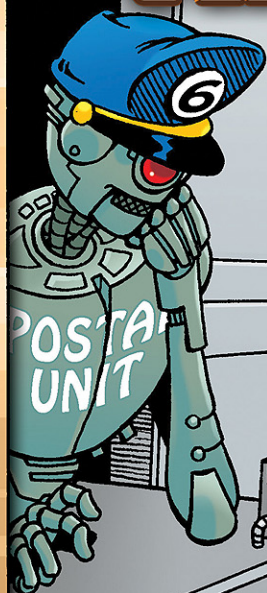
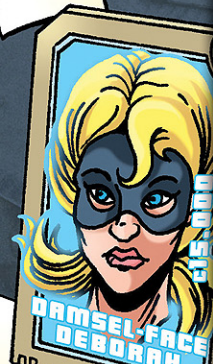


SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS



POSTAL UNIT



BY MALCOLM NORTHWINTER

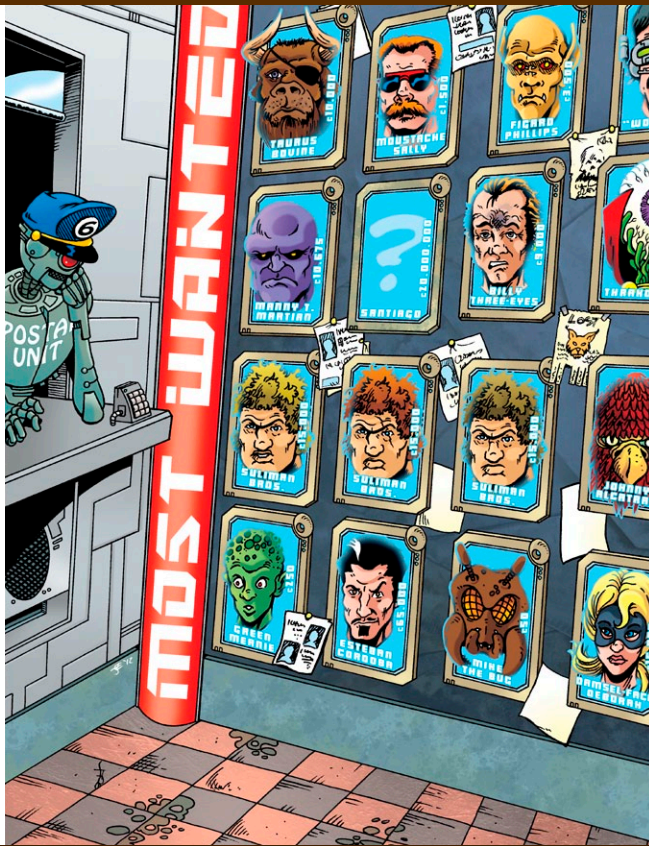
BASED ON *SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE*
AND *THE RETURN OF SANTIAGO* BY MIKE RESNICK

SANTIAGO

A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE

A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS

ADVENTURE ONE OF THE SANTIAGO ADVENTURE PATH



A FAR FUTURE ADVENTURE FOR 1ST-LEVEL CHARACTERS

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SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE
A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS

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SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE

A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Santiago, a Myth of the Far Future*. This adventure, *A Visit to Keepsake: The Hunt Begins*, is the first of eleven modules that will take the heroes across the galaxy in search of a legendary bandit whose capture, dead or alive, is worth twenty million Credits to the human government.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The campaign starts off with the party already in action on the planet of Corvus, where each has found his or her way to the local post office where sit the three holograms of a local band of thieves and murderers, the Suliman brothers. Whether they got to this point individually or together, rumors that there are more than just three of the brothers at work on Corvus drive them to join forces if they're to collect the reward.

Successful or not, the heroes next find their way to Keepsake, a world to which bounty hunters are known to travel. In the tradertown of Moritat, at a bar called Gentry's Emporium, the heroes receive their first lead on a man every bounty hunter has been seeking for almost thirty years, Santiago. With the possibility of a twenty million Credit reward looming over them and news that the Angel, a notorious bounty hunter with a reputation for catching every outlaw he's ever gone after, has recently come to the inner frontier, the party will want to leave as quickly as they can for the planet of Port Étrange. It is there that the group will meet Halfpenny Terwilder, a gambler on the run, and retrieve some information regarding Santiago from a man named Stern.

BACKGROUND

On Deluros VIII, the huge capital world of the race of Man, the nerve center of the Democracy, there are eleven governmental departments and 1,306 men and women charged with the task of finding and terminating Santiago. They doubt that Santiago is his given name, they suspect that some of the crimes attributed to him were committed by others, they are almost certain that somewhere in their files they possess his photograph or holograph but have not yet matched it with its proper identity—and that is the sum total of their knowledge of him.

REQUIREMENTS

This adventure makes use of the rules from the D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK®, the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE®, and the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL®. Additionally, the D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK® 2, the D&D 4E ADVENTURER'S VAULT™, and the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL® 2 provide useful expansions to provide even richer immersion into the world.

The adventure is designed to be played with a party size of five players and a Dungeon Master. The encounters and experience awards assume a party of 1st-level characters with little to no prior experience point awards. If the adventure is run with a different party size or higher levels, the encounters will have to be adjusted to provide enough experience to advance the characters to the next level and slightly beyond.

CAMPAIGNS IN SPACE

This campaign focuses on classic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® gameplay from a science fiction point of view. Where in a fantasy setting you may find horses, magic spells, and knights in armor battling to save the queen, in this campaign you can expect to find spaceships, aliens, and laser pistols as your party travels across the galaxy. In the end, the game and its rules remains the same. You'll still need to roll a die to attack, some more for damage, and watch that some threat or obstacle doesn't attack your own defenses or challenge your skills.

For more information about running a sci-fi game such as this, be sure to check out the *Santiago Adventure Path Campaign Guide*, available for free from EN World.

SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE

A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS ▼ INTRODUCTION

Five hundred reports come to them daily, two thousand leads are followed up each year, munificent rewards have been posted on half a million worlds, agents are sent out armed with money and everything that money can buy, and still those eleven departments exist. They have outlived the last three administrations; they will continue to survive until their function has been fulfilled.

SANTIAGO

According to popular rumor—since you can't really call it fact if nobody alive can prove they were present, Santiago committed the first of what would come to be millions of crimes almost thirty years ago from the present day, being 3286 G.E. under the leadership of the Democracy. From that first crime sprung another, and then a third, until there were so many reports of a criminal calling himself Santiago or a band of criminals working for Santiago that the government was forced to step up and offer their aid in his capture.

A warrant was put out at every major post office throughout the Inner Frontier, where it was assumed Santiago did most of his work. Unfortunately, with their lack of a reasonable description or hologram, the Democracy could only offer their reward and hope for the best.

After that first posting, Santiago's crimes only became more elaborate and in some cases deadly. Cargo supply ships on their way to worlds just being settled were destroyed or, on the chance that they did make dock, were found barren of anything with which they'd left the supply station. Whole groups of the pioneer corps were found dead after the government hadn't heard from them in weeks. Eventually, it became protocol to issue military assistance for even the cartographer's guild when a member visited a new planet to chart it for the Democracy.

The human government wasn't all Santiago attacked, though. Word came through varying channels, both secure and otherwise, that the bandit king had set his sights on countless alien cultures and worlds as well. It seemed his greed knew no limits and his cruelty knew no bounds. Thus, the government eventually reached the conclusion that they would need to enlist more esoteric means of action against Santiago. The bounty for his capture, dead or alive, was increased to twenty million Credits and word was sent out to every bounty hunter, whether deputized by the Democracy or not, that man's government was tired of playing games with the scoundrel.

THE ANGEL

When word of the increased bounty on Santiago reached the Outer Frontier, it was received by several would-be heroes, including a man known only as the Angel. With the prospect of a prize such as Santiago in his sights, the deadliest man in the galaxy dropped everything and moved his operation to the Inner Frontier, where he has since begun his own search for the legendary bandit.

ADVENTURE LAYOUT

In each chapter we present a quick overview of the current situation and the party's goals. We then detail individual scenes that are likely to occur. Each scene is presented in a format of title, tag-line, and keywords. Keywords include:

Scene Type: Action, Exploration, Exposition, Puzzle, Social, Hybrid.

Duration: Montage (a few hours or days), Real-time (a few minutes), Tactical (round-by-round).

Encounter Level: This assumes a party of 5 PCs. For non-combat encounters, use the encounter level as guidance to set skill DCs. These DCs are detailed here, and suggestions for difficulty are provided with the list of skills.

Below are two examples of tag lines found in this adventure.

Exploration. Montage. Level 1

When they leave the post office, the search begins. Clever use of their skills can get the heroes to the ship faster when they decide to leave with their gathered information. The scene ends when the heroes either run out of time (by failing 2 skill checks) or decide to move on. The more information they get before they head for the ship, the better...

Action/Social. Tactical. Level 2

Giles Sans Pitié waits for the party by their ship. As they approach, he stops leaning against the hatch and stands tall while flexing his steel fist. The bounty hunter looks none too happy that the group has arrived...

DIFFICULTY CLASS BY LEVEL

Level	Easy	Moderate	Hard
1	8	12	19
2	9	13	20
3	9	13	21
4	10	14	21
5	10	15	22

SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE

A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS ▼ INTRODUCTION

Rewards

At the end of this adventure, the heroes should have reached 2nd level, or even gone a little beyond. There will be some options provided as alternatives or extra content in case one or more of the heroes falls short of the next level.

The Experience Tracker below gives a basic summary of the total amount of experience that can be gained throughout this adventure. As encounters are completed, this provides a concise collection for you to track awards. The chart is colored by events that occur in an act.

This adventure awards treasure using the parcel system described in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE. Suggestions for rewards appropriate to the encounter are provided, but as the Dungeon Master, you may still want to consult with your players about their wish list items and make adjustments or ignore the suggestions entirely. The locations of these suggested parcels can also be found in the table below.

A Word about Skill Challenges

We have a different take on Skill Challenges; one that should feel straight forward and commonsense. Each skill challenge is presented with a list of suggestions for what the party can do as well as useful and relevant skills in context with the challenge. A skill challenge lasts as long as the heroes want it to within a minimum of 4 successes and a maximum of 12. A total of 2 failures on a skill challenge still ends it prematurely, but the heroes still receive XP up to their value of successes.

Some skill challenges can also be circumvented in other ways, such as with combat or clever role play. As DM, it will be up to you to make the ruling on how much XP will be involved in these cases, though we'll provide relevant data when able.

Encounter Checklist

Encounters	Level	XP	Potential Rewards
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 Gathering on Corvus—Exposition. Real-Time	—	—	
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 Locating the Ship—Exploration. Montage	1	Up to 500	
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 The Ambush—Puzzle. Real-Time	1	Up to 500	
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 Capture the Suliman Brothers—Action. Tactical	1	500	420 CR, parcel 3
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 (Mission) Wanted: The Suliman Brothers—Exposition. Real-Time	3	750	620 CR, parcel 3
<input type="checkbox"/> 02 The Bar Fight—Action. Tactical	1	500	100 CR, parcel 4
<input type="checkbox"/> 02 Negotiating a Cost—Exposition. Real-Time	1	Up to 500	–240 CR
<input type="checkbox"/> 02 Accusations of Poaching—Action/Social. Tactical	1	Up to 500	parcel 1
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 Stolen Fair and Square—Action. Tactical	2	625	120 CR, parcel 2
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 Where Is Stern?—Social/Exposition. Montage	1	Up to 500	
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 While We're Waiting—Exposition. Real-Time	1	Up to 500	120 CR
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 (Mission) The First Lead—Exposition. Real-Time	2	625	

CHAPTER 01: THE SULIMAN BROTHERS

In this chapter, the heroes meet up on Corvus and go after a family of outlaws with a price on their heads. After a lengthy search of their area of the planet, the heroes locate the brothers' ship and capture them to recover stolen goods and claim the bounty.

GATHERING ON CORVUS

EXPOSITION.

The heroes will need to join forces to find and capture the Suliman brothers.

As with the start of any campaign, there are many ways in which the party can form. In this case, the heroes can be individuals who just happen to be on the Inner Frontier planet of Corvus for their own reasons, or they may be specifically seeking out the Sulimans. Whether or not they already know each other becomes irrelevant when they realize that teaming up will be their best option to bring in the villains. For each individual or group background, pick the most likely scenario below and read it aloud.

JUST VISITING

You probably never intended to get involved with the law while on Corvus. Unfortunately, whatever plans you have here will need to be put on hold, because you've just received word from a couple locals that the Suliman brothers are hiding on the surface of the planet and something inside of you—a sense of justice, a willingness to help others, or maybe greed now drives you to start looking for the criminals.

As it turns out, you're not the only one on the prowl at this hour. Several other seemingly brave souls have come out in search of the Sulimans, and the lot of you have ended up sharing the wall

PERSONALITIES

The following NPCs are referenced in this chapter. Players can learn more about them by inquiring or may already know something about these characters from prior information or experience. More information about Giles and the Sulimans can be found in Chapter 02. The heroes will find little else about Billy at this time, and even less about Santiago or Esteban Cordoba.

- ◆ **Billy Three-Eyes**—One of the few men to have gotten away from old Giles Without Pity, Billy has been seen around Corvus in the past, and is suspected of a handful of robbery murders on and around Goldenrod.
- ◆ **Giles Sans Pitié**—Known for his steel fist and his dour attitude, Giles has several worlds to which he travels that he has claimed as his own. Corvus just so happens to be one of those worlds.
- ◆ **The Suliman Brothers**—John, Phin, Ike, William, and Alonzo. The only characteristic shared by the brothers is a close crop of curly hair on their head, of which none have the same color.

CORVUS

Population: Human 50%, Alien 50%

Government: Frontier

Docking: Local docking on surface. Taxis to and from Roosevelt III and New Ecuador

Credit Limit: 520 CR (Buy, Sell, or Trade)

A temperate planet with little to no real government, Corvus has become the centerpoint for underground transactions and something of a refuge for a good number of outlaws on the Inner Frontier. Since real estate here is at a premium, many of the local men and women have no qualms about selling out somebody, especially when they think that person won't be back to return the favor.

at the local post office, where three of the curly-haired outlaws, John, Ike, and William, stare back at you from holographs on the wall. Rumor has it that Phin and Alonzo Suliman are somewhere on the planet as well, though neither has a warrant out for his arrest at this time.

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

When word reached you that the Sulimans may be shackled up on Corvus, you probably assumed it was fate, circumstance, or just your time to shine. In any case, here you are, standing in the local Post Office, reviewing the wanted posters on the wall until you find the three you're looking for. Ike, John, and William Suliman each stare back at you from holographs, their family's signature curly hair prominent in three different shades of color.

Whether you find it fortunate or not, there are others here with you. They, too, are looking over the pictures of the brothers. One man even comments as he walks away in resignation that the wall is missing the last two Sulimans; Phin and Alonzo.

Use this occasion to let the heroes introduce themselves, brag about their presence in the Ballad of the Inner Frontier if they have a verse, or anything else they may want to get out to build their image for the party.

If anybody takes time to look around, it's a little after 6 PM galactic standard time, and the sun on this planet will be up for another four hours, at least. Because the post office is entirely automated, there is nobody here except for the heroes. A radio speaker in the corner plays one artist's rendition of the Ballad of the Inner Frontier by Black Orpheus. On the same wall as the wanted posters for the Sulimans are three other holographs.

One poster offers 9,000 Credits for Billy Three-Eyes, who has a cleft in his forehead given to him by Giles Sans Pitié (**Tech** or **Streetwise DC 8**). The next has collected some dust and depicts a man with a distinctive white streak through his otherwise dark hair. Under the name Esteban Cordoba is the offer of 65,000 Credits for his capture and return to Deluros VIII for questioning. The last poster has no picture. Instead, overly large print states that 20,000,000 Credits are offered for the capture of Santiago, dead or alive.

Once everybody has their take on the area and the rest of the party, you can continue with the storyline.

As strong, cunning, or stubborn as you may be, the prospect of challenging five known criminals should be enough to convince you that accepting an offer of help would be a good decision. Besides, even if you wanted to work alone, that just means you would have a handful of new rivals to deal with in addition to finding and catching the Sulimans, and that can get complicated.



In the end, it should be a clear hindrance to work alone, but that doesn't mean the party has to stay right next to each other the whole time. Give them a chance to spread out once they have collaborated. Maybe they comb a larger area now that they're working together, or the less-than-brave members can remain grouped up during the search.

LOCATING THE SHIP

EXPLORATION. MONTAGE. LEVEL 1 **100 XP, plus 50 XP per success after 4**

Leaving the post office, the party sets out in search of the outlaw family.

When they leave the post office, the search begins. Clever use of their skills can get the heroes to the ship faster when they decide to leave with their gathered information. The scene ends when the heroes either run out of time (by failing 2 skill checks) or decide to move on. The more information they get before they head for the ship, the better.

Here are some examples of how the party can use their skills. A DC 12 check should be sufficient in most cases.

- ◆ By travelling with purpose or moving across rooftops of one-story buildings, the hero covers more ground, and can discover the ship more quickly (**Athletics, Acrobatics, Endurance, Engineering, or Streetwise**).
- ◆ The hero may decide to bribe, strong-arm or otherwise convince a local into giving up his vehicle for easier travel (**Athletics, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Streetwise**). Subsequent checks are used to drive the car safely or threaten others to stay out of the way.
- ◆ Speaking to locals who claim to have seen the Sulimans may yield at least some useful information (**Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, or Streetwise**).
- ◆ Procuring or stealing a vehicle means faster travel around the area (**Engineering, Tech, or Thievery**).
- ◆ A quick search of the local database gives a list of areas where ships have recently landed (**Perception or Tech**).
- ◆ The local sheriff's hunting animal can help track down the scent of the criminals (**Diplomacy or Nature**).

As the scene comes to a close, the heroes reach the Suliman brother's ship.

FOUR OR MORE SUCCESSES

Just ahead, you see a standard interstellar ship. There are no unique markings on the ship and nothing special stands out, but the information you've gathered assures you that this is what the Sulimans came to Corvus in. It is safe to assume you have some time before your quarry shows up in case you want to plan anything.

ONE, TWO, OR THREE SUCCESSES

Just ahead, you hear the whir and blast of engines kicking on. When you get around the corner, you see a man, matching the description of Ike Suliman, punch in the code to shut the door to a basic interstellar ship. He looks at you and waves, then makes a rude gesture as the hatch begins to close.

FAILURE

You round the corner just in time to see an unmarked interstellar ship taking off toward the atmosphere. Looking closely through the hatch window, you make out a roughly human shape with curly hair.

If the party ended the scene with 3 or fewer successful skill checks, or they have nothing they want to prepare, move on to the combat section.

If the scene closes with at least 4 successful skill checks, the party can prepare an ambush, damage the ship, or do anything else they want before they have to face the Suliman brothers.

THE AMBUSH

PUZZLE. REAL-TIME. LEVEL 1 (100XP PER HIDDEN CHARACTER)

Each hero gets enough time for up to 2 skill checks of their choice. If they finished the last scene with 6 or more successes, they get a +1 bonus to each. If they finished the last scene with 12 successes, they get a +2 bonus instead. Some examples of what they can do include:

- ◆ Hack the ship's computer to open and close the hatch without setting off the alarm (**Engineering or Tech DC 19**), allowing members of the party to hide inside the ship without being seen through a window (**Stealth DC 8**, plus 2 for each character hiding beyond the first).
- ◆ Damage the ship's ability to safely take off by physically breaking part of it (**Athletics or Engineering DC 19**) or setting off the alarm while disabling the controls (**Engineering or Tech DC 12**).
- ◆ Climb onto a nearby roof or the top of the ship (**Athletics DC 12**) and hide on the rear slope (**Stealth DC 12**).
- ◆ Climb into a discarded fuel barrel (**Athletics or Acrobatics DC 12**) and wait (**Endurance DC 12**).
- ◆ Duck around a corner (**Stealth DC 8**) and watch for the Sulimans through a hole in the wall small enough to avoid being seen, but also too small to fire a weapon without stepping out into plain view (**Perception DC 12**).
- ◆ Jump into the ditch on the far side of the ship (**Acrobatics or Stealth DC 12**).
- ◆ Try to blend in with the surroundings (**Nature or Stealth DC 19**).
- ◆ Find a warehouse jumpsuit to wear (**Perception DC 12**) and tell the Sulimans you're here on business (**Bluff DC 12**).
- ◆ Stand around and convince the Sulimans that you are here for an unrelated reason (**Bluff DC 19**) or that you only want to talk (**Bluff or Diplomacy DC 12**).



Any player who made at least 1 successful skill check during the setup is hidden well enough or able to convince the Suliman brothers of their safety. That hero gets to act in the surprise round during combat.

After everybody has made their final check, you can move on to combat.

CAPTURE THE SULIMAN BROTHERS

ACTION. TACTICAL. LEVEL 1 **100 XP per brother**

SETUP

The total area is 36 squares wide by 27 squares long. Several hangars sit on either edge of the map, about 8 squares in, and the Suliman's inactive ship rests at the edge of a ditch between and below them in position. Barrels are strewn about semi randomly, with some in groups and others singled out. A machine to pump fuel sits blocking the hangar door on the right, while the left is closed tight with an electronic lock. A good-sized road leads from both hangars and the ship out toward the town.

The heroes can initiate combat at any time once the Sulimans round the corner if they're hidden. Otherwise, the Suliman's realize something is wrong as they get to the edge of the warehouses and make a run for their ship.

Enemies

5 common outlaws

Common Outlaw	Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 100

This petty thief lashes out when he realizes he has no other recourse.

HP 21; Bloodied 10	Initiative +3
AC 14; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 12	Perception +5
Speed 6	

Standard Actions

☒ **Fight Dirty** [weapon] ♦ At-Will, Basic

The outlaw jabs at your midsection, then shoves you away.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +6 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+5 damage and push the target up to 1 square.

✓ **Aim Wide** [weapon] ♦ At-Will

The outlaw fires his weapon without care to what he hits.

Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature) +6 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+5 damage

Miss: Reroll the attack once against another creature in range and within 3 squares of the original target.

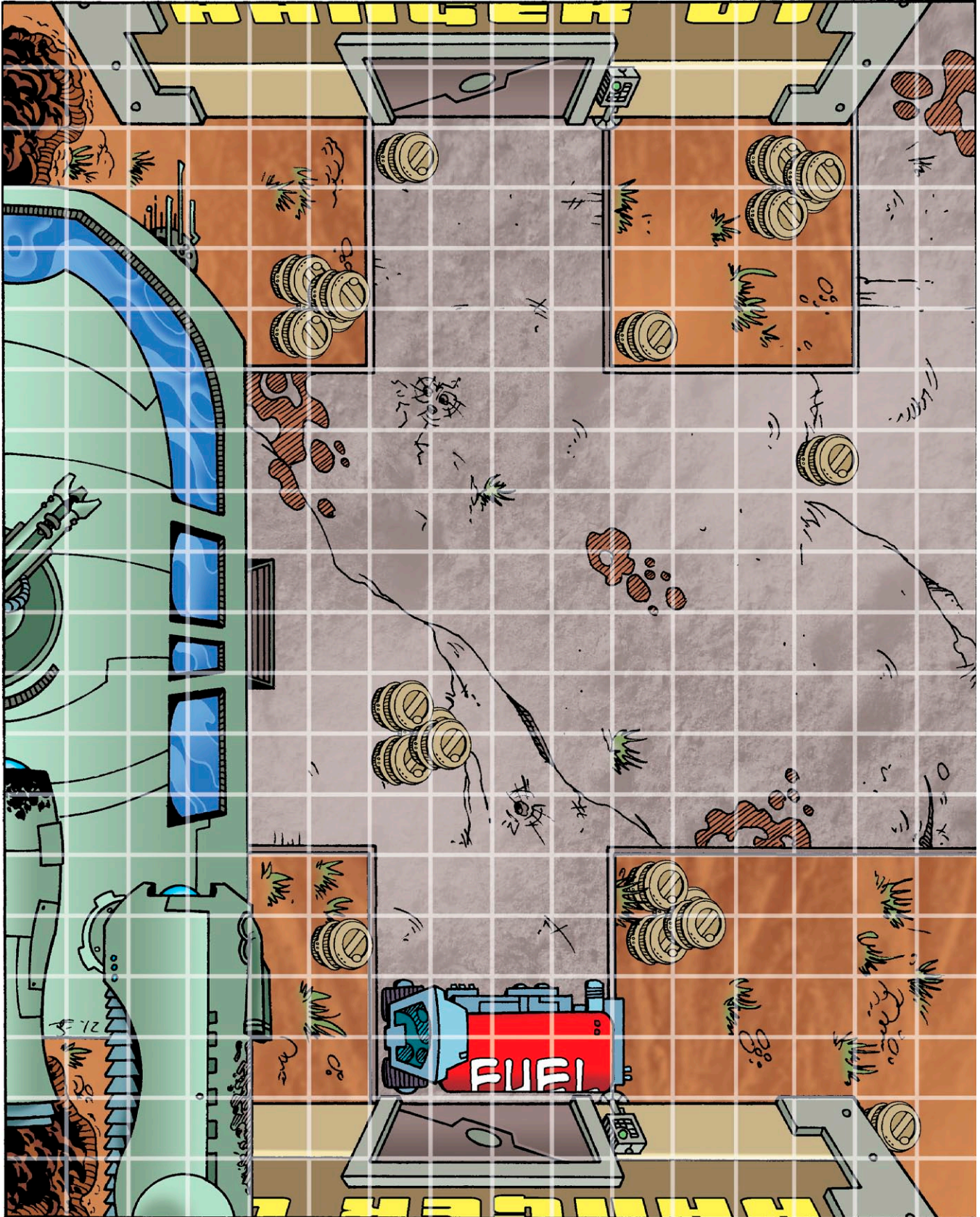
Str 8 [-1] **Dex** 20 [+5] **Wis** 11 [+0]

Con 13 [+1] **Int** 16 [+3] **Cha** 19 [+4]

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Terran

Basic Equipment Pistol, Synthetic Weave

SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE
A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS ▾ **CHAPTER 01: THE SULIMAN BROTHERS**



AFTERMATH

Once the heroes have captured the Suliman brothers, or if any got away, they can search the ship and confiscate stolen valuables (art, Credits, and the like) equal to parcel 6 for their level.

WANTED: THE SULIMAN BROTHERS

(MISSION) EXPOSITION. REAL-TIME. LEVEL 3 **150 XP per brother**

The heroes earn this reward if they've successfully captured every brother, dead or alive, and turned them into the local authorities. If any brothers got away, the heroes can either continue their chase or move on after giving the authorities all the information they can. With the rest of the family behind bars, it's unlikely that any given brother will leave the planet before trying to break his siblings out.

If the party decides to turn in the ship and all of its contents to the authorities, they're rewarded with the following for their honesty:

- ◆ The value of treasure parcel 5 in Credits
- ◆ Their choice of interstellar ship

Of course, they can certainly choose to keep the brothers' ship instead, as well as the parcel's worth of valuables inside. The authorities won't question their motives and simply assume the goods were sold off prior to the brothers' capture. Because the brothers were hauling freight, their ship has no

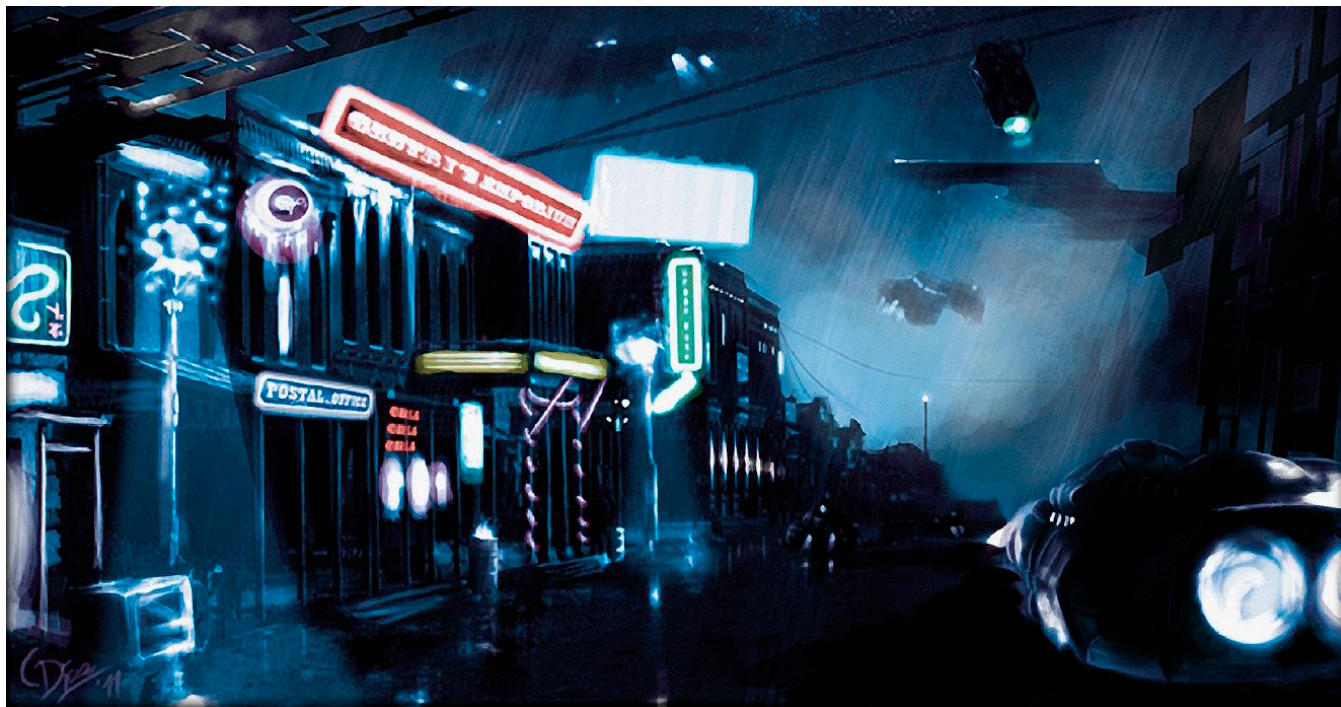
THE SHIP

The heroes should have an interstellar ship if the campaign is to take place on more than the three planets in this adventure. If you are uncomfortable with giving your party an item worth up to 3,400 Credits (assuming 5 heroes), you have two choices in this case.

- ◆ You can allow the party to receive the ship and count it as the level 3 treasure parcel for up to five levels, or one level per hero.
- ◆ You can give the heroes one or more extra Credit parcels for their level when they get their reward. They can use the extra money to purchase a ride from Corvus to Keepsake and later to Port Étrange. From there, they'll want to find another ride unless they plan to waste most of their earnings on taxis. In this case, Terwilliger may have a ship he "won" that they can use in exchange for his safe departure and protection from ManMountain Bates.

added benefits and only holds up to 250 lbs. of cargo per brother.

Upgrading the ship requires one extended rest per addition of medical bed, or research station, but an engineer with the appropriate skills may be able to reduce this time by about half with a successful skill check DC 19. Tech or Engineering can be used for this, or Heal for the medical beds. For more information about ship upgrades, see the *Myths of the Far Future Campaign Guide*.



CHAPTER 02: SOMEWHERE TO RELAX

In this chapter, the heroes are directed to Keepsake for a break. In the tradertown of Moritat, they find Gentry's Emporium, where the owner decides they may be worth his important information after they clear out his bar of trouble makers.

FROM CORVUS TO KEEPSAKE

MONTAGE.

When the heroes are ready to leave Corvus, they are directed to the nearby planet of Keepsake and told this is a good location to find another job, meet up with other bounty hunters, or just relax for a while before moving on. With luck, one of these three reasons will appeal to each party member. If they do decide to travel elsewhere, refer to the sidebar at right.

On Keepsake, the heroes find themselves in the tradertown of Moritat. Considering that it's an hour past sundown here when they land, accommodations can be found at Gentry's Emporium. Unfortunately, several overly drunk men have started up a dangerous and potentially deadly bar fight.

THE BAR FIGHT

ACTION. TACTICAL. LEVEL 1

100 XP per group

Aside from just joining the fray, which is an entirely plausible option, the heroes can also dissuade other participants from continuing the fight through coercion (**Bluff** or **Streetwise**), intimidation (**Intimidate** or **Athletics**), or reason (**Diplomacy** or **Insight**). They may also employ the use of the security system (**Engineering** or **Tech**), which was conveniently smashed in the first few moments of the brawl, should they decide to fix it. If he could get out of the building safely, the barkeep, Gentry, could probably get the police involved. He

CAN'T WE JUST GO HERE INSTEAD?

During the time period of *A Visit to Keepsake*, the heroes may decide to visit planets outside of the scope of the adventure. Here are some suggestions in case they wish to do so and how to provide them lead-ins back to the module. You can apply one or more of these to any given planet. If they do anything unrelated even to these, play it by ear and use the descriptions found for planets in both the *Player's Guide* and the *Campaign Guide*.

The Angel—By the time they've reached Keepsake, the heroes are well aware that the Angel has moved into the Inner Frontier and is actively seeking the bandit king, Santiago. Should one or more of them decide to seek him out, for good or ill, he'll give them one opportunity to back off. If they pursue him, he'll likely kill one of them and tell the others they can get their dead comrade cloned if they hurry. The cost to do this is 500 Credits, but the scientist performing the procedure will take a level 5 tech item in exchange.

Santiago—If the heroes strike off on their own in search of the scoundrel, they'll get the same general response in the majority of cases, which often amounts to a response such as, "You and every other bounty hunter in the galaxy." In some cases, they'll also be directed to Keepsake, where most bounty hunters go and are sometimes more willing to trade information regarding the search.

certainly wouldn't mind if somebody close to the door left to contact them (**Acrobatics** or **Streetwise**).

If the heroes use these methods, it will require 4 successful skill checks to get one of the groups who are prolonging the fight to back down. After that, it only requires two checks for each of the other four.

The DC for any check is going to be 12, unless the target was attacked in the previous round, in which case the DC rises to 19. Failure on any check indicates another round of combat, with or without the party. After two failures, the group is beyond talking and the rest will have to be dealt with in a physical manner.

Should the party decide not to participate, the fighting dies down after a few minutes and Gentry starts out as neutral rather than friendly when they speak with him later. If they make a considerable mess or directly attack him, Gentry will



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start off as unfriendly instead, and although he'll still give up his information, it's going to cost them a bit more. In either case, you can continue to Negotiating a Cost, below.

SETUP

The bar is 21 squares long by 12 squares wide with the entrance facing east. About 11 smaller tables dot the room with chairs all around, while a larger table takes up the south end of the bar for big games of cards or other gambling needs. A piano in the north corner sits and plays music automatically when turned on, and stairs lead to the second floor where Gentry's ladies do most of their business. The bar itself takes up the center of the back wall and features various alcohols safe for consumption by an even more varied crowd. A couple of Gentry's girls usually work the floor, waiting on tables, but during the fight they escape upstairs to wait for everything to calm down.

Enemies

- 4 martinets (Group 1)
- 4 drunkards (Group 2)
- 1 gang of rabble-rousers (Group 3)
- 2 rogue bounty hunters (Groups 4 & 5)

Martinet	Level 1 Minion Lurker
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25
<i>This card player keeps a few tricks up his sleeve in case of emergency.</i>	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion Initiative +5	
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 19 Perception +7	
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
☑ Quick Attack [weapon] ♦ At-Will	
<i>With a flick of his wrist, the martinet is armed.</i>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 6 damage, or 8 damage if the target grants combat advantage. The martinet can shift up to one square.	
Skills: Stealth +10	
Str 8 [-1] Dex 17 [+3] Wis 12 [+1]	
Con 11 [+0] Int 18 [+4] Cha 14 [+2]	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Terran	
Basic Equipment Dagger, Quick Release Weapon Sheath	

Drunkard	Level 1 Minion Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25
<i>Even a universal translator cannot understand the slurred speech from this creature.</i>	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion Initiative +5	
AC 19; Fortitude 19, Reflex 18, Will 18 Perception +7	
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
↩ Wild Punch ♦ At-Will	
<i>Swinging blindly, the drunkard manages to hit something and hold on to keep standing.</i>	
Attack: Close Burst 1 (one creature) +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 6 damage and the target is grabbed (until escape).	
Miss: The drunkard falls prone.	
Skills Athletics +7, Acrobatics +6	
Str 15 [+2] Dex 9 [-1] Wis 14 [+2]	
Con 13 [+1] Int 10 [+0] Cha 15 [+2]	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Terran (universal translator)	
Basic Equipment Pistol	

Gang of Rabble-Rousers	Level 1 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 100
<i>This group of humans is dedicated to stirring up trouble when they see fit.</i>	
HP 25; Bloodied 12 Initiative +3	
AC 17; Fortitude 19, Reflex 15, Will 17 Perception +7	
Resist melee and ranged half; Vulnerable close and area 5	
Speed 5	
Traits	
☼ Swarm Attack ♦ Aura 1	
Non-minion creatures that start their turn in the aura take 7 damage.	
Standard Actions	
☑ Punch ♦ At-Will, Basic	
<i>These men are not so drunk that they can't react to others' actions.</i>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6+3 damage	
↩ Slam ♦ At-Will	
<i>The scoundrels throw a few punches at those nearby.</i>	
Attack: Close Burst 1 (each creature) +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6+4 damage	
Str 20 [+5] Dex 8 [-1] Wis 14 [+2]	
Con 15 [+2] Int 12 [+1] Cha 10 [+0]	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Terran	

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Rogue Bounty Hunter Level 1 Artillery
 Medium natural humanoid XP 100

Lean and hungry, the mercenary sizes you up, trying to find an advantage.

HP 18; Bloodied 9 Initiative +5
 AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, Will 13 Perception +5
 Speed 6

Standard Actions

☞ **Pistol Whip** (weapon) ◆ At-Will, Basic

You feel metal crack against your skull and you become momentarily woozy.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +6 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+5 damage and the target is dazed until the start of its next turn.

☞ **Shoot to Kill** (fire, weapon) ◆ At-Will, Basic

What seems like only a flesh wound from the burner suddenly flares with outstanding pain.

Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature) +6 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d8+4 fire damage. If the target is bloodied by this attack, it takes an extra 1d8 fire damage.

✦ **Scattershot** (weapon) ◆ Recharge ☐☐☐

The hunter fires into the air and a spray of pellets rains down on everybody around you.

Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (each creature) +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10+2 damage

Str 8 [-1] Dex 20 [+5] Wis 11 [+0]

Con 12 [+1] Int 16 [+3] Cha 19 [+4]

Alignment Unaligned Languages Terran or Alien (by planet)

Basic Equipment Laser Pistol, Rifle, Mylar Armor

AFTERMATH

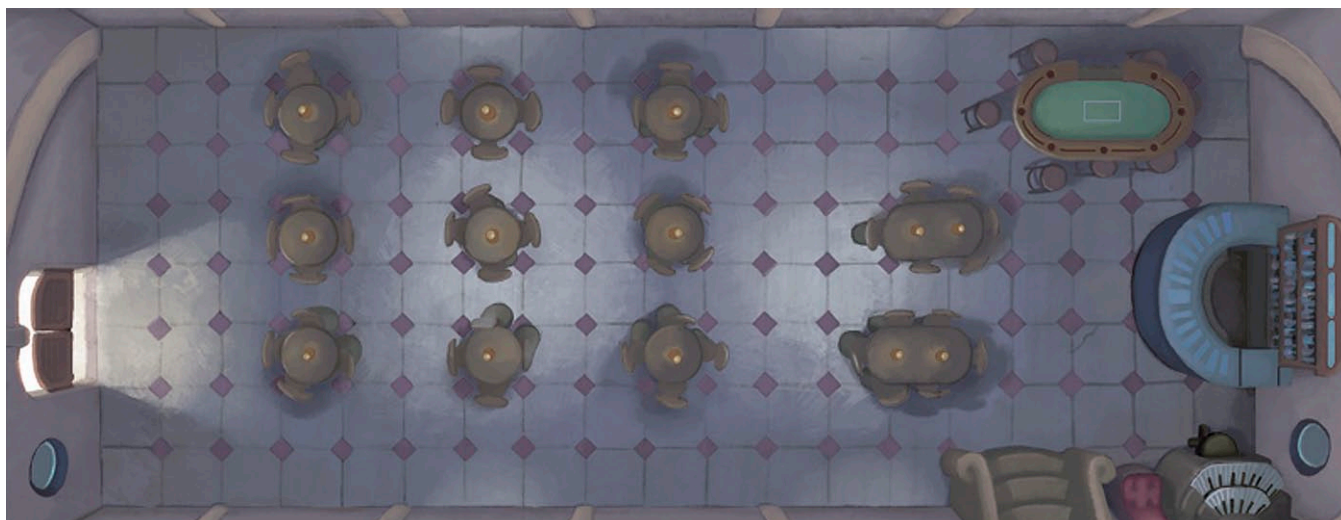
When everything has calmed down, the heroes are welcome to have a look around (**Perception DC 12**). Lying on the floor near either bounty hunter may be discarded or lost weapons valued as treasure parcels 3 and 4. The martinets may have left behind some Credit chips worth parcels 9 and 10 and one functioning quick release weapon sheath. Between the drunkards and the rabble-rousers, they could probably scrape up enough Credits to equal parcel 6 (or 5 if they kept the ship and the stolen goods before).

NEGOTIATING A COST

EXPOSITION. REAL TIME. LEVEL 1 (100 XP PER TALKING POINT)

When they're ready to continue, the heroes have an opportunity to rest for the night. Despite any misgivings he has, Gentry will offer them a couple rooms and a meal. This is where the interaction begins. The party will have an opportunity to speak with Gentry about several topics. In each case, they can use any of their skills to build up their reputation, flatter or intimidate him, or get some insight into his motives. If they just want to talk, the man is certainly willing to for a bit, and as long as they get him to spill his information at the end, how they get to that point shouldn't matter.

As you relax at a table in the emptying room, the barkeep walks over, sets a bottle of clear alcohol on the table, and offers some to the party.



When he notices your reaction to his sudden presence, he responds, "It's something they brew out Altair way. Tastes kind of like gin. I figured I could bring some over and you'd be kind enough to let me sit with you and help you drink it."

If the party turns him down or tries to scare him off, Geronimo walks away with a shake of his head, commenting that they must not be who he was expecting. He is sure to take the alcohol with him unless made to do otherwise. Soon after, Sebastian Cain will come in and Gentry will divulge his information to the songbird in hushed tones. At that point, the party will have another chance to get the information, though they'd do well not to try and extract it while Cain is around.

If anybody tries to start more serious trouble, you can have the police break things up now that they're around thanks to the bar fight a little earlier, or Giles Sans Pitié can show up to help Gentry seeing as his fellow bounty hunters were just either hauled off to jail or killed and he needs a place to sleep.

Assuming the party is amicable, continue below. Otherwise, you can move on to combat with Giles or resolve the situation through other means.

Gentry sits down, thanking you and handing out glasses to any who want to sample his Altairi liquor. After a few moments of relishing some for himself, he sits back and smiles.

"Good stuff, if I say so myself. Did Giles Sans Pitié come by you yet? No, I suppose not, seeing as you're all here."

If asked to explain, Gentry does so, stating that Giles is bent out of shape about the party capturing the Suliman brothers before he could. According to the bounty hunter, they stole his rightful claim, whether or not they knew it. The bartender warns them not to get too close to the man's robotic hand, should they cross paths, as it has the strength to crush a cinder block. Geronimo knows some information about the heroes as well. He uses it to clue them into the fact that most people know what anybody else is doing on the Inner Frontier at any given time.

"After all," he explains, "talk is cheap, and with the business I see, information is easy enough to get."

He looks around for a moment at each of you, "Not that I want to start any trouble. I seen posters on just about all you bounty hunters at one time or another. Ain't no skin off my ass. Hell, if

Santiago himself walked in the door and asked for one of my sportin' gals, I'd trot him out the prettiest one I've got. Not like he's that hard to spot..."

The old man cuts his conversation short at this point and his eyes lose focus, like he's recalling something from his past. He then gets up to leave without another word.

At this point, if the heroes ask why he got up or what he's talking about, Gentry tells them it's nothing. Whether they press him or not, he'll stop about three paces off and turn back to them with a quick look around the room before taking his seat again. The next part of the conversation makes a couple of assumptions about the party's reactions. If they differ, tailor it to them as you see fit.

"I don't know much," Gentry admits in hushed tones. "Do know one thing, though. Know he's got a scar shaped like this" —he traces a crooked S on the table— "on the back of his right hand."

He responds to your reactions vigorously, "Truth! Man I used to run with spent a couple of weeks in jail with him. Thing is, nobody knew it was him, 'cept my friend, and he didn't have a clue either until Santiago's gang came and broke the other man out. One of 'em called him by name."

Seeing his claim fall on deaf ears, Gentry sits up a bit, "Here I am, offerin' to do you a favor, and you turn your nose up at it. Damned good thing for you I'm an old man who ain't got the wherewithall to give you a thrashing for insulting me like that. I thought maybe you might be interested in knowing who my friend is and where you can find him."

Now Gentry's ready to talk business. He's well aware of what the party received as a reward for capturing the Sulimans, and he wants at least 240 Credits, so he'll start by asking for 300 Credits (assuming the party is five characters) and let them talk him down to that amount. He tells them honestly that he will sell it to others. It will be up to the party to either buy his silence or enforce it through other means. They can make up these costs later in the module, and Gentry would be willing to accept favors in lieu of cash. He's sure to have a few minor missions the heroes can go on if they want some variety and wish to avoid spending very much money.

Whatever the arrangement they come to, Gentry realizes they may be hesitant or wondering why he's just now giving out this information.

“I ain’t got anything against Santiago,” says the old man. “He ain’t ever done me any harm. Besides, the longer he stays free, the longer you guys’ll stay on the Frontier lookin’ for him, and the longer you stay out here, the more money you’ll spend at Gentry’s Emporium.”

He shifts in his chair uncomfortably for a moment, “Then again, I hear tell the Angel has moved in. Wouldn’t want no outsider picking up the bounty fee. They say he’s the best. I’ll bet you Black Orpheus gives him a good twenty verses when he finally gets around to meetin’ him.”

“So,” he continues, taking yet another swig, “I’m hedging my bets as best I can. The Angel collects that money; he’ll be back on the Rim before he has a chance to spend it. But if you get it, you’ll spend a goodly chunk of it on Keepsake.”

When all is said and done, he tells them what they paid for.

Taking his payment, Gentry puts the money away before he leans in, closer than before, and whispers, “Ever hear of a world named Port Étrange? It’s the seventh planet in the Bellermaine system.”

He sits for a moment to let this information sink in, then continues. “Just pass the word you’re looking for Stern. He’ll find you.”



The old man adjusts himself in the chair and continues, “A real sweet feller, Stern, once you get used to a couple of his little peculiarities. See, he drinks too much and he cheats at cards, and he ain’t real fond of people or animals or aliens, and he out-and-out hates priests and women, and he’s been known to have an occasional disagreement with the constabularies. But taken all in all, he’s no worse than most that you find out here, and probably better’n some. Just tell ’em I sent you. It ought to get him to sit up and take notice.”

And with that, he again offers rooms and a sample of his ladies to those willing if they haven’t taken him up on it yet, for the usual price, of course.

When the heroes do leave to their ship, whether it be that night or the next day, they find a man leaning against the hatch. The arm he has on the ship is very obviously not the one with which he was born. This is Giles Sans Pitié, and he’s none too happy to see them.

ACCUSATIONS OF POACHING

ACTION/SOCIAL. TACTICAL. LEVEL 2

As you approach your ship, you get a sense of déjà vu. From your recent encounters, you recognize the steel-fisted man before you as Giles Sans Pitié. He’s the bounty hunter Gentry warned you about.

The party can attempt to hide prior to being spotted, if they wish to get away or get the drop on the rival bounty hunter, but if they’re hoping to leave the planet any time soon, they’ll eventually need to confront Giles. If they talk to him first, continue below. Otherwise, move on to the combat section afterward.

Giles stands tall when he sees you and he flexes his metal hand tentatively. A suit of navy kevlar is visible under his basic clothing, and a laser pistol sits at his waist beneath his real hand.

“You and I need to talk,” he says menacingly. “Seems you’ve been poaching my targets out from under me, and I’d like my fair share of the earnings, seeing as you were trespassing on my territory.”

The heroes can pay Giles off, in which case he leaves after putting a dent in their cargo hold to remind them not to do it again, or they can challenge his claim and argue it out with him. The third, and most likely, outcome is combat.

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Giles Sans Pitié Level 6 Elite Soldier

Medium natural humanoid XP 500

You and I need to have a little talk.

HP 120; Bloodied 60 Initiative +7

AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 18, Will 18 Perception +3

Speed 6

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

Standard Actions

☑ **Metal Fist** (weapon) ◆ At-Will, Basic

Giles swings his powerful, metal fist at you, grabbing you before you can react.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +11 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6+7 damage and the target is grabbed (until escape). Giles can have up to 1 creature grabbed at a time.

✂ **Crushing Grip** (weapon) ◆ At-Will

You hear the spinning of wheels and a click, then the hand holding you begins to squeeze.

Attack: Melee 1 (one grabbed creature) +11 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d6+7 damage

✂ **Deadly Grab** ◆ Recharge ☐☐☐☐

A trigger in the coils of Giles' fist goes off and his hand snaps out with dangerous speed.

Effect: Melee 1 (one creature); Giles makes one *metal fist* attack and, if he hits, a *crushing grip* attack against the target.

☑ **Laser Pistol** (fire, weapon) ◆ At-Will

Giles aims his pistol at your torso and fires with remarkable accuracy.

Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature) +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8+5 fire damage

Triggered Actions

✂ **Steel Backhand** ◆ At-Will

Trigger: Giles becomes flanked.

Attack (Imm. Interr.): Melee 1 (the triggering creature) +11 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6+7 damage and the target is pushed up to 1 square.

Str 21 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 12 (+4) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+2)

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Terran

Basic Equipment Laser Pistol, Navy Kevlar

The ship rests at the edge of Moritac, south-east of Gentry's Emporium. The road ends abruptly before reaching the ship, leaving some open area to take off. There are few, if any places to hide in the daylight, but various cars parked beside buildings can be used for such actions with a good enough check against Giles' Perception.

GILES AS A SOLO ENCOUNTER

If you want to bring Giles more in line with the party, he can become a solo level 1 creature with the following adjustments.

HP 120; Bloodied 60 Initiative +3

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 13 Perception +1

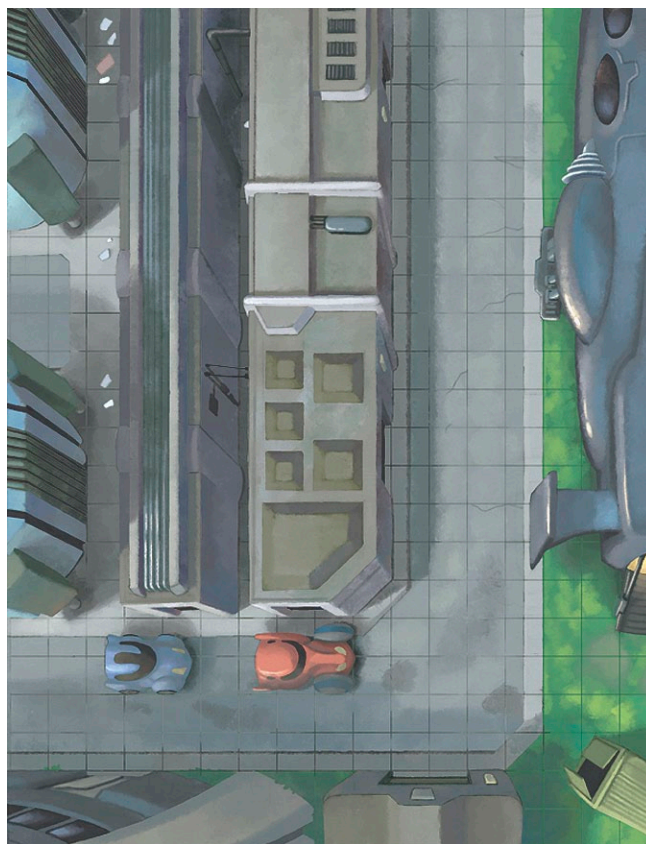
Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2

Giles' attacks are +5 vs. their target defense and deal 1d6+4, 2d6+4, and 1d8+5 damage respectively.

AFTERMATH

After dealing with Giles, the party can leave at any time. The local authority usually doesn't stand between quarrels related directly to bounty hunters, so they'll not argue over the man if he's dead. Likewise, the heroes can claim his arm for themselves. It only takes an extended rest on most human planets to get the arm installed, and a medical engineer or a ship upgrade with the proper skill (Engineering) can do the same without wasting any time since the heroes can get it done while they travel to Port Étrange.

Giles' burner is tech enhanced to match the level of one of the remaining item parcels, and his steel fist is level 5. In his possession, he also has a set of regular navy kevlar and enough Credits to total in value as treasure parcel 9.



CHAPTER 03: THE GAMBLER

This chapter concludes the module. The heroes travel to Port Étrange to meet with Stern and buy his information. While there, they also meet with a potential new ally and have to deal with some more former business partners of the Sulimans’.

STOLEN FAIR AND SQUARE

ACTION. TACTICAL. LEVEL 1

XP per enemy

Getting to Port Étrange is uneventful. As the heroes get to the local hotel after landing their ship at the local spaceport, give them an opportunity to notice an impending ambush. Several armed men are hiding in the alley across the street. They can be seen with a **Perception** check (DC 12). Anybody who sees them can act in the upcoming surprise round.

Before you can reach the hotel, a woman approaches you. She wears a shoulder holster with what looks like a modified screecher inside over a combat vest.

“You are the ones who captured the Suliman brothers, are you not?”

The woman knows quite well who the heroes are; she’s just trying to keep them distracted long enough for her cohorts to sneak up closer for a good shot. This is apparent with an **Insight** check (DC 12). If the heroes already knew about the men in hiding, they get a +2 bonus to this check. Before the thieves jump out of the alley, the woman continues.

“The Sulimans were bringing their goods to us when you captured them. Now my men and I are out several hundred Credits, and we’re looking to make it right. Care to offer up our property or is there going to be trouble?”

GILES AND THE ANGEL

Even if the heroes didn’t kill Giles Sans Pitié, they probably won’t ever see him again anyway, because the Angel will kill him between now and the next adventure. If the heroes find the Angel or follow Giles after sparing him, hopefully the speed with which the ruthless Angel kills Giles will help them understand the threat he presents.

Finding the Angel is easy enough—his fame makes his presence on any planet common knowledge within hours. When the heroes arrive at the Angel’s hotel, or when they follow Giles and discover his rendezvous, they see their rival with the steel fist confront the emotionless assassin and clearly hear his final words.

“I’m only going to make my offer to you once more, Angel. Then, we’re gonna have ourselves a problem.”

The Angel obscures himself as well as he can, as if he knows the PCs are there, and he responds icily, “I already said no. It’s not my problem if you can’t clean your ears with that hand.”

Giles raises his hand in anger, and falls dead a moment later, as blood welling from several small wounds in his torso. The Angel whips around without acknowledging any observers, and he speaks to the clerk before going to his room.

GILES AS A CHARACTER

For anybody wishing to fashion themselves after old Giles Without Pity, he’s a Soldier with Merciless Stalker and Rapid Advance. He uses Melee Imposition as a combat focus and has a *steel fist* level 5 tech-enhanced item. For more information on the Soldier class, players can refer to the *Myths of the Far Future Player’s Guide*.

SETUP

There’s only a little space to move around, and the heroes are hemmed in by their adversaries. This section of the street is only about 4 squares wide, and the door to the bar is open if anybody wants to duck inside. Across the street are a run-down hotel and another building long boarded up.

Enemies

- 1 mercenary bandit
- 3 common outlaws

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Mercenary Bandit Level 2 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid XP 250

This woman wears a combat vest underneath a shoulder holster. She brandishes a tech-enhanced screecher.

HP 52; Bloodied 26 Initiative +4

AC 15; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 16 Perception +6

Speed 6

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

Standard Actions

☑ **Slip Away** ♦ At-Will, Basic

The bandit swings at your head with her elbow, then jumps back to avoid retaliation.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+9 damage.

Special: The bandit can shift up to 1 square.

✓ **Dual-Shot Sonic Pistol** (brutal 1, thunder, weapon) ♦ At-Will

The bandit pulses her sonic weapon twice in succession, sending two small bursts of energy instead of one.

Attack: Ranged 10/20 (up to two creatures) +7 vs. AC, up to two attacks

Hit: 1d10+3 damage (one attack) or 1d6+3 damage (two attacks); plus 1d10 damage on a crit.

Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+3)

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Terran

Basic Equipment Sonic Pistol, Combat Vest

Common Outlaw Level 2 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid XP 125

This petty thief lashes out when he realizes he has no other recourse.

HP 29; Bloodied 14 Initiative +4

AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 13 Perception +6

Speed 6

Standard Actions

☑ **Fight Dirty** (weapon) ♦ At-Will, Basic

The outlaw jabs at your midsection, then shoves you away.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+3 damage and push the target up to 1 square.

✓ **Aim Wide** (weapon) ♦ At-Will

The outlaw fires his weapon without care to what he hits.

Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature) +6 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+3 damage

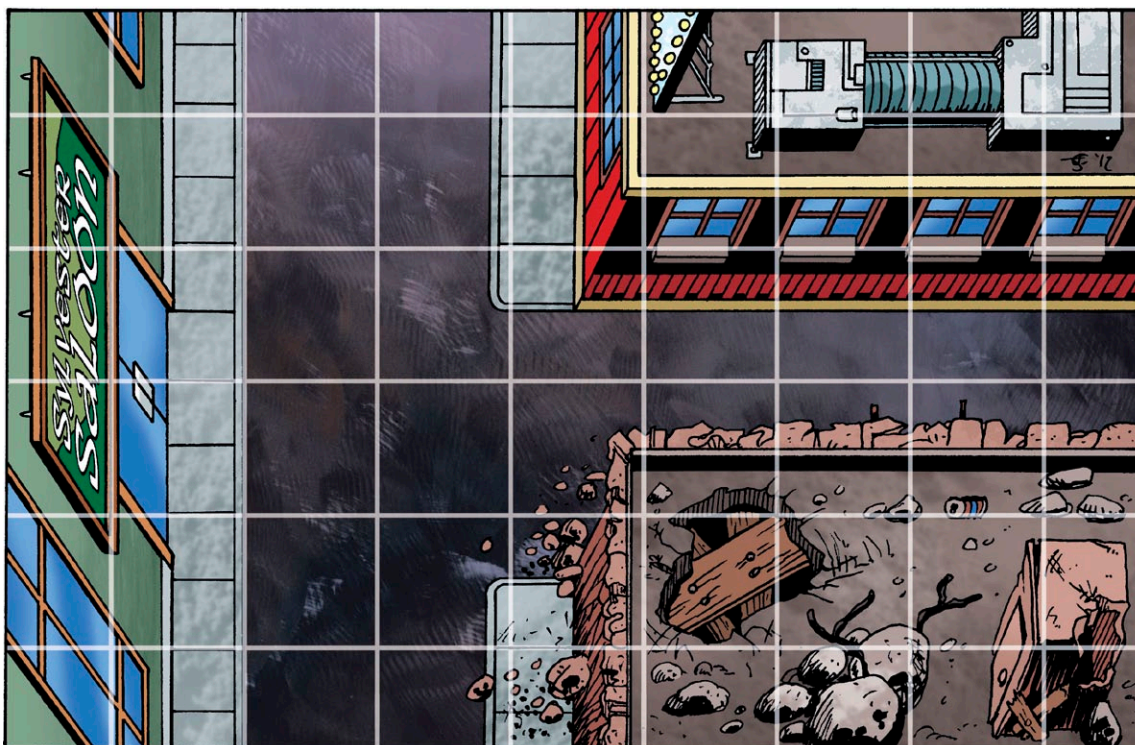
Miss: Reroll the attack once against another creature in range and within 3 squares of the original target.

Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 20 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+1)

Con 13 (+2) **Int** 16 (+4) **Cha** 19 (+5)

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Terran

Basic Equipment Pistol, Synthetic Weave



AFTERMATH

After the heroes have either chased off or killed the last of the thieves, they can find the *dual-shot sonic pistol* that was left behind by the mercenary bandit. This is a level 4 tech-enhanced weapon. More details on this weapon can be found in Appendix 01. In addition, the group had about 120 Credits between them, or roughly half what the heroes paid Gentry for his lead if they paid more or less.

The sheriff may or may not show up, but in case you decide to, he can understand that the heroes were defending themselves once they prove their status and explain that these thugs were after them for bringing in the Sulimans back on Corvus.

WHERE IS STERN?

SOCIAL. MONTAGE. LEVEL 1

100 XP per information gathered

Now that they've dealt with the group trying to jump them, the party can gather more information about Stern. They can take as much time as they want, using their skills in various ways to learn more about the man. After four successful checks at **DC 12** or two at **DC 19**, they know his full name is Jonathan Jeremy Jacobar Stern and that he pretty much runs the planet. For each two checks (or one at the higher DC) beyond those initial four, they can learn one of the following bits of information. You can continue on to *While We're Waiting* when the heroes decide they have enough information or if they fail two skill checks.

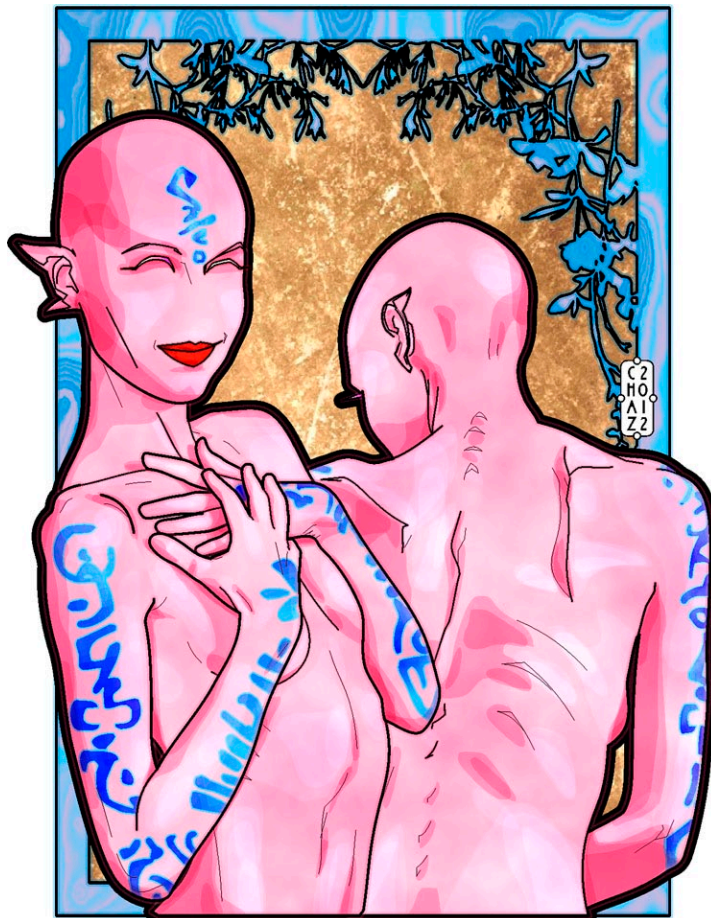
- ◆ They learn of Stern's presence in the *Ballad of the Inner Frontier*.
- ◆ He began life as the son of a miner and a whore, and before he was done he'd set himself up as king of the Bellermaine system.
- ◆ In between, he learned how to gamble and did a pretty fair job of it; he learned how to steal and became more than proficient; he learned how to kill and did a bit of bounty hunting on the side; and somewhere along the way he learned the most important lesson of all, which was that a king with no heirs had better never turn his back on anybody.

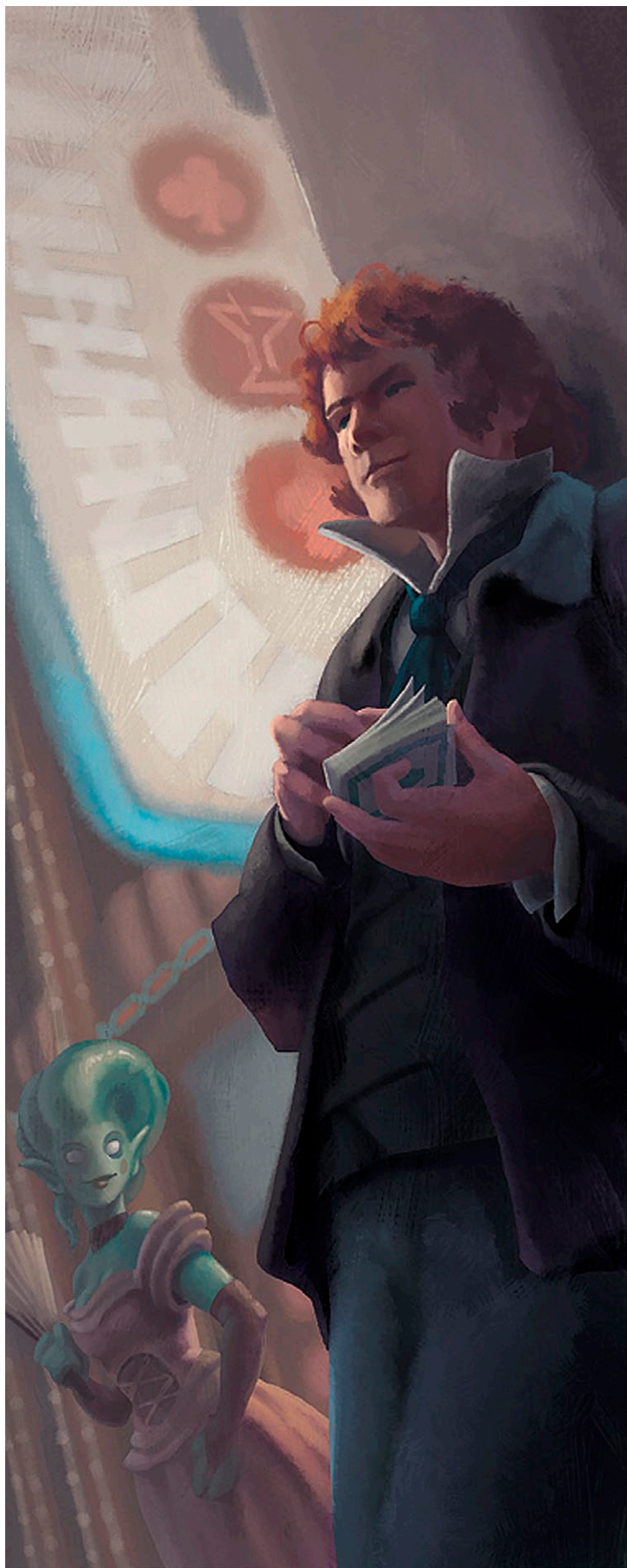
GAMES OF CARDS

Playing a few games of actual cards to help set the mood could be fun, but if you want to keep things strictly dice related, you can do so through the use of *Bluff*, *Intimidate* and *Insight*.

- Allow the heroes to each roll a **Bluff** or **Intimidate** check against Terwilliger's passive **Insight** (DC 19). Mark who succeeds and by what amount.
- Next, roll the gambler's **Bluff** (+11 bonus) against each player's **Passive Insight**. Again, note the winner and by how much.
- Check each roll against the other. If a majority of player's win, the one with the highest difference gets the pot. Otherwise, Terwilliger wins the hand. In the event of a tie, the winners split the pot 50/50.

Since Terwilliger has an ulterior motive, he may choose to take up to a -5 penalty to either of his values to allow the players to win. He's good for half the credits they paid to Gentry, and says he'll work on getting them the rest while they speak with Stern. Of course, when they're done, he has another surprise for them.





BALLAD OF THE INNER FRONTIER

He's Jonathan Jeremy Jacobar Stern,
He's got lust in his heart, and money to burn;
He's too old to change, and too wild to learn,
Is Jonathan Jeremy Jacobar Stern.

◆ A lot of people whisper that the real reason he's set up shop on Port Étrange is that he can't control his passion for women. Because of this, he's decided to do without them and had hunted up a world with a humanoid race that willingly allows him to commit terrible crimes of pleasure for which nobody has yet created any words. When the heroes are satisfied with their information gathering, they are directed to the local tavern.

WHILE WE'RE WAITING

EXPOSITION/SOCIAL. REAL TIME.

It's crowded, and despite the chrome tables and hand-crafted chairs—leftovers from the hotel's halcyon days of glory—it feels as dingy and seamy as any other Tradertown bar. The only chairs available are at a small table occupied by a short, slender man sporting a shock of unruly red hair.

"Be my guests," the man offers as you approach. He stares at your group for a moment before asking, "You new around here?"

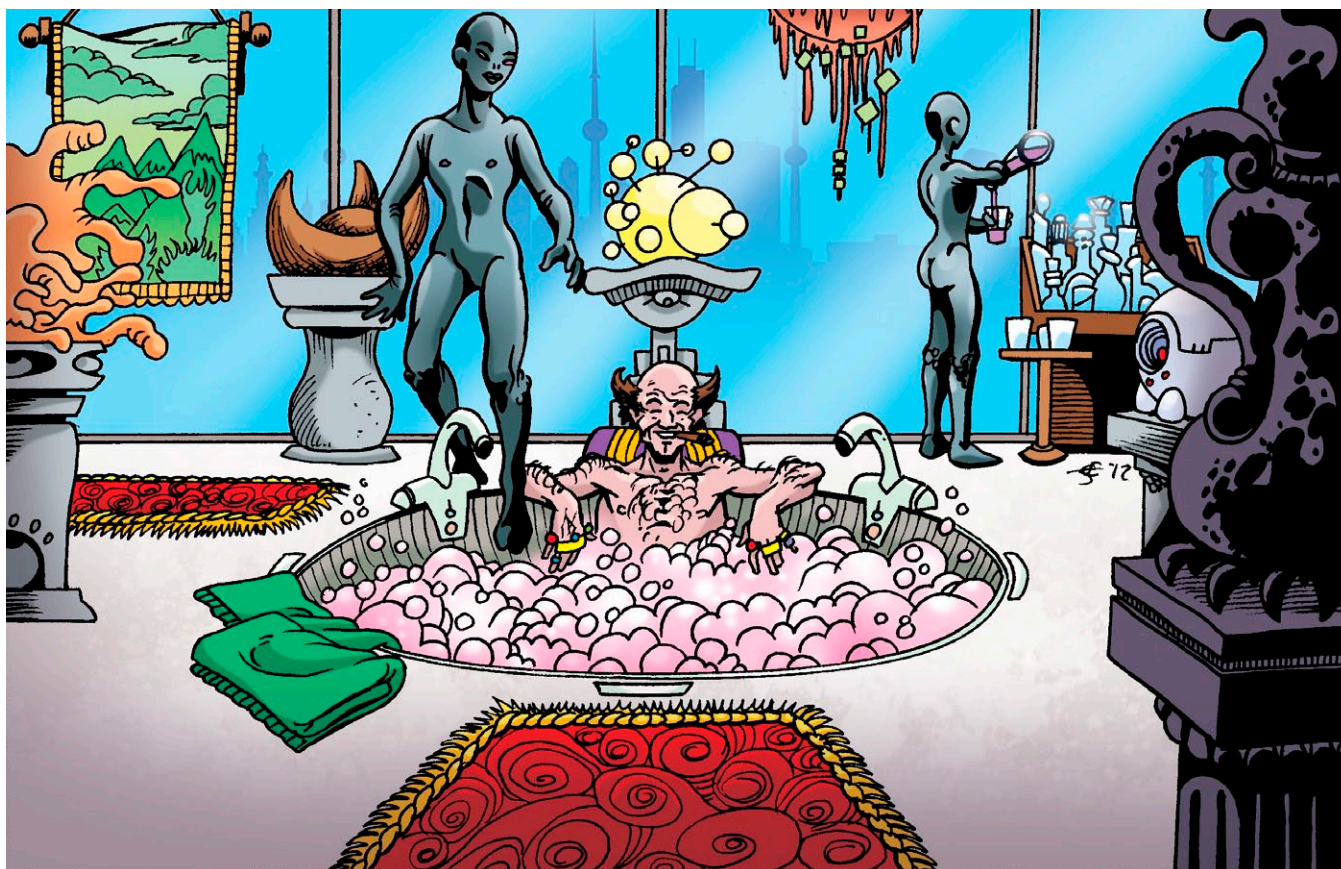
The heroes have little opportunity to inquire about Stern before the pale man speaks up.

"He's not here now, assuming you're here for Stern, and in case you're not, we've got a hell of a news story breaking here," he remarks with a chuckle. "Stern's the only person anyone ever comes to Port Étrange to see."

Before you can find the words to form a response, the man leans across the table, extending a lean white hand.

"Where are my manners. I'm Terwilliger. Halfpenny Terwilliger," he adds as if he expects his name to mean something.

A successful **Streetwise** or **Tech** check (**DC 12**) will tell one of the heroes that Terwilliger was written into the Ballad of the Inner Frontier, and a **DC 19** check will provide more about his background and why he's hiding out on this planet. More information about this gambler can be found in both the *Player's Guide* and the *Campaign Guide*.



After introductions are made, Halfpenny offers to send word that the party is here to speak with Stern, then explains that, as long as they're not looking for money, he'll probably be along soon enough. In the meantime, the gambler offers to keep the heroes entertained with a few games of cards.

This is another opportunity for the heroes to gather experience they may have ignored or missed out on from Where is Stern? Terwilliger can feed them anything they should know with a little coercion and offers some information on his own as the heroes continue to play cards with him. Treat a winning hand as 2 successes in this regard and provide the relevant information. In addition, Terwilliger knows the following.

- ◆ The race Stern is obsessed with is called the Fali. They are the local and natural inhabitants of Port Étrange.
- ◆ Stern's been around the Fali for far too long, and it's had an effect on his physical appearance.
- ◆ The fali are a strange looking race, but can be quite beautiful, depending on how long a man's been alone.

After a while, the bartender approaches and explains that Stern is ready to see them now. Halfpenny takes them across the street to Stern's office inside the run-down hotel and waits downstairs while they go to meet with him.

THE FIRST LEAD

(MISSION) EXPOSITION. REAL-TIME. LEVEL 1 **625 XP upon conclusion**

Just as you grow tired of cards and bantering with Terwilliger, the bartender walks across the room and comes to a stop in front of your table. "He wants you," the man says and turns away without another word.

Terwilliger nods in the bartender's direction, then turns to you, "I'll show you the way."

You walk out through a side door, across the dusty road that was once a major thoroughfare, and into the smaller of Port Étrange's two functioning hotels. Terwilliger leads you through a lobby that may have once been quite elegant but now shows the signs of age and neglect: sleek chrome pillars are tarnished, the ever-changing choreopattern of colored lights is out of synch with the atonal music, and the front door remains dilated for almost a full minute after you pass through it.

You approach a bank of elevators and walk to the last one in line. Terwilliger summons it with a low command.

"This'll take you right to him," he announces. "He's got the whole damned floor up there. Take one step out and you're in the middle of his parlor."

SANTIAGO: A MYTH OF THE FAR FUTURE

A VISIT TO KEEPSAKE: THE HUNT BEGINS ▼ CHAPTER 03: THE GAMBLER

You get in and the door closes as you realize you don't know to which floor you should travel. Before you can do anything about it, the elevator begins to climb.

When it comes to a stop, you emerge into a palatial penthouse. It's fully fifty feet by sixty, and filled to overflowing with objets d'art gathered—or plundered—from all across the galaxy. In the center of the room is a sunken circular tub with platinum fixtures, and sitting in the steaming water is an emaciated man with sunken cheeks and dark, watery eyes. His narrow arms are sprawled over the edges of the tub, and you notice that his fingers are covered by truly magnificent rings. He smokes a large cigar that has somehow avoided becoming waterlogged.

Standing on each side of the tub are a pair of humanoid aliens, both obviously female. Their skins, covered with a slick secretion that may or may not be natural, glisten under the lights of the apartment. Their arms seem supple and boneless, their legs slender and strangely jointed. Each has a round, expressive face, with a generous, very red triangular mouth and pink eyes that are little more than angular slits. Both are nude and devoid of any body hair. They have no breasts, but their genitalia, thus exposed, seems close to human. There is a supple, alien grace to them, which you may find fascinating or mildly repugnant. Neither of them seem to notice you at all.

"You're staring," says the man in the tub.

The man introduces himself as Jonathan Jeremy Jacobar Stern. He invites the heroes to join him in the hot tub, but gets out and has the females put his robe on for him if they all decline.

Periodically during their conversation, the heroes will notice Stern trails off and stares at the fali. He'll correct himself quickly, though, and return to the point of their talk, all the while letting his eyes drift back in the females' direction.

When it's time to get down to business, Stern is actually fairly straightforward, offering what he knows along with proof, provided the heroes can return the favor in cash. He'll not trade his knowledge for less than 200 Credits, but if the heroes offer more first, he will play on that he wanted more before finally giving in to their sum.

Stern doesn't take well to threats, stating matter-of-factly that his life's as good as over anyway. He will, however, grow increasingly worried if his favorite pets are put in harm's way. Like Gentry before him, Stern is willing to be paid off in favors, though his pretty much relate to the fali or others who've threatened him in his home.

By the time the heroes are done talking with him, they should be able to learn a few important bits of information.

- ◆ His time in jail with Santiago was spent on Kalami Three, seventeen years prior. The scoundrel was there under the name Gregory William Penn.
- ◆ His cell mate was between forty and fifty years of age, stood about six feet, four inches tall and was heavysset without being fat. He had black hair, brown eyes, and was clean shaven.
- ◆ The man spoke at least six alien languages and was quite a chess player.
- ◆ He bore a scar on his hand in the shape of a jagged "S." It was about two inches long.
- ◆ They were in the jail for eleven days before some criminals broke him out. One called him by name. They cleaned out all of the information in the jail related to Mr. Penn, leaving nothing to be traced back to the time Stern had spent with him.

He looks at you all for a moment, then smiles, "I get the feeling you don't believe me. Well, I can understand your sentiment, seeing as without any records to back up my claim, I could certainly be making the whole thing up. But, if you'll be patient, there's more."

At this point, he goes back to the tub and has the fali begin to rub his shoulders while he lights up another cigar. After taking a healthy puff, he turns back to you.

"Shortly thereafter I noticed a sudden dramatic increase in my business. By the time I reached Port Étrange I had a pretty strong feeling that I was dealing with Santiago, but of course I was never so tactless as to ask."

He grins, confident that he's got you listening again, "I dealt primarily with a man named Duncan Black—a large man, who wore a patch over his left eye—but from time to time there were others."

A Streetwise, Engineering, or Tech check (DC 8) will tell the heroes that almost anybody can have an eye replaced these days. In fact, one of them may have done so at some point prior to the start of the campaign. In any case, Stern swears it's true and continues on with his explanation.

"I continued to enjoy a very profitable arrangement. Then, seven years ago, I received a shipment of goods that eliminated any lingering doubts I may have had that I was indeed doing business with Santiago."

He points to something on a nearby table, “Do you see that paperweight over there? Why don’t you examine it?”

The heroes find that the paperweight is actually a bar of gold bullion. Upon inspection, they see an imprinted number that Stern says they could easily verify corresponds with the Epsilon Eridani robbery, a navy convoy hit by Santiago around that time.

“I kept it for a souvenir, never knowing when it might be of some minor use to me,” he says with a smile.

“Anyway, about a year after I received the gold shipment, a smuggler named Kastartos, one of the agents I’d been dealing with, approached me with a fascinating proposition. Evidently he was displeased with his salary or his working conditions; at any rate, he had decided to turn Santiago in for the reward. Being a prudent man, he decided not to do so himself, but offered to split fifty-fifty with me if I would approach the authorities on his behalf. I questioned him further, and eventually he gave me a description of the man I had seen in the Kalami jail. There were a few discrepancies, as might be expected with the passage of eleven years, but it sounded like the same man, and when he described the scar on his right hand I was sure.”

If they’re still interested in what happened, Stern explains that he warned Black of the impending betrayal and Kastar-

tos was never heard from again. Unfortunately, his business with Santiago also stopped abruptly from that point forward.

“I haven’t seen Duncan Black in almost three years now, and while it’s always possible that Santiago is dealing with me through someone else, I very much doubt it.”

“I don’t know where to find Black, and if I did, our talk would cost you considerably more than it has, but I do know that his ship bore a Bella Donna registry at the time that we did business together.”

At this point, Stern can’t seem to control himself for much longer, but the heroes should have enough to go on anyway and he bids them farewell as he begins to lecture the fali on a more sensual massage.

CONCLUSION

Back at the hotel, the party finds Terwilliger sitting in one of their rooms, playing solitaire.

He tells them that he had no luck getting them the money he owes, but can make it up by helping them with the next part of their journey, if only they’ll protect him from Man-Mountain Bates. He’s willing to beg if need be, and if there’s any mention of Duncan Black, he perks up and says he absolutely knows where to find him. He’ll tell all he knows as soon as they’re off the planet.

To Be Continued.

APPENDIX 01: GAME RULE INFORMATION

NEW ITEMS

Dual-Shot Weapon

This tech-enhanced gun can fire twice in succession.

Lvl 4	+1	840 CR	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 CR
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 CR	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 CR
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 CR	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 CR

Common Weapon: Any Firearm

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d10 thunder damage per plus

Power (At-Will): Standard Action. Ability vs. AC, two attacks; 1d6 + Ability modifier thunder damage. This attack has all properties of the weapon.



HALFPENNY AS A CHARACTER

Should one of your players wish to personify Halfpenny Terwilliger, he is a Scoundrel with the Gambler calling, Show Your Hand and Keep Out Of Trouble. He has trained Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight and Streetwise, making him quite useful in conversation, if not in actual combat.

NPCs

Halfpenny Terwilliger

Level 8 Lurker

Medium natural humanoid, human

XP 350

Pale skinned and red haired, this twitchy little man knows and sees much more than he lets on.

HP 60; **Bloodied** 30

Initiative +12

AC 21; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20

Perception +4

Speed 6

Standard Actions

☑ **Lucky Shot** (weapon) ♦ At-Will, Basic

Backed into a corner, the gambler tries to get at least one punch in.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +13 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+5 damage, and an adjacent creature also takes 5 damage.

✓ **On the Run** (force, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Halfpenny fires at you haphazardly, forcing you to duck so you're not accidentally killed.

Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature) +13 vs. AC

Hit: The target falls prone and Terwilliger moves up to his speed.

Minor Actions

✂ **52 Card Pickup** ♦ Encounter

Reaching into the pocket in his jacket, the gambler flings his deck at your face, momentarily distracting you.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target is blind until the end of its next turn.

▶ **Shifty** ♦ At-Will (1/round)

Effect: Terwilliger shifts up to 1 square.

Skills Bluff +11, Insight +9, Stealth +10

Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)

Con 12 (+5) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 15 (+6)

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Terran

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Sebastian “Nightingale” Cain

Level 5 Solo Soldier

Medium natural humanoid, human

XP 1,000

Also known as “Songbird,” Cain is a tall, lean man, his face angular and almost gaunt, his eyes dark and world-weary. His jacket and pants are a nondescript brown, their many pockets filled with shapeless bulges that could mean almost anything on the Frontier. Only his boots stand out, not because they’re new, but rather because they are so demonstrably old, obviously carefully tended yet unable to hold a polish.

HP 200; Bloodied 100

Initiative +7

AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 19

Perception +8

Speed 6

Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2

Traits

☀ **Aura of Defense** ♦ Aura 2

By watching the surrounding area, Cain keeps allies out of harm’s way while remaining focused on the enemy.

Unmarked enemies take a –2 penalty to attack creatures within 2 squares of Cain.

► Pistol Expertise

Cain is exceptionally talented with pistols.

Cain can take a –2 penalty to his ranged attacks to deal +2 damage.

Standard Actions

☑ **Self Defense** ♦ At-Will, Basic

Cain uses his enemy’s momentum against it.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature) +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8+8 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

🕒 **Protecting Shot** ♦ At-Will, Basic

To Cain, the defense of innocents is paramount. He will always rise to such occasion.

Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature) +10 vs. Reflex

Special: Creatures within range of this attack can draw opportunity attacks from Cain as though he were adjacent to them.

Hit: 2d6+9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Cain’s next turn.

Triggered Actions

✓ **Back it Up** (weapon) ♦ Recharge ☹ or when dazed or stunned
In keeping with his reputation, Cain’s enemies have come to find reason for worry when his hand goes for his weapon.

Trigger: Cain targets an enemy with an at-will attack.

Effect (Free Action): The target takes 15 damage

► Rapid Recovery ♦ At-Will

Cain shakes his head for a moment, clearing his thoughts.

Trigger: Cain starts his turn charmed, dazed, dominated, or stunned

Effect (Imm. React.): Cain recharges *back it up* and makes a *protecting shot* attack.

Str 10 (+2) Dex 22 (+8) Wis 12 (+3)

Con 10 (+2) Int 16 (+5) Cha 8 (+1)

Alignment Unaligned Languages Terran

Basic Equipment Pistol x2, Mylar Armor



CAIN AS A CHARACTER

As a character, Cain is a Frontiersman with Gunslinger and a dangerous reputation on the Inner Frontier. He has One Eye Open and Expert Tracker.

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