

FREE LEAGUE

CORIOLIS



ARAM'S RAVINE

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ARAM'S RAVINE

Between the deep forests of Kua and the smoldering wastelands of Lubau, we find Jina, an acidified hellhole with only one colony, Aram's Ravine. The colony is a mining station for bauxite and other mineral salts, and rife with intriguing mine lords competing for power.

THE SCENARIO LOCATION Aram's Ravine is the only major settlement on Jina. Frequent visitors to the colony are rare, except for freighter crews hauling the minerals away. Read up on Jina on page 284 of the Rulebook before introducing Aram's Ravine into your game.

OVERVIEW

Aram's Ravine is situated at the edge of the Lamka plateau. The Desera river has slowly eaten away at the porous stone surrounding the colony and left a strange landscape of tall, spindly pillars of harder rock in its wake. The colony sits on top of these high pillars, with thin rope bridges connecting the different pillar islands. The settlement is covered in a constant mist making for poor visibility, courtesy of Jina's acidified atmosphere. Residents not working in the mines or on the salt trawlers try to stay indoors to get away from the mist. The colony is ravaged by strong acid storms every now and then, forcing everyone inside, except for the kalites, the local nomads.

Methane gas from the swamps is the Ravine's primary source of power. Long pipes climb like vines up the ridge and worm their way between the houses on the pillars. There is one larger power station in the colony, distributing electricity to the inhabitants. The water on Jina is very acidic and must be processed before it is fit for human consumption. This is most easily done by vaporization and condensation, or through chemical purification.

Aram's Ravine is surrounded by the deserts of the Lamka plateau, empty of all life except for the lamka lizard (see the Rulebook, p 323) and a surprisingly strong population of butterflies resistant to the atmosphere.

THE SPACE PORT

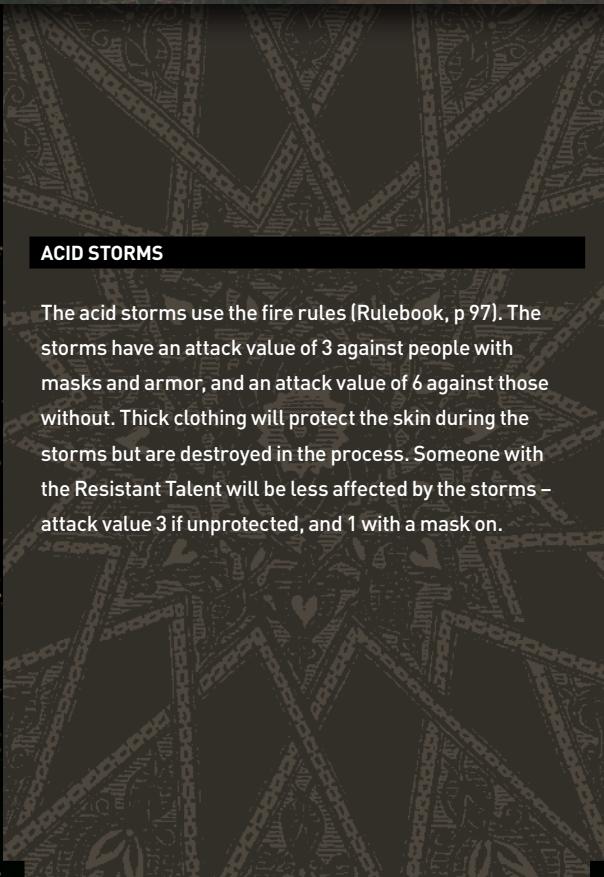
Landing platforms large enough for medium freighters usually covered in dust and sand from the plateau. The platforms can be lowered into underground silos and sealed to protect the landed ships. This is done from a small command unit next to each platform. Unless a landed ship is protected from the corrosive mist in this fashion, service costs are doubled (see the Rulebook, p 155). There is a fusion reactor in the spaceport, but it is out of commission due to lack of resources.

THE OFFICES OF THE COLONIAL AGENCY

A fancy, crescent-shaped single-storey building made from white, glazed stone, designed for the mayor of the planet. Colonial agent Moro uses only a small part of the western wing, and the rest of the building rests in silence, dusty sheets covering the expensive furniture. The covered main entrance with its worn, mosaic-covered columns has not been used for decades. Agent Moro and his bodyguards use the side entrance, since it is closer to the inhabited parts of the settlement.

THE BATH HOUSE

The colony's bathhouse, or hammam, is the jewel of the Ravine. It was built for an elite that never came, and today it serves the common folk of the colony and functions as the de facto offices of colonial agent Moro. Priceless mosaics, beautiful lighting and the soothing babble of the water makes the hammam a much needed place of rest from the toils of life on Jina. Agent Moro holds court from a dais in the back. When he is not resting on his divan, he can usually be found in the steam sauna or in the warm water pool with a tray of imported delicacies at his side.



ACID STORMS

The acid storms use the fire rules (Rulebook, p 97). The storms have an attack value of 3 against people with masks and armor, and an attack value of 6 against those without. Thick clothing will protect the skin during the storms but are destroyed in the process. Someone with the Resistant Talent will be less affected by the storms – attack value 3 if unprotected, and 1 with a mask on.

ARAM'S RAVINE

- ◆ **AVERAGE TEMPERATURE:** 25–40 degrees centigrade during the day and around 10 degrees at night.
- ◆ **POPULATION:** Roughly 3,000, 900 of whom live in Aram's Ravine. The rest live on small claims along the fault line or on salt trawlers in the Desera delta.
- ◆ **GOVERNANCE:** Formally an independent colony under the protection of the Colonial Agency. In reality, tensions are high as local oligarchs compete for power (the Colonial Agency, the Mine Lord, the Salt Widow).
- ◆ **LAW AND ORDER:** A popular militia with a hundred members keeps the peace. The militia is formally under the control of the Colonial Agency, but is de facto a lot closer to the Salt Widow. The militia is being challenged by the Red Hand Crew, which is allied with the Mine Lord and has some fifty members, as well as by unruly miners on leave. The Agency tries to play these different groups against one another.
- ◆ **IMPORTS:** Livestock, spices, foodstuffs, medicine, metals, spare parts, survival gear.
- ◆ **EXPORTS:** Bauxite ore, salts.



ARAM'S RAVINE

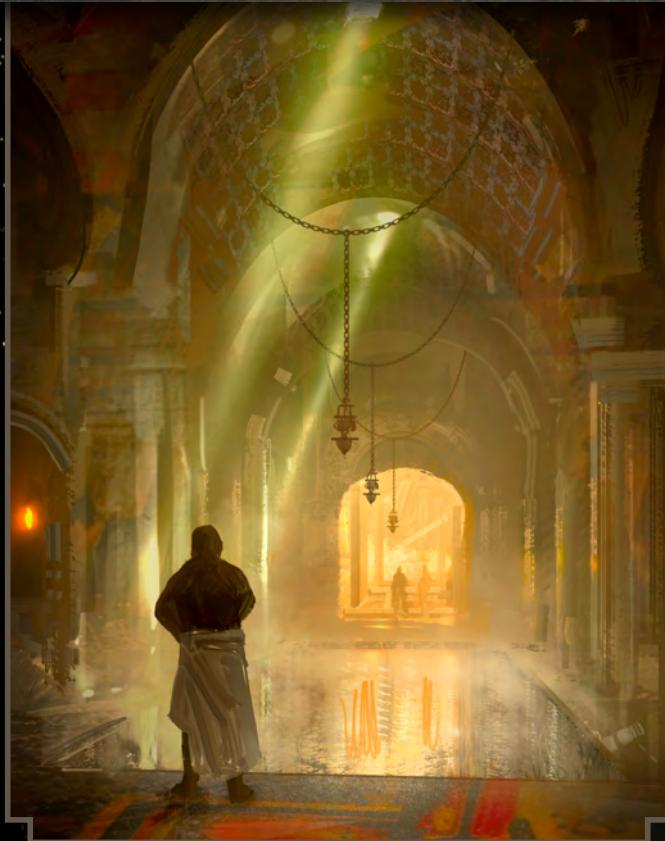


ARAM'S RAVINE

1. The offices of the Colonial Agency
2. The bath house
3. Nohak's cantina
4. The chapel of the Icons
5. The doctor's office
6. The lair of the witch doctor
7. The palace of the mine lord
8. Larval silk farms
9. The 'Oasis' cantina
10. The salt widow's house







ARAM'S CUISINE

Indigenous butterfly larvae are the cornerstones of the local cuisine. The larva is edible, but not the evolved butterfly. The larvae are mashed into a high-protein paste and then marinated, grilled, cut into thin slices and eaten. Couscous, beans and chickpeas all have to be imported and are therefore quite expensive. Some forms of algae from the river delta are also part of the local cuisine.

• NOHAK'S CANTINA

A simple but pleasant atmosphere greets visitors to Nohak's, an establishment where robust beams support a low ceiling and the guests sit or lie on mats and cushions on the floor. The clientele usually consists of hands on leave from mines and salt trawlers mixed with members of the Red Hand Crew. The kohôl is flowing and the hookahs are rarely stuffed with tabak. Nohak runs the cantina, along with the three courtesans, Lhirra, Omon and Zelena, and the village idiot Amil, who also purports to be a courtesan.

• THE CHAPEL OF THE ICONS

A simple and stern-looking building, and as such a rather accurate architectonic rendering of the local preacher's interpretation of the will of the Icons. The Icon statues are dark and beautiful, brought here from an old temple on Algol by the preacher Aravak Poho herself. Popular targets for her righteous fury are the bathhouse's fixation on the Dancer and the village's witch doctor.

• THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

The offices of Salim Nasser are simple but well run. The examination room is clean and smells of antiseptics. The rest of the house, hidden behind curtains and draperies, is the total opposite: messy, dirty and smelly. The doctor can offer an m-dose or two if the injuries one has sustained are really bad, but otherwise works with primitive medicurgy only.

• THE LAIR OF THE WITCH DOCTOR

Behind the rusty door, a curtain made from rat bones and dried insects rattles in the toxic wind. The chamber inside is dark, dirty rugs cover the floor, and strange talismans and totems litter the walls and ceiling. This is the home of Ekbian, the Ravine's oldest inhabitant, well versed in the world of herbal remedies and mystical talismans.

• THE PALACE OF THE MINE LORD

Next to the offices of the Colonial Agency, the palace is the colony's most imposing building. A large main house sits in a walled-in yard with fountains and what would have been a beautiful garden – if this hadn't been Jina. Acid-resistant lichen and algae have conquered the sculptures long ago and are well on their way to covering the mosaic floors of the yard. The violent Barhan, leader of the Red Hand Crew, can often be found here along with a handful of underlings.



✿ LARVAL SILK FARMS

A failed attempt at silk farming. The larvae spin their silk about as quickly as the acidic mist destroys it, and the results are lumpy clusters of black, stringy goo. The larvae feed off the lichen that thrives on the floors, walls and ceilings. They evolve and live a short time as butterflies before the corrosive atmosphere destroys their wings.

✿ THE 'OASIS' CANTINA

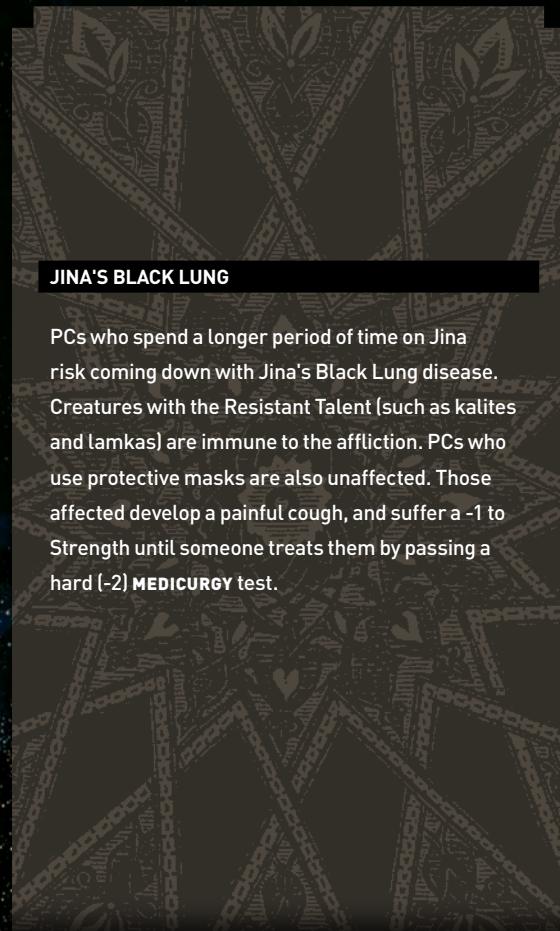
The unofficial headquarters of the popular militia. A simple building with thin columns supporting a domed ceiling. Spirits are often high here – hookahs purr and soldiers slurp loudly on spicy tea, betting their meager earnings on high-prestige games of shah.

✿ LOMAR'S WORKSHOP

A fenced-off field filled with all sorts of technological gadgets, slowly eroding in the acidified mist. The chaos continues inside the machine hall, but things in here are generally in better condition. Long rows of unfinished projects share the space with engineer Niniack's current work. The aged

JINA'S BLACK LUNG

PCs who spend a longer period of time on Jina risk coming down with Jina's Black Lung disease. Creatures with the Resistant Talent (such as kalites and lamkas) are immune to the affliction. PCs who use protective masks are also unaffected. Those affected develop a painful cough, and suffer a -1 to Strength until someone treats them by passing a hard (-2) MEDICURGY test.





THE KALITES

Deep in the ravine below the colony, and on the far edges of the Lamka plateau, there is a considerable humanite population known as kalites, characterized by their acid resistance and harsh xenophobia. The kalites live in tribal communities on mesas and in ravines on the Lamka and only leave their villages to search for lichen and larvae. Technologically, the kalites are primitive, but own some ordinary technology as well, generally thought to be plunder from reckless prospectors, but the amount of tech makes the more knowledgeable residents doubt this.

Rumors have it that the kalites have domesticated the lamka lizards and use them as sentries, and that a few lizards have escaped and sought refuge in Aram's Ravine. The origin of the lamka lizard is unknown, as Jina has no native animals for them to prey on, apart from humans.

Lomar has a hard time maintaining focus long enough to finish something, and moves around in a jungle of promising dreams and lost hopes. When Niniack really needs a hand on something, Lomar obliges, but only for a short while.

THE SALT WIDOW'S HOUSE

A simple house, empty except for the Salt Widow herself and her right hand man and bodyguard, Bhofass. The occasional hand from one of the Widow's many salt trawlers down in the delta comes through every now and then, but they never stay long. Not even fine wines and luxurious food can make up for the thick, uneasy atmosphere of the house.

BAUXITE MINES

Claims in many sizes and forms are scattered along the fault line. The Mine Lord's people run most of them, as the majority of the so-called independent miners are indebted to him. Hands in masks and worn exos mine, purify and transport the bauxite ore to the Ravine from where it is hauled offworld.

• KALITE TERRITORY

A high mesa with steep sides rises from the desert. This is the home of the kalites. Their way of life is a mystery to outsiders, and the kalites themselves are not overly keen on visitors.

• THE JAMSA DROP

A deep pit pierces the otherwise endless plateau. The sides of the hole are loose gravel and earth, making them dangerous to climb (-2 to **DEXTERITY**). How the pit came to be is unclear, but it is said that a freighter crashed there long ago.

• THE THREE SENTINELS

Three high pillars of hard, black rock rise above the gravel of the Lamka. All three are shot through with caves and tunnels, and kalites are said to live here.

• THE SAVRA DELTA

Below the Lamka, the slow moving Desera river fans out into a wide delta. The minerals carried down from the mountains end up here, and high banks of brown, black and yellow sand break up the muddy river into smaller and smaller arms. Salt trawlers travel the delta up and down in the hopes of finding a bed rich with some rare mineral, and some get stuck in the treacherous marshlands, never to be heard from again.

• SALT LAKE MOKHBA

Salt lake Mokhba is located close to the Savra delta. There are many salt barges here, working with nets, sifters and filters to gather salts from the dark, shallow lake. The salts are refined and purified in big salt ovens on the barges, and then transported on ground loaders to the spaceport in Aram's Ravine.

THE SITUATION

Aram's Ravine has been balancing on the brink of open conflict between the three aspiring rulers for a long time: colonial agent Shulan Moro, Lhorac Ignazu the Mine Lord, and Salt Widow Shana. Using their respective pawns – the militia, the Red Hand Crew and Bhofass the bodyguard – they all try to out-maneuver the other two. Their power struggle is mostly free from external meddling, but should a rare find of minerals or metals occur (such as the Tritium! event below) things could get complicated very quickly. The PCs role in all this could be as hired muscle, infiltrators or just free traders looking for a valuable haul.

CHARACTERS AND CREATURES

A few key NPCs are described below. The generic NPCs on page 343 of the Rulebook can be used for the Red Hand Crew, the militia and other residents of the Ravine.

SHULAN MORO, CORRUPT COLONIAL AGENT

The Zenithian Shulan Moro oversees the sales of claims on Jina for the Colonial Agency. He has got a finger in all large transactions in Aram's Ravine and holds court in the settlement's bathhouse. The hammam is perfect for the paranoid agent, as there are not many weapons one can conceal with only a towel around one's waist. The baths also offer the simple pleasures in life – which, strictly speaking, are the only, things motivating Moro to take any risks at all: fine wines, fragrant baths, massages and nimble courtesan boys.

APPEARANCE: Shulan is a huge man, with wide shoulders and a wide face. His nose covers an impressive portion of his flat face and his upper front teeth seem to be retreating to the sides to make room for it. His pale, grey eyes are watery and his hands surprisingly soft.



SCENARIO LOCATION

CHARACTERISTICS: Overly friendly but convincing, talks a lot about the need for "co-op-er-a-tion".

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 4

MIND POINTS: 6

REPUTATION: 5

SKILLS: Manipulation 3, Culture 2

TALENT: Judge of Character, Faction Standing

ARMOR: -

WEAPONS: -

GEAR: His three bodyguards Houda, Greshla and Pokh, personal communicator, orbital communicator, two ground loaders, transactor with 4,000 birr, 450 birr in cash.



LHORAC IGNAZU, SELF-PROCLAIMED MINE LORD

Lhorac Ignazu is said to be a Sadaalian theocrat in exile, a rumor he keeps alive by wearing an expressionless mask over his face at all times. Some people claim that his body is grotesquely deformed underneath his clothing and mask, while others say his incredible beauty angers the Icons and that he wears a mask to protect those around him from the lure of his graces. The truth, however, is more mundane: Lhorac is a middle-aged man with a receding hairline and a soft spot for the drama stirred up by his wearing his stylish protective mask indoors as well. His closest allies and the top lieutenants in the Red Hand know his secret, but keep their mouths shut as they also benefit from the myth. The Mine Lord is known to his henchmen as "Abya Farris", the Sadaalian name for the white knight in the popular board game shah.

APPEARANCE: Always wears his ceramic battle armor, flowing, white clothes and an expressionless mask over the face. His voice is dark and raspy.

CHARACTERISTICS: Moderate, articulate and mild-mannered – even when he makes threats.

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 8

MIND POINTS: 6

REPUTATION: 6

SKILLS: Manipulation 4, Dexterity 3, Ranged Combat 3

TALENT: Malicious, Combat Veteran

ARMOR: Heavy (6)

WEAPONS: Thermal pistol

GEAR: Sensor visor (in the helmet of his armor), 169 birr in cash.

SHANA, THE SALT WIDOW

Shana used to be seen as the grumpy shadow of her outgoing and social partner Harbil. When Harbil died in a suspicious accident, it was revealed that it was Shana who had been running the salt business all along. Shana holds Lhorac the Mine Lord responsible for the death of her partner – an opinion shared by most people who dare to



say anything about the matter. After her partner's death, Shana kept running the salt business and has done remarkably well for herself. Her overly correct butler and bodyguard, Bhofass, conducts all of her business in Aram's Ravine, as the Widow herself prefers the silence of her house or the salt trawlers in the Savra. Shana openly supports the popular militia and its elected leader Desree.

APPEARANCE: Thin, grey hair and dark, piercing eyes. Scarred cheeks. Usually dressed in a grey djellaba with discreet embroidery to hide her armor when she leaves her home.

CHARACTERISTICS: Silent and stern, but always interested in new faces.

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 4

MIND POINTS: 7

REPUTATION: 7

SKILLS: Manipulation 4, Ranged Combat 2, Observation 2, Survival 2

TALENT: Judge of Character

ARMOR: -

WEAPONS: -

GEAR: Personal communicator with pulse function (set to reach Bhofass), filter mask, tag with 2,000 birr, 110 birr in cash.

BHOFASS, THE WIDOW'S RIGHT HAND MAN

When the tall Bhofass speaks, the people of the Ravine hear the Widow's voice. Overly correct and meticulously dressed with a perfect beard, Bhofass is considered the Widow's extended arm in the Ravine. Several witnesses can testify to Bhofass's skills in violent situations, something that has spawned a lot of speculation as to what the mysterious man did before showing up in the Ravine. Bhofass's feelings for his employer are strong and passionate, and he would do anything to prove that he is worthy of filling the vacant spot as Shana's life partner.

APPEARANCE: Pale face with a black, perfectly trimmed beard. Dresses in a strict, simple caftan with gold embroidery and open sides (to allow for the use of martial arts).

CHARACTERISTICS: Stays in the background, patient, controlled.

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 10

MIND POINTS: 6

REPUTATION: 4

SKILLS: Melee Combat 5, Ranged Combat 4, Infiltration 4, Observation 4, Technology 4, Dexterity 3

TALENT: Nine Lives, Combat Veteran, Tough

ARMOR: Protective clothing (3)

WEAPONS: Accelerator pistol, mercurium sword, combat bow

GEAR: Personal communicator with pulse function (set to reach the Salt Widow), filter mask, wrist-mounted personal sensor, tag with 1,200 birr, 93 birr in cash.

◆ **LEGIONNAIRE WRESTLING:** A martial art taught to Legionnaires.

Gives a +1 to **MELEE COMBAT** and a +1 to unarmed weapon damage but a -1 when parrying.

TYPICAL KALITE

Men and women sent on missions across the Lamka, usually to gather larvae or lichen when the supplies in their villages are running low. Will avoid contact with people from the Ravine, unless the odds are clearly in their favor (such as five against one) – in such cases, the kalites could take the chance to acquire new slaves and gear for the village.

APPEARANCE: Kalites normally wear long caftans, their weapons and ornaments made of local gemstones and teeth from lamka lizards.

CHARACTERISTICS: Careful and apprehensive, or triumphantly aggressive.

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 6

MIND POINTS: 6

REPUTATION: 3

SKILLS: Dexterity 3, Observation 3, Survival 3, Melee Combat 2, Ranged Combat 2

TALENT: Resistant

ARMOR: Light primitive (2)

WEAPONS: Bow and arrows or accelerator rifle, mace or sabre (sword).

GEAR: Domesticated lamka lizard.

TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFACTS

Aram's Ravine is not a wealthy place. The Ravine is technologically primitive, with some limited aspects of ordinary tech. Lomar's workshop sells ordinary spare parts and gear, but otherwise, only the three local rulers have access to weapons or other special gear. Only agent Moro will trade gear to outsiders.

EVENTS

Aram's Ravine offers many opportunities to a GM who wishes to make the settlement the center in a longer campaign. As soon as the PCs arrive, they will get pulled into the dangerous plotting and scheming between the Salt Widow, the Mine Lord and the Colonial Agency.

✿ A KILLER ON THE LOOSE!

Shortly after the PCs' arrival, people start going missing from the colony, and are perhaps found dead and badly maimed some days later. Suspicions run wild – is it a lamka lizard with an appetite for human flesh or a crazy ex-miner seeking revenge for her own misfortunes on the people of the Ravine? Could it be one of the local rulers who has acquired a pet lamka and is using it to get rid of troublemakers? The PCs are contracted as independent investigators because the Salt Widow, the Mine Lord and agent Moro cannot agree on any suitable locals for the job.

Regardless of how it starts, the affair will turn into a complicated investigation for the PCs in which the hunt for the killer is interrupted by secret meetings with the local rulers who try to get the PCs to blame their opponents for the killings – at the threat of pinning the murders on the PCs themselves!

✿ TRITIUM!

Torilan the prospector was right: there is tritium on Jina – it is even close to the Ravine. Tritium is a vital part in fusion reactors and as such, a very valuable commodity in the Third Horizon. Unfortunately, the tritium vein runs into kalite territory, and exploiting it requires mining underneath their sacred mesa.

As soon as Torilan can produce a good enough drill sample (with or without the help of the PCs), the bigger fish in the Horizon will awaken and fix their gaze on Aram's Ravine. The local rulers will try to keep it quiet as best they can, but the news of a major tritium find will sooner or later make it off world. The corrupt agent Moro is responsible for the sale and registration of claims on Jina, a business that will turn bloody even before the Agency, the other Consortium companies, the Legion and the Free League show up at the scene. If the PCs lack factionary contacts, the most exciting time for them will likely be between the discovery of the vein and the moment the first ship from the Colonial Agency touches down at the spaceport. If the PCs do have factionary contacts, however (such as the talent *Faction Standing*), their situation could become even more interesting as the major players arrive. A representative from one of the interested factions could contact the PCs and ask to hire them to defend the faction's interests in the Ravine or on the far edge of the Lamka.

ARAM'S RAVINE



