

Within the Glove

Tom Gondolfi

Jinbaro 'Slaughter' Shana sat absently rubbing his ear fins. He nearly floated on his chair in the 0.1G of his asteroid ship, the *Black Rain*. Production reports continued to fill most of his time, but it was boring. Profitable, but boring. He knew he had enough time to indulge in his favorite and most productive hobby. A particularly exciting one, but one he couldn't practice very often. Creating a stronger Caravan through fear.

He savored some of the victories of the past. Jindavo Kalp was his first, some three hundred years ago. That had been a simple and blunt murder. He had become more subtle since. Poison in the food for Jindavo Jel, faulty rebreather for Jindavo Pol, an alien assassin for Hort, the spy tempting members of Jindavo Torin's crew.

"Astor."

"Yes, sir," said his personal assistant, as he floated into the room on command. That his lackey was his nephew made no matter. Nearly everyone on the *Black Rain* was his relative.

"I need the efficiency reports on the Caravan," he said, not even looking up from the latest mining estimates. He didn't see the dark look from Astor.

"Yes, sir." Astor knew this time had to come. Every thirty or forty years Shana asked for the efficiency reports. Shortly after this, one of the Jindavos would be executed or assassinated. All in the theory that the least efficient Jindavo wasn't worth keeping anyway, and the terror it inflicted improved the Caravan. Astor knew his uncle's views for a fact. He had heard it from the klogen's mouth enough at after dinner discussions at his family's home.

Nearly two hundred years he had spent working into the good graces of the Jinbaro Slaughterer. Now he would make that time pay.

He swam out to the record room and removed the proper report and a small vial that he kept locked in a nearby drawer, just for this time. It was a simple and foolproof plan. By night, there would be a new Jinbaro. One who would nurture Kleptic and bring it to life once more.

He was prepared to die to remove the menace from the Caravan. Besides, his brother would be promoted to Jindavo, and his family once again would become one of power. This was a thing worth his life and the life of another, but he hoped he would live to revel in the rewards it would bring and the revitalization of the Caravan.

He slipped on the scale tight gloves, made to look like his own scales. He then carefully brushed on the light oil contact poison on the report casing. One touch would doom the Jinbaro to death. Not an especially speedy one, but oblivion non-the-less, and the Caravan would flourish.

For seven hundred years the Kleptic Caravan had not had a single schism of power, until Shana took power. Then good men dropped like flies. They had lost three ships in the last ten years alone. It was time to amend the balance of Kleptic with a new Jinbaro.

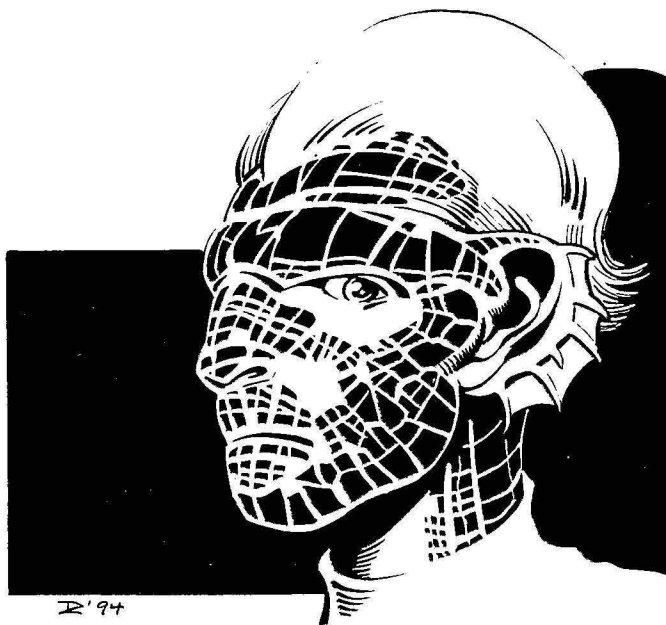
Oh, to have his family bring this Caravan to prosperity again, instead of the abysmal poverty of Slaughter's three hundred and fifteen year reign. This was a goal of the Gods themselves.

A few moments passed.

"Here are your reports, sir," Astor said as he floated in.

"Send a message to Jindavo Brita to move his ship to the asteroid belt of the Siltra region. The value of the claim has dropped too far," Shana said, taking the reports without hardly even looking up.

"I'm afraid I can't do that, sir."



"Oh?" Shana swung outward with surprising dexterity and speed and slapped the reports across Astor's face. A tiny trickle of vermilion blood formed at the point of impact, barely rupturing the dark brown skin. This was not an uncommon discipline from the Jinbaro, and as a result, Astor knew he now also was dead. But he had long since resigned himself to the possibility. "I said do it."

"No. There will be no more mysterious deaths brought about by your spies and assassins. You and I are both dead."

"Really? How? I'm intrigued. You, Astor?"

"No longer will you sap the strength of this Caravan. The poison is on the reports. There is no antidote for our kind."

"Amazing. Well, tell me, Astor. Who was it? Who promised you fame and fortune?" Astor remained silent and sullen. He was savoring what victory he could. "Well, if we're truly dead, then you are not harming anyone, are you?"

"I guess not. Jindavo Jal and Jindavo Iltho. Jindavo Jal has already been chosen to be the new Jinbaro. We have had this planned for thirty-two years since you, out of hand, destroyed Jindavo Nar."

"Very interesting, Astor. And with me gone, your family rises to power as a Jindavo of this vessel. How clever."

"Was the rest of your family in on these exciting events?" Astor was feeling weak. The poison was burning in his veins. He didn't understand how Shana could stand the pain. "No. Just myself and the two Jindavos."

"Too bad you will not be there to enjoy the new strength of the Caravan without the bloodsucker." Astor curled up into a ball, the equivalent to a collapse to an earth-bound creature. The cartilage in his body was calcifying, turning his necessarily flexible skeleton to bone. He was no longer able to breathe.

Astor watched as the life ebbed from his body. Jinbaro Shana carefully washed his hands in a nearby receptacle. He then peeled his own scale-like gloves and tossed them down upon him. "It does credit me to have my own spies, Astor."

"In actuality, there is an antidote for that poison. It was developed when I learned of your plans some twelve years ago." Shana watched the squirming Astor. Struggling for life giving breath with a chest that would not yield as it should. "You will receive the antidote and then suffer a fate worse than a death of rigid bones. You and your traitorous allies will be cast out, marooned at the next outpost we pass. Without a ship-home, without a family, without a Caravan."

Salvagers – Jindarians in Prime Directive

Most Jindavos will form (or allow to form, the distinction is unclear) a group of unusually competent and individualistic Jindarians into a special team known as "Salvagers". Salvagers are usually found in bands of about six and are of unusually high intelligence and agility. Salvager bands serve as elite fighters in wartime and act as explorers and trouble-shooters in unusual situations.

The name Salvagers seems to have evolved from the Jindarian practice of giving over a special share of any recovered goods or material to the members of the ship or Caravan that actually go into a wrecked ship or derelict.

While certainly not a complete analog for Prime Teams, Jindarian Salvagers are the only things that come close.

STANDARD JINDARIAN CHARACTER TEMPLATE

STR -2 LDR -2 INT -3 TEC -3 PER -2
ACC -3 LGC -2 DIS -3 GKN -4 SPD -2

All Jindarians have Zero Gravity Maneuvering with a Skill Level equal to TWICE their Accuracy characteristic. (Note: This is an exception to the normal skill/stat limit and reflects the special adaptations brought about by the many centuries the Jindarians have spent in little or no gravity.) Standard Jindarians move at half-speed when wearing gravity suits.

JINDARIAN SALVAGER CHARACTER TEMPLATE

STR -3 LDR -3 INT -4 TEC -3 PER -3
ACC -4 LGC -3 DIS -4 GKN -5 SPD -3

Jindarian Salvagers suffer no movement penalties when wearing gravity suits.

JINDARIAN WEAPON – THE ENTANGLER

While the Jindarians use hand weapons "salvaged" from other races, they do possess a unique weapon of their own. The Entangler is designed to restrain their enemies, rather than to physically harm them, and fires a bolo of fine wires covered with contact adhesives and numerous weights. While the Entangler does no damage, it *does* immobilize its target. As a result of this special attack, the Entangler uses the following special effects by SL rather than inflicting D#s.

Complete SL – Target is completely snared by the Entangler attack. A character snared in this manner is incapable of movement and, except for trying to break free of the Entangler (as described below), may perform no action that requires the character to move in any way. A character may attempt to break free each action by performing a Strength Characteristic RRT using the "point system", described on page 41 of the Rulebook. At this SL, the Entangler is assumed to have a Strength Characteristic of 8 for the purposes of the RRT. A character must reach a score of 5 to break free from the Entangler. If a character's "score" is ever reduced to negative 3 or below, he is no longer capable of freeing himself from the Entangler and must wait for someone to free him instead.

Moderate SL – Target is significantly snared. A character who has been snared to this degree has his Movement reduced to 0 (i.e., he cannot move from his current location) but may perform other physical actions, including all Defensive Actions, with a Flat +4 mod. A character may attempt to break free each action by performing a Strength Characteristic RRT using the "point system". At this SL, the Entangler is assumed to have a Strength Characteristic of 5 for the purposes of the RRT. A character must reach a score of 5 to break free from the Entangler. If a character's "score" is ever reduced to negative 3 or below, he is no longer capable of freeing himself from the Entangler and must wait for someone to free him instead.

Minimal SL – Target has been only partially snared, and while this impedes his movement somewhat, it does not prohibit it altogether. The character may now only move at one-third of his normal Movement, down to a minimum of 1 meter. A character with a Minimal LoA may not move at all. While the character is snared, all his physical actions are resolved with a flat +2 mod. The character may attempt to strip the Entangler from his body. This attempt to break free may be performed each action by performing a Strength Characteristic RRT using the "point system". At this SL, the Entangler is assumed to have a Strength Characteristic of 3 for the purposes of the RRT. A character must reach a score of 5 to break free from the Entangler. If the character's "score" is ever reduced to negative 3 or below, however, then he has accidentally gotten himself wrapped up even tighter into the mess! Assume that the Entangler attack is now resolved as a Moderate SL, as described above.

Failure – Misses the target. However, the Entangler round still goes somewhere, and the GM must determine just exactly who — or what — it hits!

Botch – The Entangler either misfires or fails to expand as it leaves the weapon.

NOTE – A single target that is struck by numerous Entangler rounds is not at a cumulative penalty for each round that hits him. Rather, the character must successfully break free of each round in order to start dealing with the next. In this case, start with the highest SL hits and work your way down to the next lower level, and then the next, etc. Also, it requires only 1 action to cut someone else out of each Entangler round if the assisting character has a knife or some other cutting object. (Using a phaser or other energy weapon is not recommended.) A character struck by a Complete SL Entangler requires 2 rounds of cutting per such attack to free himself.

