

Iridia

role-playing games and miniatures, old and new
by Christian Walker

On Point

I've been crazy busy at work. On top of that, I've been surfing every day afterwards. As a result, I'm very behind in my writing duties. I hope to get caught up in the near future, though. I need to do so because I'm getting married next month. If I don't get caught up now, it definitely won't happen in October. ;)

Until next time, Christian

This, That and the Other Thing: "Wagons, ho!"

random tables for your game

In most campaigns, the player characters don't get overly concerned with trade and commerce. Wagons and their contents, however, eventually play a role in every campaign. For those times when characters either escort, raid, or encounter wagons, the random table below can help to determine the contents. In a modern or sci-fi game, the cargos below can be found within a semi's trailer or a space craft's hold.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) Lumber: Various lengths of timber, ranging from long, heavy beams to thinner, shorter planks. The amount of wood present is sufficient to build a one room shack. Blueprints for the shack can be found with the wood, but no tools.</p> | <p>6) Fish: Minimal steps were taken to preserve the fish within this wagon. As a result, the stench is terrible. Most of the cargo has spoiled and the drover is considering dumping the load by the side of the road. There is a chance that the smell may attract predators.</p> |
| <p>2) Poultry: Cages stuffed full of chickens are stacked precariously, leaning dangerously to one side. The hens within cluck contentedly as feathers drift through the air. The stench of rotting eggs and chicken poop is eye-watering.</p> | <p>7) Prisoners: Sullen, dangerous men sit along each side of the wagon. They are chained together at the wrists and ankles. The convicts have a nasty look about them and are eager to escape. They will use any chaotic event as an opportunity to do so.</p> |
| <p>3) Ale: The wagon groans under the weight of many kegs of ale. A colorful label depicts a jolly halfling lifting a large mug, as if giving a toast. The stamps on the kegs read "Basilisk Ales."</p> | <p>8) Hay: Bales of hay are stacked high and lean slightly to one side. The hay has been leaving a trail behind the wagon, a trail that bandits or beasties might follow.</p> |
| <p>4) Fertilizer: This wagon will be smelled long before it is seen. The foul odor will either attract or deter attackers - GM's call. The fertilizer is extremely rich and will fetch a decent price at market. The drover is proud of his smelly cargo, going so far as to refer to it as "brown gold."</p> | <p>9) Empty? In this instance, the wagon itself is the commodity. Newly built and in fine condition, the wagon is being delivered to the person who commissioned its construction.</p> |
| <p>5) Rocks: The wagon is especially large and well-constructed. The drovers have a hard time keeping the team of oxen moving forward as the wagon groans under the weight of cut limestone.</p> | <p>10) Farm Fresh: Bushel baskets of corn, potatoes, carrots and other fresh produce fill the wagon to capacity.</p> |

Planetary Survey: Micah

classic traveller

Micah is a barren, rocky world with a thin belt of grassland at the equator. Its polar regions are permanently locked in ice. There are no large bodies of water, except for a small, icy sea in the southern hemisphere. The gravity is .9g and the cool star it orbits (micah 414) results in a low average temperature and long, dark winters. Precipitation is rare (2" per year) and most vegetation is scrub brush, stunted grass or tenacious lichen that clings to the rocks. The air levels are rather thin, so any prolonged physical exertion will result in fatigue, shortness of breath and headaches. The world is independent, mostly due to its remote location and meager resources that no one covets.

Native animal life consists of insects that lurk in rocky crevices and a limited variety of small rodents. One rodent in particular, the aurumvorax, is prized for its dense, golden coat. The small sea may support life, but a thorough exploration of it has yet to be undertaken. Avian life is nonexistent. Several years ago a small grazing animal was introduced on Micah. This stubby herbivore, called the Rothe, feeds on grass and lichen and provides the Micahns with fresh meat.

The world is noteworthy because of the Micah Institute of Advanced Analytical Sciences, located in Meridian (pop. 250,000). The Institute is famous for its mathematicians and physicists who, in the absence of outside distractions, have turned their minds inward. The Institute educates promising post-graduate students and also supports itself by solving complex problems submitted to the university by off-world engineers, governments and corporations.

Besides Meridian, there are very few inhabited areas. As a general rule, the citizens of Micah are a subdued lot, more cerebral than vocal. Most Micahns are affiliated with the Institute in some way and rely upon it for a living. A handful of inhabitants are involved in the trade of aurumvorax hides and the management of the Rothe herds.

The board of trustees that governs the Institute also acts as the planetary government. Appointment to the board is possible only through selection by the chairman and ratification by the other trustees. Most all of the board members are high ranking Institute professors and administrators. Occasionally, an ordinary citizen of Micah might grumble about the lack of popular representation. Most people, however, accept the fact that Micah would be sparsely populated without the Institute, so they defer to the board's judgment.

A small highport can be found above the planet. It is built upon the surface of an asteroid that was pulled into geostationary orbit above Meridian. It serves as a modest, yet sufficient, relay point for the X Boat network. Its downport counterpart is a few km. outside Meridian. Both the highport and downport are under the jurisdiction of the Imperium.

Micah offers a few adventure seeds that might intrigue an intrepid free agent.

1) A disgruntled graduate student from the Institute is murderous in his anger at having had his thesis rejected. The student comes from a wealthy family and is using a portion of his trust fund to finance the assassination of his advising professor. The players can act as either the assassins or as the professor's bodyguards.

2) An off-world crime syndicate is hoping to exploit Micah's citizens. The criminals plan to import the usual vices - prostitution, gambling, drugs, etc. The authorities on Micah are not equipped to deal with organized crime, so they turn to freelance professionals to solve the problem for them. Because the Micahns are quite peaceful, they will not tolerate a bloody rampage. Tact and discretion must be used.



Micah; Starport Type: C, Size 6, Atmosphere 5, Hydrographics 1, Population 4, Law Level 6, Government 5, Tech Level 10.



Iridia copyright Christian Walker, 2006. All Rights Reserved. ISSN 1930-0891. Classic Traveller copyright Far Future Enterprises. To obtain a free copy of Iridia, send a SASE to Christian Walker 9903 Santa Monica Blvd. #245 Beverly Hills, CA 90212. Please visit Iridia online at www.IridiaZine.net.