

G U R P S



Roleplaying in the Universe created by J. Michael Straczynski

"Babylon 5 was the last of the Babylon stations. There would never be another. It changed the future .. and it changed us....."

It taught us that we have to create the future , or others will do it for us. It showed us that we have to care for one another, because if we don't, who will? And that true strength sometimes comes from the most unlikely places.

Mostly, though, I think it gave us hope .. that there can always be new beginnings .. even for people like us"

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1 - INTRODUCTION

THE BABYLON-5 FEELING

The story told in the *BABYLON 5* television series is the story of the struggle of Humans to become more than we are, to achieve a destiny nobler than we know. Set at the dawn of the third age of mankind, it is the story of Humanity's quest to live up to its full potential. In many ways, it is the story of Human history, where fallible and real characters plot and scheme, live and die, and try to leave their mark on the world. In other ways, *BABYLON 5* is a modern-day myth; an epic tale where heroes, born to fate and forged of necessity, overcome their own fears and limitations to fulfill a great and valorous destiny despite the overwhelming odds arrayed against them. It is a world that blends epic tales from our past, hopeful expectations of our future, and characters who remind us very much of our present, to captivate us in its scope and form. It is a tale of a world close to our own, told on an epic scale, a world where one or a few people can change the course of destiny.

Playing *BABYLON 5* is not about telling the same story as the television show—rather, it is used to tell the same types of epic stories against the same broad setting. While the main characters of the television series are epic heroes whose deeds shape the future of the galaxy, their story is not the only one that might occur in the universe behind the show. Events happen all over known space that affect the course of history, both to heroes and to normal people alike. Some of these dramatic events go unnoticed, and sometimes the repercussions echo over an entire galaxy. The characters created for and played in this game are not the main characters in the show, and their part in the overall events of the setting are different than those of characters such as Captain Sheridan, Commander Sinclair or Delenn.

So if players don't follow the story from the television series, what might their stories be about? The potential is infinite: in an outpost on the edge of Human space, characters may bravely repel an attack from a new alien race, then struggle to convince their leaders to sign a treaty with Humanity. The pilots and escorts of a freighter of medical supplies might drive off a raiding party, saving a Centauri colony from certain death. Whatever the story, it is a part of the tapestry of events that fill out the universe behind the show. The characters in the game are realistic people, complete with friends and families, interests of their own and personal quirks, who are thrust into the events around them and whose destiny is to defeat their enemies and live up to their own unique potential. Their fate plays a part, but it is ultimately up to them to use teamwork and their personal strengths to overcome their limitations and prevail over the obstacles in front of them. The *Babylon 5* station is the central setting of the television series, which concentrates mainly on the characters who inhabit and affect that station. But it's a big galaxy, and events all over known space affect the lives of millions. This game allows you

to tell your own story in this future of mankind, and although *Babylon 5* is an important crossroads to interstellar commerce and travel, most likely you and your play group will want to center your campaign of stories in another place or another time, where the exploits of your characters affect the galaxy in other ways than those of the show's featured characters.

HUMAN HISTORY AND THE BABYLON PROJECT

The story of the Human expansion from a lone planet to an alliance that spans over two dozen star systems is the tale of two hundred and fifty years of struggle, exploration and diplomacy. A testament to a race that thrives on challenge and that loves the unknown, it is a story that begins just around the corner.

Early in the twenty first century, technical problems resulted in the abandonment of Space Station Freedom. However, the completion of the first truly permanent space station, Station Prime, in the mid twenty-first century signaled a new enthusiasm for space travel among the nations of the world. This inspired an unprecedented cooperation in efforts to create a permanent colony on another world. The efforts of new visionaries gave the nations of the world a renewed sense of wonder. The moon again became Humankind's bold frontier, with several exploration missions that heralded the return of Human footsteps on the lunar surface. The Earth's first permanent outworld colony was established on the Sea of Tranquility in late 2064. With the excitement of the founding of Armstrong Colony, the perennial movement to colonize Mars gained considerable momentum, and a new alliance of nations signed economic and political treaties with the goal of a self-sufficient colony on Mars. Under the banner of this new Earth Alliance, the world had a united goal of settling Mars by the end of the century.

"The stars are our future, and we take the journey there as a united Earth for the first time in history," said Earth Alliance president Daniel Piezanni on the eve of the launch of the first family ship to settle the red planet. True to the goal, a permanent colony was founded in early 2090. It was plagued by problems in the early years, not the least of which was an attack by radical anti-colonist terrorists which destroyed the main dome, killing all of the colony's civilian population. A truly stable, self-sufficient colony was not established until 2105. Following the eventual success of its Mars Colony, the Earth Alliance became the dominant government on Earth, catalyzing the failure of the United Nations. The more successful Alliance's government and military went farther than ever before in breaking the bonds of racial, social and cultural tension that had long kept many of the nations of the world at war. It was not the ideal model of peace, but the Alliance's programs of exploration and settlement galvanized the world.

The colonization of the Moon and Mars allowed Humans to look further out into the unknown, and early in the twenty-second century scientists began to seriously suspect something that had long been a subject of speculation and fancy; that we were not alone in the galaxy. Weak radio transmissions had always been thought to be simple background radiation from

the galaxy, but the actual discovery of faster-thanlight particles called tachyons led to the detection of real signals that indicated intelligent life.

Limited by the vast distances between stars, Humanity's main thrust of exploration was confined to the solar system. Orbital stations were built near Jupiter and Saturn, and Station Prime in orbit of Earth was constantly expanding. A new breed of frontier people began to form, whose needs and concerns differed from those back home. The Alliance, although generally responsive to their needs, was sometimes at odds with factions on one colony or another, but the common purpose of exploration and growth generally kept the peace.

Despite these shared goals, the Earth Alliance was in danger of fracturing. The economy of Earth had irrevocably shifted during the fifty years of the solar system expansion. By the time the last feasible planets and moons in the solar system had been colonized, as in ancient Rome, the lack of future habitable sites caused economic unrest and strife among the colonies and nations of the Alliance. The epitome of this unrest was a terrorist nuclear bombing of San Diego in 2150. To keep the economy stable while quelling the unrest, the next logical step the Alliance could take was to explore other stars.

Unfortunately, despite much speculation from fiction writers, Humanity had never managed to discover a way to travel faster than light, and as such, trips to other stars in one lifetime were impossible. However, with the discoveries of tachyon emissions and with new advances in medical technology, a few brave souls set out on centuries long journeys in cryogenic suspension to attempt to reach far-flung stars and perhaps contact any unknown alien races that might exist among them. These deep space exploration ships were the first serious attempt to find others, and as circumstance turned out, also the last. Because after centuries of outreach and speculation, it was not Humanity that contacted other races, but one of them that contacted us.

Meeting The First Alien Races

All speculation as to the existence of alien races was put to rest in the spring of 2155. In that year, Humanity had first contact with sentient alien life. A passing patrol ship from another race detected the signals from Humanity's colonization efforts, and reported back to its command via tachyon link, an instant form of interstellar communication. Days later, on April 7, the crew of a freighter passing cargo from Earth to Mars were the first Human witnesses of a jump point as a cruiser from this new race arrived in the Sol system with its escort.

In the initial confusion of this momentous event, members of the media assumed that the aliens were from Alpha Centauri, Sol's nearest neighbor, and took to calling this new race the Centauri. As each race began to learn the other's language, it was round that this was not true. The Centauri told Humanity of their glorious Republic, a vast empire that dominated hundreds of Planets in this sector of space.

The physical similarities between Humans and Centauri were amazing, and the Centauri were happy to help their "long-lost cousins" learn to travel the stars. In exchange for some artifacts of "native" culture, the Centauri allowed Humankind

to use faster than light travel and communication, and constructed a jump gate for Human use in orbit of Earth. This gate served as Humanity's primary conduit to other stars until the Alliance built its own gate in orbit of Jupiter several decades later. Under this leased use of the Centauri's jump gate, Earth finally began its full scale expansion of the stars.

The suspicion that the galaxy was home to other intelligent life was more than proven, and in those first few years Humans visited dozens of races in their galactic vicinity and made many fascinating discoveries. The major powers near Earth's solar system were the Centauri Republic and the Narn Regime who each spanned dozens of worlds, but there were also several cultures of only one or two worlds each, not aligned with these two major powers.

With contact opened to all of these races, Human scientists finally got a sample of Centauri DNA. Despite their claim, it turned out that aside from the physical similarities that the Centauri played up, they were in no way related to Humans. The Centauri were also a republic of only about a dozen worlds, far from the height of their power. As this information became public, the Centauri found their relationship with Humanity shifting. They agreed to sell outright the secrets of constructing jump gates and tachyon transmitters to Humans.

Interstellar Travel

With the secrets of interstellar travel and a system-wide economy geared toward expansion, Humanity reached for the stars with vigor. The Centauri contact occurred at the peak of Human expansion within the Sol system, and jumpgates allowed existing Earth ships to travel the stars with very little modification. From the acquisition of jumpgate technology in 2161 to the end of the century, Humans established twelve colonies on worlds at nearby stars, with six more outposts in systems with no remotely habitable planets. The young race's star began to rise as it left the Sol system, its home.

The era of interstellar travel brought new challenges to the Human race. Possessing the designs for jumpgates and tachyon transmitters was not the same as having the finished product, and a new field of exploration and manufacturing opened up based on implementing these new technologies. The key compound in constructing jumpgates was a rare metal known as Quantum-40, which was found in very small amounts in Sol's asteroid belt, but not in any significant amount anywhere else in the system. As a result, the first priority of Earth's new technology in the 2160's was to build ships capable of navigating the hazardous expanses of unexplored hyperspace, to find new star systems with more deposits of the valuable Q-40. This was no easy task, nor was it inexpensive.

Established links and beacons already in hyperspace were not difficult to follow, even for pilots and crews new to the experience. However, they led only to stars that had been explored and settled by other races. In order to explore and claim stars of its own, Humanity had to use the technology it had learned to build jump engines of its own.

A ship attempting to reach new stars had to navigate the quickly shifting eddies and unpredictable gravity inclines of hyperspace to a spot where a star was believed to be and open a

jump point into the system using its own jump engines. Jump engines required enormous amounts of power, and any ship large enough to house its own jump engine and the power generators to support it was expensive and hard to build. Once a system was entered, the first ship would build a jumpgate and beacon for later ships, and continue on to another system. Unfortunately, even these behemoth ships were not immune to the ravages of hyperspace, and some were lost there, never to be seen again. The first presence Humans established outside the Sol system was an orbital station in the Proxima Centauri system, a system that was not inhabited despite the similarity in name to mankind's beneficiaries. Compared to Sol, the Proxima system was rich in Q-40, and enough was found to supply the Alliance with the materials for jumpgates for most of the nearby systems. The Proxima system also provided Humanity's first chance to settle an outsystem world. On June 10, 2165, Proxima III became the Alliance's first frontier world.

Even after a jumpgate was opened, settling a system was a difficult process at best and a dangerous prospect at worst. Flush off of the success in the Proxima system, the next attempts at settlement included the Barnard's Star, Sirius B and Procyon A systems. The Barnard system provided small amounts of Q-40 and an excellent planet for colonization. Within months, a colony was established without problem. In the Sirius B system there were no suitable planets, but a station was established near the third planet, which was rich with all manner of metals and minerals. At Procyon A, there was no detectable Q-40 in the system, but the second planet seemed habitable. Scouting missions to the planet provided a perfect location, and a colonization team went to the planet. Two days after they arrived, all communication from the fledgling colony suddenly stopped, and the jumpgate stopped responding to ships in hyperspace—resulting in the loss of several ships. When a ship finally jumped into the system, the jumpgate apparatus was there but non-functional, and the colony had been abandoned. Not a soul remained, although there was no sign of attack or disaster. The Procyon A system was a deadly reminder that space exploration could be a great risk. Despite the hazards and losses of life such as those on Procyon A II, Human expansion continued. With the jumpgate at home now available to all Humans and new jumpgates being built at stars nearby, all sorts of groups and ventures sent ships outward into the galaxy. As is often the way with exploration, claim jumping and small squabbles, as well as the occasional bad encounter with an alien ship, made the Human frontier a dangerous place to live. It quickly became clear that some control and organization was needed if the Human race was to survive in space.

The Earth Alliance was to be that organization. The EA headquarters in Geneva became the coordination center for all offplanet operations. From Earthdome, the Alliance maintained the definitive records of off-planet holdings, from privately owned mining settlements and resort stations to independent nation-colonies and Earth Alliance stations. As the Earth Alliance began smoothing out the colonization process and establishing borders with aliens, more colonies and stations were founded. The larger colonies were those only one jump away from alien space, where trade of materials, technologies and cultures became very popular and, for many people,

profitable. Of these, the largest colonies were Orion VII and Proxima III. These two colony worlds became Earth's chief outsystem trade centers, with ever growing domed cities being built and settled as people arrived and prospered.

Earthforce and Military History

As the Earth Alliance took on the roles of administration of colonial claims, it became evident that some sort of peacekeeping force was needed to enforce this authority. This peacekeeping militia, called Earthforce, had a very large defense charter and required more manpower than any single nation could provide alone, becoming a multinational organization. Earthforce became guardian of and peacekeeper between the various Human settlements in many different systems.

As Earth's sphere of influence gradually expanded, more and more people began to travel among the stars, and the Earth Alliance became not only a noticeable political influence in the galactic community but also a protector of the Human race. Earthforce became one of the most important organizations in the Earth Alliance, protecting Human interests and defending Human lives from those that would harm them. Individual nations' military forces were downsized even further as the need for more defense on various colony worlds and in Earth-claimed systems increased. Even so, Earthforce was spread dangerously thin over the new stars.

This need for more defense forces outsystem prompted Earthdome to reexamine the Sol system. The old Centauri gate in orbit of Earth was deactivated (eventually to become part of a living museum of space travel history), and the first of a new Human-designed model of jumpgates was built in orbit of Io, one of Jupiter's moons. This became the primary transfer point into the system.

Ship production also became a high priority, as Earth's space fleet proved very small in relation to the space it needed to cover. The heavy weapons developed by Human engineers were not as effective as those available through trade, but new ships were needed to effectively deploy such weapons. Bid requests went out to major contractors for all classes of ships, from frigates, cruisers and carriers to fighters and gunboats.

Despite the best speed that Humans could make on construction and recruitment of new fleets, it was not enough to protect all life at first. This fact became clear in 2169 when the outpost in orbit of 61 Cygnus A II was raided by the Koulani, a race from a non-aligned world in the neighboring system. The race took the outpost as a sign of aggression despite the fact that they had disavowed any claim on the system. Their attack was far too powerful for the meager defenses of the station, and half of the two thousand residents were killed before the Earthforce cruiser Asia arrived to even out the battle. All told the Koulani attackers, mostly fighters and a light cruiser, killed three quarters of the residents of the outpost and critically damaged the Asia, which was scuttled after the battle. This loss of life fueled the Earth Alliance military buildup. The following year saw the successful debut of Earth's own fighter force. An attack by the Ch'lonas (another non-aligned race) on a colony settlement on Ross 128 IV threatened Human life and

safety. This time, the EA was ready, and the Earthforce carrier Avenger met the attack, driving off the invaders. The key to this success was a new, maneuverable fighter, the MitchellHyundyne SA-10 Starfury Aries, designed specifically for space combat. While the Ch'lonas fighters were designed to operated both in atmosphere and space, the new starfuries were able to outmaneuver the enemy with ease.

The success of the Starfury Aries gave the EA a distinct advantage over many of the non-aligned races, whose space fleets were not as capable as the new Earthforce fleet. This space superiority gave the Alliance a reputation among the alien worlds, and by 2200 most of the attacks from them on Earth territories had stopped. Representatives from those worlds began approaching the EA with respect, and embassies on some of the newer alien worlds opened to build stable, peaceful trade.

The Starfury, along with new weapons and ships built from Human and alien technology also drew the attention of the two major empires in the area, the Narns and the Centauri. While both races originally dismissed Humans as just another nonaligned world, unimportant to their own feud, the rapid expansion of Human territory gave them both cause to notice this new race, as Human space grew until it abutted both races' territories. First the Centauri, and later the Narn had border skirmishes with Humans. Eventually, the EA signed treaties with both races.

By 2220, the Earth Alliance had established a strong military presence in the area. Earth and its fourteen colony worlds and seven outpost systems were regularly patrolled by Earthforce ships. In addition, garrisons of Earthforce ground forces were stationed on all Earth territories, and all orbital stations were equipped with powerful defense grids capable of holding off all but the largest of enemy forces until backup could arrive from hyperspace.

Alien Wars

While the young Earth Alliance had participated in scores of border skirmishes with different alien races, they had not yet had any prolonged war with other races. This allowed them to build their fleet substantially. By the late 2220's the Earth Alliance had a fleet rivaling the Centauri.

The Earth Alliance, still in its early years, followed the philosophy that with great power comes great responsibility. As the EA fleet grew, its charter grew, keeping the peace in all sectors in which Earth had a presence. It also began to keep the peace in neighboring sectors, stepping in to help settle differences between races in conflict. The stage was set for Earth to become a major power.

The turning point came in 2230, when the EA became aware of the actions of a race known as the Dilgar. Through the rumors of a dozen different races, Earth learned that the Dilgar were ruthless beings. Led by their War Masters, the Dilgar conquered and used worlds as they pleased, often as subjects of genocide or cruel forms of experimentation. Prior to this time, the Dilgar had mainly confined themselves to worlds near their own, which was on the far side of the non-aligned worlds from Earth. But in 2230, the Dilgar began to strike out and invade

many of the worlds with whom the EA had established trade relations.

Chief among the War Masters of the Dilgar was Jha'Dur, a brilliant tactical genius who also specialized in biological and chemical warfare. She alone was responsible for the deaths of whole worlds, many of whom perished as guinea pigs in her "research" into weapons of mass destruction. Her legacy of blood and death earned her the appellation "Deathwalker," and among many races the mere mention of her true name was a capital offense.

With biological and chemical weapons developed through years of experimentation, the Dilgar had little regard for other species. Ambassadors to the Dilgar were met with disdain, and some were mutilated or dissected before whatever was left of them was returned to the EA. As the Dilgar expansion progressed toward Human space, the Earth Alliance felt that there was no other option than to stop the deadly advance of the Dilgar. In late 2231, the Earth Alliance formally declared war on the Dilgar. The combined forces of the EA and the League of Non-Aligned worlds stopped the Dilgar invasions, and eventually began to drive them back toward their homeworld. The worlds that they were forced to evacuate, though, were no longer habitable. The testament of the Dilgar were dead worlds plagued, poisoned, or contaminated with no concern for the billions who had perished on them in agony.

The campaign against the Dilgar was intense, but finally they were driven back to their homeworld. During the final charge, many of the War Masters were hunted and killed. Even Jha'Dur's ship was blown from the sky. All Dilgar found outsystem were either returned to the homeworld or summarily executed, depending on who found them.

Once the Dilgar threat was neutralized, the Earth Alliance left the system under the guard of some of the more peaceful non-aligned worlds. Only then was the true reason for the Dilgar invasion learned. Three years after the end of the Dilgar War, their sun went supernova, killing everyone on the homeworld - virtually every remaining member of the Dilgar race. Many worlds rejoiced at the end of the tyrants, but some mourned the inadvertent genocide caused by the Dilgar's own ruthlessness.

Through all of this bloodshed, the mysterious Minbari remained uninvolved, removed from the affairs of the younger races. Neither the bloody advance of the Dilgar nor the requests of aid from the non-aligned worlds drew them from their own affairs. Despite rumors of their power, they did not interfere. To many of the younger races, including the Humans, they appeared dispassionate and aloof.

After the success of the Dilgar War, Humanity took on more responsibility as a peacemaker among the galactic community. With the ongoing feud between the Centauri and Narn, the Earth Alliance became the leading race in the area. With a vision unique among the races, the EA began to aid other worlds in building treaties and forming communities among neighboring systems.

During this time, a dream began to take form in the Earth Alliance. With all of the wars and squabbles that constantly occurred between the races, EA Senator Calvin Natawe

proposed in late 2244 to form a place where understanding could be fostered and races could learn to settle their differences in a manner other than war. It was only a glimmer of an idea, though, and due to other concerns brewing at home it fell by the wayside. In the aftermath of the Dilgar war, many at home worried about Earth's vulnerability. They argued for a defensive, protected, even isolationist policy. This community of peace, while endearing rhetoric, was not a dream shared by all Humans.

All thoughts of expansion and peace were soon put on hold, though. On July 12, 2245 the Human race finally met the Minbari. But unlike their happy meeting with the Centauri, this first contact went tragically wrong. Its consequences altered the course of galactic events forever.

The first Humans to meet the Minbari were aboard the Earthforce cruiser *Prometheus*, escorting a light transport through one of the further sectors. As the Earthforce convoy entered the Altair system, they were greeted by the amazing sight of three Minbari cruisers. The Minbari, seeking to begin amicable relations with the new Human race that they had been following, decided to greet the Humans with honor. As a gesture of respect for the Human race, the Minbari cruisers opened their gun ports to the Humans. The edgy Earthforce officers, however, mistook the salute, and fired on the Minbari ships that they thought were preparing to fire on them. Unfortunately, the lead ship was the flagship of the Grey Council. Before the fight was over, one of the Minbari escort cruisers had been destroyed and the other two, badly damaged, escaped into hyperspace. The leader of the Grey Council, Dukhat, was killed aboard the Minbari flagship.

With their leader dying in the Grey Council's arms at the hands of the ignorant, savage Humans, the Minbari were enraged. A passion they had not experienced for centuries consumed them, and they quickly declared war on Humanity. While their main forces gathered, cruisers from their Warrior Caste began to strike hard at Earth Alliance targets. The younger race was no match for the Minbari crusade.

In a few short years, the Minbari changed from a peaceful culture to a warlike race, bent on avenging the death of their revered leader. All three of its castes, the Warrior, Worker and Religious, were of one mind for the first time in memory. With no dissent between them - no force of balance and no thought to reason - they ignored the Humans' attempts at apologies, eradicating any and all Humans in their path.

Humans were faring poorly in the war. The best technology that the EA could muster was ineffectual against the Minbari ships. Even weapons and technology bought from the Narns and other races did no good as the Minbari continued their jihad against the Alliance.

In September 2248, the Minbari began their main offensive. On the theory that cutting off the head would disable the body and make the rest easy to clean up, they began a charge straight to Earth. All obstacles to their course were destroyed with out mercy. Damaged ships were obliterated, leaving no survivors. The Minbari were poised to wipe Humanity out of existence. All of the Alliance's remaining forces were gathered to summon a last line of defense between the Minbari and Earth in what became the largest and bloodiest

battle of the war; the Battle of the Line. This desperate last ditch defense was a line of ships protecting the Earth from the Minbari, and the Minbari met it with unparalleled ferocity. They seemed poised to finish the war with the obliteration of the Human race.

And then, the Minbari issued a surrender.

Withdrawing their war fleet, the Grey Council offered terms of their surrender to the Earth Alliance. The Alliance accepted the terms without hesitation, desperately claiming the victory that the Minbari handed them. On the edge of defeat, Earth was given a new lease on life.

After the Dilgar War, Humankind saw itself as one of the dominant races in the galaxy. After the Minbari War, Humanity was under no such illusion. The war showed that the Minbari were centuries ahead of all of the younger races in technology, and they easily destroyed most of Earth's spacegoing ships, suffering only one real loss during the entire war. Over twenty thousand men and women formed the Line, yet only about two hundred survived.

For the Minbari part, they realized how close they had come to genocide. Once their bloodlust had cooled, they were willing to listen to Earth's appeals. In order to prevent further misunderstandings, the Minbari sent representatives to Earth.

The Birth of The Babylon Project

With the devastation of Earthforce's fleet and the fury of war turning to the tragedy of aftermath, people all over the Alliance were in the mood to support efforts to forestall future wars. In the Earth Senate, a project that had been suggested years before began to take on its own life. During the war, Senator Natawe, leader of the Nigerian nation, became an outspoken advocate of peace. His words, broadcast to far flung colonies and outposts, rallied the forlorn and gave the hope of peace to billions. In the surge of euphoria following the end of the war, the proposal by Senator Natawe for a neutral station devoted to the pursuit of peace became a funded project by unanimous vote of the Earth Alliance Senate. Despite those who still preferred to isolate themselves from other races, the project was begun to build Babylon Station, a monument to those who had died and a great hope for peace.

Funding for Babylon Station was quickly approved, and a suitable location was chosen over a lifeless world in neutral space.

In 2249, the Babylon Project was begun. Construction began early that year on the largest and most ambitious project the Earth Alliance had ever undertaken. Babylon Station was built to house many different species, and to be a waystation for as many of those races as cared to travel there. Housing would be provided for half a million beings. The station would also house the Babylon Council. This advisory council would allow the different races to peacefully settle their differences in a body of their peers. The Minbari and Centauri were quick to join, and even the Narn finally agreed to send representatives.

Before the station could be built, however tragedy struck. One of the of the station's rotating habitation sections broke, the structure collapsed. It was later determined that substandard

materials were responsible -materials that had apparently been delivered in error.

The dream of peace was still strong, however. The budget for the effort was increased, and many components of the original construction were salvaged. Work was resumed on what was now called Babylon 2. But again, tragedy was not far behind the effort. As the fusion reactor went online during superstructure construction, an explosion ripped through the station, destroying it.

Official reports called the reactor explosion an accident. Human error was the stated cause, and the matter was dropped. But some among the Alliance began to speak of other reasons for the destruction of the station. Many spoke of sabotage by separatist factions within the colonies.

The rumor of sabotage only shored up support for the effort, however, and rapid funding and approval for Babylon 3 was testament to the Senate's refusal to bow to the will of terrorists. Under heavy scrutiny and the watchful eye of the Senate, construction of Babylon 3 was begun. The infrastructure was completed this time, with no threat of collapse. However, soon after the next phase of construction had begun, the hull was damaged beyond repair by a series of strategically-placed bombs.

This more vicious attack and its terrible cost in lives prompted many within the Alliance to call for the abandonment of the Babylon Project. Despite the clear evidence of terrorist action, the Senate was by this point dubious of another attempt. But Senator Natawe's words - and the tragedies of the Dilgar and Minbari wars - still held great power in Earthgov. Full backing and funding - and a guarantee of security - was given to the Babylon Project by the Earthforce top brass. Under heavy guard, what could be salvaged of the previous stations was gathered, and construction of Babylon 4 began.

Babylon 4 was begun in late 2252. Under full military escort every step of the way, two years of round the clock construction began. Despite several attempts at sabotage, the construction was completed. After long years of effort and trial, Babylon 4 officially went online under the temporary command of its construction supervisor, Major Gerald Krantz.

But even this effort was doomed to tragedy. Twenty four hours after the station went online, it vanished without a trace with all hands aboard. Observers on a shuttle leaving the station at the time reported seeing a bright flash, then nothing. No debris was found, no energy traces, no signs of destruction. The station just vanished.

The Building of Babylon 5

Admitting defeat, the Earth Alliance Senate was prepared to give up on the project. Senator Natawe refused to give up on his dream, however. He approached the other alien races to try and get the necessary funding to convince the Senate that the project was a good idea. Initial proposals for Babylon Station had been met with no response. Surprisingly, however, this time the Minbari readily agreed to help, offering a large portion of the budget necessary to construct a new station. The Centauri and Narn followed the lead of the older race, offering just enough to convince the rest of the Senate to approve the

project.

With a smaller budget, Babylon 5 was redesigned. With the history of sabotage, the military again offered escorts and support. Eventually, despite objections from civilian leaders, it was put fully under the command of the military, giving it more protection from those who would destroy it. The station was not as large as its predecessor, but the funding was still sufficient to allow a station housing a quarter of a million beings, with plenty of room for representatives from all of the known races. With what little could be scraped together, Babylon 5 was finished, and officially went online late in 2256 under the command of Commander Jeffrey Sinclair, one of the few survivors of the Battle of the Line.

The Babylon Council was formed, giving voice to the Humans, Centauri, Narns, Minbari and League of Non-Aligned Worlds. To the surprise of many, the ancient and powerful Vorlons also agreed to send a representative, who was also given a voice on the Council. Ambassador Kosh Naranek of the Vorlon Empire arrived on the station in September of 2257. The Babylon Project had taken form, and Babylon 5 was finally, as hoped, a beacon of peace.

CENTAURI

The Centauri are the oldest of the "younger races" (as all of the other player character races are known by the Minbari). With over a thousand years of spacetravel, the Republic at its peak spanned over one hundred and fifty systems.

History

The history of the Centauri started with conflict, and it is a part of every day in their life. From physical conflict to social and political conflict, Centauri thrive on challenge. In the early days of their people, two species battled for supremacy on Centauri Prime: the Centauri and a race known as the Xon. In the early years of their civilization, the Centauri were geographically separated from the Xon, and contacts were few. When they occurred, however, they were hostile-the Xon were much larger and more brutal than the Centauri, and invariably treated captured or enslaved Centauri with great cruelty. Eventually, as the generally medieval Centauri society progressed into the early stages of renaissance, the pressures of growing civilizations brought the two races into continual contact-and continual warfare. Despite their physical prowess, however, the Xon were less intellectually and civilly developed (at least according to Centauri histories), and after decades of warfare were eventually defeated and then wiped out.

That was around the year 500, Earth dating, and it set the stage for modern Centauri society. The families whose forces had done the majority of the fighting in the war banded together to form a governing body for the race. Recognizing the nobility of these new houses, the Centauri people became one united nation. The noble houses formed the Centaurum, a ruling and advisory council, and the leader of the highest noble house became the Emperor, the leader of all Centauri.

2 - THE RACES

Some time after the founding of the Centaurum, as Centauri technology was hitting the equivalent of Human twentieth-century levels, an alien ship crashed on Centauri Prime. This ship carried advanced technologies, which the Centauri used to learn the arts of interstellar travel. They quickly discovered other planets and other races in the nearby systems, none of which was as technologically advanced as they. The Centauri used their technological edge aggressively. Their experiences with the Xon had given them only two models of relations with others on which to base their expansion: slavery and annihilation. Those races that did not fight the Centauri were given the opportunity to serve them, and those that did fight were usually destroyed. The expansion of the Republic began slowly, and they carefully built their empire, not expanding to the next world until the previous one was under control. This methodical growth served them well, and over the next six centuries, their sphere of influence included over one hundred systems.

It boasted a fleet of thousands of ships, and tales of some planets still speak of the ships so numerous that they blocked out the sun. During this period of expansion, the Centauri also encountered the Minbari and Vorlon races. These older races were far more powerful than the Centauri had ever encountered before, and they were forced to learn another model for relating to other races. Although none of the expeditions into Vorlon space ever returned, those sent into Minbari space were received as guests as long as they did not instigate hostilities. After centuries of politicking at home, the Centauri readily adapted to the arts of interracial diplomacy.

The Republic reached its peak in the 1700's by Earth time. For over two centuries they reigned, known as the mighty "Lion of the Galaxy." On the surface, they were perhaps the most successful galactic empire in known history. But they were torn from within and out by strife. The very foundation of the Republic was conflict and turmoil. Subject worlds became ever more restless over the centuries, as discontent rumbled among the worlds under Centauri rule. And at home on Centauri Prime, the Centaurum was torn by political struggle and backstabbing. The average lifetime of an Emperor was half of what it had been, due to the multitude of mudslinging, innuendo and assassinations that plagued the royal court. The Noble Houses were at each other's throats, and although they didn't know it, they were cutting the heart out of the foundations of the Republic.

While Humans were taking their first fragile steps off of their world far removed from the center of galactic events, the Centauri Republic began to fall to its fate. Discontent moved to hatred, and hatred to resistance on many of the Centauri worlds far too many fronts for the fleet to defend. Records conflict on which world first moved from resistance to open rebellion, but within the span of two years, the Republic began to fall apart. Those races that had been Centauri subjects began to form their own fleets, from ships that had once been

Centauri and ships that had been built under the Centauri rule. The great fleet was reduced, and the Republic began a rapid decline.

The worlds that had broken from the Republic began to explore on their own, first fighting among themselves and then forming the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, made up of both old Republic worlds and others who wished to maintain their independence. Although the Centauri government at first refused to acknowledge the League, their diminishing role in the galactic community eventually forced them to.

The Centauri took their change in circumstance badly. The Noble Houses fought among themselves, blaming one another for the rebellions. While war decimated their forces, the Centaurum argued and debated over which House was to blame for each world.

After only decades the Centauri Republic, which had reigned in glory for centuries, had been reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. But the Republic was not dead by any means. As the older generation of those in power when the rebellions started to die off, a new generation of Centauri took over, with a passion for the glory days of the Republic that outstripped their mutual antagonism.

With a new fervor, the Centauri once again began to explore, heading into new territory rather than attempting to retake their old conquests. When they met a race that already had spacefaring technology, they started diplomatic relations with them. But occasionally, they found rich worlds with simple populations, and then they fell back on the old ways of gaining rule over those worlds.

One of these worlds was the Narn homeworld. To the Centauri, it was a paradise. The natives of the planet were very simple and primitive, in addition to being strong workers. Many plants, animals, and resources of Narn had great appeal to the Centauri, and Narn delicacies, handcrafts, and luxuries became unusually sought after throughout the new empire. Service on Narn was a prime assignment.

But the Narn, unlike most other Centauri subject races, proved a burden rather than a resource. Although they seemed a peaceful people, they turned out to be fierce, hostile and destructive. Measures that calmed other populations only inflamed them. Attempts to remove or relocate instigators were only met with the creation of more instigators. More Centauri resources went into controlling that one planet than had ever been spent before, and only pride and their determination kept them in charge on Narn.

Finally, the Centauri were forced to concede. The Narns had made the planet untenable, so the Centauri withdrew and recognized them as an independent race. Within the councils of the Centaurum, however, much hatred was and still is held for the Narns.

Once it was proven to all that the mighty Republic was a thing of the past; the Centauri lost much of their remaining credibility. They still boasted one of the largest fleets of any known race, and their activities affect most of the surrounding systems, but their time had passed. The Centauri could only watch the decline of the Republic and remember fondly the glory days of old.

Government

The head of the Republic and its leader is the Emperor. From his palace on Centauri Prime, through consultation with his Prime Minister and royal advisors, he sets planetary policy on all issues. He is also advised by members of the Centaurum, a body of senators chosen from their family homes to convey the will of the people to the Emperor.

Since the Emperor, whose family is the highest among the noble houses, is assumed to act for his people by the grace of the gods and goddesses, his word is valued above all others. His advisors have no power of law, and the Centaurum may only override him with a three quarter vote of its members—a very tricky proposition in the highly-politicized atmosphere of the Centauri government.

The Centaurum, in addition to its other duties, carries out the will of the Emperor in all things. Day to day economic and political matters are handled in the chambers of the Centaurum, with only the highest priority matters going to the Emperor's attention. Members of this august body are elected or appointed, and hold their positions indefinitely. In the event that the Emperor dies with no clear heir, the Centaurum looks within to find another house with a history as noble as the old Emperor, appointing the new Emperor from their ranks.

Military

The Centauri space fleet is the most powerful fleet of the younger races. In both number and capabilities, the Centauri are capable of simultaneously defending all twelve of their remaining worlds. Military are ordered by the Emperor and his military advisors, chief among them "the Grand Fleet Admiral.

The Centauri Royal Guardsmen make up the bulk of the Republic's ground forces. Originally an escort force for the Emperor in times of war, the Guardsmen's role expanded to include ground operations on rebellious colony worlds. Today, it fills both military and law enforcement roles for the Republic.

Colonies

The remaining Centauri colonies are those systems in which they settled uninhabited worlds. While several are productive agricultural and manufacturing worlds, the chief industry that keeps them self-sufficient is tourism. The Centauri have a longer recorded history than any other race that allows free travel, so their worlds are those with the longest-standing buildings and monuments to the past. Individuals interested in history eventually visit the Centauri colonies in their search for knowledge.

Their chief commercial colony is Immolan V, one of the first colonies with a proud history. Other colonies include the agricultural colony on Rahgesh 3 and their mineral outpost in Quadrant 27. Colonies near Narn space tend to be military in nature, with little other industry.

Diplomatic Relations

The Centauri maintain cordial relations with the Minbari and Humans, respecting the powers of their empires. While many of the non-aligned worlds also maintain relations with the Republic, some still hold enmity for the Centauri due to past occupation of worlds. The League of NonAligned Worlds keeps relations with them, though, to keep the peace. The NarnRegime shares hatred with the Republic, both still quite bitter about the occupation of the Narn homeworld.

Society

Centauri society is heavily based on family history. The Noble Houses hold the highest levels of respect in society. Members of those houses are the economic, political and industrial leaders of the Republic. To a member of a Noble House, all doors are open, and friends among the Houses are a treasured commodity. Hard work, talent and dedication will move an ambitious Centauri up in the world, but not as quickly as a friend in a Noble House.

Centauri females hold no official positions in society. Males are the leaders of government, industry and commerce. They serve in the military, and all physically demanding jobs are held by men. Women are the protected resource of the Centauri, the nurturers and teachers. They comfort their mates and raise the children—their influence is felt only in subtle ways. This is not to say that they are denied opportunity: women who wish to do things traditionally reserved for males are welcome to try them, but most who do find better opportunity on worlds outside the Republic.

The roles of men and women are not the only differences between the sexes. Men traditionally show their status in society openly, wearing their hair in a wider, taller style the higher they are in society, while women shave their heads of all but a single lock, shunning the trappings of society to emphasize their own roles in society. While many Centauri at some point in their lives have a limited sort of foresight (often they can accurately predict their death from a dream), true gifts of prophecy only appear in women. While the Emperor and his court is respected in one way, among Centauri society those given the most respect on a day to day basis are the seers, those very rare women whose gift of prophecy is strong. The Centauri also have a strong faith that those above watch out for them. During their conflict with the Xon, many began to trust that those who had gone before would guide them through what was to come. Through faith and prayer, they looked to these spirits to protect them during their fight, and those who proved the most helpful were given more faith, becoming the first of the Centauri gods and goddesses. Today, there are over 50 major gods and goddesses, in addition to the multitudes of household protectors who are gods and goddesses to many families.

The practice of slavery is not uncommon in the Centauri Republic. In the past, both Centauri and subject races were sold into slavery when the occasion warranted it. Although this practice is thought to have played a contributing part in the downfall of the Republic, it is not illegal, nor is it unheard of in the present time. Few of the Houses practice it actively.

Telepaths

The Centauri learned long ago how to trace the gene within their cellular structure that controls Psionics. Now, when a telepathic child is born, he or she is raised by a Noble House and then joins the Telepaths Guild upon the emergence of telepathic abilities. The Guild is a commercial venture of telepaths who are hired out among the Centauri to provide services to the Centauri people.

There is one very special department within the Guild: the Emperors Own. This is an organization of powerful female telepaths, raised in groups of four from birth until they are constantly in contact with each other on an unconscious level. They learn to communicate with each other without a line of sight, and each always knows what the others are thinking. When an Emperor takes the throne, he chooses a group from this department to be his personal attendants. Whenever he travels out of the Palace, two of them accompany him, and two remain behind, so that he is always aware of happenings at court and the court is always to consult with him.

EARTH ALLIANCE

Humans are unique among the races in our great diversity and ability to relate to the other races. These are perhaps the reasons why Humanity is one of the more powerful races despite our relatively late arrival among the stars.

History

The Human race is, obviously, the race we are all most familiar with. Humans in 2250 are much like Humans today, complete with the same faults and foibles that we carry around. Humans explored and settled the Sol system before the Centauri discovered us and eventually sold us the secrets to jump gates and interstellar travel. In a few short decades, mankind's sphere of influence spread from the single system where we were born to almost two dozen colonies and outposts spread throughout the sectors near Sol. Earth history is detailed in the introduction to this book.

Government

The Earth Alliance is the formal governing body of the united Human system and its colonies and outposts. The Alliance capital is Earthdome, a self-contained domed area on the outskirts of Geneva, Switzerland. Housed within this structure are the various parts of Earthgov, which sets policy and legislation regarding Earth and her colonies. Earthgov's structure is a three branched system. The main ruling arm is the legislature in the form of the Earth Alliance Senate. The Senate is made up of representatives from each country on Earth, usually the elected or appointed leader of that country. Colonies and major outposts may send nonvoting representatives to the Senate. The executive arm of Earthgov is the EA president, who serves as the figurehead for the Alliance

and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The president is nominated from within the Earth Senate and elected by popular vote among the whole Alliance. The final arm, the judicial arm, is the system of courts that address grievances and infractions of EA law.

Military

The military arm of the EA is Earthforce, a military made of several service branches under the command of the EA President, supervised by the Senate Committee on Planetary Security and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The two main branches of Earthforce are the EA Space Fleet and the EA Ground Forces.

The EA Fleet is made up of a mix of warships, transport ships and scientific vessels, with fighter support wings for ships, outposts, colonies and stations. The EA Ground Forces are a strong army of well-trained forces capable of going where ships cannot, to keep the peace and defend Human lives from harm.

Colonies

Earth has sixteen colonies and eight military outposts. The vast majority of those colonies and outposts, outside the Sol system, were settled within the last century. However, Earth's colonization of other worlds began with its first colony, the Mars colony, in 2090. The first outsystem colony was Proxima III, at Proxima Centauri, one of the three stars that make up the Alpha Centauri system. Along with the Orion VII colony, Proxima and Mars are the major colonies in the Alliance. The newest colony is Tau Ceti IV, established in 2248.

After the EA built its own jumpgate off 10, a transfer station near the gate and a supply outpost on Ganymede were established to control entry to and exit from the Sol system. The Ganymede outpost remains the Alliance's largest outpost, with the outpost at 61 Cygnus A II (informally known as the Signet outpost) and the Altair outpost forming major conduits to other races. Station Prime, in orbit of Earth, remains the oldest currently inhabited structure off of the planet. Stations orbit planets in twelve different systems, both as colony support vehicles and as diplomatic liaison points for relations with other races. Babylon 5, in orbit of Epsilon Eridani III, is Earth's newest station, and its largest to date, outsizing many outposts.

Diplomatic Relations

The Earth Alliance was never a part of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, since its rapid expansion precluded Humanity becoming a member of the League. The Alliance maintains very good relations with the League, however, after its tremendous aid during the Dilgar War.

The EA also maintains a slightly better than friendly relationship with the Centauri Republic. The Republic has been very cooperative with the EA over the years, and representatives travel from one world to the other fairly often. Due to the similarities of appearance between the two races, there is also little tension during commercial and social ventures.

The Narn Regime has a less friendly relationship with the Alliance. Suspicion runs high between the two races due to the Narn tendency to attempt force before opening dialogue with others. However, formal relations are amicable, as the Narns were one of the few races to support the EA during the Minbari War.

The relationship between the Alliance and the Minbari Federation is a strained one. Technically, the Minbari surrendered to the EA to end the war, so the races are at peace. But many members of both races were left unsatisfied by the end of the war, and the resulting tension means that official contacts are few, and are carefully handled.

Society

Humanity's most unique feature is its diversity. While many worlds have histories of different tribes, clans or nations, Humanity is the only race to have so many viewpoints and peoples. Its Senate is made up of hundreds of different people of different ethnicities, each with its own cultural traditions. This diversity is unparalleled in the galaxy.

Diversity is evidenced in all things that Humans do. Earth space ships, for example, come in more configurations than those of any other race, with more personal detail than other fleets. Each culture represented in Human space has different beliefs, histories and lifestyles, and all of them live together on many different planets. Humans are also the most willing to do business with aliens. While all races realize the value of diplomatic and economic relations with other species, Human businesspeople take to the new markets of alien commerce unlike any other. This quality, some say, is one of the key features of Humanity that made the Babylon project possible.

Telepaths

Human telepaths belong to the PsiCorps, an organization devoted to regulating the use of telepathic powers. It also provides a community for telepaths where they are welcomed and not treated with fear or suspicion. For the protection of all Humans, strict Corps regulations and EA laws govern the use of telepathic powers in the interests of rights to privacy, and all telepaths operating in Human territories are technically bound by the regulations set forth by the Corps.

Human telepaths who elect not to join the Corps are given the opportunity to live normal lives by taking a series of drug treatments that inhibit their telepathic abilities. Regardless of whether or not they use these treatments, all telepaths are offered job placement and educational opportunities. The Corps has training centers and offices in cities and colonies all over the Alliance to make it easier for telepaths to find them, and to make it easier for them to find telepaths.

The Corps provides telepaths for many types of services. The Commercial Telepath Corps is the organization's most often hired arm. They moderate business deals for private clients, often verifying the sincerity of negotiators, for a fee. All national, regional, and colonial governments, and many cities, stations, and other smaller jurisdictions have resident telepaths who are licensed to perform these services.

The other well-known arm of the Corps is Psi-Cops, the internal enforcement arm of the Corps. Psi-Cops claims jurisdiction over all Human telepaths (and the activity of alien telepaths in Human space), and protect non-telepath Humans from rogue telepaths who do not register with the Corps. The Corps also has a large public relations force. Despite the protections that the Corps and the EA legal system provide, there is still a measure of distrust of telepaths among non-telepath Humans. The Corps Relations Group is an effort to remind people that "the Corps is your friend."

Telepaths of P1-P4 serve in functionary roles among the corps, from bureaucratic positions to advertising and public relations. They man many of the testing facilities all over the Alliance. P5 and P6 rated telepaths serve as commercial telepaths. P7, P8 and P9 telepaths serve leadership roles in the Corps, administering testing and training centers and supervising the commercial Corps P10 and P11 rated telepaths are teachers and trainers of other telepaths. Finally, P12 telepaths form the core of the PsiCops.

MINBARI

The Minbari hold a unique position in the galaxy. They are part of neither the ancient races of the past nor the younger races of the present. After centuries of separation from the affairs of the younger races, and a nearly genocidal war against Humanity, the Minbari are now becoming more involved in interstellar affairs.

History

Minbari recorded history stretches longer by a thousand years than that of any of the younger races. Minbar is a world of beauty and danger. Gigantic mineral deposits formed into crystal over the billions of years of the planet's formation, leaving it a beautiful but largely barren world—a world of rock and glass under hot twin suns, pleasing to the eye but deadly. Early on, the Minbari were a nomadic people. They moved from place to place, growing or gathering what they could on fertile land. They often had to defend such patches from others in need, go for long, harsh periods between times when there was ample food, and migrate across the barrens when fertile areas began to give out.

These nomadic clans developed a structured way of life over several thousand years. During time spent on fertile land, the clan was guided by those who knew the arts of farming and herding, saving and storing supplies as well as feeding their people. In times of conflict or migration, the hunters and gatherers took charge of the people, leading them until another settlement was found, or conflict over fertile terrain was resolved. High respect was always given to the nurturers and healers: those who protected life were the lifeblood of the people. The battle to survive, with its constantly changing priorities, left them without a clear or constant leadership hierarchy, but rather the need for all to act as one, each serving

the community to the best of their particular abilities, and the community as a whole acting to protect the individual. These millennia of struggle gave the Minbari a culture that was deeply contemplative, yet fiercely protective. One that was often dependent on innovation, but still strongly guided by the security of tradition. Thus, other than their clans, early Minbari had very little organized government. Each Minbari performed tasks according to his or her ability, with none putting personal pride or ambition above the needs of the greater good. Through this service structure, the Minbari advanced. Dedicated service to the whole brought respect, and respect brought influence in the decisions of the whole.

The concept of community slowly grew to encompass all Minbari, and the clans began working together, sharing their talents, to build areas where they could live more permanently, which eventually grew to cities. Their nomadic culture evolved into what we now know as the Minbari.

After several thousand years, the Minbari developed the secrets of space travel. Centuries of existence as nomads, dependent on finding new fertile lands to survive, had quite prepared them for the idea of new worlds, and many soon left their world to explore others. After a century, they had established colonies on other worlds and moons in their own system and had begun to reach further. The records are incomplete on exactly how they discovered jump drives, but over the course of a few short decades, they gained jump technology, and had begun to learn about hyperspace travel to other worlds.

Shortly thereafter, they were approached by an ancient race calling themselves the Vorlons, who brought them tidings of peace. Under Vorlontutelage, the Minbari learned more about the universe and its secrets. This ancient race taught them of other powerful and old races and wars lasting millennia, of how to fight and how to survive. Though uncertain of the purpose, the Minbari learned the arts taught them.

The reason was evident very soon, though, as the darkness of which the Vorlons warned was not long in coming. The Minbari found themselves at war, defending their very lives against a powerful foe. The Vorlons aided as best they could, but they too were beset by the enemy. The Minbari were rapidly losing ground, not so much because they lacked the technology or tactics for victory, but because they had no experience in warfare on this scale.

At the low point in the war, a Minbari called Valen arose. Under his leadership, the Minbari underwent revolutionary changes. He formalized the three functions of society into groups called castes. The Warrior Caste, drawn from the memories of the hunters and defenders of old, would fight and defend the Minbari from others. The Worker Caste, a reflection of the ancient farmers and herders, would provide the labor and structure to maintain Minbari society from day to day. The healers and nurturers became the Religious Caste, the keepers of the spirit of the Minbari people who teach and watch over the weak.

Valen went on to form a council to coordinate and lead the Minbari. He called three Minbari from each of the three castes together in his Grey Council, a balance of the people to stand as the balance between the ancient races in their war. Together,

Valen and the Nine led the Minbari to aid the Vorlons to a victory in the war, bringing a lasting peace.

The Minbari had changed during the war, but the Nine and the One had prepared them well. As the Vorlons withdrew, the Council took a much more active hand in ruling the Minbari, eventually becoming the definitive leaders of their people. Service to the community was still essential to their culture, perhaps moreso now than ever before, but the Council provided the focus, and the vision, to help guide the community. The respect due of old to those who served the most led the people to accept the advice of Valen and his council during the time of rebuilding, and beyond.

As the younger races emerged, the Minbari realized that they were an interstellar power, but they had had enough of war, and had no ambition to conquer others or to rule the galaxy. They kept to themselves, greeting new races when they could, but otherwise staying out of the unfamiliar affairs of others. The Grey Council had sworn to Valen that they would remain the gray between the candle and the star, and since they did not know what the younger races represented, they chose not to disrupt the balance. Watching the rise and fall of the Centauri Republic, they decided that their course had been wisest.

When the humans accidentally killed Dukhat, then leader of the council, the Minbari retaliated as a whole. The community had been attacked, the most respected of them had been killed, and those responsible had to pay. The vengeance was swift, and devastating, as the castes swept through human space like the hot winds that blew through Minbar's crystal deserts.

But on the cusp of destroying the human homeworld, the Grey Council suddenly reversed itself. It ordered not just a pause in the assault, but an actual surrender to the Humans. No explanation was given, or has yet been revealed. The castes, troubled but trusting the council despite their anger, obeyed.

Government

The Minbari are led by the Nine and the One, the Grey Council and its leader. Three members are selected from each caste, with the council choosing a replacement when one of its number can no longer serve. The leader sets policy with the affirmation of the council's majority vote. The council and its leader travel among the people, over all of the Minbari colonies and outposts, ruling by standing between all people.

The Minbari are still in mourning for Dukhat, and the council leads the people alone.

Military

The military caste performs the day to day operations of defense of the Minbari Federation worlds. While all three castes own and use cruisers and fighters for day to day defense, the military caste is the one that coordinates fleet movements and provides tactical and strategic orders. They are only responsible to the Grey Council and its leader, who determine the overall policy for the Federation.

Colonies

The Minbari Federation covers twenty worlds in eighteen systems. By virtue of their highly advanced technology and powerful ships, they are rarely attacked, and their borders are given a wide latitude.

Their chief diplomatic base is on Sh'lek'k'tha. Since few ambassadors are allowed onto Minbar itself, this is where most of the negotiations with the Minbari take place. Their chief industrial base is a colony on Tr'es's'na, from which they produce goods for internal use.

Diplomatic Relations

The Minbari generally stay uninvolved with the younger races, choosing instead to remain neutral. In the aftermath of the Earth-Minbari war, however, they have begun to change their policies. While many in the Federation have no love for the humans, the Federation maintains friendly, albeit strained, diplomatic relations with the Earth Alliance. They have also begun to talk to the Centauri, Narn and Non-Aligned worlds, opening previously closed channels to interact with them.

Society

Minbari life is defined by the caste and clan to which each Minbari belongs. Minbari children are taught and trained in the clans into which they are born. When they reach the age of majority, they choose their caste and clan of adulthood. A Minbari's family is his or her clan, and his or her occupation is the caste.

There are three castes, and each serves the people in its own way. Those in the military caste are raised and trained in the arts of war and defense, providing security to all Minbari citizens. The religious caste members are the guardians of knowledge, holding sacred both all recorded history and the spiritual traditions and legends of the race. Those in the worker caste are the cement that hold the Federation together, performing the day to day tasks that are necessary to survive, each according to his or her talents. Despite their different focuses, each maintains its own internal governance, complete with an executive branch that answers to the Grey Council and a military complement under that caste's command. In addition to a caste, each Minbari belongs to a clan, a philosophical family of sorts that guides his or her personal beliefs.

The five major clans are the Wind Swords, the Star Riders, the Night Walkers, the Fire Wings and the Moon Shields. The Wind Swords are the most militant among these, often bending the letter of the will of the council to better serve what they believe the intent to be. The Star Riders are the clan who most enjoy the exploration of the stars, and frequently become starship personnel within their caste. The Night Walkers are the custodians of the Minbari homeworld, helping to shape and grow the crystal and biological gardens and crops of Minbar.

The Fire Wings are the explorers and inventors of the Minbari race. They were the first to attempt space travel, and the first to master the secrets to hyperspace. They hold a position of respect for their renaissance spirit. The Moon Shields

are the guardians of the Minbari people. They care for others' physical and mental wellbeing and tend to the needs of those who cannot provide for themselves.

Telepaths

Like the Centauri, the Minbari have learned to identify those among them who have telepathic abilities. Minbari telepaths are considered to be greatly gifted. The use of this gift is extended as a free service to those in need of it.

Those with the genetic ability are given to the religious caste at an early age, and raised in the ways of Minbari service. Those who serve are valued in the community, and their needs are willingly provided for by the various members of the castes as called upon. All Minbari trained in the ways of this service are bound by their oath to serve.

NARNS

A once-peaceful race that learned the lessons of conquest in subjugation to the Centauri, the Narns are, like the Humans, relatively new to the interstellar scene.

History

The Narn Regime is a new government for a civilization a little older than Humanity. The Narns were an agrarian race who lived contentedly on their planet, a world orbiting a red star in a small system out of the way of galactic travel. Learning sea travel early, they settled their northern and southern continents and settled into an agricultural society which they maintained for over a thousand years. While not technologically advanced, the Narns were a content race, and their society was one of the most stable ever recorded.

This society underwent a giant upheaval in 2109 (Earth dating). That was the year that they were first contacted by the Centauri. The mighty Lion of the Galaxy, the Centauri Republic stumbled upon the Narn homeworld during their glorious New Era of expansion. They greeted the Narns in peace, but their plans were not beneficial to the Narns.

The Narns had tales of races who walked the stars from their ancient history, though until then they were thought of as myth. While some of the tales told of wars and strife, the majority were of wise and powerful beings who taught and gave guidance, so the Narns welcomed these new aliens with open arms.

Those arms were soon put in shackles, though, as the Centauri treated the Narns as they did all of their subject worlds. The unique atmosphere of Narn made it not only a place to grow new and exotic food crops, but also a vacation spot, and Narns made excellent servants. At least, at first.

The Narns for their part soon began to realize that these Centauri were not the powerful beings of lore, and that all responsibility and freedom had been taken from them by their technologically superior masters. Over the decades following their subjugation, isolated uprising occurred here or there, and

as the years wore on the Narns began to organize. An underground formed that allowed them to fight back against their masters. Narns who had been taken offworld early in the occupation began to use their opportunities for contact with other races to deal for arms and new technology. Narns on homeworld learned to steal munitions and technologies, and to exploit what they stole. In less than a generation, the Narns evolved under the Centauri yoke from a peaceful agricultural world to a world of guerrilla fighters, struggling for freedom and peace.

The occupation of the Narn homeworld came to an end in 2214, approximately one century after it first began. With their supply lines sabotaged, their colonists' lives in severe jeopardy and their "servants" becoming a serious military threat, the Centauri officially "recognized" the Narn wish to be an independent world and withdrew-but not before removing or sabotaging whatever they could.

Narn began to rebuild as soon as the Centauri left, using their new technologies and their vows to never be slaves again to transform their shattered society into an army capable of defending their system. Their newfound might was a gift to them, and to secure their families they began to set up military outposts, then colonies, at nearby stars, to create a buffer zone from which they could defend their world. Races in some of these nearby systems were merely obstacles to this, and the Narns felt no reservations about doing to others what had been done to them, to protect other Narns from the yoke of cruel masters.

In the decades since the liberation of their homeworld, the Narns have grown from their single system to a Regime stretching over fifteen systems and holding several races in subjugation. Nine of those are systems that were once controlled by the Centauri. Their thirst for technology has allowed them to become a dominant force in their sector of space, and they have used this dominance to secure military footholds wherever possible.

They have also become much less isolated. After establishing themselves in the galaxy, they began economic relations with as many worlds as possible, believing that trade, the most often used form of interrelation of different tribes on old Narn, was the best way to forge friendships with their neighbors. However, they had little concern for political boundaries at first (only refusing to trade with the Centauri and their "servants"), and quickly gained a mercenary trade reputation. They sold weapons and supplies to three different warring factions within the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, angering all three, before they fully realized the value of diplomatic trade policy.

They were also one of the few races that dealt with the beleaguered Humans, supplying them with badly needed weapons and ships during the Earth-Minbari war. Despite their troubles, they have risen above what they were and are a race whose star is rising.

Government

The current government of Narn is the Kha'ri, a ruling body both political and religious, hearkening back to the days

of familial rule before the occupation began. The Kha'ri consists of eight circles. The First Circle rules the entire Regime, handing down directives to all of the Narn colonies and outposts. Seven Outer Circles provide various executive and advisory functions to the First Circle, each subordinate to the one above it, so that the hierarchical ties reminiscent of the ancient family are reinforced. The members of the Kha'ri are selected by recommendation from within, and the organization is at present restricted to those who served and led in the overthrow of the Centauri. They must each have years of religious training, as they also serve as the religious leaders of the various worlds where the individual members live, much as the elders of the older tribes guided their extended families before the occupation.

Military

The Narn military is under the direct command of the Kha'ri, with many of the generals and commanders belonging to the fifth and Sixth Circles. It serves as both a combat force against outside races and a punitive arm within the Regime. Ship captains and fleet commanders are given wider latitude in carrying out the directives of the Kha'ri than those of any other race, making Narn tactics very wide ranging in nature.

Narn ships mix technologies from many different races, and older ships were often equipped with a hodgepodge of systems and components that were barely forced to work together. In the decades since the overthrow of the Centauri, the Narn war machine has become a well tuned instrument,

though, and the current Narn fleet is very distinctive, with designs thematically based on classic seagoing vessels from before the occupation.

Colonies

Narn colonial policy pursues several goals. The first, and perhaps most important to the Narns, is taking a bite out of the Centauri Republic. Vengeance on their old masters is foremost in the Narn mind. The next function of the colonies is as defense posts. The Narns colonized every system near their own, making it difficult for ships to jump into the heart of Narn space without warning. Finally, the colonies provide resources to supply the expanding Regime with raw materials for ships, food for crews and the all important Quantum-40 forjump capabilities.

Due to this eye to defense, the Narn Regime is very compact compared to the other major races. Their main colonies are at Quadrant 37 and Quadrant 14 bordering Centauri space.

Diplomatic Relations

The Narns are a race very new to diplomacy. Despite their long tradition of peaceful planetary rule, the occupation has left a deep wound in their culture, and they are often short tempered and belligerent with other races - a quality that gets them into trouble more often than not. They have emissaries on many worlds, most of whom are members of one of the Outer Circles of the Kha'ri.

They are still known as a race who will sell anything to anyone for the right price. Subtlety is not a tool with which they are familiar, and they do not believe in give-and-take negotiations, as most of the Kha'ri still remembers the occupation. Younger Narns relate a little better to Humans and other races, but they are still taught by those who knew nothing other than slavery.

Society

Modern Narn society is based on the traditional, pre-Centauri structure. In the old days, the Narn were ruled by family tribes and groups of elders, and their society valued the family above all. That remains the case now, though families are often spread out over vast distances, due to displacement by the Centauri, the dispersed nature of modern life, and the demands of an interstellar empire. Also, loyalty to the Kha'ri is high, often rivalling or surpassing family loyalty for some individuals.

Traditional penalties for crimes often followed the eye for an eye philosophy, and were often executed by the members of the family. Retribution took the form of oaths against the perpetrator, from the simple Cha'lar right to property to the Chon'kar, the blood oath of vengeance for wrongful death. Again, this system is still honored, and the Narn rely on almost no governmental justice system.

Before the coming of the Centauri, concerns of importance were discussed at a periodic meeting known as the Kha'ri, a gathering of as many of the familial elders for the tribes as could be gathered. This concept grew into the modern, permanent body of the same name, discussed above.

Telepaths

There are no Narn telepaths. Narn history says that once in the ancient past the talent-or something very much like it-was not too uncommon, but no gene comparable to the one that controls telepathy in other races has been identified. Narn scientists have gone to great lengths in the study of telepathy, and in attempts to develop telepathy through genetic manipulation. So far, effortsspanningfrom medical experiments to cross-breeding with other races (usually requiring much genetic manipulation), have developed no signs of true psionics in Narns.