TRAVELLER

REACH ADVENTURE 7: THE LAST TRAIN OUT OF RAKKEN-GOLL

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

LAST TRAIN OUT OF RAKKEN-GOLL

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INTRODUCTION

Last Train Out Of Rakken-Goll takes place on the world of Gor in the Tobia subsector of the Trojan Reach. The Travellers are invited to the estate of Sir Willard Vorstaten to enjoy a few days of relaxation in the luxury of his home. What they find there is chaos, prairie fires, tremendous storms and a young Imperial knight willing to do his duty… if only he knew how.

Almost any group of characters will be suitable for this adventure. It does not require the Travellers to own, or have access to, a starship. It is intended that the equipment and resources available to the Travellers should be limited. Grossly overpowered superheroes, who insist on taking their battle dress and fusion guns with them on vacation, will find some parts of the adventure less challenging than those with more modest equipment.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Ideally, the Travellers should already know Sir Willard Vorstaten. He might be a Contact or Ally from Traveller creation or someone the Travellers have met in the course of their adventures. This is not absolutely necessary however; if the Travellers are well-known (or notorious) as adventurers or figures in society, then Willard will want to meet them.

The adventure begins with an invitation to visit Willard at his country estate. This can be delivered anywhere but the adventure assumes that the Travellers have either already accepted the invitation or receive it upon arriving at Gor.

The Travellers get a hint of the situation on Gor as they make their way to the Vorstaten estate. There, they find Sir Willard a generous and amiable young man with aspirations and responsibilities above his means. The run-down state of his holdings is not his fault but he lacks the ability to resolve it. Still, he makes the Travellers welcome and plays the part of a gracious host.

The region around the Vorstaten estate is suffering from an extended dry spell, which has seriously harmed the livelihood of local farmers. Some have turned to banditry whilst others simply struggle against mounting odds. The outbreak of a series of wildfires endangers the local community, who turn to their noble neighbour for help.

Sir Willard proves entirely willing to help the locals but lacks the relevant experience and could make serious mistakes. His eagerness to assist draws in the Travellers, or at least creates a situation where a decision not to help will be very obvious. They could cut and run, of course, but that means leaving people who need their help… and an influential noble who will get the blame for the disaster.

If the Travellers try to help they must tackle a divided community without the technology to deal with the situation, rogue elements who put their own interests ahead of all else and the fragile self-image of a man who knows he is failing the first real test of his leadership. To succeed, the Travellers will have to come up with solutions to the locals' problems and convince everyone involved that it is in their best interests to go along with the plan.

Few of the problems confronting the Travellers can be solved with gunplay, although a wide range of options are available. The adventure, as written, assumes the Travellers will deal with some matters themselves and convince the locals to tackle others, playing out as a leadership challenge. However, the same events could be the backdrop to an entirely different style of adventure. Perhaps Sir Willard finds love with one of the Travellers even as his world is falling apart, or maybe the Travellers simply rob everyone blind whilst they are distracted.

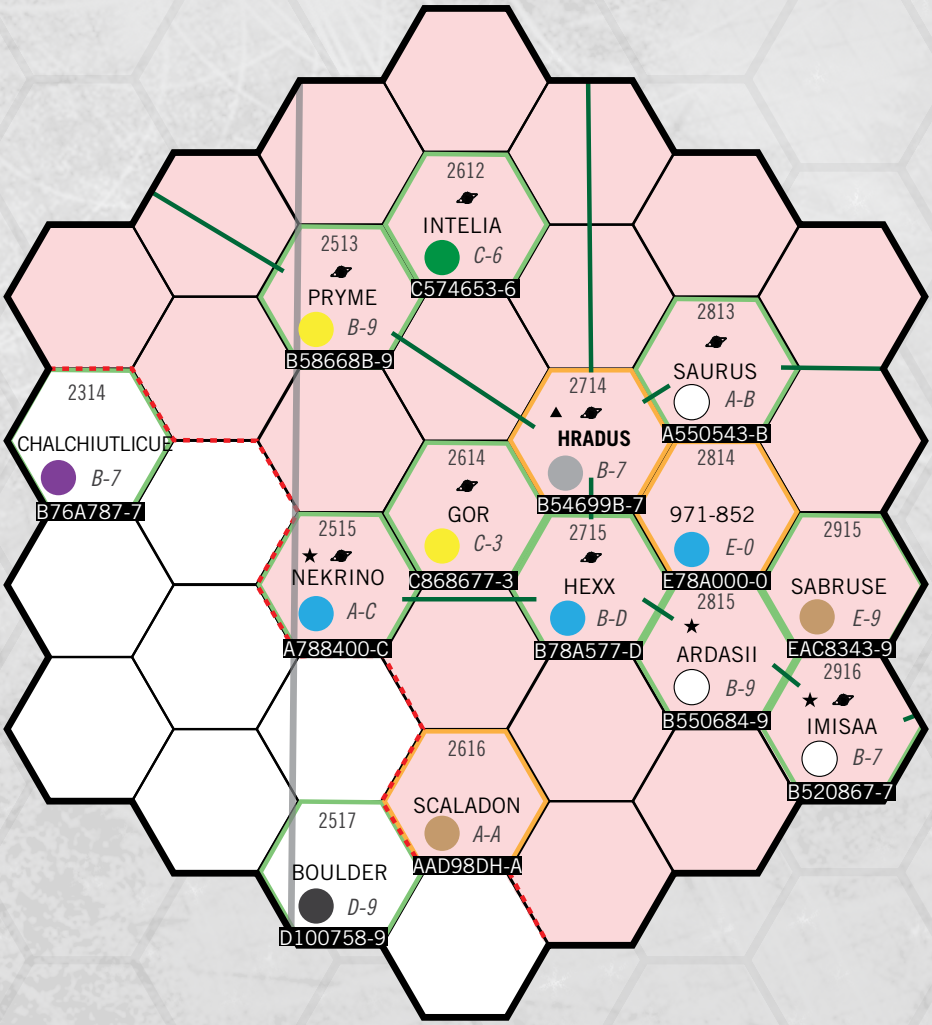
The climax of the adventure is a potentially violent confrontation but even this can be dealt with by other means. Diplomacy, negotiation and subterfuge are always options for clever and inventive Travellers.

NO COUNTRY FOR OVERPOWERED TRAVELLERS

This adventure is designed to challenge a party of Travellers who have limited physical resources at their disposal and must rely on quick thinking, guts and their impressive skill set. Passage through the starport and out into the wider world is intended to remove most or all of the Travellers' advanced weaponry and equipment.

If the Travellers arrive at the Vorstaten estate festooned with plasma guns of varying sizes, wearing battle dress and juggling boxes of high-tech gadgets then many aspects of the adventure will not be much of a challenge. Thus the Referee should use the opportunity to throw the Travellers back on their own resources. Those who sulk because they have lost their win-buttons will do badly; those who think on their feet will meet a worthy challenge and hopefully succeed… and those used to scraping along on a shoestring will find their adventure on Gor to be just another day at the office.

TOBIA SUBSECTOR



Secure System
Amber Zone
Imperial Border
Subsector Border
X-boat route

Gas Giant
Imperial Scout Base
Imperial Naval Base

Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Planet (rich in water)

Planet (vacuum)
Planet (corrosive/insidious)
Planet (rich in agricultural)

C H A P T E R - O N E

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The following information is for the use of the Referee. How much of it is made available to the Travellers, and in what manner, is for the Referee to decide. Much of this data is commonly known or available through data terminals, info feeds to Travellers' comms and so forth. However, the commonly available version may be incomplete, dumbed down or wildly inaccurate for all manner of reasons. The Referee has the whole story; if the Travellers want accurate information they may have to search or use inventive means to obtain it.

THE WORLD OF GOR

Gor is located in the Tobia Cluster, just six parsecs from the seat of the Imperial sector duke. Worlds in such a fortunate location often experience favourable economic conditions but Gor's low Tech Level and dispersed population mean there is little to attract investment or development and the world has remained a backwater since the Imperium claimed the region.

Gor was almost certainly settled by humans before the Long Night, although exactly where they arrived from – and when – remains unclear. The colonies survived but did not reach a point where they could grow and progress by their own efforts and offworld support was non-existent. After a brief period where the original expedition equipment was in use, the world declined to a pre-industrial Tech Level and has remained there ever since.

Today, Gor is officially described as balkanised but this is inaccurate as it implies the existence of multiple states. In reality there are two societies on Gor: the 'starport' culture, which has offworld contact and ready access to imported goods, and everywhere else. Beyond the port region, a few small states exist but they break up and reform on a constant, if irregular, basis.

Gor (C868677-3)

Gor has the potential to be a major world but its society holds it back. The four million or so inhabitants are divided into multiple small states and cooperation is invariably short-lived. The modest starport is surrounded by a mid-tech city but the rest of the planet is typically at the lower end of TL3. Steam power and rail transport represent the pinnacle of local technology, with imported items available only in the vicinity of the starport.

Gor is a wet world overall but some areas are prone to lengthy spells of drought. This is mainly due to prevailing wind conditions and interaction of warm and cool air on the continental coasts. A drought is normally followed by a period of intense storms, which can cause heavy soil erosion and flash flooding. This makes some areas much less productive, in the longer term, than a visitor might expect. An area of green and pleasant land might wither into semi-desert over several very dry years then be torn up by months of intermittent violent storms.

The indigenous population are familiar with these conditions but lack the technology to make accurate predictions. Their settlements are sited in areas with a history of being stable but rule-of-thumb estimates of expected conditions can be wrong from time-to-time. Socially, Gor tends to be a little unstable as well. There are a few proto-nations but most towns and the few small cities tend to be independent or grouped into loose alliances that rarely last more than a few years.

Despite this extremely fragmented society, Goreans, as the locals call themselves, share many common cultural values and are generally not well disposed towards offworld people or items. Those who live and work around the starport have a more cosmopolitan outlook but the typical small-town Gorean has little interest in being part of wider interstellar society. This has caused some frustration to those who wish to develop the world and gained the locals a reputation as a bunch of low-tech hicks who just want to be left alone so they can get on with their petty feuds.

THE GOR PROJECT

Like many heavily balkanised worlds, Gor is subject to a great deal of inter-faction conflict and friction. This has prevented any real technological or economic progress and while the Imperium does not interfere in the internal affairs of its member worlds, officially, it does have a vested interest in creating stability and growth. The Gor Project was one of many long-term measures intended to eventually produce unified worlds that could play a bigger part in the Imperial economy and, like many of these low-priority programmes, it was implemented on a tiny budget.

LAW AND WEAPONRY ON GOR

Gor is listed in the databases as having Law Level 7 but like most balkanised worlds this is a generalisation based upon conditions in the starport area. Almost all weapons are prohibited there but elsewhere citizens are routinely armed for self-defence (or, some would say, for feuding). Most weaponry is locally made, low-tech but reliable and reasonably effective. Cartridge firearms are the norm, although black-powder flintlocks are used in some remote areas.

The specific laws and regulations in place vary considerably. Many towns ban the carrying of firearms within their limits but allow citizens to own and use them beyond the boundaries of the settlement. There are, in most cases, no prohibitions on military weapons as such, as locally made versions are more or less the same as civilian rifles and heavier or higher-tech weapons are virtually impossible to obtain. The starport region acts as a buffer to prevent offworld weaponry getting into the countryside, although occasionally a shipment slips through.

The plan was to grant minor members of noble houses estates on these balkanised or otherwise troubled worlds. These loyal and influential Imperial citizens on Gor could provide a framework for improved cooperation – or at least less friction – between the people of a deeply fragmented society. The project had the major advantage that it cost very little. The land grant came with a subsidy to build an estate but after that the newly settled nobles were on their own.

In some cases these projects have borne fruit but Gor has thus far proven resistant to change. Thus the Gor Project has been ongoing for some years without any useful results. Willard's predecessor was recalled to 'pursue other duties' – a polite euphemism for being declared a failure and having the land grant revoked. After the estate stood empty for two years it was reassigned to the Vorstaten family. Willard was the next member of his house to reach the point where he needed an estate or a task, so was sent to Gor.

There are only two other Imperial knights on Gor, both in distant regions. The original plan was to have several but budgets and priorities prevented further efforts. Willard has inherited what is essentially a stalled or failed project and is acutely aware that his reputation is at stake. If he is modestly successful he will be granted the estate permanently but even modest success seems unlikely at this point.

GOLLS

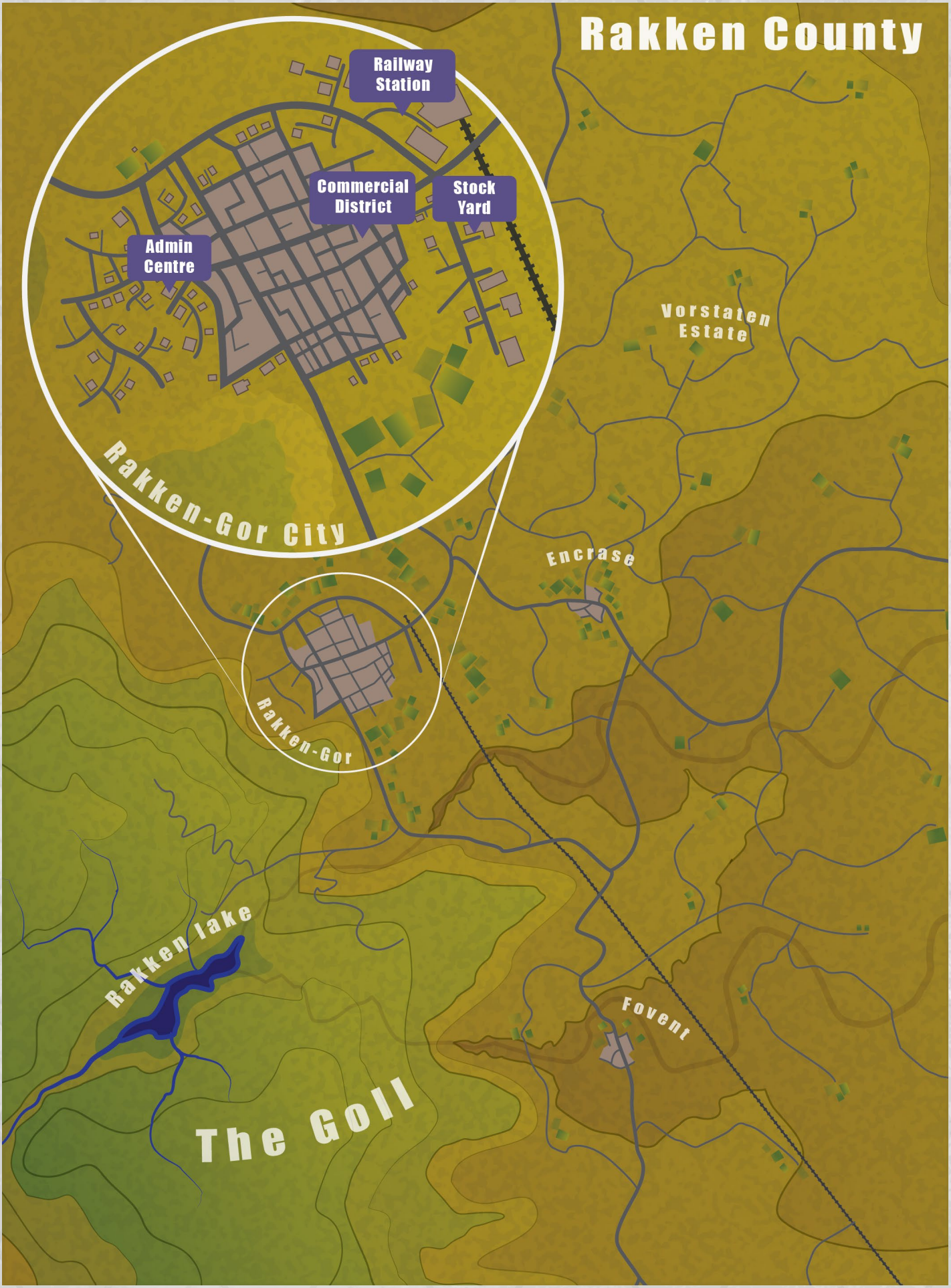
A 'goll', in local slang, is an area of high ground characterised by multiple low peaks and occasionally a mesa. 'Dry golls', more commonly just called golls, have much the same vegetation as lower areas unless they are very steep. 'Wet golls', which are less common, usually feature a depression among the higher terrain and are characterised by upland marsh or a small lake. A wet goll usually is the source of one or more small rivers and will often have a settlement nearby taking advantage of the reliable water source.

Golls are not good cattle country, so tend to be ignored by local farmers. This leaves their vegetation in its virgin state and provides habitats for the native wildlife of Gor. Since some of these creatures are capable of threatening a herd, one way or another, and expeditions 'up the goll' are a semi-regular feature of life in the outback of Gor. Hunting the large birds of prey or the ground predators is considered glamorous by some citizens but, in fact, the biggest threat to cattle on Gor is the ever-expanding population of Terran rabbits, which breed out of control on the goll hillsides. Rabbits can destroy good cattle country and are a real problem even in normal times. With the grazing land under environmental pressure as well, rabbits have the potential to be the downfall of many farming communities.

THE TOWN OF RAKKEN-GOLL

Rakken-Goll is typical of a large town or small city on Gor. Like many such places its inhabitants use the terms 'town' and 'city' interchangeably, although officially Rakken-Goll is listed as a city on the world guides available at the starport. It is part of a loose federation calling itself the Third Republic of Havein but is essentially self-governing in most matters. The town close to the foot of a steep upland area – officially known as The Goll of the Rakken but usually referred to as Rakken-Goll like the town.

The Goll acts as a watershed for the area under normal conditions and has a small but very deep fissure lake in a depression between its peaks. The lake is surrounded by an area of wetlands and even in the present very dry conditions the immediate vicinity of the Goll is better-watered than the rest of the area.


Rakken County
Railway Station
Commercial District
Stock Yard
Admin Centre
Rakken-Gor City
Vorstaten Estate
Encrase
Rakken-Gor
Rakken lake
Fovent
The Goll

With a population of around 30,000, the town of Rakken-Goll is supported mainly by farming and herding and has been hit hard in recent years by drought. Its industry is small and of local importance only, although sufficient to support other activities without importing much from the starport region. There is little technology above TL3 available and what there is tends to be old or in poor condition. It is highly unlikely that anyone would sell an offworld item if they had one.

The local currency is a copper/nickel coin, with elaborately printed notes for larger amounts. The Credit is, in theory, universally accepted but physical Credits are rare and electronic transfers entirely impossible outside the railway station. Most transactions are conducted in coinage or through 'whomen', a slang term short for who-owes-who-men. These well-respected individuals are essentially walking credit agencies, mentally keeping track of who owes what to whom and amending accounts at the end of the day. Occasionally someone comes up with the idea of conducting a transaction then killing the whoman to wipe out the debt. This is a virtually guaranteed way to come to a bad end; whomen are essential to the economic life of the town and protected by more or less the whole community.

The town is connected to the starport by rail link, which uses fairly efficient steam powered trains to transport goods and people back and forth. The railway is a major employer in Rakken-Gol and owns much of the town's very limited manufacturing capability. Surplus capacity is hired out to whoever needs it, producing small amounts of tools and simple machinery.

The railway is in serious disrepair, having suffered from several years of bad management even before the present difficult conditions began. Its personnel are notoriously corrupt and prone to dereliction of duty whilst they pursue side interests. This is unfortunate, since the railway's supposedly well-organised personnel have a responsibility for firefighting and law enforcement, which is at best patchily implemented.

The railway terminus is also the town's central business district, with stock yards and auction houses close to the rail line. The small administrative apparatus is located on the other side of town, away from the noise and smell of the yards and surrounded by high-end housing. In between lie a mix of neighbourhoods constructed on a rough and uneven grid pattern. Most buildings use timber, although it is not uncommon for a home to have been built of stone up to waist height, with timbers above this level.

Rakken-Goll has a typical attitude to weaponry. Personal firearms may be carried to and from a place of work or business and gun ownership for home defence is entirely acceptable. Routinely carrying weapons for non-work purposes within the town is illegal. In practice, this means that security personnel tend to be armed, as are some people who work outside town. The immediate environs are generally safe but those venturing further out may feel the need for a rifle or shotgun. Usually herdsmen will have a weapon to deter cattle-thieves, and shop owners might have a weapon under the counter, but the average person in the street will not be armed unless they have a reason to go home and get their gun.

The town is surrounded by steads and farms of varying sizes, with a few villages in between. Land ownership is evenly split between the larger and more prosperous herd-owners and smaller farm operators. Boundaries are rarely clearly marked but tend to follow natural features such as ravines, streams (dry stream beds, as often as not in the present conditions) and ridges. People are, on the whole, busy and in any case not interested in offworlders. Wandering across someone's land will rarely attract comment unless the Travellers cause damage, although some landowners are a lot more ornery than others.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Although Gor has a considerable amount of surface water, dry spells are not uncommon in some areas of its continents. At the present time the starport region, which includes the town of Rakken-Goll and the Vorstaten estate, is experiencing a severe drought. This has been ongoing for most of a decade, albeit with occasional periods of heavy rainfall. Whilst the area has not been reduced to a dustbowl, vegetation is brown or yellow and provides little sustenance to livestock. Farming output, which is the area's main (and very nearly only) export, has dropped considerably.

When the rains do come, they are destructive rather than helpful. Dry soil is washed away and flash floods rise where the ground cannot absorb so much water at once. This further contributes to the destruction of good grazing land and loss of production. Various measures have been attempted in the hope of alleviating the situation but resources are very limited and competition more common than cooperation. Disputes over water rights often breakout and have led to shootings on several occasions.

The result is a sense of despair or at least desperation among ranchers, although a few have exploited the troubles of others to expand their holdings. Whether this turns out to be a good investment or not remains to be seen.

AROUND RAKKEN-GOLL

Gorean society has never been well integrated or organised but for the most part folks will cooperate or at least leave one another alone. There are some bad elements, of course, but the population is sparse enough that competition over resources has rarely been an issue. Organised warfare is virtually unknown with confrontations between alliances or proto-nations tending to be amateurish affairs fought by untrained and highly disorganised militias.

As conditions worsen in the Rakken-Goll area, conflict and factionalism is increasing and there have been some attempts to recruit veterans of previous conflict as leaders of what might be termed warbands. Distinct factions are beginning to appear, based around mutual protection of interests, although in most cases the intent is deterrence and collective bargaining from a position of strength rather than aggression.

The primary players emerging in Rakken-Goll politics are:

The Rakken-Goll City Administration: Rather grandly titled, the city administration seeks to rally the local population behind the leadership of its administrative officials. Outwardly well-meaning, the administration hopes to further the interests of its primary members, emerging from the present difficult times with increased land holdings or tighter control over businesses. It has few assets of its own but does currently have the support of the majority of folk living in town and some of the smaller farmers. This could be lost if the self-serving agenda of the administration becomes too apparent but for now 'City Admin' is the most numerous faction although probably the least coherent or organised. It does have a small core of competent and reliable people who carry out most tasks with the assistance of whoever else turns up to help.

The Rakken-Goll Railway Company: Controlling the railway and some of the associated stockyards and industry, 'The Company' is the most centralised of the factions and the one with the clearest command structure. Its personnel are responsible for firefighting and law enforcement in town as part of their obligation to the community, although how and indeed whether they choose to uphold those duties depends on political conditions. The Company's internal workings suffer from the same corruption as its external dealings, which could derail operations or even cause the faction to fragment. Whilst the City Administration pays lip service to formal arrangements between the town and the Company, many ordinary folks are openly contemptuous of the way the Company deals only with the problems it chooses to.

The Fovent-Encrase Landowners' Collective: A loose association of most of the smaller landowners in a broad crescent east and south of the town, 'The Collective' is based on long-term relationships, intermarriage between families and a history of mutual assistance. Its members are the most independent of the region's citizens but also the most likely to put together a cooperative response to a situation. Most are wise enough to see that despite other factions having their own agendas, the region needs everyone – or at least their assets – if it is to pull through. Selling an idea to the Collective is likely to be surprisingly easy or virtually impossible, based solely upon its merits. Where other groups may need a careful piece of politicking, the Collective can usually be swayed by a solid and workable idea presented by someone who can be trusted to push it through.

In addition, the larger landowners tend to have their own agenda – which usually comes down to ensuring they gain or at least do not lose out – and small groups of townsfolk have also banded together to protect their interests.

THE VORSTATEN ESTATE

Located in the hills to the north of town of Rakken-Goll, the Vorstaten Estate was built around 20 years ago to TL12 standards. Attempts were made to mimic the local construction style, giving the house and its surrounding structures a rustic look from the outside, which is at odds with the internal sophistication. Walls are built from TL12 materials, treated to look like local stone, and windows use tough security-grade ceramics rather than simple glass. The house is more or less impervious to a casual intruder and can shrug off small arms, although it might be possible to chew through a window with enough sustained fire.

The layout is intended to provide security without giving the impression of a fortress, using outbuildings to create what is effectively a walled courtyard. The house is a modest two-storey structure at the rear of the compound, with a neat fenced garden beyond (and outside the compound) that is accessed through an innocuous looking but heavily reinforced rear door.

At the front of the compound is an impressively ornamented gatehouse, through which the ground entry road passes. This is normally closed off by two sets of ornamental gates, which can be augmented by retractable anti-vehicle barriers. These are largely redundant on Gor but are a standard security feature and included as a matter of course. The roof of the gatehouse has a landing pad for grav vehicles, although there is plenty of room to land in the gravelled courtyard instead.

The remainder of the courtyard 'wall' is made up of single-storey utility buildings down one side and accommodation for staff on the others. There are four apartments for the staff plus a garage, workshop and storage space. An outer wall 1.5 metre high runs around the top of the outbuildings. Military-minded Travellers will instantly recognise the security features – the house essentially has a continuous outer wall with covered firing positions, with the house serving as the rear wall and equivalent of a keep in a low tech castle.

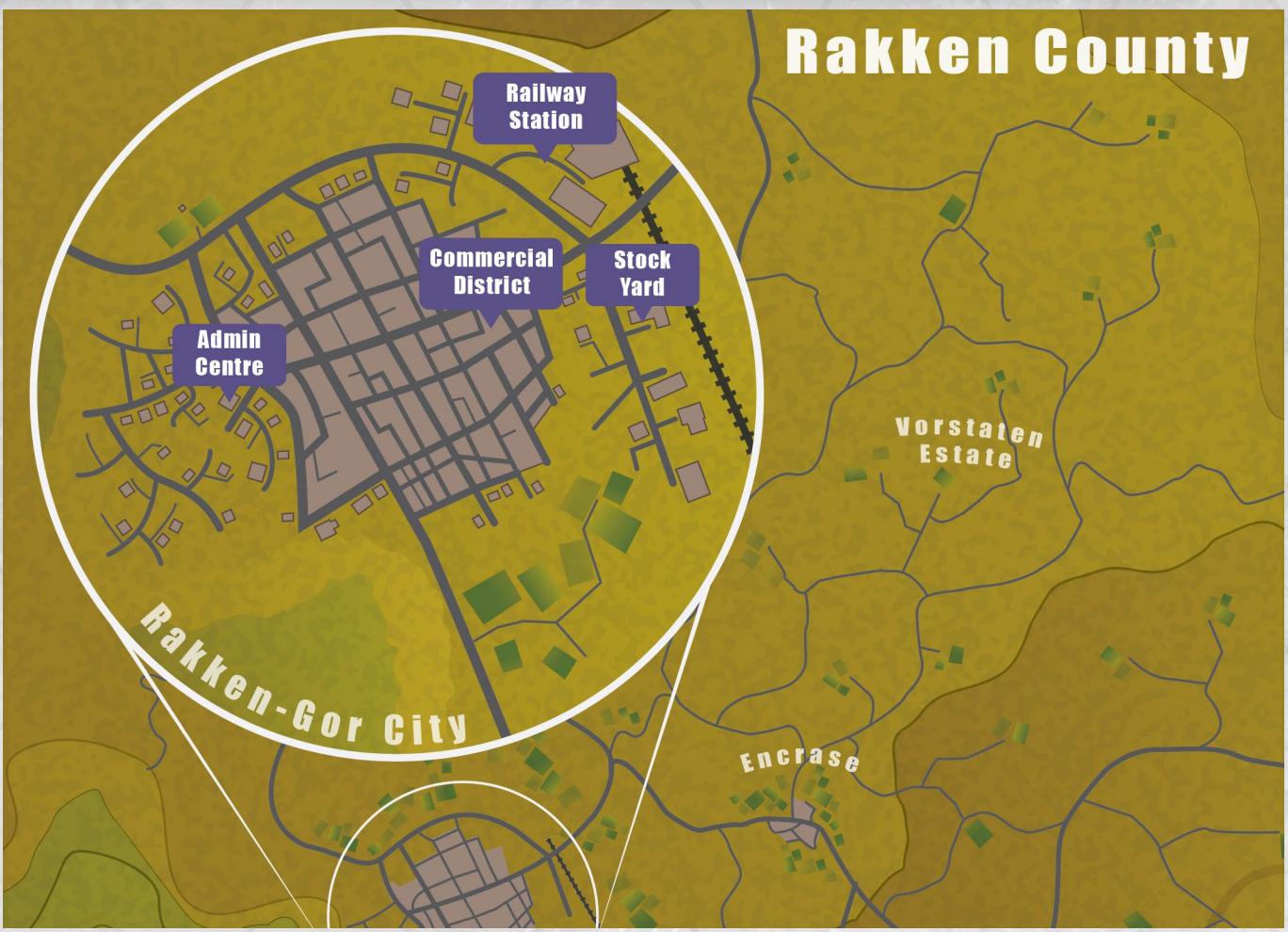
Others may notice that the estate is distinctly run-down. Efforts have been made lately to weed and replant the gardens and clear away bushes and undergrowth that have sprung up during the years of neglect. The storage area is full of odds and ends that have no other place to be and need to be out of sight. These efforts have been carried out in fits and starts, not always with attention to detail. The overall impression is one of faded splendour and half-hearted attempts to restore the estate to its original appearance.

This impression is borne out by longer acquaintance. There are two farmsteads close to the estate and forming part of it. These have been well maintained by their local owners and not suffered the same decline as the estate but it is clear they could use significant investment. Both have small vegetable crops growing but were set up as primarily cattle and dairy farms. The herds are depleted and show signs of the current hard times faced by the whole region. The livestock are actually a bit better off than those of other farms in the area, since the estate has a water reclamation and irrigation system but all the same, the animals are scrawny and underfed, constantly picking at the dry, half-dead grass in the hope of finding a few green shoots.

The estate is powered by a small TL12 fusion reactor in a basement under the house, which serves as a heavily reinforced panic room at need. The reactor has enough fuel to run for years and the house itself uses starship-grade life support equipment to ensure the occupants never run out of heat, light or water. Pipes run out under the surrounding soil, in some cases for over a kilometre, ending in a set of narrow tubes that allow water to be drawn in from the ground or pushed out if irrigation is required. At present this system is keeping the immediate vicinity of the house slightly more green than the surrounding area but it was never intended to cope with a severe drought.

Resources at the Estate

The estate is under-staffed and feels empty a lot of the time. It was restocked with minor items when Willard Vorstaten was assigned but is still run-down. There is essentially unlimited power for local needs and an inexhaustible water supply, plus an impressive quantity of high-end starship meal packs delivered a few months ago. It would be quite possible for 10 to 20 people to lock the doors and hunker down for weeks, or even months, if necessary. Whilst this might be tempting, it will not endear Willard to the locals and virtually guarantees his eventual recall 'to pursue other duties'.



Communications and Electronics: The estate is connected to the starport's communications feed and therefore has access to a full set of data storage containing much of Humaniti's vast knowledge. More importantly, the estate has access to updates from the starport's weather monitoring system and images taken by starships using the port. Sir Willard has not yet realised the significance of this. He is, of course, aware that he can ask for help from the port authority or send messages offworld from his home but does not recognise the full significance of his communications link – something no-one else in the region has.

Workshops and Machinery: The estate has a basic workshop with powered machines suitable for light fabrication. These were intended for maintenance of vehicles and systems, yet could be put to other uses. Indeed, a couple of talented people using Willard's workshop could create a modest cottage industry providing high-quality components, tools and small items that would bootstrap the development of a larger industrial sector in town. They could also fabricate spares in an emergency and might be able to use some of the stockpiled/stashed odds and ends to throw together a necessary device. Again, Sir Willard has not yet seen the potential of his estate.

Vehicles: The estate is equipped with four utility and two transport vehicles. The utility vehicles are large pickup trucks designed for off road operations in a rugged environment. Two are on near-permanent loan to the estate's farms and in pretty banged-up but functional condition. The others are reserved for estate work and see little use. The two transport vehicles are large SUVs designed for a combination of elegance, comfort, security and off road performance. They represent a reasonable compromise and are used by Willard whenever he goes anywhere. All vehicles are fuel-cell powered and can be topped up from the estate's power feeds but are not routinely kept at full capacity. A random vehicle might have anything from 10%-100% charge.

Weaponry: All Imperial nobles are potential targets for assassination or kidnap but Willard's situation is considered extremely low-threat. If he were assigned a security detail they would bring their own weapons but

he does not have one. He owns a dress sword and service weapon, a navy-issue gauss pistol, and his bodyguard/driver has a submachine gun. In addition, there are a few guns at the house, all stored in a secure room to which Willard and his bodyguard have the only access. Most are standard designs that can be found anywhere:

- A ridiculously ornate (garish, actually) heavy revolver with a telescopic sight and long barrel. Sir Willard was given it as a gift and hates it. The 50-round box of ammunition it came with is unopened.

- Two standard bolt-action hunting rifles, with 4x magnification telescopic sights. Although produced at a higher TL than the design in *Central Supply Catalogue*, these are essentially the same as the rifle on page 114. There are a little less than 300 rounds of ammunition, many of which have been spilled into a bowl to be grabbed when someone needs a gun.

- Two double-barrelled shotguns and around 600 shells. These are mostly heavy birdshot suitable for bunnyhawks or small game such as rabbits, with about 50 larger buckshot shells better suited to combat or hunting larger creatures. Several dozen shotshells are also in the bowl, since these guns are used to keep down vermin on a regular basis.

- Three locally-made revolvers, each with a spare cylinder and several hundred rounds of 7mm ammunition.

- One locally-made carbine, also with a spare cylinder, using the same ammunition as the revolvers.

People of the Estate

The small estate staff can be considered the personal household of Sir Willard Vorstaten. All are long-term employees of House Vorstaten, which is wise enough to treat its people well and create an expectation of reward for loyalty at the end of their service. They are not mindless robots who do Sir Willard's bidding without question but tend to assume he has a good reason for any instruction he gives, even if it seems a little strange at the time. None will betray him without powerful motivation but will put their own well-being and that of friends and family before service to a noble house that has started giving suicidal orders.

The estate staff consists of:

- **Dravid Morainne**, male age 41, driver/bodyguard
- **Rrongva Oekstaetz**, female Vargr age 58, legal and financial advisor
- **Tikks Kerenski**, male age 26, tech-wrangler

These staff are detailed on page 32. There are also various cleaning, maintenance and steward robots that Tikks looks after.

Associated with the Estate

There are two other groups associated with the estate and having some access to it, working the two farms close to the estate. They are not employees of House Vorstaten but native Goreans. Their opinions of and friendliness towards Sir Willard have been influenced by his conduct towards them and, on the whole, they are well-disposed towards him.

West Farm

Lying close and benefiting considerably from the house's underground irrigation/reclamation system, West Farm is owned by the estate itself. It was bought out from the owning family along with the land upon which the estate house is built, at a very low price since the farm was struggling. The original estate owners did not greatly endear themselves to the folk of West Farm but treated them well enough as tenants. It was hard for the former landowners to bear although, and some resentment remains even despite Sir Willard having taken a quite different approach.

One of the first things Sir Willard did was to look at the estate accounts and inform his West Farm tenants that his predecessor had not paid them nearly enough for the land. He is still their landlord but they now have enough cash in the bank to consider sending their children to an offworld university or perhaps buying out their tenancy some day. In the meantime, the Sarvla family are the closest thing to friends Sir Willard has on Gor and have unrestricted access to the house (although not to secure areas like the gun room and computer equipment) and its grounds.

The Sarvla family consists of:

- **'Old Man Sarvla' (Andrew Sarvla)**, age 41. Anything but old, his title is ironic as he inherited the farm at a young age.

- **Durelle Sarvla**, Andrew's wife, age 38. She is the most knowledgeable of the family about farming matters and sometimes reminds Sir Willard that he does not really understand Gor's weather, people or anything else about it. This rarely goes down well, although most of the time they get along.

- **Raichs Sarvla**, male age 22. Raichs is the eldest Sarvla child, learning the trade of a cattle farmer. He really has no aspirations beyond this and would be quite content to inherit the farm someday – hopefully as a free and clear landowner rather than a tenant but just keeping the place running would be good enough.

- **Jorge Helmenn-Sarvla**, male age 17. Jorje is an adoptee, whose parents both worked the Sarvla farm as hired hands and were killed in an accident five years ago. The family took him in and good-as-adopted him, although without much in the way of legal formalities that might be recognised at the starport. Jorje can be moody and bad-tempered, which may lead the Travellers to think he is up to something but in reality he is just having trouble dealing with what has happened.

- **Medine Sarvla**, female age 15. Medine takes after her mother in terms of absorbing knowledge and has benefited from a basic electronic education package Sir Willard gave her without realising how much it would mean to her. She is now aware of just how big the universe is and how much she does not know, and she wants to learn, well, everything. She tends to ask endless questions that just lead to more, which can be tiresome but she is deadly serious about knowledge and will not allow the Travellers to escape without revealing something she could not have discovered otherwise.

- **Seuss Helmenn**, male age 31. Seuss is Jorje's uncle and would normally have taken on the task of raising the boy after his parents died. However, the decision was somehow made – nobody really remembers why, it was just 'right that way' – that he would be raised as a family member in the Sarvla household. Suess himself is an employee but with peculiar semi-family status.

The Sarvla household is a more-or-less family who work together and have managed to keep their farm working in the present hard times. They are so closely associated with the estate that they have begun to feel the traditional Gorean attitude towards offworlders lose its strength.

High Farm

Lying on high ground further away from the estate, High Farm has suffered much worse from drought. It still has a respectable herd but the health of animals is not good and breeding has suffered the past few years. The farm is run by a manager hired by Sir Willard's predecessor and kept on when the changeover occurred. Its four or five staff see a fair amount of turnover as someone takes a job elsewhere or goes back home to their family's business.

There is no particular bond of loyalty with the manager or hands but they are fairly paid and well looked after compared to staff at locally-run farms. There are many in the Rakken-Goll region who would not consider a job at High Farm due to its offworlder connections; there are many more jealous of those to have jobs there, especially in the present environment.

Hands from High Farm sometimes come to the estate house to do work the household robots cannot manage – Sir Willard's attempt to use his robots to sort out the garden still causes hilarity from time-to-time – but for the most part they have little to do with their employer other than collecting payment each month and having to stop work and look respectful when he visits for a look around.

Sir Willard's Credibility

The impression the locals have of Sir Willard will be important at the end of the adventure. From this point on, the Referee should keep a running total of his Credibility score. This starts at zero – the locals have no strong opinion of him one way or the other – and is increased by success along the way. Credibility may be used as a roving DM on checks to resolve the final parts of the adventure – by Sir Willard or anyone acting on his behalf. Some, all or none of his Credibility may be used on any check, to a maximum DM+4 on any given check. Each point can only be used once.

It is conceivable that his final Credibility might be negative. If so, the negative value applies to all checks in the final episode made by Sir Willard or on his behalf. A greatly negative Credibility will guarantee failure, but this is hardly surprising – who wants to listen to a solution proposed by some offworlder who stood by and let local people burn to death or hid in his big house while the town was being washed away?

C H A P T E R - T W O

LAST TRAIN OUT OF RAKKEN-GOLL

The Travellers have received an invitation from Sir Willard Vorstaten to visit him at his estate on Gor. If they know him from a previous interaction, or perhaps know his family, then the invite might be a friendly one along the lines of 'drop in if you're passing and we'll hang out' – although this depends on the SOC of the Travellers and how well they know Sir Willard.

Alternatively, if the Travellers are notorious or well-known for being good guys, they will receive a more formal invitation to spend a few days being entertained at his estate. Wise Travellers will consider the fact that the nobility are used to getting their own way and that even if there are no actively bad consequences of not paying a visit they may miss out on something.

Travellers might infer this is a lead-in to a proposal that will in turn lead to a job or mission but in reality Sir Willard has not thought it through to that point. He simply wants to meet the Travellers for the sake of a bit of company. He does have a half-formed idea that someone from interstellar society might be useful as a sounding board for his ideas but at the point he makes the invitation he really has no specific plan other than covering the costs of some Travellers to visit him.

GOR DOWNPORT

The downport at Gor is typical of Class C ports on backwater worlds. It is small but equipped with standard cargo handling and vessel support equipment. The facilities have clearly not been upgraded in a long

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The starport and its associated startown have a full telecoms net, with instant access to huge amounts of data. A handful of repeater towers extends this net out to about 200 kilometres. The ability to reliably access the starport datanet is considered by many Travellers to delineate the 'interstellar social zone' (or, less charitably, the 'edge of hickdom') for a backwater world. Thus once the starport communications signal begins to fade the Travellers are truly out in the wilds.

The Travellers' personal comms and electronics equipment can transmit and receive well enough to interface with a booster and tie into the world's communications net. On most of Gor, there is no such net, so the only place where the Travellers will have good communications is close to Sir Willard's estate or one of his well-equipped vehicles. There are no communications satellites in orbit, so a Traveller out in the wilderness is truly alone.

The locals have a rather basic radio system. Some use imported transmitters built with mid-tech components but the majority use TL3 versions of the same system. These household radios are very bulky, unreliable and prone to distortion or interference. When they work they allow voice communication over 50 kilometres or so and further if atmospheric conditions are right. Keeping a transmitter working is considered something between a worthy skill and a black art practiced by mystics. Some local farmers are radio enthusiasts who can discuss the intricacies of their setup for hours on end. They tend to think people who just push a button on their wrist comm are missing part of the experience.

Attempting to tie a personal comm into the local radio net would be tricky, although an interface device could be put together by a skilled technician. There is certainly enough spare electronics equipment at the estate to do this, although it would probably take a couple of days of trial and error. Once complete, the device would allow Sir Willard to communicate with farms across the region and modifications to the repeater tower up on the Goll would extend his range much further.

time and ship turnaround times are slow. Likewise, personnel are not as sharp as they might be at a major port. Technicians and officials know their business but are constantly interrupted and retasked as more urgent jobs come in or short-handed staff request assistance.

The port concourse is small, with just a couple of shops and merchants' offices plus the usual uninspiring and overpriced portside hotel and a bar or two. Most local trade is done electronically when it happens at all; not much moves through Gor although there is a constant flow of agricultural produce headed offworld. If the Travellers want meat, grain, bulk vegetables or cryogenically-frozen milk, they can get it here. If they are after something more exotic, they should have gone elsewhere.

What Gor Downport does have is a decent set of weapons scanners and prohibition on weapons taken outside starport limits. Sidearms are permitted within the port – although they are unlikely to be needed – but anyone venturing beyond into the city or through it to the wilds of Gor must place their weaponry in storage or take it back to their ship. The exception is hand weapons of a personal defence nature. A sword or survival blade would be considered acceptable but a two-handed battle axe would not.

There are messages from Sir Willard waiting for the Travellers. They are most likely not from him personally but his household management system. This is normal; most busy people have a management system to handle routine matters such as such as hotel bookings, travel arrangements and the like. For a noble to deal direct at this stage would be unusual, although there will be a personal note if the Travellers know Willard and are on good terms.

Willard's system will arrange transit to his estate whenever the Travellers are ready. If they prefer to stay and see the sights – such as they are – of Gor's capital and startown for a while this will not be a problem, although if they think to ask they will find passage to the estate will be aboard a local train, with a vehicle sent to pick them up at the station. Trains run every other day, on average. Sir Willard will arrange a hotel – there is a better selection in the town itself rather than the starport – and cover reasonable expenses incurred during a layover.

TAKING THE TRAIN

Some of the rail transport on Gor uses mid-tech equipment. Whilst nothing like as comfortable as rail transit systems found on high-tech worlds, these trains are reliable and not unpleasant to use. Those serving the Rakken-Goll region are quite another matter. Built using local technology, they represent the best transportation most of Gor has to offer… which is not saying much.

The station should not cause too much alarm among the Travellers. As an adjunct to the starport and startown, it has had the benefit of offworld equipment

in its construction and many of the standard features found in a low-end spaceport. There are even vending machines selling popular offworld brands of snacks and drinks, although most of the racks are sold out and resupply is patchy. Still, it is not until their train arrives that the Travellers will realise just how primitive their transportation is to be.

The locomotive is one of three owned by the Rakken-Goll Railway Company capable of pulling a full-sized load over the long distance to its home terminus. Several other operators use the same main line but the Rakken-Goll route splits off after 600 kilometres or so. The final 200 kilometres is on track owned by a single company, using locomotives and rolling stock owned by that company… a company notoriously inefficient and corrupt even before the present hard times began.

The train consists of several dozen empty cattle cars, a handful of general goods wagons and a pair of dilapidated coaches. One contains passenger and luggage accommodation; the other is a sleeping/restaurant car. The condition of the passenger coaches is about as bad as the goods wagons and the less-than-smartly uniformed staff create an equally run-down and slovenly impression. The guard van at the back of the train carries two armed guards who have no function beyond providing security and will not help with anything, whilst the passenger section immediately in front of it has a two-man service team who make at least a pretence of doing their jobs.

The 800 kilometres journey to Rakken-Goll will be made at an average speed of 30–40 kilometres per hour, with a couple of stops for firewood and water, and a single halt at a small town; the Travellers can expect to spend almost 24 hours on the train to Rakken-Goll. Seating is… basic… to say the least and the sleeping area is particularly poor. Food selection comes down to a choice between a decent stew and fresh bread, or starship-type meal packs sold at a truly cosmic price.

The journey will give the Travellers a chance to find out a little about Gor and is also an opportunity for the Referee to demonstrate how offworld ideas, products and goods leak slowly into the society of backwater worlds. This can create moments of incongruity, such as overhearing the crew of a TL3 steam train discussing an offworld sporting event they watched on the holovid unit at the company rest area in the capital.

Close to the starport the land is green and lush but as the train crawls across the landscape the air becomes more dusty and green gives way to brown and yellow. Watercourses have clearly dried up and a former lake the railway passes is now a small marsh. The crew seem unconcerned; 'it's just a drought, they come and go. It'll soon pass.' By the time the rail line splits off toward Rakken-Goll, the train has passed through several areas that used to be well-watered and are now on their way to becoming semi-desert. It may occur to them that if a forest was dying in this manner on a high-tech world there would be a call for an irrigation project that might well save it. Here, everything just take its chances.

The train passes a few dry golls along the way, giving the Travellers a chance to learn the local word and finally begins to wheeze its way up the rising land towards Rakken-Goll. The uplands are clearly visible above the town and above them – rare in this journey – are a few small clouds. The train pulls into the terminus at Rakken-Goll, not a moment too soon, and the Travellers get an impression of the town.

DETAILS ALONG THE WAY

A journey of this sort is an opportunity for the Referee to do some scene-setting. This not only makes the game setting feel deeper and richer but also allows information to be provided to the Travellers ahead of time. Questions about how spikey the bushes are might be relevant as someone dives into them in the middle of a firefight, and information can always be provided when needed, but a little preliminary setup can eliminate the needs for stops and starts in the middle of an action sequence as the Travellers suddenly realise they know little about the environment they are fighting in.

Scene-setting can also be useful in establishing 'soft barriers' to Traveller actions. A few minutes of play spent describing the long journey and harsh conditions will establish to all but the most suicidally headstrong of Travellers that they cannot simply rage-quit the situation around Rakken-Goll and stomp back to their ship. The subtext to this particular journey is that the Travellers are far from their high-tech gadgetry and starship, and reliant on the railway to get back to them. If they do decide to leave Rakken-Goll to its fate, this will require some problem solving that might prove more tricky than helping the locals.

C H A P T E R - T H R E E

ARRIVALS

First impressions of Rakken-Goll are not favourable. 'Dying low-tech cattle town' pretty much sums up the situation as far as the Travellers can see out of the train windows. Still, there are people obviously working, trying to make a living in the harsh conditions and signs that the area was prosperous until recently. A lone figure waiting on the platform will catch the Travellers' eye. A man of early middle age, wearing a dark suit cut in the current style popular in the Duchy of Tobia, waves a greeting when he sees the Travellers.

Sir Willard has sent his driver, Dravid, to pick up the Travellers and convey them to the estate. One of the large SUVs is parked in front of the station ready for the trip. Dravid introduces himself in a polite, crisp and businesslike manner and suggests heading straight up to the estate. If the Travellers want he can point out the main features of the town and will indulge them if they wish to take a closer look, although he will suggest the town will still be here tomorrow.

The road up to the estate is an incongruity on Gor. It is a smooth, fusion-sealed surface constructed at the same time as the estate and has not yet begun to weather. It starts just outside of town, meeting the dirt track the locals use in a ruler-straight line. Once on the road Dravid drives fast but smoothly, answering questions if the Travellers have any. The journey is about 10 kilometres, made at an average speed of about 60 kilometres per hour. Dravid is reluctant to go faster, explaining that traffic is phenomenally light but nobody has taught the local cows about road safety.

RIDING ANIMALS

The Terran horse is ubiquitous throughout the Imperium, along with a number of similar species native to other worlds. The kian, a large flightless bird, fulfils similar functions in some regions but cannot carry a heavy load. Horses and kian can go places a wheeled vehicle cannot and can be maintained with local resources – in other words, fed and looked after – by people without access to a vehicle workshop. As a result, working animals are often encountered even on mid-tech worlds and in places like Gor they are invaluable.

Sure enough, the Travellers can see cattle wandering around loose, with the occasional horseman on a horse or kian rounding up one or two and sending them back towards the rest. This is normal practice here, Dravid says. It is a big, open country with plenty of grazing – well, apparently until the past few years – and herds are brought in only when necessary.

Nearing the estate, the Travellers will note that its environs are a little greener – or at least less yellow – than the surrounding lands. They will be able to see High Farm away in the distance and the road goes right past West Farm. Dravid exchanges friendly waves with anyone working close to the farm. He then presents the estate itself – although it has been in sight for a few minutes – and gives a general briefing on its nature. The salient points are:

- The estate is built to offworld standards and intended to be a secure residence. Materials may look local but the walls are as tough as the Duke of Tobia's bathhouse (this is both a huge exaggeration and a rather odd turn of phrase but the meaning should be clear).
- There is a continuous outer wall and gated entrance, monitored by an automated security system that actually came from the Duke of Tobia's bathhouse (not true as such but again the meaning is clear enough).
- If the Travellers have weapons, they must be deposited in the visitors' gun safe at the gatehouse.
- Once at the house the Travellers will be set up on the security system with standard access (this basically means most parts of the estate but not anything sensitive like the autodoc programming station).

Questions about the bathhouse are met with a bland statement that the nobility selects staff for their discretion. It is hard to tell of Dravid is joking or if he really does know something about the Duke of Tobia's bathhouse.

SIR WILLARD'S WELCOME

Sir Willard is waiting as the Travellers debus from their vehicle, along with Tikks and Rrongva. He offers warm and apparently sincere greetings and thanks for coming and offers a quick tour or welcoming drink. He is considerate and well aware that the journey by train is appalling and suggests that if any of the Travellers want to sleep for a few hours he would quite understand. This

comment is sincere but Travellers making a Difficult (10+) INT or SOC check will realise Sir Willard is desperate for company and really wants someone to stay awake and talk to him. Etiquette and his noble station means he must be a gracious and considerate host but under all that he is a lonely young man who craves the company of starfarers like he used to be.

Sir Willard will think no less of anyone who feels the need to immediately fall asleep after their long journey but will be quietly grateful to anyone who stays up – especially if it is a struggle – to chat with him when they first arrive. This is probably the best time to form an accurate appraisal of him, when his enthusiasm for company is at its greatest.

The early interaction with Sir Willard is best roleplayed as a rambling chat, possibly over drinks or whilst wandering around the estate pointing out its features. Astute Travellers will realise that Sir Willard is a bit out of his depth and trying to find his feet in a new role he was not trained for. He seems like a decent enough fellow but lacks the skills of a statesman or much in the way of relevant experience. He does, however, have a very nice house.

INTERACTING WITH SIR WILLARD

Sir Willard is a member of the Imperial Nobility and has a station to maintain. This is particularly important in a backwater like Gor, where his reputation is about all he has to work with. He is quite happy for Travellers to be informal and friendly with him in private but they must always remember that this is his estate and he is an Imperial knight. That does not mean being obsequious but open challenges and arguments in front of the locals cannot be tolerated. Travellers who learn to phrase their counter-suggestions carefully and appear to support Sir Willard even when they are disagreeing with him will become valued friends – a young noble cannot do better than to cultivate a circle of resourceful associates who know how to 'play the game' but still provide useful opinions.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

The Travellers are free to explore the region and perhaps visit Rakken-Goll if they wish. They may find numerous things to do without any Referee interference and if so the beginning of the adventure proper can be deferred. If the Travellers seem to be having a good time there is really no need to impose the events of the adventure on them just yet. However, there is one activity that should be implemented before the adventure begins; a dinner with the Sarvla family from West Farm.

Sir Willard invites his tenants up to the estate house on a semi-regular basis, hosting what is less a formal engagement and more of a sit-down discussion of the affairs of the farms and estate that happens to take place over dinner. Everyone is well aware that the occasion is often just an excuse for Sir Willard to talk to someone but it is still treated as a grand occasion with best clothes and an attempt, at least, at good manners.

Sir Willard is keen to host such an occasion now that his guests have arrived. This is in part because he wants to see the big dining table filled – just for once – and partly because he is excited to have guests and wants to show them off. The Travellers come from a very different background to the locals and Sir Willard hopes they will be impressed. In that, he is a little disappointed. The Sarvla family have much the same 'folks is folks' attitude to offworlders as many other Goreans. They show a polite interest in the Travellers' experiences but are not wowed by tales of interstellar adventure.

The dinner is a chance for the Referee to present the Sarvla family as characters and show the Travellers the wholesome side of life on Gor. These are just ordinary, decent people trying to make a living. They have no great ambitions (except maybe to find a way to fund their daughter's offworld education) but are willing to work hard for a living. The Travellers might dismiss them as clueless, boring hicks or might warm to them – much depends on the character of the Travellers. Either way, the evening is intended to be a pleasant one and Sir Willard will think more highly of those who treat his only friends on Gor with respect.

C H A P T E R - F O U R

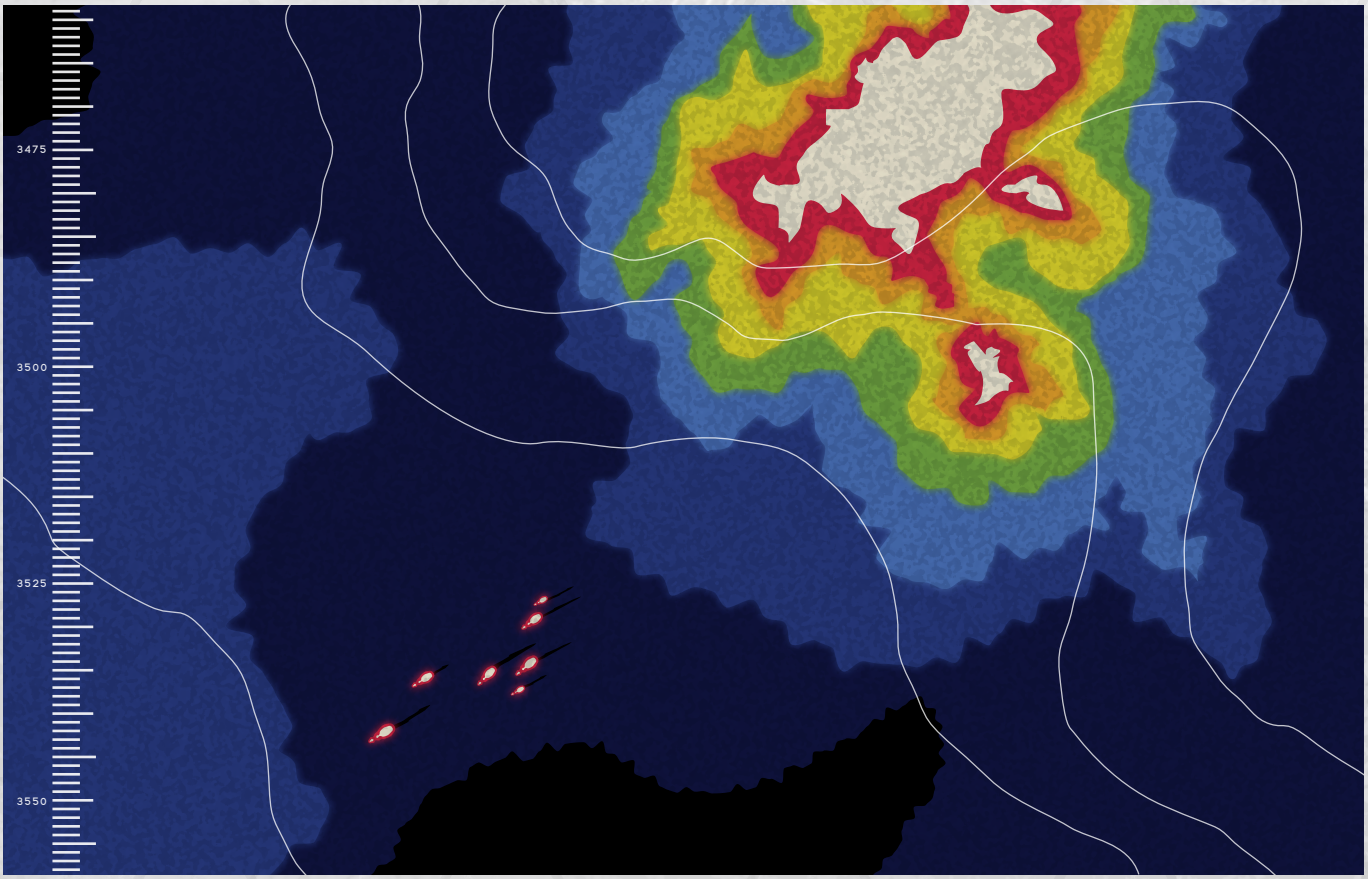
A BROWNISH AND UNPLEASANT LAND

Shortly after waking one morning the Travellers become aware of agitation in the house. The reason is soon obvious; there is a wide pall of smoke on the horizon, signifying a prairie fire. Sir Willard does not think his estate is in danger and in any case his home would shelter everyone from a mere grass fire. The economic damage would be considerable, however.

If the Travellers think of it, they can use the estate's link to the starport to collect images and weather data. There is no constant satellite coverage like there might be on a high-tech world; the Travellers will have to make do with a few radar and visual images collected by a departing subsidised merchant. Still, it is a lot better than nothing.

A few minutes' work produces sufficient raw data to work with. Starfarers used to operating a shipboard planetary-map package can quickly create an estimate of the size and location of the fires. This is something Sir Willard himself could have done if he had thought of it, so the idea must be presented sensitively to avoid making him feel inadequate. The Travellers might not care about that at this stage but it will colour his attitude towards them later.

The data can be used for far more than a picture of the fires, of course. This requires some inventive interpretation and cross-referencing but Travellers who make an Average (8+) Navigation check can throw together a reasonable working prediction of the fires'



location and likely course based upon weather and wind conditions. Other skills can be substituted at the Referee's discretion, possibly a higher difficulty level. The Effect of this check can be retained and used as a 'roving DM' by the Travellers when dealing with the fire and its aftermath. At the Referee's discretion part or all of the roving DM can be applied to any check before it is made.

Clever Travellers might figure out a way to keep the projection running and have it fed to their personal computers and comms. This requires a Difficult (10+) Electronics (computer) check. If successful, a blanket DM +1 applies throughout their efforts to deal with the fire. This represents the availability of useful but sometimes patchy information.

The situation is that there are several prairie fires burning to the east of Rakken-Goll and the estate. Wind conditions are light, fortunately, but the fire is moving at a steady pace. It seems to be moving away from Rakken-Goll itself but there are farmsteads and a few small hamlets that might be in danger.

HEADING OUT

Sir Willard wants to investigate the fires and see if he can help. This is part of his remit on Gor – if he can assist the local population it will help win them over. He will go even if the Travellers decide to do some much-needed gardening instead and he assumes the Travellers will also want to try to help. In fact he does not state his intentions – it does not occur to him to do so – but it is apparent he is getting ready for an expedition.

Throughout the adventure, Sir Willard will respond to local troubles as best he can. This is why he is on Gor and also his personal inclination. He expects the Travellers will go along with him – partly because he is an Imperial noble and born to lead, and partly because active, resourceful people just do that sort of thing, don't they…? If the Travellers are obstinate about ignoring the adventure, Sir Willard or his staff can be used to give them a hint, which will eventually become a direct call to action. He will go off without them if the Travellers still refuse to help and will inevitably get into trouble. Ignoring a distress call from their host, a member of an important Imperial noble family, will eventually have repercussions for the Travellers. If they realise this they may finally be motivated to act. If not, the Vorstaten family's displeasure may come back to haunt them in the future.

If the Travellers somehow fail to spot what their host is up to, they will have a last-second chance to hop in the vehicle(s) without preparation. More likely the Travellers will have a few minutes to gather what they think they will need. Sir Willard does not object to anyone grabbing stuff from the house or estate and since he has donned his weapons belt as a matter of course it is obvious he will not object to anyone going armed. He will instruct Dravid to hand out weapons to anyone who indicates they want one.

Sir Willard anticipates a need for equipment and will pitch in with an attempt to round up sensible items like medical equipment or emergency rations. He will rapidly become impatient if the Travellers want to spend hours searching the estate for every scrap of useful kit or trying to build something from scratch. Likewise, he is in a hurry to get to the fire site and see if he can help but is also aware that driving cross-country, even on a fairly flat prairie, can be tricky and sometimes dangerous. His naval background taught him that going fast sometimes means not getting there at all.

Driving across the prairie is not hazardous most of the time, although conditions are very dusty and the ground surface prone to crumble. Areas with a large rabbit population are particularly prone to collapse when a vehicle drives over them, creating a depression filled with fine dry dust. This will happen at least once during the drive, forcing the Travellers to find a way to get moving again. Techniques similar to those used for soft sand or snow will work, such as placing a board in front of the wheels and driving the vehicle onto it or partially deflating the tyres. The Travellers will be stuck long enough to realise they have been brought to a halt by bunnies, which may amuse or frustrate them.

Eventually, the fires are in sight. Animals can be seen moving away from the flames, in no great rush at present. The occasional mounted herdsmen chivvies them along but initially it seems matters are in hand. However, the wind is beginning to pick up and become gusty, causing fires to move quickly and unpredictably. Travellers with a link to the starport via the estate's repeater tower can get up to the minute weather data, which confirms that windy conditions are beginning. Indeed, there is quite a lot of cloud rolling in from the west that might bring much-needed rain… but not soon enough.

C H A P T E R - F I V E

PRAIRIE FIRE

One of the nearby steads is broadcasting a distress call on its primitive radio. The signal is weak and patchy but the gist of it is that the fire has changed direction and now threatens the house. The Travellers may be able to see which one in the distance. A group of neighbours has been trying to dig a ditch to act as a firebreak but are forced to mount up and retreat as the fire suddenly advances on them. The people in the house have no such option – the fire is too close and their escape route cut off by a new flare-up. There really is nothing anyone on Gor can do… except the Travellers, perhaps.

The farm owners are trying to wet their home with what little water they have. It is obviously futile but there are no better options. Now and then one of the neighbours moves towards the fire line as if hoping to find a way althrough, but there is none. Not on foot or on horseback, anyway; an off-road vehicle going fast might make it. Tyres are the standard gel-filled type and highly resilient. They should hold up long enough to get into the farm courtyard, pick up the occupants and get out again. Becoming immobilised in the fire zone is a death sentence but if the Travellers can keep moving they might be able to pull off a rescue.

Charging through the fire zone means driving more or less blind into smoke and flame, over uneven ground, at speed. It is risky but doable. The Travellers can stack the odds in their favour a little with some quick pre-planning. An Average (8+) Navigation or Survival check gives an idea of the lay of the land. This check can be used as the start of a task chain as the Travellers tackle the fire.

Getting through the fire requires two Drive checks (DEX). The first is during the approach and the second whilst actually within the flames. The approach check is Average (8+) and the fire zone check Difficult (10+). The attempt can be aborted at the approach stage if things are going wrong. There is no point in trying to turn around once within the fire.

A prairie fire will not greatly damage the vehicles, at least not straight away. If the tyres and other meltable components survive, the vehicles will be drivable afterward and not suffer structural damage. A vehicle that gets stuck will catch fire sooner or later and the heat will kill the occupants long before that. If the Travellers can keep moving they will be fine and that is simply a matter of good driving.

Each round the Travellers are approaching the flame zone or actually in it, roll 2D on the Fire Crossing table and add the Effect of their Drive check. A vehicle that aborts its approach to the flames must still roll for damage.

DM-4 applies when the vehicle is within the flame zone.

Fire Crossing

2D+Effect	Result
0 or less	The vehicle loses all remaining tyres and is immobilised.
1–2	The vehicle loses a tyre. If three remain intact it may still move but DM-4 applies to all Drive checks.
3–4	Some damage is incurred. All subsequent rolls on this table are made with a cumulative DM-2. This result may occur more than once.
5–6	Everyone in the vehicle suffers D3 damage from heat or smoke, ignoring any armour, but the vehicle gets through intact.
7 or more	The attempt goes as well as any drive through a wall of fire can be expected to. The vehicle is singed but not significantly damaged.

If the vehicle is immobilised in the fire zone, it will resist catching fire for an impressively long time but the heat will immediately start to cook the passengers. Everyone takes 1 point of damage the first round, ignoring armour, D3 the second and 1D per round thereafter. Once a 6 is rolled for damage the vehicle catches fire as well. In the approach zone, the process takes longer. No damage is taken for 1D rounds, then 1 point per round for 1D rounds and so forth. The Travellers will either have to bale out into the flames and try to run to safety or nudge the vehicle out of the fire with another. Running out of the flames causes 2D damage in the fire zone and 1D in the approach.

If the Travellers can get through to the farm house, the occupants will readily clamber aboard. This will be a chaotic scene of screaming children, people snatching burned hands away from the hot metal of the vehicle shell and frantic questions about whether everyone is accounted for. Escaping requires a second passage through the flames, possibly with a damaged vehicle.

If the Travellers or Sir Willard pull off a rescue there is no big pile of Credits or any sort of reward at all but the sight of local folks cheering and applauding might be worth more to them. It will certainly increase Sir Willard's standing with the locals, even if he did nothing more than provide the vehicles. As for the Travellers, they have just done something nobody else in Rakken-Goll could have even attempted. The house will be lost but the family will survive. Sir Willard might even help them rebuild.

LIVESTOCK RESCUE

Soon after the rescue, the Travellers will realise they have more to do – now that lives have been saved attention turns to livestock. Cows have enough sense to move away from the fire but in some cases this has meant they wandered into the path of a different fire front and ended up trapping themselves. Some have already been lost and others are beyond saving but quick and determined action could save a greater proportion of the local herds.

As herdsmen and farm hands mount up to make the attempt there is a general air of expectation that Sir Willard and the Travellers will do something. They can help in various ways even if they have no idea how to round up cattle and persuade them to go closer to the fire in order to eventually escape it.

How well or badly this section of the adventure goes depends on many factors. The Travellers have several options if they want to help and the Referee should keep track of the Effect of relevant skill checks. At the resolution of the incident, the running total of Effect so far is used to modify the final outcome.

Planners: The first opportunity the Travellers have to help is at the planning stage. If they do not attempt this, there is no 'planning stage' as such; the locals just head out to do what seems best. They feel pressured to do something right now and will not be receptive to a bunch of offworlders telling them to wait and make a plan but if they can be persuaded the results will be better and lives might be saved.

The Travellers will first have to sell the idea of creating a plan to the locals. This requires an Average (8+) Persuade or Leadership check. Failure indicates everyone is in too much of a hurry to listen and imposes DM-2 on later attempts to organise and lead the locals. If the check is made, at least some of the herdsmen wait to see what the Travellers have to say. This check is made to facilitate the Travellers' intervention and is not included in the running Effect total.

Ideally, the Travellers will be able to display some kind of map, perhaps with up-to-date information on the fires and positions of herds. This will impress some of the herdsmen, who know about technology but do not really grasp how useful it can be on a day-to-say basis. Even without a good map, a Traveller with Tactics (military) skill can assist the locals with timings and locations.

The Travellers can make an Average (8+) Tactics (military) check to assist the locals in planning an effective response. DM+2 applies on this check if they have good, up-to-date map information on the location of fires and herds.

Coordinators: The Travellers' comms may have a limited range but the equipment in their vehicles(s) will boost this to tens of kilometres. If they can find a high spot they can relay information and observations to personnel on the ground, so long as there is someone with a comm to receive it. This may require Travellers to borrow a horse or kian and go with the herdsmen. This is at least mildly dangerous and Travellers with no idea how to ride will at best fall off a lot or be unable to get their mount to do as they want. This is not a problem in terms of rounding up herds – the locals are good at that and the Traveller is there simply to relay information. However, if a rapid movement is needed or mounts panic, the Traveller could be in trouble.

How much the Referee wants to make of the Travellers' efforts at riding with the herdsmen will depend on circumstances. Travellers may find it frustrating or humiliating, which may be an interesting experience – if they are used to feeling superior to backwater hicks then trying to survive in their low-tech world can be an eye-opener. Typically, an Average (8+) Animals (handling) check (STR or DEX) will suffice to deal with most situations. An Effect of –6 or worse indicates the Traveller has fallen off. This usually does 1D damage and their mount may run off. A fall close to the flames or in dangerous terrain may be more serious. A Traveller may even have to be rescued by some of the locals.

The herdsmen react to the Travellers' efforts in a variety of ways. Some are unkind about the fact that the offworlders cannot even ride a horse (or kian), which most local children can do before they can walk. Others are respectful of what the Travellers are trying to do and most are simply grateful for any assistance the Travellers can offer.

Making a meaningful contribution in this way requires some means of obtaining and relaying information. If the Travellers can arrange to have communications people among the groups of herdsmen, they can make an Average (8+) Navigation check to direct them most effectively. If the Travellers failed to organise a planning session this check is subject to DM-2.

Herders: If the Travellers want to get stuck in and help they can borrow a mount and try their hand. Moving the herds to safety is mostly a matter of placing a cordon of herdsmen behind the cattle and making noise to get them moving. Participating meaningfully from horseback requires an Average (8+) Animals (handling) check (STR or DEX). Each Traveller riding a horse makes a check, with all contributing (positively or negatively) to the Effect of the running total.

The Travellers could instead use their vehicles. Gorean cattle are not used to such things and will be easily alarmed or frightened by them – as will horses and kian. This could be a problem but used correctly it might make all the difference. The cattle are frightened of the flames and will not ordinarily go near them, making it difficult to drive them close past a fire front and out of a bottleneck. A vehicle blaring music and sounding its horn might succeed in getting cattle moving where mere shouts or gunshots from herdsmen would not.

Each working vehicle can be used to help in this manner. The Travellers will make a Difficult (10+) Drive check (DEX), with the Effect added to the running total.

RESOLUTION

Once the Travellers have made their attempts to help the locals – or decided not to – the Referee must determine their level of success. Roll 2D and add the running total of Effect achieved so far before consulting the Cattle Roundup table.

CATTLE THEFT

There will always be those who seek to exploit a situation rather than help. A band of herdsmen (see page 34) has decided to take advantage of the confusion to steal a large number of cattle. Their plan is to drive them to a secluded area then pick them up later and take them out of the region. So far the plan has gone reasonably well and the cattle rustlers have rounded up several dozen animals. They have every chance of getting away with their crime – everyone is herding cows around the prairie right now, with no regard to ownership. If the rustlers simply play it cool they will come over as just another band of herdsmen saving what they can to everyone's benefit.

Unfortunately this has not occurred to the rustlers, who are nervous and not thinking clearly. Nor do they realise that a bunch of offworlders probably cannot tell one cow from another and have no idea what local brands mean. Some of them have a half-formed notion to bareface it out as they approach the Travellers but there are too many nervous hands near weapons not to go unnoticed.

Cattle Roundup

Total	Result
0 or less	Total disaster! Herds are scattered, large numbers of animals are killed, and several herdsmen end up trapped by the flames and roasted alive.
1–2	Extremely poor. Heavy casualties among the herds will cripple the local economy for years. Several herdsmen are killed or injured.
3–5	The herdsmen saved what they could, at the cost of several lives.
6–8	Despite numerous injuries, the majority of the herds were saved.
9–11	A well-coordinated effort saved most of the herds at very little human cost.
12 or more	No one could fail to notice that the rescue effort was a near perfect success and went far better than expected. Few injuries were incurred and the vast majority of cattle were saved. If the Travellers participated they are lauded as heroes and benefactors, and Sir Willard's credibility is greatly enhanced.

The initial encounter will be tense and it is likely that something is obviously amiss as the rustlers volunteer an explanation that falls somewhere between wheedling and belligerent. Any Traveller who makes an Average (8+) INT check realises these people are explaining themselves where no explanation is necessary and doing so very badly. An Average (8+) Gun Combat check (INT) warns those who pass it that something is about to happen…

… and then it does. Someone panics and reaches for a weapon and chaos ensues. Some of the rustlers will dismount, some will try to shoot from horseback. Their mounts are already skittish and are not, for the most part, used to sudden loud noises. Amid the scattering cattle, shying horses and wild shooting, the Travellers have an opportunity to fight or flee as they prefer. Those who made the Gun Combat or INT check are ready and can draw weapons and fight as normal. Those who did not make either cannot fight in the first round of combat, although they can dive behind cover or take similar defensive actions.

The exact number of the rustlers is up to the Referee and should be determined by the Travellers' numbers and armament. They are not skilled combatants and have chosen to fight as a stupid, desperate decision rather than a planned action. The fight should be chaotic but the rustlers will gallop away as soon as things start to go against them. Indeed, it is quite possible that some will flee straight away and others will freeze when the shooting starts – they were not expecting, and do not want, violence. Stealing cattle is one thing; shooting people is quite another.

AFTERMATH

The Travellers have had opportunities to be helpful and support Sir Willard. The fight with the rustlers is more of a problem. At some point questions will be asked about what happened and whilst the Travellers should be able to present evidence that they were attacked, this does not mean the locals will not be hostile to their account – after all, they are accusing locals of being cattle thieves and attempted-murderers. That might not go down well.

There are also some moral questions about the fight, for those who think about these things. Yes, some of the rustlers opened fire and others joined in once combat had started but this was not a clash between implacable foes; it was an unfortunate incident that nobody really wanted. If the Travellers only defended themselves they are in the right but if they took the incident as an excuse to chase down and kill every one of the rustlers their position is less defensible. This is especially true if they shot people who were not a threat. The Referee can make as much or as little of this as seems appropriate but even if the Travellers feel justified in gunning down anyone who challenges them, Sr Willard is more judgmental. This may lead to friction with their host.

Eventually, the Travellers will need to return to the estate. Sir Willard offers accommodation to the rescued family and anyone else who needs it, so the Travellers might find themselves running something between an extremely luxurious hostel and field hospital at the house. Anyone offered shelter will be underfoot for the remainder of the adventure, unless alternative arrangements are made.

Credibility

- If the Travellers did not assist Sir Willard at all, his efforts are well meaning but ineffectual. Credibility is reduced by –2.

- If the Travellers made a decent attempt to help with the house rescue – successful or not – Credibility is increased by +2. A successful rescue is worth +2 more points of Credibility and +1 more if the Travellers took big risks or struggled on even though their vehicles were damaged and they were in danger.

- If the Travellers made a decent effort to help with the cattle rescue, Credibility is increased by +1. An additional +1 point is awarded if the Travellers took big risks and another +1 if the outcome was a total success (12+ result on the Cattle Roundup table).

- No Credibility is awarded for the fight with the cattle thieves if the Travellers just defended themselves. If the Travellers behaved in a murderous manner, such as chasing down fleeing enemies or shooting non-combatants, Credibility is reduced by –D3.

- These values can be modified by the efforts of Travellers or others. For example, if the Travellers subtly find a way to get people to talk about their heroic efforts they may earn Sir Willard an extra point of Credibility. If someone spreads a tale about how they were the ones who attacked the 'innocent herdsmen' then Credibility may suffer an additional –D3 point reduction or even more.

C H A P T E R - S I X

STORM

While the Travellers were busy, clouds continued to roll in from the west and an information feed from the starport – if the Travellers have one – shows heavy rain. This is a good thing, mostly, but a storm after a long period of dry weather tends to be very destructive. As the air temperature drops and the wind picks up, the locals begin getting their livestock under cover and heading for their houses. The Travellers would be well advised to do likewise.

During the journey back, it is obvious this is a particularly bad storm. Lightning can be seen from time–to–time, and the wind picks up to the point where driving becomes difficult. Dust is blowing around, along with loose vegetation and the occasional pebble. This makes visibility a problem and occasionally rocks the vehicles alarmingly. On the plus side, heavy rain will undoubtedly put the prairie fires out…

Travellers with a weather feed get some advance warning that the storm is starting to spawn tornadoes and will have a chance to plan ahead if the Travellers can think of a useful countermeasure. If not, their first warning will be sighting a funnel touching down some distance off. They are in no imminent danger at this point but the wind intensifies and visibility drops to almost nothing as the wall of rain reaches the Travellers' vehicle. This is accompanied by very strong gusts that threaten to topple the vehicles over.

Retaining control under these conditions requires an Average (8+) Drive check (STR) and staying on course requires a similar Navigation check (INT). This would be automatically passed if the Travellers had a good navigation system, which they may indeed have had until a few moments ago. Unfortunately, the tornado has flattened the repeater tower atop the Goll and the Travellers are out of range of the house transmitter – its signal is blocked by rolling terrain. Suddenly bereft of their information feed, they may still have maps and other data in their personal computers but have lost their key advantage.

The Travellers might decide to seek shelter and wait out the storm. There are numerous deep gulleys suitable for providing protection from the wind, if they can find one. An Average (8+) Survival check (INT) allows one to be found but anyone passing the check with Effect 3+ will realise that flash flooding sometimes accompanies storms of this sort and that a gulley might not be a good place to be. Rock outcrops are not uncommon and can act as a windbreak but are less protective. The alternative is to slog on through the storm and hope for the best.

If the Travellers' vehicles are hit directly by a tornado funnel they will be picked up and flung about in a manner that will kill everyone aboard. If not, flying rocks and other windborne debris can cause significant damage to the vehicles, although smaller items cannot do much structurally. Surviving the tornado is mostly a matter of evading the funnels and that in turn means keeping the vehicles drivable. They may have already suffered damage from the fire but that mostly took the form of heat damage to the underside and tyres; the present threat is of being tipped over or impact with a large windborne object.

The passage of the tornado funnels takes place over three phases: approaching, proximity and receding. If the Travellers can survive these phases they are more or less out of danger. The wind is still very high and driving is tricky but it will be possible to get back to the estate if the vehicles are still drivable. The trick will be surviving those three phases…

Approaching: The Travellers can see a tornado funnel coming towards them. This enables a prediction to be made by anyone with the Navigation or relevant Science skill. An Average (8+) check (INT) allows a Traveller to figure out the best way to go in order to avoid the funnel; the Effect of this check is added to any check to avoid coming to harm during the proximity phase. In the meantime, the vehicle is pounded by some fairly large objects; rocks, logs and quite possibly animals. Roll on the Tornado Damage table.

Proximity: The Travellers are in real danger from the funnel. An Average (8+) Drive check (with a DM determined by any prediction made by the Travellers) allows the funnel itself to be avoided but the vehicle will still take damage. Make another roll on the Tornado Damage table. If the Travellers' vehicle is parked in shelter, the Drive check represents how well positioned it is; if moving, the Travellers will have to actively evade the funnel.

Receding: The funnel is past or beginning to dissipate but more damage is likely from flying objects. Make another roll on the Tornado Damage table. In addition, the Travellers begin to hear a roaring sound. At first it is barely discernible above the shriek of the wind but soon the ground begins to vibrate as well. Clearly something is happening…

Tornado Damage

2D+DMs	Result
0 or less	The vehicle is flipped onto its side or roof. It is, obviously, undrivable in this condition. In addition it takes 4D damage from flying objects.
1–3	The vehicle is tipped and may roll. Make a Difficult (10+) Drive check (DEX) to stay under control. In addition, the vehicle takes 3D damage from windborne objects.
4–6	The vehicle is pounded for 3D damage.
7–9	Small objects strike the vehicle for 2D damage.
10–12	The vehicle is struck by small objects for 1D damage, which its armour will shrug off.
13 or more	The Travellers somehow avoid taking any real damage.

Use the following DMs.

If the vehicle is parked in a gulley:	+4
If the vehicle is parked behind a rock outcrop or similar windbreak:	+2
Proximity phase:	–3

Outside the Vehicles

Anyone who is outside during these three phases takes damage rolled on the Tornado Damage table. During the proximity phase they will need to seek cover and cling to something. Anyone who tries to do anything else, such as wandering around in the tornado or trying to right a flipped SUV is just… gone. In the approaching and receding phases it is possible to work or move, although this is still very hazardous. A Traveller who gets a result of 0–3 on the Tornado Damage table will be tumbled across the prairie for 1Dx1D damage in addition to other effects and is unlikely to survive. Travellers who hunker down in a gulley or behind something solid are not subject to this effect, although they will still take damage from objects being thrown around in the storm.

FLASH FLOOD

The roaring sound the Travellers heard is water rushing along a nearby gulley or ravine. This might be the gulley they are hiding in, if they chose to do that. The Travellers have enough warning to make one attempt to drive their vehicle out of danger onto higher ground; a Drive check will suffice. If it is failed the vehicle is stuck, not permanently but for long enough to doom it. Any Traveller who bales out can scramble to (relative) safety without needing a check. Those still inside when the flood hits will be carried along in the vehicle for 1D rounds bashing into the gulley sides and turning over in the water. Everyone in the vehicle takes 1D damage per round and the vehicle itself will be wrecked at the end of its short but eventful voyage.

A vehicle not in a gulley will fare better. Water rushing down nearby low areas spills out into the prairie, endangering anyone on foot or animal back and potentially causing a hazard to vehicles as well. Travellers outside a vehicle will be knocked over, suffering 1D damage minus the Effect of an Average (8+) Athletics or Survival check. The driver of a moving vehicle will need to make a Drive check (DEX); failure indicates the vehicle has been slammed into something solid or pushed onto a depression where it becomes stuck. Freeing it will take 1D hours of wet and tiring work.

Once the vehicle is mobile again and the tornado funnels are well past, the Travellers will probably want to head back to the estate. They find it substantially intact, although there is a considerable amount of cosmetic damage. The two farms seem to have come through the storm reasonably well but there is a lot of radio traffic about destruction elsewhere and trouble in the town of Rakken-Goll.

Credibility

No Credibility is awarded for not dying in the tornado but the Referee might choose to award a point or two for actions taken by the Travellers. If they had survivors of previous incidents as passengers and worked hard to protect them, this may win favour. The Referee should not be overly generous, however. Most Goreans would make extreme efforts to save their friends and neighbours; outsiders doing likewise is only mildly remarkable.

C H A P T E R - S E V E N

A FUTURE FOR RAKKEN-GOLL

Rakken-Goll has suffered a great deal of wind damage plus localised flooding where its rather primitive drainage system could not cope with the deluge. Property damage is extensive and there has been some loss of life but perhaps most serious is a dispute that has broken out among the residents.

In theory, employees of the Railway Company are the town's main civil defence and law enforcement operatives but they are notoriously corrupt and lax at the best of times. Many of the townsfolk and some leaders among the city administration are angry that the railway workers hunkered down or protected their own company's assets at the expense of property and lives elsewhere. Some are unhappy with the administration for not providing a warning or organising a better response, whilst the railway bosses are claiming they did all they could with limited resources and bad direction from the administrators.

Tempers are running high in the city, especially since there are still people trapped in wreckage or endangered by rising water. Meanwhile, the town's economy is under threat as well. Casualties among the herds and damage to industry could bankrupt many landowners and business operators, and further damage is likely as the rains continue. In many cases one landowner has lost an entire herd whilst saving some of his neighbour's animals and there are calls for a system of redistribution and evening out of losses.

In short, Rakken-Goll is a powder keg despite the rains.

AT THE ESTATE

The estate is not in bad shape, although it needs a lot of clearing up. That can wait, but there is one task that might be worth expediting; the repeater tower atop the Goll has collapsed, cutting the estate's link to the starport. Repairing the tower requires a drive up the Goll, which is ordinarily not too much of a problem. The present conditions might make it a bit more hazardous but for the sake of a few hours' work the Travellers could re-establish communications with the starport.

The drive is nothing like as difficult as slogging through the edge of the tornado but the surface of the Goll is wet and slippery and there are occasional runs of water or mud to contend with. Nevertheless, unless the Travellers are highly reckless they can make it to the tower site without serious incident. Fixing the tower requires a comprehensive jury-rigging of the repeater equipment. This takes 1D hours minus the Effect of an Average (8+) Electronics (comms) check (INT or EDU) or a minimum of one hour. If the check is failed the tower cannot be repaired with the spares available.

There is an alternative to fixing the tower. A vehicle left atop the Goll could act as a re-transmitter, using its own communications suite to connect to the starport's repeaters. The extra height is sufficient to create excellent coverage and with a bit of tinkering the system could be set to monitor and boost (or intercept) local transmissions. This is probably a temporary solution – Sir Willard will want the use of his vehicle at some point and it will need to be recharged – but it will get communications back up in a very short time.

The antenna repair may go surprisingly well for the Travellers but on their way back down the Goll they run into a complication. A local farmer, caught up on the Goll by the rains, has tried to get back down and suffered a fall. He is stuck amid rocks near the site of a mud slide, with a broken ankle and suffering from hypothermia. At this point it is still raining hard and anyone working outside will be rapidly soaked.

Extricating the farmer – his name is Briyce Harnensen, and he is a distant relation of the Sarvla family – is tricky but not especially hazardous. There is a danger of slipping on mud or wet rocks, which would be unfortunate if the Travellers were carrying a casualty at the time. The biggest threat is hypothermia and shock. A Routine (6+) Medic check will allow the Travellers to spot this – the check is passed automatically if medical assistance is roleplayed and the problem mentioned – and apply treatment. A blanket, a hot drink and turning up the vehicle heater will save Briyce's life, earning the Travellers another point of Credibility if anyone finds out

about their good deed. Those who fixate on the physical injury might not spot the real problem in time and be left with a rescued-but-dead farmer. If the Travellers did not decide to fix the antenna, Briyce dies alone on the mountainside.

RAKKEN-GOLL

Whether or not the Travellers decide to restore communications with the starport, Sir Willard wants to go to Rakken-Goll to see if he can help. The damage to the town is apparent even from a distance but what is worse – and will not become apparent until the Travellers arrive and start talking to people – is that relations between the factions in town have broken down completely.

People are nervous and wary, especially of strangers. Even those engaged in life-saving work spare the occasional glance over their shoulders and it is apparent that instead of working to fix problems many are trying to protect what they have not already lost. Guns are evident on the streets where they would not have previously been seen and shots can be heard in the distance. There is a general atmosphere of trouble-waiting-to-happen.

Nobody has a complete picture of the situation. In many cases, all a given person knows is what happened on their street or at their place of business, perhaps accompanied by some tale of injustice or unexpected assistance concerning people the Travellers have never heard of. This is all low-level stuff but if the Travellers ask around they can build up a picture of the situation.

Each of the following pieces of information can be obtained with an Average (8+) Streetwise check. Alternative skills can be substituted at the Referee's discretion, and helping people out will generally get them to provide information. This may mean the Travellers spend a lot of time helping to clear wreckage or finding lost possessions, but if that is what it takes it will be time well spent.

The Travellers should be able to glean the following facts, not necessarily in this order:

- The town was hit hard by wind and rain plus a flash flood of the dry watercourse nearby. There is a lot of damage but most is actually quite minor. The damage is, in many cases, easy but time-consuming to repair and in the meantime the populace will suffer a great deal of disruption to their daily lives. For example, most buildings are structurally intact but may be uninhabitable due to losing part of a roof and suffering water entry.
- There were a few much more dangerous incidents, notably building collapses in areas where the ground subsided or became unstable due to flooding. Some parts of the town may still be at risk of further subsidence or collapse.
- The railway has suffered a serious problem. One of their trains is stuck and in danger but little more information is available.
- There is a great deal of anger over cattle losses. Some locals are demanding a redistribution of 'herds saved by collective effort' to assist those who lost their own.
- The Railway Company was supposed to deal with civil defence but apparently did nothing except protect its own assets.
- The city administration has ordered the Railway Company to put its workers on the streets to keep order and help with rescue efforts, as per its contract, but the Company has ignored the demand.
- There are, inevitably perhaps, looters here and there. Many are simply desperate people scrounging for what they need but there are those taking advantage of the situation. With little law enforcement going on, they are running wild and citizens are becoming jumpy. There have already been some unfortunate incidents and more will surely follow.

SIR WILLARD'S REMIT

One factor in being an Imperial noble is the expectation of leadership in a situation like this. The majority of nobles (those who serve the Imperium rather than those awarded showy titles for being a vid star or scientist and even some of them…) have a solemn duty to assist the Imperium and its citizens as necessary. This applies even to people from worlds like Gor, who do not really think of themselves as Imperial citizens.

In Sir Willard's case, this is exactly why he is here. His task is to establish himself as friend and leader to the local population, in order to facilitate social growth and stability. A situation like this is not only a perfect opportunity; he would be failing in his mission if he did not try. The problem is that he has no experience of a situation like this and is suffering a crisis of confidence. This is not something he can readily admit, however.

The Travellers could assist in various ways. One is to start a 'loaded' discussion about what to do, brainstorming ideas until Sir Willard finds a starting point. Alternatively, they could just start doing the obvious and hope he gets involved. This will work – once Sir Willard gets moving, so to speak, he will go from one decision to the next with increasing confidence. Indeed, that could be a new problem as he has little knowledge of TL3 cattle-country society and its problems, and might suggest unworkable or even dangerous ideas. Still, reining him in will be easier than getting him going.

If the Travellers do not pick up on the situation, Sir Willard ends up fixating on small things that can be easily addressed; this is very common behaviour among out-of-their-depth leaders and indeed people in general. It might reach the point where he is reprimanding Travellers on using bad language whilst ignoring the floodwaters a 100 metres away. This tendency to focus

on something close and fixable is normal but not useful; the Travellers will need to prod Sir Willard in the right direction without offending him.

Sir Willard's ego is fragile at the moment, largely because he knows he is out of his depth, so a degree of subtlety is called for. This is best roleplayed and demonstrated through the Travellers' actions but if a single skill check is desirable then the Travellers can use Diplomat or Persuade to point their host in the right direction whilst maintaining the illusion that he was the one making the decisions.

The following problems are all going on at once. The Travellers may encounter one while they are trying to deal with another but ultimately everything is interlinked. A solution that gives Rakken-Goll the best chance of a prosperous solution will need to resolve all these issues. Note that Sir Willard's Credibility score can be used as a DM wherever the Travellers require, providing he is with them or it is clear they are working on their behalf.

THE CITY HALL MOB

Outside the City Admin headquarters there is an ugly scene developing. This is the more salubrious end of town, away from the stock yards and railway terminus and is normally a pleasant neighbourhood. However, the city administration is essentially besieged in its offices by people demanding they do something about various problems. These are mainly concerned with lost livestock or a lack of coordinated civil defence, although some are yelling about the way the Railway Company has just holed up in its yard and is ignoring everyone else's problems.

These people are not contributing to the solution any more than the ones they are complaining about, although the irony of this will be lost on most. They are also getting in the way of what little the City Admin personnel are able to do with the few resources at their disposal. If the mob is allowed to continue working itself into a rage, sooner or later violence will break out. This is in no way imminent but at some point the mob will need to be dispersed or redirected.

Redirection is the ideal solution. If the mob can be turned from an impediment to a manpower pool its members can start contributing usefully. However, this will require a fair amount of persuasion and just getting the mob to listen at all will be no mean feat. Using a vehicle's sound system as a megaphone will solve that problem; an Average (8+) Leadership or Persuade check can be used to get the mob to listen.

Once the mob's members are listening, the Travellers can present their solutions. They will face shouted demands for solutions to several problems and will need to present a workable plan that tackles all of them.

The City Administration is Doing Nothing: This could be resolved by offering to meet with the administration's leaders (who are holed up behind barricades in fear of the mob and not doing any leading) to hammer out a workable plan of action. The plan must then be presented to the mob and 'sold' to them, which will require a Leadership, Persuade or Diplomat check at a difficulty level determined by the Referee based upon how ambitious it sounds. At the least, the locals want to hear that the administrators are tackling medical and rescue issues and looters on the streets.

The Railway Company is Also Doing Nothing: A promise to get them to act will suffice, provided it is 'sold' to the crowd and seems workable. Failing to deliver on this promise will create additional resentment.

Private Grievances: Everyone in the mob has a reason for being there. Most are worried about their livelihood, homes, family and friends, and just want to see useful action. A plan that looks like it might result in finding separated family members or eventually getting houses made liveable will placate the majority of the mob for long enough to persuade them to take part in useful collective action. If a person believes that the community working together to deal with everyone's problems will solve their own, they are likely to go along with the effort. If such an endeavour breaks down it will be hard to re-engage those who have become disaffected.

THE RAILWAY

The Railway Company does indeed have some serious problems but equally its personnel have shirked their responsibilities to the rest of the community. Getting uniformed people on the streets will help calm the situation, especially as the railway's security arm normally handles most low-level law enforcement. Their absence has been felt; their return will deter a lot of criminality.

However, getting the railway to release these people will not be easy. Many are busy with a problem that cannot wait and the rest are guarding the rail yards. If the Travellers can convince the rail bosses or security leaders that a wider presence, leading to a lower level of tension, will actually protect the yards better, then this will work. There is still another problem to be solved, however.

The railway is the lifeline of Rakken-Goll. If it is cut there are no exports to the starport and no imported tools or equipment. Without it, the town has no reason for existing. It is thus in everyone's interests to ensure the line stays open. At present, the railway is threatened by the effects of the flood, which has weakened the bridge leading into town. If it collapses, the line will be cut for some time. Preventing a collapse is possible but not with the level of manpower the railway has available.

There are two choices facing the rail bosses: let the bridge stand or fall as it may and fix it later, or fight to preserve it. An attempt at the latter has been made but

it is dangerous and uncertain to succeed. However, with a suitable amount of manpower it might be possible to shore up the bridge and add supporting timbers. This means working in a ravine prone to sudden gushes of water, mudslips down the sides and of course the constant heavy rain that makes everything slippery.

If the Travellers can convince the railway bosses to make the attempt and round up a few dozen willing people, the bridge can be shored up in a matter of an hour or two. This will be dangerous and lives might be lost, although good teamwork and a rescue system for anyone who gets into trouble should minimise the risks. An ideal solution might be to convince the rail bosses to make the attempt and obtain manpower from among the mob, motivated by the promise that fixing this problem will result in railway personnel back on the streets doing their jobs.

The actual attempt to save the bridge might or might not involve the Travellers. If they do get involved they may find themselves clambering down wet timbers to inspect damage and guide replacement beams into position or hauling workers out of the river and administering life-saving aid. There is much they can do here but exactly what role they play depends upon their motivations and skill set.

With the bridge shored up, trains can run again. That may be important sooner than the Travellers expect…

THE ECONOMIC DISPUTE

Many people are facing economic ruin and in some cases they have saved the property of others, which seems unfair. Disaffection and arguments over compensation – and fears for the long-term future – will divide the community and cause many to refuse to assist others. It may lead to people engaging in thievery, which they would ordinarily not even consider, in order to secure a financial future for themselves and their families.

There is a solution and it plays directly to Sir Willard's agenda. He is possibly the only person in the Rakken-Goll region who does not have a vested interest. He

does not stand to gain from any given adjudication and can therefore provide impartial arbitration when the time comes to decide who gets salvaged livestock and other assets.

The Travellers will have to convince the main factions that Sir Willard is the man for this job. The railway and admin factions will need to be sold the idea – Diplomat checks and some roleplaying are called for – whereas the Fovent-Encrase Collective will jump on it readily if presented in a way that sounds workable… and if the Travellers can solve another problem. The town of Fovent is in real danger of being hit hard if the floodwaters break through a hasty levee thrown up by inhabitants. There is a potential solution, although it may be a bit radical.

THE FOVENT SITUATION

There is an old, dried-up section of the watercourse cut off from the main part by deposits of silt. There is no time to dig it away to redirect the flooding river but suitably placed explosives could clear enough of the silt to allow the river to spill out in that direction. This would relieve pressure on the levee and save the town. The railway company has stocks of explosives for track-laying – not huge amounts but enough. If the rail bosses can be convinced to release the explosives and they can be moved to the site quickly enough… and someone could emplace them… then there is a chance to save the town.

Convincing the rail bosses to let the Travellers have the explosives is easy if they have established that Sir Willard will oversee a fair resolution once the dust settles. If not, they might be stolen or seized, or guards misdirected, bribed or lied to. In short, there are many ways to get the explosives but it will not be easy to transport them.

All that is available is crude, low-tech low explosives, more bulky than dynamite but fortunately very stable until a detonator is applied. These charges are ideal for moving silt and debris – that is what they are for – but their bulk means that they must be transported by train to the vicinity of Fovent. The rail bosses can supply a train if the bridge is fixed and plenty of volunteers are available to crew it. There are no engineers with explosives experience available, however. The Travellers will have to take on that role.

NOTES

The Travellers may find an entirely different path through this part of the adventure but in all likelihood they will end up with a train raising steam and being loaded with explosives as they help repair the bridge. Reassured by railway personnel out on the streets restoring order and the promise of fair settlement afterward, the citizens and city administrative personnel begin working together to provide manpower and skills where they are needed. It is still raining, the river is still rising but the Travellers are starting to win.

There is one last obstacle to deal with, however.

LAST TRAIN OUT OF RAKKEN-GOLL

No matter how well the Travellers have put their case, not everyone has bought in. A few have decided to grab what they can in the chaos, and in some cases there has been violence. Knowing retribution is inevitable if they stay, a band of desperadoes is seeking a way out of the town with whatever loot they can carry. There is only one way – the train raising steam in the yard.

The Travellers will be alerted as shots ring out and figures can be seen scrambling aboard the train. These people are desperate to escape and willing to kill if necessary. They do not know the train is loaded with explosives and might not care if they did. It is very unlikely that a stray shot would set off explosives, but it might, and if part of the train catches fire an explosion is likely sooner or later.

The Travellers need to regain control of the train. This might mean jumping aboard and fighting it out with the thieves or chasing it in vehicles exchanging gunfire with the occupants. At some point the Travellers will need to board the train and gain control of the locomotive. How exactly this plays out depends on the Travellers' inclinations. It is possible that negotiation might work but more likely force will be required. This is a wonderful opportunity for a running gunfight between speeding pickup trucks and fleeing desperadoes aboard an explosives-laden train… something to make the Travellers' time on Gor truly memorable.

Once the explosives are secured, emplacing them and blowing the silt dam out of the way is a simple matter for anyone with the Explosive skill. Those without might have to work from a primer stored on their hand computers or under instruction from a retired Imperial Marine sergeant urgently relating instructions from the starport. The flood waters are rising the whole time the Travellers are busy but if they hurry and avoid blowing themselves up they will be just in time to see the silt dam disappear in a satisfying shower of debris and the floodwaters turn away from the town.

Soaking wet, exhausted and cold, the Travellers can take comfort in the fact they have bought Rakken-Goll and the surrounding region a future.

REBUILDING

Repairing buildings will take time. Rebuilding the economy of the region will take longer. There is still a chance of violence between factions or random groups of disaffected citizens but if Sir Willard has anything to do with it the community will come out of the disaster stronger and more unified. At last there is something he knows how to do.

Sir Willard quite literally holds court over the next few days, collecting reports of what has been lost, what has been saved and by whom. He compares reports of what landowners claim they used to have with what others think they had and tries to adjudicate disputes. He earnestly attempts to be fair and impartial, and ensure those who have lost everything are given resources to begin rebuilding.

The Travellers may be part of this if they wish, although there are other more practical tasks for those who prefer to get their hands dirty. By the time the trains are running to the starport again, Rakken-Goll is beginning to clamber unsteadily back to its feet. There is no big financial reward for the Travellers but Sir Willard belongs to an influential family and they have just helped him establish himself in the role he came to Gor to carry out. He will provide a letter of introduction and a few contact names the Travellers might look up if they need assistance or are looking for work. He also invites them to come back and visit him sometime, hopefully under less eventful circumstances.

If they do so, the Travellers will find Sir Willard well established as a pillar of the community, an impartial judge respected as much as any of the town's whomen even by those who do not like him. He has succeeded in his mission – the early part of it anyway – and been confirmed as the permanent owner of the Vorstaten estate near Rakken-Goll. This is a mixed blessing – it does mean he has become a career country gentleman – but he has gone from a clueless young man trying to find his way in an alien world to a leader, benefactor and friend to the people of the city.

Sir Willard's mission has been a success… so far at least. The Travellers might have ideas for how he can help the locals develop or avoid future disasters. Sir Willard will listen to their proposals and supply what resources he can to assist. It may be that the world of Gor can be dragged onto the interstellar stage after all. Not soon perhaps but progress is being made. The Travellers had a hand in that and Sir Willard will not forget it.

CHARACTERS AND OPPOSITION

SUBLIEUTENANT SIR WILLARD VORSTATEN

SPECIES	GENDER	AGE
Human	Male	27
TRAITS	–	

STR	5	INT	6	SKILLS
DEX	9	EDU	11	Admin 0, Athletics 0, Art 0, Carouse 0, Flyer 0, Gun Combat 0, Gunner (screen) 1, Leadership 1, Mechanic 0, Melee (blade) 1, Navigation 1, Pilot (small craft) 1, Vacc Suit 1
END	7	SOC	10	
PSI	—			
EQUIPMENT				Dress Sword (2D+2), Gauss Pistol (3D, AP 3, Auto 2)

Playing Sublieutenant Sir Willard Vorstaten:
Sir Willard is 27 years old. He is a member of the Atsah branch of the Vorstaten family, a large and well-respected clan that has a proud tradition of service to the Imperium. Like many of his cousins and more distant relatives, Willard entered the naval academy (at Depot in the Deneb sector) and graduated in the upper half of his class. The next four years were spent aboard large warships as a junior officer in the gunnery branch.

Battleship service was boring, Willard discovered, since the big ships spend all their time carrying out major-war exercises under the watchful eye of senior admirals. Indeed, the highlight of his career was the time Willard was selected for cross-training as a pilot and got to transport containers of supplies around the Depot system for three months. A rather optimistic application for a transfer to carriers as a fighter pilot was turned down and, feeling he had done his duty, Willard mustered out of the navy.

Willard was granted a parcel of land on Gor as his personal estate and expected to work towards improved stability. He was not the first to be assigned to this task; his predecessor was recalled, leaving the estate in a badly run-down and neglected state. With no-one in charge the staff did their best to keep the place running and indeed what is now the Vorstaten estate is actually in better shape than before its previous master left. All the same, resources are very limited and Willard has problems just keeping his own household running.

He is not incompetent but his competences lie elsewhere. He was a capable junior officer in the navy, skilled in defensive operations and capable of flying a shuttle when necessary. What he is not, is an estate manager or highly respected local leader. He has no real grasp of politics or economics and is up against a certain amount of local prejudice resulting from his predecessor's attitude.

Willard arrived on Gor with high hopes and aspirations of leading the locals into a new age of prosperity. His delusions led to early mistakes and rapid disillusionment. He fears being recalled like his predecessor but cannot see how he can turn the situation around. This causes him to veer between false optimism that occasionally results in half-baked plans and gnawing worries that paralyse Willard on the occasions where he has a chance to make a difference.

Overall, Sir Willard Vorstaten is a decent and well-meaning young man who is wildly out of his depth. He is also rather lonely, lacking companions from his home culture. At the same time he feels the need to keep up appearances and to be seen to be in charge, getting things done. This might cause friction with 'doers' who sort out a problem without giving Willard a chance to share in the credit.

DRAVID MORAINNE

SPECIES	GENDER	AGE
Human	Male	—
TRAITS	–	

				SKILLS
STR	8	INT	9	Drive (wheeled) 2, Flyer (grav) 1, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Mechanic 1, Medic 0, Melee (unarmed) 1, Recon 1
DEX	7	EDU	7	
END	8	SOC	8	
PSI	—			
EQUIPMENT	Autopistol (3D-3), Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3), Protec Suit (+4)			

Playing Dravid Morainne:
Dravid is a long-service professional trained by House Vorstaten. He is more security-conscious driver than true bodyguard and not in the same league as a senior noble's close protection team. However, he is loyal and content in his role, and knows he will be well set up by House Vorstaten when he retires in a few years' time.

RRONGVA OEKSTAETZ

SPECIES	GENDER	AGE
Human	Female	—
TRAITS	—	

				SKILLS
STR	4	INT	9	Admin 3, Advocate 2, Broker 1, Diplomat 1
DEX	6	EDU	11	
END	5	SOC	9	
PSI	—			
EQUIPMENT				

Playing Rrongva Oekstaetz:
Rrongva has served House Vorstaten since she was a young adult, receiving a good education and a very respectable salary. Like Dravid, she is not of the calibre of the central house experts but has a good general knowledge of business, politics, finance and how they interrelate. She likes Sir Willard but finds him rather naïve and unsophisticated, which sometimes leads to arguments. He is wise enough to listen – usually – and Rrongva is smart enough not to push social boundaries, so in general they make a good team. Rrongva has an inexplicable dislike of cows, which makes this posting a little unpleasant but she is a professional first and foremost, and goes where House Vorstaten needs her to.

TIKKS KERENSKI

SPECIES	GENDER	AGE
Human	Male	—

TRAITS	—

				SKILLS
STR	5	INT	8	Electronics (computers) 2, Electronics (remote ops) 1, Flyer (grav) 1, Mechanic 1
DEX	10	EDU	9	
END	6	SOC	7	
PSI	—			

EQUIPMENT	—

Playing Tikks Kerenski:
Tikks has a proper job title but is universally referred to as the 'tech-wrangler'. If something has more than one button it is his responsibility, although he spends most of his time fiddling with leftover electronics and damaged machinery stowed in various parts of the estate by Sir Willard's predecessor. Tikks is the only member of the household to have programming access to the estate's autodoc, which he is well aware is a position of great trust. Whilst he does not share Rrongva's intense dislike of all things bovine, he is rather bored with the current posting to Gor and looks for ways to amuse himself. This usually comes down to trying to create unlikely and over-complex devices to do jobs around the estate. Whilst simpler and more elegant solutions are possible, Tikks finds it amusing to make his creations as elaborate and over-capable as possible. Thus there is a weeding-robot (which is astonishingly bad at its main function) that actually makes a decent cup of coffee and can project a 3D holographic map of its surroundings for no discernible reason.

HERDSMEN, CATTLE RUSTLERS, FARM HANDS

SPECIES	GENDER	AGE
Human	—	—

TRAITS	–

				SKILLS
STR	8	INT	6	Animals (handling) 2, Survival 1, Gun Combat 0
DEX	7	EDU	4	
END	9	SOC	4	
PSI	–			

EQUIPMENT	Gorean carbine (2D) and/or Gorean revolver (2D-2)

The majority of people working in the field on Gor can ride and have access to a weapon, although they may or may not be carrying it and in any case will not be particularly skilled with it. The same applies for looters or the desperadoes trying to steal the train at the end of the adventure.

ANIMALS

Like many worlds in Charted Space, the ecosystem of Gor includes many introduced species – not all of which were brought to Gor intentionally – along with the surviving native species. Interactions between new and established species have caused several upheavals and ecological niche displacements over the centuries. Not all introductions occurred at the same time and in some cases one invading species was displaced by another after finding its place in the new ecosystem. Matters were further complicated by human activity, with some species domesticated and others eradicated as pests. This is a tale repeated throughout inhabited space, with varying results.

The most profound changes on Gor were wrought by the introduction of the humble Terrain rabbit. Rabbits were introduced more than once and in some areas there are 'pseudonative' species of rabbit that compete with newcomers. Be that as it may, the rabbit has displaced several other species and destroyed the habitats of yet more, creating a population explosion that had unexpected knock-on effects.

Gor is home to a variety of predatory species and the sudden abundance of food permitted some of these to thrive. These tended to be the more agile land predators and various avian species, in other words those predators quick enough to catch darting rabbits in rough terrain. In turn, this meant that larger carnivores were less successful and have tended to decline over the years.

One beneficial result for humans is that Gor has few species that can seriously threaten people or large herd animals like horses or cows, which can be allowed to graze freely on wide ranges with little supervision. On the other hand, smaller predators and the rabbits they feed upon can be a real pest, making culls both necessary and rather futile.

There are several species of avian predator on Gor, colloquially divided into two groups – bunnyhawks and realhawks. Bunnyhawks are far more common and have adapted to the abundance of one particular food source by assuming an optimal size for hunting and feeding off rabbits. Interested Travellers will note there are many different species but all are sufficiently similar that only scientists really care. Bunnyhawks are not much of a threat to human activities and are generally well-liked as they keep down the damaging rabbit population.

Realhawks, on the other hand, are considerably larger. They will take rabbits as prey, along with anything else they can find but prefer larger creatures. Some species operate in flocks of up to 8 birds, which cooperate to take down an animal as large as a deer; there are tales of injured workers being set upon by a flock of realhawks. Realhawks are known to prey on bunnyhawks, sometimes so successfully that the rabbit population gets out of control once more.

There are real concerns that Gor's ecosystem is in a downward spiral or at the very least will suffer massive upheavals before order is re-established. However, no funding is available for a study of such an unimportant backwater and without proof of real disaster the chances of any offworld agency taking an interest are slight indeed.

REALHAWK

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Realhawk	8	6 m
SKILLS	Athletics (dexterity) 1, Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1	
ATTACKS	Talons (2D)	
TRAITS	Flyer (Slow), Small (–1)	
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore, Pouncer	

Realhawks can be encountered solo or in flocks. Their preferred mode of attack is a high-speed swoop, either slashing at prey with their talons or picking up smaller animals and carrying them away. A cooperating flock will often send birds diving at prey from different directions to confuse it before one makes a telling strike. The flock will then withdraw to a safe distance and wait for the victim to succumb to its wounds, although multiple strikes may be delivered to a large animal. Realhawks are frighteningly patient for avian predators and will often perch and watch a wounded or cornered animal for hours without expending any energy, sending one or more of their number to make a feint or just fly around to confuse the prey. A victim that loses track of one of the flock will be struck unexpectedly from behind.

X EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONRY

Most of the weaponry found on Gor is locally produced. Quality varies from beautiful craftsman pieces to barely functional junk, much as elsewhere. Guns are tools for those who work outside the towns. They are mainly used to cull rabbits and scare off realhawks, but people do come into conflict from time-to-time and range wars are increasingly common in the outback when the water shortage begins to bite.

A11/58231 DRESS SWORD

Willard Vorstaten is an Imperial knight and the complex dress regulations for state events require that he wear a dress sword on some occasions… but not others. Noble houses have etiquette specialists to figure out who should be wearing hats, swords, medals or other accoutrements but lacking a proper household, Willard has to rely on a rule-of-thumb guide published decades ago and has come to the conclusion that he is expected to wear a sword when 'being an Imperial knight' and to go without it when 'being a local landowner'. It is unlikely that anyone on Gor would spot a breach of court etiquette but Willard is still self-conscious and very aware that he is trying to uphold an image without being quite sure what that image should be.

Willard's dress sword is a typical 'court sword' with a slender 80cm blade designed for thrusting. The cutting edge is iridium-faced and sharper than any razor but the weapon is not well suited to a slashing action. It has a small but highly ornate handguard and stirrup-type knuckle bow. Travellers familiar with nobles' courts will know this weapon well. It is fast, light and lethal but not really intended for combat at all. Indeed, the sword is an item of dress and Willard thinks of it as an encumbrance rather than weapon. The fact that it is sharp is a social statement more than anything else. That said, Willard's dress sword can kill easily in the hands of someone who knows what to do with it and it is worth a considerable price as an art piece. However, selling a noble's personal dress weapon on the open market can be hazardous, as sooner or later someone is going to wonder how the Travellers came by it.

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Dress Sword	14	Melee	2D+2	0.9	Cr125,000	—	—	AP 2

A11/58231

GOREAN CARBINE/REVOLVER

The commonest sidearm encountered in the wilderness of Gor is a small-calibre carbine or revolver of similar designs, chambered for a long 7mm cartridge rarely seen on other worlds. Ballistic performance of these rounds is good due to a high muzzle velocity and even cheap Gorean revolvers tend to be accurate. Most design features are typical; weapons can be fired single-action or double-action and are safe to carry with a fully loaded cylinder. There are no external safety devices, just a reasonably still double-action trigger pull. The most unusual feature of these weapons is that they use a detachable 8-chamber cylinder, enabling the user to carry one or more spare cylinders for quick reloading. Most do not, as a loaded cylinder is heavy and adds to the expense of the weapon. As a result the phrase 'gave it all eight' implies a best effort with nothing spared.

The standard working gun has a long barrel and is accurate enough for a little 'varminting', which usually means shooting rabbits for the pot or just to dispose of them. The carbine version is also produced, with a much longer barrel and a solid stock, and lockwork, cylinder and mechanism are identical to the pistol. These guns are sufficiently common that they do not attract comment unless carried somewhere totally inappropriate. A varmint gun of this sort is a tool; someone walking down the same street with a man-stopper strapped to his hip would generate a lot more attention.

Most weapons of this type use a unitary cartridge in the manner of conventional firearms, although locally produced propellants are smoky and sometimes unreliable. In less developed regions, a separate cap-and-ball system is used, creating a visually similar weapon that must be prepared in advance by loading the cylinder and sealing it with grease before placing a separate percussion cap in position. Swapping pre-prepared cylinders is just as quick as with unitary cartridge weapons but once the ready rounds are fired the weapon requires several minutes' fiddly work to make ready again.

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Gorean Revolver	3	25	2D-2	1.1	Cr100	8	Cr6*	—
Gorean Carbine	3	50	2D	2.3	Cr250	8	Cr6*	—

* Cost is for ammunition alone. A spare cylinder costs Cr25.

SIR WILLARDS SUV

TL	12
SKILL	DRIVE (WHEEL)
AGILITY	+3
SPEED (CRUISE)	FAST (HIGH)
RANGE (CRUISE)	1,200 (1,800)
CREW	1
PASSENGERS	5
CARGO	.75 TONS
HULL	20
SHIPPING	5 TONS
COST	CR100,000

ARMOUR

FRONT	12
REAR	12
SIDES	12

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted), Control System (advanced), Fire Extinguisher, Sensor System (improved), Wet Bar

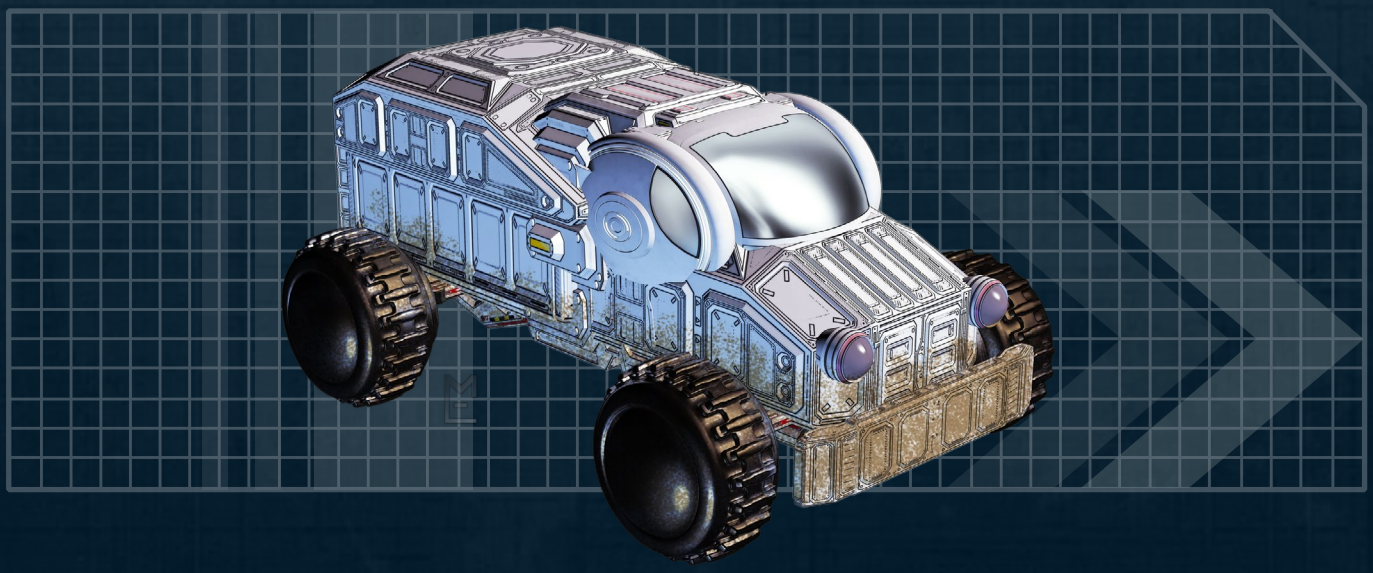
No weapon

Autopilot (skill level)	3
Communications (range)	1,000 km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	—
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	+1
Camouflage (Recon DM)	—

TRAITS

Off-roader

Sir Willard's vehicles are standard Imperial designs built by Ling Standard Products for 'the discerning customer operating on the frontiers'. They are designed to be rugged yet comfortable and to provide a measure of protection against threats. Both vehicles use a common chassis, with many standard components between them. This makes maintaining a vehicle much easier in the backwaters, even if it is not quite as efficient as a custom design.



ARMOUR

FRONT	8
REAR	8
SIDES	8

SIR WILLARDS PICKUP

TL	12
SKILL	DRIVE (WHEEL)
AGILITY	+3
SPEED (CRUISE)	FAST (HIGH)
RANGE (CRUISE)	1,200 (1,800)
CREW	1
PASSENGERS	3
CARGO	1.25 TONS
HULL	20
SHIPPING	5 TONS
COST	CR87,000

TRAITS

Off-Roader

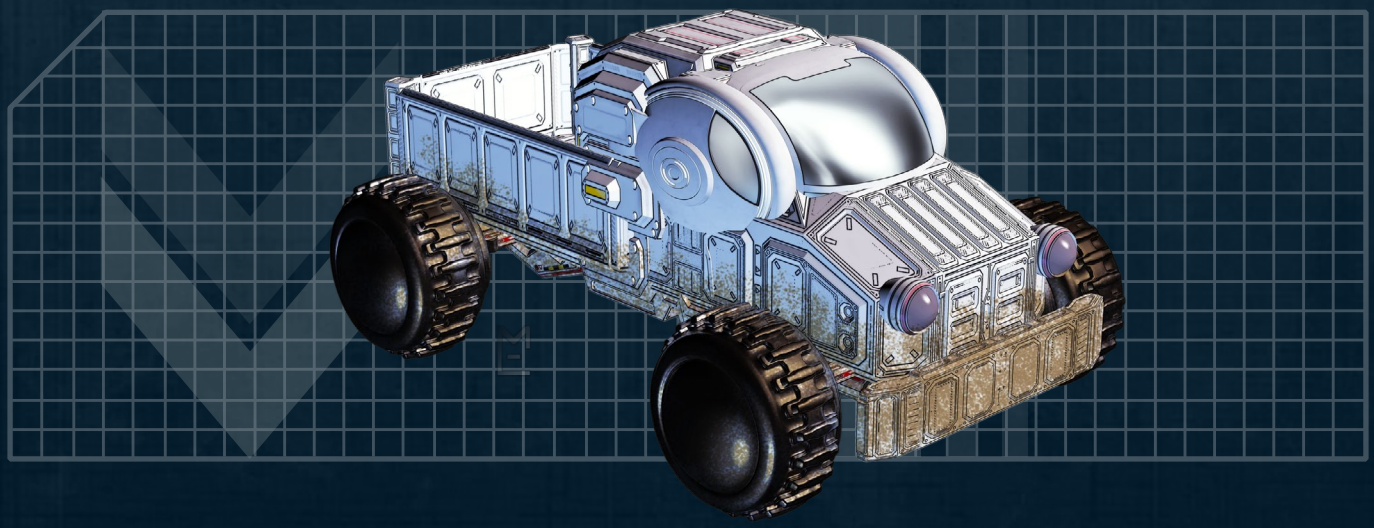
Autopilot (skill level)	3
Communications (range)	1000 km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	—
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	—
Camouflage (Recon DM)	—

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Off Roader, Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted), Control System (advanced), Fire Extinguisher, Sensor System (basic)

No weapon

The pickup is less well protected and has a cheaper electronics fit but is still a prestige vehicle – some would say overpriced for its role. Note that although both vehicles have a theoretical 1,000km communications range this requires a planetary comms net to fully utilise. In rolling terrain with no repeaters available the range is 100km at best and that requires good conditions not present for much of the adventure.



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