

# COMSTAR GAMES/AVENGER ENTERPRISES PRESENTS: FIDDLER'S GREEN

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***BASED ON THE AWARD-WINNING TRAVELLER GAME SYSTEM AND UNIVERSE BY MARC MILLER***

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Sample file

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# INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to Fiddler's Green, a Traveller adventure from Avenger Enterprises. This book is intended to be used with the Traveller roleplaying game from Mongoose Publishing. Other versions of the Traveller game, and indeed entirely different rules sets, can be used with this adventure with only a minimum of effort, but the contents of this book are specifically designed to be compatible with Mongoose Traveller and with the 'Spinward Marches' background published to accompany those rules.

This adventure is set on a frontier world (Bularia, in Darrian subsector) with a breathable atmosphere and a moderate mid-tech base. It could be transplanted to any similar world. The storyline deals with a dispute between factions in a remote area of the world, which will draw the characters into an escalating range war between the factions. How they handle this is their own problem, but they are a long way from any backup or assistance.

A group with access to a starship may find many events relatively easy to circumvent. Thus the adventure presents a suggested way to separate the characters from any vessel they may possess. It is entirely possible that the characters might be the crew of the Type S Scout/Courier Highndry, in which case removing their ship from the equation will be somewhat easier.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE:

This is likely to be a very violent adventure. Or rather, it revolves around events of a very violent nature. The characters themselves might be involved in the shooting or could end up doing other things against the backdrop of the bloodshed depicted herein.

For various reasons many of my adventures are inspired by traditional songs. Early Fallen was sparked by 'The Vacant Chair'; One Crowded Hour came from 'Wreck of the Old '97'. The inspiration for this adventure is not had to find – it's in the title.

Fiddlers' Green was a mythical place, a heaven for sailors. The idea was later 'borrowed' by the cavalry. To this day the men and women of the armoured cavalry sometimes refer to fallen comrades as having made the journey to the Green.

Halfway down the road to Hell  
In a shady meadow green  
The souls of all dead troopers wait  
Near a good old-time canteen.

Marching past, straight through to Hell,  
The infantry are seen  
Accomp'nied by the engineers  
Artillery and marine.  
For only souls of cavalymen  
Dismount at Fiddler's Green.

Though some go curving down the trail  
In search of warmer scene  
No trooper ever gets to Hell  
Ere he's emptied his canteen  
And so returns to drink again  
With friends at Fiddler's Green.

And so when man and horse go down  
Beneath a saber keen  
Or mid roaring charge of fierce melee  
You stop a bullet clean  
And hostiles come to take your scalp  
Just empty your canteen.

And put your pistol to your head  
And go to Fiddler's Green.

Given current world events, it seems only fitting to dedicate this adventure to the men and women who have placed their lives at risk in the service of freedom and to protect the rest of us 'back home'. All of them, not just cavalry but all arms and branches of the services, and whether they gave their lives or 'merely' spent several months of their time in some miserable corner of the world, deserve thanks and respect.

Enough preaching. Let's get on with it.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin J Dougherty can ride, shoot, and fight pretty good with a sword, though trying to do any two of those things at the same time would probably result in unfortunate consequences for someone other than the intended target. In the meantime Martin is also a freelance author specialising in military history, space travel and related topics. He has written or contributed to over three dozen books and book-like objects (depending on what you count as a book) plus on-line copy, magazine articles and related scribblings. He has previously worked as a teacher, an engineer, a self-defence instructor, a fencing coach and a defence analyst.

When not randomly poking at a keyboard, Martin coaches the University of Sunderland Fencing, Kickboxing and Ju-Jitsu classes. He is heavily involved with the Self-Defence Federation, with whom he holds three black belts and a Master level instructorship. Despite all this, the majority of people involved with Avenger Enterprises refer to him as 'some hack writer we met' and steadfastly refuse to take him seriously. This is probably for the best.

Martin's website, such as it is, can be found at <http://www.martinjdougherty.co.uk/> and he can be contacted by email at [avenger.enterprises@virgin.net](mailto:avenger.enterprises@virgin.net). Just don't expect an intelligible reply.

## AVENGER ENTERPRISES

Avenger Enterprises is a loose collection of semi-random individuals who have seen fit to involve themselves in producing Traveller materials. Or if you prefer, Avenger Enterprises is a design house co-owned by Martin J Dougherty and William Andersen of Comstar Games, representing some of the finest Traveller and RPG writing talent worldwide.

Avenger's writers have written and edited Traveller materials for publication since 1994, and have an involvement in the games industry stretching back a decade more. Avenger people (using the term 'people' very loosely) have written, edited and otherwise freelanced for many other game systems and for publishers including Mongoose Publishing, GDW, FASA, Imperium Games, Steve Jackson Games, Hekaforge Productions and PBM Scroll Magazine. Most relevant to this adventure; Avenger staff were heavily involved in the production of the Mongoose Traveller Spinward Marches sourcebook.

The Avenger website is at <http://www.avengerenterprises.co.uk/> and hosts a forum for Traveller and related matters at <http://www.traveller.comstar-games.com/>.

Note that Avenger is not a publisher but a design house. All Avenger Enterprises products are published by Comstar Games, through the Flaming Cobra imprint of Mongoose Publishing.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Fiddler's Green is set in the Spinward Marches sector of the Third Imperium, part of the Official Traveller Universe (OTU). It is a complete and self-contained adventure, requiring only the Traveller rules to play. However, additional materials may be useful. In particular the Spinward Marches Sourcebook from Mongoose Publishing presents details of the surrounding area and will add greatly to the gaming experience.

This particular adventure involves quite a lot of combat, though it is possible to circumvent some of it and much of the remainder could be treated as a backdrop to whatever a less combat-oriented adventuring band choose to do about the situation.

As noted in other publications, our unofficial company motto is 'roll dice, blow stuff up'. We'd not want to be involved with a game called Morally Superior Adventurers Love The World. So this time around there's likely to be a fair bit of violence. Some of the situations in this adventure are, unsurprisingly perhaps, quite hazardous. We have made

no attempt whatsoever to inflict 'play balance', whatever that is, on this adventure. The opposition are armed as they are armed and they will do what they think is best. How the players react to those actions will make all the difference. Good tactics, use of cover and liberal suppressing fire can work wonders; standing in the open blazing away with weapons is a good way to get to Fiddler's Green.

We strongly recommend that the Referee curb any tendency towards leniency, mercy or simple human decency towards the characters. Let them suffer, let them even die if that's how things go. The survivors will know they've been in a fight and the victory will be all the sweeter for it.

Or you'll get lynched, but that's not our problem.

## SETTING UP

This adventure is self-contained. Once the game starts, little further setting up is required. However, the Referee may have to do some preliminary work to ensure that the characters have a suitable range of skills and equipment for the challenges they will encounter. The following section deals with a few preliminaries to get things going.

## STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In order to play this adventure you will need one or another of the Traveller rules sets. Stats are included for the current edition of the game, published by Mongoose Publishing, though other rules sets can be used with a minimum of work. We assume that the adventure will take place in the Spinward Marches of the Official Traveller Universe (OTU), or in a game setting where the normal Traveller conventions (one-week Jumps, no FTL communications and so forth) apply. If your game universe varies significantly, some tweaking may be necessary.

You will also need some dice as appropriate to your chosen rules set. Pens, pencils and paper are useful, or their advanced microprocessor-based analogs. We also recommend a suitable playing area. Indoors, in a furnished room is usually best, but tastes vary.

Dates: All dates correspond to the standard Imperial calendar. The start date of this adventure is 048-1105 (i.e. the 48th day of the 1105th year since the founding of the Third Imperium). Time will follow normally once the adventure begins. If a different date is required, for example to fit the adventure into an existing campaign, then the start date can be altered with little or no disruption to the adventure.

Place: The adventure takes place on the world of Bularia in the Darrian subsector of the Spinward Marches.

## CHARACTERS AND EQUIPMENT

This adventure can be played (and completed successfully) by almost any group of adventurers if they are able to think

creatively and maximize their strengths. However, characters with combat skills plus medical and interpersonal skills will do well here. Starship-based skills are less useful.

Note: It is strongly advised that the characters not have access to military-grade high-tech firepower. A laser rifle or submachinegun is not a problem, but an adventurer with a plasma gun and/or battledress would be overpowered for this situation... at least until the power ran out. More importantly, it is unlikely that the Imperial authorities would allow someone to run around with such equipment.

## INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

The characters need a reason to go to Bularia. The default reason is presented below – the characters are undertaking an investigation of socio-political circumstances on behalf of parties interested in trading on Bularia. Once in the outback, the travellers will be drawn into the events that unfold around them. As the situation begins to become clear they will have to decide whether to try to help or just try to get out with their skins intact. There are many valid options which may lead to somewhat different paths through the adventure.

## REFEREE'S INFORMATION

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The following information is provided for the use of the Referee, who should decide how much of it is freely available to the characters, and also how distorted any information they may discover should be. Note that what is presented here is not the whole story in many cases, and is open to a certain amount of interpretation.

## THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Third Imperium is a large and very powerful state consisting of thousands of star systems. It is, however, a fairly loose organisation. This is necessitated by the long lags in communication between star systems many parsecs apart. As a result, worlds govern themselves, with the Imperium as an over-arching structure. On the plus side this grants wide latitude to member worlds and allows them to grow as their population please. However, it means that backwater worlds can be vulnerable to exploitation or even attack if they cannot afford to provide for an adequate level of defence.

The Third Imperium is 1105 years old. It has weathered civil war, frontier conflict and some rather serious internal crises but remains as strong and stable as ever; at least on the surface. There is no reason to suppose that any of the many problems facing the Imperium and her Emperor, Strephon, are serious enough to merit extreme measures, let alone that they might threaten the peace and stability of the Imperium. However, there are always troubles somewhere in such a huge area.

Spinward Marches sector is one of the most remote regions of the Imperium, many weeks' travel from the Imperial Core even by the fastest ships. As well as being something of an underdeveloped backwater, it is also the location of Imperial borders with states that have rarely been friendly and have at times fought against the Imperium.

The most recent of these conflicts, the Fourth Frontier War, was fought 20 years ago against a coalition of Vargr, Sword Worlders and Zhodani (and led by the latter) was both short and brought to a reasonably successful conclusion. The war, which lasted from 1082-1084 was more or less an accident. It resulted from a border incident in a period of tension. Although things are more stable now, there is always the danger of a repeat incident. The borders with the Zhodani Consulate and the Sword Worlds Confederation are both regions where it is necessary to tread carefully. Keeping the peace is a full-time job, and sometimes compromises have to be made in the interests of long-term security and stability. This works both ways; sometimes the Imperium has to grant concessions and sometimes it gains from a bargaining session. The region around the Sword Worlds is therefore rather tense at times. Sometimes local politics intrudes into wider issues, and sometimes the opposite happens.

## SPINWARD MARCHES SECTOR

The Spinward Marches (more correctly, Spinward Marches sector) has relatively little significance in Imperial affairs, except that it is the Imperial border with the Zhodani Consulate and also with certain Vargr states. Lying fully 44 weeks' transit from Capital by Express Boat (a little less by Jump-6 courier, but not much), and separated from the Imperial core by the upper claw of the Great Rift, the region is considered to be a fairly unimportant backwater that serves as a convenient buffer against the Zhodani. However, the Spinward Marches were also the origin of Admiral Olav Hault-Plankwell's bid to become Emperor. The last thing Emperor Strephon wants is another Civil War, so the government of the Marches must be strong... but not too strong.

This may be one reason why no Archduke has been named for the region, nor a Sector Duke formally appointed. That role has been fulfilled by the dukes of Mora for centuries and their precedence over other Subsector Dukes is accepted by many, but not all, of the Imperial nobility of the Spinward Marches.

The de facto ranking noble in the Marches is Duchess Delphine of Mora, whose interests lie more in the protection and development of the region around Mora subsector than the improvement of backwater worlds on the border. This is obvious from the generally low level of naval patrols and development initiatives. These are not entirely absent of course, but for the most part if there is nothing major happening on the border the Duchess is content.

The Spinward Marches sector is presented in detail in the Spinward Marches book from Mongoose Publishing.

## DARRIAN SUBSECTOR

Darrian subsector lies at the Spinward edge of the Spinward Marches, entirely beyond the Imperial border. Most of the worlds of the subsector are part of the Darrian Confederation, which is allied to the Imperium but separated from it by the less friendly Sword Worlds Confederation. The Darrian civilization is a remnant of its former glory; relics of TL-G are found on the Darrian homeworld though the useable technology of the Darrian Confederation is comparable with that of the Imperium.

To Rimward lies a small enclave of Imperial territory in Five Sisters subsector, which includes two interdicted Droyne worlds: Andor and Candory. To Trailing-Rimward lies District 268; non-Imperial territory for the time being. To Trailing is the Sword Worlds subsector, mostly foreign territory with a few Imperial worlds. Coreward-Trailing lies Vilis subsector which is dominated by the Abyss Rift. Coreward is Querion subsector, which is mostly independent territory with some worlds being members of the Zhodani Consulate. Spinward of Darrian subsector lies Foreven sector, where Imperial

influence drops off quickly.

The original Darrians were a minor race of humans transplanted by the Ancients long ago. They were joined by settlers from Terra much later, creating a new culture that was both inquisitive and wise. The Darrians were not, it turned out, excessively wise – they managed to make their sun go nova by experimenting on it, and lost the capacity for interstellar flight for several centuries. Today, however, they have a modestly powerful and well-developed civilization that is allied and friendly to the Imperium.

The Darrians are often at odds with the rather less highbrow Sword Worlders whose territory lies to Trailing of them. This leads to friction much of the time and has caused the occasional war. The Sword Worlders have also fought against the Imperium as part of several 'Outworld Coalitions' as the popular media likes to call them. Relations at present are normal, which could be better stated as 'no worse than usual'. Cultural differences and a long history of mistrust ensure that there will always be some degree of instability along the border.

In that respect, the divided nature of the Sword Worlds Confederation is both a blessing and a curse. It is virtually impossible to create an agreement that is acceptable to all of the highly individual Sword Worlds planetary governments, and just when one dispute is settled, someone else decides to take issue over the same or a different matter. On the other hand, at least this means that at any given time some of the Sword Worlds are not in dispute with the Imperium or the Darrian Confederation; at least, not all over the same issue.

On the rare occasions when something was deemed serious enough for the Sword Worlders to put aside their own rivalries and act together, the result has usually been war. It is an axiom of politics in the region that 'peace with some or war with all' are the only choices regarding the Sword Worlds.

This makes transit from Imperial space to Darrian worlds a slight problem. The route through the Sword Worlds is usually open but involves at least some harassment. The alternative is to go right around the Abyss Rift in Lanth and Vilis subsectors or to leave Imperial space and transit via the Bowman Arm of the Spinward Main into Five Sisters subsector before heading Coreward into Darrian subsector. This route is not heavily travelled, though there are hopes that better ports along the way can be built, opening up the route for increased traffic.

## KARDIN'S THREE

Clusters of star systems are often named for one of the systems in the group. The Kardin cluster, consisting of three star systems, is named for the explorer who first catalogued the group. The Kardin system is also named for this wom-