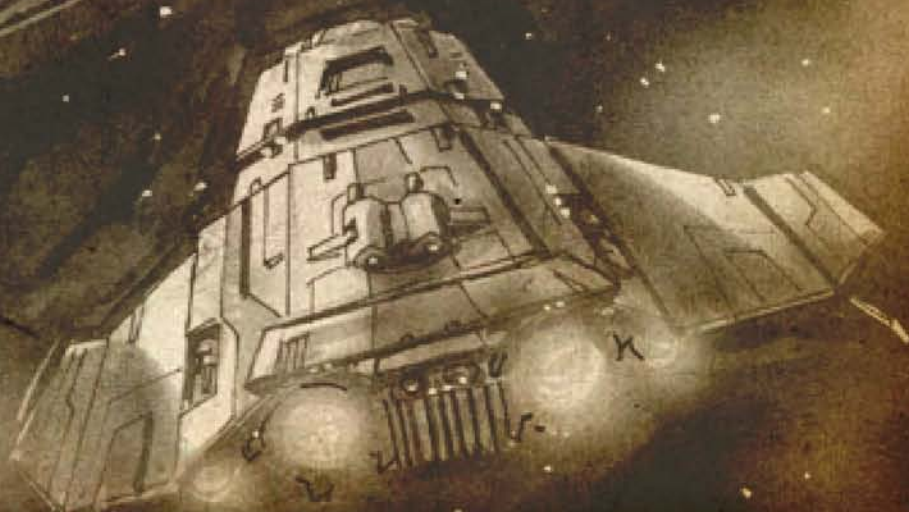


# A ROAD SO DARK



FADING SUNS™

A FADING SUNS ADVENTURE BY ANGUS MCNICHOLL

# FADING SUNS

It is the dawn of the sixth millennium and the skies are darkening, for the suns themselves are fading. Humans reached the stars long ago, building a Republic of high technology and universal emancipation—and then squandered it, fought over it, and finally lost it.

A new Dark Age has descended upon humanity, for the greatest of civilizations has fallen and now even the stars are dying. Feudal lords rule the Known Worlds, vying for power with fanatic priests and scheming guilds.

**Fading Suns** is a science fiction game of heavy combat, vicious politics, weird occultism, alien secrets and artifacts, and unknown and un-mapped worlds. The **Shards** series is a collection of adventures and encounters, intended as an inexpensive resource for **Fading Suns** gamemasters.

This volume contains the adventure **A Road So Dark**, designed for a group of 3 to 6 player characters. In this adventure, the characters research a previously unknown night road between Leagueheim and Grail, following a trail of evidence to an artifact invaluable to their employer...

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RBL-1001

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# CONTENTS

<b>A ROAD SO DARK</b>	2	<b>Act Five: Into the Wastepit</b>	14
<b>Running the Adventure</b>	2	The Test	15
Adventure Background	2	The Old Down Station	16
Plot Synopsis	3	Key Characters	16
<b>Act One: Meeting the Baron</b>	4	<b>Act Six: On the Road so Dark</b>	17
The Baron's Estate	4	Treasure Hunt	17
Complications	4	Chauki Stride	17
The Meeting	5	Interceptions	18
The Clues	5	Key Characters	18
Key Characters	6	Starships	19
<b>Act Two: Picking up the Trail</b>	7	<b>Aftermath</b>	19
Sangreal Starport	7	Awarding Experience	19
The Sangreal Port Authority	7	Complications	20
Asking Around the Bars	7	Spin-offs	20
Key Characters	7		
<b>Act Three: The Long Way Round</b>	8	<b>APPENDIX</b>	21
Aboard the Silent Flight	8	Sir Raimon Keddah	21
Aboard the Republican Dream	9	Sergeant Dash Hawthorn	21
Key Characters	9	Canon Augustus Halgarth	22
Starships	10	Koaq Huar'raughq	22
<b>Act Four: Searching Leagueheim</b>	11	Chief Larson Doville	23
Leagueheim Port Authority	12	Tarlo Esstelan the Entertainer	24
Information on the Dancing Light	12		
Finding the Crew	12		
The Karl's Range	13	<b>SHARDS SUBMISSION GUIDELINES</b>	25
Key Characters	13		
Starships	14		

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# A Road So Dark

**A Road so Dark** is a short adventure for **Fading Suns** for a group of 3 to 6 player characters that can be used as part of an existing campaign or as the start of a new epic. As written, the drama assumes that the player characters are part of a noble's entourage in the service of House Keddah. If the group is not associated with House Keddah, the gamemaster should feel free to make all necessary adjustments so that this story centers on whichever noble house the characters owe fealty. A selection of pre-generated characters is supplied in the **Appendix** of this **Shard** (see p. 21).

## Running the Adventure

**A Road so Dark** is laid out in acts, but within those, the encounters can occur in almost any order. Of course, if the characters go off on a tangent, it might require some improvisation to get them back on track. There is only one choke point in the structure, which is the trip to Leagueheim. Everything before and after can be freely mixed around to suit how the gamemaster wants to tell the story.

This requires the gamemaster to have a good grip on the whole plot and the gamemaster character's motivations. Having a few colorful gamemaster characters ready to help steer the players can be handy.

**A Road so Dark** largely centers on information gathering and investigative work. The gamemaster should encourage the players to role-play their way through the drama, rather than resorting to simple Inquiry rolls.

Following the main text are suggestions on how to modify the drama to make it fit into an existing campaign, and how to use **A Road so Dark** as the beginning of a **Fading Suns** epic.

## Adventure Background

Without the Jumpweb, human civilization would never have left Holy Terra. Mankind would have been locked in the confines of their sub-light sleeper ships, and the technological and social heights of the Second Republic would never have become a reality. In short, an interstellar civilization would have been unthinkable.

Even though every inhabited system in the Known Worlds has a Jumpgate, little is actually known about these gargantuan feats of ancient engineering. Indeed, very little is understood about the science employed by the Annunaki. A Jumpgate endures almost any kind of punishment and even seems to repair itself over time.

Many rumors exist about the Jumpweb. Some sound credible but lack substantial proof. The Charioteers Guild has the most interaction with the arcane Jumpgates, but if they know anything more than anyone else they have kept silent. The Jumpweb as currently mapped by the Guilds is not as extensive as was known during the Second Republic. There are many lost roads, and some people believe that the Jumpweb reaches only a fraction of its potential. Some even believe that the right codes could connect any Jumpgate to any other Jumpgate.

Spacers often brag about artifacts recovered that seem to control the Jumpgates. Some artifacts are capable of sealing a Jumpgate for years or even millennia, others can open new routes to previously unknown worlds, or worlds lost during the Fall. Rumors claim that the Jumpgates can be used to move people through time, or into other dimensions, or even into the dark places humanity was never meant to explore.

Jumpkeys became popular during the time of the Second Republic, as an easy and convenient way of storing jump coordinate information. Prior to that time, jump coordinates needed to be computed using a think machine and navigational array, a complex task that could take a day or more to complete. In desperate circumstances this can still be done today but the Guild frowns on the practice of 'unkeyed' jumps.

A Jumpkey resembles a narrow cylinder about 10cm in length. Styles vary and some are longer, some are very plain while others are ornately crafted. Charioteers usually carry their keys openly on a sturdy belt ring to display their status and standing within the Guild. Many actually carry fake keys, keeping the real ones safe aboard their starships.

Jumpkeys activate a Jumpgate with a coordinate sequence, each set of coordinates is unique to the Jumpgate and the Jumproad. Much of the technology contained in the key actually prevents it from being counterfeited or duplicated. All Jumpkeys are considered the property of the Charioteers



Guild and unauthorized possession of a key is a serious offence that the Guild does not look kindly upon.

Only the Charioteers understand how to make these valuable artifacts. There are thousands of Jumpkeys in use all across the Known Worlds, and even beyond in the wilds of barbarian space. Most open a single jumprouete between two systems, allowing a starship to travel from one to the other and back again. A few rare keys hold multiple codes, that open routes across two, three, or even four systems. But even more valuable than those are Jumpkeys that open a night road to a lost world or to a previously unknown system. These keys cannot be paid for with firebirds, for they provide access to untapped resources and countless opportunities for expansion.

The player characters gain hints about a previously unknown night road between Leagueheim and Grail, and must follow the trail of evidence until they have the invaluable artifact in their possession. A discussion on Jumpkeys and Jumpgates can be found in the **Fading Suns** rulebook, p. 238 (p. 223 of the **Revised Second Edition**).

The Charioteers Guild guards the secrets of the Jumpkeys and the Jumpgates as this lore is the corner stone of its monopoly. However, from time to time someone rises to challenge the Guild's monopoly. House Keddah faired poorly when they discovered a machine for manufacturing Jumpkeys in 4591 and refused to turn it over to the Guild. Charioteer agents destroyed the device and the House's fortunes took a tumble that stripped it of its royal status.

Since the end of the Emperor Wars and the rise of the Phoenix Throne, Questing Knights have ranged far and wide and many previously lost keys have come to light. Though many of the old records from the time prior to the Fall were destroyed in the data purges that brought the Second Republic to its knees, many of the now lost worlds are remembered in myth and folklore. Curiously, there are no myths that ever recall there having been a Jumproad between Leagueheim (once called Liberty) and Grail, yet the characters are setting out to find just that.


The Emperor Wars were a time of chaos. While even the most ignorant have some concept of recent history, it is the little deeds that made up the war that have mostly gone unnoticed. On all sides covert agents plied their trades. Secret meetings between factions paved the way for the grand alliance that finally placed Alexius I. on the Imperial throne, but most were forgotten and unnoticed.

The Captain and crew of the *Dancing Light* are just one of those unknown heroes, but the characters' investigation will stir old memories and cast light upon some of their deeds in perilous times. Most important to this drama, the *Dancing Light* was the first and so far only starship to have traveled a Jumproad that was created by man rather than the Anunnaki.

## Plot Synopsis

The player characters are invited to meet with Baron Halman Keddah, a man of capable intellect. It is said that he keeps a journal of unusual and unexplained events that





occur within the Known Worlds. The Baron believes in the responsibility of his title and takes care of his people. As a result, he rarely travels off-world from Grail these days. Instead, Baron Halman has build up a network of trusted family members over the years, to keep an eye open for pieces of information that might interest him.

Recently, a number of diaries and ship navigation logs from the time of Emperor Wars found their way into his collection. It was only diligent cross-referencing with a damaged navigation log that revealed something odd, something one of the Baron's cousins deemed of potential interest: The logs record a journey between Leagueheim and Grail, but show a discrepancy in the journal's time frame, which contradicts other historical logs.

There are two basic routes between Leagueheim and Grail and both take four jumps to reach their destination. The first route involves transit from Leagueheim, to Midian, to Apshai, to Rampart, and finally to Grail. This route exposes any cargo or passengers to the scrutiny of House Li Halan at Midian or Rampart and a potential for Vau entanglement at Apshai.

The second route runs from Leagueheim to either Madoc or Aragon before jumping to Byzantium Secundus, then on to Pyre, and finally to Grail. This route exposes a ship and its crew to the Imperial Authorities and the tender mercies of Temple Avesti at Pyre. The option to travel via Aragon also offers exposure to the Hazat, who are believed to eye Grail with greed. Both routes are risky—not because there is likely to be some element of actual physical danger, but because they expose House Keddah to the scrutiny of other powers.

The minimum transit time for a trip from Leagueheim to Grail measures about thirteen days, assuming that both Jumpgates and planets are in their optimum positions in their systems and that there is no interference or queuing at the Jumpgates. Usually, a starship has to travel in-system to re-supply on the voyage, potentially adding days or even weeks to the trip's duration. Therefore, a more realistic time frame for the voyage would be about twenty days, accounting for the delays mentioned above.

Baron Halman suspects that someone went to great lengths to obscure the fact that his trip only took ten days, indicating the presence of a night road directly linking Leagueheim to Grail. A Jumpkey for that route would be of incalculable value to House Keddah, as it would allow rapid ship movements if hostilities with the al-Malik were to reignite, or if the Hazat were to try and take over Grail by force. Of course, these logs are fifty years old and the information contained is difficult to verify.

As a result, Baron Halman wants the player characters to investigate the possibility of the night road discreetly, as well as recover the Jumpkey if possible. This is not an easy task, but the potential benefits could be considerable to House Keddah—not to mention the prestige for those who could accomplish such a feat.

The majority of the drama takes place on Leagueheim, where the player characters attract the attention of the Killroys (see **Spies and Revolutionaries**, p. 62). They will have to fight to protect the person who knows where the Jumpkey is and fend off the attackers. Afterwards, the group

has to get off-world and back to Grail, carefully avoiding any 'official entanglements'.

There are numerous places where his drama can lead off on a side-track or go wrong for the player characters. Diplomacy will be more valuable than a blaster; if they keep their heads cool and think fast, they should succeed.

## Act One: Meeting the Baron

The drama begins on Grail with an invitation to attend a ball hosted by the Baron Halman Keddah at his rural estate. The occasion is to celebrate the birthday of Baron's eldest daughter, Pratha Keddah. The Baron will find an opportunity to speak privately with the player characters and ask them to undertake an assignment on his behalf.

## The Baron's Estate

The lands of Baron Halman extend over a long and fertile valley several days travel from the starport and the capital city of Sangreal. Most of the valley is heavily wooded with large, red-gold Baryana trees. Where the valley opens out of the mountains onto the plains, the small town of Watersbridge sits on the banks of river that flows down out of the mountains. The Baron's estate is a stately home atop a small crag overlooking the town. The journey from Watersbridge to the estate leads over a well-maintained road that winds through farmland for a mile before coiling around the mountain to climb the crag from the opposite side.

The gardens are immaculate, and the buildings are recently renovated to repair damage from the winter season. With spring almost giving over to summer, this is surely the best time to see the gardens in full bloom.

Upon arrival at the house, Orsus, the Baron's chamberlain, greets the group and shows them to a well-appointed suite of rooms where they can freshen up before the birthday celebrations in the evening. The Baron is currently indisposed with other business. Other guests have arrived prior to the characters, and more continue to arrive throughout the afternoon. Few are from off-world; most are lesser nobility of House Keddah or rich local merchants.

The birthday celebrations begin with introductions, followed by a modest meal accompanied by local gossip and business conversations. Once the food is finished, the guests present gifts to Pratha, who is (of course) the center of attention. Let's hope that the player characters remembered to bring an appropriate gift for the fifteen-year-old noble girl!

Finally, the hall is cleared and musicians strike up for the ball to begin. Sometime after, the characters will be drawn aside into the Baron's office.

## Complications

Depending on how the gamemaster wants to run the birthday celebrations, the event could be almost glossed over or it could be an opportunity for intense role-playing. The merchants with whom the characters are seated at dinner will



take any opportunity to gain profile in the eyes of the nobility and their peers, showing off their wealth if possible. They might try to get the characters to invest in their business or gain favor by providing a character with a more appropriate gift for Pratha than the group intended to bring.

Of course, the gift giving itself could potentially cause great embarrassment. The characters might not be aware that the Baron's daughter is only fifteen years old, and bring a gift that would be inappropriate for such a young girl. Appropriate would be a fashionable dress, or a gilded hairbrush, for example. For characters who do some research, Pratha is a gifted musician who takes pleasure in beast riding. Thus, a gift that is bound to bring the group favorable attention would be a finely crafted musical instrument or an impressive riding beast. Pratha would seek the attention of the noble who gave her such a lavish and well thought-out gift—another situation that needs to be handled well by the group. Due to her young age, Pratha has not yet been formally introduced to society—but she is already looking out for prospective suitors, a fact that does not sit very well with her father.

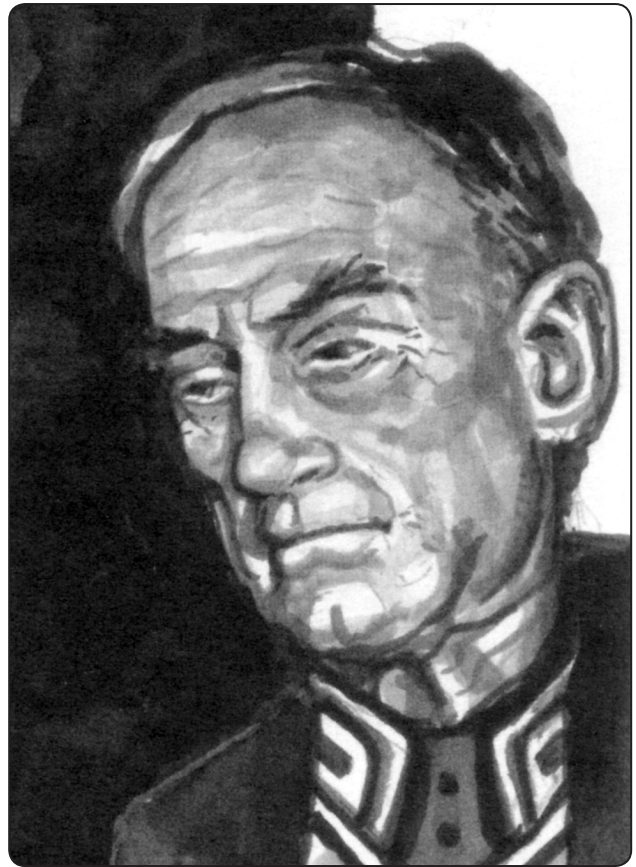
## The Meeting

Orsus takes the characters aside during the evening ball and leads them to the Baron's office. The room is not large, but the grand view from the window takes in the gardens (currently lit with many lanterns) and the valley below. The walls are shelved with books and display curiosities from across the Known Worlds (and beyond). An ornate desk dominates the space in front of the window, but Orsus motions the characters to a group of chairs and a low table set out before the fireplace. Orsus leaves after ushering the characters in.

The Baron, already seated at the fire, rises to greet the characters as if they were old friends. He smiles and invites them to join him by the fire, which (as he admits), is more for the camaraderie than the need for its warmth. He serves drinks by his own hand, and exchanges pleasantries about the evening and the group's journey. After he has had time to seize up the characters, he will explain why he has invited them.

*"Perhaps you are aware that I am a collector of unusual curiosities. Actually, I like to collect knowledge on the Pancreator's universe. There are countless facts known to us but still, the universe remains an eluding place. If, as I assume, all things correspond to the design laid down by the Pancreator, then careful observation permits us to refine our knowledge of that design and his will.*

*I have collected many things: logbooks, journals, and historical accounts of the Emperor Wars. I found something unusual in one such account and I believe that this inconsistency may lead to a great discovery. I'm sure you are aware that the trip from Leagueheim to Grail is a long one; four jumps by its shortest route and the potential for many entanglements with the Hazat, the Li Halan, the Vau, and even Temple Avesti. Yet I found an obscure record of a ship during a time*



*of open hostility making the journey in half the time it takes us today.*

*I know that these logs are fifty years old and the trail will be cold, but I feel this discrepancy bears a second look. Perhaps it is simply an error, but if it isn't ... I have gathered what information I could from the records that I own, but I will need some good people to follow the trail. You will have to travel off-world as part of this task. The potential rewards for my House are considerable, and this endeavor will work out for you as well. What say you?"*


Once the characters have agreed to help, Halman will present them the few clues he has managed to gather.

## The Clues

The log files Baron Halman possesses are from a League Explorer called *Dancing Light*. Since starships are expensive commodities, it is possible that this ship is still in operation somewhere in the Known Worlds. Of course, it might have fallen prey to any number of potential disasters. However, it is a League starship and the Charioteers Guild on Leagueheim maintains records that will help uncover the ship's fate and maybe even its current position.

The *Dancing Light's* crew complement was four strong and named in the logs as Captain Ernest Sharp, Lieutenant Marnon Hols (Pilot), Associate Talik Vos (Purser), and Fellow Wilber Hansu (Engineer). In addition, Captain Sharp's son Kam Sharp served his apprenticeship aboard the *Dancing*





*Light* at this time. Although the voyage in question happened almost fifty years ago, one or more of the crew might still be alive.

Also, a young engineer named Parnel Dwainson was recorded in the journals as one of the passengers on that trip. It might be possible to track him down as well if he is still alive. Parnel might help to get a lead on whoever else was onboard, or just give a witness account as to what happened on that trip. According to the logs, Parnel seemed to have been a frequent passenger on the *Dancing Light* for several months before this journey.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters that are important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Incidental gamemaster characters need to be prepared by individual gamemasters either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama—they are likely to have many more.

### Baron Halman Keddah

Halman Keddah is a clever man, despite his image of scholarly simplicity and cloistered academia. Nothing could be further from the truth; he is an accomplished and astute observer, who has served time both in military intelligence during the Emperor Wars and, more recently, as the Keddah envoy to House Decados. He will present himself as a quiet and studious man, but he is actually one of the architects of House Keddah's current survival strategy.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "Only by looking into the heart of mystery and can truth intimately be observed."

**Description:** Halman Keddah is a lean man of average height and build, carrying himself with a stiffness that creates the illusion of him being taller than he actually is. His face has begun to show the signs of age, and a little grey hair touches his temples and his beard on both sides of his jaw. The Baron has a smile that puts most people immediately at ease. In most circumstances, he prefers to dress in modest simplicity.

**Equipment:** Assault Shield, Palm Laser, Vibro-Dirk

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 9, Perception 10, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 4, Passion 3, Calm 6, Faith 4, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 7, Dodge 6, Fight 4, Impress 5, Melee 4, Observe 8, Shoot 6, Sneak 7, Vigor 6

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 7, Leadership 5, Warfare (Military Tactics) 6, Inquiry 6, Ride 5, Etiquette 9, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Wyrd:** 6

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

### Pratha Keddah

Pratha is exactly what she seems to be, a young girl approaching her coming of age. Her father has ensured that she understands the burden of responsibility that comes with nobility, but she is still prone to moments of child-like behaviour. Pratha has lived a sheltered life on Grail, though she is no fool and understands more about what her father has done for his house than many suspect. After careful diplomatic schooling, Pratha is acutely aware of her duty to her house. Despite this she is immature and prone to episodes of teenage rebellion. Although she loves her father deeply and is undoubtedly his eldest and favorite, she pushes the boundary of what he will tolerate (music and beast riding to date). Her most recent interest is men; she still has notions of romance and fairytales and the desire to be swept off her feet by a brave and handsome noble. She will likely pursue the most eligible young noble who attends her ball.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "Tell me a little of yourself brave Sir..."

**Description:** Pratha is a young woman just coming into her maturity. Though not overly tall, her face is delicately beautiful. She is already looking for potential partners, which is not taken well by her father. For her birthday celebration, she wears the finest ball gown that money can buy (although she follows her father's example for all other occasions).

**Equipment:** None

**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Endurance 4

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 7, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 4, Introvert 2, Passion 5, Calm 2, Faith 2, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 7, Dodge 4, Fight 3, Impress 7, Melee 3, Observe 4, Shoot 3, Sneak 5, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 3, Performance 7, Beast Lore 6, Ride 6, Etiquette 5, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

### Orsus Volstrab, the Chamberlain

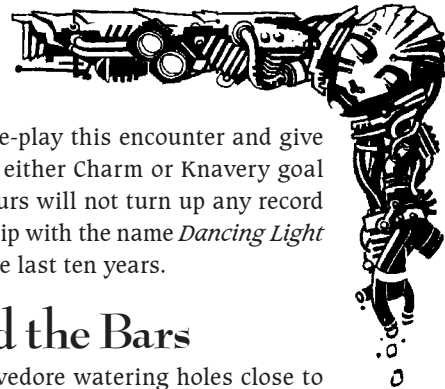
Orsus is a military veteran who served under Baron Halman during the Emperor Wars. He is loyal to his commander and doubles as an effective bodyguard for both the Baron and his family. Often overlooked because of his apparent age, Orsus is a man of decisive action. The Baron holds him in high esteem and will take Orsus' word above all others.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "My lord awaits you..."

**Description:** Orsus is a middle-aged man and appears older than he really is. His eyes are still young and alert, but his grey hair and a few wrinkles complete the illusion. Under his long robe, his body is fit and well muscled from long years of military service and constant training.

**Equipment:** Shock Stick (his chamberlains staff of office)



**Body:** Strength 8, Dexterity 7, Endurance 8

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 7, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Extrovert 1, Introvert 8, Passion 2, Calm 6, Faith 3, Ego 4

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 8, Fight 10, Impress 5, Melee 6, Observe 8, Shoot 8, Sneak 6, Vigor 7

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 6, Inquiry 4, Ride 4, Etiquette 8, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Wyrd:** 6

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Act Two: Picking up the Trail

The characters try to locate the League Explorer *Dancing Light*. There are many places to look and the search is bound to be fruitless if the group does not think things through before getting started. The *Dancing Light* passed through two owners, had a major overhaul and changed its name in the last five decades. However, asking the right questions in the right places will eventually meet with success.

The characters know of two places the *Dancing Light* has visited: Leagueheim and Grail. It makes sense to start the search on Grail and move on to Leagueheim if need be. Of course, the characters will not find the *Dancing Light* on Grail, but they can still gather some interesting pieces of information that add to the clues they already have. Grail's main starport in Sangreal is the obvious place to start, although characters with useful contacts might want to approach these directly.

### Sangreal Starport

The port at Sangreal is a hub of activity and commerce, with starships coming and going every hour. The port is centered within a wide concrete concourse lined with hangars and sheds, adjoined by a large airfield with three taxi strips used for atmospheric aircraft. Wide lanes between and behind the hangars allow for hauling shipping containers to the surrounding warehouse district.

### The Sangreal Port Authority

The Port Authority is located in a tall tower at one end of the concourse. The upper floors house the port traffic control center, with the lower levels outfitted as Guild offices. The ground level provides basic amenities to travelers, spacers and dockhands alike.

The characters can approach the local official in a number of ways. The young man, Olbert Tance (see **Key Characters**, below) is very reluctant to give out information to non-guild members without a good reason (although a good bribe, a legal warrant, or a Church writ counts as one). In addition, the Port Authority only holds records for a period of ten years before the information is "archived" (or otherwise lost in a less fancy way). The gamemaster should

encourage the players to role-play this encounter and give modifiers as appropriate to either Charm or Knavery goal rolls. Sadly, even several hours will not turn up any record of a League Explorer class ship with the name *Dancing Light* having landed on Grail in the last ten years.

## Asking Around the Bars

The spacer bars and stevedore watering holes close to the starport can be unfriendly places if the characters do not have a strong guild affiliation. Nobles and Priests will get some respect, but will still be treated as outsiders. This situation will require the characters to part with some firebirds and buy drinks before they can start gathering information. A guild member has an easier time of this than anyone else.

There are a few tidbits of information around; some of the old timers were youngsters during the Emperor Wars. A few remember that the *Dancing Light* was a common sight on Grail during that time. However, the ship has not set down here in over twenty years. Vil and Arnus (see **Key Characters**, below) even remember Captain Sharp as a good man who always seemed to have his differences with the higher-ups of his guild, which is probably why he never made it any higher than Captain. It is likely that old Sharp was replaced and his successor had a different set of Jumpkeys, so that the *Dancing Light* took to different routes afterwards.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters that are important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Incidental gamemaster characters need to be prepared by individual gamemasters either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama—they are likely to have many more.

### Olbert Tance, Port Authority Official

Still an apprentice within the Guild, Olbert works hard and is willing to help in the hopes that his efforts will earn him recognition and the chance for a more glamorous assignment.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "How my the guild be of service this day?"

**Description:** A young man not long past the age of his majority. Dark hair is cropped short in a fashionable style but a slight squint gives him a bookish look.

**Equipment:** None

**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 6, Perception 5, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 4, Passion 1, Calm 3, Faith 4, Ego 2

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 3, Fight 3, Impress 4, Melee 3, Observe 4, Shoot 3, Sneak 4, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Bureaucracy 5, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish





Wyrd: 3

Vitality: -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Vil Clavok and Arnus Wishing

Both these men are old timers who have worked almost their entire lives in the Sangreal Starport. They have seen times change, and handled cargo from all over the Known Worlds. Their lives are that of hard graft, their hands and faces weather-beaten.

Race: Human

Quote: "I said it'll be loaded on time and it will."

**Description:** Both men are sturdy built from a long life of physical labor, and an expanding gut from swilling too much beer in the starport watering holes. They dress in utilitarian clothing, but Vil has an old leather waistcoat that he is never without. Arnus is missing two fingers from his left hand.

**Equipment:** None

**Body:** Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Endurance 7

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 5, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 2, Passion 3, Calm 1, Faith 4, Ego 2

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 5, Fight 5, Impress 3, Melee 3, Observe 5, Shoot 3, Sneak 4, Vigor 8

**Learned Skills:** Speak Urthish

Wyrd: 3

Vitality: -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Act Three: The Long Way Round

The characters must travel to Leagueheim to continue their investigations. The Baron provides them with a passage contract to get them there and back if they do not have their own starship. The journey is broken down into two separate legs: the first part is aboard the *Silent Flight*, a League Freighter capable of making only two jumps (en route from Grail, through Pyre to Byzantium Secundus). The second part of the trip will be aboard the League Liner *Republican Dream*, which carries the characters from Byzantium Secundus through Madoc and on to Leagueheim.

The point of this act is to show just how long it takes to get from Grail to Leagueheim under normal circumstances. While military and explorer vessels have a greater range, most commercial transports are only capable of making two jumps before they have to refuel. Most ship captains only have a handful of Jumpkeys limiting their area of operation.

The gamemaster should feel free to customize encounters should the characters have a ship of their own and what alternative route to take to Leagueheim.

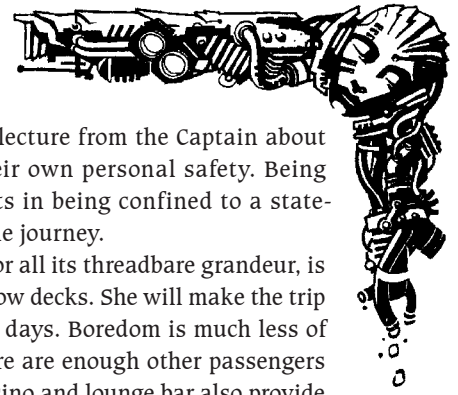
## Aboard the Silent Flight

The *Silent Flight* is little more than a space-worthy box, unable to enter a planet's atmosphere. The characters need to take a shuttle to get aboard. Primarily, this ship was designed for hauling of bulk cargo—passengers were never central to the design. The ship has six improvised passenger staterooms intended for double occupancy. Nobles are not expected to share, but commoners (Priests included) are doubled up. The common area and galley is functional and shared with the crew.

The cargo space of the *Silent Flight* is largely restricted. The cargo for this trip is lumber and fine wood harvested from Grail, so most of the hold areas are refrigerated and pressurized. Essentially, this means that the hold area can be used for exercise or a simple change of scene. Any damage to the cargo quickly puts an end to this privilege, however.

The ship crawls towards the Grail Jumpgate and takes about 10 days to get there. Once in position, the ship has to wait for the gate to cycle, which takes another day before the ship can make the jump to Pyre. Once through the gate, the *Silent Flight* is hailed by an Inquisitorial Raider, ordered to stand down and prepare to be boarded for a routine inspection. Being boarded by the Inquisition is routine in the Pyre system. Captain Halber informs the passengers that they are about to be boarded and they should remain in their cabins unless instructed otherwise by the crew or the Inquisition.

The inspection involves a check on the crew, passengers, and cargo manifests. It is time consuming, but Captain Halber is a regular traveler through this system, keeps his paperwork in good order, and runs a tight ship. If a problem arises, it's probably a result of the characters having brought a proscribed piece of equipment aboard or something similar.



Aliens are met with disdain by the Avestites, but will not be mistreated. Anyone with visible cybernetics will be examined closely. Proscribed technology in the form of weapons or think machines will draw the greatest attention, and will be confiscated with a stern warning (and a penance issued). Resistance is not advised. Captain Halber and his crew do not want any trouble so if a character starts a fight or causes trouble, they are handed over to the Inquisition and probably spend the rest of the drama rotting in a cell onboard the Raider.

Once the inspection is complete, the Avestites get back to their ship and the *Silent Flight* can make the jump to Byzantium Secundus. Upon arrival, the importance of the system becomes obvious due to the presence of a pair of imperial cruisers holding station at the Jumpgate. A short queue of merchant vessels is waiting to jump in convoy through the next gate opening. Small cutters launched from naval vessels circle and carry out spot checks on outbound traffic. The *Silent Flight* is permitted to begin its flight to the Cumulus Space Station without any significant delay.

The voyage takes eight days. The biggest problem aboard the *Silent Flight* is boredom. With a total of 19 days on board, only being interrupted by the Inquisition inspection, life is tedious. The facilities are sparse, there is little to do. The crew mostly gambles in between shifts and chores. Wisely, Captain Halbar only pays them when they disembark for shore leave between journeys. The Captain is happy for the characters to loose and pick up some of the crew's dirty work (scrubbing down decks, preparing meals and other menial work), but will not allow them to work crew shifts.

The *Silent Flight* can dock directly with the Cumulus Station allowing the characters to simply walk off the ship. Once aboard the station they will be subjected to the indignity of a customs inspection, before they can speak with a Charioteer agent about making a connecting flight to Leagueheim. Depending on the needs of the gamemaster, the *Republican Dream* might be ready and waiting for them in another bay or it might be several days away forcing the characters to find accommodations on the station and enjoy relative luxury of a more open space.

## Aboard the Republican Dream

After the sparse accommodations of the *Silent Flight*, the *Republican Dream* seems like the height of luxury, even though it is an ancient vessel and has more than a few quirks that quickly become frustrating. The staterooms are just a little too small, cabinet doors are ill-fitting and tend to swing open, and the artificial gravity is patchy in places so that small personal items laid on a desk sometimes float away. This should be disconcerting rather than comical, however. By using these and other effects, the gamemaster may try to convince one to the characters that his room is haunted.

Crew and passengers of the *Republican Dream* do not mix freely; there are designated crew and passenger areas on the ship and Captain Hal Cameron does not take kindly to passengers who break the rules. Anyone caught in a

restricted area gets a stern lecture from the Captain about his responsibilities and their own personal safety. Being caught a second time results in being confined to a stateroom for the remainder of the journey.

The *Republican Dream*, for all its threadbare grandeur, is actually well maintained below decks. She will make the trip to the Jumpgate in only five days. Boredom is much less of an issue on this trip, as there are enough other passengers to socialize with. A small casino and lounge bar also provide diversion. The *Republican Dream* even has a gym with a dueling ring and a sauna. Meals are either delivered to the character's stateroom or taken in the dinning room with the other guests. Captain Cameron makes a point of dining with the most important travelers at his table.

Once at the Jumpgate, the *Republican Dream* joins a convoy of ships waiting the gate's cycling for the jump to Madoc. The delay is little over a day before the gate opens and the Madoc bound flotilla moves through in close formation. Once on the Madoc side of the gate, the flotilla breaks up with those ships heading in-system accelerating away while those continuing to Leagueheim wheel about to await the gate's cycling; this takes only a few hours. The *Republican Dream* accelerates hard to reach Leagueheim in only six days.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters that are important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Incidental gamemaster characters need to be prepared by individual gamemasters either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama—they are likely to have many more.

### Got their own Starship?

If the characters have their own starship they can make their own way to Leagueheim by whichever route they please. Customizing the situations above will depend upon which route they take and any peculiarities their own ship has. If they pass through Pyre, they will be intercepted as described above. Traveling via Rampart brings a customs inspection from the Li Halan; they are just as zealous as the Avesti but a lot more polite.

Passing through Apshai brings no problems, but arriving at Midian means a second inspection from the Li Halan who are convinced that the characters must be smuggling Vau Tech and will delay them several days while they search for smuggling holds. During this search the characters will be removed from their ship to a Li Halan cruiser. When they get their ship back they will need to put much of it back together again. It will still be fully functional, but aesthetically it is disconcerting when all the wall panels are removed to expose piping and cables.



## Captain Tiberious Halbar

Captain Tiberious Halbar is a Charioteer Captain who has served long as a pilot when he started out aboard the *Silent Flight*. The ship is his home. Somewhat gruff, he is the kind of man who says what he means and means what he says. He has little time for matters other than running his ship and ensuring that crew get along.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "No funny business and we'll all get along just fine."

**Description:** Tiberious Halbar is a broad-shouldered man with a barrel chest and stern, block-like features. He stands half a head taller than most people and can be an intimidating sight if angered. He dresses in old, but functional clothing with his much-patched jacket always on his shoulders.

**Equipment:** Blaster Pistol, Polymer Knit

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Endurance 7

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 5, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 5, Passion 3, Calm 1, Faith 5, Ego 2

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 6, Fight 6, Impress 5, Melee 4, Observe 6, Shoot 6, Sneak 4, Vigor 7

**Learned Skills:** Drive (Spaceship) 6, Spacesuit, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Wyrd:** 3

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Captain Hal Cameron

Captain Cameron is concerned with social status, aware that he is a commoner and can never attain the power or standing he so admires in the nobility. Instead, he courts favor with travelers aboard the *Republican Dream*, slowly building a network of contacts among the nobility of every house. Many nobles owe him small favors, and he hopes that these will help him rise to the position in the guild he craves for.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "*Republican Dream*? No don't worry about then your lordship, she's old ship and its very bad luck to rename a ship."

**Description:** Hal Cameron is tall and lean; with long facial features and hooknose that gives him a very avian appearance. He dresses smartly in a dress uniform and insists his crew maintains the same standards he does.

**Equipment:** Blaster Pistol

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Endurance 4

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 6, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Extrovert 7, Introvert 2, Passion 3, Calm 2, Faith 4, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 7, Dodge 5, Fight 5, Impress 8, Melee 4, Observe 5, Shoot 5, Sneak 5, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Drive (Spaceship) 5, Etiquette 6, Inquiry 5, Spacesuit, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Wyrd:** 3

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○

## Deacon Urnest Forr

A veteran of the Emperor Wars, Urnest Forr chose the life of hard devotion to the Pancreator after he mustered out. In many ways, life in the Temple Avesti resembles the reassuring and regimented life he had in the service. The sect gives his life purpose after all the horrors he has witnessed—and caused. For him, life is a penance so that he might find the peace of the holy flame when his time comes.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "Faith is not a vestment to be worn, but a cloth with which the soul mirror may be burnished to shine more brightly."

**Description:** Urnest Forr is a man of modest height and build, with closely cropped dark hair. His clothing is, like that of most Avestites, made of plain common fabrics, but he maintains a meticulous cleanliness for himself and his few possessions. He is often quoted as saying that cleanliness is second only to godliness.

**Equipment:** Flamegun

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Endurance 9

**Mind:** Wits 6, Perception 8, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 4, Passion 7, Calm 3, Faith 7, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 6, Fight 8, Impress 3, Melee 5, Observe 6, Shoot 7, Sneak 5, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Social (Leadership) 5, Stoic Body 5, Torture 4, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Wyrd:** 7

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

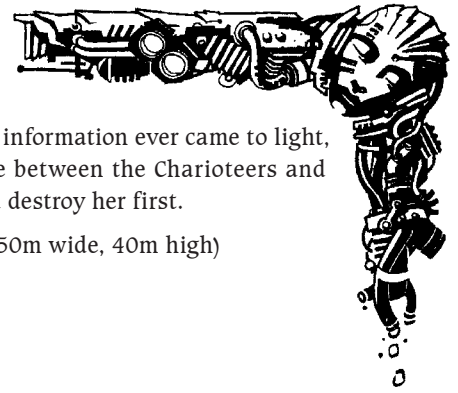
## Starships

Starships are both characters and backdrops to **Fading Suns** games. While many ply the Jumproads of the Known Worlds, each should have its own distinct flavor, even ships of the same class should be unique.

### Silent Flight, League Drayman Class Freighter

The *Silent Flight* can only be described as an inelegant box, combining functionality with the aesthetics of a Pyrebaked clay brick. The ship is a capable workhorse, however, and the crew has lived aboard for most of their lives. To insult the *Silent Flight* is on a par with derogatory comments about a crewmember's parentage.

The *Silent Flight* is over a hundred years old, built at shipyards in orbit around Leagueheim. Drayman Class ships are a common sight in the Known Worlds. Many feature



extensive upgrades and customization. Most of the changes to this ship are internal and cosmetic to make the living spaces more homely to the crew. A wall in the mess area is covered with pictures showing all the people who have ever crewed on her; it has become something of a tradition to maintain it.

**Size Rating:** 15 (80m long, 80m wide, 80m high)

**Grade:** Void

**Engines:** Standard

**Shields:**

<i>Speed</i>	<i>Left / Right</i>
Full thrust	0 / 0
$\frac{3}{4}$ thrust	1 / 1
Half thrust	1 / 1
$\frac{1}{4}$ thrust	2 / 2
Full stop	2 / 2

**Armaments:** 1 Lt Laser (turret)

**Sensors:** Radar 5

**Crew:** 6 (pilot, navigator, engineer  $\times 3$ , gunner)

**Passengers:** 6 (12 with double occupancy of staterooms)

**Cargo:** 1,190 metric tons

**Jumps:** 2

**Supplies:** 1 month for crew and full passenger load

**Vitality:** 150 (50 pts of hull and 100 pts of cargo)

**Cost:** 165,500 firebirds

## Republican Dream, Second Republic Liner

The *Republican Dream* is a very old ship with an elegant frame from an earlier period of ship design. Some speculate that the vessel is, in fact, of Second Republic construction. The hull has no hard angles, featuring sweeping curves that give the overall oval design an almost organic appearance. Once up close, that illusion quickly vanishes: the metal hull plates are covered with chipped and scared paintwork.

The *Republican Dream* has been plying the spacelanes of the Jumpweb for over a thousand years. Well maintained, every single nut and bolt has been replaced many times over the course of her operational life. Due to her great age, the ship harbors a few unusual 'nervous tics' and houses a well hidden, but fully self-aware think machine that governs all the ship's systems. Although the ship does not communicate with the crew or the passengers, she can be childish and temperamental about where she travels. In fact, the think machine will not permit a jump to any Church controlled system and gets skittish around high-ranking clergy.

There are persistent spacer's tales that the spirit of her first captain haunts the ship, which is true in a way. The *Republican Dream* is her own Captain, though she permits the current crew to run her systems and is actually quite fond of Captain Cameron. Her data banks contain a wealth of Jumpkey information that she has collected over the centuries and is capable of taking Jumproads that the crew is

not even aware exist. If this information ever came to light, there would likely be a race between the Charioteers and Inquisition to see who could destroy her first.

**Size Rating:** 10 (90m long, 50m wide, 40m high)

**Grade:** Lander

**Engines:** Fast

**Shields:**

<i>Speed</i>	<i>Left / Right</i>
Full thrust	0 / 0
$\frac{3}{4}$ thrust	2 / 2
Half thrust	4 / 4
$\frac{1}{4}$ thrust	6 / 6
Full stop	8 / 8

**Armaments:** 2 Med. Laser (turrets)

**Sensors:** Neutrino 10

**Crew:** 16 (pilot, navigator, bridge crew, engineer  $\times 3$ , stewards  $\times 10$ )

**Passengers:** 50

**Cargo:** 40 metric tons

**Jumps:** 4

**Supplies:** 1 month for crew and full passenger load

**Vitality:** 100

**Notes:** Self-Aware Think Machine

**Cost:** NA (cannot be purchased)

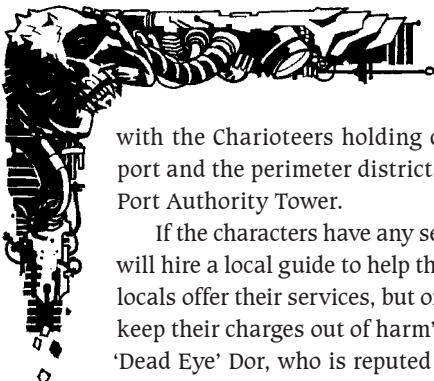
## Act Four: Searching Leagueheim

Kesparate is an enormous urban sprawl on Leagueheim, a legacy of the Second Republic, once the centre of a much bigger domain than the Phoenix Empire now commands. This planet feels very alien to characters native to Grail, which is predominantly rural. The urban cityscape reaches high into the atmosphere, giving the impression of great man-made canyons of glass and ceramsteel. Although many noble families hold small fiefs on Leagueheim and Priests tend to the souls of the masses, this is a League world—where economics rather than the nobility rule. (For more information on Leagueheim and Kesparate, refer to **Merchants of the Jumpweb**, p. 121)

The serf class that underpins the economies of so many of the Known Worlds does not exist on Leagueheim. It is rumored that, if a serf can escape to Leagueheim and remain there for a year and a day, he will be a freeman with his own destiny. Of course, few serfs ever get the chance to find out whether that is true. Serfdom is rare on Leagueheim and restricted to its rural areas. There is, however, a vast underclass of freemen; serfs to economics, slaves in all but name.

Kesparate is divided up and ruled from the streets by the hundreds of Guilds that comprise the League. The majority of city districts fall under the control of the interstellar guilds,





with the Charioteers holding command over the great starport and the perimeter districts, all centered on the looming Port Authority Tower.

If the characters have any sense (or Streetwise skills), they will hire a local guide to help them around the districts. Many locals offer their services, but only a few can be relied upon to keep their charges out of harm's way. One of them is William 'Dead Eye' Dor, who is reputed to be a dependable man with good knowledge of the districts. For a fair price, Dead Eye Dor will watch the group's backs and see them to a small hotel where their gear is safe and the beds do not bite.

## Leagueheim Port Authority

Leagueheim's Port Authority is much harder to deal with than their counterpart on Grail. As always, there are at least two ways to approach every problem: the right way and the wrong way. Striding through the front doors of the building and throwing one's weight around is clearly the wrong way. This route will get the characters sidelined; they will have to fill out reams of paperwork and then have to hang around for weeks while their request is ignored.

The right way to deal with the Port Authority is to butter up someone who can, for a few firebirds, find out what they want to know.

## Information on the Dancing Light

Once the characters locate and pay off someone who helps them gathering the information (likely with the help of Dead Eye Dor), things finally start to move. The information they get puts the group on a hot trail: the *Dancing Light* was re-registered with the Guild after a major refit about a decade ago. The ship now bears the name *Karl's Range*.

## Finding the Crew

There are a few old-timers around the starport, many of them still remember the early days of the Emperor Wars. However, the sheer size of the place makes finding the right people difficult. If the characters want to handle the search themselves rather than hire someone like Dead Eye Dor to help them, things likely get a bit rough. Nobody takes kindly to off-worlders sticking their noses in local matters they got no business asking after. Flashing around a lot of firebirds will surely put them at the center of attention—only to get them mugged in the first back alley they pass.

Eventually, the group will meet Old Maxwell. It is only fair to say that he finds them. Once his contacts realize that someone is asking questions, he will seek the characters out. Maxwell claims having been a pilot back in the day, and remembers both the *Dancing Light* and its crew. After the bloodshed of the Emperor Wars, he returned to Leagueheim to tend to his wounds (the truth is, however, that Maxwell simply spins a cover for his true identity as the son of Captain Sharp). He is willing to recount a few tales about the old days, including what he remembers of the rise and fall of Captain Sharp and his crew:

*"Sharp was a damn good man, amongst the best, I'd say. We served together on another ship before he made Captain and took on the Dancing Light. Back in those days, he could do no wrong in the eyes of the Guild. If they needed someone with some chutzpah, they had their man. He would get all the dangerous jobs, taking high-ranking guild members to secret meetings and the like. I can only imagine some of what the Dancing Light was involved in.*

*But Sharp, for all his bluff and balls, was a good man at heart and refused to do something the League asked of him. No, that's not right, they sent him off on some secret mission, but once he got there, he refused to go through with it. I don't know the details for sure, but there are many rumors, some say he had been handed a terrible weapon and refused to use it, others, that he gave the weapon to the enemies of the League. Don't think we will ever get to know the truth of it. What I do know, however, is that he lost both his command and his ship when the League found out what he had done. I believe he spent his last days in a cell at the pleasure of the Leaguemeister.*

*Of the crew, well if they're still going, they'll be almost as old as me now. I know the boy served on a number of ships but never made Captain. Sins of the fathers, I assume, even he will be an old man now. From what little I hear he became a recluse, renounced the Guild and still lives somewhere out in the Wastepit. But you don't want to be going there, much too dangerous."*

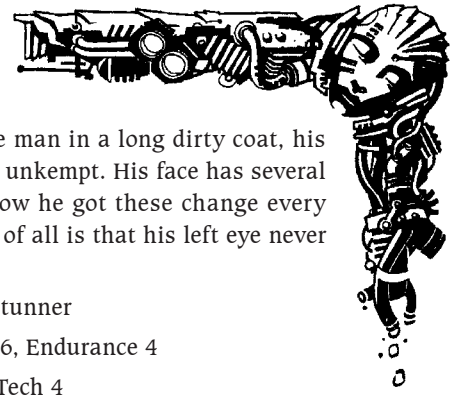
Although Old Maxwell will do his best to warn the characters from going, he will offer his services to them to see them safely through the worst dangers of the Wastepit.

## Too Many Questions

Even if the characters were careful in their enquiries, they wake up sleeping dogs within the Guild. The Killroys (the Charioteers' enforcers) begin a surveillance operation centered on the characters' hotel after they have approached the Port Authority.

The gamemaster should permit the characters a Perception + Observe goal roll when they return to their rooms. If they succeed, they notice that it appears as if someone searched their rooms. If the characters confront the desk clerk, he apologizes and says that it must have been the housekeeping personnel. If the characters are paranoid, sweeping for bugs and other forms of electronic surveillance, they might spot the observation team in the opposite building (Perception + Observe goal roll at a -8 penalty). The moment the Killroys are spotted they will bug out and move to another observation post a little further away. Assuming that they are not spotted, the Killroys will quietly watch what the characters are up to and gather evidence. They will take action later.





## The Karl's Range

The characters can track down the *Dancing Light* under its new name: *Karl's Range*. The ship is currently taking on stores and seeking cargo. Captain Holden Karl will welcome any enquiries but knows very little about the ship's previous owners. On the other hand, if the characters are looking to get off Leagueheim, the Captain is willing to take them for the usual fee or passage contract.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters that are important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Incidental gamemaster characters need to be prepared either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama—they are likely to have many more.

### William 'Dead Eye' Dor

William is a yeoman who has worked for many different masters over the years but never left Leagueheim. He heard many tales of other worlds and recycled many of them into a fictional account of his own life. If asked about his nickname, he tells the characters that he acquired it because he was a crack shot back when he served on Stigmata (it is, in fact, because he has a glass eye).

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "Ye need a guide, no? Ol' Dead Eye'll see ye through."

**Description:** A shabby little man in a long dirty coat, his beard and hair are long and unkempt. His face has several scars (the stories behind how he got these change every other day). Most unnerving of all is that his left eye never blinks.

**Equipment:** Polymer Knit, Stunner

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Endurance 4

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 5, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 6, Introvert 3, Passion 4, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 7, Dodge 4, Fight 5, Impress 5, Melee 3, Observe 7, Shoot 4, Sneak 8, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 4, Inquiry 5, Speak Urthish

**Wyrd:** 4

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|O|O|O|O

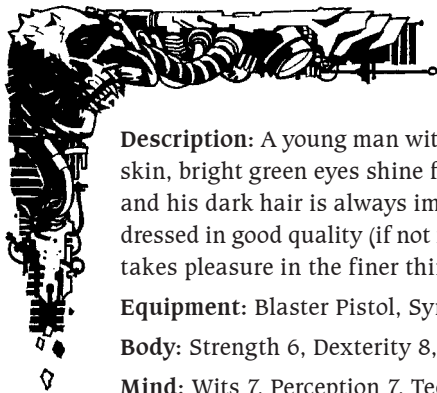
### Captain Holden Karl

Holden Karl made Captain at a young age. Luck seems to favor him—he has his ship, a crew, and the Known Worlds at his feet. He is not interested in cargo runs, but they pay the bills. He seeks adventure whenever the opportunity presents itself. Holden Karl is not reckless, although many would say so—indeed, he is ready to take a risk if the payback looks favorable.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "So what's this I hear about a deal ... and a handsome payoff?"





**Description:** A young man with a roguish grin and swarthy skin, bright green eyes shine from beneath bushy eyebrows and his dark hair is always immaculately brushed. Usually dressed in good quality (if not fine) clothes, he is a man who takes pleasure in the finer things in life.

**Equipment:** Blaster Pistol, Synthsilk

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 8, Endurance 8

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 7, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 5, Passion 5, Calm 3, Faith 2, Ego 7

**Natural Skills:** Charm 7, Dodge 7, Fight 5, Impress 6, Melee 5, Observe 5, Shoot 9, Sneak 5, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Drive (Spaceship) 8, Spacesuit, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Old Maxwell / Kam Sharp

Old Maxwell is purely a persona used by Kam Sharp to get around under the noses of the Charioteers Guild. Old Maxwell was indeed a real person, a Mendicant Monk and a mentor to Kam after his troubles with the Guild. When the old man died, Kam used his identity so that he could come and go from the Wastepit without suspicion. After his father was disgraced and removed from the Guild (through an airlock), Kam became bitter, and harbored revenge plots against the League ever since. This culminated in a series of terrorist bombings that made him a fugitive. Yet the Guild never managed to catch him. He is well practiced in the arts of knavery, but his fury is long spent. Now all he craves for is to be away from under the eyes of the League.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "I know a great many things about a great many people, that is the virtue of age."

**Description:** When dressed in the cowed robe of the Medicant Maxwell, there is little to see, his face hidden in shadow, only the beard or wisps of hair show around the folds of the deep hood. Without the robe he has a stern face that the years made sour. His eyes give him away, one green and the other blue, an inheritance from his father.

**Equipment:** None

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Endurance 7

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 9, Tech 8

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 5, Passion 2, Calm 3, Faith 1, Ego 6

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 8, Fight 5, Impress 6, Melee 6, Observe 10, Shoot 8, Sneak 7, Vigor 9

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 8, Streetwise 7, Survival 7, Spacesuit, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Wyrd:** 3

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Starships

Starships are both characters and backdrops to **Fading Suns** games. While many ply the Jumproads of the Known Worlds each should have its own distinct flavor, even ships of the same class should be unique.

### Karl's Range, modified League Privateer Class Raider

The *Karl's Range* has a sleek angular look and is generally wedge shaped. Bulky engines at the rear of the craft give the impression that she was built for speed. Obvious weapons are placed on the tips of the stubby dorsal and ventral fins. The torpedo launcher gives the nose of the craft a sleek mouth-like appearance.

Originally named *Dancing Light*, this ship has seen more action than most. She suffered considerable damage in a pirate raid ten years ago, which required a full refit of the hull and systems. Afterwards, her new Captain renamed her. Renaming a ship is usually considered bad luck and frowned upon, but Captain Karl was adamant. Since the refit, the *Karl's Range* spent a considerable amount of time tracking pirates operating in Madoc and Leagueheim systems with some success.

**Size Rating:** 4 (35m long, 12m wide, 10m high)

**Grade:** Lander

**Engines:** Fast

**Shields:**

Speed	Left / Right
Full thrust	0 / 0
<sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> thrust	1 / 1
Half thrust	1 / 1
<sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> thrust	2 / 2
Full stop	2 / 2

**Armaments:** 2 Lt Laser, 1 Torpedo Launcher, 1 Grappling Gun (turret)

**Sensors:** EMS 8

**Crew:** 4 (pilot, navigator, engineer, gunner)

**Passengers:** 6 (12 with double occupancy of staterooms)

**Cargo:** 10 metric tons

**Jumps:** 3

**Supplies:** 3 months for crew and full passenger load

**Vitality:** 40

**Cost:** 69,600 firebirds

## Act Five: Into the Wastepit

The characters take a trek into the Wastepit, one of the disused, polluted, and abandoned sectors of Kesparate. There are dangers here, not just the occasional bands of desperate outcasts who try to eke out a living, but also the more organized and better-equipped Scravers who come here



in search of salvageable parts. The environment itself is also hostile and the characters should equip themselves for survival before striking out.

If Old Maxwell is guiding them, the characters avoid much of the toxic environment. Dead Eye Dor refuses to go into the Wastepit, saying that was not part of the deal and not part of the service. If he is pressed, he justifies himself with local horror stories about nameless threats. If forced, he abandons the characters at the first opportunity.

The terrain is treacherous, great-cratered pits that have filled with heavy toxic gases, pools of acidic slime and the rough terrain of the ancient broken streets. There are even rockslides as the characters disturb the rubble that has piled up along the sides of some of the buildings.

Under the pretence of avoiding dangerous areas, Old Maxwell will lead the characters into further danger; he will pit them against a threat. This is not intended to harm the characters, but to test them and find out if they are worth trusting. It is important to him that the characters are loyal to one another, that, while they must fight to defend themselves, they are not unduly merciless or cruel. Only if the characters pass his test will he reveal who he really is; if they fail, he will simply lose them in the Wastepit and disappear, never to be seen again.

## The Test

The party has skirted around the edge of an industrial slime pool, and climbed over loose rubble into an old alleyway. While the rubble is loose and treacherous underfoot, it is not a problem to traverse with patience; in a hurry it would be easy to slip, fall and break something, or worse, trigger a slide that could crush them all. Once into the alley, their escape is effectively blocked. It is, of course, a perfect place for an ambush.

The alley is long and strewn with old rubbish, rusting dumpsters, filled with all kinds of ancient garbage. As the party advances, a howl sounds out. A few moments pass before there are answering howls and jabbering as the D-generates, a local gang of Changed, appear in the empty windows of the buildings on both sides of the alley. Most brandish homemade spears, bows or simply rocks, threatening those unfortunates below. They do not attack right away, unless the players start shooting first.

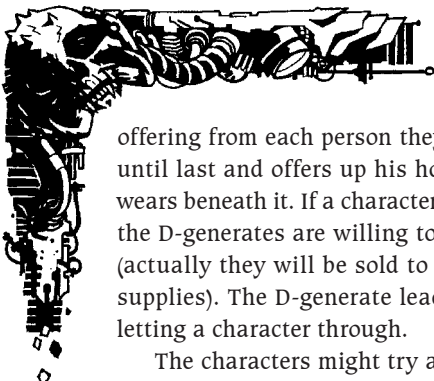
The leader of the D-generates silences the others and delivers his ultimatum from the rooftop:

*"So ye come to buy passage through our alley or contest it?"*

Old Maxwell remains quiet and watches what the characters are going to do. They can trade or fight, and fighting puts them at a serious disadvantage in terms of numbers and position. The D-generates have both the high ground and cover. They can, of course, turn and flee, or fight their way out if they do not want to make a trade. Trading for passage is of course the most survivable option.

The D-generates are interested in food, clothes, weapons, but most valuable of all are medical supplies. They expect an





offering from each person they let through; Maxwell waits until last and offers up his hooded robe and the jacket he wears beneath it. If a character has nothing to offer in trade, the D-generates are willing to keep that person 'as dinner' (actually they will be sold to the Muster for much needed supplies). The D-generate leader vets each offering before letting a character through.

The characters might try a feint by being open to trade and then taking a hostage. This will get them through the alley, but they will be hunted through the Wastepit for the rest of their time there.

## The Old Down Station

Somewhere deep in the Wastepit sits an ancient microwave power receiver station, once part of a network of down stations for receiving power collected by solar satellites in orbit then beamed to the surface of Leagueheim by microwave. The satellites are long since gone and the down station is now little more than a decrepit shell, but this is where Old Maxwell is heading for.

On the upper floor, Maxwell will uncover a bag hidden under rubble and belts on an old blaster; he also shakes out a dusty old jacket with a Charioteers emblem on the shoulder and the name 'Dancing Light' embroidered underneath.

*"Well, you've found me, Old Kam Sharp at your service. So you were looking for me? Or for something you think I can lead you to?"*

Kam led the characters out into the Wastepit to have this discussion in part out of paranoia, and in part so he can pick up some stashed belongings before he leaves Leagueheim for good.

Once the characters explain what they are after, Kam nods. There is a Jumpkey and he knows where it is hidden, or at least where his father hid it. He is willing to trade the Jumpkey for his retirement. Too long has he been an outcast on the streets of Leagueheim and Grail sounds like a much better place to go.

Before the characters can shake on the deal there is noise from lower floor of the building. Kam looks worried, and pulls his blaster.

The Killroys are coming (or if the characters are being hunted by the D-generates you can use them again). The Killroy team will have two members for each player character. Once they know they have given themselves away they will throw caution to the wind and storm the building, they know from thermal sensors approximately where the characters are and they are coming in heavy.

This should be run as a rear guard action to cover the characters' escape; by taking the stairwell to the roof Kam will lead them across the rooftops jumping between buildings and taking fire from the Killroys. Two of the Killroys will double back to pick up their flyer and try to cut the retreating characters off.

Jumping between buildings will require the characters to make Strength + Vigor goal rolls. Give a penalty to the roll based on the distance they need to jump. This will need to be

performed under stress as the Killroys are shooting at them. They will be able to take cover behind old ventilation ducts, low walls or sloped roofs. The characters can return fire as the Killroy agents try to pursue them. Kam is not one for hanging around for a firefight; he will try to lead the characters out across the roofs and hope to lose the Killroys in the chase.

Just when they think they have shaken off the pursuers and the characters are catching their breaths, the Killroys' flyer will rise up next to the building and shine a spotlight on them, starting another chase or firefight.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters that are important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Incidental gamemaster characters need to be prepared either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama—they are likely to have many more.

### Sawmouth, Leader of the D-generates

Sawmouth rose to lead his gang through cleverness rather than violence. Despite his appearance, he can negotiate well with the characters using his intimidating appearance as extra weight in his barter.

**Race:** Human (Changed)

**Quote:** "The Wastepit is our home, she is our mother, even unfortunates like us have a place in this world, and this IS our place."

**Description:** Compared to many of the Changed, Sawmouth looks very human; his skin is a little grayish and has a few inflamed sores here and there. The moment he opens his mouth it is obvious he is not a man: his teeth are like sharp daggers and seem to fill his mouth and any kind of smile gives him a murderous appearance.

**Equipment:** Spear (made with a vibro-dirk attached to a pole)

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Endurance 7

**Mind:** Wits 10, Perception 7, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 3, Passion 8, Calm 2, Faith 1, Ego 6

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 7, Fight 9, Impress 4, Melee 4, Observe 7, Shoot 5, Sneak 10, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Throwing 7, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish  
**Wyrd:** 8

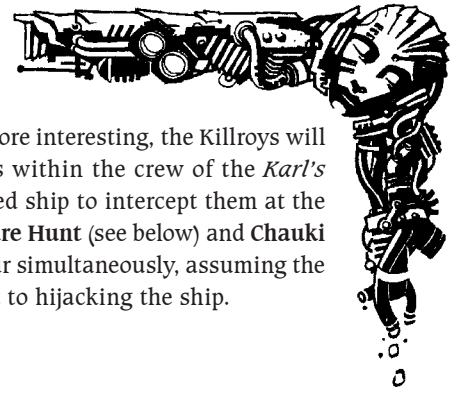
**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|◯|◯|◯|◯|◯|◯|◯

### Typical D-generate Ganger

The D-generates are survivors, they make a living from scavenging and trading safety for goods with those they meet. They are unfortunates, cursed by science, but they are not foolish or stupid.

**Race:** Human (Changed)

**Quote:** "I kill you now! And eat you later..."



**Description:** The appearance of the Changed varies widely, some look more human than others, some can even pass for human but most have obvious modification that mark them as dammed in the eyes of the Church. Anything goes, tentacles, spines, multiple eyes, extra limbs etc.

**Equipment:** Spear, rocks or other improvised weapons (a few may have higher tech weapons)

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Endurance 7

**Mind:** Wits 6, Perception 6, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 4, Introvert 2, Passion 5, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 6, Fight 6, Impress 3, Melee 5, Observe 6, Shoot 4, Sneak 6, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Throwing 5, Speak Urthish

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Typical Killroy Marine

Killroy Marines are not in fact Killroys; they are hired as expendables, though they are likely to be directed by a Killroy agent who is commanding their operation.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "Surrender or I will shoot!"

**Description:** Varies widely; during this scene they are dressed in plain clothes. If used in a boarding action in the next Act they will be dressed in uniforms.

**Equipment:** Polymer Knit, Shotgun

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 6, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 2, Passion 4, Calm 4, Faith 4, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 5, Fight 6, Impress 3, Melee 5, Observe 4, Shoot 5, Sneak 4, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Speak Urthish

**Wyrd:** 4

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Act Six: On the Road so Dark

The characters now make their escape from Leagueheim and snatch the prize on the way. Deception is the easiest way to achieve these ends as the Jumpkey is stowed in a safe compartment aboard the *Dancing Light* (now renamed *Karl's Range*). The ship is looking for a hire, which might make life easy. Kam will not reveal the Jumpkey's hiding place until he and the party are onboard and safely off world.

There are two problems to be overcome in this act, the first is retrieving the Jumpkey from its hiding place, the second is convincing the Captain to use it rather than his

own keys. To make things more interesting, the Killroys will activate one of their agents within the crew of the *Karl's Range* and dispatch an armed ship to intercept them at the Jumpgate. The scenes **Treasure Hunt** (see below) and **Chauki Stride** (see p. 18) should occur simultaneously, assuming the characters do not just resort to hijacking the ship.

## Treasure Hunt

The Jumpkey was hidden for the best part of forty years, and remained unnoticed through a major refit as well as the day-to-day maintenance of the ship's systems. Without Karl to tell the characters where to look, their chances to find it are very slim. With the new internal layout of the ship now quite different to how it used to be, Karl is also confused as to where the hiding place is now located; it takes him a day or so to get his bearings.

Of course the hiding place is inside the Captain's cabin, behind a hidden panel above the cabin's porthole. It is not uncommon for starship captains to have many small secure nooks where invaluable items like Jumpkeys can be hidden, along with other valuable navigational data.

Gaining access to the Captain's cabin can be done in one of two ways: the characters break in while he is on the bridge, or they can simply visit him while off duty and take him hostage so they can search his room.

Breaking in is likely to be the preferred way, as it will leave the captain ignorant of the valuable discovery that has been right under his nose for the last decade.

Even knowing where the compartment is, it will still require a Perception + Search goal roll to locate. If Kam has not told the characters where to look the goal roll will come with a Herculean penalty (-10).

## Chauki Stride

The Killroy agent has instructions to deal with Kam Sharp and his accomplices. The traditional method for Killroy vengeance is the Chauki stride out of an airlock without a spacesuit. His primary target is Kam but if he gets the opportunity to deal with one of the characters that is on their own, he will likely take it.

Using an electro-stunner to incapacitate the victim, the character will be used as bait to try and snare as many of the characters in the airlock as possible.

When the stunned character wakes up, he will be securely bound with Muster chains inside a small dark room (the airlock), the only light will be from the window in the inner lock door. The door controls inside the airlock are sabotaged to prevent the character from escaping. Any weapons he had will be missing, whatever communication devices he owns are still on his person (so that he can call for help). The victim might manage to escape the Muster chains but he will not be able to get out of the airlock, and hotwiring the airlock is not a clever idea.

Once the other characters are alerted to their comrade's plight, they will try to open the airlock from the inside of the ship. The controls will work perfectly, but anyone who is tech savvy might spot that they have been tampered with



(Perception + Volt Redemption goal roll with a Demanding (-4) penalty). Once opened, the doors will swing shut and seal after 15 seconds: just long enough for the characters to rush in to help their bound comrade.

Now the trap is sprung, several characters have only one minute to live as the red lights come on and an alert tone sounds to show that the airlock is about to emergency evacuate without cycling its air.

Anyone outside has a good chance to save the characters inside by overriding the mechanism (Tech + Volt Redemption goal roll). If everyone is inside, it is a lot more difficult, but not impossible: it requires a Tech + Volt Redemption goal roll with a Tough (-6) penalty. The gamemaster should ramp up the players' stress level by putting a stopwatch on the table and telling them to act quickly (they don't know that there is not a time limit). Assuming that the characters make their escape, they may want know who is out to get them.

## Interceptions

The ship that the Killroys dispatched is a heavy armed Explorer class vessel, the *Chad's Message*. It interdicts the *Karl's Range* about 0.5 AU from the Jumpgate. As it approaches, it transmits a message to Captain Karl ordering his ship to stand down on the authority of the Guild.

While Captain Karl is very surprised by this turn of events, and more than a little alarmed, he obeys the order. He then seeks a meeting with the characters to find out why the Guild wants to get their hands on them. Holden Karl is an opportunist and does not like being surprised or outmaneuvered. He gives the characters a chance to negotiate; he then makes the decision about whose side he is going to assist based on what rewards are offered.

Persuading Captain Karl is actually not nearly as hard as one might expect. Despite his opportunistic streak he is a man who believes in his Code. If one of the characters points out that he has a duty under the Guild articles to 'uphold any contract' and that they have a 'contract for safe passage to Grail' he is conflicted but ultimately sides with the player characters.

If Captain Karl becomes aware that the characters are in possession of a Jumpkey, he still helps them but also offers them a trade for the key.

If the characters gain control of the *Karl's Range* (by hijacking or persuasion) they can either run for the Jumpgate or fight. If the gamemaster happens to have a copy of **Holistic Design's Noble Armada** miniature game, this encounter can be run as a duel scenario between the two starships. The Killroys try to disable the *Karl's Range* if the player characters make a run for the Jumpgate and then proceed with a boarding action. So it is all going to come down to how quickly the Jumpgate can be opened.

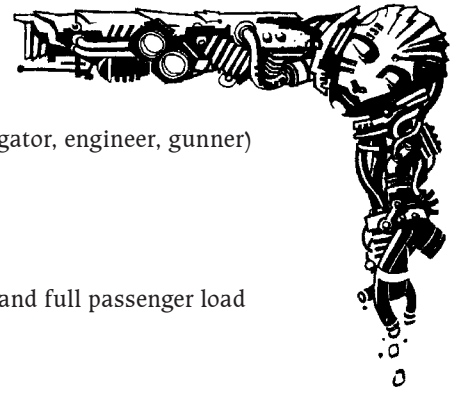
## Key Characters

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### Jon Garret, Killroy Agent

Most of the time Garret is a quiet, unassuming figure. As navigator for the *Karl's Range* he is a trusted member of the crew and often doubles as a tech to keep the ship in peak condition. He has numerous volt gadgets and can often be





found under one of the bridge control panels making tweaks. Few would guess that he is actually a Killroy agent.

**Race:** Human

**Quote:** "I know this ship better than most, I did a lot of the volt work myself."

**Description:** A bald man with a tattoo of a serpent that runs around his left ear and down his neck. Dressed in standard coveralls, he fits perfectly into the crew of the *Karl's Range*. Although he is not the ship's engineer, he carries a volt tool kit arranged in the many pockets of his jumpsuit.

**Equipment:** Polymer Knit, Stunner

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 6, Perception 7, Tech 7

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 7, Passion 3, Calm 6, Faith 2, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 5, Fight 4, Impress 4, Melee 4, Observe 6, Shoot 8, Sneak 7, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Volt Redemption 7, Spacesuit, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Wyrd:** 6

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

**Crew:** 5 (captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, gunner)

**Passengers:** 4 marines

**Cargo:** 40 metric tons

**Jumps:** 2

**Supplies:** 2 month for crew and full passenger load

**Vitality:** 40

**Cost:** 62,750 firebirds

## Aftermath

Once the starship makes the jump though the gate the characters are basically home and dry. If they use the Jumpkey they discover they are taking a shortcut back to Grail and will be home in a fraction of the normal time. It will take them about five days to make planet fall on Grail, but the Killroys have to make the trip the long way round. Captain Karl will be able to defend his decision to disobey the order to stand down on the basis of Guild law concerning delivering on a contract.

The characters receive a second interview with Baron Halman Keddah, where they are rewarded for their efforts and elevated in his esteem. They can be sure that they will receive his patronage in future. The Baron's love of the unusual is sure to put them to many tests in the future.

There are a few loose ends to wrap up. How bad are the characters' troubles with the League? They might find themselves targeted by the Killroys or avoided by the Charioteers—both of which make space travel difficult or at least very expensive. Of course, assisting the Guild in some future task might redeem them in their eyes.

House Keddah rewards the noble who successfully achieved the objective with a small piece of land that grants him a small income. The noble is expected to reward members of his retinue directly. The Baron also provides a small sum of firebirds for their assistance (about 6,000 firebirds in total).

## Awarding Experience

Rewarding Experience Points should follow the guidelines on p. 136 of the **Fading Suns** rulebook (p. 126 of the **Revised Second Edition**):

- 1 Experience Point if the characters failed to retrieve the Jumpkey for the Baron but managed to survive.
- 2 Experience Points if the characters managed to obtain the Jumpkey for the Baron but Kam Sharp died.
- 3 Experience Points if the characters obtained the Jumpkey for the Baron and kept Kam Sharp alive.

## Extra Experience

The player characters may receive bonus experience for good role-playing, working together and learning new things as detailed below.

+1 Experience Point for role-playing: Any character that was role-played properly and took an active part in the drama should receive this award.

## Starships

Starships are both characters and backdrops to **Fading Suns** games. While many ply the Jumproads of the Known Worlds each should have its own distinct flavor, even ships of the same class should be unique.

### Chad's Message, modified

#### League Free Trader Class Freighter

A modified League Freighter, the *Chad's Message* is a streamlined if boxy fish design and looks no different from any other Free Trader Class ship.

The *Chad's Message* is named for the long nosed man motif of the Killroys. They use this ship as an escort ship in the more dangerous regions of space. Intended to look like an ordinary Free Trader, its armament and complement of marines are a nasty surprise for any would-be pirate.

**Size Rating:** 4 (35m long, 15m wide, 13m high)

**Grade:** Lander

**Engines:** Fast

**Shields:**

Speed	Left / Right
Full thrust	0 / 0
¾ thrust	1 / 1
Half thrust	1 / 1
¼ thrust	2 / 2
Full stop	2 / 2

**Armaments:** 1 Heavy Blaster, 1 Grappling Gun, 1 Light Laser (turret)

**Sensors:** Laser radar 5



+1 to +3 Experience Points for learning something new: There is plenty to learn in this drama; likely this will be the characters' first trip to Leagueheim, encounters with the Killroys and the Changed, and traveling a nightroad back to Grail.

## Complications

Of course you do not need to run the drama exactly as written. Feel free to tweak or change any aspect of it for your own epic. Here are a couple of complications that add extra layers to the story. These elements are entirely optional.

### It's a Setup

How did Baron Halman Keddah come by the log records that started the characters on their quest? They were provided by an element within the Charioteers Guild, one of the honges, or even the Killroys themselves. The setup was supposed to retrieve a valuable Jumpkey and dispose of a dissident (Kam Sharp) in the process. Of course the Charioteers could have disposed of Kam at any time but he was the only link to the Jumpkey. They could not approach him directly and so made a deal with House Keddah in return for assistance and preferential trades that would help keep the minor house secure against Hazat aggression or Decados encroachment. The Baron, after all the characters have gone through, will turn the Jumpkey over to the League. But what the characters do not know will not hurt them.

### Key to Nowhere

Perhaps the Jumpkey is not what they expected. Perhaps it succumbed to data drift and is now useless (in which case they have a long trip home). Perhaps the key is only one way—the nightroad can only be accessed from the Leagueheim side, and appears to be a dead key if used from the Grail side. Perhaps the key does not even lead to Grail, the characters might find themselves on one of the nine lost worlds that once had a Jumproad to Leagueheim. Or it might simply lead somewhere unexpected.

### A Road So Very Dark

The Church teaches that after the death of the Prophet his blood sanctified all the Jumproads. Even a closed Jumproad is considered to have received that blessing, but what of this new road? It did not even exist at the time of the Prophet's cleansing. Can it be considered clean? Taking a trip down this dark path might expose the characters to dark entities or other unspeakable horrors. If the Church should uncover this nightroad it might well interdict both Leagueheim and Grail to ensure that this dark road is never used again. The player characters might find themselves tainted and/or hunted by the Inquisition.

## Spin-offs

If the characters are moving on from this drama into an ongoing epic, here are a few ideas to keep them busy:

## In the Eyes of the League

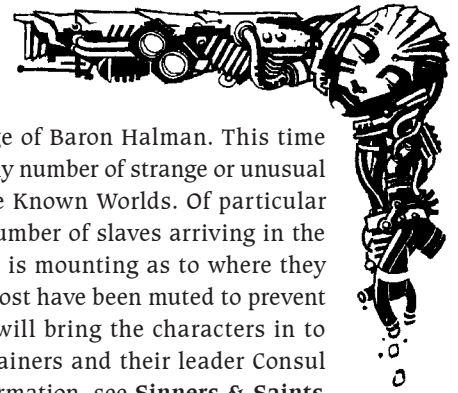
The Charioteers need something dangerous done; too dangerous for them to risk their own necks, so a messenger comes to the characters with a proposal. If the characters undertake this dangerous task, the Guild will forgive them for their part in the Jumpkey theft. Perhaps the Guild needs the characters to infiltrate a coven of Sathraists that threatens the security of the Guild. If its existence were to become open knowledge, opinions would be inflamed and one bunch of bad apples would mar the reputation of the whole Guild. Best that people unrelated to the whole affair deal with this on the quiet, or under the pretext of some other action.

## The Mystery of Parnel Dwainson

Parnel Dwainson was the only identifiable passenger on the *Dancing Light* when it made the jump to Grail almost 50 years ago. Back then he was a young engineer, but where is he today? The truth is that Parnel Dwainson is a very important commodity. The Jumpkey that the characters recovered is not an old Second Republic key, but a brand new one manufactured by Dwainson. The nightroad that runs between Grail and Leagueheim never existed prior to this key. Dwainson is one of the Known Worlds' foremost authorities of Annunaki technology.

Jumpgates only open between two gates that are programmed to interact. Dwainson was able to visit both gates and added extra codes to each gate's control, which allowed him to build a new key for the new route he had created. The genius of Parnel Dwainson could rebuild the Known Worlds in a new image, able to add new strategic





routes to the existing gate network. Which is precisely the reason why he is in hiding somewhere, engrossed in his research. Each Jumpgate is unique in its coding structure and requires years of research before a new route can be built. What else might Parnel achieve? Parnel may have a Philosophers Stone in his possession that permits him to reprogram a Jumpgate, and if he can make new routes can he also remove existing ones?

### Continued Patronage

The characters will again be invited to serve House

Keddah under the patronage of Baron Halman. This time they are sent to document any number of strange or unusual events occurring across the Known Worlds. Of particular interest to the House is a number of slaves arriving in the Grail system, some concern is mounting as to where they are actually coming from. Most have been muted to prevent them from speaking. This will bring the characters in to conflict with the Solace Chainers and their leader Consul Simon Solace (for more information, see **Sinners & Saints**, p. 34) and possibly even lead them down another nightroad to the lost world of Swans Way.

## Appendix

We present the following sample pre-generated characters in order of importance; if there are only three players, hand them only the first three characters. The extra characters can be used as gamemaster characters or simply be discarded. Please note that although all the characters are male, players can rename them and change their gender if they prefer. Likewise, the characters' descriptions are deliberately vague so that the players can embellish and personalize them.

The concept behind these characters is that of a noble and his entourage with Sir Raimon Keddah at the centre; he is the most important character as he serves as the focus for all the others.

### Sir Raimon Keddah

Sir Raimon Keddah is the son of a landless knight; born and raised on Grail, he always dreamt of bettering himself. When he came of age he joined the military in a bid to make it off world and get a little action and adventure. Even for a noble, the military life is not overly comfortable and he found the discipline to be distasteful. Worse yet was taking orders from those whom he considered less capable than himself.

At the earliest opportunity, he left to travel the Jumproads, taking up small quests from various patrons. This life was more to his liking, there was a freedom to do what he wanted, when he wanted and not be beholden to a chain of command. After several years of wandering, he returned home to Grail to find his mother had become ill. Noble blood is no proof against poverty and his family being landless, he had no particular income on which to live. He used much of his accumulated wealth to benefit them.

Now he is ready to strike out again, eager to see more of the Known Worlds, and to be free on the Jumproads to see where they will take him.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** House Keddah

**Rank:** Knight

**Quote:** "If I want things done right, I should do them myself."

**Description:** A young man with shady blond hair and a square jaw, physically well built.

**Age:** 24

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 8, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 6 (8), Perception 6, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 4, Introvert 1, Passion 4, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 8

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 4, Fight 4, Impress 4, Melee 6, Observe 5, Shoot 6, Sneak 5, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 2, Remedy 2, Leadership 3, Survival 1, Warfare (Military Tactics) 1, Drive (Beastcraft) 1, Inquiry 2, Lore (People & Places) 2, Streetwise 1, Ride 2, Etiquette 2, Gambling 2, Speak Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthish

**Blessings/Curses:** Alert (+2 Perception to spy on rivals), Untrustworthy (-1 Knavery), Family Ties, Rank (Knight)

**Cybernetics:** Second Brain, Spy Eye

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Broadsword, Wrist Squawker, 5 firebirds

**Wyrd:** 4

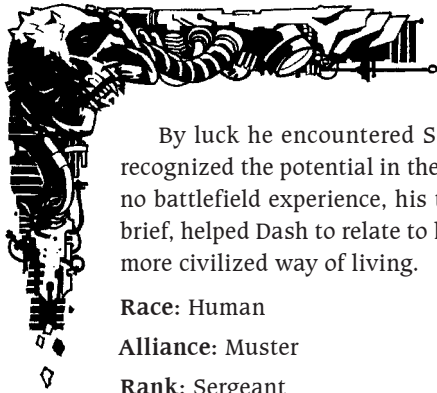
**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|0|0|0|0|0|0

### Sergeant Dash Hawthorn

Growing up, Dash Hawthorn never had much of anything. Life was difficult with a large family to feed and little income. The Guild offered a way out of poverty, the Muster saw his potential immediately and he trained hard to become a soldier for hire.

He saw action on many battlefields during the trailing years of the Emperor Wars, sometimes fighting for one side and then the other, all dependent on the whim of the contract. When the wars ended, there were suddenly lots of mercenaries looking for whatever work they could find, and Dash recognized that the writing was on the wall. The place to get work was no longer on the battlefield, but as a bodyguard for the wealthy and important.





By luck he encountered Sir Raimon Keddah and each recognized the potential in the other. Although Raimon had no battlefield experience, his time in the military, however brief, helped Dash to relate to him and come round to a new, more civilized way of living.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** Muster

**Rank:** Sergeant

**Quote:** "You pull that thing and you best be certain of how to use it."

**Description:** A well-built middle-aged man, hair shaved short to cover the fact he's balding.

**Age:** 37

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 8, Endurance 7

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 4, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 1, Passion 1, Calm 5, Faith 4, Ego 1

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 4, Fight 6, Impress 6, Melee 5, Observe 5, Shoot 8, Sneak 5, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 2, Knavery 2, Streetwise 3, Drive (Landcraft) 2, Drive (Watercraft) 2, Lore (People & Places) 5, Mech Redemption 2, Remedy 2, Search 5, Survival 1, Tracking 1, Focus 2, Gambling 3, Ride 1, Speak Urthish

**Blessings/Curses:** Bold (+2 Passion while acting when others hesitate), Callous (-2 Extrovert when asked for aid), Rank (Sergeant)

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Blaster Pistol, Wrist Squawker, Mech Tools, Fusion Torch, 2,210 firebirds

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Canon Augustus Halgarth

Augustus Halgarth is the bastard son of a noble. Fostered to a wealthy family to avoid embarrassment, he was raised to enter a monastic life in penance for his unfortunate beginnings. Augustus is unaware of his true heritage but he has made his commitment to the Pancreator and to Saint Amalthea, and would not step back from his calling.

Once his monastic training was complete, he chose to wander Grail as a traveling healer to bring his skills to any who needed aid. During this time he visited many holy sites on Grail and prayed for guidance, that he might bring his skills to those who need it most. Shortly thereafter, a vision guided him to a house where a noble woman was dying. She was the mother of Sir Raimon Keddah, who had exhausted his modest fortune to bring the finest physicians to cure his mother.

Augustus knew instinctively what he must do and that his faith had brought him here for a purpose. He prayed over the woman for long hours before laying his hands upon her. A rush of light passed through him and the woman stirred. He knew then the calling for which he had been born.

Since that time, only a few short weeks ago, Augustus has become a confidant of the family and now travels with Sir Raimon so that he might better reach those who need his aid.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** Almatheans

**Rank:** Canon

**Quote:** "May the blessing of Saint Amalthea be upon you."

**Description:** A man of average height and appearance who would probably go unnoticed if it were not for his Amalthean vestments.

**Age:** 28

**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Endurance 4

**Mind:** Wits 6, Perception 5, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 6, Introvert 2, Passion 1, Calm 5, Faith 8, Ego 1

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 3, Fight 3, Impress 3, Melee 3, Observe 5, Shoot 3, Sneak 3, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 3, Streetwise 1, Empathy 7, Lore (Theology) 1, Lore (Local People) 1, Physick 7, Remedy 7, Stoic Mind 1, Focus 2, Oratory 1, Volt Redemption 1, Craft Redemption 2, Think Machine 2, Xeno-Empathy (Etyri) 2, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Blessings/Curses:** Compassionate (+2 Passion when helping others), Gullible (-2 Wits when fast-talked), Rank (canon), Bastard, Well-liked (+1 Charm)

**Theurgy:** 3

**Theurgic Rites:** The Prophet's Blessing, The Devotional Liturgy, The Laying on of Hands

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Physick's Kit, 90 firebirds

**Wyrd:** 10

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

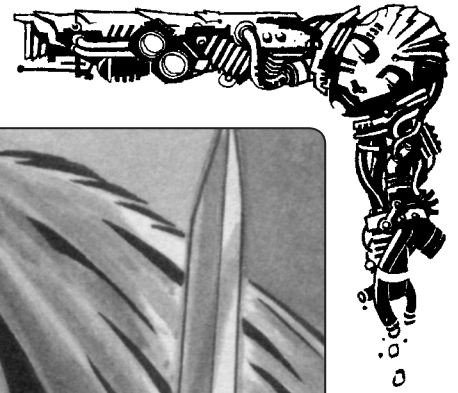
## Koaq Huar'raughq

When Koaq was young, he would look up at the stars and wonder about them. When he was fledged he tried to reach them with his own wings but he was not strong enough. When he learned more about them, he vowed that one day he would fly among them.

Koaq made himself useful around the starport at Sangreal and finally a crew took him on. His first experience aboard a starship almost changed his mind. The claustrophobic spaces; his room barely big enough to stretch his wings; not being able to see the sky except for a small porthole. He spent much of his time on the bridge where there was a better field of vision and he could see his beloved stars.

The humans were embroiled in a great space war at this time, and Koaq found it difficult to understand why humans would fight over such a vast empty space when there should be room for all. It was a time of lucrative contracts and shady work. Things have changed a lot in the last few years, the





war is over, trade is once again free to flourish and Koag returned to Grail with great tales of many suns he had seen and worlds whose skies he has flown.

He was an alien among humans and now, at home again, he found himself an alien among his own kind. After a short time the stars called to him again. This time with new human companions; perhaps he will find what he seeks.

**Race:** Etyri

**Alliance:** None (?)

**Rank:** Yeoman

**Quote:** "The stars always look different everywhere I go."

**Description:** A tall avian alien with a thick plumage about his head and a decoratively painted beak, resembling an eagle.

**Age:** hard to say

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 8, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Extrovert 7, Introvert 1, Passion 1, Calm 5, Faith 4, Ego 1

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 4, Fight 3, Impress 6, Melee 7, Observe 3, Shoot 3, Sneak 3, Vigor 4, Fly 4

**Learned Skills:** Beast Lore 1, Lore (Grail) 2, Lore (Jumproads) 2, Gambling 1, Knavery 1, Streetwise 2, Drive (Spacecraft) 3, Remedy 1, Science (Sensors) 1, Think Machine 2, Warfare (Gunnery) 2, Throwing 3, Search 1, Survival 1, Spacesuit, Speak Etyri, Speak Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Blessings/Curses:** Hawkeye (+2 Shoot or Throwing when self or target in motion), Claws (3 DMG), Beak (2 DMG), Flight, Keen Eyes (+3 Perception with sight only), Alien Nature, Claustrophobia (-2 Calm in closed quarters), Hollow Bones, Ostracized

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Wrist Squawker, Vibro Broadsword, Blaster Shotgun, 1,605 firebirds

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○

## Chief Larson Doville

Larson Doville was born to a wealthy family in rural Grail and was raised with finer tastes than most. His parents had earned their own wealth and were adamant that no child of theirs would simply be handed everything on a silver platter. It is fair to say that he was never given exactly what he wanted, everything had to be earned, everything had a value, and he learned this lesson early.

Larson apprenticed to the Reeves Guild and made a place for himself in the Sangreal Agora. His business flourished but he wanted more. His attitude brought him recognition and scorn in equal measures from the Guild; many recognized the rise of a potentially dangerous rival and conspired to keep him down. But Larson could see where he needed to go, recognized that there were big fish in this pond and that if he wanted to be the biggest fish then he had to



look beyond Grail for opportunities that would carry him to greatness.

He sought out Sir Raimon Keddah as a suitable patron; he recognized many of his own traits in the young noble and could see that he was destined for great things. Perhaps together they could take on the Known Worlds and earn themselves a place amongst the greats of the Empire.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** Reeves

**Rank:** Chief

**Quote:** "May you live in interesting times ... I certainly hope to."

**Description:** A young man of immaculate appearance, well groomed, well dressed.

**Age:** 27

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 8, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 6, Introvert 2, Passion 1, Calm 5, Faith 4, Ego 1

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 5, Fight 3, Impress 5, Melee 3, Observe 8, Shoot 4, Sneak 3, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Drive (Beastcraft) 1, Lore (Regional Sangreal) 1, Lore (Law) 3, Lore (Finance) 3, Lore (Agora) 1, Academia 1, Bureaucracy 3, Etiquette 2, Inquiry 5, Debate 5, Gambling 1, Streetwise 1, Think Machine 2, Ride 1, Knavery 5, Speak Urthish, Speak Dialect, Read Urthish, Read Latin

**Blessings/Curses:** Shrewd (+2 Wits when fast-talked), Mammon (-2 Faith when money involved), Contacts x2, Gossip Network (Grail), Rank (Chief)

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Wrist Squawker, Derringer, Heavy Auto Pistol, 620 firebirds

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Tarlo Esstelan the Entertainer

Tarlo Esstelan is a moderately successful musician and entertainer; his popularity is quite genuine despite his life being a carefully engineered façade. His current life started only a few years ago, he had come to Grail and spent several years in the wilderness of the planet cleansing the taint of his old life.

In truth Tarlo was a dervish assassin operating behind enemy lines on the Kurgan front. Trained for service to House Hazat, he was sickened by the services demanded of him. Still, he is a skilled agent and if the Hazat ever discovers that he is not dead they will surely come looking for him. The best way to maintain his disguise is to keep moving and being attached to Sir Raimon's entourage as an ideal cover for him.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** None

**Rank:** Private First Class

**Quote:** "Listen now and let my music carry you into another world."

**Description:** A lean man who looks to have been undernourished most of his life.

**Age:** 22

**Body:** Strength 3, Dexterity 7, Endurance 3

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 7, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 2, Passion 1, Calm 4, Faith 3, Ego 4

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 3, Fight 3, Impress 3, Melee 6, Observe 5, Shoot 5, Sneak 6, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 1, Knavery 3, Streetwise 3, Disguise 2, Lockpicking 2, Sleight of Hand 2, Tracking 2, Archery 1, Lore (Poisons) 1, Acrobatics 2, Acting 2, Performance 6, Arts 2, Survival 3, Crossbow, Speak Urthish

**Blessings/Curses:** Disciplined (+2 Calm in combat), Secretive (-2 Extrovert around strangers), Rank (Private First Class), Dark Secret (Rogue Dervish Assassin)

**Psi:** 3

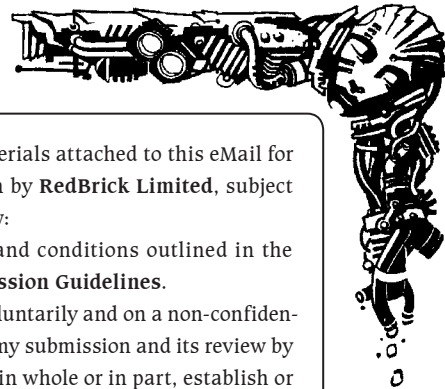
**Paths:** Soma (Toughening, Strengthening, Quickening)

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Wrist Squawker, Flute, Vibro Dirk, Garrote, Palm Laser, 1,600 firebirds

**Wyrd:** 7

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○





## Shards Submission Guidelines

The **Shards** series is a collection of adventures and encounters for the **Fading Suns** game. Intended as an inexpensive adventure resource for **Fading Suns** gamemasters, they are also a springboard for aspiring writers. The **Shards** series is published and available for purchase online from [www.drivethrurpg.com](http://www.drivethrurpg.com) and [www.rpgnow.com](http://www.rpgnow.com)—it is possible that a collection might see print at a later stage. Please read the following guidelines carefully before submitting your idea for a **Shard**. Submissions that do not conform to the guidelines may not be accepted.

### What We Are Looking For

Short adventures and encounters (including appropriate setting descriptions) for **Fading Suns**, written to be used with the rules contained in the main rulebook. A **Shard** can also contain new creatures and gamemaster characters. The tone and style of the text should fit the **Fading Suns** setting (refer to previously published adventures to get an idea of what we are talking about here). As mentioned above, the **Shards** series also serves as a hunting ground to find potential new writers we can send outlines to and ask to participate in bigger projects, so succeeding here may result in future agreements.

### What You Need to Send Us

Your manuscript, formatted as outlined below, attached to an eMail sent to [submissions@fading-suns.com](mailto:submissions@fading-suns.com). The eMail must contain a standard disclosure agreement (copy the boxed text unaltered into the body of your eMail). Please note that these guidelines are subject to change, so check [www.fading-suns.com](http://www.fading-suns.com) for updates and an FAQ).

### Formatting

We accept electronic submissions only. Each entry should come as a separate file (please use any of the following formats for your entries: DOC, RTF, TXT, or PDF). Your full name and eMail address should be provided on all pages of each entry.

All pages should be plain white letter- or A4-sized paper with one-inch margins all around, and set in type no smaller than 10-point). Using the default settings of your word processor is usually a good idea. Pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation—use our **Submission Handbook** as a guide (available at [www.fading-suns.com](http://www.fading-suns.com)).

### What Happens When My Submission Gets Accepted?

If your submission survives our evaluation process (as outlined in the **Revisions and Rejections** section of our **Submission Handbook**), we will contact you and start working on getting the **Shard** ready for publication (this involves editing, artwork selection/creation, and layout by our staff).

Once we reach this stage, your submission becomes the property of **RedBrick Limited** and **Holistic Design, Inc.**, meaning that you lose all rights to publish it elsewhere.

I wish to submit the materials attached to this eMail for consideration for publication by **RedBrick Limited**, subject to all of the conditions below:

I agree with the terms and conditions outlined in the **Fading Suns Shards Submission Guidelines**.

I submit my materials voluntarily and on a non-confidential basis. I understand that my submission and its review by **RedBrick Limited** does not, in whole or in part, establish or create by implication or otherwise any relationship between **RedBrick Limited** and myself that is not expressed herein.

I further understand and agree that **RedBrick Limited** in its own judgment, may accept or reject the materials that are submitted with this eMail and shall not be obligated to me in any way with respect to my submission until **RedBrick Limited** shall, at its own election, enter into a properly executed agreement with me, and only then according to the terms of the **Fading Suns Shards Submission Guidelines**, as outlined under **What Happens When My Submission Gets Accepted?**.

I agree that **RedBrick Limited** may have a reasonable period in which to review this submission.

I understand and agree that the review by **RedBrick Limited** of the materials that accompany my submission does not imply or create (a) any financial or other obligation of any kind on the part of **RedBrick Limited**, (b) any confidential relationship or guarantee of secrecy, or (c) any recognition or acknowledgment of either novelty or originality.

I also understand and agree that if the submission utilizes or is based on characters, settings, or other materials that are owned by **RedBrick Limited** or **Holistic Design, Inc.**, or if the submission contains trademarks and/or other proprietary materials that are owned by **RedBrick Limited**, then I shall not be free to submit the submission for publication to any person or firm other than **RedBrick Limited**.

I warrant that the submission is original, and that its publication will not violate the rights of any third party, and that the person identified herein as the submitter is the sole owner of the submission.

Furthermore, I am of legal age in my country of origin and am free to make agreements relative to this submission.

Version: 20070130

### Payment

Apart from the benefits of being a published author, you'll receive the following things from us:

- A complimentary copy of the **Shard** upon publication. If the **Shard** ends up in a later product (a printed collection, for example), you will get a complimentary copy of that as well.

- Depending on the **Shard's** final page count, you will also receive credit which you can spend on **RedBrick** products ONLY. This includes: miniatures, printed books, and eBooks. A small **Shard** (1-8 pages) will reward you store credit of US\$20; a medium **Shard** (9-16 pages) will reward US\$30 credit; a large **Shard** (17-24 pages) US\$40; and a frea-kin' big **Shard** (25+ pages) US\$50.

