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Adventure Module

Just a Few Baubles



By Neil Spicer

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“Just a Few Baubles”

“Just a Few Baubles” is an ALTERNITY adventure designed for 4-6 heroes of 2nd through 4th level (with about 15 total levels recommended). A good mix of professions is important since the heroes will require a variety of skills to complete their mission. Combat Specs, Diplomats, Free Agents, and Tech-Ops can all play a significant role. At least one hero ought to have the Computer Science-*hacking* skill, the Vehicle Operation-*space* skill, and Culture-*first encounter* could also prove very useful. Heroes among the Mercenary, First Contact Consul, Investigator, Pilot, and Scientist careers could find the plot particularly rewarding. This adventure takes place in the Oberon system, primarily on the planets of Lison and Leen, as well as the moon of Bauble, which are all briefly described in the *STAR*DRIVE Campaign Setting*. In addition, it loosely draws upon information contained within the *Klick Clack* and *Planet of Darkness* adventure modules, *Threats From Beyond*, both *Alien Compendiums I & II*, and the new *Externals ESD* sourcebook, though none of these are absolutely necessary for running the adventure. Heroes that survive should amass 8-10 achievement points, or enough to advance them to a new level and well on their way to the next.

Introduction

Greed has long ruled the heart of the Rignunmor Star Consortium, and no society has been as successful at instilling such a vice into its people's lives as it has been. It's also what led the Rignunmors to settle the Oberon star system and plunder the rich resources of rhodium on the planet Lison. In many ways, it's what caused the colonial government of Oberon to maximize profit by treating their workers as little more than slaves for so many years. And ultimately, it's what caused the downfall of that government during the Great Revolt of 2373, when the people of Oberon rose up and finally took the reins of power for themselves. They did so partially out of a desire for justice, but just as equally out of their own greed for power and wealth. The poor were finally able to seize the brass ring...or in this case, the rhodium ring...and in doing so, they replaced those that had lorded over them for so long.

Loyal Rignunmors viewed this action with

outrage, but there was little they could do to stop it. The tide of revolution proved much too strong, and the Second Galactic War separated the system from the Stellar Ring for over 120 years. The colonial government of Oberon fell into chaos and its officials scrambled to save themselves and whatever wealth they could take along. For some, venturing back to their homes in the war-torn Rignunmor Star Consortium held a number of dangers as well. To avoid having their property taxed to support the war effort, many of them hid as many valuables as possible from the revolutionaries, hoping to return some day and reclaim their fortunes. That hope has dwindled over the years as Oberon has fully gained its independence, but that doesn't stop individual Rignunmors from trying to recover their wealth. And, in basic opposition to their very nature, sometimes not all of them are completely motivated by greed.

Adventure Background

Tale of a Dying Man:

Joseph Gallagher is a formerly wealthy Rignunmor with hopes to be rich once again. He is also a sick man, dying of a physical disorder that his own doctors are unable to treat. A cure exists in the Thuldan Empire, but it's too expensive for him to acquire it. He recently discovered that his father once served in the colonial government of Oberon, and kept a secret vault to store some of the family's wealth during his term. Joseph believes the wealth still lies there to this day, and wants to reclaim that portion of his family's fortune. With it, he hopes to regain his health as well.

But Joseph's problems don't end there. His estate bordered on financial ruin even before his sickness depleted the family fortune. This caused him to make several unsavory business ventures with the Coreeno crime syndicate back in the Consortium. He has every intention of repaying his debts to them, but now his illness comes first. He needs to resolve his problems quickly, however, or his health will become threatened in more violent ways, courtesy of some Coreeno enforcers.

Tale of a Pirate:

Unfortunately, someone has already beat Joseph to the punch. Ysala Rho, a Mechalus corsair in the Oberon system, stole away Joseph's remaining family fortune just three weeks ago. She removed it from his father's vault on the

moon Bauble and then buried it on Leen, intending to return after she could make arrangements to leave Thomas Kind's pirate organization. She joined that band of corsairs some years ago, but never felt particularly loyal to Kind. Instead, she would love to make contact with a more powerful criminal organization from the Stellar Ring, hoping to become their lieutenant in the Verge. The recent arrival of Tero Coreeno, the youngest son of the Rigunmor Coreeno crime family, has done much to make her dream possible. And Joseph's family fortune contains enough priceless heirlooms, pure rhodium forge-bars, and important political documents to make her think she can bargain her way into Tero's good graces. But, there have been a few problems along the way.

Although Ysala obtained a meeting with Tero, he wanted something more than simple wealth and a few 100-year old documents from her. To test her proclaimed hatred of Thomas Kind, he demanded that she make an attempt upon her former master's life. If she survived, he'd be happy to admit her into his organization. Ysala imagined herself replacing Kind and uniting his pirates with the Coreeno's under her leadership, so she agreed. But the attempt failed miserably. She barely escaped Lison in her ship, and upon reaching space, she came under attack from not only her former comrades but the local authorities as well, courtesy of Kind's political connections to Lison's President Kevik. Rather than face certain annihilation, she engaged her stardrive for an emergency leap into drivespace. For now, she bides her time just five light-years out from Oberon, planning to return for the treasure lying at the system's core when she can effect enough repairs to slip past Kind's loyalists. Whether or not Tero will still accept her into his organization remains unclear, but one way or another she wants to salvage something out of the situation.

The word on the street is that Ysala's ship, the *Mindaran Ghost*, mysteriously disappeared over a week ago. Many suspect that she tried to double-cross Kind, but most people also believe she paid for that mistake with her life, shot down by the corsairs somewhere near the moons of Hux. In the meantime, life has continued on Leen, the site of the buried treasure. Home to a few fledgling colonies, Leen represents the next great hope for the entire system of Oberon. It is the only planet that has the potential to be terraformed and the Lison government is currently en-

gaged in a race with the other stellar nations to do so. The Orlamu Theocracy, Union of Sol, Insight, and even VoidCorp have all begun to found colonies and bases on the planet. Unknown to the Solars, their colony is being built right on top of the treasure's location. Fortunately, only Ysala and her crew know the exact spot and she wants to dig it up before someone else finds it. Otherwise, on her return to Lison, she will face not only the guns of Thomas Kind, but those of the Coreeno's as well.

Adventure Summary

The adventure takes place in the year 2503, and begins when the heroes respond to a business opportunity offered by Joseph Gallagher on his way to the Oberon system. As an Arriver to the Verge frontier, Joseph represents one of the powerful Rigunmor families that used to rule Lison prior to the Revolt of 2373. The vault that Ysala Rho looted belonged to his ancestors. Joseph still believes the vault is intact, and he has the necessary passcodes with him to open it. Unfortunately, he is in bad health and needs someone to retrieve the treasure for him.

First, the heroes travel with Joseph to Lison in order to access the local Grid and pinpoint the location of the vault by accessing the records of the old Rigunmor colonial government. During their investigation, an alarm is accidentally tripped and the heroes have to avoid or overcome security to escape the building. Once they're in the clear, they analyze the data and discover the vault lies on Bauble. Because of his deteriorating health, Joseph decides to stay behind, sending his bodyguard Hadley with them instead. They are charged with traveling to Bauble to find the treasure and return it intact.

When the heroes arrive at the vault they find that before she left, Ysala rearmed the security defenses and left several traps behind for anyone else who came looking for the treasure. In addition, Ysala accidentally left her pet gearwerk, Rench, in the vault when it wandered off. The little creature provides the key to locating the treasure because it is in tune with all of Ysala's usual locator beacons, one of which lies with the treasure on Leen. Unfortunately, the crafty gearwerk also attracted the attention of some Klicks setting up a research lab on Bauble. After the heroes encounter them, the Klicks do everything possible to eliminate the perceived threat to the secrecy of their base. They follow close behind

as the heroes trace the locator beacon to the planet's surface. Ysala also receives a signal indicating that someone or something has locked onto the treasure's beacon, forcing her to play her hand earlier than she wanted or risk losing everything.

In the end, the adventure comes down to a confrontation between Ysala's crew, the heroes, and a group of Greater Minshore Crystals. The exact location of the scene depends primarily on the heroes' actions. It could occur at the Solar colony construction site, which is being built directly over the buried treasure, or in the secret tunnels underneath of it. Locating the treasure becomes difficult too, especially after Ysala kills the locator beacon's transmission with a remote command. To find it before Ysala steals it away again requires a bit of first-contact negotiation with the Minshore crystals to get them to reveal the treasure's actual location. Even after the heroes finally acquire it on Joseph's behalf, they still have to get past a Klick strike team that followed them from Bauble and Ysala's shipmates on the *Mindaran Ghost*. Once they are successful in overcoming those obstacles, they return to Lison and Joseph rewards them generously, becoming a powerful ally and friend for future adventures.

ACT ONE

Scene One: Trigger

This scene gives the players a chance to role-play the encounter with Joseph Gallagher and his bodyguard, Hadley, before accepting the mission to recover the vault's treasure. It begins aboard the *Happenstance*, a large Rignunmor cruiser bound for the Oberon system. Presumably, the heroes' ship is docked with the *Happenstance* in order to enjoy the larger range of its stardrive, thereby making the trip shorter. Further, it is assumed that the heroes had a reason to be journeying to the Oberon system in the first place. The following is a list of possible suggestions for easily placing them aboard the cruiser:

The heroes have successfully completed a previous adventure and are enjoying the fruits of their labor by rewarding themselves (or having been rewarded) with a comfortable vacation aboard the luxurious *Happenstance*, cruise ship to many of the wealthiest travelers in the Verge.

The heroes are rhodium traders on their

way to Lison to pick up a load of cargo for resale on the open market. They decided to hitch a ride with the *Happenstance* to cut down on their operating costs...not to mention the opportunity to let someone else take care of the navigation and piloting for a change while they enjoy themselves aboard the luxury liner.

The heroes hired on with the *Happenstance* to serve as an escort on its trip to Oberon. Rumor has it the system is full of pirates and corsairs that prey upon such cruise ships, and the captain thought it might be wise to bring them along for protection once he enters the system.

Regardless of which reason the heroes have for being aboard the ship, read or paraphrase the following to them:

While dining in one of the many restaurants aboard the cruise ship, Happenstance, you notice an old man seated with an imposing fellow that can only be a bodyguard. In and of itself, this isn't unusual as several of the ship's patrons are traveling with guardians of one kind or another. But, in this particular case, the older gentleman seems to be suffering from a serious health condition, coughing loudly several times. Midway through his meal the man leaves his table, apparently planning to return since his bodyguard stays behind. The man's steps bring him near your table and he obviously holds a bottle of medicine in one hand. Just as he comes closer, his steps seem to waver for a moment. His eyes start to roll back, he drops the bottle of pills, and suddenly he pitches forward, collapsing across your table and knocking your recently delivered food and drinks into your laps. What do you do?

Joseph currently suffers from a medical condition that induces headaches, severe coughing, and eventually seizures if he doesn't regularly take his medication. He has just quite literally fallen into a relapse. Any hero with Knowledge-*first aid* or Medical Science-*treatment* should be able to quickly diagnose the symptoms (and on an Amazing success, the actual medical condition itself). A successful skill check will allow the PCs to get the seizures under control and administer his medicine to him. If no one does so, his bodyguard, Hadley, quickly arrives by his side and urges them to help. He summons the ship's doctor as well. After Joseph has been stabilized, he regains consciousness, and you may

read or paraphrase his words to the group:

"I'm so sorry. I never meant to...oh my what a mess...I...I...I apologize. I shouldn't have stopped taking my medication so soon. I thought my condition had improved enough to travel...but...but obviously it hasn't."

"My name is Joseph Gallagher of the guilded Gallagher family in the Rigunmor Star Consortium. Thank you so much for your quick action...and for helping me and Hadley, here. It's not often that anyone has shown a couple of Arrivers like us such concern or assistance since we came to the Verge."

If the heroes should ask Joseph what's so important that someone with his condition would travel to the Verge, allow them an Interaction-interview skill check. On a Critical Failure, Joseph becomes too weak to answer right away, but they can try again a few hours later when he has recovered. The hero receives information dependent on his check result, including the information for all lower check results.

On a Marginal success, Joseph says the following:

"I'm on my way to Lison in the Oberon system to reclaim my family legacy. My father used to work there back before the Second Galactic War. I'm hoping to learn more about him during my visit."

An Ordinary success also reveals:

"Up until now I had to spend most of my wealth on medical treatments. I had hoped the doctors would be able to cure me, but so far they haven't had any luck. My family fortune in the Rigunmor Star Consortium is nearly gone and this trip to Oberon is my last hope. You see, there's a new treatment available in the Thuldan Empire but it's very costly. I plan to raise the necessary funds during my stay here and then return to the Stellar Ring to seek out their doctors."

A Good success adds this extra bit of information:

"I had resigned myself to never receiving the treatment until I was selling off some family heirlooms to raise money and came across an old dataslate my father used for his diary. He was a well-placed member of the colonial government at Oberon back before the Lisons revolted in 2373."

An Amazing success reveals his full plan:

"Apparently, our family fortune was much larger than I thought, because my father makes reference in his diary to a special vault that contained the wealth he kept with him during his term at Oberon. I decided to invest in this trip so I could find that vault and finally have the money to pay for the treatment."

Joseph and Hadley spend some more time getting to know the heroes during the rest of their trip to Oberon, continuing to apologize for the episode at the restaurant and thanking them for their part in making sure everything was okay. During the journey, Joseph initiates several background checks on the heroes to determine their trustworthiness. He needs allies to be successful in his plans for reclaiming the treasure. Sometime before they leave the *Happenstance*, he asks to see them once more and offers everyone the chance to help him find his father's lost vault.

"I wanted to see you one last time before we went our separate ways. In fact, I wanted to offer you a chance to stay with us if you're inclined to do so. Would you like to accompany Hadley and me as we rebuild my family fortune? I'm not really in any shape to go traveling around too much right now. But Hadley can't do this by himself. I'd like to ask for your help. And I'll be happy to compensate each of you accordingly. What do you say?"

Unless the heroes achieved an Amazing success in their earlier interview with Joseph, he still won't mention the actual vault yet. He simply allows them to believe he can gain access to his father's wealth by proving to the local authorities that he's the sole remaining heir of the estate. If the heroes didn't bother to question him before (or achieved a lower success), he will go ahead and share all of the information from the Marginal, Ordinary, and Good success results listed above.

Joseph prefers to use non-Rigunmors or Vergers in this mission because of the anti-Rigunmor sentiment that is so pervasive in the system, and assumes that most of the heroes fit his plans perfectly. He's willing to temporarily provide a ship (if the heroes don't already have one), as well as a \$2500 retaining fee per person for their services. In addition, his bodyguard Hadley will accompany them at all times. The he-

roes can attempt to negotiate their own fee for the service if they wish to do so, but Joseph is a shrewd businessman, his Rigunmor upbringing serves him well in any bargaining session. On an Ordinary Interaction-*bargain* skill check result, Joseph will up the retaining fee to \$2750 per person; a Good result, \$3000; and an Amazing result, \$3500.

If the heroes accept, Joseph and Hadley will lead them to Lison, check them through customs and into the city of Tribon. If they don't have their own ship, he purchases one on credit from a fellow traveler aboard the *Happenstance*, and the Gamemaster is free to use the enclosed template for the *Venture*, or any other ship of comparable size and strength. While in orbit, Joseph initiates a request to the Lison government to assist him in researching his father's records, telling them he's simply looking into his genealogy. This should lead the heroes to Scene Two, where they will encounter an uncooperative diplomat, infiltrate the Lison Grid to hack into the old government grid-site, and eventually uncover the real information on Joseph's father and the actual location of the vault.



Joseph Gallagher

Level 5 Human Diplomat (Tech-Op)

STR 9 INT 11 [+1]
DEX 9 WIL 11 [+1]
CON 7 PER 13

Durability: 7/7/4/4 Action Check: 12+ /11/5/2

Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 2

Attacks

Unarmed 4/2/1 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O
9mm Charge Pistol 11/5/2 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [9]; Modern Ranged Weapons [9] -*pistol*

continued on page 9

The Venture

Refitted *Minion*-class System Scout

Compartments: 6 Dur: 30
Maneuver Rating: -1 Acc: 3 Mpp
Cruising Speed: 2 AU/hour Berthing: 8
Armament: Turret: Plasma Cannon - Range:
4/8/16 Mm, d6+2w/d8+2w/d6+1m, En(e)
8 Launch Rack Missiles, CHE -
Range: 8/16/24 Mm, d8s/d6+1w/d4+1m, LI(g)
Armor: Medium Neutronite (3 dur)
d6+1 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d6 (En)
Defenses: Jammer, Point-defense gun - Range:
1/2/3 Mm, d4s/d4w/d4+2w, HI(p)
Computer Core Ordinary computer core, Ordinary
navigation and sensors dedicated computers
Engines: Induction Engine
Power: 2 Mass reactors rated for a total of 15 power
factors
Drive: None

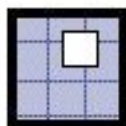
Roll (Dur/Pow)	Compartment	Systems Durability
1-2	Command 8/8/4	Ordinary computer core (1/0) Mass detector (1/0) Multiband radar (0/0) EM detector (0/0) Jammer (0/1) Spectroanalyzer (1/1) Mass transceiver (1/1) Reentry capsule (0/0) Induction engine (6/6)
3-4	Engineering 16/16/8	Mass Reactor (2/0) Airlock (0/0)
5-7	AuxiliaryMass Reactor (4/0) 10/10/5	Recycler Unit (1/1) Autosupport (0/2)
8-10	Weapons 12/12/6	Turret: Plasma Cannon (4/3) Launch rack (2/1) Crew quarters (1/0)
11-14	Crew 4/4/2	Passenger suite (1/0) Autocargo (2/2)
15-20	Cargo 4/4/2	

Description:

The *Venture* is built around a scout-class military hull from a junked system ship that fell victim to the conflict in the Algemron system. Its former owner purchased it from a salvage operation and had it towed to the Alaundril shipyards for refitting with more modern technology. Although it lacks a stardrive, the *Venture* is still a great ship. It packs a solid punch in any combat situation, carries a formidable amount of armor, and has the speed and quickness to outrun most anything it can't outfight.

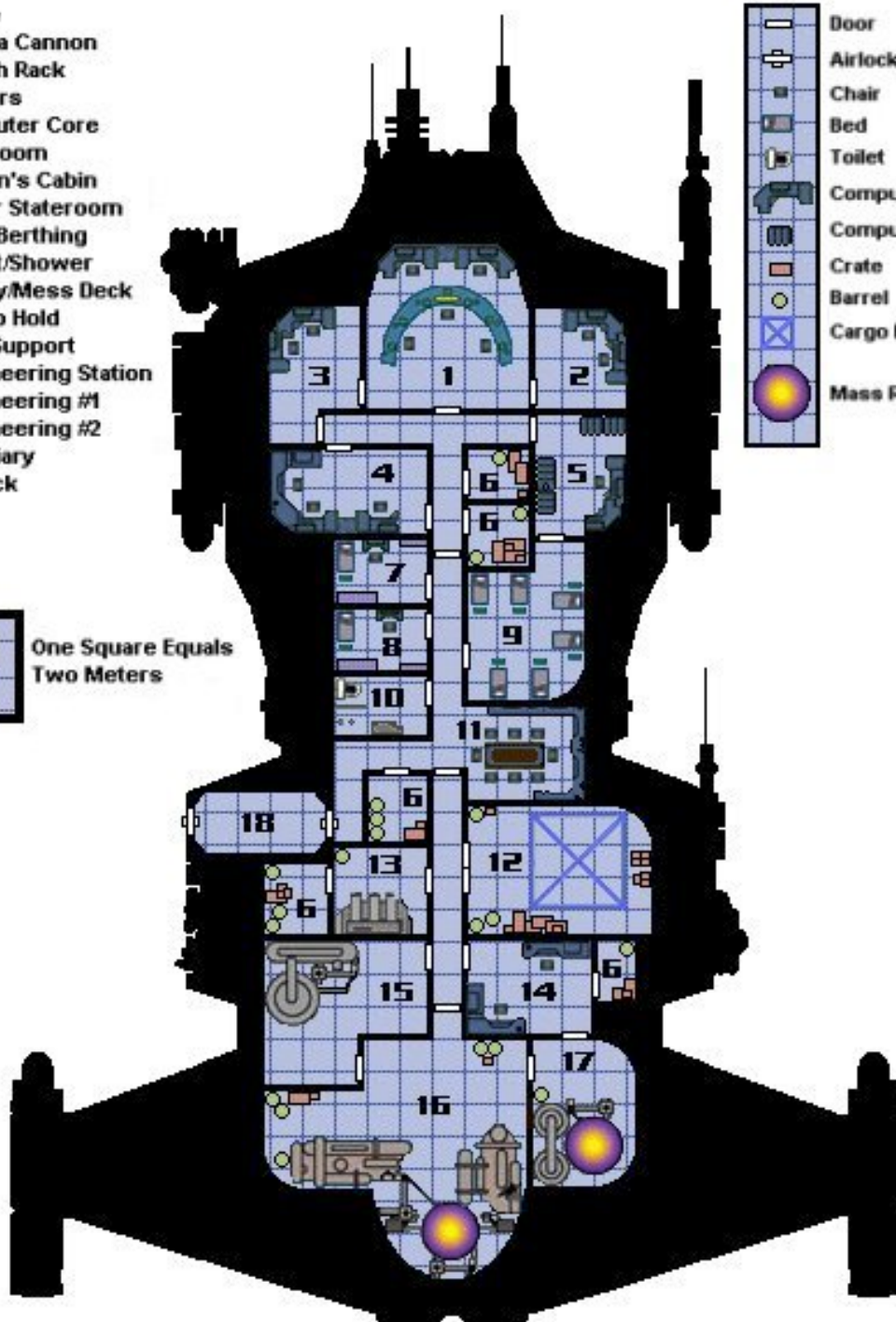
THE VENTURE

1. Bridge
2. Plasma Cannon
3. Launch Rack
4. Sensors
5. Computer Core
6. Storeroom
7. Captain's Cabin
8. Officer Stateroom
9. Crew Berthing
10. Toilet/Shower
11. Galley/Mess Deck
12. Cargo Hold
13. Life Support
14. Engineering Station
15. Engineering #1
16. Engineering #2
17. Auxiliary
18. Airlock



One Square Equals
Two Meters

- Door
- Airlock
- Chair
- Bed
- Toilet
- Computer Station
- Computer Core
- Crate
- Barrel
- Cargo Hatch
- Mass Reactor



[11]; Vehicle Operation [9] -*space* [10]; Stamina [7]; Business [11] -*corporate* [14]; Computer Science [11] -*hacking* [13], *programming* [14]; Knowledge [11] -*first aid* [13], -*language: Aleerin* [12], *language: Standard* [14], *stellar nation: Rigunmor* [14]; System Operation [11] -*communications* [14]; Administration [11] -*bureaucracy* [14], *management* [13]; Awareness [11] -*intuition* [12], *perception* [12]; Resolve [11]; Culture [13] -*diplomacy* [14], -*etiquette: Aleerin* [14]; Deception* [13] -*bluff* [16], *bribe* [15]; Interaction* [13] -*bargain* [16], *charm* [15], *interview* [14].

* -1 step bonus to skill checks due to Rigunmor ancestry.

Cyber Gear

Nanocomputer (Good), Subdermal NJack (Good).

Description

Joseph Gallagher is 135-years old, a middle-aged man by today's standards. He stands just over 5'9" tall, but weighs only 135 lbs., leaving him with a sickly, malnourished appearance. He has dark brown hair, brown eyes, a closely trimmed goatee, and an overall bearing of someone who is used to living the easy life. His stamina has slowly deteriorated ever since developing Lawkin's Syndrome, a deadly genetic disorder that ironically results from a rejection of the gene therapies used to prolong human life. Aside from always being tired, experiencing sudden fits of coughing, and occasionally suffering a seizure when he forgets to take his medicine regularly, he shows no outward signs of the condition. He has only reached Stage One of the disease, but Stage Two looms on the horizon.

Joseph's personality continues to be optimistic despite his bleak future. He is a capable diplomat and businessman. People find him to be talkative, intelligent, and well read. If he has any character flaw, it's that he's generally convinced obstacles can be overcome with a friendly smile and a sum of money, though he'll always drive a hard bargain in deciding on how much to apply to any given situation. Even while applying such a philosophy, it's hard not to like him. He's a naturally generous person to his friends.



Hadley Mazon, the Bodyguard

Level 3 Human Combat Spec

STR 11 [+1] INT 9

DEX 11 [+1] WIL 10

CON 11 PER 8

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 14+/13/6/3

Move: sprint 22, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1

Attacks

Unarmed 12/6/3 d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O

9mm Charge Pistol 14/7/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

11mm Charge Rifle 12/6/3 d6+1w/d6+3w/d6+1m HI/O

Defenses

Body Plating d6 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Skills

Athletics [11] -*climb* [12], *throw* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -*power* [13]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*rifle* [13], *pistol** [14]; Vehicle Operation [11]; Stamina [11] -*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [9] -*first aid* [10], -*language: Aleerin* [10], *language: Standard* [12], *stellar nation: Rigunmor* [12]; Security [9] -*protection protocols* [10]; Awareness [10] -*intuition* [12], *perception* [11]; Resolve [10] -*physical resolve* [11]; Interaction* [8] -*intimidate* [10].

* -1 bonus to skill checks due to Combat Spec profession or Rigunmor ancestry.

Cyber Gear

Body Plating (Good).

Description

Hadley Mazon is a professional bodyguard and perfectly loyal henchman to Joseph Gallagher, having served him for the past fifteen years. He stands nearly 6'2" tall and weighs approximately 195 lbs., an imposing figure to anyone looking to cause trouble for his master. He

also has light brown hair and blue eyes, not to mention the obvious body plating that has been grafted to his skin. His simple appearance can make others uncomfortable...or at least send the clear message that he's not one to trifle with.

Unlike many in his profession, Hadley also has a reason to stay on the job besides simple economics. Joseph helped his family get back on its feet after his mother suffered major losses in the Rigunmor Stock Exchange. When everyone else looked the other way and would have allowed them to fall into poverty, Joseph took his family in without a second thought. He has always treated Hadley like the son he never had, and the big bodyguard empathizes with the troubles that Joseph now faces with his own financial limitations. Simply put, Hadley will do everything in his power to safeguard his master, and will proactively pursue any goal to save him from financial ruin as well as from Lawkin's Syndrome.

Optional Floater Scenes:

Upon arriving on Lison, the heroes should encounter all of the sights and sounds of the capital city of Tribon. If necessary, refer to the description in the *Planet of Darkness* adventure module to give the players an idea of what underground life is like for the population. The following is a set of brief floater encounters to let them experience a taste of it, as well as feed them some information that will foreshadow the future events of the story:

Mass Transit: While catching a transit car to cross over to the government district, an altercation breaks out among two of the passengers. One is obviously a street tough painted in the colors of some kind of gang. The other is an offworlder, a visiting businessman from Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. The gang member seems to take offense at having to share a seat with an Arriver. The Austrin doesn't seem particularly inclined to back down either. If the heroes intervene by intimidating the street tough, the Austrin will be grateful enough to share a meal with them and pick up the tab later that night. He'll also be a useful source of information on current business propositions in the Oberon system.

News Kiosk: While walking past one of the numerous stalls of vendors in the marketplace, the heroes encounter a newsstand. The owner asks if they would like to buy a slim data crystal contain-

ing the latest edition of the Tribon Times. Anyone that purchases and reads the electronic news medium learns of the following storylines, which the Gamemaster may read aloud or paraphrase to the players:

1. **National News** – President Kevik is to meet with foreign trade ambassadors from the Solar Union this week. This follows on the heels of a visit by an Orlamu bishop just last year that culminated in the authorization of an Orlamist temple in the city of Tribon. While these developments have met with approval from the majority of the Lison people, focus group polls indicate that a small percentage remains opposed to any courting of favors by outside interests, particularly those from the Stellar Ring. In a related story, last week's anti-Arriver demonstration has stirred up charges by unnamed sources that the terrorist group "Concord Free Now" used the civil unrest to recruit more members into their ranks. Lison officials refused comment, but security has been stepped up for the Solar ambassador's arrival.
2. **Local News** - An internal power struggle is shaping up among the pirates operating in the Oberon system. It's common knowledge that their charismatic leader, Thomas Kind, isn't pleased by the appearance of Celestial Entertainment Limited in the Lison economy. CEL is a corporate entity owned and operated by Tero Coreeno, specializing in holofilms and holoivid programming. Tero is also related to the same Coreeno family that allegedly runs a powerful crime syndicate in the Rigunmor Star Consortium. Of course such activities have never been proven. Street sources indicate that a number of corsairs recently jumped ship from Thomas Kind's organization, eager to join the Coreeno "businesses". Specifically, a well-known Mechalus pirate named Ysala Rho broke ranks and exchanged fire with not only Thomas Kind's corsairs, but the local au-

thorities as well. Her ship, the *Mindaran Ghost*, has been missing ever since, but it seems clear that she is only the first of many casualties to come.

3. **Economy** – United Lison Mining Commissioner Paul Nextler echoed the comments of financial advisors on the rhodium prospects at station K31B9 yesterday. K31 represents the most recent expansion of the interstate cavern system from Tribon to the city of Raphal. Early ore samples taken from the site produced an astounding rhodium content of 12 percent. That's the third highest yield in history, and investors greeted the news by driving the market upward by over a hundred and fifty-three points. Analysts speculate whether this may prompt a hike in interest rates next month to head off inflation.
4. **Sports** – The Ultimate Survivor contest is coming to Lison in early 2504, representatives of the media hit indicated at Founder's Hall today. Fans of the show will be able to see a cast of thirty-two contestants, including the Thuldan phenom Dante Greene, compete in trials of physical strength, stamina, and of course, survival. The Ultimate Survivor spans every conceivable environment, pitting all kinds of sentients against the forces of nature and each other. The show just finished its last taping on the wintry moon of Arist in the Hammer's Star system, which tantalized viewers with the possibility of an encounter with the hostile alien species known as the Klicks. Concord forces operating in the system had originally opposed the location, citing security concerns, but apparently the pockets of Mask & Bauble Studios were deep enough to convince them to turn a blind eye. Ratings have dropped since the disappointing episode failed to deliver any Klicks, but enthusiasm remains high for an "Oxygen Runner" game on Lison's surface.

Demonstrators: Upon entering the government

district, the heroes come upon a scene of civil unrest. Apparently the democracy of Lison isn't quite as stable as officials would have everyone believe. A small crowd of 50 demonstrators is picketing outside one of the buildings, holding signs that declare the working conditions in the Lison mines to be intolerable. Others accuse the government of being in league with the pirates of the system. A few more rail against President Kevik's catering to the nations of the Stellar Ring.

Museum Exhibit: The heroes pass a large banner outside the Lison National Museum indicating that a new exhibit has arrived showcasing the world of Leen, sister planet to Lison. The Leen exhibit appears to include a seminar on efforts to terraform the planet, professional holopics of the landscape, and a discussion on the discovery of a strange new indigenous lifeform known as Minshore Crystals that are capable of projecting illusions in three-dimensions exactly like a holoovid.

Runaway Pet: The heroes are startled by a lost gearwerk, a tiny tadpole-like creature raised as a pet and fitted with various cybernetic equipment to give it the ability to move around on spider-legs and use small tools. It is easily mistaken for a small-scale robot by anyone unfamiliar with Aleerin culture. This particular gearwerk belongs to a Mechalus child who comes chasing close behind. He is visiting with his father who is in Tribon on business that concerns enhancing the Lison Grid.

Crime Scene Wrap-Up: The heroes come across a local Tribon police unit in the process of arresting a criminal for trafficking in illegal "pleasure cyberware". They overhear some discussion between two of the officers regarding a possible connection to the Coreeno crime family.

Scene Two: The Lison Government Hall

Joseph finally takes the heroes into the government district of the Third Tier of Tribon where he has made arrangements to meet with officials in charge of record keeping from the colonial period.

Read or paraphrase the following as they arrive at the Lison Government Hall:

The Lison Government Hall is actually a

series of buildings that occupy nearly a square kilometer in area. Many of them are embedded in the rock wall of the immense cavern containing the lower tier of the city of Tribon. Obviously, the structures were built long ago when the rhodium miners first began to cut their way into the planet's crust, making use of the natural stone as much as possible to cut down on construction time and costs.

Joseph consults his computer gauntlet a number of times as he leads the way among the buildings searching for the one that might house colonial government records. He finally brings you to a set of steps leading up to a façade of towering stone pillars and archways. The wide double-doors are currently open, revealing the interior to be immaculately clean, and Joseph takes everyone inside. Although the walls and ceiling have the look of rough stone, the floor has been polished smooth and plush carpeting runs the length of the hallway spilling out into a large lobby. An intricate chandelier manufactured from rhodium and pure crystal hangs in the center, filling the chamber with a soft light. Many other appointments have all been artistically worked into the natural rock, including a fresco depicting a scene from the life of the miners that built this place. You can only wonder how much money must have gone into the decoration alone, but assume it must represent only a tiny percentage of the profits the Lison government receives from its trade in rhodium, one of the most priceless commodities in all of settled space.

Eventually, a beautiful young woman approaches you. The practiced smile of a government official is upon her face and she quickly takes Joseph's hand, vigorously shaking it as she addresses everyone. "It's so nice to have you and your party with us today, Mr. Gallagher. I'm Kerri Lansing. Our office received your inquiry regarding your father's records while he served our former government. We initiated a search on your behalf and I'm afraid we found very little which might interest you. Nevertheless, I've taken the liberty to set up a workstation for you in our library. All of the information we found is contained on this X3D..."

Joseph appears disappointed, but he takes the X3D crystal and Miss Lansing leads the party through the lobby, down a short hallway, and into a large room full of cubicles. Each one contains a computer workstation apparently con-

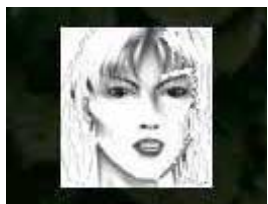
nected to a government network of some kind. Kerri hangs around long enough to answer any questions. Although she appears helpful in every way, she is actually deceiving the heroes. Kerri is in league with Ysala, and often uses her position in the government to feed the pirate information about starship flight plans and other lucrative tidbits. It was she that allowed Ysala access to the local gridsite so it could be searched for any information leading to the wealth of the original Rignonmor government.

Kerri purposefully uses the Interaction-*charm* encounter skill to "attack" the heroes in order to improve her chances of carrying off the deception. Kerri's Great Looks perk provides a -1 step bonus to the skill check and the heroes are assumed to have a starting attitude of Neutral unless a player specifically notes otherwise. Heroes that are naturally suspicious could start out as Hostile and cause the check to suffer a cumulative +2 step penalty. Those that show active interest in being attracted to Kerri's good looks may start out as Friendly instead, giving her an additional -1 step bonus to the skill check. She finally shakes everyone's hand and leaves to take care of some other business.

Heroes wishing to analyze the X3D crystal can do so with a Knowledge-*computer operation* or Computer Science-*hacking* skill check. A Failure or Critical Failure result finds nothing more than a few instances where Joseph's father's name appears on some government documents and press articles, none of which are relevant to Joseph's search for his father's wealth. An Ordinary success reveals a few more references to the Gallagher name, a biography of his father, but no mention of a secret family vault. A Good success is enough to realize that the X3D has been slightly edited, truncating a number of articles and documents; and an Amazing result erases any doubt that the X3D is incomplete, and that entire articles and documents have been specifically omitted. The computer network to which the workstations are attached don't actually connect to the computer core that downloaded these documents, so there's no way for the heroes or Joseph to hack into anything and find the missing information from here.

If the missing documents are brought to Kerri Lansing's attention, she expresses no knowledge of any omissions and once again refers to the X3D as the only data her research could uncover. She immediately raises her Te-

lepathy-*mind shield* as a precaution against any potential mindwalkers that might be capable of reading minds to detect her lie. She also uses her Deception-*bluff* skills to try and convince the heroes of her sincerity, depending on her earlier charming efforts to predispose them toward believing her. Failing that, she might resort to a telepathic suggestion, though she's reluctant to do so if she knows with certainty that a mindwalker is among the heroes. Regardless of the results, she proves uncooperative in allowing Joseph or the heroes to access the computer core from which the X3D was downloaded. This prompts Joseph to become disappointed and leave. His reaction is carefully orchestrated, however, and that becomes evident when he suggests they return after closing hours to do some investigation of their own without the Lison officials standing in their way.



Kerri Lansing

Level 4 Human Diplomat (Mindwalker)

STR 7 INT 11 [+1]

DEX 9 WIL 12 [+1]

CON 9 PER 13

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 12+ /11/5/2

Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1

Attacks

Unarmed 3/1/- d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O

Defenses

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [7]; Modern Ranged Weapons [9]; Vehicle Operation [9]; Stamina [9]; Knowledge [11] - *computer operation* [13], -*language: Standard* [14], *system: Oberon* [14]; Administration [12] - *bureaucracy* [15], *management* [14]; Awareness [12] - *perception* [13]; Investigate [12] - *search* [14], *track* [13]; Resolve [12] - *mental resolve* [13]; Culture [13] - *diplomacy* [15], *etiquette: Rigunmor* [14]; Deception [13] - *bluff* [16], *bribe* [14]; Interaction [13] - *charm* [16], *interview* [14]; Telepathy

[13] - *mind shield* [16], *suggest* [15].

Perks: Great Looks

Psionic Energy Points: 6

Description

Kerri Lansing is a bombshell of a woman. She has always used her blue-eyed, blonde-haired, and downright sexy good looks to her advantage, but beauty is only skin-deep in her case. Inside is a selfish heart that rules every calculated emotion she displays. Her father was a Rigunmor and her mother a StarMech. She inherited the formers lust for wealth and the latter's penchant for spending it on pleasurable pursuits. She also has the benefit of being blessed with mindwalking abilities. Though not exactly powerful by any means, Kerri is learning to use her telepathic skills to further her career. She wants to climb the ladder of success with her IQ and not just her physical attractiveness, but realizes the latter only helps to make things easier.

About six years ago, she hooked up with Ysala Rho when she accepted a simple bribe to pass along the flight plans of a rhodium shipment. Ever since, the two have shared information and their relationship has remained friendly as long as it continues to be successful. When Ysala informed her of the sizeable fortune she found in the Gallagher family vault, Kerri was ecstatic. But now, she has grown concerned with Ysala's decision to squander the wealth on a ridiculous attempt to join Tero Coreeno's crime family. She doesn't trust the Coreeno crime syndicate, and thinks Ysala is moving too fast. Kerri continues to hold out hope that Ysala will change her mind, but the botched attempt on Thomas Kind's life and her friend's disappearance worry her greatly. If she knew the location of the treasure, Kerri would be tempted to grab it and leave Oberon forever, but Ysala never told her what she did with the treasure, only that she found it and put it some place safe until everything came together.

Scene Three: Piloting the Government Grid

Joseph reserves hotel rooms for him and the heroes. Wasting no time, he launches into his plans for infiltrating the Lison Government Hall and gaining access to its computer core. He prepares his own X3D with a special program de-

signed to scan the records about his father. He gives it to the most technically savvy hero and tells the PCs he will remain in his room and send Hadley in his place. The bodyguard seems ill at ease with this idea, but knows the importance of someone keeping an eye on the heroes to make sure they don't steal the knowledge (and treasure) for themselves.

To complete this scene, the heroes have to avoid Lison security and attempt a local hack upon an old Rigunmor government gridsite. Because of the archaic nature of the Lison Grid, this particular site can't be accessed from the outside world. The heroes are going to have to locate a terminal with the proper connections inside the building if they want to download the data Joseph needs. During their search, a local dissident named Sal Ricciardi just happens to pick the same night and location to demonstrate his anger against the current government through a little constructive vandalism. He accidentally encounters the heroes and trips the alarm while they are inside, causing the security guards to go on alert.

Assuming the heroes agree to undertake the mission read or paraphrase the following as they approach the Lison Government Hall that night:

The lights outside the Lison Government Hall seem dimmer than your last visit. Since the underground city never actually receives any sunlight, you assume this must be how the population simulates nightfall. Approaching the glass doors, you can see that the lobby is now empty. A surveillance camera sits poised over the entrance, and a security pad next to the wall casts a bright red glow upon the steps as it steadily blinks.

"We should scout out the building and see what our options are," Hadley advises, "I don't think they'll let us simply waltz right through the front door..." He is interrupted by a sudden movement inside the building. Kerri Lansing walks through the lobby from a side hallway and goes to the lifts, clearly intending to ride one of them up to a higher floor. "What's she still doing here?" Hadley whispers aloud, "Working late?"

Getting Inside

A successful Awareness-perception or Security-protection protocols check reveals that the surveillance camera over the front door is slightly angled wrong and doesn't provide a com-

plete view of the doorway. The heroes could actually enter this way without being observed. Bypassing the security lock is a whole different matter and requires a Security-security devices skill check. A Critical Failure will set off a series of sparks causing d4 points of stun damage to everyone in a two meter radius, while immediately alerting the security guards to their presence. A Failure result won't damage the device but the door stays locked, the security system logs an unusual event, and the guards come to investigate, arriving in d4 minutes. An Ordinary success allows entry without immediately alerting anyone, but the lock cannot be re-engaged and a guard will notice the problem in 2d6 minutes while making his rounds. A Good result enables the heroes to re-lock the door behind them; and an Amazing result allows the door to be prepared for a quick exit so another check isn't necessary on the way out.

Optionally, the heroes might choose to forego the front door and try for a different way inside the building. Three other possibilities are open to them: the service entrance, the second floor balcony, and the parking garage in the basement. Regardless of which route they take, the heroes will still be faced with a door similar to the one described above, with the same security lock.

On The Clock

Obviously the heroes will want to do everything possible to avoid being discovered while they're inside the building, but it's going to take time to find what they're after. Eventually they are bound to encounter a security guard, a late-night worker, or even Sal Ricciardi as he vandalizes the building in order to make a political statement. As a result, the Gamemaster should roll every fifteen minutes or so for a random encounter on the following table:

d12	Encounter
1	Security Guard on patrol
2	Maintenance Worker
3	Sal Ricciardi the vandal
4	Kerri Lansing
5	Office Worker
6	Security Guard on patrol
7-12	No encounter

It's unlikely that the heroes would be totally surprised by any of these encounters. Only

Sal Ricciardi has a reason to hide his presence by moving stealthily inside the building. Even so, people come and go throughout the hallways even late at night, so the security guards aren't too worried about hearing noises unless they're particularly suspicious or occur in an area that's usually locked down after-hours. Give the heroes an opportunity to avoid a confrontation in whatever creative ways they come up with. For instance, a skill check involving *Stealth-hide*, *Deception-bluff*, or *Interaction-charm* could avoid most entanglements, though some choices are going to be more involved than others. *Interaction-intimidate* might also work against low-level employees, though this tactic is less useful against the guards, and could still result in the heroes being reported to the nearest security checkpoint.

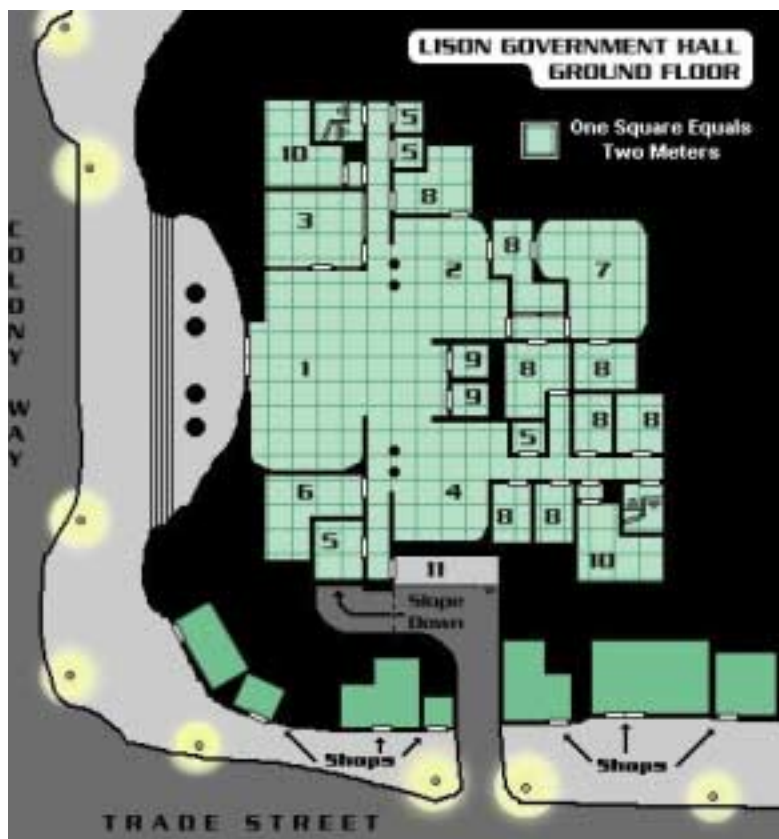
Somewhere in the course of these clandestine activities, the Gamemaster should put the facility on alert...preferably just as the heroes finally download the data. The easiest means to do this is have Sal Ricciardi trigger an alarm, but if the heroes already subdued him ahead of time, simply have a security guard finally stumble across them. The final drama of this scene should result in a frantic escape attempt by the

heroes to avoid being captured and turned over to the authorities...not a full-fledged firefight.

Lison Government Hall (Ground Floor):

1. Lobby – This area contains a large check-in desk. The interior walls are rough cavern-like stone, leading up to a vast cathedral ceiling. Up above, a walkway can be seen on the second floor. Across from the desk is a fresco chiseled into a flat part of the stone depicting the early miners of Lison.
2. Lounge – This area is filled with comfortable sofas and chairs for those waiting to meet with Lison government officials.
3. Security Office – This room controls the external security cameras and at least one security guard is stationed here at all times. Currently, he is distracted by a local sporting event on a different monitor. His partner is away making his rounds and checking in with the two other security stations on the second floor and in the basement. He will return in 3d12 minutes. Anyone getting close enough to spend some time observing the monitors (with or without subduing the guard) may make a *Security-protection protocols* skill check. On any success, they become aware of the other two security stations in the building, as well as the guards walking the halls.
4. Rhodium Display – Upon reaching this chamber, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Stepping into this room for the first time is like stepping into the world of a miner; rhodium outcroppings, archaic mining equipment, and life-like statuary are the décor. Rows of wooden benches are set in the center of this room and it is kept at a much lower light level, with only the miniature spotlights upon the displays providing any illumination. Suddenly the light of a miniature laser-torch flares to life somewhere in the back corner of the room. It doesn't seem to be part of the actual dis-



play, but you can't quite make out what's causing the intermittent glow.

Within this room, Sal Ricciardi, a native of Oberon and a political dissident, is engaged in some minor vandalism. He's been painting slogans such as "Government In League With Corsairs," "Our Democracy Is Nothing More Than Piracy," and "Concord Free Now" over the display. As the heroes enter the room, they startle him. He assumes they must be security guards and he panics, running through the display and actually trying to climb it up to the second floor to get away. If he isn't stopped, he'll slip just as he starts to reach the upper floor, then fall and aggravate his Old Injury flaw, wounding himself and accidentally tripping the alarms throughout the building. This alerts any remaining security guards in the building to not only his presence, but the heroes' as well.

If they catch Sal before he compromises their mission, or if they grab him as they make a run for it, the heroes can engage him in conversation. He's quite talkative and completely unafraid of voicing his political opinions. Read or paraphrase the following to the heroes if they listen to his rant:

"I'm caught...okay, okay...so...so what? Who cares?" the man says all in one rush, "I'm Sal Ricciardi. Yeah, there, so you know my name now. Big deal. I don't care. I want everybody to know. They've all got to know about the plight of the Lison workers. And I'm going to tell'em about it. That stupid President Kevik has got to know, too. I'm tired of seeing him and his kind dealing with the stellar nations...ignoring the working conditions down in the mines...acting like they'll just partner up with anybody and that will change everything. Well we're free, you hear? Free! Free to decide our own fate. As a democracy, the people come

first...and Lison wants to remain free. We want our people to be taken care of, that's all...that's all..."

Finally his ramblings ease off into incoherent mumblings as he deals with some kind of back pain. "Stupid injury...hurts all the time now," he says, "Got it working in the mines. Cave-in nearly killed me and the government didn't do a thing about it."

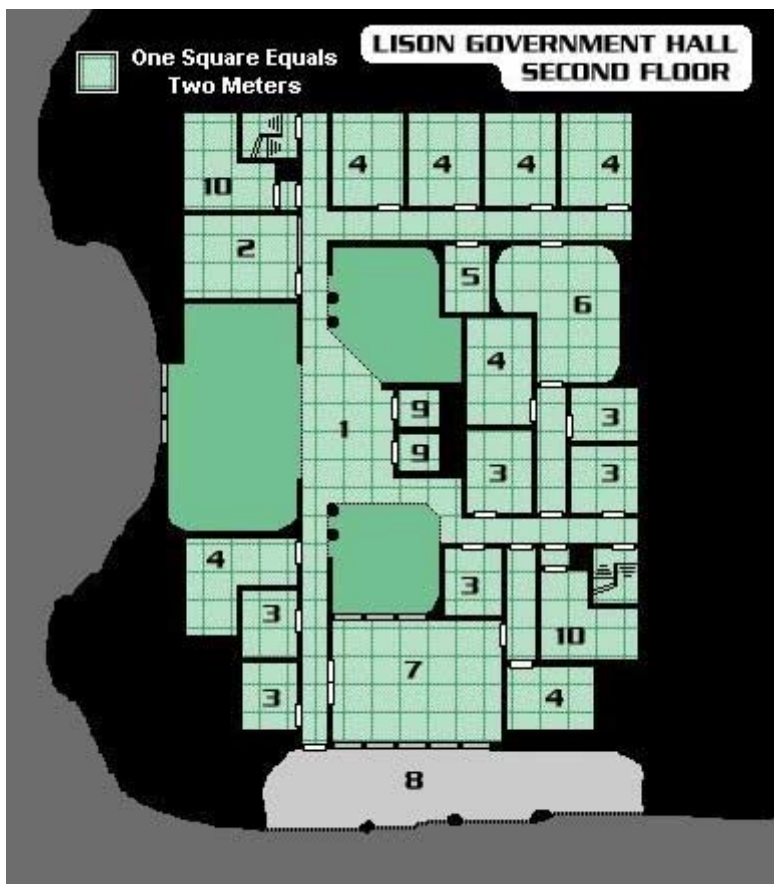
If the heroes let Sal go, he'll easily be captured by the security guards. This could be a blessing in disguise though, as the guards could assume Sal is the only intruder in the building...provided he keeps quiet about their presence. As long as the heroes remain hidden, Sal will be arrested and carted off to jail, keeping the guards busy for the next 4d12+20 minutes, and thereby leaving them some extra time to go about their business.

5. Building Maintenance Storerooms – These rooms contain general office and cleaning supplies.
6. Boiler Room – This room contains the system stations for controlling the building's climate.
7. Reading Room – This is the room that Kerri Lansing provided to Joseph and the heroes for reviewing the X3D she gave them in Scene Two. It contains cubicles with workstations, but none of them are connected to the local closed-circuit gridsite that contains the information they need.
8. Small Offices – These are minor workspaces for the lower-level managers of the record-keeping division. They all contain a workstation, but none of them are connected to the local closed-circuit gridsite that contains the information the heroes need.
9. Lifts – Two powerlifts are located here for access to the offices above and the library stacks in the basement.
10. Restrooms
11. Service Entrance – This area contains a loading platform, a backdoor into the ground floor, and the entrance to

the facility's parking garage in the basement.

Lison Government Hall (Second Floor):

1. Commons Area - This area is open to the Rhodium Display below, and in fact some of the rhodium outcroppings extend all the way to the ceiling of this level.
2. Security Checkpoint - There is usually one security guard on duty here while his partner walks the halls. They take turns making the rounds about every 3d12 minutes.
3. Small Offices - These are minor workspaces for the lower-level managers of the record-keeping division. They all contain a workstation, but none of them are connected to the local closed-circuit gridsite that contains the information the heroes need.
4. Private Offices - These offices belong to the upper managers of the record-keeping division, including Kerri Lansing. She's currently working late, and one of the security guards from the ground floor is somewhat infatuated with her and likes to stop by every 3d12 minutes as he makes his rounds just to check up on her. If captured, she can be interrogated to provide the location of the local closed-circuit gridsite containing the information Joseph needs. Careful attention should be paid to how long the heroes question her and search the room, as the security guard could arrive at any moment. In addition, Kerri will use her Telepathy broad skill to try and warn him. Since he's unaware that she's a telepath, he'll be confused but cautious when he comes to visit her. In the meantime, an Investigate-*interrogate* skill check or even an Interaction-*intimidate*



JUST A FEW BAUBLES

check with a +1 step penalty used on Kerri yields the following results:

Critical Failure, after 3d12 minutes: *Kerri Lansing finally gives a laugh and shakes her head. "I'm not going to tell you a thing," she says, "And by the time you try to beat it out of me, the guards will be here."* Repeated attempts at gaining information from her have no further effect.

Failure, after 3d6 minutes: *Kerri flinches, but says nothing. However, her eyes betray her fear. She seems close to breaking.* No information is revealed, but further attempts can be made every 1d6+1 minutes into the interrogation.

Ordinary success, after 2d4+2 minutes pass: *Kerri finally breaks down under your questioning. "The local gridsite is in the basement. There are terminals in the research room that*

connect to the computer core.”

Good success, after only d6+1 minutes, yields the same information as an Ordinary success, plus: *“There are two guards on that level. They check the rooms every now and then on their rounds.”*

Amazing success, after only d4 minutes, yields the same information as the Ordinary and Good success results, plus: *“There’s something else,” Kerri says, “The security system. It locks down the whole room if it senses unauthorized activity on the gridsite. It can be...bypassed with a legal login code.”*

Another interrogation sequence can be done following the same process outlined above (i.e., the time it takes to get her to talk), with any success revealing her own passcode to the heroes: *“Okay...okay,” Kerri answers, “It’s 599-RHO-KAPPA-7.”*

If they search her office, allow the heroes an Investigate-search skill check with a +2 step penalty. Any success discovers a rhodium forge-bar in the bottom drawer of her filing cabinet, after another d4+2 minutes. It was a gift to her from Ysala when she first returned to Lison from the successful opening of the vault and before meeting with Tero Coreeno. If a hero makes an Awareness-perception skill check, the faint inscription of “Rigunmor Star Consortium – 2370, R. Gallagher Station B17D1” can barely be made out on the bottom. Anyone making a successful Business-small business skill check can determine its street value to be around \$10,000. If the heroes question Kerri about this unusual item, read or paraphrase the following:

“It’s a...a gift from a...friend,” she says defensively, “She brought it to me as a souvenir. I don’t know where she got it. Some old ruins probably... her name was Ysala Rho, a pirate

that used to work for Thomas Kind’s outfit. I think she had a falling out with him and paid for it with her life.”

Kerri has nothing more to offer to the heroes regarding the forge-bar. To the extent of her knowledge, her story about Ysala Rho could very well be true. She has no way of knowing if her friend survived or not. And she won’t be much help regarding where Ysala found the minted rhodium. The corsair never told her the coordinates for the vault, but she does know it’s in-system toward Leen, because she checked the *Mindaran Ghost’s* flight plan logged weeks ago with the Lison Space Traffic Control Center.

5. Coffee Break Room – A small cafeteria with several vending machines is maintained here.
6. Meeting Room – This conference area makes use of the natural cavern walls and ceiling to provide a sense of openness.
7. Main Conference Room – This area is kept completely dark, but contains a large, elegant meeting table and several padded chairs. The windows lining the north wall look down upon the rhodium display on the ground floor, while the windows to the south look out upon a wide balcony and the lights of the city of Tribon.
8. Balcony – This wide patio has been built out of the natural rock of the cavern system. Several columns at the very edge break up the view of the city of Tribon down below. Benches are scattered throughout and a metal railing has been put up to provide for everyone’s safety. Anyone attempting to climb up or down from this place will find the rails particularly easy to snag with a rope and grapple, granting a –1 step bonus to any Athletics-climb attempts.
9. Lifts
10. Restrooms

Lison Government Hall (Basement):

1. Parking Garage – This area is very dimly lit, almost as to be dark. Light



conditions impose a +2 step penalty to any ranged combat actions or Awareness-perception checks. Currently six small electric vehicles are parked in the marked spaces throughout the garage, including one van and one truck. Normally, the people of Lison use mass transit to move about the city, so these particular vehicles would be considered luxury items, and a player who makes a successful Knowledge-deduce check would realize this and can assume they must belong to the more important officials at the facility. One of the vehicles belongs to Kerri Lansing, herself, and if the heroes encountered her already they could have "borrowed" the keys to use it as a getaway car...or in a pinch, the heroes could use the Manipulation-

Electric Vehicles						
	Drv	Acc	Cruise	Max	Type	Dur
Car	-1	30	100	180	6	10/10/5
Van	+1	30	100	180	6	16/16/8
Truck	0	30	100	180	6	12/12/6

lockpick and Technical Science-juryrig skills to commandeer one.

2. Storage Closets - Building maintenance supplies are kept here, as well as two pairs of janitorial coveralls. An enterprising hero could conceivably don one of them in order to bluff his way through certain parts of the facility. If anyone does so, a Deception-bluff or Entertainment-act skill check can be made with a -1 step bonus and yields the following results on any encounter with one of the security guards: Critical Failure, the disguise immediately fails to convince anyone; Marginal, the disguise actually works for a short time, but in 1d6+2 minutes, the fooled individual comes to the realization that something is wrong and comes back to investigate again; Ordinary success, the disguise works for 3d12+2 minutes before arousing suspicion; Good, the disguise works for the remainder of the hero's stay inside the facility unless his true identity is revealed somehow; Amazing, the disguise works so well that the target is completely fooled and actually assists the hero in at least part of his task. Also, any action that reveals his or her identity leaves the target surprised, per the rules in the *Gamemaster Guide*.
3. Security Checkpoint - There is usually one security guard on duty here while his partner walks the halls. They take turns making the rounds about every 3d20 minutes.
4. Library Administration Office - This place contains two workstations connected to the current Oberon government's grid-site, a completely separate entity from the local closed circuit gridsite used to maintain the old colonial government's data. Neither of these workstations will provide any information on the Gallagher family vault, but they are much more secure and any failed Computer Science-hacking attempts will alert not just the security guards on-site, but will also summon backup from outside the facility. 3d4 additional guards will arrive in the next fifteen minutes following such a mishap.
5. Library Stacks - Row upon row of packaged 3D and X3D computer crystals are

stored here. These are less-advanced backup copies of the records kept on the local gridsite. The heroes could obtain the same information here that Joseph's program would provide, but it takes significantly longer to locate the appropriate articles about his father's term in the Oberon government. A complex Investigate-*search* skill check of Amazing complexity (8 successes / 5 minutes between each check) will discover the correct set of documents. A Critical Failure result ruins the search as a rack of crystals are knocked over spilling to the floor and alerting any remaining security guards in the basement or on the ground floor. In addition, the crystals become hopelessly scattered. This will also occur if three Failure results are rolled during the check.

6. Research Room – This chamber provides a number of workstations connected to the local gridsite. The heroes should be able to log into the network and hack their way into the old Rignunmor colonial government records with the program Joseph provided. In addition, if Kerri Lansing was interrogated and provided her passcodes to them, all of the system's security alerts can be bypassed and the information accessed in just 5 minutes. Otherwise, Joseph's program provides a – 1 step condition bonus on the complex Computer Science-*hacking* skill check, which is of Good Complexity (5 successes / 5 minutes between each check). A Critical Failure on any of the checks immediately ruins the complex skill check. No information is obtained, an audible alarm is triggered summoning all remaining security guards to the basement, and the internal security systems are engaged to lockdown the chamber. This also happens if three Failure results are rolled during the complex skill check. Once the data is accessed, the system unleashes a nasty surprise that Ysala left behind for anyone following her tracks. A Guardian program of Good quality (see Player's Handbook, pg. 165) attacks the Grid-pilot's shadow. It effectively keeps the hacker busy inside the gridsite until the security guards arrive or the program

can be overcome

7. Computer Room – This expansive room contains all of the hardware necessary for maintaining this portion of the Oberon government's closed-circuit gridsite. Though enterprising heroes might think to try and remove the hardware storage devices that contain Joseph's information, the units are far too large to move and any attempts to do so will only break them and alert the guards.
8. Power Generator – This room contains the system control stations for the main power generator inside the building. It can be manipulated with any successful System Operation-*engineering* skill check. If the system is sabotaged or shut down, an off-site auxiliary system will kick in 3d12 minutes later.
9. Lifts
10. Restrooms

Hacking Results Ladder	
Number of Successes	Complex Task Result
1	Logged on
2	Find datacore
3	Bypass datalock
4	Datacore accessed
5	Files downloaded!

Failing to Retrieve the Data

If the heroes fail in their mission to bring back the data to Joseph, whether because they tripped an alarm and had to escape, messed up the hacking skill checks, or some other reason, there should still be a few options remaining to them. If subdued by the authorities, Joseph will eventually bail them out of the situation via some well-placed bribes. Of course, the Gamemaster should feel free to have him leverage such a favor into getting the heroes to agree to help him further. Taking matters into his own hands, Joseph will also have arranged to purchase the information from a special informant...either an enterprising Grid-pilot that's more familiar with the local situation, a disgruntled employee that works in the Lison Government Hall, or for an added twist of irony, Kerri Lansing herself. In any case, Joseph will ask the heroes to deliver the bribe and

pick up an X3D with the missing data on it. If Kerri is involved, she will have changed her mind about keeping the information hidden, finally convincing herself that Ysala has perished and that she needs to find the treasure on her own. She'll keep careful tabs on Joseph and the heroes from that point on so she can have an opportunity to have their cargo seized when they return. Using all of her resources from within the government, the heroes could find themselves hard pressed to hold onto the treasure at all.

Security Guards (6)

Level 1 Human Combat Specs

STR 11 [+1] INT 9
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 10
CON 10 PER 9

Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 14+ /13/6/3
Move: sprint 22, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed-brawl 12/6/3 d4s/d4+ 1s/d4+ 2s LI/O
Stun Baton 12/6/3 d4+ 1s/d4+ 3s/d6+ 4s En/O
Stutter Pistol 12/6/3 d6+ 2s/d8+ 2s/d8+ 4s HI/O

Defenses

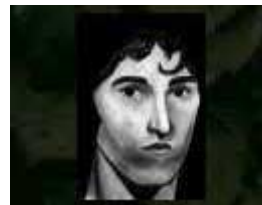
Battle jacket d6-1 (LI), d4+ 1 (HI), d4-1 (En)

Skills

Armor Operation [11]; Athletics [11]; Melee Weapons [11] -*powered weapon* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -*brawl* [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*pistol* [12]; Stamina [10] -*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [9] -*computer operation* [10], *language: Standard* [12], *system: Oberon* [12]; Law [9] -*law enforcement* [10]; Security [9] -*security devices* [10]; System Operation [9] -*communications* [10], *sensors* [11]; Awareness [10] -*perception* [13]; Interaction [9] -*intimidate* [11].

Description

These night watchmen are government employees, some of whom take their jobs seriously, and others that don't. Their leader works on the ground floor and he has developed a relationship with Kerri Lansing, whose office he frequently visits when she's working late. So far, she hasn't fully returned his romantic attention, but he's the one she convinced to allow Ysala access to the research room several weeks ago.



Sal Ricciardi

Level 1 Human Free Agent

STR 9 [+1] INT 11 [+1]
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 11 [+1]
CON 9 PER 10

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 14+ /13/6/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed 10/5/2 d4s+ 1/d4+ 2s/d4+ 3s LI/O
9mm Charge Pistol 12/6/3 d4+ 1w/d6+ 1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [9] -*climb* [12]; Unarmed Attack [9] -*brawl* [10]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*pistol* [12]; Stealth [11] -*hide* [12], *sneak* [13]; Vehicle Operation [11]; Movement [9] -*race* [10]; Stamina [9]; Knowledge [11] -*language: Standard* [14], *system: Oberon* [14]; Awareness [11] -*perception* [12]; Resolve [11] -*physical resolve* [12]; Deception [10] -*bluff* [12], *bribe* [11]; Interaction [10] -*charm* [12].

Flaws: Old Injury, slight (triggered by hard falls)

Description

Sal Ricciardi has lived his entire young life on Lison. He's a disenfranchised miner living off the welfare system ever since he was injured in a cave-in four years ago. He's also a political activist for worker's rights and a long-time supporter of Paul Nextler, the United Lison Mining Commissioner. Recently, Sal was recruited by the "Concord Free Now" terrorist group, but he hasn't done anything violent to support their cause yet. He's thirty-two years old, 5'8", and 145lbs. His thin and wiry frame hides a surprising strength and agility, something that served him

well when he used to work in the rhodium mines.

Currently, Sal is involved in organizing public demonstrations against the Lison government to express his dissatisfaction with President Kevik's foreign affairs...specifically, his pandering to stellar nations like the Union of Sol and the Orlamu Theocracy. He even opposes unification with the Nariac Domain, despite that nation's philosophy regarding worker's rights, because like many Lisons he possesses a fierce spirit of independence. He would rather they solved their own problems than sacrifice their freedom to a faraway politician in the Stellar Ring.

Scene Four: Analyzing the Data

After the heroes manage to fight or sneak their way out of the Lison Government Hall, they are able to analyze the data taken from the grid-site. They return to the hotel room where Joseph awaits them. Read or paraphrase the following as they arrive:

After returning to your rooms at the hotel Joseph is eager to analyze the results of the download. His medical condition seems to have worsened since you last left him. Pale and haggard, he takes the X3D crystal containing the incomplete data Kerri gave him and begins to combine it with the data from your own hard-earned X3D.

A few moments later, he begins to cough, shaking violently with each spasm as he reads over the results. He waves away Hadley's assistance, assuring him that he took his medicine already. "I'm afraid my pills aren't having quite as much effect lately," he tells everyone, "I'm in no shape for traveling any further. And, according to what I've gleaned from these reports, we still have another journey ahead of us if we're to reclaim my father's legacy."

He looks to each of you and smiles grimly. "I don't know how much time I have left," he patiently explains, "The doctors told me I have advanced to Stage Two of Lawkin's Syndrome. I could die in weeks or years. There's no way to know. Either way, it's a miserable existence that I'd like to change. I appreciate what you've done for me and Hadley so far. I'd like to retain your services beyond our original agreement if you're open to the idea. Double my original offer, provided we're successful in this undertaking."

He holds up the X3D, allowing it to sparkle in the light. "In the Rignunmor Star Consortium

our whole society...our family structure actually...is built around our Vaults. It's a literal term, as well as a figurative one. Our Vaults amount to all of our financial holdings and economic clout. They are a measure of our self-worth, political power, and heritage. Mine is nearly gone. Wasted away on trying to fight this disease. As I told you before, my father used to work here when Lison was a colony of Rignunmor. The colonists revolted in 2373 and he barely escaped to rejoin us in the Consortium. He left behind another Vault that he accumulated during his stay here. According to this, it lies on Bauble, a tiny moon circling the planet Leen. It's just an hour away if you've got a fast ship."

"I'd like for you and Hadley to take these coordinates," he says, tapping the X3D, "Follow them to the Vault and retrieve my father's wealth for me. Only then can I finally have the money to end this insufferable condition of mine." Hadley immediately voices an objection, but again Joseph waves him away. "Nonsense, my boy," he says, "You've served me well for fifteen years now. But, if you want to protect me from dying this time, you're going to have to go with them to accomplish this job. I'll await your return here on Lison. But hurry. We'll never know how much time I have left."

The heroes are free to question Joseph further regarding his father and the vault. An Interaction-interview skill check reveals the following pieces of information, one for each grade of success (i.e., one piece of information for an Ordinary success, two for a Good success, three for an Amazing success). Several heroes can attempt an Interaction-interview with Joseph in order to pool their efforts and glean as much information as possible:

Information on the Vault:

"I only have limited knowledge of such facilities. It's been over 120 years since this one was built, so it might be partially in ruins."

"I assume it will be a secure holding place, hidden carefully in order to avoid detection by the rebellious colonists so long ago."

"The facility probably has defenses...not as powerful as the ones we use today in the Consortium, but deadly nonetheless. That's why I'm sending Hadley with you. By pro-

protecting you and safeguarding the mission, he will be protecting me and my chance at staying alive."

"My father's notes mention that the facility was once manned, so I assume it had the necessary life-support equipment inside for air, water, food, and gravity."

"According to the information on Bauble, it is an airless moon, so if the facility has fallen into disrepair, parts of it might be a vacuum by now. Better take your e-suits."

Information on Joseph's Father:

"His name was Richard Gallagher and he served as one of many colonial administrators for twelve years leading up to the Great Revolt of 2373."

"He was an administrator of rhodium production for stations A13 through B20, and I suspect much of the wealth kept inside the vault will be unrefined rhodium ore from those mines."

"According to his diary, my father stayed in the Oberon system right up until the very end. I suspect he kept the vault functional all that time in order to protect it from the rebels."

"My father had many enemies and he kept a number of documents that could prove the corruption of powerful Rignunmor politicians so they would keep their nose out of his business and their hands out of his pockets."

After the players are finished speaking with Joseph, he sends them with Hadley back to their ship. Lison Space Traffic Control clears them for takeoff and they leave for Bauble. The trip takes approximately an hour and leads to the next Act of the adventure.

ACT TWO

Scene One: Trigger

Hadley accompanies the heroes to Bauble, twin moon to Trinket, which orbits the planet Leen. Following the coordinates obtained by their raid on the Lison Grid, they locate the entrance to the secret Gallagher family vault at the base of a cliff in a huge mountain chain.

Upon arriving at Bauble, read or paraphrase the following information to the players:

The wide expanse of the planet Leen fills the vid-screens of your ship with a bluish-green glow as you initiate orbit around its second moon, Bauble. Several ruined structures and impact craters dot the landscape of the airless rock below. Although a few tourists and historians do visit Bauble's former government center throughout the year, there's no sign of any sentient life as you fly over the punctured habitat domes, relics from the Great Revolt of 2373.

Allow one of the heroes a complex System Operation-sensors skill check to locate the vault. Because they know what to look for, each check receives a -2 step bonus, but it's still of Good Complexity (5 successes / 5 minutes between each check). Unknown to them, the natural caverns inside the vault's mountain also contain a newly constructed Klick research lab. If it takes the heroes longer than thirty minutes to pinpoint the vault, the sensors at the research base will notice their ship, and the Klicks will heighten security as described in Scene Three. After a total of five successes, the heroes will find the vault's location, and you may read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It takes several moments for the ship's sensors to pinpoint the coordinates of the Gallagher family vault, and you quickly change course. Your journey takes you past the ruins and into regions that were never settled by the colonial government. A vast mountain range becomes visible on the horizon and sensors indicate the entrance to the vault lies somewhere in one of the valleys below. The cliff sides appear to narrow at their highest point, coming too close for the ship to land vertically. Clearly, you'll have to navigate into and through the canyons to reach your destination.

At this point have the pilot of the heroes' ship make three separate Vehicle Operation-space checks to navigate the canyon. Since the heroes are under no pressure and can take their time, only a Critical Failure has the potential to result in a loss of control. In that event, consult the *Gamemaster Guide* (pp. 159-160) for the very real possibility of crashing the ship. Otherwise, any success allows the pilot to land the ship safely. A Failure result simply inflicts d4 points of stun damage to one of the ship's compartments. Cumulative Failure results that target the same

compartment upgrade their damage to d4w, and induce a +1 step penalty to all future piloting checks until the ship can be repaired. In the unlikely event that the heroes do crash their ship, they'll have to repair it before they can leave Bauble again, or signal a passing trader, Concord, or ULS vessel to rescue them.

Scene Two: Breaking into the Vault

As the heroes breach the vault, they encounter several guardian robots and other system defenses that Ysala purposefully reactivated when she and her men left with the treasure. They also discover Rench, Ysala's pet gearwerk, who was accidentally left behind in its owner's haste to depart the vault after looting it. This tiny mechanical creature is fully detailed in the *Alien Compendium II*, but is generally described as having an organic body similar to a tadpole, about a foot long with two small tendrils for manipulating most devices. Gearwerks almost always reside in a special carriage that has five spider-like legs to help them move around. Several other cybernetic implants make each gearwerk unique. Rench is skilled at bypassing security devices (a trick Ysala taught it to help gain access to the ships she and her corsairs captured). She put Rench to great use in cracking the vault's security, but the gearwerk was eventually attracted by something down a ventilation shaft and wandered off to explore it while the rest of the crew loaded the treasure onto Ysala's ship. When the pirates detected some unusual sensor readings in the area, Ysala feared that someone else might soon arrive on Bauble and decided there wasn't enough time to go looking for Rench.

Meanwhile, the unusual sensor readings were actually from the Klick scientific team. Rench unexpectedly came across the entrance to their research base during its exploration. The Klicks are actually a rogue unit, quietly in contact with their brothers on the Mindaran space station, but they are completely unknown to the rest of the External forces operating in the Verge. Currently, they are engaged in researching their own genetic structure, seeking a way to slip free of the Kadaran biotechnology that prevents their engineered forms from reproducing. The discovery of Ysala's gearwerk and subsequent analysis of its Mechalus cybertech has pushed the Klick research in a new direction. But, before they could learn more, Rench escaped them to hide once more inside the vault. The Klicks were unable to

follow the gearwerk because of the narrow openings between the caves of the facility and the vault's storage rooms.

As the heroes venture outside, you may read or paraphrase the following to the players:

After parking the ship, you don your environment-suits and venture outside onto the dusty gray terrain, immediately noticing the difference in Bauble's low-gravity. A short hike down the valley's slope brings you to the face of an immense cliff with a large metal airlock door at the base, silently awaiting your approach.

Allow each of the heroes an Awareness-perception skill check with a +2 step penalty. Any success indicates that something has caught their attention in the powdery sand leading up to the door. Although Ysala tried to cover her tracks as much as possible, a few spots remain with partially marked footprints and tracks from a forklift and other heavy-lifting equipment. It's unclear how old the tracks are...but the Gamemaster can optionally allow a Knowledge-deduce check to determine that it's unlikely they would remain so clearly defined for over a hundred years. Someone must have been here since the Great Revolt of 2373.

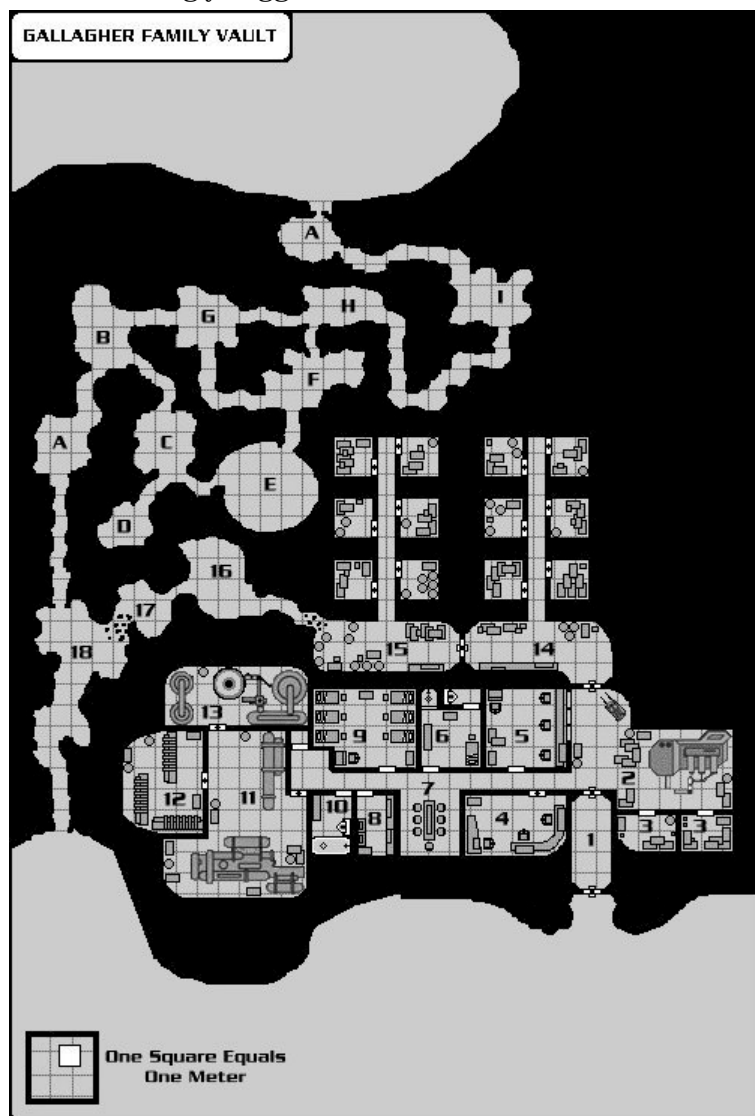
Once the heroes are ready to enter, continue with the following passage:

The entrance to the vault still looks intact and the airlock indicator displays a suitable gravity and atmosphere inside. Hadley taps his comm and says, "Looks like everything's still sealed up tight. Joseph might be right about this. If his father did keep any wealth with him during his term at Oberon, it ought to lie inside...unless someone has already been here." He uses the passcodes provided by Joseph to open the door. After stepping into the chamber and closing the outer door, the airlock cycle finishes and the interior door is all that remains between you and the completion of your mission.

Gallagher Family Vault:

1. Airlock - Ysala Rho juryrigged the interior airlock door to trigger a silent alarm to the automated security robots when it is opened. A successful Awareness-perception skill check at

a +3 step penalty allows the heroes to spot Ysala's handiwork. In addition, a successful Knowledge-*deduce* skill check at a +3 step penalty also allows the hero to realize the device is not a normal part of the security network (i.e., someone actually juryrigged it onto the airlock door). It can be disarmed with a Technical Science-*juryrig*, Security-*security devices*, or even a Manipulation-*lockpick* attempt. The results of any check are as follows: Critical Failure, the alert is unknowingly triggered and one Tindol-series Sentry Robot (the one from room 4) will be awaiting the heroes as soon as the door is opened; Failure, the alert is knowingly triggered, but the robot won't



arrive to investigate until d4+3 rounds have passed; Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success, the device is disabled and the robots remain unaware that the vault has been entered. If the heroes completely ignore the device, or failed to perceive it, the alert is unknowingly triggered and the robot will arrive to investigate in d4+1 rounds.

2. Shipping & Receiving Station – Several empty boxes, pallets, and other packing materials lie scattered around this large chamber. Heavy equipment and machinery is used in this place to separate and package valuables that are intended for storage deeper within the vault or transport back to its rightful owners. To the north is a small forklift and another heavy security door that leads to the storage chambers, Vaults One and Two. Across from the forklift, along the west wall is a set of three large plexiglass windows that look into the Inventory Control Room. Anyone that looks through the pile of boxes and packing materials is entitled to an Awareness-*perception* skill check with a +1 step penalty. Any success discovers what appears to be a small nest of paper scraps inside one of the boxes. This is where Ysala's pet gearwerk, Rench, has made its home since being abandoned at the facility. Inside this nest is a strange piece of bio-organic equipment (a key to the Klick airlock, area A) and a football-sized Klick egg, both of which Rench stole during its visit to the research base.
3. Storage – These unsecured storerooms contain lubricants and replacement parts for much of the heavy machinery as well as the environmental controls and recycling units found throughout the facility. Some of them are flammable.
4. Security Control Room – The door to this room has a security keypad that must be manipulated in order to open it. Because of the older technology in use at the facility (which was

built in the 2300's), the Technical Science-*juryrig*, Security-*security devices*, or Manipulation-*lockpick* skills can be used to open it. Any success does so, and any failure triggers a silent alarm throughout the facility instead. The chamber itself contains one Tindol-series Sentry Robot that will immediately respond to any security alerts, including the one generated by Ysala's juryrigged device. Otherwise, it remains inactivated and appears to have been so for many years, collecting several layers of dust over its chassis. The security stations themselves remain active and can be used to disarm the rest of the facility, including the storage vaults. A successful System Operations-*defenses* skill check result is necessary to do so, however.

5. Inventory Control Room – This chamber is unsecured and acts as an administrative check-in point for all materials intended for storage within the vault. Two workstations are present, one of which is connected to the local computer core. It can be used by anyone making a successful Knowledge-*computer operation* or Computer Science-*hacking* skill check to obtain a listing of the treasure held in the Gallagher family vault. Pure rhodium forge-bars, various family heirlooms, and important political documents are all listed among the inventory, with the more valuable commodities indicating they've been stored in Vault Two. The other terminal is actually a very old Rigunmor grid-station whose connection has been severed. The lesser Grid that used to surround Bauble ceased to function long ago during the Revolt of 2373, and even the hardware that once surrounded the moon has been scavenged over the years so that it no longer exists. Today, the grid-station might fetch a hefty price as a museum piece, bringing in as much as \$3,000 from the right buyer and given some successful bargaining on the part of the seller. It could also be re-

configured and rebuilt by a skilled technician, preserving the outer shell as a cool, retro look.

6. Operation Supervisor's Quarters – This room acted as the living quarters for the facility administrator prior to the vault's abandonment. There is nothing of value here. A successful Awareness-*perception* skill check at a +2 penalty can determine that the room was once searched, disturbing the layer of dust, and then carefully put back together. Ysala directed her men to do so in order to preserve the illusion that the facility had never been visited after the Great Revolt.
7. Mess Hall – This room acted as a meeting room, dining hall, and entertainment suite for the people that used to work in the facility. An archaic flat-screen projection unit is mounted in the southeast corner, near the ceiling. Although in bad condition, the storage crystals inside contain several video recordings and games from the 2300's that might be very valuable to certain collectors. There are seven video recordings worth a total of 5d20 x \$100, and twelve computer games worth about \$50 each.
8. Kitchen – This room contains a number of preserved foods that have managed to last the passage of several years. A successful Awareness-*perception* check at a +2 step penalty reveals that some of the food has been recently opened. Ysala's pet gearwerk, Rench, has been using the food to sustain itself in the three weeks it has been abandoned here. Shortly after the heroes enter, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you move about the kitchen, examining the sink, the food preparation appliances, and the refrigeration unit, a small scratching sound can be heard from one of the cabinets mounted over the countertops in the far corner. Carefully approaching the area, it seems to stop in reaction

to the noise of your movements. A couple of seconds pass and then suddenly something bursts out of the cabinet amid several plates, bowls, and containers of food that clatter loudly onto the floor. In the dim lighting, the creature resembles a large two-foot spider! It frantically scuttles back and forth as the ceramic place settings rain down around it and shatter upon the floor. Completely frightened now, it streaks across the room, between your legs, and across the boots of your environmental suits, making for the hallway.

Rench bolts from one of the cabinets, scampers out of the room, and runs down the hall toward the Shipping & Receiving Station (room 2) to hide among the empty boxes. Hadley will prevent anyone from trying to kill the creature, immediately recognizing it as a pet often domesticated by the Mechalus race. He's more interested in capturing it and/or finding its owner since it couldn't possibly have survived this many years on its own. Subduing the little creature can be done by melee or unarmed attacks that only cause stun damage, though even that runs the risk of killing the fragile thing. A more effective means would be to coax it out of its hiding place with some food and the Interaction-*charm* or Deception-*bribe* skills. The result of any check is as follows: on a Critical Failure, Rench refuses to trust any member of the party and must be subdued through other means; a Failure simply causes it not to trust a specific individual within the party and further attempts can be made to lure it out by someone else; an Ordinary success causes Rench to accept the party as new friends, though its loyalty continues to remain with Ysala when she is encountered later in the adventure; a Good or Amazing success actually causes Rench to bond with a specific hero, treating him or her as its new master, and no longer accepting Ysala at all.

9. Personnel Quarters – This room acted as the living quarters for the workers that operated the vault prior to its abandonment.
10. Common Bathroom – This place is empty, though a character making an Awareness-*perception* check notices a very smelly odor, allowing the heroes to tell that something (i.e., Rench) has been using the bathtub as a litter-box.
11. Environmental Controls & Recycling Units – The door to this room has a security keypad that must be manipulated in order to open it. Because of the older technology in use at the facility, the Technical Science-*juryrig*, Security-*security devices*, or Manipulation-*lockpick* skills can be used to open it. Any success does so, and any failure triggers a silent alarm throughout the facility instead. The chamber itself contains two Tindol-series Sentry Robots that will immediately respond to any security alerts, including the one generated by Ysala's jury-rigged devices. Otherwise, they remain inactivated and appear to have been so for many years, collecting several layers of dust. This room provides the artificial gravity, atmosphere, and recyclers necessary for sustaining comfort throughout the facility. All of the equipment is currently working normally, and any of it can be manipulated with the System Operation-*engineering* skill. In addition, anyone examining the systems may make an Awareness-*perception* check to determine that Vault Two is registering an exposure to a vacuum environment. This information could prove useful when trying to open the vault later (see room 15). Tucked away in a corner of the room are some late model PL6 environmental suits and some re-supply canisters for their oxygen tanks. If the heroes have been exploring the facility with their e-suits engaged for an extended period of time, these canisters will allow them to replenish their oxygen back to full before moving on.

12. Computer Room – The door to this room has a security keypad that must be manipulated in order to open it. Because of the older technology in use at the facility, the Technical Science-*juryrig*, Security-*security devices*, or Manipulation-*lockpick* skills can be used to open it and any success will do so. This chamber contains the inventory, security, and environmental control computer cores to which all of the other workstations connect. There are no terminals located here.
13. Main Engineering & Power Generators – The door to this room has a security keypad that must be manipulated in order to open it. Because of the older technology in use at the facility, the Technical Science-*juryrig*, Security-*security devices*, or Manipulation-*lockpick* skills can be used to open it and any success will do so. This chamber contains an older model fusion reactor on its last legs that is slowly leaking radiation. The sensors, indicators, and safeguards that would normally notify someone of the danger are no longer functioning. Opening the door to this chamber will expose the heroes to an R3-environment, though without some kind of radiation detection gear, they will not realize this. Per the Hazard Damage rules in the *Gamemaster Guide*, each hero exposed to the radiation must make a Constitution feat check or become ill. Any hero still wearing an environmental suit may make the check with a –1 step bonus. The results of the check are as follows: Amazing success, no effect; Good success, the heroes become ill after 12 hours, suffering a +2 step penalty to all actions; Ordinary success, the heroes become ill after 6 hours and suffer the same +2 step penalty to all actions; Failure, after one hour the heroes become ill as described above, and then after three hours, become extremely ill and nearly incapacitated, only able to attempt actions with a successful Resolve-*physical resolve* check and even then, all actions suffer a +3 step penalty; Critical Failure, within 10 minutes the heroes become ill as described above, then extremely ill after 20 minutes as described above, and then finally become terminally ill after 30 minutes and are nearly comatose, only able to rouse themselves for a few words of conversation with a successful Resolve-*physical resolve* check but are incapable of taking actions on their own. Consult the *Gamemaster Guide* for additional rules on recovery and/or how the effects may worsen.
14. Vault One – The door leading to this vault is tightly sealed and armed with another of Ysala's jury-rigged security devices. An Awareness-*perception* check at only a +2 step penalty will notice this one. The device is designed to send another alert to the security robots throughout the facility, but contains additional programming to override the security control stations in room 5, above. Even if the heroes have disarmed the facility via the security controls, Ysala's device will countermand those orders and direct all remaining security robots to deploy and converge upon this location. Inside the chamber, an especially effective guardian robot awaits; it is a deadlier model than the previous Tindol-series sentries encountered throughout the facility. This model is from the Janus-series (as detailed in the *Dataware* supplement, but with upgraded armor) and carries a complement of three concussion grenades that it can throw to subdue anyone invading the vault. Ysala took extra care when disabling and reprogramming this robot, making sure to disconnect it completely from the security network. It now functions autonomously and views everything as its enemy, including the other robots if they arrive on the scene. It's very likely that the heroes may find themselves in a cross-fire between both models. All of the

other doors inside Vault One have security keypads that must be manipulated in order to open them. Because of the older technology in use at the facility, the Technical Science-*juryrig*, Security-*security devices*, or Manipulation-*lockpick* skills can be used to do so. Any success gains entry, and any failure simply breaks the ancient locking device and jams the door, causing it to require a cutting torch or similar tool to open it after that. Regardless, all of the storage rooms have been plundered already by Ysala and her men.

15. Vault Two – The door leading to this particular vault is sealed tightly. On the other side, a vacuum environment exists which poses a serious threat to any hero that opens this vault. First, explosive decompression will occur as soon as the door is opened which will violently hurl the heroes and the loose boxes and barrels lying in Vault One into the chamber. Anyone unprepared for the decompression must make a Constitution feat check yielding the following results, and none of the damage effects may be blocked by armor: Critical Failure, all stun points lost, victim also suffers d6+2 wounds and follows the rules for regaining consciousness thereafter; Failure, the victim suffers d6 wounds as well as secondary stun damage; Ordinary success, the victim suffers d4+2 stun; Good, d4 stun; Amazing, d4-2 stun. Anyone fully prepared for the decompression, or who took actions to move or otherwise pin down the boxes and barrels in Vault One, or had someone intentionally adjust the pressure in Vault One to also be a vacuum via the environmental controls in room 11, suffer no damage. Following the decompression, the real danger begins to take effect. Any heroes not wearing a full environment suit are immediately exposed to a P0 environment (vacuum). They must make Stamina-*endurance* exposure checks every phase with a cumulative +1 step penalty until they

manage to protect themselves. The results of the check are as follows: Critical Failure, 4 stun points of damage is suffered; Failure, 3 stun points; Ordinary, 2 stun points; Good, 1 stun point; Amazing, no damage. When a hero runs out of stun points, he or she falls unconscious and begins to take wound damage at the same rate. Any heroes that succeed at a Resolve-*physical resolve* skill check may remain conscious despite the total loss of stun points and still attempt to protect themselves. After the chaos has ended, the storage chambers within this vault will also be found plundered of any wealth. In addition, the northeast corner of the vault has been breached by an apparent cave-in...which is the cause of the decompression. The Klicks have been using a nearby tunneling machine to set up their research laboratory in the same mountain as the vault and inadvertently caused damage to the facility's structure.

16. Crystal Cavern – This is a natural cavern that contains an impressive display of water crystals that seem out of place upon an airless moon such as Bauble. A Knowledge-*deduce* check or Physical Science-*planetology* check with a -2 step bonus allows the heroes to surmise that the moon may have once possessed an atmosphere and even an ocean or sea at one time. This cavern was accidentally opened by the Klick tunneling machine in cavern 17, and is still exposed to a vacuum environment.
17. Collapsed Cavern – This chamber is empty except for a very rough spherical piece of techno-organic machinery nearly 2m in diameter. It is a small tunneling device used by the Klicks to hollow out and expand their research laboratory, using a gravity-focused plasma beam that vaporizes rock. It requires a complex Knowledge-*deduce* skill check of Amazing complexity (8 successes / 10 minutes between each check) to figure out how the device works. Then, to con-

trol the device, it requires a Vehicle Operation-*land vehicle* skill check with a +3 step penalty. Each successful operation allows the heroes to learn more about the device and reduce the penalty by one step, to a minimum of +1. Operating the equipment creates a loud noise that could alert the Klicks in Scene Three, below. This chamber is still exposed to a vacuum environment.

18. Escape Tunnel – This tunnel is also a natural cavern, but one which is undergoing modification by the Klicks. Certain portions of the walls have been prepared with a techno-organic biomatter or borderline lifeform, which they are using to further grow their base. They haven't finished with the "construction" project yet, but they intend to grow the base all the way down to the exit at the south to create another airlock and an escape route in case the base becomes compromised. This chamber is still exposed to a vacuum environment.



Tindol-series Sentry Robots (3)

STR 12 [+1] INT 9
DEX 9 WIL 7
CON 14 PER 4
Durability: 14/14/7 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3
Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Stutter Pistol 10/5/2 d6+2s/d8+2s/d8+4s HI/O
Stun Baton 14/7/3 d4+1s/d4+3s/d6+4s En/O

Defenses

Cerametal Armor d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills

Armor Operation [12] –*combat armor* [13]; Melee Weapons [12] –*powered* [14]; Modern Ranged

Weapons [9] –*pistol* [10]; Stamina [14] –*endurance* [15]; Security [9]; Awareness [7]; Interaction [4].

Janus-series Sentry Robot

STR 14 [+2] INT 9
DEX 7 WIL 7
CON 16 PER 4
Durability: 16/16/8 Action Check: 10+ /9/4/2
Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

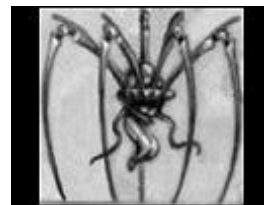
Ram 14/7/3 d8s/d6+1w/d8+1w LI/O
SMG, 9mm charge 10/5/2 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O
Stun Baton 15/7/3 d4+1s/d4+3s/d6+4sEn/O
Concussion Grenade 15/7/3 d6+2s/d4w/d4+1w LI/O

Defenses

Cerametal Armor d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4 (En)
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills

Athletics [14] –*throw* [15]; Melee Weapons [14] –*powered* [15]; Modern Ranged Weapons [7] –*SMG* [10]; Stamina [16] –*endurance* [17]; Security [9]; Awareness [7]; Interaction [4].



Rench

Gearwerk Pet

STR 2 [-2] INT 6 [-1]
DEX 10 WIL 4 [-2]
CON 2 PER 4
Durability: 2/2/1/1 Action Check: 14+ /13/6/3
Move: run 16 # Actions: 1
Reaction Score: Ordinary/1 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Assorted Tools 8/4/2 d4-1s/d4s/d4-1w LI/O

Defenses

-2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
-1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
-2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Manipulation [11]; Stamina [11]; Stealth [11]; Se-

curity [11]; System Operation [11]; Technical Science [11]; Awareness [11]; Resolve [11].

Cyber Gear

Encrypted Comm Gear, Toolkit, Lockpick Set, Video-recorder.

Description

Rench is a survivor, pure and simple. A cunning little gearwerk, it was well trained by Ysala as a thief and security-device expert. Physically, the creature resembles a tadpole perched inside a cybernetic carriage of spider-like legs. Several other pieces of cybertech are available, including a comm-unit, a set of tools and lockpicks, and a video-recorder. Currently, the camcorder unit has no 3D crystal upon which to record images, having been removed by the Klicks when they captured the gearwerk. Examining Rench, the heroes will discover a personalized owner's tag with rhodium-plating and an inscription of the letter "Y" and the Greek letter "rho" in the shape of a small "r".

Since escaping the Klick laboratory, Rench has focused on staying hidden and simply surviving off whatever foodstuffs it can find and open with its tools. The gearwerk has gone through a lot however, and isn't in very good condition when the heroes first encounter it. Since being abandoned by Ysala, Rench's loyalty to her has lessened somewhat, which clever heroes might turn to their advantage.

Scene Three: Klick Research Laboratory

After discovering the breach in Vault Two, the heroes journey down into some airless caverns and encounter a tunnel that has been sealed over by a Klick arterial, or living wall. As they are confronted with the entrance to the Klick base, read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of the tunnel you've been following seem to lead you to a dead-end. But as you get closer, your lights reflect off a surface which is completely different from the grayish rock you've grown accustomed to seeing. Sealing off the tunnel is a mass of organic material of unknown origin. It almost seems to pulse as you approach it, perhaps sensing your presence somehow. Could it be alive?

Examination of the wall reveals that it's

made of the same bio-organic material as the device found in Rench's nest in the Shipping & Receiving Station (room 2). If Rench is with the heroes and views them as its new masters, the gearwerk will attempt to take the device and demonstrate it for them by opening the airlock. Otherwise, the heroes must opt for the trial-and-error method of gaining entrance. If they have the device and think to use it on their own, a complex *Security-security devices* or *System Operation-engineering* skill check of Marginal complexity (3 total successes needed, checks can be made every 5 minutes) will suffice to open the airlock. A Critical Failure or a total of three Failures during the skill check results in one of the Klick Technicians from the Sick Bay (area B) coming to investigate. If the heroes don't have Rench or the device with them, entry becomes much more difficult. The only way to open the airlock under those circumstances is with a complex *Security-security devices*, *Manipulation-lockpick*, or *Technical Science-juryrig* skill check of Good Complexity (5 successes / 5 minutes between each check) with a +2 step penalty on each attempt. Again, a Critical Failure or a total of three Failures during the skill check results in the arrival of the Klick Technician. When the Technician arrives, it polarizes one of the sections on the arterial to see who's outside, and then immediately sounds the alarm, putting the base under an active alert. A Klick Warrior from the Eating Area (area F) will arrive in d6 rounds and together, they don their vacuum suits, open the airlock, and attack.

Exploring the Research Base:

Since the research base is actually still under construction, the inside differs slightly from the one presented in the *Klick Clack* adventure module. Most of the hallways have only recently been layered with the bio-organic material that will eventually grow into full-fledged arterials. For the time being, however, no skill checks are necessary to find the exits from each room, and they can be treated as normal caverns and tunnels with the exception of the living tissue that lines portions of the rocky surface. The atmosphere inside the base is breathable by humans, though it smells incredibly foul and tends to be richer in oxygen. In general, gravity conditions are also tolerable.

Inevitably the heroes will encounter a piece of Klick biotechnology that they'll want to

investigate and possibly interact with. Because of their presumed inexperience with such devices, the heroes will need to make a complex Knowledge-*deduce* skill check of Good complexity (5 successes / 5 minutes between each check) each time they endeavor to learn the function of a unique piece of equipment. Even after learning its purpose, they still need to make a System Operation skill check of the appropriate specialty at a +2 step penalty in order to actually use the equipment. It's important to note that a successful use of a particular piece of equipment will reduce future penalties to only +1 step.

Security

Depending on the heroes' actions, the Klicks may have become alert to the possibility of intruders. If the heroes failed to quickly locate the vault in Scene One, the Klick sensors will have detected their ship. As a result, the Klick Warriors will have been re-deployed to more actively guard both entrances to the base. The individual room descriptions below indicate the measures that will be taken under an active alert condition.

Klick Research Laboratory:

- A. Airlock – These areas act as airlocks for the Klicks as they come and go from the research base. They are normally left in a vacuum environment and will automatically cycle up to a breathable atmosphere when someone enters from the outside, or cycle down to a vacuum when someone enters from the other side, to prevent decompression of the entire base.
- B. Sick Bay – This small chamber is ringed with four separate depressions in the floor, approximately the size of a Klick. They are 1-meter deep and similarly sized bulges with many tubes and conduits extend from the ceiling over each one. They are currently unoccupied. There is also a pillar in the center of the chamber, about two meters in diameter, that is covered in readouts and ringed by control plates set in the floor. A single Klick Technician hovers over one of these plates, making some adjustments to the recently installed medical equipment. Unless the Klicks were alerted somehow to the heroes' arrival, it will be thoroughly surprised to see them. If the Klicks already suspect intruders, a Klick Warrior will be present here as well.
- C. Atmosphere Generator & Gravity Control – The center of this chamber contains a bowl-shaped depression matched by a similar indentation in the ceiling. A softly glowing light hangs suspended in the air between them. This equipment is used to maintain the gravity conditions inside the research base. The room is filled with additional equipment necessary for producing and maintaining the atmosphere, too. Four spherical objects line the eastern wall, each with a number of different electronic readouts on their surface. Anyone touching them can feel a numbing coldness emanating from inside. Additional readouts and control plates are set in the floor over by the west wall. The noise from this chamber drowns out almost all other sounds, including the work of another Klick Technician behind the spheres.
- D. Lab Room – Six transparent holding bins line the walls of this room. Inside five of them are Klick eggs varying in size from six inches to nearly a foot-and-a-half long. Several control plates and readouts are placed on the floor in front of them, and in the center of the room is a pedestal bearing a number of shiny tools. This chamber is perhaps the most prized secret of the Klick Technicians inside the research base. Unknown to their allies in the External forces of the I'krl Theocracy, these Klicks are trying to find a way to stabilize the DNA of their eggs without depending upon Kadaran technology. They have undertaken a great risk to embark on this research, involving only the most trusted technicians from those that are deployed in the Oberon system. If they are successful, it might finally give the Klicks an opportunity to break away from their masters. To protect this valuable secret, one of

the Klick Warriors is stationed here at all times, though it doesn't fully understand the nature of the research. If the base has been alerted to the heroes' presence, the Warrior will have left its post and moved to the Warrior's Barracks to guard against intruders. Among the tools on the pedestal are a few pieces of cybertech gear, removed from Rench during the gearwerk's confinement, including a video-chip taken from its recorder. If the heroes have Rench with them and examine the device, it's clear that the chip fits easily inside. If the heroes examine the chip and play it back, either now, or later when they return to their ship, read or paraphrase the following scene to them:

Static fills the viewscreen's display for a moment and then forms into a scene from the Bauble vault. The date at the bottom of the display indicates the recording was taken only three and a half weeks ago. The image shows several people moving throughout the facility, moving cargo with a forklift and other heavy-lifting equipment. In the background a female Mechalus watches over the proceedings.

"Hurry up!" she shouts into one of the vault's holding chambers, "Explanation: Those readings are getting stronger and I want us out of here before anyone stumbles across us." She then speaks into her communit, saying, "Inquiry: T'sango? Are you ready with the ship? Directive: I want you to set a course for Leen, you got it? That's right, we're going planet-side with this stuff. We can't haul it all back to Lison. Assertion: There's no way we can keep a cargo this big hidden from Kind or the rest of his people. We'll have to hide it somewhere else where we can pick it up in small shipments. Assurance: No. Don't worry, you'll get your share. Order: Set a locator beacon on frequency 111.09. We'll place it with the treasure after we bury it.

Got it? 111.09..."

A human mercenary of some kind runs up next to her, gesturing toward a sensor gauntlet. "Ysala, I can't pinpoint these sensor readings. It's almost like they're coming from deeper underground, but they're unlike anything I've ever seen. It could be External technology or something..."

"Rhetorical Inquiry: You mean, Klicks?" she scoffs, "Assurance: Unlikely. They're at Hammer's Star. Nobody's ever seen one here in Oberon. Suggestion: It's probably a corsair flying over...or maybe one of those tour ships...or worse, a Void-Corp patrol." She looks away into the vault again and yells, "Demand: I said hurry up! Or we're leaving without you! Inquiry: Has anybody seen Rench? Rench! RENCCCH!" And then the image on the screen moves away as if the person or thing holding the camera headed off in a different direction...

- E. Main Engineering & Power Plant – This chamber is roughly spherical in shape, with a smaller sphere dominating the center of the room. Conduits of all shapes, sizes, and colors extend from the sphere in every direction, eventually disappearing into the walls. Around the edges of the room are a number of different readouts and control panels set in front of semicircular loops about 10 centimeters in radius. A Klick Technician can be seen scuttling back and forth, examining the readouts, totally absorbed by its work and unaware of the heroes' presence. Perched on one of the loops above is another Klick Technician, working in tandem with its comrade to monitor the power plant and other engineering machinery of the research base. If the heroes enter the chamber from the west, there is a chance this Klick could surprise them. Allow an Awareness-intuition skill check at a +3 step penalty to detect the Technician be-

fore it drops onto them from above. Any success notices its shadow and allows the hero to anticipate the attack, spoiling the surprise.

- F. Eating Area – This room has some fifteen different troughs approximately 30 centimeters deep sculpted into the floor. Foul smelling liquid fills each one of them. This represents the food that the Klicks eat while on duty here at the base. Any hero foolish enough to try and consume any of the liquid food will quickly vomit it back up. There are no other ill effects, however. Presently a single Klick Warrior occupies this chamber, but if the base has gone on active alert, it will have moved to the Sick Bay in order to guard their escape route.
- G. Technician Barracks – This chamber contains several pillars with curtains of bio-organic material strung between them that close off sections into sleeping chambers for the Klick Technicians on duty at the research base. Currently, one of the Klick Technicians is resting here, having just completed its shift of duty in furthering the construction of the base. Heroes may avoid a confrontation with the Klick, but each of them must make a Stealth-sneak check to do so. Otherwise, any jostling, poking, or loud noises will awaken it. If the base has gone on active alert, the Technician will have moved to the Administrative Center, below.
- H. Administrative Center – This chamber contains three different depressions in the floor, contained in a small built-up rise of fleshy, organic material. Currently, one of them is occupied by the only Klick Administrator of the base, Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik. The Klick appears dead to the world, simply lying in one of the depressions with its sensory organs attached to various fleshy tubes and conduits, the Klick-version of a neural interface jack. It is busy monitoring the progress of the construction efforts and research results of the other Klicks and maintains communications with its commanding

“Klatchik”, the Blacklaser Machinegun External Weapon Design

Description: This weapon is manufactured out of living organisms combined together to produce a weapon of devastating power which employs ultraviolet lasers emanating at a high cyclical rate. It was created by the External species known as the Kadarans, whose biotechnology outfits virtually all of the Klick infantry. This particular design is an early model that lacks the fully unique coding insuring the biological ‘brain’ inside the weapon will remain loyal to the Externals. The weapon is fully sentient and can communicate with anyone holding it through a limited form of telepathy. It refers to itself as “Klatchik” and is highly opinionated regarding its capabilities.

Anyone attempting to retain Klatchik for their own personal use will be faced with three unique problems:

First, Klatchik is a highly evolved being with emotions and all of the excess baggage that entails. The weapon is extremely proud and quite jealous of its owner’s other weapons. As a result, Klatchik may prove uncooperative at a crucial moment if it feels it has been slighted in some way. A successful Interaction-*charm*, -*intimidate*, or Deception-*bribe* skill check may be necessary to convince the weapon to function properly again. In addition, Klatchik does possess at least some feelings for its former masters and will be somewhat reluctant to fire upon them unless it feels it is also threatened somehow. This translates to a +1 step penalty to all

attacks upon Klicks or Kadarans that aren’t in self-defense.

Secondly, Klatchik suffers from the same limitations as all biotechnology created by the Kadarans, requiring a constant source of energy to keep it alive. Normally, the bio-electric field generated by its wielder will suffice, but Klatchik has been designed to interface with a Klick’s physiology and can only fire up to 10 bursts before exhausting its internal reserves. A successful complex Technical Science-*juryrig* skill check of Good Complexity (5 successes / 30 minutes between checks) with a +2 step penalty could succeed in connecting another External device as a temporary power source. None of these add-ons will enable Klatchik to fire more than 10 additional bursts, however. Any attempts to cannibalize more than three External devices in this manner will result in a weapon malfunction as its components become diseased and die out, rendering the weapon forever useless.

Lastly, being attuned to Klick and Kadaran environments, Klatchik needs constant temperature regulation. The living components that make up the complicated weapon must remain cool while in storage or they will die. The elaborate holster-harness slung across its former owner’s body obviously functions as a refrigeration device of some kind. If steps aren’t taken to use this item or something else to keep Klatchik refrigerated during times of non-use, the weapon will pass away in 3d4+4 hours.

Skill	Acc	Range	Md	Actions	Clip	Size	Hide	Mass
Hvy-direct	0	100/200/500	B/A	3	150/10	—	8	

officer (currently located on the Mindaran Space Station detailed in Threats From Beyond). Watching over the chamber is a Klick Warrior and Technician. In the event of an unexpected attack, the Technician will attempt to rouse the Administrator while the Warrior moves to block any unauthorized entry. The Warrior is armed with a very potent weapon known as a "Klatchik" and was manufactured by the Kadarans from bio-organic material which gives it a certain amount of living sentience. See the artifact sidebar for more information. If the base has gone on active alert, however, a second Klick Warrior and Technician will also be here. Kik-ik-tik will already be fully awake and making preparations for an emergency evacuation to save their research from being compromised. At the first opportunity, he will have contacted his superiors on the Mindaran Space Station and elsewhere in the Oberon system to call for assistance. Klick ships will be on their way, arriving later in Scene Four.

- I. Warrior Barracks - This chamber contains several pillars with curtains of bio-organic material strung between them that close off sections into sleeping chambers for the Klick Warriors on duty at the research base. Currently, only one Warrior is in the chamber, but it is awake and preparing to report for duty. If the base has gone on active alert, however, another Klick Warrior will have joined it here in anticipation of intruders.

Klick Technicians (6)

STR 9 INT 11 [+1]
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 10
CON 9 PER 6
Durability: 18/9/5/5 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3
Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Pincers (x2) 11/5/2 d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w LI/O
Blacklaser Pistol 12/6/3 d4+2w/d6+2w/d4m
En/O

Bioweakness field: Opponents within 10 meters must make Stamina-*endurance* checks at the beginning of every round. Failure indicates that the opponent suffers d4-1 points of stun damage. For every additional Klick in the area, affected heroes must make their skill checks with a +1 penalty, up to a maximum of +6.

Defenses

Armor d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+2 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [9] -*climb* [12], jump [10]; Unarmed Attack [9] -*brawl* [11]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*pistol* [12]; Stamina [9] -*endurance* [11]; Knowledge [11] -*computer op* [14]; Vehicle Operation [11] -*space* [14]; Awareness [10] -*perception* [12].

Klick Warriors (4)

STR 11 [+1] INT 9
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 8
CON 10 PER 6
Durability: 20/10/5/5 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3
Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Pincers (x2) 14/7/3 d6w/d6+2w/d8+2w LI/O
Blacklaser SMG 12/6/3 d6+1w/d6+3w/d4+1m
En/O
Blacklaser MG 12/6/3 d6+3w/d8+3w/d4+3m
En/O

Defenses

Armor d6+1 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d6+2 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Bioweakness field: Opponents within 10 meters must make Stamina-*endurance* checks at the beginning of every round. Failure indicates that the opponent suffers d4-1 points of stun damage. For every additional Klick in the area, affected heroes must make their skill checks with a +1 penalty, up to a maximum of +6.

Skills

Athletics [11] -*climb* [16], jump [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -*brawl* [14]; Heavy Weapons [11] -*direct* [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*SMG* [12];

Stealth [11] –*hide* [14], *sneak* [13]; Stamina [10] –*endurance* [14]; Movement [10]; Awareness [8] –*perception* [11].



Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik, Klick Administrator

STR 9 INT 10
DEX 9 WIL 12* [+ 2, *+ 3 vs. psionics]
CON 9 PER 9
Durability: 18/9/5/5 Action Check: 12+ /11/5/2
Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1

Attacks

Pincers (x2) 11/5/2 d4w/d4+ 2w/d6+ 2w LI/O
Blacklaser Pistol 10/5/2 d4+ 2w/d6+ 2w/d4m
En/O

Defenses

Armor d4+ 1 (LI), d4+ 1 (HI), d4+ 2 (En)
+ 2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+ 3 WIL resistance modifier vs. psionic attack*

* = bonus due to alien artifact (see sidebar and description below)

Bioweakness field: Opponents within 10 meters must make Stamina-*endurance* checks at the beginning of every round. Failure indicates that the opponent suffers d4-1 points of stun damage. For every additional Klick in the area, affected heroes must make their skill checks with a +1 penalty, up to a maximum of +6.

Skills

Athletics [9] –*climb* [12], *jump* [10]; Unarmed Attack [9] –*brawl* [11]; Modern Ranged Weapons [9] –*Pistol* [10]; Stamina [9] –*endurance* [10]; Knowledge [10] –*computer operation* [12]; Administration [12] –*bureaucracy* [13], –*management* [15]; Awareness [12] –*perception* [14].

Description

Kik-ik-tik is an Ythkometh (EETH-KO-METH), or Lieutenant, in the I'krl Theocracy's Exeat forces operating in the Verge. Although

The Shard of Illumination Glassmaker Artifact

Form: Crystalline Amulet
Purpose: Mental Enhancement (primary), Communication (secondary)

Powers: Heightened Will, Minor Psi Resistance, and Translation (all three are ordinary powers)

Drawbacks: Blackouts (slight)

Description: Although its power has waned over the centuries, the Shard of Illumination still possesses at least a remnant of its makers' former glory. The Glassmakers originally crafted these crystals for their servants as shields against the mental intrusion of psi-capable enemies. They also left one mental pathway open to the device. It was designed to serve its wearer as a telepathic translator. The Glassmakers included this ability so their servants could more effectively communicate with one another and those they encountered in their travels.

The shard increases its wearer's Will ability score by 1 point, provides an additional cumulative +1 Will resistance modifier against psionic attacks, and when invoked, works to establish temporary communication with any sentient creature. This last ability functions at a telepathic level, acting as a universal translator for only two participants at a time in any given conversation. The device doesn't actually grant knowledge of the language that is spoken, but rather translates the holders' words as they are uttered aloud for each other's ears only. In

addition, it does not grant understanding of written text or even audio-recordings, depending entirely upon the neural pathways of two sentient minds. The translation ability lasts for just 5 minutes per use and can be invoked only twice per day.

Unfortunately, due to the waning nature of its power and the shard's ability to merge with a user's psyche and higher brain functions, periodic blackouts can occur d6 hours after being used in a major way. The situations that could trigger a blackout include: moments when the user is forced to resist an unusually powerful psionic probe or attack, a first-contact encounter in which the device provides prolonged translation, or even opportunities where the user makes a Will-related skill check resulting in an Amazing success or Critical Failure. These events are not guaranteed to cause a blackout. They only represent situations that *can* cause a blackout, and are usually limited to only once per two or three adventures, per the Game-master's discretion. When a blackout does occur, it drains away all remaining stun points and causes the user to fall unconscious. Consciousness can be regained per the normal rules, but the user will remain shaken for d6 hours following the event and suffer a +1 step penalty to any Will-related skill checks, including action check rolls.

loyal for many years to the Theocracy, the Klick Administrator and several like him have begun to share concerns about the dependency their race has upon Kadaran biotechnology. Without periodic DNA enhancements to their gene pool, altered Klicks such as Kik-ik-tik cannot continue to reproduce and only the Kadarans, a sadistic race of bioengineers, understand the process. Kik-ik-tik has been placed in charge of a group of Klick Technicians and scientists to quietly investigate alternatives to the gene therapy that might free their race from servitude within the Theocracy. This is a bold step for every Klick involved. If their research is ever discovered by those still loyal to the Theocracy their lives will quickly be forfeit, and they know that the Klick hivemothers back on Hivehome could suffer heavy persecution because of their insubordination.

For the time being, Kik-ik-tik has the blessings of his superior officer on the Mindaran Space Station. He depends upon the Klicks at that location to resupply his team of scientists and guards, and can call upon them to send aid or ships at any time for an evacuation. His overriding concern, and that of his co-conspirators, is that no one should learn about the research, especially the I'krl Theocracy. They aren't quite as worried about the nearby Verge population. They feel confident they can handle most anything the Concord and her allies throw at them, especially with their spies tipping them off ahead of time. At the same time, they're kind of interested in staying close to the human-dominated settlements anyway because it allows them to carefully research Verge Alliance technology in the hopes it might help them find the answers they seek.

Kik-ik-tik also possesses an unusual artifact, a distinctive amulet that he keeps with him at all times. The device was once known as the Shard of Illumination and long ago it belonged to the Precursors known as the Glassmakers. Kik-ik-tik learned of the amulet's psi resistance ability by accident, but now depends upon it to help keep the secret of the Klick research base from the Theocracy's krl'osar mindwalkers.

Scene Four: Klick Dogfight in the Valleys of Bauble

After the heroes leave the Klick research base and the Gallagher family vault behind, they return to their ship. Lifting off, they start the arduous journey back through the canyon to reach the open plains but run into some complications. As

they are just beginning to relax, the Klick reinforcements called upon by Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik arrive to eliminate the heroes before they can escape and inform anyone about the base.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players when they return from the vault:

Tired and disappointed that the treasure doesn't lie on Bauble, you trek back across the moon's landscape to your ship. Hadley seems particularly concerned that you're leaving relatively empty-handed. Without the family fortune, Joseph's health can never improve. Perhaps the location of a Klick base on Bauble will be worth something to the Lison government or the Galactic Concord, but any reward still won't be great enough to save your benefactor. Powering up the ship, you start lift-off procedures and consult the navigation data recorded on your previous flight through the canyon. Hopefully, getting out won't be quite as difficult on the second trip through.

The ship shudders as it begins the slow turn that will properly position it for the run. Far above, the massive expanse of Leen fills most of the sky, peeking through the narrow gap between the canyon walls. Suddenly, the passive sensors flare to life on-board the ship. Warning messages scroll across the displays indicating two incoming vessels on an intercept course from above. No transponder codes are being emitted to identify them, and their profile-signatures don't match any known configuration in the ship's database. Even worse, they appear to be small enough to slip through the constrictive opening of the canyon walls towering above you! It's time to get out of here...and the flash of a blacklaser striking the canyon floor thirty meters ahead of you only serves to illustrate the urgency of your situation!

As the heroes scramble to save themselves, each of the System Operation skills could come in handy. The pilot is going to be particularly busy trying to navigate the narrow canyon while keeping the Klick fighters from closing on him. Meanwhile, the other heroes can operate the ship's weapons to return fire, use the ship's sensors to improve the gunner's targeting of the Klick fighters, assist the pilot by interpreting the navigation data, repair any damaged sections of the ship, or improve the output of the engines.

To successfully exit the canyon while be-

Klick Fighters (2)

Compartments: 2 Dur: 10
 Maneuver Rating: -1 Acc: 3 Mpp
 Cruising Speed: 2 AU/hour Berthing: 2

Armament:
 Blacklaser - Range: 2/4/6 Mm, d8/d12w/d8m, En(e)
 Armor
 Light Cerametal d6-1 (LI), d6-1 (HI), d6-1 (En)
 Defenses: Jammer
 Computer Core: Marginal computer core
 Engines: Particle impulse
 Power: Dynamic mass reactor rated for a total of 8 power factors
 Drive: None

Roll	Compartment	Systems (Dur/Pow)
1-6	Command	Blacklaser (3/3) 8/8/4 Marginal comp. core (0/0) Jammer (0/1) Mass detector (1/0) Multiband radar (0/0) Radio transceiver (0/1) Reentry capsule (0/0) Airlock (0/0)
7-12	Engineering	Particle impulse engine (4/3) 12/12/6 Dynamic mass reactor(2/*) Autosupport (0/1)

ing chased by the fighters will require a complex Vehicle Operation-*space* skill check of Good Complexity (5 successes / 2 rounds per attempt). Any Failure results in skimming the rocky surface and inflicts d4s points of damage to a random ship compartment. A compartment that is struck twice or more after additional Failure results upgrades all future damage to d4w instead. On a Critical Failure or three cumulative Failure results, the ship will have clipped a major outcropping of rock or the canyon wall, inflicting d4+ 1w to a random compartment, and posing the significant risk of an immediate crash. Consult the *Gamemaster Guide* (pp. 159-160) for the standard rules regarding loss of control.

The Klick fighters suffer from the same piloting checks if they have to avoid the return fire of the heroes' ship; otherwise, they are small enough to easily follow and are free to fire on them without penalty. The Klick Technicians piloting these fighters are assumed to have Vehicle

Operation-*air* and -*space* skills at rank 3 (skill score of 14) and Navigation-*system astrogation* at rank 1 (skill score of 12). The Co-pilots/Gunners have System Operation-*defenses*, -*sensors*, and -*weapons* at rank 1 in each (skill score of 12). The pilot of the heroes' ship can make individual Vehicle Operation-*space* skill checks to induce the usual penalty to the targeting of these gunners. After emerging from the canyon, all ships are free to engage one another with the normal starship combat rules or flee as chosen.

Note, this scene isn't meant to destroy the heroes or their ship. It merely serves as a dramatic chase scene to further enhance the story. Feel free as the Gamemaster to have the Klick pilots accidentally crash, interfere with one another, or even fall back and give up the chase after their ships are slightly damaged. Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik and his masters aren't interested in announcing the Klick presence any further by chasing the heroes across space at this time. He, or his commanding officer, will be more likely to pull back the troops, pack up the research base, and move to another location. Despite this strategy, a strike team of Klick Warriors will still be formed to send after the heroes (especially if they have stolen one of the eggs or the Shard of Illumination). One of the Klick fighters (or another Klick vessel if they are both destroyed) will track their course so the strike team can find them in Act Four.

ACT THREE

Scene One: Trigger

Upon reaching space again, the heroes discover a signal emanating from the planet Leen. This signal is actually a locator beacon that Ysala left with the buried treasure so she and her men could come back and dig it up. It functions on a special, intermittent frequency that can be easily mistaken for simple "background" noise unless the system operator specifically knows what to listen for. If the heroes have Rench with them, the little gearwerk is the one responsible for having manipulated the sensor station to pinpoint it in an effort to locate the whereabouts of its former master, Ysala Rho. Otherwise, the heroes could pick up the signal while performing a general sweep of the area for more Klick warships happening upon the frequency. Or, if the heroes managed to enter the Klick base and retrieve the video recording of Ysala and her men as they

plundered the vault, they may immediately tune to the beacon's frequency (i.e., 111.09). Regardless, once the sensor station is activated, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Suddenly a burst of sound, patched in directly from the sensor station, emanates from the ship's speaker system. A hush settles over everyone as you strain to make out the details. "Eshta nisto iota-nega-nor! Rota es dan Ylor Leenum... jestnorum beta-olna-gon." Then an extended silence lasting several moments. Hadley finally starts to speak and then the sound interrupts him as it comes again, "Eshta nisto iota-nega-nor! Rota es dan Ylor Leenum...jestnorum beta-olna-gon!"

"What is it?" he asks aloud, "Is someone trying to contact us?" The display on the sensor station indicates the signal is coming from somewhere on the planet of Leen, but it's too weak to make an accurate determination.

Any hero capable of speaking and understanding the Mechalus language, Aleerin, can make a Knowledge-language: Aleerin skill check to decipher the message. Any success does so, and any hero that is actually of the Mechalus race can automatically interpret the words if he or she speaks Aleerin as a native tongue. Roughly translated, the communication is: "Electronic beacon I-9! Cargo drop-off at Leen... set coordinates to B-Strike-1."

At this point, allow any of the heroes to make a System Operation-sensors skill check to narrow down the location of the beacon. A Critical Failure accidentally messes up the sensor settings and causes the ship to lose the signal for awhile, requiring a complex skill check of Good complexity (5 successes / 3 hours between each check) to pick it up again. This simply allows the heroes to make another attempt to follow the beacon down to the planet through a new System Operation-sensors check. A Failure result on the initial check gains no additional information regarding the location, but the signal does remain strong enough to follow, causing the heroes to waste d8 hours zeroing in on it. An Ordinary success accomplishes the same task in d6-1 hours; a Good success determines the general vicinity of the beacon in the temperate regions of some forestland in just d4-1 hours; and an Amazing success immediately pinpoints the signal as emanating from a small settlement inside a man-made

clearing.

Note, the process of tracking the signal could take several hours, which makes for a good enough interlude that injured heroes can receive medical treatment, discuss the current situation, or even try to contact other parts of the system to relay their knowledge of the Klick threat on Bauble. If the heroes managed to capture the Shard of Illumination or Klatchik the Blacklaser Machinegun, this might also present an opportunity to examine the treasures in more detail. Ultimately, the amount of time it takes the heroes to pinpoint the signal is important because Ysala Rho and her crew of pirates are enroute to Leen as well. They will arrive in just d4 hours and could potentially reach the planet ahead of them. This doesn't have a significant impact on the story, since the treasure has been moved and Ysala won't be able to find it right away. But, it should still give an indication of how prepared the pirates will be for the eventual interference of the heroes.

Once the ship begins its descent toward Leen, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

At last the sensor station indicates the beacon's location is centered on a man-made settlement on the planet's surface. You pilot a course into the atmosphere and descend in that direction. Shortly thereafter, a communication is received.

"Hailing unidentified vessel," a strangely accented voice says, "We are tracking you on approach to the Solar outpost of Mahatay. Your registry is unknown to us. Please identify yourself before we interpret your actions as a form of aggression. Be assured we are prepared for the pirates of this system and have several defenses locked onto your ship. We will fire if you continue your current course without clarifying your intentions."

Allow the heroes to respond however they wish. The Solar colony of Mahatay is still under construction and the commander of the settlement is actually bluffing about the status of their defenses. A System Operation-sensors check can verify that no planetary weapons have locked onto their ship. Of course, there's really no reason to antagonize the Solar administrators, and it might benefit the heroes to attempt an Interaction-*charm* skill check to shift their attitude (which

is currently Neutral, despite their reservations). After the heroes announce their intentions to land, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

"Well then...welcome to Mahatay," the Solar technician replies, "We're currently still under construction down here. Be advised that although our habitat dome is finished, we haven't been successful in preparing the atmosphere for unassisted breathing just yet. A full environmental suit isn't absolutely necessary, but you'll need a filter mask at the very least if you intend on venturing about the township. There's a clearing about a half a kilometer from the dome where you can land. We'll be sending a customs official out to greet you."

The heroes are free to ask more questions about Mahatay and the troubles they're experiencing with their habitat dome, but the systems operator isn't really free to explain further. He isn't knowledgeable enough about the details anyway, but if the heroes were successful in swaying the administrator's opinion to Friendly or better, he will refer them to Lakota Sharpe at the administration offices in Scene Two, below.

Just a few minutes after communicating with Mahatay's administrators, another message comes through. The sensor station begins to indicate a new signal at the same frequency as the locator beacon for the missing treasure. Ysala Rho sends it as she realizes someone is homing in on the beacon besides her crew. Read or paraphrase the following bit of dialogue to the players as Ysala's message interrupts their conversation:

"Invocation: Greetings to whomever has locked onto frequency 111.09," a clipped voice emanates from the sensor station that has been tracking the beacon on the planet's surface. Shortly thereafter an image is transferred to your communications viewscreen, that of a female Mechalus with a surly look on her face, an unusual disposition given the stoic nature of the species. "Statement: I must inform you that you have intercepted a private transmission and are in violation of the Lison Interstellar Communications Act," she continues, "The beacon that you are currently tracking belongs to me and my family. Warning: It clearly marks the location of our vault and any attempt to follow its signal could be interpreted as an intention toward robbery. Please adjust your sensors accordingly and we will not

press charges."

The heroes are free to interact with Ysala as much as they wish. If she hasn't arrived on Leen yet, allow them an *Awareness-intuition* and/or a *System Operation-communications* skill check to realize that the voice doesn't actually emanate from the physical location of the beacon, but rather from Ysala's ship that is currently en route to the planet Leen. If one of the heroes has the *Law-court procedures* skill, they can make a check to determine if such a thing as the Lison Interstellar Communications Act exists and if it covers locator beacons such as the one they are following. Any success will realize that she is bluffing. No such regulation exists. Regardless, Ysala continues to bluff her way into convincing the heroes that she is the rightful owner of the beacon and its property, but only does so to buy time. She and her men intend to locate the treasure and load it onto her ship as soon as possible, then escape the system once and for all. If the heroes hurry, they can still catch her before she can succeed. At some point during their conversation, Ysala sends a remote signal to kill the beacon so the heroes won't be able to follow it any longer. This is a calculated risk, since she is willing to bet that she and her men can uncover the location without the beacon to assist them before the heroes can do the same.

Scene Two: Landing Site Conversation

As the heroes approach their designated landing site, read or paraphrase the following information to them:

The landscape of the planet Leen is in complete contrast to what you experienced on the moon of Bauble. Lush vegetation reaches to the horizon in almost every direction, and a low lying fog is slowly being burned off by the rising sun. Ship sensors indicate that the local gravity and median temperature are within normal human tolerance, and should, in fact, be pleasantly comfortable. But the Solar administrator's warnings about a breathable atmosphere seem correct. The nitrogen-oxygen content is currently too high and would be quite poisonous if inhaled. Also, the heavy concentration of oxygen could be corrosive and irritating to exposed skin.

As your ship crosses the equatorial regions, it descends even lower and within sight of the treetops of a hilly forest. The sun isn't far be-

hind as its rays drive back the early morning shadows and illuminate a small habitat dome that rises above the forest. The surface of the structure stretches for about a third of a kilometer and gleams with a blinding light. Crossing just to the left of the colony, you come to a clearing where three other ships are currently parked. Two of them are freighters, one large enough to be an industrial ship outfitted specifically with terraforming equipment, and the other a merchant trader of some kind. The last ship is a Corvette-class vessel with the Solar military designation UCS Victores. It appears to be undergoing resupply at the moment with a number of ground crew all around. One of them spots your descent and waves with an illuminated baton, directing you to land near the smaller ships.

As the heroes disembark on the outskirts of Mahatay's newly constructed dome, a Solar administrator arrives to meet them from the rest of the ground crew. He rolls up in an off-road transport to check their manifest and cargo holds for any materials that might be dangerous to the colony. He introduces himself as Armando Fuentes, chief inspections officer. It's a normal enough procedure and he allows the heroes to accompany him as he walks about the ship. Read or paraphrase the following conversation with him:

"Si...that looks good...uh-huh," Armando mumbles as he examines the cargo hold, "Nothing infectious or dangerous on-board." He speaks into his comm-unit to give approval for your entrance into the community. "I apologize for the inconvenience," he explains, "We're still having some problems with our environmental controls inside the habitat dome. The scientists and terraformers are a little overworked and over-conscious about outside stuff coming in. The whole lot of them are a little crazy, if you ask me...probably been spending too much time walking around in the oxygen-rich atmosphere without their breather-masks on. Make sure you bring yours with you or you might wind up the same way..." He laughs and motions for you to board the transport for a ride into Mahatay.

Allow the heroes a chance to interact with Armando Fuentes, if they desire. An Interaction-interview skill check has the following results:

Critical Failure – Armando seems in-

sulted by something one of the heroes said. He doesn't explain his reasons, but grows distant and less gracious. All further attempts to interact with him (even by other heroes in the party) suffer a +2 step penalty.

Failure – Armando seems confused by the hero's words and simply shrugs his shoulders. "I'm sorry," he explains, "My Galactic Standard isn't very good...we speak Spanish here most of the time."

Ordinary – Armando tells the heroes one of the stories under the following categories, but only gives them the Ordinary information listed.

Good – Armando tells the heroes two of the stories under the following categories, one of them provides the Good and Ordinary information listed, and the other is only of Ordinary quality.

Amazing – Armando tells the heroes three of the stories under the following categories, one of them provides all of the information listed, one provides only the Good and Ordinary information, and the last story only provides Ordinary information.

Armando's Stories:

The Gamemaster is actually free to share all of this information with the players at his discretion. Armando is particularly talkative to newcomers and could rattle on for hours. If the GM prefers to hand out the information in pieces, roll a d4 to determine which story Armando gives them, keeping in mind that the information is cumulative. In other words, if the hero's Interaction-interview result indicates a particular story provides Good quality information, both the Ordinary and Good sections can be revealed, etc.). Only one attempt per hero may be made to persuade Armando to tell a story, though he might provide additional information for the same story if the other hero's skill check result is higher than the previous one.

1 – Solar Colony of Mahatay

Ordinary, "Mahatay is a Solar colony, founded back in 2499. There are a few colonies from other stellar nations on Leen too, but we were one of the first, and we're way ahead of the rest in terms of starting a serious terraforming and colonization effort. I think the Solar ambassador's planning to drop by here after he visits with President Kevik on Lison. Everyone has been trying extra hard to put the finishing touches

on the habitat dome so he can report back to the Union that we're ready for more colonists to join us. And, if we get our terraforming effort to show significant progress, we're hoping the Concord will recognize our claim on the world ahead of the United Lison State. That's going to be a diplomatic nightmare, and hopefully something the ambassador and President Kevik will be working out over the next few days."

Good, "It took us a long while to get the dome up around Mahatay. I think the city-planners wanted to just terraform the planet without resorting to a dome at first, but in the end, they realized the need to produce some artificial atmospheres so they could move around without the need for filter masks and envi-suits. Trouble is, the dome's not working like it was designed. Seems to be a leak somewhere. It's got the technicians and scientists really puzzled."

Amazing, "The current philosophy is that the natural caves in the hillsides probably have tunnels that run under the dome and then open up to the outside atmosphere. They started trying to blast some of the caves in order to seal them off, but so far they still haven't found them all. And now there's that whole business about the treasure buried down in the caves. I'm not so sure everyone wants to seal them off now...and that's just going to put us further behind schedule."

2 - Lost Treasure

Ordinary, "One of the terraformer crews came in the other day talking about a big pile of rhodium they found. Said it was down in the caves somewhere and they brought back a couple of forge-bars to prove it. Trouble is, when they went back to carry out the rest, they couldn't find their way back to it."

Good, "The scout for the crew was named Lakota Sharpe...a veteran explorer and not somebody I'd expect tall-tales out of really. She said the rhodium was already cut into forge-bars...like it belonged to somebody. She's been trying to find the cave for awhile now. It's got a lot of other people stirred up too. It's like a gold rush in town. Everybody's trying to explore the caves to see if they can hit the mother lode. A few of them have even managed to hurt themselves down there...not watching where they're going, stuff like that. Crazy if you ask me."

Amazing, "There's only one way a pile of pre-processed rhodium could get down there

anyway. Pirates. Corsairs. They've been plying the trade-lanes of Oberon for years now. If the treasure does exist, it probably belongs to one of them. Thomas Kind is the most likely candidate. He controls most of the pirate activity nowadays. And he's not someone I'd ever want to lock horns with. If the treasure belongs to him, I don't want any part of it."

3 - Solar Military Presence

Ordinary, "See that ship over there? It's the UCS Victores, the biggest Solar military vessel to ever visit Leen. It's only a Corvette class vessel. That's pretty small compared to the bigger warships in the navy, but it's still a whole lot bigger than most of those pirate cutters and scouts that threaten travel through this region."

Good, "The Victores is here to add a little more strength to Mahatay's defenses, especially with the imminent arrival of the Solar ambassador to the system. He's arriving on the Lighthouse, I think, but they sent a small escort force ahead of him. Good thing, too. I hear they've deployed a couple of Thunderbird fighters from the Gladius light cruiser over at Lison to assist with clearing the pirates away from here for awhile."

Amazing, "Actually, I think there's another reason the Victores is here, too. It's Void-Corp. They've got a number of ships over by Hux that makes living in their shadow uncomfortable at best. And they're also trying to start a colony here on Leen. It's no secret that all the stellar nations want to gain a serious foothold in the Oberon system. The Solar Union is just protecting its interests by stationing a corvette here for awhile."

4 - Xenology Research

Ordinary, "There's still a lot of mystery to this planet. Forming a colony here is important for the Solar Union because we've always had a major overpopulation problem to contend with. But we're also interested in the native lifeforms we've encountered so far. In fact, there's a Xenological Research Facility that's been operating here for the past two years now."

Good, "Most of the research has centered around the Kilishorn and they're a godsend if you ask me. We couldn't have put the dome up this fast if we hadn't persuaded them to help us with the heavy labor. Don't let their cute-and-cuddly exterior fool you, though. Those teddy bears may not be the smartest race in the world, but they're

plenty capable of following simple orders, especially if you bribe them with a little food. Encountering us is probably the best thing that ever happened to them. From what I understand, the Kilishorn don't survive all that well out in the wild. We're doing them a favor by giving them access to easy food and shelter."

Amazing, "The facility is also engaged in another bit of xeno-research that a friend of mine told me about. It's some kind of crystalline life-form...an animal made entirely of rock. It's named after Angelika Minshore, and they call them Minshore Crystals. Nobody's really figured those things out yet, and you can't hardly find one anyway. They put up this camouflage to hide themselves so they'll blend in with the surrounding rocks. We've never seen one here at Mahatay, but I understand it's a goal of the research team to find one for study."



Armando Fuentes

Level 3 Human Diplomat (Combat Spec)

STR 11 [+1] INT 9

DEX 9 WIL 11 [+1]

CON 11 PER 11

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 11+/10/5/2

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed 12/6/3 d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O

9mm Charge Pistol 12/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

Bodyguard Ballistic Vest d6-1 (LI), d6 (HI), d6-2 (En)

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [11] -climb [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -brawl [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [9] -pistol [12]; Vehicle Operation [9] -land [10]; Stamina [11] -endurance [12]; Knowledge [9] -computer operation [10], language: Standard [12], stellar nation: Solar Union [12], system: Oberon [10]; Se-

curity [9] -security devices [10]; Administration [11]; Awareness [11] -perception [12]; Investigate [11] -interrogate [12], search [12]; Resolve [11] -mental [12]; Street Smart [11]; Culture [11] -diplomacy [12], etiquette: Oberon [12]; Interaction [11] -charm [12].

Flaws: Temper, slight (mutants)

Description

Armando Fuentes is a middle-aged diplomat from the Solar Union that decided to join the colony of Mahatay in order to provide for its security needs while simultaneously giving himself one last chance to experience and enjoy the excitement of the great frontier. He is charming, friendly, and genuinely interested in the adventures and stories of most everyone he meets. He is also a dedicated public servant, taking his role as inspections officer and security guard quite seriously. Mostly, he concerns himself with just meeting new arrivals, checking out the holds of their ships to insure nothing dangerous or illegal is being brought into the colony, and also to get a feel for any potential troublemakers among their crews.

Periodically, Armando can be found making the rounds of the colony's territory both outside and inside the actual dome. One aspect of his personality could pose a hindrance to the heroes. As a Solar citizen and a former security administrator for a mutant colony designed to isolate such people from the rest of society, he harbors a prejudice against anyone with obvious mutations. Generally, he is able to suppress these feelings from influencing his job performance, but occasionally his innate suspicion and lack of patience with such individuals can cause him to appear gruff and short with them. In addition, if he catches any mutant engaging in an obvious disregard for the law, he will feel completely justified in treating them as harshly as his position will allow.

Scene Three: Solar Construction Site on Leen

In this scene, the heroes get to explore the frontier colony of Mahatay. By investigating the story about lost treasure, they will eventually hear about the caves on the eastern side of the dome and Lakota Sharpe's success in bringing back a rhodium forge-bar from the treasure site. While they are interacting with the locals, Ysala

sends some of her men into Mahatay to find out who is closing in on the treasure. She bribed one of the ground crew at the landing-site to tell her what ships arrived most recently at Mahatay and she also obtained a description of the heroes. These men shadow the heroes long enough to mark them and make arrangements for an ambush (in Scenes Four and Five, below). In the meantime, Ysala and the rest of her crew continue on their own, entering the Minshore caves through the back entrance and beginning a systematic search for the treasure.

Exploring Mahatay

Moving around Mahatay does require a filter-mask. Any vacuum mask or re-breather will suffice, and they can be purchased at Toro's Storage or even Merck's if the heroes desire. In addition, an environmental suit is still a good idea. The oxygen-rich atmosphere of Leen is mildly corrosive and reactive with human tissue. Prolonged exposure to bare skin of more than a day will result in d4 wounds (which cannot be blocked by

any armor that isn't sealed against the environment).

Upon entering the habitat dome, read or paraphrase the following description to the players:

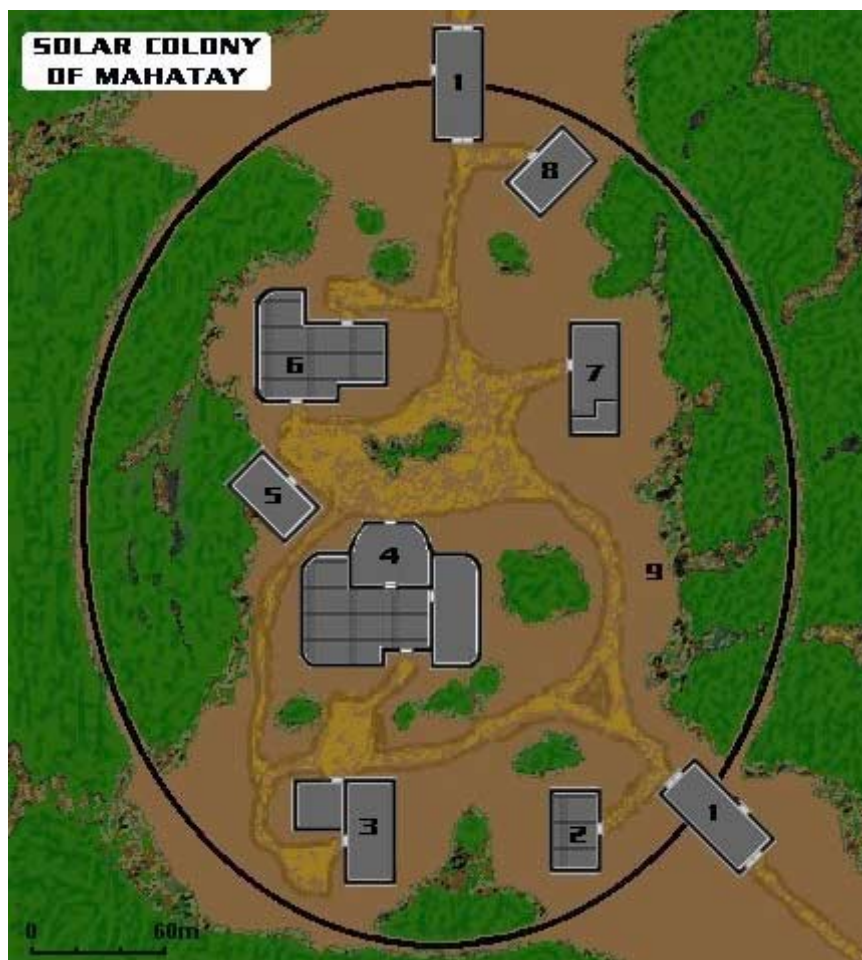
The double-sized airlocks to the Township of Mahatay rumble open and Armando revs the engine to his transport, rolling the big vehicle into the city. At first, the terrain seems little changed. The interior of the dome still supports much of the same forested hillside that you traveled through on your way from the landing site. But then, as he pilots further down the dirt road, a few buildings come into view. They have obviously been recently constructed, still shiny and clean, probably no older than three years.

The most eye-catching aspect of Mahatay is that the entire city seems to be constructed on the theme of an ancient Solar civilization. The buildings are made of white stone with red clay shingles, resembling the picturesque postcards of adobe dwellings seen in some Solar Union holovids. Festive decorations hang from every doorway. Streamers, banners, and holograms enhance the community's simple beauty, a pleasant alternative to the crowded, cramped confines of Tribon.

Armando finally brings the transport to a halt in the town-square. "Here we are, my friends," he says, helping you out of the vehicle, "Welcome to our home. I need to check these documents with the administration office. Enjoy your stay and...vaya con Dios."

Township of Mahatay:

Mahatay is actually a blending of Mexican, Spanish, and Native American Indian cultures, specifically those in the southwestern regions of the former United States. The buildings have a very nostalgic quality to them, utilizing what appears to be simple adobe or even pueblo architecture, but in reality only the façades are



made to look that way. The interiors of the buildings are just as complex and sophisticated as the most modern architecture of the 26th century.

The townspeople have also adopted the various styles of clothing and decoration of the ancient civilization they've chosen to honor. True to every Solar's upbringing, they all strive to remember the diversity of their rich heritage. Spanish is the dominant language here, though everyone speaks Galactic Standard as well. Still, the sounds of the romance language can be heard on every street corner.

Aside from the unusual culture, there is one other oddity to the Township of Mahatay. The colonists have befriended several local Kilishorn, a species of hardworking bears no larger than 1.3 meters in height. These animals don't exactly exhibit full sentience, but do possess a primitive intelligence that makes them useful for projects requiring heavy labor. In exchange for food and protection, they do all sorts of work around the settlement and are quite docile, friendly, and even playful.

The heroes are free to explore the city as they see fit. Several encounters are possible and each location has been detailed below:

1. Dome Airlocks – These airlocks serve as the entrances to the habitat dome that comprises Mahatay. They are large enough to drive vehicles through and also house emergency environmental suits and specialized decompressor masks for the terraformer and scientific research teams. In addition, the structures also accommodate the colony's security forces, two four-man teams divided between each facility. They respond to any civil disturbance and also serve as militia leaders in the event of a ground-attack by pirates or other troublemakers. (Use the Ordinary Law Enforcer supporting cast template on pg. 98 in the *Gamemaster Guide*.)
2. Toro's Storage Warehouse – Kavita Na'Toras is a savvy Fraal businesswoman that owns and operates a storage facility for cargoes that are delivered to Leen in advance of colony ships, merchants, and other businesses. She also acts as an official

postmaster for smaller parcels and has invested in a Lison drive-courier service, too. Many merchants have arranged to distribute their goods through her, shipping cargo to her storage facility and authorizing her to sell them on their behalf for a slight markup. All manner of equipment can be found for sale here, though she's careful not to advertise some of the more restricted weapons that she receives from her Austrin-Ontis contacts. The name of the warehouse is actually derived from her last name, and made to resemble the Spanish word for "bull". Those that have witnessed Kavita's ability with Telekinesis know the name is well deserved. Kavita also holds a position on the colony's city council and serves as an economic advisor to Mayor Delacruz.

3. Rio Bravo Entertainment Complex – This sprawling complex of shops, restaurants, and holovid theaters offers the best in entertainment that Mahatay has available. The colony lacks the resources and audience for the more sophisticated movies, cuisine, and businesses. But there is a particularly interesting restaurant named The Border Cantina that serves up a Solar style of cooking known as Tex-Mex. It's quite popular with the locals and is run by Carlos Cassidy, a humorous entertainer in his own right. Carlos is currently making plans to host an elaborate fiesta that he hopes to make into an annual attraction to boost tourism.
4. La Siesta Hotel, Residential Center & Mission Chapel – This large building is actually a series of underground residential halls, one of which has been sold off to a well-known chain of Solar hotels. It rents rooms for about 40 Concord dollars a night. The rest of the townspeople crowd themselves into the cramped facility and efforts are underway to construct a new wing in preparation for more colonists. The most interesting detail of the facility, however, is the elaborate chapel staffed by a trio of Catholic

priests. They are led by Father Gustavo Dominici who has taken it upon himself to bring the enlightenment of the simple life to those that have fallen victim to the greed of the rhodium trade. Currently, he spends most of his time trying to convince the local populace that the rumors of treasure in the eastern hills are false. He believes the whole story has been concocted to undermine the validity of his religious views at Mahatay.

5. Madras-Domingo Xenological Research Labs – These laboratories are engaged in the study and education of the Kilishorn to assist Solar technicians with the heavy labor of constructing and maintaining the Mahatay habitat dome. Lakota Sharpe can be found here engaged in some research of her own. She has become fascinated with the work of Angelika Minshore, trying to read up on the capabilities of Minshore crystals, as she has come to suspect the treasure cave she once led her terraform team into has been hidden by one of their infamous illusions. She's actually more interested in making a breakthrough contact with the Minshore crystals than she is in recovering the treasure. If the heroes decide to interact with Lakota, proceed to Scene Four below.
6. Terraformation Station – This facility is comprised of a very large smokestack that reaches up to the top of the dome and actually pierces the superstructure to spew heavy amounts of hydrogen into the atmosphere of Leen. This is done to produce rain that will reduce the amount of oxygen in the air. A second smokestack is under construction by a few Kilishorn, supervised by a team of Solar technicians that spare little time for conversation with the heroes.
7. Administration Offices – This is the seat of government for Mahatay. The current mayor is Enrico Delacruz, a distant relative of an important dignitary back in the Solar Union. He recognizes that Mahatay's survivability

hinges on several important factors: 1) the recognition of the Galactic Concord of their claim on the planet Leen, which is in serious contention with colonies from the Orlamu Theocracy, Insight, and the United Lison State; 2) the ability to safeguard against pirate attacks; 3) the ability to stabilize their habitat dome and create an artificial atmosphere that can foster tourism and future colonization efforts. Enrico concerns himself with these three problems on a daily basis. Currently, he is intrigued by the rumors of valuable treasure hidden somewhere in the eastern caves. He would love to obtain the treasure for the benefit of the colony. Of course, he's doubly interested in sealing off the caves so the dome's atmosphere can be stabilized. So far, he has allowed the exploration of the caves to continue but, unknown to the heroes, he's on the verge of giving the word to start blasting again.

8. Merck's Guides & ATV Rentals – Merck is a reckless explorer that loves taking excursions into the Leen outback. He runs a small business renting All-Terrain Vehicles to tourists and always offers himself as an "expert" guide. Any hero that employs the Street Smart skill with a -1 step bonus can learn that Merck is less than successful at his profession and accidentally lost his last paying customers for several days until they were rescued by Lakota Sharpe. Despite this, Merck continues to be successful in selling the equipment and vehicles necessary for extended trips into the Leen wilderness.
9. Caves – A number of caves mark the hills in this region. Some have been blasted to seal them off in an effort to make the atmosphere inside the habitat dome secure and breathable. The Minshore crystals inhabiting their interior have carefully hidden a few of them to keep out intruders. At the moment, these unsealed caverns and tunnels are responsible for the leaks that continue to allow the outside at-

mosphere to interfere with the operation of the dome. Currently, this site buzzes with activity as fortune-seeking colonists attempt to find the entrance that will lead to Lakota Sharpe's treasure site. So far, the colonists have had little luck. The Minshore crystals have hidden the real entrance, and misled the rest of the explorers with their illusions.

Scene Four: Please Do Not Feed the Bears

In this scene, the heroes get a chance to speak with Lakota Sharpe and learn more about the caves in which she found the treasure. Specifically, Lakota informs them about the difficulty her team had in relocating the cave entrance and her theory that it might have been carefully camouflaged with a holographic image of solid rock. While they talk with her, Ysala's goons set up a diversion to lure the heroes outside and then ambush them in an attempt to eliminate the threat they pose to Ysala reclaiming the treasure. They are Ysala's real target, but Lakota becomes one too after her men learn that she knows the location of the treasure site as well. The heroes have to fight off the attack and then escort Lakota to the caves so she can show them the correct entrance.

Speaking with Lakota

The heroes are most likely to encounter Lakota at the Xenological Research Labs, but regardless of when or where they meet her, she assumes they must have sought her out for information about the treasure. A number of colonists have already questioned her, including Mayor Delacruz himself. Her initial reaction to them is negative, and the heroes can improve it if they succeed at an Interaction-*charm* skill check. Any success makes her more apt to discuss the subject of the treasure. Read or paraphrase the following to the players, once they are successful in getting her to talk:

"Okay, okay," Lakota answers, "It's obvious you want to know about the treasure. Everyone does lately. Seems like I can't find a quiet moment to myself anymore without someone coming to interrupt me about what I found. Well, I can tell you that it's real. I know that for sure... and I guess that's what's important to you. The

team that I led into those caves can vouch for me, too. They all handled the rhodium. Pure forge bars. Like someone had just minted the stuff and left it there for us to find. I don't know who put it there. And I don't care."

"What does concern me," she continues, "is that something is trying to keep people out of those caves. I'm a professional explorer and a decent tracker. But when we went back with a crew to carry the treasure out of the caves, we couldn't even find the way in again. Some people thought we'd made it up...that we'd hallucinated the whole thing." Lakota reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a shiny bar of rhodium. "Well, is this an hallucination? I don't think so."

Anyone examining the bar of rhodium can make an Awareness-*perception* or Investigate-search skill check. Success discovers a tiny inscription on the surface of the metal: Rignunmor Star Consortium – 2370, R. Gallagher Station B17D1. If the heroes discovered the rhodium forge bar in Kerri Lansing's possession back on Lison, they should immediately discern that they both came from the Gallagher family vault. If any of the heroes should explain to Lakota the reason behind why they are searching for the treasure, or the story of who it originally belonged to, she nods with understanding and speaks again, as follows:

"I see," Lakota responds, "I knew the rhodium had to belong to someone. You'll have a hard time explaining that to the crazy locals that are combing the hills for it, though." She taps her chin, and she seems to give thought to an idea, finally coming to some sort of inner decision. "I tell you what," she suggests, "I can lead you back into the same cave where we found the treasure that first time. I couldn't do it before because... well, something down there hid the entrance from us last time. But I came back here to do some research, and I think I've figured out the mystery."

She taps a button on the console in front of her and a holographic image springs to life. It's a portrait of a middle-aged woman, a scientist of some kind judging by the Solar uniform she wears. "This is Angelika Minshore," Lakota explains, "She's one of the premier scientists on Leen researching the native life here. Originally, she was a botanist, but purely by accident she discovered a species of Series V life now named

in her honor. They're called *Minshore Crystals* and they aren't easy to find because they can project holograms just as efficient as anything that we've ever been able to produce electronically. Angelika has been trying to follow them for awhile now, so she can learn more about them in their natural habitat. There's been a question for some time now as to whether or not they might be sentient. You see, as a defense mechanism, they often project an image of solid rock over themselves like camouflage. Predators pass them by...including xenobiologists like Angelika *Minshore* that are trying to make contact with them."

"I have a theory," Lakota finishes, "The reason we couldn't find that cave again is because it's a natural habitat for the *Minshore Crystals*. They probably hid themselves from us while we were there the first time. That's why we were able to take some of the treasure back with us. But, when we came back, they must have taken steps to keep us from finding the entrance again. To me, that implies a significant level of intelligence and not simply a natural defense mechanism. And such a discovery is worth more than any amount of treasure that might be waiting down there. So, I'll make you a deal. I'll take you to the cave. You get the treasure. And I get to make first contact with the *Minshores*. What do you say?"

Before any of you can answer Lakota, a harsh klaxon begins to sound throughout the facility. Lakota looks up with some alarm and says, "There's been an atmosphere breach! Get your filter masks back on...quick!" She reaches into another drawer and quickly puts her own mask over her face. "This way," she says, "We have to evacuate the building so the technicians can find the leak..."

Conversation Cut Short

Using the emergency alarm units, Ysala's pirate friends have faked an atmosphere breach in the Xenological Research Facility, forcing Lakota to usher the heroes to their environmental suits and vacuum masks, and out onto the surface. At this point, under the leadership of a wily Sesheyan named Kar'pestro Nasu'ike, the pirates spring their attack. Kar'pestro enjoys using others to soften up his targets, so he has directed his men to slip a few hallucinatory drugs into the food of the otherwise docile *Kilishorn*. These small bear-like creatures have gone berserk with the

noise of the alarms and are attacking anyone outside the facility.

Kilishorn (6)

STR 9 INT 6 [-1]
DEX 9 WIL 9
CON 9 PER 8

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3

Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1

Attacks

Claws (x2) 12/6/3 d4+1s/d4+1w/d6+1w LI/O
Bite 10/5/2 d4+1w/d6+1w/d8+1w LI/O

Defenses

-1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [9] -throw [10]; Unarmed Attack [9] -brawl [12]; Stealth [9]; Movement [9]; Stamina [9]; Survival [9]; Awareness [9] -perception [10].

Description

These alien teddy bears stand only 1.3 meters tall, have soft brown fur, a pink nose, and pink tail. Normally they are quite peaceful, but with the introduction of hallucinatory drugs into their food, they have become savage beasts, lashing out with their formidable claws at anything that emerges from one of the buildings.



Lakota Sharpe

Level 3 Human Free Agent

STR 9 [+1] INT 11 [+1]
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 11 [+1]
CON 11 PER 9

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 14+/13/6/3

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1

Attacks

Unarmed 4/2/1 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O
9mm Charge Pistol 12/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

- + 1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
- + 1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
- + 1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
- + 1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [9] –*climb* [10]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] –*pistol* [12]; Vehicle Operation [11] –*land* [12]; Movement [11] –*swim* [12], *trailblazing* [12]; Stamina [11] –*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [11] –*computer operation* [12], *first aid* [12], *language: Standard* [14], *stellar nation: Solar Union* [14], *system: Oberon* [12]; Life Science [11] –*biology* [12], *botany* [12], *xenology* [12]; Navigation [11] –*land* [12]; System Operation [11] –*sensors* [12]; Awareness [11] –*perception* [12]; Resolve [11]; Culture [9] –*diplomacy* [12], *etiquette: Oberon* [10], *first encounter* [10]; Interaction [9] –*charm* [10].

Description

Lakota Sharpe is a veteran explorer from the Solar Union that decided to relocate to the Verge and assist some of her stellar nation's attempts to colonize other worlds. Currently, she has kept busy by guiding the terraformation teams and scientific surveys on the planet Leen. She has always wanted to be involved in a first-contact situation, often dreaming about it while studying the exploits of famous explorers. The idea that a sentient race of crystalline lifeforms might be nearby has inspired her to seek them out, hoping to go down in history as well.

Scene Five: Ambush in the Dark

Following the Kilishorn attack, Lakota is a bit shaken up. She is grateful to the heroes for seeing to her safety and once again offers to guide them to the cave entrance that leads to the treasure. She suggests that they go at night when the fortune-seeking colonists will be less active in the hills.

In the meantime, Ysala's thugs are frustrated that the attack didn't work. Kar'pestro is particularly angry and has his men shadow Lakota and the heroes as they head toward the caves. With his night-vision, he is able to work his way ahead of them and grabs some explosives to try and arrange another "accident". Once Lakota points out the cave, Kar'pestro's men attack, while the Sesheyan places the bomb. He hopes to seal the cave and kill the heroes in one blow.

As the heroes arrive at the cave entrance, read or paraphrase the following:

Gasping for air, your steps finally carry you over the last rise. Lakota points at the brush-covered slope ahead. "That's it," she says, "I remember that big Guyan-tree from the last trip. There should be a cave just fifteen meters to the right." Nothing but a solid wall of rock greets your eyes, but Lakota steps forward with determination and begins to feel around the surface. Suddenly her hand passes through the rock and into what can only be a holographic image.

"I knew it!" she exclaims, "Just like the information on the Minshore Crystals revealed. They must be nearby..."

The loud report of automatic gunfire interrupts the Solar explorer and she falls to the ground, clutching her shoulder! More shots come from the woods around you. In the darkness it's hard to tell where. What do you do?

In the trees, Kar'pestro Nasu'ike awaits with his submachinegun, having already fired it at Lakota Sharpe (and inflicting 3 wounds on her). He remains hidden, if at all possible, allowing his thugs to deal with the heroes on the ground. In the meantime, he watches for an opportunity to fly into the cave with his demolitions package. The heroes may attempt an Awareness-*perception* check at a +3 step penalty to spot Kar'pestro, but the Sesheyan already has them in his sights. Anyone looking up into the trees for him will immediately suffer a surprise attack. Kar'pestro then attempts to move and hide again, counting on the darkness and his ability to fly among the trees to limit the effectiveness of anyone actively searching for him. He will use his Stealth skill to impose a penalty on any hero's Awareness-*perception* check as well.

After entering the cave, Kar'pestro hastily sets the explosives and then flies back out to participate in the fight again. He switches to his hand axes when in close combat, preferring to use the silent weapons to their best advantage. If the fight begins to go very badly, the Sesheyan isn't above retreating. He will even leave his thugs behind, completely unconcerned about their fate. If the heroes actually use the cave as cover from the incoming fire, Kar'pestro will wait until they have moved deeper into the cave, then fly down to set his explosive and leave. Although he won't have had the pleasure of personally eliminating them for Ysala, he will consider the mission a success if he can trap them inside the caves.

Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, Kar'pestro isn't particularly adept with demolitions. He has accidentally set the explosives to detonate in ten minutes, probably too long of a time for the heroes to be caught in the blast. More likely, they will finish the firefight, enter the cave, and have ventured far enough down the tunnel that the explosion only manages to seal the entrance behind them. If Kar'pestro is shot down before getting a chance to enter the cave, the device falls to the ground and detonates outside the cave with enough force to still cause a rock slide that effectively blocks the entrance. This won't happen immediately, however, and serves as the Trigger Scene for the final Act of the story. Essentially, allow the heroes to finish the fight and enter the cave before cutting off their escape route.

Kar'pestro Nasu'ike

Level 3 Sesheyan Free Agent

STR 11 [+1] INT 9

DEX 11 [+2] WIL 11 [+1]

CON 10 PER 8

Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3

Move: sprint 22, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1

Attacks

Unarmed 12/6/3 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O

2 Hand axes 12/6/3 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w LI/O

9mm Charge SMG 12/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

CF short coat* d4-1 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d6-3 (En)

* tailored to accommodate Sesheyan wings

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [11] -*throw* [12]; Melee Weapons [11] -*blade* [12]; Acrobatics [11] -*defensive* [12], *dodge* [12], *flight* [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*SMG* [12]; Stealth [11] -*hide* [12], *shadow* [12]; Stamina [10] -*endurance* [11]; Demolitions [9] -*set explosives* [10]; Knowledge [9] -*language: Standard* [12], *system: Corrivale* [12]; Awareness [11] -*perception* [12]; Investigate [11] -*search* [12], *track* [12]; Interaction [8].

Perks: Ambidextrous

Description

Kar'pestro Nasu'ike is a recent and welcome addition to Ysala's crew. After making too many enemies among the powerful Aanghel Empire in the Corrivale system, he shipped out to Oberon and joined up with Thomas Kind's corsairs. Kar'pestro's heart is a bit more wicked and savage than the average pirate, however, and Ysala's plans to betray her organization in order to join the Coreeno's appealed to the Sesheyan. Ever since he has been Ysala's enforcer. He knows little about piloting starships, but frequently leads boarding actions instead and organizes ground-based activities involving stealth. He was the ideal choice for Ysala to send after the heroes.

Pirate Thugs (3)

Ordinary Brawler Supporting Cast

STR 11 [+1] INT 9

DEX 10 WIL 10

CON 11 PER 9

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed 13/6/3 d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O

Combat Knife 12/6/3 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w LI/O

9mm Charge Pistol 12/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

CF long coat d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d6-2 (En)

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills

Athletics [11]; Melee Weapons [11] -*blade* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -*brawl* [13]; Modern Ranged Weapons [10] -*pistol* [12]; Vehicle Operation [10]; Stamina [11] -*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [9] -*language: Standard* [12], *system: Oberon* [12]; Awareness [10]; Street Smart [10] -*criminal* [11], *knowledge* [11]; Interaction [9] -*intimidate* [10].

Description

These run-of-the-mill thugs go by the names of Uργο, Nat, and Steen. All three are hulking bruisers with little to no imagination. Kar'pestro keeps them in line most of the time, acting as the brains behind their brawn. In truth,

he despises them for their clumsiness and general ineptitude in carrying out his well-laid plans. In return, none of the thugs give the Sesheyan their unquestioned loyalty, but they're too stupid to figure out anything else to do besides follow his orders.

ACT FOUR

Scene One: Trigger

Either as a result of Kar'pestro's impromptu demolitions charge or through the effects of a rock slide, the entrance to the cave becomes sealed, leaving the heroes with only one direction they can go...deeper into the Minshore lair. After they enter the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

Slipping past the holographic image of rock, you enter an ancient tunnel. Switching on the lights mounted to your environmental suits, you take a look around. A low-lying fog clings to the floor, swirling in small eddies and making it clear that a draft flows between the interior of the Mahatay dome and some other surface exit that must exist on the other end. Apparently hydrogen from the dome's atmosphere has begun to mix with the high oxygen content of the outside air to produce moisture, making the walls and floor quite slippery.

Carefully making your way deeper into the caverns, your steps take you almost thirty meters when a loud roar is heard from behind! Quickly turning around and retracing your path, you come upon the sight of a great pile of rock. Dust drifts in the air, choking the tunnel, and causing your lights to glare harshly. Hadley makes his way forward and pushes his hands against the boulders. He curses loudly and then looks back over his shoulder at you. "A cave-in," he confirms, "it's totally sealed off." He steps back and refocuses his attention down the tunnel. "Looks like we've only got one way to go..."

If the cave-in was caused by Kar'pestro's explosives, allow the heroes an opportunity to make an Awareness-perception or Investigate-search skill check with a +1 step penalty. Any success discovers the remnants of the bomb. Also, the Sesheyan accidentally dropped his comm unit, but the collapse of the tunnel damaged the device. To make it usable again re-

quires a Technical Science-juryrig skill check at a +2 step penalty. If one of the heroes manages to get it operational, read or paraphrase the following:

"Inquiry: Kar'pestro?" a familiar voice asks across the comm-channel, "Assertion: Come in, Kar'pestro. Report your status, over. Have you dealt with them yet? Assessment: We are having difficulty locating the treasure. Suggest you return and help us widen the search. Over."

Obviously, the voice belongs to Ysala Rho. She is checking up on Kar'pestro's progress in eliminating the heroes. Also, since she and her crew have been unable to find the treasure where they left it, she wants the Sesheyan to return so he and his men can participate in the search. The heroes may respond to her in whatever way they wish, or simply maintain radio silence in an effort to eavesdrop on the pirates. The Gamemaster is encouraged to insert conversation as he sees fit.

Scene Two: Minshore Crystal Caverns

In this scene, the heroes discover that the Minshore Crystals were attracted to Ysala's locator beacon because of the calming effect its transmissions have upon their physiology, especially during child-birth. Previously, the Minshores used an alien artifact of Glassmaker origin for such purposes but it ceased to function shortly after one of the blasts the Solars used to seal the eastern caves. Their leader, a Greater Minshore Crystal named Kr'rek, discovered the beacon and despite knowing it came from the human colony, he decided to use it as a surrogate for the artifact. None of the crystals understand how the Glassmaker device worked and don't really comprehend Ysala's locator beacon either, but they have come to view both as divine providence.

The beacon was transported directly to the Minshore birthing caves and a shrine has been set up surrounding the area. The treasure has also been moved to another cavern, though the crystals continue to display the illusion to any visitors that arrive in the original chamber. Up until now, they had satisfied themselves with scaring away or misleading the human visitors that tried to seal off their caves and/or steal away the beacon with the treasure. They projected a solid wall of rock over the entrances to their caves so



the Solars wouldn't be able to find them. Now that Ysala has killed the locator beacon's transmission, Kr'rek has become distressed enough to welcome direct contact with the humans of Mahatay, especially if they can repair the device for him.

Overcoming several obstacles, some real and some imagined, the heroes will eventually encounter the Greater Minshore Crystals and either engage them in combat or first-contact negotiation, depending upon the choices they make. If they fix the locator beacon, or provide the crystals with a new device that emanates a strong sonic vibration, Kr'rek will agree to take them to the real treasure. Otherwise, the heroes will have to fight their way through, much as Ysala and her men are doing. Lastly, Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik's alien artifact can play an interesting role in establishing communication with the Greater Minshore Crystals.

Apparently their crystal-line nature shares a common bond with the Glassmaker artifact.

Minshore Cavern System:

1. **Trapped Cavern** – The floor of this cavern is covered with multi-colored sand, carefully swirled and arranged in unique patterns that represent the Greater Minshore Crystals' ability at sand-painting. Lakota never discovered these artistic designs in her first trip into the caves because the crystals took extra care to hide the sand and their presence from the colonists. It's impossible to traverse the cavern without stepping on the designs and potentially destroying the patterns. A successful *Awareness-perception* or *Investigate-track* skill check will detect that someone has already disturbed the sand. Two sets of footprints lead off toward the eastern tunnel. A trap awaits anyone approaching the northern exit, however. The sand-painting actually ends abruptly at a 3x3-meter wide pit full of sharpened stalagmites that await 10 meters below. A holographic image has been projected across the pit by a specially programmed crystal that makes it appear as though the sand-painting continues. Any hero that unknowingly strides into the area must succeed at a Dexterity feat check at a +2 step penalty to avoid falling into the trap. Victims of the pit suffer falling damage for a 10-meter drop, and are also impaled by d4-1 stalagmite spikes, each of which inflicts d4 wounds.
2. **Rat's Nest** – This cavern is home to an indigenous species of badger-rats. These vile animals are nearly a meter long and use their sharp teeth and claws to burrow their way through the ground. The entire western half of the

wall is full of small holes that lead to their nest. Inside, they have stored a variety of metallic ores upon which they feed, including a couple of forge bars of rhodium that they managed to pilfer from the treasure pile in cavern 10, described below. In fact, a single forge bar is lying just within sight of one of the openings. The tunnels are too small to crawl into, except possibly for a T'sa. Any hero reaching into the tunnel to retrieve the forge bar will disturb the nest of badger-rats. Ten of the creatures will burst onto the scene not only to defend their lair, but also to feed upon the metal alloys of the heroes' weapons and equipment.

3. Abandoned Exploration Equipment – This cavern contains a couple of reconnaissance drones outfitted with ore sampling and other geological sensing equipment. They were used by Lakota Sharpe's original survey team and abandoned in the excitement to return with news about the treasure that they discovered. The remote-control deck used to direct the drones is nowhere to be found. One of the scientists took it with him. A clever hero might be able to use a combination of the Technical Science-*invention* and -*juryrig* skills to create a new remote control deck from the spare parts of one of the drones and their own equipment. The device would still function with a +2 step penalty on all subsequent System Operation-*sensors* and -*communication* skill checks. As an alternative, the heroes could commandeer the geological sensory equipment instead and take it with them. With Lakota's knowledge of the geological makeup of a Minshore's physiology, they should be able to attune the device to help them detect the creatures, even if they have cloaked themselves with an illusion. A System Operation-*sensors* skill check with the device will have the following results: Critical Failure, the device is broken and will require a Technical Science-*repair* complex

skill check of Ordinary Complexity (3 successes / 3 minutes between each attempt) to make it function again; Failure, the device causes the hero to automatically fail to discern a Minshore crystal from its surroundings; Ordinary, the device grants a -1 step bonus to Investigate-*search* checks to locate a Minshore crystal; Good, the device grants a -2 step bonus; Amazing, a -3 step bonus.

4. Crystal Shards – A large pile of crystal litters the ground in this cavern. The bodies of two dead treasure hunters lie nearby. This cave was the scene of a failed first contact situation between Kr'rek and a couple of fortune-seeking colonists. Distressed by the loss of the beacon's transmission, he allowed them to find their way into the cavern system. His attempt to strike up negotiations failed miserably, however. The frightened colonists opened fire and killed one of the Minshore crystals, forcing Kr'rek to fight back. Searching their bodies will reveal identification that shows them to be citizens of Mahatay. One of the colonists also carries a 9mm charge submachinegun with three full clips of ammunition remaining. The clip inside the gun is completely empty and shell casings are scattered among the shards of crystal on the ground. Noticeably absent from the bodies are any kind of puncture wounds. A successful Medical Science-*forensics* skill check can determine a sonic weapon attacked the men, shattering their eardrums and causing massive internal injuries.
5. Rocky Staircase – This is the cavern where Lakota Sharpe and her science team first discovered the treasure. Since that time, the Minshore crystals have removed the items to cavern 10, described below. In its place, they have left only a mirage. Hiding upon the ledge on the north side of the cavern are two Greater Minshore warriors, placed there to watch over the hologram and see if any humans come back for the treas-

ure. Kr'rek wishes to meet with anyone that does, so he can ask for their assistance in repairing the locator beacon. When the heroes arrive, one of the warriors leaves to summon Kr'rek from cavern 6, while the other keeps watch. Read or paraphrase the following when Kr'rek makes his entrance:

As you move around the cavern examining what appears to be a holographic image of the stolen treasure from Gallagher's vault, a sound draws your attention to the ledge along the northern wall. The air shimmers, and a large creature made of crystal stands there looking down at you. Several tendrils wave from its upper body, gleaming with a silvery brightness in the glare of your lights. The creature shuffles forward, its feet making the sound of crunching rock-on-crystal as they move. Silently, it comes to the edge of the overhang and points its tendrils in your direction.

Suddenly, the image of the treasure disappears. In its place is a new scene. Several creatures, similar to the one on the ledge, appear to be resting in a series of small caves as if they are waiting for something. In the middle of the passageway that connects the caves together is a metal cylinder. The image moves as if you are approaching the device. As it comes closer, you can tell that it's a locator beacon of some kind... possibly the one you followed here to Leen. The display lights on the cylinder suddenly wink out with a note of sadness.

The image shifts once again and this time you see yourselves superimposed upon the scene, perfect replicas of yourselves interacting with the hologram. Each of you steps forward and examines the beacon, touching it, manipulating it, and finally repairing it so that the lights return and it begins functioning again. The image fades out and the creature seems to

be waiting expectantly upon the ledge.

At this point, the heroes may be able to deduce that Kr'rek wants them to fix the locator beacon. A successful Culture-*first encounter* skill check can help to establish a level of understanding with him. Also, a Knowledge-*deduce* check might be called for if the players are unable to decipher the scenes on their own. The Gamemaster is free to invent more holographic images between the two parties as they attempt to communicate. Should the heroes decide to shoot first and ask questions later, Kr'rek and his two Greater Minshore warriors will defend themselves as best as they can.

If the heroes happen to possess Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik's Shard of Illumination or even a telepathic mind-walker they can establish a much clearer level of understanding with Kr'rek. This will certainly allow them to participate more fully in a round of negotiations. Read or paraphrase the following if they are able to establish communication through a means other than silent images:

A burst of thought in the form of a reed-like voice echoes in your mind. "Yet again the soft-bodies come before us. First without invitation, and we hid ourselves from their eyes. They left us gifts, including the live-metal that produces restful holy music. A second time they came to us, and again we hid from them, afraid they would take back those gifts...but they left instead with only some of the lifeless metal. We were content and our mothers bore us new children, elevated to the same state of awareness that the Elders share."

The creature gestures with its tendrils, saying, "Four suns later the music stopped. Our mothers were greatly disturbed. The metal no longer sang. And our children were no longer born aware. The music

must begin anew! Help us, soft-bodies. Breathe life into the metal once again so it can call to our children. You may take all the lifeless metal that you need, if you will do this for us. You have my word as Elder Kr'rek..."

If the heroes continue to speak with Kr'rek, they can ask him questions about his previous encounters with the "soft-bodies". He can even show them images of Ysala and her crewmen when they first hid the treasure in the Minshore caves. Following that, he can show them Lakota Sharpe's science team and how they reacted to the treasure. Lastly, Kr'rek will hold off on showing them the unfortunate encounter with the fortune-seeking colonists that he was forced to kill in cavern 4, above. He would prefer to forget that incident, though if pressed on the issue, he will admit to the accidental conflict, offering his apologies to the mothers of the "soft-bodies". If the heroes agree to assist Kr'rek in breathing life back into the live-metal, he and his warriors will escort them up the slope. Their journey ends at cavern 6, below.

6. Minshore Commons/Deactivated Beacon – A single Greater Minshore warrior stands guard in this chamber, watching over the lifeless shell of the locator beacon. If the heroes somehow overcame the warriors in cavern 5 before they summoned Kr'rek, he will also be here preparing a defense against them. Otherwise, Kr'rek will have led the heroes to this place with the intention of having them repair the device. The beacon can be made operational again with a successful Technical Science-*juryrig* skill check to override Ysala's remote command to shut it down. This action will alert Ysala and her men that

someone has switched the device on again, effectively leading them to the Minshore birthing caves. If the heroes offer a different device instead of the beacon (any piece of sophisticated communications gear will do, including the reconnaissance drone from cavern 3, above), they can provide for Kr'rek's needs without alerting Ysala. This decision will determine how Scene Three plays out.

7. Sunlit Birthing Caves – Six lesser Minshore crystals reside here, basking in the glow of sunlight which streams down from several large openings in the ceiling of the cavern. The crystals use the sun's energy to feed themselves while they give birth to their children. This process is more akin to asexual budding than childbirth in human terms. A small offshoot will separate itself from the "mother" and spend many weeks growing in the safety of the caves before venturing to the surface. The term "mother" is used loosely in the Minshore language, and isn't really indicative of a crystal's gender. In essence it refers to any crystal that is close to the time of birthing. The crystals actually switch between genders as needed, some consciously choosing to become "mothers" for a time before switching back to the role of a "father."
8. Minshore Guardian – One Greater Minshore warrior stands here as a sentry against intrusion into the birthing caves from the north.
9. Escarpment/Empty Treasure Cave – This large cavern is the spot where Ysala and her men originally left the treasure before the Minshore crystals moved it. Currently, five pirate thugs are still searching the area for clues as to who might have stolen it from them. They are also prepar-

ing a makeshift set of ropes and climbing gear to reach the escarpment along the west wall, intending to follow it deeper into the cavern system. Any combat that breaks out in this room is sure to attract the attention of their friends in cavern 12, below...and in that event, the Gamemaster should proceed to Scene Three, below.

10. Treasure Trove – This cavern holds the former contents of the Gallagher family vault. One Greater Minshore warrior stands guard, projecting an illusion of solid rock over the pile that lies in a recessed crevasse. The pile includes 25 cubic meters of premium grade rhodium forge-bars (valued at over six million Concord dollars), thirty-seven different antique pieces of art ranging from jewelry to holo-portraits (valued at just under three million Concord dollars), and a collection of X3D storage crystals containing files on a number of high-ranking Rignunmor families (priceless).
11. Trapped Cavern – This cavern is trapped with another pit like the one detailed in cavern 1, above... though no sand-paintings have been arranged upon the floor. The entrances to this cavern have both been cloaked with an illusion of solid rock, generated by the programmed crystalline devices of the Minshores.
12. Pirate Camp – This chamber has become the center of operations for Ysala and her crew. From here the Mechalus corsair has taken out her frustrations upon those that have failed to locate the treasure. So far, her men have been deluded by the illusions of the Minshore crystals, unable to locate any tunnels that lead deeper into the cavern system. If the heroes choose to engage Ysala, proceed to Scene

Three, below. Otherwise, they can simply observe her and the rest of her crew, including five corsairs and her ship pilot, T'sango.

Badger-Rats (10)

STR 7 INT 3 [-2]
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 9
CON 8 PER 3

Durability: 8/8/4/4 Action Check: 11+/10/5/2
Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Claws (x2) 10/5/2 d4+1s/d4+1w/d6+1w LI/O
Bite* 12/6/3 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w LI/O

* A successful bite attack not only inflicts the indicated damage to the victim, but also excretes an oxidizing venom that can reduce the effectiveness of metallic armors by 1 point after five consecutive rounds of exposure (multiple bites do not have a cumulative effect, however). It also has an adverse reaction upon exposed skin, forcing the victim to succeed at a *Resolve-physical* skill check to avoid another d4 points of stun damage.

Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
-2 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Unarmed Attack [7] –*brawl* [10]; Stealth [11] –*hide* [12]; Movement [8]; Stamina [8] –*endurance* [10]; Survival [8]; Awareness [9] –*perception* [12]; Investigate [9] –*track* [10].

Description

Badger-rats are the bane of those carrying metal armor, weapons, or equipment. These animals are the size of small dogs and can scent metal ores and alloys at a range of 40 meters. This sends them into a feeding frenzy that has proven the demise of many a hapless explorer in the Leen wilderness. Their sharp claws and teeth are capable of rending metal and stone, and their bite carries a venomous acid that oxidizes objects upon contact.

Badger-rats are natural diggers and are usually found in underground nests that have been hollowed out by following a particularly rich vein of metal ore. More recently, they have be-

come attracted to new colonies being built on the surface of Leen, feeding upon whatever metals they can scavenge from the construction sites. Badger-rats aren't particularly bright, however, often falling victim to baited traps set by the colonists.

Minshore Crystals (6)

STR 2 [-2] INT 6 [-1]
DEX 9 WIL 9
CON 9 PER 6

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
13+/12/6/3
Move: walk 0.1 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Sonic Wave 12/6/3 d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w En/O

Defenses

-2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
-1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Can produce illusion/camouflage by making a WIL feat check to create a hologram. Doing so produces 1 point of fatigue damage, and affects an area around the crystal with a radius equal to its Will score in meters.

Skills

Awareness [9] -perception [14].

Description

These Minshore Crystals are the present variety detailed in the *Alien Compendium*. They are formed from colonies of crystals that average 5 meters in diameter, and half that in height. Their color varies from a deep amethyst to a lighter pink, and all the way to the transparent look of glass where their edges touch the ground.

The crystals have gathered in the caverns to give birth to their children under the watchful eyes and protection of the Greater Minshore Crystals. Individually, each of these lesser crystals is a solitary creature that simply feels comfortable in the safe environment provided by the elders. The arrangement borders on the relationship between a shepherd and his herd, though the Minshore are much more intelligent than a mere animal.

Greater Minshore Crystal Warriors (5)

STR 7 INT 9
DEX 9 WIL 9
CON 9 PER 7

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 3, run 2, walk 1 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Sonic Wave 12/6/3 d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w En/O
Sling +1 12/6/3 As load, see below
Sling bullet d4s/d4+2s/d4w LI/O
Mini-grenade, frag d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w HI/O
Mini-grenade, incend. d4w/d4+2w/d4+3w En/O

Defenses

Can produce illusion/camouflage by making a WIL feat check to create a hologram. Doing so causes 1 point of fatigue damage, and affects an area around the crystal with a radius equal to its Will score in meters.

Skills

Primitive Ranged Weapons [9] -sling [12]; Stamina [9] -endurance [10]; Knowledge [9] -geology [12]; Navigation [9] -surface [12]; Awareness [9] -perception [14]; Creativity [9]; Interaction [7].

Description

The Greater Minshore Crystal shares a lot of common traits with its lesser developed cousin, but tends to be taller and slimmer, standing nearly 3 meters tall but only 1.5 meters in diameter. Color variation ranges from a pale luminescent green at the base of the crystalline body, then slowly moves through a shade of blue in the trunk before ending at a deep purple where the head would normally be located.

In addition, Greater Minshore Crystals have a tassel-like structure very similar to the Crystallis (described on pg. 63 of the *Alien Compendium*) from the Lucullus system. These thin, silvered antennae are flexible enough to serve as a set of arms, which have allowed the Greater Minshore Crystal to interact more fully with the world around it. These limbs have also allowed the creature to develop tools and weapons. Each Greater Minshore warrior carries a sling and a pouch full of small incendiary and explosive rocks. They gather the necessary ingredients for these mini-grenades from underground caves

and manufacture them through a special chemical process. Each warrior will have 2d4 of the weapons available at any given time.

Currently these Greater Minshore warriors have been recruited by Kr'rek to help him safeguard the birthing caves of the lesser crystals in an effort to protect them from the humans of Mahatay. Normally very individualistic, the Greater Minshore crystals have only come together because of the outside threat they perceive from humanity. They defer to Kr'rek, however, recognizing his wisdom in handling the defense of the cavern system as well as any possible interaction with Mahatay.

Kr'rek

Level 3 Greater Minshore Crystal Diplomat (Combat Spec)

STR 5 [-1] INT 9
DEX 9 WIL 9
CON 9 PER 11

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 11+ /10/5/2

Move: sprint 3, run 2, walk 1 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1

Attacks

Sonic Wave 12/6/3 d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w En/O

Sling +1 12/6/3 As load, see below

Sling bullet d4s/d4+2s/d4w LI/O

Mini-grenade, frag. d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w
HI/O

Mini-grenade, incend. d4w/d4+2w/d4+3w
En/O

Defenses

-1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Can produce illusion/camouflage by making a WIL feat check to create a hologram. Doing so causes 1 point of fatigue damage, and affects an area around the crystal with a radius equal to its Will score in meters.

Skills

Primitive Ranged Weapons [9] -*sling* [12]; Stamina [9] -*endurance* [10]; Knowledge [9] -*deduce* [11], -*geology* [12]; Navigation [9] -*surface* [12]; Awareness [9] -*perception* [14]; Creativity [9] -*painting* [10], -*sculpting* [12]; Interaction [11] -*bargain* [12]; Leadership [11] -*command* [12], -*inspire* [12].

Description

Kr'rek is an elder Greater Minshore Crystal and one of only a handful of the original mem-

bers of his race to gain full sentience over five hundred years ago. All of the Minshore crystals tend to live the solitary life of a wanderer, and they have only recently come to the realization that their race is evolving. They developed an interesting language of flashing lights and sounds in an attempt to contact one another at a distance, never really feeling the need to congregate together. All that has changed with the recent arrival of human settlers to their world.

Kr'rek keeps in touch with his brothers and sisters now by climbing a high mountain and flashing signals in the darkness. Mostly he has concerned himself with protecting the lesser crystals that haven't reached full sentience yet. He and the other "guardians" believe that the lesser crystals might not realize the opportunity to gain sentience if humanity interrupts the process. So they have begun using their holographic powers to mask their presence whenever possible, particularly in the birthing caves. This serves another purpose as well. Recently, some of the newborn crystals have evidenced immediate signs of sentience. The guardians are seeking to better understand the process so they can help guide others to this new level of awareness. Kr'rek believes it has something to do with providing "holy music," or sonic vibrations, during the birthing process.

Scene Three: Face to Face

In this scene, the heroes finally come face to face with Ysala and her men. There are a number of different ways this could play out. One, the heroes might have repaired the locator beacon thereby allowing the pirates to find them, in which case the encounter might occur within the Minshore birthing caves (i.e., area 7 on the map). In that situation, Kr'rek and his warriors will assist them in fighting off the pirates. Two, the heroes could have chosen a different solution that enabled them to find the pirate camp first and decided to engage Ysala, in which case the scene occurs in one of the two caverns where she has stationed her men (i.e., areas 9 or 12). Lastly, even if the heroes managed to avoid the pirates altogether, Ysala will become frustrated enough that she will intentionally reactivate the locator beacon in order to find her way deeper into the Minshore lair. Unless the heroes took steps to prevent her from doing this, she might still find her way to them. Even if the heroes do return from the caves without facing Ysala, she will

spare no effort in finding them because the treasure means so much to her. This means the final confrontation might actually occur within the Mahatay dome instead. Regardless, read or paraphrase the following scene to the players when they encounter the pirates and Ysala becomes aware of their presence:

"Observation: So! We meet at last," the female Mechalus says, "Assertion: Know that this is the last time you will cross me. Ysala Rho didn't work her way into the corsairs to give up a mother lode of rhodium to the likes of you! We'll be taking that with us on the Mindaran Ghost."

If the heroes have Rench the gearwerk with them, include this as well:

Ysala's eyes narrow as she takes notice of the tiny gearwerk accompanying you. "Exclamation: Rench!" she shouts. The gearwerk seems to perk up at the mention of its name. "Statement: I see you managed to find my little lost pet, so I assume you've been to the vault on Bauble. Sarcasm: Well thank you for returning Rench to my care. And we'll be taking the treasure with us as well...Rench? Command: Come here..."

If the heroes were unsuccessful in charming Rench so that the gearwerk's loyalty no longer lies with Ysala, the creature immediately moves to rejoin its master. Ysala and her men commence the attack regardless. She has five pirate thugs, five corsairs, and her lieutenant T'sango Chisak with her. They attempt to capture at least one of the heroes alive so they can interrogate them regarding the location of the treasure (unless they obviously have it with them). In combat Ysala prefers to use her submachine gun over the integrated laser pistol in her left arm. She reserves her cybernetic weapon as a last-minute surprise, especially if she is subdued somehow by the heroes.

Pirate Thugs (5)

Ordinary Brawler Supporting Cast

STR 11 [+1] INT 9
DEX 10 WIL 10
CON 11 PER 9
Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed 13/6/3 d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O
Combat Knife 12/6/3 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w LI/O
9mm Charge Pistol 12/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

CF long coat d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d6-2 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills

Athletics [11]; Melee Weapons [11] -blade [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -brawl [13]; Modern Ranged Weapons [10] -pistol [12]; Vehicle Operation [10]; Stamina [11] -endurance [12]; Knowledge [9] -language: Standard [12], system: Oberon [12]; Awareness [10]; Street Smart [10] -criminal [11], knowledge [11]; Interaction [9] -intimidate [10].

Description

These thugs are just low-level muscle for Ysala's operations. None of them are particularly adept as spacehands, but she has put them to use for the moment in securing the caverns and searching for clues as to the whereabouts of the treasure.

Corsairs (5)

Level 1 Human Free Agent

STR 11 [+2] INT 9
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 10
CON 10 PER 9
Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 13+ /12/6/3
Move: sprint 22, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed 13/6/3 d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O
Combat Knife 12/6/3 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w LI/O
9mm Charge Pistol 12/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

CF short coat d4-1 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d6-3 (En)
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Skills

Athletics [11] -throw [12]; Melee Weapons [11] -blade [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -brawl [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -pistol [12]; Vehi-

cle Operation [11] -*space* [12]; Stamina [11] -*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [9] -*language: Standard* [12], *system: Oberon* [12]; System Operation [9]; Awareness [10] -*perception* [11]; Street Smart [10] -*criminal* [11]; Interaction [9] -*intimidate* [10].

Description

These pirates are a bit tougher than Ysala's run-of-the-mill thugs and they usually assist in manning the stations aboard her ship. Currently, they have been reassigned to search for the treasure.

T'sango Chisak

Level 3 T'sa Tech-Op

STR 7 INT 12 [+1]

DEX 14 [+2] WIL 9

CON 9 PER 9

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 15+/14/7/3 -d4

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed 13/6/3 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O

9mm charge pistol 15/7/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

Natural armor d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En)

+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [7] -*climb* [8]; Acrobatics [14] -*defensive* [15], *dodge* [15], *zero-g* [15]; Manipulation [14] -*lockpick* [15]; Modern Ranged Weapons [14] -*pistol* [15]; Vehicle Operation [14] -*space* [16]; Stamina [9] -*endurance* [10]; Knowledge [12] -*computer* [13], *language: Standard* [15], *system: Oberon* [15]; Navigation [12] -*drivespace* [13], *system* [13]; System Operation [12] -*engineering* [13]; Technical Science [12] -*juryrig* [14], *repair* [14]; Awareness [9] -*perception* [10]; Street Smart [9] -*criminal elements* [10]; Interaction [9].

Description

T'sango has chosen an unusual profession for one of his species. T'sa don't typically take to starship piloting, but T'sango relishes it with a passion. He's high-strung and twitchy, always wanting to be on the go, especially if he can

do it behind the controls of Ysala's ship. He particularly enjoys pitting his combat skills against other pilots so he can bring honor to his egg-clutch. After all, it isn't everyday that someone gets beaten by a T'sa pilot.

Ysala trusts T'sango completely. She understands what drives the little T'sa, and so she always knows how to motivate him. Most of the time she depends upon him as her lieutenant, especially when it concerns matters on board the ship. She has reluctantly asked him to help in the search for the treasure, though admittedly the T'sa hasn't brought them any luck.



Ysala Rho

Level 5 Mechalus Free Agent

STR 9 [+1] INT 12 [+1]

DEX 12 [+1] WIL 9

CON 10 PER 8

Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 15+/14/7/3

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 2

Attacks

Unarmed 13/6/3 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O

Laser Pistol (Subdermal) 13/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m En/O

9mm Bulldog SMG 15/7/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m HI/O

Defenses

CF Softsuit d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d6-1 (En)

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [9] -*throw* [10]; Acrobatics [12] -*defensive* [13], *dodge* [13]; Modern Ranged Weapons [12] -*pistol* [13], *SMG* [15]; Vehicle Operation [12] -*space* [13]; Stamina [10] -*endurance* [11]; Computer Science [12] -*hacking* [14], *programming* [13]; Knowledge [12] -*language: Aleerin* [13], *language: Standard* [15], *system: Oberon* [15]; Navigation [12] -*drivespace* [13]; Security [12] -*security devices* [13]; System Operation [12]; Awareness [9] -*perception* [10];

Resolve [9]; Street Smart [9] –*criminal elements* [10], *grid savvy* [10]; Deception [8] –*bluff* [10]; Interaction [8].

Cybertech: Nanocomputer (Good), 2 External neural dataslots (Good), Reflex (Good), Subdermal weapon mount (Ordinary) – Laser Pistol

Description

Ysala Rho is a renegade Mechalus that abandoned the reserved and passive nature of her people a long time ago. She was born in the Verge and has lived a hard life that convinced her only the strong survive...and that the strong take what they want. This philosophy is what led her to become a corsair, and she styles herself as a cut-above the competition. Blessed with a keen mind and a knack for organizing effective ambushes, she has been quite successful to date. But her ambition has undone her dreams. She climbed too far and too fast, finally encountering someone stronger than her...namely, Thomas Kind. Her attempt to betray him backfired in a big way and now she's engaging in damage control by trying to retrieve the treasure she stole from Gallagher's vault. With the money, she intends to leave the system and start over, rebuilding her strength until she can face him again.

Ysala's physical appearance is typical for a Mechalus. Synthetic filaments of wires and cables comprise most of her hair. Implanted cybernetic devices are apparent over most of her body as well, especially along her left arm (which is where her integrated laser pistol is hidden). Also, a particularly distinctive pattern of circuitry circles her left eye, giving the impression of a pirate's eye-patch. She stands just over 6' 1" tall, has a bluish-tint to her skin, and weighs nearly 175 lbs.

Scene Four: Spiders in the Parlor (Optional)

Following their successful return to Mahatay and after overcoming Ysala's pirates, the heroes gain celebrity status within the colony. Mayor Delacruz himself comes to congratulate them. He also makes arrangements for Mahatay's best doctor to see to their wounds (use the template for a Good Doctor from the supporting cast member templates on pg. 97 of the Game-master's Guide). This is the calm before the final storm, however. Even though the heroes have vanquished Ysala and reclaimed the treasure for

Joseph, they still have to return with it to Lison.

Waiting for them on-board their ship is a strike team of four Klick warriors that have been assigned to eliminate the heroes before they can lead anyone back to Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik's research base. The Gamemaster should place the Klicks all throughout the ship. They prefer to lie in wait and attack the heroes individually rather than as a group. The attack could even come as they are lifting off. Allow each hero an opportunity to anticipate the attack with an *Awareness-intuition* skill check. The roll can be made with a -1 step bonus as the bioweakness field of the Klicks tends to give them away before they can fully close on their intended targets. Read or paraphrase the following to the players when the attack comes:

A general feeling of uneasiness creeps along your spine as you move about the ship. The treasure has been secured in the cargo hold. The pirates have been defeated. And all that remains is to return to Lison and give Joseph Gallagher the good news. But something still bothers you.

Suddenly your stomach feels nauseous and a wave of dizziness causes you to stagger slightly. And then you hear a familiar sound...a clicking noise. The same sound that the Klicks made back on Bauble. You turn around and your worst fears are realized. One of the monstrosities stands before you, its claws snapping in the empty air as it approaches. You fumble for your weapon and hope that you can warn the others in time...

The Klicks attack with the full intention of slaying every hero in the party. They have been given this mission to effectively assassinate them. Nothing short of accomplishing that goal will suffice and they are prepared to lay down their lives in order to safeguard the secret base on Bauble. If the heroes are still heavily wounded from their encounter with Ysala and her men, the Gamemaster should feel free to include Armando Fuentes the inspections officer in the encounter as well. He could have easily spotted some suspicious activity near the heroes' ship and come to investigate on his own. Of course, if he is included in the encounter, the attack should certainly occur before the heroes' ship lifts off from Mahatay. If the heroes require even more help to fight off the Klicks, consider adding more security

guards under Armando's command, or skip the scene entirely.

Klick Warriors (4)

STR 11 [+1] INT 9
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 8
CON 10 PER 6

Durability: 20/10/5/5 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks

Pincers (x2) 14/7/3 d6w/d6+2w/d8+2w LI/O
Blacklaser SMG 12/6/3 d6+1w/d6+3w/d4+1m
En/O

Bioweakness field: Opponents within 10 meters must make Stamina-*endurance* checks at the beginning of every round. Failure indicates that the opponent suffers d4-1 points of stun damage. For every additional Klick in the area, affected heroes must make their skill checks with a +1 penalty, up to a maximum of +6.

Defenses

Armor d6+1 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d6+2 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Skills

Athletics [11] -*climb* [16], *jump* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11] -*brawl* [14]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11] -*SMG* [12]; Stealth [11] -*hide* [14], *sneak* [13]; Stamina [10] -*endurance* [14]; Movement [10]; Awareness [8] -*perception* [11].

Scene Five: Battle in Space (Optional)

On the way home and just before reaching Lison, the heroes are intercepted by Ysala's ship, the *Mindaran Ghost*. The vessel is either under the command of Ysala, Kar'pestro, or T'sango, depending on who survived the earlier combat scenes with the heroes. During the conflict, another pirate ship joins the fray. It's named the *Razor* and holds allegiance to Thomas Kind's organization. The *Razor's* captain recognizes the *Mindaran Ghost* and moves to attack the vessel in order to finish off Ysala once and for all. The heroes are free to participate in the battle, and if they do so, they'll earn the thanks of Thomas Kind and his men. Read or paraphrase the following scene to the players:

For the past half-hour the tiny gleam of

Lison has grown progressively larger while Leen has faded in the distance. Hadley carefully avoided radioing ahead to inform Joseph of your success in reclaiming the treasure for fear that someone might intercept the transmission. About fifteen minutes ago, you all held your breath as a VoidCorp cutter passed you by within sensor range. A few other ships have also crossed your path, all of them rhodium traders on their way out of the system.

Just as you're starting to relax within the relative safety of Lison-controlled space, your sensor station gives another beep. The passive sensors have locked onto another ship that's approaching from behind you at a high rate of speed. Your comm-station crackles to life and a garbled voice demands that you stand down and prepare to be boarded.

At this point allow any of the heroes to make a System Operations-*sensors* skill check to learn more information about the ship behind them. The results are: Critical Failure, the heroes temporarily lose track of the incoming ship, allowing it to close to within firing range, and giving the pirates one free surprise attack; Failure, no additional information is forthcoming; Ordinary, the heroes can tell that the ship is closing quickly enough that they won't be able to outrun it; Good, the heroes can determine the ship is the *Mindaran Ghost*; Amazing, the ship appears slightly damaged already.

As they scramble to prepare themselves, initiate the battle:

Suddenly, the incoming ship comes around into an attack run. Its weapons flare brightly as they target your ship. What do you do?

Allow the players to guide their heroes' actions through a couple of rounds of space combat. Shortly after this, however, another ship arrives on the scene. This one belongs to Thomas Kind's organization. The captain of the vessel seems particularly eager to join the fray:

As the battle continues, you receive another communication...this time from a different ship. A middle-aged captain smiles from the holo-display. "Welcome to Lison, trader!" he says, "Looks like you've run into a bit of pirate-trouble. I'm Captain Ronnie Foster of the Razor.

The *Razor*

Vendetta-Class Marauder

Compartments: 8
Maneuver Rating: 0
Cruising Speed: 1.5 AU/hour
16

Dur: 40
Acc: 2 Mpp
Berthing:

Armament: Plasma Cannon - Range: 4/8/16 Mm, d6+ 2w/d8+ 2w/d6+ 1m, En(e)
Armor: Moderate Neutronite (4 dur) d6+ 1 (LI), d6+ 1 (HI), d6 (En)
Defenses: Chaff, Damage control (Good), Jammer, Point-defense gun - Range: 1/2/3 Mm, d4s/d4w/d4+ 2w, HI(p)
Computer Core: Good computer core, Good battle, defense, engineering, and navigation computers
Engines: Induction engine
Power: Mass reactor rated for a total of 20 power factors
Drive: 5 light-years per starfall

Roll	Compartment	Systems (Dur/Pow)
	Durability	
1-3	Command 12/12/6	Plasma Cannon (2/3) Radio transceiver (0/1) Laser transceiver (0/1) Point-defense gun (1/1) Jammer (0/1) Airlock (1/0) Escape pod (2/0)
4-5	Electronics 10/10/5	Multiband radar (1/0) EM detector (0/0) Good computer core (2/0) Mass detector (1/0) Chaff (1/0)
6-8	Crew 10/10/5	Crew quarters (2/0) Passenger suite (1/0) Escape pod (2/0)
9-12	Engineering 1 14/14/7	Induction engine (4/4) Stardrive (3/*)
13-14	Engineering 2 12/12/6	Mass reactor (4/*) Stabilizers (2/0)
15-16	Auxiliary 1 8/8/4	Life support unit (2/2) Autosupport (0/2) Damage control (2/2)
17-18	Auxiliary 2 10/10/5	Mass Reactor (4/*) Reentry capsule (1/0)
19-20	Cargo 4/4/2	Cargo space (2/0)

to pay for the treatment?"

"It will be enough," Hadley answers, "And these good people went far beyond the original agreement to see that it was returned to you. It's a story well worth telling, but perhaps you should rest and we'll talk about it again later."

Joseph nods, still feeling a little drugged from the effects of the cryogenic tank. He closes his eyes for a moment to savor the knowledge that he might still survive his illness. Then he opens them again and looks to each of you. "Words cannot express my gratitude," he begins, "As much emphasis as my society places upon wealth and material gain, it is nothing compared to the value I place upon my survival. Without you, I would have perished. Now I have the opportunity to begin a new life. One that's focused less on how many guilders are in my accounts, and more on the friendships and small acts of kindness that I can do for others...much as you have done for me."

"First, allow me to repay you for your services," he says, "Hadley? See to it that they are each paid according to the initial agreement. And then, before sending you to Bauble, I agreed to double the amount. But with your success, I think we should triple it instead. After all, it's only money. And you deserve every penny of it."

"But, money only goes so far in repaying my debt to you," he continues, "If you should ever need anything else. Anything at all that's within my power to grant you, you have only to ask. Hadley will see to it that you have the means to contact us. And, although the great distance between the Verge and the Consortium will separate us, I have many agents and occasionally my business will bring me back to Oberon again. I'm sure there will be plenty of opportunity to seek me out if the need should ever arise. Thank you."

The T'sa doctor indicates that it's time to put his patient back into cryogenic slumber. Hadley tells you Joseph will be kept that way for the entire voyage to the Thuldan Empire...and, after the treatment is successful, he will contact you once again when they return to the Rigunmor Star Consortium. In the meantime, you are all a lot richer and a lot happier knowing that you've helped to preserve and change a man's life.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Guidelines for awarding achievement points are given on pg. 111 of the *Gamemaster Guide*. Below are some suggested awards for the completion of the adventure:

- 2 achievement points for retrieving the vault's treasure and returning it to Joseph Gallagher, who may become a Powerful Ally for the heroes in later adventures. He also pays them the generous sum of approximately \$9,000 per person (depending upon the negotiated agreement).
- 1 achievement point for rescuing Rench the gearwerk from the Bauble vault, who may become an Animal Friend to one of the heroes if they were successful in winning its loyalty.
- 1 achievement point for retrieving the Shard of Illumination, Klatchik the Blacklaser Machinegun, and/or an experimental egg from the Klick research base on Bauble.
- 1 achievement point for overcoming the obstacles, guardians, and Klicks on Bauble.
- 1 achievement point for defeating/surviving the space battles with the Klick fighters in the canyons of Bauble, the *Mindaran Ghost*, and the *Razor*.
- 1 achievement point for arranging a first-contact meeting between Lakota and Kr'rek that leads to a lasting friendship. This could also grant some or all of the heroes a Celebrity perk, at the Gamemaster's discretion, for the discovery of a sentient lifeform.
- 1 achievement point for defeating all of Kar'pestro's attempts to eliminate them.
- 1 achievement point for defeating Ysala and her thugs.
- 1 achievement point for defeating the Klick strike team sent to assassinate the heroes.

FUTURE ADVENTURE HOOKS

So where does the adventure go from here? There are a number of hooks that were intentionally left in the storyline. If the heroes retrieved one of the experimental Klick eggs from Bauble, what will they do with it? The Galactic Concord, the stellar nations, and even a number of mega-corporations would love to take it off their hands. And of course, the Klicks can't be far behind. They'll pursue the heroes to the ends of the Verge and beyond if they have to. They simply cannot afford to allow the Theocracy to learn of their attempts to gain independence. Efforts to learn more about the Klick presence in the Oberon system could even lead the heroes to the Mindaran

space station to encounter Ythkometh Kik-ik-tik's superiors. Eventually, they might learn of the Klick dilemma with respect to their genetic servitude to the Theocracy. Perhaps the Thuldan cure for Lawkin's Syndrome could help them find a way to reproduce? Or perhaps the research data on the genetic manipulations of the Klick egg could lead to a breakthrough in the biotechnical sciences of humanity? What happens if the egg hatches and somehow survives? The Klicks would give anything to examine the offspring to learn how to duplicate its birth.

Other possibilities include several Powerful Enemies that could come to haunt the heroes. The Coreeno crime syndicate could learn of Joseph Gallagher's newfound wealth and come after him in order to collect on his debt. Hadley could make arrangements to keep the heroes on as temporary bodyguards while they escort his master to the Thuldan Empire for Joseph's expensive gene-therapy treatment. Or maybe he contacts them once again when he learns of the threat on Joseph's life?

In addition, if any of the villains from the story line were left alive, they could easily seek revenge upon the heroes. Kerri Lansing had big plans for what she and Ysala could accomplish together. If she was the one that provided them the information to eventually find the treasure, she'll find a way to bring the government's resources to bear on acquiring it from them. Ysala, the Mechalus corsair herself, could also seek to repay the heroes if she somehow survived. Kar'pestro Nasu'ike is an incredibly ambitious pirate, too, with a long memory for those that have crossed him. And, if the heroes treated Captain Foster badly, they can count on catching some grief from Thomas Kind and his organization as well.

Instead of focusing on old enemies, the Gamemaster could use the Shard of Illumination as an opportunity to take the story in a new direction. Perhaps the heroes will want to discover more information about the Glassmaker artifact. Perhaps it is in tune with some far-away Precursor site that they will need to visit? And what horrors and great mysteries could await them in such a place?

Lastly, if the Gamemaster wishes to continue adventuring in the Oberon system, the Star*Drive campaign module titled *Planet of Darkness* could provide a whole new series of adventures. It can introduce new villains while allowing some of the old ones to pop up from time to time. The sky's the limit...or maybe it's not...because in Alternity, there are no limits.

Good gaming, -- Neil Spicer