centigrade, with 7 C being typical. The atmosphere contains the spores of a sea plant which must be filtered out. These will germinate in the lungs. If someone has been outside without a filter, after one week make a HLH roll (2DM if the player character was running, in combat or otherwise exercising.). Failure results in a loss of D6/2 HLH points. Roll again after each week as the plants grow in the lungs.

The is easily cured, you can buy a preventative medicine on planet for 25 Cr (much less if you know where to buy it). Note that many natives take a dose of medicine every day and don't wear a filter mask. This gives the impression that you don't need to wear one.

Mares is ruled by Milagros Martin and her OLA Party. She has transformed Mares into a militaristic and aggressive society with ambitions to form an empire. Here, she has run into problems, in that the only other nearby advanced worlds, L'Enfer and Morya, are strong and war with them would be counter-productive.

Mares owns Megara and Eendracht, claim Kyrenaika (although the lack of permanent population and absence of government means ownership is hardly a benefit). They are secretly supporting one of the four nations (Sbrod) on Morya, but this is to try and find a weakness to exploit. The Mares Empire provides recruits for the armed forces, but as the worlds are mainly TL 5 and 6 worlds, Mares has to supply most equipment and has found that maintaining a fleet of ships is more expensive than they previously thought. Many are questioning the benefits of an empire that costs so much and brings in very little.

Mares is constrained to Rimward by the strong fleet from Novaya Radina (Epsilon Eridani). Military strategists suspect that an attack on nearby worlds in the Vega subsector is likely.





### **1205 Herschel 5173 Morya**

Morya orbits a K3 star with a second red dwarf star in the system. There is a single Gas Giant in the system.

Morya is a water world with 98 million population, divided between four nations. All are Russian speaking.

Most people are involved in undersea mining, fishing and harvesting a crustacean for the minerals they make into their shells. There is an orbital space port and a range of high technology industries. People live and work on huge factory ships that control fleets of submarines. The ships are large enough to accommodate shuttles and smaller starships on their decks.

85% of people belong to Bolshoi Flot, next comes 10% who are Krasnii Flot. 3% work in Malenky Flot. The remainder are called The Sbrod, people who are almost outlaws but have a ramshackle fleet. The OLA party on Mares has supported The Sbrod hoping to gain influence, although this policy is now thought to be mistaken. Attempts by OLA to influence the Krasnii Flot have been rejected. At present, the two main Flots are in a strong alliance with L'Enfer.

The De Jong en Dijkgraaf Ruimteschip Company in Vega Subsector has been asked to upgrade the C class starport to an A Class. Until the work is completed, Morya is importing ships from Prosperina and Zhatva.

### **1206 Sigma Draconis Kyrenaika**

The main star is a type K, there is one Gas Giant.

A water world with a few islands, Kyrenaika has a transient workforce involved in catching Masivas, a whale-like creature that is processed and exported. There is no formal government and no law, although the owners of the fishing fleets keep discipline as violence reduces profitability.

The situation is unstable as a research team from Joan De Groot University at Zhatva now claim that the Masivas are sentient and that harvesting must stop. As Kyrenaika is claimed by Mares, Milagros Martin is attempting to force Zhatva to denounce the research. They say that halting the harvest of Masivas will remove a vital protein source from the diets of many of the subsector's poor.

### **1309 Epsilon Indi Megara**

A single type K star and two Brown Dwarfs are in Megara system. These are bigger than Jupiter, they are sometimes called "failed stars" as they are hot but do not fuse hydrogen. There are also two Gas Giants

A mainly agricultural world, Megara was invaded and conquered by Mares (or, according to Milagros Martin's OLA Party, "Mares was asked to send help to stabilise a deteriorating situation"). While there is a military governor on Megara and an armed presence, they do little except collect taxes. The violence that preceded the invasion has stopped, opponents say that Mares caused it to give them an excuse to invade.

The opposition, the Organización Democrática Popular (ODP) is looking for off-world help in organising resistance.

### **1310 Ross 248 Pustinya**

The central star is a Red Dwarf, there are no Gas Giants and the planet has no water, so ships visiting Pustinya have to have sufficient fuel reserves to return to civilisation. There is a persistent rumour of a comet that allows ships to refuel, although this may be mistaken. Pustinya was assigned to Altair Subsector when the initial surveys were done.



A quiet lifeless world that would be invaded by Mares if there was anything worthwhile to take. The population is mainly mineral prospectors ,and explorers although the distance to any markets makes extraction marginal, as exports from L'Enfer tend to dominate the market.

### **1406 Ross 775 Merida**

This system has two Red Dwarf stars and a small Gas Giant. Merida is a Gas Giant moon, visitors are warned to avoid the strong radiation belts on the equatorial approach.

This is a new colony, conditions are harsh, typical temperature at the equator are -30 centigrade. The moon has frequent earthquakes and constant bad weather..

### **1508 EV Lacertae Evora**

The Red Dwarf star is unusual in that it has a strong magnetic field and occasionally flares, emitting X-rays. Visitors must be under heavy cover to survive a flare. There is a Gas Giant in system.

A cold desert world, the atmosphere is nitrogen and methane so visitors need breathing apparatus. The only inhabitants are a science team from Joan De Groot University at Zhatva. They have found a downed alien spaceship. The crew are missing but the ship is in good condition and has a wealth of scientific knowledge for those who can exploit it. The University wants to avoid their discovery becoming public knowledge, so are looking to hire people to act as armed protection and to take supplies and scientists in and return with artefacts.

Note that temperatures at the equator are typically -10 centigrade.



### **1604 HSC 1904 Kipos**

Kipos orbits a red Dwarf star and is tidally locked, it is really part of the adjacent (trailing) Hercules subsector. It was isolated from most worlds in the Altair subsector until J3 drives became common. It has a TL of 13, a A class starport and a navy base. The planet exports food, medicines and help to all who need it. Although balkanised, the largest nation includes 95% of the population. The other three nations can be considered to represent differences in political thought.

Settled by Greek speakers, Kipos is a libertarian communist society. The state owns all businesses. All government officials, business managers and military officers are subject to dismissal by worker's councils if they do badly. Everyone has the same basic place to live, there is equality and excellent health care. Education is considered exceptional. Food is served in large canteens, which compete to provide the best quality to all who arrive. You are quite likely to sit between a politician, a starship engineer and a tractor driver while you eat. You will not need money on Kipos, if you are permitted to visit the planet. Visitors must convince the immigration officials that they have a good reason to go there. "Tourism" and "exploring business opportunities" are not acceptable. You will normally need an invitation from someone who lives there (who will be responsible for your behaviour while you're there). They strongly encourage their own people to travel off-world and see how other societies do things.

They believe in "From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs". All office-holders are there because they wish to do the job and have the confidence of their nominating council. Greek is the principle language, Russian and Dutch are also widely understood.

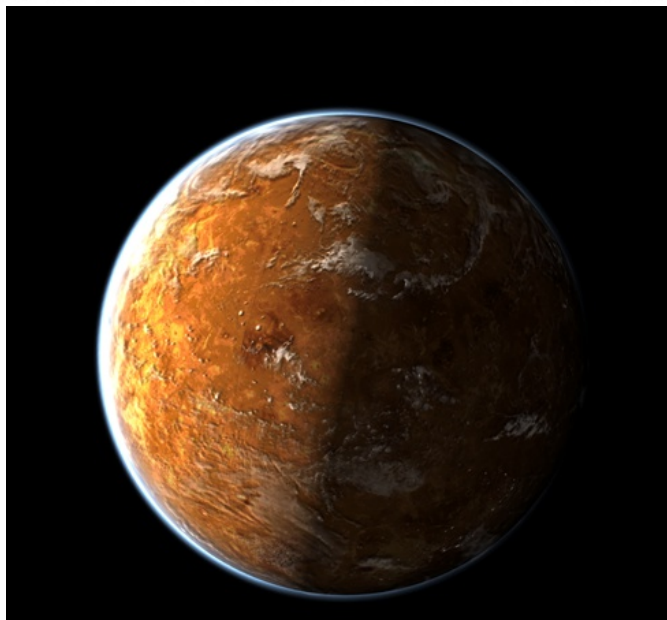
Kipos has a union with Novsvyat and

Rotesmeer, the two adjacent worlds in Hercules subsector. They have a combined fleet.

### 1608 Gliese 892 Eendracht

A type K star, there are two Gas Giants in the system.

Another poor and low technology water world that has been taken by Mares. The main industry is harvesting of Usizo, a seaweed that can be made into textiles, eaten, and has many useful medicinal uses.

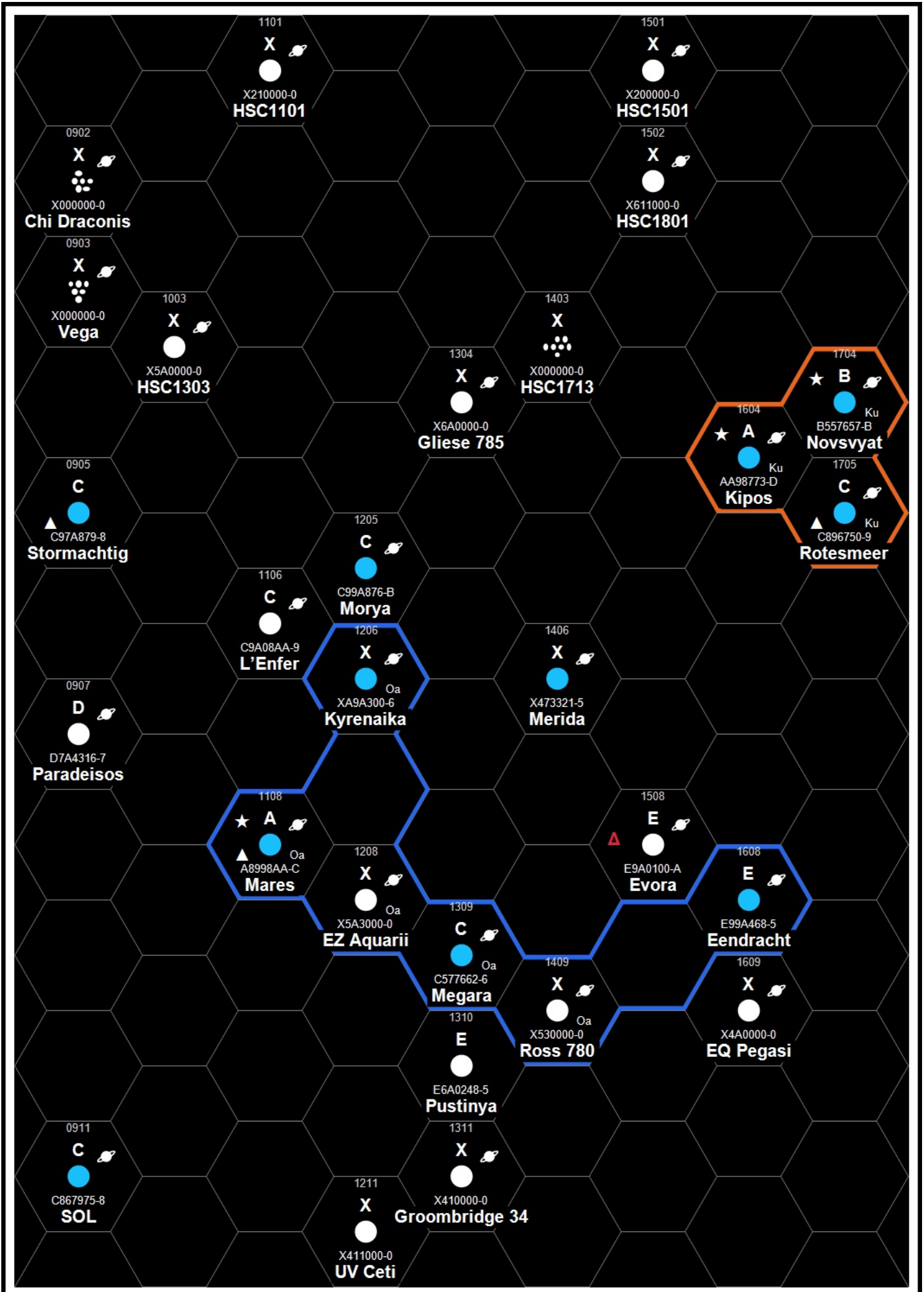


### Hercules Subsector detail

The Hercules subsector lies to the trailing edge of Altair subsector.

Hex	Original name	New name	UWP	Notes
1604	HSC1904	Kipos	AA98773-D	Agric, Navy base
1704	N/a	Novsvyat	B557657-B	Navy base
1705	N/a	Rotesmeer	C896750-9	Scout base







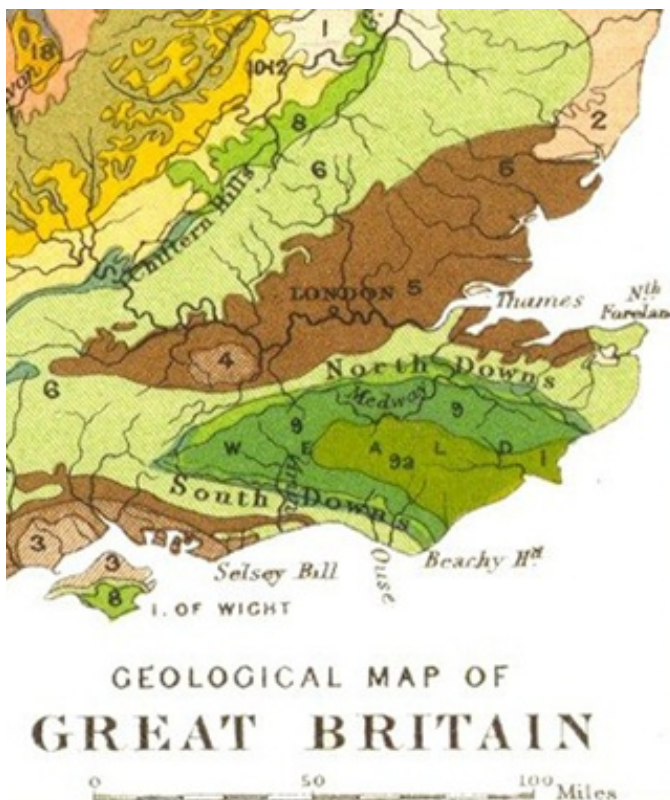
# Dr Syn, or, The Scarecrow of Romney Marsh

By Paul Drye

Just west of Dover in the southeast of England lies the Romney Marsh, a swooping, shark-fin triangle of lowland, some below sea level, that has slowly been reclaimed from the water over the past several hundred years. In 1792 much of it had become valuable sheep pasture and, after the recent end of the War of 1778, trade was once again booming with Calais across the Channel in France despite that country's recent fall into revolution.

The same increase in traffic was true for all southern England, but Romney Marsh's sparse population and not-inconsiderable remaining fens brought a twist—those who'd smuggled through the blockades of the Continent in past years have redoubled their efforts and clear as much currency and return goods these days as any legitimate trader. The situation has become so bad that it's even caught the eye of the government and, in the name of the King, a frigate has anchored off the town of Dymchurch, commanded by a captain given a mission to root them out. The bullying Captain Collyer has had plenty of success with similar work elsewhere but here he may have been handed more than he can handle: Romney Marsh is home to the fearsome smuggler chief Scarecrow and his demon Riders. They won't give up without a fight.

## Our Scene



Romney Marsh is roughly one hundred square miles of flats and marsh on the English Channel. Strictly speaking it has two names, Romney in the northeast and Walland in the southwest, but it is all one swamp. The town of Rye is its most populous, but it has fallen from its medieval heights as the coastline advanced and is now no longer a coastal port. Being some two miles inland the Rhee Wall, a canal to the Channel, was originally dug to try and save Rye, and now acts as the boundary line between the marsh's two names.

Other villages of note include Lydd, New Romney, Hythe, and our focus, Dymchurch. The River Rother is the primary natural water channel. It runs along the marsh's southwest border near



Rye, but besides the aforementioned Rhee there are also countless drainage canals and ditches (locally called "sewers") which have been dug since Roman times and which make moving off-road at night a hazardous endeavor. The marsh is hemmed in on both north and southwest by the High Weald, parallel sandstone rises partially covered in woods that tip down and in toward the marsh and keep its water in place.

(Image: Romney Marsh and surrounding area in southeast England, shown in olive green between the dark green of the Weald and the light green of the North and South Downs. From the public domain.)

## Dymchurch

The town of Dymchurch has a few notable features. Its southeastern shore is protected by a hundred-year-old seawall which allows the inhabitants and any visitors to stroll along the water's edge with impunity except on days when the wind drives swells over its edge. A fine sandy beach sits at the foot of the wall, and a few launches and piers pierce its curve so that the town's fishermen can reach their livelihood. The Ship's Inn is the local rooming house and tavern, and the town's social centre six days a week. On the seventh this switches to St. Peter & St. Paul Church, an old Norman construction that was rebuilt and enlarged back in the 16th century.

Another place of note is the 16th-century New Hall, which serves as a courthouse for the Romney Marsh area and a place to stay for the local squire when in town.

## Personages

*Reverend Doctor Christopher Syn* 897FC8  
Age 51

£500

Brawling-1, Bribery-1, Carousing-1, Leadership-4, Recon-2, Riding-3, Sailing Ships-2, Slashing Weapons-3, Slug Pistol-2, Streetwise-3, Tactics-3, Theology-2, Linguistics (Latin)-3, Linguistics (Ancient Greek)-3.

Christopher Syn, D.D (Oxon.) is one of the leading figures in Dymchurch. He has been the vicar of the local church twice, once for a short while under the previous squire, Charles Cobtree, and then in the past two decades at the invitation of his friend Antony, son and heir of Charles. He isn't a very notable person, though he is one of the few sources of intelligent conversation in the Romney Marsh. At most one might comment on his height and almost unhealthy thinness, but these are soon eclipsed by his pleasant and friendly personality.

What is far from apparent is that the Doctor is merely one of three identities he possesses. His time between stints at vicar was spent as the notorious Captain Clegg, a pirate of bloodthirsty reputation and undoubted genius who was eventually caught and hanged in nearby Rye not long before Syn's reappearance in Dymchurch. How these two facts are reconciled cannot be said, and only a few suspect that Clegg escaped the gallows—and none connect him to Dr. Syn, or at least none who are inclined to pass on the secret to others.

His other role is as the Scarecrow and it is as current as that of the vicar. There are several smugglers' gangs in the Marsh but all pale before the Scarecrow and his Riders. Some say that this figure is literally demonic, or in league with the Devil, while others suspect of him of theatrical tricks. It can't be gainsaid that he is a criminal mastermind of the first order, organizing and executing crimes of considerable sophistication.

In his Dr. Syn persona he sees quite sincerely to the spiritual needs of his flock,

and not incidentally does what he can to throw the Squire off the scent of any smuggling activity whatsoever. Needless to say, the good Doctor is quite insane, but he has an iron control over himself so long as he can maintain his identities separate.

*Sexton Mipps 677857 Age 48*

£100 (though he pretends to be much poorer)

Brawling-1, Broker-2, Carpentry-2, Leadership-2, Recon-2, Riding-1, Sailing Ships-2, Slashing Weapons-1, Slug Rifle (Blunderbuss)-2, Streetwise-3.

Every good vicar needs a good sexton, and Mipps is that to Dr. Syn. While Syn tends to the spiritual needs of his church, Mipps oversees the mundane operations that keep the church building and yard in order. As such he is Syn's right-hand man, though his work on the part of Saint Peter & Saint Paul only takes up some of his time. Much of the rest is spent running the shop adjacent to his home, Old Tree Cottage. There he works as both a coffin-maker and a goods chandler. Exactly where he gets the goods he sells in and around the grim products of his other profession is best not examined. He will also engage in the occasional bit of joinery for a contracted project (e.g., cabinet work, doors, gallows, and so on).

Very few know that once he was a pirate and the first officer of the notorious pirate Clegg. He's managed to bury that part of his life, but he acquired a number of useful skills in that time, ones that curiously would also be typical of a successful smuggler, perhaps even the lieutenant of a great leader like the Scarecrow.

Mipps is as short and solid as the parson is tall and thin, though they both share the habit of talkativeness. Where Syn tends to wax eloquent and educated, though, Mipps natters on almost incomprehensibly, only slowly sneaking up on his point and

often engendering more confusion than clarity. His appearance is of a somewhat broken-down man not far from being elderly, and he has what someone from the 21st century might term "resting guilty face"—not that anyone has ever proved anything. He is far more commanding when disguised and working at night.

*Sir Antony Cobtree 6766AA Age 50*

£10,000

Advocate-1, Gambling-1, Liaison-1, Riding-2.

The richest and most notable man in Romney Marsh, Squire Cobtree is the judge of Dymchurch. Though not a member of the hereditary nobility he lives much like one at the lower end of that scale on the back of a peculiar right granted to his family. His great-to-the-several-times grandfather was the "Leveller of the Marsh Scotts", responsible for bringing the independent-minded folk of the Marsh under the thumb of the king. For his trouble he and his descendants have the hereditary right to level at tax of one shilling per head per year from the inhabitants of the area, a flow of cash and resulting investments that gives the Cobtrees much of their lustre.

The Squire was once a member of Parliament (Dymchurch being a borderline rotten borough) but he retired some two decades ago after losing a particularly bruising political battle. He has ambitions for his son Denis to pick up from where he left off. Otherwise, he is content to be the large frog in the Marsh's small pond, collecting his shillings and presiding over legal cases brought to his attention. He is popular enough with the people of Dymchurch, though something of a distant figure.

*Captain Howard Collyer 878978 Age 28*

£100

Athletics-1, Leadership-1, Recon-1, Sailing Ships-2, Slashing Weapons-1, Slug Pistol-1, Tactics-3.

Captain Collyer is somewhat famous, as he fought and captured the French ship Lion d'Or in the mouth of the St. Lawrence. Unfortunately for him, the French and British were at peace at the time and so he has fallen into bad odor with the Admiralty and been assigned the tedious mission of hunting smugglers along the south coast.

This sums up Captain Collyer quite well: he is impetuous, proud, and something of a bully, but he is also quite competent. If he hadn't fought the battle he did he would still be on the wider oceans, but if he hadn't won the battle he'd have been beached entirely. In his current place the powers-that-be can call him back if he redeems himself, and he's been doing quite well in his new job. Having come to Dymchurch, the local smugglers may have met their match, even the fearsome Scarecrow. He is one of the few who suspect that Captain Clegg was not hanged at Rye a decade ago, and he wonders at the connection between the retired pirate and Romney Marsh's highly successful smugglers.

If actions by the player characters do not hurry it along, he is fated to die early in the Revolutionary Wars, during the invasion of Corsica alongside Nelson.

*Denis Cobtree* 978689 Age 18

£100

Advocate-0, Linguistics (Latin)-0, Riding-1.

The only son of Sir Anthony, Denis is a young man in his late teens who will be heir to the rights and properties of his father. He is a pleasant but rather dull young man, dutiful to his father's wish that he go to Oxford, be called to the bar, and then take a place in Parliament to follow up with concerns left fallow in the previous

generation. Unfortunately, he's not really got the spark of intellect and studiousness needed to meet the challenge, and he's already struggling with the Latin and Greek lessons he receives from Schoolmaster Rash. Realistically it seems he will become the next Leveller by inertia and settle into an undistinguished but pleasant life, possibly married to Imogen of the Ship's Inn (see below), with whom he is infatuated.

Accordingly, Denis is not one of those who drives events in Romney Marsh, but is instead one who reacts. From a gaming perspective he is oddly suited to play the role of the "endangered princess" in any story....

*Schoolmaster Rash* 677997 Age 29

Recon-0, Rising-1, Slashing Weapons-1.

£20

Hired primarily as a tutor for Denis Cobtree, Sir Anthony has made him available to Dymchurch as a schoolteacher a few hours each workday during the week. He is not popular with his students, being typical for him time in that he believes in thrashing knowledge into his pupils.

Rash is primarily of interest in relation to two others who live in Dymchurch. He is set on marrying Imogen the barmaid, a suit she finds most unpleasant, and he is thinking of turning King's evidence on the Scarecrow and his band. He is only a minor member of the smugglers but knows enough to make life difficult for them. The Scarecrow, for his part, is aware of his possible duplicity, but still finds him useful.

*Imogen* 678844 Age "Sixteen or seventeen"

£1



Sailing Ships-1, Slug Pistol-1, Steward-1.

Barmaid at the Ship's Inn, Imogen is the orphaned and illegitimate daughter of the notorious pirate Clegg. Since he was hanged at Rye when she was a child, she had made her way alone through life, supporting herself with her work at the public house, though Parson Syn has taken it on himself to look after her. She is approximately 16 or 17 years old and the object of attention for many of the town's young men, being beautiful and of an exotic type too—based on her appearance her mother appears to have been southern, a Spaniard or (whisper it) perhaps an Arab.

Imogen herself is in love with no-one but is intrigued by the squire's son, Denis, and dislikes the schoolteacher. Her real passion is derived from her father and is for the sea. When she gets a little time off, she will charm her way aboard one of the local fishing boats (an easy task) and stand in the bow smiling and laughing as the waves go by.

Jerry "Hangman" Jerk 68A744 Age 14

£1

Carousing-1, Recon-3, Riding-0, Steward-2, Survival-1.

An orphan and a potboy at the Ship's Inn, Jerry has a perpetual grievance against those he sees as unfairly ahead of him in life (which is to say, virtually everyone except, oddly, Denis Cobtree). His nickname comes from a particular incident where he stated a desire to hang the schoolmaster after being disciplined, but he also regularly voices his desire to become the Marsh's official hangman someday. He relishes the thought of having the power of life and death over people, and currently indulges this by surreptitiously spying on the townsfolk at night, gathering evidence of their wrongdoing for the happy day when he is in official position to

put a noose around their necks.

As well as being a source of information, Jerry knows the marshes almost as well as anyone—he anthropomorphizes it and seeks out its secrets just like those of his neighbours.

*The Dead Priest 99A972 Age ??*

£0

Piercing Weapons (Harpoon)-2, Recon-3, Sailing Ships-2, Survival-3.

The wild card in Romney Marsh is this man, or monster, or whatever he might be—even Parson Syn is afraid of him and does not quite know what he might be.

The tale is that the events leading to Captain Clegg's death relate to him. A Cuban priest who joined his crew, he had a reputation for literally infernal dealings and may or may not have already come back from the dead once to revenge himself on his murderer. For unclear reasons, Clegg abandoned him on a desolate reef with his ears lopped off and his tongue cut out, then returned to England. Yet here the priest is again, brought to Dymchurch as a member of Captain Collyer's crew. Collyer used him as a "ferret" for his smuggler-busting operation due to his uncanny ability to find hidden compartments and rooms in any situation, but upon seeing Doctor Syn the first night of his time in Dymchurch he went AWOL. He has been living in the marshes since stopping only to steal a harpoon from Doctor Syn's parlor (a memento with no meaning, according to the vicar). Some have noticed that Syn has been acting progressively more nervous since then.

The ferret, or priest, or animate corpse, or whatever he might be has a singular appearance. He is of mixed race, one of the many people who haunt waterfronts around the world—best guess is that he is

some combination of Malay and African, despite his association with the Caribbean. His hair is straggling and white, and as mentioned he is both mute and earless. He supposedly understands no language other than his native pidgin (in which Collyer's bosun could communicate with him, as of course he cannot speak for himself).

As remarkable as he is, he's even managed to get the Marsh men to blame him for the occasional outlandish crime, as opposed to their usual attribution to the Scarecrow. The Parson seems to go out of his way to do this, at least, up to and including the recent murder of the town's physician Sennacherib Pepper. Despite a substantial reward, the priest has eluded all attempts to bring him to justice.

### **The Scarecrow and his Riders**

Besides the three men mentioned by name above, all told there are about forty in the Scarecrow's band—and they allow no other smugglers in Romney Marsh, reacting murderously to any who try. Most are men, but a handful are young children (including two girls). Their scheme is an old one: wool has been a lucrative export from England since the Middle Ages, and it's been under some form of Royal control all that time. In 1792 the export duties on it are high, and the sheep of Romney are particularly known for the quality of their product. As wines and spirits from France are just as highly taxed coming in the other direction, the smugglers can make a tidy profit from the exchange on both directions.

Where the Scarecrow and his men stand out are in their theatrical approach, which they use to confuse and scare off both competitors and any authority, as well as put a stamp on the people of the marsh itself—impressing and frightening them as needed to keep their secrets. All wear masks of evil figures, demons and the like, as well as local legends like the marsh

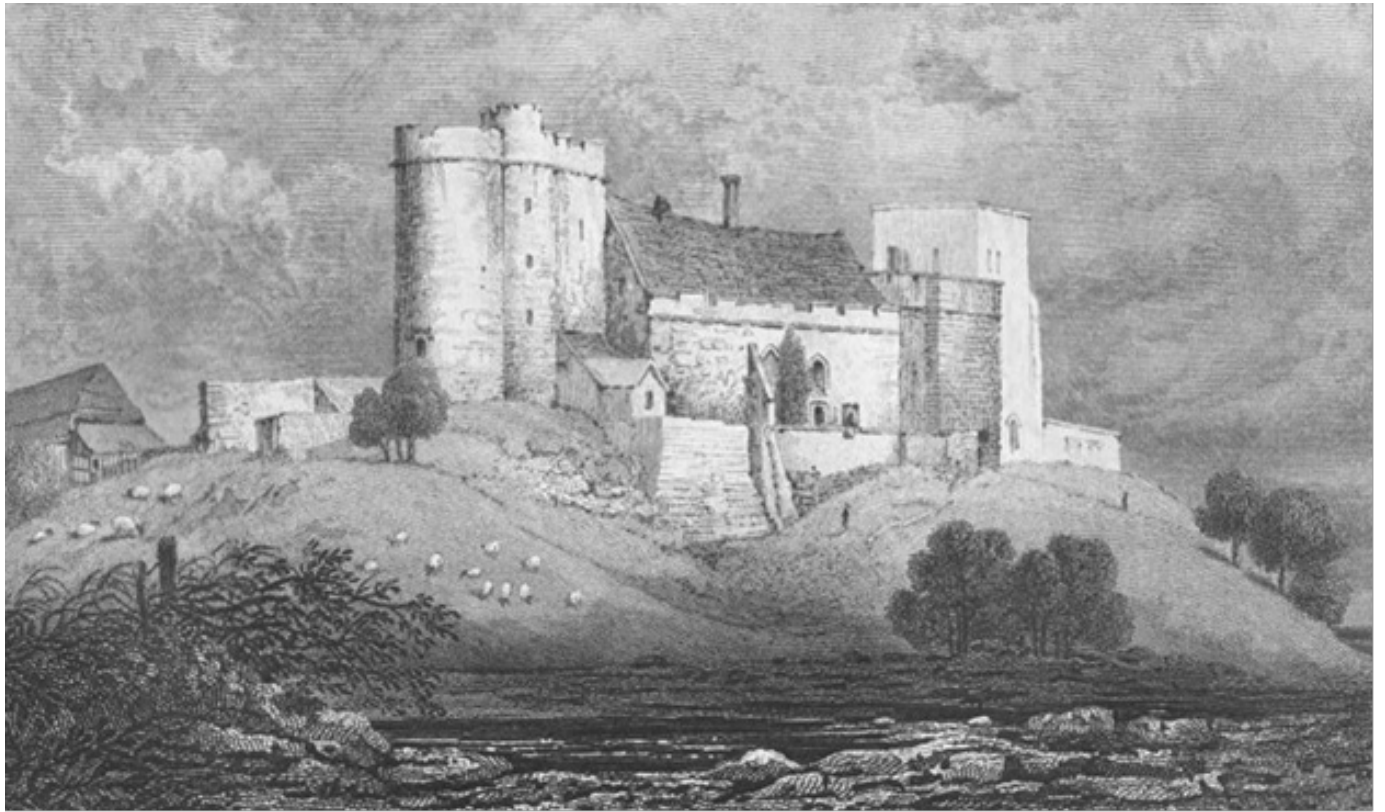
witches—the children dress as goblins. Their costumes and horses are enhanced with daubs of phosphorus to lend a devilish glow; they also attach pots of slow-burning sulphur compounds to their saddles, partly for the hellish connotations of the smell and partly to generate smoke that enhances the concealing mists that envelop the region many nights. When with each other they use only aliases, all selected for their fearsome qualities: Beelzebub, Jack Ketch, Catseyes....

Their undoubted ruler is the Scarecrow, who dresses the same as his namesake down to a burlap head mask painted with a crude face. He likely selected the identity because of his great height and relatively slim build—surprisingly like that of Reverend Doctor Syn of Dymchurch, though it's death to realize this and then say something about it. His right-hand man is Hellspite, who physically resembles the Sexton Mipps but shows a completely different personality, one with none of the garrulousness of the daylight officer of the church.

### **Other Places of Note**

Lympne Castle: Near the northern edge of the Marsh, the castle is an old medieval construction that is uninhabited and largely derelict in 1792.

At the foot of the cliff leading down to the Marsh is another, even older ruined fortification, the Roman fort Lemanis. It was later used as a naval base in Anglo-Saxon times but, as with the rest of the area, the shore receded and it was abandoned. Now all that is left is a large hexagon partially outlines with broken stone walls.



**Old Winchelsea:** When the Great Storm of 1287 hit England, the then-port of Winchelsea was drowned in the Channel, where it remains a few hundred yards offshore southeast of Rye. A new town by the same name was built further inland, but the old settlement is a source of legend as well as the occasional treasure that washes up on the beaches. It is reputed that on some nights the residents of the village Camber, closest to the site on dry land, can hear the bell of the town's waterbound Bromehill Church and ghosts sometimes walk ashore.

Author's Note: Dr. Syn is the creation of Russell Thorndike, and first appeared in the 1915 novel *Doctor Syn: A Tale of the Romney Marsh*, which is now in the public domain. He returned to the character years later, writing six more (all prequels) between 1935 and 1944. Being post-1925 these are not free to use for commercial works, but referees are pointed in their direction for clues and explanations to some of the mysteries here, not least being the precise relations between Syn, Imogen, and the man hanged at Rye. All are readily available for purchase from the usual suspects.





# 40 Eridani in 2021

By Randy McDonald

The nearby triple star 40 Eridani, also known as Omicron2 Eridani, has gained a substantial amount of attention over the past century. In addition to hosting 40 Eridani B, the first white dwarf star identified as such, the system's brightest star A has gained attention as a relatively sun-like star known to support at least one planet.

The 40 Eridani trinary

The star 40 Eridani has been observed since antiquity. Arabic astronomers seem to have been among the first to note that it happened to lie very closely in space next to another star, the apparently slightly brighter star Omicron1 Eridani. (This star, a highly evolved giant star known as a Delta Scuti variable, lies a hundred light-years beyond 40 Eridani.) Omicron1 Eridani was given the traditional name Beid, derived from the Arabic word "bayd" meaning "eggs"; Omicron2 Eridani was given the traditional name Keid, derived from the Arabic "gayd" meaning "egg shells". Omicron2 Eridani was later assigned the Flamsteed designation of "40 Eridani".

The advent of modern astronomy saw the gradual accumulation of more information about this star. William Herschel observed in 1783 that 40 Eridani was a binary star, with a dimmer partner. Later, astronomer Otto Wilhelm von Struve discovered that this partner was itself a binary star in 1851, partner B actually being the pair BC. In the early 20th century, astronomers realized the oddities in the spectrum of star B, at once very dim but white, making 40 Eridani B the first white dwarf star to be discovered.

**40 Eridani A** is a K1 star notably smaller and dimmer than our own G2 sun. 40 Eridani has a mass only 84% of the mass of our sun's and is only 46% as bright, containing at

least half as many elements heavier than hydrogen and helium as our sun as possible as many. Most estimates of this star's age estimate that it, like its partners, are a bit more than 5 billion years old, based among other things on the characteristics of white dwarf B.

40 Eridani A seems to be a suitable star for an Earth-like world. 40 Eridani A is a star not prone to flare activity, and seems to be stable otherwise. Beyond this, 40 Eridani A's relative low mass ensures that it will have a longer lifespan than our sun, lasting on the main sequence for 19 billion years where our sun will last only ten billion years. A hypothetical living world orbiting 40 Eridani A could conceivably long outlive Earth, the only possible complications coming from the recent past of A's relatively partner stars. Indeed, 40 Eridani A has already outlived its partner 40 Eridani B, a star that itself could have imaginably supported Earth-like planets.

**40 Eridani B and 40 Eridani C** are a binary pair that orbit at a great distance from 40 Eridani A, in an orbit with a semi-major axis of 400 astronomical units that takes eight thousand years to complete. B and C are a considerably tighter pair, orbiting each other in an very eccentric orbit semi-major axis of 35 astronomical units taking roughly 230 years to complete.

40 Eridani B is notable as the first white dwarf discovered by astronomers. In part, this was because of the star's relative brightness, having passed off the the main sequence and becoming a superdense stellar object a mere hundred thousand years ago. Before becoming a white dwarf, 40 Eridani B was a relatively bright yellow-white dwarf star perhaps not very

different from Procyon. In its youth, B would easily have outshone A.

40 Eridani C is a red dwarf star, considerably dimmer than even the stellar ember of B. It is a UV Ceti-type flare star, known by the name DY Eridani.

Both 40 Eridani B and C could support planets. Coming no closer than 21 astronomical units of each other, each star could conceivably have supported planets in stable orbits so long as these orbits hugged their parent stars closely, within the orbit of Jupiter in our solar system. For that matter, each star could imaginably have supported planets with broadly Earth-like environments; the circumstellar habitable zone of B in its youth and of C throughout its lifespan would have fit comfortably inside these limits. Unfortunately for any hypothetical planets orbiting B or C, the transition of B away from the main sequence would have had a catastrophic effect; the evolution of B into a red giant might have literally seen the star swallow up its planets, while the subsequent shedding of more than half of the star's mass would literally have sterilized any worlds orbiting C. For that matter, the history of B might conceivably have impacted planets orbiting distant A, though the sheer distance between B and A may well have protected the planets of the latter.

#### The planets of 40 Eridani

In 2018, the multinational Dharma Planet Survey project detected the signal of a super-Earth planet orbiting 40 Eridani A. This world, given the formal name of 40 Eridani Ab, has a minimum mass of 8.47 Earth masses, plus or minus 0.47 Earth masses. Its orbit, a mere 42 days long with a semi-major axis of roughly 0.224 astronomical units, would make this world a very hot one; receiving nine times as much stellar flux than Earth. To date, little else has been discovered of this world; given its relatively great minimum mass, this world might be

as likely to be a hot mini-Neptune as it would to be a sort of super-Venus.

40 Eridani A could easily support other planets. Multiple surveys dating back to the 1990s have been able to exclude the possibility of a brown dwarf from the 40 Eridani system, a 2006 survey ruling out the presence of superjovian planets orbiting within a bit more than 5 astronomical units of any of the stars. This leaves open the possibility of (for instance) a true Jupiter analogue orbiting A. Despite the lack of anything strongly hinting at the existence of planetary bodies like the debris disks of Epsilon Eridani or Tau Ceti, there seems to be no reason to expect 40 Eridani Ab to be the only planet in its system.

Critically, 40 Eridani A could support planets with Earth-like conditions. Though not as broad as our sun's, 40 Eridani A has a substantial circumstellar habitable zone. A planet with an orbit with a semi-major axis of 0.68 astronomical units and a year of 223 Earth days, just a bit smaller than the orbit of Venus in our solar system, could plausibly enjoy very Earth-like conditions. Broader definitions of the circumstellar habitable zone suggest it could extend from a minimum distance of 0.55 astronomical units from A to a maximum of 1.1 astronomical units, this outer boundary also including the orbit of Earth.

40 Eridani B and C could imaginably support planets with Earth-like environments, on planets with orbits very close to their primaries. The odds against this would be relatively low: Any planets in such close orbit of B would surely have been consumed by that star's transition from the main sequence, while any planets orbiting C would not only have to cope with the damage of B's terminal crisis but C's history as a notable flare star. C particularly might well still have planets, but barring some sort of external intervention the odds would be that any planets orbiting either star would be

lifeless.

## 40 Eridani and its neighbourhood

The stellar neighbourhood of 40 Eridani hosts multiple stars of potential considerable interest to any civilization based there.

- GJ 3323, also known as LHS 1723, is a star 5.11 light-years away from 40 Eridani. A very dim red dwarf only discovered in the late 20th century, in 2017 it was determined that the star possessed at least two planets. The inner world, GJ 3323b, is a low-mass super-Earth may orbit within the star's circumstellar habitable zone. A hundred thousand years ago, this star drifted within seven and a half light-years of our solar system as it moved on its course through our galaxy.
- Gliese 205, 6.24 light-years away, is a relatively bright red dwarf star known to host at least two planets. Based on their minimum masses, these Gliese 205 b and Gliese 205 c are most likely to be mini-Neptunes.
- One very interesting near neighbour is Epsilon Eridani, just 6.43 light-years away. This very young main-sequence orange dwarf is believed to have planets and itself frequently imagined as a home for life.
- The relatively bright brown dwarf LP 944-20, a body between three and four hundred million years old with a mass equivalent to that of 57 Jupiters,
- GJ 3379 is a dim red dwarf star 8.31 light years away from 40 Eridani, a flare star perhaps most notable for a trajectory that took it to a distance just over four light-years away from our solar system 161 thousand years ago.
- 9.13 light-years away from 40 Eridani lies the close-orbiting binary star system of Ross 614. Both stars are red dwarfs, but the more massive star A is a flare star also known as V0577 Monocerotis.
- Gliese 223.2, also known as LP 658-2, is a cool and thus relatively old single white dwarf star 9.3 light-years away from 40 Eridani.
- The star Tau Ceti, a single yellow dwarf star known to host multiple planets and considered relatively likely to support Earth-like environments, is located 10.15 light-years away from 40 Eridani.
- Kapteyn's Star, 10.86 light-years away, is an ancient red dwarf star eleven billion years old that may possess two super-Earth planets. Kapteyn b seems to be located in the star's circumstellar habitable zone, though flares and sheer age may have worn away its atmosphere.
- Sirius, a binary pair including the brilliant A-type main sequence star Sirius A and the white dwarf Sirius B, is just under 11 light-years away from 40 Eridani.

## 40 Eridani imagined

What could a system record for 40 Eridani look like? 40 Eridani A's system might look something like the table below.


Companion (in order from star)	Mass	Semimajor axis (AU)	Orbital period (days)	Eccentricity	Planet type
b	10.5 M	0.22	42.3	0.05	Mini-Neptune
c	0.72 M	0.74	253.6	0.06	Garden
d	2.51 M	1.11	466 (1.28 Earth years)	0.04	Desert
e	0.94 M	1.78	946.3 (2.59 Earth years)	0.03	Desert
f	193 M	3.55	2664 (7.30 Earth years)	0.1	Gas giant
g	16.8 M	6.65	6880 (18.8 Earth years)	0.18	Ice Giant



- 40 Eridani Ab is a hot mini-Neptune, a less massive version of Uranus and Neptune that is most notable for having a surface temperature much hotter than that of boiling water. Ab supports a sparse rocky ring system and small rocky moons, most of the volatiles that Ab once had outside of its deep gravity well having long since evaporated.
- 40 Eridani Ac is a true garden world, a planet with only two-thirds of the mass and 70% of the surface gravity of Earth. Despite this low mass, the relative inactivity of the star and the distance—Ac orbits 0.74 astronomical units from A—has allowed the world to hold onto much of its primordial water and atmosphere. Ac is a living world if a cold one, with wide oceans, notable polar ice caps, and abundant complex life that has produced a breathable nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere.
- 40 Eridani Ad is a rocky super-Earth that orbits outside of A's circumstellar habitable zone, its dense nitrogen-dominated atmosphere doing little to retain heat on the planet's surface. Ad remains geologically active, driving plate tectonics and volcanism that has created a world with a decidedly jagged surface, mountains quickly transitioning to deep water oceans. Life on this world exists, but is relegated to the most protected environments, of the warm deep oceans and deep underground.
- 40 Eridani Ae is a very cold Earth-mass planet most notable for its very deep oceans of water, legacy of its formation in the outer reaches of the solar system. A relatively thin crust of ice protecting a water ocean hundreds of kilometres deep, the unimaginable pressures keeping whatever might exist there protected. From the surface of Ac, Ae's icy white crust makes it a brilliant feature in the night sky.
- 40 Eridani Af, a gas giant with a bit more than half the mass of Jupiter, contains the large majority of the mass of 40 Eridani A's planetary systems. Af supports three moons the size of small planets, of which the innermost is a volcanic Io analogue while the outermost two are icy bodies with substantial subsurface oceans warmed by tides.
- 40 Eridani Ag is a true Neptune analog, a planet that supports in addition to a broad icy ring four dwarf planet-sized icy moons, relatively small bodies that form a collection of bodies most comparable to the moon system of Uranus.
- 40 Eridani B supports a thin and scattered collection of rocky debris, remnants of whatever collection of planets and other bodies orbited B before that star destroyed its planets. C, for its part, hosts a substantial collection of rocky dwarf planets. B's transition to a white dwarf, via a red giant stage, managed to bake the adjacent worlds, depriving the B subsystem of volatiles altogether and making conditions on C's worlds even more grim. Most interesting in the BC pair's worlds concentrates on trying to understand this part of the system before B's evolution into a red giant. What worlds were there? Might B have had an Earth-like world of its own, even?

#### 40 Eridani in fiction

As a relatively widely known nearby star system, over the past decades 40 Eridani has been the site of multiple appearances in different science fiction books.

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- In the Dune setting of Frank Herbert, the technologically sophisticated world of Richese is identified as orbiting “Eridani A”, a star most commonly identified with 40 Eridani A.
  - In Star Trek, science fiction author James Blish seems to have been the first person to locate Vulcan at 40 Eridani. In his 1968 Star Trek 2, the second of his short story adaptations of Star Trek scripts, this identification was made in the adaptation of the time-travel episode “Tomorrow Is Yesterday”. This suggestion was enthusiastically taken up by the fandom in the 1970s. Gene Roddenberry confirmed this in 1991, accepting the advice of scientists who suggested 40 Eridani was a better choice than Epsilon Eridani on account of the much greater age of the former system. The 1988 novel Spock's World by Diane Duane deserves particular note, as a book that explores plausibly and at length the deep history and evolution of the 40 Eridani planetary system and of its habitable world of Vulcan.
  - The 1981 C.J. Cherryh novel Wave Without A Shore is set on the isolated but settled world of Freedom, located far from the major human powers in the 40 Eridani planetary system. In addition to its human population, this world also supports a mysterious indigenous population.
  - In the 2300AD game setting, 40 Eridani hosts the garden world of Montana, a joint Mexican-Argentine colony. The limitations of the stutterwarp drive used in this setting means that although 40 Eridani is relatively closer to Earth than other planetary systems known to support habitable worlds, 40 Eridani and Montana were among the later worlds to be colonized. Astrographically, the 40 Eridani system is the first planetary system in the Latin Finger, an area of world dominated by Latin American starfaring powers.
  - In the Traveller game setting, 40 Eridani supports the mainworld of Sarpedon in the Capella subsector of the Solomani Rim. Sarpedon is a cold and relatively low-population world, heavily militarized by the Imperium because of its location on the frontier with the Solomani Confederation; the Near Bootes Cluster, the arguable core of the Confederation after the loss of Terra to the Imperium, is just a few parsecs away.

## Resources

- There is an abundance of online material regarding the 40 Eridani trinary and its known planet. The pages at Wikipedia <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/40\\_Eridani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/40_Eridani)> and Sol Station <<http://www.solstation.com/stars/40erida3.htm>> provide excellent overviews of the current state of knowledge, with links to different papers and studies. (Fans of Star Trek may also be interested in the Memory Alpha article on 40 Eridani A <[https://memory-alpha.fandom.com/wiki/40\\_Eridani\\_A](https://memory-alpha.fandom.com/wiki/40_Eridani_A)>, which describes how that star was selected as the parent star for Vulcan.)
- In 2007, the blog Centauri Dreams lent passing consideration to 40 Eridani as a possible location of planets suitable for Earth-like life <<https://www.centauri-dreams.org/2007/05/12/the-search-for-vulcan/>>.
- News of 40 Eridani A b made headlines in 2018. Universe Today's article <<https://www.universetoday.com/140045/astronomers-find-planet-vulcan-40-eridani-a-right-where-star-trek-predicted-it/amp/>> provides an overview, while the discovery paper by Mo, Ba, et al is online <<https://arxiv.org/abs/1807.07098>>.
- Reddit's Daystrom Institute forum has periodically featured imaginings what the planetary system of 40 Eridani looks like. One creative poster made an interesting suggestion

<[https://www.reddit.com/r/DaystromInstitute/comments/c0m1yj/the\\_40\\_eridani\\_vulcan\\_andorian\\_star\\_system\\_and\\_the/](https://www.reddit.com/r/DaystromInstitute/comments/c0m1yj/the_40_eridani_vulcan_andorian_star_system_and_the/)> that the Vulcans and Andorians might actually share the 40 Eridani planetary system, with Vulcan orbiting A, Andoria being an icy moon of a superjovian orbiting B, and the disputed planet of Weytahn/Paan Mokar orbiting C. Another poster considered <[https://www.reddit.com/r/DaystromInstitute/comments/9gyrof/40\\_eridani\\_a\\_b\\_the\\_real\\_planet\\_vulcan/](https://www.reddit.com/r/DaystromInstitute/comments/9gyrof/40_eridani_a_b_the_real_planet_vulcan/)> how the known planet of 40 Eridani Ab could conceivably be habitable, suggesting that with a sufficiently high albedo and taking advantage of tidal locking 40 Eridani Ab could have substantial areas with liquid water and potentially human-tolerable conditions.



## Garinars

By Graham Bayley

**HITS** : 29    **SPEED** : 12 m

**ATTACKS** : 2Bite and Claws (4D)

Note: This creature sometimes strikes to wound and frighten, reducing claw or bite damage to 2D or even 1D.

**SKILLS**    Athletics (dexterity) 1, Melee (unarmed) 1, Recon 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1 If more than one is encountered Tactics

**TRAITS**    Heightened Senses

**BEHAVIOUR** : Carnivore, Pouncer

It normally moves quite slowly, almost silently, constantly sniffing the air and searching about with its orange-yellow eyes.

When it wants to, a Garinars can surge into a fast rush or leap a surprisingly long way. It changes direction in a fast but ungainly scuffle of.

It is not known how this creature communicates with others of its kind when out of sight of them – though it definitely does and can set up complex ambushes – as its vocal chords are extremely rudimentary. Garinars can co-operate even when they cannot see one another, so some communication mechanism must exist.

They are pack hunters, preferring to push prey into a confined area and then pounce all at once. In the inevitable scramble to escape, prey will impede one another; a small group will be contained and massacred, while a larger herd of prey will usually have some survivors. This strategy seems geared towards stalking out other predators as well as prey animals –Trapped predators are more likely to scatter and flee, than to fight back as a coherent group. The implication of this is interesting, since the Garinar is apex predator on most of the worlds it exists on. Either this strategy was created to deal with other bands of Garinar that had entered a pack's territory, or else the strategy was evolved specifically to hunt humans.

**DESCRIPTION** : Garinar can best be described as a 'bristly furred, long-legged dog-like quadruped', striped in grey and dingy brown, with long fangs and claws that let it climb as well as gouge and tear.

**ORIGINS** : It is believed that the Garinar has its heritage in Terran Hyenas or African Wild Dogs. A Comm will translate the local name of the Garinar as:

'extremely clever teeth-killing thing'

'that which was left over after civilisation collapsed'

'the things out in the darkness' and 'Death beyond the light'

For use with Helzrs adventure.



# Archbishops' Gambit

By P-O Bergstedt

## Introduction

This is an adventure for the Cepheus Störtebeker setting. It can be used with the Sword of Cepheus rules or the forthcoming Cepheus Störtebeker rules. In this adventure the PCs will use their cog to transport wool from Hull to Nidaros (modern Trondheim).

The PCs are free traders and own (and may name) their cog. The ship is equipped with one small cannon. For the cannon they have 5 balls and gunpowder to fire them. The PCs may buy any weapons they like that were available in Denmark in the year 1400 AD before the start of this adventure, as the adventure starts in the late summer of that year. To fit in the Cepheus Journal, this version of this adventure is quite condensed, and the referee will have to fill in some of the blanks and manage any optional situations that the PCs put themselves in.



## Lund

The PCs' cog has just arrived at Lund and they were paid 50 Pennings. Now the crew probably want to find something to eat and drink and maybe do some sightseeing. The Lund Cathedral is the home of the Archbishop of Lund and may be interesting to visit.

If the PCs, don't go to the Cathedral themselves, the following will happen at a tavern. A man in a brown cloak approaches the PCs and asks if he may sit down. After he does, he tells them that he has been sent by the Archbishop to find the toughest independent cog crew in town. We cannot trust the Hansa for this, he whispers.

In the Cathedral, the PCs are escorted to an office by the man in brown. All weapons must be left in the vestibule. There they meet with Jacob Gertsen, the Archbishop, his accountant, and his sexton. There are also several guards, and the man in brown also stays in the room.

The Archbishop wants to give the Archbishop of Nidaros a present: wool from Meaux Abbey in England. The cargo can be picked up in Kingston-upon-Hull. On the way to Nidaros, part of the wool needs to be colored yellow and purple at St. Andrews in Scotland and red in Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands. The PCs will be paid 2 Marks now for expenses and 10 Marks after returning to Lund. They will get three special coins to pay for the wool and the coloring. It is important that they use these coins only. They may take any cargo they like on the way home from Nidaros, but no other cargo than the wool on the way there unless it will not affect the speed of the boat. On the way to Hull,

they must avoid the Hansa by crossing the North Sea and not following the coast.

The PCs don't know yet that the man in brown is the real Archbishop and that he has switched places with an advisor for security reasons.

## **Aalborg**

The first stop after 1 day of uneventful sailing in the Kattegatt is Aalborg. It is a big town, known for its herring and for its two monasteries. The pubs in the port also serve good beer and because of that, some call the town Aleburgh.

While they are having a beer, a well-dressed man approaches the group. He presents himself as Adam Alabu and asks if he may sit down. He tells them that he has made a fortune selling herring. He now exports the fish. He asks the group where they are going and if they have any room for any cargo. If the PCs reveal that they are going to Hull, Adam will ask more questions. Where were you yesterday? What is your business to Hull?

The PCs may now suspect that this is an interrogation and not a friendly conversation and an offer to carry herring to Hull. (Check against INT, EDU or any relevant skills.) If they confront Adam, there will be a bar fight. Adam has 4 friends in the bar, and 10 men outside, all armed with knives. If the PCs reveal too much, Adam's men will attack. The only way to not end up in a fight is to lie about where they came from and where they are going. Adam already knows that their ship is empty, (his men have checked) and if the PCs lie about that, there will also be a fight.

Unless the PCs manage to lie their way out of this situation they will have to fight and then run when they are outnumbered.

The fight will go well in the beginning. The PCs may be armed or may produce

improvised weapons and can hold off or even incapacitate the attackers. But when Adam's extra 10 men enters the fight; the PCs will have to run. The pub is close to the harbor, so they can run to their cog. There is one man guarding it, trying to stop the PCs from entering the boat. This man will run or dive into the water rather than fighting the PCs. The PCs can escape in their ship in the night. Tonight, it is possible to use the stars for navigation. Light from settlements can be seen on both sides of the Limfjord. Since it is dark, it will be difficult to follow the PCs' cog. The PCs can hear pursuers shouting and firing guns. As the PCs leave the Skagerrak and enter the North Sea, the sun rises. The wind is perfect: two days of sailing should take them to Hull.

## **Hull**

When arriving at Hull the PCs notice that there are 3 warships and 1 Hansa cog (De Zwarte Zeemeeuw) in the port. There are also several other smaller cogs like their own.

In Hull, they find their contact in the church. If they pay her with their special coin, she tells them from which warehouse they will pick up the cargo of 8 bales of wool. She also tells them war has broken out between the England and Scotland. There are 3 English war ships in the port, and the English are blockading Scotland. She says she know someone who can talk to the English commander to let the PCs' important cargo to Norway pass, and to let you stay in St. Andrews.

That evening, while trying the local beer at a tavern, they hear two men speaking Dutch. The two Dutchmen leave when they notice that they have been discovered. If the PCs discretely follow, they will see that the Dutchmen go to the Hansa ship.

The next morning the PCs can leave in

their cog. The weather is fine, and the wind is still from the east. It will take them about 24 hours to go to St Andrews.

When the PCs' cog has left the harbor, they see that the Hansa ship is raising a large white sail with two upside-down red-crossed keys. The PCs understand that the Hansa ship is faster than their own and better at using the side-wind.

To get out of the Humber River, the ships first must go south-east, which the wind will make a slow hunt. The Hansa ship would probably catch up with the PCs cog just outside Spurn Head. But while still in the Humber, the PCs see the grey sails of two of the English warships.

The Hansa ship fires its front guns at the PCs' cog-it will be quite ineffective but very scary. The PCs may fire back. Before the Hansa ship catches the PCs, the English warships open fire on the Hansa ship. The Hansa ship fires back. The sail of the Hansa ship is hit, and it slows down. The PCs eventually pass Spurn Head and cannot see how the sea battle goes after that.



## St Andrews

While on the way to St Andrews, the PCs' cog is passed by one of the English warships. When passing the Firth of Forth, the sun has just come up and they see

eight English ships, but none of them seem to be interested in the PCs' cog.

In St Andrews they go to the Cathedral and set up a meeting with Walter Trail, the Bishop. The Bishop is happy to see them and accepts their coin. He will arrange to color 4 bales of wool, 2 bales yellow and 2 bales purple. Gorse and heather will be used in coloring. This will take 2 days.

In the meantime, the PCs are invited to play a game of kolf on the links. Walter brings his clubs and balls and nine skittles. He takes the group across a small stone bridge over a stream called Swilcan Burn. He says that they call it the Swilcan Bridge. Out on the links, he places his skittles. He explains the game and that some Dutch traders taught it to them. The club hits the ball, and the ball hits the skittles, and you get points. Check against DEX to determine how the game goes. Walter, who has practiced, has a skill level of Kolf-2. He suggests that they all bet a penny.



When one of the PCs' (the one with the lowest DEX) balls fall into a rabbit hole, the PCs may have an idea on how to change this game. Walter says, "Ah will bet ye cannae dae that again".

After the game, the group tries a local ale called Fraoch in which heather has been used for bittering. It is quite good. The PCs are offered a chance to buy a firkin for 15 Pennings (or 15 pence). A firkin is a quarter barrel  $\approx$  37 litres. Only 1 firkin is available.

After inventing the game of golf the previous day, the colored wool has now



been loaded aboard the PCs' cog. The wind is hard and from the south: perfect for sailing north to the Faroe Islands.

## Kirkwall

On the second day of sailing, the sky gets darker and the sea gets rougher. It looks like it may get worse, so the PCs must find shelter. The Orkney Islands (to the west) are the closest land right now.

If this is a historic/fantasy setting, then insert a sea-monster here. The giant lobster shown on the Carta Marina is quite close to the Orkney Islands and could be used.



The PCs find a perfect beach on the eastern part of the main island, one with no cliffs to avoid. The sun is not visible and, in any case, will set soon. The PCs run their ship as far up on the beach as they can manage and tie it to some trees. The area seems quite uninhabited, but they can see farmland and a house at a distance.

The weather is still bad, and the PCs cannot see the Cathedral in Kirkwaa (Kirkwall), but they know it is located further west. The PCs can stay in the rain by their boat but going to the farmhouse or into Kirkwaa may be nicer. Going to the farmhouse is a 10-minute walk. The PCs are not sure how far it is to Kirkwaa but

estimate that it will take at least two hours to walk there in the rain.

The farmer, Sam Jonasson, tells the PCs that they may stay in his barn for the night. He also serves them beer and a mutton stew for free. Sam tells the PCs that there are some problems in Kirkwaa, and that the Jarl has told all farmers to be prepared for trouble.

The next day, the weather is better. The PCs can now see the top of the Cathedral. The PCs are probably curious about what is going on in Kirkwall and may walk or sail there. Walking may be better, since their ship with their important cargo would then not be exposed to whatever trouble there might be in Kirkwaa.

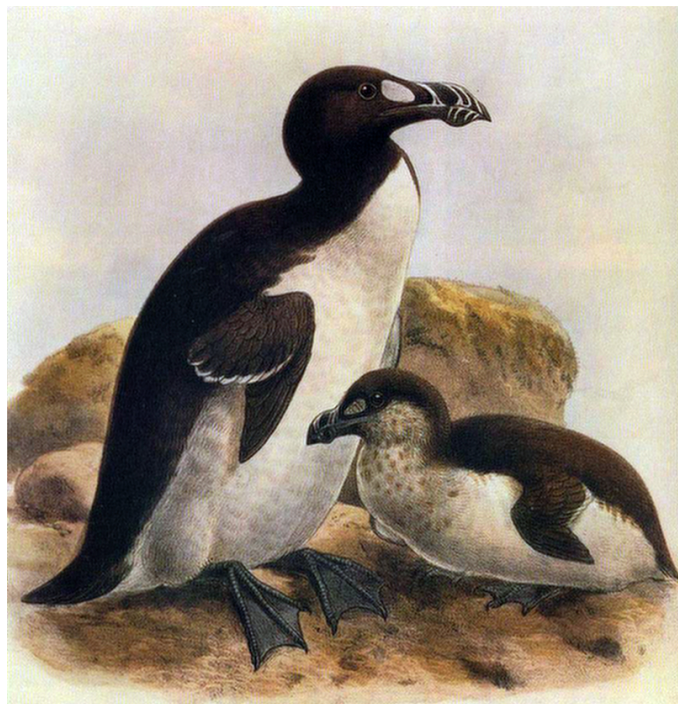
In Kirkwaa, the PCs may seek audience with the Jarl (Henry Sinclair) at Kirkwall Castle, or the Bishop (John Pak) at St Magnus Cathedral, or just talk to people about what is going on. In the harbor there are 3 Hansa cogs. From any of these sources the PCs can learn that:

- The Hansa is here to depose the Bishop and to fill their boats with garefowls to bring back to Lübeck.
- John Pak (a.k.a. Johannes Anglus) is the Bishop of Orkney. The Pope has appointed another prelate, but he is still in mainland Scotland. John Pak on the other hand has been approved by the Archbishop of Nidaros to which the Diocese of Orkney answers.
- There is a colony of garefowls (great auks) at the island of Papay (Papa Westray). The Hansa Commander wants to kill them all. The Jarl has opposed this since these birds are important the islanders--they kill only a small portion of the birds each year.
- Each of the Hansa cogs is armed with four cannons. The total crew of the Hansa



cogs are 45 sailors and three Captains. One Captain is the Commander (Maximilian Bönsch). There are also 15 Soldiers armed with swords and halberds. There is also an emissary from the Pope.

- The Bishop and the Jarl and the people of Kirkwaa don't want to agree to the demands of the Hansa Commander.



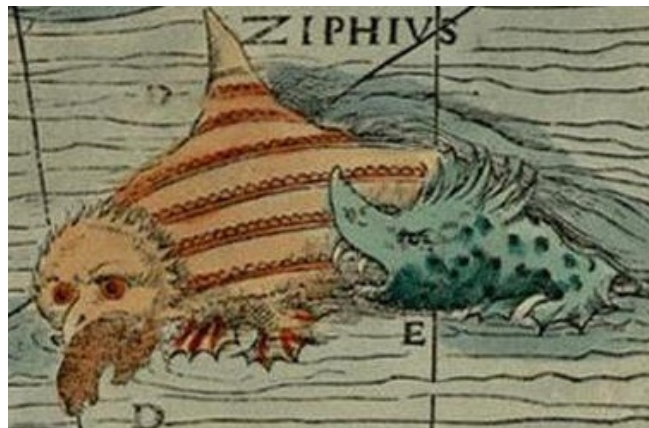
How will this situation be solved? With violence or with a cunning plan now that the PCs are here to help.

**Battle:** If solved with violence, the villagers and farmers will help. There are only a handful of real soldiers in the Kirkwaa Castle, but the Jarl is a good knight and will join the battle. For a dramatic end of the adventures on Orkney, the Jarl may die in battle-historically, he died in battle on Orkney against unknown foes at about this time.

**Bonus Sea Battle:** If the PCs decide that the men from the Hansa must not make it back to the Hansa and a few of them manage to escape (in a damaged cog) then the PCs may try to hunt them down with their own cog. If the PCs have not damaged the Hansa cog themselves, one of the villagers has damaged it and will tell the PCs about it.

## Tórshavn

The PCs continue to The Faroe Islands. For a fantasy setting, the PCs may meet and be attacked by the Ziphius-a whale-bigger than their boat and with a beak similar to a crow's. The beak is big enough to do damage to the boat.



Then, close to the Faroe Islands, they may meet and be attacked by the giant Sea Monk (the Moachus). The Sea Monk will try to crush the boat by rising out of the water and falling on it. It will try to eat any seamen that fall overboard.



For a historical setting, the PCs will see some beaked whales at a distance. Closer to the Faroe Islands they will meet some seals that are swimming close to the boat.

When the PCs get closer to the main island, Streymoy, they will notice the smallest Cathedral that they have ever seen. Arriving at Kirkjubøur town they

meet Bishop Halgier and can pay him with the special coin. The Bishop tells the PCs that they can get their wool colored at Tórshavn on the eastern side of the island. It will take about an hour to sail there or two hours to walk. If they sail, they must keep clear of the Grindadráp (whaling) that is going on just south of Tórshavn.

In Tórshavn the PCs see that the south side of the harbor is full of small boats driving small whales to the beach where they are slaughtered. The water is red.

The PCs deliver one bale of wool to be colored, also red. Coloring and drying will take two days.

### Nidaros

It will take three days to go to Nidaros. On a roll of 10, the PCs will find 2D6 kg of Ambergris on the first day. If this is a fantasy setting, then a sea-monster may attack on the second day. In a historical setting the PCs may spot some orcas.

On the third day the PCs will have to start following the coast. They enter the Trondheim Fjord, and can soon see the Nidaros Cathedral. They sail a short distance up the Nidelva and can unload the cargo there.

Archbishop Vinald Henriksson asks them to wait while they unload the cargo, then gives the PCs a coin to give to the Archbishop in Lund. Vinald says Thank you for bringing me this message, eh, I mean cargo.

The PCs may now buy a suitable cargo to bring back to Lund. There is a lot of fish for sale, but that will not bring any profit at their destination. Dried moose meat and beaver skin will be better. The PCs know that they could probably find either if they are actively looking for it.

### Back to Lund

Going back to Lund will take 4-6 days depending on the cog's load, light or heavy.

In a fantastic setting, they may meet horned sea-cows the first day, and a 12-meter sea snake on the second day. The latter tries to snatch the sailors off the deck.



In a historical setting, the PCs see some seals on the first day.

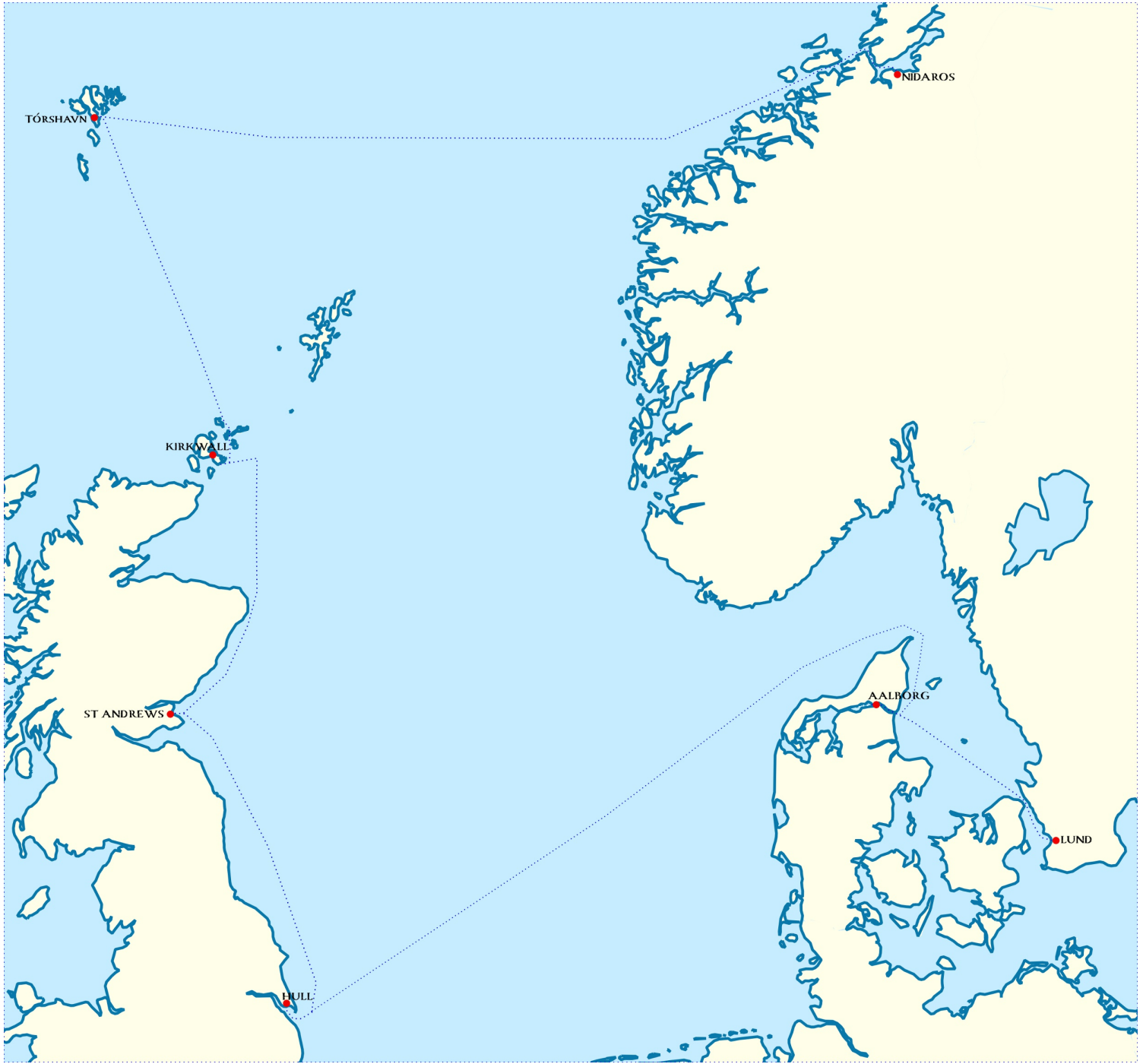
On the third day, pirates attack and must be fought. If the battle goes badly, the referee may have a Dutch warship show up to save the PCs.

When the PCs arrive in Lund they will receive their compensation for this job and will also discover the real Archbishop as he now trusts them. The Archbishop may ask the PCs to do other jobs for him in the future.





# Referee's Map:



# Escape from Qasim's Teeth

## A scenario for Godstar by Neil Lucock

As you emerge from Jump, there is a loud explosion from the engineering compartment and multiple red lights illuminate on the bridge control desk.

A Roll on Engineering (DM +2) tells you that the Boson Compression Module (BCM) has failed. Without it, the Jump Drive is a very expensive paperweight. These typically cost 120,000 Cr to replace. The players don't have that amount of money. The rest of the ship works correctly.

A Pilot/Navigation roll (DM +2) tells them that they are not where they expected to be. When the BCM failed it caused a mis-jump. Your players are now in Aurelia system (A462754 TL D) .

Traffic Control will authorise a flight path to the Axis Port near to the Crater Cities. Axis is 80 km away from Primus City. There is a Grav Train link to the Crater Cities, it costs 105 Cr each way.

Until the players can afford repairs their ship is on a Long Stay Pad (LSP), cheaper but 2 km away from the port buildings. There is a taxi bus service available to the port, it costs 10 Cr per person. The LSP is little more than a place to park. It costs 100 Cr a week.

The players need to find a source of income to repair their ship, find out where in the universe they are and find their way home.

### **An Encounter**

In the The Pilgrim starport bar, the players meet Maxim Al-Amin.

Maxim will assist the players if they help him free his brother Alexi from Punishment Battalion 443.

"My brother is a good man, vey talented,

but was arrested for saying what he believes. He was sent to PB 443. Alexi was falsely arrested, I want you to help him escape."

Maxim Al-Amin represents the Academy of Planetary Sciences (Page 35 of Godstar). He can show some identification, if required. His brother is a Skygazer, but had agreed to work with the Academy. He was denounced by The Jackals and arrested on false charges. However, despite evidence being presented, no one will admit that they were at fault. PB 443 needs workers and has no inclination to release any prisoners.

Maxim wants the players to rescue Alexi. If they do this, the Academy will get its own technicians to repair the player's ship.

### **What Maxim Knows:**

Alexi is a prisoner at Qasim's Teeth work camp, about half way between Crater Cities and Severn Sisters, to the west. The camp is 256 kilometres from the Crater Cities, (about three hours by skimmer, 4 to 5 hours by wheeled vehicle). They are building a bridge over a large chasm at a place called Qasim's Teeth. It got its name because of the rock formations on the west side of the ravine.

If the players agree to help, Maxim will offer 500 Cr as working expenses. If the players do not have a vehicle, he can offer a second hand Skimmer or Skiff. This will need to be returned, it belongs to the Academy.

### **Research desert survival.**

Local computer Networks don't exist, the players will need to find someone who knows about desert survival. No one

legitimate will want to be involved in breaking someone out of PB 443, you'll need a cover story about doing some geological surveying, studying desert plants or animals. There is no such thing as a desert guide, but you might find a surveyor, ecologist or geologist who can give you practical advice. Maxim knows 1D6 persons who might be interested.

Roll 2D6 + the highest EDU statistic of the person conducting negotiations for the group, + Liaison. If no one has liaison, you might make the person like you with Carousing.

Add +1 to the roll for every 150 Cr you add to the roll (declare this before you roll. Minimum payment is 150 Cr, no one works for nothing).

The person rolls 2D6. If the players have the highest roll, the person accepts your offer, you don't roll for the rest. If the players fail, try another person.

The person knows Desert survival 2 and will spend a day (8 hours) with the group.

Each group member present should make a roll of 8+ (add DMs of EDU and INT Characteristic Modifiers Cepheus Engine SRD page 23). Success means you have learned enough to have Desert Survival 0. You might know the basics, but have no practical experience.

You will need some of the equipment on Pages 67 and 68. Your guide can advise you on what to buy and where to buy it (so you don't get "fashionable but not functional" copies). The 8 hours instruction you get includes a shopping trip into the Golden Souk in Tertius (23 on the map). Note the players will have to buy and take extra equipment for Alexi.

### **Find out about conditions in the PB 443 Camps**

You will need Streetwise to attempt to find someone who knows about the camp. Each day you can make one attempt to find someone (either an ex-guard or an ex-

inmate)

Each attempt costs you 100 Cr in expenses, travel, buying drinks etc.

Roll 8+ DM Streetwise skill to find someone.

You can continue to look for people for as long as you wish (as long as you have enough money). If you roll a high score, you get all the information under that score (so rolling 12 gets you everything in 8, 9, etc.)

Roll 8

The camps have no fences, the desert is the greatest fence.

The camp commandant pays a bounty of double food and light duties for a week to any work group that brings in the head and dagger of a Utani. The local Utani tribes kill anyone wandering in the desert if they have come from the camps.

Roll 9

There is an air defence turret on the opposite side of the ravine. This has radar-directed 4 x 40 mm auto-cannons. It is there to prevent anyone turning up in a flying vehicle and rescuing prisoners. If you do not have an approach password, you get shot down. The turret is sealed, it can not hit targets in the ravine. There are three shifts. Every 8 hours a grav vehicle arrives with food, water and replacement crew. There are 4 persons on duty, one officer, one on sensors, two gunners.

Roll 10

There are three kinds of work at the camp.

A plant called Sornyaki grows in the ravine. It has a two metre long leaf that is harvested with a hacksaw. The leaf is beaten into a fibrous paste. One day in the sun makes it set as hard as wood. Flat panels are used as roofing and walls. Sornyaki beams can be made, these are used in making the bridge scaffolding. The paste can be washed out of the fibres and used as a very strong rope, the paste is a strong glue. There is a path to



the South West to the ravine. Groups go each day to harvest the Sornyaki.

The quarry work is the hardest. Prisoners cut stone blocks for the bridge, bring them from the quarry to the construction site on Sornyaki wooden carts.

Building is the most dangerous. Heavy stone blocks are lifted on cranes and winched into position. There are no machine tools except what can be made with Sornyaki rope and wood.

#### Roll 11

Sornyaki is a narcotic and sedative. If chewed, it adds +1 to END but removes -1 from INT for a period of 4 hours, then the person wants to sleep. All prisoners are addicted to the plant, they are allowed some after their evening meal as it makes them easier to manage.

Sornyaki is difficult to set alight, you need the heat from a welding torch or similar to get it going. Once lit, it burns fiercely and sets other nearby plants alight. It is very difficult to extinguish. Wood and panels made from Sornyaki burn like ordinary wood.

#### Roll 12

The local Utani also harvest the plant. They live in the ravine 5 KM to the SW of the bridge site. If anyone sets fire to the Sornyaki stands, the Utani would attack the camp. If the source of Sornyaki was removed, the camp would be unmanageable.

Coming off Sornyaki addiction requires an END roll each day for D6 days. Failure means the character is at -3 DM for every skill roll, the person is irritable, short tempered and restless.

#### Roll 13+

Duty at Qasdim's Teeth is long, uncomfortable and boring. The camp guards are also addicted to Sornyaki. They tend to lock themselves in their buildings (and in the air defence turret) take the

drug and sleep it off. The camp is essentially unguarded at night.

Maxim tells them that Alexi will know they are there if they spend 24 hours in the vicinity of the camp (within 5 km) and keep the name Maxim in their minds.

#### Options

The characters can enter the ravine from the North East. They can get to within 10 km before having to leave any vehicle, as the turret weapon will be tracking them at the far ends of the ravine and they are likely to be seen by people working on the bridge.

The bottom of the ravine has many stands of Sornyaki, broken boulders and rocks.

Approaching from the South West means passing through an area controlled by Utani. They are not friendly. They will spot the players approaching.

#### Roll 2D6

2-4 2D6 Utani tribesmen (as per Sand Man page 86) confront the players. They will challenge them to a duel to the first blood. If the player character injures the Sand Man, they will assist and give advice. If the player character is injured, but fought well, they are free to pass. If the players run, the Utani will attempt to kill them.

#### Taking out the air defence turret

24 hours of observation will show that the turret guard is changed at 7am, 3 pm and 11 pm. The guards do not leave the turret except when their relief arrives. It should be possible to sneak up on the turret and ambush the guards when they change duty, or plant explosives (possibly create a fire of Sornyaki leaves under the turret). The turret sides and top are proof against small arms fire and grenades. The underside is 4mm steel plate.

If the players capture the turret, they can spray the camp admin buildings with

40mm explosive shells.

### Making a diversion

Burning the Sornyaki will make the local Utani assume that PB 443 are responsible (there's no one else present). After the stand is set alight, at midnight the Utani will attack Qasim's Teeth camp with with 1D6 Sand warriors and 4D6 Sand Men (statistics page 86).

The Utani will attack the inmates in their huts. The guards will barricade themselves in Buildings 1 and 2. The inmates are under the influence of Sornyaki, they will not realise what is happening, but will flee into the desert once the Utani attack.

40mm cannon fire

Spraying explosive shells will cause the guards and inmates to abandon the camp and run into the desert. They will not return until it is clear that the cannon fire has stopped.

This will attract the local Utani who will arrive to attack everyone and steal the contents of the tool store and hospital.

### Alexi

Alexi is not an addict. He will run into the desert and towards the player characters once there is a diversion.

Alexi is a psionic with power level 11 in The Way of Karam (page 48), as is Maxim (power level 10). Maxim will let Alexi know that the players are on their way and tell him to listen with telepathic abilities for the players. He will be able to detect them and use telepathy to decide if they are hostile or not.

Once Alexi meets the players, they need to make their way back to their vehicle.

### Hazards after collecting Alexi

Roll 1D6 every hour until the players get back to their vehicle

1-2 Roll on animal encounters table on page 76

3 Sandstorm page 75

4 1D6 escaped criminals, (as per crater

workers on page 86) but unarmed. They will attack until one is injured, then run.

5-6 1D6 Utani (page 86) one Sand Warrior, the rest are Sand Men.

Unless the players have successfully fought the local Utani, they will attack anyone they find, assuming that the players have come from PB 443.

### The Vehicle

If the players left someone to guard it, it is OK.

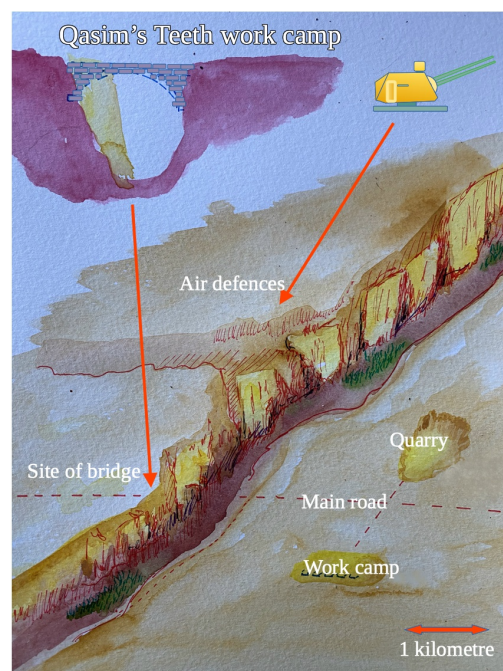
If they had a sandstorm, it will take 1D6 hours to dig it out. Continue to roll on the Hazards table each hour.

If no one is guarding it, roll D6. On 6, 1D6 inmates have beaten the players there. They have not got it running yet. They are armed with rocks and fight until all are wounded or killed.

### Return to Maxim

If you wish, Maxim is genuine and will fulfil his part of the bargain. It will take the Academy staff 1D6 days to repair the broken BCM. Now they have to get home, where ever that is.

If you really want to be evil, Maxim doesn't work at the Academy (false documents) and the players are still stuck on Aurelia.



# Helzr's Recovery Salvage and Repossession Services Part 2

By Graham Bayley

## *Kara's Got Something Else*

### **Referee's Information**

This is a short link section to prepare the characters for their next contract. It also provides some more detail about Kara.

3 weeks after returning from Thebus the character's comm pads chime. It is a message from Kara, asking that they come to Helzr's office.

### **Players Information**

### **Reception Again**

This time, the reception area is less crowded, and the reception desk is manned by a human female that goes by the name Colryn Asper and a big feline male that calls itself Dolfar Whitmane and is dressed similarly to the two Vargr on the previous visit. They greet the characters with "Good morning, Kara is waiting for you in her office. Please come this way" and with that, they lead the characters to a secure lift, open the door and stand aside, to allow them to enter. Once inside, the doors close and the lift starts to move.

### **Kara's office**

After a while the doors open to reveal a large corner office with holoscreens showing images of Kara's home world. In front of the characters is a large meeting table, on the far side of which stands Kara. She turns and sits at the table and invites the Captain to sit opposite her. Once

everyone is seated, she starts.

She begins with "Captain. It is traditional in this industry for a salvage team to have a name, this is so they get known and build a reputation that attracts work. It is better to be asked to fulfil contracts than to have to bid for them."

"Talking of contracts, I may have something for you, if you're interested?"

"Do you have your own ship yet?"

"There is an old, I should probably say venerable, Trade ship by the name of 'Fruitful Venture' parked up in Bay Lima17. She has just completed a long, 120 parsec trip, which included her 500th jump. She is about to be stripped down for a full refit. She has been awarded her certificate of worthiness, but only for a further 5 years, and for light duties only. The 'Fruitful Venture' is all we have free at the moment. You can use her until you have something newer, or more suitable, the choice is yours. Would you like her?"

If the characters accept her offer, then move on to Foul Play Part 1

### ***Foul Play Part 1 Background:***

### **Player's Briefing**

For the last three years there have been reports of an object in a very unusual eccentric solar orbit in a close by system.

The characters have been asked to



investigate the object and determine if there is any potential for salvage.

### The Contract Objectives

1. Locate the Ship.
2. Assess the salvage opportunities, is it derelict? A hulk?

If the craft is salvageable, salvage it and return it to Realgar.

### Referees Briefing

Part 1 - this adventure is used in part to get the players near enough to Marduk, to make them available for the little boy lost adventure.

Part 2 - the conclusion of the adventure and is intended to be played after 'The Little Boy Lost' either before they return to Realgar, or on the way back. In due time this should provide the way to get funds to purchase a new ship of their own choice.

Skills Required: Pilot, Engineer, Astrogation.

Useful: None.

### **What actually happened?**

Following up a rumour about a wrecked yacht in a very unusual eccentric solar orbit, the characters narrow down which system it is in, and begin making efforts to locate it. This should be presented by the referee as a puzzle to solve, at which point the characters can attempt to locate the actual craft. It is in a very strange solar orbit; not one a ship would normally find itself in under any set of circumstances the characters can think of. It does not, however, show signs of weapons fire. Boarding the yacht, the characters find it is deserted. Critical systems have been destroyed by internal explosions which must have been deliberate, totally wrecking the drives and flight controls but leaving the power plant functional. The

plant is running on a minimal level, and still has a little power left. This is being used to keep a single low berth running. The low berth has been jury-rigged using parts of all the ship's emergency survival systems, which look like they, too, were deliberately trashed. Judging from the items lying about, it seems someone fixed up the low berth aboard a dying ship and crawled in and is just barely alive. The low berth occupant is badly hurt, having been shot in both legs. She must have crawled around the ship for days collecting the components she needed and has done a good job of rigging the low berth as a survival pod. She needs careful waking and urgent medical attention but will live – and perhaps even make a good recovery.

The low berth occupant is – was – Jafurra Darrecourt, a mid-level employee in the accounts department of a large business group, who discovered a fraud. Lured to the yacht, an enemy she made in her rise engineered a particularly cruel way to murder her, leaving her wounded aboard her crippled yacht to slowly die as the air ran out. What they did not know was that she started her career as an engineer and had the skills to give her a chance of survival. She has been unconscious for more than three years, and her 'murderer' thinks they have got away with their deed. The ship's eccentric orbit was taking it far outside the system, not to return for decades and, in the meantime, her 'killer' has used her absence to prosper. The victim has no resources, no wealth, and no position anymore; she is officially dead, presumed lost in a misjump incident. Naturally, she wants revenge and will try to get the characters to help. If successful, she will be able to reward them richly, but has little to offer at present. Of course, it is up to the referee to decide if she deserved what happened to her.

### **The Contract Rewards**

Skills Required: Pilot, Engineer, Astrogation.

Useful: Survival, Recon.

The Contract Objectives

1. Locate the Ship.
2. Assess the salvage opportunities, is it derelict? A hulk?
3. If the craft is salvageable, salvage it and return it to Realgar.

### **'The Fruitful Venture'**

The players should really go and check the 'Fruitful Venture' and move in.

### **Systems checks**

By hooking their comp pads up to the 'Fruitful Venture's' internal systems, the system's checks will be considerably quicker. 1D6 Hours.

The characters will discover that the 'Fruitful Venture' has been well maintained, everything is up to date. In fact, some maintenance has been done ahead of schedule. In short, she good to go.

### **Outbound Travel Schedule**

### **Referees Briefing**

Depending on your universe you can make this trip as short or as long as you like, but it should at least 3 to 4 jumps.

### **Target System Sensor Sweep**

This is the first thing the characters should do. If they don't, give them a gentle reminder by having a piece of random space junk bounce off the hull, or bridge window.

Let them define some of the search parameters: Size, type of orbit, etc.

### **Contact**

Have the characters get some early contacts, such as;

- Cargo pods
- Junk or general detritus

Eventually give them a distant contact with details that match what they're looking for, 200 tons, solar elliptical orbit. They will need to get closer for better detail.

Once closer they will be able to determine that the object is a 200 ton Yacht and it is cold (no signature from any drives or its power plant). Its sensors are inactive or passive. The ship's transponder will identify it as the 'Just for Fun', a corporate yacht presumed lost in a misjump incident 3 years ago with the loss of its only passenger, Jafurra Darrecourt. As they get closer still, they will be able to see that there are no obvious signs of weapons damage. Hailing the craft will get no response.

### **Boarding the 'Just For Fun'**

The characters now have to figure a way to get across to the unresponsive yacht. Give them plenty of time to discuss their options. There is no right or wrong way, there is plenty of equipment aboard the 'Fruitful Venture' that can be of assistance. Get them to look in the ship's locker if they are stuck for ideas. Just before trying to get into the 'Just for Fun' the characters get an urgent message from Kara.

### **Kara's calling**

The shipboard comms station and the captain's comp pad sounds an alert and displays that a message has arrived, marked 'for the captain's eyes only'. When opened, it has a video message enclosed.

"Captain, if you've found the object and it's worthy of salvage, I need to slap a salvage finders beacon on the hull and prepare to jump as soon as you prepared. I need you to go there without delay. Further details and your jump coordinates to follow via an encrypted channel. Clumsy—redo Mark it, Register it."

### **Drop Everything, We're on the move**

A very important client of Helzr, The Baroness Tianna Rea-fort has requested that someone be sent to Marduk to check on her nephew Kawar. His steward cum chaperone has not sent his regular report, which is highly unusual. The last report he sent said they were in orbit above Marduk, in his starship 'The Chase is Everything' but that Kawar had not told Turfan his intentions. The 'Fruitful Venture' is to depart immediately for Marduk.

/\* End of Contract Foul Play Part 1\*/

### **The Little Boy Lost**

#### **Background:**

#### **Player's Briefing**

Kawar, the nephew of Baroness Tianna Rea-fort, an important Noble, has gone missing with his starship, 'The Chase is Everything' along with his pilot and steward, a Caniform called Turfan Jenkins. Kawar was looking for creatures for his own Garden Planet, on which he has created his own private Safari Park, when he went missing.

Turfan would regularly send updates back to the family to let them know where Kawar was and that he hadn't got himself into any sort of situation which would cause the family any embarrassment. Kawar is not aware of these updates.

Mission objectives.

1. Find him and return him to safety

2. Return his craft
3. Return any specimen creatures has already collected
4. Bonus

#### **Referees Briefing**

This information can be discovered via general research. Baroness Tianna Rea-fort has a lineage which can be traced back for centuries. Her family was once one of the great shipbuilding dynasties, accumulating vast wealth during this time. The family now owns whole planets, or at least large continents, as their estates.

Her nephew, Kawar, has disappeared, along with his pilot and steward, a Caniform called Turfan Jenkins, whilst looking for creatures for his garden planet in his starship 'The Chase is Everything'. Kawar is very much a playboy and is forever using his family connections to get him out of trouble. Kawar is an arrogant, pompous, spoilt brat. He will use his lineage or money to get his own way and is prone to fits of rage and tantrums.

If the players make enquiries about Turfan, they will hear nothing but good. He is very loyal and trustworthy. Added to this, he is a proficient pilot and accomplished steward. He has served the Rea-fort family for 20 years, originally as a bodyguard.

#### **Possible Rewards**

100kCr upfront for discretion.

1. 100KCr
2. 10% ship value
3. 15kCr, per creature
4. Starship shares



Skills Required: Pilotx2, Engineerx2, Astrostationx2

Useful: Survival, Recon.

Objectives

1. Find Kawar and return him to safety.
2. Return his starship.
3. Return any specimen creatures already collected.

## **Marduk System**

This small, Earth-like world has no surviving cities outside the star port shantytown. The civilisation on Marduk collapsed due to repeated raids from nearby worlds. The planet's population has broken into several dozen clans, each of which fears all outsiders. The clans all have their own languages and wildly divergent cultures. The star port is operated by GeDeCo and is on an artificial island far away from any of the native-held archipelagos.

## **Outbound Travel Schedule**

2 parsecs -- 1 jump 1 week

## **Scanning the system**

Upon arrival at Marduk a quick system scan will reveal 'The Chase is Everything' is lying in a stable low orbit. A more focused scan will show that all her drives, power plant etc., are as would be expected for a ship parked in orbit.

## **Finding the 'The Chase is Everything'**

Any attempts to hail the vessel will result in the following recorded message.

"This is privately registered vessel 'The Chase is Everything'. Please do not attempt to board, Anti-Hijack software is enabled. Repeat, this is privately registered vessel 'The Chase is Everything'.

Please do not attempt to board, Anti-Hijack software is enabled."

A closer visual inspection will reveal that her air/raft bay doors are open, and the air/raft is missing from the bay. The 20 Ton cutter is securely docked in place.

The characters should be dissuaded from trying to enter the 'The Chase is Everything' by having each and every access point carry large warning signs about Anti-Hijack software and Booby-trapped Airlocks. Make scanning the surface the safest and easiest option. If they persist, then hit them with some heavy damage, but do not kill anyone yet.

## **Scanning the surface**

A scan of the planet's surface will detect a small power source adjacent to a heavily overgrown square shaped rock outcrop, surrounded by dense vegetation.

## **Finding the Air/raft**

A more detailed scan will show that the air/raft is actually located partially under a protruding strata section in a small clearing in the surrounding vegetation.

## **Going to the surface**

The characters will need to make their way to the surface. They should use their own air/raft but should take time to prepare.

## **Finding the camp**

Descending to the surface is routine and can be achieved without mishap. The outcrop and clearing become apparent. It would appear that a small camp has been setup with the air/raft tucked under an overhang with its cabin roof open and a clearing in front, which isn't big enough for another air/raft. A larger clearing is a

few kilometres walk away with an easy looking trail leading to the 'The Chase is Everything's' air/raft. Once they have landed, ask the players what they want to do.

They may want to setup their own camp and then set off, they may want to set off immediately, or they may want to split the group, some to set up camp and some to investigate the other camp. Ask the players what they are carrying with them, and what is being left behind.

While setting up camp a couple of light rain showers pass over, suggesting that there might be heavier rain during the night. The terrain is a complete wilderness, with large areas of spiny bushes reminiscent of brambles. These are extremely resistant to being hacked through and have sufficiently nasty thorns to make macho stomping a bad option. They also have a fibrous core, whose long tough strands would likely entangle the mechanism of any rotary cutting tools.

**Referees Note:** These bushes are Spring Vine thorns, which exude a neuro toxin from their tips. They recoil if touched and the toxin can kill small prey, which will then provide nutrients to plant. The toxin will make the characters sick, but they should have an anti-toxin in their med-kits.

Fortunately, there are plenty of gaps to move through, and the bushes are only high enough to block sight in a few areas. However, they would effectively hide anyone who crouched as they moved. After an hour or so of hard work slogging through this terrain for an hour or so and after countless trips and falls, the characters encounter a change in the landscape. There are unusual mounds and oddly regular areas where the undergrowth is small and patchy – as if the soil underneath was very thin. It becomes apparent after a while that this area used to be a city. Very little remains of it now, other than a layer of tumbled masonry

and roadbeds on top of which thin soil has been deposited." It is possible to see where highways and lesser roads once stood, and here and there a small section of wall has survived. Most are covered with creepers which are now home to innumerable small birds.

After a further hour of making your way through or around the interminable vegetation you spy the air/raft across the clearing. You can now see that what appeared to be a rock outcrop is actually the remains of a structure, and the protruding strata section is a partially collapsed upper floor. 'The Chase is Everything's' air/raft is neatly and quite obviously, expertly, parked under the overhang. As you cross the clearing, glad to be free of the worst of the undergrowth, it is possible to see that the once neat campsite is in complete disarray.

With night drawing ever closer, the characters have a decision to make, search the area now or wait until daybreak.

### **Searching the camp**

Near to the front of the air/raft is a gauss pistol with an empty clip and next to it a full clip of ammo. Behind the air/raft, further beneath the overhang, protrudes a pair of booted Caniform feet. It is the dismembered body of Turfan.

Further inspection reveals that Turfan has been killed by an animal, possibly as he reloaded. There are bloodied human boot prints which lead into the air/raft. The inside of the air raft is blood spattered. A stray gauss round has gone through the controls of the air raft and rendered it un-flyable. There are several empty cases from a large calibre rifle scattered in the interior, but no weapon visible, and no trace of Kawar. As dusk starts to fall many of the birds are seen flying home to roost higher up into a

collapsed high-rise building, whose floors provide slopes up to the interior.

The landscape feels eerie, deserted yet alive, with oddly familiar shapes softened by vegetation. The wings of many small birds create sudden sounds and movements, making it seem that there is something lurking at the corner of the characters' eyes. Everyone is tired and at first jumpy, but soon it becomes too much effort to turn at every sound. It's just the birds again.

**Referee's Note:** Do a quick Check to see if any characters have lost equipment during the trip through the scrub.

### ***Seeing a light***

As night sets in, one the characters suddenly think they see a twinkle of light, high up in the vegetation of the overgrown building and, after waiting, it appears again, and then a third time. Allow the characters an opportunity to plot a course to the lights location. As night turns into day an obvious set of human boot prints, accompanied by drops of blood, can be seen leading off into the brush in the direction of the building that the light was seen in, which appears to be approximately 2.5 km away.

### ***Following the trail***

The boot prints initially follow a relatively straight line, with the occasional deviation around denser patches of undergrowth. Judging from the spacing, it becomes apparent that the subject was running. Roughly 0.5km into the brush the subject stops and there is an empty casing on the ground, along with a small, now dried, pool of blood.

The tracks then continue, but now there is a broad drag mark which almost certainly has been caused by the butt of a rifle. This then turns into a barrel impression, as if the

rifle is now being used as an impromptu crutch. About 200 meters further on several sets of prints appear, from what appears to be a dog-footed quadruped, over the original trail. After a further 700 meters the tracks indicate that the human stopped, and probably turned to look behind and then continued at a faster pace for a short distance, before slowing dramatically, then stopping next to more blood. Thrown into the bushes can be seen the empty wrappings from items from a first aid kit.

A further 200 meters on the trail breaks into what must have once been a plaza and the scrub and brush gives way to waist high grasses and flowering plants. The track, although less obvious, still heads towards one of the collapsed upper floors of the building in which the light was seen.

### ***Finding the building***

The characters are able to cross the final 1000 meters to the base of the collapsed floor in short order. Here they will find another small pool of blood and a spent rifle round. The slope created by the collapsed floor is covered in 'liana' type roots, which although they are still quite thorny, are climbable with caution.

### ***Entering the building***

Getting to the top of the slope is exhausting, with many slips and slides, but luckily, no falls. The slope ends and the floor becomes level. There is a trail in the mulch, with one obviously dragging foot, heading further into the building, and towards an old doorway. The door for the doorway has long since gone, and the remaining hinge is encrusted in rust. Beyond the door is an intact stairwell. The stairs going down descend one flight and are then blocked by rubble. The stairs going up appear to be unimpeded as far as can be seen.



Every upward flight terminates in a landing, with a closed and locked security door. The first couple of doors bear witness to attempts to open them by brute force alone. After ascending several flights, the characters are faced by another door-less frame. The doorway opens onto another flat floor. Directly ahead the floor ends abruptly in a jagged edge. To the right the exterior wall stands, still intact, but pierced at regular intervals by window openings.

To the left is a doorway into what appears to have been an interior room. The doorway has been blocked by an ad hoc barricade. The lingering smell of a wood fire hangs in the air.

### **Finding Kawar**

If the characters make themselves known, there will be a response from Kawar, who is hiding in the room. If the characters make no sound and approach the doorway silently, as they reach the doorway, they will be shot at by the terrified Kawar, sheltering within. Roll some dice, but Kawar is likely to miss in his weakened state.

The barricade can be climbed over; it is not very well built but is about 1.5m high. Once inside, a lean-to shelter can be seen. Inside is a very scared, very dirty and dishevelled Kawar. The smell of infection is immediately apparent. Kawar has a nasty, infected, bite wound to his left thigh. He has a second bite wound which has removed most of his right calf muscle, his right forearm has been bitten so deep that the bones are crushed and shattered. He has numerous superficial wounds to his face and left arm.

The characters now need to formulate a plan, or plans. See if they can come up with all the options.

They need to;

- Treat Kawar's wounds /here/in orbit/at the star port.

- Come up with a way to get him to the air/raft, or, get the air/raft to him.

As they discuss their options tell them that the light is starting to fade. Into orbit or head to the star port?

### **Nightfall again - The attack**

The Referee should take time to read the section on Garinars. This can happen either on the trip back to the air/raft or during the night.

Kawar may be in a state to have given the characters a description, and the local name, he likes to show-off, especially if it makes him look more intelligent. This is what he was here to collect, but had only got as far as stalking one, before he and Turfan were ambushed at their camp.

Garinars are described locally as:

'Extremely clever teeth-killing thing'

'That which was left over after civilisation collapsed'

'The things out in the darkness' and 'Death beyond the light'

Garinars can best be described as a 'bristly furred, long-legged dog-like quadruped', striped in grey and dingy brown, with long fangs and claws that let it climb as well as gouge and tear. They resemble a larger version of African wild dog.

The attack will be sudden organised and relentless. The Referee should determine how many attackers there are. Make this a challenge. Wounded Garinars will back off and then re-join the fight as a group. Kawar will only be able to take part if he has been supplied with a handgun. Hopefully, they remembered to bring the recently departed Turfan's Gauss Pistol.

Kawar will be 'very' insistent that he be returned to his ship and the characters take him home. He does not want it stolen by pirates, or by any other low life. He will threaten the characters with all sorts of things if they don't do as he says. His Aunt is very important, and he has lots of money and can pay for very good, 'the best' lawyers that money can buy.

### **Getting back to orbit**

The 'The Chase is Everything' 's air/raft, although damaged, can be jury rigged in extremis, in order to get everyone to orbit or back to the character's own air/raft. Kawar, providing he has received some food and water, and some medical care, will be able to supply the characters with the necessary over-ride codes to enter the 'The Chase is Everything'.

### **In Orbit**

The characters now have a conundrum, or two. They need to:

Get Kawar back to his home world.

Get the 'The Chase is Everything' to its home world.

Get The 'Fruitful Venture' to their base of

**Garinar - For description see page 30.**

operations.

Remind the players that it is a multi-week return trip and Kawar is a spoilt brat and will probably whine all the way home and make ridiculous demands of anyone looking after him.

/\* End of Contract the Little Boy Lost \*/

## **Appendix A Contracts**

### **Contract: Foul Play Part 1**

Part I this adventure is used in part to get the players near enough to Marduk, to make them available for the little boy lost adventure.

Part II is the conclusion of the adventure and is intended to be played after 'The Little Boy Lost' either before they return to the home world, or on the way back. In due time this should provide the way to get funds to purchase a new ship of their own choice.

### **Contract: The Little Boy Lost**

This adventure will gift the players their own starship and therefore grant them a greater amount of autonomy.









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