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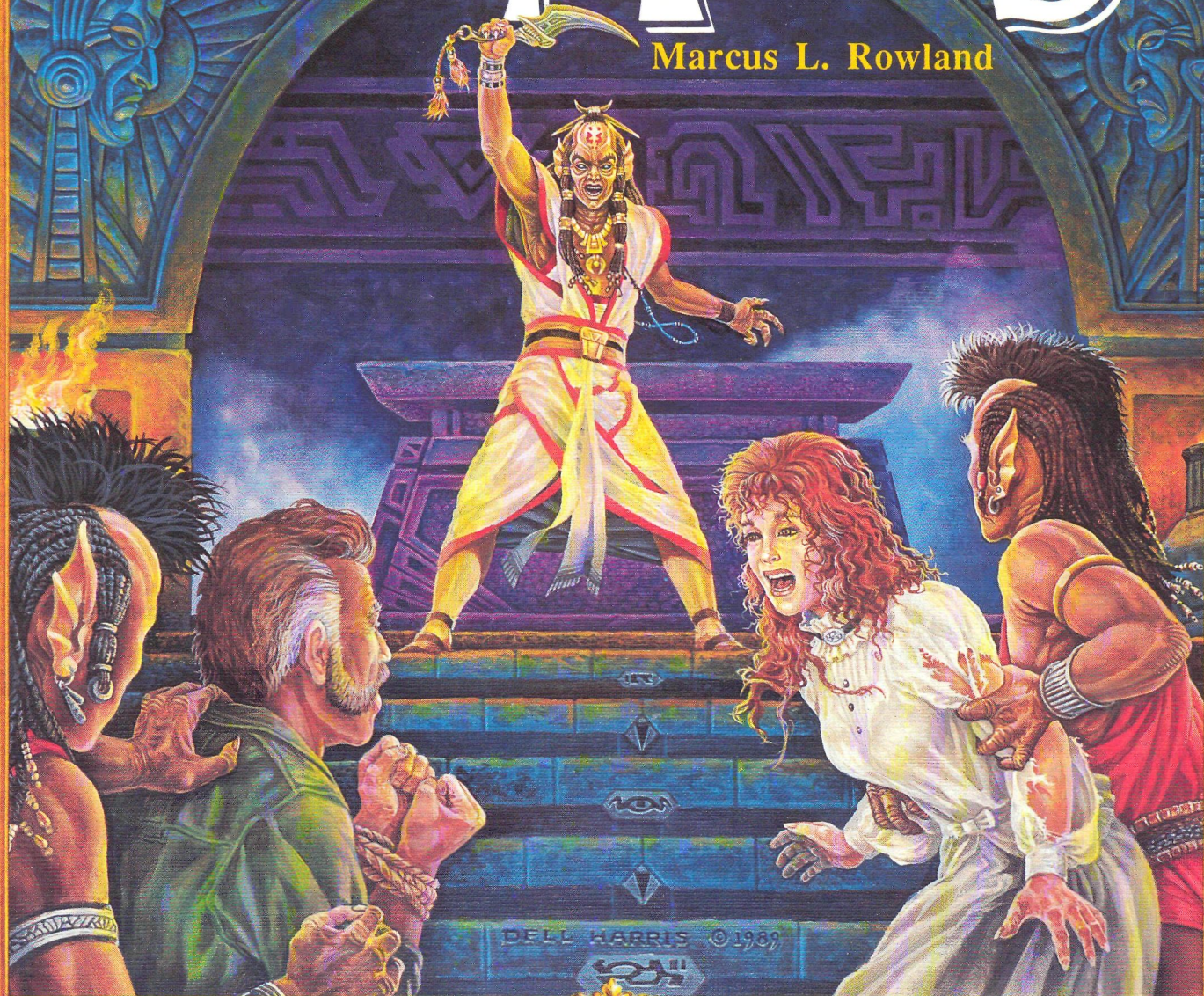
GDW 1907

CANAL PRIESTS OF

1889

MARS

Marcus L. Rowland



A Dying World...
A Reincarnation Cult...

GDW

And Assassinations
on 19th-Century Mars

Science-Fiction Role Playing in a More Civilized Time.



CANAL PRIESTS OF MARS

Marcus L. Rowland



CANAL PRIESTS OF MARS

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ISBN 1-55878-039-4.

Space: 1889 is GDW's trademark for its role-playing game of Victorian-era spacefaring.

A catalog of **Space: 1889** products is available from GDW.

Just write and ask.

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P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THIS ADVENTURE WAS influenced by countless romantic science-fiction novels, spaghetti westerns, pulp novels, TV serials, and many other sources. In particular:

A Fistful of Dynamite (film)

A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!

Harry Harrison

Gangsters (1970s BBC TV serial)

The Space Machine, Christopher

Priest

W. G. Grace's Last Case, William Rushton

Diamonds are Forever, Ian Fleming

Help (film)

The Golden Child (film)

Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (film)

She, H. Rider Haggard

The Man Born to be King, Rudyard Kipling

Deadly Litter, James White

An article in an old issue of *New Scientist*, which I can no longer find, kindled my interest in perpetual-motion machines and suggested this use for liftwood.

Special thanks to John Dallman and Roger Robinson for cricket information, to Bridget Wilkinson for thoughts on Martian physiology, to Brian Ameringen for recipes and puns, and to these and other friends for listening to the plot and laughing at the right places.

Finally, I would like to thank the players at Games Fair '89 who volunteered to run through an early version of this adventure at extremely short notice, and made many valuable suggestions.

—Marcus L. Rowland



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Sniper at the Gates of Dawn

SAND GRAINS RUSTLE under a faint dry breeze, occasionally glowing and crackling where friction has built up charges of static electricity. The glow is slowly lost as a tiny moon rises above distant hills, and the powdery sand dunes are dimly illuminated by its feeble light. Far away, the shrill cry of some small animal which has encountered a larger predator is swiftly extinguished as it dies. It is night at the edge of the Martian desert.

Two cloaked and hooded figures work their way along one of the sand ridges, making sure they are never silhouetted against the moonlight. Sand shoes muffle their footsteps and reduce their tracks to shallow depressions, quickly erased by the chilly night wind. Now and again a faint clink of metal on metal is heard. Eventually they reach their goal—a near-vertical ridge of ancient rock, about 80 feet high, that separates the desert from the canal zone. They shed their shoes and start to climb.

From the summit it is possible to smell the slightly moist air of the canal zone. One of the Martians wrinkles his nose and sniffs disapprovingly. The other gestures for silence, pointing at some dim lights at the base of the slope below the ridge. Carefully they erect a small tent painted the exact color of the rock and

camouflage it with sand and shards of rock.

They freeze as they hear the thumping rhythm of a small troop of gashant-mounted cavalry patrolling lower down the hill, and wait for the patrol to ride past before completing their work and entering the tent.

Dawn. The shrill yapping of a small pack of roogies welcomes the first rays of the rising Sun, followed by the grunts and cries of various domesticated animals. The dim light reveals a walled compound containing several buildings and a luxuriant garden a hundred yards from the base of the ridge. A door bangs as an early riser starts the day's chores.

On the ridge, a flap in the side of the tent opens to reveal a long metal gun barrel, followed by the tube of a spyglass with a deep hood around the lens. Both have been carefully scoured and rusted to stop them from reflecting the light.

Time passes. As the morning gets brighter, the noise of a gong drifts out from the compound, and Martians stream into the largest building.

"Where is he?" says one of the watchers on the ridge.

"Patience. It's not bright enough for a clear shot yet. He always goes into the garden after they finish their prayers. I'll get him then."

Later, as the compound dwellers

return from prayers, the duo intensify their watch.

"Is that him?"

"No. Too young, and he isn't wearing the amulet."

"That one, then?"

"Too old and fat." An old priest walks into the garden accompanied by two richly clothed handmaidens and a small boy.

"Now!"

The long gun booms, and a heavy ball whistles down to the garden. The boy staggers back and falls. He twitches and lies still.

"Perfect! He is down—you have hit him in the heart!"

"Praise to the Old Ones! The Worm shall triumph!" A fusillade of musket shots bursts forth from guards on the compound wall, aimed at the gun's smoke but falling far short. As the first troops ride from the compound towards the hill, the cultists draw their swords and prepare to die for their faith.

Afternoon. Priests lay out the body of the boy. A line of mourners waits to pay last respects. In one of the upper chambers the acting high priest talks to his acolytes.

"Did either cultist say anything before he died?"

"No. Both died in the fight."

"Have Lieutenant Wee'zuus disciplined. He should have taken them alive."

"It shall be done."

"How did they identify the high priest?"

"We suspect one of the servants, Sha'eenda Hus'aalsh. She left the temple 10 days ago to visit a sick sister in Parhoon. None of the other women had heard of this sister before."

"Find out if the story is true—if not, I doubt that we'll see her again. Check everyone; there is obviously a spy in the temple. Report to me if you learn anything. I'll be with the astrologer."

"Let us hope that he died at an auspicious moment."

"We'll soon know. Somehow I doubt it. This assassination was carefully planned. They wouldn't make such a simple mistake."

In one of the towers of the temple, an aging priest pores over a huge sheet of parchment covered with complex signs and formulas. He studies an orrery, thumbs an abacus, then consults a thick scroll. He frowns in disbelief, crumples the parchment, and starts his calculations again.

Behind him, the acting high priest coughs and asks, "Do you have anything for me yet?"

"I must have made a mistake. There's no way that this can be right. Come back in the evening. I should have finished by then."

Evening. The astrologer completes his fifth series of equations and studies the result again. He turns to the acting high priest.

"I've checked this by three different methods, and I get the same thing every time."

"Go on. Where will he be born? Parhoon? Umbra?"

"If only it were as simple as that."

"One of the kraags? You don't mean that he will be born a savage!"

"It's worse than that. I can't explain this result at all. By every test I can make, he will not be born anywhere on Mars! The high priest will be reborn *in the skies!*"

"How can that be possible?"

"See here, and here. Again and again, the sky symbol, linked to this planet. There is no doubt. He will be reincarnated in the heavens."

"Which planet is that?"

"One of the inner ones. Does it matter?"

"No. This is madness. How can you explain it?"

"I don't know. I just don't know."

When Edison crash-landed on Mars, the acting high priest got his answer....



Unto Us a Child is Born



THE EVENTS OF the prologue took place several years before Edison's historic flight.

Most Martians are apathetic about the gradual decay of their planet, but there are some exceptions. Much of the work of reclamation and canal repair is coordinated by the Canal Keepers of Gaaryan, a religion reputedly founded by Seldon II which is possibly the most widespread religion on Mars. The priests consider it their sacred duty to repair the entire canal system. The high priest of the cult is

believed to be Seldon reincarnated. If he dies, his soul enters another child who is conceived at the exact moment of the previous priest's death. The birthplace of the new high priest is found by a complicated astrological process which narrows down the search to a small area. Patient investigation then finds a child who was conceived at the exact moment the high priest died. All cult activities, other than routine operation of locks and other canal facilities, are suspended during the search for the new high priest.

THE WORM CULTISTS

FOLLOWERS OF THE Cult of the Worm believe that Mars is doomed. Any attempt to stop the inevitable decline of the Martian race is treated as darkest heresy. Naturally, they are opposed to groups like the Canal Keepers who try to fight the decay of civilization. Although the Worm Cult originated with the High Martians, there are adherents amongst all three Martian races, and many subcults exist with little or no connection to the original cult (whose nature is revealed in *Beastmen of Mars*).

ASSASSINATION PLAN

A HIGH PRIEST of the Canal Keepers died three Martian years before the events of the prologue, and the

search for a replacement took almost a year. Canal transport was badly disrupted for much of that time. Members of one of the Canal Martian subcults of the Worm realized that they could paralyze the Canal Keepers by making them repeat the process in circumstances which would make it almost impossible to find an heir.

The cultists knew that the new high priest was selected by astrological divination. They gave their own astrologer all the information they could find on the birth of the current high priest and instructed him to find a moment of death that would cause the maximum amount of confusion. He succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

Once every nine years the system produced an extraordinary result, a period of a few hours in which no possible birthplace existed on Mars! By that time the child high priest would be three years old, roughly five in Earth years.

The Worm Cultists contacted Sha'eenda Hus'aalsh, a temple servant who was their principal spy at the Canal Keepers' main temple near Gaaryan. She wasn't in a position to assassinate the child, but she could describe him and draw his picture. He could also be identified by the Amulet of Seldon, a medallion that is worn by the high priest.

After the child was killed, events proceeded as the Worm Cultists expected. The Canal Keepers lost much of their drive, and the condition of many canals deteriorated. No new reclamation works have been undertaken by the Keepers, though some local governments run their own repair projects on a smaller scale.

Most European colonists don't know of the cult's former importance. The knowledgeable minority think that it has died out. No Earthman is aware of the importance of Seldon's reincarnation in this religion; it is one of the most sacred secrets of the faith, never discussed with outsiders.

SELDON REBORN

WHEN EDISON LANDED, the Canal Keepers decided there could only be one explanation for the mystery; the reincarnated high priest had been conceived (and presumably born) as an Earthman. Unfortunately it took them many years to learn more of Earth and refine their astrological techniques to deal with conditions on another planet. Eventually they were able to calculate the exact place of birth. Careful investigation has narrowed the search down to one man: one of the player characters!

The Canal Keepers have decided to lure the reincarnation of Seldon to Mars and enthrone him as their new high priest. When this has been done, they want to ensure that the next high priest will be born on Mars. Accordingly, he must spend the rest of his life in their temple. To stop him from feeling lonely, he must be accompanied by a few friends. The acting high priest is now on Earth, arranging the final details of a complex plot to lure "Seldon" to Mars.

Naturally the Worm Cultists know that something is going on, but they don't have many details. The Keepers weeded out most of their agents after the assassination, and the Worm Cultists have no one in the inner circle of the faith. They have guessed that the Keepers are looking for the new high priest on Earth and are outraged

at the thought of such a blasphemous succession. Although their religion does not stress reincarnation, the Worm Cultists are not free of superstition. They won't frustrate the Canal Keepers' plan by revealing the truth to "Seldon," in case this information somehow reactivates his memories of previous incarnations. After all, Seldon would be their most deadly enemy if he were reborn, and it's best to take no chances.

Sha'eenda Hus'aalsh is now the Worm Cult's agent on Earth and has recruited several helpers in the Martian quarter of London's Whitechapel. Knowing that most Martians loathe the Worm Cult, she has tricked her recruits into believing that she is a priestess of the Ground Cleanser Cult, whose main aim is to end Terran colonialism on Mars. She disguises ritual killings as assassinations and initiation ceremonies, and she has ensnared many young Martians in her web of deceit. She is poised to strike as soon as she learns the identity of the new high priest.

Naturally the characters know nothing of these events. As the adventure opens, they are in London dealing with an entirely different matter.

CHOOSING SELDON

ASK ALL THE PLAYERS to choose birth dates for their characters. Don't explain why you are doing this.

Any character who was born before 1870 (age 19 or older in 1889) could be the reincarnated high priest of the Canal Keepers. Although the high priest is traditionally male, the Canal Keepers believe that it is possible for a male spirit to reincarnate in a female body, so female player characters need not be totally ruled out of con-

sideration as the possible reborn high priest.

Martian player characters should not be Seldon reincarnated, since the Canal Keepers would find them, and the problems described previously would not have even occurred. Martian player characters should *not* be members of the Canal Keeper cult. They should know that the religion exists and that it used to do a lot to keep the canals navigable, but the players should not know any other details of the faith.

Other nonhumans may be Seldon reborn; however, you will need to change the details of the way the priests find the character to reflect his racial origin.

It isn't necessary to make a final choice until the team arrives at the Canal Keepers' temple at Gaaryan. Problems might occur if you select a character who is killed early in the adventure or one run by a player who, later drops out of the campaign. It is probably best to make a final selection later in the adventure and to choose a character who has acted in a suitably heroic manner.

Any character volunteering to carry the Amulet of Seldon for unselfish reasons, and without prompting, should be preferred in the role of Seldon reborn.

PRELIMINARY EVENTS

THIS ADVENTURE contains a large number of incidents which usually have several possible results. It isn't possible to predict all the ways in which the PCs might behave, so be prepared to treat the text as a springboard for your own improvisation. If the plot doesn't seem to be working as written, change the order of events.

TO FIND AN HONEST MAN

THE PLAYERS ARE in London at the conclusion of a recent adventure. While in their lodgings or at their club, a letter addressed to them arrives by messenger. The letter is a brief note on the stationary of a legal firm, and a business card is enclosed. The card is reproduced below. The note reads:

My Dear Sirs:

Please forgive the impertinence of addressing this correspondence directly to your attention without benefit of an introduction. However, time is of some importance in the business at hand, as you will see if you would do me the very great honor of joining me in my chambers this afternoon at three. I represent a client who would appreciate your help in a delicate matter of some importance, but I cannot say more except by personal interview.

Anthony St. John Audley

Solicitor at Law

Audley, Butler, & Pryce

5A Fountain Court

Lincoln's Inn

Telephone Temple Bar 332

Characters familiar with London will recognize the Lincoln's Inn address as indicative of a respectable, established law firm, and the fact that Audley subscribes to the new telephone service bespeaks a certain prosperity.

A Visit to Lincoln's Inn

LINCOLN'S INN is part of the Inns of Court, a complex of old offices, gardens, and churches, including some buildings dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries. A strategic location near Fleet Street and the Old Bailey



Anthony St. John Audley (Veteran NPC)

AUDLEY IS A GOOD solicitor and can be entrusted with any legal problem. He won't discuss his clients' affairs under any circumstances. He knows many of the best civil and criminal barristers. One of the partners in his firm is a patent lawyer, a useful contact for inventors and other scientists.

Audley is not aware of the Canal Keepers' plans for the team. All he knows is what he has been told by his clients—essentially, the information he reveals to the team.

Motives: Honest, Fair.

Appearance: Audley is a soberly dressed, portly gentleman in his early sixties, gray-haired with a neat mustache. He has a habit of checking the time (on a large silver pocket watch) every two or three minutes, whether or not he is in a hurry. His middle name is pronounced *Sin-jen*.

NPC Type: Administrator **Experience:** Veteran **Marksman:** 1 **Attributes:** Mental **Arms:** Unarmed.

means the area is now used almost exclusively by the legal profession. The quiet, cobbled streets and courtyards are a total contrast to the hubbub of the surrounding streets; a small army of porters keep out the beggars and peddlers who would otherwise infest the site. Any adventurer of Social Level 1-2 must produce Audley's card to gain admission and will be escorted to his office by a suspicious porter.

The law offices occupy the ground floor of a distinguished Georgian building and are as cluttered with papers and document boxes as any other lawyer's chambers. Audley's room is expensively furnished and relatively clear of clutter, as befits the senior partner of the firm.

When the player characters arrive, Audley offers them sherry (or tea, if they prefer lighter refreshment), then explains that he represents a "distinguished foreign client" who is visit-

ing London. The client was impressed by the team's actions in its recent adventure (whatever that might have been) as reported in the *Times*. The client will soon travel to Mars on the new White Star liner *Princess Alexandra*. He will be carrying a precious antique and is extremely worried about its security. He would prefer to travel with a few trustworthy companions who could help prevent any accidents or theft.

The client would not think of insulting the team by offering a fee. However, Audley has suggested that an allowance for expenses might be in order—for example, five guineas (£5 5s) a day. Naturally the team would travel first class on round-trip tickets. There may be some haggling, and Audley is authorized to go somewhat higher. Shortly after a price has been agreed to, Audley's telephone rings. Audley listens for a moment, then says, "Show him in." A few seconds

later a clerk leads in a Martian. Audley says, "I'd like to introduce the representative of the archbishop of Gaaryan."

The Martian is a frail-looking youth in a somber gray robe. He wears incongruous steel-rimmed glasses with tinted lenses. As the youth enters, a faint smell of exotic spices, a little like a mixture of oil of cloves mixed with pepper, wafts from his robe.

When the door shuts, the Martian steps forward, bows, and says, "Forgive to be introducing self: I am Volace Zeenkeer, secretary-initiate to prelate of Gaaryan."

Once the formalities are complete, Zeenkeer recites the Canal Keeper cover story, concocted to explain their presence, need for help, and choice of the player characters.

He explains that when Edison landed on Mars, the church of Gaaryan was in decline, faltering in its "path of enlightenment through good works and opposition to evil Cult of Worm." The priests had decided that some vital spark of holiness must have departed from the religion. When Edison landed, they decided that "the pure power of faith which is moving many mountains" had gone to Earth.

For many years the priests debated the situation, deciding that the only way to "restore the goodness of all things" was to take their most sacred relic to Earth and recharge it at the "ice caps of Earth's power, from which your spiritual strength flows": Westminster Abbey, in London.

The Amulet

ZEENKEER REACHES into his robe and pulls out a flat, intricately carved wooden box, the size of a cigar case.

He makes a strange mystical sign and opens the box, pulling on a silver chain. As he pulls, the box gently rises into the air, and you realize that it is made of liftwood. Zeenkeer catches it before it floats away.

Zeenkeer says, "The Amulet of Seldon was made when Seldon conquered Mars and was worn by Seldon himself to consecrate his rule."

Suspended from the chain, the amulet is an oval bronze plaque four inches long by three wide and a quarter of an inch thick, fixed to a larger oval loop which secures it to the chain. A disk of quartz carved with a simple map is embedded in a hole in the plaque. Above it are three lines of strange hieroglyphics. Apart from a patina of age, it looks like the sort of gimcrack trinket that would sell for a few shillings in Cairo or Bengal.

The amulet is real and is as old as Zeenkeer claims. The "quartz disk" is a polished uncut diamond worth roughly £1000, but that is not obvious to anyone but an expert on gems. The map depicts the area around Gaaryan in Seldon's time, but it is engraved upside down (by Terran standards), with the southern ice cap at the top. The inscription is a poem in Son-Gaaryani—a promise that the canals shall be restored and that the waters will flow again, in the name of "Undying Seldon." Zeenkeer can't translate it well enough to convey the beauty of the words, and he won't try.

Since the amulet is so holy, the priests were originally accompanied by several guards. Worm Cultists learned that the amulet was on the move and ambushed the party near the abbey. One priest was killed, but the guards held off the cultists long enough for Zeenkeer to escape. He

now knows that there are Worm Cultists on Earth trying to steal the amulet; his room at the Savoy has been burgled, and Martians were seen leaving the building.

Zeenkeer decided that he must find "honest English gentlemen" who could be trusted to help look after the relic. He read a report of the party's latest exploits which praised the adventurers for their courage and honor. He tried to contact them through the government and was directed to "respected lawyer Mr. Audley" as someone who could arrange an introduction.

The amulet has now been blessed by the priest at Westminster Abbey, and for the return to Mars, Audley has persuaded the White Star Line to reserve some berths on the new liner *Princess Alexandra*, which leaves for Mars tomorrow. Obviously some risk is involved, but Zeenkeer seems convinced that no true Englishman could fail to help defeat the evil cultists and return the relic to its home on Mars.



The Princess Alexandra

A DAY TO REMEMBER

THE VAST BULK of the Princess Alexandra looms over the White Star Line terminal on the Sussex Downs. It's hard to believe such a gigantic object can fly. Your luggage is aboard, and you will follow it after a final ceremony to mark the maiden flight.

A brass band picks up a jaunty air as the prime minister prepares to cut a ribbon across the main gangplank. You strain to hear his speech, but the background noise makes it completely inaudible.

Nearby some photographers are loading oxygen tanks and a long-lensed camera onto an aerial steam launch. You've heard that they intend to follow the liner to 24,000 feet and

record the moment when the ether screws are activated.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

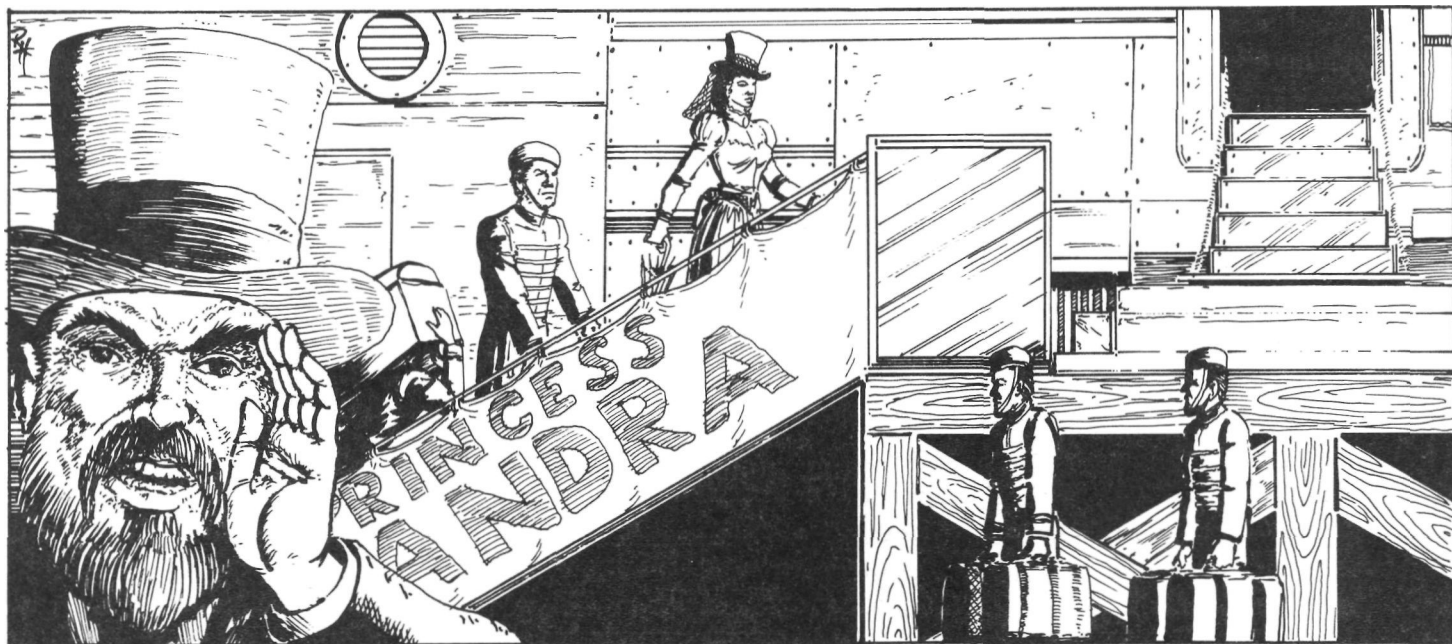
As YOU BOARD the Princess Alexandra you realize you are ill-prepared for the magnificence of this great ether flyer. From the mosaics that decorate the boarding air lock to the pine-scented freshness of the gigantic saloon, everything indicates that no expense has been spared. Even the cabins, small compared to those on an ocean liner, are compact marvels of luxury and convenience. You recognize some famous faces. Other passengers are strangers now but will doubtless be familiar by the end of the voyage.

As you find your cabins and take your first look around the vessel, the last air lock thuds shut, and warning bells ring. You brace yourself; then there's a gentle lurch as the ship rises into the air. Even through the steel hull you can hear the cheers of the crowd which diminish as the liner gains altitude.

A half hour later there's a brilliant glow around the stern of the ship, and the Earth slowly shrinks into the distance as the liner accelerates into the blackness of space.

This section of the adventure describes the mighty ether flyer and its passengers and crew. It's a good idea to establish the routine of shipboard life and give players an idea of the personalities involved before things start happening. The details and NPCs in this section may also be useful in other adventures.

All information from the *Illustrated London News*, including the ship's plans, should be made available to players as requested. The "Welcome Aboard" newsletter is available as soon as passengers board the ship; a copy is left in every cabin.





Welcome Aboard



THE WHITE STAR LINE IS PLEASED to welcome all passengers to the maiden flight of the *Princess Alexandra*.

Itinerary: Mars is nearly in opposition to Earth, on the far side of the Sun, so we will follow a route that crosses the orbit of Venus. Venus is not close to our planned course, and no undue turbulence is anticipated. Our journey will span approximately 200 million miles and is expected to take 10 to 11 weeks.

Meals: Tea is served in cabins as ordered from 0700 to 0830. Breakfast is served in the saloon from 0830 to 1000. Luncheon is served in the saloon from 1300 to 1400. Afternoon tea is served in the saloon from 1630 to 1800. Dinner is served in the saloon from 2030 to 2130.

Outside these hours the stewards will be pleased to serve sandwiches and light refreshments as requested. There are menus in every cabin and in the smoking lounge, etc.

The bar is open from 1100 to 2400 hours on weekdays and Saturdays, from 1300 to 2200 hours on Sundays.

Ship's Clocks: All chronometers will remain synchronized to Greenwich Mean Time (24-hour clock) until the end of the voyage.

Currency: Bar bills, etc. should be paid at the end of the voyage. The bar staff and stewards can only accept payment in pounds sterling; however, the purser can exchange U.S. dollars, most European currency, and all Parhooni denominations. We regret that we are unable to exchange other Martian money.

Luggage: Trunks are stored in the baggage hold on level 3. The purser will be happy to arrange access if required.

Pets: Animals must be left with the purser, and accommodations are provided in the kennels on level 2. Owners may visit their pets between 0900 and 1900 hours, but it is regretted that they *must not* be removed from this area.

Sweepstakes: Passengers often organize a sweepstakes based on the distance travelled by the ship. The services of the chief steward are available to the organizers of such a sweepstakes; however, it must be made clear that its conduct is solely the responsibility of passengers, and that employees of the White Star Line are absolutely barred from participation. It is customary to donate 10 percent of the prize money to charity.

Smoking: Gentlemen wishing to smoke are requested to use the smoking lounge adjoining the saloon. Barring unforeseen circumstances, smoking will be allowed throughout the flight.

Leak Detection: Shortly after takeoff crewmembers will inspect all parts of the ship for air leaks, as required by Board of Trade regulations. There is no cause for alarm; this is a routine precaution taken at intervals during every flight.

Emergency Drill: In an emergency, alarm bells will ring *continuously*. All armored airtight doors must be closed. If a loss of air occurs in your section of the ship, please move *quickly* to a safe area. Emergency oxygen cylinders are provided in every cabin and in public areas; they each contain approximately a five-minute supply.

In case of fire, please make every effort to sound the alarm and to extinguish the blaze. Chemical extinguishers can be found throughout the ship.

Emergency drill is held at noon every Sunday.

Officers and Senior Crew: Captain Nathaniel Bastable, MC, RNVR; Lieutenant James Plowright (first officer); Dr. Richard Garfield (doctor); Mr. William McIvar, FRS (chief engineer); Lieutenant Arthur Simms (navigator); Mr. Gordon Campbell (chief steward); Mr. Arnold Vickers (purser); Mr. Jacques Graticule (senior chef).

The officers and crew of the *Princess Alexandra* hope that you will enjoy your voyage, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that it is pleasant and memorable.

THE FOLLOWING is an excerpt from the *Illustrated London News*.

JEWEL OF THE HEAVENS

BY FAR THE LARGEST ether liner ever built, the *Princess Alexandra* is a triumphant symbol of the ingenuity of British engineers. Even the bare facts are impressive. The liner can accommodate 48 passengers in double cabins, another 14 in luxurious staterooms, and 30 more in steerage. Five officers and 25 crewmembers serve on board. The liner has the largest Edison-patent ether screw ever built, a Babbage astrogation engine, a billiards room, library, music room, and dozens of other luxurious features.

It is expected to provide the fastest, most luxurious ether travel of any ship on the Earth-Mars route. All areas of the ship are fitted with the latest electric lights (Edison/Swan patent), and a small telephone system linking important areas is even available. Our plan (reproduced by courtesy of the White Star Line) omits the lower holds, water tanks, and associated machinery below level 1. These areas are not normally accessible in flight. We begin at the prow of the ship, on level 1, thence to level 2, etc. Note that some of the features indicated are present on several decks.

A: The observatory is fitted with two powerful telescopes, field glasses, an orrery, and other astronomical equipment. It is anticipated that this part of the ship will be a "must" for every passenger. The special glass used here and in all other areas is estimated to be capable of withstanding the largest meteor; nevertheless, steel shutters are provided for any emergency.

B: The oak-paneled saloon seats up

to 60. For social events, such as the ship's concert, it is possible to remove the forward partition and expand the saloon to incorporate the observatory.

C: The galley has a staff of three chefs, all trained to the highest standards, plus stewards, etc.

D: The bar serves a full range of wines, spirits, and ales.

E: The luxuriously appointed smoking lounge has its own air filtration system, additional to that of the rest of the ship.

F: A compact library holds a selection of the latest novels and all standard reference works. The ship's newspaper is printed daily throughout the flight. When the ship is in heliograph range of Earth or Mars, the paper will incorporate a digest of system news, courtesy of *Reuters*.

G: The main air lock (on deck 1) will be the passengers' first glimpse of the interior of the *Princess Alexandra*. It is decorated with a mosaic depicting the history of flight—from Daedalus and Icarus to the Montgolfiers and Edison. Air locks on other levels are more utilitarian.

H: The leather-lined music room is soundproofed and equipped with a piano and other instruments, sheet music, and the latest Edison phonograph with a vast assortment of cylinders.

I: The billiards room is richly paneled with exotic woods from Mars.

J: Chief steward's office.

K: The larger, outer staterooms are luxuriously appointed. Standard fittings include a telephone (linked to a system serving the galley, bridge, bar, etc.) and a repeater device showing the liner's current position against a model of the Solar System, as cal-

culated by the navigator and updated every few hours. Each stateroom can accommodate up to four passengers.

K1: The owner's stateroom. On the maiden flight this suite is reserved for the marquis of Queensberry.

K2: The royal stateroom. Reserved for Mr. Hirakaya Nakimatura.

L: The inner staterooms are smaller; each can accommodate two or three passengers. All fittings, etc. are to the same high standards as the outer staterooms.

L1: Reserved for Volace Zeenkeer, secretary-initiate to the prelate of Gaaryaan, and entourage.

L2: Reserved for Dr. W. G. Grace and son.

M: The passengers' bathrooms are lavishly equipped: The walls and floors are tiled; fittings are gold-plated; and hot water is available at all times—a striking contrast to some previous ships, which offered nothing more than a hip bath!

N: The water closets are almost as luxurious as the bathrooms. An elaborate pumping and chemical processing system substitutes for sewers.

01-12: The promenade deck cabins, though little larger than those of many other ether flyers, are compact marvels of convenience. They will accommodate two passengers in comfort and can be rearranged to give a single passenger more space.

014-25: The upper deck cabins are an economical choice—a little less comfortable than those of the lower level, but still the equal of any other ship.

P: The promenades provide a breathtaking view of the stars.

Q: Crew's quarters.

R: Petty officer's quarters.

S: Crew's mess.

T: The main engine compartment features the most modern design of boilers available and an Edison-patent ether screw. Speeds in excess of three million miles per day are anticipated!

U: Ether screw (external portions).

V: The greenhouses are decorative as well as useful. All provide a vital source of air and a useful supplement of fruit and vegetables, and include a selection of flowers from Earth and Mars. Recent developments in hydroponics are incorporated, dramatically improving the yield per square foot.

W: Officers' accommodations.

X: The sick bay is equipped for routine medical treatment, dentistry, and

even light surgery.

Y: Purser's office.

Z: Strong room.

AA: Kennels for pets and other animals. These kennels are outfitted to the highest standards, with full quarantine facilities.

BB: Steerage.

CC: Atmospheric maneuvering screws (on pylons outside main hull).

DD: Baggage store.

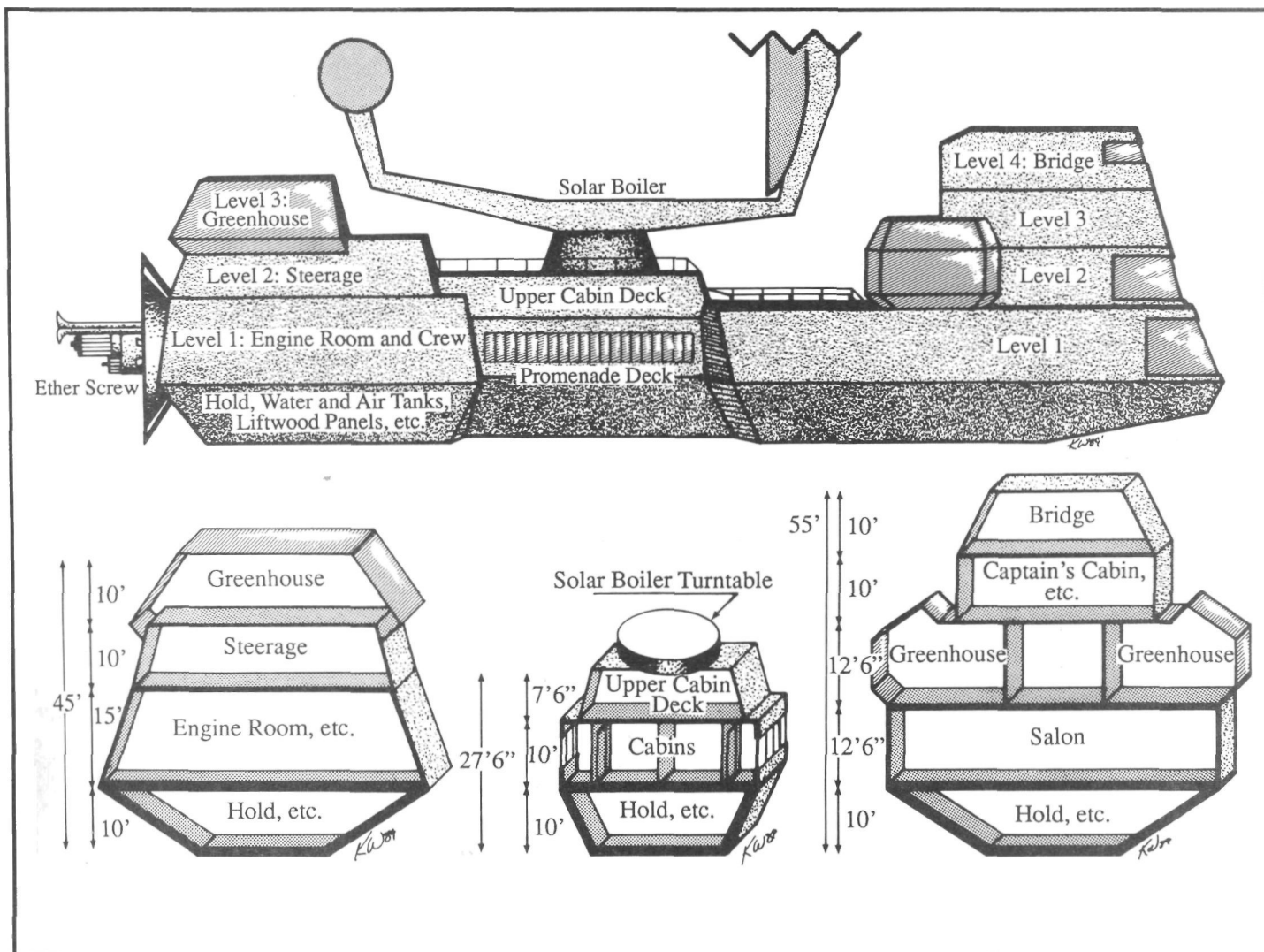
EE: Captain's night cabin.

FF: The bridge, incorporating (GG) Babbage 80-3-86 series astrogation engine, (HH) chart room, (II) signals office, and (JJ) captain's day cabin.

KK: Solar boiler control station.

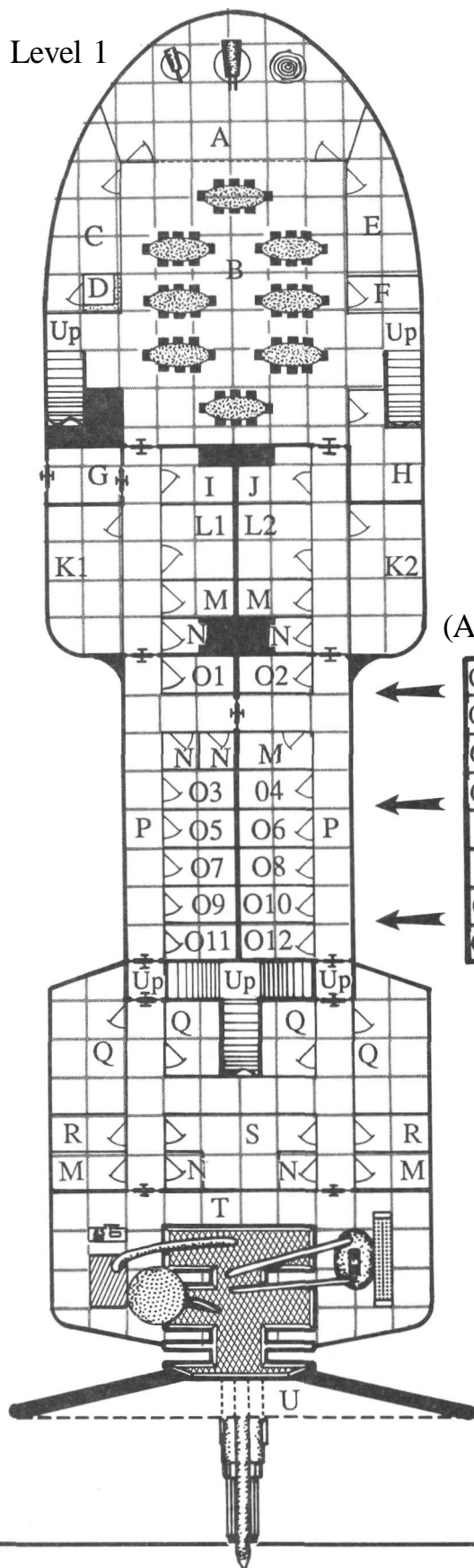
The solar boiler uses an oval steel mirror, larger than that of any other craft outside military service. The main features are (LL) the hydraulic mirror azimuth control system; (MM) the mirror, with a surface area of 2010 square feet; (NN) the angled support pylon, showing some of the steam and water lines; (OO) the hydraulic turntable, with coaxial pipe glands; and (PP) the boiler pressure chamber.

Under the command of Captain Nathaniel Bastable, RNVR, the first flight of the *Princess Alexandra* will be a landmark in the history of commercial ether flight. We wish everyone a happy and safe journey.

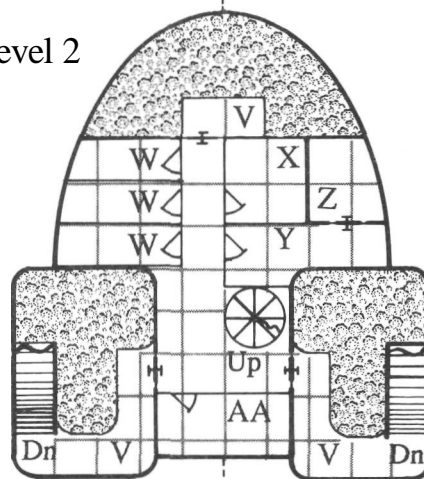


Deck Plans of the *Princess Alexandra*

Level 1

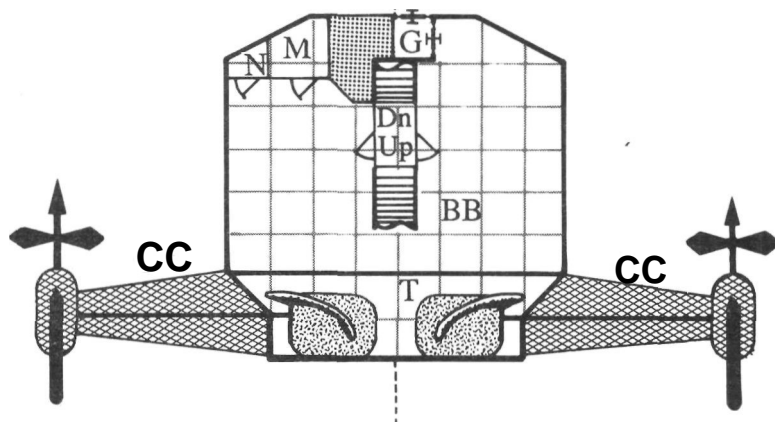


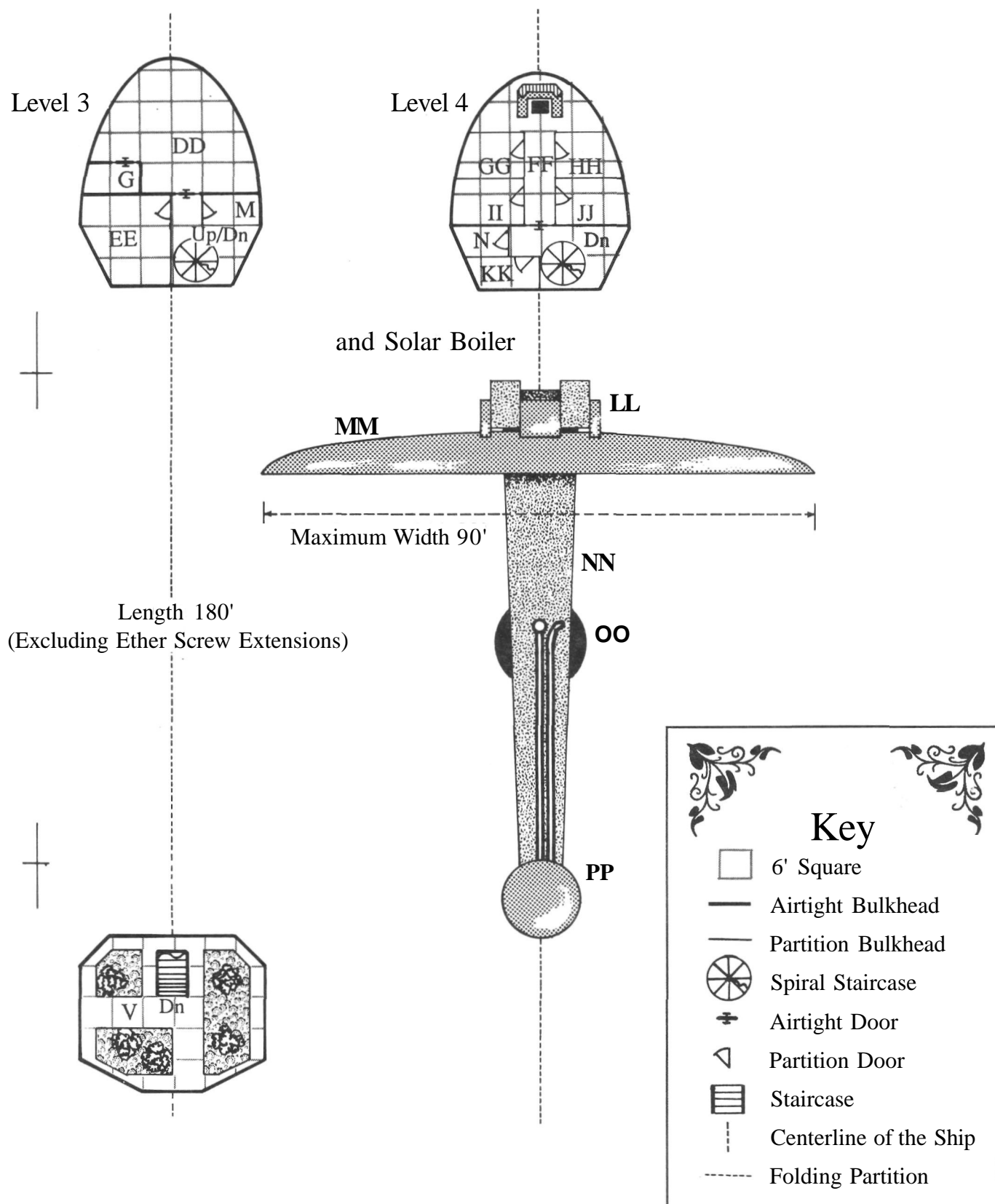
Level 2



Upper Cabin Deck
(Above Promenade Deck)

O14	O15
O16	O17
O18	O19
O20	O21
N	M
O22	O23
O24	O25





PASSENGER LIST

A FEW PASSENGERS on the *Princess Alexandra* are described below. Several cabins have been left empty, enough for any reasonably sized group of adventurers. However, the referee should try to give the impression that the ship is full to capacity. NPC (or PC) servants, etc. will probably be travelling in the upper passenger deck, or in steerage if they are real social outcasts. Unless otherwise indicated, all passengers are stock NPCs with these characteristics:

NPC Type: Civilian *Experience:* Trained/Experienced *Marksman:* 2 *Attributes:* Mental *Arms:* Unarmed.



The Marquis of Queensberry

K1: John Sholto Douglas, 8th Marquis of Queensberry, and Lord Alfred Douglas

THE MARQUIS IS most famous for formulating rules for legalized boxing. He has a fiery temper and will not tolerate any real or imagined insult. He is taking his son on a trip to Mars, hoping that it will somehow "toughen

the young idler."

NPC Type: Experienced officer.

Lord Alfred is an effeminate young man, an aesthete and friend of Oscar Wilde, and has no intention of being toughened.

They are accompanied by two servants.

K2: Hirakaya Nakimatura, Mrs. Mitsu Nakimatura, Miss Mai Nakimatura

MR. NAKIMATURA is a Japanese art collector and wealthy businessman whose interests take him all over the world. He specializes in the Impressionists but has interests in many other areas. He has recently decided to visit Mars and study the native arts. If he is shown the Amulet of Seldon, he won't be particularly interested; however, he will be very impressed by the "ephemeral art" of its liftwood box, and other fine carvings and sculptures. He is always willing to talk about the arts.

Because Nakimatura has legitimate reasons to travel almost anywhere, he occasionally acts as a courier for the Japanese Diplomatic Corps. On this journey, he is carrying a cipher book for the Japanese legation in Parhoon. It is concealed in a locked trunk containing several dozen other books, all of them in Japanese, and nothing too obvious distinguishes it from the other volumes. At least half the books have no title on the cover, and even a Japanese speaker will take some time to find the code book.

There is one easier way to find the book. All code books are weighted to allow easy disposal at sea, and this one is no exception. Although it is a small, slim volume with 80 edible rice paper pages, it weighs nearly a pound.

The code book is printed in tiny Japanese letters. Copying it will take at least 100 hours by hand or four to six hours photographically; remember that almost all cameras use glass plates which require either long exposures that must be changed after every shot or extremely slow roll films.

Mr. Nakimatura speaks reasonable English and French, and he dresses in occidental clothing. He is an Experienced merchant NPC.

Mrs. Nakimatura is a plump matron in her early forties. She speaks no languages apart from Japanese and will rarely be seen outside the stateroom. Her presence poses an additional obstacle to anyone attempting to copy the code book. She wears traditional Japanese clothing.

The Nakimaturas' daughter, Mai, is seven years old. She is a pleasant child who speaks a little English and French, and will frequently be seen in the saloon and other public areas. She also wears traditional Japanese clothing. Mai has a pet puppy which is confined to the kennels. She will concoct an elaborate scheme to smuggle it back to her cabin, recruiting the help of any sympathetic adult.

The family is accompanied by a maid, described on page 22; she is also frequently in the stateroom and poses an additional problem to anyone attempting to gain access to the book.

L1: Volaace Zeenkeer

ZEENKEER, secretary to the prelate of Gaaryan, is the only occupant of this suite, which will probably become the PCs' headquarters. There's room for several people to meet here in comparative privacy—something lacking elsewhere aboard the ship.

Volaace Zeenkeer (Experienced NPC)

ZEENKEER, high priest regent of the Canal Keepers, is young, frail-looking, and nondescript (for a Martian). He wears tinted glasses. (Like many Martians, his eyes are hurt by the Terrestrial light.) He has a good working knowledge of English, but sometimes makes grammatical and idiomatic mistakes.

Zeenkeer is travelling incognito for security reasons—as far as the team is concerned, he is the secretary to the high priest. Characters should not learn the truth unless it is essential, and the word "regent"



will not be used in their presence.

Motives: Religious Fanatic.

Background: Zeenkeer is an or-

phan who was raised by priests. He has spent all his life in the Canal Keeper faith and is dedicated to his religion. He is sure that Mars needs the Canal Keepers and will do anything to ensure that Seldon returns to lead the faith. Somehow the needs of his religion have blinded him to the fact that he is attempting to trick "Seldon" into permanent captivity millions of miles from home. Zeenkeer is trained in various obscure Martian martial arts resembling jujitsu or baritsu. He tries to hide his prowess, and the PCs should not learn the truth unless he is forced into combat. His native language is Son-Gaaryani, since he was raised by priests who spoke it as a sacred language.

Equipment: Four throwing knives (concealed in folds of robe), letter of credit (draft on Bank of Parhoon) for £5000, and £375 in gold sovereigns (concealed in money belt).

Attributes Skills

Str: 3	Fisticuffs 6, Throwing 4, Close Combat 3 (edged weapon)
Agl: 5	Stealth 5, Marksmanship 7 (bow)
End: 3	Wilderness Travel 3 (foraging), Swimming 2
Int: 6	Observation 6
Chr: 5	Eloquence 4, Linguistics 4 (Gaaryani, High Oenotrian, Parhooni, English)
Soc: 2	Riding 4 (gashant)

Note: Zeenkeer functions at Social Level 6 amongst members of the Canal Keeper faith who know his true identity.





Dr. Grace

L2: Dr. W. G. Grace and W. G. Grace Jr.

MANY BRITONS think of Dr. William Gilbert Grace as god-like. He is the greatest cricketer who ever lived. Grace is a bearded giant of a man, an eccentric who regards most forms of education with contempt but is nevertheless a doctor with a thriving country practice. He has represented England in every cricket-playing country on Earth and is now about to inaugurate cricket on Mars by defending the wicket when the first ball is bowled at the newly opened grounds in Parhoon. He and his son (also a gifted cricketer, though hardly in the doctor's league) are travelling as guests of the White Star Line, which hopes to carry teams between planets once the game is established on Mars. Grace's skills aren't limited to cricket; he is also All-England Croquet Champion and will wipe the floor with anyone stupid enough to take him on at darts, billiards, or any other game involving marksmanship and physical coordination.

Both Graces are men of few words.

Dr. W. G. Grace: *NPC Type:* Civ-

ilian *Experience:* Veteran *Marksman:* 9* *Attributes:* Physical *Arms:* Cricket bat (as club).

* Not possible under **Space: 1889** rules. Grace is no ordinary man.

W. G. Grace Jr.: *NPC Type:* Civilian *Experience:* Trained *Marksman:* 4 *Attributes:* Physical *Arms:* Cricket bat.



Miss Van Cleef

O1: Miss Matilda Van Cleef

MISS VAN CLEEF (real name Alice Simms) is a friend of the rich and famous. Currently she lacks a male companion but is always on the lookout for a suitable friend. An octogenarian millionaire would do nicely. Miss Van Cleef has somehow "persuaded" the line to give her a cabin for the price of a single passage. She is accompanied by a maid and by three poodles housed in the kennels. Her character may be indicated by the fact that she won't visit the dogs once during the voyage.

Miss Van Cleef is 35 but looks much younger. She should be played as a cunning gold digger with the morals of a fairly rapacious alligator. Diamonds are a girl's best friend, but

money or a few shares in the White Star Line can be useful too.

NPC Type: Adventuress.

O3: Patrick Wendle, MP, Mrs. Olivia Wendle, and Rodney Wendle

PATRICK WENDLE is a member of Parliament for the tiny borough of Milton Keynes and has a modest reputation as an influential member of the Naval Estimates Board. He is visiting Mars to inspect the dockyards at Parhoon.

Wendle is insane. He believes that he is the rightful heir to the throne of Britain. In fact, one of his 17th-century ancestors *was* a royal bastard; unfortunately, a lot has happened since then, and he has no real claim. Wendle is unable to take a detached view—he believes that he should really be the king. He is totally paranoid and convinced that agents of "the monarchy" will eventually kill him. He carries a small revolver at all times. If he becomes involved in any form of violence, he will assume that everyone else is a "monarchist" and will fire indiscriminately.

Mrs. Wendle is unaware of her husband's insanity; she just thinks he works too hard. She does her best to persuade him to join in shipboard activities. Their son is six and an obnoxious brat with no redeeming features.

O4: Sir Eric Thwaite and Captain Hugh Crammond

THWAITE is a "name," one of the money men of Lloyds, the famous London insurance house. He can give odds against any form of maritime accident. It's notable that he is strangely silent on the subject of ether flyer accidents, apart from muttering,



Sir Eric Thwaite

"We really only insure ships, you know."

Thwaite is the ship's bore. He can make anything sound dull. He is at his worst when discussing a pet aversion—the Americanized spelling of *ether*. Thwaite would prefer the spelling *aether* (he claims that it is more faithful to the original Greek and avoids confusion with medicinal ether). He conducts an interminable correspondence on the subject through the *Times* and other journals, and he fears that the time lost during this voyage may give his "opponents" a chance to make their views known. In fact, no one else cares enough to maintain the correspondence in his absence.

NPC Type: Administrator.

Crammond is widely known as the "Hero of Fort Collingswood." During a minor Venusian tribal war, he and his troops heroically beat off a native raid on the British outpost. Captain Crammond seems not to know the meaning of the word *fear* (many would say that he probably can't spell it either). To put it bluntly, Crammond is brave, strong, and lucky, but exceptionally stupid.

Crammond is on a long leave (the army is trying to avoid giving him any post of responsibility) and is travelling to Mars because it seems like "a jolly good change from bally old Venus." He is accompanied by a Lizard-man servant.

NPC Type: Veteran officer.



Otto Strabismäs

O6: Otto Strabismäs and Father A. J. Moriarty

PROFESSOR STRABISMÄS is a scientific crank—a maverick who does not believe in the ether. Instead he supports a crackpot theory called "wave-particle duality," which is obvious nonsense to anyone with any vestige of scientific knowledge (the theory was totally disproven by recent experiments carried out by a pair of American scientists). He claims that ether technology is a fortuitous fluke backed by mistaken theories. Despite his eccentricity, Strabismäs is very well informed on ether theory and technology. He believes that it is essential to know one's enemy, and has level 15 knowledge of the topic. A typical comment: "They all laughed at me at Heidelberg."

NPC Type: Scientist.

Father Moriarty is a Jesuit priest

from Dublin travelling to Mars to join a Catholic mission in Parhoon. He's the only human priest aboard and holds a Catholic service every Sunday between the captain's morning prayers and fire drill. He's fond of a pipe and a glass of whiskey, and will try to persuade the organizers of the ship's sweepstakes to donate the customary charity tithe to his mission. He supports home rule for Ireland, but he is not a Fenian.

O7: Mr. Hiram Pressburger and Dr. Anne Pressburger

MR. PRESSBURGER is an engineer working for Difference Engine Corporation, an American company that produces a range of analytical engines and astrogation computers. He is to be the company's new chief engineer in Parhoon. He's scathing about their rivals, Imperial Babbage Machines, the British firm that produced the 80-3-86 series navigational engines used in the *Princess Alexandra*. He is an enthusiast who believes that eventually every office will have its own difference engine capable of performing advanced financial calculations in mere minutes. He is a proponent of "man/machine interfacing," an odd phrase which apparently has to do with giving calculating engines type-writer-like "keyboards" so the tedious business of cutting punched cards can be bypassed.

NPC Type: Scientist.

His wife, Dr. Anne Pressburger, is a zoologist. She's looking forward to getting her hands on Martian animals, and she will ask Zeenkeer many questions about them throughout the duration of the flight.

NPC Type: Explorer.

O8: Herr Carl Hoffmann and Frau Anne Hoffmann

HERR HOFFMANN is a Dutch jewel merchant, age 45, travelling to Mars to buy some of the exotic gems rumored to be available there. If he ever sees the Amulet of Seldon, he

will soon recognize the "quartz" as an uncut diamond. After an examination he can say that it would be worth about £10,000 if properly cut.

He is honest and will reveal the truth to whoever he believes owns the amulet.

NPC Type: Merchant.

Frau Hoffmann is 28 and approximately four months pregnant. She is very nervous about the journey and the conditions she'll encounter on Mars; however, she would prefer to stay with her husband and see her child born on Mars, rather than waiting the two or three years he expects to spend on the red planet before she would be able to see him again.

Both speak moderately good English.

O9: Capt. Gordon Carstairs and Lieutenant Fritz Kempff

CAPTAIN CARSTAIRS is a career officer in the Brigade of Guards, seconded to the Queen's Own Martian Rifles after a disagreement with his commanding officer. He doesn't like the idea of wasting a few years on Mars, and doesn't mind letting everyone know that he despises Mars and Martians. He also dislikes human

foreigners, especially his cabinmate. In all, Carstairs will probably be the least popular person on the liner—a loud-mouthed bigot who rarely considers the feelings of others.

NPC Type: Trained officer.

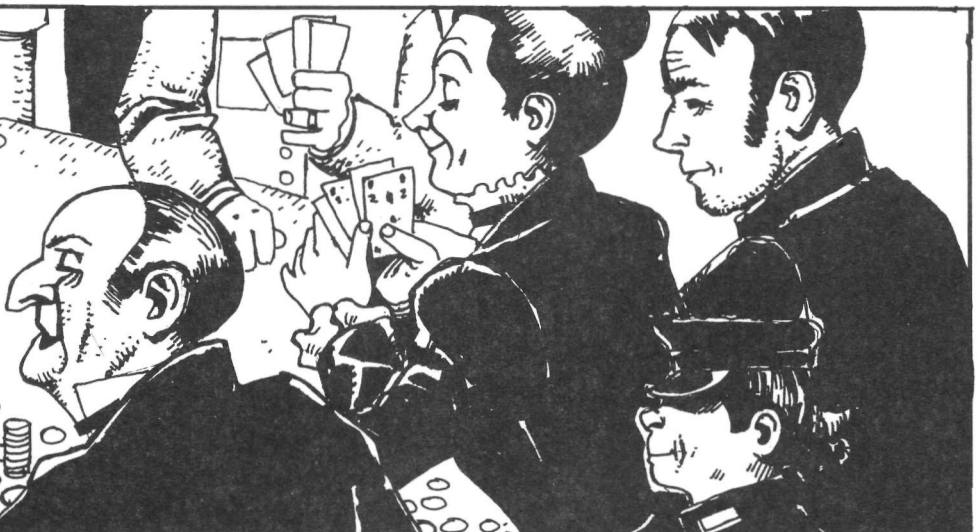
Lieutenant Kempff is assigned to the German legation in Parhoon and is travelling on a diplomatic passport. He is also after the Japanese code book. He doesn't have a camera; however, he understands Japanese and speaks English fluently. He won't take silly risks to get the book, but he might try to steal it from the PCs if he sees them take it. If the PCs don't try to get the book, Kempff will, in circumstances that ensure that the team knows he has it.

Kempff is a brilliant violinist and a skilled swordsman. His luggage includes a pair of dueling sabers. He won't like Carstairs and will eventually challenge him to a duel if not distracted. He is accompanied by a servant.

NPC Type: Trained officer.

O10: Lady Jane Evans and Miss Charlotte Green

LADY JANE is 27. Her husband recently died, and she is travelling to



Mars to get over her grief. She wears mourning clothes and is seldom seen outside her cabin. She has inherited an estate worth several million pounds, though this should not be revealed to players unnecessarily. She is a good pianist and cellist.

Miss Green is Lady Jane's companion, age 29. She feels that life is passing her by, and she is husband hunting. She is attractive, a pleasant companion, and a trained nurse.

O14: Mr. Gustav Plant and Mrs. Rita Plant

THE AMAZING GUSTAV and Rita are internationally famous music hall artistes. Gustav is Britain's foremost magician and escapologist, and his wife is equally accomplished. They are on the liner professionally and will perform a new act every Friday night throughout the trip. Their skills include knife throwing, juggling, mind reading, and every other form of conjuring. They hope to return from Mars with some new tricks that will be fresh to the British stage.

The Plants will not, under any circumstances, play cards or any games of chance. If anyone asks, they will oblige with a few simple tricks (such as producing 16 aces from a freshly opened pack of cards, rolling two dice for 10 consecutive sevens, or tossing a coin for 20 successive heads) to explain why they avoid such games. They are also good at pulling sweets or sixpences out of children's ears.

O15:

Miss Candida Bracegirdle and Miss Evadne Bracegirdle

THE BRACEGIRDLE TWINS are in their late fifties. They are card sharps who are trying a run on an ether flyer

instead of their usual trip on a transatlantic liner. They will soon decide that several weeks in close proximity to a professional magician is more than they've bargained for. Since they can most often win against an average player without cheating, they'll decide to play things straight. They are usually found at a card table in the smoking lounge. Their preferred games are bridge, whist, and stud poker.

O17: Miskiita Ch'kya (Sha'eenda Hus'aalsh)

CH'KYA/HUS'AALSH is a translator who works at the British Museum. She supposedly moved to Earth after a love affair with a British officer who was killed in the Gorovaangian War. Her cover story for travelling on the

Princess Alexandra is that recently she learned that her uncle has died. She is travelling to Mars to claim her inheritance. She is in her fifties and dresses like a respectable Englishwoman, in black mourning dress and veil.

(Under the alias of Miskiita Ch'kya, Hus'aalsh is the only active Worm Cultist in London. She is totally dedicated to the Cult of the Worm. She has lived on Earth for the last 11 years and is responsible for several murders. She hates all humans, but she is practical enough to limit her attacks to those who threaten the Worm Cult. She will do her best to identify "Seldon" during the journey, then arrange an unpleasant incident on the ship or on Mars. Failing this, she will attack Zeenkeer.)

Sha'eenda Hus'aalsh (Veteran NPC)

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Skills</i>
Str: 3	Fisticuffs 2, Throwing 2, Close Combat 4 (edged weapon)
Agl: 4	Stealth 3, Crime 3 (lockpick)
End: 2	Wilderness Travel 1 (foraging)
Int: 4	Observation 3
Chr: 5	Eloquence 5, Theatrics 5, Linguistics 3 (English, French), Bargaining 2
Soc: 4	Riding 3 (gashant), Leadership 4

NPC Motivation: Religious Fanatic.

Appearance: Sha'eenda is tall and slender by human standards, but about average for a Canal Martian. She is adept at disguise, and in a mourning dress and veil (as well as black gloves with the fifth finger stuffed with tissue) has often passed for human. Even hatless, she has often passed as an Oriental by taping her ears down and wearing her hair loose to cover them. (This disguise will not fool an Oriental, of course, but since many of the citizens of London have never seen anyone from Siam, Java, or Burma, it is somewhat easier to fool them.) When she is relaxing (unlikely with humans around), she smokes a small cigar or a cheroot. Her native language is Gaaryani.

O19: Kurt Bechwold

BECHWOLD, a sergeant of the Bavarian light cavalry, is Lieutenant Kempff's valet. His luggage includes a set of lockpicks, vials of acid, and a safebreaking kit. He is unable to avoid walking with the erect stance of a soldier, and has numerous scars and a missing earlobe.

NPC Type: Veteran soldier.

**O20: Iko Takimato
and Gladys Nicholson**

IKO TAKIMATO is the Nakimaturas' maid. She is plain and in her thirties, and speaks no English. She wears traditional Japanese clothing.

NPC Type: Maid.

Nicholson is Matilda Van Cleef's hard-working, underpaid maid. She would enjoy a shipboard romance, but her duties keep her too busy.

NPC Type: Maid.

O21: Grommett

GROMMETT is Captain Crammond's Lizard-man valet. He is well aware of Crammond's deficiencies and has been known to say, "Many Venusians think captain is a bloody god. I say that if this is true, and all gods are like him, could explain a lot about awful bloody weather Venus is having." Despite this, Grommett is loyal to his master. He always wears rather baggy suits and regards himself as a gentleman's gentleman. He speaks fairly fluent English, apart from a hissing accent, but swears much too often.

NPC Type: Venusian pirate (reformed).

**O22: Arthur Grove
and Sidney Collis**

GROVE is valet to the marquis of Queensberry; Collis is valet to Lord

Alfred Douglas. Both are completely unmemorable.

NPC Type: Servants.

**O23: Fi'fkisniil Spiif, MC
and Gfiyy'nnuk Zlash, DSO**

SPIIF AND ZLASH are sergeants of Queen Victoria's Own Martian Rifles who have just been decorated for heroism in the Oenotrian War. They are immensely proud of their medals and wear them at all times. Zlash is a lay member of the Canal Keeper faith.

NPC Type: Veteran soldiers.

Steerage Passengers

Twenty-two steerage passengers travel on this flight. All are travelling in some discomfort, sleeping in bunks in unpleasantly cramped cubicles. A few examples follow.

The O'Riordan Family: This family consists of a husband, wife, and three children—all emigrants. Mrs. O'Riordan is pregnant.

The Donnelly Family: This family is composed of a husband, wife, and two children—all emigrants. All the members of this family support the Fenian cause, though they are not politically active.

The Perkins Family: The Perkins consist of a husband, wife, and two children—all emigrants. Mr. Perkins is nominally middle class, but he lost all his money in a series of disastrous investments. He hopes to restore his fortunes on Mars.

The Zotku'tsii Family: The Zotku'tsiis are a husband and wife team of discharged servants. These two Martians were servants of a Parhooni merchant who recently retired to Earth. They accompanied him but soon realized that they didn't like the British climate, so they are now re-

turning home. They are both lay members of the Canal Keeper cult.

The Crew

Crewmembers are as follows.

Captain Bastable: He is the White Star Line's most experienced officer. After a successful navy career, he has served with distinction on ocean liners and smaller ether flyers. He is a lay preacher and holds an Anglican service every Sunday morning. Bastable has one peculiarity—he hates women and won't talk to them under any circumstances. If absolutely necessary, he'll ask someone else to pass on a message, but even that is very much a last resort. This makes dinner at the captain's table a very strained affair.

NPC Type: Veteran officer.

Lieutenant Plowright: Lieutenant Plowright is tall, ruggedly handsome, and extremely ambitious. He badly wants to be a captain and would happily do so over Bastable's dead body. He's rarely seen socially; he spends all his time immersed in his studies for the next captains' exams.

NPC Type: Experienced officer.

Doctor Garfield: Garfield is a typical ship's surgeon. He's competent and familiar with the most common accidents and infections, but he probably can't handle anything really exotic. He's a teetotaler and insists on giving at least one lecture on the evils of "The Demon Drink" (with visual aids—a magic lantern show and a pickled human liver) per voyage.

NPC Type: Administrator.

William McIvar: A fairly typical engineering officer, McIvar loves his engines and boilers, and is rarely seen out of dirty overalls, which have a smell mingling perspiration, grease,

and whiskey. He seldom takes dinner in the saloon. He has never been known to use the expressions "the engines wilna' take it" or "ye cannae change the laws of physics." As far as he's concerned, the engines will do whatever he wants them to do; and if they don't like it, he'll modify them until they work.

NPC Type: Veteran officer.

Lieutenant Simms: He is 22, but looks much younger. This is his first run as navigator. He's determined to do a first-class job, even if it takes up most of his free time. He is rarely seen far from the bridge, and usually has a slide rule and logarithmic tables in his hands or tucked under his arm. He will not, under any circumstances, discuss the ship's sweepstakes.

NPC Type: Green officer.

The Chief Steward: Gordon Campbell, despite his name, is Cockney born and bred. He usually drops his "aitches" and is rather less servile than the company would like. Campbell has worked out a relatively fool-proof way of earning money from the ship's sweepstakes and intends to retire at the end of this voyage.

NPC Type: Merchant.

The Purser: Arnold Vickers is a rigidly honest former soldier who regards the ship's property and passengers' possessions as a sacred trust. He is particular zealous in guarding the ship's strong room.

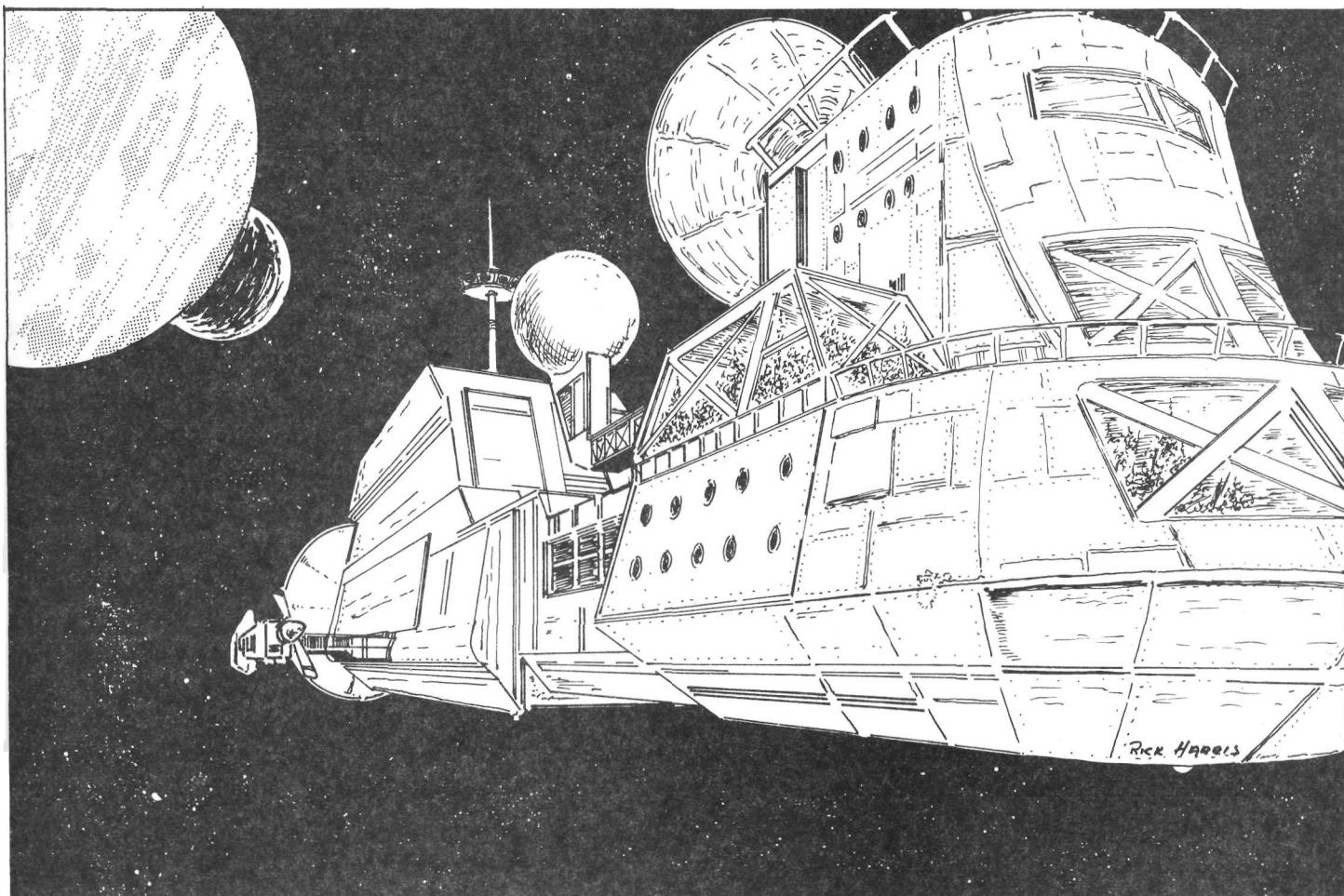
NPC Type: Veteran soldier.

The Head Chef: Jacques Graticule is formerly of the Ritz in Paris. He is an expert French chef and is even prepared to try his hand at tradi-

tional British foods; it's an insult to his art, but it's what the customers want. He is usually seen wearing his tall white hat and apron, clutching a copper pan or a rolling pin, and hurling insults at a steward or one of the other cooks.

NPC Type: Administrator.

The Rest: The crew includes another 22 men. The PCs are most likely to encounter the stewards, who are predominantly Chinese. A thriving Chinese community exists in space; for example, the orbital heliograph station's laundry is run exclusively by Orientals. Some British patriots worry about the "yellow peril" taking over the ether, but no one really takes this very seriously. The remainder of the crew spends most of its time behind the scenes.



Ships that Pass in the Night

A SHATTERING BLOW

SEVERAL WEEKS PASS without further trouble. There's a drunken fight between Captain Carstairs and Lieutenant Kempff, but neither of them is badly hurt. A steerage passenger gives birth to twins. Your rooms have been searched several times, but you haven't been able to catch anyone and have no idea who is responsible.

The liner has crossed and recrossed the orbit of Venus and passed the orbit of Earth, which is now many millions of miles away on the far side of the Sun.

Tonight Lieutenant Kempff and Lady Jane Evans provide the high-lights of the ship's concert; their violin-cello duet enthralls you. Although she's in mourning for her late husband, she seems to have a lot of time for the German. For once the steerage passengers have been allowed into the saloon, and their enthusiastic applause sets the seal on an excellent event.

The performance is just drawing to a close, with the duo silhouetted against a backdrop of stars, when you realize that some of the stars are moving. A bell starts to ring, and the captain sprints upstairs towards the bridge, followed by the navigator and the doctor.

One of the stewards screams,

"Ships—eight or nine of them!" The lights ahead seem to be getting bigger and are spreading out in front of the Princess Alexandra.

The liner has flown into the path of the Royal Navy's ether fleet, which is engaged in exercises. Ships will flash past the *Princess Alexandra* in approximately three minutes—just long enough for them to exchange a few signals. Anyone looking out the window will see a light flashing from one of the approaching ships. Three messages come in at approximately one-minute intervals.

The first simply reads, "What ship are you?"

The second reads, "Navy to *Princess Alexandra*. Message acknowledged. Your course will clear our trajectory, no risk of collision."

The third is simply, "Goodbye and good luck—sorry if we alarmed you."

If no member of the team is able to read Morse code, Lieutenant Kempff can decode the messages.

Unless the team has thought of closing the collision shutters, they are still wide open when the *Princess Alexandra* crosses the path of the fleet. If anyone is trying to crank them shut, they will still only be halfway closed when disaster strikes.

The ships flash by, and it's suddenly obvious that the nearest is only a few

miles away. Abruptly an ear-splitting crash is heard, and the liner shakes from a rapid succession of hammer blows. One of the toughened glass panels turns milky white, starred with radiating cracks. Your ears pop, and you realize that the saloon is losing air.

Someone screams, and in moments a frightened mob is scrambling for the doors at the rear of the saloon.

The ship has flown into a hail of rubbish dumped by one of the dreadnoughts several hours earlier. Each piece of rubbish is travelling at roughly 250,000 mph relative to the *Princess Alexandra*.

The saloon window has been hit by a nutshell, weighing a small fraction of an ounce. The outer hull near the purser's office has been penetrated by a steel washer, which has buckled part of the plating of the strong room. Several pieces of orange peel have smashed liftwood panels on the lower hull. Finally, a tin containing four ounces of moldy bully beef has crashed in through a bridge window and out via the bridge roof; the hyper-sonic Shockwave and explosive decompression have killed everyone on the bridge.

Most passengers and several crewmembers are in the saloon when the window is hit. The stewards immediately try to evacuate the compartment, pulling people back towards the airtight doors and preparing to close them if the window shatters.

In the confusion that follows Sha'eenda Hus'aalsh steals a long, jewelled pin, shaped like a miniature rapier, from Matilda Van Cleef's hat (or from any other woman present—if possible, a PC) and stabs Zeenkeer. She is an expert assassin, and the

point penetrates his heart. He is swept up in the panicking crowd, collapsing in the corridor once he is out of the saloon. Players should not know of this unless they are actively looking for Zeenkeer, and they will not witness the assassination. No one will realize that anything happened to Zeenkeer until he collapses.

If the shutters are open, the saloon loses air rapidly. Everyone in the saloon must make an Easy Strength roll to stay conscious in the first minute, a Moderate roll in the second, and a Difficult roll in the third. The pane shatters at the end of the third minute, and anyone still in the saloon must make an Impossible Strength roll to stay conscious for even another minute. Survival after that minute is Impossible without oxygen. There are cylinders by the stairs, next to the bar, and along the back wall. They contain enough oxygen for five minutes.

Anyone closing the shutters without oxygen must make an Impossible Strength roll to close them in one minute, a Formidable roll to do it in two minutes, and a Difficult roll to do it before the pane shatters. Once the pane shatters, people in the saloon are unable to do anything apart from struggling to stay conscious. No more than three characters may work on the crank. If teammates start cranking the shutters after the window is hit, they must make an Impossible Strength roll to shut them in two minutes, or a Formidable roll to close them before the glass shatters.

If the shutters can be closed, air loss will be slowed. The closed shutters hold the glass in place, stopping it from falling apart completely, and the saloon stabilizes at low (but breathable) pressure. The window can be

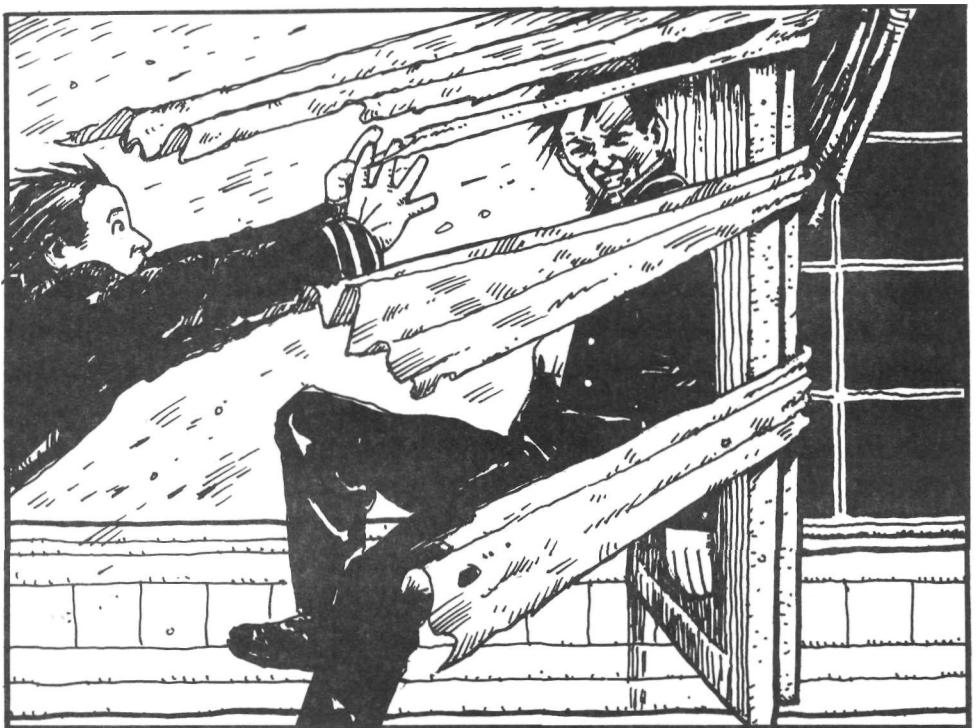
caulked with tar as a temporary repair, and the shutter can be bolted in place to patch it for the rest of the trip. Those who are unconscious will survive, unless they have a weak heart or some other frailty. It is suggested that two or three NPCs (such as the Bracegirdle sisters and Sir Eric Thwaite) should suffer from such complaints and should be killed by the partial decompression. Player characters should not die if they lose consciousness, but they will suffer aches and pains for several days, and their skin will be covered in a network of ruptured blood vessels that takes several weeks to clear up.

The Wendles, the Pressburgers, the Graces, and Father Moriarty must survive; they are needed for later parts of the adventure. The Douglasses are historical characters who should survive; in any case, they are healthy men who should have no difficulty reaching safety. Strabismäs must survive unless player characters have similar knowledge of the ether.

If the shutters aren't closed, the window finally shatters, and the rest of the air in the saloon is sucked into space. This condition isn't survivable unless characters have reached oxygen. Anyone who is unconscious will die, including player characters. However, the PCs should be given every chance they need to reach safety.

It will take several hours to depressurize the saloon, and any corpses will be mummified and dehydrated by the time they are recovered. Space suits are on board, but it will take several minutes for a crewmember to pull one on and return to the saloon; even then, the saloon's airtight doors can't be opened without depressurizing areas of the ship behind them.

For example, to enter through the right-hand door it is necessary to depressurize the chief steward's office, staterooms K2 and L2, and the adjoining bathroom and lavatory. It's just possible to do this in time to save someone who has managed to reach the oxygen cylinders.



THE MORNING AFTER

DURING THE LAST FEW hours crew-members have repaired some of the damage. The saloon is pressurized, and stewards have told you to assemble therefor a meeting. Pressure is still low throughout the ship; your ears and throats ache; you pant if you try to move quickly; and it isn't possible to brew a pot of tea because the boiling point of water is too low.

Zeenkeer is in the sick bay, still unconscious. Dr. Grace has removed the long, jewelled hat pin that was lodged in his heart; it's too soon to know if Zeenkeer will recover.

You're gloomily sipping a cup of tepid chocolate, the only thing that's vaguely drinkable, and you are watching the steerage passengers troop in when the chief engineer arrives.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I must inform you that the bridge was damaged in last night's incident, and there

were no survivors. I am the only surviving officer; accordingly, I am assuming command.

"Our supplies of air and water are severely depleted, and we have lost some of the liftwood we will need for a safe landing. Many of the bridge instruments have been badly damaged. I have been unable to make contact with the navy and must assume that the fleet is unaware of our situation.

"I am imposing air and water rationing. All bathrooms will be closed, and smoking is banned throughout the ship. Anyone with any knowledge of ether craft operation and navigation will please join me after this meeting. All other able-bodied men must report for work parties. Dr. Grace, I must ask you to take on the duties of ship's surgeon. Ladies, your help will be needed in many areas; we must all pull together if we are to survive.

"Now, another matter. One of our Martian passengers was attacked after the saloon was struck, and he is extremely ill. I don't believe that this was a deliberate attempt at murder; I think that someone was frightened and struck out in the crowd. It would probably be best if the culprit confessed before I am forced to report this to the police at Parhoon.

"I'm sorry that I have no good news to offer. However, we should pull through if luck is with us. I've asked Father Moriarty to lead us in a prayer."

Zeenkeer is obviously dying. Dr. Grace has found evidence of internal bleeding, and he can do nothing to stop it. Zeenkeer's pulse is gradually weakening, and no one on board knows enough about Martian physiology to help him (if one member of the team happens to be an expert on Martian physiology, nothing that is tried will help).



On the fourth or fifth day, while some (or all) of the PCs are visiting Zeenkeer, he regains consciousness for a few minutes.

Suddenly Zeenkeer moans, a despairing wail no human throat could utter. He says something incomprehensible, then his eyes slowly open, and he seems to focus on you for a moment. He whispers, "Must go to temple. Seldon...Seldon...must go to temple. Gaaryan...safe there...Gaaryan...." His eyes close, and he falls into a coma, dying a few hours later.

Father Moriarty reads a short but impressive funeral service, and McIvar asks the PCs to say a few words about their late companion. His body is then carried into the air lock and launched into the endless dark of space. Note that bodies will not stay near the ship. They are left behind as the ship moves, or fall into the field of the ether drive and disintegrate.

Unless the team investigates, no

one will learn anything about this assassination. The pin was stolen from Matilda Van Cleef; she'll deny that it's hers, but several other people will recognize it, notably Herr Hoffman. She'll eventually admit the truth; it's a relatively worthless paste replica of a jewelled hat pin she pawned several months ago, and she didn't want to admit owning it, in case she got into trouble. Miss Van Cleef is virtually penniless, and she hopes to recover her fortunes or escape her debtors on Mars. One or two passengers noticed her leave the saloon before Zeenkeer, so it's unlikely that she is the attacker.

All attempts to find the culprit fail. No one saw anything, and no one is admitting anything. None of the other Martians aboard seem to have any hostile interest in Zeenkeer; in fact, three belong to his religion and are deeply shocked by the attack. Forensic science and other specialized skills won't aid the team; there aren't

any clear fingerprints on the pin, which was handled by Dr. Grace. In any case, fingerprint evidence is generally regarded as suspect.

Sha'eenda will assume she is under suspicion and will do nothing incriminating for the remainder of the flight. If she is questioned, she's a good enough actress to appear completely innocent. In the absence of a confession, there is little chance of solving the mystery.

Since the teammates are Zeenkeer's only known friends, McIvar will ask them to take charge of his possessions. These include the amulet, his money belt and knives, and a trunk containing several robes, a large silk banner (a huge representation of the amulet), and several books. If anyone can translate Son-Gaaryani, the books prove to be remarkably erudite tomes on astronomy and astrology, which won't reveal anything immediately useful.



REPAIRS

IF ANY OF the teammembers claim knowledge of ether craft operation or navigation, they will be put to work on the immense job of repairing the bridge instruments and correcting the ship's course. The Babbage engine has some bent cogs, stripped gear teeth, and snapped springs, and the stack of punched cards used to program it blew out through the hole in the bridge ceiling.

Many charts and papers were lost. A few of the heavier books remain, but vital records are missing. The latest supplement to the 1885 Naval Observatory tables is the most serious loss; without it the configuration of the main ether currents can only be approximated by hours of tedious calculation. The sextant and telescope have been smashed. Three of the six bridge windows have been smashed and are shuttered closed. This won't actually make any difference to Navigation skill rolls, but it's a continual nuisance—the most important planets and navigational stars are always concealed behind the opaque steel plates, so the navigator must keep moving from side to side.

Professor Strabismäs and Hiram Pressburger can help if none of the PCs have suitable skills. Although Strabismäs doesn't actually believe in the ether, his knowledge of ether theory is profound. He'll be able to prepare some rough charts immediately, refining them as the voyage continues. Pressburger isn't capable of repairing the Babbage engine without the help of a skilled mechanic, but he knows how to program it if it's fixed. Herr Hoffmann won't immediately think of volunteering to help with these repairs; however, his

luggage includes a full set of jeweler's tools, which will be needed for work on some of the more minute components, and he is skilled enough to use them successfully.

Although the bridge telescope has been destroyed, two other powerful telescopes occupy the observation deck. It will take several hours to get either one up to the bridge and mount it properly. Players should be encouraged to think of other improvisations. For example, the orrery from the observation deck could be used as a crude substitute for the Babbage engine until it's repaired. It might be possible to build a sextant out of scrap or by cannibalizing other instruments. Some of the information needed for navigation might be found in the ship's library, and the daily navigation reports establish the ship's position a few hours before the accident.

If the teammembers assume (correctly) the ship was roughly on course when the accident occurred and plot the navigator's daily reports, they'll find that major course corrections aren't apparently needed. However, a Moderate Piloting (ether flyer) or a Difficult Science (astronomy or ether) skill roll will reveal that a minor change is needed in three days. Any delay after that time will greatly lengthen the voyage. After the three-day deadline, the roll to spot the need for a course change is Easy.

At the moment, the ship is 16 days from Mars, with supplies for another 30 days. Each day without a course change after the initial three days adds *two* days to the time needed to reach Mars. Another Moderate skill roll is needed to make the change successfully. If the roll is failed, the course change is only approximately correct,

and each two-day period without an additional correction will add another day to the time needed to reach Mars.

At the end of 30 days, food, water, and air will start to run out, and there is no alternative destination closer than Mars.

Meanwhile, several major repairs are needed outside the ship. Anyone who can wear a space suit will be pressed into service. Liftwood panels need to be bolted back into place or moved to ensure even trim, and the solar boiler turntable is jammed—it must be mobile before the ship maneuvers.

There are five space suits on the liner, all designed for wearers of medium height (Strength 3-5). Anyone bigger simply can't wear a suit; anyone smaller will find there is a lot of chafing, and his hands will keep sliding out of the gloves and back into the sleeves. The suits aren't self-contained—each has an air line leading back to one of the air locks. This restricts mobility considerably. Since the ether screw remains in use, it's also necessary to remain roped to the ship at all times. No one is sure what would happen to someone who gets too close to the field of an operating ether screw, but theory suggests that it might not be pleasant. Safety rails have been built into the top of the hull, and the safety lines have clips designed to attach to the rails.

The suits incorporate one new innovation: Each has a telephone microphone and receiver built in, and it's possible to talk to one other person by pressing a button and asking an operator (inside the ship) to make the connection.

Space suit wearers can stay outside for a maximum of 10 hours in any 24-

hour period. After that, exhaustion sets in, requiring at least 12 straight hours rest. Most of the work is tedious: levering twisted fragments of metal from the turntable track, unbolting liftwood slats and replacing them in new locations, and hammering in rivets to secure metal plates that were loosened by the impact.

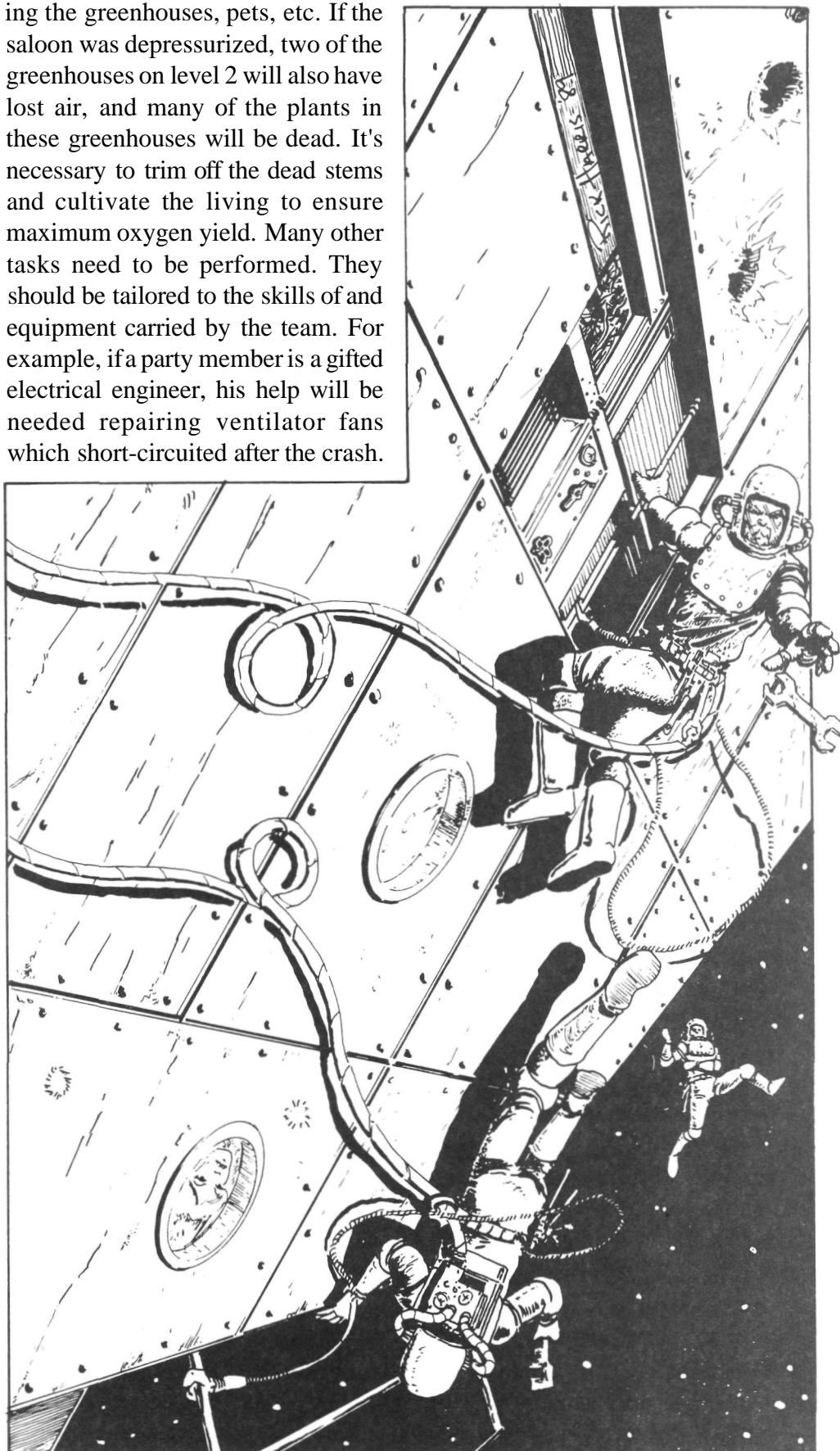
It will take 50 man-hours of external repairs to free the boiler turntable. Roughly half of this work should be done by player characters, unless they are all busy with bridge duties and repairs. Have players say how often they are prepared to go outside—don't warn them of the three-day deadline until the bridge team discovers the problem. If the ship maneuvers without a mobile mirror, approximately a third of the ship's power will be lost, halving the distance travelled each day. Full power will be regained when the mirror is freed.

The other repairs are much less urgent. The ship won't need liftwood until it approaches Mars, and the outer hull plates aren't so badly loosened that the ship is suffering really serious air losses.

Workers outside the hull may find the loose plate in the strong room wall if they spend much time at the forward end of the ship. It's at floor level, and there's just enough room for a slim man to reach in and take something. Several boxes of coins and jewel cases were thrown to the deck by the force of the impact, and the floor is littered with sovereigns and gems.

Work inside the ship includes substitution for crewmen who were killed or are busy with the repair work, hunting for air leaks, and tend-

ing the greenhouses, pets, etc. If the saloon was depressurized, two of the greenhouses on level 2 will also have lost air, and many of the plants in these greenhouses will be dead. It's necessary to trim off the dead stems and cultivate the living to ensure maximum oxygen yield. Many other tasks need to be performed. They should be tailored to the skills of and equipment carried by the team. For example, if a party member is a gifted electrical engineer, his help will be needed repairing ventilator fans which short-circuited after the crash.



IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT

THE FOLLOWING WEEKS are dominated by the need to make repairs and get the ship to Mars, and everyone aboard should be too busy to find much time for other activities. However, incidents will still occur and should involve the team whenever possible. You may wish to expand on some to suit your players. For example, Kempff's tirade against the navy (day 7) might lead to a duel if one of the player characters is a former naval officer.

Day 3: By now the ship should be ready to maneuver; if it is not, or if the team doesn't realize a maneuver is needed, start adding to the time needed to reach Mars.

McIvar announces that a serious air loss is still going on somewhere on the ship, and he urges everyone to conserve oxygen and look for leaks. (Air is leaking from the strong room; fortunately the door is tight-fitting, and not much gets out.)

Day 5 (Or Any Other Time as Convenient): One of the teammembers is injured badly enough to need some medical attention, and he must be treated by Dr. Grace. This is an interesting ordeal. Grace's bedside manner consists of examining the wound, prodding and twisting it extremely painfully, saying, "Huh! Seen worse than that little scratch!" and applying a poultice of cold tea leaves (for burns), arnica (sprains and bruises), or reconstituted dehydrated milk (cuts). He sutures large cuts with a needle and thread borrowed from one of the ladies' maids. Apart from an occasional grunt or a "Say, 'Aaah,'" his conversation relates exclusively to cricket, and then only if the victim is known to him as a

player or demonstrates real knowledge of the game. Amazingly, everyone treated by Grace recovers completely.

Day 7: Kempff enrages almost everyone by a long tirade against the Royal Navy. He claims that German ships have "proper discipline" and that the crew would never dream of endangering spacefarers. Later he apologizes.

Day 9: Whoever is navigating the ship must make a Difficult skill roll to realize that it is going to encounter a wave of Mercuric ether turbulence at approximately 1300 hours.

If the roll is failed, the ship is totally unprepared when it is hit by turbulence during lunch. Crockery and plates are damaged, a steward spills soup on the marquis of Queensberry, and anyone outside on the hull must make an Easy Strength roll to avoid being swept off into space. Everyone outside should be tethered, so the most likely results are bruises and other minor injuries. The turbulence lasts 15 minutes.

If the navigation roll is made successfully, the ship can be prepared for the wave. On an additional Moderate skill roll, the ship "catches" the wave and stays with it for several hours; it gains a day, so (if everything has gone successfully so far) it will reach Mars on day 15. These hours of turbulence are extremely uncomfortable, with the ship shaking and bucking continuously.

Day 10: A violent fight breaks out between the Donnelly and O'Riordan families. McIvar, the purser, and others of the crew break up the argument, which is about Irish politics.

Day 12: Chief Steward Campbell staggers into the saloon during sup-

per, dead drunk and singing a music hall ballad. He makes improper advances to any ladies present (preferably to one of the team). If the team doesn't move to stop him, Captain Crammond eventually says, "I say, that really isn't cricket, you know" and fells Campbell with a single punch. As he collapses several golden sovereigns fall from his pockets.

If he is searched, another £85 will be found. There is another £450 in his cabin, plus various rings and necklaces. Eventually someone (preferably a player character) should realize that one of the jewels has come from the strong room. When he sobers up, Campbell will admit that he found a loose metal plate in the strong room wall while working on the hull and has stolen everything.

This discovery explains the continuing air loss (if the team hasn't already solved the mystery). McIvar orders the purser to keep Campbell under close arrest until the ship reaches Parhoon and sends a trustworthy work party out to fix the hull.

Day 13: Kempff is indulging in another of his rants against the British. He happens to say, "Of course, I have nothing against your glorious queen, but as for the rest of your government, pah!"

Patrick Wendle overhears and says, "The queen? The queen? Don't you realize that the monarchy is responsible for this disaster! They dare not admit that I am the true heir to the throne. Do you really think that what has happened is an accident? They want to kill me! Even here aboard this ship! All of you want to kill me!"

As he talks, he draws his revolver and backs out of the saloon, retreats to his cabin, and barricades himself

inside. If possible he should take one of the player characters hostage and threaten to shoot him if anyone tries to get in. Attempts to talk Wendle out will fail; he is now convinced that everyone (including his own family) is out to get him.

Wendle isn't particularly formidable, and it shouldn't be hard to take him alive. As he is dragged off he shrieks, "The monarchists did this! We're all doomed!" Dr. Grace prescribes a large dose of laudanum, and he spends the rest of the voyage in a straitjacket in the sick bay.

Day 16: If the ship has flown an optimum course, the team should now be preparing for the final approach to Mars. If so, go to Landfall, on page 32. If not, continue with this section until the ship reaches Mars, or until day 30.

Days 20-25: If the ship is still in flight, discontent is growing amongst the crew and steerage passengers. The crew knows that supplies are running low, and there are several cases of pilfering and theft.

On day 22 McIvar senses trouble and calls in a few trusted passengers (including the team, Grace, the marquis of Queensberry, etc.), arming them if they don't already have weapons. He has a chest containing six revolvers under his bunk. They are smooth-barreled, using small-caliber shotgun cartridges (which can't harm the hull) instead of normal bullets (see sidebar).

Day 26: If the ship hasn't reached safety, several of the Chinese stewards will mutiny. Armed with knives, bottles, and other utensils, they aren't much of a match for McIvar and the team, but they do a fair amount of damage before they are stopped. The



saloon is wrecked again; some NPC passengers are wounded; and most of the bottles in the bar are broken. Try to stage this so that each of the adventurers has to fight at least two stewards. McIvar imprisons all the surviving mutineers in the strong room.

Day 30: Food is running out, and the air is increasingly thin and hard to breathe. All seems lost, when someone notices a light approaching the ship from astern.

The *Princess Alexandra* has been reported overdue, and the Martian orbital heliograph station *Foresage* has been looking for it. By a remarkable stroke of luck, one of the astronomers on board the station noticed the ship. The only ship in the area is the *Province*, a four-gun French ether

frigate, and it has changed course to investigate.

The *Province* carries a normal complement of navigators and technicians, and just enough spare oxygen to allow the *Princess Alexandra* to reach Mars. If things have gone unusually badly, the French ship will take the *Princess Alexandra* in tow.

In view of the damage, the French decide not to risk a normal landing. Instead, they pilot the liner to the heliograph station, where tugs take it in tow and shuttle the passengers and cargo down to Parhoon, as described in the next section.

Naturally this is a deeply humiliating experience for everyone involved. No one should gain *any* fame points or other rewards from this voyage if a rescue is needed.

Weapon Statistics

Weapon	Shots	Mag.	Reload	Wnd.	Req. Strength	Range
Shotshell Pistol	3	6	(3)	1D/2	2	5

LANDFALL

AT LAST, Mars looms ahead, and McIvar calls all passengers and crew to the saloon to announce that he will dock at *Foresage* station, unload passengers and cargo, then land with a minimal crew. Everyone else will be shuttled down by tugs over the next two or three days. That will lighten the ship considerably and should facilitate a safe landing. He will call for 10 volunteers to help with the landing.

As the team nears Mars, it spots the beacons of *Foresage*, and the ship halts 50 miles from the station. Soon two tugs appear and take the liner in tow. *Foresage* is almost identical to *Harbinger* (described in *Tales From the Ether*). It will take two days for the first shuttle to arrive, and five days more for the last passengers and luggage to reach Parhoon. In the meantime the station is crowded, hot, and uncomfortable.

During the unloading, Sha'eenda sneaks back aboard and hides in the steerage lavatory. She will only be found if the team conducts a thorough search of the ship.

After a few hours, the liner is unloaded, and McIvar calls his volunteers aboard to prepare for the flight to Parhoon. Nakimatura and his party stay on *Foresage*. Dr. Grace and his son stay on the *Princess Alexandra*.

The *Princess Alexandra* departs the station without incident. A few hundred miles up, the ship slows, and a difficult stage of the operation begins—the transition from solar power to the coal-fired steam turbine used in the atmosphere.

To begin with, the solar boiler must be brought up to maximum pressure. This isn't particularly difficult, al-

though the noise of the tanks groaning under several hundred atmospheres of pressure is alarming. While this is done the whole solar boiler system must be locked and braced in position, so it can't swing about as the ship is buffeted by the atmosphere.

This requires the work of several people in space suits, preferably including a few player characters. Eight guy wires on the ship are fastened to small tensioning winches. Each wire must be fitted to lugs on the structure, then winched tight. Two lugs lie below the boiler, two at the ends of the mirror, and another four along the length of the gantry. The mirror lugs must be secured first and are the hardest to reach—the rigger must edge out along a narrow girder behind the mirror, clinging to a series of weak-looking handholds. There isn't much danger though, because anyone falling off only hangs in space on the end of a line.

The boiler is still extremely hot, and anyone looking back toward the mirror while attaching boiler wires will be blinded by the intense glare it reflects. Fortunately, it isn't possible to fall into the primary focus of the beam; it's well out of reach.

The wires must be tightened in pairs, and the job gets harder with each pair. One or two people may work on each winch. They must combine their Strengths against a target number of 6 for the first pair, 8 for the second, 10 for the third, and 12 for the fourth. If the workers on either winch fail, both wires must be slackened off and the job started again. Keep track of the number of attempts made.

If all the wires are tightened at the

first attempt, no unusual problems occur.

If one to three extra attempts are made, the ship is just entering the uppermost fringes of the outer atmosphere as the last wire is secured. The hull creaks, and the wires start to vibrate. No special rolls are needed; the air is still much too thin to have any great effect.

If four or five extra attempts are made, the ship starts to encounter appreciable air resistance as the last wire is secured. Rolls to fasten the last pair are made against 16, not 12, and the wires vibrate very violently. Over the telephone link McIvar warns the riggers that they'll soon be exposed to strong gusts. Moderate Strength rolls are needed to overcome the air resistance and get back to the air locks without falling off. If such a roll is failed, the victim is swept off and dangles on the end of his air line and tether. Difficult Strength rolls are needed to pull him in, but multiple attempts may be made.

If six or more extra attempts are needed, one of the wires snaps. This is extremely dangerous; it lashes back towards the winch like a whip, and anyone failing to dodge it is struck for one to three wounds (the save number for this is 2, which includes the armor effect of the suit). Fortunately the suit doesn't tear. Once a wire has snapped, no further lines can be secured. A Difficult Strength roll is needed to get back to the air locks.

Once the solar boiler is secured, the ship runs on stored steam pressure until it reaches the lower atmosphere, then the coal boiler can be lit to maintain pressure. Provided at least six wires are fixed, the boiler won't cause problems.

Meanwhile the trimsmen run into an unexpected snag. McIvar ordered all cargo and most of the passengers unloaded on the assumption that it would make the ship easier to handle. Unfortunately, this isn't true. The change in load has greatly altered the ship's center of gravity, and it is now top-heavy and excessively "frisky." All the trim controls must be adjusted. Things aren't helped by the huge area of the mirror, causing an eddy of air turbulence above the aft hull.

This effect first becomes noticeable at roughly 100 miles altitude, as the solar boiler is (hopefully) secured. The drag of the mirror starts the entire ship rotating, prow up and stern down, so the deck slowly slants down towards the stern of the ship. Both trimsmen must make Moderate skill rolls to check this initial motion. Multiple attempts can be made, but each failure should cause some damage or injuries (someone in the engine room loses his balance and falls onto a steam line, the telescope falls off its stand, and so forth).

At 20 miles, atmospheric effects are

much more severe. Both trimsmen must make Difficult skill rolls to keep the ship on an even keel. If the boiler is properly secured, a failed roll results in several liftwood panels breaking free of the hull. The ship pitches even more, and more Difficult skill rolls are needed to keep it level. If the rolls are failed, it drops five miles before control is regained.

If the boiler isn't secure and this skill roll is failed, the remaining guy wires snap, and the entire solar boiler assembly swings around on its turntable, pulling the ship wildly off balance. For a few moments the ship heels over at 45 degrees, then the turntable bearings seize up. There's a horrendously loud noise of snapping metal, and steel plates start to fall from the mirror. Steam escapes from the turntable pipes, and anyone working in the engine room must make a Difficult skill roll to shut off the pipes before there's a serious loss of pressure. If this roll is failed, the ship loses power and starts to drift away from Parhoon with the high altitude winds, slowly righting as pieces of the mir-

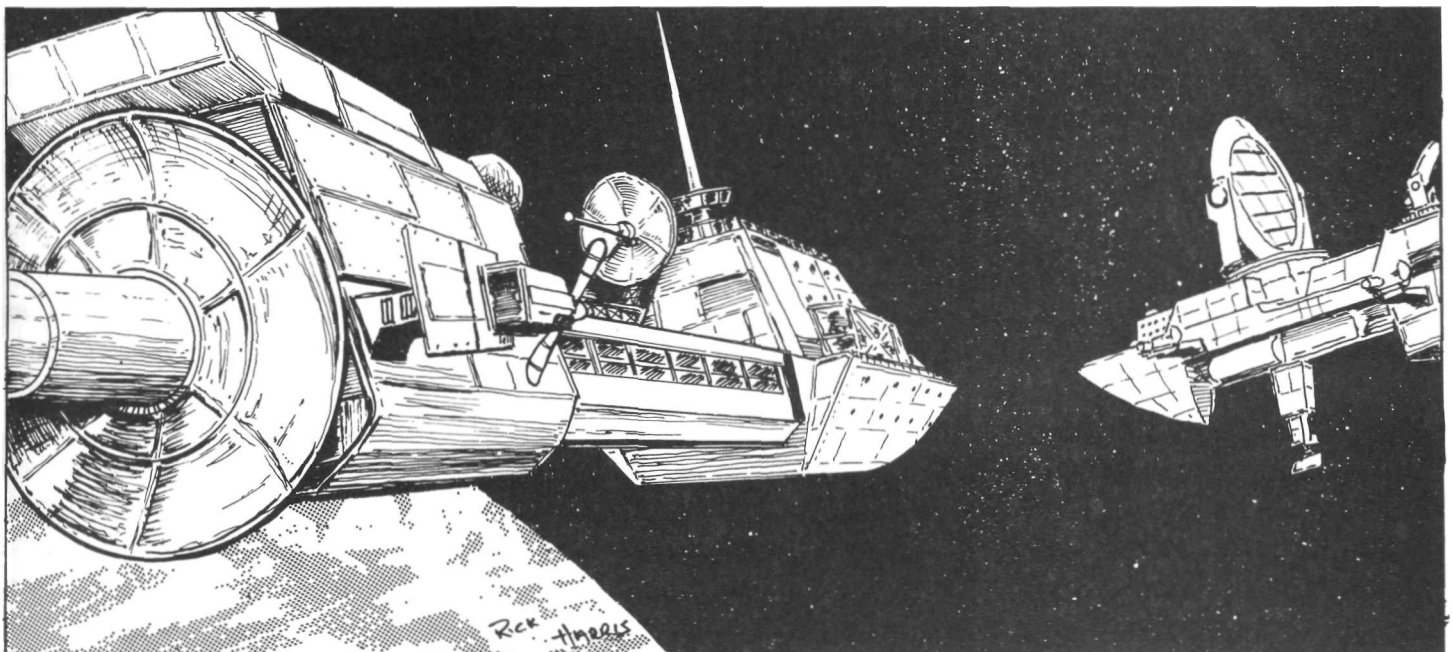
ror fall off and change the balance.

At five miles altitude the stokers can finally light the ship's coal boilers. If steam pressure hasn't been lost, the ship is still roughly on course for Parhoon and carries enough fuel to reach the city; otherwise, it will run out of fuel miles short of Parhoon, and the navy will have to tow it in.

If the ship is relatively undamaged, the trimsmen need to make Moderate skill rolls to maintain altitude. If it is badly damaged all skill rolls should be Difficult. Each failed roll drops the liner one level, e.g. from Very High to High altitude.

If the rolls are failed repeatedly, then the liner will crash-land. Everyone aboard should make a Difficult Strength roll to avoid taking one to three wounds. Fortunately it crashes in British territory, and help is soon at hand. If all the skill rolls are successful, the ship eventually lands normally at Parhoon's docks, either under its own power or towed in by the navy.

After everyone has disembarked, Sha'eenda emerges from hiding.



A STICKY WICKET

A WEEK LATER the remaining passengers from the *Princess Alexandra* have shuttled down, and the liner is in dry dock for repairs. It's estimated that it will be ready to fly again in two or three months.

By now the so-called Miskiita Ch'kya may be the main suspect in Zeenkeer's murder if the PCs have paid attention. Unfortunately she can't be found, and the details of her supposed identity have proven false.

Hirakaya Nakimatura is known to have visited the Japanese legation. If the teammates didn't copy the code book, it's now too late to take any action. No one seems to know much about the Canal Keepers in Parhoon, and there is certainly no easy way to get to Gaaryan. No one has contacted the team to discuss the matter.

After the landing Dr. Grace invited everyone who was previously on the *Princess Alexandra* to attend the opening of the Parhoon Cricket Club. It will be an important social event, and any chance to see the legendary sportsman in action is too good to miss.

The cricket club ground is the first purpose-built cricket club on Mars, although British colonists have always played the game. Cricket needs no special rules for Martian conditions, apart from a slight increase in the size of the pitch to reflect weaker gravity.

Today's match is between the army and navy. First, though, Dr. Grace is to take on the cream of both teams in a virtuoso display of batting skill.

The usual military band has gone through its paces. This one incorporated several native instruments,

giving "Colonel Bogey" an unusual lilting melody. The governor has unveiled a plaque commemorating the occasion. Now Dr. Grace, in spotless whites and pads, is advancing towards the stumps, his bat over his shoulder.

Grace takes up his position, and the first bowler starts his run towards the crease. As the ball flies from his hand, someone says, "So, you are friends of the Canal Keepers, yes?"

Grace hits the ball for six as you turn to see who has accosted you. Sitting behind you is a young Martian woman.

"Father Moriarty is asking me to be helpful to you, in name of Our Lord. Am Spuulin Dunoos; am honored to be meeting you."

Belatedly you notice a rosary around her neck.

As Grace's display of skill continues, she explains that Father Moriarty has heard enough about the team's activities to realize that it might need a little help in Parhoon, so he gave Spuulin his own ticket, hoping that she'd be able to find the team. While Spuulin isn't prepared to fight (as a Christian convert she feels that she must always turn the other cheek), she knows the city well and has hundreds of native contacts.

Meanwhile, Dr. Grace steadily hits a succession of balls to the boundary, into the crowd, and occasionally out of the grounds completely. His score is now rapidly mounting towards triple figures. At 97 a new bowler takes the field and throws a curving slow ball.

There's a ripple of applause as the doctor coolly smashes it high into the air—and a thud as it hits something many yards above the pitch. With a

shrieking wail a naked High Martian plummets towards the field, spinning as he tries to regain the use of a broken wing, dropping a spear which swishes into the turf near one of the fielders.

Finally, almost inevitably, the ball crashes to earth on top of the wicket, sending the bails flying and narrowly missing Dr. Grace himself. The umpires confer for a moment, then one calls, "Not out!" The spectators cheer.

A constable and two stretcher-bearers take the unconscious Martian into custody, and Grace prepares for the next ball, but the umpires call for a break while the pitch is rolled. The tea tent and bar are opened, and the spectators stream in for refreshments.

The High Martian's wings are covered in blue snake tattoos, which Martian characters and Spuulin will recognize as a sure sign of a devout Worm Cultist.

Spuulin says, "Am thinking trouble has found you again."

Does the team investigate this unexpected incident? If not, they should quickly realize that it's the talking point of the day. Even Dr. Grace's magnificent performance is almost forgotten, though a few crick-eting fanatics are arguing about the umpires' decision. They don't feel that Grace should be out—they're just wondering if the relevant rules section relates to acts of God, to natural hazards, or to loose animals on the pitch.

Generally the only High Martians seen in Parhoon are mercenaries attached to one or another of the kites trading at the port. Such troops usually wear some clothing, if only a loin cloth and knife belt. A naked, tat-

tooed warrior is unusual, and is cause for some concern.

Eventually the High Martian recovers consciousness in the local jail to which the constabulary have taken him. He speaks no English, feigns ignorance of civilized Martian tongues, and will sneer at anyone who addresses him in his grunting native language. He will commit suicide at the first opportunity. He is a failure and cannot fly; thus, he regards himself as reduced to the status of a slave or worse. If necessary he will gnaw his own arm until he bleeds to death. Needless to say, he will attack anyone foolish enough to enter his cell. He is a typical High Martian stock NPC and uses his teeth as a weapon (2,2,0, 1) if he fights unarmed.

While most of the tattoos on his wings seem comparatively old and a little faded, one on his left arm (spotted on a successful quick Observation roll) looks much fresher. In fact, it's dye painted on his arm, not a tattoo, and it is a reasonably accurate depiction of the Amulet of Seldon. Anyone foolish enough to show him the amulet will be attacked instantly, even through the bars.

No matter what the team does, it will learn nothing more from this prisoner, though the PCs should be able to guess that he was looking for someone wearing the amulet. This implies that someone knows that the PCs have the amulet, and that he was able to track them to the cricket ground—hardly reassuring information.

A messenger arrives, asking the team to visit the deputy regent-general (the highest ranking British official in Parhoon) that afternoon. Spuulin is not invited and will not be admitted if she accompanies the team.



Spuulin Dunoos (Green NPC)



SPUULIN DUNOOS is a rarity—a Martian who has been converted to Christianity. She is a parishioner from Father Moriarty's mission. The father has asked her to seek the team out and help it while it is in Parhoon. She has an encyclopedic knowledge of the city and no love for the Ground Cleansers or Worm Cultists. However, she is not inclined to accept any of the native Martian religions uncritically and should occasionally express minor doubts about the purity of the Canal Keepers' motives. After all,

their religion was once the spiritual arm of an empire that spanned a third of the planet. Maybe they want to restore their faith to its former position of power. She has no knowledge of the real state of affairs within the Canal Keeper religion. She has a widespread net of contacts in and around Parhoon, including family, friends, and fellow converts. She is the daughter of a Parhooni merchant captain and learned to pilot a cloudship as a child. Spuulin should *not* be used to babysit the team; she's simply a reasonably competent guide who may be helpful if the team asks her the right questions. If the team already has a good native contact in Parhoon, it may be advisable to use that character instead. Her native language is Parhooni.

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Skills</i>
Str: 2	Fisticuffs 1 (but will <i>not</i> fight), Throwing 1
Agl: 3	Stealth 2
End: 4	Wilderness Travel 3 (mapping)
Int: 4	Observation 4
Chr: 3	Eloquence 3, Linguistics 2 (English, Latin)
Soc: 3	Piloting 2 (cloudship)

Motives: Dependable, Pious, Earnest, Pacifist.

Appearance: Spuulin Dunoos is a slim, young, Martian woman, who is pretty by Martian standards. She always wears a modest form of native dress. In moments of stress, she is inclined to start telling her rosary beads. She will not fight, regardless of provocation.

TROUBLE WITH THE NATIVES

THE DEPUTY REGENT'S office overlooks the parade ground at the Parhooni barracks, and the noise of several hundred soldiers practicing their drill forms a faint background to the meeting.

The deputy regent is worried about the possibility that the Canal Keepers might believe that the death of the priest is some form of plot to destroy their religion, and he wants to make sure that the team hasn't told any natives about the assassination. So far he's kept the news quiet, but he's worried about it leaking out and triggering a holy war. Although there don't seem to be many Canal Keepers in Parhoon, he wants to avoid upsetting them. He wants the team to keep him informed of anything it learns that has a bearing on the situation.

If the teammates decide to begin by asking a few questions in Parhoon, they'll soon realize it's very difficult to learn much about religion. The natives are rarely prepared to discuss such matters with foreigners.

Spuulin can lead the team to many friends and relatives, some of whom are lay members of the Canal Keeper cult and will be prepared to talk at Spuulin's prompting. There is a strong Parhooni custom of hospitality, and each of these interviews begins with cups of *t'kzill* or berry wine, small spicy cakes, and other delicacies. After two or three interviews, all the adventurers must make Easy Endurance rolls to avoid indigestion.

The local Canal Keeper temple was closed several years ago, when the last priest died. The temple occupied

the ground floor of an old tower on the edge of Parhoon, and the roof has collapsed in the years since it was last used.

There is currently no permanent Canal Keeper organization in Parhoon. Lay members occasionally meet in each other's homes to pray, and travelling priests sometimes hold services in public halls, but the religion is gradually dying out, preserved only by a few families.

If the PCs wonder about this, it may be time to give them a little information about the current status of the Canal Keepers. The fourth or fifth informant tells them that a few years before Edison fell from the clouds (adjust this as necessary to fit the age of your preferred "Seldon") the local priests seemed to withdraw from society. They stopped clearing the canals and said that "a great evil had been done, a blow at the heart of undying Seldon." Until it was remedied, no more works could be undertaken, and the priests must now devote all their time to prayer.

If the PCs want more than this, the informant will look frightened and tell them that he has already said too much. The team is asking about sacred matters which must not be discussed. No bribes, threats, etc. will make anyone reveal any more information.

Is someone actually carrying or wearing the amulet? If it's shown to members of the Canal Keeper faith, they'll immediately assume that it was stolen from Volaace Zeenkeer, and the team should rapidly become the center of a riot. Allow the amulet carrier to make an Easy Intelligence roll to realize that revealing it isn't a good idea.

During the investigations, the team will occasionally encounter crowds of beggars, and at one point it is caught up in a jostling crowd of begging children. As the beggars leave (either because the team throws a few coins or, alternatively, starts hitting them), the amulet carrier discovers that the amulet is missing, stolen in the confusion. If the team doesn't have the amulet, then some other treasured possession should be stolen: a medal, a wallet, or a favorite gun—anything that's valuable or irreplaceable.

Whatever happens, the team *must* recover the amulet; however, there is no need for it to be easy. Send PCs on a long chase through teeming crowds, then give them a fleeting glimpse of the amulet (or its box) just as they give up hope. It's being carried by a child (a thief stock NPC) who looks about four Martian years old (eight to nine Terran years) and has immense stamina.

Run the teammates into encounters with street musicians and acrobats, more beggars, drunken soldiers (Martian and British), wedding processions, funeral parades, and so forth. **Beastmen of Mars** describes some useful city encounters on pages 16-17.

If the PCs lose sight of the child, Spuulin can always guess the way to turn (roll on the tables below).

DIRECTION TABLE

Die	Direction
1	Straight ahead—he's heading for the docks/bazaar/ruins
2-3	Turn left
4-5	Turn right
6	Double back—he's slipped past us!

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Die Description

- 1 A narrow alley
- 2 A main street
- 3 Through a street market or bazaar
- 4 Through (1-3) a shop or (4-6) someone's home
- 5 Up some stairs and across some flat rooftops
- 6 Across a canal by (1-4) bridge, (5) boat, or (6) swimming—if one of the teammates has a good Swimming skill

The teammates should catch the child when the chase flags or you feel you've devoted enough time to this phase of the adventure. Whatever happens, the team should not get (or hopefully want to get) a clear shot at the beggar. If the player characters do start firing, they'll soon be surrounded by an extremely angry mob of Martians and may need to be rescued by Spuulin's eloquence or the fortuitous arrival of some British troops.

If the teammates don't take Spuulin's advice, they'll eventually lose the child completely. A few min-

utes later he runs back into view, pursued by two Irish soldiers who have also just been robbed, and the team can head him off.

Once he's caught, the child starts crying, saying (in Parhooni) that he's an orphan, was led into theft by evil companions, and so forth. He also tries to steal someone's watch; he has Crime 4 (pickpocket) skill. The team may somehow be fooled into believing that the brat is a useful addition to their numbers. In fact, he'll do his best to rob them, then escape. He is totally untrustworthy.

If the PCs visit the former temple,

they'll find it difficult to reach and in an even worse condition than was described. The upper half of the tower has now collapsed, and the ruins are buried under many tons of rubble.

The area no longer has any inhabitants, and it is slowly reverting to the wild. There are strange noises—distant animal sounds and an occasional half-perceived scuttling as some tiny animal hides from view. Optionally, a small pack of feral animals may be around (like a wild dog pack in a Terran city, but use statistics for roogies). Nothing useful will be learned.



AN ODD LITTLE STORY

LATE ONE EVENING the PCs run into Hiram Pressburger, the difference engine expert they met on the *Princess Alexandra*. If the team is staying at a hotel, this encounter takes place there; otherwise, he invites the team back to his hotel. In the latter case, the team has been followed.

"Glad I ran into you fellows. What can I get you? Say, I heard an odd little story today—maybe you can fill me in on some of the background."

Pressburger is incapable of telling a story without digressions into Babbage machine theory and philosophy, the superiority of American engineering, the relative efficiency of punched cards versus perforated cams, and other hobbyhorses. The bar is rather noisy. Try to simulate these diversions as his story unfolds.

About two years ago "a half-dozen or so Martian priests" visited the Difference Engine Corporation offices in Parhooon, carrying a huge pile of scrolls—dozens of complicated equations to be solved, with the answers to be put into one final formula. They paid for the work in gold, and insisted on supervising every stage, which took nearly two weeks.

Most of the programming was done by Pressburger's predecessor, who is now on Earth, and even he didn't understand what the Martians wanted. One of the Martians, "a really old guy with glasses like pebbles, who carried a little abacus around with him" actually learned to read the dials which indicated the results.

The problem was so complicated that none of the engineers could grasp it in its entirety: "It was like a complex navigational exercise, but some of the concepts didn't make any sense—there was no factor for travel time, and the accuracy required was way too high, even for an ether flyer." The final result was a series of three or four numbers, each of 10 or 12 digits. At the end of the job, the priests insisted on burning all the cards and papers related to the project, except for a couple they took away.

At the time no one in the office knew where the priests had come from. However, "the boss guy, the priest that seemed to be running the whole shebang, was a young fella, no more than 12 or 14 Martian years. The guys at the office reckon his name was Sinker, or something like it—sound kinda familiar?"

The teammates can probably guess the problem had something to do with the books in Zeenkeer's luggage. No matter what they do or who they ask, they won't learn more about this bizarre little incident.

Meanwhile, the team may have forgotten about the cultists. But Sha'eenda certainly hasn't forgotten about the team.

AIR RAID

As YOU FINISH your drinks you hear a loud crash and a woman's scream, followed by the noise of breaking glass and several shots. Pressburger shouts, "Anne!" and races upstairs.

The referee should create a diagram of the third floor of the hotel. Each upstairs room (apart from the bathroom) has two entrances: an internal door and a door leading onto a balcony running the length of the building. The Pressburgers occupy room 304. If the adventurers are staying here, they should be allocated rooms on this floor. All other rooms on the third floor are unoccupied. If the PCs are not staying here, the other rooms should be occupied by NPCs—soldiers, merchants, and so forth.

Three days ago Sha'eenda and other cultists stole a small merchant kite. They have dyed the sails black and darkened the hull, and it is now grappled to the hotel roof. Six cultists have climbed down ropes, intending to break into the team's rooms and kill the PCs. (See the sidebar for the cultists' statistics.) There's only one problem with this plan: They've assumed that the PCs will be in bed, but they're still in the bar!

The cultists entered through the window of 304. Anne Pressburger was in the room, and she fortunately

Air Raid Cultists NPC Table

Cultist	NPC Type	Experience	Marksman	Att.	Arms
1	Thief	Exp.	2	Phys.	Musket, Knife
2	Bandit	Exp.	3	Phys.	Musket, Knife
3	Merchant	Trn.	2	Ment.	Musket, Knife
4	Thief	Trn.	1	Phys.	Musket, Knife
5	Merchant	Grn.	1	Ment.	Musket, Knife
6	Merchant*	Grn.	2	Ment.	Musket, Knife

* Wounded

had a revolver handy. One of the cultists was wounded, and they all have retreated to the balcony to look for a better way in.

The cultists are searching for the team, and it will take them awhile to realize their mistake. In the meantime they will try rooms 304, 306, 308, and 310. It takes them three rounds to enter and check each room. It will take the PCs eight straight rounds to reach the third floor via the stairs, more time if they are being cautious. Hiram Pressburger will make the climb in five rounds; he is unarmed.

Run this as a freewheeling combat, with the cultists moving between the rooms and causing as much confusion

as possible. It's unlikely that the intruders will do much harm. However, they will fire at the team whenever possible.

If two more cultists are shot, the survivors will retreat to the balcony and try to get back to their ship. Sha'eenda responds to such cowardice by ordering the ropes cut when they are halfway up, casting the kite free, and dumping the fugitives 100 feet or so onto a cobbled courtyard. There will be no survivors.

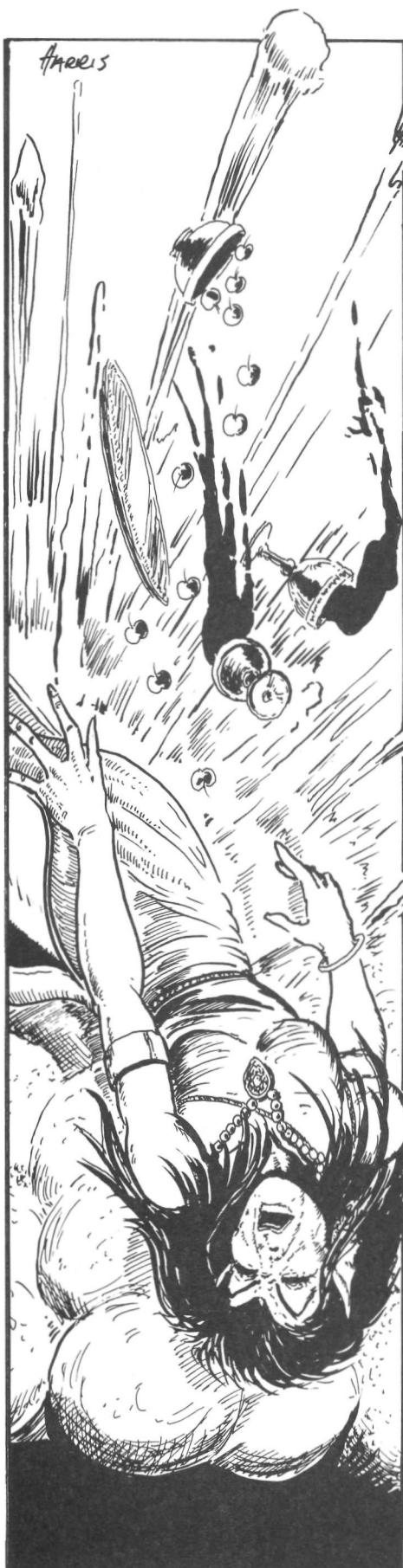
Any adventurers trying to climb the rope when it is cut must make an Impossible Strength roll to hang on; if unsuccessful, they fall to the ground. Roll 1D6. On a result of 1-3,

the person falling is badly bruised but otherwise unharmed. On a 4 or 5, the bruises and sprains are a cumulative injury which acts as level 1 fatigue for the next week. On a 6, an arm or leg is broken and must be splinted for the next month.

Any people who are hanging on swing with the falling rope. If they haven't climbed far, they land on the roof or balcony; otherwise, they swing down to land on a lower balcony, taking bruises but no injury.

The kite drifts off into the night, easily escaping the navy patrol that steams overhead a few minutes later—both moons are below the horizon, and it is very dark.





UNWELCOME GUESTS

THE NEXT DAY you are awakened by a loud explosion, and shouts and screams from below. When you come downstairs, you learn that someone has thrown a bomb into the lobby, killing one of the Martian maids. At breakfast the hotel manager presents you with your bills and asks you to vacate your rooms by noon.

The adventurers can argue as much as they like; the manager is adamant. The hotel has been attacked twice. Half the guests have left, and most of the remainder are checking out. He blames the team for these problems. (Who can say that he's wrong?) If the PCs aren't staying at a hotel, the attack is directed against someone's home.

Even if the adventurers find somewhere to stay, make it clear that this is likely to be temporary. Someone seems to be out to get them, and there seems to be little alternative to a rapid escape from Parhoon. Of course, the adventurers may simply decide to go somewhere else for a while. There is nothing compelling them to go to Gaaryan now that Zeenkeer is dead, unless they feel they are obliged to return the amulet and Zeenkeer's money or are intrigued by the odd stories they've heard. If they've discovered that the "quartz" in the amulet is an uncut diamond, they may want to find out if there are more gems like that in Gaaryan.

Troubleshooting

IF THE TEAMMEMBERS do decide to go somewhere else and don't leave a clear trail that can be followed by Sha'eenda and her friends, *do not* continue the series of attacks. If they don't leave a trail, they can spend

weeks or months in another part of Mars. Nothing at all will happen, apart from the normal hazards and encounters of Martian life. After a few months, representatives of the Canal Keepers will visit Parhoon and lodge a complaint with the governor—a claim that the team has stolen an important religious artifact and may even have murdered Zeenkeer. This will set the British authorities on the adventurers' trail. Ideally they should be arrested and brought back to Parhoon for questioning. The Canal Keepers will pretend to be more interested in the amulet than in the team, but they will kidnap the team members and take them back to Gaaryan at the first opportunity. The Worm Cultists will also notice the PCs' return to Parhoon and make renewed attempts to kill them.

THE ROAD TO GAARYAN

ASSUMING THAT the teammates do eventually decide to head for Gaaryan, how do they want to travel? The aim of this section of the adventure is to persuade the team to use a Martian kite belonging to Siditkayaa Dunoos, Spuulin's father. However, the player characters should come to this choice gradually and can spend as much time as they like exploring other options. If the team already owns transport based in Parhoon, you may wish to arrange an "unfortunate accident" to dispose of it.

Screw galleys can be ruled out immediately. While the Parhooni Navy runs a few, they have limited range and are exclusively military designs. Water and land travel can be ruled out for reasons of speed and difficulty of supply.

It would be quickest to use an ether

flyer, which could take off from Parhoon, orbit Mars, then land at Gaar-yan a few hours later. There are a few problems with this plan, most notably the fact that all the ether flyers currently in Parhoon belong to the navy, which has numerous regulations about unauthorized flights. No matter how the PCs try, they will *not* be able to persuade anyone to give them a lift. There is also no possibility of hijacking an ether flyer for this mission. It takes hours to get one ready for flight and raise steam, and the navy would certainly object.

A steam flyer would theoretically be a good alternative, but very few vessels have the range to make the round trip without refueling. (There are no reports of coal stocks at Gaar-yan.) Navy ships aren't available, due to the Oenotrian War scare, and civilian steam flyers tend to be slow, vulnerable, and hideously expensive.

Riding The Wind

SOONER OR LATER the adventurers will probably start looking at kites, and Spuulin will then suggest her father's ship, the *Little Bird of Passage*, described on pages 42-43.

Siditkayaa Dunoos can usually be found around Parhoon's docks. He's a merchant captain (and smuggler, though this should *not* be mentioned by Spuulin) who is used to evading military patrols and other hostile forces. He isn't especially friendly with Earthmen, but he is always willing to talk business.

If the adventurers decline to meet Spuulin's father, they will have to make their own efforts to find a kite. The ship they ultimately find should have a captain who is identical to Siditkayaa in all but name.

Siditkayaa should drive a hard bargain, but will ultimately give in if the team offers 10/— or more per person per day. Spuulin will not join the expedition. She teaches at the mission school and must return to work. It is to be hoped that some of the adventurers can now speak a little Parhooni or Koline. No one aboard the kite

(except the adventurers) will know English or any other Terran language.

Before the team boards, Captain Dunoos drives a quick bargain with some of his contacts around the docks and loads 200 tons of *kkl'hwas*. It's a rare food in the south, and he hopes to make a lot of money selling it along the way.

Siditkayaa Dunoos (Elite NPC)



SPUULIN'S FATHER IS, first and always, interested in money. He'll carry the team for the cash, not because of any special love for Earthmen or the Canal Keepers. Within these limits he's loyal (to the person who pays him and to his crew), reasonably brave, and resourceful. However, he will not risk his ship (or life) to protect the team.

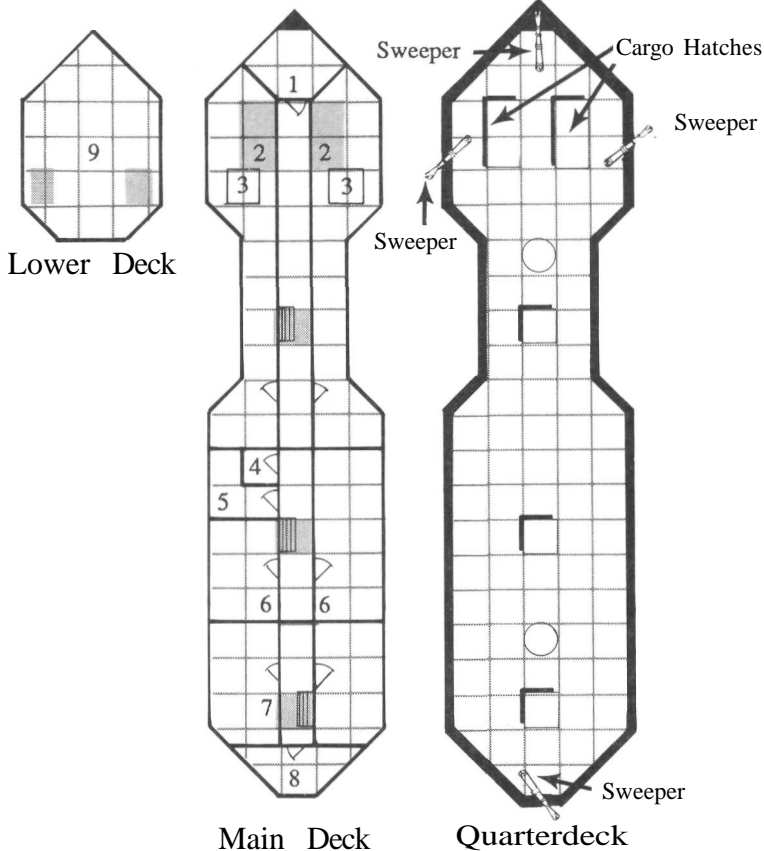
Motives: Mercenary.

Appearance: Siditkayaa is about 25 Martian years old and has the calluses and scars of someone who has spent most of his life aloft. He looks (and is) every inch a sailor. He does not speak any Terran languages. He loves his daughter, but does not approve of her religion and will not let her talk him into committing any unbusiness-like mistakes. Siditkayaa's native tongue is Parhooni.

Attributes	Skills
Str: 5	Fisticuffs 5, Throwing 2, Close Combat 5 (edged weapon)
Agl: 4	Stealth 3, Marksmanship 3 (rifle)
End: 4	Wilderness Travel 4 (mapping)
Int: 4	Observation 4, Gunnery 4 (muzzle-loading cannon)
Chr: 4	Eloquence 4, Bargaining 4
Soc: 3	Riding 2 (gashant), Piloting 5 (cloudship)

Westward to Gaaryan

Little Bird of Passage Merchant Kite



Key

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Bridge | 7 Passenger Cabins |
| 2 Holds | 8 Captain's Cabin |
| 3 Hatches to Lower Hold | 9 Lower Hold |
| 4 Head | Overhead Hatch |
| 5 Galley | Stairs |
| 6 Crew Quarters | Deck Hatch |

BEYOND THE EMPIRE

DAWNOVER Syrtis Major. Your kite, the Little Bird of Passage, drifts high above the oblivious city, creaking gently in a steady wind. Overhead the topsmen make minor adjustments to the sails. Below, a couple of deckhands sing a cheerful Martian chanty while cleaning the decks.

You can smell breakfast cooking in the galley; however, the smell is almost drowned by the pungent aroma of the dried roots that fill the cargo holds. You hope you'll get used to it before long, but it seems unlikely.

The most direct route to Gaaryan follows the canals south to Deltoton then west to Noachis, then leaves the canals at Noachis to skirt around the highlands to Gaaryan—a little over 4000 miles, mostly against the wind.

Alternatively, the ship could travel via Pyrrhae, following the canals all the way and avoiding the desert, but this adds a few hundred miles to the journey. Either route takes approximately three and a half weeks by kite to get there and two to three weeks to travel back. The most dangerous part of the journey is probably the unavoidable passage through Oenotrian territory south of the British holdings.

This journey can take as much playing time as you like. Three dangerous incidents are detailed, but it's easy to add more using the encounter rules in the **Space: 1889** game. Remember the *Little Bird* is very lightly armed—a long series of fights will almost certainly result in the kite's destruction. If you want to cut things short, use just one incident—the cultist attack that takes place near Serpentis—then say "the rest of the journey is uneventful" and move on to the team's arrival in Gaaryan.

During the journey the team can continue its language lessons, watch birds and other Martian flyers, or pass the time reading and playing cards or chess. Anyone who can read Son-Gaaryani (or a related Martian language) and spends at least three weeks studying the books from Zeenkeer's luggage will end up with a good working knowledge of Martian astrological beliefs. Unfortunately nothing immediately useful will be learned from this study, but it's a good way to pass the time.

Occasionally the kite swoops down to Very Low altitude to lower buckets for water or allow the crew to shoot a wild eegaar for the cook, but it spends most of its time at Very High altitude to catch the fastest winds. It's cold at that altitude, and the team and crew must dress warmly throughout the flight.

Give the team some time to look around the ship—and to discover the delights of life on a vessel with Martian cooking and little plumbing—as the ship passes over the city and heads south.

While you're trying to decide what you'll do for the next few weeks, you hear a cry from the lookout. You look up to see a large steam flyer approaching from astern and gaining fast.

The ship has been intercepted by H.M.S. *Dauntless*, on routine patrol over the canal. Although the captain of the *Dauntless* doesn't really expect to run into pirates or Oenotrian vessels this close to Syrtis Major, it's policy to check out any vessel that's sighted.

After hailing the kite and ordering it to heave to, the gunboat delicately maneuvers alongside, and a lieutenant

and two sailors board to inspect the *Little Bird*.

This last contact with the forces of the empire should be a pleasant encounter. The navy personnel are appalled by the smell and surprised to see the adventurers, and they advise them not to risk such a dangerous expedition. No one knows much about what's going on in Oenotria, but there is evidence of a good deal of naval activity, and much of the route to Gaaryan is unknown territory. The lieutenant sends across for the latest admiralty charts, which Captain Dunoos examines and rejects as inferior to his own hand-drawn maps.

This is a last chance for adventurers to try to borrow weapons (which may be available, if they don't ask for anything more than a rifle or handgun) or send messages back to Parhoon. However, the wind is steadily blowing both ships towards Oenotria, and eventually the steamer will have to return to its patrol.

The *Little Bird* sails on toward the Oenotrian Empire.

LITTLE BIRD OF PASSAGE MERCHANT KITE

Armor: 0

Hull: 5

Speed: Kite

Altitude: Very High

Tonnage: 400 tons

Price: £263,000

Crew: 4 officers, 4 gunners, 5 topmen, 5 deckhands

Maximum Passengers: 10

Armament: 1 light gun, 2 sweepers

The *Little Bird of Passage* was built as a smuggler's ship before the invention of the modern screw galley and

the arrival of steam flyers. It has a long, narrow hull which makes it difficult to observe from the ground or from ships at lower altitudes. This design causes minor stability problems; any adventurer acting as trimman should make all skill rolls at -1.

The ship is lightly armed but can carry up to 300 tons of cargo and 10 passengers, and still reach Very High altitude. This was a useful accomplishment when most naval vessels couldn't reach such heights; unfortunately, modern technology now makes the kite more vulnerable. However, even today most Martian warships patrol at High or Medium altitude, and a relatively small ship at Very High altitude has a good chance of escaping their attention.

In view of the kite's vulnerability, Siditkayaa prefers legitimate cargoes but still has a few tricks up his sleeve: A concealed locker contains a large box of flags, pots of paint, and other equipment that can be used to disguise the ship. Another locker contains eight brand-new Lee-Metford rifles and 30 clips of ammunition, all with British Army markings. Siditkayaa will resolutely refuse to discuss the origin of these weapons and will only reveal their presence on the ship in a real emergency.

TYPICAL CREWMEMBERS

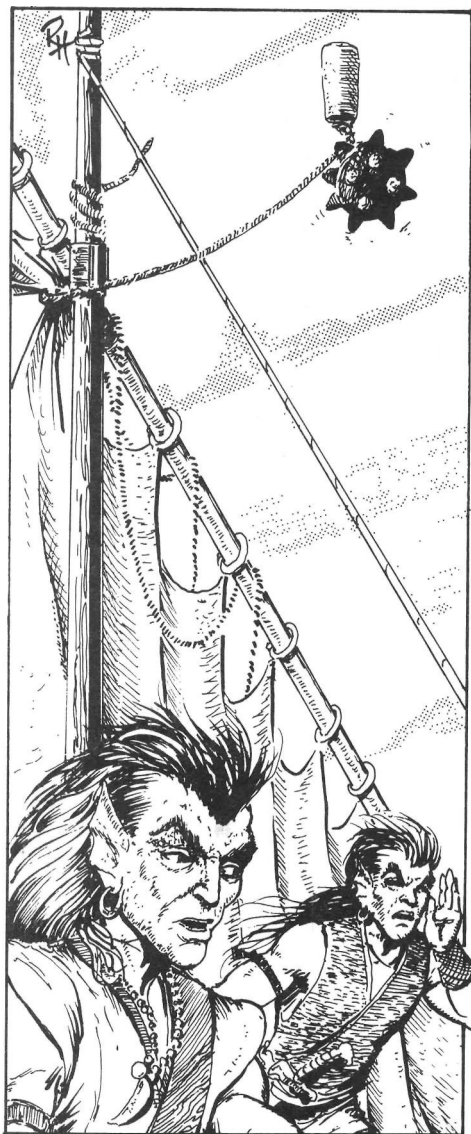
THE CREWMEMBERS of the *Little Bird of Passage* are much like their employer—interested in money, not religion or politics. While Dunoos pays their wages, they'll do a good day's work. They take his orders, not those of the team.

NPC Type: Smuggler **Experience:** Trained/Experienced **Marksman:** 3 **Attributes:** Physical **Arms:** Knife.

IN ENEMY SKIES

So FAR YOUR LUCK has been good, and the ship has penetrated deep into the Oenotrian Empire without encountering any patrols. Neither moon is above the horizon, and there is almost nothing to see except stars. Suddenly there's a loud cracking noise and a shriek of pain, then you hear the sound of tearing canvas and an ominous creak of wood under great strain.

The ship has flown into the cable trailed by a stray Oenotrian tether mine. Unfortunately the mine was moving in a crosswind above the ship,



and the cable hit with enough force to injure a sailor and damage the rigging. Now the cable is caught up in a tangle of rope and canvas, all wrapped around the mainmast, and the ship is drifting back towards Deltoton. Until the damage is repaired, the ship will be virtually helpless, and there is a real risk of the mine exploding and knocking the *Little Bird* out of the sky.

Full details of tether mines can be found in **Sky Galleons of Mars** or **Cloudships and Gunboats**. For the purposes of this scenario think of the mine as a huge floating aerial bomb, liable to explode if it is treated harshly, trailing just enough cable to entangle the rigging.

If the mine is left alone, it will continue to foul the rigging, gradually winding around the mast. Each turn around the mast takes about three minutes and shortens the remaining cable by two to three feet.

The cable can be detached from the rigging if several people work carefully to untie the tangled ropes and sails. At least one person must climb the mast to free higher loops of cable. The cable is tarred and has very resilient plant fibers running through the center. It will be very difficult to cut or break. Additionally, anyone jerking the cable upsets the fragile equilibrium of the mine's liftwood float, and it drops one to two feet down towards the deck.

Untying the cable successfully requires four consecutive Easy Agility rolls, made by the people working on the cable. Any failure results in the mine swinging round—tangling more of the cable and lowering the mine another one to three feet. If a roll fails, the job must be started again. On

a second attempt the Agility rolls should be Moderate; on a third attempt they should be Difficult, and so forth.

If the mine touches the mast, it will explode (power 4, burst radius 10), causing an immediate loss of trim. The explosion will alert the Oenotrian Navy, and a screw galley will soon appear to investigate. Fortunately the explosion won't start a fire, and the ship will evade pursuit if it retreats to Very High altitude and stays quiet. However, it will still lack a mast and can only drift east with the prevailing wind. A replacement mast can be jury-rigged in about three hours, and the ship will then be able to maneuver again.

If the mine is freed, it will slowly drift off, and the crew will shamefacedly return to work. The damaged sails can be repaired or replaced in about an hour, and the ship is soon heading east again. It isn't possible to take the mine aboard and use it as a weapon—it's armed and likely to explode with any rough handling, and the team doesn't know how to disarm it.

Unless the team deliberately seeks a confrontation, no other encounters will occur over Oenotrian territory.

BLACK SAILS IN THE SUNSET

AS THE Little Bird passes the outskirts of Serpentsis, you look back at the immense ruined spires that were once a towering metropolis. Above them rises a small black dot—a dot that is slowly getting larger.

Sha'eenda and her cultists have finally caught up with the team. Their ship is similar to a *Bloodrunner* kite, but armed with a single light gun and

capable of reaching Very High altitude. The reduced armament would normally allow the ship to carry a few tons of cargo. Sha'eenda has loaded it with cultists instead.

At first the team may not realize that *the Avenger* is an enemy. However, it should soon become obvious that it is trying to close in on the *Little Bird*, and it will open fire as soon as it is in range.

Unless the team has other ideas, Captain Dunoos will decide to turn the *Little Bird* and prepare to ram the *Avenger*. If the team doesn't have firearms, Dunoos will send a crewman down to his cabin to fetch some rifles. As the ships converge, the High Martians fly off the smaller ship and move in for their own attack.

Players may wish to control the *Little Bird* during this combat; if so, one player should take on the role of Dunoos; others should take on the role of the trimsmen, gunners, etc. Assume that all characters (apart from Dunoos) have level 3 in all relevant skills, and the trimsmen has level 4 skill. Players must also control their own characters, so this option may extend the time needed to play out this combat. Remember that all the crew must obey the orders of Dunoos, who should be run by an experienced (and preferably reasonably sensible) player. The Terrans need not obey his orders.

Try to run this combat so that the PCs are kept busy and in some real danger; however, they should stand a good chance of surviving. Shots from the *Avenger's* gun should hit the hull or rigging, not the deck. The cultist marines have been ordered to kill any Terrans they find (and will do their best to obey), but the High Mar-

tians are armed only with cutlasses and the other boarders with muskets and daggers. They are heavily outnumbered by the team and the crew of the *Little Bird*. However, they will attack adventurers, aiming to kill if they get the chance.

Sha'eenda will stay on the *Avenger*, but the PCs should have a chance to recognize her. She has abandoned her Terran clothing and wears traditional Martian dress. She strides the deck smoking a cigar, shouting instructions through a speaking trumpet. Whatever happens, she should not be killed. Even if the *Avenger* is captured or crashes, her body will not be found, and she will not be taken prisoner.

Ideally this combat should end with the *Avenger* still airborne, but crippled and unable to pursue or continue the fight, and with the *Little Bird* damaged but fundamentally intact.

Once the *Little Bird* is clear of its attacker, Captain Dunoos puts all hands to work repairing the damage and caring for the injured. Night is falling. By dawn, Dunoos hopes to be far away from his pursuer, and he will be unless the team does something to change the situation.

If the team originally decided to travel via Noachis, Captain Dunoos pretends to set course for Pandora, diverting back towards Noachis once it is completely dark and he is sure that the *Avenger* is far behind.

If the team originally wanted to travel via Pandora, Dunoos says that he thinks the cultists must be aware that he's heading that way and are bound to follow. After dark he diverts towards Noachis, in hopes of shaking off their pursuit.

If the ship was badly damaged in the fight, Dunoos puts in at Noachis

for repairs. If any crewmembers were killed, he hires replacements. Present these new hands as suspicious-looking characters. They aren't actually members of any of the factions involved in this adventure, just normal dockside riffraff, but the adventurers can enjoy a touch of paranoia whenever one of the new crewmembers is about.

Noachis is strategically located on a major trade route, and its king is determined to maintain independence and strict neutrality at all costs. He has heard of the Belgians and British, and he does not want his city to suffer reprisal raids and other colonial actions. The arrival of human visitors is a real problem for this ruler—they are extremely unpopular with the citizenry, but he doesn't want any serious trouble.

If the team goes ashore, it will be pursued by mobs of jeering natives or pelted with rotten fruit and other noxious substances. City guards keep the mob under control, but they make it clear that the team isn't at all welcome. There is no active Canal Keeper temple in Noachis. As in other areas, the priests withdrew many years ago.

AVENGER KITE

Registered Name: *Flower of Parhoon*

Armor: 0

Hull: 1

Speed: Kite

Altitude: Very High

Tonnage: 80 tons

Price: £6000

Crew: 4 officers, 1 gunner, 1 topman, 1 deckhand, 10 marines (cultists—6 Green, 4 Experienced)

Armament: 1 light gun

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

DUNOOS HAS DECIDED to shorten the journey by flying southwest around the foothills of the Noachis heights, then south to Gaaryan. Because the holds are still full of roots, the decks are crowded with barrels of water.

About halfway across the desert the *Little Bird* runs into a Martian rarity—extremely bad weather. The first signs of trouble are seen on the second afternoon.

The Little Bird is making good time as it passes the latest of a succession of bleak rocky foothills. There's almost nothing to be seen—just cliffs, sand, and an occasional (and very rare) plant resembling an American tumbleweed.

Far below you see a cloud of dust, and a spyglass reveals a huge herd of ruumet breehr, stampeding east at considerable speed. You're speculating about the reason for their flight when the wind suddenly slackens, and you notice a change in the light. The lookout shouts something you don't understand.

The Sun is turning red.

The ship has flown into the path of a huge sandstorm, blowing southeast across the desert. There has been a momentary lull in the wind, but it will soon be blowing at gale force. The storm front is roughly 80 miles wide

and much higher than the maximum altitude of the *Little Bird*. The only alternatives are to land or to ride it out. Fine particles of dust have already reddened the sunlight. Soon the sky will be black, and visibility will be reduced to a few yards.

Dunoos underestimates the severity of the storm and orders the trimsmen to gain height. Unless the team argues with him, the ship will be at Very High altitude when the storm hits. The ground in this area is Very Low or Low, with peaks extending to Medium and High altitudes. If the team prevails, the ship will be at Medium altitude when the storm hits. It can't move out of the hex shown on the map before the storm front arrives. Let the team look at the map for a few moments before continuing.

The team members should take on the roles of the captain, trimsmen, and other officers of the *Little Bird* during the storm. Assume that all characters (apart from Dunoos) have level 3 in all relevant skills, and the trimsmen has level 4 skill.

As soon as the storm hits, visibility drops to 50 yards. Hide the map from the players, and let them decide what they want to do.

Movement in the Storm

USE THE RULES for altitude control

in storms on page 119 of the **Space: 1889** rule book, but use the rules below for landing and crashing.

The ship can apparently maneuver normally; however, movement is actually 1D6+3 downwind and 1D6-3 divided by 2 (rounded up) upwind. Use the team's die rolls, but don't let the team know how far the ship has moved. The ship will often be swept downwind even when the team thinks it's moving upwind. The map is geomorphic. If the ship is swept off the west edge, it moves into the corresponding hex on the east edge. If it is swept south, it reenters on the north edge, and so forth.

If the ship is at a lower altitude than the terrain height in the adjacent hex to the northwest, it is sheltered from the storm. The wind speed drops dramatically, and it is possible to move normally and even land. Visibility is still only 50 yards, but that's enough for a safe landing. Moving out of shelter subjects the ship immediately to the full force of the storm.

If the ship is at the same altitude as the terrain but is not sheltered, the crew can see the ground and can attempt an emergency landing. To do this, the ship must be moving at zero speed (turned into the wind, with a die roll of 2 or 3 for movement), and the trimsmen must make a Moderate skill roll. If these rolls are made successfully, the ship lands without any damage. Otherwise, the ship crashlands (see the section below).

If the ship is lower than the terrain hex entered, there are a few seconds' warning of impending disaster. If the trimsmen can make a Formidable skill roll, the ship rides an updraft which lifts it one height level. If this is not enough to clear the obstruction,

Ship Damage

Damage Type	Crash Landing	Crash
Hull Hits	2D6	4D6
Rigging	Sails Torn	Dismasted
Crew Hits	1D6	3D6
Water Supply	1D3+3 Days	1D3+1 Days
Strength Roll	Moderate	Difficult
Wounds If Failed	1-2	1-3

repeat the roll until the ship clears the obstruction or a roll is failed. If any roll fails, the trimsmen may attempt an Impossible skill roll to crash-land. If this also fails, the ship crashes.

The storm continues until the ship lands, crash-lands, or crashes, and for another two hours after the ship is down, ending at five in the evening.

Crash Landings and Crashes

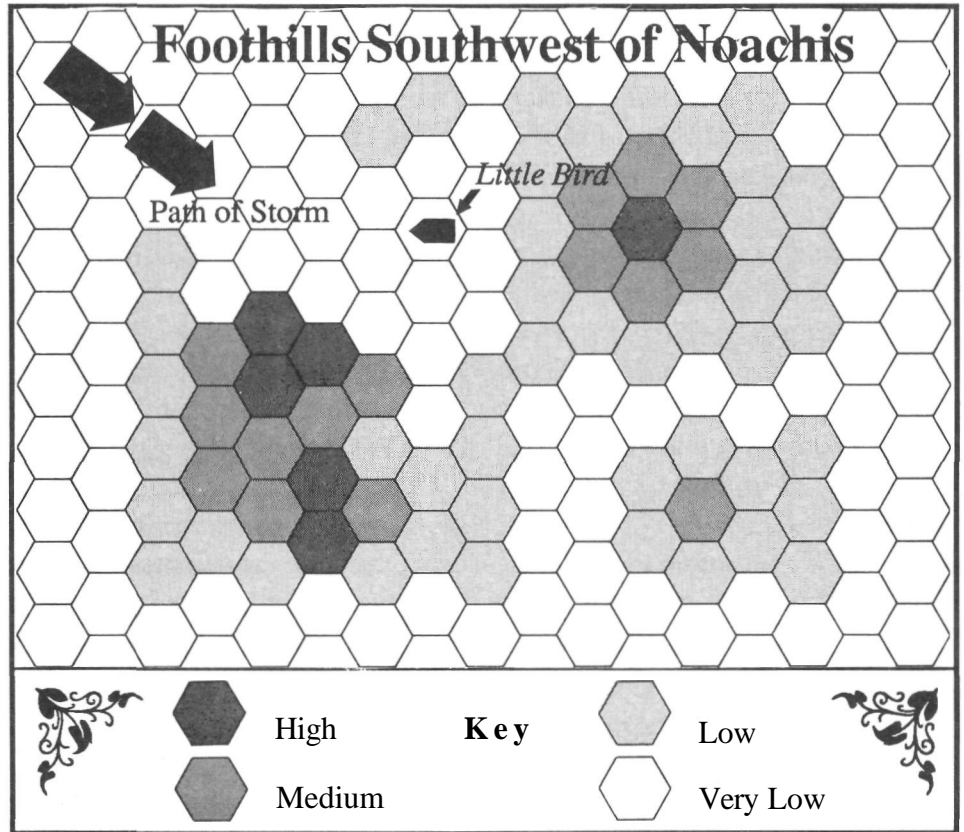
A CRASH LANDING is partially controlled by the crew, but is still extremely violent. A crash is totally uncontrolled.

These accidents have several effects: hull and rigging damage, crew injuries, loss of some of the water supply, and possible injuries to the team if a Strength roll is failed. See the Ship Damage table on page 46.

Once the ship is down, it is relatively safe. Uninjured crewmembers can anchor it and secure the remaining sails and rigging, and any wounded can be tended. Captain Dunoos should not be killed or seriously wounded. Until the storm ends, all hands must try to stay in shelter. This may be difficult if the hull is badly damaged. Everyone will be tired, and anyone who was on deck will be somewhat sandblasted, with patches of raw and bleeding skin, in addition to any other injuries.

Repairs

ONCE THE STORM ENDS, the crew and team can assess the damage. To get to Gaaryan the ship must be able to reach Medium altitude; otherwise, it won't be able to clear some of the terrain in its path. If damage has reduced the maximum altitude below the altitude of the terrain hex the ship is in, it won't even be able to take off!



For the purposes of this scenario, repairs will take an hour per point of hull damage repaired. The hull cannot be repaired in flight. Rigging repairs will take five hours if the sails were ripped and 10 hours if the ship was dismantled, and cannot be carried out while the hull is being repaired because all hands are needed to haul on ropes, lash cables, etc.

If the ship has less than three days' worth of water left when it takes off, Dunoos will impose limited rationing—drinking water is available, but washing (apart from medical treatment) is forbidden. This halves consumption, so (for example) a three-day supply will last six days.

Once the ship is repaired, the rest of the flight is relatively easy, but frequent stops for additional repairs are needed. No more storms crop up, but the wind alternates between strong gusts and flat calm. It takes

four days for the ship to reach the canal north of Gaaryan where it can take on water. By nightfall the kite is approaching the outskirts of the city.

The first spires of the city have just come into view when the lookout warns that three ships are approaching. As they near, you realize that they are powerful screw galleys. Each would be more than a match for the Little Bird if it were in perfect condition. With a damaged hull and lashed masts, you don't stand a chance if they prove to be hostile.

Two maneuver to parallel your course at a distance, while the third closes to port. As it nears, you notice the flag it is flying—an inverted globe of Mars on a bronze-colored background—a flag identical to the banner in Zeenkeer's trunk.

Captain Dunoos relaxes, and says, "Gaaryani Navy, not pirates. They'll guide us to port."

WELCOME TO GAARYAN

TIMBERS GROAN as the kite settles into the landing cradle, and dockers quickly raise a boarding ladder. In moments a half-dozen soldiers climb aboard, followed by several priests. Captain Dunoos smiles and bows, but the first priest brushes him aside and says, "You are the English visitors we have been expecting, yes? I am Eak'ijiis Grouivr, chancellor of the temple. You are under arrest, on suspicion of murdering Regent Volaace Zeenkeer.

"Where is the Amulet of Seldon?"

It should be obvious that Grouivr

is aware of the team's identities. Zeenkeer sent a telegram reporting his progress via the orbital heliograph before leaving Earth. It reached the temple on a merchant kite about six weeks ago, and every ship visiting Gaaryan since the landing of the *Princess Alexandra* has been met by a reception committee. Rumors of Zeenkeer's death have also reached the temple via merchants from the Belgian Coprates.

Once Grouivr has confirmed that the teammates are the Englishmen he's expecting, he summons a coach and cavalry escort to take them to the

temple. He will not accept any arguments, and the troops give him the muscle to back up his "request." Naturally the team is thoroughly searched, and the amulet and any weapons are confiscated. Nonobvious weapons (such as air rifle canes, hat pins, etc.) and well concealed equipment will not be confiscated.

The adventurers may want to make arrangements for Captain Dunoos to wait a few days, come looking for the teammates if they don't return, and so forth. This isn't easy when everyone is under arrest, but if the PCs somehow manage it, the priests sim-

Eak'ijiis Grouivr (Experienced NPC)

EAK'IJIIS GROUIVR IS the chancellor of the temple, responsible for most day-to-day activities of the cult. He is not religious; unlike most other Canal Keeper priests, he sees the faith as a convenient stepping stone to power. He hides this well, and his piety is widely respected. He is a brilliant administrator and has been left in charge while Zeenkeer is absent.

Zeenkeer's death gives Grouivr an ideal chance to become the next high priest regent. Unfortunately the presence of a living adult incarnation of Seldon means that the regency is largely symbolic. Once an adult Seldon has been anointed as high priest, the regent is little more than an advisor. Grouivr will maneuver for two things: appointment as the next regent, then the death of Seldon and his friends (preferably as Zeenkeer's murderers). Once the team is out of the way, Grouivr should enjoy several years of power while another Seldon is found and raised to maturity—then a "tragic accident" might extend the regency indefinitely. Think of Grouivr as one of the Borgia popes and you won't go far wrong.

His native language is Gaaryani.

Attributes Skills

Str: 3	Fisticuffs 2, Throwing 1, Close Combat 3 (edged weapon)
Agl: 4	Stealth 4, Crime 3 (forgery)
End: 2	Wilderness Travel 1 (foraging)
Int: 6	Observation 5, Science 3 (chemistry)
Chr: 5	Eloquence 6, Theatrics 6, Linguistics 4 (Son-Gaaryani, Koline, French, English)
Soc: 6	Riding 5 (gashant), Leadership 5

Motives: Ruthless, Efficient, Machiavellian.

Appearance: Grouivr is tall and thin, and always looks alert and extremely intense. He never smiles and wears the plainest of priestly robes. He carries a knife underneath his robes. He is apparently only interested in his faith and the well-being of the temple.

ply wait until the team has left the ship, then pay Dunoos to forget the matter. He leaves Gaaryan as soon as he has sold his cargo.

The coach is well sprung, comfortable, and large enough for eight passengers. It's pulled by six gashants. Grouivr and a scribe join the PCs in the coach and question them about the death of Zeenkeer. He'll do his best to trick them into making incriminating statements, which will be noted by the scribe.

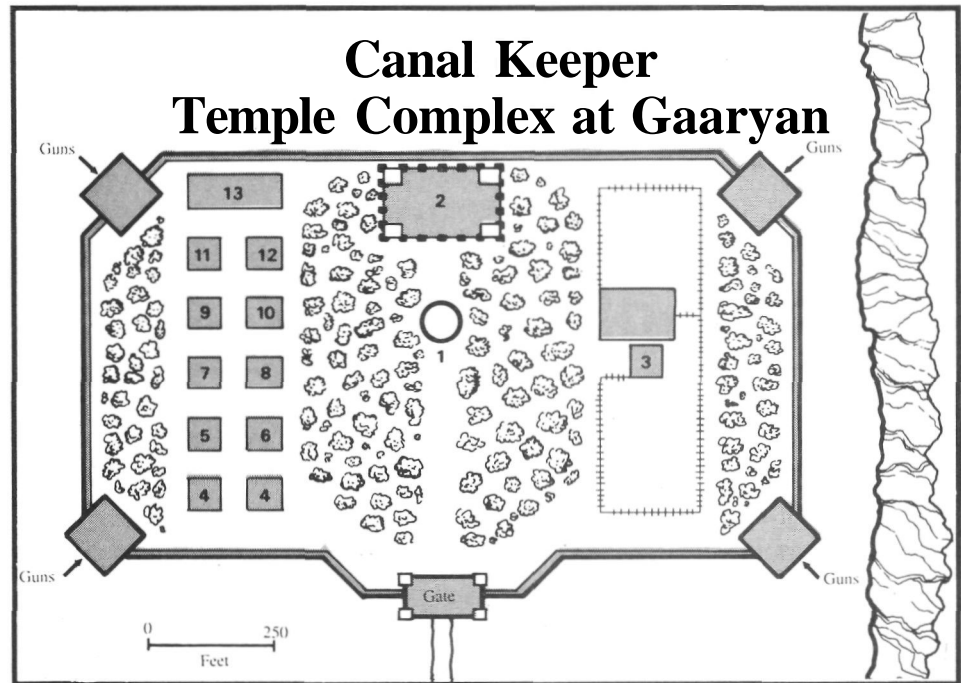
If the team asks about awkward events, such as Zeenkeer's visit to the Difference Engine Corporation offices, he simply says, "I'm asking the questions."

After two hours the coach slows, then clatters through a gatehouse, past high metal gates, and along a drive. It brakes to a halt in front of a huge building, 50 feet tall with towers at each corner.

Through the window drifts the scent of flowers and the sound of many voices chanting in unison.

Grouivr says, "Until this matter is resolved, you are under arrest, but there is no reason for you to be uncomfortable. The high priest's suite is empty; you can stay there until your trial."

Use the details on pages 52-53 to describe the chapel as Grouivr leads the team to the apartment. Approximately 300 Martians are in the chapel when the team arrives. The service continues despite the presence of the PCs, but they should sense a ripple of excitement and feel hundreds of eyes watching them as they pass. Servants follow with the team's luggage, naturally leaving any weapons behind. The adventurers are left to choose bedrooms and make them-



selves comfortable in a suite of rooms that is clean but doesn't seem to have been used for several years.

Canal Priest Cavalry and Guards (Stock NPCs)

IN GAARYAN the Canal Keepers maintain a small military force, whose main responsibility is guarding the temple and Seldon. In general, they are less pious than the priests, though they are adherents of the cult, not mercenaries. They are as efficient as any other Martian troops.

All troops are Martian stock NPC soldiers; however, most are armed with bows, and cavalry are armed with bows and lances. Approximately 80 troops are attached to the temple, including 20 cavalry.

Typical Canal Priests (Stock NPCs)

WHILE APPEARANCE and personality may vary greatly, most Canal Keeper priests go through a common course of training, primarily reli-

gious, but also including survival techniques, engineering (with particular reference to canal maintenance), and defensive combat. The skills which follow may vary considerably, as may attributes, and many priests have specialized skills in addition to, or replacing, those below.

All Canal Keepers wear gray robes. Generally the highest-ranking priests wear finer fabric, but this is not necessarily always the case.

Motives: Responsible, Pious.

Att. *Skills*

Str: 2 Fisticuffs 2, Throwing 1, Close Combat 2 (edged weapon or pole arm)

AgI: 2 Marksmanship 1 (bow)

End: 3 Wilderness Travel 2 (foraging)

Int: 4 Observation 3, Engineering 3 (any type)

Chr: 3 Eloquence 2, Linguistics 2 (Son-Gaaryani, any other Martian language)

Soc: 3 Riding 2 (ruumet breehr or gashant), Medicine 1

The Temple of the Keepers

THE TEMPLE AND GAARYAN

GAARYAN ISN'T RULED by the Canal Keepers, but the faith does have enormous influence there; for example, the national flag is an image of the Amulet of Seldon. This faith is still the state religion, and priests hold many important civil posts. The prince of Gaaryan will uphold any decision of the priests which doesn't affect the security of the state, and his troops will aid the priests in any emergency.

TEMPLE BUILDINGS

BUILT DURING THE REIGNS of Seldons II and III, the temple complex marks the site where Seldon II is reputed to have first conceived the idea of conquering Mars.

The temple is 18 miles outside the main city of Gaaryan and is isolated—the nearest buildings belong to farms several miles away. It is less than 100 yards from the cliffs which separate this part of the Gaaryan canal zone from the desert heights.

Although player characters may be under the impression that the cult is on the verge of extinction, many thousands of lay followers—and nearly 300 priests, novices, soldiers, and servants—are still based at this site. It is the sleepy center of a poten-

tially powerful religion which (on the whole) could benefit most of Mars if it were more active.

The plan on page 49 shows the layout of the main temple site, which is surrounded by a 30-foot stone wall with eight heavy cannons mounted in four corner batteries and another two mounted above the gatehouse. These buildings also house ammunition stores and armories. They are well guarded, and no one is allowed inside without permission. There are fields outside the temple walls.

The grounds are landscaped and impressively fertile, watered via a system of irrigation pipes.

The dome (1 on page 49; page 51) houses the Eye of the Builders and is kept closed and guarded for most of the year, shuttered to prevent anyone from entering. The Eye of the Builders is actually a large fragment of a shattered crystal lens from an ancient Martian heat ray of the type used to build the canals. Although only an imperfect piece of the original lens, it is capable of producing a lethal beam of coherent light. For a few days every year, when the Sun is correctly positioned, the highest elders of the temple hold services in this dome, with their prayers relating the beam to the divine spark of reincarnation and Seldon's cycle of death and re-

birth. This period of special worship is due to start approximately 10 days after the team arrives.

The dome is built as a dark maze surrounding an inner hollow containing the Eye of the Builders. Several booby traps lurk in the maze, and anyone entering the wrong section is in great danger. A bright lantern will reveal that parts of the floor are shiny and smooth, while other parts are dull and dusty. The shiny areas have been worn smooth by countless generations of feet.

Four types of traps are concealed in the maze, all operated by pressure on special floor slabs. Unless stated otherwise, they must be reloaded or reset manually after each use.

- Pit traps are simply trap doors over 20-foot-deep, smooth-sided pits. The trap lid is counterweighted and will close without any attention.

- Knife traps fire a single throwing knife from a spring gun buried in the side wall. Treat the knife's attack as a skill 2 throwing knife attack.

- Spear traps drop eight spears from slits in the corridor ceiling. Treat each spear as though thrown by someone with level 1 skill.

- Deadfall traps drop a 200-pound stone from the corridor ceiling. A Moderate Agility roll is needed to jump free and avoid 1D6 wounds.

When the dome is open, the inner chamber is guarded by four soldiers (armed with bows) with orders to kill anyone tampering with the lens or the holy fragments below it. Only Seldon would be allowed to touch them.

The lens beam acts as a short-range heat ray (wound 4, save 1). Anyone under the lens at the midpoint between the two pillars is a potential target. The main lens fragment is 14

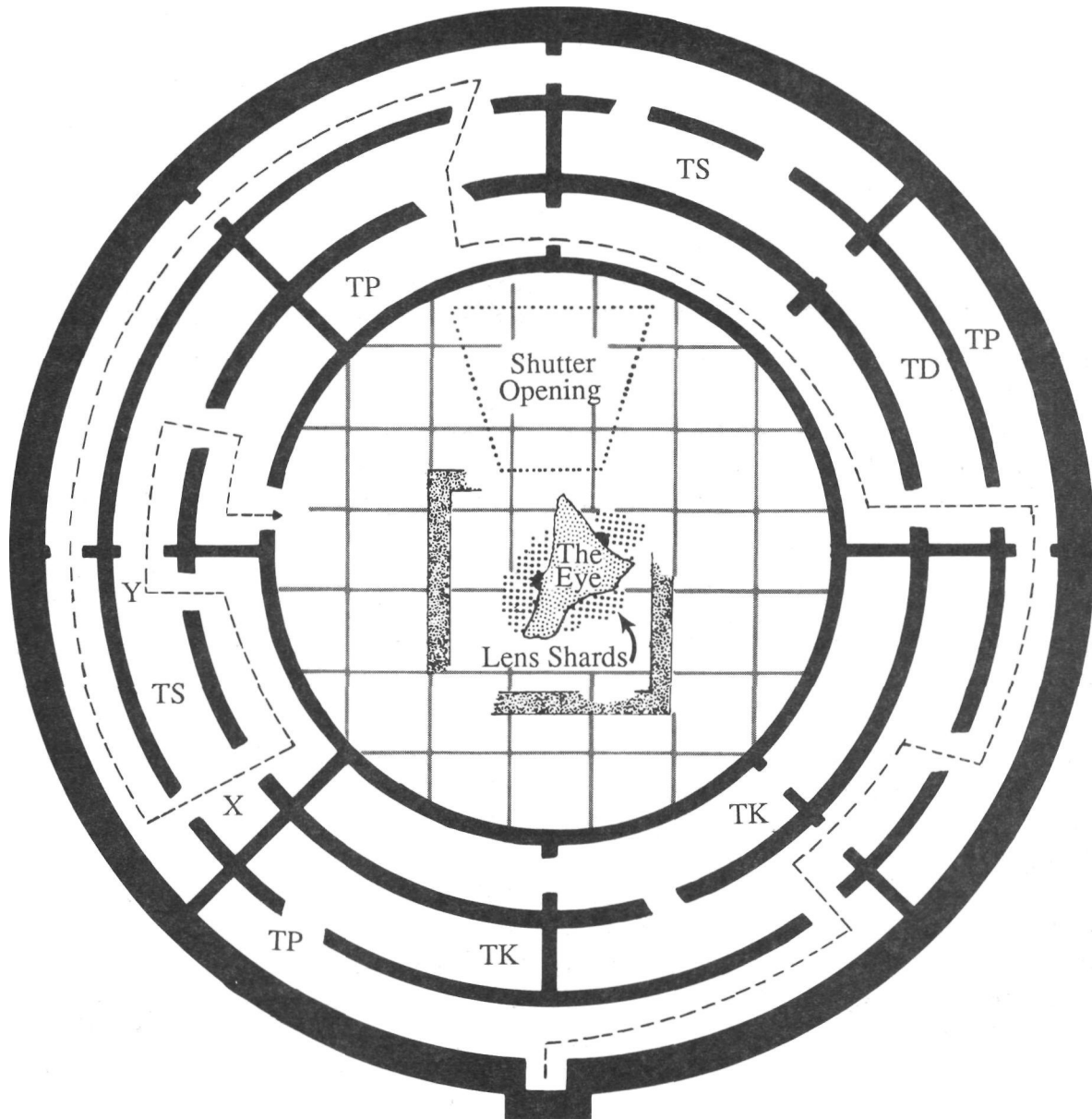
feet above the dome floor. Anyone under the lens when the beam appears must make an Easy Agility roll to shut his eyes and avoid 1D6 minute's temporary flash blindness.

The lens and fragments are made

of highly stressed crystal (with thousands of tiny flaws) doped with a variety of dyes that can't be analyzed by 1890s chemistry. The lens will shatter into more fragments if anyone tries to move it. The smaller pieces

(mostly fine gravel, with 30 or 40 pieces ranging from the size of an acorn to an ounce or more, and a dozen chunks weighing several pounds) are much more stable, and look like gems.

The Eye of the Builders



Key

TK Trap (Knives)

TP Trap (Pit)

TD Trap (Deadfall)

TS Trap (Spears)



Safe Path

X, Y

See page 59

The chapel (2 on page 49 and detailed below) is used for most acts of worship and also contains apartments for the high priest (Seldon), the high priest regent, the temple astrologer, the master engineer (who draws up plans for canal reconstruction—the post is currently vacant), and the offices of other temple officials.

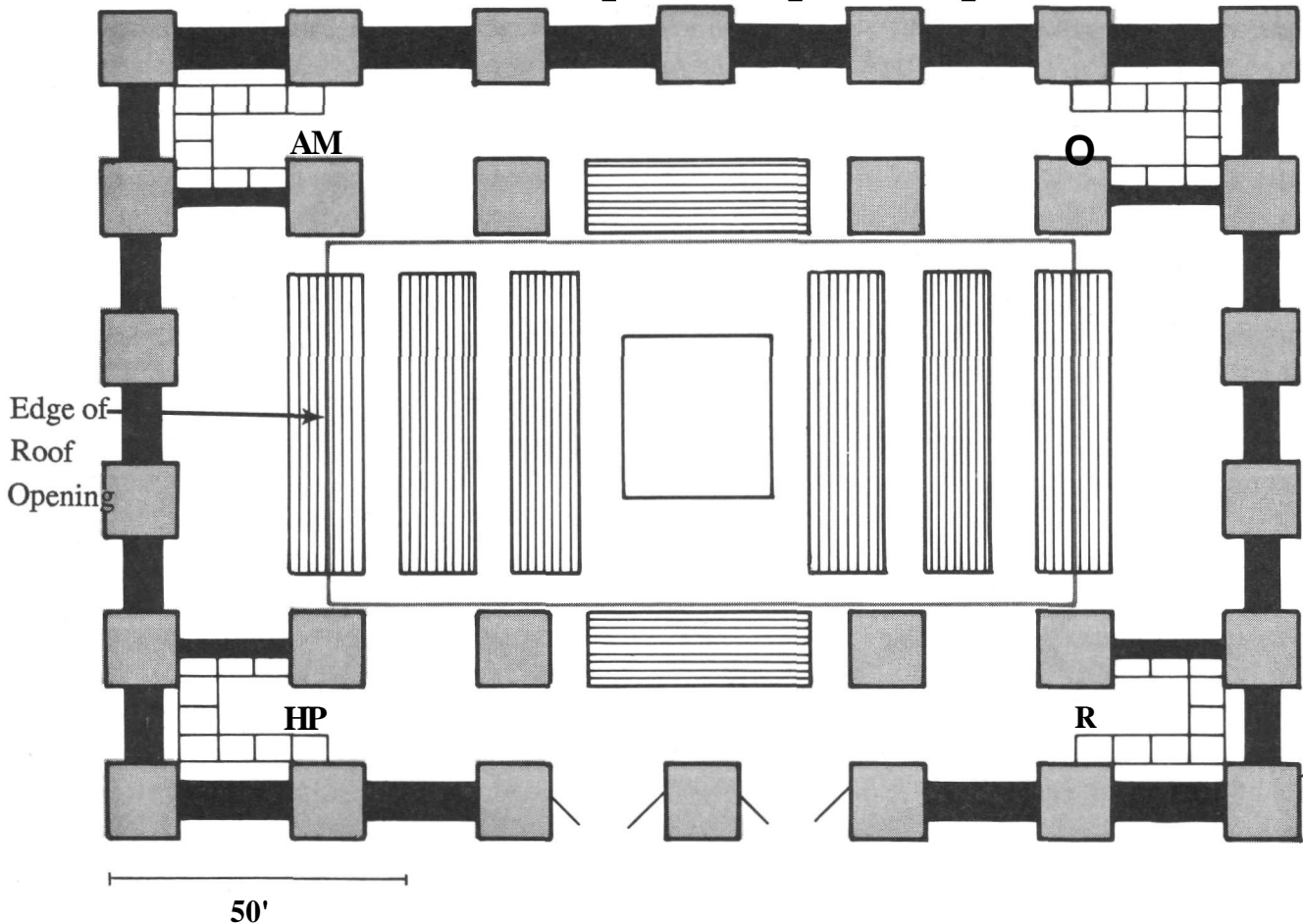
The main chapel is impressively decorated with elaborate mosaics, murals, carvings, and statues depicting the life and works of Seldon II in

his roles as conqueror, engineer, statesman, father, and demigod. There are always at least six spear-armed guards on duty in case of Worm Cult attack. Tiers of seats slope down towards a central stage, and the hall can easily hold 1000 or more. The chapel is always busy. If a service isn't in progress, off-duty priests sit in groups discussing abstruse philosophical points or the fine points of canal lock repair while a priest stands on the stage chanting passages from

The Book of Canals, the *Life of Seldon*, or other holy works.


The chapel roof is a hollow square of wood, a solid margin approximately 40 feet wide with the central opening covered by a gigantic canvas awning which is supported by an elaborate system of rigging ropes on the roof. This arrangement is adequate for the weather of Mars and lets in enough light to make the hall reasonably bright by day. At night the hall is normally lit by dozens of can-

Canal Keeper Temple Chapel



Key

HP High Priest's Apartment
O Offices

R Regent's Apartment
 Staircases

AM Astrologer and Master Engineer

dies and oil lamps, supplemented by a large brazier for special occasions.

Staircases in the four corners of the chapel lead to the apartments above. Each is a three-story tower with bedrooms, or offices and other facilities. They are moderately well soundproofed, though the noise of a full congregation in song penetrates all areas. The team is accommodated in the high priest's suite, which is large enough for all the PCs, plus NPC companions and servants. It's nicely decorated, but hardly luxurious.

A few Martian servants tend to the needs of the team. Some armed guards are posted on the roof and at the base of the staircase, but they do their best to be unobtrusive. There are doors onto the roof from each of the towers.

The map numbers in the sections below refer to the map on page 49.

Most of the eastern half of the temple site is taken up by stables and paddocks (3) housing the gashants used by the temple cavalry. The animals are all trained to an individual rider, and will buck and rear if anyone else tries to mount. A Difficult Riding (gashant) skill roll is needed to control them, or a Formidable roll with any other form of Riding skill. A barn houses fodder and gives the animals shelter in the event of sandstorms and other bad weather.

The cavalry and other troops are housed in two barracks blocks (4). At any given time at least a third of the troops are on duty somewhere around the temple site.

Unmarried servants are housed in building 5, and building 6 is used by married couples. The PCs may be surprised to discover that some of the priests are on very friendly terms with

unmarried female servants. Priests of this religion are not celibate.

Buildings 7 and 9 house priests. They each contain rooms and dormitories for approximately 100 priests and novices, plus bathrooms and other facilities. Each is about two-thirds full. The priests' kitchens, dining halls, and laundry are in building 8.

Building 10 is a carpentry workshop where the priests build furniture, barrels, coffins, and other useful objects. Stores here include a few pieces of liftwood, carefully tethered for ease of handling. The adventurers may wonder what the liftwood is used for. The priest in charge of the shop will gladly explain that it's mainly needed for repairs to the Great Wheel (described at right), with spare pieces occasionally used for special projects, such as the box containing the Amulet of Seldon. Several priests and servants work here by day; by night the building is empty.

Building 11 is a food store. This building contains barrels of smoked fish and dried fruit, sacks of grain, and other staples, plus cold cellars (packed with ice from the southern ice cap) containing an assortment of meats, fish, and some unseasonable fruits. Enough food is stored here to last approximately two weeks.

The school (12) is used by novices and the children of servants. Subjects include languages, civil engineering, and the doctrines of the faith. Nothing useful to the PCs can be learned here, and they will be pestered with endless questions about Earth if they venture inside. The school houses a library which includes several books in English, mainly intended for use in language lessons. They are the only English-language books in the tem-

ple and can be borrowed if the team wants something to read.

Building 13 is a pump house over a deep artesian well. The pump is powered by the Great Wheel, a device originally designed by Seldon XIX and gradually perfected over thousands of years by the temple.

The Great Wheel is rather like a ferris wheel which is 50 feet in diameter and is supported in a huge metal frame. It has eight platforms, each pivoting around its axis and geared to stay flat, each carrying a chanting priest. At intervals a priest jumps onto one of the platforms, replacing another who has finished his shift. The whole mechanism rumbles round at approximately 10 rpm, with gigantic chains, cogs, and rods linking it to a huge beam pump. It is used throughout the daylight hours; at night the building is empty.

Inventors who study this machine will soon understand the mechanism. Each of the platforms consists of a flat wooden stage covering a layer of liftwood slats. As each platform goes round, the priest riding it operates a trimming lever, much like the trimman's controls on any flyer. On one side the slats are set to give maximum lift; on the other side they are set to minimum lift, and the platform is pushed down by its own weight and that of the rider. The difference in force makes the wheel turn.

Although this may appear to be a perpetual motion machine, it is in fact a means of harnessing the ether flux which surrounds the planet. While this energy source is, for all practical purposes, unlimited, so is solar energy, and no scientist would consider a solar boiler to be a genuine "perpetual-motion" machine.

PRETRIAL JITTERS

THE NEXT MORNING passes uneventfully. Servants wake the team with breakfast, and Grouivr arrives a little later, accompanied by two younger priests who act as his secretaries. He questions all the adventurers again about the death of Zeenkeer and asks them to sign statements. The statements are written in English and are simply transcriptions of the team's stories.

Later, one of the English-speaking priests shows the team around the site. The dome housing the Eye of the Builders isn't open (and won't be described by the priest, who simply names it and says that it is "very holy" without revealing details), but all other areas can be visited. This will take several hours. Let the PCs spend

as long as they like admiring (or sketching and photographing) the Great Wheel. If players are unable to appreciate its significance, all characters with Science or Engineering skills should make an Easy Intelligence roll to realize its potential value.

As the PCs move around the temple grounds, they should be aware that they are watched at all times. As well as the young priest, at least two or three other priests are always in sight, and there always seem to be guards around. Naturally the PCs will not be allowed to leave the temple grounds.

If the adventurers try to steal weapons (or reveal concealed weapons) and shoot their way out at this or any other time, the priests and troops will try to overcome them with minimal

injuries through unarmed attacks and sheer weight of numbers. The priests are fanatical enough to ignore threats and to use human wave tactics. Once the PCs have been recaptured, the priests politely disarm them and carry on as though nothing had happened.

Late in the afternoon Grouivr returns to the adventurers and announces that "the elders" will judge them in the chapel at nightfall.

Eventually, willingly or not, the teammembers should be ushered onto the chapel stage. At this point the referee *must* have chosen the new "Seldon" and should be prepared with details like his date and place of conception.

Night is falling as you climb a few steps onto the stone stage. Guards with spears herd you to one side of the platform. A huge brazier burns in the center of the stage, bathing the entire hall in an eerie, flickering, red light. Overhead the tent-like canopy billows and swells as it fills with warm air. In the pews surrounding the stage, hundreds of priests and worshipers chant a doleful tune, which seems to be a plea for Seldon to return and restore the Canal Keepers to their former glory.

Grouivr follows you, accompanied by four extremely old priests. One, slightly younger than the rest, wears pebble-like glasses, and you suddenly remember Pressburger's odd story.

As the last priest steps onto the platform, several priests raise curved instruments resembling hunting horns and blow a dozen or so deep notes. The hymn ends, and Grouivr raises a scroll and announces Zeenkeer's death.

Grouivr states his case for the prosecution: Zeenkeer was last heard



of in the company of the team; now both are dead; and the teammates seem the logical suspects. After all, they were present at the scene of the crime.

When he has presented his case, Grouivr calls on "Glaar Skuguu, leader of the Council of Elders." The oldest priest totters forward and asks the adventurers to read their statements. Have the players act this out. If there are any contradictions in the statements, Skuguu questions the PCs until the discrepancies are unravelled. If they refuse to cooperate, Grouivr calls on the elders to witness the team's "guilty silence." He also cross-examines each of the adventurers. Eventually the older priests move to the side of the stage and confer. The team may believe that they are about to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit; in fact, they are in no danger unless they have been extremely stupid and told the priests a pack of incriminating lies.

Glaar Skuguu (Stock NPC)

SKUGUU IS A TYPICAL (albeit old) Canal Keeper priest whose main qualification for office is age and a reputation for great wisdom. He's a wizened old Martian who walks with a cane and occasionally mumbles to himself.

Skuguu (and the other elders) are all typical canal priests, as described on page 49. They all speak Gaaryani and Son-Gaaryani.

MEET THE NEW BOSS

When the elders finish deliberating, Skuguu says, "In the name of undying Seldon, founder of our faith, we of the Council of Elders hereby affirm that the death of Volaace Zeenkeer is

proven. However, we are convinced that no blame is attached to any present here.

"Chancellor Grouivr, you have been zealous in prosecuting this case and establishing the truth. We hereby appoint you to the post of high priest regent, guardian of the faith, and keeper of the amulet."

The guards swing their spears away from you, and the congregation starts to sing another hymn. Grouivr takes the amulet and raises it in both hands, walking around the stage so that the worshipers can see this symbol of their faith. Abruptly he gestures for silence.

"In all humility I accept the honor you have entrusted to me. I am doubly honored, because I shall be regent in more than name."

There's an excited murmur from the crowd, which ends when Grouivr raises the amulet again, and shouts, "Seldon lives! Seldon is reborn!"

The crowd cheers, and soldiers move to stop some of the more enthusiastic members of the congregation, who seem to want to rush onto the stage. Grouivr beckons for silence again.

"As you all know, Lord Seldon is perpetually reborn to guide us as our high priest. In the year of the Silver Knoe Shoshu (give the team a date approximately nine months before your chosen Seldon was born, if anyone has bothered to learn the Martian calendar), his body was foully slain, assassinated by devil-spawn of the Worm Cult. But his soul lived! His soul still lives! And we have found him again, and proven him innocent of evil!"

Grouivr turns to face you, and beckons you (point to "Seldon") for-

ward. "Welcome home, Lord Seldon. We have sorely missed you." He raises the amulet again, and deftly slips it around your neck before you have a chance to react.

If you wish Seldon to have really been reincarnated as an adventurer, this is the moment at which he realizes the truth. Hopefully, it will be a complete surprise to all the players.

About half the congregation seem to be stunned with surprise, the rest start to cheer. Someone starts to chant "Seldon...Seldon..." and in moments the cry is taken up by hundreds. The crowd surges forward again but is stopped by the crossed spears of the guards. The cheering continues, getting louder by the second as the Canal Keepers salute their new leader.

As far as the Canal Keepers are concerned, the latest incarnation of a living demigod is among them. Any reservations about the propriety of Seldon reincarnating as a Terran are forgotten in the general euphoria.

From now on it may be advisable to refer to the chosen high priest as Seldon, regardless of his real name. To avoid confusion, this name is used throughout the rest of this adventure.

Eventually Grouivr raises his arms again, and the cheering gradually subsides. "Enough. It is late, and I have much to discuss with High Priest Seldon and his friends. Rest now, for tomorrow we take up our work again, refreshed and made eager by the long wait."

Members of the crowd make determined efforts to touch Seldon, but the guards thrust them back with spear butts and clear a path towards the stairs leading to Grouivr's office. There doesn't really seem to be much alternative to following him upstairs.

WHAT THE STARS FORETELL

IT'S TIME FOR GROUIVR to tell the adventurers the whole story. Let them read the prologue, to establish the background. Grouivr will then explain that the temple astrologers and Zeenkeer made many complex calculations to find the exact place and time of the conception of the new Seldon. He calls on Lliis Hadfi, the astrologer, to explain how this was done.

Even knowing that Seldon had been conceived on Earth, the priests had to develop completely new methods of calculation to translate from Martian astrological terms to Terran geography and refine the position to within a few feet. Hadfi spends some time describing a new form of astrological calculus, incomprehensible to anyone who is not a skilled mathematician. Eventually the priests succeeded in developing formulas for the calculation, solved the problem with the aid of the difference engine in Parhoon, then converted the results into map and altitude coordinates. They discovered that the position corresponded to a Brighton hotel room. (Choose another location if this does not seem appropriate; for example, an aristocratic Seldon would probably be conceived in a stately home, an American in America, a Lizard-man Seldon would naturally be conceived on Venus.)

Grouivr dismisses Hadfi, and takes up the story. Detectives hired on Earth were used to establish that the room was occupied by Seldon's parents at the crucial time and to trace them and their child. Once Seldon's identity was established, Zeenkeer went to Earth to make the final arrangements. Grouivr goes on:

"It is true that we have deceived you to lure you here, but it was necessary. Without Seldon we are nothing. The canals fill with silt, locks decay, and bridges collapse because no one is there to give the orders. Only Lord Seldon can lead us. You must remain here for the rest of your life. Your friends will keep you company."

Make it quite clear that the Canal Keepers intend to keep all the adventurers captive for the rest of their lives. If Seldon heroically suggests that he is really the only person who needs to stay, Grouivr apologizes and says that it is too late. Anyone who was released would carry tales back to "your Queen Victoria," and the temple might then be raided by Royal Navy flyers. For obvious reasons, the team won't be allowed to send messages.

If the PCs suggest that a mistake might have been made, Grouivr acknowledges the possibility, but says that it makes no difference

"Even if Zeenkeer was wrong or Lliis Hadfi lost a number in his calculations, even if it is just superstition, and Seldon never has been reborn—you are Seldon now. Hundreds believe it, and as the news spreads across Mars, thousands will follow. We needed Seldon, and now we have him."

Outside the window, the canopy over the chapel flaps up and down, glowing with the light of the brazier below. The Canal Keepers are still singing, and even from here you can detect a note of joy in the tune that reaches you. Seldon is reborn, and the Canal Keepers are celebrating.

Lliis Hadfi (Stock NPC)

THE YOUNGEST of the Canal Keeper

elders, Hadfi may best be described as an astrology hacker. He isn't really interested in individuals. All he cares about is the pattern of cosmic forces revealed by his intricate (and almost incomprehensible to outsiders) calculations.

Hadfi has invented most of the techniques used to find Seldon and is intensely proud of his research methods. He is delighted to talk to anyone who expresses an interest. However, no amount of persuasion or logic will convince him that he has made a mistake.

Hadfi is in his mid-twenties (about 50 Earth years) and is extremely short-sighted. He speaks Koline and Son-Gaaryani.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

SELDON IS SOON involved in the ceremonial life of the temple. Every morning a procession of priests arrives with scrolls drafted by Grouivr and the other temple elders, orders and plans for the future of the faith. If Seldon refuses to sign them, Grouivr threatens to have the PCs confined to their rooms and carries out his threat if Seldon still won't cooperate.

Grouivr is sending out priests with orders to reopen the old temples and raise funds for canal clearance. He hasn't ordered any supplies or equipment for the work, but that will presumably come later. Seldon should notice that the amounts to be raised seem extremely high. Encourage him to annoy Grouivr by querying the amounts indicated or refusing to sign.

Gradually the team should become aware that Grouivr is not at all pleased to have Seldon taking an active role in temple life—he'd much prefer a

child or no Seldon at all. While Seldon is always kept under close observation, the other adventurers can easily lose their guards for a few minutes and eavesdrop on conversations or spy out the routine of their captors.

The first sign of trouble should be a conversation between Grouivr and Skuguu, overheard a few days after Seldon is crowned. Only a few words are comprehensible:

"You agree then, this is intolerable?"

"But he is Seldon, our high priest...."

"But not of our race. Remember that. This incarnation is but a transitory stage in the life of immortal Seldon. When he reincarnates as a Martian...."

Two days later, Seldon should have a brush with death. While he is walking near the chapel, a block of stone falls from the parapet. It misses Seldon by three feet, but he takes one to two wounds from flying rock fragments. A nearby guard is killed. No one is seen on the roof, but access can be gained to it from all four towers.

On the same day one of the adventurers bumps into Lliss Hadfi, who drops a bundle of scrolls. He seems anxious to avoid conversation and scurries back to his quarters once he's recovered his papers.

The astrologer's suite is accessible from the chapel or its roof, and is easily burgled when Hadfi is asleep or busy elsewhere in the temple. The tables are covered with piles of charts, each apparently an astrological projection. Anyone who has read Zeenkeer's books will realize that they are used to determine the location where a soul is reincarnated. A



Moderate Intelligence or Navigation skill roll will reveal that they reflect conditions from two days earlier to 20 days in the future. The current day's chart is missing. About half are incomplete, and Moderate rolls will reveal that they show reincarnation off-planet—on Earth.

It's obvious that Hadfi has been trying to work out where Seldon will reincarnate if he happens to die, with a special interest in any date which will ensure reincarnation as a Martian.

The chart on top of the pile is dated six days ahead. It shows reincarnation on Mars. A Difficult skill roll reveals that it indicates a reincarnation point less than 20 miles from the temple, somewhere in the midst of Gaaryan town.

The next day Grouivr announces that the dome of the Eye of Seldon will be opened in five days and that Seldon must officiate at the first ceremony.

If the PCs haven't already realized that Grouivr plans something nasty for the ceremony, you may want to drop one or two more hints. For example, if the adventurers haven't yet investigated Hadfi's room, find a plausible excuse to invite them there. He might ask for advice on buying a calculating engine for the temple, then remember that his only copy of the Imperial Babbage Machines catalogue is in his room. As before, he does his fumbling best to keep the team away from the charts, but drops one where the team can easily steal it and doesn't notice the loss. It's the chart for the day when Seldon was nearly killed and shows reincarnation in Pelagus, only a few hundred miles from Gaaryan.



ESCAPE PLANS

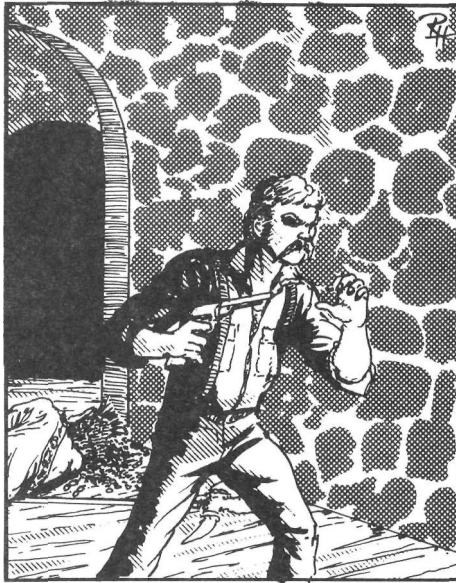
BY NOW the adventurers should be anxious to escape and may imagine that they are about to be rescued by a fortuitous accident—the arrival of a conveniently stealable sky galleon or some other diversion. They're wrong.

Simple escape attempts (such as disguising adventurers in priests' robes or stowing away in the bottom of a wagon leaving the temple) should not work; everyone and everything leaving the grounds is thoroughly checked by the guards. Diversionary tactics should also fail. Enough priests and guards are around to keep a close eye on all the adventurers, even if they separate. Tunnels will not work. Rock lies under the soil of the temple compound. Attempts to escape by ordering the guards to stand aside will also fail—they are aware that the teammates are not willing guests and that Seldon may not be reconciled to his new status.

It may be a good idea to let the team make at least one unsuccessful escape bid which actually gets them outside the walls. Since the Canal Keepers have overwhelming manpower and

the temple is a long way from any refuge, they have plenty of time to track down the adventurers. If the PCs reach Gaaryan town, they will be arrested by the city guard and handed back to the priests.

All may seem hopeless, but three ways to escape actually exist. All of them require daring, but any self-respecting adventurer should have that in plenty.



Boy's Book of Flying Wonders

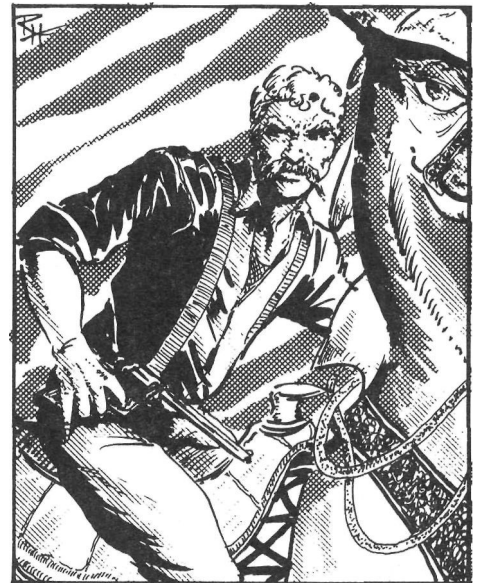
THE LIBRARY at the temple school includes a volume that may be of great interest to adventurers—a British book on the history of flight. It was published shortly before Edison's historic journey and includes pictures of preliftwood balloons, gliders, and experimental flying machines. Since it's aimed at bright schoolboys, it includes several experiments which can be done "with materials to be found in any well equipped home." One of them is a model hot air balloon.

Anyone reading this book and making an Easy Intelligence roll will realize that the canopy over the chapel, the guy ropes that support it, and the brazier on the stage below can

be combined to make such a balloon on a much larger scale. The PCs have already seen it billow upwards when the brazier is in use. They will need a basket to ride in, but plenty of laundry hampers and boxes lie about.

Naturally this won't be very easy. The team must take control of the chapel for at least an hour, release the guy ropes that secure the canvas canopy, lash them to the brazier, and fill the canopy with hot air. Once this is done the balloon will drift east in the prevailing wind, clearing the temple wall and the cliffs beyond, then head off over the desert.

Exactly how the team gains the time to build the balloon is left to the players and referee. Overt violence should not work because there are too many guards and priests around, but it should be possible for Seldon to trick everyone outside while the rest of the team bars the chapel doors. Alternatively, the team might temporarily hold off the guards by pretending to take Seldon hostage and threatening to kill him. Most of the Martians aren't involved in Grouivr's plan and want to keep Seldon alive. Once the



building is clear, it will take some time for the priests and guards to get organized and batter the doors down.

Variations on this plan include building hang gliders or man-carrying kites from materials found in the temple. Unfortunately neither method of transport will get the PCs far enough from the site to evade the guards, and they will soon be recaptured and returned to the temple.

Take The Wheel

ANOTHER WAY to escape from the temple is to hijack the Great Wheel. If all the vanes are set to lift simultaneously and some bolts are loosened, the wheel will rip from its frame and crash up through the wooden roof of its building.

There are a few snags: The wheel isn't designed to fly and will spin and twist uncontrollably. The wheel has no form of propulsion and will be at the mercy of the winds once it clears the temple walls, drifting east over the desert. All the ploys described under *Boy's Book* can be used to take control of the building for the few minutes needed to steal the wheel.

It's also possible to steal the lift-wood stored in the temple carpentry workshop and build the equivalent of a small raft capable of carrying two or three passengers. Such a raft will be barely airworthy and will eventually crumble apart and crash-land out in the desert. Proceed to the appropriate point in *Unexpected Reunion*, and carry on from there.

Public Relations

THE FINAL ESCAPE METHOD is the simplest, but the most dangerous. If Seldon can prove that the temple hierarchy intends to kill him, many

priests will assume that their leaders have been taken over by the powers of darkness and will rise up against Grouivr and his fellow conspirators. Definite proof will be needed, and Seldon must somehow trick one of the conspirators into publicly revealing the truth. The fight that follows will quickly escalate towards total anarchy, allowing the team to steal some gashants and make its escape.

However this fight progresses, you should ensure that it ends with the adventurers evading pursuit by riding into the desert. If they stay to fight or go off in any other direction, they'll eventually be recaptured, either by Grouivr (who will claim that the team was lying or mistaken and will have Seldon "accidentally" killed at the earliest opportunity) or by Seldon's loyalists, who just want to keep their high priest. Neither side is interested in letting the team loose.

If the PCs escape, it's important that they end up travelling over the desert, whether they are flying, riding gashants, or on foot. If they don't escape, there may be another way for *part* of the team to reach the desert.

An Unfortunate Accident

IF THE TEAMMEMBERS haven't already escaped, Seldon will eventually be "invited" to the first ceremony of the season at the Eye of the Builders. Grouivr, the elders, and a few soldiers loyal to Grouivr will be the only Martians inside the building. Their plan is for Seldon to apparently die accidentally, by the will of the gods, during the ceremony. The remainder of the team is present to witness that his death is indeed an accident. The method is simple: A guard will initially lead the PCs through the maze.

As they reach point X (see the map on page 51) the guard will drop back, and Grouivr will appear with a lantern at point Y, beckoning Seldon toward him. If Seldon falls for this, he'll trigger a spear trap halfway along the corridor.

If this plan fails or Seldon isn't killed, Grouivr proceeds with the ceremony, which implores the Builders to show a sign of their power. He'll try to trick Seldon into standing under the Eye in the path of the beam at the crucial moment by telling him that the patterns under the Eye are symbolic of the work of the Builders or by claiming that the lens and fragments are emeralds. Naturally he knows the exact time when the beam will appear.

If this fails too, or if either trap works but Seldon isn't killed, Grouivr will let the team leave the maze without any further incident.

From this moment on Grouivr will make repeated attempts to kill Seldon at astrologically appropriate moments—a suitable opportunity occurs once every 3+1D6 days. Methods may include poisoning, an unlucky fall from the chapel stairs or roof, a mistake with a bow or cannon during target practice, a hunting accident, and so on. The attempts will get more dangerous with each failure. Grouivr doesn't like to look foolish.

If the teammates simply won't do anything to escape or make futile attempts that don't get them anywhere, Grouivr will ultimately succeed in killing Seldon. With Seldon out of the way, there's no need to keep any witnesses around, so Grouivr will arrange for the team to be taken out into the desert and killed by his troops. Carry on with the events described in the next section.

UNEXPECTED REUNION

IF THE TEAMMEMBERS are escaping by balloon or in the Great Wheel, they eventually crash-land in the desert some way from Gaaryan—too far away to walk easily. Their rickety craft is thoroughly smashed. If it is the Wheel, too many pieces of lift-wood break free to allow it to fly again. If it is a balloon, the canvas catches fire in the confusion of the landing. Fortunately no one is badly hurt. Soon a sandstorm starts, pinning the team down overnight.

If the PCs are escaping on foot or on gashants, they probably don't intend to venture far into the desert. However, they are forced to travel many miles to shake off pursuit, and then a sandstorm blows up and pins them down overnight. By the time the storm ends, everyone is tired and sore, and the team's tracks have been obliterated by the blowing dust. Fortunately the pursuers lose the team's trail and give up the chase.

If Grouivr has killed Seldon and ordered the temple guards to dispose of the other adventurers, they are bound hand and foot, tied across the back of gashants, and taken a long morning's ride into the desert. Eventually the guards cut the PCs from the gashants (but leave their hands and feet tied) and ride off laughing. One of the adventurers should be able to work loose eventually—plenty of sharp rocks lie about. As the PCs free themselves, a sandstorm starts, continuing all night.

When the storm ends, you take stock of the situation. You don't know exactly where you are and don't have the supplies you need to survive in the desert. Gaaryan is somewhere to the east, but you can't be sure of the exact

direction. In any case it's probably a good idea to stay well clear of the temple and city.

As you try to work out a plan, you notice several black shapes circling overhead, swooping down towards a nearby ravine.

The referee should devise a plan of the ravine, which the PCs approach from the south. They'll find the wreck of a small kite at the bottom. It has been painted black and has black sails. If the *Avenger* escaped from the encounter with the *Little Bird*, the PCs will recognize their former adversary. If the *Avenger* was destroyed, the wreck is another small craft "commandeered" by Worm Cultists led by Sha'eenda. In either case it has had another encounter with the *Little Bird*, which is not far away. However, the team has no way of knowing this.

A dozen Canal Martian and High Martian corpses are scattered on or around the wreck. Most have multiple gunshot and shrapnel wounds. The hull of the kite is smashed in many places. Bat-like scavengers tear at the corpses; fortunately, they won't attack the living.

The hull is totally irreparable, but it contains a few packs of provisions (dried meat and fruit and other iron rations) and four 10-gallon water casks. It houses no workable weapons apart from three cutlasses and a musket—even the cannon is split. A few loose cartridges lie on the ground, but they don't fit any firearms the team may be carrying.

Let the team spend some time searching the wreckage. It won't find anything else of use.

Suddenly a shot rings out, thudding into the deck near your feet, and a voice cries, "Die, unbelievers!" You

realize that someone is sniping at you from the edge of the ravine. You have a nasty feeling that you recognize her voice.

Sha'eenda survived the wreck and is determined to take final revenge on her enemies. She will shoot to kill and is armed with a 12-shot, lever-action rifle. She has plenty of spare ammunition and has picked a spot with natural cover: a clump of rocks on the edge of the ravine, northwest of the wreck.

Sha'eenda intends to kill all the adventurers. She will move around the edge of the ravine as necessary to keep the team in sight, and won't be suckered into coming down after the adventurers. The team can take cover in the wreck but will find it very difficult to retaliate. The PCs may feel that it's best to wait until dark, then try to sneak out—an occasional shot penetrating the hull and whistling past (or into) one of the adventurers should persuade them that this isn't a particularly good idea.

Any reasonably cautious plan should work; for example, the team could set fire to the wreck, then use the smoke (which blows north) as cover for a climb to the edge of the ravine. Once out of the ravine, the team can stalk Sha'eenda and prepare to attack her.

As the PCs close in, or if they seem to be getting nowhere, there is an unexpected development:

A gigantic shadow passes overhead, and you hear the crack of a cannon. Shrapnel and splinters shriek off the rocks and ricochet over your heads, and you hear a scream from the sniper. Rocks fall from the nearby hill and thud down onto her position.

The kite slows, the crew dropping sail and throwing out anchors as it reaches level terrain, then slowly settles to the ground. You recognize the smell before you see the name on the stern. It's the Little Bird of Passage.

If the team stops to check out the body of the sniper, they won't find it. Of course several tons of stones and rock have collapsed onto Sha'eenda's position, but the team should come away with a lingering suspicion that she may have somehow escaped.

HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN, JIGGEDY-JIG

IT WAS NOT GOOD FORTUNE that brought the *Little Bird* into the desert to find the team. Dunoos, despite the urgings of the canal priests to forget everything he had seen and heard about the red men he delivered to Gaaryan, decided that there was money to be made in lingering in the area. The British government at Syrtis Major, he reasoned, would reward him handsomely if he were to rescue the humans from the clutches of the

Canal Keepers. The fact that he was unable to locate a suitable cargo in Gaaryan was also a factor in his decision.

If Grouivr has bribed Dunoos (as suggested on pages 48-49), Dunoos will not stay bought. The captain will endeavor to keep the bribe a secret, in hopes that the humans will be more likely to put in a good word with the red men's government if they are kept in the dark concerning that little transaction.

Although he ran into a spot of trouble (the sandstorm, then the rematch with the *Avenger*), he has indeed managed to rescue the lost humans with only minimal damage to his own vessel, and he can still show a profit for the trip, especially if the team will show gratitude by offering to pay for the repairs to the *Little Bird* once it arrives back in British territory.

The return journey may be as eventful as the referee deems necessary. It is rather anticlimactic to have the team face any further tribulations—for the moment.



EPILOGUE

BACK IN PARHOON the teammembers will find that some of the money Zeenkeer promised has actually been paid into their bank accounts—about

£ 120 per adventurer. Although its less than expected, it's still a reasonable fortune for the lower classes, and a good windfall for middle- and upper-class adventurers.

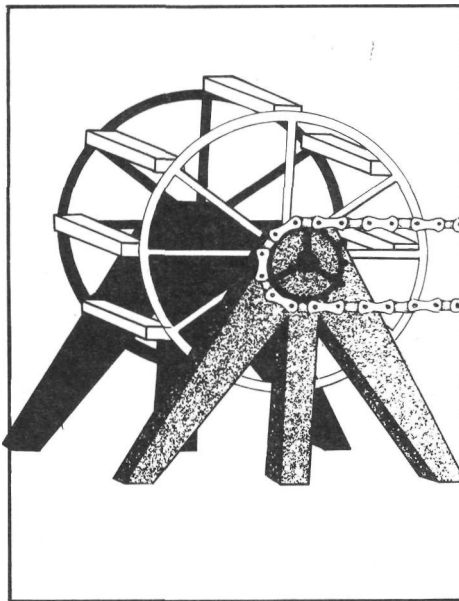
The *Princess Alexandra* will be ready to return to Earth in two weeks; if the adventurers have lost their tickets, the White Star Line is prepared to supply replacements.

Ether Flux Generators

EDISON EXPERIMENTED with an ether flux power generating device soon after his return to Earth, using liftwood cannibalized from the hull of his first flyer. His prototype refused to work, and all machines built since then have failed to work.

The Great Wheel is proof that such a machine can be built, but only if it is *big*. The antigravitational elements of liftwood generate energy fields which resonate in the ether. Close pieces of liftwood (such as the elements of a ship's hull) tend to resonate in unison, so all the pieces produce similar lift. This is desirable in a ship; it smooths the lifting effect and makes the trimman's job much easier. Unfortunately, the effect means that a system which needs pieces of liftwood with widely differing lift values runs into problems. The effect is overcome by distance—for a working system the liftwood units must be at least 14 feet apart, and greater separation is better. Edison experimented with a three-foot wheel, and no one else tried one much larger.

There are other limitations: The machine must be fixed to rigid foundations; it must be very close to a large mass (such as a planet) and located at least 14 feet from other large pieces of liftwood. Giv-



en these restrictions (which rule out any chance of using this system in a normal vehicle), it is possible to build a worthwhile engine and harness it for power. Manual control can be replaced by a mechanical gearing system which moves the vanes at the correct moments. Each hull size equivalent of liftwood should theoretically generate several hundred horsepower; in practice, the liftwood produces energy for less than half the movement cycle. This factor and other inefficiencies reduce the output of any great wheel to around 125 horsepower (one power point) per hull size.

At a British yard the liftwood will cost £8000 per power point, and the frame will weigh 20 tons and cost

£200 per power point. Operation costs 10 percent of construction per year for maintenance and liftwood replacement (e.g., £800 for a one-power-unit machine). But by comparison, a one-power-point steam engine in continuous operation requires 3650 tons of coal per year at £1 per ton. Ether flux generators of lesser power can't be built given present materials.

Thus, ether flux generators are initially expensive, but comparatively cheap to run. They break even with steam engines between two and three years after they are built, and are virtually free for the next six to eight years of operation. At that time, however, the liftwood vanes must be replaced.

The ether flux generator is an invention in the power production research area which has a minimum research level of 30 and an experimental success number of 4. An inventor who has closely examined the Martian flux generator, however, has his power production research level raised by twice his Intelligence attribute plus his Observation skill (but only for purposes of inventing this device). PCs building and demonstrating such a device stand to make a considerable income from the royalties or the sale of the patents.

Two days before departure, the PCs are surprised to find several Canal Keeper priests waiting to see them. Their escape (or the death of Seldon at the hands of the temple elders) has led to a violent reformation of the faith. All the former elders are dead, and the priests have been sent to apologize. If Seldon is still alive, the priests promise that there will be no more attempts to kill him or drag him back to Gaaryan; however, the Canal Keepers would be very grateful if he would make arrangements to have them notified of the exact place and time of his death. He will remain the titular head of their faith and can call on their help in any emergency. Depending on circumstances, this role may be useful, embarrassing (if a few hundred followers decide to present their compliments to Seldon when he's not expecting them), or extremely dangerous.

After all, there are still many Ground Cleansers and Worm Cultists, and some of them do not like the idea of a human as Seldon. If a living Seldon left the amulet behind when he escaped, the priests will give it back to him; again, they'd like it back when he dies.

If Seldon has died since leaving, the priests will want to know the exact time and place of his demise. Later that year a new Seldon will be found, and the Canal Keepers will slowly return to their old work. If the PCs had the amulet when they left and Seldon is dead, the Canal Keepers will want it back.

Did the adventurers make notes on the construction of the Great Wheel? If they can produce a working replica, they might be able to patent it and eventually earn large amounts of

money. However, plenty of unscrupulous industrialists will stop at nothing to pirate the wheel's secrets before the patent can be registered.

Any player who participated in close combat during the adventure should be given at least one experience point in that field. Players who helped repair and/or land the *Princess Alexandra* should be given one or two points each in appropriate skill areas. Players who make an effort to learn the local languages receive one experience point in Linguistics. One or two experience points should also be awarded to players for any adventurous encounters in Parhoon, and at least as much for their voyage out to Gaaryan. As this is a long and involved adventure, opportunities abound for rewarding good role playing.

As to renown, players who helped recover the code book can expect very little in the way of direct recognition, but can be assured that the foreign

office will see to it that any other noteworthy exploits of theirs are well publicized—double any other renown points they gain in the adventure.

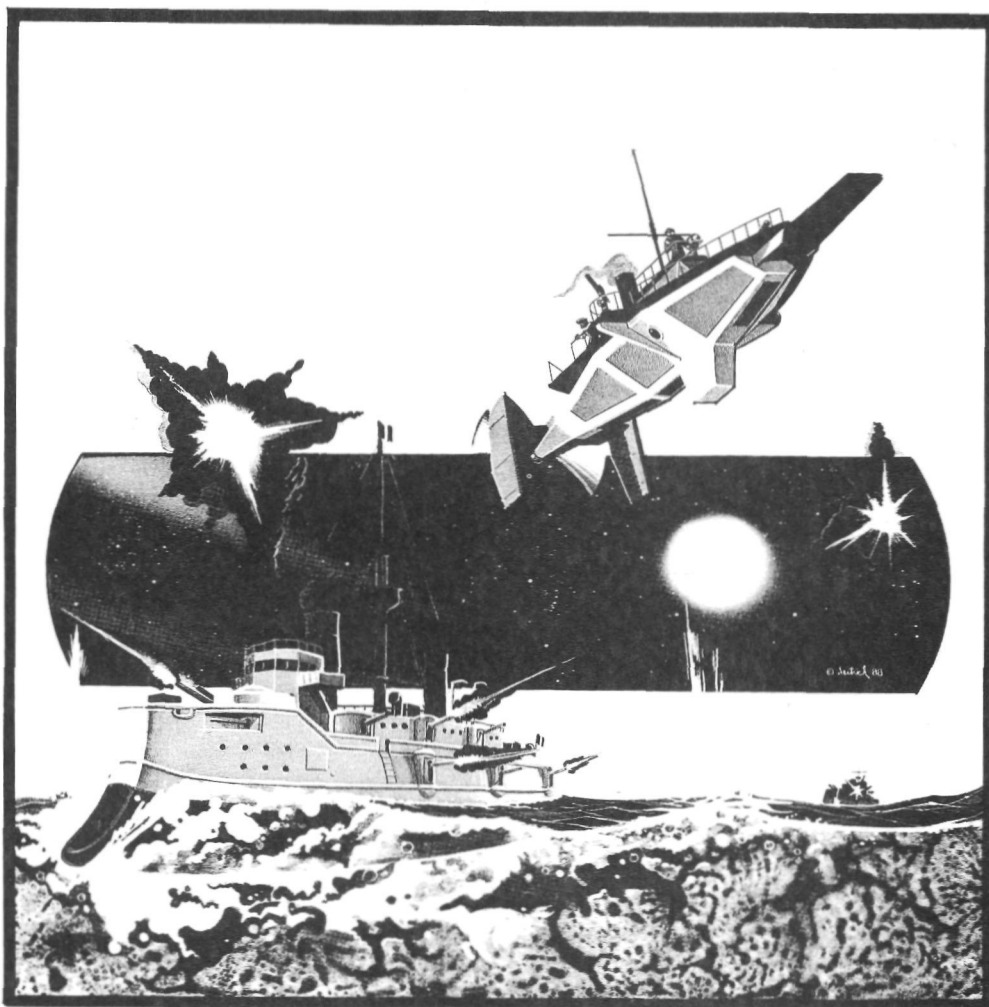
Any players who helped land the *Princess Alexandra* will certainly receive a point for Heroic Acts. Any character taking part in the successful invention of an ether flux generator will receive five renown points for Scientific Achievement. If the players conduct themselves in a forthright and upright manner throughout their journey to Gaaryan, they are likely to receive a renown point for Service to the Crown.

Finally, everyone who helped land the *Princess Alexandra* eventually receives an unexpected bonus. The White Star Line gives these PCs vouchers which can be exchanged for three return steamship tickets to any destination on Earth or one round-trip ether flyer ticket for any destination in the explored Solar System.



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Made in U.S.A.
Printed in U.S.A.

ISBN 1-55878-039-4

