

GURPS® *Traveller*®
Planetary Survey 6

DARKMOON™

THE PRISON PLANET



By **DAVID L. PULVER**

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

COLD STORAGE

"Welcome to Darkmoon Imperial Prison. I am Warden Kaede Malone, and you are very lucky. Instead of a filthy, lice-infested prison mine, you've come to a clean, state-of-the-art correctional facility."

"Darkmoon Prison is operated under Ministry of Justice charter by Schunamann und Sohn AG. You will work hard to repay your debt to society for the crimes you committed, and your debt to SuSAG for providing the necessities of life here. If you demonstrate contrition and participate in recommended programs, you may qualify for change in your status and a stay at a minimum security facility. I see mention that this is a SuSAG operation caused a stir. Don't be afraid! SuSAG pharmaceuticals are all extensively tested on animals before any human trials begin."

The Darkmoon system has been many things – a base for the Imperial Navy, a System Defense Boat and Space-Submarine Warfare School, the last stop of a fringe group of cultists seeking to escape the downfall of civilization . . . but when the Navy left, the system became a backwater, and economic ruin set in. To the rescue came the megacorporation Schunamann und Sohn AG, who took over the SDB School and turned it into a maximum security prison.

On a gas giant moon under miles of ice and water, this "escape-proof" prison is the final stop for 3,000 of the Imperium's worst scum, from corsairs to Ine Givar terrorists. But Darkmoon is no ordinary prison world . . . a prisoner who steps out of line may find that he's been reclassified "lab rat."



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
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The *GURPS Basic Set*, *GURPS Traveller*, and *GURPS Space* are required for full use of this book in a *GURPS* campaign. The background presented here will be of great value to any *Traveller* campaign, and will also serve as a source of inspiration for other SF games.

THE SURVEYORS:

Written by

DAVID L. PULVER

Based on the award-winning *Traveller* science-fiction universe by

MARC MILLER

Edited by

ANDREW HACKARD

Cover by

JESSE DEGRAFF

Illustrated by

DAVID DAY

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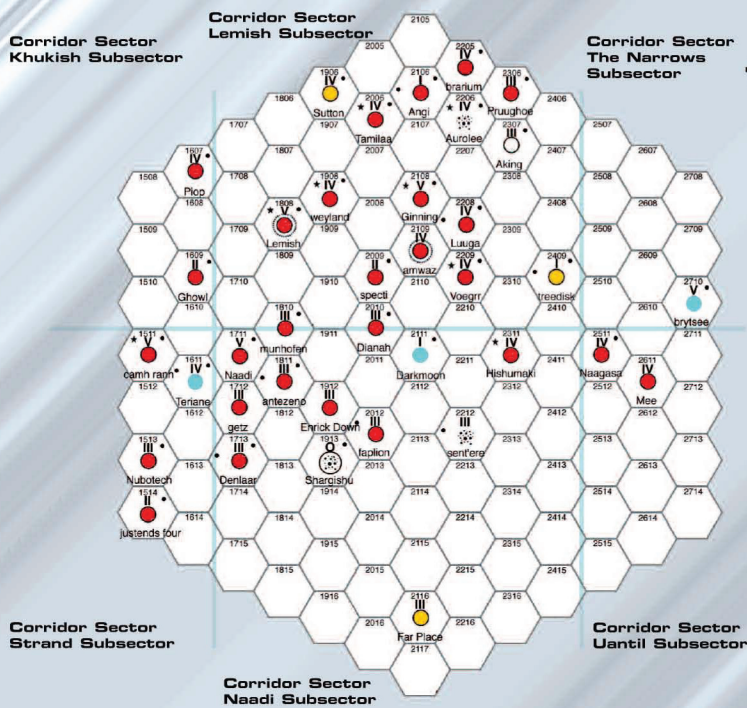


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the USA

Jump-6 Map for Darkmoon



LEGEND

Location

Starport

Gas Giant

World Type

Name

Travel Zone (amber)

Travel Zone (red)

Naval Base

Scout Base

World Types

- Asteroid
- Vacuum
- Desert
- Normal
- Water

Worlds with population over a billion are named in all caps. Worlds with population 10,000 or less are named in all lower-case, e.g., **faplion**. Worlds between these extremes are capitalized normally, e.g., **Darkmoon**.

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GURPS® Traveller®

Planetary Survey 6

DARKMOON™

THE PRISON PLANET

By David L. Pulver

Based on the award-winning Traveller science fiction universe by Marc Miller

Edited by Andrew Hackard, Steve Jackson, and Loren Wiseman

Additional material by Andrew Hackard

Cover by Jesse DeGraff

Illustrated by David Day

Additional illustration by Jesse DeGraff

Maps by Andy Akins, Alex Fernandez, and Heather Oliver

GURPS System Design ● STEVE JACKSON

GURPS Line Editor ● SEAN PUNCH

GURPS Traveller Line Editor ●

LOREN K. WISEMAN

Production Manager ● GENE SEABOLT

Page Design ● JACK ELMY

Production Artist ● HEATHER OLIVER

Creative Direction ● PHILIP REED

Prepress Assistance ● MONICA STEPHENS

GURPS Errata Coordinator ● ANDY VETROMILE

Sales Manager ● ROSS JEPSON

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Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other abbreviations are GT for *GURPS Traveller*, AT for *GURPS Atlantis*, T:AI for *Alien Races I*, CII for *GURPS Compendium II*, T:MC for *Modular Cutter*, T:RF for *Rim of Fire*, T:ST for *Starports*, UTT for *GURPS Ultra-Tech 2*, and VE for *GURPS Vehicles, Second Edition*.

For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

“Welcome to Darkmoon Imperial Prison. I am Warden Kaede Malone, and you are very lucky. Instead of a filthy prison mine, you’ve come to a state-of-the-art correctional facility.

“Darkmoon Prison is operated under Ministry of Justice charter by Schunamann und Sohn AG. Here you will work hard to repay your debt to society for the crimes you committed.

“I see mention that this is a SuSAG operation caused a stir. Don’t be afraid! SuSAG pharmaceuticals are all extensively tested on animals before any human trials begin. Also, while we encourage participation in these programs, Imperial regulations require us to offer an alternative vocational track. You may indicate a preference for bio-recovery work.

“Some of you are killers. Did you ever wonder who cleans up after you? Or recovers debris after an air/raft crash, or carts out the elderly pensioner who died alone in her apartment, no one realizing it until six weeks later? Now you know: SuSAG Bio-Recovery and Salvage Units. And now we are here – you are here – to clean up the biggest single mess this sub-sector has seen in 150 years. And maybe save some lives.”

Well off the frequently travelled space lanes lies an obscure system. Once used for naval exercises and scientific research, it’s now home to a primitive colony and a mysterious prison. Rumors about what happens inside Darkmoon prison range from slave labor to forbidden psionic research, from a corrupt drug-testing lab to a megacorp-sponsored treasure and salvage hunt. It seems the only way to learn the truth about Darkmoon is to go there . . .

How To Use This Book

The Planetary Survey books are not rules; they’re background, nearly system-free. They are designed as a series of adventure settings . . . not just worlds the PCs can visit, but also “offstage” places with their own history that can be used to drive adventures elsewhere. You can use this book:

☉ As is. Darkmoon/Corridor is an official *GURPS Traveller* world, tied in to the history of the Imperium. Take it and run.

☉ Elsewhere. If you like the setting but don’t want to take the party to Corridor, you can just uproot the world and put it somewhere else. Drop SuSAG and replace it with your favorite oppressive megacorporation, swap in your favorite subversive organizations, change the history of the world to fit your requirements.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David L. Pulver is a writer and *Transhuman Space* line editor at SJ Games. The author of over three dozen RPGs, worldbooks, and adventures, David resides in Victoria, B.C. His *Traveller* campaign ran from 1980 to 1991.

depth. At or beyond its test depth, roll vs. the vehicle's HT+2 each minute. Failure causes leak and pressure damage to the vehicle equal to 1d times (depth in yards)/70.

The crush depth of a vessel designed using *GURPS Traveller* is equal to $(DR+10) \times 3 / \text{Size Modifier}$. On a world similar to Earth this is measured in yards. In Darkmoon it is measured in increments of 7 yards, since gravity is only 0.14 G.

Unprotected exposure to the crushing pressure and freezing cold of Darkmoon's icy depths is normally instantly fatal. For details, see p. CII139 and p. CII144.

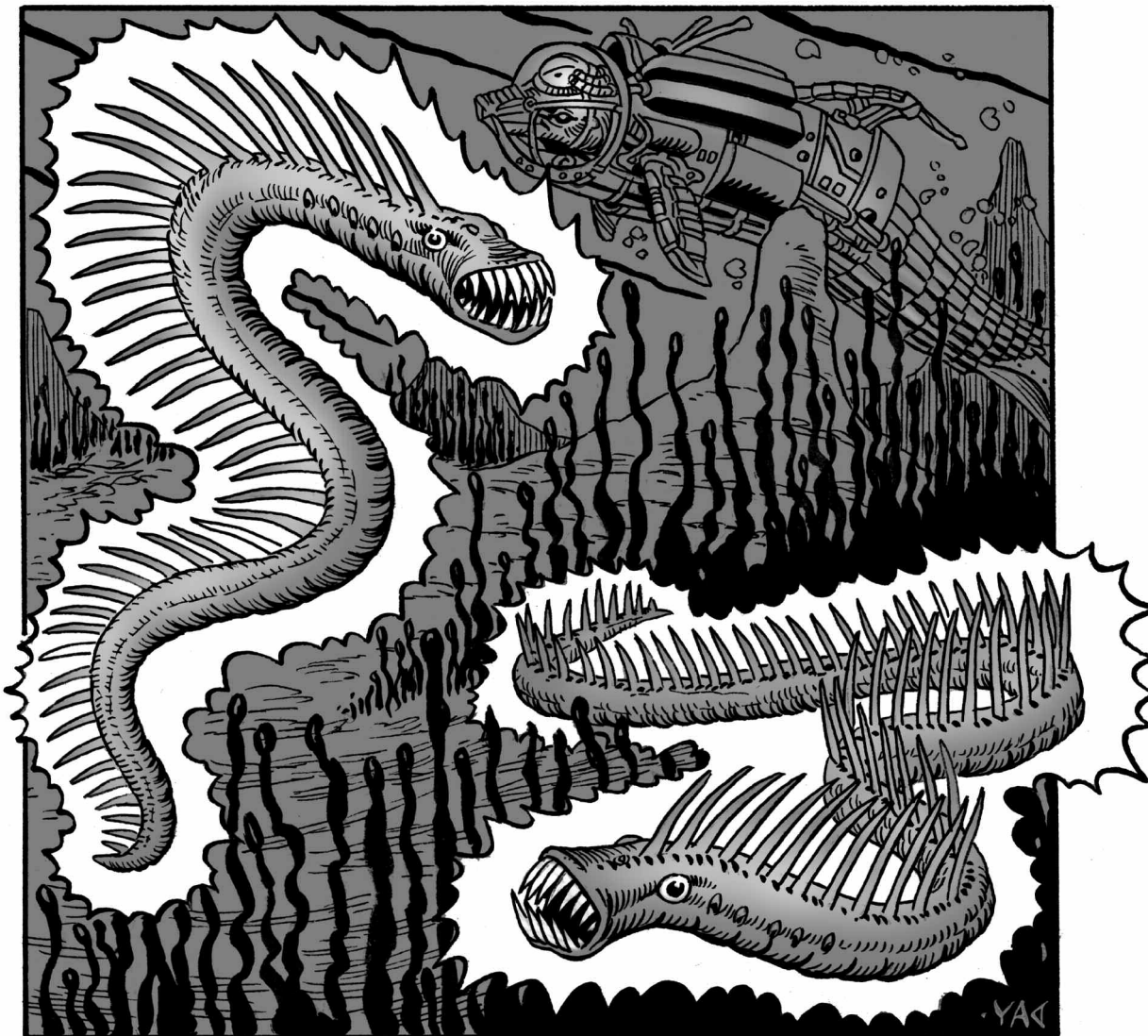
ANIMAL LIFE

All Darkmoon life forms are adapted to hundreds of atmospheres of pressure. They cannot survive in lower pressures, and would explode if suddenly exposed to Earth-normal pressure in an airlock. Two of the larger life forms are detailed below.

Moonrakers

ST: 4-7 **Move/Dodge:** 7/4 **Size:** 1
DX: 10 **PD/DR:** 2/2 **Weight:** 40-60 lbs.
IQ: 3 **Damage:** 1d-3 cut **Habitat:** S
HT: 14/4-7 **Reach:** C

The largest predators in Darkmoon's ocean, moonrakers live in the warm water zones around the chimney vents. A moonraker is a 6'-long worm-fish with a large, lamprey-like mouth and sharp bony teeth rather than suckers. They have multiple blade-like spines along their body, with bioluminescent cells that flash on and off constantly to attract prey. Moonrakers swim in schools of 2-5. They lay eggs and reproduce sexually. They feed on juvenile jelly flowers, tube worms, and other smaller vent-creatures. Moonrakers are curious and will follow aquapods or submarines, congregating in unusual numbers. A school of glowing moonrakers tagging along might make it difficult for a prisoner with a stolen aquapod to hide himself.



Deathly afraid of disease, she is inwardly terrified at being assigned to SuSAG's bio-recovery unit and cannot stand to look at dead bodies. However, she has nightmares of corpses rotting inside the faulty preservation units, and this drives her to overcome her fears and insist that the Arbie ark recovery process be given priority. As such, she insists on regular booster shots for all inmates (she'd give them Panimmunity, but the system can't afford it) and requires that each inmate undergo a physical checkup every week. This has a side effect of slightly reducing the likelihood of assaults, since it is harder for an inmate to conceal evidence of physical abuse.

Non-Prison Staff

A few individuals on Darkmoon are neither guards nor staff.

Ducal Household Representative: A representative from the subsector court at Naadi. His job is to ensure that salvaged property from the arks is properly catalogued. There is some tension between him and the SuSAG staff, since he's not in the prison's chain of command and his presence implies a certain distrust of SuSAG. He reports directly to the governor of Darkmoon and the Duke of Naadi, and has access but not authority. The current representative is Sir Bryan Galapagos, a noted antiquarian. When he's not cataloguing "our share of the loot" as he calls it

(much to the warden's annoyance), Sir Bryan is hobnobbing with guards or inmates to gather material for an opera he intends to compose, "the Great Arbie Hunt." Sir Bryan has intervened with the staff or guards on behalf of inmates he befriends or considers good source material.

Grief Counselor: SuSAG provides a pair of psychologists whose job it is to help rescued Arbies adjust. This is a stressful position with a high turnover rate.

Bio-Recovery Cadre: A team of six SuSAG bio-recovery and underwater salvage specialists are stationed on Darkmoon to train new prisoners in proper rescue, cadaver disposal, decontamination, and aquapod operation techniques. These are well-paid specialists, ambivalent about working with "amateur" prisoners. Some cadre members respect those inmates that make an effort to work hard (and may lobby on their behalf with staff or guards). Others are nervous or contemptuous. There's usually one bio-recovery cadre member assigned to each inmate team. As with grief counseling, this job has a high turnover. Some cadre have been assaulted or suffered accidents (or "accidents") while training or leading convict teams. Bio-recovery cadre members are not supposed to go armed, but most of them are fairly tough customers in a brawl, and a couple have prevailed on guards to let them carry illicit weapons.



Primary Skills: Guns (P/E) DX+2 [1]-13*; Holdout (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Judo (P/H) DX-1 [1]-10; Shortsword (P/A) DX [2]-12.

Secondary Skills: Administration (M/A) IQ [1]-10; Computer Operation (M/E) IQ [1]-11; Criminology (M/A) IQ [1]-10; Electronics Operation (Security or Sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-11; First Aid (M/E) IQ-1 [1]-10; Intimidation (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10. Four of Beam Weapons (P/E) DX+2[1]-13*; Guns (Light Automatic) DX+2 [1]-13*; Interrogation, Leadership, or Streetwise, all (M/A) IQ [1]-10; Detect Lies, Diplomacy or Psychology, all (M/H) IQ-1 [1]-9; or Shield (P/E) DX+1 [1]-12.

* Guns skill includes +1 for IQ.

Background Skills: A total of 6 points from Area Knowledge (Prison area) (M/E); Armoury (Any) or Fast-Talk (both M/A); Carousing (P/A); or Law (M/H). Prisons in inaccessible areas may have additional vehicle or outdoor skills; e.g., guards on Darkmoon have Pilot (P/A), Powerboat (P/A), or Vacc Suit (M/A).

Customization Notes: Choose advantages and secondary skills to reflect the guard's job within the prison. An ordinary guard would have the Alertness or Danger Sense advantages and the secondary skills Detect Lies, Interrogation, and Streetwise. A prison psychologist would have Criminology, Detect Lies, Interrogation, and Psychology, while a member of the DERT Sea Lion team would have the Combat Reflexes advantage and Beam Weapons, Diplomacy, and Guns (Light Automatic).



DARKMOON CAMPAIGNS

Darkmoon is an obvious destination for PCs who have fallen afoul of Imperial law and lived to tell about it. Mercs foolish enough to challenge Imperial Marines and lucky enough to survive, smugglers caught running Red Zones, captive pirates – all could end up in the Aquarium.

PRISON BREAK ADVENTURES

PCs sentenced to Darkmoon Prison will usually want to escape. It's not easy.

The guards are alert for trouble, and well-equipped to handle it. More importantly, Darkmoon Prison is under 10 miles of water. Outside these walls, the water pressure is 100 times that of a standard atmosphere. An unprotected person exposed to Darkmoon's oceans wouldn't last long enough to scream.

Even if an escapee made it to the surface, there's nowhere to go: no people, no food, no air . . . However, a sufficiently determined (or foolhardy) inmate might find a way.

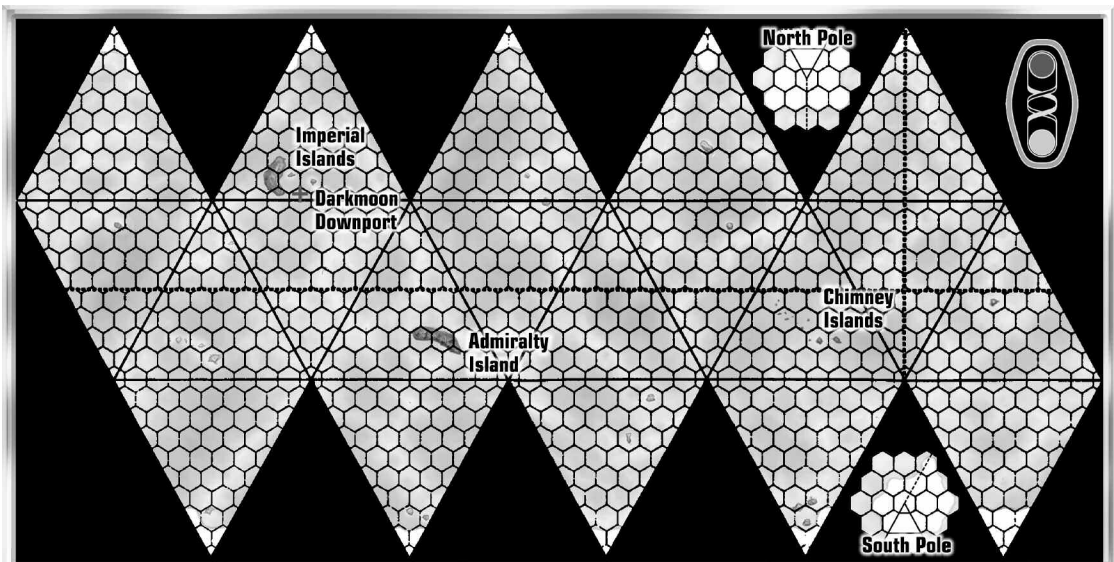
Stowaway on the Supply Boat

The weekly supply cutter (see *The Darkmoon Ferry*, p. 10) carries out everything from salvaged farm machinery to dead bodies each week. However, stowing away in a crate or something similar is an *obvious* security risk, so two different squads of guards perform checks; one supervises the initial packing of any cargo, the other its loading into the cutter. Loading often takes hours as guards meticulously sort through to ensure that there are no stowaways.

A would-be stowaway's best bet is to figure out a way to bribe or blackmail at least two guards, one in each squad. Then he needs to determine how to hide, and how to avoid suffocating or dehydrating or starving, especially if he ends up locked in a cargo hold. One possible way out that no one's tried yet is to impersonate an Arbie corpse: with suitable make-up and drugs (see *Fast Drug*, p. GT109) a prisoner might just pull it off. Then there's the question of what to do if the escapee makes it onto a cutter. Will he find a way to get out of the cargo hold, subdue the crew, and hijack the vessel, or will he gamble on escaping unnoticed when the cutter arrives at Tsenjia?

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Tsenjia

+ Starport