TRAVELLER

Compendium 1

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first volume of *Traveller* Compendiums!

Our free online magazine, *Signs & Portents*, has been going for many years now and while every issue is still available on our web site, we constantly have fans of our games ask for us to compile the best articles into a more 'solid' form. Since the release of *Traveller*, we have accumulated a great many articles for the game, and you can find the best of them within these pages.

In the *Traveller Compendium 1*, you will find patrons and full blown scenarios you can drop into your campaign at a moment's notice, new alien races, new ships, interesting new items of equipment to expand the *Central Supply Catalogue*, new careers to enhance your characters, detailed background pieces set in the Third Imperium, and much, much more!

These Compendiums will be a semi–regular releases, appearing every year or two as we accumulate enough good material from *Signs & Portents*, but you can always stay up to date by downloading the latest issue of the magazine on the first of every month. Simply take a trip to our web site and click on *Signs & Portents*.

If you are of a creative mind yourself, we are always looking for good quality *Traveller* articles. So, if you have an idea for such a piece, drop us a line (details at the back of this book). We cannot promise you fame and fortune, but you will likely earn the gratitude of other *Traveller* gamers, and will have the chance to see your work in print within *Signs & Portents* and, maybe, the next Compendium!

The Road So Far Travelled

By Gareth Hanrahan

An introspective look at the return of the longest running science–fiction roleplaying game by its creator, Traveller genius Gareth Hanrahan.

Some games are easy to write. You've got a single clear vision, a single authoritative voice and no expectations about how well it will do. You write them for yourself. *Traveller* started out that way but that was a long, long time ago. Doing a new edition of *Traveller* was hard. Take your pick of clear visions – 'it'll be just like the Little Black Books and it is also *Traveller* **5**/it'll be just like it used to be but also it'll be brand new/it'll be uniquely *Traveller* and a generic sci–fi system'. There were *lots* of voices, especially when we opened the game up to open playtest.

Expectations? It's *Traveller*. I have a copy of an original schedule, which called for the book to be done in December. I'm writing this in late March and the book is still in final proofing. Jumpspace is tricky that way. In some ways, we met our goals. It's got all the content of the Little Black Books but it is also a whole new thing.

It is even closer to *Classic Traveller* than I originally intended it to be but is also a foundation for a long game line covering multiple settings. It's not a generic sci–fi system but the bits that are not generic are easily modified or replaced with sections customised to whatever game you want to play. The open playtest was an astonishing… experience. A success, definitely, in terms of the feedback we received and the improvements that were made to the game as a result. Fans did more than just test a few rules and say whether or not they liked them – they wrote whole subsystems, re–edited sections, did statistical analyses and spent thousands of hours discussing the game. It made the game better. It was also a baptism of fire.

The *Traveller* community has been around for a long *long* time and Mongoose Publishing's involvement is a very recent development. I wondered, when I started, why friends *warned* me that *Traveller* fans care about the game. What's wrong with caring for the game, I wondered? It is not wrong. It is just that everyone's platonic ideal of *Traveller* is unique to them and various editions must be measured by how far they deviate from that unreachable ideal. To borrow from Greg Stafford's *Glorantha*; YTWV

(Your *Traveller* Will Vary). The final game may not be that platonic ideal *Traveller* but I hope that it occupies a position roughly equidistant from a lot of those perfect games. Now, make it your own. Project your own single vision of what you want from *Traveller* onto the framework of the new rules.

They will, I hope, complement each other. (This article is far from the fluff 'isn't new *Traveller* great?' piece I was supposed to write, so the next paragraph is for people who have not played *Traveller* before and want to know what it is all about and why it is so great. Existing *Traveller* fans can skip on a bit.) *Traveller* posits a big, big universe, a living universe that is more than a backdrop for the characters' adventures.

You can be the guys who save the world but one world is almost trivial in *Traveller* terms. The galaxy is always bigger than you are. You do not shape *Traveller* **a**nd the universe does not exist to showcase or benefit your characters. You live in it. It is drama played out on a scale that is both vast and intimate – you are dealing with the wild expanse of space but it is also confined to your small ship, your speck of warm matter. It's *Firefly* and *Ringworld* and *Mass Effect* and *Foundation*.

I am currently working on the *High Guard* supplement, with expanded rules for ship creation and combat as well as lots of naval material. If you want to run games inspired by Honor Harrington, this will be the book for you. *Mercenary* is mostly done too and *Scout* and *Merchant Prince* are lurking in outline form somewhere.

Elsewhere, *Traveller* stalwart Martin Doherty has finished *The Spinward Marches* setting guide and both he and Lawrence Whitaker are working on adventure support for the line. It has taken us longer than planned to get here but we are travelling fast now.

The Rescue

By Gareth Hanrahan

A starting scenario that will see the players become heroes of a doomed lunar city. The Rescue is an ideal scenario with which to start an entire campaign.

The universe is not a hospitable place for life. Humans can live naturally in a microscopic band, a thin film on rocks that happen to be the right distance from the local star and have the right combination of gases. Go beyond that little niche of viability and you must rely on life support systems and artificial shelters, trusting your life to hulls and airlock seals. *The Rescue* explores what happens when all of that goes wrong.

It is suitable for a beginning group of *Traveller* characters and can serve as the kick–off for a whole campaign.

Mariposa & Sahal

Mariposa is a minor world on the fringes of the Imperium, a backwater ignored by most. It is primarily an agricultural world, producing textiles and luxuries for richer planets. The planet's large moon, Sahal, is mined for tritium, an isotope of hydrogen used in fusion reactors. Over the decades, the concentration of industry and technology has led to Sahal becoming the most influential and wealthy region in the system. The nobility, industrialists and corporate executives of Mariposa live on Sahal's underground cities and domed settlements, looking down at the benighted world below.

The main settlement on Sahal is Oculus, a city of a few thousand people that expanded out from the first tritium harvesting operation. The city is built into the floor and walls of Oculus Crater. Underground tunnels link Oculus to outlying settlements and bases. The richer nobles have mansions built into upper crater walls; the higher up the crater, the more prestigious the location. Factories, shuttle ports, fusion reactors and lower–class housing are located on the crater floor.

The Disaster

The fusion reactors powering the lunar city have all manner of safety features and emergency systems but nothing is infallible. A shuttle, Flight 10, coming in from Mariposa lost control of its thrusters and accelerated as it approached its landing platform. The shuttle slammed into the Oculus Number Three reactor, causing a massive explosion. The blast itself did comparatively little damage.

The twin blows to Oculus' stability were the loss of power throughout the city and the moonquake caused by the reactor's destruction. The shockwave caused dozens of access tunnels to cave in and caused part of the crater wall to collapse.

The shockwave also sent vast amounts of dust flying up and it would take weeks for the moon's weak gravity to drag the dust clouds back to the ground. The city was suddenly shrouded in an opaque grey dust, disrupting laser and radio transmissions. Oculus had grown up organically, without any central planning and the contingency plans were no match for a disaster of this magnitude.

In the chaotic hours after the disaster, the characters will be the only ones who can save dozens of lives.

Involving the Characters

If the characters have their own ship, then they just need to be near Mariposa. Perhaps they were trading at Mariposa's spaceport or even visiting Oculus City. When the disaster strikes, then all ships nearby will be called in to help with the evacuation of Oculus. If the characters do not have their own vessel, then they need to be in Oculus City when Flight 10 crashes into the reactor.

There are five sub–plots in this adventure, which the characters can pursue in any order:

The Morningside Dome: Dozens of people are trapped in an outlying dome, running out of air. Worse, rumours are spreading about the cause of the disaster and panic is beginning to take hold.

The Deep Tunnels: An underground tunnel complex was struck by the shockwave, trapping workers within. Rescuing them will require a perilous journey through unstable shafts.

The Mansion: One of the wealthy nobles demands that he be rescued first. At the same time, a gang of thieves is taking advantage of the confusion by looting the rich homes on the crater wall.

The Shuttle Port: The Oculus City shuttle port was severely damaged by the disaster but if the characters can free some of the ships there from the debris, they will greatly aid the evacuation effort.

Life Support: Truly brave characters can head into the disaster area and repair the damaged power grid, restoring life support to Oculus City.

The characters are obviously not the only group trying to rescue survivors from Oculus but the other rescuers are concentrating on other survivors. The five tasks above are solely the province of the player characters – if they do not save those people, no–one will.

Failing Life Support

With the main reactors offline, life support in Oculus City is fading. Air recyclers have stopped, heaters are shutting down. Characters will start feeling the effects of the lack of life support an hour after the disaster, as the city becomes noticeably colder and the air feels thinner. Two hours after the disaster, the survivors in the Morningside dome will begin to run out of air. The miners have three hours of air, as does the mansion. Artificial gravity has also failed throughout the city, reducing the gravity to one–sixth normal.

Mariposa is 400,000 kilometres away from Sahal, so it will take over three hours to fly from the moon to the planet below at 1g. There are other places to deposit survivors, if the characters think of checking. They could drop them off at orbital factories at the LaGrange point, which is only half an hour away from the moon or just move them to less damaged parts of the city. If the characters reactivate the main reactors, then life support is restored to the whole city.

MOVING AROUND OCULUS CITY

There are several ways for the characters to get around Oculus City:

The Tunnels: Tunnels are the main way to get around the city. The major thoroughfares are wide boulevards, which under normal circumstances are designed to look like a street on an Earth–like world. The ceiling has holograms of blue skies and plants grow along the sides of the walkways. Now, the only illumination is from emergency lights. Some of the tunnels have collapsed and others are choked with fleeing refugees. There are tunnel carts but these run off power from the main reactor and so are currently non–functional. If the characters find a suitable power cell, then an Engineering or Mechanic roll allows the characters to charge a cart.

There are also numerous side access tunnels, which are narrow ferrocrete tubes lined with cables and pipes. Every part of Oculus City is accessible by the tunnels. It takes 30 minutes to get from one place to another via the tunnels but the Games Master should also roll 1D6 on the Tunnel Encounter Table each time.

The Surface: Characters with vacc suits and a good sense of direction can move along the surface, through the dust cloud, by making a Navigation test taking 10–60 minutes. There are numerous airlocks leading down into Oculus, all of which can be operated mechanically when the power is off.

By Ship: The fastest way to get around the city, obviously, is by spaceship. The dust cloud does not impede flying.

FLIGHT 10 IS DOWN

The scenario begins moments before Shuttle Flight 10 crashes into the reactor complex. If the characters are in Oculus City, they hear the crash and the ensuing explosion. The ground quakes, the lights go out, then are replaced by sickly emergency lights. The city's computer system begins reciting emergency procedures, telling everyone to report to the nearest emergency shelter and wait for instructions from security. Unfortunately, the main security tower was destroyed in the shuttle crash and it will take some time for junior security staff to respond to the crisis. If the characters are in their ship, then they receive distress messages from Sahal soon after the shuttle crash. Automated systems announce that there is an emergency at Oculus shuttle port and that all vessels in Mariposa orbit should stand by for further instructions.

The characters are soon contacted via their ship or comms by Rai Astasi, a communications officer at Oculus City's security centre. She is young and inexperienced but she is also the ranking officer left after the crash and she is taking charge in this crisis. She has identified the Player Characters' ship as one of the few vessels within range that can aid in the crisis. If the characters do not have their own ship, then she call upon any ex–military characters to aid the rescue effort.

Assuming the characters agree to Rai's requests for aid, she fills them in on the current situation – a shuttle has crashed and somehow disabled main power across Oculus City. She is co–ordinating the rescue effort and is calling in aid from the planet below and from other settlements on Sahal but there are two groups of people who are trapped and she wants the characters to aid them. Life support is failing, so the characters will have to act quickly. The first group are in the outlying habitat dome, Morningside Dome. Three dozen people took shelter there but the dome is damaged and slowly leaking air. Rai wants the characters to get the people there to

The Tunnels

Result	Encounter
1–3	No encounter.
4	Collapsed tunnel – the characters will have to find another path, taking another 1D6x5 minutes.
5	Panicked refugees, looking for help.
6	Dangerous tunnel – collapsing, fire, looter gang and so on.

the shuttle port, where they can be picked up. No–one in the dome is answering their comms.

The second group is a group of workers in a new set of tunnels beneath the city. They are trapped down there – an airlock has sealed itself behind them and refuses to open. One of the workers, Herik, has a comm and Rai can put the characters in touch with him; he will guide them down into the tunnels. As soon as the characters agree to help Rai and are discussing where to go first, they get another call. It is from Yaj haut–Epp, a noble of Oculus City. He was monitoring the characters' communications with Rai and knows they are competent and mobile. He demands that they come and rescue him first of all; he is trapped inside his mansion and wants an escort to the shuttle port. He will pay them handsomely if they aid him, offering them 5,000 credits immediately but he is prepared to go as high as Cr. 20,000 each.

THE MORNINGSIDE DOME

The Morningside Dome is located on the eastern edge of the crater, in the shadow of the rocky walls. The moonquake caused tons of debris to collapse on top of the dome, damaging its outer shell. The dome contains new housing modules, as well as one of the larger open indoor spaces in Oculus City, an artificial garden. When the impact of the shuttle crash and reactor explosion rocked the dome, the inhabitants gathered in this central space. One of the loudest voices in the dome was that of Roget Viers, a former marine, who assumed that Oculus City was under attack by Ine Givar terrorists or even alien invaders. Viers has convinced the other survivors to remain in the dome and prepare for a siege instead of leaving. He has whipped them into a frenzy of paranoia and they now believe that the rest of the city is filled with rapacious terrorists and thieves.

Entering the Dome: The airlocks connecting the dome to the rest of the city have been locked from the inside. Characters can override the locks with a successful Mechanic or Engineering (electronics) check or they can don vacc suits and climb up the dome (easily done in one–sixth gravity) to one of the upper access hatches. While on the dome, the characters will see the fractures in the dome shell. Once the characters have entered the dome, they can make their way through the curved corridors towards the central area.

Firefight: In anticipation of an attack of the invaders, Viers has sent small armed groups to watch the entrances and set up ambushes. These are not trained soldiers, just frightened citizens who have been told they are under attack. Wary characters (Recon 1 or more) will notice the ambush up ahead – two of the doors along the corridor are slightly ajar, as there are armed citizens lurking in there.

If the characters walk past the doors, the citizens spring out and challenge them. If the characters do not react by drawing guns or firing back, then the characters may be able to talk their way out of the ambush. If they do fight, then the ambushers start at Initiative 6 and have 1/2 cover when they fire out from the doorways.

Citizens
Str 6 Dex 8 End 8 Int 7 Edu 6 Soc 6

Stealth 0, Gun Combat (slug handgun) 0 Snub Pistol, C/S x3D6–3

If the characters convince the ambushers that they are not Ine Givar terrorists, then they are brought into the central dome where they can speak with Viers. If they leave smoking bodies behind them, then convincing the terrified survivors to trust them will be almost impossible (*'we just shot your friends, but seriously, we're here to rescue you'*).

Viers: In the central area, the characters find Viers surrounded by several dozen frightened citizens. Viers is standing on the plinth of an ornamental statue in the garden, shouting about how the city is under attack and they have to hold their ground. They must dig in and wait for relief from the surface. If the characters are going to evacuate the people here, they will need to get Viers to stand down. Viers is not crazy or delusional but he has completely misinterpreted what is going on and believes that the city is under attack. If the characters tell him that it was just a shuttle crash, he will be suspicious – terrorist sabotage of a shuttle as it lands is eminently possible. He suggests that it could be the characters who are wrong about the attack and that they should wait here until they can get a secure channel to Mariposa and confirm what is going on.

Convincing Viers will require roleplaying but he will lend more weight to the words of military characters or those with the Advocate skill or high Social Standing. The biggest risk is that the players will try to bully or overrule Viers, in which case he will become convinced they are slavers or kidnappers, trying to lure the people of the city out to their ship.

Viers
Str 10 Dex 8 End 10 Int 8 Edu 8 Soc 7

Athletics 1, Battle Dress 0, Tactics 1, Heavy Weapons 0, Gun Combat (slug rifle) 2, Stealth 2, Leadership 1, Recon 1. Snub Pistol (3D6–3), ACR (3D6/Auto 6)

Evacuation: If the characters convince the survivors in the dome to leave, then they still need to get them to safety. There are 37 survivors, some of which are lightly injured. The characters can cram survivors into their ship and carry them to another dome on Sahal's surface or the LaGrange factories or guide them through the tunnels to the shuttle port.

THE DEEP TUNNEL

From its humble beginnings as a tritium mine, Oculus City has expanded in all directions, especially down.

Thick layers of regolith protect the citizens from the lethal radiation of space. When Flight 10 crashed, Herik and his work crew were excavating a new section of tunnel 50 metres below the surface. The impact caused an airlock to shut behind them, trapping them underground. Herik was able to patch his comm into a fibre–optic line and contact the surface. Rei can connect the characters to Herik, who explains the situation. He and two others were repairing a damaged mining robot when the impact hit them. Herik warns the characters that the deep tunnels are dangerously unstable and that they really shouldn't risk their lives by going that far underground. Instead, he suggests they head to the control room for the mining robots. The characters will have to put on vacc suits and filters, as the caves are freezing cold and airless. The tunnels are also outside the artificial gravity of the city, so the gravity drops from one–G to one–sixth G.

Moving Through The Tunnels: Herik has mapped the tunnels and while the disaster has caused a few caveins, there is still a clear route down to him. There is a danger of more cave–ins. Characters moving through the tunnels must make Dexterity+ Stealth tests. The time frame is 10–60 minutes.

If the characters successfully make it through the tunnels, they find their way to a control room. There are computer terminals here; Herik and his crew were using these computers to remotely manage the robot miners. Over the comm, Herik suggests that the characters go no further into the caves. Instead, they can use the computers to send the mining robots down into the deep tunnels to cut through the airlock and free Herik and his crew.

If the characters examine the computers, the display shows a map of the tunnel network and there is a flashing warning icon beneath the shuttle port.

According to the computer, the tunnels beneath the port are in danger of collapsing and need to be reinforced. There is no way for the characters to get there in time but they can send the mining robots to repair the problem.

They have gravitic supports that they can deploy to shore up the damaged area. However, if they send the robots to save the shuttle port, then they will have to save Herik and the other two workers themselves. If they ask Herik, then he will urge them to send the robots, then escape themselves.

The Robots: The two functional mining robots are also in the control room. They are large cylinders that float in the air and are covered in drills, particle beams, probes and other sensors. The deployable gravitic supports are stored along the flanks of the robots and can be removed manually. These are dumb robots, with only minimal initiative or intelligence of their own.

If the characters send both robots to support the shuttle port, then the danger there is dealt with easily. The robots race through the access tunnels and deploy gravitic supports, shoring up the tunnels and saving the city from further collapse. If they only send one robot, have a player roll 1D6. On a 5 or 6, a single set of gravitic supports was not enough and the tunnel collapses again, wrecking one of the few functional landing pads in the city. With this port gone, escaping from the city will be much more difficult and the characters have doomed hundreds of people. Obviously, if they don't send any robots, the port automatically collapses.

Rescuing Herik: If the characters send one of the mining robots down into the deep tunnels, then they can rescue Herik at no risk to themselves. On the other hand, if they descend into the depths, they risk further cave–ins.

If the characters go deeper again, then they must make another Stealth test, this time with a –1 DM. Again, if the test is failed, they suffer a cave–in as above. Once the characters reach the blocked doorway, they have to open it, which requires either a Hard (–4) Strength test or a Mechanic Skill Test. Once out, they need to make their way back to the surface, again risking cave–ins.

Herik & Workers
Str 8 Dex 7 End 9 Int 7 Edu 6 Soc 6

Engineering 0, Stealth 1, Mechanic 2, Trade (civil engineering 2)

THE MANSION

The haut–Ebb mansion is located in the crater wall, overlooking the Morningside Dome. Normally, visitors arrive by air/raft or

Effect	Result	Event
Failed with 0 or less	Disaster	Huge Cave–In: All PCs suffer 4D6 damage, and the miners are trapped begin tons of rubble.
Failed with 1–5	Average Failure	Cave–In: The character suffers 3D6 damage.
Failed with 6+	Marginal Failure	Minor rock–fall: The character suffers 2D6 damage.

by the high–technology grav shaft that rises from the tunnels on the crater floor to the mansion high above. With main power down throughout the city, the obvious way up is via the emergency access stairs that wind around the grav shaft. If the characters ask Rai or another citizen, they are told that haut–Ebb is a rich and eccentric nobleman who lives alone. Rumours claim that he suffers from an auto–immune disease that makes him vulnerable to infection or that he hates other people or that he is insane or that he has got a secret psychic ability and finds crowds of people agonizingly painful people. He is very unpopular within Oculus City. He is certainly very wealthy.

The Gang: Four criminals are taking advantage of the current crisis to loot the mansion. They were already plotting to raid one of the nobles of Oculus City; the disaster is a windfall for them. They are:

Trager, a thug and mercenary who wanders from world–to–world. Trager is a gun for hire.

Ripper, his Vargr pal. Bloodthirsty and cruel, Ripper lives to fight and kill.

Orri, a political activist from Mariposa. She believes that her world suffers from the predations and greed of the Sahal nobility and that wealth is being drained from the world below by the moon vampires. She has no interest in stealing from haut– Ebb, she wants to make a political statement.

Yance, a denizen of Oculus City. He is a coward and a petty thief and is in the gang as a local guide and locksmith.

Trager
Str 7 Dex 10 End 9 Int 7 Edu 6 Soc 6

Athletics 1, Gun Combat (slug handgun) 1, Gun Combat (slug rifle) 1, Recon 2, Melee (brawl) 1, Tactics

2 Autopistol (3D6–3, Auto 4), Accellerator Rifle (3D6), Flak Jacket (Armour 6)

Ripper
Str 9 Dex 10 End 8 Int 5 Edu 5 Soc 3

Athletics 1, Melee (blade) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Gun Combat 1 (slug pistol) Autopistol (3D6–3, Auto 4), Blade (2D6), Flak Jacket (Armour 6)

Orri
Str 6 Dex 7 End 6 Int 9 Edu 10 Soc 5

Advocate 2, Stealth 1, Gun Combat (slug handgun) 0 Snub Pistol (3D6–3)

Yance
Str 6 Dex 8 End 6 Int 8 Edu 6 Soc 6

Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Mechanic 2 Gun Combat (slug handgun) 0 Snub Pistol (3D6–3)

The gang's plan is to break into the mansion, incapacitate or kill haut–Ebb, then make their way across the surface of the moon to safety. They have lightweight environmental suits that will get them to a nearby outpost. Currently, the four gang members are making their way to the mansion. There are a lot of stairs; Orri's endless ranting about the evils of the nobility is annoying and Ripper is getting bored. It is never a good thing when Ripper gets bored. If the characters head straight to the mansion, they will get there before the gang. If they go to one of the other locations in the city first, then the gang makes it to the mansion first and the characters will either encounter the thieves at the top of the stairs as they disable the door or inside the mansion itself.

Accessing the Mansion: If the characters have restored power to the city, then they can use the grav shaft to bypass the stairs and get to the front door. Otherwise, they have to take the stairs and it is a long and boring climb even in one–sixth gravity. Through plassteel windows in the stairwell, they can see the city covered in a thick dust cloud, like a burial shroud. At the top of the stairs is the main entrance – a blast door. It's a richly decorated, ornate and very pretty and elegant blast door but it is still a blast door. The sort of blast door that says '*I value my privacy, especially where tactical nukes are concerned'*. If the characters are the first on the scene, then they can contact haut–Ebb and he will open the door for them.

If the characters do not go straight to the mansion, then haut–Ebb will contact them periodically and complain that they have not rescued him yet. He is insistent on this point. When the criminal gang start breaking through his blast door, haut–Ebb's comm messages will change from whiny and insistent to terrified and screechy. The gang get through the blast door by disassembling it, which takes them almost an hour.

Haut–Ebb: His Excellency Yaj haut–Ebb is a rake–thin, wild–haired man who wears flowing robes decorated with golden peacocks. He has a horror of all forms of footwear; it is quite hard for him to talk to the Player Characters while they are wearing shoes or boots and the thought of putting on a vacc suit fills him with nausea. Getting haut–Ebb out of his mansion and down to safety should be incredibly frustrating.

Haut–Ebb

Str 6 Dex 7 End 4 Int 8 Edu 10 Soc 12

Carouse 0, Medic 1

Fighting the Gang: There are two possible places for the characters to encounter the gang: on the stairs or in the mansion. When fighting on the stairs, then Ripper will hold their stairs with his blade, while Trager and Orri shoot from above. Yance will lurk at the rear, either cutting through the door mechanism or holding haut–Ebb hostage, depending on whether the Player Characters turn up before or after the gang breaks into the mansion.

The thieves will avoid using their grenades unless the Player Characters are proving especially tough. The stairs provides ½ cover to everyone. Trager will try to snipe at the most dangerous looking characters, while Orri will just try to keep them pinned down with wild bursts of fire.

If fighting in the mansion, then the gang will attempt to grab haut–Ebb and use him as a hostage. There is plenty of cover in the mansion and the characters can hide behind antique First–Imperium furniture and antiques from Sol, causing thousands of credits worth of damage with every shot.

THE SHUTTLE PORT

The shuttle port consists of four large landing pads surrounding a control tower. The large passenger concourse is located beneath the control tower. Flight 10 clipped the control tower as it crashed, sending chunks of debris plummeting onto the concourse below but the port is still the centre of the evacuation effort.

Refugees from all over the city are gathering here, waiting for shuttles to carry them away. Others are putting on vacc suits and risking the overland crossing to outlying domes. If the characters are escorting the survivors from the Morningside Dome or haut–Ebb, then they will have to come here.

Rai informs the characters when they arrive that there is an extra shuttle in a hangar but fallen debris has trapped has damaged the roof. If the shuttle is moved, the hangar will begin to collapse.

None of the pilots at Oculus City are willing to risk moving the shuttle but if it can be flown out intact, then it will help speed the evacuation immensely.

If any of the characters are expert pilots, they can try flying the shuttle out. This requires a Difficult (–2) Dexterity+Pilot (small craft) test. If the test fails, then the character fails to get the shuttle out before the hangar collapses on top of it.

If they get the shuttle out, then a trainee pilot, Noral, volunteers to fly it back to Mariposa with a load of refugees. If the tunnels below the port collapse, then the remaining landing pads become too unstable to use.

Life Support

Once it becomes clear that the shuttle crash was not a deliberate attack or terrorist plot, the players may ask about the city's backup power. Surely a moonbase has a massively redundant power supply that should have kicked in when the reactor was destroyed – and they are right. Oculus City's backup power should be able to power life support indefinitely. The problem is that the backup power supply never activated and the city is currently running off the secondary backup. If this discrepancy is pointed out to her, Rai checks the computer and discovers that the backup power controls were damaged by the crash. The backup reactors are working but they are

not connected to the city's power grid. Someone will have to go in to the crash scene and reconnect the backup. There are two ways to approach the crash site – from the tunnels and overground.

From the tunnels: This close to the impact, many of the tunnels have cracked or collapsed. Fires smoulder in other corridors, mostly snuffed out by the low oxygen levels. The main threat, though, is the cargo of the shuttle. Among the cargo containers is a shipment of radioactives, which have spilled out into the tunnel.

Characters approaching the reactors from below will absorb 2D6x10 rads. Vacc suits reduce the rad count by 50. This may be enough to cause nausea and burns.

Overground: Characters travelling overground will have to climb over the jagged rubble and melted, twisted metal of the crash site. The danger here is ripping a vacc suit on a broken rock or protrusion. Characters need to make Dexterity + Vacc Suit tests to avoid damaging their suits as they clamber through the wreckage. If a character does break his suit, he takes 1D6 damage immediately from the cold and another one damage each round until they patch the suit (self–sealing suits patch themselves).

Backup Power: Activating the backup power systems requires an Education + Engineering (power) test.

Once backup power is activated, then the limits on life support are removed and the only rescue with a time limit is haut–Epp. Clever characters might send the robots from the deep tunnels, once the

AFTERMATH

A few hours after the crash of Flight 10, rescue ships from Mariposa arrive in force and take charge of the city. The final death toll is between two and three hundred, depending on the actions of the Player Characters. If they saved Herik, then they are heroes of Oculus City. If they dealt with Viers violently, though, they may face legal problems later.

THE STARCHILD

BY COURTNEY PARSONS

Set in the Spinward Marches, this adventure can be used to start an entire campaign. Starting with a missing child on a mining installation, the players will soon find themselves tangling with a powerful Zhodani operative.

STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Starchild is an introductory adventure for use with he Mongoose Publishing rules set for *Traveller*. It serves as an excellent introduction for players and Referees who are new to *Traveller*, to The Third Imperium of Man, one of the most venerable campaign settings in the history of Science Fiction gaming.

The Starchild deals with a group of adventurers who find themselves rather suddenly embroiled in the search for a missing girl on a mining installation operated by an Imperial Ministry of Defence contractor. What at first appears to be a simple act of domestic terrorism gone wrong suddenly thrusts the adventurers into the heart of an interstellar conspiracy perpetrated by back–stabbing double agents on both sides of the Fringe. Events force the group to confront a mysterious Zhodani operative who is said to be a restless, inhuman spirit denied the peace of death so he can wreak vengeance upon his Imperial enemies.

Time and Place

The adventure begins in the Spinward Marches Sector of The Thrid Imperium on the 300th day of the 1106th year since the Coronation of Emporer Cleon I and the founding of The Third Imperium. The date is expressed as 300–1106.

This adventure takes place in the Rhylanor Subsector. It begins on Jae Taellona (0404–A560565–8 Rhylanor/ Spinward Marches) but can theoretically expand to nearly any planet in the Rhylanor subsector. To that end, the Referee may wish to have access to an *Official Traveller Universe* (henceforth, OTU) copy of The Rhylanor Subsector jumpgrid map like the one found in *The Spinward Marches* supplement for *Traveller* from Mongoose Publishing. If the Referee does not have access to this supplement, he should create his own subsector map according to the procedure given in the World Creation chapter starting on p. 167 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook* and place Jae Taellona as desired on the map.

Requirements

This adventure is written for 3–5 characters of beginning to moderate experience. At least 2 of the characters should have ground combat experience; it will be difficult for the players to complete the adventure if this is not the case. Experience with starships is also recommended, although it makes little difference whether this is acquired through a military background, such as the Scouts or the Navy or whether it is acquired through a civilian career such as the Merchants or the Rogues. Note, however, that if the players are creating new characters specifically to complete this adventure, it is far more likely that they will achieve the recommended skill set through military experience or by joining the Merchant Marine than through a "knocking around" career such as Drifter or Rogue.

The *Traveller Core Rulebook* contains all the ship data and deckplans for every vessel critical to the completion of this adventure. The Suleiman (Type S) *Scout/* Courier, The Beowulf class Free–Trader and The Type R Subsidized Merchant ('Subbie,' or 'Fat Trader') are all detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* starting on p.114. The Tigress–Class dreadnought and the Vargr Corsair will be detailed in upcoming supplements. For now, the Referee, if he does not have access to any information about the Vargr Corsair, may assume it to be equivalent to the standard Corsair on p. 129 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. The Tigress–class dreadnought is mentioned later but it is not necessary to have a deckplan or even a description of this vessel to run this adventure.

BACKGROUND

Shalini's Tale

Note that this information can be pieced together by the adventurers by searching through X–boat feeds, library data and by talking to the girl and her father. It should not, of course, be given to them all at once. Shalini A'ssynii is a young girl (age 10) whose family hails from the agricultural world of Belizo (3015– B895646–5 Rhylanor/Spinward Marches). The world's atmosphere is naturally tainted, requiring filter masks for most normal humans but the populace has acquired a natural immunity over time. Agricultural and hydration techniques borrowed from higher technology worlds have allowed their crops to flourish and Belizo has grown into a beautiful and prosperous farming community. It is said that the world is not completely unpleasant if one can adapt simultaneously to the hot climate and the

atmospheric taint. The atmospheric pollution is caused by a naturally–occurring alkaline dust that causes severe irritation of exposed soft tissue, including lungs and eyes. Before the journey that took them to Jae Taellona, Shalini's family consisted of herself and her parents. Her mother and father (Jaye and T'niri A'ssyni) were respectable Thiti Nut farmers who managed to eke out a modest but comfortable living for themselves. Jaye had one brother, Shallum A'ssyni, who left Belizo many years ago. Shallum was considered something of a black sheep by his brother's family, having forgone honest work in favour of the somewhat shady dealings involved in the life of an adventuring scoundrel. In addition to accruing a rather lengthy police record, he somehow managed to acquire a starship, a Type A Free Trader named The Empress Iolanthe (see the *Traveller Core Rulebook* p.117 for details), that some would later say he won in a high–stakes poker game. Several years from now Shallum's body is destined to wash up on the shores of the Regina Starport River but the precise details of his demise are to remain a mystery and not a very interesting one at that, at least, not to the Regina Starport Authority, under whose jurisdiction the case of Shallum's disappearance legally fell. Nevertheless, at the time of this adventure, Shallum has not been found and the details of his disappearance are of no particular import. What is important is that, according to Regina law, the ownership of the vessel defaults to Shallum's next–of–kin in the event he is declared dead. Since Jaye had neither need nor desire for star travel, nor a wish to so much as speak to his brother, Shallum's disappearance was to go unnoticed and the Empress Iolanthe was to sit rusting in a warehouse storage hangar for the next 6 years. At the same time, since Shallum was legally still alive, the storage fees were automatically withdrawn from the remainder of his somewhat large – at least, large six years ago –bank account. Jaye, a man of deep conviction, wanted no part in his brother's likely ill–gotten booty, so he took little interest when the Regina authorities notified him that they were about to declare Shallum dead during the first half of 1105, nor did he bat an eye when the Minsitry of Ships and Shipping sent him an official Xmail notification that he would have to come to Regina to claim the Empress Iolanthe because Regina SPA had just declared the owner dead. Further, Jaye had every intention of letting the rapidly accruing debt go into default at the end of the mandatory one–year grace period, at which time the ship would be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Then everything changed. About 6 months ago Shalini fell ill. She began to complain of severe headaches and her strength began to wane. She would often be bedridden for days only to suddenly wake up one day and be fine. She began to have horrible nightmares, which Jaye and his wife discounted as merely feverish dreams at first.

However, one day, after Shalini had been bedridden for days, she suddenly recovered and told her father that she had dreamed of a terrible monster that had ridden in on the wind and wreaked a massive amount of damage while it ate 224 people. She described in lurid detail how the creature was spitting air and water between its long fangs as it wandered along its hideously destructive path. A day or two later a record breaking hurricane laid waste to a small continent on the southern hemisphere of Belizo, doing millions of credits worth of property damage and killing hundreds. A few days later, the family was gathered at the kitchen table when the final death toll was announced: 224.

Shocked, her fearful parents took her to a well–trusted doctor friend of theirs, who after great difficulty, determined that she was most likely suffering from a brain tumour. His primitive TL5 diagnostic equipment did not seem to work on her and indeed, all sorts of electronic equipment began to malfunction around her. He began to suspect that there was more at work in the girl's illness than a simple tumour, so he consulted the interstellar medical database at the local Class B Starport installation and happened upon an obscure medical paper penned by a Dr. L'leel Thorne, a corporate doctor with a background in medical research. After dealing with an unprecedented number of illnesses with strikingly similar symptoms on his own world, Dr. Thorne used the X–boat database at his world's local *Scout* base to detect similar patterns on worlds all across the Domain of Deneb.

Although the Belizan doctor was from a bucolic background, he was no idiot. He managed to infer from Thorne's paper that the tumours were causing the activation of latent psionic talents in the afflicted girl and knowing little (yet enough), Imperial Law to understand that the girl would be in danger from far more than just a tumour if this were ever to be discovered by the authorities, he warned her parents to remain silent. Also, Dr. Thorne had had experience with tumour removal during his posting on Jae Taellona and the A'ssynii family physician made contact with him through the Xboat network. Dr. Thorne replied that he would be glad to meet with Shalini and her family and responded that he felt he could treat the girl discreetly and perhaps remove the tumour, if that were indeed what was causing this illness. Jaye took out a small mortgage on the Empress Iolanthe and bought passage for himself, his wife and their child aboard an agricultural transport headed for Jae Taellona, which was the only available transportation at such short notice. The ship was called The Rainbow Sun, a 400–ton subsidized merchant owned by Tukera lines. The A'ssyniis had to stay in cramped crew quarters just above the engine compartment and Shalini suffered greatly during jumpspace, at least, during the time when she was awake between doses of sedatives. The Rainbow Sun suffered an endless series of malfunctions and mysterious electronic fires during this time and the crew were far from sad to see the journey end when the ship finally landed on the dust–blown surface of Jae Taellona. The A'ssynii family disembarked the Rainbow Sun, believing themselves to be finished with that vessel forever. However, the forces that govern the cruel fate of those who would travel between the stars would not have it thus. Even as the family navigated their way through the unfamiliar environment of Jae Taellona's vast underground complex, the captain of The

Rainbow Sun, Lars Granhault, began to set events in motion that would fuel the gossipmongers who haunt the jumplanes and the Xnet for many Standard Years hence. Lars was an ex–scout and seasoned wanderer of the Imperial Fringe who knew psionic talent when he saw it. Granhault also recognised when an opportunity for profit presented itself that was too good to pass up. He discreetly let himself onto the bridge while no one was watching and downloaded what was left of the vessel's surveillance data and logtapes and (illegally) removed the organic core of the Rainbow Sun's primary flight data recorder – the only piece of equipment that had recorded all of the events aboard the Sun and remained undamaged.

Granhault then contacted an underworld associate of his who had connections to the Zhodani spy network on Jae Taellona and sold it to him for a rather sizeable fee. Unfortunately, Captain Granhault did not live long enough to enjoy his profits once the Zhule operatives grasped the full implications of what they had been brought.

The swiftness of the spy network's response would have received grudging admiration from even the most efficient Zhodani–hating Imperial Intelligence officer. Within 6 hours of selling the information, Captain Granhault's personal air/raft mysteriously exploded about 10 minutes after departing from a rather seedy area of East Startown, scattering burning wreckage uniformly over the partially abandoned town below.

Granhault's underworld contact, N'ort Tume, was arrested soon after for the crime and was found hanged in his cell after only a few hours in custody, presumably the victim of suicide. Meanwhile, as the A'ssynii family visited the offices of Dr. L'eel Thorne,who, unbeknownst to them, had worked in an Imperial Research Station on Vanejen years before and had direct experience dealing with psionics. He verified to his own satisfaction that that the girl was one of the most powerful precognitive psions he had ever encountered, though he did not entirely reveal what he knew to the family. He immediately contacted the Imperial Intelligence Service (IIS) who wasted no time sending a pair of agents to the office even as the family were waiting. The family was being told that a treatment did exist and that although it was experimental, that there was still some cause for hope.

Thorne immediately referred them to a doctor on Vanejen who, the family were told, was the man who had developed the original treatment and was therefore the most qualified to perform the surgery.

Further, Thorne assured the A'ssyniis that public funds existed to assist cases like Shalini's. The family were told that time was of the essence and that the funds had already been approved by the local Ministry of Medical Affairs and the IIS officers were actually medically trained Ministry personnel, there to facilitate their trip to Vanejen. The family was assured that the government had their best interest at heart and that they must depart to a waiting starship quickly before Shalini's case

got any worse. Once aboard, the plan was to put Shalini into medical cold sleep for the journey, to prevent her condition from degrading any further and to alleviate her suffering and psionic outbursts. For the first time in many months, Shalini's parents had begun to feel hope that everything was going to be alright. It was then that everything quite literally exploded…

PLANETARY DATA
JAE TAELLONA (0404–A560565–8 Rhylanor/

Spinward Marches)

Physical Description
Jae Taellona is the only inhabited world of the single star Jae Taellona system. In addition to the mainworld, the system contains 3 gas giants and an asteroid belt as well as a number of unremarkable planetoid–sized bodies scattered between. There is a single large gas giant locked in a solitary orbit and a pair of twin gas giants, which are fairly small. The pair of small gas giants are in possession of an unusually high periodicity, as well as being closely linked in their stellar orbits, making them all but inaccessible throughout most of the Jae Taellonan year. The remaining gas giant, which accommodates a reasonably impressive satellite system of its own, is the only other major body in the system that will remotely interest most visitors. Refueling within the large Jovian system is perfectly legal, even encouraged, since the lone pair of class A Downports on the system's mainworld see more than their fair share of traffic, indeed, sometimes even more than they can comfortably accommodate.

Plans have been in the works for quite some time by the Jae Taellonan Starport Authority to add multiple orbital elements to help alleviate the overflow of traffic but thus far, none have progressed past the planning stage and SPA officials are notably adept at avoiding questions. To this date, the only orbital elements that can handle any significant traffic belong to the Navy, who notoriously loathe opening its facilities to civilians. However, on more than one occasion the Navy has been forced to open at least one station to larger commercial vessels when traffic flow threatened to strain the Downport capacity to unsafe levels. Although Jae Taellona boasts a Standard atmosphere, it is a desert world and daytime temperatures can become torrid and even quite deadly, even in the so–called temperate regions. There is no free standing water on the planet whatsoever and most offworlders will find the environment outside the underground complexes quite uncomfortable. Needless to say, crossing the desert is lethal without a vehicle or environment suit. Those not acclimated to the harsh wind and the absence of moisture in the air will find that exposed skin quickly chaffs and blisters, often causing moderate to severe damage before the afflicted is even aware of the problem; and during the day, dehydration and heat stroke often quickly follows.

To minimize exposure to the harsh desert sun, the world has two Starport facilities, one at each polar region. Jae Taellona

has a period of revolution of about 2.2 standard years and a 250 axial tilt. A day on Jae Taellona lasts about 36 hours in the mid–latitudes but days at the polar regions are a little over an Imperial Standard year long. Many inhabitants, at least those who can afford to, fly to the opposite pole every 13 months or so as to always live on the nightside, which, although frigid and just as deadly to the unprotected, many still feel is much preferable to the blistering daytime heat.

There is a powerful magnetic field present at both poles, approximately two orders of magnitude greater than that of Terra and three orders of magnitude greater than that of Capital and the night months are often lit by spectacular dances of colour caused by ionized particles in the atmosphere as they are ignited by powerful solar winds. The light is often so bright that it is possible to see, even navigate, without visual aid. Many *Traveller*s feel that this spectacular display makes up in some small way for the fact that this tiny (8,109 km) low–G (0.625g) world has no moon. Mining colonies exist mostly underground, periodically dispersed throughout the regions of desert and mountains.

Government and Law

Although the law level is nominally 5 (moderate), Jae Taellona is made up of rough–cut miners who, as long as they work hard, the government generally allows to play hard. Recreational drugs, some of which are categorically banned on many worlds elsewhere in the Imperium, are freely available upon Jae Taellona and prostitution has evolved into an institution with benefits and pensions. Jae Taellona has become a haven for miscreants, including human pirates, Vargr corsairs and strangely enough, Zhodani agents. Zhodani spies and operatives have found Jae Taellona an ideal world on which to blend in amongst this motley assortment of criminals of varying races; indeed, the fact that many smugglers and criminals of their own race tend to operate out of Jae Taellona serves to draw attention away from the activities of the professional agents and towards the less than– subtle methods and far more colorful backgrounds of their criminally–inclined compatriots. Against this lurid backdrop of criminals, scam artists and thieves, the Zhodani operatives find that they are able to conduct an unprecedented amount of business while remaining relatively unmolested. Nominally, the colony falls under the edicts of Imperial Law and is operated under charter by Sternmetal Horizons, LIC, at the behest of the Imperial Navy. The Majority of the planetary police force are probably best described as corporate security personnel, without a lot of real power but just enough to make them better avoided by would–be adventurers. A drunken miner who is involved in a bar brawl is far more likely to be given a ride home and an admonition than to be taken to jail. This would not be a problem if the same miners were not taken home by police nearly every weekend. Many on the force are corrupt and a large portion of police and economic power is controlled by criminal organisations. Anyone crossing the Affiliation, as it is commonly called, is usually driven to the desert in an air raft

near the equator and left there, where death comes quickly, if not easily.

If there is any real trouble it can usually be attributed to groups of miners who either take part in terrorist activities or simply hold up production through the timehonoured method of civil disobedience. Sternmetal has full legal authority to request Imperial troops, should they feel that a particular situation warrants it and they have yet to be denied such a request. It is generally believed that Sternmetal has never made such a request lightly. The troops usually try to capture and imprison the labourers but in some extreme situations, they have been known to break up gatherings of dissidents with lethal force.

Environment and Ecology

There is very little animal life on Jae Taellona. Except for the humans that exist in the above and belowground cites, the planet is largely free of muticellular life–forms and most of those that do exist are insects. The dominant form of life on the world is the motile desert algae that grows in vast carpets in the temperate zones and the variety of single–celled organisms and insects that exist in tandem with it. It is this algae that is largely responsible for maintaining a breathable atmosphere on a world with no water and a minimal ecosystem. A typical motile carpet and the parasites it hosts can be expected to move up to 10 km a week – too slow for the human eye to perceive, yet fast enough to quickly remove all doubt as to its mobility. Though vast carpets of algae move across the surface, they never approach the polar or equatorial regions, so the majority of the world's population lives and dies on Jae Taellona without ever even seeing it.

Powerful solar winds charging the densely–packed ions in the atmosphere sometimes cause great problems in with sensors, contragrav function and communications. Occasionally, ships are grounded by Starport authority because of the interference of powerful magnetic storms. To lift off during an emergency grounding is a serious offense and the offenders will be hunted down and charged large fines or even find themselves sentenced to a penal mining colony under horrendous conditions for months or even years. The exact punishment for violating a flight ban is well within the SPA JAG Officer– On–Duty's discretion but ranges from a Cr10,000 fine up to 3 years hard labour.

Hazard Advisory

The primary hazards on Jae Taellona are the inhospitable climate, occasionally angry and/or drunken miners and a well–established criminal underground. However, most *traveller*s need not be overly concerned with these issues, since crimes of a violent nature against tourists or *traveller*s just passing through are exceedingly (not to mention surprisingly, to some) rare. The few incidents that have occurred in such cases have almost exclusively happened when curious offworlders have ventured to places in which they knew full well beforehand that they had

no business. Of realistic concern to *traveller*s, however, are the ion storms. While the SPA has become quite adept at detection and early warning, more than one *traveller* has found himself grounded on Jae Taellona for indefinite periods of time; some for so long that their travel funds have dwindled away and they were forced to find local employment until they could afford passage.

Population Centres

The two major population centres on Jae Taellona lie at the extreme magnetic poles of the planet and each experience extremely long periods of alternating darkness and light, with six local months of each. A Jae Taellonan solar month is just a little over two Imperial Standard Months. While each Starport remains operational throughout the year, most civilian traffic is routed to the one that is currently in darkness. Since military and corporate traffic are exempt from this rule, the Starport that is currently in daylight maintains a small but effective work force and just enough residents remain behind to serve their needs, while a large majority of the remainder migrate to the other side of the world.

There are various installations all over the planet serving as access points to the rather extensive network of mines and tunnels that are laced throughout the planet's crust. These access points often function as cities, though the buildings and installations of which they consist are often of a very temporary nature. Most of the access points are in the equatorial and tropical bands and are often concentrated in the hilly and mountainous regions. Sternmetal Horizons does not freely distribute information as to their active mining sites, however, so information on these installations is sparse at best and subject to change without warning. The northern city is known, somewhat archaically, as Stargate Artica, while the southern is known as Stargate Antartica, in accordance with a tradition that became popular among planetary scientists during the Rule of Man. A migratory population of approximately 90,000 people exists between the two cities, while Stargate Artica has a stationary population of about 2,090, while Stargate Antartica has a slightly smaller statonary population of 1,999. While both cities have some die–hard surface dwellers who tend to see living on the surface and braving the elements as a sign of superiority, the major portion of each city exists underground. Of the two, Stargate Artica is older and therefore slightly larger and has a much more developed underground complex. Stargate Artica is thought to have been the landing site of the original settlers of this world. The underground complex of Stargate Artica is divided into eight Sectors, which are named for the colours of the visible electromagnetic spectrum (eg, "Red Sector," "Orange Sector" and so forth). Each sector has its own identity, purpose and culture. For example, Yellow Sector consists of offices and housing of people who work within the bureaucracy of the Imperial government, all official government offices on Jae Taellona can be found here. Red Sector contains the underground element of the Starport and the apartments and hives that house SPA personnel and civilian employees. The sectors are connected by an extensive and somewhat quaint underground electrical railway system, somewhat reminiscent of the subways, which used to (and, in many cases, still do) grace the undercities of larger population centres such as Old New York of Terra and New Nashville of Barnard. Stargate Antartica has the same system of classification but it is far less developed. Only five sectors (Red through Blue) exist there.

Referee's Notes

In the desert, another environmental concern is the rare but dreaded occurrence of terrible windstorms (generated by pockets of pressure differential due geomagnetic and gravimetric flux) where winds powerful enough to shred flesh are accompanied by beautiful but deadly bolts of multicoloured lightning. For every two weeks travel in the desert, roll 1d6. A roll of 1 indicates a windstorm. These winds will whip up the extremely fine sands that make it impossible to breathe unless the unfortunate *traveller*'s mouth and nose are covered or if he is in a sealed environment.(see suffocation rules, TCR142) and cause 1d6–2 damage per minute to unprotected skin. If the group is flying, a piloting roll must be made every 20 minutes to keep the vehicle in the air. There is also a respectable chance of being hit by lightning: roll 2d6 if in the air: a 2 or 3 indicates the craft is struck by lightning. On the ground, roll 2d6; a roll of 4 indicates a randomly determined party member is struck by lightning. The bolts are small but very energetic; they do 3d6 of damage and may short out unshielded electronic equipment, at the Referee's option. Recently, the Affiliation has been cooperating with a Zhodani Director who controls a small group of expert Zhodani commandos specially trained for the task of working deep undercover in the Imperium, far beyond the Fringe. The Director and his group are working with The Affiliation to establish a permanent base here so they can weaken the Imperial infrastructure for the upcoming Fifth Frontier War.

ENCOUNTER I: TERROR IN THE TUNNELS

The adventurers find themselves stranded in Stargate Artica during the night months, all but broke and looking for work to find some way off this hellish rock. They are fortunate enough to be on the nightside of the planet at the moment but the cold is barely tolerable and they discover that it is probably wise to go underground. At some point, they will find themselves unable to avoid travelling on board one of the underground electric railways, perhaps during a journey to an as yet unvisited startown bar or to the latest in a series of increasingly cheap motels as their capital inexorably dwindles away.

Read (or paraphrase) the following to the players: Y*ou have spent yet another day fruitlessly searching for work to gain enough capital to get you off this dustball; now, you slowly leave the underground portion of the starport where you have spent your day. Exhausted, you wait impatiently for the evening's*

last monorail, as you muse angrily over how silly it is to have a closing time for public transportation in an underground city where the mines operate in round–the–clock shifts and it is going to be night for six more standard months anyway. Finally, the train arrives and you take your seat, stopping to briefly brush away the thin coating of metallic dust that covers everything in this godforsaken city. Looking about, you see that the train is fairly crowded with workers on their way home from the mines (presumably, the source of most of the dust) as well as a couple of other offworlders from the starport, who also look as though they would rather be anywhere but here. Finally, after about 15 minutes, you hear a hiss and barely catch yourself yet again as the primitive electric train lurches to a halt. The doors open with a clumsy screech and five people step on board (Shalini, her parents and two Imperial Intelligence agents). Two of them appear to be a couple, obviously offworlders, judging by the simple woven tunics of vegetable fibres and the colourful headbands that they wear. The third, dressed in a similar manner, is a child, a beautiful girl with big, brown eyes and a thick, flowing mane of hair who, despite her beauty, looks pale and shuffles along as if she were not feeling well.

The remaining two are dressed in business suits and sport glasses with mirrored lenses. You wonder briefly if the glasses are offworld lenses fitted with microUV detection and thermal imagers, then decide that it is probably none of your business.

Unbeknownst to the passengers, a bomb has been strategically placed in the underground tunnel ahead by a disgruntled miner who has been recruited by the Zhodani forces. Five strike squad agents wait in the tunnel, in fire teams of two and three. The team of three has orders to board the railcar, while the other two wait outside and cover all possible escape. Suddenly, the *travellers*' world is thrown into chaos as the bomb detonates, partially collapsing the tunnel. The windows of the train shatter as it is thrown from track, lurching sickeningly on its broadside along the tunnel. Finally, with the gut–wrenching squeal of steel, the car turns over on its side. Adventurers who still have their senses about them (an Average check of Endurance, followed by a Difficult Recon Check) can barely make out three unusually tall and lithe figures in dark clothing, scampering up the side of the capsized railcar through the shattered window. The individuals' faces are covered but those who passed the Recon check can see that they are cradling weapons. A second Routine Recon check identifies the guns as laser rifles with grenade launchers. With fluid, graceful motions, the figures drop into the railcar through a shattered window. These strange men are in fact elite Zhodani special ops agents (See table overleaf for details).

Read the following to the players:
You are not sure what just happened. Your ears are still ringing and the world around you has lost its focus. You become increasingly aware of the fact that you are laying on your side and someone is on top of you. You hear the sounds of screaming. It is dark but your eyes are already beginning to adjust to the

dim emergency lights that illuminate the vaulted subterranean passage that you can just barely make out overhead between the jagged shards of thick safety glass where the window used to be. You are not surprised when you become aware of the sputtering, carefully controlled rat–a–tat burst of automatic gunfire somewhere to your left.

The crowd panics, trying all at once to get out of the railcar. The troops are wearing advanced (TL12) hyperspectral headgear equipped with a heads–up display. Treat as TL 12 PRIS (**The Traveller Core Rulebook,** p.96**)** that gives a +2 DM to hit. They immediately track (their equipment negates the negative DM due to poor lighting) and lock in on their targets, using laser rifles to minimise collateral damage. Note that experienced players will realise that if the adventurers jump up and attempt to open fire in the crowd they are far more likely to hit an innocent bystander than their targets. One of the two Imperial Intelligence agents lies in a pool of blood on what has become the floor; as the group tries to collect their senses, they see a burst of coherent light lance through the darkness, cutting down the remaining agent even as he reaches in his jacket for his sidearm. Immediately Shalini's father grabs her and attempts to herd her through a shattered window but they are blocked by two Zhodani agents waiting outside. Shalini's mother lies on the floor, her body twisted, broken and not breathing. Before Jaye and Shalini can make it out of the window, Jaye is cut down by another burst of coherent light from outside the railcar. The operatives will then attempt to grab Shalini. The group may try to interfere but if the squad gets their hands on her, every control panel, surveillance system and light source both in the tunnel and aboard the subway vehicle suddenly explodes in a shower of sparks, adding to the confusion. Surprised, The Zhodani will release her and she scampers off down the corridor. The squad will attempt to avoid fighting with the group in favour of chasing Shalini, who they find is no longer detectable by vision or their multirspectral goggles.

If the agent in charge decides that the mission is a wash out, they will release smoke and stun grenades to cover their retreat. Note that if the EMP also shorted out the laser rifles – GM's discretion or separate random rolls, 2 in 6 chance, since they are military weapons and probably have hardened circuitry) – then the commandos will switch to their gauss pistols if confronted by armed resistance from the adventurers. If the group is having a difficult time defeating the Zhule agents, then the Referee may choose to make this ruling in order to give them all the edge that is needed to come out victorious – after all, it *is* the opening scene of the adventure. The Zhule agents had planned to run down the tunnel for about half a mile to where they have secured a maintenance access ladder to the surface, at the top of which awaits an open–air ground vehicle. However, since they had not anticipated the girl's ability to be invisible to their hyperspectral goggles, they will probably abandon that plan and they are quite willing to remain behind and die if necessary. The Referee should keep in mind that the Zhule agents are professionals and while they may be dismayed by this turn of

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing	Psionic Strength
Zhule Sodality Strike Squad	Agent (law enforcement) 3, Army (infantry) 1	9	10	8	9	8	7	5
Athletics (co–ordination) 1, Athletics (endurance) 1, Deception 1, Gun Combat (energy rifle) 2, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Melee (blade)1, recon 1, Stealth 1; Telepathy 1								

events, they are fully capable of improvisation. If captured, the agents are equipped with a microcapsule filled with a deadly liquid hydrogen cyanide–concentrate held in a hollowed–out molar, which is activated by first using the tongue to manipulate the capsule into place (a safety measure to prevent accidental breakage) then by the application of a substantial amount of pressure by biting down. The microcapsule is carefully placed so that it is virtually impossible to break should the host experience an accidental impact.

When the Zhule agents are finally defeated or if they escape or should the Transit Authority arrive in time (careful – many players feel such timely arrivals appear contrived) to assist the adventurers, the chaos eventually begins to die down. If they are not already there, the Transit Authority personnel will finally manage to arrive and the group finds that Shalini has utterly vanished.

Investigation of the security cameras and video imaging devices find that they are all shorted out and though there are a limited number of access points, no one seems to recall seeing Shalini pass through. A search is instigated immediately through the tunnels with the assumption that she remains in the railway system while all stations are notified to be on the lookout for her.

Of course, any such search will ultimately prove to be fruitless, since the girl's telepathic skills are of sufficient strength to erase any memory of her presence. Shalini's mother is long dead when the medical personnel arrive and her father is very likely to be dying but conscious – unless the group has been *very* diligent. As Jaye is being led away in a stretcher, he grabs one of the character's hands with the strength of a desperate man. He asks that they visit his hospital room as soon as possible, for he is certain that he does not have long to live and even if he survives his wounds he is certain that "They" will return to kill him as soon as possible. His need is of the utmost urgency, he claims.

As he is being wheeled away, Jaye begs the group to find his daughter, claiming that he will give them all that he has if they can succeed. "Hsh!" admonishes the medic, as he wheels Jaye away.

ENCOUNTER II: THE OFFER

The hospital room is cold and sterile and the dying man is attached to a breathing machine, so he cannot speak – if the group somehow has prevented the strike squad from shooting Jaye, then the nurse tells them that severe internal injuries from the impact will prevent him from surviving the night. The group can deduce that Jaye must have been moving on pure adrenaline when he tried to push his daughter out the railcar window. A well–dressed man sits in a chair next to the bed, pouring over a datapad and rises to meet the adventurers as they enter. He introduces himself to the group as Jeel Tormé, a litigation specialist whose primary field is Interstellar Processes. He hands the pad to his client and the group looks on as the datapad shakes violently in Jaye's hands. Eventually, though, Jaye manages to outline his proposition for the group on the rather primitive holographic display. The details are fairly straightforward – the *Empress Iolanthe* for the rescue of Shalini and her safe delivery to the specialist on Vanejen. The first catch that the players notice, however, is that the ship is warehoused on Regina, which means that the adventurers will have to get themselves there. If the group agrees, then all legal documents are drawn up via hand computer. Once the group has fulfilled the terms of the contract, the lawyer will issue the new registration documents for the ship, which can be done, if necessary, via Xmail.

If the group agrees to take the job, Jaye downloads the family's last Cr8,000 into their accounts to cover any expenses that they may have during the search. Also, Jaye gives the adventurers the girl's ragged teddy bear and his religious symbol (the Belizan Triple Cross), so Shalini will know that the group is acting for him. He also gives them a data chip that contains a single audio file: the short, pained final message of a dying father to his daughter, since the doctors have predicted that he will not survive the night.

If pressed for tips on where to begin, the man scrawls down that she usually goes to "places where she feels safe" but that he would not know where that would be, on this world. The family had stayed in a motel the previous night; perhaps the adventurers should begin there. A nurse suddenly arrives

to inject a syringe of Hydramorph into Jaye's IV tube and he succumbs to a deep slumber from which he will never awake. Jeel remains for a few moments to insure that the group has no further questions and to explain that he has heard that not only are the local authorities on the search but that Imperial Intelligence is also diligently looking for the girl and that the father told him that he was no longer sure who could be trusted. Since the adventurers (presumably) did their best to stop the Zhule operatives from taking Shalini or hurting any more innocents, Jaye felt that they were perhaps the best candidates in which to place his trust.

Enemies

Following the failed operation in the rail tunnels, the adventurers will be watched by the operatives of the Zhule Sodality – some of whom are psionic. The abysmal failure of the extraction team to return with the girl and due to all of the unwanted attention that has suddenly been drawn from that particular operation, the commandant of the local *Zhule* cell has decided to bring out his most terrifying weapon: a psionic operative who is so effective and therefore so valuable, that he is kept in cold sleep until he is needed. This operative is the legendary *Spectre,* who is whispered to be a ghost amongst Jae Taellonan underworld, returned from the grave to exact revenge upon his human murderers. Legend has it that 150 years ago, *The Spectre* was cornered and surrounded by Imperial agents who were leading a combined task force of local police and security personnel and burned to death with plasma weapons. It is said, however, that his body was never found; that he has become pure energy and that he is now more powerful than ever. Much to the chagrin of more than a few of his *Sodality* colleagues, *The Spectre* has been brought out of cold sleep and is now in command.

The local police have been infiltrated and are under the influence of the Jae Taellonan underworld, which is in turn under the influence of the *Sodality,* so their help will be ineffective at best; at worst, they may actively interfere with the group's investigation.

The local Imperial Intelligence Service office is a wildcard, to be played as the Referee sees fit; perhaps some of the adventurers are even agents themselves or perhaps they can be used to point the group in the right direction should the trail grow cold. The IIS on this world, however, is underfunded and severely undermanned; they will be of little help to the group but by the same token, they will not be able to interfere with them much either. It is possible that the adventurers may be questioned once or twice by the local police, perhaps even brought in for interrogation, until *The Spectre* gives the order to leave them alone, at which point they will be inexplicably released and no further trouble will be had. *The Spectre's* plan is to allow the group to operate unhindered, in the hopes that they will have better luck locating Shalini, hopefully having far more subtle methods than his operatives.

The local Director of the *Sodality* is Heinrich P'tr'ar, a Zhodani who has undergone genetic conversion to appear to be a normal Imperial human. The PCs are not likely to encounter him in this adventure. They will, however, encounter *The Spectre,* who will catch them unawares unless they are very, very careful. During this time, it is important for the Referee to be aware that the group is being watched by *Zhule* agents and their human informant network. The *Zhule* operatives have four SPA security personnel in positions ranging from low to mid–level on their payroll, as well as a mechanic that is currently performing repairs aboard *The Rainbow Sun.* It is simply a matter of time before the *Sodality* locates her but they prefer to allow the adventurers to do the legwork for them in order to minimize exposure.

While the group is investigating, they will be tailed by three field operatives of the *Sodality;* use the statistics given in the NPCs section for the Zhule Sodality Strike Squad if the group becomes aware of them and combat ensues. If the players do not state that their characters are watching for suspicious characters, the Referee should not worry about rolling; if, however, a player indicates that his character is (rightfully) being paranoid, the Referee may wish to make a secret Stealth check for the agents vs. the characters' Recon skills. If the character succeeds, he may notice a suspicious individual (or two or three) watching the group from a corner booth in the Starport bar or from behind a newspaper in a rail kiosk and so forth. If the agents think they are made, they will flee. If cornered, they will fight but they will not let themselves

be taken alive and will use the poison capsules described in Encounter I if captured.

ENCOUNTER III: AVENUES OF INVESTIGATION

There are several ways that the adventurers can go about their investigation. The first that will likely come to mind will be to question Transit Authority personnel in case the local police cannot be trusted. Allow them to do so but after a day of information gathering and a few successful Investigate, Diplomacy or Carousing checks the Referee should make it clear to the group that this avenue of investigation is a dead end. Any electronic security equipment that might have caught what happened in the tunnel that night has been shorted out and while there may be remnants of data recorded before the pulse, they will, of course, be of little value. Next, the group will probably think to check when the family arrived from offworld. Hopefully, this will then lead them to look for the ship that the girl arrived in and ask questions of the crew. Other methods would be to search out the local taverns and bars, along with public and police records for clues as to who is chasing her and why. The most common methods that can yield clues are detailed below but this list is by no means exhaustive; the Referee will have to adapt to his players' styles.

Finally, should the players think of something that is not covered here, do not immediately discount it; the Referee is encouraged to evaluate the players' ideas in light of the information given in *Background,* the information below and that given in the NPCs section and finally to ascertain for himself whether or not the players' ideas will be effective.

The Lion's Den

Asking questions at the local Starport facility and checking prior arrival and departure records (which are public information and should require no rolls should the group think of it) will reveal that the girl arrived aboard the 400–ton *Akkigish*–class Subsidised Merchant *The Rainbow Sun,* which was, at the time of arrival, under the command of one Captain Lars Granhault. Tracking Captain Granhault's last movements may lead the adventurers to *The Lion's Den,* a spacer's bar on the surface outside the underground complex, amongst the squat, crumbling and mostly abandoned buildings that were part of the original colony when that was built by the first settlers to land here.

The *Lion's Den,* at first glance, appears to be a hangout for drug dealers, addicts, alcoholics and seedy underworld types. It is quite successful in this respect, due to the fact that the local police do not like the extreme temperatures and therefore do not go up to the surface often. Besides, they believe that little goes on in *The Lion's Den* that could possibly interest them, since nearly everything on Jae Taellona is legal anyway.

In fact*, The Lion's Den* is little more than a front for the *Zhule Sodality.* Agents of the *Sodality* will recognize the PCs immediately but no one will alert them to this. The bar patrons and employees will appear to be very helpful at first but the adventurers will soon realise that the folks they meet here are masters of talking much and saying little. One of the Zhule operatives involved in the subrail attack is posted here but the PCs have no way of knowing that. For a price, of course, they will be offered drugs, sex and even information but none of any real value. After talking to a few people, a successful Routine Streetwise check reveals that although the patrons and employees seem friendly on the surface, no one wants the group here and would rather that they left and that there is little to be gained by questioning them further.

The Stellar Wind

The local spacer's bar is called *The Stellar Wind* and is filled with a mixed crowd and therefore, information of a more useful nature than that gleaned in the *Lion's Den* might be encountered here. *The Stellar Wind* is in Red Sector of Stargate Artica, about a 10 minute walk along the Concourse from the Starport, making it a natural place to begin. There are two types of rumours encountered in *The Stellar Wind:* Mandatory Rumours and General Rumours. Mandatory rumours are automatically encountered in the first instance of the group spending any significant amount of time in the bar and are only encountered in *The Stellar Wind.* General rumours are assumed to occur in *The Stellar Wind* but theoretically can occur in any of the starman's bars in the Red and Blue Sectors of Stargate Artica. If the group wishes to split up, allow them to do so and each subgroup or lone adventurer may make a separate check. Each hour spent searching for rumours in *The Stellar Wind* requires the seeker to spend at least 2d6 credits on drinks and nets a single Easy Streetwise or Carousing check, which, if successful, garners a roll on the Rumours Table below. Each extra Cr10 spent on drinks allows the adventurer an extra attempt per hour, to a maximum of 3 attempts. '

Group members may also make untrained attempts to garner rumours using the Soc skill but the difficulty then rises to Average and the costs for drinks are doubled. An abysmal result (four or more less than the target number) on any attempt means that the seeker has incurred some resentment and may not check for rumours in that particular location any longer without instigating potential violence. If the result is especially poor, the Referee may also wish to impose an encounter with a group of resentful belters, drunk and looking for a victim to administer a severe beating to.

The Referee should feel free to chose rumours from the table rather than rolling, especially if he feels that the group is stuck in their investigation but he should be mindful of the DMs that apply to each character type when doing so. Rumours 1–6 are more likely to be obtained by Rogues and Drifters using the Streetwise skill while 10–13 are more likely to be obtained by professional, ex–military starmen and women through the use of the Carousing skill. Rumors 7–9 are common, everyday rumours, which are more likely to be gleaned by those using the Soc ability with no DMs to their table roll.

Random Rumors

DMs: Ex–Scouts, SPA or Naval personnel receive a DM +1. If, for some reason, the adventurer making the roll is actively enlisted in one of these services, the DM is +2. Ex Rogues and Drifters are awarded a DM of –1, –2 if they are still active members of that profession. Referees should feel free to choose a rumour from the table rather than rolling; an especially good result should automatically net them a true, useful rumour, such as Rumour 2 or Rumour 12 or if the result is *very* good, Rumours 1 or 13, depending on the skill (Streetwise or Carousing) and the character type involved in the attempt.

Mandatory Rumors

The Corsair Crew

It is here in *The Stellar Wind t*hat the PCs will have their first encounter with Commander Klaargh, captain of a Vargr corsair parked some distance away at a makeshift base in the desert. Klaargh will enter the bar accompanied by 1d6 crewmembers some time while the adventurers are there. After they have had a few drinks, Klaargh and his crew will begin barking loudly in his guttural language.

Eventually, they will take notice of the group and Klarrgh, as the Alpha, will approach them, pick the strongest looking one and try to start a fight, unarmed. If the adventurer who is challenge accepts, then, according to the unwritten Code of Honour amongst Vargr Corsairs, the fight should be unarmed and fairly evenly matched. Klaargh and his crew are armed (see their statistics in the NPCs section) with knives and even pistols should the adventurers violate the unwritten edicts of the code, including trying to help a comrade who has lawfully accepted but is losing or should a group member try bring weapons into the combat. The adventurer who is challenged is free to decline but will probably have to endure a series of rather scathing insults from the Corsairs – most of which, fortunately, will be in Vargr.

If, however, the adventurer challenged by Klaargh accepts and fights honourably, even if he loses, he will have (probably) earned the respect of Klaargh and his crew. A successful Average test of Social Sciences (Alien Cultures) will reveal exactly what those codes are; for more information, consult the section on Vargr in *The Traveller Core Rulebook,* p.46, though the Referee should feel free to improvise. For more information on the Corsair's Code, see the Library Data entry Dh'oughz Khfae. The Corsairs will then invite the adventurers to stay up all night drinking with them and depending on how they have conducted themselves, will likely have won a valuable group of allies.

The Referee should note that the Vargr are aware of the location of The Spectre's vessel and are looking for someone to help them break in. The Vargr see it as an easy credit but using their vessel's weapons could damage whatever is inside and cause any spare parts they wish to salvage to decline in value. Klaargh is violent but he is anything but stupid and wishes to try to enter the vessel through finesse before trying brute force. If Klaargh likes the group, he may ask them to join this endeavour.

Of course, the critical importance of this rumour will likely only become obvious in retrospect.

The Spectre

While searching for rumours or just drinking in the bar, the adventurers overhear a pair of trader crewmen having a heated discussion at a corner table. One claims that The Spectre is real and the other claims that it is a story to scare children. The argument will eventually die away – this is of course at the Referee's discretion but one barfight, with the Corsair crew, is probably enough for one adventure – and the crewmembers will walk away, each quietly fuming. If the adventurers approach one of them and ask about the Spectre, they will find the crewman more than willing to talk as long as they continue to buy drinks. Almost any local or spacer who is a regular at Jae Taellona has heard the legend that The Spectre is the vengeful ghost of a Zhodani agent who was caught and burned alive by marines and security officers at the Naval Base during the Fifth Frontier War. Legend has it that The Spectre has killed thousands; children and even some of the more superstitious starfarers say that staring into the naked jump field and speaking his name 10 times will summon him. He can walk through walls, it is said and his mere touch can melt an armoured man.

The crewman who argued in favour of the Spectre's existence does not believe all of that but he does think that The Spectre is still alive, maybe through drugs or cold sleep and he is convinced that he has powers beyond the comprehension of the average man.

The Galactic Census and Records Bureau

The more officious members of the party may think to check with The Galactic Census and Records Bureau, a department of the government operated under the auspices of the Imperial Ministry of the Interior. If this is the players' first experience with *Traveller*, the Referee may assume that, although the players may not know about the existence of the Bureau, their characters, as citizens of the largest bureaucracy in the galaxy, most likely do. You may allow some or all of them a Routine difficulty INT check to think to look at the Bureau (DMs: +1 if the character rolling has Admin, Investigation or the Advocate skill, +3 if he has two or more of these). A quick check of the information database at the Starport (or simply asking someone, such as an SPA official) will reveal that the Ministry of the Interior indeed holds an Archives and Census office on Jae Taellona.

The Bureau holds similar offices on most planets under Imperial control with a Class C or better Starport. On many Imperial worlds, the Bureau offices mainly document and analyze demographic and statistical data, most of which (but not all!) would probably be of little interest to a group of adventurers. Since, however, Jae Taellona is nominally an Imperial protectorate, the chances that the Bureau holds government records that are possibly salient are actually quite good. A Difficult check of the Advocate skill will reveal that any corporation that operates under the Imperium as

Rumours Table

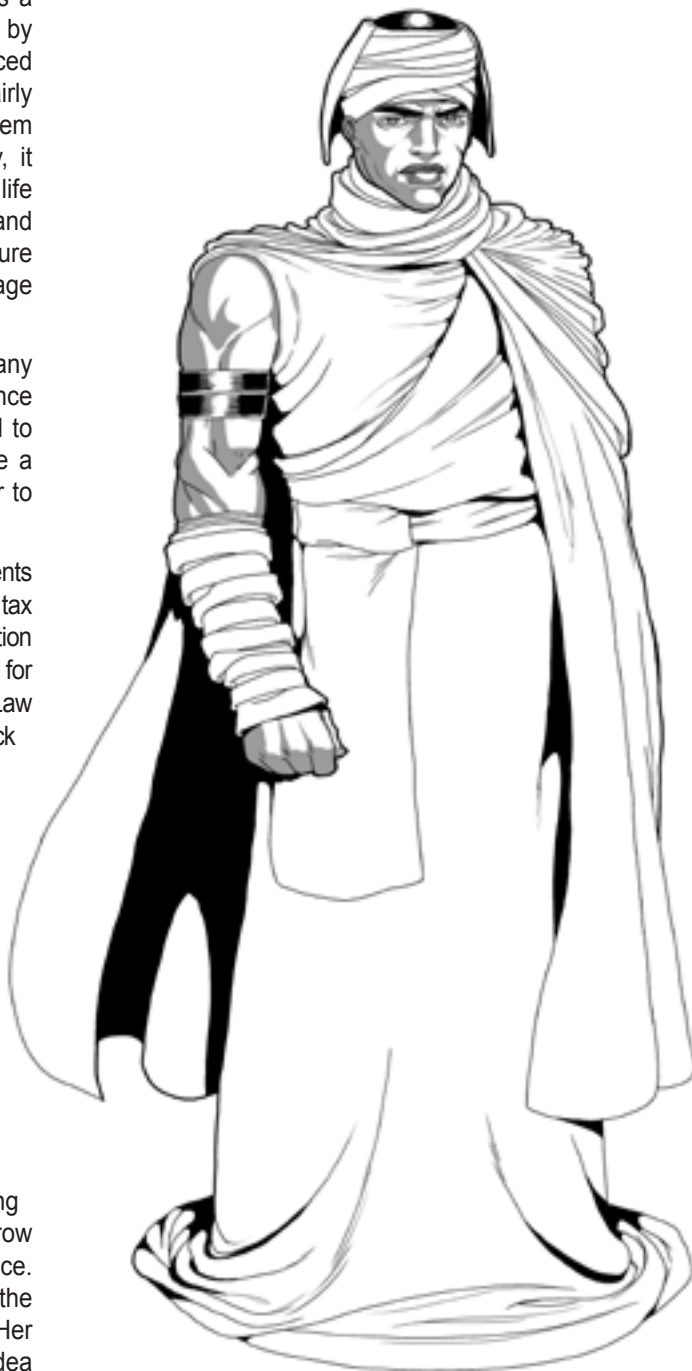| Die	Rumour
1	A couple of shady figures who work for Big Name crime lords have been overheard recently hiring local thugs to watch the crew of a freighter known as *The Rainbow Sun*, which sits in the repair yard at the Starport.(T)
2	Captain Granhault was a well–known alcoholic and sex addict. He frequented a place called the *Lion's Den*, known to be a front for the local underworld. They say he dabbled in smuggling and had plenty of underworld contacts, including one N'ort Tume, who killed himself while under arrest recently. (T)
3	Mysterious, shady–looking individuals who are definitely of Zhodani descent are said to have been seen in the company of several Big Name crime figures at their hangouts in Orange Sector. Some say they are part of a deep–cover cell known as The *Zhule Sodality* and they are getting ready for Something Big. Anyone that goes around repeating this information to the Wrong People may find himself buried behind a wall of thermal concrete in the Purple Sector when the next dead mine in sealed up. (T)
4	The Rainbow Sun was carrying an expensive cargo and Captain Granhault was forced to eject it into space near to the gravity well of a moon of the system's large gas giant while being pursued by a customs vessel. It is said that the cargo was worth millions and was packaged so it could have possibly survived re–entry. He was killed because he arrived without the cargo. Whoever finds that cargo will become rich. (F)
5	A petty criminal tells the group that a crew of Vargr Corsairs (see below) is looking for a security hack or a mining expert help him cut or break into a security–sealed ship buried halfway in the sand somewhere in the desert, a pretty good ways off. Only Captain Klaargh and the Corsairs know where it is, and they are not talking, because they want whatever loot may be aboard. If nothing else, the ship is said to be in good shape and the spare parts alone would make a decent haul. (T)
6	The miners are planning a revolution very soon (within the month) and it will not be a good idea to be around when they rise up. (F)
7	One of Granhault's contacts was N'ort Tume, who was arrested and died in a locked cell under mysterious circumstances. (T)
8	There is Something Big going down in Purple Sector and the government and Sternmetal are behind it; else, why all the secrecy? Why are only miners on an active shift allowed down there? What is behind all of the sudden, mysterious and last–minute changes to the work schedules of Sternmetal employees? Theories range from the sudden discovery of a hidden cache of alien technology to the planning of a secret defence strategy that involves killing all of the workers and their families involved in the coming uprising.
9	Over 200 miners a month are killed or injured because of the deadly working conditions on the planet and the Imperium refuses to give compensation or medical care to the disabled. (F)
10	Over 200 miners a month are killed or injured because of the deadly working conditions on the planet and the Imperium refuses to give compensation or medical care to the disabled. (F)
11	The miner terrorists are actually just a bunch of thugs hired by the Underworld to stir up chaos and force the Imperium closer to negotiations for Taellonan independence, a situation which the Consulate–aligned worlds on the Border would certainly enjoy seeing. (T)
12	Both Imperial Internal Intelligence and Naval Intelligence reports agree in the belief that there is an active deep–cover cell present on Jae Taellona, known as *The Zhule Sodality*. The *Sodality* is spreading money and influence to establish itself amongst the Jae Taellonan criminal element, in the hopes of eventually adding Jae Taellona to the Consulate's growing list of allies in the upcoming war. (T)
13	A ship known as *The Rainbow Sun* recently put into port after having several mysterious system failures in jumpspace. The ship is docked at the Starport repair yard and is *still* having the same mysterious failures.
14	The *Zhule Sodality's* best operative is codenamed *The Spectre*. Although it sounds incredible, Imperial Intelligence believes *The Spectre* to actually be the same battle–dress wearing operative that somehow infiltrated the Naval base here in 984, sabotaging several key battle cruisers and made the repair facilities all but useless for several weeks. It was not enough to cause the Imperium to lose the War but it certainly did not help us win any. Reliable sources confirm that *The Spectre* is very real, however legendary his exploits have become. The Spectre is old and wily and most clearheaded folk believe that a regimen of anagathics combined with cold sleep is responsible for his longevity. It is true, however, that his mental powers are formidable and he can defeat nearly any security measure imaginable.

a colonial administrator is in fact defined as functioning as a "government ad litem." As such, the corporation is required by law to file copies of any internal documentation that is produced as a result of any action that it takes, which falls under the fairly narrow legal definition of this function. While this may seem to be an example of overly convoluted legal terminology, it merely means that documents such as demographic data, life support expenditures, terraforming projects, public building and housing construction, population control, as well as any future construction projects that have reached the planning stage must be filed with the Bureau.

Of particular interest to the characters may be the fact that any and all documents dealing with the creation and maintenance of a local or planetary police department are also required to be filed – since, legally speaking, the planetary police are a corporate security force who, at the end of the day, answer to primarily to Sternmetal, LIC and its shareholders.

Although the corporation is encouraged to keep these documents up–to–date by the Imperial government through the receipt of tax breaks on 'ad litem' expenditures in order to promote colonisation and development, the only way for the adventurers to find out for certain just how closely the company has adhered to Interstellar Law is through a visit to the Bureau itself. A successful Routine check of the Admin or Advocate skill will remind the character that, by law, Bureau records are supposed to be freely available to any Imperial Citizen who asks to see them. The Bureau's offices can be found in the underground portion of the city in the Yellow Sector, a portion of Stargate Artica that contains the offices of the Imperial Bureaucracy and the dwellings of those who work for it. Yellow Sector is about a 5 minute rail ride away from the Starport.

The group will find that the Records office is tucked away down a dark, narrow, twisted corridor just off the main Concourse of Yellow Sector. The windows of the offices are coated with dust and it is only identifiable by a small plaque bearing the Imperial starburst to the left of the antique door. Upon entering, the adventurers may be dismayed to see filing cabinets, stacks and reams of dusty paper and files and a row of ancient microfiche machines along the back wall of the office. A dour, bespectacled woman sits behind a desk just inside the door, clacking away on an archaic typewriting machine. Her name is Nora Childers and she is none too thrilled at the idea of strange offworlders poking through what she considers to be her records. She rises to challenge the adventurers and upon finding that they wish to poke about unsupervised in "her" office, she demands that they leave.

She is nonplussed by arguments concerning the legal rights of Imperial citizens – such claims will only serve to make her more determined in her denial. If the group does not comply with her demand that they leave, she will call the police who will be equally deaf their protestations and they will be ejected or even jailed if they continue to resist. Such a fate can be avoided if one or more of the adventurers can make a smooth, persuasive argument accompanied by a Difficult (–2) check of Diplomacy or Persuade. Feigning interest in her work – a Routine check of Administration or Persuade – might also serve to get on her good side. She is vulnerable, however, to moderately attractive older (45+ Standard Years) men. If the party contains such an individual, then a mere showing of kindness from him can win her over, giving the group unfettered access without a roll. This challenge is a pure test of roleplaying skills; the Referee should not allow the players to sidestep it by making dice rolls. Once the group has dealt with Ms. Childers, they can then turn their

attention to the records. A major portion of the public records are actually kept on paper and microfiche. Investigators from the Imperial Core or other high (12+) TL regions of the Imperium who are used to holographic storage units and neural shunts might be aghast at being confronted by this primitive file–and–card method of record–keeping. In such a case, the adventurer's skill in Administration might actually be a hindrance– at least at first. Apply a DM of –1 to the roll per TL over 12 that can be attributed to a character's background *if* he has Administration skill. Otherwise, he need not be penalised, since a lack of rank in the Admin skill also indicates that he has not spent enough time in libraries or offices to accrue the kind of bad habits that are the result of an overdependence on technology. In that case, the lack of any ranks in Admin to assist the search should be penalty enough.

The records are in such disarray that they will take quite a long time to sift through, even if the searcher is familiar with the archaic record–keeping system employed here. Searching the records is a Very Difficult (–4) check of Administration or Advocate. If the investigator has both skills, he may add a DM of +2 to the roll. If he has both skills and a level of 2 or greater in the skill not being used, he may add a DM of +4 instead. Further, the investigators can employ the rules contained in **The Traveller Core Rulebook** for task chaining and assistance to further improve their chances. A successful roll and 1d6 hours of searching through records and microfiche files will reveal a single item listed below. If the roll was especially good, the group may deduct up to 2 hours from their search time. If the group has failed to convince Nora Childers of the worthiness of their cause, this will serve to add a DM of –3 to their roll, as she rearranges records, hides things and generally makes things as difficult as possible for them to work. If, on the other hand, they have won her over, they may ask for her assistance and receive a DM of +4 and decrease their search periods to 1d6–2, down to a minimum of three. Whether or not a group already on her bad side deserves a second chance is entirely up to the Referee and Ms. Childers.

There have been large, unscheduled shipments of cargo and personnel into the starport for which the customs and legal papers are missing. The group has noticed a prodigious amount of Zhodani living and working on Jae Taellona, yet there is no documentation to be found for them in this office. There has been a large amount of criminal activity that has never been investigated. Captain Granhault had an extensive police record, including smuggling, drugs, petty larceny and other fairly minor offenses. He should have been in jail but he was not and his Master's Licence was never revoked; presumably, his transgressions were never reported to the Ministry of Ships and Shipping. N'ort Tume also had a record but his was far worse. He had been arrested for murder three times but the court records for the disposition of these cases are missing. He also died by hanging himself, alone in a locked cell.

The local Starport seems to be using far more of its resources than are being documented. This would suggest that far more ships are coming and going than is being recorded. The Crime Statistic compilations show that there are an inordinate amount of murders that occur when the victim seems to be well–protected in locked rooms, aboard secure starships, in secure places with recording devices and guards all around them – and nothing ever gets recorded nor is any evidence left behind. Most of the murders are committed using a knife or similar blade– like weapon, although some have been committed with gauss or energy weapons.

A Sternmetal Horizons security report remarks on the disappearance of a decorated Imperial Captain (Captain Locke–Stromwell) locked in his own cabin aboard a **Tigress–** class dreadnought, one of the largest, most well–armed, secure vessels in the Navy, surrounded by crewmen and security personnel. The report remarks that there was no record in his log or from SPA customs officials on duty that he ever went ashore and security and crew of the vessel that were questioned claimed he never left his cabin. The report concludes that Captain Locke–Stromwell somehow managed to leave without his crew knowing about it or that they were lying about it for some reason. However, nothing could be proven and the investigators eventually gave up, though the case remains open. There is no evidence of any follow–up investigation, ever, nor any indication that this fact ever appeared in the local media.

The Bureau Office also contains a rather extensive news morgue with printouts from the Xnet and planetary datasphere (such as it is) as well as from the local newspapers, used to compile and correlate various statistics for the Imperial Census. While searching the morgue, the group manages to uncover an ancient news article about a devastating series of explosions at the naval base here during the Third Frontier War, on 161–984. The article claims that a single Zhodani agent was responsible; he was cornered by an intrepid group of Special Tactics police supported by Imperial Marine contingent in battle dress; nevertheless, before he was incinerated to a crisp, the article claims that the Zhodani killed eight brave officers involved in his pursuit. It does not specify whether these "officers" were Sternmetal security personnel or military. At this point in the investigation, this piece of information may seem irrelevant to the adventurers and the Referee should not make too much of it; just note that it catches the characters' interest.

The Trail of the Rainbow Sun

If the group decides to check out the Rainbow Sun, they are on the right track, for that is indeed where the girl is hiding, secretly under the care of the ship's engineer. There are several indications of this; the first may be gleaned if the group thinks to question the crew. If they do not, all is not lost; after 1d6 days from the beginning of the investigation, the series of system failures and accidents at the Starport will begin to seep into the local datasphere and newsbytes, not to mention the Starport rumour–mill. Further, the group will probably be in or near the

Starport at some point during their investigation and may perhaps witness a power failure or other systems malfunction. Should this happen, the Referee may allow them to make an INT check (Average difficulty, DM +1 for any adventurer with direct experience with psionics, +2 if an adventurer is a trained telepath himself). The Starport has redundant systems aplenty, so while the failures are certainly a nuisance, they are not enough to force a fullscale investigation… *yet.* If the group does not act fast, they will soon, however and SPA officials and/or Imperial Intelligence will eventually make the connection with psionic abilities – after all, the inhabitants of the Imperial Fringe have been fighting the Zhodani for 500 years and many of them know psionics when they see them.

If the girl vanishes into the custody of local authorities or the Ministry of Defence, the adventurers can fully expect to kiss the girl goodbye, quickly followed by their commission. While this eventuality is completely up to the Referee, as a guideline, SPA can be expected to launch a full–scale investigation 1d6–3 days after the first mysterious systems failure and to locate her 1d6+3 days after that investigation begins.

Once the group has decided to focus on the vessel, they may wish to play it cool and first visit the SPA records office. There, they can access a ship's registry, a current or recent flight plan and/or a crew manifest, all of which are public information and require no roll.

If the players do not think of it, an Average check of INT might allow their characters to; any ex–scouts, naval personnel or merchants in the group can receive a DM of +2 to this roll. The group might first try to speak to the captain and thereby learn his fate.

The First Mate
Perhaps the will think to attempt to approach the ships first officer, Lyliian Arducci, who will prove, at first, anyway, to be unhelpful and rude. She is not the ship's steward, she says, so she has nothing to do with the passengers. In truth, however, she remembers the girl quite well but she wants nothing more to do with her and in her superstitious starfarer's mind, that includes speaking of her. She feels that further discussing the girl might make the jinx she brought upon *The Rainbow Sun* permanent.

As it stands, she feels that the ship's crew has a good chance of throwing the jinx off and will say as much to any adventurer who can succeed in a Difficult Carousing roll, while buying her enough drinks. After she has had a few, she will even tell the adventurers that the jinx is still in effect; the systems failure rate seemed to stop for about four days after the docking but started right back up a couple of days ago. The Referee should take care to convey that the date the ship's troubles began anew should coincide with the exact the day that

Shalini disappeared in the rail tunnels. Of course, this should be the group's first hint that Shalini is still aboard the Rainbow Sun. At this point or sometime later, the group might consider bribing Lyliian into letting them search, to which she might consent, if she is drunk enough.

On the other hand, she may just as quickly report the group to the authorities or both, depending on the result of an Average check of the characters' Persuade skill (DM +1 per multiple of Cr1000 greater than 4000 offered, –1 for each multiple under). If the persuade attempt fails by more than five, she will report them to the authorities.

Whether or not she takes their money anyway is up to the Referee. The group might also deduce that the girl is somewhere aboard and try to convince her that they can solve her jinx problem – this is more difficult, because Lyliian is always wary of bar conmen and starport rats with ulterior motives. If the group is good, however, the Referee should not be resistant to the possibility that the group could get *her* to pay *them.*

The Steward
The ship's steward, Tomiasi V'rii, has a far more helpful attitude. V'rii is a long–standing TAS member and can be found most of the time he is dirtside relaxing in the bar of the local TAS hostel, indulging in his taste for Sirian congnac and Terran tobacco. Though not particularly wealthy, V'rii thinks of himself as a gentleman of refinement and taste, an adventurer of the Old School and is more likely to be impressed with the group if a member has a reasonably high Soc ability (9 or better) or if they are fellow TAS members. He remembers feeling sorry for the girl. The whole crew liked her, for she was a sweet little girl.

A couple of crewmembers, he tells the group, including the first mate, believed she was responsible for all of the electrical malfunctions and were scared of her. Most of them, however, remember a nervous, frightened little girl who was very sick at times but also excited to be on her first space voyage. She liked to go down to Engineering because it was noisy down there, which "drowned out the loud voices".

She also liked to hang out in the crew commons area just above the j–drive machinery. The Chief Engineer liked her, too and he often took her under his wing and allowed her to hang out in the engine room.

If prodded or questioned about the bizarre series of malfunctions while en route to Jae Taellona, he replies he is not a technician but he does know that the Captain and the First Mate were worried that the Ship might never make it to planetfall.

If prodded further, he will reluctantly admit that the failures seem to have returned for some reason but he asks the group to keep this tidbit to themselves, because it could cause the ship to lose passengers, which could in turn affect V'rii's job.

ENCOUNTER IV: THE RAINBOW SUN

The Rainbow Sun is at underground docking bay 13 and security at the starport is tight at the moment due to the recent "terrorist attack" in the rail tunnels. It will not be possible for the group to walk up to the ship and simply saunter aboard. They may be able to obtain a crew ID badge by bribing or even assaulting another crewmember. The Referee should be mindful that he does not press the group here – experienced players will have their own ideas and newcomers will be anxious to try. This portion of the adventure, planning and executing an operation, is the responsibility of the players and experienced Referees will know to take care not to pressure them into a particular course of action or the game will feel contrived. For this portion of the adventure, the Referee should refer to the details of the Type R Subsidized Liner on pg. 119–120 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook* and might–if, for example, the adventurers think to check a relevant Library Data program– photocopy it for their perusal.

The Engineer (Chief Yardin Anois), a tall, part–Vilani spacer with a friendly disposition and a twinkle in his eye, will be helpful as well. He will not let the PCs aboard but he will offer to look himself. When he returns, he says he cannot find her. Yardin is in fact well aware that the girl is aboard, because he is hiding her in his cabin, which is adjacent to the commons area and directly above the j–field mechanism, which seems to have a calming effect on her, even when in low power state. His partial Vilani heritage makes him notoriously difficult to read but a successful Difficult (10+) check of Deception, Social Sciences (Psychology) or Investigate, indicates that he is hiding *something* but little else.

There are other crewmembers who might be more easily persuaded or perhaps the group will come up with an entirely different plan – posing as a maintenance crew, for instance. This would involve some computer hacking and the theft or manufacture of uniforms. The exact method of getting aboard is completely up to the group but silly or unrealistic plans will quickly land them in jail or even get them killed.

ABOARD THE SHIP

Before the group reaches this portion of the adventure, a bit of preparation and forethought by the Referee will make it flow much more smoothly. Begin by examining the map of the Subsidized Merchant on p.120 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook* and decide just where any intercom terminals and intercoms will be; each separate area of the vessel has one and some – such as the Bridge and Engineering – have several; the passenger and crew cabins and common areas all have at least one. Also, the Referee may wish to prepare by taking a few moments to create a simple map of the maze–like grid of access tunnels that run beneath the crew deck and between the bulkheads on which Shalini is hiding; should the group be careless with her in the initial encounter, she may well lead them on an extensive chase through the grid.

The Referee should again refer to p. 120 for assistance in this endeavor. The grid may be as simple or as complex as you wish it to be. It is not necessary for the two decks to be connected via the grid, should you wish to keep things simple. If, however, you foresee a lengthier chase – perhaps to teach the group a valuable lesson in forethought and planning for the next adventure – then by all means, make the tunnels a veritable maze with numerous outlets on every deck and room.

Most of the crew is on leave but there are a few still working aboard. Though several options are given on the table, only six or so crew members are likely to be aboard; the Referee should take care to mark off each encounter as it occurs and roll no more after six crewmembers and the passengers have been encountered. If the PCs are there at night (during the graveyard watch), there is one couple who are here for a layover who are staying in their quarters. The Chief Engineer is also aboard. Encounters aboard the ship will be random by nature – roll 1d every few rounds while the party is aboard or each time they enter a new area. A 1 indicates an encounter. Roll below for the results, DM –2 if at night. Count a result of zero as a one. Partial statistics are given for each below, as they relate to combat or any reasonable interaction that might occur between the adventurers and the individual; these are guidelines only and the Referee should feel free to flesh them out further as necessary. If the encounters below are armed (Referee's discretion), it will be with the sidearm types with which they have greatest skill.

Otherwise, encounters will be unarmed.

1. Insomniac Passenger (1–3, the man, 4–6 the woman, use the same statistics for either)

565889 Citizen

Gun Combat (Body Pistol)–1; Trade (Architect) –2; Persuade–1

2. Working Passenger

467677 Ex–Rogue

Melee (Blade Combat) –2; Streetwise –2; Melee (Unarmed) –1

3. Working Passenger Citizen

789A96 Gun Combat (Auto Pistol) –3; Carousing –2; Diplomat –1; Persuade –1

4. Assistant Engineer

878B98 Ex–*Scout*

Gun Combat (Auto Pistol) –1; Engineer (M–Drive) –1; Engineer (J–Drive) –2

5. Crewman

AAB977 Ex–Marine

Gun Combat (Energy Pistol) –3; Carousing –2; Persuade –2

6. Engineer

878B98 Ex–*Scout*

Gun Combat (Auto Pistol) –1; Engineer (M–Drive) –1; Engineer (J–Drive) –2

7. Crewman

787986 Citizen Investigate –1; Diplomat –0; Computers –3

8. Cheif Engineer Yarin Anois

See NPC section for the Chief 's statistics

9. Sensors Officer

988A98 Ex–Navy

Gun Combat (Slug Pistol) –2; Sensors –2; Computers –1

10. Steward

567987 Citizen

Steward –3; Diplomat –1; Investigate –1; Deception –2

11. Astrogator

668997

Astrogation –1; Computers –3; Pilot –1

12. Executive Officer Lyliian Arducci

979BA8 Ex–Navy

Gun Combat (Gauss Pistol –3) Leadership –2; Astrogation –1; Deception –2; Investigation –2; Melee Combat (Unarmed) –2; Melee Combat (Blade) –2

Hopefully, the adventurers have authorisation (false or otherwise) to be aboard, in which case they can expect little trouble from the crew and passengers. If, however, they have sneaked aboard, hopefully they will have brought snub pistols with tranq rounds or other nonlethal (and *quiet*) weapons, with which to dispose of the potential witnesses. If not, the group may find themselves at odds with local police as well as the *Sodality* and The Spectre–making their objectives considerably more difficult to achieve. If the individuals encountered above have reason to become suspicious of the group, their first action will invariably be to sound an alarm rather than directly confronting the group. Most of the encounters above will avoid combat at all costs – only fighting if cornered. If an encounter is successful in sounding the alarm, the crew will attempt to evacuate the vessel and a heavily armed Starport Authority task force will arrive in 1d6 minutes. If the characters are caught and have shot and killed somebody, they will be arrested for murder or at the very least, assault – and this particular adventure, as such, is pretty much over for them. If the group is arrested for Criminal Trespassing and Breach of Security on Starport property they will pay a fine of Cr100,000 and do 1d months in jail, or 2d years if they do not have the money to pay the fine. Any jailbreak attempts are strictly the purview of the Referee.

Shalini

The final goal of the group is to reach the crawlspace behind the hidden access panel in the Engineer's cabin where Shalini is hiding. Chief Engineer Yardin Anois' cabin will be one of the cabins labeled 'area 3' on the deckplan on **The** *Traveller Core Rulebook*, p.120. The Engineer may or may not be in his cabin; if he has not yet been encountered, he will be in the cabin on a 1–3 on 1d6. If he is there, Shalini will be out of the crawlspace and he will be playing with and talking to her when the group arrives. If they press the buzzer and ask to be let in, the Chief will stall them while he quickly opens the access panel (see below) and hurries her inside.

If Chief Anois is not there, getting inside the cabin should not be *too* difficult for a group of relatively experienced adventurers. Defeating security measures and doors on board a vessel is covered on pp. 143–145 of **The** *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Most of the vessel's security systems are TL 10 and her security measures are Electronic in nature.

Once the group has gained access to the cabin by whatever means, there is evidence inside that two individuals have in fact been living in this single–occupant officer's cabin. A successful Average check of Investigate or Recon (or Int, if none of the adventurers have either skill) will allow the group to notice that the trash receptacle contains candy and ice cream treat wrappers. The bed is missing a blanket and a pillow and finally that there are scrape marks across the floor, leading from the small desk against the wall to the corner of the room. Moving the chair reveals an access panel and that the paint has obviously been worn away around the screws from where they have been removed repeatedly.

Listening closely, followed successful Average check of Recon (or the Int skill again) may reveal the sound of someone moving or breathing quietly behind the wall.

If the group opens the accessway and barges in, they may find themselves in for a shock. Shalini is waiting on the other side with a makeshift blade (a scissor–like implement used for clipping gel microconduits that the engineer gave her with which to amuse herself) and the minute she sees a body part appear around the corner from which she is hiding, she will stab at it in terror and then flee further down the access tunnel, which branches out in several different directions. If the group is not quick, they might lose her very quickly. If she feels cornered, she may use her psionic abilities to thwart the group's pursuit.

If the adventurers make too much noise or stay too long in the cabin, there is a 2 in 6 chance every round that the Engineer will stop by to either check on the girl or come running if he has heard noise. If the adventurers attempt to reason with the Chief, he *may* stop to listen; the Referee may call for a successful Average to Difficult Persuade check to prevent him from immediately going

for the alarm on the intercom panel by the door. If the group can get the Chief to listen and they have thought to bring the datachit with Shalini's father's last message (and something to play it on, of course), the teddy bear and/or the religious symbol (which he will recognize, as Shalini wears one just like it) and explain that they are trying to help, he will agree to assist them. See the description of Chief Yardin Anois in the NPCs section for more information on dealing with him. Shalini will come to his call; she will be wary of the group at first but will warm to them once she sees the symbol or hears her father's voice.

If for some reason the Engineer does not, or can not,– appear to assist the group, hopefully they have brought the items Jaye gave them or they may be in for a long and difficult chase indeed.

ENCOUNTER V: THE SPECTER

If the group manages to escape the vessel without being arrested or being taken down by SPA security forces and if they have Shalini in tow, they are about to discover that their life has become quite a bit more difficult. Sometimes, fortune favours those who would travel the stars but more often, it scorns them. Within the hour after the group has Shalini, the Starport will issue an ion storm advisory (see Planetary Description for more information on ion storms and the Solar Winds that cause them). The Starport Authority will initiate a full Level 5 (maximum) lockdown before another hour is passed and no one will be allowed to leave– legally, anyway.

The group will be forced to hole up on Jae Taellona until they can find transport off the planet. Perhaps this is a good time for a member of the group to recall Captain Klaargh and his corsairs. If the adventurers have earned their respect, through combat or otherwise, Klaargh will be more than willing to assist them with leaving the planet – for a fee, of course. Whether or not the Corsairs are ultimately to be trusted is an issue for the Referee to decide, certainly they can be up to a point. If the group has not befriended Klaargh, they will have to make other arrangements or wait the storm out, which will last for six solar days. Meanwhile, the *Zhule Sodality* has been watching *The Rainbow Sun* and unless the group has taken precautions to prevent it, they will be getting ready to take Shalini from them. This time, The Spectre intends to see to the matter personally. If the group has somehow taken care of the agents tailing them and the human informants that are watching *The Rainbow Sun* or if they have managed

to somehow exit the ship with Shalini without anyone seeing them, The Spectre will resort to his Clairvoyance ability in an attempt to locate them. Note that although Shalini, due to her Neutralize Psionic Ability power, is immune to this search, the characters themselves are not. See Shalini's description in the NPCs section for more information about Shalini's Neutralize Psionic Ability power.

The likelihood is, however, that no matter where the adventurers go, The Spectre will find them as that is what he does and he

does it well. Eventually, probably while the group is holed up in some seedy hotel somewhere (perhaps on the surface?) The Spectre and his men will attack. If the group has managed to set up a defence, The Spectre will initiate a *Zhule Sodality* Strike Squad to initiate a frontal assault, while he attempts to teleport in behind the group, probably catching them by surprise.

He will use his stunner on Shalini to prevent her from using her psionic abilities, grab her and teleport out. Later, he will lock an anti–psionic helmet over her head to prevent her from accessing her abilities. If the attack succeeds, The Spectre will teleport (or run) to an air/raft parked nearby and fly away. As soon as he is able, he will transport Shalini to his ship, hidden in the desert some 500 km. south of Stargate Artica and prepare to take off as soon as the storm lets up just enough that he can do so relatively safely. Meanwhile, he has left orders with the remaining Strike Squadron members that the adventurers are to be disposed of for good.

The Spectre's vessel is a modified Type S Seeker (see *The Traveller Core Rulebook*, pp. 114–116); the Zhodani version of this vessel is essentially the same as the Imperial one on the pages indicated. The storm will slowly begin to abate over the next several days but it will be a minimum of six days before anyone can lift off reliably. If the group (or the Spectre, in the Referee's opinion) wishes to lift off before the six days are up, then it requires three successive tests of Pilot skill. The first day, no flying is possible, no matter how skilled.

The second day, the difficulty level becomes Formidable and the third day, Very Difficult and so forth, until the storm is abated. If The Spectre manages to make it into space with Shalini aboard, he will head directly for the large gas giant (see the Planetary Description section) to refuel, then, if he is being pursued, he will risk misjump by entering jumpspace as soon as his grid is powered without travelling to an optimum jump point. If the characters have allowed him to get this far, then the characters will have to resort to space combat in order to resolve the situation and a possible boarding action. All the data necessary to play out this scenario is given in **The *Traveller Core Rulebook*.** If the group is aboard the Vargr corsair, the Referee should not allow them to pass off all the work onto the Vargr. Klaargh may allow them to take up crew stations (gunnery position, even the pilot's station) so they can have an active role in stopping The Spectre's flight. If the group is of no assistance, then Klaargh may claim all booty recovered for himself and crew, including Shalini. Of course, should a space battle become necessary, the adventurers will want to be careful to selectively disable the Seeker's engines without seriously damaging the vessel, else they could hurt Shalini.

CONCLUSION

This adventure may conclude in any number of ways; this is deliberate, since nothing is worse for the players than a game with a predetermined outcome. If the players feel that no action they can take can possibly affect the conclusion, then it detracts

greatly from their enjoyment of the game. There is enough information given here for the Referee to accurately predict how the NPCs will react to the player characters' actions and to keep the game alive and fluid, instead of stilted and rigid.

This adventure is presented so that it can be organic and evolving. The most minor of the players' actions early on can have an enormous effect on how things turn out later. If the Referee has done his homework and fully familiarized himself with the characters and information presented herein, then he should have no trouble running this adventure and keeping it alive and interesting for the players and most important of all: *responsive to their actions.*

It is, of course, entirely possible that the group abandoned their search for the girl early on to follow Rumour 5 in Encounter III. If they have done this, then certainly, The Spectre's vessel might no longer be in perfect working condition. It is also likely in this event that The Spectre and his men have spread enough money around to discover that the Engineer is keeping Shalini on *The Rainbow Sun* and that they already have her.

If this has happened, the Referee should take care not to reward the adventurers for so quickly abandoning their mission objectives for unlikely tales of possible treasure in the desert, regardless of whether that treasure is real or not. Perhaps the group might pick up a bit of information on the streets when they return about a girl being hidden in an abandoned warehouse on the surface; the possibilities are myriad. When, or *if,* the group deserves a second chance in this case is entirely up to the Referee.

Rewards

If the group manages to be observant and has taken heed of the rumours and information to be gleaned from the Census bureau, then it is likely they have set an effective trap for The Spectre–by researching methods and gathering enough materials to construct an antipsi field, for example. If they have managed to keep the Spectre from capturing Shalini and making off into space with her, then they have done exceptionally well. As a reward and at the Referee's discretion, they may find The Spectre's PDA or map box with the coordinates and security codes to his vessel. If the Referee does not wish them to have the entire vessel, then perhaps they can arrive just after the Vargr raiders have left, leaving them just enough parts to salvage to make a tidy profit in addition to the Free Trader they now legally own on Regina, as well as what is left, if any, of the Cr8000 they were paid for expenses by Jaye A'ssynii.

If the Spectre gets away with Shalini in spite of (or due to a lack of) the group's preparations, then they will most likely be forced to enlist the aid of either the Vargr corsairs or some equally disreputable crew with a fast ship and knowledge of the desert and the solar system.

After all, there very few above–board starship crews who would be willing to take on a group of strangers in the middle of a storm claiming to be on a secret (or contrived) mission, unless they were of course willing to pay far more than the adventurers could afford. If the group is mistrustful of Vargr and chooses to team up with a disreputable human crew of the sort found on the surface of Jae Taellona, then it is likely their "allies" will wait patiently until the group kills The Spectre for them, then they will rise up and kill the adventurers in turn. At the very least, they will probably try to abandon them in space with very little air and even less hope of rescue. If, on the other hand, the group has elected to team up with Klaargh and his men, they will not be betrayed. Klaargh will, however, demand payment for his services, preferably in the form of The Spectre's scout vessel, if it becomes available. If, for some reason, the scout vessel does not become available and the group cannot pay Klaargh a reasonable fee (at least Cr10,000) upon arrival at their destination or at the completion of the mission, then this adventure could have a very nasty end indeed.

Further Adventures

If the Referee and the players have enjoyed this adventure wish to play on, then that is certainly recommended. *The Starchild* was designed as an introduction to the *Traveller* campaign setting of The Third Imperium. There are more than enough elements here on which to found a campaign. In the most immediate future is the journey to Vanejen and seeing Shalini safely to the "specialist." If the group decides they are finished with this adventure and wish to pursue the matter no further, then it is recommended that this "specialist" indeed be a master healer and he takes Shalini as a patient. The group might wait anxiously in the hospital for 16 or so tense hours of emergency surgery, until the doctor comes out, still in his surgical gown and pronounces the procedure a success. Shalini then returns to Belizo to continue her life as if nothing had happened and the Referee and the players can venture on to Regina using the space travel and trade system in **The** *Traveller* **Core Rules.**

If, on the other hand, the Referee and players wish to continue with this particular story arc, then it is recommended that the group find out, preferably after they have dropped Shalini off, that the "specialist" is none other than Sir Gerrold Viscervis, head of research at Imperial Research Station Gamma. In this case and on the heels of some very disturbing rumours about what goes on there, a second rescue may prove to be in order. This adventure will be one in which the group may discover many things, including their first encounter with the enigmatic beings known as the Droyne. Referees and players wishing to proceed down this route are urged once again to obtain a copy of FFE003: *Traveller: The Classic Adventure,* and refer to *Adventure 2: Research Station Gamma*. Further adventures on Jae Taellona are suggested by the Library Data section at the end of this adventure. The Referee is encouraged to read it and if he finds any of the adventure hooks contained therein useful, to flesh them out into full–fledged adventures.

Finally, if the group has managed to play their cards right and if they have been prudent, then they will not only now be legal

shipmasters but they may have a few credits in their pockets besides. If the group has utterly failed in their task, then hopefully they have retained enough of the advance to buy tickets off of Jae Taellona, and quickly. Otherwise, their adventuring days might very well end before they really even began…

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Referee's Notes: The following gives statistics for all the major NPCs encountered in this adventure. To use these NPCs, the Referee will of course need access to a copy of **The** *Traveller Core Rulebook* from Mongoose Publishing.

The characters described here were generated using the point allocation system given in the Alternate Character Generation Rules on page 40. The point value of each character is given in their statistics, just before the UPP value. For characters with multiple careers, the current career is shown in bold and that character's current rank in that career is in bold as well. Note that the number after the dash in the UPP indicates the Psionic Strength characteristic, which for most (untested) characters is left blank. The Psionic Strength characteristic is described on p. 152 of The *Traveller Core Rulebook* on p. 152.

It is strongly recommended that the Referee familiarise himself with the Psionics chapter on pp. 152–159 of **The** *Traveller Core Rulebook* prior to running this adventure.

Take note of the fact that Shalini's psionic faculties are a special case and due to a matter of unprecedented raw talent and natural ability. If a Player Character wishes to develop psionic aptitude, he is consigned to do so by the rules given in the Psionics chapter; that is, by first locating an underground Psionics Institute faction and convincing them to allow him to undergo testing.

Shalini A'ssunii

Notes: The abilities given under "Special Abilities" are the powers that Shalini has access to in addition to all the powers that are normally accessible due to her Talents.

A description of these new powers, in addition to a short explanation of the Electrokinesis ability, is given in the New Equipment section of the Appendix. Shalini is a sweet young girl with the same dark–skinned, rich complexion that all those from the equatorial regions of her world possess. She is very beautiful, with luxurious, flowing hair with a slightly kinky quality due to her mixed African ancestry.

Shalini is quite bright and catches on quickly, despite the bucolic nature of her upbringing. Her capacity for problem–solving is quite remarkable and she may surprise the adventurers with her immediate grasp of the nature of their situation. She may even have some useful insights into the problems faced by the group, if the referee feels that the characters need it. She might even be of some limited use if the characters are ambushed by The Spectre or his men. Keep in mind, however, that no matter how mature, she is still a ten year– old child who has just

lost her parents and is scores of light–years away from home. Her grief should be just incapacitating enough to keep the characters from having unlimited access to her psionic abilities and thus serve as an excellent method for Referee to prevent the characters from abusing them. By the same token, however, she should not hinder the group too much from completing their goals. Keep in mind, also, that even she is not aware of the full extent of her powers and they tend to only manifest when she feels frightened, nervous or is under duress. Jump space is extremely unpleasant for her, due to spatial distortions and temporal variances that are imperceptible to most people, even those with psionic abilities, thought there are others who are similarly sensitive and they are prone to jump sickness. This fact can be deduced by the adventurers from the rumours given them by the Rainbow Sun crew members in Encounter III: Avenues of Investigation and they would be well–advised to take heed and make preparations when they enter j–space with her on board, or her electrokinesis ability may wreak havoc that is not within her powers to prevent, just as it did on the journey from Belizo.

The Spectre

Point Value: 100

Age: 154 (34 Terms)

UPP: DCEAA8–B

(See NPC Table)

Notes: The Spectre was once a handsome, young Zhodani noble with a bright future ahead of him. He was a skilled psionicist and had the very rare teleportation ability. The Spectre, whose

true name was forgotten long ago and now only known to him, became a professional psion and thus began a long and successful career as a gladiator in the Psionic Games. For many years he was the Golden Child, a Hero of the Consulate. During this halcyon time he married a beautiful young wife who bore him a daughter, Zuey, who was his entire world. One day, his wife and daughter were travelling to visit her mother when the orbital Starport where they were changing flights came under the attack of a group of "freedom" fighters, Zhodani proles who were backed by Imperial Foreign Intelligence Service. The terrorists had in their possession a nuclear warhead stolen from a naval base and when Consulate Commandos boarded the station to take it back, they detonated the warhead. On that day, The Spectre swore vengeance against the Imperium and all of Humanti that was not of Zhodane.

When the Consulate once again clashed with the Imperial Fringe during the Third Frontier War, The Spectre (who was not called such then) volunteered and served 4 terms in the Consulate Special Forces. His skills in Stealth and Recon and his success at impossible missions on enemy soil earned him the nickname The Spectre, so dubbed by his enemies. This nickname entered the realm of legend nearly 122 Imperial Standard Years ago, when The Spectre was on a mission to sabotage a naval repair yard at Jae Taellona. He was caught by a contingent of Imperial Marines and Sternmetal Horizons security forces who were stationed there; they chased him down and nearly burned him alive – only his ability to teleport, which he thought had long deserted him, activated by some instinct and saved him. Now he works as a deep cover agent for the Zhodani government, the Zhule Sodality and occasionally, Ine Givar. His face is deeply scarred and hideous and he has become a twisted, hateful shade of his former self; now, he calls himself "The Spectre" in earnest and is never seen outside of his Zhodani Commando battledress, which is specially modified to enhance his psionic abilities. His existence is maintained through the use of powerful anagathics, psionics–enhancing steroids and the Zhodani equivalent of medical opioid derivatives; all of these drugs are powerful euphorics and numbing agents but the issue of addiction is long been moot for him. In addition to the genetically–engineered psi drugs he takes daily, his brain has been pin cushioned with psienhancing implants, not only bringing his psi powers to an unprecedented level for his age but also staving off their inexorable decay as well. He is well–paid for his services, though each day he lives on past his years requires more and more drugs to sustain him.

About 80 years ago, when the Zhule Sodality first gained a permanent foothold on Jae Taellona, he was put into cold sleep until he was needed again. He has only been awakened a handful of times since then but when the Sodality's leaders first received their data chip containing the logtapes of The Rainbow Sun, they knew that this mission would require a special operative.

The Spectre used to live only to see the Marches burn and the Imperials suffer for the death of his wife and daughter but now,

he only wishes to die. The Sodality and therefore, his beloved Consulate, needs him and he is too well–trained to allow his own desire for death to override his duty, however much he might wish for the quietude of death. It is not, however, beyond impossibility for the adventurers to detect this tendency in this otherwise relentless killing–machine and to use that to their advantage. The Spectre makes a powerful foe – the Referee is urged to use his abilities wisely.

Combat Notes: In combat, The Spectre is never concerned about defeating his foes as he is with the success of the mission. He has no wish to kill indiscriminately; in fact, he abides by a strict chivalric code of honour that the ancient Zhodani nobles adhered to before the development of star travel. He is likely to leave his opponents alive if their death has no bearing on the success of this mission. If, on the other hand, he has orders to leave no witnesses or if he deems it critical to the ultimate success of the mission, he is quite capable of killing in a chillingly calculated manner. His nickname is indicative of his tactics; he usually travels alone but for this mission, he is taking no risks and there is a 3 in 6 chance he will have 1d6+1 Zhule operatives (like those described below) with him. His favourite tactic is to teleport in quietly, then use his stun and smoke grenades to create confusion, then teleport to a short distance away while his enemies are distracted. Then, depending on the mission objective, he will use his PGMP–13 to hose down his stunned targets, complete his objective, then perform one last teleport out of the area. If a Strike Squad is with him, he will have them distract Shalini's guardians with cover fire whilst he teleports in behind them to retrieve the girl.

Equipment Carried: Zhodani Battle Dress (TL 13, see **The Traveller Core Rulebook**, p. 88) with Vislight

Chameleon laminate and Multispectral HUD, PGMP– 13 with Intelligent, Xaser, and Gyrostabilization options(see **The Traveller Core Rulebook**, p. 102), Gauss Rifle, Laser Pistol, Stunner, Commdot, 6 grenades (2 frag, 2 stun, 1 smoke), Combat Utility Webbing (see Library Data)

Zhule Sodality Strike Squad

Point Value: 40

Age: 34 (4 terms)

UPP: 9A8987–5

(See NPC Table)

Notes: These are the statistics for the extraction team first encountered by the group in the rail tunnels.

Further, since this is the type of Zhule Sodality operative that is most likely to be encountered by the group during this adventure; these stats may be used as needed for multiple encounters. Although the initial team encountered is armed with laser rifles, the ACR is also a common weapon for these squads. The

Referee is encouraged, if he wishes to tweak these stats as necessary so that there will be more variation in the types of agents encountered. Note that only 1 in 4 of these operatives will have psionic abilities; those that do not may substitute the 2 points spent on the Telepathy ability for anything the Referee wishes – an extra gun combat skill, for example.

Equipment Carried: Laser Rifle–11 or ACR, Blade (bayonet), Gauss Pistol, Tactical Bodysuit (treat as Smart Fabric that functions as full–body Cloth with layer of Reflec and IR Chamelion), Multispectral goggles (Combination IR and Light–Intensifying, see The *Traveller Core Rulebook*, p. 96), TL8 portable Comm, 6 Stun grenades, Combat Utility Webbing (see Library Data)

Chief Engineer Yardin Anois

Point Value: 90

Age: 54 (9 terms)

UPP: 9A8987–5

(See NPC Table)

Notes: Chief Anois (on–WAH)– or, "the Chief," as he is called by his friends and co–workers– is an effervescent, friendly man with a perpetual twinkle in his grey eyes and a smile on his lips. His head is clean–shaven and he sports a bushy, white beard. The Chief is getting on in years and some say he is far older than his apparent age, because time out in the space lanes tends to slow to a crawl but nevertheless his characteristics are slowly but surely declining with age; he is no longer as strong as he used to be, nor as nimble. His impressive array of skills, qualify him for a far better job than that of Chief Engineer aboard the Rainbow Sun; he could easily be a Department Chief aboard a major corporate freighter or passenger liner for Tukera, Oberlindes or any of the Imperial Megacorps or government contractors.

The acquisition of wealth, however, at the expense of freedom, has never held much attraction for the Chief. The Chief speaks with a thick accent, faintly reminiscent of Terran French–Canadian, like all those do who hail from Heya, his homeworld, a farming planet in the Regina subsector. His agricultural upbringing is the reason he immediately took a liking to Shalini and when he saw that there were people out to get her, he was eager to help. His plan was to hide her in the crawlspaces between decks when he was on duty, then spend time with her in his cabin when he was not, since he never had a daughter of his own.

He has given even given her crayons, construction paper and a pair of something like scissors to amuse herself with when he is working. The Chief only wants what is best for the girl and is willing to do whatever is necessary to see that she is protected. He is an old, wary spacehand and bribing, tricking or intimidating him is all but totally impossible; honesty and forthrightness is the only way to impress an old stardog like the Chief.

If the adventurers approach him as a potential ally, however and are candid and convincingly sincere with him, he will reluctantly let them take Shalini, since he has no way of getting her to Vanejen on his own.

Equipment Carried: TL–11 Electronics Toolkit, TL–12 Engineering Pocket Toolkit, Cr40, Utility Blade The Chief keeps a small automatic pistol in his desk in his office.

Commander Klaargh

Point Value: 90

Age: 46 (7 terms)

UPP: 8DBA9B

(See NPC Table)

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing	Psionic Strength
The Spectre	Agent, Army Special Forces	13	12	14	10	10	8	11
Rank: 4 (Special Agent); Marine NCO 5 (Gunnery Sergeant)								
Skills (92 points): Heavy Weapons (Man Portable Artillery)–4 (+8), Gun Combat (Slug Rifle)– 2(+4), Gun Combat (Slug Pistol)–2 (+4) 16 pts.								
Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)–2 (+4) Flyer (Grav)–2(+4), Recon–3 (+6) 30 pts., Stealth–4 (+8), Leadership–1 (+2) 40 pts., Athletics (Endurance)–								
2 (+4), Athletics (Coordination)–2 (+4), 48pts. Athletics (Strength)–1 (+2), Melee (Blade)–3 (+6), Melee (Unarmed)–2 (+4), Comms–0 (+1),								
Medic–0 (+1), Persuade–2 (+4), 66 pts. Deception–2 (+4), Computers–2 (+4), Investigate–3 (+6), Streetwise–2 (+4), Battle Dress 4 (+8)								
Psionic Abilities (20 points): Awareness–2 (+4), Clairvoyance–4 (+8), Teleportation–4 (+8)								

Notes: Commander Klaargh has clawed, bit and fought his way to the top every bloody, vicious step of the way; such is the way of life for a Corsair and he does not regret it for a Trexalonian second. He has been serving on Corsairs since he was born. His broodmother was a Captain and out of her entire litter, she knew he would be special and she told him so. He did not inherit her ship; when she became old and weak and too long in the teeth to bear any more young, she met The Challenge bravely, jaws first. Her first officer called her out and told her she smelled old and of weakness; as is tradition, she could have stepped down from her command and lived, but in shame. That is not life. So she died by the point of her own first officer's (who was Klaargh's father, some say, though he was not even half her age) knifepoint and Klaargh watched as his teeth ripped the warm flesh of throat and blood spewed forth from her punctured jugular. Klaargh prayed to the Allmother that he might be strong enough to be granted such a worthy death as she. Klaargh, since he was on the losing side, was given the chance to join the winners. In honour of his mother, he did not accept, even as all who had stood with him gratefully embraced the quarter that was proffered and changed sides. Klaargh was stubborn and as to be expected, he was abandoned on an asteroid with nothing but his wits, a Vacc Suit and six hours of air.

He was fortunate, under the Code they could have chosen to kill him outright. Klaargh wandered found an old, long–abandoned mining installation and enough air for several weeks. He managed to repair the anicent comm system and call for help. Eventually, he was rescued by a human crew and spent three years aboard their ship, learning their soft, weak ways. Eventually, he returned to a Vargr world near the border of the Imperium and the Extents and worked his way into the crew of a Corsair ship as a lowly Comms officer – the same posting he had aboard his original vessel. Klaargh was patient, chose the right mate and the right companions this time and planned his coup very carefully. Eventually, he took the second officer's place when he met with an unfortunate accident during an EVA repair mission – not an entirely lawful method of ascension but an effective one. He took on his predecessor's role fully, quickly becoming a proficient starship pilot. Eventually, the first mate experienced an accident as well, one with a defective Vacc Suit and Klaargh rose in his stead.

When it came time to challenge his captain, he did so by lawful combat. Klaargh prefers to use his laser pistol in combat if he can, though if there is a boarding action he will use his Gauss Rifle until he is out of clips, then toss it aside and draw his Laser Pistol. Both weapons are ancient, almost antiques, both fashioned in the same ornate, unusual style. The most noticeable feature is the rococo spiked fin that decorates the cooling vent along each weapon's dorsal length. The entire effect, along with his double–bladed dagger and spiked armour, which hand–painted with blood–red Vagr runes and death–lord symbols is fearsome and vicious–looking, and is

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
Chief Engineer	Merchant (5 Terms)	6 (+1)	9 (+5)	7 (+2)=8	10 (+6)	11 (+8)	8 (+3)=17
Yardin Anois	Imperial Navy (3 Terms)						
Rank (20 points): Merchant 4 (2nd Mate); Navy NCO 6 (Master Chief)							
Skills (45 points) : Engineer (J–Drive)–3 (+6); Engineer (M–Drive)–3 (+6); Engineer (Power)–2 (+4); Engineer 16 (Electronics)–1 (+2); Engineer (Life Support)–2 (+4); Gun Combat (Slug Pistol)–3 (+6); Pilot (Small Craft)– 2 (+4); Vacc Suit–1 (+2); Computers–4 (+8); Zero G–1 (+2) Admin–0 (+1)							

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing	Psionic Strength
Zhule Society	Agent (3 Terms),	8	10	8/12	9/5	7/2	5/7	5/0
Strike Squad	Army (1 Term)							
Rank (1 point): Agent 1								
Skills (18 Points): Gun Combat (Slug or Energy Rifle)–2 (+4); Gun Combat (Slug Pistol)–1 (+2); Stealth–1 (+2); Recon–1 (+2); Melee (Blade)–1								
(+2); Deception–1 (+2); Athletics (Endurance)–1 (+2); Athletics (Coordination)–1 (+2)								
Psionic Abilities (2 points): Telepathy–1								

enough to frighten many would–be challengers and victims into submission. Klaargh is strong for his race but his real strength in battle is his speed; the ability to strike first and aim true has won him a great many battles.

Equipment: TL 12 Ornately Decorated Combat Armor,

Gauss Pistol, Gauss Rifle, Double–Bladed Combat

Dagger (does 1d6+4 instead of 1d6+2), TL8 Personal

Communicator

Pack Leader Ghzyrkha
Point Value: 60

Age: 34 (4 terms)

UPP: 8DBA9B

(See NPC Table)

Notes: Lady Ghzyrkha has been Klaargh's mate for 20 years and his first officer for 10. Her loyalty and love for her Chosen is deep but she is a Vargr, after all and she worries that she has caught the scent of indecision a few times recently. She is young and has felt a few times that Klaargh's days may be numbered, though she is far from decided on this. Just in case, however, Lady Ghzyrkha has her eye on a junior officer, who she intends to sponsor and assist as she did Klaargh – she was the one, after all, who took care of the First Officer's Vacc Suit. Ghzyrkha prefers to be the "power behind the throne," so to speak, rather than to be the one to directly challenge Leaders who have grown soft. After all, the penalties for miscalculation are far less permanent that way. The arrival of the adventurers into the volatile situation on board the ship may serve as a catalyst for a decision – whether to make her move now or wait a few more moon–cycles until Klaargh has grown so soft that everyone can see it. The only problem with the second choice is that, if she waits too late, someone else who she has not got her claws into may decide to act first, leaving her in the unenviable position of having a new Captain in power over which she has no influence. Perhaps one of the humans that Klaargh has foolishly taken aboard and chosen to aid out of some misguided sense of male loyalty could be made suitable to the task at hand…

Equipment: Vargr Tactical Bodysuit (TL 10 Cloth with reflective weave) or TL–11 Combat Armour; Shotgun, Blade, Personal Comm

Vargr Corsair Pack Member
Point Value: 35

Age: 30 (3 terms)

UPP: 597877

(See NPC Table)

Notes: These are generic statistics for the Referee to use for members of Klaargh's crew as needed. These are general guidelines only; the Referee should feel free to adjust this basic template as needed to reflect individuality among the crew members. The crew is fiercely loyal to Klaargh for the moment and will gleefully die at his command, although that could change in a second. Equipment: Vargr Tactical Cloth Bodysuit (TL 10 Cloth armor), Accelerator Rifle or Laser Rifle, Gauss Pistol or Medkit, Blade, Personal Comm

Library Data
Anathium: An exceedingly rare, valuable, iridescent metal ore with a low degree of radioactivity that is highly valued for its ability to achieve superconductivity over a broad range of temperatures. Its free electron pairs can therefore be easily stimulated into a superconductive state without the use of a liquid supercoolant or extreme heat, the primary obstacle to the widespread implementation of superconductor applications from their discovery at TL 6 and prior to the discovery of the gravitic wavefunction that leads to the development of contragrav at TL 9. Anathium is extremely valuable due to its versatility; it has recently come into very high demand due to a recent initiative in by the Minister of the Interior in the Domain of Deneb to assist in the development of planets of TL 5–8, through the construction of largescale public transportation systems.

Anathium makes large maglevs, hoverrails and monorails at TLs 5–7, previously inconceivable on such worlds, feasible and maintainable with the materials and techniques at those TLs. Before that, however, Anathium was and still is, primarily used in the construction of high–quality and precision contragrav modules. While other metals can, in theory, be made to work almost as well, they do so only after a gruelling, painstakingly fastidious process of refinement and materials synthesis. The process is prohibitively expensive at TLs lower than 12 and the final result almost never performs to expectation. The resulting schism in demand has strained labour relations on Jae Taellona

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
Commander Klaargh	Corsair (7 Terms)	8/3	13/12	11/8 = 23	10/6	9/5	11/8 = 19
Rank (12 points): Captain 6							

Skills (36 Points): Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)–3 (+6); Leadership–3 (+6); Comms–2 (+4); Gun Combat (Slug Rifle)– 2 (+4); Melee Combat

(Natural Weapons)–2 (+4); Melee Combat (Blade)–1 (+2); Tactics (Naval)–4 (+8); Pilot (Spacecraft)–1 (+2)

and has all but led to an all–out trade war between Oberlindes Lines and Sternmetal Horizons.

Other applications of a more experimental nature are reportedly being investigated as well. By far, the largest exporter of Anathium in the Domain of Deneb is Jae Taellona in the Rhylanor subsector, with Macene and Glisten being distant seconds. Combat Utility Webbing: A combination shoulder harness/utility belt that uses TL 12 materials technology to firmly secure items, similar to the Velcro cloth of earlier TLs but far more advanced, allows the wearer to comfortably carry and quickly access up to four weapons – two sidearms and two rifles. There is also room for 4 smaller items, such as a melee weapon and extra clips or ammo packs. The CUW also holds up to 6 grenades or items of similar size. 0.5 kg, Cr900. Dh'oughz Khfae: Literally translated as "The Duellists' Honour," Dh'oughz Khfae is an ancient invention of Vargr WarPacks, an unwritten code of behaviour dating back at least as far as their known pre–contact history. Dh'oughz Khfae is generally frowned upon by modern Vargr mainstream society, since they have tried to suppress some of the more barbaric practices that date back to their pre–history as pack animals in order to make themselves more palatable to interstellar society as a whole. The code is practiced unapologetically among the corsairs as well as Vargr isolationists; however, as are many of the other unwritten laws of pack social structure. Dh'oughz Khfae governs the many situations under which a Vargr may challenge his alpha, as well as the appropriate codes of behaviour during a duel among equals and inferiors.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of subtleties and nuances that govern Dh'oughz Khfae, from the stance chosen by the challenger, to the choice of weapons and how they are grasped, to the expression on one's face and the exact pitch range of one's bark of victory, most of which are beyond a human's capacity to comprehend. Fortunately, however, those humans who have been unlucky enough to find themselves challenged have reported that the Vargr do not expect the "ignorant monkeys" to fully grasp the depths of Dh'oughz Khfae. In general, a human who has been lawfully challenged under Dh'oughz Khfae is expected to conduct himself honourably, to use only honourable insults to taunt his opponent. In an "acceptable" insult, for example, the opponent's mate and pack members are fair game but insults directed at the opponent's mother are not, since Vargr are born in litters and the challenged may be unwittingly insulting half the spectators as well. Interestingly enough, insults to the opponent's father are reportedly met with puzzlement, since a Vargr invariably has no idea who his father is, nor does he care – family consists of siblings and mother, as far as he is concerned – it is considered a social faux pas for a Vargr to show interest in his litter. In general, it is reported that if the challenged sticks to a Gentleman's code of conduct similar to that practiced by Terrans in their second millennium AD (ca –3500 to –2500 Imperial) then that will, for the most part, be satisfactory to the Vargr.

dX: A microscopic tablet–style data storage medium for recording and storing datastreams of enormous magnitude and of extremely high frequencies. The mostcommon use for dX is the storage of super–high THz X–boat network feeds. Each tablet can store hundreds to thousands of terabytes of data, so it is widely used to transport datastreams, for media applications and for physical backup and storage of planetary X–boat feeds.

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
Pack Leader	Corsair (4 Terms)	7/2	10/6	9/5 = 13	11/8	7/2	8/3 = 13
Ghzyrkha							
Rank (10 points): Corsair 5 (Leader)							
Skills (24 Points): Astrogation–3 (+6); Leadership–2 (+6); Sensors–2 (+4); Gun Combat (Slug Rifle)– 2 (+4); Melee Combat (Natural							
Weapons)–1 (+2); Melee Combat (Blade)–1 (+2);							

Character	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
Vargr Corsair Pack	Corsair (3 Terms)	5/0	9/5	7/2=7	8/3	7/2	7/2=7
Member							
Skills (17 Points): Gun Combat (Slug or Energy Rifle)–2 (+4); Astrogation, Comms, or Sensors–2 (+4); Melee Combat (Natural Weapons)–2							
(+4); Engineering (any)–2 (+4) or Medic–2; Carousing–0 (+1)							

It is important to note that dX tablets vary wildly in their capacities and write speeds, because they are "grown," not manufactured, by a nanomolecular process that closely resembles a living organism. The dX tablet possesses a remarkable faculty to hard–write high–capacity data configurations at astoundingly high frequencies that would normally require a mainframe to process, such as dedicated encryption subroutines and cipher patterns. This makes it the most secure data storage medium in existence and the medium of choice for intelligence–gathering and investigative operatives both in and out of the field.

Unfortunately, its size as well as its compatibility with a standard Wafer Jack (adapter required, TL 14, Wt. neg. Cr500) make it a prime candidate for illegal data trafficking as well as a host of other illegitimate uses. dX is forbidden to civilians on many worlds, since it has a notorious reputation as the only storage medium capable of retaining and processing the notorious Endorphin–Cascade Induction Stimsim programs.

ECIS: Acronym for Endorphin Cascade Induction Stimsim; a powerfully addictive virtual reality simulation that can only be accessed with a Wafer Jack neural shunt. The "wafer" (generally a dX tablet) is sold to the user, who places it in a preinstalled Wafer Jack interface with a dX adapter (see above), who then experiences the reality simulation (called a "stimsim") digitally encoded on the tablet. This "stimsim" is different from normal programs of its type in that it uses direct electrical impulses to stimulate neural centres in the cerebral cortex for the express purpose of initiating an endorphin "cascade," which begins with an overwhelming discharge of endorphins from the hypothalamus. Other electrical impulses stimulate natural neurochemicals into a by a slow, self–sustaining exothermic reaction in the neural matrix. This reaction effectively causes a sort of feedback loop that can reportedly hyperstimulates the endocrine system, keeping the cascade of endorphins passing through the receptors and the brain's natural reuptake mechanism for up to 22 hours.

The ecstasy reportedly experienced by users is without parallel. Of course, this process is extremely dangerous, as it can utterly deplete the user's entire supply of natural pain blockers, leaving him vulnerable and overly sensitive to any external stimuli. There have been reports of users, many of who were first–time users, whose endocrine systems are damaged by the hyperstimulation and are rendered utterly incapable of replenishing the natural endorphin supply. Those who are so afflicted generally succumb to suicide but the few who were unfortunate enough to live on – or too physically weak even to take their own lives – are stricken irrevocably insane. Their minds continuously process what would normally be a trivial discomfort as searing, unbearable agony. Finally, death is not an uncommon side effect of "Skading" though it does not happen as often as one might expect.

Still, when it does happen, it is often due to sloppy, amateurish software coding or black–market dX chips of shoddy cultivation or materials. In either case, the result is generally the same: the electrical impulses are directed to the wrong neural cluster, yet they still retain their characteristic micro–surgical precision, resulting in wildly unpredictable brain–to–body command signals.

These signals can be as catastrophic as the selective failure of a CNS–regulated organ function – such as breathing or heart regulation – or even total system failure or they can be as innocuous as false sensation of itching in a random body part or a feeling of irresistible drowsiness. There is no known way to determine if a given tablet or software is defective.

Despite the well–publicised risks and its legendary unpredictability, "Skading" continues to be an enormously popular pastime with young, rebellious types. Experts and medical researchers remain befuddled by the relative rarity of devastating catastrophic incidents when compared to the sheer volume of ECIS abusers. In the Spinward Marches sector, Jae Taellona is the only world that does not prohibit the sale or production of ECIS software and paraphernalia, except in situations where it has been discovered that a minor is involved.

Viasuit: This suit, designed specifically by Sternmetal Horizons, LIC for use in its mining facilities on Jae Taellona, is especially designed to improve the survival rate in underground mining accidents. It has also proven to be useful to those stranded or otherwise forced to make long treks across the arid Jae Taellonan. Its primary purpose is to keep the wearer alive in the event of a cavein, which used to happen quite frequently. More often, however, it is used in the desert and few on Jae Taellona dare enter the desert, even in a sealed vehicle, unless they are wearing one. In reality, the Viasuit can be used to survive for an extended period of time in nearly any hostile environment save hard vacuum.

The advantage of the Viasuit is that it can run for an extended period of time before it requires recharging and that it is not hampered by a limited air supply. Though it is lightly armoured to prevent damage to the wearer from falling rocks and debris (treat as Cloth), it is certainly not intended to be used in place of armour in a combat situation. The Viasuit is equipped with four TL–11 CO_2 scrubbers that actually continue to convert CO_2 back into oxygen, using from several thin layers of cations on the surface of the filter and water molecules taken from the body's secretions. The cation layers are eventually depleted in this process and scrubber filters need to be exchanged once every 139 hours – the CO_2 scrubbers have a window that slowly turns from green to red as they get closer to needing replacement. The suit also draws moisture from the body and the ambient air and filters and recycles it for use to keep the wearer alive in the event there is no water source to be found.

In general, a wearer should be able to survive for up to two weeks when wearing a Viasuit, as long as there is a trace or more of oxygen to breathe. The suit maintains power through organic cells that recharge themselves when exposed to body heat, sunlight and nearly any natural heat source imaginable.

The suit does have its limitations, however, as it must undergo a full maintenance cycle once a month – during which time it cannot be worn – and its power cells must be connected to a major power source, such as a starship power grid, or an industrial power outlet and be exposed to a current for 12 hours once every two weeks. This repolarises and realigns the cathode–anode configuration; otherwise the batteries will begin to fail within one to six days of missing the two week maintenance date as polarity fades and they can no longer hold a charge. Despite these limitations, however, the Viasuit is a prized survival gear and technically illegal to buy or own if the possessor is not an employee of Sternmetal Horizons, LIC. This inconsistently–enforced restriction only serves to make the suits more expensive – not less available. 5 Kg., Cr5500.

Antisedition and Fidelity Act of 908: Generally considered to be the most draconian, restrictive piece of legislation in the history of the Third Imperium, the Act is generally thought to have begun in 907 when the Archduke of Deneb travelled to Capital to attend a special emergency session of the Moot of High Lords. Records from many Moot meetings (including this one) of the time are vague at best but it is thought that during the meeting, the Archduke successfully managed to whip the embers of fear into open flame by exacerbating dual concerns over the Scylla and Charybdis of the increasingly hostile Solomani Autonomous District coreward and the militant build–up of Consulate forces along the Fringe rimward. In response to the Archduke's intimations that the enemy was infiltrating Imperial culture on both fronts, the Moot passed the Antisedition and Fidelity Act of 908. The Act criminalized many things which could not be enforced, often to what many felt were ridiculous lengths. Speaking out against the war – either one – was forbidden, as well as criminalising the possession of reading materials which the Archduke's appointed "Council of Treasonous Activities" deemed as "seditious" or "pro–Zhodane." This act managed to stifle the exchange of popular music, theatre and art by the worlds of the Fringe, which, up until then, had flowed freely. Suspicion and mistrust began to fester in the border worlds, as those of Zhodani descent were jailed for no other reason than their heritage.

To the relief of many, the Act was repealed in 986 almost simultaneously with the signing of the Armistice, in the wake of a quarter century or more of an almost unilateral failure to consistently enforce the terms of the legislation. Although most scholars today consider the Act an unequivocal blunder, it has left a legacy that persists to this day. No longer do Imperial and Consulate citizens mix or exchange culture, trade routes that once bound the worlds of the Fringe to each other now lay silent and untraversed; tourists and visitors from the Consulate are closely watched on Imperial soil and vice versa. Suspicion and paranoia run unchecked, as the citizenry know nothing about their neighbours. The TAS has considered issuing an Amber Zone advisory for the entire District 268 and Chronor subsectors but thus far, this has only been a suggestion. Thiti Nut: A nut that is raised on trees that have so far only been grown successfully on Belizo. The nut is considered to be a delicacy only affordable by the most affluent; it sells for Cr5000 an ounce.

Tukera Lines has a contract with the planetary government giving them a monopoly on the shipping of the Thiti Nut. By the time the company and the planetary government take their share of the profits, only a few credits manage to trickle down to the relatively poor farmers of Belizo. Xnet: An informal, rather loose association of regular topics discussed by Scouts, members of the Imperial Postal Administration, computer and communications enthusiasts which are grouped into literally billions of different "headers," based on topic. Each header can be thought of as a sort of chain letter, which gathers comments and branches out into other headers as the mail packet proceeds to each subsequent destination. This practice can trace its roots to the "Usenet" communication network that still exists on Terra, as well as Usenet's lesser imitators on other worlds, as well as the ultimate evolution of the peer–to–peer commentary network, better–known great FlameNet that exists within the planetary datasphere on Core. Zhule Sodality Name derived from an obscure Zhodani dialect taken by or given collectively to a resistance movement that exists in localized pockets in various subsectors of the Domain of Deneb. The movement is generally believed to have originated on Jae Taellona about 80 years before the Third Frontier War as a labour equality movement, which was crushed by Sternmetal Horizons when the Antisedition and Fidelity Act came into effect. It is thought that a core group of highly–trained, deep cover Zhodani agents managed to assimilate the desperate remnants of the movement.

Over the course of the Third Frontier War, this core group managed to grow into a full blown resistance movement by managing multiple small cells of true believers who were always ready to sacrifice themselves for the cause of Jae Taellonan independence and the workers' freedom from corporate greed and Imperial oppression. The terrorists were responsible for the deaths of thousands and countless delays and supply line disruptions that might have cost the Imperium the war, had their leader not been hunted down and destroyed by a small, poorly–armed group of intrepid marines and security personnel trapped and killed their leader while he was attempting to sabotage the Naval repair yard in 984. The last of the Sodality was thought to have been arrested in 991 and he died in prison in 1022. There have been rumours of time to time of a resurfacing of the Sodality but although a new, rejuvenated labour movement seems to be in progress on Jae Taellona at the time of this entry, so far authorities have met such rumours with little more than cynical amusement.

The REPTII Assault Triax

By Bryan Steele with assistance from Nick Robinson

New ships from a rapacious alien race that has recently appeared in the space lanes of civilised worlds.

The *Traveller* universe is a huge place with galaxies upon galaxies that contain countless stars, many of which contain habitable worlds that have produced alien life over the eons. Some of these life forms evolved into sentience, becoming civilised and eventually even reaching for the stars. One of these races – the Reptii – invented their own spacecraft and took to the space lanes in order to do what they have always done best – prey on the weak and make meals of them.

Reptii Deathclaw–class Assault Ship

The Reptii are a physically powerful species that specialise in close combat and ship–to–ship assaults The 'Deathclaw' is a troop delivery vessel that is sent out after the missile banks of the Reptii larger ships have crippled their enemies. The Deathclaw is piloted up against the other ship, magnetic harpoons are launched and a breaching team of armoured Reptii warriors are sent across to deal with survivors and to take the spoils and remains.

Deathclaw Assault Ship			Tons	Price (Cr.)
Hull	100 Tons	Hull 2		3,200,000
	Streamlined	Structure 2		
	Self–Sealing			
Armour	Titanium Steel	2 Points	5	100,000
Jump Drive A		Jump 2	10	10,000,000
Manoeuvre Drive B		Thrust 4	3	8,000,000
Power Plant B			7	16,000,000
Bridge			10	500,000
Computer	Model 1/bis/fib	Rating 5 (10 for Jump Control)		60,000
Electronics	Military Sensors		2	1,000,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Double Turret (Magnetic Harpoons)	1	500,000
Fuel	28 tons	One Jump–2 and four weeks of operation	28	
Cargo	9 tons		9	2,000,000
4 Staterooms	4 Staterooms		16	
Extras	Assault Barracks		4	400,000
	10 Low Passage Berths		5	500,000
	Fuel Scoop			—
	Ship's Locker			—
Software	Jump Control/2			1,200,000
	Manoeuvre/0			
	Evade/1			
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				3,622
Life Support Cost (monthly				13,000
Total Tonnage and Cost			100	43, 460,000

NEW WEAPON – MAGNETIC HARPOON

Only usable at short range, the magnetic harpoon is used to pull a targeted ship closer so that a seal can be made and assault troops sent across in a boarding action. Any ship successfully hitting its target with magnetic harpoons before boarding will receive a +4 DM bonus to the roll used to initiate the boarding action itself.

Weapon Type	TL	Range	Damage	Cost (MCr.)
Magnetic Harpoons	7	Short	D6	0.1

1. BRIDGE
2. SHIP'S LOCKER
3. ASSAULT BARRACKS
4. FRESHER
5. COMMON AREA
6. ENGINEERING
7. CARGO BAY
8. LOW BERTHS

DORSAL TURRET ACCESS

DORSAL TURRET

AIR LOCK

POWER PLANT

FUEL

FUEL

JUMP DRIVE

MANOEUVER DRIVE
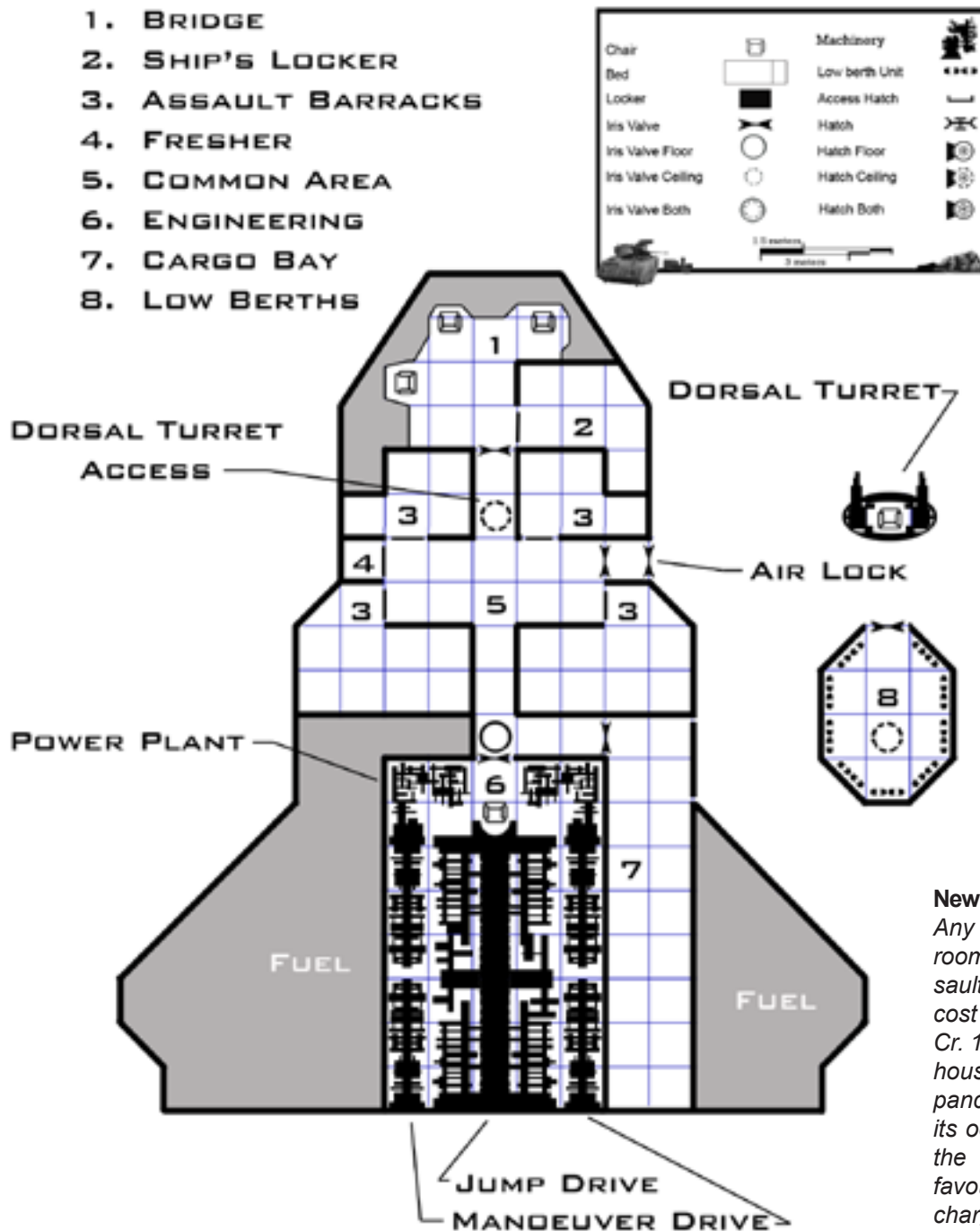
New Extra – Assault Barracks
Any ship equipped with staterooms can turn them into Assault Baracks at the additional cost of one ton of volume and Cr. 100,000. An assault barracks houses double the normal occupancy and the personal gear of its occupants but removes all of the commonplace amenities in favour of a weapon rack, cell recharging station and workbench.

Reptii Voracious–class Gunship

The primary vessel of the predatory fleets of the Reptii, the Voracious gunships are vessels layered with thick armour and bristling with gun turrets. They are designed to serve as the primary offensive force in a Reptii attack, hurling missiles and laser strikes at enemy vessels to incapacitate them so a swarm of Deathclaws can swoop in and finish them off. The ample cargo space of a Voracious is used to hold salvaged and stolen loot and bodies from Deathclaw assault teams, however they are also sometimes used to house living cargo as well.

Reptii Voracious–class Gunship			Tons	Price (Cr.)
Hull	500 tons Standard Self–Sealing	Hull 10 Structure 10		37,000,000
Armour	Titanium Steel	6 points	75	9,600,000
Jump Drive E		Jump 2	30	50,000,000
Manoeuvre Drive C		Thrust 1	5	12,000,000
Power Plant E			16	40,000,000
Bridge			20	2,500,000
Computer	Model 2/fib	Rating 10		240,000
Electronics	Military Sensors	+0 DM	2	1,000,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1 Hardpoint #2 Hardpoint #3 Hardpoint #4 Hardpoint #5	Double Turret (Twin Pulse Laser –7) Double Turret (Twin Pulse Laser –7) Double Turret (Twin Beam Laser – 7) Double Turret (Twin Missile Rack) Double Turret (Twin Missile Rack)	5	10,500,000
Fuel	140 tons	Jump–1 and eight weeks of operation	140	
Cargo	82 tons		82	
10 Staterooms			40	5,000,000
Extras	30 Low Passage Berths Ship's Locker 2 Repair Drones Escape Pods Cutter		15 — 10 10 50	1,500,000 — 400,000 1,000,000 28,000,000
Software	Auto–Repair/1 Fire Control/2 Jump Control/2 Library Manoeuvre/0			9,200,000
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				17,328
Life Support Cost (monthly				23,000
Total Tonnage and Cost			500	200,740,000

Chair
Bed
Locker
Iris Valve
Iris Valve Floor
Iris Valve Ceiling
Iris Valve Both

Machinery
Low berth Unit
Access Hatch
Hatch
Hatch Floor
Hatch Ceiling
Hatch Both

1.5 meters
2 meters

AIR LOCK

TURRET 2

TURRET 1

TURRET 4

TURRET 3

1. BRIDGE (PIT)
1A. BRIDGE (CNC)
2. SHIP'S LOCKER
3. CARGO HOLD
4. LOW BERTHS
5. REPAIR DRONE BAY
6. CREW COMMON AREA
7. CREW STATEROOM
8. ENGINEERING

TURRET 5

FUEL

FUEL

POWER
PLANT

CARGO
BAY

DRIVES

JUMP DRIVE

MANOEUVER DRIVE

50 TON
REPTII CUTTER

Reptii Horde–class Command Ship

Only three in existence, the Horde Command Ships are the largest ships in the Reptii fleets and represent a mobile space headquarters that slowly roars across the galaxy in search of ripe worlds and small fleets to descend upon and devour – both figuratively and literally. The banks of weapons built into a Horde protect it from minor threats and the normal escort of several Voracious Gunships and a veritable swarm of Dreadclaws make nearly anything a potential target for their predation.

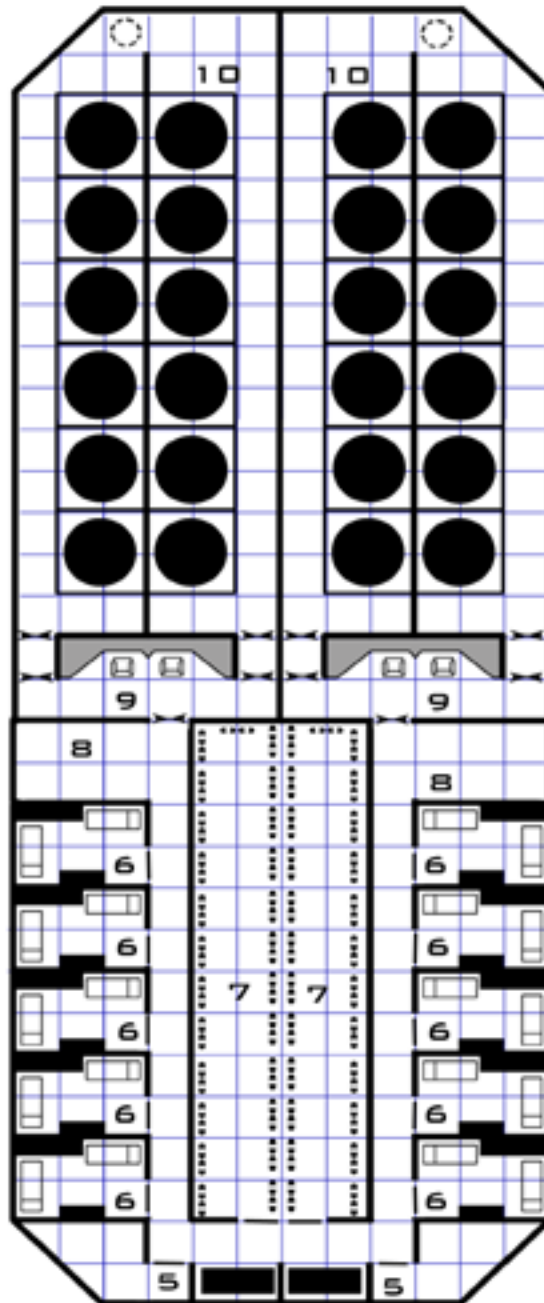| Reptii Horde–class Command Ship			Tons	Price (Cr.)
Hull	1,200 tons Distributed Self–Sealing	Hull 12 Structure 12		120,000,000
Armour	Titanium Steel	10 points	300	30,000,000
Jump Drive J		Jump 2	50	90,000,000
Manoeuvre Drive J		Thrust 2	17	36,000,000
Power Plant K			31	80,000,000
Bridge			40	6,000,000
Computer	Model 2/bis/fib	Rating 10 (15 for Jump Control)		320,000
Electronics	Military Sensors	+0 DM	2	1,000,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Triple Turret (Three Beam Lasers – 7)	1	4,000,000
	Hardpoint #2	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	2,500,000
	Hardpoint #3	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	2,500,000
	Hardpoint #4	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	2,500,000
	Hardpoint #5	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	2,500,000
	Hardpoint #6	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	2,500,000
	Hardpoint #7	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	450,000
	Hardpoint #8	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	450,000
	Hardpoint #9	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	450,000
	Hardpoint #10	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	1	450,000
	Hardpoint #11	Double Turret (Twin Beam Lasers – 7)	51	12,000,000
	Hardpoint #12	Single Turret (Sandcaster) Single Turret (Sandcaster) Single Turret (Sandcaster) Single Turret (Sandcaster) Weapon Bay (Missile Bank) Weapon Bay (Missile Bank)	51	12,000,000
Fuel	340 tons	Jump–2 and ten weeks of operation	340	
Cargo	125 tons		125	
10 Staterooms	Double Occupancy		40	5,000,000
Extras	50 Low Passage Berths		25	2,500,000
	Ship's Locker		—	—
	Probe Drones		1	100,000
	2 Repair Drones		12	400,000
	Escape Pods		10	1,000,000
	Shuttle		95	33,000,000
Software	Auto–Repair/2 Fire Control/2 Intellect Jump Control/2 Library Manoeuvre/0			15,200,000
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				38,568
Life Support Cost (monthly				
Total Tonnage and Cost			1,200	462,820,000

Legend

Chair		Machinery	
Bed		Low berth Unit	
Locker		Access Hatch	
Iris Valve		Hatch	
Iris Valve Floor		Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Ceiling		Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Both		Hatch Both	

1.5 meters
3 meters
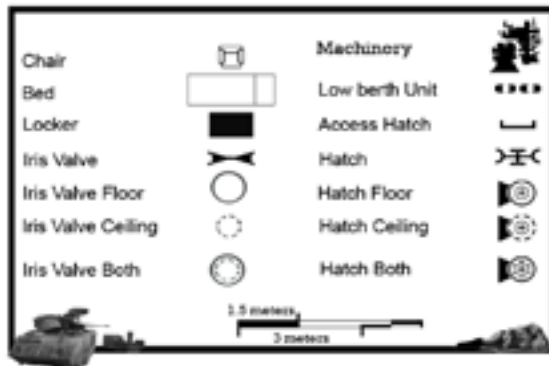
1. AVIONICS
2. BRIDGE
2A. TACTICAL OPS
2B. FIRE CONTROL
3. SHIP'S LOCKER
4. UPPER CARGO BAY
5. FRESHER
6. CREW STATEROOM
7. LOW BERTHS
8. COMMON AREA/ MESS
9. MISSILE BAY FIRE CONTROL
10. MISSILE BAY
11. REPAIR DRONE BAY
12. PROBE BAY

PROBE AND GUN DECK

CREW/ MISSILE DECK
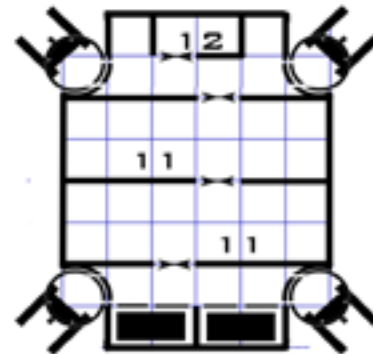
COMMAND DECK

ESCAPE PODS

Chair		Machinery	
Bed		Low berth Unit	
Locker		Access Hatch	
Iris Valve		Hatch	
Iris Valve Floor		Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Ceiling		Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Both		Hatch Both	

1.5 meters

5 meters

FUEL DECK

FUEL

FUEL

FUEL

ENGINEERING DECK

FUEL

POWER PLANT

JUMP DRIVE

MANOEUVER DRIVE

Chair		Machinery	
Bed		Low berth Unit	
Locker		Access Hatch	
Iris Valve		Hatch	
Iris Valve Floor		Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Ceiling		Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Both		Hatch Both	

1.5 meters
3 meters

SHUTTLE BERTH

MAIN CARGO BAY

CENTRAL LIFTS

CARGO/ SHUTTLE DECK

WEAPONS DECK
BEAM LASER TURRETS

LOWER CARGO BAY

SAND CASTER TURRETS

REPTII 95 TON SHUTTLE

AIR LOCK

CARGO BAY

FUEL

DRIVES

Fair Game

By Carl Walmsley

An adventure that sees the players trying to track down a missing shipment on a remote world filled with natural dangers.

The myriad worlds of known and unknown space are full of opportunities for explorers and entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, humanity's technological progress has not always been matched by advancements in ethics and morality. Some of those who trade in the far reaches of known space are little more than pirates and smugglers. Delivering contraband or acquiring illegal materials is the lifeblood of their trade.

Amongst the darkest of all such operations is the capture and sale of slaves – both human and alien. In the time of the Third Imperium, the slave trade is not dead: it has simply moved to the stars.

Adventure Background

Matthew Rexel is a wealthy businessman, based on the planet *Hashanah*. Officially, he runs an organisation that surveys and maps remote mineral deposits for large mining corporations. These operations are just a front, however: Rexel's real interest is in the capture and sale of exotic species.

Many worlds have restrictions on the sale or captivity of alien creatures. Wilfully imprisoning sentient beings – human or alien – is outlawed in just about every known settlement. Despite this – or perhaps because of it – there is a huge market for Rexel's wares. Illegal Fighting rings make use of ferocious alien beasts – and what better subjects to pit them against than humans or sentient aliens?
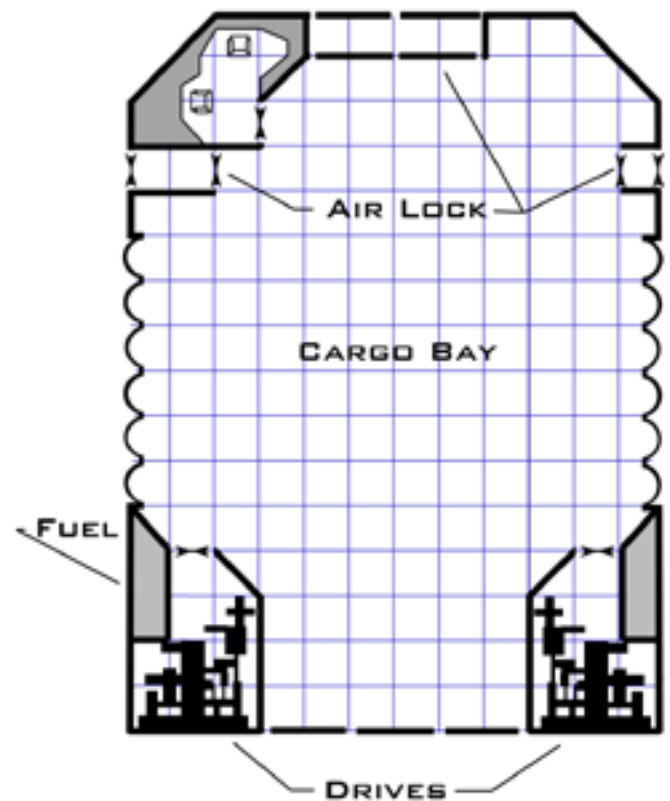
Wealthy nobles like nothing more than to populate their grounds with exotic species in order to display their wealth – regardless of how it might impact on the indigenous wildlife.

There are even private zoos that obsessive collectors fill with oddities from across the stars. Rexel's skills and merchandise are in constant demand. Four weeks ago to the day, Rexel dispatched a ship – the *Brook* – to a remote world called *Sinai*. The crew, lead by Captain Jensen Cole, was charged with acquiring a list of indigenous plants and animals and returning with them to *Hashanah.* They are now one week overdue.

Rexel suspects that the mission has run into difficulties – and he is correct. However, the difficulties are not anything that he could have anticipated. Assigned to the crew is a xeno–biologist named Kate Anderson. It is the first time that she has worked for Rexel and she believed, rather naively, that the mission was a legitimate attempt to gather research samples.

The day before the crew was set to leave, Anderson realised that one of the plants that they had gathered was a sentient life form. She relayed this information to Captain Cole but was appalled when he seemed not to care. As far as Anderson is concerned, this fundamentally changed the nature of the mission: the crew are no longer smugglers, they are slavers. The following day, as the ship lifted into orbit, Anderson sabotaged key systems on board the ship – forcing it to return to the planet. It was a bumpy landing, further damaging the *Brook* and weakening some of the cages used to hold the captured animals.

Cole was furious but before he could deal with Anderson she jumped ship and escaped into the jungle. To make matters worse, several of the caged beasts escaped, killing a member of the crew. Stranger still, Cole's head of security – a man he has worked with for six years – released the sentient plant and fled with it into the jungle.

Cole and his remaining crew are now trapped on the planet. They are attempting to recapture the escaped beasts, to track down Anderson – who has stolen some key components from the Jump drive – and to locate the missing head of security, Zolo Renick.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are hired by Rexel to track down his missing shipment of alien plants and animals. Whilst the exact nature of the animals is not revealed, they are told that some of them are dangerous.

Upon arrival on *Sinai,* they will need to work out whom they can trust and why there has been such friction between the crew.

Captain Cole is determined to gather up every lost animal and complete his mission. Stalking some of the escaped beasts

through their natural habitat is not easy. The PCs will find that Anderson, the xeno–biologist, is hidden in the forest: she will try to contact them and enlist their aid.

Chief Renick is being psionically dominated by the *Bohfa* plant. His senses have been altered so that he perceives the plant as an injured comrade. He will do all that he can to protect it, driving away any intruders with whatever force is necessary.

One way or another, the PCs will need to help gather up some, if not all, of the missing creatures and help repair the *Brook* if they are to complete their mission and earn the payment promised to them by Rexel.

CHAPTER ONE

Characters who ply their trade either as explorers, mercenaries or traders can be introduced to this adventure quite easily. The PCs will need to have access to a Jump capable ship. One of Rexel's employees will get word to them – either in person or electronically – that Mr Rexel would like to meet with them and discuss a business opportunity. In order to legitimise this meeting, it will take place in the offices of RexelTech.

This building is located in *Kynan,* an industrial city on *Hashanah.* Kynan has a Class B starport and despite its rather built–up and hectic environment, is home to any number of prosperous organisations.

Mr Rexel is a charismatic host of mixed Asian and Caucasian heritage.

He will treat his guests well, ensuring that they are comfortable before negotiations begin.

Read or paraphrase the following. *About a month ago, one of my ships – the Brook – was sent to the planet Sinai to gather plant and animal samples. These are of interest to various pharmaceutical companies looking to develop new drug treatments.*

The Brook was due to return a week ago but has failed to report in. I am increasingly concerned for the safety of the crew.

I would like you to travel to Sinai – it is a pretty remote world and whilst the atmosphere is breathable, there are some indigenous life forms that are quite dangerous. Locate the Brook, ensure that the crew is ok and then help them to complete their original mission. If you can do that for me, you will be generously reimbursed for your efforts.

The PCs will no doubt ask Rexel why he does not send some more of his own people to locate the *Brook.* He will state that any other vessels he owns that are suitable for this task are off–world performing survey–work. There is some truth in this but Rexel's real reason for hiring outside help is that if *Sinai* has turned out to be more dangerous than he had anticipated he does not want to lose any more men and equipment.

Rexel is reluctant to provide full details of all the plants and animals that the Brook was sent to collect. He claims that a confidentiality agreement with the nameless (and bogus) pharmaceutical company prevents him from doing so. Rexel will state that most of the samples are harmless, though there will be a large predator amongst the shipment.

Rexel should offer enough money to make this a tempting assignment – notwithstanding any reservations the PCs might have about Rexel's refusal to reveal exactly what the *Brook* was sent to collect. He can be persuaded to cover expenses such as fuel, if the PCs haggle.

Investigation

Cautious PCs will likely wish to do some checking up on their prospective employer, Mr Rexel. They will find nothing official to indicate he is anything more or less than a respectable businessman – taxes paid, no criminal record and so on. More inventive means, such as rumour gathering in the local black–market hot spots, may turn up the following:

* Employees of RexelTech are surprisingly well–armed for planetary surveyors (Effect total 2+).

* Employees of RexelTech have a habit of getting injured or even killed whilst out on missions (Effect4+).

* Rexel's ships are sometimes used for smuggling contraband (Effect Total 6+).

If the PCs confront Rexel with any of these rumours, he can shrug off all but the accusation of smuggling. He will make no secret of the fact that surveying work – and occasional side missions to acquire organic samples – can be dangerous. If the PCs call Rexel a smuggler, he will advise them to keep such thoughts to themselves.

He insists that free trade is the lifeblood of the universe. If the characters are foolish enough to threaten Rexel – either with blackmail or a report to the authorities – they will be making a powerful enemy. Rexel has more than 200 employees, many of whom are capable of eliminating interfering characters.

Sinai

Assuming that a deal can be struck with Rexel, the PCs can make the Jump from *Hashanah* to *Sinai* – a distance of one parsec. Rexel provides co–ordinates to where the survey team was due to land.

However, once the PCs arrive they will find that the Brook is no longer there – the ship originally left the planet and then was forced to return when Anderson sabotaged several systems.

If the PCs ship has powerful enough sensors, they may be able to locate the downed *Brook* from orbit. Alternatively, they will need to make contact using their ship's communications system. If they identify themselves as in some way working for Rexel, Captain Cole will answer the hail and provide the PCs with landing co–ordinates. However, Cole is not the only one

listening: Anderson has a portable transceiver. Once the PCs are within her 500 km range, she will send them the following message in a panicked tone:

'Don't trust him! He'll lie to you – just like he lied to me!'

At this point, Cole will jam Anderson's signal using equipment on the *Brook.* The PCs will now most likely be very suspicious. Cole will try to placate them with a promise to explain everything once they land. If this does not work, he says that a rogue member of the crew, who caused the ship to crash, sent the signal.

If the PCs follow the co–ordinates provided by Cole, they will see that the Brook has crash–landed atop a rock promontory that sticks up above the surrounding jungle. Cole himself stands outside and waves them in.

Chapter Two

Once the PCs make planet fall, Cole will invite them inside the damaged *Brook t*o talk. He explains that after his crew had gathered the plant and animal samples they were sent to collect, they tried to leave the planet.

However, whilst still in orbit, the ship lost several key systems. The pilot managed to make an emergency landing on the plateau of rock where the *Brook* now rests. They have been here for two weeks. According to Cole, the crash damaged the holding cages and released some of the captive beasts. One of these – Subject Five – killed a member of his crew. Two other crewmembers have gone AWOL – the team's xenobiologist (Anderson) and the head of security (Renick). Cole speculates that Renick might have received a concussion during the rough landing (causing him to act irrationally) or that he is suffering from post–traumatic stress brought on by his years in the star marines. He wants to locate and safely recover his friend.

Cole will state his belief that Anderson is a saboteur. Her radio message is, he claims, further proof of this. He says that she caused the crash by sabotaging key systems and has now fled taking with her some key components from the Jump Drive. Until these are recovered, the *Brook* is grounded. Cole wants the parts returned – but not Anderson.

Cole will ask the PCs if they can help with a number of things:

* Capturing Subject Five and Subject Twelve (the *Bohfa* Plant) – the last two escapees

* Locating Renick

*Locating the spare parts Anderson stole

* Finishing repairs to the *Brook*

The Brook

As the PCs are working for Rexel, they will be given more or less free reign of the *Brook* in order to utilise any equipment stowed on board and to help with repairs. Cole says that only two areas are out of bounds – the crews' quarters (specifically his cabin) and the specimen cages. This latter restriction is for the PC's own safety. The *Brook* is a 'Fat Trader' (*Traveller Core Rulebook*, pages 119–120).

The Main cargo bay has been specially converted to hold 20 specimen cages. All but one of these is full when the PCs arrive on *Sinai* – leaving room for the *Bohfa* plant.

The Forward Cargo Bay is converted into a single reinforced caging area to hold Subject Five. This part of the ship was damaged during the crash, allowing the beast to escape.

The Rear Cargo bay contains a thruster pack, a tent, a large net, a Geiger counter, six vacc suits (one of which is damaged), a medkit, a stunner (TL10) and an artificial gill. All of these items can be found in the equipment section of the *Traveller Core Rulebook***.**

Access to the crews' quarters is restricted by a keypad lock. A character with Engineer (Electronics) can try to bypass this device. The DM for the check is –2. An Exceptional Failure triggers a ship–wide alarm. Cole's room is secured with a biometric lock. Any attempt to open this suffers a DM of –4. Any failure activates the alarm. Stashed away beneath Cole's bunk is a collection of plant samples that he plans to sell on for his own personal gains. If the PC's learn about this, Cole will be desperate to prevent Rexel from finding out what he is up to. Of course, whether this means the PCs are able to manipulate him or that he tries to take them out of the picture will depend on how they play their hand. Cole can certainly be persuaded to share the profits from the sale (2d6 x 1000 credits) but he will not simply do whatever the PCs might demand. If he needs it, he has the backing of the crew – and he is a ruthless man.

Along with Captain Cole, there are currently six other surviving members of the crew, one of whom is his copilot, Seth McKay. With the exception of Anderson, everyone aboard the *Brook* has taken part in a range of smuggling and slaving operations.

Captain Jenson Cole

Str 9, Dex 10, End 9, Int 8, Edu 8, Soc 7

Astrogation 2, Carouse 0, Comms 2, Deception 2, Gunner (Turrets) 2, Mechanic 1, Pilot (Spacecraft) 3,

Recon 0, Sensors 1, Stealth 1, Gun Combat (Slug Rifle) 2, Melee (Unarmed Combat) 1

ACR (3d6, Auto 6)

Co–pilot Seth McKay

Str 7, Dex 9, End 8, Int 8, Edu 7, Soc 7

Astrogation 2, Comms 1, Deception 1, Engineer (Jump Drive) 2, Gunner (Turrets) 2, Mechanic 2, Sensors 2, Pilot (Spacecraft) 1, Gun Combat (Energy Pistol) 2, Melee (Blade) 1

Laser pistol (3d6, TL9), Blade (2d6)

The Brook

Scale 1 square = 4m
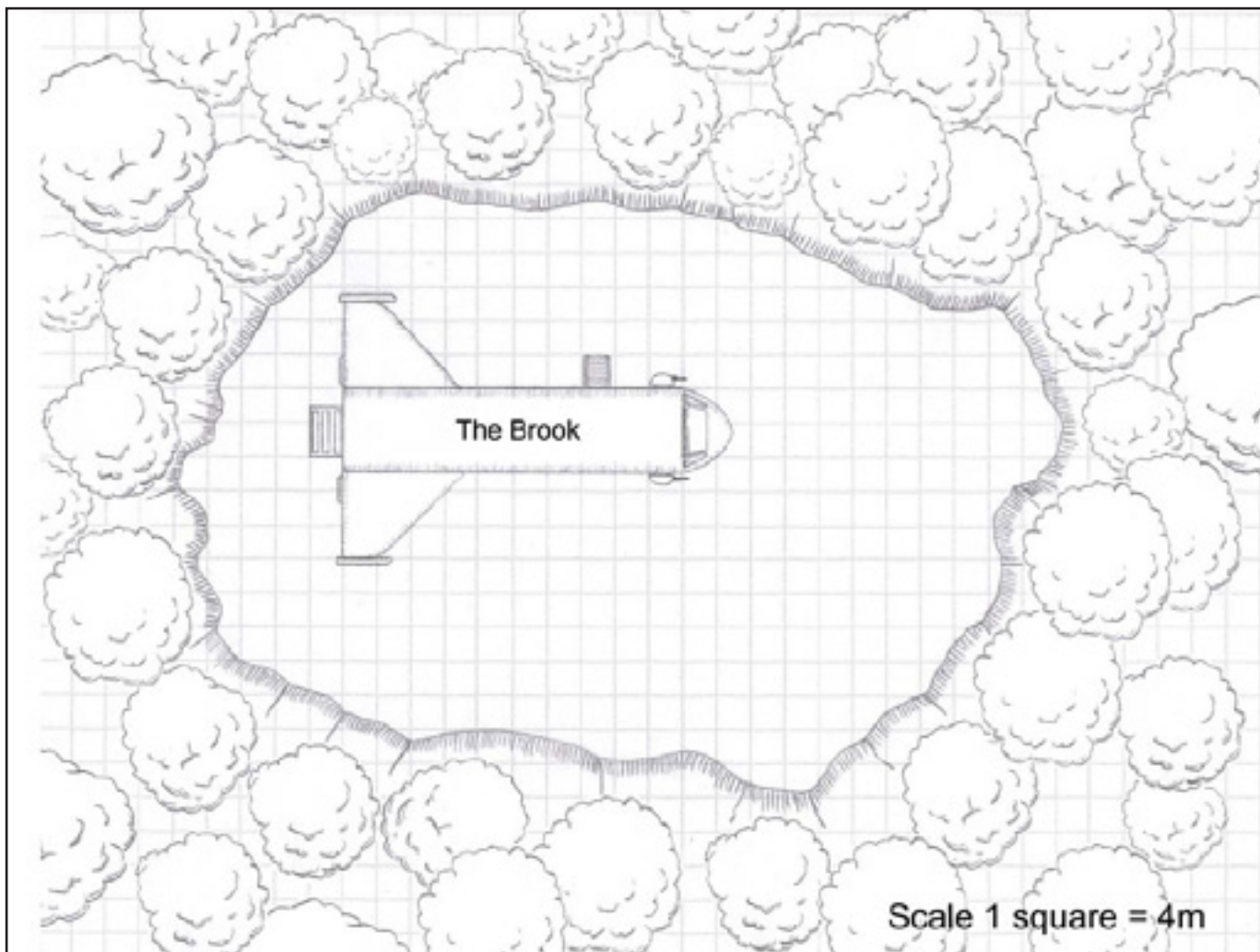
Brook Crewmembers (5)

Str 7, Dex 8, End 8, Int 7, Edu 6, Soc 6

Deception 1, Stealth 1, Gunner or Sensors 1, Gun Combat (Slug Rifle) 2, Mechanic 0, Melee (Unarmed Combat) 2

Assault Rifle (3d6, Auto 4)

Repairs

Having had two weeks to work on the damage sustained during Anderson's sabotage and the subsequent crash, the crew have got the *Brook* more or less in working order. There is a single point of Hull Damage still to be restored that a mechanically minded PC can help iron out. What is really needed, however, are the irreplaceable components from the Jump Drive that Anderson took with her – having taken the time to destroy all the onboard spares.

The Environment

The region of Sinai where the PCs find themselves is extremely hot and humid. Up on the rock promontory, there is at least a cooling wind. Down beneath the canopy it is as hot as hell: masks steam up, metallic objects become hot to the touch and characters will find that they sweat constantly. Even at night, when the temperature drops by a good 10 degrees, it is still in the high twenties.

Subject Five

The dense jungle surrounding the rocks where the *Brook* set down is extremely humid and littered with primeval pools. Consequently, one of the dominant predators that have managed to evolve in this region is a giant purple–skinned amphibian. This creature has regenerative capabilities, not unlike an earth salamander and a long prehensile tongue loaded with toxin, which it uses to hunt. Imagine a cross between a bullfrog and a hippo.

The crew of the Brook originally captured Subject Five using a tranquilliser gun. Unfortunately this was destroyed in the crash. Added to that, the crewmember who died was the team's expert hunter. Without his skills, they have been unable to recapture Subject Five – or another of his species. Cole will suggest

staking out one of the large pools in the forest floor and waiting for subject five to show up. There are known to be a number of dangerous life forms down in the jungle, so up until now he has not been willing to risk any more of his crew. With the PCs help, he feels it should be safe…*ish.*

Subject Five Type Habitat

Str	Dex	End	Int	Instinct	Pack
Pouncer	Jungle	Amphibious	14		12(6)*
11	1	7	3		

(Carnivore)

Recon 1, Athletics (Co–ordination) 2, Survival 2, Melee (natural weapons) 2 Teeth (3d6), Tongue (1d6), Thick skin (4). Number encountered: 1

The toxin in subject five's tongue reduces the target's Int and Dex by 1D6 if an Endurance check is failed. The DM for this is –3. The effect lasts for 1–6 hours. The effects of multiple hits are cumulative.

*On dry land, subject five is more cumbersome than when in water, hence the reduction in Dex. Its Movement is half that of a human on land (3 metres) but it is much faster in the water (7 metres).

If the PCs follow Cole's plan, they will have to hide beneath the layer of mouldy detritus that blankets the forest floor and wait 1D6 hours for a member of Subject Five's race to show up. A successful Stealth check is required to locate a suitable hiding place. The beast will eventually show up, moving slowly across open ground before entering the pool.

One method of capture that the PCs could use is to utilise the large net from the cargo hold of the *Brook* to rig up a snare. A Survival check Opposed by Subject Five's Recon skill will be required to set this up effectively.

This will at least immobilise the creature long enough to medicate it or subdue it physically. If the PCs badly injure or even kill Subject Five, the despairing captain will tell them that a dead or mutilated specimen is of no use to him. Cole will not give the order to leave the planet until he is in possession of either a member of Subject Five's race or the *Bohfa* plant. The PCs might therefore find themselves repeating their hunt.

What the Hell is This Thing?

Every new planet that the PCs visit should seem strange and unfamiliar: stepping out of that airlock onto alien soil should be an exhilarating but daunting experience.

One way to accomplish this on Sinai is to have the characters encounter peculiar animals that they have no idea how they should react to. Two examples are included below but feel free to invent some oddities of your own.

A Hair–Raising Encounter

Within the dense forest canopy is a breed of nestbuilding deconids (think 10–legged insects). Human hair is perfect weaving material for their nests. At some point, when the PCs are stationary – possibly whilst laying in wait for subject five – one descends from the trees and begins plucking. Given that the deconids are 20cm across, this might sound like a terrifying encounter. However, these creatures emit a song that has a lilting, lullaby quality. Any character that cannot pass an Endurance check with a –2 DM is compelled to stand around and listen to it – and thereby serve as a willing source of bedding material for baby deconids.

With enough of these critters around, a character could conceivably wind up bald. If attacked, these timid creatures immediately flee and the tone of their song alters. Soon, untold voices ring out through the forest. Whether this is a warning to other deconids to beware the PCs or something altogether more sinister is entirely up to you.

Sleep Tight

A species of microscopic bugs infests every inch of the planet. These tiny creatures feed almost exclusively on salt. When the human body perspires it releases enough sodium chloride to feed a veritable colony of these things. Added to this, human tears are extremely salty. Consequently, the tear ducts form a perfect feeding ground for these bugs, which flock to them like animals to a watering hole.

As these creatures feed, they excrete. Not a lot individually, but en mass, they are surprisingly productive. A character who falls asleep with a colony of these bugs on him will wake up covered in a crusty residue. This is not enough to immobilise him – the residue can be picked off like a scab – however it will seal his eyelids with the equivalent sticking power of super glue. The realisation that he has been to sleep encased in a shell of tiny alien bug faeces should be enough to remind any character that the universe is a strange place.

Rogue Biologist

Cole's men have been trying, without success, to locate Anderson for almost a fortnight. Her knowledge of xenology and survival has allowed her to find shelter and to scavenge enough food to stay alive.

If Cole or any members of the crew are questioned about Anderson, they will state that she did not fit in with the team from the word go. Cole speculates that she might be some enviro–freak set on protecting this world from outsiders. Cole makes it clear that he does not care whether Anderson is found or not – if she is, Cole will refuse to allow her back on the *Brook*. All he cares about is locating the missing components. Note that the PCs should not simply be able to take parts from their own ship and use them to patch up the *Brook*. The parts required must be a perfect match.

Searching for Anderson

If one or more of the PCs has the appropriate skills, he might try to locate Anderson's tracks. She is camped out only 1 km from the plateau where the Brook is located and has made daily visits to check up on the crew. Any character with Recon can conceivably look for tracks but those from primitive worlds are likely far better suited. You should apply a –2 DM to checks made to locate Anderson's camp for characters from worlds with TL 8+. Attempts to pick up Anderson trail using Recon are Opposed by her Stealth skill.

Kate Anderson

Str 6, Dex 8, End 10, Int 9, Edu 10, Soc 8

Animals (Veterinary) 2, Comms 1, Deception 0, Life Sciences (Biology) 3, Mechanic 1, Medic 1, Space Sciences (Xenology) 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Gun Combat (Shotgun) 1, Melee (Blade) 1 Shotgun (4d6), Dagger (1d6+2) As soon as one of the PCs is out in the forest unaccompanied by a member of the *Brook's* crew, Anderson will approach him and ask for help.

Anderson's Story

Anderson will claim that Cole and his men are slavers and that at least one of the organisms they wish to transport off world – the *Bohfa* plant – is sentient. According to Anderson, the plant 'spoke' to her; through a series of what she believes were psionic images.

Anderson will freely admit to sabotaging the *Brook* and still has the stolen Jump Drive components stashed at her camp. She will admit that she acted rashly but claims that she had no alternative. She really does not know what to do now that the *Brook* is stranded. She does not want to see anyone get hurt but she feels that she must protect the *Bohfa.*

As you may have gathered, Anderson has no idea that Renick has taken the plant and fled the ship. If she learns this, she will willingly give up the Jump Drive components so that the *Brook* can leave.

As Anderson will not be allowed back on the *Brook,* the PCs may represent her only chance to get off *Sinai.* If the opportunity presents itself, she will request passage and whilst she has

Bohfa Plant

Renick's Trench

Scale 1 square = 1.5m
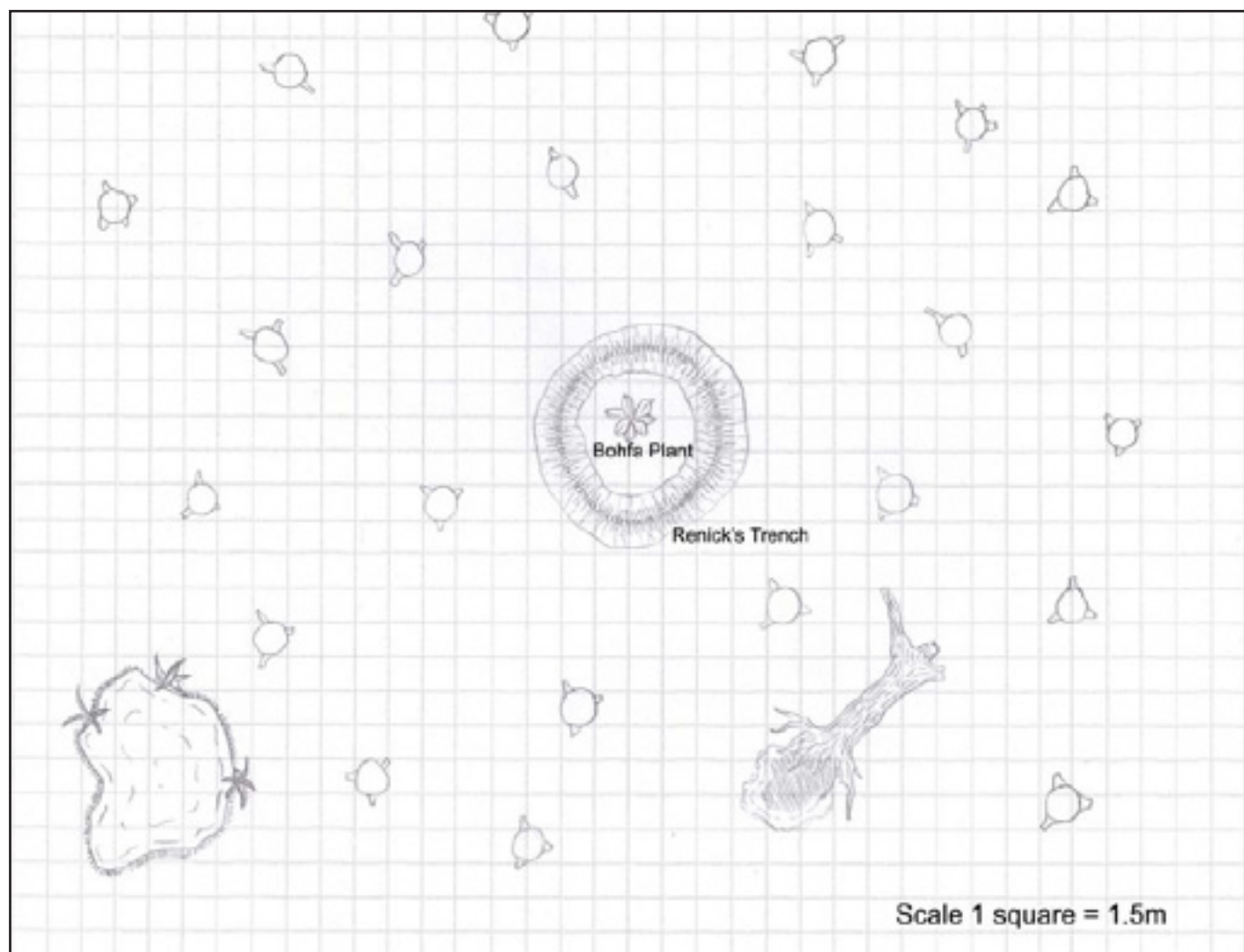
no funds to offer, she can earn her keep with her medical and scientific skills. She may even make a useful addition to the crew.

Kate Anderson is a tough, outdoor–type who has roughed it on a number of harsh alien worlds. If the PCs try to take her by force, she will do everything she can to defend herself – and she certainly knows which end of a shotgun is which.

WE DON'T LEAVE OUR PEOPLE BEHIND!

Zolo Renick was Captain Cole's right–hand man for six years. Now – thanks to the psionic influence of the *Bohfa* plant – he believes that he has been betrayed by his crewmates. More than this, he perceives the *Bohfa* not as a plant but as a wounded comrade that needs to be protected until help arrives.

Until an attempt has been made to rescue Renick – from himself if need be – Cole is unwilling to leave the planet. If an attempt is made and it fails, resulting in casualties, Cole will reluctantly agree to leave his old friend behind.

If asked whether there was anything odd about Renick's behaviour before his disappearance, Cole says that he was suffering with bad dreams. Cole believes these might be a result of Renick's military experiences, which were quite taxing. The truth is that the dreams were an early sign of his latent psionic talents picking up on the unhappiness of the *Bohfa* plant.

The crew of the Brook are reluctant to go after Renick – they know how well trained he is and how hard it will be to capture him. Cole would, genuinely, like to search for him himself but feels he has a responsibility to remain with the ship. Renick is an expert survivalist and soldier. He served two terms in the star marines and received numerous commendations for bravery.

Zolo Renick

Str 10, Dex 9, End 11, Int 7, Edu 7, Soc 7

Battle Dress 1, Comms 1, Deception 0, Drive (Wheeled) 2, Explosives 2, Gunner (Turrets) 1, Gun Combat (Slug Rifle) 3, Heavy Weapons (Launchers) 1, Leadership 0, Melee (Blade) 2, Recon 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Tactics 2

ACR (4d6, Auto 6), Grenade Launcher (Frag: 5d6/3d6/ 1d6), Blade (2d6), Flak Jacket (TL 8, Protection 6)

Renick's Snares

Renick has set up a series of snares designed to detect and ward off intruders. There will be no talking him down – he is willing to defend the *Bohfa* plant with his life, rather than let it be captured by 'the enemy'. The crew of the *Brook* already knows the approximate location of Renick's camp but so far no one has dared to try to capture him. Renick has established a series of perimeter tripwires. Spotting these requires a Recon check. If

triggered, these tripwires rattle wind chimes and alert Renick to the presence of intruders. Beyond the tripwires are a variety of snares:

Staked pothole: This covered pit is only 0.5 metres deep but it is enough to impale and possible break someone's leg. Damage 2d6. If this damage reduces the target to Endurance 0, any further damage must be subtracted from Dexterity.

Leg Snare: A sprung trap that uses a bent branch, this snare closes a noose around the target's leg and catapults him into the air. As the target turns, his head is smashed into the ground. This trap immobilises a target until he is cut down. Damage 1D6+2. If this damage reduces the target to Endurance 0, he is knocked unconscious as his head connects with the ground.

Grenade Trap: Far and away the most lethal snare that Renick has set, this simple tripwire pulls the pin from a grenade. It detonates one second after this occurs. A character who immediately throws himself prone suffers 3d6 damage. Otherwise, the poor soul who triggers this explosive takes 5d6 damage. Each of these snares can be spotted with a Recon check. The staked pothole has a DM of –2.

The exact location of these traps is not marked on the map, in order that you can use it with your players to keep track of their positions as they go after Renick. You should have each character involved in the hunt encounter a tripwire and one of the snares as they approach his camp.

The Trench

Renick is hunkered down inside a trench that he has dug for himself. It provides him with ¾ cover (*Traveller Core Rulebook,* page 63). If the PCs have managed to get through the tripwires and snares undetected, there is a chance that Renick is sleeping. Roll 2d6 – on a result of 2 to 6, he is catching some shuteye. If not, the PCs will need to make a Stealth check Opposed by Renick's Recon skill to get close enough to the see the old soldier. The area around Renick's camp is thick with vegetation, providing ample cover for anyone sneaking around (+1 DM on Stealth checks).

If Renick detects intruders, he will use every skill and weapon in his arsenal to take them out. If Renick can be isolated from the *Bohfa* plant for 24 hours, he will go through a sort of psionic withdrawal. Once he has endured this, he will be back to normal.

The Bohfa Plant

This large green and yellow plant has an intelligence that is comparable with a human child. Whilst it needs to remain in soil, it is able to uproot itself and move – very slowly – to new areas. It has remained near Renick as it senses that he wishes to protect it.

How much the Bohfa can communicate with the PCs is up to you. Any character with psionic abilities should be able to receive its thought projections quite clearly. Any characters with latent

psi–abilities will understand some of what the creature is trying to communicate (both Anderson and Renick fall into this category).

If your campaign is making use of psionics, this could be a significant first–contact meeting that might lead on to other adventures: an entire race of psionic plants could be of interest to all sorts of people.

The PCs will have decide for themselves whether they are comfortable handing over a sentient creature to Cole so that it can be examined in a laboratory. If they do so, Anderson will still try to get the PCs to help her off world – she has the good sense to stay quiet until then – but she will go her own way at the first opportunity.

Return to Hashanah

If the PCs help Cole and his crew to fix the Jump Drive and the *Brook* returns safely to *Hashanah,* Rexel will accept that the PCs have carried out their end of the bargain and pay them for their services. However, this payment can be modified – up or down – according to certain considerations:

* Neither the Subject Five nor the *Bohfa* plant are included as part of the shipment (–30%)

* Either Subject Five or the Bohfa plant is not included in the shipment (–10%)

*The PCs played a major role in helping to subdue Renick and he is now able to resume his duties (+20%)

Mr Rexel could be a useful contact for the PCs and if their work was good, further offers of smuggling or acquisition work might well be forthcoming. As the man said, free trade is the lifeblood of the universe…

ADAPT AND OVERCOME

By Carl Walmsley

Stranded on a backwater world, the PCs become embroiled in an effort to explain a series of bizarre attacks and to capture some very unusual creatures.

Evolution

For several years, the bio–genetic corporation *Janus Tech* has been trying to develop creatures that can mimic the abilities and behaviour of other species. The corporation's goal is to produce rapidly evolving creatures – called biomorphs – that can be introduced to new environments and adapt quickly enough to form part of a stable food chain. The corporation's first biomorph is now at the stage where it needs to be field–tested – and the world chosen for this experiment just happens to be the place where PCs are currently docked.

The Experiment

24 hours ago, the lead scientist on the first biomorph field test – Dr Walter Kraig – oversaw the release of seven specimens. His team has set up a monitoring station in the forests surrounding the port, from where they can monitor how well the creatures adapt. To facilitate this, each creature has a tracking device located beneath its skin so that the scientists can keep tabs on them. The biomorphs have a genetic safeguard, which means that they can only adapt their genetic code for the first 24 hours after their release – after this, their form and abilities 'lock'. This is to prevent them working their way all the way up the food chain and dominating an ecosystem. In their un–changed form, biomorphs are rather featureless, grey–skinned quadrupeds.

The Test Site

The site chosen for the experiment can be any quiet backwater world with a small starport. Besides the limited industrial hub around the port, the surrounding environs are based on agriculture and include vast swathes of untamed forest where off–worlders occasionally come to hunt.

If the PCs need a reason to visit such a place, any of the following is suitable:

* The PCs are lured to the planet with an offer of work – perhaps transporting rare merchandise to another world.

*The PCs are tempted by a reward for the capture of a criminal who is hiding out on this world.

* The PCs have been forced to land in order to effect repairs or to re–fuel. Whatever the PCs reason for being here – and it is best to provide them with an incentive to leave this world as soon as possible – the adventure begins when they attempt to depart and find that every ship in the starport has been grounded.

Quarantine

Unfortunately for Dr Kraig and his team, two of the biomorph's released into the forest have mimicked the abilities of some dangerous indigenous creatures that they were not aware of and have started to attack the local population. One of these attacks occurred inside the port itself. As a result, the authorities – who fear that a hazardous alien life–form might have been smuggled in – have sealed off the port. They have also ordered a search of all docked vessels.

The PCs can huff and puff as much as they like but the port's bureaucratic head of security – Marrick Waller – will not allow any ships to leave; not until the strange attacks have been explained.

Unexplained Attacks

A couple of hours before the PCs make their attempt to leave, a security guard working within the port is critically injured in an animal attack. The wounds correspond to those that would be inflicted by a *taythar* – a large scorpion–like creature that lives deep in the woods. It is inconceivable that one could have made it into the port unobserved, however, so the locals are baffled as to what could have happened.

Hopefully, the PCs will realise that the quickest way for them to get off–world is to clear up this mystery. If necessary, Waller will offer a small reward – or may turn a blind eye to any questionable merchandise that he has discovered on board the PC's ship.

If the PCs decide not to intervene, further attacks will occur within a matter of hours and the local populace will become increasingly concerned. The finger of blame may even start to be turned towards strangers.

Picking Up the Trail

As soon as the PCs decide to get involved in the search, they will receive word that another attack has just occurred – this

time, inside a factory. The victim of the attack – Kalem Pierce – was an employee of Bensen Agri–Farms. Unfortunately, this attack has been fatal and there is evidence that Pierce's dead body has been fed upon. A blood trail leads fromthe body, down into the port's sewerage system.

The local constabulary will seal off the area but it will not be difficult for the PCs to talk their way in if they are offering to help.

The First Hunt

Following the trail down into the sewers presents the PCs with a number of problems. Firstly, Bensen Agri–Farms has been illegally stowing pesticide canisters in the tunnels directly beneath the factory. Most of these are intact but a few have leaked, producing a toxic spill that is strong enough to burn skin (1 point of damage per round of exposure). Secondly, the biomorph has adopted the sewers as its home and will attack any characters that search for it.

Sewer Biomorph

Type: Killer

Habitat: Sewers

Str: 14, **Dex:** 10, **End:** 12, **Int:** 3, **Instinct:** 10, **Pack:** 1

Recon 2, Melee (claws) 2, Stealth 2 Pincers (3d6), Sting (1d6 + neurotoxin poison*), Hide (2)

* *Traveller Core RuleBook* (page 74)

This particular biomorph has taken on the features of a taythar scorpion (providing it with pincers and a stinger) and a sort of predatory eel (known as a narok). It is now about three metres long. The biomorph remains beneath the surface of the sewer water until prey comes close enough for it to attack.

Encountering the Team from Janus Tech

Once the PCs have killed or captured the sewer biomorph, a recovery team from Janus Tech will immediately arrive. Dressed in hostile environment suits and armed with stunner weapons, it should be clear that they are searching for the biomorph themselves.

The leader of the team is Dr Kraig's assistant, Catherine Belvue. She and her men will try to take the biomorph back to their monitoring station using a specially prepared transportation vehicle that they have waiting nearby. If the PCs are not willing to surrender the creature, Belvue will firstly try to 'buy' it from them and if this does not work, admit that the creature is part of an experiment and that her company created it. Given that the PCs have managed to capture or kill the first biomorph, Belvue will ask for their help in tracking down the second that has gone astray. Again, a payment of some kind will be forthcoming if

necessary. If the PC's ask Belvue about the biomorph, she will explain its adaptive abilities to them and admit that things have not gone according to plan.

The Biomorph Lair

Using the locater hidden beneath the second biomorph's skin, Belvue has narrowed down its location to a cave complex at the edge of the forest. If at all possible, she will persuade the PCs to go in and capture the creature – or at least flush it out. She can provide the PCs with a scanner that allows them to locate the transmitter to within a few metres. What Belvue does not know is that the biomorph – and its locater – has been swallowed by an enormous indigenous predator called a maklith.

Maklith

Type: Trapper

Habitat: Caves and Forests

Str: 17, **Dex:** 10, **End:** 20, **Int:** 1, **Instinct:** 9, **Pack:** 1

Recon 1, Melee (tentacles) 2, Stealth 3 tentacle (1d6 + paralytic poison), Bite (2d6), Hide (1)

Paralytic poison – any character that suffers at least 1 point of damage from the maklith's tentacle attack must make an Endurance check or become paralysed for 1d10 minutes.

The *maklith* resembles a huge black jelly–fish with a large circular mouth located on its back. Thanks to internal air–sacks it is able to float through the air and attack prey from above. It spends most of its time, however, hidden within a muddy pool, absorbing the gases it needs to fill its flotation sacks.

The rock around the central chamber where the maklith dwells is honey–combed with storage holes where prey is stored until such a time as the creature is hungry.

The Maklith attacks intruders that stray too close to its mud–pool. It will seek to paralyse them and then drag them beneath the mud, where it can drown them – and then place them in its food store.

Quarantine Lifted

Once the rogue biomorphs have been captured or killed, Dr Kraig will do all that he can to hush things up. His experiments will continue – only now in greater secrecy and on a more isolated world. Marrick Waller will receive a hefty bribe from Janus Tech to keep quiet about recent events.

Within a matter of hours the quarantine will be lifted, allowing the PC's to leave. Whether they happen to have a biomorph stowed away on board their ship or not is entirely up to you…

JURY – RIGGING

By Gareth Hanrahan

The creator of Traveller takes a look at Task Chains and how you can use them to bring serious drama into your games.

Jury–Rigging is an infrequent series of articles about the *Traveller* rules and how to hack them for different universes and styles of play. All of the rules here are entirely optional.

One of the goals of the new edition of *Traveller* was to marry a variation on *Classic Traveller*'s roll 2d6 system with the stat+skill roll seen in later editions, including *Traveller* **5**, while also making the skill system a little more consistent and removing special–cases and exceptions where possible. (There are still a few legacies, like the Battle Dress skill, which is rarely rolled but determines the penalty for using armour when unskilled).

The core system of '2d6+ skill + stat modifier + other DMs, get 8+' works very well for one–off skill checks – did the Player Character hit the target with a gunshot? Did he persuade the guard to let him into the TAS hostel? – However, *Traveller* encounters often call for more detailed task resolution rules. A scene where the characters repair a starship is just as important to the game as a

firefight and should have the same level of detail and scope for player input.

Task Chains

Task chains are explained in the *Traveller* rulebook on page 51. The idea is that each check in the chain gives a bonus or penalty to the next check, so several Player Characters can contribute to the same task. Each check in the chain gives a bonus or penalty (up to +/–3) to the next one. Most task chains are only going to be two or three links long.

Breakable Task Chains: Most task chains assume that the final goal can also be completed – the previous skills just make things easier. The gunner with the vehicle–mounted gun can always fire the gun; the driver may make things easier, by driving smoothly and lining up a nice shot or harder by slewing the vehicle wildly and forcing the gunner to compensate but the gunner can always fire.

Task Chain Examples	Check #1	Check #2	Check #3
Aiming a Vehicle mounted gun	*Drive (to put the vehicle into position)*	*Heavy Weapons (to fire)*	
Finding a buyer for stolen goods	*Streetwise (to find the buyer)*	*Persuade (to get in to talk to him)*	*Broker (to seal the deal)*
Digging up rumours about an enemy	*Carouse (to find someone willing to talk)*	*Deception (to pretend to be someone else)*	*Investigate (to wheedle out the right rumours)*
Making your way across a desert	*Navigate (to find the way)*	*Survival (to cross the wilderness successfully)*	
Jumping a ship	*Astrogation (to plot the course)*	*Engineering (jump) to activate the engines*	

Breakable Task Chain Examples	Check #1	Check #2	Check #3
Disarming a bomb	Investigate (find the bomb)	Explosives (disarm the bomb)	
Stealing a shuttle	Stealth (sneak onto the starport)	Engineering (electronics) (overcome the electronic locks)	Pilot (small craft) (to fly the shuttle)

In some task chains, though, any break in the chain makes future checks impossible.

In both of the above examples, if any link in the chain fails, the whole chain fails. If the characters do not find the bomb, they cannot disarm it. If they fail to sneak onto the starport, then all of the piloting skill in the world will not let them fly a shuttle that they do not have.

Breakable chains are very risky for the players – the chances of failure multiply with every link in the chain – but some tasks are that risky.

Combined–Effort Chains: Normally, each link in a task chain only affects the next task by +/– 3. This means that one check can fail dismally but with a good roll in the next link, the character can still get a huge success and pass on a big positive DM to the final check. Often, the only ones that really matter are the second–last and the last check.

Combined–effort checks allow multiple characters to affect the final roll – instead of a chain; it is a combined effort, with lots of checks contributing to the final roll. Each supporting check in a combined–effort check raises or lowers the difficulty by one step on the difficulty table.

Difficulty	DM
Ridiculously Easy	+8
Simple	+6
Easy	+4
Routine	+2
Average	+0
Difficult	–2
Very Difficult	–4
Formidable	–6
Impossible	–8

For example, if the characters are trying to impress clients at a party, then everyone could make Carouse or Diplomacy or Perform rolls. These rolls would affect the final difficulty of the Broker role to seal the deal. If the final

Broker check was going to be Very Difficult and two characters succeed at their supporting checks while another one fails, then the final check moves down one step on the difficulty ladder to merely Difficult (–2).

Open Chains: For a more free–form game, let the players come up with skills to fill a task chain. For example, the characters are trying to break into a prison camp. The Referee announces that this will be a Formidable (–6) Stealth skill check. The players can now suggest and implement ways to bring this difficulty down. One player might say *'I'm going to use Comms to intercept the guards' radio traffic'*, another might suggest using Recon

to spy on the camp from a distance, another might use Deception to disguise himself as a guard or Clairvoyance to observe a guard entering the code into an electronic lock.

Each of these checks would be at a much lower difficulty than the final check but if the characters succeed, they bring the difficulty down for that final check. (If they fail, of course, they raise the difficulty.) The Referee should encourage creative use of skills in an open chain.

Competency

Not every use of skills needs to involve a skill check. Sometimes, randomness does not factor into a situation – the character either has the skill or he does not. For example, if a character has a Medic or Life Science skill of 2+, then he has heard of some obscure disease. Otherwise, he simply has never heard of it. Competency checks should be used when the Referee wants to avoid interrupting the game with dice rolling.

Risk & Consequences

To make skill checks more interesting, the Referee can specify a risk involved before making the check. This risk is in addition to any normal consequences for failing the check. For example, if a Player Character is trying to repair a damaged subsystem on his spacecraft. The Referee says that this will be a Hard (–4) check or a merely Difficult (–2) check if the character takes the risk that if the check is failed, he will get fried by an electrical discharge and take damage.

Offer the player a greater chance of success – at a cost.

Alternatively, the Referee can offer the player a reduced success in exchange for a reduced difficulty. When making a Stealth roll to sneak past guards, offer the player a choice of *'it is Difficult to sneak past the guards and they don't spot you at all. Alternatively, it is only Routine to sneak past them, but they will spot you after you go past and they might chase you.'*

The point of risks and consequences is to give the players more choice on important skill checks. If a check is a key moment in an adventure, then there should be room for more input than just a dice roll.

Keep Dice Modifiers Under Control

Several of the optional rules presented here can give considerable bonuses to the player's skill check. Keep the Probability of Success table (*Traveller* rulebook, page 49) in mind – too many DMs will make a check too easy. It is generally better to make a check too hard and let the players find a creative way around the problem than make every check too easy.

Opposed Checks

When two characters are acting against each other, the simplest solution is that the character with the highest Effect wins. That

Example Competency Tests:

Condition	Required Skill
Qualified to fly a spacecraft	Pilot 2+
Can recognise a particular obscure brand of gun	Gun Combat 3+
Automatically avoids leaving a trail when moving through the wilderness	Stealth 2+ or Survival 2+
Knows contacts in town	Streetwise 3+
Can operate a vacc suit	Vacc Suit 0
Can operate battle dress	Battle Dress 0

Risk & Consequence Test Example

Situation	Skill	Risks
Falsifying records	Admin	A trivial investigation will uncover the false records
In a firefight	Gun Combat	The ship takes a point of Structure damage due to the stress of dodging
Treating a wounded character	Medic	The patient loses a limb

Round	Result	Advantage
0	The conflict begins. Lucius accuses Zarek of allying with the Zhodani.	0
1	Zarek wins with an Effect of 4. Zarek easily dismisses Lucius' accusations.	–4
2	Lucius wins with an Effect of 1. He brings up evidence of strange comm traffic from Zarek's ship (offensive).	–3
3	Both sides fail.	–3
4	One of Lucius' allies demands that Zarek answer the question. Lucius wins with Effect 2 (offensive).	–1
5	Zarek snaps that there's no evidence that he is a Zhodani traitor, winning with Effect 2.	–3
6	Zarek again wins the argument with Effect 3 by bringing up an occasion when Lucius was psionically influenced by a Zhodani agent.	–6

Extended Conflicts

Situation	Attack Rolls	Attack Characteristic	Defend Rolls	Defend Characteristic
Bluffing past a guard	Social Standing + Deception	Social Standing	Intelligence	Intelligence
A court case	Education + Advocate	Social Standing	Education + Advocate	Social Standing
Wrestling on a cliff	Strength + Melee	Endurance	Strength + Melee	Endurance

works perfectly well when a quick resolution is needed but some dramatic scenes call for an extended conflict between the two. For example, if two characters are wrestling on the edge of a cliff or arguing in a murder trial, then a single roll is not enough.

In an opposed check, both sides keep making skill checks. There is also a running total called the Advantage. A positive Advantage benefits the attacker, a negative total benefits the attacker. If the attacker wins, his Effect is added to the Advantage; if the defender wins, his Effect is subtracted from it. The opposed check ends when a positive Advantage equals

or exceeds the most appropriate Characteristic of the defender (or a negative total equals or exceeds the most Characteristic of the attacker). The character with the Advantage has a +1 DM to all opposed checks in the conflict.

For example, Lucius is arguing with Zarek. Lucius has Social Standing 6, Zarek has Social Standing 8. Both characters make opposed Intelligence + Persuade checks. Zarek is the defender. As the Advantage now equals Lucius' Social Standing, Zarek has won the extended conflict.

THE FALL OF RIGELLA NAMSEY

BY NICK ROBINSON

A tongue in cheek adventure that can be set on any civilised world, and will have your players wondering just what exactly is in their food…

Referees Information: This adventure is designed for four to six travelers on a mid to high tech world. The world will have a fairly relaxed law level, large population (certainly in the tens of millions, preferably more) and with a tainted atmosphere that require filters of some sort.

It should be based somewhere within the Imperium, since the main protagonist is on the run from a number of alien governments, however it can be very easily converted to any setting that features aliens who would be upset if people started to eat them...

In my own campaign I used the (slightly modified) world of Persephone in the Lunion subsector of the Spinward Marches.

INTRODUCTION

The contact is an ape. Not exactly what you expected from the well educated and privileged tones that made contact with you via an audio only link. An intelligent chimpanzee – go figure. He met you in a park on the planet's capital, Erskine. You are all wearing filter masks to keep out the harmful pollen that is always abundant in the air of the planet and the ape, Mr Tidds, has quickly gotten down to business.

'I have a simple job for you. Locate a person who is of interest to my employers. If you are able to find out where they are then I will have more work for you. You will get a 10,000 credit payment upon receipt of the information required.'

(Assuming the players agree to the terms).

'Excellent. The person you are looking for came to this world under the pseudonym Delores Vashinelli. This is not her real name, safe to say. We know she stayedat the Starborne Hotel for a couple of nights before disappearing. Apart from the hotel the only lead I have is that one Max Janthar is an old friend of hers and also lives in this city. Once you have tracked her down contact me on this number immediately and payment will be directly sent to your bank accounts and any further instructions for additional work will be provided at that time. Any questions?'

Mr Tidds has little other information for the characters. Vashinelli is described as a middleaged woman of some means; 5'6", talk of a slightly dumpy build. She is not dangerous but may have a bodyguard or two in her employ. All that the characters have to do is find her.

The Hotel
The staff here are generally friendly to potential guests but are not that well paid. As a result they will not be overly suspicious of enquiries made by the characters as long as the party provides a plausible reason for any requests and do not give them any cause for alarm (turning up at the hotel lobby kitted out in combat gear would certainly be cause for alarm and the hotel staff will try to escape or hide in panic if the party were to decide to put on such a show of force. Any information that might be gathered can be via the appropriate use of bribery (for hotel staff (and bank staff if they try to find out more about the account)) or Computer, by hacking into the computer records of the hotel (or bank). The only leads that the characters might be able to come up with are Vashinelli's bank account details and vidphone records. The account is now closed and the only contacts that she had with outsiders was with Max Janthar and another private citizen, Chloe M'banda.

The Bank Account
Vashinelli had a very healthy balance in excess of 20,000 credits at a local bank, Shavathans but this account was only active for a very short time. It was opened days before Vashinelli came to the world until two days after she left the hotel. There were no regular payments; it was used for payment in some shops near the hotel and the hotel bill itself. The funds were eventually transferred into another (unnamed) account, which the characters cannot access no matter how hard they try.

Max Janthar
Max Janthar is an elderly, retired chef, who once owned a small chain of restaurants on the planet and was the star of several cookery shows on the local entertainment networks. He now lives in the penthouse apartment of a reasonably well kept building in the capital of this world.

The security for the building is minimal, although Janthar's apartment can only be reached via a security door. It might be possible to trick the old man into letting the party through or a player can use either his computer or electronics skill to get past the relatively simple security system, causing the door to open.

Janthar is easily scared and will help the party as well as he can if they threaten him. If the party gets too carried away with their threats of or actual physical acts of violence Janthar will suffer a heart attack, which may or may not, cause the players to panic. He has known the target for a great many years, having appeared alongside her in some old cookery shows many years back. Now an aging man he is aware the Vashinelli is actually Rigella Namsey, but has no idea where she is. He does have a mobile vidphone number, though.

There is little of interest in Janthar's apartment, with mementos of his past fame and (of course) an exceptionally well stocked kitchen. A thorough search will turn up some panic buttons located around the apartment, which could also cause the players to panic. Fortunately for them Janthar has forgotten about their existence (never having had to consider using them in the 30 or so years he has called his apartment home) and he will not have set off the alarm even if he has had the opportunity to do so.

Chloe M'banda

Chloe M'banda is an attractive woman in her early thirties with previous experience in both the military and as a government intelligence agent. When the government of her home world was overthrown in a violent revolution she fled and joined the private security industry using her personal contacts to secure a fairly senior position and she has prospered ever since. She takes the role of a senior co–ordinator for clients, ensuring that her team is ready at all times to deal with threats as and when they arise.

She currently resides in a pleasant neighbourhood with a large yard surrounding a well kept three bedroom, two storey home. The property has a panic room and a small security room and the tall fences around the property are constantly monitored by discreetly hidden security cameras.

None of her neighbours know anything about her; other than she appears to be a professional lady, has always driven a new and immaculately kept vehicle and keeps herself to herself. No neighbour has ever seen the interior of her property and they just think that she is a private person. Her garden is nothing more than an immaculately mowed lawn, which means there is no cover in the 30 yards from the edge of her property to her home.

Currently her private security firm employers have been hired to protect Vashinelli/Namsey. When the players approach her she will be cautious and claim to know nothing, whilst secretly getting help sent to her via a personal panic button that she carries at all times. If she is made aware of intruders on her property (through laser or ground sensors and/or security cameras) she will hit her panic button immediately and take up her position in one of the upstairs rooms, using an assault rifle if she has the opportunity. A back up team will arrive in less than 10 minutes. There are four men, all well armed and armoured, arriving in a pair of fast vehicles. They will turn up with guns blazing. Whilst the characters may have no idea as to what they have gotten themselves into these mercenaries are well prepared to deal with any possible threats and always assume the worst in any given situation due to their previous experience in the personal protection industry.

If captured M'banda or one of the mercenaries can be made to talk via intimidation/torture and know the location of Vashinelli, plus the details of her security detail. M'banda also has Vashinelli's vidphone number should she need to contact her. She is well aware of the reason that her client needs protection, although she will not reveal this information (or any other information) unless asked directly and tortured/given drugs to force the truth from her.

The vidphone

With the right skills and equipment it is possible to trace the location of Namsey using her phone. Since Namsey is an old friend of Janthar it will prove easier to do this if the *traveller*s use her old friend's vidphone or M'banda's. Calls from other vidphones will be ignored since as far as she is aware no one else has her number. She will inform her bodyguards of this and they will then seek to trace any vidphone that tries to contact Rigella subsequently, to ensure it is a wrong number call.

Using tracing equipment (if the *traveller*s have access to it), bribing vidphone company employees or hacking into their computers, are all methods that have a chance of working.

Primary Threat Security

The only other way to find Vashinelli's location is to enter M'banda's office at Primary Threat Security. PTS is a respected mercenary outfit that operates throughout the sector, being considered a top end (and expensive) company that can be relied on to do the job better than most of their competitors. Totally professional, they understand that they can come up against rival mercenaries who may one day be allies or even employees or employers, so it is all very business–like once the bullets stop flying.

Their offices are well guarded with two roving security officers plus a pair of large canines inside a perimeter fence, one man at the reception and a response team of four men always on site. It is worth noting that these four men are those who will respond to any distress call from either

M'banda or Vashinelli. If they have already been dealt with elsewhere they will not reappear here. The offices themselves are fairly small and if the security is dealt with it is easy to find M'banda's office and find out Vashinelli's address by simply accessing her file (either the hardcopy or via M'banda's computer). M'band's computer does have a password set up and will require a very difficult skill check to get past the security she has on her machine. It is possible to get this information from M'banda if she is interrogated.

Neither M'banda or any of the other employees can be bribed to turn over this information. Threats will work in the right circumstances but they are utterly professional in their work, reflecting their employer's own standards in this regard.

Vashinelli Found

Once the *traveller*s have found Vashinelli/Namsey they should contact Mr Tidds immediately. His vidphone will answer after two rings and they will hear an automated message (Mr Tidds has already escaped off planet).

'This is a recorded message. If you are calling this number you have managed to track down the package for me. You are to be commended. You can either send me the details via the vidphone messaging service and upon confirmation that you have tracked down the package you will be paid or you can deal with the package yourself. You will be paid a bonus sum of 50,000 credits if you eliminate the package. Upon confirmation that you have done so you will be paid this sum. If you do not wish to go ahead with this contract you will not be hearing from me again and I bid you good day.'

'To accept this contract you will need to ring this number again five minutes from now and just say the word yes. I look forward to hearing this response. Good luck.'

The Safe House

Half an hours drive away from the capital the safe house is where PTS hide their clients. This is normally only for short term use, there are better facilities elsewhere that are better protected. Located in a glacial valley the property is in an area that has higher than normal amounts of hazardous pollen in the air. It is overlooked on one side by a steep glacial cliff several kilometers from the property. The house is also screened by large bushes and trees that stand on the perimeter of the grounds and can not be seen from the winding road that passes almost half a kilometre away from the building. Within the grounds there is little cover from the edge of the grounds to the building itself, providing a good killing ground, although there are small dips and rises in the land that will provide a minimal amount of cover for attackers.

The house itself has a bunk room, bathroom, ready room, security room, three en–suite bedrooms (for clients, sometimes families use the property and PTS), armoury, kitchen area, lounge, a large garage is attached to the main building. The walls are especially reinforced to be able to withstand any small arms fire, giving those within a distinct advantage when it comes to combat.

Vashinelli is protected by a team of three security officers. There is also a reaction team half an hour away, of four men (at the PTS offices). The local police will respond to initial reports of fighting but will back off once they realise that this is some sort of major actions, for which they are not trained or equipped to deal with.

They see the business of mercenaries as something that does not require them to get shot at by professional killers. If there is an extended firefight then better organised paramilitary police and/or military may be sent (arriving in an hour at the earliest, such a quick response would involve the players wounding or killing the first local police officers at the scene (before they have had a chance to evaluate the situation and back off)).
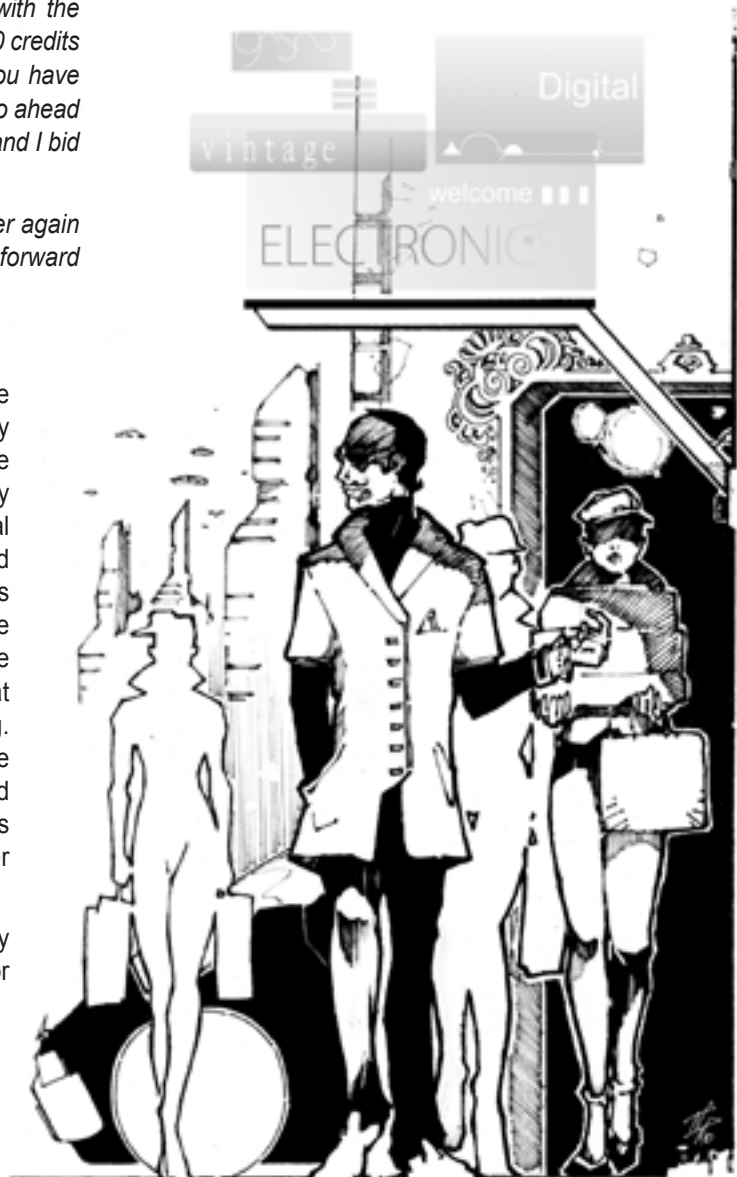
If captured alive Namsey will beg for her life, explaining it was all a joke and it was not her fault that some people actually used the recipe for K'Kree a l'Orange!

Payment

Mr Tidds has long left the planet by the time that this contract is over. Upon the confirmed death of Namsey payment will be made to the Player Characters. They will have the funds transferred into their accounts (unless they have specified another method of payment). Depending upon the chaos the players might have caused on the planet they may wish to leave the world. If they do so they will no doubt be contacted by Mr Tidds or another middleman of his employers again at some future date with another contract to fulfil.

Rigella Namsey

A popular celebrity chef, Rigella has been in the entertainment industry for over two decades, with her cookery shows being syndicated across many worlds. Her career came to a shuddering half four years ago with the ill–advised publication of an electronic cookbook 'The Intergalactic Cookbook' which featured recipes involving sentient alien species. Since publication (and the assassination of both her publicist and publisher) Namsey has been on the run and is believed to be hiding out in the near Vland, in the belief that the nature of Imperial space there will protect her.

The Intergalatic Cookbook

The only cookbook in history thought to have pushed so many races close to war! Written by top chef Rigella Namsey the book was an underground cult hit, supposedly as a spoof for all the other cookbooks out there that featured unusual ingredients from the worlds beyond the Imperium.

It was the K'Kree who first brought to light the problematic nature of the book with its recipes featuring various sentient races. Unsurprisingly the Aslan and various Vargyr governments soon added their voices in protest, the Hivers initially thought it was a great joke until it became clear that some enterprising traders had been capturing hiver young and shipping them far from their homeworlds to farms where they grew to adulthood destined for the pot.

Namsey is still on the run after her publicist and printer were both assassinated by freelance agents, the K'Kree are prime suspects, although the cookbook's notoriety made her many enemies.

As a footnote – the recipe for K'Kree is Orange Sauce was considered a classic by several (now deceased in unusual circumstances) top gourmands.

NPC Statistics:

The main protagonists are presented below. The vehicles and equipment for the mercenaries may vary according to the Referees preference to take into account the Tech Level they may be operating at. All of their equipment will be well maintained and in excellent condition. Neither Janther nor Namsey will be equipped with any weapons of their own, neither has any personal experience of the more brutal side of the *Traveller* universe.

Rigella Namsey

Entertainer Entertainer (performer) 6 terms

4	7	5	10	11	9

Advocate 1, Athletics 1, Carouse 1, Melee 0, Steward 4, Streetwise 1

Cloth Armour (TL10). Comm

Max Janther

Entertainer Entertainer (performer) 7 terms

3	5	3	9	9	8

Carouse 2, Deception 1, Investigate 1, Melee 0, Steward 3, Comm

Chloe M'banda

Army (infantry) 2 terms, Security 2 terms 8

8	9	11	7	7

Melee (unarmed) 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol)1, Gun Combat (slug rifle) 2, Athletics (coordination) 1, Streetwise 1, Tactics (Military) 2

Comm, Cloth Armour (TL10), ACR

Typical Mercenary

Army (infantry) 3 terms, Security 1 term 9

8	10	6	6	6

Melee (unarmed) 2, Gun Combat (slug rifle) 2, Athletics (co–ordination) 1, Sensors 1, Stealth 1

Comm, Flak Jacket (TL 8), ACR

Medic!

By Alex Green

A detailed look at how medics and other medical personnel can operate in Traveller, across worlds of differing Tech Levels.

Introduction

The role of the Medic in *Traveller* is mostly undervalued. If a character takes a wound in combat, usually the healing process takes place in downtime, a process involving a glossed–over visit to a local hospital unit and a rapid discharge with a clean bill of health and a hefty medical bill or a quick once–over by the Ship's Medic and a few hours' confinement to a low berth while the Medicinal Slow kicks in. Little attention is paid to the role of the ship's medic in the game: the focus on combat and trading puts the science and healing on the back burner for the majority of the time. This article begins by charting the development of medicine through the technological levels, to suggest to referees what might be available locally for injured characters. Next, the role of the medic in a *Traveller* campaign is highlighted; along with possible fees that a ship's medic can claim as a roving private medical consultant. Some Patrons with a medical theme follow, rounding off this part of the article. The second half will describe specific issues regarding medicine and medical practice in a *Traveller* campaign, including the possibility of an entire campaign based on the adventures of characters who happen to be physicians.

MEDICAL INNOVATIONS BY TECH LEVEL

As societies develop technologically, not only do they make new discoveries – they develop new tools, also. So it is in the field of medicine. The cultural and technological developments listed here are derived from human history on Terra. Other alien races may have developed in different ways. The Hivers, for instance, have little concept for OB–GYN and Droyne medical technology varies from world to world, sometimes from individual to individual, with a staggering range of sophistication from the primitive to the positively magical dizzy heights of the tech levels above 15 and 16.

Cap on Available Skills: At lower tech levels, the availability of reliable knowledge is extremely limited. Referees are advised to cap levels in all the Sciences and Medic to the suggested skill cap level for NPCs at that tech level. Thus, if a TL 8 soldier were wounded on a TL 3 world, the presiding medic's skill could be no more than Medic–2 and at that level of skill said medic would be the highest ranking physician on that planet.

Tech Level 0

Firemaking is invented. Early weapons used for hunting provide protein to allow brain growth and increasing sentience. Trepanning (drilling a hole in the head) is invented: it is used in some surgeries up to TL 10. Some communities have a designated wise woman / herbalist / midwife or shaman figure, generally knowledgeable in herbal lore, though somewhat hit and miss. Bone implements and animal gut and plant glues are used to fashion crude surgical implements including the heyssaw (a stone pick used in trepanation). Medic and Sciences skills are capped at 0.

Tech Level 1

Physicians appear in the historical records. Primitive descriptions of anatomy and herbalism appear. Anatomists begin to dissect cadavers and animals out of scientific scrutiny rather than divination. Physicians can bind wounds, cauterise extensive injuries with fire and boiling oil, perform cataract surgery and use leeches to relieve blood pressure. Egg yolks and sponges provide ophthalmia. Massage therapy and bone setting techniques are developed. Hemlock and henbane are known poisons. Alcohol is invented, providing the first chemical anaesthetic in surgery as well as everywhere else.

Milling produces the first bread from grain flour. Grain also yields the first beer. Soap is invented, along with an early form of vaccination. Public sanitation is invented: bathing, latrines and clean running water delivered along pipes and channels. Surgical tools of surprising sophistication are developed during this time from metal, bronze and other materials. Obsidian is discovered to hold an edge sharper than steel and finds use in surgery as primitive scalpels. Antimony is used to staunch bleeding cuts. Medic and Sciences skills are capped at 1.

Tech Level 2

The first authoritative treatises on anatomy are published. Physicians know how to treat lacerations and bone fractures. Dressings, poultices and bandages are invented, replacing cauterisation of wounds. Alchemy is developed: distillation and other techniques yield refined spirit alcohol, perfumes and medicines extracted from various materials. Several elements are discovered, among them arsenic and phosphorus. Medic and Sciences skills are capped at 2.

Tech Level 3

Cures for diseases such as scurvy are found. The first treatises on pathology as a science are written. The invention of the optical microscope and the discovery of bacteria and micro–organisms revolutionise medicine, paving way for the future inventions and discoveries of TL 4. Medic and Sciences skills are capped at 2.

Tech Level 4

Further developments in medicine lead to the germ theory of disease propagation and the policy of antiseptic procedures in surgery and general hygiene in medicine. Hypnosis is discovered. The first blood transfusions take place. Early experiments in heredity lay the ground for modern genetics and the study of evolution. The structure of cells is analysed, leading to the discovery of white blood cells and the first analyses of diseases such as yellow fever, typhoid and malaria are made. Cancer is identified as uncontrolled cell division. The ophthalmoscope, stethoscope, sphygmomanometer (blood pressure monitor) and syringe are invented. Experiments to determine the chemical composition of air lead to the discoveries of chemical anaesthetics such as ether, chloroform and nitrous oxide, leading to their use in surgery. Marijuana, cocaine and opium are routinely prescribed to patients suffering chronic pain. The discovery of radioactivity promises a whole new field of medical technology. Medic and Sciences skills are capped at 3.

Tech Level 5

The genetic basis of heredity is confirmed. Hormones are discovered, as is blood typing. Transplant surgery is pioneered. Vitamins are discovered. The role of the pituitary gland and other parts of the brain are outlined. Psychoanalysis begins to treat the mind as medicine treats the body. The first true ranges of medicinal drugs are invented, ranging from aspirins to anti–cancer treatments and general and local anaesthetics. Insulin is isolated and prescribed to diabetics. The first truth drug is invented. Doctors routinely carry medical kits around with them, in distinctive black bags. Rubber gloves, masks and gowns enter the operating room for the first time. The invention of the electric light bulb offers a more efficient method of lighting operating theatres and autoclaves routinely sterilise surgical implements. X–rays provide a new diagnostic tool for physicians. The ECG is invented to monitor heart activity and the EEG monitors brain activity. Ambulances appear, along with a new type of physician: the paramedic. Medic and Sciences skills are no longer capped at this or higher tech levels.

Tech Levels 6 – 8

Modern medicine, as practised on Earth c. 1930 through to the 21st century, is a bewilderingly vast subject. Human anatomy has been studied down to the genetic level, with the structure of DNA laid out along with its role in genetics and heredity well mapped. Cloning, transplant surgery and gene therapies are developed. Even neural and hepatic (liver) tissues can be made to regenerate. The mind, also, is undergoing scrutiny as psychoanalysis matures and develops. The rational scientific community meets early experiments with psionics with scepticism, leading to surprise and finally acceptance as psionics capabilities are proven. The first Panaceas and stim drugs are invented and anti–rad drugs developed for use by astronauts to counteract long–term exposure to solar radiation. Psi–standard drug boosts telepathic ability at TL 8, establishing verifiable psionics for the first time. Air ambulances appear at TL6, first helicopters and eventually VTOL thrust–powered vehicles. Full body scanners, electron microscopes, ultrasound and ever more sophisticated surgical procedures overtake one another with great speed, each offering ever more sophisticated diagnosis and treatment of diseases and medical conditions. At TL 8, the first computerised modern Medkit is invented, combining many of the above technologies' functions in a handheld unit.

Tech Levels 9 – 10

VTOL propulsion gives way to grav assist and eventually full grav propulsion, rendering ground based ambulance obsolete. Reliable cloning and cybernetic replacement of limbs enables the most severely injured patient to get up and walk. Tissue samples can now be grown into cloned organs to replace those lost to disease or accident. Amputated limbs can be regenerated with a simple medical treatment and prosthetic limb replacements now routinely outperform patients' natural limbs, to the point where disabled athletes are banned from attending able–bodied sporting events for fear of upstaging the other competitors. Advances in cryogenics lead to the development of cryoberths at TL 10, along with low passage berths. At TL 9, Psi–inhibitors and Psi–double drug are invented; and TL 10 sees the development of Psi–special drug. The greatest advances come from the invention of metabolic accelerators, leading to the invention of Fast Drug, Slow Drug and Combat Drug.

Tech Levels 11 – 12

Medicinal Slow Drug provides the ultimate tool in the medical treatment of injuries. Coupled with cryoberths, modern cloning and regenerative techniques and speedy grav ambulance services, death as a result of accidental injury becomes almost unheard of, except amongst the poor. TL 12 sees the invention of the autodoc – a specialised, immobile robotic physician. Combined with the cryoberth and contemporary medical procedures, autodocs become available on most worlds of this

tech level and make most doctors obsolete at a stroke.

Sickbays from TL 12 onwards comprise rows of cryoberths and autodocs who perform required surgical procedures. No further human intervention is needed. There are still no caps on Medic or Science skills, although for treating simple injuries and replacing lost organs and limbs human physicians start to become increasingly obsolescent at this time.

Tech Levels 13+

Medical treatment by autodoc becomes routine in civilised society at this time. Physicians focus on finding cures and treatments for diseases and poisons for which there is yet no cure; and as human beings venture further and further into uncharted space, visiting worlds where no man has gone before, they find plenty of brand new pathogens to test their immune systems.

At TL 15 medical treatment becomes economical enough to bring its benefits to even the poorest disenfranchised among the population, who can be cured and healed of almost anything except death itself. With smarter and smarter computers being invented and Expert, Agent and Intellect software being developed for the Medic and Life Sciences skills, human doctors

find computers at first to be a blessing, and later a curse as the intelligent software begins to outstrip the humans' capabilities. The invention of the bioscanner and neural activity sensor at TL 15 merely crowns the list of technical achievements made by humanity at this time: the shining achievement, by this era, is the long history of medical tech itself, not any new tools man may invent.

DOCTOR ON BOARD – THE SHIP'S MEDIC

Qualifications

A ship's medic must have at least Medic–0. Usually, the only time a Medic–0 is designated a ship's medic is if the only available qualified medic has been killed or incapacitated and no other qualified personnel are available. If a ship has more than one physician, the character with the highest Medic skill is assigned the position of chief medical officer and can draw an extra Cr. 1000 above and beyond what her staff earn. Characters with Medic–0 know basic first aid and can stabilise severe wounds; characters with Medic–1 or 2 can operate as paramedics and are qualified to perform life saving field surgery. A character with Medic–3 or more is a full doctor, can prescribe medical treatments and has earned the title 'Doctor' with their name, e.g. Dr Zahevis. If the character also has Dexterity 8+, he is qualified as a surgeon and has the title 'Mister,' 'Miss,' 'Mrs' or

'Ms', e.g. Mr Roget. If assigned to a ship, they may be referred to as the ship's surgeon.

The Physician's Role

Physicians appear when a character suffers wounds, dispense a magical curative, restore the character's health within a few minutes and send them back out onto the battlefield to incur more injuries. When needed, the medic is the ship's crew's best friend. Between the frantic calls for aid, they are best seen but not heard. Aboard ship, however, the ship's medic has a wide range of duties which can bring her character to the fore in a number of scenarios.

Doctor's Orders

In science fiction TV shows, the medic character is often portrayed as being grumpy and irritable. Perhaps, considering the typical behaviour of

Traveller Player Characters, their grouchiness is not without good reason. In accord with an ancient Maritime law, the orders of a ship's chief physician supersede those of the captain where the health and wellbeing of the crew or the competency of the vessel's commanding officer, are concerned. A ship's physician can have a captain declared incompetent and unfit for duty and have her relieved of her post until such time as the captain can receive a full medical check–up and be given a physical and psychological clean bill of health. The physician can order all ship's crew to undertake regular physical examinations, testing for the usual bodily functions – temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respiration, weight, cholesterol levels and substance abuse. This includes regular checks of cybernetic or other augments or implants the characters may have. Regular ship's crewmembers are required to have a physical once every six months; augmented crewmembers are required to have a physical monthly.

A ship's physician has a legal responsibility to maintain the crew's health. Apart from the physicals, they do this by monitoring the crew's diet and ensuring that they eat the proper balance of vitamins, minerals and proteins to keep them healthy and sane. Medics are often seen wandering the length of the ship dispensing vitamin pills, supplements and regular anti–rad shots to the crew in Engineering or even adding the appropriate nutrient packs to food dispensers in the ship's galley. On arrival at a new world, the physician will usually insist on providing the landing crew with broad spectrum inoculations to bolster their immune systems against any strange new diseases they may encounter. Finally, the ship's medic has the duty of looking after all of the passengers in low berths, as well as the more onerous duty of having to write the death certificates for those crew and low passengers who do not make it.

Low Berth Maintenance

The ship's medic must roll 8+ for each low berth patient. The DM is –3 for characters with Medic 0, –2 for characters with Medic–1 and –1 for characters with Medic–2. If the medic fails this roll, the low berth patient dies in transit. Characters with Medic–3 and above do not need to roll: they automatically succeed in keeping all of their low passengers alive. A ship's medic can look after any number of low passengers at a time but on larger vessels a chief medical officer usually has staff at hand for this task.

Research and Diagnosis

Ship's doctors are generally fiercely proud of their profession and do not suffer conflicting opinions readily. At the higher tech levels, with the rising threat of expert systems and automated medicine rendering a human medical opinion worthless, doctors have become very territorial. An NPC physician is likely to feel aggrieved if his medical opinion is contradicted by a machine; and characters are frequently treated to the amusing sight of their ship's medic furiously screaming at a wall panel. If a new disease or ailment strikes the crew, the ship's medic has to research the cause of the sickness and a possible treatment that will not kill the patients.

This is one function which a machine cannot serve and the main reason why ships still require a living medic even at TL 15 or higher. If an unknown illness strikes a crew between worlds, the medic has to conduct tests using what facilities that are available on board ship, including using stricken crewmembers as guinea pigs to test any treatments and conducting autopsies on deceased crewmembers.

The ship's medic has an absolute right to perform these experiments. If the disease seems immune to known treatments, that same ancient Maritime law that gives the physician power over the vessel's captain also requires that she declare the vessel under quarantine. Nothing leaves the ship, nothing enters it.

PRIVATE CONSULTANCY: THE MEDICAL TRAVELLER

Sometimes a Player Character chooses a full time Physician career path but instead of setting up a practice planetside or joining a ship's payroll as its medical officer, they choose to make their own way through the universe, using their medical skills and abilities as and when. The ground under their feet is their practice and their medical equipment is whatever is to hand in their medicinal bag or local supplies. With the advent of autodocs and medicinal slow drug, elective surgical alterations to the face and body have become ludicrously routine, with patients going under the knife and emerging with new faces and surgically enhanced bodies just 24 hours later. Yet still, on many lower tech worlds, surgeons from high tech planets are heavily in demand for operations such as remedial plastic surgery on burns victims and on children with congenital defects such as cleft lips. A ship's medic with a decent high–tech medkit and access to ship's facilities can offer his services while his ship is grounded and a private medical consultant can potentially earn incredible amounts of money if his reputation is good.

Elective Surgery

As a rule, private elective surgery (plastic surgery, implanting or removing augments, removing tattoos and so on) can earn a doctor Cr. 500 x her Medic skill x the tech level of the equipment available, plus expenses.

Operating privately as a consultant, performing procedures such as gender reassignments and face lifts, a medic can potentially charge Cr. 1,000 per day x his Medic skill x the highest tech level of locally available accessible equipment, again plus expenses. That does not even take into account expenses such as drugs:

a medic with a reliable source of anagathics could easily earn enough money just from delivering courses of injections alone to be able to retire in his late 20s. That, of course, brings up one other benefit of having medical qualifications: medics and physicians can legally carry and prescribe, a variety of drugs and controlled substances that could get a non–medical character arrested, imprisoned or even executed if found in his possession. A medic can even carry Psi–drugs, if he can make the claim that they are of use for the "psychopharmaceutical treatment of psychiatric patients.

OB–GYN

A competent medic knows how to deliver a baby. A physician who specifically qualified in Obstetrics and Gynaecology can potentially find clients in every starport and human colony. This aspect of the Medic Skill is not without risks. A qualified medic knows as much about preventing and terminating pregnancies as she does about fertility and midwifery and this can land a medic in serious trouble if she is not careful. Some parts of the universe, particularly those worlds ruled by the more xenophobic theocracies or oligarchic societies founded on misguided concepts of genetic purity and eugenics, sometimes have peculiar, inconsistent and intolerant views on physicians who terminate pregnancies and even those who preach the use of contraceptives and birth control methods.

Many an otherwise benevolent physician has found himself the subject of a witchhunt by ignorant locals and ended their life at the end of a noose or even tied to a burning stake, for this dangerous knowledge.

Some of the more barbaric cultures practice medical procedures outlawed in other parts of the Imperium, such as lobotomies on suspected psions, State–enforced genital mutilation or sterilisation of citizens considered by "the majority" to belong to a disenfranchised minority (the criteria does not matter; underpinning each such culture is a bigotry that is sadly universal even in the *Traveller* universe) or termination of citizens above a certain age, e.g. 60 years.

It is entirely possible that characters can come from such cultures and have acquired such shadowy medical knowledge as part of their medical repertoire. Referees are encouraged to steer Player Characters away from this path, mostly out of respect for other players in the party.

Gerontology

No doctor has ever found a cure for death. However, anagathics have managed to stave off the Grim Reaper for a select few. Research into aging and dying also continues apace. A medical character could make the study of aging her primary focus in her travels throughout the galaxy. Drawn by medical reports of naturally long–lived "Lazarus Longs" and

Methuselahs to the sad sufferers of progeria – a medical condition that forces children to grow old rapidly and die at a tragically young age – a wandering physician can find plenty of adventure hooks in his search for immortality (even if that immortality is just his own).

The Holy Grail of medical characters pursuing this line of enquiry is, of course, the discovery of the perfect anagathic that delivers immortality with just a single shot. To date, this treatment remains elusive – but progress in the field of anagathics suggests that the quest is not a futile one.

PART 2: MORE MEDICAL MATTERS

In Part 1, the cultural role of the physician in the *Traveller* universe was examined. Part 1 outlined the historical development of medicine through the technological levels, and looked at elective surgery, obstetrics and those complications which take *Traveller* medicine out of the realm of "cure light wounds." Part 2 brings further expansions to the repertoire of the physician in a *Traveller* game, in the form of new specialities, new tasks and new medical technology. The article also presents material for the Referee.

New Specialities and Tasks

New Specialities

The Medic skill, as described in *Traveller*, was presented without specialities. However, medicine is a field rife with specialities, and this article can only present a few of the major branches, the ones of greatest relevance to the player characters.

• **Neurology:** The study of the brain and nerve function. Required for specialist neurosurgeons.

• **Cardiology:** The study of the cardiovascular system (the heart and blood vessels). Required for specialist cardiologists.

• **Psionology:** The practice of psionic medicine; covers both the use of psionics in medicine and the practice of treating deterioration or injury of a patient's psionic talents and abilities and the study of things which affect them for good or ill.

• **Epidemiology:** The study of diseases and pathogens, and how they spread in a population.

• **Immunology:** The study of the body's immune system, and how it fights off infections and pathogens.

• **Pathology:** The study of how the body's systems fail, and the causes of death. Coroners and medical examiners develop this speciality.

• **Forensic Medicine:** The practice of medicine as it relates to determining causes of wrongful or unlawful death, and the presentation of evidence in court.

• **Triage:** The practice of assessing the survivability of patients in battlefield situations or after disasters.

• **Obstetrics:** The practice of medicine concerning pregnancy, birth and the reproductive system.

• **Cryomedicine:** The operation of cryoberths, low berths and the administration of fast drug and other techniques of suspending animation.

• **Cybernetics:** The practice of implant medicine, usually found among medics whose crew relies on combat implants. Also covers nanomedicine, nanotherapy and nanotechnological augmentation procedures.

• **Genetech:** The practice of genetic medicine, including gene therapy and genetic augmentation procedures.

• **Xenomedicine:** The practice of medicine concerning alien species.

New Tasks
These tasks expand upon the repertoire of tasks from *Traveller*. The difficulty rating for some of the procedures varies with the technological level: see below.

Diagnose new disease or poison, Intelligence, 1–6 hours, Special. Identifies a disease.

Stabilise serious injury, Intelligence, 1–6 minutes, Average (+0) (Patient will no longer deteriorate and is considered injured rather than seriously injured).

Remove foreign object, Education, 1–6 minutes, Routine (+2). Foreign object removed; healing improves by +2.

Implant cybernetic / genetic / nanotechnological augmentation, Education, 1–6 hours, Special.

Perform transplant surgery, Education, 1–6 hours, Special.

Perform cosmetic surgery, Education, 1–6 hours, Special. Alters patient's appearance or eliminates negative Social penalties due to appearance, e.g. battle scarring, tattoos.

Perform remote surgery, Education, 1–6 hours, Special. (Character performs surgery by text message or via a local internet, or by giving verbal instructions to another doctor over the telephone or comm – the operation must be some distance from the calling physician).

Conduct autopsy, Education, 1–6 hours, Average (+0). Identify cause of death or study anatomy of decedent.

Antique and Advanced Medicine
In the previous article, the stages of medical development by technological level were outlined. Just as with other forms of technology, medical developments begin as groundbreaking procedures at these technological levels, become routine as technology improves and ultimately become simple procedures, usually replaced by more advanced therapies only just coming into being.

Blood typing leads to transplant surgery, ultimately being replaced by stem cell organ cloning and full organ tissue synthesis, for instance.

The difficulty of a medical task check depends on the difference between the local technological level and the technological level of the procedure being conducted. For reference, the technological levels for certain procedures, drugs and equipment are listed below. These are the levels at which tasks involving these procedures and drugs are considered Average (+0) checks.

TL 2	Set a bone, deliver a baby
TL 4	Simple vaccination
TL 5	Surgery with anaesthetics
TL 5	Blood typing
TL 5	Truth Drug
TL 5	Medicinal Drug
TL 6	Mass inoculation program
TL 6	Chemotherapy
TL 6	Eye and ear surgery
TL 7	Laser surgery
TL 7	DNA typing
TL 8	Panacea Drug
TL 8	Anti–Rad
TL 8	Stim Drug
TL 8	Transplant organ / bone marrow

TL 8	TL 8 Medkit (p. 93, *Traveller*)
TL 8	Remote surgery
TL 9	Regenerate nerve tissues
TL 9	Clone new organ from stem cells
TL 10	TL 10 Medkit
TL 10	Slow Drug
TL 10	Combat Drug
TL 10	Cryoberth
TL 10	Fast Drug
TL 10	Synthesise organ
TL 11	Medicinal Slow
TL 12	TL 12 Medkit
TL 14	TL 14 Medkit
TL 15	NAS
TL 15	Bioscanner

Local TL

Procedure TL	Procedure	Task Check	Example
TL – 3	Groundbreaking	Formidable (–6)	Germ theory; first test tube baby
TL – 2	Pioneering	Very Difficult (–4)	First heart transplant
TL – 1	Advanced	Difficult (–2)	Open heart surgery
TL +0	Average	Average (+0)	Setting a bone; battlefield triage
TL +1	Routine	Routine (+2)	Blood transfusion
TL +2	Easy	Easy (+4)	Delivering a baby
TL +3	Simple	Simple (+6)	Prescription of aspirin

New Medical Technology and Techniques

Drugs and Medicines

Regeneration Drug (TL 9): Cheaper than Medicinal Slow, and available at an earlier Technological Level, Regeneration Drug ("Regen") is a useful alternative. Regen accelerates the metabolism, but more slowly than Medicinal Slow and not requiring a Cryoberth. A resting patient (bed rest's) natural healing rate (see p. 75, *Traveller*) is doubled. An active patient regains 1d6 + Endurance DM (if positive) per treatment but all tasks are performed at a –2 DM from the pain. Frequently Regen is administered with a sedative to keep the patient quiet; given the intense pain that comes with treatment, the patient typically finds sleep welcoming. Cr 300 per dose. Dermal Patches (TL 8): Dermal patches are perfect for slow release delivery of Medicinal Drugs through the skin. Costs are per drug, except derms take one hour to take effect and last four times as long as pills or injections. TL 9 Slap Patches deliver a quicker dose; these are used to tranquillise patients quickly (1d6 + Endurance DM combat rounds).

Youth Serum (TL 8): A weakened form of a toxin such as Botox, delivered by facial injection, this drug paralyses the facial muscles, thus tautening the skin. Has no effect on aging or aging rolls; but does offset some negative reactions to aged appearance – eliminating a negative Social DM brought about by Social characteristic loss due to aging. Cr. 150 for a single shot lasting about 12 hours. Sometimes produces a mask–like appearance; on a failed Average Social check, the negative DM is actually doubled instead and the character suffers 1d6 Dexterity damage.

Oxytocin (TL 8): An advanced form of Truth Drug, this undetectable liquid increases the bonds of trust between a subject and his interrogator. The patient finds it harder to resist attempts at Carouse, Deception, Leadership and Persuade tasks performed against her (–2 DM). This drug lasts for one hour and costs Cr. 100 per dose.

Fertility Drug (TL 7): Increases fertility. Patients are more likely to conceive through sexual activity. On an Endurance roll of 8+, a female patient undergoing treatment is more likely to conceive multiple births. Cr. 1,500 for a course.

Contraceptive Drug (TL 6): At TL 5, simple contraceptives become available. TL 6 is the first technological level at which they are available by prescription to the general public. Taking the form of a regime of pills, initially a female human takes one pill daily over the course of a single fertile cycle (period to period, typically about 28 days). At TL 8, a contraceptive patch is available, which has the same effect; at TL 9, a contraceptive implant becomes available which is a Routine task to inject, and lasts for six months between injections. Cr. 5 for a regime of pills; Cr. 10 for a patch; Cr. 50 for an implant.

New Medical Equipment

Biobed (TL 10): An open bench lined with a variety of sensors, onto which the patient lies. The biobed provides the equivalent readings of a TL 12 medkit. The TL 12 version has the equivalent of a TL 14 medkit. Not portable; usually found in a sickbay. The TL 10 version is immobile and bolted to the ground; the TL 12 version can be wheeled around like a trolley. A TL 14 version is a simple frame which is mounted around a bed; that is portable, weighing the same as a TL 14 medkit but requiring 1–6 minutes to set up, and providing a bonus DM of +2 to uses of the Medic skill.

TL 10: Cr. 2,000.

TL 12: Cr. 8,000.

TL 14: Cr. 16,000.

Disintegrator Therapy (TL 16): This technical equipment is more advanced than the highest Technological Level of the Imperium but is available as a bulky prototype as low as TL 14 where is first appears as a piece of immobile equipment the size of an ATV into which the patient is inserted. Scans and pinpoints foreign objects such as lodged bullets, pieces of broken off melee weapons and tumours and applies a field which suppresses the strong nuclear force. The targeted object sheds neutrons and disintegrates harmlessly in the body. The TL 14 version is immobile and costs Cr. 1,000,000; at TL 15, it weighs 100kg and can be wheeled around the patient. Cost Cr. 250,000. The TL 16 version is the size of a briefcase, weighs 10 kg and costs Cr. 50,000 on a TL 16 world.

Medical Nuclear Damper (TL 13): Eliminates radioactive particles in the patient's body. A single treatment by this device eliminates all accumulated rads in the patient's body. Patients may still require further treatment to restore any radiation damage to their systems. Usually carried into a disaster scene, at TL 13 the apparatus is the size of a shower cabinet. It is immobile when set up, weighs 50kg and costs Cr. 25,000. At TL 14, the mass is 25kg and the cost Cr. 12,500; at TL 15, the mass is 10kg and the cost Cr. 10,000.

Medical Robot (TL 14): A mobile, autonomous medical robot unit combining the best features of the Autodoc (p. 95, *Traveller*) with the mobility of a Servitor robot ("Robots and Drones," p. 94, *Traveller*). Often purchased by rich, paranoid Nobles who prefer to trust a machine when it comes to medical treatments. As with Autodocs, medical robots are traditionally exempt from laws against robotics due to their utility. Strength 7 (+0), Dexterity 9 (+1), Hull 2, Structure 2 Intelligence 9 (+1), Education 12 (+2), Social Standing 7 (+0) Traits: Integrated System (TL 14 medkit), Specialised Computer/3 (running Intellect/1 and Medic/2) Weapons: Surgical tools (Melee (scalpel), 1d6 damage) Cost: Cr. 150,000

Antique Medtech

Surgical Equipment (TL 5): Old–fashioned scalpels, hypodermic syringes, forceps, separators, a bone saw, trepanning apparatus, needles and sutures. Low technology, unpowered and still capable of saving lives even at Technological Levels as high as 15. 10kg. Cr. 1,000.

Doctor's Bag (TL 4): Basic equipment to check the patient's condition. Includes thermometers to measure temperature, a sphygmomanometer to measure blood pressure and a selection of Medicinal Drugs of various kinds. Also includes bandages and other first aid appraatus. 8 kg. Cr. 1,000.

Autoclave (TL 5): Apparatus to sterilise surgical apparatus for a procedure by subjecting them to high temperatures. 10kg. Cr. 500.

First Aid Kit (TL 5): Apparatus specifically to provide first aid on an injured patient, stabilising the patient and preparing her for transportation to hospital. Includes bandages, gloves and other apparatus, including a few doses of Medicinal Drugs. 5lg. Cr. 150. Resuscitation Kit (TL 8): A portable defibrillator and vials of adrenalin to be injected directly into the heart. Comes with syringes and other supplies to bring patients who have suffered a severe injury crisis (see p. 37, *Traveller*) back to life. 15kg. Cr. 1,500. Intensive Care Equipment (TL 4): Oxygen tents, traction frames and stirrups. +1 to long term medical care tasks. Cr. 2,000. Dialysis (TL 6): Antique medical technology for patients whose kidneys have failed. Requires being hooked up to the machine for hours at a time.

Initially the size of a large, immobile cabinet, they reach briefcase size by TL 8 before being phased out by efficient transplantation, organ cloning and tissue synthesis. Cr. 50,000. X–Ray Machine (TL 5): Provides primitive internal examination of patients. Detects foreign objects, broken bones and tumours, and permits dental identification of corpses. Cr. 10,000.

The machine weighs 20kg; the articulated frame is immobile. Someone subjected to this machine accumulates 1 rad per hour of continued exposure. Ultrasound Scanner (TL 7): Using the sonar principle, the ultrasound scanner is primarily used in OB–GYN, or where X–rays are contraindicated (such as testicular scanning). A handset is placed against the abdomen of a pregnant patient, and the foetus is imaged on a screen. TL 8 provides full 3D imaging, computer – generated: at TL 9, the handset is wireless: at TL 10, the display is holographic. Cr. 25,000. 20 kg.

Full Body Scanner (TL 7): From the earliest CAT Scanners to NMR and PET scans, full body scanners work the same way. The patient is immobilised on a trolley, and inserted into a machine which scans the patient, detecting tumours or abnormalities undetectable to X rays. At TL 8, 3D computer–generated imaging is feasible: at TL 10, imaging is holographic. Immobile. Cr. 100,000 to Cr. 500,000. Anatomical Skeleton (TL 3): Usually mounted on a frame, the joints held together by wire, the anatomical skeleton is a useful guide to the human skeletal structure.

At the lowest technological level, the skeleton is often that of a real deceased person. Cr. 500 (Cr. 250 as a prop from a theatrical shop). Where available, alien anatomical skeletons provide useful guides to the skeletal structure of alien sophonts (endoskeletal sophonts, that is). Cr. 1,500 to Cr. 50,000, depending on rarity of the specimen.

New Augmentations

The following are new cybernetic implants and augmentations, adding to the list of augmentations on pp. 89–90 of *Traveller*. Memory Augmentation: By enhancing the brain's ability to process stored knowledge and learned experience, the

character is able to make better use of his experiences. This augment enhances the character's Education characteristic in the same way as the Intelligence Augmentation implant (p. 89, *Traveller*). Apply the same TLs, characteristic increases and costs for Intelligence Augmentation to the character's Education characteristic instead.

Enhanced Hearing (TL 13): The character's ears are enhanced, giving her superlative balance (+1 to all Athletics tasks) and enhancing her ability to hear (+1 to all tasks using hearing) as well as the ability to pick up ultrasonic and infrasonic cues beyond the range of human hearing. Cr. 25,000.

Enhanced Kinaesthesia (TL 14): The character's senses of taste, smell, balance and touch are enhanced. The character makes task checks for the following skills as if her characteristic DM were doubled (positive only): Animals, Athletics, Deception, Investigate, Medic, Stealth, Survival. If her Dexterity DM is negative, this implant eliminates the modifier.

Biotechnology and Genetechnology

Technically these are just as much Augmentations as the cybernetic modifi cations above; but these Augmentations tend to operate on the genetic structure of the patient directly and thus produce more far–reaching alterations. Biotech and genetech therapies involve the creation of viral creches in the patient's thymus gland and bone marrow tissues, nanofactories producing modifi ed T–cells in the bloodstream and lymphatic system which house tailored retroviruses. These retroviruses partially rewrite the patient's DNA, altering certain genetic, cellular and chromosomal structures which result in the desired outward phenotypical changes (the augmentation).

All of the augmentations listed in *Traveller* on pp. 89–90 and below are available through this kind of treatment. However, the most potent and most desired use of genetech and biotech augmentation is in the control of the processes of aging.

Organ Regen (TL 9): Eradicates conditions such as diabetes or kidney or liver disease. Through cultivated stem cells, the patient is given a new kidney, liver or other organ to replace the failed organ. At TL 9, the organ is grown outside the body from the patient's own stem cells. At TL 11, genetically neutral organs are developed, which can be implanted into any recipient. At TL 14, the organ is grown inside the patient. Cost Cr. 50,000 – Cr. 150,000.

Restoration (TL 14): Restores damage brought about through a failed aging roll. The patient's age remains unchanged, and aging rolls are made as normal: but this therapy permits restoration of the patient's health and the eradication of the accumulated deterioration brought about by age once the aging roll has been made. Costs Cr. 100,000 plus Cr. 10,000 per term; a patient aged 46 (7 terms) will pay Cr. 170,000 for the procedure, rising to Cr. 180,000 when he reaches age 50 (8

terms). Typically as illegal as regular anagathics but available more widely and at lower Technological Levels.

Rejuvenation (TL 15): Through intensive genetic therapy and immersion for more than a week in a tank of bubbling fluids connected to oxygen and life support, the patient's physiological age is reset back to age 18. aging rolls no longer apply to the patient until the fourth term after this procedure (physiological age 34) whereupon they begin again as normal for the patient. The patient cannot receive a further rejuvenation until he has once again reached the chronological age at which he received the first rejuvenation treatment: if the patient received his first rejuvenation at age 66 (11 terms) he cannot receive another rejuvenation treatment for a further 11 terms, resuming aging after 4 terms (physiological age 34, chronological age 100). The patient may not take anagathics during this time, though she may have Restoration therapy (above) to alleviate aging damage sustained with each aging roll. Cost Cr. 1,000,000 plus Cr. 100,000 per term; a patient receiving rejuvenation at age 38 (5 terms) will pay Cr. 1,500,000.

Aging Slow (TL 13): This course of drugs does not prevent the character from aging, nor from the ravages of aging rolls. What it does do, however, is slow it down to a crawl. Each year from the first that the character receives this treatment, the character ages one year for every four. At TL 14, this increases to one year for every 8; at TL 15, this is increased to one year for every ten. In effect, while the character ages, he only needs to make an aging roll once every 16 years at TL 13, 32 years at TL 14 or 40 years at TL 15. Neither rejuvenation nor restoration treatments are effective to a patient under the infl uence of this therapy. One year's supply of this treatment costs Cr. 12,000; the character resumes aging at the normal rate if the supply is interrupted for one month.

Nanotechnology

Nanotechnological developments allow for the creation of temporary augmentations. These have the effects of regular implants, but their effect is temporary; at the end of their course, the nanotechnological devices dissolve and are ejected from the body as harmless chemicals. Such augments leave a distinctive and visible pattern on the skin while they last, resembling a kind of tattoo of living silvery circuitry running just beneath the skin. The following augments are available as temporary implants:

Neural Comm, Physical Characteristic Augmentation, Intelligence Augmentation, Skill Augmentation, Enhanced Vision, Memory Augmentation (above), Enhanced Hearing (above), Enhanced Kinaesthesia (above), Psionic Shield (above), Psionic Strength Augmentation (above). Temporary implants are available at 1 TL below the standard level for each augmentation listed – a temporary Neural Comm with a duration of 1 week, providing basic audio reception only, can be obtained at TL 11. Cost is 50% of the cost of a full implant, and the duration is one week: each extra week adds

that amount again to the cost. The above audio only neural comm would cost Cr. 500, but one that lasts one month would cost Cr. 2,000. Even shorter–term implantation is possible: a temporary augment lasting just one day costs as little as one fifth the listed cost. If the patient desires an augment which lasts for longer than four days, it is more cost effective to purchase a one week duration treatment instead.

Referee's Section

Not all Referees like the idea of running medical–themed scenarios. Stories of diseases, wounds and wandering about clad in blood stained scrubs aren't to everyone's tastes. However, some Referees might like the idea of setting challenges for medic characters. Perhaps a rich Patron approaches the medic looking for a supply of anagathics, or a plague might require an urgent delve through a trap–riddled Ancient base in search of a cure for a germ thought to be millennia dead. One's crewmates are always urgently demanding the medic's attention: despite medical advice, most characters prefer the sort of lifestyle where getting shot at is very common, and frequently they have to be on call to patch up their friends, only to send them right back onto the battlefield again – or join them there. Some ideas were offered in last issue's article. The following are some more challenges to present to a medic character.

Medicinal Slow ... And When To Say No

Most player characters rarely have to worry about injuries. One shot of Medicinal Slow (or Regen – see below) takes care of everything. But that reduces medic characters to mere dispensers of healing postions. Referees need to challenge physician characters – that means masks, bloodstained scrubs and arms sunk deep into gaping wounds. The Referee is advised to think of circumstances in which Medicinal Slow cannot be used, requiring player characters to actually perform surgery (see p. 56 and 75, *Traveller*) on their patients. Some suggestions include: The patient is allergic to Medicinal Slow; administering it would inflict 2d6 damage; No Cryoberth, low berth or other cryogenic facility (including Fast Drug) are available, or their power sources are unreliable and erratic; Medicinal Slow is unavailable anywhere, including the characters' own supplies, due to low Tech Level or too high a local Law Level; The wound is infected with a pathogen which thrives on the drug; A foreign object is lodged in the patient, requiring removal; The patient suffers a medical crisis (heart attack, stroke, aneurysm), requiring immediate stabilisation; – The patient is a child, a pregnant female or infirm from natural old age, high blood pressure or diabetes; The patient has a congenital condition, and is too frail for the Cryoberth; The patient has been prescribed a drug which reacts with Medicinal Slow, or is under the influence of recreational substances or Psi drugs; The patient has a combat implant which interferes with Medicinal Slow; The patient has a religious objection (e.g. the drug may be made from a natural herb which the patient's religion considers taboo, or conversely the Medicinal Slow could be purely synthetic, and the patient's religion forbids treatment by any medicines not derived from Nature); The patient is an alien.

Xenomedicine

Much of these articles has involved humans practising medicine upon other humans. *Traveller* being a science fiction game, humans aren't the only species – so sooner or later, either an alien medic may have to treat a wounded human, or an alien requiring medical treatment may end up on a human surgeon's table. Each alien species has its own cultural approaches to medicine. Human medics require a licence to practise medicine, but some alien cultures may not.

The Droyne, for instance, have a strict caste system – and a Droyne doctor might not have a license as such, as her career has been picked out for her at her Coyning (casting) ceremony. Zhodani doctors, being mostly drawn from the ranks of the psionically–gifted Intendants and Nobles, don't rely so much on mechanical technology to scan for deep injuries, as they consider their Psionic abilities to be far superior to any Imperial scanner. Hivers do not have Maternity wards in their hospitals or OB GYN specialists, due to the unique manner of Hiver reproduction; and the

Nature: The type of pathogen.

Dice (2d6)	Type	Earth equivalent
2–3	Bacterial	Plague, MRSA
4–6	Viral	Influenza, the common cold
7	Retroviral	HIV (any kind of virus that rewrites the patient's DNA)
8	Fungal	Thrush, athlete's foot
9	Parasite	Malaria
10	Pollen	Hay fever
11	Prion	CJD
12	Other	Nanotech; Psionic possessor entities from the movie *Ghosts of Mars*

Vector: How the pathogen travels from patient to patient.

Dice (2d6)	Vector
2–3	Airborne
4–5	Skin contact
6–7	Bloodborne
8–9	Waterborne
10	Animal vector
11	Genetic / Congenital (and thus cannot be transmitted except through heredity)
12	Psionic (e.g. Teleportation) or Other (e.g. infectious bite from a cadaver animated by a parasite)

Exposure: The DM applied to the character's Endurance check to shake off the disease.

Virulence	DM
0	−3
1–2	−2
3–5	−1
6–8	+0
9–11	+1
12–14	+2
15	+3

Damage: How much harm the pathogen causes each interval after exposure.

Virulence	Damage
0–2	1d6–6
3–4	1d6–4
5–6	1d6–2
7	1d6+0
8–9	1d6+2
10–11	1d6+4
12–14	1d6+6
15	1d6+8

Interval: The interval between Endurance checks.

Dice (1d6)	Interval
1–3	1d6 weeks
4–5	1d6 days
6	1d6 hours

K'Kree prefer non invasive surgery – whatever avoids breaking the skin and exposing the scent of spilled blood and meat.

A physician encountering an alien from a new species will find the alien's anatomy, physiology and psychology baffling. Regardless of the character's Medic skill, without the Xenomedicine speciality initial treatment of the alien species suffers the following drawbacks: The very first task check, whether it is an initial examination or first aid or medical care, will initially be a Formidable check for a Groundbreaking procedure; All task checks involving medical procedures on a member of this species suffer a –2 DM. After each encounter with a member of the species, including the first, the character has a chance to learn from the encounter and eliminate the –2 DM. This requires a Very Difficult (–4) Education check. Success means that the medic learns enough about the species encountered that he can treat further members of this species with confidence. The Xenomedicine speciality benefits medics in two ways.

Firstly, rather than a Groundbreaking procedure and a Formidable task, the initial task check is Difficult (–2) instead. Secondly, the Education check to learn from the encounter and eliminate the –2 DM is Average (+0). Another way of learning about aliens is, sadly, to examine alien corpses – providing the aliens' culture permits such examination. Success with this task automatically eliminates the –2 DM. The task check, in this case, is:– Perform alien autopsy, Education, 1–6 hours, Difficult (–2). These limitations apply to humans treating aliens, to aliens treating humans, and to alien medics treating aliens of entirely different species. It is as hard for an Aslan surgeon attempting to treat their first Droyne patient as for a human attempting the same treatment on that same Droyne.

Diseases

On occasion, you may have to come up with an alien disease or pathogen. Perhaps the ship's crew come down with something while in Jump, or a plague is spreading across the planet they just landed on. The following tables can help you to generate a nasty bug to trouble your characters. These expand upon p. 73 of *Traveller*.

You can modify the disease to affect a characteristic rather than Endurance. A disease that affects Strength causes muscle atrophy; a fungus that produces a neurotoxin that induces a tremor in the hands affects Dexterity.

Education can be affected by a sickness that affects memory, and Psions dread the onset of Targea's Syndrome, which causes a progressive reduction of Psionic Strength at a rate of 1 point of Psionic Strength per month.

PATRONS

The following are six Patrons with a medical theme. Three are Protagonists, and three Antagonists. These Patrons follow the same format as the Patrons in the supplement *760 Patrons*.

Protagonists Loyal Intern

Required Skills: None

Required Equipment: None

PLAYER'S INFORMATION
Motivated, helpful and skilled, this loyal intern is the character's understudy and a quick student of medicine.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION
The loyal intern is (roll a d6) ...

1: – a social networker who can procure drugs and medical technology at an advanced technological level and a good price, no questions asked.

2–4: – from the character's old neighbourhood, and a childhood friend.

5: – a relative of the character's old Mentor, who is indebted to the character for giving her daughter the practical medical experience she needs.

6: – a powerful Psion with a Talent for healing (treat as the Regeneration ability of Awareness, with a maximum Range of Close (range cost 0) and each Psionic Strength point healing a number of a patient's characteristic points lost equal to his Psionic Strength characteristic DM of +2).

Medical Ship's Captain

Required Skills: Medic

Required Equipment: None

PLAYER'S INFORMATION
This captain runs a Saint–class hospice ship (*Traders and Gunboats*, p. 52) who is taking on shipboard medical staff. He is rich and bored, a former Noble, and his mission is to travel to Poor worlds in his sector to help communities who can't afford fancy and expensive medical treatments.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION
The medical ship's captain is (roll a d6) ...

1–2: – an eccentric ex–Noble who, true his word, wants to help others, even if his motivation is boredom at first. Perhaps the characters can inspire him to genuine empathy.

3–4: – a former rakehell who has turned to religion and wants to make amends for his past life.

5–6: – actually running a flying brothel. The characters are paid well, and get to do some work dispensing contraceptives and broad spectrum inoculations to the "nurses," but they are mostly only there to make the ship's mission seem legitimate to the authorities.

Medical Archaeologist
Required Skills: Medic, Science

Required Equipment: Ship

PLAYER'S INFORMATION
This doctor has heard a rumour that an Ancient site may lie on an alien world a few Jumps away. He needs the characters to take him to the rumoured site so he can see if it is there – and, if so, that the rumours of a piece of Ancient medical technology are true. He is generous with funds and equipment, and his evidence appears solid.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION
The Patron is (roll a d6) ...

1–2: – desperate to find a cure to a disease that is killing his wife, currently resting in a Cryoberth in the hospital.

3–4: – hoping that the discovery will be the break that assures his fame in medical circles.

5–6: – honest and earnest, but fears that he could be wrong in spite of all the evidence. The characters may be needed to prove him right. If they do, they gain a skilled and knowledgeable Medic as a staunch Ally with access to a collection of Ancient medical artefacts.

Antagonists Drug Trial Victim
Required Skills: Investigate, Medic

Required Equipment: None

PLAYER'S INFORMATION
This unfortunate guinea pig was a participant in a drug trial which failed, leaving him looking monstrous. The only survivor of the trial, he claims that he is fleeing agents of the pharmaceutical company who have been sent to kill him to cover up their failure.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION
The Patron is (roll a d6) ...

1: – slowly dying from the effects of the non infectious disease he was being treated for.

2: – a Typhoid Mary, carrying an infectious disease and immune to it.

3–4: – bitter with the company, a favoured Patron of the characters, and wants to expose their activities. If he does, the characters will no longer be able to count the company for work.

5–6: – a con artist who has run this scam before, and is looking to rip off the characters.

Advanced Tech Physician
Required Skills: Streetwise

Required Equipment: Medicinal Drug, any medical technology

PLAYER'S INFORMATION
This arrogant physician comes from a world with a far higher Technological Level than the characters', and likes to rub the characters' noses in it at every opportunity, showing off his advanced technology and medicines at every turn.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION
The advanced tech physician is (roll a d6) ...

1–2: – secretly a heavy drug addict, hooked on the stims the characters' world is producing.

3–4: – a dreadful bore, and some nurses are planning on taking down this buffoon a peg or two. They need the characters' help to prescribe some sedatives and procure a couple of hookers.

5–6: – actually a worse medic than the characters, with a lower Medic skill. Without all his fancy tech toys he'd be little more than a glorifi ed general practitioner.

Angel of Mercy
Required Skills: Investigate

Required Equipment: Forensic toolkit

PLAYER'S INFORMATION
Patients are dying in the hospital where the characters are currently working. This Angel of Mercy is killing them.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION
The Angel of Mercy is (roll a d6) ...

1–2: – a licensed euthanist offering a voluntary service from the hospital. She has a hard job to do, but her world's government and Law Level sanction her activities to those who wish to die with dignity.

3–4: – a religious freak killing patients he deems "unclean," such as women having abortions or people taking anagathics.

5–6: – a psychopath who has been killing people for years, and is on the verge of becoming a spree killer and cutting patients up at random in a bloody rampage.

SYSTEMS DEFENCE

By Bryan Steele

Two new ships for players to encounter, defending systems from their rapacious and predatory intentions!

The MSDB is rarely left to its role without a decent amount of fighter or escort presence. It is an offensive powerhouse, launching waves of missiles and torpedoes into multiple targets with impunity. It is heavily reliant on its ammunition stores and MSDBs without proper fleet resource support will quickly become little more than flying targets. The normal crew consists of the captain, pilot, 2 engineers and 5 gunners.

Missile Systems Defence boat			Tons	Price (MCr)
Hull	500	Hull 10		32
Armour	Crystaliron	8 pts	50	12.8
No Jump Drive			–	–
Manoeuvre Drive Q				
Power Plant Q		Rating 6	46	120
Bridge			20	2.5
Computer	Model/3fib	Rating 15		3
Electronics	Advanced	DM +1	3	2
Weapons	Hardpoint #1 Hardpoint #2 Hardpoint #3 Hardpoint #4 Hardpoint #5	Missile Bay–9 Torpedo Bay–9 Torpedo Bay–9 Triple Turret (Beam Laser–8 x3 accurate) Triple Turret (Missile Rack x3) 300 Standard Missiles 48 Basic Torpedoes	31 31 31 1 1 25 120	24 24 24 4.3 3.25
Fuel	60 tons	Four weeks of operation	60	
Cargo	2 tons		2	
5 Staterooms			20	2.5
Extras	Fuel Scoops			1
	Ship's Boat		30	17.694
	Fuel Scoops			1
Software				–
	Library			–
	Intellect	Rating 10		1
	Fire Control/3	Rating 15		6
				0.0284
Life Support Cost (monthly)				**0.010**
Total Tonnage & Cost			**500**	

Lower
Missile
Bay

Missile
Storage

Torpedo
Bow
Storage

Torpedo
Midship
Storage

Port
Torpedo
Bay

Starboard
Torpedo
Bay

Torpedo
Stern
Storage

Fuel
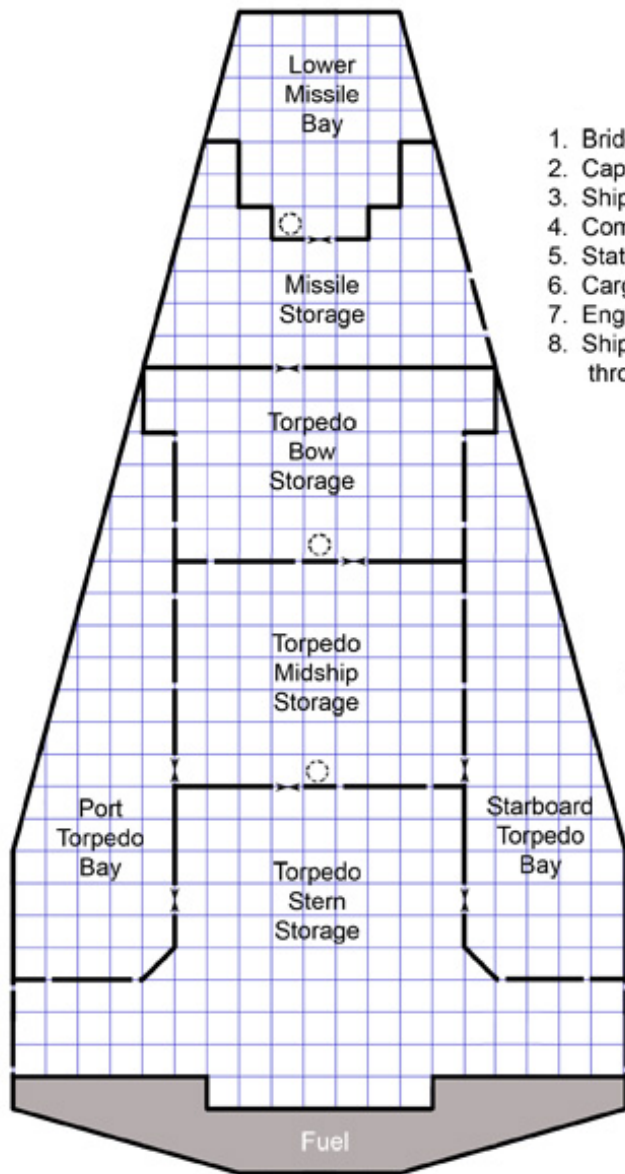
Weapons Deck
(level 1)

1. Bridge
2. Captain's Office
3. Ship's Locker
4. Common Area
5. Stateroom
6. Cargo Bay (has door into 8)
7. Engineering
8. Ship's Boat Berth (launches
   through ceiling doors)

Triple
Missile
Turret

Triple
Beam Laser
Turret

Upper
Missile
Bay

Fuel

Fuel

Power
Plant

1
2
3
4 6
5
5
5 5
5
7
8

Fuel

Power
Plant

Manoeuver Drive
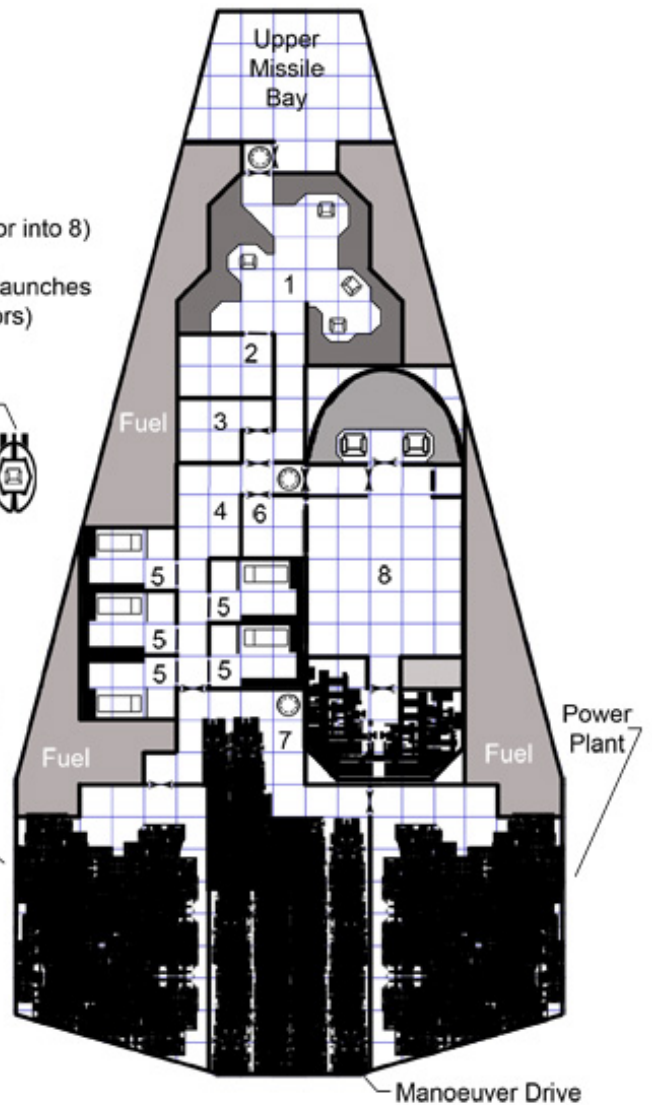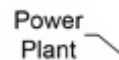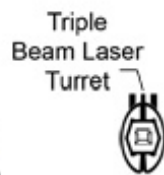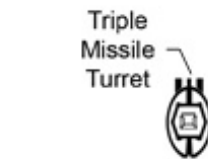
Command Deck
(level 2)

Using advanced technologies on the original defence frigate chassis, the DCF is at its best service at the centre of a small defence picket or fleet, running all of the actions of the system's defence from its high tech command and control (which replaces the hangar bay of the more common defence frigate). It is jump capable, with these normally being part of a subsector Navy which are then often 'lent out' to planetary navies that need such a starship to coordinate the system's defences. The normal crew is the captain, pilot, navigator, 3 engineers, 8 gunners and 5 flag staff

Systems Defence Command Frigate			Tons	Price (MCr)
Hull	800	Hull 16 Structure 16		80
		Streamlined		8
Armour	Crystaliron	8 pts	80	32
Jump Drive G		Jump 2	40	70
Manoeuvre Drive R		Thrust 5	31	64
Power Plant R		Rating 5	49	128
Bridge			20	4
		Command Bridge		6
Computer	Model /5 fib	Rating 25	80	15
Electronics	Counter–measures Suite	DM +4	7	6
Weapons	Hardpoint #1 Hardpoint #2 Hardpoint #3 Hardpoint #4 Hardpoint #5 Hardpoint #6 Hardpoint #7 Hardpoint #8	Particle Beam Bay–10 (High Yield) Missile Bay Missile Bay Triple Turret (Pulse Laser–9 (accurate) x3) Triple Turret (Pulse Laser–9 (accurate) x3) Triple Turret (Pulse Laser–9 (accurate) x3) Triple Turret (Sandcaster x3) Triple Turret (Sandcaster x3)	51 51 51 1 1 1 1 1	25 12 12 2.875 2.875 2.875 1.75 1.75
Ammunition		420 Standard Missiles	35	
		120 Sandcaster barrels	6	
Fuel	224 tons	One Jump 2 – Four weeks of operation	224	
Cargo	3 tons		3	
13 Staterooms			52	6.5
Extras	Escape Pods	13 Pods	13	2.6
	Fuel Scoops		–	1
	Fuel Processor	40 tons per day	2	0.1
Software	Manoeuvre/0			–
	Library			–
	Intellect	Rating 10		1
	Evade/2	Rating 15		2
	Fire Control/4	Rating 20		8
	Jump Control /2	Rating 10		–
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				0.0413
Life Support Cost (monthly)				0.026
Total Tonnage & Cost			800	495.325

1. Avionics
2. Bridge
3. Captain's Office
4. Ship's Locker
5. Stateroom
6. Common Area
7. Sandcaster Barrel Storage
8. Engineering
9. Countermeasures Suite
10. Command Bridge
11. Security
12. Breifing Room

Particle
Beam
Bay - 10

Missile Bay 1
Level 1

Missile Bay 2
Level 1

Chair	Machinery	
Bed	Low berth Unit	
Locker	Access Hatch	
Iris Valve	Hatch	
Iris Valve Floor	Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Ceiling	Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Both	Hatch Both	

1.5 meters
3 meters

Fuel

Fuel

Fuel

Manoeuver Drive

Particle Beam Bay Deck
(level 1)

Command Bridge Deck
(level 2)

1. Avionics
2. Bridge
3. Captain's Office
4. Ship's Locker
5. Stateroom
6. Common Area
7. Sandcaster Barrel Storage
8. Engineering
9. Countermeasures Suite
10. Command Bridge
11. Security
12. Breifing Room

Missile Bay 1 Level 2

Missile Bay 2 Level 2

Missile Storage

Fuel Purification Equipment

Triple Sandcaster Turret

Fuel

Fuel

Fuel

Fuel

6

7

7

5

5

5

5

5

9

Escape Pods

Cargo Bay

Escape Pods

8

Jump Drive

Missile Deck (level 3)

Triple Pulse Laser Turret

1

2

3

4

5

5

5

5

5

5

5

5

Escape Pods

Escape Pods

Fuel

Fuel

Triple Sandcaster Turret

8

Power Plant

Command Deck (level 4)

15 Meter Tall Fuel Fin (level 5)

Chair		Machinery	
Bed		Low berth Unit	
Locker		Access Hatch	
Iris Valve		Hatch	
Iris Valve Floor		Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Ceiling		Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Both		Hatch Both	

1.5 meters
5 meters

The Levall Affair

By Paul A. Dutton

A bounty hunting task for players that, being set on minor planets within a system, can be quickly dropped into any campaign.

This adventure is designed so that a Referee may drop it into an existing campaign. The PCs need to be *traveller*s who scratch a living from taking whatever jobs will pay the bills.

Whether trading, ferrying, smuggling, mercenary work or in this case – bounty hunting. It is assumed that the PCs have a starship. If the Referee invents a reason to provide one, then a 200 ton Fast Trader would be the most ideal.

Setting

The worlds presented in this short adventure are not the primary planets of their system; therefore this adventure may conceivably be placed in almost any appropriate star system. Many of the scenes give minimal information of their immediate surroundings in order that all of the "fluffy" details of the setting may be filled out from the Referee's imagination to suit his or her campaign style.

Background

Elliot Powell is on the run. He was convicted of murder on his home world and sentenced to death for his crime. After the trial, he managed to escape off world. Powell is an innocent man, wrongly convicted.

The true murderer is the local Police Chief who, in cahoots with his two senior officers, Piers Dugarry and Robert Dawns, is smuggling drugs onto the planet of Levall and forcing a string of petty crooks to peddle his illegal wares on the streets of Dassas. Chief Round exerts threats of violence and blackmail on the crooks to ensure their compliance.

Once smuggled onto Levall, Round used a warehouse owner named Ambas Lazarczuk to store his drugs near to Dassas Starport. One day Lazarczuk, tired of Round's constant threats, made the fatal error of threatening to expose Round to his superiors in government. Round stabbed Lazarczuk in the chest and left him to bleed to death.

Round and his officers were still in the vicinity when the unfortunate Elliot Powell discovered Lazarczuk's body. Powell made the perfect scapegoat when Round's officers arrested him at the scene. Now that Powell has escaped, Chief Round is desperate for a sense of closure on this whole affair. He is employing bounty hunters to bring Powell back to face his sentence. Enter the PCs.

The Adventure Act One

Levall UWP D553734–10 **Port** D, poor starport; **Size** 5, medium (8,200 km); **Atmosphere** 5, thin (breathable, 0.55ATM); **Hydrographics** 3, wet world 32%; **Population** 7, (45 million); **Government** 3, self perpetuating oligarchy; **Law** 4, moderate law; **Tech Level 1**0 (early stellar).

Levall is a planet that lays 0.85AU from its primary star. Unrefined fuel and limited repair services are available at its starport and some of its municipal spaceports. Scooping from open bodies of water is prohibited by law as this deprives the government of fuel taxes. The air and temperature are pleasant in the Polar Regions, which boast rugged mountain ranges, dark forests and many large lakes. Yet the equatorial zone is mainly arid, dry–rock desert with soaring temperatures during the summer months. There is no human habitation in the equatorial zone.

Apart from the small cities and towns of its northern hemisphere, Levall remains largely undeveloped. Its government is a forum whose members are selected from among the rich land–owning families rather than being democratically elected. Positions of power and officialdom are meted out amongst the members of the richer classes. Prejudice against the lower classes is commonplace. Levall's judicial system allows defendants to be judged by appointed forum officials. How fair the trial might be depends upon the prejudices of the judges. Most of Levall's towns are dusty, fly–speck mining settlements and farming communities. Many towns have seen little change since the time of the first prospectors arriving to colonise the world. In contrast, Dassas, the capital and largest city of Levall, is a shining jewel of commerce and modern living.

Employment on Levall

Julius Round is the Chief of Police in Dassas. A stocky man of about 50 years with a balding head and a piercing stare in his eyes that makes most people feel uncomfortable in his presence. His office is located on the first floor of the Dassas Police Bureau building in the heart of the city. His demeanour

tells of a man who enjoys his position of power and yet loathes the work responsibilities that come with it.

Though he recognises the importance of hiring experienced personnel with the necessary skills to complete the job, he none the less finds it difficult to hide his arrogance and disdain toward the working classes when interviewing them. A fact not lost on the PCs gathered in his office. Chief Round briefs the PCs of the situation: An escaped criminal convicted of murder. After sentencing at his trial he managed to overcome his guards when being transferred back to gaol. This was five days ago. Powell is described to the PCs as a dangerous killer who cannot be allowed to escape justice.

The PCs are one of a small group of bounty hunters hired to find Powell. Each group receives a retainer of 5,000 Cr for expenses to undertake the job but only one group will receive the full bounty of 50,000 Cr for the return of Elliot Powell to justice on Levall. Chief Round refuses to be drawn on how many bounty hunters are already on the case. He does though furnish each PC with temporary credentials. These credentials, until revoked, will afford minor privileges to the PCs in their pursuit of Powell. The status bestowed upon the PCs by these credentials is ambiguously termed 'Agent of Law'. The credentials may allow PCs to enter and search Powell's home, access shipping lists at the starport or may be produced as a warrant if arresting Powell on another world with which Levall has an extradition treaty. The credentials will not allow PCs to poke their noses into official police records or business. Chief Round will inform the PCs that Powell's last reported sighting was four days ago at Dassas Starport where he was caught on security camera. The port is located just 8km south of the city. Powell is assumed to have evaded security and smuggled himself on board a vessel to escape off–world.

Investigations

Though Powell may conceivably have smuggled himself aboard any random starship, he has actually headed to Eca IV, a mining colony in–system where his sister lives and works. The PCs can learn of the existence of Powell's sister from investigations at his home. This is the only lead they will have and should be enough to send them on their way. If PCs decide to investigate the crime scene, the Referee should make sure that the PCs do not gain easy access until much later, when investigations here play an important part in Act Four of this adventure.

Work – F. J. Sai Storage Company

Powell worked as a warehouse labourer near to Dassas Starport. He travelled to work on public transport (wheeled vehicle, bus). The warehouse hires storage space to merchants operating from the port itself. Powell's boss, Folson Sai, regards Powell as an honest and diligent worker. Sai was truly shocked when Powell was arrested; he adds that "It just goes to show, you just can't tell about some people". Powell's work colleagues all agree that Powell was a popular guy, everybody seemed to like him.

When talking with any of Powell's work colleagues, a Streetwise check (8+) reveals that they believe Powell is an innocent man. PCs will learn that another colleague claims to have witnessed what really happened. The witness is Arran Kitzler who can be found hard at work in the warehouse. Kitzler is initially reluctant to talk to the PCs but some good roleplay and a Persuade check (10+) is enough to prize information out of Kitzler: He was with Powell when the murder occurred: "We were walking by Lazarczuk's warehouse when we heard the sounds of a scuffle. Elliot went in to investigate and found Lazarczuk lying dead already. I looked in to see Elliot holding a knife but I can assure you he didn't have the knife when he went inside. Then the police arrived and arrested him. But Elliot would never do such a thing. I filed a full witness report but it was never submitted in defence at the trial because they say I didn't see the actual murder".

Kitzler is holding information back. A few days after Powell's arrest, one of Round's officers approached Kitzler and warned him not to speak with Powell's lawyer. Kitzler was not to become a witness for the defence. Although a Deception check (8+) will allow a PC to realise that Kitzler is holding back, no amount of coercion will convince Kitzler to reveal this. Development If PCs approach the authorities regarding Kitzler's story they will get nowhere.

Police will dismiss Kitzler's original statement as inconclusive evidence. Kitzler will mysteriously disappear the next day, never to be seen again. Trade If the PCs wish to engage in trade, they may broker a deal with Folson Sai. Most of the stored goods belong to merchants but Sai has 20 tons of basic consumables available for 1,200 Credits per tonne and 15 tons basic manufactured goods at 8,000 Cr per ton. A PC can barter with a successful Broker check (8+) to reduce the price by 100 Cr per tonne for every 1+ of effect on the check. For resale value – see base price on p165 of the *Traveller* **Core Rule** book.

Home – 89b Lingholme Apartments, Sector 19, Dassas.

Powell lived with his wife, Mina and young son, Parker, in a small apartment in a run down tenement block in a poor sector of Dassas. Mina is at her wits end with worry. Her husband is on the run from a death sentence. The media, the authorities and even her neighbours are making her life a misery and without an income she and Parker are struggling to get by. Mina will not be happy to receive the PCs, especially if she finds out that they are bounty hunters. She has received no contact from Elliot and does not know of his whereabouts. If PCs search the apartment an Investigate check (6+) is enough to find several letters addressed to Elliot from off–world.

The letters are from Elliot's sister, Hannah Gravesson who corresponds every few months to keep in touch with her

brother. Her return address is given as Habitation Block 2, Station 23, Eca IV. On a Persuade check (8+) Mina will confirm that apart from her and Parker, Hannah is Elliot's only living relative. She is married to a mine worker on Eca IV.

Crime Scene – Lazarczuk Storage

More than two months after the murder, this small warehouse is still sealed off as a crime scene. Round has ordered it so. PCs will be prevented from entering by a security patrol or night watch. If PCs do enter and attempt a search they will be interrupted by the arrival of police called by someone who witnessed them breaking in. PCs will be ushered away from the crime scene. If the PCs return here in Act Four of the adventure they may get luckier.

Defence Lawyer

Kal Persalis is a forum appointed yes man. As a defence lawyer his job is to make the Levall judicial system look fair instead of the class prejudiced farce that it truly is. Persalis did little to no work on providing any sort of defence for Powell. He is only ever appointed to defend the poorer classes and in his entire career he has never won so much as a single case, nor does he ever expect to. Persalis' offices can be located on an Admin or Streetwise check (8+).

The stencilled letters on the glass–paned door of his private office read 'K.J.Persalis. Attorney at Law.' Kal is a lanky, frail looking man who will be flustered by a visit from the PCs and if necessary will contact Chief Round directly to have someone come round and remove them. Persalis will refuse to engage with the PCs stating that client confidentiality prevents him from entering into any discussion of individual cases. Persalis's case files on Powell were confiscated by Chief Round. The PCs will learn nothing here.

The Starport

Starport records list 171 vessels departing Dassas on the day that Powell was last sighted. This is narrowed down to 18 departures within the hour or so immediately after Powell was filmed on security camera.

All vessels on arrival are required to state their last port of call and on leaving to state their intended destination. If PCs cross reference departures for Eca IV, they will find only one flight listed: A free lance trader called the Vogel. An Admin (6+) locates the Vogel's manifest. It was carrying a cargo of fabrications required for essential repairs to one of Eca IV's mining stations.

Eca IV

Once PCs discover that Elliot Powell has a sister on Eca IV, it will provide the only clue as to where he may have headed. One of the moons of Eca, Eca IV is a mining colony with several corporate owned mining stations. It lays some 450 million km from Levall, an approximate journey of some 50 hours at thrust 4 or 80 hours at thrust 2.

Rival Bounty Hunters

There are three rival groups of bounty hunters to the PCs. Each has conducted their own investigation to find clues that may lead them to Powell. Only the Delgado brothers, Tye and Kanwar Delgado and their crew hands have learned about Powell having a sister – information they discovered from threatening Mina Powell. For now they remain one step behind the PCs but they will soon catch up on Eca IV.

ACT TWO

Eca IV UWP X224300–9 **Port** X, no starport; **Size** 2, small (2,900 km); **Atmosphere** 2, very thin, tainted, 0.35ATM; **Hydrographics** 4, ice world 44% (frozen); **Population** 3, (3,700); **Government** 0, no government; **Law** 0, no law; **Tech Level** 9 (early stellar).

Laying 4.7AU from the system star, Eca IV is the fourth of 11 moons orbiting the huge planet Eca. Eca IV is a fledgling colony being established only in the last 60 years. The colony is only habitable due to its proximity between the main planet and another moon, Eca IX. Both worlds exert a gravitational influence on Eca IV, which results in Eca IV having a decidedly elliptical shape and the conflicting forces serve to warm the world's core. Small mining settlements of colonists huddle together on the equatorial belt to harvest as much surface warmth as possible, though at its best it hardly rises above freezing. It takes a hardy or desperate kind of fool to wish to settle on Eca IV.

Most of the inhabitants are employed by various off–world corporations who own the mining stations. Daylight is dim due to its distance from the system star and its slow rotation means Eca IV's day and night cycle lasts 52 standard hours. Mining settlements, termed stations, operate landing strips that are often little more than a clearing on the rock bed. Corporate freighters bring in essential supplies and take out unrefined minerals and ores. Large freighters remain in orbit and use shuttles to ferry cargo from the surface.

There is no government, each station is autonomous and managed by a corporate appointed governor. There is no recognised law, only company rule. The surface is a barren and frozen wasteland of rock formations. A typical mining station consists of a clump of buildings in near proximity to a quarry or drilling facility.

Residents live in steel structures known as habitation blocks, their private quarters separated from each other across corridors. There may be as many as four or five habitation blocks in a station, each housing up to 100 people. Outbuildings may include small temples and bar–diners, as well as power terminals, water processors, food vats, recycling plants and storage silos for ore, minerals and fuel. The average temperature at the equator is a cool – 15°C (258K), though at the Polar Regions it dips significantly further.

Volcanoes occasionally spew plumes of frozen sulphurous dioxides into the thin atmosphere, requiring a respirator and filter to aid in breathing. Any character exposed to the air without a respirator and filtration mask can breathe satisfactorily for a short while but must make an Endurance ability check (8+) every minute. On the first failed check, the body's respiratory system begins to fail and the character begins to suffer 1d6 damage every minute.

Station 23

With sensors, it is not hard to locate Station 23 on the world surface. Winds in Eca IV's thin atmosphere pick up speed quickly and can blow flurries of sulphur dioxide frost which obscure vision. Landing in such conditions requires a Pilot check (8+) to set down without causing damage to the ship. Any damage incurred is largely superficial and fixed after two successful Mechanic checks (8+) taking 1d6 hours per check. On arrival the landing strip is vacant but station workers will attempt to open comms and hail the PCs in their approaching vessel. The PCs are not expected and landing permission is denied. PCs may attempt to smooth things over and with a plausible reason, gain permission to land on a Comms check (10+). However, in the end, the station has no way of stopping determined PCs from landing anyway. Station workers may own a few side arms between them but are not in the habit of carrying them around.

Trade opportunities

If PCs landed without permission then trade is refused. Otherwise they might be able to broker a deal to buy and sell cargo. Available cargo, priced per ton: uncommon ore 4,000 Cr and uncommon raw materials at 17,000 Cr. A PC can barter with a successful Broker check (8+) to reduce the price by 200 Cr per tonne for every 1+ of effect on the check. Base prices for resale value are on core rulebook p166.

Governor Zak Carver

Zak Carver is Governor of Station 23, appointed by its owner – the Metallia Corporation. On arrival, PCs will be escorted to Carver's office. He will act decidedly disgruntled towards the PCs if they landed at the station without permission. However, if PCs did gain permission then Carver will be far more respectful in greeting his visitors. Station 23 has a community of 228 inhabitants and Carver knows them all well. He is very aware that Elliot Powell came to visit his sister. He is also aware that Powell left again shortly after. PCs can search the station if they wish and may interview Hannah and her husband Grieg Gravesson once they finish their shift at the rock face. As the investigation continues Carver will be begin to co–operate more with their requests as he comes to realise it is the quickest way of getting the PCs to leave again.

Hannah Gravesson, Habitation Block 2, Station 23, Eca IV.

Hannah may once have been described as pretty but since working here her looks have become rugged, her skin coarse from exposure and frost burns. Hannah was most surprised to see her brother. She had no idea of what had happened to him on Levall. She confides that Elliot suffered severe culture shock at the conditions on Eca IV and was heart broken to find his sister labouring at the rock face to eke out a meagre living. He stayed only a couple of standard days before chance arrived to secure passage on a freighter by working as a volunteer deck hand. He had no wish to endanger his sister in case the likes of the PCs were to trace him here, so he moved on.
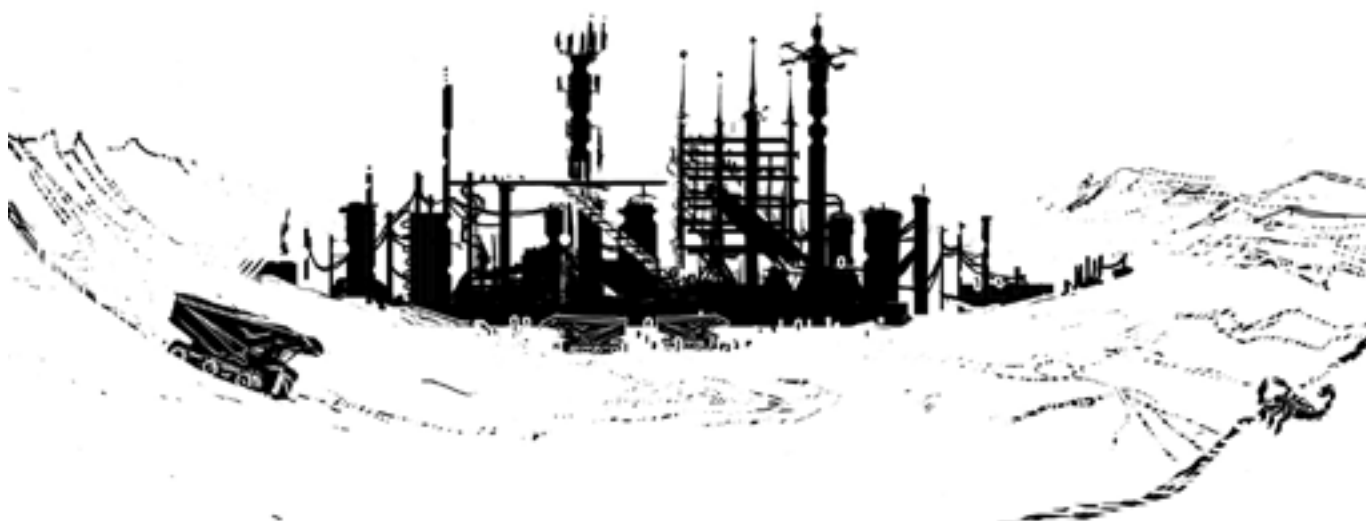
Vessel Log

PCs will be shown the station's vessel log, at the end of which they will note the name of their own vessel has been added. The last freighter to be recorded in the log was a Metallia owned heavy freighter called the Tregarn. The freighter held in near orbit whilst its shuttle ferried cargo. Carver assures the PCs that Elliot Powell boarded the Tregarn as a deck hand. The Tregarn left orbit 50 hours before PCs arrived. It will have taken about 25 hours to reach the planet Eca's 18 million km jump limit before making the jump 1 journey to Balfor, an industrial world in the next system. If the PCs check the log for a vessel called the Vogel it is listed as arriving on the day Powell arrived. It first dropped its cargo at another station before ferrying Powell to station 23.

The Delgados arrive on Eca IV

The Delgado brothers with two crew members arrive at Station 23 shortly before the PCs make ready to leave. Amid the frost flurries, the Delgados and PCs share an uneasy look across the landing strip. The Delgados are engaging the landing strip workers in conversation. Over the sound of the wind, a Recon check (10+) is enough for a PC to overhear a worker saying out loud, "That Powell must be a popular fellow, those folks over there have been asking about him too". PCs may decide to confront the Delgados or simply ignore them and board ship to leave Eca IV. If they confront their rivals, the two brothers stand tall and arrogant whilst their two crew hands stand back. The elder brother, Tye Delgado, does the talking. He will warn PCs to back off: "Elliott Powell and the bounty for his head belong to us". If a fight breaks out now the PCs may avoid having to battle it out in space. If the PCs simply leave, the Delgados will soon follow. There are ample crates and outbuildings around the landing strip to provide cover in a fire fight. The weather too contributes to cover with obscured visibility due to the dimness of Eca IV's daylight and the almost constant wind driven flurries of frost. If PCs are forced to finish repairs to their ship, the Delgados may leave Eca IV first. The Delgados, seizing an opportunity to remove their rivals, will wait in space using another of Eca's moons as cover from which to ambush the PCs – run the Space Engagement.

Tyrone Delgado

Str 8, **Dex** 8, **End** 10, **Int** 10, **Edu** 8, **Soc** 7; Deception 1; Drive 0; Engineer (electronics) 1; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2; Pilot (spacecraft) 1; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 2; **Gear**: auto pistol (3d6–3), armour –cloth (5), respirator/filtration (mouthpiece), wrist restraints, a photograph of Elliot Powell; 800 Cr;

Kanwar Delgado

Str 7, **Dex** 8, **End** 8, **Int** 10, **Edu** 9, **Soc** 6; Admin 0; Astrogation 1; Comms 1; Computers 1; Drive 0; Engineer 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Gunner (turret) 1; Pilot 0; Recon 1; Streetwise 1; **Gear:** stunner (energy pistol, 2d6+3 non–lethal), armour –cloth vest (3), respirator/filtration (mouthpiece); 500 Cr;

Delgado Crew Hands

(x2) Str 7, **Dex** 7, **End** 8, **Int** 6, **Edu** 7, **Soc** 6; Engineer (jump drive 1); Gun Combat 0; Gunner (turret) 1; Mechanic 0; Melee (blade) 1; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6–3), dagger (1d6+2), respirator/filtration (mouthpiece); 120 Cr;

Development If the Delgados are losing in a fire fight they will retreat to their ship and lift off in a hurry. Unless severely injured or under–crewed they will re–engage the PCs, this time in a space battle. If the Delgados are alive but severely wounded they will withdraw from the competition for Elliot Powell's bounty.

The PCs though have gained an enemy. If the PCs left Eca IV without fighting with the Delgados, the brothers will be quick to find the leads they need and will hasten after the PCs and engage them in a space battle. Either run Space Engagement or move directly on to The Tregarn as appropriate.

Space Engagement

The Delgado's ship is an A3 Fast Trader named the Medusa. Depending upon the type of vessel the PCs are using, Referees should feel free to replace the Medusa with another ship if more appropriate for game balance. The Delgado's ship must be jump capable and at least match the PC's vessel in tonnage and thrust.

Moments after leaving orbit from Eca IV the sensors on the PCs' vessel will pick up a contact. It is the Medusa. The Delgados hail the PCs on comms to warn them off. If the PCs don't withdraw, a space engagement ensues at short range (<1250km). Tactics The Medusa will be quick to fire missiles to force PCs onto the defensive. The Delgados will not think twice about leaving defeated foes dead–in–the–water or even destroyed. The PCs simply must win this engagement. If things go badly for the Delgados they will withdraw from combat and from the race to bring in Elliot Powell but the PCs will gain the Delgados as an enemy.

The Medusa – Fast Trader, Type A3 – 200 tons

Hull 4, **Structure** 4; streamlined (aerofins); **Armour** titanium 2; **Jump Drive** B, jump–2; **Manoeuvre Drive** D Thrust 4; **Power Plant** D, rating 4; **Bridge: Computer** model/2 (rating 10); **Electronics** basic military +0 DM; **Fuel** 48 tons (1xjump–2 & 2 weeks of ops); **Cargo** 42 tons; **Staterooms** 8; **Low Berths** 6; **Extras:** air/raft; fuel scoop, fuel processors (20t/day); **Software:** maneouvre/0, library; jump control/2 (rating 10); intellect (rating 10); **Weapons Systems:** 2 Hardpoints, #1 double turret (pulse laser x1/ sandcaster x1) #2 double turret (pulse laser x1/ missile rack x1). **Ammunition** 20 sandcaster barrels; 12 basic missiles. **Crew** 4; **Crew Skill** Average +1DM; **Pulse Laser** fires bursts of energy; optimum range is short, –2 DM to hit, (damage 2d6). **Basic Missile** thrust/5, endurance/10, (damage 1d6).

Act Three

After leaving Eca IV, to continue the pursuit of Elliot Powell, the PCs must follow the heavy freighter Tregarn through jump space to the industrial planet of Balfor.

Balfor UWP X484510–9
Port X, no starport; **Size** 4, small (5,700 km); **Atmosphere** 8, dense, 1.55ATM; **Hydrographics** 4, wet world 44%; **Population** 5, (322,000); **Government** 1, corporate, power–sharing assembly; **Law** 0, no law; **Tech Level** 9 (early stellar).

Viewed from space Balfor appears burnt orange in colour. Its entire economy revolves around the corporate owned industrial townships. Townships are established on high plateaus where humans may breathe unassisted. In contrast, the lowlands and sandstone canyons suffer from a dense, humid atmosphere and its oceans are shrouded by warm, humid cloud. Balfor's government is a multi–corporate assembly in which seats are obtained by the purchase of shares, not the polling of votes. Balfor offers the ideal solution to corporations looking to avoid the heavy tax tariffs of polity worlds. It can prove far more profitable to produce goods on a world which you own.

The Tregarn

If the PCs follow the Tregarn through jump space they will discover her in orbit around Balfor. The Tregarn's shuttle is in the lengthy process of ferrying ore and minerals down to the Metallia Corporation's refineries on the planet surface. Powell is still on board the Tregarn. He does not get to jump ship until the last of the cargo is off loaded. Once alongside the Tregarn it is a relatively simple act to retrieve him.

If the PCs hail the Tregarn, Captain Angela del Schaff will open comms. She is a confident captain but is fully aware that she is in no position to stave off the determined assault of a pirate ship; which is initially what she will assume the PCs to be. PCs need to convince del Schaff that she is harbouring a dangerous criminal, Persuade check (10+).Once convinced she will gladly be rid of Powell who is endangering her crew just by his very presence. If PCs convinced del Schaff on the first or second attempt at the persuade check, then she will agree to the PCs docking with the Tregarn and boarding to collect Powell who she will hand over without a fuss. Docking requires a Pilot check (6+) taking 1d6 minutes. If it took more than two persuade checks or if warning shots were fired across the Tregarn's bow, del Schaff will not have enough trust in the PCs to allow them to board. Instead she will have her crew subdue Powell, force him into a vacc suit and flush him out of the air lock. Powell is now free–floating in space. To rescue Powell from space, a PC will need to don a vacc suit and thruster pack from the ship's locker and go for a 'spacewalk'. A task chain of three Zero–G (8+) checks (or (6+) if the PC has the Vacc Suit skill) is required

to successfully retrieve Powell. Failure to succeed within six checks may signify the PC has got into trouble and will need rescuing too.

The Tregarn – Heavy Freighter – 1,000 tons

Hull 20, **Structure** 20; **Armour** none; **Jump** Drive H, jump 2; **Manoeuvre** Drive E, Thrust 1; **Power Plant** H (rating/2); **Bridge: Computer** model/2 (rating 10); **Electronics** standard sensors, –4 DM; **Fuel** 216 tons (1xjump–2 – 2 weeks of ops); **Cargo** 552 tons; **Staterooms** 8; **Extras:** shuttle (95 tons), **Software**: manoeuvre/0, library; jump control/2; **Weapons Systems:** 2 Hardpoints: #1 and #2 double turrets (sandcaster x1/ pulse laser x1); **Crew** 10; **Crew Skill** Green +0 DM; Based on the heavy freighter on core rule book p125.

Refueling on Balfor

Should PCs descend to Balfor a Pilot check (6+) is required to ride some choppy weather in its heavy atmosphere. A failed check results in overheating and systems damage requiring an Engineering check (8+) and 1d6 hours to repair. If PCs need to refuel they may scoop from an open body of water beneath the lower cloud level.

To scoop requires a vessel capable of hovering in gravity and four successful Pilot checks (8+) to complete the operation. Each attempted check signifies one hour of time. Scooping is not welcomed by the corporate government. PCs will eventually be detected on sensors (within 1d6 hours of arrival) at which time a pair of government fighter drones will be despatched to investigate. This means that PCs may complete the operation in time; otherwise the amount of water scooped for hydrogen separation is reduced proportionally.

Drones will engage the PCs to chase them off but will not pursue beyond near orbit. Engagement begins at short range. To avoid confrontation, PCs may purchase fuel legitimately. A Comms check (8+) receives permission to enter Balfor airspace and land at a township to purchase refined fuel at an extortionate 600 Cr per ton. A Broker check (8+) can reduce this to 500 Cr. Despite the humble landing pad being the height of sophistication for receiving starcraft, Balfor has many refineries and refined fuel is always available.

Drone Fighters (x2) – 20 tons

Hull 0, **Structure** 1; streamlined, Stealth; **Armour** crystaliron 6; **Manoeuvre Drive** sK Thrust 10; **Power Plant** sK (rating 10); **Drone Command Unit** TL12: **Computer** model/2 (rating 10); **Electronics** military sensors +0 DM; **Fuel** 1 ton (1 week of ops); **Software**: manoeuvre/0, evade/1; fire control/2; **Weapons Systems:** Fixed Mount railgun; Missile Mount 3x basic missiles; **Ammunition** railgun rounds x20; **Remote Operation** DM+1; Based on the Assault Fighter – *Traders and Gunboats* p24.

Railgun fires bursts of ferrous bullets; optimum range is short, (damage 2d6). **Basic Missiles** thrust/5, endurance 10 turns, (damage 1d6).

Powell's pleas of innocence

Elliot Powell is living on the edge of his nerves. Despite the reputation given to him by Levall's authorities, he is not violent and poses no danger whatever. He knows that a life on the run would mean there will always be bounty hunters on his trail.

He cannot keep on running and he misses his family very much. He makes a plea to the PCs: he is an innocent man and they are taking him back to face a death sentence for a crime that he did not commit. He desperately hopes that they might help him prove his innocence. A Deception check (6+) is enough for a wary PC to be convinced that Powell may be telling the truth.

Powell's Story

After finishing his work shift, he and a colleague named Arran Kitzler headed to the bus terminus to catch transport home. Whilst passing by another warehouse they heard a scuffle. After a few moments of daring each other to investigate, Powell looked into the warehouse to find the warehouse owner, Ambas Lazarczuk, lying face down in a pool of blood. Powell bent down and turned him over. There was a knife in his chest. Without thinking,

Powell removed the knife – he was trying to help. The next thing Powell knows is the sound of approaching footsteps. The police had arrived on scene and they arrested him. He was later convicted of murder. The knife, with his fingerprints, was submitted in evidence, as were the witness statements of the police officers who found him leaning over the body, knife in hand.

A Moral decision

The PCs have three choices. They can let Powell go, in which case he will eventually be tracked down by other bounty hunters. They can simply hand Powell over to the authorities on Levall and collect their bounty. Or they can sympathise with Powell's plight and forge ahead with an attempt to prove his innocence.

ACT FOUR

What to do with Powell?

Once back on Levall, PCs need to decide what to do with Powell. If they decide to sneak him into Dassas then PCs are required to make a task chain of three successful Stealth checks (6+), this abstracts the PCs' efforts to sneak Powell through the starport. A failed check brings discovery but security officers will initially assume that the PCs have brought Powell back to claim the bounty. However, if Powell is not restrained or if the PCs were caught in suspicious circumstances, then it will require a very convincing story and a Persuade check (10+) to alleviate any suspicions that spaceport security may have. If security is suitably convinced, Chief Round will be informed of the PCs' arrival and their success in bringing back Powell but if security officers remain suspicious they will attempt to arrest the PCs – see *Trouble at the Starport*.

If PCs hand Powell over, whether voluntarily or after failing to sneak him through the starport, Round will take him into custody and pay the bounty to the PCs (as long as they are not wanted fugitives now). The PCs now have just three days until Powell's execution to solve the murder and prove his innocence. The 50,000 Cr bounty is paid over in Chief Round's office at the Police Bureau.

He will inform the PCs that their temporary status as agents of law is now revoked and they should hand their credentials to his secretary before leaving the building. The PCs must pass through the adjoining secretary's office on the way out. If, when the secretary requests the PCs to return their credentials, a PC tries to keep his credentials back, a Deception check (8+) is enough to convince her that the PC was never issued with credentials in the first place. She will still expect at least PC to have a set of credentials to be returned.

Trouble at the Starport

If things go wrong, port security will attempt to arrest the PCs. If PCs escape the port they will become wanted fugitives. Chief Round will be panicked if he hears that the PCs are helping Powell and will issue a 'shoot to kill' policy against the PCs – a very harsh and unusual step, even by Levall's standards. If PCs decide to continue to conduct an investigation to prove Powell's innocence (and their own) then from now on they will have to keep a low profile and avoid the authorities. The Referee is encouraged to complicate investigations as appropriate. If arrested, the PCs' fate is sealed. There will be no charges and no trial. To protect himself, Round will have them killed.The following stat block may be used at the Referee's discretion for Security Officers and Police alike throughout the remainder of this adventure.

Security and Police Officers

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **End** 7, **Int** 8, **Edu** 8, **Soc** 7; Admin 0; Comms 0; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Investigate 0; Melee (bludgeon) 1; Recon 1; **Gear**: auto pistol (3d6–3) or ACR Advanced Combat Rifle (3d6), stunstick (1d6 normal + 2d6 non lethal), cloth armour (5), comm, wrist restraints;

Investigations

If PCs intend to prove Powell's innocence, they need to solve the crime for which he has been wrongly convicted. The starting points for investigations should be apparent

–the crime scene and the victim. If the PCs are struggling, a benevolent Referee may call for Intelligence checks to help guide the PCs.

Ambas Lazarczuk

The murder of Ambas Lazarczuk took place two months prior to Powell's trial. Lazarczuk had just been forced to take in yet another shipment of drugs that had been smuggled through Dassas Starport. Over the last two years Lazarczuk had cheated on his tax payments. When legal proceedings were imminent, Chief Round offered him a deal. Round could arrange for the debts to be expunged and the evidence of tax evasion erased. This established Round's hold over Lazarczuk. Lazarczuk grew tired of being used and tried to force his way out of Round's influence with a foolish attempt at blackmail; threatening to expose Round to his superiors. An indignant Round stabbed Lazarczuk to silence him.

Home Lazarczuk lived alone and his former home has been emptied and is now for sale. There is nothing at Lazarczuks home for PCs to find.

If PCs check the background of Ambas Lazarczuk they may find evidence of the proceedings against him for tax evasion and the subsequent dropping of those charges from one of three sources: media archives, legal records or locals who knew him.

Media Archives are public and can be accessed from any computer, a Computer check (6+) locates the relevant detail – a column containing a story on Lazarczuk being charged with tax evasion offences. An Investigate check (8+) notices many stories of citizens who break the law and their subsequent sentencing is always sensationalised. Such coverage is encouraged by the Levall Forum in order to show the lower classes that they cannot get away with crime. Oddly, there is no follow up media story to explain why Lazarczuk's case never came to trial.

Legal Records are held at forum offices and are confidential. Making subtle enquiries and a successful Admin or Advocate check (8+) locates the correct offices. PCs cannot access the offices, not even with credentials. A few hours of surveillance outside the offices confirms that bypassing the building's security is nigh on impossible. PCs can, however, attempt to hack into the forum computer system. Three successive Computer checks (10+) taking 1d6 hours gains remote access to all relevant files. Failure to complete the checks within six attempts results in the PC's hack being detected and security

software locks the PCs out. The attempted hack will be traced to the remote computer used. PCs can later try the hack again but now the checks are (12+). If the PCs are successful they can learn on an Admin or Advocate (6+) that Lazarczuk was being taken to trial for cheating 40,000 Cr from the Levall tax office. The proceedings against him were halted just before his trial, the case file finishes with the words "Evidence: Deleted. Charges: Dismissed. Case File: Closed – Chief J. Round".

Locals Streetwise checks close to Lazarczuk's business or home reveal locals knew all about his impending trial but for some unknown reason all charges were dropped just days before the trial was due. "It's a rare thing indeed for a low class citizen to escape criminal prosecution".

Crime Scene – Lazarczuk Storage

If the PCs did not visit here before departure to Eca IV, the description remains the same, a small warehouse still sealed off as a crime scene as per Round's orders. The place is empty, all goods have gone and all business records confiscated from the warehouse office. This time, PCs may enter undisturbed. An Investigate (8+) discovers a small sack of grain that has slipped into the cavity between the outer wall and a low, inner storage wall. If PCs remove the sack from the cavity for a closer look, grain will begin to spill from a tear in the sack, closely followed by several small, sealed packets containing a grey powder.

These are Round's drugs, smuggled through Dassas Starport in sacks of basic consumables. The sack has a label sown onto it which gives basic information on the origin of the shipment. This information allows the cargo to be traced to a ship's manifest. The information includes world of origin (Referee's choice) and a batch number. If the PCs still have credentials they can gain free access to the Starport's manifest records, an Admin check (8+) and 1d6 hours traces the cargo to a vessel named the Autumn Star; registered to a free lance merchant, 'Captain' Royce Caine. The cargo of 40 tons of grain, was brought in to Dassas Starport just over two months ago, the week before Lazarczuk was murdered in fact. The Autumn Star has not returned to Levall since but records show that it visits Levall on a fairly regular basis, once every three to four months. The drug is a highly addictive narcotic called Berrozine – colloquially known as 'grey'. It has a street value of 150,000 Cr a ton. Each 40 ton grain cargo potentially includes a hidden cache of 2 tons of grey.

Lazarczuk's warehouse is one of several on a site. Call for a Recon check (not if the PCs are here prior to bringing back Powell) to notice that the warehouse opposite has security cameras. PCs may, with a Persuade check (automatic if the PCs still have credentials), gain access to recorded footage from the day of the murder. PCs will find footage of Round entering the warehouse just five minutes before Powell and Arran Kitzler walk by. Round is then seen exiting a side door as Powell goes in through the front. Seconds later Round is seen directing his two senior officers, Dugarry and Dawns, into the building.

The two officers re–emerge with Powell in restraints. Minutes later a crowd has gathered and more officers arrive, Kitzler can be seen giving a statement and finally a police vehicle arrives to take Powell into custody.

The Streets of Dassas

Streetwise checks will locate street dealers of black market goods and drugs in Dassas's more deprived districts. If PCs have sample drugs, any drug pusher, if bribed or threatened, will identify the substance as 'grey'. Many of the street dealers are under the thumb of corrupt police, especially of Round and his senior officers. Every crook is aware of the consequences of ratting on their police handlers. If interrogated, it takes more than simple threat to make a street dealer talk. PCs will need to get physical and inflict sufficient injury plus a Persuade check (10+) or Interrogation check (8+) to force a dealer to talk. A dealer will then inform PCs that he is provided the drugs by "Chief Round and his buddies" and forced to sell them.

Bank Records

Investigating Round's bank account is not easy. The bank will not knowingly give out any personal information. Good role play, the showing of credentials and a successful Persuade check (10+) might convince the bank manger that the PCs are agents of law conducting an official investigation. If PCs can access Round's account details, all is found to be in good order. Round does not launder his dirty money through his personal bank account.

Round's Home and Offices

The easiest way to find Round's home address, should PCs decide to go there, is to follow Round home. The Referee may call for Stealth checks to successfully tail Round. The house can be searched once there is nobody home. The only clue to be found is a discarded envelope. The letter it contained is missing but the envelope itself has a printed address on its reverse side: M. Round Accountancy, 19 City Offices, Sector 4, Dassas. If PCs break into Chief Round's office at the Police Bureau (a much harder task) the Referee may decide that the PCs discover the envelope there instead.

Round's Accountant

Miles Round is the elder brother of Julius. He is a crooked accountant with the expertise to launder his brother's dirty money. The money is channelled into a dozen different accounts in the name of fictitious off–world businesses. Miles keeps records of all his client's accounts on his personal computer. A task chain of three skill checks (8+) in Admin and/or Computer at 1 hour per attempted check is enough to locate the pertinent accounts. PCs can break into the offices at night or blatantly threaten Miles in the day. If Miles is confronted he will warn his brother. If the PCs weren't fugitives already, then they are now and Chief Round issues a shoot to kill policy on the PCs.

Going to the Authorities

Round's immediate superior is Mayor Joran Parkes. Despite being part of the privileged classes, Mayor Parkes is a decent man. If PCs approach him without evidence, the PCs will be told that making serious allegations against a senior police officer without proof is a very dangerous thing and he will advise that the PCs should keep quiet and maybe leave Levall before they get themselves into big trouble.

The PCs need to gather evidence to substantiate their claims against Round and his officers. An Advocate (6+) check is enough to know when the evidence collected is enough to take to the Mayor's Office. In the face of overwhelming evidence the Mayor will eventually be forced to act. With corruption at such a senior level he will be unsure of who exactly to trust amongst the ranks of police. Not wanting to alert Round, it is best to keep regular police out of the equation and the Mayor will ask the PCs to form part of the arresting team. The Mayor has a small contingent of four Forum Agents who are attached to the Mayor's Office and remain separate from the Police Bureau. These may be the only agents of law he can trust at the moment. The PCs are sworn in as temporary agents to augment the Mayor's circle of trustees. Each PC will earn a retainer of 5,000 Cr from the Mayor's Office for their temporary employ. If PCs have no weapons of their own, the Mayor's Office will issue some basic firearms on loan. Forum Agent Jack Silas is placed in charge of the operation to arrest Chief Julius Round and his accomplices.Development: If PCs do not voluntarily go to the authorities (most likely because of issues with not knowing who to trust), have Agent Silas contact the PCs surreptitiously. The Mayor's Office may already have a distrust of Chief Round and having been alerted to the PCs investigations are looking to use any evidence discovered to bring down corruption in the Police Bureau.

The Arrest of Julius Round

Agent Silas decides upon a plan to catch Chief Round, red handed if possible. He assigns three agents to follow Dawns and Dugarry. Silas himself remains with the PCs who will keep Chief Round and the Police Bureau building under surveillance. Within a few hours Silas receives a report from his agents that Dawns has been shadowed to an apartment in District 9. The apartment checks out as a listed safe house sometimes used by Dassas police. Dawns is seen leaving the apartment with a carry case and is followed back to the Dassas Police Bureau by a single agent; two agents remaining behind to check out the apartment. By the time Dawns arrives back at the Bureau, the two agents have entered the apartment and confirmed the find of a drugs haul. The PCs are informed by comms that Dawns is being followed back to the Bureau and he has a carry case. A few minutes later Dawns comes into view of the PCs. He parks his car (wheeled road vehicle) and enters the Bureau, he leaves the case locked in the car. Silas instructs the PCs to wait.

Half an hour later Chief Round, Dawns and Dugarry exit the Bureau and get into the car, Dawns is in the driver's seat. As Round and his officers drive away, Agent Silas and the PCs follow. Dawns drives to District 11, a deprived and over crowded hive of the lower classes. The Referee may call for a Drive (wheeled) (6+) check for a PC to successfully shadow Dawns in the traffic without being detected. If the check fails the PCs are spotted and a car chase and vehicle shoot out may develop.

At District 11, when Dawns parks the car, he and Dugarry will get out, Round stays in the car. The two officers cross the street and approach a street dealer, Dawns is carrying the case. Their intentions are to enter the dealer's nearby building to collect cash from previous drug sales and supply him with the next cache of grey. If PCs have not leapt into action already, Agent Silas now gives them the go ahead. Its time to apprehend Round and his senior officers.

Julius Round

Str 7, **Dex** 8, **End** 10, **Int** 10, **Edu** 11, **Soc** 11; Admin 0; Advocate 2; Deception 2; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2; Flyer (grav) 1; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 1; **Gear**: auto pistol (3d6–3), armour –cloth (5), credentials, comm., 800 Cr;

Senior Officers (Robert Dawns and Piers Dugarry)

Str 8, **Dex** 9, **End** 9, **Int** 8, **Edu** 9, **Soc** 9; Athletics 0; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Melee 0; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 2; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6–3), armour –cloth (5), credentials, wrist restraints, comm., 220 Cr; Dawns has a carry case containing 12 x 0.5kg of packets of grey.

Street Dealer

Str 8, **Dex** 7, **End** 8, **Int** 6, **Edu** 5, **Soc** 5; Gun Combat 0; Melee (blade) 1; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 3; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6–3), knife (2d6);

Agent Jack Silas

Str 8, **Dex** 8, **End** 9, **Int** 9, **Edu** 8, **Soc** 9; Athletics 0; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Investigate 2; Recon 1; Persuade 2; Stealth 1; Streetwise 1; **Gear**: auto pistol (3d6–3), credentials, wrist restraints; comm.;

Tactics Dawns and Dugarry will slug it out in the street whilst Round attempts to make his escape. Round is sat in the car when combat begins but it will take him two rounds to move into the driver seat before he can attempt to drive away. Round is finished on Levall; his only chance of escaping justice is to get off world. Round and his officers will fight it out until dead or incapacitated. If there is large party of PCs then the referee may wish to add the street dealer and maybe one or two petty thugs who are part of the street dealer's gang to the combat.

Conclusion

Afterwards, the PCs will receive thanks from the Mayor's Office. If still alive, Julius Round, Robert Dawns and Piers Dugarry all face a bleak future. The accountant, Miles Round will be arrested, as will Captain Caine when the Autumn Star next lands at Dassas Starport. Elliot Powell will be freed.

On some worlds Powell might hope for some compensation, on Levall he must instead console himself with the fact that he is the first low class citizen ever to have a death sentence revoked and conviction quashed. Elliot and his family will have eternal gratitude toward the PCs for what they have done. The PCs reward is their promised payment from the Mayor's Office and the stern request that they leave Levall with all haste. The Levall Forum needs to sweep this incident under the carpet as soon as possible and under no circumstance can they allow the PCs to remain as role models for the lower classes.

THE SAD DEATH OF SADDER VILLIN

BY GARETH HANRAHAN

An addition to Prison Planet that will get your players sent to Tarkwall, and then give them something to do during the long years of their incarceration!

The new *Traveller* adventure, *Prison Planet*, describes the hellish Tarkwall Prison. Player Characters convicted of a crime may be condemned to that irradiated pit and forced to remain there for long years until they escape (or die and are buried in the yard). Most Player Characters commit enough crimes to warrant a prison sentence six times before breakfast but if your group are morally upright and law–abiding and then the first part of this adventure will get them sent to Tarkwall. In the second part, the character's erstwhile patron is murdered and the characters must find the killer before he comes for them, too. You can run the second part of the adventure for a group who are already in Tarkwall, in which case they may befriend Sadder Villin and then investigate his death.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the Lanth and Rhylanor subsectors of the Spinward Marches (*The Spinward Marches*, pages 82 and 86 respectively). Tarkwall Prison is located on Keanou (0801/ Lanth), an obscure desert world on the edge of Lanth, Rhylanor and Regina subsectors. It is assumed that the Player Characters have their own spacecraft and are looking for employment. Skills like Pilot, Sensors, Zero–G and Vacc Suit are needed in the first part of the adventure.

The Macene Bureau

The Macene civilisation is a ring of high technology settlements carved out of the rocky asteroids. The belt's shipyards produce a sizeable proportion of the new civilian ships and high–tech components for Rhylanor and Lanth subsectors, especially jump drive cores (the belt is high in lanthanum deposits, a vital part of the drive). The system is home to several naval bases, including the sector reserve fleet. Macene is a key factor in the security of the whole Spinward Marches. The outer reaches of Macene have a less salubrious reputation – the belter population of the system were once involved in piracy and some older rocks in Macene still welcome raiders and 'ethically challenged merchants'. Ishta Rahm is a naval counter–intelligence agent; her primary duty is to ensure that nothing interferes with naval operations. The Zhodani have tried to infiltrate Macene in the past; especially daring Vargr raiders covet the wealth

and technology of Macene and there are always ambitious local nobles who might make trouble. Six months ago, Rahm discovered evidence of a conspiracy; old, worn–out naval components including weapons are vanishing from the Macene shipyards instead of being destroyed. This is a serious security breach – someone could be building their own warships or gathering information about the capabilities and readiness of the Sector fleet. She was about to bring this information to her superior Hoster, when she noticed an alarming correlation between transactions in a watched bank account and Hoster's movements around the belt. If an Intelligence bureau's chief is corrupt, then… well, Rahm sleeps with a body pistol under her pillow, just in case. Before she can make any such accusation, though, she needs proof of the conspiracy. Her mole inside the conspiracy has passed on a shipping schedule. A consignment of naval parts has been transferred to an old storage depot on the edge of the Macene belt. According to the computer records, these should be junk parts, useless to anyone. Rahm suspects that the computer records have been tampered with and that the parts in the depot are actually weapons components. With her superior under suspicion, she cannot use agency resources, so she has to use other avenues of investigation – specifically, a contact of hers named Sadder Villin.

Sadder Villin

Sadder Villin is an old spacehand a former merchant whose battered old free trader, the Lunion Queen, finally gave up the ghost ten years ago. He now lives in the remains of his ship, which is permanently stuck in orbit of a planet that the Player Characters regularly visit (Risek is a good choice). Villin makes a living as a broker and informant. He has dozens of friends in spaceport bars across the Marches and he can put free traders in touch with patrons who need goods moved discretely. Villin has spent 50 years living on board the Lunion Queen and has grown rather eccentric.

He sometimes has conversations with long–departed crew members and has a paranoid terror of leaving the confines of the ship. When he has to go planetside for business, he wears a vacc suit and takes sedatives and whiskey. Despite his obvious quirks, Villin has a reputation for honesty and an encyclopaedic

knowledge of the tramp ship network in the Marches. Rahm has hired Villin to get a non–traceable ship and retrieve the components from the depot.

If the cargo stored in the depot really is junk, then she is on the wrong trail. If Villins recovers weapons parts, though, then she has proof that there is a conspiracy afoot. Ideally, the Referee should introduce the wreck dwelling hermit to the campaign several sessions before running this adventure. The players should know and trust Villin before he contacts them with a new and curious mission.

Sadder Villin

Str 4 **Dex** 8 **End** 6 **Int** 9 **Edu** 7 **Soc** 6 **Skills:** Broker 3, Pilot (spacecraft) 1, Streetwise 2, Vacc Suit 1, Zero–G 1

Villin contacts the characters by radio if they jump into the same system as the Lunion Queen or else by leaving messages for them at the starports they frequent. He informs them that if they visit him in the next few weeks, he can put a highly profitable piece of work their way. He can't say any more except in person.

The Macene Run

When the characters arrive at the drifting hulk of the Lunion Queen, Villin signals for them to come aboard. He greets them in what was the common area of the ship, back when it was a ship and not a wreck. He keeps the gravity switched off to save power. The bulkheads are covered with star charts, notes

on shipping timetables, computer screens and unidentifiable stains. Villin floats some foil squeeze–bottles of booze over to the Player Characters and pulls a sheaf of printouts out from what used to be an engineering access panel. 'Don't ask too many questions about this job, all right? The patron wants it kept very dark, very very dark. It's in the Macene system. There's a small rock there called, er, M129–AP–299. I guess that's a name if you squint at it. The patron's got a load of cargo sitting in a vault there. She needs someone to pick up the cargo and drop it here, without going through a starport or running into any patrols. I know the patron and the cargo's not illegal, just… it has to be handled discretely, understand?'

The fee is Cr. 5,000 per ton per parsec and Villin says there should be around 10 tons of cargo at M129–AP–299. A quick check of Library Data will alert the characters to the fact that Macene is primarily a naval outpost and that avoid patrols might be difficult. Villin replies that M129–AP–299 is on the fringes of the system and should be far from any naval patrols.

The only tricky bit will be refuelling; Villin suggests either visiting Macene port first and filling up there or else skimming from the gas giant before heading into the belt. Either way, they should be ready to jump out immediately after loading up at M129–AP–299. If the characters agree to the job, Villin gives them a data cassette with a code on it.

This code will open the dock at M129–AP–299. Villin again emphasises that the job is totally legitimate and that he trusts the patron, although he will not reveal her name. Paranoid players may assume they are being set up, which is accurate up to a point – neither Villin nor Rahm is planning to betray the characters but events are about to overtake everyone. A successful Difficult (–2) Comms check suggests that the code on the data cassette looks like an old naval code, probably years out of date.

Jump In...

The voyage to the Macene system is uneventful. If the characters refuel at either Macene starport or the gas giant, Hau, they spot several huge naval warships that dwarf their own vessel hundreds of times over, as well as dozens of smaller escorts and patrol boats. Most of the activity in Macene is concentrated around the moons of the gas giant and at the Trojan points

. ...Grab The Cargo...

M129–AP–299 is 45 million kilometres from the starport, so it will take several days to reach the asteroid. It's a lonely speck of matter, a mix of ice and rock, sitting well outside the orbit of Hau. As the characters approach, they detect no other ships nearby but sensors do pick up a structure within M129–AP–299. The asteroid has been partially hollowed out to serve as a depot. There are two airlocks, one standard size and one larger portal for loading cargo. Transmitting the code on the cassette opens either airlock.

Inside, the asteroid base consists of only a few rooms. It is obvious that the base was carved out of the rock centuries ago and has been visited only a few times since then.

1. **Small Airlock.** This airlock can only be opened if the characters transmit the code from the data cassette. The airlock bears the words 'NAVAL PROPERTY – DO NOT ENTER WITHOUT AUTHORISATION'.

2. **Access Corridor.** The walls of this corridor are polished stone. There is no gravity but there are metal plates glued to the floor and walls every metre or so, allowing a character wearing magnetic boots to walk. There is no heat or atmosphere when the characters arrive but as soon as the airlock is activated, the environmental controls in room 4 switch on, heating the rooms and filling them with a breathable mix of gases. It will take several hours for the environmental adjustments to be completed.

3. **Central Chamber:** There are six exits from this cubic room, one in the centre of each wall. There are also vacc suits and a pair of unloaded accelerator rifles in a locker next to the access corridor entrance, along with extremely out–of–date medical kits and rations. While the equipment is functional, the lockers and other fittings are obviously very old.

4. **Fuel:** This automated fuel cracker melts the ice of the asteroid and converts it into hydrogen and oxygen, which are then stored in the fuel cells surrounding the cargo bay.

5. **Security:** This upper chamber contains a security robot, an autonomous combat drone equipped with an accelerator rifle. The drone will attack any trespassers unless the code from the data cassette is transmitted to it. The droid uses a small thruster pack to move; the port–side thruster is damaged and fires with much less force that its counterparts, so the droid has trouble turning in zero gravity.

6. **Environmental Controls:** This chamber contains a small fusion reactor and other life–support systems. Hydrogen fuel cells are honeycombed into the rock around this room. The equipment here is also centuries old but still works.

7. **Computer Control:** The computer system in this chamber logs visits to the depot. A quick check shows that after the depot was constructed 310 years ago, there was approximately one visit per decade – up until two years ago. Since then, robot tugs have been showing up every few months and depositing cargo. There are also records of the main airlock being used, usually a week after the tug's visit. No ship is logged as having arrived at those times. (The smugglers have not bothered to log their illegal visits to the depot.)

8. **Large Airlock:** There are two automated cargo–handling robots waiting in this airlock. If commanded, they will move cargo containers from the bay to a docked ship.

9. **Cargo Bay:** This cavernous zero–g cargo bay is filled with one–dton cargo containers. There are obviously two groups of containers. One set of containers are stacked at the edges of the bay and have not been touched in centuries. The second set of a dozen containers is in the middle of the bay and is much newer. This second set of containers holds the stolen naval components.

10. **Fuel Umbilical:** This tube can be connected to a ship to tap the asteroid's hydrogen reserves. The asteroid has 50 tons of fuel available.

...and Jump Out

Soon after the characters arrive at M129–AP–299 (ideally, while the characters are loading cargo), the smuggler ship arrives. The smuggler vessel is a Far Trader that just made a Jump–1 in from Kinorb. Their plan is to pick up the cargo and jump out again, as their ship still has the fuel to make a Jump–1 back.

Far Trader

Hull 4, **Structure** 4 **Double Turret:** Two Beam Lasers (2d6 each) **Double Turret:** One Beam Laser (2d6), Sandcaster

Pirate Crew

Str 6 **Dex** 8 **End** 7 **Int** 6 **Edu** 7 **Soc** 7 **Skills:** Pilot (spacecraft) 1, Gunnery (turret) 1, Gun Combat (rifle) 1, Engineering 0, Mechanic 1, Recon 1 **Vacc Suit** (Armour 6), **Accelerator Rifle** (3d6)

This plan does not include another ship sitting right on top of the asteroid. The smugglers' reaction depends on that of the players. They will ignore any attempts at negotiation and instead attempt to threaten them using the turret–mounted laser cannons. However, the last thing the smugglers want is a firefight right on the doorstep of their secret drop–off point. Therefore, after a few rounds of combat, the smugglers will jump away unless the Player Characters surrender. If there are characters on M129–AP–299 when the smuggler vessel arrives, they may have to fight off boarders.

Searching the Cargo Containers

Inquisitive Player Characters will doubtless search the cargo containers. According to the electronic manifest on each container, they all contain 'scrap and salvage' recovered from decommissioned naval vessels. If the crates are opened, they are found to contain naval weapons components. There are no complete weapons here but there are parts for meson guns and other alarming weapons (these count as Illegal Weapons for the purposes of trade).

Return to Villin

Assuming the characters recovered any cargo from the asteroid, their next step should be to return to the Lunion Queen and collect their payment from Sadder Villin. Unfortunately for the characters, Hoster the corrupt intelligence agent is no fool.

He suspected someone in his organisation was onto him and made a list of likely pawns who might be used to sabotage his smuggling ring. Sadder Villin was one of the top names on that list. A military vessel, the Kestrel, has been dispatched from Macene to the Lunion Queen, with orders to capture Villin and the characters. (The ship dispatched should be big enough to overpower the Player Characters' vessel – a Gazelle class escort should be more than enough in most cases.)

Dead or Alive, You're Coming With Us

The Gazelle may be waiting for the characters, lurking in a powered–down state in orbit or it could jump in as the characters are meeting with Villin on board the Lunion Queen. The characters are hailed: 'LUNION QUEEN, [PLAYER CHARACTER VESSEL], THIS IS THE IMPERIAL SHIP KESTREL. IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR YOU ARE ORDERED TO SHUT DOWN ALL DRIVES AND WEAPONS AND PREPARE TO BE BOARDED. ANY RESISTANCE OR SUBTERFUGE WILL BE MET WITH LETHAL FORCE!' The Kestrel closes in and launches a squad of Imperial marines in grav–assisted battle dress armed with gauss rifles. Villin signals his surrender – he is got friends in Naval Security or so he thinks. He is gotten out of scrapes before thanks to his naval allies. The Player Characters can fight back if they want but their chances of survival in a stand–up fight should be slim. If they flee, they become wanted criminals.

PART 2: TARKWALL

After their capture, the characters are transferred – without trial – to a prison transport. Their ship and any weapons, armour or other notable equipment is impounded at Macene. The characters spot Villin in another cell on board the transport but are unable to speak to him. After several weeks of confinement aboard the prison transport, the characters find themselves in the Keanou system. The transport lands at Keanou spaceport, where the prison shuttle waits to bring them to Tarkwall Prison. Protestations that they have not had a trial are ignored – Hoster has enough sway with the Ministry of Justice to have the characters and Villin quietly buried at Tarkwall Prison. Hoster wants to find out who hired Villin to hire the Player Characters and Tarkwall is the best place to do so.

The First Weeks

The first weeks in Tarkwall should unfold as normal. Prison hits Villin hard – he is not used to either high gravity or open spaces. His new cellmate is 1119 Morian Gosh, a violent thug who is spending 20 years in Tarkwall for murder. Gosh is trying to curry favour with 7057 Big Rolf. Villin initially assigned to light work in the Upper Mining Level but then 9047 Rand Gurish recognises Villin; he claims that Villin ratted him out five years ago to the authorities and attacks Villin with a mining pick. If the characters do not intervene, then Gurish beats Villin hard enough to send the old spacer to the infirmary for a month. If they do save Villin, then he is reassigned to the machine shop as it is clear that he is in no condition to survive the mines (and he has yet to incur the dislike of a prison official who would send him back to the mines regardless of his survival chances). Guirish spreads the rumour that Villin is a snitch and untrustworthy bastard; several other prisoners, including 1215 Ward Stamboul, 1217 Talbot Vinge, 1935 Felip Karageorge, 8046 Satoshi Honig and 3064 Berndt Khanugir listen to this rumour and also take a dislike to Villin. If the characters ask Villin about his connection to 9047 Rand Gurish, he admits that he did know Gurish out in the real world; Gurish was part of a pirate crew who raided shipping on the fringes of Lunion subsector.

Gurish approached Villin, looking for a fence to shift some stolen cargo but Villin reported Gurish to the authorities. The rest of the pirate gang escaped but he was pleased to see Gurish put away for thirty years. Villin's obvious distaste for piracy may be surprising to the Player Characters, given the job he hired them to do. In the machine shop, Villin tries to befriend 3006 Azax Hamid, believing that the clerk can get a message out to Rahm. Unfortunately, Hamid charges Cr. 500 to even attempt sending a message and Villin has no cash. He asks the characters to help him gather the money but refuses to tell them what he wants it for (to preserve Rahm's secrecy). In fact, Azax is scamming Villin – he is pocketing the cash and telling Villin that his contact in Circle City will relay the messages 'any day now'. Villin also befriends 6724 Jaime Giligis, who comes from an asteroid colony and shares Villin's problems with high–gravity. Giligis has a stash of bone–density drugs which he shares with

Villin. Characters who investigate may come to the conclusion that Villin has become addicted to drugs supplied by Giligis.

A Visitor

The next incident occurs several weeks later, when Hoster visits the prison. This is an unofficial visit – Hoster is not here in his capacity as director of security for Macene, he is simply popping in to have a little chat with the prison warden. Warden Grice is quite star–struck by his visitor and is so awed that he will do anything for Hoster's approval. The characters may glimpse Hoster as he lands in a private shuttle. He is a fat man with a florid, multi–coloured moustache and cybernetic eyes. He is well dressed and pops vitamin tablets constantly. He speaks very quietly, in a voice just above a whisper. Hoster interviews Villin privately but Villin refuses to tell him who ordered the break–in. Characters with connections among the guards will learn that a secret interview took place and that no–one in the prison knows what the strange visitor wanted.

Breaking Villin

Having failed to extract the information he needed from Villin, Hoster departs, leaving instructions with Assistant Warden Voller to break Villin's will. The old spacer is reassigned to the Danger Zone and the word goes forth that it is open season on Sadder Villin. Those who make Villin's life hell – without killing him – will be rewarded. If anyone does kill him, though, then they will answer to Assistant Warden Voller. All the major gangs start hunting Villin. If the spacer is caught, they beat him, he is carted off to the Infirmary and goes from there to the Hole. Once he is out of the Hole, it starts again. The guards only intervene to keep Villin alive. His every waking moment – and those of the Player Characters, if they help him – is a nightmare. His food in the canteen is unimaginable slop. His cell is sabotaged, spilling the contents of the chemical toilet everywhere. In the repair shop, his equipment is smashed, every day's work ruined. Anyone who publicly associates with Villin suffers the same fate.

The one advantage of all this is that Rand Gurish can no longer threaten Villin. The ex–pirate complains about the warden's 'favouritism' of Villin to anyone who listens, insists that Villin is actually a snitch and claims that the attacks on Villin are all faked to give him some credibility among the prison population. Villin holds out for a few weeks. By the end, his nerves are frayed to the verge of insanity and he is skeletally thin. Death hangs on him like a shroud – but he has not given in.

Villin's Plea

Sadder Villin knows that he can't endure much longer – either he will be killed by the torments of the other prisoners or he will crack and give in, revealing Ishta Rahm's identity to Hoster. He still believes that if he can only get word to Ishta Rahm, she will be able to rescue him from prison. He sends word to the characters by bribing G10 Semyon Wainrite, telling them that

he wants to meet them in Area I of the Danger Zone tomorrow. It is vitally important that they meet him, if any of them are to escape Tarkwall.

The Murder

When the characters make it down to the Danger Zone, they find Villin's body lying in the dirt. He is been brutally beaten, his head smashed against the wall over and over until his skull fractured. It's a horrible, bloody way to die and whoever did it must have been remarkably quick and strong. A quick Investigate check shows that Villin's body was searched after he died – his pockets were inside out and his boots were stolen. If the characters linger here too long, they will be discovered by the guards and possibly blamed for the murder.

What Really Happened: Gurish could not attack Villin directly, because of the Assistant Warden's proclamation that anyone who killed Villin would be punished. Therefore, Gurish approached the insane 1470 Jack Shansir and told Jack that Villin was actually a Zhodani spy who was broadcasting thoughts into Shansir's head. The crazed Shansir tried to break into Villin's cell that night but couldn't get through the bars and was beaten back by 1119 Morian Gosh. Shansir tracked Villin down the next day in the Danger Zone and murdered him, smashing him against the walls until the older man went limp. Shansir then wandered off into the caves, talking to himself. He claimed, when asked by the guards, to have cut his hands on sharp rocks and bled all over his clothes. A few minutes later, 8144 Eneri Shadashi found the body and he looted everything he could find. The characters will presumably investigate Villin's death – during this investigation, Hoster will show up again, in You're Next!

Investigating the Death

There are several routes that the characters can take when investigating the death. Warden Voller is also investigating the death and will dispatch G4 Cesmo Wallenstein and G3 Gorod to find the killer. Cesmo begins by bringing the body to the infirmary and having the doctors perform a full autopsy. Gorod just beats people up. Within a week, Cesmo will identify 1470 Jack Shansir as the killer and the psychopath will be thrown in the hole to rot.

Witnesses: No–one is willing to admit they saw anything initially. A few bribes, threats or rumour gathering gets the following information: • There was a furious racket outside Villin's cell last night (caused by Shansir's attack on the cell) • Villin obtained pen and paper from 3006 Azax Hamid during the week and the two had a fierce argument (Villin wanted the paper to write a note, explaining the situation to the characters; he took the opportunity to berate the clerk about his failure to pass messages onto Rahm) • Rand Guirish has been spreading rumours about Villin • 8144 Eneri Shadashi has been lurking around the mining level lately, he is probably trying to steal gemstones • One of the guards visited Villin's cell yesterday.

Villin's Autopsy: If the characters obtain a copy of Villin's autopsy, they learn that the body was disturbed at least once after the death. Furthermore, there were traces of a second blood type on the body, suggesting that the killer was injured in the struggle.

Villin's Cell: His cellmate reports that Jack Shansir tried to break into their cell the night before the murder. Shansir was raving that Villin was 'in his damn head'.

Villin's Boots: Eneri sells Villin's heavy magnetic boots to 6724 Jaime Giligis; the boots have good ankle support, necessary for those who have bone density problems. Characters who know Giligis or are searching for Villin's boots will discover this and Giligis will inform them where he got the boots.

The Note: Eneri Shadashi has the note he stole from Villin's corpse. He will give up this note with a bribe of a few hundred credits or the threat of violence. The note reads, simply 'ISHTA RAHM, MACENE TRANSIT – CONTACT HER.'

You're Next!

As soon as news of Villin's death reaches Hoster, he returns to Tarkwall. He is furious – few visitors have both the authority and the courage to berate both Warden Brice and Assistant Warden Voller. After castigating the prison authorities for losing an important prisoner, Hoster calls any Player Characters who is a known associate of Sadder Villin for an interview. If the characters played through the first part of this adventure, then Hoster demands they reveal who hired them to steal from asteroid M129–AP 299. If they have not, then Hoster asks if Villin told them anything about M129–AP–299. If the characters refuse to answer or lie (and as the characters have no idea who hired Villin, those are the only two options), then Hoster sighs and releases them. If the characters have found Villin's note, they can give Hoster Rahm's name. If they do this, then Hoster leaves Tarkwall forever; Rahm is spaced in a convenient accident and the smuggling ring continues. Otherwise, after failing to get an answer from the characters, Hoster departs. He orders Assistant Warden Voller to do to the characters what he did to Villin – make their lives hell until one of them cracks and talks. Hoster makes it clear that a few casualties are permitted this time, as long as one of the characters survives long enough to breathe the name of Villin's contact within Hoster's organisation.

Contacting Rahm

At this point in the scenario, the characters are in big trouble in Tarkwall. Any attacks on them have Voller's blessing, so they will be assaulted, stolen from, insulted and threatened by every other prisoner. Anyone who injures them will be rewarded by the prison authorities. Every minor infraction on their part, by contrast, will result in vicious beatings by the guards, a spell in the Hole or both. Hoster will return to the prison after six months. If the characters have survived to this point, then he will question the characters again and if they still do not know who hired Villin, he will finally believe them and give up on this route of investigation. If the characters can get word out of the prison through a more reliable channel than 3006 Azax Hamid, then Rahm will visit the prison after a few weeks. She will pose as Sister Mari, a nun from a charitable organisation that sponsors promising inmates for eventual release and redemption. She seeks out the characters and has a private interview with them; during this interview, Rahm reveals who she is and asks the characters about Villin's death. If the characters have made contact with Rahm, then she will aid in getting them released (if they were illegally incarcerated because of Hoster) or in aiding them otherwise (if they were in prison for other reasons). Once the characters are eventually released, Rahm may even employ them in other schemes to bring down Hoster.

KRESDEKKA I

By Dale C. McCoy, Jr.

A new moon orbiting a gas giant for players to explore, with plenty of adventure hooks to get their teeth into.

Planetary Readout

Planet Statistics: D4E2469–B, Ni Size/Gravity: 4 (7,000km in diameter, about 40% standard gravity) Atmosphere: 3 (Very Thin, N/O mix) Surface Water: 2 (17%, 100% of which is frozen) Population: 4 (43,000, 48% human, 21% Canine, 18% Feline, 8% Insectoid, 5% Various.) Government/Ruler: 6 (*Prison Planet*, Thomas Sals – Warden and Corporate Rep.) Classifications: Non–Industrial

Major Population Centres

Subterranean Factory I (prison facility). Population 18,000. Class D starport (Berthing fee: Cr 100). Subterranean Factory III (prison facility). Population 15,000. Class D starport (Berthing fee: Cr 100). Subterranean Mine VII (prison facility). Population 10,000 (Berthing not permitted).

Local Law Summary

Weapons: All weapons illegal outside of spaceport for non–prison personnel. Drugs: Medical drugs tightly controlled. Information: All data from offworld censored. Technology: All tech above TL 4 evaluated. Offworlders: Offworlds must remain in visitor areas. Psionics: Psions not permitted on world. Other: All traffic near planet must respond to communications or may be shot down.

System Details

Kresdekka I is the largest moon orbiting the third gas giant in this system, Kresdekka. Kresdekka II has an elliptical orbit around the planet. The ice moon melts slightly as it skims the giant's atmosphere, giving it a halo appearance every four months. Kresdekka IX has a refuelling station and serves as a trading post for planets deeper in the system. Closer to the sun reside two dwarf planets; these warm weather worlds orbit each other. Both dwarf worlds house small colonies. A total of 12 worlds and dwarf worlds orbit the star Pesridian. Station Quinn rests inside a planetoid along the Berkelium Belt. Miners extract the naturally occurring Berkelium (Bk–247). Additional bodies in the system: 58 moons and seven comets. A cloud of micro–asteroids throughout the system gives the system a hazy appearance. Sun Color: Orange.

Known Imports/ Exports

Basic Consumables (Food) – Major Imports Basic Machine Parts (Manufacturing Equipment) – Major Imports Basic Raw Materials (Iron Ore) – Major Imports Basic Machine Parts (Mining Equipment) – Minor Imports Advanced Machine Parts (Jump Drive Parts) – Major Export Advanced Electronics (Sensor Equipment) – Minor Exports Advanced Machine Parts (Engine Parts) – Minor Exports

Major Corporations and Contacts

Falcore Prison Facilities (Prison Management Corporation) – Kade Smith (Assistant Manager), Rek'sar (Family Relations), (Sales) Titan Securities (Security Service) – Paskira Finch (Assistant Manager)

Threats

Criminal/Pirate Activity: Minimal outside of facility. Heavy inside facility War Threat: Minimal. Radiation Level: Moderate (Berkelium Belt emits high levels of radiation but is only dangerous at close range).

REFEREE'S EYES ONLY

Description and Characteristics

Kresdekka I possesses an atmosphere so thin that facilities had to be built underground to take advantage of the increased pressure the moon's bedrock provides. Even with this increased pressure factories must be pressurized to allow humans and similar races to comfortably operate. Falcore Prison Facilities finds this quality optimal for their business. Since pressure on the surface is so low that most races cannot survive unaided, few prisoners attempt an escape without an elaborate plan for survival. New prisoners are paraded before the bodies of those that tried to escape and died a horrible death on the surface

waiting for an escape ship that was shot down. On the moon's surface rest countless micro–craters.

Countless impacts from the micro–asteroid cloud throughout the system damage all surface features on planetary bodies without atmospheres or those with an atmosphere too thin to adequately protect them. Unarmoured ships and facilities on such worlds require constant upkeep. Titan Securities calculated this would be an excessive financial burden and placed their base on Kresdekka IX, a moon with an existing refuelling station and an atmosphere thick enough to burn off the continual bombardment of tiny rocks throughout the system. The total population of Kresdekka 1 oscillates around 43,000. Of that figure about 2,000 are guards and another 1,000 handle support functions such as coordinating shipments, scheduling prisoner transfers, cooking meals, washing clothes, educating inmates, inspecting manufactured goods and so on. Kresdekka I holds the high security prisoners from every world within eight parsecs. Of these the most dangerous serve their time in the mine. Inmates frequently try to escape but few succeed.

Those quick enough to slip past the guards and smart enough not to get shot by the automated security systems tend to die from exposure before a vessel arrives. Various caverns, craters and cracks on the moon's surface allow for relatively easy access to altitudes low enough not to require an oxygen supply. The largest ones allow for a 50 ton craft to pass through such an opening. Other such cracks allow for a person to climb through and arrive on the surface. Players standing on the surface without an air supply should use the suffocation rules but take damage every ten minutes. Those with an air supply but without a vacc suit take suffocation damage every 30 minutes from the insufficient pressure the thin atmosphere provides.

Recent History
Subterranean Mine VII opened last year and was forced to become fully operational within four months. The lower reaches of Mine VI collapsed during a prisoner riot killing 352 prisoners and ten guards. With no alternative until Mine VII came fully online, Falcore ordered prisoners to continue to work in Mine VI. The mine claimed about one life every week due to various accidents resulting from the earlier collapse. The labour union representing the workers at all three of Kresdekka's prison facilities are currently negotiating for a better contract with Falcore. The corporation's negotiators angered union members by belittling the work they perform. The union plans to implement a strike the moment their contract runs out. Without the union cooking meals, cleaning laundry and maintaining the health of the facility, Falcore Prison Facilities could be looking at a deadly riot. Given the opportunity, the Blood Fangs already have their plans to use such a riot to further their plans. One of Titan Securities' fighters crash landed on the surface of Kresdekka I opening up a sink hole into the remains of Subterranean

Factory II. Titan's standard procedure is to retrieve the downed fighter and conduct an investigation into the cause of the crash. Because the crash entered one of the old prison facilities, Falcore is forbidding the investigators entry. Titan does not have the resources to investigate in secret but is searching for alternative means to conduct their investigation.

Points of Interest
Subterranean Factory I: The main shipping facility. Shipments to and from the mine pass through this facility. While only authorised personnel may gain access beyond the visitor's area, corporate representatives frequent the restricted areas. Their presence maintains the quality of the products produced and ensures that an adequate quantity leaves the facility. After a few inspectors were roughed up by inmates while guards were not looking, corporate reps no longer enter this area without their own muscle. Even though the number of incidents continues to increase, corporate representatives feel safer and continue the practice.

Subterranean Mine VI: Even though this mine is closed, protocol still requires that the collapse be investigated. A small team of excavators operate several robots from the surface as the machines slowly chip away at rocks. They operate with slow precision in order not to cause another cave in; their instructions are to repair the mine so that additional resources can be extracted. Bringing in relief workers and supplies via ground vehicles to this operation requires special permission from the main factory on the planet, as well as paying off the right guards. The alternative involves vacc suits and carrying supplies on foot. Landing space craft at the old space port is strictly forbidden. Even the excavators are not permitted to take ground vehicles there.

Defences
Fighters: ten Wings of 48 multi–mission fighters. Two wings of 24 bombers armed with basic torpedoes, stationed on Kresdekka XI. Gun Boats: Five 1,400 Ton spacecraft optimised for heavy combat, stationed on Kresdekka XI. Satellite Defense System: 20 remote operated satellites each equipped with Beam Lasers.

Groups
Guards: The guards working for Falcore supplement their meagre incomes with bribes from prison inmates that want a favour as well as from those that want to smuggle items in to the inmates. Credits, drugs and information are the guards' preferred currencies. All new inmates know to watch their back when the guards happen to look away.

Blood Fangs: The Blood Fangs represent the largest gang on Kresdekka I. Over 90% of the Canine population belongs to this gang. These are some of the toughest inmates and they frequently brawl with the other gangs. Their signature move involves savagely biting their opponents in order to spill blood.

The Blood Fangs arrived on Kresdekka I when one plant tried to break up a small street gang by sending them to work in the mines. Instead it served only to strengthen the gang and increase their membership to numbers the original politicians could not have imagined. Several original members will finish serving their time soon. They plan to continue to spread the gang's influence to nearby worlds.

King Cobras: While the other gangs fight with each other, squabbling for scraps, the King Cobras sit back and watch. They have all the drugs they could desire and live lives more comfortable then any of the other inmates. This gang happens to have the dirtiest lawyers and friends on the outside willing to do whatever they ask. Whenever a guard or inmate needs to apply pressure to someone's family or a prisoner wants to maintain control over the gambling operation he left behind, the King Cobras handle that operation with few fingerprints leading back to the facility for investigators to pursue. Admittance to the Cobras requires the inmate to order a hit on someone on the outside and without it being found out by the Warden until the deed is over.

Torch Bearers: Among the educators, cooks, janitors and other staff workers resides a group of missionaries that work to help rehabilitate the prisoners. Their goal is to spread their religious beliefs and help turn the criminals from their life of crime to being productive members of society. Individual members that believe in the conversion of a particular inmate will frequently speak on their behalf at their parole hearing. Some prisoners use the Torch Bearers as a means to get released early. If an inmate can convince several members of the religious community that their conversion is genuine, express the right amount of remorse and so on they may be able to wrangle a reduction in their sentence.

Patrons
Balkins Hedilson: Corporate Representative

Required: Admin, Advocate, Melee, Streetwise Reward: Cr. 12,000

Players' Information
Balkins Hedilson works for Rogers Industries, a company that hires Falcore Prisons to produce Sensor Equipment. Falcore reported several delays to Rogers; Rogers instructed their representative in the region to perform an immediate inspection of Falcore's bookkeeping. With his main crew inspecting another facility's books for another two weeks, Hedilson needs another crew to handle the inspection work. He requires the crew to be able to handle themselves in a fist fight since weapons are not permitted onsite. Hedilson will accompany the crew to provide them access but he hires the players to perform all other duties.

Referee's Information
When Hedilson and the players arrive, Falcore Prisons attempts to delay them as long as possible. During the course of their investigation, the players discover:

1–2. A prison riot resulted in several key components going missing. Prisoners involved have been in lockdown since that time while guards search for the missing components. Falcore is within their contract to delay for this reason but simply does not want to admit the problem and potentially lose their contract.

3. Prison guards used production equipment to maim a dangerous inmate. Falcore would prefer to pretend the incident had not happened and are still cleaning up.

4–5. A competitor of Rogers Industries hired Falcore to ship three fully functioning copies of their sensor arrays. The units shipped while Falcore delayed the crew.

6. An inmate received a shipment of drugs inside some new machinery shipped to the facility. Unfortunately he sabotaged the machine to extract his goods. Production has subsequently been delayed. Falcore does not want to face a fine and attempts to hide the incident.

Charles Peznix: Member of the King Cobras
Required: Gun Combat, Stealth, willingness to assassinate a judge. Reward: Cr. 125,000

Players' Information
Charles Peznix is a member of the King Cobras and has paid off a guard to permit him a private conversation with the players for five minutes. He asks the players if they have any problem performing a hit on a corrupt public official, one that has sent several people to Kresdekka I needlessly. If they agree, Peznix gives the players a plastic capsule, instructs one of them to swallow it and retrieve it once they are safely off world. If questioned about payment, Peznix tells the players that the interested party promises Cr. 125,000 and all the information necessary to retrieve such a payment is inside the capsule.

Referee's Information
The capsule includes three small scraps of paper with something on each. Having a computer scan the information and increase the magnification is the only way to read them. The first piece of paper is a picture of a middle–aged feline female with the name "Judge Rasser Hak'Zes" and the name of a nearby planet.

The second scrap of paper instructs the players to seek out Kamal Chazren, provides his address, and tells them to give him the third piece of paper. The second scrap also informs the players that a hit will go out on them should they fail to take care of their mission within one month. The third scrap is a letter to Chazren that it is time for him to pay for his freedom and to give the group Cr. 125,000. The following are several possibilities that could happen to the players while they work this mission.

1. Chazren went to ground after being released from Kresdekka I. The players need to track down Chazren if they want to get paid. The King Cobras are less interested

in the players getting paid then they are in the mission getting accomplished. Should the players fail to complete their mission, the Cobras will send out a hit on them.

2. The players discover that Judge Hak'Zes is not "corrupt" but routinely hands out excessively strict punishments for even the most minor of infractions. Kresdekka I is suppose to be reserved for the harshest of criminals only. She sentences embezzlers to 15 years on that rock. The public likes these punishments as it serves their desire for vengeance, but other judges and prosecutors do not like her style of "justice" as it breeds resentment among families and friends of those improperly sentenced. Finding individuals that will assist gaining access to Hak'Zes (for a small price) is not a difficult task.

3. Judge Hak'Zes survived several prior assassination attempts and does not take security for granted. Her home is armed with several alarm systems, her personal vehicles are heavily armoured, and she employs security guards that travel around wherever she goes. One of the guards frequents a local singles bar when off duty.

4. While the players investigate Judge Hak'Zes they discover she possesses trinkets from every inflated prison sentence she hands down and acquires them by hiring local thieves to break into the person's home and steal them. Each trinket is a personal possession of the convicted. A Simple Advocate check will reveal this to be highly illegal and a window of opportunity for the players to reach the judge.

5. As the players search for information, they uncover that Kamal Chazren and Charles Peznix are both friends with a local politician. An investigation into the politician's office continues to be lead by Judge Hak'Zes.

Sk'tzak'kst: Escaped Inmate
Required: Investigation, a spaceship Reward: Cr. 15,000

Players' Information
The players return to their ship after doing business on Kresdekka I. After entering jump space, the players notice food missing from the galley and various supplies missing from the rest of the ship. From time to time, a player thinks they see something human–sized moving throughout the ship. Eventually the players discover an insectoid creature standing in a torn prison uniform identifying himself as Sk'tzak'kst. He admits to being an escaped convict and tells the players a hard and difficult story of his wrongful conviction. He claims to know the location of a long forgotten pirate treasure and promises the players a cut of Cr. 15,000 if they assist him to retrieve it and drop him off at a civilized world afterwards.

Referee's Information
As the players probably guess Sk'tzak'kst's story of a false conviction is not exactly true. He murdered several men who tried to steal this very same treasure before he had a chance to hide it. Now he is willing to part with some of his stolen treasure as the price of his freedom. But the Five Guns pirate organisation kept tabs on his time in prison and watched for his re–emergence. Their people inside the facility watch departing ships for suspicious activity and pay guards to inform them of any developments. They heard of his disappearance from the prison facility some time ago.

1. Some of the prison inmates working for the Five Guns released a micro–drone that latched itself to the player's ship. It transmits the coordinates of the jump the players programmed into their computer and a long range scout ship launched to meet the Five Guns a few hours later.

2. The players arrive on the asteroid that Sk'tzak'kst hid the treasure and they find the entryway relatively quickly. They activate the defences that Sk'tzak'kst set up years ago and has since forgotten about and the players must fight their way in.

3. The asteroid has long since been pulverized by collisions over the years. While scanning for what happened to the money the players' sensors will detect tiny pieces of gold and other metals about the size of coins scattered among the other asteroids in the area. They also encounter an active mining base which has no doubt collected some of these metal "chunks".

4. The stolen pirate treasure is in fact Sk'tzak'kst's mate. He freed her from the pirates before being sent off to Kresdekka I. When the players arrive at his mate's hiding place they discover the pirates raided the safe house and recaptured her. Sk'tzak'kst reveals that it is almost his mate's time of year to lay her eggs and they need to rescue her before that begins.

5. The treasure is on a world that has since been conquered. The government is now held captive by an off–world power and the people have no personal freedoms to move around as they wish. The players must pass through several check points simply to get close to the treasure.

6. The players encounter few difficulties retrieving the treasure. Afterwards, Sk'tzak'kst asks the players to stay with him to help him get revenge on those that sent him to prison falsely. Sk'tzak'kst doe not simply want to kill them but wants to have everything they have and hold dear slip away from them before their eyes. Their new friend offers to pay them for their efforts. His initial requests are simply to have the players gain information on old associates of his but as time wears on Sk'tzak'kst's request become more hate–filled and vengeful.

The Arhiyao Clan

By Gareth Hanrahan

*A complete Aslan clan based in the Trojan Reaches, complete with important characters,
politics and worlds.*

The Arhiyao are a minor Aslan clan, presented here to illustrate the political and territorial dynamics of a typical clan. They have holdings in Ranib subsector in the Trojan Reach. The Arhiyao can be used as a 'home clan' for Player Character Aslan or as patrons or even foes.

History

The Arhiyao are a young clan by Aslan standards. They cannot trace their lineage back to Kusyu; they have never been accounted among the Twenty–Nine Great Clans, nor were their glorious deeds recorded in the Grand Conclave. Their history begins during the Aslan Border Wars.

The Deeds of Klraiyo

The earliest account of an Arhiyao landholder is in 1733, when a warrior named Arhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru is recorded as having seized the western islands of a world in the Reaver's Deep in a series of lightning raids. He captured a Human warship and used it as his flagship in the Border Wars, launching surprise attacks on Human–occupied worlds. According to the folk–tales of the clan, Arhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru possessed supernatural powers and was capable of teleporting and reading the minds of his enemies. He could 'step between the shadows' and bore the title of the 'Laughing Lightning–Ghost'. Descendants of Arhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru served honourably in the armies of several lords and vassals of the Hrasua but the sons of Arhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru never held enough territory to be accounted an independent clan.

In 2577, one of these descendants, Klraiyoarhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru, quarrelled with his Hrasua lord over a point of honour. Klraiyo and his followers hired a colony ship belonging to the Wahtoi clan and crossed the Great Rift. Klraiyo was accompanied by his new wife, a stolen female of the Hrasua line. The Hrasua have never forgotten nor forgiven this slight – for a vassal to kidnap a Hrasua bride is an insult that will burn longer than the stars. Further, Klraiyo lacked the money to pay for the colony vessel, so he and his followers had to indenture themselves to fight on behalf of the Wahtoi as soon as they arrived in the Trojan Reach. Although Klraiyo is recognised as the true founder of the Arhiyao clan, he is also a cautionary example. If Arhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru teaches his descendants to seize what they desire with cunning and ferocity, then Klraiyo shows them to consider what they desire carefully and not to overreach.

The years immediately after crossing the Great Rift were hard ones for the young clan. The Wahtoi used Klraiyo and his followers as scouts and then as cannon fodder in their wars with their Aroaye'i rivals. Of the 4,000 males who followed Klraiyo into the Trojan Reach, no more than 800 survived the 50 years of indentured servitude. They had acquitted themselves heroically against the Aroaye'i in battle but all their victories were on behalf of the Wahtoi. Klraiyo was among those who died in battle under a Wahtoi banner but his twin sons Jaklraiyo and Hruklraiyo took up their father's cause and his dreams of a free clan. From him, they learned to dream and plot; from their Hrusua mother, they learned how to fight.

As soon as the 50 years of forced service were at an end, Hruklraiyo immediately declared war on the Wahtoi.

The Wahtoi, never a strong military clan, had come to depend on Klraiyo's followers as shock troops. Their own house armies were no match for Hruklraiyo's warriors and the Wahtoi were forced to cede the world of Uitasoayaw (0810/Ranib) to Hruklraiyo. With this much territory at his command, Hruklraiyo was able to declare his followers to be an independent clan, the Arhiyao. Hruklraiyo became the first Arhiyaoko.

Back in Hierate space, such a declaration would have been considered little more than a joke. The clan had less than 600 adult males, no money, no industrial base and no ships apart from a few battered and poorly–maintained scouts. They had a world but the two most influential clans in the region – the Wahtoi and the Aroaye'i – considered the Arhiyao to be enemies and one of the Twenty–Nine still held a blood feud with the new clan over the kidnapping of Klraiyo's bride. Back in Hierate space, the Arhiyao would have been put back in their place within a decade by some long–established traditionalist clan.

The Trojan Reach is a land of opportunity and new possibilities, though – even the possibility that such a weak clan could thrive. The Arhiyao had one advantage that their enemies had not considered and it was this advantage that would save them.

In the Imperium, the *Scout* Service is a notoriously dangerous occupation. Exploring the fringes of settled space, dealing with hostile environments or bizarre cultures, encountering alien races and inexplicable phenomena – it is a rare scout who survives for too long in the service. Such a rare scout almost always leaves the service a rich man, though, as a successful scout will know about mineral deposits and valuable alien plants or animals, about rich worlds and alien relics, about potential short cuts and trade routes. The Arhiyao had been used as scouts by the Wahtoi for 50 years and they had not shared all of their discoveries with their erstwhile masters.

The Arhiyaoko's twin brother, Jaklraiyo, became the clan envoy to the Aslan corporations who were eager to exploit the newly–discovered worlds in the Trojan Reach. Instead of repeating his father's mistake and tying the fortunes of the clan to a single master, Jaklraiyo (and his mates Kaaus and Ihkauiai, who are the unsung heroines of the Arhiyao's survival) played the corporations off against each other. Trading the location of a lanthanum deposit to one company got the Arhiyao more ships and weapons to fend off attackers; the secret of harvesting valuable biochemicals from a dangerous jungle planet got them the herdstocks and farming equipment they needed to survive.

Klraiyo died in battle under another clan's flag, having led his kin into near–slavery. One of his sons died in the great palace on Uitasoayaw, old, fat and surrounded by young wives and grandsons, surveying the vast territory under his claw. The other son vanished in a misjump aboard his custom vessel, the 1,000–ton Salouwealryekha but was accounted one of the wealthiest Aslan in the Trojan Reach before his disappearance.

The Wahtoi Strike Back

Over the next two centuries, the Arhiyao consolidated what they had won. Their population grew as they tamed Uitasoayaw and they maintained their reputation as excellent warriors, although advancing technology put their troops at a disadvantage against more powerful clans. Their trove of valuable secrets ran out as Aslan expansion in the Trojan Reach went past the borders they had scouted but the clan continued to send scout–ships out into unexplored space and worked with the trade corporations in exploiting new worlds.

After a generation's work, Uitasoayaw was a usable agricultural world. They seeded the planet with Kusyuan bacteria and built huge automated factories to subtly adjust the atmosphere. Livestock purchased from the corporations were set loose and within a decade of colonisation the Arhiyaoko was able to hunt aua'ka through the young forests. The planet was unremarkable in terms of resources, though, and the Arhiyao were rapidly falling behind the technological development of other clans. This technological gap would prove devastating to the clan's fortunes.

In the Hierate, the Great Clans invariably possess the most advanced technology, as they have the resources to pour money into research. New developments are then passed on to their vassal clans in exchange for service. The Arhiyao were independent for centuries and both their previous suzerains were hostile to them. While the rest of the Hierate pushed towards TL13, the Arhiyao were slipping back towards TL9.

In 2660, Uitasoayaw was attacked by Wahtoi forces. The Wahtoi were accompanied by mercenaries and ihatei bands. As soon as the Wahtoi fleet jumped in, their envoy informed the Arhiyaoko that the two clans were now at war – a limited war for control of Uitasoayaw's fertile western continent and spaceport.

The Wahtoi had significant advantages both on the battlefield and in the initial challenge – as they already had ships in the system, they could force the earleatrais to accept that space forces would be part of the conflict. The Arhiyao had few warships and nothing that could defeat the considerably more advanced Wahtoi ships. On the ground, the Arhiyao warriors were better trained and had more stomach for battle than their foes but were using yeheal autorifles against wye'oiheasarl plasma cannons.

The war lasted six weeks. The Wahtoi and their allies suffered more losses than they anticipated but the earleatrais declared them the victors nonetheless. Over a third of the territory on the Arhiyao homeworld was seized by the invaders. The shame led the current Arhiyaoko to commit ritual suicide, passing the leadership of the clan to the next generation.

Over the next decade, the clan rebuilt its military forces and sought out allies. Two of these new alliances would lead to the reclamation of Uitasoayaw and the rise of the Arhiyao; the third alliance would nearly destroy them.

The first of these new allies was the Tru'shan, another offshoot of the once–mighty Trui'kt. The Tru'shan faction hived off from the larger clan during the Cultural Purge; they were a clan of scientists and researchers who advocated the use of robots in battle instead of risking Aslan lives. The fundamentalist khiraokhaor'ya clans wiped out the Tru'shan drone armies in a series of apocalyptic battles, forcing the Tru'shan to flee Hierate space. The Tru'shan established a new colony on Ewyeyal in Silraaihe subsector but were isolated from the rest of the Aslan. Most of the clans in that region were on the khiraokhaor'ya during the civil war, while the Tru'shan were tainted by their tseyko roots. The Tru'shan were pariahs but they were pariahs with advanced technology and a formidable industrial base. The Arhiyao offered to act as intermediaries, reselling Tru'shan technology to khiraokhaor'ya clans. A new corporation, the Ekhoaoiarl (Brother–Making Commercial Endeavour) was founded to pursue this trade. The Arhiyao owned a third of the shares, the Tru'shan another third and the final third was traded

openly on the Aslan markets (but most of these shares were quickly purchased by Arhiyao traders).

The income from the company allowed the clan to pursue even greater fortunes. The nearby world of Hkakh, a marginally habitable frozen world, was colonised and established as a trade nexus. Hkakh freeport, with its state–of–the–art spaceport, its automated cargo handling and its regular security patrols made it attractive to the growing number of traders passing through Ranib subsector on their way to the Imperium. The company expanded quickly; from its foundation of trading solely in Tru'shan technology, it diversified into dust–spice, terraforming technology, agricultural products and cosmetics.

The third alliance was with the Glorious Empire. Like the Tru'shan, the Aslan of the Glorious Empire were unable to trade freely with the Hierate. The Arhiyao offered them a back door into the Hierate market, in exchange for military support and a sizeable share of the profits. It was not smuggling per se but it certainly skirted the boundaries of both legality and honour.

An alliance with the Glorious Empire was extremely controversial within the clan but the Arhiyaoko's word was law. The Arhiyaoko of the period was a young warrior named Khtoarlyu, the Steel Cat, who lost an eye and both legs during the battles for Uitasoayaw. He was fitted with Tru'shan–built cybernetics to restore his strength and for the rest of his life he was accompanied everywhere by Tru'shan technician–maidens to maintain and adjust his machine parts.

The second war for Uitasoayaw saw a combination of Arhiyao and Glorious Empire troops descend on the Wahtoi territories like fiery tigers. The Wahtoi crumbled and fled into space; the new Tru'shan–built Arhiyao fleets pursued them and the war ended with the Wahtoi ceding the world of Ehaealir to the Arhiyao.

The Glorious Empire

The clan's alliance with the Glorious Empire was always going to be a troublesome one. Ever since the Tokouea'we clan broke away from the Aslan Hierate, conflicts and territorial wars were virtually constant along the border. The Ahriyao approached the Glorious Empire during a time of comparative peace but soon the wars started up again.

The Ahriyao were under no legal obligation to send warriors to fight on either side but they were dragged into the conflict anyway. The Ekhoaoiarl company freighters needed escorts if they were to continue trading with the Empire. Often, these escorts were attacked by Hierate forces from the Wahtoi or a Hrusua–related clan, as old enemies of the Ahriyao took the opportunity to inflict some damage on the clan. Other attacks were from previously neutral clans who objected to any trade with the Glorious Empire.

The clan was bitterly divided between those who believed that the alliance with the Glorious Empire was a mistake and

those who argued that the clan must hold true to its word, no matter what the cost. The Tru'shan and the executive board of the Ekhoaoiarl both added their voices to those arguing against the alliance but the aging Khtoarlyu, still ko of the clan, refused to contemplate any diminishment of the clan's ties to the Empire, even when it became clear that the alliance had ceased to be a benefit and was now an invitation to war to any clan with a grudge against the Empire.

In 3066, Khtoarlyu was murdered by an assassin. The two strongest candidates for ko were Sauhkesi, the commander of the clan's space fleet, and Yahefiy, the wealthiest and most powerful male on Hkakh.

Sauhkesi was young to be considered for ko but his prowess in space combat had won him great honour. He was a strong advocate of the alliance and considered the Glorious Empire to be the model that future Aslan clans in the Trojan Reach should follow. The weak human worlds of the sector begged to be conquered and the clan who reached out and put them under the claw would be invincible! He was an honoured friend of the Glorious Empire and even hunted with the Glorious Empire in the palace gardens on Syoukh.

Yahefiy was a great landowner, who counted most of Hkakh as his personal fiefdom. Three of his wives were on the board of the Ekhoaoiarl, while his sons were powerful generals and

captains in the clan's armed forces. Yahefiy was seen by most as Khtoarlyu's inevitable successor, a safe pair of claws to guide the clan into a brighter future.

The two fought a bloody duel on Uitasoayaw and the elder Yahefiy was the victory. Rather than accept his new lord, Sauhkesi accused him of being behind the assassination of Khtoarlyu. Yahefiy countered by claiming that a secret war of assassins had been declared months earlier by the Hrakoea, blood–kin of the Hrasua and so therefore another traditional enemy of the Ahriyao. The Hrakoea were also among the clans attacking the Glorious Empire.

Sauhkesi returned to his ship and jumped away. Yahefiy's first act as ko was to break the alliance with the Glorious Empire and add the forces of the Ahriyao to the war. Surprisingly, Sauhkesi agreed to lead the invasion force, striking at his former friends with all the fury of an Aslan warrior.

Within months, the clan had their first victory over their erstwhile 'allies'. The world of Souftea in Nora'a subsector was ceded to the Arhiyao by the Glorious Empire after a shockingly brief war. The Glorious Empire commander at Souftea surrendered directly to Sauhkesi, who took possession of the world. The human slave population of Souftea, numbering some three million, were abandoned to their new Arhiyao overlord.

The conflict with the Glorious Empire rumbled on for another four decades but as the advancing borders of the Hierate pushed the war zone out of easy reach of Ahriyao forces, the clan's involvement in the war diminished. An uneasy peace lasted for the remainder of Yahefiy's reign.

Recent Troubles

While the Ahriyao claim four worlds as theirs, only the well–established planets of Uitasoayaw and Hkakh are the clan's core territory. Ehaealir is shared with several other clans, most of whom have more resources than that Ahriyao. Souftea is wholly owned by the clan – or, more accurately, the pride of Sauhkesi, who treat the world as their private fiefdom and have only limited contact with the rest of the clan.

In 3618, some 20 years ago, three warships from the clan's space forces vanished near the Glorious Empire. These three vessels – two Aositaoh–class cruisers and one Halaheike–class pocket warship – were all under the command of officers from Souftea. An investigation into the disappearance revealed no signs of sabotage or hostile forces operating nearby. Either all three vessels simultaneously misjumped or they defected to the Glorious Empire.

The Tru'shan clan is undergoing its own internal difficulties. A blight on their homeworld of Ewyeyal has destroyed much of their food production capability, forcing them to trade for basic foodstuffs via the Ekhoaoiarl. Unless a cure for the blight is found, the Tru'shan economy may collapse or they may be conquered by another clan who can feed their citizens.

Clan Structure

The clan Ahriyao numbers some 29 million Aslan, divided between seven major prides who make up the aristocratic tier of the clan (and hold most of the territory) and another four dozen lesser prides. The head of the Ahriyao pride is the Ahriyaoko – the dominance of the Ahriyao pride has gone virtually unchallenged throughout the clan's history, with only a few exceptions such as the Yahefiy dynasty that ruled for three generations.

The seven major prides are as follows:

Ahriyao Pride: The oldest of the prides, the families of the Ahriyao can trace their lineage back to Arhiyaoaiftlaiyhruuhru himself. They hold the territory in the east of Uitasoayaw. The Ahriyao are traditionally the leaders of the clan and even when they are out of power, they wield considerable influence over the clan's politics. Most of the clan's priests, envoys and poets come from this pride and the current Ahriyaoko is from this bloodline.

Homeworld: Uitasoayaw

Strengths: Territory, Tradition, Politics

Yahefiy Pride: Originally a family within the Fiyatrusha, the Yahefiy broke off from the older pride when Yahefiy became the Ahriyaoko and moved his family and holdings to the world of Uitasoayaw. The Yahefiy are the young turks of the clan and are the most ambitious and aggressive of the families. They are feuding with the Sauhkesi and are closely allied with the Arhiyao through intermarriage. They have eclipsed their former kin, the Fiyatrusha and today the two prides have little in common. While the head of the pride dwells on Uitasoayaw, the family still has extensive holdings on Hkakh.

Homeworld: Uitasaoyaw

Strengths: Wealth, Territory, Military

Sauhkesi Pride: The Sauhkesi rose to prominence within a single generation. Their founder, Sauhkesi, was born to a landless awkhea family. He managed to win a place in the space service, where his genius for military tactics and lust for conquest won him great honour. When the ahriyaoko died, Sauhkesi was able to mount a serious claim for the clanship.

When Sauhkesi was defeated by Yahefiy, he returned to space and followed the clan leader's command to make war on the Glorious Empire. He conquered the world of Souftea from the Glorious Empire and claimed it as his own. The pride of Sauhkesi has held that world ever since. The ruling family of the Sauhkesi are of Sauhkesi's own bloodline; the other families are the descendants of his loyal crew.

The Sauhkesi are mistrusted by most of the other families. They are seen as isolated and strange and have little contact with the rest of the clan. Their culture is closer to that of the Glorious Empire than the Hierate. In effect, the Sauhkesi are a clan within a clan and some fear that it is only a matter of time before

the Sauhkesi leave the clan – or are driven out. The thought of a Sauhkesi claiming the clanship is a dreadful one to the Ahriyao and Yahefiy prides.

Homeworld: Sauftea

Strengths: Territory, Military, Slave Labour

Jaklraiyo Pride: This pride claim descent from one of the explorer who started the clan's tradition of scouting. The Jaklraiyo are explorers still but they also have considerable interests in the clan's trade and diplomatic circles. The Jaklraiyo have only minimal territories, which means they will never be contenders for the political leadership of the clan but they are immensely wealthy. The Jaklraiyo traditionally support the Ahriyaoko in most matters but have played kingmaker in the past, throwing their wealth and power behind a challenger from the Yahefiy or Haurenahar.

The Jaklraiyo are peacemakers and pragmatists; they have argued against expanding the clan's holdings, arguing that the clan lacks the military resources to hold another world.

Homeworld: Uitasoayaw

Strengths: Space Fleet, Wealth, Trade

Haurenahar Pride: The Haurenahar are another branch of the Ahriyao. The pride was founded when the clan conquered Ehaealir. They are somewhat isolated from the rest of the clan and see themselves as above the petty squabbles of the Ahriyao, Yahefiy and Sauhkesi. The Haurenahar have a strong military tradition and agitate for the clan to improve its space fleet and expand once more.

Homeworld: Eheaalir

Strengths: Territory, Military, Trade

Fiyatrusha Pride: The Fiyatrusha Pride was born of a political marriage between elements of the Ahriyao and the Tru'shan clan and they have inherited the technological aptitude of their Tru'shan forebears. The Fiyatrusha produce the most skilled technicians and scientists of the clan and are the backbone of the clan's spacefleet. The Fiyatrusha's htahyu (clan stronghold) is in orbit of Hkakh; it is a huge habitat, more than 600 years old and supporting more than 10,000 Aslan. It is the clan's primary shipyard.

The pride has always harboured ambitions of greater influence (and the Tru'shan clan would very much like to see their kin rise to command the Ahriyao clan) but lacks both the territory and the warrior spirit to win such power.

Homeworld: Hkakh

Strengths: Technology, Trade

Ahriusha Pride: This pride is almost as old as the clan but has never been close to power. The Ahriusha families are the descendants of the warriors who accompanied Klraiyo across the Great Rift. They are the backbone of the clan's military and have a considerable amount of territory on all four of the clan's worlds but the pride is too divided to mount a serious challenge for the leadership. The rest of the clan keeps playing Ahriusha families against each other; there are Ahriusha who are sworn to support the Ahriyao and the Fiyatrusha and the Yahefiy and even the Sauhkesi.

Homeworld: Uitasoayaw

Strengths: Territory, Military, Population

Politics

Internal politics within the Ahriyao is cut–throat in a restrained way. In other clans, the fight to determine which pride will dominate the clan is a brutal, bloody one and any of a half–dozen strong prides could rise to rule over the rest. The Ahriyao are a small clan and (a few rare examples notwithstanding) the Ahriyao family of Ahriyao Pride rules over the Ahriyao clan.

The major political struggle, then, is between the Yahefiy warriors and the Jaklraiyo merchants for control of the clan's direction. When the clan goes to war, the Yahefiy grow in power; when it is peaceful, the Jaklraiyo benefit.

The other prides have their own limited interests and switch their support between the two major prides as circumstances dictate. The Sauhkesi are always on the fringes of clan politics – no pride likes them but they are powerful enough to be cultivated as allies.

Military Forces

The clan is too small to support any capital ships, so the Ahriyao specialise in smaller, more agile forces. They have significant numbers of Ekawsiykua escorts for light duties and local defence, augmented by monitor ships. The clan possesses two dozen Aositaoh cruisers and ten Halaheike warships. Their ground forces number some 30,000 warriors.

Growing Up Ahriyao

Arhiyao characters will be intimately aware of the small size of their clan. Other clans control hundreds of worlds and have populations in the billions but the Ahriyao have only four lonely worlds. They are a tiny part of the Hierate and the clan's future is uncertain. The Player Characters have a good chance of shaping the destiny of the clan.

This does make character generation much more interesting. Choices made during character generation will not only determine the nature of the Player Characters but also the future of the clan. If the players all play naval officers and warriors, then their military adventures will push the clan into conflict with its neighbours. If they concentrate on merchants and diplomats, then they can expand the clan's corporate holdings.

Pride Modifiers:

Ahriyao: +1 Social Standing, –1 Endurance

Yahefiy: +1 Strength, –1 Intelligence

Sauhkesi: +1 Endurance, –1 Social Standing

Jaklraiyo: +1 Intelligence, –1 Strength

Haurenahar: +1 Intelligence, –1 Social Standing

Fiyatrusha: +1 Education, –1 Social Standing

Ahriusha: +1 Endurance, –1 Social Standing

Worlds

Uitasoayaw (B5796J7–9, Ni) is the oldest of the clan's planets. It is a poor and unremarkable world. Its native biosphere was wiped out by the Aslan terraforming efforts, although aborigine flora still persists in isolated regions. To most visitors, Uitasoayaw has nothing to recommend it except for breathable air and the capital city of Yairtyrl but to the Ahriyao, this is the promised world that their ancestors fought for.

Hkakh (A3245J6–E, Ni) is a frozen ice ball but beneath the ice are rich reserves of iron and other metals. Orbital factories produce the majority of the clan's industrial goods and starships. Hkakh is also situated on a major trade route and is the seat of the Ekhoaoiarl Corporation. It is the economic engine that drives the clan. It is, unfortunately, a hellish place to live – the major cities are all under domes of packed ice and most homes are in old mining tunnels. The Aslan of Hkakh are miserable, denied the wide open spaces and hunting grounds that their blood calls out for.

Ehaealir (B6365HB–9) is right on the border of the Glorious Empire and is regularly attacked by slaver ships. The clan's holdings there are in the Mountains of Glass. There is a sizeable human population on Ehaealir; tribes of wild humans live in the foothills, driven back to a primitive level of development to survive the slavers.

Souftea (A2517K4–D) is a small, nearly airless moon but was heavily industrialised by the Glorious Empire. The factories of Souftea are as productive as those of Hkakh (possibly more so, although there are rumours that the Sauhkesi use slave labour in the underground mills). The Sauhkesi want clan funding to expand the old shipyards in orbit of the moon, upgrading them to allow the construction of warships. So far, this proposal has been blocked in the clan council by the Yahefiy but the Haurenahar believe it is the best way to secure the coreward frontier.

Important Characters

The **Ahriyaoko** today is an elderly male of the Ahriyao family. His mind is fraying and he is rumoured to be increasingly paranoid about the clan's ancient foes, the Hrasua. His youngest wife, **G'aulai** of the Yahefiy has taken over more and more of her husband's duties.

The most influential voice on the board of Ekhoaoiarl is another female, **Iwala.** She believes that the clan has grown stale and needs to invest in explorers and free traders to bring in new opportunities. The unexplored and untamed sections of the Trojan Reach hold the future of the clan and she is looking for ambitious young cubs to sponsor. Unusually for a female in her position, she has not yet taken a siyajkhoara oath to remain unmarried.

The commander of the clan's space fleet is **Yesyakhei** of the Ahriyao but many in the navy believe that young captain **Tolirah** – the victor at Uao, the warrior who slew the pirate queen Khitlaa – is the true leader of the clan's military forces. Tolirah is an inspiring leader and a brilliant tactician – but he is Sauhkesi, so the clan's elders mistrust him.

Adventure Ideas

• **The Tru'shan Famine:** The Tru'shan clan are on the brink of famine. An Arhiyao researcher just discovered that a new form of plant engineered by Syoisuis scientists will thrive on the Tru'shan worlds. If this plant can be obtained, then the famine can be averted. The characters must acquire these seeds, by fair means or foul, before the Tru'shan starve or some other clan uses the seeds to drive a wedge between the Ahriyao and their allies.

• **Civil War on Ehlaealir:** The border world of Ehlaealir breaks down into civil war. The Ahriyao clan's holdings on that world are secure and easy to defend, so the war poses little threat to them. Militant leaders in the clan suggest that this is the time to go on the offensive, to take territory from other clans – but what if the Glorious Empire takes this opportunity to attack.

• **New Frontier:** The Ekhoaoiarl want to begin trading directly with the Florian League and to do that they need to establish a waystation somewhere in Yggdrasil or Dpres subsector. The player characters are given a scout ship and sent to find a good colony world.

CREATING KINSHIPS

BY SIMON BEAL

*Advice for adding Aslan Kinships into your campaigns, along with some sample Kinships for
you to add immediately.*

Alien Module 1: Aslan introduces the Aslan concept of kinships. Kinships can be likened to human guilds that focus on a particular skill or career. This article expands on what has been established in the book to provide you with a framework for creating your own kinships. Following these guidelines are some example kinships that you can use in your games and some scenario ideas that can be used for any of your players that are members of a kinship.

Kinship Design
When creating a new kinship, try to add as much detail as possible and cover as many aspects as you can. These guidelines will help you define the important areas of a kinship and are broken down into the following elements:

Name

Purpose

Organisation

Territory

Membership

Benefits

Rules

Traditions

History

Further Information

Name
The name of the kinship can be anything you like, but traditionally the name is descriptive of the guild's purpose. It is also quite common to add the suffix 'Kinship' to the descriptive element of the name. Some example names include Fellowship of Poets, Diplomatic Kinship, Spacer's Kinship.

Purpose
Next you must define the purpose of the kinship. What are the aims and objectives of the kinship? Try to keep the purpose as specific and concise as possible; many elements of the kinship's purpose are likely to be detailed in later sections.

Common purposes include providing train and mastery of skills, networking members, sharing information on particular topics and providing a sounding board for new ideas and projects.

Organisation
The organisation section should detail how the kinship is structured and administered. This should include the internal hierarchy of the organisation, describing the role of each position.

You can also list who currently holds any positions of note such as the leader. Most kinship's have a single leader position with a number of advisory and administration roles. Aslan traditions prevail here, so leader roles will generally be limited to males only, whilst administration positions will be filled by females unless the kinship is limited to a single sex.

You can also use this section to detail any internal politics. Again, most organisations reflect Aslan society, so positions of power within a kinship are highly sought after and can even improve one's Social Standing.

Territory
This section should list the subsectors, systems and worlds where the kinship is currently active. You can also detail any locations of note such as the main headquarters or any large facilities the organisation might have.

Most kinships will have a number of buildings for running the kinship and also to provide member facilities such as meeting rooms, training areas and accommodation. Such places are usually owned by families of the founding or ruling member (if male) or his descendants. Kinships that are run by females are either rented or owned by the manager's immediate family.

As a kinship grows and expands, additional territory is usually provided by other members and their families. Members who grant the use of their territory for kinship expansion will always gain some standing within the organisation, which will usually be a promotion within the kinship or some additional benefits.

Membership

The membership section should describe who is eligible for membership and how new members are found and invited into the kinship. Kinships that restrict membership to people with a particular skill or career will often restrict membership to a specific sex if appropriate. For example, a kinship of traders would only have female members and a kinship of warriors would be exclusive to males.

Membership to a kinship cannot simply be purchased. New members are usually invited to join a kinship if they show a natural aptitude or particular talent that can be nurtured. Many kinships will also allow existing members to invite family as long as the candidate qualifies for membership. If an invite is accepted, new members must often undergo a rite of passage or indoctrination procedure before being accepted into the kinship. Any initiation procedure should be detailed here.

Rites of passage and indoctrinations usually exist to ensure that all members have the necessary skills and aptitude, so make sure the proceedings are appropriate to the kinship.

Most kinships require funding in order to provide the facilities and benefits to its members. If the kinship requires members to pay a joining or recurring fee then it should be detailed in this section.

Benefits

The benefits that members gain by being in the kinship will most likely have been stated in the purpose section. However, a more detailed description can be included here with any additional information not already listed in previous sections. Most kinship's will allow members to seek shelter and aid from other members. Additional benefits will depend on the purpose of the kinship but might include training, guidance, support, libraries and knowledge, facilities, discussion and sharing of ideas.

For kinships that do not charge membership fees (as detailed in the previous section), they will often require payment on a per use basis. These fees are required to maintain and run the facilities and are heavily discounted, often providing a much cheaper alternative to similar facilities in the area.

Rules

Depending on the size and nature of the kinship, it might have simple and informal guidelines or it could have a strict set of rules and principles in the form of a constitution or similar document. As one would expect from the Aslan, most kinships tend to have a more formal set of rules that must be strictly adhered to. The rules should describe how the kinship expects its members to behave and what is expected of them. They should also detail what the member can expect of the kinship. Certain types if kinships called hoaawli (secret schools) will also specify that knowledge of the organisation must remain a secret and should never be discussed with non–members.

Failing to abide by the rules of the kinship will fall under one of the three classes of offensive behaviour (familiarity, impoliteness and discourtesy) as appropriate and incurs the same consequences (refer to the Duelling & Honour section of **Alien Module 1: Aslan** for details).

Traditions

Many kinships, especially the older ones, will often follow a number of traditions. You do not have to include anything here but traditions will help flesh out the kinship and can often provide additional roleplaying opportunities. Traditions can be special events, ceremonies and even specific attire that must be worn at certain occasions.

History

The history of a kinship can tell you much about it, and like the traditions it can really help to fl esh out the kinship and make it more realistic. Key historical facts should include:

* How and why the kinship was created.

* When the kinship was created.

* The founding members.

You can add in other historical information as required. Additional details might include events within the kinship's history, changes to the kinship (such as new rules or traditions) and any notable members.

Further Information

You can add any additional information as required in this section. This can be anything relevant to the kinship that does not fit in any of the previous sections. You can also use this section to detail any new skills or items of equipment that are available to the members of the kinship.

LEAGUE OF EXPLORERS

Purpose

The League of Explorers is a kinship for explorers to exchange details of places they have been and systems they have discovered. A central library stores all data pertaining to its members discoveries, except in instances where the explorer is duty bound not to reveal information.

Organisation

The kinship is organised into independent chapters. Every chapter has its own data library and periodically sends new information to its neighbouring chapters. Each chapter of the League is self regulated and has the following positions:

* **Head:** The person in charge of the chapter.

Archivist: A number of archivists are responsible for logging new data into their chapter library.

* **Administrator:** The head will usually appoint one or two administrators to take care of the day to day running of the chapter.

* Recruiter: Recruiters actively seek out potential candidates for membership of the League.

In the interest of organisation and efficiency the League only allows one chapter per world, however each chapter may have more than one facility per world if required. Chapters are funded by charging members for the use of the facilities. Use by nonmembers is usually restricted but they are able to purchase library data.

Territory

The League of Explorers has chapters on most colonised Aslan worlds. On highly populated and frequently visited worlds, there are often several chapter facilities located at key locations. The headquarters of each chapter is usually located near that world's starport for the convenience of visiting members.

New chapters are usually donated by the head or the head's family however, where the kinship sees the need for a new chapter in a popular system, other chapters will often invest their own funds as a donation or on a loan basis.

Membership

Any Aslan with experience of exploration or who is embarking on such a career is a potential candidate for membership. All new members must be approved by the head, who will then call one of the administrators to handle the paperwork.

There is no rite of passage to join the kinship and there is no membership fee. The League of Explorers is extremely active in finding new members. Recruiters (usually retired explorers) are appointed to seek out potential candidates and invite them to the kinship.

Many new members are found at the spaceport where the recruiters are always on the lookout for new explorers, others are found through word of mouth or head hunting. All members of the League are also encouraged to invite anyone in their family or clan who meet the requirements. Anyone invited in this way must still be approved by the chapter head.

Benefits

The data collected by the League of Explorers is regarded as the definitive collection of historical data on Aslan systems. This information is freely available to members and sold to anyone else who wishes to find a new world to colonise or mine. Once a system or world has been colonised, the library is updated but no further details on that world are recorded.

Most chapters will provide accommodation and other facilities for *traveller*s. Since there is no membership fee (the kinship wants to attract as many members as it can), members must pay for the use of the kinships facilities but costs are around half the price of similar facilities on that world.

Members who have limited funds may petition the chapter head for shelter. As long as the member makes a convincing case, the head will usually waive the fees for the duration of the member's stay. However, if this service is abused it can result in dismissal from the kinship.

Rules

The rules of the League of Explorers are as follows:

* All chapters are self regulated and financed, under the control of the chapter head.

* Members are requested to log any new exploration data with a chapter archivist unless that member is under obligation to keep their findings out of the public domain.

*Members may access the League data libraries free of charge but are not permitted to pass this data on to any third party without permission from the chapter.

* Non–members may purchase library data at an agreed fee directly from a chapter or from a member authorised to do so.

* Members may use the chapter common areas free of charge but must pay for food and drink as appropriate.

* Members may bring up to two visitors into chapter common areas.

* Visitors must be supervised at all times.

* Members are permitted to use other chapter facilities at the discounted rate set by that chapter.

* Members may request free shelter from a chapter head. If a satisfactory reason is given, the head may waive accommodation and related fees.

Traditions

All new members to the kinship are given a League Emblem, which is a small metal badge with the League's logo on it. Members are encouraged to display the emblem on their person but this is not compulsory.

History

The League of Explorers was founded in 142 Aslan, roughly 46 years after they reached the stars. The kinship was conceived by two explorers, Khaliki and Sakea who established the first chapter on the Aslan homeworld. As the Aslan Empire expanded, new chapters were created on the colony worlds providing safe harbour for explorers and access to the League's data library. Khaliki and Sakea created a sensible set of rules for the League, which have not changed in the history of the kinship.

MASTERS OF ALR'SOI

Purpose

The Masters of Alr'soi is a secret school that teaches the ancient art of Alr'soi. Alr'soi translates to 'one with the blade'

and is a martial art that teaches the student how to master a number of bladed weapons. Alr'soi is becoming a forgotten art and the purpose of the kinship is to keep the skill alive by passing the knowledge on to elite warriors and gifted students. Details on using the Alr'soi fighting style are given in the Further Information section.

Organisation

Unlike most kinships, the Masters of Alr'soi has no internal structure to speak of. There are no leadership or administrative roles; instead there are just four positions that relate directly to the warrior's proficiency in Alr'soi as follows:

* Master (Alr'soi level 4)

* Adept (Alr'soi level 2–3)

* Journeyman (Alr'soi level 1)

* Student (no skill level)

Students are always mentored by a master in a one to one relationship. Rarely will a master take on more than one student. Once proficient in the art of Alr'soi (at skill level 1), the student attains the rank of journeyman and no longer needs a mentor. Journeymen and adepts are free to do as they wish but they can only request further training once they have real combat experience using Alr'soi. A journeyman or adept may approach any master for further training but most will seek the guidance of their original mentor. Only if the warrior has shown progress through experience will a master train them further.

Territory

The Masters of Alr'soi has no territories, buildings or facilities but members can be found throughout Aslan space. Training is done in any appropriate location that is free of distractions and prying eyes; this can be anywhere from a secluded valley to an empty cargo hold.

Membership

Only a master may invite a new member to the kinship but adepts may make recommendations to any of the masters. After completing the rite of passage, the student will be mentored by the master who invited him. The rite of passage exists to prove a student's worthiness before being accepted into the kinship. The student must show skill, determination, honour and obedience. The rite consists of three separate trials.

The first trial is a test of the mind and at this point the prospective student will not even be aware he is undergoing a trial. The masters will ask questions and pose philosophical dilemmas to test the sharpness of mind and the suitability of the candidate. Only if they pass the first trial will the master formally invite the student into the Masters of Alr'soi.

If the student accepts the invitation, he must first swear to obey the rules of secrecy, even if they fail the remaining trials. If they agree to this, the trials will continue. The second trial is a duel to first blood. This is not a duel of honour but simply a test the student's skill and courage with the blade. No master has ever lost a duel in the second trial. If the master is satisfied that the student has a natural aptitude, the final trial will begin in the form of a task. The nature of the task is determined by the master and it will not be easy as it must test the resourcefulness and determination of the student. The task might be to survive for three days in the wilderness with nothing but the clothes on their back, or it might be to deliver or retrieve an item with little or no resources.

There are no membership or training fees of any kind. Members of the Masters of Alr'soi will willingly share techniques and training with any other member and most mentors will provide food and accommodation for their students.

Benefits

The benefits of joining the Masters of Alr'Soi are quite simple; members get the opportunity to learn this rare, ancient and deadly martial art. Although many warriors will recognise the style of Alr'soi, few people outside of the kinship have the knowledge to use it.

Rules

The rules of the Masters of Alr'soi are as follows:

* Members must never disclose any information about the Masters of Alr'soi or the martial art with anyone outside of the kinship. The only exception to this rule is when a master invites a candidate after the first trial.

*Students must obey their mentors without question.

* All masters must seek out and mentor at least one student. New students must be suitable and the rite of passage must be adhered to.

* All members are must attend the annual Arena event unless extreme circumstances prevent them from doing so.

* Failure to abide by these rules will result in dismissal from the kinship. Any breach of the first rule will be considered an act of discourtesy and can result in a duel to the death.

Traditions

The Masters of Alr'soi have only one tradition called 'Arena'. Arena is an annual tournament held at a different location each year for members only. The event lasts for six days and is the only time that members get the opportunity meet each other outside of chance encounters. The tournament pits contestants against each other in fights of first blood to see who has the greatest skill and mastery of Alr'Soi. The tournament works on a knock out basis divided over a number of rounds. Each round is divided into heats and each contestant fights in one heat per round, with the winner of each heat advancing to the next round. Due to the amount of contestants, the first heats pit 10 warriors against each other to thin the numbers.

Alr'soi and other fighting styles were all but forgotten. Those masters who remained saw that their art would be lost forever unless they took action and so the Masters of Alr'soi was born. The Masters of Alr'soi do not keep records; their traditions are passed down orally from master to student. The exact date that the kinship was formed is unknown but most masters believe it was sometime during the Border Wars.

Further Information

Alr'soi is visually distinct and any warrior who recognises it as such will usually have great respect for the practitioner. The style is fast and fluid with deadly attacks and quick parrying moves. To represent the use of the Alr'soi martial art in *Traveller* a new skill, Melee (Alr'soi), is now available. Upon attaining the rank of journeyman, the warrior learns the Melee (Alr'soi) at level 1. Melee (Alr'soi) can be used with any bladed weapon and works much the same way as Melee (blade). To reflect the fact that Alr'soi is a more refined and deadly fighting style, all damage dealt when using Melee (Alr'soi) gains a +2 DM. The defensive advantages also reduce the cumulative penalty for parrying by 1.

MERCHANT KINSHIP

Purpose

The Merchant Kinship exists to facilitate trade between Aslan and other races. It also serves to provide networking and support services for its members. Members are able to discuss the customs of any race they do business with and provide help for members who plan to deal with these cultures.

Organisation

The Merchant Kinship is built on a hierarchical structure that is necessary to manage its vast network of branches. Merchant branches make up the bottom layer of the hierarchy and provide facilities to members and visiting clients.

Above the branch level are the subsidiary offices, which are usually responsible for every branch in that subsector. Systems with high populations or popular trade routes will often have several subsidiary offices if there is sufficient need.

At the top level of the kinship structure is the head office. This office manages all of the subsidiary offices and governs the entire kinship, setting the rules and regulations for its members. Each level within the Merchant Kinship has a number of positions as follows:

* HEO (Head Executive Officer): Stationed in the head office, the HEO runs the Merchant Kinship.

* HAO (Head Advisory Officer): HAOs work directly under the HEO to aid and advise her in the running of the kinship.

* **HFO (Head Financial Officer):** Manages the finances of the kinship.

Subsequent rounds are one–on–one duels. Any member who has attained the rank of journeyman or higher may participate in the tournament but this is not compulsory.

There are three classes to the tournament, one for journeymen, adepts and masters. The winners of each class then face each other in a free–for–all fight to determine the overall winner of the tournament. The victor is most often a master but adepts have been known to win on occasion. It is a great honour to be the victor of any class and the host of the event will always supply prizes of money or weapons; in rare cases territory has been given as a prize. The tournament winner must host the following year's event at a location of his choosing.

In addition to the main tournament, Arena is an opportunity for members to meet each other, get further training from masters, exchange tales and catch up with old friends. Although the event traditionally lasts six days, some members will remain for weeks to complete their training.

History

As the Aslan made technological advances, guns and other advanced weapons became the favoured tools of war and the use of martial arts slowly began to diminish. Over the centuries

* SEO (Subsidiary Executive Offi cer): Each subsidiary office has an SEO to oversee and run the office. An SEO is responsible for every branch under her control and reports to the HEO.

* SFO (Subsidiary Financial Officer): SFOs manage the finances that come in from each branch in that subsidiary. SEOs report to the HFO.

* BEO (Branch Executive Officer): The manager of a single branch. BEOs report to their appointed SEO.

*BFO (Branch Financial Officer): BFOs manage the finances of a single branch and report to their appointed SFO.

* Administrator: Administrators work at every level in the kinship and deal with the day to day running of the branch or office. With the kinship positions spread over three levels, there is plenty of scope for politics as members endeavour to rise up through the ranks. Neighbouring branches are often competitive, recruiting more members and bringing in more clients in the hope of being promoted to the subsidiary office.

Territory
The head offi ce is located on the Aslan homeworld. Branches have been established on most Aslan worlds (usually near the starport) and there are even branches on some Imperial worlds. Subsidiary offices are located in most subsectors where there are Merchant Kinship branches.

Membership
The Merchant Kinship is always looking to expand its portfolio of businesses and is one of the few kinships that does not require members to be invited. Due to the nature of the kinship, membership is only available to females but any business may apply to become a member.

Applicants must detail the nature of their business, together with recent accounts and references. Only successful or potentially successful businesses will be granted membership. A business in financial trouble or with a bad reputation will be rejected, only the best qualify to be part of the Merchant Kinship. Once an applicant has been approved they must pay an annual fee of Cr. 50,000 to be a member and gain access to all the benefits the kinship provides.

Benefits
The benefits of joining the Merchant Kinship are numerous. Firstly, all members are given a data wafer containing a business guide to negotiating and doing business with other races. The information on this guide is collected from members and can be updated any time a member visits a branch. The guide also contains a directory of all member businesses.

Each branch has a common room where members can meet and swap advice on the customs of other races and how this can affect business negotiations. Many members also do business with each other as a result of their discussions and will often provide training for a small fee.

Members also get full access to all branch facilities including conference rooms and trade networks. Conference rooms can be booked by members to meet clients of any race in a safe environment with the support of other members if necessary.

Non–members are also allowed in the branches to facilitate negotiations and client networking. Visitors can be invited by Merchant Kinship members or they may visit branches looking for Aslan traders and merchants. Many Aslan companies get new business this way.

Rules
The Merchant Kinship presents itself as a professional business and expects its members to conduct themselves and their affairs in accordance with the following rules:

* Members are free to use the common area in any branch to meet and discuss any business related topic.

* Members requiring the use of other branch facilities must book in advance.

* Non–members may request the use of branch facilities for business purposes with Merchant Kinship members. The branch will charge a fee as deemed appropriate.

* Members are requested to submit any new information on alien customs and cultures that will be of use to other members.

* Any information contained within the business guide is for use by members only. This data may not be shared, sold or otherwise released into the public domain.

* Members are required to submit reports of all business activities that take place within Merchant Kinship facilities. These reports are used for statistical purposes to improve the services of the branch and the kinship. *All officers must submit quarterly reports as appropriate (such as branch activity and finances).

* Any member or visitor found to be trading in illegal goods or services (according to local law) will be reported to the authorities as appropriate and membership will be revoked.

Traditions
There are no formal traditions in the Merchant Kinship but over time the members have developed a certain way of doing things. When visiting a world that has a branch, most members will spend some time in the common area if time permits. This has become a great social aspect to the kinship where the members can relax and drink whilst sharing any business related news.

During these talks, many details about alien cultures can be confirmed and refined. This provides an excellent sounding board for members before they submit their findings for possible inclusion into the business guide.

History

The Merchant Kinship was founded in 2929 Aslan by Tali Aohoa Yahrel. Taliran several successful businesses in Aslan space but when she expanded and started to deal with alien races, her negotiations failed and her businesses began to decline. Realising her lack of understanding with these alien cultures was the reason behind this, Tali conceived the idea for the Merchant Kinship. The kinship began as a simple setup with the single objective of sharing the customs of alien races, thus improving business negotiations with them. However, in the early days many people would sign up simply to get the business guide and then cancel their membership after the first year.

When this issue became apparent, steps were taken to provide additional services to members and ensure that their continuing membership had value. The kinship soon grew to include all the benefits that members currently enjoy.

Scenarios

A well thought out and detailed kinship can provide a wealth of roleplaying opportunities, scenarios and even form the basis for campaigns. Some suggestions are listed here that can be used with your own kinships or those detailed in this article. Most of these ideas can either be run as a personal side story for one of your players, or for an entire party who are all members of the same kinship.

Event

Kinships that have large gatherings or events (such as the Arena event detailed in this article for the Masters of Alr'soi) can provide a number of possibilities for your game. Such events can serve as a nice break in a long running campaign or perhaps the players need to win a tournament to improve their Social Standing. Events are also a great way to bring a party together or to bring new characters into the group.

Politics

Kinships that are steeped in internal politics are another great source for scenarios and campaigns. Perhaps the players wish to increase their standing or make a play for a higher position.

Alternatively, the players might discover that a rival seeks to dominate the kinship and the players must take steps to prevent this from happening.

Rites of Passage

This scenario is ideal for a small party of players who have all been invited to join a kinship and can provide a nice way to bring your party together. The rite of passage could be shared or something that each player must achieve on their own. Once the players have passed the rite, they will most likely begin training together and through their shared experiences the characters would naturally be drawn together to form a party. As the players' training comes to an end you can even combine this with one of the other scenario ideas or a plot device of your own to begin a campaign.

Secrets

Whilst delving into the history of the kinship one or more of the players will discover a secret, be it a small piece of information that alludes to some conspiracy, or a section of the history is missing and most likely removed to hide the truth of a dark past.

Shelter

One of the players is approached by a member of their kinship who asks for shelter or sanctuary. The newcomer might just be down on his luck or trouble might be following a few steps behind. This scenario can work as a side story or it can be the start of a campaign.

Task

High ranking members within a kinship request a meeting with one or more of the players. The players are informed of a situation and their assistance is required or requested. The nature of the task is entirely up to you and can be a side story or form the basis of your campaign. Ideas for tasks include finding someone, retrieving some data or an item, investigating a situation within the kinship and recruiting new members.

Other Ideas

Feel free to expand on these ideas or add your own. If you plan to design a campaign around a kinship then you will need to be very descriptive but you can add specific hooks that will provide opportunities for your players to get involved as well as side quests and encounters.

THE DERELICT

By Paul Dutton

Have your players foolishly misjumped? No need to scatter their atoms to the far ends of the galaxy – this adventure will get them back on track after suitable trials and tribulations.

This short adventure is suited to a group of three to five players and is ideal as a ready–to–go scenario should a Referee find that his players misjump and emerge in deep space with not enough fuel to jump away again. For the heavy freighter that is encountered, the Referee may use any design and deck plan to suit his or her own need. If the *traveller*s' ship has reserve fuel then a Referee may decree that their ship has suffered a massive fuel leak after experiencing a rupture to a fuel tank on exiting jump space. Now, aside from the problem of finding more fuel, one PC at least is going to have to don a vacc suit and venture outside the ship to repair the ruptured tank.

Synopsis

The stranded *traveller*s will encounter a heavy freighter floating through deep space, which provides a fortuitous opportunity to obtain fuel. The ship has the name 'd'chaell' visibly painted on its hull. The d'chaell is of an unknown alien (humanoid) origin and has been floating through space since it was abandoned 700 years ago.

The original crew, whilst on their last trip, had picked up a small stone pyramid which they hoped to sell for profit. Unfortunately, the pyramid did not turn out to be the priceless art object they had hoped for. Instead it affected their mental states and threatened to send them insane or destroy them. Now the *traveller*s have discovered the d'chaell, will they too fall victim to the strange stone pyramid?

The Stone Pyramid

In one of the freighter's holds is a crate containing the pyramid shaped stone. The stone is black, like polished obsidian, eight inches tall and weighs about four kilograms. The crew of the d'chaell came into possession of the stone during their last trip and thought such a curious object might fetch a nice price in the collectors' markets of their home world.

The stone pyramid exudes an aura that might be mistaken for a form of intelligence. The aura interacts with the brainwave patterns of sentient beings and can produce some very strange effects; as if the subject were under the influence of some form of hallucinogen. The crew never realised that the stone was the cause of their ills and instead of jettisoning it, they themselves fl ed in the lifeboat to

escape the madness of the d'chaell. All fled that is except for one crew member who it was felt had become so crazed as to be a perilous danger to himself and his shipmates.

This poor unfortunate was locked inside the clothes locker in his stateroom and left there to die. When dormant, the stone pyramid has a very low electro–magnetic field, so low as to be imperceptible to even the most high tech of sensor sweeps made from outside the freighter. However, EMF readings spike considerably in periods when the stone's aura becomes active. The stone proves impervious to all attempts of dealing physical damage to it. It absorbs energy, including laser and ballistic and then slowly dissipates that energy.

The d'chaell

There will be no reply from the d'chaell to any attempts at communication. Depending upon the type of sensor array being employed, a sweep of the d'chaell will reveal some or all of the following information:

There are no life forms on board the ship, no signs of movement, the ship's life boat is absent, there is no power source, no heat, the engines are cold, there is no jump drive and no armaments – it is what salvagers call a derelict. The d'chaell's fuel tanks remain partially full and currently hold 118 tonnes of refined hydrogen fuel. Its holds are full or ores and minerals and there are also biochemical fuels which are masked from most sensors by the metal barrels that they are stored in. Radiation levels are safe and the air has an oxygen–nitrogen mix in suffi cient quantities to provide a thin, breathable atmosphere. However, after being so long abandoned, the air has become stale and requires venting.

Boarding the d'chaell

As the PCs prepare to dock with the d'chaell, encourage them to assign duties in order to get them to split up. It is most likely that the PCs will split themselves between a boarding party and those remaining on board the *traveller*s' ship to oversee the operation and to operate fuel hoses. The boarding party will probably explore the freighter, locate the bridge to restore power and life support systems and then investigate the holds and fuel tanks.

The airlock of the d'chaell is alien and incompatible with the *traveller*s' vessel and docking will require an extendable flexitube to achieve a seal. The airlock is not only totally alien, it has no power and to bypass the locking system will require a PC to successfully set up an external circuit on an *Engineer (electronics)* or *Physical Science (electronics)* check (8+) or a *Mechanic* check (10+). Otherwise the only alternative for docking is to clamp to a hard surface and burn through the hull. Docking with a free floating ship requires a *Pilot* check (10+) and 1d6 minutes. PCs might avoid docking altogether if they elect to exit their ship using vacc suits, then cross the void to the d'chaell and manually open the air lock to gain access. They will still be required to bypass the non-powered airlock as described previously. On board the freighter, the ship is in complete darkness and most surfaces have a layer of frost due to the extreme cold. Zero gravity is in effect and various loose items hang effortlessly in mid air. If breathing is unassisted, then exhaled breath noticeably frosts in the cold and the aged air has a definite metallic taint that hits the back of the throat. Once on the bridge a PC can access redundant power systems, including life support. Unfortunately the computer systems andcontrols are in an unfamiliar alien language.

A PC well versed in ships' computers should be able to intuitively locate the primary systems with a *Computers* check (10+). If the PC has translation software that can be linked to the alien computer system then the check is unnecessary as navigating the controls becomes routine. Lighting, power and artificial gravity can all be restored. Also, the air can be vented and a fresh oxygen mix introduced to facilitate unassisted breathing; likewise the internal temperature can be raised to a more comfortable level. A PC with a translation programme may access the ship's log on an *Admin* (6+) or navigate through ship's schematics to locate the operations controls for the fuel tanks, *Computers* (8+).

Pumping the Fuel Whether by checking the schematics on the computer system or by personally investigating the tanks, it becomes evident that fuel cannot be transferred from the tanks unless the valves are operated manually from the engineering bay. To refuel the *traveller*s' ship requires hoses to be guided in to connect to the external seals of the tank. Guiding the hoses from the *traveller*s' ship takes 1d6 minutes with a *Pilot* check (10+) or *Remote Operations* check (8+). Continuous checks may be made until successful, each check adding another 1d6 minutes to the operation.

Once a seal is achieved the valves that control the flow of fuel may be opened to begin pumping and gauges are present to ensure valves are adjusted correctly to maintain safe working pressure. The fuel begins to pump rather laboriously at a rate of two tons per minute. The fuel will not pump at all if PCs have not restored power to the freighter. As soon as a PC sets off to find the engineering bay, begin running the strange occurrences that effect the *traveller*s as detailed later.

Cargo In the holds there are 200 containers of ores and minerals. Each container weighs 1,000 kilograms, a total of 200 tons (uncommon ore Cr 5,000 per ton). There is also a 95 ton cargo of biochemicals sealed inside metal barrels. A total of 950 barrels weighing 100 kilograms each (biochemical Cr 50,000 per ton). Salvaging the cargo is not going to be easy; even the lightest containers are far too bulky and too heavy to man handle around the ship and transfer through the airlocks.

Ship's Log
The computerised log will require a translation programme in order to read and understand it. The date system is not standard Imperium and means nothing to the PCs. The d'chaell was on a routine run to pick up a cargo from a mining colony and return it home. Captain v'llant reports in the log that some of his crew believed there might be a stowaway or stowaways on board and reports that strange happenings had befallen several crew members during the previous few hours. There are no details in the log that might give a clue as to what these strange happenings were. The next entry reports that a'keeda had gone crazy and attacked one of his shipmates; it took four of them to overcome a'keeda and calm him down. Later he had gotten into another fight, this time with a crewman who had begun shouting and screaming at shadows or maybe something in the shadows. However, nobody else could see what it was he was shouting at. There would appear to be a gap in the log reports because the next and final entry is very abrupt: 'Taking the lifeboat. Abandoning ship. Having to leave a'keeda behind, his mind is broken'.

The State Rooms and the Dead Crewman
If the state rooms are searched, a *Recon* check (8+) will find the remains of a humanoid alien body trapped in a clothes locker. The locker itself has several deformations to the door where the metal has been forced outwards due to the unfortunate crewman hammering his fists against the inside of the door in an attempt to escape his tiny prison. Clad in a blue cloth uniform, the almost skeletal remains still retain some vestiges of darkened skin and internal organs. Decomposition was in an advanced state before life support systems powered down allowing the ambient temperature to drop below freezing which preserved the last of the body's soft tissues. The remains are humanoid, about five feet and three inches tall, with a slightly stooped stance, overlong arms that reach to the knees and a cranium that exhibits a distinct slope of the forehead. A PC with the medic skill may spend 1d6 hours in medical and forensic examination to determine that the remains exhibit various minor skeletal defects from repairs made to heal old wounds but there is no sign of trauma that might tell of a violent death or any residual of a viral infection. The alien actually died of starvation, but this would be pretty much impossible to conclude through medical examination.

A *Medic* check (8+) may help to establish how long the alien has been dead. The greater the effect on the check, the more accurate the estimation; the alien has actually been dead for
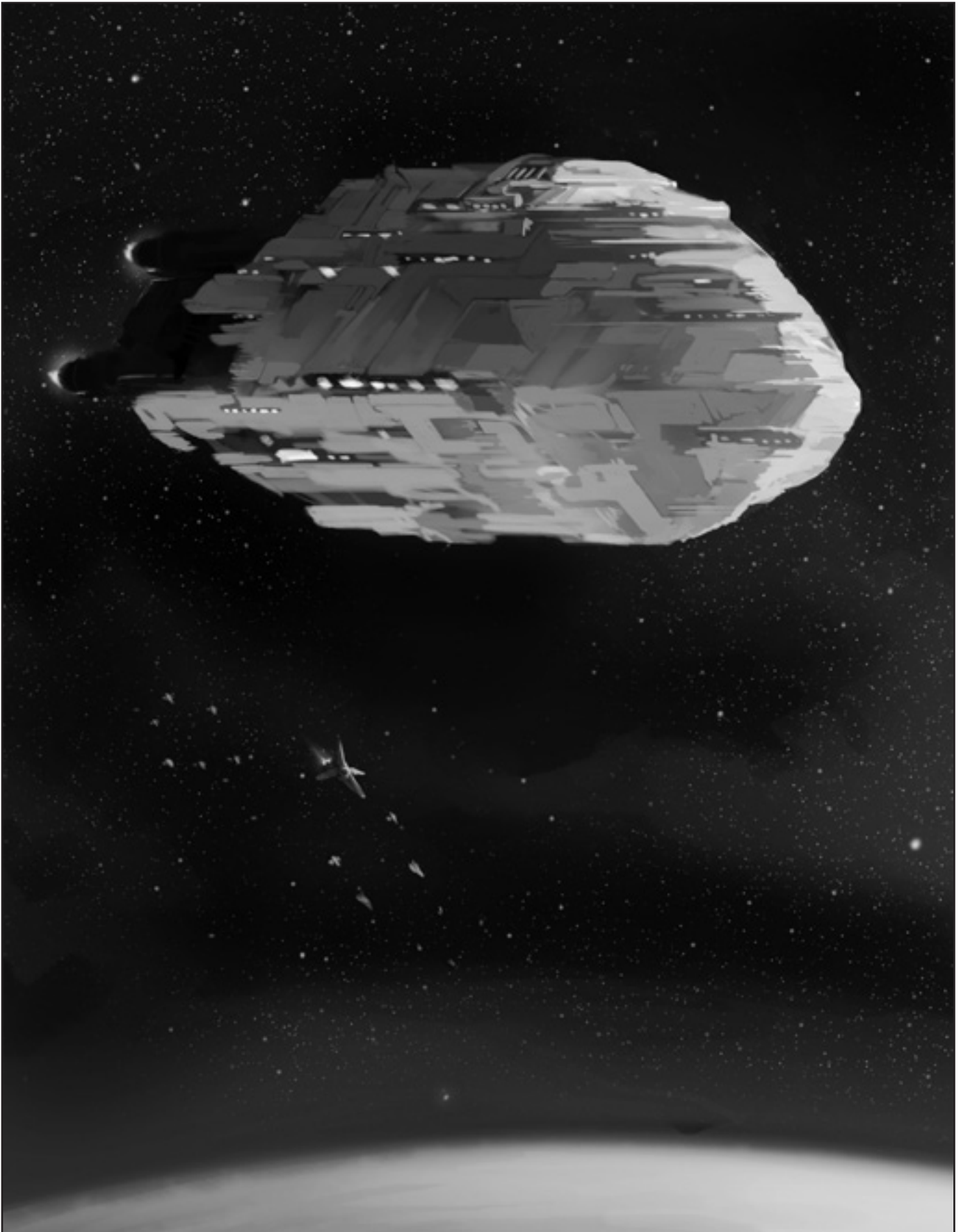
700 years. In his final days he went mad due to the aura of the stone pyramid and his fellow crewmates locked him in the clothes locker for their own protection.

THE STRANGE OCCURRENCES

The following sequence of strange occurrences should affect one PC at a time and will work best if the PCs have split up their party and if these occurrences are run in quick succession. The stone pyramid stored in the hold will begin to exert its influence on the minds of the PCs who succumb to hallucinations and other mental effects with profound consequences. It may quickly become obvious to PCs that all effects are illusionary but simply allowing illusions to happen and pass without reacting to them may not always prove the best policy.

The First Occurrence

When a PC heads off to the freighter's engineering bay to locate the valves for the fuel tanks have him lose communications with his fellow *traveller*s. The PC loses all track of time, it feels as if he has spent no time at all on his way to engineering but in truth he will be gone for much longer – in fact for as many minutes or hours as it takes for another PC to go and look for him. However it happens, one PC will be temporarily lost to time in the engineering bay. Next, any other PC or PCs that were with him at the time or came after to look for him will inexplicably find themselves standing in another part of the ship without any recollection of how he (or they) got there – see the second occurrence.

The Second Occurrence

After splitting up members of the boarding party, one PC is temporarily lost to time in the engineering bay whilst his companion or companions who were either with him or went looking for him, are now standing in a bewildered state in another part of the ship not knowing how they got there. If only one PC has boarded the d'chaell and nobody else follows to investigate, then that PC is automatically the victim of the first two occurrences which will require the occurrences to happen several hours apart from each other. The second occurrence is experienced by one bewildered PC, if he is accompanied then his fellow travellers just see the affected PC begin to panic in absolute dread and fear, reacting to an invisible menace. The affected PC begins to feel that he is being watched, a claustrophobic oppression overtakes him and the room or corridor in which he stands begins to darken. The shadows around him grow and lengthen with strange angular shapes that reach toward him.

A snaking tentacle begins to form in the shadows which takes on a solid form of putrid flesh and exudes a nauseating aroma of death. The tentacle lashes out at the PC followed by another and the full form of some alien nightmare manifests before him. A heaving, bulbous body with no discernable head, just a gaping slavering maw filled with rows of jagged teeth. Around the body, its tentacles writhe and make ready to strike again. A second creature rises up from the shadows, either before or behind the PC, to cut off any hope of his escape. These alien creatures are hallucinatory manifestations of the PC's own mind. If the PC is 'killed' he is actually rendered unconscious for d66 minutes. If he destroys the creatures, then when the combat encounter ends the PC will be left standing unharmed; although his adrenaline pumped body is likely suffering from the after effects of an extreme panic attack or shock. If the PC opened fire, damage to the ship's internal structure or systems may have occurred and will require damage control. The PC will have suffered no physical injury unless inadvertently self–inflicted or perhaps received from a bump to the head if he fell unconscious. No traces of the nightmarish creatures are to be found. The Referee might decide not to allow the PC to recover consciousness or realise the truth until after running the third occurrence.

Tentacled Nightmare

Str 12 (+2), **Dex** 10, **End** 10, **Int** 4, **Instinct** 7, **Pack** 2; Melee (tentacle) 1, Melee (teeth) 2; Tentacle (4 attacks) 2d6 damage per tentacle or Bite 3d6 damage; Armour (Hide) 2.

The nightmare has no creature classification as it appears as a hallucinatory effect and is a figment of the victim's own imagination. It requires no stealth skill or movement statistics as the victim cannot escape from his nightmares while the hallucination is in effect.

The Third Occurrence

PCs remaining on board the *traveller*s' ship will be suddenly surprised by a proximity alert. Ship's sensors will be tracking two inbound missiles that have 'locked on'; though there is no sign of a hostile vessel on the sensors. Missiles begin at a range of 15,000 kilometres, travel at thrust 5 and will impact in two turns. Those PCs aboard the *traveller*s' ship may correctly believe that the missiles are not real – just phantoms. They might engage the incoming missiles with ECM or attempt to destroy them using point defence but neither action will have any effect. The alternatives are to either ride out the attack or to begin evasive manoeuvres. The Referee should keep in mind that if the *traveller*s' ship has a direct hard seal with the d'chaell, employing evasive manoeuvres will leave the d'chaell compromised as the burned hole in its hull becomes exposed to open space. If the PCs decide to ride out the phantom missile attack, then impact will feel very real.

At the moment of impact, all PCs on board will be rendered unconscious as the pyramid's infl uence shuts down their minds. PCs on board the d'chaell will not be affected and will not be able to pick up any incoming missiles on the freighter's sensors and after the phantom impact, the *traveller*s' ship will disappear from the freighter's sensor readings. If however, PCs on the d'chaell have the possibility of checking visually, they will be relieved to see their ship still along side, intact and

safe. Looking back to the freighter's sensors, their ship will now have reappeared but they will still be unable to contact it. PCs on board the *traveller*s' ship will remain unconscious for 1d6 hours or for d66 minutes if a PC from the freighter returns and successfully renders medical aid with a *Medic* check (8+).

The Fourth Occurrence

The Referee should ensure the PC who falls victim of the fourth occurrence understands that his character is helpless to resist the influence of the stone and will quickly develop an infatuation for it. Indeed, it may be prudent to take the player to one side for a brief moment to explain the effect upon his character. Alternatively, this occurrence will also work well if there is an NPC amongst the *traveller* crew that the Referee can take control of. One PC (or NPC) aboard the freighter can hear beautiful music and feels drawn towards the source of it; nobody else will be able to hear it. Amongst the cargo of the main hold, there is a crate that contains the black, stone pyramid. The affected PC will become charmed by the stone pyramid and will take it and want to keep it for his own.

If any other PC shows interest, the Referee informs the charmed PC that his character stakes a claim over it; violently soif necessary. If the charmed PC is keen to role play, he may come to blows with any other who asks to see the stone for himself or tries to persuade him to part with it – whether this infers handing it over or leaving it behind.

The charmed PC will cradle the stone in such a way that it becomes obvious he treats it as something precious. Every time the charmed PC feels challenged by one of his fellow *traveller*s he reacts angrily. Each time his ire is invoked, the stone's EMF readings will spike. Any *traveller* close to a sensor will be able to pick up these readings as they go off the scale and any *traveller* near to the charmed PC will feel an inexplicable sense that the stone is emanating some sort of powerful aura. As the aura continues to grow in response to the charmed PC's raised temper, it becomes powerful enough to induce feelings of nausea and also a humming vibration in the heads of all PCs except for the one who is charmed by it.

DEALING WITH THE STONE PYRAMID

During the fourth occurrence, the Referee should have seen to it that one PC (or NPC) will insist on keeping the stone and will refuse to give it up or leave it behind. He should become angry, even violent if his will is opposed. If the stone is taken aboard the *traveller*s' ship it could spell disaster as everyone begins to fall further under its maddening influence. Eventually, everyone will end up going insane. The PCs need to relieve their charmed comrade of the stone pyramid and unless they have a moment of genius, there would seem to be only one of two ways to proceed with the problem at hand: Either to overcome the charmed PC by physical means or to attempt to instil some sense into the charmed PC in order to make him realise what is happening to him. This second option may require the Referee setting a task chain of difficult skill checks (10+), typically involving *Deception* and *Persuade* checks and possibly *Leadership* checks too. Failure will likely leave the PCs with only the first option – physical action against their charmed shipmate.

The pyramid itself proves impervious to all attempts of dealing direct damage to it. PCs may decide to simply leave the pyramid and the d'chaell behind when they are refuelled and ready to depart deep space. Alternatively, the pyramid can be jettisoned into space or the travellers may decide to destroy the d'chaell with the pyramid on board.

Ending the Adventure

Following the strange occurrences and when PCs have relieved their charmed shipmate of the stone pyramid, they should gather their wits about themselves and complete the operation of siphoning fuel. Refuelling follows the procedure and skill checks as detailed in *Pumping the Fuel.*

The Referee may decide that the PCs have already had enough strange experiences and allow the refuelling to go ahead smoothly so that they may complete the task and leave. Otherwise, unless the PCs have had the forethought to jettison the pyramid into space already, the Referee might choose to harass the PCs with one more experience – space pirates are suddenly loose about the freighter, armed to the teeth and out for blood. Of course they are merely phantoms. On leaving, the PCs might decide to destroy the d'chaell with the pyramid on board.

But if they left the d'chaell and the stone intact or if they jettisoned the pyramid into space, then it will simply fl oat through the void – for all eternity. Unless, maybe one day, some poor unlucky crew of travellers will be unfortunate enough to discover it.

Psionic Healing

By Richard Hazlewood

New psionic talents and a new psionic career that use the power of the mind to heal the most terrible of wounds.

This article will provide rules for psionic healing and introduce another psion career, the Psionic Healer. Psionic Healing is an advanced talent. The learning DM for this talent is –1. Psionic Healers do not use their psionic powers to heal another person, called the patient. The healer uses their psionic abilities to cause the patients own body to heal itself. As such, the Healer must be in physical contact with the patient. Skin to skin contact is required for any of the healer's abilities to be used. If direct physical contact with a patient would normally cause damage, then the Healer would suffer that damage.

Psionic healing may be used by a psion on himself; however, Mental Healing may not be used by the psion on himself. Since the patient is healing themselves, during the healing process they need to eat twice as much food as normal, in certain situations, this condition may be important.

Healing

The advanced psionic talent of Healing allows a psion to use a patients own natural healing ability to heal themselves. Healing has no range and the psion must physically touch the patient to use this talent.

Triage

Using a Significant Action during combat, a Healer can perform the psionic equivalent of First Aid on a patient. See Medical Treatment in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. One important aspect of Triage is that it can be used to completely block pain. Any limitations on actions by the patient due to pain would not apply after the patient had been triaged. The Psion expends 1 PSI point to administer the Triage. Medic skill may be added as a positive DM to the roll.

Triage a Patient: Healing, Psionic Strength, 1–6 Seconds, Average (+0). Cost: 1 PSI.

Physical Healing

Patient wounds and injuries may be healed rapidly. The patients Strength, Dexterity and Endurance lost to injury, disease, poison or other trauma may be healed using this ability. The psion expends 3 PSI points and can heal 1d6 points of damage to one characteristic at a time. Multiple healings to a characteristic may be made but if the rolled amount of healing exceeds the amount of damage to that characteristic, then the additional healing points are lost. This ability may not be used to restore permanently lost characteristics. Medic skill may be used as a positive DM to the roll.

Heal 1d6 Physical Damage: Healing, Psionic Strength, 10–60 Minutes, Average (+0). Cost: 3 PSI.

Mental Healing

Psionic Trauma and mental instability can be healed. The process to heal mental damage is long and complicated but a psionic healer can heal mental illness faster and more completely than normal psychological techniques. Psionic Trauma is healed at a cost of 10 PSI points to heal each level of psionic trauma. Psionic Trauma is explained in detail in *Book 4: Psion* under Psionic Trauma.

Mental Instability can also be healed with this ability but the process is significantly more involved. The type of mental illness must be defined on the Behavioural Effects table in *Psion*. The dice roll for the particular mental illness is the number of PSI points that must be expended and the number of successful rolls to heal that particular illness. One roll may be made per day. If three rolls are failed in a row, the healing has failed and the entire process must begin again.

For example, to heal a patient of Schizophrenia, a 6 on the Behavioural Effects table, requires 6 PSI points be expended for 6 days. If the Psion does not have enough PSI points to complete one days healing at a single attempt, he may split the healing into two or more sessions but each session must be rolled for and successful for the healing of that day to count as a success. Mental Healing may not be used by a psion on himself, only on others. Skill in Social Science (Psychology) may be used as a positive DM to each roll.

Heal One Level of Psionic Trauma: Healing, Psionic Strength, 1 day, Diffi cult (–2). Cost: 10 PSI. Heal Mental Illness: Healing, Psionic Strength, 1 day for each Behavioural Effects roll, Difficult (–2). Cost: Behavioural Effects Roll per day.

Refereeing Mental Healing

The process of healing Mental Trauma should be used by the Referee as a roleplaying opportunity. The Healer must actually enter the mind of the patient and help the patient face the underlying cause of the trauma. There have been several science fiction movies and TV shows that have had a character enter the mind of another individual. Movies like *Nightmare on Elm Street* or *The Matrix* can be used as inspiration. The Healer should have to help the patient overcome whatever form their Mental Instability has taken.

Severe Mental Instability should present potentially dangerous and frightening scenarios within the patient's mind. The Referee should award DMs based on good, or bad, roleplaying, as appropriate.

Characteristic Boost

The Psionic Healer can boost the physical characteristics (Strength, Dexterity or Endurance) of a patient for a short time. Characteristics may not be boosted higher than the racial maximum (15 for humans) nor can the number of characteristic points gained exceed the Healers current level of Psionic Healing. The characteristic boost reaches its new level immediately, remains at that peak for 10 minutes and then declines at the rate of 1 point per minute until the normal level is reached. This power works as normal on wounded characters but their Characteristic returns to the wounded level rather than the normal value. It cannot be used as a 'quick heal'. *Boost a Physical Characteristic: Healing, Psionic Strength, 1–6 Seconds, Average (+0). Cost: 2 PSI points per point of characteristic increased.*

Rejuvenation

Similar to the basic psionic talent of Regeneration, Rejuvenation allows a healer to help a patient restore permanently lost characteristic scores and to regrow lost limbs or body parts. With the Referee's permission, Rejuvenation may be used to recover lost characteristic points due to aging, providing a psionic form of anagathics. A characteristic may be restored by the expenditure of a number of psionic points per day equal to the new value of the characteristic. The healing proceeds for a number of days equal to the new characteristic.

For example, to restore a characteristic from 7 to 8, a psion would have to expend 8 PSI points and make 8 successful rolls. Each day the Healer must make a successful roll and if the healer fails to make the roll three days in a row the rejuvenation fails and must be started over again. If a psion does not have enough PSI points to expend at one time for a days healing, he may divide it up into several sessions but each session must be rolled for and all the rolls for that day must be successful for the day's healing to be successful. Radiation damage may also be healed with this ability. One psionic point is used to heal one Rad of exposure. Medic skill may be used as a positive DM to each roll.

Restore Permanently Lost Characteristic: Healing, Number of days equal to the new characteristic value, Difficult (–2). Cost: PSI points equal to new characteristic value per day. Heal 1 Rad of Radiation Exposure: Healing, 10–60 Minutes, Average (+0). Cost: 1 PSI.

CAREER: PSION HEALER

Psionic Healers are those rare people that can use their mental powers to aide a patient to heal themselves. In societies that do not condone psionics, a Psion Healers can hide their ability behind the belief that they are incredibly skilled medics or psychologists.

Even societies that fear psions and telepaths will often allow the psionic healer to practice openly.

Qualification: Intelligence 7+ –1 DM for every previous career

+1 DM if Psionic Strength 8+

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

• **Churgion:** You are a Healer from a society that does not fully understand your abilities.

• Physicalist: You are skilled in the healing of physical injuries.

• **Mentalist:** You are trained in the healing of mental illness and psionic trauma.

Ranks and Benefits:

	Churgion	Skill or Benefit	Physicalist	Skill or Benefit	Mentalist	Skill or Benefit
0						
1		Medic 1	Medic 1	Social Science (any) 1		Social Science (any) 1
2						
3		Any Science (any) 1	Life Science (any) 1	Life Science (any) 1		Social Science (any) 1
4						
5		Admin 1	Admin 1	Admin 1		Admin 1

Skills and Training

	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Endurance	Healing	Advocate
2	+1 Intelligence	Deception	Life Science (any)
3	+1 Education	Athletics (any)	Any Science (any)
4	+1 Psionic Strength	Medic	Computers
5	Streetwise	Survival	Engineer (any)
6	Melee (any)	Stealth	Leadership
	Specialist: Churgion	**Specialist: Physicalist**	**Specialist: Mentalist**
1	Healing	Healing	Healing
2	Streetwise	Medic	Social Science (any)
3	Deception	Life Science (any)	Social Science (any)
4	Medic	Stealth	Diplomat
5	Stealth	Comms	Persuade
6	Talent	Talent	Talent

Healing: Gain one level in Healing skill. Talent: Gain one level of skill in any psionic talent possessed by the character.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Churgion	Intelligence 6+	Education 7+
Physicalist	Education 6+	Intelligence 7+
Mentalist	Intelligence 7+	Education 6+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	1,000	Ally
2	2,000	Psionic Equipment
3	5,000	+1 Intelligence
4	10,000	+1 Education
5	20,000	Scientific Equipment
6	30,000	Ship Share
7	50,000	TAS (or Equivalent)

Mishaps:

2d6	Mishaps
2	Severely Injured – Roll twice on the Injury table and take the lower result.
3	You suffer Psionic Trauma as a result of your efforts to help others. Gain one level of Psionic Trauma.
4	You are injured while trying to save a patient. You are exposed to 1d6*10 Rads of radiation.
5	You encounter something that your healing powers cannot heal. Your confi dence is shaken and you leave your career in disgrace.
6	You learn something while trying to heal a patient that you shouldn't. Gain an Enemy.
7	Injured – Roll on the Injury Table.
8	Your powers uncover a traitor in your ranks. You cannot prove anything and are driven from your career by the traitor. Gain an Enemy.
9	You save a rogue psion, an enemy or criminals. You are forced to leave your career. Gain the patient as a Contact. Gain 1d3 Rivals.
10	Your talents are exposed and you are forced to flee for your life. Gain an Enemy.
11	You discover that one of your patients has been the subject of government experimentation. Gain an Enemy and 1d3 Rivals within the government.
12	Traumatised – After years of healing other people's trauma, you are psychologically unable to continue. Roll on the Behavioural Effects table in **Psion** and gain that mental illness.

Events

D66	Event
11–12	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
13	You are called upon to heal a vicious criminal or murderer and you are placed in a moral quandary. If you save their life, gain them as an Ally but also gain 1d3 Rivals. If you choose not to save them, you still gain 1d3 Rivals.
14	You are sent to the sight of a plague or major natural disaster. Roll Intelligence 8+ or Psionic Strength 8+. If you succeed, gain one of the following: Medic 1, Any Science (any) 1, or Survival 1. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table.
15	A criminal gang tries to recruit you to their organisation. If you accept, you may join the Psion: Rogue career next term without rolling for Qualifi cation. If you refuse, gain the gang as an Enemy.
16	You become very close to one of your associates. Gain an Ally.
21	You are part of an experiment in psionics. Roll 1d6 for the result: 1.Gain +1 Psionic Strength 2.Gain one level of Investigate 3. Gain one of the following: Sensors 1, Comms 1, Engineer (Electronics) 1 or Mechanic 1 4.Roll for a new Talent with a +1 DM on the Learning roll. 5. Gain one level of any Talent you already possess 6.Permanently reduce your Psionic Strength by one
22	You are seconded to the military. Roll for Survival, Skill and Event on the Psion Army, Psion Navy or Psion *Scout* career tables. You may transfer to that career next term without rolling for Qualifi cation if desired.
23	You are given advanced training in a specialist field. Throw Education 8+ or Psionic Strength 8+. If you succeed gain one level in any skill you already possess.
24	You become involved in a feud between rival psionic groups. Throw Psionic Strength 8+ or Investigate 8+. If you succeed, gain a +1 DM on a Benefit roll. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table.

25	Your healing abilities gain you renown and fame. Gain a +1 Social Status.
26	You serve aboard a space ship or station. Gain one of the following: Vacc Suit 1, Pilot (Small Craft) 1 or Zero–G 1.
31–36	Life Event. Roll on the Life Event Table.
41	You are part of a close group of friends. Gain 1d3 Contacts.
42	You inadvertently scan someone and discover a deep secret. Roll 1d6 to determine that secret:1.Has been unfaithful to their spouse 2.Is a traitor to the government 3.Is involved with a criminal gang 4.Is working for a rival interstellar government 5.Is a government spy within your organization 6. Knows the location of a valuable treasure (1d6*50,000 Cr.)
43	You are lost or abandoned in the wilderness and must learn to survive on your own until rescued. Gain one level of Survival or gain Recon 1 or Navigation 1.
44	You are given advanced training. Throw Intelligence 8+. If you succeed, raise any level 0 skill to level 1.
45	The psionic underground contacts you and asks for your help. If you accept, throw Intelligence 8+ or Deception 8+. If you succeed, gain one level of Streetwise or Stealth. If you fail, you must take the Rogue or Psion Rogue career next term. If you refuse to help, gain a +1 DM on your next Advancement roll and 1d3 Rivals.
46	Working in a war zone, you desperately try to save as many people as you can. Throw Intelligence 8+ or Psionic Strength 10+. If you succeed, gain one level of Medic, Healing or Social Science (any). If you fail, gain one level of Psionic Trauma due to the stress.
51	You undertake a course of intense physical fitness. Throw Intelligence 8+. If you succeed, make an extra roll on the Personal Development Table.
52	You are invited to join a psionics advisory board, along with other psions. If you accept, roll 1d6 for the benefits of membership: 1.+2 DM on your next Advancement roll 2.Gain one level of skill with any psionic talent you already possess 3.+1 Social Status 4.+1 Psionic Strength 5.Gain one level of Advocate or Admin 6.Mishap – Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career
53	You have the chance to trust another psion. Throw Intelligence 8+. If you succeed, gain an Ally. If you fail, your trust was misplaced and you are betrayed; gain an Enemy.
54	Your work has hardened you to the psionic trauma. If you have any psionic trauma, reduce it by one level. If you have not received any psionic trauma, you may ignore the first level of trauma that you receive in the future.
55	You heal a Noble or other important person. Gain either +1 Social Status or a Noble Ally.
56	You are assigned to a secret project. Gain one level of one of the following: Investigate, Deception, Sensors or Any Science (any).
61	You receive a bonus for your hard work. Gain a +1 DM to one Benefit roll.
62	You spend a lot of time working with very injured patients. Gain a level to your Healing skill.
63	One of your superiors takes an interest in your work. Gain a +2 DM on your next Advancement roll due to their help.
64	One of your patients is very grateful for your healing. Gain an extra Benefit roll.
65	Your work with psionics has exposed you to many different talents. You may roll for a new Talent with a +2 DM on the Learning roll.
66	Your healing talents are greatly appreciated and you are automatically promoted.

A Friend in Need

By August Hahn

A selection of new patrons to drop into your regular Traveller campaign.

Patrons for Traveller

The galaxy is really big. There are hundreds upon thousands of known worlds, many of them explored to some degree or other. From balls of rock to gas giants, corporate colonies to toxic jungle worlds, they all have one thing in common. No matter where people go, they always have needs. Some are small and easily handled.

For the bigger tasks a helping hand is sometimes required. Need and conflict are the driving forces behind adventure. Conflict creates itself once players get involved. Need is what patrons are for. A patron is anyone or anything with a direct need and the means to both communicate that desire to others and a way to reward them for the task's completion. This can be as simple as a gourmand ordering a meal and paying for it or as complex as a distraught noble hiring freelance operatives to infiltrate a war zone and rescue his captured son from an enemy stronghold. Patrons provide both the source of an adventure and the benefit for undertaking it.

This article series will present a pair of patrons each issue, providing all the background needed to incorporate them into an existing campaign and the details required to use them in several different ways. Patrons may not always be forthright, or even honest, in their dealings with players but in every case they serve to get the ball rolling on a great adventure!

Dermont Calaway, Human

Entertainer

Requires: Broker, Persuade, Streetwise

Rewards: Cr. 10,000 or more if the characters can bargain their fee higher.

Player's Information: Dermont is better known as Dermy, a name any character with knowledge of current music culture will know without need for a skill check. Dermy is a master of the aerosynth, a complicated instrument pioneered by him in his much younger days and now a common sight in bands across the known stars. Dermy is a living legend and though his musical days are mostly behind him, he still lives well off royalties and the very occasional personal appearance.

Dermy is well known for just reaching out seemingly at random and hiring strangers to do things for him with little explanation and often for obscenely large rewards. Most people assume it to be a sort of dependability test. Many of Dermy's most famous associates and band mates were once strangers he pulled in and trusted with some mundane task. Others think Dermy does it because it amuses him to watch people scurry around at his slightest whim. The truth may be a little of both.

Referee's Information: Dermy is actually in a bind this time. Though he is not in any great need of money he is in dire
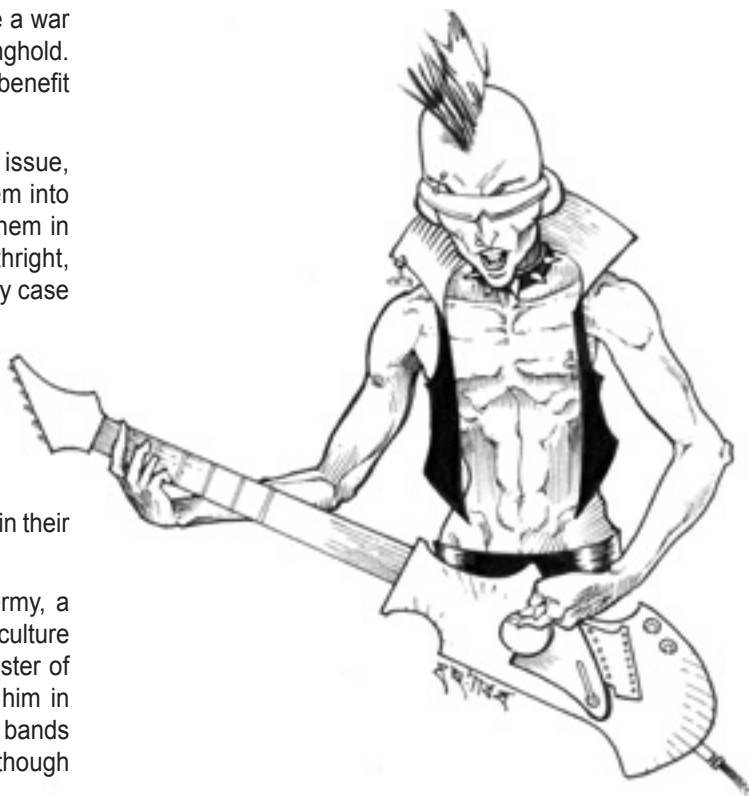
straights where his anti–aging drugs are concerned. Dermy has developed a rare allergy to normal grade anagathics. Without a steady supply of cutting edge 'youth juice' Dermy's long, hard years will start catching up with him in a hurry. His normal supplier is willing to make a special trip to bring him his drugs but he wants a bonus this time – one of Dermy's original Calaway aerosynths. Since anyone who actually knows Dermy would be able to fi gure out that something huge must be happening to get him to part with one of only three such instruments in existence, he has to rely on total strangers to make the exchange for him.

1. Dermy is a little eccentric but he is also a straight shooter with no intentions of backing out on his part of the bargain. The same cannot be said of his supplier, a chemist in the pocket of a large criminal cartel. Now that his supplier knows how desperate Dermy is to get what he is selling, negotiations are liable to get heated. A rare instrument just will not be enough when the characters arrive to make the exchange. Bargaining skills might diffuse the situation before guns are drawn but going into the meeting strapped would still be a good idea.

2. Though he seems pretty honest, Dermy has everyone fooled. His reputation is a sham, a construct of a public relations firm and some well paid word of mouth. He has no intentions of trading one of his priceless aerosynths for black market anagathics. If his supplier wants to raise his prices it is time to get a new supplier. The characters will be shadowed by a trained assassin and framed for the chemist's death after the exchange is made.

3. In a cutthroat world like the music industry, a secret is worth 100 hit songs. Gerry Gallows, one of Dermy's rivals, has found out about his debilitating allergy and would like nothing better than to tamper with the supply that the characters are about to deliver. When the characters finish with the exchange Gerry will spring into action. How she approaches the characters will depend on how they handle themselves with the chemist. A reasonable, conversational group might actually haveGerry come speak to them and offer them twice what Dermy paid them for the drugs. A seemingly violent or difficult party might have to deal with an ambush or three before they make it back.

4. Dermy's supplier arrived on time but, as smugglers are wont to do, he is in trouble with the dock authorities and his cargo is locked down. If the players want Dermy's drugs they are going to have to either find a way to clear up the Cr. 60,500 fine the supplier has outstanding or retrieve the metal chemical case from his ship's hold on their own.

5. The anagathic allergy Dermy has is actually caused by a drug interaction with a 'recreational' chemical Dermy enjoys on a fairly constant basis. If the characters manage to handle the exchange properly and do not try to haggle him for more money he may decide to keep them on as 'procurement' specialists. He gets his drugs from several different suppliers on a dozen other worlds and if the characters are amenable to playing fetch he could become a long term patron. They keep him high, he keeps them loaded.

6. Sooner or later the Reaper always catches up. Moments after the characters hand over his anti–aging medicine Dermy takes a dose, has a violent reaction and falls over dead. Their arrangement was a secret, Dermy's guards just outside the door have no idea why the characters were let in and the rock star just screamed loudly and died at their feet. Cue the drama.

FUEL EFFICIENCY

By Benjamin Pew

A discussion on the efficiency of starships in Traveller.

A typical starship in the *Traveller* universe is powered by a fusion power plant. This power plant requires purified hydrogen for fuel and will consume it fairly hungrily. The earliest commercially–viable fusion plant is built at late TL–8, even though experimental models exist earlier (however, these are fuel–swilling monsters that do not put enough energy out to be worthwhile). A TL 8 starship–grade fusion plant will consume two tons of fuel per level of ship drive per week, that is to say a TL–8 plant A will use two tons of fuel in a week, while a plant B will use four tons. Many plant designers feel that this is still very inefficient, even if it is cost–effective for their purposes and try to increase the efficiency of their designs. A standard TL–9 fusion plant design will be able to make that power plant A use two tons of fuel in four weeks – effectively doubling its endurance; likewise, larger power plants will be able to be twice as efficient. This doubling of efficiency will remain the same up until about TL 15 or so, when the fusion plant is efficient enough to run for several years straight before needing to be refuelled.

Most designers will generally include several weeks' fuel tankage in their designs in order to provide for long–term operations. **Fusion Power Plant Efficiency:**

TL 8: A Fusion power plant A requires 2 tons of fuel to get 2 weeks worth of operation; multiply this by the size difference of the power plant in use to get the amount of fuel required for that period. For example, a power plant B is twice as big as a power plant A and as such requires 4 tons of fuel, while a power plant E, being five times as big, requires 10 tons of fuel, while a power plant N, being 13 times as big, requires 26 tons of fuel. This is the standard table listed on page 107 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Note that the factor of difference between the power plant used and power plant A will determine the fuel required for each succeeding Tech Level.

TL 9: A Fusion power plant A requires 2 tons of fuel to get 4 weeks worth of operation. As with TL 8 plants of greater size, increase this by the factor of difference between the power plant utilised and a power plant A. Therefore, a power plant B will still use 4 tons of fuel, while a power plant N will still use 10 tons and a power plant N will use 26 but each plant will get 4 weeks worth of power from that amount of fuel.

TL 10: At this TL, a power plant will get 6 weeks worth of operations for a certain amount of fuel; as with all listed TLs, fuel requirements will remain the factor of difference between the power plant used and power plant A. A power plant A will get 6 weeks worth of operations for 2 tons of fuel, while a power plant N will still use 26 tons for that same 6 weeks.

TL 11: Power plants of this TL will get 8 weeks for a certain amount of fuel tonnage. This is the standard efficiency for most civilian power plants, although most plants built at later TLs will be built using methods, materials and costs appropriate their TL.

TL 12: Power plants built at TL 12 will generate 12 weeks of power for their required fuel tankage. Most high–grade civilian power plants are built to operate at this level and many non–military plants are also.

TL 13: A breakthrough in efficiency causes power plants built at this tech level to generate 24 weeks of fuel for the tonnage required. Most power plants will contain two–thirds of their required tonnage in order to provide backup fuel in case of combat damage. This becomes the standard efficiency for military vessels until TL 15.

TL 14: Power plants of TL 14 manufacture will provide 50 weeks of operation for their required fuel tonnage. This is fairly common on long–range scientific and survey vessels and intruder–style military vessels, as it provides them with nearly a year's worth of power plant operation. Power plants greater than E will usually only carry their full load of fuel in order to counter loss through combat and accident.

TL 15: The Tech Level 15 power plant will provide 76 weeks worth of operation for the required fuel tonnage. Indeed, the primary reason that the TL 15 power plant is not more common among space faring vessels is its expense and relative rarity. TL 12 and 13 power plants and indeed TL 15 power plants built to TL 12 and 13 specifications, are much cheaper, even if they are larger and less efficient. TL 15 plants are the desired standard for all ships in important fleets, such as the Core Fleet that protects Capital and for important vessels such as the Emperor's Yacht.

TL 16: At TL 16, fuel efficiency is practically indefinite. But it is a very rare ship that will have such a power plant, as it is notoriously hard to find. A power plant of this manufacture will be 70 percent the size of a standard TL 12 power plant but will be 400 percent more expensive.

DUELIST

BY JAMES DESBOROUGH

A new career featuring a true protagonist skilled in the use of weapons in one–on–one combat.

Duellists are experts in personal, one–on–one combat, fighting for their own personal honour or that of their ship, unit or even their society. In some societies whole battles can be settled in personal combat and even in interstellar society, different naval vessels can establish their pecking order and superiority to other vessels through the quality of the ship's duellist.

Duellists usually appear around TL 3, as planetary societies establish patterns of nobility and mercantile activity as well as personal weapons technology that begin to favour personal expertise and demonstrate the necessity of avoiding too much collateral damage to expensive businesses and cities.

Enlistment: Dexterity 8+. The duellist must enter the career from a military tour (Army, Marines, Navy) or one as a Noble. Successful applicants retain their military rank, or are commissioned at rank 1 of their service (Army, Marines, Navy).

Assignments: Choose one of the following

Fencer
The fencer is an expert in bladed combat, typically favouring the rapier as their weapon of choice, technologically enhanced or not. While they might be trained primarily for sport they are still deadly in a melee fight.

Pistoleer
The pistoleer is a master of the quick draw and a marksman with hand weapons. They fight deadly pistol duels with other pistoleers and engage in marksmanship competitions to determine their ranking.

Champion
Champions fight with sword, pistol or both at once, usually in matters of honour that are considered to be life or death, rather than sporting events or friendly bouts between rivals. In many eyes this is only one step up from an assassin.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills
1	+1 Str	Leadership
2	+1 End	Carouse
3	+1 Dex	Melee (blade) or Gun Combat (any pistol)
4	+1 Soc	Athletics
5	Melee (blade) or Gun Combat (any pistol)	Persuade
6	Diplomat	Diplomat

Roll	Fencer	Pistoleer	Champion
1	Melee (blade)	Gun Combat (slug or energy pistol)	Gun Combat (slug or energy
2	Athletics (any)	Athletics (any)	Melee (blade)
3	Carouse	Carouse	Athletics (any)
4	Diplomat	Diplomat	Carouse
5	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership
6	Gambler	Gambler	Gambler

Ranks and Benefits:

Roll	Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	—	—
1	—	—
2	Duellist	Melee (blade) 1 or Gun Combat (slug or energy pistol) 1
3	Duellist third class	Ally
4	Duellist second class	Contact
5	Duellist first class	Ally
6	Duelling Master	Contact

Mishaps:

Roll	Mishap
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the injury table). Alternatively roll twice on the injury table and take the lower result.
2	Injured. Roll on the injury table.
3	You are involved in a bout–fixing scandal. Lose one Social Standing.
4	You form a rivalry with another outstanding duellist. Gain a Rival.
5	A rival duellist attempts underhanded tactics to get you out of the fight. Roll End 8+. If you fail, roll on the injury table.
6	You are passed around from place–to–place as a duelling asset, preventing you from settling down or forming attachments. You do, however, gain a Contact.

Events:

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are brought in to fight a particularly prestigious duel. You have no choice but to accept. Roll Melee (blade) 8+. If you succeed gain 1 Social Standing and a bonus of 10,000 credits. If you fail, roll on the injury table twice, taking both injuries.
4	Being a duellist gives you plenty of opportunity to travel and take in unusual experiences. Gain a level in any skill.
5	You are feted and festooned with gifts from your patrons thanks to your performance. Gain a +1 DM to any one Benefi t roll.
6	You become a political pawn as the champion of two rival patrons. Gain a level in Advocate, Carouse or Diplomacy as they vie for your services but also gain an Enemy.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table.
8	An officer from a rival service (Army, Navy or Marines) attempts to poach you from your current service to fight for his force's honour. If you accept change the service to which you are attached and a +2 DM bonus to any one Benefit roll. If you refuse gain a +2 DM bonus to your Advancement check and gain an enemy, the officer who tried to recruit you.
9	You make a great deal of money betting on yourself in fights through intermediaries. Gain a +1 DM bonus to any one Benefit roll, a level in the Gambling skill and gain an Enemy in the underworld.
10	You capitalise on your fame as a duellist to gain media exposure and even greater fame. Gain a level in Carouse, Diplomat, Persuade or gain a +2 DM to a single Benefi t roll. Your media exposure also gains you a Rival.
11	You become the personal champion of a powerful officer or noble. He becomes your Ally and you gain a +4 DM bonus to your next Advancement check.
12	A bout that you're involved in becomes the talk of the quadrant and is studied by other duellists. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Fencer	End 7+	Dex 7+
Pistoleer	Dex 7+	Dex 7+
Champion	End 8+	Dex 6+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	5,000	Blade or pistol
2	10,000	+1 Social Standing
3	20,000	+1 Dex
4	30,000	+1 Str
5	60,000	+1 End
6	75,000	Personal vehicle
7	150,000	Yacht

Beserker

By James Desborough

For players looking for a character that is a bit more primal and low tech, we present the Berserker…

A Berserker works themselves up into a battle frenzy in combat, for the duration of which they are more resilient to damage, can exert more of their natural strength and can take a great deal more punishment than usual before succumbing to their wounds. While more common in primitive societies (TL 0–2) some advanced societies retain Berserkers due to tradition or use combat drugs and implants to get a similar effect from their soldiers, trained or not.

Berserkers, high tech or low tech, are specialists in close quarters combat and are generally armed with heavy, simple melee weapons, short range, powerful side arms and heavy but simple armour, equipment that they can use in their frenzied state.

Enlistment: Endurance 8+, must come to the berserker from a Drifter (Barbarian) tour for low–tech societies (TL 0–2), or from a military career for higher technology societies (TL 3+). The character must have Melee (blade or bludgeon) at 0+ to enter the career.

Assignments: Berserkers only have one speciality, that of the Berserker itself. Low–tech Berserkers take the Animals skill and use the left hand rank designation while high–tech berserkers take the Drive skill and use the right hand ranking. High–tech Berserkers that use chemicals or implants to enter the berserk state can substitute Gun Combat (any) for the new Berserker skill should they so wish.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills
1	Melee (any)	Athletics
2	+1 Str	Melee (any)
3	+End	Survival
4	+1 Dex	Carouse
5	Survival	Animals/Drive (any)
6	Carouse	Berserker

Roll	Berserker
1	Berserker
2	Melee (any)
3	Survival
4	Athletics
5	Carouse
6	Animals/Drive (any)

Ranks and Benefits:

Roll	Berserker	Skill or Benefit
0	– / Private	Melee (any) 1
1	– / Lance Corporal	Survival 1
2	Warrior / Corporal	
3	–/ Lance Sergeant	
4	Chieftain / Sergeant	Leadership 1
5	/ Gunnery Sergeant	
6	– / Sergeant Major	

Mishaps:

Roll	Mishap
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the injury table). Alternatively roll twice on the injury table and take the lower result.
2	Injured. Roll on the injury table.
3	You are the only surviving member of your unit, following a disastrous engagement. You carry the blame and are pushed out. You may not continue in this career and receive no benefits or mustering out bonuses from this career.
4	Your frenzy causes you some brain injuries through stress on your system and a near embolism. Lose 1 point of Intellect.
5	You lose control of your rage and assault and nearly kill an offi cer or chieftain, gaining them as an enemy.
6	You are prone to slipping into your red–rage at inopportune moments. When you are under stress the Games Master may call for you to make an Int 6+ roll or fly into a berserk rage.

Events:

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Your chieftain or officer offers to put you forward for special duty. If you accept you get a +2 DM to your next qualification and advancement rolls but you owe them a favour.
4	You are involved in a number of vicious battles. Gain one level of Melee (any) or Survival.
5	Your unit is involved in the sacking of a defeated enemy settlement. Gain a +1 DM to any one benefit roll.
6	You take part in a truly brutal and bloody campaign. Roll End 8+ to avoid injury, if you succeed gain one level in Melee (any) or Leadership.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table.
8	A chieftain/officer takes a personal interest in your training. Increase your Berserker or Melee (any) skill by 1.
9	You fight with exemplary courage and skill in an important battle. Gain a +2 DM to your next advancement check.
10	A constant life of battle highs and peacetime lows hones your skill and temper to a fine edge. Raise one of your existing skills by 1 level.
11	You are tempered by battle and injuries becoming hard and scarred and brutal. Gain +1 Str or End.
12	You are without peer in battle and are automatically promoted on your next term.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Berserker	End 8+	Str 7+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	1,000	+1 End
2	3,000	+1 Str
3	6,000	+1 Dex
4	7,000	Melee Weapon
5	8,000	Armour
6	12,000	Contact
7	20,000	Ally

Berserker Skill The Berserker skill is used by Berserkers to enter their state of frothing frenzy and combat strength. Entering the state of frenzy is normally an Average (+0) roll but this can be made more difficult through the use of tranquilisers and other means of interfering with the berserker's state of mind, including psionic influence.

While in a frenzied state the Berserker's Str and End are considered to be one higher and they are considered to have a natural armour Protection of 1, representing their ability to shrug off minor wounds. These temporary bonus points vanish at the end of the frenzy – typically at the end of combat – and it is possible for this to cause the death of the berserker.

While in their frenzy Berserkers may not use complex weaponry, such as fi rearms, or equipment such as computers. Anything more complex than opening or closing a door is simply beyond their faculties in such a state and they are limited to the use of melee weapons.

The Berserker skill may only be learned through the Berserker career or through the repeated – and dangerous – use of Berserker combat drugs or implants.

Most high tech Berserkers do not learn the skill at all and can only enter their frenzies through technological means.

Berserker Combat Drugs Crude Berserker drugs become available at TL 6 and have the same effect as the skill (given in the previous section) but the occurrence of the frenzy is not controllable and may result in the user turning on their friends and allies. It also requires an End 8+ roll not to become addicted to the drug, requiring a daily dose or progressively taking 1 damage every day. Low tech Berserker drugs cost 100 credits a dose.

These primitive Berserker drugs are generally replaced with stim, metabolic accelerators and combat drugs until TL 11 when advances in medical technology and tailored pharmaceuticals make a more powerful and controllable form of Berserker drug possible. These high tech Berserker drugs have double the effect of the skill or the crude drugs and come with regulator harnesses, worn on the neck or wrist, that administer the drug precisely – or remotely – to avoid problems with attacks on friends and allies. The tailored drugs are much less addictive with the roll being reduced to End 6+. High tech Berserker drugs cost 500 credits a dose. Injection regulators costs 1,500 credits and are available from TL10. Military Berserkers using these drugs are inured and conditioned to their use and can withstand addiction and other ravages with relative ease.

Berserker Implant An alternative to the drugs and the training is a cybernetic implant. These are available in a crude form from TL 8, all the way through to TL 16. These implants work through various methods, combined together, from flooding the body with adrenalin and electrochemically stimulating aggression, to releasing engineered hormones and fleets of nanites into the bloodstream and even cutting off the body's pain receptors and hijacking the nervous system with pre–programmed, high speed actions. The implant can only be turned on once per day with a maximum duration of 1d6 hours, the body's biorhythm being unpredictable. This rises to twice per day at TL 10, three times at TL 12, four times at TL 14 and it becomes possible to constantly run it at TL 16. Running the frenzy for more than three hours at a time and every three hours causes 1 point of damage which can only be healed by natural rest. Military Berserker implants are often placed in penal troops, alongside explosive 'kill switches' and can be activated remotely with the correct signal and codes.

Berserker Implant

TL	Cost	Str	End	Dex	Initiative	Armour	Other
8	5,000	—	+1	—	—	1	−1 Int from implantation.
9	6,000	+1	+1	—	—	1	−1 Int from implantation.
10	8,000	+1	+1		—	1	
11	9,000	+1	+1	+1	+1	1	
12	10,000	+1	+2	+1	+1	1	
13	12,000	+2	+2	+1	+1	1	
14	15,000	+2	+2	+1	+1	1	
15	20,000	+2	+2	+2	+2	1	
16	25,000	+2	+2	+2	+2	1	The character regenerates 1 End of damage each turn through nanotechnological healing technology, unless they are rendered dead.

CONDITIONED SOLDIER

By James Desborough

Characters with a shady past might find they were once conditioned or brainwashed into a killing machine.

Conditioned Soldiers (TL7+) are those who are exposed to the absolute, hardest training and psychological preparation known to sentience. Almost all humanity is stripped away leaving a conditioned and controlled killing machine with all the subtlety of a brick. Most sentient species have a degree of empathy for other intelligent beings and 'wince' at harming them, so much so that this is a real problem for militaries who try to train a kill–response into their soldiers so that they fire without thinking. Conditioned Soldiers take this a step further, creating conscienceless, functioning sociopaths that have no compunctions about killing – or sometimes dying – and as a result are all the more deadly.

Enlistment: Fanatics can come from any walk of life but must roll End 6+ to enter the career. The Excised can either be born and raised to it, automatically entering but being unable to choose any other career until they exit, otherwise they must come from a Military or Agent career and roll End 8+ to enter. Manchurians must have completed a previous Military or Agent career tour and roll End 8+.

Assignments: Choose one of the following

Fanatic
Fanatics are so devoted to a religion or an ideology that their own personalities and sense of worth are completely suborned to the political or spiritual system that they advocate. Fanatics are capable of great feats of heroism and foolhardiness where their own personal safety does not even come into the equation. Everything is given up to the cause.

Excised
The Excised are people who have had their normal human psychological values of empathy, fellow feeling and conscience severely truncated through deliberate traumatisation, meme–implantation and medical, chemical or cybernetic tinkering. The Excised are high–functioning sociopaths with increased levels of obedience and in–group loyalty to compensate but they are, in essence, leashed serial killers. The ultimate cold–hearted killers.

Manchurian
Manchurians are programmed with deep, subliminal, hypnotic or psychic conditioning to switch them from their docile, public personas to that of a deep–seated and hidden killer personality. Manchurians can be triggered remotely by their controllers or others who know the necessary triggers – usually a nonsense phrase calculated not to be uttered by accident – or by being placed in dangerous situations where their survival is threatened. A Manchurian may not even be aware that they are one until their training kicks in.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills
1	+1 Str	Athletics (any)
2	+1 Dex	Gun Combat (any)
3	+1 End	Explosives
4	Gun Combat (any)	Melee (any)
5	Melee (any)	Stealth
6	Athletics (any)	Jack of All Trades

Roll	Fanatic	Excised	Manchurian
1	Athletics (any)	Athletics (any)	Athletics (any) / Drive (any)
2	Deception	Gun Combat (any)	Gun Combat (any) / Mechanic
3	Explosives	Melee (any)	Melee (any) / Trade (any)
4	Gun combat (any)	Battle Dress	Stealth / Engineer (any)
5	Melee (any)	Heavy Weapons	Deception / Trade (any)
6	Leadership	Survival	Survival / Science (any)

Ranks and Benefits:

Roll	Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	Military and Agent background advance by rank title within their parent careers. Fanatics have no formal ranking.	
1		Gun Combat (any) 1
2		
3		Melee (any) 1
4		
5		Athletics (any) 1
6		

Mishaps:

Roll	Mishap
1	Severely injured on an operation. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table (*Traveller Core Rulebook* page 37) and take the lower result.
2	A rival group tries to extract you. If you go along with them you leave the career path immediately without benefit. Refuse and you fi ght them, rolling twice on the Injury table and taking the lower result. You also gain an Enemy and a level in any skill of your choice.
3	The intense training and mental programming does something harmful to your brain, severely limiting your mental faculties. Lose a point of Int.
4	Regular soldiers and agents do not like conditioned soldiers, nor do regular folk, gain an Enemy from your own side.
5	Your conditioning breaks down in public and you turn on your friends or family – if you have any – or an innocent bystander. Roll twice on the Injury table for them and gain them as an Enemy.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

Events:

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You get involved in a difficult operation. Roll 8+ on any of your career skills and if you succeed raise that skill by 1, otherwise roll on the Mishap table.
4	You successfully complete an operation to your superior's satisfaction. Gain a +1 DM to either your next Benefit roll or your next Advancement roll.
5	You are linked with others like yourself in a decentralised network. Gain 1d3 Contacts like yourself.
6	You are given advanced training/conditioning to hone you to a fine edge. Roll End 8+ to raise Str, Dex or End by 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (*Traveller Core Rulebook* page 34).
8	You are given advanced training to raise your skills and abilities. Roll Edu 8+ to raise an existing skill by 1.
9	Exemplary performance earns you a +2 DM to your next Advancement check.
10	You are given supplementary training specific to your mission, gain a new skill at 1.
11	A superior takes a special interest in your career, either gain them as an Ally or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll due to their patronage.
12	You take part in a major operation and come through unscathed and lending credence to the whole programme. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Fanatic	End 8+	End 6+
Excised	End 7+	End 7+
Manchurian	Int 6+	Int 7+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	1,000	Weapon
2	4,000	+1 End
3	8,000	Combat Implant
4	9,000	One ship share
5	10,000	Contact
6	40,000	Ally
7	75,000	Two ship shares

Manchurians gain a 'double' skill set, their Manchurian skills not being accessible unless their Manchurian personality kicks in, the other skill set typically coming from a low key career path and forming their cover. The skill table presumes a Citizen (worker) cover identity but others can be assumed.

When rolling, the Manchurian's skills should be noted separately from the cover personality skills. Manchurian mustering out benefits come from their cover identity. The gains they get from being a Manchurian are held, secretly and only accessible to the Manchurian personality.

Will to Kill

Capability is only one part of the equation in how much harm one human being can do to another, being willing to shoot, to punch, to break, to cripple, these are as – if not more – important. All conditioned soldiers do an extra point of damage against living targets with any weapon or with their bare hands.

Manchurians

Manchurians are a little more complex than other career paths, particularly where it comes to their skill sets and their mustering out benefi ts. To help clarify an example follows: Ben completes a tour as a Corporate Agent and then a tour as a Manchurian.

Ben's skills:

Computers 1

Streetwise 1

Drive (wheeled) 1

Investigate 1

Recon 0

Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1

Deception 1

Manchurian Skills:

Athletics 0

Stealth 1

Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1

Melee (blade) 1

Cover Identity Skills:

Trade 0

Mechanic 2

His Cover Identity skills integrate with his pre–existing skills, so they are available all the time. He can add Trade and Mechanic to his repertoire. His Manchurian skills are only available when he is triggered but they do add to his main identity skills cumulatively. When activated he gains access to Athletics, Stealth and Melee (blade) and his Gun Combat (slug pistol) skill *increases* to 2.

As a Corporate Agent he left their service with 5,000 credits. When he leaves service as a Manchurian he leaves with 10,000 credits from his cover identity, for a total of 15,000 credits. His Manchurian identity is implanted with a Combat Implant but it only operates when his Manchurian identity is activated.

Information Warfare Specialist

By James Desborough

The best hackers can be found not in the darkest corners of low–rent bars but among the military. This career will turn a character into a terrible weapon in any modern society.

Enlistment: Intelligence 8+, must have completed a tour as a Scholar or Rogue in addition to a military tour or a pirate/rebellion oriented life event or career as well as Computer at 0+.

Assignments: Choose one of the following

Combat Hacker

Combat hackers are strictly limited to computer interactions but they are the very best at subverting and controlling computer systems, extracting data from them or repurposing them to their own ends.

EW Specialist

An Electronic Warfare Specialist's remit is even broader than that of the Combat Hacker. As well as retrieving data from enemy systems the Electronic Warfare Specialist also needs to learn how to detect leaked signals and scan interference from different sensor suites and how to assault, baffle or hide from enemy scanners and sensor sweepers. A good Electronic Warfare Specialist can blind and cripple an enemy ship or war machine before a single shot is even fired.

SIGINT Specialist

A Signals Intelligence Specialist is all about intercepting and decoding enemy signals and chatter, breaking their ciphers, tracing their locations and using drones, satellites and other means to track down enemies, pinpoint their locations and project their movements. Signals Intelligence Specialists are also charged with securing their own side's signals, protecting them from interception and encrypting them in creative ways so that they cannot be understood.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills
1	+1 Int	Comms
2	+1 Edu	Computers
3	Computers	Engineer (electronics)
4	Comms	Investigate
5	Engineer (electronics)	Remote Operations
6	Science (electronics)	Science (electronics)

Roll	Combat Hacker	EW Specialist	SIGINT Specialist
1	Computers	Comms	Comms
2	Deception	Computers	Computers
3	Engineer (Electronics)	Engineer (electronics)	Engineer (electronics)
4	Investigate	Science (electronics)	Remote Operations
5	Persuade	Sensors	Sensors
6	Science (electronics)	Tactics	Tactics

Ranks and Benefits:

Roll	Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	—	—
1	—	—
2	Specialist 3rd Class	Computers 1
3		
4	Specialist 2nd Class	Comms 1
5		
6	Specialist 1st Class	Tactics 1

Mishaps:

Roll	Mishap
1	You are arrested along with some other hackers. Lose one benefit roll and you must take the Draft in your next career – if any.
2	An electronic infiltration goes wrong, forcing you to flee the planet. Gain one of Deception 1, Stealth 1 or Gun Combat (any) 1.
3	You form a rivalry with another Info War specialist, gain an Enemy.
4	You are injured in a deep strike or terrorist bombing of your Ops centre. Roll on the Injury table.
5–6	Specialist 1st Class

Events:

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are put in the position of working against former friends or allies. Accept and gain an extra Benefit roll, a level in Computer and Comms and 1d3 Enemies.
4	You are inserted into a frontline unit to provide electronic support. Gain one of Gun Combat (any) or Survival.
5	You are given special training. Roll Education 8+ to raise any skill listed in the Skills & Training tables for your career by +1.
6	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (*Traveller Core Rulebook* page 34).
7	You code some essential software that becomes part of the combat suite of your faction. Gain a +2 DM to your next advancement check.
8	You stumble upon some compromising information about a politician or a ranking member of the military. You can hand it over to them and gain a +2 DM to your next advancement check and an extra Benefit, or you can hold onto it, holding it over them to gain them as an Ally.
9	You are mentored by one of the greats of the electronic underground. Increase any of your existing career skills by 1 or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll due to his advocacy of your ability.
10	You are brought in to work on a strange alien computer in an attempt to decrypt what is inside it. Roll Intelligence 8+ to raise your Int or Edu by 1.
11	You intercept some key intelligence resulting in an extra Benefit roll as a reward and a+2 DM to your next Advancement roll.
12	You are involved in a legendary operation, you are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Combat Hacker	Int 7+	Social 7+
EW Specialist	Int 6+	Edu 7+
SIGINT Specialist	Int 6+	Int 7+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	3,000	+1 Intelligence
2	8,000	+1 Education
3	12,000	Computer Equipment
4	20,000	Electronics Equipment
5	30,000	One ship share
6	50,000	Two ship shares
7	75,000	Two ship shares

Gods of the Space Age

By Uri Kurlianchik

Spread the word of the greatest deity among the stars, with the help of technology.

'Any sufficiently advanced technology is

indistinguishable from magic.'

— Arthur C. Clarke

While deities and religion often take a central role in fantasy settings, they are usually pushed to the very back of the stage in sci–fi games. In an era where Man has conquered the stars, contacted aliens and achieved a technological level that makes Biblical miracles look like cheap tricks, who needs superstitious clerics and vague shamans? But if the miracles of yore can be reproduced technologically, why not do the same with the gods?

Why throw away religion and mysticism and all the depth they add to your game, when they can be upgraded, updated and revamped to suit the Space Age? 'Gods of the Space Age' presents players with the Miracle Engineer career, the skill and technology he uses to perform his 'miracles' and a couple of exemplary patrons who might be interested in his service.

The Religious Campaign

The players are all members of some religious organisation bent on spreading its dogmas across the stars. While occasional internal intrigues or battles with heretics are possible, the majority of this campaign focuses on discovering new worlds populated by sophonts and attempting to convert them.

This can take the form of training local miracle engineers to undermine existing beliefs, coming as Gods and messiahs, running theological arguments with the competition and sometimes even the violent occupation of stubborn areas. Inspiration could come from Dune's Bene Gesserit or Ra from the Stargate film.

The Alien Intervention Campaign

The players are alien miracle engineers sent to Earth for some purpose. Such a campaign would work best with a preindustrial Earth, when humanity is still seeking mystical explanations to various phenomena. Such a campaign could focus on the 'truth behind the myth', in which the PCs will get to play the great magicians and prophets of the past and battle rival aliens and opportunistic humans in order to steer humanity in the 'right' direction. Another interesting alien intervention campaign could be an 'alternate history' game, where the PCs get the chance to try to fix humanity's historical mistakes or prevent some famous catastrophe. Inspiration for such campaigns can come from Roger Zelazny's Lord of Light or Harry Turtledove's Tosev Timeline.

The Miracle Engineer

The miracle engineers are professional messiahs, insidious wizards or genies in a spaceship. They are masters of disguise and brilliant engineers, men of science and religion, tricksters, guests from the future and prophets of the Space Age. These adventurous individuals blend faith, technology and psychology to affect primitive and superstitious civilisations; some work for governments who desire to steer pre–stellar societies to more beneficial directions, others are missionaries who help God to impress the natives, still others are sophisticated conmen who cheat entire nations out of their wealth. Contrary to the popular conception of the miracle engineer as a lone preacher going from planet–to–planet is a shiny spaceship, miracle engineers usually work in well coordinated teams – playing God is usually too much for only one person, talented and well–equipped though he may be.

Qualification: Int 7+

–1 DM for every previous career

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Preacher:** The preacher is a religious figure who uses technology to imitate divine miracles. He is not a cynical conman but rather a man who literarily worships science and wishes to use it to spread his faith. The highest–ranking preachers travel from planet–to–planet, creating local deities and directing the progress of entire races.

- **Wizard:** The wizard is a more advanced illusionist; a person who uses cutting edge technology to achieve effects most viewers could only explain as magical. Equal parts scientist and adventurer, the wizard wishes to perfect his art through

Skill and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Edu	Advocate	Art (any)
2	Carouse	Any Science (any)	Astrogation
3	+1 Int	Computers	Investigation
4	Survival	Deception	Language (any)
5	+1 Social	Diplomat	Leadership
6	Jack of All Trades	Engineer (miracle)	Nevigation

Roll	Specialist: Preacher	Specialist: Wizard	Specialist: Trickster
1	Social Science (philosophy)	Art (holography)	Carouse
2	Admin	Explosives	Streetwise
3	Art (holography)	Art (acting)	Gambling
4	Explosives	Carouse	Art (holography)
5	Medic	Remote Operations	Remote Operations
6	Remote Operations	Sensors	Stealth

Roll	Preacher*	Skill or Benefit	Wizard	Skill or Benefit	Trickster	Skill or Benefit
0	Initiate					
1	Novice	Persuade 1	Apprentice	Engineer (any)		Engineer (Miracle 1)
2	Teacher					
3	Master	Admin 1	Seeker	Social Sciences (archaeology) 1		Deception 1
4	Prophet					
5	Messiah	Leadership				Jack of all Trades 1
6	God–Maker	Social Standing 12 or +1 Social Standing, whichever is higher.	Enlightened	Artefact		

* Different religions have different hierarchies; feel free to replace these with space–rabbis, cyber–imams, nuclear–priests or anything else that suits your campaign.

1D6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.
2	Your teaching is horribly distorted by some bloodthirsty dictator who goes on a genocide crusade against his infi del neighbours. You gain an Enemy in the form of the genocide's survivors. You are vilified by mass media, which reduces your Social Standing by 1.
3	3 Due to a tragic misunderstanding, the natives decide to reward you for the peace and wisdom you brought them by martyring you. You survive but just barely; reduce all physical characteristics by 1 and increase your Social Standing by 1. This mishap does not cause you to leave the career.
4	4 The superstitious natives of a less–advanced planet declare you a witch and begin to hunt you, forcing you to flee and hide for a long period of time. Gain Deception 1, Pilot 1 or Survival 1.
5	5 Your miracles are exposed by competitors or investigating journalists. You may try to hastily invent new tricks and go on (lose all Benefit rolls from this career but you do not have to leave) or retire and start anew (leave the career but retain this term's Benefit roll).
6	6 You are betrayed by an ambitious apprentice, who escapes with your secrets and spreads false rumours about you. You may challenge the apprentice to a miracle duel. Roll Engineer (miracle) 8+. If you succeed gain a Rival but retain your career. If you fail roll on the Injury table.

Events:

2d6	Event
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	A criminal/terrorist organisation wants to hire you to assist them in committing some serious crime. Accept and gain two extra Benefi t rolls and 1d3 Enemies.
4	As you delve deeper and deeper into ancient secrets and arcane matters you begin to lose your grip on reality. Increase your Education by 2 and reduce your Intelligence by 1.
5	You invent an impressive new miracle by accident. Gain +1 DM to any one benefi t roll.
6	You witness a phenomenon previously considered impossible. If you choose to study it, you quickly become obsessed and neglect all other pursuits in an attempt to uncover this mystery. Roll Investigate 8+ and Engineer (miracle) 8+. If you succeed on both gain an additional Benefi t roll, +2 DM to your next Advancement roll and one level of Engineer (miracle). If you fail lose all your allies and contacts and reduce your Social Standing and Intelligence by 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (page 34 in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*).
8	primitive alien tribe worships you as a deity and caters to your every whim. You may abuse their trust and gain two extra Benefit rolls and an Enemy or guide them to happiness and gain the tribe as an Ally and +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
9	You find a race suffering from a horrible humanitarian crisis and can try to help them. Roll Admin 6+. If you succeed gain an Ally and one level of Admin. If you fail gain an Enemy.
10	You convert a prominent alien leader to your cause. Gain an Ally and +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
11	You befriend a brilliant aging miracle engineer who wishes to pass on his wisdom to a worthy student. Gain an Ally and either gain a level in Engineer (miracle) or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll thanks to his aid.
12	You manage to perform a miracle that was previously considered impossible. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Preacher	Int 5+	Soc 6+
Wizard	Int 6+	Edu 7+
Trickster	Dex 4+	Int 7+

Mustering – Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	5,000	+1 Edu
2	10,000	Miracle Device
3	20,000	+1 Soc
4	30,000	+1 Int
5	40,000	TAS membership
6	60,000	Minor cult following
7	80,000	Ancient Technology

the research of futuristic technologies and the uncovering of ancient artefacts.

- **Trickster:** Unlike the preacher and the wizard, the trickster has no noble aspirations of achieving spiritual or scientific perfection through advanced technology. Instead, he uses tricks to pretend to be a demon, a genie, a deity or some other powerful creature.

THE SCIENCE OF MAGIC

This section describes the most important weapon in the miracle engineer's arsenal, the Engineer (miracle) skill, and presents a few examples of the various products of this skill.

Engineer (Miracle)

The Engineer (miracle) skill is used to design, construct and repair miracle devices. As the name might imply, it mostly deals with advanced engineering, mainly optics and electronics. However, it also includes a fair amount of theatrical and visual arts, as well as a bit of psychology. The greatest challenge of this skill is not merely to construct an effective device but also to design it in such a way as to make it appear magical or divine rather than technological.

Because of this, miracle devices tend to have mythical rather than commercial titles. Even mundane items used by miracle engineers gain romantic names and designs; a common flamethrower might be designed to look like a petrified dragon and be referred to as 'The Dragon's Breath', while antibiotics are most likely to be handed in archaic–looking glass bottles and be called 'The Tears of the Martyr' or 'Magic Potions'.

Repairing damaged miracle devices functions the same way as any other mechanical repair (see page 56 in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*)**.**

Constructing a miracle device is usually a Difficult task, while altering an existing mechanism to appear miraculous is an Average task.

Every miracle device has a rating which indicates how effective it is in convincing onlookers it is magical. This rating is equal to the skill check's Effect plus any bonuses the

Referee may designate for clever construction and knowledge of the target civilisation. This rating is applied as positive DM to the illusion roll.

The Illusion Roll

An illusion roll is an opposed check made to convince onlookers that a miracle device or its owner are magical. The miracle engineer's Deception or Persuade (whichever is better) are contested by the target's Science, Engineering or Investigate skills (whichever is better). The miracle engineer adds his miracle device's rating to this roll as a positive DM, while the target adds half of his society's TL (rounded down) to the roll. Other modifiers might be applied in case of favourable or hostile conditions.

For example, Father Larensen (Education 11, Engineer (miracle) 2, Persuade 1) tries to convince the natives of a TL 3 planet that he was sent by the Gods to lead them to enlightenment. He chooses a clichéd miracle and constructs a pair of anti–gravitational boots that enable him to walk on water. His Engineer (miracle) roll is 10, which means his miracle device's rating is 2 (10–8). The Referee decides that since this miracle is not particularly impressive and has no roots in the planet's culture, Larensen's gets no other bonuses to its miracle rating. Now the hour of the test comes and after giving an inspiring sermon (an Exceptional Success on a Science

Device	Miracle Rating	TL	Mass (Kg)	Cost (Cr.)
The Staff of Wonder	2	11	4	10,000
Genie in a Bottle	5	12	1	5,000
The Sacred Halo	7	15	0.5	80,000

(philosophy) check), father Larensen confi dently walks over a lake. The Referee decides the sermon is worth +2 DM and so the total DM for Larensen's roll is +4 (2 miracle rating +2 for the excellent sermon). One of the natives present is a famous local philosopher and has Social Science (philosophy) 1. His total DM is +2 (1 from TL 3 divided by 2, and 1 from his Science skill). Larensen's player rolls a total of 13, while the Referee rolls 11. The natives believe Larensen is a messenger of the Gods and are ready to follow his divine commandments... for now.

Note that a successful illusion roll means the miracle engineer has managed to convince a person or a group of people of his supernatural powers. It does not guarantee their positive disposition or reverence. Quite often, a successful illusion roll results in fear, envy or open aggression. The following are examples of some miracle devices:

The Staff of Wonder: Staffs of Wonder are a dramatic and relatively cheap way to impress the natives. These metal staffs are usually 4–5 feet long and are designed to look like petrified snakes. Either through a voice command or by pressing a hidden button, the staff can perform one of two functions; transform into a snake–shaped drone (see stats below) or shoot a powerful laser beam. The beam has the same properties as a laser carbine but has only eight charges due to the weapon's small size and imposes a –1 DM on all attack rolls because of the staff's awkward form.

Snake Drone

Strength 8 (0), Dexterity 10 (+1), Hull 3,

Structure 3

Traits: Tiny, Integral System (comm, audio/visual)

Weapons: Bite (Melee (unarmed), 1d6 damage + optional poison) While these miracle devices are unlikely to impress anyone living in a TL 7+ society, they are extremely effective on less advanced worlds and so are standard issue in many missionary organisations, where they are used for self defence as well as miracle making.

Genie in a Bottle: The genie in a bottle is often used by miracle engineers who wish to make spectacular entrances into underdeveloped civilisations or enchant gullible individuals in more modern societies. The name is a bit of a misnomer because the 'bottle' is usually shaped like a common household receptacle in the target civilisation and therefore rarely takes the form of an Earth bottle. This item is activated by chafing and creates a stunning show of colourful gases and dancing lights which culminates in the user's enlarged holographic image appearing hovering above the bottle.

The bottle is equipped with an audio/video system that enables the user to interact with his surroundings. On rare occasions these bottles are also installed with miniature

laser pistols (six charges) to enable the user to be more than just smoke and mirrors. This costs 5,000 additional credits. Fancier upgrades also exist, such as invisible tractor beams that enable the apparition to manipulate objects, teleportation devices to send in items or abduct natives and so forth. Their price and complexity, however, puts them far beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest and most powerful miracle engineers.

The Sacred Halo: The scared halo is quite literary the crowning achievement of miracle engineering; an item so immensely complex and potent that even Space Age citizens find it hard to believe it is technology and not magic. When activated, this item resembles the halos traditionally painted over Christian saints – a flat luminescent ring floating above the user's head. The halo creates an invisible, nighimpenetrable force–fi eld around the user. This force–fi eld can carry up to 500 kilograms and move in any direction at the speed of six kilometres per hour, creating the illusion of fl ight. Additionally, it can generate intense heat rays that function like plasma gun shots, only with Pistol range and 10 charges. Some halos also include matter transformers that enable the user to change the atomic structure of one kind of material into another (such as lead into gold), with the most common applications being cheap metal into precious metal or non–edible material into edible material. Note that matter transformers are impossible even for TL 15 societies to create on their own and must be somehow reverse engineered from ancient technology or acquired from even more advanced alien civilisations.

RELIGION 2.0

This article often refers to religious activists who fabricate miracles through the use of advanced technology to further their beliefs. While in some instances these are indeed fraudulent actions done for economic or political gains, this is not always the case. Future religions view the very existence of the technology that enables Man to perform miracles as a manifestation of God. In their eyes, God *is* technology. Spreading technological progress is akin to spreading the scriptures and inventing ever more incredible devices is the ultimate form of worship. Heaven is an allencompassing cosmic scientific network that includes all sentient life forms while Hell is when stubbornness and ignorance bring progress to a halt. Space Age clerics realise it may take a civilisation centuries, maybe millennia, to reach the level of enlightenment required to embrace this kind of religion. For this reason, "airy tales"about mystic Gods, demons, angels and so forth are used to guide the developing civilization in the right direction. Other clerics view mythology as more than just allegories designed to steer believers in the right direction. These clerics believe that alien miracle engineer have visited their worlds ages ago and that these visits were recorded by their primitive ancestors in the form of mythological stories. Now that these worlds are sufficiently advanced to send out miracle

engineers of their own, it is their moral duty to do the same for younger races and to become the heroes of future mythologies themselves.

Have Divine Powers, Will Travel:
Most miracle engineers work as freelancers who offer their services to the highest bidder. Some customers want to spread their faith through the countless stars in the heaven, some need a dazzling distraction to carry out the perfect crime, some are wealthy parents looking for someone to entertain children who have seen everything and some are not at all what they seem...

Rims Rom Ramon Ra
Required: Engineer (miracle); Diplomat

Reward: Cr. 15,000 in precious stones and metals

Players' Information
Rims Rom Ramon Ra is an inquisitive and brilliant priest in the all–powerful cult of the Goddess of the Seven Suns. After decades of research, he uncovered the secret behind his people's religious unification and the sudden accelerated technological progress which started about a century ago. They were visited by a human miracle engineer who entranced them with many miracles and good works before setting them on the path of unity and peace. Unfortunately, the miracle engineer's decrees were horribly subverted since then and her disciples became tyrants who forced an oppressive theocracy on the planet. This has halted all progress and made life hell through a series of arbitrary and vicious 'divine' laws. After years of hard labour, Rims managed to construct a primitive transmission device and send a message into space, requesting a miracle engineer to come and fix this mess as soon as possible.

Referee's Information
Rims is not nearly as benevolent as he appears to be. While he resents the ruling theocracy, his own plans for his species and the PCs are not much better...

1. Rims plans to topple the ruling theocracy in order to become the sole priest of the goddess and subject the entire plant to his cruel and sudden whims.

2. Same as above, only to make sure he is never thwarted, Rims plans to keep the miracle engineers imprisoned under his palace to supply him with new miracles to use against his enemies.

3–4. Rims is in fact the secret master of the theocracy and wants to capture a ship full of miracle devices to spread his violent religion across the stars.

5. Rims plans to escape with the miracle engineers' spaceship, leaving them stranded on the planet while Rims and his associates take over the engineers' jobs and rewards.

6. Rims honestly wishes to release his people from the shackles of the horrible tyranny under which they live. He plans to expose the ancient miracles for what they were, technological frauds, and then put the visiting miracle engineers on trial for the crimes of their colleagues.

Kilala Bogina
Required: Engineer (miracle); Investigation

Reward: Cr. 5,000 plus all expenses covered

Players' Information
Kilala is a young widow who moved back to her family's ancient estate after her husband was killed in a deep–space mission. She hoped that a change of scenery and pace would help her and her children deal with this sudden trauma. However, instead of peace, Kilala found horror – soon after her arrival, strange and terrifying events started happening in the castle, appearing very much like traditional ghostly haunting. Being a sceptical person, Kilala first turned to the local police. After the police failed to find the culprit, she put an ad for an experienced miracle engineer to come and help her uncover the mystery behind the nocturnal apparitions.

Referee's Information
Many years ago Kilala worked as a nurse on a cargo ship. A mistake she did during a standard revival procedure had cost a passenger travelling by cryoberth his life. She has not told anyone and has been living with the guilt ever since. This has nothing to do with her current plight but can add an interesting dimension of doubt and supernatural dread to the adventure.

1. Kilala's wayward brother is a miracle engineer who wants to drive her out of the castle with these apparitions. He might resort to some dirty tricks but will take the uttermost care not to kill anyone.

2. Same as above, only the brother is so disgruntled that Kilala inherited everything after he was disowned by their father that he is willing to kill anyone who stands in his way to regain the wealth that he considers his birthright.

3. An alien creature that exists partially in another dimension was brought to the castle by Kilala's father shortly before his death. Starving and disoriented, the creature wanders the castle, desperately looking for a dimensional exit.

4. Same as above, only the creature is intelligent and feeds on the psychic energies generated by fear. If anyone attempts to drive the creature out of the castle or expose its existence to the world, it will try to kill this person.

5. Kilala's father was a known trickster and left a series of non–lethal traps scattered across the castle as one final joke. The last entry in his diary looks like the scribbling of a madman but is in fact the key to locating and defusing the traps.

6. Same as above, only Kilala's father went completely mad in the last few months of his life and made the traps quite lethal.

THE GANGSTA

By Alan Oliver

A look at the stars of the criminal hierarchy, and new careers for players to take part.

In any society with laws, there are always things that are prohibited. And in any society where people with money want that something, criminals will rise to the challenge of servicing that need. Whether its prohibition and the organised crime families that got rich from it, or the war on drugs and the drugs dealers that fuel it, there is always money to be made when the government decides that the public cannot have something. These careers produce hard men and women who are not law abiding citizens, however that's not to say that some of them don't reform later in life when it is no longer 'in them' to be players. There are many careers to be had on the criminal side of things but for the moment we will look at three specialities within this field; Drugs dealers, Smugglers and Criminal Celebrities.

Drugs Dealers

Drugs dealers are a classic example of the supply end of this, dealing directly with the consumer. For a contemporary example of how the industry changes with the technology just look at the drugs scene in a large city, Baltimore for example. The product being sold will vary from placeto– place and the tech level of the society involved will help shape how things are done, which means that drug dealers will vary across the galaxy within this general framework.

This is the sharp end of the business as between law enforcement and competition on the streets the survival rates are not high, however serious money can be made here. One serious advantage to this career is that characters can get an early start. Most will have started at around 14 but some start even younger, starting at 10 is possible.

Obviously if the character can survive into their 30s they will have a greater range of experience. On top of that a drugs dealer who survives and keeps their head in the game can make huge amounts of money, assuming that their luck holds.

It's not all guns, girls and money though, there is a fl ip side to the career. Survival rates are not high and the trick is always getting out with your stash intact before the game kills you. Furthermore, starting that young will permanently damage your education, making entry into other careers and progress through them more difficult. Dealers may know the corners but few manage to understand science, technology and those who start really young might not even be literate or numerate.

This in itself can present some interesting roleplaying possibilities, playing a veteran street soldier with tons of street smarts and killer combat skills, who struggles to read the simplest manual could make for good game play.

A successful drug dealing organization will require tight discipline throughout the operation, from the top right on down to the bottom. Between the authorities trying to build evidence for a case every step of the way and the rivals looking or any opportunity to shut you down, with slugs if necessary, every member of the organisation has to stay tight at all times. Every organisation that goes down can be traced back to a discipline failure somewhere. This discipline also applies to the product as well. Few drug dealers are regular users of the product that they sell; some never touch the product, others only on special occasions.

Smugglers

It is very rare for the restricted commodity, whether it is booze, drugs, women or whatever, to be available in the location where it is prohibited. This means that someone's going to have to get it into the country, state, planet or system. That's where the smugglers come in. Smuggling is not such a dangerous game as running the corners but there is less money to be made as you are dealing with the product wholesale. Starting out in the business is not easy and will probably involve low level tasks to begin with, working as a mule or security. Progressing up the ladder to eventually handling your own product will take time, loyalty and luck. On the up side though, smugglers are less likely to get involved in gunfights over territory on a regular basis. Instead the main dangers come from the authorities, or war when two rival operations clash.

The downside of smuggling is that there is less money to be made and less room to make it in. A city might support dozens of drugs crews employing hundreds of people. That same city might only support two or three major smuggling operations, which means only half a dozen or so men and women getting rich and employing only a couple of dozen people. The quantities smuggled are such that the authorities are likely to inflict harsh punishment on those caught with the product. Discipline with a smuggling organisation is more likely to be a top down thing, with

the bosses using enforcers to maintain order among common security and mules. Independent smugglers, who have made enough money to buy a ship, or more likely acquired it through some under the counter action, are their own bosses. For them discipline is a personal thing. However they know that missing a delivery or ditching a cargo is likely to be a very dangerous mistake.

Criminal Celebrities

Throughout history certain criminals have been able to turn their criminal activities into celebrity status. Whether it is Robin Hood, 18th century highwaymen, Dillinger or the modern gangsta rappers, they play to the public fascination with the criminal world to elevate themselves above the rest of the common criminals.

Unfortunately to become a criminal celebrity you first have to be a criminal, this career is only open to characters who have already done at least one term as a gangsta or rogue earlier in their career. Criminal celebrities can start out as kids slinging drugs on the streets, so you can start out early as a drugs dealer then make a shift into this career. Smugglers generally rely on being inconspicuous so will find it difficult to break into the career.

Thieves are rarely that well known, however it is not impossible to turn a career of high profile crimes into celebrity status. Pirates are naturally flamboyant and can easily become celebrities if they can avoid the bounty on their heads. Enforcers rarely have the charisma and social skills to make the grade, but again it is not impossible. The advantages of turning your criminal career into celebrity status are obvious, firstly you are a lot less likely to die from it, survival is generally less of an issue. Secondly you can still make a lot of money, assuming that you can make the right media contacts along the way. The Hells Angels of California in the 1960s tried to do this and failed, blowing their chance to make money off their celebrity status at the time. Thirdly if still practicing your chosen form of crime your reputation can play in your favour. For example a reputation for robbing stash houses and leaving a trail of bodies behind you can mean that eventually the corner hoppers will just be giving you their package to keep you away from them, even if your just going down to the store for milk and cereal.

The disadvantage of this as a career choice is that you will loose your friends in the real criminal world quickly, most will see you as a sell out. This can lead to bitterness and from a naturally violent criminal subculture that's not something you want. As you become well known your crimes become well known as well, which makes it easier for the authorities to arrest, convict and punish you for them. Your celebrity status will protect you for a while, however the public are a fickle bunch and once they loose interest in you that public knowledge of your past can become a millstone around your neck. Finally being well known for a particular type of crime can bring in rivals seeking to prove themselves better, tougher and more 'in your face' than you are.

Gangstas in play

For the most part a career as a gangsta is more likely to be part of a characters background than what they are currently doing. However a whole game based around the drugs trade offers plenty of opportunities for good drama and roleplaying, not to mention plenty of action against other criminal groups and the police. Working smugglers are more easily inserted into a mixed group of characters, especially if they are providing the transport. Criminal Celebrities naturally fit into a high society based game, or could be the focus of play.

Drug dealer ranks

Younguns are the kids who are just starting in the career. They are used as lookouts, runners and often do the actual handover of the drugs to the customer. This is their apprenticeship in the career, if they can survive this without messing up the count or getting killed over turf, then they have a good chance to progress. Most younguns are aged between 10 and 14. Hoppers are the core staff of a corner chief. They have greater responsibilities but still get paid a set amount no matter how much selling is done. They might be watching the street stash, getting the re–up, taking the money and similar jobs.

Some of them will be armed but at their level the violence is often limited to knives and fists rather than guns. A corner chief runs a corner, will have his own crew of hoppers and younguns doing the work and may even have points on the package himself, although many are still just getting paid for their work. They don't handle the money or the drugs themselves but watch operations looking for trouble and if it arrives have to deal with it. They are likely to be armed, with some sort of pistol in most cases for easy concealment and disposal. A stash house is where the drugs for several corners are kept; ready to provide a re–up as necessary. The chief's job is to keep security tight on the stash and keep it moving every few days. This keeps it hidden from the authorities and from other criminals who will want to steal it. They will be armed, either with pistols or possibly shotguns, as will the enforcers they employ as muscle to protect the stash.

They normally have little or no contact with actually selling the drugs other than providing the re ups to the corner chiefs. They are normally on a paycheck rather than points on the package. Soldiers are the heavy hitters of the drugs world. Their main roll is protecting their organisation from their rivals, whether it is the package or territory. Some are employed specifically to kill people, while others are trouble shooters for the corner and stash chiefs. They will normally have access to guns but will be careful about carrying them and will dispose of them as soon as they use them, assuming the local authorities are equipped and willing to use trace evidence to go after drug dealers.

They are much more than just enforcers or thugs, they are the backbone of the drugs organisation. They will have points on the package, sometimes tied to specific corners, sometimes off the

Qualifications

Dex 7+ –1 DM for every career +1 DM for every Rogue or Gansta career

Automatic qualification if social standing 6 or lower.

Criminal Celebrity requires at least 1 term as gangsta or rogue.

If drug dealer and starting at 14, then character doesn't get the automatic education skill.

If drug dealer and starting at 10, then character also looses 2 from their Education stat.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Drug dealer	End 8+	Int 6+
Smugglers	Dex 7+	Soc 6+
Crim celebrity	Soc 6+	Soc 7+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	Blade
2	10,000	Blood brother
3	25,000	Gun or ground car
4	50,000	Contact
5	75,000	Air/raft
6	100,000	Package
7	150,000	3 ship shares

For every two jail terms on your record, gain a +1 DM to advancement rolls as Gangsta, Rogue or Drifter, or –1 DM to advancement rolls on all other careers.

Blood brother; very close bond formed between you and another in your career who is within 1 rank of yourself.

Package; value at wholesale 100,000, value if distributed on the streets 500,000 but with the obvious risks.

Skills and Training

Roll	Persona development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Int 10)
1	Athletics	Deception	Comms
2	+1 End	Gun combat *	Computers
3	Gambler	Persuade	Flyer
4	Gun Combat *	Streetwise	Investigate
5	Melee **	Drive (any)	Gun Combat (any)
6	+1 Dex	Recon	Tactics

Roll	Specialist: Drug Dealer	Specialist: Smuggler	Specialist: Criminal Celebrity
1	Gun Combat *	Admin	Carouse
2	Leadership	Gun Combat *	Advocate
3	Recon	Flyer (any)	Art (any performance)
4	Stealth	Pilot (small craft & spacecraft)	Gun Combat (any)
5	Streetwise	Mechanic	Persuade
6	Comms	Broker	Deception
	* Any pistol or shotgun	** Unarmed or blade	

Roll	Dealer	Skill/benefit	Smuggler	Skill/benefit	Celebrity	Skill/benefit
0	Youngen		Mule	Implant		
1	Hopper	Recon 1			Name	Deception 1
2	Corner chief	Streetwise 1	Soldier	Weapon		
3	Stash house	Persuade 1			Rapper	Art 1
4	Soldier	Gun (pistol)	Independent	Pilot 1		
5	Lieutenant					
6	Kingpin		Chief	Admin 1	Robin hood	

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Fatal injury: Recovered through medical assistance however your crew all believe you are dead and your reappearance will be taken as proof of snitching. Roll 1 injury and leave the career.
2	Severely injured (as result 2 on the injury table) but recovered by own people so can continue on career.
3	Organisation crashes and burns: You survive but have to seek new career in different system.
4	Police shoot out goes badly: Arrested and drafted as below and a roll on the Injury table.
5	Arrested: Spend next term in confinement, develop level of streetwise, then return to this career in 4 years time. Add one jail term to record.
6	Arrested: Loose one benefi t roll from this career and drafted into the military as your next career. Add one jail term to record.

Events

2d6	Event
2	Disaster. Roll on Mishaps table but can remain in this career.
3	Arrested and spend 6 months imprisoned alongside major criminal fi gure, either take them as a Contact or take a +3 to next promotion roll. Gain another jail term on your record.
4	Your organisation goes to war with another organisation. You survive with fresh scars, war stories and 1d3 enemies from the opposing organisation.
5	Two more powerful organisations go to war and wipe each other out, your operation is able to step up and take their territories, take either a +3 roll on a benefits roll or automatic promotion.
6	Subordinate messes up the count, leaving you to fi t the bill, either loose a benefit roll or gain an injury roll.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (page 34 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook*).
8	Arrested and convicted, minor offences, spend 6 months in prison and gain a jail term on your record.
9	Rumours circulate of your involvement with the authorities, take a loss of two ranks or a roll on the Injury table.
10	Multiple minor arrests and jail terms, evading serious prosecutions. Add three jail terms to record.
11	Arrested and imprisoned for a year, enemies set you up on the inside for assassination. Gain 1 roll on the injury table and 1 jail term.
12	Incredible heroics leads to automatic promotion.

whole thing. Lieutenants are the inner circle of the kingpin. They are advisors, brothers in arms, bankers and are often direct family to him or her. In many cases a kingpin's Lieutenants will be specialists in different areas, one might handle personnel, another violence while a third handles business dealings and the money. They are all going to be rich, having a direct share in the business but they are getting to the level where they handle so much money that it is no longer an issue.

The kingpin is the main man. He will be a known name on the streets, even if the authorities have no idea who he is. And he or she better hope that they don't because once they do know who they are, then their time is running out.

Every kingpin is constantly juggling how long they can stay in the business and so how much money they can get, against the odds that a rival will take them down or the authorities will catch up with them.

Drug Dealers in game play

A character whose current profession is a drugs dealer is going to be tied in to a specific location, so they would only be able to be played in a game set within that location. If that is the case then they will have certain advantages. Firstly depending on their rank they will have subordinates who will do their bidding, often without fear or hesitation. A corner chief will have a number of hoppers and younguns on the payroll and can call on

1d6 hoppers and 2d6 younguns at short notice. A stash house chief will be supplying several corner chiefs and could call on 2d6 hoppers and 3d6 younguns from them. In addition they will have several Enforcers as muscle for the stash house who are on their payroll. A soldier answers directly to the high command, acting both as muscle and management for the corner chiefs and stash houses. They are expected to be able to bring forces to bear on a situation and will have 2d6 enforcers who answer to them, as well as being able to bring 2d6 stash houses and corners running at short notice. A Lieutenant will have 1d6 soldiers that take their orders from them but are unlikely to be well known to the lower orders, only corner and stash house chiefs are likely to know them. Lastly a Kingpin will have 1d3 Lieutenants and their soldiers under their command, as well as 1d6 soldiers that answer directly to him. In their own territory a dealer is always making money. This will involved at least six hours work a day, at whatever level they are at in the structure. This is the minimum amount of time that they will have to put in to maintain their position, most are working all the time. This leaves little time for adventuring. However they will have a constant revenue stream to tap into.

Smugglers in gameplay

Smuggling comes in two basic forms, either smuggling contraband on legitimate transports or illegal runs in specialist smuggling ships. Smuggling can also involve many different kinds of product, ranging from illegal drugs to people trafficking. The nature of the product being smuggled will have a major impact on the methods used.

At the lowest level a mule will have a smuggling implant at TL 8 or above, to enable them to carry relatively small quantities of high value cargo while travelling as a passenger on commercial transports. Some might be permanent employees of a larger organisation, others might be freelancers who've had the implants put in at their own cost. Either way they are the pack animals of the smuggling world and their careers are often short. Whether it is a faulty implant dumping an entire shipment of drugs into their blood stream leading to death by overdose, or getting picked up by the authorities, the turnover rate among mules is very high. At lower tech levels mules have to conceal the contraband on or in their person, which can also lead to problems, such as cavity searches. On a larger scale contraband will be hidden inside commercial shipping units in any

number of ways. This might be disguising the product as something harmless like cocaine in talc bottles, or hidden inside legitimate cargo. Even concealed spaces within the containers themselves, which is generally the only way to ship a live cargo. This sort of larger scale smuggling will involve more people along the way, as manifests will need to be altered, dock hands to ensure that the right container goes in the wrong place, minders on the ships crew to ensure that the container is not tampered with en route. All this makes this sort of smuggling the purview of large smuggling organisations only. The second form of smuggling involves using non registered transports to carry

the cargo from supplier to distributor. This might be on a planetary scale, surface ships or aircraft moving product from cityto–city. Or it could be on a planetary scale with starships running cargo from systemto– system. This is actually one of the easiest forms of smuggling if you have the funds to purchase and operate a smuggling ship, as pickup and delivery can be done from anywhere within the systems involved in most cases. This makes discovery by the authorities a negligible risk unless there is a leak within the operation. Ship smugglers may be independent owner operators who run their own ships and work on a job–by–job basis, or they might be employees of a large smuggling operation, just paid to make the runs themselves. If it is the later however the organisation will want to have some pretty heavy security on that ship to make sure it comes back. Ships being signifi cantly more expensive than any individual cargo.

Independent smugglers will make for more useful Player Characters in a game, as they can easily be hired by the other players to get them from A to B and get tangled in the story along the way. If they are part of a larger operation, then they will be unlikely to have the freedom to pick and choose which smuggling runs they are on, which limits their usefulness to the rest of the party.

Criminal Celebrities in gameplay

The most important aspect of these characters is how they have turned their criminal exploits into celebrity status and are they still celebrities when they enter game time. For example a flamboyant enforcer who makes his living hitting stash houses and has a name on the streets only has celebrity status through what he does, which limits it to the criminal and police world. But a gangsta who has become a musician and is selling music to the general public will be much more widely known. However to do that they have to actually be able to do something more than just be a gangsta. Some form of performing art is the normal route taken to get out of the game and become a celebrity, however that is only one way. For example being a witness for the authorities will get you some celebrity status and if that is played up to the media this can lead to a whole career change. If the character is still an active celebrity then they are going to have to spend a significant amount of time maintaining their public image. Whether this involves doing performances, holding outrageous parties or committing high profile crimes, they will have to maintain a high enough profile to keep their name in the media. They are likely to sweep other characters along with them, as they are likely to have an entourage of some sort, so making them the focus of the game. If not then they are going to have to be operating close enough to the media and fan base to maintain their profile while the characters as a whole are adventuring.

EQUIPMENT

For the most part gangstas don't have much need for specialist equipment but there are some things that do make their jobs that little bit easier.

Augments

Mule implant (TL 8–9): This is a storage space inserted into the body normally somewhere in the torso. Space is made by shifting the internal organs around, or in more extreme cases removing them. They are undetectable to most forms of scanning from an equal TL but higher TL scans are likely to discover them. They come in two varieties, either access through an existing orifice in the body or assessed through a concealed skin zip. The former are limited to the normal orifices of the body, limiting where they can be hidden, while the latter are more easy to detect with a full strip search until you reach TL 12, where the skin zip technology is such that they can only be detected by TL 13 or above scanners. Most mule implants are inserted in illegal clinics, which increases the chances of infection or complications. A Streetwise roll at 8+ is necessary to find a safe clinic where infection is unlikely.

Communications

The form of communications used by a drugs or smuggling operation is always going to depend on the TL environment and the current status of the law in keeping up with the technology. The authorities might be able to tap comms and comdots but not have access to Transceivers, in which case they will be the comms method of choice. Or getting a comms tap may take several days, in which case they will use disposable comms and ditch them each day.

Disposable comms (TL 9): Whatever the state of play, one use disposable comms are likely to be useful for most gangstas and in most cases they will want to be using audio only for obvious reasons. With these devices the issue becomes wether the authorities can track where they are being purchased in order to get a tap on them before they are used, so the source of these disposable comms will be important.

Typically a disposable comms will cost Cr 5–10, depending on source.

Computers: Options

Voice/bio–metric activated data burner (TL 9): Any computers used by gangstas are likely to have data on them that would incriminate them should it fall into the hands of the authorities. This option will operate some mechanism to render the data on the computer unrecoverable when triggered.

This might be accomplished in any number of ways, explosives, acid, EM pulse, data virus, in extreme cases even an AM charge. However it is done, once activated the data held on the computer will be permanently destroyed, only recoverable with more advanced technology at least 2 TL higher than the computer itself. Whatever the system used to destroy the data, what is important is the trigger mechanism. This can range from hot–key combination, through voice activation to a bio–metric system that destroys the data if the user dies or moves more than 2 metres from the computer. The exact trigger is programmed in when the computer is constructed and the system installed.

Augments

TL 8	Orifice accessed only	Cr 10,000
TL 9	Orifice or skin zip accessed	Cr 5,000
TL 10	Orifice or skin zip accessed	Cr 1,000
TL 11	Orifice or skin zip accessed	Cr 500
TL 12	Skin zip accessed even from orifices	Cr 100

Computers: Options

TL 9	Hot key activation	Cr 5,000
TL 10	Voice activation	Cr 7,500
TL 11	Bio–metric activation.	Cr 10,000
TL 13	Thought activation	Cr 20,000

Ship's Locker

By Alex Greene

The Ship's Locker can be a treasure trove of useful items. We present a selection of new equipment for players.

Only a few extremist cults in the Universe and some species of alien or isolated savage human societies, wear no clothing at all. Clothing provides, at the very least, mobile warmth and shelter from the elements against unprotected skin and in its highest expression clothes, in the form of fashion and haute couture, mark one's status and Social Standing in society like nothing else.

Yet little thought is actually given, most times, to what characters may wear whilst on their missions. The assumption is that characters just put on "whatever is appropriate" to the mission and that's it.

The following are items of apparel, accessories and other items. These can be purchased as cargo items, used by the player characters, included as luxuries in a ship's manifest or used as McGuffins by the Referee.

The Rag Trade

Even in the far future, fabrics only originate from three sources: animal origin, plant–based and synthetic. Leather is the treated skin of an animal and wool is the processed fleece of an animal such as a sheep or similar creature. Silk originates from insects such as silkworms. Cotton–like plants can be harvested, sap from trees extracted to make latex for rubber and plant materials found even in the wildest worlds of the Spinward Marches which produce fabrics with the look and feel of linen, calico or burlap.

High tech advances in polymers create synthetic analogues for wool, silk, rubber and all of the above fabrics without coming anywhere near a living animal, as well as smart fabrics never found in Nature, yet mimicking some of Nature's tricks such as chromatophores to alter colour.

However far in the future Mankind goes, the look and feel of clothing will generally remain timeless, even if the silk in a Naval officer's shirt came from some sentient arboreal spiderlike creature the size of a small bear, or even from a vat.
And silver lamé jumpsuits which make the wearer look like a walking frozen dinner pack may never be taken seriously.

Categories of Clothing

Costs per unit are for individual items. Referees can use the cost and mass guidelines to make up small cargo shipments for trade (see pp. 160–166, *Traveller*). Broker skill can be used to haggle costs of individual items up or down, depending on whether a character is buying the items or selling them to others.

The four main categories considered in this article are:

Shipboard: Clothing worn at work – which, for *Traveller*s, means on board a ship of some kind, whether a Starship, small craft or in–system explorer.

Dress: Formal clothing, uniforms, dinner jackets – one's Sunday best clothing, washed, starched and pressed.

Outdoor and Leisure: Clothing worn away from the ship, usually outdoors. Covers sports clothes, ordinary clothing and outdoor clothes.

Speciality: Clothes a character would wear on a job, or in performance of their trade. Includes specialist clothes such as laboratory coats and surgical scrubs, among other utilitarian clothes.

APPAREL

Shipboard

Ship's Jumpsuit (TL 6+): A one–piece coverall made of a synthetic fabric, that zips up the front. Plain but functional, jumpsuits are designed with lots of pockets for tools, ID and other items. Jumpsuits come in a variety of colours. Sleeveless and fully–sleeved versions are available. Jumpsuits provide no protection against rough weather and they cannot be environmentally sealed. Ship's Captains purchase standard jumpsuits in bulk to reduce unit costs. Individually, a jumpsuit costs Cr. 30. Mass 2kg.

Insulated Ship's Jumpsuit (TL 6+): An insulated version of the standard jumpsuit, these provide some limited protection against cold shipboard environments. Costs Cr. 40, mass 3kg.

Ship's Uniform (TL 6+): Stylish, two–piece synthetic suit: a full sleeved jacket and pair of trousers. Available in a variety of colours. This is worn planetside. Typically worn by *Traveller*s while on shore leave, these clothes are known as "Patron catchers" by those experienced in the Travelling life. Cr. 75. Mass 3kg. *Traveller*s are required to buy their ship's uniforms and are responsible for their replacement. Experienced *Traveller*s keep sets of spares with them.

Ship's Underwear (TL 6+): Lightweight ventilated vest and shorts. Functional but uninspiring. Costs range from between Cr 5 and Cr 15, with an average of Cr. 10 per unit Ubiquitous on board any ship, because their purchase in bulk is factored into the ship's monthly maintenance costs. Mass less than 400g.

Dress

Dress Jacket (Lightweight) (TL 5+): Lightweight waist length dress suit jacket. Sometimes known as a "blazer." Beloved of Nobles with Yachts, whether spacefaring or ocean–going. Cost Cr 200. Mass 2kg.

Dress Jacket (Heavyweight) (TL 5+): Heavyweight dress suit jacket, knee length. Epaulettes and brocade optional, depending on Rank and Social Standing. Cost Cr 250. Mass 3kg.

Dress Coat (Lightweight) (TL 5+): Lightweight coat, worn over uniform to keep the rain off. Cost Cr 250. Mass 3kg.

Dress Coat (Heavyweight) (TL 5+): Heavyweight long grey military coat, worn over uniform to keep rain off. Cost Cr 350. Mass 4kg.

Evening Jacket (TL 4): Also known as a "smoking jacket," this is a long jacket, fashioned from an expensive material like silk, lined with satin. Still sometimes worn by flamboyant members of the nobility indoors and by some of the more eccentric *Traveller*s. Costs Cr. 150. Mass 2kg.

Dress Shirt (TL 5+): Silk shirt for a dress suit. Cost Cr 40. Mass 1kg.

Dress Shirt (TL 5+): Somewhat more flamboyant silk shirt with ruffed front, sharp lapels and cuffs. For the more extravagant and flamboyant *Traveller*s, Nobles and other eccentrics. Cost Cr 45. Mass 1200g.

Dress Pants (TL 5+): Standard trousers for a dress suit. Cost Cr 70. Mass 2kg.

Dress Vest (TL 5+): A sleeveless waistcoat worn between the dress shirt and dress jacket. Cost Cr 50. Mass 1kg.

Kilt: A skirt–like item of apparel worn by men, made of a heavy, patterned cloth called tartan. Traditional to a remote region of Terra, sometimes worn by gentlemen who wish to claim ancestry from that region, however distant. Worn with a traditional dress dinner jacket top and silk ruffed shirt with ruffed cuffs and a small purse–like item called a sporran. Costs Cr. 100. Mass 5kg.

Slinky Silk Dress (TL 5+): A lightweight one piece dress item worn to conceal and to reveal in equal measure. Styles vary greatly, as do costs, ranging from Cr. 25 to Cr. 4500. Mass 100g – 500g.

Heavy Evening Gown (TL 4+): A full length formal ballgown, comprising a floor length skirt and long sleeved top. Looks heavier than it is, because the materials of which it is made are lightweight, such as silk and satin. Costs from Cr 100 to Cr. 5000, depending on style and material. Mass 2kg–10kg.

Power Suit (TL 8): Worn by corporate and business types, the power suit is designed to intimidate the competition and show customers that the wearer means business. Cost Cr. 250. Mass 3kg.

Outdoor and Leisure

Coat (TL 4+): A lightweight coat, full sleeved and waist length, with outer and inner pockets. Costs vary. A basic light coat costs Cr. 30. Mass 2kg.

Heavy Coat (TL 4+): A heavier coat, knee–length, full sleeved with outer and inner pockets. Provides better protection against poor weather conditions. Cost Cr. 50. Mass 4kg.

Cape (TL 3+): A short–length lined synthetic cape. Provides additional protection against rain. Cost Cr. 35. Mass 1kg.

Cloak (TL 3+): A floor–length, hooded cloak. Provides protection against rain. Cost Cr. 60. Mass 3kg.

Hood (TL 4+): An option for coats and capes, hoods provide protection against rain and weather. Add +50g and Cr. 5 to mass and costs. Insulated coats have insulated hoods.

Unitard (TL 5+): A skintight bodystocking, available full sleeved and full–length or short sleeved and/or short–legged. Figure hugging, preserving modesty while at the same time maximising mobility, unitards are worn by entertainers and performers of the arts, notably dance. Cost Cr. 30–90. Mass less than 1kg. Available in all sorts of colours and fabrics.

Swimming Costume (TL 8+): Designed to maximise swimming performance and minimise friction in the water, these costumes are worn by professional athletes in competition. Cost Cr 100. Mass less than 1kg.

Bathing Costume, Antique (TL 4–5): Made of a light cotton–like fabric, covering the entire body from neck to ankles, this is more designed to preserve the wearer's modesty than to improve upon swimming performance. Cost Cr 30. Mass 2kg. Wet, mass is more like 4kg due to water absorption.

Gown, Hospital: There is no sight less dignified than that of a hospital patient wearing a gown, shuffling about in the ward. Cost around Cr. 10. Mass 500g.

Pyjamas and Nightgowns: Typically made of a lightweight,

light coloured fabric, these are worn at night, often with a heavier dressing gown. Costs Cr. 10. Mass 1kg. Dressing gown costs Cr. 15. Mass 1200g.

T – Shirt (TL 5+): A light, short–sleeved single piece shirt, T–shirts bear a host of stylish designs. Can be worn in lieu of vests, sweaters or shirts in a shirtsleeve environment such as a ship. Costs from Cr. 10. Mass 1kg.

Cardigan (TL 3+): A thick, chunky, soft, long sleeved upper body cover, made of processed animal fleece and available in any of a range of colours and designs, a cardigan provides good protection against cold weather: the equivalent of 2 points of armour against characteristic loss through exposure to the cold (see p. 74, *Traveller*). Cost Cr 10. Mass 2kg.

Shorts (TL 4+): Short length trousers, no longer than knee length. Worn by joggers, amateur sports enthusiasts and by people in a variety of shirtsleeve environments. Cost Cr. 25. Mass 750g.

Pants (TL 4+): Ordinary trousers, jeans or slacks. Come in a variety of materials, colours or styles. Cost Cr. 30. Mass 1500g.

Underwear (TL 5+): Come in a variety of styles, for a variety of purposes. Costs range from between Cr 5 and Cr 35. Mass less than 500g.

Long Underwear (TL 5): Insulated long thermal underwear, these provide some protection against cold. Cost Cr. 25. Mass 1kg.

Heated Underwear (TL 8): As long underwear above, but heated by a special battery pack to provide even better protection against cold. Cost Cr. 65. Mass 1kg, not including the battery pack.

Speciality

Working Uniform (TL 4+): Specialist clothing which not only performs a utility function; it identifies the trade to which the wearer ostensibly belongs. These include:–

Lab Coat: Long, heavy white jacket with long sleeves and pockets. A lab coat is an essential garment to wear in a laboratory, because the material of which it is made is usually treated to be chemical–resistant, providing some measure of protection to the wearer from chemical spillages. Cost Cr 100. Mass 2kg.

Chef's Clothes: The traditional uniform of a Vilani Shugili (chef) is unmistakable. Similar in design to the traditional Terran chef's garments, the Shugili's uniform comprises traditional heavy trousers, an undershirt, a heavy front–buttoning jacket and protective pinafore or apron. Given the similarities in function between Vilani Shugili and Terran chefs, the first real connection was made between the two human races when their respective catering staff first encountered one another and instantly recognised their commonality through the similarity of

their uniform designs alone. Cost Cr 150. Mass 2–3kg.

Surgical Scrubs (TL 5): A waist–length gown and pants, worn for surgery, these keep the medic from contaminating the patient and vice versa. Cost Cr. 50..Mass 2kg.

Martial Arts Gi: A jacket and pants worn by martial artists, fastened with a traditional belt. The colour of the belt typically denotes the level of mastery of the martial art, ranging from white (Melee–0) to black (Melee–4 or higher), with various colour gradations in between. Lightweight fabrics chosen for contact sports such as Karate and more sturdy fabrics are chosen for martial arts styles involving throws, pins and grapples, such as Aikido and Judo. Aikido masters also require the wearing of a special pair of loose trousers, called a hakama. Martial arts gi range from Cr 25, mass 4kg (Karate), to Cr. 35, mass 6kg (Judo, Aikido); hakama weigh 4 kg; and the specialised outfit for Kendo, called a bogu, costs Cr. 250 and has mass 10kg.

Clown Suit: From the TL 2 court jester to modern clowns, the tradition of clowning extends back to the most primitive TL 0 cultures, where even the most savage communities always had a Fool who lived apart from the rest. The theatrical development of the clown suit comprises a wild and garishly coloured, usually baggy, one piece or sometimes two piece patchwork uniform called a motley, covering the body from neck to ankles. Accessories include clown boots, heavy gloves, lots of makeup and a conical hat of some sort. An export from Terra, the antics of clowns are recognised in every human culture thus far encountered.

Clown suits are mentioned here for another reason: sometimes, crimes have been committed in the most unlikely clothing, and if characters decide to try and, for instance, turn over a bank whilst wearing clown suits, at least now they will know how much to expect to fork out for these uniforms. Cost Cr 250. Mass 5kg. Clown makeup (pancake or "slap") costs Cr. 50. Mass 2kg. Replacement slap costs Cr. 10, and has mass of a few grams.

Vestments: Worn by priests, religious leaders and Psions. A heavy robe. May be accompanied by a variety of items worn over the base vestment, which is alsocalled a cassock. Costs Cr 1500. Mass 10kg.

Antique Diving Suit (TL 4–5): A heavy, cumbersome sealed unit of heavy, waterproof rubberised cloth with a large spherical brass helmet mounted on a screw mounted shoulder plate, thick gloves and lead–lined boots providing a completely sealed environment, the antique diving suit is described as "the Vacc Suit of Technological Levels 4 and 5." Not much use below 20 metres or so, the actual depth of dive is equal to the maximum length of air hose available, connected to an external airpump mounted above the water on a boat of some sort. Heavy boots allow for extremely clumsy and slow walking on the bottom of a body of water – Speed and Dexterity are penalised –4 each. Romantic images of steampunk alternative futures aside, however, these suits provide no protection against the vacuum

of space. Cost Cr. 5000. Mass 125kg.

Wetsuit (TL 6): A lightweight full body length rubberised unitard designed to be worn by SCUBA divers. Provides limited protection against hypothermia: in really cold waters, leisure wetsuits are useless and heavier, insulated wetsuits are needed instead. Cost Cr. 150–350. Mass 5kg or 10kg.

Infiltration Suit (TL 8+): Specially designed to minimise an infiltrator's presence on the target premises, an infiltration kit comprises a solid black one piece costume, designed for silent movement and stealth. Cuffs on collar, sleeves and ankles are elasticated and have adhesive strips designed to provide a tight seal with the supplied gloves, moccasins and cowl and minimise the chances of leaving forensic evidence (hairs, skin samples or other trace evidence) behind at the scene of a crime. Cost Cr. 800. Mass 4kg. Options available include Computer Weave, Smart Fabric, IR Chameleon and Visilight Chameleon, as described on p. 88–89, *Traveller*.

Equestrian Outfit: Specialised endurance equestrian suit, gloves and pants designed for wearing whilst riding a beast of burden. Provide protection to the wearer's inner thighs and backside and prevent chafing from becoming too unbearable. Some cultures also require leather leg chaps, and possibly a leather tabard too. Costs Cr. 100. Mass 5kg.

Urban Night Camo (TL 10): Specialised fatigues – outer jacket and pants – designed specifically for nocturnal urban environments. The material has been treated to absorb the specific colours of artificial light sources, making the wearer harder to spot if he hides in shadows cast by that light: +2DM to Stealth skill task checks. Cost Cr. 500. Mass as standard fatigues.

Municipal Work Uniform (TL 5+): Coveralls made of a heavy synthetic fabric, municipal work uniforms are worn by city workers. They provide identification of status and purpose as well as protection against the usual accumulations of dirt and hazardous materials with which the wearers typically come into contact. Completed by heavy boots and thick gloves, a character in a municipal worker's uniform can easily be ignored by people accustomed to seeing work gangs busy digging holes in the road, pushing a broom through a corridor or wandering through maintenance areas of offices and facilities. Add +2 DM to attempts by the wearer to escape notice (via Stealth or Deception). Automatically lowers one's Social Standing DM to –2 for any other purpose. Costs from Cr. 150. Mass 2kg.

Still Suit (TL 11): A sealed suit designed for long–distance desert crossing, the still suit is worn beneath outer desert clothing and has been developed to conserve water. Powered by the muscular action provided by walking, the still suit processes perspiration, bodily wastes and breath and extracts the water, storing it in shin pads; the wearer draws in the water through a drinking tube. Adds +4 to all Survival task check DMs to avoid dehydration and exposure in desert conditions. Costs

Cr. 4000. Mass 15kg.

Arctic Survival Suit (TL 11): Designed to protect against extreme cold weather, this sealed suit combines insulated outer and inner clothing; a hooded outer jacket, one piece survival suit and inner underwear, gloves, socks and boots. With this high tech version, the vest, gloves, hood and socks are heated by a battery pack worn on the waist, typically hanging from a belt. Adds +4 to all Survival task check DMs to avoid exposure in extreme cold conditions. Costs Cr. 500. Mass 10kg.

Gravity Suit (TL 12): A combination of grav–assist technology and servomotors similar to those deployed in Battle Dress, a gravity suit enables a character from a lower–gravity world (e.g. UWP Size code 3 or less) to survive in a high–gravity one (UWP Size code 8 or higher). Worn by a character in her native gravitational field, a gravity suit provides the full Strength and Dexterity bonuses of Battle Dress (p. 88, *Traveller*) but without the bulk. Regular armour would have to be worn to provide protection and gravity suits are not compatible with Combat Armour or Battle Dress. Costs Cr. 120,000. Mass 10kg.

Power Infiltration Suit (TL 14): Combining the options available for infiltration suits, above and gravity suits, above, this advanced powered form of infiltration suit grants the infiltration options listed on p. 88 – 89 of *Traveller* and the advantages of gravity suits and infiltration suits, above. Costs Cr. 150,000. Mass 10kg.

FOOTWEAR

Shipboard
Ship Socks (TL 5+): Ankle–length socks. Cost Cr 5. Mass less than 100g.

Ship Shoes (TL 5+): Soft slippers with non–slip soles. Cost Cr. 5. Mass 200g.

Ship Boots (TL 5+): Low–top boots . Worn with ship uniforms. Cost Cr. 10. Mass 400g.

Dress

Dress Socks (TL 4+): Knee–length standard socks, worn under dress boots. Cost Cr. 10. Mass less than 200g.

Uniform Boots (High–top Lace) (TL 5+): Shiny standard uniform boots. Cost Cr 50. Mass 2kg.

Dress Boots (High–top Slip–On) (TL 5+): Shiny uniform boots. Worn with full dress uniform for ceremonial occasions. Cost Cr 70. Mass 2kg.

Uniform Boots (Low–top Lace) (TL 5+): Shiny uniform boots. Cost Cr 40. Mass 1500g.

Dress Boots (Low–top Slip–On) (TL 5+): Shiny slip–on uniform boots. Cost Cr 40. Mass 1500g.

Outdoor and Leisure

Common Socks (TL 4+): Standard socks, high–top and low–top varieties available in a range of colours. Costs from Cr. 5, mass less than 100g.

Athletic Socks (TL+): Long sports socks worn by athletes. Costs Cr 5. Mass less than 100g.

Insulated Socks (TL 4+): These socks provide a little protection against cold. Cost Cr. 10 a pair. Mass less than 200g.

Heated Socks (TL 7+): These socks are warmed with a miniature battery pack, good for 18 hours' continual use. Cost Cr. 30 a pair. Mass 150g.

Slippers (TL 4): If you're in command of a million ton Capital Ship, carrying the biggest meson spinal mount emplacement Charted Space has ever seen, nobody will dare tell you that you're wearing carpet slippers with your uniform. Cost Cr 5. Mass 500g.

Hiking Boots (TL 4+): These heavy low–top laced boots are designed for long–distance walking, hiking, climbing and other long–duration ambulatory activities. Sealed against water, these boots keep feet from frostbite and trench foot alike over long hikes overland. Cost Cr. 50 a pair. Mass 2kg.

Citizens' Boots (TL 4+): Heavy boots worn on construction sites, reinforced with steel toecaps. Protect feet with 1 point of armour. Cost Cr. 20. Mass 1kg.

Speciality

Infiltration Moccasins (TL 10): High–top thick–soled sealed split socks designed for use with infiltration suits, above. The options available to infiltration suits are available to these socks, too. Designed to form a tight seal with the elasticated ankle cuffs of infiltration suits to prevent shedding of incriminating forensic evidence. Costs and mass incorporated in the infiltration suit.

Equestrian Boots: High–top, slip–on boots designed for equestrian wear. Costs and mass incorporated into equestrian outfit.

Performance Shoes (TL 6): Worn by dance performers, these high–top socks have non–slip soles for gripping on polished surfaces such as the boards of a stage. Cost Cr. 40. Mass 100g.

Ballet Shoes (TL 5): Worn by dance performers. Cost Cr. 40. Mass 100g.

Tap Dancing Shoes (TL 4+): Tap shoes with steel taps on the toes and heels, worn by performers in the archaic dance form known as "tap dancing." Cost Cr. 50 pair. Mass less than 500g.

Flippers (TL 6): Webbed rubberised diving footwear. Dexterity DM and Speed are reduced –2 while on land. Costs Cr. 50 a pair. Mass 4kg.

Clown Boots (TL 5+): Oversized shoes, deliberately designed for absurdity. Worn by clowns as part of their act. Dexterity DM and Speed are reduced –2 while worn. Cost Cr. 40. Mass 2kg.

HEADGEAR

Shipboard

Cap: Baseball–style cap. Typically carry the insignia of the ship or service to which the wearer belongs. Cost Cr. 10. Mass 50g.

Dress

Uniform Cap: Peaked uniform cap bearing insignia of service. Worn to formal functions. Cost Cr. 150. Mass 1kg.

Outdoor and Leisure

Hat: Available in a variety of styles, hats include Stetsons (large hats with broad rims), fedoras (smaller hats with broad rims), bowler or Derby hats (hemispherical rigid hats) and top or silk hats (stovepipe hats), as well as more exotic types such as jester's caps, skull caps, clown hats and others. Costs range from Cr 30 to Cr 200. Mass 1kg.

Knitted Ski Cap: Just covers the top of the head. A variety of colours and styles. Cost Cr. 5. Mass 100g.

Insulated Cap (TL 8): Provides thermal protection. Covers the head, neck and ears. Cost Cr. 15. Mass 100g.

Heated Cap (TL 8): As for insulated cap but also heated with a miniature battery pack. Cost Cr. 45. Mass 100g, not counting the pack.

Motorcycle Helmet: A rigid full–head covering, the helmet is a protective device worn to protect the head of a motorcycle rider. Provides 2 points of armour against impacts aimed at the head and obscure facial details, preventing identification. These helmets do not protect against bullets. Cost Cr 50. Mass 2kg.

Speciality

Ski Mask (TL 6+): Worn over the entire face to prevent facial identification. Cost Cr. 10. Mass 100g.

Infiltration Cowl (TL 10): Worn as part of an infiltration suit, the options available to the infiltration suit are available here too. Provides a full seal with the suit's collar. Costs and mass incorporated in the infiltration suit. Completed by eye protection/visual enhancement goggles and a filter mask over the lower face. See p. 96–97, *Traveller*.

ACCESSORIES

Shipboard

Utility Tabard (TL 5+): A sleeveless vest which is worn over a jumpsuit or uniform. Contains many pockets for tools and several utility loops. Cost Cr. 20. Mass 1kg.

Gloves (TL 4+): Lightweight gloves, providing limited thermal protection. Cost Cr 5 a pair. Mass less than 100g.

Insulated Gloves (TL 4+): Heavyweight gloves, providing more protection when handling hot items. Cost Cr. 15 a pair. Mass 500g.

Belt (TL 4+): A heavy utility belt, with multiple utility loops for tools. Cost Cr. 20. Mass 1kg.

Dress

Dress Belt (TL 5+): White uniform belt. Costs Cr. 20. Mass 250g.

Dress Sash (TL 5+): A sash (worn over the shoulder) or cummerbund (worn about the waist), usually to hang medals or decorations on. In some cultures, a red silk sash denotes Noble Social Standing. Come in a variety of colours. Cost Cr 30. Mass 100g.

Dress Gloves (TL 4+): Lightweight white gloves. Cost Cr 15 a pair. Mass less than 100g.

Neckerchief: A wide strip of cloth worn about the neck. At a moment's notice, it can be placed about the face to keep out trail dust … or to obscure the face and prevent identification. Costs Cr 1. Mass 5g.

Dress Tie: Straight silk tie. Cost Cr. 10. Mass 15g.

Dress Tie: Bow tie. Cost Cr. 25. Mass 5g.

Cravat: A silk kerchief worn with a smoking jacket and sometimes a ruffed silk shirt. Cost Cr. 25. Mass 5g.

OUTDOOR AND LEISURE

Surcoat (TL 2): A sleeveless apron that slips over the shoulders. Costs Cr. 25. Mass 500g.

Apron / Pinafore: This provides some protection against spillages. Heavy aprons are worn by craftsmen. Cost Cr. 5 or Cr. 50. Mass 150g or 5kg.

Utility Belt (TL 6): A sturdy canvas belt with utility loops for items. Cr. 15. Mass 100g.

Webbing Harness (TL 5): A sturdy canvas harness, worn over shoulders and around the waist and crossing at the back, with utility loops to hold items. Cost Cr. 20. Mass 200g.

Handbag: Stylish carry bags for storing money, IDs and cosmetics. The more extravagant handbags are made of expensive leather, encrusted with semi–precious stones or are similarly outlandishly designed. Costs vary widely, from Cr. 30 to Cr. 20,000, depending on the reputation of the brand. Forgeries of brand label goods are common. Mass from 100g to 5kg.

Backpack (TL4): A rigid H frame with straps to secure a rigid bag to the back of the wearer, with a main compartment and two smaller side compartments. Can support contents weighing up to 30kg. Fabric treated to resist harsh wilderness and most environmental conditions. Cost Cr. 75. Mass 2kg.

Chest pack (TL 4): A chest pack with an internal capacity of up to 5kg. Cost Cr. 10. Mass 500g.

Towel: Costs Cr 5. Mass 1kg. The good ones cost Cr. 10 and mass 1500g.

Speciality

Sunglasses: Available in a variety of styles. They provide protection from harsh light, although some brands of sunglasses are more for style than for any practical use. Costs range from Cr. 15 to Cr. 150. Mass 100g.

Eye Goggles: Protective eyewear, these are required by law in engineering areas and laboratories. Cost Cr. 40. Mass 100g.

Face Shield: A full face shield, this protection is required by arc welders to protect their faces and eyesight. Cost Cr. 150. Mass 4kg.

Tights, Nylon (TL 6): Normally worn as leggings, these can be worn drawn over the face to obscure features and prevent identification. Cost Cr 1. Mass 1g.

Mask, Theatrical: A rigid face mask. Worn over the face and held by a loop of cord around the head, it provides an effective disguise. Cost Cr 5. Mass 10g.

Mask, Rubber: A rubber face mask, worn over the entire head. Rubber masks tend to be designed to look like caricatures of notable personalities. Among the favourites currently in vogue are Duke Norris, Emperor Strephon, an Aslan, a Droyne, a Vargr and the head of the Church of the Stellar Divinity. Cost Cr 15. Mass 50g.

Infiltration Gloves: Completing the infiltration suit, these are long gloves with fasteners allowing a seal between the gloves and the elasticated cuffs of the infiltration suit's sleeves, ensuring that stray epithelial cells, hairs etc. remain sealed in. Costs and mass incorporated in the infiltration suit.

KITS AND ACCESSORIES

Clothing Maintenance Kit (TL 2+): All the tools to repair and maintain clothes, from lint brushes to needles and thread. The quality of repair depends on the skill of the repairer and the materials available. Costs Cr. 10. Mass 5kg.

Footwear Maintenance Kit (TL 2+): Boot polish, boot brushes and replacement shoelaces. Costs Cr. 10. Mass 4kg.

Suit Travelling Case (TL 5+): Made of heavy–duty synthetic fabrics. Used to carry suits in good condition. Costs Cr. 25. Mass 2kg, not including the suit.

Luggage (TL 4+): Cases made of impact – resistant plastic, designed to hold up to 50kg of clothing and gear. Cost Cr. 30. Mass 5kg per unit, not counting contents.

Duffel Bag (TL 4): A large fabric carry–all bag with a capacity of up to 50kg. Costs Cr. 30. Mass 1500g.

Heating Battery: Battery pack worn on a utility belt, the battery pack provides the power for all heated apparel (heated thermal underwear, heated socks, gloves, hood and other clothes). Duration: TL 6; 1 hour. TL 8; 6 hours. TL 10; 12 hours. Costs Cr. 45. Mass 1kg.

Clothes Maketh the Man

Most times in a *Traveller* scenario, what a character wears is insignificant. When looking for a Patron, interacting with passengers on board ship or performing the usual sort of adventuring activities *Traveller*s get up to, besides armour or Battle Dress or vacc suits, what they wear never really bears close scrutiny. But that's not always the case.

From Imperial Marines in full Battle Dress to the Emperor in all his finery, from a scientist in a white lab coat to a stern corporate Agent in a sharp power suit, what a character or NPC wears can identify them long before the character makes any sort of significant action, or even opens their mouth to speak.

A Referee can take advantage of this list to generate scenarios and Patron encounters for Player Characters. For instance, a world the characters visit might have a religious taboo against people showing their faces, requiring everybody, male and female, to have to wear very specific kinds of masks and headgear – cowls, for example, covering the head and shoulders with integral rigid masks. Another world might have a taboo against the use of animal–based fabrics such as wool, silk, satin or velvet but have no objection to clothing made of plant–based or synthetic fabrics (cotton, linen and so on).

On some worlds, possession of an infiltration suit is grounds for arrest because the local law level of the world considers such possession as admission of intent to commit crimes. On other worlds, wearing an all–black skin–tight costume might be considered a sign of someone available and willing to marry a local. And ancient theatrical tradition declares that characters wearing black are supposed to be invisible, so some people will respond to the character accordingly and ignore them, no matter how urgently he needs their attention.

Some science fiction shows have marvellous technologies such as devices which can fabricate clothing out of nothing. *Traveller* does not presume the existence of such marvels of garment generation and assumes that characters in need of clothes in a hurry will need to find a store that supplies it, or make do with whatever alternatives are available. Characters could potentially become highly attached to their uniforms from their career days, lavishing attention on "the old dress uniform" as they bring it out of mothballs for a special occasion. And of course, where they go, their uniforms and clothes will have to go too. The more they carry, the more they have to pay for passage.

Stewards have to make sure they have good quality formal wear and accessories handy for entertaining the high passage passengers. Scientists have to be wearing their lab coats. Adventurers exploring hostile terrains need to make sure that their apparel is suitable for crossing that terrain and so on.

The world of *Traveller* does not generally pay close attention to the minutiae of such trivial activities as laundry and clothing repair. Like the rules for character generation, world building, ship design and trade, the amount of detail a player wishes to apply in describing the activities of day–to–day clothing and apparel maintenance depends on how much detail they are willing to apply.

But consider, for example, the Referee potential if a Player Character's NPC girlfriend suddenly started to wear floaty maternity smocks, or an Agent formerly thought loyal turns up wearing the uniform of an enemy force's military and professes their loyalty to the enemy's cause – and that they have been loyal to the foe all along.

A mercenary or *High Guard* Naval scenario can be spun out of a character being punished for not maintaining their uniform properly, or the characters could be paid handsomely if they could but transport a cargo of spare uniforms to a Naval base (just as the base was subject to an invasion, for instance).

Consider a scenario where the world the character visit is under the control of a rigid, mechanistic oligarchy which maintains strict bureaucratic control over its citizens, through the clothed that they wear: every profession has a unique and identifying style, from the highest Nobles to prisoners and mental patients in hospital wards, and each uniform has a Social Status assigned to it which limits the people they can talk to. Consider a matriarchal world, such as Mora in the Spinward Marches or the world Angel One from the episode of that name of Star Trek: the Next Generation, where women might wear the aggressive business suits and men the lightweight, flouncy fabrics other cultures associate with women's clothing.

Sometimes, all it takes is a change of clothing to change one's entire perspective on things. And it is the ability to change perspectives at will that define the very nature of *Traveller*s.

Sample Patron

Tailor
Required Skills: Broker, Trade (Tailoring)

Required Equipment: None

Players' Information
This elderly tailor is on the cusp of retirement. He knows that his better days are behind him now, and he wants to go out in a blaze of glory with one final outfit design. He has secured a contract to design a Noble's daughter's wedding dress and he wants the characters to help him with a quick run to a neighbouring star system to secure some bolts of a material which would be ideal for this dress: a fabric of an advanced Technological Level that the competition have never heard about, and which has just come on the market.

Referee's Information
The tailor is … (roll 1d6):

1–2: unaware that the material is far more expensive than he thought but he is willing to bankrupt his whole business to secure the shipment.

3–4: actually dying and he is looking for someone with good tailoring skills to take on the business;

5–6: going to cheat – there's a dress available on the market the next star system over, made of this wonderful fabric but it is ready–made, and all he is going to do is cut off the brand names and sew on his own.

NON–LETHAL WEAPONS

DESIGNED TO SUBDUE, NOT TO KILL

Combat in *Traveller* is usually lethal. It requires little effort to terminate a life; and some of the weapons available from a disturbingly low technological level, can terminate thousands, even millions, of lives in an instant. However, sometimes, characters need to take their targets down and keep them alive for some reason.

A bounty contract might stipulate no collateral casualties; a criminal may need to be brought back to life to face justice. Security personnel on a ship or space station might be outfitted with low–impact stun rounds to avoid puncturing hull walls or viewports.

Criminal abductors might need to subdue their victims; a corrupt government might equip its riot control forces to subdue rioting crowds, putting down insurrections while keeping dissenters alive for "trial and exile" (for which read "torture and secret execution away from the media gaze").

Of course hunters, conservationists, scholars and zookeepers need rounds designed to incapacitate fretful or fugitive animals harmlessly, for capture, rescue, or for tagging, measurement and study.

Whatever the reason, the following non–lethal devices are available to *Traveller*s, the Law and criminals alike.

Using Mercenary

The *Mercenary* sourcebook lists heavy artillery and support weapons, as well as other weapons more suited for heavy deployment in a military context. Referees are likely to need *Mercenary* as a reference for some of the weapons listed here.

Incapacitants and Restraints Manner of Incapacitation

A non–lethal weapon may subdue a target or targets in a number of ways.

Sedation: Exposure to a chemical agent induces a state of sedation or unconsciousness.

Paralysis: Exposure to the agent induces immobilisation, or a state of muscular relaxation in which physical actions are no longer possible.

Shock: A current flows through the target's tissues or a sudden release of energy in some form jars the subject (e.g. an intense burst of sound or light or release of kinetic energy).

The target is immediately sent into a state of shock and may lose consciousness – but will certainly be stunned and at a disadvantage to all physical actions whilst in shock.

Restraint: The target is physically restrained, as if grappled by an overwhelming force.

Knockback: The target suffers a physical impact which knocks him down.

Means of Incapacitation

Chemical Restraint: The weapon exposes the target to a chemical agent that induces sedation, paralysis or even shock. A chemical agent takes time to act upon the subject's metabolism but it is thorough and hard to resist. Chemical restraints cannot induce knockback.

Binder: An agent which physically restrains the target in a mass of strands of some kind of material, often adhesive, most often a synthetic polymer but sometimes a natural product such as a discharge of silk–like threads.

Electrical: The weapon discharges an electrical current, inducing shock and unconsciousness.

Sonic: The weapon discharges a combination of an ultrasound burst and a plasma discharge. The target exposed to this weapon will be stunned and may also be knocked back.

THE STUN EFFECT

Stun Rating

A non–lethal weapon's damage rating is its stun rating. A weapon whose rounds inflict 2d6 damage can deploy non–lethal rounds that inflict 2d6 + Effect stun damage instead. Some weapons inflict minor physical damage as well, usually if deployment of a non–lethal chemical agent requires piercing the target's skin.

The round usually takes 1d3 + End DM (minimum 1) rounds to begin working on the target, unless stated otherwise. If a chemical stun round's damage exceeds the target's Endurance DM (if positive), the target must roll End each round to avoid losing consciousness. Sometimes a chemical stun round's damage does not exceed the Endurance DM; the target is often not knocked out but remains fatigued for 2d6 – Endurance hours (minimum 1 hour); the target is at a –2DM to resist further similar attacks, as well as other actions.

Mercy Rounds

Chemical stun rounds are available for a range of slug throwers. Non–lethal sedative rounds for slug throwers are known as mercy rounds. In some circles, they are also known as street sleepers, goodnight specials, jelly babies, hush bullets and other similar nicknames.

Action: A mercy round inflicts no more than 1d3–2 (minimum 1) physical damage when it strikes (this is not part of its stun

rating). It must bypass armour and penetrate bare flesh, which requires that the wielder of the weapon must take an aiming action against an armoured opponent. Armour that fully encloses the target cannot be bypassed.

The mercy round takes effect 1d3 + End DM (minimum 1 round) rounds after striking the target. Targets roll End each round for the next hour or fall unconscious. Unconsciousness lasts 2d6 – the target's Endurance in hours, minimum 1 hour.

Availability and Cost: Mercy rounds for each type of slug thrower are available at a +2 DM to the availability roll and mercy rounds cost 10% – 60% less than standard, lethal, rounds.

Technological Level: Mercy rounds become available for each weapon at the technological level at which the weapon becomes available. At the same technological level, the mercy round comprises a hollow metal hypodermic flechette that pierces the skin and injects the chemical payload.

At two technological levels above the weapon's level, mercy rounds take the form of flechettes of a water–soluble gelatine laced with the sedative agent. The tiny needles enter the body and leave a tiny, quickly healed mark on the skin. When they dissolve, the round releases the payload.

Mercy Shot: Available for shotgun rounds, a mercy shot round contains, not regular shot pellets but tiny pellets of semi– rigid gelatine laced with an agent such as DMSO (dimethyl sulphoxide) and a metabolic rate–controlled anaesthetic. The DMSO allows the anaesthetic round to penetrate the skin without piercing it; thus, mercy rounds only inflict 1d6 physical damage, halved, in addition to its full stun rating.

A mercy shot round affects all targets in the weapon's cone of fire, exactly the same as for regular shot. However, the mercy shot rounds automatically bypass any armour that offers only partial cover, such as flak jackets, cloth or jack armour. Mercy shot grenades are grenades filled with the same mercy shot pellets and affect all targets within the blast radius.

Paralysis Rounds

Similar to mercy rounds, a paralysis round works on the central nervous system and muscles. The target must exceed the weapon's stun rating with Dexterity instead; failure means that the character remains conscious but paralysed and incapable of taking any action, even to defend himself. The character becomes fatigued if the Effect is less than or equal to the target's current Endurance DM, if positive. Paralysis lasts for the same duration as for mercy rounds. Availability, costs and technological levels are as for mercy rounds.

Other Sedation Techniques

Spiked Drinks and Food: A character can surreptitiously spike the target's food or drinks with a sedative. Lacing the drug requires a successful Dexterity characteristic check: the target can detect the presence of the adulterant on a successful Intelligence check against the rating of the drug.

Once ingested, the drug takes effect in 1d6 minutes. The target suffers fatigue and makes Endurance checks each minute or fall unconscious for 2d6 – Endurance hours, minimum of 1 hour.

Gas: Tranquiliser gases become available at TL 4 with the invention of nitrous oxide, laughing gas. Gas release systems take time to disperse a volume of gas within the atmosphere of an enclosed space: enough to fill a single stateroom with an effective concentration of gas within 10–60 seconds or a larger enclosed space such as an office block or hospital complex within 10–60 minutes.

The effect of the gas is as for tranquilisers in drinks or food but onset is within 1–6 seconds and all affected targets must roll Endurance each round to stay awake.

Drug–Soaked Pad: The character soaks a volatile chemical such as chloroform onto a pad and then applies it over the victim's mouth and nose. This requires a successful surprise attack and a successful melee grapple attack. The drug's rating is 2d6 and onset is in 10–60 seconds, with fatigue if the target wins the Endurance roll against the rating but with an Effect less than her Endurance DM if positive. Unconsciousness lasts for 2d6 – Endurance hours, minimum of 1 hour.

Injection: This requires a successful surprise attack and a straightforward Melee attack to deliver the chemical payload, either through a hypodermic syringe (delivering 1 point of damage and requiring that the attacker bypass any armour the target is wearing) or through a slap patch. Onset begins in the next combat round, with effects as for mercy rounds.

Physical Incapacitation

Stunners, Stunsticks and Shock Rounds

These are the weapons listed in the Equipment section of *Traveller*. At the technological levels at which these weapons are introduced, stunners (also known as tasers) use compressed air to shoot two tiny metal darts at short range. Thin copper wires connect these darts to the taser weapon: when discharged, the stunner delivers an electrical current to the target.

The target must roll the weapon's stun rating or greater on Endurance for each round the taser continues to discharge into him; if the target succeeds, the taser has no effect on the target.

Stunsticks, another form of stunner wielded like a melee weapon and known as stun guns, inflict the same damage but are wielded as melee weapons.

Shock rounds become available for slug throwers at the same technological level as the level at which the weapons become available.

Sonic Weapons: At TL 12, sonic stunners become available in pistol, carbine and rifle form. These weapons have the same statistics, including availability and costs, as laser pistols,

Drugs

TL	Rating	Detection DM	Availability	Cost (Cr.)
2	1d6	–2	10	15
6	1d6	+0	8	10
8	2d6	+0	10	15
8	2d6	+2	8	10
14	3d6	–2	10	50

Gas

Gas	TL	Rating	Availability	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)
Nitrous Oxide	4	2d6	6	4kg bottle	250
Halothane	8	3d6	8	4kg bottle	600
Petrizine	10	4d6	10	1 kg bottle	800

carbines and rifles but have a maximum range of Medium. These energy weapons discharge a bolt of superheated plasma and ultrasound designed to knock down and disorient the target; these weapons' damage rating (which is the same as for laser pistols, carbines and rifles) is their stun rating.

If the target succeeds with the Endurance roll against the rolled stun damage of the weapon, he still must roll against the same stun damage with his Dexterity or be knocked down: a target knocked down ends all actions for the current combat round and begins the next round prone.

TL 12 stunsticks operate under the same principles as TL 12 stunners but are still melee weapons.

Beanbags and Binders

Beanbag Rounds

Available for the police combat shotgun, a beanbag delivers stunning and knockback damage as for TL 15 sonic stunner weapons. These rounds have no effect on targets armoured with any armour stronger than jack.

Binder Rounds

Binder rounds envelop the target in a fine cloud of nanofibres. These fibres cling together in a binding cocoon, immobilising the target for 1d6 hours. The target can attempt to break free by exceeding the rolled rating of the round with his Strength; he may attempt this once a minute.

Binder grenades have the characteristics of frag grenades (p. 101, *Traveller*) but roll the listed damage ratings to provide the effective grappling Strength rating of the binder agent. TL 9, Availability 10+, Cost 200 Cr.

Binder rounds and grenades come with a spray which dissolves the fibres. Cost Cr. 50; mass 0.5 kg. The spray dissolves the fibres within 1–6 seconds.

WEAPONS

Blowgun: A long tube for launching darts at targets up to Medium range, blowguns are powered by breath and are surprisingly accurate. Darts must bypass armour; against a target wearing armour, the character must aim the attack. Blowguns use the Athletics (archery) skill described in *Mercenary*.

Police Combat Shotgun: These are short (95 cm), smoothbore specialised shotguns used by police forces. Available as single – shot, breech–loading shotguns at TL 7 and as automatic shotguns with a 10 round clip from TL 8, the police combat shotgun is a larger version of the cartridge pistol that takes a large calibre shot shell which is incompatible with standard shotgun shells. With a simple bead sight, the police combat shotgun has a flip–up sight for ranged shots.

Round types include beanbag rounds, shock and stun rounds, mercy shot and binder spray, flashbang and gas grenades of various types (smoke, aerosol, knockout, tear, irritant and incapacitant). Bulky 3 kg drums are available containing 30 rounds.

Heavy Weapons

Law enforcement forces with access to large scale incapacitating shells can subdue whole areas at a time. Frequently, law enforcement officers deploy tear gas grenades and beanbag rounds with police combat shotguns.

Tear gas grenades and mercy shot grenades for police combat shotgun rounds inflict their stated stun rating on all exposed targets within a 1d6 metre blast radius of the point of impact.

Police forces engaging in riot control have access to heavier weapons, such as water cannon, shot grenade and gas mortar shells and, at TL 15, mounted stun cannon.

Water Cannon: Vehicle mounted, a water cannon delivers a spray of high–pressure water at the same range as a flamethrower. Targets resist the rolled stun rating with Dexterity to avoid knockback from the water. A water tank inside the vehicle supplies the water: the vehicle can fire continuous bursts for 10 minutes before the tank needs to be refuelled.

SAMPLE NPCs

Marion Bolivar, The Huntress
Agent, Age 36, 4 terms

Str 8 **Dex** 11 **End** 8 **Int** 10 **Edu** 9 **Soc** 9

Admin–1, Advocate–2, Deception–3, Diplomat–2, Gun Combat (snub pistol) –3, Stealth–2.

Snub pistol with two full clips of mercy rounds, Allies (her two partners), 3x tranq spray, several doses of liquid chemical

restraint (knockout drops, chloroform pad), petrizine bottle and dispersal mechanism, van, 1 low passage ticket per character, 3 medium passage tickets – one for herself, one for her partners

Appearance: Marion looks like a typical harassed stay–at–home mother. Her hair and makeup are slightly dishevelled and her clothes a little behind current fashion trends. To all intents and purposes, she looks like someone out to do the shopping. She is, however, a ruthless man hunter.

Encounter: At some point in the characters' career, they will get on the wrong side of some powerful and influential person or other. That person will be very determined to see that the characters suffer for their presumption: however, he is a hands–on sadist and he will want to torment the characters in person.

Mortar Mercy Shot Rounds: These shells spray bursts of mercy shot across a wide area. Used in standard mortar launchers. Mortar launchers' minimum range, effective range, rates of fire and operating crews are listed in *Mercenary*.

Vehicle–Mounted Sonic Stunner: At TL 8, a vehicle–mounted heavy sonic stunner is available. The effect is the same as for the TL 12 sonic cannon, with a maximum range of Medium. Too large to be carried by hand, the vehicle's power source also powers the device.

The field of fire of the vehicle mounted sonic stunner is the same as that of a shotgun, affecting a cone spreading out from the point of fire and affecting all targets within that area.

Referee: Use Marion as your quick and dirty railroading agent. If the players are bored with the current adventure, have an old enemy of theirs hire Marion. She will track them down and, one by one or all at once, incapacitate the characters, hauling them all off before her Patron.

Mercy and Paralysis Rounds

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Recoil	Auto	Mass (kg)	Maga – zine	Availa– bility	Cost (Cr.)	Ammo Cost (Cr.)
Blowgun	0	Ranged (thrown)	1d6	0	No	1	0	8 +	0	Negligible
Police Combat Shotgun	7	Ranged (shotgun)	2d6	4	No	0.9	0	8 +	800	Special
Police Combat Shotgun	9	Ranged (shotgun)	3d6	4	2	0.9	0.9 /3.9 with drum 01/10 /30	8 +	850	Special

Weapon	Rating
Revolver	3d6–3
Cartridge Pistol Mercy Shot	2d6+3
Autopistol	3d6–3
Flechette Pistol	3d6–2
Snub Pistol	3d6–3
Body Pistol	3d6–3
Gauss Pistol	3d6
Carbine	3d6–2
Autocarbine	3d6–2
Flechette Carbine	3d6
Gauss Carbine	3d6
Rifle	3d6
Autorifle	3d6
Sniper Rifle (TL 4)	2d6+6
Sniper Rifle (TL 8)	3d6+3
Flechette Rifle	3d6
Gauss Rifle	4d6
Assault Rifle	3d6

ACR	3d6
Gauss Rifle	4d6
Shotgun	4d6
Police Combat Shotgun	4d6
Shotgun Slug	4d6
Police Combat Shotgun Slug	4d6
LMG	4d6
LAG (TL 5)	6d6
LAG (TL 8)	8d6

Marion charges a hefty fee for her services. As a Patron, she could approach the characters asking if they can aid her to pull off an elaborate scheme she is running to bring in an elusive target: a banker whose incompetence brought a major sector

Corporation to its knees two sectors away. She stands to gain Cr. 500,000 from the banker's capture.

Marion is ... (roll 1d6):–

1–2: True to her word. The banker is physically harmless but he has been extremely lucky. Marion suspects he may be a psion.

3–4: Honourable and generous. She has to be. The banker has already managed to kill both of her regular boys.

5–6: Actually planning on subduing the characters: they are her real prey. And with a bounty of Cr. 100,000 apiece, she is not going to give up the pursuit, even if her true plot is revealed.

NUCLEAR DAMPERS AND DISINTEGREATORS

Introduction
Of all the ultra – high technology devices available beyond Technology Level 15: antimatter, teleportation systems, pocket universes, psionically active AI: no advanced technological item is more popular among Player Characters than disintegrators. Weapons that make their targets literally disappear forever are deeply coveted by many Player Characters.

This article looks at two types of tool, which use the same principle in different ways: nuclear dampers and disintegrators. Since the fi rst launch of *Traveller*, these devices have been considered to be signature technologies and the purpose of this article is to take an in–depth look at these marvellous devices.

Recommended Traveller Books
You will need the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Nuclear dampers and disintegrators also appear in **Book 1:** *Mercenary* and **Supplement 4:** *Central Supply Catalogue*. If you have **Book 4: Psion** and **Book 5: Agent,** you might fi nd these books useful

Weapon	TL	Stun Rating	Recoil	Magazine	Auto	Availa– bility	Cost (Cr.)
Water Cannon	7	3d6+6	3	25	water tank	10+	2,500

Weapon	TL	Stun Rating	Radius	Availability	Cost (Cr.)
Mortar Mercy Shot Shell	11	5d6	9 metres	8	1,250

Weapon	TL	Range	Stun Rating	Auto	Mass	Magazine	Availability	Cost (Cr.)
Heavy Stunner	8	Medium	3d6 + knockback	Yes	–	Vehicle	10+	5,000
Heavy Stunner	10	Medium	4d6 + knockback	Yes	–	Vehicle	10+	8,000
Heavy Stunner	12	Medium	5d6 + knockback	Yes	–	Vehicle	10+	10,000

as well. However, you do not need any of these sourcebooks to use this article.

Author's Note to Readers

Some of this article outlines a plausible theory to explain how these devices work. The theory covers abstruse scientific subjects such as atomic structure, particle physics and so on. The article may therefore, in places, seem to positively drown in technobabble. Conversely some readers may deride the article for the opposite reason, considering the same technobabble to be excessively simplistic. To both kinds of reader, I offer my apologies.

Without A Trace

The invention of the nuclear damper is but one step in a quest into the study of the fundamental structure of matter: a topic with a long history.

Nuclear Science

TL 0

Early sophonts might, at this primitive stage, know of the yellow stinking powder that comes from the fiery mountain, the black powder left behind after a tree is struck by lightning, or the hard white crystal and yellow metal that make jewellery.

They know of the grey metal and the red metal that make bronze and the heavier metal used in swords. And that's it.

TL 1

The fi rst stabs in the dark are made at this level, when philosophers theorise that matter is composed of atoms. At this technological level, the idea that atoms can be split is unthinkable. Science might seem to take a wrong turn at this point, by theorising that matter is composed of only four elements – earth, air, fire and water. Later scientists might look back at this simplistic thinking with derision, little realising that what these early natural philosophers were describing is actually the then known *states* of matter – solids, liquids, gases and plasmas. Scientists discover Archimedes' Principle – a means of measuring the purity of certain substances by water displacement. This is called specific gravity.

TL 2

At this stage, early experiments in chemistry lead to the discovery of a variety of different substances, many of which require extraction from oxides or minerals. Some substances which cannot be further refined are called elements. Carbon, iron, gold, sulphur, silver, arsenic, phosphorus and a handful of others are known or discovered: towards the mature TL 2 stage, early chemists create lists and make the fi rst fumbling attempts to order them. But the basic idea of the indestructible atom developed at TL1 persists.

TL 3

The cataloguing of elements becomes a rush, as new kinds of physical experiments yield new ways to refine elements from the raw materials. Matter is formally described as composed of molecules – combinations of different kinds of elements in specific ratios, such as water (H_2O) – two atoms of hydrogen to one of oxygen. The modern science of chemistry is born.

At this stage, science has uncovered enough elements to begin to see a pattern forming. The listing of different kinds of elements leads to the development of the first periodic tables. Towards the mature TL 3, scientists discover radioactivity for the first time, along with the realisation that the atom can be split.

TL 4

Discoveries come thick and fast in this era. Scientists identify different kinds of particles being emitted by radioactive materials: alpha particles, beta particles, neutrons, gamma rays and so on. At this point, scientists know of the existence of protons, neutrons and electrons. The structure of the atom – a nucleus made up of protons and neutrons, surrounded by a cloud of electrons – is laid bare to them. At this stage, science now has the fullest understanding of why elements are all different: each element has a unique atomic number, the number of protons in its nucleus. Hydrogen is hydrogen because its nucleus is a single proton: uranium is uranium because of the 92 protons in its nucleus. With this, the periodic table reaches its final form. Scientists make the final discoveries and determine that only 92 elements can exist in nature. And then they make more elements. Towards the mature TL 4 era, nuclear chemistry splits off from its parent, as scientists begin to pursue divergent interests: some continue to play with the molecules, and the others play God.

TL 5

At TL 0, primitives banged bits of rock together and made sparks. This era is marked by a single event: when the primitives bang together lumps of metal and produce a spark that levels cities. A deceptively simple formula, $E = mc_2$, leads to the discovery of nuclear fission and then nuclear fusion. The possibility of nuclear power is broached; it becomes a reality at the next tech level. But a major step towards nuclear damper technology has also been made, as science discovers for the first time that matter can be converted into energy.

TL 6

The knowledge that the atom can be split and that matter can be converted into energy, drives the development of nuclear power: and also begins to pose a problem, that of the disposal of nuclear waste. Sadly, the answer to this problem eludes scientists for a few tech levels.

TL 7

Nuclear science matures considerably, as neutrinos are first hypothesised and later confirmed with experimentation. Particle

accelerators make increasingly exotic discoveries and the first hints, which form the foundation of nuclear damper theory, are laid down.

TL 8

During this era, the next discoveries are made, not in the atom, but out in the depths of space. Astronomers begin to hypothesise about the existence of dark matter. At first a curiosity, planet–bound scientists are unable to make much headway in studying dark matter at this point. Also discovered is dark energy, a theory first laid down as early as the mature TL 4 but only now beginning to be taken seriously.

TL 9–11

The development of gravitics and the Jump drive open up a number of possibilities. Fusion drives and power plants become practical thanks to gravity pinch fields and containment bottles; gravity technology also permits scientists to create reliable particle containment systems for particle accelerators. Gravity accelerators allow neutrons to be used in accelerators for the first time. The expansion of society into the stars also allows science the opportunity to go out and hunt down dark matter and dark energy, rather than create it in the lab.

TL 12

It isn't until this technological level that dark matter is finally encountered and the first experiments with dark matter and dark energy can begin, leading to the development of the first nuclear damper units. Nuclear dampers are initially put to work decontaminating the legacies of the past: regions contaminated by old fallout from nuclear weapons and waste dumps containing remnants of experiments with nuclear medicine, which still pose a hazard centuries afterwards.

Nuclear dampers become available as ship–mounted screens. Nuclear damper installations spring up to protect cities. Damper proliferation becomes the major political issue of the day, as emotive a subject as the threat of nuclear weaponry poses to society back in late TL 6 to 8.

Medicine, too, makes use of nuclear damper technology to decontaminate citizens exposed to radiation, as well as to minimize the side effects of medical treatments such as radiotherapy.

TL 13

Nuclear dampers make their appearance on the battlefield, increasing the lethality of warfare as, in response, military forces stock up on weapons which cannot be stopped by a damper field.

The nature of the interactions between dark energy and matter continue to be studied. Scientists make breakthroughs in their understanding of how damper fields work, but the ultimate breakthrough – the disintegration of stable nuclei – remains theoretical. Damper boxes are developed as a reliable method of transporting nuclear matter and warheads.

TL 14–15

Nuclear damper technology evolves, the damper units themselves getting smaller and cheaper to run. Further advances lead to the first experiments with disintegration technology but the first practical advances in disintegrator technology do not occur until TL 16. Damper technology has advanced as far as it can go by this stage; with damper boxes containing radiation and dampers becoming small enough to carry by hand, the containment of radiation hazards becomes almost completely routine.

TL 16

The first working disintegrator weapons are large and bulky, fixed weapons the size of spinal mounts protecting large installations and cities. Disintegrator therapy is developed on a small scale, an advancement on nuclear damper decontaminators that allows the safe destruction of foreign bodies or tumours inside patients' bodies.

TL 17

The first ship mounted disintegrators appear: large spinal mounts on capital ships. Ranges and power efficiency increase with each new tech level. On the battlefield, vehicle–mounted disintegrators appear; like the introduction of the nuclear warhead and the first battlefield nuclear damper screen, disintegrators change the face of war yet again, as society worries about the potential for atrocity: an army equipped with disintegrators can conceal its war crimes in a whiff of smoke, leaving nothing but silent dust and nothing to point to them at the war trial afterwards.

Fortunately, damper box technology develops apace with disintegrators, eventually leading to disintegrator screens, fields which set up a disruptive resonance that interferes with disintegrators.

TL 18 +

At this stage, man–portable disintegrators become available. Hand held disintegrators and disintegrator small arms are the ultimate expressions of weaponry. Defence technology catches up with weaponry at this stage, with the introduction of the personal anti–disintegrator screen, a portable device that interferes with the functioning of disintegrators.

NUCLEAR DAMPER THEORY

How Dampers Work

Nuclear dampers strip the radioactivity away from radionuclei harmlessly. No nuclear by–products such as radioactive gases and no harmful radiation. How does this work? As far as the scientists who develop nuclear dampers are concerned, when a damper field is applied to a radioactive nucleus it works continuously on the nucleus for as long as it remains unstable.

Decay Chain

For instance a nucleus of uranium undergoes a number of decays, each to another radioactive element which in turn decays still further until the nucleus changes to a stable isotope of lead: the final product of uranium decay. This process of continued radioactive decay from element to element is known as the *decay chain.* In the process, the uranium changes to radium and even to gaseous radon, another dangerous radioactive element.

The Damping Process

Under the influence of a damper field, the decay chain is completely bypassed. The uranium decays straight away to stable lead and from that point the nuclear damper has no further effect on the nucleus, so the process stops. This would release a huge amount of energy and many particles and gamma photons all at once; but the damper process instead releases that energy harmlessly in the form of neutrinos. This happens regardless of whether the atom is a super heavy nucleus like plutonium or a lightweight element such as tritium (a radioactive hydrogen isotope with two neutrons and one proton in its nucleus).

UNDERSTANDING DAMPER THEORY

In order to understand how nuclear dampers work, science has to proceed far enough along in its understanding of particle physics to come up with a working model for the structure of atomic nuclei, the processes of nuclear chemistry and an understanding of the strong and weak nuclear forces, as well as gravity and the electromagnetic force.

Science may come to a plateau of knowledge and stumble blindly for generations before crossing the threshold of understanding which leads to the development of the damper field. Some cultures never develop the understanding fully, instead discovering the principles through examination of found alien devices or through random chance: they might uncover a nuclear warhead left behind from an ancient war, which was transmuted into lead before it could detonate; or one of their own nuclear warheads might pass through an anomalous energy field and be rendered inert. One thing is, however, clear. The development of the nuclear damper begins with the discovery of dark matter and dark energy, discoveries made as early as TL 4.

Dark Matter and Dark Energy

Dark matter exists in greater abundance in the universe than the regular matter which makes up every living being and object. Dark matter does not interact with normal matter; only with gravity. Dark matter interacts with dark energy in the same way as normal matter interacts with photons. Dark energy is postulated as the force driving the universe to expand and in fact accelerating its expansion. Dark energy is understood to be a kind of repulsive force, partial understanding of which leads to the development of gravitics, manoeuvre drives and ultimately the Jump–drive. Although dark energy, focused and directed in a coherent beam, has another effect; it weakens the strong and weak nuclear forces.

Directed against unstable matter, dark energy has the property of destabilising that matter without the usual release of particles or gamma photons. Instead of the energy being released as harmful ionizing radiation, the dark energy converts all that energy into a burst of neutrinos.

Quantum Level Interactions

Damper theory posits that the influx of dark energy creates a quantum–level vacuum fluctuation, the result of which means that the unstable matter instantly reaches its most stable "ground state" configuration; and the surplus excitation energy, rather than be converted into gamma photons or a nuclear release, is converted instead into neutrinos – and some dark matter, which harmlessly passes through the normal matter.

Only at around TL 12 does it become possible for a space faring civilisation to begin to make use of dark energy, through containing particles of dark matter in damper emitters. The initial experiments at TL 10 and TL 11 yield promising results but dampers only become practical at TL 12.

MODE OF OPERATION

Damper Emitters

Nuclear dampers operate in pairs of emitters, programmed to work together. One emitter is the master and the other a slave – the latter module is operated remotely from the vehicle housing the master module. The emitters focus their dark energy beams on a region to be decontaminated. Where the beams intersect, they create a node. The beams' frequencies heterodyne (reinforce one another) and reach a threshold value, above which the damper effect activates. At TL 12 and 13, damper pairs are short ranged – their maximum range is only about 100 times the distance separating them, up to a maximum of 200 metres. TL 14 dampers have a much better range of 1,000 times the separation distance. TL 15 dampers have a maximum range up to 10,000 times the separation distance. Because early dampers operate at such a short range, it makes them almost useless for defusing flying nuclear ordnance. Early dampers are usually developed for use in military and civilian HAZMAT and decontamination vehicles, designed to enter regions of high radioactivity such as those produced by nuclear fallout or accidental spillage of nuclear cargoes. Larger, fixed mount dampers have sufficient range and power to protect cities from incoming warheads.

Damper Boxes and Containment Fields

Damper theory requires that, in addition to nodes where the damper effect is enhanced, damper beams can intersect at antinodes where the opposite effect occurs: the strong and weak nuclear forces are reinforced, rather than disrupted. Damper boxes are specialised containment boxes designed to store and transport radioactive material in relative stability.

Commercial damper boxes are used to transport hazardous radioactive cargoes. Military damper boxes are used to store depleted uranium rounds and ammunition, as well as tactical and strategic nuclear warheads; the warheads retain their potency over long periods. It is possible for someone to tamper with a nuclear warhead inside a damper box, or even to devise a warhead where the payload is designed to be detonated within a damper box. The effect is up to the Referee but one recommendation is that the effective yield of the warhead could be multiplied by the square of the technological level of the damper box: a 50 kiloton tactical warhead detonated from within a TL 15 damper box (a multiplier of 15 x 15 = 225) would have an effective yield of 11.25 megatons instead!

Disintegrators

From the development of the nuclear damper, it is only a matter of time before the next leap to the development of the disintegrator.

The Threshold

The development of a nuclear damper that works on stable matter marks the threshold beyond which nuclear dampers become disintegrators. Up until this point, the concentration of dark energy was not strong enough to disrupt the strong nuclear bonds in stable matter. Disintegrators change all that.

Invention

In his book *Profiles of The Future*, the late science fiction author Sir Arthur C Clarke wrote three famous laws concerned with predicting technological advances. The Third Law states "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," and the mechanisms and devices of Technological Level 16 and above may appear to be just that – magical. Arthur C Clarke's Second Law states "In order to explore the limits of the possible, we must venture a little way beyond it into the realm of the impossible." So it is with the invention of the disintegrator, which crosses a threshold previously considered impossible – the successful application of a damper field against stable matter, effectively causing it to decay completely into a spray of neutrinos, leaving nothing behind.

Disintegrator weapons begin as clumsy, bulky spinal mount cannons fitted to capital ships at Technological Level 16. Disintegrators are built progressively more compact at higher technological levels, becoming available as ship–mounted bay weapons and then eventually as turret weapons, vehicular weapons for military support and ultimately as small arms; disintegrator rifles and pistols appear at the dizzying heights of Technological Levels 17 through to 19 and beyond. However, disintegrators appear as tools for far more peaceful purposes at earlier technological levels and find a variety of uses.

Art

Disintegrators work in the same way as dampers: two emitters focus beams of dark energy at a targeted point. At that focus point, matter disintegrates. In the case of disintegrators, each weapon casing houses both emitters. Because the individual dark energy beams can penetrate into matter without harming it except at the focus point, it becomes possible to hollow out objects without having to drill into them or open them up. Sculptures have been discovered at the sites of particularly advanced alien cultures, such as the Ancients in the *Official Traveller Universe*, which appear to be solid and intact on the outside but have been hollowed out in an intricate pattern; how this is done is a mystery unless one realises that a disintegrator had been used to make it.

Medicine

Foreign bodies and tumours can be removed if their locations within a body can be pinpointed accurately enough. This is the principle behind disintegrator therapy, a form of treatment which becomes available at TL 16.

Just as importantly, disintegrator therapy can help eliminate another problem: heavy metal contamination by contaminants such as lead, mercury and thallium. Heavy metals accumulate in the bones and organs of patients and are hard to remove. However, disintegrator beams are more effective against denser, heavier atoms than against lighter atoms such as carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. Attuning the beams to a particular spectrographic signature, such as that of lead or cadmium, disintegrator therapy can prove beneficial here too.

Society

The likeliest place a culture's civilian population is going to find disintegrators is in the hands of miners and construction workers. Short range beam disintegrators make excellent and efficient mining tools; selectively attuned to eradicate the lighter rocks, a mining beam can cut away at the rock and expose the veins of valuable minerals which have a different signature.

Smoking Boots – Types of Disintegrator

The principles behind disintegrators may vary from the version presented for the **Original** *Traveller* **Universe.** Here are some exotic variations on the narrative theme of wishing unwanted items – and people – to the cornfield.

Structural Destruction

The principle is simple. Sound makes objects resonate. If one finds the right sound, one can make an object ring like a bell, or shatter into pieces. Experiments with coherent sound waves produce a device called a saser – a sonic laser, capable of projecting a focused beam of sound that disrupts inorganic matter such as walls, doors and armour. For that reason, these weapons are often called sonic disruptors. Disruptors are available as hand weapons at Tech Level 14 to Tech Level 16. They cannot be mounted as shipboard weaponry and cannot function in Very Thin, Trace and Vacuum atmospheres.

Molecular Decohesion

Another form of disintegrator operates on a different principle: even the most perfect crystalline structure contains flaws and

inclusions. No substance is entirely chemically pure and so on the molecular level everything solid has at least some points of structural weakness.

This weapon focuses a beam of coherent dark energy and a stream of neutrinos into the target. This has the effect of causing the matter to lose structural cohesion, becoming physically brittle; the lightest touch may cause the affected material to shatter. This device can operate selectively on a specific element or molecule to devastating effect. Removing all of the iron in a sophont's bloodstream will kill the target in a few seconds; removing all the calcium will cause the target to collapse as its skeleton vanishes.

Deleting the water molecules will cause the target to turn into a loose pile of dry chemicals. In game terms, the former device affects a vehicle's Hull and Structure points, including space going vessels' Hull and Structure. Armour is bypassed and living things are not directly affected. The latter device, which eliminates organic matter, operates in the same manner as the neutrino detonator (p. 115, *Central Supply Catalogue*).

Chronon and Antichronon Bombardment
Chronons are hypothetical particles measuring disruptions in time. In some versions of *Traveller* chronons can be controlled and directed like lasers or particle beams. A burst of concentrated chronons shot at a target could cause the target's matter to age physically, accelerating physical decay at an alarming rate. Conversely a beam of coherent antichronons could unravel a target's history, effectively erasing the target from time as if it, or he, never existed.

Morphic Field Disruption
All matter exists. The presence of a given particle at a particular point in the Universe is a point of data; it exists as much as a field of data as energy or matter. The morphic field disruptor, a psionic weapon, erases the field of data, making the Universe forget that the particle was ever there at all.

The Argand Gun
This variation on the theme of the disintegrator is the most exotic: the Argand Gun kills its targets with mathematics. Using a principle similar to psionic teleportation, this weapon eliminates its target by rotating it dimensionally out of the universe and out of existence altogether. The target seems to recede from the observer at high speed as if from a video effect no matter what angle the observer views the target, as if he were rotating 90 degrees away from everything else. The Argand Gun is a unique Artefact. Its name refers to a Terran mathematician who pioneered a form of mathematics involving imaginary numbers.

Skills and Specialities

Art
Mystery Carving: At the highest technological levels, sculpting reaches its height with the development of so–called "mystery carving", where an object has been intricately hollowed out apparently without cutting into the thing.

Engineer
Damper Technology: This is the speciality covering the manufacture, maintenance, repair and calibration of nuclear dampers, from the shipmounted screens to the civilian damper emitters on decontamination vehicles. This speciality also covers damper boxes and the long–term storage of nuclear materials within them.

Disintegrator Technology: This is the speciality covering the manufacture, maintenance, repair and calibration of disintegrators.

Gunner
Nuclear Dampers: A specialisation of the Gunner skill, this covers the operation of nuclear damper bay weapons aboard a ship.

Disintegrators: This speciality covers control and use of disintegrators, whether as spinal mounts, bay weapons or turret weapons.

Gun Combat
Disintegrators: This speciality of Gun Combat skill specifically covers the operation of hand held disintegrator weapons in combat.

Exotic Energy Weapons: This speciality of Gun Combat skill specifi cally covers the operation of exotic, high technology weapons in combat other than neural weapons or disintegrators.

Heavy Weapons
Disintegrators: This speciality of Heavy Weapons skill specifically covers the operation of vehicle–mounted battlefield disintegrator weapons.

Life Science
Nuclear Medicine: This speciality of Life Science skill covers the development of nuclear medicine; the use of radioisotopes and other radioactive sources as diagnostic tools and as a treatment of cancers (radiotherapy).

Damper Decontamination: This speciality of Life Science skill specifically covers the issue of nuclear dampers and their function in decontaminating the environment, as well as medical application of dampers in the medical decontamination of patients.

Disintegrator Therapy: This speciality of Life Science skill specifically covers the operation of disintegrator therapy devices in therapeutic medical treatment.

Physical Science

Nuclear Physics: This speciality of Physical Science skill covers all aspects of the study of matter on the atomic and subatomic scale, from the study of protons, neutrons and electrons to the processes of nuclear decay and radioactivity, from nuclear fission and nuclear fusion through to the study of quarks and more exotic particles, such as neutrinos.

Nuclear Damper Theory: This speciality of Physical Science skill specifically covers the physical principles and current theories behind nuclear dampers.

Disintegrator Theory: This speciality of Physical Science skill specifi cally covers the physical principles and current theories behind disintegrators.

Space Science

Cosmology: This speciality of Space Science skill specifi cally covers the study of the cosmos as a whole. Everything from the size of the Universe, to theories as to the nature of reality, are covered by this speciality. This does cover the presence and role of dark matter and dark energy but these are covered in greater detail by the speciality.

Dark Matter and Dark Energy Theory: This speciality of Space Science skill covers the study of dark matter and dark energy, and their relationship with regular matter and regular energy.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Advanced Technology

The following items of technology are mostly of an incredibly high technological level. Matter disintegrators as hand held weapons, covered in *Central Supply Catalogue*, are available at a minimum of Tech Level 18; some of the more esoteric tools and exotic weapons are only achievable at TL 20 or higher, beyond the limits of even theoretical knowledge at TL 15. As always, allowing Player Characters unfettered access to such advanced technologies has serious implications. Sometimes, though, it can be satisfying to run a story where Player Characters equipped with regular technology have to face off in desperate, one–sided combat against hostile aliens equipped with far more advanced devices. The Borg were far more fun when they outclassed the weapons of Starfleet in *Star Trek*, and one–sided conflicts have been a staple of science fiction authors since H G Wells first wrote *The War of The Worlds*

Nuclear Damper Equipment List

Vehicular Nuclear Damper (TL 13): Available for civilian and military vehicles for nuclear decontamination. Emitters come in pairs – a master module and a slave module. Each module is fitted to a single vehicle and decontamination dampers have a range of up to 500 metres. Modules draw current from the vehicle's power plant.

Vehicular Nuclear Damper, Improved (TL 15): Much lighter and more powerful than lower technology versions, the TL 15 damper module comprises of a master and slave module operated from a single vehicle. The range is the same as before but mass and costs differ greatly. The modules draw current from the vehicle's power plant.

Damper Box (TL 12): The first damper boxes are large, bulky containers used to carry radioactive cargo payloads. Both civilian and military versions draw current from vehicular power plants, or from external battery packs.

Small Damper Box (1m³ capacity): Wt.: 50 kg.Cost: Cr. 5,000.

Cargo Damper Box (50m³ capacity): Wt.: 250 kg. Cost: Cr. 25,000.

Damper Box (TL 14): Damper boxes at this level have their own internal miniature fusion power sources, allowing them to run for up to five years. **Small Damper Box (1m³ capacity):** Wt.: 50 kg. Cost: Cr. 15,000.

Cargo Damper Box (50m³ capacity): Wt.: 250 kg. Cost: Cr. 75,000.

Disintegrator Equipment List

Sculpting Tool (TL 17): A bulky tool used in the art form called "mystery carving," this device includes a holographic densitometer readout that enables the artist to see the interior of the object being carved. Safeties prevent it being used on living tissues.

Mass: 4 kg. Cost: Cr. 30,000.

Sculpting Tool, Advanced (TL 19): A tool shaped like a short baton, this mystery carving tool interprets the interior of the object and psionically transmits it into the wielder's mind. A psion can add his Psionic Strength characteristic DM to the Art roll.

Mass: 250g. Cost: Cr. 50,000.

Mining Tool (TL 17): Looking like a sawn–off double–barrelled shotgun and powered by a belt battery pack with a duration of 1 hour's continuous operation, this mining tool can disintegrate solid rock at a rate of 1m³ per round. Safeties cause the mining tool to disengage if living tissues enter the beams. Sensors can also program the beams to operate selectively, disintegrating valueless rock and ignoring veins of valuable minerals, which are exposed. An ideal tool for Belters mining asteroids because it has no recoil.

Mass: 2 kg. Cost: Cr.60,000.

Breacher (TL 18): A short–barrelled device the size of a heavy fl are gun, the Breacher is used to open portals in walls, quickly and efficiently. Drawing power from a standard belt – mounted battery, the Breacher is good for 10 shots. Each shot will open

a single two metre tall portal in a wall or bulkhead almost silently. Safeties mean that the beam refuses to activate if aimed at a living being. The default shape is a circle, though the Breacher can be preset to a couple of other geometric shapes: square, diamond, oval or pentagon.

Mass: 2 kg. Cost: Cr. 25,000.

Disintegrator Screens (TL 17): A modification of ship–mounted nuclear damper screen weaponry creates a screen proof against shipmounted disintegrators.

Matter Transmuter (TL 20): The ultimate tool of matter manipulation, matter transmuters use a combination of nuclear dampers and disintegrators and damper box / disintegrator screen technology to manipulate matter on the subatomic scale. Any kind of stable element can be transmuted into any other kind of stable element. The transmuter draws its power from matter conversion and could run forever. The source element may be no more than three atomic numbers above or below the target element on the periodic table: to make lanthanum, the transmuter could use barium or neodymium. The transmuter converts a flat rate percentage each hour.

These legendary Artefacts are coveted for all the obvious reasons.

Disintegrator Weapons

Handheld disintegrators have been covered in *Mercenary* and *Central Supply Catalogue*. The following weapons are somewhat more exotic. Some of these devices are from tech levels so high as to qualify as virtually magical. The Referee should use discretion in introducing them. All disintegrators do damage the same way; the Effect is determined by the armour or Hull rating of the target, rather than by the die roll.

Patron: The Dauphine Estrellita Markov

Noble, 50, 8 terms

Str8 Dex8 End9 Int11

Edu12 Soc13

Admin–2, Athletics (climbing)–2, Athletics (endurance)–2, Art (sculpture)–3, Diplomat– 2, Leadership–2, Recon–2, Social Science (archaeology)–3, Social Science (linguistics)– 3, Survival–3. TAS, survival kit, Contacts (academic), Cr. 150,000.

Player Information

A physically fit, imposing woman whose hair is only now beginning to grey, stillyouthful belying her age, the Dauphine is a keen archaeologist. All her life she has heard rumours of wonderful Ancient devices in strange sites in out–of–theway
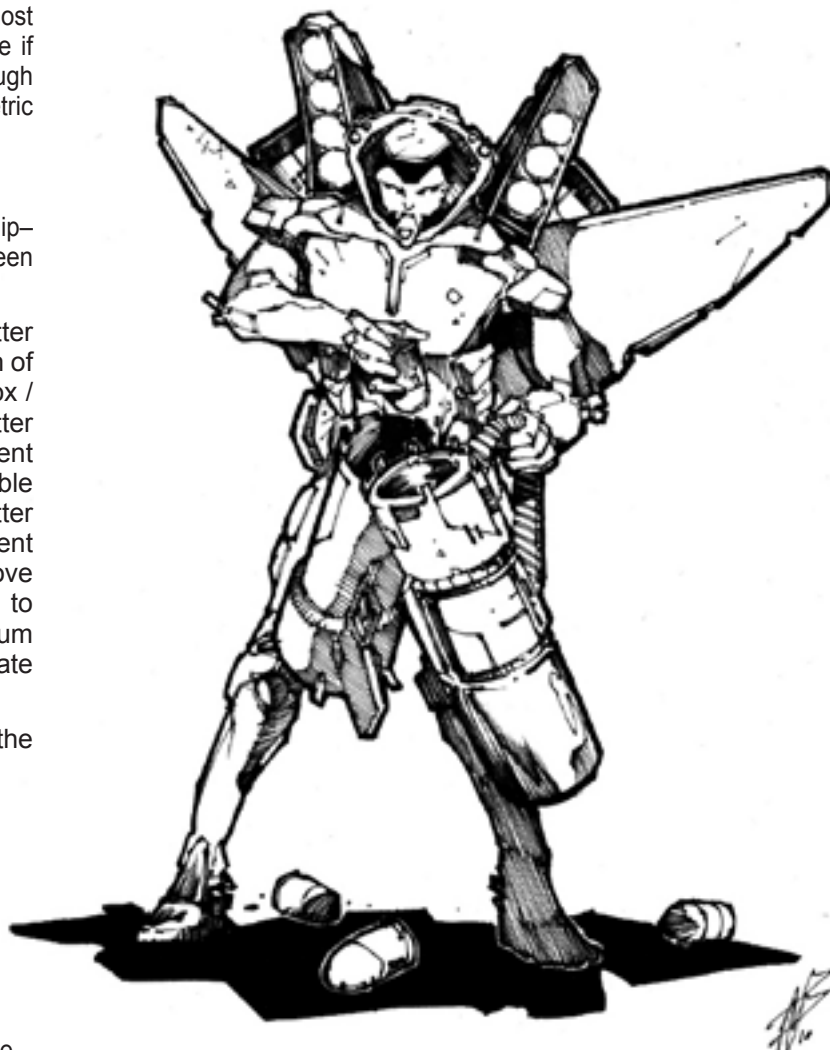
Item	M₃	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)	Note
Master Module	10	100	7,500	Includes slave controls
Slave Module	10	100	4,500	500 m range

Item	M₃	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)	Note
Master Module	2.5	25	30,000	500 m range

Screen	TL	Effect	Tons	Cost (MCr.)
Disintegrator Screen	17	Reduces disintegrator damage by 2d6, removes automatic crew hit	50	100

Matter Transmuter

Item	TL	Payload (kg)	Rate	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)
Desktop Transmuter	20	10	10%	25	185,000
Desktop Transmuter	20	10	20%	25	270,000
Cargo Transmuter	20	10,000	10%	30,000	220,000
Cargo Transmuter	20	10,000	20%	30,000	500,000

Weapon	Cost (Cr.)	Mass (kg)	Ammo (Cr.) Cost	Notes
Saser	30,000	4.5	—	Will not operate in Thin, Very Thin, Trace or Vacuum atmospheres.
Water Disintegrator	50,000	2.5	—	Uses time as a weapon. Target rolls End vs. damage rolled. If the target fails, he is permanently erased from history or aged 1,000 years in 1 round.
Chronon Gun	120,000	3	—	Draws on 1 Psionic Strength point per shot; has a "magazine" of 10 points.
Morphic Field Disruptor	200,000	1	—	Draws on 1 Psionic Strength point per shot; has a "magazine" of 10 points.
Morphic Field Disruptor	300,000 or more	1.5	—	Target rolls End vs. damage rolled. If the target fails, he is permanently rotated out of the space time continuum.

places and strange planets and she has devoted her entire life to seeking them out.

One story in particular has fascinated her: the story of the Argand Gun, a legendary Artefact which her father used to describe to her while she sat on his knee as a little girl. A small object, looking like a featureless solid gold tetrahedron, her father held it in his hand before he was forced to leave the site in a hurry. Estrellita remembers her father's great regret in never taking the time to take the object with him, and when her father disappeared without a trace when she was 17, the Dauphine resolved to follow in his footsteps.

She now has a mission for the characters. She has located the site and she is prepared to fund an expedition there to find the Argand gun and maybe find out what happened to her father.

Referee's Information
The Dauphine is ... (roll 1d6):

1–2: ... actually a ruthless and ambitious woman, who will not hesitate to turn the Argand Gun against the characters once she gets her hands on it. Dead men tell no tales.

3–4: ... concerned that her father may have returned to, and fallen victim to, the Argand Gun.

5–6: ... being pursued by a Rival. Use the Dauphine's characteristics. The Rival is a male and he has backup in the form of a force of NPCs equal in capability to the Player Characters.

Last Word
The major theme of damper technology and disintegrators has never been about their use on the battlefield. Deep down, it has always been about matter transmutation and manipulation; the end goal of primitive alchemy. Knowledge of the periodic table and particle physics must always precede these tools. The properties of dark matter and dark energy are not suffi ciently understood to establish whether or not it could be used in the manner described here. However, dark matter and dark energy were not even known to theoretical physicists in 1977. Who knows what could be possible in the far future. Whatever developments occur, however, they will always use the discoveries of the periodic table and the fundamental particles as their foundation.

Referee's Emergency Toolkit

By Alan Oliver

Have your players gone off piste again, venturing into an area of the galaxy you ave not yet prepared? Don't panic, simply use this Emergency Toolkit!

As in any setting some games are morelikely to end up 'in the rough' than others, depending on how much background detail the ref has to hand. Those games running to a heavily scripted story being the most vulnerable when the players do decide to go 'off script'. However even in a more sand box style game there are times when you need to slow the players down or distract them. For the most part these ideas are not aimed at a specific game system, although the *Traveller*s Aid Distress Signal section is obviously aimed at the *Traveller* game system. Doesn't mean the ideas there cannot be used in other game systems of course, they will just need a little more work. Ideas have been grouped together by type.

Firstly there are some basics on traveling in space, which will be generally useful. Then we have Time Fillers, Delays, Side Bars, *Traveller*s Aid Society SOSs and Bar Fluff.

Space Travel

First of all, it is worth remembering that space itself is a hazardous environment that most PCs are not able to survive in on their own. There are three different ways that space will kill you, unless you have suitable protection, and they are pressure, temperature and radiation. Once that protection fails, the players will die unless they are able to do something about it, which means dropping whatever else they are doing and dealing with the situation. This can be a very useful way of stopping the party doing something else and keeping them busy for a time as they deal with the problem. The fourth serious threat in space does not come from space itself but the environment that most characters need to survive. This threat is fire, as most ships must keep an oxygen rich atmosphere just to keep the crew alive. Fire is always a risk, not only from directly damaging characters but also from the damage to the habitat that otherwise keeps them alive.

Pressure

This is possibly the most obvious threat, as everyone knows that space is a vacuum. Exposure to open space without some form of protection will kill almost any character, although some machine characters might be able to function in space. To protect against this the characters must maintain the integrity of the ship around them, as any breach will lead to a slow leak, if small, or a massive explosive decompression if large. Exposure under 90 seconds will generally be survivable, unless it is in the form of rapid decompression, where the pressure drops very suddenly. Exposure over 90 seconds is not survivable with current day medicine but the more advanced medical practices available in a SF game may change this. However as each game universe has access to different medical technology it is impossible to generalise as to how long a character can be exposed for and still be recovered. Most ships are going to have some automated systems to help protect against this. Pressure doors are the most obvious, automatic doors tied to pressure sensors; they will seal off sections of the ship when they detect a radical drop in pressure. All ships will need some way of repairing incidental damage to the outer hull, which can range from a crew man in an EVA suit to nanotech self repair systems. The other aspect of pressure is that organic crew will need a specific mix of gasses to survive. Humans need just the right amount of oxygen, too much and they get high, too little and they suffocate. Either way the life support systems of the ship must maintain not just the correct atmospheric pressure but the correct balance of gasses as well.

This will be automated to a degree on most ships but damage or poor maintenance can lead to failures. As to how a ship can start to loose pressure, the players are a likely cause. For a start any time that a weapon is fired inside a ship, it has to hit something. In most cases player weapons are unlikely to be able to punch a hole straight through the hull of a ship, unless they carry personal anti–ship weapons. But they can hit pipes, pressure sensors, perhaps even the interior bulkhead of an airlock, any of which could lead to a leak. Space combat of any sort is going to be a major risk to the pressure integrity of the ship. Most ship–to–ship weapons are basically a way of puncturing the hulls of other ships to kill the crews inside them, so if the ship takes any damage directly from enemy weapons there will have to be repairs. However even if the ship is not

hit directly, there is a good chance that the outer hull will take some damage from debris and this might not make itself felt immediately. The bulkhead might hold out for days, even weeks, before finally rupturing. And given the nature of stories and story telling games, it will of course fail when there are characters nearby to be cut off by pressure doors. Even without any space combat, traveling at high speeds through space makes even grains of sand dangerous. A micro meteor strike can rupture the hull of all but the heaviest armoured ships and if the players are flying around in a battleship then you can always throw a bigger rock at them.

Temperature

Space is not only a vacuum, it is also very cold. The fact that it is a vacuum actually helps here, as a ship can only radiate heat away, there is nothing to conduct it away and no air convection to cool the ship down. Even so, ships loose heat to space at a sufficient rate that without insulation and heating, most normal organic crew will die of the cold. This means that the ship must maintain a habitable temperature. Insulation inside the hull will help maintain internal temperature but the heat still needs to be generated. Depending on the engine technology this might come directly from the engines, waste heat from reactors being used to maintain the internal temperature of the ship. As engines get more advanced and efficient, waste heat becomes less available, so for more advanced ships they must actually convert other energy into heat to keep the crew alive.

The biggest threat here is if the ship looses power for an extended period. Damage to the insulation of a ship will increase the heat lost to space but not so much that a ship with power cannot easily compensate. But a ship without power is going to slowly cool, eventually reaching temperatures where survival isn't possible. The simplest way to mess with this is to have the engines go offline for some reason.

Not only will the crew have some issues with temperature over the next few hours, they will also not be going anywhere till the engines are operating again. It doesn't end there though. If the ship is heated by waste heat from reactors, then that heat has to be carried through the ship somehow. Is it boiling water piped through the ship, or pipes full of high pressure gas at high

temperatures, or maybe even pipes full of plasma. Any of these can cause a lot of damage if they accidentally get shot, crack due age or otherwise get broken by boisterous characters. If the ship is too advanced to have waste heat, then it will require powered heating systems of some sort. Not only can these heaters fail, dropping the temperature, they can also go wrong and start raising the temperature of the ship. Want to force the players to have to dump their heavy armour and equipment while stomping around the ship, have the heating system go wrong and raise the internal temperature to about 45 C, that should get them sweating in their swimsuits.

Radiation

Open space is a harsh environment, without protection from it the radiation given out by most stars will kill you sooner or later. This isn't as quick as pressure or temperature but it is also not as obvious when it is happening. Ship hulls will include protection against the radiation in space that is harmful to their normal crew but beware if you are using an alien ship. You should make sure that they are vulnerable to the same forms of radiation that you are, otherwise they might not have protected against them. Ships will also have radiation detectors in most sections of the ship. This raises the alarm if damage to the hull floods part of the ship with dangerous radiation. However if radiation does enter the ship there is generally little that can be done to counter it. Once radiation does get in the crew will

have two things to deal with, firstly they will need to handle the medical situation.

This might be anything from taking antiradiation drugs to advanced nanotech depending on the technology available. Whatever they are doing, it will take time and could leave members of the crew out of action for a while. Secondly they will need to get the ship radiation proof again, resealing the hull and repairing whatever anti–radiation systems the ship has. As for how radiation can become a problem on a ship, there are a number of possibilities. For a start damage to the hull from previous combat could lead to a breach in the external radiation protection, flooding parts of the ship with radiation near to the hull. Externally there could be radiation storms caused by local stellar activity that overwhelm the radiation defences of the ship. This would lead to radiation floodingmuch of the ship and most of the crew are likely to need treatment. Depending on the technology of the engines, they could have a breach of containment themselves which could flood some or all of the ship with radiation. This is most likely to a failure to maintain the engines sufficiently over an extended period but sabotage is another possibility.

Fire

Any ship that has an oxygen atmosphere is going to run the risk of fire. While the hull and structure of the ship is not going to burn, there is a good chance that plastics are used extensively in the interior of the ship and these may well be highly combustible. The dangers caused by fire are many. First and most obvious is that those characters actually caught in the fire will be burnt to death, or at least badly injured by the fire. Secondly smoke from the fire is going to fill the confined spaces on board ship quickly, at the least hampering vision but possibly choking the crew. If there are lots of plastics and petrochemicals on the ship, there is a good chance that the smoke is going to be toxic as well. The fire is also going to generate a lot of heat, which may overload or otherwise damage the environmental systems which may push the temperature inside the ship above that which can easily be survived. Given that ships are well insulated from the cold of space, it will be difficult to get the temperature inside the ship back down quickly. This means that the crew may survive the initial fire but still be cooked by the heat. The fire may also damage the fabric of the ship itself, melting seals, rupturing pipes and generally destroying all those systems that keep people alive in space.

After a fire there may be pressure loss, or even radiation issues as the ship protection against this is damaged. Obviously fire is a risk everywhere but in space it is lethal. It can be started in any of the usual ways, so smoking on board ships is likely to be very restricted or banned. Weapons fire on board ship obviously has the capacity to start fires, especially if laser weapons are used as they do their damage through superheating the target. Electrical faults from poor maintenance are another good way of starting a fire, especially if the techs on the crew do not carry

out much essential maintenance on the ship. As you can see, space is a dangerous place to be and it is quite easy to find ways of putting the characters lives at risk and keeping them busy just through use of their environment.

TIME FILLERS

These are ways of keeping the players busy for a few minutes while you look something up or do some frantic bad guy generation for an encounter that's just around the corner. These fi ll players' time without necessarily interrupting the actions of the characters.

Net presence

Get each of the players to go through what steps they take to control their presence in the internet/web/dataverse. In any SF setting there is going to be a massive information network spreading across from planet–to–planet and every normal member of society is going to be a part of this. Everything from medical records to tax records, military history to legal status is going to be appearing on a computer somewhere. Unless you take steps to hide yourself. Each character should go through what they have done to hide, disguise or alter their dataverse records. This serves several purposes, for a start it will take the characters half an hour or more to run through all of this, especially if you ask a pertinent question or two to make them worry about it. Secondly it will make the players paranoid about who might be checking up on their identities and past. Is this the authorities closing in on them, or are old enemies on their trail again. Thirdly it may highlight some interesting facts about the players that can later be converted into useful plot points in their own right. For example if a player uses an old contact to wipe out their criminal record, then that contact is the weak link. Later you can leak news that this contact has been themselves arrested or kidnapped, which threatens the player's new clean identity and may force them to rescue this contact. You don't have to take advantage of these potential plot points straight away, just make a note of the good ones in case you need them.

Pressure Temperature Radiation Checks

This only works if the players are operating their own ship. Get them to run through what pressure, temperature, radiation, fire and atmospheric sensors there are on the ship and who has the duty to maintain them. Then you can have these characters make a few skill rolls to see how good their maintenance has been recently. This may not take the players long to sort out but it does buy you a few minutes and it may highlight some areas of maintenance that are not at their best, which you can take advantage of later. If maintenance is particularly bad, you are best off not jumping on it with both feet straight away but taking a note of it and using it a couple of sessions down the line. Using it straight away would be obvious and the players will see it coming.

Virus Protection

Get the players to go through all their electronic hardware, detailing the virus protection that they are using and how often this is upgraded. This serves several functions. For a start they will have to stop and think about what protection they have and how they upgrade it. This will buy you time to be doing whatever prep work you need. However it also will make the players paranoid about possible viral attack coming in on their computers, communicators, cybernetics or other hardware.

This will also give you a current picture of their electronics. There may be much in this that you can use, gaps in their communications network, players who don't bother to update their virus protection regularly enough or players who rely on a single computer for their electronics and are therefore vulnerable to loosing it. These could provide starting points for sub–plots or new ways for their enemies to track or attack them.

Delays

Generally for use when the team is travelling through space and you need to distract them with something to keep them from arriving on time at their destination. For the most part these will not involve a huge amount of additional gaming, they will just affect the time of arrival at the destination. These are the opposite of time fillers, as they waste characters time while not taking up much of the players' time.

The Holy Day of Whojamiflip

This works best if you have an alien character among the crew. Have some obscure religious rite turn up which requires the alien character to not do anything useful for the day. They might even have to stop the ship, especially if they are the pilot or navigator. Of course this requires players who will play along with it. They can easily get out of this by having their character be non–religious so doesn't honour the holy day, or just not playing their character that sincerely. If you do have players who won't play ball, you can always add that if rumours of their character not observing the rites get back to their race then 'bad things' will happen to them.

This can of course be done with human characters as well but the players might be a bit suspicious if you suddenly tell them that it is the 25th of December, they might feel entitled to a little more warning than that. This is why alien characters are better for this one.

Engine Failure

This is most risky when travelling interstellar but would still cause delays if traveling within a solar system. For whatever reason the ships main engines fail. This will not only stop them getting to where they are going, it may also threaten their lives, as without the engines they may loose life support and either freeze, suffocate or both. If they have the capacity to repair the engines, then this is just going to keep them busy for a few hours and thereby delay their arrival to the time that you need them there. If they cannot repair it themselves then the entire team is at risk.

They will have to look at doing whatever they can to get rescued by another ship, putting out whatever the current form of SOS is over whatever communications they have. Be careful however if they don't have the means to repair their own engines, as if they are not rescued this could easily kill off the entire team. There are other things that can go wrong with the ship without necessarily putting the entire team at risk. Computer failure could stop them without killing them all, while a sensor malfunction could leave them flying blind.

And now the Shooting's Started

Have some sort of armed conflict break out in the area of space that they are moving through. This might be a boarder clash between two interstellar federations or just the Empire struggling to maintain control over a few outlying systems. Whatever the nature of the war there are now a number of fully armed warships moving around in this part of space and any ship that isn't escorted is likely to be destroyed.

Obviously if the players are in command of a huge interstellar battleship then they might be up for just flying through the middle of the warzone killing whatever they meet along the way. However if they are in possession of such a powerful unit, then they will have to face both sides in the conflict trying to recruit them to serve their cause, as their involvement could easily tip the balance one way or another. Instead of delaying them by forcing them to go around the problem you can delay them with diplomatic approaches from the different factions. However most groups don't have access to huge warships and will not want to get caught up in a warzone. This gives them two choices, either sit and wait for an escort through the warzone and hope that the enemy doesn't start shooting neutral ships, or go around the entire warzone. Either way they are going to take longer to get to where they are going than they would have otherwise.

This might even prevent them reaching their destination at all, if it is actually within the warzone. Which converts this from a delay to a roadblock.

Traffic Control

This relies on the game universes interstellar travel having narrow routes that have choke points, whether wormhole portals or hyperspace jump gates. If these exist then it is possible for traffic to build up. This might be just through normal heavy traffic or could be a ship in distress that is blocking the entire choke point for hours. This isn't a delay that the players can do that much about, short of blasting their way through all the ships ahead of them.

They can try arguing or bribing the traffic control officials but every ship caught in the delay is going to be doing this so this could easily get expensive and may result in them taking longer to get through as traffic control punishes them for being rude or threatening. Similar delays can occur when the players are trying to dock or undock their ship from a station. This again can just be down to heavy traffic congesting the docking areas, or if a greater delay is needed some minor problem on the docks, spilt chemicals for example, might leave a couple of the docks out of action.

This can easily cause the traffic to back up and lead to a few hours of delay again. This also works if interstellar travel doesn't involve fixed routes and choke points. On the same lines there can easily be some delays with customs and border security. This could be through staff shortages, heavy traffic or just players being typically obnoxious and having to wait till the end of the line to get processed.

Loose Cargo

Whatever type of ship the players are on there is going to be something in storage that if loose would cause complications. This could be the cargo itself on a civilian freighter, a dangerous and exotic pet getting loose on a luxury liner or just explosive ordinance on a military ship. Whatever it is if it is not stored correctly it can lead to problems later.

The delay comes about when the cargo gets loose during heavy manoeuvring, sounding alarms on the bridge and forcing the ship to slow down or halt while the situation is resolved. If the ship doesn't slow there is a good chance that the loose cargo will do some damage to the ship, which will cause the players to have to stop anyway.

When they do slow down or stop they will still have to get the cargo under control and stored properly, which could take some time. This can also be expensive for the players if their own hardware is part of the cargo. Hardware can easily be damaged or destroyed, which might be just expensive to replace or might not be replaceable at all.

ROAD BLOCKS

Sometimes the players decide to go somewhere that you just don't want them to. You need to stop them going there for the foreseeable future but don't want to make it too obvious. Sometimes you can just hit the destination system with something nasty, making it uninhabitable and removing whatever the players wanted to go there for. However this is not always possible or might have too many ramifi cations for the overall game universe, in which case you need to stop the players without destroying the system or turning it into a war zone. Road blocks are a lot more effective in game universes where space travel happens down specific routes. Whether it is

from navigation beacon to beacon through hyperspace, such as *Babylon 5*, or jump routes from system to system in *Traveller*, specific routes lead to choke points and these can be blocked without making the destination system unusable itself.

Choke points are the key systems that anyone travelling to the target planet must pass through along the way and if they are unusable for some reason then the entire route is rendered inoperable. Where ships are free to navigate their own route, not necessarily passing through inhabited systems, then it becomes more difficult to establish external road blocks. Instead you have to look inside their vessel for ways of stopping them. One alternative is always to take out their Faster Than Light drive, of whatever sort and strand them in the current system, however that forces you to keep running games in that system for a while, which may not help the overall plot progression. Instead you need ways of stopping them going to the target, while still leaving them their freedom.

Plagues

Always a good way of blocking a choke point system. Some deadly plague is loose, capable of infecting members of different species and for which there is either no cure, or the cure is very expensive. No ships will be allowed to enter the system and those that do arrive will be quarantined and not allowed to leave, to prevent the spread of this plague to other systems. Even if the players are not themselves susceptible to this plague the authorities are unlikely to allow them to just fly away, potentially carrying the plague with them. The down side of this option is that it relies upon there being authorities with sufficient military clout to enforce this. Where the local or galactic authorities are not powerful enough to enforce a system wide quarantine then this option becomes a little more risky.

Technical fault

This is a good way of temporarily blocking a choke point system. It's an external fault that directly affects FTL travel. In *Babylon 5* it might be the hyperspace beacons for the system, in a universe that uses wormholes to travel between systems it would be the wormhole itself. This is a good way of stopping the players because it doesn't offer any arguments, it is just impossible to go through the system in question. However it can be reversed at a later point if you want to give the players access to the system later.

Nav Comp Error

This is a way of blocking off the players if there isn't a choke point to use. Have their vessel's navigation computer suffer some incidental damage somewhere along the line, whether from virus attack or physical damage, which means that the navigational data for the system that they want to go to is destroyed, erased or corrupted. Depending on the nature of the damage they might just need to buy the navigational coordinates again but

you can hamper that in any number of ways. Charging them a high price, lack of availability, uncooperative sales assistants are all just examples. However the damage might be a lot more serious. Whole circuits (crystals?) within the navigation computer may need to be replaced, or in a worst case scenario the entire navigation computer. This means getting in the techs to do the job, finding spare parts, hiring in specialist equipment, all of which will be expensive and time consuming. If you want to make things even worse the ship might have a design fl aw that means that the ships navigation computer cannot be repaired without cutting through the hull. This will probably require work in a shipyard, maybe even a drydock and will certainly tie up the ship for days, even weeks. Not to mention costing a bomb.

SIDEBARS

These are mini sub plots and items that can easily be dropped into a game but have the potential to develop into major sub–plots or even hijack the entire game. However they can just as easily be ignored completely. They are particularly useful if targeted at characters or players that don't otherwise get much air time as it brings them to the foreground.

Bounty

The group become aware that there is a bounty out on the head of one of the team. This might be through word of mouth, the dataverse, holographic projectors left in the market square or through whatever sort of technology is used within your game world. The bounty is for the capture, or death if your feeling vicious, of one or more members of the team. It will not give them any idea who's set it or what it is for at first, however with some investigation it will be revealed that the bounty is for something that they did earlier in the campaign and thought they had gotten away with. The bounty could be official, with police and licences bounty hunters coming after the PC, or it might be entirely illegal and lead to criminal bounty hunters gunning for them. This serves several uses. Firstly it gives the players something to think about and investigating why they have bounties on them should take up some time, giving the Ref a chance to breath. Secondly it enables you to throw bounty hunters at the team whenever you need to up the pace and introduce a little action. Thirdly it opens up possible plotlines where the players seek to resolve whatever has caused the bounty to be placed to begin with. Fourth it may also teach players that there are always consequences to their actions. Even if they think that they have gotten away with something, it can come back to haunt them later. This works particularly well in a longer running campaign that hasn't had too high a casualty rate so that there are still several of the original characters left, who will be the targets of the bounty. In a long running game they might have difficulty remembering just what they did to cause this. Fifth, if targeted at a character that otherwise dominates the group and

is unpopular, it may actually provoke a revolt within the team leading to that characters expulsion from the team or death.

Distress Call

The ship picks up the message shell of a ship in trouble somewhere close at hand. Analysis of the message shell indicates that they are likely to be the first ship to have heard the call. The question is what they should do about it. They might go in on a rescue operation, looking to evac survivors and save lives. Maybe they are more interested in the salvage that the ship represents. Perhaps the message is encoded, some high end military scrambled signal so they don't know what it is saying or who's sending it, other than it is high up in the military. Curiosity may get them interested, that and the promise of cutting edge military hardware. Alternatively the message could be of alien origins, which may be a big thing if alien races have yet to be encountered. Here the bounty is likely to be scientific, although opening trade with an alien race is likely to be lucrative as well. And there is always the possibility that it isn't a distress call at all, it might be awarning…..

Kid Siblings; Always a pain in the butt

Through rumours, internet, old boys' network or whatever sources of information the players have access to, they learn that the younger sibling of one of the players is in trouble. This could be that they are now in prison, possibly for something that their older sibling actually did, or that they have been drafted into the military and are serving in a high attrition rate military unit off fighting a war somewhere.

Whatever has happened to them, they are obviously in it over their heads and will be facing harsh treatment and a high risk of death. The situation is bad enough that the sibling player should be considering dropping everything to go to the rescue but without this being immediately practical. That might be because the prison is too tough for the players to crack without serious preparation, or that the war is some distance away. The point is that the players cannot go and deal with this immediately but it can become an ongoing sub–plot for them to be worrying about later. Gathering the resources or information for them to be able to rescue the sibling later can become a major motivational factor, especially for a character who doesn't have much reason to do anything else. Eventually the players will be in a position to go and rescue their kid brother or sister. This is likely to be the core of a major scenario.

 If it is a prison break, then they will have to fight their way in, find their sibling and get them out again, while possibly dealing with all the other prisoners in there as well. If it is rescue from the military then they will either be attacking a military base, not known for being easy, or meeting up with the sibling in the middle of a war zone, with all the potential for problems that this entails.

He is doing What now?

This one works best in a campaign that has been running for some time. Find an enemy that they defeated during an early fire fight or scenario that they are going to remember and who survived the experience. Now reintroduce this enemy in a completely different context from last time.

For example if he, or she, was a criminal thug that they took down in a shoot out he, or she, should turn up as a politician who's just been elected to some serious office. Or if he was a commercial rival last time, they should learn that he is now a professional assassin working for a powerful crime family. The point is that whatever he or she is now doing it should be something that could make them a threat to the players again but in a completely different way than he was the first time.

TRAVELLERS AID SOCIETY S.O.S.

Now this is a specific type of distraction aimed at characters in *Traveller* who have membership of the *Traveller*s Aid Society. Not only does membership offer assorted benefits, it does put a bit of duty onto the players. A member of the society that did not answer the SOS of another member would be severely looked down on, if not expelled from the society entirely.

This means that if the players get an SOS from another society member the character with membership will be under a lot of pressure to answer it. This not only provokes debate within the team as he or she argues for answering the call, which may buy you some time but also will keep the group busy as they go and deal with the emergency.

Ship in Distress

One of the simplest SOS possibilities. The TAS member is on board a small ship that has suffered some sort of damage or malfunction and is in need of urgent assistance. The ship is either loosing pressure or has suffered a power failure and is slowly freezing, so they need assistance within X hours or days. X should be longer than it will take the players to reach the ship in distress but shorter than the travel times for any rescue service or other ship to reach them. The point is that if the players don't go, then the crew on the ship in distress will likely die.

Assuming that the players do the 'right thing' and go to the ships rescue it shouldn't be difficult to do. Repairs to the ship should be something simple, it is just the ship in distress doesn't have the right parts, equipment or skills to do the job. This may require skill rolls and a degree of hazard, if for example they have to do an EVA to perform the repairs, but the main point is that it will take them time to get to and from the ship in distress. The society member will obviously be grateful for the rescue. What sort of reward they give the players for it will depend on your team. Perhaps they are an attractive member of the relevant species and are willing to express their gratitude privately. Or

they may be rich and will give the team money for their aid. Another option is that they provide the team with some useful information, perhaps as the starting point to your next sub–plot. This is a great opportunity to give the players whatever they need to keep the game running smoothly.

Missed Flight

A less urgent option this one and not one that is going to delay the team particularly. When in port they get word that there is a society member who's missed their connecting ship to the system that the team are heading to next. As fellow members of the *Traveller*s aid society, they are called upon to give this person a lift to the next system so that they can make their next connection. While nobody is going to die if they don't, it is going to harm their reputation with the society if they don't do this.

The point of this is that it gets an NPC onto the ship for the next leg of the journey. This can fi ll game time if you make them someone with interesting stories to tell, assuming your players are interested in the conversational side of roleplaying. Or they may have useful information on where hardware can be acquired. They can be there to further the plot, if they have information that will be of use to the ongoing story. The one thing that shouldn't happen is that the players kill their fellow *traveller* for their money, hardware or whatever. The society knows that they boarded the players' ship, if they aren't there at the other end, well the player with the society membership can kiss it goodbye just for starters. The alternative is that the stranded traveller isn't who he or she claims to be. They might be an escaped criminal or even a psychotic serial killer. This will make the journey to the next system a lot more interesting. The players will be trapped on their own ship with a dangerous killer, who should be tough enough to give them some trouble at the very least.

Spaced

The SOS comes from nearby their ship but not in the direction that they want to go. Travel time shouldn't be too long but enough that they will notice the delay. What they are coming for is someone who's been spaced out an airlock in their vac suit. They only have air for a few hours, long enough for the players to reach them but not with that much time to spare. This combines elements of the first two, as they have to go out of their way to rescue someone and then they will have a stranger on board their ship for the remainder of the journey. Of course the biggest question is why they were spaced in the first place and as with the missed flight, this could open up whole new sub–plots.

BAR FLUFF

In any game, sometimes the players are looking for a little more detail on the patrons of the local bar, restaurant, drugs den or whatever than you have time to cater to. This is where bar fluff comes in useful. Each of these is a thumbnail description of a bar patron that can be dropped into a game at short notice.

Some of these may spark off ideas that can be built into subplots later.

These are split into four groups, men, women, aliens and machines for ease of finding the appropriate type to add to a bar. The aliens will not be race specific so that they can be used with any game system. The machines will only be of use in games where there are sentient machine life or at least pseudo sentient droids.

The Men

· Menial working men, 2d6 of them, in after a hard day's work at some menial job. Rough and loud.

· Office workers, shirt and tie brigade, 1d6 of them, in after work for a quick drink.

· Military grunts, 1d6 of them, on shore leave and looking for fun. Not armed.

· *Mercenary*, young and green, clean and fresh military surplus and a basic rifle. Loud and got a point to prove.

· *Mercenary*, middle aged, good quality armour and battlescars. Heavy battlefield rifle. Quiet and dangerous.

· *Mercenary*, old veteran, top notch defensive gear but odd choice of weapon, net gun, grenade launcher or the likes. Old and tired, just wants to drink.

· *Mercenary*, looks young (actually very old with rejuvenation treatment), very good power armour or similar with small but powerful inbuilt weapons. Good natured and cheerful.

· Middle aged man with a belly, smoking cigars and drinking expensively. Well dressed but radiates violence, actually highly placed figure in organised crime and has a temper.

· Street criminals, 1d6 young men in shabby clothes, drinking lots of cheap booze. Hidden weapons and a tendency to shoot first and not ask questions.

· Students, 1d6 young men in shabby clothes, drinking lots of cheap booze.

· Frontier lawman, middle aged and in good shape. Slightly worn clothing and obviously armed. Righteous and just but has a quick temper.

· Professional gambler, early middle age, well dressed, armed with powerful sidearm of some sort. Sat playing poker or whatever card game is available.

· Gargoyle, man with extensive worn or cybernetic sensory recording devices. Sat in the corner of the bar watching and recording everything for someone.

· Underage boy, dressed in stylised sailors uniform. Drinking navy rum and chatting to the most available looking women. Either extensive rejuve work or adult personality downloaded into child's body.

The Women

· Office workers, secretaries in skirts, 1d6 of them in for after work drinks, ages vary.

· Shop assistants, 1d6 of them, still in their uniforms. Mostly young and boisterous. In for after work drinks.

· Students, 2d6 of them out on the town, major partying and all dressed up, all teenagers/early twenties.

· Escort, not with client. Older than the usual and somewhat past her prime. Driven to work by addiction. Likely to be capable of violence if threatened and to be armed with something small but lethal.

· Technician, pretty but oil stained, dressed in worn overalls with tools, drinking heavily and swearing a lot.

· Navy officers, 1d6 young women in smart uniforms. Drinking and out on the pull. Will be armed.

· Professional gambler, middle aged but looking good through genetic mods or surgery, dressed in casual clothing but obviously has money. No obvious security.

· 2 jet bike cops, skin tight uniforms, powerful sidearms at their sides. Sat drinking at a table in deep conversation but aware of the rest of the room. Partners, possibly in several senses of the word.

· *Mercenary* cyborg woman, much of her body replaced with military grade cybernetics or prosthetics. Quietly drinking at the corner of the bar.

· Foul mouthed and smelly woman, age difficult to tell under the dirt. Arguing with the bar staff on whether she is going to drink here.

· Little old lady sitting in a dark corner drinking spirits, dressed in multiple layers of cloaks and shawls. Hidden beneath these is an artificial combat body packed with weapons. Looks harmless but actually lethal assassin.

· *Mercenary*, middle aged but fit woman lovingly holding a powerful sniper rifle. Will be hanging with whatever other military types are around. Likely to be smart and quiet.

The Aliens

· Alien, known for aggression, drinking alone at the bar, armed with ceremonial blade of some sort.

· Full environment suit, vaguely humanoid in form but not recognizable as one of the known alien races. Sat in the corner not doing anything, might be mistaken for decoration. Or perhaps is decoration mistaken for a customer.

· Alien with reputation for peacefulness or cowardice, drunk or intoxicated in some other way. Stumbling around the bar being loud and aggressive.

· Alien, reputation for deviousness, sitting at a table playing poker or other card game. Well dressed by their standards and obviously wealthy.

· Alien, dressed in human style suit and speaking human languages, obviously very taken with the human race. Will be keen to speak to any humans present.

· Alien, naturally or artificially looks like a human woman in important aspects, dressed in slinky dress or similar and cruising among the human male population of the bar. Might be an escort, pick pocket or just into inter species relations.

· Alien, known warrior species, heavily armed and wearing combat armour of some sort. Stood at the side of the room watching events. Probably bodyguard for someone in the room.

· Ugly alien sitting at a table eating, has disgusting table manners or is eating vile food. Tables all around are clear.

· Alien crew of a freighter, 1d6 aliens of same species, all grimy from extensive flight, drinking and talking together.

· Alien priest in robes, very quiet and serene. Looks lost and out of place in the bar.

The Machines

· Serving droid of some sort, waiting patiently by the door for someone. Polite if spoken to.

· AI android in the bar preaching for improvements in AI rights. Small and polite machine with near human appearance.

· Small flying droid with annoying manners and high pitched voice floating around the bar examining things.

· Large AI war machine of some sort, self aware and armed, sat playing cards or gambling in some other way.

· Sexbot, dressed as a streetwalker, owned by the bar to provide special entertainment to draw customers.

· Cluster of specialist droids or AIs, gathered around a table communicating in machine language, reason for being there unintelligible.

· Small and fast looking humanoid AI war machine sat up high somewhere in the bar watching events. May be bar security or personal protection for someone here.

· Camera drone, fl oating around the room filming everyone in the bar. Might be security or some sort of spy.

· Medical droid, selling services to counter the intoxicants being sold or provide hangover cures for later.

In Conclusion

This article is intended to do two things. Firstly as it says it provides ready snippets that can be dropped into a game at short notice when you need them in an emergency. Of course it doesn't matter how good this material is, it still has to be adjusted to suit the players and characters involved in the game. Material written by others can never match up to the quality of material a ref writes specifically for their players, designed to play directly to their strengths and weaknesses.

But if you don't have anything of your own, these will be better than nothing. However beyond that these little vignettes may be good seeds from which to grow your own sub–plots, scenarios and games. This might happen through including something detailed here that the players then bite on and so it develops into something bigger, or reading this inspires fresh ideas of your own that can be developed in their own sub–plots.

Signs & Portents

We hope you have enjoyed this first *Traveller* Compendium, and have found all sorts of new ideas to insert into your campaigns.

If so, remember that a new issue of *Signs & Portents* appears on our web site on the first day of every month, packed from cover to cover with new rules, scenarios and other juicy articles to support all of our games. Better yet, it is completely free to download, so you can start using the material immediately!

Hopefully, this *Compendium* has also inspired you to add your own creations to the *Traveller* universe. That being the case, you can be pretty certain that other players will want to see what you have done and add your material to their own games!

Writing for *Signs & Portents* could not be easier – simply send in any articles in Word format to the address below, and we will review what you have done. If the article makes the grade, we will soon be in touch with any suggested changes and then, these completed, you may well find yourself in print soon after!

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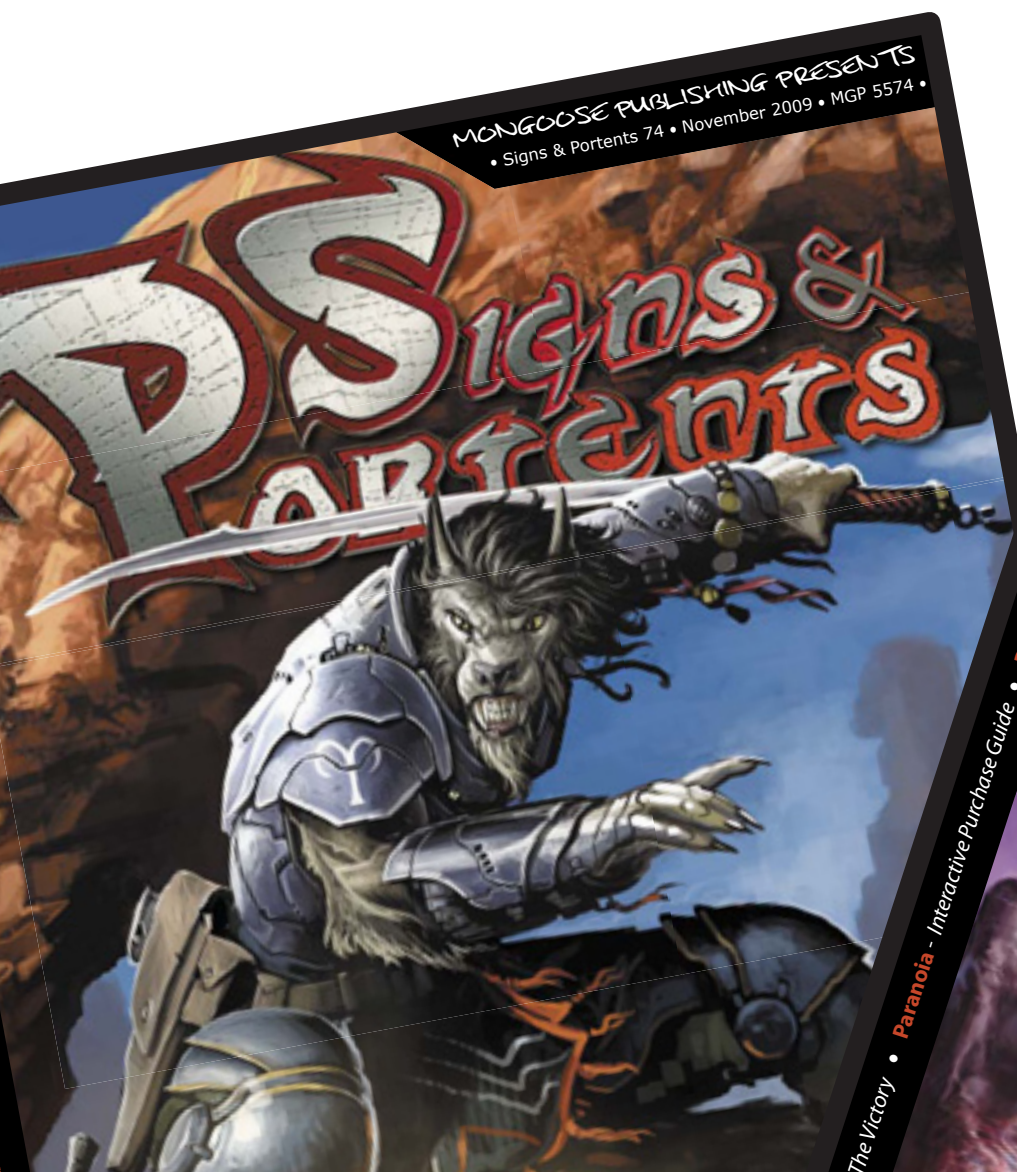
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