TRAVELLER CHRONICLE

New Hope

8

The Traveller Chronicle

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The Editor Speaks...

Greetings, Salutations, and Welcome Back!

First off, our apologies for this issue being SOOO late. Our submissions dried up and without articles, we can't publish a magazine. I'd like to thank everyone who came through for us, especially Andy Lilly. So send your stuff in, people, so we can get the next issue rolling!

This issue brings new talent to the magazine including Bradley McDevitt (who's not very new to the TNE crowd) and Christian Royse. Hope you like their artwork. Let us know by filling in the response card located in the center of the magazine.

That's all for now folks...

From those of us Behind the Claw,

Kevin Knight

How Are We Doing???

Please take the time to let us know what you liked and didn't like about this issue of the Traveller Chronicle. Just fill out the response card in the middle of this issue and mail it back to us! A lucky three people will receive a free copy of the next issue. Please rank the articles and submissions on a scale of 0 (the worst) to 5 (the best).

Responses From Last Issue	Rating
A Rock Called Jade	4.11
The Intendant	4.00
Aikhiy	4.33
Caledon Subsector	4.00
Weapon's Locker	2.89
Far Frontiers	3.75
Artwork (Richard Biever)	5.00
Artwork (Radley Masinelli)	3.89
Artwork (Nathan Mezel)	3.37
Artwork (Mike Sorensen)	3.31
Artwork (Paul Sanders)	4.00
Artwork (Alan Gillispie)	3.11
Overall Satisfaction	4.25

The winners of free copies of Issue 8 are Jan Kowalzig, Ben Hopkins, and James Dempsey. Congrats!

Into the Sa'Drit Jungle
by Marcus Zarra

In this adventure a party of 4-6 people are going on what seems to be a very easy and simple search for a missing expedition which blossoms into a fight to the death for survival. It is best to have at least one person with medical skill and one with survival skills.

Advertisement

"Wanted urgently; experienced crew with a private ship. Experience must include extensive exploration in the wilds. Exceptional pay with potential of large long term bonus. Apply to fmall5478@downport.aubaine".

Patron

When the party calls the number they contact an older gentleman by the name of Kieth Valor who asks to meet with them in the afternoon two days from today in a small bar called The Spiral Down on the other side of town.
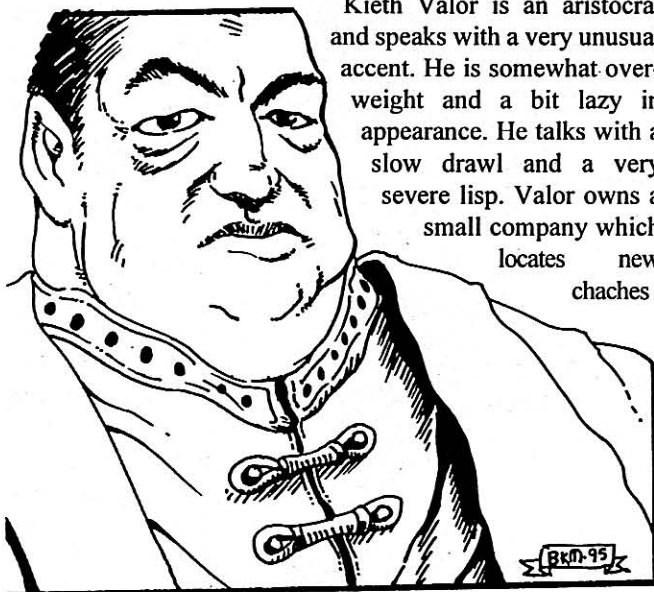
Kieth Valor is an aristocrat and speaks with a very unusual accent. He is somewhat over-weight and a bit lazy in appearance. He talks with a slow drawl and a very severe lisp. Valor owns a small company which locates new chaches of old tech and then sells the locations to other larger interested parties. Normally he deals strictly in cemetery work, but occasionally he finds something on a populated planet that is just too good to pass up. Recently, while Valor was searching through one of the less profitable cemetery worlds, he ran across a data crystal that made reference to a 'ravine outpost on Pekuraa'. He searched the available maps of Pekurra and found a large ravine close to the starport. Valor then sent out an investigative team to see if there was anything worth reporting.

About two weeks ago, Valor received a report that his search party had crashed their G-Carrier into a crater lake about 40 kilometers from the starport. Now it is possible that a system on the Carrier merely failed, but it is unlikely. The locals have refused to investigate the crash because it was 'not their problem'. Valor wants the party to investigate the crash site and determine what caused it. In addition, if it is possible, Valor would like for the party to recover any infor-mation about the ravine. This may include searching the ravine if they can find out no information from the carrier or cannot find the carrier. If the party does find and retrieve any artifacts, Valor is willing to split the profits of the sale of those artifacts 60/40. In addition, he will further give the party 20% of the finder's profits if there is an outpost in that ravine.

Valor is basically on the up and up with his deal. He is willing to negotiate the split to 50/50 and the finder's profits to 30%, but will not go any further than that. However, Valor is not telling the whole story to the party. If the party has any free trader contacts on Aubaine or any contacts within RCES and thinks to talk to them about their mission, they will find out additional details about Pekuraa that Valor will claim that he was not aware of. The full information about Pekuraa is outlined below. The amount of information that you give to the party is your choice. The less information that you give to the party, the more difficult the mission will be.

Pekuraa (Diaspora 2236 D78456A-9)

Pekuraa is very typical of a minority government in rule of the majority and not caring too much how the majority lives. At the time that the party will be on the surface, several things will be happening at once.

First, a rebel force by the name of "Sons of the Phoenix" will be planning and executing several raids. The party and their ship may even be a target for these attacks. The rebels want the government to stop all off-planet trade and contact. They further demand that all technology be stopped and to "go back to a simpler time". They of course are trying to get their hands on all high tech that they can grab to accomplish this end.

The second thing that is happening, is that just prior to the arrival of the players, the Government declared martial law for all cities. No weapons are allowed to be owned by anybody. This especially includes any off-worlders. Off-worlders caught with contraband are usually sentenced to death (75%) or a workcamp (25%) for life. Natives are always sentenced to work camps for life. Every person is searched before they leave the starport area, and attempting to enter or leave the starport in any way other than the check points is grounds for an immediate sentence of death. Fortunately, the government is corrupt and a search party can be convinced to look the other way, for a price. All forms of non-government aircraft are unlawful and will be forced down and seized by the police.

The area that the exploration party crashed in is known as the Sa'Drit jungle. This jungle, as the party will learn, is off limits to both natives and offworlders. The jungle is being cleared for more space for farming and population growth. In addition, it is believed that the Rebels are hiding in the jungle. The government claims that it is too dangerous due to the activities of the Rebels and the conversion that is being done. It is also claimed that the government is at this time sweeping the jungle and anybody could be

mistaken for a rebel.

The planetary tech level is low and anything above a ground car will be an unusual site. The police force does have slightly higher tech access and they are equipped with flak jackets and TL9 laser carbines. The police force can be seen driving ground cars. Roll once per day that the party is in the town to see if they have an encounter with the police force.

Orbiting Pekuraa

From orbit, the planet seems rather normal. There are the signs that the civilization has been polluting the atmosphere which is normal for a low tech planet such as this one. As soon as the party enters orbit, they receive a radio signal from the planet.

The signal is as follows:

"This is Pekuraa orbital control. Encoded with this message is your flight path if you wish to land on the planet. If you stray from this path, you will be considered hostile and will be subject to meson attack. Once you have landed, you will wait until a customs agent contacts you. Do not leave your ship until you have been contacted and released from quarantine. End."

Encoded in the message is a flight path that designates the exact pad they are to land on.

It is obvious at this point that they will not allow the party to land directly in the jungle or the ravine. The party's choices are extremely limited; they can land at the starport or they can leave.

The Starport

Once the party lands, they will notice that the starport is rather run down and it seems clear that the people running the place are not familiar with how a port should be run. There are paint lines all over the tarmac where apparently someone painted landing lines and then changed their mind several times. There are large piles of junk all over some of the landing sites and there are several sites that are nothing but large holes in the ground. On the other side of the field, the tail of a SDB can be seen jutting out of the ground.

After several hours, the party sees a ground car approach their ship. As it pulls up it can be seen that there is one man and three police officers in the car. They stop just outside the airlock and two of the police officers get out with the gentleman who is dressed in some form of business suit.

The customs agent will request to examine the entire ship claiming to be looking for smuggled goods. He will examine the cargo and make sure that there is no contraband. He will pick some small item out of the cargo and state that it cannot be brought onto the planet. He will examine the ship's log to determine the last five stops of the ship. He will also advise the party that the city is under martial law and that all weapons are contraband. They can be left on the ship, but if they are caught with them, they will be pro-secuted. The party can ask him any questions and he will answer to the best of his ability from the description above. After a very thorough inspection, he will issue the party a pass, charge them Cr500 for the inspection and allow them to leave their ship. The party will also be informed that it is the local custom that all non-believers of Patah (The God of knowledge) must wear a red turban. He recommends that each party member purchase one before leaving the starport or they may become vic-tims of a mob. It is also the law that all women are to wear ankle length robes that hide all features. If a woman is caught without wearing a robe, she will be arrested and suffer up to four years incarceration.
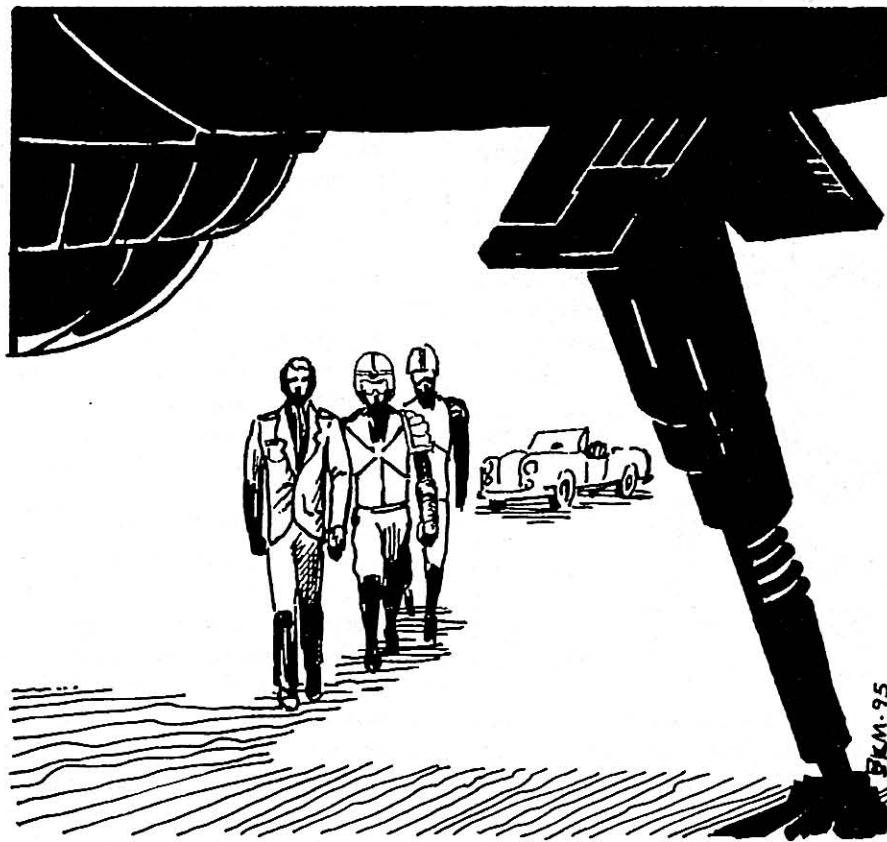
Pekuraa Down

When the party attempts to leave the starport, they will walk through a metal detector and will be searched completely for weapons. If they do not allow the search, they will be put into custody until they allow it. If they offer any resistance to the search, they will be watched closely from here out. In any event, the party will be charged a Cr50 visitor's fee to leave the starport and issued a visitor's visa and must be renewed every 30 days. This pass must be re-issued each time the party leaves the starport. If the party does not conform to the customs of the planet, they will be arrested as soon as they leave the starport. Men will be fined

Cr500 and be forced to wear the turban. Women will be sentenced to four years incarceration or charged a Cr2500 fine. If the party tries to smuggle weapons out, it will be an Average:bribery task. There is a 60% chance that a security guard will make an off-handed hint about being willing to take a bribe.

Once leaving the starport, they will walk into what can only be considered a rundown slums. There is a tremendous worn or tired look about the entire town. There are bars on the windows, the people seem spiritless and the city has a general dirty feel to it. The design of the city is very poor and all the streets wind around each other. If the party is not careful, they could become lost very easily. If the party wishes to find a room to rent, they can find several around town. The ones that are within site of the starport are priced at about Cr75 per day per two people not including meals and are extremely disgusting. If the party ventures away from the starport, they can find a decent room for four people for Cr60 per day which includes one meal per day per person.

Transportation

The party will more than likely attempt to rent a vehicle to travel into the wilderness. If that is the case, they can rent a wheeled ATV from one of several shops at a rate of Cr250 per day with a Cr5,000 deposit. All vehicles are registered with the government and have a tracking device implanting in their framework. If asked, any shop owner will notify the party of this, but they will not mention it if not asked.

If the party owns their own wheeled or tracked vehicle, they can use it, but it must be inspected for "emissions" before it can be allowed into the city. The inspector charges Cr400 to inspect the vehicle and will pass it in about four hours. During the inspection, a tracking device will be placed on the vehicle so that it can be tracked if necessary. This device does have an explosive charge built into it and the device will be placed near the engine.

We are still having problems with the contra-grav lifters...

Leaving the City

To leave the city, the party must pass through a police check point. The party will have to purchase a seven day travel pass at a cost of Cr500. If they do not return within those seven days, they will be assessed a Cr150 penalty per day and if they do not return in 16 days then they will be declared dead and all of their possessions will become property of the State.

Travel into the Sa'Drit

Once the party leaves the city they will have a very uneventful trip until they reach the jungle proper. There a road reaches about three kilometers into the jungle and then stops. It appears that the road was made by starting fires and then clearing off the burnt wood. Obviously, if this practice continues, this culture will do irrevocable damage to their ecosphere.

The jungle is extremely thick with a heavy amount of undergrowth along with a dense packing of trees. The tree canopy has an average height of 40-50 meters. The fastest way to travel through the jungle is by foot. Any land based vehicle will have to stop after going half a kilometer into the jungle. Travel by foot is at half rate to account for the winding nature of the paths that the characters will be forced to take. Roll once each day for an encounter on the jungle encounter table. Provisions will not be a problem as the party can find edible animals and plants along their route. If no one has survival skills, it is a Difficult test against Intelligence to realize the edible nature of the plants.

Lake Kur

Once the party reaches Lake Kur it will be very apparent that the lake was created by an asteroid hitting the surface millions of years ago. The lake is approximately 15 kilometers in diameter and roughly circular. The waters for the lake are extremely clear and, if they party could fly over the lake, they could locate the downed craft by sight.

G-Carrier

The G-Carrier is submerged in 50 meters of water approximately one kilometer off the west coast of Lake Kur. Once the G-Carrier is located, the party will discover that it appears to be intact, lying on its side with the airlock side facing the surface. There is a large hole near the rear of the craft on the bottom. If the party inspects the craft, they will discover that the crash was caused by an internal explosion near the power plant. This explosion caused the contra-grav lifters and power plant to fail.

Once inside, they will find that the entire team died in the crash. If the party thinks of it, there are three hand computers in the craft.

Once the hand computers are retrieved, they will discover that one belongs to the team captain. The other two computers belong to an engineering officer and a medical officer. The engineer's and doctor's computers have had their memory damaged beyond repair. The captain's computer is also severely damaged (To repair the computer, Difficult: Computer), but there is one log entry that can be retrieved:

"We have done a long range survey of the ravine to the west of Lake Kur and have found what might be a tech site. Unfortunately, we are still having problems with the contra-grav lifters on the G-Carrier. We have decided to go back for repairs and then we will return to continue our search. I hope the carrier can be repaired very quickly. I want to get off this planet before the Rebels actually start making some real noise."

No other log entries can be salvaged from the computer. It is obvious at this point that the party must resume the previous team's mission.

Ambush

The first night after the party leaves the crash site, they will be ambushed by Rebels. There will be four more rebels than there are players. Make sure that the rebel party is strong enough to take on the party and make it a good fight. Remember, the rebels are trained to fight in the jungle and they will use every bit of cover possible. They are able to travel among the tree tops and can attack from just about any angle. The rebels will be using TL5 7mm carbines with two extra clips per person. All the rebels are to be considered experienced NPCs. They will have no armor, considering it too hindering. After the rebels have lost half of their party to the characters, they will retreat into the jungle. It will be virtually impossible for the characters to track them.

Travel to the Ravine

The ravine will be very difficult for the party to travel in. The ravine rises to a height of more than 200 meters over the river. Most of the rock is a granite type substance that will crumble under their feet. The bottom of the ravine is a river so the party will either have to travel on the rim (and chance missing the base), travel in the water (and have difficulty climbing up the ravine), or along the edges. There are a number of paths that the party can take along the faces of the ravine but travel will be very slow. If the party is not roped together, there is a 1 in 10 chance that someone will slip from the crumbing rock. If this happens, roll randomly to check to see who it is and have them make a AGL check. If they fail they fall to the bottom of the ravine and suffer damage per the rules.

The entrance to the base is on the eastern face of the ravine about 10 km from the lake. If the party is walking on the rim of the ravine, it will be a Formidable test against Observation. If they are rafting down the river, it will be a Difficult test against Observation. Finally, if they are hiking along the face, it will be an Easy test against Observation. The entrance looks large enough for a shuttle or scout craft to pass through. There is a small entrance situated next to the hanger entrance. It will be a Difficult test against Electronics to enter the base.

The Base

When the party searches the base they will discover that the base has been deserted and was picked clean some time after that. There are, however, some items of value. There are two TL15 jump drives rated for two parsecs (designed for a scout ship), a missile barbette (no missiles) and a 200 MW TL15 fusion power plant. This is obviously a very large

find, but also too large for the party to remove. In addition to the large items above, the party will also find three suits of TL14 Battle Dress still in crates in one of the storage rooms. There is no loading equipment or anything else of value in the base. This was obviously some kind of Scout base prior to virus.

Escaping Pekuraa

When the party returns to their vehicle they will see that it is no longer there. When they walk back into town, the security will deny knowing them or issuing them passes to leave the city. The party will be informed that the city is under lock down and they will have to wait until the riots are calmed down before they can enter. If the party waits, the riots will be calmed in about three weeks. If they attempt to sneak into the city, it will be fairly simple for them but they will discover that their ship is no longer where they left it. Their ship will be located in a government section of the starport under government seal. There will be two armed guards around the ship at all times. The guards will be armed with TL8 laser carbines and ballistic weave vests. Once these guards are defeated, It will be an Average test of Electronics to defeat the government seal and gain access to their ship.
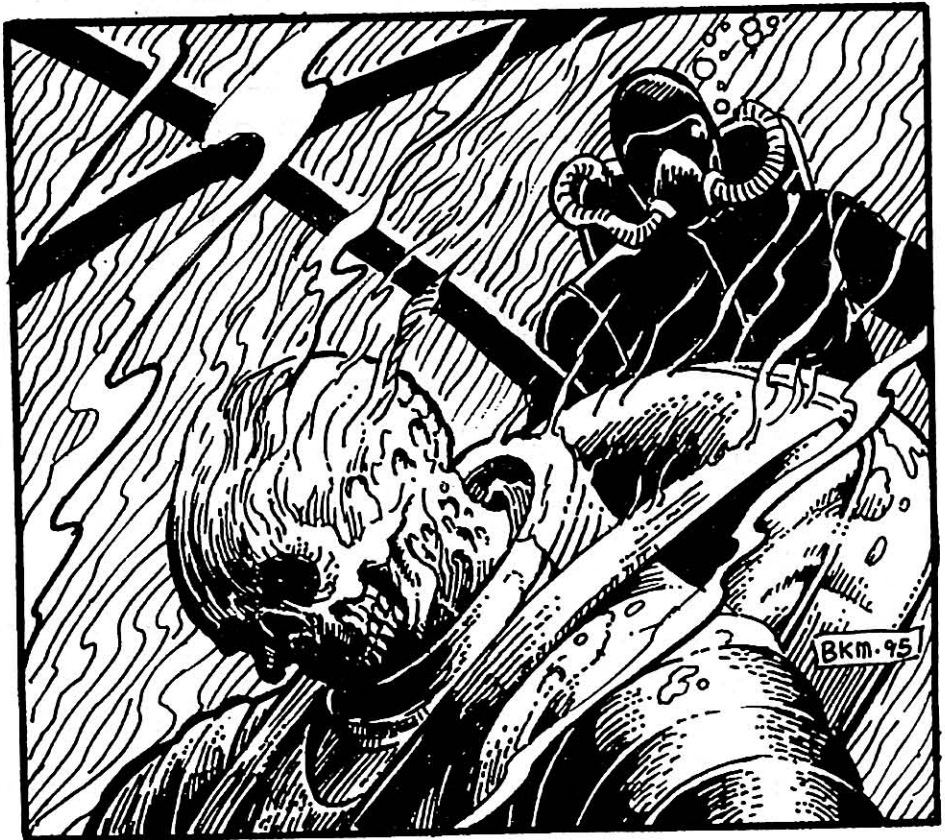
The threat of a meson gun when the party entered orbit was just that, a threat. The meson gun has not worked in living history.

Return to RCES space should be rather uneventful. Once they return, they need to report back to Valor so that he can place a finder's claim on the base. Considering the value of the other equipment in the base, Valor will allow the party

to keep the three suits or sell them for their own profit. He will not offer this but will agree to it if asked. No doubt RCES will have to do some form of smash and grab raid on the base in the future. The party will receive the agreed upon percentage of the finder's fee and will be considered for any future ventures that Valor runs across.

Town Events

Roll once per day on the table below to determine if there is going to be an encounter.

1d10 Name Event

1 **Police**   A squad of two police officers in ballistic weave vests will stop the party and ask to see their visas. In addition, if the party does not conform to the local dress, they will be arrested immediately.

2 **Thief**   A local thug will attempt to pick-pocket one of the party members. The thief will have a 10 + 1D6 skill level. If the party catches the thief, they can turn him into the local authority who will believe the thief over the party and release him. They will warn the party not to be harassing the citizens.

3 **Explosion**   A nearby building is the source of a large explosion. The explosion will kill anyone in the building at the time and cause a large fire. The news will report that it was a terrorist attack by the 'Sons of the Phoenix.'

4 **No event**

5 **No event**

6 **Sniper**   A shot will be fired at the party from a nearby building. The shot will barely miss and the party will not be able to locate the sniper.

7 **Drunk**   A drunk attempts to pick a fight with one of the party members or attempts to hit on one of the females in the party. He passes out before anything can become violent.

8 **Children**   A group of young kids in their early teens will run past the party screaming 'kill the aliens, kill the aliens'. They will run down a near-by alley and disappear.

9 **No event**

10 **No event**

Sa'Drit Events

Roll twice per day on the table below to determine if there is going to be an encounter.

1D20 Name Event

1 **Rainstorm** A sudden rainstorm reduces visibility and turns the ground to thick mud. Ground travel is slowed to quarter speed for the four-hour period.

2 **Drums** Distant drums are heard; periodically they fall silent and are answered from another direction. If the party investigates, they to discover that these are the mating calls of a large omnivore. (Hunter: Claws & Teeth, 1D6+1 dam, 30/30 hits, 3 int, 1 pen, sht rng, 9 to hit, no armor, A F , s25)

3 **No event**

4 **Rebel ambush** A rebel look out party situated in the trees will attack the party with sniper fire. After about five rounds, the rebels will retreat into the jungle.

5 **Tanglewood** A large area of the jungle floor is covered by a sticky dense wood. Travel is reduced to one quarter speed for the one-hour period.

6 **Rainstorm** A sudden rainstorm reduces visibility and turns the ground to thick mud. Ground travel is slowed to quarter speed for the four-hour period.

7 **No event**

8 **No event**

9 **Animal trap** The lead member in the party has to make a Formidable AGL check to avoid falling into a pit designed to catch animals. The pit is 10 meters deep. The character will take damage as appropriate.

10 **Rainstorm** A sudden rainstorm reduces visibility and turns the ground to thick mud. Ground travel is slowed to quarter speed for the four-hour period.

11 **Cold Snap** The ambient temperature falls rapidly. Individuals must obtain shelter (or put on heavy clothing) or suffer 1 point of damage to all locations per hour for 1d10 hours.

12 **Radiation** An area in the jungle is devoid of life, and a radiation sensor shows very high levels of radiation near the center. Individuals who spend more than 10 minutes in the area will suffer from radiation sickness, beginning 1D6 hours later. The illness will last one day for each 10 minutes spent in the area. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and headaches, and the character will have STR, AGL, and INT halved for the duration. The radiation area is 2 km in diameter and there is a destroyed scout ship in the middle. It appears that it crashed nose first. There are no salvageable materials in the scout.

13 **No event**

14 **No event**

15 **Statutes** The party finds a large stone statue half buried; the torso is human but the head is that of a local carnivore.

16 **Rainstorm** A sudden rainstorm reduces visibility and turns the ground to thick mud. Ground travel is slowed to quarter speed for the four-hour period.

17 **No event**

18 **No event**

19 **Rebel ambush** A rebel look out party situated in the trees will attack the party with sniper fire. After about five rounds, the rebels will retreat into the jungle.

20 **Rainstorm** A sudden rainstorm reduces visibility and turns the ground to thick mud. Ground travel is slowed to quarter speed for the four-hour period.

All the Fun of the Fair

by Andy Lilly

With grateful thanks to Jo Jaquinta for Red Wizard and Ship's Cats

1. New Frontiers Starfarer's Exhibition

The NFSE is a large exhibition of starfaring technology, aimed at advertising almost everything to do with space travel. Fairs vary widely in size and location; we shall concentrate on the NFSE currently travelling through the Far Frontiers worlds of the Inverness subsector.

2. New Frontiers Corporation (NFC)

NFC is run by the accountant brother/sister team Roner and Marianna Farquin. Realizing the potential profits to be made from a touring exhibition, they set up NFC several years ago. Based on the subsector capital Narsus, NFC now employees 30 full-time staff (personal assistants, liaison, account-ants, contracts, etc.) and has an annual turnover of CR50M. A 3 month-long tour is run every 6 months (spending 1-3 weeks at each of 5-10 planets). The intervening time is used to organize the next tour - Roner and/or Marianna travel to each planet for 2-4 weeks to negotiate the location, transport, local exhibitors, etc.

3. Exhibitors

3.1. Main Exhibitors

These are the larger companies who can afford to travel with the exhibition. In particular NFC has close connections with Torian Travel - a major shipping group in the Inverness area. Torian provides free transport to NFC and cheap rates for other exhibitors. In return, Torian gets free advertising and a premier stand location at the NFSE.

3.2. Local Exhibitors

These can be off-world companies who can only afford to travel to one or two planets, or localized concerns who have no desire (or need) to advertise off-world.

4. Exhibition Arrangements

4.1. Location

The NFSE is held at the local starport, usually in several disused hangars or equivalent buildings. NFC pays to have the area cleaned up, repaired and repainted prior to the exhibition.

The exhibition is divided into three sections: public, trade and 'shield' (security). Each section is usually in its own building(s) with associated security staff, refreshments, etc.

4.2. Public Exhibition Hall

This area is open to all ticket-holders and contains displays intended to famil-iarize and enthuse the public with space travel. There are plenty of snack refreshment facilities and (usually) bar areas. 'Real' starfarers regard this as the 'ground hogs' area and only visit it to thrash members of the public at the flight simulations. Typical exhibitors include:
* In-system and inter-system passenger travel companies
* Public cargo shipment firms
* Holiday/ business travel agents
* Travel/Cargo insurance companies
* Luggage manufacturers
* Personal vacuum suit suppliers (cheap, low quality suits)
* Mobile communications suppliers
* 'Home' computer and software sales groups (including flight simulators, interactive virtual-reality games, etc.)

* Holoview (or 2D-projection) rooms displaying the latest space hero films, interspersed with heavy advertising ("Visit Wongak and stand on the spot where Bulk Rogers defeated the invading Grongians")
* Off-world artifacts are intended to encourage the public into travelling. These display a wide range of off-world goods and artifacts not generally available to the current planet.
* 'Mail'-order stalls - companies offering to supply the above off-world goods.
* Duty-free shop (a real crowd puller!) offering whatever off-world (consumer) goods would normally be heavily taxed on the current planet.

4.3. Trade Exhibition Hall

This hall is only available to those with trade tickets. This is where the genuine starship exhibitors are found and where serious transactions take place. Typical exhibitors include:

* Shipping - ranging from single trader ships to corporations, these stalls advertise shipping services and their specialisations (livestock, plant life, high value items, physical/electronic mail, etc.).
* Passenger services - similar to the stalls in the public area, but dealing mostly with business and high-class travellers.
* Insurance - as per the public area but only dealing with large/valuable cargoes.
* Broker services - both off-world and local.
* Legal services - specialists in off-world and/or local regulations.
* Accountancy services - advisors on taxation, ship mortgage repayments, etc.
* Banking services - providing loans for buying the more expensive items found in the exhibition.
* Shipboard services - selling prepackaged ship food, sanitation and air filtration packs, cleaning/valeting services, etc.
* Computer sales - ranging from hand computers to complete ship computers: upgrades, peripherals and some programs (generic navigation, gunnery, etc.).
* Software sales - specialist programs (data analysis, surveying, mining, etc.) and enhanced navigation, gunnery, etc. programs. Major sales are often in library data packages for the local planet or other systems.
* Ship drives - representatives of manufacturers or authorized sales outlets. These may range from tiny space maneouvre drives to giant jump drives. Drives may be available on the day (e.g., second hand) or may be made to order. Some companies may specialize in alternative drive types (solar sails, etc.).
* Engineering services - installers and repairers, ranging from local one-man sanitation services to local or off-world ship-building companies.
* Luxury craft retail - a large stand may have a small luxury in-system yacht on display. Smaller stands will have holographic displays of their wares.
* Spaceship retail - as retailers of complete spaceships. The larger stands may have a small luxury in-system yacht on display.

* Starship retail - a limited number of retailers of complete starships may be present. Examples of their craft may be parked in nearby port parkbays. Customers who are suitably interested in a ship (and have sufficient funds to purchase it) will be driven to the appropriate parkbay and escorted around the ship. Often a single small ship from the largest manufacturer may form the centerpiece of the entire hall.
* Cabin accessories - retailers of cabin decoration (holo-windows, land/sea-scape displays, colour-shifting wall paints) and furnishings (from luxury suites to cabin lockers).
* Safety equipment - fire prevention, fire-fighting kit, cargo restraints, noxious gas detectors, radiation detectors and protection suits, etc.
* Hostile environment equipment - suppliers of atmosphere analysers, filter masks, cold weather clothing, etc.
* Encounter kits - Translation books or automated systems, computer library data on alien races (major and minor) and also on flora and fauna.
* Survey equipment - antennas, radars, densitometers and other sensors (hand-held, vehicle and ship systems), specialist computer software. One or more specialist analysis fields such as terrain mapping, analysis of minerals, chemicals, flora, etc.
* Medical kits - from 'jab' kits for tourists to complete emergency facilities such as might be required on a large passenger liner.
* Entertainments systems - hardware (display systems, virtual reality interfaces, etc.), software (games, databases, encyclopedias, history tapes, engineering data, etc.) and subscriptions (to get the latest news, films, etc. at each port).
* Training systems - advanced flight simulators, virtual-reality models of emergency situations, alien liaison encounters, etc.
* Maintenance equipment - suppliers of various replacement parts, normal and specialist tool kits, diagnostics systems, etc.
* Vacc suit manufacturers - various suit types, PLCCs, fix-it kits and accessories.
* Anti-hijack systems - suppliers (and installers, if desired) of simple ship protection measures: locks (including simple voice recognition, palm-printing, etc.), internal and external video cameras, external lighting, mechanisms for automatically releasing tranquilizer gas, tranq' guns (for unruly passengers or cargo livestock), message encryption systems and starship anti-hijack programs to coordinate any of the above. These companies will (free of charge) look around a customer's starship and advise them on appropriate security measures.
    Note: These companies usually have stalls both here and in the 'Shield' exhibition; if a customer appears particularly wealthy, they may be invited to visit the 'Shield' hall, where they can be sold a much more exclusive (and expensive) system.

* Cargo protection retailers - locks, seals and anti-tamper devices and a huge range of cargo container types for every conceivable cargo type and hazard.
* Private sellers - an area of the hall is set aside for general trade bargaining and for the sale or barter of 'second hand' goods - anything from cans of engine oil to a 'only slightly knackered' jump drive. Quality, quantity and type of goods will vary enormously but a NFSE representative oversees this area constantly to ensure transactions are legal and are registered in law (earning NFC its 0.25% fee - see {ref fees|4.4.}).

4.4. Shield Exhibition Hall

This hall is only available to those with Shield tickets. This is a relatively new exhibition, running for two years. Anti-hijack and security displays were originally in the Trade hall but began to grow to include 'offensive' forms of defense. NFC separated this section and called it 'Shield' to emphasize its defensive nature. When various governments began expressing interest in the wares displayed, NFC took the decision to enlarge the range of 'Shield' wares, rather than limit it. After all, a gun considered 'offensive' on one planet might be considered standard ship defence kit on another.

Tickets for Shield are expensive and can only be obtained by high level officials in the government and military, manufacturers of Shield wares, and users of the wares (e.g., ship manufacturers).

Typical exhibits include:

* Anti-hijack systems - the 'big brothers' of the stalls in the Trade hall. More advanced versions of the Trade hall systems will be found here, plus options for hull electrification, poison gas release, automatic ship's weapon fire, ground defence (heavy machineguns, autocannon, etc.), ship camouflage kits, etc.
* Medical kits - ranging from complete miniature hospitals (for rich hypochondriacs) to roboticised combat casualty systems and one-man kits (adapted for operating mainly on battlefield wounds from bullets to nerve gas).

* Body armour and Uniforms - if you're going to have bodyguards, etc. you might as well dress them nicely; includes normal uniforms, bullet-proof cases, clipboards, etc., body armour (from flak jackets to combat armour to personally tailored under-suits), specialised holsters and weapons slings (for easy concealment), etc.
* Ship defence weaponry - this can include just about any weapon system from body pistols to Surface to Air Missiles. Every supplier will have specific details of how his weapons are specialised for starship defensive purposes and hence how they can be bought on this law level 9 planet as long as they're delivered to you in the starport. Even mines ("make sure the natives you trade with don't get too close to the ship") and plasma guns ("rescue cutting equipment specialized for rapid cutting through bulkheads and door-ways in emergency situations") may be available!
* Industrial espionage - retailers of bugging devices, bug detectors, radio monitoring units, computer hacking systems, long range video surveillance kit, etc.
* Training systems - as per the Trade hall but also including ship assaults, defence against pirate attacks, inter-starship combat, etc.

4.5. Fees

Exhibitors pay NFC fees for their stands (including admin-istration, security, etc.) and for advertising before and during the exhibition. Additionally, NFC charges a 0.25% tax on all contracts and direct sales made at the exhibition. There is always an entrance fee - the public areas cost only a few credits to enter, while the trade and security halls each cost between CR50 and CR500 depending upon the planet's relative wealth.

4.6. Security

Security around the public exhibition is limited to crowd control personnel with orders to catch pick-pockets and minor thieves likely to attend such events.

The trade building(s) will have more obvious security measures including video cameras, secure locks and an alarm system for the night hours when the fair is closed. The security staff will be more vigilant and may include representatives of the local (port or planetary) law enforcement agencies.

The security exhibition will be far more tightly guarded than either of the other areas, with a large number of highly visible security staff, more complex alarm systems and a 'protected' perimeter (e.g., razor wire fence).

Guards will be armed as appropriate to the law level. The security exhibition will usually have armed guards even if the local law prohibits such weapons.

5. SPECIFIC STANDS

5.1. Torian Travel & Rhombic

Most notable in the Trade hall is the central stand of Torian Travel with its 40 meter "Excelsis" executive jump shuttle in gleaming Torian colors. The Torian stand includes its own insurance and cargo shipment groups as well as representatives of Rhombic - the renowned starship construction firm who supply the "Excelsis".

5.2. NFC

NFC maintains a small stand in each hall from which security staff are coordinated. A number of NFC staff are always on hand to deal with disputes (from a spilt cup of coffee to contractual matters between companies). NFC are known for their fair dealing and even corporations usually respect the results of their arbitration.

5.3. Red Wizard

A common sight at the NFSE are the virtual reality (VR) systems for entertainment and training. Almost every VR system at NFSE is supplied by the renowned RealVision company, exclusively running Red Wizard simulation software. Both companies are run by the enigmatic "Red Wizard" (RW) himself.

The training systems in the Shield hall are from FullVision which is not officially linked with RealVision but is in fact also run by the RW. One of the NFSE training systems simulates the FullVision MilLink system where each 'soldier' has integral goggles and a camera, the input of which is correlated by a central battle computer to give a 3D map synthesised from each soldier's views. Thus unit A could "see through" a wall if the other side was in view by unit B. If unit B had moved off, unit A could still see what used to be behind the wall (layout, cover and possible hazards) but could not tell if the enemy might have moved into or out of the area since unit B stopped viewing it.

The public RealVision simulations include gymnastics, weight lifting, skiing, tennis, shooting, grav-ball, rally driving, starship racing, shoot-outs, etc. Grav units and inertial compensators make the experience remarkably realistic. The premier games available in all three halls are the Red Wizard adventures. These may be 10 minute spurts to full blown week-long excursions and are usually played using complete stim' tanks. Reality is total except that 'death'

or complete failure usually just means starting over again. Psych' drugs are used to simulate the effects of long periods passing (so that boring events such as sleep or a starship jump can be simulated in 'fast forward' mode). In some systems the user's short term memory can be altered such

that they do not remember entering the RealVision world. This can be particularly fulfilling as the user can be completely unaware that they are in a simulation.

At the end of all such games the RW will appear in the credits as an ingratiatingly cheerful red-robed wizard, very annoying but seemingly immune to all antagonism. There is always a method for 'killing' this figure, but it is usually obscure; some players will repeatedly play the game just to find the secret way of 'offing' the Wizard!

The Red Wizard games all offer a common "Law of Reality" system whereby the 'natural' laws are consistent across them and an item found in one game can be transferred to another and used in the same manner. This allows the four best games each year to be joined into a single playing area to give the "Critter Competition" where players fight a range of nasty traps and monsters while puzzling out cryptic clues to achieve a goal. Occasionally the RW himself appears to give clues or attack the player(s).

The RW is shrouded in mystery - some believe he is just a trademark, others that he is a digitally-recorded personality, and others that he is an incarnation of a deity!

5.4. Paws in Space

Considered a 'novelty shop' by many, Jon "Cuddly" Manow stocks various life-forms suitable as companions for starfarers. Advertising them as "More Human (Aslan/Vargr /etc.) than most Shipmates", Jon sells the genetically engineered (or just plain alien) equivalents of rats, cats, dogs, monkeys, etc. The creatures are selected for their intelligence, ability to operate in various gravities and usefulness (catching vermin, etc.) and are trained for easy maintenance (feeding, etc.), friendliness and to jump into a vacc rescue bubble in an emergency situation.

Cats are a particular favourite with starfarers (although any cat chosen by the PCs will no doubt be a fur-shedding, sharp-clawed, vicious and bloody-minded animal).

A descendent of the orangutan family is also a good seller, being able to put on its own vacc suit, carry equipment, communicate any meaning by simple tonal control of the word "Oook" and swing along ship ceilings using the zero-G grip bars. These "ookies" as they are known, are also remarkably good at defending the ship against hijackers, handling unruly passengers, etc.

6. INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

Listed below are a number of methods by which the player characters (PCs) may get involved in the NFSE.

6.1. Buyers

The PCs may simply wish to visit the NFSE for a common purpose, e.g., to buy passage, organise cargo shipments or play the video games in the Public Hall. Alternatively they may wish to upgrade or repair their starship, or even buy a new one in the Trade hall. The wide range of equipment available there may be useful for an upcoming adventure, allowing them to purchase kit of a type of tech level not normally available on this planet.

It should be noted that exhibitors costs are high and they will be more than usually desperate to sell their products. Related enterprises (e.g., drives salesmen and installation engineers, travel agents and travel insurance companies) will have drawn up temporary alliances: "I'm so glad you decided to buy our tickets sir. Now, you'll be wanting our insur... you don't? Expensive? Well..." <leans closer and smiles conspiratorially> "I shouldn't be telling you this, but Hairline insurance over there is doing a special deal right now if you buy two carry-cases from SupaLuggage..."

(1) Patrons abound at these fairs since they serve as both an exhibition of wares and also as a primary meeting place for business people. Some may simply lounge at the bars, waiting for likely looking groups or individuals.

(2) One of the Shield hall bars is used as a prearranged meeting place for mercenaries (local and off-world). There are always contracts to be had here!

(3) NFC have had to settle for a substandard hangar area to fit in the displays. They have bribed the local officials to declare it safe but actually the hangar collapses part way through the exhibition. The PCs may be trapped within, help in rescuing others, make use of the distraction to break into the Shield hall, etc.

(4) As (3) but the local government forced its officials to sign the hangar as safe because NFC refused to stop here unless suitable safe facilities were available. NFC may hire the PCs to investigate which government personnel effectively signed the death warrants of the tens of people who died in the collapse.

(5) As (4) but the hangar was safe - it was the local Tangstrom Shipyards who organised a small explosive charge to bring the hangar down. Tangstrom has made millions in profits from its overinflated prices; the ship manufacturers at the fair are so much better priced they could have signed up every contract on the world for years - and Tangstrom could not afford to let this happen at any cost!

(6) An escaped "ookie" or ship's cat from "Paws in Space" (see 5.4) takes a liking to the PC. NFC security will eventually turn up but the creature will refuse to be parted from the PC (this could be a serious consideration if it's an "ookie")!

6.2. The Red Wizard

The RW (see 5.3.) is REAL and he's at NFSE! The PCs are hired for an exorbitant fee by Red Wizard, RealVision or an anonymous patron, to escort a VIP (the RW) throughout the NFSE tour (a 3 month trip). The RW will describe himself as Roger Wiseman, a senior programmer interested in VR systems. He is extremely intelligent and an expert on computer systems. He will visit the show every day to play the games (in either of the three halls; he has tickets for all of them) and will encourage some of the PCs to join him (while the others stand guard). The PCs must be unobtrusive and respect the RW's peculiar habits and constant curiosity. During the trip, one or more of the following may happen:

(1) When playing, 'Roger' enters a passcode which, after suitable bio-identification, enters him as the Red Wizard character in the game. After one game another player will recognize him (through mention of some event in the game) and will start a huge stampede as players try to get autographs from (or lynch) the famous RW.

(2) Marissa Veric's brother Tom died in a RealVision stim' tank during a major Critter competition. RealVision claimed Tom had falsified records for the obligatory medical check prior to use of a stim' tank, but Marissa believes the RW 'killed' Tom in the game. After several years she has tracked 'Roger' to this exhibition. She is not sure he's the RW but does believe him to be the senior Red Wizard executive. She will attempt to shoot or stab him at close-range.

(3) As (1) but the RW helps out a PC in the game and the PC then determines 'Roger' may be the RW himself.

(4) As (2) but one of the PCs is approached by Marissa and offered a lot of money to either kill 'Roger' or let her getaway after doing it herself.

(5) As (2) but Marissa is a corporate executive and has hired hitmen to do the job for her.

(6) The Public hall VR systems are attacked by a technophobe group. 'Roger' will rush to defend them and the PCs must then protect him from the wrathful wreckers.

(7) While playing the Critter competition, 'Roger' realizes someone else has also logged in as the RW. He and the PCs must try to use the false RW's game activities to trace which of the players is emulating the RW character. The culprit is Ypre Samez, a brilliant but arrogant programmer from Red Wizard who has falsified the RW character onto a data card which (like many other players) also contains items picked up from various games. When the card is plugged in both the items and the false RW character are copied into the VR system. Once traced, 'Roger' may reward Ypre for ingenuity, or have him/her arrested.

(8) As (7) but Ypre's data card inserts a multitude of super-killer critters into the Red Wizard system which wipe out any player (except possibly the RW character). Ypre intends to discredit Red Wizard. 'Roger' will want him caught.

(9) As (8) but if a super-killer critter attacks a game player Ypre's reprogramming will cause the player to experience real pain (and even death) by overloading the player's stim' unit.

(10) Similar to (7) but Ypre is a Red Wizard executive who doesn't know 'Roger' but is known by the latter. 'Roger' is surprised to see Ypre at the NFSE. Ypre is selling Red Wizard game secrets to the 'cult' players who will pay huge sums just to solve that extra clue or otherwise achieve maximum possible score in the games. 'Roger' will ask the PC's to get proof of Ypre's illegal activities before having him arrested.

(11) As (10) but Ypres is selling MilView's military secrets to contacts on several planets for huge sums. He is constantly guarded by several (very discreet) bodyguards and a contingency of agents from the appropriate government. The agents will stop at nothing to prevent Ypre being caught by the PCs.

Alternative leads:

(a) The PCs just happen to be around to help 'Roger' when events (1)-(6) happen, OR: Events (7)-(11) begin and 'Roger' then hires the PCs specifically to undertake that job. In either case, success may gain the PCs great rewards and a contract for the rest of the trip.

(b) At any point when playing the RealVision systems, PCs may realise they're being watched. The local police/navy/mercenaries/pirates (take your pick) are watching the law enforcement/flight simulator/combat simulator/etc. to try to identify likely recruits. This could be a possible entry point for a new career!

6.3. Security Staff

The PCs may be hired as NFSE staff, either to travel the entire trip or locally for a specific world. Any of the following events may occur during their employment:

(1) The PCs may be called to any of events (1), (2) or (6) from the Red Wizard section (5.3).

(2) An anti-weapons protest starts outside the Shield hall and ends with protestors trying to break in with fire-bombs to get the 'murdering government slimeballs' within. The PCs must protect the hall without massacring civilians!

(3) A group of religious isolationists (against all off-world contact) enter the Public hall and begin spraying the 'heretic' stall-holders with CS gas from hand aerosols. The PCs must neutralize the group without excessive violence!

(4) As event (3) in section 6.1 but the PCs hear about NFC's double dealing and must decide whether to tell the local authorities.

(5) As event (4) or (5) in section 6.1; NFC assigns the PCs to investigate.

(6) Pollard Jump Drives are trying to dodge the NFC taxes by finding customers at the fair but then inviting them to a local hotel to draw up the actual contract (valued at CR40M so far, i.e., CR100k of NFC taxes). The PCs will probably have to pose as buyers (NFC can provide cover IDs and backgrounds). NFC needs suitablyDISCRETE video evidence of Pollard's methods before a quiet 'reminder' is given to one of their directors. NFC do NOT want a lot of publicity on this matter.

(7) NFC may be asked to take a part in either of the scenarios in 6.4 and 6.5. They will temporarily assigns the PCs to help.

(8) An escaped "ookie" or ship's cat from "Paws in Space" (see 5.4) decides it's going to climb into the hangar superstructure. The PCs will be required to chase it down and capture it. Jon (from "Paws") can provide a tranquiliser gun but a cat will be a small target and an "ookie" will recognise the gun and know when to duck!

A whole new relationship may be formed between the creature and one or more of the PCs!

6.4. Foul Play

Ruger Haltzim is the senior stall rep' for DataGuard Encryption Services in the Shield hall. The company's latest system (a suitcase-sized super encryption system DGE99) is on display and customers are invited to take away encrypted messages - if they crack the system and decrypt the message before the fair leaves planet, DGES will pay out a million credits. He hires the PCs to protect the system because foul play is suspected. The PCs are required to guard the DGE99 at all times, including at the fair and at Ruger's hotel room where it is stored each night). Possible events are:

(1) One of Ruger's three assistants (Phil Zamani) is giving the original (unencrypted) messages to a contact who will split the cash prize with him. The PCs must determine this, and catch the right assistant red-handed.

(2) As (1) but the original messages were encrypted by Ruger. Hence Phil is having to use the DGES decrypter to decode the messages before passing them on to his contact.

(3) A competitor (SuperCrypt) will attempt to steal the DGE99 by hiring a group of thugs. One thug will approach the stand like any other customer, then grab the DGE99 and run off with his colleagues getting in the way of the pursuers.

(4) As (3) but a professional team will try to hijack the case between the fair and hotel.

(5) As (4) but the theft will be attempted at the hotel.

6.5. False Security

Quorx Secure are one of the firms offering anti-hijack equipment for starships (Trade or Shield hall). Ann Tuerig is one of the four representatives who visits customer ships and gives them an on-the-spot quote for security systems. In secret, Ann then hands over all details of the ship's current (and intended) security systems to Armani "Black" Benett, leader of a group of ship stealers. The group has 4 pilots and an 'assault' team of 8. In their innocent Far Trader, they follow the NFSE tour and at each stop find one or two suitable targets during the several weeks. The assault group takes out the ship's guards and security systems (possibly taking the owner or a crew member hostage and forcing them to help) and then one of the pilots flies the ship out of system to be sold at a corrupt shipyard where the transponder, etc. is changed.

(1) The PCs invite Ann aboard to quote for new security! Theft is bad this week so Armani decides the PC's ship will do as a target...

(2) Quorx has had several law enforcement enquiries about stolen ships and have concluded they may have a corrupt employee. The PCs are hired to find out who it is!

(3) Marcu Kahn, a millionaire playboy, has his yacht stolen (by Armani) a few days before a new Quorx alarm system was due to be fitted. The PCs are hired to investigate to find the thieves, punish them, and return the ship.

(4) As (1-3) above but Ann is conniving with 1-2 of the engineers who fit the new alarm systems. The thefts usually only occur several weeks after the fair has left system, in order to minimise chances of a connection being made.

In any of the above cases, these thefts are BIG money and Armani's group will be intelligent, well-equipped (for cracking security systems), well armed, and not afraid to shoot first to preserve their livelihood.

Counter Insurgency
by David Schneider

I. Introduction

In Traveller, there are normally any number of revolts, revolutions and acts of terrorism occuring at any given time on any number of worlds. These occurances are usually disputes between the local or system government and elements dissatisfied with that government. However, since the outbreak of the Rebellion, and the subsequent collapse of Imperial civilization, a whole new dimension has been added to this situation.

In these troubled times, many mercenary companies have found themselves with contracts to supress elements which have taken up arms against the government. However, because of the widespread upheaval, such situations are now often far more than just 'local' affairs, but instead may have relevance to the fate of an entire subsector. This article will look at and discuss several of the ways that governments use to attempt to supress armed insurection, popular or otherwise.

Most groups try to achieve this by adopting one of two view points: Force of Arms or Winning Hearts and Minds.

II. Common Tactics

The following tactics may be, and often are, employed regularly by both governments who are relying upon Force of Arms and those trying to Win Hearts and Minds.

Relocating isolated communities::

Isolated communities are very important to rebel forces, as they provide a source of supplies & information, regardless of whether or not the community is friendly to them. It therefore becomes important to government forces to relocate them to areas where they will not give the enemy an advantage. In the case of repressive governments, the new settlements are little more than cramped camps whose guards have their weapons pointing inwards. More responsible governments often build model settlements with facilities not available in the original settlements, and whose guarding troops are there for the protection of the inhabitants.

Propaganda:

This is used extensively by all types of governments. With it, the government, its policies and officials are shown as being good and loyal persons vigilantly protecting the people from the evil rebels. It is also used to influence the populations attitude to numerous other topics. Propaganda is one of the most important tools for a government trying to Win the Hearts and Minds of the people. Whether or not the propaganda is true is another a matter.

Aggressive Patrolling:

In dealing with an insurgency, it is vitally important to keep rebel forces on the defensive as much as possible. This prevents them from gaining the initiative and any advantage over your own forces. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to send large well equipped forces out on patrols, to draw rebel forces into combat and eliminate them. Troops belonging to repressive governments are less fussy about targets and often carry out some creative looting. Another aspect of patrolling involves utilizing 'plain clothes' officers. These individuals may inconspicuously locate rebel troops, strong points or caches and then alert actively patrolling units.

Infiltration of rebel organizations:

Regardless of the type of government or its policies, this is one of the most desirable courses of action in dealing with a rebellion, the higher placed your agents the better. The information from a well placed spy at the right time can be worth more than a battalion of troops. Spies can find out all kinds of useful things, like suppliers of food and equipment, sources of funds, names of sympathisers, troop movements, internal rivalries, cache locations, training camp locations and the names and locations of important rebel leaders. A rebellion could falter if its top leader was killed. An alternative to attempting to infiltrate your own people into the already established rebel organisation is to bribe or blackmail known rebels for information. While if done properly this can be a way of gaining valuable intelligence, it does have certain implicit risks, in that information from such sources is often misleading, unreliable or contradictory. On occassion it may be a rebel plant. Repressive regimes are well known for their use of blackmail, such as threatening someones children if information is not forthcoming.

Movement restrictions and ID issue:

In order to limit the mobility of rebels, it becomes necessary to restrict the movements of the population. This generally means issuing identity papers to all citizens. A process which involves taking finger prints, retina scans and other procedures depending on tech level. Such identity papers are required to be carried on all journeys. To make this work defensable check points must be established, these check the ID papers of people passing through them at random. There are two types of check points, mobile and static. Static check points are obvious and can be avoided by rebels (though this is part of the whole idea), however the major problem with static check points is that they may become tempting targets for rebel attacks. Mobile check points are able to suprise rebels by virtue of the fact that they check areas at random for rebel movements. A problem with mobile check points is that they are susceptable to ambushes. All of these things are intended to prevent rebels from utilizing your transport network.

Cutting lines of supply:

Insurgent forces are often aided or supplied by a 'third party', who stands to benefit if the insurgents are successful or simply desires that the region be destabilized. Such 'third parties' are often neighboring nations, economic rivals or corporations. In order to limit the effectiveness of such outside aid it becomes necessary to block the lines of supply through which the aid is supplied. As most of this aid originates from sources outside of the governments territory or system it is important to establish secure borders. This is partly done via the methods of aggressive patrolling and movement restrictions, but is a more involved process requiring extensive intelligence on activities occurring outside your of territory as well as a variety of other factors. If the aid is coming from out system, an effective system defence boat force becomes highly desirable. With such a force it becomes possible to control incoming starship traffic and direct vessels to secure starports, thus severely limiting rebel access to offworld supplies and expertise.

Restricting education:

This is a classic long term tactic. The only subjects taught are either politically safe and/or are heavily biased in favor of the government. In short it is indoctrinating the population at an early age.

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III. Force of Arms

Repressive regimes or invading/occupying forces using Force of Arms to counter insurgency will use methods such as:

Death Squads:
Particularly nasty regimes have special squads who roam around the country, eliminating anyone they suspect may not support the current government. The main problems with this tactic are that it may decide people more firmly against your government and seriously damages your credibility with other governments who may feel duty bound to intervene.

Figure Heads:
If the current government is the result of a coupe or invasion, the government created will often need some sort of reason or figure head to legitimize its existance. Using a member of the local nobility or a deposed leader is often a good way to legitimize your actions, and even gain a little popular support. The figure head, of course, has no real power and is only there to provide the illusion that the government is one representing the people.

Creation of a middle class:
On poor or low tech worlds, it is often a good long term plan to allow a certain percentage of the population to become reasonably well off. These people will then actively resist rebellion so as not to lose what they have gained.

Retaliation:
For every government official, policeman or soldier killed by rebels, a certain number of the population from rebel strong zones are rounded up and publicly executed. The concept behind this is that the population will be too afraid of government retaliation to help 'subversive' elements, and, in their fear, may even turn against the insurgents. A risk with this activity is that it may turn the population even more firmly against your government, and, again, seriously damage your credibility with other governments.

Scorched Earth:
With a scorched earth policy anything that may be of use to enemy forces in areas not firmly under your control is systematically destroyed. Livestock is shot or removed, crops are burned, all buildings are demolished, railway and momorail tracks are destroyed, as are sealed roadways, or they are mined. A government trying to Win Hearts and Minds may also employ this tactic, but not to the same degree. This is mainly because such whole sale destruction does not normally go down well with the general public.

Intimidation:
Large garrison forces are posted in all cities and towns with the aim of intimidating the locals into obeying the government. A limiting factor with this is the number of troops available who can be assigned to such duties.

A point worth mentioning with governments relying upon Force or Arms is that you must be careful about the reliability of your troops. Troops recruited from a particular area may balk or desert when they recieve orders to destroy that area.

IV. Hearts and Minds

Governments who wish to win the hearts and minds of the people will use such methods as:

Outlaw attrocities:
Active attempts are made to bring to justice any member of the police, military or public involved in attrocities or war crimes. Persons found guilty face heavy penalties, including the death sentence. This demonstrates to the people that the government does care about them and does not have double standards.

Encourage rebel deserters:
Offer amnesties and rewards for rebels who desert and come over to your side. This includes providing new identities and positions in your own organizations and so forth. The only potential hazzard with this is that rebels may attempt to use it to infiltrate your organizations.

Form a citizens militia:
Training and arming a citizens militia demonstrates your government's commitment to protecting the people, helps the populace to identify with the government and gives the population a better understanding of the conflict.

Friendly Garrisons:
Government troops are encouraged to fraternise and develop friendships with the public. Whenever possible, troops should be used in projects for the benifit of the populace. The people begin to think of the troops as being their soldiers, there to protect them, and the military thinks of their job as being to protect the people from the rebels. If this tactic is carried out effectively, it can increase public support for the government and alienate the rebels.

V. Conclusion

In this article, we have looked at a few of the more important tactics used by governments to supress uprisings. The main thing to remember in such situations is that no matter how strong a rebel force is, the government has the advantage by virtue of the fact that it is already in power.

New Wilds Careers
by Mark 'Geo' Gelinas

The following career types are primarily for use for worlds in the Wilds. At the referees discretion, characters with Wilds homeworlds may use the following careers for character generation. Some worlds in other regions may also be suitable for these careers, but should be used only at the referee's discretion.

SURVIVOR

You are disillusioned by your world's society. You would travel to another world, but such opportunities are not common these days. Instead you headed for the hills to scratch out a living in the wilderness. On some worlds your way of life puts you at odds with the government who wants a controlled citizenry. Sometimes you live alone, sometimes you join with others like yourself, hardy and self-sufficient. You call yourself a survivor because of your ability to live off the land, others might call you a mountaineer, woodslander, hinterlander, or desert rat.

PREREQUISITES: Homeworld Atmosphere = Thin - Dense.

FIRST TERM SKILLS: Acrobatics 1, Explore 3, Gun Combat 2, Perception 2.

SUBSEQUENT TERMS SKILLS: Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Explore, Gun Combat, Perception.

ALL TERMS
SPECIAL ADVENTURE: 6+ for Archery, Crime, Determination, Gun Combat, Medical, Melee, Technician, Vice.
PROMOTION: 7+, DM +1 if INT 7+.
CONTACTS: One per term, Criminal, Government, Rebel, or Specialist (Survivor)

OTHER EFFECTS: No secondary skills are gained by Survivors. Also, if from a High Government world, roll 1D10 once per term for INT or less to avoid capture. If unsuccessful, the next career term must be prison.

PSIONIC PRIESTHOOD

You have always felt that you were different. Things would happen, things no one could not explain logically. Then one day, you were noticed by one of the Order. You were taken to their cloister and tested, then trained. Eventually you became one of the Order, advisor to those in power or defender of the weak.
ENTRY - Requires Psionic Exam at point the character intends to enter this career.

PREREQUISITES: PSI 5+, Homeworld in Wilds

FIRST TERM SKILLS: Psionics 4, Willpower 2, Social Science 1, Interaction 1

SUBSEQUENT TERMS SKILLS: Psionics (See Page 248), Determination, Perception, Charm, Interaction, Social Science

ALL TERMS
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT: 8+ for Psionics, Determination, Vehicle, Vice, Gun Combat, Melee
PROMOTION: 7, DM +1 if INT 8+, DM +1 if any Psionic asset 16+. If High Gov World, DM +1 if SOC 8+.
CONTACTS: One per term, Specialist (Psion) or Government
OTHER EFFECTS: Add +1 to SOC for each term served. No secondary activities allowed during first term in this career. See TNE page 173 for typical Ranks.

The Pirates of Pinafore or The Computer Who Loved A Lass
by Scott Kellogg

Act I

The Fidelity's launch with the player characters aboard is rising from the surface of a planet and suffers a minor engine failure while just reaching escape velocity. In order to effect repairs, the engineer must take all power off line. Initial navigation and repair estimates put the launch is on course for rendezvous with the ship, but it will take seven hours longer than expected for the launch to reach rendezvous point.

Once this is reported to Fidelity, Captain Sternbaum will elect not to move the main ship, but to save fuel and simply wait until the launch arrives.

The engineer then shuts down the power plant and begins work on the drives. To conserve battery power, the radio, sensors and most equipment is shut down in order to maintain the environmental systems including the power hungry grav plates.

Before the crew is even aware, a brightly painted ship, with the shining gold name plate of "HMS Pinafore" comes across the players while they are so afflicted. She is an ancient looking Gazelle class escort in somewhat odd condition: only one of the ship's drop tanks is present giving her an asymmetrical appearance, the ship's launch is gone and in its place is what looks like a wooden longboat.

The Pinafore:

The Pinafore is in very bad shape. The missing fuel tank moves the ship's center of gravity off line and so the ship can not use full engine thrust without throwing itself into a spin. Due to this and general disrepair, maximum acceleration available to the Pinafore is 2G's. This unusual configuration has changed the Pinafore's radar cross section sufficiently that it is no longer identifiable as a Gazelle by radar. Only one of her laser barbettes is functioning. The ship's jump drive has not been maintained in many years and is in need of major repairs.

Without a shot being fired, the evil corsair maneuvers in and docks with the hapless launch. The players will not be able to see it until it comes within visual range, and unless they are keeping a watch out (unlikely) then may not notice it until it is a few meters away, coming in toward the docking port and locking on, taking the players by complete surprise.

Instantly, the air lock opens and a mob of pirates come aboard in 19th century period costumes armed with cutlasses. Oddly, the pirates all seem to be either cyborgs in bad makeup or badly maintained pseudo-biological robots in bad makeup. Bits of their synthetic flesh no longer cover the entire bodies of the pirates. Odder still, as the battle rages, the entire company of pirates is singing at the top of their lungs:

"With cat like tread!
Upon our prey we steal!
In silence dread!
Our cautious way we feel!
No sound at all!
We never speak a word!
A fly's foot fall would be distinctly heard!"

"Come friends, who plow the sea!
Truce to navigation, take another station
Let's vary piracy
With a little burglary!" etc.

In the middle of the battle, (if things are going badly for the pirates) a second swarm of ill maintained pseudo-biological robots comes tramping aboard dressed as British bobbies. They begin to 'fight' the pirates, while singing at the top of their lungs,

"When the foeman bears his steel! Ta-ran-ta-Ra-Ta-ran-ta-Ra!
We uncomfortable feel! Ta-ran-ta-Ra!" etc.

The bobbies begin to lose rather badly and fall all over the place, to comedic effect, knocking the players over and spoiling their defensive plans. In any case, the pirates should be allowed to win the battle fairly easily and if absolutely necessary, the bobbies who have been 'killed' by the pirates suddenly stand back up and grab the players.

The robots win and, with three cheers of Hip-Hip-Hooray, begin to strip the launch of spare parts they need. Also taken, will be any gold, silver, jewelry or currency from the ship or the persons of the players. The players, thus captured, are hauled aboard the corsair to meet the captain (also a robot). As the captain approaches, he sings to his crew:

"I am the captain of the Pinafore! (and a right good captain too!)
You are very very good
And be it understood
I command a right good crew!"

The players will find that the Pinafore's interior is rather badly painted and somewhat resembles the set of some kind of amateur production. The bulkheads are painted like wood and adorned with hempen rope and a black skull and cross bones type flag. The ship's captain is introduced to the players and informs them:

"Oh I am the Pirate King!
And it is indeed a glorious thing to be a Pirate King!"

Note: At this point, clever, knowledgeable players may claim to be orphans. If so, the pirates will instantly burst into tears and the players will all be tearfully released with outrageous melodramatics. Alternately, if they pretend to sneak out while in plain sight while singing "Carefully on tip toe stealing" the pirates will pretend not to see them, allowing them to escape.

However, this will apply to ONLY those who are singing. If someone does not sing the song, they will be seen by the pirates and recaptured.

The Pirate King produces an ancient looking scroll which when unfurled rolls down to the ground. It is a long, long list of people to be executed. If any players are found to be on said list, they will be beheaded by a strangely japanese executioner with a sword. As the swordsman approaches, the pirates sing,

"Behold the Lord High Executioner!"

The Lord High Executioner then proceeds to take the list and sing it out while examining the players to see if they fit the characteristics of those he is to execute.

"I've got a little list!

I've got a little list!
Of society offenders who might well be underground,
And who never would be missed!
Who never would be missed!"

Sadly, none of the players seem to fit the description of the list, (at least the robots don't seem to think so, even if the players happen to actually BE on the list). So the Pirate King insists that there be an execution of *some* kind. Thus, a robot is brought forth for the Japanese executioner to behead.

"The criminal cried as I dropped him down..."

The condemned robot is then comforted by the presence of a female robot and he is finally beheaded by the executioner. Stranger still, the head of the robot falls off, lands on its neck and bows three times to the Pirate King. The body is then hauled off and it's head stuck back on with no ill effect.

If any of the player characters happen to be beautiful women, they are then pulled aside by the robots who proclaim that they must be married. Lt. Commander Gamaagin O'Connor, Sub-Lieutenant Joanna M'tana, PFC Marie Nakamura, Dr. Sharuk Rodriguez, and Dr. Suzanne Yeager are accosted by the robots. The pirates descend upon their brides singing:

"Pray observe the magnaminity
We reserve to grace and dimety
Never was such opportunity
To get married with impunity!" etc.

However, if there is indeed an ugly woman among the players, one of the pirates sings of her,

"The flowers that bloom in the spring, Tra-La!
Have nothing to do with the case!
I've got to take under my wing, Tra-LA!
A most unattractive old thing Tra-la.
With a caricature of a face" etc.

Note: If the woman (or women) in question can sing

"Refrain, Audacious Tar
Your suit from pressing
Remember who you are
And whom addressing" etc.

in its entirety, she will be released. If not...

Whatever the bride's name, she is instantly dubbed "Yum-Yum" by the pirates who sing to the players to be not so disconsolate as their companion will not have such a horrible fate as all that:

"For he's going to marry Yum-Yum! Yum-Yum!

Your anger pray bury
For all will be merry
I think you had better succumb! Come-Come!
And join our expressions of glee!" etc.

The brides are then hauled off by their grooms before a doctor of divinity, who is located in this vicinity. As it turns out, this is none other than the Pinafore's main computer (stricken by virus) who informs the players:

"I am a very model of a Modern Major General
I've information vegetable animal and mineral..." etc.

The ceremony is performed by the main computer, and the poor brides suffer a fate worse than death. The poor woman is the victim of a public, extremely overly dramatic and poorly executed kiss.

Immediately after the kissing her, the pirate husband will look on his bride with shock and utter, "Ladies! No sex *Please*!" he pauses to draw himself up to his full height, "We're *British*." he explains. His fellow pirates praise him, singing,

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"He is an Englishman!
For he himself has said it!
And it's greatly to his credit!
That he is an Englishman!
That he is an Englishman!
For he might have been Zhodani,
Aslan, K'kree, Vilani
Or perhaps Solomani!
But in spite of all temptations,
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!
He remains an Englishman!" etc.

The brides are then placed in low berths to be hauled off to the pirate base.

"Farewell my own,

Light of my life farewell!
For crime unknown you go to a dungeon cell..." etc.

The rest of the players will be released on their own recognizance provided they recognize the Pirate King as their sovereign and give the pirates their word that they will no longer fight against them. The pirates will (of course) accept their words on this matter and, hail them as brothers, repair their engines and release them to their (now partially stripped but not totally incapacitated) launch.

The Pinafore rockets away with its radio blaring,

"We sail the ocean Blue!
And our saucy ship's a beauty!" etc.

ACT II.

The player's ship will not be able to fire on the pirates as the vital equipment has been stripped but they may be able to get a fix on the pirates course.

The Fidelity's launch it seems was not totally virus proof. It is now infected to the fullest extent possible, by an incredibly insane and silly virus. It believes itself to be a Very Proper British Seaman who will cheerfully (and tunefully) follow the orders of the players provided that they refer to it by name: Ralph Rackstraw (pronounced 'Rafe') and that they ask nicely. All orders must be suffixed with "If you please." which the computer will prompt for, "If what...?" "If what...? What do you mean?" "If you please!"

Ralph Rackstraw the virus, as a Very Proper British Seamen will refuse to follow orders from anyone who swears or uses bad language.

On its positive side, Ralph Rackstraw has rudimentary navigation, piloting, sensor operation, engineering and gunnery skills. When asked to perform any one of these tasks, he will cheerfully respond in his pleasing tenor song. Suggested titles from its repertoire include:

"We Sail The Ocean Blue",
"A British Tar is a Soaring Soul",
or when operating sensors "Things are Seldom What They Seem".

Ralph Rackstraw is also able to give some clues as how the pirates may be defeated as he knows all the entire repertoire of Gilbert and Sullivan. By researching the plays, the players may find the ways to defeat the pirates handily. In addition, Ralph Rackstraw will be able to take them to the pirate base.

Once the pirates leave, and the players have met Ralph, the crew of the launch should be able to reestablish communication with the Fidelity and track the Pinafore back to its base.

The Pirate Base:

The pirate base will be located in the heart of a hollowed out asteroid. Inside the base are the Pinafore, a Type-M Subsidized Liner named "D'Oyly Carte", and a rather odd looking inidentifiable ship. Armament of the base is in disrepair and that which remains should be adapted to suit that of the players. Note that the robots are not built for combat. They have won their previous engagements mostly by the lucky fact that they've never taken on anyone who was seriously equipped for a fight.

Clever players may indeed entreat the pirates to surrender by waving a union jack and calling on them to give up in Queen Victoria's name. If they do so, the pirates will *instantly* lay down their weapons humbly and the base may be captured without so much as a shot being fired.

The Rescue:

The players will not only find their captured companions but indeed a large number of beautiful women who have been captured over the past 70 years of raiding by the pirates. All of whom have been 'married' by the robots and stuffed into low berths. All of these will be starship crews or their passengers. Some of them are the original crew of the Pinafore and the D'Oyly Carte. As such many of them may have been there since before the collapse and may possess information and skills useful to GUESS.

A few of the prisoners will be Iltharan. It seems that their vampire ship was overtaken by this vampire and re-infected with the new G&S strain virus. As we speak, the entire Iltharan vampire fleet may be slowly spreading the G&S virus.

The Mystery:

The answer lies aboard the stripped liner, the D'Oyly Carte. Players exploring the ship will find the packing crates for the Carrillian Assembly Gilbert and Sullivan Society. A group of theatrics who travelled Reaver's Deep putting on plays using their pseudo-biological robots. The original corsairs captured the D'Oyly Carte which was at the time a virus carrier. The D'Oyly Carte was a very valuable property at the time as the pseudo-biological robots had been of good quality at the time and worth a pretty penny. When the virus activated, it found the G&S software in the robots and promptly went a bit funny in the headbox.

Getting out:

The D'Oyly Carte was stripped of parts 70 years ago and has been ignored ever since. The pirates took what they needed at the time and then promptly ignored the ship. A search party sent aboard will find that the stripping of parts was incomplete and sufficient parts remain to repair the Pinafore's jump drives to transport the ship back to Gralyn given enough time. Jump drive mechanics rescued from the low berths should be able to get the Pinafore jump-1 capable in 1D weeks. To repair the D'Oyly Carte will require jump drive components to be ordered, manufactured and transported in from Gralyn. This may be accomplished in 2-3 months.

Enigma:

The third ship in the base is completely unidentifiable. There are no surviving records on it other than the hull itself. The rediculous looking ship seems like it was built at TL4 or 5. Metalurgical analysis of it will show that it is approximately three thousand years old and made out of low grade steel held together by numerous bolts rather than welds. It has the remains of what appears to be an ingenious type of solar powered steam boiler. Large areas of the ship appear to be green houses with enough area for plants that it just *might* have been able to support human oxygen consumption. For propulsion, the steam jets may have provided enough reaction mass for orienting the ship, but could not provide any significant reaction. Strangly, there are the remains of what look like old propellors, but they have decayed away to nearly nothing, as has a veneer of an odd wood that surrounded the steel hull. Isotopic abundance analysis of the steel will show that the ship was not built in Reaver's Deep, but came from somewhere else, possibly the Solomani Rim. The best guess that the science team can come up with is that the Carrillian Assembly Gilbert and Sullivan Society was using it somehow in their productions, though any survivors of the D'Oyly Carte will have no knowlege of it.

Just in case:

If your players are annoyed with all of this, you can always hand over the pirate's treasure of gold, silver and jewels that all good G&S pirates collect.

Communications and Currency in the Regency
by Marcus S. Zarra

This is an area of internal organization that has not been worked on by either the independent sources or by GDW itself. This article is an attempt to unify and clarify a very important area of internal organization within the Regency.

Communications

How do I make a phone call? How do I send someone a letter or some data? These are very important questions that could cause a game to come to a halt as the referee tries to make something up on the fly. Below is a resolution that I have come to in my campaign and it is based on our own real world solutions.

General Concept

When you wish to contact someone, there are several resolutions to the contact. Each type of contact is made the same way and can be switched between fluidly. Your communications device, whether it be a hand communicator, hand computer, ship's computer, public access terminal, etc. is the base of the communication. Your equipment first connects into the planetary network (such as our Internet).

The address of the person you are attempting to contact will be in two parts (e.g. John_Doe@anywhere). The second part of the address (usually following an @ sign) is the server to which the person is connected (e.g. anywhere). The first part is that person's personal address. When you enter this address, your device attempts to connect to the appropriate server across the network and then instructs that server to contact the appropriate person (e.g. John_Doe).

If this person is available, the connection will be made by the highest available form of communications. The order, from highest to lowest, is as follows: Video/Audio, Audio only, Immediate text, text message. Depending upon what type of equipment you have available and what type of equipment the other person is using, such will decide what type of connection is made. If the person is unavailable then some type of messaging system will be available, again depending upon the type of connection equipment available.

Equipment

Below is an example of the base forms of equipment available for communication across networks:

* Hand Communicators

These types of devices generally only allow audio or visual communications. They are not set up to handle data or text communications by themselves. However, when connected to a hand computer, they are able to do all types of communications. (But an audio communicator cannot do video communications because it does not have a video feed. However, the other persons video can be displayed on the hand-computer.)

* Hand Computers

These types of devices allow only data and text access. They can display a video image but are unable to transmit a video feed because they do not have a video pick-up device. A modified hand computer could be created that would have a video feed. This is left up to the discretion of the referee. The problem with hand computers, however, is that they do not have an internal interface into the global network. They must be physically connected to the network through some other device, a public access terminal, a communicator, a larger computer, etc.

* Public Access Terminals

Throughout most high-tech societies, there exists public access terminals for the use of the general public. These may be a simple data connection for a hand computer or it can be as elaborate as a full blown audio/video/text terminal. Depending upon the sophistication of the society, these may vary widely. Generally there is a charge for the use of these terminals. The general rule on these terminals, however, is that they have severely limited access for security reasons.

* Ship's Computer

Ships' computers can be used as a communications device just as any other computer can be. They will have audio, video and text/data capabilities. The standard for shipboard communications is that the computer will query the network on one of the many standard frequencies and then the network will inform the computer of the protocols that are necessary to communicate with the network. Generally, most systems do not allow communications from orbit. The reason for this is that they are unable to set up any type of billing and therefore it not be cost effective. When a ship lands at the starport, they are given temporary access to the network which is billed to their docking fees. Any communications from orbit are handled strictly through radio, laser, maser, etc.

Obviously these are not the only types of possible connections and players will inevitably come up with ways that were not dreamed of (what else are they for?). One must stress that any world network is going to have security protocols interweaved with their networks. Obviously the differences in tech levels will determine how easy or difficult it would be for the players to circumvent these protocols.

Costs

Generally, most networks will charge on a monthly or yearly basis for their services. These costs are usually extremely low and almost irrelevant. As these charges will not usually affect the players, I will not go into great detail on them. Let it suffice to say that these should not run more than Cr25 per month or Cr250 per year.

The charges that the players will have to deal with on an almost daily basis are the costs of temporarily using a foreign system. These charges, while again minor, are great for mood setting and other background information. Generally, public access terminals charge on a per hour basis of around Cr5 per hour with a one hour minimum. Starports generally have a stepped-charging program. They charge by the hour (Cr5 per hour), then by day (Cr20 per day), by week (Cr60 per week), and finally by month (Cr200 per month). Obviously these are more expensive than a permanent connection, but that is what the market will bear.

Currency

Do I have to carry around Cr100,000 in my pocket all of the time? Isn't there a better way? These were two questions always asked of me by my players. Below is my resolution to this problem.

First Bank of the Regency

Welcome to the First Bank of the Regency. This bank is set up to cater to all of the planets of the Regency and is fully capable of handling all transactions without the need for actual cash. Each customer of the bank is issued a computerized bank card. This foolproof card is used in place of cash. A detailed description of the card is listed below.

The bank has at least one branch on each planet of the Regency and any customer can come into the bank (or the automated tellers) at any time and remove cash from their account. This is usually unnecessary within the Regency as most merchants are able to use the customer's bank card directly and therefore cash is unnecessary. It is recommended, however, that the customer interface his or her (or its?) card once per month to synchronize their debits and credits with the banks records. This is recommended to prevent accidental errors.

I normally do not charge the players for having an account with the Regency as it is just another bookkeeping item that burdens the flow of the game. This is left up to the individual referee as to whether or not they wish to use this. As with all other things, it is useful to help remove unwanted cash from the player's pockets. Of course the occasional bank error is always useful to create a bureaucratic adventure. Imagine the hassle to would be it correct a Cr100,000 bank error!

Equipment

The equipment used for a Regency bank account is a wonderful device called a bank card. It is about the size of a modern credit card but about a 1/4 of an inch thick. The card simply has a micro battery, memory, small CPU and a thumb print reader. The card keeps the person's entire account record within it and is the basis of the system. Each time a person uses the card, it records the credit or debit and either subtracts from the person's account or adds to it. To use the card, it must either be connected to another card, a merchant's bank machine or an automated teller. When the person requests a transfer, they must place their thumb on the fingerprint reader to verify that they are authorized to use the card. Once they are verified, the transfer takes place.

All merchant machines are linked to the bank's computers and update the person's account automatically. The bank transfers this data on a monthly basis so that at most the banks are 1 week behind real time usage. Each time the person accesses the bank directly, the bank checks its records against the cards records and if there is a discrepancy, the person is notified and they must see a bank representative immediately. All activities in the card are suspended until the discrepancy is resolved.

If a card is lost, its loss must be reported immediately and it takes 45 days to issue a replacement card. This time is necessary so that the bank can verify all charges on the card from all sites before it issues a new card and cancels the old card. Once a card is cancelled, it will be wiped out the moment it is used.

The memory inside of the card is extremely complex and it would take an impossible:computer check to breach the card's security and then another impossible:computer check to alter the card's memory without a trace. Of course if this is done, it will no longer match with the bank's records and can be verified within 30 days by any bank teller. Obviously a player is asking for a lot of trouble if they attempt to do this.

Vlazhdumecta
by David Thornell (with Grant Sinclair)

The following comes from the History of Draj Orshtiel (First House) on Anchli, (Yiklerzdanzh 2140), as collected by Archivist Shtivats jir-Vretsdriezh. This special collection presents the mixed blood Vlazhdumecta (the most commonly encountered type in Afachtiabr) and the rarer pure or near-pure blood people (as in the Izrats Kriezhlas Unity in Yiklerzdanzh, the last remaining Vlazhdumecta state, and in backwater settlements in Afachtiabr).

Physiology

Externally, we show only minor differences from the bulk of humaniti. However, the story is quite different below the cellular level, where extensive geneering by the Ancients has greatly modified the genetic mechanism (while still remaining within human norms).

These genetic differences have led some scientists to argue that we should be considered a separate race, rather than part of humaniti. As we have obviously interbred with other human races, this is of course nonsense.

Evidence suggests that this geneering was incomplete when the Final War began and that the stabilisation of our biochemistry has been a gradual process over the last 300,000 years. The interbreeding over the last 6 millenia with the Sky Raiders, Zhodani and other human races has been of great assistance.

Height and Weight: There is little difference in size between males and females. Both sexes average 1.9 m tall. However, while males mass approximately 90 kg, females mass slightly less at 85 kg.

Appearance: Our appearance remains mostly unchanged from that of our ancestors millenia ago. Our skin is heavily pigmented and ranges in colour from golden bronze to almost pure black. Most pure blooded Vlazhdumecta are a dark bronze. While our skin is dry, we have a layer of subcutaneous fat which gives us a sleek, "rounded" appearance. Our hair is coarse, straight and usually pure white. Interbreeding has seen the appearance in the last few thousand years of blonde, grey and even brown hair. However, facial and body hair is almost non-existent.

Our faces are dolichocephalic (long-headed), triangular in shape with high cheekbones. There is some prognathism (projection) of the lower face. We have a wide forehead that slopes back from a light brow ridge. The nose is small, convex and high bridged. Eyes are always large and dark. There is an epicanthic fold and secondary lid arrangement controlled by additional muscles beneath the brow line. This gives us our so-called "sleepy" appearance to other humans, but protects against glare and windborn particles. We have small, recessed ears which lie flat against the skull. A protective membrane can seal them from cold and dust. Because of this arrangement, we have poor hearing in standard atmospheres or thinner.

Diet: Like most humans, we are omnivorous. However, due to the changes in our metabolism, we require a regular intake of certain amino acids and sugars. Luckily, these can be found in most foodstuffs. These changes also allow us to find nutrition in a wide range of biochemistries. We generally eat 5 to 6 small meals a day, the largest of which is generally taken after the first sleep period of the day.

Rest: Our colonising origin has made our circadian rhythm highly adaptable. However, left to itself, our natural rhythm seems to be adapted to a 28 hour repeating cycle over 168 hours (6 hours sleep, 10 hours work, 4 hours sleep, 8 hours rest). The sleep periods in the final

28 hour period are generally longer, with a shortened rest period. When working in the 24 hour cycle of most other human cultures, we usually keep a shortened 24 hour cycle over the same period (4 hours sleep, 8 hours work, 5 hours sleep, 7 hours rest).

Reproduction: We are unusual in that the female has well marked periods of oestrous. These were originally of fixed durations and times, but they have become longer and more frequent over the millenia. Males are always sexually capable, but suffer periods of infertility, due to the last remnants of incomplete geneering.

If fertilisation occurs, live offspring are born after a gestation period of about 270 days. Multiple births are rare. It appears that this method of reproduction was developed to offset the lowered fertility associated with the geneered changes made by the Ancients. Sterile offspring are still relatively common (1/1000), although much less so than at the time of original Zhodani contact (1/20).

Those of us with even a minor Zhodani genetic heritage tend to be more fertile and are less likely to bear to sterile children. With as much as half Zhodani or other genetic heritage, sterile offspring are virtually unknown and fertility is further increased (though still lower then human norms).

Senses: Our senses are about as acute as those of other humans. We differ only in that our eyes can cope with greater brightness and atmospheric irritants and that our hearing is less acute in standard or thinner atmospheres.

Anatomy: Apart from the minor differences already mentioned, there is little to distinguish us externally from other humans. However, internally, our basic biochemical functions exhibit several major differences from other human races. Of most interest is that our bodies are in a constant state of metabolic acidosis. This is due to the higher plasma levels of lipids and ketone bodies resulting from metabolism of an extra four amino acids. As a result, some humans (particularly Solomani) complain of an unpleasant odour associated with us. We have a different range of blood types to other humans. The three major types are designated V1, V2 and V3 for convenience.

Lifespan: Biological evidence has shown that the first Vlazhdumecta were autopolyploidal. It is believed that the Ancients geneering efforts on them were experimental and incomplete at the time of the Final War. As a result, sterility of offspring after the war exceeded 50%. Population would have plummeted and extinction would have been imminent for millenia after the war.

However, these changes have markedly reduced the rate and effects of senescence compared to that in other Humans (even Vilani). A racially pure Vlazhdumecta has a life expectancy of about 130 standard years. For most of that period, they will appear unchanged from when they were 30-40 years old. Interbreeding has reduced the lifespan, but even those with less than one eighth Vlazhdumectan blood can expect a lifespan of 110-120 years.

However, at some point the metabolic process starts breaking down. Degenerative changes occur rapidly and death is usually 8 to 10 months after the first physical symptoms. This period is called the Inzhan Hel: ("divine wind"). Due to the horrendous breakdown that occurs once senescence sets in, most of us finalise our affairs after the first symptoms and opt for euthanasia.

The last vestiges of unstable biochemistry produces premature Inzhan Hel in about 1 in 100,000 of us. This tragic event usually also induces unstable psychological patterns.

Cellular Geneering

Most of the changes in our race are the result of only a few fundamental changes in our genetic structure. The non-histones, the small proteins that bind other proteins to DNA, are markedly different. Transcription of specific genes into mRNA is thereby modified and enhanced with the use of several unusual biosymthetic enzymes, thus aiding the synthesis of additional protein. Our chromosomes are also much more heterochromatic than other humans, meaning that unlike other races, most of our chromosome is involved in genetic activity. However, some of this activity is additional reiterations of genes. Another benefit is an increase in packing density, resilience and regrowth potential of the neurons and their surrounding myelin sheath.

Psychology

Philosophy: To us, the universe is hierarchical in nature. It comprises the mundane (yetsda), sublime (kethra), and causal (hokhsda) worlds. The physical mind and body can only experience the mundane world. The world as experienced through the external senses can never relate to true reality. The sublime world is experienced through the inner mind, manifested by intuition, imagination, and the visionary experience. This is the true reality, and is experienced most directly during the Inzhan Hel, prior to death. The causal world is a unified consciousness that links the mundane and sublime experiences. This is most easily accomplished through the use of psionic potential's.

To the extent that this philosophy embraces religion, we believe that God is utterly unknowable, but is present in all creation. Creation is God, whose energies can be experienced through the sublime being.

Lam Dre: ("proper action") The basic ideal to which all Vlazhdumecta strive. The concept refers to principles including honour, gentility, sensitivity to proper behaviour, faithfulness to duty, recognition of ones proper place, and harmony.

Society and Culture

The Vlazhdumecta are a deeply spiritual, emotional people. Their society and culture has been profoundly affected by their contact with the Zhodani, both before and after the Vlazhdumecta collapse. Like the Zhodani, psionics has sculpted our society and is an integral part of our racial psyche.

Itos: A basic tenet of our culture. It denotes the

understanding from within accomplished by empathy, intuition, imagination, and/or divine inspiration. It rejects knowledge from without accomplished from observation and research.

Draj: ("House/clan") : A descent grouping incorporating one or many lineages. Companies are often based around these family or extended family lines. Even within companies, business units tend to be smaller than those of normal Zhodani or Imperial practice. The highest status work is associated with value-added products, so Vlazhdumecta items tend to be well crafted and long lasting, though more expensive. Some travellers like to visit obscure villages, hoping to find some item of great workmanship.

Ishikin: ("amalgamation of purpose") : An Ishikin is a grouping of Houses brought together for a common purpose. The group is considered one House for legal purposes for the duration of the quest and holds special status. If divinely inspired, any action thwarting the achievement of the goal can result in pariah status.

Kishik: ("place of contemplation") : Any place which is used for quiet contemplation and experiencing of the sublime world. Most settlements have a variety of such places, whether constructed (our equivalent of your churches and monasteries) or natural (specially preserved areas of natural wilderness, such as pools and streams). It is not unknown for hikers or mountain climbers to come across such places far away from population centres, perhaps established and nurtured by a single individual.

History

About 6000 years ago, our ancestors were contacted by the Zhodani. Already possessing a moderate tech level, they were able to use the secret of the jump drive obtained from the Zhodani to colonise much of Afachtiabr sector.

At about the same time as the Zhodani were becoming concerned about the Vlazhdumecta, a multi-House effort established a colony in Yiklerzdanzh. A number of other nearby worlds had just been settled when the Vlazhdumecta Colonisation Sphere began to collapse. When it was realised that the end was near, the last Vlazhdumecta in spin/rimward Afachtiabr with the capability to do so consolidated in the Yiklerzdanzh colony. By -4900, the link to the Yiklerzdanzh colonies had been long abandoned.

Language

Originally, the Vlazhdumecta spoke numerous languages, each with a stylised ideographic written form. After Zhodani contact, many learnt the spoken and written forms of Zdetl (the Zhodani language) and so Zdetl became the lingua franca of the Vlazhdumecta. Some believe that the increased ability to communicate with each other was a factor in the sudden boost of Vlazhdumecta fortunes that followed Zhodani contact.

As the Vlazhdumecta spread out into space, each colony used an official language (derived from the part of the homeworld from which they came) and Zdetl (used to communicate with off worlders). The languages began to merge and evolve in different directions, particularly after the breakup of the Vlazhdumecta Colonial Sphere and the influx of Sky Raiders, Imperials, and other peoples.

Pure Vlazhdumecta languages disappeared well before modern times, though many backwater villages speak tongues which in part descend from them. Linguists are very interested in reconstructing the original languages, but no such attempt has gained wide acceptance. Linguists are famous for fierce arguments, attacking the theories of others and defending their own, to the point where all are stereotyped as fiery, larger than life characters. Archaeologist-Linguists are well known patrons of expeditions to obscure villages on obscure planets.

Travellers will find that Zdetl is needed on most Zhodani ex-Vlazhdumecta worlds. Galanglic is best outside the Consulate, but travellers should beware the higher number of loan and slang words than usual.

Vlazhdumecta Characters

Character Generation: Vlazhdumecta characters are generated using normal rules, except that a -1 DM should be applied to Endurance/Constitution (minimum of 2 for Endurance and 1 for Constitution).

For all three game systems, aging rolls are made at the usual times. For seven-eighths or better Vlazhdumecta blood, add 4 to all saving throws against losses (so losses are less likely). For six-eighths, the modifier is +3, for five-eighths +2, for one-eighth to four-eighths +1. Those with less than one-eighth Vlazhdumecta blood live normal human lifetimes.

Anagathics: Normal anagathics have little effect on pure or near-pure Vlazhdumecta, due to biochemical differences. However, virtually all Vlazhdumecta in Afachtiabr sector have enough genes from other human races to use the standard anagathics.
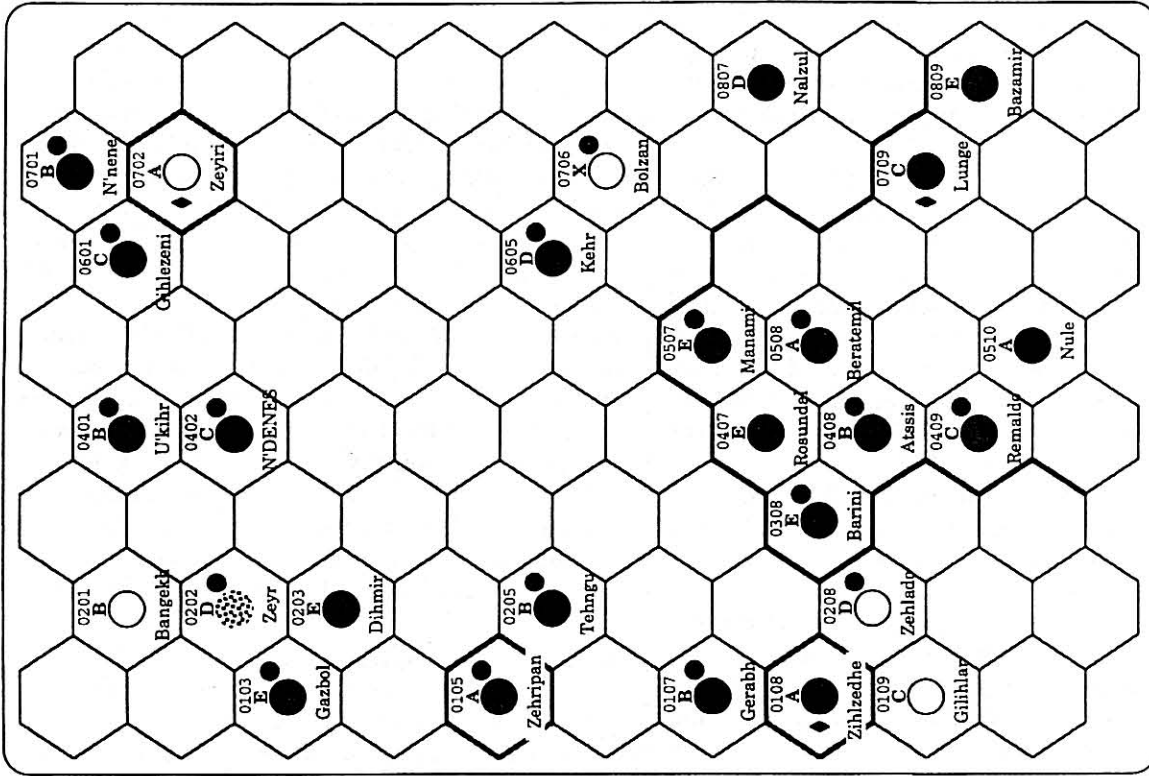
Retan
(Far Frontiers F)

Retan Subsector

Legend: Gas Giant / Forbidden Zone / Military Base / Scout Base / Asteroid Belt / Unabsorbed World / Desert World

World Name	Hex	UWP	B	Trade Codes	Z	pbg-tf	Al	Stellar
Gazbol	0913	E556000-0		Ba Ni		003-XX	Na	M0 V
Zehripan	0915	A77968A-9		Ni S3		303-89	Zc	M3 V M0 D
Gerabh	0917	B434121-A		Lo Ni		905-23	Na	M9 V
Zihlzedhe	0918	A867212-8	Z	Lo Ni		410-CB	Zc	M0 V
Gilihlar	0919	C400520-8		Ni Va		410-69	Na	F2 V
Bangehk	1011	B110345-9		Lo Ni		200-11	Na	M5 V
Zeyr	1012	D000389-9		As Lo Ni		123-41	Na	M2 V
Dihmir	1013	E537798-6		S8		200-20	Na	K7 II M8 D
Tehngu	1015	B779354-9		Lo Ni		212-00	Na	M5 V
Zehlado	1018	D110777-8		Na S5		203-62	Na	G5 V M0 D
Barini	1118	EAA656A-8		Fl Ni S7		112-58	Pt	M6 V M1 D
U'kihr	1211	B467752-A		Ag Ri SD		902-87	Na	K1 V M8 D
N'denes	1212	C64795A-7		Hi In		413-B9	Na	M3 V
Rosundal	1217	E634000-7		Ba Ni		300-A5	Pt	G7 V
Atssis	1218	B413614-9		Ic Na Ni C0 S8		704-86	Pt	M1 V M8 D
Remaldo	1219	C303114-A		Ic Lo Ni		605-47	Pt	M5 V
Manami	1317	E342524-7		Ni Po		303-10	Pt	M7 V
Beratemil	1318	A787315-8		Lo Ni		203-CA	Pt	K4 V
Nule	1320	A549311-B		Lo Ni		400-8E	Pt	A4 V
Gihlezeni	1411	C302532-7		Ic Ni		704-00	Na	M8 V
Kehr	1415	D446355-6		Ic Lo Ni		424-X4	Na	G0 V
N'nene	1511	B512127-8		Ic Lo Ni S8		603-41	Na	M2 V M2 D
Zeyiri	1512	A220220-C	Z	De Lo Ni Po		720-6C	Zc	M6 V
Bolzan	1516	X11059B-7		Ni		423-X4	Na	G7 V
Lunge	1519	C556549-6	N	Ag Ni SA		405-6B	Pt	A3 V M9 D
Nalzul	1617	D435620-7		Ni S9		310-X4	Na	G1 V M1 D
Bazamir	1619	E8A3835-8		Fl SE		210-A5	Pt	F7 V M2 V

A Word About Format

The subsector listings for the coreward half of Far Frontiers Sector are in the standard GDW format with two changes. The first is the addition of the Traffic and Facilities codes detailed in TTC#4. These can be found between the Population-Planetoid- Gas Giant codes and the Allegiance Code. In general, the higher the value, the higher the traffic volume or quality of facilities. See TTC#4 for further details. The second addition can be found in the Comments section of any system with more than one star. The code "S##", where the numbers range from 0 to F (15 in hexidecimal
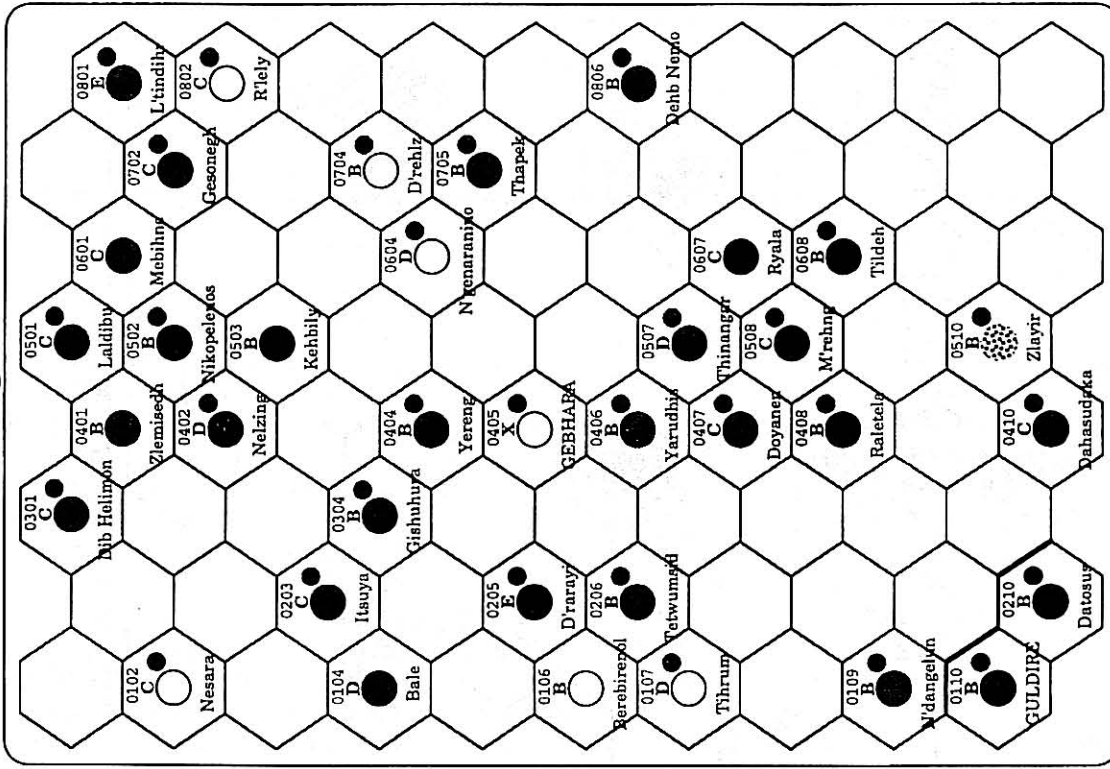
Dalesabandagh

(Far Frontiers G)

Dalesabandagh Subsector

Map legend: Gas Giant · Forbidden Zone · Military Base · Scout Base · Asteroid Belt · Unabsorbed World · Desert World

Map hex labels (hex / base / name):
0801 E L'tindihr · 0802 C R'lely · 0806 B Dehb Nemo
0702 C Gesonegh · 0704 B D'rehlz · 0705 B Thapek
0601 C Mebihne · 0604 D N'genaranino · 0607 C Ryala · 0608 B Tildeh
0501 C Laldibu · 0502 B Nikopelenos · 0503 B Kehbily · 0507 C Thinangar · 0508 C M'rehng · 0510 Zlayir
0401 B Dib Helimon · 0402 D Nelzing · 0404 B Yereng · 0405 X GEBHARA · 0406 C Yarudhis · 0407 C Doyanen · 0408 B Raletela · 0410 B Dahasudaka
0301 C Dib Helimon · 0304 B Gishuhura
0203 C Itsuya · 0205 E D'rarayi · 0206 B Tetwumsid · 0210 B Datosus
0102 C Nesara · 0104 D Bale · 0106 B Berebirenol · 0107 D Thrum · 0109 B N'dangelun · 0110 B GULDIRE

| World Name	Hex	UWP	B	Trade Codes	Z	pbg-tf	Al	Stellar
Nesara	1712	C120676-8		De Na Ni Po		125-00	Na	G3 III
Bale	1714	D9B6544-8		Fl Ni		510-XX	Na	M0 V
Berebirenol	1716	B25078C-B		De Po SF1		200-24	Na	M1 V M9 D M8 D
Tihrum	1717	D310799-7		Na		604-36	Na	M7 V
N'dangelun	1719	B787753-8		Ag Ri		115-DD	Na	K8 V
Guldire	1720	B997AFF-B		Hi In S6		621-FF	Pt	M1 V M0 D
Itsuya	1813	CA78578-7		Ag Ni C0		602-41	Na	M2 V
D'rarayi	1815	E585114-6		Lo Ni S7		902-X0	Na	G5 V M5 D
Tetwumsid	1816	B522774-A		Na Po C1		604-10	Na	M6 V
Datosus	1820	B210467-9	N	Ni		504-66	Pt	K9 V
Dib Helimon	1911	C572000-0		Ba Ni SA		024-XX	Na	K6 V M5 D
Gishuhura	1914	B54459A-8		Ag Ni		704-30	Na	M9 III
Zlemisedh	2011	B301100-8		Ic Lo Ni Va		900-10	Na	G3 V
Nelzing	2012	D78A79C-3		Ri Wa		604-60	Na	M4 V
Yereng	2014	B565325-A		Lo Ni SB		205-37	Na	M2 II M2 D
Gebhara	2015	X120A59-9	N	De Hi In Na Po		613-2X	Na	M6 V
Yarudhis	2016	B7B2502-8		Fl Ni		604-21	Na	M0 V
Doyanen	2017	C676231-7		Lo Ni S3		313-35	Na	G5 V M3 D
Raletela	2018	B59467B-A	N	Ag Ni		405-56	Na	M5 V
Dahasudaka	2020	C88A5AF-6		Ni Wa		314-75	Na	M5 II
Laldibu	2111	C8D6786-9		Fl SA		913-35	Na	M9 V M3 D
Nikopelenos	2112	B565335-9		Lo Ni SC		505-45	Na	K9 V M5 D
Kehbily	2113	B562343-6		Lo Ni SE		300-65	Na	K3 V M3 D
Thinangar	2117	D626778-7		De Ni		624-22	Na	M3 V
M'rehng	2118	C886773-3		Ag Ri		203-71	Na	M6 V
Zlayir	2120	B0008AE-C		As Na		404-85	Na	M3 V
Mebihne	2211	C356320-9		Lo Ni S8		200-10	Na	K1 V M2 V
N'genaranino	2214	D5A055B-8		De Ni		424-32	Na	K2 V
Ryala	2217	C748558-9		Ag Ni S2		310-23	Na	G3 V M1 D
Tildeh	2218	B769214-A		Lo Ni S5		614-00	Na	M5 V M2 D
Gesonegh	2312	C44659B-A		Ag Ni S3		302-43	Na	K2 V M0 D
D'rehlz	2314	B3706AD-7		De Ni		801-42	Na	M7 V
Thapek	2315	B477573-B	N	Ag Ni S3		202-9D	Na	F9 V M8 V
L'tindihr	2411	E769200-5		Lo Ni SF		202-30	Na	M0 V K3 D
R'lely	2412	C120243-B		De Lo Ni Po S3		613-00	Na	M1 V M0 D
Dehb Nemo	2416	B67A474-A		Ni Wa		914-00	Na	M8 V

Far Frontiers

Far Frontiers

Zezhpae
(Far Frontiers H)

Legend:
- Gas Giant
- Forbidden Zone
- Military Base
- Scout Base
- Asteroid Belt
- Unabsorbed World
- Desert World

World Name	Hex	UWP	B	Trade Codes	Z	pbg-tf	Al	Stellar
Afne	2512	E652468-6		Ni Po		703-10	Zh	M8 V
Zdihl	2515	B211640-8		Ic Na Ni S8		403-53	Na	F2 V M6 D
Potldrepiefr	2611	D236116-6		Lo Ni		600-10	Zh	M0 V
Dred	2613	C2006A8-7		Na Ni		301-83	Zh	M5 V
Nebhan	2615	C57A895-6		Wa S3		704-63	Na	G9 V M9 D
Degedhi	2617	E435645-7		Ni S0		920-00	Na	G4 V M1 D
Ryidhen	2618	B683111-8		Lo Ni S2		703-00	Na	G7 V M4 D
Nuleliman	2620	E62587A-7		S3		820-21	Pt	M4 V M0 D
Zhebrtladr	2711	E100652-9		Na Ni Va S8		724-37	Zh	M5 V M0 D
Krrl	2713	E8B0527-8		De Ni SA		903-10	Zh	K0 V M5 V
Tlodadltse	2715	E555588-3		Ag Ni S9		502-94	Zh	A8 V K9 D
Meikadobask	2716	B54678C-9	Z	Ag C3 S3		503-AA	Zh	M6 II M3 V
Entsezzi	2812	C569233-A		Lo Ni S9		414-26	Zh	K0 V M9 D
Fiezhtezhde	2814	A634438-D		Ni S0		400-41	Zh	M7 V M9 D
Lench	2816	D245786-6	Z	Ag	U	114-43	Zh	M8 V
Vezdinz	2912	EAC6455-9		Fl Ni		402-01	Zh	G2 V
She' I'	3013	C427744-A	Z			804-32	Zh	M0 V
Ongihlil	3017	B7935A8-A		Ni S9		423-67	Na	F1 V M7 V
Therop	3019	A5119BD-B		Hi Ic In Na S39		910-BC	Pt	F9 V M4 D M4 D
Jant	3116	A859231-D		Lo Ni		604-78	Zh	M3 V
Afrisha Bins	3117	C4308AA-A		De Na Po		820-67	Zh	G0 V
G'kilpheny	3119	B444432-9		Ni		303-64	Na	M0 V
Dliareq	3213	C335652-8		Ni		511-85	Zh	M1 V
Iesheqr	3214	B444400-A		Ni		600-66	Zh	M4 V
Kiat	3218	CAA65A8-9	Z	Fl Ni S7		703-9C	Zh	G0 V M7 D
Deyil	3219	C744654-5		Ag Ni S8		413-41	Na	G6 V M3 D

notation), indicate the orbits in which the companion stars are found. Following the tables in the MT Referee's Manual (pg 26) or the TNE rulebook (pg 192), these orbits range from Orbit 1 to Orbit 14, with "Close" being anything inside Orbit 1, and "Far" being anything beyond Orbit 14. These two special cases are represented by "0" and "F" respectively. As an example, Degedhi (2617) has the note "S0", indicating a "Close" Binary system. One further note is required for Trinary systems with Far companions. If the Far companion is the second listed number (as in "S4F"), then it is a solitary star, with the other companion orbiting the primary somewhat closer (as indicated by the first number). However, if the Far companion is the first companion listed (as in "SF1"), then it is a Far binary, with the other listed companion in orbit around it in the indicated position.
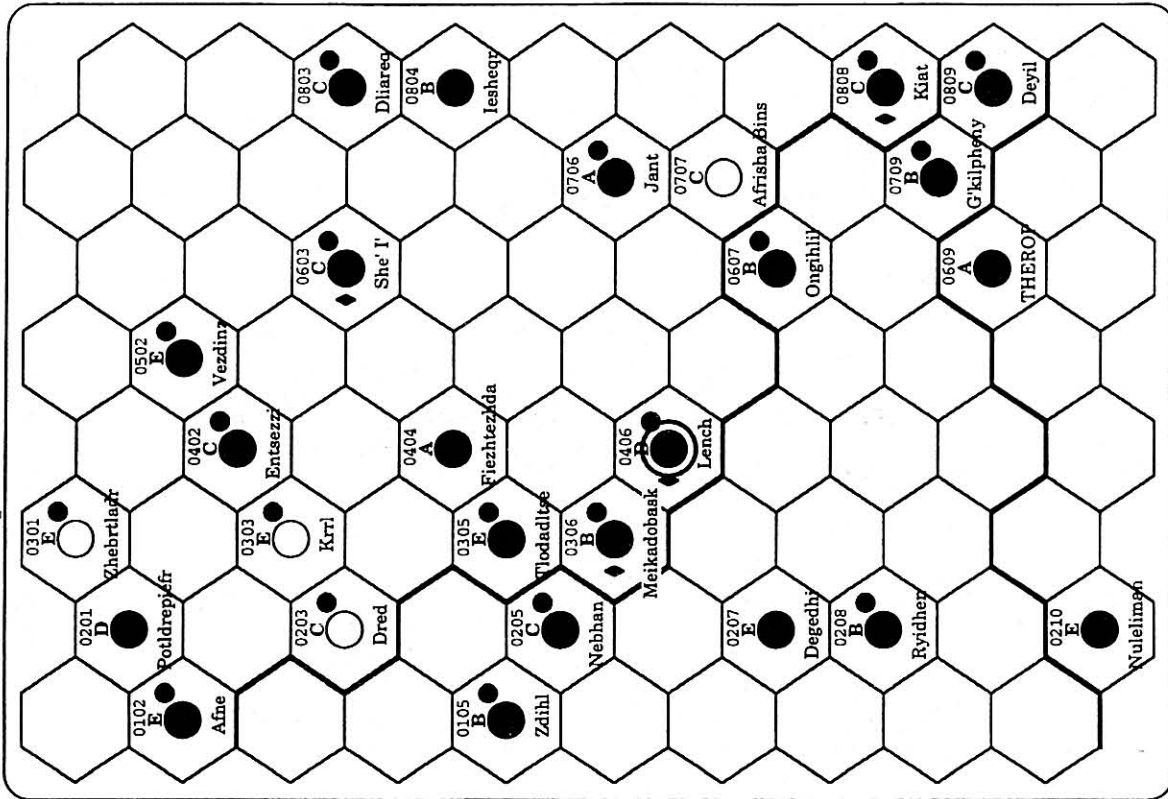
Tsuga Orbital
by Joe Heck

255-1198

Background

This adventure is set up for PCs to be exploring the nearby star systems and includes aquiring them a ship (in the form of a relic). The Joydel system is specifically left undefined to fit in any campaign or area, but the details of the adventure as written place it near Vargr space.

The PCs begin on Giettacin, in the Joydel System. Giettacin is only beginning to regain the capability of interstellar travel - and the PCs are involved in that juncture. (Giettacin E556535-9 Ag 430 G5 V)

The PC's begin as a group from 1-5 players who have been gathered together at an Orbital Spaceport for a business proposal. The PCs should have a variety of skills among them - Belter or Space Navy as careers work very well. Any skills that are lacking can be made up by NPCs.

"Ms. Caroline Tsuga is the owner and CEO of Tsuga Orbital - a transit company that has grown a great deal over the past years in tourism of nearby planets - and has a interesting business proposal."

Referee Notes

Ms. Caroline Tsuga is an exceptional businesswoman who has expanded her mother's freight hauling company into a full fledged space travel industry and holds the virtual monopoly on the tourism of other nearby planets in this system. The primary focus of tourism has been the planet Ruigth, recently opened to public travel.

Ruigth was kept interdicted by the planetary government in order to allow them to thoroughly scavenge the destroyed Scout Base for relic

technology. By the time the planetary government actually got to the Base, it was already thoroughly picked over by iternerant Merchant ships - appearing only briefly between the years to trade industrial goods for the agricultural goods common on Giettacin. The remains of the Scout Base have allowed Giettacin scientists to recover the technology required to produce working Jump Drives.

The advance in jump technology is now filtering to the general (commercial) population. The technology recovered is Jump 1, and if Tsuga could find a Jump 2 drive in working order, they would get a lead on their competition, Ricaro Systems. Part of Tsuga Orbital's research and development money has been spent scouring the system for remaining jump technology not controlled by the government, and the expenditure has finally paid off. All Tsuga Orbital needs is a carefully picked crew willing to do some deep space recovery.

What isn't an open secret is the government of Giettacin has established preliminary contact with a nearby system, and in order to develop trade between a set of close planets is constructing a deep space refueling station. Ricaro Systems are the primary contractors for the governmental starships, and have the contract for creating the refueling station. The tanker ships to carry the fuel have been in construction for the past 18 months, and will be finished in another 6. When they are finished, the Ricaro will have a strangle-hold on trade between a number of worlds and re-establishing interstellar contact.

The Offer (setting up)

The PCs are invited to join Caroline Tsuga at Spaceport 1,
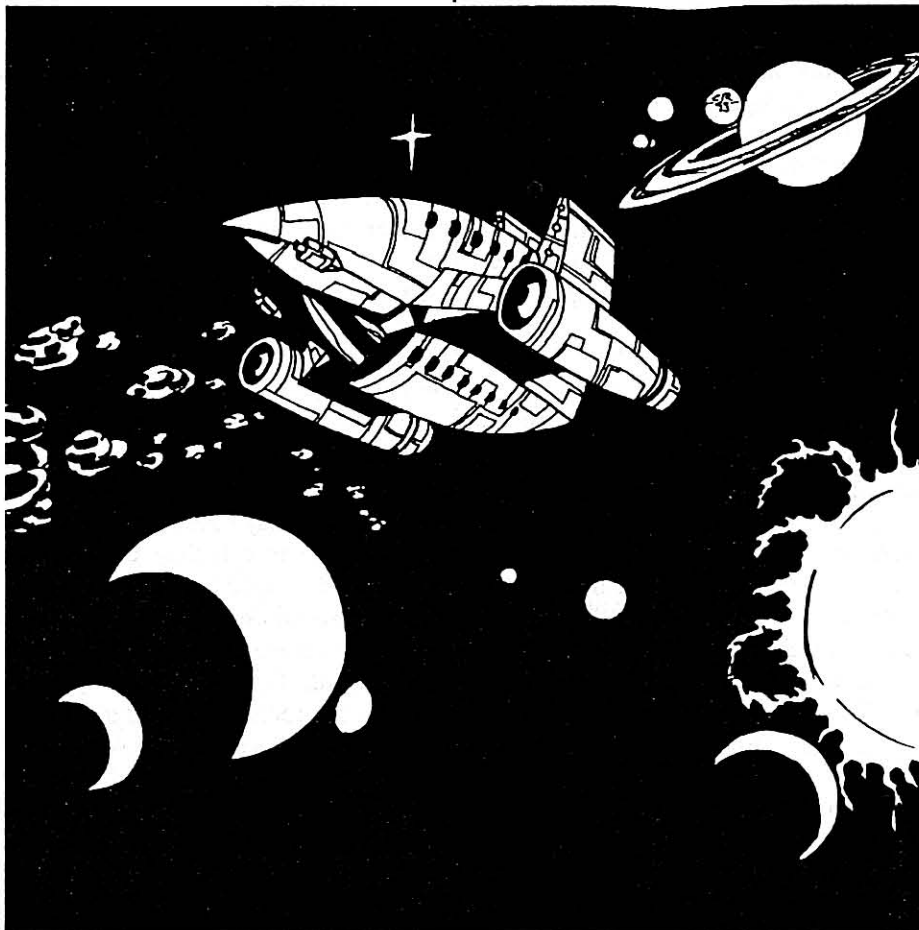
courtesy of Tsuga Orbital, for a weekend visit. Spaceport 1, like Giettacin, orbits the small gas giant Ashua. Spaceport 1 is at the forward trojan point on the Giettacin orbit around it's gas giant. After a tour of the facility, the PCs join Ms. Tsuga in a confrence room. She is very frank and to the point.

The job as it stands is for the PCs to recover a starship entering the system in a highly elliptical orbit. She has some basic information on the starship, but has been unable to identify it. It is undoubtably a relic, and the possibility exists of an active virus infection on the starship. To complicate matters, the relic - although undetected up till now, will not remain so. Due to the media blitz against the government and Ricaro Systems, any ship launched in an uncommon vector will be tracked and the relic located. Assuming the PCs take the job, they will have a lead time of only hours to recover the ship and claim it - as publicly as possible (transmitting live video) - in front of the public. The offered compensation for this job is Cr100,000 per person, on success. Some guests that have joined the PCs as possible 'adventurers' politely decline and are offered the station's hospitality - with little room for denial.

Launch and Race

The PCs are provided with an unarmed, 95ton shuttle. The shuttle has been retrofitted fitted with internal fuel bladders in the place of the cargo space and some of the seating to allow extended thrust times. Using the full thrust capabilities of the ship, the PCs will get 174 Ghours worth of fuel.

The PCs are given leave to launch, and final telemetry on the ship, giving a distance of 1400 light-seconds. One hour after launch, Caroline Tsuga opens a communications channel to inform them that another ship is accelerating behind them. Although authorities are denying anything, spaceport 1 has tentatively identified the craft as a Ricaro Jumpship and estimates their fuel will give them 120 G-hours of acceleration. The 95 Ton shuttle has a 3G acceleration, providing an ample on the Ricaro ship.

Derelict

When the PCs arrive near the ship, they will find the derelict tumbling slowly in it's highly elliptical orbit. While matching vectors shouldn't be difficult, stopping the tumble might be. Any belter will know it's possible to "bleed" off the tumble by brushing against the derelict with the shuttle. It is quite possible to cross to the derelict and attempt to enter it, but the tumble will need to be stopped eventually, and the derelict has no fuel or power.

Sometime before the PCs enter the ship, they'll need to begin broadcasting. The time difference is a little over 23 minutes at this range using a Maser communicator, so it will take roughly 45 minutes to set up successful communications with Tsuga Orbital. Once they are transmitting, the PCs will need to find a way into the ship...

The PCs will need to first get an active lock on the derelict before they can match vectors with it, and then match vectors before than can attempt to "bleed" off the derelict's tumble.

Getting an active lock on the derelict while closing is required to "find" the derelict. (Difficult: Sensors, 15 minutes)

To stop the tumbling, two successes are required (Difficult: Pilot (Interface/Grav) or Ship's Tactics). Any catastrophic failure adds an additional success needed, as well as possibly damaging any surface mounted features (roll for one minor surface hit on the shuttle). This could conceivably damage the maser antenna, requiring more time to repair the damage before any transmission could begin.

To set up communications with Tsuga Orbital using the shuttle's MaserComm: (Average: comm-unications, 45 minutes; each unsucessful attempt adds 15 minutes to the time).

Boarding

When the PCs start the broadcast, it's time to go in... The viewports are 28cm thick reinforced shatterproof polymer (toughness = 0.5), giving an armor value of 14 (same as ship's hull). This requires a little over 1kg of tamped plastic explosive to breach. Once the port is breached (however so small), the rest of it will shatter and explode into space.

On the belly of the ship is a single iris valve. To enter the ship through the iris valve (Difficult: Mechanic, 15 minutes).

A single turret is accessible on the back of the ship. To cut open the turret using tools on the shuttle (Formidable: Mechanic or Machinist, 60 minutes).

The bridge of the ship (on the belly) has three viewports which might be smashed. If the PCs take this route, the bridge (Room 2) will explosively decompress, spraying the contents of the bridge into space.

Recovery

Once the PCs enter the ship, they will need to explore the ship. At this point, the PCs have probably claimed the ship for Tsuga Orbital. If they are checking the monitors, the will notice that the Ricaro ship is still coming in full blast, and the PCs may have to find a way to deal with an armed ship. Remember if they cut in through the turret, they probably damaged it too...

This section primarily deals with the ship's layout, and notes concerning the fate of the original crew. Once the PCs are aboard, they should quickly realize that the ship was Vargr. The rooms are coded to the ship's deckplans. Details are given for each area below.

Due to the timed nature of this section of the adventure, the referee might wish to keep track of PCs and what they are doing and for how long. PCs will need to work together and quickly before the Ricaro Jumpship arrives.

General Details:

General Conditions:

If the PCs enter the ship without vacating the atmosphere, the ship will have a foul stench. The temperature is all well below zero, making the vacc suits nessecary for at least warmth. The air is breathable, although highly poluted, and the life support system will need to be completely flushed. When power is activated on the ship, life support will begin to function, but it will take at least 4 hours to bring the ship back to a decent temperature and purge the worst of the pollution from the internal atmosphere.

Lighting for the ship is in the form of indirect overhead lighting, when the ship's power is on. All Iris valves have emergency lighting as well in the form of red glowing panels over the hatches (or beside them in some cases). If the ship is on emergency power, the Iris valve lighting will be lit, but not the overhead. With all systems active, the lighting is controled by the central computer.

Power and Fuel:

Power for the ship was provided by the fusion plant in Room 7 (Engineering - Port). The Virus ran the ship's power at minimal levels to try and maintain itself, but it did eventually run out of fuel, and that was 70 years ago on a highly eliptical orbit heading out of the system. There is no fuel left in the bulkheads, and some will need to be transfered to the power system before it can be started. The power system, jump drives, and manuever drives all have their own fuel tanks. They are interconnected though, so transfering fuel from tank to tank is not difficult (of course, it requires power to pump it from one place to the other).

Power can also be connected externally through standard (or what was once standard) inductance feeds. There is an access panel on the hull at the aft end of the ship for this port. The PCs don't have the "male" end of the connection on their ship, but the type of connection is still being used in the Joydel System, so it might be possible to create something (Difficult: Mechanical, Electronics, 10 minutes).

Ship's Computers and The Virus:

The ship had three computers, one of which was destroyed (it was in the electronics access room in the nose of the ship), one ripped off line before it was infected (on the bridge) and one (infected) in the engineering starboard room. If the PCs do not take the TL12 infected computer off line before re-powering the ship, the computer will do it's utmost to destroy the ship and PCs, but not before trying to infect the shuttle they came in.

Active infections on the starship are actually quite limited - just powerful in scope. The TL12 computer is the most obvious, but the avionics on the air/raft is also infected - and it has an active transponder when powered. Since the virus is silicon based, it didn't make it much past the fiber optic backbone, although it infected the other pieces with various software control viruses. The hardware tampering was limited to the avionics and transponders - having TL12 computer being the only thing advanced enough to re-write it's hardware based on outside instructions.

Iris Valves:

The air-tight portals are 1.75 meter tall rounded rectangles, made of 5cm thick composite laminates. The valves themselves have an armor value of 30, and would require a 50cm breach to break the internal locks in the center of the door.

Next to each portal is a small box covered in green and red stripes, and detailed with strange lettering in an unknown alphabet. Inside the box is an E shaped object, chequered in yellow and blue diamonds. The PCs might recognize the object as an electric winch for emergency access to the iris valves. Upon careful inspection of the iris valves, the PCs may spot the area to insert the tool, twist slightly, and power open the valve. Each tool has battery power for approximately 10 uses.

The iris valves only have the emergency access ports on the inside of the ship. There is also a small panel somewhere on the wall, unmarked and unlabeled, to allow the PCs to crank open an iris valve by hand.

> To spot the ports for the emergency winch on the iris valves (Difficult: Ship's Architecture, Mechanic, or Formidable: Machinist, 5 minutes).

> To enter the determine the use of the E shaped object (Difficult: Ship's Architecture, or Formidable: Mechanic or Machinist, 5 minutes). Raise the difficulty one level for Mechanic or Machinist. Opening or closing an iris valve with the emergency winch takes 30 seconds.

> To spot the panel for the hand crank to open the iris valves by hand (Difficult: Ship's Architecture, Mechanic, or Observation, 1 minute). Cranking open an iris valve by hand takes approximately 5 minutes.

Sliding Doors:

The doors are simple rectangles that slide along a track inside the walls. They are not air-tight, and any sudden decompression from one side will blow the door off it's track. There are simple privacy locks, but forcing them is as easy as using a crowbar.

> To force open a sliding door with a crowbar (Average: Strength or Mechanic). If the PC is using strength alone, increase the difficulty one level.

1 Air/Lock: If the players succeed in entering through the air/lock, the Iris valves will all be sealed to other areas of the ship. There is a ladder against the wall leading up to an Iris valve in the ceiling. A small box covered in green and red stripes is mounted on the wall, detailed with strange lettering in an unknown alphabet. A clear panel shows an E shaped object inside the box, chequered in yellow and blue diamonds.

2 Main Bridge: The only access to the bridge is from the Air/Lock, and stepping up the short stairs into the bridge is a scene of carnage. Two humanoid figures with canine

features are slumped in their seats facing the viewports, frozen. A third floats upside down near the middle of the room. Burn marks are very obvious on the creature's clothing near what remains of it's hands, and the body curled in an obvious spasm of pain. The creatures all exhibit high degrees of decomposition, but the PCs can determine they had canine skulls, tails, and short fur on their bodies.

The central command chair sits on a small dias and has a perfect view out the three viewports. Just behind the command console is a closed cabinet with some sort of wood finishing. Beneath the dias is a variety of electronics, some of which is ripped out and apparently shreded. The controls are all very alien, and marked in an unfamiliar language and alphabet. PCs using the controls will have a +3 to difficulty until they figure them out.

To recognize the creatures as Vargr, (Simple: History, Instant).

To recognize the Vargr alphabet/text, (Difficult: History, Instant).

To determine cause of death, (Average: Medical, 5 minutes). Xeno-biology or biology might be able to be used as a substitute - up to the referee. The two Vargr in the chairs died of gunshot wounds to the head.

To determine the functions of the control panels (Difficult: Sensors, Communications, Pilot, and Astrogation for the four stations, and Computer for the command console, each console will take 2d6-1 x 30 minutes to work through).

The cabinet behind the command console is the ship's locker, and contains 4 10mm TL12 snub pistols, 6 cases of ammunition (100 10mm rounds each), and a TL13 laser pistol, fully charged.

The dias contains control systems and a TL12 standard computer system which was taken off line before the virus could invade it. It is the only TL12 computer system on the ship not infected.

To notice the computer is under the Dias (Average, Observation & Computer, Instant).

To reconnect the computer system (Difficult: Computer and Electronics, 2 hours). "Taking their time" will drop the difficulty by one and double the time required.
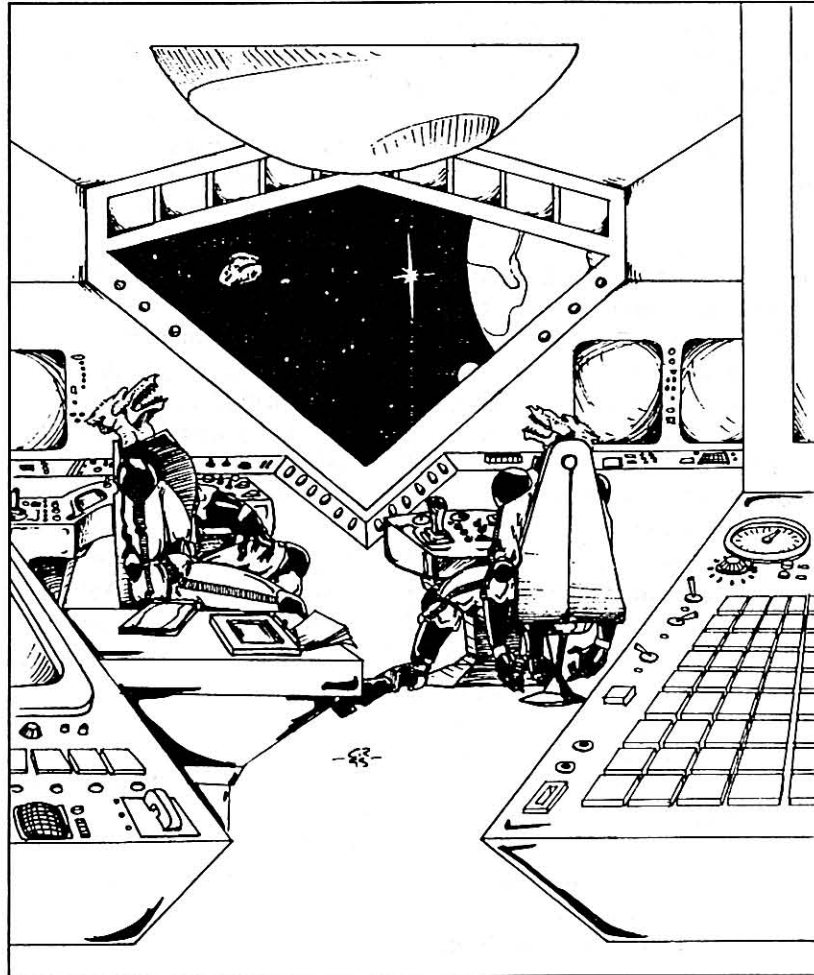
3 Captain's Quarters: The stateroom is garishly adorned with bright yellow, red, and violet paint. A wooden desk is bolted to the wall and floor, it's surface bare. Two ship's chairs are still attached to the floor near the desk, but a cushioned chair on casters, as well as various bits of clothing and paper float in a swarm of debris somewhere near the ceiling. If gravity was restored before PCs entered the room, the debris is littered about the floor.

Searching the desk will reveal some electronics unfamiliar to the PCs and a number of small, cubic plastic cartridges.

The electronics in the desk is a holorecorder, and the cartridges are optical storage media for the holorecorder.

To recognize them as such (Average: Electronics or Communications or Difficult: History, Instant).

To determine their use through experimentation (Formidable: Electronics, 30 minutes).

The papers scattered about the floor are written in the Vargr language and alphabet, essentially useless to the PCs.

4 Converted Cargo Bay: This room is very large and can be accessed from the Air/Lock or the cargo hatch. The room

currently contains a table floating near a wall and shards of glass scatttered throughout. Against the wall is a control panel, with a sign in unknown script taped clearly over it. An odd model of an Air/Raft is moored against the floor with short chains. The Air/Raft seems to be heavily modified, and sports shiny fins as well as deep seats with holes cut into the backs. Several dents along the right and left sides, as well as numerous scars over it's black and white zebra-stripe paint job prove the vehicle to be heavily worn. The operator's seat is covered in a shiny metalic fur.

The sign over the controls on the wall is simply a "Do Not Use" in the vargr language. The controls are operational once power is restored, although safety interlocks won't allow it to be opened into vacuum (unless circumvented, of course).

The Air/Raft is quite operational, although very dangerous, once refueled. It's internal avionics system has been infected with the Virus, and the entire computer system will need to be scrapped.

5 Central Corridor: The aft end of the corridor has iris valves to engineering and the decks above and below. Five sliding doors open to crew staterooms on the port side, and 9 vacc suit lockers line the starboard side. Scattered through out the corridor is a fine, dark brown, pebbly dust. At the fore end of the corridor is an access panel is open to a crawlspace. A large green symbol is painted on the iris valve leading aft, and nearby it on the walls, floor, and ceiling are dark brown to black stains.

The crawlspace is 1 meter in diameter and 6 meters long with rungs sectioned every 30cm. At the end of the crawlspace, a tangle of wires and electronics is littered about, spilling from an access room for the electronics and avionics of the ship.

The vacc suit lockers contain a total of 6 vacc suits of strange design. They might fit a human of small stature, but are obviously of alien manufacture. The domes are oblong and the lower half of the suit is designed for the alien leg structure and has space for their tails.

> To fit into one of the vacc suits, a PC would need a combined strength & endurance of less than 10, and a roll of 10+ on 2d6. The Vacc suits are TL12, and so weigh considerably less than the TL8 Vacc suits the PCs are using.

> To determine that the pebbly dust and stains are blood (Average: Biology or Medical, 1 minute).

6 Engineering (Jump Drives): The iris valve from the central corridor opens into a room filled with high-tech machinery that looks like it's been patched repeatedly with baling wire and bubble gum. There are two distinct sets of equipment and a control panel with an acceleration couch. The body of a canine alien floats behind the acceleration couch. A sliding door, partially open, leads into another nearby room.

The alien is in a vacc suit with it's oblong helmet tethered

at it's hip. Brown stains cover the vacc suit and the aft end of the room. It obviously died due to massive trauma - as the middle section of his body looks to be crushed to the point of shearing through the vacc suit.

Close investigation will reveal the brown pebbly dust to obviously be blood, as the suit was half sheared through. The alien was killed by being crushed in the iris valve. Normally safety interlocks usually prevent this from happening...

The machinery consists of a high yield fusion power plant and the jump drives themselves - consisting primarily of power sinks and feeds. This is the goal for which Caroline Tsuga is striving. The drives are in perfect working order, even if they seem to be in poor repair, although there is no fuel in the jump tanks for operation. The careful inspection of the machinery will also discover a set of electronics sealed in a corner of the room behind the high yield fusion plant - the remaining TL12 standard computer that is online. It is infected with the virus.

> To determine the machinery's purpose: Fusion Plant - (Average: Ship's Engineering, 15 minutes); Jump Drive - (Difficult: Ship's Engineering or Formidable: Physics, 30 minutes).

7 Engineering (Power Plant & Manuever Drive): Forcing the door open, the first thing that meets PCs is an alien body, tumbling slightly in the open space of the room. Shards of ice and snowflakes are scattered about the room, floating in random directions and bouncing off walls. In addition, almost all the surfaces of this room are coated in a fine film of ice, making this room extremely treacherous. The alien is little more than a skeleton - obviously more decayed than the others. No flesh remains on the skull or hands, and the vacc suit is burned away in front. A blob of plastic and metal is melted onto the right hand. The machinery behind the alien is a fusion power plant with ties into the wall. Fuel lines lead to and from various parts of the plant, and one of them is obviously severed.

A control console is against the back side of the room, again with an acceleration couch. Behind the console, bolted against the wall, is a steel cabinet with alien writing across it.

The power line was severed by the Vargr with a laser welder, opening the room to high pressure, super-heated fluid. The steam ruptured into the room and killed the alien immediately. The fluid stayed mostly within the engineering room, although the pressure build up in the room popped the sliding door off it's track. The fusion drive is inoperable until the line is repaired and fluid replaced.

The cabinet on the wall contains tools used to general maintenance of the ship. Wrenches and standard sorts of mechanical tools are in abundance, as well as some higher tech equipment.

> To repair fusion plant: Fusion Plant - (Difficult: Ship's Engineering, 2d6- 1 x 30 minutes)

8 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, the room is fairly spartan in furnishings, although garish in decoration.

Yellow and blue tinsel is strung across the ceiling of the room, and a poster of an alien landscape graces the wall. Furnishings include two chairs, one stuck to a wall and the other floating near the bed. A small cabinet against the wall seems to be made of wood grained plastic, grey showing through the edges and heavy wear spots. A desk with a computer terminal is mounted against one wall.

The chairs will prove to have magnetic clamps on the feet, keeping them in place with the exception of a decent tug. The cabinet contains clothes - mostly ship's jumpsuits formed around the alien physiology, but with a couple pairs of outrageous shirts in wide horizontal stripes and plaids.

The computer terminal is connected to the main computer, and is functional with power.

9 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, the room is plain and nearly unfurnished. The bed is folded into the wall, and clothes are all stuffed behind a web webbing neatly tacked in front of the cabinet. Two chairs are in the room, one stuck to the floor and one to the ceiling. A desk with a computer terminal is mounted against one wall.

The chairs will prove to have magnetic clamps on the feet, keeping them in place with the exception of a decent tug. The cabinet and webbing contain clothes - all folded quiet neatly, but displaying a multitude of geometric black and white designs on almost all of it, in no particular order. The computer terminal is connected to the main computer, and is functional with power.

10 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, the room is filled with furniture. Various pieces of wooden furniture float about the room, tethered to their respective places by rope. The ship's bed has been folded back into the wall, unused in favor of the larger bed with a thick matress. Cloth swims through the room in the form of clothes, sheets, blankets and pillows. Boxes of various forms and sizes litter the web of cloth.

The chairs will prove to have magnetic clamps on the feet, keeping them in place with the exception of a decent tug. The computer terminal is connected to the main computer, and is functional with power.

Aside from being nearly in-navigable, the room is also a wealth of culture. The boxes contain recordings from various worlds - on a multitude of media. magnetic cassettes, optical cartridges, plain photographs, and holo-pendants are all bundled throughout the room.

11 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, PCs find another alien body, or what remains of it. The chairs in the room are broken, shards of plastic litter the room, the feet of the chairs having magnetically clamped themselves to various places. The body of the alien is thoroughly crushed, and blood stains are spattered on floor and ceiling thickly, and thinly everywhere else.

There is little of value in this room, and even the computer console has been smashed by floating objects. The alien was killed brutally by varying the grav plates in the room to 3G and crushing it (and everything in the room) between ceiling and floor.

12 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, the room is filled with floating dirt and the frozen remains of plants. Shards of ceramic pots are littered about the room, brown leaves and bodies of various kinds of plants scattered. There are still two chairs in the room, both clamped against the floor, and a computer terminal is in a desk mounted against the wall. The cabinet contains clothes not unlike those found in other staterooms, and the desk contains some unknown electronics.

The room is hard to navigate due to the floating dirt and dust, but fairly plain otherwise. The electronics in the desk is a pocket medical scanner, in working condition. The computer terminal will need it's keyboard cleaned before it can be used. The cabinet in the wall contains a brown leather satchel decorated with metalic fur. Inside the satchel are shattered vials and frozen fluids.

To determine the function of the pocket med scanner (Formidable: Electronics or Medical, 10 minutes).

13 Electronics & Sensor accessroom: The end of the crawlspace opens into a tangle of wires and electronics. Various pieces are smashed and littered about the room. The various components all look to be irrepairable. An open tool box has spilled various tools through-out the room.

The vargr managed to destroy part of their killer before it killed them. Included in the remains of electronics are a TL12 standard computer, the transponder, two sets of avionics, and the main trunk of sensor wiring. Although it looks very bad, parts of the system can be brought back into something of a working order. The EMS active and passive array are still completely functional and unaffected by the virus. None of the sensors can be used, however, until the connection is reestablished.

To repair the sensor wiring and connection to the ship's electronic trunk line (Difficult: Electronics, 1 hour).

14 Turret Access and upper corridor: This corridor is extremely short and has a dual manual hatches against the aft wall. Both hatch is currently open, showing access to a control room inside the turret. If the PCs cut in through the turret, the entire deck will be rendered airless and various bits of clothing and personal furnishing will be littering the hallway and the turret - scattered in the rush of air to vacuum.

15 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, the room is completely barren, having only token furnishings. Two chairs and a computer console are in the room, the chairs stacked and stowed against the wall. The bed is folded into the wall and has no linens.

The stateroom was not occupied at the time of the virus' infection. The terminal is completely functional when powered.

16 Crew Stateroom: Entering from the hallway, the room is filled with electronics. The room smells (if it hasn't been vacated of atmosphere) of something dead, but no body is in obvious site. Electrical tools float alongside bits of wiring and the electronics. Two chairs sit against the wall, pushed up against where the bed folds into the wall. A computer console is on the desk mounted against the wall.

The electronics floating about the room are pieces of communications equipment. A full electrical tool set is floating in the room, as well as three functioning TL12 communicators (3000km range radio), two laser communications relays, and a TL12 hand computer. The computer in the desk has been cut from the central computer line.

The TL12 hand computer is functional, and when turned on contains a message for whomever has activated it. Unfortunately, it's in the vargr language, but it includes 2D video on a small screen and the PCs will get a look at the features of the now long dead alien in the room.

The body of the alien is in the fresher. Dark stains cover the fresher and the alien's body, and the decayed remains of the left hand hold a straight razor.

If the PCs cut in through the hatchway, each of the electronics will be destroyed on a roll of 1-3 on a 1d6.

17 Turret: The room is little more than a command console built into an acceleration couch. The whole turret slides around on a bearing track, dual hatches sealing from the rest of the ship. Two prominent access panels are situated above the console.

If the PCs cut in through the hatch, the deck will lose pressure. The first burst of atmosphere will slam shut one of the dual hatches, but it won't seal and the air will continue to vacate, albiet slower.

Investigation of the turret reveals that there is still a missle unactivated in one of the launch tubes. It is a TL12 semi-indepdent missle, and fully functional, although launching it will require power to the turret.

Endgame

The PCs can re-activate the ship, having the Virus try to kill them, and the Ricaro Jumpship following the PCs has orders to destroy both space vessels if the relic can not be recovered. Three effective means of stopping them is the single remaining TL-12 missle, suiciding the shuttle into the Jumpship, or waiting for the Jumpship to dock and attempt to board them. The remains of the adventure are completely left to the players and what they make of the situation.

As the Ricaro Jumpship comes closer to the PCs and the ships, it will attempt to make a sensor lock. When it has a sensor lock, it can launch one of it's TL8 missiles. The players may also be attempting to gain a sensor lock on the Ricaro Jumpship. Since the Ricaro is coming in full acceleration and it's stern end on, it's very easy to get a lock on it, especially using the Vargr's sensors.

If the PCs haven't fired their engines, increase the Ricaro's diff by 1. If the PCs are "powered down", increase the Ricaro's diff by 2. If the PCs use any form of active Sensors, decrease the Ricaro's diff by 1.

The Message

The secret of what happened to the Vargr crew is contained in the TL12 hand computer in room 16 - and it will take 1D6 days to translate back on the mainworld, once the language is identified. Considering the fuel remaining to the PCs when they finish, they'll be better off transmitting the message back to Tsuga to find out what it means.

Static blares briefly, quickly refining itself to the form and face of the alien. The alien has a canine face, and speaks quietly from the computer. The backround is dark behind her. "I am Gharkhed, of the IIS Tourist. I hope that at some time this message will be found, as the rest of this crew is dead, and I will be shortly. Kahkee managed to foul it's plan - but the computer now knows we're aware of it's sentience. Something has invaded two of our computer systems and brought them up to a sentient level - with sociopathic tendencies. The invasion does not seem to have infected lesser devices. The command computer is offline in the bridge, and only emergency power is now available. Kahkee severely damaged the power plant, but that doesn't seem to be enough to keep the alien from working. There is no way to know how long the power will last, and I'm not sure why it's running at."

The alien snorts quietly, turning away momentarily, and then faces the screen again. "When you find this, I hope this thing is dead and drained of power. It is not unbeatable! I have attempted three more times to contact the Starport, but it is not responding anymore. I think this system wasn't advanced enough to be destroyed, but I am dead. Before I go, know that the name Kahkee should be scribed into permanent media and passed to all who smell, hear and see for his courage."

NPC

Ms. Caroline Tsuga, Elite NPC
Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts, Slug Weapon
Other Assets: Leadership 16, Willpower 9, Persuasion 12
Motivations:

Diamonds 6: Tsuga Orbital has been her life, and the government is standing in the way of it's future development, citing unacceptable reasons for restricting technology.

Spades Ace: Her ability to work with people has pushed her further and faster than she every imagined. Her employees are extremely loyal, and her personal contact with them keeps it that way.

Relic Equipment

Battery Powered Emergency Hatch Crank:
The emergency hatch cranks are located near the Iris valves on the ship, each if chequered blue and yellow in a diamond pattern and kept in a box covered with green and red stripes. The cranks are generally E shaped, and the ends of the object fit into an access panel near each Iris valve.

The cranks are battery operated, and each has enough power to open an Iris valve 10 times. It takes 30 seconds to open or close a valve.

TL12 Semi-Independent Missle
Vol: 7kl   Mass: 7 tonnes

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	Rng
TL12 Snub Pistol						
(10mm Std)	DAR	2	Nil	0	6R	4
(10mm HE)	DAR	2	Nil	0	6R	4
(10mm HEAP)	DAR	2	1C	0	6R	4
TL13 Laser pistol	SA3	5	Nil	2	15	120

TL13 Holorecorder: Vol 6 liters, Weight 4kg
(optical recorder cartridges) Vol 0.1 liter, Weight ~kg
TL12 Pocket Medical Scanner: Vol 0.2 liters, Weight 0.1kg
TL12 Vargr Vacc Suit
Armor=1 Vol=0.9kl Weight=2kg Agl Mod=-1
TL12 PLSS-B
Vol=16kl Weight=11kg 24 hours duration 1High Pressure Tank
TL12 Hand Computer (equivilant to TL7/8 STD)
Vol=0.2kl Weight=0.5kg

Ship's Locker - 95Ton Shuttle

6 x TL-9 Vacc Suits: Armor 0(1), Vol 3.6kl, Weight 8kg, AGL mod -3
6 x TL-9 Type B PLSS: Vol 20kl, Weight 14.5kg
4 x extra Oxygen tanks: Vol 5kl, Weight 2.5kg
2 x Medical Kits (personal): Vol 0.5 liters, Weight 0.2kg
4 x Heavy Magnetic Grapples & 300 meters steel cable
2 x Light Magnetic Grapples & 100 meters of polymer cable
2 x TL-9 6mm Accelerator Rifle

ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	Recoil	Rng
3	2	1-Nil	4	15	1/2	50

4 x clip of 15 rnds each for Accelerator Rifles
2 x 1kg block of Plastic Explosives: Vol 1 liter, Weight 1kg
1 x Mechanics tool set: Vol 30 liters, Weight 20kg
1 x Eletronics tool set: Vol 10 liters, Weight 5kg

Recent Headlines

173-1197 A spokesman from Tsuga Orbital today announced that he had definitive proof that the government has found the secret to Jump Technology, and is purposefully keeping it from commercial interests. He repeatedly pointed out the dangers of single-minded use of technology, and re-iterated the benefits of Interstellar trade. Ricaro Systems, primary contractor of spaceships for the Giettacin government, refused to comment.

200-1198 Tsuga Orbital announced the laying down of the first jump capable ship in commercial hands in over 70 years. The ship, Cartoga Rich, is the going to be built based off old plans refitted to current technology.

245-1198 Tsuga Orbital announced the opening of Winter World Exploration. Ruigth, recently opened to public tourism, is now accessible via an interplanetary shuttle. Flight times range from 9 to 50 hours, averaging on 25 hours, depending on time of year. The flight itself boasts a scenic view of Ricaro, the largest Gas Giant in the system with it's silvered ice ring and 6 moons. Ruigth itself is covered with extended polar caps, and the equatoral region has the central facility for Winter World Exploration, with an average temperature of 9°C.

250-1198 In an impressive demonstration, image enhanced data from Tsuga Orbital Spaceport 2 was displayed over public video lines. The image began with the flare of a fusion drive, cutting off to show a flat disc coasting away from Giettacin. A number of seconds later, the starship lit up with an indistinct blue glare and disappeared from sensor readings. Active scan Ladar also confirmed the ship's disappearance. Recorded speeches accompanying the video made repeated comments about Interstellar contact with nearby planets. The display has sparked a number of civil protests in the government arcologies.

252-1198 Civil protests finally died down after a three day surge of violence in the government arcology. Damage is estimated at nearly 1.5 Million credits. The protests were only relieved when scientists from Ricaro Systems and the Secretaries of Industry and Technology presented themselves to the public over video. In a five minute speech, they admitted to having contacted nearby worlds and confirmed that the details would not be released "until all apparent dangers have been verified". Secretary Goodrum alluded to possibilities of the Holocaust affecting Giettacin again, and stated "at this time, the technology should be maintained for governmental vehicles only due to the risk to Giettacin". Protestors argued loudly with the Secretaries and scientists, although many seemed stunned by the thought of another holocaust.
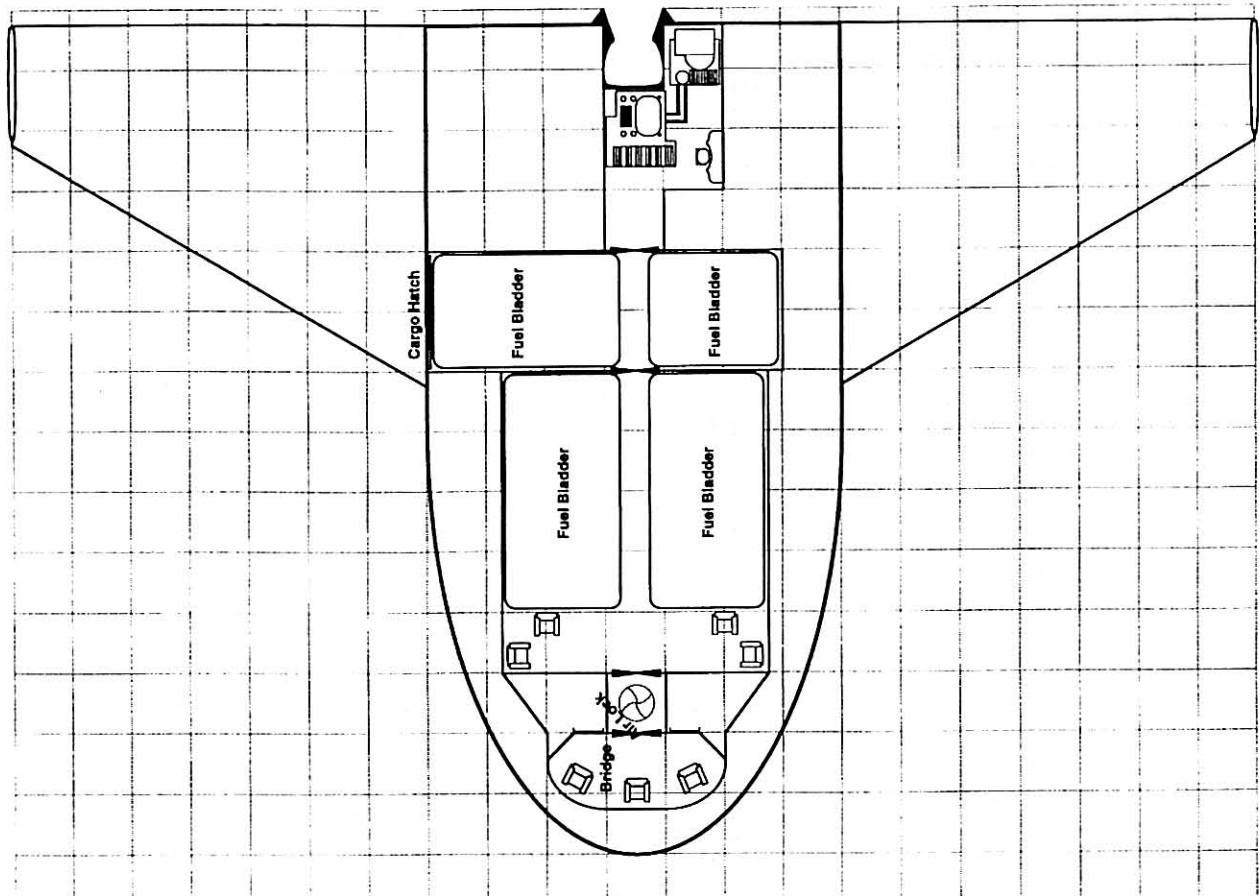
General Data

Displacement: 200tons
Length: 25.5 meter diameter
Price: 375.7024MCr
Configuration: Dome/Disk AF
Mass (Loaded/Empty): 2563.46/1977.67 tonnes

Hull Armor: 12
Volume: 2800 m^3
Target Size: Small
Tech Level: 9

Engineering Data

Power Plant: 200 MW Fusion Plant (50MW/Hit), 1 year duration, 15 m^3 fuel

Jump Performance: 1 (280 m^3 fuel)

G-Rating: 1G (100MW/G) TL-9 STD ContraGrav Lifters, TL-9 Fusion Rocket (1hr reaction mass, 13.2)

G-Turns: 2 Plasma (24.4. using jump fuel), 25m^3 each
44 Fusion (212 using jump fuel), 1.6675m^3 each

Maint: 63

Electronics

Computer: 3 x TL-9 Mod Std Computers (0.25 MW each)
Commo: 30,000km Radio (1 hex, 10 MW), 1000 AU Maser (∞, 1 MW), 60,000km Radar (6 MW), 120,000km HRT (folding array, 0.25MW)
Avionics: TL-8+ Flight Avionics
ECM/ECCM: None
Controls: TL-9 Computer Linked Controls, 3 Engineering Workstations, 6 Bridge Workstations.

Armament

Offensive: 1 TL-8 Missile Barbette (Loc:10, Arcs: All) with integral 300,000km Laser Comm (10 hexs, 0.15MW), 1 empty turret socket fitted.
Master Fire Director: None
Deffensive: None

Accommodations

Life Support: Extended (0.28 MW)
Crew: 11 (2xManuever, 2xElectronics, 3xEngineering, 1xGunnery, 1xMaintenance, 2xCommand)
Crew Accommodations: 8xSmall Staterooms
Passenger Accommodations: 10xSmall Stateroom
Cargo: 535 m^3
Small Craft & Launch Facilities: None
Air Locks: 2, 1xLarge Cargo Hatch

Notes

The Ricaro Jumpship uses a fusion rocket for it's primary thrust. There is also a reaction chamber for the Fusion Reactor, but it only produces 1G Thrust for 1 hour - enough to simply move away from the planet to light up the big torch.

Variations include a fuel bladder in the cargo hold - another 280kl would allow another Jump1. Fuel purification machinery might also be installed in the hold. A 60kl fuel processing plant would process 320kl in 19.2 hours, or 600kl fuel in 36 hours.

The 200MW power plant will easily drive a laser, sandcaster, or missle launcher in the extra turret, and the fusion rocket itself is a weapon at shorter ranges. In addition, the hold could be converted to carry any number of small vehicles - up to approx 23 displacement tons (giving a 1.6x leeway for being in a cargo hold)

Area (1D20)	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions
1	1-3: Hatch	1-3: Qtrs, 4-20: Hold
2-3		Qtrs
4-5		Hold
6-7	ANT (HRT)	Qtrs
8		Hold
9	1: A/L	Hold
10	1-3:ANT (Radar)	
	4: ANT (Maser)	1-10: Elec
	5: ANT (Radio)	11-20: Hold
	11-15: ANT (HRT)	
11		Engr
12-13	ANT (HRT)	1-10: Elec, 11-20: Hold
14	1: A/L	1-7: Engr, 8-20: Hold
15		1-8: Engr, 9-20: Hold
16-17		Engr
18-19		Engr
20	1-2: Missle	Engr

Systems	Systems
JD-2H	Fusion Rocket (7H)
PP-4H	SSR-18x(2h)
CG-1H	LS-3H
ELS-2H	HRT Ant-1H
MD-(2h)	Radar Ant-1H
All Others-(1h)	Missile Barbette-1H

General Data

Displacement: 100tons
Length: 42 meters
Price:
Configuration: Needle AF
Mass (Loaded/Empty): 1190.93/1123.15 tonnes

Hull Armor: 14
Volume: 1400 m^3
Target Size: Small
Tech Level: 12

Engineering Data

Power Plant: 150 MW Fusion Plant (50MW/Hit), 1 year duration
Jump Performance: 2 (210 m^3 fuel)
G-Rating: 2G (50MW/G) Contra-Grav Lifters (10MW)
G-Turns: 38 (54.8 using jump fuel), 12.5m^3 each
Maint: 19

Electronics

Computer: 3 x TL-12 Mod St Computers (0.4 MW each)
Commo: 30,000km Radio (1 hex, 1 MW), 1000 AU Maser (∞, 0.6 MW), 300,000km Active EMS (10 hex, 27.5MW), 120,000km Passive EMS (4 hex, .15 MW), Neutrino (0.1 MW)
Avionics: TL-8 Flight Avionics, TL-12 NOE Avionics (NOE: 160kph)
ECM/ECCM: EMM
Controls: TL-12 Dynamic Linked Controls, 2 Engineering Workstations, 5 Bridge Workstations.

Armament

Offensive: 1 TL-12 missile turret fitted (Loc:10, Arcs: All) with integral 300,000km Laser Comm (10 hexs, 0.15MW)
Master Fire Director: None
**Deffensive:** None

Accommodations

Life Support: Extended (0.28 MW), Grav Compensators (3G; 7MW)
Crew: 7 (2xManuever, 2xElectronics, 2xEngineering, 1xGunnery, 1xCommand)
Crew Accommodations: 7xSmall Staterooms (0.0005 MW each)
Passenger Accommodations: 1xSmall Stateroom (0.0005 MW)
Other Facilities: 70m^3 utility space (additional electronics, cargo, etc)
Cargo: 18.26 m^3
Small Craft & Launch Facilities: None

Air Locks: 1, 1xSmall Cargo Hatch

Notes

Area (1D20)	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions
1	ANT	Elec
2-3		Hold
4-5		Hold
6-7		1-10: Qtrs, 11-20: Hold
8-9	1-2: EMM	1-10: Qtrs, 11-20: Hold
10	1: ANT	1-10: Turret, 11-20: Qtrs
11		Qtrs
12-13		1-10: Qtrs, 11-20: Hold
14-15	1-2: EMM	Hold
16		1-5: Turret, 6-14: ENGR, 15-20: Hold
17		1-5:Turret, 6-20: Hold
18		ENGR (Power Plant)
19		ENGR (Jump Drive)
20		1-8: ENGR (M-Drive), 9-20: Hold

Systems	Systems
JD-2H	AG-1H
PP-3H	SSR-8x(2h)
CG-(4h)	LS-3H
ELS-2H	EMS Act-(2h)
MD-(2h)	Neutrino-(2h)
All Others-(1h)	
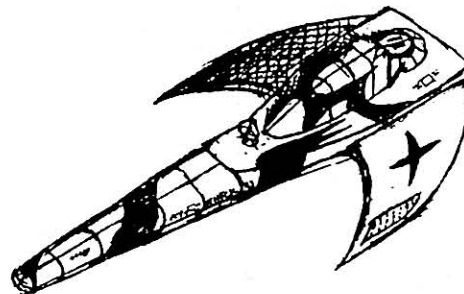
Revenge So Sweet
by Andy Lilly

1. Introduction (Referee's)

The players are passing through the Shadowsand system (0106 C000419-B As Ni Mi, Inverness subsector, Far Frontiers - Traveller Chronicle issue 3) when they encounter a young woman left to die in space (The Hook). If they recover her (Catch The Torpedo?) they will learn who put her out here (The Bad Guys) and why (The Victim). The party may help (Decisions) but should be headed for port anyway (Shadowsand). Her story is authentic (Checking Up) and her enemies are already at work again (The Next Sting). The party can try to find out what's going on (Watch This Space) and intervene (Revenge). If not the woman will go it alone (Not You Again!). Rewards for success are plentiful (Ill-Gotten Gains).

2. The Hook

The familiar temporal lurch announces your ship's transition from jump space back to the real universe. Navigation indicates you are, as planned, in the Shadowsand system. Suddenly alarms begin to sound - there's something small, metallic and torpedo-shaped heading for your ship...

3. Catch the Torpedo?

A Difficult Sensors task will reveal that the 'torpedo' is actually a metalised vac' suit with an over-large fiery rocket pack strapped to it - it will pass within a few km of the ship but does not appear to have been aimed specifically at it. A Difficult Pilot (I/F-Grav) roll (this can be rerolled every few minutes until successful) will match velocities with the 'torpedo' allowing a character to EVA and catch it. Difficult Zero-G Environ and Environ Suit rolls must both succeed to snag the vac suit and turn off the rocket. Failure of either roll means the suit has been knocked onto a slightly different course and an Average Pilot roll must be made to rematch velocity. Failing both rolls at any point means the EVAing character has been caught in the rocket exhaust - the referee should decide how nasty to make this!

4. The Victim

The person inside the vac' suit is an unconscious young woman dressed in a dirty one-piece spacer's costume. Strangely her hair braiding and make-up are those of a rich lady, not a spacer.

An Average Medical Diagnosis task will show her to be suffering the effects of cold and low oxygen (the suit's heater battery and oxygen supply are almost exhausted). She also has heavy bruising and cuts on her wrists and ankles - signs of the use of restraining devices. A Simple Environ Suit task reveals she must have been in space for 9-10 hours. She has no possessions or identity papers on her.

After a few hours, she will recover consciousness. She is extremely suspicious but if the players are genuinely friendly she will calm down. If the players are harsh, she will clam up, demanding to be taken to the CentrePoint port.

If she is persuaded to talk, she will tell the the following. "I am Samara Von Torp, an executive of the Matrix Network corporation from Llywellan (0205 BA6A788-B Ri Wa; one jump from Shadowsand). My father Harvy is..." (her face hardens and she corrects herself) "...was, a self-made millionaire trading in Virus-proofed software. It was only small, but Matrix was his life. He was always wanting to expand, so when a group approached him with a ready-made business for sale on Marsus (0206 A9989B9-A In), he jumped at the opportunity. It was too late when he found out he'd bought a non-existent company. The bastards were so damn convincing - I mean I helped dad with a lot of the transactions and spent a week on Marsus looking over their facilities... I should have known it was too good to be true." She pauses significantly. "We'd overstretched ourselves... the bank panicked and said they wanted to put receivers in. It was dad's corp' and he couldn't take that - I guess his weak heart might have got him, but he decided to end it himself, first..." (he put a magnum pistol under his chin and blew his brains out). At this point she breaks down in tears. Sympathetic characters will earn her undying gratitude at this point!

Finally, she continues: "I tried to trace them of course but they had disappeared, laundering our money so quickly that it couldn't be found. The company on Marsus was real alright, but knew nothing of the sale - they had thought that they had been dealing with major potential customers, hence the walk-rounds the site, etc. Torin, Maria and Felix - the chief fraudsters - ensured neither group talked directly to each other."

"Then I saw Felix pass me on the road. I swung my car round and headed after him - I was going to pulp his head

until I realized he was headed for Outward Bound - the starport. I followed, he met Torin and Maria, I bought a ticket on the same passenger liner - it was a Belax so big enough I could have avoided them for the trip. But they didn't take the liner - at the last moment they boarded the SkyBurner - a little trader. I got too close in my rush to keep track of them and one of their bruisers caught me. I got a free trip here - a damnable week 'cuffed to a bed while they discussed what to do with me. It was one of their two bruisers - 'Talky' who suggested the trick with the rocket taking me out into space to die slowly."

5. Decisions

If the players don't immediately volunteer to help her, Samara will mention hiring some belters at CentrePoint, saying "They're bound to be interested in the millions in cash this trio carry around." To inquisitive players she will just say "I spent months around these people - they spend money like there's no tomorrow. All in cash."

Samara has no ID and hence no way to get money at Centrepoint. She will beg the players if necessary, if only to give her a few credits to rent a room there. If they leave her, she will indeed try to hire some belters but at some point during their business they will see her being roughed up - her upper class accent doesn't go down well here, especially given she cannot afford to buy her popularity.

6. The Bad Guys

The three primary fraudsters who swindled Samara's father are Paul Bayvel, May Gerani and Leonard Ferret. They have been swindling people for years and have never been caught. They employ Ohio Joe as a pilot for their ship and 'Talky' as a bruiser. They employ other people as necessary for each job, usually for 4-6 months; mostly these people have no idea that their employers are scammers.

All three have access to the following:

(a) A wide range of clothing (from poor to rich) and disguises (by Leonard) with matching IDs (prepared by Paul);

(b) A well-tailored bullet-proof vest (appears to be a normal jacket);

(c) 4mm Gauss pistol - HEAP and tranq rounds (for emergencies only; each has a licence forged by Paul);

(d) CR200,000 in 'cash', i.e., individual bio-identity cred' cards.

(e) Access to up to CR25,000,000

(f) 3 High passages (genuine) usable on any starline or independent trader.

The group's ship is a converted Far Trader with souped-up drives, variable identification and lots of weaponry. Only the last is noticeable from the outside. The ship has several alternate sets of registration papers - typically it operates as the legitimate trader Solar Flyer but when the group requires it (e.g. leaving at the end of a con job) the ship leaves planet and comes back as the SkyBurner or Potem's Revenge. Once in jump it changes back to the Solar Flyer - thus it is doubly difficult to trace the group's progress.

7. Shadowsand

Shadowsand is an asteroid belt with around 20,000 miners working it. The system starport is on a 2km asteroid outside the main belt with the supporting startown of Centre-Point within tunnel complexes and surface domes beneath and around it. Around 30,000 miners, port, service and support staff are here at any one time.

The miners espouse a radical mind set based on free enterprise. They are a harmonious xenophobic group, the belters ("Diggers" as they call themselves) set above the support staff ("Lubbers") and they are extremely suspicious of outsiders ("Flat Feet"). All Diggers wear ear rings - the number, size and type indicating their relative success at finding strikes and any particularly dangerous feats they've done. Space at CentrePoint is fairly limited, much as on a belter ship, so most accomodation is extremely cramped or is shared by 2 or more persons. Individual bunks may even be on a time-share basis. The importance of leisure is recognised (particularly sports, to maintain stamina and strength when working long periods in zero gravity). The limited number of places in the swim-pool, gyms and ball-courts means that passes are allocated on a strict regimented basis and Diggers value these highly.

Ore refining and processing is primarily performed by Konrin et Cie, a well known corporation in this subsector. A few small competitors exist but Konrin has by far the largest refining installations which are then hired by individual belters to process their strike.

Law level is nominally 9 but this is applied mainly to outsiders. Open displays of weaponry are forbidden even to Diggers, but fights are regular and often involve blades. The 50-strong police force is small but formidably armed and armoured and are very quick to arrive. Not that they will necessarily stop a fight if it looks evenly matched and only fists are involved! Guns are frowned upon due to the danger of breaching the fragile living quarters and evacuating its inhabitants. The town is necessarily sectioned with strong
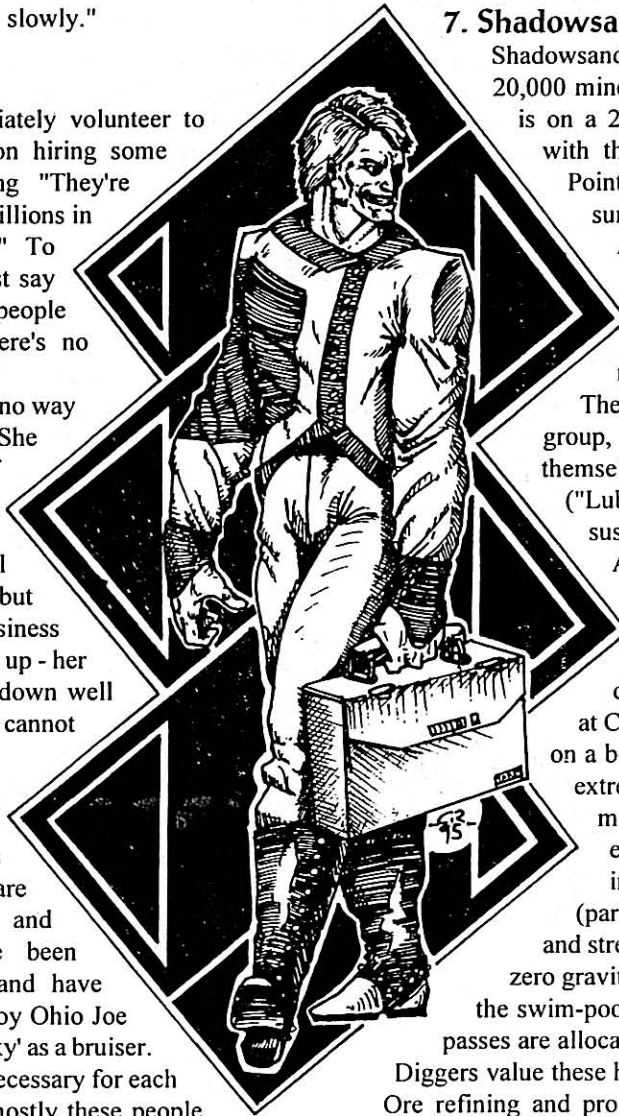
airlocks between sections.

8. Checking Up

Samara is telling the total truth. News reports of her father's death and her disappearance will arrive on the next inbound ship from Llywellan and will be available from CentrePoint's news system. Matrix Network corp went straight into liquidation. Samara will be irate and want to kill the fraudsters.

Finding the fraudsters will be a problem since the party will be looking for the SkyBurner not the Solar Flyer. Working on the time Samara was in space will indicate that the most likely ship to have been involved is the Far Trader Billabong, currently trading entertainment systems to the miners in dock bay 12. This is not the correct ship since the players will have assumed normal Trader acceleration for the journey; the Solar Flyer arrived 4 hours earlier due to its uprated engines. System navigation records might be accessed via bribery or connections (if a member of the party is a belter or particularly good at charming people) - these will show no records of the SkyBurner coming in or out of system but will allow extrapolation of Samara's rocket trajectory (a Formidable Astrogation task) to trace the Solar Flyer back to the approximate area of Samara's abandonment.

The players should thus be able to determine that the fraudsters ship has uprated engines and variable identity. Discrete observation of the Solar Flyer in dock bay 4 will indicate its heavy weaponry. The ship is a valuable prize should they be able to get it! However, this is as yet circumstantial evidence and the three fraudsters have changed disguises such that even Samara would find it difficult to recognise them without coming face to face with them (see Not You Again!).

9. The Next Sting

The fraudsters have not stayed aboard the Solar Flyer - they have an executive (i.e. normal sized) suite in the startown's only hotel catering for "Flat Feet" - the Gem Dome. To outsiders, the Solar Flyer is merely a trader and the fraudsters its passengers.

The fraudsters are not here for a holiday! They know many belters are rich, fairly free with their money, and not too knowledgeable about out-of-system business. Their plan is to select appropriately gullible miners with recent valuable strikes and approach them with an irresistable offer.

Konrin is a fair company but does charge quite highly for its ore processing services. The fraudsters will approach the selected miners and offer them advance shares in a Talisan Inc. - a subsector corp better known for its gas giant refineries. They wil explain that Talisan wishes to move into ore processing, but cannot afford to do so half heartedly - it must do so in one fell swoop with the support of a large number of miners. The miners will be made to feel that they are buying into a helpful cooperative venture which will give substantial cheaper processing costs. They must not reveal this knowledge until Talisan is ready, since any advance warning would allow Konrin to hold up Talisan with fine legalities, while increasing their processing charges to punish the belters.

Within 3 weeks the fraudsters will have swindled CR12,000,000 out of some 30 belters.

10. Watch This Space

If the players haven't identified the Solar Flyer at this point, the easiest way is to find 'Talky' in a bar - he is quite unmistakeable and fairly stupid, although if he recognises Samara he will try to snatch her and rush back to the ship. In any case, if followed, he will soon lead the party to the ship.

Careful questioning of the dock staff (possibly gaining access to the restricted security videos or passenger lists) will reveal the rough identities of the three 'passengers' who arrived on the Solar Flyer.

Surveillance of the Solar Flyer during the 3 week period will show only that Ohio and 'Talky' spend their entire time either in bars or picking up small packages (up to a displacement ton) of cargo.

Investigation at the Gem Dome should allow the party to eventually identify the three fraudsters. If followed to some of the meetings with belters the party may deduce the nature of the swindle. Individual belters, if asked about the matter, will avoid or denounce the players. Mouthing off about the subject will initiate a run-in with a large group of angry belters (not the investors themselves but their colleagues or hired help). If word of the players investigations reach the fraudsters they will tell the belters the players are spies from Konrin and must be dealt with - simply beating them up will just provoke a reaction from Konrin, so they must be killed... the belters have the brawn and weapons to make this a reality!

Very careful surveillance will show that as each belter makes his payment, he is provided with forged share
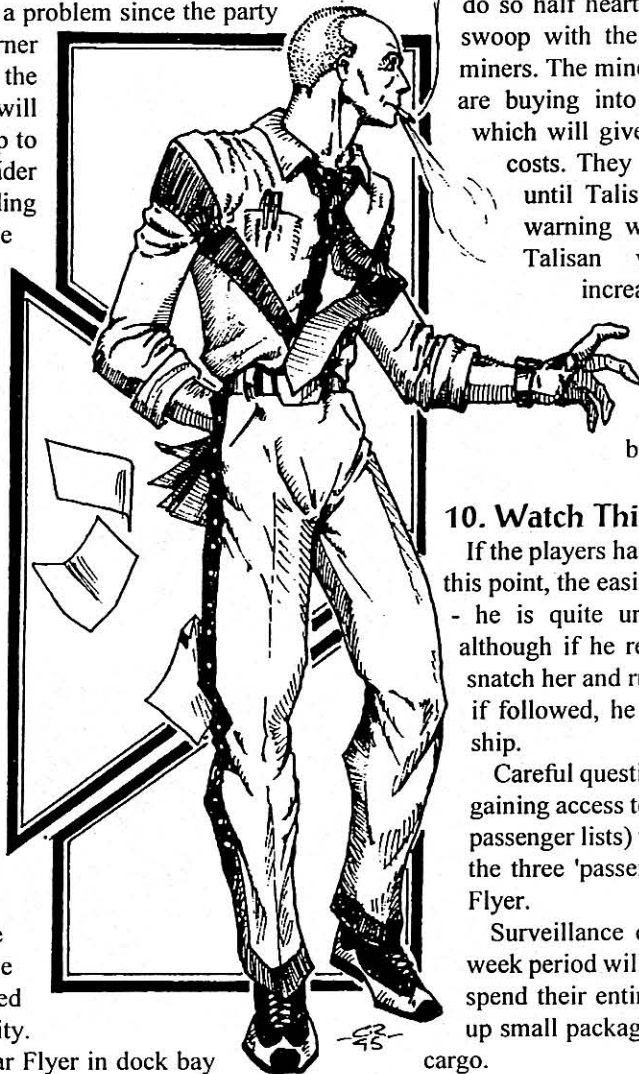
certificates (in CR1,000 denominations). The payment is electronic and not easily traceable but a little thought will show that the money is being transferred back to Ohio's account - he is investing it in small cargos of gems and other valuables which can be easily laundered in another system.

11. Revenge

Samara wants revenge. The players should by now be slavering at the thought of the Solar Flyer and the huge amounts of cash which must be on board! Samara would also like some of the money so she can try to save buy back most of her father's company. She is not afraid to kill (or encourage the players to kill) to get her way.

The local police will not deal with this case unless the defrauding of the belters can be clearly proven. They will then start investigations, but they have insufficient men to mount a covert operation and may enlist the player's help anyway, giving them a comms number to call if they need back up. The police will provide support if the players get the evidence, but crying wolf too often will result in a reduction in the size and speed of the backup.

The exact means of avenging Samara should be planned by the players but they should bear in mind that the Solar Flyer holds all the cash (see Ill-Gotten Gains). Any obvious violent death will attract the attention of the police (and worried belter investors) and the fraudsters will not be afraid to fight back. As soon as the threat to them seems too great

they will leave system, although they would prefer to stick around another week and collect a few more millions.

12. Not You Again!

Any confrontation with the fraudsters will cause them to call in Ohio and 'Talky' and thereafter the police (if they believe the party has no evidence) or belter associates if the party is too close to the truth. If Samara is seen by any of the fraudsters, she will be tracked down and killed (properly!) by hired belters.

13. Ill-Gotten Gains

There is no evidence (not even the monetary transactions can be traced) linking the Solar Flyer to the fraudsters, so if the latter are killed or imprisoned, Ohio and 'Talky' will take the ship out of system as quickly as possible.

The only means for proving the Solar Flyer's involvement is to scare the fraudsters into making a run for it. They will book tickets on the next possible ship out but (as at Llywellan), at the last moment head for the Solar Flyer instead. This would be sufficient proof for the police, especially if any conversations between the fraudsters and the ship can be recorded.

However, if the police are involved, they will impound the Solar Flyer and its cargo. Sorting out the finances and repayments to belters and (if she's lucky) Samara, will take months and the party will see no reward for ages.

A direct assault on the Solar Flyer has several problems
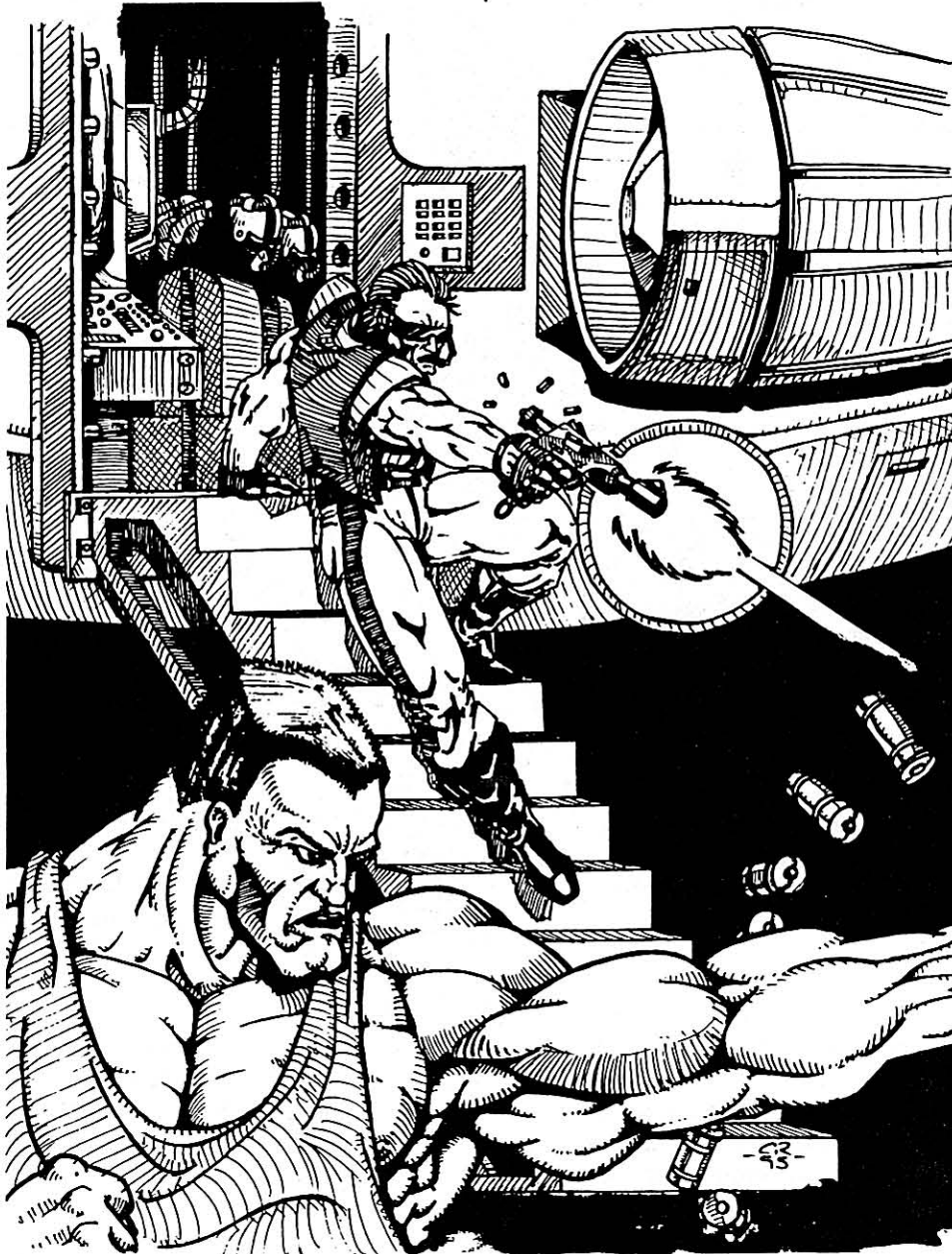
- it has an advanced anti-hijack system with anti-personnel lasers protecting the airlocks and corridors and bio-coded computer locks; Ohio and 'Talky' will put up a fight; and the police will be called and will probably side with the 'innocent' owner of the ship.

A subtle hijacking, perhaps disguised as the fraudsters themselves, or as customs officers, etc. might allow the ship to be taken with less bloodshed. Ohio will never reveal the codes to unlock the computers, but at least the cargo (CR43,000,000 of gems, etc.) can then be off-loaded. Samara needs about CR25,000,000 to save her father's company, and if the truth of the fraud gets out, the belters will want their CR12,000,000 back, but in the worst case this still leaves a profit of CR 6,000,000 for the party (plus the gratitude of the belters?)

Cast of Characters

Samara Von Torp
(Human Female, age 29, Manager)
5'8", medium build, fair skin, brown hair, blue eyes.
Str:4   Agl:6   Con:5
Int:9   Edu:10   Cha:7
Skills: Admin/Legal 12, Leadership 9, Liaison 9, Marketing 11, Persuasion 9, Observation 10, Wheeled Vehicle 7, Willpower 11
Equipment: Nothing!

Paul Bayvel
(Human Male, age 38, Con-person)
5'9", medium build, fair skin, blonde hair, green eyes.
Str:7   Agl:6   Con:7   Int:8
Edu:9   Cha:10
Skills: Act/Bluff 13, Carousing 12, Computer 10, Forgery 10, Pilot (I/F-Grav) 7, Leadership 13, Slug Weapon (Pistol) 8, Streetwise 12, Wheeled Vehicle 9
Equipment: Hand computers (several, with high quality copying and printing facilities, interfacing units, etc.), forgery kit (extensive, high tech).
Notes: Paul is the nominal leader of the group and does the computing and forgery work to set up each scam.

May Gerani
(Human Female, age 35, Con-person)
5'10", slim, wiry build, tanned skin, black hair, brown eyes.
Str:8   Agl:11   Con:5   Int:8   Edu:9   Cha:9
Skills: Act/Bluff 12, Electronics 11, Wheeled Vehicle 12, Intrusion 14, Medical Trauma Aid 12, Streetwise 10, Unarmed Martial Arts 10
Equipment: Lockpicks (mechanical and electronic, high tech), surveillance equipment (cameras, microphones, trackers), usually seductive clothing, medical kit (small, high tech), hand computer (contains substantial notes on Shadowsand, effectively increasing her Streetwise skill to 12 on this planet - players might find the data on contacts and deals very useful!).
Notes: May uses her charms to talk or seduce information out of people. Her lock-breaking is used to obtain restricted papers, blackmail data, etc.

Leonard Ferret
(Male Human, age 39, Con-person)
6'0", slim build, tanned skin, brown hair, brown eyes (shifty)
Str:4   Agl:6   Con:4   Int:8   Edu:8   Cha:7
Skills: Act/Bluff 11, Admin/Legal 12, Bribery 10, Marketing 10, Disguise 11, Slug weapon (pistol) 5, Streetwise 9, Wheeled Vehicle 7
Equipment: Hand computer (contains documentation of the legal system and trading rules for Shadowsand - nothing illegal, just very useful), disguise kit (very extensive).
Notes: Leonard handles the legal and administrative side of the scams, as well as being a dab hand with make-up.

Ohio Joe
(Human Male, age 28, Ex-Scout)
6'0", light build, dark skin, black hair, brown eyes.
Str:7   Agl:9   Con:5
Int:6   Edu:9   Cha:4
Skills: Astrogation 10, Carousing 6, Computer 10, Pilot (I/F-Grav) 11, Ships Engineering 10, Slug Weapon (Pistol) 8, Streetwise 7, Wheeled Vehicle 10
Equipment: Concealed compact 9mm SMG.
Notes: Ohio runs the group's ship and acts as a secondary bruiser.

'Talky'
(Human Male, age 25, Criminal)
6'4", very big build, tanned skin, brown hair, brown eyes.
Str:11   Agl:4   Con:10   Int:3   Edu:2   Cha:3
Skills: Observation 5, Slug Weapon (Pistol) 14, Streetwise 5, Unarmed Martial Arts 14
Equipment: Concealed compact 9mm SMG, 4mm Gauss pistol, knuckle-dusters, etc.
Notes: Talky's knuckles scrape the ground as he shambles along. He is slow witted and looks stupidly harmless (apart from his size). However, he is secretly in love with May and will fight to the death to protect her and the rest of the group. His combat skills are pretty good.
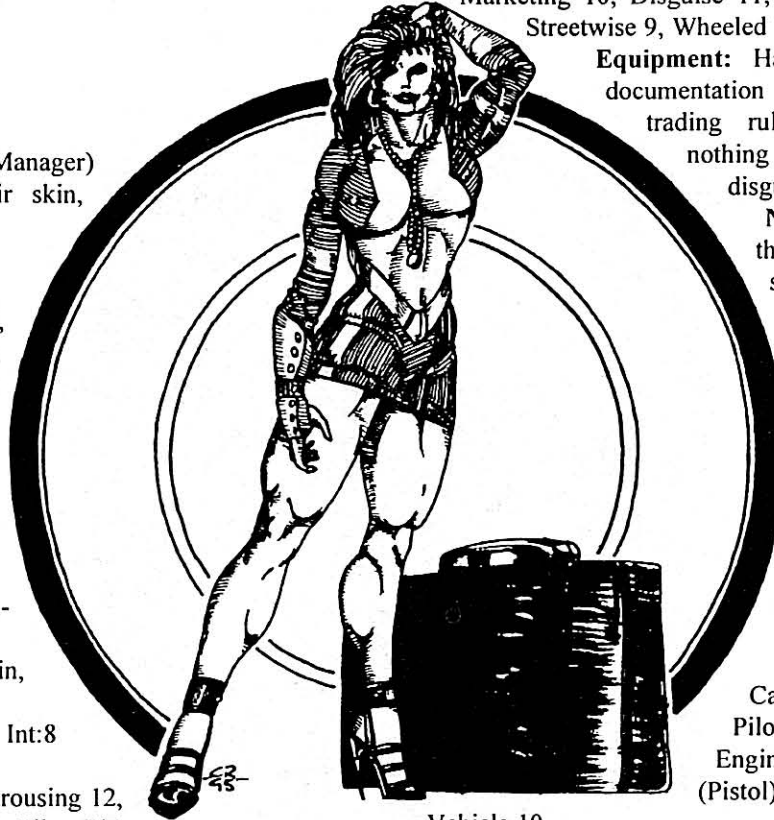
HOW MUCH IS THAT
(Genetically Engineered Furry Thing That Looks Like a Dog)
IN THE WINDOW?

'Pets' for Traveller
(c)1995 Andy Lilly and Jo Grant

Introduction

Genetic engineering ('Geneering') is the act of altering and /or constructing DNA sequences to create new or altered life-forms subsequently brought to term artificially or through a natural host.

Geneering has been used throughout the Imperium over thousands of years from the earliest attempts at selective breeding through alteration of DNA to full genetic construction involving the complete synthesis of new life forms. Geneering has been used for an enormous range of purposes: from increasing the amount and leanness of meat on cattle to enhancing the intelligence of animals (e.g. the Orang-utan and Dolphin, both raised to a higher level of intelligence by the Second Imperium); from reducing human susceptibility to diseases and atmospheric taints to creating new bioforms for entertainment; from increasing a creature's physical attributes to the creation of geneered monsters, bred purely for their fighting ability. Geneered creatures are typically called 'genas'.

History

Geneering was widely used by the Solomani even prior to their encounter with the Vilani First Imperium. Initial use of widespread geneering was for adaptation to new colonies and environments. The Vilani lagged behind but during the Rule of Man they absorbed some of the Solomani technology. Early experiments included enhancing primates to create a zero-gravity workforce. Although this was superceded by artificial gravity systems, the work was continued many years later with the intention of enhancing the Solomani themselves.

Truly intelligent orang-utans and gibbons were created but the work sparked a paranoia of the eugenicist scientists and their research was destroyed in the Gene Wars. The simians were given their freedom but were widely dispersed and the Solomani goverment has since used the 'Stellar Security' banner both to obscure the history of the Wars and to suppress public knowledge of selected areas of geneering.

From the beginning of the Long Night, geneering joined other technologies in a dramatic decline. The true origins of many geneered species were forgotten or deliberately obscured during the following 17 centuries. The establishment of the Sylean Federation saw a rebirth of geneering and was (at least temporarily) further encouraged by the backlash against robots after a terrorist 'suicide' robot blew up an Imperial warship in -112 (which led to the Shudusham (robotics) Concords in -110).

Geneering was temporarily thrown into legal confusion in the 17th year of the Third Imperium when Emperor Cleon Zhunastu declared "Any sentient lifeform within the
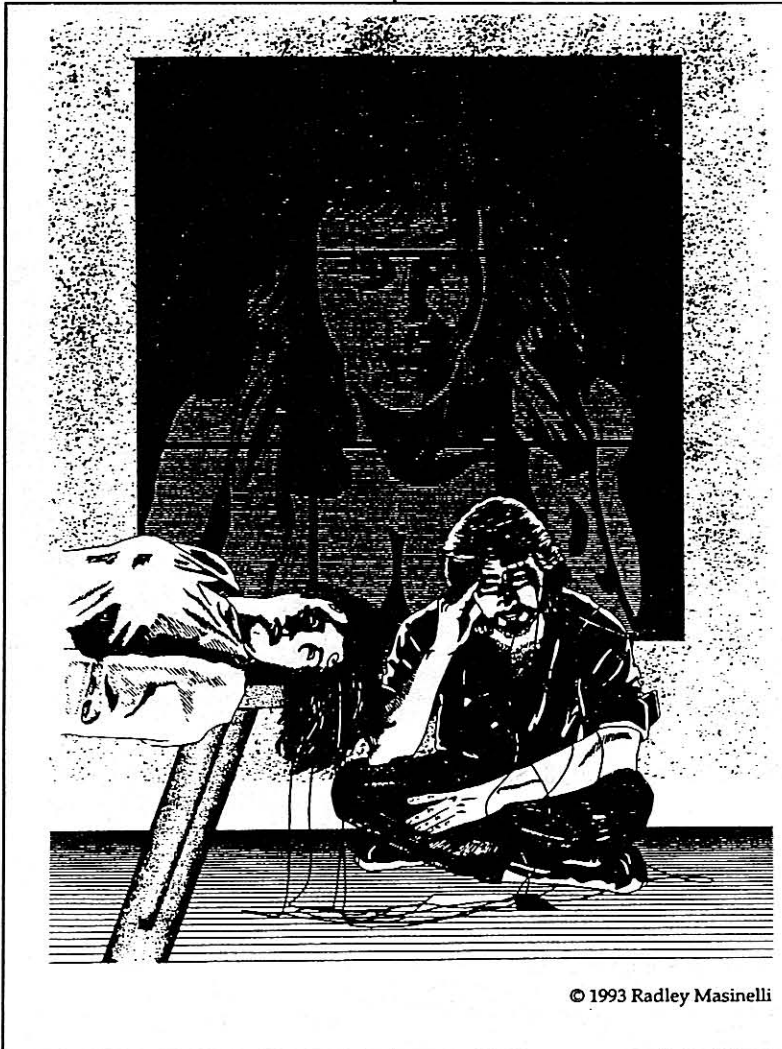
Imperial borders, regardless of its origin, is a protected being, and thus a citizen of the Third Imperium." He followed this with the statement that robots are not citizens, since "One may argue that an intelligent robot might be sentient, but it is definitely not a lifeform." Many worlds congratulated Cleon for attacking the exploitation of genas which were now commonly being given more than just animal intelligence.

Over the centuries the Solomani had (despite the Gene Wars) used geneering to enhance themselves as well as 'uplifting' more than 20 species (e.g. the Terran Dolphin). The Confederation Ministry of Genetics (GenAssist) has the most geneering experience of perhaps any major race and also the most extensive gene bank (the 'Repository'), the location of which is a closely guarded secret - genetic data has a huge commercial and military value. Major producers of genas are ConTech and Argent Mining, the later owned by the Wuan Technology Association (WTA), producer of geneered humans for labour and other servile purposes. The Solomani recognise both sophont genas and Artificial Intelligence (AI) robots as citizens but lower intelligence genas and robots are regarded merely as tools. There is some opposition to genas, notably by the religious SanctaTerra group who oppose the use of high technology (including genetic meddling, and AI machines), the Society for the Sovereignty of Mankind over Machine (SSMM) and splinter terrorist groups, some allegedly involving sophont simian descendants of the Gene Wars era.

The Vilani emphasis on blood purity and their reluctance to accept rapid technlogical change led to a much slower adoption of geneering than their Solomani neighbours. Their initial use was often in the field of biochemical engineering to help the 'foodmaker' caste (shugilii) adapt Vland foodstuffs to the Vilani (i.e. transplanted Terran) digestion. However, commercial and military incentives have led to widespread use of less advanced genas across the Imperium. In an analogue to the Shudusham Robotics Conference, every 5 years the Lifeform Research and Advancement League (LRAL) convenes a meeting in each major sector. The megacorporations directly involved in geneering are Instellarms (military), Makhidkarun (entertainments), SuSAG (any) and Sharurshid (luxury).

The Vargr had similar needs to the Vilani due to their Ancient transplantation, requiring selective breeding to make the foodstuffs of their new homeworld edible. They have first hand experience of Ancient geneering within their own race: the large fierce Urzaeng, diminutive but bright Kokasha, the psionic Akumgeda, Nakagun and (blind) Roth Thokken. Genas and robots are regarded merely as tools and thus ownership of such does not enhance a Vargr's charisma. Their disorganised approach to research has further reduced the degree to which geneering is used by the Vargr, although allegedly splinter groups from their Church of the Chosen Ones (a religion proclaiming the Vargr to be the perfect race created by the Ancients) have engaged in covert research into enhancing themeselves beyond the 'perfect' state.

The Aslan have little interest in geneering for enhancing themselves (regarding this as 'underhand') although they have used selective breeding widely for their labour and food animals. They strive to treat all sophonts fairly and with honour but have little regard for creatures lacking the intelligence to understand their social system and heirarchy. However some genas and AI robots are sufficiently intelligent (or appropriately programmed) to cause dispute among Aslan as to whether they should be treated as equals. Some clans buy genas from the Solomani WTA in Magyar sector.

The K'kree have used geneering on both animals and vegetables (e.g. the 'grass' used in their ships which continuously recycles their bodily wastes into edible turf). They have few qualms about geneering other species since they regard all other races as their inferiors. Perhaps fortunately, their geneering is less technically advanced than that of the Imperium.

The Hivers racial trait of Manipulation, combined with their own firm belief in their racial superiority, has led them to significantly alter many of the species they have encountered, partly to satisfy their 'curiosity'. Such work has more commonly revolved around their pyschohistorical techniques (e.g. the Ithklur) rather than direct genetic alteration. Naturally, they are more than willing to buy or hire genas from client states or the Solomani.

The Zhodani appear to have limited their geneering to medical uses and some psionic-based research. They seem to prefer the ethics of using robots for hazardous or repetitive work.

Robotics

In addition to medical and other uses, geneering has widely been regarded as a competitor with the robotics industry. A common drive to both technologies has been the production of cheap, reliable labour. At lower TL (9-12) geneering often has a higher initial cost but significantly undercuts robotics in the cost per unit - the genas usually requiring only an enhancement to their already existing intelligence, whereas robots rely on expensive computer 'brains' for all except the most trivial tasks. Additionally, customers (particularly in the leisure and pets market) often prefer living creatures to robots, being able to build up a relationship with the former. At higher TLs, robots finally become viable replacements for genas. Naturally, where geneering is restricted by law, robotics has found a solid niche even at the lower TLs, while specific markets swing wildly between the two extremes - for example warfare 'units' may be solely robots on one world, due to the reluctance to sacrifice living creatures in battle, whereas a more 'capitalist' world might use mainly genas as warriors because of their relatively low cost compared to warbots. Also at higher TLs, some genas are brought up to 'sophont' intelligence and the legal wrangles over their rights start to make robots look particularly attractive.

Legal Implications

The laws regarding geneering vary widely across the Imperium. The Imperium itself has few specific laws on the subject, these being mainly legal clauses to prevent military

geneering by anyone other than approved Imperium megacorporations. Individual planets may then have their own additional laws covering import, export, research and permitted usage. These may vary depending upon whether they are applied to the genas themselves, their associated geneering data, DNA techniques or geneering equipment.

Many worlds have fairly restrictive laws, preventing the direct use of sophonts as a basis for genetic experimentation or production. Many legal wrangles have arisen over the term 'sophont' when applied to 'created' genas. Some worlds restrict the maximum level of intelligence of the genas. Genas are usually required to be registered, often using a subdermal implant radio tag which can be read remotely by the appropriate sensors. Genas which acquire sufficient intelligence to be termed 'sophonts' may sometimes be allowed to live untagged, but on most worlds they remain subcitizens, perhaps defended by the law from abuse but often prevented from initiating legal action themselves, unable to vote, and barred from major posts in the bureaucracy or military. Many religions regard all but the most simple geneering as against the will of 'God/the Gods/ the One Being/etc.' and campaign (some more violently than others) against geneering research and gena enslavement. Non-religious Vilani activist groups include the peaceful Free All Intelligent Lifeforms (FAIL) and the terroristgroup Strikeforce Against Slavery (SAS). Accordingly there are counter pressure groups, notably the Beneficial Future Research (BFR) which is made up of committed scientists across the Imperium.

Where the laws are overly restrictive, scientists claim government short-sightedness has resulted in great setbacks to sophont science and the constant battle to eliminate diseases, genetic disorders and other illnesses. Commercial concerns complain about the loss of huge potential markets for ecosystem adaptation, personal enhancement and tailored individuals for leisure, entertainment, and special industries.

Geneering has received bad publicity due to isolated incidents of insanity. On Agafo, Solomani supremacists took advantage of the relatively poor diversity of the Vilani gene set and engineered a killer mange that sought out Vilani descendants. This necessitated a 400 year quarantine. The planet of Emoue was taken over by the product of a government eugenicist project gone wrong. An enclave of their descendants still exists but are restricted to a series of islands and primitive equipment due to their genetically induced militant tendencies.

Additionally, occasional breakthroughs in autogenesis, cloning and memory transfer have caused much disturbance among the nobility and mega-corporation officers, all of whom rely on inheritance as a means of proliferation and change.

Many early biosphere-adaptation projects caused furious confrontations when it was shown that native species had been eliminated by the geneered organisms. Furthermore, the popular vid-dramas of "Plutarch Assassins" are not complete fabrications and it is known that those with money could have beings designed to suit their whim - pleasure or terror. For example, the 'Twelve Tears' murders of Deneb - long blamed on local Aslan - were eventually proven to have been performed by a geneered Garinian Bear, programmed to kill by an extremist Aslan-hating sect.

Accordingly the Imperium did try to introduce tighter controls to ensure control of militarily valuable geneering. However this was countered by so many complaints from businesses already relying upon related technologies that the new laws were never passed. In order to reduce the extremely grey area surrounding 'intelligence', the Scout Corp adapted the Office of Sentiency (a branch of the Survey office) to include administering their complex sentiency tests to genas wishing to to determine whether they could claim full legal rights as true sophonts. Subsequent litigation
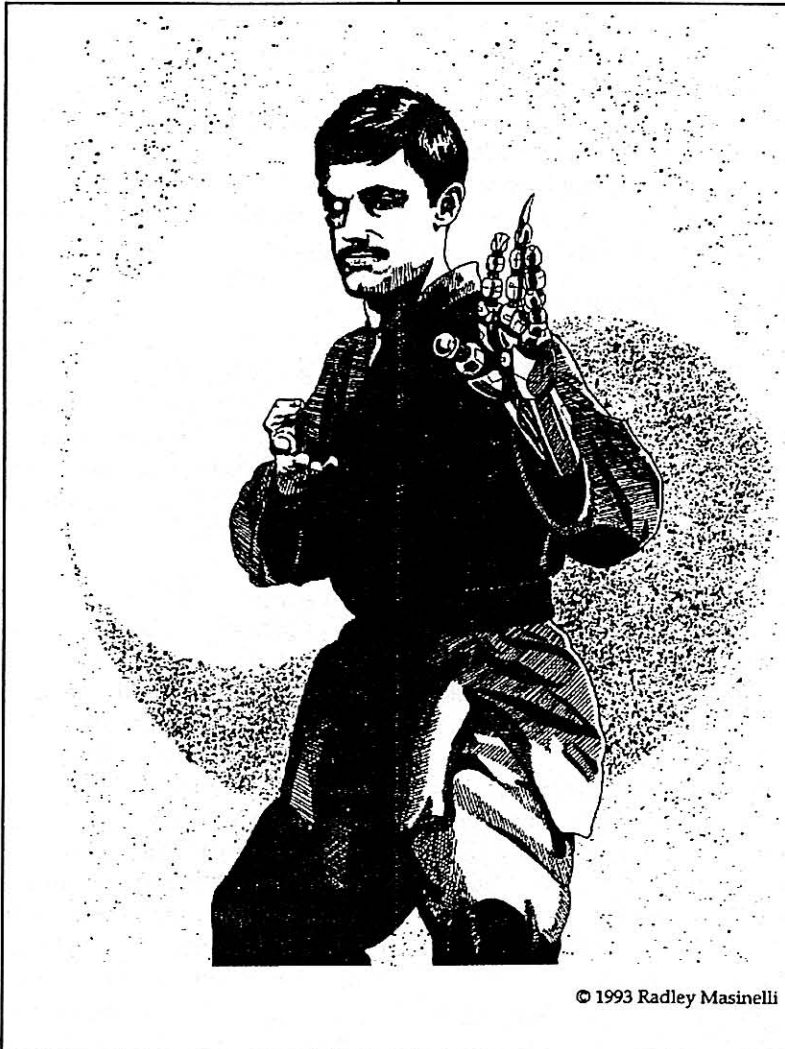
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by some of the newly declared sentients against their creators or owners carried on for years and geneering agencies have since been careful to produce constructs a fair safety margin below the sentiency limits. There remain a few shady businesses that deal much closer to the limit for commensurate prices.

In the Shattered Imperium, the 'Real' Strephon and Antares factions have proclaimed robots to be citizens while Margaret openly declared her disdain for artificial beings - biological or otherwise and proclaimed all genas non citizens, no matter what their intelligence.

In the New Era period, geneering is a lost art throughout much of the Wilds, although the Regency retains its knowledge. Much like the Long Night period, the history of many geneered creations has been lost to the ravages of the Virus, or deliberately obscured by the genas themselves or, worse, by those who seek to control and exploit them. Those genas unable to self-replicate have died out over the years. Many planetary ecologies, dependent upon the environmental control provided by geneered micro (or macro) organisms, have decayed and once again become uninhabitable.

The Process of Geneering

In genetic engineering proper, existing DNA codes are taken and spliced together into new lifeforms. This can often be a long process of trial and error, especially when dealing with new or incompletely understood codes. This is generally best applied to tailoring a specific species to better suit some end goal such as survival in a new environment. The more advanced field of genetic construction creates genetic coding from its basic components (while still perhaps using extracts from existing DNA series) in order to create completely unique creatures.

Most naturally-evolved DNA consists of a large variety of sequences derived randomly over time which are then 'filtered' by natural selection. Early geneticists made the mistake of believing large portions of these codes to be redundant left-overs and initial 'constructed' creatures used very minimal cost- and effort-efficient gene sets. However, star-travellers soon discovered that the 'redundant' code was actually only dormant because the necessary external stimuli to activate it were no longer present in their environment. When transported to another world, real creatures often adapted naturally to the changes in environment, bacteria, viruses, etc. whereas the constructed creatures could be wiped out by a single disease. Thereafter, constructed creatures were either created for specific environments or had to include a substantially greater degree of flexibility in their DNA 'programming'. The latter increased costs and tended to encourage the enhancement of existing creatures - requiring much less genetic manipulation. However, constructed creatures remain much more efficiently tailored and can be identified by their small number of genes (usually no more than 6) - in addition to the comments and copyright notices included in almost all constructed DNA! Constructed organisms are thus fairlyeasy to identify given some form of cell sample. The advantage of this specificity is that a lifeform can be created to fulfil a certain purpose which, once accomplished, triggers the death or cessation of reproduction in the organism.

Most constructed creatures with the ability to reproduce in a natural environment, seldom evolve along more than a few similar routes and tend to remain very susceptible to diseases or environmental changes. It should be noted that many geneered creatures (constructed or altered) are deliberately neutered (physically or genetically). This is often a legal requirement to prevent escaped genas affecting planetary ecologies. It is also of commercial benefit to the geneering firms - in order to make genas affordable, they must have a low unit cost and a high market turn-over. Genas with long lives or the ability to reproduce, would significantly reduce the available market, hence few such creatures have been produced.

Usage of Geneering

The uses are almost limitless. Increasing stamina, strength, speed, hearing, intelligence, concentration, obedience, lifespan, memory, regeneration. Adaptation or creation of lifeforms, flora and fauna to specific environments. Countering (or creating) diseases, pests, viruses and toxins. Aiding in transplants, regeneration, artificial organs, cloning, memory programming and control. Creatures can be tailored for labour, honed for specific skills, bred for combat, trained to kill without thought, or to avoid all violence.

Biological organisms can often perform work more intricately and flexibly than machines while usually possessing the capability to self-repair and (where appropriate) self-propagate. Individual sophonts may choose to have themselves or their offspring altered but the law usually prevents commercial abuse of sophont genas (e.g. one rarely finds altered or created human labourers). Taking humans as an example, however, constructs from close copies of human DNA or direct extracts of primate DNA have been used to construct some genas almost indistinguishable from true humans. These may range from robot-like heavy labourers for hazardous work to specialised "escorts" of either sex (or occasionally both!). Although engineered to react in as near human a fashion as possible, legally these are still 'animals' with restricted rights.

In the field of genetic construction creatures are not limited to nature. All realms of fantastic and mythological creatures can exist in reality. From living and animated stoles, to the conspicuous consumptive show pieces of evening suits made entirely of butterflies and sprites, the range is too diverse to cover here. However, a few examples are given below.
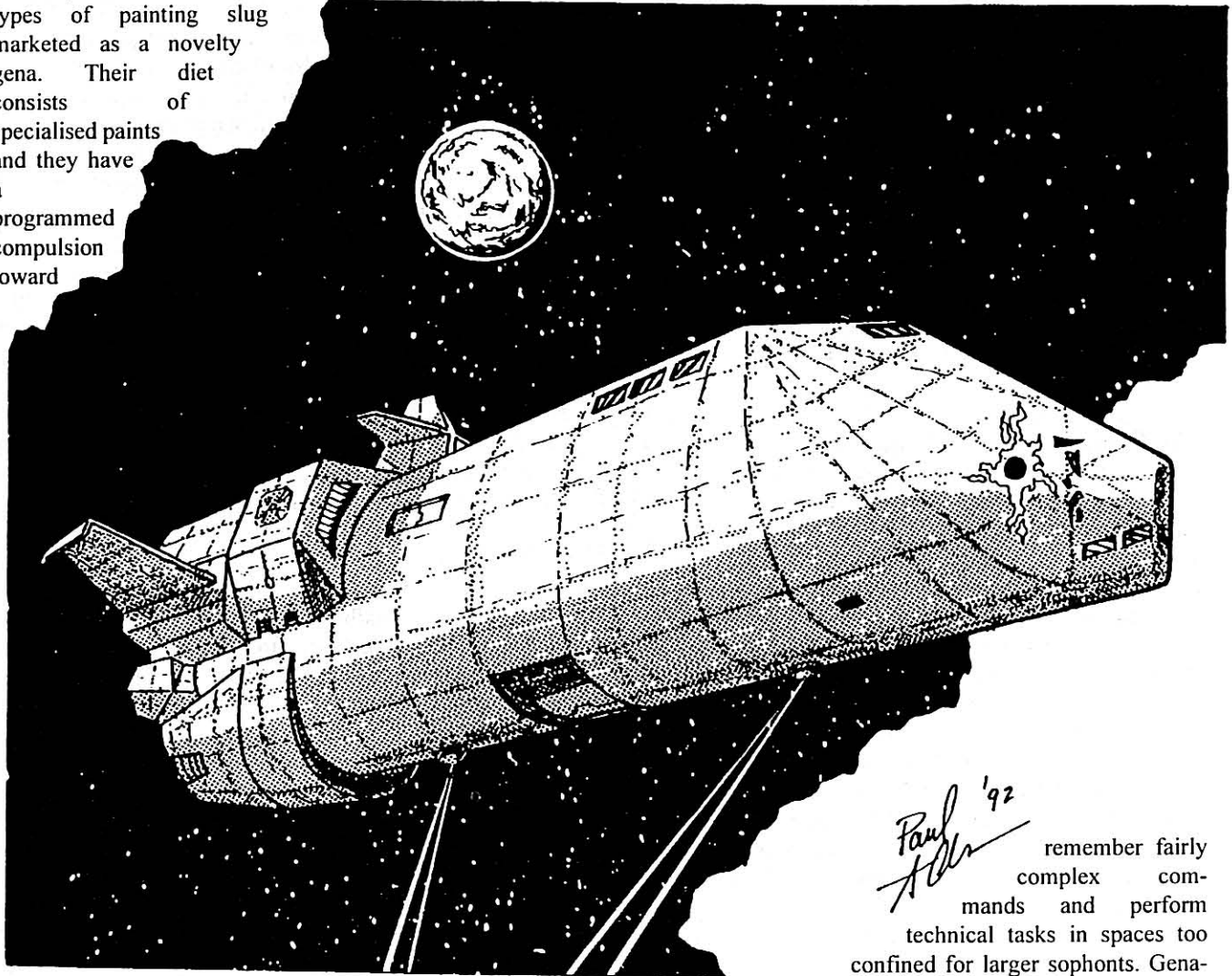
Ubedewi Iceworm

The Iceworm is a successful and popular construct able to live in temperatures near absolute zero by adsorbing any and all radiant energy. Its original use was for seeding ice worlds in order to gradually alter the planetary albedo. The Ebony Harkweed is the vegetable equivalent - a tiny vacuum 'plant' used for similar purposes.

Grassflat ᵗᵐ

Grassfalt is a geneered turf used on space stations. It is tough, resilient and beneficial to artificial atmospheres (removing odours, etc.). A similar (but more complex) product is used by the K'kree on their starships.

ArtWyrms ᵗᵐ

ArtWyrms are one of several types of painting slug marketed as a novelty gena. Their diet consists of specialised paints and they have a programmed compulsion toward

Gena - Beaker

Enhanced Beaker monkeys with increased size (85-105 cm tall, 3-4 kg), intelligence, problem-solving and tool-using capabilities are a common pet throughout the Imperium, particularly among starship crews. Popular for their endearing appearance and friendly nature, and renowned for their cleanliness, gena-Beakers are trained to

remember fairly complex commands and perform technical tasks in spaces too confined for larger sophonts. Gena-Beakers and similar creatures have found wide use in the military for reconnaissance and covert infiltration tasks.

symmetrical movements such that when placed on a blank wall they will gradually cover it with intricate designs. These expand to the edges of a scent-defined area and then double back forming an ever changing tableau of art.

Harmonisers ᵗᵐ

A species of Feeweegro Tree Frog with a particularly melodious mating call was geneered to have a predilection for harmony. Two Harmonisers together will "sing" in counterpoint to each other in an ever changing melody taking as inspiration incidental sounds in their environment. A quartet of Harmonisers can provide pleasant accompaniment to conversation, ringing phones, or even construction work.

Gena - Nanshu

Geneered Nanshu are based on dark-furred leonine carnivorous chasers native to Shirene/Lunion (2125 Spinward Marches), standing 110 cm at the shoulder, weighing 280 kg and with retractible 10cm claws on each of their 4 paws! The gena-Nanshu is often trained to use its natural ability to sense electromagnetic fields (within 20 m) for military reconnaissance purposes. Of equivalent intelligence to gena-Beakers, Nanshu can understand similar commands but tend to have less technical roles for guarding or combat.

Lastly, but certainly not least, a favourite among starfarers:

Ships Cats

Various types of small (and large!) feline have been specifically bred to serve on space ships. Minor genetic tinkering has been used, mainly to change their instinctual reactions to certain things. Interbreeding and natural adaption (survival of the fittest) has led to some beneficial extra abilities while in-breeding has led to some not so beneficial.

Ship Cats cope quite well with changes in gravity, even zero-gravity. Trained or experienced cats understand standard "brace for acceleration" warnings and act accordingly, clinging to the nearest large soft object (e.g. a member of the crew) with their sharp claws.

Special cat-spacesuits are available at TL9 but crew help is required to insert the cat and seal it up. At about TL11 auto-sealing space-bubbles are available (similar to human 'rescue' bubbles but smaller) - the cat just crawls in, nudges a given knob and the ball seals up and starts oxygen. Such balls are usually flexible and the cat can move it around to some degree. At TL13 the form-fitting 'suits' become sufficiently simple that a trained cat can get into it, start the auto-seal and oxygen and then can move around fairly freely. By TL15, suits with radios, jet-packs and all the paraphernalia of human suits are available.

Most ship cats are competent at chasing out small vermin which still occur on most ships. Their good eyesight and smell is sometimes augmented by sensitivity to changes in pressure and electrical disturbances. In some circumstances it has been claimed that cats have been able to 'sniff out' faults in ship systems, but scientific tests have been unable to prove or disprove this point. (Ref's note: it is true, but depends totally upon whether the cat is feeling like it).

Ship cats understand the difference between crew and passengers and are proficient at not being seen by people who might not appreciate them. Some cats can even distinguish between High and Middle passengers (if they feel like it).

Ship cats tend to switch breeding habits according to circumstance, remaining infertile for long periods aboard ship but becoming suddenly active during extended periods in dock (e.g. annual maintenance). Occasionally they will breed with cats on the same ship, but only if the other is not a near relation. Hence multiple cats on a ship will tend to be a single 'family'. Inexperienced buyers should beware being sold a pair of cats without good evidence of sharing the same parents (unless they wish to be kept awake by mating yowls all night).

Whether specifically trained or inherited from their parents, many cats have skills associated with a particular background - i.e. there are Navy breeds, Merchant breeds, etc. Exceptional family lines are widely known and may be the subject of idle dockside talk. Such breeds command accordingly exceptional prices.

Most spaceports allow registered ship cats into their extrality zone with the same processing (customs, medical, etc.) as for crew. Registration is usually made shortly after birth with an encoded implant injected into the cat's neck. This can be read with customs sensors much as per livestock. The data within the implant includes parentage, any genetically engineered features, medical data, etc.

Cybertech Supplements

Genas are often augmented with cybertech supplements, identical to those available for repair (or enhancement) of sophonts. Genas almost always have implanted radio tags for identification purposes but a wide variety of additions are possible: longer range radios, with one or two-way communication, video and data links, etc.

Vision may be enhanced (telescopic, infra-red, high resolution, range-finding) with the ability to remotely view (via a radio link) what the gena is seeing or the ability to project data (targetting, technical, etc.) directly into the gena's optical system.

The gena's combat ability can be augmented with subdermal armour, enhanced jaws or claws, or in extreme cases concealed firearms.

Where geneering adaptation to an environment is prohibitively expensive, the gena might be fitted with lung filters, gill implants, webbed feet, aquatic or vacuum-proof skin, etc.

Implanted computers are rarely used in genas since it is commonly more efficient to rely upon the creature's own intelligence. A few technical genas do have cyber databanks, allowing them to service a very wide range of specialised equipment (e.g. almost every manufactured types and tech levels of jump drive).

Similarly, gena appendages are rarely cyber-enhanced since it is cheaper (on mass-produced constructs) to geneer in the desired arm and leg types.

Gena Equipment

It should be remembered that even low intelligence genas can be fitted with, or programmed to use tools. This is usually a far cheaper option than cybertech or even geneered enhancements - e.g. as low as TL7-8, trained animals (e.g. police dogs) can carry miniature video cameras allowing their handler to see what the dog is doing - the dog can then be sent ahead of law officers when approaching a potentially hazardous criminal in a building, etc. Higher intelligence genas can handle tools themselves - from screwdrivers to grav belts to weapons. Intelligent pack horses could be geneered with an extra pair of manipulative appendages to load and unload their own panniers!

Associated Adventures:

Patron: MOBSTER
Job: PAYOFF

Having conducted some dubious work for a criminal organisation the players go to a rendezvous point for the payoff. Instead of the 30kCr they were promised they find a small child clutching a small case. She has fair skin, long

crimped silver hair, wears a silver lace dress, and has solid silver eyes. The case contains 10kCr and a note from the mobsters indicating the remainder of the payment is "in kind" and consists of the genetically engineered plaything. Her license is in the box and shows her to be geneered ape stock (although anyone with Admin will suspect the license). A medical examination shows her to be the victim of severe mental and (non-damaging) physical abuse.

1-2: All is as appears but the license is a forgery. Players may adopt her or sell her for 100kCr on the black market.

3-4: As (1) but a detailed genetic analysis shows that she has some human DNA in her (increasing her illegality).

5: She is not a genetic alterant at all but a cosmetically geneered child of a nearby noble. She was being held for ransom by the mobsters but the noble refused to pay. Her memory has been hypnotically repressed.

6: The "child" is a geneered hit-man for the mob. She has become too well know and wants out of the vicinity. She will happily play along but will later escape from the adventurers or (if sold) blackmail her new owner.

Patron: NOBLE
Job: VENDETTA

The characters are approached by the representatives of a Noble who indicate that they have a job for those with good investigative skill and a desire for justice. If they are interested they will be ushered to a meeting in a grav-limo.

The Lady says there is a noble on a nearby world who wronged her in the past and whom she owes one to. She admits no noble is a paragon of virtue - each evades justice to a greater or lesser degree - but now is the time for justice to catch up with her nemesis.

Following up on an off-hand comment made some years ago, she has discovered that one academic institute he has been funding is unofficially involved in genetic research. She wishes them to investigate further and expose whatever is being hidden.

1: The Noble is the subject of a genetic weakness due to many years of inbreeding. He is funding research into a drug to mitigate the effects and to ensure it is not inheritable.

2: As above but this is really just a cover for an attempt to clone him without the defect. Research is beginning in how to enact a memory transfer to the new clone.

3: As in (2) except the memory transfer is due to take place in 3 weeks. Plans are in place for him to "die" and pass his inheritance on.

4: As in (2) except the memory transfer has already taken place. However the new clone has escaped and is now actively plotting the death of its progenitor.

5: The institute is researching a genetically enhanced version of the Noble. It is designed for optimum physical performance and utmost loyalty to its progenitor. He plans a revolution on the world with himself as the head.

6: As (5) except industrial cloning of the replicant is already underway.

Patron: REFUGEE
Job: ESCAPE

While in-system the player's ship detects a small sealed grav car intercepting their vector. Back-projecting its flight it could have come from 3 or 4 possible locations although it is clearly too low on fuel to reach any sensible destination.

Hailing the craft will produce no results but if they approach close enough a woman can be seen within it. She will respond to them but is obviously unfamiliar with the controls and will have to be talked through everything.

When rescued she will say she is Mlini and she is fleeing a local industrialist claiming to be her husband. She will offer the characters 10kCr to take her out of the system. If they seem hesitant she will double the offer.

If the players take her up she will confess, once in jump, that she really has no money. She will appeal to them to let her work for her passage. After some time the characters may notice a few odd things. She appears physically perfect, intelligent and naturally sophisticated. However her knowledge of the world in general seems particularly lacking. (She has a UCP of AFFD2C)

1: Mlini is a genetic replicant of the industrialist's late wife. He is very keen to get her back and will send a detective with an open cheque book to return her. A problem in her geneering caused her to flee in confusion - this is easily treated once returned to the geneering lab.

2: Mlini is an illegal genetic alterant, tailored for the pleasure of the industrialist. He will attempt to retrieve her as in (1).

3: A sister company sent the industrialist Mlini as a present. In reality she is a genetic construct commissioned by a rival firm. Consciously she is completely naive and innocent. However, at pre-programmed times a subconscious "split personality" takes over and she becomes a trained espionage agent. This form activated, stole some important documents but accidentally got switched off during escape. The industrialist will attempt to recover her as in (1) but so will the rival firm!

4: As in (3) except the subconscious personality will awaken 1D days into jump. She will attempt to take over the ship using her cunning and programmed knowledge of unarmed combat.

5: Mlini is a genetically engineered experimental fashion toy, being tried out by a favoured customer. Unfortunately the model is a little too wilful and the customer a little inept. Alas, he has fallen in love and will pursue her to woo her himself. He will be very defensive about revealing her true origins.

6: As in (4) except the company who produced her will send 2 assassins to kill her and dispose of the evidence. They will eliminate the industrialist too if he talks too much.

Patron: CIVIL SERVANT
Job: ASSASSINATION

While passing through a Company/Corporation owned world the characters are approached by a company official.

He will offer them 100kCr to track down and kill some dangerous animals. If they are interested they will be given a non-disclosure agreement to sign and a briefing room to report to.

Another official will inform them that one of the products the company produces is gentically constructed fighting automatons for sale to high calibre mercenary brigades and world governments. Unfortunately 4 of these have broken their training and have escaped onto the planet.

The genas current whereabouts and intentions are unknown. They are close to their genetically programmed shutdown date and, if they are aware of this, are likely to be desperate. The party's mission is to seek out and immobilise the automatons. The company will then send a special 'mop up' technical team to recover the gena and remove any evidence of its existence.

1: The automatons are highly skilled and trained fighting troops. They are attempting to cause as much physical damage as possible on the company in revenge for their slavery.

2: As (1) except they are trying to find the genius who created them and force him to engineer an extension to their life span.

3: The automatons are unarmed but still have lightning reflexes and killer instincts. They plan to break into a training lab and "liberate" their "comrades" destined for slavery.

4: The automatons are, in fact, normal human mercenaries who have been brainwashed into believing they are constructs. An anti-genetics organisation has perpetrated this to embarass the company.

5: The "escape" of the automatons is just a cover. They were actually purchased by a mercenary guild but have been sent back to take the president of the corporation as hostage in return for a ransom of further military equipment.

6: The automatons accidentally found about about their shut down date. This has driven them to question their duty and right to existence. Knowing of nowhere else they have returned to their world of origin, trying to explore their earliest memories in their final hours of life.

Associated Encounters:

Encounter: DUST MOTHS

Almost any starship, space station or planetary building, is plagued by dust, particulates, etc. To reduce the manual labour of cleaning, and overcome the costs of extensive filtering systems and electro-static repellers (which have limited use near sensitive electronic equipment), Serabi Industries have developed various flying 'cleaners', the most popular of which is the Serabi Dust Moth.

These high quality, small size moths with their flexible tongues can clean most nooks and crannies, glueing the dust into balls with their saliva and then depositing these in prearranged bins. Some moths can instead create fanciful "dust castles" (rather than balls) for easy disposal (usually including the Serabi logo).

Individual dust moths can clean small vehicles or robots. For larger areas (e.g. starships) a "hive" is recommended. Dust moths have an average life expectancy of 1 year but this may be shorter in extremely dirty environments. Hives include a queen and 'nursery' drones to maintain a constant hive community. An annual 'certification' check from Serabi Industries is encouraged to guarantee their health. Otherwise the only maintenance required is a tiny sugar drip (usually located within the hive) which must be refilled every month.

Dust Moths cost 50Cr each or 5,000Cr for a hive (c.100 active moths plus reproducers). The recommended density is 1 per ton of craft; if so used they reduce the cost of annual maintenance by 1D% and act as a +1 modifier to any task involving ship health or cleanliness inspections.

A Certificate of Health costs 1,000Cr from Serabi Industries or a licensed Moth dealer (found at most A class starports). An uncertified hive queen may die on 11+ (roll once per month after first year). The hive will then slowly decline. When not active, moths return to the hive or hide in inconspicuous places within the ship. In an emergency they can survive vacuum for about 8 hours.

1: The players receive a free trial shipment of short-lived moths.

2: The players are hired to tranship several huge hives for a Serabi dealer to replenish a major passenger liner fleet which has had its hives wiped out by a moth 'plague'.

3: A few moths find their way onto the players' ship in spacedock. The PCs may be puzzled by the little dust castles and spend time tracking the "culprit" down.

4: As 1 but the moths are not genuine Serabi - their dust castles don't have the Serabi logo and the moths are ill and badly programmed - as they die, one will get stuck within the computer systems, causing periodic faults which are hard to track down.

5: As 4 but the moths have 'plague' and are gradually going blind - they will begin flying into walls, players, etc.

6: Combination of 3 and 4 - worse, the moths have taken a liking to an alternative foodstuff - lubricants, PC's food, PC's blood, etc.

Encounter: SHIPS CATS

A passing salesman calls at the player's ship trying to sell trained 'Star Cats'. He apologises for the lack of stock, but the range has been so popular he is down to his last three cats (for this week):

(a) A fairly mangy looking beast. Moderate price tag with registration to indicate it's fairly experienced. Analogy: Garfield.

(b) A Terran-style Russian Blue. Pretty, expensive. Registration shows it's pedigree and specially bred for merchants. Analogy: Nermal.

(c) A cross-eyed neurotic Siamese with a god-awful throaty meow. Moderate in price. Actual value very little - the salesman knows this but is always hopeful of finding a stupid buyer. The price could easily be beaten down. Analogy: Bill the Cat.

* (a) is lazy and violent (in subtle ways) if it doesn't get it's own way (shredding various starship furniture, etc.).

* (b) is very cute and will have passengers queueing to pander to its every whim. However, it is otherwise quite useless aboard ship.

* (c) If the players need encouraging to choose "Bill", let them watch him for a while and see how cute he is as he wanders around bumping into things.

This cat has some 'faulty' genes: it has a knack of turning up in the wrong place at the wrong time and announcing its presence with its throaty yowl. Bill will sit on passengers' food, shed fur and cough fur-balls over the ship, crap in shoes and showers, turn ship systems on and off (Bill will spend hours pressing buttons just to watch the pretty lights go on and off). Once Bill is on the crew database within the ship's computer, he will wait for some suitable time to demonstrate his incredible ability to pick up skills. Unless careful programmed, the ship computer will assume Bill to be a normal crew member. Since the cat's yowls match no known language, the ship will either try to match vocal commands as best it can, or (if high TL) may engage its self-learning language ability to comprehend the feline utterances. Sometimes commands can be inferred from circumstance - Bill is outside a closed door when he yowls, hence the computer opens the door for him. If the computer assumes this to be the 'open door' command, next time Bill yowls in a different manner, the computer will assume it must be a different order... maybe 'lock door'? Wait until Bill 'learns' how to lock everyone off the ship, activate the anti-hijack program or eventually finds the right pitchfor self-destruct...

Encounter: MINGS CREATURE EMPORIUM

Ming's deals in the alteration and enhancement of existing creatures. The shop has a large catalog of genetic samples from thousands of creatures from many worlds. Customers can choose a 'base' creature and then have their own custom additions geneered. Base price is 100Cr per kg of creature with a 'production' delay of about 1 day per 10kg at TL13, more at lower TL, depending on availability of growth tanks. Commercial orders (e.g. for planetary colonisation) are handled by a special office with discounts for bulk orders, etc.

Available customisations include:

* Alteration-1. Select a specific existing genetic variance for the creature, e.g. colour of hair, eyes, or skin; gender; size; etc.

* Alteration-2. Enhance or inhibit an existing physical or mental attribute, e.g. making a wild creature domestic, geneering blunt teeth or claws into a carnivore.

* Alteration-3. Adds or remove a physical or mental attribute, e.g. making a carnivore demi-vegetarian, adding poison to a stinger.

Each Alteration costs 10/30/50% of the base price for level 1/2/3 respectively.

* Enhancement-1. Gives a basic skill to a creature, e.g. simple labour, cutting hair, tidying up, washing dishes.

* Enhancement-2. Gives skill level 0 (in a common ability), e.g. Steward-0, Handgun-0.

* Enhancement-3. Gives a professional skill, e.g. Grav vehicle-1, Ship's Boat-1.

Each Enhancement costs 100/200/300% of the base price for level 1/2/3 respectively. It should be remembered that a minimum intelligence of 1/3/5 is required for the above enhancements and base model creatures with low Int will require an additional 200% cost per Int point raised.

For example the players might chose to construct a "Griffon". Assuming the basic stock is found (say 200kg) they might make it domestic (A2), toilet trained (A2), demi-vegetarian (A3), remove its love of horse flesh (A3) and give it basic riding skill (E1) to remove the need for each of them to learn Equestrian. However the base creature is equivalent to Int 0 and requires an 1 Int raise to use the skill. Cost would therefore be 200 x 100Cr (basic) with 460% extras, i.e. 112 kCr.

Players must beware local laws on the skills allowed to genas (e.g. weaponry skills may be illegal). Cheap genas may be sold with skills but have insufficient Int to use them effectively. This might not become apparent until a critical point! Genas seldom retain the ability to breed. Reproductive capability can be geneered on request but will drastically increase (2-10x) the price.

1: As payment for a job performed for a local noble, the players are presented with an albino elephant - tusks et al.

2-3: An unscrupulous subcorporation of Ming's is producing altered humans. The players are contracted to investigate and shut down the operation. Ming will pay them with custom genas worth up to 200 kCr.

4: A competitor of Ming's is producing a new rainbow-coloured crest for lizard-based genas. It is so popular with customers that Ming wants the players to obtain the necessary gene codes - by deception, bribery or breaking into the competitor's labs. Ming will pay 100 kCr for the data.

5: Ming hires the players to transport a geneered dinosaur (Tyrannosaurus Rex?) to a fun park on a nearby world.

6: A primitive planet offers a large reward to the players to track down and bring back a mythical species to their planet. This gives them the opportunity for a cheap con-job.

Encounter: SILGEN SALESPERSON

Rena Fife is a bouncy, cheery, opportunist that can be found at the star- or spaceport. She is young and energetic and sports a tray of commodities (interesting novelties and gizmos of no real value) that she is trying to sell. This month it's a range of genas from Silicon Genetics (SilGen) entitled "More of your Favourite Critters". She has glossy advertising pamphlets but relies mostly on her own sales pitch.

THE GURU

A 4" high, potbellied and ancient man sporting a long beard and deep eyes. He tends to squat in the Lotus position

applications but can keep a professional job fresh.

All these critters cost 150Cr each and have a lifespan of 1 year although Rena will avoid questions concerning how much of that year has already been used up. The genas' only food is sugar water and each comes with a small "scent stick" that can be used to trace out an area of wandering beyond which the gena will not stray.

Other 'critters' available from SilGen include a broom/mop-wielding floor-sweeper, a ballerina, "The Flasher" (only available to adults), marching soldiers (in all periods of dress) and The SilGen Brass Band.

Ref's Notes:
* A player's GURU says something significantly prophetic to a passerby (from a primitive or highly religious culture). The passerby comes back later with many followers, to follow/worship/take/kill the GURU!

* A player's DOOMSAYER inadvertantly reveals the covert actions of someone else (potentially leading the player into an adventure), e.g. (noticing someone breaking through a fence) "No, No, Don't Cut That Wire!" or (in a bank, noticing some suspicious guys with concealed weapons) "No, No, Don't Hold Up _This_ Bank!".

* An ARIEL, confused by an alcoholic sugar drink, begins painting rather gaudy 'art' on anyone she runs into. The apologetic owner can be used as an adventure lead-in.

* Rena Fife books passage on the player's ship and spends the entire time trying to sell the critters to crew or other passengers.

References used in this article:
MT Referee's Companion (GDW)
MT Imperial Encyclopaedia (GDW)
Vilani and Vargr (DGP)
Solomani and Aslan (DGP)
Fire Fusion & Steel (GDW)

for long periods mystically peering about. Occasionally when another person (or pet) meets his eyes he will intone some wisdom with deep gravity. "What is the sound of one transistor switching?" "In Jumpspace the stars speak for those with souls to listen."

THE DOOMSAYER

This is another 4" critter wearing a very conservative business suit and with a perpetually worried expression. He fidgets and creeps nervously about. Occasionally he mops his balding head with a handkerchief. Whenever a person nearby hesitates in performing a recognised action (e.g. opening a door, etc.) he will wave his hands frantically and cry "No, no! Don't open the door!" If the player continues their action it will look thunderstruck and whine "She opened the door! We're doomed!", then return to its agitated wandering.

ARIEL

Ariel is only 3" high but she has 6" butterfly wings. This small, svelt, and naked fairy flies about its owner (or perches on their shoulder) with a small painter's palette. Her main function is as an artistic accoutrement and to touch up the owner's makeup. She is not very original in her own

Test Flight
by Jo Jaquinta

"So what do we do now, Aoibhell? I still want off."

"In space? We see how she handles. Hold on!" Aoibhell swung the joy-stick violently to the right. Lora gasped and turned a peculiar grey colour, clutching the edge of her seat. "Sick-bags under the seats", Aoibhell said calmly, rolling the fighter. "How are the restraints holding up?"

"When are you going to invent grav compensators?" Lora moaned as she hung in the safety harness.

"Interesting idea", Aiobhell muttered. "Say, crack the cylinder under my seat, will you?"

"Bring this thing the right way up, first." Lora grunted, stretched and felt under the seat. She found the spigot and gave it a quarter turn. "There. What's that hissing sound?"

"Oxygen, it's replacing the air we're losing."

"We're losing air?!"

"Not much. Stop worrying, by all the gods," Aoibhell smiled, "It's not as dangerous as all that -- we've only had two fatalities this year".

"It's only January 7!!!"

"I've forgotten, which month is January again?"

"The first. I want to go home."

"Oh, in that case we've had no fatalities at all yet", Aoibhell said cheerfully. The fighter sped in orbit, occasionally veering from side to side as Aoibhell played with the controls. Lora began to settle down as things became more stable.

"I guess you do know what you're doing", she said grudgingly as they completed an orbit.

"Well, of course, Lora. These yokes are incredibly easy to fly once you get the knack. Orbit completed, re-entering atmosphere:, she said into the mike. The craft turned steeply and began diving towards the planet. "Chew gum this time! It's in the seat-arm!" Aiobhell yelled. Lora complied quickly, willing herself not to moan. Aoibhell half turned to her, pointing at her ears, a querying look on her face. Lora smiled grimly and stared ahead. The craft howled down toward Polo, its dive flattening out alarmingly quickly a few thousand feed above what the Evani called sea-level. Aoibhell threw the ship into a barrel-roll and Lora fought the desire to retch. The display of aeronautics lasted a little longer until suddenly the engine noise stopped. Aoibhell leaned back, hands clasped behind her head. Lora stared at her rings for fully half a minute before she could contain herself no longer.

"Get your bloody hands back on those controls!", she yelled.

Aoibhell looked back at her casually, "I've always assumed you knew what you were doing on your ship. After all, I am qualified to fly this vessel -- I do know what I'm doing. Now just sit back and enjoy yourself -- how are the ears?"

"Sore. Why is it quiet?"

"We're out of fuel -- hey, calm down, I could hardly land whilst accelerating, now could I? We'll just glide back into station, neat and tidy. There's absolutely nothing that can go wrong, believe me.

She turned back and took the controls once more, Lora breathing a very audible sigh of relief. They coasted down, a string of excited and congratulatory Evani pouring from the mike.

"Are they always that -- obsequious?"

"They're probably just happy they don't have to explain my death away."

"Whatever happened to the 'there's absolutely nothing that can go wrong'?"

"They didn't seem to want to accept that analysis any more than you did, but I'll prove you all wrong, now haven't I?"

Lora muttered something uncomplimentary in Vilani. There was a slight judder as the vessel landed and they rolled down the runway, coming finally to a halt.

Lora took a deep breath and unbuckled the safety harness, easing her way out of the cramped seat. Aoibhell opened the door and got out of here seat, smiling at Lora.

"So what do you think?"

"Very manoeuvrable."

"If you think that's good you should see some of our atmospheric craft -- turn in their own length, they do."

Lora looked amused. "Not with your technology, they don't."

"Go ask them downtown, Lora. We flew them through the streets of the city", she smiled.

"So what did you modify in this -- craft, for want of a better word?"
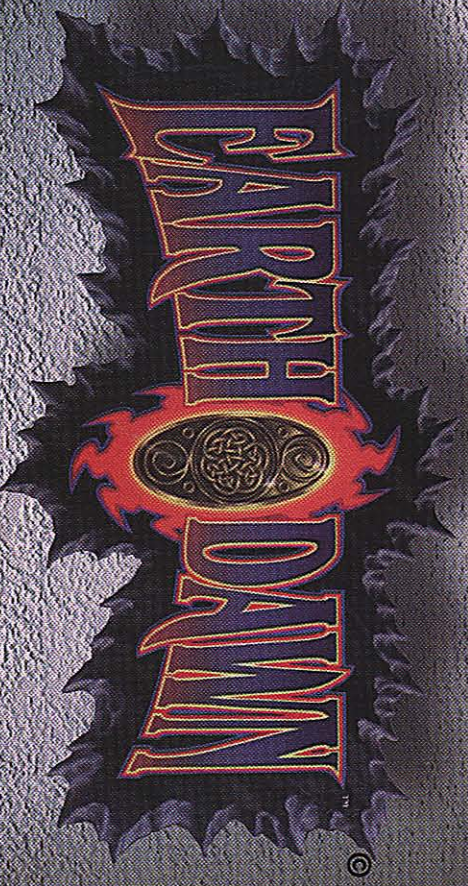
"The safety restraints, for one."

"You made them better?"

"I included them", she smiled evilly. "Like to go for a little flight in one of our unmodified vessels, Lora?"

"Lora blanched. "I am never, gods witness it, never going up in an Evani ship again. You'll be hard put to get me into a ground vehicle of yours."