

Frontier Explorer



Issue 15
Winter 2016

The Buckerbeisser
Mapping Port Loren
Janus System Brief
Androids

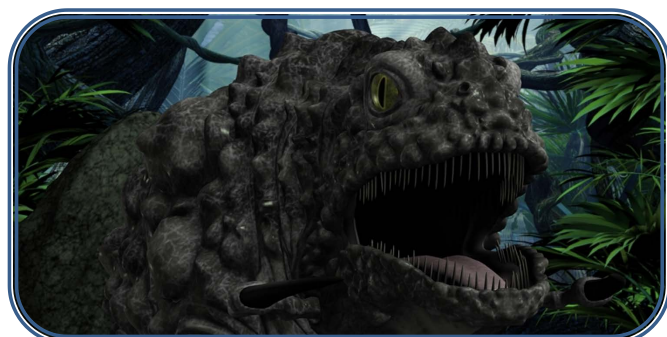
The Arks, Dogmen, and Mogs
Plicka and the Void Crusher

... the whole globe as one
great dewdrop ...

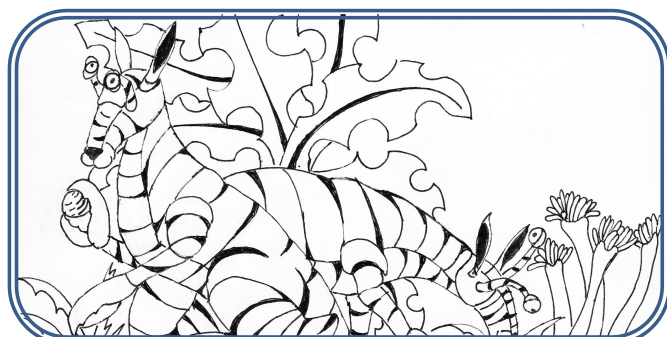




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FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome back explorers!

A new year and a new issue of the Frontier Explorer. This issue contains a lot of material from our contributor Laura Mumma. She grabbed the old “Trouble on Janus” module from the 1984 MassConfusion Star Frontiers competition and cleaned it up a bit and expanded the descriptions of the planet, fauna, and indigenous sapient species. The world is ready to drop into your campaign.

Laura also contributed two additional articles on other sapient species. The first expands on an article, The Hunde, from our sister magazine [The Star Frontiersman](#) (issue 19), and gives some variations on this canine race. Her second article talks about androids and expands the options for robots in your game.

Beyond that we have many of the usual articles including a new Jurak Hangna creature, the next installment of the Titan Rising comic and more equipment from the Minzii Marketplace. I also did an article on my recreation of the original Port Loren map and we have another article from the continuing adventures of Alex Stone and a story from our resident artist, Scott Mulder.

I greatly appreciate all the stories and articles from our regular contributors. They provide a strong foundation for every issue of the Frontier Explorer and provide us with some regular features that we can look forward to. But what truly makes the Frontier Explorer great is contributions from the wider community. We’d love to hear more from our readers.

Are you using material from the magazine in your games? Have you adapted it to another system? Did it inspire you to create something else? We’d love to hear feedback on the influence the articles and art have had on your game. And if you created something that you’d like to share we’d love to help with that too.

And it doesn’t have to be based on the core Star Frontiers system. It often seems to be that way but when I created this magazine I never intended it to be focused solely on Star Frontiers. I would love to see material for other systems as well. In a perfect world, I’d publish all the Star Frontiers material in the Star Frontiersman and use the Frontier Explorer for material from other systems as well with Star Frontiers just being one of many.

I know there are people out there playing games in the Star Frontiers setting using other rules systems because I see it mentioned on social media all the time. I’d love to publish some of the wonderful material they have been

PRODUCTION CREDITS



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Full Cover Quote: *When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop, striped and dotted with continents and islands, flying through space with other stars all singing and shining together as one, the whole universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty.*

— John Muir

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producing as well. The greater the variety of ideas and viewpoints, the better everyone’s games become.

So that’s my request. If you’ve created a piece of equipment or a setting or an NPC or even a whole adventure that is related at all to science fiction gaming, consider submitting it and sharing with the world.

And as always, keep exploring!

- Tom Stephens
Senior Editor

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THE BUCKERBEISSER

Eric Winsor

Greetings gentlebeings. Let me introduce you to another creature of the Frontier. The JHF hosts a small pack of Buckerbeisser. Several years ago a friend of Dwain and I gifted us a mated pair of Buckerbeisser during our visit to Kidkit, Madderly's Star. He named the pair Anthony and Cleopatra. We call them Tony and Cleo. Our pack is the offspring of this pair and we are presently completing the travel arrangements to place all but two of our pair's descendants with various zoos. Port Loren Zoo is getting a female to pair with the male they already have. Klaktow Zoo is getting a pair of males to start their exhibit. Special arrangements have been made for this pair as buckerbeisser are the mascot of MerCo. Another male is going to the Metropolitan Zoo of Lake Vast where they hope to mate him with their female. A female is going to the Onerhome Xenological Park. Another male is going to the Sengsen Zoological Society. We are receiving a male from them with a female that was to be sent to the Klaktow Zoo from the Port Loren Zoo. MerCo won a law suit baring the importation of female buckerbeisser to the Gruna Garu system. The two we are receiving will be paired with the male and female buckerbeisser that we are retaining from Tony and Cleo's children.

THE RAIN FORESTS OF KIDKIT

Kidkit has beautiful rainforests in many of its coastal regions. The northwestern coasts of the Moldovan continent have great rocky mountains running north to south along the coastline which trap the coastal rains as the weather presses inland, creating a temperate rainforest climate. The trees here grow to great heights and the undergrowth has flourished in the wet climate with vascular plants that develop into a great variety of fronds and flowers. The environment is wet and green.

Rivers flow from the mountains to the north and west that block the rains from pressing inland. Rain occurs about 80% of the year. The moisture falls as snow in the tallest peaks feeding glaciers that drive the many rivers in the region year around. The rivers converge in the many canyons to become rivers ten to twenty meters wide. These canyons join together causing these several rivers to join into a great river named the Wimahl. The terrain also supports countless ponds, lakes, and springs.

The temperatures in the region range from hot and humid in the summers to occasional winters with a dusting of

snow. The summers are known for commencing with great rain storms accompanied by fierce winds. The great trees of the region have adapted by growing massive root systems to withstand these winds. Following the great rains, the short dry season causes the glaciers to melt back and occasionally reveal the bare rock peaks of the mountains. The rains return on a daily cycle following summer with morning and late afternoon showers. The winter months are characterized by temperatures that approach freezing and on occasional years drop just below freezing. The daily precipitation during the winter months often minimizes to just once a day around noon. Following winter the twice a day rain cycle returns as the temperature increases until the great rains return.

MOLDOVAN WILDLIFE

The rain forest supports a profuse variety of carboniferous tetrapods. These creatures possess features common to rudimentary mammals as well as amphibians and reptiles. Typically the creatures are adapted to life in water with skin that needs to remain moist and allows gas exchange to supplement breathing. The larger Moldovan Rain Forest creatures have lung structures which allow them to travel further from water and survive with their skin dry for long periods of time.

The predominant physical structure is four limbs, two in front and two in back, with four digits on each foot or hand. Bilateral symmetry is well developed. The internal bone structure of the creatures is a mix of solid bone and cartilage allowing for great flexibility and fast movement. Teeth are developed in these creatures and range from serrated boney ridges in the small creatures to individual teeth set in the surrounding bone of the larger creatures.



Buckerbeisser by Scott Mulder

The distinguishing feature of the creatures in the Moldovan Rain Forest is a pair of opposing pincers set below the jaw.

The rain forests are also populated with a great variety of insects, mollusks, simple amphibians, fish, small reptiles, and basic mammals. The insects and mollusks are food sources for the simple amphibians, fish, small reptiles, small carboniferous tetrapods, and the small mammals. The larger reptiles, fish, mammals, and carboniferous tetrapods find food sources among the smaller creatures. Some of the reptiles and mammals are strictly herbivorous. Among the dominant predators of the Moldovan rain forest is the buckerbeisser.

The buckerbeisser is one of the largest carboniferous tetrapods found on Kidkit. They reach a size of about a meter tall and a meter long when fully grown. Full size is reached at about two years of age. This coincides with fertility for the buckerbeisser. Buckerbeisser are ovoviviparous, mating for the first time at about two years of age and caring their young for three months before birthing live young into an aquatic environment. Newly born buckerbeisser lack their limbs and have a simple tail which they swim with for the first couple of months while their limbs develop. They are about 30 to 40 centimeters long at birth and only prey to the largest of fish in their environment. However, there are many reptiles adept at ambushing the young buckerbeisser. Typically, between 6 to 10 young are born to a mother at a time. The young then remain with the mother and father for the next two years until they are full grown and the pack breaks up with each of the young heading out on its' own to find a mate. The adolescent buckerbeisser will then spend the next year seeking a mate. Buckerbeisser mate for life.

Buckerbeisser hunt in pairs and will team up with a sibling or two while they seek out a mate. They are loyal to their hunting partner(s) and will stick to them until their mate is found. This loyalty also allows for the formation of super packs where several mated pairs and their offspring will hunt together. These super packs eventually disband when the prey food source is insufficient to feed the pack and they must split up to hunt in different territories. Hunting is typically done by ambush with each pack member hiding silently in the undergrowth and waiting for prey to wander into the kill zone they have encircled. Once prey is in the kill zone, the waiting buckerbeisser will rush in for the kill. Another hunting method employed when two or very few buckerbeisser are available to hunt together is for one to lay in concealment and the other to drive the prey into the kill zone of the waiting ambush. When a single buckerbeisser is forced to hunt alone, ambush is the only documented hunting method.

The buckerbeisser typically attack by bowling the opponent over with a rush that capitalizes on their bulk to hit their prey. The pincers are then employed to grapple

onto the opponent and the buckerbeisser mauls its victim. If a limb or other body part can be fit into the maw of the buckerbeisser, then the beast will employ a crushing bite to inflict prolonged damage.

Contrary to many reports on the core networks, the buckerbeisser does not have a long tongue that it can shoot out to catch prey. The tongue is sticky when touched and buckerbeisser do rest with their mouths open to bait insects into landing and getting stuck. On rare occasions, if a large insect happens to land, the buckerbeisser will snap its' mouth shut to assure the catch.

DOMESTICATION

The first encounters with buckerbeisser were by MerCo personnel on training exercises in the Moldovan rain forest. Legend has it that an elite team of rangers were conducting a search and destroy exercise when their point man walked into the kill zone of nine Buckerbeisser and was caught off-guard. The team then fought off the pack and rescued their badly injured companion. The team then completed their mission by using a captured Buckerbeisser to distract their approach to the target and destroy it. After the mission this team took to hunting the Buckerbeisser in small two man teams as a training exercise for environment awareness. This continued contact with the Buckerbeisser revealed the intelligence level of the Buckerbeisser to be similar to human canid. One of the team officers then captured a young Buckerbeisser from a pack and raised it in contact with



Hunting Buckerbeisser by Scott Mulder

the other humans in his ranger team. The Buckerbeisser bonded with the team and accepted them as its pack.

This MerCo ranger team then began a breeding program to domesticate the Buckerbeisser for use as working animals. To date they are dozens of generations into their breeding program and they have produced Buckerbeisser who are able to be led on a leash, take simple commands to stay in a place or follow, and to control their urges to

attack humans, yazirians, dralasites, vrusk, ifshnits, and osakar. They claim they are still having problems acclimating Buckerbeisser to humma. So far the most common working purpose of domesticated Buckerbeisser in MerCo are as guards where they will wait over their trained kill zone and then rush anything that enters that zone. They are typically chained for guard work as they will make a loud guttural sound as they try to reach beyond the end of their leash when attacking. Several buckerbeisser surrounding a kill zone on chains will effectively keep an intruder from moving until the guards with shock restraints show up. Buckerbeisser are not taken into public on leash often due to their immature domestication. They are still unpredictable about attacking even while on leash with their trainers.

MERCO MASCOT

MerCo is headquartered on Kidkit and with the discovery of this species credited to their personnel, they have become quite fond of the Buckerbeisser. MerCo filed the official registry in the alien creature file and sponsored the initial scientific study of the creature and all of its related species. They purposely named the creature after the city of Buckerton as an honor to the city. The name beisser was used because it means biter in an ancient human language and was once used in naming dog breeds that walked with a gate similar to the buckerbeisser.

The CEO of MerCo has taken to bringing a gold chained buckerbeisser with him as part of his color guard in official meetings both on and off world. All MerCo ranger units now keep a buckerbeisser as a mascot and these are often taken on off-world deployments by the commanding officers.

LEGAL STATUS

MerCo is currently the only organization utilizing buckerbeissers. Individual ownership of these creatures as pets or guard animals has yet to spread outside of MerCo. There are a few exceptions among the police

force of Buckerton with employees who have past career ties to the MerCo Rangers. They have also reportedly been employed as guard animals on some of the estates of the wealthy Buckerton family on Kidkit. The Buckerton family will neither confirm nor deny this.

Off-world buckerbeisser have only been reported to have been imported to zoos and other xenological institutions including the JHF. The wild disposition of the pure undomesticated buckerbeisser bars their importation to most worlds. The domesticated breed is still too immature for most worlds to permit importation. The JHF could find no records of buckerbeisser importation beyond zoological imports.

Buckerbeisser are dangerous animals and not a pet for nonprofessional animal trainers. There are numerous accounts of severe bite wounds and some maimings from buckerbeisser on Kidkit. The JHF does not recommend personal ownership of these animals and encourages all beings interested in seeing these creatures to visit any of the zoos and xenological institutions mentioned at the beginning of this article.

Buckerbeisser	
TYPE:	Carnivore
SIZE:	Small : 1m
NUMBER:	1-12
MOVE:	65 m/turn
IM/RS:	5/45
STAMINA:	40
ATTACK:	65
DAMAGE:	2d10
SPECIAL ATTACK:	Pincer grapple, crushing bite
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	None
NATIVE WORLD:	Kidkit, Maderly's Star

GM NOTES

MerCo, though in good relations with WarTech as one of their weapons suppliers, pressed the limitation of no female Buckerbeissers in Gruna Garu because WarTech also sells weapons to Galactic Task Force Incorporated.

The naming of the buckerbeisser after the city of Buckerton is commonly recognized by the locals of Kidkit as actually a nod to the very wealthy Buckerton family who are major shareholders of MerCo.

FE

Readers wishing Jurak Hangna to investigate a creature of the frontier need only submit a picture and any details of the creature via FrontierExplorer.org. Submitters must have right and permission to submit all artwork.



MAPPING PORT LOREN

Tom Stephens

Editor/Author's Note: This article first appeared as [a blog post](#) on my blog, [Arcane Game Lore](#) in mid-December 2015. You can check out the blog for other gaming material as well.

There are a few other fan created versions of the Port Loren map out there ([Here's the google search](#)) but none of them captured the feel of the original for me.

I have many memories of adventures and encounters played out on this map over the years. I still have my original copy that I got with the boxed set back in the 80's. I had it laminated back then so we could write on it (and the maps on the back) with grease pencils (anyone remember those?) to add features or notes. It has held up quite well over the years thanks to the lamination.

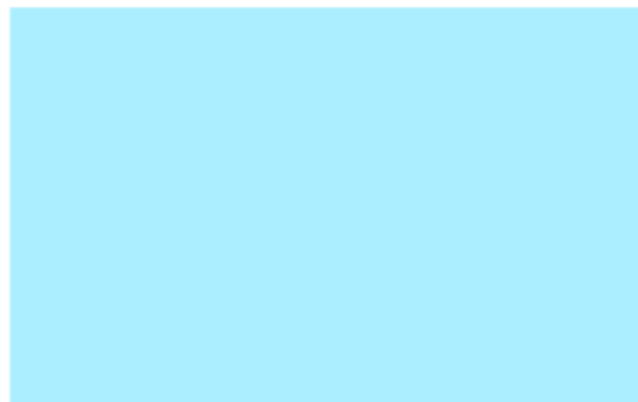
I started on this project a couple of years ago and don't really remember what prompted me to really get into it. But with an increase in on-line virtual tabletop systems, I figured it would be nice to have a near original copy for the nostalgia value alone. I had finished everything but the labeling last November but then being back in grad school hit me with some super busy semesters and I had to put the project on hold. When I finished my last paper for the most recent semester last week, I figured I'd finish this off and get it out there for people to enjoy. I thought I'd talk a bit about how I put this together.

The map was drawn in Inkscape, my current go-to vector drawing program and was drawn in a series of several layers to get all of the features on there properly. The map is drawn at 100 dpi.

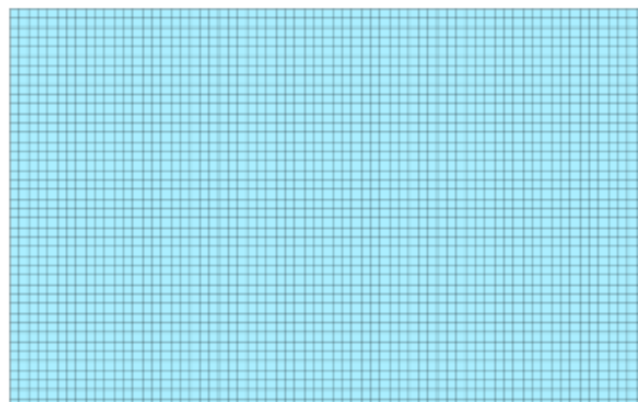
I started by counting out the size of the grid. The map is 67x42 squares in size. The map has two squares per inch which makes each square the size of the chits that came with the game. However, I discovered while doing this that the original map is actually squished a little bit, at least in the horizontal direction. Every fifth column is slightly smaller than the others. I vaguely remember this from playing on the map but never really thought about it much. Because of this the new map, if printed, will be slight larger than the original as I have corrected that problem.

Given the basic size, I created a new file that was 1" larger in both directions than the map so that I would have a 1/2" border all around. The first layer of the map just contains a large blue rectangle that was the color for the

roads on the map. I also established a rectangular grid in Inkscape to allow drawing all the objects easier as the tools would snap to this grid.



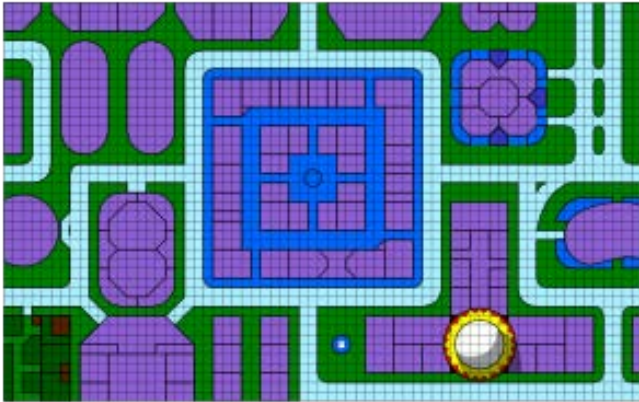
Next I added the actual map grid. This is actually quite easy in Inkscape. You just go to Extensions->Render->Cartesian Grid... This gives you a dialog box that allows you to set the parameters for your grid. You can set things like the spacing between the lines, thicknesses of the lines, and have primary, secondary, and tertiary grid divisions if you want. I just set primary grid lines at 50 px spacing and the correct number in the x and y directions. After adjusting the settings, just click the Apply button and your grid appears. You might have to move it around a bit but that's fairly easy.



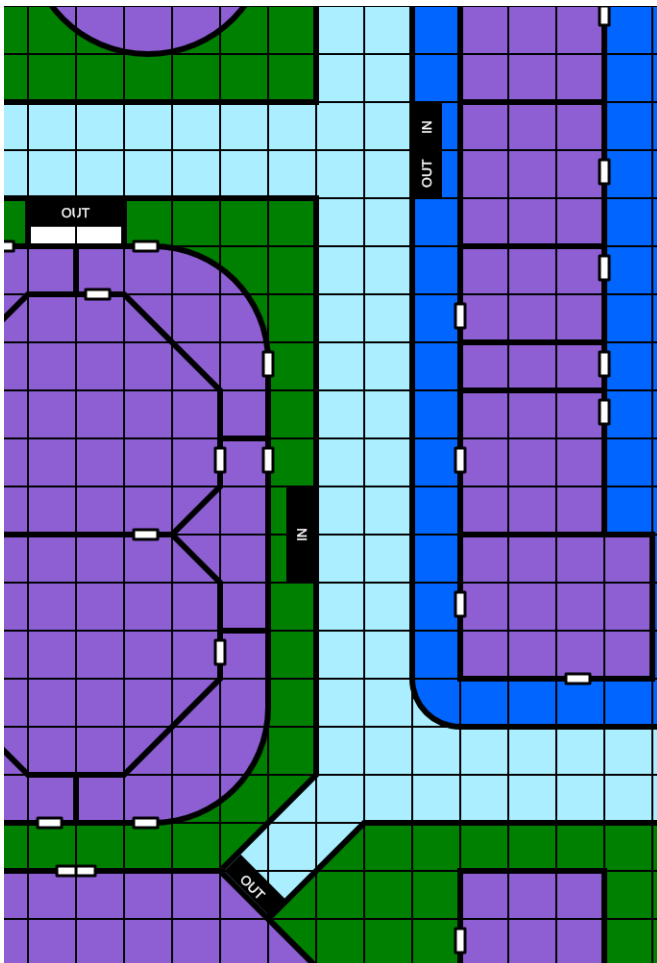
With the grid in place, I started working across the map putting in the grass, sidewalks and water features and the buildings. I basically did this one grass section at a time and worked from the upper left to the bottom right. The grass was put on one layer and the buildings on another. Both of these layers were placed under the grid layer so

Frontier Explorer

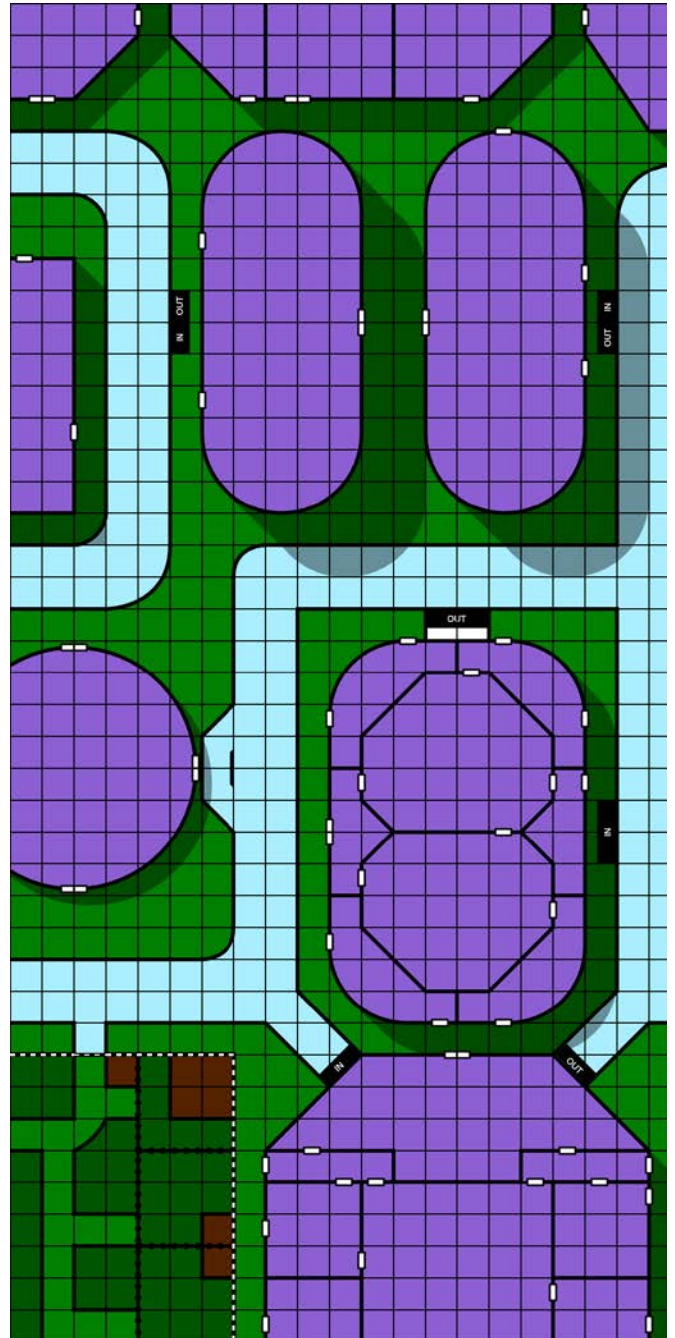
that the grid overlaid them. You may notice that the color used for sidewalks (in that big center area) is the same as the color used for water features (e.g. around the government building).



After that was done, I put on all the doors on their own layer. This was the first layer above the grid as the doors needed to not have the grid running over top of them. Otherwise, these would have just gone on the building layer. This layer also included the “In” and “Out” labels for the underground parking areas.

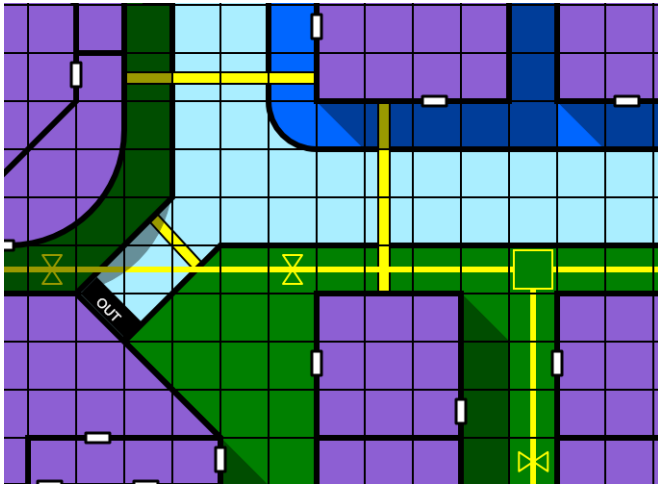


Next came the shadows. In the end, I think this is what was really missing from all the other maps. With the exception of some of the shadows on the Stellar Tower Hotel, all of the shadows were drawn on their own layer that was placed below the building layer. This allowed me to less exact on those shadow bits that were “under” the buildings and get them drawn faster.

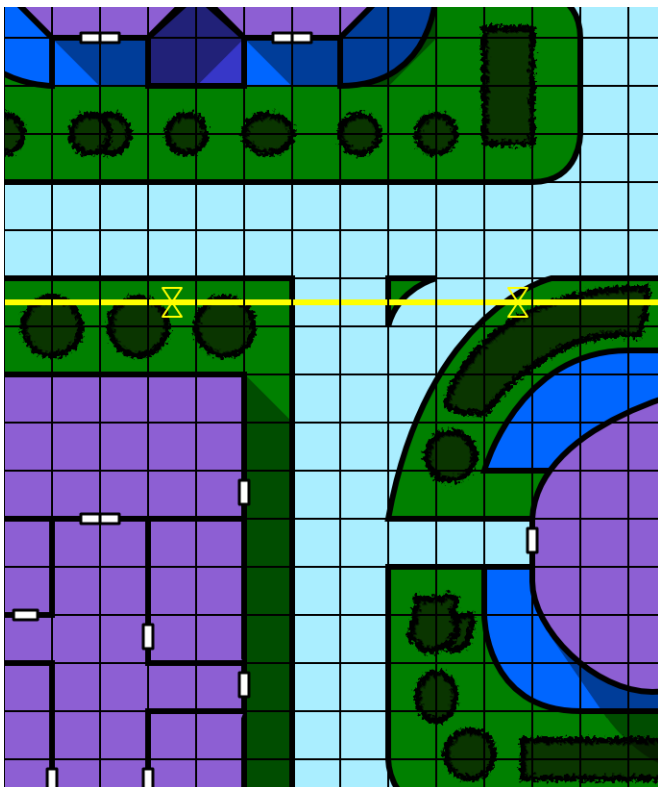


The next layer was the monorail and walkway system. This layer was originally above everything up to this point but at the last minute, I realized that it should be under the shadows and moved it down in the layer stack to the right location. This is one of the areas where I deviated slightly from the original version in that I made the pylons for

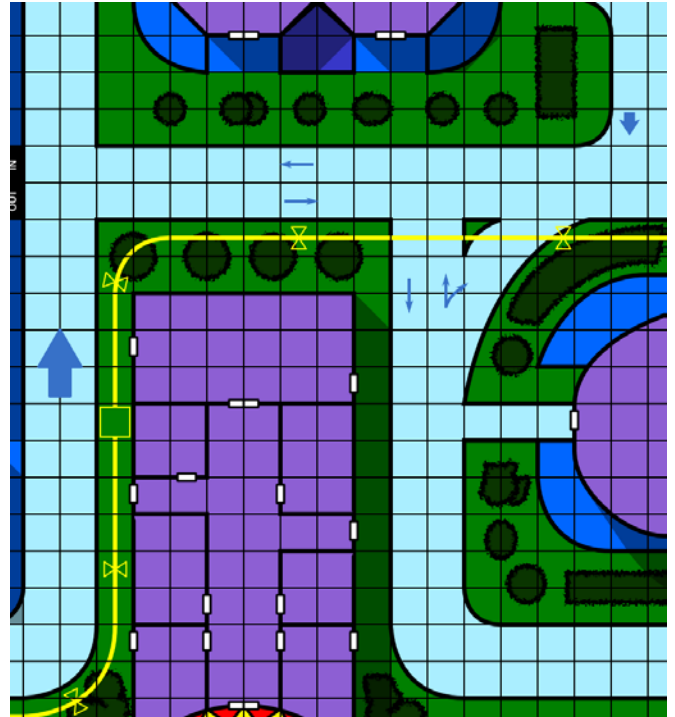
monorail system slightly larger than in the original (and consistently sized and shaped).



Next came the fun part, figuring out how to do the shrubbery. (For some reason I have Monty Python running through my head. “You must bring us ... a shrubbery”.) I did not want to draw these by hand. I figured there had to be some sort of image filter that would give me the basic rough outlines that would match the original map. After a lot of experimenting, I found one that I liked and got the colors figured out. Unfortunately, I seem to have forgotten exactly what it was. I have the filter saved as part of the image but I can’t seem to find it in the tools at the moment. That is something I’ll have to refigure out if I want to make another map in this style. This layer was placed below the shadows layer.



Next I added in the arrows on the roads to show the direction of traffic. These are on a layer above the grid to match the styling of the original map.

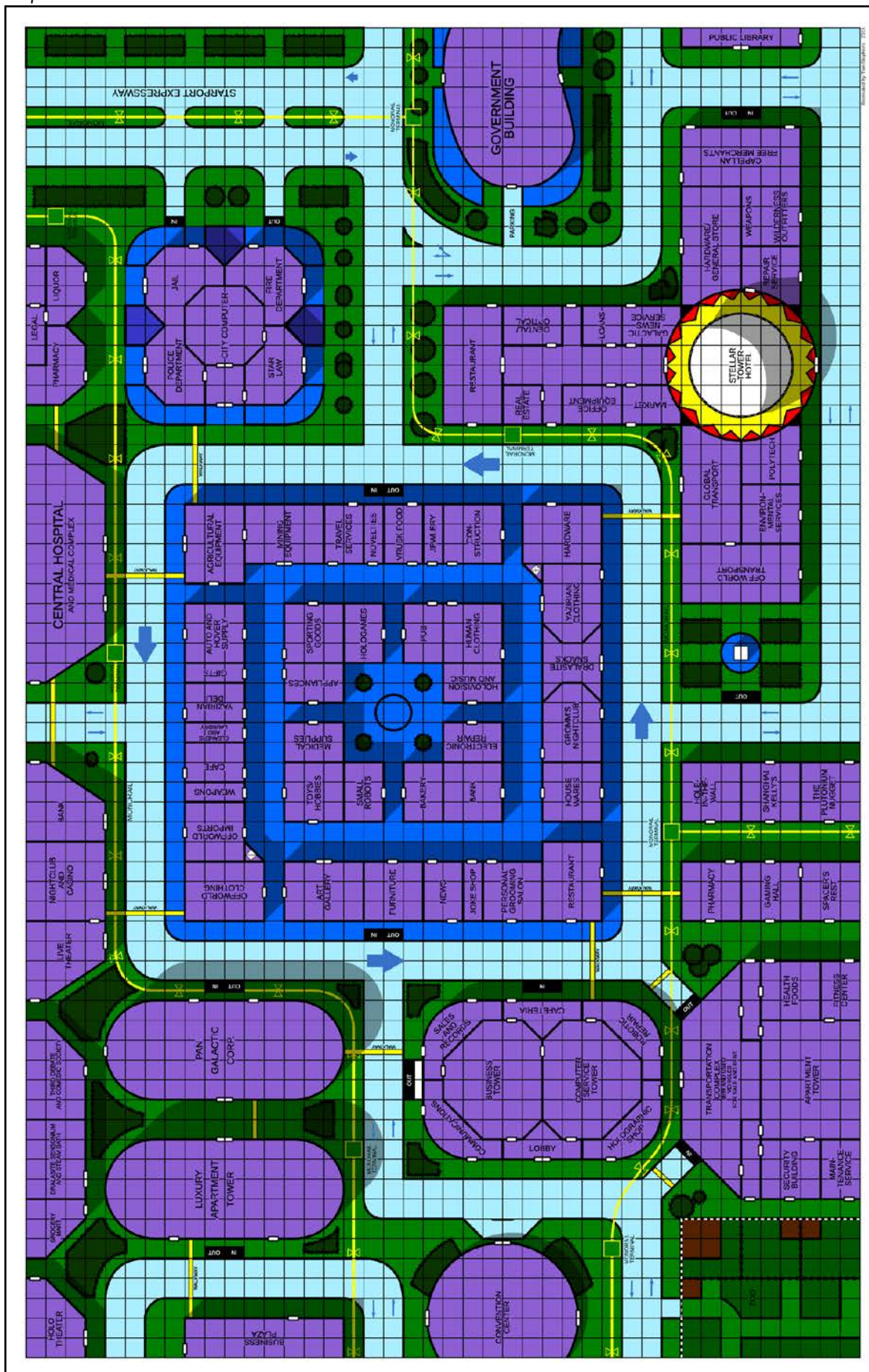


Finally, I added in the labels. This was done with two different layers. The first, and topmost layer, simply contained the labels themselves. However, the text was running over the grid lines and, like on the original map, some of those grid lines had to be masked out to make them more readable. This was done on a second layer just below the text. I simply drew rectangles of the same color as the underlying background to cover the grid in the appropriate places.

And that’s the Port Loren map, recreated (seen complete on the next page). The more I look at it, the more I feel the purple is a little too deep. Maybe at some point I’ll go back and try to match the color a little closer but it’s not too far off when comparing a printed section of the map to the original. The other thing I couldn’t match exactly was the font. I came pretty close using Liberation Sans but I could never find the exact font used on the original. If anyone knows what it is, please let me know as I’d love to update it to that font.

Someone pointed out that the in and out directions for some of the parking garages don’t make sense. I’ll probably go back and change those in a future edition as well. I didn’t really pay attention when I was making it as I was just recreating the original.

Finally, there are a couple of fan made maps that extend this map or draw a different part of the city. I may take a stab at recreating those maps in the same style.



Star Systems

JANUS SYSTEM REPORT

Laura Mumma

Adapted from Robert Jennings original ideas and expanded on by Laura Mumma.

CANON BACKGROUND

The planet Janus first appeared in the MassConfusion 1984 Star Frontiers Competition Module “Trouble on Janus” by Robert Jennings. The module is very Traveler-like in feel and not nearly Star Frontiers enough for most fans of the Star Frontiers role playing game. As a result Janus become a world in Star Frontiers that has not seen much use by referees. I suggest with this “new” world it is up to the referee to place the world on the map and in the setting’s timeline that best fits the referee’s use. Janus can best be described as the Amazon Jungle, Old South plantation culture meets Australia. This is a planet of “two-type” creatures, creatures that have strange abilities or seem to be a mix of creatures from different environments.

PLANETARY BRIEFING

Janus is a jungle planet, in the binanry Geminus system (The two stars are called Geminus One and Geminus Two and local spacers call them “the twins”), on the edge of the Cluster (near Gergonise).

There are three other planets in the system, with the other two planets being much farther out and uninhabited. Janus has one moon, uninhabited, and has one space station orbiting the planet to provide weather information, boost off-planet communications, and facilitate movement of cargo onto and off world.

The gravity on Janus is 1.1 G. Janus also has a very dense atmosphere with slightly higher oxygen content, so that beings accustomed to 1 G should feel no discomfort. The density of the atmosphere and the proximity to two suns make this a virtual hothouse world. The planet is covered with lush jungles of amazing biodiversity. The planet is divided into two major continental masses that are crisscrossed by vast and small rivers with a large number of natural lakes creating a maze of huge to small islands across the continents.

Janus has a relatively flat rotation orbit and an extremely slight axis tilt. As a result, seasonal changes are virtually unknown on Janus. The southern hemisphere is undergoing a summer season while the northern hemisphere is undergoing a late summer or very early fall season, and this situation is expected to continue for the next thousand years or so.

ECONOMIC PROFILE AND DEVELOPMENT

Janus was discovered over a century and a half ago by an exploration ship sponsored by Multi-Cap Corporation. It was briefly cataloged, but Janus was not immediately colonized. About sixty years ago Multi-Cap Corporation funded a second expedition to Janus before their original claim expired. The expedition ship the “Borderline” crashed in the southern hemisphere.

The owner and commander of the ship was Jerry Tatum, who was also the discoverer of the Tatum Plant, whose leaves made an almost universal pain killer and a good antiseptic. Multi-Cap



[Jungle Clearing](#) by Barta IV on Flickr

immediately recognized the value of the discovery of the Tatum plant and within 1 galactic standard year had begun developing the planet with the establishment of scientific research and mapping stations, and an experimental agricultural farm, thus ensuring Multi-Cap retained its claim to Janus.

After determining the most efficient growing methods for Tatum Plants, Multi-Cap began to recruit colonists from predominately human populations in the Frontier. Since then the production of Tatum-leaves have become the primary product of Janus and its principle source of export income. Tatum and his crew were also the discoverers of the planet's inhabitants, dubbed "Woolies".

CURRENT ECONOMIC PROFILE

The economy of Janus depends almost entirely on the growth and export of Tatum leaves, from which a base is extracted to be made into painkillers and antiseptics. Due to this situation, the real economic power on Janus rests with the Multi-Cap Corporation, a pharmaceutical manufacturing and pharmaceutical agriculture firm with Frontier-wide distribution. The Multi-Cap directors realized early on the potential sales to be gained from exploiting Tatum leaves.

Multi-Cap functions as the real governing power on Janus; Multi-Cap company police have the real law enforcement power concerning larger planetary affairs. There is a rudimentary parliamentary system on Janus. The local non Multi-Cap police force is community based and very similar in concept to sheriffs. Local authorities such as planetary police or customs officials wear powder blue uniforms. Multi-Cap security wears dark blue uniforms.

Central City is the capitol of Janus, the largest population center, and the location of the planet's spaceport. Central City is located on the eastern coast of the southern continent where a great river called the Noraworo enters the bay. The Noraworo delta is connected to many other rivers, which feed into it creating a natural supply line of waterways for the movement of crops to Central City and supplies from Central City to the many plantations in the jungles of Janus. Thus Central City has a huge port for river ships & warehouses. In addition a major mill is located in Central City that processes lumber brought from the jungle.

Camp Borderline is the second largest settlement on Janus and is the oldest settlement as well. This is the site of the crashed

ship Borderline and became the site of Multi-Caps first research station as the immediate area was mapped, friendly relations had been established with the local tribe, and some structures already built by the surviving crew of the Borderline. Camp Borderline has the first cemetery and memorial sites for off-worlders.

Multi-Cap maintains a test farm and plantation at Camp Borderline and maintains other research facilities there as well. Camp Borderline has a small landing facility and an artificial waterway and port that Multi-Cap put in to connect it to the extensive river system via the Pango River once Multi-Cap determined water travel was the safest way to travel. Camp Borderline is located 1,500 kilometers southwest from Central City.

PLANTATION SYSTEM

Multi-Cap has developed large tracts of the southern hemisphere and administers it in the following manner. Tatum Plants are grown on extensive plantations. Land tracts are apportioned by Multi-Cap, which picks the owners of each tract, helps the owner with financing, clearing the land, equipment purchases, and the other set-up costs. These plantations are settled along major waterways in order to secure cheap and reliable transportation for movement of the harvested Tatum leaves.

A plantation system is established with the owners of the plantations in debt to Multi-Cap for development capital and dependent on Multi-Cap for control of the land itself. Multi-Cap agrees to buy all the Tatum leaf produced and offers settlers a reasonable price, not neglecting the profit margin they stand to make from the product when it is refined and sold off planet. For security reasons, no Tatum leaf extract is refined on Janus itself. It is speculated that this security policy helps maintain the firm control Multi-Cap holds over the plantation owners and develops an even greater dependence on Multi-Cap's purchasing power.



The labor to actually plant, weed, and harvest the Tatum Plant is provided by the Woolies. Use of Woolies as labor appears to be a mutually exploitive system. That is, the growing and harvesting of vast acreage of Tatum Plants would be impossible without a source of cheap, effective labor able to make independent decisions beyond the capability of programmed robot labor.

The plantation system appears to be a salvation for the Woolies themselves. The planet is over run with a host of natural predators, both animal and plant, and most of these predators feed on Woolies, whose function in the ecology appears to be roughly equivalent to that of rabbits. The lack of large tribal or clan connections, or more than elementary civilization development, make the Woolies a poor long-range choice to emerge as a dominant species on Janus were it not for the intervention of other intelligent species, specifically, the advent of the Multi-Cap Corporation and plantation system.

In return for working the plantations the Woolies receive free food, free housing, free medical treatment, and trade privileges as payment. Woolies do not appear to fully understand the term “payment for wages” or the concept of labor being valuable. However, they are willing to work the plantations in return for such implements as knives, spears, trinkets, and primitive weapons such as bows. Apparently the primary consideration from the viewpoint of the Woolies is security. There are no predators within the boundaries of the plantations (except for occasional intervening creatures which break thru the security perimeters), which means Woolies can raise families and live a peaceful existence without the fear of imminent death. The second consideration is medical attention, which they regard as some sort of god-magic provided by the generous out-worlders. They do not regard free food or housing as any benefit at all, since in their natural state food and housing is relatively “free” anyway.

An investigation eleven years ago by a Board of Inquiry reveals that the system utilized by Multi-Cap does not constitute slavery, voluntary or otherwise, and from all appearances the Woolies themselves, as well as the plantation owners, are happy with the situation which places them at the disposal of Multi-Cap. The system appears to be uniquely fitted for exploiting the only real economic potential available on Janus in the best and most efficient way possible.

TRADE

Under the terms of trade agreements, no planet may shut off trade with another signatory planet, except for medical reasons.

Non Multi-Cap ships do come to Janus for trade purposes. However, they come mostly as carriers of goods to the planet. While Tatum Plants grow wild all over the face of the planet, they are seldom concentrated enough to make up enough of a harvest weight to make harvest from the wild viable. In addition, Woolies in the wild apparently have difficulty understanding the concept of property and property-trade rights.

Some unscrupulous traders have influenced tribal bands of Woolies to steal from plantations at harvest time, and have gotten away with it. However, Woolies appear to be loyal workers, and while such practices have occurred, they are by no means common.

There are rumors that sapphires and large deposits of various ores have been found in the interior of the southern continent. Specifically it is rumored that the Red Mound Hills, in the Wallaby River Basin contain riches. This area is about three thousand kilometers west of Central City, in the middle of uncharted, hostile jungle. Some traders have managed to barter such inconsequential items as mirrors, metal knives, bells, rope, and the like and have obtained raw sapphires, though not in serious quantity. Most explorers willing to tackle the hazards of the jungle specialize in exotic plants and fruit. Orchid type flowering plants are common. In general trade opportunities on Janus are not well established. Multi-Cap does have several scientific research stations and teams looking for other plants with medical applications.



[Levant Mine](#) by John Stratford on Flickr

PIRACY

Pirates are not unknown in this region; however, they normally do not bother with secondary yield cargos such as Tatum-leaves.

THE LANDLESS

Not all citizens of Janus work on plantations or own plantation land, such people rent. Since Multi-Cap owns the land rights it is near impossible for someone to gain land not through them, however it's a big planet with lots of unexplored regions. There are rumors of people going "up river" which means they have set out on their own without Multi-Caps permission to carve out not a plantation but a place to live. It is rumored that there are hidden, illegal (squatter) communities in the interior. These rumors are mostly dismissed, as it is common knowledge the jungle is deadly and such people are doomed to failure.

FLORA & FUANA

Plant and animal life is abundant on Janus. Birds and insects are everywhere in the jungle. Plant life is often animate on some level. The rivers and seas team with life as well. Janus wild life is often described as "two-type" possessing features of more than one kind of creature or even a mix of plant, animal, insect and mineral kingdoms.

Woolies are the native sentient race and culture of Janus. Woolies have a protected status on Janus. Woolies are not to be bothered or harassed in any ways. If a Woolie gets hurt by a non-Woolie the planetary police automatically hold the non-Woolie involved on attempted murder charges until the problem can be investigated. Woolies, though tall, are not very strong and are basically non-aggressive.

A FEW ADVENTURE IDEAS

The original module Trouble on Janus can be reworked into a Star Law adventure, or if the players are not Star Law the players could be trying to investigate the disappearance of a specific ship perhaps for insurance reasons, to find lost family members on board, or because they have heard rumors of riches to be found on Janus at a spacer's bar.

RETURN TO JANUS

PCs are part of the crew of the Borderline sent to further explore Janus by Multi-Cap, the ship crashes, they must survive the wildlife, collect botanical samples (without getting killed), map the immediate area, build various things necessary for their survival, make successful contact with Woolies, and repair communications and get an emergency signal sent out.

OUT OF JANUS

"I once had a farm on Janus." PCs become plantation owners and have adventures based on trying to farm on

Janus, interact with the natives, and so on. This is the Bonanza, Out of Africa type of adventure setting.

UP THE RIVER

Waterway travel has suddenly become more hazardous than usual with ships disappearing or being found destroyed, passengers, crew, and cargo missing. PCs are hired to discover the cause of these sinkings and or vanished ships, is it the Woolies, pirates, or a previously unknown creature or hazard?

THE GREAT SPACE HUNTER

PCs are hired as part of a Safari to hunt down a rumored creature in the interior by a famous off-worlder hunter. This is the classic black and white African Safari scenario in old films. It should include a tribe of Woolies, the porter Woolies are afraid and for good reasons, Woolie taboos should cause some plot twists, a variety of dangerous creatures, the elusive semi-mythic creature the great hunter either wants to capture or kill, at least several family members and friends of hunter that are a pain in the neck, a rival Safari hunt group out to get the critter first at any cost, a few annoying scientists and a few jealous and petty types that will fight, maybe commit murder, get in trouble and generally cause problems and the discovery of something totally unexpected to all.

HEART OF DARKNESS

PCs are hired to retrieve a Multi-Cap employee who has not just wandered off into the jungle or gone native but has gone off the deep end. This individual has somehow become not just the chief of a tribe of Woolies but their god, and he is galvanizing not only the tribe, but also allied tribes into a waging war against plantations, friendly Woolie tribes, and Multi-Cap.

LOOK OUT JIM THAT'S A BIG ONE

Jim and the PCs are trying to make a wildlife film documentary for an Interplanetary Geographic episode... sponsored by a health and life insurance company, which the PCs should really need by the end of the adventure.

RIVER MONSTERS

That's right the PCs are going fishing on the trail of a killer monster in one of the rivers, and if the PCs thought land wildlife was deadly, what lurks in this river should make them never want to go swimming again.

JANUS AS A SATHAR WORLD

The core four settled on a Sathar world. Janus is the perfect environment for Sathar. The Sathar are present, living hidden in the swamps and the underground river system on what they consider to be a wormy Garden of Eden and they are none too pleased with the core four races building and squatting on their pristine planet. At some point these local Sathar are going to do something about the invaders.

Races

WOOLIES

Laura Mumma

Author's Note: The Woolies first appeared in “The Trouble On Janus” module by Robert Jennings at the Massconfusion 1984 Star Frontiers Competition. I fleshed them out a bit, did not assume they needed to be primates, or even mammals, and added to their culture a bit.

Woolies	
TYPE:	(sentient race) large herbivores (1.98 to 2.13 meters)
NUMBER:	1-20
MOVE:	15m/35m/6m
IM/RS:	5/45
STA:	50
ATTACK:	by weapon type, or claws 45%
# OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE:	1d10 per claw, or weapon type
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Jungles, Forest, Mountains
WEIGHT:	45 kg
BODY TEMP:	30 C
LIFESPAN:	200 years to unknown (see description)

Woolies are the native sentient race and culture of Janus and have a protected status on that world. Woolies are not to be bothered or harassed in any way. If a Woolie gets hurt by a non-Woolie, the planetary police automatically hold the non-Woolie involved on attempted murder charges until the problem can be investigated. Woolies, though tall, are not very strong and are basically non-aggressive.

These creatures are bipeds covered with moss like fibers that give them a Wooly appearance. They are about 1.9 meters to 2.13 meters tall. The civilization of these people is described as nomadic and tribal. Some larger tribal units of relative stability, primarily on the northern continent, have been observed to be more settled.

Woolie is a pun on the phrase the Pango tribe used when asked by explorers what they called themselves Woloi means in Pango linguistic group “from this place”.

Woolies come in a variety of colors such as purple, red, blue, pink, white, and black, some are bi-colored in that their lower arms, lower legs, and faces are a different color than the rest of their moss like coat.

Woolies have three eyes which are large and bulbous. The eyes themselves are a constantly changing pattern of colors on black, best described as like watching colored oils move on the surface of dark water. The Woolie does have protective eye-lids. Woolies cannot be hypnotized. Woolies have extremely good eyesight, are extremely hard to surprise, and are excellent marksmen with any ranged weapon.

Woolie range weapons, though primitive, maximize their strength. Atlatl, blowguns, slings, and other types of weapons allow them to be weak by other race's standards but still deadly. Woolies are also known to create traps and defensive structures of primitive but effective natures. Woolies culturally have no desire to kill other sentient life but will do so if they believe their tribe or the things they hold sacred are threatened. They are pacifists seeking to live in harmony with all of nature.

Woolies shave patterns into their wool and weave feathers and baubles into their “coats.” Some tribes wear their coats in long cords. A Woolie body is long and lean. The arms and legs are long, flexible muscular limbs similar to elephant trunks. The legs and arms are surprisingly slender ending in a large two-toed foot and an extremely dexterous three-fingered hand. Their limbs are extremely flexible because they do not have a skeleton but an interconnecting web of strong fibers that help support their slender body, somewhat akin to that of a dralasite. Woolies are not as strong as humans, yazirians, vrusk, or dralasites because of their unique biological structure.

Woolies are not mammals but a unique form of life found on Janus that possess both plant and animal characteristics. Woolies do not nurse their young. Woolies have a light pink blood that does contain a type of plant-animal red blood cell, but have significantly less of these O₂ carrying “red blood cells” than say Humans. Woolies must wear an O₂ boosting breathing device, or be given O₂ boosting drugs to function on planets with lower O₂ content than Janus.

Multi-Cap maintains that the intelligence of the Woolies has been tested as low. The long term survival potential of the Woolies without intervention of a more advanced

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culture has been judged as low as well by Multi-Cap scientists. However, their ability to learn indicates that they simply have no cultural points of reference for certain concepts which the more advanced races take for granted rather than a lack of intelligence.

Woolies worship the Mirror Plant. Woolies feed their dead to the plant as a burial ceremony. The Mirror Plant is central to their mythologies, and various tribal beliefs. Woolie elders claim they can communicate with these plants which speak for the world, but Multi-Cap scientists do not believe this and claim it is nothing more than superstitious primitive religious beliefs.

Woolies have a symbiotic relationship with the Mirror Plant. The Woolie's life cycle is tied to the presence of the Mirror Plant. Prey and predator are uniquely connected. Woolies who are not around Mirror Plants are sterile and will produce no children till exposed to the vapors of the Mirror Plant. Only after exposure to vapor will the reproduction of an adult Woolie become active and express itself as either a male or female "flower" that grows from their chest on a tether. Once the pollen of a male flower has fertilized a female flower, a fruit forms connected to a sort of outside umbilical cord from the female flower, which then gradually matures into a child Woolie as it grows towards the ground.

Female Woolies often wear slings to help keep the child contained. The baby Woolie clings to its mother scampering around on the end of its nutrient tether. When the tether is long enough that the child can walk beside their parent the umbilical usually withers and falls off. The male Woolies flower after releasing its pollen dies and falls off within 24 hours. Woolies (male and female) "bloom" about every 4 months with the exception of a female with child, who will not bloom again till her child's nutrient tether falls off at about 8 months.

The Life Span of the Woolie is not fully known, many die by being eaten by something before reaching old age, most die before 50. Many, upon reaching an "elder" age of 200, change their name and go into the jungle on "The Great Walk." Their fates are never discussed with off worlders.

Elder Woolies go through metabolic changes at 150. They stop being able to be fertile and become a third neutral gender. In addition, they begin developing psionic abilities at 175. The UPF scientists do not fully understand the change Woolies go through as the Woolie culture is hiding this from the off-worlders as a sacred way of their people.

Elder Woolies still not on "The Great Walk" perform the religious rituals of the tribe, offer council, or are tribal teachers of tribal history. If off-worlders ask an elder about their age "I am elder" is the only answer they will give (for this reason many scientists believe the Woolies

cannot count above a certain number, this assumption is untrue).

It is not known yet what the maximum life span of a Woolie is but some UPF and Multi-Cap scientists believe based on observed physiology and tribal myths that it may be anywhere between 500 to 1000 years or more, while others debate that is impossible and just myth.

Note: One Woolie elder (Cht'ahwhaah "Farwalk" a Woloi tribal member) did stow away on a freighter and is on "The Great Walk" amongst the star peoples, star worlds, and the sacred harmonies of the stars. The UPF is unaware of this. Cht'ahwhaah did go prepared to deal with its specialized metabolic needs on other worlds.

WOOLIES AS CHARACTERS

When generating full ability scores for Woolies, either as significant NPC's or even as player characters, use the ability score modifiers from the following table.

Woolie Ability Score Modifiers	
STR/STA:	-10 to STR only
DEX/RS:	+10
INT/LOG:	0
PER/LDR:	0

FE

SHARE YOUR CREATIONS!

Do you like what you see in the Frontier Explorer? Do you have ideas of your own that you'd like to share with the community? Has something from a previous issue inspired something for your game and you'd like to tell the world? We'd love to help you.

The Frontier Explorer is always looking for submissions and ideas from new authors. We're open to submissions of art and articles on any topic from adventures to character sketches to locations to background information to new rules to whatever else you can think of. The only requirement is that it should be sci-fi related. While most of our content to date has been focused on Star Frontiers, it doesn't have to be that way. We'd love to see articles related to other game systems as well. The more variety the more inspiration for everyone.

If you've got material you'd like to publish we'd love to help you get it ready and into a future issue of the Frontier Explorer. To submit material all you have to do is jump on over to the [Frontier Explorer website](http://frontierexplorer.org) and hit the big, gold "Submit New Content" button. Or if you'd like to talk to the editors about your ideas first, feel free to drop us a line at editors@frontierexplorer.org and we'd be happy to talk to you about it.

JANUS FAUNA

Laura Mumma

Author's Note: The Blackout Bat, Kite Bird, Mirror Plant, Octopus Plant, And Tigerpaw first appeared in "The Trouble On Janus" module by Robert Jennings at the Massconfusion 1984 Star Frontiers Competition. The Janus Wallaby is my own addition.

Skien suits offer protection for players, plus the Yazarian players can, if they remove their sun goggles, actually see through the black fog and pick out the attacker from the victim, something the other players will not be able to do. Once dead, the black fog dissipates within a minute or two, and this will also happen if the bat is unconscious.

BLACKOUT BAT

Blackout Bat	
TYPE:	Large Carnivore (4-6 meter wing span, nose to tail 0.5 – 1.5 meters)
NUMBER:	1 (Solitary hunters)
MOVE:	Medium: average 60 m per turn
IM/RS:	5/50
STA:	130
ATTACK:	2 talons 60% grasp – then, Bite 75% + blood drain
# OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE:	Talons 3d10, mouth 1d10 + 1d5 blood drain per turn
SPECIAL ATTACK:	After victim has lost one third his STA, it must roll under its remaining STA to remain conscious, rolling each round damage continues.
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Fog of darkness is cast to cloak itself and its victim in a black fog about 8 meters in diameter.
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Jungle

These creatures lurk in overhanging jungle trees and swoop down taking their victims by surprise. The bat will always try to fly away with the victim, however, since adults of the core four races are heavier and denser than Woolies, the bat will be unable to do so. Sentient beings of a weight similar to the Woolies can be carried off by the bat. If the victim is of the Dralasite race the bat does initial damage plus another claw attack, then tries another, better tasting victim.

JANUS WALLABY



Janus Wallaby	
TYPE:	Medium herbivores (1.8 meters from head to tip of tail, weight 24 kg.)
NUMBER:	1-100
MOVE:	fast (90 meters/turn)
IM/RS:	7/65
STA:	150
ATTACK:	45
# OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE:	Stampede strike 2d10, Leap Kick 3d10, Bite 1d10, claws 3d10, tail strike 4d10
SPECIAL:	Can leap 5 meters, immune to beam weapons.
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Mountains, Plains

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Janus Wallabies have a purple and maroon stripped natural body armor that is segmented (makes them look like a cross between an armadillo and a wallaby) and immune to beam weapons. They have short forelimbs that end in viscous lobster like claws evolved for cracking into hard husked large nuts. Their eyes are on stalks which can swivel around. Their legs are very strong and their tail ends in a spiked club that they can strike with as well.

Mobs typically stampede through and away from threats, but if cornered or attacked the mob will also form a circle around their young and launch leaping and spinning strikes aimed at the threat or a portion of the adults will break off and attack back giving the mob with juveniles a chance to flee. Once they have the attacker knocked down they will mob their victim pounding it with their legs, clubbed tail and using their claws and teeth to tear the threat apart. Janus Wallabies cannot climb. They can leap up but will only do so on boulders, branches, or logs that will give them landing support.

REFERENCES

Star Frontiers, by TSR Staff, editing by Steve Winter, 1980, TSR

KITE BIRD

Kite Bird	
TYPE:	Large Carnivore, 6-10 meter wingspan, beak to tail 1-2 meters.
NUMBER:	1-5
MOVE:	Very fast (120 meters/turn)
IM/RS:	7/65
STA:	180
ATTACK:	2 claws – 50%, Beak 65% (80% if target is in claws)
# OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE:	Each claw - 4d10; Beak - 4d10 (Inertia screen and skiensuit will provide some protection.)
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Impervious to stun or most poisons.
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Top Canopy of Jungles

These creatures possess enormous triple jointed orange and yellow colored wings, long claws and huge beaks. They are territorial and aggressive towards other flying creatures and towards flying crafts (such as shuttle crafts, scout ships, glijets, jetcopters, aircars and so on) and will attack intruders (even good sized craft have a 12% chance

of being so unbalanced by an attack as to cause them to crash). A mid air collision with one of these beasts that live in the top canopy of the great trees of the jungles can foul engines and destroy tail fin assemblies. Small crafts can be ripped to shreds and their passengers devoured.

OCTAPUS PLANT

Octopus Plant	
TYPE:	Medium, carnivorous plant, 1.5 meters diameter, .5 meters thick, with trailing tentacles about 1.5 meters long
NUMBER:	1 to 3
MOVE:	Very Fast
IM/RS:	7/65
STA:	88
ATTACK:	tentacles, 50% (8)
# OF ATTACKS:	8
DAMAGE:	Special – tentacles are used to hold prey fast, while the central mass secretes sweet-smelling semi-narcotic type digestive fluid, eating through a skiensuit in 5 turns, Albedo Suit in 3 turns, normal clothing in 2 turns, damage to bare skin 1d10 per turn.
SPECIAL ATTACK:	After the 3 rd round of the attack, victim must roll under his STA each round to prevent being overwhelmed by fumes, which cause the victim to become helpless, dazed, high, and immune to pain, even though being dissolved by the plant.
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Plant is immune to stun attacks, poison, and takes minimum damage from needle gun attacks. Because it is a plant, it must be absolutely destroyed before it frees a victim.
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Jungles, Forest

This dark purple, eight-tentacle, blob-like carnivorous plant species lives in trees, where it is completely camouflaged. A stealth predator, it drops from above and wraps its tentacles around the body of the victim. 2-pints of the acid-narcotic can be collected from a dead plant but must be put into wooden or paper containers.

TIGERPAW

Tigerpaw	
TYPE:	Medium carnivore
NUMBER:	1
MOVE:	Fast (90 meters/turn)
IM/RS:	7/65
STA:	200
ATTACK:	2 front paws 60% each, 2 back claws (only if front claws hit) 80%, Bite 70%
# OF ATTACKS:	Up to 5
DAMAGE:	claws 2d10, bite 3d10
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Tigerpaw get +20 to STA check Vs. Stun
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Forest, Jungle

The Tigerpaw runs to attack, it does not spring at its victims. Tigerpaws are huge, green and black striped animals, a sort of a cross between a feline and a hyena, with enormous front and back paws, about two and a half meters long, standing a meter and a half tall, solid muscle, with bulging yellow eyes and lots of long sharp teeth.

MIRROR PLANT



Mirror plants do not need to eat often and are sacred to Woolie tribes. Mirror plants are large fat green plants, sort of like an enormous barrel cactus with yellow flowers and thin tendrils drooping down from its top. The barrel section of the plant can open up, splitting from the top into four parts, revealing a gapping opening lined with long sharp thorn-teeth. When a victim is tossed into the mouth or pulled into the mouth of the plant the plant snaps the four sections closed with extreme force, piercing the flesh and audibly snapping bones of its victims.

Note: mirror plants seem to be able to learn to a certain degree, such as certain chants mean dinner. Woolie holy people seem to be able to communicate with them, or at least claim they can. Mirror plants are intelligent on some level.

Mirror Plant	
TYPE:	Medium, standing about 2 meters tall, 1 ½ meters thick
NUMBER:	1 (Solitary hunters)
MOVE:	Stationary, see below
IM/RS:	7/65
STA:	400
ATTACK:	10 tentacles 60%, range up to 15 meters, tentacles are withdrawn into plant for most of length when not attacking.
# OF ATTACKS:	See special, then 1 each per tentacle, tentacles are fast able to shoot out 15 meters in 1 turn and will pull a victim caught in them into its mouth in the next turn if victim does not free themselves or is freed by others.
DAMAGE:	1d5 per tentacle, thorns along tentacle, mouth does 20d10
SPECIAL ATTACK:	Plant attacks with a flash of light, 50% chance victim will be stunned or disorientated for ½ D10 turns. Plant can flash once every 20 turns, 3 times per day, will use all charges up if heavily damaged.
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Plant also casts a direct mirror image of itself as soon as it takes any damage. This duplicate appears 1 meter to the right of the plant and is a mirror image of it, caused by release of vapor and humming sound to cause partial hypnotic effect on victims or anyone else within 34 meter radius.
NATIVE WORLD:	Janus
HABITAT:	Jungle

TITAN RISING: 2299

EPISODE #8.0: "FINAL BRIEFING"

V2.0

LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE, EXCEPT GARRETT, IS HERE FOR THE MISSION BRIEFING.



THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME LEFT BEFORE THE JUMP SO WE WILL HAVE TO GET STARTED WITHOUT HIM.

THIS IS YOUR FINAL BRIEFING BEFORE THE HYPERSPACE JUMP.



PREPARE YOUR DEPARTMENTS...

...AND ADVISE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS OF THE MISSION OBJECTIVES WE COVER HERE TODAY.

SO GOOD OF YOU TO JOIN US COMMANDER.



'APOLOGIES CAPTAIN, I WAS DELAYED DOWN IN ENGINEERING.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?



NOPE.

OUR MISSION FROM SPACE FLEET COMMAND...

IS TO BREAK THE SEPARATIST BLOCKADE THAT CONTROLS ACCESS TO THIS SYSTEM AND RESTORE ORDER TO THE COLONY.

AS YOU ALL KNOW, EVERY ATTEMPT TO SEND PEACE KEEPING FORCES TO THE CENTAURUS COLONY HAS FAILED.



TEN STARSHIPS LOST SINCE THE TYCHO ATTACK.

THE ENTIRE CENTAURAN FLEET SEIZED BY SEPARATIST FORCES.

AN IRON CLAD STAND OFF.

...UNTIL NOW.



THIS IS PLANETOID M121, CALL SIGN... ACHILLES.

BIRTH PLACE OF THE CENTAURAN SEPARATIST MOVEMENT AND THE LOCATION OF THEIR ORBITAL BASE OF OPERATIONS.



SINCE THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE XIN REFUGEE PROCESSING STATION NEAR TYCHO THE SEPARATISTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO KEEP ONE STEP AHEAD OF US.

...THANKS TO LIEUTENANT FLYNN, WE DISCOVERED THAT THE REASON THAT THESE SEPARATISTS KNEW OUR EVERY MOVE WAS BECAUSE IT WAS AN INSIDE JOB.

THE MESSAGE TO SANDRA, WHO WAS ON SPACE TRAFFIC CONTROL DUTY, SIMPLY STATED THAT THERE WAS A XIN REFUGEE TRANSPORT IN-BOUND FROM QUARANTINE ON ACHILLES M121.

...THERE ARE NO XIN REFUGEES ON ACHILLES.



...SHE WAS POSTED WITH THE T.D.F. SERVING ON THE REFUGEE STATION THE DAY OF THE ATTACK.

JUST BEFORE THE BOMB WENT OFF A TRANSMISSION WAS RECEIVED...

FROM THE C.S.S. HAMMERFALL UNDER THE COMMAND OF ALLIANCE CAPTAIN RACHEL FLYNN.

IT WAS A CRYPTIC MESSAGE THAT ONLY HER SISTER LT. SANDRA FLYNN UNDERSTOOD.

...THE MESSAGE WAS A WARNING

AND IT CONTAINED A VITAL CLUE.



SANDRA RECOGNIZED SOMETHING WAS OFF ABOUT HER SISTER'S MESSAGE AND REPORTED THE INCIDENT TO HER COMMANDER.

LIEUTENANT FLYNN'S QUICK RESPONSE INITIATED AN EVACUATION THAT SAVED A LOT OF LIVES THAT DAY.



THE INTREPID'S MISSION IS A STRAIGHT FORWARD SEARCH AND DESTROY OPERATION.

OUR ORDERS ARE TO ENTER ENEMY SPACE, BREAK THE BLOCKADE, AND NEUTRALIZE THE SEPARATIST BASE ON ACHILLES M121

I REQUESTED LIEUTENANT FLYNN JOIN US ON THIS MISSION BECAUSE I BELIEVE SHE IS OUR BEST CHANCE TO TURN THE TIDE AND STAY A STEP AHEAD OF HER SISTER.



ONCE WE HAVE BROKEN THE BLOCKADE, CAPTAIN MARKELL'S TASKFORCE WILL BEGIN LANDING TROOPS AT THE COLONY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

ANDROIDS

Laura Mumma

“...four transparent oval tanks. Within each of these transparent tanks is a semi-humanoid figure, each slightly different from the other, floating in a clear, amber fluid. In the tank on the far left is the metallic framework of a man inter laced with a mass of electronic wiring. In the tank to its immediate right is a similar framework. However, partially covering the metal is a partial layer of muscle. In the next container the skeleton has a layer of muscle and very man-like figure complete with skin, but lacking distinct toes, 1 fingers, and eyes. In the final tank is a creature indistinguishable from a pure strain human, complete with hair, nails, and facial features...” – Legion of Gold GW1 by Gary Gyga with Luke Gyga and Paul Reiche III

GAMING HISTORY

TSR has had several versions of androids in their various game systems. To my knowledge they first appeared in the 1976, Metamorphosis Alpha by James M. Ward, Expedition To The Barrier Peaks from Origins II 1976 republished as an AD&D module 1980 by Gary Gyga, and Gamma World 1st edition 1978 by James M. Ward and Gary Jaquet. I reviewed these early TSR android descriptions as sources for this article. The androids in these various games all shared some common ideas and generally served a similar purpose, usually killing the player party. In addition the Massconfusion 1984 Star Frontiers Competition Module Trouble on Janus has androids as well. I have tried to coalesce the general idea of what an android is from these early ideas into an overall whole. Including androids in the Star Frontier universe can offer a wide range of plot opportunities from good old fashion dangerous creature to benevolent NPC and even an unusual player character option. The androids presented in these various examples, are a bio-chemical organic cybernetic based technology in keeping with the ideas in TSR material.

IN PLOT LINES

Typically androids in a post apocalypse environment usually consider their creators to be a threat to their existence, travel heavily armed, and will always fight to the death. There are, however, plenty of examples of androids not being hostile in post-apocalyptic Sci-Fi settings and in non-apocalyptic Sci-Fi settings. Androids in science fiction have become hosts to the minds of dead people for better or for worse, formed their own societies,

searched for the meaning of life or to be more than their programming, developed mental illnesses, found religion, or realizing they were slaves, rebelled, and killed their creators.

STATS

The below stats are for a basic human or yazirian type android. Vrusk and Osakar androids move faster while a race like Isfinit move slower. To determine the rate look at walking speed +2 for basic walk, for run multiply the walking speed by 5 for Thinker and Worker type androids. For the Warrior type basic walk is +5, run is found by multiplying the basic walk by 5.

	Thinker	Worker	Warrior
TYPE:	Mechanical		
RACE:	Human		
NUMBER:	1-6		
MOVE:	12/60	12/60	15/75
STR:	roll	roll	75
STA:	75	45	100
DEX:	roll	roll	70
RS:	roll	roll	70
INT:	All types randomly rolled with a -20 modifier to this ability.		
LOG:	75 (min)	roll	roll
PER:	roll	roll	70
LDR:	roll	roll	70
ATTACK:	½ DEX rounded up		
# OF ATTACKS:	2		
DAMAGE:	# of d10 damage determined by STR using the punching table.		
WEIGHT:	100kg		

DESCRIPTION

Androids are constructed, intelligent beings created using advance technologies in the chemical, biological, and cybernetic fields. Androids are usually created in facilities specially designed for their production, overseen by medical, computer, and robotics technicians of the species creating them. Such facilities usually are only capable of

producing androids of specific race designs. The brain structure of these constructs is made to be programmable directly by computer banks or directly from an individual.

Androids resent being referred to as robots and may or may not have emotions. Androids can look like Humans, Yazirians, Vrusks, and many other species and come in any gender and various age groups though young adult in the prime of their life is often preferred.

Androids can use any tools or weapons of the race they are based on as long as they possess the skills to do so. All have the basic attributes: STR/STA, DEX/RS, INT/LOG and PER/LDR, all to be determined by the referee randomly except for the following guidelines:

- All Androids have a low INT score and have a -20 at creation.
- The thinker has a minimum 75 LOG and 70 STA, and the warrior has a 70 in all categories except STA, which is 100, & LOG which is randomly rolled.
- All workers have a STA 45 all other abilities are randomly rolled.

Note that specially built androids such as medical androids would for instance have a high LOG and high DEX score. A variety of training androids on a large space ship for instance might be very specialized such as martial arts instructor, fencing instructor, boxing, nurse, surgeon, servant, and so on. Civilian versions of the Warrior Type (a body guard) would not have an STA of 100 as that would be military grade and would probably not exceed 70. The three types listed are guidelines only and the referee is encouraged to create androids that best meet the needs of their setting.

When androids are reduced to less than 1/5th of their starting STA points, there is a 50% chance per combat turn that the android will cease functioning.

Androids are impervious to cold and usually take only half damage from acid or fire. Paralysis, gas, poison, and gaze weapons are useless against androids, but if hit with electrical attacks there is a 1% chance per point of damage they sustain that the attack will short their cybernetic aspects.

Immersion in water for 3 full turns will always short-circuit an android unless it is specially built for underwater operation. Androids can be created to be resistant to different conditions hostile to the species that created them, such as radiation, chemicals, acids, or other atmospheres thus allowing the android to work in that hostile environment safely. Note, however, that all androids have biological aspects to them and if they are not specifically designed to resist radiation or mental attack, for instance, they will be just as susceptible as other life forms.



"...one large complex where there are complete android fabrication laboratories containing the necessary facilities for production: formulation vats, mental matrix circuit facilities, programming energizers, chemical storage, and a test area." & "...the ability to make chemical life (androids) was well within the power of the medical specialists. But the question of whether man had the right to create any form of intelligent living being was not yet, answered for all. In a move to placate those that did not wish these fabrications to be equal to men, limitations were put into every android." – Metamorphosis Alpha, by James M. Ward

Societies that are technologically advanced enough to create androids often build in safeguards. Typical safeguards include limited life span (2-6 years), limit the amount of memory storage space (so the androids skills are limited and they are specialists only in one field), sensitivity to sonics and easily damaged by sonic weapons, a way to turn them off (individually or as a group), and programming against harming their creators.

Some societies purposely make their androids as close as possible to themselves while other species prefer their androids to look slightly different or obviously artificial.

Androids can have features such as changing color near the end of its life expectancy (to allow it to be recycled), built-in frequency key that will permit androids to gain access to all areas requiring that key, vision that is normal to 150% human norm, including special types of sight and audio sensors that can range from normal human hearing to 150% human norm.

Unless an android's life expectancy has been limited, they have an indefinite life expectancy, that is really only limited to damage they may receive or power source needs and thus they could last 10's, 100's, or 1000's of years easily.

Androids are powered by electrical energy but again designers may supply an android with a long lasting power supply, broadcasted energy, or a limited power source. Hydrogen energy cells power most androids. The standard civilian models usually can operate for 20 hours from the energy given from the standard hydrogen energy

cell. Lack of energy after 20 hours will cause the android to collapse until energy is restored. Hydrogen Energy Cells are rechargeable batteries, less common and, more expensive than chemical energy cells. They do not lose their charge through disuse.

Editor's note: You could substitute any standard power pack or Type one Parabattery and assume power usage is 1 SEU per hour.

COST

In the average setting androids should probably be expensive and predominately owned by large mega-corporations, governments, and the extremely wealthy. There are probably some cheap versions but these should be very limited and designed to be servants with limited capabilities and various safety features, as most governments would probably not want hordes of super-strong, smart androids they don't control running about. Androids may fulfill entertainment uses, be tutors, bodyguards, servants, and perform many other jobs.

Basic Body: 1000 multiplied by the ability scores of each skill ability.

Example: If an android had 45 for each ability that would be $360 \times 1000 = 36,000$ just for the body.

Skills: Programming and special features would need to be considered. For programming use the player skills keeping in mind that androids are normally specialists and multiply each level of skill cost by 100 in the androids specialty.

Example: Level 6 Medical Skill would be $300 + 600 + 900 + 1200 + 1500 + 1800 = 6,300$

Special Features: pricing should be determined by looking at the similar tech items available and adding that to the cost.

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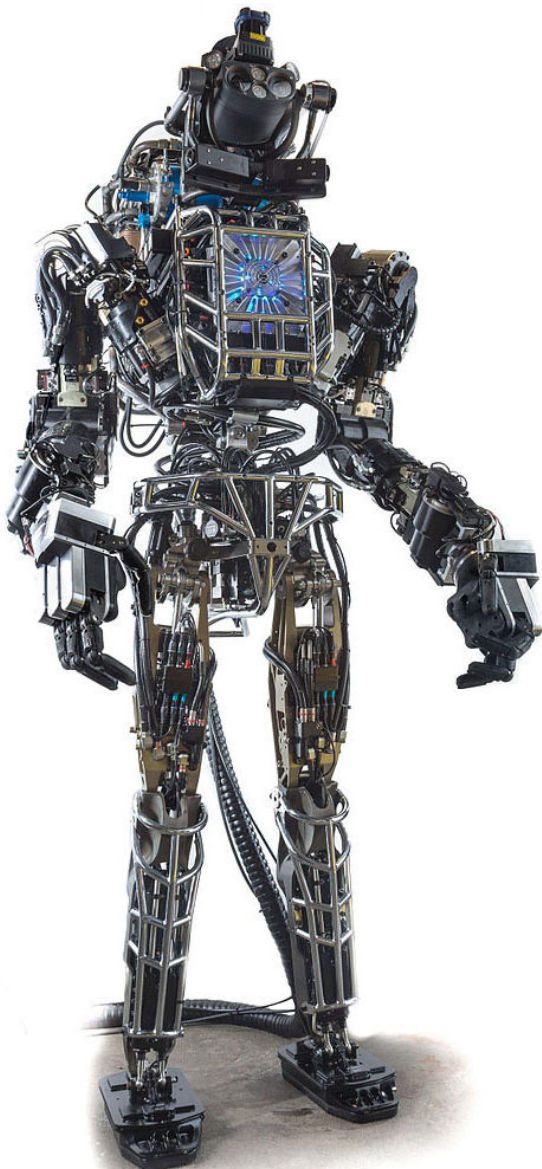
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Equipment

GET A GRIP

Tom Verreault

The old pirate had been regaling me with tales of daring do from across the decades of his life but most sounded fairly embellished. I had entertained him with a listening ear when he had bought me a Capellan Mist. I had never had one of the inhaled intoxicating “drink” that had been a recent fad in the Frontier for the last few years. However, his tales were beginning to wear on me and I was looking for a polite way out of talking with him.

“You mentioned killing the astrogator with the shock grip on your laser? I thought shock grips were limited in the charge they could give.”

“Aye, normally they are as the laws on most colonies in the Frontier prohibit them from doing much damage. I, however, bought mine in the Minzii Marketplace on Faire in the Capella system, have you ever been there? Anything available in the galaxy is for sale there my friend.”

“Really?”

“Oh yeah, this here is a concealed shock grip,” he said with a wave at his side arm.

“You have to be pretty damned intuitive to spot it and the lethal setting delivers a full 10 SEUs from the laser’s clip if it has that much power left. Most of the colonies in the Frontier prohibit the concealed shock grip and require that the max setting be 2 SEUs.”

“What if you use a gyrojet or needler without a power clip?”

“Well then they use a specialized pistol grip with a mini

power clip installed.”

“Huh! I’ll have to look into that, I wonder if I can get one from PGC or Wartech?”

“Oh, yeah but if you do their lethal setting is limited to only 2 SEU, like I said. To get one that will zap with a full 10 SEUs you’ll have to find one from a Capellan Free Merchant. The big corporations don’t make them due to liability issues.”

I nodded and slipped my ID card into the bar terminal to pay for the last round of drinks before wandering off to the restroom.

RECOGNITION GRIPS

This weapon accessory can be installed on pistols, rifles, and most melee weapons. It prevents operation of the weapon by any but its owner. Weapons without a power clip (i.e. a non-beam weapon) require a SEU microdisc (sold separately - 10 Cr). Weapons that use a 20 SEU clip for ammo can operate off that power supply. The recognition clip is keyed to the dermal scans of the owner at time of installation and the weapon will simply fail to operate when used by some other being. Recognition sensors for shock gloves are a more complicated installation and therefore there is a 10% increase for installation.

Cost: 100 Cr. **Installed and Coded:** 50 Cr. **Mass:** N/A

SHEATH LOCK

A sheath lock works in conjunction with a recognition grip and prevents a weapon from being drawn from its sheath/holster. It was developed for law enforcement but latter was used to prevent weapons from floating out of holsters during zero-g operations. If used in space the user’s vacuum suit must be modified with dermal sensor circuits (200 Cr). Items not normally using a recognition grip like a knife are sometimes modified to have a recognition grip and sheath lock if used in zero-g.

Cost: 75 Cr. **Mass:** N/A

SHOCK GRIP

A shock grip is a recognition grip that will deliver a shock to any but the coded user of the weapon. The grip can be set for stun or 2d10 worth of damage for 2 SEUs per



Image by [Samuli Silvennoinen](#)

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shock. Weapons with that use SEUs for ammo can use the ammo source of the weapon to power the shock but all others require a mini power clip that is sold separately (50 Cr). Recognition sensors for shock gloves are a more complicated installation and therefore there is a 10% increase for installation.

An anti-shock implant nullifies the shock effect of a shock grip but the power is still drained. Also the anti-shock implant will not do anything about the recognition circuits stopping the weapon from being used.

Cost: 500 Cr. **Installed and Coded:** 50 Cr.

Mass: N/A

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

FULL DISCHARGE

In most jurisdictions the maximum setting for a shock grip is 2 SEUs doing 2d10 worth of damage. A grip set for full discharge will deliver 10 SEU for 10d10 worth of electrical damage. Since it's largely considered illegal, a character will have to negotiate for the final cost.

Cost: 300-500 Cr. **Mass:** N/A

CONCEALED GRIP

Shock grips are easily identifiable by law to prevent accidental injury to sapient beings. For an extra charge a character may have his grip concealed so as to appear as a normal grip. Concealed grips for plain recognition grips are legal and generally cost a flat 100 Cr. However, concealed grips for shock grips are nearly universally illegal and a character will need to negotiate for the final cost. A character must make an INT check to spot that a weapon's grip is a concealed grip and avoid potential unpleasantness.

Cost: 200-400 Cr. **Mass:** N/A

FE



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Races

THE ARKS, DOGMEN, AND MOGS

Laura Mumma

Author's Note: The Hunde, a canine like biped alien race, was presented in Star Frontiersman number 19, page 25-26. Referees may wish to review that article to better understand how the Arks can fit in as a dangerous subculture or clan of the Hunde.

MOGS

"Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in." – Mark Twain

Mogs (The Dogmen)	
TYPE:	Medium Carnivore
NUMBER:	1-4
MOVE:	Medium (10 m/t walking, 20 m/t charge, 13 m/t trot, 50 m/t running)
IM/RS:	6/60
STA:	40
ATTACK:	65
# OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE:	Bite 1d10, Brawling +5%
ABILITY MODIFIERS (for PC's):	STR/STA: +5 DEX/RS: +0 INT/LOG: -15 PER/LDR: +10 (PER only)
NOTES:	Base Genotype: dog. Heightened sense of smell, heightened hearing, night vision, color blindness
NATIVE WORLD:	N/A
HABITAT:	varied

Usually standing 2 meters tall, the Mog is a biped genetically-created, mutated, or altered canine for use as companions, servants, and protection. Many believe mankind sought to create humanoid dog to be used for companions, servants, body guards, or in war, while others believe an accidental mutation among canines then was further genetically modified to mankind's desires.

The Mog became a common pet species among the humans in the Frontier. The Mog normally lacks the

special attacks and abilities of the Ark (unless it was purposefully created to have them, or exposed to a way to gain mutations per Gamma Dawn rules) and is less intelligent than either the Ark or the Hunde. It is however friendly and very loyal to their humans. All Mogs have a heightened sense of smell and heightened hearing. (+10% to tracking, +10% to hear distances but -20% against sonic attacks, Night Vision +10% but no adverse affects during the day, Color Blindness -50% to get any color choice correct.)

Mogs INT/LOG scores are generally never over 30 (only PCs can be higher).

HOW MUCH FOR THE MOG IN THE WINDOW?

The base price for an untrained fixed Mog pup is 1000 credits.

Adult fixed Mogs that are trained to be companions or servants usually go for 2000 to 3000 credits.

Mogs (fixed) trained for protection work or helping the disabled cost a minimum of 4,000 credits.

Breeding Mogs are extremely expensive ranging in price from 5,000 to 10,000+ credits depending on strain, lines, training, show, and competition records.

ARKS

If dog's knew the nature of a mankind's heart would they still be our friends?

The Ark is an intelligent species. Standing between 2 to 3 meters tall, the Ark always walks on its well-developed hind legs. It has a mental strength: LOG mental resistance of 46 and radiation resistance of 20 which allows the Ark to ignore 20 points of radiation intensity (example an Ark exposed to -25/R20 radiation would only experience -5/R20 effect). All Arks have the following mutations: telekinesis, weather manipulation, and life leech.

Arks fear large winged creatures (this is a phobia and requires a LOG check with -25 penalty to overcome). They also have heightened sense of smell and heightened hearing. (+10% to tracking, +10% to hear distances but -20% against sonic attacks), Night Vision (+10% but no adverse effects during the day), and Color Blindness (-50% to get any color choice correct). Their racial color

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blindness, causes them to have a very unusual style of coloring. It can hurt the eyes of the other races because they only see in shades. This can lead to confusion when working with art or wiring diagrams of other races

Ark (Hound Folk, Dog Folk)	
TYPE:	Medium Carnivore
NUMBER:	1-4
MOVE:	Medium (15 m/t walking, 30 m/t charge, 20 m/t trot, 75 m/t running)
IM/RS:	6/60
STA:	40
ATTACK:	65
# OF ATTACKS:	2
SPECIAL ATTACK:	Telekinesis, Life Leech
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Weather Manipulation
DAMAGE:	Bite 2d10, Brawling +15%
ABILITY MODIFIERS (for PC's):	STR/STA: +15 DEX/RS: +0 INT/LOG: -5 PER/LDR: -10
NOTES:	Base Genotype: Dog Genetic Stability: Stable
NATIVE WORLD:	N/A (referee should decide how/what arns are in their setting)
HABITAT:	Mountain, Forest, Ruins, or Radioactive Zones

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE ARKS

Arks are the result of project A.R.K-9 (Advanced Research Canine Project), Mog DNA was enhanced with the alien race Hunde DNA and the resulting Mog-Hunde hybrids subjected to unethical experiments by a human-run, bio-weapon company. They were subjected to horrific experimentation and genetic manipulation in an effort to create a War Mog hybrid. What little is known about this project by Star Law indicates that either Sathar based bio-forming was involved or the Sathar may have influenced the direction of the research.

Arks have floppy ears that many pups parents have cropped at birth, along with the pups tails docked. Though a minority movement has started among them to stop such "enslaved" practices, while others insist it is part of their warrior culture and history that must be preserved. Most



Arks have a smooth tight coat that is black with tan markings (80%), though they also come in red and tan, blue/grey and tan, fawn and tan, chocolate and tan, brindle and tan, gold/yellow and tan. Arks with other markings or colors are usually the result of Mog or Hunde crossings.

The Ark affected an escape and rebellion from the facility while slaughtering the humans responsible for crimes against them. The leader and lawgiver of the Arks during this rebellion was Karl of Ark X15328 (Ark project experiment litter 15328). Called Karl X by Arks. Karl was incredibly intelligent and led his people to freedom in the wilds of the marginal planet the research station was located on.

By the time Star Law became involved in this blight on UPF history, the Arks had established themselves on the planet, successfully defending themselves from any attempts to eradicate or capture them. Star Law, with the help of the Hunde, were able to end hostilities and negotiate a peace treaty with the UPF. The Hunde successfully lobbied for the Arks to be considered a Hunde race as Hunde DNA had been illegally and unethically used to create them, and for them to be put under Hunde protection and given rights under UPF law.

Star Law and Hunde scientists have been able to prove, from the documents and research seized at the time of the rebellion by the Arks and recovered information latter from the now defunct bio-weapon company, that Sathar were behind many of the most horrific experiments on

the ancestors of the Arks. In short Arks may distrust and have issues with humans but they truly despise Sathar.

Arks have a strong distrust of humans and view all humans with suspicion, many hate humans (-10 when interacting with humans). The only humans allowed on the Ark planet are Star Law as they stopped the efforts of StarGenBio from killing the Arks and actively sought the arrest of StarGenBio CEO and employees involved in crimes against the Arks and it was Star Law that brought the Hunde in to help the Arks.

Arks are fiercely independent, they will very rarely (almost never) take aid from humans, but are more willing to deal with other races. The only races they freely will accept aid, assistance, or interact with in a very friendly manner are the Hunde or Mogs (+10 when these species interact). Arks are a proud people and believe all Mogs should be freed and helped to become more than the slaves humans have made them into (Arks do understand most Mogs are less intelligent than most Hunde or Arks but strongly feel slavery is preventing the Mogs from developing their true potential).

Ark pups are encouraged to fight each other from a young age (though parents do not allow such brawling to become deadly) so they will never be slaves again. Arks enjoy physical combat sports over “games for children” (the Arks view all non-combat sports as children games). Arks are often gruff, aggressive, and impatient with other races. Arks feel they must protect their rights by demonstrating their strength. Arks view themselves as the warriors they were created to be. They see themselves as a race whose duty it is to protect the Hunde and the Mogs from the predatory practices of other races.

Arks acknowledge the Hunde as their kin but feel the Hundes are not doing enough to free the Mogs and stop the exploitation of Mogs. Hunde social workers have been attempting to integrate Arks into their society and the UPF but with little success, mainly because of the Ark distrust of humans. Arks do not consider themselves or Mogs to be dogs and if referred to in anyway as a “dog” they will be greatly offended.

Arks can breed with both Mogs and Hundes and produce viable offspring. Note, however, the pups only have a 50% of inheriting any of the Ark’s parents special abilities or size. In addition, there is a 10% chance the pups of such a mating will have a unique physical or mental mutation.

In the apocalyptic or primitive setting, Arks carry wicker shields and large clubs as weapons. (They use stone spears, knives and do wear leather or studded armor.) They are more than capable of having more advanced weaponry. Arks have a unique range weapon they created that uses compressed air called the Gow Gow. In addition they have a tradition of capping their teeth to protect the teeth in battle.

They do have a history of hunting other sentient species for food. They consider human hands to be a great delicacy. This taste for human goes back to their rebellion days when there was limited food and the enemy forces were often the only food available.

Arks in space should be treated as the intelligent and potentially deadly foes they can and should be. As a species they do consider it slavery for any sentient being to keep a genetically modified or mutated dog that can walk upright as a pet or to do various duties as a servant. They will see euthanasia and the sterilization of such beings as murder and genocide. Arks feel any human that keeps a Mog for any reason is a slaver.

Regardless of how the Ark best fits into a setting, they will have a society structured on the complexities of the canine pack and that focuses on the hunt. Arks are loyal to the ones they love or causes they love. Arks form packs based on common needs or interests as well as extended family units.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

EDITOR’S NOTE

Since no experience cost was specified, assume any PC Arks start with level 1 in both Telekinesis and Life Leach. Cost to increase is 5 XP time the level desired (i.e. level 2 costs 10 XP, level 3 costs 15 XP, etc).

TELEKINESIS

(Skill Level 1-6)

The Ark is able to move objects with his mind that are up to 15 meters away, plus 5 meters for every skill level. The STR that he uses to lift the object is equal to 20xSL. The Ark can use telekinesis for 9 turns, then he must rest 9 turns, before again using the power. Telekinesis cannot be used for fine manipulations, like a hand operating a machine. It can only lift, carry, move, throw or rotate an object. It cannot wield a weapon, except for throwing big heavy things. Lifting and carrying objects telekinetically is just as fatiguing as carrying them physically. The character cannot lift himself. Any attempt to lift a creature requires a mental attack. The same is true for attempting to manipulate an object in someone's hands. An Ark that is using this mutation, even just to hold an object cannot attack unless he is allowed multiple actions per round.

LIFE LEACH

(Skill Level 1-6)

The mutant is able to drain the life force from all semi-intelligent or intelligent beings, friend and foe alike, within a 10 meter radius of the mutant. Small animals and normal plants are not affected by life leech. Most common animals over half a meter in size qualify. Plants only qualify if they are mobile or sentient. The character drains 2xskill level STA points from all such creatures within 10 meters each round. He can continue to use this power for

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5+SL rounds, but then must rest it for at least 20 hours. Range increases by 3 meters for each SL over level 1. The STA points drained from nearby creatures are first used to heal any damage he has taken. Any leftover points are put into a special pool of STA points. All subsequent attacks do damage to this STA point pool. Only when the pool is empty do attacks affect the creature's original STA points. After four hours, what remains of any of these "phantom" STA points in the pool begin to fade at the rate of 5 per round. The STA pool cannot exceed the character's SL x 10.

WEATHER MANIPULATION

This allows the Ark to manipulate the weather in the area he is in. The newly created weather conditions will last as long as the mutant concentrates on them. (Note that if the mutant is hit in combat his concentration will be broken.) The mutant must concentrate for a full minute (10 turns) before the weather begins to change, and it takes another 2 minutes (20 turns) for change to be completed. The weather will be affected in a 10-kilometer radius around the mutant. The weather cannot be radically changed, i.e. from below zero to 100-degree heat wave. The extent of manipulation possible depends upon the prevailing conditions.

All three aspects of the weather can be manipulated, but only as shown: For example, a day which is clear and warm with a light wind can become hazy, hot, calm day. Contradictions are not possible, fog and strong wind, for example.

Success is not automatic each skill level above 1 increases the percent chance by +5: There is a base 65% chance of causing one of the possible changes. If it is desirable to cause a change two degrees away (from clear to light rains, for example), the chance of success drops to 35%, and double the time is required (20 turns concentration, 40 turns to effect the change). If a change three degrees away from prevailing conditions is desired (such as warm to arctic cold), the chance of success is only 10% and triple the time is required (30 and 60 turns).

The percentile dice are rolled after the initial concentration is completed, but the new conditions are not fully effective until the change in weather is completed. If the mutant is unsuccessful in changing the weather (either through failing the percentage roll or being interrupted after the initial concentration), he must rest a full week before attempting weather manipulation again. This mutation is usable a maximum of once per day.

GAMING HISTORY OF THE ARK

TSR first introduced the Ark in the 1978 Gamma World 1st edition by James M. Ward and Gary Jaquet. In the

Aspect of Weather	Prevailing Conditions	Possible Change
Cloud Cover/ Precipitation	Clear	Very Clear
		Partly Cloudy/Hazy
	Partly Cloudy	Clear
		Cloudy
		Misty/Light Rain/ Light Snow/ Sleet/Small Hail
		Partly Cloudy
Temperature	Cloudy	Deep Clouds
		Fog/Heavy Rains
	Hot	Heavy Snow/Driving Sleet/ Large Hail
		Sweltering Heat
	Warm	Warm
		Hot
	Cool	Cool
		Warm
Wind	Cold	Cold
		Arctic Cold
	Calm	Calm
		Light Wind
	Light Wind	Strong Wind
		Calm
	Strong Wind	Gale
		Light Wind
	Gale	Storm
		Strong Wind
	Storm	Hurricane/Typhoon
		Gale

original setting of Gamma World, Arks were clearly meant to be one of many dangerous intelligent species that might not just kill the players but eat them. As Gamma World developed and changed, many folks have actually used them as a player race option. Arks in Star Frontiers offer some interesting possibilities. The Arks here have been presented as the result of purposeful genetic modification of man's best friend and an alien race that went wrong or went too right depending on the goals of the scientists. Arks could have equally come into existence on one of the quarantined planets, the accidental mutated descendants of pet dogs now hunting the survivors of the blue plague. It is possible that the colony ships the Morden or the Warden is the origin of the Arks or even the Hundes in space. The Gamma World time line that includes these Metamorphous Alpha ships was published in Dragon 88 (August 1984) "Before the Dark Years" by James Ward and Roger Moore.

NPCs

MR. M

Tom Stephens

Author's Note: I just launched a new series of RPG gaming supplements called [Two Sheet Locations](#), on DriveThruRPG. The first of which (and only as of this writing) is [Mr. M's Equipment Emporium](#). Designed to be system agnostic, the intention of the Two Sheet Locations is to provide a framework that a referee can quickly translate and drop into their game or system of choice. Here's my take on the proprietor, Mr. M, in Star Frontiers.

BACKGROUND

Born on Lossend in the Timeon system, Mr. M tired of the life of a farmer at an early age and was always looking for a bit of adventure. When he came of age, he signed on as a member of an exploration team that was going to be working on Lossend's southern continent. It didn't matter that he would be just a common laborer and camp aid, it got him off the farm.

By the time that year-long expedition was over, the dissatisfaction of life on the farm had solidified into a strong wanderlust to see as much of the world and the Frontier as possible. He stayed with the exploration team two more years traveling to sites on Groth in the Fromeltar system and New Pale in the Truane's Star system.

The trip to Groth was almost his undoing as he was grossly unprepared for the much higher gravity of that world, being 70% higher than that of his native Lossend. He adapted quickly, however, and learned a valuable lesson about learning about what was coming and getting prepared for it that would serve him throughout the rest of his life. On New Pale, he witnessed some of the devastation and destruction brought about by the First Sathar War.

The exploration crew was disbanding and offered him a ride back home to Lossend but he declined and hopped a ship to Pale. While planning to stay for just a short time, he was intrigued by all the stories of the occupation during the First Sathar War and ended up exploring the planet and talking to survivors until his money ran out. Having no way off world, he found employment as a factory worker in the still rebuilding economy for a couple of years spending his spare time continuing to explore the planet and collect stories about the occupations.

His wanderlust acting up again, he decided to enlist in MerCo as way to travel. The medical, psycho-social,

environmental, and weapon skills he had picked up serving on the exploration crew gave him a leg up on many other recruits. He spent many years in MerCo and visited almost every planet in the Frontier during his travels. Everywhere he went he would collect stories and souvenirs. He loved to immerse himself in the local culture and try to fit in as a native, or at least as well as he could being human.

After a particularly dicey MerCo mission, he decided the mortality rate for mercenaries was a little too high for his liking. Unwinding after the mission, he ran into a merchant captain that was looking for a chief of security and quartermaster for his ship. The two hit it off and the captain offered the job to Mr. M who accepted.

For the next few years, Mr. M learned the ins and outs of Frontier trade and picked up some technical skills during the long trips between the systems. This time he did visit every planet on the Frontier, even if only from orbit.

After nearly two decades of travel, his wanderlust finally satiated, Mr. M decided to go into business for himself. Still drawn to Pale and the stories of the Sathar invasion, but also wanting to interact with ship crews and get news from around the Frontier, Mr. M set up shop on Pale station. He often visits the surface to continue his explorations but mostly spends his time in his shop where he swaps stories with his customers and collects and sells items from around the Frontier.

CHARACTER STATS

STR/STA: 62/45

DEX/RS: 45/45

INT/LOG: 60/60

PER/LDR: 80/60

SKILLS

PSA: Biosocial

Environmentalist – 3, Psycho-social – 5, Medical – 1, Beam – 6, Martial Arts – 3, Melee – 4, Projectile – 5, Robotics – 1, Computers – 1, Technician – 3

WEAPONS AND DEFENSES

Mr. M wears a civilian skisuit and carries a laser pistol whenever he is in his shop or about the station. The laser is set to 5 SEU and he typically has a spare clip on his person as well. He also has an anti-shock implant that he acquired during his mercenary days.

Alex Stone

PLICKA AND THE VOID CRUSHER

Eric Winsor

Last time I presented the “Legend of the Brother Hunters” and promised to get back to the story of my trip to Lossend. This issue I am proud to present “Plicka and the Void Crusher”. When we left off the telling of my journey, I was on Boneyard Station and had luckily arranged passage on the Void Crusher to Timeon via hot jump through Prenglar. I meet a dralasite on Boneyard Station named Gropa who arranged my introduction to Plicka and Captain V'Thi-Keek of the Void Crusher. V'Thi-Keek agreed to taking me on as a passenger provided I passed a preflight physical.

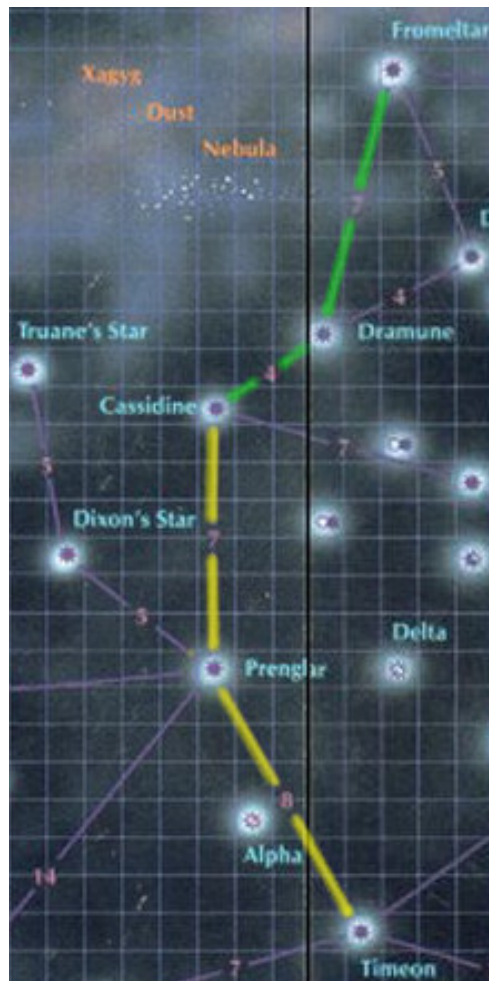
I learned why the physical was so important the moment I boarded the Void Crusher. Dr. Caine, a tall muscular man, took sole charge of me. I had expected to be escorted to an open bunk to stow my gear and then assigned an acceleration couch for the initial push out from Boneyard Station. However, my gear was stored in a locker in the cargo bay and Dr. Caine strapped me into a full military grade cardiovascular acceleration couch (CAC). I have heard plenty about CACs but no one ever details all of the connections they make to your body. First you don a special CAC g-suit. This g-suit has all of the plumbing and IVs to connect a being to the CAC. If you hate needles then a CAC is not for you. I did not enjoy the experience. IVs were placed into all the arteries of my limbs and my neck and secured through the g-suit. Additional IVs were also placed in corresponding veins. This was the most unpleasant part of the setup. Topical anesthetics were applied which took much of the pain out of the process but the many needle applications was still discomforting.

In addition to the IVs, there were a few connections for other bodily fluids and then the g-suit was connected to the CAC. The CAC supplies additional blood volume and appropriate medications such as biocort, stimdoze, and synthoplasma,

all on demand for the conditions of high G flight. The CAC will increase or decrease blood flow to any given portion of the body in response to current gravitational forces. This is augmented with traditional g-suit constriction controlled by the CAC and direct oxygen supply to the blood to support diminished breathing under high G. Over the g-suit is a space rated flight suit and helmet for protection from full vacuum and space radiation. The medical officer then briefed me on emergency CAC controls and ejection procedures. The full CAC can be ejected from the ship and will provide forty eight hours of life support in the vacuum of space. This includes direct heating and cooling of the blood supply. A small EVA backpack is included in the CAC to allow a person to detach from the CAC for eight hours at a time for increased mobility during repairs or refuge scenarios.

When the half hour process of suiting me into the CAC was over I commented to Dr. Caine that this was a lengthy process to get suited up for flight each time. Dr. Caine just pulled down his shirt collar and pointed at the implanted couplers in his muscular neck. Then he motioned over to Makoto the weapons officer and said, “Watch”.

Makoto is an older human who used to be a fighter pilot and Dr. Caine explained that he had the most experience with suiting up with a CAC. For an older man he has the build of a gymnast-body builder. Makoto slipped easily into his g-suit and as each implanted coupler was covered Makoto snapped it into his g-suit. Then Makoto pulled on the flight suit with integrated EVA backpack and engaged the connections on the back of his g-suit with the EVA backpack. He sealed the flight suit and set down into the CAC which automatically connected to the EVA backpack. The entire process took about two minutes. Dr. Caine then explained that the CAC system was designed for military use



Alex's Jump Route from Terledrom, Fromeltar to Lossend, Timeon - Map from Zebulon's Guide

where fast setup and tear down was essential. The implants were expensive and relatively new. All the crew of the Void Crusher had the implants appropriate to their varied races do to the constant need for high G maneuvers they used as private couriers to protect and quickly transport their valuable cargoes.

Private courier cargoes are always time sensitive and also often *discreet* items that must travel quietly. Sometimes these discreet cargoes are sought after by beings who will kill to capture or destroy them. Governments sometimes use private couriers to move items *off the books* hence they enjoy diplomatic immunity from time to time but that is never advertised or divulged. They had taken on only a little cargo for our run and I like to fantasize that some small package was ultra-top secret government stuff and was delivered without anyone even knowing.

Dr. Caine dismissed himself and set about settling into his CAC just as Te Gala, their brawny yazirian engineer, boarded the ship. Private couriers like to keep their crews small to limit mass. The Void Crusher crew is five. Te Gala is their engineer, Dr. Caine the doctor, Makoto the weapons officer, astrogator, and backup pilot, Plicka is their pilot, and V'Thi-Keek is the captain and backup astrogator. Plicka is the being that has made the Void Crusher famous among private couriers. Plicka is a renowned pilot who holds many speed and accuracy records. As a dralasite he can take higher Gs than other races in the Frontier. We could not fly with him without the CACs. Dr. Caine explained that at full Gs for Plicka we may still pass out even with the CACs. He explained that Plicka also uses a CAC system so the Gs would be quite high.

Te Gala announced to the crew that the engines were ready for full burn and jump. Instantly everyone got very busy. Plicka pulled out the jar of strawberry syrup and spread it along the very edge of his bowl shaped CAC. This was followed by many other pastes around the inside of his bowl making clashing circular bands of color. He climbed into his CAC and announced to everyone, “When we jump the waffles are on me and the strawberry jam is on Alex.” Everyone else responded with comments of thanks to Plicka and me for the treats and requests to still be alive and conscious to enjoy them. Captain V'Thi-Keek cleared our departure with Boneyard station traffic control and said to Plicka, “Give them a show and teach Phag Hurat how this is really done.”

Plicka slid us silently away from the docking port and moorings. He maneuvered the Void Crusher swiftly and precisely into the escape vector for Boneyard station to jump to Prenglar. Traffic control held us there for an eternally long few minutes while a tug crossed our path. The anticipation brought my heart rate up, especially because it was displayed on my helmet heads up display. I began to breathe deeply and slowly to calm myself when I heard traffic control announce, “Void Crusher, you are

clear.. ROAR!” Plicka didn't wait for the words *for departure*. He lit up the engines and maneuvering thrusters all at once and smashed us into our CACs. Plicka quickly called out, “Epo!”, followed by, “Bar B-Q”, “Bubblegum”, “Chocolate”, “Vanilla”, “Beacon”, “Watermelon”, and “Almond”. Very quickly my ability to breath was restricted to nothing as the g-forces pressed my chest so hard that I could no longer inhale. The CAC was the only thing putting oxygen into my blood. Plicka then grunted out, “Mint”, “Malt”, and “Lemon”. My heart was having trouble beating but the CAC kept the rhythm and pressure synchronized to keep me from experiencing heart failure. I could not lift my arms or legs and dared not move my head to the side for fear that I wouldn't be able to twist it back. It was a strange feeling to be conscious when all of my bodily experience and instincts said I should have passed out.



Plicka's acceleration bowl is in the middle of the cabin. All of our couches surround his looking up and inward. With labor I could look slightly down toward him and back up to my heads up displays. Plicka was actually sporting a grin. His face was smashed flat, eye spots slightly spread apart, and little ripples of skin bellow his eyes were pushing up in the grin. He had grown four arms prior to launch and absorbed his legs so that he was flat in this bowl. I could see with the Gs pressing his skin down that Plicka was stronger than most drals. Long muscle fibers were laced like cables all along his face as seen through his helmet. I know from a life among many dralasites that these same muscles would be all along his body and especially down his arms and into his fingers. Yet even with his strength, CAC lines dropped down from above to their couplings in his g-suit pumping body fluids enriched with oxygen into him while couplings in the bowl of his CAC gathered body fluids and processed them for return from above.

Plicka's four arms protruded from all four directions onto controls custom designed for a dralasite, his powerful muscles all focused on his fingers and wrists to allow him

movement. All around the circumference of his bowl Plicka's body was slowly spreading and sliding up the edges of the bowl. Along this edge Plicka's g-suite mesh was spreading open exposing his skin. Along this ring of exposed skin Plicka was absorbing the rings of food paste he had previously spread around his bowl. This wild ride was a smorgasbord of flavors for this silly dral. That thought in my head is what brought me to the realization that Plicka's goal was to push the Gs high enough and long enough for him to reach the edge of his CAC bowl and taste the strawberry syrup he has spread along the rim. The pressure on my body increased and I began to dread the thought of him tasting strawberries. But there was nothing I could possibly do to stop this wild ride. I had agreed and now we were on our way. All I could do was relax my mind and hope the CAC would let me pass out.

The Void Crusher was vibrating under the intense thrust of its modified Jedggy Elite engines. The dread of experiencing the crushing Gs of strawberries clashed with a morbid curiosity about which flavors lay on Plicka's bowl between the edge of his body and the rim of the bowl where the strawberry syrup was spread. "Orange", grunted Plicka reinforcing my morbid curiosity and encouraging me to stay conscious. I could feel my face sliding back to my ears. No I could not stay conscious to do this. "Mmmmm..", moaned Plicka in a satisfied tone causing me to glance down. The grin on his face was getting noticeably wider with satisfaction and the effects of extreme gravity. I waited in anticipation willing myself to remain conscious. I was soon rewarded with a soft long happy intonation of, "D-ur-i-an". My mind caught on that and I puzzled. I knew I had caught a scent of durian in the cabin but couldn't place the smell. Durian and epo, that is a good combination. I went to glance back up at my heads up display but I found I didn't have the strength to glance back up.

No, I could not keep this up, time to close my eyes and relax into unconsciousness. It would be so much easier to just close my eyes. But, I could see a thin yellow line between Plicka's sides and the red of the strawberry syrup on the rim. Only one more flavor to discover and then I could close my eyes. I just had to see the increasing weight through. Fortunately unbeknownst to me the CAC was pumping stimdoze into my blood stream. I had stamina that I did not know I had because I was as souped up as much as the Void Crusher. The ship vibration was so fast that it was its own hum in the background. I stared intensely at Plicka as he rolled over the yellow band in the bowl. I began to think, "What could be yellow? Lemon? No that had been said earlier. Could it be butter? No that would be odd. Wait this is a dralasite, odd is normal. No, this guy was into sweets, it had to be..." Then Plicka said with pleasure, "Banana!" just as I thought it. Ok, now I was satisfied and I thought, "I can let go and enjoy passing out." I closed my eyes and relaxed, but I couldn't pass out. That stimdoze, I later learned, was there to keep

me conscious for safety reasons until the Gs stabilized. I was getting to experience strawberries whether I liked it or not.

The Void Crusher was straining to push that little bit harder to make fifteen Gs. She is a craft built for high Gs and her engines are modified to get extra thrust for longer durations than normal. Her mission to deliver important cargoes swiftly and safely requires this extended ability and her engineer is an expert at making this so. I was forcibly enjoying this display of Te Gala's and the Void Crusher's capabilities when Plicka blissfully and triumphantly announced, "Strawberry" and the others repeated, "Strawberry!" in strained and muffled grunts. We had reached fifteen Gs, 5.3 on the ADF scale.

The flight plan was to hold this for the rest of the hour then throttle back to one and a half Gs for a couple of hours and then drop back again to one G for the remainder of the seventy hours that Captain V'Thi-Keek and Makoto needed to do the jump calculations. V'Thi-Keek and Makoto work overlapping shifts, eleven hours plotting the jump with the last hour doubled up, eight hours sleeping, and an hour of personal prep after waking (eating, hygiene, etc.). I was beginning to wonder if I was going to have to be awake for the full hour at fifteen Gs when Dr. Caine popped on my intercom. He explained to me that we had reached a constant stable acceleration and that he could tell from my vital signs that I was beyond my limit and he could help me rest if I so desired. I nodded with great effort and Dr. Caine responded that he would put me to sleep until we dropped back to one and a half Gs. Moments later something changed and I was out like a very heavy baby.

I was dreaming. I dreamed that I was caught on a cliffside road and couldn't get up. The road pulled me down to it and all I could do was wobble a little from side to side. Then an ancient gangster automobile would appear speeding toward me and I couldn't roll away. I was fighting to roll and I couldn't move because the road was pulling me down. I fought and I feared. Then just as the white wall tires were about to hit me I rolled away and the wheels just missed me. Then it started all over again as the vehicle came racing from the other direction straight towards me. Over and over and over again I fought and escaped only at the last moment of fear. Then the road let me go and the mountain side and ocean bellow disappeared. I was tired and heavy but the road could no longer pull me down and it wisped away. The world changed form and then I was awake with Dr. Caine calling softly over my com link and heads up display. Dr. Caine was calmly and firmly repeating to me, "Breath Alex, Breath! Suck in some air and breath on your own."

I opened my eyes and I could see everyone busy around the cabin. I tested my strength to move my head to the side and look over at Dr. Caine. My head and neck could move. It was hard but not the oppressive act of futility

fifteen Gs had been. I thought through the reality and felt a huge wave of relief flow through me. Then I noticed the uncomfortable solid feeling of my chest and I was a bit concerned. I glanced over to Dr. Caine with worry and he repeated, “Breathe! Suck in some air!” I looked down at my chest and noticed that it was not moving and I simultaneously thought, “This is weird.” and, “Good gollywog! I'm dead!” That fear that was in my dream of the vehicle wheels rolling over me hit again and carnal instincts heaved my chest muscles and I gulped in air. I coughed the air back out. My body protested and gulped air back into my lungs. This was followed with a battle between my nervous system and my brain about who was in control of the process of breathing. Fortunately my nervous system persisted in asserting its dominance and my brain surrendered to my autonomic nervous system. When I finally had confidence in my autonomic breathing I looked over again at Dr. Caine with wide eyes and he was calmly answering all the questions that I had not yet begun to ask but desperately wanted to know.

Waking up from high G CAC support of your body does require a conscious effort to restart your autonomic breathing and a few other things like swallowing and blinking. However it is not a reaction of fear once a person has experienced it and knows what to expect and can remain calm. Dr. Caine explained that ancient pilots perfected processes of active breathing and body control for high Gs that are very relevant for use with the CAC in long durations of high Gs. He also explained that many experienced pilots acclimate to the process of waking up from prolonged high G sleep and automatically restart breathing without conscious thought. I was also worried about when things went very wrong, like a blowout spiking the Gs beyond the CAC's capabilities and killing me. However, Dr. Caine explained (*before I asked*) that the CAC incorporated a freeze field for such conditions.

Finally Dr. Caine explained that I needed to move my arms and legs to work out the stiffness from being smashed in the couch so long. The CAC moves the contours of the couch to prevent bed sores and it also causes the g-suit to constrict and relax to facilitate blood flow but nothing can replace full skeletal movement to work the muscles and tissue. The CAC had been distributing doses of biocort throughout my body to combat tissue damage but that does not prevent the soreness and stiffness that has to be worked out with exercise. I began by lifting my arms up and down at the shoulder, then by flexing at the elbow, and finally by rotating my wrists. That left my upper body strength spent and I stopped. Dr. Caine then pushed me with encouragement to switch to my legs and when I was tired of that he switched me back to my arms. The end result was improvement as I reanimated my limbs. I was much happier that I had pushed through the exercises after the work out was done.

I spent the remainder of the next two hours at one and a half Gs sipping fluids and even eating a little pasty stuff. My gut had been squeezed pretty empty and it was necessary to put something back into it. When we dropped down to one G for the remainder of the flight Dr. Caine got me up from the CAC couch with the EVA backpack still attached and had me walk around the cabin and I spent some time cleaning myself up.

Everyone but the Captain and Makoto had previously gotten up after we started pushing at one and a half Gs. They exercised and tended to hygiene. V'Thi-Keek exercised from his couch and did some stands and side to side pacing, anything that he could do without distracting himself from working on the astrogation. Makoto remained asleep. He had gotten up right after the fifteen G burn and worked out and tended to personal needs very briefly and then he went straight to sleep. Makoto needed to be ready to take over astrogation after V'Thi-Keek's shift so no one bothered him as he slept. Dr. Caine did continue to monitor his health more than the rest of us. Plicka was even up and moving about around his station to limber up. Plicka as a dralasite is stronger and more capable of withstand high Gs than the rest of us but he still was worn out from the long push. He stayed close and alert so that Captain V'Thi-Keek could give him course corrections for the jump. This turned out to be rather minor and rare however. Plicka is an excellent pilot and very precise. He had placed the Void Crusher very near perfectly on the jump vector Captain V'Thi-Keek was seeking in his astrogation plans. After about an hour of cabin exercise Plicka returned to his CAC bowl and took to cat napping so that he could be awake and available at a moment's notice for the remainder of the pre-jump.

The Void Crusher's crew stayed pretty strict to their tasks. They make their money by delivering items across the Frontier in the swiftest times possible and reliably. They did not stop to chat and relax much while there was work to be done. From time to time there was a bit of social banter then back to business and quiet. Everyone was strict to their shift schedules so that they could be ready and keep to the flight plan. Time was everything. I was mostly left to myself and took in some vids on my helmet heads up display and did a little writing on this article.

Makoto was a couple of hours from finishing his fourth shift when the astrogation computer sounded the alarm for impending jump into the Void. Captain V'Thi-Keek and the rest of the crew all got up and reported their stations ready as Makoto called out the final commands and counted down to the void jump. Plicka dropped the acceleration to zero G for the last few minutes as Makoto stared intently at his console. Captain V'Thi-Keek observed everything and I knew he was double checking every calculation and decision but nothing was said. Makoto then announced, “Void jump vectors all ready.” Captain V'Thi-Keek clicked back calmly, “Proceed.”

Frontier Explorer

Makoto punched the Void Crusher into the Void with the slightest bit of acceleration and the world went gold.

I have jumped through the void many times and it never seems to make sense. I know that it is not something that we can make sense of, it is another realm, but I always seem to try. The Void Crusher was there around me, but it was not. The air had a gold color to it but the floor was a moving blue. Little flashes of light popped and snapped around my eyes. I thought of the voidlings and Cletus. Cletus had tried to explain to me that I shouldn't expect the void to look the same every time I jumped through it. I looked toward the astrogation clock on the view screen, it was counting down the seconds exact to the millionth of a second. I could swear I could see the millionths digits individually ticking away, like time was slowed. I had never experienced time distortion in the void but then I had never jumped through the void in the command cabin with a view of the astrogation clock. I realized that I had never even bothered to think about time in my past jumps because I had always been looking at the colors, shapes, tastes, and smells of things. I remember once that I had seen what the smell of a hamburger looks like during a jump and had been fascinated that it didn't look like a burger but rather like a decorative crystal chain. Then the jump had ended and I had lost the view of the burger smell just as I thought I was about to comprehend it. I wondered about my comprehension of time now, at this moment, in *this* jump, and looked back at the clock and concentrated on it. I could speed up and slow down the clock, almost. I focused more and willed the clock faster, it went slower. I willed it back and it went sideways. How could it count sideways? This did not make sense. There was a sound coming from the numbers. I concentrated but relaxed trying to understand time. Just as I was about to come to grips with how time was working we dropped out of the void. The world was real again and the clock was 0.0 and still.

Captain V'Thi-Keek started calling in reports, "Acceleraton?"

"Zero G," reported Plicka.

"Location?" called V'Thi-Keek.

"Prenglar Beacon at 0.9873 of expected signal strength. Vector to star 0.005 degrees by 1.207 degrees," responded Makoto.

"0.005 degrees by 1.207 degrees, check," confirmed Plicka.

"Prenglar Beacon code, check! Strength 0.98736, check!" added Te Gala.

"Life Support?" called V'Thi-Keek.

"All good!" responded Dr. Caine.

"Maneuvering thrusters?" continued the captain.

"Positive all axis!" replied Plicka.

"Engines?" called V'Thi-Keek.

"Idling good," returned Te Gala.

"Detects?" asked Captain V'Thi-Keek.

"None, all clear in all directions!" answered Makoto.

"Hull integrity?" continued V'Thi-Keek.

"Green all systems, all sensors," growled Te Gala with a hint of pride.

Captain V'Thi-Keek then looked over everyone and everything and said, "Well done team! Keep the scans active. Rest the engines a bit. Take a break." Then everyone visibly relaxed. I could see each being's posture settle just a little. Captain V'Thi-Keek inquired as to my health and enjoyment of the ride in a very vrusk-like manner. We all chatted idly among ourselves a bit and everyone took turns complementing each other on a job well done. I was rather impressed with how well everyone worked together. Then Plicka said, "Waffles!" and the party started. We coasted along at zero G whilst Plicka and Dr. Caine prepared waffles with strawberry syrup for everyone. Te Gala added a bacon like meat to his so that the waffles were sandwiched between the meat. Makoto took his waffles dry and dipped them as he tore little bites from the dough. Captain V'Thi-Keek took two waffles at a time with the strawberry syrup in between making it very neat and clean to eat with his mandibles. Dr. Caine and I followed the customary waffle on a plate with the syrup poured on top. Pouring syrup is hard to do at zero G. Plicka painted the waffles with the Strawberry Syrup, pasted them to his body, and folded around them. Everyone ate their fill and enjoyed each other's company as they monitored systems.



Captain V'Thi-Keek then told Makoto and Plicka, "Point us at Timeon, 0.0185 by 0.0043. Plot for a hard burn in system and a short ride to Easley Station." Makoto replied with a positive, "Sir!" and Plicka said, "You got it!" Then V'Thi-Keek settled back forward into his couch and went to sleep to keep on his shift schedule.

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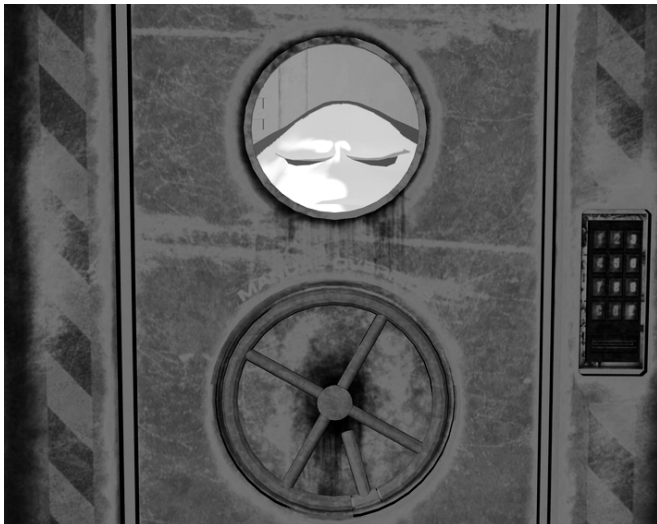
Frontier Fiction

THE STOWAWAY

Scott R. Mulder

FY-208: Streel Corporation Expedition Cutter S.S. Aeon Explorer, deep space nebula survey mission, five light years out from K'aken-Kar near the Xagy Dust Nebula.

Gemble Doro considered himself a very space-wise and resourceful Dralasite who was usually good at avoiding difficult situations. So you can imagine his frustration when he found himself locked in the cold plastisteel brig on the Streel Corporation's Aeon Explorer starship. Restlessly he changed his body's shape in a futile attempt to find a form that was more sympathetic to his new accommodations. Outside his cell, a young nimble looking male Vrusk crewman stood guard in the corridor.



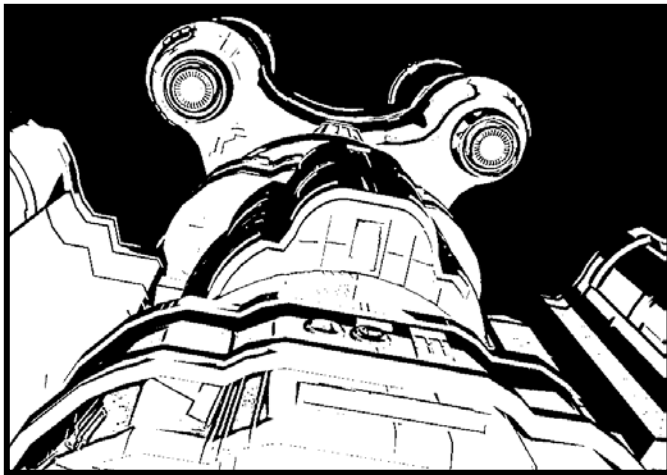
The Vrusk guard turned his insect-like head just in time to see the prisoner moving restlessly about inside his cell. The guard gave Gemble a stern look, and scolded the Dralasite through the cell's intercom in a harsh sounding dialect of the Pan-Gal trade language. "Hey sit still in there, all that oozing around is making me space-sick."

It had been only two hours now since one of the ship's security robots found Gemble hiding in the cargo hold. For an experienced space traveler, Gemble was surprisingly uncomfortable with confined spaces. Already he was starting to feel a little claustrophobic locked inside the small cell. Gemble had been bumming rides on merchant vessels on and off over the last four years since he lost his last job working as a technician on Laco. During this time Gemble had learned that most merchant transports had precious little time or manpower to go searching about their holds looking for stowaways once

their cargo was loaded. The real trick was learning to tell the difference between a cargo hold that had life support and those that didn't. The later usually resulted in a very short one way trip if you didn't bring along your own vacuum suit, water supply, nutri-packs, and a sufficient quantity of breathing gases. If you learned to pick the right kind of ship, and could keep out of the crew's sight, it wasn't all that difficult to hitch a free ride. Unfortunately, this was Gemble's first time hitching a ride on a corporate expedition ship and he mistakenly assumed that he would once again be able to slip by unnoticed.

The Aeon Explorer, or "AE" for short, was a recently commissioned starship on a routine engine overhaul at Port Lauren when Gemble first saw it docked at the shipyard. He had grown tired of the hustle and bustle of the busy spaceport and felt that he needed a change of scenery to clear his head. He found the shiny pristine appearance of this new corporate expedition cutter absolutely irresistible. Ever since his first flight on a local spaceliner as an adolescent, Gemble had developed a nearly uncontrollable love for starships and space travel. While he didn't have the aptitude scores needed to become a spacer himself, it never stopped him from finding any excuse or opportunity to get on-board any chance he could. The Aeon Explorer with its sleek corporate hull markings was certainly no exception to Gemble's fancy and he knew at first sight that he had to go for a ride on that fine looking vessel.

The AE's scheduled flight plan was for a sixteen-week survey run into the vast Xagy Dust Nebula on the edge of the Frontier. The ship's large custom designed hydrogen ram scoop had been specially modified to collect nebula gas samples for a private research project being sponsored by the Streel Corporation. All of this was common knowledge among the thirty handpicked members of the ship's crew and scientific expedition team. Unfortunately for Gemble, he was not one of them, and as a stow-away had no idea that this expedition cutter was on its way into deep space and not the next bright beacon of Frontier civilization or lonely backwater outpost. By the time Gemble was discovered in the ship's hold, the AE was already three weeks into its voyage, had successfully completed its void jump to the nebula, and was now well past the point of no return. With each passing minute Gemble was finding himself in an increasingly difficult situation.



Twenty minutes later, just at the point when Gemble thought his confinement was pushing him over the edge of sanity the cell door finally opened. Outside, the unsympathetic and cantankerous Vrusk guard gestured for his prisoner to step into the corridor. “Cap’n Sonat will see you now,” the Vrusk clicked impatiently as he paused to adjust his utility harness and straighten his eight-legged jumpsuit.

“It’s about damn time!” Gemble barked at the sentry as he slowly rose from the puddle shaped mass he was in on the floor. Gemble’s feinted outburst of self-righteous indignation barely masked his apprehension about meeting the ship’s Captain for the first time. Especially considering the circumstances that Gemble was an illegal stowaway on the ship and not just another member of his crew.

The Vrusk crewman who served as Gemble’s jailer delivered him promptly to the Captain’s ready room located adjacent to the ship’s bridge. His jailor was a young Vrusk of few words and Gemble could barely get more than a few impatient grumbled clicks out of the big bug. Gemble always thought of himself as an agreeable sort that found his way easily enough among the various races of the Frontier Sector. However, this stoic Vrusk was sorely unimpressed by Gemble’s self-professed irresistible social charisma and apparently had no love for stow-aways. At one point Gemble even thought he heard the bug click something under his breath about preferring to stuff the little blob out the nearest air lock rather than baby-sit him for the next thirteen weeks.

Gemble noticed that his escort seemed oddly nervous as they waited just outside the open hatch of the ready room. Gemble tried to remain calm and refrained from indulging in making his favorite shape shifting humor while waiting for the Captain to acknowledge their presence and invite them in. Gemble thought to himself that his guard’s obvious discomfort was not a good omen for the anticipated meeting with the Captain. It was not common to see this much frigid formality on a corporate vessel, which meant that either something very important was

going on here or something had gone very wrong. In either case, this was certainly no longer some run-of-the-mill survey run. Whatever was going on here was beginning to peak the stow-away Dralasite’s interest and insatiable curiosity.

After an awkwardly long wait, Captain Razgar Sonat finally looked up from the large stack of papers that covered the top of his ornately decorated wooden desk. Undoubtedly, the decorative scene was some kind of family heirloom from a distant arboreal world with carvings depicting scenes from the lost garden of Yazira. Without speaking, the Captain made an abbreviated gesture with the long out-stretched boney fingers of his hand beckoning the two visitors to enter the room. This was followed by an equally brief wave of his hand that motioned for the two to have a seat across from him at the desk while he busily rifled through the stack of papers before him.

“Ah, Mr. Gemble Doro, technician third class, and former employee of Teknadyne industries. Which I must say ...is a very poor cover for corporate espionage if I ever heard one.” The tall elder Yazirian said with a restrained hint of disdain as he produced Gemble’s confiscated identicard, chronocom, and compact Merco laser pistol from a large envelope that was lying among the papers on his desk. “So, what is it that really brings you to be here on my ship Mr. Doro?”



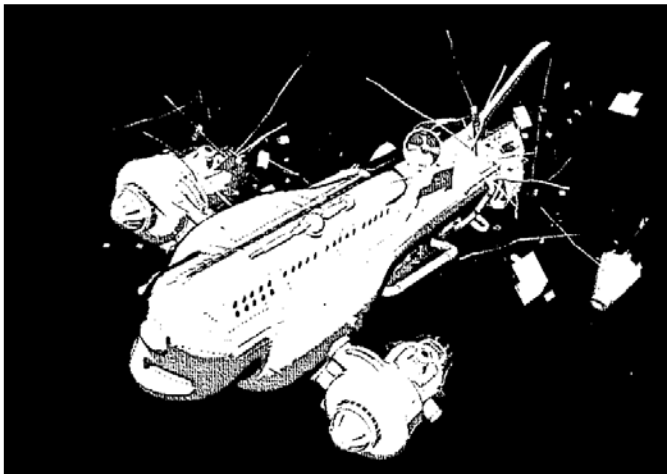
Before Gemble could answer, a clean cut human flight officer unceremoniously rushed into the ready room. Visibly winded, the young man almost stumbled through the hatchway as he entered. “Captain, sorry to interrupt but we have a proximity alert. It looks like a large debris field on radar imaging but it’s too dark to visually confirm on the scope.”

“Very well Mr. Sans”, the Yazirian Captain said acknowledging the crewman before him with a tone of irritation. “Have the helm slow to station keeping and I’ll be out in a moment to see what’s going on.”

The tall Yazirian slowly rose to his full height from behind the large desk and paused for a brief moment to straighten his coverall jumpsuit. “Gentlemen, if you will please excuse me I have some pressing matters to attend to on the bridge. Mr. T’zikt will you please escort Mr. Doro back to the Brig. We will have to continue our conversation another time.”

The Vrusk crewman roughly grabbed Gemble by one of his arm-like appendages and rushed him out the ready room door. As Gemble and his escort passed by the adjacent hatchway that led onto the ship’s bridge a flurry of activity could be seen inside. Corporate jumpsuit clad crewman rushed about from station to station confirming and exchanging information like an angry swarm of Tozar Bees. Amongst the commotion Gemble caught a glimpse of the large video monitor in the center of the bridge displaying an image that immediately seized his attention.

“Hey that looks like an old Tran-Solar Type Five Spaceliner!” Gemble commented to himself aloud as he stretched his elastic neck behind his stubbornly pulled body to get a better look. On the monitor Gemble saw the ragged silhouette of an old spaceliner almost identical to the very one that he had once travelled on in his youth. However this ship, unlike the one of his youth, was a mere shade of its once elegant splendor. The entire surface of the spaceliner’s hull was covered with patchwork plating and conduit indicating a significant amount of modifications had been made.

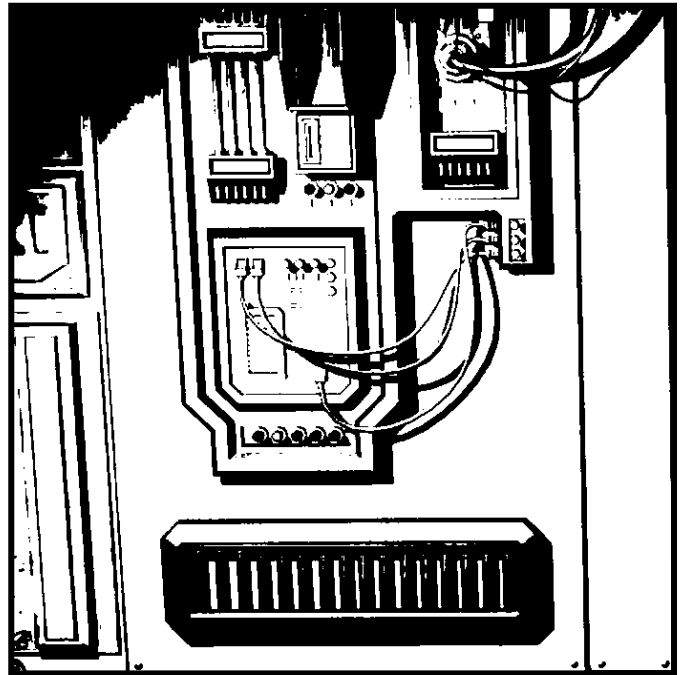


“C’mom blob, let’s go!” T’zikt impatiently clicked his mandibles at Gemble as he struggled to pull the now rooted Dralasite down the corridor back to his cell. “...You can, ...watch what’s goin’ on, ... from the monitor in the Brig.”

“But wait, that’s a...”, Gemble stammered as the length of his body finally stretched to the elastic limit of its volume sending him tumbling down the corridor with a suction cup like pop.”

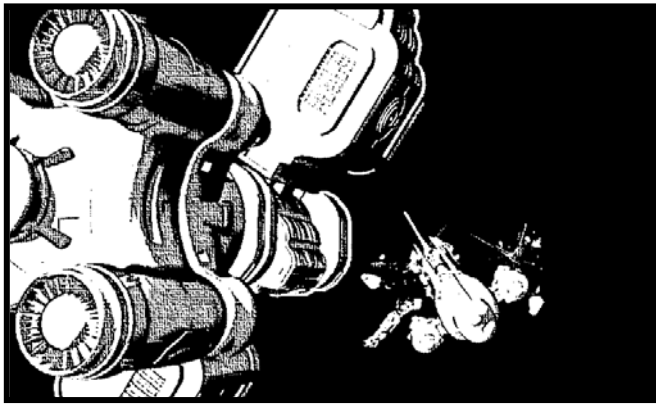
“Quit playin’ aroun’ and keep movin’!” T’zikt scolded as his rubbery prisoner almost rolled into him.

Moments later, after a short ride on the mag-lift that ran through the ship’s central axis, T’zikt and Gemble arrived once again at the ship’s brig. It was a very Spartan compartment near the ship’s medical bay that contained a guard station and three very small holding cells that were barely large enough to accommodate two adult humans. The cells in the brig were very clean, Gemble had unfortunately seen more than his fair share that weren’t during his travels. Gemble speculated to himself that this brig must have been designed to serve as additional berthing space in the event of an emergency. Each of the three cells contained two zero-g bunks that were recessed into the compartment wall and a zero-g lavatory station. There also was a small video monitor and intercom located on the wall opposite the cell’s bunks. The sterile white high gloss plastisteel walls of the cell helped to magnify the ambient light in the small rooms but Gemble found this feature only served to irritate his optical nerve clusters.



T’zikt escorted Gemble back inside the cell where he was originally held prior to the meeting with Captain Sonat. The noise dampening hatch closed behind Gemble with a quiet swoosh that was immediately followed by the muffled clank of the door bolts locking. It was a sound that was both a source of comfort and anxiety for the confined stowaway. The sense of comfort came from knowing that whatever was happening on the bridge would certainly occupy the Captain’s attention for a while. Every minute that the Captain was busy attending to his ship was one more minute that Gemble didn’t have to worry about the possibility of getting flushed out the airlock. On the other hand, Gemble’s sense of anxiety came from knowing that every minute he was locked inside this cell events were unfolding that placed his fate

in the hands of people who were not particularly happy with him.



Turning the video monitor on in his cell, Gemble was pleasantly surprised to see that T'zikt had indeed been true to his word. Before Gemble on the small screen was dark and grainy video footage of the derelict Tran-Solar streaming directly from the AE's powerful telescopes. With each passing moment the derelict ship slowly grew larger and larger on the screen as the AE approached the drifting hulk.

"Hey, looks like we are moving into position for a docking maneuver", Gemble remarked into the intercom.

"Looks that way", T'zikt replied glancing quickly over his shoulder at Gemble's cell as if he were actually speaking directly to Gemble and not the intercom. It was a subtle unconscious gesture that T'zikt was completely unaware of but that Gemble found hysterically funny. Fortunately for Gemble, the ill-tempered young Vrusk could not hear the Dralasite laughing at him uncontrollably behind the sound dampening walls of the cell.

A few minutes passed in silence as Gemble regained his composure and resumed watching the AE's approach towards the derelict. As the AE grew closer to the drifting spaceliner more details became visible on the monitor. No lights could be seen on the exterior of the ship and all of the observation ports were shuttered. Two massive atomic engines extended from the lateral sides of the ship's hull and looked as if they had been hurriedly scavenged together from at least a half-dozen other spacecraft. A faint ambient glow could be seen coming from the two engine's emergency exhaust vents which indicated that the reactors were still hot and possibly functional. The rest of the ship's scarred and pitted hull looked much older than the two engines and had several small breaches that were open to space.

"T'zikt, those old Tran-Solar's date all the way back to the Second General Muster. Spaceliners like these that were capable of interstellar travel were retro-fitted with armor plating and cannons so they could help with the fight against the Sathar invasion fleet during SW-1. After the war, those starships that survived were either returned



to civilian service or sent to the border systems as patrol ships to guard against future Sathar incursions. If I were a betting Dralasite, which I am, I would bet that this old Tran-Solar is one of those early patrol ships."

T'zikt outstretched a finger towards the intercom button on the console of his guard station but then hesitated as he seemed to reconsider indulging his prisoner with a reply. After-all, he thought to himself, this no-good dead-beat blob was wasting his time by guarding his pathetic elastic ass when he could be with the rest of his crewmates investigating this amazing find on the very edge of the Frontier. While T'zikt's duties as a security specialist on the AE were not as important to the mission as the scientists or flight crew he still resented having to babysit a stowaway that had no business being on this ship in the first place. It was a task he felt was better served by one of the ship's security bots. His parent's prestigious position within the Streel Corporation's Science Division had secured him a place on this mission and the very thought of missing an opportunity to distinguish himself as part of an important discovery for something as routine as brig watch infuriated the young Vrusk.

T'zikt's eyes momentarily drifted away with his wandering thoughts from the monitor screen on his console. Only to be abruptly snapped back to attention as the whole ship seemed to shutter backwards from the inertia of the braking thrusters firing. Both Gemble and T'zikt were instantly fixated on their video monitors watching the Aeon Explorer's ship to ship mechanical docking arm slowly latch on to the pitted hull of the derelict spaceliner. A loud hollow sounding clunk echoed throughout the ship as it settled into a tandem docking configuration with the derelict. Immediately followed by an eerie silence replacing the previous frantic buzz of activity all about the ship. All motion seemed to suddenly die as every living soul on the Aeon Explorer collective held their breaths in anticipation as they hypnotically watched the grainy feed stream into their video monitors.

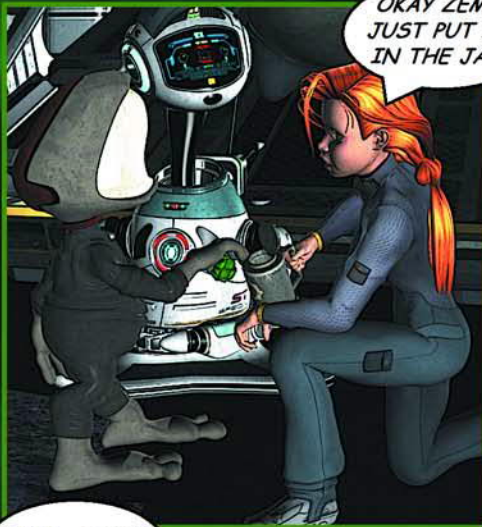


GRYMZ

GUIDE TO INTERGALACTIC CONQUEST



LESSON #15: AWWW CRAP!



OKAY ZEMP,
JUST PUT IT
IN THE JAR.

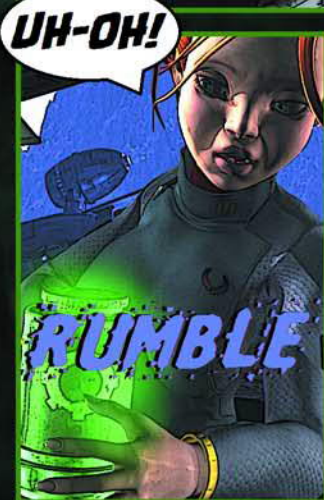


SEE, NOW THAT
WASN'T SO BAD.



WE'LL JUST
ISOLATE THIS
FOR A BIT.

'TIL WE KNOW
WHAT IT IS.



UH-OH!

RUMBLE



WOOSH!



AWWW
CRAP!

WHERE'D
THEY GO?