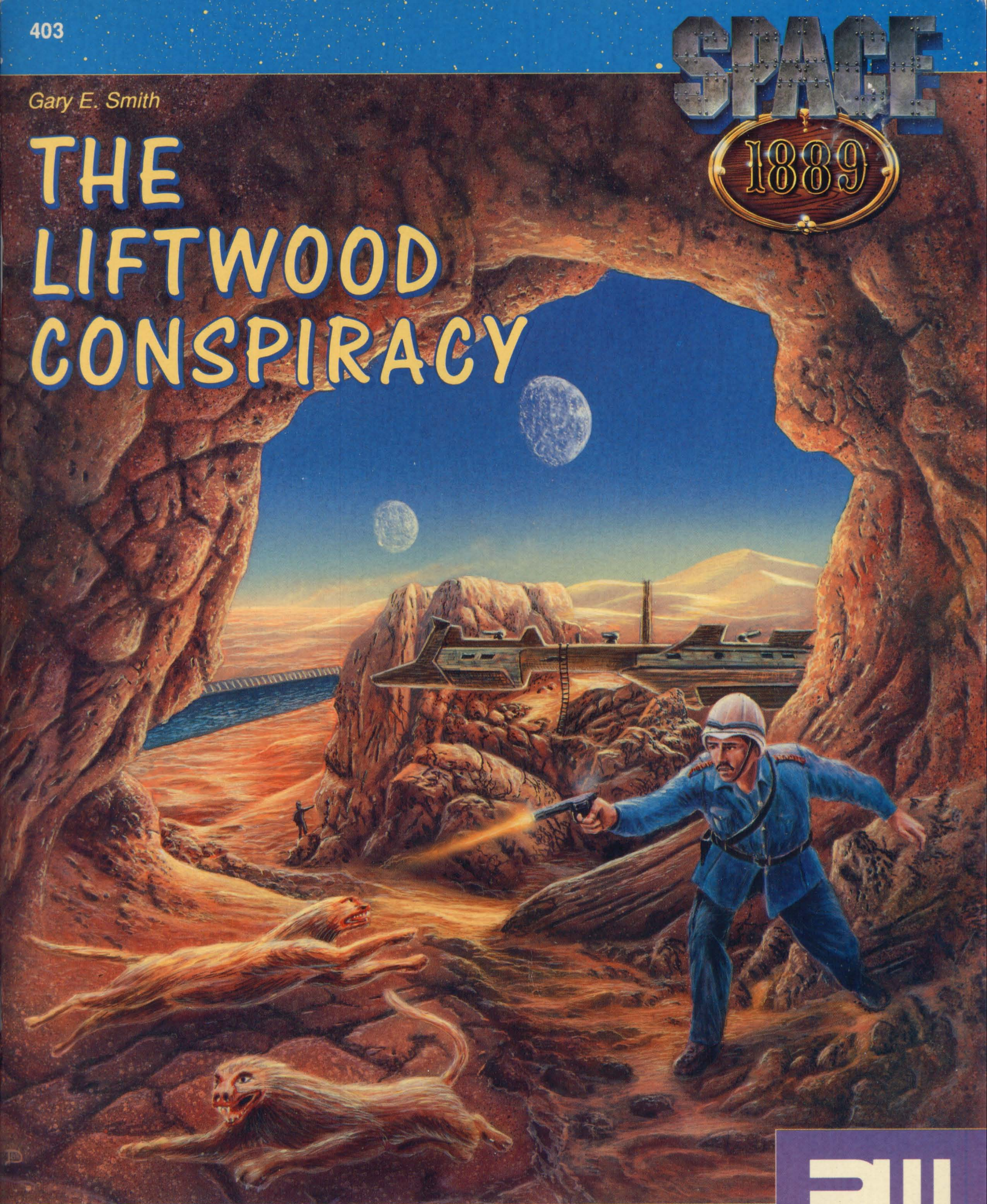


Gary E. Smith

# THE LIFTWOOD CONSPIRACY



Approved for use with GDW's Space:1889

**3W**

CAMBRIA, CALIFORNIA





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**Space: 1889** is GDW's trademark for its science-fiction role-playing game of adventure in a more civilized time.



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSPIRACY

*IT ALWAYS* seemed the same, the Colonel's office, I mean. Queen Victoria on the wall behind the desk, staring at you over the Colonel's shoulder, his paperwork laid out just so, four gashant leather chairs along the wall to the right with two in front of the desk, our regimental flag in the corner, the muffled sounds of sergeants bawling out orders to troops on the parade grounds beyond the windows; and the Colonel himself seated at the desk in a red dress uniform, gnawing on a black pipe that contrasted so sharply with his whitish-grey moustache and hair. But those steel colored eyes always locked onto you (like those of a mongoose when it sees a cobra) as soon as you entered from the outer' sub-office to the Colonel's call of "Come!" It was always the same; why didn't I ever get comfortable and used to it? Trading salutes, the Colonel got down to business.

"Lieutenant, your report here" (his right hand reached out and touched it without those eyes leaving me for an instant), "on that bit of trouble your company ran into with those Oenotrian Marines makes crackling good reading". (His eyes then went flat and hard), But weren't your orders supposed to have you and your lads on peacekeeping duties?"

Well, into the breach. Thought I'd hear about that.

"Yessir. And right well we did at that, too. We were keeping the two factions apart so that the civil authorities could restore order to the area. The amended disposition by the Commissioner I attached at the end of my report attests to our..."

"I can read, Lieutenant. Your efforts are well documented and independent reports back up what you say. Your skills at dealing with the unexpected and dangerous are not in question. What I'm interested in is your ability to adhere to orders while on an independent mission despite firm reasons to the contrary."

"Sir, I don't believe that I had a choice. True, my orders were to keep the peace. But when a foreign power dangerously intrudes into a civil dispute, as the Oenotrians did, then I had to balance the shedding of some blood to keep a larger peace."

The Colonel leaned back in his chair, hands clasped on his stomach and looked thoughtful a second, then smiled and said, "Keep a larger peace", is it? Perhaps a lesson has been learned. Yes, you may have that opportunity."

He shifted in his chair and his facial expression changed again as though he had made a decision. He had. "Lieutenant, I have another task for you."

"Sir, I hope this doesn't have anything to do with the Oenotrians," I replied, though I would rather gladly deal barehanded with a starving steppe tiger if it meant action and that this meeting was over. (Is *that* why they made him a colonel?)

The Colonel fiddled with his pipe cleaner and pipe, smiled and said, "No, it's rather the opposite direction."

Quickly and carefully he laid out a map across his desk. I moved in closer to get a better view and was surprised to see the Astusape Highlands prominent on it. Isolated terri-

tory, rocky paths and beastly High Martians running loose. What am I getting into? I hadn't agreed to anything yet, had I?

"Lieutenant, our nation has a looming major problem. As you know, liftwood is the major component in cloudship design. It collects "lift" which allows aerial machines to float through the skies. This tree grows only in scattered and secluded groves in the various highland regions here on Mars. As of this date, only the "native" powers on Mars control this vital tree. Britain must pay, and pay dearly, to acquire liftwood lumber for its ships. Allowing these powers to dictate the supply to the British Empire is unwise; to allow any other rival colonial power to gain control is unthinkable."

He paused and a tight little smile lit up his face. "You did not hear this, but the Foreign Office has arranged for a member of the Royal Botanical Society and his assistant to take a "holiday" here on Mars, presumably to vacation near liftwood trees. I am informed that they will need guides and travelling companions to round out their party. Incognito, of course. Interested?"

"Yes, sir!" (Paid holidays courtesy of Her Majesty, a chance for adventure, an opportunity to get noticed by the right people and he asks if I'm interested? So what if the frocks are involved!)

"Good show. You will go on immediate leave as of today. I'll give you a packet with your orders and where to meet your other "companions". Please destroy those orders by fire once you've read them. You'll want no unexpected company..."

THIS MODULE is an adventure for **Space:1889**; GDW's Victorian era, science fiction role-playing game. It is designed for players with moderate experience as well as newcomers. There will be plenty of opportunities for action, but it will also take careful planning and thought to successfully penetrate and withdraw from the liftwood highlands. This adventure is designed for 4-6 players or even more, depending on if people are willing to play some of the NPCs.

This module contains the following information:

- \* This background introduction.
- \* An overview of the adventure for the referee.
- \* Biographical information on all the major NPCs involved.
- \* Maps and diagrams of the area near Draxxkklanet.
- \* Background information on Draxxkklanet.
- \* Ship information on the Ithuriel.

## REFEREE NOTES

YOU CAN view this adventure in any number of ways. First of all, it can be seen as a covert military operation, a get-it-and-go mission where time is of the essence. In league with this, you could emphasize that greater issues are at stake, such as the potential for war if things go wrong.

This module can also be played with more roleplaying emphasis, each player attempting to take the best advantage of their strong points in trying to successfully conclude this mission. **Liftwood Conspiracy** was hopefully designed so that you, the referee, have enough options to entertain and challenge the players and yourself.

## DESIGN NOTES

ALL ROLE-PLAYING games have combat as a central core of their being. But, I feel the test of a good adventure is that it makes the players **think** and explore **all** options and avenues on their path toward success. The players are going to be in situations where combat will be easy to initiate. In some cases, combat could be the correct approach. In others, it's a sure way to jump from the frying pan into the fire. Ideally, roleplaying should mirror real life; the players will have to keep in mind their goals and devise ways to accomplish them without going off on tangents or sacrificing the long term good for the short term fun.

You should read through this module carefully, for just as in real life, there are several different paths for the characters to take. Since they will have various ways to proceed, you need to familiarize yourself with all the potential options.

## WARNING:

**Players should not read any further in order to preserve the element of surprise.**

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

THE CHARACTERS, once "properly" motivated by you, the referee, will attend a dinner party (of sorts) at the Barnes House. This house is really a "safe house" for the British Foreign Office. How you wish to create a motivation for your players's characters is up to you; the introduction to the Conspiracy is provided as a detailed example of how such a "frame" could occur. Naturally, only patriots need RSVP. There the characters will be introduced to four of the major NPC's, one of whom will reveal a scheme to covertly trespass a chosen High Martian liftwood grove to steal saplings and soil samples for analysis back to Earth. This man, Creighton Dillsworth, a British Foreign Office agent, is a rude and arrogant twit whom the party will learn quickly to dislike, if not hate. Two of the NPC's are involved with botany and will be able to successfully bring the plants back. The other major NPC is a native Martian with much experience at these sorts of expeditions.

The characters may or may not find out at the Barnes House that they are being spied upon by agents of Baron von Gruber, an implacable foe of British interests on Mars. They soon will know that someone is taking a particular interest in their activities.

The next morning the characters will go to the Syrtis Major landing grounds to board the screw galley Ithuriel in order to start out on the cloudship portion of their journey. Here they will have the chance of picking up some interesting rumors that are floating around, as well as deal with thugs and brigands before they board the ship. Sharp-eyed characters may note that they are being watched by someone in the crowd, as well.

Once aboard the Ithuriel, there is a chance that any one of the characters will detect a bomb that is stowed away in some cargo to be loaded aboard (not a big chance though). If they do so, there may not be an

explosion now and certainly not one later at night. If they do not detect this bomb, the damage done when it goes off will not destroy the ship, but will cripple her in some respects, making it more difficult to successfully complete their mission. Also, they will meet the captain of the Ithuriel, Devon Constantine, the last major NPC to enter this module before the ship sails (unless things go **very wrong**, of course). If you were to picture Errol Flynn on Mars, you'd have a good idea of Devon.

The journey by air will take five (5) days, travel off the beaten flight paths and during which aerial adventures and encounters may occur. These can involve ships as well as creatures, since **Space: 1889** includes a good ship vs ship combat system. Should referees not wish to utilize this feature, they are free to use an optional quick resolution section or simply freeform the ship encounters as they see fit. This isn't a Holy Relic, you know. If the bomb was not detected prior to launch, it will detonate the first night out.

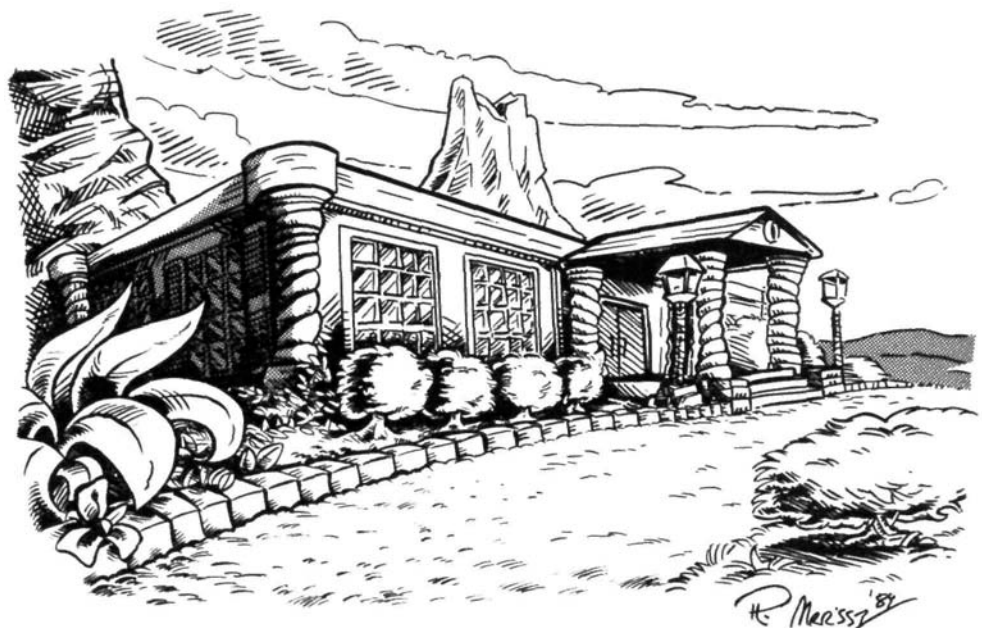
At this point, there is a section of note for the referee entitled A HATCHING OF PLOTS? In here

you will find background notes on the two powers that have an interest in this particular expedition and how they fit into the overall picture on Mars.

The characters will eventually disembark from the Ithuriel a few days march from the grove. Hopefully, they will be let off at the proper landing point, as there is a chance that things could go wrong for them in this regard. They will chance some ground encounters on the march before they reach their objective, as well as come across a wrecked ship amongst the hills.

Once at the grove, things will go somewhat more smoothly (?) as the party searches for liftwood saplings. Of course, as per regulation Victorian storytelling, an abduction of the Doctor's daughter will take place. The characters will have to quickly organize and brave the interior of a previously unknown sinister Temple secluded on the far northern side of this liftwood grove in order to rescue her.

When the situation is resolved within the Temple, the party may yet have to deal with more High Martians if they were unable to stop word





from getting out that the Temple captured an intruder, or was under attack. Any further attacks must be dealt with during the remaining daylight hours before the characters can signal the Ithuriel to come in to the treacherous mountain area at night to retrieve them for the journey home.

This module leaves several "open doors" for referees to follow-up on if they so choose. The party may have captured a small cloudship during one of the encounters, which they could use for themselves in future adventures. Maybe a repair expedition could be planned to fix up the Draxes, that crashed cloudship they stumbled onto in that ravine. Or, perhaps the mysterious carvings on the walls of the Temple will pique their interest in hunting down the lost Mother Temple Prantxxang, the founding temple of the Worm Priests. Are they going to become Temple busters and gain a reputation for it?

And the Baron, what plans could he be up to now, especially if he had something to do with that knife in the wall at the end of the story? Or are the High Martian operatives in on this?

And, of course, what of the perils of ether travel if the Baron has succeeded in setting up an intercept between the ether flier bearing Doctor Ashton and the saplings and a warship of the Imperial German Navy (no doubt suitably disguised)? The Germans can ill-afford to allow a British success now and the risk of war surely follows when the naval ships of one nation assault those of another. Are the Germans truly **that** desperate?

The players and the referee now have many options open to them from being part of **The Liftwood Conspiracy**. But don't worry. The players will work out some idea of where they want to go and what they want to do. Your job is to provide the space/time warp via **Space: 1889** to allow them to do it.

## ASSEMBLING THE CHARACTERS

AT THIS POINT, the characters will need to assemble at the Barnes House, a small but nicely maintained "safe" house (owned and operated by the Foreign Office) on the outskirts of Syrtis Major. Agents and operatives use the site to pick up and drop off orders, information, news, etc. The "owners" of this house do not figure in this module, but will be up in front as quasi-guards while the meeting takes place. Referees may, of course, wish to flesh out the extra people; this is up to you.

The players may have characters of any type or mix and they should at this point have been properly motivated for being selected (as, for example, the opening of this module) to accompany this secret mission. NOTE: If you are planning to have players take on the roles of the major NPC's and play them as characters, it is best that Dr. and Felicity Ashton **not** be role-played. Dillsworth and Jimra (we'll get to him) provide certain skills and add "colour", hence player involvement is fine. But this expedition hinges on Dr. Ashton being able to find, select and care for liftwood saplings until they are sent to Earth. He is the reason for this expedition and will act to drive part of the action. Felicity drives **him**. You, the referee drive **them** and hence the flow and pace of what is to follow.

The mix of character types is important to produce a successful outcome to any adventure. Your players should try to achieve such a balance. In this adventure, Hunter and Explorer types would make a valuable addition. Doctors are al-

ways useful, as well. For that matter, a stowed away newspaper reporter looking for that big story might make for a real diversion and added color to this so-called "secret mission".

It is highly recommended, though not totally necessary, that one of the characters be an incognito military type (no uniform or other distinctive accouterments, after all, this is an unofficial mission). If you do so, read the following to the players.

*During this time period all members of the military had a strong dislike for Foreign Office types because it was believed that they bungled up so much on the diplomatic front that to save the Empire's reputation, an awful lot of unnecessary wars were fought. Collectively, members of the Foreign Office were called "frocks" because the diplomatic dress of the day was a frock coat.*

*The diplomats looked down their noses at the military, collectively considering them as a group of incompetent, boorish, bull-in-the-china-shop fossils who soaked up a vast portion of the national budget only to stagger and bollix up nearly every "simple" military operation they were sent on.*

As can be seen, the natural ingredients exist for a rivalry between Dillsworth and a military player character that could enliven most facets of this trip. Dillsworth can question or reject any points or tactics such a player might make and smugly gloat over every single "victory" he believes was made.

Dr. Nigel Ashton (Green NPC):



**Dr. Nigel Ashton (Green NPC):**

Dr. Ashton (age 60) has spent his life enthralled with the diversity of plantlife that is to be found on Earth. As a young boy he spent most of his free hours in the woods on the family property, or helping the gardener with his landscaping chores (discreetly, of course). The boy's parents were somewhat perplexed by his "hobby" at first, but they saw rapid progress and excellent grades in school on botanical subjects, so they encouraged him in those studies.

His college studies and research papers were so impressive that Dr. Ashton was asked upon graduation to accompany the Hillers Expedition to Borneo as one of the assistants to Hillers himself. While this particular trip resulted in little new information, it marked Nigel Ashton as an important personage in botanical circles. A well-deserved membership in the Royal Botanical Society was not too far off.

So, for the last 35 years, Dr. Ashton has been one of the fixtures in various journals devoted to botany, well-known and respected, a noted author of short works regarding discoveries in, and trips to the distant corners of the world. Rarely home for any substantial length of time, Dr. Ashton tended to prefer science to a home life.

Until he met Amelia.

For a man who loved botany as much as he did, there never seemed enough left over love (or need) for a wife and mate. When he met Amelia Stoddard, all that changed. For she loved him as he was and he loved her because she was simply the most wonderful person in the world. Amelia died tragically in 1870 from influenza, leaving Dr. Ashton devastated. But, he still had part of Amelia to care for, as their daughter Felicity grew into a near-replica of her mother. Unfortunately.

He is practically blind to any problems that his daughter might cause, excusing nearly everything she does. Felicity is very much an image of her mother in looks (not temperament) and this haunts the good doctor.

#### **Attributes    S    kills**

STR: 2	Fisticuffs 1, throwing 1
AGL: 2	Stealth 1
END: 3	Wilderness Travel 3, (foraging 3)
INT: 5	Science 5, (Botany) Engineering 1, Observation 2
CHR: 3	Eloquence 2, Linguistics 3 (French)
SOC: 5	Riding 4 (horse)

(Note the total number of attributes is 20 due to his age). Dr. Ashton is a Scientist specializing in Botany.

**Motives:** Wise, Love (for Felicity he would excuse nearly anything);

**Appearance:** Dr. Nigel Ashton is about 5' 7" tall, with somewhat short grey-white hair, a small moustache and bright alert eyes (picturing Neville Chamberlain would be close). He looks as though spending time in conversation with him would be enjoyable. He wears suits "smartly", though he prefers khaki and shorts once an expedition is under way.



## Felicity Ashton (Green NPC):

**Felicity Ashton (Green NPC):**

Twenty years old and softly spoiled, Felicity has grown up to be a free-spirited woman who has had few obstacles placed in her path when she wants something. Raised by governesses generously paid for by her father, she has come to view the world as a place where she can accomplish (read "get") anything if she really wants to.

She expresses the view of equality of the sexes partially to gain attention (in this era it would), but also as a method to discourage men who might not grant her things that she wants because, of course, they were prejudiced. The true ideals behind the concept aren't for her, as she would rather play the coquette when it suits her purposes.

One off-shoot of her equality stance was the taking up of marksmanship. Her practice at target shooting with pistols horrified the more conservative elements of society, but Felicity garnered a lot of attention from the males at the shooting meets, one or two ribbons, and an article in the Times. Naturally, having an educated and well-travelled father rubbed off and Felicity acquired more than a smattering of knowledge as well as the practical ins-and-outs of how to travel. She has enough learned skills to assist her father with some of the work on this mission. This won't make her that easy to travel with, though! She's more likely to make plans and issue opinions on incomplete information rather than be contradicted by the truth.

All in all, Felicity tends to be manipulative, loves men to pay her attention, likes to get her own way, is somewhat dangerous with a little knowledge and, while not actively seeking a husband, certainly is keeping her eyes open in that area. What tends to smooth the rough edges is that she can be very engaging and fun to be with.

**Attributes****Skills**

STR: 2	Fisticuffs 1, throwing 1
AGL: 3	Stealth 2, Marksmanship 3 (pistol)
END: 1	Wilderness Travel 1, Swimming 1
INT: 3	Observation 2, Science 1
CHR: 5	Eloquence 4, Linguistics 3 (French and German)
SOC: 5	Riding 4 (horse), piloting 1

(Note the number of attributes is 19 due to her age)

Felicity Ashton is a Dilettante Traveller.

**Motives:** Stubborn, fair.

**Appearance:** Felicity is 5' 5" tall with blondish brown hair usually worn up on her head, not down. She tends to over-dress and wear clothing a bit impractical for the locale. This is partially to gain some attention. She will appear confident and eager to lend her opinions to any discussion.

Felicity packs a small revolver and ammo for practicing.

## Creighton Dills worth (Trained NPC)



### Creighton Dillsworth (Trained NPC):

Creighton Dillsworth is a man determined to make "something" of himself in his work as a Foreign Office agent. It's just that he doesn't want to wait. In his late 20's, Dillsworth's scholastic career was a bit spotty at first; he spent time looking for a career that would bring him attention, was easy for him to do well in, and that he liked. He ended up with offers in the service of the government and Archaeology. The ancient Egyptians

fascinated him, but the concept of (hopefully) performing officially recognized patriotic service was too career enhancing to pass by. Dillsworth has had some regrets about that choice, but he has come to believe that his big break could be "the next mission" and so he continues on.

Plus, his contact with Dr. Ashton over the last two weeks here on Mars has allowed him to meet Felicity. While love has not yet conquered Dillsworth, he is smitten by her and realizes that marrying a woman of the upper class would have distinct advantages for a man from the middle class. He is jealous, but tries to conceal it. Although, if Felicity is on the wrong side of an argument, he will try to back her, unless he can see that winning will lose him an opportunity to further his ambitions.

What exactly are these ambitions? Even Creighton hasn't got them cataloged exactly, but Fame and Fortune might be close enough. Some sort of discovery or hugely successful mission that would gain him honors (a title perhaps?) and/or renown, would suit him.

#### Attributes

#### Skills

STR:	3	Fisticuffs 2, throwing 2
AGL:	5	Stealth 4, Crime 4, Marksmanship 4 (pistol)
END:	3	Wilderness travel 2
INT:	4	Observation 4
CHR:	3	Eloquence 2, Linguistics 4 (French, Parhooni 2, German 2)
SOC:	3	Riding 2 (horse)

Creighton Dillsworth is a Foreign Office agent

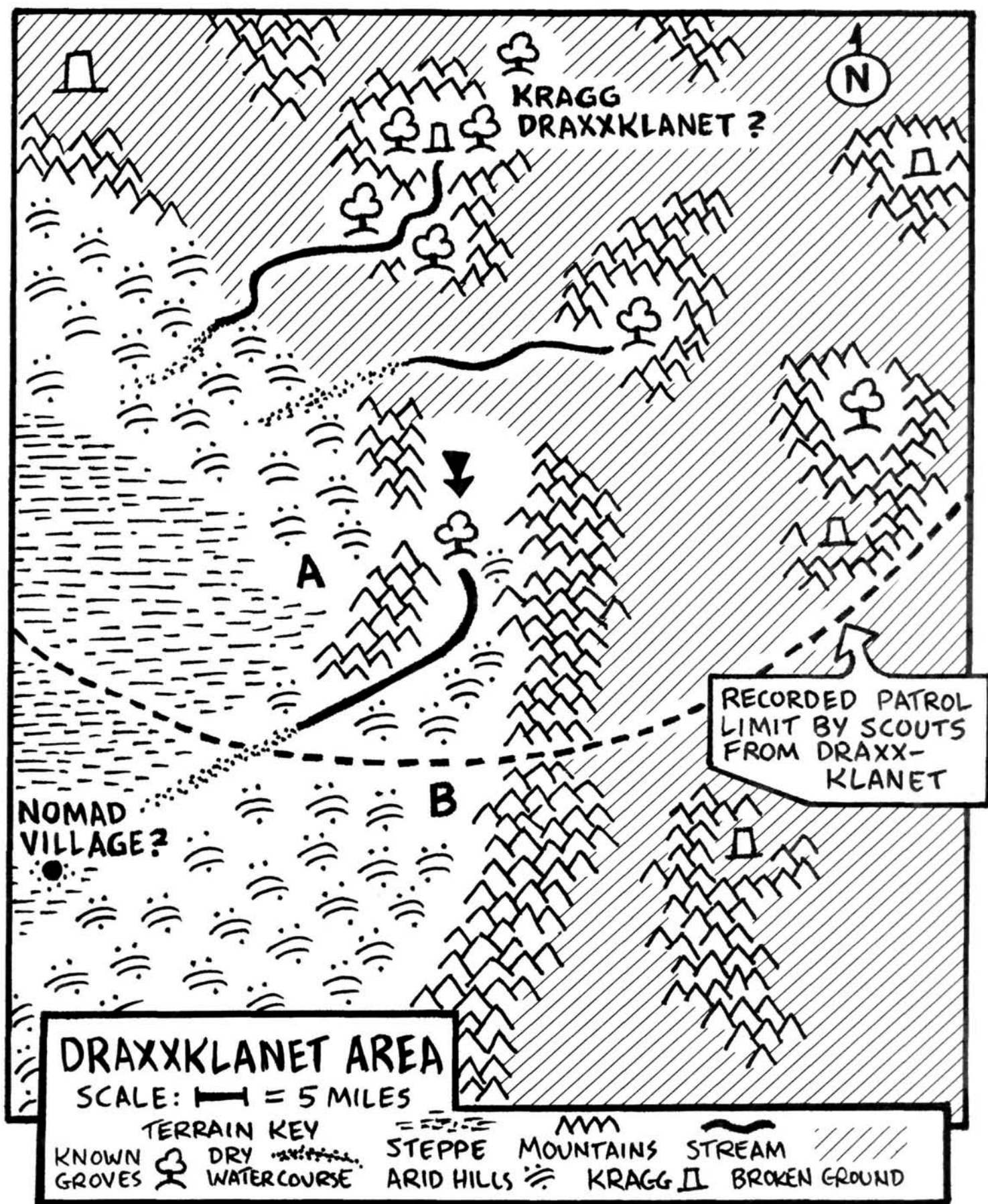
**Motives:** Ambitious, adventuresome, knowledgeable.

**Appearance:** Creighton Dillsworth is 5' 9" tall with dull brown hair and a thin moustache. He's somewhat standoffish and insists that certain duties and tasks assigned to him **not** be infringed upon. This leads to abruptly crossing his arms whenever an argument or complaint issues from him. He usually wears rumpled brown suits and a bowler hat, both of which are well made but have seen better days. Dillsworth will be close at hand if danger threatens; he's not afraid (much) of those types of situations; after all it could get him recognized as an ace agent. He carries a heavy revolver for this adventure.

**NOTE:** You will notice that the personalities above all speak French. This is deliberate because if no character knows this language (or if one that does is not within earshot), these people have the option to engage in some private conversations and decision making meetings using French. They generally do this to keep their practice up, though Felicity might make a few barbed remarks because it's safe; and Creighton would use it to keep player characters from knowing more than they might need to. Dr. Ashton does this as a matter of course; it would never occur to him that it might be rude or misunderstood, even if he were told that it might be. In one ear and out the other, so to speak.

Referees are free to use this little plot complication as needed to keep players off-balance. A trio of French speaking English folks on a secret mission could be played up nicely. (Though if your players start calling Creighton "Crouton" you might be overdoing it!)







## THE MEETING

TO START OUT, each player has been contacted and knows generally that an important secret mission is planned, that they have been requested to be a part of it for pay (at least) and that the final details are to be given under the cover of attending a dinner party at the Barnes House. All players are on their own at the start (unless otherwise arranged by you), but read this to them collectively:

*It is a cool, late afternoon in Syrtis Major as you make your way through town towards the northern outskirts where the Barnes House is. The usual pedestrians mill about and the buzzing of flyer traffic abounds as the Martian population closes up their workshops and stores to head home. Stately moving masts and white/cream colored sails mark the location of a canal to the east, while gashants and ruumet breehrs stand out on the roadway. Nevertheless, you're keeping a wary eye out for anyone keeping an eye on you (Ref: have players roll on Observation. Nothing's there, but keep them wondering). The traffic thins out as you reach the outskirts of the city and there, a faintly glowing orange (due to the setting sun) is your destination off to the left. You've been invited to a party (you're to say) and you won't be late. (The Barnes's throw a lot of dinner parties, most of them are legitimate). The house itself is set back from the road and is surrounded by a stone fence about 6 feet tall. The grounds are landscaped in the style of an English country home. When you arrive at the ornately styled door, a manservant greets you, (a Difficult Task roll to see that he's discreetly armed with a small pistol under his coat) inquires your*

*name, takes any coats or gear you wish to leave him, escorts you down a corridor to a double door which he opens into a large library filled with other people, all of whom turn an inquiring eye on you. One of them is a native Martian, dressed in Canal Martian working class clothing. He has a friendly appearance and a smile on his face.*

Once all the players have arrived and Dillsworth has introduced them all by name to one another, the briefing will begin. Dillsworth will stand at the head of the conference table around which the characters and NPC's (except Jimra, he's off to the side) are sitting and then does all the talking, answering most all the questions (even trying to answer ones asked of other NPC's). Remember, it's his expedition and he wants things to go his way.

Read this:

*"Now that everyone has assembled, we shall get underway. Please remember, you are on your honor not to speak about anything you have heard here until we have departed, or, if you should back down (small pause for effect here), not for a fortnight. As you may well be aware, a major component of clouds hips as well as ether flyers is liftwood, that miraculous tree that produces the lumber used to impart buoyancy to those ships. As you may not be aware, this wood grows only in secluded groves in the highland regions of Mars, so that to purchase this priceless material requires the use of Martian middlemen who must deal with the owners of these groves. And, the owners of these liftwood groves are none other than..." (pause for dramatic effect) "bestial*

*High Martians!"* Anyone thinking to look at Jimra would note the fleeting look of consternation pass across his face at Dillsworth's tone. Roll on the character's Observation attribute. (All this really means is that Jimra is pained that racism may be rearing its head and that the party may look at all Martians as being inferior. What the party thinks of Jimra's look is up to them.)

*It is intolerable that Her Majesty's Government could leave such a precious commodity in the hands of such an unfriendly power. But any overt actions on our part would only stir up heated passions amongst those powers, both on Mars and Earth, such that civic unrest or even the threat of war might occur. Hence, we must act covertly to avoid impropriety."*

*Therefore, since liftwood smuggling is an old and time-honored tradition here, our expedition is to gain silent access to a secluded grove where Professor Ashton" (Dillsworth indicates him), "a noted botanist, and his daughter..." :*

At this point Felicity (who is seated next to the Doctor) will interrupt Dillsworth in a snippy tone of voice and say...

*"That is DOCTOR Ashton, sir. Please do my father the honor of announcing his correct title."* Tell the players that Dillsworth flushes at the correction, then replies, *"Excuse me Miss Ashton, my apologies for the error."* Turning back to the center stage he says, *"yes, Doctor Ashton, noted botanist and member of the Governing Board of the Royal Botany Society and his daughter Felicity, will secure liftwood saplings for transport back to Earth for study and*



transplanting. The rest of the party will make use of their professional skills or act as guards or in any other capacity necessary to ensure the success of this mission. Jimra there, (Dillsworth indicates the Martian), has been on many such poaching raids. He has helped select the grove we shall raid and will be in charge of the three native bearers who will carry the saplings and some of our supplies. Unfortunately, we shall all be forced to carry some goods to guard against the expedition running longer than foreseen. But no more than strictly necessary. Any questions at this point?

Should anyone ask about money, Dillsworth will reply, in a tone that implies that patriots are preferable to mercenaries: "Yes, yes. You've been asked on this mission because of your skills and abilities, not because Her Majesty wished to enrich you. The honorarium for each member shall be £50 sterling, per sapling, payable upon our return."

If the subject of equipment comes up, Dillsworth's answer is: "You may bring whatever you feel is necessary that you personally can carry on a march. It is expected that each person will carry three days rations about them. The bearers will carry rations five days of rations for all party members, as well as five sets of flares."

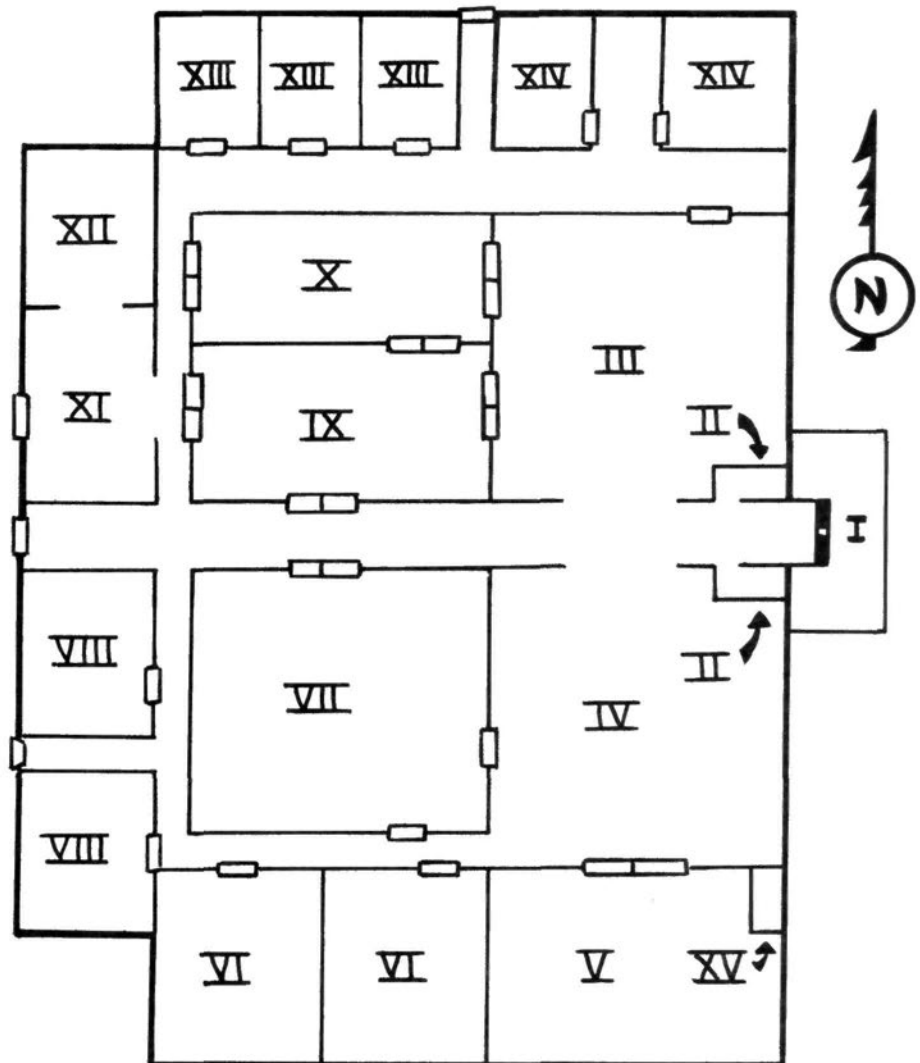
Obviously, someone will want to know the actual plan. At that type of question, Dillsworth will ask: "Once you have all sworn to secrecy and have agreed to go, we can discuss those points. I put it to you: are we one on this?" When the players give their assent, he will discuss the actual plan, not before.

Read: Reaching under the table, Dillsworth pulls out a large rolled up map and carefully spreads it out across the table. (See the map on Page 13). This map covers the region from Fadath in the south to beyond

the Meroe badlands north of the As-tusapes Highlands. While running his finger across the map and pointing at various locations on it, Dillsworth says the following:

## THE BARNES HOUSE

1" = 6 FEET



- |                        |                       |                         |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| I. PORTICO             | VI. BEDROOMS          | XI. KITCHEN             |
| II. CLOSET/COATROOMS   | VII. LIBRARY          | XII. PANTRY             |
| III. PARLOR            | VIII. CHILDREN'S ROOM | XIII. SERVANTS QUARTERS |
| IV. FRONTROOM          | IX. DINING ROOM       | XIV. OFFICES            |
| V. BILLIARDS/CARD ROOM | X. OPEN AIR ATRIUM    | XV. GUN CABINET         |

KEY: □ DOOR

▢ VENETIAN DOOR

## THE PLAN:

*"MY PLAN IS as follows. Tomorrow, we are to board the cloudship Ithuriel here in Syrtis Major. The captain knows of our mission and will assist us in our endeavors. We shall leave midmorning and make supposed passage west/southwest towards Signeus Portus to put off any suspicions. However, we shall turn to run due west once out of sight of Syrtis Major for 24 hours and cover 300 miles. Then, we shall head north for 2 days and cover another 600 miles. Finally, we shall go east, so as to approach the selected grove from the least expected direction. We shall be let off at night at Position A or B, depending on how we all decide. Position A is 15 miles west of our target on the edge of the flatlands. It allows for a shorter distance to travel by foot (three and 1/2 days instead of five) and gives the Doctor more time to do his work, but there may be steppe nomads about and a ship may have more chances of being seen over such land. Position B in the hills would allow us more cover, but would take longer and be over rougher ground.*

*In either case, we shall have to travel by night. High Martians from Kraag Draxxklanet (the owners of this grove) do themselves fly in small groups to scout the area for intruders, as well as maintain ship patrols. We must land at night, march at night and be removed at night.*

*From whichever position we march from, we shall arrange our pickup time for a specific night based on our estimated travel and poaching time. I do not intend to spend more than three full nights on site. I spoke of flares earlier. We shall set*

*alight a pair, spaced 100 yards apart, green and red, aimed west, at 9:00 p.m. on the night of our removal. The ship, hovering in the far distance, will see them and come safely to us, thus avoiding crags, hills or other inconvenient terrain features. She should come to us within three hours and then it's homeward bound. The flares burn up within an hour and we are taking five sets as a precaution.*

*Whatever path we choose or actions we take, we do so on our own for ourselves. This is not an "official" mission. If it succeeds, we have been patriots and loyal subjects. If we fail, not a finger will be lifted to help us. Questions?"*

In lieu of trying to answer any of the hundreds that might crop up, remember this is Dillsworth's plan. His answers will all revolve around the fact that it's a clever, near-perfect exercise and that he's doing the players a service by allowing them the choice of a landing position.

At some point during the questioning though, a character may ask why the ship simply can't drop them off at the grove itself. Dillsworth can say: *"The danger of flying over the Highlands at night are such that we might make intimate contact with a crag or other such terrain features. That is the reason for using flares to guide her in the night of our departure. Absolutely not."*

Also, should anybody think to ask Jimra for advice or council, his point will be that since the party must be quiet to help avoid contact with anyone, the use of firearms must be strictly curtailed, at best in self-defense. Not even the French liftwood middlemen Jimra worked for that

occasionally were allowed to visit the groves carry firearms. Only intruders and poachers do. Gunfire will therefore alert anyone within earshot that armed strangers are present.

Jimra, as noted, helped select the grove. Questions addressed to him on the locale should be referred over to a map (see Page 13 or 14). The maps provided will answer most questions, but in general, this is a secluded grove, not one that is even known about. The day Jimra was there, he only saw 2 guards fly over and no sign of inhabitants (which the lack of High Martians around would substantiate). Other background questions about Jimra can be answered by referring to his background notes.

Once the questions have been dealt with (not necessarily answered), dinner will be served. Felicity will spend the time flirting with "eligible men", snubbing any other female characters, and generally pointing out how really well-known her father is and how dreadful that Dillsworth made such an error but how nice he was to do it correctly, etc. A few quiet toasts are drunk to the success of the affair, with Dillsworth repeatedly telling people not to raise their voices or say anything to anyone about the matter until after departure time.

All the participants are to meet at 11:00 a.m. the next morning at the Syrtis Major commercial landing grounds to board the Ithuriel for this journey. All necessary gear must be brought there at that time for stowing away. Characters are admonished **not** to be late and to travel in groups if possible. Don't move about alone



if at all possible.

If any player gets security conscious and asks about other people in the house, Dillsworth will assure them that security in the house is being dealt with by other Foreign Office people. Should players want to go out onto the grounds to check up on things or just for an after-dinner drink and smoke, let them. If not, have them think they hear a noise at the shuttered window, or have them all leave as a group once the "party" is over. Once outside, have them do a Difficult Task roll (Target 12) for Observation.

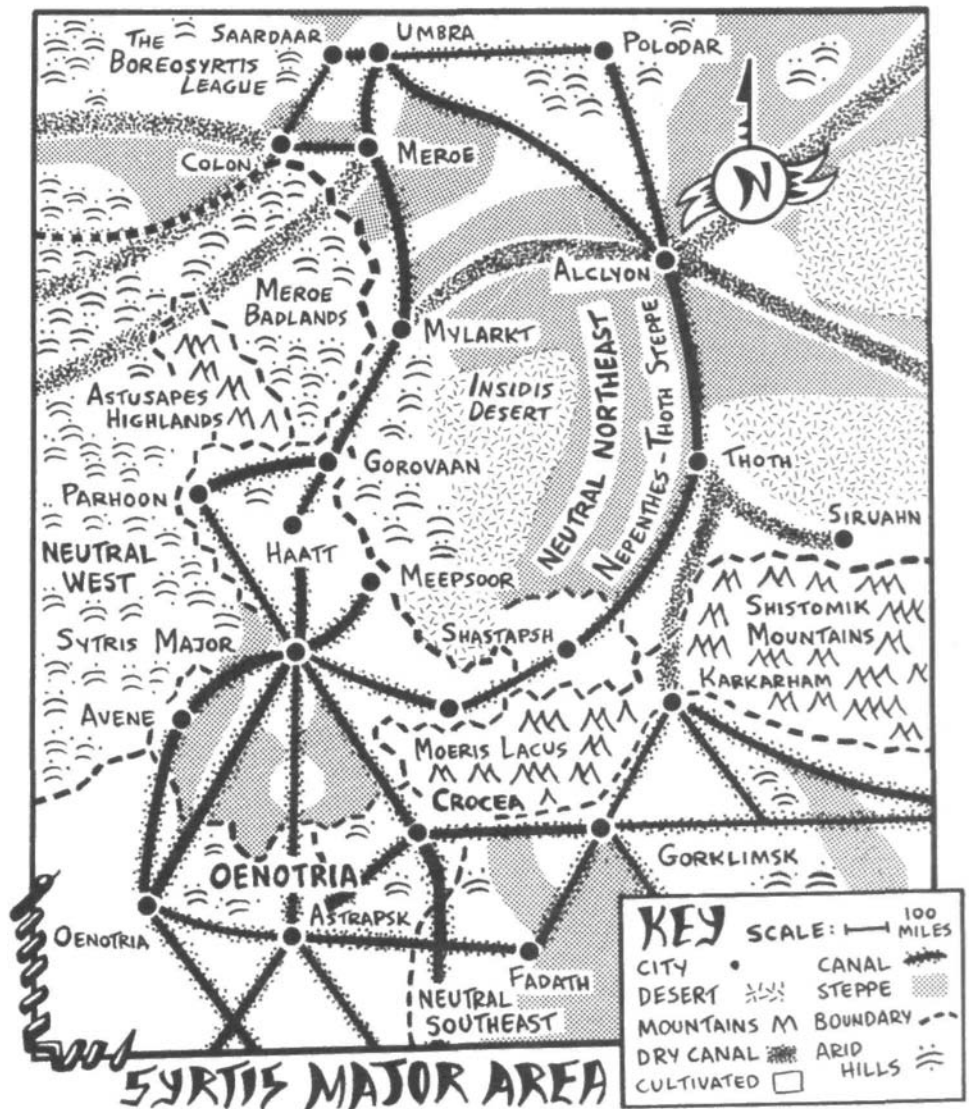
If no successful Observation is made, go on to the section The Voyage.

If a successful roll is made, the person who made the roll will think that they have spotted someone on the grounds in the shadows, but they're not sure. If they investigate, a figure will dart from the bushes and make a run for the wall. This figure will reach the wall, swiftly climb a rope and be gone. He cannot be caught. If chase is given, play up the quickness, agility and dash of this individual. If someone fires at the figure, fake a roll and announce "He's hit and collapses." Checking the body will show the intruder, a Canal Martian, dead. There is no evidence or materials in any pocket or anywhere else on the body.

If it has come to this, Dillsworth should mutter under his breath, "The Baron, always the Baron". When asked for an explanation, he will talk about Baron Hasso von Gruber (see the Space: 1889 rulebook, page 40) and fill the characters in on him. But, Dillsworth will say (in a hopeful tone) that it may not, after all, be the

Baron's work. It just might have been a "normal" thief. If the players think to ask why such a thief would approach a well-lit home while a party was in progress, Creighton will mutter something about how it doesn't change things; if it is the

Baron's work, they'll all have to be more careful and at least the spy didn't get away so nobody knows anything anyway. In any case, the characters are not going to feel at ease over this turn of events and hopefully will be put on their guard.



## MAJOR NPC — Jimra Xanxth (Veteran)



### MAJOR NPC — Jimra Xanxth (Veteran)

Jimra is a Canal Martian from the Parhoon region. He started off life in the Martian equivalent of a working class home, learning his family's trade of wood-working. For various reasons, the business failed and the offspring had to go out and make their own way in the world. Jimra tried various other trade jobs and was getting to where he would have had his own business, when Fate intervened.

A war somewhere (he never bothered worrying about them) necessitated an increase in the size of the

local army units stationed in Parhoon. Jimra was "volunteered" by a blow to the back of the head and he awoke a marine aboard a cloudflyer. He served in and around Parhoon and the Astusapes area, where his business mind noted a few things that proved helpful upon his discharge.

First, liftwood was an expensive item that rich people paid a lot for. Second, you could cut out the middlemen and steal your own. Third, the money from a little stolen liftwood went a long way. Fourth, his woodworking abilities allowed him a better than average skill at choosing and cutting down the trees.

So, Jimra has spent the last 15 years organizing and leading small parties to cautiously poach only good quality liftwood, working only for trustworthy clients (which lately have included the British) and investing the money wisely into a woodworking business (the perfect cover). He hasn't had to steal much, but he bears the scars from close brushes with High Martians, which makes him even more reluctant to trust to chance. It's a good life now.

#### Attributes      S      skills

STR: 3	Fisticuffs 2, Throwing 1, close combat 2
AGL: 4	Stealth 3, Crime 2, Marksmanship 1
END: 4	Wilderness Travel 3, Swimming 1
INT: 4	Observation 3
CHR: 4	Eloquence 3, Linguistics 2 (English), Bargaining 2
SOC: 2	Riding 2 (gashant), Piloting 1

Jimra Xanxth is a Smuggler.

**Motives:** Loyal, Cautious, Mercantile.

**Appearance:** Jimra dresses conservatively, though he does wear a silver loop earring in his left ear. He generally sports a smile and has a happy, outgoing look about himself. He won't talk much at all about his past experiences in poaching. During free time, he generally sits and whittles for relaxation.

Creighton Dillsworth has dealt with him in the past, paid well for those meetings and has earned Jimra's trust (so far). Hence, Jimra will listen attentively to whatever Dillsworth says and will be eager to follow his instructions, offering few objections to what Creighton says. Once out of sight, Jimra will do what he feels is best and explain any problems or conflicts that might arise as "things going wrong, had to best to save your plan." Jimra will have a musket with him on this trip.



## THE LANDING GROUNDS

THE NEXT MORNING should see the characters out at the landing grounds with their personal gear. Whether they arrive by carrier or by foot, they will come to the edge of the open ground where cloudships normally set down to business.

Read:

*There's a tremendous bustle about as Martians and humans shift cargo and goods from place to place, sidewalk merchants are hawking their goods, ship crews are wandering about, and commerce is in the air. As you wander through, getting poor directions to the cloudship Ithuriel, you do hear the oddest things.*

(A roll on the General Rumor Table now occurs for each player and the result read to the characters) in question. You may want to do this in a separate room to add a bit of mystery.)

GENERAL RUMOR TABLE

Die	Result
2-3	Rumor 1
4	Rumor 2
5	Rumor 3
6-8	Rumor 4
9	Rumor 5
10	Rumor 6
11	Rumor 7
12	Rumor 8

**Rumor 1:** Prince Amraamtaba X of Syrtis believes that the British merchants are circumventing customs and he intends to thoroughly search cloudships for contraband.

**Rumor 2:** The High Martians killed a liftwood merchant for cheat-

ing them out of a sale to the British authorities.

**Rumor 3:** The High Martians fear more incursions by British ships since the attack on Kraag Barrovaar, so they have more ships out patrolling their territory.

**Rumor 4:** The cloudship **Draxes** is overdue from Coloe. It was due 3 days ago and there has been no word. The captain is noted for the punctuality of his voyages.

**Rumor 5:** There are more and more Skrill riders being spotted to the west of Syrtis Major. They're still only a nuisance to ships, but they are starting to be seen more and more in the highlands where they've never been seen before.

**Rumor 6:** A shipment of especially potent bhutan spice was due in on the cloudship **Draxes** three days ago. The ship hasn't arrived and the merchants are upset.

**Rumor 7:** Certain merchants suspect that goods being sent to them via cloudship are being off-loaded elsewhere and reported lost. A reward is offered to crew members to report suspicious ship activities out of the norm.

**Rumor 8:** The British are upset because some Yankee merchant has gone and sold King Hattabranx of the High Martians repeating rifles.

Naturally, all isn't sweetness and light here in this Royal Colony. While the majority of the natives are peaceful and honest, a small (but active) minority deal in crime and/or just plain disliked humans (or red devils, as humans are called). Roll to randomly determine which character (or characters, if some are going together) bump into one of these folks.

Once you've got a victim, roll on the Encounter Table below:

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Die Roll	Encounter
1	One thug leaps out and slashes with a knife.
2	1D6 thugs attack with clubs.
3	One thief attempts to steal a random article from the player, roll to determine.
4	1D6 thieves attempt to steal as above, but if caught in the attempt, they have knives.
5	1D6 beggars set upon the character beseeching for money. Once rid of them, roll randomly to see what item they have stolen.
6	A Martian is jumped by 1D6 thugs and is badly injured. If he is helped, the thugs will run. He will then say (badly) "Message... (gasp)...beware...Pollix... (choke)...danger!" And then die. There is no information on him of any kind. Note: This has nothing to do with the adventure at hand, but why tell anyone?

NOTE: Use the Martian Stock NPC table to acquire suitable thugs. Don't let the characters get killed here! This is only "atmosphere", an appetizer, not the crux of the module.

## BOARDING

ONCE THE PLAYERS get through the above, they will eventually get the correct directions to the location of the Ithuriel. The ship itself is a Hullcutter-type screw galley modified in various ways, the most noticeable is that she has a for-

ward deck cabin and has no Lob gun on board. (Don't mention this fact to the players, just say that it looks like a military type ship in merchant usage. Check against Observation should anyone try to "fix" the type.) The ship is very well maintained and painted; one can see that a lot of pride goes into the owning of this ship. The crew, too, seem more neat than the normal merchant cloudship types one sees at most landing grounds.

At the foot of the ramp two lightly armed canal Martian crew members are checking over various load of cargo (crates, small boxes, sacks, etc) and then are sending the sweating, poorly dressed porters up the ramp with these smaller shipments. A small crane, located next to the ship, is slowly transferring pallets of larger goods from wagons onto the ship. The Martians at the ramp will stop their cargo checks to ask the characters why they are there, then mark their names off of a manifest and allow them on board. They will be polite but they won't answer questions.

Once characters walk up the boarding ramp and get onto the ship proper, out of view of people on the ground, two more Martian crew members (humans this time, a bit more prominently armed with repeating rifles), will leave the crew whom are unloading the pallets off of the crane and stop the characters and ask to inspect their travel kits and equipment. If characters object, they will politely insist. If characters loudly object, then Dillsworth will pop his head out of a nearby open hatchway and hiss something to the effect of, *"Quiet you fool(s)! Do you want everyone in blazes to hear?!"* If at this point the characters do anything else except submit quietly to a search, Dillsworth will write them up as "troublemakers" in his report. No matter how heroic or how well they

perform from here on out, this damning notation will cause the character(s) in question to receive no **official** awards or renown. They'll get paid, but that's it. (Assuming of course, that Dillsworth survives. Don't mention this point to the players.)

Characters will then be led to their quarters for the trip. These "quarters" are really little more than small rooms of various sizes with two bunks in each of them. The characters are not here to travel in style! However, Felicity will be heard to (loudly) object to the quarters selected for her and her father. In fact, she will insist so much that the captain will have to come to check out the problem and soon, so will Dillsworth.

Ultimately, the Ashtons will be relocated to a room of Felicity's choice. Randomly determine which character(s) lose out. Felicity will smile grandly at her victory in establishing the "pecking order". Dr. Ashton, (if the character behaves decently about all this; referee's option) will take the former owner aside and say, *"Sorry for all this. My daughter is only thinking of my health (a gentle lie, he knows why she's doing this), nothing personal. I'll make it up to you later."* A nod with a quick, nervous smile, then he goes below. The character(s) should be made to feel that the Doctor seems very sincere about this incident. Hammocks will be supplied if the number of bunks is exceeded by the party taking passage on this adventure.

Should characters be looking around the deck, they will notice the following bits of information. The ship is armed with three Martian artillery pieces placed on the main deck. These are covered by tarpaulins. There is a deck house with a "flying bridge" on the forward hull





section. Sharp characters will notice that on either side of this deckhouse, bolted to the rail at the deck's edge, are metal swivel mounts, looking as though they might hold weapons. These mounts are currently empty. Unless a character has the proper military background, don't tell them that these are mounts for Hotchkiss 1-lber cannons (the weapons themselves are prudently stowed away for use as necessary).

Characters who persist in believing that they are being spied upon can roll all the dice that they want to. However, should they make a Formidable Task, Target 16 roll on Observation, they will notice a scraggly looking human type seemingly meander around in the people passing by the It huriel as she lies in her cradle. This person, when finally noticed, is **not** aimlessly wandering, but instead, moving with a purpose; he is keeping an eye on the ship and in particular the people in view on the deck. Now and then he stops to chat very briefly with some of the porters involved in the loading of the ship.

Should anyone go after him, he will quickly meld into the crowd and disappear from sight. Porters questioned about him will say that the guy was drunk and asked things like how heavy the crates were, how many passengers were aboard, type of cargo, etc; the generic types of questions a wharf rat might ask to kill time. As so they are. This guy was just checking up on which ship Jimra was followed to very early this morning.

Anyone making a tour below decks will eventually notice the dorsal gun mounted at the stem of the ship, capable of firing in any direction by a bit of adroit maneuvering. This is **not** a standard mounting for any merchant type vessel. Some Hullcutters in military use (mostly in the Oenotrian fleet) have this type of

mounting, most do not. In fact, none of the weapons on board are usually seen on merchant ships period, except in time of war.

Your players may want to check over the action on the main deck as the cargo is brought aboard the It huriel. Roleplayers tend to be a nosy lot, it keeps them alive more often than not, or at least better informed as to their surroundings. Should they do so, go through the following:

**Either:**

If any characters at any time bother to take notice of the cargo coming aboard, perform a Formidable Task against Observation. If they succeed, one chest doesn't look "right". Careful scrutiny (Difficult Task vs Engineering or Mechanics) will reveal that the chest is booby-trapped. A further Moderate Task roll against Engineering or Mechanics will open and disarm the chest; a failure will set off a dynamite explosion of "4" power. (However, if the characters appraise Dillsworth of the situation **before** they try opening the crate, he will immediately order everyone away from it and send for an explosives expert who will successfully disarm it). The person who actually tried to open the chest and failed will take wounds equal to 4D6; everyone within 6 yards of this chest will take damage as though an exploding shell went off (burst size determined by the power of the charge). Characters may try to Dodge, but treat this as **at least** at a Difficult Task Level. (Some players will try **anything** as long as they can roll dice for a chance at success).

If opened without incident, the characters will find three sticks of dynamite wired to a battery and clockwork timer. The whole thing is set to go off in a little under eleven hours from now. There are no clues as to the origin of the chest, however anyone looking at the clock mecha-

nism will see, in small print on the dial face, "Strasbourg". The loaders, if questioned, will simply say that they took it off of a wagon that rattled up, mixed in with other goods. They don't know which wagon or its owner.

If the chest is successfully opened or after the mess is cleared up, Dillsworth will say, "*The Baron is onto us. Remove those things and let's be off! Get the Captain!*" The Captain (a rugged, good-looking type with a passing resemblance to Errol Flynn) will secure the ship and cast off by bellowing "Up ship!" If the Baron was not mentioned earlier at the Barnes House, Dillsworth will explain in some detail about him now.

**Or:**

If the chest passed aboard unnoticed, despite the action of the players or due to no action on their part, all the gear will be secured, Dillsworth will go below and return with the captain, saying, "*We have appointments to keep, sir. I believe we must be off.*" The captain (same chap as above) will look somewhat pityingly at Creighton (he doesn't care for him either) and give orders to secure the ship for immediate departure.

NOTE: If a character is killed by this little stunt, having the player run one of the NPC's is the best solution, or you could create another Foreign Office agent to be a last-minute substitute, sent for by Dillsworth as a backup. Pre-make this character to keep handy so the flow of the game doesn't slow. Of course, you'll have to tell the player that this new character will report to Dillsworth and work for him. Depending on how "well" you've done portraying Dillsworth as a royal pain, this may not sit well with the player in question!

## MAJOR NPC—Devon Constantine (Veteran)



### MAJOR NPC — Devon Constantine (Veteran)

Devon is a dashing good-looking man in his early thirties, who grew up loving the ocean and ships. Born of the middle class, it was doubtful that he could join the Royal Navy as an officer, since his skill at mathematics was poor (essential for navigation and a prerequisite career skill at this time) and his family could not afford to send him to the proper schools to gain admittance to the Navy. So he went to sea as a lad of 18, apprenticed into the merchant marine, perhaps to later gain a commission into the Royal Navy Reserve.

His parents were hoping he could end up working passenger ships on the North Atlantic run, but instead Devon ended up (by choice) in the less civilized areas of the world, helping to run guns and contraband, smuggling ivory and eventually amassing enough money to own his own rickety ship plying the Mediterranean. His good looks and free style of spending money kept him well "occupied" by members of the fairer sex.

But when Devon heard of the riches on the frontiers of Mars and actually rode in a flyer on Earth, he fell head over heels in love with this new-type ship and the opportunities any kind of poorly patrolled frontier offered to sharp individuals (like himself, for example). He cashed out of the merchant marine and taking all his money, booked working passage to Mars.

Well, Mars and he took to one another like the ocean and spray. In no time he had a small ship, a devoted crew and more than one official eye glaring in his direction. Devon skirted real trouble for 2 years, but evidence of a circumstantial nature was building such that the authorities were about to do something.

Then, of course, he became a hero and they couldn't do **anything**.

An Oenotrian Hullcutter class screw galley had piled into a Royal Navy merchant auxiliary and a vicious boarding melee was taking place, with the British losing (and a vital Foreign Office agent at risk of capture). Devon, coming onto the scene, realizing that most of the Oeotrians were on merchant auxiliary, boarded the galley from the disengaged side and by means not fully understood by anyone not knowing Devon's luck, captured it and "persuaded" the captain into surrendering his crew. Devon became a hero, certain pending charges against him were "dropped", he got the screw galley as a prize (he claimed that it was "abandoned" and as such, was eligible for salvage), and the Foreign Office (who helped with the salvage claim) got a new valued field agent. Quite a bargain.

#### Attributes: S kills

STR:	3	Fisticuffs 2, Throwing 1, Close Combat 3
AGL:	5	Stealth 4
END:	2	Wilderness Travel 1
INT:	3	Observation 3, Gunnery 2
CHR:	5	Eloquence 4, Linguistics 4 (Koline 2, Parhooni 2)
SOC:	3	Riding 2 (Pacyosauros), Leadership 3, Pilot 2

Devon Constantine is the merchant equivalent of a line officer in the Royal Navy.

**Motives:** Adventuresome, honest (really).

**Appearance:** Errol Flynn in any one of his best movies. Perhaps **Captains Courageous** in feeling and spirit if the movie's time period were a bit later.



## ITHURIEL: MODIFIED HULLCUTTER CLASS SCREW GALLEY

DEVON KNEW that simply owning such a ship (though gladly he does so) would be far different than operating it profitably. So he made a few adjustments to bring down the break even cost. First, ordinance considered to be surplus (the Lob gun and one Rogue gun) was removed and sold. The magazine space saved was converted over to cargo. The observation platform and two forward masts were taken away and a deckhouse built instead with a flying bridge on top of it and one smaller mast abaft. This gave the bridge crew a good view forward and up (the usual directions of a cloudship) and so primary control of the ship was transferred there.

The forward ram was cut down a bit so that the remaining Rogue gun could cover the full forward arc of fire. Two Hotchkiss 1-lbers were "loaned" for a more effective close-in defense (more on this loan later).

With these changes, the actual crew was reduced by six gunners, leaving a total of 44 people. To use the Hotchkiss guns, Devon added two Petty Officers acquainted with such weapons. When combat is imminent, these men remove the guns from their lockup, position and fire them. With some internal rearrangement of walls, rooms and magazines, space was freed up for a barely adequate cargo hold. That and the passenger space (reduced to 8 from 10) was the revenue generating area for Ithuriel.

For gaming purposes, Devon has made the Ithuriel capable of ramming, something she wasn't fully able to do before. Her tonnage is now 493 tons, down from 695 tons, mean-

ing she can now reach a VH altitude. Two petty officers have been added to the crew and Ithuriel's rated value is now £49,220.

However, that's not all.

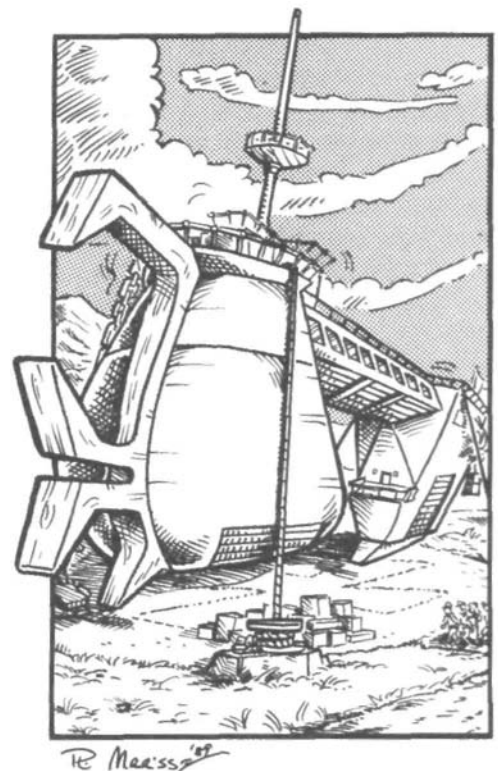
Unbeknownst to the world at large, Devon and the Foreign Office worked out an "agreement" so that in exchange for keeping the ship and the dropping of all pending charges, the Ithuriel will operate in "conjunction" with certain operations of the Crown. In exchange, a small monthly operating stipend is paid. To keep this fact quiet, the cover is that the Ithuriel is to operate as an armed merchant cruiser in any conflict involving Syrtis Major and a foreign power. (In fact, should such a conflict actually take place, she will operate as such, though Devon may not be aware at present that such plans are on file).

Those people who have delved a bit into the rules regarding the construction of cloudships will notice that the Ithuriel is a bit "light" to be a well-balanced ship. This is due to Devon not yet determining exactly what further odds and mods he wants to add to his ship. Budding naval architects are encouraged to fiddle around with this, but bear in mind the following points:

- a) Devon will never use Martian Fire. It's not sporting, you know. Even uncivilized.
- b) Modern weapons will never totally replace the Martian weapons as the older ones are cheaper to maintain and fire. Besides, despite Devon's "conversion" to the forces of good, it is doubtful that Her Majesty's Government would allow him to so arm his craft that

the Ithuriel ends up equal to or superior to most Royal Naval vessels. This could only come about with some very significant strings attached.

c) Further products will finalize the Ithuriel, but Devon is a clever sort who will make changes as necessary to suit the immediate needs (it's doubtful that he has any long term ones; Devon just doesn't think that way).



## CLOUDSHIP TRAVELS

### READ THIS:

*THE BEST place to view the changing scenery aboard a cloudship is at the bow, or, on some ships, down on the auxiliary bridge under the hull. Watching the advent of nightfall from that vantage point is especially sought out, as it ever ceases to delight voyagers. As the (smaller looking) sun sets, the landscape of Mars reflects various shadows and hues of ochre and red-orange, while the shadows of different landscape features stretch out towards the darkening eastern horizon. The two Mad Sisters (Phobos and Deimos) begin their dash across the vault of the sky, accompanied by the stately thrum of the galley crankshaft and the whisper/swish of the propellers, which act to orchestrate the background mood. The air chills down quickly, as in all desert climes, and scattered lights begin to spark here and there on the floor of the planet, indicating life, while overhead the stars burn in the heavens, indicating the unknown. Mars, God of War, slumbers once again. For now.*

However the characters end up at the landing grounds, once the Ithuriel lifts off and heads southwest on her supposed journey to Sigeus Portus, there is a three day ship journey awaiting.

Players should be encouraged to make all the necessary preparations they can for the march ahead. Characters attempting to get to know Dillsworth better should be given more information from the biography provided; it's not likely that he is going to warm up to anyone at this (or any) stage of the proceedings. (If another Foreign agent is along, have Dillsworth work hard at "convincing" that character that following Dillsworth's orders is the best and sure way to not get a black mark on their record).

Also, Dillsworth will have at least one meeting a day with Jimra, the bearers and Dr. Ashton. They will review equipment how they will

transport saplings, marching rules, etc. If characters want to check out these meetings, Dillsworth will be reluctant to let them. Roll against Eloquence to see if they convince him to relent. If they succeed, they will note that Dillsworth will talk to the Martians in dialect and to the Doctor in French. He will be reluctant to translate. Observers might notice that Jimra looks totally bored (after all, he's made these kinds of raids before), the bearers grumble at packing, unpacking, holding and setting down the same items over and over. Dr. Ashton doesn't seem to mind, he's used to being careful and meticulous on important expeditions such as these. Dillsworth simply knows that once away from the ship, the party will have to fend for itself, so things have to be right at the start. Remember, he views this as his big chance for recognition and advancement. He wants to make sure things are **right**. He may not have the opportunity again.

The three bearers are simply that...bearers. Not warriors. For gaming purposes, consider them as Hill Braves on the Martian Stock NPC list except that they're armed with spears and knives.

Should characters attempt to talk to Jimra without Dillsworth being present, they will find him open and friendly. All the information in the biography is available to give out, though Jimra will want to talk where the chance of non-party members overhearing is slim to none. Questions may be asked about the grove itself, since Jimra was the one who helped select this particular location. Jimra actually knows very little about the northern edge of the grove, so omit any details on the Temple or any habitation. Just refer to the pertinent maps in question.

However, roll 1D6 should any such talks begin. On a 5 or 6, Dillsworth will appear and bluntly tell the character(s) to stop meddling with the natives without his permis-

sion and to leave immediately. Unless the character(s) do so, a Formidable Task (Target 20) roll on Eloquence is necessary to convince Dillsworth that things are all right. A failure to make the target will cause Creighton to believe that the character in question is working behind his back, maybe even to undermine the very mission itself (especially if the bomb was detected in any way). Depending on how narrow-minded you want to play Dillsworth, this could escalate into an arrest and accusations of spying for a foreign power.

A successful roll will allow the conversation to go on, but Dillsworth will remain to listen and soon begin to ask Jimra if there aren't "things" he should be doing, bearers to attend to, etc. Jimra will make excuses and depart. He knows where the money is coming from. Dillsworth will tell players to deal with him directly, not the hired help that he has contracted for.

Players may try to talk to Jimra as much as they want, but Dillsworth, if he catches them, certainly will write them up as "troublemakers", if not arrest them as above. He will then work to squelch the handing out of Renown points as well as pay. There is a distinct chance that the character may be noted in the records as being "suspicious", "unsavory" or something of that ilk. While that may not cause any short term problems, characters so stigmatized with such a dossier might have a hard time in the future working officially for the government in any capacity. In this time period, once you're marked, you stay marked. Even if you can prove otherwise. This may not bode well on future jobs.

All in all, Creighton Dillsworth should rise to his level of incompetence during this voyage. He should be a task master, quibble over details and insist on his rights, no matter what he perceives them to be. He should question characters on what



equipment they're bringing, disagreeing on the selection of certain things; anything, in fact. He's nosy, so make him obnoxious. Dillsworth will inquire as to their background and experience, then claim that the Foreign Office could have done better than to recommend that character, or offer backhanded compliments (*"That's quite good for a civilian. Pity you've wasted it on non-government ventures."*) Try to play him as

arrogant due to his being unsure about himself. Let his insecurities about his position and abilities flare up from time to time.

Devon Constantine will have very few problems with Creighton. The fact that the same Office employs the Ithuriel (although Dillsworth is unaware of this) simply gives Devon the luxury of ignoring him as needed. Should Dillsworth push the fact, Devon will just inform

him that his interference could cost the party any chance of success. Dillsworth will buy that line only from Devon, no one else.

Creighton won't bother the Ashtons either. The Doctor is as attentive to his tasks as Dillsworth would want. He's from a higher class, too. As for Felicity, Dillsworth is polite, attentive and generous with his time. Whatever he might tell her about the mission would always be confidential. In practice, he tells her nothing of importance. But he does say it in French, the language of love.

Don't forget, Dillsworth will try to back her in any argument she might have with the characters, unless such backing would lose him an opportunity to further the success of this mission.

She will in turn always back his arguments, unless they're directed at her. Felicity is attracted to men she perceives as possessing "power". While Devon Constantine falls in this category, his class level is "wrong" and he plays the game too well himself. She'd rather not find out how really good he might be!

Generally, play the romantic angle carefully. This is, after all, Victorian times we are gadding about in. The basic concept is that Dillsworth will act nearly "human" around Felicity, unless a display of power is called for. Characters may notice that when Felicity is on deck, Dillsworth will be in the distance giving her the starry-eyed look. Should anyone else move into the picture, he will be on the scene to make his presence known. An attempted flirt with her is asking for a raging fury of a Dillsworth to deal with later.

Please don't overdo this romance angle. Omit it if you choose. It's only a suggestion to add spice to the slower moments of this adventure. The idea is to plant "landmines" so that the characters watch their step around Dillsworth. However, love may yet mellow him out.



## AERIAL ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 2D6 ONCE for each leg.

Ships used will be those given in the **Space:1889** rules book with the noted changes. Use the combat rules from that book or from the boardgame **Sky Galleons of Mars**, where a much larger selection of ships is available. Referees are free to substitute similar ships to add more variety to the action.

### Southwest Leg (1st Two Days)

- 2-3 Merchant Kite (small)  
Bloodrunner (no guns)
- 4 Merchant Kite (large)  
Warm Winds
- 5 Armed Merchant Kite  
(1-2 Bloodrunner,  
3-6 Warm Winds with  
4 Hvy Guns Mounted)
- 6-8 Small Oenotrian Warship  
Small Bird Type
- 9 Large Oenotrian Warship  
Hullcutter Type
- 10-12 No Encounter

### Northwestern Leg (Second Two Days)

- 2-3 High Martian Hunter/Scouts  
20 Individuals
- 4 Flying Skril
- 5 Pirate Vessel (small)  
Small Bird Type
- 6-8 No Encounters
- 9 Pirate Vessel (large)  
Whisperdeath Type
- 10 High Martian Galley  
Small Bird Type
- 11-12 High Martian Galley  
Glory Sled Type

### The Run In At Night (Last Day)

- 2-3 Eelowaan
- 4 Flying Skril
- 5-9 No Encounters
- 10 Pirate Whisperdeath Type
- 11-12 High Martian Galley  
Small Bird Type

### NOTES: AERIAL ENCOUNTERS

Should referees wish to omit the ship versus ship encounters in order to speed up play, feel free to do as you choose. You may wish to substitute more creature oriented encounters, or just use a variation of the quick and dirty encounter set-up on Page for The Run In At Night. If you can, give the ship vs ship rules a try, or use **Sky Galleons of Mars**. They're both simple and fun.

**Merchant Kites:** These are peaceful merchants at work. Should the party close the merchant, 1-4 it will turn to run with the wind, 5-6 it will clear the decks and commence combat (fear of pirates) if armed. If the Ithuriel can successfully signal for information on a 1-3 (one chance only), no combat will commence - the merchant will cease its flight. Information is that High Martian ship patrols are more active now. (This is due to a paranoia of the High Martians about overall British intentions; not this particular expedition. There's been no time for the merchants to see an effect yet. Don't bother the players with that detail, though. Let them guess a bit).

**Oenotrian Warships:** Hullcutter types will immediately close to attack, there's a bounty out for Devon and the return of the Ithuriel. However, it may approach from such an angle that it wouldn't be able to catch the Ithuriel. Roll a 1-2 to initiate combat at 5 hex range with Ithuriel having initiative and the warship to her rear. Or, if Ithuriel wants the fight, subtract **two** from the dice roll and place Ithuriel at any angle to the approaching ship, combat to start at 5 hexes with the players having the initiative. Negative numbers are

read as a "1".

The small warship will zip away and inform the Hullcutter ship about Ithuriel. Roll a 1-2 to see if they succeed in finding her again. (If Ithuriel makes any sort of course alteration W/NW, subtract one from the die roll. If she goes N/NE, she escapes. However, this will cause a delay in the trip, in which case you will need to have the players make **four** Encounter rolls, two on the Southwest Leg, as they will have to cover the same territory. If she goes any other direction, add **two** to the die roll). If found, **both** will attack from the rear, start combat at 6 hexes with Ithuriel having the initiative.

**High Martian Hunter/Scouts:** There are 20 of them and they've been watching the Ithuriel coming up for a while. They will try to fly up quickly and board her. Roll a die. On a 1-2 they have surprise and attempt to board, 1D6 of them a turn (OK, so they're not coordinated. Make them so if you want) until all of them fly aboard. They won't give up until 16 of them are killed or incapacitated.

**Flying Skril:** This creature will attempt to dart down and grab someone on deck, fly off a ways and drop them. (Cute form of fun). Roll a 1-2 to see if it's spotted before it starts its run. If so, try to shoot it or dodge with the ship (1-3 chance that dodging will abort the run). If the dodge is successful, there is a 1-3 chance the skril will keep trying until it's dead, leaves on a 4-6, or grabs a victim.

As a target, there is a 1/6 chance that a character or major NPC is the victim. Roll a 1 to see if this occurs. If so, randomly determine which person is on deck. If the skril is not spotted, rolling a 1-4 means the person is grabbed. A 5-6 means the

person was struck, doing 1D6 wounds. Should the skrill only do damage, it will leave. If the skrill was spotted and still gets in and the character tries to dodge, rolling a 1-2 means being grabbed, a 3 is 1D6 wounds. A character may heroically stand and attempt to fight. In this case, the character gets one attempt to wound the creature. If this is successful, the skrill will only try to wound the victim at the last second on a 1-2, doing (1D6)-2 damage if it succeeds.

**Pirate Vessel:** These ships will close to start an attack. Handle this the same as for the Hullcutter approach above, including the option of delaying a day and doing another roll. Determine wind direction, as Ithuriel may want to run into it to shake off a Whisperdeath. However, Devon and his crew, while reformed, don't mind capturing a pirate ship for the prize money. In fact, should the characters think about it, if they got involved they would receive a share of the reward. (Dillsworth is by no means going to sanction this!) A Small Bird pirate will flee once the firepower of Ithuriel becomes evident.

**High Martian Galley:** (Either type). These will close for an attack. Handle them as for the Hullcutter approach above. However, they won't leave the fight once they have it. Small ships will send off 1D6+1 boarding High Martians, large ships will send off 2D6 boarding High Martians.

**Eelowaan:** Will attempt at night to drop onto the ship to feed on a 1-2. Anything else is a miss. Randomly determine as in Flying Skrill who is a victim. The Eelowaan has surprise, do combat as per the rules, as this creature is a constrictor looking for a

meal and will stick around to feed if it snares a victim.

**Pirate/High Martian Galley at Night:** On a die roll of 1-3, the rolled for ship suddenly appears alongside with initiative. Do normal combat. On a 4-6, it appears ahead and closing. The Ithuriel has initiative.

**Hying Skrill at Night:** Use the same procedure as for Flying Skrill above, **except** that the creature only gets one lunge at the ship.

In any case, players and the referee should grasp a couple of essentials in ship vs ship encounters. First, the Ithuriel now can go to VH altitude so as to fire down on some ships. This avoids the nasty problem of being a victim to Martian Fire or Drogue Torpedoes. Second, Ithuriel can now ram and cause a fair amount of damage in doing so. Both of these points Devon Constantine would be aware of. Third, the characters are likely to own and operate weapons of mass destruction and firepower (their repeating sidearms). Use of these guns as Small Arms fire in aerial combat just might clear many an enemy's deck in short order.

Kind referees might tell the players about that, devious ones might just let the players figure it out on their own. In either case, the natural follow-up is to include the characters on any way party for boarding other ships. See the applicable rules in the **Space: 1889** rulebook.

**NOTE:** If any Oenotrian ship is actually captured and the crew of the Ithuriel take her as a prize, amongst the papers of the captain will be a note advising the probable course of the Ithuriel, an incomplete list of passengers, and a cryptic line in whatever Martian language you deem it should be: "Reward requires proof, as stones the desert. "G".

Yes, this is Baron von Gruber. It could also be another person that works occasionally for the Baron but more often to avenge himself on Devon Constantine. If the Captain is in on reading the note, or is asked who "G" possibly could be, have him look grim and then say: *"Godoy, possibly. A swine of a pirate I helped put out of business about a year ago. He has vowed revenge, but for all his fire we of the Ithuriel haven't had any trouble with him, nor even any real news."* Devon might go on to add that Godoy's methods were to hack and slash, kill all the survivors except those profitably sold as slaves (human slaves are rare but well-paid for), and destroy the victim ship completely by explosion and fire.

Jimra should suddenly pop in here to add, "Godoy! Jimra worked along him before. He steal liftwood as two. Not good man." Characters attempting to follow up this new information will find out that Jimra did go on one or two poaching raids with a Godoy about 12-14 months ago (he doesn't remember exactly) which were moderately successful. Jimra took his cut, Godoy the same, and that was that. Neither have been in contact with one another since then.



## FIRE IN THE NIGHT

THE FIRST NIGHT out at a little before 11:00 p.m., if the bomb was **not** discovered and indeed got stowed away, there is a loud but somewhat muffled explosion that rocks the Ithuriel. (If the bomb was exposed earlier skip this section. Read this:

*Suddenly, the night is rent the sound of an explosion, then smoke and flame. Voices cry out in the darkness, some with pain, some with fear, others with orders and commands. Dashing out in whatever you can grab to be properly decent, you see the signs of fire and damage in the forward section of the ship. The crew dashes about, more disciplined now, as they tackle the greatest fear of cloudships: Fire. You can feel the deck under your feet trembling as your other senses tell you the trimsmen is rapidly losing altitude to get down as close to the ground as is safely possible at night. More lights glow on board, as you were running dark to preserve the secrecy of your passing. Finally, as you move down the corridor, sliding along against the bulkheads to keep from being thrown to the deck by the rapid descent, tracing the drift of the smoke and cries of the crew, you reach an area of the ship damaged by something, or someone. A petty officer turns, sees you and says, "Sorry, you'll have to stay back. There's a bloody big hole in the side and the cap'n's taken a look." Dillsworth appears at your side and says, "What happened?"*

*Captain Constantine's head appears up through a jagged hole in the deck and says, "Appears to have been a fair sized explosion in the forward cargo hold. Started a small fire, but we've stopped that." Looking at the petty officer, Costantine says, "Have the carpenter sound the hull. Tell the bridge all Stop, hold us in place."*

After about two hours of work and testing, the ship gets underway again. The permanent damage done (aside from losing some cargo and punching holes in the decks and side of Devon's beloved ship is as follows:

The forward Rogue Gun mount is disabled and will take a day to repair.

The ship may only travel at a top speed of 2 hexes should combat occur. Repairs have been started, but it will take three or four days to patch the hull and realign the turncrank.

Three crew members were killed.

The report from the ship's carpenter is that a small explosion occurred in the #2 cargo area. There were no known explosives or ordinance being carried in there. Fortunately, the blast vented itself through the side of the ship. Had the explosive been in the next forward cargo bay, it could have touched off the magazine to the forward gun. Had it been in the larger aft bay, the turncrank itself would have been seriously damaged by being thrown off its supports. The carpenter will believe that the quantity of explosive was not great, considering the actual hull damage sustained. Certainly though, it wasn't gunpowder. The tell-tale smell of rotten eggs was lacking.

The loss of speed will not affect the Ithuriel's normal cruising speed. However, her top speed has been lowered by one third, meaning that ship-to-ship combat is now more dangerous. The three dead crew members are marked on the Ship Combat Form as two off Maneuver, one off the Deck. Players should note that interceptions are more likely now as Ithuriel can't run away quite so sprightly.

It will also take longer to make the final nighttime dash to drop off the characters. Also, the temporary loss of a gun won't help if unfavorable encounters occur, though the characters may elect to heave to and make all necessary repairs before going on. If they do intend to do this, remember that the party will have to take an extra roll on the appropriate leg's Encounter Table for each day they stop.

Dillsworth, aside from grumbling, will not seriously object to this delay for repairs, as losing time is not so important as failure. Getting to the grove in one piece is more appealing than getting there in pieces! He won't start out any discussion on the subject that way, though.

By now, the characters should be feeling that this mission has been compromised. Encourage this line of thought by mentioning that the crew has gone over to muttering among themselves but cease this when any one of the characters pass by. The mood is now one of silent suspicion towards the members of this star-crossed expedition. (Don't worry, there is no chance of a mutiny. However, you can just let the players swing in the wind on it).

Dillsworth, on the other hand, will blithely insist that things must go forward so everyone must carry on, the Empire is depending on this, etc. If, up to this point, you've somehow not had Dillsworth give out background information on Baron von Gruber, he should start muttering about "The Baron. Always the Baron". Once someone asks about him, give out the necessary background information, both from this module and from the **Space: 1889** rules book. Bring the churlish swine to life for your players.

The Captain, if sounded out on the subject, will indicate that he's

willing to continue (after all, he gets a check no matter what). If pressed, his confidence will waver slightly and he will opt that if the party wants to go back and reform, he will agree. The mission has no real importance to Devon beyond being paid, but his life is his ship and crew; he will protect them wherever possible. Getting killed for Dillsworth is not part of any deal Devon would care to be a part of.

Jimra (if you can get an opinion out of him with Dillsworth around) would opt to quit right now, though it will cost him money. He hasn't survived these sorts of escapades over all the years by doing things half-cocked. Jimra's motto has always been, "If things are not working to your advantage, stop until they are. Your life isn't worth it." Should Dillsworth be around, Jimra won't be as blunt, but he will prefer to go back to Syrtis Major and start over again.

Felicity might pop off here with something along the lines of: "Can you imagine? Unthinkable! We travel all the way from Brighton for the honor of the Crown, and **natives** want this mission to stop! Creigh...er, Agent Dillsworth had better see to his people straight away!" She doesn't see any danger to worry about, as Felicity is one of those English types who believes in the God graced superiority of the British race and its upper classes. Any other approach is foreign, literally. Wogs start at Calais, as it were, this is Mars and so tradition and the Englishman's burden applies with all its full force, at least in her mind.

Doctor Ashton secretly thinks this is all "keen". This is one of the most exciting things that he has ever done, though with typical phlegmatic British understatement, will

say that "...stiff upper and all that rot. Must carry on. Personally requested by the Home Secretary, you know." He's not afraid of what may happen on this trip simply because he's conquered the botany world, so to speak. Dr. Ashton has reaped all the comfortable benefits his skills could attain him and his plans were to retire with what fame and renown he had built up. When this plan was put to him, he surprised the backers by immediately accepting.

This expedition, if successful, opens a new area of needed expertise back on Earth. Someone will have to become "**the**" expert on nurturing liftwood. Certainly, there will be

need for a noted botanical authority to head up H M government's liftwood plantations and research stations. Dr. Ashton has the skills, the necessary social level and a lifetime of awards, positions and renown. All he needs are the saplings. A Knighthood would be just the legacy to be remembered by.

As for the crew? Well, they'd just as soon sing church psalms when they worked as go on with this jinxed group of snobby rich folks. Of course, you knew this and thus don't have to ask them. But they might let the party know, in various little ways.



## The Hatching of Plots?

ASTUTE PLAYERS might pause here (or there, depending where the bomb entered things) and consider the evidence. The sabotage attempt wasn't a very successful try. At no time was the ship in mortal danger as the explosive material was too small to do any truly critical damage. If the bomb was discovered on deck, it certainly didn't **seem** like a professional plant. Either way, this sabotage attempt should seem slipshod and ad hoc. (If the players aren't seeing it this way, have Dillsworth point that out). Is all this a delay attempt, a warning to desist? Is the Baron behind this directly, or are some bungling henchmen the real culprits? Or even, another party all together? Can it be that the Baron is only a red herring and perhaps the middlemen who deal between the High Martians and the consumers of liftwood are trying to protect their markets? The referee should encourage some speculation (or at least offer the idea) on who might really be to blame for the troubles encountered so far.

Actually, the Baron only learned in haste about what was going on. He doesn't really have the major details and so had to jury-rig something together. This goes against his grain, as the Baron is noted for his ruthlessness and efficiency. Given more time, the Ithuriel would probably not have been able to leave Syrtis Major at all. At least, not with the good Doctor.

You can be sure that he's not resting on his, er, laurels at this point either. The fact that Oenotrian ships are out is certainly not a coincidence. After all, they have a grudge against the master of the Ithuriel, so why not have them act as a back-up should the party head off in that direction?

He'd rather not have used bombs (uncivilized, you know), but he would, with a heavy sigh, permit the more unsavory individuals with whom he has some contact to use

such means. Gentlemen and espionage, they just don't seem compatible. However, duty for His Majesty being what it is, one can only do his best and reap the rewards accordingly.

At any rate, the Baron has been able to formulate a three part concept that he hopes to turn into a true plan to deal with this particular expedition. First was the planted bomb to (hopefully) scare off or even cripple the mission by injuring key personnel or damaging the ship itself. Second was alerting the Oenotrians to be on the lookout for the Ithuriel should she pass their way (the Baron doesn't know what way she is going) as well as sending information through the High Martian intelligence agents (yes, they do have a few. The Baron keeps up on them as well) that some sort of British raid was planned somewhere. Third (which is still in preparation and is the most conceptual) is if, against all odds the British should succeed and return with plants, then some sort of "accident" or incident should need to befall them, either that they should find their way into **German** hands or, barring that, be reluctantly destroyed. After all, Baron Gruber's job in part is to "secure access to liftwood for the Imperial German Navy's building plans". Indeed, capture of these saplings is by far preferred to destruction.

The Baron is astute enough to know that liftwood trees grow in many places on Mars but that unless they grow in very particular locations, they do not produce lift, only firewood. This British expedition must have more up its sleeve than merely acquiring just saplings. Not having any background in botany or biology, the Baron is not sure whether the idea is to just get saplings for tests, transplanting, generic study purposes or what. But if the British have such definite plans that they would commit to action, why

the Baron von Gruber can certainly commit to a course of action that denies them their goal while perhaps furthering his own.

And the Baron's goal? Why, to gather into the fold of the Fatherland either the territory that currently grows this most desirable tree, or trees that will produce this quality called "lift" growing on German held land. That alone will satisfy his sense of duty.

Obviously, German plantations of liftwood trees are preferable to British ones. Why not have the British do the work, pay the money, take the risks and be the ones to offend deeply the native Martian nations? Let von Gruber be the final conduit that delivers the precious trees to Germany. In fact, the correct **German** approach here could open many previously closed doors to the ambassadors of the Kaiser. Venus is a backwater compared to Mars. But look how far dedicated Germans have advanced through their efforts there! The Baron's inability to secure German access to territory containing liftwood to date can be negated by a success here, and a major German success is not out of the realm of possibility here (at least in the mind of the Baron).

Those saplings and the good Doctor must go home to Earth to analyze their booty, ya? Once the characters leave Syrtis Major, they escape from Baron von Gruber's ability to directly control events. He must rely on underlings and agents to pursue his plans. But once the characters depart by ship, they have 360 degrees to head out on and the Baron, for all his talents, cannot watch **every** degree with equal care.

One point of interest though. If the saplings are going back to Earth, they must leave via ether fliers. A British ether flier too, as no dull Englishman worth his fish n'chips would consign them and the Doctor to a **foreign** carrier. And British



ether fliers only depart from Mars at **Syrtis Major**. So the expedition must come back from whence it started. Should it return with a success, it would not be difficult at that time to determine **which** ship. It would be well guarded here on Mars. Once in space, well, ships do disappear. Permanently. A secret inquiry is sent to the Imperial Navy on an available ship for interception duties.

In any player discussion of the Baron, keep in mind that he has never dealt with von Gruber before. He has only heard of the Baron's exploits and attempts to frustrate the British from his superiors. The picture these superiors paint is one of craftiness, bold exploitation and the uncanny ability of the Baron to pick and choose the proper time/place to strike. Not that he has been always successful. But he's far too good to ever allow him any chances to succeed.

This should cause you to play Dillsworth as anxiously cautious in that he wants a success badly, is taking every precaution he can, is going over and over the details of the trip to see that nothing has been left out and that everyone (at least the important participants in Dillsworth's mind) are prepared for what lies ahead.

And yet, Dillsworth still can't easily loosen his fear of losing control of the party (and hence the situation) if he opens up and allows the characters to be more involved in planning, for example. But if you can play him as **gradually** lightening up, players may distrust him exactly when they need to trust him the most.

### The French Connection

Ah, but the good Baron von Gruber is not the only person with an interest in liftwood besides the High Martians. As was mentioned earlier, the middlemen who deal between the High Martians and the rest of Mars

also have a stake here. While Canal Martian entrepreneurs might be involved, they aren't due to the fact that they don't believe that science in any form can make those precious trees grow anywhere else except in their ancient homelands.

But, the very few Earthmen who have taken up this dubious profession are not so blinded. Science got them to Mars across the ether. Science built those canals. Science is curing age-old diseases. Any intelligent person realizes that science, once applied, will solve the liftwood problem.

Unfortunately, Jacques Godoy (the Godoy mentioned before) is only partially correct. He can see all of the above points. His answer is to crush the forces of progress and rigidly enforce the status quo. There will be no science before its time. Godoy has time and again bribed, bought off, sabotaged, disrupted and out-and-out killed to keep the flow of liftwood moving through a very few hands. Mostly his, if he had his own way.

Godoy "acquired" his middleman status by muscling in on a native Martian business and absorbing it into his small empire. Yes, Devon put him out of the pirate business about a year ago. Unfortunately, that was not Godoy's entire business. He has not rested lightly the past year. He has a "major interest" (read total control) in a liftwood trading company. The current native Martian "owners" are more fronting for him. Godoy has two merchant ships (well armed) that haul liftwood from the collection centers to other customers, as the High Martian lords very rarely allow outsiders to the groves themselves. The wood is logged and taken to collection centers from where the selected middlemen ship out to the final purchasers. Godoy recently acquired control of a special mill that shapes liftwood into the proper forms for cloudship use.

Obviously, his overall plan is to control an entire industry by purchasing, transporting, crafting and selling liftwood. To Godoy, owning a shipyard is not out of the realm of possibility. From mere, owning groves to supply the chain becomes a logical step. After all, without that natural resource, the equation of his empire is meaningless.

So, the \$64,000 question is: Does Godoy have any knowledge of this mission? Well, yes and no. Bearers are a poor lot. They can always use money and Godoy can always use information about possible rival liftwood businessmen. One of the party's bearers has let slip that Jimra (who once worked for Godoy a time or two) is going off on a trip. Since Jimra rarely travels except on liftwood business, Godoy has guessed that a liftwood poaching expedition is afoot.

A bit of surveillance has also netted the fact that Jimra departed aboard the Ithuriel, homeported here at Syrtis Major. Figuring that pigeons come home to roost, a welcome home party is to be arranged. As Godoy has some connections with the customs officials here, he plans to have agents board the ship upon its return and seize the cut liftwood timber (which is what smugglers smuggle, after all) as contraband.

Then, once impounded, he will pay off the senior customs officials so as to allow him to acquire the timber at a pittance of the normal cost. Wagging tongues being what they are in rumor loving Syrtis Major, a cover story has been spread about the local government increasing its customs searches. This ruse should keep suspicions from arising over the seizure of this particular load of valuable liftwood.

## THE DROP OFF

ONCE THE DANGERS of this cloudship journey are behind them, the party and the Ithuriel have arrived at the change over point of this adventure, which is the physical march to the liftwood grove they seek. No longer do they have the option to run or fight, or even choose their own ground on which to fight.

The encounters that may occur in this section should be choreographed by the referee to be mostly **surprises** wherever possible. Ambushes would be even better, but no party should be so lackadaisical that it would be ambushed repeatedly. Of course, you must take into account the applicable attributes and skills of each party so that they do have consistent opportunities to detect and/or recover from whatever happens. The fun of roleplaying as a referee is not to **murder** your players; it is to challenge their minds and ingenuity. If you get a good group, they challenge you, the referee, also.

Note: The characters had a choice of landing at Position A or B back at the meeting at the Barnes House. If this party has chosen A, go through the following steps as laid out here. The steps for B are the same, except there is one additional chance for the characters to get into trouble.

### **Either:**

**Position A:** Once the Run In encounters have been determined and the suspense built up, the characters are now going to find their chosen landing site and start walking. Or are they?

The Ithuriel is making this dash

at night to avoid prying and inquisitive eyes, both the High Martians and anyone else who might wonder at a lone ship in the middle of nowhere. But since navigation at night is still a By-Guess-and-by-God "skill" between a navigator, his sextant and the wind, this dead reckoning approach may **not** put the ship right where she should be! Use the following chart to determine the accuracy of the drop off.

### **Location Chart (2D6)**

2-3	Can't find the location.
4-6	One Day's Journey Closer
7-10	On Target
11	One Day's Journey Short
12	Two Day's Journey Short

NOTE: Because the party is planning to travel at night, a day's journey is reckoned at 5 miles, not the normal 10.

### **Can't Find the Location:**

Devon and the navigator have no confidence here in the dark as to where they are. The characters now have a set of choices as to what to do.

1) Disembark and proceed, fixing their location when day arrives.

2) Hold the ship at this point until light then get a fix and decide to off-load or try again the next night with another run in.

3) Retreat immediately while it's still dark and try again the next night.

If 1 is chosen, have them roll **again** on the Location Chart, adding 3 to the amount thrown (results of

12+ are read as 12).

If 2 is chosen, first roll again on the Location Chart, adding 2 to the amount thrown (results of 12+ read as above). The group now decides to leave or try again the next evening. Second, whether or not the party disembarks now, the Ithuriel will have to make another roll on The Run In At Night table, using this Quick Resolution Method as follows: A 2-4 means two crew members are lost to creatures (the referee chooses which two), a 10 means that the ship destroys the pirate, but suffers the loss of 25% of all remaining ship status boxes (Hull, Maneuver, Crew, Weapons, etc.) at the referee's discretion (a vicious fight), and an 11-12 means the capture of the High Martian galley and the killing of all its crew. If the party stayed on board, they can receive part of the prize money. In any case, the characters will suffer no wounds or be killed (unless you want to include the chance of either occurring). If they landed and left the ship left, too bad.

If the players chose option 3, Dillsworth will fume and infer that they are cowards and that perhaps they should have stayed behind. Certainly, he will note something about this in his report. Roll on The Run In At Night table as per the Quick Resolution Method, except that a 10-12 is treated as the vicious fight. Apply the damage accordingly. Once this is taken care of, have the players roll again on the Location Chart **as written** with no modifiers. A "Can't Find" result is now a One Day's Journey Further Along.

Or:

**Position B:** Handle as A above, except that before you roll on the Location Chart, roll 1D6 first. A 1-4 nothing occurs, the ship sets down in amongst the hills and plateaus as planned. On a 5-6, an unexpected rugged ridge line suddenly appears directly ahead of the ship as she begins her cautious let down. Roll again; a 1-4 they avoid the ridge (play up the fear angle here, though), a 5 and the ship grazes it, taking 4 Hull boxes of damage, and a 6 causes a major strike, destroying 7 Hull boxes, 3 Maneuver boxes and 1 Deck box of damage.

Proceed as with A above as written. (If the major strike cripples the ship and causes it to "crash" and be unable to fly due to the amount of previous damage it has taken, the crew will stay with the ship to repair her while the party goes off. Add back the damage taken in the last strike, board the survivors when the Ithuriel returns and just go home. This group deserves a break if things went that bad this soon!)

For players who might want to give it a try, Devon is not going to allow members of his crew to go along on this jaunt. Their job is with the ship and not to go tramping across the countryside. Bribes won't help, as any crew member will have to desert to go along and then re-board the same ship they deserted from to fly home. No one on this ship is that stupid.

If female members of the party wish to try using, well, Eloquence (I suppose) on Devon to convince him

to ask for volunteers, treat this as a Difficult Task, Target 12 to make. If successful, Devon will graciously allow the party to ask for volunteers from among the crew. At most, two will be interested, for an immediate bounty of £25 sterling, paid **now**. Treat these two as Sailors off the Human Stock NPC table.

Once the party has decided to disembark (and the ship is flyable), read the following:

*The cold and crisp night air cools your brow as you prepare your gear for the march. Muffled thumps and creaks haunt the air as the crew closes up the ship in order to be away. The Captain and Dillsworth are off to the side going over the final instructions for the rendezvous, Jimra is helping the bearers get loaded up, and the few crew who have helped you unload start going back up the gang plank, some stopping to quietly wish you luck. The Captain finishes his talk and shoos the last of the crew up the ramp. He turns to face you at the top of the plank and says, "Best of luck, folks. Mind the daylight past sun up, 'tis said that High Martians can see the shadows of ghosts if they look hard enough. Take care." He waves, and then turning, disappears into the bulk of the ship.*

*With a faint scrape of wood on wood, the unseen trimman adjusts the liftwood panels on the bottom of the ship and she gently leaps skyward, vanishing quickly into the dark night, unnoticeable except for the beating of her propellers as they begin to bite the thin air. Very soon,*

*that sound evaporates and a stillness reigns.*

*Turning eastward, you see the faint but clear outline of part of the Astusapes Highlands framed by the lightening sky. Somewhere, the distant cough/growl of a steppe tiger is heard. Then, the screech of a roogie (or two? three?) wavers through the air. Dillsworth, in an almost apologetic tone says, "Well, we've got about two hours of walking until we must stop for shelter. Let's move along." The party, dressed in khaki and travel gear, begins its march. The most dangerous part of this trip now lies ahead.*

Have Dillsworth and the party decide on the marching order before setting out. Dillsworth will want to lead with Jimra next to him, but he will consent to having point guards out ahead. Felicity and the Doctor will want to be ahead of the bearers (she will insist) but close to them if the need for them should arise. Everyone else can fit in where they may. Your more experienced players may gravitate toward the center of the march order!



## ENCOUNTERS ON THE MARCH

REMEMBER, Position A is 15 miles from the target, if they landed on target. Ten miles are relatively flat steppe, the rest of the distance is hilly to mountainous. Traveling at night, the best the party can hope for is to cover 5 miles a day. Position B is 25 miles from the target which means 5 days worth of traveling. Marching is done by using the following section from the **Space: 1889** rules book modified for this module.

### Foot Travel

Characters may walk either 5 or 10 miles at night (taking care due to the lack of illumination) at their option. If they choose 10, the following modifiers apply:

Fatigue: Roll Endurance attribute dice for an Easy Task to avoid fatigue from exertion and stress when marching by foot. Difficulty level is modified as follows:

Marched Additional 5 miles: +1 Level

Encumbered: +1 Level for every 20% of body weight carried.

Humans on Mars: +1 Level

Mountains/Highlands: +1 Level

Should the characters (for whatever reason) opt to move by day, revert to the Foot Travel chart in the **Space: 1889** rules book.

Scaling the **Astusapes**: (Modified from the section Land Travel in the **Space: 1889** rules book).

The Highlands at this point are not true mountains, though they are more than merely hills. Thus, the referee must roll (1D6)-2 for each day spent in the Highlands to determine the number of rock faces that the party must attempt to climb. Results of 0 or less are read as 0. If the players wish, they can spend an additional day scouting out the area for easier terrain to scramble over. For scouting at night, roll 1D6, with a 1-4 result meaning it really is easier, a 5-6 result means that the rock face roll **must** be made again and the party has to live with it (they got part

way up and found their error). If they scout by day, increase the chances of being spotted on the appropriate table.

The party can climb rock faces equal to the number of the highest Mountaineering skill in the party, otherwise they are limited to 1 face per **day**.

Each day there is a chance of an accident occurring during the climb. Roll against the character's Agility attribute or Mountaineering skill dice, whichever is higher, for a Moderate Task to avoid accidents. Use the following table to determine the level of injury.

### Climbing Accidents

- 1-2 Climb delayed. Subtract 1 from faces climbed this day.
- 3 Climb delayed. Subtract 2 from faces climbed this day.
- 4 Climb delayed. No faces climbed this day.
- 5 Injury. Treat as level 1 Fatigue. Lasts for 3 days. No faces climbed this day.
- 6 Injury. Roll 1D6. 1-4 Sprained ankle. No faces climbed. Can climb again tomorrow.

5 Broken arm, (determine which). No faces climbed. Climber can walk, but must be carried over faces. Arm heals in one month. Reduce number of faces that can be climbed per day by 1/2 round up. Add 1 to difficulty to avoid accidents.

6 Broken leg. Climber cannot walk or climb. Must be carried over all faces. Reduce the number of faces that can be climbed per day in 1/2, round up. Add one to difficulty to avoid accidents. Leg mends in one month, but the character may hobble about on a crutch after four days. They will still need to be carried over faces, but they will have some limited mobility at 1/3 normal movement.

### Martian Wilderness Encounters

#### Roll 2D6

Die Roll	Steppe	Mountain
2	High Martian Scouts	High Martian Galley
3-4	High Martian Galley	High Martian Scouts
5	Nomad Hunters	Eelowaan
6-7	Roogie Pack	Great Kommota
8	Steppe Tiger	No Encounter
9-12	No Encounter	No Encounter

**Important Note:** These are the daylight chances of an encounter. For encounters at night, add 2 to the die roll. Roll once per **march**, so if in one day the party moves only by day or night, roll once. If they move by day **and** by night during the same day, roll twice. However, if the party is moving north from Position B

through the hills, add one to the die roll, as the chances of being seen by anyone or anything are less in this type of terrain. The fact that the party will have to make successful climbing rolls balances out the lesser chances of encounters.

For using gunfire, minus 2 from the die roll for the next day's roll.

Take into account the limited visibility that the darkness brings in seeing any target at range and determining gunfire or missile weapons damage accordingly.

Encounters with Martians at night should have a good chance of not coming off, as the darkness helps the concealed characters avoid contact. Roll 1D6 and on a 1-3 (unless someone does something stupid or wants to initiate contact), the encounter is missed. When the party is laid up during the daytime, roll a Moderate Task against **Fieldcraft** or **Wilderness Travel**, which is greater, to ensure concealment.

This is where Felicity becomes a pain. She should make herself useful by breaking into song at inopportune times, hauling out a mirror to help rearrange her hair (the resulting reflections should approximate a heliograph trying to signal Earth) as well as wanting to keep up her pistol practice. At least twice though, she will badger Dillsworth into stopping the party and having the bearers set up a tent so that she might change her clothes. "The heat is simply driving me dotty! Must change into something else before I simply ruin these clothes."

NOTE: Should the party be traveling by day, subtract 2 from the die roll, as they're asking for trouble, so we'll give it to them.

**High Martian Scouts:** A group of 8 out on a flight. They will attack the characters and attempt to capture or kill them. If any get away subtract 3 from the next day's die roll for the encounter and only a 1-2 conceals the party at night. If another group is encountered as above and at least one gets away again, subtract 6 from the next day's roll and only a 1 conceals the party.

**High Martian Galley:** On a roll of 1-4 it is a small galley, on a 5-6 it is a large one. If the party is seen, the ship will attempt to kill or capture them by flying off 2D6 High Martian scouts. If the scouts die or re-board the ship, the ship will fire 1D6 rounds from its largest gun and depart. Range is Long (Target Level is 12), the gunner has a Gunnery skill of 3. Randomly determine who the "main" target is, plot the location of all other characters as to the "main" target, fire at that person, determine shorts and longs accordingly and determine wounds (if any) that result. See Page 99 of the **Space: 1889** rules for more details. Do subtractions on subsequent encounter rolls as per High Martian Scouts above.

**Nomad Hunters:** A party of six nomad braves and two warriors. These people will stand up suddenly from behind some rocks about 30 yards away with weapons ready. Don't immediately roll the die, but they may offer assistance (1), ask for gifts (2), leave the party alone (3), shadow them awhile to see what's up (4-5), or attack (6) by dropping back down and going to it, (you can assume that they were at rest and the party trod up on them unawares). If the characters think to act first by trying the friendly approach and/or offer gifts **before** you roll, subtract 1 from the roll. These nomads will gladly accept weapons, steel tools and gunpowder. They would be satisfied with strong drink. They will view the offer of food as an insult and will leave at once, to hound the party from a distance (random arrow shots, etc.), until one of them is killed.

Should a friendship (or at least passive neutrality) occur the nomads will say that they are from a nearby village and they are out hunting. Note that this is the village questioned on the area map.

**Roogie Pack:** Roll (2D6)+2 to generate the number of beasts in this pack. On a die roll of 1-4, they're not hungry and leave. On a 5-6, the scout gives out a screeching bark to summon the rest of them and they will attack. Roogie raids should be sneaky; with lots of attacks from the rear, skulkers on the fringes, loud wavering animal cries and gnashing, biting teeth.

**Steppe Tiger:** It will attempt to surprise the characters and go after the trailing or point person. Even chances for either.

**Eelowaan:** Even chances on whom it will assault in the group. The characters should have a chance to hear this creature as it twists and flaps through the air with its ribbon-like body movements.

**Great Kommota:** It will fly over and let go one large rock, which will strike someone (choose randomly) on a die roll of 1. Roll against the character's agility attribute to avoid the rock.

NOTE: It is suggested that you don't overdo the number of encounters during the march. This route has been chosen especially because of its lack of population and emptiness. Referees are always free to add or subtract to the storyline as printed; you are just cautioned that this is enough of a marathon as it stands. If you decide to add situations to test your players, just remove others to keep things in balance.

Also, don't forget that the characters must not directly address questions, requests or orders to Jimra or the bearers. Any deviations will bring down Dillsworth's wrath and a bad write-up in his report, which can affect renown.

## THE WRECK

NO MATTER WHICH route the characters travel, they will have to pass through the hills as shown. As they do, the following encounter occurs. This is the last one before they begin to climb the final slope to the liftwood grove. Read the following:

*The "path" Jimra has you following is along the boulder strewn side of flinty hillside. Down to your right (quite abruptly down, you note), cutting between this hill and the one off to the east, is a jagged and jumbled ravine, filled with rocks, outcroppings and ledges of stone. Suddenly, Jimra and Dillsworth stop and peer intently down into the ravine. You turn to look as well. Is that wreckage, rocks or just the shadows, twisted into some grotesque joke?*

Actually, it's wreckage. At the bottom is the mangled remains of a small cloudship. It is lying on its starboard side, facing south,, with its main deck facing up at the players. This is all the players can see at night. (If they are moving by day, they can see everything in the description below.

To descend into the ravine will require a Moderate Difficulty roll Target 8 against Strength and Agility added together and divided by two, dropping fractions. It will require a rope to make this trip safely. If the characters do not use one, subtract 3 from the die roll for each player to descending. A round trip will take 40 minutes for one person. Add 10 minutes for each person making the trip, as they will slow one another down slightly to help each other

safely make this climb.

Dillsworth will not seriously object to exploring this mystery ship. No one else should be anywhere near here. The fact that this ship is where it is may have alerted the High Martians as to intruders and thus put the party in jeopardy. Or it could be a missing High Martian ship that a searching flight will be out looking for. Once an answer as to what it might be is determined, then Dillsworth will want to take action, most likely to leave and put a lot of distance between the party and this site.

Surprisingly, Doctor Ashton will want to go take a look if party members decide to explore. He's bored and it looks like sporting fun. Felicity will be annoyed that he even thinks about doing such a thing, but aside from verbiage, she won't stop him.

Once they get down close to the ship (but not next to it) or it's daylight when they see it, read the following:

*The ship looks as though it took a severe shelling from something; there are blast and fire marks all over it. It obviously came down from the north, as a trail of debris appears to go back up the ravine in that direction. It apparently hit the rocks and ledges trying to land on the only level (?) ground in this area. Naturally, she was chewed to bits.*

*Where it has landed it is somewhat under an overhanging cliff side, which gives it a bit of overhead protection. The ship is about 60 feet long and looks to be about 150 tons or so.*

At this point really lay on the prose on how badly this ship looks. Being a kite, you can go into detail about an askew mast, tattered sails, broken railing and suspicious stains here and there on the decks. With a soft wind hissing in the background, (are those the sounds of groans and moans wafting up from the ravine)? Is she even worth repairing or salvaging? The players can't tell until they get up close.

When the players press up close to the ship, they will see a large hold smashed or blasted in the starboard side which was not visible from up above. When they finally get down on the flat (ha!) floor of this ravine, the family of roogies that have turned this ship into a condominium will storm out and attack the characters. They will have surprise in doing so. The number of roogies present should be scaled up or down to match up with the number of players on this little side trip.

Once combat is joined, some of the critters will skulk and slink around the flanks of the characters in order to try to get behind them. But, once half the beasts are killed or the number of roogies is reduced to less than that of the players under attack, the rest will turn and run up the ravine, breaking off combat. None will bother the Doctor, but if the characters who had his room taken by Felicity and her father is along, roll some meaningless dice during the combat and say: *The Doctor fires his pistol once, and then again! The two roogies leaping for blank drop in their tracks, one was nearly going to*



*leap. As the Doctor whirls towards another target, he flashes a quick grin and says, "Ripping good show, eh?"* (This is called "adding color").

The characters may now look over the remains of the ship at their leisure. They will discover that the name of the ship is carved on the bow: **Draxes**. The ship type is a modified Bloodrunner. The armament locations have been smashed up badly, and all guns have been removed. There are no bodies or remains of any crew around. Sand and dirt have been blown into the hull from the persistent wind coming down the ravine, but a roll against INT will show that this ship has only been here a week, maybe.

Anyone with cloudship attributes or someone who has travelled widely on Mars can see that this was **not** a High Martian ship from the lay of the ladders, carved decorations, type of rope work used in the rigging, etc. This is a standard Martian ship. But why is it here? As you remember from the Rumor section at the landing grounds of Syrtis Major, Draxes is carrying a potent bhutan spice shipment. Truth to tell, this spice is far too, er, potent to be legal. So, she was trying to stay off the normal flight paths to avoid pirates, customs and others of that ilk. But she strayed too close to the Astusapes and became fair game.

So, the Draxes was brought down by High Martians. Characters rolling against INT will be able to determine from the type of shell hits, the stripped carcass look and the proximity to a known High Martian

kraag that this is so. Referees might throw in a few tufts of High Martian hair caught in the splintered wood of the deck cabin as added clues.

A treasure hunt through the remains will also show that everything useful has been stripped out of the hull. No cargo remains anywhere in sight. Ants couldn't have done a better job. However, in the stern of the ship, under a pile of debris, players will find one small chest with a small lock. Once the lock is sprung, it will close and open normally, the lock ceasing to work.

Opening the chest, they will find it packed with some sort of spice. This is bhutan spice, of a **very** strong (ie. narcotic) type. Its value is problematical, but any character having spent some time on Mars will know that a chest of normal spice this size is easily worth £100 sterling. The smell will tell them that it's much stronger than what they've ever encountered before.

Should any human try a taste test, try to describe to them an effect similar to biting down on **two** fully mature Jalapeno peppers (with a Tabasco chaser) at once. Roll ID6 to see if the taste tester involuntarily swallows. A 1-3 they do, 4-6 they don't. If they swallow, they will immediately become drugged and collapse. Recovery will take 24 hours. Until then, they are unconscious.

The Martians will all refuse to try the spice, as they claim it's bad luck to loot ships that have died a violent death. Actually, they're smart enough to **not** try anything that isn't

clearly labeled.

The characters may decide to spend the next day (or night) taking cover in the wreckage. The roogies won't come back and no High Martians will bother them. However, with the persistent wind, you might want to play up on the characters sense of paranoia and keep them on edge and worried. The thin high screeching bark of a roogie in the distance might also remind them of who was camping here first.

Should anyone with cloudship skills or experience take a look at the wreck to determine if the ship is salvageable, have them roll against their INT attribute. If they are successful, inform them that the ship could be salvaged with a lot of work, if spare parts are brought in. If they miss their roll, or someone with no ship skills makes the inquiry, inform them that they can't tell without taking a far more detailed survey than they have time for now.

Despite being about twice the tonnage of a normal Bloodrunner, Draxes is **not** twice as big. The extra weight is generated by more weapons and their crew, along with an enlargement of the rear cargo area. Bloodrunners are economical to operate anyway, but Draxes has tended to deal in cargoes that require bulk purchases in lot sizes that totally filled her up. Hence the changes made to accommodate odd lot sizes.

## THE GROVE

ONCE ALL the encounters are over and the last slope has been climbed, the characters will have reached their sought after goal, an isolated liftwood grove of the High Martians. Read this:

*That last climb was the slowest, but now you're on the very mount that holds your target. The party is working its way through a slowly increasing amount of brush and undergrowth, which is cropping up amongst the rocks. Suddenly, a halt is called. As you make your way up towards the head of the column, you see others peering ahead through the darkness and murmuring to one another.*

*Ahead through the rocks, there are...trees! A grove of trees! Jimra and Dillsworth exchange broad smiles of triumph. At last, you're on site. The moons of Mars circle majestically through the shimmering start above, causing the shadows of the lower surrounding hills to tumble and shift in and ever-changing fantasy of light and dark. The woods ahead seem vaguely alive, as the moonlight (lights?) weaves and winds through the branches, supplying a pattern of shadows that add to the mystery of this place. Close behind this grove, a dark mass blocks part of the night sky. The summit of this mount, if you remember correctly. This grove is on a shelf that juts off to the south.*

Dillsworth will call for the party to move forward into the woods, as dawn is due in a short while and everyone must get undercover and prepared to remain still for the day. He and Jimra will move the group well into the grove to avoid seeing eyes. The party should note that while the fringes of the area have a multitude of plants (weeds) growing around, there is very little within the "boundaries" of the grove proper. Someone seemingly does maintain this place. There will be no encoun-

ters this day, but don't let the party know this.

Once they get settled in and the sky starts to lighten up, presaging dawn, let them know that they faintly hear the sound of running water in the far distance, like that of a small stream or stony creek. Whenever anyone goes to investigate this sound, they will indeed find a creek running through the grove and off towards the eastern lip of this shelf, the creek will disappear into the rocks down the eastern slope.

To the north they will find a small dam that creates a pool behind it, and a path headed northward, back toward the mass of rock that is located there. Unless someone makes a successful roll on Tracking, no one will know how used this trail appears. If the roll is made, this area has been used fairly recently, say within 3 or 4 days. Anyone wanting to explore along the path will be stopped by Dillsworth. Jimra knows that the path goes up to a stone hut where the trimming tools and saws are kept that are used to remove branches and tree limbs, if pressed, Jimra will admit that he went no further than the hut, but some sort of trail did. But several trails left from the hut, so he feels that they are the paths the slaves use to move through the grove. Characters will in fact come across trails here and there in the grove, and should people explore them, they will indeed eventually lead to this hut. If further pressed as to why he went no further, Jimra will explain that the grove looked as though it were thinning out as one went north. With over-flights of High Martians occurring on a random basis, he didn't want to risk being sighted.

Refer to the map on page 37 for specific details on the grove. Looking over the grove, the party will note that this is a very well tended grove. (If they don't ask the right questions,

have Doctor Ashton use his Botany skill to supply some of the answers.) The trees are roughly a uniform distance apart, branches have been clipped to allow for people to easily move about and the grove itself has the appearance of being slanted with a vee in the center. This means that the tallest trees are mostly to the west while the younger, smaller trees are to the east. However, the trees furthest to the east are taller than the trees in the center. As the liftwood is harvested, a row at a time, new trees are replanted. The harvesting is thus moving east to west.

Characters should also note (on the proper INT die rolls) that there are surprisingly few weeds within the grove proper. If they checked out the stream and the dam, they will note (again, on the proper die rolls) that there is no system for irrigation. The dam was apparently constructed to create a pool of water, not necessarily to help maintain the grove.

Once the characters decide to begin their work (and Dillsworth will insist on waiting for darkness to nearly be at hand), Dr. Ashton and Felicity will search for saplings. The botany crew will then carefully note the estimated number of hours of daylight this tree gets, tag and number it, carefully dig out roots and the clump of dirt around it, wrap them in a burlap bag, fill up a mason jar with soil from the area the tree was in and tag it, and only then give it to a bearer. The plan is to try and replicate the location of the sapling so that replanting will successfully produce liftwood. Chemical analysis of the soil in the mason jars will hopefully reveal the elements that impart lift to these trees.

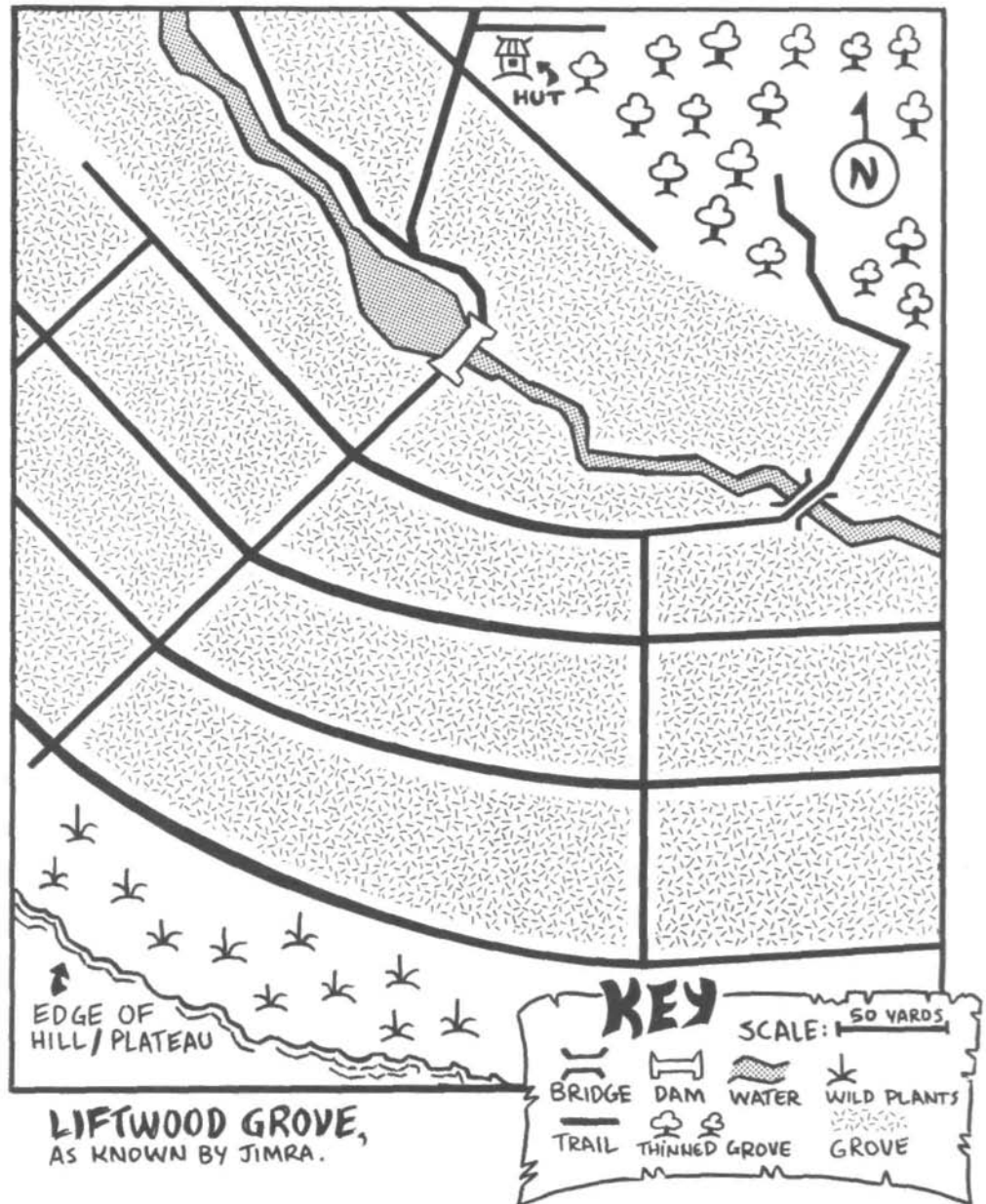
Characters will be assigned to keep watch during most of the time spent in the grove. During the day, one or two flights of High Martians will pass overhead. Roll some meaningless dice and let them know they

weren't seen. In fact, unless the characters attack the High Martians or try to be spotted, they won't be. But don't tell them that.

Anyone with Tracking or a good Observation attribute number may note that there are no fresh prints or signs of Martians about. Anything seen is about three days old. The inhabitants of the Temple are currently undergoing a purification/cleansing fast which keeps them indoors at prayers. Since they have to stay indoors for 5-7 days, the slaves stay in too.

At night, the shifting shadows and whispering wind can add to their worries. Keep them in suspense as to what they see and hear, if, as a result, they want to help hurry up the good Doctor, the characters may look for saplings themselves. Dillsworth will discourage this. "After all, that's why we have gone to the trouble of transporting a noted botanist here. You are more valuable as eyes than brains, old chap." If the characters persist, roll 1D6 per day per searcher. A roll of 1 means they have found one good sapling. Dillsworth will note their initiative and skill in his report. He will also allow then the honor of personally carrying that tree. It weight about 10 lbs. Doctor Ashton will still have to attempt to find six other suitable trees for the bearers. That's his job, after all.

Of course, if the rest of the characters all hunt and come up with trees (they are worth £50 sterling apiece per player member), Dillsworth will not make them **all** carry them. He will relent and let the bearers take the six. Any extra saplings beyond the six **will** have to be carried by the finder. Dillsworth will, though, bear a grudge towards the person who started this problem and thus "forced" him to back down in front of everyone.





## THE TEMPLE OF DRAXXKLANET

### THE ABDUCTION

ONCE THE TREES are stowed, or three nights go by, the party will finish up the third night of searching and settle in for another day to await the planned pickup that evening. As dawn begins to grace the eastern sky, Dr. Ashton will appear with a puzzled look upon his face, he will go from character to character asking if anyone has seen Felicity. Nobody will have.

Finally, one of the bearers will say that she passed him about 10 minutes earlier. She was muttering something about it being "**too** hot in this beastly forest. I simply must cool my feet and throw water on my face." (Should the party be camped by the stream or pool, have the bearer say that she went further along the water to do so. Modesty and all that.)

Read this:

*Suddenly, a terrified shriek rips through the stillness of the grove, a shriek that cuts off in mid cry. "That's Felicity!" erupts the Doctor as he starts to run toward the direction of the sound. Dillsworth makes a flying tackle and brings him down. "Shut up!" he snarls in a freezing hiss, "Do you want to give us all away?"*

**Referee Note:** If your players were of the curious type, they may have gone to take a peek up north beyond the stone hut. If so, they might logically discover the stone trail leading to the Temple proper. Don't fret. Have Dillsworth refuse to allow any disturbance of that site. Absolutely forbid entrance. (Be sure the door was locked if they tried something.) After all, you're here for liftwood. By all means, post guards and be extra vigilant. Rousing the newfound natives is not part of any game plan. Certainly not Dillsworth's.

Simply readjust and have Felicity picked up by a couple of acolytes on wing while she inadvertently strolled in an open area. Shame there are too many trees to get a good shot in. Have a bearer see the abduction, they shouldn't have any guns anyhow. But he would see the High Martians fly up over the kraag and then suddenly descend and disappear, like into a cleft or something.

If a couple of roving acolytes want to collect Felicity for Show & Tell, well then no telling where apple polishers will turn up looking to complete their assignments.

WELL, YOU KNEW it would come to this, didn't you? After all, this is a story about Victorian era people, right? The Rescue is a time honored tradition of this genre, saving damsels from "a fate worse than Death."

The players should have gotten the idea that this grove was just a bit too well maintained to be a simple logging preserve. Instead, the small kraag to the north houses within it the Temple Draxxklanet, a minor religious site within the vast domain of King Hattabranx. This temple is more of a retreat than a functioning religious way station.

However, it is an outpost for the notorious Worm Priests, whose hatred of humans is well documented. They come here for spiritual cleansing and private worship/instruction.

But they don't come too often. Draxxklanet is off the main flight paths and is not readily open to lay High Martians. This whole area belongs to the holdings of a vassal noble of King Hattabranx, one named Regesat. He rules from Kraag Bentovartex to the north. It is misnamed on the main map as Draxxklanet.

High Martians refer to this entire area of the Astusapes by that name. Regesat is only a minor noble, so he and his people don't get much of an opportunity to deal with Canal Martians, the map makers of this world. Therefore, the local maps have scant information and the most common name identified with this territory has been attached to the Kraag up north, not the Temple here.

Regesat is none too happy with Worm Priests in general, either. While King Hattabranx might be a strong supporter, Regesat is not too sure of what the Worm Priests' true motive is; religion or political power.

A Holy War would certainly help secure secular power for them.

So, Regesat has kept his distance and maintained a watch on the Temple's activities. The courier for the Temple is an informant, for example. Handy thing, that.

Regesat leaves the grove alone, as the priests have declared the area a lesser shrine. In return for this "privacy" that the Temple area proper enjoys, the priests are to stay clear of Bentovartex except for religious holidays and formal occasions. There is however, a disagreement on just what constitutes the "Temple area."

When the cloudship Draxes made the mistake of veering into High Martian territory, she was hounded and pursued by Regesat's people until they brought her down. Though the Temple priests claimed that, due to proximity, the spoils of the hunt were theirs, it was still Regesat and his forces who took the prisoners and salvage back to Bentovartex, not the Temple. Hence, there is an uneasy truce at present between the two locations.

Of the area to the north of the storage hut, the trail turns into a semi-paved flagstone pathway (of sorts) curling around the eastern perimeter of the small kraag, ending up at the less-than imposing doorway of the Temple proper. Four acolytes were out refreshing themselves with pure water from the pool, as they had been in retreat in the Temple for two weeks undergoing a fast of purification. Felicity simply had the bad luck to have the same concept at this most inopportune time. In the semi-darkness she nearly walked right into their arms. She quit screaming due to a solid right cross delivered by an acolyte **not** especially noted for his gallantry. She will have left her pistol

with the rest of her belongings and is unarmed. Of course, you could let her have it and have one of the acolytes pocket it for later use when the cavalry comes storming in. Think the characters will remember to check for it before they dash off?

Dillsworth will quickly call for volunteers to go after Felicity, saying "*We must make haste! Not only is her honor at stake, but our very lives if they force from her lips the secret of our presence here!*" Dr. Ashton will badly want to go along. The party will have to decide whether or not to let him; Dillsworth would rather he didn't.

In forming the rescue party, the bearers will be very reluctant to go. Dealing with unknown underground High Martians is not part of the contract. Plus, if players order them to go, who's going to watch the sapling? Doctor Ashton, all alone? Roll 1D6 for each bearer. On a 1 that bearer will go if asked or urged. On any other roll, he will refuse. If you decide to have Dillsworth (or a player playing him) give a direct order for one or all of them to come along, they will. But they'll stay in the rear, defend only if attacked and generally be of little help.

Someone has got to stay as well to be in charge. Dillsworth would want to keep the Doctor safe (looks bad on the old record to lose noted personalities in your safekeeping) by keeping him here. Most likely, Dillsworth would want Jimra to stay with the bearers and the Doctor. If he players want Jimra along, Dillsworth would fix them with a nasty stare and ask, "Well, which one of you will stay in his place? **Someone** has to stay to watch over our camp."

The party will hear the sound of a small group of individual up ahead of them on the path leading past

the stone hut. by taking care and following the sounds, they will presently see the path pass into more open terrain as the grove thins out. The path will come right up next to the stony kraag, then veer off to the east (right) following the side of this hill.

As the party gets to this point, they will hear the unmistakable sound of a large door shutting. Soon enough, they will come to the door. This door is a battered but ornately carved work of art that has unfortunately barely withstood the elements. It has a closed, sliding viewing slit. Luckily, the acolytes were in such a rush to show off their find that they didn't lock the door as they went in (not that they do so in such a remote area anyway).

Should anyone ask how High Martians might have constructed any such structure here, Jimra and Dillsworth will explain that High Martians prefer living underground in rooms excavated from solid rock. So, any structure here will probably be in the solid rock of the kraag up ahead.

There is always a flier shaft so that small ships can land inside to load and unload goods, personnel, supplies, etc. It is also used as the major method of entrance and exit, as High Martians prefer to fly rather than walk, if at all possible.

Hence, there are few windows, if any, and generally only one door, the slave quarters will have neither, but these quarters are located near the shaft so that the slaves have access to moving cargo off craft that enter.

Once the characters nerve themselves to it, they will have to open the door (add the appropriate sound effects for old, creaky doors here) and move inside to find Felicity and deal with her abductors.

## LAYOUT OF THE TEMPLE

THE UNDERGROUND domain of Dortar Spindrax and his eight acolytes (sounds like a 50's Rock group, doesn't it?) is a dark-some hole, filled with a few faintly foul vapors. Temples of the Worm Priests are not bright happy places, filled with eager faces searching out truth, justice and a sense of fulfillment.

Worm Priests are a somber order, believing in sacrifices (animals and sentient beings), fear, and frightful punishments for thinking "wrong" thoughts. In general, they are imbued with a bleak outlook of the world at large and a person's place within that world. Not your normal televangelist upbeat outlook, this Temple reflects that kind of dour religious overview. Play it up with disgusting carvings, moldering cloth tapestries, very poor lighting and the real presence of fear lurking in every corner.

**1) Entrance:** Past the unlocked door, the main corridor moves in a north/south direction. Standing at this junction allows one to easily see (in the poor light) all movement in this hallway.

1a) Guard Rooms: Not used as such any more. They have now been converted into antechambers for storing cloaks, trappings, etc. The doors have been removed. There is a secret doorway (known only to the priests) that goes from the right side guard room into the Great Hall.

1b) Double wooden door which is the main entrance to the Great hall. It has no lock but can be barred from the inside. It is old too and has

numerous gaps in its wood panels, giving a view of part of the Great Hall. The strength of the door is x 4.

**2) The Great Hall of Worship:** (see pg 148 in the **space: 1889** rule book for a view that approximates this hall): Six great pillars support the vaulted ceiling. The floor is inlaid with mosaic patterns depicting various worm-like motifs and designs. It is dimly lit with oil lamps, but the light is such that one can barely make out the opposite far end of the hall with any certainty.

The vaulted ceiling goes up to 30 ft. in height in the center. If the acolytes and priests are attacked in here, they certainly have the ability and room to fly around (some) and make overhead attacks on party members. Don't neglect a 3D approach to combat when you are using High Martians!

2a) The Altar: Currently occupied by Felicity (unconscious) being securely tied down by four acolytes. They will be very intent on doing so, arranging various types of cutlery, scrolls, cloth, etc. If attacked while at work, they will charge with knives the heathen scum defiling this house of worship (our heroes, the characters). The lead acolyte carries a flintlock pistol, good for one shot. He has six reloads on his person.

2b) Ornate carvings are located on the walls at these points. Dillsworth will become fascinated by them and, if he survives, will spend a lot of time making copies and drawings of what he sees. The carvings, if ever they are analyzed, will bear a marked resemblance to the

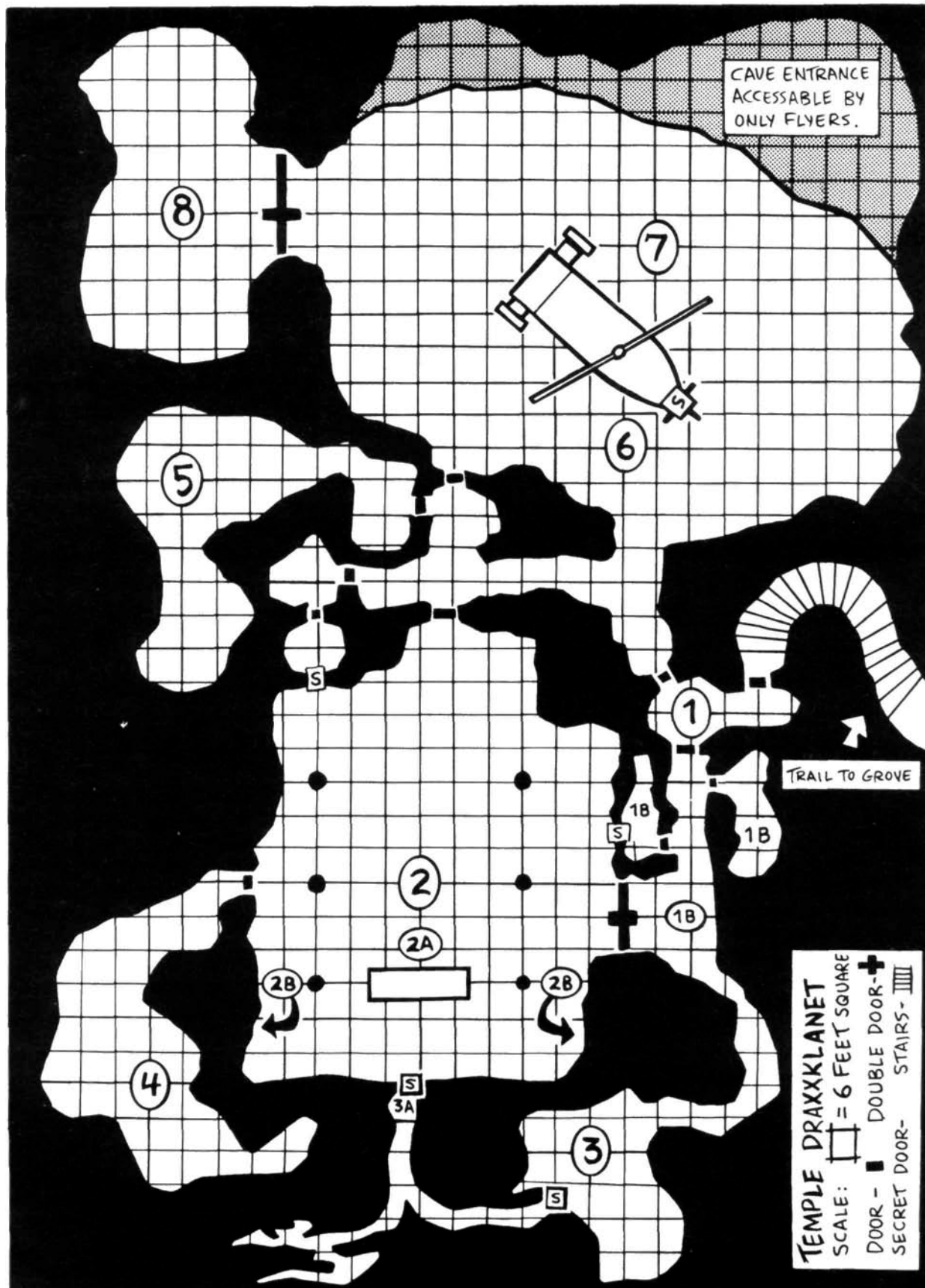
ones at Kraag Barrovaar of King Hattabranx. (Note: any surviving acolyte, if "prodded", will reveal that these carvings supposedly represent a depiction of the Mother Temple Prantxxang, now lost in the mists of legend, but revered as the grandest Temple of the founding Worm Priests.)

**3) Quarters of the Two Resident Priests.** Being a rather spartan order of this religion, there would be little of any value in here. Some tapestries and curtains are hanging on the walls in and there are a few tables, chairs and trunks scattered about. One of the chests has a false bottom in which is concealed a gold and jewel necklace worth £500. The priests are currently getting dressed and outfitted for the hastily called "morning services".

3a) A secret passage that leads from the wall behind the altar to the rear of the Priests' Quarters. Stored in here is another chest of Bhutan spice from the Draxes, as well as £263 sterling cash taken from the ship's strongbox. There is a hidden alcove off the southwest corner which is to be used as a last ditch hiding place. Only the resident priests know of this passage, the doors to enter it and the alcove. (See the OVERALL TEMPLE ACTION SEQUENCE for more details on this alcove.)

**4) Acolyte Quarters:** The layout is for eight residents. The arrangement is pretty much the same as for the priests quarters, except it is even more spartan. The Temple armory is





also located in here, under the control of the lead acolyte. It is small, consisting of four flintlock hunting muskets, eight spears, and two swords. When combat breaks out, some of the acolytes will make a run for this room to arm themselves. Should you decide to arm an acolyte with a musket, they would also take and ammo pouch with 20 rounds along. It takes a full turn to load any flintlock type weapon. Two acolytes are currently dressing and hurriedly cleaning up. They will come out two turns after the start of combat armed with flintlock hunting muskets and knives.

**5) Slave Rooms:** This area also includes a kitchen and laundry room. One acolyte is on duty as a guard, armed with a spear and flintlock pistol. If there is an attack, he will organize the five slaves and arm them with clubs. They will be out 3 turns after combat begins. He will "encourage" them with his pistol. If the party calls upon the slaves to desist, resist, or help the party, the slaves will do so on a 1D6 roll of 1-4 (rolled for each slave). Otherwise they will attack, but not determinedly. The acolyte will shoot at the party members unless the slaves turn against him, at which point he will fire at one slave and the rest will scatter.

**6) Landing Pad:** This is the floor of an open shaft leading to the cleft in the rock where small craft and High Martians fly in and out of the Temple. The cleft rises 150 and some odd feet from the floor to the

opening in the rock. Currently there is a ground cradle with a small sky skiff in it occupying the landing area.

**7) Sky Skiff:** This is a small kite used for ceremonial occasions and general transport for the Temple. It has limited cargo space and is used more for personnel transport. There is one acolyte on duty here doing general maintenance on the craft, if combat breaks out elsewhere, this person will load the bow sweeper of the skiff and train it on the main entrance leading (from 1) into the landing area, he will then hide behind the gun and wait. Any party member using that entrance will be fired upon immediately. Should people use the smaller doorway, he will have to swivel the gun over there and hence reveal himself, giving the person entering the chance to roll a saving throw. In any case, once the sweeper is fired, the acolyte will quickly attempt to fly up and out of the shaft to make his escape. (Note: the gun is detachable from this craft).

**8) Storage Area:** Used to temporarily store flown in goods and equipment for transfer to other parts of the complex. Currently there is nothing stored here except 300 ft. of rope and a munitions locker with shot and powder for the sweeper mounted on the sky skiff.

**NOTE:** One other acolyte is already headed towards the landing area. This is the official courier between Draxklannet and Kraag Ben. On the sixth turn after the party enters the Temple, he will fly up and out of the shaft to make a report to

Regesat. Unless the party takes a passage that leads to the Landing Pad area and stops him (by injury or death), he will leave regardless of what combat breaks out anywhere (see the Action sequence for details).

In case you might wonder, these acolytes will die to the last Martian to defend their faith and priests. No exceptions. Not so with the priests. They will feel few twinges of guilt in sending the acolytes to their deaths and then flitting off themselves to safety. After all, they didn't spend their lives to become priests to die when mere acolytes will do nicely.

**Martian Secret Doors:** These are sliding (to one side) panels located in various parts of the Temple. Only the priests know of their locations and how to unlock them. There are small knobs that look like part of the decorations seated at waist level near all the doors. By pushing them in and simultaneously turning them to the left, the catch is released and the doors will slide open. These are **silent** doors; should one of the priests escape with an acolyte or two, who knows what kind of ambushes could be sprung?

Characters rolling on a Formidable task using Observation or perhaps Structural Engineering might see them. Once seen, to open them will require fiddling with the knobs. A successful roll against INT will allow them to trip the mechanism.

## ACTION SEQUENCE

THE PARTY has stepped into a chain of events which are currently following a programmed course. Obviously, they may step in at any time to alter the chain of events, but exactly **where** they do step in is up to them. Naturally, if they move at a crawling speed of two squares per turn, they take the chance of reaching certain points too late to effectively control events.

The action sequence that follows is the one that will occur as if the party never trespassed the premises. It starts the moment the party opens the main door and enters the Temple. The referee will need to keep track of the party's action versus the movement of the Temple inhabitants, but this list of events has been kept simple enough (I hope) so that there should not be any problems.

Should the party delay things beyond Turn 10, the Priests will simply try and question Felicity as to who she is, why she's there, how has she survived in the wilderness after the wreck (of the Draxes), is there anyone else around, etc. Felicity will answer with screams and curses the like of which you never thought a protected young woman could command with such élan.

The High Priest, Dortar Spindrax, has complete control over his people. Blessed (?) with a strong Charisma and a great hatred of humans, he will have no hesitations in sending the acolytes into unequal combat with the Red Men. He himself will attempt to direct rather than participate in such combat. If and when things go badly, he will unceremoniously make a dash for the hidden passageway behind the altar of off of the Priests' Quarters, as a small hidden alcove exits there as a last refuge. It has no exit to the outside, but anyone hiding within these cracks that make up this alcove can

face any follower one on one in near-darkness and can even maneuver through these cracks to outflank a pursuer and make a stab at the with a spear or knife.

**Turn 1:** As the party enters through the door, Felicity is being carried up to the altar by 4 acolytes. The two priests and the courier are there (2a) and have just been informed about her.

**Turn 2:** Felicity is placed on the altar. The priests head back toward their rooms, crossing the entrance corridor (1) from (2) headed up the passage towards (3). The courier moves north from the altar toward the Landing Pad (6).

**Turn 3:** The four acolytes continue to bind Felicity to the altar, arrange equipment, etc. The courier reaches the northern doorway of (2) which opens into a connecting passageway. The priests are in their rooms (3) getting changed.

**Turn 4:** The four acolytes are still at the altar, the priests are changing, and the courier enters the Landing Pad area (6) through the doorway.

**Turn 5:** Three acolytes are at the altar, one goes to the Acolyte Quarters (4) to hurry the other two up. The courier prepares to leave, informing the acolyte working on the sky skiff about what's going on.

**Turn 6:** The courier leaves. The acolyte at (6) exits via the door into the corridor passing (5). He tells the acolyte guard at (5) what's going on.

**NOTE:** Whenever combat breaks out, the Landing Pad acolyte will make a dash to get back to the skiff and prepare the gun. He's new and that's his job in emergencies. The priests finish dressing (3), the three acolytes are finishing at the altar, and the three acolytes at (4) finish up their cleaning.

**Turn 7:** The three acolytes at the

altar are finished and turn to watch the double doors for the entrance of the priests into (2). The priests start down the curved passage to cross the entrance corridor (1). The acolytes at (4) open the door to enter (2). The acolyte from the Landing Pad (6) enters the Great Hall (2) at the northern end. **Note:** If there has been no combat up to this point, the acolyte guarding the Slave Quarters (5) will exit that area and lock the door behind him.

**Turn 8:** The two Priests cross the corridor (1) and enter the Great Hall (2). The three acolytes at (4) enter into the Grand Hall. 1 The Landing Pad acolyte reaches the altar. The Slave acolyte enters the Great Hall (2) by the northern doorway.

**Turn 9:** The priests arrive at the altar and inquire about how the woman is (she's still unconscious). All the acolytes except the one from the Slave Quarters (5) are now at the altar and stand respectfully back to the north of the altar. The Slave acolyte is about 1/2 way up to the altar from the door.

**Turn 10:** The Slave acolyte reaches the altar, all the acolytes stand in a line to the north of the altar, the priests stand on the south side up and over Felicity, who now opens her eyes and shrieks in terror.

**Turn 11:** the questioning begins, along with rough male chanting and the brandishing of knives. Obviously, if the party were to move in at this point, the High Priest Dortar Spindrax will cry out in very bad English that he will kill the girl if the party doesn't surrender. Unless the party does, or they try to kill Spindrax immediately, he will stab Felicity once and then make a break for it as the shooting starts up. He will try to go for the secret door to head for the hidden alcove.



## MAJOR NPC — Dortar Spindrax (Experienced NPC)



### MAJOR NPC — Dortar Spindrax (Experienced NPC)

#### High Priest At Draxxklanet

Though advanced in years and ready for retirement, one thing keeps Spindrax active: hatred. Most pointedly, of humans. The religion he has given his life to has seen its ups and downs over the past decades. Just before the arrival of humans on Mars, the Worm Priests in this part of the globe were held in low esteem, barely tolerated at best and actively shunned at worst. However, once the Red Men "invaded", things became very different for members of this order.

The Worm Priests realized that they now had a rallying point, a political reason for all Martians to band together under one banner. After all, driving out invaders is always a good PE stance to take. The subsequent few mistakes made by most colonial powers (as well as the deprivations of the Belgians) simply "proved" the Worm Priests right.

Dortar Spindrax, elderly but still strong in Charisma, tried to lead the fight against the red barbarians in his territory. But younger, more ambitious priests, bent on assuming higher posts in the hierarchy, managed to ease Spindrax out of the mainstream and to one side. The, these priests arranged to have him "promoted to High Priest of a lesser Worm shrine far from the courts of the High Martian power brokers.

So, ultimately helpless to stop the "honor" bestowed upon him, Spindrax accepted fate and took up his new position. But he didn't give up the struggle. Every High Martian priest and lay person must make pilgrimages to the Holy shrines at a few points in their lives. Some (though few) head towards Draxxklanet, a site regarded with some devotion for a vision one Worm Priest "saint" had on the site.

Dortar preaches this hatred of humans at all religious services he conducts. There is no service performed at Kraag Bentovartex where Spindrax does not harangue Regesat and try to hammer home the message of driving out the Red Men. The acolytes under his training are true believers in this theory of hate (except the courier).

#### Attributes      S      kills

STR:	2	Fisticuffs 1, Throwing 1
AGL:	2	Stealth 2
END:	3	Wilderness Travel 2
INT:	4	Observation 4
Chr:	5	Eloquence 6, Theatrics 5
SOC:	3	Riding 2 (gashant), Leadership 3, Medicine 1

(Note the total number of attribute is 19 due to his age)

**Motives:** Leader, Hatred, Rage.

**Appearance:** Dortar Spindrax is only 5' 5" tall, a thin, somewhat gnarled looking old High Martian. He sports aFu Man Chu type mustache, gold studs in both ears, and rings on all his fingers. His face is lined and his hair is mostly white with patches of grey. His flying membranes are torn and in a poor state of affairs. He dresses well (as befits his station) but indifferently, as his robes seem a size or two too large.

## AFTERMATH

ONCE THE PARTY has subdued the High Martians, there are several things within the Temple that they may want to do. If your players are seasoned roleplayers, they will want to hunt for loot. This is fine. This is a frumpy lot of priests and the pickings are sparse, or so it appears.

Dillsworth will insist on looking over all the carvings and hieroglyphics on the walls of the Great Hall and making copies. In fact, he will insist on this course of action and will interrogate any surviving acolytes as to their meaning and significance. Not that they can read these markings. No one here at the Temple can. They are in an early form of religious writing that fell out of use centuries ago. However, the great libraries of Syrtis Major may hold a clue to their opaque meaning. Surviving slaves will provide no help as to any real information on the location beyond the grove (in which they work) and the Temple. If the courier made it away, the slaves will point out that one of the acolytes is missing from the complex. They will, if queried, say that the one missing was the official courier. But whether he was here or not before combat started, they won't know. If asked about the possibility of visitors, they will reply that visitors do show up unannounced, but are very infrequent. The referee should introduce the troublesome thought via one of the NPC's that maybe this guy heard the fighting and took off to

warn other High Martians. Always a comforting thought to lay on players.

These slaves will beg, if necessary, to be taken along with the party, as they have no way of escaping here on their own and sooner or later High Martians from Kraag Bentovartex will show up and punish **them** for this discretion. They have no knowledge of forces at the Kraag except "a lot".

The sky skiff **Sky Sailor** may come in for some attention. It is nicely cared for, has no jewelry but some gold ornaments of value inlaid into the wood (referee's judgment on value, but it shouldn't be much). A trained cloudship person might venture a guess that the skiff itself is worth £3000 sterling. As mentioned, the gun is detachable. Ammunition is kept in the storage area in a lockup. With a cheap lock, no less.

It has room for 10 people maximum, with little space for any provisions. **Sky Sailor** is meant for local travel between points taking less than a day. Note that I did not say **comfortable** travel. The Popemobile, to name one, is not rigged to give His Holiness a cushy ride. **Sky Sailor** would, however, be able to travel further if properly outfitted. Also, she would make a dandy cutter for a larger cloudship. (Hint, hint).

Dillsworth will want to get the entire party back together and hide out in the Temple until nightfall when the flares are to be lit. Everybody is bone tired from working all

night and going through the ordeal this morning. If any of the characters were carting around saplings and such, you may want to penalize them and temporarily take an attribute off of one of their stats for the rest of the day.

In fact, cruel referees will cause those saplings that were to be carried by characters but were left behind to save Felicity (at least one would suspect that they would have, who's going to carry a tree into combat?) to be **left** behind if the player doesn't think to go back and get it. It was, after all, **their** sapling. Dillsworth said so. Or, the sapling could have been trampled and then dies. Or the sun baked the roots dry and it still dies. Players might be annoyed to realize that a dead sapling costs them **each** £50 sterling to apply towards more equipment, tools or whatever. Careless characters might hear about this in some way.

Dillsworth, if he has his regulation six saplings, might even forbid anyone to venture outside the Temple for the rest of the day to go pickup any spare trees lying about. Certainly he won't go for any ore sapling prospecting.

Clever players (or those who have been around the block once or twice) will know that there's more something **somewhere** to leap out at them. Mustn't disappoint them at this stage. However, at this point we fade to Kraag Bentovartex and...

## VISITORS

IF THE COURIER flew off as planned and he heard no combat take place, the following scene occurs.

Kraag Bentovartex, about 2-1/2 hours after the courier leaves the Temple.

*Regesat was on his throne this bright morning, contemplating the day's activities. A tour of the repair facilities for the cloudship galleys was planned, as well as sitting as a judge on some petty disputes between two of his lieutenants. And, of course, the floggings.*

*Few things, he sighed quietly, gave him as much bliss as a good flogging. They kept slaves alert and retainers loyal. His father had taught him that and he believed it. After all, his floggings at the hands of his father made **him** obedient, a model child, the apple of his beloved dad's eye. A bruised apple, to be sure, but edible nevertheless.*

*There was a stir at the entrance to the Throne Room. A flunky entered, begging pardons, and mentioned that the courier from Temple Draxxklanet had arrived with important information for His Lordship, begging his pardon sorry for the interruption, cringe, scrape, etc. With an annoyed wave, Regesat motioned the courier to be brought forth. His reverie disrupted, he might as well deal with the business at hand now. Ah, the heavy duties of a High Martian lord.*

*The courier came swiftly in and threw himself on the floor at the base of the stairs leading up to the regal throne. Looking at the ground, he*

*begged the Lord's pardon, but he was bearing news, news for him alone, he said meaningfully. Regesat paused, then motioned the door guard out and bid him close the door after him.*

*"Speak, courier. What is the news that is for me alone?"*

*"Red devils at the Temple!" hissed the acolyte through clenched teeth.*

*"WHAT!" bellowed Regesat as he sat up straight with a great start. "How many? What news? Who says so? Speak swiftly; priest!"*

*"Only one, lord. An ugly female. We caught her by our stream."*

*Regesat sat motionless, his brow furrowed in furious thought. "No other?" he questioned.*

*"None, O Great One," toadied the acolyte in a raspy voice.*

*"Did you look?"*

*"I myself did not, but our Head Priest surely has ordered investigations."*

*Regesat sat very still for a few minutes, the urgency draining out of his demeanor. However, a lingering concern began to make itself known. What occurs? Survivors from the hunted cloudship? SPIES? Action was needed here. Action and information.*

*"One human. you say? Armed or not?" Regesat demanded of the courier.*

*"No weapons, lord. She walked into our arms as if we were not there," replied the courier.*

*Regesat relaxed at that. Invaders do not bring females who walk*

*into your hands. Surely, if there was trouble, that High Priest Spindrax wouldn't have sent a flying courier, he would have sent his swift cutter instead. Still, he had been informed that the crew of that cloudship had been accounted for. A worry. But not a big one, not now. Regesat decided.*

*"Guard," he bellowed. The door snapped open and the door guard smartly appeared. "Bring forth Jordnax at once!"*

*Time stilled as the courier and Regesat waited. Soon enough, a High Martian wearing the trappings of an officer (a low one though) appeared.*

*"Jordnax," snapped Regesat in his command tone, "Fly yourself, this courier and four of your best trackers at once to Temple Draxxklanet. Get with the High Priest and search the grove and the area around the Temple for human intruders. Earth females do not wander amongst the hills without their heroes to protect them," snorted Regesat at that thought. "Arm yourselves with muskets. The crew of that cloudship put up a fair fight. Be warned accordingly and send a report back by nightfall."*

*"Yes, Lord Regesat," responded the scout as he grasped the arm of the courier and ushered both of them out of the Throne Room.*

*The Lord of the Kragg leaned back and closed his eyes. An annoyance, this. But, one must take care when safeguarding Royal property.*



## BACK TO THE TEMPLE

### EITHER:

THIS SCOUTING party is quickly organized and dispatched. It will arrive at the Temple about noon and will attempt to land down the shaft on the landing pad. That's what this pad is here for, after all. Perhaps players will tumble on that point. High Martians put these shafts in their abodes so that they might exit and enter directly into an area of safety. Doors are usually for the slaves and thus are few and not well cared for.

The scouts will land to enable Jordnax to report to Spindrax (after all, Spindrax is in charge here), get the latest information on any intruders, and then coordinate a search (if necessary) of the area. At any rate, Spindrax would be furious if they **didn't** check with him first. This is sacred soil we're dealing with here!

So, the scouts will touch down inside and immediately look about for any acolyte supposedly on duty in this area. Failing to find one (which might alert them that something is "not right"), the scouting group will walk through the south doorway to attempt to enter the Great Hall, where somebody is almost always present, occupied in prayer or sacrificial mayhem.

### Or:

If the courier heard combat occurring, or another High Martian from the Temple escapes (Note: you

as referee really should see that one does if the party got the courier before he flew off. It makes for a more interesting game) and reached Kragg Bentovartex, Regesat will send eight High Martians along with Jordnax on a Small Bird galley with orders to covertly search for intruders and destroy them if they think they can. In any case, Regesat will want a report sent back. He does, however, expect *at worst* that poachers are present. The courier will report that he heard combat, but doesn't know any details beyond that. Any other will report the extent to which he saw any fighting.

Being the cautious type, if the courier made the report, Jordnax will fly his scouts off of the galley out of sight of any watchers atop the Temple (it does command a good view of the surrounding area. Hopefully the characters thought of that and brought along a telescope for this kind of use). He will then order at least 2 scouts and the courier to fly directly in at the Temple to draw any fire, or to make contact with any remaining Temple personnel. This contact group will be watched from a distance. Should the party attack these scouts, or the scouts just never return within a reasonable amount of time, Jordnax will have his answer and try to covertly check out the area and pick off party members.

If any other High Martian makes the report, Jordnax will send in all the scouts and the courier to check things out. If they get fired upon, or just

don't come back, Jordnax still has his answer and will keep the survivors and himself around to watch things while the galley heads back for help. This help will consist of a Hullcutter type galley with 10 High Martian marines. Some of these boys just might have a few of those repeating rifles that the enterprising Yankee traders peddle. Not many, though. Nor a lot of ammo either. However, this ship won't arrive until dusk. The captain will off-load the marines to do some night scouting, but the attack won't come until morning. Should the Ithuriel appear though, combat is definitely a go. Solve it as a die rolling from Encounters, unless you prefer to fight it out.

(Note: Referees are at liberty to modify Jordnax's plans to suit their own tastes, depending how the party has fared to this point. As an option, for example, roll 1D6. On a 1-2 the above plan is followed. A 3-5 means that **all** the scouts, the courier and Jordnax fly in to attack/scout. A 6 would mean that the galley itself comes in to scout and hovers over the Temple, guns ready, as the scouts fly in to look about. You can be cruel, but be fair also with this scenario).

The members of the party on any lookout duty should roll on Observation every hour to spot members of this patrol poking about. Naturally if the scouts come directly in to try and report, or the galley looms up in the distance, spotting should be automatic. They're not trying to be

stealthy in this case. Remember, High Martians are not the brightest of the sentient species on Mars. You can play them as narrow-minded, bullheaded, dull witted, kill-em-all fodder. Sort of like orcs, only they fly.

Your players may try to use the **Sky Sailor** as a launch to fly out and meet the **Ithuriel**, or at least move to another hilltop to light their flares. This way, they can (presumably) leave the area of the Temple before uninvited guests appear. Jimra especially will want to get out of the neighborhood, as he knows that the High Martians are very protective of their groves and Temples. He's probably got a small reward on his head for just these sorts of things, too.

Remember, Dillsworth will want to **stay** at least 2 or 3 hours to make copies of all the carvings. In fact, he will insist. An archeological find such as this could be a distinct feather in his derby. He will use the need for Felicity to rest and come around after her ordeal as another reason for staying a bit. He really does care for her. Really. Felicity will agree with this line, as will her father.

If the characters take the **Sky Sailor** for a spin, the watching scouts (if any), will fly in to attack them. Since this is a religious artifact the players are "borrowing", the scouts will continue to attack until they are all dead or the craft is retaken. These guys are out to get Renown points too, you know.

#### HIGH MARTIAN STOCK NPCS

NPC Type	Ex	perience	Marksman	Att	Arms
Head Acolyte		Trn	3	Phys	Musket/Saber
Acolyte	G	rn/Trn	1	Phys	Spear/Knife
Jordnax	E	xp	4	Phys	Musket/Saber
Scouts		Trn/Exp	2/3	Phys	Musket/Spear
Spindrax		Trn	1	Ment	Knives
Slaves		Grn	1	Phys	Clubs/Knives

Should the players have any of the freed slaves carry the one (or more) spice chests they may have accumulated, the chance of theft is possible. These penniless guys are no dummies; they know what Bhutan spice is worth on the market. Any slave carrying such a chest should have 1D6 rolled for him. On a 1 or 2, the slave will make a furtive attempt to open the chest and fill up a pouch or two with powdered spice.

The smell of spice is strong around these chests, so the characters will not notice anything amiss as long as the slave in question stays near a chest. Should he stray off some, then it is more likely that the characters may detect a bit too strong

of an odor about him and get suspicious.

Granted, the value of the spice thus filched is small, scarcely £5 at best. The idea again is to create a feeling of distrust here. If these slaves who now owe their freedom to the party actually steal from the characters, where will this all lead? What else are they getting into? What's next with these ungrateful heathens? Plus, if the party members get vocal about this apparent disloyalty, are they remembering if these "heathen" slaves were **armed** to help defend against High Martians? Do **you** go around calling armed folks with little to lose bad names?

## TAKING DELIVERY

AT THE END of the day, as darkness falls, Dillsworth will put into motion the signaling plan to bring the Ithuriel to the pickup point, wherever it may be by now. The chance of the ship sighting the flares is determined by rolling 2D6. If a 10-12 is rolled, the flares are not seen that night and the ship doesn't arrive. Should the players lay out the flares the next night, the chances are 9-12 that the ship doesn't see them.

If the players are not picked up, then at this point their options become somewhat limited:

1) They can use the **Sky Sailor** to try and meet up with the ship.

2) They can try to fly the **Sky Sailor** home, or at least to a "civilized" location where they can arrange passage home.

3) The characters could march out from the Temple to a known civilized point and arrange passage home.

4) The characters could send a small group ahead in the skiff to find help while the rest of the party marches out on a predetermined course.

5) They could even try to capture one of the High Martian galleys that may have ended up at the Temple and ride home in style (fat chance, but not impossible. Say, wouldn't Dillsworth claim the galley as Crown property, denying everybody their Prize money, since it was taken on an **official** government mission)?

**Options 1 & 2** will encounter opposition from the freed slaves if there's too many people to fit on the craft. The slaves **know** what will happen to them if they stay here. And with the motley collection of weapons that they could take with them, they couldn't march out under attack and survive. Unless their needs are taken into account, they will eventually try to steal the **Sky Sailor** themselves and make a break for it. Panic and fear, fear and panic. Play these

slaves this way if the cards fall this way.

Don't forget, there are liftwood saplings, soil samples and journals that must be protected and returned. The saplings are also going to need watering to stay alive. If the characters have all these items with them, all those things will take the space of two people in the **Sky Sailor**. Which means the Doctor and Felicity will go with them. That leaves 6 other seats to fill.

Therefore, in these circumstances, the characters are going to have to negotiate with the slaves as to how loading up the skiff will proceed. (I'll bet the characters armed the slaves to help defend against the High Martians, too. **Armed** fear and panic; now that's a scary combination!). Being the honest English types they are (unless a real scoundrel is present), the characters should lose renown points if they decide to maroon anyone here. While the English might have invented marooning, they don't like this point brought up in polite society.

**Option 3** will sooth the folks who can't fit aboard the skiff. But the players will have to get moving quickly as the High Martians will, sooner or later, be here in force to determine who is responsible for the Temple Draxxklanet massacre.

**Option 4** would probably be the best bet, depending on the number of people needing rescue and how the selection for manning the craft was determined.

Don't bet on **Option 5**. Stranger things have come to pass, though. For any option taken involving a march away from the Temple, use the Encounter Tables on page 15, the same as before, to determine how the party is doing.

As we all know, the intrepid Devon Constantine and his loyal crew will not abandon our brave heroes to the pleasures of a High Martian slave camp. The **Ithuriel**

will put herself in great danger to remain somewhat in the area to hopefully recover the away team. The following table has been created to account for this dash and disregard for personal safety.

Recovery Table Options				
Day	1&4	2	3	5
1	7-12	8-12	9-12	10-12
2	8-12	9-12	10-12	11-12
3	9-12	10-12	11-12	12
4	10-12	11-12	12	12
5	11-12	12	12	12

Roll 2D6 and add together. If the resulting number is in the chart above, the party is rescued. Roll **once** per day before any encounters are rolled for. All rolls after the fifth day need to be a 12 to get rescued (though kind referees may take pity here).

Once the party is rescued, the Ithuriel will head back for Syrtis Major by another indirect route. Conversely, the players may have had to make their own passage home by another ship. Referees may use the same aerial encounter charts if they wish, to make the homeward journey fraught with excitement. More generous ones will secretly roll dice and say that nothing happened **this** day and let the characters rest and recoup their strength.

At this point, you really should allow your players to make the journey home in peace, whether they march to civilization and fly home, or just take passage on the Ithuriel. The High Martians will believe that the British are involved in all this, but they will assume that the danger lies between the Temple and Parhoon/Gorovaan, ie. the direct route. So, they will furiously apply their efforts in that area to search for the invaders. Since the ship is going to head home by a more circular course, the danger is lessened quite a bit.



## SYRTIS MAJOR

THE ITHURIEL will fly into Syrtis Major and unload the party and its goods at dusk to lessen the chance of prying eyes. But, to the surprise of all, customs agents of Prince Amraamtaba X quickly show up and ask to search the Ithuriel for contraband items. There was that rumor earlier that they might start doing this again, you know. Of course, they will want to match whatever cargo she is carrying against her manifest.

These, of course are the agents dispatched courtesy of Godoy, sent here to look for contraband and illegal substances. They think that there may be illicit liftwood lumber being smuggled into town by the Ithuriel and her well-known captain. Which means, if they don't find **something**, they're going to look like fools, something no bureaucrat wishes to appear as in front of the civilians they serve.

Hmmm, wasn't that bhutan spice in the chest (or chests) the characters found highly narcotic and illegal? If they managed to bring this spice back with them, the party could now end up in jail for smuggling drugs. The characters now have a couple of basic choices. They can:

Use Eloquence (Difficult, Target Level 12) to fast talk their way past these officials,

Pay a **large** cash bribe (referee's judgement on large),

Threaten Dillsworth (who otherwise won't help at all) with exposure of the true nature of the trees to these officials if **he** won't call them off somehow (the trees, should anyone look, **are** on the manifest as fruit trees),

Claim Diplomatic Immunity and force Dillsworth to back them up by having him declare himself with the Foreign Office,

Or just try a subtle approach such as a shoot out or rendering the officials unconscious or some such.

Once the customs agents are out of the way, the Foreign Office agent at the landing grounds will notify the main office that the Ithuriel has returned. There will be coaches and wagons dispatched to spirit the characters to another safe house (NOT the Barnes House from before!) At this location, the players will receive their official pay for this adventure. Renown points should also be handed out, or Dillsworth will candidly say why certain characters are **not** receiving any.

**Experience:** Each character should get one general experience point per episode of this adventure. These consist of any Aerial Encounters, the March, the Wreck (for those who ventured down into the ravine), and all the combat sequences at the Temple, for a total of three (3). If the flow of your adventure went differently, add or subtract points as necessary. Each character that engaged in close combat at least once receives one Close Combat experience point. Anyone participating in four or more close combats should receive **two** such combat experience points.

The liftwood trees, soil samples and journals will go with Doctor Ashton and his daughter, both of whom will be leaving with these items on a fast ether flier for Earth within the next 24 hours. In fact, the ship will be held for them. Until then, they will be under constant guard. Doctor Ashton will bid everyone good-bye. Felicity might, if the events of the last few days "changed" her. If not, she will sniff a farewell.

As for the freed slaves (if any), the characters will find that one or two of them will offer to stay on with certain party members as sidekicks,

servants, guards, etc. if the characters treated them with at least a modicum of decency.

The characters will also stay here under guard until the Ashtons and their "goods" have safely departed Mars. Or, perhaps some (or all) the characters may end up outward bound on that ether flyer with the Ashtons. After all, Baron von Gruber still wants those saplings. Perhaps this adventure is not yet over?

Should the Ashtons depart without the characters, they are free to go where they please. They most likely will want to cash in any "found" valuables, register with a Prize Court (along with Devon, as necessary) for their share(s) of ships taken as prizes, etc. Certain characters, or even the whole group, could keep the prize ships for their own use, depending on their druthers.

Postscript: About a week after the Ashtons depart, choose any character at "random" (personally, I'd choose the leader or someone who made an outstanding contribution). As this character is moving down a street past a wooden wall, a knife comes whistling out of nowhere to thunk into the wall, quivering inches from this character's nose. Close one, that. The character will not be able to see the thrower of the knife, no matter how hard they try (or how well they roll dice). Attached to the knife is a message, written with poor script in Parhoon. The message is:

**We Know, We Remember,  
We Shall Avenge**

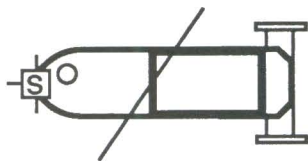
High Martian operatives? The Baron's? Pirates? Life is never easy for heroes in the Service of Her Majesty.

# SKY SAILER

Kite

0

£ 3,420



1

35 TONS (K)

Bridge HT

Deck

Maneuver

(Masts)

-1  
-2  
-3  
-4  
-5  
-6

Hull Hits

VH	
H	
M	
L	
VL	

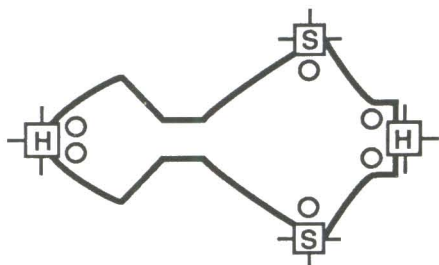
Passengers


# DRAXES

Kite

0

£ 13,600



2

150 TONS (K)

Bridge CHTS

Deck

Maneuver

(Masts)

-1  
-2  
-3  
-4  
-5  
-6

Hull Hits

VH	
H	
M	
L	
VL	

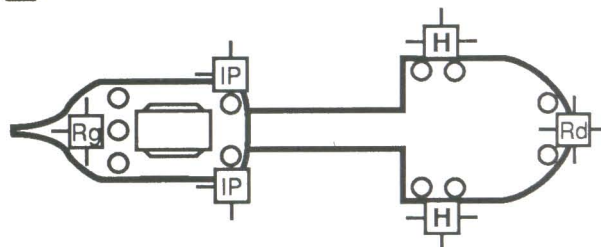
Marines


# ITHURIEL

Screw Galley

0

£ 49,220



7

439 TONS (3)

Bridge CHTSOOO

Deck P

Maneuver P

Screw

3  
2  
1

Hull Hits

VH	
H	
M	
L	
VL	

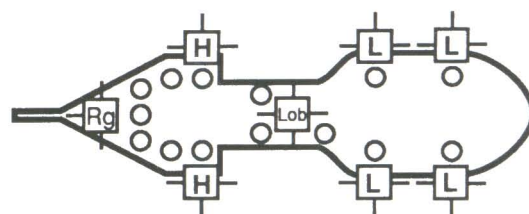
Passengers


# GLORY SLED

Screw Galley

0

£ 45,400



7

700 TONS (3)

Bridge CHTSOOO

Deck

Maneuver

Screw

3  
2  
1

Hull Hits

H	
M	
L	
VL	

Marines




RESCUE  
AT  
THOTH





# RESCUE AT THOTH

A Space: 1889 Mini-Adventure

By Gary E. Smith

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## RESCUE AT THOTH

### A Space: 1889 Mini-Adventure

by Gary E. Smith

*Rescue at Thoth* is a short mini-adventure for 4 to 7 characters. Referees may, at their discretion, have someone play the Major NPC provided, as long as the obvious plot restrictions that occur in the text are followed. Of course, you being the referee can totally change around anything you like and Clive Estes could be worked in from the start as the character he plays. This is not recommended as it spoils the ending plot twist.

The main thrust of the plot is for your players to be approached by Clive Estes on the outskirts of a somewhat backwater city-state named Thoth. He will try to sign them up to help rescue his patron, Lord Fhobar, from the hands of religious fanatics. The Lord can't trust anyone in the city, so he wants Clive to get a group of apolitical humans to help him out.

There is an immediate payment via cashier's check to the players and the promise of more to come if they succeed in the attempt to rescue Lord Fhobar.

Clive will have a plan already conceived, he just needs the fire-power and cunning to bring it off. That's the characters. By wagon and either concealed or disguised, the party is to make its way to the manor where the Lord is detained, get him out of there and then take him to the local cloudship landing ground so he can make passage on a reserved booking to friendlier ports. So, your

players might ask, why can't we just fly in via cloudship or small flier, drop in on the manor, cut the place up, and call it quits?

Well, the locals, being Canal Martians going through a religious schism, are not fond at all of humans. But for now, as long as they stay in certain neutral zones and out of city politics, they won't be bothered. If the characters get caught at night off the main flight paths or heave-to over a compound guarded by the local bullies and proceed to shoot up the place, then while the characters might get away, the humans who actually live and work in Thoth are going to pay for this outrage.

By keeping concealed in the wagon, it's quite plausible to come up with enough of a cover story that even if the wagon is stopped and searched, the characters may be able to double-talk their way out of trouble. At least, if the characters were chosen to emphasize guile and brain power over marksmanship and weapons skills. Both will have their place here.

As for playing the NPC's in this mini-adventure, only Clive Estes has been graced with life. He should be played as a charming, helpful traveling companion and all-around nice guy. Except when his bounty hunting duties come up, at which point he does a 180 degree turn and becomes Mr. Business: cold, efficient and undeterred by sentiment.

Lord Fhobar should be sketched

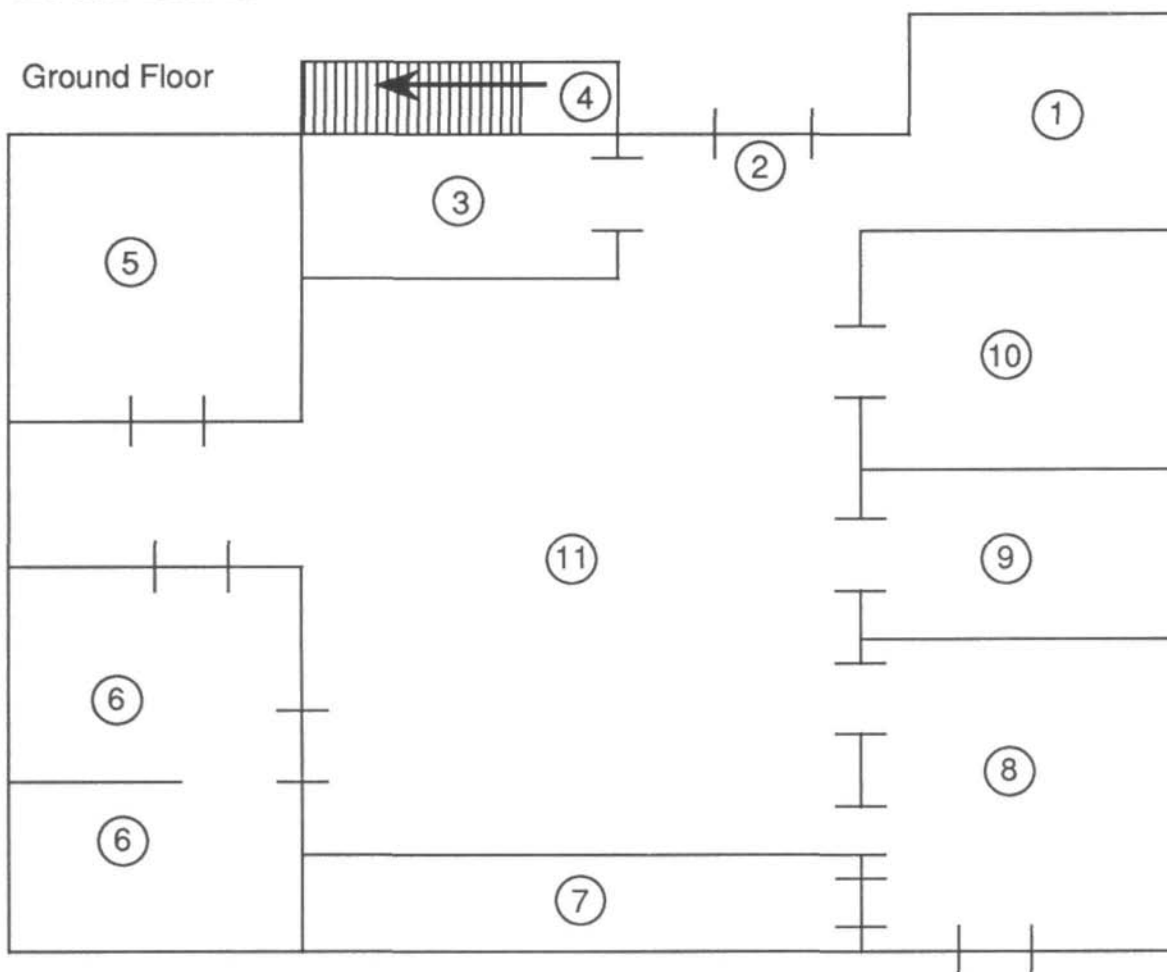
as a somewhat distant, that's-a-good-fellow type of noble, with a slightly sinister tinge, if you can do it. He should attempt to give some orders and talk down to "the help", but if the characters pay him no mind, he won't care. Fhobar only knows Clive by the fact that the Lords' retainers hired him to get help, as no one else could be trusted. Lord Fhobar has no skills.

Alechia is straight forward and really doesn't like Lord Fhobar except that his money buys a lot of toys and comfort. After all, he's rich and she is, too, when she's with him. In fact, she might want to latch onto the party or even Clive just so she can get to some place where the grass is greener and she can start climbing social ladders again. She doesn't have any useful skills, either.

The retainers are the interpreters. They are dutiful, quiet and actually quite bland. They don't have any weapon skills. They are only helping out the Lord Fhobar because the pay is good and work easy. They will probably have some cute cover story that will allow them to go free if things go bad.

Feel free to expand and change this work as needed. Mini-adventures are designed to be fleshed out by the referee as he sees fit. You will need to set up the NPCs using the stock lists from the *Space:1889* rules.

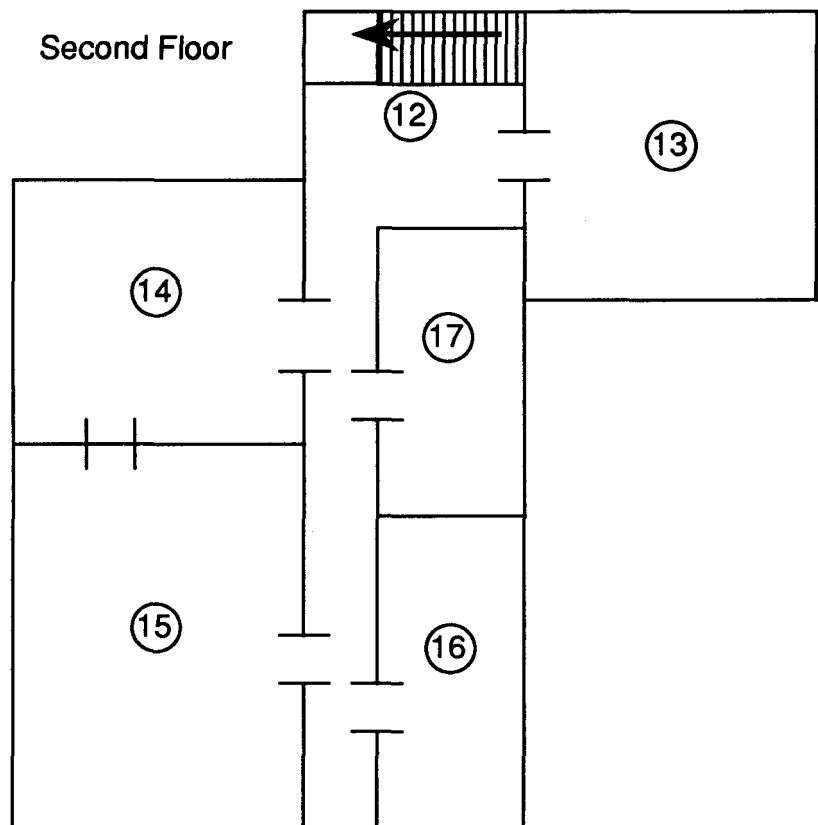
On to the story.



**HOUSE TRANX**



**Legend**

- 1) Guard Room (Now Unoccupied)
- 2) Main Door
- 3) Cloak and Robe Room
- 4) Stairs to 2nd Floor
- 5) Library
- 6) Offices of Chamberlain and Staff
- 7) Pantry
- 8) Kitchen
- 9) Lady's Private Room
- 10) Lord's Private Room
- 11) Great Hall/Dining Room
- 12) 2nd Floor Landing
- 13) Open Air Terrace
- 14) Lady's Bedroom
- 15) Master Bedroom
- 16) Children's Room
- 17) Children's or Nurse's Room



NOTE: Doorways are indicated as  or , either with no door (1) present, or with a door (2).

One can assume 1 window per room, all doors to the outside are closed and locked, inside doors are open or not locked.

## THE PROPOSAL

ONCE YOU have your group of players together, you will need to motivate, start or otherwise pass through the general vicinity of (but not in) Thoth, a city-state off the northeast section of British Mars. Ideally, they should be about two hours from the city proper, resting up after some other adventure you've agonized them through.

*After finishing up the last outing, your party finds itself relaxing at the Rumpled Ruumet Inn not far from Thoth, a city-state to the northeast of Syrtis Major. The Inn, owned by one Charles Long, an ex-Royal Marine, acts as a regional watering hole for the Europeans that pass through this part of Mars. Most human travelers make it a point to stop in if they are in the area. With the rumblings of a religious schism between certain factions brewing in Thoth, more than a few humans have made their way here to stay clear of any problems. A cross between an English pub and hotel, the Rumpled Ruumet is a welcome breath of Earth with an exotic backdrop.*

*Having been tired when you arrive, you people spent a fair portion of your loose cash on entertainment and spirits. Over the last two days you've become very well known by the local patrons, employees and the owner himself. You have even taken care not to repeat too often your tales of derring-do, so as to not become boring to the new-found friends your purchases have made. This has made you popular and has allowed for the information of your presence here to circulate amongst the humans that have come and gone these past two days. Lucky for you.*

At this point, the characters should be in the bar area during the midmorning, once again delighting in spirits, when they notice a man enter, looking to be in his mid-30s, with light brown thinning hair, wearing clothing of different shades of brown, with a British accent, carrying a Colt Single Action Army revolver strapped to his hip. He goes up to the bartender and says a few words to him. The bartender waves towards their table and says a couple of the party member's names to the stranger, then goes back to work.

The man goes over to their table and introduces himself as Clive

Estes and relates to them what he's after. Clive had gone to Thoth to meet a potential native patron and enter his employment as a middle-man for trade purposes between human merchants and Martians. When Clive got to town two days ago and tried to report in, he found that a religious power struggle had broken out and that the Lord he was to meet has been "detained" pending review of his religious affiliation. Making contact with the household, he offered to go for help. The offer was accepted and Lord Fhobar in secret drafted the following message that Clive hands over in an envelope:

*Friends:*

*I, Lord Fhobar, second cousin to the current Prince of Thoth, greet you. I regret that I cannot come in person but I have been otherwise held. Due to the current political problems I have decided to join my nephews' household in exile in Karkarham. I wish to retain your services to help me achieve this goal.*

*Currently I am being held prisoner in my manor in Thoth. My guards are six fanatics of the new regime. They are armed with swords and spears, though I have seen two with rifles. Most of the day I am locked in my suite on the second floor while they stay on the ground floor. Every evening I am allowed to read in my library for two hours.*

*My loyal retainer, who has given you this letter, will provide you with directions and help. Together you all should be able to affect my rescue from these religious heathens. If you succeed in my liberation and transport me to the Thoth landing grounds where a ship in secret stands ready to deliver me from my persecutors, I shall see that you are well rewarded.*

Lord Fhobar

House Tranx — Thoth, City-State

Also in the envelope is an official document with Lord Fhobar's signature and seal (matching the letter) and a cashier's check for £500 sterling. The document promises another £1000 sterling on delivery of Lord Fhobar to his ship. If the

characters check out the document and letter, they will find out that they are drawn up by the same hand. The check will be honored at full value at this Inn. Lord Fhobar is known by folks here to be a notable in the city.

## THOTH

THOTH IS a lesser city-state with only one canal passing through it. It is considered somewhat of a backwater in the scheme of things. The only real traffic that passes through is that of traders and merchants stopping to sell some items to get enough money to continue their journey to more lucrative markets. So, at best, traders don't stay longer than a day or two.

If the characters want to do any research beyond this point, they can ask around the Inn on the subject. They will learn that Thoth is pretty much the standard Martian feudal city-state, but that in the last month or so it has become more and more of a religious bureaucracy. Fanatics of one of the local religions have, in effect, swayed enough of the population over to their side that they have been able to ooze into control of the government. In short, the fundamentalist belief that drives this group is that any opposition (however faint or muted) must be rigorously segregated and then disposed of.

Though civil unrest has been common, the landing grounds and merchants quarter of Thoth have been relatively unaffected by events. By common consent these areas are considered neutral, nonpartisan zones "free" to continue their affairs as they did before. However, the goings and comings are now under the strict, watchful eyes of the "truth squads" that act as guards and security. The landing ground, though, has its own security people who also double-check the comings and goings of traffic. Business at the grounds has remained fairly con-

stant, though there has been an increase in Martians attempting to secure some sort of passage to other, more tolerant climates, on the few trade ships stopping during these troubled times.

Since the local government is still trying to consolidate their rule during this time of transition, a state of semi-martial law exists in Thoth proper and its immediate surrounding suburbs (which does *not* include the area of the Rumpled Ruumet). The major provisions which would affect the party are that of carrying weapons and not being a member of the security forces that is now forbidden; violation of which is punishable by confiscation of all goods and a public flogging.

Humans are viewed with suspicion, being seen as the potential agents of unrest and foes of the new religion. So, it has been announced that the Red Men are to stay either in the Merchant's Quarter, on the landing grounds, or out of Thoth proper altogether. Violation of this injunction without proper prior clearance means humans give up any protection that they could claim and so fall under Thothian law (New Regime), which means they are viewed as agents of evil, reactionaries, etc. and liable for imprisonment.

The landing field at Thoth where the party is to transport Lord Fhobar is about a mile south of the city center. The manor Lord Fhobar is currently detained in is positioned about three miles northwest of the landing ground. Traveling from the Rumpled Ruumet to the manor should take about three hours by

ground transportation.

Should the party think to acquire a flier or cloudship of some sort to try a rescue, Clive will tell them that such a craft *must* fly in and out of Thoth on a very strict flight path. Deviations are not permitted (fear of gun running or rebels being brought in) and such craft are immediately stopped and searched. The lucky ones are not confiscated. If the party owns their own flier, The Rumpled Ruumet has a small landing ground where the ship may land, thus avoiding the grounds at Thoth proper. If the players decide to try to bring Lord Fhobar back there, Clive will admonish them that if detected, the authorities will believe that *all* the humans in this here-to-fore left alone zone are now plotting against the government and the reaction will be swift and very unpleasant for those left behind. Besides, the Lord has made his connections. The party are the agents to achieve these connections.

Clive, however, has gotten hold of a native wagon pulled by two Ruumet Breehrs. Two loyal members of Lord Fhobar's household will act as drivers and interpreters. The wagon is big enough for the party to be in. Clive has even managed to acquire six religious robes for the use of the group. While it will be very difficult for a human to pass as a Martian in the light of day, in the darkness and/or with Theatrics, the party might be able to fool inquisitive patrols should things get interesting.



## HOUSE TRANX

ON THEIR JOURNEY by cart towards the House Tranx, it is very possible (in fact, count on it) that our noble heroes will come up upon other groups on the road. Since the trip should last about three hours, the following tables have been set up to account for whichever ground path they might decide to take. Check against the appropriate one every half an hour for a total of six potential encounters. Six is enough, so don't overload your players with too many problems. Crafty referees will naturally load the problems into *each* encounter, not extend the total number of them.

### Encounter Tables:

#### Road:

##### Die

#### Roll Encounter

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Civilians (2D6) unarmed        |
| 2 | Civilians (1D6) with a wagon   |
| 3 | Civilians (1-3) with a cart    |
| 4 | Militia Patrol moving (1D6)    |
| 5 | Militia Checkpoint (1D6)       |
| 6 | Militia Flier (1D6) At least 2 |

#### In Town:

##### Die

#### Roll Encounter

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Civilians (1-3)             |
| 2 | Civilians (1D6)             |
| 3 | Civilians (2D6)             |
| 4 | Militia Patrol moving (1-3) |
| 5 | Militia Patrol wagon (2D6)  |
| 6 | Militia Checkpoint (2D6)    |

All the civilians above are armed with, at best, daggers or knives. They may have information on the location of Militia Patrols and

so forth. Rolling a 1-2 on a D6 means they have such knowledge and the *next* encounter roll should be minus 2 to the die roll. Should the referee roll a 6, then these poor civilians are totally bewildered and have no idea what's going on. *Add 2* to the next encounter roll.

Sadistic referees might want a chance for one of these so-called civilian parties to actually be brigands or the like. If you are so inclined, arm them with concealed short type swords and a spear or two. Nothing more than a flintlock pistol. Remember, the thieves will think that this is a cart of religious folk and should be wary of getting on the bad side of the new regime by attacking its adherents.

Militia encounters will have most members armed with swords, a couple of spears and at least two flintlock muskets. Patrols will want to check up on where the party is headed. Checkpoints will want to search the wagon for contraband or wanted persons. The flier will swoop down and the occupants will be looking specifically for a human named Clive. He will be wanted as a known lawbreaker and felon rumored to be in league with rebels in the city. The flier is armed with a bow sweeper and referees can use the Sky Sailer located elsewhere in this module as a handy craft.

Obviously, characters with high totals in Theatrics, Eloquence, Linguistics, etc. should do well. If these types are not present, allow the interpreters to have some of them.

Lord Fhobar, for all his nobility, was not very welcomed by his sec-

ond cousin, the former Prince, when he came to Thoth. He has been on the outs with the family here due to shenanigans he had pulled in Alclyon last year, causing our friend the Lord to be tried in absentia there. Grudgingly, his relations here in Thoth took him in and dumped him in a small manor a couple of miles from the palace proper.

While not being overly regal or spacious, it served him well as a potential stepping stone to possible advancement. At any rate, it did. He is confined to the upper stairs suite with his consort Alechia. The upper windows have been barred and access to the upper floor is via one stairwell.

The party will note if they observe (or Clive will state if there's no time) that two of the guards circle the manor, wandering through the grounds, then trade off with other guards inside. These outside guards have the two flintlocks. There are three others staying on the ground floor armed with spears and swords (and *one* flintlock musket, which is unloaded at the start of things). The inside guards spend their time in the kitchen, nibbling on the dainties that stock Lord Fhobar's pantry.

Upstairs, one other guard stays at the top of the stairs, keeping an eye on whoever might want to travel that way. If the Lord is in the downstairs library, this guard will be outside that door keeping watch. He has a flintlock pistol and a spear. Lord Fhobar will insist that Alechia accompany him to safety. He won't take no for an answer.

## FINISHING THE JOB

SHOULD THE characters succeed in taking off with Lord Fhobar, the authorities will not learn about this for about a half an hour — unless, of course, there is a surprise inspection made to insure that our pal, the Lord, is still detained, and that the guards have not succumbed to secular blandishments such as strong drink or filched dainties from pantries and the like. How soon might this inspection occur, you ask? If the players were heedless enough to use a flier or let a guard escape — how about the next instant *after* they lay their hands on the Lord? Roll 2D6 plus 2 to arrive at the number of inspectors that show up on the road outside the fence surrounding the manor. Armed with lots of muskets, too. At least, *I* would arm them that way. With a very determined religious officer in charge just itching to discover moral corruption somewhere. The fact that there are heathen Red Men (and/or Women) from Earth present will make for an even better chance for this officer to gain renown.

Players who place the other humans back at the Rumpled Ruumet in such danger should receive *negative* renown points. If they complain about this treatment, too bad. Innocent bystanders should not fall prey to player greed. One might ask — then won't the authorities know anyway from the survivors that humans were involved? Yes, if the players are so careless as to leave survivors. The danger to all humans is such that it is a *must* no one survives.

This rescue calls for using stealth and surprise to overcome all

opposition to squelch the chance of all humans suffering. Humans on the prowl in wagons could have a good cover story worked up if they get detected by militia patrols so that other humans don't suffer. Humans using fliers after dark in restricted areas, and killing loyal members of the militia have gone beyond the limits the zealots will take.

When the authorities do learn, the roads all around the area will be filled with patrols looking for the departing Lord. If you, as referee, wish to keep using the Encounter Tables, add 2 to all die rolls from this point on.

Once they arrive at the landing grounds, about three miles southeast of the manor via town, the party will find a rather lengthy line of people awaiting entrance there. These Martians are waiting to book passage on any ship to get away from this place. Most of their remaining belongings are with them as well as what valuables they could bring along. This makes them very leery of strangers who might want to rob them or detain them here so that they can't get away before some religious group comes along and confiscates their remaining assets. Hence, they will *not* be receptive to helping anyone, (especially people dressed as religious devotees, if the party didn't change), letting people take "cuts" into the line ahead, or handing out information.

There is also a checkpoint of Militia outside the gate (the field has been fenced in with a Martian form of wire fence) who checks out everyone trying to enter. This 2D6 patrol is augmented by a similar one about

100 yards to the south along the perimeter who watch the merchant's gate.

At this point, once the party has safely gotten into the landing field, or is getting ready to drop the Lord off at some other safe point where he can board a ship, Clive Estes will act. He will have worked to be near the Lord during the entire trip. Suddenly, while passing in front of Lord Fhobar in an unobserved (by other than party members) spot, the Lord will cry out and fall. Clive will pull his knife from the Lord's chest and quickly stoop to retrieve the diadem the Lord wears (or, I guess, *wore*) on his forehead. Clive will quickly hiss that the two interpreters and Alechia must keep silent for fear they will cry out and alert others. He should pull his weapon and train it on these three.

When the party demands an explanation, Clive will pull out a very official document from the city-state of Alclyon stating that Lord Fhobar has been found guilty of the torture deaths of several of his (former) servants and has been condemned to death in a *bsentia*. The bearer bringing in proof of his death will receive the equivalent of £500 sterling as a bounty. Clive, pointing out that he's a bounty hunter by trade, has completed his job. He leaves the jewels and money the Lord has about him to the party and will take his leave. The party must deal with the retainers and Alechia, as well as their own safe retreat. They may be able to "persuade" Clive to stick around a bit, but he will go as soon as he can manage it. And, after all, the party will make about £300 sterling off the body of Lord Fhobar.

## BOUNTY HUNTERS

THE LAW IS NOT, despite what you might think, an iron fist attached to keen sighted eyes that unerringly seeks out criminals and unfailingly brings them to justice. Even in the most civilized locations on Earth, there are locations and zones where the law is simply unable to have any effect in righting wrongs and bringing evildoers to the courts for punishment.

In such cases (and especially when the rich and titled are involved), methods outside of the normal jurisprudence system are invoked. Specialized mercenaries hired for the express purpose of finding criminals (and/or administering justice) are sought out for these cases. Bounty hunters, as they are called, hunting human prey for the tangible monetary rewards offered in the form of a bounty for the return of the criminal or the demise of same.

While your players fall, to some extent, within this category, we are talking here about specialists whose lives are spent hunting down and bringing to justice that most dangerous of prey: human beings. Or, depending on the money and contacts, Martians. Either potential victim will do, after all, what counts is the fee to perform the job.

While native Martian bounty hunters do exist within their society, Mars is the type of exotic location that calls out to humans with an urge to exist and prosper (however you define that word) on the edge of known civilization. Martian civilization being unknown only adds to the lure.

Due to the lack of enforcement of human (read "British") law on the fringes of the Royal Colony and the inability of some local law enforcement groups to adequately control their areas, bounties are unfortunately becoming a somewhat more increasingly common method of capturing or removing specific criminals.

Though this frontier justice is tolerated at best, the killing of criminals is sanctioned only for those offenders convicted and sentenced to death. The local native constabularies, on the other hand, consider any type of bounty hunter as just a paid vigilante. More often than not, bounty hunters are deemed criminals for the actions that they perform.

No doubt this is because bounty hunters usually tend to do their work somewhat "outside" the framework of law as it is understood by the authorities. Hence, the stretching or breaking of laws as necessary to track down and incapacitate the true criminal as well. In fact, the best bounty hunter is a criminal as well. In fact, the best bounty hunters are very often only a hairs-breadth away from being pursued and hunted down themselves.

Due to this line of work, a comradeship tends to build up between these professionals. While respecting each others' skills and abilities, quarrels are common over such things as hunting ranges, operating territories, and the like. Every bounty hunter knows his territory well and expects to own the right to track down those criminals with bounties who are operating within

"their" area. Outsiders are *not* welcome. Most areas though are open to regular traffic and as such, few such marked criminals stick around for long. So if the prey moves about, so does the pursuer.

Bounty hunting as a skill is most frequently learned at the hands of another such artiste, which means that this is the surest way to break into the trade. Trying to learn on your own is a quick way to end a budding career. However, this does not mean that the teacher and student have to remain friends, or even civil. While bounty hunters may go to the aid of a colleague whom they respect, few will rely upon such help when in dire need. Friends do not remain as such for very long in this lonely profession.

Naturally, on Mars there is another complication in all of this. Native bounty hunters are far more "territorial" against human rivals than other Martians. This is only natural, given sentient behavior. Also, it would take a very talented human quite a long time to become as good as a native, born and raised in the culture they were both operating in.

Those of you who are impatient will already know the obvious: humans will stand out rather glaringly in a crowd on Mars. So, how can humans ever hope to deal with all the potential bounty cases? They can't. But native Martians would be equally out of place in the city haunts of humans. As a general rule, humans employ humans to hunt humans, Martians employ Martians to hunt Martians. But not always.



## CLIVE ESTES (Veteran NPC)

THINGS JUST seemed to work out that way, but Clive never intended to make bounty work his career. Adventuring was more his style, seeing the sights and wonders of the world on a (starvation) budget. The wanderlust make him loathe to stay in one spot for any length of time except to earn enough money to move on. His British accent bought him more drinks and meals (out of sheer curiosity) than he could ever count.

However, while tooling around in the Great American West in the early 80's, Clive fell into the center of a range war and saw a lot of innocent people killed. His sense of fair play moved him to want to help, his empty pockets encouraged him further. Dandy Massey, a bounty hunter in it for the money only, took a liking to Clive, and took him under his (Dandy's) wing for a little on-the-job training.

Well, Clive ended up at the head of the class and had a new skill to tour around with, supplying him with the necessary cash to keep on moving and viewing the sights. Once he heard the tales of the Martian colonies and their need for law enforcement (pirates, you'll remember), it was only a matter of time before ole Clive booked an economy bunk to the Red Planet.

Things haven't yet worked out too well for Clive on Mars. While he's got a good command of English, he hasn't yet got any real clue to *any* Martian dialect. He is trying to learn, though. This does tend to somewhat limit his ability, as you might guess,

to work among Martians.

Therefore, Clive has hit on a scheme to help him with his work. Where possible, he cozies up to humans able to speak some Martian language. On one pretense or another, he fibs about what he's up to and generally gets them to help him out until such time as he can accomplish his job. As you can see, this method will not always be readily available for every job. He's clever, though, and will always find a way around his language barrier. Too bad they don't always work. In any case, it does make the job exciting.

Clive does not think of what executions he does as "killing". He feels that once a crime warranting death is committed and is so noted by *official courts*, (not just by civilians or in the area of a vendetta), the perpetrator forfeits all the rights we hold to be self-evident. At that instant, the intended victim simply becomes prey, a job to perform satisfactorily in order to fulfill the contract. Just the facts, please. He never brags about his work, so no one really knows how good he might be.

### Attributes Skills

STR: 5	Fisticuffs 5, Throwing 3
AGL: 4	Stealth 4, Marksmanship 3 (pistol)
END: 4	Wilderness Travel 3, Fieldcraft 2, Tracking 2
INT: 4	Observation 4
CHR: 2	Eloquence 1, Linguistics 2
SOC: 2	Riding 1

Clive Estes is a Bounty Hunter  
**Motives:** Fair, Steady, Frugal.

**Appearance:** Clive dresses comfortably, wearing clothes that run the gamut of shades of brown. They are well maintained, but are, of course, not new. He has somewhat thinning hair, brown eyes, a quick wit and happy demeanor. He makes a good traveling companion, telling stories about the sights and scenes he's witnessed. He rarely mentions the line of work he's in and *never* gives details if he does. "That comes under the heading of my business," is his response. Any job requiring outside help will have a cover story to hide the fact that he's out to kill or capture someone.

Clive carries a Single Action Colt .44 as a weapon of choice and since ammunition for this gun is non-too plentiful, he will use as his general defense weapon a Martini-Henry breech loading carbine (which kicks like a mule, but suits Clive for what he wants. And the rounds are inexpensive).

He also has the usual camping gear, tent and other equipment for traveling in the wilds. Though he has done a few jobs rurally, he prefers (for now) the city, since the chances of finding humans to use as interpreters is far higher in town rather than the open plains. Should he come across humans in the country, he will immediately work to ingratiate himself into the group. While with them, he will prove to be helpful, take part in all actions, and see things through to the end. But he won't stay with any one group for any real length of time. Too much to see, you know.



# THE LIFTWOOD CONSPIRACY

## Duty for the Empire calls!

The government of Her Majesty Queen Victoria asks for volunteers to undertake a secret expedition to the forbidden liftwood groves of the Astusapes Highlands. There, work will be done to help unlock the secrets of this marvelous tree that provides the vital "lift" for the cloudships of Mars as well as Earth.

Others (you have heard) have made this type of attempt and failed. Will your expedition perhaps be a successful one? If so, what will the cost be of your success? Or the price for your failure?

This module provides the needed charts, tables and major NPC's necessary for high adventure and intrigue on the planet Mars. High Martians, Canal Martians, human adventurers and bureaucratic middlemen; they're all here to assist or hinder your efforts, depending how you deal with them. Carefully, if you're lucky.

Cloudship combat is a feature of *The Liftwood Conspiracy* and the necessary ship charts and statistics for use either with the **Space: 1889** or **Sky Galleons of Mars** aerial rules are included, along with new ships to expand your fleet.

No specific date or year has been set for this work, so referees may run it as a stand alone adventure or add it into any on-going campaign. Either way, get your own conspiracy started immediately! The Queen so expects.

**BONUS:** **Rescue at Thoth**, a mini-adventure of derring-do, is included in this module. Can your players rescue a Martian noble from the hands of religious fanatics without turning the city-state of Thoth against the resident humans? If you can't, the list of sacrifices will grow, and grow, and grow .....



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