Approved for Use With MEGATRAVELLER™ and 2300™

the TRAVELLERS' Digest

Number 20

Classic Traveller Adventure:
An Act of Conscience

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Reft and Trojan Reach

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Middlemen

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— Akidda Laagir, from "Diplomacy and Prejudice" in the Travellers' Digest, 1117
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How about that — here's Digest Number 20 in your mailbox or store, and the ink on number 19 is hardly even dry. What gives? Well, issue number 19 was about 8 weeks late, so we've worked hard putting ourselves back on schedule with issue 20. Issue 20 is back on schedule, coming out the first of July. Look for issue 21, the grand finale issue of the Travellers' Digest, exactly one quarter later, this October.

ENTER: THE MEGATRAVELLER JOURNAL
What? The last issue of the Travellers' Digest? Yes, that's right. With issue 21, the Grand Tour we started with issue 1 of the Digest will be over. Meanwhile, the 2300 section continues to pull in abysmal ratings in our survey sweepstakes, and the 1989 survey vote to keep or pull the 2300AD section, while surprising, was far from decisive (it was split 50-50).

Given this and other developments, we have decided the time has come to take a new direction with our magazine: focus solely on MegaTraveller, and re-orient the magazine content toward the details that matter to characters. We aim to turn the Digest's approach "inside-out," if you will. See the ad in this issue for more details on the new MegaTraveller Journal. Those of you with subscriptions will get the balance of your subscription as issues of the MegaTraveller Journal. Our hope is the new Journal will give you even better coverage of our favorite roleplaying game.

TO OUR 2300AD READERS...
As we promised in Issue 18 of the Traveller's Digest, the 2300 section is staying in for the duration of the Traveller's Digest run (that is, through issue 21), but once the new MegaTraveller Journal starts up, Digest Group has no further plans for 2300 support. Sorry, guys, but we regret to say, with our focus being exclusively MegaTraveller in our new magazine, the 2300 section no longer fits into the picture.

If the only reason why you subscribe to our magazine is for the 2300AD section, then let us know. We'll refund your money for any issues you have left over after Digest 21 comes out.

WHAT'S UP ON THE PRODUCT FRONT
Some products are right on schedule, others (surprise, surprise!) are behind. On the ones that are behind, we misjudged what resources we had available to work on these projects, plain and simple. But rather than just slap something together to keep you happy, we're determined to take our time and make sure we do it right.

On schedule (more or less)...
- Manhunt (Onnesium Quest Trilogy, vol 1): The first in a trilogy of adventures where the player characters seek out the fabled Victory Belt, a mythical planetoid belt of untold wealth in onnesium-118. A GenCon '90 release, 56 pages, $8.95.
- Flaming Eye: A follow-on adventure product for Vilani and Vargr. If you aren't completely sure how to play MegaTraveller aliens, here's a product to help you learn how. A GenCon '90 release, 56 pages, $8.95.
- Solomani and Aslan (Aliens, vol 2): On schedule for a fourth quarter '90 release. If you've seen Vilani and Vargr, then you can look forward to this volume being more of the same kind of detail about still more MegaTraveller aliens: the Solomani and Aslan.

In the works, but no definite release date...
- Robots and Cyborgs: Updated robot design rules for MegaTraveller, plus new rules for creating cyborg characters. Also incorporates 101 Robots, with new art.
- Grand Explorations: Going beyond charted space into the great unknown. Includes new rules on exploratory missions and colonization as well as a new world generation system for star systems beyond charted space. Also incorporates four adventures to give the referee ideas on how to run exploratory adventures in MegaTraveller.

Behind schedule...
- Black Duke: We've all agreed on a working outline (finally). Writing is now underway.
- World Builder's on Computer: The software was partially done and went back to drawing board for redesign. Trust us: the wait will be worth it!
- Second Survey on Computer: Roughly half of the 37 sectors of data has been updated to the current Imperial date of 1120. Once the other half has been updated, this will be released. Again, you will be glad we took the extra time to make sure this data is right!

I DREAM OF GENIE
If you are not on the GEnie computer network, you are missing out on an opportunity to talk with the DGP staff, GDW staff, and some of the more famous freelance Traveller authors (like Terry McInnes, author of COACC and several Challenge and Digest articles) — not to mention getting in on interesting discussions with the premier Traveller fan organizations like the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG). Call 1-800-639-9636 for the details about how to join GEnie and get in on all the excitement.
AKIDDA LAAGIIR, JOURNALIST

STATS:
858AAB age 51 8 terms Cr 21,000
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Admin-1, Brawling-1, Computer-0
Holocrystal Recorder
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 319-1059

Position: Current recipient of the Travellers’ Digest Touring Award.

Akidda Laagir started at age 18 as a copy boy with the Mora World Review; his friendly face and ability to gain the trust of others contributed to his steady career progress.

Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against “the system,” preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things. This boldness (especially in interview situations) has also contributed favorably to his career.

His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well-developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to a strange locale or culture—a skill that has saved his neck on more than one occasion.

Like most writers, he is consumed with curiosity, and when the Travellers’ Digest journalism contest was held again in 1986, he was among the first to apply. His piece was entitled "The Imperial Frontier: The Next Millennium." In it, he discussed the spinward frontier sectors of Daneb, Spinward Marches, Trojan Reach, and Reft as well as their role in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1,000 years. On 258-1099, he received the announcement that he had won the coveted Travellers’ Digest Touring Award.

Akidda has been travelling and submitting articles of his travels for over seven years.

Roleplaying Notes: Akidda’s strong interview skill indicates he has a real nose for a good story; to play him otherwise would be untrue to his character. His natural curiosity makes him likely to pursue “trouble” rather than run from it.

The counterbalance to Akidda’s tendency to seek out such trouble is his streetwise skill, which enables him to lessen the harmful results of an otherwise awkward situation. His streetwise skill may enable him to “stumble” onto a valuable source of information the others would overlook.

Keeping this in mind, the referee should use the NPCs encountered by Akidda as those with the most valuable information to the group, as a result of Akidda’s abilities. Akidda’s phenomenal interview-5 skill gives him tremendous insight when dealing with people.

DUR TELEMON, EX-SCOUT

STATS:
A7A858 age 43 6 terms Cr10,000
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1, Gambling-1, Brawling-1, Computer-1, Vacc Suit-0
Auto Pistol
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 038-1068

Position: Ex-Scout (on reserve status).

Dur Telem was born into the Scout Service. His father was in the Scout Service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers had served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure.

The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager—his father’s service in the war was a source of pride for the entire family and deepened Dur’s love for the Scouts.

Dur’s individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a "routine" mapping expedition on Panner/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Kreinsteind’s life. Neither of them is overly emotional about it, but it was that initial chance encounter that grew into a respect and friendship between the two men over the years.

Dur’s second and third terms were spent in District 268 and Five Sisters Subsectors doing various planetary surface and orbital surveys. During these surveys, Dur learned much about staying alive and living off the land in unusual environments. Halfway through his fourth term, he was transferred from his field post in the Exploration Branch to a bureaucratic position in Fleet Support.

Dur has resigned from the Scouts and has been travelling with his uncle, Akidda Laagir.

Roleplaying Notes: Dur is the brash adventurer of the group and as such he is the least likely to fear physical confrontations or physical discomfort. He is also the most likely of the group to act without giving due consideration to the consequences. He has genuine concern for others and is the most likely to risk his life to save someone.
DR. THEODOR KRENSTEIN, SCIENTIST

STATS:
485FCB age 67 12 terms Cr 300,000
Robotics-5, Leader-3, Electronics-2, JOT-2, Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Medical-1, Mechanical-1
Hand Computer (TL15), Electronic Tool Kit, Robot AB-101
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 173-1043

Position: Gra Rechno Chair of Computational Robotics at Ryhanor Institute of Technology — on sabbatical leave.

Dr. Theodor Krenstein is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the "ologies" inbetween.

Born on the planet Ryhanor, he entered the Ryhanor Institute of Technology at the age of eighteen, eventually receiving advanced degrees in computer science and robotics. He went on to serve three terms as Dean of the School of Robot Science at HIT, after which he was appointed to the Gra Rechno Chair of Computational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position. He is the author of 12 holocystal publications and over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, in addition to holding more than 250 Imperial military patents for his inventions and robotics work. Despite his academic success, he has become bored and is currently working as a consultant to Deneb Sector.

Among his many pursuits, Dr. Krenstein has aided the Scouts in developing robots for planetary surface surveys. During a test in 1900 on Pannet/ Rylahan, members of a disgruntled anti-technicist group kidnapped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout Service didn't meet their demands. A young Scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer rescue team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the doctor.

After this incident, the doctor constructed his servant, bodyguard and experiment in synaptic learning, "Aybee."

Dr. Krenstein has been travelling with Dur Telemon and Akkida Laagir since their chance meeting five years ago.

Roleplaying Notes: Dr. Krenstein, the "Mr. Fix-It" of the group, contributes valuable analytical skills. Together with Aybee, the doctor may contribute unusual insights to the Doctor's puzzle or Akkida might otherwise overlook.

The doctor is slightly mischievous in the manner in which he conceals Aybee's true robotic nature — a source of much fun if roleplayed completely. The doctor seeks new experiences and knowledge for both his robot and himself, so he will pursue adventure suggestions readily.

Keep the doctor's age in mind — he is the least able of the group physically, although Aybee helps to make up for this.

AYBEE WAN OWEN

APPARENT STATS:
8D09CB age 19 0 terms Cr 0
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Laser Welder-1
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 049-1081

Actual Pseudobiological Robot Profile:
Constructed in 1091 by Dr. Theodor Krenstein
561x2-A2-PM327-FDC7(J) Cr11,970,000 319kg
Fuel=78.1 Duration=21.7 TL=15
7/17 (Jack)
Head (10%), 2 Lt arms
2 Eyes (+1 light intensity), 2 ears, vodor, touch sensors
Power int, brain int, TL 15 holorecorder, Lt laser welder
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Valet-1, Laser Welder-1, Rescue-1, Emotion Simulation

Position: Personal servant and protege of Dr. Krenstein.

As 101, or "Aybee," is a pseudobiological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. Aybee's apparent UFP is what Dr. Krenstein wishes Aybee to project to others based upon his programming (he is actually capable of much greater values); his intelligence and education are estimated from his computer hardware and software; and his social class is based upon his position as a knight.

Although Aybee's programming gives him certain basic abilities, he lacks true artificial intelligence and thus can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level. Aybee's "weapon" is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. Many Imperial worlds specify standards for robot-installed weapons, and Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee so that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are generally not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use Aybee as a weapon at short range.

Roleplaying Notes: Without a doubt, Aybee is the most unusual of the quartet. He is also the most difficult to roleplay effectively.

Aybee is the most valuable piece of equipment the group has. He can record situations in 3-D hologram form (10 minutes' worth, after which it is relegated to 2-D storage), then play them back for future study at the group's leisure. He will quietly observe a situation and report his findings to the doctor, keeping the doctor's safety as his priority.

Aybee is a good source of logical analysis, although his conclusions lack deep creativity. Play him as a native, knowledge-hungry character who is learning what his value system ought to be (somewhat like an adolescent child). He should make errors in judgment when a situation relies heavily on a knowledge of human nature.

Strangers who find out that Aybee is a robot may react negatively (increase the difficulty of any interpersonal task one level). Most will never suspect from casual observation that Aybee is nothing but a machine.

To determine Aybee's role at one encounter:

Difficult, Robotics, Interview, 2 min

Referee: Roll once during the first encounter. Thereafter roll daily if the character constantly spends extended periods of time near Aybee. Otherwise, ignore this task — there is no chance for detection.

Aybee's power plant is a closed hydrogen/oven oxygen fuel cell. Aybee carries his own hydrogen supply, but the hydrogen is oxidized by oxygen from the air. Aybee is thus much like a true human in this respect — if he loses his oxygen supply, his power plant will not function. After an accident at the Shusham Robotics Conference, Krenstein installed a half-hour supply of oxygen for emergencies. Aybee's fuel cell produces a harmless waste by-product which must be eliminated from time to time: pure water.
An Act of Conscience

ADVENTURE NUMBER 20
—by Tad Ringo and Ian McKinney

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place on worlds in and near the Florian League, a human client state in Trojan Reach Sector. It deals with a robot that has attained sentience as he and his travelling partners encounter a society that uses slaves.

Dates: All dates in this adventure correspond to the Imperial Calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 97-1111. Place: The adventure begins at the down starport on Halka, an agricultural world in the Florian League (Trojan Reach 0510).

Non-Player Characters

Kellendrian Darkavar, ex-Scout

BA8A67 age 38 5 terms
Cr50,000
Ship Tactics-3, Auto Pistol-2, Engineering-2, Recon-2,
Brawling-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Gunnery-1, Navigation-1,
Pilot-1,
Starport A, Small, Thin Atm, Wet, High Mod Law, Average Stellar

Kelle is a friend of Dur’s from their time together in the Scouts. She and Dur had a brief romance at that time, and there is still a mutual attraction. Kelle has just left active service, and has struck out on her own. She is dabbling in free trade enterprises to see if the merchant’s life might be of interest. She is not shy or passive; she acts on her convictions and is quite willing to take on a leadership role if the position needs to be taken.

Alyssander Halkan, native

798833 age 22 0 terms
Cr100
Herding-1, Steward-0
Starport B, Large, Std Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Early Stellar

Alyssander is a member of the albino human race native to Halka. He has worked as a farm hand most of his life. He is seeking transportation off-world because many native Halkans have been kidnapped into a growing black market slave trade, and he fears black marketeers may be after him.

Alyssander is naive about the ways of the world outside of herding and farming, but has a stoic resolve to maintain his freedom.

Anton Vorkash, industrialist

A65989 age 54 9 terms
Cr50,000,000
Administration-4, Bribery-3,
Carousing-2, Leader-2,
Persuasion-2, Auto Pistol-1
Starport A, Small, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Low Law, High Stellar

Anton Vorkash is the Vice-President of Vorkash Manufacturing, a corporation involved in mining operations in and around the Florian League. His main concerns are the increase of his wealth and status, and he is unscrupulous in their pursuit. As well as being a braggart, he is a physically huge man, and he uses his imposing physique to bully others in business affairs. Vorkash sees the Imperium as his ticket to acceptance into the upper (noble) class of Florian society.

Olanda Trullt, merchant broker

566D85 age 50 8 terms
Cr1,000,000
Bribery-4, Broker-4,
Streetwise-3, Administration-2,
Computer-2, Forgery-2, Pilot-1,
Grav Veh-1
Starport B, Large, Std Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Early Stellar

Olanda Trullt is the brains behind the black market on Halka, and is directly involved in organizing the growing slave trade. She was once a free trader, but a major subsector-wide merchant line drove her out of business. She turned to brokering to make a living, and vowed no one would ever have that kind of power over her again. She is very intelligent, but cold and calculating. She is quite at ease in her black market dealings, mainly because she feels she is in complete control.
18. Gaining a Foothold: The characters arrive in the Viceroy system (Viceroy is a company-owned mining world two parsecs away from Halka, and not a member of the Florian League), and encounter resistance from the starport until it is revealed that the characters are Imperial nobles.
19. Rumors: The characters mingle with off-duty workers and discover that Halkan slaves are used in the mines. This can lead to Nugget 20 or Nugget 29.
20. Meeting With Vorkash: Vorkash tries to impress the characters, and reveals that he keeps holographic recordings of all his business meetings. He also invites the characters on a tour of the mines.
21. Break-in: The characters can break into the offices and take the holocrystals which will incriminate Anton Vorkash in the slave trade.
22. Back at the Office: If a break-in was not attempted, this is the characters' chance to get the holocrystals from the office before they tour the mines.
23. Tour Down Under: The characters proceed to a guided tour of the mines.
24. Some Time Alone: Vorkash is called away, and the characters are left unattended in the elevator, giving them a chance to use a computer terminal to locate their friend.
25. Into the Mines: The characters head into the mines to get Alyssander. One of the characters must assume the identity of a Vorkash employee in order to avoid questions.
26. Up the Shaft: The characters race back to their ship with Alyssander as a full-scale search tries to stop them. Alternatively, they may try to take all the slaves in sight and steal a cargo ship to carry them home.
27. Blast Out: Kelle uses the ship's turret armament to blast through the docking bay doors. The characters then head for a safe distance out from the planet to engage the jump drive, as they are pursued by a patrol ship.
28. Calling for Help: If the characters go back to Halka with new evidence, they can bring back a rescue mission for all the slaves. This leads to Nugget 30.
29. Back at Halka: By following the characters' ship to Halka, Vorkash makes a final futile attempt to prevent them from turning the holocrystals over to the authorities. Halkan system defense craft neutralize the attack and take Vorkash into custody.
30. Clear Conscience: Turning the evidence over to authorities on Halka shuts down the black market slave trade. The authorities apprehend Vorkash and Truitt, and the characters' ship is repaired as a reward. The characters are free to head home to the Spinward Marches.

1. AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

(Opening Dialogue)
"I'm sorry to see you fellows leave," said Captain MacLean. "Doubt if I'll ever again have such a distinguished crew." Amid a jumble of goodbyes and thanks, MacLean disappeared up the ramp into the Liberty, the 600-ton merchant ship that Dur, Akidda, Aybee, and Dr. Kraeenstein had served on in exchange for passage for the last few weeks.

"The Spinward Marches are less than a subsector away from here!" said Dur, his eyes alight. "My old Scout Service stomping grounds are right on our way home."

"Not very far past that and we'll be home," said Kraeenstein.

"Well, why don't we put some energy into getting there instead of standing around here talking about it," said Akidda. "I guess we should check the ads for working passage ..."
"Don't get too carried away, Kidd. I figure we can leave our bags in a hotel first." Dur clapped his uncle on the shoulder and picked up his own bags. "Fight this way, gentlemen!"

Dur jumped out ahead with a spring in his step. "This is certainly a different mood than we've seen Dur in recently," said Aybee.

"I'll say it is," said Akidda. "Say, Dur, what's gotten into you? What happened to 'Oh, I'll just get stuck in a desk job when we get back'?

Dur slowed down a bit to match his friends' pace. He lowered his voice conspiratorially. "I just have the feeling of a sudden that anything could happen. After all," he said,

"it's a whole new planet!"

"But Dur," said Aybee, "we've been on new planets before...

"It's an old Scout expression, Aybee. Like 'it's a whole new grabbal game'. Same thing."

"Even so," said Krenstein, "I hope we can leave the system more easily than we entered it."

"There's a nice-looking place on your left, Dur,"

The foursome turned into the Halka Down Port Hotel and started checking in at the counter. "Say, you couldn't tell us anything about why your planet is so heavily patrolled, could you?" Akidda asked the desk clerk as he signed his name.

"Our freighter was practically stopped twice on the way in to the starport!

"It's nothing to worry about, sir. The native Halkans were slaves and servants until just recently, when they won their freedom with help from the planetary government and the Floranian League. A very minor group of black marketers continues to defy the law by attempting to sell Halkans to off-planet interests. That's the reason for the blockade. Now that the Halkans have full citizenship, both governments are trying to safeguard their rights."

"The Halkans are a minor human race, if I'm not mistaken," said Krenstein.

"How could any human view another human as so inferior that they could be bought and sold as property?" Aybee said intensely.

The clerk looked somewhat startled, but recovered. "It certainly is a shame, sir."

"Come on, Aybee, let's go find our rooms," said Akidda, steering the robot toward the elevators and leaving a bemused Dr. Krenstein to follow in their wake.

Alone in the elevator, Aybee spoke up again. "Dr. Krenstein, what do you think of all this? Doesn't it seem wrong to you?"

"Well, yes it does, Aybee..."

"Then why didn't you say anything?"

"Sometimes it's better not to say anything about so emotional an issue, Aybee, especially around people we don't know," said Akidda. He shifted his grip from Aybee's elbow to his shoulder. "But I for one was glad to hear you say what you did."

There was a small silence, and then the elevator doors opened. The four companions stepped off the elevator as Krenstein said, "The slave issue on Halka is an isolated case, Aybee. It's a very rare problem within the Imperium."

"Perhaps the problem is more widespread than you think, Doctor," said Akidda. "There are many similarities between the attitudes of black marketers here on Halka and the attitudes of many Imperial citizens toward robots and androids. For example, even though androids are officially regarded as citizens of the Imperium, individual worlds within the Imperium are allowed to treat androids as property."

"If humanity can still take this attitude, then what chance have I got?" questioned Aybee.

No one had an immediate answer to that. Then Dur put his arm around Aybee's shoulders.

"Don't worry, Ayb. You've got us.

After a moment, Aybee smiled. "Thanks, Dur."

2. THE WORLD OF HALKA
(Character's Background, Library Data)

Halka (Trojan Reach 0510 B665544-A) is a member of the Floranian League, a human client state just a subsector away from the Spinward Marches. It occupies the south orbital zone around a giant M9 size III star. A total of seven planets, 12 satellites, and one asteroid belt occupy the system. Halka is the only world of these that is habitable. Roughly 12,000 kilometers in diameter, it has a standard atmosphere, and its surface is nearly divided between water and land masses. Halka is a prime example of an agricultural world.

Few areas on Halka are very far from the sea. There are many peninsulas both large and small along the coast. Generally, grain crops are grown in the plains, while the peninsulas yield fine fruit from which widely-exported wines are made. Native livestock is also raised on the planet.

The down starport is an excellent class B facility, surrounded by one of the largest cities on Halka. The city is a shining example of Halkan architecture and design, flowing elegantly up from the countryside. Fittingly, the Halka Institute of Art and Design is located there.

Members of the minor human race native to Halka are characterized by their slight build and their striking albino appearance, which is due to the dimness of Halka's star. In fact, they are not true genetic albinos. They have light gray (almost white) eyes and hair that ranges from white to pale blonde.

Halka was settled in -50 by Floranian colonists of noble heritage. The colonists soon discovered the minor human race native to Halka. Over the centuries, as the colony grew and the two societies interacted, a caste system developed. The nobles colonists saw the native Halkans as an inferior race, and employed them only as agricultural workers. Later, other acceptable areas of employment were established. Within the last decade, some business people on Halka began to look for new resources, to boost a declining economy. Some of those people saw the native Halkans as that resource, and the illegal slave trade came into being.

Today, native Halkans can be found in a growing number of jobs. Legal actions have been taken on Halka, as well as in the Floranian League government, to confer citizenship and voting rights on the Halkans, abolish the caste system, and put an end to the slave trade.

3. AN OLD FRIEND
(Dur finds Kelle)

Scene: You are looking through a starport computer listing of ships in port, when Dur comes across a name he recognizes, and listed with an Imperial Scout ship, no less! Dur hurries you over to the ship's pad. Standing in front of the battle-scarred Type S Scout/Courier with her back to you is a tall, slender woman wearing the form-fitting vass suit uniform of the Imperial Scouts. Her long, dark hair cascades past her shoulders.

"Kelle?" Dur asks anxiously. The woman turns around in response to the voice. She is quite attractive. Her face lights up with joy as she recognizes Dur.
"Dur Telemon! What in the galaxy are you doing here? I thought I'd never see you again!" With that said, Dur ran to each other and embrace.

Action: The captain is Kellen of Darkavar, a name that brings back fond memories for Dur. Kelle and Dur served in the Scouts together during Dur's second term, when they were both assigned field duty in District 268 and Five Sisters Subsectors of the Spinward Marches. They enjoyed a brief romance at the time, but it was broken up when duty took them separate ways. While their affection for each other should be roleplayed, it should not greatly affect the course of the adventure.

Kelle has just left active duty in the Scouts after the end of the Fifth Frontier War, and can fill the characters in on the results. She admits that it would be a lot easier running the ship with a crew of more than one, and suggests that the characters bring their belongings aboard and make themselves at home. She'll be heading back to the Marches soon, and it only makes sense that they travel with her.

Kelle is now on reserve status, and is contemplating a career change to that of a merchant or free trader.

4. SOMETHING ROTTEN ON HALKA
(Kelle picks up a cargo)

Scene: Kelle rents a large airraft, and you accompany her on her trip to pick up her cargo. The trip to the vineyard takes you out into the countryside. Vast fields of grain being harvested by machine give way to orchards as the trip progresses into the hills. Here native Halanks work by the hundreds to harvest the fruit. Occasionally you can see cheaply constructed barracks-like buildings — presumably to house the field workers.

Upon arrival at the vineyard, you can see these barracks up close. The workers are back from the fields, and are just standing around. You are not the only ones here to pick up a cargo, apparently. On the other side of the barracks sits a 50-ton shuttle, ready to transport its cargo into orbit.

A middle-aged woman appears to be in charge, and comes over to Kelle. "Ah, Darkavar, good. Come right over here and we'll get you squared away," she says.

Action: The middle-aged woman is Olinda Trutt, the broker that has arranged the cargo of wine for Kelle. A cargo floater holds a number of large plastic barrels, and the characters can start to load them into their airraft.

To load the barrels into the airraft using the cargo floater:
Routine, Grav Vehicle, Dex, 5 minutes

While the characters are loading the airraft, they should have a chance to notice the peculiar aspects of the shuttle and its cargo.

To notice details regarding the shuttle and its cargo:
Difficulty: Trader or Broker, Int, 5 minutes (safe, unskilled OK)
Referee: This should be a blind task roll (i.e., do not tell the players why they are rolling the dice). If the time for this task is longer than it takes to load the barrels onto the airraft, success is not possible. On success, the player notices that some of the cargo handlers from the shuttle are armed with laser rifles. On exceptional success, the player may also notice that there was no evidence of the cargo being loaded.

In fact, the cargo is the native Halanks workers. They are being sold into the slave trade, despite the fact that they are citizens. The owner will make a tidy sum and can just hire new workers later. The Halanks are transported against their will to secure locations and sold mainly to off-world interests.

5. A NEW FRIEND
(The characters take on a passenger)

Scene: You have returned to the ship's pad at the starport and are loading the barrels onto the cargo hold of the Scout ship, when you are approached by a native Halank. He asks, "Excuse me, are you taking passengers?" Before any of you can respond, he continues. "Am I suppose to ask you that? I hope it's all right. I've never been to the starport before, but I've saved some money and wish to travel away from here." The Halank rattles on nervously, but you are able to discern that his name is Alyssander, and he is offering you the equivalent of Cr100 for passage off world. He is obviously naive about star travel.

Action: The referee should encourage the characters, especially Aybee, to be sympathetic toward Alyssander. Alyssander will admit that he is trying to leave because he is afraid; several of his friends have disappeared, presumably kidnapped for the slave trade, and he might be next. If the characters don't want to take Alyssander's money, he will suggest that he could do some chores on the ship (a sort of working passage as steward). If the characters express concern about taking him, he points out quite truthfully that he is a citizen of Halak and free to go where he pleases.

6. TRAVEL PERMITS? WHAT TRAVEL PERMITS?
(A customs patrol boards the characters' ship)

Scene: You finish bringing your belongings on board the
ship, and Kelle asks for and receives clearance to depart. Dur heads back to engineering, as he will assume engineering duties. Dr. Krenstein familiarizes himself with the ship's computer. Akidda, Aybee, and Alyssander are free to do as they please.

About halfway out, you spot a patrol boat on the sensors, and soon thereafter you are hailed by them to confirm your cargo and flight plan. Kelle responds routinely, but the patrol asks for a hands-on inspection and permission to board.

At the airlock you greet the elegantly uniformed patrol captain. He is flanked by two crewmembers with laser rifles slung over their shoulders. Everything proceeds without a hitch, until one of the guards spots Alyssander. "Sir," he says to his captain, "I think we've got a violation here."

**Action:** Special travel permits are required for native Halkans to travel off world. The travel permits have been instituted by the government in an attempt to crack the black market slave trade through a trail of red tape. None of the characters, Kelle, or Alyssander knew of this red tape requirement. The referee should make certain the characters realize Alyssander was not trying to pull something, he just didn't know. Remember, he is very naive.

If the characters think to hide Alyssander to avoid the search, just in case, Alyssander should protest, saying he has nothing to hide, he's a citizen, and free to travel (true — with the permit, though). If the characters force him to hide or try to steer the customs agents away from Alyssander in any way, the characters' attempts will be thwarted.

7. **LOCK-UP**

(The characters are jailed until their trial)

**Scene:** The jail cell is in a basement level, and is damp from underground seepage through the wall. It is also poorly lit, and as all six of you are in one cell, it a bit crowded. After a few hours, a well-dressed young woman comes to your cell. She introduces herself as the defense attorney assigned to handle your case.

**Action:** The attorney explains that travel permits are easily attainable, and are required so that specific legal actions can be taken against slave traders. Once the slavers get the native Halkans off world, tracking them down is almost impossible. Once the attorney hears the characters' side of the story, she believes she can get the characters off. Floriani justice works by determining whether an action was a crime and should be punished, rather than asking whether the accused committed a specific act. It is plain to the attorney that the characters' action was without criminal intent.

Alyssander is very apologetic about the entire matter. He can get rather emotional, blaming himself repeatedly. Encourage the characters to sympathize with him. He didn't do anything wrong, he just didn't know the proper procedure. Furthermore, the time spent confined to the jail cell should cause the characters to reflect upon how they take their freedom for granted.

Aybee in particular could get downright mad, when thinking about Alyssander's plight, that anyone would enslave another sentient. Encourage a friendship of sorts to develop between Aybee and Alyssander.
8. THEIR DAY IN COURT
(The characters gain their freedom)

Scene: The courtroom is a large hall, and front and center is a high, massive, ornately decorated table at which a robed judge and five jurors sit. Across the room from the panel is a deep polished bench, where you are directed to sit. Rays of light pierce the hall from large skylights atop the vaulted ceiling, and your voices echo in the large hall.

Your attorney turns back to you with a bit of a grimace. "This could be harder than I thought," she says. "Old Man Borjiis is leading the panel today, and he is very tough on the slavery issue."

Action: Make the characters play out their testimony, and make them sweat with "Old Man" Borjiis. It is readily apparent to him that this is all a misunderstanding, but he admonishes the characters to have more respect for the local laws and customs of the different worlds they travel to. The characters are instructed to pay their legal fees of Cr500 in the outer office, and they are released.

9. ABDUCTION
(Alyssander is kidnapped)

Scene: You walk down the front steps of the courthouse, breathing in the fresh air of the summer breeze. Alyssander is anxious to obtain his travel permit and get back to the ship. A grav taxi hovers curbside, and Kelle waves at the driver. However, before you reach the waiting taxi, another grav taxi swoops down right beside you on the sidewalk. Two men jump out, one levels a laser rifle at you and the other pulls Alyssander into the taxi. The kidnappers speed off into star town as they muffle Alyssander's screams.

Action: All of the characters' equipment is back on the ship, but if Aybee uses his laser welder, let him only wound one of the thugs. Do not prevent the chase. If the characters don't immediately think to go after the kidnappers, the driver of the waiting grav taxi encourages them by saying he can catch the other taxi (he has Grav Vehicle-4). He may also explain that he recognizes the taxi, and his friend who should be driving it would never be party to a kidnapping. It must be stolen, and he is angry.

To gain on the kidnappers' grav taxi:

Difficult, Grav Vehicle, Dex (confrontation)

Referee: The characters' driver has Grav Vehicle-4 and a Dexterity of 11; the kidnappers' driver has Grav Vehicle-2 and a Dexterity of 6. Have the players roll this task once per round. If the characters fail the task, their distance in the chase remains the same. On a mishap, the kidnappers are able to pull away, out of sight. If they are out of sight from the characters for more than two rounds, the kidnappers have escaped.

The driver will allow one of the characters to attempt to report the stolen taxi by radio to the dispatcher. The grav taxi radio is only tuned to its own network and cannot summon police directly. If this is attempted in flight, the answer will be from a rather stupid computer, which does not know how to handle the situation. It must be ordered to get a human operator on the line, which takes a few minutes.

If the characters succeed in closing on the kidnappers, they will respond by shooting at the characters' driver. If he is hit, the characters will have to gain control of the grav taxi to avoid a crash.

To gain control of the grav taxi from the wounded driver:

Routine, Grav Vehicle, Dex (fateful)

Referee: If the character fails on this task, allow one other character to make an attempt with increased difficulty. If the characters fail to gain control, the grav taxi crashes. Apply the damage rolled on the mishap table to the grav vehicle, then apply less severe wounds to the characters.

Ultimately, the referee should make sure the kidnappers escape with Alyssander.

10. FINDING A LEAD
(Akidda interviews witnesses)

Scene: You are parked on a street in star town, taking stock of yourselves. The rush of adrenalin from the chase is beginning to subside. The grav taxi with the thugs and Alyssander has gotten away.

Action: The driver is anxious to call in to the dispatcher to report the incident. (If the driver was shot in the previous scene, it is only a minor wound, and Dr. Kresten or Aybee can take care of it.) He learns that the thugs stole the grav taxi in front of the Grand Floriani Hotel in star town. His friend, the driver, was knocked out but is now all right.

At the hotel, Akida can interview witnesses who might have seen the thugs.

To find witnesses who can provide useful information:

Difficult, Interview, Streetwise, 10 min

Aybee has recorded images of the thugs, and these can be used to help identify them. Interviews reveal that the thugs had asked what room Anton Vorlak was in, that they were overheard to mention "Achara" (a planetary system one parsec away), and that Mr. Vorlak left to see a starport broker — Olanda Trutt.

This last piece of information, along with the pictures of the thugs, should give the characters thinking.

For the characters to connect the thugs with Olanda Trutt:

Difficult, Int (safe, unskilled OK)

Referee: On success, the characters realize that the thugs were on hand at the vineyard, with Olanda Trutt. Also, if any characters succeeded in noticing anything peculiar about the shuttle at that time, allow them to attempt that same task to figure out what was going on at the vineyard.

At this point it should be obvious to the characters that all the clues are pointing to Olanda Trutt and the starport.

11. OFF TO SEE OLANDA
(The characters confront the broker)

Scene: You find Olanda Trutt at her office in the merchants' wing of Halka Down Port. The office is spartan and functional, with both filing cabinets for paper records and a computer terminal for electronic recordkeeping. Various papers are scattered on the large desk.

Trutt is working at her computer terminal, but looks up and recognizes you when you enter the office. "Any problems with the wine?" she asks calmly.

Action: Olanda Trutt is a cool customer, and will not give anything away through conversation, regardless of how persistent the characters are. However, be sure to roleplay the encounter fully for the best effect. During the encounter, the characters have a chance to notice a clue in Trutt's office.
To notice the invoice from the Adhara Lady:
Difficult, Streetwise, Int, 15 sec (unskilled OK)
Referee: If a mishap occurs, Olanda Trett becomes nervous and tries to end the conversation. If one of the characters succeeds, they connect the ship name to the earlier reference to "Adhara". The word heard in the thugs' conversation may not be their destination, but part of the name of their ship.

After the characters leave the broker's office, if they check the computerized starport registry for ships in port, they will find that the Adhara Lady is in docking bay 3-A. Other possible actions are contained in the next five nuggets.

12. SEARCH FOR THE ADHARA LADY
(Following a clue from the broker's office)
Scene: You hurry down the subterranean corridor to docking bay 3-A. As you approach the open iris valve, you see the two kidnappers drag Alyssander into the docking bay. They do not appear to notice you, but they close the iris valve behind them. Soon the warning light above the valve begins to flash, and muted klaxons blare. "Warning," says the computerized voice. "Docking bay sealed for blast off. Warning: Do not enter bay until ship is clear."
Action: If the characters attempt to fire at the thugs before the iris valve closes, allow them to get off a hurried shot. However, even if both thugs are hit and fall unconscious or dead, someone from inside the bay will pull Alyssander in.

The iris valve is locked by the starport computer, as the ship has been cleared for blast off. If the characters hot wire open the valve, they will be met with a burst of hot air and the sight of the ship rising slowly into the sky.

13. WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND... DOESN'T IT?
(If the characters alert the authorities)
Scene: The Starport Customs Office is located in the central region of the Halka Down Port, on an upper level near the flight control offices. The sergeant on duty is cooperative, but needs you to answer some questions before the report will be advanced to a patrol boat. He enters the answers into his computer terminal, and upon their completion, informs you that your report will go right out to an on-duty patrol boat.

Action: Filing the report consumes valuable time. The characters may attempt to speed up the process, which is simply red tape demanded by the bureaucracy.

To speed up filing the report:
Difficult, Administration, Edu, 10 min
Referee: On success, the time needed to file the report is greatly reduced, and the Adhara Lady will be searched much earlier in its trip out to jump point. On failure, the time needed to file the report will be lengthened. If a mishap occurs, filing the report will take so long that the characters will not be able to catch the Adhara Lady before it jumps out of the system.

The search produces no evidence, and the Adhara Lady is released.

14. CHASE TO JUMP POINT
(If the characters pursue the Adhara Lady)
Scene: The Adhara Lady is a 200-ton Type A2 Far Trader armed only with two dual-laser turrets. The ship has a good head start on you, but has only 1-G acceleration.

Kelle calculates that you can catch up to them (your ship has 2-G acceleration) before they reach a safe distance out for jump.

Action: The amount of time the characters have to do something should be determined by how long it took them to file the report with the customs office in the previous nugget (assuming they did report). If they have enough time, the characters can consider these options:
1) Disable the Adhara Lady through ship combat, or
2) Board the Adhara Lady and seize control of the bridge after a gun fight.

The first option will prove fruitless, as a patrol boat responds to the Adhara Lady's distress signal and subdue the characters before they can disable the Adhara Lady. This will produce another run through the legal system for our characters, and the kidnappers will get away again. If the second option is implemented, the same results will occur, with the addition that the characters, who are outnumbered, will risk serious personal injury. Also, any attempt to find Alyssander on the ship during a boarding action will fail.

If the characters are brought to court again, their story about seeing Alyssander kidnaped will be thoroughly checked while they languish in jail for a week. Although the story will finally be corroborated, the planetary authorities can do nothing now that the ship is gone except send notice to nearby starports to look out for the Adhara Lady. Nonetheless, for attacking another ship in system, characters will receive a stiff fine (1DxC10,000) which only Krenstein's resources on Rhylanor would suffice to cover. The group will remain under house arrest until his credit is established by the nearest branch of an Imperial bank with connections to Rhylanor. This takes a minimum of 10 weeks.

The characters will have to come up with a third option, one which allows them to pursue the kidnappers beyond the Halka system. If the characters check with the starport for
the filed flight plan of the *Adhara Lady*, they discover its destination is Viceroy, only two parsecs away. This investigation can be carried out even from house arrest, but if the characters point out their findings to authorities, they will be told that Viceroy is out of the Florian League's jurisdiction and nothing can be done.

To think of checking the flight plan:
Routine, Pilot or Navigation, Edu (safe, unskilled OK)
*Referee*: If the characters fail to think of this, have Kelle check it on her own, but allow the characters to exhaust their ideas before Kelle presents them with her findings.

15. REMAINING ON HALKA
(If the characters give up the chase)
*Scene*: You are sitting in a dark corner of a starport bar or lounge, commiserating over your failure to stop the kidnappers. Two large, muscular men in gray, starport cargo-handler coveralls enter the bar, look around for a moment, then come directly over to you.

“We’ve got a message for you,” growls one of the men.

“The boss wants you off this planet, and if you don’t cooperate, we’re supposed to get rid of you.”

The men then leave, eyeing you as they walk out.

Later, as you walk down an isolated corridor on the way back to your ship, the two men show up again. They don’t look like they want to talk.

*Action*: The two strongarms attempt to rough up the characters. Both have UPP’s of C6A55S and a skill level of 2 in brawling. Play it out as a brawl. Aybee’s weight should be quite a surprise to the strongarms, as might his laser welder. The characters may use weapons if they choose. If starport security is brought in, it’s the strongarms who are arrested (finally!). Neither the characters nor starport security will be able to get any information from the two men. In fact, they were hired by Olanda Tuit, because for the first time in the adventure, the characters worry her.

16. JUMPING TO ADHARA
(If the characters follow the wrong lead)
*Scene*: Adhara (0609 B27A667-8 Wa Ni) is a water world. Ship traffic seems normal for a class B starport. Your trip to the down port is uninterrupted by customs patrols. As you near the starport on your landing approach, you can see that it is built on supports rising from the ocean floor.

*Action*: There is no sign of the *Adhara Lady* in port, nor has she ever been here. There are no records of the ship being built or registered here. There is no division of Vorkash Mining on Adhara, and there is no sign of any native Halkans. This is a dead end. The characters will have to proceed to Viceroy or head back to Halka.

17. THE WORLD OF VICEROY
(Characters’ Background, Library Data)

The Viceroy system ( Trojan Reach 0408 B8D3515-D Ni) is a binary star system whose primary is a main sequence star (G8 V). The companion star is a subdwarf which circles the primary at a distance of 4,200 astronomical units.

The world of Viceroy is roughly 12,000 kilometers in diameter and occupies the second orbital position. Viceroy has a dense, high atmosphere, unbearable to humans. Deep in the crevices of the planet the atmosphere is so dense that it becomes liquid.

Viceroy is a company-owned planet in independent space. Vorkash Manufacturing is engaged in extensive mining operations in the deep, rocky crevices of the world. The entire population is made up of Vorkash employees.

Vorkash Manufacturing was founded in the late 900's by Ricardo Vorkash. The company grew out of a privately-held mining and industrial firm. Vorkash Manufacturing took advantage of the rapidly developing human client states, establishing offices on many worlds, especially those whose tech level was on the rise and whose natural resources were being exploited. Subsector Vice-Presidents often have a free rein to open new markets and develop new resources. Vorkash Manufacturing is now a vertical monopoly, engaged in all aspects of production, and a dominant corporation in the region.

The class B starport maintained on Viceroy handles the ore shipments, as well as providing repair facilities. The down port supplies living quarters for company employees, an office complex, and centers for entertainment of off-duty workers. The orbital starport has only essential personnel. It exists to prevent unwelcome guests from coming down to the planet; refueling and modest repair facilities are maintained to provide minimal class B service, and visitors are hurried on their way.

18. GAINING A FOOTHOLD
(The characters seek permission to land)
*Scene*: Your sensors do not indicate any ship traffic in the system. In particular, there is no sign of the *Adhara Lady*. Your communications console beeps, indicating an incoming message.

“Beep-beep-beep. Imperial Scout Vessel 53791-R, you have entered the Viceroy system. Please state your business with Vorkash Manufacturing or proceed to orbital refueling station.”

*Action*: If the characters attempt to avoid contact with the starport, possibly sneaking down to the planet, they will be spotted by sensors and escorted to the orbital facility by a system defense boat. When it is discovered that the characters have no business with Vorkash Manufacturing, they will be extended refueling privileges and asked to move on.

The starport will inquire whether the characters are Imperial citizens, since their ship is an Imperial Scout/ Courier. If the characters introduce themselves as Imperial nobles, they will immediately be offered shore leave at the Viceroy Down Port.

To think to mention that they are Imperial nobles:
Routine, Carousing, Soc (safe, unskilled OK)
*Referee*: On success, the characters should be encouraged to play it up as much as possible.

If the characters inquire whether the *Adhara Lady* is in port, suspicion shows in the voice on the radio. Their noble status will still get them shore leave (next nugget), but Vorkash will not invite them to tour the mines and anything they find out will have to reported back to Halka for action (Nugget 30).

19. RUMORS
(Checking out Vorkash Mining)
*Scene*: Viceroy Down Port is a crowded, bustling facility. It has the atmosphere of a high-tech version of a boom town in the old west. The off-duty miners really like to live it
up, and you can hear some foul-mouthed argument as you approach a crowded entertainment center, the "Lanthanum Rush". As you approach the entrance, two brawling men roll out the door into the corridor in front of you. They pay absolutely no attention to you.

Inside, spotlights shine on exotic dancers on pedestals around the room. The dancers gyrate to the beat of recorded, synthesized music. Miners drink and cheer at their poorly lit tables, and the bar is abuzz with talk.

Action: Dr. Krenstein and Aybee may feel somewhat out of place, but Dur and Kelle have seen places like this while in the Scouts. Akida, with his Interview-5 skill, should be the only player to try to ferret out any information. The other characters are better off just passively trying to overhear something.

To discover through casual interrogation that Halkan slaves are used in the mines:

- **Difficulty**: Int, 15 minutes (hazardous).
- **Referee**: Akida's Interview-5 skill defaults to Interrogation. If he succeeds, his suspicions are confirmed. If a mishap occurs, someone takes offense at his questions and begins a brawl. Company security does not appear.

To overhear a comment that Halkan slaves are used in the mines:

- **Difficulty**: Carousing, Int, 30 min (safe, unskilled OK)
- **Referee**: No mishaps occur on failure.

It is important for the referee to remember that this area is usually off-limits to non-employees, but because of the characters' noble status, they have been brought down to the surface starport. This is why the characters have even a chance to find out anything, and why security seems soft.

20. MEETING WITH VORKASH
(The characters learn something useful)

**Scene**: In your rooms, you are notified via telescreen that you are all invited to meet with the president of Vorkash Manufacturing personally while he is here. An escort will come for you later in the day.

You do not have access to a computer terminal linked to the whole system, just a modest library data resource in your rooms.

Vorkash's personal assistant arranges to escort you to the meeting. The assistant is smartly dressed in an outfit made of shimmering material. As he takes you to see Vorkash, he speaks only when spoken to. You pass a simple security robot in the corridor on your way (#71 in *101 Robots*). Its tread is heavy even in the carpeted hall.

At the outer reception area, the assistant goes over to a panel beside the door to the main office. He pushes a button which activates a voice screen and announces you.

"Please go right in," he says. The door opens silently.

Decorating the office are fine art objects, and scattered throughout are high-tech gadgets. You have trouble discerning the purpose of some of the gadgets.

Anton Vorkash leans back in a large gray chair and motions you to a collection of smaller gray chairs on the other side of his desk. "Sit down. Make yourselves at home," he beckons. "We have lots to talk about!"

**Action**: In attempting to impress the characters with his business acumen, Vorkash mentions that he keeps holorecordings of all his business meetings in this office. These are even more reliable than written contracts, in his opinion. If the characters don't immediately realize that the holorecordings may be the physical evidence they need to bust the slave trade, allow the characters to roll for it in a task.

To realize the recordings may hold incriminating evidence of slave trading:

- **Routine, Administration, Int, instant (safe)**
- **Referee**: The characters will not have any opportunity to get the holocrystals during the meeting. However, Vorkash motions vaguely at the drawer in which they are kept when he talks about them. Vorkash does not seem to be terribly intelligent, just business-smart — it is quite possible that he would keep incriminating evidence, as long as he thought it would never leave his company planet.

During the meeting, Vorkash offers to take the characters on a tour of the mines later, and if the characters don't accept immediately, he will persist until they do. This will be the opportunity the characters need to find Alyssander.

If the characters want to try to steal the holocrystals or break into the main computer, see the next nugget.

**It may occur to a character to carry a concealed weapon.**

Allow the characters to do so, but keep them nervous about it. However, unless they use the weapon, the characters will never be searched and the weapons will never be discovered.

21. BREAK-IN
(If the characters sneak into the office)

**Scene**: The offices are dark and silent. You appear to be the only ones here. The office complex has electronic combination locks, much like those found on iris valves. Once you unlock the door to the office complex, the corridors between offices are open, and you can proceed directly to the reception area outside Vorkash's main office.

While in the reception area, you hear the steps of a security robot in the hall. It does not come into the room you are in.

The door to the main office is a more complex, computerized lock. However, it is a kind Dr. Krenstein is familiar with.

**Action**: Supply the characters with a floor plan of the office complex, with the location of electronic locks marked. Determine a routine patrol route for the security robots. The video surveillance in Vorkash's office is used by him to screen visitors; it is not used at other times.

To defeat the computerized lock to the main office:

- **Difficulty**: Computer, Electronics, 1 min
- **Referee**: Krenstein's Robotics-5 serves as Computer-4, and his JOT-2 allows him to retry this task twice without penalty.

Finding the holocrystals is easy; they are in the desk drawer Vorkash motioned to during their meeting. However, the drawer is locked.

**Action**: To open the locked desk drawer:

- **Routine, Electronics, Mechanical, 10 sec**
- **Referee**: On a mishap the drawer is damaged, leaving signs of the break-in.

In the office is a computer terminal. Dr. Krenstein can use this to find out where Alyssander can be found if the
characters have time. If they take too long in your opinion, have one of the security robots come into the office.

To bypass computer security:
Difficult, Computer, Edu, 30 sec (hazardous, fateful)
Referee: If Krenstein fails at this task, company security will be alerted to an unauthorized computer entry. However, it will take time for security agents to track the break-in. Allow Krenstein to repeat this task up twice because of his JOT-2 skill.

Once Krenstein is into the system, locating Alyssander is easy. He is currently stationed on level E, and is designated worker #6249-H.

To avoid the security robot:
Routine, Stealth, Dex (fateful, unskilled OK)
Referee: Have one player roll the task for the entire group. If the characters split up, roll for each group separately. On a mishap the group encounters the security robot.

Remember, the characters will hear the robot before it gets there, so they will be warned. The robots are individual units and not tied into any central security system; they are effectively just night watchmen.

22. BACK AT THE OFFICE
(Before the tour, if the characters still need to get the holo-crystals)

Scene: You are meeting Vorkash at his office so you may begin your guided tour of the mines. The receptionist recognizes you and pushes a buzzer. Moments later the office door slides open and he motions you in. Anton Vorkash stands up from his grav chair to greet you. "Well, how did you sleep, my Imperial friends?" he bellow.

Action: One of the characters will have to be alone in Vorkash’s main office for a minute or so if they are to get the holo-crystals. Either they must get Anton Vorkash to leave his office momentarily (perhaps distracted by one of the characters) or one of them will have to come back into the office shortly after they all leave ("Excuse me, I left something in the office. It’ll just take a moment").

To hastily find the holo-crystals unobserved:
Routine, Stealth or JOT, Dex, 10 sec (fateful)
Referee: If failure occurs, the receptionist comes in. He does not catch on, but will usher the character out of the office. The receptionist will have to be physically subdued in order to complete the task, which results in the character finding the holo-crystals. If this occurs, it will be discovered by others in the office complex after a few minutes, but not before the characters are going down the observation elevator.

23. TOUR DOWN UNDER
(Taking the observation elevator)

Scene: Before you enter the observation elevator, you are issued pressure suits as a standard precaution. These bulky vaxc suits are just like the ones shift foremen wear in the mines, except the helmet has an orange "VISITOR" designation on it.

The luxury observation elevator is a huge, enclosed platform that descends into the crevice along rails built into the rocky wall. The platform is like a glass cage, and you can see out into the murky fog of the atmosphere. As you descend deeper into the crevice, a light drizzle blurs the view.

Looking into the cliff, rather than out into the atmosphere, you can see various mining excavations as you pass the airlocks to these levels.

Action: There is a computer terminal on the observation platform. If the characters have not yet found where Alyssander is, this terminal can be used to find him, although Krenstein would prefer to be alone when he tries to circumvent the security programming.

24. SOME TIME ALONE
(Vorkash is called away)

Scene: As Anton Vorkash expounds upon the virtues of strip mining Imperial Reserve planets, the elevator’s telescreen comes on. "Paging Mr. Vorkash. Your presence is required at mining station D."

Vorkash turns to the elevator's control panel, and soon the platform slides effortlessly to a stop. As he opens the airlock, he says "If you’ll excuse me for a moment, I’ll take care of this little matter as quickly as possible."

Action: This is Krenstein’s alternate chance to use a computer terminal to locate Alyssander. Use the task in nugget 21. The characters can easily operate the elevator controls to take them down to level E.

A more cautious group may copy some of the information on Halkan slaves employed here onto Akidia’s recorder or Krenstein’s computer, return to Halka, and come back with Halkan authorities in force to free all the slaves. If they took the crystals, these should be copied and left in some obvious place so that Vorkash will think they were mislaid. Vorkash must not be alerted by anything the characters do, or he may move the slaves while the characters are enroute to Halka and back. In this case, go to Nugget 28.
25. INTO THE MINES
(Searching for Alyssander)

Scene: At level E, you open the airlock. Before you is a dimly lit, rough-hewn access corridor. Standing to one side of the airlock is a foreman in his pressure suit.

"May I help you?" he says, then looks into the observation elevator. "Hey! Where's your employee escort? I'll have to report this!"

Action: The characters will have to subdue the employee to prevent him from calling security; he will not cooperate with the characters in any way. Once he is subdued, one of the characters can exchange helmets with the employee, giving the group the appearance of being escorted.

On the way to Alyssander's work station, the characters will encounter another employee. Make the character wearing the employee helmet talk his way through the encounter. Eventually, the characters find Alyssander's foreman, and should request that worker #6249-H be brought to them for questioning. If there are problems with the foreman, the characters will have to decide how much force to use. The degree of difficulty of this nugget is up to the referee.

26. UP THE SHAFT
(The characters run for their ship)

Scene: You quickly hustle Alyssander out past the maintenance workers with their robotic laser drills. You pass an ore processing area, where other workers are preparing the ore for transport to a processing center. Alyssander guides you to the express work elevators. As you ride up toward the surface, klaxons begin to sound. "Intruder alert!"

Action: Instead of running with Alyssander, the characters may feel that they should try to free all the slaves they can reach. Of course, their Scout ship can not hold very many.

They would have to steal a cargo ship at the port to carry all those who want to leave. The slaves, once they are aware of what is happening, will overpower the foremen and take over planning of this action. None of them can pilot or crew a ship. The characters may supply Aybee or Dur as pilot, and possibly Dur as engineer if Aybee pilots, or the slaves may just hold a knife to the throat of some Vorkash crew-member and make him take them to Halka.

To hijack a cargo ship from the port:

**Referee:** This does not include warm-up time for the power plant.

The express elevator will take the characters to the surface without stopping. Alyssander is familiar with the immediate area, and the characters will recognize where they are when Alyssander leads them into an area near the entertainment centers. The referee may supply a map of the complex as the characters get into an area they know.

The characters will run into at least one security team at the entrance to the docking bay, and possibly one other before they get that far.

To avoid security teams on their way to the docking bay:

Difficult, Stealth or Recon, Int (fateful, unskilled OK)

**Referee:** This task is attempted once for the entire group. If the task fails, the characters encounter an armed security team. The number of security personnel encountered is two, four, or six, determined by the severity of the mishap.

Security personnel are armed with laser rifles and wear cloth armor. The characters' pressure suits are equivalent to cloth armor. The characters may attempt to find weapons as they sneak through the complex. If the slaves are all coming along, the exit is not stealthy and weapons may be grabbed from guards who are incapacitated.

To find weapons as they race for the ship:

**Routine, Determination**

**Referee:** Each player may attempt this task once. If successful, a player has found one or two weapons, likely laser rifles and auto pistols. On a mishap, the characters have surprised the owner of the weapons.

**Or:**

**Routine, Strength, Brawling**

**Referee:** The large group may attempt this four times. Assume that average Halkans have the same strength as Alyssander, and a 50-50 chance of having Brawling skill. The weapons seized are the same as above. On a mishap, one or more of the group is injured in the fight.

The referee is free to change the weapons selection as he sees fit. The characters will already have Aybee's internal laser welder. (But if he fires through his suit, energy will be expended burning through his glove, and the suit will no longer be gas tight. Inside the complex this last makes no difference.) The weapons of the other characters are on their ship, unless someone is carrying a concealed weapon.

When the characters reach the docking bay, a security team is waiting. The airlock which the security team is guarding is the only way back to the ship. The characters will have to fight their way through. Use standard combat rules.
27. BLAST OUT
(Escape to jumpspace)

**Scene:** You are back on your ship. Dr. Krenstein or Aybee can take care of any injuries sustained in the fire fight. Your main concern is getting the bay doors open. You may ask the starport for clearance, but they refuse, of course.

Kelle addresses the crew. "Well, guess we've got to blast our way out! Brace yourselves!"

**Action:** No task is needed to blast the bay doors open... it succeeds. While en route to the system's jump point, the characters' ship is attacked by a patrol ship. Treat it as a Type T Patrol Cruiser with 1-G maneuver drives; it is an old model obtained by Vorkash Manufacturing as military surplus. Although the patrol ship is more heavily armed, the Scout can outrun it. Thus, the characters should have to fight defensively for only a few ship combat rounds. If they get in serious trouble, the characters may consider jumping before a safe distance is reached. Consult the starship operating procedures in the Imperial Encyclopedia for task rolls.

28. CALLING FOR HELP
(If the players choose to bring the Florian League to the rescue)

**Scene:** You have withdrawn quietly from the Viceroy system, but without new evidence to offer Hakarian authorities. When you come out of jump space, you pass again through the searches and delays, but after the first ship's crew hears your report, you are hurried down to the starport with priority clearance.

**Action:** The new recordings showing Halkans being held on Viceroy are enough to spur some action. The characters are directed to the planetary offices of the Florian League.

To convince the League Navy to act against Viceroy:
- Routine, Admin, Leader, 3 min
- *ReferVia:* More than one character may apply his skills to this task.

To convince the League to impose economic sanctions on Vorkash Manufacturing:
- Routine, Admin, Leader, 2 min
- *ReferVia:* As above.

On success of the first task, five naval vessels are summoned from nearby planets to accompany Hakka's two ships. The characters may also return in Kelle's ship, or remain on Hakka to await events. When they reach Viceroy, the show of force is sufficient to force Viceroy to submit to search and occupation. The slaves are transported back to Hakka and the company must allow Florian inspectors into all its facilities on demand. The threat of trade sanctions remains as a tool of enforcement. If only the second task succeeds, the action will be slower but no less certain. The characters may choose to wait on Hakka or go on home, trusting the authorities to handle the problem.

Go to Nugget 30.

29. BACK AT HALKA
(The evidence is revealed)

**Scene:** While in jump, you have the opportunity to view the holorecordings with Akidda's recorder (if you stole them). They were encrypted only with a standard commercial code. One of them shows a meeting between Anton Vorkash and Olanda Trutt on Viceroy, and leaves no doubt that Trutt is the head of the illegal slave trade. Vorkash is also incriminated for purchasing slaves. The characters also have Aybee's recordings of their entire adventure.

You arrive in system and limp in to the starport. As you are nearing the orbital facility, a customs patrol.hails you. "You look like you've got some carbon scoring, there. Where's the fire?"

Another message comes in. "Don't think you can get away! I've got you now!" The voice is unmistakably that of the desperate Anton Vorkash. You can now identify the corporate patrol ship on your sensors. Vorkash has followed you through jump and now opens fire.

**Action:** Give the characters a brief scare with a couple of shots from Vorkash's ship, but then make sure the system defense craft close with Vorkash and board his ship. In the resulting confusion, the characters are able to gain clearance to dock at the orbital facility, thereby gaining some measure of safety. Once in the docking bay, the characters may contact the Starport Customs Office and present their evidence of Vorkash's slave dealing. Vorkash will claim to have been pursuing the characters because of crimes on Viceroy. (If they took the holocrystals, he will demand their return without examination by the authorities, and accuse the characters of burglary. If anyone was hurt in the mines, the characters can be accused of assault.) These conflicting claims will have to be dealt with in court. Fortunately, the judges are more concerned with the theft of their citizens than with "irregularities" committed by the characters on Viceroy, which is outside their jurisdiction.

30. CLEAR CONSCIENCE
(The authorities wrap things up)

**Scene:** You are sitting in the customs office at the starport. After reviewing your evidence, Agent Muldoon hits his communication console. "Agent Conley, locate and apprehend Starport Broker Olanda Trutt on charges of selling slaves." Muldoon picks up the holocrystals. "You've done a great deed, here," he says to you. "Your approach was a bit dangerous, of course — and if you hadn't found what you were after you could have been in a lot of trouble." He gives you a stern look. "Still, when interstellar law is such a muddle, I suppose an old-fashioned hero sometimes gets more done than we can manage by the book. A lot of people care deeply about the injustice being done these past few years. We appreciate your help."

Agent Muldoon buzzes the outer office. "Send Notl in here," he says. "Agent Notl will see to it that your ship is repaired at no cost. We've got things under control now, and we'll be in touch in a couple of days."

**Action:** Olanda Trutt faces a long jail term. Vorkash Manufacturing is being forced to cooperate under threat of losing all Florian League business and having their assets seized. The Halkan government is arranging for the return of the other slaves on Viceroy, and holds a public ceremony honoring the characters and their efforts. Alyssander has decided to stay on Hakka now that he feels safe. Once the repairs to Kelle's ship are finished, the characters can continue on toward the Spinward Marches and home. •
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The Travellers' Digest — Number 20

The Hiawatha Gambit

MEGATRAVELLER ADVENTURE
—by Matt Frisbee

This adventure is intended for up to five characters. The group should be able to crew a free trader, although other characters may be included in the team. It is strictly for players who enjoy a high-risk, covert operation scenario.

This adventure takes place in the Spinward Marches, with most of the action confined to the Border Worlds; the starting date is 123-1120.

REFEREE'S SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

1. Setup: The characters have been hired by the patron (Sir Erik Taldrait) who is in truth being backed by Deneb Imperial Naval Intelligence. He provides preliminary instructions and a ship.

2. Off to Work We Go: The characters prepare to jump to Biter.

3. Rude Strangers: Two optional red herrings are available on the trip to Biter; a pirate attack or a hijacking attempt.

4. How Does One Descramble an Egg?: If the character that received a personal capsule for delivery on Biter decides to open it, the results are detailed.

5. "This Tape Will Self-Destruct in Five Seconds": Characters receive their mission briefing on Biter. A world brief for Sacnoth, the target planet, is included.

6. You Really Shouldn't Have: This nugget details consequences for the indiscreet courier character, if applicable.

7. Looking You Over: Characters arrive at Sacnoth and undergo customs inspection without ticking off anyone.

8. Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?: Characters discover that most of the persons they were supposed to recover have left the planetary university for parts unknown. The only remaining person (Dr. Marissa Kantarus) will be easy to find, but in order to get the target to come with the characters, they'll need to get her son (Devon Kantarus).

9. The Kantarus Apartment: Evidence shows that Devon has been kidnapped, so the characters must mount a rescue mission. A major lead is offered.

10. Vector Interstellar Shipping: This nugget gives full details on where Devon is being held, with diagram and contents of each area.

11. More Than One Way: Other ways of getting Devon back are described, besides assault on the shipping warehouse. Characters may choose to sabotage the opposition ship before escaping in their own.

12. Let's Blow This Popsicle Stand!: Getting away after the rescue is difficult and requires a desperate jump at 10 diameters. Space combat may also occur.

13. The Final Chapter?: Characters return to Biter to receive their payoff, thus ending the adventure. If using the adventure as a campaign-starter, the characters would be required to crew the Hiawatha up Spinward Main to Regina, and deliver the NPCs to the university there.

IMPORTANT NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Sir Eric Taldrait, Order of Deneb (Noble)
656898D Age 38 5 terms Cr100,000
- JOT-2, Admin-1, Brawling-1, Computer-1, Engineering-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Handgun-1, Leader-1.

Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Sensor Ops-1
Body Pistol, Snub Pistol, TAS Member
Starport A, Large, Standard Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, Avg Stellar

Taldrait is a man of action, believing adventure does more for his character than other noble diversions. Taldrait is also a tenacious sort, he refuses to quit until all options have been explored and tested (some have referred to it as plain stubbornness). His humor is quite droll, and has a touch of sarcasm mixed in it. He is very loyal to Archduke Norris. He has been placed in charge of the Free Trader Hiawatha, and has been given a generous amount of money for "operating expenses and crew salaries." He owns a pet tree rat which has a memory implant.

Dr. Marissa Kantarus (Scientist)
7659A9 Age 42 6 terms Cr88,200
- Physics-6, Instruction-3, Computer-1, Grav Vehicle-1, JOT-1, Mechanical-1, Handgun-0
Starport A, Medium, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, High Stellar

Kantarus is a sociable woman who makes friends easily, and is well liked by both her peers and students. She has the knack of explaining even the most mind-boggling concepts in laymen's language. She is devoted to the raising of her son, allowing him the freedom to pursue his interests. She is the "target" of the mission, but will absolutely refuse to go off-planet unless her son is with her. She will do anything within reason to protect her son from harm. She is also cautious and calculating, and can't be pushed around.

Devon Kantarus (Student)
776885 Age 17 0 terms Cr1,000
- Computer-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Rifleman-0
Starport A, Medium, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, High Stellar

Devon is a student of slightly above average ability, who has been recognized for his innovation in problem solving. He is fascinated by space and space technology, and would like to join the Scout Service when he graduates from school. He is the independent sort, curious, and very indignant over his kidnapping. He will insist on some role for any operation that will help him get his "revenge".

The Free Trader Hiawatha

The ship is a fairly new, TL-15 Beowulf-class Free Trader that has been up-gunned for use in the Spinward Marches. It is armed with a triple pulse laser turret dorsally (TL-13, UCP Factor 3), and a triple missile launcher ventrally (also TL-13, UCP Factor 3) with a section of 6 kilogramsers reserved as ordnance space on the lower cargo deck. When the adventure starts, the magazines are fully loaded with 60 Standard HE missiles (20 battery-rounds, weight is 3 tons) all of which have contact fuses. The ship also has a Traveler open aircraft and a Trasea grav "bike" in its garage.
1. SETUP
Players' orders are to crew the Hiawatha to Biter, where they will receive a complete mission briefing and equipment. They are to maintain a cover of free trader operations at all times. The owner/commander of the Hiawatha, Sir Eric Taidrait, is an agent of Imperial Naval Intelligence, but will be playing his part as a trader as well.

2. OFF TO WORK WE GO
(Preparing for lift)
Scene: When you report for work, you must post the announcements of the ship's availability for cargo and passenger hauling, and file flight plans with the starport authorities, etc. All of this can be done within the downport complex itself. The specifics indicate that the ship lifts at dawn tomorrow.

Action: By midday, the characters will have finished all of the work assigned to them, and can prepare for the incoming cargo contracts, which can be determined randomly by the referee.

There are two contracts worth mentioning, but they should not be overly emphasized to the players. The first is a 81 kl, 6 ton mail shipment to Biter, with the usual tamper-proof seals. The second is a 13.5 kl, .5 ton security-sealed crate to Biter, from Lantok Enterprises to an import clearing house. There are a randomly determined number of passengers (which is not terribly important, unless the referee is planning a hijack for the Iron system stopover as a red herring) all of which are bound for Biter.

In the predawn twilight, a man arrives before takeoff and appeals to a character (selected at random) to deliver a sealed container small enough to be easily carried in a pocket to a Biter resident near the starport for a payoff of Cr50 now and another Cr250 when it gets there. The man will stress that the container should not be opened. If the courier opens the container for any reason, then refer to nuggets 4 and 6.

The flight should go very smoothly, with only a brief stop in the Iron system (Spinward Marches 1626-E529000-9) to refuel and calculate the next jump. If the referee wishes to complicate things, she could have a corsair lying in wait, or have an attempted hijacking interrupt things at this point. (Nugget 3)

3. RUDE STRANGERS
(Possible encounters in the Iron system)
Referee: There are two possible scenarios in this nugget, only one of which should be used if any are desired.

A. Scene: While diving into the atmosphere of Iron's gas giant, your ship is approached by another. The stranger is not engaged in refueling orbits, but begins maneuvering to "high guard" position above you.

"Battle stations!" bawls Sir Eric, and sends your ship climbing out of its vulnerable position at its maximum thrust.

Action: The ship is a non-political pirate, human-crewed. Treat it as a corsair. The extra armament of the Hiawatha should tip the combat in the characters' favor. If they get in really deep trouble, have another honest ship appear and help them out, no questions asked. (These pirates are wanted men).

B. Scene: As you calculate your next jump, an alarm sounds shrilly. Lights on your boards indicate an intruder in engineering. A call comes through on intership communications, both to the bridge and to anyone outside the locked door of engineering.

"I've got a bomb here! You tell your captain to take us to Mithril or I'll blow us all up."

The voice is male, probably young adult, certainly somewhat hysterical.

Action: The demand to go to Mithril seems ridiculous. The world is totally uninhabited, though inhabitable. As it happens, one of the passengers is a member of a fanatic political offshoot group which is currently trying to claim Mithril for themselves. He has some supplies in his baggage. His emotional state is perhaps his greatest weakness.

The door to engineering cannot be opened from the corridor, but Sir Eric could override it from the bridge, and there are some anti-hijack gasses he can use to disable the passenger. Play this out at your discretion, including possible damage that delays the ship while repairs are made. The bomb the hijacker claims to have is only powerful enough to blow up the ship if precisely placed in the power plant, and if he is kept distracted he will not be able to place it or set the ignition.

Once the action (if any) settles down, the ship proceeds to Biter.

4. HOW DOES ONE DESCRAMBLE AN EGG?
(For curious characters only)
Scene: If you open the container entrusted to you, you discover that it contains a holocrystal, a fairly common method of sending messages with a personal touch. When (or if) you play the crystal, it will show nothing but static and garbled noise.

Action:
To realize the crystal is encrypted:
Routine, Int, instant
Since the message cannot be delivered with a broken seal, the character can do what he likes with the holocrystal.

If the character wants to try decrypting the recording, it will take the ship's computer and time to accomplish it, as outlined in the task below.

To decrypt the recording on the holocrystal:
Difficult, Computer, Intelligence, 2 hours, safe
Refer to: Failure simply indicates the current decrypting program failed. Roll 3D x 2 hours for time spent on the useless program, and the character must make a Routine Task roll, modified by his determination, in order to make another attempt. Also, the time spent for each attempt made may be broken up into several periods, as the character's schedule allows.

Once decrypted, the holocrystal will show a man (the same one that gave the character the container) narrating a series of still holos, with the text listed below. Still holographic descriptions are in parentheses.

"Altair Miro, report number 122, date 125-1120. (Full-length view of Sir Eric Taldrait.) The subject discussed in my previous report has acquired a free trader, listed under the name Hiawatha, probably from the DINI.

(VIEWS OF THE CHARACTERS, MAGNIFIED FROM DISTANT HOLOS) "Taldrait has hired a crew, and they will have arrived at the starport there by the time this report is viewed. The materials you requested in communication 104 will have been delivered to the location specified by the time this reaches you.

(FULL LENGTH AND TECHNICAL VIEWS OF THE HIWATHA.) "Best information indicates that the ship has better firepower and higher-tech equipment than most of its class. In all probability, its security systems are more sophisticated also, so any activities involving it should take this into consideration.

"(The man alone) My operation here may have been compromised in the latest activities of our group, so internal security measures are more secure since the first set is being tightened. It is my personal belief that we will be able to continue our duty here, but precautions should be taken in case I am wrong.

"Pertaining to requests in communication 104, the following persons have not been located (holo-records missing, each name): Dakar Broga, Ph.D.; Julia Horotike, Ph.D.; Dr. Theo Pattarik; and Allison Slatik, Ph.D. Evidence indicates that all of them left more than a standard year ago, and chances of their returning here are slim. Messages to our other groups have been sent, and reports from them are forthcoming.

"(Holocartoon map of the Sword Worlds, Lunion, District 268, and Glisten subsectors) The Aslan situation continues to worsen. Latest conquests place them only six parsecs from here, with little sign of slowing. Current estimates would have them here by mid-1122. The Imperial communications place the Vargr raids near Corridor higher on the Archduke's priority list that the Aslan conquests.

"Your reports of the success of Project Beacon are a continuing source of inspiration to the group here, and knowing that they helped accomplish it makes it that much more rewarding. This is the end of report 122."

How the character wishes to handle this is really up to him, and there are a few courses of action he can take.

If the character suspects that the security-sealed crate they are carrying has anything to do with the message (an admittedly reasonable train of thought), he may try to open it. The crate contains only what is listed in its manifest, which is a case-lot of advanced holorecorders and blank holocrystals. Breaking into the crate is also a crime, and the person(s) responsible could be held liable for any damage to the contents, plus a CR10,000 fine.

If the character decides to bring this to the attention of the rest of the crew, Taldrait will mention that the person they are going to meet on Biter will be very interested in it.

If the character is dense enough to try to deliver the message in the container with a broken seal (or in a different container altogether, or without a container), he is going to get into trouble, which is detailed in a later section.

5. "THIS TAPE WILL SELF-DESTRUCT IN FIVE SECONDS."

Scene: When the ship arrives at the Biter Down complex, the first priority is the offloading of the cargo, which will take several hours. Under cover of darkness, Taldrait receives a visitor and gathers the crew in the passenger lounge for a briefing. Taldrait also attends the briefing, of course, as does his pet tree rat, which is friendly with all of the characters by now. It spends its time climbing into and out of laps.

The visitor identifies himself as Bryan Nukoor, chief of the Biter operational office of DINI. He is an older man, but has plenty of backbone and fire. He smokes a pipe, using it as a pointer when necessary.

Action: The points Nukoor will cover are listed below.

1. The Sword Worlds have mounted an intelligence gathering network in this area since the end of the Fifth Frontier War, hoping to gain some useful information that might help their government's cause against either the Border Worlds or the Davarian Confederation.

2. The Universities of Regina and Rhyanor had been engaged in an exchange program that traded teachers for a few terms. By kidnapping the best and brightest from the
Imperium and extracting their knowledge, the Sword Worlds governments hope that their technological disadvantage could be resolved.

3. The emphasis has changed recently from conquest to defense, as they appear terribly concerned with the extent of the Asian conquests. The Sword Worlds have actually refitted a battlecruiser with Tech-13 weapons and sensors, and have also begun refitting their SDB’s using the technological improvements.

4. The Archduke has decided that no further risk should be taken by the educators. He has issued official orders to all remaining Imperial teachers and scientists to leave the Border Worlds and Imperial Fringes and return to the institutions that sent them.

5. Specifically for the characters, the following personnel must be evacuated from Sacnoth as soon as possible: Marigo Derru, Ph.D; Jen Gronnia, B.S.; Marissa Kenturis, Ph.D; and Torrak Nugack, Ph.D. Any family members may be brought along as well, but specified persons take precedence. These persons must be transported to Biter for confirmation of their identities.

6. Whenever possible, the ship and crew must maintain their cover as an independent trading vessel, and should abide by local regulations. The Imperium will make no official efforts to aid the characters should they get into trouble.

Nukoor will then ask if the characters have any questions. The referee can probably ad lib these, but Nukoor will probably refer to the text above. Any information about the Sword Worlds’ intelligence gatherers will be most welcome, and other information about the planet will be forthcoming (World Brief on the next column).

Nukoor promises that an air/raft will bring a crate containing what he thinks the characters will need on Sacnoth to complete their mission; he then leaves.

The characters will probably be engaged in post-operative maintenance as well as flight plan filing, advertising, and so on, for the rest of the night, so only the hardcore revelers will venture out after the work is done.

If the character with the container hasn’t opened it, he can deliver it, collect his Cr250, and get back to the ship in about an hour.

Around mid-morning, Nukoor will be back with a crate about 4 kl in volume, and about 200 kg in weight. He will act as if he’s never met the characters before, handling the transaction in a very business-like manner.

Opening the box (hopefully in the privacy of the cargo deck), will reveal:

1. A holocrystal with the following information: World Brief of Sacnoth, personal data on all of the target personnel, personal data on known Sword Worlds agents on the planet, the recorded personal orders for each target, and detailed survey data of the Sacnoth star system.

2. Filter masks enough for all crew members, targets, and their families, plus ten spare filters.

3. Three Shotguns (with 60 rounds pellet ammunition in disposable magazines), 1 Autoshotgun (with 10 rounds each of pellets, trang, and gas), enough cutlasses to arm the crew, and 5 Breaching charges (with variable fuses).

4. A special box with 6 stun grenades inside. These grenades create a lot of noise and a lot of flash, and are intended to confuse and blind an enemy temporarily so that forces can close and capture them. When a stun grenade goes off, it affects all targets within short range of its detonation point. For each target roll 1D-3 (minimum of 1), the result being the number of combat turns the target is blinded and/or deafened. In enclosed spaces, the roll should be 1D-1 (minimum of 1).

5. Enough cloth armor sets for the crew.

There are also some informational holocrystals and mini-computers for the returning scientists and teachers to keep them amused during the return trip.

WORLD BRIEF FOR SACNOTH/SPINWARD MARCHES
1325 B775956-C

Sacnoth is a busy, fertile world that supports a wide variety of plant life, but is deadly to humans. The atmosphere contains a high amount of carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless, odorless gas which knocks out the hemoglobin of red blood cells and prevents the transport of oxygen (O2) to the cells. However, unprotected persons and animals can survive brief exposure to the atmosphere, as occasionally happens when a filter mask fails. Most of the buildings and vehicles are sealed so that filter masks are not an aspect of everyday life.

In general, a person can survive unprotected for a number of days equal to his endurance. For each full day exposed, reduce the character’s endurance by one. When the score reaches two, the character will become short of breath, become weary easily, experience dizziness, mild headaches, and slight nausea. These effects become even more pronounced once the character’s endurance drops to one. When the score reaches zero, the character must have immediate medical help. Otherwise, he will die in another 1D days.

Sacnoth has vast petrochemical resources, and this forms the backbone of its economy. Its major exports are petrochemicals, plastics, and various items fashioned from these materials. Its major imports are filters and filter elements, luxury items, and livestock.

The government is a feudal technocracy, which has many factions and separate governments working with each other. People are born into their lines of work, and are trained from birth to fulfill their destinies. Birth control is rigorously practiced. The planet’s armed forces are allied with none of the factions, but committed to keeping peace within the star system and protecting it from outside threats.

The Autonomous Zone, an area of the planet that no faction can claim or control (by mutual agreement), is a one-thousand-square-kilometer area that surrounds the starport. It contains the University of Sacnoth, all of the offices of offworld businesses, of the necessary businesses to support the populace of the area, and the living units for its population. The area is policed by a company hired by the planet, and the law level reflects that zone only, since off-worlders are not allowed into other areas (except under very special circumstances).

Residents of the Autonomous Zone are usually much more hospitable than the natives, who wouldn’t give an offworlder the time of day unless absolutely necessary. It is usually best to deal with a representative or an intermediary when conducting trade with any of the factions.

The AyZee (as it is called by its residents) abounds with diversions and entertainments for a wide variety of tastes and budgets, but the most popular of these are the many casinos and gambling palaces. Overall, a traveller gets the impression of a crowded, urban society, much like that of Hong Kong on Terra, back around -2,500.
6. YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE
(if the container is delivered with a broken seal)

Scene: The person at the address seems slightly upset
and eyes you speculatively, but pays you anyway. Later, as
you wander back toward the ship, window-shopping as you
go, you hear footsteps behind you. When you look back,
a form is just disappearing into an alley.

Action: A Sword Worlds’ agent is trying to assassinate
the character with a snub pistol loaded with HEAP rounds. The
assassin will be wearing cloth armor, an old pair of leather boots,
and will probably run if the character manages to return fire. He cannot be captured, but
fear a task roll if the character tries.

Any major law problems can be handled quickly by
Nukoor’s organization, and the character will have two full
weeks to recover from any wounds.

7. LOOKING YOU OVER
(Arrival at Sacnnoth)

Scene: When your ship arrives at Sacnnoth, you are
instructed to dock at the orbital facility for a routine import
inspection. All the “special equipment” you have on board
had better be hidden, quick! But once you are docked, the
officials come aboard and examine the items on board.
Action: The characters that are present for this should
make the task roll below, since they have all viewed the
holocrystal included in the cargo package.

To identify one of the inspectors as a Sword Worlds’
agent:

Difficult, Intelligence, Instant, (uncertain), safe.

Referee: Only on Total Truth will the character recognize
one of the inspectors as an agent outlined in the holo.

The inspectors will prove most understanding about small
discrepancies on the manifest (if given a reasonable expla-
nation), and will give the characters a holocrystal detailing
the trade laws of Sacnnoth, and their stamp of approval to
land at the Downport facility.

The agent had no particular instructions to look out for
the characters. (His orders are still more than a week
away.)

The characters will once again be involved in refueling,
discharging passengers and cargo, and maintenance
checks. Taldrait will insist on having the ship ready for
departure on short notice before passing out paychecks
and engaging in the search and rescue operations.

8. “BUTTON, BUTTON, WHO’S GOT THE BUTTON?”
(Search for the target persons)

Scene: The University of Sacnnoth is a compacted cam-
pus of interconnected buildings which are sealed off from
the outside atmosphere, and visitors to it must register at
the Campus Information Offices. The pretty clerk is quite
willing to help you find your “friends”, but it turns out that
most of them left the University about a year ago. Kenturus
is the only one left, and the clerk directs you to her office,
remarking that “the doctor sure has become popular all of
a sudden.”

Action: When pressed for further information, the clerk
can only remember that another man asked about the doc-
tor’s address about two days ago.

9. THE KENTURUS APARTMENT
(Why Devon doesn’t answer the phone)

Scene: This used to be a very nice, roomy, two-bedroom
flat in a good part of town, but it has been ransacked and
shows signs of a fight. There are small smears and occa-
sional droplets of blood in the living area, along with torn
up furniture and small items lying haphazardly about.
The rest of the place is in the same shape. The holo-
recorder in the den is displaying the frozen title “Play Me.” Upon playing the
message, the holo will show a man holding the limp form of
Devon Kenturus. “Okay, Doctor, if you want to see your kid
alive again, I suggest you vidphone the number on the card
under the recorder. If you tell anyone about this, you can
forget about the kid.”

Action: Marissa now acknowledges that there was an inci-
dent on campus a few days ago, which she did not realize
was directed at her. One man with a tranq gun was arrested
by campus security, two others escaped. She laments bit-
terly that she did not bring her son on campus where he
would have been better protected. She is somewhat hysteri-
cal and must be prevented from calling the indicated num-
ber at once.

It might occur to someone to crosscheck and find the
owner of the number.

To obtain the address matching a given cell code:

Routine, Edu, Computer, 1 min

The number is a private line out of the offices of Vector
Interstellar Shipping, a firm that operates out of the Down-
port Complex, and some more work will indicate that a free
trader registered with the company is in port.

Taldrait will insist that Marissa be brought aboard the
Hiawatha immediately, so she can be better protected.
Taldrait himself offers to charter a plane to Mars and
pick up Marissa and Devon. The kidnappers are alerted within four hours by
clumsy police action and Devon is moved immediately to
the Starwave. Unless the characters can prevent this,
the boy will be taken off planet and Marissa will flatly
refuse to leave without offering herself to the kidnappers
in exchange. Taldrait will tranquilize her if necessary, but back
on Biter she will raise legal Cain for the characters.

The kidnappers may also try again for Marissa herself,
leading to a confrontation near the Hiawatha. If captured,
they can be forced to reveal Devon's hiding place, either
here or on a Sword World to which he is being taken. Off-
world, however, the characters will be unable to help him.

10. VECTOR INTERSTELLAR SHIPPING
(If the characters try to find Devon themselves)

Scene: The offices are in an aging warehouse near the
hangar bays of the downport. Guards are present, well-
armed and alert though not numerous. The office staff is
efficient. You recognize the manager from the holo in the
apartment. One of the cargo lift operators has a nasty
bruise on his face and a split lip, and was also on the
hola in the Kenarust apartment.

Action: Direct confrontation is a bad idea. The staff will
deny any knowledge of Devon Kenarust, and will then be
alert to the characters' intentions.

Devon is being held in a back office in the warehouse,
a fact which could only be discovered by a covert break-in.
Devon is slightly the worse for wear, having resisted his
abductors fiercely before being captured. Overall, he is in
good health and good spirits, and more than ready to pay
back his captors with interest should the opportunity present
itself. The warehouse is detailed on the next page in case the
characters choose to break in or to fight the kidnappers.

Taldrait has one ace up his sleeve which could make a
break-in less necessary. The tree rat is an ordinary pet; it
has an implanted memory module and enhanced intelligence.
It will accept commands to investigate a place. No
one will be surprised to see such an animal wandering
the streets or even the warehouse. It could be sent in to try
sniff out Devon's whereabouts. (If anybody shoots at it, the
characters have more incentive to get rough with the bad
guys.) The tree rat cannot free Devon, however; it can only
report his location.

The warehouse normally employs 5 full-time personnel
during the workday. There is one security guard posted in
the booth, and this number increases to 3 during the off-
hours. (The night shift guards, the manager, and the cargo
lift operator are all Sword Worlds agents.) Each of the
guards wears jack armor and carries a 2-way radio, a
cudgel (nightstick), and a shotgun loaded with pellet
rounds. The manager is also spending his nights here
(keeping an eye on Devon), and carries a shotgun loaded
with pellet ammunition, but does not wear armor. All of
these people have hit ratings of 3/5. Lying around the
warehouse are various small objects that can be used as
weapons in a pinch.

11. MORE THAN ONE WAY
(Other rescue options, referee information)

Referee: If the characters delay until around dawn, then
Devon will be moved from the warehouse to the Starwave.
The company owns an open-topped air/raft, and Devon is
moved with 4 guards and the manager. The stun grenades
would be a real help here.

Hangar Bay 23: This is an enclosed area without life sup-
port, meant to protect the ship inside from the elements.
The maintenance team left late in the night, and didn't
tell the Starwave's captain they were done. Thus, the ship's
security program is still disabled and will be until mid-
norning. The technicians have powered up the ship's power-
plant, though (they needed the power to check some
subsystems).

Until the crew wakes up, sabotaging the ship will be a
simple process, because the technicians have left most of
the maintenance panels open. The ease of the operation
depends on the timing of it.

Bait and Switch: Any suggestion of a fake exchange will
be immediately put down by Taldrait, who will point out that
putting Marissa at risk of capture or worse is playing into
the enemy's hands.

12. "LET'S BLOW THIS POPSICLE STAND!"
(Escape with the Kenarustes)

Scene: When you get Devon aboard the Hiawatha, every-
one is anxious to get away fast. Taldrait has kept the ship
warm and ready, so you can take off at once.

Action: If the Starwave is still spaceworthy, it will be about
15 minutes behind the characters, and it is armed with a
triple beam laser turret (TL-7, UCP 3) and a single sand-
caster turret TL-10, UCP 3) with 12 battery-rounds. Referee
es can use their discretion with the battle situation, but the
Starwave's gunners and pilot are all level 1. The fireworks
will bring the authorities into it, resulting in an SDB intercept
as explained above.

If the Starwave is out of commission, have the starport
authority calling the Hiawatha about some indiscretion or
other (blowing up parts of the other ship, taking off without
clearance, the police want to talk to them about some
weapons being fired, and so on) as soon as it reaches orbit.
The characters will ignore this, since they don't want any
legal involvements. This will result in SDBs being called
down from their normal patrol routes. Careful analysis of
vector plots for the SDBs will indicate that the ship could be
fired upon just as it reached 10 diameters.

To predict an interception point:
Routine, Pilot, Computer, 10 sec

The jump will have to be attempted at 10 diameters. Do
the jump attempt by the book, but feel free to assign your
own DMs based on how well the characters have been
doing. After all, good role-play should be rewarded. If they
land deeper in the Sword Worlds, they will need to conceal
their mission and get back on course as quickly as possible
before any message catches up with them.

13. THE FINAL CHAPTER?
(Closing the adventure, referee information)

When or if the characters successfully return to Bler,
they will drop off both of the Kenarustes for a brief and suc-
cesful positive identification. After this, the characters will
be paid an amount up to the maximum of Cr10,000 each, at
the referee's discretion. If the adventure is short term, it
ends here.

If this adventure is intended to be a campaign-starter,
then the group will be assigned to transport the Kenarustes
back along Spinward Main to Regina, while conducting vari-
ous missions as dictated by the DNI operative groups
along the way, as well as maintaining the Hiawatha.*
The VIS Warehouse: This is a typical prefabricated warehouse that has been sealed from the outside and has its air filtered and climate controlled. The numbered areas are listed below.

1. The receptionist's office. This room contains several chairs, a large desk, and computer terminal. The company's correspondence records are kept on holocrystals in the desk. The files show a complete listing of all the ships currently operating for the line, and also show that a free trader, the Starwave, is in port at hangar bay 23 and is due to finish its annual maintenance check that evening.

2. The contractor's office. This room has another desk/terminal combination and a few comfortable chairs. All of the payment records and specifics on shipping contracts are kept here. The files show complete listings of all the ships currently operating for the line, and also show that a free trader, the Starwave, is in port at hangar bay 23 and is due to finish its annual maintenance check that evening.

3. The inventory/computer office. This room contains the building's computer system, and also serves as the inventory records office. It has a bank of computer systems and another desk/terminal combination. The files can show precisely where any item is stored in the warehouse, but do not show where Devon is being kept.

4. The employees' lounge. This room has a few tables and chairs, a refrigerator, a holovision unit, a snack and beverage dispenser, and a vidphone.

5. The storage room. This room contains various tools, cleaning equipment, a small lavatory, and spare parts for the cargo lifts that are used here. Lately, it has been used as a detention area for Devon Ken-tarus, who is bound and gagged in a locked storage cabinet. The room's door has a keypad lock, but is made out of light wood and can easily be kicked open.

6. The storage racks. These metal frames hold several levels of boxed and crated goods awaiting shipment. The racks extend all the way to the roof, 5 meters above the floor. The floor is smooth concrete. The lowest level has various nooks and crannies that provide cover and concealment in a pinch. The containers have various warning labels (i.e. flammable, corrosive, poison, etc.) concerning the handling of their contents. Some of the racks (numbered 6A) are tanks for cryogenic storage, showing frost on their outsides. None of these items would be very safe if broken open in a firefight.

7. Security guard's booth. This room has a small computer terminal, a radio, a bank of vidphones, and a keypad lock to the cargo airlock (10B). The radio is preset to the roving guards' frequency, and a person can set off the security alarm from the computer terminal.

8. Loading docks. The projections from the warehouse are about 1 meter higher than the floor, and this area's ceiling is the same height as the warehouse.

9. The service area. This area contains the equipment to recharge the two cargo lifts that operate in the warehouse. In the very back of the room is a garbage compactor with external access. The inner doors cannot be opened from inside the device.

If a security alarm is activated (this can only be done from the security guard's booth), the police will be there within 5 minutes, and a series of loud alarms will go off throughout the building. If the alarm goes off, the manager will make his way from his office (2) to the storeroom (5), to get Devon. The manager will use Devon as a hostage to escape, if possible, but will make the mistake of trying to kill another character if trapped.

10. Airlock. These units cycle out tainted air while pumping in purified air. It takes about 10 seconds to cycle the personnel lock (10A) and about 30 seconds to cycle the cargo lock (10B). Note that while the 10A lock has external controls, it will not allow anyone to enter during off hours unless a special code is entered on its keypad lock. The controls for 10B are in the security guard's booth (7).

11. Vehicle parking lot. While this area is sheltered by an overhang, its air is not purified. The company's open-topped air/raft is parked here when not in use.
Reft

LIBRARY DATA OF THE SECTOR
—by James Holden, John Meyers, and Mike Mikesk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vestus</th>
<th>Macon</th>
<th>Two Little</th>
<th>Barker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>Sagitar</td>
<td>Lost Way</td>
<td>Gorne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Void 8</td>
<td>New Islands</td>
<td>Old Islands</td>
<td>Limon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>Evestin</td>
<td>Ancrant</td>
<td>Mobil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reft: Subsector Key

Garden/Alone (0435 B755578-A): Isolated beyond easy jump distance, Garden has only been visited by humans within the past three centuries. Colonists first began to arrive in 1792, desiring a new world to farm in peace. Garden’s relative inaccessibility to the rest of the universe suited them perfectly, as their initial thoughts were to get back to nature and leave much of technology behind.

Surprisingly, Garden’s first explorers found the remnants of another civilization. This prior civilization — identified within the past ten years as belonging to the Salika, a non-human minor race — had abruptly ended around 1000. Buildings were still intact, and all signs pointed to a mass migration offworld. At the time, no one knew the identity or destination of Garden’s original inhabitants.

The colonists found the planet’s environment in an unbalanced state. Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere were abnormally high, warming the world’s climate. Garden’s climate was further worsened by its star, a long-period irregular variable, now in a bright phase. All in all, Garden was much less habitable than its name implied.

The settlers, with aid from the Imperial Ministry of Colonization, began a wide-scale atmospheric terraforming project. Designed to remove the excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, it has already started to show slight signs of cooling the planet’s climate.

Garden’s current inhabitants live by a strict conservation ethic. They refuse to use any sort of destructive or exploitive technology. They stay away from using chemical fertilizers or pesticides in agriculture, and put considerations of environmental foremost in their work. What technology exists on Garden is used for power, communications, or environmental control purposes. The starport is the only planetary installation to sport a high degree of automation.

Lintl/Vestus (0503 B739AEE-F): A cold world, Lintl is the capital of Vestus Subsector. Its 39 billion inhabitants are bound by the constraints of the local religion (URP A74015-A). Lintl is governed by three autarchi-priests, who interpret and execute the demands of the faith.

REFT SECTOR OVERVIEW

In 1120, possession of the Reft worlds is divided among multiple powers. On the Great Rift’s other side, Norris’ fleets hold sway. From the provincial capital at Lintl/Vestus (0503 B739AEE-F), his Domain of Deneb solidly extends its reach over three subsectors. Norris’ rimward borders are not without encroachers, however. Invading Jathrii from the Aslan Colonies in Trojan Reach have begun to move into the sector. At present, these Aarlakthi — “New Lords” — have wrested control of seven systems from Deneb, and their expansion shows no indication of slowing.

Tonruar/Usher (0416 B43695E-7) has been the site of vicious fighting between Aslan and Denebian vessels. Originally an independent world, Tonruar has managed to drive off most of the Aslan with the help of Denebian forces. Nevertheless, the Jathrii dominate the space around Tonruar, and military analysts voice little hope for this inconspicuous world’s future.

The Aslan encroachment on Tonruar was launched from nearby Bastion/Usher (0116 B737332-B). In pre-Revolution times, Bastion was the location of a small Naval base. When word of Strephon’s death reached Reft, the base was closed down, and operations were moved to the larger base at Aldaya/Usher (0212 B885620-6). Unfortunately, as the Aslan moved in, both Bastion and Aldaya fell into their hands. The bases now serve the fleets of the powerful Brekhalri clan.

Farther to trailing lies a number of non-aligned systems within the Rift. The worlds of the Islands subsectors have scarcely felt any direct effects of the Rebellion. True to their past, the Solomani-descended inhabitants of these worlds continue to quarrel among themselves. The balance of power between the region’s eight major powers remains precarious.

Also situated in the depths of the Great Rift is the Droyne world of Zamoran/Two Little (2108 B674675-A). Although not as famous as some of the Domain’s other Droyne worlds — Autey, Zeon, and Andor, especially — Zamoran is relatively prosperous.

The Zamoran system is a crucial stepping-stone on route to the mid-Rift Naval base at Amorac/Barker (2509 B381468-A), a Denebian client state. A small amount of trade is conducted between the Droyne and travellers passing back and forth along the Amorac route. Naval activity at Amorac has increased markedly since the onset of the Rebellion.

Most worlds along the Rift’s trailing edge have been absorbed by Dulinor’s Domain — officially titled the Federation of Ilelites since 1119. Cyril/Moibin (2738 A7A639B9-F), the old sector capital, declared for Dulinor without a struggle. This act has gripped sizable numbers of Cyril’s five billion inhabitants, however, and vehement anti-Ilelithian action groups have repeatedly caused trouble over the last several years.

Anti-Ilelithian sentiment is not confined to Cyril. The Zapazmal of Moibin Subsector initially sided with Ilelith because of its proximity. As time passed, though, the Zapazmal came to resent Dulinor’s federalist policies, which threatened the traditional conduct of Zapazmal affairs. Brusque Federation artifact-hunting at Dialek’s archeological sites did little to improve relations.

Objecting to this, Holilapli/Limon (3229 B765658-A), the most distant Zapazmal colony, turned to Strephon following its reappearance in mid-1117. Guerrillas from Holilapli are now working to free their brethren from Dulinor’s control, but so far, Ilelith holds Dialek and the other five colonies.
In Lintlian belief, all beings are elements of a mass consciousness, the Totality. The Totality is defined as the sum of all individual minds. By living according to the standards of the faith, each individual can maintain his contact with the Totality after death; otherwise, he is condemned to an endless future of complete mental isolation.

The autarck-priests have inculcated this belief into the minds of the populace, linking the world’s laws with the religion of the masses. Despite Lintli’s high population, order is maintained through a dogma of fear.

R’bak/Segittiarlan (1314 B3977777-3): Red Zone. R’bak is the only system in Sagittarian Subsector. Meteor swarms present a considerable hazard to navigation. Travellers are advised to adhere to guidance instructions from the starport authority as inner system travel is especially threatened. The starport for the system is located at one of the space habitats in synchronous orbit around the main world. The world itself, however, is interdicted.

Centuries ago, before the Third Imperium restored interstellar exchange, insystem shuttles fell into disrepair, and the world’s inhabitants were isolated from their fellows in space. The ground society quickly descended to barbarism and forgot the people in orbit.

In recent times, the habitat dwellers have replaced their interplanetary craft with Imperial aid, and they now have the equivalent of a B-class starport. At the Imperium’s insistence, however, they have not reconnected the population on the ground. The Imperial Navy has requested that the developing cultures be protected from the interference of outside activity.

This last fact has drawn some attention in the sector news media, for the Navy is rarely interested in protecting developing cultures. Generally, it is the IISS that takes the interest in placing such worlds off-limits. Rumors of unusual lifeforms and psionic activity among R’bak’s ground-dwellers persist, however. These rumors have led some researchers to pinpoint R’bak as the site of a top-security military research project.

Tapazmal: Minor human race native to Dlaekan/Moibin (3134 A369657-D). Dlaekan is a hot world, its mean surface temperature exceeding 70 degrees Celsius. Dlaekan has an unusually dense core and a surprising amount of tectonic activity. The early Tapazmal lived on the slopes of Dlaekan’s high peaks, where the atmosphere was thinner and temperatures lower.

Physically, the Tapazmal are little different from the rest of humanity. One notable feature is their low birthrate, a result of genocide by the Ancients. This modification likely served to limit Dlaekan’s population in Ancient times, thereby conserving the mountains’ scant resources.

Interstellar contact in more recent times first came around 4700, when the Loeskalth — another minor human race, native to neighboring Gushemegh Sector — intermittently raided the Tapazmal for artwork and other valuable objects. (The Loeskalth had long since received jump drive from another Vilani client, but were not absorbed into Vilani culture until later.)

These raids continued until the Vilani themselves came to Dlaekan several centuries later. The Tapazmal eagerly accepted Vilani offers of technological aid and protection, at the cost of submerging their native culture in the Vilani Way. Tapazmal civilization grew under Vilani custody, but it never reached beyond Dlaekan.

This situation changed after the First Imperium’s fall. Old cultural records were unearthed and studied, and the Tapazmal tried diligently to return to the ways of their distant ancestors. The expanding Solomani, eager to have a base in the area, granted the Tapazmal several colony worlds in return for their cooperation.

Today, the Tapazmal occupy six worlds in Reft — Dlaekan, G’haenbaz (2733), Boklibom (2834), Pamraeltan (2932), P’hay (2934), and Holihapuli (3229) — as well as one world in Gushemegh: Choltonril (0136). Despite their reach, the low numbers of the Tapazmal have kept them from being a major force in Imperial politics.

The Tapazmal are known for their great artistic and architectural skill, combining modern technology with traditional styles and motifs. A conservative, unaggressive, and mystical people, their roles in society are strictly defined. Individualists defy the old standards at substantial risk. Nonetheless, Dlaekan and its daughters are pleasant worlds, their inhabitants hard-working and at peace.*
TROJAN REACH SECTOR OVERVIEW

The political situation in Trojan Reach is one of utter turmoil. As news of Strehov's assassination leaked across Imperial borders, the sector's governments fell into disarray. Although few at first realized the full extent of the danger, the Florian League and Glorious Empire immediately readied their military forces.

The prime threat came not from the rapidly splintering Imperium, but rather from the Aslan. The landless ithai of the trans-Fliif colonies seized the opportunity to expand. Backed by their fellows in the Hierate, they swept out of Aslan territory into the vast no-man's-land of the Reach's central subsectors. As they pressed onward into Imperial territory, lesser powers were overrun.

By the end of 1117, most of the Florian worlds in Nora'a Subsector had fallen to Aslan invaders. Apparently, the Aslan are content with these holdings, as they have taken little additional Florian territory in the years since.

Sophontologists are quick to point out that this is atypical Aslan behavior, as enough ithai remain landless to intrude upon other Florian worlds. Some explain this strange behavior by pointing out that richer Imperial targets drew more attention. Others, however, point to rumors of high-tech Florian weapons, hastily put into production as the ithai first crossed League borders.

Unlike the Florian League, which has so far weathered the Aslan expansion without fatal injury, the Glorious Empire has been wholly overrun by the Aorlakh. Minor clans begin to encroach on Empire territory in 1117, and by the end of the following year, three worlds had been taken over by Aslan settlers. The beginning of 1119 saw the Empire surrounded by Aslan land seekers, and a full-scale attack by the Aorlakh reabsorbed this splinter state.

Sysoakh/Goettel (1027 A6968MC-C), former capital of the Empire, put up a hard fight against the Aorlakh forces and suffered for it. After nearly 500 years, Hierate honor was finally satisfied. Substantial planetary bombardment by nuclear weapons poisoned Sysoakh's atmosphere and drove this rival separatist state into submission.

With the Floriani and the Glorious Empire out of the way, only the smallest of powers stood between the Aorlakh and the Imperium. Great ithai fleets set out from Tialowaha, moving up through the Borderland along the old Aslan-Imperial Tradelane. The Aslan set upon Tobia Subsector, encroaching on the sector capital itself. In 1118, much of Tobia/Tobia (3215 A444A55-F) was staked out by Aslan settlers. The Sector Duke, Quinn, committed suicide in the wake of this disaster.

Tobia's fall was hastened by a lack of naval strength. At the outbreak of the Rebellion, Alexander Quinn had sent many ships forward to bolster Norris' forces against the Varg. This left him unprepared for the sudden incursion of the Aslan land-seekers. A good leader, Quinn will nevertheless be remembered more for his historical studies than his military prowess.

Quinn's successor, Duchess Sharik Arcadia of Gazulin/Gazulin (2708 A6A6B87-B), was his total opposite. Arcadia was a career Marine officer; her body of experience rested with combat, not administration. Still, she quickly adjusted to her new role.

Realizing that the time for open confrontation had passed, she deployed the Navy to hold the region's unoccupied territory. Then, taking an offensive tack, she tried a new strategy: turning the Aslan against themselves. Within weeks of her succession, she set plans in motion to exploit factional differences among the Aorlakh clans.

Evidently, those plans are working, for at last, the Aslan have all but stopped their quest for new "unoccupied lands" on the remaining worlds of the region.
The Floriani view of technology also stems from their interaction with the Ancients. Following the Final War, the Floriani were forced to rebuild without assistance. They were poorly suited for this job; they were servants, not researchers. Nonetheless, they managed to recover and adapt many relics of remnant Ancient technology, from which they gained a basic understanding of science and its applications. They also copied Asian jump drive to produce their own version.

Rumors of Floriani breakthroughs are often true, but they reflect the copying of someone else’s advanced device (often an Ancient artifact from their own world) and not true innovation.

**General Development Company (GeDCo):** A sector-wide firm active in Trojan Reach and the spinward portion of Reft. GeDCo’s charter obligates it not only to conduct interstellar trade, but also to increase tech levels. To this end, the company runs a route from Deneb/Uasaani (Deneb 1925 B537ADD-C) through Reft to Tobia/Tobia (3215 A444A55-F).

The company dates back to the period immediately following the Civil War, when Empress Arbellatra resettled many nobles — both supporters and rivals — on new border fields. In 700, a group of these nobles pooled their resources to buy bankrupt fledgling lines, merging them to form GeDCo.

Economic historians credit GeDCo with raising the frontier’s tech levels to the “average stellar” range. This continuing goal of technological dispersion is supported by a variety of planetary industries that manufacture goods for offworld export. Other subsidiary operations import higher-tech products and engage in speculative trade throughout GeDCo’s territory.

**Glorious Empire:** Former Aslan separatist state centered in Goertel Subsector. The Empire, formed by the Tokoua’we clan in 650, expanded militarily. By the 900s, a lack of resources forced expansion to a halt, but by then the Empire had grown to embrace 13 worlds.

Although dominated by Aslan, about one-third of the Empire’s population was human. Economic historians credit the frontier’s tech levels to the “average stellar” range. This continuing goal of technological dispersion is supported by a variety of planetary industries that manufacture goods for offworld export. Other subsidiary operations import higher-tech products and engage in speculative trade throughout GeDCo’s territory.

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Survey Data — Ref Sector

**REFT SECTOR UW LISTING**

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Bases: J (independent naval), N (Imperial Naval base), Q (Droyne garrison), R (Aslan clan base), S (Imperial Scout base).

Remarks: An (Ancient site), Cc-C9 (Chirper population in tethans), Cp (subsector capital), Cw (Chirper world), Cx (sector capital), Dd-D9 (Droyne population in tethans), Dw (Droyne world), Rs (Imperial Research Stations).

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**TROJAN SECTOR UW LISTING**

Allegiances: As (Aslan), Ao-A9 (Aslan Tlaukhu bloc), Bs (Belgardian Soujon), Cs (Imperial client state), Dd (Domain of Deneb), Dr (Droyne), Fi (Florian League), Na (non-aligned).

Bases: A (Imperial naval and scout base), F (non-imperial military and naval base), M (non-imperial military base), N (Imperial naval base), P (Droyne naval base), R (Aslan clan base), S (Imperial scout base), T (Aslan Tlaukhu base), U (Aslan Tlaukhu and clan base), W (Imperial way station).

Remarks: An (Ancient site), Cc-C9 (Chirper population in tethans), Cp (subsector or local capital), Ex (exile camp), Dd-D9 (Droyne population in tethans), Pr (prison world), Rs (Imperial research site).

Two world names didn't fit in the Name field: Sables des Etoiles (0504) and Chalcihtlicue (2314).

| Talfen 0100 ES00240-3 Ni Lo Na Po De 202 Na M2 M2 | |
| Bike 0100 D087341-9 Ni Lo Na 202 F7 F0 V3 | |
| Daruf 0116 D240308-2 Ni Lo Na Po De Pr R 213 F7 F4 | |
| Boleck 0119 B857411-A Ni Ag 915 F1 M1 | |
| Atye 0122 B260353-D Ni Lo Na 313 F8 B4 | |
| Ahkelaha 0126 B244243-K Ni Ag Na Po Do Ri 101 F7 F1 M7 |
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I need a bit of clarification. By reading your penetration rules, I get the impression that the only way to do the listed (that is, "normal") damage is to roll the hit number +1. If you roll exactly the hit number, you get a graze — and if you roll the hit number +2, you get exceptional success and do double damage. It seems to me the window for normal damage ought to be larger. — S.G.

Yes, the window for "normal" damage is narrow. However, you are overlooking an important aspect of the MegaTraveller combat system: you only roll once to determine both the hit and the damage it causes. Given this, would it make sense for every hit to cause the same level of damage? That's what would happen if, as you suggest, the "normal damage" window was made larger.

In fact, the MegaTraveller Referee's Screen (in the Referee's Gaming Kit, available from DGP) shows this clearly in the table for Penetration and Damage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PENETRATION AND DAMAGE (%)</th>
<th>Level of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pen vs Armor</td>
<td>+0 +1 +2 +4 +8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Pen &lt; Armor*</td>
<td>ne** ne** 1pt** 2pt** 4pt**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pen ≥ Armor*</td>
<td>25 50 100 200 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pen ≥ Armor* x 2</td>
<td>50 100 200 400 800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pinpoint hit or target under cover, use armor +2.
**ne=no effect. pt=points of hit dmg, no matter what the weapon dmg. Vehicles and robots take 10% of regular wpn dmg as superstructure hit.

This technique provides for variable hit likelihood and variable damage results with only a single dice roll of the "to hit" task.

Your question has within it another implied question — why exceptional success on +2? Shouldn't exceptional success take more than just rolling 2 over the needed result?

As I was forming the exceptional success/failure part of the tasks for MegaTraveller, I originally tried +4 over the roll for exceptional success and +4 below the roll for exceptional failure. As I studied the probabilities, and tried some tasks, I found that a +4 exceptional success was infrequent enough that it was a nearly useless distinction.

For instance, compare these probabilities on a Difficult task where the character has a fairly typical DM of +4 (a skill of 3 and a characteristic mod of 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceptional on +2</th>
<th>Exceptional on +4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fumble</td>
<td>3% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Failure</td>
<td>25% (3-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>14% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Success</td>
<td>17% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>14% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excep. Success</td>
<td>28% (9+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or, if we just look at the frequency of successful hits and ignore failures:

Marginal hit 29%
Normal hit 24%
Exceptional 34%
Double Excep. 8%

I found in playtesting that exceptional success on +2 was much closer to the feel I was after. As you can see, when using +4 for exceptional success, nearly 60% of the hits (in actual play, it felt like two thirds of the hits) did identical "normal" damage — which was very unnatural, not to mention frustrating.

With the +2 approach, the hit distribution is much more even — leading to more believable visibility in hit results (and less frustration), which I think better mirrors the spirit of the old classic Traveller combat system. I did consider exceptional success or failure on +3 briefly, but it was quickly rejected as being too unnatural a number to work with, given that the task difficulty levels are increments of 4.

As you can see, the MegaTraveller task-based combat system was a series of trade-offs. Although not everyone will agree with our preferred "feel" for combat, I think most will agree that given the goals we were after, the task-based combat system meets our goals well.

I hope this explanation helps you make better use of the combat system in your sessions. — Joe D. Fugate Sr.

How did the Vilani get so many "v" words and yet have no "v" in their language? — D.M.

This apparent problem with the Vilani "v" is caused by a discrepancy between the way different people transcribe the sound. (Remember that the original High Vilani alphabet was totally different from ours, so the Galactic letters are only an approximation.) The Vilani "v" actually sounds similar to the Spanish bilabial fricative "b" sound, and is transliterated by modern scholars as the Galactic "b". The Solomani, however, heard the sound as "v", and thus wrote the Vilani sound as a "v".

Thus scholars spell AAB, the Argushigl Admegulasha Bilanidin, for "the Vilani Repositor of All Knowledge", with no "v" in sight. AAB breaks down as:

- Argushigl: "the hidden truths, or knowledge"
- Admegulasha: "an infinite multitude in one unit"
- Bilanidin: "the scholarly spelling for "Viland"

Thus, when the Solomani first heard "Bilanidin", they thought the locals said "Viland", and the spelling stuck in popular literature.

If you want to try to reproduce this Vilani "b", move your mouth as though forming a Galanglic "v", but rather than touch your lower lip against your upper teeth, instead let your lower lip just barely brush against your upper lip.

(Way back when we grappled with the Vilani in issue #5 of the Traveller's Digest, we proposed this solution to Marc Miller, and he approved it. This is the official solution to the missing "v" mystery, although little has ever been said about it in the official press.) — Gary L. Thomas and Joe D. Fugate Sr.
Concerning jump drives, how much fuel (as a percentage) does a ship use when it jumps a shorter distance than it is capable? If a jump-4 cruiser travels only two parsecs, can it make another jump? — M.T.

This is a good question, and we should have made the answer clearer in the Starship Operator's Manual. Classic Traveller states that when a jump-4 starship jumps only two parsecs, the same amount of fuel is used as in a jump-4 jump. In MegaTraveller, that is still true. Let's look closer at why this is so, according to the details presented in the Starship Operator's Manual.

Longer jumps primarily need more complicated hull grid energizing sequences, with the zuchai crystal network dumping its energy into the grid at a correspondingly faster rate. Because of this situation for longer jumps, the jump drive fusion plant needs to process more fuel even faster than for a lower jump, in order to mirror a "fast charge rate image" in the zuchai crystals.

To get this faster charge capability means a much bigger fusion power plant and a larger zuchai crystal network — which means the jump drive in total is significantly larger. This extra size allows the charging system to operate at a stepped up rate and still maintain reasonable safety limits.

The best way to tune a jump drive power plant is to tune it to the fastest charge rate for which it is expected to be run. This has the unfortunate side effect of making shorter jumps burn up nearly the same amount of fuel as a longer jump. But a well-tuned power plant produces a smooth zuchai crystal charge image. And, of course, a smooth charge image dramatically reduces the incidence of miskump.

To retune a jump drive for optimum fuel usage for any given jump requires time and expense approaching an annual maintenance. In fact, a large part of annual maintenance is retuning of the jump drive to maintain a smooth charge image.

So, what it all boils down to is this: if you tune a jump drive's fuel usage to be optimum for jumps below the drive's rated maximum, you then jeopardize the performance reliability of the ship when making the higher jumps. To get optimum reliability, you therefore tune the ship's drive to get good performance across all jumps. Unfortunately, this means that all jumps end up taking about the same amount of fuel, regardless of the jump distance. — Joe D. Fugate Sr.

Why rate the inoperative/destroyed spaceship systems if these values are not used in the space combat section? — P.C.

Even though starship combat doesn't currently use these point values (since the current High Guard-based version of starship combat is not point oriented), these point values are vital in ground combat (which is point based).

Suppose one of your player characters wielding an FGMP-15 decides to take a pot-shot at an enemy Scout ship that's on the ground? In my experience as referee, players often want to try offbeat stunts like this. The starship point ratings allow you to say confidently, "Okay, go ahead and shoot," instead of fumbling around, saying "Uh, uh, uh" a lot, and getting flustered because you are not sure they can even do that.

GDW and DGP are currently working on a joint project to produce an upgraded points-based starship combat system for MegaTraveller. This alternative system does use those points in starship combat. I am not free to divulge a publishing date as of yet, however. Watch these pages for more details as this project unfolds. — Joe D. Fugate Sr.

Can turrets no longer have mixed weaponry? — G.G.

We have gotten this question often recently, and I must admit, it surprises me. Nowhere in the MegaTraveller design rules does it say you cannot have mixed turret weapons in a single turret. Good craft design involves looking at the list of can'ts and then trying everything else you can think of. Many published designs have mixed-weapon turrets. It seems to me the obvious answer is: you must definitely can have mixed weaponry in a single turret.

The craft design tables for turrets on pages 73 and 74 of the Referee's Manual list the values for one weapon of the type installed in the turret. If you want to create a tripod turret containing a missile launcher, a beam laser, and a sand caster, then pick one missile launcher from step 10, one beam laser from step 11, and one sandcaster from step 15. That's all there is to it. You have your mixed-weapon turret. — Joe D. Fugate Sr.
9MM BOLT ACTION RIFLE

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

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AMMO STATISTICS

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<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0kg</td>
<td>Cr50</td>
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</table>

med sig=some light/noise generated; easy to spot if fired in darkness;
med recoil=causes disorientation if fired in a zero-g environment

AMMO USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents one round

- TL7: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- TL10: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

DESCRIPTION

This finely crafted sporting rifle uses 9mm magnum rounds with 12-gram soft-nosed semi-jacketed bullets. The rifle's solidly-fitted, precisely-crafted components give it a good long-distance accuracy, and telescopic sights further improve accuracy at very long distances.

One combat round is required to load the chamber with a new round from the magazine. Two combat rounds are required to reload this rifle with a new magazine. The high velocity slug mushrooms as it penetrates its target and causes 4 hits worth of damage. Custom made versions with checkered stocks, precious metal inlays, or stocks of rare woods can cost up to three times as much as the standard rifle. Ammunition is not interchangeable with 9mm ammunition for pistols and submachine guns.

TASK LIBRARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Max Range</th>
<th>C*</th>
<th>S*</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>L*</th>
<th>VL*</th>
<th>Hit Dmg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>bullets</td>
<td>V Long</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>D/4</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>F/2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>scope</td>
<td>bullets</td>
<td>V Long</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>D/4</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyro (TL10)</td>
<td>bullets</td>
<td>V Long</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>F/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>scope+gyro</td>
<td>bullets</td>
<td>V Long</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>R/4</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*for the range given, hit difficulty/penetration is listed.

To repair a damaged rifle:
[varies]. Mechanical, Dex, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level of the gun; use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

- superficial damage...........3 min
- minor damage..................10 min
- major damage..................2 hrs
- destroyed.....................6 hrs

For field repair, apply the standard difficulty increases.
**13MM DOUBLE BARREL BIG GAME RIFLE**

**EQUIPMENT STATISTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TL</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Vol</th>
<th>Wt</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>Cr2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Double Barrel Rifle</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.5kg</td>
<td>Cr1,500</td>
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**AMMO STATISTICS**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>TL</th>
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<th>Round</th>
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<th>Danger</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20 rds</td>
<td>slug</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>high</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.0kg</td>
<td>Cr50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*med sig=some light/noise generated; easy to spot if fired in darkness; high recoil=cannot move during turn if firing*

**AMMO USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)**

Each square represents one round

- TL5: 
- TL10: 

**DESCRIPTION**

This rifle has the most stopping power of any civilian rifle available on the market. It has two barrels arranged side by side, each holding one 13mm cartridge that is manually loaded through the breech.

The rifle fires a relatively low velocity soft-lead 20-gram slug that relies on its heavy weight to bring down its target. One hit will cause 4 hits of damage. One round of aimed fire may be fired per combat round, or both barrels may be fired on a successful cautious attempt. Both barrels may be reloaded in one combat round.

This rifle is a high recoil weapon. The stock includes a thick recoil pad. The rifle is not fitted for long-range sights, since the range of the rifle is so short and the weapon's recoil is so great they would be of little benefit.

**TASK LIBRARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Max Range</th>
<th>C*</th>
<th>S*</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>L*</th>
<th>Hit Dmg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>slugs</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>R/5</td>
<td>R/5</td>
<td>D/5</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>gyro (TL10)</td>
<td>slugs</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>R/5</td>
<td>R/5</td>
<td>R/5</td>
<td>D/2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*for the range given, hit difficulty/penetration is listed.

To repair a damaged rifle:

*varies*, Mechanical, Dex, *varies*

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level of the gun; use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

- superficial damage...........2 min
- minor damage..................8 min
- major damage.................2 hrs
- destroyed....................4 hrs

For field repair, apply the standard difficulty increases.
Affordable Transport, Part 2 (Budget Grav Vehicles)

TRAVELLER TECH BRIEFS
—By Mike Jackson

In Traveller, one of the greatest advancements in transportation technology is the grav vehicle. The grav vehicles that have been presented so far in MegaTraveller publications are at the high end of the financial spectrum. Such vehicles (such as tanks, APCs, specialty craft, or wilderness vehicles) are of most interest to adventurers travelling to exotic or hostile environments. This article addresses the other end of the spectrum — the common, inexpensive grav vehicle — the family car of the future.

DESIGNING LOW-COST GRV VEHICLES

The grav vehicles in 101 Vehicles for the most part have one thing in common: high cost. Many of these vehicles have prices in the six or seven figure range, putting them beyond the means of the average Imperial citizen. The high price of these vehicles makes perfect sense — they are designed for the rugged and demanding treatment of wilderness or combat activity, not the tame environment of the modern high-tech metropolis.

Further, most of these vehicles are designed for high performance, good protection, and lengthy durations of operation, and they mount top-notch computers, sensors, and communicators. None of this is necessary in an urban environment, where the nearest shop or fueling stop is at most a phone call away.

Designing low-cost grav vehicles using the MegaTraveller Referee's Manual is a relatively simple process. The following is a basic outline of how to design a useful grav vehicle, while keeping the cost low enough for even a newly generated player character (PC) to afford.

Chassis: Keep the chassis small and light. The bigger a vehicle is, the more grav modules you need to keep it up, and the more power and fuel the beast is going to drink up. Make the vehicle no more than a displacement ton or two. Keep the armor to a minimum, no more than level 4, to keep the vehicle light. You don't need the vehicle to go faster than 300kph (remember, it's being used mainly in the city), so leave the chassis unstreamlined. Configurations 3 (cylinder) and 4 (box) are the best.

Power: Your biggest power user will be the grav modules, so do the locomotion section first. Fuel Cells are the only practical power source, as they are small, cheap, and don't use a lot of fuel. Batteries are possible if you never want to leave the city, and will need to be recharged about as often as an internal combustion engine needs refueling. Fusion power plants are great when you need a lot of power, but here they're too big, too heavy, and far too expensive for general use. Once you calculate in the scale efficiencies for small fusion plants (table 2, page 64 of the Referee's Manual), they become downright useless for such small, light-duty domestic vehicles.

Locomotion: Choose standard (TL9) grav modules. They may use more power than other grav modules, but adding the extra fuel cells is a lot cheaper than buying even one low-power grav module. As a general rule of thumb, get twice as many tons of thrust as you have UCP tons of displacement (i.e., if your vehicle is one ton displacement/13.5 kl, get two grav modules for two tons thrust). Unless you plan on a lot of cargo space, this will always get you up to the 300kph top speed dictated by your configuration.

Don't buy avionics. They're extremely costly and eat up as much power as your grav modules. Besides, flying nap-of-earth in a city at faster than 40kph is prohibited on most worlds anyway.

Communication: You don't need a meson communicator in a city, and the satellite communication nets in place on most tech 10+ worlds mean you don't need more than a few kilometers of range. Get a radio with 50 km range, or perhaps a bit larger if you like. That's all you'll need.

Sensors: Exploration and fighting vehicles need sensors, lots of them, and for good reason. But your budget grav vehicle needs them for only one reason — to keep from hitting other vehicles or hitting the ground. Sensors cost a tremendous amount, and the only cheap and useful one available is the short range radar. It will serve your purposes adequately, and you only need a few kilometers of range anyway. Don't forget to get headlights, so you can see where you're going at night!

Weapons: You don't need any weapons on a civilian grav vehicle, but for the sake of completeness, let's discuss weapons anyway. None of the weapons in the Referee's Manual are cost or power effective; if you want one then you're not designing a vehicle, you're designing a full-fledged spacecraft (spacecraft design is beyond the scope of this article). Use personal weapons — authoritaries, lasers, grenade launchers. These are light, cheap, and use very little power. Statistics aren't given in MegaTraveller, so use the values in Book 8: Robots or in Striker. Book 8 doesn't give volume, but most of these weapons take up 1 liter of volume per kg of weight.

Environment: Again, it's assumed that this vehicle is for urban use, so extended life support is unnecessary. Get basic life support if you want to use the vehicle on any world without a comfortable atmosphere. Grav plate and inertial compensators are a necessity for fast combat and space vehicles, but are just an expensive, power-sapping frill for light-duty urban craft.

Controls: A computer is perhaps the most expensive component available for a grav vehicle, Cr60,000 at the cheapest. While perhaps a necessity for some craft, a computer becomes a liability here. This means you'll have to get electronic (TL7) control panels, but that's okay. This vehicle is so cheap you'll only need one couple of them anyway.

If you really need a computer, say for the occasional orbital flight, get a robot brain. They're small, not too expensive, and might even be able to fly the grav vehicle for you.

Other: As mentioned earlier, fuel cells don't use a lot of hydrogen. You should easily be able to carry enough fuel for a month's operation. Even the smallest fuel tank will hold enough for several days.

Keep cargo low, because it generally weighs a lot, which means more grav modules are required.

BUILT TO LAST

One of the good things about the more expensive grav vehicles already in print is their durability. Unlike the cars
and planes of twentieth-century Terra, the more expensive high-tech grav vehicles are built to last. When you buy an aircraft built for heavy-duty use, you can expect it to last a long time, perhaps your entire life. This means even an average citizen may decide to save up for an expensive craft, and it also means that long-term bank financing is available.

Grav vehicle financing works just as it does for robots (see table below). Note that grav vehicles typically last longer than robots, as they have almost no moving parts.

### GRAV VEHICLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TL</th>
<th>Life in Years</th>
<th>MaxLoan Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>150+</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### USED VEHICLES

For those who still can't afford a new grav vehicle, there is always the option of buying a used one. Used vehicles are available through dealers, trade exchanges (electronic boards or in person), local advertisements, and of course, direct from the original owner.

Used grav vehicles are often aged, and sometimes damaged. Roll on both the age table and the damage table to determine the vehicle's condition. Calcium damage means the craft still works, but may be dented, scratched, or have worn upholstery. Minor damage means that some system is not functioning properly — perhaps the radio is broken, or the vehicle can only reach half of its rated speed. Major damage means the vehicle will not function, and must be repaired. Destroyed means it is essentially scrap.

To repair a used grav vehicle, use the standard repair tasks in the Referee's Manual. The average selling price of a used grav vehicle depends on its condition — No damage: 80% list price. Superficial damage: 70% list price. Minor damage: 60% list price. Major damage: 50% list price. Destroyed: 10–30% list price.

### AGE IN YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TL</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>(3D-3) 3 years</td>
<td>2   No damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 2 years</td>
<td>3   No damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 4 years</td>
<td>4   No damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 5 years</td>
<td>5   No damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 7 years</td>
<td>6   No damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 8 years</td>
<td>7   Superficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 10 years</td>
<td>8   Superficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>(3D-3) x 15 years</td>
<td>9   Minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RENTALS

If a character still can't afford to buy a grav vehicle, he can always try to rent one. Rentals are relatively cheap over the short term, but over any extended period of time become more expensive than an outright purchase. Prices vary, but typically run about 0.0005 x the list price per day. Thus a Siengo Economy Grav (see design below) would cost Cr8 per day, and a Kankurur G-Carrier would run a whopping Cr5,315 per day. Rentals are usually for a pre-specified number of days, with payment almost always made in advance. Any damage done to the vehicle must be paid for in full by the renter.

### DESIGN EXAMPLES

In Traveller, the Min Grav Cycle is TL 10, Cr7,900

Craft ID: Min  Grav Cycle, TL 10, Cr7,900

Hull: 1/2, Disp=0.074, Config=3USL, Armor=1E

Unloaded=0.39 tons, Loaded=0.69 tons

Power: 1/2, Fuel Cellx2 =0.18Mw, Duration=30/90

Loco: 1/2, Std Grav, Thrust=1 ton, NOE=40kph, Cruise=225kph, Top=300kph, MaxAcel=0.4G

Comm: Radio=Very Dist (50km)

Sensors: Radar=Dist (5km), Headlight

Off/Def: Hardpoints=1

Control: Panel=Electronicx2, no environ.

Accom: Crew=1 (Driver), Seats=1 (open)

Other: Cargo=0.28kl, Fuel=0.28kl, ObjSize=small, EmLevel=faint

Perhaps the least expensive grav vehicle ever marketed, the Min is manufactured under license by dozens of corporations on many worlds across the Imperium. It is small, reliable, and easy to operate, and at its price, it is a common sight in human space.

Because it is designed in a motorcycle format, the operator must ride on the outside of the vehicle. There is a small cargo compartment on the back and there are harnesses for both the driver and a single passenger.
TRELEA UTILITY GRAV
CraftID:  Trelea Utility Grav, TL 13, Cr18,750
Hull:  2/5, Disp=2, Config=4USL (open top), Armor=1F, Unloaded=0.918 tons, Loaded=3.488 tons
Power: 1/2, Fuel Cellx4 = 0.54Mw, Duration=26/78
Loco:  1/2, StdGrav, Thrust=4 tons, NOE=40kph, Cruise=90kph, Top=120kph, MaxAccel=0.1G
Commo:  Radio=VeryDist (50km)
Sensors:  Radar=Dist (5km), Headlightsx2
Off/Def:  Hardpoints=1
Control:  Panel=Electronicx5, Environ=BasEnv, BasLS
Accom:  Crew=1 (Driver), Seats=cramped x4
Other:  Fuel=0.73kl, Cargo=1kl, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faith

The Trelea is a common, inexpensive grav vehicle, essentially a large, cargo-carrying aircraft. It is relatively slow, but seats 6 (9 if cramped). The Trelea is unusual in that it has more cargo space than weight capacity — it can carry only 2.5 tons of cargo, but has space for 7kl (even more if stacked higher; the vehicle is open-topped).

SPECTRE BUDGET SPACE VEHICLE
CraftID:  Spectre Budget Space Vehicle, TL 15, Cr152,300
Hull:  1/2, Disp=1, Config=4USL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=8.66 tons, Loaded=11.73 tons
Power: 1/2, FuelCellx5 = 2.16Mw, Duration=13/39
Loco:  1/2, StdGrav, Thrust=20 tons, NOE=40kph, Cruise=225kph, Top=300kph, MaxAccel=0.7G
Commo:  Radio=Continental(5,000km)
Sensors:  Radar=Planetary(50,000km), Headlightsx2
Off/Def:  Hardpoints=1
Control:  RobotBrain (Int3, Edu1), Panel=HoloLinkx1, Environ=BasEnv, BasLS, ExtLS
Accom:  Crew=0 (optional pilot), Seats=cramped x4
Other:  Fuel=1kl, Cargo=3kl, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faith

The Spectre is an inexpensive, space-capable grav vehicle used by inhabitants of asteroid belts, starship crews, and other space workers. At less than a tenth the price of other space transport, it is an excellent buy.

The Spectre is unstreamlined; though it does 0.7Gs acceleration in vacuum, it has a top atmospheric flight speed of only 300kph. The vehicle's large fuel capacity gives it a range of over 500 million km, and its reclining seats and entertainment programs make 13 day trips possible, though uncomfortable.

Instead of a computer, the Spectre uses a robot brain, both to reduce cost and to increase its usability — most people have no spaceflight skills, and in such cases the vehicle can fly itself. The brain is programmed as follows: LowData, Limited Basic Command, Ship's Boat-1, Navigator-1, Grav Vehicle-1.
Diseases and Their Treatment

MEDICAL DIGEST
— by Terry McInnes

Ten thousand years of human interstellar travel have shown that humaniti is immune to most native microorganisms found on worlds throughout charted space. Ironically, perhaps the most plentiful source of hostile microorganisms is Terra itself, the homeworld of the humans (incidentally, this is a good argument that Terra is, in fact, the true homeworld of humaniti).

While the Vilani did encounter hostile microorganisms on other worlds in their early interstellar travels, most such infections were more annoying than deadly. It was during the Rule of Man that the worst epidemics of hostile microorganisms occurred. The Solomani settlers of that time brought viruses, bacteria, and other disease pathogens of Terran origin with them as they expanded throughout explored space.

The effect of spreading Terran pathogens to the Vilani and other minor human races was immediately felt, and many historians claim these "plagues" contributed to the defeat of the First Imperium. Viral diseases contracted from Solomani prisoners of war (including infections like influenza and measles), spread throughout the Vilani population of entire cities, and incapacitated many units of the First Imperium’s forces.

The Plague of Duskir — the most famous — followed in the wake of advancing Solomani troops and affected worlds from the Solomani Rim to Vland. The Plague was a complex infection caused by a combination of microorganisms common to the Solomani, including yeast, staphylococci, digestive bacteria, and venereal disease.

Although Terran medical technologists moved swiftly to prevent as many deaths as possible (and while many Vilani were able to develop a degree of immunity), several thousand worlds were infected, and the final death toll came to over one billion.

Today, while such mammoth interstellar plagues are unheard of, no sophont — human or otherwise — is totally free from the risk of disease and infection. The microflora of Terra are now found wherever humans travel, and local mutations often defy a traveller’s developed immunities. Non-Terran hostile microorganisms may sometimes be encountered as well. Individuals need to be especially careful on worlds with primitive or limited medical technology, or on worlds that have been devastated by the factional wars now raging through Imperial space.

IN THE GAME

Generally speaking, characters have a greater chance of contracting diseases on a low-tech (TL4-) world with a standard atmosphere than on any other. Disease has either been eradicated or substantially reduced on high-tech worlds (TL11+) and consequently, the chances of becoming ill are much less.

Pathogens affecting humans are generally not found on vacuum worlds or on worlds with exotic atmospheres, and biological pathogens are less likely on worlds with certain kinds of tainted atmospheres (although sometimes a biological pathogen is the taint).

Nevertheless, microorganisms can be found in the closed confines of a starship, or any such sealed community (such as a domed city, underground city, arcology, or an orbiting habitat). Coming in contact with a disease carrier who contracted the illness on an infected world is yet another possibility.

SETTING UP A DISEASE ENCOUNTER

Each character has a chance of contracting a disease. The referee should predetermine when this is to occur, and use this "disease encounter" as a predetermined encounter as per the normal encounter sequence in the Referee’s Manual.

If the characters are adventuring in a location with a known disease outbreak, you may also want to provide a fateful, uncertain task for the player characters to avoid contracting the disease.

Determine the incubation period randomly, and roll the severity of the character’s disease using the chart on the following pages.
DISEASE EFFECTS

Characters may come down with anything from a mild upper respiratory infection to a severe fever or plague that can kill within a few hours or days. Not only have the "classic" Terran diseases spread throughout human space, but mutations of these diseases have also arisen.

Because there are so many possible diseases a character could contract, it is simplest to concentrate on the effects of an illness, rather than dealing with any specific named disease (although naming a disease will enhance the role-playing flavor). Disease effects are treated similar to wounding in combat. However, a disease affects specific body systems: the respiratory system, the gastrointestinal system, the nervous system, the muscular system, or the circulatory system.

The diseases covered here are acute infectious diseases, rather than long-term degenerative diseases. It is assumed that the MegaTraveller aging rules automatically take into account the effects of any long-term diseases the characters may suffer.

The "affected body system" table gives an approximate idea of what the effects of a specific illness could be. The exact effects are determined by the severity of the illness and its location, as well as by the referee's imagination. As examples, a mild respiratory illness might be the equivalent of a common cold, while a character suffering from a catastrophic respiratory illness is fighting a case of life-threatening pneumonia or an equivalent. Similarly, a mild nervous system illness could amount to a mild headache, while a disabling nervous system infection could be anything from a high fever to a form of meningitis or its alien equivalent.

TREATMENT

An ill character who is suffering from a mild illness and is ambulatory, or who is disabled but conscious, can usually recover on his own. The ill character's UPP will remain at a temporary low level until he has recovered.

A disabled character must rest in bed during the illness. If forced to move about, recovery time will be extended an additional 1-6 days unless moved under medical supervision.

A character in a coma (two characteristics reduced to zero) must spend the first 1-6 days under extensive care in order to recover completely. If this intensive care is not received, the character is permanently impaired and may die.

Intensive care time must be spent in an intensive care facility with at least a Medic-2 in attendance. The character regains consciousness with one characteristic increased to 1 after this time in intensive care. A character who regains consciousness must spend the remainder of the illness hospitalized in a normal ward or room. It is entirely possible for a character in a coma not to recover and to remain in a permanent vegetative state or to die while in coma.

REANIMATION

A character who would otherwise die may be brought back to life if TL13 or higher medical facilities and a reanimation specialist (Medic-5+) with a supporting medical team are available.

To be eligible for reanimation, the character needs to be placed into a low berth within moments after death. He must arrive at the reanimation facility within 30 days after being suspended in low berth. Only one reanimation attempt is usually possible, since the body systems experience severe trauma from the reanimation process.
If the initial reanimation succeeds, the patient is alive, but in a coma. The character must next recover from the coma. Even if initial reanimation succeeds, if the character fails to recover from the coma he will die, which means the reanimation is considered a failure and the character is dead for good. There is no second chance with reanimation.

DRUGS

There are a number of drugs useful in preventing or treating contagious diseases, including vaccines, antitoxins, antibiotics, antivirals, metabolites, and retroviruses. These can be obtained only by a physician (Medic-3+) or by physician’s prescription on worlds with law levels of moderate or higher (law level 4+). On worlds with law levels of low or less (law level 3–), these drugs may be obtained over the counter.

Symptomatic Relief (TL4): In addition to the medical drugs described above, symptomatic relief drugs such as pain relievers, anti-nausea drugs, and decongestants are available over the counter beginning with simple pain relievers at tech level 4 and others by tech level 6. They are available in pill form and cost Cr5 per 100 doses. Taken every four hours, these subtract one point of damage from the total suffered by patients with mild and disabling illnesses.

Vaccines (TL5): Vaccines help prevent illness if taken as recommended, by stimulating the body's immune system against invading viruses. They help keep a character from contracting a disease, and reduce the severity of a disease if it does develop. Vaccines that are effective against a single disease are available for Cr15 per inoculation. Characters who travel routinely receive all vaccinations against common diseases of their destination planet.

Antitoxins (TL6): Antitoxins aid in the recovery from an illness by combating the poisons generated by microorganisms. Antitoxins cost Cr20 per injection. Early antitoxins are disease specific and aid in the recovery from only one disease. (There are also specific antitoxins for animal venoms and plant poisonings.)

Antibiotics (TL7): These drugs attack the bacteria and similar microorganisms that invade the body and hasten the patient's recovery. They are not effective against virus-caused diseases.

Although antibiotics are useful, they have several drawbacks. A specific antibiotic may not be effective against the invading microorganism, and more than one may have to be administered to combat a specific infection.

Antibiotics may cause allergic reactions, if exceptional failure occurs on the treatment task. This extra damage must be treated as a separate injury. Antibiotics cost Cr50 per injection.

Antivirals (TL8): Antivirals act similarly to antibiotics but against viral pathogens. They cost Cr50 per injection.

Metabolites (TL9): Metabolites are expensive and rare drugs that alter the patient's metabolism and enable the patient to fight the disease more effectively. They are always effective. The "To locate a metabolic..." task must be rolled to determine if the drug is available. Metabolites cost Cr1,000 per injection.

Broad-Spectrum Vaccine (TL10): Vaccines that guard against most common viral diseases are available at tech level 10 for Cr100 per inoculation.

Retroviruses (TL11): A retrovirus is a specially engineered virus that links parasitically with the harmful microorganism and kills it. A successful retrovirus treatment is often very effective, yielding a rapid recovery. Retrovirus treatment is specific to the disease, and may not always be available. If a retrovirus for the disease is not available, then one must be engineered by an individual with medical skill (when dealing with known diseases; a process which can take from 6 to 36 hours) or by an individual with genetics skill (when dealing with unknown diseases; this process may take weeks).

Off-the-shelf retrovirus treatment costs Cr1,000 for one dose, given by injection. One treatment is usually sufficient. Specially engineered retroviruses typically cost Cr5,000 or more per treatment.

Broad-Spectrum Antitoxins (TL12): More effective broad-spectrum antitoxins affecting a wide range of diseases are available at tech level 12 for Cr100 per injection.

Fast Retroviruses (TL12): With growth quickening techniques, it becomes possible to engineer a retrovirus for any known disease in 6 to 36 minutes, instead of 6 to 36 hours. Fast retrovirus treatment, grown on the spot, costs Cr15,000 to grow one injection treatment, which is often enough to cure the disease. A fast retrovirus provides a way for an individual with tech 12+ medical gear to grow a treatment quickly for any known disease if none is otherwise available.

Broad-Spectrum Retroviruses (TL15): Genetic engineering techniques advance to such a point that it becomes possible to produce "smart" retroviruses that can seek out and link with a wide range of known diseases. These retroviruses are difficult to engineer, however, and may not always be available. A broad-spectrum retrovirus treatment, if available, costs Cr2,500 per treatment, which is usually sufficient to do the job. If the retrovirus needs to be engineered, it must be produced under laboratory conditions (not in the field) and it costs Cr25,000 per custom-grown treatment.

ADMINISTERING DRUGS

Antibiotics and antivirals may be administered by any character to conscious characters orally in pill form. Otherwise, drugs are administered by a Medic-1+.

COSTS

A visit to a physician costs Cr50 for routine examination and treatment in addition to the cost for any prescribed drugs. In addition, physicians charge Cr100 per day to treat a patient hospitalized with a disabling illness, and Cr500 per day to treat a patient hospitalized with a catastrophic illness.

Hospitals cost Cr100 per day for regular care and Cr500 per day for intensive care. Medic-2 nurses are available for Cr50 per day for disabled patients who do not wish to be hospitalized.

Reanimation costs Cr100,000 for the reanimation specialist, Cr50,000 for the specialist's assistant, and Cr10,000 for each of up to three reanimation nurses. Hospitalization in the reanimation unit costs Cr5,000 per day.
TREATMENT OF DISEASE

Once the referee has determined that a character has succumbed to a disease, perform the following steps.

**Note:** The time it will take for a character to feel the effects of a disease depends on the disease's incubation period (determined by the referee). During that period, the character will feel normal. The disease's symptoms will appear at the end of the period and worsen to the level determined by step 1.

### DISEASE EFFECTS

**1. Determine disease severity**

Roll a mishap (2D or 3D: referee’s choice) to determine the severity of the illness.

- Superficial: Mild illness
- Minor: Disable illness
- Major: Catastrophic illness
- Destroyed: Fatal illness

Allow the character to roll a saving throw of 3D-3 against his endurance: if successful, reduce the severity of the illness one level. For a mild illness, a successful saving throw means the mild illness automatically has an effect of 1 damage point in the next step (step 2).

**2. Determine disease effects**

Roll on the table below to determine the temporary damage this disease causes to the character's Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance. Apply one die to one of each of the characteristics. For example, a character with a disabling illness will roll 2D and apply the roll of each die to a single characteristic, for a total of two characteristics affected.

- Mild illness: 1D
- Disabling illness: 2D
- Catastrophic illness: 3D
- Fatal illness: 4D

- If one characteristic is reduced to zero, the character becomes bedridden.
- If two characteristics are reduced to zero, the character lapses into a coma.
- If all three characteristics are reduced to zero, the character is dying and will live only another 1 to 6 hours.

### REANIMATION

**1. Reanimating a dead character**

If the character was placed in a suspended condition (using a low berth) within 1-6 minutes of death, then the character is eligible for reanimation at a tech level 13+ medical facility. Once the character is reanimated under top-notch medical supervision, the condition that killed the character may be treated, with the possibility that he can be restored to full health.

To reanimate a dead individual:
- Formidable, attending Medical, End, 3 days (lateful)

**Referee:** This task may only be attempted in medical facilities of tech level 13+. If this task succeeds, the individual is in a coma and must proceed to the Treatment and Recovery Section, below. If the reanimation task fails, the individual dies.

### TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

**1. Diagnose and treat the illness**

The attending physician must diagnose and treat the illness.

To diagnose and treat an illness caused by microorganisms:
- [diff varies], Medical, Int, [time varies] mild=simple mild=1 min disabling=normal disabling=2 min catastrophic=diff. catastrophic=5 min fatal=formidable fatal=10 min

**Referee:** This task indicates the amount of time the physician must spend on the initial treatment — periods of recovery and healing are also required. Treatment may be augmented by the use of certain treatment aids — see the Treatment Aids section.

If a superficial or minor mishap occurs during treatment, apply the additional mishap damage to the patient as further wounds.

If a major mishap occurs, full recovery may not be available even with the best treatment and the latest technology. Roll a 2D mishap and apply the additional damage as permanent damage.

**2. Regaining consciousness**

(if in a coma)

Once a character in a coma has been successfully treated, use this step to see if and when the character regains consciousness. Skip this step if the character is already conscious.

The referee may want to define tasks to allow the PCs to seek help from non-conventional coma treatment techniques, like direct computer links to the nervous system or the use of psionics.

To regain consciousness from a coma:
- Difficult, attending Medical, End, 1Dx1D hours (lateful)

**Referee:** For each attempt that results in exceptional failure, make one damage point of the character's impaired Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance permanent. Notice the character's condition could deteriorate over time, so that the severity of the illness worsens.

The character automatically dies on a fumble (natural roll of 2).

Once a character in a coma regains consciousness, proceed to the next step (step 3).

**3. Recovery when conscious**

To recover from a disease when conscious:
- [diff varies], Medical, End, [time varies] mild=simple mild=2 hours disabling=normal disabling=1 day catastrophic=diff. catastrophic=4 days fatal=formidable fatal=8 days (maybe indefinite)
TREATMENT OF DISEASE (Cont.)

Referee: A fumble indicates a sudden reversal and the patient dies. Any failure means the character must be treated by the attending physician again — the first treatment did not take. On a fatal disease, failure means the character’s condition is terminal.

The time duration represents the period of total inactivity (bed rest) the character must get during the recovery period.

4. Healing

An ill character, once successfully treated and on the road to recovery (i.e., having rolled a successful recovery task), heals at the following rates, depending on the level of illness:

- Mild illness +1 per day for each characteristic
- Severe illness +1 per day for one characteristic (PC’s choice)
- Catastrophic illness +1 per 2 days for one characteristic (PC’s choice)
- Fatal illness +1 per week for one characteristic (PC’s choice)

TREATMENT AIDS

Certain drugs aid in the recovery from disease.

1. Determine treatment aid (if any)

The attending physician is always assumed to be using some minimal form of treatment aid in the basic treatment task. However, for additional interest and an improved chance of recovery, consult the following table to select which (if any) treatment aid may be employed to augment the physician’s treatment.

TREATMENT AIDS TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Aid</th>
<th>Treatment Task Augment</th>
<th>Recovery Time Increment</th>
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<td>Antitoxins (TL12+)</td>
<td>+2</td>
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<td>Metabolics (TL12+)</td>
<td>+3 (note 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retrovirus (TL11-14)</td>
<td>+4 (note3)</td>
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<td>Retrovirus (TL15+)</td>
<td>+5 (note 3)</td>
<td>x0.1</td>
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Add the task augment DM to the treatment task.
Multiply the recovery task time increment in step 3 by the time increment multiple.

Note 1: If the augment DM is 0, the treatment aid is ineffective.
Note 2: Compute the time increment multiple as: (Task Augment DM+10/10)
Note 3: Metabolics and retroviruses are not always available at the lower tech levels. Use the following task to determine availability:

To locate a metabolic or retrovirus:
[difficulty], Medical, Admin or Streetwise, [time duration]
TL8-10=Formidable (metabolic only) TL8-10=1 hour
TL11-12=Difficult TL11-12=30 min
TL 13=Routine TL13=5 min
TL 14++=always available
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**TRAVELLERS' DIGEST 20**

Let us know what you think! Photocopy the survey below, fill it out for the articles you read, and send it to: TD20 Survey Sweepstakes, 8979 Mandan Ct., Boise, ID 83709. Three names will be chosen at random to win a free subscription to the MegaTraveller Journal. Deadline for entries is September 15, 1990.

#### FOR OUR INFORMATION

**NOTE:** Please use back of page for the answers to questions 14.

1. What science fiction element is Mega-Traveller missing that you would like to see? (We don't mean product titles.)
2. What is the least enjoyable aspect of Mega-Traveller for you?
3. If you write or draw, have you considered doing work for Digest Group Products? If not, why not?
4. Do you have a favorite MegaTraveller artist and writer? If so, who?
5. Based on our previous product quality, if DGP were to produce a non-MegaTraveller product, would you:
   - [ ] Not buy it
   - [ ] Consider buying it
   - [ ] Definitely buy it
6. How many new roleplaying games do you buy a year? ______
   How many of the new games do you play? ______
7. What kind of computer system do you own (if applicable)? ______
8. Have you ever used a computer network (Like GEnie)?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

#### Editor's Digest

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1. Quality of Cover Art:
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   - [ ] So-so

2. Quality of Interior Art:
   - [ ] Excellent
   - [ ] Good
   - [ ] So-so

Name and Address:

Comments:
Middlemen
—by Mark Galeotti

REFEEEREE'S OVERVIEW
This is an adventure which stresses commercial acumen and is ideal for characters with some sort of business angle. Most independent ship operators and traders, for example, would turn their hand to whatever should yield a fairly quick profit.

The important thing is to play out encounters in full: the meat of the adventure is the interaction with various individuals, business dealings, and the mounting frustration of the players as the odds seem stacked against earning their lucrative bonuses.

THE CONSORTIUM
The water world of Botany Bay produces light industrial goods for the whole American Arm. From the capital of New Cairns, thriving communities have spread to other islands, including the Aborigine settlement of Ranipawab. Able, energetic, and enterprising, the Aborigines have built up a solid economic standing. There is a healthy flow of trade between New Cairns and Ranipawab. Hydrogen and sail-powered ships ply the straits regularly, as do a few cargo zeps. Abnormally high winds keep air traffic to a minimum, but a small consortium of Aborigine investors and entrepreneurs, AKO Inc., thinks it has identified a chance for a commercial air service.

Like many other nations, Russia regularly disposes of "non-lethal" army-surplus equipment on the open market. Two old wing-in-ground-effect transports (wingships) are to be auctioned on Tirane. Hybrid hover/aircraft, built to combat standards with full foul-weather and day/night pilot systems, they are rugged enough to operate on the turbulent New Cairns-Ranipawab route. As wingships are faster than ships or zeps, and cheaper to run and safer than aircraft, they could serve AKO well by shuttling cargo and passengers.

The consortium is wary of alerting potential rivals to the opportunity, and is made up of busy individuals disinclined to take time off for such a straightforward task as procuring the wingships. Hence AKO will approach the characters to act as their agents.

THE OFFER
The characters may be based on Botany Bay and be contacted in person. Otherwise a lawyer representing AKO will contact them by secure mail, enclosing a computer chip with details of the offer, handling instructions, authorization for using AKO credit lines, and a voice-print contract for the characters to confirm and return.

The terms are these: as well as being reimbursed for standard passage to Tirane, the characters will receive Lv2000 each to buy the wingships, check their airworthiness, and arrange their safe and prompt transfer to New Cairns. Their responsibility ends when the wing ships are loaded on board ship and bound for Botany Bay. In addition, AKO is offering a series of bonuses if the characters meet various targets, all or some of which can be taken in the form of AKO stock at a special rate of Lv125 shares for Lv100.
AKO has arranged a line of credit with a local bank for up to MLV2 (for both ships, sold as one lot). But the group is entreated to keep the price as close to MLV1.5 as possible. As an incentive, characters who make a good bargain will receive 1% of the difference. In addition, a line to MLV1.9 has been established to cover transshipment, temporary warehousing, and other expenses. If these expenses are kept below MLV1.5, the lump sum bonus is Lv5000; if MLV 1.5-1.7, the bonus is Lv2000. The third bonus is for promptness. Depending on when the wingships reach Botany Bay, the team as a whole may receive either Lv4000 or Lv2000. Finally, a small purse of Lv1000 is provided for living expenses. Any left unspent the characters can keep.

**DAY ONE: ARRIVAL**
The auction takes place at the French colony of Provence Nouveau, under the auspices of a local import/export firm, Maurits et Abelard. The characters will arrive at Tirane (or be hired, if already based there) the day before the auction, and the wingships will be available for inspection. The group can hire a local expert for Lv400 or attempt it themselves.

**Task: To check wingships:** Routine. Electronic. 1 hour.

The characters must present their credentials to take over authority for AKO's credit lines at the Tirane Branch of the Colonial Investment Bank SA (CIDB).

The man they have to speak to is the deputy manager, Andre Segard. If the group looks smart and knows the form, they will be able to speak to him straightaway. If not they may have trouble convincing his over-protective secretary of their bonafides.

**Task: To convince secretary:** Routine. Determination or Eloquence. 5 minutes.

**Task: To complete authority (Teamwork):** Formidable. Determination or Bureaucracy. 30 minutes. **Referee:** Add 1 to the roll for every character above one trying to bully, persuade, and help Segard.

If the PCs have not succeeded by the time the bank closes, they must return the next day. The auction opens at 10:30am, the bank opens at 9:30am and the trip from one to the other takes 22-32 minutes (20 + 2D6) by metro (cost Lv1), 11-26 minutes (9 + 3D6) by taxi (cost Lv10). The PCs may have to choose: hope they succeed first thing in the morning, split into two groups, or return to complete the authorization later. But in the latter case they must provide a "nonreturnable deposit" of Lv1500 for the CIDB to underwrite their bid at the auction.

**DAY TWO: THE AUCTION**
Play the bidding for tension, starting with several interested buyers at the opening price of MLV1, falling away as the price rises. By MLV1.6 the party is bidding against just one other group, a trio of uniformed men sitting at the back. They will drop out after MLV1.9.

Observant characters may note several things about the opposition:

**Task: To make observations about the trio (Unskilled) (Hazardous) (Uncertain):** Difficult. 3 minutes.

For every success, impart one of the following bits of information: The uniforms were military, but not French; the uniforms were not from any major army on the planet; the three looked extremely annoyed at the characters; they spoke English; all three wore pistols under their tunics. For mishaps the referee may choose to insert misinformation.

As soon as the lot is sold to the characters, the three stalk out. If followed, they take a metro to a cheapish quarter and go into a small hotel.

**Task: To tail the three (Hazardous):** Routine. Stealth. 2 minutes. **Referee:** All characters involved in the tail must make two checks — once for the metro trip, once for the walk to the hotel. A failure on the first roll means the quarry is lost, on the second that the characters are spotted. If the officers realize they are being followed, they detour via a crowded department store and shake off pursuit.

Questioning other patrons at the auction may be more fruitful:

**Task: To gather information (Unskilled):** Routine. Interview. 2 minutes

The trio was from a predominantly British mercenary unit, the Black Angels. A quick check through past news broadcasts (a service costing just Lv10 from a library or public information booth) will reveal that they are a tank regiment, with a doubtful reputation, based at New Albion.
Helene Portmanteau

It's been a bad day. The alarm went off late, the car broke down on the way, and, let's face it, she's stuck in a dead-end job despite a good education and a lot of talent. Who wants to be helpful? Motivation: Club Queen: stubborn; Spade Jack: pompous and arrogant.

Play her as obnoxiously as possible. The characters need her to bend the rules and she feels in the mood to be rigid. If they are especially diplomatic, the characters may be able to persuade her or bribe her. Any offer of less than Lv1000 will automatically fail.

Task: To persuade

Portmanteau: Formidable. Bureaucracy or Eloquence. 5 minutes.

Task: To bribe

Portmanteau: (Hazardous): Difficult. 2 minutes. Referer: Failure means that the bribe is rejected, mishap that the money is taken first, a major mishap that Portmanteau may call the gendarmes.

If the police are called, the characters should be able to talk their way out since there is really no evidence.

Task: To talk their way out:
Simple. Eloquence or Streetwise. 5 minutes.

Failing this task will lead to the players spending the rest of the day hanging around the local gendarmerie station before being thrown out into the streets.

STABLES

Once the auction is over, Mss. Maurois and Abelard will present the characters with hard copy deeds and documentation for the wingships, made out to AKO. Final confirmation of the credit transfer, export registration, and the arranging of shipment to Botany Bay will take a few days and the characters and wingships are obliged to stay on planet for that time.

Storage of the wingships immediately becomes the characters' responsibility. The usual practice is to rent a "transit park", a fenced-off lot in the warehouse quarter near the spaceport. A park must be hired and moving arrangements made with a local helicopter-crane operator.

Task: To find a transit park: Simple. Bargaining. 30 min. Referer: Basic price is Lv1,000 per day, less Lv25 per point the roll exceeds the necessary score.

Task: To hire a helo-crane: Simple. Bargaining. 30 min. Referer: as above, with cost Lv1000 less Lv20 per point.

Should the characters be unable to hire both in four hours, business closes for the day. Maurois et Abelard will charge Lv5000 for the night's warehousing. In addition, transit parks are unguarded. If the characters want to avoid doing their own guard duty, they must hire that service separately for Lv1000 per day.


Alternatively, characters with a police background may try to get the local gendarmerie to keep a closer eye on the park.

Task: To call on local police: (Hazardous): Difficult. Streetwise or Bureaucracy. 15 minutes. Referer: Add 1 to roll per turning point passed while a policeman. Increase the difficulty by one level if not French. A failure may reflect hostility at the attempt to win preferential treatment.

BUYING THE TICKET

The next task is to arrange transshipment. This is not all that straightforward given the complexities of freight handling, but there are two main options. To engage a professional transshipment consultant is expensive (flat fee Lv1000) and most will not touch such a one-time job;

Task: To engage a consultant (Unskilled): Formidable. Bureaucracy. 30 min.

On the first failure a sympathetic secretary will advise them to use the public freight services database instead. The database can be accessed through any telephone or public information booth for Lv20. A task roll is needed to get the best out of the system:

Task: To find freight service (Unskilled): Simple. Info Gathering. 5 min.

There are three options, on the ships Yankee Venturer, Verniy Torgovets, and Madame Rosalie, though the if the task is failed the characters only come up with the first. A consultant will present the characters with all three options. The characters must arrange for the wingships to be lifted into orbit in any case. This will cost Lv160,000 for transport by scramjet.

THE YANKEE VENTURER

The Yankee Venturer is an American bulk freighter heading back to the Arm. It charges MVLv1.5 and will reach Botany Bay in time for the characters to earn the full Lvl4,000 bonus, but is due to depart on day five. The export paperwork will not be completed until the morning of day seven unless some way to off the wheels is found. A visit to the starport customs will first of all have to get past the politely unhelpful reception:

Task: To get past reception: Routine. Eloquence or Determination. 30 min.

When successful (and they may be bolder away as long as they want), the characters will get to meet Helene Portmanteau. See sidebar.

THE VERNIY TORGOVETS

The next option is the Verniy Torgovets ("Trusty Merchant") from the Russian flag line Cosmolot. It leaves on day seven and will reach Botany Bay soon enough to earn the reduced bonus of Lv2000 — but is fairly expensive since a surcharge will be levied for converting the cargo bay to carry items more delicate than the titanium ore it brought to Tirane. Astute characters may manage to haggle the price down from MVLv1.7 to MLvl1.6 by negotiating with the shipmaster, Captain Aleksandyr Solovyyov.
The best approach is to fete the captain and his senior officers with genuine Russian vodka (price Lv20 per bottle) and stress the importance of developing Russo-Australian trade:

**Task: To negotiate a cheaper rate** (Unskilled): Difficult. Determination. 20 min. **Refer to** Reduce difficulty level by one if one of the characters speaks Russian or if they bring more than four bottles of vodka to the meeting.

**THE MADAME ROSALIE**
The final option is the French itinerant freighter, *Madam Rosalie*. Slow and relatively cheap (MLv1.4 for the 368 LV haul), it will get the wingships to Botany Bay, but without earning the characters any bonus. It leaves on day ten.

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**DAY THREE: A VISITATION OF ANGELS**

Once the wingships have been transit parked, the characters receive a visit from the trio from the auction. The leader introduces himself as "a senior officer from a respected mercenary unit". He says he has just spoken to their bankers and is in a position to buy the wingships for the full price paid, plus "more than a little something thrown in to sweeten the pot". The truth, that the characters are but agents, without the authority to sell, is treated as just a bargaining ploy. The mercenary refuses to be specific about why he wants these particular wingships, and when it becomes clear no deal is in the offing, withdraws sourly, muttering "we'll see about that" and similar veiled warnings.

**THE BOX**

At this point the players may be wondering what is so important about the wingships. After all, a simple check through the database of upcoming auctions (cost: Lv5) will reveal a similar shipment in only six weeks' time:

**Task: To check database** (Unskilled): Simple. Computer, 5 minutes.

Clearly it has something to do with **these** wingships. A careful examination by a skilled tech will reveal that one has been incompletely "sanitized". The navigation system still includes a small "penetration aids" black box, a multi-band sensor jammer and spoofer designed to allow the wingship to sneak unnoticed through a radar screen. Though hardly top of the line, this kind of "penalised" hardware is not often available to mercenaries.

**Task: To find black box** (Uncertain): Routine. Electronics. 1 hour.

**Task: To identify black box**: Difficult. Electronics. 10 minutes.

Even if the black box is not identified, the characters will know it is some piece of sophisticated equipment not included on the bill of sale, which specifies systems included in the deal.
RUSSIANS AND WRITS
The characters are soon contacted by an official from the Russian embassy. If they are at a hotel, he phones; otherwise he visits the park. Maurois et Abelard gave him the addresses.

The official, Novikov, claims one of the wingships may have a faulty navigation computer and offers the services of a trained Russian technician. It will not take much to get Novikov to admit the presence of the penaid. He stresses his clear legal right to remove anything not listed on the bill of sale — such as a piece of military-standard intruder spoofware.

The professional approach would be to accept the justice of the Russian claim, in which case a Russian engineer calls later in the day and removes the box. Novikov demands absolute discretion, and offers a lump sum of Lv2000 for silence, though hard bargaining may inflate this:

Task: To Inflate fee: Difficult. Determination or Eloquence. 5 minutes. Referee: Increase fee by Lv100 for every point the roll exceeds the necessary score.

Players may try to pull a fast one and cause themselves a lot of trouble in the pursuit of a few more livres. Tampering with the penaid will almost certainly trigger a destruction charge, damaging the craft and incurring the wrath of both the Russians and the AKO.

Task: To remove the penaid safely (Hazardous): Impossible. Electronics. 1 hour. Referee: a mishap indicates the wingship is damaged, a serious mishap also exposes the character to an explosion (EP-2). If a mishap is rolled, the character has a chance to spot the fact that he or she is about to trigger the charge and hold back:

Task: To spot the trap: Routine. Electronic. Instant.
If they do extract it, they can probably get the Russians to pay out Lv3000 for it and silence, but other options are limited. Intelligence services will be uninterested in such a fast-generation system and though the mercenaries will pay well (Lv10,000-15,000), if the players refuse to return the box to the Russians, embassy lawyers will platter them with writs for theft, industrial espionage, violation of terms of trade, and anything else they can think of. The French authorities have no reason to alienate Russia and would impound the wingships and possibly the characters until some deal can be struck. At best, characters find themselves paying stiff legal costs and in poor graces with their employers.

DAY FOUR: AMBUSH AND KIDNAP
Whatever is arranged with the Russians, the Black Angels don't know about it and attempt a typically heavy-handed bid to get hold of the penaid, kidnapping one of the characters and demanding it as ransom. If the characters themselves are standing guard shifts over the wingships, the Black Angels attempt to snatch someone at the transit park. Otherwise they locate the PCs' hotel and make their move whenever they get an opportunity.

This can be handled in one of two ways. If you want to ensure a dramatic combat finish, make the snatch a fail accomplish: just provide a reason why one of the characters (or, even better, a prized NPC) is alone, and describe the buzz of a stunmer from a darkened doorway, and the screech of a groundcar as it speeds away around a corner. Then the others receive a phone call from Major Denham warning them that they had better get ready to hand over the black box, cutting off before they can reply.

Alternatively, you can play the snatch attempt, with the possibility that it will fail and the action sequence be brought to a finish.

SAVING THE DAY
If the snatch is successful, the characters must choose whether to contact the police or to handle things themselves. In the former case, success is certain but slow. A tipoff will alert the Black Angels after a few days of investigations and the victim will be left, unconscious but unharmed, on the outskirts of the city while they make their getaway.

But this may mean revealing the presence of the penaid and hence saying goodbye to the Russians' bonus. Besides, PCs may well be in a more macho mood — or desperately need the skills of the victim — and take matters into their own hands. The mercenaries are holed up in their hotel, which the players may already know. Otherwise, there are a number of ways they may track them; here are just some examples. Although it is strictly unethical, Maurois et Abelard may provide the local address the Angels gave in registering for the auction:

Task: To persuade Abelard or Maurois: Difficult. Eloquence. 10 minutes.

If the characters are close by when the snatch is made, they may be able to follow the car at a discreet distance:

Evgeni Nikolaevich Novikov
Novikov is a typical junior diplomat from the Russian Foreign Service: well-educated, able and intensely aware that he needs an unblemished record to advance to the highest ranks. His approach is businesslike and firm, but he begins to look rattled if the characters give him a hard time.

Motivation: Spade 7: he seeks a position of responsibility; Club 2: he is not intimidated by the threat of violence.
**Task: To follow the car (Hazardous):** Routine. Gound Vehicle. 3 minutes. **Reference:** A minor mishap means the Angels spot the pursuit and try an ambush, a major one indicates a pile-up.

Alternatively, they may wait for the next communication from the Angels and trace the call. Given that all phones are also computer interfaces on high-tech Tirane, this is a real possibility given time to set up the trace:

**Task: To prepare a trace:** Difficult. Computer or Security Systems. 1 hour.

The final, obvious possibility is to wait until an exchange is arranged and double-cross the Angels (or try to persuade them that the box is gone — fat chance!).

If the characters launch an attack on the hotel, they will readily see that it is a shady sort of place. The concierge will tip off the Angels unless bribed (at least Lv50) or threatened to silence.

**Task: To bribe concierge (Uncertain):** Routine. Streetwise. 1 minute.

**Task: To threaten concierge (Uncertain):** Routine. Determination. 1 minute.

In addition, a quick check of the hotel once the Angels’ suite is located may reveal the tactical possibilities in a fire escape winding past their window:

**Task: To spot route:** Difficult. Tactics or Intelligence. 1 minute.

If the characters want to make a sudden entry through the Angel’s door, they can either use the concierge’s key, or kick the door down:

**Task: To kick down door:** Difficult. Strength. Instant.

They encounter the four mercenaries as described in the sidebar, also armed with one Wu-Beijing 49 hidden in their luggage.

**AFTERMATH**

After all these tribulations, the characters are finally able to get the wingships on their way and deserve whatever fee they have earned. They may also have won a reputation as able and reliable agents, and perhaps the enmity of the Black Angels.

If they took any payment in the form of AKO stock, they will have a good reason for continued interest in the consortium. This could be a useful hook for future adventures. They may, for example, be leaned on by a rival eager to acquire their shares as part of a hostile takeover. AKO may face a prolonged whispering campaign, and, lest their share certificates devalue to so much wallpaper, the characters may investigate the source of the smears. Anyway, the shares provide some way of anchoring the characters to their playing environment, to offset the usual tendency for characters to drift from adventure to adventure without putting down any sort of roots or developing long-standing associations outside the confines of a particular group or crew.

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