

Friends in Foreign Parts

by Dave Morris

The following is another scenario for the Tirikéku rules. Set during the reign of Dlich'uné the Usurper, the adventure involves Tsolyáni citizens in Mu'ugalavá. Because it is an extremely role-playing heavy scenario, it can be easily adapted to any rules set.

Setting the Scene

The protagonists are staying at the Red Star clanhouse in Khéiris, a coastal city in southern Mu'ugalavá. The Clan Patriarch is Hekkúnish Mátir, a quite capable Tsolyáni-speaker. Khéiris has two off-shore lighthouses. Most of the coast is dangerously rocky with high cliffs, but there is at least one good sheltered cove (see below). At this time of year the weather is blustery, with high humidity and warm rains blown in off the sea. Occasionally hurricanes bring cooler rain, but this is naturally not very welcome since it puts a halt to all shipping and often costs lives due to flooding, storm damage, etc.

The adventure begins with Hekkúnish asking the protagonists to go up to a villa on the cliff-tops to look in on Ssiriei hiFushmangar, a clan-member of Tsolyáni extraction. He explains that she arrived home unexpectedly after a trip abroad and he just wants to see if there's anything she needs. Since the protagonists are Tsolyáni themselves (and presumably include at least one Red Star member), it seems appropriate that they go to drop in on her.

The Lady

Ssiriei hiFushmangar is a wealthy young Aridáni of the Red Star clan who lives in a mansion overlooking the sea, some way along the coastal cliffs outside the city. She is the only daughter of the late Tekkunel hiFushmangar, a former administrator in Jakalla, who fled to exile here after being implicated in the artificial grain shortage of 2349 AS.

Ssiriei is a scholar in ancient Tsáqw texts. Becoming interested in certain documents referred to as being at the Monastery of the Tempered Blade in the city of Lnóris (on Vrá), she took ship for there eight weeks ago. Anticipating a stay of at least a month for access to and translation of the documents, she told her servants she would be back in about three months.

However, when she got there she quickly found that the documents were not what she'd hoped for. Turning straight round, she has therefore got home seven weeks early. Going straight to her house, she found the door opened by a strange man - obviously Mu'ugalavýáni, but rather rough-looking and she thinks maybe a sailor. Along with two other men (one of them possibly a local Tsolyáni) he seized her and her maid and bundled them up in the cellar. Ssiriei got free by breaking a bottle and cutting her bonds, by which time the house was deserted. Nothing was stolen except the contents of a display box of antique coins - only five coins, worth no more than 50 Káitars or maybe 100 Káitars to a dedicated collector.

Later on, one of her four other servants (the old major-domo, Korchek) is found dead in the well at back of the villa. The cook, Ransru hiEshmazun, is missing along with the two house slaves.

The Ex-Pats

There is a very substantial Tsolyáni population in the foreigners' quarter of Khéiris, accounting for close to 5% of the overall population of the whole city. That is about 20,000 people. Many fled here from southern Tsolyánu during the closing stages of the Civil War five years ago. Consequently one finds representatives of mostly Karakán clans, including many Vrayáni, with some Ksáruul clans also. There is even a Black Y clanhouse here - licenced only within the foreign community here, of course. When they first arrived, the most important refugees were seized by the Mu'ugalavýáni (either as bargaining chips with the Tsolyáni or as a source of military intelligence) but the rest were left to settle. In fact, although so many of the Tsolyáni here are disaffected exiles, the large Tsolyáni population in the "Blue District" has only encouraged trade with Tsolyánu.

The Ship's Company

A Tsolyáni ship arrives in Khéiris out of Jakalla. Many of the crew are of the Red Star clan, and they therefore come to stay at the clanhouse. This group includes the ship's owner, Dengetl hiRishyai and his (female) captain Terukai hiShadika. Others take chumetl here and then are obviously bound for other lodgings.

There is much news from home. The Marotlan championship was won by the team of the Clan of the Artificers of Iron. It was quite an upset, as the heavy betting was on the Legion of the Searing Flame team. Varchu hiCharken apparently leaped high over a body block, rolled over the attacker's back, passed to his brother Ga'intor, who scored with a flying leap in the closing moments of the game.

The rice harvest was rather poor around the south-west this year.

Other news: two officials of the Omnipotent Azure Legion are rumoured to have been arrested after an OAL internal affairs investigation at the Palace of the Realm in Palá Jakalla. Some people are saying they were secretly in collusion with pro Eselné insurgents.

Additionally, talk around Jakalla is that the political agitator Chanaq hiVriddi has somehow escaped from Torunal Island, where he's been held prisoner for thirty-two years. "Some people claim that Chanaq is a wizard who induced a demon to spirit him away." This is the opinion of one of the lower-clan sailors. Dengetl is of more practical cast: "It doesn't seem the authorities agree - they had Imperial troops on the streets looking for him within three hours, and the OAL informer network didn't get any peace for the day or so before we shipped out."

Also, the famous Béy Su gladiator, Chamor hiDogeng of the Red Flower Clan, has just arrived in Jakalla. At the age of 29 he is undefeated in thirty-one duels. (He has also won virtually all of his innumerable unarmed 'friendly' bouts.) The talk is that he will compete in two duels in Jakalla during next year's season and then retire; thirty-three wins will be well-aspected, he has been advised by his sponsor's astrologer, since that is the number of Chegarra's aspects.

As Dengetl is seeing off his comrades (most of whom are going to clanhouses or hostels in the Blue District), he pauses to talk to one. This fellow appears to be the quartermaster or somesuch. (In fact his name is Jankoi hiSengireth of the Open Hand Clan.)

Dengetl: "I'm going to need more storage space, Jankoi."
Quartermaster: "I could clear --"
Dengetl: "Ships, man! Ships!"
(pause) **Quartermaster:** "I could talk to Fénul hiNakome..."
Dengetl nods.
Quartermaster: "He'd want more than a payoff."
Dengetl (firmly): "No partners."
Quartermaster: "You can't deal with a man like Fénul that way, sir."
(pause) **Dengetl:** "Set up a meeting; let me know. ...And Jankoi: keep quiet about all this. Stay off the drink."

What Really Happened

Fénul hiNakome, with the co-operation of Tsumikel Tarket of the Hanging Rug Clan, was planning to smuggle Chanaq HiVriddi into shore. The plan was to land him, by night, in the cove near Ssiriei's villa and to take advantage of her absence to let him lie low in the villa until he could be conveyed to a safer location in Ch'óchi.

Three of Ssiriei's servants accepted a bribe, but the major-domo did not. This was why he was murdered.

Fénul and Tsumikel cannot alert the ship bearing Chanaq, which is due in about ten days' time. They intend to use Tsumikel's son Senyatokoi to lure Ssiriei away from the villa on as many nights as possible. In that way she hopefully won't be in when the group escorting Chanaq arrive. The following morning they will take the risk of moving Chanaq to Fénul's townhouse in a wine-barrel.

Things to Find Out

Fénul hiNakome

Left Tsolyánu thirty-two years ago, following the Vriddi rebellion. Now quite old but still alert, keeps much to himself in his heavily guarded townhouse. Formerly a sort of "godfather" to the older-established Tsolyáni community, though his influence was eroded by the large influx of political refugees five years ago. (There is some circumstantial evidence that Fénul helped the Mu'ugalavýáni authorities in rounding up some of the pro Eselné ringleaders.)

Fénul has recently been receiving daily shipments of large wine-barrels, arriving in a cart just after the gates of the Foreigners' Quarter are opened at sunrise.

The Spies

Fénul's townhouse is being watched by two scruffy types who look like labourers. These are actually Captain Kazhurin hiTalú and Lieutenant Yodekkan hiMaksoi of the OAL.

Tsumiyel Tarket

A Tsolyáni who bought himself full Mu'ugalavýáni citizenship in a medium-low trading clan and now lives at its clanhouse. Most of his accomplices are cut-throat types - mostly Mu'ugalavýáni of very low clans. Tsumiyel deals in various commodities, which he ships mostly to Tsolyánu and Livyánu. He has made a lot of money, some of it reputedly by slaving. He escapes full opprobrium from his clan for this by doing his deals through Tsolyáni in the Foreigners' Quarter. One rumour is that he's not above pressganging low class foreign labourers for his slave vessels. His only son is the handsome Senyatokoi. His chief lieutenant is Chuvunish of Chi'í Mu'úgha.

Chuvunish of Chi'í Mu'úgha

Tsumikel's chief henchman, a former sailor who has a Livyáni-style tattoo on his arm. Chuvunish belongs to a very low clan - and even they pretend otherwise. He is not a nice fellow. This is the 'rough-looking Mu'ugalavýáni' that Ssiriei was greeted by on her unexpected return home.

Senyatokoi Tarket

Only son of Tsumiyel. Aged about twenty-four, and very good looking. He usually has nothing to do with his father's business (apart from spending the profits on wine, feasting and dogfights). Just after Ssiriei's return, however, he strikes up a friendship with her and soon the two are constant companions. He even has a private townhouse decorated in Tsolyáni style for her comfort, including some antiques. (This place was in fact rented by Tsumiyel and furnished at considerable expense the very day after Ssiriei's sudden return to Mu'ugalavá.)

Ssiriei hiFushmangar

In her mid-twenties, a scholar; not terribly attractive, though pretty enough in a sea of Mu'ugalavýáni faces. She was born on the ship after her father's departure from Tsolyánu. Rich and of high lineage, she keeps pretty much to herself. When news of her return spread, she was visited by Senyatokoi Tarket in person to discuss a new major-domo and the purchase of supplies. (This is odd because Senyatokoi is a spoiled playboy and normally doesn't have anything to do with anything resembling work.) A romance is developing, it seems.

Ranzru hiEshmazun

A fat, jaundiced-looking man; full of self-interest, but at least he has the dignity to be slightly ashamed of himself for it. He is lying low at Fénul's townhouse.

Basura and Chaktesh

The two house-slaves are sleeping rough in the Blue District, and are worried because they think Fénul or Tsumiyel might decide to silence them. Basura helped herself to a handful of antique coins when Chuvunish of Chi'í Mu'úgha wasn't watching; now she's hoping to get some money for these, as she and Chaktash can't collect the rest of their promised payoff.

Dengetl hiRishyai

Red Star Clan. Owner of the Spear of the Sea. Wants to take advantage of rice shortages in southern Tsolyánu, and therefore keen to hire ships for carrying the extra cargo. He's trying to do a deal with Fénul, who in fact owns no ships but acts as middleman for Tsumiyel. This could be established at the harbour office.

Terukai hiShadika

Blazoned Sail Clan, but staying at the Red Star clanhouse by reason of her higher status as ship's captain. Not really interested in anything that happens on dry land; her job is to see to the ship, which she spends much of her time at.

Following her will at least give the characters a taste of Mu'ugalavýáni thoroughness. Soldiers of the Second Palace search each ship's cargo and then place it under sealed guard until unloading, which is supervised by dock militia.

Chanaq hiVriddi

One-time hothead, but thirty years in an Imperial prison have cooled his ardour somewhat. He remains dedicated to the Vriddi cause, but is mellow and more introspective than he was in his youth. Also he is still a little bewildered by the sudden turn in events following his break-out, and is consequently more inclined than he might otherwise be to go along with the plans of others. (He's not a wizard. That rumour only arose because he slipped so miraculously through the Imperial security net on several occasions in the past.)

'Common Knowledge' Versions (these can be given to the players for reference after they've met each character):

Fénul hiNakome

A bigwig in the "Blue District" (Tsolyáni area of the Foreigners' Quarter), but of an older generation than the recent influx of political refugees and their families. He lives in a red-doored townhouse on the northern fringe of the Foreigners' Quarter. He is not now very active in business, but his name is still spoken with awe by the older residents of Blue District. It seems he is still a force to be reckoned with.

Tsumiyel Tarket

Originally of the Black Hood Clan. A Tsolyáni who came here twenty-five years ago and bought himself full Mu'ugalavýáni citizenship in a medium-low trading clan (Hanging Rug). He now lives at the clanhouse and carries on a kind of double life: respectability within Mu'ugalavýáni society, extortion and slaving among the foreigners here. He escapes opprobrium from his clan for this by doing his business entirely through intermediaries in the Foreigners' Quarter. (One rumour is that he's not above pressganging low-class foreign labourers for his slave vessels.) Tsumiyel deals in various commodities, which he ships primarily to Tsolyánu and Livyánu. He has a number of cut throat types working for him - mostly Mu'ugalavýáni of very low clans. His only son is the handsome Senyatokoi. His chief lieutenant is Chuvunish of Chi'í Mu'ugha.

Chuvunish of Chi'í Mu'úgha

Tsumikel's chief henchman, a former sailor who has a Livyáni style tattoo on his arm. Chuvunish belongs to a very low clan - and even they pretend otherwise. He is not a nice fellow.

Senyatokoi Tarket

Only son of Tsumiyel. Aged about twenty-four, and very good looking. His mother was half-Livyáni and half Mu'ugalavýáni, so he has rather mixed parentage. Although he speaks his father's native tongue, it is with a strong Kheiris accent; and both father and son are thoroughly Mu'ugalavýáni in their dress. Senyatokoi seems to tend towards the Tsolyáni side in his disposition, however - indeed, he represents the very Tsolyáni stereotype of the dissolute young roustabout. He usually has nothing to do with his father's business (apart from spending the profits on wine, feasting and dogfights).

Ssiriei hiFushmangar

Tsolyáni member of the Red Star Clan. In her mid twenties, an absent-minded scholar. Not terribly beautiful, though pretty enough in a sea of Mu'ugalavýáni faces. She speaks perfect unaccented Tsolyáni and dresses in Jakallan style, unaware that the revealing style is unflattering to her rather unconditioned figure. She was born on the ship after her father's departure from Tsolyánu. Rich and of high lineage, she keeps pretty much to herself in her villa atop the cliffs outside town.

Ranzru hiEshmazun and Basura and Chaktesh

Respectively the cook and missing house-slaves of Ssiriei hiFushmangar. Ranzru was already in employment at the villa when Ssiriei's father died (five years ago), but both the slaves were acquired since then.

Dengetl hiRishyai

Red Star Clan. Owner of the Spear of the Sea. About forty three years old, and an example of another Tsolyáni type: the serious-minded merchant adventurer.

Terukai hiShadika

An Aridáni in her thirties, a handsome rather than openly beautiful woman. She belongs to the Blazoned Sail Clan, but is staying in Kheiris at the Red Star clanhouse by reason of her higher status as ship's captain. Seemingly not much interested in anything that happens anywhere other than on board her ship.

Lt. Atvallish Gishko

An Investigating Officer in the Scarlet Eye, the police overseeing arm of the Second Palace. In his late twenties, gruff but reasonably fair as a Mu'ugalavýáni official. Having lived most of his life in Kheiris, he has acquired a good grasp of Tsolyáni.

Capt. Hautmekkish Hri'ar

Representative in Khéiris of the Company of Mourners in Sable (Counter-intelligence & State Security wing). A thin-lipped, hooded-eyed man whose manner brooks no impertinence. He is quick to remind any foreigner that in Mu'ugalavá murder is a criminal, not a civil, offence. Violence is often treated as a crime against the state, and Hautmekkish has a reputation for pushing the full weight of the law against offenders. Particularly Tsolyáni, for whom he seems to have a special distaste.

Sequence of Events

The umpire should prepare a time-line to determine how events will unfold. The following is a rough guide to such, showing the likely sequence of events at each major location. As a mnemonic aid, tick these off as they occur:

The Villa

1. The trip out along the cliffs, passing very few travellers on the coastal path. They're either first to find Ssiriei (if they left early in the morning) or they arrive discover the local police (under Lt. Atvallish) starting their enquiries.
2. Second visit. Ssiriei is about to go out in the company of Senyatokoi.
3. Third visit. The villa may well be deserted as Ssiriei is by now being kept busy by Senyatokoi. (Eventually) Chanaq HiVriddi will arrive by night...

Fénul's townhouse

- (On any visit here, there is a small chance of seeing the missing cook sneaking in or out...)
1. They see a guy with tattoos leaving the place. (This is Chuvunish.)
 2. (If morning) they might see large wine barrels being delivered.
 3. On the third visit to this location, perceptive characters might spot two dodgy characters (the spies) lurking nearby whom they also noticed on a previous visit. It should be apparent that these two are keeping the townhouse under observation.

Margulan hiFarom's Numismatic Stall in the Blue Quarter

1. The stolen coins give a possible lead to the Two Towers Hostel - the dive where the missing house-slaves are lying low.

The Hostel of the Two Towers

1. If the house-slaves don't manage to give our heroes the slip, they'll reveal that the cook is at Fénul's place.

Tsumiyel's clanhouse

1. The protagonists spot Senyatokoi (check to see if they remember having seen him previously at Ssiriei's villa).
- Some very shady-looking types emerge from the clanhouse courtyard after a brief exchange with Tsumiyel. If followed, they lead the protagonists to Chuvunish.

General locations within the Foreigner's Quarter

1. Fénul's men are spotted looking for the missing house slaves.
2. The protagonists discover that Fénul owns no ships, but is the middleman for deals with Tsumiyel.

Senyatokoi's townhouse

1. (They might follow him and Ssiriei here.)

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