

## Introduction- Return of the Errant Son

For a continuing game, any set of events that take the players to Seortfil-d is acceptable. This was originally run as a stand alone short game, so players were only expected to leave town rapidly. For players, it can be the beginning of a large quest, a way for them to have a potential recurrent patron, or a way to acquire an affordable ship for adventuring.

( Your luck may finally have changed for the better. The ship you were serving on, the *Undarbuss*, managed to escape the pirates near Cropanwar-Bb long enough to make the jump to Seortfil safely, if not economically. At least you arrived in system after your jump drive was hit. It is always risky to travel to a restricted system, but it seemed like an easy job... Unfortunately the *Undarbuss* took significant damage and will be laid up for weeks if not months while being repaired. At least the captain paid you in full, which wasn't guaranteed after that fiasco.

You and your colleagues have been invited to meet with Reginald Basque, the head of a locally well known trading house, Basque Resources. All of you are familiar with one another having served aboard the *Undarbuss* and seem to be able to at least tolerate one another. You are currently waiting to be collected near Rayelvan Terminus, a sprawling starport on Seortfil-d. It's actually much nicer than where the *Undarbuss* is. While Seortfil-g may be a 'habitable' world, the gravity of 1.34g made your legs hurt, and the winter snow was less than pleasant. No wonder they had space in the repair yard. Good thing your patron sent you a ticket to the warmer and dryer Seortfil-d. Even the 41 hour shuttle trip (at a respectable 4g) was an improvement.)

A hot,dry wind blows across the dusty starport. Given the small amount of surface water here, the dust isn't surprising. Hopefully the wind won't pick up, as you've heard that the sandstorms can be ferocious and ruin anyone's day pretty quickly. Even if the job doesn't work out, at least you can stock up on pretty much whatever you're looking for here short of military grade weapons. Seortfil is a low law, high tech system and you've just been paid off by the *Undarbuss*. Considering some of the places you've seen on your travels, it could be much worse. Besides, air conditioning is readily available and it's not like you should have to wait long.

A rather nice looking groundcar arrives, driven by Jarvis Ohno, Mr. Basque's longtime assistant, who is here to take you out to the Basque estate. He's happy to note points of interest and answer any general questions you may have other than about your potential job, saying Mr. Basque is looking forward to talking to you about that.

### Jarvis Ohno

**Appearance:** early 60's, graying black hair, weathered brown skin with fine clothing and a tailored jacket.

**Portrayal:** Generally reserved, he is dedicated to the Basque family and has worked for them his entire life. Part servant, part administrative assistant, part family, he has some experience in space and plays the flute in his spare time. He will help in whatever way he can to bring Rodney home to his father. He is not a fighter or an engineer, but can help with any administrative/legal issues. His wife, Q'Isiana Ohno, and music are the 2 things he's interested in besides the Basque family.

**Hook:** He knows Rodney very well and practically raised him. Rodney will know the situation is serious as Jarvis is there in person and he would never leave his father without very good reason.

Jarvis drives you out through the metropolis along well maintained roads about 90 minutes from the spaceport to a gated estate. Inside, you can see palm trees (the first trees you've seen of any sort on Seortfil-d) surrounding a large-ish manor house with several greenhouses off to the side. The gates open automatically for the groundcar, and you drive up to the front door of the manor.

Jarvis walks you inside the house to a sitting room just off the main entryway. It is well

appointed but not ostentatious, with comfortable chairs, real wood tables, moving holographic pictures from several systems, as well as what are probably family portraits. Before long Jarvis returns with Reginald Basque. He is a powerfully built man in his early 60's, wearing a short sleeve shirt, slacks, and loafers. He welcomes you all individually by name, shaking your hands.

"I have something of a problem, and I believe that you collectively would be able to help me out. My trading house is built on family in key positions, and as I'm sure most of you know, family can be the greatest blessings or the greatest curse in the universe. We are, unfortunately, having some difficulty at the moment, and things may soon become ugly. 3 of my 4 children are well established and in ready contact in protected positions, but my youngest son, however, has never been oriented toward business. From his letters, he is headed to Asgesinth, a corporate owned garden planet just into the Tapaigdar subsector. It is a rather remote system; nothing bad you understand, but there are only a few hundred people there and he is without any protection. Given our current difficulties, I fear he may become a target. The business is currently in the middle of a leadership struggle between us (the old guard Reginald and his allies) and the younger generation (Orlando Basque, a nephew, and his crews) who wish to expand into new markets and services.

"Would you be willing to retrieve him? Not violently, you understand- he's not a bad young man. He is, however, unmotivated and, well, willful. I'll send Jarvis along so that Rodney knows you are serious. Jarvis practically raised the boy while I ran the business. I can provide a small cruiser for your use, and can give you each 10,000 credits plus expenses for your trouble. Half now, and half on your return with Rodney."

## **Calypso Exploration Cruiser**

Jarvis borrows a groundskeeper who drives all of you back to the spaceport. You go through to a private terminal where sits a 200 dton exploration vessel. It appears somewhat older, but given the varied tech levels around the galaxy it is hard to judge a ship by its age. Jarvis walks up to the main cargo hatch and pushes an external speaker button. "Jarvis here, with guests. Please let us aboard, Calypso."

"Certainly Jarvis" comes the immediate reply as the cargo ramp lowers. "All system repair work was completed yesterday, food, water, and spare parts arrived the day before, and the ship is ready to leave as soon as you are."

(Calypso is the artificial intelligence aboard her exploration vessel. While not proficient at everything, she is an Intellect program of average intelligence and has been thoroughly programmed with polite interaction. She will accept the characters as guests, and ask each for voice print authorization not long after boarding. She will also inform them that, as guests, they are expected to refrain from interfering with primary ship functions and to avoid sensitive areas of the ship unless accompanied by an owner. Owners include Reginald, his wife Theria, his children Ogden, Lavia, Helen, and Rodney, as well as Jarvis Ohno and his wife Q'Isiana Ohno. As an intellect program, she will not take kindly to any doubletalk or refusals, and will remember those characters who she deems inappropriately respectful. She has access to all cameras, locks, microphones, repair droids, and probe droids aboard the ship, and can have eyes and/or ears wherever she wants them. She is perfectly happy to discuss her capabilities (circumspectly RE spying on characters, but repair, flight, cargo capacity, etc she is even eager to discuss. Everyone likes talking about themselves.)

Departure can be nearly immediate if the characters desire, and if the characters check their bank accounts the first half of their payment will already be deposited. Jarvis is quite familiar with stores in Rayelvan, and direct people to any type of establishment but will know the upper class places best. Liftoff and jump will be uneventful, and Jarvis (along with Calypso) will give everyone a tour of

the ship. While Calypso monitors all ship systems, a successful recon roll (0 if casual, +2 if actively inspecting) will show that non-ship systems are run down and have not been well maintained. If asked, Calypso will admit that she has not been in service for some time, and only recently came back online. She is not as economical as purpose-built freighters, and is designed for mineral exploration and analysis. If characters desire, they may repair and/or maintain any non-essential systems (launch, air raft, autodoc, vacc suits, etc) using spare parts (Calypso knows where they are and she will be helpful if the characters are being useful) and tools available. Jarvis is happy to pay for ship supplies and repairs of any sort. Seortfil-d will have most standard equipment available through TL13 in Rayelvan. While some shopping will be acceptable, Jarvis will definitely work to expedite departure. Character equipment may be used to supplement ship supplies for the autodoc, if desired.

For any system or equipment not overhauled by the characters, there is a chance that the machinery will break. on 2d6, it will break immediately when trying it on a 2, the next use on a 3, etc. Clearly the machinery has seen better days, but it is all of fairly high grade TL12 make. All upkeep tasks are easy (+2 DM) on mechanic or appropriate skill (gun, robotics, vac suit, etc), and can take 10-60 minutes for easy (vac suit) items, or 10-60 hours for complicated systems (autodoc). Once overhauled, each system will perform flawlessly- they have just not been maintained. If the system actually breaks down, repairs are at the normal difficulty. Characters can take extra time on tasks to give a positive die modifier. Calypso can also give characters +1 DM if asked as she can control the ship repair drones. Repairs should keep the characters busy for much of the trip out to Asgesinth-d. Legal speculative trading will also be allowed during the journey, but Jarvis will balk at any illegal trade or passengers.

## **Asgesinth-d**

Asgesinth-d is a garden world with few residents but has a basic class C starport which Asges Industries hopes will become a more important stop in the Tapaigar subsector. There are only a bit more than six hundred sophonts in the system, mostly spread out in small camps around the starport but with no infrastructure to speak of. The goal is to provide rich travelers a taste of wilderness living while paying for the privilege of getting away from it all.

Two girls at the only spaceport bar on Asgesinth-b remember Rodney. He was a good tipper and hung out with friends. They remember him wanting to see the wilderness, but they haven't seen him in a few weeks. Asges Tours, the corporate tour agency, booked a Rodney Basque to visit Arabella Lodge 2 weeks ago.

Arabella lodge is an eight hour boat ride outside of town or about 30 minutes by air raft. In order to maintain the rustic environment, however, air raft use is restricted to emergency use only. Convincing an official there is an emergency is a possible, but difficult, admin roll (-2 DM). There's a cargo trawler making the run out to the lodge tomorrow (takes 8 hours) for 15 credits per passenger, or you can rent a launch + captain for 150 credits/day, or just a motorboat for 80 credits/day (with 350 credit deposit) and use your own seafaring skills. The planet has 0.7g gravity and a very long day (36 hours, which takes a LOT of getting used to!), but is very pleasant otherwise with a temperate climate and short sleeve weather for much of the planetary year. It freezes at the poles, but all of the people live in a small area on the main southern continent about 15 degrees S of the equator.

If the captain is hired or players specifically ask about hazards, they are warned about pterosaurs in the forests and about snags/deadwood in the river. Pterosaurs are a major flying reptilian predator of the jungle and can be dangerous if found in a large enough group. Pterosaurs are 15kg on average, flying reptiles with 1.5m wingspans with crocodile jaws of sharp teeth. They tend to pounce on prey from trees above and attack in groups of 6 or more to bring down larger prey. They have Str 6, Dex 13, End 6 and melee (teeth) 1, survival 1, flying 1. They have tough leathery skin (armor 3) and

do 2d6 damage with their bites. Think flying coyotes with more stealth skills.

On water craft, (open 25' boat piloted by Captain Ballian, if hired) there are many strange calls, hoots, whistles, and various reptilian and large arachnid forms among the trees. Several of the lizards are flyers. There are relatively few birds and mammals, but plenty of fish. On the way out a group of pterosaurs will attack (1 per player +2 extras). Injured pterosaurs will generally flee, or the rest will flee if 1/2 their number are driven off/killed.

## **Arabella Lodge**

The forest lodge is set amidst towering, vine covered trees with a small but well maintained boat dock extending out into the river. Several guests are using jet skis on the water, with 2 rifle-armed observers scanning the trees around them. The main lodge is a rustic 3 story wooden structure with a large stone chimney in the center of the atrium area. In the back is a barn with a fenced yard and several humans riding an odd lizard. While watching, one of the humans is thrown to the ground as the lizard lumps off to the far end of the pasture. The man stands, coated in mud, and slowly shuffles off after the lizard.

Asking around the lodge, yes, there is a Rodney Basque registered there. He is on a 3 day camping trip and is due back later this afternoon. They have ~70 guests, mostly humans, and a dozen staff members working with them. Robots perform domestic jobs such as cleaning; staff are for active engagement with the guests.

Various activities are going on around the lodge, from basic riding, to target shooting with bows, to an arachnid petting zoo (apparently they are quite furry big spiders).

Eventually a camp leader and 6 guests come back on riding lizards loaded with packs and supplies. The guests are all dressed fashionably retro, joking and laughing with each other. In the absence of party moves, they all take the lizards back to the barn to unload. They unload their supplies, then head toward the lodge for separate long showers (Rodney's room is on the second floor in the middle of an H shaped hall), then meet afterwards in the bar for drinks before Rodney heads back to his room alone while others pair off or not.

Whenever the characters choose to approach Rodney (or after he goes back to his room to sleep at the latest), a thin 1.4m tall blonde woman is seen approaching him (or his closed door) with something bulging in her waist at the back. (Assassin: 9A8685 gun combat (flechette) 2, melee (sharp weapon) 2, survival 1, recon 1, athletics 0 She has a flack jacket armor (6 points, with a flechette pistol (pistol range, auto 4, 3d6-2 damage, 40 rounds magazine) and a vibroknife (small blade, 3d6+1, recoil 0) and 200 credits. She will be smiling when she approaches the target; either in a friendly manner (if he's visible) or in a malicious way if approaching his door. If approaching the door she has an electronic key stolen from a droid (found partially disassembled a closet later). The party should spot her making her way towards Rodney with the intention of killing him but before the killing is carried out.

Once discovered, she will either 1) attempt to kill Rodney and escape; or 2) escape if Rodney is not easily in sight. Generally starting a fight with her will cause enough of a disturbance that guests will be alarmed and staff alerted. Staff are armed against wildlife attacks since there are some dangerous animals in the forests. Assassins are a new one. If she manages to get away she will be in the motorboat with the 2 thugs who chase the party and Rodney on the water.

## **Boat (or Air raft) Chase**

(use boat or air raft, whichever the players have, for the chase)

When the players return to the starport with Rodney (who will be scared into following by the attempt on his life, and will let Jarvis and the party talk him into leaving early). The motorboat or

trawler (depending on what the party hired) will start back downriver. About 1/3 of the way there they will be chased by a motorboat. On the motorboat are 2 thugs and the assassin if she escaped. One Thug will have an autorifle, the driver has an autocarbine (firing one handed while driving), while assassin has her flechette pistol. Thug (988576, gun combat (slug rifle 1), melee (unarmed) 2, seafarer 0, cloth armor (TL10, 5 points). They can outrun the cargo trawler, but have less armor and less hull/structure than the trawler. Captain Jahair has seafarer (boat) 3 and has a submachine gun (gun combat 0) and he will try to outrun/outpilot the motorboat.

Back in town, Captain Jahair will report the attack(s) to the authorities, and the party can scramble back to the *Calypso*.

## Fraud?

Upon their return to the port, as the party makes preparations to leave the planet they have a planetary hold placed upon their departure by ASA (Asgesinth Starport Authority). Portmaster Aimsford of the Asgesinth starport wishes to have a word with Rodney Basque regarding credit fraud. If the rest of the party wishes to leave, they can leave him behind, otherwise the *Calypso* is not permitted to leave. Attempting to leave without permission will result in the activation of the automated weapons grid and firing upon the *Calypso*.

Aimsford has a tiny office and one of only 2 humans running the starport. The party must work to prove or persuade the Portmaster that Rodney is innocent. An automated clothing dispenser submitted a claim against Rodney for 2500 Cr for custom outdoor clothes from 2 weeks ago and hasn't paid. Rodney did use it (he is currently wearing the clothes), but says he paid.

The assassin's accomplice blocked his charge card to delay the party from taking off. By himself, Aimsford will figure out Rodney's innocence 36 hours later, but by then the accomplice and any remaining opponents waiting near the spaceport try to kill Rodney. Accomplice (565884) has gun combat 0, computer programming 2 deception 1 electronic devices 2, autopistol, cloth armor, 300 credits. Party efforts to find out the truth could happen through comms requests, computer forensics, bank investigations, etc. If the party informs Aimsford about the assassination attempt, he will figure it out 12 hours earlier, and will have all 3 robot guards escort the party to the ship which will help the party's chances in the assassination attempt. The thugs, accomplice and assassin will attempt to shoot Rodney outside the ship.

## Home

Anyone looking for news at starports will hear how Orlando Basque, nephew of Reginald and Theria Basque, is trying to wrest control of Basque Resources away from the founders. He is shown surrounded by the mayor, several legislators, and various business leaders including local VPs for Latrian Transports and Lightyear Jumpships. Orlando is furious after leaving last night's meeting having failed to become the new chairman of the board despite allegations of criminal fraud by Reginald Basque. The board meeting endured several fistfights and Orlando has a black eye.

Basque shipping employees are split. Many believe the old leaders aren't working, and recent company losses are their fault. Other Captains just try to muddle through. Depending upon where the characters enter the Seortfil system, radio messages to Seortfil-d are easy to arrange and receive. Reginald is glad you have returned with Rodney, but has a bit of an emergency. A thousand ton heavy freighter, the *Punic Pony*, isn't answering hails and did not Jump on schedule. It is heading out-system from Seortfil=e in normal space which is anything but normal. It is carrying hundreds of tons of advanced electronics for Transophontics, a megacorp known for their high tech robots. Losing the shipment, worth more than 50,000,000 credits, would piss off a major customer, create a public relations disaster, and generate a massive hole in Basque Industries' budget.



The company under Reginald is preparing to launch a relief ship from Seortfil-d, but Orlando's faction has their own relief vessel closer to the *Punic Pony*. Reginald is worried that Orlando's relief vessel will plant embarrassing evidence of company wrongdoing so Reginald could be ousted despite winning last night's board vote. Your vessel is able to reach the *Punic Pony* well before any of the planetary vessels. He promises your efforts to recover the ship and its cargo will be well rewarded.

- 1) Locating the *Punic Pony* on sensors
- 2) Maneuver the *Calypso* to dock
- 3) Dock and enter the ship at one of several points
- 4) Explore ship to find fighting. Rodney provokes attacks from one side and a spirited warning and defense from the other. Basically the two company factions are fighting for control of the *Punic Pony*. Communications and sensors were sabotaged, but engineering and the only 2 surviving engineers work for Orlando.
- 5) Players should fix the radio or at least alert Seortfil of the situation using their own radio.
- 6) Retake the *Punic Pony* from Orlando's faction.
- 7) Keep Orlando's 'rescue' fast ship's boat from docking or defeating the boarders. May require using the laser turret of the *Punic Pony*. Sensors need to be fixed before the turret can target the incoming ship.
- 8) Bring the *Punic Pony* back to Seortfil-e so that it can be repaired and mutineers replaced.

The starport on Seortfil-e is more than a bit annoyed about your arrival as companies should NOT be fighting over their own vessel. There are plenty of pirates in space, but the authorities are clear that the ship belongs to Basque Industries. After some detailed questions regarding use of force and crew deaths (if any), starport control allows you to leave for Seortfil-d.

## Homecoming and Reward

Returning to Seortfil-d, Jarvis, Rodney, and party return to Basque Estate after Jarvis orders *Calypso* refueled and restocked. The same ground car that picked you up almost 3 weeks before awaits you at the spaceport. Rodney tells stories about what he used to do as a teen while Jarvis drives you through through the various neighborhoods. The gates are open when you arrive at the estate.

You pull directly up to the front of the house and Jarvis opens the door, leaving the keys in the ignition. When the door opens there are 4 people standing at the far end of the entry hall about 50 feet away, with Reginald Basque kneeling at his feet, hands bound behind his back. The door opens just as a man that looks something like Orlando uses a broadsword to chop the head off of Reginald Basque, falling next to the decapitated head and body of his wife. Two guards in heavy combat armor carrying massive looking guns stand behind the dead couple. They all look surprised to see you, and one of the guards quickly points his gun and fires in your direction. The doorframe over Jarvis' head explodes, along with a fair chunk of the wall, scattering dust, plaster, and brick fragments over everyone near the door (1d6 damage, 1/2 damage if 2d6 under Dex). Everyone in the door also takes a 4d6 radiation dose (and 4d6 more every time the soldiers fire their FGMPs).

"Damn it! Kill them! screams the man with the broadsword. This should be the characters cue to leave, but they may take a shot or 2 at the figures. Bullets or lasers barely stagger the armored folk on a good hit (armor 16), and if the party doesn't leave immediately or sooner Jarvis is blown into chunks of meat and bone. The man with the sword could be hurt by gunfire, in which case one of the armored guards moves to protect him while the other blows Jarvis away.

The characters rush down into the groundcar and someone (Jarvis or one of the players) drives

away toward the gates. Rodney needs to be dragged to the car and is in shock watching his father killed and seeing his mother dead. Driving back toward the gate, you can see 2 dead bodies piled behind the gatehouse (they were not visible when driving in) and 2 more guards running into the road and shouldering autorifles to shoot at the car. Players can shoot at the guards, and hit or not they are forced to dive out of the way of the car before being ridden down. Turning rapidly onto the road, tires squealing, the left gatehouse is blown to bits by another FGMP burst (2d6 more radiation). (The radiation exposure should tell the characters that they are outgunned. Suggesting that they would be blasted into chunky tomato sauce on a direct hit might also help.)

## Outbound

As the car zooms back towards the starport Jarvis (or Rodney if Jarvis is dead) gets a call from *Calypso*. (If Rodney, *Calypso* complains that Jarvis' phone must be dead because the grid could not connect to him.) (If Jarvis is still alive, he calls his wife and tells her to hide and meet up on Sagradnat-e at their retirement home.) Her monitors show several unsavory characters gathering not too far from her and they seem to be up to no good, eyeing her suspiciously. She feels watched.

There will be 4 thugs near the ship, watching it. When the groundcar approaches, they will pull out weapons (2 autocarabines, 2 submachine guns) and try to dissuade the party from leaving. *Calypso* can lower the cargo door and allow players to drive right in, or the party can disembark and shoot back at the thugs. Thug (988576, gun combat (slug rifle 1), melee (unarmed) 2, recon 0, cloth armor (TL10, 5 points) As soon as everyone is aboard, *Calypso* will be ready to launch. Thugs will probably not make it on board, but if they do they will try to take over the ship and force it to land.

When the ship tries to leave, there will be no immediate problem from the Starport Authority. Near the jump boundary, a large Basque Resources freighter will try to intercept the ship to force it to surrender before jumping. They radio a warning to halt and be boarded. After takeoff but before jump, the Starport orders the *Calypso* to return for questioning regarding weapons fire near the Basque estate.

## Destinations?

There are over a dozen worlds in *Calypso's* jump range. Several worlds have Basque Industries divisions on them, although Rodney has no clue who can be trusted. Jarvis knows Rodney's sister Lavia is on Sagradnat-e and is running things there. (If Jarvis is alive, he wants to get there.) These 4 are the most likely candidates other than Sagradnat, depending upon what the players want to do.

Syelbhon is a divided system where Basque Industries has been supporting Duke Elestron, one of the faction leaders on Syelbhon-d. Orlando can't buy Elestron, so they are working on a deal with the Bylar Confederates, a partially aligned group competing with Elestron for leadership of the Integrationists who want more interstellar trade.

Dosreorid is an entry into the Whomew subsector for Basque Industries. There is a small station here, but systems are fewer and there is only one good trade route in the subsector. Seortfil subsector is more dense with many large, stellar economies compared to Whomew subsector.

Vitru is a small but very well placed system near multiple large worlds. Basque Industries have a large operation here, with many supporters of both factions. While dangerous, it would go a long way to either consolodating Orlando's control or giving Rodney's family a much stronger position.

Sidvit is a low stellar, higher population world with only a small Basque Industries station. It leads out of Seortfil subsector through smaller systems. It is a good escape route to abandon Basque Industries to Orlando.