Farmer’s Maze
Director’s cut

A role-playing scenario placed in the science fiction environment **”Amalgamated”**

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Welcome to Farmer's Maze

If you are reading these lines, you are either preparing to be the director of this scenario or at least contemplating the idea. If you are going to play the scenario, I suggest you restrict your reading to the player characters and the material handed out by the director during the game.

All relevant texts for the scenario are condensed in this text for the director, so you can get through it in one read. All other papers you will receive are for handing out to the players.

At the beginning of play the players will receive their respective characters—the investigators. That is all they need, initially. When the investigators split up after the first scene each player also receives a booklet with the witnesses and suspects that he or she is going to play. These texts should not be read until the relevant scenes are going to be played.

Your role as the director is quite discreet. In the prologue and the first scene you have the traditional obligations of a table top game master, but after that, you hand out the booklets and the players take over—there is no supporting cast left for you. All you have to do is introduce the scenes and control the pace of the scenario by cutting, fast forwarding or asking for deliberations.

It is not your job as the director to lead the story to any specific conclusion. You should just help the players investigate and improvise on the story. If the players want to solve the murder mystery, there is no doubt they will—after all, they are playing all witnesses, suspects and the killer themselves. If they want the crime or crimes to go unpunished, there is no reason to prevent it.

If you feel that it will improve the dynamics of the scenario, you can set up situations where the witnesses divulge information in other ways than questions and answers: overhearing conversations, misplaced messages or anything that seems relevant.

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Abaranian and Arisian Culture

There are two inhabited planets in the Abaris system: Aris, the third planet, and Abar, the fourth planet. This tale takes place on Abar, when the war between the two planets was just beginning.

Abar

On Abar, children are tested at the age of one to map out their innate personality, talents and intelligence. After this they are placed with the family unit, where they will be best able to reach ther full potential. Based on this test and further tests throughout childhood, their educations and careers are also decided by ingenious programs in the gigantic computers, buried deep underground.

Abaranian families are bound together by the love that arises out of their harmony and common interests, while the biological origin is nothing more than that, a coincidence, a random combination of the genes of two different people. The family shares everything with each other, and everything is owned in common. Sisters and brothers are usually lovers and regarded as spouses, since they are obviously not biologically related, and thereby one of the most common human taboos is lifted.

Marriages as such do not exist, but the adult part of any family the equivalent could be seen as such and thus consist not of one woman and one man, but can consist of any combination of people of both sexes. Physical fidelity and sex is not seen as that important, but does take place mostly within the family. Abaranians define sexual relationships on two different axes, the first being monogamous vs. polygamous, the other being introgamous (sex inside the family) vs. extragamous (outside the family), and all variations can be found. The most loving name you can call your beloved is brother or sister, and even extragamous lovers use this endearment. The only taboo is sex between generations, known as out-of-generation, and a generation is generally agreed to be defined as an age difference of 15 years.

Women normally bear children in their twenties, on average three or four, and are then sterilized, but again this can vary widely. Children are conceived as it may happen as the result of sex, since the culture is yet young, and the planet has room for many more people. The children are not given names and are known as "guests" untill their first birthday when they are tested and placed with their real family, who gives them their name. The attitude displayed towards a guest brings to mind the love given to a special pet.

All of society is consequently organized so that everybody is placed in exactly the niche they are best suited for. There are several families whose members are the directors, lawmakers and administrators of the state apparatus, but the Abaranians see themselves as a democracy. The computer chooses only those persons for these families, that are capable of governing, enjoys it, and that the population would have chosen, did they have the full knowledge that the computers have. Other families are involved in research, farming, the arts, industry etc.

Companies and businesses and are often owned and controlled by one or more families. The economy is a mix between capitalism and a planned economy. Each family or business delivers their services or products without payment. Their performance is monitored, as all data are fed into the computers, and the family receives an allocation of luxury points, based on how well they have done (measured by many variables, among them generation of happiness). All normal amenities are freely available to everybody, while luxury goods and services (as defined by the government and the computers) cost luxury points. The computers are not otherwise involved in the running of society, only in family placement, education, career choice and market monitoring. Everyone is happy, because they are in the right place - with the right people. Or are they?

Aris

On Aris, people are also placed in niches, but based on quite different criteria. Arisians believe that everything is determined by blood. You are born into your family and caste, and you belong to it forever, since no one can obviously change who they are. Everyone knows quite clearly what is expected of them and are trained from an early age in their role. The eldest son or daughter inherits the family property, while the younger child is either dependent on their family's goodwill, or have to fend their own way in the world.

How did the societies on Abar and Aris arise?

The many similar and yet remarkably different customs on Abar and Aris are not incidental. Abar was colonized by disaffected individuals from Aris, who felt that their talents and abilities were wasted in Aris' rigid caste system. Raised as they were in a caste system, their thoughts ran on within this framework, and they developed a different caste system - based on talent and skill, rather than inheritance. The early Abaranians built the gigantic computers and fed them with data from Aris. Tests administered to children at different times were compared with how they had performed in their given career together with data from other planets, where choice is free. For the first several generations, the system was far from flawless, but gradually, as more and more data were gathered, the process was refined.

The abaranian community has now existed for over 600 years, and eventually it has become clear that their system works somewhat better than the Arisian. Abar was outcompeting Aris before the war, and some historians believe that this is the real reason for the war between Abar and Aris.

The strife over Allera's inheritance

Albak Skeop, an Abaranian merchant from a prestigious family, met and married a very rich arisian, Lera Skasenak, first-born daughter of a family of mine owners from the industrial caste. When they had a daughter, the father expected them to have their child given the standard Abaranian one-year test. The infant girl had after Arisian custom already been named Allera. The test showed to the father's great joy that Allera belonged in one of the best research families, Kareol. Albak and Lera took the child to its "family" for a longer visit. Albaks unvoiced intention was to surrender the child to the Kareols, but under the influence of his wife's Arisian morals, he became reluctant to be parted from his little guest. When it became clear to the mother, what was happening, she insisted furiously that they immediately go home to Aris - with their daughter.

The Kareol family demanded that she be returned to them, and while these demands were still being tried in the judicial system, the controversial couple died in an accident, exploring for and finding axondit in the belt of Eklas, midway between Abar and Aris. The orphan Allera was now the owner of large properties, including this asteroid belt filled with axondit, a rare mineral, which according to Abaranian researchers from the Kareol family could solve all energy problems.

Now began an inheritance dispute, the equal of which has rarely been seen. The Kareol family felt that they had been deprived of a daughter whose abilities would now never reach their full potential, as she would grow up with people who were merely her biological relatives, never knowing the joy and harmony of a true family. Of course they were also interested in the amazing wealth that was her property. Allera's guardians, her aunts and uncles, refused flatly to give her to people they regarded as complete strangers with no claim to the child.

When the importance of the mineral became known to the public, the two planetary governments became involved. Abaranian lawyers ruled that the asteroids belonged to the Kareol family - according to the very own law of the Arisians - while Arisian lawyers ruled that the Kareol family had no legal claim.

The decisive differences between the two planets' way of life, which until now has been tolerated largely by ignoring each other, are now very visible. The contempt they feel for each other's social structure and moral standards, the disagreement on something as basic as what constitutes a family, has added fuel to the fire, and there seems to be a real all-out war brewing. The skirmishes between Abaranian and Arisian forces have been growing ever more frequent and the seize fires ever shorter. Talks about enforcing a seize fire has bogged down. Both societies are gearing up their military forces, including the military intelligence.

The genetic inheritance of the Abarisians

The people of both Abar and Aris closely resemble the human genetic normal standard.

Gender roles

Both on Abar and Aris the sexes are completely equal, and gender is considered to be a relatively unimportant factor in the assessment of a human.

Dress

Both on Abar and Aris, a constant part of the clothing is a braided ribbon with your family's colors. Traditionally, they are worn on Aris as a braided sash around the waist. This is a symbol of how the family is the living expression of their genetic heritage, which they themselves are carrying around and can pass on (in the genitals). On Abar, on the contrary, they tie a braided ribbon around their heads to symbolize that the true community springs from the mind. The clothing have besides these braided colored ribbons no special features.

Names and behavior

The family name is the more important one, and outside their family you will often simply be called by your surname. Abarisian names often contain k, l, a and e, as seen by the names Allera, Albak, Lera, Skasenak and Kareol. In both languages final e is usually transformed into an I and final o intu a u.

Arisians are very conservative and polite in their behavior, while Abaranians are somewhat more relaxed and individualistic.

The player characters:

The characters have their own little conflicts and complications. These relations are not as such important for the playing of the scenario, but they offer the players a range of opportunities for interaction, when things slow down or even for choosing to let their personal life overshadow their unwelcome duty on the Southern Continent.

Apart from the prologue, you should not force the relations between the characters, but let the players themselves choose how much to use them.

Each character is introduced with a short paragraph about the family of the character. For brevity this is only included once, if two characters are related.

The Anoksa family

General area of expertise: military and personal leadership, mastering strategies of war and battle

Sexuality and relationships: Occasionally extragamous, polygamous

The Anoksa family is a large multi –generational family. They have supplied the Abaranian army with many of its generals for more than a hundred years, and the family life is strongly influenced by military norms and ideals. Discipline and proper behavior is strongly encouraged, the main pastime is strategy games and physical competitions, and most family members are highly competent, enterprising, intense and serious.

To say that they are well fitted to serve as army officers is almost an understatement: they are born officers. In the field, they show initiative and courage, have a high self confidence and carry themselves with natural authority.

Pre-lieutenant Steli Anoksa, 20 years

Polygamous and extragamous, heterosexual

You carry yourself with complete confidence and exude natural leadership. You like to improvise and make decisions on the spot. Your special ability: When you give orders, people obey you

Your special ability works when you say: "This is an order: xxx!". People want to obey you, and are very likely to do as you say. Of course this is not 100 % effective.

Steli is eager and tense to go on her very first mission as an officer. In school, when she was a teenager, of course she was also a leader, someone that her friends and class mates looked to for direction. But it's not the same as a real military command. Being chosen to be a member of the Anoksa family, she has known from childhood that she would make a good officer, and now is the time to show it.

Her primfather has warned her that her abilities do not mean she will never make mistakes – everybody makes mistakes – and that there are details and elements of leadership that can only be learned in the field. But Steli feels certain that this job will go without a hitch. It's not even a real mission, just a civilian problem that is best solved using military intelligence. She knows little specifically of crime investigation, but that is of no relevance. Her job is to utilize the capabilities of her team, decide on the optimal strategy and get the job done.

She wonders what the crime in question is? She has received hardly any information, not even the names of of her group members. Well, she will know soon enough. She just hopes she won't encounter that senior agent Kali Leban, either here or in the future. It was just mortifying to discover the he was out-of-generation to her. He had apparently discovered it very soon after their first meeting on the train going to the base at Reaktat, while she never knew till he told her. So she had plenty of time to thoroughly embarrass herself by sending him flowers!

She should have researched his background before doing something so foolish. The best basis of an optimum strategy is to know as many facts as possible. She has been reprimanded by her mothers and fathers on being too impulsive some times. Well, she has learnt that lesson, and luckily without much of a consequence. No one knows anything, except her, Kali Leban and the flower service.

She has never been off planet before, and it feels as such a shame that she'll have to go back so soon. Some military families send their children off for education on other planets, but the Anoksas pride themselves on being Abaranian through and through. Since Abaranians are chosen for their latent abilities and these abilities are given the fullest opportunity to flower, Abaranians must be the best in everything they do. The average officer from Abar is as good as the best on any other planet, and the same goes for all other professions. The self confidence of an Anoksa is no false pride, it is more in the nature of a realistic assessment. Her leadership skills may not flower in this exact assignment, but flower they will.

Her mission on Abar is on her mind all the time: The best strategy for establishing a cell, the best ways of connecting the various cells of infiltrators and spies, safe ways of passing on information. It is a nuisance to turn from her preparations to this civilian assignment, but since it must be done, it is worth doing, and she will give it her best.

The Barbales family

General area of expertise: Forensic science, registration and processing of leads

Sexuality and relationships: Strongly introgamous, mostly monogamous

The Barbales family was established fairly recently, as part of the preparation for the coming war. The family is consequently not very big and is very close-knit, since they have been moved around a lot for education and special jobs. Having no crime on Abar, Ona and Akkel have had to go off-world, to Sacki, for their advanced training.

The family has eight members: two elders (the first members of the family), four adults (forming two couples of which Ona and Akkel are the one) and two children. The elder adult couple each has one primchild, while neither Akkel, only just in his thirties, and Ona at 26 has received any primchildren yet.

Junior Technical Agent Ona Barbales, 26 years

Primsister and partner of Junior Technical Agent Akkel Barbales, completely monogamous and intragamous, heterosexual

Headstrong and singleminded, somewhat conservative, possessive of primbrother, has six months old guest, special ability: to talk to rooms

Your special ability works when you cock your head to the side and say:"So, barn/cabin/living room - what can you tell me?" You then have an actual conversation with the room who is played by the game leader. You coax the information out of the room, asking questions like:"So, what was the person who lived here like? Don't be shy, you can tell me."

Ona has a very special ability, one that may turn out to be very useful in military intelligence. In peace time, there really is not very much use for it on Abar, since there is hardly any crime, but she has found some use for it in investigating traffic and workplace accidents. Ona can "talk" to a room, interpret the physical signs in a way that gives her much more information, than one would think possible. She can deduce, very reliably, from the smallest details what happened in a room, what the owner of a room is like and much more.

She learned the theoretical basis for this and honed her skills on the planet, Sacki, a horrible place rife with crime. She and her brother, Akkel, went there for several years to study at one of the universities. On Sacki, capitalism rules, everything is for sale, and nothing is free. People actually die of hunger or sickness, it was awful to experience! She was so happy to return to Abar, and afterwards she has been very much aware that people just don't appreciate their unique and happy society enough.

But she doesn't think it would really be beneficial for everybody to go offworld. The experience also had a profound effect on Akkel, but possibly not to the better. Like how he fell in love with and had a sexual encounter with a fellow military intelligence specialist, Alli. Of course she doesn't feel like she owns Akkel, like one of those possessive Sackians, but she thought Akkel was like her and the rest of the family, strictly introgamous. That is part of what makes them fit together so well and so tightly. Akkel also sometimes sleeps with their older brother, but mostly the four of them make up two steady couples, and since their older brother and sister are too old for her, she really has no other available partner than Akkel. It never worried her before, but now she knows what it means to be jealous.

Akkel met Alli during an undercover operation on Sacki, trying to penetrate the security of the Arisian embassy. She was not very closely involved in the job, so she only met Alli once, but she immediately knew. Not from their faces or body language, but from Alli's apartment. It had Akkel written all over it. It strained their partnership for a bit, but she really worked at it, she knew what she wanted, and as time went on, they put it behind them. Akkel really appreciates her for who she is, headstrong and intensely loyal.

And now there are so many things happening. She has her first guest, which takes up quite a bit of time. These small creatures need a lot of care and attention till they can be given over to their real family. Akkel helps her of course, it would be so unfair if only women had to attend to the guests, just because of biology as it is in some cultures! But since she is still breastfeeding, the baby must stay with her most of the time, and so she carries it in a sling. And then there's the war. Everybody is excited to be sent to their posts, the war effort must really be stepping up now...

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unior Technical Agent Akkel Barbales, 31 years

Primbrother and partner of Junior Technical Agent Ona Barbales, mostly monogamous and introgamous, bisexual

Friendly and outgoing, somewhat cosmopolitan after his stay on Sacki, loves primsister,but feels a little bit trapped, and so dreams of Alli. Special ability: complete recall and photographic memory

Your special ability works when you put your hand to your forehead and say:"Let me just remember…" You can then either have the game leader repeat specific information or have the players replay a scene, as well as they are able to remember it (the replayed version is then the definitive version).

Akkel thinks that it may have changed him more than the computer anticipated to go offworld to Sacki for his training. Supposedly, the programs in the computer should be able to predict his happiness under varying conditions and ensure that his experiences do not change him too much, so as not to fit with the family and situation, he has been placed in. It isn't that he feels that his placement is wrong, it is just not quite as RIGHT as it was before. The stay on Sacki has changed him indefinably… slightly.

In some ways, he enjoyed the stay on Sacki, even if it is a terrible place. Everything is about money on Sacki, this strange concept, that imaginary value counters can get you everything. And that you could get nothing without them. The Abaranian state of course supplied them with enough money that they had no problems, but to see the accumulation of luxury to single individuals, while others had nothing, was obscene, but fascinating. There certainly were more things to spend your money on than you can get for your luxury points on Abar!

And of course he met Alli there. He's never had any dalliances outside the family before, never felt any urge to do so. He always had enough in Ona and the occasional hookup with his elder brother. Everyone in their family is introgamous, and it was just the way he was, he didn't think about it, not till Alli swept him off his feet. It was very sweet and intense and short, their love, conducted while they worked together on an intelligence job on Sacki, trying to infiltrate the Arisian embassy there. Akkel was the local contact, and so he spent a lot of time showing Alli around. It ended, of course, when the job was over, and Alli went home to Abar.

He still loves Ona dearly, but he feels torn, as if it is not quite enough. Maybe his heart has room for other people than his brother and sister? Ona was terribly hurt by the whole thing, though. She does not love outside the family, and so there is no one else for her than him. It took them some time to get back to normal, and he's not sure that things are the same as before. Does he even have a choice? He is supposed to fit perfectly into his family, not feel trapped. So he dreams of Alli, feeling a bit guilty, but reliving their love over and over in memory,

His photographic memory was one of the reasons they went to Sacki, that and Ona's ability to interpret physical clues. He has been trained by experts here on Abar and on Sacki, to be unusually observant and remember every detail of what he sees and hears. He has both a strong visual, auditive and spatial memory, and he has used his abilities to take a general and very broad education. His abilities will be invaluable in the time to come, the army estimates. They will probably put him to use as a spy, just casually strolling past sensitive facilities and then being able to reproduce everything.

Dividing the supporting cast

Since it will be decided in the first full scene, which characters will participate in which scenes the supporting cast cannot be handed to the players until then. One character, Steli, however, has a set participation, so her name is on the coresponding booklet. The other booklets will be marked with the names of the scene, the character is initially going to.

Supporting cast—Steli: Fela, Eklan

Supporting cast—character going to the combine harvester (A): Jakeb, Renka, Torek

Supporting cast—character going to the combine harvester (B): Rabel, Klea, Maklar

Supporting cast—character going to the yeast vats (C): Partos, Anares, Lekala

Supporting cast—character going to the yeast vats (D): Pelek, Mala, Kentes

The Leban family

General area of expertise: Recruitment and turning , incrimination of enemy personnel through seduction, interrogation

Sexuality and relationships: Strongly extragamous and polygamous

The Leban family is a medium-sized family, 17 members. It has been in existence for several hundred years and lives in Aksellat, the Abaranian central city. The structure of the Leban family is quite unusual, even for Abar that really has no "standard family". The family members are separated in age by 5-7 years, and each family member has just one child. Consequently, there are no generations, but instead a string of sisters and brothers, and a few young children.

They have a huge sprawling home and get on very well with each other – and their many guests. All family members are gregarious, easy-going and extremely charming, and the house is like an ongoing party. In peace time, family members have mostly worked in the entertainment industry.

Kali and Alli are brothers, separated in age by 11 years. Even though the age difference does not prohibit a sexual relationship, they have never been close in that way, since Kali is strictly heterosexual. Kali has a primchild, Arakke at five years old, now at home with the rest of the family, while Alli is still too young for receiving his first primchild.

Junior Contact Agent Alli Leban, 28 years

Brother of Contact Agent Kali Leban, polygamous and extragamous, omnisexual

Easygoing and flirtatious, a bit egocentric and naïve, you ares only serious about one thing: the Abaranian way of life. Special ability: charming people into giving you what you want

Your special ability works when you take the hand of one of your co-players and look them in the eyes. They then have to act out that they have to some degree fallen for you and will try to please you.

Alli is used to the world giving him what he wants. He has never wanted for luxury items or lusted for a person that he couldn't seduce. Growing up was a great adventure, with his loud and flamboyant primfather, all the other fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers, all of different ages, all bringing home bright and interesting people.

And the adventure hasn't stopped: Alli isn't becoming a famous actor, edutainment host or interviewer like the older fathers and mothers. He'll get to be a patriotic hero instead, a real-life spy in the war against the barbarian hereditarians on Aris. The Abaranian way of life is one of the few things, he takes seriously in this world that is otherwise just fun and games to him. The way he lives his life, the family he grew up in, it is hard to imagine it existing in another time or place.

In literature and vids from old days or other worlds, their kind of person, charming, egocentric and outgoing usually was not very capable at establishing and maintaining a family. But their family is so balanced that it is much more fun than work, and they fit so well together that it is worth the occasional bother. Alli does not have his own primchild yet, but he knows that he'll still be able to go off for work or fun when he does have one, since there will always be several of the fathers and mothers around to fill the gap, just like his brother Kali is also going off for war right now, leaving his primdaughter Arakke behind.

Alli has already been on some jobs for the Abaranian secret service. Once he was on Sacki, the decadent and crazy planet where "money" rules. Money are a bit like luxury points, but not really, since they are also used to acquire the necessities of life. Some people on Sacki die of hunger, absolutely ludicrous in a society at their technological level! He'll admit that what he thought of as living in the lap of luxury, the way his family lives, doesn't take a shine to the real thing, but it's not worth it. Abar really has found the right way to live.

Sacki did have its advantages though, among them a very nice young Abaranian man, his local contact and guide. Akkel was studying mnemotechnics and getting a very broad education at one of the Sackian universities with his sister, but he had been found to be more than well-suited for intelligence work by the computer programs and so was heading for a career in the growing intelligence service and was already working for them when needed. Akkel was a darling and made the stay on Sacki and the horrible old woman Alli had to seduce there much more bearable.

He hasn't thought much about Akkel since, it's not his way. Maybe they'll meet again, in the course of their work, and then he would not mind making love to Akkel again. He was so inexperienced, not used to other lovers than his sister, typical of the intragamous, but quick to learn and very sweet. In his war effort, he will be expected to seduce and compromise all kinds of people, so he tries to make the most of his opportunities while he still can.

Contact Agent Kali Leban, 39 years

Brother of Junior Contact Agent Alli Leban, polygamous and extragamous, heterosexual

Charming and suave, you radiate sincere interest and understanding. Special ability: You make people trust you and tell you more than they meant to, maybe even their secrets, or help you.

Your special ability works when you consciously mirror your co-player's body language and say:"You know, can trust me." Your co-player must then be affected by your sincere interest and tell you more than they meant to or act in your interest. This does not mean that they have to tell you everything or do everything you ask, though.

Kali is feeling completely disgusted with this assignment. He and Alli was already offplanet, having said goodbye to Arakke and the rest of the family at a big party. And now they have been called back down to the surface of Aris, the clouds alone know what for, and he's not even in charge! He wasn't able to find out who is, but the rumours say that they're going to be lead by a pre-lieutenant, even though he's the only senior agent in the group. He cannot fathom what he's doing wrong, but he really should have passed beyond the rank of agent by now. It's beginning to burn in his heart. People of his own age or younger, with shorter service time, have passed him by and are now senior agents.

It all started really well. He joined the intelligence service in his early twenties and when he was on only his second mission, he earned a medal and a commendation for uncovering and stopping an Arisian plot to introduce a virus in the underground supercomputers. His primmother suggested that he may be too god a field operative to ever be promoted into a desk job. Or maybe it's that he's not good enough in making snap decisions? Some of his aptitude tests are a bit lacking in that direction, it is not his strongest force, but still he's better than the average person.

Of course, the average officer is somebody like Steli Anoksa. From a military leader family where the favorite family pastime is playing strategic board games or staging a mock war in the garden! He thanks the stars that he was born on Abar and so didn't have to spend his childhood in a family like that. His genetic source was actually an Anoksa, so on any other planet he would have had to. What misery that would have been!

Of course he couldn't remember anything from his own handover ceremony, he was only a year old then, but he has heard the story many times: the stiff Anoksas, all in their galla uniforms, and his family in colorful garb of the latest fashion. The Anoksas were terribly serious and intense and clearly did not enjoy the humorous mood scene performed by the antigravity dancers hired for the occasion. And even though the Anoksas had tried to imagine what someone from the Leban family would like, they gave him a vid by a very famous 3D artist – depicting a space battle! It hangs on his wall, though, the depiction IS exquisite.

Of course he was intrigued, when he met an actual Anoksa last year. Especially as she was really beautiful and interesting, and he only found the intensity arousing. It was SO lucky, that nothing really happened on that train. They had seats next to each other, when they were both reporting to the military base at Reaktat. Talking lead to flirting, that lead to sitting a little too close, and then thankfully they arrived. They exchanged access codes, but very soon he learnt about the new rank of pre-lieutenant and realized what the slightly different striping on Steli Anoksa's uniform had meant. He inquired, and she was not a lieutenant, as he had thought, but a pre-lieutenant straight out of the military academy, only 20 years old. Normally, she would have been placed as a cadet first, assisting a lieutenant, but as the war was heating up, they needed more officers, hence the idea of pre-lieutenants. She had to be more than 15 years younger than him – not a nice thought.

He has never been interested in the out-of-generation, and his rationalization of his mistake was that her air of authority lent her more years than she really had. Steli Anoksa didn't realize the problem and actually sent him flowers, at the same time he sent her a polite message informing her of it. Well, his rank of agent added to his youthful looks was misleading, and she was somewhat excused in assuming that he was younger than his 39 years. She had been so embarrassed, and he had been embarrassed to admit that he was only an agent at his age. But it's people like her that will be commanding people like him, no doubt about it, and she should probably have been more careful. Assumption is the friend of the enemy, goes the saying in the military. He would never make a mistake like that. He should have been promoted to senior agent years ago!

In the beginning of each scene, there is an introduction for you as director, giving you an idea of our intention with the scene. After that there is a short text that you can use to introduce the scene to the players.

Scenes

The investigators have to split up into three groups after the first scene. Steli will have to go to the *communal home* first to meet up with the elders of the family, and she will have to divide the remaining four between the *combine harvester* and the *yeast vats*. This division can be done in several ways, but it would be a loss, if Ona did not get assigned to the *yeast vats*. The scene at the *central landing ground* should give Steli all the information she needs to realize that for herself.

Disembarkation (prologue)

The purpose of the scene is to set the internal mode of each character and the possible relationships between them. There are several possibilities for interaction between the characters. Some groups will use them vigorously, others may just brush by them and go on to the main story.

The characters are all military intelligence, who have originally been collected at a military space station orbiting Abar until they can be shipped to their wartime assignments. Now they are rerouted to their investigative chore on the surface.

Military intelligence is not a large trade. Not even on a world that has experienced growing interplanetary tension over the latest generation, so everybody knows everybody – if not personally, then at least by reputation. And some of the protagonists of this story have a history with each other. You should use the disembarkation to have the players voice out some of the issues between their characters.

Arrival: Have the players declare when they arrive for the shuttle. Who arrives early? Who is in the very last minute? What are their thoughts respectively as they arrive and thake their places in the shuttle.

Welcome: Let Steli welcome people and maybe say a few choice words. Let the characters exchange remarks in public or whisper privately as the shuttle dislodges from the space station and falls towards the surface of Abar.

The Central Landing Ground

The purpose of the scene at the Central Landing Ground is to give the players and in-game introduction to the case and the structure. Be sure to give them as much information as possible that leads to understanding of the culture, but do not invent extra information or allow other actions if they are aimed at making the investigation more effective. The general purpose of the story is not to catch the murderer, but to experience the characters attempting and possibly succeeding in catching the murderer.

As the shuttle falls towards the Central Landing Ground of the Southern Continent, the protagonists have a view of the almost unbroken sea of corn. The central plain stretches almost 500 km in all directions from the Central Landing Ground towards the two low mountain ranges towards East and West. In this area families live far apart and manage enormous estates. The Southern Continent is populated by people who neither crave cities nor hectic environments.

The Central Landing Ground is the hub of several thousand families, but it still looks partially deserted. These people don't move around much, and they evidently don't go to town for some action. Machines take care of most of the work and cargo is shipped surface from the shore.

Landing: The protagonists are greeted on landing by Parona who is responsible for local social affairs. Parona is a conscientious woman who is deeply troubled by the situation. She will do her best to accommodate the investigators, but she has very limited resources with regards to police matters.

Briefing: Parona presents what information she has as clearly as possible to the investigators and will be as helpful as possible.

For obvious narrative reasons, however, she cannot offer the investigators ways to break the structure of the scenario: They must go by crawler to their destinations

and they cannot obtain extra information of any forensic nature.

She will of course offer access to all "forensics" reports and an opportunity to view evidence for oneself. She will also pass on any information she can about the sites and the Enaskani family.

Victim: The victim's name is Latefa Enaskani. She was 42 years old at her time of death. The body was processed by the local paramedic who used the best robodoc available, but since they are both in the business of keeping people alive, their observations were not entirely relevant. It has been concluded, though, that the cause of death was a strong blow to the back of the head with a blunt instrument, which caused the victim to die of internal hemorrhage in the brain quite quickly because of the pressure on the brain. Judging from the condition of the body, Latefa had been dead between two and three days, when she arrived at the Central Landing Station in the crawler, which is just over two days ago. The processing of the victim has rendered her unusable for further forensic studies by anyone.

Vehicle: The standard vehicle of the area is called a crawler. It is a quite fast and slim vehicle, which is propelled by flexible belts for cross country ability it can hold three people in cramped conditions. The crawler can be driven on manual, but is usually fully automated, running smoothly and safely to the punched in coordinates.

Crawler log: The navigation log on the crawler only has a memory slot for the last trip. The last trip of the crawler was from the Enaskani Family Home to a point far out in the fields. The trip lasted from 03:04 on Fiveday to 00:54 on Sixday. Then the crawler stood still at its destination for 30 minutes while it tried to contact its driver. At 01:24 on Sixday, the crawler locked on to the homing beacon of the Central Landing Ground to which it returned at 11:39 on Sevenday. It is now the morning of Nineday.

Crawler contents: In an attack of confusion, the staff of the landing ground has omitted to cancel the automatic cleaning process for the crawler. A normal investigation of the crawler will therefore reveal very little. If Ona takes some time to talk to the scene, there will be some information, though. The crawler will tell her, that its last passenger did not actually bleed in the vehicle, but did shed already partly coagulated blood. It will also explain with the assemblage of dust, that it has stood unused for quite some time before its latest trip. Also based on the way the dust has and especially has not been disturbed, it will tell her that the last passenger – Latefa – did not move in any significant way or not at all while she was aboard the crawler.

Enaskani family: Parona can inform the investigators that the Enaskani family is a polygamous, introgamous family. The members of the family have a relatively low need for social contact, but are not generally shy or introvert. The family loves children and has had more than an average share assigned to it over the last generation – it is most likely that the family will be split up in two family units within the next five years in order to avoid it becoming too big. The family currently consists of 3 elderly members, 9 adults (10 with Latefa), 2 teenagers and 13 children. The splitting up is an absolutely natural process, which happens to every family that is fond of children, just like families that function best with very few children combine from time to time.

Parona does not know anyone from the Enaskani family personally, but she has had dealings with Partos, Rabel and Pelek at different times – mostly because these three take care of the majority of the administrative work of the family. Pressed for an opinion, she will characterize Partos as a kind old man, Rabel as an elderly women with her wits about her and a sharp tongue and Pelek as a rather brusque, but effective and conscientious person to work with.

Parona has never personally met Latefa and has no information about her.

Use Parona as a way to explain the Abaranian culture to the players. It is much better to be corrected in this scene (though as tactfully and discretely as possible) than to have to retake scenes or edit statements, when the players are more involved.

Sites: Parona will explain that the family is currently spread out between four different locations. This is partly because of the harvest season, but other more communal families manage to have harvesters on remote or automatic in order to stay together most of the

time. So the spreading of the family is also a testament to the relatively low social needs of the Enaskani family.

The Enaskanis have requested that the leader of the investigators (Steli) goes to their **Family Home** alone, and before anyone arrives at any other destination. This is relatively easily achieved, since the Enaskani Family Home is actually the closest of the four sites, the Enaskani are at right now. (Arrival midday on Tenday)

In order to cover as much ground as possible, two investigators will have to rendezvous with three members of the family, who are at a large **Combine Harvester** somewhere in the sea of maize. These are cramped living conditions, and the investigators should probably stay overnight in order to qualify their information as well as possible, so some social skills will be called for. (Arrival early afternoon on Tenday)

The other two investigators should meet up with another group of three family members who are currently working at the **Yeast Vats**. This rather smelly environment is recorded as Latefa's primary work assignment, so some experience with physical investigation (Ona) would probably be a good idea. (Arrival late afternoon on Tenday)

Finally two adults and all the children of the family are at a medium sized lake in the farthest end of the Enaskani farming area. This is their usual site for summer holiday and harvest children's camp. Steli should be able to reach **Lake Enaskani** by early morning on the second day (Oneday). The rest of the party should be able to arrive some time after lunch. Everybody is supposed to return by crawler early evening on Oneday, so they can lift off the Central Landing Ground before the end of Twoday.

If the investigators complain about the slow transportation, it should be explained that this is a very unhurried society. The fact that everybody lives contented lives makes them more interested in enjoying life than in racing from achievement to. The investigators are here to help avoid a general scare – flying about from place to place would have the exact opposite effect.

At the family home

The purpose of this scene is not to set the investigators on the track of the murderer. Rather, it is to give an idea of how the family is made up and what one can expect later on. Make sure that every family member gets his or her say, and try to get Rabell to confide somewhat in Steli, but concentrate on the general picture of the family. The two younger family members in this scene are a bit different from the rest of their generation (they both isolate themselves relatively voluntarily) and should be able to give some interesting observations on the family in general.

As the crawler approaches the Enaskani Family Home, the wooden gables of the buildings gradually appear over the top of the corn just a moment before the crawler leaves the cornfield and scales the slight escarpment to the high ground of the buildings.

The family home is actually one large wooden structure, but it consists of several larger buildings, connecting structures and smaller side buildings. There is clearly not a lack of space for the family members. They both have their parent-child quarters, communal areas as well as numerous work and leisure facilities. Around the main structure a number of concrete buildings hold workshops, machine stations, garages and much more. The concrete buildings, however, are partially subterranean and do not obstruct the nice view of the home.

The four family members at home greet Steli in front of the house. Apart from that the scene is open.

Partos (79)

Primpartners: Lekala and Rabel

Primchildren: Mala, Pelek, Klea

In spite of the society and this family too being very egalitarian and everybody having a say, the elders in a family very often have the deciding vote. It is only logical. When you do not have any serious grievances with each other, the younger family members tend to value the large experience of the elders. In this family it means that Pathos, Rabel and Lekala have often had to decide in matters.

Pathos has tried to be a mediator, tried to strike a balance between his two sisters Lekala and Rabel in the matter of Latefa, but it has not always been easy. He knows that he has mostly preferred the company of Lekala over Rabel – Lekala is the younger of the two and has always been very beautiful and feminine. For years on end, Pathos has tried not to let Rabel feel this, and he believes that he has been rather successful at it, but maybe it has clouded his judgment regarding his younger sister. Looking back Latefa was always a bit… different. Wrong somehow? And Lekala had always been blind to it. Maybe one of the therapist families should have been called in long ago.

There is no doubt that Latefa has acted out progressively, since it became clear that the computer would never assign her a child of her own, but Lekala has always assured him that it was in control. Maybe it was not, but that is too late now. This catastrophe has happened and must be dealt with. It is most likely that Kentes did it, maybe he was fighting with her about her obsession with his youngest child Katlek.

Partos is not as well informed about family matters as he used to be, and he is well aware of that. It is important, however, that the investigators recognize him as the natural head of the family, so he can influence them and minimize the damage done to the family.

Rabel (74)

Primpartners: Lekala and Partos

Primchildren: Kentes, Renka, Jakeb

Rabel has for many years seen it as her responsibility to give all the children of Parthos, Lekala and herself an equal chance. And for many years that has also included making special allowances for Latefa, since she evidently had a harder time than most.

Recently, however, Rabel has been told about some disturbing finds by her daughter Renka. Renka told her that she had uncovered a furnished and elaborate cave dwelling close to the yeast vats. Renka was sure that the dwelling was constructed by Latefa since she was the only person who stayed at the yeast vats for prolonged periods of time. It must have ben constructed for some strange and disturbing purpose, and Renka claimed that she had found remnants of several skeletons of small children in a mound of stones nearby.

There is a risk that Renka has made it all up in order to help Kentes in his campaign to keep Latefa at arm's length from his youngest child Katlek, or even just as revenge for Latefa's sleeping with every man in her age group and thus complicating Renka's relationship to both of her primpartners Anares and Kentes. But the accusations could not be disregarded and they seemed too horrendous to be made up – they must be true.

Ever since last summer, Kentes has been saying that he did not want Latefa to be responsible for the children at the lake this harvest season (actually not ever again). He shrank from giving any specific reasons, but he was quite adamant. Suddenly it seemed as if he had done so for good reason. Up until Renkas information, Rabel did not feel she could back Kentes' demands against the pleadings of Lekala to let Latefa have at least this little contact with the children. Now Rabel had to make a stand, and she managed to get the assignment for Kentes to go to the lake together with Lekala instead. Latefa must have become very sad or very angry.

It is so sad, what has happened to the family. So many people are angry with each other. This is not the way a family should be. But surely no one could be angry enough to kill each other. Still it must have been Kentes, every other possibility makes even less sense. The agents, however, must not know. If he was taken away, it would be dire for the children.

Pelek (43)

Primpartner: Mala (Pelek is and has for a very long time been as exclusively monogamous as one can be in this family).

Primchildren: Torek (14) and Pela (9)

Pelek likes to keep himself for himself for much of his time, and when he spends time with other people it is usually with his prim children Torek and Pela or his partner Mala. The family as a whole, he only joins at special occasions.

With regards to Latefa, Pelek likes to think that he doesn't understand what all the fuss is about. Things would be much easier, if everybody just concentrated on do-

ing the right things themselves. For instance, when Latefa tried to have sex with every man in the family, they could "Just say no". Pelek did, and he and Mala had no problems there.

The others talk a lot about Latefa's guests, but it is not the central issue. Of course she should treat her guests right, but it is not like they are family. And who says she did not do the best she could – she was weird in so many ways, probably she was also a retard at caring for infants. That could also explain why the computer never wanted her to have children of her own. If she could not do the job properly someone should have stepped in to help her, and that someone really ought to have been one of her primfamily – her primbrothers (Anares and Eklan) or Lekala as her primparent.

Pelek is a competent farmer and can do most of the jobs around the farm, but since he took charge of the books, he does not really get out much, and his view on things is more theoretical than practical. He keeps books on everything though – even the sales of illegal vision spores that Latefa made and Renka and Jakeb sold and the different perks they afford the family.

Pelek's prime interest is in getting the family functional and less conflicted again. He does not actually have any suggestions for how this could be done and is generally not very empathic in his approach. Now that Latefa is already dead, they might as well get on and make the family work as it used to.

Jakeb (36)

Primpartner: No serious relationship, sometimes Eklan, sometimes people from other families.

Primchildren: Albek (5)

Jakeb often feels that he is a bit different from everyone else in the family, except of course Albek. He does not mind, he actually feels that the others value his being a little bit different. No one bothers him for it, and he is not as interested as the others in who is currently partner with whom.

This is also the reason that Jakeb is often the one who goes to other families to barter or trade for surplus points. He also trades the Vision Spores together with Renka – his nearest primsister. He is quite aware that it was Latefa's achievement to grow the spores, and he is also aware that it was quite illegal. So maybe it is all for the better that no one in the family seem to be able to continue the production.

These last few years the neighboring families have been very interested in how things were going in the Enaskani family. The fact that Latefa had slept with men from almost every family in the area was seen as so unlike the Enaskani family that their curiosity was woken. Jakeb of course could not shed any light on the story. He did (and does) not want to harm the family's reputation by slandering his sister.

Of course Jakeb knew everything about Latefas predicament. What he had not experienced himself had been endlessly repeated as family gossip.

When Anares decided that he did not want to help Latefa get any more guests and so would no longer have sex with her, she had for a short while tried her luck with the other men in the family. Many of them, like Jakeb, had not rejected her – at least not immediately, but as it became more and more clear that the sex had one purpose only, they also decided to stop. After that Latefa started to look for partners outside the family.

It was a deplorable situation, but the men of the family could not be blamed for it, and to a certain extent, neither could Latefa. In the final analysis, it is always the responsibility of the elders when a family experiences internal difficulties.

Jakeb has worked much with the three elders of the family because of his trading, and he is not impressed. It is his feeling that they are afraid of addressing the personal matters in the family and thus only the elder with the most pressing problem acts and gets to decide. One could say that the victory always goes to the elder who is willing to be the most unreasonable.

The gigantic combine harvester

The gigantic combine harvester is the first scene where the investigators get a chance to interact with procatively with the witnesses. Try to give the investigators opportunities to drive the investigation in a direction of

their choice. They can use professional charms, split the group up for interrogations or they may just want to stick to inquisitive conversation. Actually the method is not really important for the outcome – the freedom of initiative is. Also try to inspire the players who play witnesses to find interesting ways to "spill the beans". It is much more interesting, if they do not have to rely on direct questions all the time – it could be telephone calls overheard by accident, rows between the family members or feeble attempts to play the investigators as pawns in some family matter.

The scene does not have to be played in one go. If there is a natural place to cut up the scene, you can cut to the yeast vats and cut back to the harvester at a later point. No matter what, the investigators will have the chance to re-open the scene briefly the next morning before they leave.

In spite of its gigantic size, the combine harvester is actually quite confined space. There are a myriad of narrow maintainance passages and work spaces, but very few areas where the noise level allows conversation or one can actually sit or lie down.

When the investigators leave this scene, they can choose to bring along one of the family members to the lake for further questioning.

The yellow sea of maize has engulfed you for hours and hours. Blue sky and fluffy white clouds above, but no horizon. When the crawler divides the corn in front of it, only new two meter high stems block the view. Until suddenly, it all falls away and the gently rolling hills of the landscape lay open for the eyes of the traveler. Here the combine harvester has already been at work.

A large automated train of cargo robots roll by with its small share of the harvest and far away the combine harvester can be seen as a small speck. As the crawler approaches this little speck grows to intimidating size, and as the hold doors open, the crawler is dwarfed to insignificance and even inside the vehicle hold the three waiting figures seem rather small.

Anares (35)

Primpartners: Renka, until a year ago also and predominantly Latefa

Primchildren: Lanna (5) and Eskal (2)

Anares is sad – terribly sad. He was Latefa's primbrother and the one closest of age, and they were primpartners at that. The thing with the primpartners, of course, was only until he had to refuse being a part of Latefa's insatiable want for guests.

Anares did not like to refuse the advances of Latefa. After all, they had slept together regularly for something like 20 years, and he still loved her; but his conscience would not allow him to help her have more guests because of his nagging suspicion that they were mistreated. But he just feels so terrible that everything spiralled out of control like this. The family ought to have been able to contain and stimulate Latefa – help her deal with her tragic lack of children. The family should also have been able to make all its members understand Latefa and give her some slack. It did not – someone ended up killing her, and that someone has to be found and brought to justice.

It is no secret to Anares that Latefa went out to the neighboring families to find partners, when he chose to refuse her last year. It pains him that the gesture which cost him so much will power and hurt did not lead to any responsible behavior from Latefa. She ought to have had herself sterilized as any sensible woman, but with so many polygamous extrogamous families in the vicinity, it was probably just too easy to find someone else. He felt and feels no jealousy towards Latefa and her partners, none at all – rather pity.

In the beginning of the summer, Renka contacted Anares discretely to tell him about some rather sinister finds of hers near the yeast vats. Renka told him that she had uncovered a furnished and elaborate cave dwelling close to the yeast vats. She was sure that the dwelling was constructed by Latefa, since she was the only person who stayed at the yeast vats for prolonged periods of time. It must have ben constructed for some strange and disturbing purpose, and Renka claimed that she had found remnants of several skeletons of small children in a mound of stones nearby.

Renka wanted Anares to confront Latefa about it. He did, eventually, but it took him far too long before he managed to pull himself together. And when he finally did it was possibly the worst thing he could have done. It is less than a week ago now, and as far as Anares knows, within a day or so from his telling Latefa, someone had murdered her. The talk itself did not lead to anything anyway. Latefa became mad and aggressive; she refused any knowledge of the cave dwelling and raved about other members of the family evilly trying to discredit her. She stormed out of the room and that is the last Anares ever saw of her.

Fela (20)

Primpartners: Used to be Eklan, but since Maklar has become old enough, he is gradually becoming the most important.

Primchildren: none yet.

Fela is five years older than Maklar, but he is a kind and intelligent boy, and it is nice to have a partner from her own generation, so Fela has spent a lot of time with Maklar these last months. For the last couple of days, however, Maklar has seemed quite distraught, when Fela has talked to him. Probably, it is because he knows something about his father, Kentes' involvement in Latefas death. He might even have witnessed it.

Fela did not have a very close relationship with Latefa. She had been a great friend to have at the lake during harvest, and sometimes Fela had also helped taking care of her guests, being the oldest of the children and all. It was also cool to have her advice, when the relationship with Eklan started. Latefa was Eklans older primsister, and it kind of evened out his being twelve years older than Fela to have Latefas advice from time to time.

But the last year or two Fela has actively kept her distance. It was simply too embarassing to have such an old woman behave like a 20-old and keep on having guests. Old women do not have as healthy guests, anyway.

Fela is expecting her first guest now. It is still very early in the pregnancy, and nothing shows – but wow, it would have been weird if Latefa had been there expecting yet another guest at the same time.

Fela finds it pretty weird also that Latefa had a string of sex-partners outside the family after she fell out with Anares. Actually she is not all together sure that it was not the other way round … maybe Anares ditched Latefa because he found out that she had partners outside the family.

Mala (48)

Primpartner: Pelek (for all practical purposes Mala and Pelek have a monogamous relationship)

Primchildren: Fela

Mala is the oldest of her generation. It is a responsibility, but on the other hand also just an informal one. Mala's responsibility to her daughter Fela and Fela's unborn guest is much more tangible. Fela is going to be the first woman in the new generation to give birth, and Mala will see to that her guest is going to be well cared for, so the indifference to guests in the family can be countered.

The family allowed Latefa too much of a leeway with her guests. When one displays such indifference, and the little one is actually regularly mistreated, it is hard to decide, whether the deaths among the guests can be called mishaps or accidents. In reality it is at least neglect and could be just as easily be called murder. If Latefa had been sent to a family of therapists when the problems were first seen, all this could have been avoided.

This family is growing, and it will eventually be split up into two families. When that happens, Mala is going to be the elder of her family, and she is not going to allow such a laxness and disregard for proper values. She is not going to dabble in drug production either. This family is full of dissent and discontent – this is both a sign that it is becoming too big, but also that the family is not led properly with regards to values.

It was probably Latefa's ability to produce the illegal vision spores that caused the elders and a good part of the rest of the family to tolerate her transgressions. No

one in the family uses that dangerous stuff, but many of them depended on the surplus from the illegal trade to sweeten their visits in town or help them acquire the little luxuries that not everybody could get.

The vision spores can very well be at the core of all the trouble – including the murder of Latefa. It is more than likely that Latefa got into a dispute with some user from another family about a drug deal.

The yeast vats

The yeast vats are where almost all evidence in the scenario can be found. This is not to say that the other scenes are less important, but as a director you should make sure that the players have time and opportunity to investigate both the cave dwelling, the burial cairn and Latefa's room in the living quarters at the yeast vats during the scene. Just as the combine harvester, this scene does not have to be played in one go. You can cut between the two scenes as long as you leave the players time enough between cuts to actually play their characters.

The scene at the yeast vats should also display some of the confusion and frustration of the family members at Latefa's demise. The family members have come to depend on her in several ways. Most notably, because it is illegal, they depend on her production of vision spores, and since no one can carry that on, many privileges have now been lost. But although less noticed in daily life they had also come to depend on her running the yeast vats.

Latefa's skill with fungi and spores enabled her to keep the yeast vats running at top production single handedly and yet be able to leave the place for one or two days without anything going wrong. For anybody else it was a stressful fulltime job, and since the production has come out of balance because no one realized that the vats were untended until a couple of days after Latefa's death, three family members are working frantically to save what they can of the current production line.

When the investigators leave this scene, they can choose to bring along one of the family members to the lake for further questioning.

The minor locations will be described in the end of this scene.

The smell signals the arrival at the yeast vats long before any other senses. At first it is just a slight change of odor, but over the next quarter of an hour it gradually changes into a gut wrenching stench. It is hard to acknowledge that the production of good steaks and juicy chicken wings has to reek so much.

When the crawler finally pulls up in front of the low concrete command complex at one end of the giant line of production silos, no investigator would contemplate going outside without a face mask.

Klea (40)

Primpartner: Kentes and Eklan

Primchildren: Vakela, Asek, Asper

Klea has always been Latefa's best friend. They played together as children, confided in youth, but they began to drift apart when Klea started having children. And as Klea got her second and third child and Latefa had none things got more tense, but Klea kept her warm feelings for Latefa, and she felt that in spite of her disappointment, Latefa still liked her too.

As far as Latefa still had someone she confided in, Klea was it. It was no problem for Klea – her heart was big enough to be mother to three, partner to two and best friend to the black sheep of the family.

If Klea has any regrets about her relationship to Latefa, it is that she broke the news about who was going to the lake this harvest in the worst way possible. She had simply not foreseen that Latefa could be ignorant about the situation. For a whole year, Kentes had demanded that Latefa should not accompany the children to the lake over harvest any more. Meeting after meeting during winter it had been rejected, but then in the very last days before harvest the decision had been reversed, and Klea heard that Kentes and Lekala would accompany the children to the lake.

Klea simply had not imagined that Latefa had not been informed about the decision. The elders ought to have taken care of that – if no one else, then her own primmother.

The result was that when Klea met Latefa last, she immediately started to talk with her in a consoling way, since she expected Latefa to be both sad and angry. But since Latefa had no idea, what it was all about, she was at first terribly frightened and confused, and when she realized that the children had been escorted to the lake, and she had not even been told that the others did not want her to come, she turned white and became totally quiet. A moment after Latefa cut the connection, and Klea did not hear from her again.

Klea worked with Latefa at the yeast vats, but she is not half as good at the job as Latefa was. She was out harvesting, when Latefa was found at the landing facility. Everybody was so confused, when they heard, but because of the harvest, they didn't have time to have a family meeting. It was a whole day before they realized that nobody had been at the yeast vats for several days! They set the harvester Klea was on on automatic, and hurried to the yeast vats, and now they have to try and fix it without Latefa. But Klea's thoughts are somewhere else: How are the kids doing? Are they scared or worried? This is so horrid – who in the world could have done something like that?

Renka (40)

Primpartners: Kentes and Anares

Primchildren: Kleas (9) og Rabel (6)

For a long time, Renka shared Anares with Latefa as primpartners, which was fine. But then Anares started having qualms about the number of guests Latefa had and the way he felt they were treated. So Anares put Latefa on ice, and she tried to get on with Kentes instead, and that was not all right. Sex is for people who like being with each other, but Latefa was systematically soliciting sperm from every available male – inconsiderate behavior from a sister! Kentes quickly saw through her and sent her packing. He thought it was revolting the way Latefa obsessed about guests. It was a actually relief when she started going outside the family for her needs.

Renka has an important extra job facilitating sale of the vision spores, and as such she often had dealings with Latefa at the yeast vats. Some time ago, when she went to see Latefa to arrange a large delivery, she couldn't find her in the factory. She went outside to look, found a trodden path in the maize and followed it to a small cave in a rock outcrop. It had some furniture, a bed, a crib, table and chairs and very small clothes neatly folded up – they were not guest-clothes, they were children's clothes. It seemed very odd to Renka.

Outside the cave was a cairn. Renka decided to investigate the cairn and removed some of the stones from the pile. That was when she realized that the cairn was piled up over the body of an infant – in fact several infants now reduced to skeletons. Renka concluded that this must be where some of the guests that were unaccounted for ended up. For a few days she was stunned by her discovery, then she told Anares in the hope that he would know what to do. He promised to confront Latefa about it, but Renka has not heard anything about how that went.

Later Renka also told her primmother Rabel about the cave and the cairn. She did not know what she really expected from that, but she half hoped that Rabel would know how to react to the information. With the investigators on the scene, Renka has an even better authority to leave the evidence to, so she expects that she will show it to the most trustworthy of the investigators.

Renka was out with the harvester together with Klea and Eklan from the harvest began, until they had to go and try save the yeast. They were all there, all of the time. Well, she can't really say about the nights, except for the one night she slept with Eklan. She thinks that it's probably Anares or Kentes who killed Latefa. Anares may have killed her in self defense, if she exploded when he confronted her about the skeletons. Kentes was being very obstinate about her being too much around the children, and they had had fights about that before.

Eklan (32)

Primpartners: Jakeb, Klea and Fela

Primchildren: Lekala

Eklan is Latefa's youngest primbrother, and also the youngest member of his generation in the family. His varied and unsettled sexual patterns may lead other

people to regard him as easy going and almost insincere, but he is actually very earnest about his family obligations.

When Eklan got his first primchild last year and named him Lekar after his primparent Lekala, his empathy with his sister Latefa, who still did not have a child almost ruined the pride and joy of holding such a perfect little person in his arms. But the computer knows best. He had to tell himself that, and nursing and taking care of the adorable little Lekar, he also realized that they belonged together and that it was folly to try and tamper with the wisdom of the computer.

To Eklan, it is inconceivable that anyone in the family would kill Latefa. It simply is not possible. It is much more likely that she killed herself. After all she was chronically depressed over her condition. She had been so for some time, and it only became worse as the years went by. Eklan is deeply saddened by his sister's untimely death and also for the fate she has suffered which can now never be remedied. He really is sad, but he also makes a point out of showing his poor spirits to everybody in order to harvest encouragement or sympathy.

Being the youngest of his generation, Eklan is used to being popular, and he is also quite dependant on being popular. He usually tries to please others in order to gain praise and affection from them and is quite often successful. This pattern will also be relevant in relation to the investigators, whom he will try to pleas as best he can.

Latefa's room at the Yeast Vats

Latefas room is bare and empty and shows few signs of use. It is an unloved place, only sometimes used for sleeping in, with no personal effects save a toothbrush and some of her clothes. It is clear that Latefa was not happy here.

The cave dwelling and the cairn

The cave dwelling is a very central place in the story. The story can still evolve and reach an interesting climax without a visit here, but it would be a pity not to give the investigators the chance to check it out.
This is a place, Latefa has used quite a lot when she worked at the yeast vats. Partly because it felt less lonely to be alone in this small location than being the only one in the large accommodations barrack which can house half of the family. But just as important, it gave her a place to be together with her guests, and pretend that they were real children, whom she could be family with.
Once she actually kept a guest past the age of becoming a child. She reported it dead to the computer, but kept it at the dwelling, waiting for it to become older so it could be her child. The experiment failed. The guest just kept being a guest in spite of children's clothes and its becoming older and more mobile. But she never developed the rapport with it that parents have with their children, and in the end the guest died from neglect and was buried in the cairn outside the dwelling. Two other guests which died from various forms of neglect are also buried in the cairn.
The cairn is a pile of rater large stones. The stones cover the remains of three infants. The bones have been picked clean by a range of small animals, which could get to them in between the stones, so very few traces are left.
In the dwelling, the physical evidence will tell or hint the story of its occupants. This can be the sizes and styles of clothes. The food stored in the larder. The makeshift form of the furniture and the prisonlike crib, which was clearly equipped to keep a child watered and fed for a prolonged period of time.

As you walk through the corn, you realize that without a compass, only luck can bring you back safely – there is no way to navigate. Finally you arrive at a small rock hillock and half way to the top of it, there is a cave entrance which has been boarded up and fitted with a door. Around the hillock to the west you can see the top of a pile of stones – probably a cairn.

The Lakeside

There will actually be two scenes played out at this location. The first scene is an ordinary investigative scene between Steli and the four family members present, who are old enough to be relevant for questioning. The second scene is the final discussion between the five investigators and possibly witness interviews (A player cannot represent both a family member and an investigator in the same interview – i.e. the investigator leaves when the interview begins). The second scene must end in some kind of a conclusion, since the investigators will be picked up and flown back to the central landing ground a few hours after they have convened at the lake.

If you have problems ending the scene, it is not consistent with the scenario to press the plot, but you can use the fact that the investigators are on a tight schedule. Just insist that time is running and the pickup will be in, say 30 minutes, and they will have to decide on what to do within that time frame. You may even revise your original time frame for the scene simply by having the

pilot contact the group and inform them of a change of flight schedule and give them a new pickup time.

The lakeside is a bit like a summercamp. Low uncomplicated buildings which all seem to point the visitor in the direction of the lake. Clear high pitched voices of children can be heard from every corner of the area and on a nearby lawn four children can be seen engaged in a game of croquet. Two of them, who are evidently sharing one club look more as if they are in a tug of war than anything else.

Lekala (70)

Primpartner: Partos

Primchildren: Latefa (dead), Anares and Eklan

Lekala is devastated. Latefa is dead. She is gone and she will be sorely missed. Lekala has always spent much more time and effort on Latefa than her other two primchildren – but that was because Latefa was so much more needy.

Lekala spent enourmous amounts of mental energy on keeping up Latefa's spirits, calming her anger and soothing her pain. She had to, since the family did not step up to the plate and help Latefa cope with her loss of not having children. Latefa was so unlucky, not only did she not receive a primchild of her own, probably because she was such a special person that matching children were very far between, but her misfortunes with her guests also made her the scapegoat of the family. They should have helped her instead of talking behind her back.

Lekala tried to comfort Latefa about not having received any children by saying that the computer must not have been able to find the special child that exactly fits somebody as unique as Latefa. But to a young woman like Latefa, who is so evidently suited for bringing up children it was very hard to accept.

Subsequently there was the thing with Kentes flatly refusing to let Latefa take care of the children at the lake, as she always did during the harvest. It was some ridiculous story about protecting Katlek, poppycock! Lekala and Latefa has always done a great job at the lake, even though Latefa had to go back to the plant to tend to the yeast vats from time to time. But Rabel and Partos suddenly turned against Lekala this time, and Kentes was chosen to go instead.

Lekala couldn't bring herself to tell Latefa that she wasn't going this year. At the lake, it wasn't the same, it was tense between her and Kentes as one could expect. A couple of days ago, she noticed Kentes coming back into the camp very early in the morning. He could have come back from a fight with Latefa, but there's no way of knowing.

Kentes (46)

Primpartners: Renka and Klea

Primchildren: Maklar (15), Roska (9), Lakson (6) and Katlek (2)

Kentes is furious at Latefa. The last days have been a nightmare. His son has killed another human being. And it is all her fault.

He cannot understand that he ever liked her in the least; that he used to have fun with her at celebrations and share her bed occasionally; that they were brother and sister. She does not feel like a sister to him now. Her jealousy of his responsibility of bringing up four kids made her try to destroy his part of the family. She started by trying to take over little Katlek, using charm and spending far too much time with Katlek to the exclusion of the other children who were her charges at the lake. She was clearly trying to usurp the role of primparent, destroying the plan of the computer concerning Katlek's welfare . When he finally got the elders to take notice and managed to stop her by taking over the role as caretaker at the lake this summer, she literally tried to steal his child!

Luckily, Maklar stopped her, but oh at what price! The boy must live the rest of his life, knowing that he took another person's life. The agents must not find out, they would take him away to a therapist family, and the best thing for Maklar now is being with his family who loves him, not being torn away from it. If necessary, Kentes is ready to take the blame, so that Maklar can stay here. But then Maklar and his three primsiblings would be without a primparent.

Kentes did not see what actually happened, but Maklar was waiting in the dark by the path, when he came back

to the hut from the bonfire. Maklar said that he had killed Latefa that she had attempted to steal Katlek, that she had a crawler, and that he had hidden her in it. Kentes calmed the boy and went with him back the kids to see that they were safe. He left Maklar there and went to the crawler. The back of Latefa's head was covered in blood. He went and got a monoplane, one of those things that only has room for one adult and a kid, and packed it in the back. He drove the crawler on manual to the garage at the central compound and moved Latefa to another crawler, programming it to disappear in the maize. He cleaned the first crawler thoroughly and placed it so it would be the first one out next morning. Others would use it, the data of Latefa's trip would be overwritten, and no one would know anything. Then the used the monoplane to fly back to the lake arriving just in time to start morning routines.

Maklar (15)

Primpartner: Fela

Primparent: Kentes

Primsiblings: Roskot, Lakson and Katlek

Maklar had the feeling that something terrible was going to happen for quite some time. It started last summer when Latefa kept Katlek on her lap or by her side the entire time and excluded Maklar from their company as much as possible. She was behaving more like a primparent than a common mother. One night, he woke up, and when he went to check on Katlek, he was not there. Latefa was gone too, but they were back the next morning. He didn't tell anyone about it till the next harvest drew near, and he knew they were going back to the lake. Latefa always went with Lekala as the responsible adults, and he dreaded what could happen this time.

So Maklar told his and Katlek's primparent, Kentes, who became very alarmed. It turned out that Kentes had been feeling very uncomfortable about Latefa's behavior towards Katlek as well. She had been taking Katlek aside more and more, trying to push him out of the way, Kentes said. Kentes assured Maklar that he would not have to worry: Latefa would not be going to the lake this harvest; he would make sure of it.

So Maklar felt quite safe, and enjoyed himself at the lake. Well, enjoyed and enjoyed. He missed Fela, they had only just begun getting physical recently, and it was so great! He was beginning to become impatient about when he would be deemed sufficiently grown up by the computer to join the adults in their work? He was beginning to chafe at being lumped together with the kids. He wanted to be part of the intense and important work of the harvest, not just an extra babysitter. But he knew the big kids were needed for babysitting, so he did his part, even if he sulked a bit about it. The only thing that helped was the fact that Kentes was with them this year instead of Latefa.

That night, when he was in the hut alone feeling depressed, he was watching over the smallest kids, while the rest were enjoying themselves down by the lake. Then suddenly, out of the blue, Latefa appeared. She didn't say hello or anything, just rushed past him towards the children, where she grabbed the sleeping Katlek! He asked her what she was doing, but she was already leaving – with Katlek in her arms.

He ran after her, yelling for her to stop, but she ignored him, and he saw that she had a crawler parked few meters away – in a minute she could be gone into the maize taking Katlek with her. He reacted instinctively, grabbing something (a croquet club) from the porch and hit her hard from behind. Her legs buckled, she fell and Katlek fell to the ground. He ran and got Katlek, who had started crying, got him quieted down and brought him back in his bed. Only then did he go to see what had happened.

Latefa was clearly dead. Maklar had killed his common parent. What should he do? He knew he had to ask Kentes for help, and the rest of the family must not know. He stuffed her body into the crawler and drove it off 20 meters, hiding it in the bushes. Then he waited for his primparent. When Kentes came, he waited until everybody else had gone to bed, then he told him everything. Kentes hugged him hard. He did not scold Maklar or get angry, but he had tears in his eyes. Kentes said he would take care of everything and never to tell the others. And that was it.

Now Maklar does not know how to behave. He feels like crying all the time. He goes off to be alone, but then the

kids come and find him, and Kentes tells him not to act suspiciously. Everything is so horrible and he keeps getting at odds with Fela, when they talk. But he had to do it, did he not?

Torek (14)

Primparent: Pelek

Primsiblings: Pela

Being at the lake has been very different this harvest. Torek was used to Latefa being there, and now she is not. Of course she is not here now – because she is dead, but even before that it was very different. Kentes seems to have eyes in the back of his head, and he is very strict with all of the children.

Latefa was a bit queer sometimes, but she loved to be with the kids and was loads of fun. Lekala is not as much fun as she used to be either, and since the news about Latefa arrived, she is devastated, of course. All the other kids are sad and confused, which is quite understandable since they are so small. It is quite eerie with military agents arriving and all that.

Maklar hasn't been himself either, this harvest. Torek and Maklar have been the best of friends for ages, but Maklar has been so busy with Fela, now that they are lovers, and he was annoyed at having to go to the lake with the kids. Torek doesn't mind, he rather enjoys being the second-oldest and getting to decide over the other kids. But Maklar has been sulking by himself, as much as he could (which wasn't much – there's a lot of kids younger than them). And then about four days ago, he went completely into teenage depression (Torek heard Lekala use that expression). It is probably all to do with Fela. Yech – Torek is not looking forward to becoming old enough for that – most of the adults say that he is getting old enough to be interested in girls, but he sure does not feel that way.

Actually Torek finds it quite scary that the agents are coming, but he has promised himself to show the little kids that they have nothing to fear, so he is going to go talk to the agent as soon as he can. Until then he has taken three of the older kids to the lawn for croquet, which is quite fun, since he is the best at it. If only they would stop fighting over the clubs – it has been like that ever since the yellow club broke four days ago and no one admitted to having done it.

Map

The family's current standpoints on the central controversies

The question of Latefa's guests

Latefa has had many more guests than is usual. As usual, they were tested and given to their families, but some died accidentally before being tested, and lately she has isolated herself when she had guests, and there hasn't been much information about them.

I fear to think what she does to the poor creatures	Rabel Anares Mala Renka Kentes Maklar	Jakeb	Partos Fela	Eklan Torek	Pelek Klea Lekala	She has been so unlucky, I guess she tried the best she could

The controversy of who should take care of the children at the lake

The children of the family always spend harvest time frolicking at the lake. Usually, Lekar and Latefa together with the larger kids take care of all the small ones. But this year, Kentes has been voicing his concern: he felt that Latefa was trying to usurp his role as primary parent for his two-year old Katli and did not want her babysitting at the lake. He said he did not feel that it was safe, and that Latefa's interest in Katli seemed unhealthy.

Latefa should not be allowed near the kids	Rabel Mala Renka Kentes Maklar	Jakeb	Partos Anares	Pelek Fela Torek	Klea Eklan Lekala	Latefa loves the kids, she wouldn't dream of harming them

The production and sale of illegal vision spores

The family secretly produces hallucinatory spores at the yeast vats. These are traded for luxury items on the black market, but nobody in the family would dream of using them. They are just not that kind of family.

The vision spores are a valuable addition to the production of the farm	Pelek Klea Renka	Partos Fela	Rabel Anares Maklar Torek	Jakeb Kentes	Mala Lekala	The vision spores are illegal, and we should stop producing them