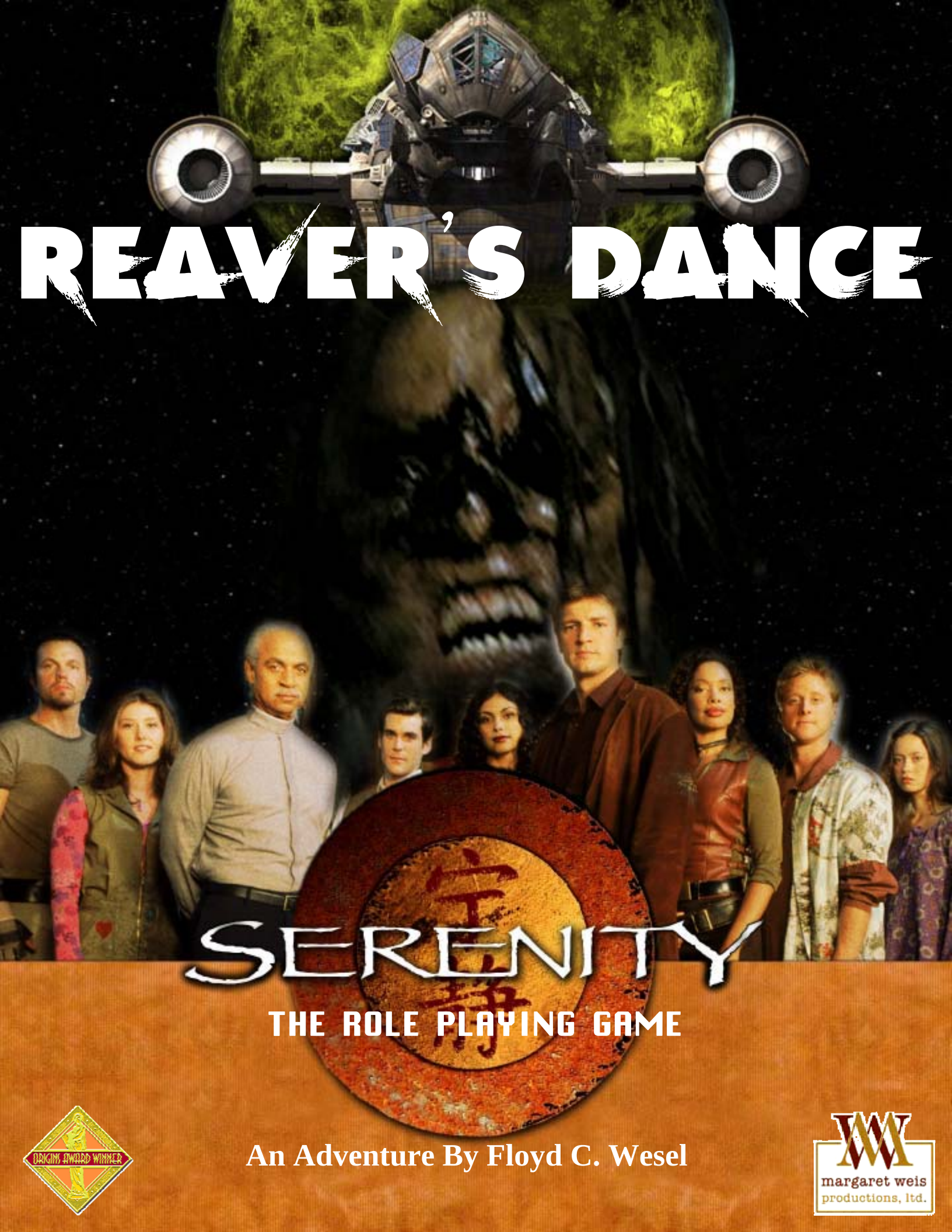




REAPER'S DANCE



SERENITY

THE ROLE PLAYING GAME

An Adventure By Floyd C. Wesel



A Gen Con 2006 Scenario for the

SERENITY ROLE PLAYING GAME

Scenario #02

REAPER'S DANCE

A Tale in Three Acts.

By Floyd C. Wesel

Prior to running, Gamemasters should read this event a few times to make sure that they have an understanding of the basic plot and—more importantly—have a chance to spot the moments and sections where they can really make the scenario shine for the players and their characters.

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Here's How It Is:

Here in lies the basic plot of the adventure scenario in its most basic and unblemished form.

Our adventure begins with Malcolm and the crew of *Serenity* in the middle of a firefight. Hired by the Mayor of Warlock, they have been tasked with dealing with a minor 'warlord' named Thorsoun. As the action begins Malcolm, Jayne and Zoe have snuck into Thourson's complex and started to sabotage the warlord's 'Skiff-Fighters'. Unfortunately someone spotted the three and the started shooting.

Back on *Serenity*, which is just on the other side of the ridge, Wash, Kaylee and Simon are waiting with several old pre-War missiles lying in the cargo bay. While *Serenity* doesn't have a launching rig, the missiles can be fired from the open bay doors. Just as the fighting started in earnest Inara and Shpeard Book jumped into her shuttle and launched in hopes of helping Malcolm and the others...despite Malcolm's explicit order's to the contrary.

Once the fight is one and the goram mercenaries are taken care of the crew of *Serenity* returns to the town of Warlock to discover that while they were away the town has been the victim of a greater evil: *Reavers*.

The Reavers fell out of the sky in one of their nightmare causing ships and attacked like a pack of savage beasts, killing some folk, pillaging and taking what they wanted. Worst of all the Reavers kidnapped a dozen or so young women from the town...including River Tam! Captain Reynolds and *Serenity* now must race to save Rover and the other girls before its too late, if it isn't already. After tracking the Reavers into a asteroid field, the Captain and his crew discover that the Reavers they'd been following aren't actually Reavers at all, but are a band of men—slavers—masquerading as them. Under the guise of the nightmare inducing Reavers they have harvested a fair crop of women for their trade.

After forming a plan, the crew of *Serenity* must sneak their way into the old asteroid mining complex and then find River and the girls, and then escape. To make matters worse, just as they get to River, a shipload of REAL Reavers come into the asteroid field, looking for prey.

Masters of the Game:

You'll notice as you read through the event that there are actually few to none of the hard "rules references" that you might normally find in an adventure. For example, you won't find things like, "Kaylee must make three separate DIFFICULT checks using her Intelligence + Technical Engineering in order to keep the ship from crashing."

This is because, to put it simply, there's just not the need to have them. The system is fluid enough and the skill list is simple enough that any circumstance that the heroes are in should dictate what skill the player should roll out. If there's a question, simply choose which ever sounds best to you. If all else fails tell the player to roll some dice or spend a Plot Point as you see fit and get back to the action.

The scenarios are really meant to showcase the fun that is playing in Mr. Whedon's "Verse". They are meant to be short—but sweet—stories that take a bit less time then a normal CON

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event slot to run. Teach people the rules of the game *as you play*. With all convention games the most important rule is to make sure everyone has a chance to do something special with their character and that everyone, including your self, has a great time.

Don't let something as minor as "the rules" slow down your game; in **Serenity** things happen at the speed of Plot (Points).

Casting Notes:

Here's a list of our cast and how and when they might have a moment to shine within our story. Also, any special notes or background information that you might need in specific for this adventure will be noted here.

Here's an option for you if your table is light of players. For the opening 'big action' sequence, use all of the cast, using the extra characters as NPCs for the fight, during that you can wound any extra characters to the point where Simon suggests that they stay behind in Warlock while the rest of the group goes on the rescue mission.

If you REALLY want to use River as a PC that's fine, just make sure to feed on the honor and decency of the crew to go rescue the town's daughters. Perhaps one is pregnant. Perhaps the town's daughter was carrying the gems that the town was going to pay Malcolm and his crew with.

Malcolm: One of his crew has been abducted by monsters. There is all kinds of drama in that for Mal's player. We should likely see a darker Malcolm in this adventure.

Zoe: Zoe will back Mal's play, but even so, going after Reaver's is crazy.

Wash: wash's big moment should be flying into the asteroid system and then flying to escape the real Reavers' ship when they how up.

Jayne: Going after River is just plain dumb to Jayne. Some conflict between him and Mal should be inevitable. Look for a pissing contest to happen here. Once in the fight, let Jayne shine.

Kaylee: Giving Kaylee a chance to be brave is essential. Also, having various problems on the ship while in the fight would be a really good way to showcase her stats.

Inara: Inara is a skilled shuttle pilot; she should likely be the one who flies the shuttle in close to the facility.

Book: Book is a man skilled in many different things, it seems. He should volunteer to go help River and the girls. Also, he could be a good motivational speaker to help the group come to terms with what they are about to do...go after a Reaver ship.

Simon: He'll do anything and go anywhere to save his sister.

River: River is not in the episode very much, save at the end. I recommend doing occasional "cut scenes" of how River is being treated or how she is reacting to her

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environment. They should range in being brutal to funny (as River's reactions to thing can be odd at times). Do not reveal the fact that the Reavers aren't Reavers through the cut scenes. In fact if anything they should be used to fool the players into thinking it is real. In the end, in hindsight of the adventure as a whole, they should be ambiguous.

Script:

Hand out a script to each of the players. Have them study their scripts for a few minutes and then have them read out their player character's lines. Read anything not specifically said by a Player Character.

ACT One:

In Media Res.

The Opening Script explains to the players that they are in the middle of a fight with some pretty bad men with some not small toys at hand. This is a big opening action sequence; give each player a chance to shine some. Basically, Malcolm and crew were hired to take out a War Lord Mercenary who had been terrorizing and lording over the town of Warlock. Malcolm came up with the plan of stealing the Skiff-Fighters and giving some payback to the Warlord. As one might expect, it didn't go down quite like that. Luckily Warlock's Mayor was able to give them a few old missiles to use.

The action has three fronts.

Jayne, Malcolm & Zoe are on the ground have to deal with some mercenaries and could possibly stop more of the Skiff-Fighters from taking off. Let at least one more Skiff-fighter take off. Have it go after *Serenity*.

Inara and Book are on the shuttle and they have to do some fancy flying to evade the first Skiff-Fighter. When the missile that Kaylee just fired just misses the craft have it turn on the *Serenity*. Inara and Book can maybe go back and help Malcolm.

Meanwhile Simon, Kaylee and Wash are on the *Serenity*. They have several missiles that they can try and use on the Skiff-fighters. Make them as effective as they need to dramatically be. Have the two Skiff-Fighters chase *Serenity*. Wash should get to fly and do some amazing stunts while Kaylee and Simon have to keep from falling out of the docking bay. Perhaps Simon falls out, but has a safety line...now Kaylee has drag him into the ship.

Let Jayne or Zoe or Malcolm get to the third (last) Skiff-Fighter and join the fight. They should take care of one, then get hit and have to punch out and parachute down.

Let Wash do a crazy maneuver that gives Kaylee and Simon a chance to get another missile off, which destroys the last Skiff-Fighter.

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Bad News At Warlock.

After the battle, cut to the town of Warlock. It looks like it has been attacked. We see *Serenity* parked there now, having just landed, Malcolm is coming out of the ship and sees several men, including the Mayor. They might think the Warlord got a surprise on them, but that isn't the case. The Mayor tells them that Reavers attacked them. A small Reaver ship came down out of nowhere and they came out like banshees, screaming and attacking folk and the like.

What's worse, the Reavers grabbed up and stole away with a dozen womenfolk, including River Tam, who had been left behind so that she wouldn't get underfoot while they had dealt with the Warlord's men. Plus, River had taken to the Mayor's daughter, Jenny, who has also been taken.

Some clues.

There's several things that are odd about this. The group could discover this if they look into things and talk to people. Don't give away details, let the players earn them.

- They took women that are between the age of 16-19. Twelve of them.
- They killed only 1 man (deputy of the town), but they did hurt about 10 others.
- They set some fires.
- They stole a bunch of various stuff; from food to tools to odds-n-ends.
- While a few were hurt, only one died. Other wounded were taken back onto the ship when they left.
- The body of the dead Reaver was found by the body of the dead Deputy, the Mayor's son. If Simon examines the body of the Reaver he should see that it had been frozen and thawed.

The Deputy was killed by the Sheriff, who is in cahoots with the "Reavers." The slavers got their hands on a actual dead Reaver and have kept him on ice to use to give their operation some authenticity. So the Sheriff killed his deputy and then they dropped the body next to the Deputy's.

ACT Two:

Tracking Reavers.

There's little doubt that Malcolm and the others won't go after River and the other girls. Allow the crew to follow the tracks left by the uncontained Reaver engine core. (Its not really uncontained, just an affect for show.)

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While they are in pursuit, the group should be allowed to digest what they are doing. They are, for all they know, going after a Reaver ship and planning on attacking it and rescuing a bunch of girls that might already be dead (if they are lucky). Make sure each and every character has this all pointed out to them.

Alliance Patrol Ship.

The Sheriff, worried that Malcolm will get into his business, has called the Alliance and told them of an attack and instead of blaming Reavers, he told them that a Firefly was involved. Luckily there's a patrol boat not too far away and it is going to intercept.

The Alliance is really not interested in talking.

At worst they'll attack and blow up *Serenity*, and then eat lunch. At best they'll board the ship, arrest the crew, throw them in lock up and auction off the ship at some point in the future. Not to mention that whole "we have Alliance fugitive Simon Tam, on board" problem.

The Captain simply won't be able to convince the Alliance as to what he's really doing. You should give Mal and the others the sense that Warlock called the alliance without directly saying so.

Luckily he's still got three missiles from the town in his hold, huh? If he and Jayne get into some vacuum suits, they can close off the docking bay and fire the missiles just like Kaylee and Simon did earlier. It'll take at least two of the three missiles they have to cripple the Alliance craft.

ACT Three:

The Asteroid Field.

Serenity tracks the Reaver ship to an asteroid field. They will lose the trail here, and will have to carefully navigate it, hoping their sensors can get through all of this rock and pick up on something. Eventually they will pick up some power reading on a large central asteroid. There's a mining complex.

This should be a tense ride. Making it tense and dangerous now, when the crew can go carefully and slowly through it will only make it that much more exciting when they have to go through it very fast at the tale end of the adventure.

Side Note: If you want to pay homage to *Empire Strike Back*, feel free to throw a few 'mynocks' on the hull; have Jayne and Zoe go out to clear them off. [Someone had to say it.]

Mining Facility.

Once they find the mining facility the crew should know that if they get too close, the Reavers could detect them. They could easily land *Serenity* on the same rock and then use a

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shuttle to fly a few feet over the surface of the asteroid and get close to the facility. Once up close they can enter through one of the airlock doors.

Serenity.

Is someone staying behind on *Serenity*? Who is flying the shuttle?

Facility Air Lock.

Getting to the facility from the landed shuttle isn't too difficult. Getting the door to open will be more difficult. It has not been used in a long time.

Once inside let them sneak about some. Play up the atmosphere. The facility has several levels to it and the Fake Reavers only use the bottom two, which connect to the docking bay. The upper levels have pretty much been left to rot. As soon as they enter the facility and go down one level, they'll lose radio connection to the shuttle and *Serenity*.

As they get deeper and deeper let them suddenly see a pair of Reavers come into view down the hallway.

Fake Reavers?

So there's a pair of Reavers standing a ways down and suddenly one of them looks at the other and asks him if he wants a "Fruity-Oatey-Bar." The other says something to the effect, "Is it boysenberry? I love boysenberry."

At this point the cast should realize that this is not normal and these men are not Reavers. If they capture the men they'll tell them that they are basically slavers and that their boss came up with the genius idea to do some collecting for the slave guilds. Their boss is a man named Waid. (If you want to have more fun with it, you can have Waid work for Niska.) They know nothing about the Sheriff.

Meanwhile...

Make sure you pull the players that got left behind to the side when you get to this point.

Back on *Serenity*, the sensor board goes off, revealing that a "Reaver Ship" is coming in. Who does the crew react? Have they been warned about the fact that the Reavers here are fake? The only problem is that this ship is not a fake; it's a real Reaver vessel filled with real (and real angry) Reavers!

Escape...

The crew now knows that they are not Reavers. But there's still a lot of men here, several dozen at the least, so Mal and the others will still need to be as covert as they can. Let them make their plan, make it as dramatic as possible.

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Let them get to the girls and then hit the scene with an alarm. This alarm is not about them, but is about the fact that a ship has been detected. A voice could come over the horn saying a ship is inbound. The crew might think its *Serenity*.

At about this time, have them being noticed and a fight break out. A few rounds into the fight have the voice on the intercom warn everyone that "REAL REAVERS!" are attacking.

A good tension "memorable moment" is to have a fake Reaver, looking all disgusting and evil, scream like a little girl and go running down the hall yelling, "Reavers! Reavers! We're all going to die."

Mal and the others have to get the girls to safety, so they can't drag out fight the slavers. They need to get away. Having River do some crazy stuff at this point is more than appropriate. Perhaps she picks Vera out of Jayne's hands and shots like four men dead with a small burst of the weapon...something crazy and scary, and truly helpful like that. Because it's always bad when weird and terrible things like that are *good*.

...and Evasion

Once they get back to the shuttle, they'll need to meet up with *Serenity*. This is where Wash gets to fly really fast through the asteroid field. They might have a missile they can fire. Really, the Reavers won't give much chase; they have a bunch of fake Reavers to do horrible things to in the name of dramatic irony.

Dénouement:

I'll shoot the Sheriff.

If time permits, feel free to run the revelation that the Sheriff is the bad guy in all of this. (He doesn't know Niska.) Several of the girls overheard the Fake Reavers talking about the Sheriff.

Or better yet, Have River, with her uncanny abilities, reveal that the Sheriff is guilt. She can do it with such authenticity that it causes the Sheriff to break and he tries to take a hostage (River, this time helpless-little-girl-River) always makes a good hostage. Make sure you give Simon a *chance* to shoot the Sheriff before Malcolm or anyone else.

The town Mayor should be very happy, the crew saved his daughter, and a dozen or so other girls from town and foiled the Reaver/Slavers plot and brought to justice the man who really killed his son. (Remember the Deputy was the Mayor's son.)

Stats & Mechanics:

SHERIFF BLAKE

Agi d6, Str d8, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d6, Wil d6; Life Points 14; Initiative d6 + d6. Traits: Wears a Badge (Minor Asset). Skills: Athletics d4, Guns d6/Rifle d10/Pistol d10, Influence d6, Knowledge d6/Law d8, Perception d6, Melee Weapon Combat d4.

WARLORD THORSOUN

Agi d8, Str d8, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d10, Wil d10; Life Points 18; Initiative d8 + d6. Traits: Friends in Low Places (Minor Asset), Leadership (Major Asset) Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d6/Streetwise d12/Stealth d10, Discipline d6/Interrogation d12/Mental Resistance d10, Guns d6/Shot Gun d12, Influence d6/Negotiation d10/ Intimidation d10, Knowledge d6, Melee Weapon Combat d6/ Knives d10, Perception d6/Black-Market Trends d10, Unarmed Combat d6.

WARLORD MERCENARY / PILOTS

Agi d10, Str d8, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d6, Wil d6; Life Points 18; Initiative d10 + d6. Traits: Yough As Nails (Major), Overconfident (Minor Complication). Skills: Athletics d6, Discipline d6/Interrogation d8, Guns d6/Pistol d8/Assault Rifle d8, Knowledge d4, Perception d6, Pilot d6/Skiff-Fighter d8.

REAVERS (FAKE)

Agi d8, Str d8, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d6, Wil d6; Life Points 14; Initiative d8 + d6. Traits: Crude (Minor), Greedy (Minor), Sadistic (Minor). Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d4, Discipline d4, Guns d6/Pistol d8/Shot Gun d8, Influence d4, Knowledge d4, Melee Weapon Combat d6, Perception d6.

REAVERS (REAL)

Agi d8, Str d10, Vit d10, Ale d8, Int d6, Wil d10; Life Points 24; Initiative d8 + d8. Traits: Tough as Nails (Major Asset), Fightin' Type (Major Asset), Sadistic (Major Complication). Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d6/Stealth d8, Discipline d6, Guns d6/Pistol d8, Perception d4, Melee Weapon Combat d6/Knives d10/Club d8, Unarmed Combat d6/Brawling d10. Special Note: If Reavers feel pain, they are not hindered by it—but rather thrive on it. Reavers ignore the effects of Stun damage, and do not suffer Wound penalties for injuries. (They will, however, suffer penalties for obvious physical problems. A Reaver whose arm has been severed can only attack with one arm!)

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Script:

EXT. SETTING SUN. THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON OF WARLOCK. DEEP INSIDE THE RUGGED TERRAIN A SMALL COMPLEX SITS. WE SEE SIGNS OF A FIRE-FIGHT GOING ON BETWEEN SEVERAL STRUCTURES. THERE'S A TRIO OF THREE SMALL AIRCRAFT "SKIFF-FIGHTERS", A COMBINATION OF HELICOPTER AND FIGHTER-PLANE. ONE OF THEM EXPLODES BRILLIANTLY, LIGHTING UP THE DARKENING SKY. THE LIGHT REVEALS SEVERAL PEOPLE PINNED DOWN BEHIND SOME BOXES AS MEN COME AT THEM FIRING MACHINE GUNS.

JAYNE:

(looks over cover and immediately gets shot at, pissed)

"I'm plumb out of grenades, should'a brought the gorram crate."

MALCOLM:

(laughs ironically as he reloads)

"I did sort of imagine this going a mite easier than this."

JAYNE AND ZOE LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER.

JAYNE & ZOE:

(in unison)

"You would."

ZOE:

"No way we can make it away from here sir, without being holified and all. What I wouldn't give for a sniper to cover us."

JAYNE:

"Now that's something that never gets old."

MALCOLM & ZOE:

"Huh?"

JAYNE:

"Shooting people from far away and them not being able to do nothin' about it." (chuckles) "Good times."

MALCOLM:

"Here they come!"

MALCOLM, JAYNE AND ZOE DEFEND IN WHAT LOOKS TO BE A ALAMO MOMENT, JAYNE AND ZOE ARE HIT AND IT LOOKS BAD WHEN SUDDENLY A SHUTTLE FROM SERENITY COMES DOWN ALMOST ON TOP OF THE ADVANCING MEN.

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MALCOLM:

(Yelling into radio as he stands there)

"I thought I told you stay back!"

INARA:

(Flying shuttle.)

"Yeah, I am going to let your inferiority complex dictate that I let you die."

BOOK:

(standing behind Inara)

"Perhaps we could concentrate on the flying of the shuttle that the Shepherd is in and not so much on the lover's spat?"

INARA and MALCOLM:

(In Unison)

"What?!"

BOOK:

"*G'en ho tze bi dio se.*"

INARA:

"Shepherd Book, language!"

BOOK POINTS AND INARA FOLLOWS THE GESTURE UNTIL SHE SEES ONE OF THE SKIFF-FIGHTERS BEGIN TO LIFT OFF THE GROUND, WE SEE IT CLEARLY HAS SEVERAL WEAPONS ON IT.

INARA:

"*G'en ho tze bi dio se.*"

MALCOLM:

"Inara get my gorram shuttle out of here. Now!"

INARA:

"It's only your shuttle when I'm late with my payment!"

ZOE:

(Into Radio)

"Wash baby, we need us some *Serenity*, if you please."

WASH:

(Over Radio)

"We're here, Zo', and we're ready..."

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WE SEE SERENITY COME UP FROM BEHIND A MOUNTAIN RIDGE. AS IT COMES UP WE SEE THE BAY OPENING.

WASH:

(Over ship intercom to Simon and Kaylee)

"...we are ready, right? Because if we're not...then *juh guh jee hua juhn kuh pah.*"

KAYLEE:

"We're ready, Wash. Tell Inara to get out of there quick like."

IT'S AT THIS POINT THAT WE SEE KAYLEE AND SIMON HAVE SEVERAL LONG TUBES...MISSILES!...LINED UP ON THE DECK OF SERENITY AND LOOK TO BE OF A MIND TO FIRE THEM AT THE SKIFF-FIGHTER AS IT TURNS ITS GUNS ON THE SHUTTLE.

SIMON:

"This is crazy!"

KAYLEE:

"Shhh! I'm trying not to shoot Inara and Book, if you don't mind. Now help me get this scanner lock. It's hard enough that these things are older than *Earth-That-Was* itself."

SIMON:

"I'm a doctor, why am I shooting the *missiles*, again?!"

KAYLEE:

"Goramit Simon, get your *kuh ai* ass over here!"

SIMON:

"Okay! Okay! *Juh shi suh mo go dihnng shee!*"

WE SEE A SKIFF-FIGHTER SILHOUETTE APPEAR ON THE SCANNER. IT SHIFTS FOR A FEW MOMENTS, IT BEEPS A LOCK, KAYLEE HITS A BUTTON (saying, "Sorry" as she does it) AND SUDDENLY ONE OF THE MISSILES AT THEIR FEET LAUNCHES AWAY.

SIMON:

(looks at Kaylee)

"Did you just say my ass was 'cute'?"