



Across the Nereid Sector, crews and ships are going missing.

Can you save them and learn the secrets of the Harvester Moon?

Harvester Moon

BY JACOB RODGERS

WELCOME TO THE NEREID SECTOR

Harvester Moon is an adventure set in the Nereid Sector and can serve as a direct sequel to *The Last Survivor* (see EONS, Issue 30). The sector is on the frontier, and the Union Worlds have just begun to explore this region of space, along with any number of prospectors, merchants, explorers and less reputable types. Recently, the Ogron Warlord Bauk has been attacking smaller ships... destroying or disabling the ships and capturing their crews. What does Bauk want with all these sentients?

Advancement Level. The Nereid Sector is at AL 9 or so. Ships use standard FTL drives, with most ships capable of speeds from FTL-5 to FTL-8. Only Alliance ships (and some alien craft) are faster, and not by much

THE PLOT OF HARVESTER MOON

The characters will somehow become involved with the slavery operation of Bauk. Perhaps they will be captured... possibly by accident, but more likely as a conscious plan to go “undercover” and discover the Warlord’s plan. Or they may instead investigate recent attacks and sneak their way onto

COLOR ART *Victoria Oliveira*
Ellis Goodson
James Gary
MAPS *Meshon Cantrill*
EDITING *Russ Morrissey*
LAYOUT *Xanditz*

the Harvester Moon after realizing that the Ogron have been delivering captured crews to that location.

Once on the Harvester Moon, the characters will soon learn of the strange nature of the place... the Resonant Crystals, the Sowers, the Reapers and the Hunters and the new weapons that the Ogrons are developing. Soon enough, the moon will go through a Pass, when it hurtles through the Vortex, a cloud of energy that surrounds Maera VII. Depending on their research and willingness to bid their time, it might take multiple Passes for them to either contact the Union or otherwise come up with a plan to rescue the slaves and disrupt the Ogron operation.

Once they’ve freed themselves from the Harvester Moon, the heroes will need to stay alive long enough to signal the Union, or escape their captors.

THE THEMES OF HARVESTER MOON

Harvester Moon can function as a straightforward adventure story, but it should also serve as an exploration of an alien place, and a gradual realization that the entire moon is essentially artificial... everything on it has been manipulated for a specific purpose, and the players might realize that only slowly. Or it's possible that they might simply enjoy the adventure elements, and not worry too much about the setting. That's okay too.

A secondary theme is present, about the nature of freedom and slavery, and self-determination. This can be tricky in roleplaying games, see the "Player Agency" sidebar in the next section if you choose to have the characters be captured by Bauk.

IF YOU PLAYED *THE LAST SURVIVOR*...

If the characters explored the *Selkirk* and rescued its crew from Bauk, they have already been introduced to him as a threat. In fact, if you're reading this adventure in anticipation of running *The Last Survivor* and then *Harvester Moon* immediately afterwards, you might change the ending a little bit, and have all the other crew of the *Selkirk* already have been captured by Bauk. Jono Anst then becomes another "last survivor" of *The Last Survivor*, and then the PCs have even more incentive to pursue Bauk without attempting to destroy him.

It's possible (but not too likely) that the characters were able to destroy Bauk. In that case, the Ogron fleet still wants the Resonant Crystals and thus other slaver ships will be dispatched in order to work the mines of the Harvester Moon.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR *THE VIROSA ACCORD*...

The Harvester Moon is a spectacular example of the stellar engineering that the *Virosa* were once capable of, and knowing its location will provide the characters with a strong bargaining chip if they survive their meeting with the Accord. Players that pay careful attention to the setting and some of the scavenged technology of the Harvester Moon will

find new understanding when they reach the third adventure.

LOST CREWS AND GHOST SHIPS

Setting the Scene: A small MERCHANT SPACESHIP tries to flee an OGRON ALL-MASTER WARSHIP. The WARSHIP fires its ION WEAPONS and the SPACESHIP grows dark. The WARSHIP easily overtakes the smaller vessel, and draws it near.

The Ogron Warlord Bauk haunts the empty places of the Nereid Sector, pouncing on vulnerable ships. He attacks with ion weaponry, then seizes the crew and either disables the ship or steals it for his own use. His deprivations grow even more bold and the Union must act.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

There are several ways that the characters could come in conflict with Bauk. For a Union vessel, they might be sent to locate the Warlord and find out where he's been taking his prisoners and what he's doing with them. For a merchant vessel, they might fall into his clutches, though you should take caution with this approach. If the characters are independent contractors who have sometimes done work for the Alliance (especially if they recently helped the Union with a First Contact problem) then they might be asked to investigate Bauk.

If the characters will be asked or ordered to become involved with the situation, see **Meeting with Commander Yauna** below. If they instead are brought unwittingly into the story as they explore the Nereid Sector for their own reasons, see **Captured!** Instead.

MEETING WITH COMMANDER YAUNA

The characters find themselves at Orchid Station in the Ione system, and in the meeting chambers of Gold Spoke... Commander Yauna will first acknowledge the characters' previous accomplishments (if any) and then soon afterward address the issue of the Warlord. For more information on Orchid Station and its importance to

the Nereid Sector, see *The Last Survivor* in EONS 30.

“Warlord Bauk continues to attack independent ships in the Sector, news of which is now rapidly spreading. We must do something about this, but our relations with the Imperial Court is strained at the moment. Directly attacking Bauk when he has yet to fire on Union ships would be politically dangerous. Instead, we’d rather learn more about his activities and then, with a suitable request for help, the Union can come to your aid.”

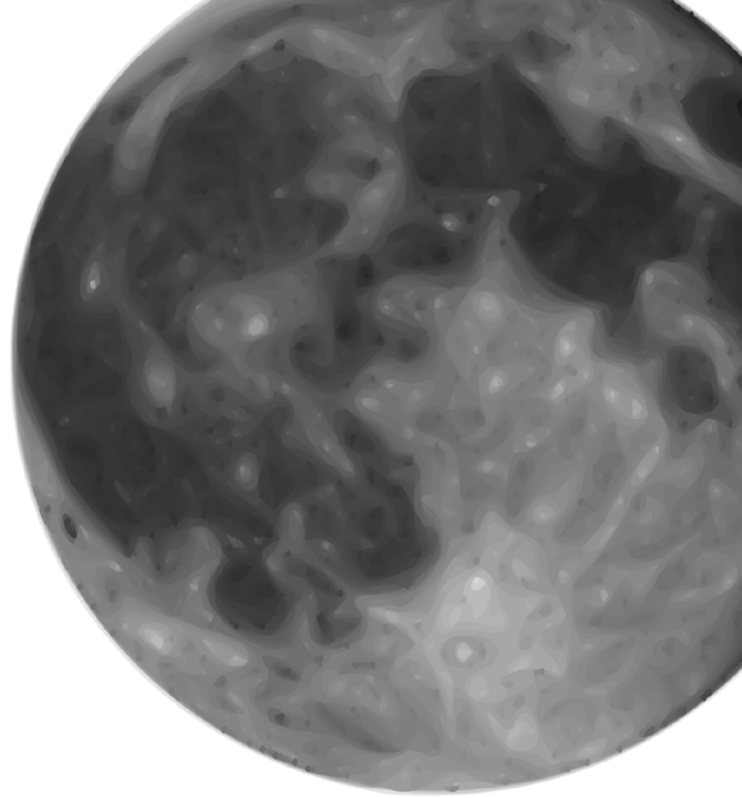
Yauna continues to explain the options for the characters. If they wish to track the Ogron warship, they are free to do so. Orchid Station can provide the location of the last few attacks. Or the crew might elect to allow themselves to be captured. If that’s the case, Yauna will propose that at least one crewmember be fitted with a subdermal distress signal device. Undetectable to casual medical scans, the PC will be able to activate the distress signal in order to have the Union rescue them. The Commander asks for caution though... premature activation might not fit the political goals of the Union.

She will be willing to pay the characters for their services if they are independent contractors, 1000 creds each as an initial payment with a bonus dependent on performance delivered after the mission is complete.

THE GHOST SHIPS OF THE NEREID

If the characters elect to trace Bauk’s previous activities, Yauna will provide details on all recent attacks, the most recent being in 02.01 (Amatheia), 03.04 (trade route between Creneis and Pontomedusa), 04.02 (Eumolpe), and 05.06 (Beroe). The crew will need to visit the site of at least three attacks. Each location that they visit will tell a similar story, there will be the remains of a ship that was ambushed by Bauk... the level of damage to the ship is dependent on how hard the crew fought, and it seems that in the more recent attacks, the ships are less damaged.

At each location, they will need to make a *Challenging [13]* LOG check in order to use their



ship’s scanners to establish the nature of the attacks. The following is a list of information that can be ascertained, bearing in mind that each successful scanner check answers one question:

1. The ships were attacked by ionic weaponry. In all cases, it seems like the Ogron took great effort to prevent crew casualties on the attacked vessel.
2. For the most recent attacks, there is evidence of less resistance from the crews, and the derelict ships are almost intact.
3. The attacks were made either at the edge of inhabited systems, or in common shipping lanes near to inhabited systems.
4. If the crew compares the attacks over time, they will find that only the most recent attacks show the signs of the ships not fighting back but that also Bauk has become more and more bold in what ships he attacks and how close to settlements he comes.
5. For each location, faint traces of subspace disturbances from the All-master’s engines can be detected. Once three such traces have been found, the characters can be reasonably confident that the Maera System (06.01 on the sector map) should be their next destination.

CAPTURED!

It might be that the players decide the surest way to learn where Bauk has been taking slaves is to arrange for them to be captured. This is a perfectly valid plan, if one that is a bit risky for their ship. However, such a bold plan should be rewarded... if the crew does not fight back, or only makes the most basic pretense of fighting the ship off, then their ship will not sustain any major damage.

It's also possible that during the events of *The Last Survivor* the PCs failed to rescue the crew of the Selkirk. In that case, both the player characters and the crew of that ill-fated ship will be captured by Bauk and taken to the Harvester Moon. This provides a good "escape valve" for salvaging an earlier failure and advancing the story.

It's possible that you might elect to introduce the events of *Harvester Moon* by having Bauk capture the PCs at the beginning of the game. Beware! If you're running a demo of the W.O.I.N. game system and are limited for time, and are using pregenerated characters, opening *in media res* with the player characters already in the slave hold of Bauk's warship is perfectly fine. But if you already have an established group with established characters, don't expect the characters to go down without a long and brutal fight. See **Player Agency** below.

THE OGRON APPEARS

If the characters elect to get themselves captured, they'll need to put themselves in harm's way. A *Routine [10]* LOG check can help figure out the most likely places for Bauk to attack. Soon enough, the All-Master Warship will appear and begin to pursue the character's ship.

You can resolve the pursuit by either using a map, or theater of the mind combat. If the heroes have chosen to be captured, you can actually narrate the pursuit without needing to make any checks. Bauk will fire upon the ship, aiming only for engines and weapon systems. Once the warship gets within tractor beam range, Bauk will activate his Psychic Projection Field... roll 5d6 against each hero's MENTAL DEFENSE. Heroes that fail gain the Frightened condition.

Bauk then uses magnetic grapples to draw the characters' ship to the All-Master and his Ogron crew come aboard. They're each wearing a torc with a small piece of Resonant Crystal set in the middle. Wearing these makes the Ogrons immune to the Psychic Projection Field. They will use just enough force to capture the crew, and place them into the slave holds on the All-Master. **NOTE:** Artificial beings are of no particular use to the Ogrons for the Harvester Moon, but you should justify why any PC artificial lifeforms are taken anyways. This shouldn't be too hard, after all PCs should be special, and the Moon needs doctors, specialists and laborers too.

PLAYER AGENCY

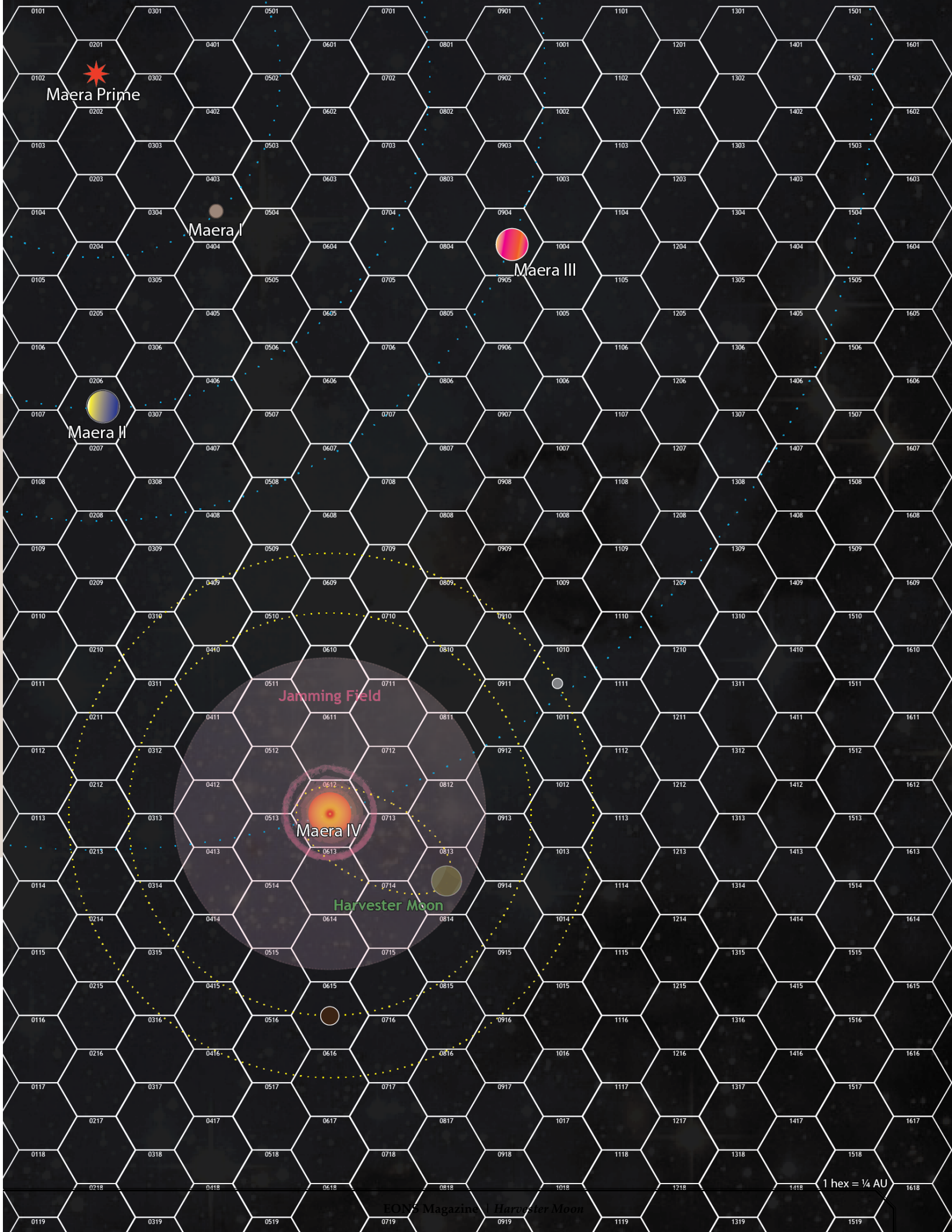
Harvester Moon deals with placing the player characters into captivity, and that can be very tricky for players. They want, of course, to be able to control their character and guide the story by their actions. Being held captive makes many players feel like they can't make decisions for the characters anymore and they might take any opportunity to concoct desperate schemes to escape captivity.

In general, you should not force the players into a captivity situation, they should choose it for themselves. If there is still stress at the table even after they've elected to become captured, remind them that it is part of the plan and the story. They will have the chance to earn their freedom.

THE MOON OF MAERA

Setting the Scene: An OGRON TRANSPORT approaches a large MOON. As the TRANSPORT descends into the atmosphere, we track down, seeing a nearby GAS GIANT planet in the sky.

The Maera system was considered mostly unremarkable when the Nereid Sector Survey was completed several years ago. However, the survey team was moving quickly and had a lot of space to cover. It was easy for them to miss that the strange



Maera Prime

Maera I

Maera III

Maera II

Jamming Field

Maera IV

Harvester Moon

1 hex = 1/4 AU

THE PSYCHIC PROJECTION FIELD WEAPON

See the section on Psi-tech Equipment at the end of this adventure for more information on the Psychic Projection Field Weapon. Note that Bauk must pay each time he fires this weapon, and he will not use it indiscriminately.

orbit of one of the moons of the fourth planet was not a natural artifact of the system but instead was engineered long ago.

Characters that are on their way to the Maera system after tracking Bauk's movements have the chance to make *Challenging* [13] LOG (*astrophysics*) check. If they succeed, they will notate the Harvester Moon's elliptical orbit as being unusual. Those that continue to use the survey data to model the formation of the star system (a *Demanding* [21] LOG check) will realize that the moon's orbit is due to a remarkable effort of stellar engineering, one that the Union can only theorize about... the moon has been made to have a high-speed eccentric elliptical orbit that causes it to pass within the Vortex of Maera IV. This has several effects... the first is a natural jamming field that will prevent signals from being sent or received on the moon, the second is a tremendous amount of energy generated by the moon's passage.

This is the Harvester Moon, a creation of the now defunct Virosa Empire, designed to create and charge Resonant Crystals, which can be used to create powerful psionic weapons. Always mindful of long-term planning, the Virosa created an artificial ecology on the moon to make sure that the crystals would always be available for them when they needed more. But that was thousands of years ago, and the territory of the Virosa is much smaller than it once was and the Harvester Moon has been forgotten.

ARRIVAL

Once the Ogron warship arrives in the Maera system, it heads straight for the outermost gas giant... Maera IV. The innermost moon is Bauk's destination. Maera IV.1, otherwise known as the Harvester Moon, has an elliptical orbit that has it spend only part of its time outside the Vortex of

the gas giant. Most of the time, it is bombarded by intense electromagnetic waves generated by the gas giant and the flaring yellow sun.

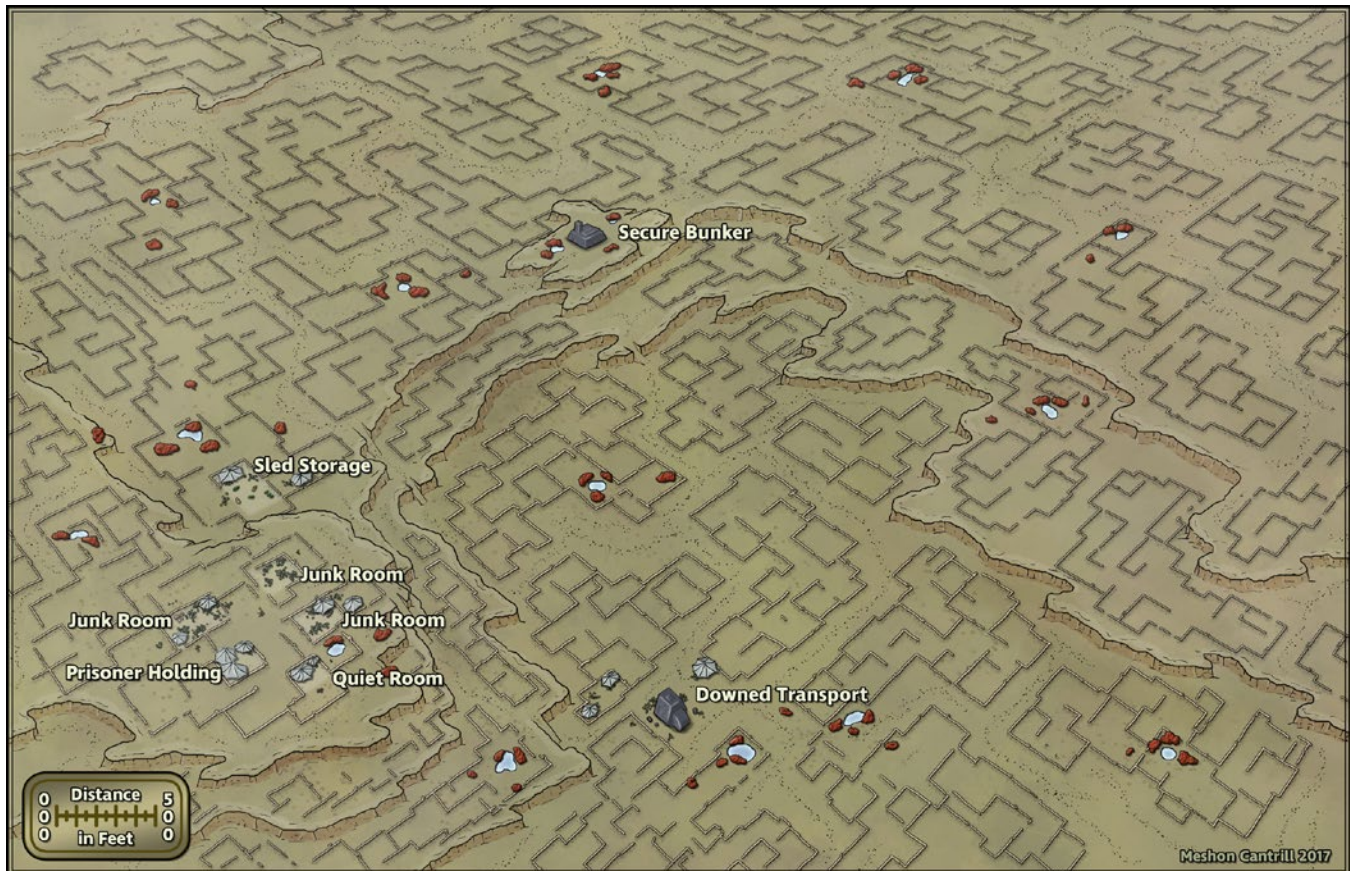
Bauk is met by smaller tender ships... the All-Master is much too large to land on the moon, and the prisoners are loaded onto the transports under the watchful eyes of Ogron guards. While this might be the first chance for the character to attempt escape, they as of yet have little knowledge of what Bauk is up to.

Once they are off-loaded from the transport, they have their first glimpse of the landscape of the Harvester Moon. The moon is dense with a heavy metal core, and gravity is about 0.6 of standard.

THE INSIDE MAN

It's possible that the characters might benefit from having someone to guide them as they try to ferret out the secrets of the Harvester Moon. They might have been captured without any plan to escape or backup from the Union forces. Or, they might have snuck onto the Harvester Moon and are looking for someone they can trust. In all cases, they're looking for Vakh'pa.

While it's true that the average Spartan doesn't make a very good spy, it also means that those few Spartans who do elect clandestine roles have an advantage — no one suspects them of being a spy. And that's exactly what Vakh'pa is. Whether he's on the Harvester Moon because of another arm of the Union moving without consulting Commander Yauna, or as backup in case the characters fail, or if he was accidentally captured and is actually on another mission entirely is up to you. But if you need to get the characters out of jam, remember that the Spartan is always around.



While cold, there is a thin atmosphere that hangs close to the planet. There is a green haze to the clouds, and open bodies of water. The transports are heading to something that looks like a small town or large facility, surrounded by a forest of green plants whose stalks are twenty feet tall.

Characters that have the ability to take readings (perhaps an android with integrated sensors) can make a *Demanding* [21] LOG or INT check to realize that the moon is almost certainly not natural... at the very least it might have been an inner system planet at one point. Characters with medical sensors might make a check at the same difficulty to realize that the atmosphere is at the lower edge of habitable for some species... Borians and Virosa for two examples. Breathing masks are issued, but there's little else provided in the way of protective gear.

The prisoners are herded into a work camp. This facility is obviously adapted from an existing alien structure. There are many low walls, each no higher than about six feet, and no roofs on any of the buildings. Individual rooms tend to be large, and the entranceways are also larger than expected. In many

of the rooms, there are places for fountains or pools of water. Most of these are dry, but some are filled with stale water that has nothing living in it.

In some of the buildings, tarps made of thin insulating material serve as roofs. The prisoners are escorted within, and told to wait. They'll receive their training soon enough. The guards may poke and prod at the prisoners, and several of them will openly take bets about which of the prisoners will survive their first Pass.

SNEAKING ONTO THE HARVESTER MOON

For crews who have decided to follow Bauk back to the Maera system, they will need to somehow sneak onto the moon. Fortunately, this is easier to do than it might be otherwise, simply because of how the Harvester Moon works. The tremendous energies generating by each Pass (the transit of the moon through the Vortex) produce a natural "jamming field" that fouls sensors and communications. Ships are effectively blind when they're in orbit around the moon, and nearly blind anywhere near the gas giant.

When the players enter the system, they'll probably do so at the edge of the system, hoping to avoid immediate detection. If your setting has Jumpgates, they will necessarily be far away from Maera IV... if they were closer, the energies there would interfere with their operation. A navigator can make a *Difficult* [16] LOG (*astrogation*) check to plot a course to the moon that takes advantage of the energy fields, and the pilot must make one *Demanding* [21] AGI (*piloting*) check to fly around the swirling vortexes of energy. Pilots that fly by the seat of their pants are required to make three checks instead of one. If they wait until a Pass is in progress, then the piloting checks become *Strenuous* [25] instead. However, failures does not alert a patrol ship (see below) but instead do 1d6 damage to the ship directly as crackling sheets of energy engulf the vessel.

If the crew fails one of these checks (or otherwise flies straight towards the moon without concern for stealth) then one of the Ogron patrol ships will come to investigate. The All-Master will be unloading a shipment of prisoners when the player-ship arrives, so it will not be available to assist, and the jamming field means that the patrol ship has no way to call for help.

THE SLAVER FACILITY

The facility that the prisoners are being held in is fairly large, several square miles of various open-roofed rooms. While some areas seem to be "courtyards" with several pools, and there are "roads" where no walls interrupt a straight line leaving the complex, there does not seem to be any sense of distinct buildings.

Most of the prisoners are being held in one corner of the city, in an area where alumtarp (thin reflective sheets of metal) serve as something resembling a roof. There are sleeping areas, meal areas (though all there is to eat is Ogron military rations) and other facilities that are needed. While the moon is away from the planet (a Rest Period), Ogrons can be seen to patrol the facility on occasion. During a Pass, only a few (2d6+3) Ogrons remain, in one of the few shielded bunkers. There is little effort to keep

the prisoners corralled... after all, the only way off the moon is via an Ogron Transport and those only come after a Pass has been completed.

Here are a few areas of note that the PCs may wish to investigate:

1. **The Storeroom.** Characters that spend time talking to old-timers (possibly using skills like *intimidate*, *flirtation*, or *carousing*), could learn of a room where more of the alumtarp is being held. The protective material helps shield against the radiation from the Pass and inventive players will certainly find a use for it. If a character is protected by alumtarp and is outside during a Pass, they take only half the normal HEALTH damage.
2. **The Quiet Room.** This is a section of the food stores that is situated such that a small group can meet here without anyone knowing of their presence. This is the preferred meeting spot of Vakh'pa, and might be where the characters plot out their actions. There are several entrances to the food stores, so the group may leave this area and not be seen conspiring together.
3. **The Downed Transport.** At the far edge of the facility, there is one Ogron Transport that never leaves. The ship's reactor has failed and Bauk — already acting in secret for the Empire — has been unable to obtain a replacement. Sufficient technobabble (especially involving the Resonant Crystals and/or psionics) could get the Transport flying again. It does have a minimal guard while the moon is in a Rest Period, but is abandoned during a Pass. See **Escaping the Harvester Moon** below.
4. **The Junk Rooms.** Outside of the living facilities of the slaves, there are a number of rooms that house all manner of equipment. Most of it is completely unusable, destroyed by time and exposure to the energies of the Pass. However, the Ogrons have been able to recover some useful things from the junk, and the character may occasionally spy an Ogron scientist digging through the ancient equipment. The sleds that are used during Passes are here, and Bauk's

psionic projection field weapon was derived from this equipment. Characters that complete a major demanding engineering task can salvage something from the junk; if they have the aid of a psionist then the task is simply difficult instead. Most psi-tech equipment will rely on one or more Resonant Crystals for operation.

- 5. The Secure Bunker.** This area has actual sealing doors and plasteel roofs. The Ogrons stationed on the moon have their bunks here, with a small weapon locker, recreational facility and comms suite that is strong enough to punch through the jamming field to reach the ships in orbit around Maera IV. At least two Ogron guards (see the end of this adventure for stats) are on duty at all times in front of the only entrance to the bunker. During a Pass, all of the guards are within the bunker.

Defeating the lock mechanism is a *Difficult [16]* LOG check, any failure alerts the Ogron guards to the attempts. Characters might decide to scramble the lock rather than open the door. If they do so, begin a slow 6d6 countdown with one minute intervals. Characters can make one more *Demanding [21]* LOG check to replenish the countdown pool, but after this the Ogrons will make their way out, even if they have to blast a new opening.

THE OPERATION

As the characters have a chance to meet with their fellow prisoners, they will begin to learn about the Harvester Moon and what is expected of them. During the Rest cycle, little is expected of the prisoners. Due to the Ogrons' interference, the Reapers have very few Resonant Crystals of any worth, and going into the fields is simply not productive... too many slaves are lost to the Hunters for the number of crystals that are recovered.

Characters will learn that the slaves are rewarded based on the number of crystals that they recover. This has naturally led to power groups within the slaves, as those who turn in more crystals get preferential treatment. Bauk even occasionally takes productive slaves back up on the transports, ostensibly to grant them freedom (whether or not he actually frees them is up to the GM). There are three

bosses that might approach the characters, especially if they make a name for themselves among the slaves.

Orla Hayt (a human **mob boss**) is the most direct of the bosses. Those who work for her get better food, but there's a strict pecking order. Orla will attempt to intimidate the characters into joining her work gang. If the Ogrons reward a slave with freedom, Orla picks who gets to go.

Túndim (a borian **worker**) and his crew control the best rooms in the facility. There's even a rumor that he's got a machine that can make alcohol out of the leaves of the Crystal Plants. His offer to the characters is very workman-like... join his crew and they'll start at the bottom, but if they survive, they can advance based on their productivity.

Vakh'pa (a spartan **warrior** {secretly a **spy**}) runs another work crew. If the character join his crew, then they will draw lots any time a reward is given. Each member of the spartan's work gang has an equal chance to get the greatest reward or the most dangerous work assignment. See **The Inside Man** sidebar for more information on Vakh'pa.

Once the character have made their choice and had a few days to settle into the routines of the moon at Rest, it will be time to for a Pass.

THE ECOLOGY OF THE HARVESTER MOON

The Virosa created and designed the Harvester Moon to produce Resonant Crystals, a special kind of psionic focus that is charged with energy that they were able to use to build powerful psi-tech devices. The entire ecology of the moon is designed for the production of the Crystals, but it was never meant to run unintended for so long.

The Crystal Plant — This is a stationary lifeform, with broad leaves of a delicate and translucent material. There is a central stalk, with a "seed-pod" at the top that houses the Resonant Crystals. The entire structure is from nine to twenty feet tall and the leaves are at least as long as the stalk is tall. The pod only opens during a Pass. Resonant Crystals during a Pass can be easily removed from the pod, assuming one can avoid the Hunters. Once a pod has been picked clean of Resonant

Crystals, the plant dies. Small insect-like creatures climb on the leaves and stalk of the plant, these are immature Sowers (see below) and are harmless to both Reapers and prisoners.

The Resonant Crystals — Each of these crystals is as big as an adult human's hand. When collected immediately after a Pass, the crystal hums with energies that can be harnessed by psionics or by properly calibrated psi-tech equipment.

The Hunters — Nestled amid the roots of the crystal plants are the Hunters — they are somewhat like worms or snakes with a ringed set of teeth around their circular mouths. They grow up to a dozen feet long, and about a foot in diameter. During a Rest, Hunters attack anything that approaches their Crystal Plant (usually Reapers, but now also any prisoners who try to harvest the crystals). Hunters are usually dormant during a Pass and rarely attack then. They can burrow underground and then launch themselves at prey.

The Sowers — Sowers are a hexapod insect-like offspring of the Crystal Plant. In truth, they are effectively mobile seeds. Once they hatch, they scurry away from the stalk... most are caught by the Hunters, but a few manage to escape and find a suitable location. They then burrow into the soil to sprout as a new Crystal Plant later.

THE CRYSTALLINE FLOWERS OF ARETHUSA

In *The Last Survivor*, we learned that Selma Jones's discovery of crystalline flowers in the Arethusa system set off a Space Rush as folks tried to discover the 'next big thing' in the Nereid Sector. Perhaps the few flowers that Jones discovered were related to the Crystal Plants here. It's likely that it was a similar organism; either a failed first experiment or perhaps accidentally left behind by the scouting expedition that eventually settled on Maera IV as their host for the Harvester Moon.

The Reapers — These creature are also six-legged like the Sowers, but they are much larger... about the size of a large dog. They appear spider-like in form and collect the Resonant Crystals during a Pass, feeding off the psionic energy later in their cave lairs. They are territorial and aggressive. When the Virosa managed the Harvester Moon, they used psi-tech to make the Reapers docile and gathered Resonant Crystals from the Reaper lairs, but the Ogrons have not succeeded in reproducing that technology.

THE REST PERIOD AND THE PASS

The Harvester Moon has an elliptical orbit around the gas giant that is known as Maera IV. Despite this being the last planet of the system, all of the planets are very close to their host star and conditions are on the Harvester Moon are almost standard... the gravity is a little lighter, the days are a little shorter, and the environment is a little colder than normal, but nothing extreme.

Then, for about nine days out its 53-day orbital period, everything changes. The gas giant begins to loom in the sky as the Rest Period comes to a close, and then the sky lights up in brilliant blues and purples as the Harvester Moon enters the Vortex and the Pass begins. Lightning is common, usually from cloud to cloud, but sometimes it will strike the ground. Thunderstorms become frequent, and the Reapers emerge from their caves.

It is during this time that the Crystal Plants open up their leaves and expose the Resonant Crystals to be charged. The crystals begin to sing, as the energy causes them to vibrate. The Hunters are rarely seen, preferring often to wait out the storms despite the increased Reaper activity. The Reapers themselves assault the plants, trying to climb the stalks and wrestle free a crystal.

During a Pass, it is expected that the prisoners will gather as many crystals as they can. Crystals are only valuable if they are charged, and must be harvested during or just after a Pass to be of any use in the psi-tech equipment that they're designed for. The work bosses bring out sleds... these flat platforms have a repulsor technology that allows them to hover a foot or two off the ground at all

times. There are two rails, one at the very edge that is just a foot tall, and another one that is in the exact center and about three feet in diameter, forming three-quarters of a circle. There are no obvious controls to the craft... the prisoners simply push them along, or drag them with ropes.

A psionist that spends time investigating a sled can make a *Difficult [16]* PSI check to learn how to mentally steer the sled. A sled under psionic control has the following stats:

SPEED 3	ACCEL 3	HEALTH 20
SOAK 0	DEFENSE 15	Occupants 5

FIGHTING THE REAPERS

Unless the heroes have made special plans, they will be expected to fight off Reapers while other members of their work crew harvest crystals. While they have been relieved of any ranged weaponry that they had before they were captured, they were allowed to keep any melee weapons. If they don't have anything, they're given long metal bars that have the same stats as a club.

Characters on guard duty will have to face at least one Reaper every time they go out on a harvesting run, which will be at least five times during a Pass. Feel free to describe the majority of the battle in descriptive terms, breaking into actual combat only when the player characters are directly involved.



REAPER

Medium non-sentient insectoid (4d6)

STR 6 (3d6)	AGI 10 (4d6)	END 6 (3d6)
INT 3 (2d6)	LOG 3 (2d6)	WIL 4 (2d6)
CHA 2 (1d6)	LUC 0 (0d6)	REP 0 (0d6)

HEALTH 20

MELEE DEFENSE 14;

RANGED DEFENSE 14; MENTAL DEFENSE 10

SOAK 0; VULN none; immune poison

STATUS IMMUNITIES none

INITIATIVE 5d6 PERCEPTION 4d6

SPEED 6; CLIMB 3; JUMP 12'/6'

CARRY 120lb (max lift 300lb)

ACTIONS 2

NATURAL DAMAGE 2d6+3

REACH 5'

Pincers 4d6 (2d6+3 piercing damage)

GATHERING THE CRYSTALS

If the heroes elect to climb the stalks and gather crystals instead, they must make a *Difficult [16]* AGI test to climb up, and then must make a *Challenging [13]* AGI test and *Challenging [13]* STR test to remove a crystal. If the heroes attempt to remove a crystal during a Rest Period, the STR test becomes *Herculean [33]* instead.

Heroes that attempt to gather crystals during a Rest Period must also deal with the Hunters. There are at least 1d6+1 Hunters for each Crystal Plants, and larger plants might have up to 2d6+3 Hunters.

HUNTER

Medium non-sentient burrowing worm (4d6)

STR 10 (4d6)	AGI 10 (4d6)	END 10 (4d6)
INT 3 (2d6)	LOG 3 (2d6)	WIL 2 (2d6)
CHA 2 (1d6)	LUC 0 (0d6)	REP 0 (0d6)

HEALTH 30

MELEE DEFENSE 14;

RANGED DEFENSE 14; MENTAL DEFENSE 10

SOAK 5 (natural armor);

VULN none; immune poison

STATUS IMMUNITIES none

INITIATIVE 3d6 PERCEPTION 3d6
SPEED 3; CLIMB 3; JUMP see below
CARRY non-applicable
ACTIONS 2
NATURAL DAMAGE 2d6+4
REACH 5'

Pincers 5d6 (2d6+4 piercing damage)

Burrowing. This creature can move its full SPEED underground.

Natural Ambusher. This creature can use an action in order to make an AGI test to become hidden. The result of the test is the difficulty score for any attempts to locate it.

CONSEQUENCES OF A PASS

After a Pass, count the number of work cycles completed by a character. Divide this number by half, rounding up and then add 1d6. This is the HEALTH damage sustained by the character during the Pass. The damage comes in the form of chills, nausea, and 'sunburns' that appear as the Pass ends and the Rest Period begins. The damage counts as Radiation.

ESCAPING THE HARVESTER MOON

Setting the Scene: An OGRON TRANSPORT takes off from an obviously ALIEN OUTPOST on a MOON. As the TRANSPORT leaves, we zoom out as the MOON approaches a GAS GIANT. As the MOON gets closer, everything suddenly begins to crackle with waves of ENERGY.

Once the heroes have had a chance to investigate the Harvester Moon, they will understand that Bauk is planning to use the Resonant Crystals to power new psi-tech weaponry, like the Psychic Projection Field. If the heroes have the subdermal transmitter installed by the Union, they might activate the device, expecting the Union to receive the signal. However, even a *Routine* [10] INT check reveals that the interference from the energies of the Passes prevent the signal from escaping the moon. The characters will need to find another way.

Here are some possible solutions that they might consider:

We have a ship. If the characters snuck onto the Harvester Moon earlier, they might decide to simply leave that way as well. The characters have a choice to make however... if they take off during a Rest Period, the Ogrons will easily spot them and they'll have to fight their way out of the system. If they take off during a Pass, they might make it further before being seen, but the dangers of flying in the Vortex still apply.

Taking off from the moon requires three *Routine* [10] AGI (*piloting*) checks during a Rest Period. During a Pass, these checks are *Strenuous* [25] instead. Failures during a Pass do 1d6 damage to the ship due to the strong electromagnetic energies encompassing the entire atmosphere. See **The Ogron Pursuit** below for more information on their pursuers.

What about that one? The characters might elect to restore the downed Ogron Transport to operation. With the reactor damaged, they'll either need to repair it (a major demanding task that requires seven successes, due to the limited equipment at their disposal) or technobabble a way to use the Resonant Crystals to serve as a temporary reactor. Heroes that elect to do this will find it to be a major difficult task requiring three successes, but if they have a psionist available to assist then it is simply a major challenging task instead. Once the ship is in the air, the rules above for escaping the moon apply. See the end of this adventure for stats on the Ogron Transport.

Once the characters send the signal to the Union, it might be a really good time to remind them that the automatic Friend or Foe systems that the Union battleships use will not be able to distinguish their ship from the enemy ships. It is a *Challenging* [13] LOG check, aided by the *computers* skill to change the code.

We have come to bargain. It's possible that the characters might force or bluff their way off-planet, possibly by convincing one of the work bosses to allow them to be released, or by convincing the Ogrons that they won't get any more Resonant Crystals until the characters' demands are met. This sort of plan requires the

assent of all three work bosses, each requiring a *Difficult* [16] CHA check, possibly fortified by *seduction, persuasion* or *intimidation*.

Then the characters will need to open up a communications channel to Bauk. Thus they will need to gain access to the comms suite in the secure bunker. Once they've established a channel, they will then need to convince Bauk to negotiate with him, which requires at least three successful checks at the *Demanding* [21] level. Bauk's weaknesses are the Resonant Crystals (he has big plans for psi-tech weaponry) and the slaves (he's put a lot of effort into gathering them... sure sooner or later they're going to die, but he'll get more crystals the more slaves he has). Unless the characters are particularly clever, Bauk intends only to keep his word as long as it is convenient for him to do so.

Boost the signal! The character might know of the communications suite, and decide that with the right amount of technobabble they can hook up their subdermal transmitter to the larger array. Once they've managed to defeat the Ogron guards (which will be a challenge in itself), this will involve two checks... a *Difficult* [16] check to remove the hidden transmitter (it helps if anyone is actually a doctor or has medical skills), and a *Demanding* [21] LOG check to integrate the Union technology with the Ogron console.

Once they do so, begin a slow 6d6 countdown with one hour intervals. When the countdown completes, the Union ships have arrived. During this time, the Ogrons will try to regain the bunker. Bauk will not assault the facility with orbital weapons, unless he knows for sure that there are no valuable slaves or Resonant Crystals in danger.

THE OGRON PURSUIT

If the heroes take off of the Harvester Moon in a ship, they'll have to escape the cordon of ships around Maera IV. How they escape the moon will affect the number of ships that they face. If they took off during a Rest Period and without any attempt at subterfuge, they'll face three Ogron Scouts in immediate orbit, and then have to face the All-Master Warship once they leave the vicinity of

Maera IV. Once they get past the scout ships, they'll be far enough away to activate their Union signal. At that point, begin a slow 6d6 countdown with one hour intervals. When the countdown completes, the Union ships will arrive. Until then, the character will have to either avoid Bauk or flee the system entirely.

If the characters used the Pass to disguise their take-off, they face only one Ogron Scout vessel. Then they will face the All-Master Warship and two Ogron Transports once they leave the jamming zone.

Clever players may decide to fly into the Vortex and risk damage to their own ship in order to damage their pursuers. This might well prove to be effective, if the crew has a better Pilot than the Ogrons (which is likely). Stats for the Ogron Scout and Ogron Transport are given below, see EONS Issue 30 for the stats of the Ogron All-Master Warship and just add the Psychic Projection Field weapon (see the Psi-tech Equipment section at the end of the adventure) to the stats.

Depending on the exact plan of the heroes, you might want to run this as a Theater of the Mind combat, or you can use the sample system map to do Newtonian Tactical combat.

THE UNION ARRIVES

Once the characters send their send, the Union will send a fleet to the Maera system in just a few hours. Obviously, they must have been hanging back, just out of range. If the heroes are in a ship and in the battle area, then Bauk will stay and fight... the heroes might prove pivotal against the Ogrons. A fleet action is too complex and the Union force outmatches the Ogrons, so this combat should be done as Theater of the Mind, simply describing the combat situation and giving the heroes several chances to interact with the Ogrons and the Union vessels.

After the battle, the characters will be contacted by Admiral Badelt, he expects them to have information that justifies the Union action. The existence of psi-tech weaponry and the only known power source for such weaponry is enough for him to justify his actions to his superiors. Concerns about the death-toll of the slaves are also valid, but most of the



captives are non-Union and, as such, not under his protection.

Lastly, once the matter of the day has been resolved, Badelt has news for the characters. They've been selected to join a diplomatic mission to the Virosa homeworld. As long as the characters played through *The Last Survivor*, such an invitation should make sense (hopefully, they're being asked because they helped Caper recover. If they killed Caper instead, then they are still "invited" to the homeworld, but the might expect a trial instead of a parade). If they didn't participate in the previous adventure, then the Admiral simply wants them along as folks who are reliable in unusual circumstances.

Admiral Badelt is an older human male, who is career military with the Union. He has little time for pleasantries, and a responsibility to his superiors that he takes very seriously.

PSI-TECH EQUIPMENT

Harvester Moon introduces the idea of psi-tech, equipment that runs on psionic energy and can produce effects similar to what a psionist can

produce. This technology has the potential to dramatically change your NEW game, and thus you'll want to consider exactly how far you'd like to push it. The only device that appears within this adventure is the Psychic Projection Field weapon. This can be, if necessary, a one-time irreproducible artifact. Or it could be a prototype of a new generation of weaponry.

An important limiting factor for Psi-tech Equipment is the need for Resonant Crystals. It's likely that the Union will gain control of the Harvester Moon and thus have a supply of crystals. Perhaps there are other locations that can produce

crystals, or another fuel technology (a darker twist might be using psionic energy to fuel psi-tech weapons). This can be a source of conflict in your game, or it can fade into the background once the events of the Nereid Trilogy have concluded.

If you do not want to introduce the idea of psi-tech weaponry to your NEW game at all, then the Psychic Projection Field weapon could use some sort of electromagnetic field to subtly manipulate sentients' brain waves and produce feelings in that way. In this explanation, the Resonant Crystals are a focusing device instead of a fuel source.

The PPF must be powered by Resonant Crystals. Each firing consumes at least 10 crystals, and then you must designate an additional number of crystals to be consumed. Each additional crystal produces adds 1d6 to the dice pool. (So Bauk consumes 15 Resonant Crystals in his standard 5d6 attack.) The attack fills an entire hex.

The PPF must have an 'operator' that is experiencing the same condition that the controller wishes to induce in the target. The effects of the weapon wear off in about ten minutes

Use the following stats for the PPF weapon:

Psychic Projection Field	Cost	Size	CPU	Space	Range	Attack	Damage
	Priceless	L	3	11	2*	-1d6	Special

OGRON SHIPS

OGRON SCOUT CLASS I PATROL CRAFT

Weight 2,448 tons; **Cargo Units** 50
(31.9 available; capacity 1,595.0 tons)

Hull Class I (INIT 0)

Traits Evasive, Inspector

Crew 4 (cost 800cr/m); **Troops** 0; Passengers 0
(0 standard, 0 luxury)

Command & Control Systems

Computers 1x Highwatch SM-1 Command
Computer (CPU cycles: 8; max FTL: 2; checks: +0d6)

Sensors Chen-Collins SS-1 (range 2; check +0d6)

Engine & Propulsion Data

Subluminal 1x Satellite Concepts SI-2 Ion Engine
(power 11 ; SPEED 11.0; fuel efficiency 1.4)

FTL -

Operational Range 0 parsecs

Defensive Data

Superstructure 3 **DEFENSE** 20 **E-DEFENSE** 10

Armor -

Shields 1x Tyler Mechanics SSM-2 Combat Shield
System (power 7 ea; SOAK 7)

Point Defenses

Weapons Data

1x Narita Maltech SLP-1 Blackbuster Pulse Laser
(range 2; damage 2d6 heat; attack +0d6)

Facilities

Luxury 130% (Adequate: -)

Facilities Escape Pod (4), Cabin, Hotbunk (4),
Armory (1), Galley (1), Sickbay (1),

General Systems

Fueling -

Electronic Warfare -

Tractor Beams -

Cloaking Device -

Engineering -

Hangars & Bays

Shuttles 0

Fighters 0

Vehicles 0

Market Value 68.8 MCr

OGRON TRANSPORT CLASS III FREIGHTER

Weight 19,232 tons; **Cargo Units** 250
(144.2 available; capacity 7,210.0 tons)

Hull Class III (INIT 0)

Traits Hauler

Crew 7 (cost 1400cr/m); **Troops** 10; Passengers 0 (0
standard, 0 luxury)

Command & Control Systems

Computers 1x Highwatch SM-1 Command
Computer (CPU cycles: 8; max FTL: 2; checks: +0d6)

Sensors Chen-Collins SS-1 (range 2; check +0d6)

Engine & Propulsion Data

Subluminal 1x Satellite Concepts SI-2 Ion Engine
(power 11 ; SPEED 3.7; fuel efficiency 1.4)

FTL 1x Warpdyne Asteroid Mining SA-2
Antimatter Engine (power 8 ; FTL 2.0; fuel
efficiency 1.1)

Backup FTL -

Operational Range 30 parsecs

Defensive Data

Superstructure 9 **DEFENSE** 18 **E-DEFENSE** 10

Armor 2x ablative (SOAK 1 ballistic, 1 energy.)

Shields 1x Tyler Mechanics SSM-2 Combat Shield
System (power 7 ea; SOAK 2)

Point Defenses

Weapons Data

1x Corellian Engineering Corporation AG-2G Quad
Laser Cannon (range 2; damage 2d6 heat; attack +0d6)

Facilities

Luxury 148% (Adequate: -)

Facilities Cabin, Hotbunk (1), Armory (1), Brig (50),

General Systems

Fueling -

Electronic Warfare -

Tractor Beams -

Cloaking Device -

Engineering -

Hangars & Bays

Shuttles 0

Fighters 0

Vehicles 0

Market Value 292.2 MCr