

**MURMURS OF TRUE
EARTH
A C N W 2006**

The card is simple, a human with auburn hair, wearing a body-hugging suit of grays, with a greenish chitin-like weapon that looks affixed to his arm. He's staring at you with cold green eyes. You don't recognize him. The background shows a cratered landscape. The back of the card shows a constellation that you don't recognize. The card is cold, and Senator Martin is itching to go after this fellow. Where's the card from? Somewhere in sector 427: a small outpost of the proscribed Jade Empire, near the edges of the map of the Known.

MINIMUM 4 PLAYERS MAXIMUM 5

**100 POINTS, NO PARTIAL POWERS, NO CONJURING,
AND NO ITEMS ABOVE 6 POINTS: NO SENTIENT OR
DANGER-SENSING ITEMS, AND NO PERSONAL
SHADOWS. PLAYERS TO PICK CHARACTERS'
PARENTAGES FROM KNOWN ELDERS, NO OBERON/
DWORKIN/UNICORN, OR MERLIN/MARTIN/DARA.
CHOICE OF THREE "SPACESHIP'S OFFICER"
POSITIONS THE CHARACTER COULD PLAY, IN ORDER
OF PREFERENCE.**

INTRODUCTION: BRING THE CHARACTERS INTO THE STORY AND INTRODUCE THE PROBLEM.

Summary: Senator Martin enlists the PCs help to find the man in the Trump, or better yet, the person who made the Trump.

Location: Gaia-6, Port Tecys. The room is part boardroom, part office, and is in a suite past an empty secretarial desk. His secretary is gone for the day, if he has one. (Tiponya's answered the phone before, but you've never met her.) There are comfortable leather chairs in a light, aqua "blue," and black. One wall of the office is a large aquarium, with some of the native marine life hovering ominously over the proceedings. Martin's desk is remarkably clean, with crisply separated piles. There's a picture of a pretty green-skinned girl on his desk. The desk and the table seem to be made of non-reflective black monolith. (Psyche-neutral.)

Opening: Gaia-6, Port Tecys is a booming, post-industrial city, where scrub-bots take the place of custodians, and computers are voice-activated. While the majority of the planet is still undergoing some terraforming, huge windows show the bay and the launch pads as well as other windows into the complex. The buildings are hemispherical in shape, made of a plasticrete white that glitters in the morning light of the sun.

Setting Details: The conversation is being recorded, but only for Martin's private records. Underneath the

photo is a Trump of Moire. The fish are venomous, and only slightly sentient. They are not hungry. Martin thinks that the man is probably Rebman, because he's seen that kind of weaponry in development against Chaosian incursion during Patternfall.

Quotes: "The subject of the Trump itself isn't necessarily interesting. Where it was found is interesting. It was found in the wreckage of some ship orbit, kind of, by a friend of mine. I don't know what it means."

"No, I don't know who he is. Look at the back. I've never seen a

NPCs Present: Martin, Tiponya.

Trump with a back like that. I don't even know if it's really possible, except I feel the energy. I don't recognize the art."

"Yeah, I've tried it. He's blocking, whoever he is.."

Summary: It's cold. Very cold. It's not breathable. Who wants to panic first?

Location: Deep space.

Opening: It's cold. Very cold. The shock of the temperature is more than (lowest Endurance) can handle. The saliva on your tongue begins to boil. Unless contact is broken, asphyxiation will follow.

Details: If the victim holds his breath during decompression, the delicate internal structures of the lungs can be ruptured, causing death. Eardrums may be ruptured by rapid decompression, soft tissues may bruise and seep blood, and the stress of surprise will accelerate oxygen consumption leading to asphyxiation.

Quotes: "Seek me not, children!"

"Can anyone pinpoint that?"

Specials: Shapeshifters can (and will) go to Automatic, at which point they'll need to break contact with the others.

POINTING THE WAY: THE PCS WIN A CHANCE TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM.

RAISING THE STAKES: TRYING THE TRUMP TOGETHER.

NPCs Present: Martin, Tiponya. Justin Minobee, son of Finndo

Summary: Spaceships, Pirates, and Chaosian Creatures from Beyond the Stars! Wait, not that last one... yet...

Location: Her Majesty's Ship Veiled Tart

NPCs Present: Martin, Tiponya. Spider ALS-004, Dead Denizens of "The Hammered Foe"

Opening: The HMS Veiled Tart is the ship Martin had designed for small jaunts of weightlessness. While not quite the flying junkie his father is, Martin does seem at home with the controls. The ship is spacious without

being large, built like an arrowhead for atmospheric entry. The artificial gravity is set to a strange setting, one that feels more like being underwater than anything else. The décor is the same aqua and black of his office, and the ship is strangely silent and still, as if shielding the sound of the engines was one of the designer's primary concerns. The galley is well-stocked, especially with alcohol. There are some bunks and a locked Master Suite.

Details: Every one needs to get familiar with their particular specialty and niche. They're given dock clearance, and then Martin seems to go rigid; he's shifting Shadow in a strange way. Gravity will begin to fade and then come back into force with no warning. Martin will pass out and someone else will have to take over the ship. (He's OK, just overextended himself.)

Just then, a proximity alert will begin ringing. The PCs will have to figure out what the alarm is, before it becomes too late. "It's about as big as a moon, but the sensors say it's organic." Let them get their Lovecraft jokes out of their system. It's not particularly sentient, just hungry. Let it eat something nearby...like a passing pirate ship. Sure, let it be a Spider. "It appears to be processing the ship into metallic eggsacs."

COMPLICATION: THE PCs SHADOWSHIFTING GOES AWRY

Summary: They're in Chaos. The edge, yes, but more like the edge of the Abyss. Pattern is TOO powerful, reality TOO malleable.

Location: *The rock on which I stood... If I attempted to fix my gaze upon it, it took on the aspect of a pavement on a hot afternoon. It seemed to shift and waver, though my footing was undisturbed. And it was undecided as to the portion of the spectrum it might call home.*

Opening: As you break free from hyperspace, the asteroids around you seem to cluster, as if magnetized. Then they recede, shifting and wavering. There's something strange here, and not just the beacon shouting in the communication officer's earpiece that this is an interdicted zone. Zone Beta 427, Sigma 957, and other terminology depending on the language requested.

The double-binary sun shifts colour from red to blue and then to white, then to orange and back to red. There are three planets here, one large with heavy rings, one dwarf planet that glows a soft white, and one blue-green planet with a single moon.

"Here, in the lagrangian point," Martin shows a small area on a map. "One of my scouts picked it up there." (Short Shiva, if you must know.) "It was anomalous to any other item she had been tracking. Much warmer, for one." He seems to be joking.

Details: There are the remains of what seem to be three ships here.

Two of them are non-native to the Shadow region. One of them is still mostly intact; it's called Osric's Revenge, and it has life signs if anyone should happen to look. The remains of one (The Dark Waters and the Tasting Strategy) still floats in pieces. There's a kind of black box. Osric's Revenge will focus weapon systems (all power is routed there, including life support) on The Veiled Tart.

NPCs Present: **Justin**, Finndo's son. He has been searching for several years the extent of his own abilities. At this point he is effectively Oberon-class without Obie's natural unicorn-boost. His

LAGRANGE POINT: the five positions in interplanetary space where a small object affected only by gravity can theoretically be stationary relative to two larger objects (such as a satellite with respect to the Earth and Moon). The Lagrange Points mark positions where the combined gravitational pull of the two large masses provides precisely the centripetal force required to rotate with them. They are analogous to geosynchronous orbits in that they allow an object to be in a "fixed" position in space rather than an orbit in which its relative position changes continuously.

biggest kryptonite is that he doesn't have Pattern. On the other hand, that means he's got lots of practice not having it. Some of his abilities include mild shapeshifting (no full-creatures), power words, enhanced endurance, shadowpath use, mild command of shadow laws, and most importantly for game purposes, resist chaos/abyss. The Trump of him was made by a rogue court artist who is experimenting with extreme techniques, but it is not cross-shadow environmental, and it is powered by a limited node source between the sigma sectors—kind of a Keep of the Paraelements (chaos version.)

Quotes: "You're like a bad case of space herpes, aren't you?"

FINDING THE KEY

Summary: Who are we really fighting? Abyssal symbiont spore. The same one that Short Shiva was tracking. (To tie it into to traditional Amber, maybe it was released from

Brand after his death in the Abyss.) It has now absorbed one ship (**the Tasting Strategy**) and is hungry for more.

Opening: There is a strange sense of energy that envelops one part of the ship...and it's eating away at it!

(Secondary part; if they lose anyone, there's going to be a side-trip to the Abyss where they will learn from the pit diving Short Shiva that the creature is a parasite that's rare but seen around power nodes, but that one of the jobs of the pit divers is to hunt them. Maybe gain some Chaosian muscle here. They have a volunteer (Sion) who is willing to act as a "living spacesuit.")

Details: Any ongoing power (spells, Trump, whatnot) is disrupted by the Abyssal energy of the symbiont. It's going to go towards the most powerful source of energy, which may be Martin. Trump continues to have problems, and Pattern still is dangerous to the area as a whole. They might just lose people here.

NPCs Present: Jaustin is still in the area, trying to understand (and

hopefully acquire) some of the strange Abyssal energies. He might reveal that his mother's name was Belissa, and he lived in a castle

on a plain most of his childhood years in Karm. He knows his father and Uncle Osric went off to fight, but he didn't know his Uncle Benedict survived. He grew into his powers trying to track down his mother.

Quotes: "I thought it was just the physical structure of the...what did you call it? Shadow."

CLIMAX: THE BIG SCENE! CONFRONT THE MAIN VILLAIN

The challenge for the GM here is to make this scene as memorable and exciting as possible. Don't forget that they're trespassing in the

Jade Empire. These people are serious mages, and will not hesitate to use what magics are working to stop both the PCs and the symbiont. Martin will try to stay low-profile; he thinks they're either working with Rebma or maybe the Tir.

Summary: This scene is meant to be a reward for having successfully completed the adventure. Players like a sense of accomplishment over and above treasure and XPs. To this end, think of what happened to the game world after the PCs solved the story problem. Perhaps they gained in reputation, or made new friends and allies. They may earn recognition and titles, in addition to treasure.

DENOUEMENT & REWARDS

The denouement is also the time to reveal the big picture - tie up loose ends, reveal what happened to NPCs who were left behind or went off and did something else, or reveal secrets that defeating the enemy has brought to light. This allows a GM to round out an adventure and firmly ground it into the campaign world, which also redounds to the players' satisfaction.

Ideas? Return to Chaos and make connections.